

Melody of Dharma

❁ **Looking Into the Nature of Mind**
A teaching by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin

❁ **The Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche**

❁ **Maitreya's Semtsema**
A teaching by The Most Venerable
Khenchen Appey Rinpoche



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

HIS HOLINESS THE SAKYA TRIZIN



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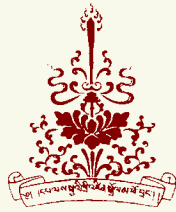
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Mrs. Yang Dol Tsatultsang (Dagmo Kalden's mother);
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Cover Photo: Sakya College



The Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche



Dear Dharma friends,

It brings me great joy to wish each and every one of you a very happy new year of the Iron Rabbit.

I hope that this past year has been rewarding in every way for you and your dear ones. It has been an excellent one for us, particularly as our family was blessed with the arrival of a new member: my first grandson, H.E. Akasha Vajra Rinpoche was born in New Delhi on the 27th of March 2010. His parents, H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and H.E. Dagmo Kushok Kalden, are overjoyed with this new addition to their family. We wish His Eminence Akasha a long and healthy life.

If the year offered us such a joyful arrival, it also brought us a sad departure. The passing of the Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche on the 28th of December 2010 left us, his students and disciples, bereft of his holy presence. We are, nevertheless, blessed by the rich legacy of teachings and invaluable Dharma works that Rinpoche has bequeathed us.

The year has brought us another precious gift with the inauguration of our new retreat centre, adjacent to the Phodrang. All of its rooms are already occupied, with twenty monks currently doing retreat. Some among them are doing the traditional three-year-three-month retreat, while younger monks are taking turns in doing a one-month-long retreat. This endeavour plays an important part in ensuring a continuance of our Sakya meditative tradition and, as such, represents an enormous contribution to the preservation of the Dharma.


Furthermore, we are very happy that, after facing a number of obstacles, construction of the Sakya Academy in Dehradun is well on its way, and should be opening its doors to a first group of students in the autumn. The Sakya Academy will offer a rich complement to our retreat centre as, parallel to the centre's preservation of our meditative tradition, the Academy will assure the continuance of its scholarly tradition through the in-depth study of our precious Sakya texts. The Academy also marks a milestone in our tradition, in that it will provide its student monks with a thoroughly modern formation alongside their traditional Tibetan Buddhist education.

This year was also very special for me, as I had the wonderful occasion to embark on a very fruitful three-month-long teaching tour of Russia and Europe. It was a particular pleasure to bestow the holy Lamdre in the lovely town of Kuttolsheim, in France. And it was a great joy for me to see how practitioners are growing in number, as well as in the depth of their practice and realization. I am extremely grateful to all who, through their continued hard work and financial support, make these Dharma activities possible. Their gift to the Dharma is immeasurable.

This coming year also seems very promising for our Dharma work. I am happy that I will be embarking on an American teaching tour. Not only will I be bestowing the holy Lamdre in New York during the month of June, but I will also be visiting several centres in the United States, Canada and, for the first time, Latin America. I am very much looking forward to seeing old friends after so many years, and to meeting new ones.

I pray that the New Year bring with it bountiful gifts, both inner and outer. I pray that all beings may enjoy good health, rewarding relationships, material comfort and deep spiritual satisfaction. I pray that the Dharma spread far and wide and bring countless beings to final Liberation.

May all be filled with the blessings of the Triple Gem.


The Sakya Trizin

5th March 2011



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 །ལེགས་ཚོགས་དབྱིག་འཛིན་ཁྱོན་ཀུན་བྱབ་པར་སྟོན།།

*From the graceful new Iron Rabbit Year's heart of cloud,
 With summer's thundering of auspicious utterance.
 By divine-arising dew-drops of celestial rain,
 May abounding benefit and joy suffuse the world!*

The Sakya Trizin

Happy New Year



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

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

Artwork by Dagmo Kalden D. Sakya





Happy Tibetan
New Year



༄༅། ཨོང་རྒྱལ་ལོ་ ༢༠༣༨ རང་གཤམ་ལུ་ལམ་ལོ་མ་གཤམ་ལོ་གསུང་དུ་བཞུགས་པའི་དགེ་འཛོམས་རྣམས་ལ་
བསྐྱེད་པའི་བཀའ་ལན།

नव वर्ष की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएँ ।

Iron Rabbit Year 2038

GG&S

Best Wishes,
Khondung Gyana Vajra Sakya
& Dagmo Sonam Palkyi Sakya

Dear Readers,

Firstly, we would like to wish every one of our readers a very Happy and Prosperous New Year of the Iron Rabbit!

This is our first issue of the new year, and we very much look forward to sharing with you the teachings and activities of our revered gurus during the months to come.

We would like to dedicate these pages to the celebration of the life and accomplishments of The Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche, who passed into Parinirvana on the 28th of December 2010. Although Rinpoche's departure is a great loss to the Dharma, and to the Sakya School in particular, he leaves us with an inestimable treasury of teachings, writings, monastic institutions and memories. We will, in this issue, be remembering Rinpoche through his legacy of teachings and achievements, as well as through the words of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, who counted Rinpoche as one of His main teachers, and those of some of his close disciples.

We will, in addition, commit to our pages a description of the last rites that were held for Rinpoche in Kathmandu at the beginning of February, as well as an account of last autumn's Sakya Monlam in Lumbini.

Equally, we are happy to be featuring the first part of an inspirational teaching by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin on "The Nature of the Mind" and, alongside this, a precious teaching on "Maitreya's Santsema" by Khenchen Appey Rinpoche.

We hope that this issue and the ones that will follow it, bring us closer to our gurus and their teachings, and thus contribute to assimilating the Dharma more fully into our lives.

Tashi Delek!

The Editing Team

H.H. the Sakya Trizin and H.E. Gyana Vajra Rinpoche 2011 North and South American Teaching Schedule

HOST	DATE	EVENT
SILVER SPRING, MD Sakya Phuntsok Ling	May 21	Long-Life Initiation and Dharma Talk
	May 22	Manjushri Namasamgiti Empowerment – Day 1
	May 23	Manjushri Namasamgiti Empowerment – Day 2
354 Prelude Drive Silver Spring, MD 20901-5041 +1 301-906-3378 www.sakyatemple.org/spl		
BOSTON, MA Boston Sakya Center	May 26	Dharma Talk
	May 27	Chakrasamvara in the Vajra Gantipa Tradition – Day 1
	May 28	Chakrasamvara in the Vajra Gantipa Tradition – Day 2
	May 29	Long-Life Initiation
Holiday Inn Convention Center 242 Adams Place, Boxborough MA01719 +1 978 263 8701 www.sakya.net		
BERNE, NY Tenzin Gyatso Institute	May 31	Visit to the Centre
165 Game Farm Rd Berne, NY 12023 +1 518 872 1250 info@tenzingyatsoinstitute.org- www.tenzingyatsoinstitute.org		
WALDEN, NY Tsechen Kunchab Ling	June 1-30	LAMDRE
	June 1	Soft Opening of the Centre Ushinisha Vijaya Initiation Lamdre begins
	June 11	Consecration of the Temple
	June 19	Grand Inauguration of the Temple Long-Life Initiation for the Public
12 Edmunds Lane Walden, New York 12586 +1 301 9063378 www.sakyatemple.org		
NEW YORK, NY Sakya Chokor Ling	June 25	Amitabha Initiation Jambala Initiation
Queens, New York CALL: +1 917 386 5572		

HOST	DATE	EVENT
NEW YORK, NY Tsechen Tsopa	June 26	Program to be confirmed
CALL: +1 646 724 0551		
NEW YORK, NY Palden Sakya Center	July 2	White Tara Initiation
	July 3	White Tara Teaching
	July 4	White Tara Teaching
paldensakya@vikramasila.org www.vikramasila.org		
MINNEAPOLIS, MN Sakya Thupten Dhargye Ling	July 8	Public Talk: Advice on World Peace from a Buddhist Perspective
	July 9	Avalokiteshvara Initiation in the Gyalpo Lug Tradition
	July 10	Long-Life Initiation
	July 11	Vajrakilaya Torma Empowerment
619 8th St. SE, No 112 Minneapolis mnsakya@mac.com www.mnsakyacenter.org		
LOS ANGELES, CA Tsechen Chokhor Ling	July 13	Dharma Talk
	July 14	Manjushri Initiation
12037 Clark St Arcadia, CA 91006 tsechenchokorling@yahoo.com www.sakyacenterla.org		
MEXICO CITY, MEXICO Sakya Dolma Ling	July 16	Parting from the Four Attachments (to be confirmed) Manjushri Initiation (to be confirmed)
	July 17	Vajrakilaya Initiation (to be confirmed)
+52 55 55 23 82 67 mexico@dechen.org		
SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA Thubten Chokhor Ling	July 19	Consecration of the Dharma Centre
		Morning: Bodhisattva Vows and Sakyamuni Initiation Evening: Parting from the Four Attachments Buddha Sakyamuni and Guru Rinpoche Blessings
elenapianca@gmail.com		
RIO DE JANEIRO Venue to be confirmed	July 22	Morning:Interdependency and sustainability: a universal responsibility
SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL Vila Antiga	July 22	Evening: Talk on Parting from the Four Attachments
	July 23	Morning: Manjushri Empowerment Afternoon: Talk on Wisdom, Education and Management in Modern Society

HOST	DATE	EVENT
		Evening: H.E. Gyana Vajra Rinpoche will bestow a Ngondro Initiation and Teaching on the Practice
	July 24	Morning: Chenrezig Chenang Afternoon: Talk on "Compassion as a path to leading society to a more comprehensive and constructive relationship"
RECIFE, BRAZIL Universidade de Pernambuco	July 25	Evening: Main Speaker at the International Conference
		Evening: H.E. Gyana Vajra Rinpoche will bestow a Manjushri Initiation and Teaching on Wisdom
Timbaúba - Pe	July 26	Morning: Consecration of Land for Sakya Gompa
CEBB Dharmata	July 26	Afternoon: Guru Rinpoche Initiation
Universidade de Pernambuco	July 26	Evening: Talk on "Ethics as the Key to Developing Rewarding Relationships"
Rodovia Vereador José de Moraes, Km 6 - Sítio São Roque - Centro - Cabreúva - SP +55 11 4528 1737 www.sakyabrasil.org		
SANTA CRUZ, CA Vajrapani Institute	July 29	Visit to Centre
SAN FRANCISCO Ewam Choden	July 30	Hevajra Cause Empowerment – Day 1
	July 31	Hevajra Cause Empowerment – Day 2
	Aug 1	Guru Rinpoche Long-Life Initiation Public Talk (in Tibetan)
	Aug 2	Public Talk (in English)
PALO ALTO, CA Sakya SfBay	Aug 3	Public Talk Chenrezig Initiation in the Kadampa Tradition
254 Cambridge Avenue Kensington, CA 94708 +1 510 527-7363 info@ewamchodenorg www.ewamchoden.org		
CAZADERO, CA Padmasambhava Peace Institute	Aug 4-7	Empowerments and Transmission of the Treasure Cycles of Orgyen Trinley Lingpa, Apong Terchen
+1 707 632 5629 info@padmapeace.org www.padmapeace.org		
PORTLAND, OR Portland Sakya Center	Aug 9	Teaching: 'Parting from the Four Attachments' Teaching: 'The Nature of Mind'
	Aug 10	Medicine Buddha Initiation Guru Rinpoche Initiation
www.sakyausa.org		

HOST	DATE	EVENT
OLYMPIA, WA Olympia Sakya Centre	Aug 12	Avalokiteshvara Initiation Teaching: 'The Nature of Mind'
www.nalandaolywa.org		
SEATTLE, WA Sakya Monastery of Tibetan Buddhism	Aug 14	Chenrezig Empowerment in the Gyalpo Lug Empowerment
	Aug 15	Two-Armed Mahakala Initiation
108 NW 83rd Street Seattle, WA 98117 +1 206 789 2573 Monastery@Sakya.org www.sakya.org		
VICTORIA, BC Sakya Thubten Kunga Choling	Aug 17	Trikulanatha Initiation
www.island.net/~sakya		
VANCOUVER, BC Sakya Tsechen Thubten Ling	Aug 18	Dharma Talk
	Aug 19	Vajrakilaya Empowerment
	Aug 20	Vajrakilaya Empowerment
	Aug 21	Vajrakilaya Teaching
Sakya Tsechen Thubten Ling 5231 Maple Road Richmond, B.C. V7E 1G2 vancouver.vajrakilaya@gmail.com www.sakyasechenthubtenling.org		
CALGARY, ALBERTA	Aug 25	Long-Life Initiation
CALL: +1 403 217 1667		
TORONTO, ONTARIO	Aug 27	Dharma Talk
	Aug 28	Long-Life Initiation
	Aug 29	Trikulanatha Initiation
CALL: + 1 647 233 5159		
WALDEN, NY Tsechen Kunchab Ling	Sept 1	Welcome Ceremony for His Holiness
	Sept 2	Tenzhug Celebration
	Sept 3	Tenzhug Celebration – Main Event
www.sakyatemple.org		

H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche's 2011 European Teaching Schedule

HOST	DATE	EVENT
FRANKFURT, GERMANY Sakya Kalden Ling	May 12	Hevajra
	May 13	Hevajra
	May 14	Vajrayogini
Linkstr.66 65933 Frankfurt Tel: +49 (0) 69 9563 7237 info@sakya-foundation.de www.sakya-foundation.de		
STUTTGART, GERMANY Sakya Dechen Ling	May 18	Public Lecture on The Middle Way in Buddhism
	May 19	Amitabha Initiation
Alexanderstr, 141A 70180 Stuttgart Tel:+49 (0) 711 780 3763 sakya.stuttgart@gmail.com www.dechen-sakya.de		
LAHR, GERMANY Ngakpa Rangshar Ling	May 21	Hevajra Cause Empowerment
	May 22	Hevajra Cause Empowerment
Schillerstrasse 3 77933 Lahr – Schwarzwald info@tibet-lahr.de www.tibet-lahr.de		
NEAR DETMOLD, GERMANY Dzongsar Ngari Dharma Mati Institute	May 25	Parting from the Four Attachments Manjushri Gangloma Initiation
	May 26	Parting from the Four Attachments Manjushri Gangloma Initiation
Rustenhof 5 33034 Brakel Tel: +49 (0) 172 214 3180 Tel: +49 (0) 172 691 6576 himalasia@wlink.com.np susanne.v.d.heide@gmx.de		
FRANKFURT, GERMANY Sakya Kalden Ling	May 28	Chenrezig Initiation in the King's Tradition
	May 29	Manjushri Namasangiti with lung of text
	June 15	Saka Dawa Celebration
	June 16 - 30	Pujas performed by Sakya monks
Linkstr.66 65933 Frankfurt Tel: +49 (0) 69 9563 7237 info@sakya-foundation.de www.sakya-foundation.de		

