

# Melody of Dharma

☸ **An Introductory Teaching on Taking Refuge**  
by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin

☸ **Buddha Nature**  
A teaching by H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche

☸ **Global Ecological Crisis: An Aspirational Prayer**  
by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin



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## From The Editors

We are very pleased to welcome our readers to this, our third issue of Melody of Dharma, with a particularly warm greeting to our new subscribers.

We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to our sponsors, whose generosity made this issue possible, and to all those who have contributed to the magazine in one way or another. We're very grateful for the donations, editorial collaboration and appreciative support that have been offered us during these past few months.

Our principal aim is to keep our readers in close contact with the Gurus, their activities and their teachings, as well as with each other, and we ardently wish to be able to persevere in this endeavour. For this, we depend entirely on the generosity of our readers, and we hope that our pages will inspire them to participate in its continuance.

We are happy to bring you in this issue the concluding part of His Holiness' teaching on 'Taking Refuge', as well as the first part of a teaching by His Eminence Ratna Vajra Rinpoche on 'Buddha Nature'.

Also featured is a compelling poem by His Holiness that takes the issue of the environment to a spiritual plane and, in addition, Virupa's Dohakosa, his piercing, vivid and beautiful Song of Realization. And lastly, a beguiling short history by His Holiness of the Mahavairocana Puja, and a brief explanation of its significance.

Furthermore, this is a particularly special issue, as it includes a twenty-five page diary of His Holiness' 2010 teaching activities in Northeast India, Russia and Europe. It is also special in that it is the bearer of very exciting news: the birth of His Holiness' first grandson, Dungsey Akasha Rinpoche.

We hope that you find these pages enjoyable, interesting and enriching.

Yours in the Dharma,

*The Editing Team*





## H.E. Chogye Trichen Rinpoche

**H**is Eminence Chogye Trichen Rinpoche, Ngawang Khyenrab Thupten Lekshe Gyatso (1920-2007) was, during his time, the most senior lama of the Sakya Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, and the supreme head of the Tsharpa branch of this lineage.

His Eminence was an unsurpassable tantric master

and a supremely accomplished scholar. He counted as his disciples the throne holders of most of the lineages of Tibetan Buddhism, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, His Eminence Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, and His Eminence Gyana Vajra Rinpoche. He was revered as an extraordinary teacher

and realized practitioner by his numerous disciples and by masters of all traditions, and held in the highest regard by anyone who had ever been blessed by his presence.

He was awarded the title “Gorkha Dakshin Babu” by King Birendra of Nepal, the only Buddhist monk ever to receive this tribute.

His Eminence was born in 1920 in Tsang, Central Tibet, and the occasion was marked by many auspicious signs. He belonged to the Shalu Kushang family of the Che clan, which descends directly from the Clear Light Gods. The name “Kushang”, means “royal maternal uncle”, and the family bore it because so many of its daughters had been married to Sakya throne holders. The family was also unique in that every one of its generations had produced a minimum of four sons, several of whom had become throne holders of Sakya monasteries.

His Eminence was recognized by the 13th Dalai Lama as the reincarnation of the previous Chogyi Rinpoche of Nalendra Monastery. As such, His Eminence became the 26th patriarch of Phenpo Nalendra Monastery, near Lhasa in Tibet. Nalendra, founded in 1439 by Rongton Sheja Kunrig (1367-1449), was, until its destruction at the time of the Chinese takeover, one of the most important Sakya monasteries in Tibet.

When he was twelve, His Eminence was enthroned at Nalendra, where he assiduously studied all the major texts and rituals of the monastery. From his root Gurus, the 4th Zimwog Rinpoche Kunga Tenzin and Dampa Rinpoche Shenphen Nyingpo, he received all the major Sakya teachings and transmissions, principally the precious Lamdre, the



Thirteen Golden Dharmas, the Greater and Lesser Mahakalas, and many more. His Eminence was an accomplished scholar, poet, historian and he excelled in Buddhist metaphysics.

When the Chinese entered Tibet, His Eminence fled to Mustang, where his sister was married to the King. Then, in 1962, he was asked by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to act as Secretary General of the Council for Religious and Cultural Affairs of the Tibetan Government in Exile in Dharamsala, India. He left for India, and carried out this duty until 1969, when he went to Lumbini, in Nepal, in order to fulfill a vow which he and the King of Mustang had made six years earlier while on a pilgrimage there: to build a monastery in the birthplace of the Buddha. In May 1975, Tashi Rabten Ling Monastery was inaugurated and has since then become a place of pilgrimage for all Buddhists who visit Lumbini. A newer and larger monastery was later built nearby. Since its inauguration in 2004, the latter has hosted the Great Sakya Annual Monlam Aspirational Prayer Festival.

His Eminence also built the Jamchen Lhakhang



monastery in Boudanath, Nepal, where he lived until his passing into paranirvana in January of 2007.

Thus, His Eminence established the new seat of the Tshar lineage in exile, perpetuating the tradition of the old Nalendra monastery in Tibet. His Eminence also established retreat centres in Nepal, Mustang, as well as dharma centres in Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Taiwan. During his lifetime, His Eminence spent many years in retreat, and dedicated most of his waking time practicing. He was said to

sleep only one hour, and this he always did sitting up.

The degree of his realization became clear when, at age 87, he passed into Paranirvana. His Eminence remained in the state of Tukdam – resting in the clear light of death – during all of 15 days. His body was cremated at Jamchen Lakhang, and many auspicious signs accompanied the ceremony.

He remains the heart master of numberless disciples, who eagerly await his return in rupakaya form.

## Nalendra Monastery

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**T**he Nalendra monastery in Phenyul, in the Penpo District of Central Tibet, was founded in 1435 by the great Sakya master Rongtomba Sheja Kunzig, one of the Six Ornaments of Tibet. This great lama was born in the eastern country of Gyalmo Rong in 1367, and is considered to have been an emanation of Arya Manjushri.

He had memories of previous incarnations as great masters from both India and Tibet, including Kamalashila. His incomparable clarity as a teacher and faultless skill in debate won him the title “Lion of Speech”.

Not only was he an accomplished scholar, but he was also known for his siddhis, such as resurrecting the dead, flying in the sky, and his power of emanation.

He lived to the age of 84, at which time he left this world for Tushita heaven.

Nalendra owes its name to the famous Nalanda centre of learning in India.



The last eighteen holders of the Nalendra throne have all belonged to the celestial Che clan. The two principal lines of Lamas who have tended to Nalendra’s spiritual needs through the centuries, have been the Chogye Trichen Rinpoches and the Zimwog Rinpoches. His Eminence Chogye Trichen Rinpoche, supreme head of the Tshar tradition of the Sakyas, was the twenty-sixth throne holder until his passing into Paranirvana in 2007.

# Remembering Great Masters: Virupa

The great master Virupa is one of the celebrated eighty four mahasiddhas, or tantric adepts, of ancient India. He became the first human holder of the Lamdre, the core tantric teaching of the Sakya

tradition, which he received directly from Nairatmya, Lord Hevajra's consort.

Master Virupa, was born in the seventh century to a royal family in Bengal, in the eastern province of Tripura, during the reign of King Devapala. At a very young age, Virupa was ordained as a monk at Somapura Monastery in North Bengal. After completing his studies there, he entered the famous Nalanda Monastery, where he received his bhikkhu ordination from Dharmamitra, the Abbot of Nalanda, at which time he was given the name Dharmapala. It was only after attaining Siddhis that, because of his unorthodox behaviour, Dharmapala started to call himself Virupa (the Wicked One).

At Nalanda, Dharmamitra gave Virupa Vajrayana teachings and in particular the Chakrasamvara Tantra. He became so renowned for his learning that after the passing away of his teacher, he succeeded him as abbot of Nalanda monastery. During the day he gave Mahayana teachings to the monks, taught debate, and composed texts. At night and in secret, however, he undertook Mantrayana practices. Yet, after







practicing in this way for a very long period of time, he experienced no significant signs of progress or accomplishment. Worse still, he began to have dreams which he interpreted as ill omens. Virupa thought that perhaps he did not have the necessary karmic connection with tantric practice and so, disillusioned, he threw his mala into the latrine, and decided to devote his full-time efforts to giving Mahayana teachings.

But on that very night, Nairatmya appeared to him, and told him:

“Noble son, do not act in this way. Pick up your rosary, clean it, and take up your practice again. I am the deity with whom you have a karmic connection and I will bestow my blessings upon you”.

The following evening Nairatmya appeared to him again in her mandala of fifteen goddesses, and she bestowed upon him the four initiations, upon which he reached the First Bhumi, the Path of Seeing. Virupa then realised the true meaning of his dreams, which he had wrongly interpreted as ill omens. From that evening onwards, Virupa attained a new Bhumi each night and, on the night of the twenty-ninth day, he became a bodhisattva of the sixth bhumi.

In order to express his gratitude to his Guru and Yidams, Virupa arranged for a Ganachakra feast where meat and wine were included as offerings. This made the monks highly suspicious and Virupa, not wishing to cause controversy and demean the Secret Teachings, declared himself “wicked” and left the monastery.

Virupa then traveled far and wide, and became known for his magical powers, which he used to defeat enemies of the Dharma. He is famously known to have parted the waters of the Ganges twice and, in a spectacular show of crazy wisdom, stopped the course of the sun for three days so that the tavern where he was drinking would stay open and keep serving him. On the course of his journeys, he met Dombi Heruka and Krishnacharin, who became his first two disciples. Later, he built a temple and established a monastery in Sowantha, where he ordered the suspension of animal sacrifices.

When he died, he is said to have dissolved into a stone image, with his right hand pointing at the sun, and holding a pot of gold paint in his left. It is said that this paint can turn base metal into gold.



# Virupa's Treasury of Dohas

Homage to Sri Vajrasattva  
Homage to Blessed Nairatma

E ma ho!  
The mahamudra is completely pure by nature like space.

Since the reality of the demonstrated object does not exist,  
it cannot be expressed through the medium of conventional words,

the essence without proliferation by nature is free from all dependent phenomena,  
cannot be investigated or examined, free from demonstrative examples,  
also not abiding in freedom from examples, beyond the domain of the mind,

not eternal, not annihilated, not samsara or nirvana,  
not apparent, not empty, not real, not unreal, not non-arising,  
not the original dharmata, and also not beyond mind,

also not non-being because being and non-being cannot be expressed with the mind,  
not connected with any dualistic phenomena, originally homogenous.

Even the explanation of the activities of defining the essence,  
equivalent with the fallacy of those false horns of a rabbit being sharp or dull,  
all phenomena are not different from that characterization.

The relative phenomena of the world however they appear  
are without essence, mere names, mere sounds, mere designations,  
not the slightest bit of difference between names and meanings exists,

innate from the beginning, not to be sought elsewhere,  
the nature of the mind, without a name, mahamudra free from proliferation,  
it is equivalent with the nature of space, without a name from the beginning,

non-arisen by nature, free from the proliferation of signs,  
all-pervading, unmoving and unchanging like space,  
empty throughout all time and always selfless,

not the characteristic of concept, like a mirage of a river,  
not bound, not liberated, having never moved from the original state.





All sentient beings are emanations of mahamudra,  
the essence of those emanations is the forever non-arising dharmadhatu,  
also all characteristics of dualistic appearances, happiness, suffering and so on,  
are the play of mahamudra, the original dharmata.

Because there is no truth and nothing on which to rely in play itself,  
reality never transcends the seal of emptiness.

Some are completely tortured with empowerment rites,  
some always count their rosary saying hum phat!  
some consume shit, piss, blood, semen and meat,  
some meditate the yoga of nadi and vayu, but all are deluded.

E ma ho!

Having been connected with a sublime Guru,  
one should realize as follows:

because there is some kind of delusion,  
true realization does not exist,

free from any extremes of partiality or bias  
since there is nothing to realize and no realization,  
the homogenous original state is neither with nor without [extremes].

If one realizes in this way there is definitely no-one else to ask.

Since diversity appears as the dharmakaya,  
a mind that accepts and rejects never arises.

There is nothing to meditate or not meditate,  
and nothing is covered with characteristics,  
one should never depend on apparent and non-apparent objects,

a mind with action and agent does not exist,  
free from all objects,  
a mind with hope and fear does not exist,  
turned away from all attachments,

if one realizes the original reality shown by the Guru,  
the diversity of recollection and awareness  
automatically dissolves into the dharmadhatu,

consciousness does not remain on an object,  
since one is free from all attachment and grasping,  
all phenomena are liberated  
in the uncontrived original state.



If one is not attached to anything,  
free from the stain of pride and so on,  
devoted, totally connected with the sublime ones,  
and free from mental activity of any kind,  
there is no doubt one will be immaculate,

because one is purified of a knower  
and objects of knowledge,  
the direct perception of dharmata will arise.

If one has not realized original mahamudra,  
since one is always attached to everything  
because of the power of dualistic grasping,

thoughts arise in the mind  
like the stream of the variety of blurred vision,  
not abiding in the non-erroneous ultimate,  
one cycles and wanders in samsara.

Because of attachment and grasping  
to all the fame and offerings,

and the arising of great hearing, reflection,  
and intellectual comprehension, good experience,  
siddhis, blessings, and the signs of power,

the contrived path is ultimately a stain,  
the wise do not entrust their minds to them.

If one is interested in those things  
and falls into the two extremes,

because it is the root of cycling  
in the cycle of samsara,  
look, what is the mountain of the mind  
that is the root of everything?

