

A JOURNEY TO THE WEST II

Recollections of Accompanying My Guru to Europe and
North America in 1993

Compiled by

Khenpo Sodargye

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5th Stop

July 23rd–July 31st

United States

WASHINGTON, D.C.

SCHEDULE

July 23rd

Arrived in Washington, D.C.

July 24th

Taught on the Four Noble Truths

July 25th

Gave the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* empowerment in the afternoon

July 26th

Visited the National Mall during the daytime and gave the *Peaceful Manjushri* empowerment in the evening

July 27th

Visited the National Air and Space Museum during the daytime and taught the first lecture on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* in the evening

July 28th

Talked about the merit of keeping precepts for ordained practitioners, and taught the second lecture on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* in the evening

July 29th

Taught the third lecture on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* in the evening

July 30th

Visited the White House and met with the ambassador at the Chinese Embassy

July 31st

Gave a farewell talk

ARRIVED IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

On July 23rd, we flew from the West Coast to the East Coast and landed in the national capital, Washington, D.C., after a six-hour journey. As soon as we stepped out of the terminal, we were warmly greeted by a gathering of Buddhists. They were of different races and ethnicities, including white, black, and yellow, and even Tibetan and western monastics. All of them held khatas and lined up to welcome Yidzhin Norbu. Everyone's face glowed with excitement since they had waited day and night and finally got to greet Rinpoche.



5.1: Ahkon Lhamo (left) with monastics and lay people receiving Chojé at the airport



5.2: Chojé giving blessing to a girl; everyone at the airport; Chojé and an African American monk

When leaving the airport, we compared the West Coast that is famous for its picturesque natural scenery with this city on the East Coast, which had a more humanistic and historical ambiance. Although its history is less than three hundred years, the city has a magnificent presence as the political capital of the United States. Its various landmarks, such as the White House and the US Capitol, have evolved into the country's distinctive cultural landscape.



5.3: Panoramic view of Washington, D.C.

Locals told us that after the United States was established, the southern states wanted the capital to be set in the southern regions, while the northern states wanted it to be in the north. In the end, the two sides agreed to establish a one-hundred-square-mile diamond-shaped territory on the Potomac River, that bridged the northern and southern states to serve as the permanent seat of the federal government. The capital city was then built on this land and named after George Washington, the first president of the United States.

Chojé would be giving teachings in this city for a week.

The Greatest Spiritual Teacher
Still Living in Tibet Comes to the West

HIS HOLINESS KHENPO JIGMEY PHUNTSOK



July 24-29, 1993
Washington, DC
& Maryland



The essence of Buddhism is to subdue and transform one's unruly mind; to minimize harm towards others while doing the maximum

to help them; to perfect oneself individually and then to help others to do the same. One's mind is the most important. Unless the mind is subdued and transformed into something better, you will be unable to help others...because everything depends on the mind. If the mind is troubled, then nothing can be achieved. The root of Buddhism is the mind. To be able to understand the world, a trained mind is required. There are two levels of peace. If the individuals are at peace, the world will be at peace.

— HIS HOLINESS KHENPO JIGMEY PHUNTSOK

His Holiness Khenpo Jigmei Phuntsok is considered one of the most extraordinary Buddhist lamas or teachers of this century. Tireless in his commitment to continue teaching in Tibet, he comes to the West for the first time to share his profound teachings on wisdom and compassion, thus fulfilling a sacred prophecy.

His Holiness is renowned for his revelation of *terma*, or hidden teachings, mastery of all lineages of Tibetan Buddhism, and his pristine monastic discipline.

Many have witnessed his Holiness' miraculous activity, such as leaving footprints in solid rock. Mantras, statues and holy objects have spontaneously appeared at sites where he has prayed, and emanations have shown themselves hundreds of miles from where his physical body was, in order to increase people's faith in the potency of the Buddhist path.

A RARE PUBLIC APPEARANCE
for those of all spiritual paths

July 24, 2pm-5pm

BODHICITTA & DZOGCHEN TEACHINGS

The Lansburgh Theatre
470 Seventh Street, NW, Washington, DC

In Buddhist thought, compassion is the activity of a mind which wishes others to be free from suffering. The aspiration to rescue all sentient beings from the sufferings of cyclic existence and to bring them to enlightenment is known as Bodhicitta.

Dzogchen, "The Great Perfection," is the most pristine view in Tibetan Buddhism, concerning the spontaneous presence of the natural perfection of all things, transcending logic and intellectual contrivance. The main principle in Dzogchen is to go beyond mind, to transcend the ordinary, thinking mind altogether and to reach the primordially pure state of our pristine awareness.

KUNZANG PAILYUL CHOLING

July 25, 2pm-5pm

COMMENTARY TEACHING & PHURBA GURKHUKMA EMPOWERMENT

July 26-29, 7:30pm-10pm

TEACHINGS ON BODHICITTA: CULTIVATING THE HEART OF COMPASSION

Bodhicitta, or compassion for all sentient beings, is the foundation of all Buddhist teaching. This in-depth teaching will help participants to deepen in their understanding of compassion as a way of life.

"If you can live an extraordinary life solely to end the suffering of sentient beings, not only are you purifying your mind, which is the antidote for self-absorption, but you are also a contributor to an idea we should hold as very precious: the idea of a world free of pain." —*Jetsunma Akhön Lhamo*

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Pre-registration for all teaching events is recommended. Early arrival and seating is advised.

There will be no childcare available July 24. If you need childcare July 25-29, you must register your child in advance by July 14 by calling Lynn at (301)231-3965. There will be a daily fee which will include snacks and materials.

Advance tickets for the July 24th teaching are also available at GZ, Dick's Books, and Yes! Bookstore.

Nearby accommodations: Red Roof Inn, Gaithersburg 1-800-848-7878, and Marriott Courtyard-Rockville 1-800-521-2211.

KUNZANG PAILYUL CHOLING is a Tibetan Buddhist center for study and practice in the Nyingma tradition. Jetsunma Akhön Lhamo, a reincarnate lama, is the spiritual director. KPC is located at 18400 River Road in Poolesville, Maryland, which is approximately 13 miles outside the Capital Beltway. For more information please call 301-428-8116.

TURNED THE WHEEL OF DHARMA ON THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

On July 24th, Chojé began his first teaching in Washington, D.C., which took place at the Lansburgh Theatre. It was the fourth day of the sixth Tibetan lunar month, the festival of the Buddha's first turning of the wheel of dharma on the Four Noble Truths. Coincidentally, the topic of Khenpo Rinpoche's teaching that day was also scheduled to be the Four Noble Truths.



5.5: Lansburgh Theatre

Before the teaching, the organizer gave the opening speech as follows:

Good afternoon! Today it is my great honor and good fortune to be able to introduce to you His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche, who is considered to be one of the most extraordinary spiritual masters alive at this time. I don't know how it is that we have accumulated the great merit to be able to meet him, but I hope that each one of us will be able to take advantage of this glorious opportunity in the best way possible.

One of the important things to remember as we receive Buddhist teachings to begin the path to enter into Buddhist practice is that to hear these teachings is like going to a continent of precious jewels. Each of us should take care to not return from that continent empty-handed. The program today is dedicated to teachings about the Four Noble Truths and Dzogchen, which are the backbones of the Buddhist path. So, I hope that this teaching will be a great benefit to you and that when you go home, you are not empty-handed.

I would like to reiterate once more that this is a more extraordinary opportunity than you can possibly imagine and that I have no words to let you know how important this is. Thank you again for coming and thank you for having the good karma to be here.

Then, Yidzhin Norbu taught as follows:

First of all, I would like to address this auspicious timing. Our root teacher Buddha Shakyamuni with great loving kindness, compassion, and skillful means generated supreme bodhicitta many eons ago, then spent three countless eons accumulating merit, and finally attained perfect enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, India. Forty-nine days after his full enlightenment, the Buddha turned the wheel of dharma for the first time in order to bring benefit and happiness to humans, celestial beings, and all other sentient beings. Today coincides with this special date that commemorates the Buddha's first turning of the dharma wheel. This coincidence signifies that all the inner, outer, and secret interdependent conditions of the teaching are perfect and auspicious.



5.6: The teaching on the auspicious day of Chökhör Düchen

On such an uncommon day, I am delighted to be here in the capital of the United States, a leading nation with unparalleled economic power among nearly two hundred countries worldwide. There are three reasons why this makes me happy. First, from the aspect of national leaders in the US, I believe that they all have distinct courage, insight, intelligence, and diligence to lead human beings in the whole world to the path of peace. Thinking that such wonderful people live in this place, I truly feel a sense of joy.

Second, from the aspect of the US citizens, you are endowed with wealth and freedom and enjoy perfect happiness in the world, all of which are privileges rare to obtain. Especially in this place, the living environment is so beautiful, and looking at its hills, forests, gardens, and residential houses, it is as if heaven has fallen to earth. So, I am very happy to be here in such a wonderful place.

Third, when I was back in eastern Asia, I heard about this country and was longing to come. Now my wish has been fulfilled, and it naturally adds an extra dimension of joy. I am especially moved and pleased to see that the leaders and members of the dharma centers here take great delight in the dharma and have great faith in their gurus to the point that even their subtle facial expressions demonstrate deep respect for their teachers. Such demeanor is consistent with both the Buddhist code of conduct and the noble customs of human beings. So, I am really touched and rejoice.

Many Tibetan masters, especially Gyalwa Rinpoche, have come to this country and made amazing contributions to the flourishing of the dharma over a long period of time. Thanks to their efforts, there are many western monastics in red and yellow robes in this hall today. This is a delightful spectacle to see!

Generally speaking, as long as there are the four groups of Buddhists—bhikshus, bhikshunis, female and male lay practitioners—in one place, Buddhism is complete there, and the dharma may be established. On the contrary, if one of these four is missing in a location, we cannot say Buddhism is there in its entirety. For example, if a place has only monastics or only lay practitioners, Buddhism there is incomplete. Now that the four groups are fully present here, Buddhism is complete, and this place can be referred to as *the central land of dharma*, meaning a place where the dharma exists and flourishes.

In particular, the presence of monastic sangha is of great significance. Why? Because whether Buddhism is present in the world or not

depends solely on the presence or absence of monastics. Of course, speaking of Secret Mantrayana, it exists in the world at all times because there are always tantric practitioners in various realms, including celestial realms, realms of nagas, yakshas, gandharvas, and garudas. For this reason, the teachings of Secret Mantrayana will never disappear. However, speaking of the Buddhadharma overall, the only means of determining whether it flourishes or diminishes is to observe whether monastics are present in that place or not. This is the reason why having so many monastics here is exceptionally rare.

Some may wonder, "How long will Buddhism survive in the world?"

It will remain 5,000 years in this world. According to the Buddha's teaching, "When the dharma is on the brink of vanishing, it will flourish from north to north." In the future, except in Khotan (Xinjiang or Nepal) and the Land of Tibet, the dharma will disappear in all other places, including India, indicating that the observation of pure monastic precepts will no longer exist. However, at present, there are many people observing monastic precepts, not only in the Land of Tibet but also in western countries. This is a perfect interdependent origination that suggests Buddhism will continue to flourish for a long period of time in the Land of Tibet, as well as the entire world. If you can propagate the dharma, especially monastic precepts, in the future, it will truly bring prosperity and peace to the whole world. By doing so, all diseases, famine, and war will be eradicated. I sincerely pray that you will remember this point.

So far, I am sharing some words about what I am concerned with from the worldly point of view. Now, I will give a brief teaching following the Buddhist doctrine. It has been nearly three thousand years since our root teacher, the great compassionate Lord Buddha who possessed excellent skillfulness, turned the wheel of dharma on the Four Noble Truths for the five human bhikshus and eighty thousand celestial beings at Deer Park, India. According to the glorious Phugpa tradition, this is the year 2873 of the Buddhist calendar. According to the common

calculation used by Buddhists worldwide, it is the year 2537 of the Buddhist calendar. Now, by recalling the benevolence of the Buddha, I will briefly talk about the Buddha's teaching.

Overview of the Four Noble Truths

What did the Buddha teach?

*All phenomena arise from a cause;
That cause was taught by the Tathagata.
In order to bring an end to the cause,
The Buddha taught how to train in the accumulation of vast virtue.*

This verse is the translation of the mantra of interdependent origination: "Om ye dharma hetu prabhawa, hetun teshan tathagato hyawadat, teshan cha yo nirodha, evam badi mahashramanah svaha."

What is the meaning of this verse? This was taught by the Buddha during his first turning of the wheel of dharma on the Four Noble Truths. At that time, the Buddha taught the following:

*This is the truth of suffering;
This is the truth of the origin of suffering;
This is the truth of the cessation of suffering;
This is the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.*

This shloka clearly tells the definition of the Four Noble Truths.

The second:

*Know the truth of suffering;
Abandon the origin of suffering;
Realize the cessation of suffering;
Follow the path leading to the cessation of suffering.*

This shloka indicates what to do concerning the Four Noble Truths.

The third:

*There is no knowing of suffering,
No abandoning of the origin of suffering,
No realizing of the cessation of suffering,
And no following of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.*

This shloka indicates the ultimate result of the Four Noble Truths.

The Buddha explained the Four Noble Truths through these three shlokas, totaling twelve lines. After the Buddha gave these twelve truths, the five bhikshus and many other beings attained arhatship one after another, and simultaneously eighty thousand celestial beings directly realized the true nature of reality. In other words, aside from the teaching of these twelve truths, the Buddha did not expound upon other subjects. However, through the Buddha's power that was endowed with skillful means and great loving kindness and compassion and because the listeners were devoted followers in their last rebirth in samsara, they were able to attain the qualities of enlightenment in terms of abandonment and realization. The second and third shlokas were taught for those who had already attained certain levels of realization. Now, I will briefly explain the four lines in the first shloka. My explanation will follow the commentary of Lord Maitreya, who resides in the Tushita Heaven as the regent of Buddha Shakyamuni.

According to Maitreya, the Buddha expounded the Four Noble Truths through an analogy. For a person who is seriously ill, the first thing he or she needs to do is to recognize the suffering of the disease; this is to know the truth of suffering. Secondly, if the individual wants to be rid of the illness, he or she needs to know what causes the disease, such as improper diet or behavior patterns, and then adjust those choices. This is to abandon the origin of suffering. Thirdly, when the illness is gone, the body and the mind will be comfortable and happy, which is

to realize the cessation of suffering. Fourth, the cessation of suffering, the state where both suffering and its origin are eliminated, does not appear without a cause and a condition. Just as it is necessary to rely on medicine to get rid of illness, one needs to practice on the right path to attain the cessation of suffering, which is to follow the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

The Truth of Suffering

Just as you need to recognize the pain of physical illness, you must recognize that wherever you are in the cyclic existence of the three realms, the nature is that of suffering. There is endless pain and suffering in samsara and like jumping into a fire pit or coming into contact with sharp weapons, there is no opportunity to enjoy true happiness.



5.7: Chojé gazing into space

How are samsaric beings trapped in such situations?

All beings experience various forms of suffering, including physical discomfort, emotional distress, and failing to achieve what they want, such as material possessions, authority, and prestige. Even if you may be able to achieve power or high status, someday you will have to step down, which undeniably is a form of suffering and referred to as *the suffering of change*.

All things that you believe can bring happiness, such as wealth, status, and fame, are actually cause for more distress. Why is that? Take material objects as an example. When you possess one item, you desire a second; and once you have two, your longing extends to acquiring a third. Even if you control all the politics and economics of an entire country, you still want the wealth of other countries. Driven by unceasing desire, your mind will always be attracted by something

and can never be satisfied. Thus, there will never be happiness, only anguish.

Think about the possession of material wealth. In the beginning, in order to accumulate wealth, you need to go through various efforts and experience many hardships; this is the suffering of accumulating wealth. In the middle, you would worry about being robbed by enemies, thieves, and so forth; this is the suffering of protecting wealth. Finally, you would become preoccupied with your material wealth all day long, desiring more and more. In this way, because of suffering, you will never be able to enjoy happiness through your possession of material wealth. Now think about how you would enjoy material pleasure. Suppose you own all the material wealth of the United States. Even if this were the case, except for more delicate food, exquisite clothes, and cozy bedrooms and houses, there are no other aspects that you can enjoy. Except for entertaining yourself with food and clothing of higher quality, wealth is of little use, and worse still, it is often the cause of many troubles.

Moreover, even if a person owns all material wealth in the world, at the moment of death, there is no way for them to take anything with them, not even a needle or thread. Similarly, even if you were to be a leader of all humanity, you cannot take anyone with you at the end of life. You will have to leave alone with empty hands, and that moment will eventually come. So, in this short life, it is indeed futile to covet a lot of wealth. Buddhism teaches that contentment and less desire is the greatest wealth that even the heavenly king Indra is unable to enjoy. This is an absolute fact.

Therefore, instead of being obsessed with material wealth, you should practice pure dharma, which is the most important thing in life. Also, it seems that the more relatives, friends, and close relationships you have, the happier you feel. But the truth is that the more affiliations you have, the more you suffer. This is because you have to worry about their basic needs, resolve their conflicts, maintain harmonious

relationships, and manage many other things, all of which only add distraction and have no benefits at all. In the same way, power, status, fame, and everything else do not transcend the nature of suffering.

Generally speaking, beggars have to undergo a great deal of hardship just to get a small amount of satisfaction or comfort. It is the same for ordinary people, who also need to go through hardships and experience pain to achieve career success and move on to a higher position. Even those in high positions are always suffering from the fear of losing their position, hoping to acquire a promotion or a higher status, and so forth, so they suffer much distress in their minds.

As a matter of fact, compared to ordinary people, officials with prestige and fame may have a hundred times or a thousand times more ambition and worry, which brings them even more distress. Those with lower status only have expectations to elevate their living condition and are concerned only with basic necessities, not having to worry about losing their status. Comparatively, those in high positions yearn desperately to gain higher status and are fearful of losing what they already have. So, they have twofold suffering—the fear of losing what they have and the anxiety to get more. People with lower status only suffer from wishing for more while being free of the fear of losing. From this aspect, people in high positions suffer more than ordinary people. If you are an ordinary person, all you need is to find a good job and be free of worries about food and shelter. You don't need to worry about fame, power, or status, and you can sleep soundly at night. However, if you hold a prominent position, you will have to be concerned about the interests of different factions all day long and are likely to suffer from insomnia.

Even if you possess all the desired wealth and fame you wish for, they are not permanent or stable and are also the essence of discontent. For example, an individual may live a life of abundance during the initial part of their life but end up destitute in the latter half. Or they may enjoy a prominent status in early life but descend to a lowly position in

later life. There are even such cases where an individual was wealthy and enjoyed a happy life last month but has now become extremely miserable this month. Such phenomena are indeed not uncommon. Hence, the crucial principle is to have no attachment or worries to anything.

It is true that everyone pursues wealth and fame. The fact is that if you have accumulated good karma in the past, you will succeed without much deliberate effort. Without good karma, however, no matter how hard you work and how much effort you put in, you can hardly gain fame or fortune in this lifetime. Therefore, everyone should learn to let go, or else no matter how occupied you may be, you will never put an end to samsaric things that are trivial and meaningless.

The happiness and prosperity, fame and reputation you once had, as well as all the suffering you experienced in this life, have all become memories and will never return, just like a dream from last night. In your dreams, even if you enjoy happiness or experience suffering for a long time, everything disappears when you wake up, and those joys and sorrows are not real at all. Similarly, when you die, the happiness and pain you experienced in your entire life will have vanished without a trace, having no substantial meaning at all. Therefore, you should not crave happiness, wealth, fame, or anything else in samsara.

The great compassionate Buddha once said that just like staying in a filthy room where you can only smell the stench but not any trace of fragrance, no matter which of the six realms you take birth in, there will only be suffering and no happiness. If you deeply contemplate this, you will understand that both agony and pleasure is suffering in nature, and that true happiness does not exist in samsara. If you can understand that everything in samsara is uncertain and unsatisfactory in this way, you will be able to cultivate the genuine intention to transcend samsaric existence rather than remain trapped by all of this.

The Truth of the Origin of Suffering

If you want eliminate suffering, you must endeavor to uproot its cause. Suffering will not naturally cease by itself. This second noble truth reveals the origin of suffering, which consists of mental afflictions and karma.

Mental Afflictions

There are three main mental afflictions: desire, hatred, and ignorance.

Desire is the fixation on objects, such as wealth, power, status, friends, and loved ones. In short, to feel anything or any person desirable and thus cling to it is called desire. If you fall prey to such emotion, there will be endless suffering. So, you must try all means to rid yourself of desire.

Hatred is the mental state that wishes others to suffer and also feels anger toward others. What is the cause of hatred? It arises when you or your loved ones are harmed or your enemies are benefited by others. These are the main reasons for hatred to arise. If you don't put an end to it, you will certainly experience unceasing suffering. So, you must also eradicate this destructive emotion.



5.8: Graciously adorned throne and splendid teaching site

Ignorance means not knowing what to do and what not to do and having no idea of practicing virtue and abstaining from non-virtue. There are two types of ignorance: that which comes from not understanding and that which comes from misunderstanding. The first refers to lacking understanding of the purpose of this life. Although you have been born as humans in the southern continent, Jambudvipa, different from other forms of life, if you have no religious belief at all and never work

hard to practice virtue and abstain from non-virtue, just idling your time and being in a daze all day long, you would be living like cows and horses, for example. Animals also have the intention to seek food and water and to evade harm and disasters. If you just survive with no spiritual pursuit, you would be the same as animals, with the mere difference that animals don't wear clothes, but you do.

In this world, there are three major religions and various minor ones. It is important that you choose one to follow. Otherwise, to waste away your days without a spiritual pursuit is indeed a type of ignorance. When I was in California, I saw many cows on pastures that were to be slaughtered in the future. However, none of the cows ever tried to escape; they just grazed in the pasture leisurely. Likewise, some people believe that they do not need to embrace a spiritual tradition, have no thought about their spiritual pursuit, and simply indulge themselves in ordinary material pleasures. In this way, they may live a life no better than those cows. You should not waste your life like this.

The second type of ignorance coming from misunderstanding refers to the case in which you have a religious belief, but it does not provide you with the true reality of the world. Before joining a religion, you must carefully examine it, try to observe its authenticity, and consult others for more information. It is not wise to follow a religious tradition impulsively without careful observation and analysis. As a matter of fact, concerning the food you eat in a day, you will examine whether it is delicious, hygienic, and good for your health or not. So, even choosing food requires careful observation, needless to say how important it is to choose a belief that concerns your everlasting happiness in all future lives. You must employ deliberate consideration before following a religion.

Some people show zeal for one religion and hatred for another for no reason. This is irrational. You need to use logical analysis and give meticulous consideration to your spiritual journey regarding its path and its destination. During this process, it is necessary to make a

thorough and in-depth investigation to figure out which doctrine is correct and which is wrong, which is beneficial and which is not. To join a religion hastily without any logical judgment is truly silly, and you must not behave like this.

Among the many religious traditions worldwide, some advocate that sexual misconduct, stealing, and robbery are virtuous acts, and some claim killing certain people and other beings is good. But if you think about it carefully, not to mention bringing about happiness in future lives, even in this life, such acts triggered by desire or hatred incur only the fault of breaking the law. From all aspects, harming others will never bring you benefit.

In addition, although some religions teach methods to seek happiness, they only care about their own followers and teach them how to benefit themselves and their relatives without any consideration for others. Certainly, this is better than having no belief at all. But since their focus is just on their own community, such religions cannot be counted as the best. Whichever religious tradition it is, as long as it teaches people to benefit both themselves and all sentient beings, it can be considered the best. Wherever there is a religion with such qualification, you should embrace it.

Of course, to merely have the intent to benefit both self and others is not enough, as it will not take actual effect to bring about extensive benefit. It is like an old lady with no arms seeing her son being carried away by torrents, who can do nothing but pray that her son will not be drowned. You should try to carry out actions to accomplish the twofold benefit of yourself and others as bravely and resolutely as a hero who leaves his son on the battlefield. Wherever there are expedient methods for achieving that goal, you should devote yourself to their study and practice.

The right method to achieve the goal of benefiting self and others should be tested through three types of analysis, which are scriptural teachings,

logical analysis, and actual practice. Great scholars and accomplished practitioners in the past always based their judgment or choice on reliable scriptures instead of the assumptions of certain people. So first of all, such a method must have its source from authentic scriptures. Also, the method must undergo the test of meticulous reasoning. If it fails to stand up to logical analysis, then it is akin to a person in power proclaiming, “Only by following my teaching will you enjoy a happy life, or else, you will suffer from misery and misfortune.” This is not convincing at all. Last but not least, it must be proven by actual practice. It means that if you practice the teaching of a certain religion, you should be able to consequently attain temporary benefit and ultimate realization. To have actual spiritual experience through practice is the absolute evidence for the authenticity of a teaching. Without such a result, a verbal argument cannot prove itself.

As a matter of fact, all religious traditions that are dedicated to the welfare of sentient beings are brought to this world by the power of Buddha Shakyamuni’s enlightened activities and his great compassion. In Hinduism, Buddha Shakyamuni is believed to be the emanation of Vishnu. From the perspective of Buddhism,



5.9: Chojé making prayers before the teaching

Maheshvara is the manifestation of Avalokiteshvara. The fact that Hinduism teaches people methods to pursue peace and happiness in this life is a good proof that it is the embodiment of the Buddha’s great compassion. Take Christianity as another example. Its principle of cultivating compassion and universal love for all beings is the core of Buddhism. So, you can say that it is also an embodiment of the Buddha’s enlightened activities. The point is, no matter who you are, please stay impartial to all religious traditions that thrive in the world

and never zealously grasp onto one but detest the others. It is of vital importance that all religions coexist in harmony, stay united, and are friendly to each other.

To be frank, the only doctrine that employs the three types of analysis is the Buddha's teachings since no other religious tradition is able to reach this level. If you want to have a deeper understanding on this point, I suggest you study scriptures of all major religions. It is impossible for me to explain clearly about the features of Buddhism and opinions of other religious traditions within such a short time, but if you read through those books composed within the past one or two thousand years, you will give rise to the conviction in what I said.

For myself, I am a Buddhist and live in a place where Buddhism flourishes. However, I have never been blindly attached to Buddhism and harbor aversion toward other religions because I am a Buddhist follower. It is through long-term and in-depth study into the doctrine of all religions that I can discern which one is better. Nowadays, Buddhism has three main branches—Southern Buddhism, Han Buddhism, and Tibetan Buddhism, and what I follow is Tibetan Buddhism. After a long time of study and practice, I have developed unwavering faith in the unique wisdom and transcendent qualities of Buddhadharma, and that is why I share my conclusion with you. For yourself, you also need to discern the doctrines of various religions. Before you decide to follow a religion, take time for careful and serious consideration. If you just join without any investigation and analysis, it is what we Tibetans usually say, "This is like a hungry dog eating a lung." Even though an animal's lung tastes the worst compared with the flesh of other parts of the body, a ravenous dog will devour it without a second thought. This is the same for those who blindly follow a religion without giving it considerable thought, which is absolutely unacceptable.

In summary, the three mental afflictions of desire, hatred, and ignorance are the first cause of suffering, and after knowing this, you should spare no effort to get rid of them.

Karma

The second cause of suffering is negative karma, so you must abstain from each and every negative action.

The first negative act to forsake is killing. Whoever you are, you must abstain from killing. Some religious traditions only forbid killing people and claim that killing other forms of life is harmless. But if you think carefully, you will know that all forms of life, whatever they are, are afraid of death and will feel pain when being killed. Therefore, there is no reason for anyone to kill any sentient being. Even a small ant cherishes its life and will try all means to avoid harm and protect itself. All sentient beings are equally the same and suffer the same way as you do. So, the act of killing should be absolutely abandoned from its very root.

The second is stealing. If out of a selfish intent, you steal the possessions that belong to others, such an act will hurt those people and also incur misfortune to yourself. So, the act of stealing must be abandoned.

The third is lying. If you seriously cheat others through lies, this act will cause them to be greatly harmed and plagued with unexpected problems. Meanwhile, it degrades your quality of being a dignified person. So, you should quit lying.

The fourth is sexual misconduct. To engage in sexual misconduct with another's wife or husband incurs negativity, just like the aforementioned negative deeds. The reason is that people usually have the strongest affection for their husband or wife and cling to them the most. So, engaging in sexual misconduct with someone who is already married to another will incur much worse negative karma than stealing.

The fifth is drinking alcohol. Alcohol can be the fundamental cause of all negative acts, so you must abstain from it. Alcohol consumption not only causes many health problems, but also brings about obstacles

to dharma practice. If people are intoxicated, they get dull-minded and are inclined to lose control of themselves, at which time they will likely break all other precepts. That is why you must quit drinking alcohol.

To refrain from drinking alcohol and the abovementioned four misdeeds in terms of physical conduct and speech is called the five precepts. For anyone who follows the Buddhist path, it is better to abstain from all five of these actions. By doing so, you will accumulate inconceivable great merit. If on the basis of forsaking these misdeeds, you take the pratimoksha vows of a lay practitioner and protect your mind stream by observing these vows carefully, then the merit accumulated will be a hundred or even a thousand times greater. Such being the case, it is better for you to take the pratimoksha vows of a lay practitioner and practice virtue with such a commitment.



5.10: Chojé glowing under the spotlight

For you monks and nuns here, the precepts are basically the same, and there are just two more disciplines you need to follow. First, you should wear monastic robes at all times. Without monastic robes, you appear no different from a lay person, and there is nothing else to indicate you are a monastic. The only thing that distinguishes you from lay people is wearing monastic robes. Second, lay practitioners are allowed to have sex with their spouses, and this is not considered

sexual misconduct. However, you monastic practitioners must avoid the sexual act altogether; otherwise, you are breaking a root vow. Today, there are many monastics present, so I emphasize the four root precepts and the precept of abstaining from alcohol. I hope that from now on, you can always wear your monastic robes properly and observe the five precepts carefully. Then, even if you fail to observe other precepts on a stricter level, it will not be a big problem.

According to the Tibetan Vinaya texts, if you have not taken ordination, you have no qualification to wear monastic robes. But here in this place, if there is no favorable condition for you to receive monastic vows for the time being, you may wear the monastic robes as long as you take the refuge vows and observe the five precepts. Once you wear the robes inherited from the Buddha, for anyone who sees you, the seed of liberation will be planted in their mind streams. Meanwhile, you will not be harmed by demonic forces and will experience signs of spiritual progress and realization quickly and smoothly. Someday, when there are favorable conditions, you should immediately take ordination. It would be unacceptable if you do not take ordination when there is a good opportunity yet still wear monastic robes.

The Truths of Cessation and the Path

What is the ultimate fruit of virtuous karma? It is buddhahood, a state of ultimate bliss in which all suffering is eradicated. To attain buddhahood is to realize the truth of cessation, and in order to realize it, you must rely on the truth of the path.

To rely on the truth of the path means to align your mind stream with the right spiritual path. In this world, the Buddhadharmas are classified into the common vehicles and the Great Vehicle. The latter is further divided into the Sutrayana and the Vajrayana of Secret Mantra. Thus, there are mainly three vehicles.

In the common vehicles, you take refuge in Buddha Shakyamuni and on that basis, you abandon all intentions and acts of harming others

and focus only on benefiting yourself. Nowadays, in countries like Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Thailand, there are many people practicing the common vehicles.

Comparatively, all Mahayana teachings emphasize benefiting others more than benefiting yourself. With the sole concern of others' benefit, your intention and actions are fully dedicated to the accomplishment of the benefit of others, maintaining loving kindness and compassion that intend to place all sentient beings in the state of buddhahood; this is the practice of Mahayana. If you are a follower of the common vehicles, you need to refrain from the intentions and acts of inflicting harm on others. If you are a follower of the Great Vehicle, you are required to not only avoid harming others, but also work solely for the benefit of others. Followers of the Great Vehicle can now be found in most Han regions and Japan.

On the basis of Mahayana, numerous supreme instructions are employed, which is called Vajrayana of Secret Mantra. Following this path, you do not have to undergo a long-term ascetic practice and will swiftly accomplish buddhahood. By applying many expedient means and wisdom, it is possible for a practitioner to become a buddha within this very life. The *expedient means* refer to the practice of the generation stage, in which you visualize yourself as the deity and so forth. *Wisdom* refers to the practice of the completion stage, including the view that all phenomena are empty. These two methods, the generation and completion stages, belong to Vajrayana of Secret Mantra. In the Land of Tibet, Bhutan, and other regions, a lot of people engage in Vajrayana practice. Now in the US, there are many dharma centers established by Tibetan Buddhist masters, and their disciples are practicing Vajrayana. There are also many Tibetan masters in other countries and places who endeavor to build dharma centers to greatly promote the Vajrayana teaching.

Of all the Vajrayana teachings of Secret Mantra, which one is the most supreme among all paths, the wisdom intent of all buddhas, and the

heart essence of numerous female buddhas and dakinis? It is the clear light teaching of Dzogchen. If you have received the supreme, skillful pith instructions of this teaching, you will swiftly attain buddhahood. As the saying goes, “If you practice it during daytime, you will become a buddha in the day; if you practice it during night, you will become a buddha that very night.” For those with wonderful karmic fortune, they do not even need to practice but will become a buddha simply by hearing Dzogchen teachings. Just hearing its name will block the door to the lower realms, and just seeing the words of its texts, touching them, or recalling them will enable you to easily and swiftly reach the state of perfect buddhahood.

Like a wish-fulfilling jewel, it does not appear in the world often. Even those who are busy with worldly aims and pursuits and are always preoccupied by trivial matters can easily engage in Dzogchen practice and attain the result swiftly. However, except for fortunate ones, other people will not be able to encounter this teaching. If you are lucky enough to encounter it, you will never fail to attain liberation through its practice.



5.11: Chojé joining his palms together solemnly

In the Land of Tibet, the peerless masters who first erected the victory banner of Secret Mantrayana were Orgyen Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra. The clear light Dzogchen is the innermost profound

teaching that these two great masters imparted to their heart disciples in the manner of entrusting them with this most valuable treasure. Even in the Land of Tibet, this teaching is hard to encounter. Among the many teachings of the eight lineages of attainment, the clear light teaching of Dzogchen is the supreme one only specific to Ngagyur Nyingma.

As I have said before, in your country, the United States, quite a lot of people are the proper vessels to receive the Dzogchen teaching. Although I have lectured on many other teachings, it seems they are not that welcomed. But whenever I speak on Dzogchen, everyone becomes extremely joyous, and their unusual faith and devotion are clearly reflected in their facial expressions. Since your country is economically advanced, people here always have various ambitions and are preoccupied with many businesses. In such a case, it is hard to achieve desirable results through practices other than Dzogchen. This simple but highly effective practice is much more suitable for you. I do believe that a lot of western Buddhists will be enlightened by the Dzogchen teaching. I hope you can devote yourself to the practice of Dzogchen now and afterwards. Tashi Delek!

AT KUNZANG Palyul Choling

During our stay in Washington, D.C., Yidzhin Norbu resided at Kunzang Odsal Palyul Changchub Choling. It was a tranquil and secluded monastery with luxuriant green trees. Staying in such a place, it seemed that we had arrived at the Deer Park back in the time of the Buddha.



5.12: Kunzang Palyul Choling

The center was established by Ahkon Lhamo, the female tulku recognized by His Holiness Penor Rinpoche. Although she has not taken monastic ordination, she has trained a lot of monastic practitioners. This is very uncommon in the western world. Before she was enthroned as a tulku, Ahkon Lhamo loved collecting crystals. So, we saw crystals of various colors everywhere in the center. Ahkon Lhamo invited Khenpo Rinpoche to take a look at the crystals she collected. He wanted to find a naturally formed octagon crystal because a crystal of such shape is helpful for Dzogchen practice. We searched for a while but did not find one.

In the following days, Chojé toured famous tourist attractions in the daytime and gave empowerments or teachings in the evening.



5.13: Ankon Lhamo showing Chojé her collection of crystals

FAVORABLE TIMING, GEOGRAPHICAL, AND HUMAN CONDITIONS



5.14: Monastics and lay people welcoming Chojé along the road

On the afternoon of July 25th, Chojé bestowed the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* empowerment. Because the size of the audience was so large, the organizer had to arrange multiple parallel sub-venues to receive the overflow of audience and set up closed-circuit television to live-stream the teaching. Before the empowerment, Rinpoche said the following words:



5.15: Close-circuit television in each room for live stream

As the saying goes, "Make offerings before eating. Say something before acting." So, please allow me to say a few words before the teaching.

Following our Tibetan tradition, I'd like to first extend my best regards to the resident lama and those in charge of the center. I wish you peace and good health. May auspiciousness always be with you. Then, I'd like to give my best wishes to those American Buddhist followers who have been to the Land of Tibet to pursue dharma teachings and who have persisted in hearing and receiving teachings for a long time thereafter. May everything be auspicious for you. Also, to the monastics from my hometown Sertar and my Tibetan compatriots who come from Nepal, I wish you auspiciousness. Lastly, I extend my wishes to all who come here for the dharma teaching. May you have auspiciousness in every aspect. The rest are those who came with me, so there is no need to give them my wishes. (Laughs)

May you all enjoy good health! May the dharma flourish!

This time, my dharma activities here are perfect with exceptional and favorable dependent conditions, which is certainly something to be happy about. What is the interdependent arising of this event? As I said yesterday, now I have come to Washington, D.C., the capital city of the most powerful country in the world. So, in terms of the place of teaching, it is really wonderful to be here and spread dharma teachings extensively.

Then, in terms of the teacher, the teaching, and the audience, all these aspects of this special occasion are truly delightful. In today's world, the country with the strongest economic power is the US, and the region where Buddhism is the most prosperous is the Snow Land of Tibet. If the authentic dharma from the Snow Land and the economic strength of the US can complement each other, it will make great contribution to the peace and prosperity of the whole world. Therefore,

on such an auspicious occasion, to meet with you here in a harmonious and joyous atmosphere makes me feel even more cheerful.

In terms of time, yesterday commemorated the occasion of the first turning of the dharma wheel by our compassionate root teacher Buddha Shakyamuni. In addition, the tenth day of this Tibetan lunar month is an important festival that commemorates Orgyen Padmasambhava's miraculous birth into this world. It was on this date that Padmasambhava manifested suddenly from natural awareness in the southwest of the milky lake Oddiyana, without having a biological father and mother. Not only that, the tenth of this month also coincides with the date of Guru Rinpoche's departure for the continent of rakshasas, Ngayab Ling, to tame the rakshasas there. So, the time of the teaching is perfect.

Moreover, the fifteenth day of this Tibetan lunar month is a special time when Buddhist monastics embark on the three basic rituals of the Vinaya. It is from this date that they begin their three-month summer retreat, during which they will engage in the practice of sojong and other trainings of precepts, doing what they should and abstaining from what is prohibited in accordance with the Vinaya. For Vajrayana practitioners, the tenth day is a special day during which all dakas and dakinis spontaneously gather together. Orgyen Padmasambhava once promised:

*On the tenth day of the waxing moon,
I of Oddiyana will descend to all areas of Tibet.
On the tenth day of the monkey month in the monkey year,
My emanations will unchangeably fill the Land of Tibet.*

The second buddha Orgyen Padmasambhava visits the Land of Tibet and all other places of this world on every tenth day. Tantras in the Sarma tradition mention that on this special day when dakas and dakinis spontaneously gather together, all tantric practitioners can naturally open the door to the mandala of Secret Mantra. Particularly,

the six months starting from the fifteenth day of the sixth month in the Tibetan Calendar are the perfect period of time for Dzogchen practitioners to engage in the Dzogchen practice, such as meditating on its view through the practice of threefold space.

Generally speaking, whenever you practice Dzogchen teachings, you will receive blessings and siddhis. However, in places like India and Washington, D.C. where the weather is mostly very hot, this period of time of the six months following the fifteenth day of this lunar month, has a relatively cooler temperature and provides a more favorable condition for the balance of the four great elements of our bodies. Therefore, it is easier for beginners to bring forth spiritual accomplishment and maintain their state of realization if they practice during this time. Such being the case, the past vidyadharas normally chose the period after the fifteenth day of this month to carry out their dharma activities. I heard that considering this special period of time, Gyalwa Rinpoche is planning to visit here in one or two months. I believe all his dharma activities are dedicated to your progress in spiritual training.

The Tibetan saying goes, "Man-made conditions are not excellent, the natural interdependent arising is wondrous." If you deliberately make an effort to bring about the causes and conditions for a thing to happen, it is not something amazing. But if all the causes and conditions appear naturally and coincidentally, this is extremely marvelous. I never purposely planned to come to the capital city of the US on Chökhör Düchen, the fourth day of the month of Ashadha, to lecture on the Four Noble Truths. Neither did you make any arrangement planned that way. It is through the compassionate blessing of the guru and the Three Jewels that all these causes and conditions come together naturally. This is really a great delight for all of us!

As for myself, from the time when I was twenty-five years old until now, I have always initiated my activities of spreading the dharma

and benefiting sentient beings in this month. Let me briefly introduce to you what I have done in recent years:

In 1985, I was enthroned as a reincarnation of Tertön Lerab Lingpa at his monastery. There, I made the aspiration to safeguard and uphold the vast activities of spreading the dharma to flourish Buddhism. Ever since then, I have devoted myself to the goal that all monastics at every corner of the Snow Land can remain harmonious, observe pure precepts, and focus on dharma study and practice. For that vision, I have carried out unimaginably vast and great undertakings and accomplished unprecedented achievements in benefiting sentient beings.

In 1986, on the fourth day of the sixth month, I gave rise to supreme bodhicitta to propagate the dharma and benefit beings. Following that, I visited the twenty-five holy places in the lower regions of Dokham, as well as monasteries in different places of Tibet. During that time, many extraordinary words, buddha statues, stupas, and other holy objects naturally appeared in the twenty-five holy places, and I also revealed many profound termas. Many incredible signs such as these occurred. Just to mention the revival of the sangha community who wear monastic robes, during the period of the Cultural Revolution, Buddhism was at a low ebb and monastics could rarely be seen in every place. After this movement, I and my main disciples went around all the different places in the Land of Tibet to give ordination to those fortunate ones. Through these efforts, now just around my hometown, there are about twenty thousand monks and nuns who observe pure monastic precepts. We have made such a great change.

In 1987, I made a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai in the east, leading a group of more than ten thousand Tibetan monastics and lay practitioners, as well as many Han Chinese and Mongolians. There, we chanted collectively the *King of Aspiration Prayers for Excellent Conduct*, which amounted to tens of millions of times. Everyone who participated in this pilgrimage experienced blessings of different levels according

to their karmic fortune. Those with superior capacity and karmic fortune personally saw Lord Manjushri, heard teachings from him, and received the blessing of his wisdom. Even those with inferior capacity and karmic fortune had various uncommon experiences, such as seeing rainbows, light rays, or other miraculous signs. The pilgrimage brought us such incredible results.

In 1988, I traveled to Nyarong and gave empowerments, transmissions, and practice instructions to all sangha members in the thirteen monasteries there. Thus, the victory banner of dharma teaching and practice was erected.

In 1989, at the sacred mountain of Minyak Gangkar, I imparted the empowerment of *Nyingtig Yabzhi* to about three thousand disciples.

Throughout those years, the sangha group at the Larung Gar academy developed vigorously, and the number of monastics had reached about six thousand. Usually, at this time of every year, they dedicate themselves to the cultivation of supreme bodhicitta.

In 1990, following the wishes of several great accomplished masters, including His Holiness Penor Rinpoche and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, I went to India. On the fourth day of this month, we eight people—six of whom are now present here, including Khenpo Namdrol, Khenpo Sodargye, Ngodrup Dorje, and the three of my family (my sister, niece, and me), plus two other monks—went to Gyalwa Rinpoche's residence. In front of the ancient Avalokiteshvara statue named Kyirong Jowo Wati Sangpo, Gyalwa Rinpoche and I sat together on one seat and aroused supreme bodhicitta. A few days later, on the tenth day of the same month, I went to Mysore, a city located in southern India. There, I stayed at the Ngagyur Nyingma Institute of Namdroling Dharma Monastery established by Penor Rinpoche and gave the empowerment of *Peaceful Manjushri* to a thousand monks, including forty khenpos and tulkus. Thereafter, whatever I have undertaken has gone smoothly and has been accomplished successfully without any obstacles.

I am not saying all this to build myself up to impress you. I just want to make you feel joyous and happy before receiving my teaching. In a word, at this time and in this place, all favorable causes and conditions naturally join together. Through my teaching and your listening to the teaching, I believe we can for sure accomplish the great deeds of spreading the dharma and benefiting beings, and all my wishes can thus be actualized. This truly makes me happy, and this certainly has not come from occasional luck. Therefore, I am sharing with you these words to make you happy too.

To reiterate, the economic power of your country, the US, is like excellent food ingredients, and the authentic dharma from our place, the Land of Tibet, is like exquisite seasoning—both of them are indispensable. However excellent the ingredients are, we wouldn't want to eat them if they are not cooked with proper seasoning. Likewise,



5.16: Chojé blessing everyone with a phurba

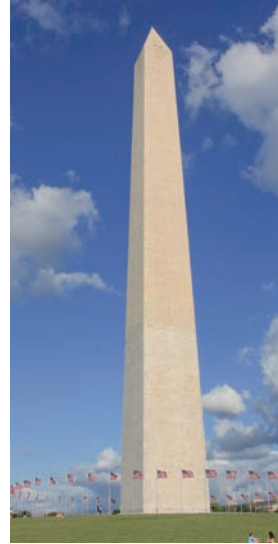
no matter how strong the economic power is, without the support of authentic dharma, the happiness derived from material pleasure is only enjoyable for this lifetime but will not continue into future lifetimes. Now, we have the good seasoning to be added into the good ingredients; it is time for us to enjoy the delicacy. (Laughs)

If it were not me, but someone rich, who came here today, he or she would probably serve you a sumptuous dinner. Rather than that, I serve you with a banquet of the noble dharma. Are you willing to enjoy it? (Applause)

ONE DAY TOUR IN THE NATIONAL MALL

On July 26th, we accompanied Yidzhin Norbu to the heart of the nation's capital, the National Mall. It is an important site where many national celebrations and ceremonies are held and also a great tourist spot with many attractions to explore.

The first site we visited was the Washington Monument, the landmark of this capital city. The 555-foot marble obelisk was built to honor George Washington, the United States' first president. It is said that the government used to have a restriction that no construction could be taller than the Washington Monument in this city. There are no inscriptions cut on the monument, quite like Empress Wu Zetian's Wordless Tomb Stele in China. Some people say that this indicates that George Washington's feats are beyond what words can describe, while others say that it means that his accomplishments and faults were left to be judged by later generations.



5.17: Washington Monument

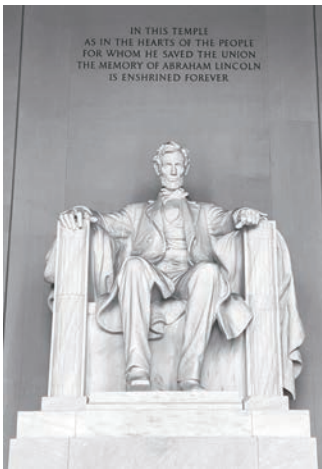
We then visited the Lincoln Memorial, the stately monument honoring Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States. As soon as we entered the hall, we saw the statue of Lincoln in the center. Directly behind the statue of Abraham Lincoln inside the memorial chamber, there is an inscription that reads:

In this temple
As in the hearts of the people
For whom he saved the union
The memory of Abraham Lincoln
Is enshrined forever



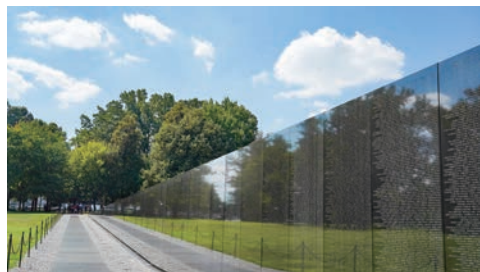
5.18: Inside Lincoln Memorial

This is also the gathering place for people who seek peace. It was from the steps of this memorial that civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech.



5.19: Lincoln Memorial

Leaving the Lincoln Memorial, we then toured the Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial. It is a black granite V-shaped wall inscribed with the names of members of the US armed forces who served and died in the Vietnam War. Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok lingered in front of the wall for a relatively long time and chanted mantras and prayers for the deceased veterans.



5.20: Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial



5.21: Chojé praying for the deceased veterans

The last stop of our tour was the United States Capitol. It is another prominent place of the United States, where most inaugurations of the presidents of this country have taken place. The Capitol is a five-level building, and the most attractive part is the Rotunda, a circular ceremonial space in the center under a dome that also serves as a



5.22: United States Capitol

gallery of magnificent paintings and sculpture depicting significant people and events in the nation's history. To the south and north of the Rotunda are the chambers of the House of Representatives and the Senate, respectively, which witness the passage or rejection of the most important policies of the nation.