HOST	DATE	EVENT
BERLIN, GERMANY Rigpa-Zentrum	July 2	Parting from the Four Attachments
	July 3	Parting from the Four Attachments
Soorstraße 85 14050 Berlin Tel: + 49 (0)30 232 550 24 info@rigpa-zentrum-berlin.de www.rigpa-zentrum-berlin.de		
MOSCOW, RUSSIA	July 5	2-day Major Vajrakilaya Empowerment
	July 6	2-day Major Vajrakilaya Empowerment
	July 7	Teaching on Vajrakilaya Sadhana
	July 8	Necklace of the Prince: Evaluating the Various Types of People
	July 9	Necklace of the Prince: Evaluating the Various Types of People
ELISTA, RUSSIA	July 10	1-day Avalokiteshvara Initiation (from the Meh tra Zho Kha Tradition)
	July 11	General Buddha Initiation (by Norbu Tenpa)
	July 12	Bestowing of Bodhisattva and Refuge Vows
	July 13	Parting from the Four Attachments Melody of Excellent Greetings (by Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen)
	July 14	Parting from the Four Attachments Melody of Excellent Greetings (by Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen)
Kunga Yudroen kungayudroen@yahoo.co.in Sergey Zemskov sakyaserg@mail.ru		
BUDAPEST, HUNGARY Sakya Tashi Choling,	July 16	2-day Vajrakilaya Empowerment with Explanation
	July 17	2-day Vajrakilaya Empowerment with Explanation
	July 18	Public Talk (topic to be confirmed)
VIII.ker. Pál utca 3. II.emelet Budapest Tel: 0036 12662643 www.szajka.hu sakyahungary@gmail.com		
FLORENCE, ITALY Sakya Ngon Ga Ling	July 21	Evening: Conference on "Freedom and Enlightenment"
	July 22	Chenrezig Initiation in the King's Tradition
	July 23	21 Tara Empowerment (prerequisite: Chenrezig of previous day or other major empowerment)
	July 24	Teaching on Tara Practice – Question and Answer Session (same prerequisite)
Via Castello di Cireglio 54 51020 Cireglio (PT) Tel: + 39 0571 659 063 + 39 0573 391 83 info@vasubandhu.org info@sakyangongaling.it		

HOST	DATE	EVENT
BIARRITZ, FRANCE Sakya Thukje Ling	July 27	General Buddha Initiation (by Norbu Tenpa)
	July 28	Bestowing of Bodhisattva and Refuge Vows
	July 29	Teachings: Explanation on Love and Compassion - Eight Melody Experience of the Great Yogi (Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen)
	July 30	Teachings: Explanation on Love and Compassion - Eight Melody Experience of the Great Yogi (by Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen)
	July 31	Melody of Mind Transformation (by Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen)
Le Sahel - 25,av Edouard VII 64200 Biarritz Tel: +33 (0) 06 14 02 45 53 sakya.thukje.ling@gmail.com sakya64.net		
READING, UK Sakya Ling	Aug 3	Teaching on Vajrayogini Sadhana Long-Life Empowerment Puja
97A Swansea Road Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8HA Tel: +44 (0) 118 967 2744 sakyaling@hotmail.com		
BRISTOL, UK Sakya Buddhist Centre	Aug 5	Public Lecture on the Middle Way in Buddhism
	Aug 6	Major Vajrakilaya Empowerment
	Aug 7	Major Vajrakilaya Empowerment
121 Sommerville Road Bristol BS6 5BX Tel: +44 (0) 117 924 4424 info@dechen.org www.dechen.org		
BOURNEMOUTH, UK Sakya Thubten Ling	Aug 8	Welcome Reception at STL
	Aug 9	Day: Medicine Buddha Initiation Eve: Public Talk for Beginners
	Aug 10	Day: Buddha Shakyamuni Initiation Eve: Public Talk for Beginners
	Aug 11	Public Talk (Venue to be confirmed)
	Aug 12	Hevajra Cause Empowerment
	Aug 13	Hevajra Cause Empowerment
	Aug 14	Hevajra Path Empowerment
167 Shelbourne Road Bournemouth BH8 8RD Tel: +44 (0) 1202 538 108 info@stl.org.uk www.stl.org.uk		
LONDON, UK Sakya Dechen Ling	Aug 16	Orange Manjushri Initiation
31A St Lukes Road, Notting Hill London W11 1DB Tel: +44 (0) 20 7183 2109 london@dechen.org www.dechen.org		

HOST	DATE	EVENT
ALICANTE, SPAIN Fundación Sakya Pedreguer	Aug 19	Teachings on Mind Training (based on Sakya Pandita's text)
	Aug 20	Hevajra Cause Empowerment
	Aug 21	Hevajra Cause Empowerment
	Aug 22	Hevajra Path Empowerment
	Aug 23	Explanation of Non-Differentiation of Samsara and Nirvana and of Hevajra Sadhana (requisite: Hevajra Cause Empowerment)
	Aug 24	Continuation of previous day's teachings
	Aug 25	Sinhamuka Initiation for Despelling Obstacles and Curses
Avda. del Comtat, 1 Bis Residencial La Sella 03750 Pedreguer (Alicante) Tel: +34 (0) 96 576 07 77 secretaria@fundacionsakya.org www.fundacionsakya.org		
DENIA, SPAIN Sakya Drogon Ling	Aug 26	AM: Chenrezig Initiation in the King's Tradition PM: Chenrezig Tsembhupa Teaching (requisite: Chenrezig Initiation in the King's Tradition)
	Aug 27	Continuation of the previous day's teachings
Partida el Palmar Cami Les Bovetes al Mar, 26 03700 Denia (Alicante) Tel: +34 (0) 96 576 09 48 info@sakyadrogonling.com www.sakyadrogonling.com		
BARCELONA, SPAIN Sakya Gephel Ling	Aug 29	AM: Necklace of the Prince: Evaluating the Various Types of People PM: Necklace of the Prince: Evaluating the Various Types of People
	Aug 30	AM: Amitayus with Hayagriva Initiation PM: Necklace of the Prince: Evaluating the Various Types of People
	Aug 31	PM: Vajrakilaya Preparation Day Empowerment
	Sept 1	PM: Vajrakilaya Main Day Empowerment
	Sept 2	AM: Teaching on Vajrakilaya Sadhana PM: Teaching on Vajrakilaya Sadhana
Carrer de Trafalgar 50 08010 Barcelona Tel: +34 (0) 933 150 240 sakyagephelling@gmail.com sakyagephelling.wordpress.com		
KUTTOLSHEIM, FRANCE Sakya Tsechen Ling	Sept 4	Green Tara Teachings and Empowerment
5, Rond-Point du Vignoble 67520 Kuttolsheim Tel: +33 (0) 388 877 380 sakya.tsechen.ling@orange.fr		



The Sakya College

The Sakya College in Mussoorie, the first of its kind in India, is an Institute of philosophical and religious study, where the preservation of Tibetan Buddhist monasticism and scholarly tradition are placed at the highest premium.

Uprooted from its land of origin, with most of its scriptural resources destroyed or lost, the spiritual wealth of the Dharma that had thrived in Tibet was threatened with extinction when Tibetans were forced to flee from their country in 1959.

But thanks to the unwavering efforts of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, and other dedicated Lamas, precious scriptures were gradually recuperated and collected, and monastic centres were established in exile where

monks could become vessels for the ocean of wisdom contained in these texts, and be qualified to teach their contents, thus reviving the treasures of the Tibetan Buddhist spiritual tradition and allowing it to be transmitted to successive generations.

It is with this in mind that, with the blessing and guidance of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, the most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche founded the Sakya College in Mussoorie, India, on the 19th of December 1972, the anniversary of the Parinirvana of Sakya Pandita.

The college had humble beginnings in a small rented house in Barlowganj, Mussoorie, with only seven students attending. One of these, Lama Thubten Nyima, recalls:



H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche walking with Appey Khen Rinpoche during his student days at Sakya College

“I remember my time at Sakya College as a very special time, very wonderful. We were very few students, living conditions were difficult, but we had a happy mind. I felt very fortunate to have such a good teacher, such a holy teacher. This kept my mind happy, very happy all the time.”

The college moved to a new site in 1980, and its construction was completed in 1992. Nearly forty years on, it occupies premises of great beauty, overlooking the Doon Valley, between Dehradun and Mussoorie. It counts as its alumni such eminent teachers as Their Eminences Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, H.E. Dzongsar Rinpoche and H.E. Luding Khen Rinpoche, to name but a few. It is responsible for the formation of hundreds among the most capable minds within the Sakyapa monastic community.

Appey Khen Rinpoche, also founder of the

International Buddhist Academy in Kathmandu, Nepal, was one of the most eminent scholars of the Sakya tradition, until his passing into parinirvana in December 2010. He was one of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin’s main teachers, and himself studied under some of the most outstanding Tibetan teachers until he left for India when Tibet lost its freedom. After founding the Sakya College, he acted as its director and main teacher until 1985, when he resigned from active duty. Rinpoche, however, continued to provide the college with his invaluable support and advice.

He was succeeded in 1985 by the Ven. Khenpo Jamyang Tenzin, who very aptly governed the college for four years, until Ven. Khenpo Migmar Tsering took charge in May of 1989. The latter served as the college’s head teacher and administrator over the following ten years, and his great qualities won him the love and devotion of all his students. His death in 1999, following a tragic illness, was a great loss to the institution.

The college is now under the able direction of Khenpo Gyatso, its principal. Khenpo Gyatso has not only been successful in steering the college along a steady path, but has also taken it upon himself to create the Sakya Nuns’ Study Institute in Manduwala, India, a sister institution to the Sakya College, and the first of its kind in the Sakya tradition.

The fundamental purpose of the Sakya College is to ensure the preservation and transmission of the Dharma, in particular the Sakya tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, by allowing monks with superior capacities to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Buddhist philosophical tradition, to then be qualified to transmit it to others.

It now accommodates some 200 students, selected from Sakya monasteries in India, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet on the basis of their intellectual capacity,



The Sakya College garden, maintained by the students

education, character and commitment to serve as future teachers and monastic leaders.

The average age at admission is sixteen years, and the minimum stay at the college is seven years, after which the students receive the Kachupa degree, equivalent to a B. A. They have the option of staying on for two more years to obtain a Lobpon degree, equivalent to an M.A. The complete thirteen years of study will award them a Rabjampa degree, equivalent to a Ph.D., for which they need to author a thesis and defend it.

The college follows a basic curriculum approved by a committee of Sakya scholars and consists essentially of the eighteen most important Sakyapa scholastic scriptures in their Tibetan translation, along with their Indian and Tibetan commentaries. The main subjects are the study of the Prajnaparamita, the Vinaya, Madhyamaka, Abhidharma, Logic and Epistemology, and Right Practice of the Vows. Other subjects are also covered, including tantric philosophy, ritual practice and English.

Students have access to one of the best Sakyapa research libraries, furnished with nearly 10,000 books,

some in Tibetan, some in foreign languages. The college has also published works of its own.

The college graduates are among the most highly rated scholars of Tibetan Buddhism, and are greatly sought after as teachers in monasteries in India, Nepal and abroad. Their role is crucial to the preservation and dissemination of the Dharma, and so, the service that the college renders to their education is of the utmost importance to Tibetan Buddhism, and to the Sakya tradition in particular.



Exam time at Sakya College

The Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche (1927-2010)

On the 28th of December 2010, at 9:30 am, the Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche passed into parinirvana at his residence in Kathmandu. He will be immensely missed by his many disciples.

Appey Khen Rinpoche was one of the most eminent Sakya scholars of our day. He studied under some of the greatest masters of the past century, such as Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodrö and Dezhung Ajam Rinpoche, and was himself tutor to His Holiness the Sakya Trizin and several other distinguished masters, including H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche and Sogyal Rinpoche. Among his many accomplishments, he was responsible for the creation of the Sakya College in Mussoorie, India, and the International Buddhist Academy in Kathmandu, Nepal, two of the most important institutes of Buddhist learning today.

Khenchen Appey Yöngten Zangpo was born in Dergé, East Tibet, in 1927. Shortly after his birth, he was recognised as the reincarnated tulku of Khenpo Tsewang from Karma Palpung Monastery. His parents were enjoined to let him enter the monastery but, being ardent Sakya followers, they refused to grant their permission. And when he was nine, Rinpoche was sent to Serjong Monastery in Dergé, where he was to spend the following fourteen years, nine of which were dedicated to intensive study at the monastery shedra, the final ones under the tutelage of Khenpo Dragyab Lodrö. Right from an early age, it became obvious that he was no ordinary student –



he was always ahead of the lessons being taught, and showed a deep degree of realization of the texts he studied, aside from memorising them with the greatest of ease.

Rinpoche then went on to pursue his studies at the Dzongsar Shedra. Conditions at the college were harsh, there was no money, and the study load was heavy. At night, this had to be done by candlelight, a strain to the eyes. So when the moon was bright enough, Rinpoche would bring his sutras near the window, and read the scriptures using the moon as his

lamp. As the moon moved across the sky, Rinpoche would shift his books to follow its rays. He was so captivated by what he was studying that, on one occasion, he found himself outdoors: unawares, he had followed the moon's rays right out of his room into the courtyard!