If one becomes free from the mind  
because it is not seen when looking,  
liberation is certain.

Since the mind does not indicate  
“The dharmadhatu is this”,  
both meditation and an object of meditation  
do not exist in that,



rest in the undistracted state  
without any concepts of existence and non-existence.

If one intellectualizes emptiness,  
non-arising, beyond mind,  
freedom from extremes and so on in any way,  
not dwelling in actual reality,  
one will be very distracted.

Rest in a relaxed state disregarding empty or not empty.

Letting go in the state of independence  
without meditating or not-meditating,  
be just like a zombie, without a mind that accepts or rejects.

If one dwells in my state through knowing reality as it is,  
the traces of the characteristics of dualistic appearances  
will be quickly destroyed.

If one is distracted by characteristics  
without dwelling in the state of realization,  
one will not be able to avert the traces  
of the characteristics of dualistic appearances,

though it seems a particle  
is in the eye of one with ophthalmia,  
the ophthalmic appearance cannot be repaired  
without curing the eye disease.

Intellectualizing reality,  
attachment to meditation experience,  
cultivating and meditating on the actual true state  
are causes of deviation.

Because attachment and aversion arose  
towards conducive conditions,  
one is bound.

All negative disharmonious conditions are sublime siddhis,  
since negative conditions intensify the yogin's experience,  
since one understands the true state of negative conditions  
without avoiding them, train in them,  
maintain that, and practice until coming to the conclusion  
of experience and realization,  
just as a good horse is encouraged by a quirt.





If yogis with good experience lack the companion of conduct,  
as that is not possessed, it is like people without feet.

Train in the actual ultimate real state free from attachment,  
giving up nothing, accomplishing nothing, attached to  
nothing, purifying nothing, rejecting nothing,  
the best of the very best behavior is whatever feels good to one's body.

Though relatively, the Buddhas have the great confidence of a dead body,  
they diligently do whatever possible without abandoning  
the great mass of sentient beings.

Though fearless, without fearful thoughts towards samsara,  
refrain from even the slightest wrong action.

Though phenomena are realized to be empty like space,  
free from an origin,  
give up attachment and aversion  
having destroyed all strong attachment.

Though one realizes the meaning  
of the great transparent Dharmata free from extremes,  
while one has not attained stability  
keep one's experience and realization secret from others.

Though one realizes that ultimately  
both self and other do not exist,  
relatively, think on the great benefit of migrating beings.

Though one has the confidence  
that does not depend on the guidance of others,  
place the very kind Guru on the crown of one's head.

The one with attachment and grasping will debate everyone,  
contrary conduct not in conformity with tradition is a deviation.

Since there is no object of perception and no perceiver,  
difference is liberated in its own state.

Since the experiencer is destroyed,  
one is free from all effort and practice.

Since the result to attain is destroyed,  
one is liberated from all hope and fear.

Having totally uprooted I and mine,  
one is victorious in the war with Mara.



Since realism is destroyed in its own state,  
one is liberated from samsara and nirvana.

Since Rigpa is pure in the basis,  
it is called “Perfect Buddhahood.”

Since phenomena and mind are exhausted in the state of exhaustion,  
therefore it is explained as “nirvana”,

uncontrived, unchanging,  
totally liberated from everything  
to be given up or to attain.

E ma ho

That great profound term “mahamudra”,  
whatever its basis of designation is, also has the label “empty”;  
as moments are empty by nature, who realizes selflessness?

There is no realizer, just a name, a term, a label.

Also that is not perfect, a projection of disciples,  
also in disciples there is no self,  
similar with illusions and emanations  
“Mahamudra” is a mental imputation of the childish.

“Delusion” and “non-delusion” are mere names, mere labels,  
who is the person to feel or be aware of delusion?

If not even an iota of the result, nirvana, exists, and is not perceived,  
“liberation and non-liberation” is an adventitious reification,

Nothing exists in peaceful and pure space,  
so what is the path of liberation?

“Ultimate and relative” are also just emphatic labels,  
but the two truths don’t exist in the dharmadhatu,  
the dharmadhatu does not exist.

*The Treasury of Dohas composed by the lord of Yogis, Virupa, is complete.*

*( Doha: Song of Realization).*

*Reproduced by kind permission of Lama Tseten Migmar*



# Global Ecological Crisis: An Aspirational Prayer

by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin

---

When I pray one-pointedly, with fervent faith and devotion,  
To the Lord Buddha, to the master Padmakara, to Padmapani,  
To the venerable Tara and other deities  
In whom the Three Precious Jewels are all gathered,  
I beseech you to direct your enlightened intention compassionately toward us  
From the invisible expanse of reality!

All aeons of time that are illustrious in lifespan and merits are destroyed  
By ill-intentioned thoughts and deeds, and by evil barbarity.  
Will you not therefore direct your enlightened intention compassionately  
Toward living beings who, lacking positive opportunities,  
Commit an enormous mass of degenerate actions, embodying the five degradations?

Due to rapacious greed that covets the world's resources  
Trees and forests are cut down and so forth,  
Causing an imbalance of the rainwater element.  
May you swiftly and compassionately protect  
Living beings who fall into such disastrous circumstances!

In order that countless diverse machines might be brought into service  
There is unlimited excavation of mines, and through these actions  
The abodes of celestial, aquatic and terrestrial spirits are imbalanced.  
Grant your blessings therefore that afflictions associated with the elements might be assuaged

The air is being polluted by billowing clouds of smoke from countless factories,  
And through this primary cause,  
The whole world trembles due to unprecedented diseases.  
Grant your blessings that it may be protected from such states of misery!

In particular, due to insatiable desires and cravings,  
Coarse human behaviour pulverizes the physical world and its organisms,  
Giving rise to an imbalance of the four naturally occurring elements.

Grant your blessings therefore, that the mundane aggregates  
Might be pacified right where they are, without causing harm!

The poison of global warming due to the harnessing of machines in all places and times,  
Is causing the existing snow mountains to melt,  
And the oceans will consequently bring the world within reach of the aeon's end.  
Grant your blessings that it may be protected from these conditions!

Moreover, there are incurable skin diseases that arise  
From the breaching of the natural ozone canopy  
Which inhibits the intolerable and terrifying poisonous radiation of the sun.  
Grant your blessings that these may be pacified, remaining behind in name alone!

In brief, dependent on strong desire and craving,  
This world generated by ordinary past actions  
Is beginning to be swiftly transformed into a desert.  
Grant your blessings that the negative past actions which are responsible  
Might cease, right where they are!

Although the entire mass of defects that afflict the physical world and its living organisms  
Has been engendered by the dissonant mental states associated with past actions,  
Comprising all primary and secondary dissonant mental states,  
Even so, through the unfailing power of truth, of the Three Precious Jewels,  
I pray that all the points of this aspirational prayer may be fulfilled!

*This prayer was composed by Ngawang Kunga of the Dolma Palace, throne holder of Sakya, in accordance with the repeated exhortations of Dr John Stanley, conveyed with the great clarity of higher aspiration, with regard to the impending catastrophe that now confronts the environment and living organisms in all parts of the world. May its aspirations be accordingly fulfilled!*

*(Translated by Dr Gyurme Dorje)*

His Holiness' parting words to His disciples at the end of the Lamdre teachings that took place in July and August in the French town of Kuttolsheim were that the most pressing issue facing our world today was the state of the environment. His Holiness said that if things were allowed to worsen, our world could turn into a hungry ghost realm, and He pointed out that we, as Bodhisattvas, had the duty to protect it and to promote its wellbeing. His Holiness added that although we hadn't yet attained Buddhahood, and therefore could not avert war, pestilence and natural disasters, we should nevertheless strive to bring whatever contribution we could to the safeguarding of the environment. His Holiness said that the most useful way that we could help was by awakening as many minds as possible to the magnitude and urgency of this issue.



# Taking Refuge

A teaching by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin

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*(Continued from the previous issue...)*

The very first step in practicing the Dharma is to take refuge. There are five aspects to taking refuge: the cause of taking refuge, the object of refuge, the way to take refuge, the benefits of taking refuge and, lastly, the rules of taking refuge.

The first aspect, the cause of taking refuge, we have already discussed in the previous issue.

So now, we will look at the second aspect, the object of refuge. The object of refuge is the same for all Buddhists, whether they belong to Hinayana, Mahayana or Vajrayana. All Buddhists take refuge in the Triple Gem. But on closer examination, there is a difference. According to Mahayana, and also to Vajrayana, when we say Buddha, we refer to someone who is totally awakened, someone who has become free from all forms of obscurations - the obscuration of defilements and the obscuration of knowledge, including their propensities. Someone who has attained the highest qualities, and who possesses the three kayas.

Of the three kayas, or bodies, the most important one is the Dharmakaya. Dharmakaya means the ultimate truth, or the true nature of all phenomena – it is similar to the Dharmadatu, or ultimate reality, which is totally free of all obscurations. It is also called double purity. Double purity means not only the basic purity that everyone possesses, but also

purity in the sense that all temporal obscurations are also totally eliminated. And such a state is realized through awareness, or through primordial wisdom. Such a state, the primordial wisdom that realizes ultimate truth, which possesses double purity, is the Dharmakaya. So that is the most important body. And because They have attained this, the Buddhas have



gained all the qualities and have eliminated all forms of obscurations. And so, in order to help sentient beings, and while ceaselessly remaining in this state of Dharmakaya, They appear in a form - but the Dharmakaya is actually formless, it has no form, it is beyond description, it cannot be comprehended by our relative minds.

In order to help sentient beings, the Buddhas, while remaining in such a state, take on a form that is helpful to the pure disciples, the higher followers. For the benefit of the higher followers, the Buddhas appear in the Sambhogakaya form. Sambhogakaya means the body of enjoyment. The Sambhogakaya is said to have the five certainties: the certainty of place, the certainty of time, the certainty of form, the certainty of teachings, and the certainty of surroundings. Here, the surroundings refer to the followers. The place is not anywhere, but always in the highest Buddha Akanishta, the Buddha Field that is known as Akanishta. Here, there is no time, there is no such thing as birth or death, but it is there all the time, constantly remaining in the form of the Buddha. It does not appear in different forms, but always in the Buddha's form, the fully enlightened Buddha's form, adorned with the thirty-two signs and eighty qualities. And it does not impart different teachings, but always the highest Mahayana teachings. And the disciples are not ordinary persons but Bodhisattvas, the highest Bodhisattvas, Bodhisattvas who are already on the stage of the ten bhūmis. In other words, the Bodhisattvas who have already gone beyond the worldly path. So it is that the Sambhogakaya has the five certainties.

And then, in order to help ordinary sentient

beings, the Buddhas appear in Nirmanakaya form. This is different from the Sambhogakaya, in the sense that when there are worthy followers, the Nirmanakaya appear. When there are no worthy followers, they do not appear, but enter into Parānirvāṇa. The form is not necessarily in the Buddha's form, in that whenever, wherever, and whatever form is required, the form will appear that is most beneficial to that particular situation, to that particular circumstance. The Buddhas will appear in that particular form to help sentient beings. So the historical Śākyamuni Buddha is also actually a Nirmanakaya. But He's known as an excellent Nirmanakaya because even ordinary persons saw Him as a Buddha with the thirty-two signs and the eighty qualities and so forth.

So the Buddha is the first object of refuge. The second object is the Dharma. 'Dharma' is a Sanskrit word and it has many different meanings but here, we are referring to the Holy Dharma. The Dharma has two aspects. One relates to the teachings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who have attained a high realization, wherein They describe and explain to disciples the meaning of this realization. This is the Dharma of teachings.

The teachings are one Dharma, but they are divided into different categories, for example according to subject or time, but normally they are presented as the Tripiṭaka. Tripiṭaka means 'Three Containers'. The purpose of teaching the Dharma is to subdue, to tame the defilements. And so, in order to subdue desire, the Buddha taught the Vinaya, the first Container, which explains all aspects of moral conduct, for instance, the lay and monastic vows.

Then, the second Container is called the Sūtra.



The Buddha taught the Sutra, which explains all the meditations and the different levels of meditations, in order to subdue hatred.

Then, to subdue ignorance, the Buddha taught the third Container, the Abhidharma, which explains wisdom, or ultimate truth.

So this is one aspect of the Dharma, the aspect of the teachings of the Buddha. In fact, the real Dharma is contained in the realizations that the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have attained, and in the fact that They have permanently eliminated all obscurations. This is the Truth of Cessation.

The real Dharma is also the Path that leads to the Truth of Cessation. The path that leads to uncontaminated primordial wisdom, that becomes a direct antidote to the obscurations, is the Truth of Path. The Truth of Cessation and the Truth of Path, the last two of the Four Noble Truths, are another aspect of the Dharma. They are the true Dharma.

The Tripitaka is just a teaching that is given, while

the real Dharma is the genuine Truth that is realized by the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas. This is what we take refuge in, so the second object of refuge is Dharma.

And then the third object of refuge is the Sangha. The word 'Sangha' actually means 'Community'. So the Sangha means anybody, from the highest Bodhisattva down to the ordinary person, anybody who has entered the Buddhist path. But the true Sangha are the Bodhisattvas who have already gone beyond the worldly path, and who have already reached the irreversible state, who are sure to advance on the path to Buddhahood. These are the true Sangha. So these are the three objects of refuge: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

And now the third aspect is the way we take refuge. The way we take refuge is by taking the Buddha as our guide. Even in ordinary life, if we're embarking on a new enterprise, we need someone to guide us through. In the same way, we take refuge



in the Buddha as guide and teacher on our path. But although the Buddha has great power, it is not by using His power alone that He can save sentient beings. If we constantly commit negative deeds, whatever blessings we receive from the Buddha can just bring us temporary solace. This has nothing to do with the Buddha's teachings. Rather, in order to help beings, the Buddha shows us what is right and what is wrong, He teaches us how to remain on the right path. The Buddha said: "I have shown you the path to liberation". Whether or not we follow this path is up to us.