5.23: Touring inside the US Capitol; Capitol Rotunda now



5.24: Chojé and his entourage taking a group photo in the capital of the US

ORIGIN OF THE *PEACEFUL MANJUSHRI*

On the evening of July 26th, Chojé bestowed the empowerment of *Peaceful Manjushri*. Before the empowerment, he delivered the following speech:



5.25: Chojé offering a khata to Ahkon Lhamo

I would like to briefly introduce the origin of the *Swift Bestowal of Blessings—A Sadhana of Peaceful Manjushri*.

In 1987, I led a large group of Tibetan monastics and lay people totaling more than ten thousand people to Mount Wutai in the east, the place where Lord Manjushri actually resides. Later, many Han Chinese, Mongolians, and foreign tourists joined our pilgrimage. Together in front of the Giant White Pagoda that contains a relic of Buddha

Shakyamuni, we recited the *King of Aspiration Prayers for Excellent Conduct* tens of millions of times. By virtue of the unobstructed power of Manjushri's wisdom, all the people present at that time received extraordinary blessings in accordance with their karmic fortune. Those with the best karmic fortune saw Manjushri and received his teachings in person, and the blessings of Manjushri's wisdom entered their minds. Those with middling karmic fortune experienced such signs in their meditative experiences. Those with less karmic fortune saw Manjushri in their dreams. Even those with the least karmic fortune had some of the ten transcendental signs as described in *The Annal of Mount Wutai*,¹ such as seeing the blessing light of Manjushri. It seemed that there was not a single person who didn't receive some blessing from Manjushri.

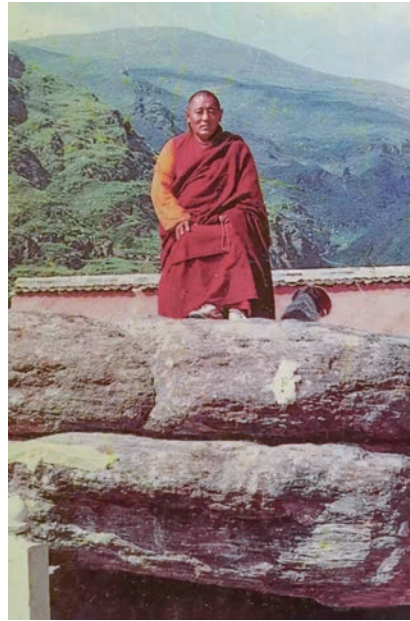


5.26: Chojé and his disciples in a 3-month retreat at Mount Wutai, 1987

When our prayer ceremony was reaching completion, the majority of lay people made aspirations for this and future lives and then returned safely to their own homes. Over five hundred monastics who were eager to attain buddhahood within this life remained at the sacred sites

of Mount Wutai for another one hundred days. They made pilgrimage to and practiced at each of the Five Terraces, the five flat peaks that are the abodes of the five forms of Manjushri, as well as many other holy places where enlightened bodhisattvas and accomplished practitioners have visited.

During our stay at Mount Wutai, we monastics mainly stayed at the following several places. One was a solitary place on the West Terrace where the Xielong Stone was located. Known also as the Qingliang Stone, meaning *cool stone*, the stone was where Lord Manjushri displayed miraculous powers. From the fourth to the tenth day of the sixth lunar month, I sat on that stone to give teachings to my disciples. On the tenth day, as we were making a grand tsok offering, there appeared in the sky rainbows and Manjushri's body, his lion, mantra, and hand emblems in the form of light. All five hundred monastics present saw these appearances directly.



5.27: Chojé on Qingliang Stone

Another place where we spent time was the Shancai Cave, the cave of Sudhana, at the lower area of the East Terrace. It was where Youthful Sudhana generated supreme bodhicitta and made the vast aspiration to accomplish oceans of virtuous actions in front of Manjushri. When we chanted prayers to make aspirations, there were over six hundred Han Chinese lay Buddhists present, most of whom had a direct vision of Manjushri in the sky, while some saw other appearances, such as his lion.



5.28: Chojé in Shancai Cave

The third place was the Narayana Cave near the top area of the East Terrace. It is where Manjushri and his ten thousand followers have constantly resided from the beginning of this eon and will reside until the end of it as prophesied by the Buddha in the *Sutra of the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas*. During my stay in the Narayana Cave, through the power of Manjushri's blessing that entered into my mind, this *Peaceful Manjushri* terma flowed naturally out of the expanse of

awareness, which I then put into writing. All those who practice this terma will effortlessly give rise to transcendental spiritual experience and realization. At the very least, they will develop exceptional faith and compassion or have progress in other aspects of spiritual practice. The blessing of this teaching is obvious, and that is why it is widely propagated throughout the Land of Snows.



5.29: Chojé giving teaching at the top of the East Terrace

In 1990 when I visited India, I offered without reservation the empowerment, practice manuals, and instructions of this terma to many knowledgeable scholars, accomplished practitioners, and great lineage holders. By virtue of this act, this teaching became even more popular and spread far and wide in India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Han Chinese regions.

This year, through the power of our karmic connection and virtuous aspirations in the past, I came to the US. Originally, I didn't plan to give the empowerment of this teaching. But due to their repeated supplication, plus the maturation of my own aspiration and the timing, I imparted the empowerment and teaching of this terma at Nechung Dorje Draying Ling in Hawaii, the first stop of my journey. While I was giving this teaching, everyone was suffused with devotion and

reverence, leaving me with the impression that they would fully embrace and uphold this practice.

Afterward, when I visited dharma centers in Colorado, as I was giving the assembly this empowerment, I recalled the prophecy about this terma that came to me spontaneously when I was at Mount Wutai, so I read it to the audience. What is it about? The prophecy says that although this teaching originates in the East, it will flourish and benefit beings extensively in the West. Hearing this, people who were present aroused extreme great faith, and all promised to put this terma into actual practice. So, their faith can be considered as confident faith.

In particular, in the dharma centers in California, I also imparted the empowerment and practice manual of this terma. All the dharma masters there possess the noble qualities listed in the scriptures. As they received this teaching, by the power of their connection to this terma, many of their disciples generated confident, irreversible faith in this teaching, and those with sharp faculties increased their devotion immensely. My point is that it is not enough for you to merely have eager faith in this teaching; you must cultivate confident faith in it. This kind of faith comes from the special blessings from its words and its meaning. If your faith is generated just by hearing another's simple description, such faith will easily get lost. It may arise today but will probably disappear tomorrow.

In addition, your heartfelt respect for me can also be counted as confident faith. Why do I say so? If you compare me with your guru, you will find that she surpasses me more than a hundred or a thousand times in terms of her reputation, status, or inner qualities. But this time, she put herself in a very low position and attended to me with great respect. Her behavior is just like what the Buddha said in his scripture, "Like a bull with broken horns, we should abandon arrogance and respect everyone." So, she must have sincere faith in my teaching. Otherwise, she would not be able to behave like this.

Not only her, the five people who accompanied me at this time also have fervent faith in me. Among them, Medron and Mumtso are both my family members, and they naturally have inconceivable devotion for me. The other three, Khenpo Namdrol, Khenpo Sodargye, and Ngodrup Dorje, took the role of my attendants during my trip to India three years ago. Over six months, they worked for me and arranged everything without tiring. Now, here in the US, they take care of me day and night without feeling even a little fatigued. They put themselves in a very low position and serve me as if I were a chakravartin. This demonstrates their irreversible faith in me.

How do you know that your faith and devotion to the guru is irreversible? You can get some idea from the following story. In the past when Buddha Shakyamuni was alive, there was a great king called Prasenajit. After he developed irreversible faith in the Buddha, he constantly prostrated to the Buddha and the Buddha's followers, untying his hair knot and putting his hair on the ground as a carpet for them to walk on. One day, the king met many vagrants, and he mistook them for the Buddha's followers. So, he paid homage to them and put his long hair down on the ground to let them walk on. The king's behavior caused ridicule from the locals because they believed it was improper to pay respect to those vagrants. Because of this, King Prasenajit went to the Buddha and made the request, "Please allow me to offer special clothes to your shravakas, which will easily distinguish them from vagrants." The Buddha consented, and that is how the three dharma robes for monastics came into being. Like this, in ancient India, a heartfelt respect and devotion to the guru is a sign of possessing irreversible faith.

In the Land of Tibet, there was also such a king. In the past, there lived a dharma king named Tri Ralpachen, a great king who ruled the vast Land of Tibet. This king wore very long hair, and whenever he met monastics, he would put his hair on the ground to let them walk on.

He venerated monastics greatly and was known as the Dharma King with Hair Knot.

If you treat your guru with as great a reverence as those kings, you have irreversible faith.

Heartfelt Wish to the Great Master, the Holder of Teachings

When I came to Washington, D.C., I sincerely hoped that the activities of benefiting sentient beings here will be even greater than those in Hawaii, Colorado, and the West Coast. There are two reasons for this. As we know, His Holiness Penor Rinpoche is recognized as the supreme head of the Ngagyur Nyingma lineage. In the Nyingma tradition, there is no one who is more authoritative and influential than him. For quite a long time, I have been carefully and thoroughly learning and observing his spiritual qualities as a dharma master, as well as his worldly qualities. In terms of his spiritual qualities, he has both penetrating wisdom and profound realization, and his virtue is unparalleled. From the worldly perspective, he is kindhearted, forward-looking, sympathetic, trustworthy, sincere, and honest. I am afraid that such a wonderful teacher like him is very rare to be found in today's world. Your teacher, Ahkon Lhamo, is the one who was recognized by the great Penor Rinpoche as a tulku. She enjoys a high reputation, and her dharma activities are vast. I hope she can live up to her reputation and let the true meaning of her title be well established. Even if she had a hundred root gurus, the only one that she should hold dear as the only priceless jewel above her head is His Holiness Penor Rinpoche, and she must try every effort to actualize his broad vision in her entire life. This is the first reason.

Through his stainless wisdom, Penor Rinpoche foresaw this center's influence and appointed Ahkon Lhamo as its main teacher. Since this center is located near the capital of the US, given this unique geographic location, I hope it will become an extraordinary and distinctive place for the dharma to spread and prosper. This is my second reason.

The great aim of spreading the dharma and benefiting beings cannot be accomplished without causes and conditions. First and foremost, the dharma teacher must be endowed with good qualities. For Ahkon Lhamo, I believe she was born with many excellent qualities. Nonetheless, in order to maintain a center and set up and educate the sangha, it is far from enough to have only innate virtues. It is necessary to further develop more noble qualities through training in dharma study and practice. There are two reasons: Firstly, even if a master is endowed with extraordinary wisdom and spiritual accomplishment, he or she can influence others only after having acquired comprehensive knowledge of the dharma. In the world, there is no one whose inborn qualities surpass Buddha Shakyamuni's, but even the Buddha studied under the guidance of two teachers, Alara Kalama and Uddaka Rāmaputta, to allow ordinary people generate faith in him. In terms of spiritual accomplishment, there is no one who exceeds Orgyen Padmasambhava, but even Padmasambhava himself relied on many teachers, including the eight mahasiddhas, for an extended time. Similarly, Vimalamitra followed Shri Singha for twenty-one years and fully received all the instructions from his teacher. Therefore, no matter how many inherent qualities you possess, you must rely on a qualified teacher to receive teachings and to study and practice the dharma to the best of your ability. This is of great significance.

Secondly, although great masters developed incredibly great qualities in their previous lives, when they are reborn to this world again, a large number of them are vulnerable to habitual propensities and obscurations caused by a womb birth. So, the qualities from past lives, however abundant they were, will be obscured; in order to reveal them, it is necessary to rely on qualified teachers to extensively study and practice the dharma. The importance of following the teacher is clearly stated by the Buddha in the *Tantra of Holding All Qualities*:^a

^a *yonten yong zung gi gyü (yon tan yongs bzung gi rgyud).*

*Before relying on a teacher,
 Even the name of a buddha is unheard of.
 All buddhas in one thousand eons
 Come from following the teacher.*

As I previously learned, having been guided by Penor Rinpoche, Ahkon Lhamo received many empowerments, transmissions, and instructions of the tantric teachings, such as the *Rinchen Terdzod*, from her teacher. I also heard that she has studied with many great masters from the Land of Tibet. So, I believe she has made the accomplishments of dharma study and practice. Despite that, if she wants to train students, some ordinary accomplishments are not enough. She must acquire more transcendental accomplishments and qualities.

Take the peerless Lord Atisha as an example. He is the actual emanation of Buddha Amitabha in our human world. In order to educate disciples and attract others into Buddhism, he followed over one hundred and fifty teachers and had a thorough and in-depth study on a variety of teachings and instructions. As a result, he not only had the mastery of the complete path to full awakening but was also able to give corresponding teachings to sentient beings of various capacities. If he had possessed only a limited number of qualities, he would not have been able to benefit beings to such a vast extent.

This is the same as treating patients. A doctor must have the ability to prescribe the right medicine in accordance with the patient's illness. A disease that arises due to heat and another one that arises due to cold must be cured by using the corresponding medicine for each one. All illnesses cannot be cured with only one medicine. It must be so that in the hospitals in the US, doctors prescribe medicines based on each patient's symptoms, and there is never the case where a doctor uses only one medicine for all the various diseases.



5.30: Chojé looking at everyone affably

In the same logic, as a teacher, to know only one type of teaching is not enough. He or she must be equipped with a multitude of teachings. In the case of Ahkon Lhamo, besides her inborn virtue, she has further learned from many qualified masters to improve her inner qualities. This is really important. The Buddha once said, “Even if one has achieved the fruition of no further learning, one should behave as if one is still in training.” Although many great masters have attained buddhahood, the path of no further learning, they still appear to keep learning. Therefore, I wish Ahkon Lhamo will continue to train herself extensively in dharma study and practice.

As for you disciples, never focus solely on making a living or the pursuit of wealth or reputation in your life. After you receive this teaching, you should put everything aside and earnestly practice what you’ve learned. Only if you do so are you the proper vessels who deserve my entrustment of this teaching, and I would be pleased and rejoice in your practice.

I will give you the empowerment today and its practice manual tomorrow. The entire teaching will be offered to you without missing a single sentence. The key point is that you should not squander it. Please do not stay on a superficial level and only show short-term enthusiasm for it. If you just practice the teaching in these few days and after I leave here, you no longer pay attention to it, it is meaningless for me to impart this practice to you.

This time, I have three wishes for you. First, try your best to actualize the wishes of Penor Rinpoche and all great masters who uphold the teachings. Second, do everything possible to let the dharma flourish and prevail in this center and in this country. Third, never abandon the teaching of *Peaceful Manjushri* and devote yourself to its practice. Most likely, I will not come to the US in the future. Even if I don’t come, we can still communicate through letters. I would love to have a piece of information about your progress in the actual practice. I hope you can be diligent.

All of you possess rich virtues and good qualities, but now you listen to the advice from such a person as me, who is devoid of any merit while having a lot of faults. It is like a lion getting advice from a dog, which is quite unreasonable. Nonetheless, since the capital of the US is very famous, the dharma throne I am seated on is very high, and also I am much recovered today, an outpouring of words came out of my mouth naturally. If there is anything that touches you, please keep it in mind; if not, please forgive me.

VISITED THE NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM

On the morning of July 27th, Chojé visited the National Air and Space Museum. Given that aerospace has only developed for about a hundred years, the museum does not have ancient historical artifacts on display, but it does exhibit the most advanced technological achievements of humankind in aerospace.

In the center of the exhibition hall, we noticed the 1903 Wright Flyer or Flyer 1, the story of which can be found in many historical textbooks. The first generation of supersonic research aircraft Bell X-1 and the first American successful orbiting satellite were also exhibited. The collection of this



5.31: The 1903 Wright Flyer or Flyer 1

museum varies from all types of aircraft, rockets, missiles, and spacecrafts to the various objects used by astronauts, all of which bear witness to historical moments in human history. Most exhibits are original, with a few reproductions in their actual sizes. They gave us a strong visual impact as we saw all these real airplanes, engines, rockets, and so forth in a very limited space of the exhibition hall.



5.32: National Air and Space Museum

In particular, Khenpo Rinpoche carefully observed the Apollo Lunar Module, the part of the spacecraft that was used to land on the moon. The Apollo Lunar Module was the first crewed vehicle to land on the moon. Since the lunar module could only be used once and was discarded on the moon's surface after the descent, what is exhibited in the museum is a spare module—Apollo Lunar Module LM 2, not Apollo 11 Lunar Module “Eagle,” the one that made the first moon landing in 1969. A television next to the module played a documentary of the Apollo 11 mission on a loop.



5.33: Apollo Lunar Module LM 2; documentary of the Apollo 11 mission

This epoch-making achievement of the moon landing, which has been recorded in the history of humankind, is known as “one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.” Chojé was very interested in this and learned in detail the whole process of the first moon landing. This visit broadened my horizons, impressing me that the United States of America was indeed a superpower in science and technology, and its history of technological innovation was truly astonishing.



5.34: The impressively advanced technology in aerospace

THE FIRST LECTURE ON *PLACING BUDDHAHOOD WITHIN REACH*

During this trip to the North America and Europe, Yidzhin Norbu taught *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*, the practice manual of the *Peaceful Manjushri* five times in total. When teaching it at other dharma centers, for the part of Great Perfection, he merely gave the oral transmission. However, here, Chojé taught the text in full. So, I compiled the complete teaching and share it with you now. The teaching was given in three lectures, and the first one was on the evening of July 27th.

What I am going to teach today is the Dzogchen practice manual of the *Peaceful Manjushri* that is called *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*. I will offer the teaching in two parts: the general explanation of the stages of the path and the specific explanation on this practice manual.

The General Explanation of the Stages of the Path

As a branch of this Dzogchen practice, the text *Heart Essence Bindu of the Heart* delineates the stages of the path as follows.

Being Content and Having Less Desire

First of all, practitioners who engage in this practice should be content and have less desire. *Contentment* means to be content with your own material wealth; *less desire* refers to having no envy of others' material wealth. All material wealth, happiness, prosperity, fame, and reputation in this life have no substantial meaning. The more you enjoy them, the more greed is encouraged. So, pleasure and enjoyment in this life do you no good. In addition, without enough merit accumulated in the past, you cannot obtain any of these no matter how much effort is made. Therefore, you should give up the desire and pursuit of comfort, prosperity, and fame in this life, but instead concentrate wholeheartedly on practicing the noble path of liberation.

Of course, it is impossible for you to survive without adequate food and clothing. However, besides meeting the basic requirements of life, you should uproot the attachment to material wealth and possessions. The same goes for power and status. Except those that come to you naturally, you should not covet more prominent status or desire to have a far-reaching reputation.

In the *Precious Garland of the Four Themes*,^a Omniscient Longchenpa said, “Only when all desires are extinguished does one become a true noble being. When one’s desires are few, one is in the noble family.” As it is stated clearly, one with few desires has the potential to be a noble person, and only when you put an end to all desires can you be counted as a true noble being. In other words, whoever focuses their life only on food, clothing, housing, transportation, fame, reputation, and so forth will have no opportunity to follow the noble path and accomplish the supreme fruition. Such being the case, everyone needs to be content and have less desire. Only those who put aside all the meaningless activities of this life and wish only to practice the sacred dharma will have the fortune to engage in this Dzogchen practice. Such people can be classified as the ones who belong to the noble family.

Hence, before embarking on this practice, all of you should examine your mind stream and find out whether you have the qualities of being content and having less desire. If that is not the case for you, from now on, try to leave behind all meaningless activities, big or small, in this life and make a sincere and firm vow to only practice the noble dharma, preferably this Dzogchen practice. If you do not think this teaching is important and merely practice it in a contrived manner—in other words, you practice it casually with no devotion while spending most of your energy improving living conditions, supporting friends and relatives, and defeating competitors and enemies—such pretense obviously will not bring you much benefit. Therefore, in the beginning,

^a *chö zhi rinpoche'i trengwa* (*chos bzhi rin po che'i phreng ba*); Longchen Rabjam.

you must make an effort to cultivate a virtuous mentality of being content and having less desire.

Relying on Qualified Teachers

If a practitioner who is content and has less desire wants to enter the path to enlightenment, he or she must first rely on a qualified spiritual teacher. Without the guidance of a teacher, you will fail to cultivate any inner qualities. Of course, it is unreasonable to follow any teacher rashly without discernment because there are both authentic and false teachers. It is important to rely on qualified teachers rather than those unqualified ones who do not possess any noble qualities.

Some may wonder: “What kind of person can be considered a qualified teacher?”

Take a qualified teacher of the Great Perfection. First, the teacher must have certain meditative experience and realization of the Dzogchen practice. Second, the teacher must harbor loving kindness and compassion and wish to guide and help all sentient beings. Third, the teacher must have the wisdom of thoroughly understanding the Dzogchen doctrines and be able to dispel all misunderstandings and doubts that his or her disciples may have. If all three qualities are present, he or she can be called an excellent or *a qualified teacher of Dzogchen*. If these three are incomplete or only one of them exists, that teacher is not genuine. If the teacher has none of these three qualities, do not rely on such a teacher.

Having found a qualified teacher, cherish him or her more than your own eyes and heart and rely on the teacher with great joy and eagerness. How do you rely upon a teacher? What delights a teacher the most is that the student tames his or her own mind by diligently practicing the pure dharma. Therefore, the superior way to rely on a teacher is to offer one’s own practice, or in other words, to engage in actual practice. If you are unable to engage in the vast and extensive virtuous practices, you can wholeheartedly work for the teacher’s needs as long as they

are in accordance with the authentic dharma. This is the middling way of relying upon the teacher. If this is also out of reach, then with every effort and without the slightest stinginess, you should make offerings of substances and wealth to the teacher's activities that are dedicated to promoting virtue and ceasing non-virtue. This is the inferior way of relying upon a teacher. A student should rely on a teacher through these three ways in the long term.

Then, what are you supposed to do after relying on a qualified teacher? You should listen to the dharma teachings in front of the teacher with pure faith. What kind of pure faith do you need to have? To be specific, if you receive the Sutrayana teachings, you need to listen with the faith that the teacher is equal to and inseparable from a buddha. If you receive the general Secret Mantrayana teachings, you need to listen with the faith that the teacher is an actual buddha. If you receive the clear light teachings of Dzogchen, you should understand that the teacher's kindness to you is a hundred or a thousand times greater than the Buddha's kindness, thus listening to the teachings with greater faith and reverence than what you have toward the Buddha.

For practitioners who engage in Dzogchen practices, they should have the confidence and faith that their teacher is more supreme than the Buddha. Do you have this kind of faith? If the answer is "yes" and your joy toward your root teacher is greater than to Buddha Shakyamuni or Orgyen Rinpoche Padmasambhava, then this kind of faith is unparalleled. Even if you do not have that kind of faith, you should at least have the faith and conviction that your teacher is equal to a buddha. If you do not have any of these but consider your teacher as an ordinary person, then it will be like the saying, "If you perceive the master as an ordinary person, then the blessings received will be no more than a drink of water." In such a case, the teacher's blessing cannot enter your mind stream, and even if there is a small blessing, it would be like a watery and tasteless soup that offers you no other blessing or accomplishment.



5.35: Chojé bestowing dharma teaching

Here, you should understand that what I am talking about relates to the stages of the path, meaning that the points I mentioned earlier should be practiced step-by-step and in the right order. First, you need to be content and have less desire. Next, you should find a qualified teacher whom you can rely upon, and then try to cultivate pure faith in the teacher. Now, I will teach the following stages of the path. Only after you cultivate the quality of the previous stage can you move on to the next. Please keep this in mind.

Maintaining Pure Precepts

What's next after a practitioner has established pure faith in the teacher? You need to observe pure precepts, which is the foundation of the path. Without pure precepts, a practitioner will not even have the chance to experience temporary happiness as a god or human being, so how can he or she attain ultimate buddhahood? If you break your precepts, even if you spend hundreds of thousands of years making offerings to the field of merit, such as the Three Jewels, and practicing generosity and helping the needy, such as beggars, you will not be reborn in the higher realms of humans and gods but will definitely fall into the lower realms. To make it clear, once breaking the precepts, you have no other destination other than the lower realms.

Whoever aspires to develop qualities on the bodhisattva path or the Vajrayana path of Secret Mantra must possess pure precepts. Those who don't observe precepts can hardly make any progress. As the Buddha taught, "Precepts are like the earth itself." Both sentient beings that can walk, such as human beings, cows, and horses, and inanimate plants that are without consciousness, such as grass, trees, forests, and groves, rely on the earth as their ground to survive. Without the earth, nothing can be alive. In the same way, without pure samaya, there is no opportunity to develop a single excellent quality.

Generally speaking, there are three categories of precepts: the precepts of individual liberation, the bodhisattva vows, and the samaya commitments of Vajrayana. Here, I am speaking of the precepts of individual liberation. Some may wonder, "If I only observe the bodhisattva vows but do not uphold the precepts of individual liberation, can I attain liberation or the result of omniscient buddhahood?" This is absolutely not possible. Without taking the precepts of individual liberation as the foundation, you cannot receive the bodhisattva vows. Regarding empowerments of the Secret Mantrayana, whichever empowerment you are going to receive, it requires you to first take the precepts of individual liberation and the bodhisattva vows. Otherwise, you are incapable of receiving its vows and disciplines. In a word, both the bodhisattva vows and the samayas of Secret Mantrayana have to be based on the precepts of individual liberation.

Some may ask, "Since taking the precepts of individual liberation is a requirement, does that mean, except for monks and nuns, lay practitioners would never have the chance to develop spiritual qualities through dharma practice?"

It is true that the individual who takes monastic vows is the best object for you to make offering to and is the object worthy of offerings from gods and humans. Yet, lay practitioners also have their corresponding pratimoksha vows, including the twenty-four-hour lay vows, which can serve as the basis of the bodhisattva vows and the Vajrayana samayas. Looking at today's world, in places like the Land of Tibet, India, and Bhutan, there are numerous monastics almost everywhere who keep pure precepts. But here in the US, probably due to the cultural background and social environment, it is uncommon and difficult to find the opportunity to take ordination and maintain a monastic life. For this reason, while I am here in this country, I have rarely said to people, "You should become a monastic." Most often, I encourage people to take the pratimoksha vows of a lay practitioner or to observe the twenty-four-hour lay vows as best they can. However,

here in this dharma center, there are already so many monastics, and such a marvelous scene is truly rare. It would be even more significant to increase the number of monastics and let the sangha community flourish. I hope that the resident lama, managing members, and all disciples can keep this in mind.

Personally, among monastics and lay practitioners, I will be very delighted if there are more monastics. This is because in the doctrine of Buddha Shakyamuni, monastics carry a more important role than lay practitioners. We can also see that many accomplished great masters, such as Penor Rinpoche, Gyalwa Rinpoche, as well as their heirs and heart disciples, are mostly monastics.

In order to receive and maintain monastic vows successfully, you must be free from the three types of obstacles that prevent the precepts from arising, abiding, and excelling. *The obstacles preventing precepts from arising* indicate that not everyone can take ordination and become a monastic. For instance, as stated in the Vinaya texts, people who have killed their father or mother are not allowed to take ordination because the ordination vows or the determination to keep the monastic precepts cannot truly arise in their mind streams.

The obstacles preventing precepts from abiding refer to the case where the individual fails to receive permission from his or her parents, spouse, or the king who is in power to take ordination. Without this approval, this person would very likely encounter hindrances to observe his or her precepts in the future, and in some extreme cases, have to give up the monastic identity and return to an ordinary life. Therefore, it is crucial to avoid such obstacles.

Some people may wonder, "Does it mean that without the permission from the king, the parents, or the spouse, even if one has taken ordination, the monastic precepts will not arise in his or her being?" They will certainly arise. The problem is that if the permission is not granted, there is the risk that obstacles may easily arise preventing

them from maintaining pure precepts. If there is no such risk, then the fault is not that significant, and you can still become a monastic with no permission from these people. Here, the key point you need to consider is whether there will be negative conditions for maintaining pure precepts.

The obstacles preventing the precepts from excelling refer to negative conditions preventing you from practicing virtue, for instance, when you get an incurable disease or are preoccupied by too many worldly activities. If this is the case, do not take ordination. Otherwise, you will likely fail to maintain precepts and further develop supreme qualities. If these obstacles exist but do not pose a threat to maintaining precepts, you are still welcome to take ordination.

In this dharma center, except for the monastics, it would be best if the rest of the members receive the precepts for lay practitioners or at least observe the twenty-four-hour lay vows of eight precepts whenever you can, for without taking any vows at all, you are wasting your precious human rebirth. As for the specific precepts for monastics and lay practitioners, I elaborated on them a few days ago in Washington, D.C. In brief, if you are a monastic, you should wear the monastic robes and refrain from any forms of sexual activities. If you are a lay practitioner, even after you take the pratimoksha vows or when you observe the twenty-four-hour lay vows, you should not wear the monastic robes. Of course, you do not need to give up sexual activities with your spouse except for the days you observe the twenty-four-hour lay vows. Besides these two big differences, everything else is the same for monastics and lay practitioners.

The reason that I am expounding extensively on the precepts today is because, unlike other places, this dharma center has many monastics, as well as lay practitioners. So, I wanted to give a clear explanation on this topic. In these few days, we are going to hold an ordination ceremony here. For those who want to take ordination, if you are free from the above-mentioned three types of obstacles, it would be

excellent to take ordination. In the future, if other lamas visit here, you may invite them to give the novice vows and the bhikshu vows. It is of great significance to have more monastics and to make the monastic sangha flourish ever more. Why?



5.36: Chojé receiving a Padamasambhava statue

In this world where we live, some places are referred to as *the central land*, whereas some are *the borderland*, indicating whether the Buddhadharma is flourishing or not in that place. To be specific, *the central land* refers to places where bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasaka (male lay practitioners), and upasika (female lay practitioners) are all present. Where none of these four is present, or strictly speaking, any of these four types of Buddhists is absent, that place is called *the borderland*. According to this, America used to be a borderland, and now, gradually, as these four types of Buddhists, especially the monastic sangha, are showing up, the dharma has begun to flourish, and this country has become a central land of Buddhism. From this aspect, the existence of a monastic sangha is very necessary. All of you need to do your best to let the monastic sangha exist and expand now and in the future. Please never neglect this point.

Listening, Contemplating, and Meditating

Someone may ask, "Is it enough to just observe pure precepts?" The answer is "no." On the basis of pure precepts, you need to cultivate the wisdom of listening. From a qualified teacher, you listen and study the teachings of Sutrayana and Tantrayana, as well as traditional sciences, whereby the seed of liberation can be planted in your mind stream, the darkness of stupidity and ignorance be dispelled, and all obscurations be purified. Regarding the benefits of listening to the dharma, there is no need to say that listening to the dharma itself is of immense benefit. As it is pointed out in the sutras, even if animals by chance hear the sound of beating the dharma drum or blowing the dharma conch that works as a means to remind people of the time to listen to the dharma, this will one day lead those animals to liberation. Therefore, it is crucial to diligently listen to the teachings in the sutras taught by the Buddha and in the shastras that explain the intended meaning of the Buddha.

Is it acceptable to just listen to the dharma? Of course not. You should contemplate the meaning of what you hear to cultivate the wisdom of contemplation. For instance, today you have listened to my teaching. Afterward, if you are completely distracted from the teaching and fully occupied by your work or just idle your time away, what you have heard today will not necessarily help you much. You must reflect repeatedly on the words of the teaching, as well as the meaning behind the words. Try to ponder on the teaching from various aspects and also consult with others, so that you are finally able to dispel all doubts and confusion and give rise to the wisdom of contemplation. Without such wisdom, even though *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*, the practice manual I am teaching, is concise and straightforward, you will still have no idea of how to practice it after listening to it just once. Thus, it is of significant necessity to delve into the Buddhist teachings and contemplate the meaning, especially those that have a special connection and greater benefit to you. Otherwise, it will be of no avail

if you engage in practice with a superficial understanding or even personal misinterpretation.

In short, before you start meditation, you must remove all your doubts and fully understand the meaning of the teaching. How do you gain the full mastery of the teaching? You should bear in mind the words of the teacher, understand its meaning, and then put it into actual practice in your mind stream. All three of these are indispensable, and the words and meaning are the guidance for your practice.

Indeed, no matter what you do, even the most ordinary thing in the world, you first need to form a clear picture of how to do it. For example, when you learn to drive, without a period of training, you won't know how to drive. Meditation is far more complicated and sophisticated than driving. But if you compare spiritual practice to driving, contemplation is training in driving and meditation is driving on the road. Therefore, it is essential to contemplate thoroughly before you start to meditate. Otherwise, without the genuine wisdom of contemplation, to start meditation rashly will for sure bring you more harm than benefit. If you practice without the wisdom cultivated by contemplation, it will be like what the great Tibetan master Sakya Pandita said, "Most of the foolish who meditate on Mahamudra will go to the lower realms." Without relying on a qualified teacher and cultivating the wisdom of contemplation, people who meditate based on their own conceptual thoughts will likely be reborn as mountain hares or marmots, which should really be avoided. This is Sakya Pandita's heartfelt advice for us.

Therefore, please bear in mind that you must be sure how to do it before you start meditating. Otherwise, just sitting up straight without knowing any instruction is not meditation at all. If you know how to meditate, it is the best, and you should meditate diligently and earnestly. However, if you don't know, you may pray to the Three Jewels and recite the mantras of Avalokiteshvara or Guru Rinpoche, which is the safest thing to do. No matter what you meditate on, you

should never just sit there stiffly and blankly, which only brings you backache or waist pain. Rather, you must have a clear idea of how to do it. Once it is clear, you need to put it into practice. If you don't move on to real meditation after you understand the instruction, it will not bring you much benefit either.

Specific Explanation on the Practice Manual

So far, I have covered the first part of the stages of the path. The second part is how to actually practice. This covers the preliminary practice of training in the four thoughts that turn the mind up to the actual meditation on the Great Perfection, all of which are laid out clearly in *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*. Please open your text, and I am going to explain it sentence by sentence.

Peaceful Manjushri, Placing Buddhahood within Reach

The reason the title is *Peaceful Manjushri* is because the practices of Manjushri are usually classified into two categories, peaceful Manjushri and wrathful Yamantaka. The subject of study here is the practice of *Peaceful Manjushri*. Yesterday, I gave you the empowerment and the oral transmission of its sadhana. *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* means that with this practice manual, buddhahood is actually placed in your hands.

***To Manjughosha, primordial lord protector, simultaneous
intrinsic awareness and emptiness,
I pay homage with the realization that you and I are beyond
union and separation.***

If you realize the nature of mind unerringly, the mind itself is the actual Bodhisattva Manjushri and your mind is free from any dualistic concept, such as union or separation. Lord Manjushri is never separate or differentiated from your mind. If you realize this point, it is called *paying homage by recognizing the view*.

*I explain the distilled essence to you, my heart children,
Make sure you never abandon it, but earnestly put it
into practice.*

The distilled essence means that I am distilling the quintessence of the tantra, transmission, and upadesha of the Great Perfection and condensing them into this practice manual with concise words, which facilitates practitioners to reach enlightenment swiftly and easily. I am giving this practice to my disciples whom I cherish as dearly as my own heart, and meanwhile I urge everyone earnestly, "Once you receive it, please seriously meditate on it instead of putting it aside."

The Difficulty of Human Rebirth

All fortunate ones, first, you should contemplate as follows:

Practitioners who are fortunate to receive this teaching as proper vessels and who are able to meditate on it with sincere devotion should contemplate like this at the very beginning:

Now, I possess the jewel-like human body endowed with the freedoms and endowments, which if examined through causes and conditions, analogies, and numbers, is extremely difficult to obtain, and which allows me to accomplish the enlightened results of the paths for individuals of three levels of capacities.

The jewel-like human body, perfectly endowed with the eighteen freedoms and endowments that are favorable for spiritual advancement is very hard and rare to obtain. How hard is it? From the perspective of causes and conditions, only if you uphold pure precepts as the foundation, make pure aspirations as the direction, and engage in virtuous actions, such as generosity, as the favorable conditions can you obtain such a human body. Looking at its rarity through analogies, it is less likely to occur than beans sticking on a smooth wall after being

tossed against it. In terms of its numbers, if the amount of sentient beings in the three lower realms is compared to dust on the entire earth, the population of beings in the human and god realms is about the amount of dust on one fingernail. Among them, even fewer beings enjoy the opportunity to practice dharma. Therefore, no matter how it is examined, whether through causes and conditions, analogies, or numbers, this precious human body endowed with freedoms and endowments is truly difficult to obtain.

Moreover, not only it is difficult to obtain a human rebirth, you should also be aware of the great significance once you do obtain it. How significant is it? If you wish to follow only the path for beings of lesser capacity that intends to avoid the three lower realms and attain the higher rebirths as humans or celestial beings, you already have the supreme support, this human body, for you to practice this path. If you desire to follow the path for beings of middling capacity that seeks self-liberation from samsara to attain arhatship or pratyekabuddhahood, this human body is also able to assist you in fulfilling that aim. If you are motivated to practice the path for beings of greater capacity that strives to enable both yourself and others to attain buddhahood, the state of permanent peace and happiness, again this human body is qualified to carry it through to completion. Therefore, this jewel of a human body can help you accomplish the goal of any of these three paths, and now all of us possess this jewel.

Further, I have also met the qualified spiritual teacher who has imparted to me the profound and sublime dharma. At this time with all these favorable conditions being present, I should repeatedly contemplate what I have and make the resolve to diligently practice the genuine dharma without being lethargic at all.

In addition to having a human body, what is rarer is that you have met a qualified teacher. You are fortunate to be born as human beings in

this world where the Buddha came and taught the dharma and where his teaching still remains. What's even more rare, a qualified teacher has accepted you as a disciple and taught you the pure dharma in accordance with your capacities and propensities. Therefore, you have obtained all the favorable conditions for spiritual practice that leads to enlightenment. While you possess this supreme body as your support, it is important for you to make a sincere resolution that you do not waste it but make good use of it to practice the pure and sublime dharma.

This completes the first instruction, "Make the resolve to practice the genuine dharma by contemplating the rarity of obtaining the human body endowed with freedoms and endowments."

The Impermanence of Life

Contemplate that the body is bound to die, but the time to die is uncertain, and at the time of death, besides the genuine dharma, nothing else will bring any benefit.

Though you have obtained such a precious human body endowed with freedoms and endowments, you are bound to die one day. Once born, you are subject to death. Rather than death, you have no other choices in the end. What's worse, the causes of death are numerous and unpredictable. There are countless external factors that can cause your death, including disease, enemies, fire, savage beasts, dangerous ravines, and other treacherous places. Comparatively, the external factors that can sustain your life are very few. Though clothes and food are factors to sustain your life, it is not impossible that they somehow become causes of your death. If food is taken improperly, it can kill you. Also, some people may endanger their own lives to fight with others for clothing. Since conditions sustaining your life are very few while the causes of your death are countless, the time of your death is hard to predict.

Think about sentient beings of the past and future, and then you will realize that this human existence is definitely going to cease. All sentient beings existing in this world before today have demonstrated impermanence. Most people living in this world a hundred years ago have died. Likewise, all of you are bound to experience death, as well as all sentient beings in the entire world. The United States became independent two hundred seventeen years ago, and the people who witnessed that historical moment have all died. So far, there have been forty-two presidents who served and are serving this country, but only a few are still alive, and most of them have passed away. So, if you think about the past, you know that no sentient being can live forever. And if you look at the future, besides a couple of exceptions, sentient beings living in this world now will probably all die after a hundred years. You, too, are unable to transcend this natural law. Even just next year at this time, many of you will certainly have passed away and moved forward to the next life, and none of you can guarantee that you are not one of them.

So, make sure to maintain the awareness that you are bound to die but that the time to die is unpredictable. As said in the sutras, how much certainty do you have that you will not die tomorrow? Do you have an agreement with Yama, the Lord of Death, to exempt you from death? Even if you have a good relationship with him, he will not give you such absolution. You cannot have any certainty that you will still be alive tomorrow. Thus, please do more virtuous practices before death arrives.

Having understood this principle, resolve to diligently practice the dharma without delay.

Since you don't know when you will die or whether you will die soon or not, you should not think, "Let me consider my dharma practice next year or the year after next. I should work hard this month and make some money, then next month, maybe I can ask for a break to

practice the dharma.” Please do not postpone your practice again and again. Instead, keep in mind, “I don’t know when death will come, so I must engage in virtuous practices as soon as possible.”

This is the second instruction, “Make the resolve to practice virtue without delay by contemplating the impermanence of life.”

The Infallible Karmic Law of Cause and Effect

After death, sentient beings will not become nothing but, instead, will inevitably experience suffering and happiness driven by their negative and positive karma without any deception.

If death were like a fire simply becoming extinguished or water being dried up, it would be nice, and there would be nothing to worry about. Unfortunately, that is not the case. The fact is sentient beings who do virtuous deeds will enjoy supreme happiness in the higher realms of humans and gods, and those who do non-virtuous deeds will suffer in the three lower realms. The karmic law of cause and effect will never be deceptive. Even if waves leave the ocean behind, the karmic law will never fail to take effect. Therefore, it is crucial for you to have conviction in the karmic law of cause and effect and seriously abandon non-virtue and practice virtue, starting with small acts.

This is the third instruction, “Be inspired to abandon non-virtue and adopt virtue by contemplating the infallible karmic law of cause and effect.”

The Suffering of Samsara

You must be especially mentally certain that the suffering of samsara is boundless, long-lasting, and unbearable.

You should deeply reflect that as long as you are still subject to the karmic law of cause and effect, no matter where you are born in samsara, you cannot escape from suffering. Especially in the three lower realms, the suffering is vast and enduring. How vast is the suffering in samsara then? Take the suffering in the hells, the worst of the lower realms, for example. Lord Nagarjuna said:

*For one whole day on earth, three hundred darts
Might strike you forcefully and cause you grievous pain,
But that could never correspond to or match
A fraction of the smallest pain in hell.*

You would consider it to be horrible if even a great sinner is stabbed, chopped, or shot with weapons, like spears, knives, and arrows, every single day. Each time after death, he or she would be brought back to life to repeat this torture again and again without pause. However, this is not as intense as the least suffering in the hells; that criminal's suffering is nothing compared to any suffering in hell. It is especially agonizing if you have to be born in the hot hells where the ground is covered by molten iron with roaring flames. When the minions of hell chop or saw your upper body with axes or saws, your lower body will regenerate; when your lower body is chopped or cut, your upper body will regenerate. As such, you would have to undergo such unbearable suffering for a very long time.

Let's reflect on the endless time of suffering in hell. Beings in the Reviving Hell have the shortest life span within all the hells. However, a hundred thousand years in the human realm is shorter than one day in the Reviving Hell. The life span of beings in the Reviving Hell is thousands of billions of years if counted according to human years. They must suffer for a very long duration of time. Yet the suffering in the Reviving Hell is the least intense compared with all the other hot hells. In the Rounding Up and Crushing Hell, Howling Hell, and other hot hells, the intensity of suffering increases in succession seven times greater than the former one. Besides, there are also eight cold

hells where beings are tormented by unbearably intense cold. All in all, in hells the suffering of extreme cold and heat is indescribably unbearable.

Then, let's reflect on the situation of hungry ghosts. Not to mention food, most hungry ghosts could not get even one drop of water in twelve years to quench their thirst. However, due to their karma, although they have no food or drink for an extremely long time, they will not die but must constantly endure the suffering of hunger and thirst. Even if they get a chance to find a fraction of food, that bit of food will turn into fire once consumed, incinerating their body inside out. Then, they will come back to life and continue to be tortured by hunger and thirst.

Next, think about the animals. Among marine animals, smaller creatures nest in or on bigger ones and consume their bodies to sustain life. Larger creatures also swallow smaller ones as their food. They equally undergo the unbearable suffering of being eaten by others. Animals living scattered on land, such as wild beasts and domestic livestock, also have endless suffering, such as being slaughtered for their flesh, skin, or bones, or being enslaved to transport heavy cargoes, to carry human beings, or to perform other labors without the freedom to leave or rest as they wish.

For sentient beings who seldom accomplish virtuous deeds, these sufferings in the three lower realms are always awaiting them. Everyone should think deeply, "How many virtuous deeds have I done in my life, and what kind of misdeeds have I accumulated?" I'm afraid that most people have been spending their time primarily accumulating non-virtue and very little virtue. If this is the case for you, the only place you are going to end up is the lower realms. Given that the suffering in the lower realms is so terrifying and you have already wasted your human existence so far without virtuous practice, from now on you should exert yourself in practicing the pure and virtuous

dharma while you still have the freedom to do so for the rest of your life.

The above is the fourth instruction, “Be inspired to practice the dharma by contemplating the suffering of samsara.”

With that conviction, resolve to follow the vast and extensive dharma path that can liberate you from samsara.

After contemplating the faults of samsara and the infallibility of the karmic law of cause and effect, you should make the resolve to practice the vast and extensive dharma.

Then, fervently pray to the guru and deities so they will bless you to fulfill the above three resolutions.

As mentioned, you must resolve to practice the genuine dharma by contemplating the rarity of obtaining the human rebirth with freedoms and endowments, resolve to practice the dharma without delay by contemplating the impermanence of life, and resolve to practice the vast and boundless dharma by contemplating the unmistakable karmic law of cause and effect, as well as the faults of samsara. Now, pray to the guru and deities for their blessings so that these three resolutions will be fulfilled swiftly. Meanwhile, resolve to follow whatever instructions the guru gives you. This is the instruction to rely on a qualified teacher.

These four thoughts that turn the mind away from samsara are the preliminary practices that are in common with the practices of the shravakas and pratyekabuddhas of the common vehicles. Through training in these four thoughts, you should generate the mind of renunciation that detaches you from anything in samsara and qualifies you to move onto the path of Mahayana. That’s the teaching for this evening.

YELLOW MONASTIC ROBES ON THE GREEN LAWN

On July 28th, Yidzhin Norbu talked to all the monastics at Kunzang Palyul Choling about the benefits of upholding precepts and the faults of breaking them. Rinpoche always attached great importance to maintaining precepts and had trained a great number of monastics observing pure precepts in the Land of Tibet. Before we arrived, there were already many monastics at this center. After Chojé arrived, more people got ordained and received monastic vows from him. There were several dozen monastics at this center, which was not as spectacular as any monastic sangha in the Land of Tibet that could easily reach tens of thousands, but to have such a monastic group in the US was very rare at that time.



5.37: Chojé talking to the monastics at KPC about precepts

Even today, I can still clearly recall that unforgettable moment. Sitting under the shade of lush trees, Rinpoche expounded on the permissions and prohibitions listed in the Vinaya texts, while the sangha in yellow monastic robes sat on the green lawn surrounding him, listening earnestly with great veneration. The scene and the ambiance easily reminded me of Buddha Shakyamuni's first turning of the dharma wheel for the five bhikshus at Deer Park. During my life, I have witnessed various occasions of monastic assemblies, but have rarely

seen so many western monks and nuns gathered together, which was really touching.

After listening to Chojé teaching on the benefits of taking ordination, the monastics were so exhilarated that the entire center seemed to be permeated with a glorious, uplifted atmosphere.



5.38: The scene resembling Shakyamuni's first turning of the dharma wheel for the five bhikshus

THE SECOND LECTURE ON *PLACING BUDDHAHOOD WITHIN REACH*

In the evening, Yidzhin Norbu continued teaching on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*.

Today is such a good day that the entire world is brimming with auspiciousness. It is the special day when in the Land of Tibet, all followers of the Ngagyur Nyingma will gather together to recall Orgyen Rinpoche Padmasambhava. Last year on this day at Larung Gar, three thousand monastics gathered together to enjoy a grand ganachakra feast of Four-Armed Manjushri. Today is also very auspicious here, because with the help of the khenpos, over thirty people have received the monastic vows. I really appreciate everyone from the depth of my heart!

Generally speaking, the population of Buddhists in America is quite large, but the number of monastics is quite small. Today, on this special occasion, many people not only entered the door of Buddhism but have even taken ordination and become monastics. To enter the door of Buddhism means that you generate faith in the Buddhadharma, take the refuge vows, and follow the guidance of the Three Jewels to practice the sublime dharma. In addition, once a monastic community is established, there is the ground for the Buddhadharma to flourish. Although you generate faith in the Buddha and take refuge in the Three Jewels, there is still the risk that you may convert to other religions. However, once a person gets ordained, he or she becomes a genuine Buddhist and will very unlikely revert to being a non-Buddhist.

I don't know whether there was the establishment of such a monastic community in American history, but I guess the ordination ceremony held today must be a rare and glorious event in the history of this country. Regarding the development of Buddhism in the Land of Tibet, there were twenty-eight great kings in the initial stage of Tibet, starting from the seven heavenly kings called Tri, the two celestial

kings called Teng, the six earthly kings called Lek, the eight water kings called De, to the five corresponding kings called Tsen. The first king was Nyatri Tsenpo, and the twenty-eighth successor was King Lha Thothori Nyantsen. It was during the reign of King Lha Thothori Nyantsen that Buddhism began to develop in the Land of Tibet. Yet, at that time, there were only lay people who entered Buddhism, having faith and joy in the dharma and taking the refuge vows. Other than that, no monastic sangha was established.