After completing his studies at the Dzongsar Shedra, Appey Khen Rinpoche returned to Serjong monastery and, at the age of 25, became its abbot. Rinpoche was known for the strict observance of his samaya, and was such an accomplished scholar and practitioner, that he was highly respected by all four branches of Tibetan Buddhism.

In 1957, he was made abbot of Ngor Monastery, during which time he travelled briefly to Sikkim to visit his teacher Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodrö. He returned to Ngor, where he stayed until 1959, when he again travelled to Sikkim in order to seek a mo (prediction) from his teacher. This was a fortunate turn of events, as he happened to be there when the Chinese marched into Tibet.

When Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodrö passed away, Rinpoche stayed on at the Palace Monastery in Gangtok, in order to keep a deathbed promise to



Appey Khen Rinpoche with H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, c. 1974

his teacher to be tutor to Sogyal Rinpoche. Present at many of these teachings was also Khyentse Chokyi Lodrö's tulku, H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche.

In 1964, Rinpoche was asked to become His Holiness the Sakya Trizin's tutor and acquaint Him with the main Sakyapa scriptures, a relationship that was to endure right up to Rinpoche's passing.

Later, Rinpoche was also asked to take charge of the education of H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche. He was two years into a long-term retreat in Sikkim at the time, and had to abandon it in order to take on this new responsibility.

It was around this period that, following a request by, and with the guidance of, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, Rinpoche founded the Sakya College. And so, on the 19th of December 1972, the anniversary of the Great Sakya Pandita, the Sakya College was created. Its beginnings were humble, with all of seven



His Holiness and Appey Khen Rinpoche with Phodrang attendants in Mussoorie – late 60's



Appey Rinpoche with His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, H.E. Luding Khenchen Rinpoche, H. E Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and H.E. Luding Khen Rinpoche, early eighties

students enrolled, its premises a small rented house in Mussoorie, India.

From the inception of the College in 1972 right up to 1985, Appey Khen Rinpoche took on the role of director, fundraiser, principal and teacher, and steered the institution through very difficult times. He was totally devoted to his students, and rarely missed a class. Whenever, for example, he went to visit His Holiness at the Phodrang, he was invariably invited to spend the night, but would always decline so as not to let his students down by missing classes the following morning. And so, as there were no cars at hand in those days, he would walk all the way back to Mussoorie. In return, his students revered him, not only for his great kindness, but also for his deep and vast knowledge of the scriptures and the precision and clarity with which he rendered them. These same qualities apply to his written work, notably his commentary on Sakya Pandita's "Clarifying the Sage's Intent", a description of the stages of the Bodhisattva



Appey Khen Rinpoche 1978

path from the beginning up to full Buddhahood.

When he retired from his duties at the College in 1986, Rinpoche moved to Nepal, where he spent some years in retreat. Between retreats, Rinpoche spent a great deal of effort in collecting and propagating rare Sakya texts, thus ensuring their preservation.

In 2001, Rinpoche established the International Buddhist Academy in Kathmandu, Nepal, with an aim to give international students the opportunity to engage in the study and practice of Tibetan Buddhism, as well as in the study of the Tibetan language. The enrollment in the Academy of young Tibetan monastic Dharma scholars learning English, Chinese, Spanish, computer literacy and translation, provides IBA with a symbiotic cultural and linguistic mix that has given birth to one of the leading programmes for the translation of Tibetan Buddhist texts into English and, eventually, other foreign languages.

Appey Khen Rinpoche spent the last years of his life in retreat at his residence in Kathmandu, until his death last December. He was generous to the end. Even though he was in great discomfort because of his failing health, he selflessly tended to the needs of anyone who came to him for counsel or blessings. Those who took care of him over the last months of his life never ceased to be awed by the degree of his

kindness and humility. He was adamant not to be a burden, and insisted on taking care of his own needs until he was physically unable to do so. When asked if he would allow his last rites to be performed at IBA, he showed his usual modesty by begging to have a simple cremation at his home. He was also hesitant to create unease among western students at IBA, whose culture generally views death with a certain amount of trepidation, but finally acceded to the insistent requests of his disciples to let it be performed at IBA.

His attendants also marvelled at the clarity of his mind, which never flagged. He gave advice to those who needed it right up till the end. Over his last days, he himself organized a rota among his attendants so as to make sure they had some free time. He also stipulated what should be done after his death: he left clear instructions that, at the moment of his passing, his door should be closed for three days, so that his retreat should not be disturbed. He also instructed that His Holiness the Sakya Trizin be informed immediately, but that no one else be told before the end of those three days.

As his last day dawned, his breathing became shallow and tenuous. Rinpoche turned to his right

side and adopted the Sleeping Lion's position. At 9:30 that morning, the Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche entered the state of tukdam.

Nepal had been afflicted by a particularly harsh drought, with no rain falling during the preceding months. But, at the time of Rinpoche's passing, a tremendous cloudburst poured over Kathmandu, which persisted for several hours. There was also a brief snowfall, with numerous flakes in the shape of flowers. A last gesture of generosity from one of the Dharma's great Bodhisattvas.

His demise is a huge loss to the Dharma in general, and to the Sakya tradition in particular. He will be grieved by numberless disciples around the world. His legacy, however, will live on as it continues to bring the gift of Dharma to successive generations of students. As one of the most eminent scholars of Tibetan Buddhism, Rinpoche dedicated his entire life to the promotion of the study of the Buddha Dharma. He was one of its main pillars and, to a large extent, was responsible for the recuperation, preservation and propagation of Sakyapa texts. If it were not for him, it is doubtful that the Sakya School and its precious teachings would have survived as they have.

Above all, however, Rinpoche shone by the level of his realization, made manifest by the degree of his compassion. When asked what they considered to be Rinpoche's greatest quality, those who had been close to him almost unanimously concurred: compassion. He always maintained that compassion was the essence of the Dharma and that, although the holy sutras and tantras lead to final liberation, the highest practice of all is that of compassion.



Appey Khen Rinpoche – 2006



Appey Khen Rinpoche teaching at IBA – 2007

A Supplication Prayer for Khenchen Appey Rinpoche's Swift Rebirth

by H.H. the Sakya Trizin

By the blessing power of the myriad objects of refuge,
Root and Lineage Gurus, endowed with Kindness and Compassion,
Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and both wrathful and peaceful tutelary deities,
May this aspiration prayer be fulfilled.

I supplicate to the Supreme Guide of living beings,
Possessing the power to manifest every noble activity, fulfilling disciples' needs,
Sovereignty of the Treasure of the Three Secret Qualities (1)
Of Vagindra Manjushree Guru.

While you, my lord, from time immemorial, with the mighty armour of effort,
Have been bearing the great burden of teachings and practices, of Jina in general,
And the great compassionate Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, in particular,
What manifestation is this, that you have dissolved your wondrous Rupa Kaya?

While Buddhas and other witnesses are not present,
And degenerating time is clouding over, like darkness,
If you, also, enter into the sphere of peace,
On whom do we depend for refuge and protection?

Therefore, by the effect of the sun-like rays of Bodhicitta
On the pure, ocean-like minds of the faithful ones,
May a youthful lotus-like reincarnation, fully adorned
With magnificent and beautiful petals, swiftly appear!

I pray, may you reign exactly as you did, over the kingdom of former life,
With a feast of sharing honey-like Elegant Sayings,
Having assembled all Fortunate Disciples who, like bees,
Are attracted by the fragrance of the Three-Fold Magnificent Wheels (2)

By the blessing of the undecieving Triple Gem,
By the power of the infallible causal and resultant interdependence,
By the power of our pure and genuine supplication,
May the goal of this prayer be fulfilled exactly as aspired.

Sakya Trizin Ngawang Kunga prayed intensely thus, driven by intolerable grief, at the
entering into the Dharmadhatu Sphere of our Benevolent and Compassionate, Matchless Guru,
Excellent Guide, Tutor of All, the Most Venerable Khenchen Aphey Rinpoche.

May this prayer be fulfilled as aspired.

1 Body, speech and mind

2 The Three-fold Wheels:

- a) the Wheel of study through reading, listening and contemplation*
- b) the Wheel of abandonment through concentration*
- c) the Wheel of service, through activities*

Rendered in English by: Jhampa Losal

His Holiness the Sakya Trizin remembers

The Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche

I had a very long relationship with Khenchen Appey Rinpoche, as I received innumerable teachings from him, and asked him to found Sakya College. Rinpoche started the Sakya College in the early seventies, at a time when there were very few scholars, very few people with an in-depth knowledge of philosophy. Although at that time conditions were very difficult, he taught and also administered the College and it became very successful. Today, most of our abbots, teachers, administrators and scholars are his students. It is largely due to his efforts that we have been able to continue our lineage.

He first came to us in the early sixties, in 1964, I believe, and then stayed with us until the early seventies. Then he started Sakya College, but kept teaching us on and off, even when he was involved with Sakya College. So I think he taught us for some twenty years or so. Actually, you might say that he taught us until the day of his passing. I was here last September, and he was very sick. Even then, he gave us a lot of teachings, not formal teachings, of course, but just through speaking to us. And we were in constant contact with him until his last days.

He was never formal when he taught, particularly with us. He was always very informal. Normally, when we receive teachings, we have to make mandala offerings and so on. But when he was teaching us, he felt that this was not necessary. He just talked, and gave teachings through what seemed a normal conversation. This was very special. And he was



always very joyful. Most other teachers, when they give teachings, are very serious and formal. But he was always very joyful. He gave a lot of examples, told many stories, and was always smiling and laughing.

He was very caring and compassionate. For example, when people undertake large building projects, they don't spare a thought for insects or tiny creatures, but when he built Sakya College, he was always very careful not to harm them.

He never thought of himself but rather always made sure that others were taken care of. When we visited him in Kathmandu last year, although he was very ill, he never complained, and only thought of making us comfortable.

I'm very happy to have had Khenchen Appey Rinpoche as one of my main teachers, and I'm grateful for everything that he taught my sons and myself.

Adapted from an interview with His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, conducted by Jurek Schreiner

Appey Khen Rinpoche at Sakya College

by Acharya Lama Jamyang Lekshey

I was one of the first seven students chosen by His Holiness to study at Sakya College, and so I had the opportunity to spend many years with Khen Appey Rinpoche and study under him. I had heard a lot about him before, and so I was very excited about joining the College.

Khen Appey Rinpoche was very humble. Even though he had won a widespread reputation as a scholar and a practitioner, he was always humble and simple. At the beginning, there were few sponsors for Sakya College, so we had serious financial difficulties, and we had to live very simply. Rinpoche shared everything with us. We all lived under the same roof, under the same conditions, eating the same food.

We were renting a small house, called Chandrabawan, There was no common toilet or bathroom. So we walked some five minutes down the hill to a small hut in ruins, with a tin roof. This we used as an outhouse. We put a partition, so we had two toilets. It had no proper door, just a cloth that we hung at the entrance. Khen Appey Rinpoche also used to walk down and use it. Actually, there was one toilet in the house, but Rinpoche offered it to Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, who was also studying there. It would have been normal for him to share with Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, but he never did. Khyentse is the reincarnation of Rinpoche's guru, so

he felt he needed to show him devotion and respect.

Whenever he went anywhere, he would either walk or use public transport, depending on the distance. Whenever he went from Chandrabawan to Mussoorie, some 3 or 4 kilometres away, he would always walk. He never took a taxi unless there was absolutely no other alternative. When he went to Dehradun, he always went by bus, even though he became terribly car sick. He did this to save money for Sakya College. What's more, when we bought land and started building Sakya College, he worked alongside us as a labourer. He worked just as hard as we did.

I was with him for nearly eleven years, from 1972 to 1984. In all those years, I never missed a single class, except for one week when I was ill. I had to come to Dehradun. I remember Rinpoche was teaching 'Pramanavartika', a text on logic, during those days.

We had a problem with texts. At the beginning, we didn't have enough texts. We did have the root texts, but commentaries were very rare. What few commentaries were available, students would take shifts in using. Rinpoche himself usually had a copy of the texts, which he would usually borrow from His Holiness' library.

He would always revise the text before he

gave a teaching. We wondered why, as he was so knowledgeable, and didn't really need to. But we later learned that he thought that a teacher must prepare well before he teaches, as a way to value the Dharma and develop motivation. He wanted his students to really understand what he was teaching, and so he always made sure that he himself had a profound knowledge of what he was teaching. Plus, he went through many texts by other scholars, so as to be able to teach us the different views and explanations of other schools. This I found remarkable. It is rare to find teachers in any of the schools who will explain all the traditions to their students. This requires a great deal of intelligence and knowledge.

Rinpoche would never engage in idle talk. Whenever he gave a teaching, he would always stick to the topic at hand. He would never digress and talk about other things. Also when he gave advice to students on how to be a good person, how to be a

good student, how to be a good practitioner, he would use the teachings as a guideline.

He also had a way of teaching that was different from the norm. He would teach in such a way that his students would always understand the meaning of what he was presenting. At the beginning, he kept things really simple, and gradually, as the students progressed, he would explain more complicated points. He would always teach according to the students' level and capabilities. He was extremely clear in his presentation, never used informal language, and never hesitated. His teachings could be written down as texts, and wouldn't need any corrections.

Beyond being an accomplished scholar, a dedicated teacher and a fervent practitioner, Rinpoche set an example for all Dharma practitioners through the sincerity of his guru devotion and the virtue of his behaviour.



The Last Days of Appey Khen Rinpoche

One of the attendants who were with Appey Khen Rinpoche during his last days, recounts:

“There were five of us taking care of Rinpoche during his last days. With Lama Thubten we would have been six, but he was only able to come at the last minute. At about nine on the night before his passing, he asked us to take shifts, so that we would all be able to get some sleep. And he said: “If something happens, please just inform His Holiness, but don’t tell anyone else.” His voice was a little bit weak, and he had turned to lie on his right side, so we all thought that he was going to leave us, because he had prepared for that day – it was the anniversary of the parinirvana of Chögyal Phagpa and also that of his guru Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche. He had asked us to instruct IBA to perform a Guru Yoga puja and a Mahakala puja on that day, and to conduct a Monlam three days later. And then he said: “If something happens tonight, best not to inform His Holiness. He shouldn’t be disturbed, and so you should wait till tomorrow morning.” And then he said that three of us should get some sleep, so I went to my room.