We also take refuge in the Dharma. Refuge in the Dharma is our actual path, the real saviour. For example, when we are ill, it is important to have a good doctor, but we must also make an effort to follow his instructions, to take the medicine that he has given us, and to avoid conditions that will inhibit our recovery. Similarly, the Buddha is like a doctor, and the Dharma is like the medicine. And, as we must take medicine, we must practice the Dharma in order to recover from our samsaric state. We talk about the "Wheel of Dharma". As the wheel of Dharma turns, the Buddha's teachings and His wisdom are transferred to the disciple. It is then up to the disciple to put these teachings into practice, and this way progress along the path. Every time the wheel of Dharma turns, we receive new teachings, we put them into practice, and we progress further along the path.

And we take refuge in the Sangha, our companions along the path. For example, if we are undertaking a long and arduous journey, it is important to have worthy companions. Whatever our endeavour, it is always helpful to be accompanied by like-minded

persons who share our goals and aspirations. In the same manner, when we embark on the path of Dharma, it is very beneficial to depend on fellow practitioners, so we take refuge in the Sangha. This is the way we take refuge.

As I mentioned earlier, we normally explain the refuge according to five aspects. The first one is the cause of refuge, which is fear, faith and compassion. The second is the object of refuge, which is Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. And the third is the way we take refuge, how we take Buddha as our guide, Dharma as our actual path, and Sangha as our companions.

Now the fourth aspect is the benefit of taking refuge. The benefit of taking refuge is said to be enormous. Even by merely hearing the refuge, even by merely hearing the name of the Buddha, we can gain an enormous amount of benefit. So if, with very sincere devotion and faith, we take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, the merit that we earn is immeasurable. If it had a physical form, even the whole of space would be too small to accommodate such a huge amount of merit. And then also, by taking refuge, we change from the ordinary path to the Dharma path, from the wrong path to the right path. And also we change from being a non-Buddhist to a Buddhist. By taking refuge, we become real Buddhists, not just in name but from our very core, and the Dharma protectors look after us.

The fifth aspect is the rules of the refuge. For example, if we take refuge in another country, then we must abide by the rules and regulations of that country. If we do not keep the rules and regulations of the country that is giving us shelter, then of course we

get into trouble. So similarly, after taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, we also have to observe the rules of this refuge. There are general rules and specific rules to the refuge.

The general rules are five. The first one is that, no matter what, even at the cost of our life, we should never give up the Triple Gem, the Three Precious Jewels, the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

Second is that, whatever happens, whatever need arises, we should not seek other means, but always seek the guidance and the blessings of the Triple Gem.

And the third one is to make offerings to the Triple Gem on a daily basis, and if this is impossible, then at least on special occasions. If we have a shrine, then it is important to make daily offerings, such as water offering, flowers, incense, fruit, etc. If we do not have a shrine, then we should make offerings in the temple, especially on special days, such as full moon and new moon days and, more importantly, on the Buddha's special days, such as that of His Birth, His Enlightenment, His Descending from the Heavenly Realms, Dharmachakra day, and so forth.

And then, the fourth rule is to practice refuge very diligently. Even though it is important to recite the refuge lines, 'I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Dharma, I take refuge in the Sangha', these words alone are not enough to lead us to liberation, unless they come from the depths of our hearts. When we truly take refuge in the Triple Gem, it means that we are totally submitting ourselves to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, that we rely entirely on their guidance. For example, if we need to escape from the rain and we seek a cave to give us shelter, it won't help

us much to recite "cave". Rather, in order to be safe from the rain, we make the effort to find shelter in a cave, or in a house, so that we're spared from the rains. So similarly, although recitation is also important, the crucial thing is that, from the depths of one's heart, one takes refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. And so, it is important to practice diligently, and then, it is also good to encourage other people to take refuge.

The fifth rule is that, whatever we are doing, wherever we are going, we always remember the Buddha. And particularly, wherever we're facing, to remember the Buddha of that particular direction. For example, when we are going to the east, to remember the Buddha Akshobya, when we're going to the south, to remember the Buddha Ratnasambhava, and when we're going west, to remember the Buddha Amitabha, and so on. We must at least remember the Buddha all the time, day and night.

These are the five general rules. Then there are the specific rules. One specific rule is that, after taking refuge in the Buddha, we cannot take refuge in the worldly deities. 'Worldly deities' refers to deities who are not free from the defilements, who are still tied to samsara. To these deities we can make offerings, but we can't take refuge in them. There is a vast difference between taking refuge and paying respect, or taking refuge and making offerings.

And then, after taking refuge in the Dharma, we can't harm any sentient being, at least not intentionally.

And by taking refuge in the Sangha, we can't take non-believers as our spiritual companions. There are also other rules - for example, after taking refuge in the Buddha, we cannot show any disrespect to any image

of the Buddha, even to the broken pieces of a Buddha statue. It's not right to leave any representation of the Buddha on the ground, or step on it, or lack respect towards it in any way.

In the same way, we can't show disrespect to the Dharma, even to pieces of paper that contain Dharma words, by leaving them on the ground, sitting on them or stepping on them, and so forth. We should show the same respect for the monastic Sangha's robes, and

even to any piece of yellow or saffron-coloured cloth.

We must also try to develop genuine devotion and faith in the Buddha, and to practice the Dharma very diligently, as much as we can in relation to our ability and circumstances, by studying, contemplating and meditating. And we must try to develop a very close and genuine relationship with members of the Sangha.

So this, in general terms, is how we explain the refuge.





# Buddha Nature

A Teaching by H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche

To begin with, I'd like to stress the importance of motivation in our practice. Whether we are receiving a teaching on Buddha nature or any other teaching, or whether we are practicing the Buddha Dharma through body, speech and mind, the first step is to develop the right motivation. It is said that the accumulation of great merits due to virtuous

deeds depends on one's motivation in the beginning, concentration on the actual practice or teaching, and one's dedication at the end. Therefore, motivation is very, very important.

For example, if two persons are circumambulating the Buddha's stupa. One is doing the circumambulation with right motivation in the beginning, right concentration during the circumambulation, and also dedication at the end; the other one is doing the circumambulation without proper motivation in the beginning and, during the circumambulation, he or she is not concentrating on dharma or reciting any mantras but talking about mundane things with others, and he or she does not dedicate the merits properly at the end. Physically both have done the same number of circumambulations of the same stupa, but the one with proper motivation will earn far greater merits than the other one. Therefore, if we seek to accumulate great merits and make our practice a real cause of attaining Buddhahood, we must do the practice properly by developing right motivation in the beginning.

And here, developing motivation involves first of all developing renunciation thought towards the whole of samsara. This is very, very important. In short, without the renunciation thought, it is difficult to become a real Buddhist.

In order to become a real Buddhist, we need to take the Pratimoksha vows. There are many different levels of the Pratimoksha vows, and in order to become a Buddhist, we need to take the refuge



vow inherent in the Pratimoksha vows. It is also important to know that not all refuge vows constitute Pratimoksha vows. For instance if one is receiving the refuge vow from the master, with the proper ritual, but one is receiving it with inferior motivation such as fear of one's parents, teacher, or relatives, and not out of one's own sincere aspiration, in reality this refuge vow is not the Pratimoksha vow. Also, if one receives the refuge vow in order to gain fame, wealth, or rewards, then that is not a proper refuge vow either. With this kind of motivation, even if one receives the refuge vow, it does not belong to the Pratimoksha vows. In general, the definition of the Pratimoksha vows is that, motivated by the renunciation thought, one should not harm others through body, speech or mind. Without the renunciation thought, one cannot receive the proper refuge vow; and without this proper refuge vow one cannot become a real Buddhist. In short, without the renunciation thought one cannot become a real Buddhist. This renunciation thought is therefore very, very important to develop. It is like a cornerstone to becoming a Buddhist.

Renunciation thought does not merely involve renouncing one's house, town, city, or country. Here renunciation thought means renouncing the whole of samsara. Although we cannot renounce the whole of samsara physically right now, we must cultivate a genuine wish to be free from it grip. In order to develop such a genuine wish, we need to remove our attachment to samsara, by realizing the suffering inherent in it. We need to fully realize that it is full of suffering.

For example, there are many countries in this world, and billions of people. But whether we are in

a developed country or in one that is less advanced, we will never find a single place where there is no suffering at all. Wherever we go, east or west, we experience suffering – mental stress, or physical pain, for example. This means that the whole world is in the nature of suffering. The whole of samsara is in the nature of suffering. After careful examination, we'll discover that having attachment to samsara is synonymous to having attachment to suffering, because samsara is of the nature of suffering, nothing but suffering.

So if we understand the nature of samsara, it becomes easier for us to remove our attachment to it. Once we no longer have attachment to it, then we can easily develop a genuine wish to be free from the whole of samsara. This is what is called the renunciation thought, and this is what we need to cultivate. Then based on this, we must develop infinite loving kindness and compassion, which means the genuine wish to gain happiness and the cause of happiness for the sake of all sentient beings, and the genuine wish to free all sentient beings from suffering and the cause of suffering, which are negative actions and defilements.

Though it is easy to understand the meaning of infinite loving kindness and compassion, it is difficult to practice them in our daily life. Therefore we must remember their meaning again and again until we can practice infinite loving kindness and compassion towards all beings, at all times, anywhere, and towards everyone alike. We need to develop such thoughts because, just like ourselves wish to gain happiness and be free of suffering, all sentient beings also wish to gain happiness and be free from suffering. We all have

the same aspiration, and it is very wrong to ignore others and think of ourselves alone. As Buddhists, especially as Mahayanists, when we generate Bodhicitta, we promise to help all sentient beings. If, after making such a promise, we don't take care of others, then we have made a false promise. We must keep our promise.

And also, it's not only our aspiration to be free from suffering that we have in common with all beings; we have much more in common. All beings have, at one time or another, been our very own parent or dear one. We are born in this samsara not only once; we are born in this samsara countless times. We don't have the same parents or dear ones over and over again every time we are born. Every time we change lives, we change dear ones. So all beings were once our own dear ones, either in this lifetime or in our past lives. When one of these beings becomes our parents in a particular lifetime, they take care of us, and they rescue us from many dangers. Just as we need to repay the kindness of our parents or dear ones in this present life, similarly we also need to repay the kindness of our past lives' parents and dear ones, whom we now see as either friends, indifferent beings or enemies. Due to this, we need to develop infinite loving kindness and compassion towards all beings without exception.

To think only of oneself is very limited – 'oneself' means one person and 'others' means an infinite number of beings. For example, if someone gives food to one person and another one gives food to billions of persons, it is obvious that the person who gives food to billions of people will earn much greater merits than the one who gives food to only one person.

Similarly it is far greater to help others than oneself alone.

If one thinks of oneself alone, then one can not even fulfil one's own wish, which is to gain happiness and remove one's suffering. This is because the very cause of happiness is altruistic thought or mind, and not selfish thought. The whole cause of suffering is selfish thought. Selfish thought will only produce more and more suffering and will not fulfil one's own aspirations. Therefore, we must develop and practice loving kindness and compassion towards all beings without any exception. Then we must develop Bodhicitta. It is said that without having genuine loving kindness and compassion, we cannot develop a genuine enlightenment mind. Infinite compassion is the cause of the generation of a genuine enlightenment mind, or Bodhicitta. Bodhicitta means that one wishes to attain Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings, and for that purpose, one is practicing the Buddha Dharma. This is particularly relevant this morning, as we are receiving a teaching on Buddha nature.

In short, having proper motivation means to develop renunciation towards samsara, to cultivate loving kindness and compassion, and then to generate Bodhicitta. It is with this kind of motivation that we must practice the Buddha Dharma and receive the Buddha Dharma teachings.

The source of the Buddha Dharma is Lord Buddha. Lord Buddha performed many noble activities, and His most important noble activity was the turning of the Wheel of Dharma for fortunate disciples. Lord Buddha gave an enormous amount of teachings in order to suit different levels and different





mental dispositions of sentient beings.

The reason why the Buddha gave all these different types of teachings is not for followers to merely gain an intellectual understanding of them. The main purpose of all these precious and profound teachings is to help disciples tame their mind. In other words, their principal aim is to remove the defilements that have been in our mind stream for a long, long time, and to help develop positive qualities in our minds, eventually helping us gain Buddhahood. This is the real purpose of Lord Buddha's teaching. So, we should not be content with intellectual understanding of the Dharma. We must meditate on what we have learnt, and we must apply these teachings to our life.

The Buddha guides us by showing us what is the right path and what is the wrong path. If we follow the right path, we can gain positive qualities and eventually Buddhahood. If we follow the wrong path, then we are bound to experience more and more suffering, and eventually the inconceivable pain of the hell realms.