Afterward, in the reign of King Trisong Detsen, Khenpo Shantarakshita was invited from India, and there were seven people called *the seven men to be tested* who formally got ordained. From then on, in the Land of Tibet, there existed the first monastic sangha that laid the foundation of the Buddhadharma. This is the well-known history in Tibet. In the same manner, here in your place, the monastic sangha has been established, and in the future, it may grow as perfect as the monastic sangha in the Land of Tibet, which makes the dharma thrive. To make this happen, I sincerely hope that you teachers and disciples can work hard with all your efforts.

For the lay practitioners here, please give a deep consideration to this issue. Before you choose to be a monastic, you should observe carefully if the three types of obstacles for ordination are avoided. If you possess all the favorable conditions and are eager to be a monastic, you may take this opportunity to get ordained during these few days. We will be here for another three days. If you have made the decision, the khenpos are here and can do this for you. Otherwise, after we leave and you want to take ordination someday, very possibly you may have to wear the monastic robes while waiting a few more years to formally receive the monastic vows. After all, it is not easy for qualified teachers who can bestow the ordination vows to visit here very often. Even if a couple of lamas may come to visit, it still depends on whether they are qualified and also have the time. Therefore, during this time while we

are here, if more people have decided to take ordination, we can hold the ceremony a couple more times. This would certainly be wonderful.

For lay practitioners, I would like to encourage you to support and help this sangha community through all kinds of means. This will benefit both your present and future lifetimes. For monastics, please observe and protect your precepts earnestly. As long as you do not let your morality deteriorate, the outer environment here will be excellent for your dharma practice.

A couple of days ago, I was told that one of your nuns works at the White House in her monastic robes. What she does is admirable! It must be very rare in the entire world to work around the President, Vice President, and other government officers while wearing monastic robes. With supreme joy, let me offer her a khata to express my congratulations to her! Tashi Delek!

(Rinpoche offered a khata to the nun.)

That was something I wanted to address before the teaching. Now, let's begin the actual teaching. What you are listening to is the Dzogchen practice manual of *Peaceful Manjushri, Placing Buddhahood within Reach*. Last evening, I finished the instructions on the four thoughts that turn the mind away from samsara. Now, I will continue with the uncommon preliminaries.

Taking Refuge

First is the instruction for taking refuge:

Taking refuge is the cornerstone of all Buddhist paths.

No matter what dharma you practice, taking refuge is an indispensable foundation. Without taking refuge, you are not qualified to perform any practice taught by the Buddha.

It is the doorway for you to enter Buddhism.

You will formally become a Buddhist only after taking refuge; otherwise, you cannot be considered as a Buddhist. Therefore, taking refuge provides you admission to the community of Buddhists.

Thereby, clearly visualize the object of refuge according to what the root sadhana describes: [...]

To take refuge, start with the clear visualization of the object of refuge described in the root sadhana for *Peaceful Manjushri*.

[...] In the state of emptiness, visualize that in the sky in front of you, among a vast expanse of magnificent rainbow light and white clouds is your root guru in essence, appearing in the form of Manjushri Jnanasattva.

In the space in front of you, visualize that in the center of magnificent rainbow light and white clouds appears your root guru, who takes the form of the wisdom hero Manjushri. With a brilliant golden-yellow body, one face, and two arms, Manjushri wields a wisdom sword in his right hand in the air and holds an utpala lotus flower with a text above it in his left hand. Adorned with silken and jewel ornaments, he sits in the full-lotus posture on top of a moon disk above a lotus throne. His body is in the center of all deities in the mandala of self-occurring tantras. Above him dwell all gurus, surrounding him reside dakinis, and below him are all dharma protectors.

Having visualized this, contemplate, "From now until perfect enlightenment, I take refuge only in you and follow your instructions. Until I attain the same fruition as yours, my lord guru, I will continuously and diligently practice together with companions who share the same view and conduct." To make such a commitment is the approach of

taking refuge in accordance with the common Sutrayana tradition.



5.39: Chojé gave three lectures on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* at KPC

Contemplate, “Rather than you, my supremely kind root guru, I will not seek any other object of refuge, protector, lord, friend, or helper, not even in dreams. In whatever circumstance, I will rely only on you.”

This is to take refuge in the buddha who is none other than your root guru.

Next, “From now until perfect enlightenment or buddhahood is attained, I will rely only on you, my supremely kind guru, who is inseparable from Bodhisattva Manjushri. Except for following your teachings and instructions, I will not do anything else.” This is to take refuge in the dharma as the path.

Next, “Together with all your followers who share the same view and conduct and emulate you, I will train myself on the path to enlightenment.” This is to take refuge in the sangha as your companions.

Notably, the way of taking refuge here is different from the normal one in that you take refuge by relying only on the guru. Practicing the noble path in the manner of relying on the root teacher and his or her instructions and followers is the causal way of taking refuge. Resolving to practice continuously until attaining the same state of the supremely kind guru who is inseparable from Lord Manjushri is the resultant way of taking refuge. You should evoke such resolve in your mind stream. Both the causal refuge and resultant refuge are the common approach in accordance with the Sutrayana tradition.

Abide in the realization of the nature of your own mind, the great original purity; this is Manjushri Jnanasattva on an ultimate level. Maintain this state as it is recognized; this is the specific approach of taking refuge in this practice that is uncommon to others.

The nature of your mind is primordially unborn and empty and is Bodhisattva Manjushri in the definitive sense. Having recognized your true face, rest single-pointedly in equanimity in the natural state of mind. This is the way of taking refuge that is specific only to the practice of the Great Perfection.

**Remain in this state without deviating from it and chant
the refuge verse as many times as possible:**

zhi ying kadakoln zhönnu bumpé ku

***The ground is primordially pure space, the youthful
vase kaya;***

dang tsal magak rangrig changchub sem

***Its radiant energy is unceasing—my own awareness,
bodhicitta***

ngedön jampal pawö daknyi du

Is of the nature of the hero Manjushri on an ultimate level.

rang ngo shepé ngang né kyab su chi

In recognition of this, my own true essence, I take refuge.

Repeat this refuge verse as many times as possible a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, or one hundred thousand times.

The precepts of taking refuge are that after taking refuge, you must never forget to pray to the guru and the Three Jewels in everyday life, never harm any sentient being, either of higher or lower ranks, and respect and rely upon all members of the noble sangha with fervent devotion.

The benefit of taking refuge is that in the present life, all unfavorable conditions represented by the eight great dangers or sixteen lesser ones, such as illness, demonic obstacles, hostile enemies, ferocious beasts, and so forth, will be dispelled. In future lives, you will be protected from all sorts of suffering, especially those in the three lower realms, and will enjoy all kinds of happiness, including good health, pleasure, and merriment in the celestial and human realms. Ultimately, you will attain omniscient buddhahood. All of these accomplishments arise only through taking refuge, so please diligently engage in the practice of taking refuge.

Generating Bodhicitta

Next is the instruction for generating supreme bodhicitta:

Contemplate how wonderful it would be if sentient beings, who are constantly tormented by endless suffering, could be liberated from suffering! Reflect in this way until intense compassion arises and tears spring from your eyes.

How do you generate supreme bodhicitta? The first key point to consider is, “Without exception, all sentient beings throughout the reaches of space have been my parents. When they were my parents, like my parents in this life, they fed me with the best food, dressed me in the best clothes, and raised me with unexcelled love and effort. They were the kindest to me. However, although my loving parents wish to be happy, they do not know the cause of happiness is to practice virtue. Although they do not want to suffer, they constantly accumulate the cause of suffering by engaging in non-virtuous acts, such as killing, stealing, and so forth. What they do always brings the opposite results of what they wish for. Such being the case, my loving parents—all sentient beings—are desperately helpless, like blind people lost in the wilderness with no one to turn to.” Reflecting like this, cultivate great compassion toward all sentient beings.

What does *compassion* refer to? It is the intention to wish that all sentient beings be free from suffering. If you cultivate such a wish for a long time that each and every sentient being be free from suffering, someday whenever you see any being suffer, your tears will automatically well forth. Before reaching such a state, you need to continue with this practice.

What is the criterion that compassion has arisen in your mind stream? Imagine either your father or mother was arrested by the king and was being stabbed by spears, shot by arrows, or harmed and killed by other sharp weapons. In this situation, you have neither methods nor

the ability to rescue him or her, and you can only woefully cry your heart out. This is how you should feel for all sentient beings equal to limitless space. Before you consider them the same as your own parents, you must continue to train in compassion.

This is the first of the two prerequisites of generating bodhicitta, focusing on the welfare of others with a compassionate attitude.

Continue to contemplate, “I must accomplish buddhahood that provides me with the ability of saving and liberating all sentient beings.

Reflect, “Although I have strong empathy and compassion toward all sentient beings, I lack the ability to save and liberate them. Now, since I wish to bring sentient beings to liberation, besides the fruition of buddhahood, nothing else will enable me to accomplish this goal. Therefore, I must strive for buddhahood through dharma practice.” This is the second prerequisite, focusing on the state of fully enlightened buddhahood with wisdom. When the sincere resolve to accomplish buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings genuinely arises in your mind stream, you have given rise to aspirational bodhicitta.

“The path that enables me to attain buddhahood smoothly and swiftly without having to undergo a long period of hardship is none other than the clear light teaching of Dzogpachenpo. Therefore, I must engage in the actual practice of the Great Perfection.”

Normally, it requires an extremely long time of practice to reach buddhahood if a practitioner follows other paths, such as the path of Sutrayana. Comparatively, the clear light Great Perfection is an expedient approach that can swiftly bring forth buddhahood within a few months. Therefore, aspire to engage in the actual practice of the clear light Great Perfection. This is practical bodhicitta.

Then, abide in the great placement beyond extremes and recite the prayer of generating bodhicitta as many times as possible:

lobur trulnang gyumé drongkhyer la

In the illusory city of incidental deluded perception,

até zhenpé khormor chenpa nam

Beings roam endlessly through clinging to things as real.

yedrol chökü sa la ukyung chir

To bring them all to the dharmakaya's primordial freedom,

ta drol chok zhak chenpor semkyé do

I generate bodhicitta in the great placement beyond extremes.

Only wishing to practice the Great Perfection is not enough. You need to abide in the state of the great placement beyond extremes. Abide in such a meditative state and recite the verse of generating bodhicitta in the root sadhana a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, and even up to one hundred thousand times.

Finally, visualize that from the heart centers of the noble beings as the object of refuge, infinite light rays radiate to you and all other sentient beings, purifying all your negative karma and obscurations without exception. Then, your bodies melt into light and dissolve into the object of refuge. Rest in meditative equanimity, free from fixation.

At the end of each meditation session of taking refuge or generating bodhicitta, visualize that light rays radiate from the heart centers of the noble beings as the object of refuge to yourself and all other sentient beings. Through this, all negative karma and obscurations are eliminated. Next, visualize that you and all other sentient beings dissolve into light, which then merges into the heart center of the root guru. Then, rest in meditative equanimity without any fixation.

Afterward, dedicate the root of virtue to ultimate enlightenment. Each meditation session of taking refuge or generating bodhicitta must be concluded in this way.

You have received the refuge vows and the bodhisattva vow during today's empowerment. Each time you recite the verses of taking refuge or generating bodhicitta a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, up to hundreds of thousands of times, you should remind yourself that you have already received the corresponding precepts and vows during the empowerment.

After taking the bodhisattva vow, there are plenty of practices you must undertake. However, they can be condensed into the constant practice of the Four Immeasurables. What are they? *Immeasurable loving kindness* is to have the intention, "How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings are mentally joyful and physically healthy!" *Immeasurable compassion* is to have the intention, "How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings are free from physical pain and disease, as well as mental distress and misfortune!" *Immeasurable joy* is to feel joyous from the depth of your heart when seeing sentient beings enjoy happiness and perfection. *Immeasurable equanimity* is to have no attachment toward relatives and friends and no hostility toward enemies, but impartially wish that all sentient beings be happy and free from suffering. Earnestly and courageously cultivate these intentions day and night; this is the foundation of the bodhisattva path.

Both the refuge precepts and the bodhisattva vows will be lost due to certain causes, so you must be very careful to avoid these causes. What causes the abandonment of the refuge precepts? The moment that you believe you are not a Buddhist any longer and that you no longer seek refuge in the Three Jewels or practice the dharma but intend to or actually do things that directly go against the Three Jewels, your refuge precepts are broken. What is the fault of breaking the refuge precepts? It creates immense negative karma. Anyone who breaks the

refuge precepts will only fall into the three lower realms rather than being born in the higher realms of humans and gods.

What is the cause for breaking the bodhisattva vows? Even though you are able to bring peace and happiness to sentient beings, you refuse to do so and truly wish them to suffer or even take action to bring them suffering. To think or behave like this is the abandonment of the bodhisattva vows. Once breaking the bodhisattva vows, this person has lost the virtuous mind and retracted his or her commitment to work for the benefit and happiness of all sentient beings. Therefore, this misdeed is so heinous that any other negative act in this world cannot compare with it. Its fully ripening effect will be so grave that that person will wander in samsara for an extremely long time to experience unbearable suffering.

Next, I would like to briefly talk about the benefits and advantages of maintaining bodhicitta. Among all 84,000 gateways of dharma taught by the Buddha, the most profound and ultimate one is to practice bodhicitta. Once bodhicitta arises in your mind stream, you will be free from any physical or mental agony in samsara and will enjoy happiness and joy. Soon after, you will amass infinite noble qualities. Unequaled by any other practice, bodhicitta brings about enormous benefits.

The moment bodhicitta arises in the mind, that person can be called a *bodhisattva*. Anywhere this bodhisattva resides, powerful gods and spirits who possess miraculous strength, such as Indra, Brahma, yakshas, and so forth, will come to pay homage and prostrate. They will even respect the dust and soil stepped on by this bodhisattva by placing it reverently on the crowns of their heads. Without bodhicitta, the merit created by virtuous deeds, such as prostration and circumambulation in terms of body or recitation of sutras and mantras in terms of speech, will be easily destroyed once negative emotions like hatred arise. On the contrary, the merit created with the guidance of bodhicitta is

immune to negative karma like hatred and will further increase by itself.

If you perform positive deeds without bodhicitta, such deeds will bear positive effects only once, after which they are exhausted. However, with bodhicitta, even if you chant the Mani mantra only once, you will temporarily gain good rebirths many times in the human realm as a universal monarch and in the celestial realms as Indra or Brahma, and ultimately, you will attain the perfect omniscient buddhahood. Once bodhicitta arises, all ordinary negative karma will be purified. Even if you have performed heinous actions, such as taking the life of your own father or mother, a severe crime that will definitely lead to rebirth in the lower realms, with the blessing of bodhicitta, you will only remain in the lower realms for as short as the time of the snap of a finger, and then will soon attain liberation. Bodhicitta has such incredible benefits and advantages.

In summary, all the buddhas and bodhisattvas in the past, present, and future walk on one path only, and that path is giving rise to the awakened mind of bodhicitta. It is the ultimate practice that all buddhas and bodhisattvas undertake. Relying on bodhicitta, you can attain the accomplishments of buddhas and bodhisattvas. Without it, you will never reach such noble states.

Bodhicitta is also the criterion to discern whether a guru is qualified or not. Whoever has bodhicitta in his or her mind is a qualified teacher, while a teacher without even a bit of bodhicitta is a bad teacher. Only examining whether a teacher has bodhicitta or not can you come to the conclusion whether he or she is a qualified teacher.

If you possess bodhicitta, you will be serene and happy. The place where you reside or stay will be imbued with incredible peace and bliss, and all sentient beings around you will enjoy happiness. Moreover, the dharma of realization and the dharma of transmission that were transmitted by the Buddha and like wish-fulfilling jewels will naturally

flourish and be widely propagated. It is just like when the sun arises, it will shine in all directions and dispel all darkness.

Now, I have taught bodhicitta a little extensively regarding its nature, its training, the cause for breaking its vows, as well as its benefits and advantages. The reason is that I was supposed to give a special teaching on bodhicitta a couple of days ago, as publicized in the flyer. But at that time, I talked about the Four Noble Truths and ran out of time to touch on the topic of bodhicitta's benefits and vows. Also, the following day as I gave the first lecture of *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*, I could not make time to do so either. Today, I felt like it is still a good occasion, so I elaborated on bodhicitta a little bit.

Guru Yoga

Clearly visualize the guru as before.

For the instruction of guru yoga, visualize the guru in the space in front of you, as described in the previous instruction for taking refuge.

Pray wholeheartedly, "Henceforth, in all lives to come, even in my dreams, I will seek no other sources of hope other than you, my supremely kind guru, the embodiment of the entire source of refuge. I will rely upon you as my object of refuge and offer you my body, all my possessions, and root of virtue amassed throughout the three times.

Contemplate, "From now until perfect enlightenment, other than you, my guru, I will not seek other objects of refuge, protector, lord, or helper, not even in my dreams. I recognize you are the buddha and take refuge in you. I rely only on you, my gracious guru, as my refuge. I will hold you dearly as the most precious and never depart from you, not even in my heart."



5.40: Chojé's penetrating stare

How do you specifically practice this? Offer your own body, the thing you cherish first and foremost to your gracious root guru. Then, besides your body, the second thing you are most attached to is your material possessions, but you are happy to offer them as well to your root guru. Moreover, besides these two, the third thing you care the most about is the root of all virtue that you have gathered throughout the three times; yet again, you would offer it to your root guru. In a word, you offer to the guru the three things that you have been strongly attached to. Furthermore, bring to mind all the pleasant objects in this world, with or without an owner, and offer them to the benevolent root guru. Meanwhile, arrange the substances of water, lamps, incense, perfumed ointments, and so forth as the actual offerings to the guru. This is the instruction of mandala offering that is combined with the practice of guru yoga.

“I disclose and confess all my misdeeds and downfalls accumulated since beginningless time.

From beginningless time until now, in all your lifetimes, you have accumulated all kinds of non-virtuous karma driven by mental afflictions of desire, hatred, and ignorance. Now, bring all of them to mind and disclose them in front of all buddhas and bodhisattvas, giving rise to regret for all the wrongdoings in the past and resolving to never commit them again in the future. Make confession like this by applying the four remedial powers. Confessing all negativities thoroughly in this way is the instruction of purifying obscurations by relying on the guru.

**“Please ripen and liberate my mind stream, bless me to thoroughly realize the clear light Great Perfection and attain the supreme fruition equal to yours, my sublime mentor.”
While contemplating, chant the prayer wholeheartedly:**

Contemplate, “As I follow the sacred path of the clear light Great Perfection, I pray that by receiving its empowerments, my mind that has not yet ripened may be brought to a state of maturity, and by receiving the pith instructions, my mind that has not been liberated may be brought to a state of liberation. Please bless me to reach perfection on the practice of the clear light Great Perfection, including both trekchö that reveals the view of original purity and tögal that brings the realization of spontaneous presence. May I finally attain the same fruition as yours, my benevolent guru.” With intense devotion, chant the following prayer:

zhon nu'i ku lu jang wa po

Appearing in the form of a youthful kaya,

yeshé dron mé rab tu gyan

Splendidly adorned with the wisdom luminosity

jigten ti mug mun sel wa

That can dispel the darkness of ignorance in the world—

jampé yang la sol wa deb

To you, Lord Manjushri, I pray.

Contemplate, “Lord Manjushri, you appear in the form of a sixteen-year-old youth, finely adorned with the Buddha’s nonconceptual wisdom luminosity that can dispel all sentient beings’ darkness of not understanding, misunderstanding, and doubt. I pray to you Lord Manjushri, please bless my mind stream.” Repeat this prayer a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, or one hundred thousand times.

Before concluding the mediation, visualize that white, red, and blue light rays radiate from the three places of the guru and merge into your corresponding three places, thus purifying the karmic obscurations of your three doors and bringing forth all excellent qualities of body, speech, and mind. In the end, the guru also dissolves into light that is

absorbed into yourself. Thus, rest in the equanimity of the genuine nature beyond conceptual mind.

When it is time to conclude a meditation session, visualize that white light rays radiate from between the guru's eyebrows, red light rays radiate from the throat of the guru, and blue light rays radiate from the heart center of the guru and then enter the spot between your eyebrows, your throat, and your heart center, respectively. Then, the obscurations of your body, speech, and mind are purified, and you obtain the same excellent qualities of the guru's enlightened body, speech, and mind. Afterward, the guru dissolves into a sphere of light that enters the crown of your head, descends, and dissolves into your heart center. Visualize that your mind melts into the wisdom of the guru, and they become nondual and oneness. Abide in this state as long as you can.

Once coming out of meditative equanimity, recognize that whatever appears and exists is the essence of the guru. Dedicate the root of virtue to ultimate enlightenment.

When you arise out of meditative equanimity, visualize all that appear and exist as the guru; the outer universe is the guru, and beings living in the universe are also the display of the guru. While abiding in the state that all phenomena are pure, dedicate the root of virtue to ultimate enlightenment.

Completion Stage

Visualize your body in ordinary form and in its center is the clear blue central channel like a bamboo arrow shaft, whose top opens up on the top of your head and whose bottom is blocked below your navel.

Now, the instruction for the completion stage will be given. Visualize your body as it is, in your present, ordinary form. In its center, visualize

a straight channel without any twist or bend. That is the central channel, clear blue, with a fine luster, as the size of your ring finger or a bamboo arrow shaft. Its upper end reaches the top of your crown with an aperture, and its lower end extends below your navel, where it is blocked.

On its right is the red rasana channel, and on the left is the white lalana channel. Their lower ends bend and connect with the lower end of the central channel, forming a shape like the Tibetan syllable *cha*. Their upper ends curve into your two nostrils. Visualize this way and exhale the stale wind.

On the right of your central channel is the red rasana channel and on the left is the white lalana channel. Their upper ends curve into your two nostrils respectively, and their lower ends join with the base of the central channel below your navel, forming a shape like the Tibetan syllable *cha*, where the three channels converge together. Then, exhale the stale wind three times through your two nostrils, while visualizing all the demonic forces that cause disease, the contaminations of karmic obscurations, and downfalls are expelled from your body.

While inhaling, clearly visualize that wind enters the two nostrils, passing through the lalana and rasana channels all the way to the junction of the three channels below your navel. At that junction is the fierce wisdom fire, which has a solid base and a sharp tip, hot to the touch, and about the size of a barley grain. When the inhaled wind touches the fire, its flame increases, incinerating entirely the contaminated body, including its winds, channels, and bindus, without a trace remaining. In the end, everything disappears into the non-referential state.

When you inhale, visualize clearly that wind enters the body through the two *lalana* and *rasana* channels. It descends to the junction of the three channels below the navel and ignites the fierce wisdom fire, whose lower base is solid and upper tip is sharp. The fierce wisdom fire is scorching, and as the wind comes in, its flame increases, incinerating your entire contaminated body, including its winds, channels, and *bindus*. In the end, everything disappears into emptiness that is free from any reference.

Again, within the state of emptiness, visualize that you appear in the vajra body of Manjushri, totally transparent, like a fully inflated placenta.

Within emptiness, visualize yourself appearing in the vajra body of Manjushri, transparent and just like a fully inflated placenta or a crystal ball. Visualize the garments and ornaments of your body according to the root *sadhana*. This is the visualization of the outer body.

Clearly visualize in the center of your body are the three channels, four chakras, a short a^2 below the navel, and a white inverted syllable *hang* at the top of the central channel, which represents the nature of all buddhas and mere recollection of which can bring forth the experience of emptiness and bliss.

Having visualized the body, visualize again in the center of the body are the three channels—the central channel, the *rasana* channel on the right, and the *lalana* channel on the left. Also visualize the four chakras. At the crown of your head is the chakra of great bliss with its thirty-two white branch channels; in your throat is the chakra of enjoyment with its sixteen red branch channels; at the level of your heart is the chakra of dharma with its eight blue branch channels; and at the level of your navel is the chakra of manifestation with its sixty-four yellow branch channels. These are called *branch channels*

because from these chakras the channels branch off like the ribs of an umbrella. The branch channels at the crown chakra and heart chakra curve downward, while the branch channels at the throat chakra and navel chakra curve upward.

At the top of the central channel, visualize an inverted Tibetan syllable *hang*. It is the condensed nature of all buddhas, and through mere recollection of it, one can give rise to the wisdom of emptiness and bliss. Visualize it in the form of a white bindu, like a drop of water that is going to drip. This is the visualization of the inner channels.

When wind inhaled through nostrils touches the fierce wisdom fire (the short *a*) below your navel, the tip of the flame that is as sharp as the tip of a needle quickly ascends to the top of the central channel and touches the inverted *hang*. Then, the flame increases, causing nectar to descend continuously from the syllable *hang*. The flame and the bindu chase each other up and down.

Inhale through the two nostrils, and when the wind touches the fierce wisdom fire at the junction of the three channels below your navel, the flame soars up within the central channel. When it touches the syllable *hang* at the top of the central channel, the *hang* starts to melt, and nectar drips from it onto the flame, which makes the flame kindle even more as if being sprinkled with oil. As the *hang* continues to melt, more nectar is released, which descends and fills all the channels and chakras in order. Thus, visualize that the flame and the bindu chase each other up and down, and the descent of nectar becomes stronger and stronger. Focus your mind on this.

In succession, nectar fills up the four chakras, whereby you experience the four wisdoms of joy and four wisdoms of emptiness and realize the genuine wisdom of emptiness and bliss. Rest in this state as long as possible, and in the end, dedicate the root of virtue.

The descending nectar fills up the chakra of great bliss at the crown, then in order the channels and chakras at the throat, heart center, and navel. Through the strength of the nectar, you attain respectively in the four places of your body starting from your crown, the four wisdoms of joy—joy, supreme joy, exceptional joy, and connate joy, as well as the four wisdoms of emptiness—emptiness, great emptiness, extremely great emptiness, and everything as emptiness. These two kinds of wisdoms are inseparable and share the same essence. From the aspect of the luminosity of great bliss, it is called the wisdoms of joy; from the aspect that joy is not truly existent, it is called the wisdoms of emptiness. Visualize that you have attained the four wisdoms of joy and four wisdoms of emptiness. Then, abide in the ineffable state of meditative equanimity.

This practice of the completion stage should not be performed just once. You must meditate on it repeatedly until the supreme experience of the wisdoms of joy and the wisdoms of emptiness arise in your mind stream.

Finally, arise from that meditative equanimity. Dedicate the root of virtue that comes from meditating on the completion stage for all sentient beings to attain buddhahood.

BLESSED LARUNG GAR

During the stay in Washington, D.C., one night, Yidzhin Norbu went back to Larung Gar in his illusory dream body. At that time, a serious infectious disease was taking place at Larung Gar. Rinpoche went to the residential cabins of some lamas, including Khenpo Gekdor, and clearly heard their conversations, learning everything that was happening in the academy.

The next day, Chojé told the disciples near him, “Last night, I went back to the academy with my illusory dream body and noticed that many monastics

were very sick. We should chant some prayers to bless them.” Then Rinpoche led the disciples in the ritual practices of several sadhanas.

After we returned to Larung Gar, I was told that during those few days, an infectious disease was indeed rampant inside the academy, which quickly disappeared for no obvious reason. Such was the testimony I received, and the timing was exactly right.

THE THIRD LECTURE ON *PLACING BUDDHAHOOD WITHIN REACH*

On the evening of July 29th, Chojé gave the last teaching on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*.

During this time, when all outer, inner, and secret favorable conditions have gathered together, please make your best effort to practice the precious Buddhadharma and do not deceive yourself. This is quite important. However, when engaging in the practice of the dharma that is like a wish-fulfilling jewel, if you do not understand its true essence, you certainly have no idea of what to be practiced. Therefore, the first crucial step is to clearly understand the entire context of the dharma path. At the beginning, it is faith and devotion that open the door to the dharma; in the middle, it is loving kindness and compassion that mainly should be cultivated on the path; and in the end, it is the welfare of all sentient beings that will ultimately be accomplished.

At the beginning, there are three kinds of faith: the vivid faith in the jewel of the Buddha, the eager faith in the jewel of the dharma, and the confident faith in the jewel of the sangha. Regarding the jewel of the Buddha, if you fully understand the unequalled qualities of the Buddha in terms of his wisdom, compassion, and power and then give rise to a pure and joyful mind, such an attitude is vivid faith. Regarding the jewel of the dharma, if you truly wish to end suffering and its cause as taught with the Four Noble Truths to further actualize

the path and reach its destination of the cessation of suffering, such genuine intention is eager faith. Regarding the jewel of the sangha, if you firmly believe that the Buddha's followers are the most sublime among all living beings, including gods and humans, because they are endowed with two types of qualities, such conviction and trust in the sangha from the bottom of your heart is confident faith. The two types of qualities refer to accomplishment and liberation, meaning that the sangha accomplishes the pure precepts and qualities of meditative experience and realization and that they are able to liberate themselves from misconduct.



5.41: Chojé with a gentle look

In the middle, you must focus on the training of loving kindness and compassion as your main practice. Among them, *loving kindness* is the wish that all living beings may equally attain happiness and its causes, and *compassion* is the wish that all living beings may be free from suffering and its causes.

Some religious or spiritual traditions declare that desire, anger, or ignorance is a spiritual practice. All of these are indeed the incorrect, unrighteous path and should be forsaken. Although some other traditions advocate that compassion is the only path to follow, they use kindness as an excuse to defend their own interests, while holding animosity toward others. This is just superficial kindness. Some others extend their compassion to all human beings but exclude all animals from their concern. Again, this is not genuine compassion. Buddhists, however, are trained to be compassionate to each and every living being in an unbiased manner, wishing all beings together with themselves to equally attain happiness and to be free from suffering. Hence, the path of Buddhism is the supreme one.

In the end, what is the ultimate accomplishment in Buddhism? It is to place all sentient beings in the state of peace and happiness. In order to achieve this goal, to free all beings from suffering and to grant them happiness, rely only on the Buddhadharma. Except for spreading the wish-fulfilling jewel of the dharma taught by the Tathagata and making it flourish, any other methods cannot accomplish this purpose. The Buddhadharma is twofold and consists of the dharma of transmission and the dharma of realization. Both those who uphold the dharma of transmission through teaching and listening to the doctrine and those who uphold the dharma of realization through practicing are called *the venerable upholders of the dharma*. Other than these two types of individuals, no one else can be called by this name.

Our root teacher Buddha Shakyamuni aroused the supreme bodhicitta at the very beginning, kept accumulating an immense amount of merit over three countless eons in the middle, and achieved the perfect

fruition of buddhahood in the end. The ultimate goal of this whole process was to establish all sentient beings in a state of permanent peace and bliss. He was the one with great compassion and loving kindness and was also an expert in all aspects of skillful means. In order to achieve his goal, the only thing he did in this human world was to propagate the dharma of transmission and the dharma of realization. Likewise, you should follow in the footsteps of the most compassionate and kindest Buddha to listen to and teach the dharma of transmission and to practice and accomplish the dharma of realization.

Now, I will continue teaching the text *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*. It has three parts, the instruction of the virtue in the beginning, the instruction of the virtue in the middle, and the instruction of the virtue in the end. The first two instructions are in harmony with the Sutrayana practice and the general Tantrayana practice, respectively, both of which were explained yesterday. Next is the instruction of the virtue in the end, which is the specific instructions of Dzogchen. Again, it has three parts: the preliminary practice, the actual practice, and the concluding practice.

The Preliminary Practice

In the Dzogchen practice, there are three parts: the preliminary practice, the actual practice, and the concluding practice.

The preliminary practice has three parts: the preliminary of body, speech, and mind that leads to the three doors, the preliminary of the yoga of the four elements that leads to the three kayas, and the preliminary of discerning the two extremes of samsara and nirvana that leads to pristine awareness.

The preliminary of body, speech, and mind that leads to the three doors also has three parts: the preliminary of the

body, the preliminary of speech, and the preliminary of the mind.

For the preliminary of the body, visualize your body as a blue vajra blazing with fire and radiating sparks. Assume the vajra posture as long as possible until you cannot control the body and involuntarily collapse. At that moment, the discursive mind is arrested. Then, you abide in the natural state and rest. Repeat this practice again and again.

You need to visualize your body as a blue, three-pronged vajra and assume the vajra posture as long as possible. Try your best to maintain the posture until the body loses its control and falls down. At the very moment that the body collapses, just let it be and observe the nature of the mind, abiding in that natural state.

For the preliminary of speech, visualize that your consciousness abides in the heart in the form of the syllable *hung*. From it, countless subtle *hung's* are continuously radiated. When they penetrate external phenomena, such as houses, mountains, and earth, everything becomes *hung*. Further, those *hung's* from outside are reabsorbed into your body, which in turn becomes *hung*. Finally, all the *hung's* dissolve into the dharmadhatu, and you rest and abide in the natural state. During this visualization, you should chant the song of *hung* with a melodious voice continuously.

You need to visualize that your mind is not different from the inner wind, and it appears as a blue syllable *hung* in your heart. With this root *hung* as the source, countless subtle *hung's* radiate from it one by one. These *hung's* move outside the body and penetrate rooms, houses, mountains, and earth, as all of which transform into *hung*.



5.42: Chojé with a loving smile and an indomitable expression

First, visualize that all outer phenomena become *hung*; then visualize all the *hung*'s return and enter into your body, which in turn becomes nothing but *hung*. All *hung*'s are absorbed into the root *hung* one after another, and in the end, the root *hung* itself dissolves into the dharmadhatu.

During the whole process of this practice, you need to chant with a melodious voice the sound of *hung, hung, hung, hung, hung, hung, hung* continuously while following the instructions for the visualization.

For the preliminary of the mind, ascertain that all phenomena of samsara and nirvana are the magical display of the mind. Examine where the mind originates, where it abides, and where it goes. All coarse material things can be reduced to particles, and particles can be reduced to indivisible particles, which in turn are ascertained as being baseless from the root. Thus, you come to the conclusion that the mind has no location for its origin, abiding, or cessation. If you further observe whether the mind has any shape, color, sound, smell, taste, or texture, then you end up with nothing. Even the cognizant aspect of mind is merely established in a conventional way, with a lack of true, inherent existence. Thereby, you should collapse the false cave of the mind that believes it has true, inherent existence and understand its selflessness.

Just like when you are dreaming, everything in the dream is the illusory manifestation of your own mind, and no such things as high mountains, large rivers, or dangerous passes truly exist. Likewise, know that all appearances you perceive at the present moment are merely the magical display of your mind according to its habitual tendencies and that nothing inherently exists externally. You must achieve the certainty that the root cause of everything is the mind.

Further, examine and reflect carefully on where the mind originally comes from, where it currently abides, and where it eventually goes. If you think that the mind comes from those coarse material things that are compounded of particles, such as a pillar, cut it into three parts and examine the result. There is no way for each of the three parts to produce the mind because in that case a person would have three minds. If you think it is the middle part that produces the mind, then you can further cut that into three segments. If you continue this process, all material things are reduced to particles, and particles are reduced to indivisible particles, which in turn are determined as having no true, inherent existence. Then, you come to the conclusion that in material things, there is nowhere for the mind to originate, nowhere for the mind to abide, and nowhere for the mind to go.

When you observe the mind itself, it has no shape, such as a rectangle or a semicircle, and it has no color, such as white, red, yellow, or blue. Thus, you can ascertain that the mind is not visible form. Likewise, the mind has no melodious, strident, or neutral sound, so it is certainly not sound. The mind has no fragrant, stinking, or neutral smell, so it is certainly not smell. The mind has no sweet, sour, bitter, astringent, pungent, or salty taste that one's tongue can determine, so it is certainly not taste. And finally, the mind has no gentle, heavy, light, or warm texture that one's body consciousness can sense, so it is certainly not texture.

If you assert that the mind is cognizant, such cognizance can be only established by words and languages, which have no inherent entity at all. By understanding its lack of true existence, you can destroy your grasping at the existence of mind that is like a cave that needs to be collapsed. That is the preliminary practice of collapsing the false cave of the mind. Gain the certainty of its selflessness.

For the preliminary of the yoga of the four elements that leads to the three kayas, your mind seems to dissolve into the sounds of earth, water, fire, and wind. Single-pointedly

focus on each of them and abide in that state. When all conceptual thoughts are pacified, naturally relax, and recognize the nature of mind.

You merge the mind with the sounds of the four elements, for instance, the sound of hands slapping the ground, the sound of water flowing, fire burning, or wind blowing in the air. It seems that the mind fully dissolves into these kinds of sounds, and you single-pointedly focus on that state and rest. When no conceptual thoughts arise, you are able to discover the very nature of mind.

For the preliminary of discerning the two extremes of samsara and nirvana that leads to pristine awareness, randomly engage in the behaviors of the sentient beings of the six realms in terms of their body, speech, and mind. When all sorts of discursive thoughts are proliferating, forcefully shout *phat*, through which all discursive thoughts are severed. At that moment, observe the innate nature of mind. Repeat this practice until the view that the nature of mind is baseless from the root arises without wavering.

You need to first discern the extreme of samsara and then the extreme of nirvana in this preliminary practice. With your mind, imagine and experience mentally all different suffering and pain that sentient beings are experiencing in the six realms, such as the hell, hungry ghost, and animal realms. With your speech, speak all the different languages and sounds in the six realms; and with your body, engage in all the different conducts of sentient beings in the six realms. Then, suddenly, forcefully shout *phat*. At that very moment, observe the nature of mind, and recognize that the mind has neither origination nor basis. This is the extreme of nirvana. Like this, repeat this practice again and again.

In the end, simply rest with the three doors of body, speech, and mind in a motionless state, identify the innate nature of

mind as the nonconceptual dharmakaya, and gain a sense of certainty.

At the end of the practice of discerning the two extremes of samsara and nirvana, you do not move your body, do not speak with your mouth, and do not think with your mind. Just like taking a rest when you are exhausted, you simply rest in the innate nature of mind, and this is the preliminary practice of resting in the dharmata.

Then, engage in the peaceful conduct of the shravakas, engage in the intermediate conduct of bodhisattvas, or engage in the wrathful conduct of wrathful deities; engage in these three types of conducts while identifying the nature of mind. You should enter the path by perfectly achieving both shamatha and vipashyana, meaning that you abide in the nature of mind continuously.

First, you engage in the peaceful and well-tamed conduct of the shravakas by sitting in the seven-point posture of Vairochana. See whether you can simultaneously achieve both tranquil stillness (shamatha) and true seeing into the nature of mind (vipashyana) when following the shravaka path. Then, you progress to the intermediate practice of the bodhisattvas. As you perform all activities, such as walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, see whether you can achieve both shamatha and vipashyana while abiding in the essence of the bodhisattva path. Eventually, you progress to the wrathful deity practice, and as you shout *ha ha, hi hi*, jump, stomp, and thrash around, see whether you can still abide in the perfect union of shamatha and vipashyana. If you can, this means you have truly entered the path. If not, practice continuously until you are able to steadily abide in that state.

Since most of you are currently performing the five hundred thousand preliminaries, at this point, I need not elaborate on this too much. It takes you an extended period of time to complete the preliminary

practices of Dzogchen, and today I am not offering you the actual instructions of this Dzogchen practice. If you are being guided in the actual practice, you need to spend many days on each of these preliminaries. For instance, some vidyadharas in history spent seven years on the practice of discerning the two extremes of samsara and nirvana. Nowadays, most dharma practitioners are not endowed with such great capability, but still, they need to spend at least one hundred days on this practice. Otherwise, they cannot claim to have engaged in this preliminary. The same goes for the preliminary of body, speech, and mind, as well as the preliminary practice of the yoga of the four elements. Therefore, it is crucial for all of you to persevere in your practice over a long period.

The Actual Practice of Trekchö

Rest the mind naturally and without any contrivance, observe the innate nature of mind, and fully realize its intrinsic emptiness that is baseless from the root beyond inner, outer, and middle extremes while having its natural and unceasing radiance, and that it is without any conceptual thoughts and inexpressible by any words. Then, realize that there is no good or bad between the wisdom of all the buddhas of the three times and the impure minds of sentient beings, and thus identify the innate wisdom nature of luminosity and emptiness that encompasses everything. This is called *the direct placement in the view like a mountain.*

The actual practice of trekchö, thoroughly cutting through to original purity, is to ascertain the unborn nature of all phenomena. At the beginning, rest your mind naturally without any contrivance, and then observe its nature: it is unborn, and its essence of emptiness is the dharmakaya. While being unborn, its intrinsic nature of luminosity that is ascertained by the mind itself is the sambhogakaya. There is no good or bad between the enlightened mind of buddhas and

the ordinary mind of sentient beings, both of which share the same taste of emptiness and luminosity, and this quality is referred to as all-pervasive compassion, which is the nirmanakaya.

Among the view, meditation, conduct, and result, this is called *the direct placement in the view like a mountain*.

While recognizing the view and resting naturally in that state, there is no fixation on any object, such as existence, non-existence, being, or not being, and it is beyond any defilement of conceptualization and analysis, such as refuting and proving. This perfect union of the shamatha of the innate concentration on the dharmata and the vipashyana of the true seeing into rigpa is called *the direct placement in meditation like an ocean*.

As you rest naturally in the recognition of the view, there is no fixation on existence or non-existence, being or not being. There is nothing to be meditated upon, or anything to be conceptualized or analyzed. Having no discursive thoughts or meditation, you truly see into the nature of mind and concentrate on the dharmata. Placing your mind in the perfect union of shamatha and vipashyana and sustaining such a state is called *the direct placement in meditation like an ocean*.

Continuing the practice, any appearance of the six collections of objects and consciousnesses should not be altered, accepted, or abandoned. Sustain the awareness of the cognizant and empty nature of mind and do not lose it. All appearances displayed by its unobstructed power are neither harmful nor beneficial, like waves subsiding into the ocean. This is called *the direct placement in conduct with appearances*.



5.43: A very popular photo of Chojé in a sitting position

When sustaining this state in conduct, any appearances of the six collections of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mental consciousnesses, their corresponding conceptual thoughts, as well as the six sense objects of visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes, textures, and mental objects, should not be fixated on or refuted or established. You simply sustain the state of intrinsic awareness itself, and then like waves going back to the ocean, all conceptual thoughts will dissolve into awareness without causing any harm or benefit. This is called *the direct placement in conduct with appearances*.

Following this practice, when recognizing the intrinsic awareness in the beginning, conceptual thoughts are self-liberated like a snake naturally uncoiling itself. When the unobstructed power has been perfected in the middle, any collections of consciousness have lost their potential to benefit or harm, like a thief entering an empty house. When attaining stability in the end, if one searches for impure phenomena, there are none to be found, and only inherent, genuine wisdom has been rendered perfectly evident, like arriving at an island of gold where there is no earth or rock. This is called *the direct placement in pristine awareness as the result*.

In the beginning of the practice, whenever a conceptual thought arises, recognize its nature at that very moment. Then, it has no way to continue to manifest, like a snake naturally uncoiling. This gives rise to the experience that conceptual thoughts are self-liberated into their inherent nature.

In the middle of the practice, be aware of the empty nature of mind and once the unobstructed power of the realization of intrinsic awareness has been perfected, the rising of virtuous thoughts will not make you happy and the rising of non-virtuous thoughts will not make you sad. This is like an empty house being broken into by a thief; because there

is nothing to be stolen, there is nothing for you to worry about, nor would you be happy if a thief does not appear. This is the experience you will have in the middle.

In the end of the practice, no ordinary thoughts will arise, and there is only the stable awareness of rigpa. This is like arriving on an island of gold, where there is only gold and no ordinary dirt or stone to be found. At this point, everything turns into the dharmakaya, and this is the ultimate view of trekchö, *the direct placement in pristine awareness as the result*.

The Concluding Practice of Tögal

In order to directly perceive the secret luminosity of rigpa instead of establishing it through speculation, you should practice tögal, directly crossing over to the spontaneous presence of appearances.

Now, we come to the practice manual of the concluding practice, the practice of tögal that directly crosses over to the spontaneous presence of appearances. You should know that the dharmakaya Samantabhadra is originally present in your mind. That presence can be directly perceived, rather than being established by logical reasoning or imagined to be true through speculation. In order to perceive it directly, embark on the path of tögal.

In tögal practice, the key point of the body is to assume one of the three postures. The key point of the speech is to remain silent and to inhale and exhale slowly through the mouth. The key point of the mind is to engage in the actual trekchö practice to place the mind in the luminosity of self-occurring prajna. The key point of the place is the cloudless sky, the sun, the moon, a butter lamp, or the like. The key point of the gateways of the eyes is to gaze upwardly, to gaze sideways, and to gaze downwardly. The

key point of appearances through the practice is to perceive the spontaneous appearances of the luminosity of the dhatu of awareness, the luminosity of the empty bindu, as well as the vajra chain of awareness. The luminosity of the dhatu of awareness is the pervasive blue space surrounded by concentric rings of five-colored lights. The luminosity of the empty bindu is concentric circles of five-colored lights. The vajra chain of awareness is like gold threads adorned with crystal beads.

When these appearances arise, you should make them stable and motionless by dissolving your breath, eye consciousness, and mental consciousness into the appearances and focus there. You need to focus on this practice for a long period of time without any conceptualization or speculation so that you can eventually perceive the luminosity of the dhatu of awareness, the luminosity of the empty bindu, as well as the vajra chain of awareness. This is the first vision of the direct recognition of the dharmata.

As appearances become more and more apparent, stable, and complete, and boundless brilliance also arises, this is the second vision of the increasing experience. When the luminosity of the dhatu of awareness appears as pure lands, the luminosity of the empty bindu is perfected as immeasurable palaces, the vajra chain of awareness matures into kayas, and any appearance is pure manifestation, this is the third vision of pristine awareness reaching its full extent. When the boundless appearances of kayas and wisdoms all dissolve into the inner radiance of dhatu as the ever-youthful vase kaya and the stable ground of no appearances is attained, this is the fourth vision of the complete exhaustion of phenomena into dharmata.

There are six key points in the *tögal* practice. The key point of the body is to assume one of the three postures: the dharmakaya posture like a lion, the sambhogakaya posture like a sleeping elephant, and the nirmanakaya posture like a crouching rishi.

The key point of the speech is to remain silent or at least to talk less, and to inhale and exhale slowly through the mouth.

The key point of the mind is to abide in the state of the actual *trekchö* practice that I previously taught, and this is called the direct placement in the luminosity of self-occurring *prajna*. Do not depart from that state.

The key point of the place is to focus on the stainless sky, or any of the following three objects: the sun, the moon, or a butter lamp.

The key point of the gateways of the eyes is to gaze upwardly toward the middle of the eyebrows if in the dharmakaya posture, to gaze downwardly if in the nirmanakaya posture, and to gaze sideways if in the sambhogakaya posture.

The key point of appearances is to be free from any conceptual thought and to perceive clearly the luminosity of the *dhatu* of awareness, the luminosity of the empty *bindu*, and the *vajra* chain of awareness. Among the four visions of *tögal*, this is the vision of the direct recognition of the *dharmata*.

When the *dhatu*, empty *bindu*, and awareness become more and more apparent and stable, approaching perfection, becoming limitless, and increasing continuously, this is the vision of the increasing experience.

When the luminosity of the *dhatu* of awareness appears as pure lands, the luminosity of the empty *bindu* is perfected as immeasurable palaces, the *vajra* chain of awareness matures into the bodies of deities, and there are no impure phenomena at all, this is the vision of awareness reaching its full extent.

When all impure phenomena have been transformed in the previous vision, all pure appearances of kayas and wisdoms attain the stable ground in the inner radiance of the dhatu; and without any manifestation, when all appearances exhaust into the inner radiance of the dhatu, this is the vision of the complete exhaustion of phenomena into dharmata.

Then, in different worlds where there are karmically connected beings, you will manifest as the three kayas, and this arrangement of the three kayas are the undeceiving, self-occurring result of the gathering of both aspirations and virtuous karma.

Once attaining buddhahood, the fruition of dharmakaya, you will manifest different forms, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya, in different worlds for sentient beings who have previous karmic connections with you. This requires two contributing circumstances coming together, which are the force of aspiration of a buddha and the force of the enhanced positive karma of sentient beings.

If in this life you have not given rise to a stable and supreme realization, then at the moment of death, visualize the mind as a white syllable *ah* in your heart, which ascends on the upward moving wind and dissolves into the heart center of your guru, who is seated above your crown. The guru ascends higher and higher, departing for the pure land of Sukhavati. With the focus that your mind and the guru's mind become inseparable, take rebirth.

This is the instruction for the bardo of dying. Upon the moment of death, you imagine that your mind appears as a white syllable *ah* in your heart and wholeheartedly pray to your guru, who is seated above your crown. Then, you continue to visualize that the *ah* ascends and dissolves into the heart of your guru; and your guru ascends higher

and higher, going directly to the pure land of Sukhavati. Your mind and the guru's enlightened mind of wisdom become inseparably one, you abide in this state, and you take rebirth in the land of Sukhavati. Thus, you will attain buddhahood, the fruition of dharmakaya.

In the dharmata bardo, whatever display of kayas and wisdoms appears, such as sounds, lights, brilliance, and so on, recognize them as your own appearances and abide in the realization of their innate nature through the direct placement in the view. Before all appearances of unobstructed power are exhausted into the dhatu of the ground, you should continue to abide in that state.