At two in the morning, it was our turn to be with Rinpoche. Lama Thubten had arrived, but didn’t want to startle Rinpoche, and decided to wait until morning to see him. During the night, Rinpoche would sit up for a while, then he would lie down. He asked me if I knew how to turn on the massage machine, and I said yes, which wasn’t true. But I did switch it on, and placed it under his back. After an hour or so, he said that he wanted to lie down, and he slept for a while. He woke up and asked for a drink of water. I held him up as he sipped, and then laid him back down. Jampa Losal was beside me, holding his hand. Then he said: “Don’t be sad, there’s no need to be sad. I’m all right, there’s no problem.” And then he said in English: “My only problem is blood pressure. That’s my only problem. Other than that, everything is all right. Don’t

be sad.” He repeated this several times.

Around six thirty, he told us to wake everybody up. We all went to his room, and he said: “Everyone is up, now I can go to sleep.” He fell asleep, so I went to my room to do my sadhana, and when I finished I lay down for a while, as I hadn’t been able to sleep during the night. At around nine, Lama Thubten came in and said that things weren’t looking good, so I went with him to Rinpoche’s room. Rinpoche stopped breathing at nine thirty. He was gone. It was very simple, very soft, there was no pain, nothing. Gendun had gone out to get some medicine and when he came back, he said: “No, you’re mistaken, he’s still alive.” He couldn’t believe it, because Rinpoche looked so vibrant. He had turned to his right side, and looked very peaceful, as if he was sleeping.

Right to the end, suffering as he was from such a terrible disease, Rinpoche was always worrying about others. As I was standing there next to his bed, he kept looking at me, from head to toe, up and down, and said to the others about me: “His clothes are not warm enough. Give him socks. I’ve got socks in my cupboard. Please give him some.”

When he left India for Nepal in 1986, I took him there. I was hoping to stay with him, but His Holiness asked me to come back to Dehradun to finish the construction of Sakya College. So a few weeks ago, when he heard that I was coming, he said: “Ha! Once, he sent me to Kathmandu, and now he’s coming to send me up there!”

And then he kept saying: “There’s no point in staying on too long, it just becomes a burden for others.” And we would say: “Please don’t say these things, Rinpoche. His Holiness requested that you stay long, so please try your best to stay long. But finally he went – everybody has to go.”

Remembering Great Masters

Drogön Chögyal Phagpa (1235-1280)



The 22nd day of the 11th month of the Tibetan lunar month (26th January) marks the anniversary of the Parinirvana of Drogön Chögyal Phagpa.

Drogön Chögyal Phagpa was the fifth founding master of the Sakya order of Tibetan Buddhism. He was born in the Female Wood Sheep year to Machig Kunchid, consort to Sakya Pandita's younger brother Sonam Gyaltzen. Many auspicious signs accompanied his conception and birth.

Already in his early childhood, Chögyal Phagpa showed signs of being a special being. He had

vivid memories of previous incarnations and could spontaneously read and write in different scripts. At the age of three, he was already giving teachings and could recite from memory an elaborate Hevajra sadhana. Scholars were so impressed by his qualities that they gave him the name 'Phagpa', which means "Holy Being". He took novice ordination vows from his uncle Sakya Pandita when he was ten, and by the time he was 17, Sakya Pandita had entrusted him with all his knowledge, teachings and responsibilities. Sakya Pandita left his body the following year.

Two years later, in 1253, the Mongolian Emperor Kublai Khan, Emperor of China, invited Chögyal Phagpa to his court, and was highly impressed by his intelligence and learning. He put to him difficult Dharma questions that no other master had hitherto been able to answer. These Chögyal Phagpa answered with such ease and clarity that the Emperor requested Dharma teachings from him. Chögyal Phagpa answered that in order to receive these, the Emperor would have to look to him as his guru, which meant that he should prostrate to him whenever he came into his presence and should always place him on a higher throne than his own. This posed a problem for the Emperor, as if he was seen doing this, his authority would be undermined. They agreed that he would do so in private meetings, but that they would occupy equal seats when in public. Chögyal Phagpa bestowed the Hevajra empowerment onto the Emperor, and as offering, Kublai Khan gave him a considerable amount of land to govern, including the three provinces of Tibet. The Emperor also offered valuable gifts, the most precious among which was the famous White Conch Shell that the Buddha had used to summon disciples to teachings. This most holy relic was brought back to Sakya by Chögyal Phagpa, and remains there to this day. Also, in answer to Chögyal Phagpa's request, the Emperor ordered that the practice of population cleansing, whereby the old and disabled were drowned every three years, be suspended. He also conferred upon his teacher the title of 'Tishri', which means 'Imperial Preceptor'.

The Emperor gradually realized the qualities of his teacher, and his devotion grew stronger and stronger. On one occasion, in order to further bolster his disciple's faith, Chögyal Phagpa performed a miracle: he cut off his own head and limbs, which reappeared as the five Dhyani Buddhas. The two developed such a strong lama-patron relationship that

they were compared to 'the sun and the moon in the sky'.

In 1255, Kublai Khan issued a decree called 'Bhande Shet Kyedma', which established Buddhism as the official religion of Mongolia and released Tibetans from taxation and unfair practices. It also stipulated that Buddhism in Tibet should be practiced under the headship of the Sakyapas.

The following year, Chögyal Phagpa invited the great master Nyethangpa Dragpa Senge from Tibet, requesting from him that he help him complete his religious education. Sakya Pandita himself had recommended this eminent teacher to Chögyal Phagpa. From him Chögyal Phagpa received many teachings and took his full ordination vows at the age of 21.

In 1266, at the age of thirty one, Chögyal Phagpa returned to Sakya, where he was given an overwhelming welcome by the Tibetan chieftains, who had come from all over the land to pay their respects. Once there, he united all of Tibet under one central government, with Sakya as its administrative centre. He undertook much-needed construction and restoration work at the monastery, and sponsored the writing in gold ink of over 200 volumes of the Buddha's teachings, which bear superb illuminations, and are still to be found in the monastery's library.

In 1268, Kublai Khan once again invited Chögyal Phagpa to the Mongolian court. He had asked him to devise a script for the Mongolian language that would help unify the nation's many languages. When Chögyal Phagpa arrived at court, he presented the Emperor with the "Phagpa Script", which was adopted as the official Mongolian script. Kublai Khan once again honoured him with lavish gifts and exalted titles.

In 1276, at the age of 41, Chögyal Phagpa returned to Sakya. From a vision that he had, the



Emperor knew that this was their last parting, and it was a sorrowful occasion for both him and his guru. Chögyal Phagpa left with a huge retinue, and many auspicious signs appeared at the time of his departure and throughout his journey. Once in Sakya, he ordained many thousands of monks, while ceaselessly giving teachings and empowerments, as well as composing several texts. On one occasion, as he imparted a fourteen-day teaching, many miracles occurred. A shower of perfumed flowers fell every day of the teaching, five rainbows surrounded the sun, and celestial offerings appeared spontaneously. Those with pure vision saw Buddhas and Bodhisattvas emanating rays of light that filled the whole of space.

Chögyal Phagpa continued to teach and compose until he left his body in 1280, at the age of 46. This early end to such an illustrious life had been prophesied by Sakya Pandita when Chögyal Phagpa was still a youth. Sakya Pandita had also prophesied that when Chögyal Phagpa would approach the time

of his parinirvana, celestial beings and nature itself would go into mourning. And this came to pass.

On the 22nd day of the 11th month of the Male Iron Dragon year, the earth trembled, a rain of flowers fell, celestial music was heard, heavenly perfumes filled the air, and celestial beings appeared as Drogön Chögyal Phagpa entered Mahaparinirvana.

Chögyal Phagpa was one of the most accomplished masters to have graced this world. Throughout his short life, he never stopped performing holy activities, firmly establishing the Dharma far and wide, in China, Mongolia and Tibet, building monasteries and ordaining thousands of monks, and placing countless people on the path to liberation. He left behind him an inestimable Dharma legacy, much of which has survived the centuries. His written works are still being used today and are prominent among the texts used in the study of Dharma.

A Gift of Dharma to Kublai Khan (As spoken by the Sakya-pa Chögyal Phagpa)

To the incomparable Enlightened One, who is endowed with the splendour of fame in name and the splendour of wondrous virtues in actual fact, I offer homage.

Although you, mighty emperor, know already the discourses on worldly and spiritual science, still, as with the songs and music of musicians to which you listen again and again even when you have heard them all before, why shouldn't a poet repeat wise words?

All of the countless teachings of Dharma taught by the Sage for the sake of countless disciples indeed are meant to be practised. But how may this be done?

Just as a man bound by fear and shame would not disobey his king's command but dwell in right conduct without harming others and, as a result, would ever grow in good fortune and even earn the praises of his king, so, too, with a person who accepts, in accordance with his ability to accomplish them, the rules of discipline enjoined by the Sage to help beginners on the Hinayana and Mahayana paths: if, after properly receiving vows from an abbot, that person would then guard them because he is bound both by fear of seen and unseen sufferings in worldly existence and by shame whenever he reflects, 'The multitudes of Noble Ones who know the thoughts of other beings will be shamed if I break my vows, . . .'

He, as a result, would become a foundation not only of seen and unseen joys in worldly existence, but of the virtues of perfect liberation; he would also

become a worthy object of veneration for men and gods and even receive the praises of Buddhas.

These three realms of existence, after all, are just suffering, while Nirvana, too, is just peace. Looking with pity, therefore, on those who wish either for worldly existence or Nirvana, it is the Buddha alone who, Himself free from sorrow, removes sorrow, and who, having Himself attained great Joy, bestows joy. And He has appeared from amongst beings like ourselves.

The methods He used we can also use. Without timidity and laziness, therefore, you should unwaveringly aspire to win highest enlightenment and feel free to think, "I must surely attain Buddhahood". Guard as your own life the vows you have made which, if violated, will cause you to be burnt in hells and which, if preserved, will enable you to experience truly wonderful results in proceeding from Joy to Joy even now.

Since the three sets of vows - of the Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana paths - are the foundation whereon all virtues may arise, remain and grow within oneself and others, try from the very first to be firm in their observance.

Become certain that the Teaching, which is virtuous in its beginning, middle and end, and whose words are quite flawless and not contradictory to the two logical proofs of valid knowledge, is the unique spiritual way among ways.

Know, too, that the Enlightened One who taught it is endowed with unhindered wisdom and great compassion - since He revealed (the truth) without close-fistedness - and also with tremendous power.

Because they are His followers and a gathering of beings with virtues similar to His, because also your own sphere of spiritual activity is identical to theirs, know the noble Assembly of Bodhisattvas to be the best field for increasing your merit.

Realising that it is your preceptor who points out and introduces you to these Three Jewels, that he is endowed with the same virtues they have, and that he sustains you with kindness, always attend and meditate upon him with unflagging faith.

Since they are like yourself in having the nature of being endowed with the causes of pain and with a constant state of unsatisfactoriness, and like yourself, moreover, in wishing themselves to be free from unhappiness and its causes, you should unceasingly meditate great compassion for all living beings.

Recalling the benefits of virtue, which you will need in order to attain highest enlightenment and to achieve others' good as well as your own purposes, strive wholeheartedly with genuine devotion to acquire it. In brief, since a mind endowed with faith, compassion and devotion is the precursor of all spiritual accomplishments, perform every least virtue with these three present.

Envision the Body of the Enlightened One either in front of you or as your own body, and visualise that your dwelling place is a Buddhafeld wherein all beings are Conquerors surrounded by Bodhisattvas and Disciples. Then worship yourself and others with oceans of offerings consisting of the enjoyment of the five sense-objects.

Realise that your own virtuous preceptor and all the Conquerors are truly equal and nondual in form, activity and essential nature. At all times, you should envision him in front of you, or seated atop the crown

of your head, or within the lotus of your heart, and pray to him or meditate upon him as being nondual with yourself.

Of virtue, nonvirtue, pleasure, pain and all the phenomena of Samsara and Nirvana, mind is the substratum.

If you were to examine that mind thoroughly from every angle, you would realise that it has neither colour nor shape, nor is it single or manifold. It therefore has no nature; therefore it is not arisen, neither does it remain nor cease. It is devoid of both centre and periphery, and is thus away from all extremes. It has just the nature of space.

Even so, cognition is not stopped. Hence mind has the nature of nondual cognition-and-emptiness.

As one's own mind is, so, too, is the nature of all beings' minds. Understand thoroughly that all phenomena are nondual appearance-and-emptiness and place your mind in meditation without grasping.

Through meditating nondually on the two objects (one's preceptor and the Enlightened One) and objectlessness (emptiness), you will attain a superior meditative state of tranquil concentration (shamatha) that cannot be disturbed by thoughts.

Joyfully remembering that every act of virtue or nonvirtue increases the strength of one's virtuous or nonvirtuous inclinations, always bring virtues to mind and strengthen them.

Especially should you recollect and analyse the support, form and experience of your meditation whenever you have meditated upon an object. Through examining further the interdependent origination of their causes and conditions - however many they may be - you will attain meditative insight (vidarshana) through realising the true state of their suchness, i.e., that no support, form or experience whatsoever exists.

Following the performance of virtues, you should gather together in one all the merit acquired through that (meditation and the like), and fully dedicate them

to the attainment of perfect enlightenment by yourself and all these countless beings.

Even though transferrable merit may not have been acquired at the time you offer prayers, your wishes nonetheless will be fulfilled if you pray for a great purpose to be achieved - for mind alone is chief. Every virtue which is adorned by this kind of recollection, dedication and noble prayer will increase unceasingly and eventually become the cause of great good for oneself and others.

Everything that is experienced and all other conditioned things (samskrtadharma) i.e., the five aggregates, the senses, sense-objects and sense consciousnesses) are devoid of any nature of their own because they all depend upon causes and conditions.