If we commit a lot of negative physical, verbal, and mental actions, we won't be able to remove all our suffering just by praying to the Buddha, because we have already created the cause of our suffering, through our negative actions. Even if we implore Him, the Buddha cannot miraculously remove our negative actions, the cause of our suffering, nor is He able to cleanse our negative actions. So whether one can gain liberation or enlightenment depends mainly on oneself, and not on the Buddha or on the teachings alone. If we do not follow the Buddha's instructions, we cannot be liberated from samsara. In the sutras it is said that oneself is one's own saviour, and oneself is one's own enemy. Our worst enemy is not outside of us. Our external enemy is not our worst enemy, because he or she cannot inflict upon us the inconceivable suffering of the hell realm. But the internal enemy, our defilements, can lead us to the hell realms, where one can experience inconceivable sufferings. So the worst enemy is not outside; the worst enemy is within our own mind. We must

therefore practice diligently in order to make this life very fruitful and use it to gain Buddhahood swiftly.

The teachings also say that we should perceive the Buddha as a doctor, and ourselves as the patient, our defilement as our sickness, and the teachings as the medicine. And we should perceive the receiving and practicing of the teachings as receiving medical treatment and following the doctor's advice. For example, when we are sick, even if we consult the best doctor and go to the best hospital, we won't get better if we don't follow the doctor's advice. However skilful the doctor is, if we don't follow his instructions, such as taking the prescribed food or medicine at the prescribed time.

Similarly, although the Buddha and His teachings are great, if we don't follow them properly, then it's our own fault if we suffer. It's not the fault of the Buddha or of His teachings. So it is not enough to have the Buddha and His teachings. The main thing is that we must follow His instructions properly. If we don't follow them, then no matter how great the Buddha or His teachings are, this will not help us.

The Buddha Dharma is the sole medicine that cures all kinds of ills, and it is the source of all happiness. And if we really want to practice it, then we have to learn what is to be adopted and what is to be abandoned. Due to our ignorance, although we wish to gain happiness and remove suffering, we don't perform positive actions, and we commit negative actions. If we look carefully, we'll see that in the span of 24 hours, the better part of our actions are negative rather than positive. We need to change this. We need to analyse what is the cause of happiness and what is the cause of suffering. Then we will

come to understand that the cause of happiness is performing virtuous deeds, and the cause of suffering is performing non-virtuous deeds.

Although in this world, everyone tries very hard to gain happiness and get rid of suffering, what we are doing is to pursue mundane happiness, not genuine happiness. Mundane happiness is not something that we must aspire to. If we do attain mundane happiness in this lifetime, this means our happiness will last no more than 100 years or so. Also, the nature of mundane happiness is not genuine because it is not real happiness. Mundane happiness is actually the suffering of change, not genuine happiness. Also, the cause of mundane happiness is, more often than not, negative actions or impure virtuous deeds. So from a point of view of cause, nature, and duration of happiness, mundane happiness is not something we should aim for. What we need to aim for, is to attain Buddhahood, because Buddhahood is the ultimate state of happiness, the ultimate state of wisdom, compassion, knowledge, and power. This happiness will last forever. It's not something that will last only for some 100 years. It will last forever. Once we gain Buddhahood, then ultimate happiness will last forever, and the cause of such ultimate happiness is not negative actions. The main cause is uncontaminated virtuous deeds. For this reason, we should not aim for mundane happiness, but we should aim for ultimate happiness, genuine happiness.

In order to develop inner happiness, we shouldn't think that material development is its real cause. We can see that in the last few decades, there has been a lot of development in the material world, but we cannot say that there has been much development in

our inner life. We cannot say that nowadays people experience less mental stress, pressure, or physical pain. This clearly indicates that material development can bring temporary comfort, but not real peace and happiness.

To achieve inner peace and happiness, we should focus on the mind. We should try to develop our inner world, our inner mind. And this mind is not separate from Buddha nature. The texts say that Buddha nature means the non-duality of clarity and emptiness of the mind. So in order to talk about Buddha nature, first we need to talk about the mind.

Actually we know that happiness and suffering are caused by actions. We can classify actions into three: physical actions, verbal actions, and mental actions. Out of these three kinds of actions, the most powerful action is mental action. For example, the dead body has no mind, it only has a physical body but it has no mind. Because of this the dead body cannot perform physical or verbal action.

Another way to explain how mental action is powerful is with the following example: we are currently receiving a teaching; our physical body is in the teaching hall, but if our mind is not focusing on the teaching, if our mind is focusing on something else, then no matter how long we attend the teaching, we cannot comprehend its meaning. Although our physical body is there, if our mind is not concentrating on the teaching, we cannot comprehend the teaching. So, mental action is very, very important.

Also, you can say that the mind is something very powerful because it is the mind that performs actions, positive or negative. It is the mind that experiences happiness and suffering, and it is the mind stream

that will go on to the next life. Our body will not go into the next life. Our mind stream will go from this life to our next life, and also our mind stream came from our past life to this life, not our body. Also it is mind that develops positive thoughts such as loving kindness, compassion, and it is mind that develops negative thoughts such as anger, attachment, jealousy and pride. It is mind that will experience the results of our thoughts and actions, both positive and negative. It is mind that will experience liberation and attain Buddhahood. Also it is the mind stream that can go down to the hell realms and experience their suffering. So everything is based on this mind or mind stream. Mind is the one that performs actions and that experiences their results.

In Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakosa*, it is said that all of the content and container of samsara is produced by our actions, which means that everything animate and inanimate is produced by actions. Inanimate phenomena such as mountains, forests, and so forth, are also a product of our actions. There are two kinds of actions: individual actions and collective actions. Mountains and forests are the results of our collective actions.

For example, in our dreams we can see many different inanimate objects such as mountains and forests and, although they seem very real at the time, they are a projection of our own mind. We can see these inanimate objects in our dreams due to our own actions, our own karma. Similarly, in our waking life, we can see many inanimate objects – and all that we can see is a result of our own karma, these inanimate objects are also the product of our own actions.” (*To be continued in our next issue*)...





His Holiness with Dungsey Akasha



Dungsey Akasha Rinpoche



Young Jetsunma with her baby brother

## News From The Phodrang: Dungsey Akasha Rinpoche

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On the afternoon of 27th of March 2010, His Eminence Dungsey Akasha Vajra Rinpoche came into this world in New Delhi, India. His Eminence is the first grandson of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, and second child of His Eminence Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and of his wife Her Eminence Dagmo Kalden Dunkyi.

His Eminence's birth took place on the 12th day of the 2nd month of the Tibetan calendar, anniversary of the Parinirvana of Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen, one of the Five Founding Fathers of the Sakya School of Tibetan Buddhism. His birth was accompanied by a slight earthquake in New Delhi, an auspicious sign that a great being had entered this world.

Soon after His Eminence was born, His Holiness visited him in hospital and performed a traditional ceremony, where He drew the Tibetan letter DHI (Manjushri's seed syllable) on his tongue with saffron water and wisdom pills. This is a traditional ritual performed on every newborn of the Khön family, and serves to increase knowledge and wisdom.

On April the 8th, Akasha Rinpoche was brought home to Dolma Phodrang, where he was welcomed by lamas, monks and nuns from Sakya Centre, Sakya College, Sakya Nunnery and Ngor Monastery. Over the ensuing week, the young Dungsey received several

initiations from His Holiness, including a Long Life empowerment of the Nine Deity Buddha Amitayus. On the same occasion, he received his long name and was presented with a long life prayer composed by His Holiness. A few days later, His Holiness gave the Dungsey a two-day major Vajrakilaya empowerment and then an initiation into the 'Long Life and Heart Essence of the Immortal Arya Tara' (Chimey Phagma Nyingthig) practice.

On the 17th of May, Dungsey Akasha was taken for the first time to Sakya Centre under a ceremonial parasol, escorted by a procession featuring banners and ritual music. A light shower of rain fell on all who were gathered just as he left for the Sakya Center from Dolma Phodrang. This light rain, also known as a 'shower of flowers' cooled the air, but did not drench anyone and ended soon after his arrival at Sakya Centre, where he was formally introduced to the assembled congregation of monks, nuns and lay people.

His Eminence Akasha Vajra Rinpoche is the youngest member of the Khön family, descendants of the Gods of Clear Light, many of whose members have been emanations of the great Bodhisattvas Manjushri, Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani.



## The Khön Family

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The origins of the Khön family are to be found in Abhasvara, or Realm of the Gods of Clear Light, one of the seventeen levels of gods within the rupadhatu, or form realm. According to Tibetan lore, three brothers from this realm descended to our world. Two of these eventually returned to their God realm, but one remained in Tibet and became a prominent figure within the country. At that time, the family bore the name of Lha Rig.

Eight generations later, one of his descendants, called Yapang Kye, subdued a race of demons called Rakshas, and then took a Raksha wife. From this, the family received the name Khön, which means 'conflict'. This symbolically represents wisdom's subduing of ignorance and the defilements.

In the eighth century AD, during Padmasambhava's time, the great Indian abbot Sangharakshita came to Tibet, where there were no monastics at the time. As a trial to see whether Tibetans were able to keep the upashaka vows, Sangharakshita ordained seven laymen at Samye. One of these belonged to the Khön family, and through ensuing centuries, the Khön family were to be strong upholders of the Nyingma teachings in Tsang.

In 1072 AD, Sherab Tsultrim, a Nyingmapa monk and head of the Khön family, found that the old Nyingmapa teachings that they had been following, had become corrupted. He ordered that these be buried and that the new Tantras from India be adopted in their stead. He asked his younger brother Khön Konchok Gyalpo to go and study these new Sarma teachings

under the eminent scholar and translator Drogmi Lotsawa, an emanation of Virupa. Khön Konchok Gyalpo did so, and later built the Sakya Monastery, and became the lineage's first Sakya Trizin.

The word 'Sakya', which gave its name to the lineage, means 'white earth'. It refers to a white patch on one of the Ponpori Hills, in the Tsang region of Southern Tibet. In earlier times, as the great sage Atisha was travelling in this region, he saw in his pure vision the seed syllables of Manjushri, Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani on this white patch. He prostrated to the letters, and predicted that a great lineage would prevail there, which would produce many holy beings, emanations of these three great bodhisattvas.

Atisha's prediction proved true: the Khön family has provided an unbroken lineage of spiritual leaders and great masters, starting with the Five Founding Fathers of the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism: the Great Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (1092-1158), Loppon Rinpoche Sonam Tsemo (1142-1182), Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen, (1147-1216), Chöje Sakya Pandita (1182-1251) and Drogön Chögyal Phagpa (1235-1280). All five were recognized as emanations of Manjushri (the manifestation of all the Buddhas' wisdom), Avalokiteshvara (the manifestation of all the Buddhas' compassion) and Vajrapani (the manifestation of all the Buddhas' power).

During the 13th century, Godan Khan, grandson to Genghis Khan, invited the great Sakya Pandita to bring the Buddhist teachings to Mongolia, and a few years later, the new Mongolian emperor, Kublai Khan, in

turn invited Sakya Pandita's nephew, Drogon Chogyal Phagpa, to teach at his court. He was so impressed by the latter's wisdom that he decided to adopt Buddhism as the official religion of Mongolia, and declared Chogyal Phagpa ruler of Tibet. The Sakyapas were to rule Tibet for over a century, the first time that religious figures had held secular power.

And right up to this day, generation after generation of the Khön family has produced great scholars and mahasiddhas who have played a crucial role in preserving and enriching the Buddha's

teachings in Tibet.

Following the steps of his forebears in spreading the doctrine to other lands, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin has, for several decades, been blessing thousands of beings on nearly every continent with His immeasurable compassion, knowledge and wisdom. And now, with Their Eminences Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, a new generation has come to the fore as eminent teachers in their own right, continuing to safeguard and disseminate the precious spiritual legacy that they are heir to.

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## Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche



**K**höndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche is the eldest son of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin and of His Wife, Her Eminence Tashi Lhakyi, daughter of a minister to the King of Derge, in Kham, Tibet. His Eminence was born in Dehradun, India, on 19th November 1974 (the 5th of the 10th Tibetan lunar month). Within a few months of his birth, he was formally enthroned at H.E. Tharig Rinpoche's monastery in Boudanath, Nepal. It was auspicious that on this occasion, His Eminence was spontaneously presented with a manuscript of the life of the great Ngorchén Kunga Sangpo, written in gold ink.

Shortly thereafter, His Eminence began accompanying his Father on teaching tours, which he has continued to do until this day. His formal education started when he was five, when he received the reading transmission of the Homage to Manjushri from His Holiness. His Father also began teaching him the Tibetan alphabet, until a tutor was appointed to instruct him in the academic and scriptural disciplines. The following year, he began to receive the Lamdre Lobshey teachings from His Holiness and,



at the age of seven, he gave his first oral examination in presence of His Holiness and important Sakya Centre lamas.

He undertook his first retreat in the company of his mother, Gyalyum Chenmo, when he was twelve. He joined Sakya College in 1990, where he obtained his Kachupa Degree.

His Eminence has, throughout his life, received numerous teachings and initiations from the greatest masters, starting with his Father, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, and including His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Kyabje Chogye Trichen Rinpoche, Kyabje Luding Khenchen Rinpoche, Kyabje Dungsey Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, Kyabje Luding Khen Rinpoche and Kyabje Deshung Rinpoche.

In 2004, His Eminence undertook a nine-month Hevajra retreat, after which he began his trajectory as a spiritual teacher. He has since then taught frequently in Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, North America and Europe. In 2005, His Eminence taught the precious Lamdre for the first time, at the Sakya Centre in Rajpur. In 2009, along with his aunt H.E. Jetsun

Kushok and his brother H.E. Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, His Eminence accompanied His Holiness to Sydney, Australia, for the imparting of the precious Lamdre Tsogshey, where he did the revision of the Triple Tantra and also gave important initiations.