During the dharmata bardo, various phenomena will appear, including sounds, lights, brilliance, the kayas of deities, as well as the signs of wisdom. At that moment, you need to recognize that all appearances are none other than your own appearances. Abide in that state of recognition, and all your conceptual thoughts will dissolve into the dhatu of awareness. This is the very essence of the instruction for the dharmata bardo.

When the bardo of becoming manifests like a dream, single-pointedly pray to your guru and deity with devotion and veneration. Practice the pith instruction for the bardo of dying, and you will attain comfort in a self-occurring nirmanakaya pure realm.

During the bardo of becoming, the karmic manifestations of the six realms will appear. At that moment, you should pray to your guru and deity single-pointedly. Meanwhile, practice the pith instruction for the bardo of dying so that you can transfer your consciousness and abandon your samsaric rebirth. That is, visualize your mind as a white *ah*, let it dissolve into your guru's heart, and then your guru

departs for the pure land of Sukhavati. Thus, you will awaken in a nirmanakaya pure realm.

*This practice that places buddhahood within reach
Welled forth from my wisdom mind,
With just a few words composed by my conceptual thoughts.
In order to benefit some beginners,
I wrote it down.
By the virtue of this composition,
May all sentient beings as boundless as open space
Equally attain comfort in the dhatu of awareness.*

The very key points of *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* welled forth from the Great Perfection state of intrinsic awareness and emptiness. There are just a few words in the text that did not originally appear in my wisdom mind. Thinking that this practice would bring some benefit to all beginners of Dzogchen, I composed it into a text with my conceptual thoughts. In the Land of Tibet, this is a teaching manual for beginners, and they need to further study the Dzogchen teachings collected in the categories of tantra, transmission, and upadesha.

For most of you westerners, however, I feel this Dzogchen manual contains everything you need from the beginning to the end and no more instructions need to be received. Given the situation that you cannot read too many texts or practice too many instructions and that you have very little time for dharma practice, this teaching manual is enough.

By the virtue of this composition, may all sentient beings attain the fruition of dharmakaya.

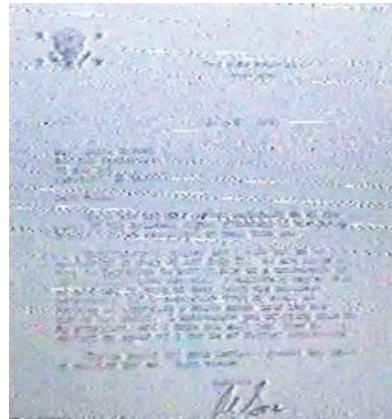
This was written by Ngawang Lodrö Tsungmé in a break between morning meditation sessions, in the hermitage of the Asura Cave, also known as the Cave of Narayana, at the

five-peaked mountain of Wu Tai Shan, a place sacred to the emanations of Manjushri.

Now, the study of the Dzogchen teaching manual *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* has been perfectly completed. In accordance with your wishes, we've experienced the virtuous beginning through the virtuous ending in terms of both the teaching from my side and the listening from your side.

A LETTER FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE US

When His Holiness was giving teachings at Kunzang Palyul Choling, he received a letter from Vice President Al Gore. He wrote this letter on the 23rd of July, in which he mentioned that he was very happy to hear that H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche had come to the United States. Although he had to participate in a conference that weekend, Mr. Gore had his staff waiting for Rinpoche at the White House for a visit. He also expressed his sincere regret for not being able to meet



5.44: The letter from the former Vice President Al Gore

with Chojé in person, saying that if there was anything that he could help with, he would be happy to hear from us. Later, after Rinpoche completed his teachings at the center, he made a tour of the White House arranged by Vice President Al Gore.

VISITED THE WHITE HOUSE

On July 30th, Chojé visited the White House, the home and workplace of the President of the United States. Part of the premises is open to visitors. To get passes, US citizens need to contact their members of Congress, while citizens of a foreign country need to contact their embassy in Washington, D.C. for assistance.



5.45: The White House

Requested by Vice President Al Gore, a staff member named Karen Williams accompanied us on the tour. The White House consists of three major parts: the East Wing, the West Wing, and the residence. The State Dining Room, the East Room, and so on are in the East Wing, and the famous Oval Office, the Cabinet Room, and other rooms are in the West



5.46: Inside the White House

Wing. While from the outside there seems to be three levels, the residence actually has six levels and one hundred thirty-two rooms in total. Karen worked as a tour guide, gave us a detailed description of each area, and also showed us some other places that were not open to the public. One amazing thing of interest to us was that Karen was also a Buddhist nun and wore Tibetan monastic robes. It was remarkable that she had both this Buddhist identity and an official job in the White House.



5.47: Hallway in the White House

There were a lot of portraits on the walls, including all former presidents and first ladies. Either in the hallways or inside the rooms, we noticed many artworks with a strong historical and cultural flavor, as well as delicate porcelain, glassware, and gold and silver tableware that had been used in the White House. The president at that time was Bill Clinton, so we also saw many of his pictures together with his family, as well as some videos.

Later in the afternoon, we went to the Chinese Embassy, and the ambassador received us kindly, asking about our journey in the US, the departing and returning schedule, and some other details. After that, we went back to the monastery.



5.48: Reporting the trip to the Chinese ambassador



5.49: Chojé with the Chinese ambassador in 1993

A FAREWELL TALK

On July 31st, Chojé completed all the scheduled dharma teachings at Kunzang Palyul Choling. As a celebration, the center held a joyful feast on the grass, where they set up tents, provided a buffet, and the Buddhists of different colors and nationalities gathered together. The day was sunny, and the trees were luxuriantly green. Hearing the birds' melodious songs and smelling the refreshing scent of flowers in the air, everyone was relaxed and enjoyed the delicious food. Such a leisurely time made all of us quite happy and at ease.



5:50: A grand buffet on the lawn

Before the farewell, His Holiness gave one more talk to everyone.

I have a few wishes for you that I want to share with you today.

Generally speaking, someone like me who has no merit but a lot of faults is not qualified to give you any useful advice. But this time, because we have been tightly bound by the samaya between teacher and disciple that causes us not to separate from one another not only in this life, but in all future lives, I am encouraged to share some of my thoughts with you.

First, I have two wishes for your resident lama, Ahkon Lhamo. All her qualities can be summarized into two aspects: the aspect of her actualization and realization of the dharma and the aspect of her activity of propagating the dharma and benefiting beings. I sincerely hope she can keep these two types of qualities without declining or losing them but rather increasing them more than ever through her best efforts.

Second, I have three wishes for you monastics, which are to be harmonious in solidarity, to observe pure precepts, and to diligently study and practice the dharma.

You need to have solidarity and a harmonious spirit not only within Buddhism, but among all different religions, such as Christianity and Hinduism as well. Incessant rivalries and strife between each other can only cause harm instead of happiness and ease. So, my first point is that you should strive to build a cohesive and friendly relationship with all different religions and Buddhist schools, particularly the four major schools that have been thriving in the Land of Tibet. This is the most fundamental thing for all of us that cannot be neglected.



5.51: The western sangha happily taking photos together with Chojé

Compared to the situation a couple of decades ago, nowadays, Buddhism is flourishing in many countries around the world. But be aware that there is a big mara-like obstacle that could destroy Buddhism. That is disunity. Honestly speaking, if there are two gurus in one place, their relationship can hardly be harmonious at all times; and if there are two dharma centers or two groups of sangha in one place, again they can barely get along well with each other. But indeed, solidarity and harmony are of the utmost importance. As the Buddha said,

“Harmony in the sangha brings happiness; and the ascetic practices of a harmonious sangha bring even more happiness.” Great happiness comes from harmony in the sangha, and if such a harmonious sangha collectively practices virtue and refrains from non-virtue, even more happiness will be acquired. So, to have solidarity and be harmonious is indispensable.

Secondly, pure precepts are the very foundation of your dharma practice. Since you have been ordained and have received the monastic vows, if you can perfectly uphold the pure precepts, it is certain that you will enjoy happiness and be free from suffering in both the present and future lifetimes. However, if you break your vows, you will have no other recourse but to fall into the lower realms. Therefore, you must observe your precepts carefully because they can bring you either great benefit or huge harm.

Third is to diligently study and practice the dharma. What is the practice of the dharma? It is to devotedly and firmly internalize and actualize the dharma. What is the study of the dharma? It is to wholeheartedly listen to and teach the dharma. It is great if you have the ability to expound the dharma to others. But if it is beyond your ability for the time being, you should exert yourself in listening to and contemplating the dharma. The best situation is to have favorable conditions for both listening to and teaching the dharma. If you cannot do both of them, you must practice one of them.

I have two wishes for you lay practitioners. Please refrain from killing and stealing and engage in virtuous practice as best you can, such as doing prostrations or circumambulations, chanting sutras or mantras. This is my first wish. Please pray to the Three Jewels with devotion and more importantly, do not lose faith in the jewel of the sangha. Pray to them and serve them as much as you can. If you have additional material wealth, make offerings to them without stinginess. By doing so, both your present and future lives will be greatly benefited. This is my second wish.



5.52: Chojé leisurely sitting before the dining table

I have one common wish for all of you, which is to spare no effort to protect and propagate Buddhism as a whole and in particular to maintain your monastery well and keep it from any harm or misconduct that may cause the monastery to be faulted by others. If bad things happen to the center, not only would each of you not be able to hold your head up in front of others, all of Buddhism would be disgraced. Therefore, you need to be vigilant and pay full attention in this regard.

More specifically, there are two things that you need to watch for. First, there should be strict discipline between monks and nuns in the monastery. Otherwise, if some of them fail to observe their monastic

vows of refraining from sexual activity and their monastic robes have to be abandoned, then nothing could be worse than this result. Therefore, the managing members should set up strict regulations to safeguard the behavior of monastics. For instance, if your condition is compatible, you may assign different areas for the residence of monks and nuns and promote isolation between them. This regulation is important because it can avoid any misbehavior from the very start. Instead, if monks and nuns live in the same area and can easily meet each other and associate with lay people, there is a high probability that they may fail to keep their vows.

This is what I am doing at Larung Gar. In my Buddhist academy, there are more than one thousand nuns and more than one thousand monks. When they receive teachings from me, I require them to sit in different areas with a large distance in between. They are not allowed to sit together. The dharma hall has different entrance doors for monks and nuns, and they cannot enter or exit from the same door. Their living areas are separated far away from each other, and normally they are not allowed to make contact or meet together. If I didn't set up these rules, I'm afraid that it would be difficult for both monks and nuns to observe their precepts purely.

Likewise, you must create all favorable conditions to protect the precepts of monks and nuns. A root downfall creates severely negative karma that may cause you to remain in the lower realms for hundreds of thousands of lifetimes. Therefore, to keep the precepts pure and unbroken is the first crucial point for every monk and nun.

Second, please be highly vigilant against destroying other's observance of precepts. If you cause another person to break his or her monastic vows, it is even worse than breaking your own vows. Why? It is said that the negative karma of destroying another's pure precepts is much more severe than that of destroying tens of millions of Buddhist stupas. Even if you commit the root downfalls of killing and stealing, such negative karma will for sure take you to the lower realms, but it can

also be purified sooner or later. However, if you seduce a monk or nun, you have committed one of the five offenses similar to those with immediate retribution, and as a result, you will immediately fall into the Incessant Hell right after death, barely having any opportunity to be liberated from there. So please be mindful and vigilant as best you can.



5.53: The sun shining on Chojé's face

For any one of you, it is not a big fault if you fail to accomplish extensive virtue, but you must try your best not to create any obstacles to others' observation of their pure precepts. If you cause a person who upholds pure precepts to break a vow, you will not encounter the Three Jewels for hundreds of thousands of lifetimes, and even worse, you will be reborn in the dark barbarian areas where the name of the Three Jewels is never heard of.

Someone may think, "Breaking the monastic precepts may not cause a big downfall if the practitioner can make it up by engaging in the practice of Secret Mantra."



5.54: Group photo on the lawn

As it is said, "For one who practices Secret Mantrayana while having broken a precept, the Buddha said this person cannot attain accomplishment." As long as you have lost a pure precept, no matter how diligently you listen to the dharma, seek the dharma, or practice the dharma, the only destination awaiting you is the lower realms, and you cannot obtain any benefit. Hence, please be extremely mindful and vigilant on your dharma path. Even if you fail to uphold your own precepts, do not make trouble for others, but rather provide any

possible favorable condition to help them observe their precepts. In doing so, you will also gain merit through their observation of pure precepts.



5.55: Chojé conversing with everyone cordially

In summary, I've talked about two wishes for your resident lama, three wishes for the monks and nuns, and two wishes for all male and female lay practitioners. Please bear these pieces of advice in mind and never ignore them. After I depart from here, please hide them

carefully in your inside pocket and do not let them fall out and be lost somewhere else. (Laughs)

To conclude, I'd like to make three aspirations: First, may your resident lama remain long in this world and have a prosperous dharma activity. Second, may all monks and nuns keep pure precepts and attain perfect wisdom. Third, may all virtuous male and female householders have immovable faith in the Three Jewels and engage in the ten virtues continuously. May all buddhas and bodhisattvas bless me to fulfill these aspirations! Also, please all of you grant me great power so that I can make all my wishes come true!

At this point, the dharma activities in Washington, D.C. were complete.



6th Stop

August 1st–August 8th

United States

NEW YORK CITY

SCHEDULE

August 1st

Arrived in New York City

August 2nd

Gave a teaching on *Kalachakra*

August 3rd

Visited the United Nations headquarters in the morning and gave the *Peaceful Manjushri* empowerment in the evening

August 4th

Visited the World Trade Center in the morning and gave the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* empowerment in the evening

August 5th

Gave a public teaching on *Vajrakilaya*

August 6th

Taught on the practice of Padmasambhava

August 7th

Gave the *Chetsun Nyingtig* empowerment in the morning and taught on the *Chetsun Nyingtig* in the afternoon

August 8th

Taught on the *Chetsun Nyingtig* in the morning and afternoon

ARRIVED IN NEW YORK CITY

On August 1st, Yidzhin Norbu departed from Washington, D.C., the political center of the US, and flew to its economic center, New York City. The flight took more than one hour and landed at LaGuardia Airport.

New York is the biggest city in the US and also served as the temporary capital of the United States in the distant past. George Washington was sworn in as the first president on the balcony of New York City's old City Hall in 1789. Since the 19th century, due to its unique geographic location, New York City has been the economic and financial center of the US. After World War II, with the international role of the US dollar being well established in the world, New York City further became the world's financial center. On this island of Manhattan that is less than sixty square kilometers, there are numerous financial and international trade institutions. A large portion of the entire world's financial information is collected here, and almost everything that happens on this planet is inextricably linked to it.



6.1: New York City, the biggest city in the US

Chojé resided at the residence of John Giorno, Dudjom Rinpoche’s disciple and a prominent poet and artist in the city. His home was the renowned 222 Bowery Street, which was a pre-war, one-hundred-year-old building in downtown Manhattan that had hosted many influential artists. Some artists later nicknamed it “the Bunker,” and even today, it remains an iconic building in New York.



6.2: 222 Bowery Street

H.H. Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok stayed at the Bunker for about one week.



6.3: The Padmasambhava Dharma Center at “the Bunker”

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE DHARMA TOUR IN NEW YORK CITY

After some thirty years, the records of Chojé's teachings in New York are vague. Although I have asked around and inquired of many people, I was able to find only a little information. With no other choice, now I can only briefly write down the teaching schedule from 1993 according to the information I remembered and have collected. If in the future I can get more relevant materials, I'll be happy to share them with everyone concerned.

The following is the schedule I have for New York City:

On August 2nd, gave a teaching on *Kalachakra* at a Jonang dharma center.

On August 3rd, gave the *Peaceful Manjushri* empowerment at the Grace Gratitude Buddhist Temple.

On August 4th, gave the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* empowerment at the Padmasambhava Dharma Center.

On August 5th, gave a public teaching on *Vajrakilaya* at the Padmasambhava Dharma Center.

On August 6th, taught on the practice of Padmasambhava at the Padmasambhava Dharma Center.



6.4: Chojé teaching in New York

On August 7th, gave the *Chetsun Nyingtig* empowerment in the morning and taught on *Chetsun Nyingtig* in the afternoon at the Padmasambhava Dharma Center.

On August 8th, taught on the *Chetsun Nyingtig* in the morning and afternoon at the Padmasambhava Dharma Center.

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* * * * *

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* * * * *

CHETSUN NYING THIG
August 7 & 8, Saturday & Sunday
10 am - noon, 2 pm - 5 pm, \$25 each day

The CHETSUN NYING THIG, the Heart Drop of Chetsun, is a transmission lineage belonging to the Men Ngag Dey, Secret Oral Instruction class of the Great Perfection - Ati Yoga.

The great Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo remembered precisely the time and place where the great Chetsun Senge Wang Chug (10th Century) had passed away in a rainbow body of light. At that time the dakinis sang a song of lament and sadness. Due to this, his Primordial Wisdom Body appeared and conferred upon them the teaching entitled Dampai Nyingpo, the Essence of Instructions. This was then kept by the dakinis, until Khyentse Rinpoche wrote it down. This lineage embodies and maintains one of the most potent and precise oral transmission of Trekcho and Togal. Melding into one stream the Pure Perfection (Dag Nang) Terma Lineage of Khyentse Rinpoche and the extensive transmission lineage of the Great Perfection - Ati Yoga, which comes unbroken from Bimalamitra, Long Chenpa, Jigme Lingpa, and on down to the present lineage holders.

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6.5: Choje's teaching schedule in New York

THE LARUNG DHARMA CENTER OF SUTRAYANA & TANTRAYANA IN NEW YORK

When Yidzhin Norbu was in New York, he hoped to establish a dharma center of Larung Gar in New York so that many people who received his teachings could continue to study the sutras and tantras. He requested me to register this center.

Although I was unfamiliar with the local environment and did not speak English either, it was not so difficult to register an organization in the US. With the help of several local Buddhists, after many discussions and communications, I was able to register the dharma center with all the necessary information within those few days. I chose a suitable place for the center and named it Larung Dharma Center of Sutrayana & Tantrayana. This was the first dharma center of Larung Gar being set up in New York, and initially, its members were mainly Chinese because they could easily speak with me.



6.6: Khenpo Sodargye and members of Larung Dharma Center of Sutrayana & Tantrayana in New York

Rinpoche himself came and consecrated the center. He gave the *Jampal Yeshe Sempa* empowerment and related teachings and also kindly blessed everyone in the center. At that time, the establishment of this Larung dharma center was widely reported on the front page of both *New York World* and *Newsweek* with an eye-catching headline.



6.7: Chojé blessing everyone in the dharma center

This dharma center was managed for a while, and later because of the inconvenient communication with me at Larung Gar and some other reasons, it was not able to continue. Nonetheless, it was an auspicious start to enable many people to be connected with the dharma lineage of Kyabjé Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche, and I believe such a connection plays a crucial role on their path toward liberation. Up to the present, some of them are still learning and practicing the dharma teachings provided at Larung Gar, and their perseverance has inspired many people around them to enter Buddhism.



6.8: Chojé holding a buddha statue to bestow blessings

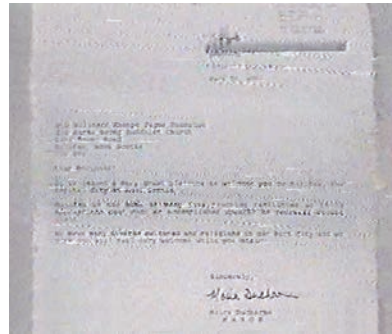


6.9: A promising prospect of Buddhism in the future

VISITED THE UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS

When Choje was in New York, Mr. Maurice Strong, who had been an under-secretary-general of the United Nations, sent him a letter inviting him to visit the United Nations headquarters. He also asked the representative of Bhutan to accompany Rinpoche as a tour guide.

On August 3rd, we arrived at the United Nations headquarters. The 184 (now 193) national flags were flying outside the Secretariat tower, representing the 184 member countries in the United Nations at that time. Flying on the primary flagpole was the blue United Nations flag with its emblem in white.



6.10: The letter that the UN under-secretary-general wrote to Choje



6.11: Photo taken at the United Nations headquarters

The representative of Bhutan took us on a tour of the Secretariat tower, the General Assembly Hall, as well as the conference and library buildings. He introduced us to a famous mosaic called *The Golden Rule*. This artwork reflects the wondrous mix of nationalities, creeds, and colors, indicating that every person in this world enjoys the same dignity. On the mosaic, there is a sentence quoted from the Bible, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."



6.12: The representative of Bhutan leading Chojé on a tour in the UN



6.13: The Golden Rule

Then, Khenpo Rinpoche entered the General Assembly Hall, the conference place where all member countries have equal representation and equal voice. That day there were no conference schedules, and the entire hall was empty. Chojé showed great interest in this place and prayed a long time for the peace of the world.

6.14: Chojé reciting *Wangdu* to pray for the peace of the world in the General Assembly Hall

Later, he led all of us to chant *Wangdu: The Great Cloud of Blessings* in the hall.

A RECOLLECTION OF A PROFESSOR AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

In the past few years, I was invited to give talks at Harvard University twice, and both times were hosted by Professor Janet Gyatso. She had met Yidzhin Norbu in 1993 and also served as his interpreter during his stay in New York. For the purpose of this book, I interviewed her, and the following is what she recalled.

You know I teach at Harvard now, but at the time when Rinpoche visited Boston and gave teachings in Newton, I lived in western Massachusetts and taught at Amherst University. When Rinpoche was in New York, I served as Rinpoche's interpreter for a few days because his translator had to ask for a short leave to see her father, who was seriously sick. Although Rinpoche has a very strong Golok accent, he was very good at expressing himself clearly with simple Tibetan. I was able to completely understand him even though my Tibetan was not very good then.



6.15: Janet Gyatso now

Rinpoche was so tall. Honestly, when I first met him, I was shocked by his height. When he came to the States, I was translating two autobiographies of Jigme Lingpa from Tibetan into English and had some questions. So, during Rinpoche's stay, I asked him my questions. I can clearly recall one of the questions I asked was, "Why is one of Jigme Lingpa's autobiographies called *The Secret Instruction of Dakinis*?" I was confused because Jigme Lingpa was a man, so why would his autobiography be told by dakinis who are women? Rinpoche explained the answer to me so well that all my doubts and confusion were removed.

I also remember that Rinpoche visited the headquarters of the UN. I accompanied Rinpoche along with another five or six people. You know the UN has the representatives of all the member states in the world, right? So when we arrived, the representative of Bhutan came to greet Rinpoche and gave us a tour of the entire building. When we were outside the General Assembly Hall, Rinpoche was told that all the representatives gather there to have meetings. He was very excited that the representatives of all the countries across the world could get together and discuss world issues. So, he asked a lot of questions about how they vote, how they communicate, and all the details about how the UN operates.

I have to say that Rinpoche must have been a marvelous teacher; otherwise, he would not have been able to establish Larung Gar. It has such a large scale, and the number of monastics is enormous. This is really good for the preservation of Tibetan Buddhism, and its influence on all of Tibetan Buddhism is very great.

I've also been impressed by the Tibetan khenmos in Larung Gar. They are so well-educated, and they compiled a series of books on female practitioners in Tibetan Buddhism. It's a great contribution to Tibetan Buddhism, and I believe they could do it because they've been inspired by Rinpoche and followed his aspiration.

THE WORLD TRADE CENTER THAT IS GONE

On August 4th, His Holiness visited the world-famous Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. These two skyscrapers stood high up into the sky with one hundred ten stories. The North Tower was four hundred seventeen meters high, while the South Tower was four hundred fifteen meters. They were the world's tallest buildings at the time of their construction. Known as the *Windows on the World*, they symbolized the prosperity of the US.



6.16: The World Trade Center

At the entrance of the Twin Towers, there was a gift shop crowded with many visitors. We walked over and saw various President Clinton cardboard cutouts, which visitors could take pictures with. There were even toys that spoofed Clinton, such as the Clinton puppet with his head and a large dog body, on which people rode and posed in strange ways. We asked Chojé to take a picture too, so he put his hand on “Bill Clinton’s” shoulder, and we took their picture together.



6.17: Khenpo Sodargye taking a panoramic view of Manhattan



6.18: Chojé and Khenpo Sodargye

Then, we took the elevator straight to the 110th floor. There were many telescopes, and we used them to look over the entire city, getting a glimpse of the magnificence of the world's leading financial center. Further up was the rooftop observation deck, which gave us an even broader view. We had a clear panoramic view of Manhattan and also saw the Statue of Liberty that stands in Upper New York Bay. As a universal symbol of freedom, the Statue of Liberty was a gift from France to the United States on the centennial of the American Independence and over the years has become a symbol of both New York City and the United States.



6.19: Statue of Liberty

The World Trade Center was such stunning architecture that it took over seven years to complete the construction and cost more than 1 billion dollars. Unfortunately, the two seemingly indestructible towers were attacked by terrorists on September 11th, 2001, and completely collapsed within two hours. Later, the New York City government decided to rebuild the World Trade Center, with the plan including five new skyscrapers along with a memorial and a museum. Most of them have been completed and opened to the public.

The World Trade Center from 1993 does not exist anymore, and Rinpoche has been gone for about twenty years, but the photos that were taken of Rinpoche there are still with me, and I treasure them as a precious memory.

THE ORIGIN OF THE LAY BUDDHIST COLLEGE AT LARUNG GAR

In the past, although everybody in the Land of Tibet believed in Buddhism, there was no such tradition that lay people were gathered together to study and practice the Buddhadharma collectively and systematically. One day in New York, Yidzhin Norbu suddenly told a few of us, "I've received a prophecy from Ekajati that I should build a Buddhist college for lay practitioners at Larung Gar, which will benefit many householders and guide them toward liberation. Hence, I will follow her instruction to do so after I go back."

I dared not to ask him how he received this prophecy, whether Ekajati showed up in person and directly told him or whether he saw her in his pure vision or in a dream. But anyway, this news made me so happy because with such a college available for householders, my parents could continue to stay at Larung Gar rather than go back to their hometown. This was exactly what I wished for. At that time, they were still at Larung Gar, temporarily living in a borrowed tent. It was really an auspicious coincidence, and I immediately helped them register at the college.

In the autumn, after returning to the academy, Chojé chose a place in the lower Larung valley and initiated the construction of a dharma hall for the lay Buddhist college. I would say this was the first dharma hall for lay practitioners in the history of Tibet. At the beginning, there were only four families, including my parents. With the construction of the dharma hall being finished and the teaching being offered regularly, more and more people were attracted to the college, and it grew day by day. Over the years, many of the lay practitioners who entered the college dedicated themselves keenly to dharma practice and experienced various degrees of spiritual achievement and auspicious signs at the end of their lives.

Seeing the great development of the lay Buddhist college at Larung Gar, many other places in the Land of Tibet were inspired to build similar Buddhist colleges for lay people, which created favorable conditions for Tibetan householders to study and practice the dharma collectively and systematically.

I SERVED RINPOCHE AS HIS DRIVER

For a long time, I could not find any recorded files of Chojé's teaching in New York. Fortunately, Yvon Chausseblanche, a man who drove for us in New York, unofficially recorded the teachings with his tape recorder and preserved them until now. However, since it has been a long time and maybe he did not find a good place to keep these materials, only one teaching was clear enough for transcription.

While extending sincere gratitude, we also interviewed him. When talking about Rinpoche, Yvon got very emotional, and tears sprang from his eyes. Below is what he told us.

When Rinpoche came to New York, he and his entourage stayed in my friend John's "bunker" at 222 Bowery Street. It's a place where artists always gathered together. John had hosted lots of great masters there.

That entire week, I was designated to drive Rinpoche and his entourage. Since having a rinpoche teaching in New York was once in a blue moon, I brought my cassettes and recorder with me to record the teachings so I could listen again. Usually, I had to park the car after I dropped Rinpoche and his entourage. Sometimes, it took me a while to find a spot, so, the recordings may miss a portion at the beginning. And you may hear some noise, or find the sound is not clear.



6.20: Tears springing from his eyes when Yvon Chausseblanche thinking of Chojé

Anyway, when Rinpoche gave the empowerment of *Peaceful Manjushri*, I felt it was given by Manjushri himself. This must be because it had not been very long since Rinpoche revealed it. When I went to Rinpoche's Boston teaching, I got a photo of the sky during the time when Rinpoche revealed this terma at Mount Wutai.

When Rinpoche gave the *Chetsun Nyingtig* empowerment in New York, besides English translation, Khenpo Sodargye also provided Chinese translation for the audience. One thing I remember very clearly was after he explained how to cultivate the mind of renunciation, Rinpoche asked us to meditate for a while. So, the entire venue was very quiet for a short while. Then, Rinpoche softly remarked, "Since we have Americans, Tibetans, and Chinese here today, I noticed that some people could sit with their torso still but keep turning their head, some people could sit with their torso and head still, but keep rolling their eyes, and the worst is, some people keep turning their heads and rolling their eyes. Which group do you think you were in?" After hearing this, the entire room burst into loud waves of laughter.

On the last day of Rinpoche's New York visit, when I thought he was leaving for Boston, I cried like a baby because my job kept me from following him there. After they left, I still missed Rinpoche so much, so I went to my boss and asked for time off. Once he nodded, I jumped on my motorcycle and dashed to Boston at full speed. Unfortunately, it was raining all the way, but I didn't care. I only stopped under shelter when it was too dangerous to drive.

Fortunately, after I arrived, I got empowerments again from Rinpoche. Actually, you are going to laugh because I requested Rinpoche to give his *Dorje Drolo* empowerment in Boston. I had to go through the Vajradhatu folks, who kept asking me how many new people from New York wanted to receive it. Apparently, Rinpoche had already given it a couple of times that week. I believe I mentioned "a few." Somehow, I learned that somebody from Vajradhatu told Rinpoche there were twenty-five disciples from New York who wanted to receive that empowerment. The day when he gave it, Rinpoche asked who these twenty-five disciples were from New York, and I was too embarrassed by this misunderstanding to raise my hand.

After giving the empowerment, Rinpoche asked us to practice it and spread it. Finally, he said, "For anyone who has faith in this practice and wishes to get it, you are welcome to bring him or her to me and I will fulfill their wish."

When requested to give us oral transmissions and empowerments, Rinpoche was always willing to satisfy us. I was so moved by how compassionate and patient he was. Later, I found out that he had some serious health issues at that time and almost canceled his remaining stops. But out of his innate loving kindness and compassion, he fulfilled all our wishes without any reservation.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF GURU RINPOCHE PADMASAMBHAVA

On August 6th, Khenpo Rinpoche gave a teaching on the practice of Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava at the Padmasambhava Dharma Center. It is so lucky that we finally got the audio recording for this lecture after searching in so many places for the teaching materials in New York. This recording is provided by Yvon, and since he had to park the car before attending the teaching, his recording missed the beginning a little bit. But the rest is complete and is shared below.

...

How should you adjust your motivation when receiving a dharma teaching? You can adjust your mind by following either of the two motivations: the vast motivation of the Bodhisattvayana, and the motivation of the Secret Mantrayana that is endowed with vast skillful means.

The Vast Motivation of the Bodhisattvayana

How do you develop the vast motivation of the Bodhisattvayana? Just as space pervades everywhere, sentient beings exist everywhere. Wherever there are sentient beings, there are negative karma and afflictions. Wherever there are negative karma and afflictions, there is endless resultant suffering. All sentient beings who are experiencing endless suffering, without exception, have been your mother and father since beginningless time. This was stated very clearly by the Buddha in the sutras. When they were your mother or father, they treated you exactly like your present parents and brought you up with their purest hearts and kindest care, for which you owe a great debt of gratitude to them. Though these benevolent parents want to attain happiness, they don't know the causes for it is to accumulate virtue. Though they want to rid themselves of suffering, they constantly create the causes

for suffering. What they wish for and what they actually do are always contradictory. Thinking of this, you should generate a kind motivation, “How wonderful it would be if all miserable sentient beings could be freed from any kind of suffering!”



6.21: A side photo of Chojé

When you have this thought of getting sentient beings out of suffering, you should also evoke the kind wish to place them in the state of perfect peace and happiness, such as physical health and mental joyfulness. However, an existence or a birth in the three lower realms is never endowed with peace and happiness. Beings in the celestial and human realms may experience a certain level of happiness, but it is temporary and not long-lasting because it is subject to change. Since they experience suffering when happiness declines, such happiness is insubstantial. Such being the case, it will not bring sentient beings much benefit by placing them in the higher realms of gods and humans.

Further, you should have a more deliberate consideration. Even if you get them out of samsara, freeing them from its causes that are karma and affliction, as well as its effect that is suffering, and helping them attain the fruition of the shravakas or pratyekabuddhas, it is still less

beneficial and not of the utmost meaning. This is because although shravakas and pratyekabuddhas have achieved enlightenment that brings the highest level of self-benefit and enables them to enjoy great peace and happiness, their attachment to the extreme of one-sided peace prevents them from vastly benefiting others.

What brings the greatest benefit to sentient beings is to place them in the state of perfect buddhahood that transcends the two extremes of existence and peace. That is, with the wisdom of realizing the selflessness of the individual and of phenomena, you can eradicate the suffering of samsara from the very root; and with great compassion, you will not remain in one-sided peace but will benefit sentient beings throughout space. In order to achieve such a result, you should generate the supreme bodhicitta that aspires for perfect enlightenment of both yourself and all sentient beings. This is the vast motivation of the Bodhisattvayana.

The fruition of buddhahood does not appear without proper causes and conditions. You need to be trained in its fully endowed causes to bring it to maturity. What are these causes? They are fully endowed discipline, fully endowed meditative absorption, and fully endowed wisdom.

Fully Endowed Discipline

How do you observe pure discipline? Observing the vows of pratimoksha is to avoid harming other sentient beings from the very root. Observing the bodhisattva vows is to aspire to benefit all sentient beings irrespective of how many eons it may take, how huge their numbers are, and how difficult they are to be tamed. That which accomplishes the twofold benefit of self and others easily and swiftly is the samayas of Secret Mantrayana. In terms of *easily and swiftly*, *easily* means you can attain the state of great bliss while enjoying all pleasures of the five senses at will and without having to abandon them. *Swiftly* means you are able to attain the state of vajradharahood

within this short lifetime in the age of degeneration, without having to undergo long-term ascetic practices.

Fully Endowed Meditative Absorption

Resting the mind single-pointedly is called *meditative absorption*. The pith instructions for resting the mind include eliminating the five faults, relying upon the eight recognitions, and practicing the nine methods of placement. By applying these techniques, you will gradually cultivate the nine successive absorptions. A detailed introduction to them can be found in Maitreya's treatises. If explained according to pith instructions, gradually pacifying all conceptual thoughts by observing the mind with your own mind and resting in its natural state is called *meditative absorption*.

Fully Endowed Wisdom

There are three types of wisdom: wisdom that comes from hearing, wisdom that comes from contemplation, and wisdom that comes through meditation. Wisdom that comes from hearing is cultivated by clearly listening to the teachings of sutras and tantras in front of qualified spiritual teachers, especially those teachings that you will implement in actual practice. Wisdom that comes from contemplation is cultivated by repeatedly reflecting on the words and the meaning of what you have received and eventually dispelling all darkness of not understanding, misunderstanding, and doubt in order to gain certainty about reality. Wisdom that comes through meditation is cultivated by integrating the meaning that has completely dispelled any doubt you might have through repeated meditation.

You must practice these causes for attaining buddhahood, the threefold trainings of discipline, meditation, and wisdom. This time here, I hope all of you can adjust your motivation to receive the pure teaching.

The Motivation of the Secret Mantrayana with Vast Skillful Means

The motivation of the Secret Mantrayana that is endowed with vast skillful means is mainly to keep the five perfections clearly in mind when receiving a dharma teaching. Take today's teaching as an example. While you listen, you should visualize the five perfections like this: *The perfect place* is to recognize that the place where the dharma is being taught is the Palace of Louts Light of the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain. *The perfect teacher* is to recognize that the teacher is actually Padmasambhava of Oddiyana and listen to the teaching with sincere faith. *The perfect teaching* is to recognize that the path of Secret Mantra Vajrayana is marvelous, vast, and profound. *The perfect time* is to recognize the fact that as long as there are fortunate disciples who have connections with the teaching, the Buddha's activity of teaching the dharma is unceasing. *The perfect retinue* is to recognize that all who are gathered here are essentially dakas and dakinis, all of whom are vidyadharas.

Before receiving the dharma teaching, you should first adjust your motivation to align with either of the two motivations mentioned above. Then, give rise to a heartfelt delight toward today's teaching by recognizing that you are different from other sentient beings and possess the four favorable conditions for practicing the noble dharma.

The four favorable conditions are: having been born in the southern continent of Jambudvipa, a place that is very difficult to take rebirth in; not only having obtained the human rebirth in Jambudvipa, but also having encountered great masters and qualified spiritual teachers who can teach

you the dharma; having made aspirations; and having accumulated merit in previous lifetimes. The first two conditions come from the



6.22: Western disciples receiving teachings respectfully

latter two. Fully endowed with these four favorable conditions, you should develop great delight because they enable you to have faith and conviction in the dharma, which is a supreme condition for dharma practice and distinguishes you from other ordinary sentient beings. One who wishes to practice the dharma must possess these four conditions that encompass all favorable conditions for dharma practice.

Even though you have possessed the four favorable conditions, you cannot possess them forever. This life is not long-lasting, and you are going to die, but when death comes is uncertain. At the time of death, except the dharma, all other things are of no use at all. Being aware of this, you should resolve to practice the pure dharma from now on.

The Buddha taught the 84,000 categories of dharma teachings according to various elements, capacities, inclinations, and intentions of sentient beings who are of superior, middling, and inferior levels. It is not necessary for you to grasp and practice each and all of them. The essentials of all these teachings can be condensed into the cultivation of compassion and faith. Compassion is developed by taking into consideration the physical and mental sufferings of all sentient beings and wishing to eliminate them by all means. The method to eliminate their suffering is to have strong and sincere faith in buddhas and bodhisattvas and to pray to them fervently for the elimination of sentient beings' suffering. You should be clear that only considering other's suffering without actually doing anything about it will certainly not alleviate their suffering even a little bit.

The Extraordinary Qualities of Guru Rinpoche

The buddhas and bodhisattvas that are mentioned in the sutras are too numerous for us even to recite their names one by one; it is even more difficult to sincerely pray to all of them. Yet, the embodiment of all buddhas and bodhisattvas is none other than Orgyen Padmasambhava. If you pray to him wholeheartedly, you are praying to all buddhas and

bodhisattvas. Guru Padmasambhava manifested from the wisdom intent of all dharmakaya buddhas, is blessed by all sambhogakaya buddhas, and is entrusted as their regent by all nirmanakaya buddhas.

Someone may wonder, “How is it possible that he is the embodiment of all buddhas?”

When the good karma and merit of fortunate beings matured, the enlightened bodies, speech, minds, qualities, and activities of the buddhas of the three times merged into a single syllable *hrih*, which dissolved into the heart of Amitabha, Buddha of Boundless Light, and then descended from Amitabha’s heart onto the milky lake in southwest Oddiyana. Without having a biological father and mother, Padmasambhava suddenly manifested from natural awareness. When he revealed himself, his body was adorned with the marks and signs of the dharmakaya Buddha Vajradhara, and all dakinis and dakas revered and served him as their sovereign. Since he was self-arising in the lake of Oddiyana, he was known as Orgyen Tsokye Dorje, Lake-Born Vajra.

In order to put an end to the poverty of sentient beings, the king of Oddiyana, Indrabhuti, was on a voyage to find jewels on the islands within the lake. When they were crossing the milky lake, they encountered the miraculous emanation of Padmasambhava. Taking him back to the palace, Indrabhuti installed him as the crown prince and asked him to take his seat. Having established the kingdom in the dharma, Padmasambhava was known as Pema Gyalpo, Lotus King.

Later, he skillfully escaped the affairs of government and went to practice awareness-discipline in the eight great charnel grounds, where he turned the dharma wheel of the Great Vehicle to dakas and dakinis. He was known then as Nyima Odzer, Rays of the Sun, since he had the miraculous power to travel as free as the wind by riding on the rays of the sun.

Relying upon the eight great vidyadharas of India, such as Acharya Prabhahasti, he became a great scholar and grasped the numerous

teachings of the common and uncommon vehicles. Thus, he became known as the scholar Loden Chokse, Wise Seeker of the Sublime.

At the Asura Cave, he was ordained by the Buddha's attendant Ananda. As a fully ordained monk, he observed pure precepts and was known as Bhikshu Padmasambhava.

When he was at Bodh Gaya, his body manifested as pure gold in color, and his conduct seemed to be no different from that of Buddha Shakyamuni, so he became known as Shakya Senge, Lion of the Shakyas.

Traveling to Zahor in northern India, in order to lead the King of Zahor onto the dharma path, he took the royal princess Mandarava as his consort for the practice of awareness-discipline. When the King of Zahor tried to burn him alive on a pyre, he transformed the pyre into a lake filled with the pure water of eight good qualities and was found seated on the pistil of a lotus, unperturbed. So, he was known as Pema Totreng Tsal, Powerful Lotus of the Garland of Skulls.

Later, in Maratika Cave in Nepal, relying upon his consort Mandarava, he accomplished the vidyadhara with mastery over life, a stage of immortality. He was then known as Chimé Pema Jungney, Deathless Lotus-Born.

In the rock cave of Yanglesho in Nepal, after accomplishing the mahamudra vidyadhara, he manifested in the wrathful form of Vajrapani and subdued all evil spirits, demonic forces, and samaya-corrupting spirits, so he was known as Senge Dradok, Lion's Roar.

After that, with the aid of the lion-faced dakini Marajita, he destroyed numerous cities of upholders of wrong views. The aforementioned are Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava's activities of benefiting sentient beings in India and Nepal.

Then, at Paro Taktsang in Bhutan, he subjugated all prideful spirits of appearance and existence through his magnetizing power and bound

them under oath. Later in Tibet, in the three upper regions of Ngari, four central regions of U Tsang, and six lower regions of Dokham, he concealed a great number of terma doctrines and terma objects and prophesied that there would be one hundred and eight primary tertons appearing successively who would reveal them in the future. He made aspirations, sealed the termas, and entrusted them to dharma protectors. He was known then as Dorje Drolu, Wild Wrathful Vajra.

Guru Rinpoche stayed in Tibet for about fifty-five years. After having completed his activities in Jambudvipa, he went to the continent of rakshasas called Chamaradvipa to tame and liberate those cruel and rampant rakshasas. There, he suppressed the rakshasas and established the dharma. In order to bring them onto the dharma path, he manifested a wrathful form known as Dorje Drakpo Tsal, Wrathful Vajra Might. According to many extensive terma texts, in order to show his different kinds of accomplishments, Guru Rinpoche still manifests as Dorje Drakpo Tsal with multiple faces and arms. Without abandoning his physical body, Dorje Drakpo Tsal appears in the rainbow body of great transference and is now still dwelling in the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain located in Chamaradvipa and teaching the dharma there.

In the center of Chamaradvipa, the current abode of Guru Rinpoche, rises the heart-shaped Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain that is surrounded by twenty-one regions of rakshasas. On the summit of the mountain is located the three-storied Palace of Lotus Light. The lower story is the nirmanakaya realm, where the king of the rakshasas, Raksha Thotreng, teaches the dharma to rakshasas. The intermediate story is the sambhogakaya realm, where the sambhogakaya Avalokiteshvara teaches the dharma with the five certainties. The upper story is the dharmakaya realm, where the dharmakaya buddha Samantabhadra remains in the unborn nature of reality. The Palace of Lotus Light is replete with boundless supreme qualities.

In the thirty-six places of the Palace of Lotus Light, situated in its four cardinal directions, four intermediate directions, and directions above and below, there are Guru Rinpoche's thirty-six emanations benefiting sentient beings. His emanations are turning the dharma wheel to the assembly of his disciples, the king and the ministers, vidyadharas of inconceivable realization, and other fortunate sentient beings.

The Terma Doctrines of Guru Rinpoche

All the reincarnated tertons who appeared after Guru Rinpoche in the Land of Tibet had personally attended the ganachakra feast held by Guru Rinpoche. Back then, Guru Rinpoche himself gave the feast substances to each of them and told them to take rebirth in the Snow Land to benefit sentient



6.23: Chojé listening to the translator

beings. Most of these tertons could reveal both profound earth terma and vast mind terma at will.

The transmission of the terma doctrines held by the reincarnated tertons is characterized by three uncommon and supreme features. First is the transmission of prophetic authorization. Guru Rinpoche foretold everything to a reincarnated tertton regarding his or her activities of benefiting sentient beings during their entire life. Second is the verbal transmission of the yellow scrolls, where Guru Rinpoche, Denma Tsemang, Vairotsana, or Yeshe Tsogyal would write the terma script on yellow scrolls and conceal them. Relying upon the power of Guru Rinpoche's wisdom intent and special entrustment, all scripts on yellow scrolls can only be deciphered by the reincarnated tertton who was designated as the owner of that profound terma, and no one else can decode it. Third is the transmission of the entrustment to dakinis. In addition to prophesying a tertton's karma mudra who had made the appropriate aspirations in the past, Guru Rinpoche also entrusted

every terma to inconceivable dakinis and assigned them to assist the reincarnated tertön.



6.24: People receiving benefit from Chojé's teaching

The sealing and entrustment of termas first took place on the very top third floor of the main hall of the Samye Monastery. When Guru Rinpoche gathered there with his twenty-five heart disciples—the king and the ministers, as well as some others—he entrusted them with many termas. The termas that were not being entrusted and sealed at that time were re-entrusted by Guru Rinpoche in Chamaradvipa. From the perspective of reviving and propagating the dharma and bringing peace and bliss to sentient beings, all reincarnated tertöns possess many extraordinary qualities that are unrivaled by other dharma practitioners.

Where have the reincarnated tertöns been born? In general, there must be some of them everywhere in this world. But most of them have been born in the Snow Land of Tibet because this land was the place where Guru Rinpoche concealed the termas and gave his blessings, handed them over to his disciples, and entrusted them to the dharma protectors. Which school have these reincarnated tertöns belonged to? Tertöns exist only in the Nyingma tradition, the Old School that follows the tradition of Padmasambhava, and they seldom appear in other schools.

Who concealed all the teachings of Guru Rinpoche as termas and who reveals them? It was Guru Rinpoche's consort, the great Khandro Yeshe Tsogyal. After Guru Rinpoche went to Chamaradvipa, Khandro Yeshe Tsogyal spent seven years collecting all his teachings and instructions and concealing them in different places. She sealed them with specific aspirations, and it is due to her great kindness that many tertons have appeared successively in the world and revealed a large number of termas. So, in the Snow Land of Tibet, to those who are upholding the lineage of Guru Rinpoche, the only one who showed the same kindness to them as Guru Rinpoche is precisely Yeshe Tsogyal. After Guru Rinpoche went to the continent of rakshasas, she practiced the Great Perfection of Manjushri for seven years and eventually obtained the rainbow body of great transference. Then, she went directly to meet Guru Rinpoche in Chamaradvipa and dwells there today. Guru Rinpoche and Khandro Yeshe Tsogyal, to whom we owe immense gratitude, are now living in the far away rakshasas' continent of Chamaradvipa.

Seven-Line Prayer to Guru Rinpoche

If you pray to Guru Rinpoche, it is impossible that you do not receive blessings from him. Once he himself said, "I will abide in front of those who have faith in me and never leave them. I will guide them wherever they are born in the six realms." In your dharma practice, if you pray to Guru Rinpoche, you will receive greater blessings than praying to other buddhas and bodhisattvas. In particular, praying to Guru Rinpoche is a specific guru yoga practice. All followers of the Ngagyur Nyingma tradition should pray to Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava. As it is said in tantras, "Better than meditating on a hundred thousand deities for ten million eons is to think of one's guru for a single instant. Better than reciting mantras and sadhanas for millions or tens of millions of times is to pray to one's guru even just once."

Why does Guru Rinpoche bestow greater blessings if you pray to him? Due to his powerful aspirations, unlike other buddhas, Guru

Rinpoche especially cares for the sentient beings of Jambudvipa. In the biographies of Guru Rinpoche, it says, “In order to benefit sentient beings of Jambudvipa, riding on the rays of the rising and the setting sun, you come in person.” This precisely describes that Guru Rinpoche always comes to this world instantaneously to benefit sentient beings. Also, Guru Rinpoche personally said that although the noble qualities of buddhas are the same, due to his special aspirations, those who pray to him will receive blessings hundreds or thousands of times swifter and greater than the practices of other buddhas. He also said, “Attaining me, you attain all other buddhas; seeing me, you see all other buddhas, for I am the embodiment of all the sugatas.”