You should know, therefore, that these external objects also, which appear in various forms to, and are experienced by, mind that is stained by mental impressions, are not real; they are like magical shows which appear due to a variety of causes they are also like dreams that occur during sleep.

The (so-called) 'unconditioned dharmas' (asamskrtadharma) are simply ascriptions. A person would have to be mad to wish to propose meaningless names for them, or to indulge in thoughts about them and thereby accept them as 'conditioned dharmas'.

Never scorn the connection between deeds and their results, for (the teachings on) the interdependent origination of cause-and-result as it operates in the sphere of relative truth are not deceptive. You will experience the ripening results of your actions.

There are 'eternalists' in whose view the substantiality of phenomena is accepted. However, no object whatsoever exists which is devoid of (both) direction (i.e., dimension) and time (i.e., consciousness): if you were to analyse the forms of direction and space, you could not possibly find a single entity (which is not reducible to its component parts). And if a 'single entity' does not exist, whence

could 'many' appear? As there is no existence other than these, the conceptualisation of 'existence' (itself) is an inferior one.

Just as there is no length without shortness, how could a nature of 'nonexistence' be apprehended when even a nature of 'existence' is not obtained?

Know, intelligent one, that the Real also does not consist of 'both' (existence and nonexistence) because this possibility has been removed by the rejection (of each individually); nor does it consist of being 'neither' of the two, because there is no logical proof for this possibility and, in any case, there is no possible 'bothness' to which it could be an alternative.

But if we were to conclude that 'Mind alone is real since it is formless and thus has no directions', (we would have to admit that) it also becomes plural and false if subject and object are identical, (the latter being manifold).

If, however, subject and object are different to one another, how then do objects become objectified and mind subjectified. If the two arise dually, in what way (e.g, simultaneously or otherwise), do they appear? Finally, what kind of liberation is achieved merely by rejecting illusory external appearances?

Since the object is not established as real by nature, the subject, too, is not established as real. The claim that there exists somehow a pure consciousness apart from these two, is as extremely wrong as the (Sankhya philosophers' notion of a) 'Self' (purusha) distinct from the transformations of primal nature (prakrter vikara).

Be free from supports, knowing that all phenomena from the first, are unarisen, natureless, away from extremes and like space.

Marvellous and much more wondrous than any wonder is this knowledge which does not relinquish the emptiness of all dharmas nor yet stop the process of interdependent origination!

Realise that objects are the nonduality of

appearance-and-emptiness, that mind is the nonduality of knowledge-and-emptiness, and that the paths to liberation are the nonduality of methods and wisdom.

Finally, act (in accord with this insight).

The stages of cause, path and result should be understood thus: the interdependent origination of the relative sphere is like illusion; in the ultimate, the nature of dharmas is emptiness; finally, both are nondual without differentiation.

Thus, if the foundation (morality), preparation (reflection), meditation, conclusion (dedication of merit and recollection) and the process of practice taken as a whole each be multiplied by three (in correspondence to the three stages of cause, path and result), all the paths of virtue are gathered together in fifteen factors.

Whoever strives to perfect these (fifteen) factors in each performance of virtue enjoys the happiness of fortunate states and accumulates oceans of the Two Collections (merit and transcendent wisdom).

Through the clarity of his meditation, he becomes joined with the Aryan Path and increases in transcendent wisdom as a result of his meditation and noble conduct. Then, attaining the goal (of Buddhahood) through coursing along the final stages of the Path, he puts an end to all thought constructions by realising the nature of mind to be pure from the very beginning. (His mind) becomes one flavour with the Dharmadhatu and is transformed into the Svabhavikakaya which is the transcendent wisdom of Dharmadhatu and the knowledge of the perfection of renunciation.

For him, the dharmas of worldly existence become transformed through the practice of the path so that his body becomes the Body (of an Enlightened One) adorned by (112) marks and signs of perfection. His voice becomes (the Voice of the Buddha) endowed with sixty tones; his mind is transformed into Transcendent Wisdom and is also endowed

with omniscience. Passions are transformed into the boundless virtues of the Conqueror and constitute the Sambhogakaya. His deeds are transformed into the 'Task-Accomplishing Wisdom' and the countless kinds of enlightened activity that form the Nirmanakaya.

These five wisdoms constitute the perfect realisation of the Enlightened One and, inasmuch as He is also endowed with spiritual power, they are unending and uninterrupted. May you also, O emperor, become like Him!

Through the merit of offering this gift of Dharma, which summarises the deep sense of the noble path, may all living beings with you, O king, as their chief, quickly attain the highest stage of enlightenment.

My own mind, too, has become encouraged by composing these lines as a gift of doctrine and so I shall speak further of another matter: undistractedly hear it, O Lord among Beings!

The time when you should make efforts is now: make firm the good fortune you have, ensure long life and the success of your lineage and practise right methods to gain liberation.

It is right to make efforts without distraction. At a time when Dharma has not yet set like a sun and a religious king like yourself sits on the throne, how can your mind remain indifferent to the plight of those who wear saffron robes?

Though I am not old, the strength of my body is slight and my mind inclines to be lazy; therefore I wish to be excused for awhile that I may seek Dharma's meaning in solitude.

From "Treasures of the Sakya Lineage" by Khenpo Migmar Tseten

Translated by Acharya Lobsang Jamspal and Acharya Manjusiddhartha [Jared Rhoton]. Copyright, Victoria Buddhist Dharma Society, 1976

Looking Into The Nature of The Mind

by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin

The practice of looking into the nature of the mind is called “insight meditation”. In order to practise insight meditation, we first need to develop a steady mind, a mind free from conceptual thought. We do this through the cultivation of single-pointed concentration, whereby the mind can become stable and devoid of thoughts, thus allowing us to rest in its clarity.

There are many different levels of concentration, but the very basic requisite for entering into concentration is that we must be in a place away from noise and distractions, a quiet, comfortable place. We should sit, if possible, in the full lotus position, or at least with our back straight and our two hands resting on our lap, one on top of the other, facing up.

For beginners, it is difficult to bring the mind into concentration without using an object, and so it is better to use an object of concentration like a statue of the Buddha, or anything inspirational, such as a flower. This should be at the level of our eyes, about two feet away; it should be placed on a stable support, so that it doesn’t shake or move, as any movement can cause thoughts to arise.

Then, we should try to bring three things together: our breath, our eyes, and our mind, and place them on the object. We should refrain from thinking about the qualities of the object, such as its shape or colour, and try to keep these three things fixed on the object.



We’ll find that if, for example, we hear a sound, immediately thought arises. If we sense any kind of stimulus, thought arises. At that time, instead of following that sound or sense stimulus and becoming distracted by it, we should straight away try to bring our mind back to the concentration object and keep it there.

Our mind and our body are interlinked, and when our mind is strong, even if we are unwell physically, we will feel all right. But when our mind is not strong, physical problems will cause us to feel pain.

In the practice of concentration, there are five major faults that we must avoid: laziness, forgetfulness, sinking and scattering, not applying the antidote, and over-application.

The first one, laziness, refers to not practising concentration, not making the effort of bringing our mind to the concentration object. The second, forgetfulness, is what happens when we forget the instructions of how to practise concentration. The third fault that we must avoid is sinking and scattering. Sinking is when our mind slumps, feels heavy, a bit like sleeping, or sinking in water. And scattering is the opposite, when our mind can't remain on the concentration object, when our thoughts are dispersed and go off in different directions. The fourth fault is not applying the necessary antidote to each fault. And the fifth is over-application of the antidote where, rather than helping, it becomes a hindrance to concentration.

So these are the five faults to be avoided. And, in order to counter these faults, there are eight antidotes.

The antidotes to the first fault, laziness, are: interest, effort, faith and contentment. The first one is the intention of practising concentration, the desire to do so. The second antidote is effort. When

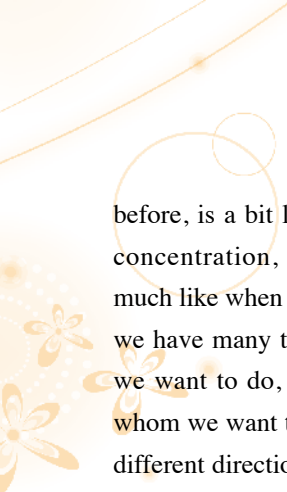
we are interested in the practice, then we make the necessary physical and mental efforts to do it well. The third is faith, faith in the fact that by practising concentration, we can achieve results, temporary results and finally the ultimate result. Faith makes the practice a lot stronger. The fourth antidote to laziness is contentment.

The practice of concentration produces physical and mental calm and comfort; when we experience this, we develop an interest in the practice. Like a businessman who, when he sees that something offers the possibility of making a profit, he'll develop an interest in it, and invest effort in it. Similarly, when we see the results that the practice of concentration brings, we develop an interest in it. This becomes even more so when we realize that it not only brings the ultimate result, but also temporary ones, such as physical and mental calm and contentment.

Our mind and our body are interlinked, and when our mind is strong, even if we are unwell physically, we will feel all right. But when our mind is not strong, physical problems will cause us to feel pain. So it is important to apply these four antidotes to laziness, and the most important one among these is effort, the effort of making our mind strong by bringing it into concentration. Even if we are feeling lazy, or encounter any of the other faults, we can make the effort of coming back to the concentration, for example by remembering the failings of samsara, or by reading an inspiring book.

The antidote to the second fault, forgetfulness, is remembering; constantly remembering the instructions that we received on how to practise concentration. These must always be kept in mind, so that whenever we start to practice, we automatically remember how to do it.

The antidote to the third fault is awareness, watching the mind. It is important to always watch our mind, whether it's gone off in the wrong direction, whether it's sinking or scattering. Sinking, as we said



before, is a bit like sleeping. When we try to practise concentration, sometimes our mind becomes dull, much like when we're sleeping. Or the opposite, where we have many thoughts, we're thinking of things that we want to do, places that we want to go to, people whom we want to see, and so forth – our mind goes in different directions. It is very important to watch these two things continually, the sinking and scattering. And so, watching the mind is the antidote to the third fault.

The antidote to the fourth fault is applying the antidote. As soon as we notice that our mind has gone in the wrong direction, we make an effort to apply the antidote.

The antidote to the fifth fault, over-application, is to apply the correct dose of the antidote. We strive to bring equanimity to a mind that is overly relaxed, or overly agitated. This means that we find a balance between a dull mind and an unsettled one.

And so, by applying these antidotes, we can eliminate the five faults of concentration.

There are nine levels of concentration.

On the first level, we place our mind on the object, we make no physical movements, we don't blink, and

we make sure that the object of concentration is not moving either, and that we can see it clearly. Then we try to meditate. Our eyes are neither wide open nor closed, just halfway opened, and our breathing should be normal, a slow, natural breathing. And so we should bring all three together, our mind, our eyes and our breathing, and place them on the object.

On the second level of concentration, because it is difficult for the beginner to practise for a very long period of time, we try to do many short sessions. If, at the beginning, we try to do long sessions, then we become physically and mentally exhausted. This can make us grow cross with the meditation. In the beginning we should try to do many, many very short sessions. So we should continue placing the mind again and again for short periods of time.

On the third level, whenever something occurs that distracts our mind, such as a sound, or any sense stimulus, we immediately try to place our attention back onto the object.

On the fourth level also, we strive to again and again place our mind on the object.

On the fifth level, we remember the qualities obtained through concentration, so that if our mind is affected by sinking and scattering, then we have more incentive to apply the antidotes and bring our mind back to the subject.

On the sixth one, although we are trying to bring our mind to the object of concentration, our mind is distracted or agitated. So here again, we try even harder to bring our mind back to the concentration object, in order to break away from this state of distraction.

On the seventh, if we are experiencing the complete opposite to a calm mind, such as thoughts of anger, envy or any negative emotion, then we shouldn't follow those thoughts. For example, if we're angry with someone, then we'll tend to think of that person, we'll build up a story around him, what he's like, what he did, and so forth. Instead of following

We might feel discouraged because, no matter how hard we try, many thoughts keep arising. Normally, although many, many thoughts arise, we don't notice them, but when we practise concentration, we do notice them. This is a good sign, and we shouldn't become discouraged.

these thoughts, we should immediately try to bring our mind back to the concentration object.

On the eighth level, if we're doing our best to eliminate the sinking or scattering through the application of the antidotes, but are unable to do so and our mind is still dull or scattered, then we should try something else, like investigating where these thoughts came from, what their nature is, and so on, and with this try to bring the mind back to the object of concentration.

And on the ninth level, after going through the beginning stages, where we did many short sessions, and then gradually increasing the length of these sessions, now the practice becomes easy. Once we're used to it, we are able to remain in this state of concentration without much effort. So these are the nine stages of concentration.

Through inner concentration, without using an outside object, one can eliminate thoughts and remain with a steady, single-pointed mind, and concentrate on the clarity of mind.

In practising concentration in this way, we encounter certain experiences. Generally, there are five kinds of experiences that we meet.

The first experience that we come across is one called the "waterfall". When we try to concentrate, many thoughts arise, one after another, just like a waterfall. In a waterfall, there are no gaps, the water flows uninterruptedly; similarly, we find that thoughts flow uninterruptedly. We might feel discouraged because, no matter how hard we try, many thoughts

keep arising. Normally, although many, many thoughts arise, we don't notice them, but when we practise concentration, we do notice them. This is a good sign, and we shouldn't become discouraged. It's called the experience of recognising the thoughts, or of experiencing the thoughts.

The second experience that we encounter is that of resting thoughts. Although thoughts arise, there are some gaps between them. So now there are some thoughts, but they're sort of tired. They arise, and then there's a gap.

The third experience is that of tired thoughts. If there is an outside cause, then thoughts arise. But if there is no outside cause, then thoughts don't arise.

The fourth experience is called "ocean with waves". Oceans are normally very settled, but occasionally waves arise. In the same way, although our concentration is very settled and our mind is very calm and can remain on the concentration object very steadily, occasionally one or two thoughts emerge, just like waves on the ocean.