More recently, he has been teaching Tantra to the resident monks at Thubten Namgyal Ling in Puruwala, and will be teaching at the Dzongzar Institute in the autumn.

His Eminence is renowned as a diligent practitioner, as well as an accomplished scholar, qualities that earn him frequent comparison to Kyabje Chogye Trichen Rinpoche. His precision and attention to detail, as well as his determination to preserve the purity of the teachings, have won him the highest respect of all the monks who have had the privilege to receive teachings from him.

His Eminence's knowledge and realization, his excellent command of the English language, and the clarity of his presentation, make him one of the most valued exponents of Tibetan Buddhism in the West.

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## Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche

**K**höndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche is the younger son of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin. He was born in Dehradun, India, on the 5th of July 1979. Alongside his elder brother, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, he began his literacy and religious studies at a very early age, under the tutelage of Venerable Rinchen Sangpo. He completed his primary and intermediate studies at Sakya Centre, Dehradun, His

Holiness the Sakya Trizin's main seat and monastery, and then pursued his higher studies at Sakya College, where he studied Buddhist Philosophy for five years. During this time, he received numerous major teachings and initiations from His Holiness and from other great masters such as Kyabje Luding Khenchen Rinpoche, Kyabje Chogye Trichen Rinpoche and Venerable Khenpo Appey Rinpoche, to name but

a few. Since then, His Eminence has accompanied His Holiness on many of His teaching tours, and has himself taught and given major empowerments in several countries. He has become an accomplished master and authentic upholder of the Sakya tradition.

His Eminence has been deeply involved in ensuring the wellbeing and proper education of the young monks under his care, which has earned him their deep respect and devotion. During his years as Vice-President of Sakya Centre, he renovated the kitchen, library and bedrooms, and also provided the monks with a sports field adjacent to the Centre, which the monks put to daily use.

His Eminence also undertook the building of the much-needed gompa (ritual hall) at the Sakya Nunnery. It is of inspiring beauty, which it lent to the second half of the Wangyal Norbu Thengwa Initiations given by His Holiness last year.

His Eminence has initiated two major projects that are soon to see fruition: The Sakya Academy and The Gyana Project.

The Sakya Academy aims to endow some 500 young novice monks with an education steeped in knowledge of the Buddhist Canon, particularly the texts of the great Sakya masters and, alongside this, a modern education that will equip them with the necessary tools to keep abreast of an increasingly complex world. The proposed site of the project is seven kilometres from Dehradun, in twenty-five acres of secluded land, which will provide the young monks with an atmosphere conducive to study and contemplation.

The Gyana Project aspires to collect and translate into English the extant scriptures of the Sakya tradition, in particular, the teachings and commentaries



of the Five Founding Masters. This project was originally conceived by the late Khenpo Migmar Tsering Rinpoche, onetime abbot and principal of Sakya College, and one of His Eminence's main teachers. But he sadly passed away before he could bring it to light, and His Eminence pledged to him on his deathbed that he would make this dream his own.

The Sakya Monastery in Tibet, built in the 12th century by Khön Konchog Gyalpo (1034-1102), houses an extraordinary library that has remained intact through the centuries, and has even survived the Chinese incursion. This library contains a remarkable quantity of volumes, some measuring 1,80 m by 50 cm, its pages scribed in gold ink and graced by superb illuminations. These were a gift from Kublai Khan to his root master, Drogön Chögyal Phagpa, one of the Five Founding Fathers. In 2003, a secret library was discovered at the Monastery, sealed within a wall, laying bare a precious store of 84 000 scrolls, the full content of which has yet to be established.

These texts are of tremendous significance, and their translation into English will ensure that future generations worldwide can benefit from this precious Dharma treasure.

We will keep our readers informed of the progress of both these invaluable projects.

# Dharma Activities

## His Holiness' Visit to Arunachal Pradesh

On 11th April of this year, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin embarked on a 3-week tour of North-East India, where He imparted teachings and empowerments, performed rituals and consecrated new monasteries. His Holiness was accompanied in His travels by His wife, Her Eminence Gyalyum Chenmo.

His Holiness' journey took Him to Arunachal Pradesh, the easternmost state of India, which shares borders with Myanmar and Tibet, and whose population is in its majority of Tibeto-Burman origin.

His Holiness visited the districts of West Kameng and Tawang, where Tibetan Buddhism predominates. Perched in the mountains, the region boasts centuries-old stupas and pilgrimage sites. The latter have sadly fallen into disrepair in recent times, but efforts are being made to revive them.

His Holiness visited several monasteries there, as well as Tibetan settlements.

Everywhere His Holiness went, large crowds of devotees eagerly awaited Him, and many lined the roads along which His Holiness' cavalcade travelled, fervently offering Him khatas as His car drove by.

His Holiness' first stop was at Shillong, where it was particularly touching to see how many of the hundreds of followers that greeted His Holiness, were well into their eighties.

His Holiness then spent several days at the Gontse Gaden Rabgyel Ling Monastery at Bomdila in West Kameng, where He imparted teachings and initiations, and also consecrated a new monastery. Gontse Gaden Rabgyel Ling (GRL) is the seat of the 13th Tsona Gontse Rinpoche, who has done much to preserve and promote the region's cultural and spiritual inheritance. His Holiness visited the GRL Monastic School, and the Central Institute of Himalayan culture, both founded by His Eminence Lama Tsonawa.

His Holiness also gave teachings at the Gaden



↑ His Holiness at GRL with H.E. Tsona Gontse Rinpoche  
←Gontse Gaden Rabgyel Ling Monastery at Bomdila





Tawang Monastery



Children performing for His Holiness at a Tawang orphanage

Namgyal Lhatse, commonly known as Tawang Monastery, one of the largest of its kind in the world. It is the wellspring of spiritual life for the people of the region. There, His Holiness gave talks, including one in English, where He stressed the importance of spiritual life. A tenshuk ceremony was held in His Holiness' honour, where people came in their hundreds to pay homage to their Guru.

His Holiness then visited Urgelling, birthplace of the VIth Dalai Lama, where He presided over a fire puja, and also the Gorsam Chorten in Zemithang, a replica of the Boudhanath Stupa in Nepal, which was for many centuries a major centre of pilgrimage in the region. Efforts are being made to see it recover its

status as a holy place.

His Holiness next travelled to Itanagar, capital of Arunachal Pradesh, where He delivered a discourse on the 'Basic Teachings of Buddhism' to a large gathering, after which He visited the Tezu Dargeyling Tibetan settlement, where he gave teachings and empowerments to its population of over 1200 souls. It was a rare and precious occasion for the residents of the settlement to be in the presence of such an eminent Teacher, and most of them were touched to the core.

On the 30th of April, His Holiness returned to Dehradun for a short pause, before undertaking His Russian and European teaching tour.



↑ Gorsam Chorten

←H.E. Gyalyum Chenmo with children in Mio



## His Holiness' Russian and European Teaching Tour

Between the 21<sup>st</sup> of May and the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, an intensive teaching tour took His Holiness the Sakya Trizin to Russia, England, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, France and Switzerland.

Everywhere He visited, His Holiness indefatigably imparted teachings and initiations, as well as inaugurating new dharma centres. Old disciples were ecstatic to once again be blessed by His presence, and many new followers were overwhelmed by His kindness and wisdom.

Following is an account of His Holiness' journey, including disciples' descriptions and impressions of His Holiness' visit to their respective regions and centres.

### Russia

His Holiness began his three-month journey with a visit to Moscow, where he gave two public talks and a Hevajra Cause initiation. His Holiness then travelled to the Kalmyk Republic, whose population is in its majority Buddhist.

Kunga Yuodren, who took part in organizing His Holiness' visit, relates:

*This was a really special year for Russia, because on May 21st, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin Rinpoche finally came to our country. Fifteen years had passed since His last visit to Russia, and His Holiness noticed*





His Holiness giving a public talk in Moscow

*a lot of big changes here. He even said as a joke that, compared with His visit to Russia in 1995, now everything looked like a pure land. He said that even as the airplane was approaching Moscow, He and His entourage could see that everything was very green and beautiful, and His Holiness got the impression that prosperity had spontaneously come to our land.*

*Many people here were eagerly awaiting His Holiness' visit. Several had received His teachings and initiations during His previous visit, and were overjoyed to see Him again.*

*His Holiness opened His visit in Moscow with a public talk offering a general introduction to Buddhism and a brief history of the Sakya lineage, followed the next day by a teaching on Bodhicitta and the Bodhisattva vows, which was attended by over 500 people.*

*His Holiness was then invited to give the Hevajra Cause Initiation and commentary on the Hevajra sadhana to some 300 disciples at Kunpenling, a beautiful Rime dharma center, in a forest filled with wonderful fresh air and bird song.*

*Next, at the request of Venerable Telo Rinpoche,*

*His Holiness travelled to the Russian Republic of Kalmyk, the only European region with Buddhism as its main religion. Auspiciously, His Holiness arrived in Elista, the Kalmyk capital, on 27th May, the very holy day of Saka Dawa Düchen. He was offered a long life puja by Tibetan and Russian monks in the Buddha Shakyamuni temple, the largest Buddhist temple in Europe, and centre of social life for the local population. This was taken as a sign that the Sakya teachings would soon spread in Kalmyk and in all of Russia.*

*The temple was filled with devotees as His Holiness imparted teachings and initiations, including a Vajrayogini blessing. He was earnestly beckoned to visit Kalmyk again soon.*



His Holiness, monks and followers at Buddha Shakyamuni Temple in Elista



His Holiness teaching the Amitabha Powa in Reading

*Immediately following His Holiness' visit, a new Sakya dharma center was opened in Moscow, and we pray that it will grow stronger and stronger; we pray that the Sakya teachings will spread widely in Russia, that many Sakya lamas will visit us in the future, and that the disciples of this center will greatly benefit all sentient beings. Sarwa Mangalam!*

Kunga Yuodren

## Europe

On 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2010, His Holiness arrived at London's Heathrow airport, the first among the many stops that He was to make throughout the Western European part of His teaching tour.

His Holiness was greeted at the airport by Phuntsok Wangyal, founder and director of the Tibet Foundation, by members of Lama Jampa Thaye's

family, by C.S. Lama, representing the Reading Nepalese community, and by members of His Holiness' centres in England.

## Reading, U.K.

His Holiness began His teaching tour on 3rd June with a public talk at the Reading Town Hall, where a large congregation, mostly made up of devoted Nepalese disciples, assembled to receive from His Holiness an Amitabha Powa initiation.

Amitabha is the deity that helps most in the transferring of consciousness at the time of death. If the powa is given by a qualified teacher, and the dying person has unshakeable faith, the latter is guaranteed to be reborn in Amitabha's realm. There, the wheel of Dharma never stops turning, and one is able to quickly progress on the path to enlightenment.



C.S. Lama, Lama Khenpo Ngawang Tsultrim and Hasta Lama, representing the Nepalese community in Reading

## Bournemouth, U.K.

From June 4th to June 10th, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin visited Sakya Thubten Ling in





His Holiness enjoying the woods at Deer Park

*‘The greatest blessing of my life has been to receive these teachings and empowerments from His Holiness Sakya Trizin. Being with him for an intense four days is akin to having your entire being blown apart, re-wired, and left to settle, and when it*

*does, you’re somehow just not the same! He has your heart.’*

Maddie Blee

Bournemouth, on the south coast of England, where He bestowed Hevajra and Vajrayogini initiations and teachings, and gave a public talk on ‘Buddhism in the Modern World’. Disciples present at the teachings describe their experience:

*‘The teachings were held in the Dorset Cricket Centre, in which a beautiful gompā was created with colourful drapes hanging from the cricket nets, adding to the sense of spaciousness and clarity instilled by His Holiness. Students were struck by the sustained power and energy of His Holiness’ teachings, and His diamond-like forbearance of the samsaric phenomena around Him.’*

Richard Sedgley

*‘How lucky was I to be able to drive His Holiness Sakya Trizin around on His days off! And how auspicious it was to visit Deer Park with Him and His entourage. These moments will stay with me forever!’*

Sue Sedgley

## London, U.K.

On 11<sup>th</sup> June, His Holiness travelled to London, where He was to spend the following week. On the afternoon of His arrival, His Holiness was invited by the Tibet Foundation to give a lecture at the SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) on “Consciousness from a Tibetan Buddhist Perspective”. That evening, His Holiness was guest speaker at the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Tibet Foundation.



Dorset Cricket Centre transformed into a stunning gompā

The following morning, His Holiness imparted a “Tak Chak-Kyung Sum” (Hayagriva, Vajrapani, Garuda) initiation, considered to be very effective in removing obstacles, after which He met with members of the Tibetan community who had come to seek His blessing. In the afternoon, His Holiness gave a teaching on “Reflections on Ethics” from Sakya Pandita’s letter to the Emperor Godan Khan.

The remainder of His Holiness’ stay in London was dedicated to teaching at Sakya Dechen Ling, Lama Jampa Thaye’s centre in London.