Then, how does he embody all buddhas? Guru Rinpoche himself said:

*In former ages I was Amitabha, Lord of Boundless Light;
On the hill of Potala, the Protector, Avalokiteshvara;
And Padmasambhava on Dhanakosha Lake.
Only do I seem to have these three identities,
For they in truth are never separate from each other.
Samantabhadra in the dharmadhatu,
Great Vajradhara in the field of Dense Array,
The Mighty One Shakyamuni upon the Vajra Throne—
All inseparable, all by nature Padmasambhava, myself.*

So, you should know that compared to praying to and meditating on other buddhas and bodhisattvas for eons, you will receive blessings and siddhis more swiftly through praying to Guru Rinpoche in a short period of time.

Although there are a lot of extensive practices of Guru Rinpoche in various termas, the ultimate practice of all of them is the *Seven-Line Prayer*. This *Seven-Line Prayer* was not composed by an ordinary being but arose spontaneously as the natural resonance of indestructible nature from the unborn dharmakaya and the unceasing sambhogakaya. In the termas of every tertön who follows Guru Rinpoche, there is not

a single terma in which the *Seven-Line Prayer* is not present. This prayer is also the symbolic words that dakinis used to invoke Guru Rinpoche to their sacred feasts. Even if you do not understand its meaning, only reciting its words will invoke Guru Rinpoche to come in person from Chamaradvipa to bless you.

This *Seven-Line Prayer* denotes the seven kinds of consciousness within the ground, represents the seven branches of enlightenment upon the path, and perfects the seven sacred riches of the ultimate when the result is attained. It can be practiced on five levels: outwardly, in the way of supplicating; inwardly, according to the generation stage; secretly, according to the teachings of the path of liberation; extremely secret, according to the path of skillful means; and innermost secretly, according to the pith instructions of the Great Perfection. All these practices of different stages are encapsulated in the *Seven-Line Prayer*, and its original words are complete with everything. It is not necessary to add an extra word.

Now, I will briefly teach the guru yoga practice based on this prayer according to its outer, literal meaning. Visualize yourself in your ordinary form. In the sky before you, clearly visualize the Dhanakosha Lake of Oddiyana filled with the pure water of eight good qualities. In the lake, on the pistil of a self-arising lotus is seated Guru Rinpoche in perfect union with his consort Yeshe Tsogyal. They are a compelling white color with a rosy hue and brimming with energy and vitality. They are surrounded by dakas, dakinis, and dharma protectors, all of whom are ablaze with splendor.

Develop strong faith by reflecting, "From now until I obtain the state of buddhahood, whether I experience suffering or happiness, foreboding or auspiciousness, higher or lower status, except you, Orgyen Guru Rinpoche, I will never place my hopes or seek refuge in anyone else. Only from you, I seek blessings."

Practice the first three branches of the seven-branch offering. Visualize that in front of Guru Rinpoche and his entourage, you and all sentient beings faithfully make prostrations with body, speech, and mind; make myriad kinds of material offerings and offerings created by imagination; and with great remorse, confess all wrongdoings and downfalls that you have committed in all your lifetimes since beginningless time. Then, practice the last four branches. Without jealousy, rejoice at all virtue accumulated by you and others throughout the three times; pray that Guru Rinpoche's supreme body of deathless peace remains long in the world; request Guru Rinpoche to turn the wheel of the sublime dharma for all sentient beings; and dedicate the accumulated merit for all sentient beings to attain the result of Guru Rinpoche.

Continue to visualize: relying upon the power of the sincere supplication and the practice of the seven-branch offering, light rays radiate from the body of Guru Rinpoche to you and all sentient beings, through which all obscurations of body, speech, and mind are purified, and you are granted the fortune to attain the siddhis of pure body, speech, and mind. Recite the *Seven-Line Prayer* and the vajra guru mantra as much as possible.

Seven-Line Prayer:

hung

Hung

orgyen yul gyi nup jang tsam

In the northwest country of Oddiyana,

pema gésar dong po la

Upon the stamen of a lotus flower,

yatsen chok gi ngö drup nyé

Having realized the most astonishing supreme siddhi,

pema jungné zhé su drak

You are known as the Lotus Born,

khor du khandro mangpö kor

Surrounded by your retinue of countless dakinis.

khyé kyi jesu dak drup kyi

Following you, I practice.

jin gyi lop chir shek su sol

Please approach and bestow your blessings.

guru pema siddhi hung

Guru Padma Siddhi Hung

Vajra Guru Mantra:

om ah hung benzar guru padma siddhi hung

Though there was a tradition of reciting the *Seven-Line Prayer* and the vajra guru mantra with the symbolic language of the dakinis, none of us today knows how to speak their language. So, recite them in Tibetan, for it is the language that Guru Rinpoche himself blessed.

Someone may ask, “Does that mean that no one knows how to recite it in the symbolic language of the dakinis?” Actually, all reincarnated tertons can recite the prayer in dakini language. In the thirty-two principal sacred lands of the dakinis, there exist thirty-two kinds of symbolic languages. The symbolic words of the *Seven-Line Prayer* in all these languages have been widely known for a long time. However, since the reincarnated tertons never formally learned the symbolic language of the dakinis, they all simply decipher the symbolic words into Tibetan and recite it in Tibetan. So, you, too, can recite it in Tibetan.

Even if you learn how to speak the symbolic language of the dakinis, except the dakinis themselves, nobody understands its meaning. Just like *om atsik nirtsik* from the Guru Drakpo mantra, although we know how to pronounce these few words, no one knows their meaning. But if they are rendered into Tibetan, because we know the language, we can explain the literal meaning when necessary. Or for another

example, there are many dialects in the Land of Tibet and some of them spoken in Gyarong are very obscure for Tibetans outside of that region. Similarly, the symbolic language of the dakinis is hard to understand for most human beings.



6.25: Choje and the Padmasambhava statue in front of him

Back to the guru yoga practice, you pray to Guru Rinpoche wholeheartedly. At the end of the practice, visualize from the three places of Guru Rinpoche, the middle of his eyebrows, his throat, and his heart, radiate white, red, and blue rays of light and dissolve into your three places respectively, through which you obtain the full blessings and

accomplishments of Guru Rinpoche's body, speech, and mind. Then, Guru Rinpoche and his consort melt into light and then into a radiant, rosy white bindu marked with the syllable *hung*. It dissolves into your heart, and the guru's wisdom mind and your own mind merge inseparably. You abide single-pointedly in such a state without getting distracted or focusing too intently inward. In your post-meditative state, you should recognize all appearances as the body of the guru, all sound as the speech of the guru, and all thoughts as the mind of the guru, calling to mind these three recognitions in all your daily activities, no matter whether you are walking, standing, sitting, or lying down.

Above is the guru yoga practice of Guru Rinpoche. For those who want to accomplish vast dharma activities, they must rely upon the *Seven-Line Prayer* which encapsulates thirteen pith instructions that are as precious as wish-fulfilling jewels, as mentioned in Guru Rinpoche's *Prayer to Guru Rinpoche that Spontaneously Fulfills All Wishes*.^a Among all ultimate teachings of all buddhas' doctrines, no practice is better and more profound than praying to Guru Rinpoche, Padmasambhava of Oddiyana, to practice the clear light Great Perfection. Please bear it in mind and put it into practice.

At this point, Chojé's dharma activities in New York City were complete.

^a *sol deb sampa nyurdrup ma (gsol 'debs bsam pa myur grub ma)*.



7th Stop

August 9th–August 16th

United States

BOSTON

SCHEDULE

August 9th

Arrived in Boston

August 10th

Gave the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* empowerment

August 11th

Gave the *Guru Dorje Drola* empowerment

August 12th

Gave the *Khandro Nyingtig* empowerment

August 13th

Gave the Dzogchen empowerment of *Peaceful Manjushri* and related teaching

August 14th

Taught on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*

August 15th

Taught on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*

August 16th

Gave the *King Gesar of Ling* empowerment and related teaching

TEACHING SERIES IN BOSTON

Departing from New York, we traveled about four hours by car and arrived in Boston, the spiritual center of the New England states and the earliest center of American culture. Being one of the oldest and most culturally significant cities in the United States, Boston has both a European feel and an American flavor. It is not as busy and fast-paced as New York City but more conservative and traditional. It has seen American history from the colonial period and the Declaration of Independence up to today's rapid growth and prosperity.



7.1: Chojé arriving in Boston

Boston was founded in 1630 by wealthy Puritan settlers who left their English homes for a “New” England. Most of them had studied at Cambridge or Oxford University, and in order to educate the new country's future ministers, teachers, professionals, and public servants, they



7.2: Downtown Boston

built the first college in North America, Harvard University, in 1636, which was intended to imitate the nature and purpose of their alma maters. Later, many institutions of higher learning, such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, were founded, which enriched the city of Boston with a strong cultural and academic ambience.

Yidzhin Norbu stayed in Boston for about a week, and the scheduled teaching events were:

Tuesday, August 10th, *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* empowerment, ticket: \$30

Wednesday, August 11th, *Guru Dorje Drola* empowerment, ticket: \$30

Thursday, August 12th, *Khandro Nyingtig* empowerment, ticket: \$30

Friday, August 13th, Dzogchen empowerment of *Peaceful Manjushri*, ticket: \$30

Saturday & Sunday, August 14th & 15th, teaching on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*, ticket: \$125

Monday, August 16th, *King Gesar of Ling* empowerment, ticket: \$30

The detailed timetable over the weekend:

8:30 am: Breakfast

9:00 am: Sitting meditation

10:00 am: Teaching

12:00 pm: Lunch

1:30 pm: Discussion

2:15 pm: Sitting meditation

3:00–5:00 pm: Teaching

8:00 pm, Sunday: The weekend reception

Location: Dharmadhatu's Ashoka House

His Holiness Tertön Sogyal,
Vidyadhara Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Jungnye
At Ashoka House

Born in 1933, H.H. Khenpo Jigme was recognized at age two as the reincarnation of the previous Tertön Sogyal, Lerab Lingpa, widely renowned as a principle Root Guru of the great Thirteenth Dalai Lama, and closely associated with Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo & Jamgon Kongtrul Lodo Thaye.

H.H. Khenpo Jigme has taught in Tibet continuously since the Chinese occupation at remote caves and retreat centers in the mountains of Eastern Tibet. He has ordained at least 10,000 monks and nuns inside of Tibet in addition to founding retreat centers and colleges, and teaching on the Sutra and Tantra traditions of all lineages. A manifestation of the Bodhisattva Manjushri, His Holiness is a Rime master equally at home with the view and tenets of Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyu, Gelug, Jonang and Bon. Many students of His Holiness have obtained rainbow body as a result of applying the instructions bestowed by this precious Master. This is a rare opportunity to receive teachings and empowerments by one of this century's great teachers of Dzogchen.

Teaching Schedule

Vajrakilaya Tuesday, August 10 \$ 30

Empowerment 1:00 - 3:00 p.m., Teachings 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

While on his way to meet the Dalai Lama in 1990, His Holiness revealed this treasure sadhana, "*The Single Kilaya of Enlightened Mind, a Branch of the Kilaya Tantra mGur Khug Ma*", at the Asura cave in Nepal, where Guru Padmasambhava accomplished the mandala of Vajrakilaya and achieved the realization of Mahamudra Vidyadhara. Restricted to Vajrayana students.

The Wrathful Guru Dorje Drollo Wednesday, August 11 \$ 30

Empowerment 1:00 - 3:00 p.m., Teachings 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

In accordance to an ancient prophecy by Tertön Druk Dra Dorje, His Holiness revealed this *Dorje Drollo* accomplishment practice at the Tiger Den, Paro Tak Sang cave, Bhutan, where Guru Padmasambhava manifested as *Dorje Drollo* in order to subdue the eight classes of arrogant demons plaguing Tibet. Restricted to Vajrayana students.

The Innermost Essence of the Dakini Thursday, August 12 \$ 30

Empowerment 1:00 - 3:00 p.m., Teachings 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

The *Khandro Nyinthig* Dzogchen cycle was revealed by the Tertön Pema Ledreltsal, and widely propagated by the great 14th century Dzogchen scholar and commentator, Kunkhyen Longchen Rabjam. The *Khandro Nyinthig* has a vital place at the heart of Nyingmapa Dzogchen teaching, being the Dzogchen lineage of Guru Padmasambhava. This will be a rare opportunity to receive this vital transmission, essential for those interested in pursuing the swift path of the Great Perfection. Restricted to Vajrayana students.

Manjushri Empowerment Friday, August 13 \$ 30

Empowerment 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

In 1987, His Holiness visited the Sacred Mountain Wu Tai Shan, in China, traditionally regarded by Mahayana Buddhists everywhere as the seat of the Bodhisattva Manjushri. While there His Holiness revealed the *Jampal Shi Drup*, "*The Peaceful Accomplishment of Manjushri*". Open to the public.

Buddha in One's Palm Seminar Saturday & Sunday, August 14 & 15 \$ 125

Breakfast 8:30, Sitting 9:00, Teaching 10:00, Lunch 12:00, Discussion 1:30, Sitting 2:15, Teaching 3:00 - 5:00 Both Days. Sunday Reception 8:00

The "*Dzogchen Sanggye Lhag Ter*", or the "*The Dzogchen Treasure Placing Buddhahood In One's Palm*" was revealed as part of the peaceful Manjushri cycle. These extremely concise instructions begin with the common foundations of Hinayana and Mahayana, "*The Four Thoughts Which Turn The Mind Toward Dharma*", and conclude with instructions on the practices of the Dzogchen Upadesha Series including Threghod and Thogal. The price includes the Manjushri empowerment. Restricted to Vajrayana Students.



7.4: Chojé in Boston



7.5: Chojé in the middle of teaching

THE NEED TO PAY FOR A DHARMA EVENT

In the West, almost every dharma center charges for a dharma teaching, which is kind of hard for easterners to accept, especially Tibetans since in our culture the dharma teachings are not something that can be sold. But there are good reasons for western dharma centers to do so because they are surviving in a different society where people are not accustomed to fully supporting dharma centers

like in the Land of Tibet. Instead of making profits through dharma activities, they need to collect money by selling tickets to maintain their normal operations. They have so many kinds of expenses that need to be covered, such as rent, utility bills, maintenance bills, as well as other types of insurance and taxes. In particular, when a center invites a lama or a guest teacher to give teachings, they also usually need to take care of the teacher's travel and transportation, food, and accommodation; and all these expenses are seldom sponsored by someone else. Such being the case, if a dharma center does not charge any fee at all for events, it can hardly survive in the long run.

It is undeniable that paying for dharma teachings may cause some difficulty to certain individuals who want to study the dharma. If someone does not have enough money, this person may miss the opportunity to receive the dharma teaching. Such things seldom happen in the Land of Tibet. I remember when Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok was giving teachings in Washington, there was a Chinese college student who could only afford one teaching of *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*. To ensure that he could attend all the three lectures and receive the full transmission of this text, I paid \$70 for him in private.



7.6: Chojé conferring the *Vajrakilaya* empowerment



7.7: The audience listening to Chojé attentively

Although charging for dharma teachings is a western style that does not conform to the eastern tradition, I feel it is not necessarily a bad thing. From another point of view, since an individual has paid for the dharma teaching, this person may naturally pay great attention to the teaching. Thus, both the attitude of receiving the teaching and the impact

that the teaching brings to him or her would have a big difference compared to a free teaching.

So, it is difficult to say whether charging for dharma events is good or bad. What is certain is that in different societies and cultural environments, the way to spread the dharma must follow the local customs and take people's culture and habits into consideration.

THE SUN THAT NEVER SETS

On August 13th, when Chojé was conferring the Dzogchen empowerment of *Peaceful Manjushri*, he spoke the following words:

Every time I am about to leave a place, those with heavy feelings and strong devotions cannot help but shed tears, as if it is a separation between a mother and her son. Many practitioners are like this. As a matter of fact, it is not that we have had only this temporary gathering during this short period of time, but we have established close and stable connections that will continue to exist life after life.

When I was giving teachings at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center last month, a verse of prophecy for the propagation of this terma teaching came to my mind, which reads:

*The sun, universally benefiting all,
Rises behind the mountains in the east,
And shines to the west.
Ignorant lower mountains,
Do not be haughty.
When you are covered by the shadows before you,
Though you are free from the sunlight temporarily,
Eventually, you will be completely exposed to it.*

This prophecy indicates that just like mountains cannot prevent the sun from rising and shining throughout the world, this terma teaching, too, will gradually spread throughout the world without being obstructed by anything. We have already seen many signs and indications that have proved this prophecy, so I'm sharing it with all of you here.



7.8: Chojé gesturing while teaching

Usually, when I am going to do something, be it big or small, I will first pray deeply to my guru and deity for a long time. Never will I engage in something without thorough consideration and careful observation. But this dharma trip to the West is an exception. I came to the US just wondering whether I could bring some benefit to the local people and whether I could propagate the dharma in this distant country. As I said in New York, I made this trip not for more offerings or wider

reputation or higher social status. I believe it is Lord Manjushri who brings me here out of his great compassion and blessing, because the good timing for me to benefit beings in the West has ripened. Through his miraculous power, Manjushri sends me to this land to give you teachings. From your side, you are willing to give up the opportunity to earn money and come to see me and receive teachings from me, which I also believe is due to the kind blessing of Manjushri. Therefore, the only reason for us gathering here is because we are cared for and blessed by the compassionate Lord Manjushri.

This time, as you have all received the precious teaching of this terma, it is important for you to engage in actual practice and further share it with many others as best as you can. This is my sincere hope and also your own responsibility. If you are able to do so, both you and other beings will benefit immensely from this terma.

In history, when the British Empire became the largest empire in the world, it had the declaration that “the sun never sets on the British Empire.” Just like that, as long as we make joint efforts, we can also make the statement that “the sun above where the Dzogchen practitioners of *Peaceful Manjushri* dwell never sets.” Indeed, the fact that supports this statement has already started to be obvious. As you can see, when the sun sets in the US and you are about to sleep, practitioners in Asia wake up, starting to practice *Peaceful Manjushri* and chant the mantra *om ah ra pa tsa na dhiih*. When practitioners in Asia are going to bed, the sun rises in your location, and you will continue to chant *om ah ra pa tsa na dhiih*. Therefore, I can definitely say that the sun never sets over the practitioners of *Peaceful Manjushri*. Now, it is almost 11 am, so most practitioners in Asia have gone to bed or fallen asleep, but here in the US, the *Peaceful Manjushri* empowerment keeps going on, and we are chanting the mantra of Manjushri. When we go to bed tonight, Asian practitioners will continue to engage in the Manjushri practice and chant his mantra.

I will leave the US in a few days. The great Tibetan master Tsangyang Gyatso once said in one of his songs:

*The letters written in black ink
Can be smudged by a drop of water.
The paintings in the mind that are not drawn out
Cannot be erased even if one tries to.*

Writing a word on paper with ink and even putting a stamp on it can still be ruined by external forces of the four great elements. However, the love and the dharma transmission in your minds can never be erased if you have engraved them in your hearts.



7.9: Chojé with a bright smile

Recently, many American students came and said to me, “Please come back to the US again and again.” Unfortunately, having considered it from all different aspects, I am afraid that I will not be able to make a second trip for the rest of my life. However, I will never forget you and my sincere wish for you is, no matter whether I can come back or not, please persevere in the practice of *Peaceful Manjushri*. If you can actively engage in this practice, then it would be the same as if I came

back personally. As long as you, my American students, do not waver in your intention and devotion on your dharma path, you will always stay in my mind. This I will not change, just like the sun and the moon will never deviate from their own paths.

In the end, His Holiness sang this verse three times in a prolonged tune as the final prayer to everyone:

*The supreme Mount Meru at the center of the world,
Is immovable, unchanging, and enduring.
The sun and the moon that orbit around it
Never deviate from their own paths.*

(Applause)



7.10: Chojé blessing American disciples so their faith in the dharma will not waver

WENT TO SEE THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

When we were in Boston, we stayed in a place where we could clearly see the Atlantic Ocean. One day, Chojé went to the ocean and saw the great waves at a close distance. Listening to some local people's detailed description of this area, Rinpoche seemed to be in a very good mood.



7.11: Seeing the Atlantic Ocean

On the rocks by the sea clustered many oysters whose shells were just like rocks. Someone took one of them to Chojé, and we were so surprised that this “rock” was indeed a living being. That was the first time that any of us had seen an oyster. Rinpoche sighed and felt deep compassion that a living being's karma was so inconceivable, and he blessed the oyster firmly.



7.12: Chojé blessing the oysters whose shells were like rocks

Like many other great masters, Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok appeared to be very fond of the sea. It is quite true that when we come to the sea and look at it, all our discursive thoughts seem to be easily taken away by the rolling waves and

dissolve into the boundless ocean. What remains is an evident experience of the immaculate dharmadhatu that transcends any conceptualization.

Of the four major oceans in the world, I accompanied Chojé to visit the Indian Ocean in 1990, and the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean in 1993. Although these oceans seemed to be the same, I did want to accompany him to visit the fourth one, the Arctic Ocean, to make our travel around the world complete. However, this just turned out to be an ingenuous dream of a young man that never came true.

THE MIRACULOUS SHAMBHALA

On August 16th, Yidzhin Norbu went to the Boston Shambhala Meditation Center and gave the last teaching to the people gathered there.

Today I have two things for you. First, I will briefly talk about the kingdom of Shambhala, and second, I will give you the *King Gesar of Ling* empowerment.

Introduction to the Kingdom of Shambhala

Generally, when talking about the kingdom of Shambhala, it is mainly to introduce the origin of Shambhala and the activities of all the kings of this kingdom.

How did the kingdom of Shambhala come forth?

Our root teacher, Buddha Shakyamuni, the one endowed with loving kindness, great compassion, and various skillful means, first generated the supreme bodhicitta numerous eons ago, then accumulated an immense amount of merit for three countless eons, and in the end manifested to achieve complete enlightenment of buddhahood in Bodh Gaya, India.

In order to bring benefit and happiness to all sentient beings, including those in the celestial realm, the Buddha turned the first dharma wheel expounding the Four Noble Truths in the Deer Park at Sarnath, Varanasi. Nowadays, Buddhists in many countries, such as Sri Lanka and Myanmar, mainly practice the Four Noble Truths. The second turning of the dharma wheel took place on Vulture Peak Mountain near Rajagriha where the Buddha taught the absence of characteristics, which is now extensively studied and practiced in places like the Han regions of China and Japan. The third turning of the dharma wheel took place in Vaishali and other places, and the Buddha expounded on fully distinguishing the reality beyond a trace of doubt, which is like a bridge that connects the Sutrayana and Tantrayana teachings. Then, the Buddha turned the dharma wheel of Vajrayana on the teaching of Secret Mantra for those fortunate beings in many different realms, such as the realms of gods, nagas, yakshas, and gandharvas. These days, Vajrayana teachings are correctly practiced by Buddhists in the Land of Tibet, Bhutan, the US, and many other places.



7.13: Sitting on the throne, Chojé never seeming to be tired

On the full moon of the Caitra month, *vikrama* Iron Dragon Year, the compassionate Buddha taught the *Kalachakra*, *Reciting the Names of Manjushri*, and other tantras at the great stupa of Shri Dhanyakataka

in southern India. This happened in the same year of the Buddha's passing into nirvana when he reached the age of eighty-one. The audience who received these teachings consisted of humans, non-humans, gods, yakshas, and other types of fortunate beings. Among them, the foremost disciple was King Suchandra, the first dharma king of the Shambhala kingdom. At that time, he requested the teachings on the *Kalachakra Tantra*.

After receiving the *Kalachakra* teachings from the Buddha, King Suchandra compiled them into a textual form of twelve thousand verses, which is well known as the *Root Kalachakra Tantra*. King Suchandra and his six succeeding kings were together called the *seven Dharmarajas of Shambhala*, all of whom upheld and practiced the *Root Kalachakra Tantra*. During their reigns, just like in ancient India, the kingdom of Shambhala was subject to caste identity, and its inhabitants were divided into four castes, namely, brahmins, kshatriyas, vaishyas, and shudras, the latter two being mainly merchants and laborers. Given such a caste system, only people of noble castes had access to the dharma, and people of lower castes were not allowed to study or practice the dharma. Those who were able to receive the dharma teaching were called Kalkin, Holder of the Castes, and belonged to the vajra caste, which distinguished them from all the rest.

After the reigns of the seven Dharmarajas, the eighth king in King Suchandra's line, King Manjushri Yashas, appeared and ascended the throne. King Yashas believed that caste identity was not important in regard to upholding and protecting the dharma, that the noble qualities developed from dharma practice were the key to making Buddhism thrive, and that, therefore, everyone should embrace the essential teaching in Buddhism. With such an awareness, he merged all four castes into the single vajra caste and granted them the empowerment. As said in the *Kalachakra* teaching, "Four castes are in fact the one; the Kalkin caste is not necessarily brahmins."

Having achieved the unification of all the inhabitants of Shambhala under one vajra caste, Manjushri Yashas became known as the first Kalkin King of Shambhala. From then onward, in the kingdom of Shambhala, there was no longer discrimination of one caste over the other, and everyone was entitled to study and practice the sacred dharma. Manjushri Yashas' deeds had a far-reaching impact on the continuous flourishing of the Shambhala kingdom even up until today.

The first Kalkin King Manjushri Yashas compiled all the *Kalachakra* teachings of the seven preceding Dharmarajas into an abridged text in five chapters. This text was called the *Abridged Kalachakra Tantra*. Compared to his seven ancestors, his enlightened activity was sublime. When his reign was over, his son and royal heir, Pundarika, became the second Kalkin King of Shambhala. Pundarika wrote a commentary on his father's work, and it was called *Stainless Light*. Before Pundarika composed this great commentary, citizens of Shambhala had relied only on the *Root Kalachakra Tantra* and the *Abridged Kalachakra Tantra* to engage in their dharma practices.

There will be twenty-five Kalkin Kings who rule the kingdom of Shambhala in line, and each of them rules the kingdom for one hundred years before the next one ascends the throne. The two kings, the tenth King Samudravijaya and the eleventh King Aja, were two exceptions, and they ruled the kingdom for four hundred three years in total. Here, the duration of the reign has nothing to do with the life span of each king. Before they ascend the throne, they have been living for many years and will continue to live for many years after they pass the throne to their heirs.

The present Kalkin King who is in power is the twenty-first Kalkin King Aniruddha. This year (1993) is the sixty-seventh year of his reign. His son, Narasimha, will be the twenty-second Kalkin King of Shambhala, who will rule the kingdom for one hundred years. When Narasimha's reign is over, his son Maheshvara will ascend the throne to be the twenty-third Kalkin King. The twenty-fourth Kalkin King will

be Anantavijaya, and his son, Rudra Chakrin, will be the twenty-fifth and the last Kalkin King of Shambhala.

The main enlightened activity of Rudra Chakrin will be helping beings of Jambudvipa and other continents regain peace and happiness at a future time when these beings will suffer from all kinds of disturbances and trouble. Appearing in a wrathful way, Rudra Chakrin will subjugate the cruel and vulgar barbarians who will profusely harm sentient beings, and then he will become the ruler of the four great continents, i.e., Jambudvipa, Aparagodaniya, Uttarakuru, and Purvavideha. During his reign, he will propagate the authentic dharma extensively and the *Kalachakra* teachings in particular. By then, either from the worldly aspect or the spiritual aspect, his activity will be so vast that it will surpass that of every Dharmaraja or any of the other twenty-four Kalkin Kings. Those who uphold and protect his activities will enable his lineage to thrive and prosper for thousands of years. Rudra Chakrin will have two sons, Brahma and Sureshvara, who will inherit and continue to carry out the vast activities of their father. That was a brief introduction to the lives and activities of the kings of Shambhala.

Where is the kingdom of Shambhala located? In Buddhist cosmology, the vajra seat in Bodh Gaya is considered the center of our world. To the north of Bodh Gaya resides a place called *Li* in Tibetan, outside of which is a snow mountain called Snow Mountain Possessing Glory that is endowed with magnificent qualities. Further north of this snow mountain is the realm of Shambhala.

To be more specific, the Snow Mountain Possessing Glory is located to the north of Bodh Gaya, passing through nine majestic Black Mountains. To the north of this snow mountain is located the Fragrant Mountain. Between the Fragrant Mountain and Snow Mountain Possessing Glory is Anavatapta Lake. From the Anavatapta Lake flows all rivers that nurture the earth of the entire world. To the north of the Fragrant Mountain is situated the kingdom of Shambhala.



7.14: Chojé with all-pervading compassion

The Nine Black Mountains and the Snow Mountain Possessing Glory are not ordinary mountains. Instead, they are very huge and majestic. Roughly speaking, you can imagine that these mountains are as extraordinary and majestic as the Himalayas that stand as the natural boundary of the Tibetan Plateau and Nepal. The highest peak of the Himalayas, Mount Everest, has an elevation of 8,848 meters, making it the highest mountain in the world. There are more than one hundred eighty countries around the world, and none of them has such high mountains. Even the tallest mountain in North America, Mount McKinley, has a height of only 6,190 meters above sea level. So, you can have a brief idea of how extraordinary and majestic the Nine Black Mountains and the Snow Mountain Possessing Glory are. Within the Nine Black Mountains, there are oceans, rocky mountains, snow mountains, forests, and so on. Since they are not ordinary mountains, except those with miraculous powers and those who have acquired the assistance and blessing of their deities, it is impossible for ordinary people to physically access them.

Many people may suspect, “The so-called Shambhala cannot possibly exist on this planet because no scientist in the world has ever seen it.” It is undeniable that scientists are smart and intelligent, but their intelligence cannot compare to the Buddha’s wisdom and still needs to be improved and perfected. With his omniscient wisdom, the Buddha confirmed the existence of Shambhala, and as a testament, many noble beings in the past have been there, one example being the great Indian Pandita Chilupa. On the other hand, science is still on its way to finding truth and has great room for improvement. For instance, the US can be said to be a world leader in the development of medical science, but still, there are many diseases that remain incurable, and medical experts are working hard searching for effective solutions. Or one more example, even though a scientist can predict that there is going to be a hurricane, he or she has no idea of how to avoid it. But it would never happen to the Buddha that he only knows the coming of the hurricane while having no method to stop it. Just like children need to grow up to become adults, science needs further progress and improvement.

A scientist used to declare that a kind of electric light would appear as powerful as the sun and be able to light up all countries throughout the entire world. Many people were eager to witness it, and someone also feverishly told me about this breaking news. But I didn’t think it would be practical. Later, as I heard, something went wrong, and such a light never appeared. Unlike this, the Buddha would never say something untruthful and mislead others. Hence, since the Buddha spoke in detail about the kingdom of Shambhala and all the kings of this kingdom, you needn’t have any doubt about their existence.

The territory of Shambhala is about two-thirds of our world and is encircled by snow mountain ranges. Within the kingdom there are nine hundred sixty million cities that are also surrounded by snow mountains. In the central region rises the magnificent city of Kalapa, the capital of this kingdom where all Shambhala kings live. Countless rivers of Shambhala wind their way through the land and flow to

Kalapa. Since the realm of Shambhala is encircled by snow mountains and seas from the outside, you cannot possibly arrive there without having achieved supreme miraculous power. Guru Padmasambhava visited Shambhala and received the *Kalachakra* teachings and Dzogchen instructions from King Suchandra, the first Dharmaraja of Shambhala.

What activities do the kings of Shambhala and the citizens carry out? Mainly, there are two kinds of activities, to subjugate and liberate those who cause harm and suffering to living beings in a wrathful way and to benefit those fortunate practitioners with the sacred dharma teaching in a peaceful way. The final Kalkin King,



7.15: The scene from the *King Gesar of Ling* empowerment

Rudra Chakrin, is indeed an emanation of Guru Padmasambhava, and in one of his previous lives he was also King Gesar of Ling. At that time, when the whole world, the Land of Tibet in particular, was corrupted with suffering and misfortune, Gesar was born in the Dza valley in Kham and pacified all disasters.

While it is believed that King Gesar was a real historical figure, some would claim that he is just a legendary king in Tibetan and Asian mythology. Indeed, such statements that deny the authentic, heroic deeds of Gesar can be only accepted by those who are kind of blind and deaf toward the facts. No one else believes them. If you go to the Tibetan regions and visit the hometown of Gesar, you will see in person the ruins of the palaces where King Gesar and his generals used to live.

There was one palace of King Gesar called Sengtrug Tagtse Castle (Lion Cub Tiger Peak Castle) which was built in Sa-nag Lungdo (Black Earth Valley) in Lower Ma during his time. When I was making a pilgrimage to Qinghai in 1990, I went past the valley and identified it to be the

original site of this castle. Back then, it was just an extensive meadow with no obvious ruins being noticed. Later, when the reconstruction of the palace took place on that spot, it was said that the walls of the old palace and other items were unearthed. Both Tibetan and Han scholars engaging in Gesar studies were very excited and convinced that it was the actual site of the old palace. When the site was prepared for the commencement of construction ceremony, I and my entourage—including Khenpo Namdrol and Ngodrup Dorje—were all present.

In the future of the degenerate age when the dharma declines, King Gesar will reincarnate as Rudra Chakrin, the twenty-fifth Kalkin King of Shambhala, conquering the dark forces and inaugurating the dawn of a new golden age of peace and joy on the earth.

Introduction to the Shambhala Center

As you are well aware of, at this Shambhala center, there are mainly two spiritual approaches being offered: the approach of Shambhala training and the approach of learning and practicing the traditional dharma.

The approach of Shambhala training is open to any individual who has interest and faith in this path, regardless of whether he or she is a Buddhist or not, or which country or part of the world they come from. The only requirement is that they should relinquish jealousy to those who are superior to them, avoid disrespect or contempt to those inferior to them, and treat all beings equally with kindness. This path is to primarily cultivate loving kindness and compassion. With these qualities, a person would make their best effort to benefit all beings of different levels.



7.16: The audience looking at Chojé attentively

Some people may worry, “The participants of the Shambhala training belong to the organization of the Dorje Kasung that follows a military style. Could they be a threat to the country and the people here?” This is an unnecessary concern. As we know, Shambhala has been established in the land of United States for many years. If you look back through these years, it is obvious that the Shambhala community has never caused the slightest harm to this country or to any other country in general, nor has it done a single deed that is harmful to sentient beings of all levels. The training of the Dorje Kasung is to create the auspicious conditions for the participants to be born among the armies of Rudra Chakrin in the future and to extensively benefit beings. Therefore, the Shambhala training is a harmless and peaceful path that only brings great benefit to the country and the people. It is an utterly valuable practice.

The second approach is the learning and practicing of Buddhhadharma. Within the Shambhala community, every Buddhist will follow a progressive stage of dharma practice. You first engage in the preliminary practices, followed by shamatha meditation, and the Vajrayogini practice. When all these practices are completed, you will continue with Mahamudra and Dzogchen practices.

It is fine if you only follow the Shambhala training or only engage in learning and practicing the Buddhhadharma. What is essential to keep in mind is that the Shambhala training and the traditional Buddhist training do not contradict each other. If you can combine both approaches in your spiritual practice, it is certain that you will achieve perfect peace and happiness in this life and in all your future lifetimes. Such is the inconceivable result you will have. For a long time, many of you have been dedicating yourselves to maintaining the Shambhala center, and this is very necessary. But more importantly, each of you should enhance your practice in the Shambhala training and the traditional Buddhist training and internalize these teachings into your beings.

For sure, you are all familiar with the overall situation of your center, but here I just want to clarify and emphasize the purity of these two approaches in your center. I am afraid that if this is not made clear, someone may hold doubts about their purity and authenticity and thus cause trouble or disorder to the center. Why? Because with certain misunderstanding of the purpose of the Shambhala training, people may worry that the Dorje Kasung could be a threat to the country and the people. Also, if practitioners within the Shambhala community do not understand that the Shambhala approach and the Buddhist approach are of the same intent, they may introduce disagreements or arguments to the followers of these two programs.

Anyway, as I have addressed, the learning and practicing in the Shambhala center follows a harmless and peaceful path. If you understand that the two programs do not contradict each other but are of the same essence, then not only will you gain immense benefit, your neighborhood and your country will also be greatly benefited. The good reputation of the Shambhala community will be spread wide and far, and your enlightened activities will flourish and prosper.



7.17: Chojé completing his trip to Boston

Finishing these words, Chojé conferred the *King Gesar of Ling* empowerment with the ritual he composed and also gave the oral transmission of *The Prayer and Offering to 'The Great Lion, Gesar the Jewel,' that Spontaneously Accomplishes Activities*. In the end, His Holiness concluded, "In order for whatever you wish to be spontaneously fulfilled, I entrusted the dharma protectors with your enlightened activity. Now, you are able to recite offering prayers to the dharma protectors, as I have given you all the oral transmissions of these prayers, either the extensive, medium, or concise ones."

With this, Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok's dharma trip to Boston was complete.



8th Stop

August 17th–August 22nd

Canada

NOVA SCOTIA

SCHEDULE

August 17th

Arrived in Canada in the morning and gave an interview in the afternoon

August 18th

Delivered a public talk at Dalhousie University in the evening

August 19th

Arrived at Dorje Denma Ling in the morning and gave a teaching called *Cultivate Faith in the Three Jewels* in the afternoon

August 20th

Gave the *Peaceful Manjushri* empowerment and related teaching

August 21st

Gave the empowerments and teachings on *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* and *Dorje Drolo* in the morning and watched the drill practice of the Shambhala Dorje Kasung at noon

August 22nd

Gave farewell advice

ARRIVED IN CANADA

On August 17th, Yidzhin Norbu concluded all of his activities in the United States and headed to his next destination, Canada.

Early in the 17th century, Canada was still a French colony, and it was later ceded to Britain but did not achieve full independence until 1982. When we visited it in 1993, Canada had a population of fewer than thirty million people, but its total area of land was larger than the United States and China, making it the second largest country in area after Russia. Despite the fact that Canada is a close neighbor to the United States, the pace of life in Canada is entirely different. In 1993, people there did things in a leisurely way. They appeared to be extremely patient and carried on life as though they had plenty of time. From



8.1: Khenpo Sodargye and the infinite Atlantic Ocean behind him

that regard, the life there resembled that of the Tibetans, so we felt quite at ease. Arriving in Canada, we unconsciously released a bit of stress and entered an indescribable state of relaxation.

The flight from Boston to Halifax lasted slightly longer than an hour. As a result of the positive relations between the United States and Canada, we went through customs smoothly. Following our departure from the airport, we arrived at a dharma center named Sharchen Ling, where Chojé resided for two days. This time, he stayed on the third floor instead of the ground floor, which

he did in most places. The view from the room's big balcony was sweeping and panoramic, taking in the city below as well as the ocean and islands in the distance.

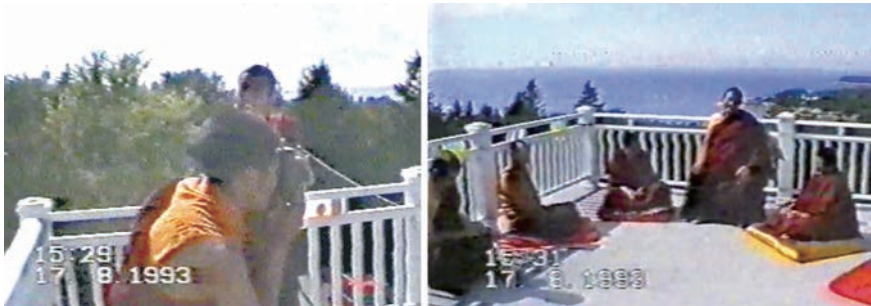


8.2: A very valuable photo of Chojé taken by Khenpo Sodargye

The climate of Canada is at its finest in August, when temperatures are mild, humidity levels are low, and the sky is a brilliant blue, allowing the sunshine to warmly radiate everywhere. While sipping tea and mingling with his guests, Rinpoche spent part of the afternoon on the balcony. The beautiful scenery refreshed him, and he exclaimed with delight, “Here we have blue skies, the

vast ocean, rolling mountains, and lush forests! The landscape is incredibly picturesque. This is by far the most beautiful place I've ever visited!"

When I saw that Chojé was in a good mood, without a sickly complexion and even looking younger, I quickly took out my camera, hoping to capture a few photos to give as gifts to the monastic community at Larung Gar. Rinpoche was more than willing to cooperate, wore a smile on his face, and posed for photos. I took some photos of him on the balcony, and he even suggested that we take more in the room, which we did. I recall when taking one of the photos, I expressed to Chojé the wish to share the photo with everyone at Larung Gar and other fortunate ones. He agreed and then abided in a special state of samadhi, which was able to bestow blessings on all beings who saw that photograph.



8.3: Khenpo Sodargye taking photos of Chojé to capture the precious moments

In fact, each time Khenpo Rinpoche traveled outside Larung Gar to give dharma teachings, a photograph of him in the location where he traveled was the most cherished keepsake of his disciples at Larung Gar. Even now, a picture like that is treated like a priceless jewel by the recipient. Some reverently place it in their shrine rooms, some hang it on their walls, while others carry it with them as the object of their prayers and visualizations. All these reactions reflect their deep faith in their root guru.



8.4: A very popular photo of Chojé

One particular example is Lama Södön, a monk who was appointed by Chojé to deal with affairs of our academy. He has several large photos of Rinpoche adorning the walls of his home. Once, he made the request to me in private that when I took photos of Yidzhin Norbu, make sure I included his entire body. He strongly suggested to me to take the photos from a position where the throne did not block any part of Rinpoche's body, and no one was standing alongside him. Also, he said that a smiling pose was preferable. So, when I was taking that special photo of Rinpoche, the one in which he abided in a special state of samadhi, I thought, "Lama Södön and other dharma friends like him will surely be pleased with this photo!" As expected, when everyone finally got to see the photo, they were all ecstatic. This picture became quite popular later.

AN INTERVIEW WITH TWENTY QUESTIONS

In the afternoon, Chojé was interviewed by a local Buddhist media person. Here is the content of that interview:

Q1: Venerable Rinpoche, could you please introduce yourself? What is the reason that people address you as a lama?

HHJP: I was born in a place in the Land of Tibet called Dzime Chölhé, located in the present-day Qinghai Province. My current residence is in Sertar, Sichuan Province. I have been studying and practicing Buddhism for many years and was conferred the degree of khenpo. According to the prophesied texts of some previous great masters, I have also gained the title of the reincarnation of Tertön Lerab Lingpa. All my efforts in this life have been devoted to spreading, practicing, and carrying out the dharma, and as a result, I have amassed a large number of diverse followers from different places. Because of these reasons, I am addressed by people as a lama.

Q2: I've heard some of your incredible tales, such as how you've miraculously created your footprints into stone. Out of curiosity, I wonder if these stories are true.



8.5: Chojé happily accepting an interview

HHJP: Yes, there have been such incidences. It happened a few times.
(Laughs)

Q3: What is the purpose of your visit to the West at this time?

HHJP: From what I've learned, Buddhism in the West is not as thriving as it is in the Land of Tibet. So, my primary motivation for coming here is to spread the dharma and to benefit sentient beings. I hope I can make some contribution to people's peace and happiness. That is the primary goal of my coming.

Q4: What are your impressions of New York City?

HHJP: New York is the largest metropolis in the United States and also the place of residence for the headquarters of the United Nations, the most influential international organization with about one hundred

eighty-four countries as members. Not only Americans live in New York, people of different backgrounds and nationalities congregate there as well. Additionally, New York has the second tallest skyscraper in the world. In New York, I saw many amazing things that I've never seen before, which made me feel delighted.

Q5: Why did you decide to visit Buddhist centers in Canada?

HHJP: It is similar to my concern for wanting to go to the United States. I want to be of benefit to sentient beings and to spread the Buddhist doctrine here in Canada as well. At the same time, I am interested in seeing local cultures and the customs of different countries, so you might say I also came for sight-seeing.

Q6: Do you bring a certain message to people here in the West?

HHJP: Wherever I go, not just in the United States but anywhere in the world, I hope to see whether I can make a positive impact on the lives of others by relying on the loving kindness and compassion I've developed over the years. Likewise, I hope you can do your best to benefit all sentient beings by following this sublime path that is peaceful and harmless. This alone is my wish and message for you.



8.6: Chojé with a serious look

Q7: When comparing the Land of Tibet and the West, where is Buddhism more widespread?

HHJP: In the Land of Tibet, about ninety-nine percent of the people show enthusiasm and great faith in the dharma. Among those devotees, there are lay people and monastic practitioners, and the number of monastics is large. Comparatively, although western countries are

highly developed, Buddhism does not flourish there as it does in the Snow Land of Tibet.

Q8: Many westerners spend a lot of time pursuing wealth. What do you think is a healthy attitude toward money?

HHJP: In this world, what people cherish the most is their own life. So, it is natural for people to accumulate wealth to seek a better life. If they can incorporate loving kindness and compassion in their process of making money, then they can gain material benefit while carrying out Buddhist spirit. This is beneficial from both material and spiritual aspects. But if with an unwholesome intent, they have a vocation that harms others, then even if they are making money, I don't think it will bring them much benefit and happiness.



8.7: Chojé with a relaxed expression

Q9: Could you please share your perspective on Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche?

HHJP: It seems that Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche was the first Tibetan lama to come to the United States in this era. From my point of view, he employed two skillful means to spread the dharma and help sentient beings. One is for those who do not want to follow the formal Buddhist path for the time being, so he would lead them to learn and engage in the Shambhala training. This is the expedient means he adopted to help these types of people. The other is for those who have faith in Buddhism and yearn to study the dharma, so he would introduce them to the Buddhist doctrine. These days, his groundbreaking activities equipped with these two unique techniques are more widely known than ever before. This is quite rare.

Q10: Do you know about Christianity? What do you think of it?

HHJP: According to what I've learned, Christianity promotes and practices universal kindness and love, which I think is very good.

Q11: Compared to the East, how do you perceive the education of loving kindness in the West?

HHJP: Although both share the same goal of benefiting sentient beings, they use a variety of methods to accomplish it, and their ways of performing these methods are different.

Q12: In your opinion, will this center become the largest center of Buddhism?

HHJP: That's up to the prophecies that other lamas have made before. In particular, your lama, Trungpa Rinpoche, must have said a few words in this regard. Other than that, I don't have any new or specific comments.

Q13: Do you feel that you prefer people in your hometown or people from other places?

HHJP: People's habitual propensities are very strong, so, naturally, everyone has a deep-seated preference and attachment to their native place. My own family members, including my siblings, all live in the Land of Tibet, so I love my homeland. But when I went to the United States, although I was not there for very long, I found that Americans, too, are kind and pure in heart. In particular, they showed tremendous concern for me. So, I was happy to be with them, and the feeling toward them is similar to what I have for those from my hometown.



8.8: Chojé skillfully answering all questions

Q14: I feel people here are not very optimistic and enthusiastic. What do you make of it?

HHJP: No one can say with certainty that one group is more optimistic than another. Take my family for example. Our mental and physical states may vary depending on whether or not we are sick. Sometimes we feel happy, and sometimes we feel sad. In the Land of Tibet, too, there are those who are very optimistic and also those who are overly pessimistic. The same holds true for the West, that every individual has a different mentality. Thus, it is hard to say who are more optimistic, westerners or Tibetans, just as it is difficult to tell who is happier, Sangye or Jigme.

Q15: What is your perspective on North Americans dedicating a significant amount of time to exercise for the sake of health?

HHJP: People of all countries are similar, and they attach great importance to regular exercising with the hope to experience fewer diseases. My view is the same, nothing more to add to that.



8.9: Chojé's eyes conveying indomitability and strength

Q16: What is the essence of the practice of the Four Immeasurables?

HHJP: The Four Immeasurables is to genuinely wish that all sentient beings enjoy happiness and be free from suffering from the bottom of your heart. In order to practically apply this aspiration, you should abandon any activity that brings harm to others, such as killing, and engage in virtuous actions, such as the practice of generosity, as much as you can.

Q17: When comparing the method of spreading Buddhism in the Land of Tibet and the West, what are the primary differences?

HHJP: Buddhism, as I mentioned before, is not as flourishing in the West as it is in the Tibetan regions if we observe it based on the percentage of Buddhists in the total population. But, gradually, the spread of Buddhism here may surpass that in the Land of Tibet. Therefore, all of you need to make an effort to help it thrive. I believe the Buddhadharma will prevail and flourish here, and I do make such an aspiration as well.



8.10: Chojé looking at the journalist cordially

Q18: How do you view the study and military training in Shambhala?

HHJP: Your lama first guided people to the practice of benefiting and not harming others through the skillful means of the Shambhala military training. Then, he gradually led them onto the Buddhist path. This is excellent and most crucial.

Q19: Do you ever get depressed or feel anxious? Do you have any methods for dealing with those feelings that you can share with us?

HHJP: Whether I am happy or sad, I only pray to the guru and the Three Jewels in my daily life. Besides that, I don't make effort to apply or implement other methods.

Q20: What is your connection to Gyalwa Rinpoche, and how would you describe it?

HHJP: The previous Gyalwa Rinpoche and my predecessor, Tertön Lerab Lingpa, had a very close relationship as teacher and disciple. Because of that strong connection, when I journeyed to India to meet Rinpoche in 1990, he received me warmly with great kindness.