The fifth experience is called "ocean without waves". Once we are used to the concentration, we can remain very firmly fixed on the object, just like an ocean without waves. Even though there are external causes for distraction, our mind is very steady, single-mindedly remaining on the object, and thoughts don't arise. When we are able to do this, instead of looking at the outside object, we should try to look inwardly into our own mind, at the clarity of the mind, and concentrate on this. Through inner concentration, without using an outside object, one can eliminate thoughts and remain with a steady, single-pointed mind, and concentrate on the clarity of mind.

This is a brief description of how to practise concentration.

(To be continued in the next issue...)

A Teaching on Maitreya's Semtsema

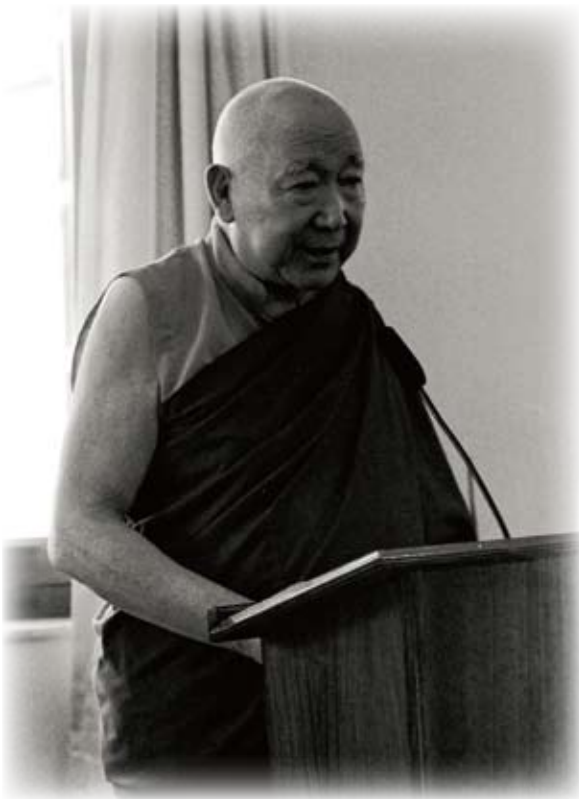
by The Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche

The "Semtsema" is one the twenty-two chapters of the "Ornament of Mahayana Discourses", the first among the Five Works of the Great Bodhisattva Maitreya, which were brought down to earth from Tushita Heaven to Arya Asanga.

Whenever we receive teachings, it is important to generate the right motivation. We think: "I'm going to listen to these teachings in order to benefit all limitless sentient beings." This is the motivation with which disciples should listen to a teaching. Likewise, the one giving the teaching should cultivate the aspiration that, by bestowing these teachings of

the Buddha, he or she might help to liberate all beings that are afflicted by suffering. It is with this as primary purpose that the teacher should impart the teachings. So it is important to begin with all of us cultivating right motivation.

It is said that the act of listening and receiving teachings is very meritorious, and that through this not only will one create a lot of merit, but also will accrue tangible, practical benefit for oneself. It is said that it is more meritorious to listen to teachings than to make offerings to all the Buddhas in the three thousand worlds. Even if one were to engage in explaining and listening to teachings on one single verse, the merit would surpass any merit that one may receive by making offerings to thousands of Buddhas in the thousands of realms of existence. Making offerings to the Buddhas, with right motivation, even offering one single flower to all the Enlightened ones, will bring benefit, even higher rebirth, but it will be limited to reaping temporal benefit, and will not become the cause of liberation. Whereas listening to the teachings of the Buddha and contemplating on them will lead one to understand the causes that lie within one's own afflictions, thereby allowing one to achieve liberation. Hence, listening to the teachings is far more meritorious than making offerings.



Listening to the teachings of the Buddha and contemplating on them will lead one to understand the causes that lie within one's own afflictions, thereby allowing one to achieve liberation.

Generally, two aspects are regarded as indispensable in receiving the teachings of the Buddha: that of listening to them, and that of meditating on them. But of the two, the practice of meditation is given more importance. Study, if not followed up by practice, won't bring significant result. But, at the same time, if one seeks to practice, it is necessary to receive and understand the teachings, to understand what it is that one has to practice. The teaching acts as support to the practice.

In certain practices, external phenomena can become the object of study. For example, the object of study for those who study the Vedas is the act of listening to them, and engaging in reciting their verses. Similarly, for the Jains who engage in the practice of asceticism, their very practice of asceticism becomes their object of study. In the practice of the Dharma, on the other hand, the object of study is not something external. The mind itself is the object of our focus, and so, with the help of the Buddha's teachings, we need to understand how to best view the mind objectively as an object of meditation.

The topic at hand in the teachings that we're looking at here, is reflecting on the qualities of the Buddha, pointing out His qualities, eulogising them, and paying homage to them. The qualities of the Buddha are very well articulated by Maitreya Nata in his texts, but not comprehensively covered. And so the text that we now have at hand, composed by Sakya Pandita, is a complement to Maitreya's writings on

the qualities of the Buddha. It is important to know who the Buddha is, what His qualities are, because in order to feel connected to His teachings, one needs to be motivated by seeing the qualities of the Buddha, until one develops faith in Him. We have to have a reasonable understanding of the qualities of the object in which we deposit our faith.

One may develop faith in the Buddha by merely emulating others who have a strong faith in Him. This is faith based on no valid reasoning, and is referred to as developing faith. It isn't strong or stable, because it depends on external causes, rather than on our own reasoning. Because of this, it can bring some benefit, but very little in comparison to the benefit reaped by having faith based on sound reasons. Whereas, if one gives rise to faith in the Buddha by realising His qualities, by very clearly understanding them, then one's faith is validated, and so one can develop a very strong conviction that will not wane.

There are three kinds of faith that we need to cultivate. The first is lucid faith. This is gained when one has so clearly seen the qualities of the Buddha, that it is with a very lucid mind, completely free from doubt, that one adopts the Buddha as our object of refuge.

The second type is trustworthy faith. Here, one has the firm conviction that the teachings of the Buddha are incontrovertible and infallible, and that they are the only possible path for one to follow. There is a deeper understanding of the teachings, and a commitment to their practice.

The third kind is called aspirational faith. It is a desirous faith, as it actually gives rise to a strong sense of desire and passion to the extent of wanting to achieve the state of enlightenment as a vital and ultimate goal. And so it leads one to study, meditate and contemplate on the teachings, and totally engage into the pursuit of enlightenment.

So the text that we are studying here pays homage to the infinite qualities of the Buddha. The qualities

of the Buddha are infinite and, because of this, it is impossible to express them all. However much one describes the qualities of the Buddha, there is never the possibility of covering them all. This infinity or immeasurability of the qualities of the Buddha is one of His unique characteristics.

As Chandrakirti said, when a bird soars into the sky, no matter how aggressively he might strive to stay in flight, it eventually has to land. And this is not because it doesn't have enough space to fly in, but rather because of its own limitations. In the same vein, however much great scholars and poets might indulge in enumerating and eulogising the qualities of the Buddha, they would come to a limit. And this would not be because of the qualities of the Buddha were exhausted, but rather because of the limitations of those who ponder on them. And so even Maitreya, who so eloquently and extensively described the qualities the Buddha, and Sakya Pandita who felt that there was even more to add to Maitreya's eulogy, even those two great masters could not come close to expressing all the qualities of the Buddha.

The qualities of the Buddha are infinite and, because of this, it is impossible to express them all. However much one describes the qualities of the Buddha, there is never the possibility of covering them all. This infinity or immeasurability of the qualities of the Buddha is one of His unique characteristics.

The qualities of the Buddha are of two kinds: shared qualities and uncommon qualities. The first, shared qualities, are qualities of the Buddha that are also found in other beings, whereas the second, the uncommon qualities, are unique to the Buddhas. They pertain only to the domain of the Enlightened ones.

The first quality referred to here is the quality of immeasurability. The term 'immeasurability' applies to the compassion of the Buddha, which is infinite. The number of sentient beings is immeasurable, and the compassion of the Buddha embraces every single sentient being, and so it is immeasurable. The immeasurability of the Buddha's qualities is based on two unique intentions: the intention of establishing every being into a state of temporal happiness, and the intention of benefitting every being in the ultimate sense: by leading them to enlightenment, to definite Liberation, to a state of omniscience. This is the Buddha's ultimate aim.

The Buddha tailors His teachings according to the predispositions of different beings. Those who merely seek temporal happiness, the Buddha leads to happiness by helping them obtain a higher rebirth. But for those who seek a higher goal, the pratimoksha, bodhisattva and vajrayana practitioners, these three vehicles are taught in order to lead them to the ultimate accomplishment. These are the two main intentions of the Buddha.

Of the four Immeasurable qualities of the Buddha, the first three serve to provide sentient beings with happiness and its causes, and to separate them from suffering and its causes. These three are kindness, compassion and joyfulness. They all stem from the first intention of the Buddha, to establish beings into a state of happiness that will not turn into suffering. The fourth and last of the Immeasurable qualities of the Buddha, is equanimity. This refers to the state of mind that makes no distinction between beings, whether close and dear or distant and indifferent, or even unpleasant. Whereas ordinary beings develop



attachment and aversion depending on the object, the Buddha is able to transcend this duality of attachment, and feels equanimity towards all sentient beings. The Buddha's equanimity is immeasurable equanimity, which pertains to His second intention, that of establishing beings into ultimate liberation.

Where the text addresses the Buddha with the words 'You who have kindness towards all sentient beings', this refers to the immeasurable sentient beings. This kindness is not the kindness related to the four immeasurables, but rather the kindness of all four immeasurables combined, ie the intention of establishing beings into the ultimate state of happiness. It signifies that the Buddha intends that every one of the immeasurable sentient beings have happiness and its cause, be parted from suffering and its cause, and that they remain in a state of joy, inseparable from happiness. This is the first intention. But the Buddha also wishes for beings to find ultimate happiness, liberation, and this is the second intention. So here, the author is paying homage to 'He who is endowed with the two great intentions.'

Paying homage can be done in three ways: physically, verbally and mentally. We can pay homage physically by doing prostrations, by actually touching all five major points of the body out of deep faith and devotion; we can pay homage verbally by speaking of the qualities of the Buddha, or by uttering prayers or words of salutation such as 'I pay homage'; and we can pay homage mentally by generating a strong yearning for the qualities that we perceive in the Buddha, thus arousing a strong devotion that will urge us to pay homage physically and verbally. Each of these activities of paying homage benefit in two ways: it eradicates negativities, in particular pride, and accrues merits that are the antidotes to this.

The Fully Enlightened One, the Buddha Himself, is one who has reaped the benefit of paying homage. The Buddha in His former lives showed courtesy and respect not only to His own spiritual teachers and

masters, but also to others whom He saw as venerable, who had qualities that He Himself sought to gain, and from whom He could learn. Because of this, after attaining enlightenment, the Buddha not only became a worthy object of homage for humans, non-humans and gods, but also for inanimates such as flowers, trees and mountains. All of nature paid homage to the Fully Enlightened One. All this stems from the merits that the Buddha accrued in His former lives by paying homage.

In one of the biographies of the Buddha, there is a passage in which a bikshu called Anirudda was seeking to be ordained, but discovered that he would have to pay homage to Upali, a monk who had previously been a barber. As Upali was from what was considered a lower caste, Anirudda became worried and consulted with the Buddha as to whether it was proper to pay homage to someone from a lower caste. The Buddha, of course, answered that Anirudda would indeed have to pay homage to Upali.

The main purpose of practicing the Dharma is to eradicate our defilements, and, in order to be able to defeat our defilements, we need to identify them and to establish what the most effective remedy is to destroy them. For example, so many actions that we perform become causes for suffering, but most of us have the attitude that we're not as bad as others. We have trouble seeing ourselves with humility. But if we correctly practice the Dharma, we'll begin to understand that we had best see ourselves as inferior to all. Thinking this way will eradicate the defilement of arrogance, and lead us to cultivate the virtue of humility. By practicing the Dharma, we understand our defilements and apply the correct remedy to defeat them.

**The main purpose of practicing
the Dharma is to eradicate our**

defilements, and, in order to be able to defeat our defilements, we need to identify them and to establish what the most effective remedy is to destroy them.

The qualities that are contained in the four immeasurables are shared by worldly beings, such as sravakas and pratyekabuddhas, but never to the same degree as the Buddha. The qualities of the Buddha are boundless. But by realising the qualities of the Buddha and trying to emulate them, it becomes possible to plant a seed of the four immeasurables in ourselves and to gradually allow it to take root and grow. This will gradually endow us with the qualities of the four immeasurables.

The teaching on the four immeasurables is one of the most important concepts of the Buddha's Dharma. Of these four, the cultivation of loving kindness and compassion towards all living beings are the most important. And of these two, the act of compassion, of relieving beings from suffering and its cause, is paramount.

Whatever practice of the Great Vehicle teachings you may engage in, compassion is always at its very core. Compassion is the intention behind generating Bodhicitta, it is also what motivates generosity, morality, and listening to teachings. Because of the fundamental importance of compassion, it is very important to analyse it – what it really is, and how we can dispense it effectively. We need to think very carefully about this concept of compassion, and look into oneself – 'Just as I wish to be free from suffering, so do all living beings'. In this way, we try to universalise the need to be free from suffering – we need to develop the deep wish for all beings to be free from suffering. Sentient beings have no

real freedom – they are totally controlled by external forces, the external forces of defilements and harm. They are in a piteous state, and don't realise the sorry nature of their state. They wish to be free, but don't know how to accomplish this. They are completely controlled by their own defilements. They have to bear much, much suffering that they have no wish for. And however much they are suffering, they have no one to guide, protect or assist them, to lead them out of their suffering. We need to realise deeply the pain that afflicts beings, and develop a great sense of empathy and pity for their suffering and for their incapacity to escape it.

So, in order to develop compassion, we use logical reasoning. We reflect on the importance of giving rise to compassion in our mind. Sometimes the mere effort of giving rise to compassion might bring us to naturally feel compassionate toward all sentient beings. So through deliberate effort, we gradually develop a compassionate tendency that becomes second nature to us.