A member of this centre recounts His visit:

*‘His Holiness and entourage spent five days from 13 to 17 June in London as the guests of Lama Jampa Thaye, his wife Dechen Dolma and Sakya Dechen Ling. This was His Holiness’ ninth visit to the Dechen group of centres directed by Lama Jampa Thaye.*

*On the morning of 13 June, His Holiness and entourage were warmly welcomed to the Sakya Dechen Ling centre in Notting Hill. Lama Jampa offered His Holiness a ‘mandal tensum’ for His long life. His Holiness kindly blessed the centre’s new 43-volume collection of Lamdre texts. Due to an auspicious*



His Holiness with Lama Jampa Thaye at Sakya Dechen Ling

*coincidence, these precious texts had arrived at the centre on the previous day.*

*Later that day, in the magnificent Great Hall of Lincoln’s Inn in central London, His Holiness bestowed a teaching on the Zhenpa Zhidral (Parting from the Four Attachments) upon an audience of over 400 people. His Holiness’ exposition of the teaching, based on the famous commentary on the root text by Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltzen, was truly startling in its clarity and a vivid demonstration to all those attending of the reason why His Holiness is regarded as an emanation of the Bodhisattva Manjusri, the embodiment of wisdom.*

*On Monday 14 and Tuesday 15 June, His Holiness bestowed the major initiation of Shri Kalacakra from the lineage of Abhayakaragupta upon over 500 fortunate disciples who had gathered to receive the teachings at the Great Hall of the Kensington*



His Holiness going over the Tibet Foundation Anniversary program with Phuntsok Wangyal, founder and director of the Foundation





His Holiness teaching at the Great Hall of the Lincoln's Inn, London

*Conference Centre in west London. As well as many people from the Dechen Community, there were also people there from Sakya Thubten Ling in Bournemouth, Sakya Ling in Reading, Diamond Way, the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition and Rigpa. At the conclusion of the teachings, Lama Jampa Thaye gave a short speech expressing the deep joy and appreciation at His Holiness's visit felt by everyone present and offered prayers for His Holiness' long life.*

*On the fourth day of His visit, His Holiness kindly agreed to a filmed question and answer session covering various dharma topics, including the bardo, His Holiness' root lamas and the connection between*

*the Sakya and Nyingma traditions.*

*Some of those attending His Holiness' teachings were renewing their connection with Him, whereas others were meeting His Holiness and receiving His blessings for the first time. However, all were deeply touched and inspired by the limitless compassion and flawless wisdom of His Holiness, the King of vajrayana masters, and by the awesome power of the glorious Sakya tradition. We take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to His Holiness and pray that all beings swiftly come to be cared for by such a perfect master.'*

Roz Haddon



## The Hague, Netherlands,

His Holiness' following visit was to The Hague, Sweden, where he spent the 18th and 19th of June.

Over these two days, He gave a White Tara initiation and teaching, and a public talk on Samatha and Vipashyana. Also, some 500 Tibetans came to receive a blessing and advice from His Holiness, who stressed how important it was for them to preserve their culture and religion, and urged them to make great efforts in making this endeavour a central part of their lives.

Mieke Stoppels, who acts as president of Sakya Thegchen Ling, writes:

*'After 26 years we were very lucky to welcome His Holiness Sakya Trizin to the Netherlands. On the first day, He came to our centre to confer the precious*

*White Tara initiation and its teachings, and on the second day of His visit, His Holiness gave a public lecture about how to practise the Dharma in daily life.*

*Later that day, His Holiness welcomed a large group of Tibetans from the Netherlands and Belgium, and He was, as usual, very interested in all the good words they brought Him. As Tibetans, this was a very important moment for them, and they were very grateful to have the chance to meet His Holiness.*

*We, as a sangha, felt very privileged to have received His Holiness, Khenchen Sherab Gyaltzen Amipa Rinpoche, and the other monks and nuns in our centre.*

*Looking back on this event, we can say that we feel very happy.'*

Mieke Stoppels



His Holiness and sangha in Sakya Thegchen Ling gompa at The Hague



His Holiness arriving at the hall

## Biarritz, France

On 22<sup>nd</sup> June, His Holiness travelled to Biarritz, France, where he spent the following four days. His Holiness began the program with an explanation of the four classes of Tantra, in preparation for the Kalacakra Tantra empowerment that He was to confer over the following two days. This root tantra, from the Vajramala Collection of Tantras, is a deep and powerful teaching, and His Holiness gave an extended and detailed explanation of it before conferring its empowerment. He then gave an explanation of its sadhana, including the practice of the Six-Limb Guru Yoga. His Holiness spent the last day giving both a Sakya Pandita and a Manjushri empowerment.

The transformation of a large ‘fronton’(\*) hall into

a gompa was astonishing. The shrine was magnificent, the mandala house breathtaking, and the beauty of the



The Kalacakra Mandala House in Biarritz

entire hall stirringly revealed the amount of work and devotion that had been poured into its elaboration.

His Holiness' program in Biarritz was intensive, but time was set aside for Himself and entourage to visit this beautiful seaside town and to enjoy the fresh sea air of its beaches.

*\*Basque ball game played against a high wall*

## Frankfurt, Germany

On 26<sup>th</sup> June, His Holiness flew to Frankfurt, where He spent six days at Sakya Kalden Ling. There He granted refuge to several disciples and imparted an Amitayus-Hayagriva initiation, a two-day Vajrakilaya empowerment, and a teaching on Chogyal Phagpa's "Gift of Dharma". His Holiness also gave an Ushnisha Chakravarti initiation at the Tibethaus.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> July, His Holiness' last day in Frankfurt, took place the consecration of the new Sakya Kalden Ling gumpa. Next to it, thanks to the generosity of a sangha sponsor, living quarters have been built, where His Holiness and His family lodge when visiting the centre.



A moment of calm for His Holiness

That evening, His Holiness gave a public talk on the importance of spiritual progress and how to integrate it into everyday life.

Members of the sangha, describe their experience of His Holiness' visit:

*'We had been very busy preparing for the arrival of His Holiness in Frankfurt, and didn't know whether there would be enough space in our new Gumpa to accommodate everyone.'*

*In the end, more than 150 people came, the Gumpa filled to capacity and overflowed into the courtyard. Thanks to His Holiness' blessing, everything went very smoothly. We were relieved and happy.*

*On the last day of His visit, His Holiness inaugurated our new Gumpa. It was a hot and sunny afternoon, and many guests joined us. In the early evening, His Holiness gave a public talk, after which*

His Holiness consecrating the new Sakya Kalden Ling gumpa in Frankfurt; at His side, Venerable Lama Gendun Gyatso, resident lama of the centre



*sangha friends gathered in the courtyard to join Him for dinner.*

*His Holiness sat at the head of a long table, His loving disciples around Him. The light from the sunset was orange-red, and blended with the flame colour of our centre's walls. Time stopped. Everything was filled with His presence.'*

Isabelle Fehler

## Berlin, Germany

His Holiness then spent three days at the Rigpa-Zentrum in Berlin, where He was greeted on 3<sup>rd</sup> July with a traditional and warm welcome by keen students awaiting Him in the centre courtyard. That evening, His Holiness gave a teaching on 'The Six Paramitas' to



His Holiness at Rigpa-Zentrum, Berlin



Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche, Pema Wang-Gyal Rinpoche and Tulku Rangdrol participate in the Vajrakilaya empowerment

a crowd of some 300 people. While these were in their majority Buddhists from different traditions, many non-Buddhists also flocked to hear Him speak.

Over the next two days, His Holiness gave a Vajrakilaya empowerment, which was attended by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, Pema Wangyal Rinpoche, Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche and Rangdrol Rinpoche, who had come to pay their respects to His Holiness. His Holiness also blessed the land where a future spiritual care centre will be built, and He presided over a dakini day Tsok practice which

occurred on the birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. Sogyal Rinpoche, and 270 retreatants at Dzogchen Beara, Rigpa's Retreat centre in Ireland, as well as around 100 practitioners at Lerab Ling Retreat Centre in France, simultaneously joined in with the Tsok practice, through an internet video connection.

Rigpa-Zentrum is Sogyal Rinpoche's centre in Berlin, and is a stunning example of sangha participation and dedication.

Members of the entourage that accompanied His Holiness throughout His European teaching tour, share with us the impression that Rigpa-Zentrum made upon them:

*'When we last visited Sogyal Rinpoche's Berlin centre in 2002, it was a small flat. On our return this past June, however, we were very pleased to discover that, thanks to the very generous gesture of a sangha member, the centre now occupies the whole of a superb traditional five-storey mansion, in the very centre of town.'*

*We were deeply touched by the sangha's enthusiasm and diligence, both in carrying out their own practice and in making the Dharma available to others. The sangha members perform a Tsok offering every day and, on this occasion, some 80 people participated in a two-hour long tsok, all chanting in Tibetan, with His Holiness officiating. Those participating in the Vajrakilaya empowerment were provided with explanatory sheets and pictures. The centre also offers programs of study at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels.*

*We ardently pray that many such centres grow and carry the Buddha's teachings to innumerable beings.'*

## Stockholm, Sweden

On 7<sup>th</sup> July, His Holiness travelled to Stockholm, Sweden. There are not many Buddhists in Sweden, and the members of Sakya Changchub Chöling usually meet in a private house. They were overwhelmed



Rigpa-Zentrum, Sogyal Rinpoche's centre in Berlin



Mandala offering at the Kalacakra wangchen in Stockholm

when they found out that 250 people would attend the teachings. Under Khenchen Lama Sherab Rinpoche's guidance, an old school was chosen to host the event. It was transformed into a beautiful gompa, in which His Holiness gave teachings on Samatha and Vipashyana, and imparted a two-day Kalacakra wangchen (major empowerment) from Vajramala, which contains over forty mandalas.

His Holiness and His entourage were taken by Stockholm's beauty, and much enjoyed being near the sea. They found its white nights exhilarating, and made the most of their long days!

The members of Sakya Changchub Chöling express their gratitude for His Holiness' visit:

*This summer, Venerable Khenchen Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa Rinpoche and Sakya Changchub Chöling were very honoured and happy to welcome His Holiness Sakya Trizin for a five-day long visit in Stockholm, Sweden. This was His Holiness' third visit to Sweden, invited by Rinpoche and Sakya Changchub Chöling. Members of Sakya Changchub Chöling and the Tibetan Community in Sweden welcomed His*

*Holiness with entourage at Arlanda airport, close to Stockholm.*

*This time, His Holiness first gave a public lecture on Samatha and Vipashyana - calm abiding and insight meditation - with His Holiness' as usual extremely clear and easy to follow in His explanations of the different kinds of obscurations and of their antidotes. During the next two days, we were fortunate enough to receive the most important major empowerment of Kalachakra. About 250 persons from many parts of the world gathered in the lecture hall in central Stockholm, where the precious teachings and empowerment were given.*

*We members of Sakya Changchub Chöling are most grateful for His Holiness Sakya Trizin kindly accepting our invitation, for His joyful presence, and especially for giving a major empowerment in Sweden - we hope to be blessed by His visit soon again.*

*Sakya Changchub Chöling, Stockholm/Uppsala, Sweden*



## Lamdre in Kuttolsheim

On 12<sup>th</sup> July, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin and His retinue arrived at the picturesque Alsatian village of Kuttolsheim on the outskirts of Strasbourg, in France.

His Holiness had come to bestow the precious Lamdre teachings and empowerments to close to 200 fortunate Dharma practitioners from Europe, Australia, North and South America, India, and the Far East. It was the 18th time that His Holiness was conferring the Lamdre, and the third that He was doing so at Kuttolsheim.

This very special event was being hosted by the European Institute of Tibetan Buddhism, Sakya Tsechen Ling, a centre founded and guided by Khenchen Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa Rinpoche, the most senior Geshe Rabjampa of the Sakya tradition.

Founded in 1978 by Khenchen Lama Sherab, Sakya Tsechen Ling was inaugurated by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin on the 5th November of that year. It is one of the most beautiful Buddhist centres in



The altar with its precious offerings

Europe and, besides His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, whose visit this summer is His ninth, it has hosted such spiritual luminaries as His Holiness the Dalai Lama, His Holiness Dagchen Rinpoche, His Eminence Chogye Trichen Rinpoche and His Eminence Luding Khenchen Rinpoche.

The members of Sakya Tsechen Ling have always been exceedingly generous in their support of Dharma activities, and have funded several charities in Tibet. Among other things, they were the main sponsors for the making of the superb Shakyamuni statue at the Sakya Centre, His Holiness' main monastery in India.



The very beautiful Sakya Tsechen Ling



Led by Khenchen Lama Sherab Rinpoche, members of Sakya Tsechen Ling offer a mandala to His Holiness

The teachings took place in the town's community hall, a five-minute walk from Sakya Tsechen Ling. The hall itself had been transformed into a magnificent sacred space, bedecked with Tibetan rugs, drapes, banners and thangkas, and copious bouquets of flowers. A simple but imposing yellow-clad structure housed an intricate sand mandala, which His Holiness initiated in a special ritual, and which took His attendant monks 13 hours to complete. Next to it, an awe-inspiring altar had been built, whereupon stood a large golden statue of Hevajra, surrounded by a lavish array of offerings.

This time His Holiness was imparting the precious Lamdre Tsogshey, conferring



Khenchen Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa Rinpoche

its empowerments according to the Sakya lineage, and using the text that had traditionally been used at the Great Sakya Monastery in Tibet. It was the first time that this text was being used outside Tibet. It had been missing for over fifty years, its pages scattered throughout the globe, and has only recently been recompiled thanks to the arduous and untiring efforts of Khenpo Appey Rinpoche.