CHOJÉ FELL ILL

On the evening of August 18th, Yidzhin Norbu was scheduled to give a public lecture at Dalhousie University. However, during the day, he suddenly became ill with abnormally high blood pressure, a persistent fever, and an uncontrollable urge to vomit. Ani Medron was particularly concerned, saying that high blood pressure can cause many complications. So, we rushed Chojé to the nearest hospital in the hope that he could get some intravenous fluids to bring down his blood pressure. However, after arriving at the hospital, we found that getting intravenous therapy, injections, or even medications was a complicated procedure in Canada. In the end, they did not offer any kind of treatment aside from blood tests. I was consumed with anxiety but completely helpless.

A few days prior to this, when we were in Boston, Lama Mumtso had also become seriously ill. At one point, she was so ill that she had to go to the hospital, and as a result, her empowerment that day was canceled. Considering Chojé's current health condition, we also proposed to call off the evening lecture, but he was adamant that the lecture take place as scheduled. Just before he departed for the lecture venue, Rinpoche threw up badly in the bathroom, and I stood helplessly by his side, wishing that I could take upon his pain. Surprisingly,

after being so intensely sick, Rinpoche still gave a stellar performance during the actual lecture as if he was not ill at all.

However, after the speech, the signs of illness showed up again, and his health deteriorated further. The situation was quite bad. At that time, it occurred to me that both Dudjom Rinpoche and the sixteenth Gyalwang Karmapa passed into parinirvana in another country, and their bodies were later flown back to their own monasteries. Thinking of this, I became especially uneasy, worrying if something similar would happen to Chojé.

We had already planned that after this stop, Yidzhin Norbu would travel to several European countries to give dharma teachings, and his itinerary there was already quite full. However, considering that Rinpoche's health wouldn't allow him to continue such a busy schedule, after much deliberation, we decided to shorten the trip by canceling the visits to the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and other European countries and to just pay a short and representative visit to France before returning home.

Teaching in the West was quite different from in the Tibetan regions. The dharma centers that organized dharma events would lose a lot of money if an arranged and publicized event was canceled on short notice, but we had to put that aside for the sake of Rinpoche's health. At one point, I thought to myself, "If compensation is needed, I will find a way to pay for the loss myself." Afterward, when we talked to those organizers about Chojé's declining health and our decision to cancel the teachings, all of them showed their understanding. They said they would handle the financial loss on their own.

Even though Yidzhin Norbu was unable to travel to the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and other European countries, the connection had been established, and I remained hopeful that it would create auspicious interdependent conditions for Rinpoche to visit these countries someday in the future.

WISDOM AND COMPASSION

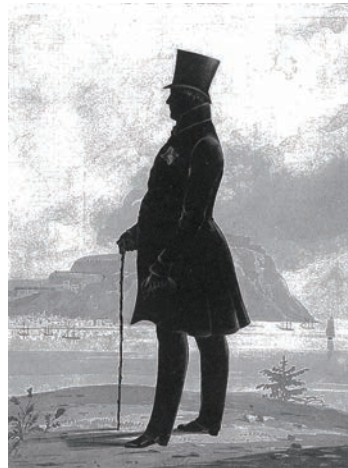
In the evening, Chojé arrived at Dalhousie University and delivered a public speech to an audience of teachers, students, and local Buddhists titled *Wisdom and Compassion*.



8.11: The billboard outside Dalhousie Arts Centre

Dalhousie University was founded by the ninth Earl of Dalhousie, George Ramsay, in 1818, who aimed to establish an institute of higher education open to all, regardless of class or creed. It has become one of Canada's foremost universities and has even produced three prime ministers of Canada and one Nobel laureate.

The speech was delivered at the Dalhousie Arts Centre of the university. Even before Rinpoche was invited into the stage, the auditorium that has a seating capacity of a thousand spectators was fully packed. Before the speech, the host introduced Chojé to the audience with excitement:



8.12: Ninth Earl of Dalhousie, George Ramsay

Welcome everyone to today's talk given by H.H. Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche was born in 1933 in northeastern Tibet. He started teaching actively in the Land of Tibet approximately ten years ago. Since that time, he has been able to greatly revive the practice of Buddhism in Tibet, which had experienced a decline for several decades.



8.13: Buddhists attending Chojé's teaching at Dalhousie University

We are very fortunate to have him come all the way from the Land of Tibet to the West to propagate the dharma. He has traveled abroad only once prior to this, which was to India in 1990. This is the first time that Rinpoche has been in the West, and we are particularly fortunate to have him with us here in Nova Scotia. This was a somewhat last-minute addition to his itinerary, but he said he wanted to visit here. So, we're very honored and pleased. Let's welcome Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche to give us a teaching.

Then His Holiness started his talk:

Today, on this perfect and auspicious occasion, I am very pleased to be here in this wonderful country of Canada, a country that lies the closest

to the North Pole. I myself come from a distant country in eastern Asia, and I am especially pleased to meet all of you hundreds of people here. For each and every one of us, we are really fortunate to have been born in this world of Jambudvipa with a precious human existence endowed with freedoms and advantages. Having such great fortune, we must make great effort to benefit ourselves and others and abstain from causing any harm. This is something you must understand and think about.

Which Religion to Follow

Some of you may ask, “How and what should I think about exactly?”

There are two types of people in this world: those who have no religious beliefs at all and those who have religious faith. Most people who have no religious beliefs focus their lives fully on the pursuit of food and clothing. They only care about their livelihood in this life, without bothering to practice virtue and abandon non-virtue for the sake of future lives. Indeed, even animals, like horses and cows, can survive by finding food and drink themselves. Therefore, to live a life with only the pursuit of a livelihood would be unwise. Regarding the second type of people, they can be considered to be extraordinary compared to the first type, because they possess a special quality that goes beyond worldly pursuit and have chosen a religion to practice in order to attain temporary benefit and long-term happiness.

When you have the precious human rebirth, you should not waste it. Otherwise, it is not only personally embarrassing but also shameless in front of wiser people, who have recognized the significance of human life. Thereby, following a religion is very important.

Regarding which religion is the best, you must consider carefully before you make a decision. When you decide to follow a religion, you expect it to bring you long-term benefit and happiness. So, it would certainly be imprudent to rush into a spiritual path without any observation. In the Land of Tibet, there is a saying that describes

such imprudent action as being like a hungry dog eating an animal's lung. We know that an animal's lung tastes the worst compared with the flesh of other parts of the body, but a ravenous dog will devour it without a second thought. This type of example is given about someone who just jumps into a religious tradition or grabs a teacher whenever he or she meets one without examining the religion or teacher first. Such behavior is very foolish.

Since following a religion is a long-term process, you must be prudent before choosing any religion. Think about the food that you are going to eat every day; you will select carefully by examining its quality and nutrition. However, any type of food, either of top quality or not, after being digested, will end up becoming waste. There is no need to say how important it is to scrutinize a religion that concerns your benefit and happiness in this and all future lifetimes. If you make the wrong choice, it will bring negative influences to your future in the long run. Considering this, you must examine it carefully.

Recognize the True Religion

Some religions advocate hatred and encourage their followers to express harm toward others. Some incite desire, saying it is good to have sexual relations with those who are married or to steal others' possessions. For some other religions, their founders or preachers advocate whatever comes into their minds without scrutinizing it logically, which is a demonstration of ignorance.

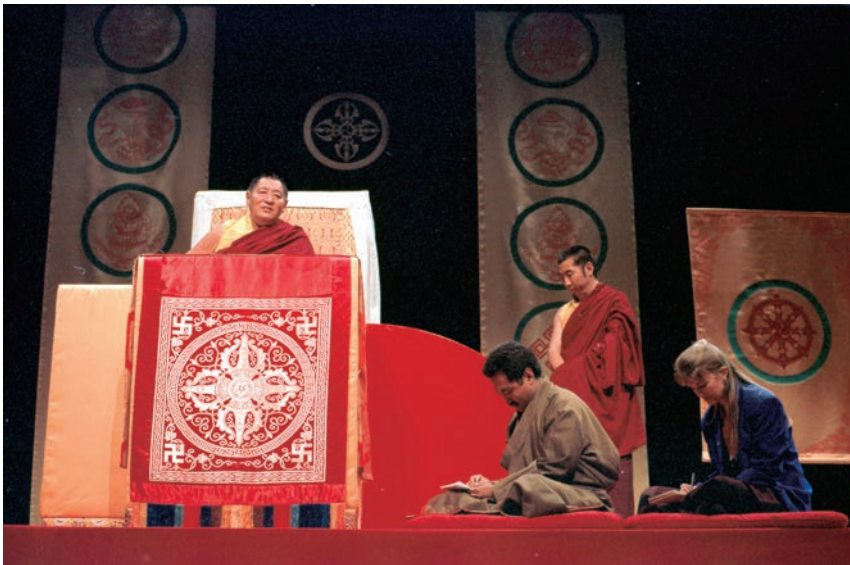
Think about it, would it be a pure doctrine if a teaching proclaims anger or hatred? Certainly not. Just like you do not feel good if anyone beats you or even tries to kill you, no one would be willing to accept such harmful action where you strike them or take their lives. So, you can surely understand that the doctrine of agitating for hatred is as wrong as putting the cart before the horse.



8.14: The splendid arrangement of the dharma throne

Then, think about a religion that claims desire is the doctrine. If someone runs off with your spouse or possessions, you wouldn't feel good about it. So, you know how improper it is if you inflict harm or unhappiness on others out of desirous intention. It is clear that saying "desire is the doctrine" is an incorrect teaching.

If a religion bases its doctrine on ignorance, it certainly leads people astray, so it should not be propagated. For example, if you intend to go to the capital of Canada and someone takes you toward Washington, D.C., the capital of the US, you would certainly refuse such guidance. In terms of a spiritual path, it is the same, and no one wants to be directed toward a wrong path and go astray in any lifetime. Thus, you can be sure that it is not right to take ignorance as the doctrine.



8.15: Translators attentively taking down Chojé's teaching in shorthand

In short, whatever religion it is, only if it lays out the methods that bring about benefit and happiness can it be acknowledged as the correct one. Of course, some religions do provide approaches to accomplish benefit and happiness, but if it is only for yourself and your relatives and

followers and does not include others, then although their approaches wouldn't be deemed *mistaken*, these religions are considered inferior.

There are those religions that teach the doctrine that you should not only benefit yourself but also all human beings. However, they do not consider the welfare of animals and other forms of life. Still, they are not the best one. The reason for this is that just as a human being cherishes his or her life most, any sentient being such as a cow or horse does the same. Just as a human being would suffer when being harmed, animals feel the same way. So, you must come to the recognition that a true doctrine is the one that teaches methods to bring benefit to all beings equally. Therefore, a religion that possesses a pure doctrine is the one that promotes loving kindness that wishes all sentient beings to enjoy peace and happiness and compassion that wishes all sentient beings to be free from suffering. Also, it guides its followers to carry out deeds to actually help sentient beings in any way possible.

Though there are many religions in the world, from the perspective of upholding the intention of no harm and implementing the conduct of no harm, Christianity and Buddhism share some similarities. Surely, there must be many differences between them, but I don't think I can comment on them. In the Land of Tibet, there is almost no Christianity, and rarely can any Christian texts be found there. I have only been in the western world for some two months, and although I've gotten to know a little bit about Christianity, there has not been an opportunity for me to investigate its doctrine. So, I cannot make any accurate comments on how Christianity and Buddhism differ from each other.

If you find these two traditions to be equally conducive without the slightest difference, you can practice both of them equally. If you find that there are differences between them and one is better than the other, then delve deeper into their doctrines and practice whichever you consider superior. Now, as the one who teaches Buddhism, I'd like to explain briefly to you what the Buddhadharmā is.

Essence of the Buddhadharma

There are two core principles in the Buddhadharma: abandoning all actions that harm others and based on that, accomplishing all actions that benefit others. The first principle of abstaining from harming others is widely practiced in southeast Asian countries, such as Thailand and Myanmar. The second principle is that aside from abstaining harming others, you should also cherish others more than yourself. This altruistic doctrine of solely benefiting others is advocated in Mahayana Buddhism, which primarily flourishes in places like the Han regions of China. In addition, within the context of Mahayana, the path that guides its followers in dedicating themselves to the application of skillful means that can swiftly accomplish vast benefit for all living beings without hardship is known as Secret Mantrayana. It is practiced widely in the Land of Tibet and many places in India.

All three types of Buddhist doctrines were taught by the same root teacher, share the same teachings, and lead to the same fruition. If a distinction is made, these doctrines are different regarding their approaches to benefiting living beings, which, respectively, provide minor skillful means, great skillful means, and great skillful means that enable swift accomplishment. So, you should know that among these three, the latter is better than the former.

Nonetheless, the essence of all Buddhist doctrines is the same and can be summarized into two points: not harming others and taming your own mind. If your mind is untamed, you will be unable to benefit others, because even if you do not have the intention to harm someone, you might still inflict harm on them due to carelessness. So, first and foremost, learn how to tame your own mind. The way to do that is to cultivate the two indispensable qualities of unconditional compassion and transcendental wisdom.

What is compassion? It is to reflect, “How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings can be free from suffering.” With such a virtuous intention, you spare no effort to help beings alleviate suffering.

There are two practices to cultivate compassion: considering others as equal to yourself and cherishing others more than yourself. How do you engage in the practice of considering others as equal to yourself? Think about your own body. Even though there are different parts of your body, such as the head, hands, feet, and other parts, you equally protect each and every part from



8.16: Chojé imparting teaching passionately

getting hurt. Similarly, each living being will feel pain when experiencing suffering, and therefore, you must try to help all beings be free from suffering and achieve happiness, just like you do for yourself.

As the Buddha taught, the reason that you need to benefit others is because among all sentient beings, from beginningless time until now, there is not a single one of them who has not been your mother or father. At the time when they were your parents, just like the parents in this life, they brought you up with love and compassion and showed you tremendous kindness. This is the case even when you and they were born as wild animals, like tigers or leopards. Having recognized this, if you do not repay the great kindness of sentient beings but rather harm them, it is a great shame.

The Buddha also taught, “In this world, all peace, happiness, and harmony come from virtuous intent and conduct that aspire to bring happiness to others. Whereas all distress and misery, such as illness, famine, warfare, and so forth, come from non-virtuous intentions that are only for your own happiness and can cause unhappiness for

others.” You can understand this point by reflecting on the fact that our root teacher, Buddha Shakyamuni, the one who possessed great loving kindness, compassion, and skillful means, engaged himself only in altruistic activities to bring benefit to other sentient beings throughout countless lifetimes. For the sake of others, he even sacrificed his own life numerous times. It was because of this that he achieved ultimate enlightenment, a state of inconceivable bliss and happiness. On the contrary, ordinary sentient beings have mostly been considering their own happiness and don’t want others to be happy; sadly, they are still struggling in the endless suffering of samsara.



8.17: Chojé compassionately looking at the audience

If you want to benefit sentient beings, you should forsake jealousy toward those who are superior to you, give up a competitive attitude when associating with those who are of the same level with you, and abandon disrespect toward anyone who is of lower rank or capability. You need to maintain an impartial and honest intention and try to be perfect in conduct. On that basis, try to cultivate the Four Immeasurables in your daily life. They are immeasurable

loving kindness that wishes that all living beings enjoy happiness, immeasurable compassion that wishes all living beings to be free from suffering, immeasurable joy that rejoices in others' good fortune and pleasure, and immeasurable equanimity that bears no attachment to your relatives or hostility to your enemies. Those are the techniques of cultivating loving kindness and compassion.

When considering wisdom, merely having the aspiration that all sentient beings attain happiness and be free from suffering is not enough. You need to know the methods to carry out those aspirations. Without knowing those methods, compassion alone will not help much. Therefore, you must develop stainless transcendental wisdom, the knowledge of how to accomplish the benefit of yourself and others, and how to avoid harm to yourself and others. Such wisdom is an indispensable assistance to fulfill your compassionate aspirations.

This wisdom cannot arise without a cause and condition, neither will you develop it on your own by using your brains. You must first find a spiritual teacher who is more learned and who has developed transcendental wisdom and other noble qualities through diligent study and practice. Having found such a qualified teacher, next you must make an effort to extensively listen to the Buddha's teachings from him or her. What kind of teachings do you need to study exactly? For instance, in the Land of Tibet, there are more than three hundred volumes of the Kangyur and Tengyur that came in their entirety from India. In addition, there are thousands of volumes of works written by great Tibetan lamas.

Regarding all these teachings, superior practitioners should study all of them and earnestly put them into practice. If you are not able to do that, you should definitely listen to the doctrines of the bodhisattvas from your teacher, which are the teachings that enable you to accomplish the twofold benefit and avoid the twofold harm to self and others. Afterward, you must analyze the meaning of the teachings to see if you have really understood them and can put them into actual practice.

Just listening to the teachings and never contemplating the meaning will not enable you to develop a genuine understanding. For instance, if a student has attended the classes of a teacher for many years but never contemplates the teaching, then he or she would not grasp the essence, let alone put the information into practice. This is also like someone who merely knows the information of how to hold a steering wheel and step on the accelerator but never tries to drive a car on the road.

So, you need to know that everything you study should be put into practice in the end. If you do not incorporate what you have learned into your mind stream, it will be of no benefit, no matter how many teachings you have received. This is like learning how to drive a car on paper while never actually doing it. How is that different from not knowing how to drive at all? Therefore, if you want to develop immaculate transcendental wisdom, you must listen to dharma teachings in the beginning, contemplate their meaning in the middle, and put them into practice in the end. These three stages of study and practice must be carried out in sequence.

Practice Compassion and Wisdom Together

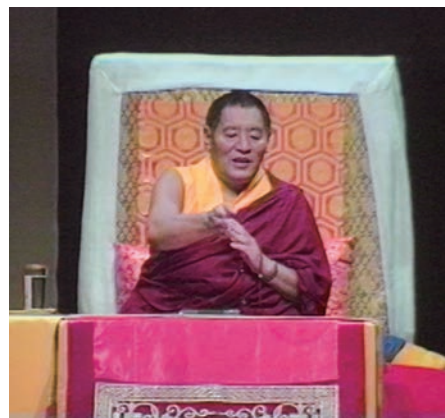
Now, I would like to talk briefly about how to train in compassion and wisdom.

First, contemplate that from beginningless time until now, without exception, there is not a single sentient being who has not been your father or mother. When they were your parents, just like your current parents, they fed you with the best food, dressed you in the best clothes, and raised you with unexcelled love and effort. They were so kind to you. However, although your loving parents wish to be happy, they do not know the cause of happiness. Although they do not want to suffer, they constantly accumulate the cause of suffering without any choice. How pitiful!

For these parent sentient beings, they always do what leads them to the opposite results of what they wish for, like blind people lost in the wilderness. For instance, most people wish for longevity, but they might take the lives of others. When they encounter their enemies, they are worried about being killed by those enemies so will take actions to kill them first. However, the more enemies they try to eliminate this way, the more hostility they will produce. Moreover, each time you take the life of another being, you will have to experience the repercussion that your own life will be taken five hundred times. So, to protect your own life by killing others is a mistaken view and conduct.

Or some people steal other's possessions to enrich their own wealth. However, such non-virtuous action will only bring them misfortune. Not only that, it is actually a cause that undermines their fortune to become wealthy. In particular, they will become impoverished, and the level of their poverty depends on the degree of their stealing. Unfortunately, they are completely ignorant of this.

Continue to contemplate that obviously, sentient beings have no idea of how to achieve happiness and how to avoid suffering. Therefore, you must apply an expedient method to help all sentient beings transcend suffering and attain happiness. However, at this moment, you do not possess the ability to benefit them. How can you be equipped with such ability?



8.18: Chojé vividly giving teaching

You must achieve buddhahood, which enables you to benefit others swiftly without any difficulty. Having recognized this, make the commitment in your heart, "In order to bring benefit and happiness to all sentient beings, I must accomplish buddhahood."

Of course, the ultimate fruition of buddhahood will not be accomplished without any cause, so you must persevere in its causes, which are the six paramitas. The first is the paramita of generosity, which is to give your own body, possessions, and root of virtue to all sentient beings without the slightest sense of stinginess. The second is the paramita of discipline, which is to abstain from ever harming any living being and to do whatever you can to benefit others. The third is the paramita of patience. This is to endure whatever harm being inflicted upon yourself by others and not to give rise to anger or aggression. Rather, do whatever you can to bring inexhaustible benefit to them.

The fourth is the paramita of diligence, which is to take great joy in pure and virtuous practice with the intention to accomplish the benefit and happiness of all sentient beings. The fifth is the paramita of meditative concentration. This is to focus your mind single-pointedly on virtuous thought, without allowing it to be overpowered or distracted by the afflictive emotions of desire, hatred, or ignorance. The sixth is the paramita of wisdom, which is to unmistakably understand the infallible law of cause and effect and to engage with all knowable things without delusion.

All six paramitas possess two aspects: focusing on the well-being of others with compassion and focusing on full enlightenment with wisdom. You must diligently practice these two in your daily life since they include all the essentials of the Buddhadharma. For all of you who are eager to practice the dharma, be aware that the essence of dharma practice is compassion and wisdom, so please wholeheartedly devote yourselves to cultivating these two qualities.

For those who are deciding whether or not the Buddhadharma is pure and correct, you can examine these two essential teachings. Immaculate compassion and unerring wisdom can be verified by internalizing them into your own being. If you find fault with them, then it indicates the Buddhadharma is not correct, but if you find nothing wrong, then it indicates it is a pure and correct path. Once you come to the conclusion

that the Buddhadharma is faultless, you should decisively begin to practice it. Otherwise, having recognized that the Buddhadharma is unmistakable but still not following it and saying that this is not the tradition that your father practices, this is merely a biased attitude and rather senseless.



8.19: Chojé looking at the audience

There is a Tibetan saying referring to such mindless behavior, “A herd of sheep blindly jump into the river.” When one sheep jumps into the water, all the other sheep just follow and jump into the water mindlessly, without bothering to think if they will drown. They are very blind. I don’t know if the sheep here in Canada also behave the same way, but that’s how they act in Tibet. If one sheep jumps, all the sheep behind will follow and jump one after another, even if they have watched the previous sheep drowning. In the same way, even if a tradition is passed down through generations, you should never consider it to be the first choice and simply embrace it without any

in-depth observation. Or else, it will be no different from the herd of sheep that jump into the water, and such a senseless act should be criticized. (Laughs)

A Tibetan Buddhist master once said:

*The wise can investigate things for themselves,
But fools chase after whatever is popular.
When an old dog yelps,
Other dogs run without reason.*

A learned one will discern carefully before he or she chooses to follow a path or do something, whereas a fool just follows whatever others are doing and doesn't even know why they are doing it. In the latter case, it is like when one old dog starts barking, all the other dogs start barking, not knowing what they are barking at. This is how the fool acts. So, you should definitely avoid behaving like this and never follow the crowd without any investigation.

You should really reflect on what I've said here. It is not because I am a dharma teacher that I have spoken these words. I entered Buddhism when I was seven years old, and now I am sixty years old. In my life, I never had blind faith in Buddhism and claimed it was the best for no reason. I have been investigating it throughout my life and have come to the conclusion that it is the supreme and most reliable spiritual path in this world. That's why I have devoted myself to its essential practice, the cultivation of pure compassion and wisdom, and rely on the Three Jewels as my ultimate refuge. If you find my teaching reasonable and my words resonate with you, you can choose to practice the same way.

This time, I traveled to the West, staying in the US for about two months and now in Canada. I have noticed Americans are kindhearted, hospitable, pleasing, and always smiling. The same is true for you Canadians, very warmhearted. So, I am happy to be here with you. During this short time this evening, I wanted to make it interesting by working a few jokes into my dharma teaching, but since my health is

not so good these days, that's all I can share with you tonight. If there is anything unsatisfactory, please forgive me.

I would like to mention that when I arrived here, I received warm greetings from the premier, the mayor, and other government officials, who expressed the sincere wish to meet me again in the future. You also gave me a warm, hospitable welcome, and I am very grateful for that.

Finally, I pray that in this lifetime, we can meet again and that through dharma practice, at the end of this life, all of us will take rebirth in Sukhavati to reunite at the feet of Buddha Amitabha. Tashi Delek!



8.20: Chojé waving goodbye

CULTIVATE FAITH IN THE THREE JEWELS

On the morning of August 19th, Yidzhin Norbu left Sharchen Ling and arrived at Dorje Denma Ling after a two-hour ride. Upon arriving at the center, Chojé was welcomed at the Schoolhouse building, where he resided for the following four days to give dharma teachings at this center.



8.21: Dorje Denma Ling in early years



8.22: Denma, one of the great generals of the King Gesar of Ling

Dorje Denma Ling was named after Denma, one of the great generals who commanded the troops of the Tibetan warrior king Gesar of Ling. Denma was also the father of Tenzin Yuö Bummé, a previous life of Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche. This center is located some one hundred forty kilometers from Halifax and is one of the few residential retreat centers of Shambhala. It is situated in a village called Tatamagouche, which is said to be a holy place where

the American aboriginals gathered and resided for thousands of years. Situated on a grassland and surrounded by lush forest, the center is wonderfully free from the hustle and bustle that pervades the city and is really an excellent place for spiritual practice.

In the afternoon, Rinpoche gave a dharma speech to the members of this center, as well as several thousand Buddhist devotees from the US and other places in Canada. It was a fabulous talk, as follows below.

My talk today will be comprised of some brief teachings central to and in accordance with the Buddhist tradition.

A State of Great Fortune

To begin with, all of us should recognize that, at this very moment, we find ourselves in a state of great good fortune. What is this great good fortune that I am speaking of?

First, we are very fortunate to have been born into this world, which according to Buddhist cosmology, is known as the southern continent of Jambudvīpa and which, in itself, is fully endowed with great fortune. Why is it said that Jambudvīpa is uniquely a place of great good fortune? It is because this world is fully endowed with the conditions to practice the dharma. Comparatively, even though there are other continents in which human beings may be reborn that are full of great enjoyment and pleasurable experiences, such places as the eastern continent of Purvavideha, the western continent of Aparagodaniya, and the northern continent of Uttarakuru, as described in the Abhidharma, these places are not endowed with favorable conditions to practice the Buddhadharmā. It is for this reason that the continent of Jambudvīpa is superior to any other continent in which to be reborn.

Second, in and of itself, it is extremely precious and excellent to obtain a human rebirth in the realm of Jambudvīpa because of all of the

endowments and freedoms that this offers. In other realms, such as the hell realm, the hungry ghost realm, the animal realm, or the asura realm, the suffering that must be endured there is unbearable. Because of this, there is absolutely no opportunity to practice the dharma. Even if you are born in the god realm of rare beauty and sensual ecstasy, because you are so consumed with the experience of pleasure, there is no opportunity to practice the dharma. So, for this reason, a human rebirth is more precious than a god rebirth.

Moreover, Buddha Shakyamuni presented teachings in three vehicles corresponding to the pratimoksha vows, the bodhisattva vows, and the Vajrayana vows. Only those who have obtained a precious human rebirth are able to practice these teachings and to achieve their accomplishment. For someone who is born in the god or other realms, their existences do not provide them the entire prerequisites for completing a Buddhist path, and they would hardly have the opportunity to practice any of these teachings. For these reasons, a human rebirth is absolutely the most sublime and is more precious than any other type of rebirth. Therefore, the Buddha and his followers specifically praised this jewel-like human body as being even superior to that of a god. As we have all obtained such a precious existence, we should really feel a sense of great joy.

In addition, it is even rarer to be born at a time when a buddha has come into this world. Why is that? An eon that a buddha has come into the world is called *a bright eon*, and an eon in which no buddha appears in the world is called *a dark eon*. As for these two types of eons, there are many more dark eons than bright ones, and the occasional bright eons such as ours when Buddha Shakyamuni appeared are interspersed among many, many dark eons. So, the bright eons are very rare to encounter. The reason why a buddha does not appear in a world is because the opportunity and favorable conditions for sentient beings to practice the dharma is extremely rare.

The Buddha came into the world and turned the wheel of dharma three times. Furthermore, the light of these dharma teachings has not decreased and is still illuminating this world, which is even rarer. Because you are living among these precious conditions, you should really feel great joy.

Even with all of these favorable conditions—that the Buddha came into this world and taught the dharma and that all of his teachings are still present in the world—you still need a qualified spiritual teacher who can explain these teachings to you. Without a qualified teacher, it is impossible to learn and practice these teachings by relying only on your own efforts. Unfortunately, it is also rare to encounter a lama from whom you can receive the Buddha’s teachings and who can guide you to put these teachings into actual practice.



8.23: A ray of sunshine shining upon Chojé

Here is a brief summary of these favorable conditions in which you find yourself: being born into a human existence with all of the endowments

and freedoms in the southern continent of Jambudvīpa; being born in a time that the Buddha has come into the world and given the dharma teachings, and that these dharma teachings have not vanished from the world and are still available; and being able to meet with qualified spiritual teachers who can explain these sacred teachings and who are still imparting the teachings. Therefore, your present situation is rarer and more fortunate than the blooming of an udumbara flower. Every time you think about this, you should give rise to a strong sense of joy and gratitude.

Three Levels of Faith

In terms of external aspects, you are fully endowed with advantages and conducive conditions. Then, on your part, first and foremost, you must develop a deep faith in order to achieve enlightenment. What exactly is faith? From a Buddhist perspective, there are three types of faith: vivid faith, eager faith, and confident faith. *Vivid faith* is faith that is based on strong attraction and is inspired by thinking of the Buddha. *Eager faith* is the faith that encourages you to emulate and is inspired by thinking of the dharma. *Confident faith* is faith that is inspired by thinking of the sangha.

Vivid faith is a feeling of tremendous joy and happiness that comes about when you think about the Buddha. The reason that you feel tremendous joy and happiness when thinking about the Buddha is because, when compared to Maheshvara, Indra, Brahma, and many other powerful beings of this world, the Buddha possesses countless, unparalleled noble qualities that make him unequalled by any of them. Then, you may wonder, "What are the Buddha's unparalleled qualities?" For example, if a bodhisattva on the first bhumi or above were to describe one of the Buddha's qualities and were to speak uninterruptedly for hundreds of thousands of years, this bodhisattva would still not be able to completely describe all aspects of this quality. So, even one of the Buddha's qualities is unimaginable, let alone all of his qualities.



8.24: Thousands of Buddhists gathering from the US and Canada

Although the Buddha possesses countless noble qualities that you are unable to fully know, you must be aware of those uncommon qualities that are of great benefit to you. What are they? The Buddha taught living beings the methods of achieving a good human or god rebirth where you can enjoy a temporary state of happiness, as well as the spiritual paths to attain buddhahood, the ultimate state of enlightenment that contains all miraculous abilities. Of all his qualities, the Buddha's abilities in teaching these methods to living beings are the most supreme. These are the qualities that you must be aware of because regardless of how many noble qualities the Buddha possesses, if they were of no benefit to you, there would be no reason for you to take delight in him. For example, there are many powerful kings or rulers in this world. If they cannot bring you any benefit, what's the reason to like and support them? But if any of their actions were to greatly benefit you, then thinking of them would bring much joy. So, be aware of the Buddha's noble qualities that are of great benefit to you so that you can develop sincere joy and delight in him.

What then were the Buddha's noble qualities that are of such great benefit to you? Of them all, there are three primary categories: the qualities of wisdom, compassion, and power.

If the Buddha had not known how to set limitless sentient beings free from suffering and place them in the state of permanent peace and happiness, the Buddha would have been of little or no benefit to them. Yet, the Buddha was able to do so because he possessed the quality of omniscient wisdom.

While the Buddha had the quality of omniscient wisdom, compassion was also indispensable. Without compassion, he would not have worked for the benefit of sentient beings. For instance, even though a person is very learned, if they have ill will toward others or a rough and offensive character, then no matter how knowledgeable he or she is, they really cannot be of benefit to others. Therefore, the quality of compassion must be possessed.

What kind of compassion did the Buddha possess? Take the example of the love of a mother for her only child. Multiply her love by hundreds and thousands of times, and it still falls short of the love that the Buddha had for all living beings. How has this conclusion been reached? It is because during both his causal stage and the time of his full enlightenment, the Buddha always dedicated his body and life to the well-being of others. Some people may ask, "In what way did the Buddha dedicate his body and life during his causal stage in order to benefit others?" At the famous Deer Park, Varanasi, where the Buddha gave the first turning of the dharma wheel, he gave away his own head hundreds of thousands of times in order to bring benefit and happiness to living beings. This was said by the Buddha himself. As a matter of fact, the dedication of his blood and flesh for the well-being of others happened not only in Varanasi, but in many places throughout Jambudvipa and even in numerous other parts of the universe outside of Jambudvipa.

Moreover, there was never a time or situation in which the Buddha showed that he possessed biased and unequal compassion. If the Buddha had expressed compassion toward those who were close to him, such as those who were attracted to him or respected him, and

not shown compassion to others, then this would have shown his compassion to have been biased. The Buddha's compassion was never like this, but rather universally even toward all beings. So, how is the Buddha's universal compassion described? Once, when the Buddha was alive, Indra was reverently cleaning the Buddha's body using sandalwood water on his right side, while Devadatta, harboring a malicious intent, was trying to harm the Buddha with sharp weapons on his left. The Buddha treated them each with loving kindness and held within his heart and mind the wish for both of them to equally be placed on the path to peace and happiness.

Also, if the Buddha's loving kindness and compassion extended only to those in higher positions or to those who were endowed with greater material wealth, but not to those who were inferior or poor, then the Buddha's love would not have shown its full expression. In fact, it was just the opposite. Instead of favoring powerful people, the Buddha showed more compassion and love for those who were poor and helpless. The Buddha's compassion was never limited, unlike that of political leaders that most often favor their own people or race. If you think about political leaders these days, they usually express their kindness and appreciation in front of thousands of people when there is some benefit for themselves, but they may not help even a couple of individuals with a sincere mind. In contrast, even if just one sentient being was in need, the Buddha would willingly give up his life and blood many times over without any regret. For billions of years, the Buddha has unceasingly and tirelessly given of himself in order to benefit even one living being. Such love and compassion are absolutely unrivaled.

At one point during his causal stage, the Buddha was in the hell realm, and he was known as Gyepakshuda, together with a friend called Kamarupa, where they were forced to pull heavy wagons. A guard of the hell realm harnessed them to a wagon and beat them severely, forcing them to labor unceasingly. The future Buddha thought, "I'll

pull it and suffer alone, so that Kamarupa can be relieved." So, he said to the guard, "Sir, please listen to me. I'd like to bear my friend's karmic retribution on behalf of him. Put his harness over my shoulders. I'm going to pull the cart on my own. Please spare my friend from suffering." Hearing this, the guard became even more angry and said, "No one can do anything to prevent others from experiencing their own karmic effects!" Then, the guard just smashed him over the head with a hammer. As a result, he died and took rebirth immediately in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three. This story is recorded in the Buddha's biography.

Also, in the Buddha's time, there was a former disciple of his named Devadatta, who ended up becoming one of the Buddha's greatest enemies and was always trying to compete with and even harm the Buddha. Even in the many previous lives that they shared together, there were many occasions that Devadatta tried to bring harm to the Buddha. In spite of this, the Buddha always sought to bring benefit to Devadatta even at the cost of his own body or the loss of his own life. This, along with countless other examples, shows that the Buddha's expressions of his loving kindness and compassion are ineffable.

Given his omniscient wisdom and unrivaled compassion, the Buddha was further endowed with great power. Without power, compassion and wisdom are not complete. This can be equated to a situation in which a poor mother with no arms sees her child being swept away by rushing water. Even though filled with an inconceivable love for her child, there is still nothing that she can do to save it. Likewise, compassion without power gets you nowhere in your efforts to help sentient beings. However, the Buddha possessed such power.

What kind of power did the Buddha possess? There are three types of power that the Buddha possessed that relate to his body, speech, and mind. Regarding the power of the Buddha's body, simply seeing the Buddha or being in his presence brought about the potency to liberate beings from the suffering of cyclic existence and set them on

the path toward ultimate peace. Someone may ask, “That is the benefit an individual could gain in actually meeting with the Buddha. What about the present day now that the Buddha has already passed into nirvana?”



8.25: Chojé teaching in the tent

It still applies today. As the Buddha himself promised, “I will manifest in various forms and guide beings to perform virtue.” The Buddha clearly stated that he will manifest in various forms to benefit beings. Included in these forms are the statues that are molded in his likeness and made of gold, clay, wood, or even stone. Paying homage, making offerings to them, and making aspirations in front of them all bring about the same results as if you were to meet the Buddha directly. This is taught in the sutras. Similarly, if someone is able to see a thangka that depicts the form of the Buddha, whether it is a particularly attractive work of art or not, it will bring to the person who views it incredible blessings.

You should have no doubt that if an individual with strong faith and devotion sees the form of the Buddha, that person will accumulate

merit that is beyond description. Even if you gaze upon the form of the Buddha while filled with anger, just through the connection of this experience, you will quickly achieve buddhahood. This is also clearly stated in the sutras.

Regarding the power of the Buddha's speech, if during the time that the Buddha was alive, you were able to have directly received his teaching, or if in the present time, through sincerely praying to the Buddha, you eventually see the Buddha and hear his teaching in a pure vision or in a dream state, all of these kinds of experience will enable you to quickly develop various noble qualities and to eventually achieve buddhahood.

(At this point, Chojé smiled and said, "I thought that they hadn't given me a microphone. Well, as it turns out, it's down there in the drawer. I didn't know that until now. Who closed the drawer? Was it you two or me? It's me? Really? Well, I didn't know it was there. I thought I had no mic, so I spoke loudly. Just now I heard its sound, so I realized that I have a mic.")

The Buddha's speech includes not only the teachings directly spoken by him, but also all the dharma teachings that are compiled into sutras and shastras. The merit of actually hearing them is inconceivable and can bring about the power to close the door to the lower realms, and needless to say, to extend your life, bless you with good health, endowments, and so on. Even in the case of people who are less fortunate and have no opportunity to hear dharma teachings, as well as such beings as birds or wild animals who do not have the ability to receive the teachings, just by hearing the sound of a conch being blown or a drum being beaten before the teaching, they will be freed from the suffering of samsara in the near future.

Regarding the power of the Buddha's mind, triggered by his great compassion and loving kindness toward every individual, the Buddha has been ceaselessly engaging in activities of benefiting sentient beings

at all times and on all occasions. In the same way that it is impossible for waves to leave the ocean, likewise, it is impossible for the Buddha to give up or terminate his activities of benefiting all beings.

Throughout all the different worlds in every one of the ten directions, if the form of a buddha can inspire living beings, the Buddha will manifest as a buddha. If the form of a bodhisattva can inspire living beings, the Buddha will manifest as a bodhisattva. Similarly, if the form of a hearer or a solitary realizer can evoke beings' inspiration, then the Buddha will manifest as such to them accordingly. For the benefit of those non-human beings, like birds, wild animals, aquatic animals, and so forth, the Buddha will manifest in their forms accordingly to inspire and enlighten them. In a word, the Buddha can assume boundless forms for the benefit of sentient beings.

Even more, for the purpose of demonstrating the dharma, the Buddha will manifest as mountains, forests, jungles, and so forth in order to bring incredible benefit to living beings. For each and every sentient being, the Buddha always tries to benefit them unceasingly day and night in whatever way is deemed necessary. There is never a time that the Buddha ceases to benefit beings.

I would like to reiterate what I've just mentioned. If the Buddha did not have the wisdom that knows how to bring benefit and happiness to sentient beings, then there is no reason for you to give your devotion to him. But that is not the case, and the Buddha possessed the omniscient knowledge of all phenomena. Given the Buddha's omniscience, if he did not possess great compassion, he wouldn't guide and inspire sentient beings to the path of liberation. So, in addition to being omniscient, the Buddha possessed unconditionally great loving kindness and compassion as well. Given that the Buddha possessed omniscient wisdom and great compassion, if he didn't have power, he wouldn't be able to accomplish his great purpose of actually benefiting living beings. So the Buddha must also have had complete power. In the entire world, it is only the Buddha who possessed this type of unrivaled

qualities in terms of wisdom, compassion, and power. There is no one else in this world who can equal him in this. So, if you settle down to give careful thought to it, other than those who have no heart in their body or no brain in their head, everyone else will surely generate sincere faith in the Buddha.



8.26: Chojé's loving smile

Eager faith is the faith inspired by thinking of the dharma. It is to have conviction in the Buddha's sublime teachings with the enthusiasm to put them into actual practice. Some may ask, "Then, how do you practice the Buddha's teaching?" To put it simply, it is to accomplish what is wholesome and virtuous and to abandon what is not.

What is wholesome and virtuous practice? In brief, it is to have the consideration of never harming others and to develop loving kindness and compassion toward all living beings. Conversely, to harbor negative thoughts or to actually show physical aversion toward any being, whether they are high, middling, or low, is considered to be non-virtuous.

In order to help sentient beings abstain from harming each other, the Buddha taught the four principles for Shramana. While it is termed as *the principles for Shramana*, it is actually a code of conduct for all followers of the Buddha because, in a broader sense, *Shramana* refers to all followers of the Buddha. So, it follows that these four principles should be practiced by all followers of the Buddha.

First, never hold anger toward others, even when others feel angry with you. Second, do not respond with an angry retort even if you are being verbally abused. Third, even if others strike you with a stone, a stick, or other weapon, as true followers of the Buddha, do not fight back. Fourth, do not retaliate when others insult you. For instance, when someone speaks ill of your parents or says that you are ugly and penniless, that you are a robber or liar, and so on, or simply points out your faults, you should not react with vicious remarks and expose their faults in retaliation. This exemplifies the spirit of the Buddhist teaching, “May I take upon myself all defeat and offer to others all glory.” You should give to others the victory and any type of benefit and take upon yourselves defeat and loss. If someone is able to truly practice these four principles, he or she can be considered to be a true follower of the Buddha. Otherwise, although you may appear to be a Buddhist and consider yourself a follower of the Buddha, without practicing these four principles, you are a Buddhist in name only and not a true follower of the Buddha.

How then can these principles be put into practice? In the general sense, when others deliberately harm you, how can you not feel angry at all? Even if someone whom you have treated as well as you have treated your own child were to harm you, despite the fact that you have done nothing at all wrong, you should still not feel resentful. The situation is like that of a child who suffers a mental illness. No matter how he abuses his mother, the mother would never feel resentful, but rather would only think of how to cure her child’s suffering. Likewise, to those who return your kindness with hatred, you should only wish

them to be free from such affliction. This is the way of practicing loving kindness and compassion toward others.

If you have hurt others in the past, then it is understandable that they might wish to hurt you in the present. So why should you become angry with them? If you have not even made a mistake as tiny as a needle point, but still someone mistreats you and harms you badly, even if they were to go so far as to cut off your head, still you should not let your anger arise. Moreover, you should pray, "May all of his negative karma and subsequent suffering ripen upon me." This is the type of compassion that you should generate toward others.

Also, if there are those who talk ill of you, there's no reason for you to get angry. Even if they spread rumors about you or reveal your faults on a much larger scale, maybe across many countries, you should still exalt their good qualities with a joyful mind. If you are belittled by those who are superior to you, you may find that it is not difficult for you to accept their behavior and practice patience. But if those who are inferior to you cast various insults upon you, not only should you never retaliate with anger, but you should also show them respect and tolerance. This is also the all-embracing spirit of Buddhism.

So, the doctrine of the Buddha is the sublime path of being peaceful and harmless that promotes the practice of never harming others and always benefiting them. Maybe you are thinking, "The Buddha's teaching sounds very good, however there are very few people who can truly practice these teachings. So, it is impossible for me to carry it out." Happily, there are known methods that you can learn to follow this path. To engage yourself in all these practices is certainly too difficult for most beginners. Even for myself, a Tibetan monk and a lama, it is also not always easy to put all these teachings into actual practice. So, it is important that you act according to your own capability and try to delve into this teaching of the Buddha and practice it in gradual stages.

In the Land of Tibet there are well-practiced lamas who would rather give up their lives than hurt or steal from others. But for you, it is probably difficult to absolutely refrain from harming a single living being or taking the possessions of someone. Even so, you can begin to train yourselves step by step.



8.27: Interaction with the audience

According to the Buddha's teaching, Shramana should abandon harming others. To possess a vicious mind or engage in rude behavior certainly disqualifies you as a true follower of the Buddha. This has been clearly taught. The Buddha also said, "To tame your own mind and to never disturb the mind of others, this is the Buddhist doctrine." Therefore, you must spare no effort to accomplish this goal.

Then, how do you tame your mind? You should carefully watch your mind for any negative thoughts. When a strong upheaval of anger appears, when great desire or jealousy arises, or when an arrogant feeling makes you believe that you are better than others, in the moment that such negative emotions arise, you should immediately recognize them and let go of them. Mindfulness and vigilance are indispensable to protecting your mind. Meanwhile, in order to prevent

these emotional afflictions from arising in the future, you should pray to the guru and the Three Jewels for their powerful blessings.

How do you not disturb the minds of others? You must renounce bad behavior caused by the actions of your body, various kinds of rude language that arise as a result of your speech, and all negative thoughts created by your mind because all these would possibly distress and harm others. If it happens that you have actually disturbed others either physically, verbally, or mentally, it is best to eradicate such afflictions from the root. If this proves to be beyond your capacity, you should at least remind yourself that as followers of the Buddha, disturbing the minds of others is really a shameful and unsuitable thing that you should never do again. To maintain this determination, pray to the guru and the Three Jewels to receive their blessings.

Some of you may wonder, "What are the benefits of taming my mind and not disturbing the minds of others?" The benefits are that in this very lifetime, you will experience longevity, gain good health, beauty, wealth, and respect from others, as well as many other benefits. Not only that, in a future life, you will be reborn in pure lands, such as the pure land of great bliss, Sukhavati, and achieve the status of perfect enlightenment, attaining ultimate happiness that is free from any suffering.

So, if a single person acting on their own actually practices the dharma, this person will be freed from suffering and gain peace and happiness. If a family practices the dharma together, then the whole family will be endowed with happiness. If the people of an entire city were to practice the dharma, the entire city will gain both temporary and ultimate peace and happiness. And if the people of an entire country were to practice the dharma, then that whole country will be prosperous, and its people will be living in peace. Eventually, if people of the whole world were to practice the dharma, the whole world would be filled with happiness and present an appearance of peace and auspiciousness. There would

be no more suffering beings, every person would feel joy and every family would be infused with happiness.

Every sentient being wants only to be happy and free from suffering. Nobody wants to suffer and be denied happiness. As a matter of fact, the way to attain happiness and to be free from suffering is taught only by the Buddha. As I have just mentioned, if you carefully think about and thoroughly observe the Buddha's teachings, everyone with a heart in their body or a brain in their head will be attracted to the dharma.

Careful observation is a necessity. But if you have repeatedly examined the Buddha's teachings but still have no faith in them, you are, as we Tibetans call this type of person, *a heartless or brainless person*. In our culture we have the practice of calling someone like this a person without a brain or a heart. This is really not to be taken literally since I am not saying that a person has no physical heart or brain. It's not like this. For the followers of the Buddha, the heart is not just that lump of flesh inside a physical body, and the brain is also not just the white brain tissue. These physical organs are not typically emphasized in Buddhism. In fact, anyone who develops the right view in accord with Buddhist teaching can be called *a person with both a heart and a brain*.

So, if you want to be a person with a heart and a brain, you should discern your spiritual path and get to know what you are going to practice in a manner free of any doubt or misunderstanding. If all you know how to do is to sleep, walk around, eat, and put clothes on, then this is not enough to qualify you to be thought of as someone with a heart and a brain.

Confident faith is the faith that is inspired by thinking of the sangha. The word *sangha* means the followers of the Buddha. As the followers of the Buddha, the sangha's only goal is to work hard to bring benefit to themselves and others. The sangha falls into three categories: the followers of Hinayana, who abstain from harming others intentionally;

the followers of Mahayana, who in addition to not harming, intentionally bring benefit to others; and the followers of Vajrayana, who can attain spiritual accomplishment swiftly and effortlessly and in doing so benefit all sentient beings extensively.

If people realize that the sangha, regardless of which category, is always concerned with the welfare of others, then no one will mistrust them. For example, you may have a friend who likes you, respects you, is happy for you when he's together with you, and will also praise you and care about your benefit when you're not around. Friends



8.28: Chojé interacting with the interpreter

such as these are certainly true friends and deserve your trust. There are also some kinds of friends who will compliment you to your face while saying bad words about you behind your back. Friends such as these deserve no trust at all because they are likely to hurt you in any number of ways. Unlike those so-called friends, you can develop confident faith in the sangha.

That completes a brief explanation of the noble qualities of the Three Jewels.

Take Refuge in the Three Jewels

Do you feel a sense of joy in the Three Jewels? If yes, please raise your hands. I'd like to see how many of you feel that way. (The majority of people raise their hands.) Are there any people who still don't feel interested? Please raise your hands. (No one raises a hand.) Well, excellent! It seems like everyone likes the Three Jewels. (Laughs)

My wish is that from this moment onward and throughout all of your lifetimes, you will pray to the Buddha, the unsurpassed teacher who

possessed the most exalted and perfect qualities, that you will practice the dharma of never harming beings, and that you will befriend the sangha who upholds the sublime dharma. May you make the vow deep in your hearts to practice the Buddhadharmā. With this type of devotion and aspiration, please bring your palms together at your heart and repeat after me three times:

I take refuge in the guru.