Right now, we may not have this unsullied compassion and therefore, we have to create, to fabricate a tendency to feel it. And then, when we are familiarised with it, it develops into uncontrived compassion, effortless compassion. Through this deliberate act of moulding our mind to become compassionate, compassion will eventually arise spontaneously.

So, if one is to practice the Dharma, it not necessary to try to learn everything. If we practice compassion, then we have the teaching, the qualities, the basis, the foundation, the stages leading to Enlightenment, all in the palm of our hand. We don't need to do much else when we practice compassion.

Dharma Activities

The Holy Last Rites of The Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche

At nine thirty, on the morning of the 28th of December 2010, the Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche passed into the state of tukdam, resting in the clear light of the mind after death. The Sakya School of Tibetan Buddhism had lost one of its greatest scholars and bodhisattvas.

He had been ill for some time, and his passing

came as no surprise. Nevertheless, his devoted disciples were overcome by grief. His Eminence Ratna Vajra Rinpoche immediately travelled to Kathmandu, as did His Eminence Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, Lama Lekshey from Sakya Centre, and his brother Lama Thubten Nyima from Sakya Drogon Ling in Spain, Lama Logya from Kalimpong, and Khenpo



Gyatso from Sakya College. Forty-nine days of pujas were to be performed for Khenchen Appey Rinpoche, both at Rinpoche's house in Boudanath, Kathmandu, and in different Sakya monasteries in India, Nepal and abroad, with his cremation ceremony to take place on the 7th of February,

Rinpoche had asked that, at the moment of his passing, his door should be shut and that no one should disturb his meditation for three days. He had also instructed that His Holiness the Sakya Trizin be informed immediately, but that no one else be told until his meditation was over.

When the prescribed three days were over, Appey Khen Rinpoche's kudung (holy body) was wrapped in ritual cloths and placed in a



The Most Venerable Appey Khen Rinpoche's kudung



H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche conducting a one-month Hevajra puja



H.E. Rinchen Paljor Shabdrung performing the Vajrayogini puja at Jamchen Lhakang



Mahavairocana puja at Tharig Monastery

glass casing that was laid, surrounded by flowers, in a small shrine room on the second storey of Appey Rinpoche's house, where students and disciples could come and pay their last respects. Right up to the day before Rinpoche's kudung was committed to the

leaving for Sikkim, where he offered 100,000 butter lamps in the monastery of his predecessor, Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodrö.

From the moment that the passing of Rinpoche was announced, Sakya monasteries took turns in

flames, its shrine room was filled with the deep fragrance of flowers. Disciples kept vigil in the garden next to the house, where visitors were offered tea. Some performed kora around Rinpoche's house.

Upstairs, H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche completed a one-month-long Hevajra puja concluding his vigil with a three-day Mahakala puja (kangso), while in a large shrine room downstairs, daily pujas were conducted by high lamas, including H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, who was a close disciple of Appey Khen Rinpoche's, and regarded him as his main teacher. His Eminence led the rites for two days before

performing a series of seven-day pujas over the span of the ensuing forty-nine days. Ngor Monastery in Manduwala was first, with the celebration of a seven-day Mahavairocana puja, followed by the Sakya Centre in Dehradun who conducted a week of Mahakala rituals; the Sakya Monastery at Mundgod was next, completing two weeks of Mahavairocana pujas, following which Vajrayogini was performed during seven days at Jamchen Lhakang in Boudanath. The last two week-long pujas were Mahavairocana, held at Tharig Monastery in Boudhanath, and then at



Sand Mandala at Tharlam Monastery for the Mahavairocana puja



The cremation stupa

Tharlam Monastery, also in Boudanath. Meanwhile, over the course of these seven weeks, a reading of the Kangyur was held at IBA.

On the morning of 5th February, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin left India for Kathmandu, in order to preside over Rinpoche's last rites. His Holiness was accompanied by H.E. Luding Khenchen Rinpoche, H.E. Thartse Rinpoche, H.E. Gyalum Chenmo and H.E. Tharig Tulku Rinpoche. His Holiness was received at IBA by its abbot, the Venerable Khenpo Jorden, and other dignitaries and high lamas, and almost immediately made His way to Appey Khen Rinpoche's house in order to perform a short puja before Rinpoche's kudung.

The morning of 7th February opened with clear

blue skies, while monks hurried to give the finishing touches to the funeral preparations. They had been working day and night for the past week, and the issue of their dedication was astonishingly beautiful, a fitting last tribute to the Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche.

The IBA courtyard had been transformed into a mandala, at the centre of which a garlanded white dais had been erected, with a three-step staircase on all four sides, leading to the cremation stupa. On each corner of the dais, a bundle of wood that would be used to consume Rinpoche's holy body. The cremation stupa stood in the centre, covered with garlands of beads, with its white dome delicately decorated with

depictions of protector deities and garlands of wish-fulfilling jewels, while the arched opening that would receive the kudung was framed by a golden fringe of intricate designs.

The base, where oblations were to be offered to the flames, was equally beautiful, in white and gold, with four elegantly carved apertures, the central one larger than the others, through which offerings to the deities would be fed to the flames.

Encircling the dais was a carpet of flowers, the closer ones forming a sixteen-petal lotus, itself surrounded by a circular cordon of white and yellow roses, Rinpoche's favourite flower, and offerings of tormas, candles, fruit and saffron water. On each



The cremation stupa waiting to receive Appey Khen Rinpoche's kudung



The funeral lorry carrying its precious load to IBA

corner of the mandala stood a table on which lay the substances that were to be offered to the fire deity, while a rosary of golden vases, spewing multi-coloured gladioli, delineated the border of the square.

At the edge of the mandala, four thrones had been prepared on a platform. His Holiness was to sit on the central one, east of the stupa; to His left, south of the stupa, H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche would take his place; to the west, was H.E. Luding Khen Rinpoche's throne, and to the north, that of H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche.

On either side of the four officiants sat dozens of lamas that had come from near and far to pay homage to Appey Khen Rinpoche, including H.E. Asanga Rinpoche and Their Eminences Thartse Khen Rinpoche, Dorje Dhenpa Rinpoche, H.E. Rinchen Paljor Shabdrung, Tharig Rinpoche and Dungyud Rinpoche, as well as Dezhung Rinpoche and other high lamas.

Offering the participants welcome shade from the sun, a canopy of white silk-like cloth covered the

perimeter, from which hung sleek columns of fabric. A cornice of flowers and garlands of beads, which had taken the entire night to fashion, offered a finishing touch to creating a three-dimensional mansion.

At seven in the morning, the recitation of preliminary prayers began at IBA, while at Rinpoche's house, his kudung was painstakingly hoisted onto the flower-bedecked lorry that was to carry it to the pyre. A mixture of excitement, mirth and grief reigned, as the courtyard began to fill. Gradually, the lamas began to take their seats, and finally Their Eminences Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, Luding Khenchen Rinpoche and Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche took place on their thrones, followed by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin.

Prayers continued until 9 o'clock, when the sound of ritual music announced the arrival of the cortege accompanying Rinpoche's kudung from his house. A general surge of emotion was palpable as the casket was lifted from the lorry and brought into the courtyard.

H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, H.E. Thartse



As His Holiness and Their Eminences look on, the kudung is placed inside the cremation stupa



His Holiness pays His respects

Rinpoche, H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, and other high lamas left their seats in order to usher Rinpoche's funeral case as it was carried in circumbambulation of the stupa, while devotees showered it with khata as it passed by.

Rinpoche's holy body was then carefully taken from its vessel, and placed on a table, next to the pyre. It sat erect, attired in a Five Dhyani Buddhas crown, cloak and apron and, considering the imposing physical stature with which Rinpoche had been endowed, his holy body now seemed very slight.

His Holiness then approached the kudung to pay His respects, carefully wrapped a ritual white cloth

around His revered teachers' body, and joined His hands in a final gesture of valediction. His Holiness placed a yellow khata on Rinpoche's lap as a last offering, leaving His Eminence Ratna Vajra Rinpoche to bid his farewells.

Distinguished members of the assembly, in their turn, reverently approached Rinpoche's body to express, for a last time, their gratitude and respect to one who had been an unflagging guide, and protector of the Dharma.

A quiver of loss ran through the congregation as Rinpoche's kudung was lifted and placed, as if on a funeral throne, inside the stupa.



The kudung is placed inside the cremation stupa



His Holiness performing Vajrayogini



H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche performing Hevajra



H.E. Luding Khenchen Rinpoche performing Mahavairocana



H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche performing Vajrasattva

His Holiness, along with Their Eminences Thartse Rinpoche (on behalf of H.E. Luding Khenchen Rinpoche), Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche climbed onto the dais and circumambulated the stupa, each holding a ritual torch, which they then handed over to attendants who, one on each side of the stupa, lit the pyre.

Thus began the fire puja, and as the officiants regained their thrones, the fire deity was convoked, and propitiated with bundles of Yang Shin sticks. Yang Shin is a special kind of wood normally used as offering to the deity during the fire pujas, so that it transmutes into flames and consumes all that is confided to it.

As further offerings of grains, tormas, blessed water and ghee (clarified butter) were fed to the fire, the flames soon blazed, the deity sated. The conditions were now auspiciously ripe to invoke the principal deities, and so His Holiness and Their Eminences initiated the performance of the main ritual. Four individual pujas were to be celebrated simultaneously, with His Holiness the Sakya Trizin performing Vajrayogini, H.E. Luding Khenchen Rinpoche, Mahavairocana; H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, Hevajra; and H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, Vajrasattva. Each of these were full major pujas, involving the performance of their particular ritual music and the participation of a section of the attending lamas.

This was a momentous occasion. The mere presence of four of our greatest masters, and the holy purpose that brought them together, was compellingly powerful, and instilled in all those present an overwhelming sense of participating in something historic.

In the late morning, the pujas ended one by one, with the main deities dissolving into the Dharmadatu

and, as the flames died, the fire yidam regaining its celestial realm. And finally, all merits accrued by the celebration of these pujas were dedicated to the liberation of all beings. As they concluded their respective pujas, His Holiness, Their Eminences and the lamas surrounding them rose from their seats and left the courtyard, until the enclosure emptied of people, and silence reigned around the stupa.

Bricks were then brought up to the dais, and all the apertures to the stupa were cemented, leaving a flume of smoke rising from its dome that would last through the night.



The fire deity has transformed into flames



As the pujas continue, the fire consumes its charge

On the following morning, a libation was poured through the roof of the stupa, which completely extinguished what cinders might have been left smouldering. The stupa was then completely covered with a multi-coloured drape. The holy repository would now be left until the end of the 49-day period, when it would again be opened to recover Rinpoche's relics.

Early in the afternoon of the 9th of February, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin and the gathering of disciples who had come together to honour this unparalleled leading light of the Dharma, now dispersed, as each regained their respective activities, and would begin to pray for the swift rebirth of the Most Venerable Khenchen Appay Rinpoche.

In the early morning of the 13th, the drapes were removed from the stupa, and Rinpoche's ashes were

gathered in urns and taken to be sifted for relics. Those whose task this was, were elated with what they found: Rinpoche had lavished his disciples with many, many relics, a final and sublime token of his immeasurable realization and generosity.



Urns containing Rinpoche's holy relics

His Holiness the Sakya Trizin in Singapore

On the 9th of February, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin left Kathmandu, where He had been presiding over the holy last rites of the Most Venerable Khenchhen Appey Rinpoche. Accompanied by Her Eminence Gyalyum Chenmo, His Holiness boarded a plane to Singapore, where He was to spend the better part of two weeks teaching and bestowing initiations. Stephen Ang, president of the Singapore Sakya Tenphel Ling centre, and Sarah Theo, its social secretary, describe His Holiness' visit:

"On 9 Feb 2011, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, Her Eminence Gyalyum Chenmo and attendants

arrived in Singapore from Kathmandu at around 8pm. His Holiness and entourage were then welcomed in the Singapore Sakya Tenphel Ling temple main shrine hall with a Tenshug where the 16 Board Members, offered a mandala, symbols of body, voice and mind, the seven precious possessions of a Universal Emperor and the 8 auspicious signs. Our members and friends who did not offer khatags at the airport began to queue up and make their offerings. After which, His Holiness, along with his entourage, retired to their rooms where they were offered a light meal of noodle soup for auspicious connection and as a Long Life wish to His Holiness.



His Holiness blessing the mandala with the Three Amitayus Buddhas



The Amitabha Shrine

Our temple led by His Eminence Chogye Shabdrung Rinpoche and Sakya College monks offered and dedicated 3 days of Long Life Pujas from 11 to 13 February in the daytime to His Holiness the Sakya Trizin so that His Holiness will continuously turn the Wheel of Dharma. During the 3 nights, His Holiness bestowed the Amitabha Empowerment and gave

teachings on Langri Thangpa's Eight Verses of Mind Training and the five Buddha Races. Some guests of honour comprising of His Eminence Dagkyab Kyabgon Rinpoche from Germany, the President of Gaden Shartse Dro-Phen Ling, Singapore Gelugpa Centre and their Patron, Mrs Goh Chok Tong attended the Amitabha Empowerment on Friday night. The two weekend Dharma Talks gave a graduated view of the Buddha's Teachings from the basic Mahayana tenets to an introduction to Vajrayana.

During the next two days, His Holiness' entourage, together with our Resident Monk Khentrul-la, began constructing a beautiful Sand Mandala dedicated to Amitabha Buddha. Three Amitabha Buddhas carved from one piece of Cypress wood were placed in the middle of the sand mandala with 3 crystal stupas placed in front of these Amitabha Images.



His Holiness with volunteers

On 16 February, our members and friends were very fortunate to receive the Path Empowerment of Shri Hevajra. For many, it was a renewal of their Lam Dre vows. A joyous occasion was ensured as many disciples of His Holiness had not met for some time.

17 February marked the auspicious alignment of certain important stars and His Holiness performed a puja to the Three Red Deities (Marpo Kor Sum) with special focus on Red Ganapati. It also coincided with the 15th day of Chinese New Year which is the last day of celebrations for this important Chinese Festival where families would have their final reunion dinners.