Khenchen Lama Sherab is offered a mandala on behalf of the Phodrang, on the occasion of his enthronement





His Holiness initiating the sand mandala

On 15<sup>th</sup> July, the auspicious day of Chokor Düchen, which celebrates the Buddha's first turning of the Wheel of Dharma, a long life ceremony was held, during which His Holiness the Sakya Trizin bestowed the honorific title of 'Khenchen' to Lama Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa. This was in recognition of Khenchen Lama Sherab's 'peerless and extraordinary activities in support of the Buddha Dharma in general and of the Sakya tradition in particular,' as His Holiness wrote in the colophon to the new long life prayer for Khenchen Sherab Rinpoche, composed by His Holiness for the occasion. This was following a heartfelt request made by Khenchen Sherab's disciples, who were overjoyed at this exceedingly well-deserved celebration of their teacher's qualities and achievements. Newcomers were struck by the loving kindness and wisdom that emanated from him.

Khenchen Sherab Amipa is indeed a pillar of the Dharma. It was 43 years ago that, at the request of the Tibetan Government in exile, and with the agreement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and that of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, Khenchen Sherab Gyaltsen travelled to Switzerland in order to head the newly founded Rikon Tibetan Institute, which had been created for the preservation of Tibetan culture and religion, and also to bring teachings to Western Buddhists. In the decades that followed, Khenchen Lama Sherab was very influential in the creation of Dharma centres in Europe, all of which he continues



His Holiness leading the Bodhisattva Vows ceremony





Group photo on the last day of the teachings

to visit regularly.

This homage was followed by an intensive three-week program of teachings, empowerments and practice. Activities started as early as seven each morning with praises to Tara led by Khenchen Sherab Rinpoche, followed by the morning teaching sessions conferred by His Holiness. In the afternoon, a review of the teachings and their practice took place, guided by Khenchen Lama Sherab Rinpoche, while His Holiness granted private audiences to students.

Sangha members who attended the Lamdre share their impressions:

*‘When we arrived in Kuttolsheim on 12th July, our host told us that the region had long been suffering from drought, and that the farmers were*

*desperate for rain. That afternoon, the skies filled with clouds and broke into a torrent of rain, and thunder and lightning greeted His Holiness’ arrival. It felt as if He was showering nectar upon the land, as well as on His disciples.’*

Kunsang Wangmo, Tibet

*‘As I was sitting at His Holiness’ feet, receiving a precious empowerment from Him, I felt from the bottom of my being His unbounded compassion for everything that lives, His immovable resolve to remove their suffering, and His compelling power to attract them onto the path to enlightenment. I pray with all my might that He continue forever to turn the wheel of Dharma.’*

Bina Wang, New Zealand

Bernard Altschuh, Vice President of Sakya Tsechen Ling Institute writes on behalf of his fellow members:

Already in the autumn of 2008, a strong yet soft wind began to blow over Sakya Tsechen Ling Institute in Kuttolsheim, France, a wind unique to the Dharma, a wind like no other. It was the wind of activity – joyous and diligent – of preparing for a very special occasion. Indeed, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin was to come to the institute for three weeks in the summer of 2010, in order to confer the Lamdre Tshogshey, quintessence of transmission in the Sakya tradition.

Carried by Khenchen Sherab Gyaltzen Amipa Rinpoche's impetus, his meticulous attention to detail, his encouragement and his blessing, each and everyone set to work, enthused and grateful, confident that they would be of use.

All skills were welcome, as much during the two years of preparation as during the teachings themselves, and the members, one and all, volunteered to take turns in becoming painter, gardener, seamstress, electronics engineer, carpenter, secretary, translator, printer or window washer. The task was vast and multiple, as was the occasion.

Teachings such as those we were to receive, whose origins date back to over two thousand five hundred years, were virtually unknown in the West up to a few decades ago. And yet, they offer a powerful but challenging response to our daily suffering, so multiple, diverse and painful in nature. Indeed, far from being just another benign summer course of study, this would be a time fundamental in scope, perspective and purpose.

And so, from 14th July to 6th August 2010, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin conferred the Lamdre Tshogshey Hevajra empowerments and teachings, with the Triple Vision as its preliminary part, and the Triple Tantra as its main one. As is customary, these teachings were given in the morning by His Holiness, and reviewed in the afternoon under the guidance of Khenchen Sherab Gyaltzen Amipa Rinpoche. Important ceremonies accompanied the teachings: on 15th July, the very day of Buddha Shakyamuni's first turning of the wheel of Dharma, Chokhor Düchen, Lama Sherab Gyaltzen Amipa was enthroned as Khenchen, in a moving ceremony infused with the immense gratitude of his students; on 31st July, anniversary of the parinirvana of Trichen Ngawang Thudop Wangchuk, a "Lama Chöpa" Guru Yoga ceremony, the "King of Rituals" was held; and on the last day of the teachings, the Sixteen Arhats prayer, and that of Samantabhadra, were recited, bringing those memorable three weeks to a close.

Throughout those days, time had taken on a different guise, dense and elusive, a time removed from time, permeating space, a space removed from space. And yet, a time and a space well in harmony with the unfolding of day-to-day activities.

A time of beauty, of sharing, of students from all over the world – twenty nationalities in all – coming together to form a splendid bouquet of diverse linguistic melodies that would envelop and adorn that other time where language is transcended, the time of silence and meditation. This multilingual, multinational dimension emerges as a reflection of His Holiness' intent as He confers the Lamdre year after year, from continent to continent, each time a call, an invitation to partake, extended to all His students everywhere in the world.

And so, everyone of us would like to express, from the deepest of our being, our infinite gratitude to His Holiness the Sakya Trizin for His invaluable gift of these precious teachings, to Khenchen Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa Rinpoche for creating this and so many other sacred spaces where such gifts can be imparted, as well as for his teachings, to all those who so generously gave of their time and effort before and during this blessed occasion, and ensured its smooth unfolding, and to each and everyone who shared in the common happiness that it generated.

Due to the merits accrued through our motivation and devotion, we have been given the rare privilege of being of service, and thus of contributing to making our life fruitful. May these same merits be the cause of wellbeing and happiness for all beings.

Bernard Altschuh, Vice-President, Sakya Tsechen Ling Institute

## His Holiness the Sakya Trizin Example of compassion, wisdom and humility

Kuttolsheim, 06 a.m.

*Golden sky and fresh air. The leaves of the flowers have kept drops of water from yesterday's rain. They reflect the present morning light, transformed into cristal. On the ground, petals of yellow flowers.*

*We are walking to the temple for the Tara prayer. On the top of the hill somebody is waiting for us. His Holiness and His retinue are coming back from their morning walk... they wait for us.*

His Holiness smiles and asks in French :

- ça va ?

*We answer with ease, to the Man issuing from a royal family, head of so many Schools, Monasteries, Nunneries and projects, known and respected all over the world, the Man standing before us, in the street of*

*this quaint village, among the ordinary people who are waiting for the 0645 bus to go to work, so humble, smiling to the beginning of the day.*

*We exchange a few words about the beauty of this place.*

*Then, silently, He disappears.*

Kuttolsheim, 09 a.m.

*His Holiness the Sakya Trizin enters the Salle Polyvalente in Kuttolsheim. The hall is transformed into a splendid Buddhist Temple. The monks are playing sacred music. His Holiness slowly approaches His throne, smiling to the two hundred people attending His teachings. He prostrates and sits. His disciples also prostrate and sit. He looks at everyone, his eyes full of love and compassion, and begins the prayers.*

*Then, in a deep and low voice, His Holiness recites in Tibetan the verses that will be the subject of*



*study during the coming twenty four days. The Man is now transformed into the Great Master, and the Master transformed into Wisdom, the Compassionate Buddha.*

*According to the Sakya Tradition, His Holiness will give a commentary on the root text. This tradition has been observed over the past one thousand years.*

*His Holiness the Sakya Trizin carefully and slowly chooses His words. He is the Lord of the right words. The gestures of His hands, like a dance, show us the path, the way. All listen. His Holiness opens our consciousness, step by step, without effort. His teachings are unfabricated, authentic. We feel that He offers us wisdom as a fruit that has been ripened for many thousands of years.*

*The topics are difficult to understand, but His Holiness speaks both to our intellect and to our Heart. He gives us the Hope that we are all able to transform the nature of our mind, our body, our non-virtues into virtues, and even to attain enlightenment if we practice not only for our own aims but for the sake of all beings.*

Kuttolsheim 230 p.m.

*After the lunch break or a short walk, the hall is again full of practitioners waiting for their precious Guru, Lama Sherab G. Amipa Rinpoche.*

*His Holiness' teachings are useful if we practice*

*the meditations, and if we study again and again the topics covered, until these merge with our consciousness.*

*Lama Sherab, like a Shepherd or the Captain of our boat, is the Father. He guides us, showing us the right way, helping us to understand deeply the union of method and wisdom. His words are like precious nectar. His presence brings us peace of mind.*

*At the end of each day that we follow the example of our Guru, we are able to understand the power of wisdom, the essence of love and compassion and the necessity of humility.*

Kuttolsheim 22.00 p.m.

*The light is slowly melting into the darkness. On the roads around the village, one can see figures walking in silence before going to bed. No fear. No hope. The night will bring us space to meditate and to prepare for a new day.*

*We have lived 24 days in this atmosphere.*

Sherab Chöden, Geneva

## **Arosio, Switzerland**

His Holiness' next stop was at Khenchen Lama Sherab's centre in Arosio, Switzerland, where He stayed for three days, and performed a 100.000 Guru Rinpoche tsok offering.



A radiant smile from His Holiness

Thubten Chanchub Ling, lying snugly among the Alpine trees, enjoys dazzling views over the neighbouring mountains. It owes its existence to an exceptionally generous disciple of Khenchen Sherab, who is also largely responsible for the building of Sakya Hospital in Rajpur, as well as for the financing of its ongoing expenses.

His Holiness' busy schedule eased somewhat during those days, and so He was able to enjoy some free time, which He often shared with followers who were there. Some recount their time in Arosio with His Holiness:

*'On 7 August His Holiness arrived at Thubten Chanchub Ling in Arosio, Switzerland, a small, enchanting centre guided by Khenchen Sherab Gyaltzen Amipa.*

*Charmed by the natural beauty of the surroundings, His Holiness spent much of His free time comfortably seated on a sofa in the dining room, close to the French window, enjoying the view over Lake Lugano and the surrounding mountain range. To everyone's great delight, His Holiness was often*

*available for questions, advice and explanations; He shared many inspiring and amusing life stories and was very keen on learning more about our European cultures, history and spiritual traditions. There were also numerous moments of lively exchange on different topical issues, such as the environment, homosexuality, abortion, and many others.*

*A crowd of nearly 150 people gathered in (and outside) the temple on 8 August to receive the initiation of Buddha Vairocana. The following day, an event open to the general public was held at Monte Verità (the Mountain of Truth) in Ascona, Switzerland, which attracted many people, including a considerable number of non-Buddhists, who expressed a genuine interest in Tibetan culture and religion. The first part of the event was dedicated to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, with a detailed explanation of the Six Perfections, main practice of the Bodhisattvas. After the teaching, His Holiness conferred a Medicine Buddha initiation.*

*On both occasions, His Holiness underlined the importance of moral conduct and observation of the five general Buddhist precepts for the benefit of the world in general and Dharma practitioners in particular.'*

Danijela Stamatovic, Slovenia

*Arosio, Alto Malcantone, a small village in the canton of Ticino, Switzerland, 1000 metres up the southern foothills of the Alps.*

*Clear skies, a light breeze, the mountains, it seems as if the natural elements are lingering for His Holiness' arrival...*

*The Sangha also waits... so many months of preparation... the moment has finally come!*

*The year 2002 saw His Holiness' first visit here, and the consecration of Thubten Chanchub Ling. It has been a long eight years' wait for His return, His blessing, His extraordinary presence, to renew the Samaya between the Guru and His disciples.*

*In the meantime, we have been guided by our beloved teacher Khenchen Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa Rinpoche.*

*Khenchen Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa's dedication, that makes him come to us every month, on a long*

*train journey, to bring us his teachings; this has not gone unnoticed by His Holiness, Who chooses His words with a kindness that touches all our hearts:*

*His Holiness says that not only has this centre become more beautiful, but that also its Sangha has grown richer in their practice and experience.*

*Our infinite gratitude to His Holiness for His precious teachings, and to Khenchen Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa Rinpoche for the unwavering care he extends to our Sangha.*

Sarva Mangalam

## Rikon, Switzerland

On the 11th of August, His Holiness travelled to Rikon, in the district of Winterthur, near Zurich, where He was to spend the remainder of His stay in Europe. His Holiness was visiting the Tibet Institute Rikon.

This Institute was created in 1967, upon recommendation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in order to preserve and promote Tibetan culture and religion. It is also noteworthy in that it endorses research in the field of Tibetology, and a dialogue between Buddhist philosophy and modern science.

While at the Institute, His Holiness gave a Buddha Ayuttara initiation to an assembly of over 1500 Tibetans, some of whom had travelled a considerable distance in order to be there.