I take refuge in the Buddha.

I take refuge in the dharma.

I take refuge in the sangha.

(His Holiness conferred the refuge vows to the audience.)

Now, all of you have received the refuge vows. From this moment onward, you may call yourself a Buddhist. From this moment onward, whatever activities you engage in, whatever goals you want to accomplish, either spiritual or secular, you will be able to accomplish them smoothly and without any hindrance. Moreover, if any human, non-human, negative spirit, or malicious demon tries to create obstacles for you, you will be compassionately protected by the Three Jewels. As long as you do not abandon the Three Jewels, either in your actions or in your thoughts, you can gain happiness and benefit in this life, and you will no longer be forced to take rebirth in the three lower realms. If you maintain this commitment and promise in an unchanging way, then you will have truly accomplished the highest purpose of this precious human rebirth.

Now, as I look around, I see that there is a mixed crowd here. Many of you here were born in Canada, and some of you were born in the US. I do feel that for many of you here, today is the most meaningful and valuable day of your life. Why do I say so? Because I think for many, most of your life has more or less been spent in the pursuit of food, clothes, wealth, and position. You have dedicated almost your entire lifetime and so much effort on your careers, with the hope that

there might be a chance that you can become as rich as the billionaire David Rockefeller. However, regardless of how hard you have tried, what you have been able to accomplish is nothing out of the ordinary. Except for enough food to eat, some money, and a certain reputation, nothing really special has been accomplished. So, it seems that what you've done in your entire life has not been all that meaningful. If you compare what you can earn through the efforts of your entire working life, the benefits you've obtained today in just this small amount of time have been more meaningful. (Laughs.)

This is how I feel. Many of you probably are long time Buddhist practitioners. Some of you were not Buddhists before, and now you are. Whatever the case, if you develop devotion and faith in the Three Jewels, then I feel that my journey to Canada has been something meaningful and that our meeting today is a fully endowed occasion.

Next, I'd like to briefly outline the training that you must try to engage in after having taken refuge. From this day forward, do not forget to pray to the Buddha to help and assist you on the path. Having taken refuge in the dharma, you should try your best not to ever intentionally harm any other being. Having taken refuge in the sangha, you should respect and cultivate confidence in the followers of the Buddha. By doing these things, all your aspirations will be fulfilled.

In my teaching today, I have talked about how to generate faith in the Three Jewels. I hope you have gained great benefit from it. I don't consider myself to have an attractive voice or to be skillful with words, so maybe you didn't like the way I'm talking. Nevertheless, what I've shared with you today is something that will be a benefit to you in this and all future lifetimes. So, whether you liked my speaking style or not, I hope that all of you will take care and think about my words from your heart.

Thank you. That's the teaching for today. There will be more teachings tomorrow and the day after, and you can attend as you wish.

FOUR KINDS OF SUPERIORITY

On August 20th, Yidzhin Norbu briefly introduced the sadhana of *Peaceful Manjushri* and then gave that empowerment.



8.29: Chojé bestowing the *Peaceful Manjushri* empowerment

Today, I'm going to give you the empowerment of *Swift Bestowal of Blessings—A Sadhana of Peaceful Manjushri*. Before we start, I'd like to concisely introduce its history and origin.

According to Buddhist cosmology, the center of our world is Bodh Gaya in India. It is the sacred place where all the buddhas of the three times will attain full awakening, and if you go there to pay homage, prostrate, and make aspirations, just through such actions, your downfalls and wrongdoings committed since beginningless time will be purified. To the east of Bodh Gaya, there is a holy mountain called Mount Wutai in China, which has five flat-topped peaks. Since time immemorial, it has been the place where the bodhisattva Lord Manjushri actually resides.

On the auspicious full moon day, the fifteenth day of the fourth month of the Fire Rabbit Year during the seventeenth calendrical cycle (1987), I paid a special pilgrimage to Mount Wutai with tens of thousands of disciples. We went to this powerful holy place with the intention of making virtuous aspirations through collectively chanting the *King of Aspiration Prayers for Excellent Conduct* and other auspicious prayers. During our stay there, depending



8.30: Chojé blessing everyone during the empowerment

on their levels of awareness and stages of development in practice, every person gathered there saw auspicious signs in one form or another, such as extraordinary light rays or illusory manifestations displayed out of the great compassion of Manjushri. Being consumed by the compassionate blessing of Manjushri, this particular sadhana spontaneously and effortlessly welled up in my mind. Whoever engages in its practice regardless of their spiritual capacity, whether it is superior, middling, or inferior, will obtain tremendous benefit. It is a profound practice that is particularly relevant to and meant for practitioners in the West, and its blessings and results come more swiftly than any other practice.

This year, because of the compassionate blessing of Manjushri, I found myself being brought here to the West quite beyond my power. And you, as the recipients of this teaching, also gathered here by the force of your karmic fortune from past lives. In this lifetime, my disciples and all of you who attend today's teaching are considered to be the first group of recipients of this practice; thereby, the blessings will be tremendous if you engage in its practice.

This sadhana, along with the practice manual, is characterized by four kinds of superiority. First, it is concise in words, yet contains all the essential meanings of the teachings of the Buddha and his followers. In other words, it condenses all the secret and essential points of the Buddhadharma. Second, unlike many other practice formats, the teaching is easy to understand, and even if you have never undergone long-term theoretical and practical training, you can grasp its essence easily. Third, its blessing is greater than other teachings, so it is a teaching particularly intended for the present time. Why do I say it is intended for this time? As the world goes through many changes, each age requires a teaching that is in accordance with the needs of the time. Now, this particular teaching is exactly what people need today. Fourth, it is a special practice that will definitely bring you benefit. Just like borneol³ is an antidote for heat illnesses, this is a pure practice that can remove all karma and afflictions and bring forth benefit and happiness. Therefore, you should listen to the teaching attentively with devotion and respect.

Now, I am going to transmit to you the empowerment and instruction of this practice that is endowed with the four supreme qualities. After receiving it, I hope you can put it into practice and share it extensively with other fortunate ones. In brief, it is of great significance that you uphold and carry on this practice of Manjushri so that its transmission will continue in this world. Please bear this in mind. Above is a brief introduction to the history and origin of this practice, which I mentioned in order to make you feel eager to embrace it.



8.31: Chojé joyfully giving the transmission

In the following process when you are receiving the empowerment, you should not see the teacher as an ordinary and impure mortal being

but view him as the real wisdom being Manjushri. Then, with respect and devotion, supplicate the teacher to bestow upon you the profound empowerment that can bring your mind to spiritual maturity.

When the empowerment was being conferred during the part of directly pointing out the nature of mind, Rinpoche taught the following pith instruction:

First of all, you must understand that all phenomena in samsara and nirvana are just illusory manifestations of your own mind and cannot be truly established externally. Having developed such an understanding, you must then come to the realization that without examination, the mind itself is like the reflection of the moon on water, only appearing to exist. While observing its nature, you realize the mind is empty and has nothing to be substantially established.

To have such understanding is not enough; you must also maintain such a view in daily life. Either in your ordinary life or during your practice, whatever appears to you, either good or bad, you must not negate or affirm it, nor do you classify it. Instead, always try to sustain the view of emptiness.

If you repeatedly practice in this way, someday your negative conceptual thoughts, such as desire, anger, ignorance, arrogance, and jealousy, however strong they may be, will wane to exhaustion into the dharmadhatu, as if a black whirlwind subsides and disappears into the empty sky. Thereby, with no need to search for them anywhere else, you will accomplish the noble qualities of a buddha spontaneously and effortlessly. For this reason, this short instruction is considered to be the one that has incorporated the view, meditation, conduct, and result of Dzogchen and Mahamudra.

I LEFT A TOOTH

During our stay in Dorje Denma Ling, despite the fact that the environment was tranquil and beautiful, I was not in the mood to enjoy the scenery. The reason was that as Chojé's attendant, there were so many things to deal with that I was extremely busy. What was even worse, during that period, I got a terrible toothache that made it hard to fall asleep every night. That experience made me understand the authenticity of a Tibetan saying, "Among all types of fatal diseases, headache is the mildest. Among all types of non-fatal diseases, toothache is the most unbearable."

The toothache tortured me for quite some time, and finally one day, I could not bear it anymore and decided to see a doctor. I walked out of the center alone to see if I could find a hospital nearby. After walking for about a kilometer, I saw a dental clinic. The dentist was quite nice. He gave me an injection of anesthetic and pulled out one of my upper molars. Being free of the toothache, I happily went to the checkout to pay the bill. But when I was told that they charged me 70 Canadian dollars, this amount made my heart ache. That was about 350 yuan at that time. How expensive! If it had been in the Land of Tibet, it would have only cost me several yuan at most.

On my way back, I passed by an open ground, and it occurred to me that I should leave this costly tooth there. With this sudden idea, I buried my tooth on the spot and made a virtuous aspiration. If there is any chance that I visit Canada and go to that place again, I know I will be able to locate my tooth and find it.

TWO EMPOWERMENTS

On the morning of August 21st, Yidzhin Norbu gave two empowerments, *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* and *Dorje Drolu*, the wrathful form of Padmasambhava.

After completing all the stages of preparation that must be completed before the actual empowerment of *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma*, Rinpoche began to introduce the origin of this practice:



8.32: Chojé giving the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* empowerment

Once in the past, the second buddha Orgyen Rinpoche Padmasambhava engaged in single-pointed concentration on the practice of this sadhana in the rock cave of Yanglesho in Nepal. His sole purpose was to subjugate all malicious and unruly demons and spirits of Tibet so that the Buddhadharma could be established and prosper in that land. Through practicing this sadhana, he attained the siddhi that made him equal to the glorious Vajrakumara, and he achieved the supreme result of the mahamudra vidyadhara. With that, all *Vajrakilaya* tantras and sadhanas welled forth within his mind.

At this time, Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava, foresaw the special needs in future times and thus made the following prophecy in the root terma:

*I, the self-arisen Lotus King,
Entrust this, the ultimate essence of
The whole Vidyottama Tantra,
To you, Jinamitra.
Do not neglect it but put it into practice.
In the future, at the very end of time,*

*One who is your own emanation will
Encounter this and safeguard the teachings.*

For the benefit of his five disciples, including the Nepali king at that time named Jinamitra, as well as sentient beings in the future, Orgyen Rinpoche took out this sadhana of the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* from the pouch that he wore around his neck. Then, he entrusted it to Jinamitra and sealed and blessed its transmission by making aspiration prayers. He also committed the twelve Guardian sisters of Vajrakilaya, as well as other powerful dharma protectors, to protect this practice, and made the prediction that in the future, this practice would be brought into the world again and be widely propagated. As it was predicted, when the important circumstances were fully present, at the right place, on the right occasion, and with the right retinue, I revealed this terma by recalling a former life.

When I was at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center, I gave a more extensive explanation of the history and background of this terma. I hope you can receive that and keep it in mind.

Afterward, at the beginning of the *Dorje Drolu* empowerment, Chojé gave the following teaching:

What you are going to receive is the empowerment of a concise practice of *Dorje Drolu*, which I revealed at Paro Taktsang in Bhutan. It is from the accomplishment cycle of the profound earth terma of *Dorje Drolu, Complete Sugata Assembly*.

Anyone who receives this empowerment and performs this practice will attain the result of longevity, good health, abundant endowment and possessions, and being freed from negative circumstances and obstacles. When passing from this life, you will immediately be reborn in the Palace of Lotus Light of the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain in Chamaradvipa or be born in Sukhavati, Amitabha's buddha field of bliss. There, you will enjoy inconceivably undefiled great bliss.

This practice is the uncommon and direct cause for the attainment of buddhahood, the state of extraordinary peace.

Especially, for those of you who are dharma practitioners at this center, if you practice this sadhana, you will have all your wishes fulfilled. This practice is of special significance to you because I know that Trungpa Rinpoche himself revealed a terma of *Dorje Drola* from Paro Taktsang. I guess that his terma and mine are basically the same,



8.33: Chojé giving the *Dorje Drola* empowerment

although this is not clearly delineated in the symbolic words of the dakinis or elsewhere. For this reason, I believe if practitioners at his centers practice this sadhana of *Dorje Drola*, they will be able to accomplish all they want without meeting any obstacles, and it will also help greatly for the propagation of the Buddhadharma.

Hereafter, all you disciples of Trungpa Rinpoche, whether you practice my terma revelation of *Dorje Drola* or that of Trungpa Rinpoche, either one is appropriate. No matter what, you should maintain the *Dorje Drola* practice as your root practice. When I first gave the empowerment of this practice in Boston, considering the general and specific necessity, I gave an extensive explanation of its background and history. Some of you may have already heard that, so I won't repeat it on this occasion.

During my two-month stay in the United States, except in Boston, I have not conferred the *Dorje Drola* empowerment elsewhere. You should understand that this sadhana belongs particularly to your centers. This is the portion of delicious food that I am reluctant to give to people of other places, and now I secretly give it to you. Do you understand? (Laughs and applause)



8.34: Chojé communicating with the audience with a big smile

During the main section of the empowerment, Rinpoche said:

However the wind blows and the clouds move in the sky, they emerge from space and will inevitably dissolve back into it. They have never been apart from space. Similarly, the appearances of the external world and all living beings within it are just the magical manifestation of the mind, like dreams. You must initially have a clear understanding of this point.

Then, if you were to wonder, “What exactly is this mind that everything emerges from?” without examining, you might think it is existent; but it is like the moon’s reflection on water. However, if you analyze the mind, you will find that it exists nowhere, either inwardly or outwardly. By virtue of its nature, it is empty with nothing to be established.

When you are able to ascertain the mind like this, this is the *view*. Maintaining this view continuously is *meditation*. Familiarizing by training in the strength of the meditation is called *conduct*. When your meditation reaches stability, that is the *result*. Anyone who attains such realization is likened to Karmapa Pakshi and Guru Dorje Drolo, both of whom are none other than the nature of mind. Now, please

recognize the nature of your own mind as you listen to my pointing-out instructions.



8.35: Dorje Kusung standing by the side of the dharma throne

Among the many lamas in the Land of Tibet, Karmapa Pakshi was quite exceptional. There is a reason for this. Also, the terma revelation of *Dorje Drolo* by Trungpa Rinpoche is a practice in which the deity is in nature the same with and inseparable from Karmapa Pakshi and the wrathful Padmasambhava.

In history, Guru Rinpoche once said in the *Lama Gongdu, Gathering of the Wisdom Intent*, that the great masters Karmapa Dusum Khyenpa and Pakshi were his manifestations. When Karmapa Pakshi taught at the imperial court for an emperor of China, he was said to have performed many spectacular miracles



8.36: Chojé gazing upward

at court. At that time, he declared, "Sometimes I am Padmasambhava, and sometimes I am the mahasiddha Saraha." So, he had confirmed that he was Padmasambhava. I mention all of this not to please you, nor am I harboring any other purposes; I am simply letting you know

that Karmapa Pakshi, the wrathful Padmasambhava, and your own mind, these three, are not different—they are one and the same.

Also, be aware that this practice is not to be concluded with the usual stages of chanting aspiration prayers and auspicious verses. Rather, at the end of each session, the practitioner needs to maintain the vajra pride of oneself as the deity, that is, the awareness that all forms are the enlightened body of Dorje Drolo, all sounds are the enlightened speech of Dorje Drolo, and all thoughts are the enlightened mind of Dorje Drolo. With this vajra pride, go about your regular daily activities. Other than this, there are no more instructions.

After the empowerment, Chojé gave the following words of conclusion:

This was my first time to come to the West. As the last stop in North America, I came to your center, and together we enjoyed the inconceivable feasts of Mahayana teaching. Now, as my trip in the United States and Canada is drawing to an end, before we bid each other farewell, I would like to say a few more words for the people of your centers.

Although from the very beginning, neither of us has purposely tried to bond with one another, we have been closely connected. The establishment of such a strong bond is simply the result of the natural concurrence of favorable circumstances, without any deliberate effort. This auspicious and perfect result is brought about through the power of our previous virtuous aspirations and karmic interdependency.

Not only have you made virtuous dharma connections with me, you have also taken good care of me in every aspect. Thank you so much! In the future, I will pray again and again that all your centers may always be in harmony and have solidarity and that you may be of one mind and work together to make the Buddhadharma prosper and benefit more sentient beings.

Once again, I would like to remind you of your guru. When Trungpa Rinpoche first came to the West, he went through untold hardships, even risking his life. All his dedication and sacrifice were for the sole purpose of establishing the Buddha's doctrine and benefiting sentient beings in this land. As his disciples, please always maintain his wishes and carry on his enlightened activities. This is my heartfelt wish. Back in that time, the dharma was barely established, your guru had to face all sorts of challenges and difficulties, and he even worked for others as a gardener in order to conform with the people here so they could generate faith in Buddhism. Finally, he was able to establish many excellent centers. What he accomplished was indeed marvelous, and all of it came from his amazing willpower, which was as amazing as that of the heroic Manjushri. For me, I feel sorry for what he experienced and have great faith in what he accomplished, so I also made prayers to him. I hope you can keep in mind the kind of dedication he generated for this land.



8.37: Chojé gently staring at everyone

For all of us as teacher and disciples, I pray that in this life, we will meet again and enjoy the sublime Mahayana teaching together. When we pass from this life, we will be immediately reborn in the western pure land of Sukhavati and reunite in the presence of the Buddha Amitabha. Tashi Delek!



8.38: Chojé looking at the camera

EXTRAORDINARY DEVOTION TO THE GURU

At noon that day, as Yidzhin Norbu was about to leave Canada, members of the Dorje Kasung at the Vajradhatu center held a grand ceremony for him with their highest level of etiquette. They performed Shambhala army drills, sang the Shambhala anthem, and made special dharma offerings, creating an auspicious aspiration for Buddhism to defeat evil and demonic forces in the future.



8.39: Chojé enjoying the Shambhala army drills



8.40: Shambhala army drills

When Rinpoche was in the Land of Tibet, he had always been happy to enjoy vajra entertainment dharma events, including vajra songs and dances, and particularly the *Epic of King Gesar* opera performances. So, on that day, he watched attentively and appeared to be very joyful over the performance.

This kind of army drill is a skillful means adopted by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche aiming to help people overcome the three poisons of attachment, hatred, and ignorance and practice mindfulness and awareness with a strong will, whereby they can proceed toward basic goodness. It was a bit incredible to see westerners, who love freedom so much and don't like to be bound, lining up like soldiers, shouting slogans, following the rules, and obeying orders.

After watching the performance, Chojé gave a short teaching to the Dorje Kasung members. Every time the name of Trungpa Rinpoche was mentioned, people became very emotional, and tears welled up in their eyes. In fact, not only in Canada, when we visited other dharma centers in the United States, those disciples of Trungpa Rinpoche were also like that.



8.41: Chojé looking very pleased after the performance

I asked some people in the center why they appeared emotional whenever Trungpa Rinpoche was mentioned. They said that somehow, every time they heard the name of their guru, it would bring back fond memories of their time with him and something resting in their hearts would be evoked. At that point, they couldn't stop their tears but let them fall down.



8.42: Chojé in private conversation with others

In fact, this is a sign that the blessing from the guru's mind has melted into these disciples' minds, and they have received indescribable benefit from their guru. To have received such a blessing is especially significant for a dharma practitioner. Although Trungpa Rinpoche's way of training and guiding disciples was different from the traditional methods, due to his great aspiration and skillful means, the mind streams of many disciples were completely transformed, and their lives were also changed dramatically. Even decades later when I went to the West to teach the dharma, I noticed that as long as there were any of Trungpa Rinpoche's senior disciples in the audience, whenever the name of Trungpa Rinpoche was mentioned, they would still shed tears and demonstrate great faith and devotion for their guru.

Their longing for their guru did not dwindle away, let alone disappear, as time passed. Instead, it will forever remain in their hearts and become even stronger and more vivid.

HE IS A GREAT MAN BEYOND TIME



8.43: Richard Peissinger in 1993

Many people showed great faith in Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche during his stay at this center, and one of them was Richard Peissinger, who was part of the leadership team making sure Rinpoche was properly taken care of and received in a secure environment. Recently, I reached out to him and invited him to share some of his memories from that period, and he

provided the following information in response to our invitation:

At the age of forty-three, I had the honor of meeting H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche as the Dapon Orange of Dorje Kusung. At that time, I had been a student of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche for seventeen years. The Dorje Kusung is a subset of the Dorje Kasung, primarily responsible for providing close service and protection for the teaching lamas. The color orange symbolizes “meek,” the tiger, one of the four dignities that represents the foundation of the warrior’s journey—being grounded, modesty, and kindness. And “meek,” the tiger, is a symbol within the training to overcome arrogance and cultivate friendliness toward yourself and others.

It was the very first major event that Dorje Denma Ling ever hosted, which was at the newly constructed pavilion. In particular, I recall that Yidzhin Norbu met with a small group of us and exhibited a keen interest

in learning more about the Dorje Kasung training. I'm curious if the notes from our private audience with Rinpoche back then still exist.

I was able to serve many great masters thanks to the position that I held as a Dorje Kusung. Some of these masters include H.H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and the sixteenth Gyalwang Karmapa. As a result of these experiences, I have become aware of some of the characteristics that are shared by all the enlightened beings, and it was very simple for me to recognize those characteristics in Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche as well. In spite of the fact that he was not in the best of health, words of wisdom just came galloping out of him and shone forth like the sun of the dharma.



8.44: Chojé in a yellow garment

What struck me the most was that Chojé radiated *lungta* (wind horse). Sincerity, self-assurance, power, and commanding presence were all palpable when he was in the room. Even though, as far as I know, Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche had spent the entirety of his life in eastern Tibet

and this was his very first time in the West, he did not appear to be affected by the fact that he was in an unfamiliar environment. Instead, he radiated a sense of royalty with calm confidence and complete ease with his surroundings. I can still vividly recall that his skin had a rough texture, and I was attracted to the ruggedness of his appearance. In hindsight, I believe that it was the display of the elements, and I believe that the skin of Dorje Drolo would appear in the same way.

Chojé expounded in particular on the prophecy of Shambhala and the connection to Trungpa Rinpoche. Never before have I heard anyone talk about my teacher as the future twenty-fifth Rigden, who with Chogyam Trungpa's current warrior students in their future lives, will lead the great battle to re-establish widespread practice of the Buddhadharma teachings following a dark period of their diminishment. I often revisit this teaching and believe that this discourse reveals Khenpo Rinpoche's extraordinary realization and demonstrates the remarkable connection between him and Shambhala.

Although Yidzhin Norbu only came to Dorje Denma Ling once, and in relative terms, it was a brief visit, his influence however has been profound. He continues to bless us till this day. He is a great man beyond time.

HEARTFELT FAREWELL ADVICE

On the morning of August 22nd, at Dorje Denma Ling, Yidzhin Norbu recited the prayer of *Wangdu: The Great Cloud of Blessings* to everyone present and then gave a short speech:



8.45: Chojé giving heartfelt farewell advice

This year, I visited the United States and then came to Canada. To the present day, it has been two months and five days. I have built a karmic connection with tens of thousands of people in the US and Canada and spread the dharma in these places, which makes me very satisfied.

Today, I will bid farewell to all of you with auspicious wishes. Disciples, you should further enhance your present merit and try to generate merit that you have not yet gained as much as possible. May the light of auspiciousness pervade everything and everywhere!



8.46: Chojé on the throne

I also make a vow that from now until I attain buddhahood, I will try my best to put aside or completely forsake all the worldly trifles, such as protecting relatives and defeating enemies, and I will do everything I can to promote the dharma and benefit sentient beings.

All of you are followers of the wrathful Padmasambhava in the past, King Gesar in the present, and King Rudra Chakrin in the future. What they have done or will do is to propagate, uphold, and protect the wish-fulfilling jewel of Buddhadharma. I hope you will follow in their footsteps and engage in these three types of activities.

How did or will they propagate the Buddhadharma? In the past when the Land of Tibet was in extreme darkness, Orgyen Rinpoche Padmasambhava brought the Buddhadharma from India to Tibet, subdued all the evil spirits who created obstacles, including malignant and samaya-corrupting spirits, and bound them under oath to protect Buddhism. Later, when Buddhism declined to a low point, King Gesar propagated Buddhism in this world and conquered all the demonic armies that were harmful. In the future, when the dharma is largely undermined by barbarians and tirthikas, King Rudra Chakrin will destroy all those enemies and widely propagate the *Root Kalachakra Tantra* and its commentaries, upholding the dharma in this way. From then until thousands of years from then, the Buddhadharma will thrive and remain at its peak.

In the past, when Buddhism did not flourish in Canada, it was mainly through the effort of great Tibetan masters that the victory banner of the dharma was erected here, and the public was guided to embrace the dharma. Likewise, you need to follow them and widely propagate the dharma. In the future, you need to protect the dharma through the activities that you have learned from the Shambhala trainings. In this way, you have set up the dharma here in the beginning, are upholding the dharma in the middle, and will continuously protect the dharma in the future. All that you need to do, including your careers, is included in these three types of activities. So, when it comes down to their

essentials, everyone's ultimate aspiration is to bring happiness and peace to all sentient beings, and this depends solely on upholding, protecting, and propagating the dharma.

The Dorje Kasung and Dorje Kusung, who receive learning and training here in this center of Shambhala, are like the ring of iron mountains that encircle our entire world, while those who study and practice the dharma are like the beautiful paradise inside. Although for the time being, your respective ways of learning and practice are slightly different, your ultimate purpose is to bring peace and happiness to all sentient beings, and the only way to achieve that is to actually practice the dharma. Please keep that in mind.

In the end, Chojé sang some auspicious verses of prayers:

*May the Buddhadharma spread and flourish in a vast way.
May all sentient beings be at peace and
Practice the subtle and sublime dharma day and night,
So that the benefits of self and others are spontaneously accomplished.*

*May the vajra masters stay in this world for a long time.
May the sangha proliferate, and the study and
practice of the dharma spread.
May all benefactors acquire influence and wealth.
May the dharma be long-lasting and may all be auspicious.*

*May this place be pervaded by monastic sangha
Possessed of the three higher trainings and wearing the kasaya.
May they teach and practice the dharma until the end of time.
May the dharma flourish and everywhere be auspicious.*

After the teaching, Rinpoche blessed everyone by putting his hand gently on each of their heads and also gave each of them a blessed protection cord. According to the tradition of the center, all the disciples lined up to say goodbye

and sang, “*Ki Ki! So So! Lhagyalo!*” In the midst of this stirring song, Chojé reluctantly got in the car and left, taking with him all the wonderful memories from this location.



8.47: Everyone receiving blessing from Chojé

THE CRYSTAL WHERE CHOJÉ LEFT FINGERPRINTS

On the way to the airport in Halifax, Rinpoche got to briefly see the eastern coast of Canada and local urban architecture. We left the city in the afternoon and took a nearly two-hour flight to the airport in Boston, USA, to be ready for our evening flight to France.

At the airport, many disciples from the United States and Canada came to say goodbye. When Gyatrul Rinpoche bid Chojé farewell, Khenpo Rinpoche happened to have a crystal in his hand, so he said, “This is for you, as a support of faith.” Then, he slightly squeezed the crystal and gave it to him. It was later discovered that the crystal was squeezed into the shape of a torma, on which the outline of Chojé’s fingers was clearly visible. Today, this crystal is still treasured at Tashi Choling. It was a special object blessed by Rinpoche before he left North America, through which he showed his miraculous power to some western disciples.



8.48: The crystal where Chojé left fingerprints



8.49: At the airport ready for the trip to Europe

Upon parting, Yidzhin Norbu left three precious pith instructions, “For all of you living in the western countries, the first and foremost thing is to pray to the Three Jewels wholeheartedly with complete faith. In the middle, it is important to truly give rise to bodhicitta, triggered by kindheartedness, love, and compassion.

Last but also the most crucial, you need to practice the clear light Great Perfection to accomplish buddhahood in this very lifetime.”

At this point, the dharma activities in Canada were complete.



8.50: Chojé at the airport



9th Stop

August 23rd–August 30th

SOUTHERN FRANCE

SCHEDULE

Aug 23rd

Arrived at Lerab Ling

Aug 24th

Gave the *Tendrel Nyesel* empowerment in the morning

Aug 25th

Met the senior managing members of Lerab Ling and gave them a brief teaching

Aug 26th

Participated in a grand ganachakra feast of *Tendrel Nyesel*

Aug 27th

Gave the empowerment and instructions on *Yang Zab Nyingpo*

Aug 28th

Taught on the *Secret of Achieving Buddhahood in a Single Life*

Aug 29th

Taught on the *Pith Instructions of Directly Pointing Out the Nature of Mind* in the afternoon

Aug 30th

Gave the *Jampal Yeshe Sempa* empowerment, taught the instructions on tögal, and made a heartfelt parting speech in the morning, and gave an interview in the afternoon

FLEW TO LERAB LING

From Boston, Massachusetts, we flew across the Atlantic Ocean to Paris, France, which took about seven hours. After arriving in Paris, we took another flight of one and a half hours and landed in Montpellier, France. Then, we headed to Lerab Ling by car, and it was more than an hour's drive. Along the mountain road entering Lerab Ling, a great number of Buddhists had already lined up on the sides of the road, holding khatas respectfully to warmly welcome Yidzhin Norbu. The scene was grand and dignified.



9.1: Lerab Ling sangha welcoming Chojé along the roadside

Along the mountain road entering Lerab Ling, a great number of Buddhists had already lined up on the sides of the road, holding khatas respectfully to warmly welcome Yidzhin Norbu. The scene was grand and dignified.



9.2: Sogyal Rinpoche and representatives greeting Chojé

After arrival, Rinpoche was invited to the main house, where he stayed for the entire visit. It is said that his room later became a "holy shrine room," the

spiritual epicenter of Lerab Ling, where great masters like H.H. Penor Rinpoche and H.H. Sakya Trichen had also stayed.

Lerab Ling is a Buddhist center founded by Sogyal Rinpoche, the author of the well-known book *Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. The location was chosen by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche in 1990 and blessed by Dordrupchen Rinpoche in 1991. Then, it quickly grew into one of the largest Tibetan Buddhist centers in France. Being surrounded by lush, green forests and magnificent mountains, the scenery there was very similar to the Land of Tibet. Each summer, regular and occasional retreats and



9.3: Above: the white tents for meditators; below: the large tent where teachings took place

dharma events would be held for both monastics and lay practitioners. When we arrived, they were in the middle of a three-month retreat. On the hillside a short distance away from where we resided, hundreds of tents were set up in good order to facilitate practitioners for their retreat. The tents were of the same style and the same color, making it kind of like a military camp—quite impressive. The place where they gathered for dharma teachings was a large tent nearby. In the following seven days, Khenpo Rinpoche would give teachings there, and Ringu Tulku Rinpoche served as his interpreter.

Since we had flown from Canada, transferred planes in the US, and arrived in France, the entire trip was very lengthy. Added together, the total time spent in cars, airplanes, and airports was almost twenty hours. Chojé appeared very exhausted after such a long trip. Noticing this, Sogyal Rinpoche said, “You have

spent a long time teaching the dharma in North America, and your schedules have been so tight, so you must feel tired. Now, coming to this center, I arrange everything, so you don't have to follow a tight timetable. Please have a good rest and take time to regain your energy. You can make your schedule, and we will be happy no matter what you decide to do. As long as you are delighted, Your Holiness, it is the dharma!"

It was indeed true that Chojé had been on a laborious journey. In the past few months, he had not been well, but still gave teachings one after another. He had not had good sleep or appetite, nor did he have time to get over jet lag. The whole trip was a big challenge and required enormous physical and mental strength. So, hearing what Sogyal Rinpoche said, Khenpo Rinpoche appeared much more relaxed.

However, as it turned out, even under his own arrangement, Chojé still had a busy schedule and taught a lot at Lerab Ling, which was actually not any easier on him than at any other center.

WAS RINPOCHE LERAB LINGPA

The next morning, the morning of Aug 24th, Yidzhin Norbu still decided to give teachings and conferred the empowerment of *Tendrel Nyesel* revealed by the great Tertön Lerab Lingpa. Before the empowerment, Sogyal Rinpoche introduced him to the audience as follows:

H.H. Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche has been recognized as the reincarnation of the great Tertön Lerab Lingpa from the 19th century. His father was from Dudjom Lingpa's clan, and the third Dodrupchen Rinpoche was his father's uncle. Since childhood, Rinpoche studied at Nubzur Monastery of the Palyul Lineage in the Nyingma School. At age

eighteen, he went to Changma Buddhist Academy in Sershul, where he relied on Thubga Yidzhin Norbu as his root teacher. Through six years of hard work, he received from his teacher all the instructions of Vajrayana, especially the teachings of the Great Perfection, in the manner like a vase being filled to its brim.



9.4: Chojé beginning his dharma teachings in France

Chojé has established many monasteries and centers for Buddhist study and practice in the Land of Tibet. He founded Larung Gar Five Sciences Buddhist Academy in Sertar, which is a non-sectarian Buddhist university for higher Buddhist study and meditation and has a few thousand residential monastics. So far in his life, Rinpoche has ordained tens of thousands of male and female practitioners and revealed a great number of termas.

This year, he came to the western world to spread the dharma for the first time. He has traveled to America, Canada, and now to France, and to our center, Lerab Ling. I wish to begin by offering Rinpoche the very warmest possible welcome!

It is an extraordinary blessing for all of us that with your great compassion and kindness, you are visiting us here at Lerab Ling. No words will be enough to express how grateful we are to you. Lerab Ling has been named after the great Tertön Lerab Lingpa, and you are exactly the reincarnation of Lerab Lingpa. So, your presence here amongst us has a very special meaning.

Not only are you a reincarnation of Tertön Sogyal, you are also a great teacher. We have long been admiring your amazing activities of spreading the dharma in the Land of Tibet. For years, I have been hearing about your various incredible feats. You are a great upholder



9.5: Sogyal Rinpoche earnestly introducing Chojé

of the teachings of Dzogchen, a representative of Padmasambhava for this time, and a peerless lineage master of the terma teachings. Everyone here has heard of your amazing work of spreading the dharma in the Land of Tibet. Your fame has spread far and wide.

Surely no one has done so much to restore the Buddha's teaching in the Land of Tibet and to lead the people there to practice the dharma. Western students of Tibetan Buddhism everywhere are deeply moved to hear what you have achieved. Our dharma work here in the West is merely a humble imitation of your wonderful work there. All of us feel a great closeness to you, a oneness with you, an awe and admiration for your work, and a deep gratitude for the teachings and empowerments you have kindly accepted to grant us on this occasion.

Following that, Chojé responded:

At a time as perfect as this, I am so happy to be here with all of you at the seat of Lerab Lingpa. The true, supreme reincarnation of the great Tertön Lerab Lingpa, Sogyal Rinpoche, is residing here, and I am extremely happy to meet him and to be able to exchange the Mahayana teachings with him.

Let me first express my gratitude for Sogyal Rinpoche's recognition of me. I am sure that he must have his own reasons for saying all this. But do I really have the qualities he attributed to me? Not a single one. He must indeed have some purpose for saying what he just said. It is like calling a dog a lion. For someone like me, who possesses every possible fault and not even the tiniest trace of any good quality, it is only because I have the name of being the reincarnation of Lerab Lingpa and have the outward appearance of a dharma practitioner, that he gave me all those compliments.

Despite that, I have not the slightest quality. During this final era of the teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni, I am sitting on a big throne and expounding the teachings for a great assembly of people, and this is something that cannot be refuted. Long ago in the past, during the time of the teachings of Buddha Kashyapa, the King Kriki had a dream with a series of eighteen different premonitions. In one scene of his dream, he saw a monkey sitting on a tall lion's throne, with a large gathering of lions sitting in front to listen to its teachings. What does this mean? It was a sign that in the future, during the final period of Shakyamuni's teachings, the one sitting on a dharma throne would be like a monkey without the slightest capacity, while the students who gather around him would be like lions with every perfect quality. Well, in my case this seems to be particularly pertinent.

At an early age, I was quite smart and good at studying the sacred texts, and also I rigorously stuck to my monastic precepts. Therefore, I

was given the title of Lerab Lingpa. But I rejected it right away because the prayer to Lerab Lingpa says:

*Body incarnation of Nanam Dorje Dudjom,
Blessed by the speech of Vajravahni,
Playful manifestation of Padmasambhava's mind,
The vidyadhara who opened the doors of profound termas
And tamed sentient beings—
Lord Lerab Lingpa, to you I pray.*

Obviously, he was a buddha. Now, would a buddha, a fully enlightened being, have fallen back into samsara? If so, and if he could have become an ordinary sentient being, then I could be him. Otherwise, it would be impossible for me to be his reincarnation. Therefore, from the time when I was very young, I never used to accept this. Yet now that I am older, I feel like the monk in Patrul Rinpoche's saying, "The bhikshu was strict at the beginning and relaxed at the end." My monk's vows, which used to be very strict at the beginning, have become a little more relaxed. I have done a lot of thinking as I have grown up and aged. Following Lerab Lingpa's prediction, most of his students and benefactors gave me the name of his reincarnation. Of course, just giving me this name did not in any way make me become Lerab Lingpa, but because I have reflected on how there might have been some purpose behind it, it is something that I do not completely reject.

The reason that I no longer reject this name is because from my perspective, I might thereby be of some small benefit to the teaching and sentient beings. In addition, since it looked as though Lerab Lingpa's terma lineage was almost interrupted and on the verge of disappearing, it might have been necessary for me to bear his title in order to revive them. So, I have done my best to spread Lerab Lingpa's terma teachings as much as I possibly could. I collected all the wood blocks of his teachings that had been scattered in different places and restored those that were gnawed away by rats, and I renovated his temples and centers. I have been doing all of that to the present.



9.6: Chojé in front of a Padmasambhava thangka

From the first tertön Sangye Lama onward until now, it seems that there has never been a tertön who possessed such infinite realization and knowledge as Tertön Sogyal and whose activities have been so limitless. For this reason, when he was alive in the Land of Snows, he was widely revered as the



9.7: Chojé waiting during the interpretation

teacher of the thirteenth Gyalwa Rinpoche Thubten Gyatso, the fifteenth Karmapa Khakyab Dorje, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, Jamgon Kongtrul Yonten Gyatso, Omniscient Ju Mipham Rinpoche, and many other great scholars and accomplished practitioners from Sakya, Gelug, Nyingma, Kagyu, and even Bön. He was a great reincarnated tertön.

There was a prediction that Tibet was to suffer twelve invasions during the time of the thirteenth Thubten Gyatso. When the ninth invasion took place, Tertön Sogyal repelled the invaders, and because of this, he was renowned as the lord of dispelling the perils that faced the Land of Tibet. In fact, Tertön Sogyal went through unthinkable hardships for the sake of the teachings and sentient beings in Tibet, and as a result, the Land of Tibet was not harmed or damaged by any form of disaster, like plagues, famine, or wars, while he was alive.

Among all the disciples of Tertön Sogyal, the two principal ones were the Gyalwa Thubten Gyatso and Dodrupchen Tenpe Nyima. Regarding Dodrupchen Tenpe Nyima, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo had said that he would not live to be older than fifty, but Tertön Sogyal made it clear that neither of his two chödaks^a would pass away until he himself had completed his enlightened activities in this world.

^a *chos bdag*; holder of the doctrine.

Lerab Lingpa had an attendant called Atrin, and it was said that if there was an occasion when Atrin, Tulku Tsultrim Zangpo of Shukjung Monastery, who is the root owner of Tertön Sogyal's terma teachings, Dodrupchen Tenpe Nyima, and Gyalwa Thubten Gyatso could gather in the great Potala Palace in Lhasa, and Lerab Lingpa could give them his terma, *The Sadhana of the Gyutrul Sangnying*, along with the commentary on the tantra and the instructions, then through this auspicious origination, during the lifetime of his two next reincarnations, there would be no decline in the fortunes of Tibet.

In fact, what happened was that due to the lack of good karma and merit among sentient beings, Dodrupchen Tenpe Nyima was unable to arrive. Because of this, Gyalwa Thubten Gyatso sent messengers to invite him. At that time, Shukjung Tulku disguised himself as a beggar, saying, "I will go there first and wait for the others," and he left and arrived in Lhasa. The great accomplished master Dodrupchen Rinpoche also happily left for Lhasa. When he was about to cross over the Doke River, the animal that was carrying him, however, became reluctant to move forward. Then, the monks who accompanied the master lashed it with a whip and flung stones at it. Dodrupchen Rinpoche, who had an extremely noble character, was dismayed. He said, "If in such a short distance we have already accrued so much negative karma, then by going all the way to Lhasa we would undoubtedly accumulate much more negativity than virtue." So, he just called off this trip. No sooner had this happened than Atrin died.

Then, on the first day of the first month of the following year, Lerab Lingpa went to see Dodrupchen Tenpe Nyima. When they were about to part, Lerab Lingpa said, "It was not customary to give scarves upon parting, but this time I want to offer you one. Though, in this lifetime we will not meet again, in all our future lives, we will always be inseparable."

Lerab Lingpa revealed a life-force stone of Hayagriva and Vajravahni from the Nyenpo Yutsé Mountain in the east and gave it to Gyalwa

Thubten Gyatso secretly before showing it to any other person. If Gyalwa Thubten Gyatso were to keep it with him all the time and throughout all his future reincarnations, then an auspicious cause would be created such that no harm would ever come to his life. Later, this precious stone reached Gyalwa Rinpoche, and when I met him in 1990, he personally showed it to me. At the time he was escaping from the Norbulingka Palace, he thought to himself, “No matter what difficulties and obstacles I may encounter, what can truly protect me is this sacred stone.” This life-force stone has a self-arisen image of Hayagriva above and a self-arisen mantra *bam ha ri ni sa* of Vajravahni below. Gyalwa Rinpoche still has this stone in his possession, and I think that he will not have any obstacles during his life.

The previous life of Lerab Linpa, the mantra adept Nanam Dorje Dudjom, captured the hearts of Orgyen Rinpoche and the King Trisong Detsen. Unlike any other disciple or minister, he served them with extreme loyalty and devotion. This became an interdependent cause for his future activities; in every one of his future incarnate lives, all his activities of spreading the dharma and benefiting sentient beings became very vast.

When he served Trisong Detsen, he was the most trusted minister of all; he was also a translator and the one who invited the second buddha, Orgyen Rinpoche, to the Land of Tibet. During Trisong Detsen’s reign, it was Dorje Dudjom who carried out many of the king’s activities, and later, when the princes Mutik Tsenpo and Mutri Tsenpo ruled the country, he also took the role as their minister and was again entrusted with the kings’ work. There was no one who won the heartfelt trust of the great Dharma King Trisong Detsen as did Nanam Dorje Dudjom.

To Orgyen Rinpoche, among his principal disciples, the king and the ministers, there was no one who had attended him as closely as Dorje Dudjom. When Padmasambhava traveled from Yanglesho to Tibet, Dorje Dudjom followed along, carrying his luggage on his back and serving him in all necessary ways. When Dorje Dudjom

requested teachings on Vajrakilaya from Guru Rinpoche, he offered an inconceivable quantity of articles, such as gold, silver, turquoise, coral, and so forth. Not only that, he offered a large amount of meat for the tsok practice yet did it without harming a single animal. This is stated in the history of Kilaya.



9.8: Lerab Ling sangha listening attentively

Orgyen Rinpoche once said, “Among all my disciples, Dorje Dudjom is unobstructed like the wind.” Dorje Dudjom not only achieved unimpeded accomplishment, but among all followers of Padmasambhava, he was nominated as the head of mantrikas, who beat the drum and held the phurba. There was no one who could compete with Dorje Dudjom in beating the drum, and no one was more powerful than him in using the phurba.

Now, Sogyal Rinpoche and me, we two do have some power. Since we are known as the reincarnations of Lerab Lingpa, we are the Dorje Dudjom for this time. He has a drum in his hand, and I have a phurba in my hand. Now everyone in this world must be clear about what kind of power we two have! (Laughs)

Moreover, because Dorje Dudjom pleased Guru Rinpoche deeply and his offerings were exceptionally abundant and exquisite, the terma

objects revealed by all his later reincarnations have preeminence over those of others; they are made of superior materials and look gorgeous in terms of their forms. This is the case with most terma objects revealed by Rigdzin Godem, and it is even more so in terms of those of Lerab Lingpa. I have a number of those terma objects in my possession. To this day, Tertön Sogyal's terma objects have been distributed to the main holders of his teachings, so they are spread all over the world.

In a word, personally speaking, I have never said that I was not Lerab Lingpa, and this is out of some "selfish" considerations. What's my reason? I suspected that merely through holding the names of Tertön Sogyal and Dorje Dudjom, I might be able to inconceivably benefit the teaching and sentient beings.

A short time ago, when I was in the United States, a hurricane was forecast to sweep through Boston. Although I was not absolutely certain, I still told Gyatrul Rinpoche, "If it had happened beforehand, there would have been nothing I could have done about it, but now, the hurricane will not come. Because I have the name of Dorje Dudjom and if I want to accomplish something in this name, all the gods and maras of phenomenal existence will never be able to make any trouble. Imagine, for example, that a person who has no capacity whatsoever gets an authorization with the signature of President of the United States and stamped with the president's official seal. Simply because of that authorization, he would be able to have some influence. In the same way, although I am not Dorje Dudjom, yet I hold his name, so to then give orders to the gods and maras, it should have some effect." This is one of the reasons why I refrain from saying that I am not Dorje Dudjom.

Although I have not rejected it, I have never admitted that it is the fact that I was Tertön Sogyal. However, there is one thing that I do believe, and that is that I have received special blessings from Tertön Sogyal. Usually, it is the case with other tertöns that their terma teachings will go through four stages of duration, which are the period of fruition,

accomplishment, transmission, and symbolic representation. During a tertön's lifetime, the blessings of his teachings are much greater, but when being transmitted to his disciples, the teachings carry fewer blessings, which gradually diminish as the teachings are passed down through generations. However, when it comes to the teachings of Tertön Sogyal, their impact, power, and blessings would multiply a hundredfold, becoming even greater as time has gone by. Lerab Lingpa himself had said, "The period of transmission of my terma teachings is five hundred years measured by the human time. During this period, they will remain without ever declining and will flourish and become even more perfect."

Today, I am very happy to visit Lerab Lingpa's center. I have been a bit long-winded and extended the time a little bit. The empowerment of *Tendrel Nyesel* is rather short. So please sit well for a little longer, and it won't be too much for you.

THE INTERDEPENDENT CAUSES FOR THE FLOURISHING OF VAJRAKILAYA

On August 25th, Yidzhin Norbu met with the senior managing members of Lerab Ling and gave them a brief teaching. That day, he did not publicly teach the dharma, but Khenpo Namdrol gave teachings to the assembly. On August 26th, it happened to be the tenth day of the Tibetan Calendar, so all of us attended a grand ganachakra feast of *Tendrel Nyesel* at Lerab Ling.



9.9: Khenpo Namdrol giving a teaching

On August 27th, Khenpo Rinpoche gave the empowerment of *Yang Zab Nyingpo*, a terma of Lerab Lingpa. Before the empowerment, he said the following words:

As we begin the empowerment, first of all, it is divided into what the guru should perform and what the disciples should perform. As for what the guru should perform, according to the conventional practice of the lineage gurus, this part is conducted in a very brief manner, and I have finished it already. Then, in order for you disciples to receive the empowerment, you need to remove obstacles and create favorable conditions.

Removing obstacles includes two parts: to purify the inner obscurations through the practice of purifying the body by visualizing the body as the body of wrathful Amritakundalin^a and to dispel all external maras and spirits created by discursive thoughts by visualizing the protection circle. These two parts have been completed.

Creating favorable conditions also has two parts: to generate the supreme bodhicitta and to make mandala offerings. *To generate the supreme bodhicitta* means that you adjust your mind and contemplate as follows, "In order to benefit all sentient beings throughout the universe in this life through actual practice, I will achieve the state of dharmakaya Samantabhadra, the universal master and primordial lord who is in nature the unity of the four kayas and the five wisdoms. For this purpose, I will receive the empowerment that can bring my mind to maturation and then train in all the stages of the path that can bring about liberation." You should receive this empowerment with such a supreme intention.

Our root teacher Buddha Shakyamuni, who possessed countless skillful means and cared for us with great loving kindness and compassion, taught inconceivable dharma of various stages and levels, according

^a Dudtse Kyilwa (*bdud rtsi 'khyil ba*), Skt. Amritakundalin.

to the different elements, capacities, inclinations, and intentions of all sentient beings. All these teachings are summarized into three categories: the Shrivakayana that aims at eliminating harm to others and its causes, the Bodhisattvayana that strives to accomplish the benefit of others and its causes, and the Vajrayana of Secret Mantra that fulfills the goal of benefiting others smoothly and quickly by adopting skillful means and supreme wisdom. The dharma you are going to receive today belongs to the Vajrayana of Secret Mantra.