From 18 to 20 February weekend afternoons, His Holiness' entourage performed the Grand Amitabha Puja followed by the Mahakala Puja. It was the first time that this Grand Amitabha Puja was held in Asia. The temple was filled with more than 650 devotees as His Holiness imparted teachings and initiations. The chanting of the Amitabha Sutra in the Chinese Mahayana style in the early afternoon, led by Venerable Zhen Xiu, always preceded the pujas. During the Friday and Saturday nights, His Holiness bestowed teachings on Amitabha Phowa and Amitabha Sleeping Yoga. Among the guests of honour who attended were Mr and Mrs Jet Li, Madam Goh, the Grand sponsor of projects of late Khenpo Appey Rinpoche and Mr. Ho Sing.

On Sunday 20 February, was the final day of the Grand Amitabha Puja. His Holiness gave a speech and advised our members and friends to renew the lease of the land on which the temple is built. The current lease will end in mid-2022. By working together, His Holiness hopes the renewal could see the light of day and ultimately benefit the next generation of members.

His Holiness then set the example by kindly

donating towards one main Cypress Amitabha Image contributed under the name of His Eminence Akasha Vajra Rinpoche – His Holiness' grandson. His Holiness also donated another two 12-inch Amitabha images on behalf of Her Eminence Jetsunma Kunga Trinley Palter Sakya, His granddaughter, and of Her Eminence Dagmo Kushon.

On 21 February, our centre organized an appreciation dinner during which we thanked His Holiness for His precious time spent in Singapore and we offered appreciation musical performances to His Holiness mainly by our members' children in their newly formed group, "Sakya Dharma Fellowship". We were deeply blessed to be in the presence of our precious teacher and be able to express our sincere appreciation.

We thank His Holiness for all His support and inspiration. Not forgetting the volunteers to whom His Holiness gave advice and encouragement culminating in a group photograph (see photograph) on the night of 14 February after His Holiness met with the Board Members. His Holiness will be coming back to Singapore in 2012 for a Grand Vajrakilaya Puja program to assist us in the renewal of land lease fund raising. We are indeed grateful to His Holiness for his continuous concern and care for our Singapore Sakya Centre, Sakya Tenphel Ling.

On 22 February 2011, His Holiness returned to India and we look forward to His Holiness' return with great eagerness.

We once again express our profound thank you to all the kind benefactors and volunteers who supported this Grand Amitabha Event."

*Written by: Stephen Ang, President
Sarah Theo, Social Secretary
Photos by: Steve Lay*

His Eminence Ratna Vajra Rinpoche in Taiwan

On the 9th of February, His Eminence Ratna Vajra Rinpoche left Kathmandu, where he had attended the cremation ceremony of the Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche, who had passed into Parinirvana on the 28th of December 2010.

From there, His Eminence flew directly to Taiwan, where he was to bestow empowerments and teachings, as well as performing pujas, at different centres on the island. Due to the circumstances that kept him in Kathmandu, His Eminence was unfortunately forced to cut short his visit to Taiwan. He did, however, spend three weeks there, on a very intensive programme of teachings and empowerments.

His Eminence arrived at Taoyuan Airport on the morning of 10th February, where he was greeted by resident lamas and representatives of all the region's Sakya centres.

Lining His Eminence's path on his arrival were sangha members, attired in colourful chubas (traditional Tibetan dresses), bearing offerings of flowers and khatas.

In Eastern culture, devotion to the Guru is at the core of Dharma practice, and he is viewed as a deity. Offering goddesses are invoked to honour his coming,



His Eminence was greeted at Taoyuan Airport by Sangha members

and these take the form of devout female followers. Everywhere blessed by the Guru's presence is seen as a celestial realm, even an airport.

Many Dharma followers also came to the airport to welcome His Eminence, offer him khatas, and seek his blessing. This was His Eminence's second visit to Taiwan, and disciples were elated to see him again after the five long years that separated it from his first one in 2006.

Eager not to leave his students wanting, His Eminence exerted himself to make up for the time lost by the shortening of his visit, and spent the following three weeks unrelievedly giving teachings and empowerments, allowing himself hardly a moment's rest. He began his programme with a teaching on "Parting from the Four Attachments", followed by the bestowal of the Vajrakilaya initiation from the



His Eminence giving a teaching on "Parting from the Four Attachments"

Khön family tradition, which His Eminence gave to an assembly of nearly 500 people. Disciples were very happy that, on the next day, His Eminence gave a teaching on the Vajrakilaya sadhana, which would help them greatly in their practice.

His Eminence spent the following weeks visiting all Sakya Centres in Taipei, granting each one blessings, teachings and empowerments. Near the end of his stay, His Eminence held a White Mahakala Fire Puja on the edge of a scenic lake near the city. Surprisingly for this time of year, it was a warm, sunny day, and entire families came to celebrate together.

Everyone threw offerings into the ritual bonfire, including one participant who committed an image of Avalokitesvara to the flames. This is considered very auspicious, and was greeted with much glee by members of the congregation.

And finally, on the 25th of the lunar month, His Eminence granted a two-day

Vajrayogini blessing. Because of the large numbers of disciples seeking it, it was impossible for everyone to receive it, and so sangha members are already creating the aspiration that His Eminence return soon to Taiwan to again bestow Vajrayogini blessings and many other precious teachings and initiations.

On March 1st, His Eminence was accompanied by lamas and centre representatives to the airport, where he was given as warm a farewell as he had been a welcome. He boarded a plane to India, on time to celebrate Losar at the Phodrang with his family.



White Mahakala Fire Puja by the lake



The 2010 Annual Monlam

On the 12th day of November 2010, the small village of Lumbini in Nepal, birthplace of the Buddha, saw its few streets, fields and guesthouses swell with some 2000 monks come together from all parts of India and Nepal to celebrate their 19th Annual Great Sakya Monlam Aspirational Prayer Festival.

The Monlam Prayer Festival is a tradition that dates back to 1409, initiated in Lhasa, by the founder of the Gelugpa Order, Tsongkhapa. All four orders of Tibetan Buddhism celebrated it once a year until 1959, when the political situation forbade it.

The Sakya Monlam was reintroduced in India thanks to the efforts of Dharthang Tulku, also a Gelugpa lama, who sponsored the first one in 1991. This was originally held at H.E. Chogye Trichen's monastery adjacent to the Mahadevi gardens but, upon

its completion in 2004, Rinpoche's new and more spacious Tashi Rabten Ling took its place as venue for the Festival.

This year, the Sakya Monlam Prayer Festival was led by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, H.E. Dungsey Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, H.E. Dungsey Abhaya Rinpoche, and Their Eminences Luding Khen Rinpoche, Kar Shabdrung Rinpoche, Lowo Shabdrung Rinpoche, Dezhung Rinpoche and Tharig Tulku Rinpoche, as well as several other Sakya tulkus and high lamas.

While not as grand as the 2009 Monlam, which coincided with the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Enthronement of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, this year's Monlam had a very special quality to it, one of devotional intimacy, congeniality and joy.

There were few lay people present, and so the great majority of the assembly was made up of Tibetan, Indian and Nepali monastics. There was something very touching about the courtyard filling with monks of all sizes and ages, some as young as five years old, and some old enough that they needed to be assisted as they made their way to their sitting place. Just as touching was the reverence of the many Theravadan monks who had come, as they do every year, to seek the Buddha's presence within the walls of a Vajrayana temple. They respectfully sat on the paving, on the fringes of the courtyard, with the robes they were wearing as their only cushion.

This year's Monlam was the responsibility of the Sakya Centre at Dehradun, and its smooth running bore witness to the efforts that the Centre invested in its organization. A significant feature of this endeavour was the introduction of a one-day environmental campaign, echoing the stress that His Holiness is increasingly placing on the importance of protecting our earth.



Monks having lunch on their camping site next to Mahadevi

Also noteworthy was the dedication of a team of nuns who volunteered to keep 100,000 butter lamps alight throughout the prayer festival as an offering to the Triple Gem. No easy task as, according to tradition, 10,000 lamps, sponsored by participants, are lit everyday at dawn and must be kept burning until late at night. This is a true labour of devotion, as it has the nuns working in scorching heat, in constant vigil that each of these 10,000 lamps remained filled with sufficient ghee to keep them aglow.





Volunteer nuns keep butter lamps alight throughout the Festival

There was another factor that made this Monlam special: the presence of two health assistance teams that came as volunteers to tend to the medical needs of anyone who sought them. One small team had come from Singapore, on this their tenth goodwill mission since their first visit in 1996. This year, their task was

shared by a sixteen-strong team of doctors, nurses and pharmacologists from Taipei, who brought with them a wide range of medical supplies, and treated over 1000 patients over the span of the six days that they spent at the Monlam. The teams treated monks and lay people alike, and significantly, members of the local



A local sadhu is given medicine



A young nun has her eyesight examined by a member of the medical team



Names of the deceased are burned at the Mahavairocana puja

population, who are normally deprived of any kind of medical assistance. High blood pressure, diabetes and skin afflictions were prevalent among the conditions that the teams diagnosed, and for which they offered advice and treatment. Monks, mostly from the translation program at IBA in Kathmandu, served as interpreters.

The medical team from Taipei also held a dynamic interactive educational talk for the monks and nuns, which these found highly informative and thoroughly enjoyed.

There was also a delegation of sponsors from Taipei, some of whom have generously sponsored

the Monlam for many years. They were elated to visit the site where, thanks to a donation that they had extended to villagers last year, a well had been dug which provided the locals with a much-needed supply of water, bringing an essential ingredient to their lives, as well as reducing the risk of disease.

In the early morning of 13th November, the first sounds of the temple gong were heard, calling disciples to prayer. As was to occur on every subsequent day of the festival, a Tara puja was held at 6:30 and then, from 9:00 on, His Holiness and the high Lamas led the recitation of Monlam prayers that were to last until late afternoon, interrupted by a lunch break. This featured the 100,000 recitations of the Aspirational Prayer of Samantabhadra.

On the 17th, His Holiness presided over a Mahavairocana Jangchok, a ritual of purification held for the deceased to help them purify their karma and secure a satisfactory rebirth. This very elaborate ceremony brings great benefit not only to beings in the bardo, but also to those who have passed away for some time. All merits accrued by participating in the ritual are dedicated to the purification and liberation of the deceased. Names of dead friends and relatives are written on sheets of paper by the participants and, at



The wondrous gift of water



H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche offers His Holiness a khata for His long life

the culmination of the ceremony, these are thrown into flames as a means of purification.

On the same day, led by Lama Wangdu, for many years assistant to Chogye Trichen Rinpoche and now in spiritual charge of the old gonpa, a group of followers went to the Mahadevi grounds to hang thousands of prayer flags that were to gather the blessings of this sacred place and anoint the persons whose names had been written on them. These were hung high from tree to tree by astonishingly nimble monks, who seemed completely at ease as they dangled from frail branches to catch and secure the ropes thrown at them from the ground.

Well into the night of the 18th, the parvis of the temple was lit up with lanterns as monks made haste to decorate it for the next day's ceremony that would be held for His Holiness' long life. And on the following morning, the temple was a beautiful sight, a testimony to the care that had been placed in its preparation, as garlands of flowers hung from every



Monk hanging prayer flags at Mahadevi

arch and skirted every pillar, and exuberant bouquets surrounded His Holiness' throne. The ceremony ended with thousands of devotees approaching His Holiness to extend their devout wishes and offerings.

The following day, His Holiness conferred a Tsewang (long-life empowerment) on the thousands of devotees assembled in the monastery courtyard, which He accompanied with a substantial teaching in Tibetan on the importance of taking refuge in the Triple Gem. His Holiness closed His homily with some words in English for the benefit of the few foreigners present.



His Holiness holds a Long-Life Vase during the Tsewang



Monks waiting in line to offer seek His Holiness' blessing

On the 21st, His Holiness, accompanied by Dungsey Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, Her Eminence Gyalyum Chenmo and other high lamas, offered prayers and khatas at the Buddha's birthplace, stopping on their way at Chogye Trichen's old monastery to pay their respects.

And, early in the afternoon of the 22nd, last day of the Festival, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin left Lumbini with His entourage to start His journey back to Dehradun, where He was to begin a two-month retreat.

Annual Grand Pujas at the Sakya Centre (APR-MAY-JUN)

- **Vajra Nairatmia Puja** – 8th of the 2nd lunar month for 7 days (Apr 11 – 17)
- **Mahavairocana Puja** – 11th of the 4th lunar month for 5 days (June 11 – 15)

Great Festival

- **Saka Dawa Düchen** – 15th day of the 4th lunar month for 15 days (June 15 -30)

Important Dates

- **March 27th:** Western Birthday of H.E. Akasha Vajra Rinpoche
- **April 11th:** Parinirvana of Yabje Kunga Rinchen (Father of H.H. the 41st Sakya Trizin)
- **April 15th:** - Tibetan Birthday of H.E. Akasha Vajra Rinpoche
- Parinirvana of Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen & Khangsar Shabdrung Ngawang Lodroe Tenzin Nyingpo
- **April 16th:** Parinirvana of Khenchen Dorje Chang Jampa Sangpo
- **April 28th:** Parinirvana of Khuwo Rinpoche Kunga Gyaltsen
- **May 3rd:** Parinirvana of Jamgon Loter Wangpo
- **May 17th:** Parinirvana of Phende Khenchen Ngawang Khedup Gyatso
- **May 20th:** Parinirvana of Dezhung Tulku Kunga Tenpei Nyima
- **May 27th:** Parinirvana of Gaongkhar Dorje Denpa Dzongpa Kunga Namgyal
- **May 31st:** Parinirvana of Gaton Ngawang Lekpa
Parinirvana of Luding Khenchen Jamyang Thupten Lundok Gyaltsen
- **June 8th:** Birth of Sakyamuni Buddha
- **June 13th:** Parinirvana of Khenchen Dhampa Dorje Chang
- **June 23rd:** Anniversary of Mahasiddha Virupa's attainment of the First Bhumi
- **June 26th:** Parinirvana of Ngorchen Dorje Chang Kunga Sangpo

❁ Lamp offerings in the monastery and food offerings to the lamas 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
and
HIS EMINENCE GYANA 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.

**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

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