His Holiness peruses a pecha





A mandala offering being presented to His Holiness at Rikon

His Holiness also gave a teaching in English. Sherab Chöden, who attended the teachings, relates: *Winterthur, August 14<sup>th</sup> 09 a.m.*

*We approached the hall with a great joy in our heart. Immediately as we entered, we felt at home, among our real family.*

*The last teachings of His Holiness Saya Trizin's European tour took place in Winterthur, near Zurich, where lives the highest concentration of Tibetan Refugees in Switzerland.*

*The morning teachings of this August 14th were for the Swiss community, and the afternoon ones for the Tibetans. These had come, dressed in their traditional clothes, three generations of Tibetans,*

*the first of which had arrived in Switzerland in 1959. We could read on their faces the sufferings they had overcome, the strong hopes that they sustained, and the power of their faith.*

*I am more and more certain that Buddhism can help us to turn our mind toward religion, spiritual concerns and non-violence. The message is so clear : in front of obstacles or difficulties, keeping our mind in peace can transform our reality.*

*My heart is full of gratitude to His Holiness Sakya Trizin, Lama Sherab G. Amipa Rinpoche, and all the Masters who have come to Europe to free us from suffering.*

Sherab Chöden, Geneva

**And finally, on Tuesday the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, after three months of near ceaseless teaching activity, His Holiness boarded a flight that was to take Him back to India, where He would be reunited with His Family and be able to spend precious time with His grandchildren.**



His Holiness performing a Padmasambhava 100,000 Tsok Offering Puja in Rikon, Switzerland

# Mahavairocana Puja

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**T**he Mahavairocana Puja is an important puja held every year at the Sakya Centre. It is celebrated on the 11th of the 4th month of the Tibetan lunar Calendar, and lasts five days. This year, it was held from the 24th to the 29th of May, and was attended by a large gathering of lamas, monks and lay followers.

## A Brief History of the Mahavairocana Puja by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin



His Holiness officiating at a Mahavairocana puja in Sakya Centre earlier this year

Mahavairocana is one of the most important pujas in Tibetan Buddhism. In Tibetan, it is called ‘Khünrig’, and in Sanskrit ‘Saravidhia’. Originally, it was a tantra given in the heavenly realms.

Its history relates how King Lumidewa was a very evil king, having killed his father in order to usurp his throne, thus causing his mother to die of grief. So he was responsible for the death of both his father and mother.

One day, as he was strolling in the forest, he met a hermit who was besieged by sun, wind, rain and insects. The King asked him why he was inflicting so much suffering upon himself, and why didn’t he come with him to his palace and live in comfort. The hermit answered that he was undergoing hardship now, but that afterwards, he would gain liberation and never again even hear the word ‘suffering’. And he told the King that he might at the moment be enjoying worldly pleasures but that after this life, because of his heavily negative karma, he would suffer immeasurably, and never even hear the word ‘happiness’.



The King was terrified by these words, and asked the hermit what he could do to remedy this. The hermit answered that he should pray and take refuge in the Triple Gem. The King paid heed to him and, due to this, was reborn as Norbu Jimameba in a Heavenly Realm. But, because of his heavily negative karma, he died very young.

Lord Indra asked the Buddha where Norbu Jimameba would be reborn. The Buddha answered that he would first be reborn in the worst hell realm, then in all the hell realms, then as a hungry ghost, then as an animal, and then finally as a human. But that even as a human being, he would be blind, deaf and



Ceremonial hat at the Mahavairocana puja

dumb. He was to go through kalpas of suffering.

Jimameba heard this, and he was so shocked that he fainted. When he revived, he asked the Buddha whether there was any way to be saved from such suffering. And from the body of the Buddha, many light rays issued as He gave Jimameba the Parishodani or Purification Tantra, which liberates from the suffering of the lower realms. Due to the power and blessings of this Tantra, the King very quickly expiated his karma by spending a very short time in each lower realm. Jimameba was so impressed by the power of the Buddha that he offered Him his ornaments. This is why, during the Saravidhia ritual, there is an offering of a crown, earrings, necklace, and so on.

Saravidhia is a very powerful puja and initiation. It is particularly powerful in purifying karma that causes to be born in the lower realms. We usually perform this puja for the deceased. But it is also very beneficial for people who are gravely ill, as it either speeds up their recovery process, or grants them a quick death, saving them from extended suffering.



Mahavairocana ritual of purification: lists of names of the deceased are put into the flames



## Summer Retreat

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**Y**anne, or Summer Retreat, traditionally takes place during the rainy season. Its origins go back to Shakyamuni's time, when the Lord Buddha Himself made it a Vinaya rule that all fully ordained monks and Samanaras, or novice monks, should remain within the boundaries of the monastery during the Indian monsoon. This was out of concern for the monks' health, as the heavy rains brought many diseases with them. Another reason was that the monsoon caused the ground to be covered by insects,

and the monks were bound to step on them while doing their begging rounds, thereby committing an act of killing. So the monks had to stay within their compounds and do retreat, with emphasis on vinaya practice and the study of sutras. Originally, the retreat lasted for three months but nowadays, for practical reasons, it only lasts one and a half month.

*Every year at Sakya Centre, the monks hold a one and a half month retreat, starting early July.*

## His Holiness' Retreat House For Monks

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**T**wo years ago, foundations were laid adjacent to Dolma Phodrang for what was destined to become a retreat centre for monks, a project dear to His Holiness' heart. Today, the construction of the centre is well on its way, and its doors will be opened to retreatants within the next few months.

The building consists of two floors, with ten rooms each. Each room has an en-suite bathroom. This will allow for 20 monks to be in retreat at any given time.

The facilities will be available for Sakya monks to do either short or long retreats, including the three-month-long Mahavairocana, the seven-month-long Hevajra, and the three-year, three-month retreat.

The monks will be furnished with all the conditions necessary to ensure that they make the most of their time in retreat. Crucially, they will be under the direct guidance of His Holiness. But also



fundamental is that all their material needs will be met by the Phodrang, so that they can concentrate fully on their practice. This includes food being catered to them, as well as all other day-to-day necessities being taken care of. They will also have their own liturgical library, where all essential Dharma texts, principally Sakya, will be made available to them.

## Annual Grand Pujas at the Sakya Centre (Sept-Nov)

- **Annual Grand Hevajra Puja:** 8th of the 9th lunar month for 8 days (15th – 23rd Oct)

### Important Dates

- **7<sup>th</sup> September:** Birthday of His Holiness the 41st Sakya Trizin (according to Western Calendar)
- **9<sup>th</sup> September:** Birthday of His Holiness the 41st Sakya Trizin (according to Tibetan Calendar)
- **21<sup>st</sup> October:** Birthday of H.E. Ngor Luding Khenchen Rinpoche  
Anniversaries of Bari Lotsawa, Khön Konchok Gyalpo and Sachen Kunga Nyingpo
- **22<sup>nd</sup> October:** Birthday of H.H. Jigdal Dagchen Rinpoche
- **25<sup>th</sup> October:** Anniversary of Atisha
- **29<sup>th</sup> October:** Lhabhab Düchen (The day the Lord Buddha descended from Tushita heaven)  
Birthday of H.E. Jetsun Kushok Chime Luding
- **10<sup>th</sup> November:** Birthday of Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche (according to Tibetan calendar)
- **12<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> November:** Annual Sakya Monlam in Lumbini

✽ Lamp offerings in the monastery and food offerings to the monks are welcome during all important pujas and ceremonies. Kindly contact the Sakya Centre in Rajpur if you wish to make an offering (see contact addresses on sponsorship page).



**LAM DRE AT TSECHEN KUNCHAB LING**  
**to be bestowed by**  
**HIS HOLINESS THE SAKYA TRIZIN**  
**accompanied by**  
**HIS EMINENCE RATNA VAJRA RINPOCHE**

**WALDEN, N.Y. - JUNE 2011**

Students of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin throughout the world are eagerly anticipating His Holiness' period of residence at Tsechen Kunchab Ling during the summer of 2011 where three important events will take place:

- Bestowing of the Precious Lam Dre Teaching Cycle: June 1 - June 30, 2011 (information)
- Formal Opening of the New Temple Building at Tsechen Kunchab Ling – June 19, 2011 (information)
- Offering of a Long Life Celebration for His Holiness Sakya Trizin – September 3, 2011 (information)

His Holiness will also bestow teachings at Sakya Centers from coast to coast and from Canada to South America.

For more information, please see: [www.sakyatemple.org](http://www.sakyatemple.org).

**HIS HOLINESS THE SAKYA TRIZIN**  
**will bestow the**  
**VAJRAKILAYA**  
**in Vancouver – August 2011**

Sakya Tsechen Thubten Ling is pleased to announce that His Holiness Sakya Trizin, the 41st throne holder of the Sakya Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, under the invitation of Jetsun Kushok Chimey Luding Rinpoche, will bestow the Vajrakilaya 2-day major empowerment and teachings in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, from 19 to 21 August 2011.

To receive further information regarding this event, please send an email to [vancouver.vajrakilaya@gmail.com](mailto:vancouver.vajrakilaya@gmail.com)

A DVD of His Holiness' 13/06/10 teaching at the Lincoln's Inn in London is currently being edited and will soon be available for purchase from the Dechen website ([www.dechen.org](http://www.dechen.org)).

Footage of His Holiness' 16/06/10 London interview can be seen on a dedicated Youtube channel located at [www.youtube.com/user/dechenBuddhism](http://www.youtube.com/user/dechenBuddhism).



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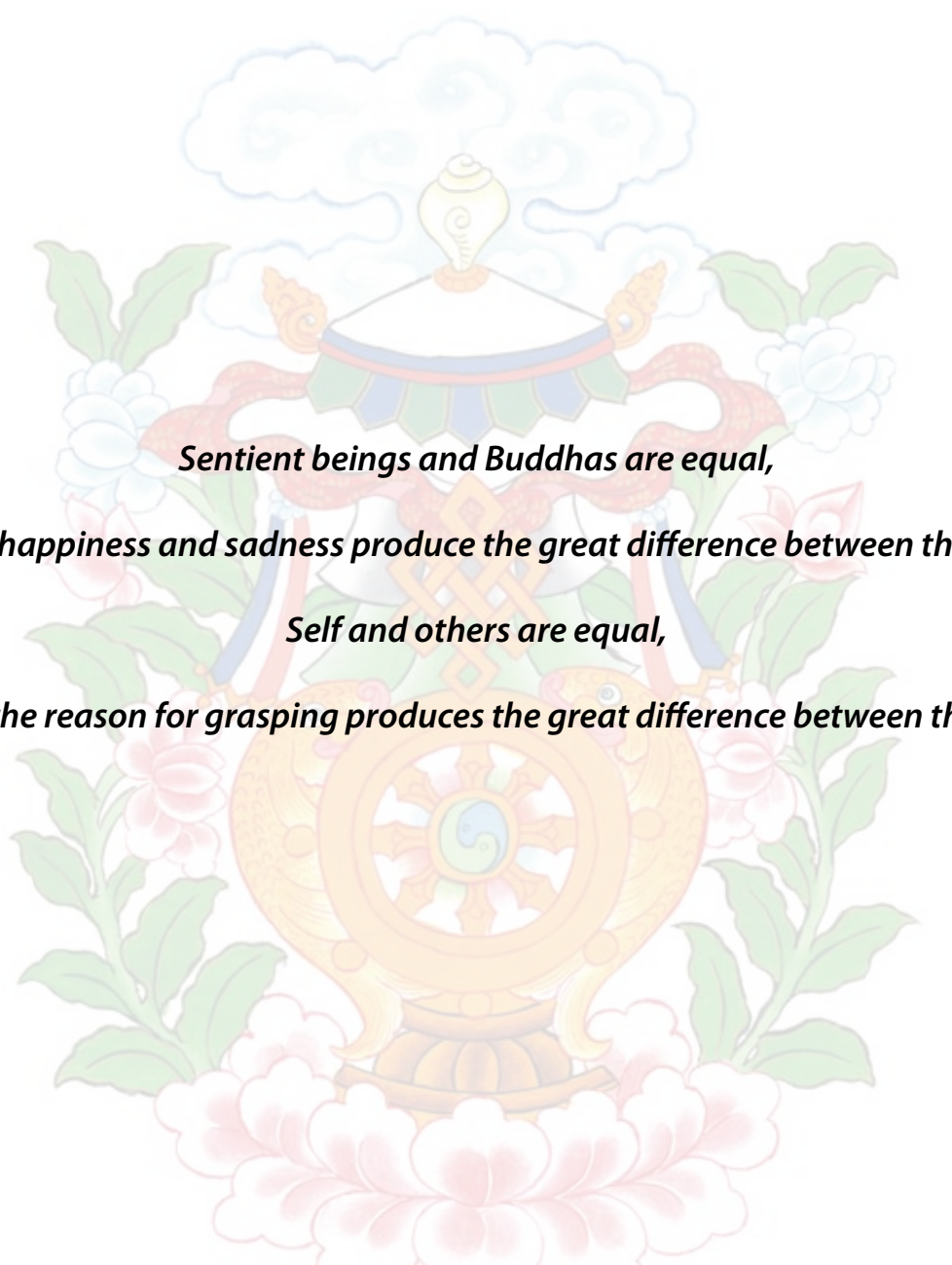
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## Sakya Nunnery

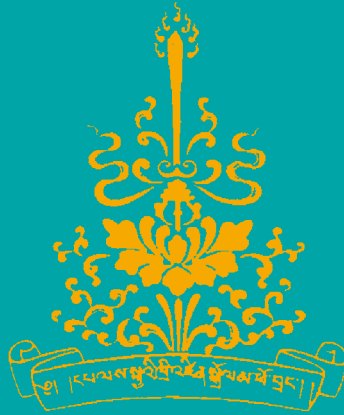
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***Sentient beings and Buddhas are equal,  
Yet happiness and sadness produce the great difference between them.  
Self and others are equal,  
Yet the reason for grasping produces the great difference between them.***

From 'The Great Song of Experience' by Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen  
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