The Vajrayana of Secret Mantra has two categories: the outer tantras through which you can attain buddhahood after several human lifetimes, such as three or sixteen lifetimes, and the inner tantras through which you can attain buddhahood in this very lifetime. This dharma belongs to the inner tantras.

In terms of its propagation in the Land of Tibet, the inner tantras through which you can attain buddhahood in this very lifetime are divided into two categories and are practiced respectively by two schools. The tantras translated into Tibetan from the time of Thönmi Sambhota to the time of Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo are termed the Earlier Translations and are practiced by followers of the Old School Nyingma. All those that were translated by Lotsawa Rinchen Zangpo and translators after him belong to Later Translations and are carried out by practitioners of the New Schools, or Sarma. The dharma I am going to teach here belongs to the Earlier Translations.

Teachings of the Earlier Translations have two modes of transmission. All doctrines that have been transmitted from Vajradhara to the present day uninterrupted through the three lineages of transmission—the direct mind transmission of the buddhas, the symbolic indication transmission of the vidyadharas, and the oral transmission of spiritual masters—are called the Kama or canonical teachings. In addition to these three transmissions, those which are also characterized by another three types of transmission are called the Terma teachings. The dharma to be transmitted this time belongs to Terma.



9.10: A smile of compassion

The Terma teachings are again divided into two kinds: the general category of termas and the actual termas. *The general category of termas* refers to those that existed before Padmasambhava. Long ago, the Lord of Secrets, Vajrapani, transmitted the tantric teachings to the Five Excellent Ones of Sublime Nobility, and the entire sadhana category transmitted to them at the Shankarakuta Stupa were hidden as termas by the Dakini Karmendrani and later revealed by the eight great vidyadharas in India. In addition, the master Shri Singha of China presented two lineages of the Great Perfection, namely, the whispered lineage and the explanatory lineage. Among those, all the teachings of the whispered lineage were hidden in Bodh Gaya and were later discovered by Jnanasutra. The way in which this was revealed is similar to Guru Rinpoche's terma tradition, but this revelation preceded that. Thus, this is not among the well-known category of terma. There are many reasons to support this statement, but I am not going to elaborate on it today.

The so-called actual termas refer to the teachings that Padmasambhava entrusted to his disciples, the king, and the ministers and sealed through his prayer before he went to Ngayab Ling. They also include the dharmas that are sealed by Padmasambhava through his prayers and entrusted by him every now and then to fortunate sentient beings of the current time while he is residing in the Palace of Lotus Light on the Copper-Colored Mountain of Glory. Today, what you are going to receive is a well-known actual terma.

In terms of the categories of actual termas, there are eighteen kinds, such as dharma termas, profound termas, material termas, wisdom termas, mind termas, and so on. Tertön Lerab Lingpa is the honorable sovereign who was able to reveal all eighteen kinds of terma without obstruction, and the details are clearly recorded in his biography. Among them, the dharma termas alone are composed of profound earth termas and vast mind termas. Today's teaching belongs to the profound earth termas.

For the terma you are receiving this time, in addition to the three transmissions mentioned earlier, it is also endowed with the transmission empowered by aspiration, the transmission of prophetic authorization, and the verbal transmission of the yellow scrolls. So, it possesses six lineages of transmission.

How did this teaching originate? Back then, Orgyen Rinpoche Padmasambhava subdued all the malicious maras and spirits in Tibet, attracting and converting them as the protectors of Buddhism, thereby laying the foundation of Tibetan Buddhism. Later, at the Red Rock Cave of Samye Chimphu, Guru Rinpoche empowered his nine heart disciples, including the king and the ministers, into the mysterious mandala of *Drubpa Kagyad*. During the empowerment, the flower that each disciple cast for choosing their deity fell respectively into the mandala of the deity with whom they had a karmic connection. The flower of Yeshe Tsogyal fell into the mandala of the Vajrakilaya, the deity that represents enlightened activity. Later on, Yeshe Tsogyal herself opened the mandala of Vajrakilaya and obtained the common and uncommon siddhis that made her equal to the great glorious Vajrakumara and enabled her to attract the twelve Guardian sisters of Vajrakilaya as servants. They were the first group of disciples to receive the entire teachings of the sadhana category from Guru Rinpoche.

Nanam Dorje Dudjom was not present at that time. After learning that Yeshe Tsogyal had become a yogini who had achieved accomplishment in the practice of Vajrakilaya, he sent her a letter through a carrier pigeon with seven gold coins around its neck. He wrote in the letter, "Please bestow the complete empowerment of Vajrakilaya to me." Yeshe Tsogyal received this letter sent by the pigeon. After reading it, she accepted all the gold coins but didn't make any response. Instead, she devoted herself fully to the Vajrakilaya practice.

Seven days later, at midnight, the twelve Guardian sisters appeared and said to Yeshe Tsogyal, "It is time to supplicate Orgyen Guru Rinpoche to open the door of the profound teachings of Vajrakilaya

for those disciples with auspicious karmic fortune, including Nanam Dorje Dudjom.” Yeshe Tsogyal did not give a gentle response to them but said, “All you females, please shut up! I just do what my guru instructs me. Also, I know the character of spirits like you.” After saying this, she remained in silence and single-pointedly concentrated on her state of realization.

At dawn, the glorious deity Vajrakumara appeared to her and said, “The time has come to propagate the vast teachings of Vajrakilaya. You can go to Orygen Rinpoche and request him to teach them.” At that time, Yeshe Tsogyal thought, “Although the deity is incredible, the guru is more important. I need to remain silent until Orygen Guru Rinpoche talks to me and gives me his instructions.” So, she did not give any answer to the deity either, but wholeheartedly remained in samadhi.

Because of her total faith in the guru, in the Land of Tibet, the vast and boundless teachings of Vajrakilaya have still been widely spread without any obstacles. The auspicious cause for this to happen was precisely created by Yeshe Tsogyal. Had Yeshe Tsogyal thought that the deity was better than the guru, then she would have tainted the interdependent arising. Cases happened in the past that some great masters slightly compromised the interdependent origination just because they believed that the deity was more important than the guru.

You must understand that between the guru and deity, you should always value the guru more. If the glorious Vajrakumara were to manifest in person right now, I wonder if most of you would say, “I have received a lot of dharma teachings from Sogyal Rinpoche, so today I shall receive teachings from my deity.” You couldn’t be more wrong if that is what you said. If you have such wrong thoughts, you should dispel them completely because the embodiment of the buddhas of the three times is the guru, and that is why we need to consider the guru more important.



9.11: Chojé joyfully giving teachings

I might have said too much today, and I hope you won't feel bored. I understand that you must be very tired, having just gone through a rigorous three-month retreat. Plus, yesterday, you participated in the grand ganachakra practice for a whole day and a whole night, which was also quite exhausting. Today, you have listened to me for such a long time, probably feeling even more weary. Anyway, please lift your spirits, and my dharma teachings will conclude in only three days.

In the past, when our extremely compassionate Buddha was in his causal stage, outside the cave of Buddha Pushya, he recited:

*In heaven and on earth, no one compares with the Buddha;
In the worlds of the ten directions, also none matches him.
I have seen the universe in its entirety.
There is no one whatsoever like the Buddha.*

Standing on one foot, he praised Buddha Pushya with this verse for seven days and nights; thus, he perfected the paramita of diligence. Now, if you can keep your spirits up for one day and one night, or just the whole day today, for the dharma teaching, you will probably also perfect the paramita of diligence.

When Chojé gave the fourth empowerment, the ultimate empowerment of the absolute nature, he said:

According to different tantras, the fourth empowerment can be classified as the great bliss empowerment, symbolic empowerment, and word empowerment.

The *great bliss empowerment* is the fourth empowerment directly taught in the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*^a and the glorious *Guhyagarbha Tantra*. According to the canonical lineage of Zur, at the end of the third empowerment, you experience the sixteen joys through the descent and ascent of

^a *sangwa dupa gyü (gsang ba 'dus pa rgyud).*

wisdom nectar, whereby you are introduced to the wisdom of great bliss.

The *symbolic empowerment* is the empowerment that introduces you to the clear light aspect of mind through gestures and authorizes you to practice *tögal* through the ultimately unelaborate empowerment in the seventeen tantras of the Great Perfection, especially the *Nyingtig Yabzhi* and the like.

The *word empowerment of primordial purity* is the one that reveals the primordial wisdom of awareness in direct experience through the expression of words and phrases and authorizes you to practice *trekchö*. The fourth empowerment in most of Orgyen Padmasambhava's *termas* is this type.

Later, Rinpoche taught the view, meditation, conduct, and result of the Great Perfection:

Now, observe your mind. You will ascertain that the essence of mind is not existent, just like space, so there is nothing to cling to. This is not a conceptual understanding gained by reading a book, nor through reasoning and analysis; it is a full recognition through direct experience. This is called *recognizing the view*. In other words, if you look into your mind and rely on the power of insight, you will recognize that the mind is empty and does not exist intrinsically. This is the view of the Great Perfection, and there is nothing other than this.

In this state of realization, sustain such recognition and familiarize yourself with it; this is the meditation. Whatever discursive thoughts or appearances arise, do not follow them, but focus on awareness and let it reside in its natural state; this is the conduct. Through practice, you are not influenced or manipulated by discursive thoughts that grasp onto what has happened or is happening, but let awareness reveal itself utterly and nakedly; this is the result.

Everyone should clearly understand the view, meditation, conduct, and result of the Great Perfection. Once you do, your practice will never go astray. Even if you don't have profound realization, you still need to familiarize yourself a little bit with these teachings of the Great Perfection.

Above is a brief summary of the quintessential points of all the tantras, transmissions, and upadeshas of the Great Perfection.

BEING THE ATTENDANT OF THE GURU

In the eyes of many people, it must appear to be very delightful and enjoyable that I accompanied Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok to many countries, traveling and sightseeing everywhere. In fact, as his attendant, I needed not only to serve Rinpoche himself, but also to be considerate of the people who came to him, as well as to communicate with the organizers and many others. There were a lot of things I had to arrange internally and externally, so I had been under a lot of stress as if there was a string tightening in my heart, and even normal eating and sleeping had become a luxury.

During the tour, skipping meals was common for me. Rinpoche's teaching schedule was quite full and tight, with very little downtime for rest. Most often, as soon as he finished a simple meal, he had to rush to the next destination, leaving me barely enough time to pack the luggage. Therefore, while Chojé was eating, it was often the best possible time for me to pack. Each time, I would check twice to make sure nothing was forgotten. Even in times when we didn't have to hurry off to another place, I would take the time while Rinpoche was eating to walk around and inquire what needed to be prepared for the following event. For instance, this would include what to take with us to the venue, which ritual implements were needed for an empowerment, who to talk to when we got there, the conditions of the venue, and so forth. Thus, there was no way for

me to sit comfortably around the table and enjoy a meal at ease like a guest, let alone ask others to prepare additional food for me after mealtime. Occasionally, I would get a piece of bread, and I'd be so satisfied, eating it while dealing with other things.

In terms of accommodations, most centers would put all their efforts into taking good care of Yidzhin Norbu, and his entourage was usually less attended. There were times when my room was too far from Rinpoche's room, while sometimes, I stayed in the same room with him, both of which are inappropriate for me. Considering the safety of Chojé and the convenience to attend him, I had to find a place neither too far nor too close to him. Many times, I would sleep in a corner outside of his room for a night without so much as a pillow or a blanket.

During our stay in Lerab Ling, the organizers had prepared a separate room for me, but it was too far from Chojé's room. So, I had to find myself a more proper place to sleep, sometimes on the floor beside the throne and sometimes under the stairs to Rinpoche's room. When his health was not so good, I would definitely stay overnight right outside of his door so that whenever he called for me, I would be there. Once, after several nights sleeping under the staircase, Rinpoche discovered me. In fact, every center had its own concerns and difficulties, so as a guest, as long as Chojé was well taken care of, I was already deeply grateful to the host. As for myself, it did not matter how I was received, and I never made any demands for myself.

While we were in the West, I took care of Rinpoche's daily routines and received various guests every day, just as I had in India. Unexpected changes were quite normal, so I had to run back and forth and was busy all day long. But I was very happy and had no negative emotions at all. Although my own

health was not that good, this body always did a good job and never brought me any trouble every time I traveled with Rinpoche.

When attending Yidzhin Norbu, I needed to take good care not only of him but also those who he cared about. What he valued the most were all sentient beings; whether they were people from the East or West, he cared for and loved everyone equally from the depth of his heart. Unless Chojé was too sick, he would always take the time and effort to bless those who came to meet with him from far away. Under his influence, I would also strive to treat everyone kindly. Even if I was not able to please everyone, I always attempted to deal with any person with gentle language and a loving attitude, never handling things casually or in a perfunctory manner.

After serving gurus for a long period of time, some people tend to become haughty and disregard others. This is not good. We must maintain mindfulness and vigilance at all times. Otherwise, notwithstanding a guru's great compassion, if his or her close disciples are arrogant and irritable, the guru's enlightened activities will be compromised. In particular, when a guru has the opportunity to spread the dharma, disciples should never hold the guru as their personal property and protect the guru in an overly strict way, preventing others from meeting or making connections with him or her. This kind of attitude and behavior obstructs a guru's dharma activities, causing a significant loss. As long as the guru's health permits, as a disciple, you should try to make arrangements for the guru to meet sentient beings, even if it means a lot of hard work. The fact is that most people do not have many opportunities to listen to the dharma in their ordinary life, and they may have only that one opportunity to meet the guru throughout their entire life. If they can meet the guru, even if they could only get a touch on the head or a few recitations of mantras from him or her, seeds of enlightenment will be planted in their minds.

I always paid close attention in this regard, truly wishing that more sentient beings could make a connection with H.H. Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok. When such a great bodhisattva as Rinpoche is in the human world, if any sentient being can make even a brief connection with him, the benefit they will obtain will be inconceivable. Therefore, as long as there were people wishing to meet with Chojé, I would always do my best to make arrangements. When he blessed people, sometimes he would put his hand directly on their heads, and other times he would use a special article like a protection mandala that he himself had personally made. Inside of that were syllables of liberation upon contact and hearing. This was a very sacred object. When Chojé went out, he would often use this object to bless the devotees. Sometimes, afterward, he would bless those of us in his entourage as well. His hands were very large and warm, and when he placed them on our heads for a blessing, there would be a feeling of weight, and immeasurable joy would arise in the mind so that all passions would dissolve in their place. Chojé would chant the mantra of Manjushri, the mantra of Guru Rinpoche, and the *Seven-Line Prayer*. If the person was an advanced practitioner, he would also recite the following verse:

Ho
The primordial lord, the self-occurring wisdom deity,
Abiding inseparably from the mind in the form of light,
Dissolves all the darkness of samsaric confusion
Into the realm of great bliss and equanimity.

The most difficult aspect of being the attendant was that there were always some people who complained about me in front of Rinpoche. Sometimes, I knew who did it and what their purpose was, but I never took it to heart. If Chojé appeared unhappy, I would not be angry with the people who accused me, but would take it as an opportunity to reflect on myself. Therefore, I never blamed others, let alone held any negative thought toward Rinpoche.

Generally speaking, people who seldom serve a guru closely tend to believe that attending a guru by his or her side must be an extremely happy job. But in reality, an attendant has to face formidable challenges all the time, both physically and mentally; so this job is not as appealing as it appears.

SECRET OF ACHIEVING BUDDHAHOOD IN A SINGLE LIFE

On the morning of August 28th, His Holiness first introduced the principle that all schools and traditions in Tibetan Buddhism are not contradictory with each other, and then he talked about the uncommon features of the Great Perfection.

Our root teacher Buddha Shakyamuni, who was endowed with great loving kindness, compassion, and various skillful means, achieved unsurpassable and complete enlightenment in an ultimate sense. However, for the sake of the fortunate beings karmically connected with him, he manifested the whole process of generating the supreme bodhicitta at the beginning, accumulating vast amount of merit throughout three countless eons in the middle, and attaining perfect buddhahood at Bodh Gaya, India, in the end.

After he became the Buddha, he turned the first wheel of dharma on the Four Noble Truths at Deer Park, the second wheel of dharma on the absence of characteristics on the Vulture Peak Mountain, and the third wheel of dharma on fully distinguishing the reality beyond a trace of doubt in the city of Vaishali and many other places. Through these three turnings of the dharma wheel, the Buddha kindly placed all ordinary fortunate beings onto the noble dharma path.

Tantric Teachings that the Buddha Preached

To extraordinary fortunate beings of supreme capacity, the Buddha gave the vast teachings of Secret Mantra in many realms, including the celestial realm, naga palaces, and the residential places of yakshas and

gandharvas. In the human world, the Buddha taught the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* in the kingdom of Oddiyana and the *Kalachakra Tantra* at the great stupa of Dhanyakataka. When the Buddha was living in the world, he only briefly taught these tantric teachings to human beings.

When the Buddha was approaching parinirvana, he said, “I have given the general tantric teachings extensively to those fortunate beings who are well connected to the common vehicle of Secret Mantra. The definitive Vajrayana teachings of the uncommon vehicle of Secret Mantra, however, will



9.12: A beaming smile on Chojé's face

be widely spread after twenty-eight years.” Following the Buddha’s prophecy, twenty-eight years after the Buddha’s parinirvana, a statue of Vajrapani and a number of tantras appeared on the roof of King Dza’s palace, and this is how the Mahayoga teachings came to exist and thrive in the human world. Later, Vajrapani, Lord of Secrets, taught the tantric teachings extensively to the Five Excellent Ones of Sublime Nobility, and this is how the Anuyoga teachings appeared in the world. Again, Vajrapani transmitted to Rigdzin Garab Dorje the detailed and comprehensive teachings of all tantras and upadesha instructions of the Great Perfection, and this is how the Atiyoga teachings first appeared in the human world and started to thrive.

Regarding the key points of all doctrines taught by Buddha Shakyamuni, it can be said that there are 84,000 methods to use as antidotes to sever all 84,000 kinds of mental afflictions. However, to classify them according to the result that each method brings about, generally, there are three kinds of dharma paths: the dharma path that leads to buddhahood after several countless eons, the dharma path that leads

to buddhahood after several lifetimes, and the dharma path that leads to buddhahood within one single lifetime.

The first dharma path refers to the Sutrayana, which holds the view that sentient beings are originally not buddhas; and in order to achieve buddhahood, they need to practice the dharma for many, many eons. The second dharma path refers to the three outer classes of tantra that posit that sentient beings can achieve buddhahood through practicing skillful means stage by stage over a few lifetimes. The third dharma path refers to the highest or unexcelled yoga tantra that affirms that sentient beings are originally buddhas and that if one is able to recognize this original nature by applying special pith instructions in his or her practice, this person can achieve buddhahood within this present life.

The unexcelled yoga tantras in themselves are beyond verbal descriptions. However, based on their main content and according to the Sarma tradition, they are divided into the father tantras, mother tantras, and nondual tantras. Father tantras, such as the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*, focus on the actual practice of five stages. Mother tantras, such as the *Hevajra Tantra*, expound on the path and the result. The nondual tantras emphasize the nondual or effortless practice, such as the six-branched practice of vajra yoga of the completion stage in the glorious *Kalachakra*. Among all three kinds of unexcelled yoga tantras, the most supreme one is the six-branched vajra yoga presented in the glorious *Kalachakra*. The five stages in the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* and the instructions of the path and the result of the *Hevajra Tantra* are all considered as practice with effort, if compared with the glorious *Kalachakra*. Therefore, it can be said that among all tantras in the Sarma tradition, the highest teaching is given in the *Kalachakra*.

In the Land of Tibet, the four major schools of the New Translations each choose different tantras for their main practice. The Kadampa and Gelug schools primarily practice the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*; the Sakya School practices the path and the result taught in the *Hevajra Tantra*;

the Kagyu School practices the six yogas of Naropa in their path of skillful means, and Mahamudra on their path to liberation; and the Jonang School practices the outer, inner, and other instructions on the generation stage, as well as the six vajra yogas of the completion stage, both of which are explained in the *Kalachakra*. As stated, all these traditions focus on different tantras as their main practice.

However, the Nyingma School of the Old Translations is different from these schools in that it possesses the most supreme pith instructions that have never been taught in the Sarma tradition. They are the father tantras of Mahayoga that focus on the generation stage, or the skillful means aspect; the mother tantras of Anuyoga that focus on the completion stage, or the wisdom aspect; and Atiyoga of the Great Perfection that focuses on nondual, self-abiding primordial wisdom.

All Schools Do Not Contradict Each Other

Regarding the Old School of the Earlier Translations and the New Schools of the Later Translations, as mentioned yesterday, the New Schools mainly refer to those appearing from the time of the great translator Rinchen Zangpo onward, such as Sakya, Kagyu, and Gelug.

Some may ask, “Does the Nyingma School practice those tantras emphasized by the New Schools such as the *Kalachakra* and *Guhyasamaja* tantras?” As a matter of fact, all sutras and tantras in Buddhism are intactly preserved in the teachings of the Ngagyur Nyingma of the Earlier Translations. Great masters of the past, such as Mipham Rinpoche, have said:

*The complete and unmistakable philosophies of Sutrayana and
Tantrayana,
The tradition of vidyadharas of wisdom and accomplishment,
The essence of the Buddhist doctrines—
All are included in the Earlier Translations of Secret Mantra.*

It is only within the Nyingma School of the Earlier Translations that all the doctrines of Sutrayana and Tantrayana were completely translated into Tibetan. The translators in the period of the Later Translations translated only a small part of them. One of the main features of the Nyingma School is that it embraces all the philosophies and teachings of Sutrayana and Tantrayana, where the inner tantras of the three yogas and the Great Perfection, in particular, are not seen in any other schools. This needs to be known.

Again, some may ask, “In this case, wouldn’t the teachings in the New Schools contradict those of the Nyingma School, and wouldn’t the wisdom intent of the erudite scholars and accomplished masters in the Old and New Schools be inconsistent?”

The answer is “no.” If we look at the great lineage holders of each school, the peerless Venerable Atisha and the great Tsongkhapa were emanations of Orgyen Rinpoche Padmasambhava, which is clearly stated in the *Son Teachings of the Kadampa School*.^a Sakya Pandita, one of the supreme emanations of Manjushri, was also an emanation of Padmasambhava, as declared in his biography and prophesied by Guru Rinpoche in many of his termas. Moreover, the omniscient Dolpopa in the Jonang School, the peerless Gampopa, and the second Karmapa Pakshi in the Kagyu School were all genuine emanations of Padmasambhava. Briefly speaking, all those great lineage holders in the Land of Tibet, without exception, were the emanations of Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava. Therefore, it cannot be possible that their intentions and teachings contradict each other. The key points of the teachings in different schools are only differentiated by whether the practices are with or without effort. Other than that, there is no major difference.

Some may have one more question, “Then, what’s the exact difference between the Old and New Schools?”

^a *kadam bu chö* (*bka gdams bu chos*).

The tantras in the New Schools provide the skillful means of achieving the result of the unification level of Vajradhara in a single lifetime, and the father and mother tantras of the Nyingma School also expound on the skillful means of achieving buddhahood in a single life. This is the similarity between the Old and New Schools. The main difference between them is that the Dzogchen teachings in the Nyingma School can bring one to full enlightenment in a very short time in this degenerate age. Especially in the category of pith instructions that are secret, there are skillful means that can lead a practitioner to perfect buddhahood in three years or even as short as six months. So, the Old and New Schools differ only in the swiftness of achieving full enlightenment.

Based on these explanations, you should know that all dharma was similarly taught by the Buddha, and all gurus are the true emanations of Padmasambhava without exception.

A Piece of Advice to All Disciples

Now, I would like to solemnly say a few words to all of you with good intentions. Since they are very important, I request you to keep them firmly in your mind. What are they?

In the past few decades, many great masters, mainly Gyalwa Rinpoche, as well as Dudjom Rinpoche and the sixteenth Karmapa, caused the Buddhadharma to take root in the West and start to flourish, like the rising of the morning sun. Out of their altruistic intentions and great kindness, they underwent a lot of hardships over a long period of time to make this happen. Now, the Mahayana Buddhism that has been flourishing in the Land of Tibet is thriving more than ever because it has come to the West and spread widely throughout this planet. Observing the outer, inner, and secret signs, it is clear that such prosperity comes from all the enlightened activities carried out by every rinpoche living here in the West and the great Tibetan masters in India.

However, as the old saying goes, "Virtue is one foot tall, the devil ten feet." As the Buddhadharma and the activities of these great masters who uphold the dharma become more and more prosperous, misguided friends and mistaken teachers will appear to lead you astray, so you need to be very cautious. How do they appear?

For instance, originally in the Land of Tibet, all the dharma teachings in the most prosperous eight lineages of attainment were directly spoken by the Buddha himself, and they had no differences in this regard. Unfortunately, in the future at your center, you may hear someone claiming, "Only a few gurus are enlightened beings, and most of them are the manifestations of maras." It is certain that such kind of things will happen. For instance, in Tibetan history, there were similar cases that someone made the slanderous statements, like King Langdarma was an emanation of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, while Orgyen Rinpoche Padmasambhava was a mara, or Lama Tsongkhapa and many other great masters are the sons and grandsons of a demon. Or, they may rudely assert that some teachings are pure, while some are deluded and misleading. For example, someone may declare, "Only the teachings in our Nyingma School are noble teachings, and all those in the New Schools, such as Sakya and Kagyu, are wrong." Or the opposite might be said, "Only the dharma path offered in the New Schools is unerring, and the Nyingma School teaches the wrong path." Statements like these should not be considered at all because they are proclaimed by the maras who are eager to lure you to the wrong path and control you by malicious forces. They are demonic teachers who can destroy your peace and happiness in this and all future lifetimes and entrap you in the boundless lower realms. This is something you must be aware of.

If, unfortunately, in the future you encounter such misguided teachers and give rise to all kinds of malicious thoughts, please go to qualified dharma teachers and gurus to dispel your doubts. I have given extensive teachings in this regard when I was in the Land of Tibet. Think

about this: I am an old man who can neither see clearly nor think sharply. But just by myself, I can establish and uphold the view that all great masters and upholders of the eight lineages of attainment share the same wisdom intent and all their teachings are noble teachings. How can you smart disciples be misled by misguided friends? So, please never go astray from the noble dharma path.

In the future right before or after I pass away, you will see someone who comes forward to say, “This guru is quite good, and that guru has some problem,” or “This teaching is correct, and that teaching is wrong.” There will be many people like this. So you have to be very careful and vigilant. This is my advice for each of you from the bottom of my heart!

Certainly, here I am not saying that the teachings in all different Buddhist schools have no difference regarding their profundity and ease. Even in the Nyingma School alone, it is obvious that compared with the father and mother tantras, the nondual tantras of Atiyoga provide teachings and pith instruc-



9.13: Chojé fully immersed in giving teachings

tions that are more profound, easier to practice, and swifter to achieve the results. So, there is a big difference among them. But this does not mean that one teaching is wrong and the other is correct. All dharma teachings were taught by the Buddha according to different elements, capacities, inclinations, and intentions of sentient beings, while the pinnacle of all paths is none other than the Atiyoga of the Great Perfection. This was said by the Buddha himself. You should know that the Great Perfection clearly reveals all the key points of the Buddha’s words, and it is the all-embracing commentary of the entire corpus of noble teachings, the subtle wisdom intent of all buddhas of

the three times, and the complete and unmistakable path for all sentient beings to attain buddhahood.

The Uncommon Features of the Great Perfection

Someone may feel that the way I'm talking is like a parrot. In our Tibetan regions, we have a saying that parrots say, "Don't kill insects, don't kill insects" all day long, but they themselves always eat insects. Now, I'm similar. On the one hand, I'm telling you to abandon the sectarian attitude, and on the other hand, I'm solely praising the Great Perfection. (Laughs)

Indeed, praising the Great Perfection is not a sectarian attitude out of favoritism toward my own school. It does have many reliable validations for me to do so.

First, looking back at the history of Dzogchen, there is no doubt that all the great vidyadharas, such as Garab Dorje, Jampal Shenyen, Shri Singha, and Jnanasutra, attained the great rainbow body. Also, without abandoning their physical bodies, the second buddha Orgyen Rinpoche and Vimalamitra are now residing respectively in the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain on the southwest subcontinent of Chamaradvipa and on Mount Wutai in the Han region of China. Like this, it seems that almost every Nyingma lineage master in history achieved a body of liberation, either the rainbow body transcending physicality or the rainbow body of great transference.

To this day, in the upper, central, and lower regions of Tibet, many Dzogchen practitioners have shown auspicious signs from the outer, inner, and secret aspects, as well as the uncommon signs of accomplishing the rainbow body. Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* includes many of these stories in detail. There are indeed many more practitioners who reached such a high level of realization and were not mentioned in that book. This kind of accomplishment is happening all the time. Just from this point alone, I

can say that the profound teachings of Dzogchen are unprecedented and unsurpassable throughout the entire world.

Second, regarding how long it takes to achieve enlightenment, different schools have different statements in their doctrines. Both the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* and the *Kalachakra Tantra* declare that a practitioner of great diligence and great wisdom may achieve buddhahood within a single lifetime. Here, *a single lifetime* refers to a life span of less than one hundred years. Besides this statement, all tantras of the New Schools do not mention any situation of achieving full awakening faster than that. Since they do not state clearly how fast you can attain buddhahood within a single lifetime, any arbitrary conclusion in this regard cannot be made.

Then, how quickly can buddhahood be reached if the Great Perfection is practiced? In many tantras, such as *Nyingtig Yabzhi*, it is said that a practitioner of great diligence can attain the result of perfect unification within three years. Even faster, in *Chetsun Nyingtig*, the quintessence of all pith instructions of the Great Perfection, it is clearly mentioned that those of supreme capacity or great faith and devotion can transform their physical body into light within six months at best. All of this is directly stated in the doctrines of the Great Perfection. Understanding these words, you should know that such a swift shortcut to attaining buddhahood as the Dzogchen path is very rarely taught in any of those tantras in the New Schools.

Third is the effort needed for practice. Among all tantras in the New Schools, the most profound one is the glorious *Kalachakra*, and there is no other tantra more supreme than this one. In this tantra, its effortless path is the six-branched vajra yoga practice of the completion stage. In terms of carrying out actual practice, if you learn more about it, you will notice that the practice of the first branch, the yoga of retraction, is similar to Dzogchen practice in that it requires the natural abiding of body, speech, and mind, as well as the eyes gazing into the clear and cloudless space. However, as you proceed to other branches, such

as the yoga of meditative concentration and the yoga of recollection, you would encounter many kinds of demonic forces and the pitfalls of incorrect methods. If you want to advance on this path, you must implement many special pith instructions to avoid these misleading approaches. Particularly, if you cannot rely on a learned and qualified guru who has mastered all the teachings and is experienced in actual practice, you can barely make any progress on this path. This is clearly stated in the Jonang practice manual of *Kalachakra* called *Seeing Accomplishes All*.^a Therefore, in this chaotic age, it is truly difficult to follow this path to practice the tantric teaching.



9.14: Transcendent blessing beyond time and space

But if you choose to practice Dzogchen, the only prerequisite is to have strong faith in the guru and to see the guru as a buddha. With strong confidence, you pray to the guru devotedly and practice the pith instruction of natural abiding. This is more than enough to achieve full enlightenment, and nothing else is needed. In the root

text of the *Chetsun Nyingtig*, it says, “In particular, to supplicate the master respectfully and assiduously with intense and uncontrived devotion is the most supreme method among all means of dispelling obstacles and enhancing practice.” Therefore, besides praying to the guru with strong devotion, you do not need any other practices, and you may just sit or lie with ease and comfort. It is fair to say that there are no other practices as easy as the Great Perfection.

Fourth, regarding the teaching intended for this age, when sentient beings’ mental afflictions become weightier and harsher, accordingly,

^a *tongwa don den (mthong ba don ldan)*.

they need more profound teachings to tame their minds. It is like a person who is seriously ill; there is no way for him to recover if he is not prescribed some special medicine to treat him. The same goes for the dharma. In the age of perfection, all sentient beings' mental afflictions are not obvious at all, and they only need kriya tantra as their antidote. In the ages of possessing three and possessing two, when people can only perform part of the ten virtues, they need charya tantra and yoga tantra to tame their minds respectively. When the age of strife begins, sentient beings' mental afflictions are much stronger and obvious; thus, the highest yoga tantra has to be taught to guide their spiritual practices. Now, it is an age even more chaotic than the age of strife, in which the five degeneracies are rampant and sentient beings are obstinate and difficult to tame. Given this situation, except for the teaching of the Great Perfection, no other teachings can be truly helpful. As the great master Kathok Dudul Dorje said, "When the teachings of eight yantras can barely tame beings, it is the time to illuminate the highest path of Atiyoga." In this degenerate age when all eight yantras fail to guide sentient beings, practitioners need to rely on the pinnacle of all yantras, Atiyoga of the Great Perfection, because it is especially intended for this time. In this regard, the Dzogchen teaching is the most outstanding and incomparable.

Fifth, regarding the duration of the Buddhadharma in the world, generally speaking, most teachings taught by the Buddha have come to an end in this age. The duration of the dharma existing in this world overall has four periods: the period of fruition, the period of accomplishment, the period of transmission, and the period when only the symbols are retained. Currently, this is the period of transmission, at the juncture where the transmission of discipline has finished and the transmission of meditative concentration has begun.

Regarding the tantric teachings in general, most of them have also entered into their final period and will soon disappear from this world. Take the *Kalachakra Tantra* as an example. During the reigns of the

seven Dharmarajas and twenty-five Kalkin Kings, the dharma is widely propagated, and this is an earlier period of *Kalachakra*. The later period refers to the time when the two sons of Kalkin King Rudra Chakrin assist the *Kalachakara* teachings to thrive and prosper. Currently, it is in the earlier period, the reigns of the seven Dharmarajas were over, the twenty-first Kalkin King Aniruddha is on the throne, and this year is the sixty-seventh year of his reign. As you can see, the earlier period of *Kalachakra* is nearing its completion. One thing you should know is that the closer the duration of the teaching is getting to its end, the lesser and slower its blessing and power are becoming.

On the other hand, the Dzogchen teaching is the opposite situation. As the *Reverberation of Sound Tantra* says:

*The Dakini Paldzin, who is endowed with virtue,
Will receive and uphold the teaching
And propagate it when the life span of humans is ten years.
After that, the teaching will not exist in the world.*

Now in this age, it is exactly the right time to widely spread the Dzogchen teaching, and many female practitioners will attain the accomplishment of the rainbow body through Dzogchen practice. As the tantra mentions, when the human life span decreases to ten years, the Dakini Paldzin will appear in the world to propagate the Dzogchen teaching, and anyone who sees, hears, recalls, or touches her will attain the fruition of the rainbow body of great transference. The current time is the time for Dzogchen to flourish, and it should be spread, propagated, and practiced.

The superiority of Dzogchen is so vast and boundless that even a great bodhisattva who has attained the dharani of total retention cannot enumerate all its extraordinary features over several eons. Even some ordinary persons like me can expound on this topic for quite a few days. Unfortunately, we have to stop here due to the limited time.

Concluding Remarks

In order to create an auspicious coincidence, I will conclude my teaching with two quotes. The first is from Rigdzin Garab Dorje's *Secret Commentary on the Sole Heir of the Doctrine Tantra*. At the end of his commentary, he wrote:

*All buddhas of the three times
Have given countless pith instructions.
This Sole Heir is the most supreme among them.
There are absolutely no other instructions more profound than this
In vast, immeasurable realms.*

There are countless teachings given by all buddhas in the past, present, and future, but to summarize their essentials, none of them can surpass this teaching of the Great Perfection, a self-occurring tantra and the only heir of all buddhas. Just like we Tibetans have the custom to swear by Lhasa, here Garab Dorje made this promise and assured us of the incomparable qualities of Dzogchen. Please keep this in mind.

Another is from Omniscient Ju Mipham Rinpoche, who expressed unequalled kindness to beings and was well-known as a qualified teacher manifested by the nonconceptual wisdom of all buddhas. He himself once said, "When the world is enveloped in the darkness of degeneration and decline, the enlightened activities of Padmasambhava will become as brilliant as the moon." In this age when the darkness of the five degeneracies is more rampant than ever, plague, famine, and war strike the world one after another, and people's mental afflictions, such as desire, anger, and ignorance, become more and more uncontrollable, it is the time when the enlightened activities of Padmasambhava become more and more flourishing. The darker the night sky, the brighter the moon. Likewise, the more the darkness of degeneration envelops the world, the faster the blessings of Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava will come to us.

Therefore, I exhort you to choose the Great Perfection as your only dharma practice and Guru Rinpoche as your main teacher. This is my sincere request to each of you. I myself and Sogyal Rinpoche are recognized as the reincarnations of Tertön Sogyal Lerab Lingpa. For both of us, our only reliance for this entire life is Guru Orgyen Padmasambhava, and the only dharma we exert ourselves to practice is the Great Perfection. Therefore, once again I implore you to do the same thing if you want to follow the two of us, and particularly Sogyal Rinpoche. Please engage yourself solely in the Dzogchen practice; this is the key message I share with you today, which is also your guru's motivation.

I am not lying to you. Truly, as I come to this dharma center of Tertön Lerab Lingpa, although I did not prepare anything, it seems that once I start to talk I cannot stop, so my teaching becomes more and more extensive. Like today, I haven't gotten to the main point of the Dzogchen



9.15: Chojé finishing up an extensive teaching

practice, and now the time is up. But I think it is okay since you have practiced the Great Perfection in the past, you are practicing it now, and you will continue to practice it in the future. If there is more time tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, I'll talk about it briefly. But if there is no more time, it won't be a problem as long as you rely on your guru over the long term and ask for his advice to dissolve your doubts and questions if you have any. By doing so, it is sure that you will make progress on this path.

It is really odd that an old monk like me is talking nonstop. If I continue like this, I am afraid that I will still be chattering away even when the sun sets. But anyway, it is time for me to stop here.

In the end, His Holiness paused for a few dozen seconds, and then composed an impromptu poem:

*Lerab Lingpa's place of practice is as vast as empty space,
Where the reincarnation of Terton Sogyal gives a blessing like the
sun.*

*My speech is boundless and endless,
But it is still difficult to cover every aspect and give an exhaustive
teaching.*

So, I can only stop here for the time being.

I ALSO GAVE A FEW LECTURES

On the evening of the same day, as requested by the Buddhists at the center, I also gave a lecture about Terton Sogyal Lerab Lingpa and his reincarnations. Primarily, I talked about His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche's qualities in terms of his body, speech, and mind in reference to his biography.



9.16: Khenpo Sodargye giving a lecture about Lerab Lingpa and his reincarnations

During this trip in the West, not only at Lerab Ling, I gave dharma teachings at other segments of the trip as well. In Napa Valley, I talked about the practice of Manjushri and had two Q&A sessions. In Boston, I talked about the three

noble principles and the philosophy of a non-existent self and also gave the oral transmission of the sadhana of Vajrakilaya.



9.17: Khenpo Sodargye interacting with audience in Napa Valley

When I explained the selflessness of the individual, I applied the logical reasonings of different scholars, including the fivefold reasoning of the chariot in Nagarjuna's *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*,^a the sevenfold reasoning of the chariot in Chandrakirti's *Introduction to the Middle Way*,^b the reasoning of neither one nor many in Shantarakshita's *Adornment of the Middle Way*,^c as well as the observations offered by Shantideva in his *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*, whose analyses affirm the selflessness of both the physical body and the six consciousnesses. Through these logical arguments of the Middle Way, I established that the so-called self that sentient beings strongly cling to does not exist at all, guiding the students to develop a theoretical understanding of a non-existent self. I also shared the actual method of practicing the selflessness of the individual.

In fact, to spread the dharma in the West, I feel there need to be two kinds of teachers. One is a fully enlightened master, such as H.H. Jigme Phuntsok

^a *tsa wa sherab (rtsa ba shes rab)*, Skt. *Mulamadhyamakakarikas*; Nagarjuna.

^b *uma la jüg pa (dbu ma la 'jug pa)*, Skt. *Madhyamakavatara*; Chandrakirti.

^c *uma gyen (dbu ma rgyan)*, Skt. *Madhyamakalamkara*; Shantirakshita.

Rinpoche, who possesses extraordinary blessings transmitted from their dharma lineages and has achieved exceptional spiritual accomplishments. This kind of master can plant virtuous seeds in those beings who have made connections to them and can even lead those of great faith directly to liberation. The other kind of dharma teacher has been living in the West for many years and is familiar with the westerners' interests, culture, and mental struggles. In the best case, these teachers may have also learned the modern methods of dealing with emotions, such as those in psychological studies.



9.18: Khenpo Sodargye giving teachings and oral transmissions in Boston

Besides them, someone like me as a visitor certainly cannot bring much benefit to the locals. I had only a quick visit to these unfamiliar countries and have neither a high level of realization nor a sound understanding of western cultures. Therefore, just giving westerners a few lectures occasionally probably does not inspire them or greatly benefit them. For this reason, I didn't include any of my teachings in this book, lest I provoke any jokes. This book mainly contains the vajra words of Yidzhin Norbu because they can directly benefit the readers.

LAMA MUMTSO RINPOCHE

On the morning of August 29th, Lama Mumtso bestowed the empowerment of Guru Dorje Drolo on the entire assembly. Almost at every stop during this trip, she gave empowerments at the request of each dharma center, including *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma*, *Tendrel Nyesel*, *Jampal Yeshe Sempa*, and *Avalokiteshvara*.

In western society where gender equality is highly promoted, many people had a special joy upon seeing Lama Mumtso. She was exceptionally welcomed by every dharma center because there were very few great female masters who traveled



9.19: Lama Mumtso giving empowerment

to the West to spread the dharma, and it was even rarer to find female tulkus or dakinis who were able to grant empowerments to a dharma assembly. When disciples saw Lama Mumtso, all of them felt she was the exact embodiment of compassion as her gaze and smile exuded a gentle glow. Even if an individual met her only once, they would be deeply attracted by her unique elegance of spiritual practice. Especially for many female practitioners, Lama Mumtso gave them great hope and confidence and increased their courage to dedicate themselves to dharma practice.



9.20: Left: Lama Mumtso in Hawaii; right: in Maryland

As I accompanied Chojé to many places at home or abroad, I had a chance to stay close to Lama Mumtso. Not to mention her extraordinary spiritual realization and transcendent wisdom in the teachings of Mahayana and Vajrayana, just in her daily life alone as she interacts with others and deals with many trivial matters, she is not as fragile, sensitive, or unpredictable as some women in the secular world. She is quiet and reticent by nature, having no desire for any mundane things, and her clothing, food, housing, and transportation are all very simple. She is never fussy about food and accommodations when she goes out.



9.21: Top two: Lama Mumtso and western disciples in New York; bottom three: in Napa Valley



9.22: Lama Mumtso's bright eyes

I never saw her lose her temper when she was with her uncle Khnepo Rinpoche and her mother Ani Medron. She was always respectful in her words and actions and served the two of them wholeheartedly. Between Rinpoche and the disciples, she never made a fuss or sowed discord, but always showed her love and care for everyone year in and year out.

Lama Mumtso also has superb intelligence and an extraordinary memory. For example, if we forgot where we left our luggage, she could recall it immediately. She remembers everything that has happened clearly, even the date and year. The only thing she is fond of is dharma practice. She spends most of her time chanting mantras and daily prayers. Except that, she doesn't like to talk a lot.

To me personally, Lama Mumtso has great kindness and benevolence in both worldly and spiritual aspects. Today, she is the vajra guru of all sangha members at Larung Gar Five Sciences Buddhist Academy, and she constantly grants empowerments and teachings to all of us. May she live long in this world and always turn the wheel of dharma!

ENJOYED THE SCENERY



9.23: Sogyal Rinpoche inviting Chojé to the main hilltop of Lerab Ling to make sang offering



9.24: Sang offering



9.25: Chojé having a happy conversation

After Lama Mumtso's empowerment, Sogyal Rinpoche invited Yidzhin Norbu to the main hilltop of Lerab Ling to make sang offering, and he readily agreed. We drove to the hilltop, where there were many prayer flags and, in particular, many of Gesar. This is the place where the sangha members at



9.26: Chojé and Sogyal Rinpoche

Lerab Ling would come to make sang offering on auspicious days and festivals. The landscape is wide open, with a broad view of the surrounding valleys and the Pyrenees Mountains that form a natural border between Spain and France. Someone pointed out the mountains nearby and the directions of each European country. Later, Chojé and everyone together chanted the liturgies and made sang offering and offerings to the dharma protectors. All of us prayed that the dharma always thrive in the world and benefit sentient beings extensively.



9.27: Chojé walking slowly in the forest

After going downhill and having lunch, Rinpoche was invited to the tea house, accompanied by several great masters. It is a little wooden house constructed by Sogyal Rinpoche in the same valley where the main tent for dharma teaching was located. It is nestled in the forest by the side of a little stream and waterfall, and there is only a rugged mountain trail leading there. Since the vehicle could not reach there directly, Choje just walked with the support of everyone, which was a little bit hard for him going up and down.



9.28: Choje and others resting and chatting at the tea house by the waterfall

After we arrived, Rinpoche enjoyed the beautiful scenery and talked about Padmasambhava and Shantarakshita coming to Tibet to spread the dharma. The development of the dharma activities at Lerab Ling was also discussed for some time.

PITH INSTRUCTIONS OF DIRECTLY POINTING OUT THE NATURE OF MIND

In the afternoon, after coming back from the tea house, Yidzhin Norbu gave a teaching on the eleven topics of Dzogchen, as well as the pith instructions of trekchö.

Today, I'd like to share with you a few words focusing on the clear light teachings of Dzogpachenpo. The Great Perfection is the ultimate intent of all buddhas of the three times and the pinnacle of all paths.

In terms of its propagation in the human world, the Dzogchen teachings that are thriving today were initially entrusted to Rigdzin Garab Dorje. As the first human master, he compiled all Dzogchen teachings into 6,400,000 verses. Later, his disciple Jampal Shenyen divided these verses into three categories: the outer category of mind, the inner category of space, and the secret category of pith instructions. Shri Singha further divided the category of pith instructions into four cycles: outer, inner, secret, and quintessential secret. The great pandita Vimalamitra then divided the quintessential secret cycle, the Nyingtig teachings, into two categories: that which can lead to liberation in this very life belongs to the explanatory lineage of the Great Perfection, and that which can lead to liberation in the self-manifestation of wisdom in the bardo state belongs to the whispered lineage of the Great Perfection.

Regarding the teachings of the explanatory and the whispered lineages in the Land of Tibet, Omniscient Longchenpa expounded on them with the extensive pandita approach in his *Seven Treasures* and *Trilogy of Rest*, and he also compiled the *Nyingtig Yabzhi* that presents the teachings with the profound kusali approach. All these pith instructions are well preserved in the three categories of tantra, transmission, and upadesha in the written format. Altogether, there are a total of nineteen Great Perfection tantras: the seventeen tantras of the quintessential secret

Heart Essence cycle, plus the *Blazing Clear Expanse Tantra* and the *Wrathful Black Mother Tantra*.

Regarding transmission, the clarification of the tantras, there are the four profound scriptures, i.e., the golden syllables, the turquoise syllables, the conch syllables, and the copper-colored syllables. *men ngak*, or upadesha, the heart essence instructions given by the master, refers to the one hundred nineteen essential pith instructions.

The instructions of actual practice that embrace all the essential points of these Dzogchen teachings are introduced in Omniscient Longchenpa's *Lama Yangtig*. It contains fifty-one sections, and if you can put it into actual practice, then you practice all Dzogchen teachings without missing anything.

The Eleven Topics of Dzogchen

The question may arise, "Which tantra does the *Lama Yangtig* depend on to explain all the pith instructions?" It is primarily based on the *String of Pearls Tantra*,^a which expounds the Dzogchen teachings by following the eleven topics. What are these eleven topics? The *String of Pearls Tantra* says:

*The ground, the way confusion occurs, the way the buddha nature pervades,
The location, the pathways, the gateways, the objective sphere,
The actual practice, the optimal extent, the bardo,
And the ground of liberation—these are the eleven topics.*

First, the Ground. In the very beginning when there are neither enlightened buddhas nor deluded sentient beings, the ground remains uncertain or indeterminate. It is spontaneously present with its essence as emptiness, its intrinsic nature as luminosity, and its radiance of compassion ready to manifest. It can be described in terms of five

^a *mu tig treng wa (mu tig phreng ba).*

groups, which are five kayas, five wisdoms, five winds, five dakinis, and five lights.

Second, the Way Confusion Occurs. In the open space provided by its essence, clinging to its intrinsic nature as external objects and misunderstanding its compassionate energy as the mind, sentient beings keep wandering in samsara continuously driven by the three causes and four conditions. The three causes are the causal ignorance of single identity, connate ignorance, and imputed conceptual ignorance. These three kinds of ignorance cause the confusion of sentient beings. The four conditions are the controlling condition, objective condition, causal condition, and immediate subsequent condition. These four types of condition also lead to confusion.

When appearances arise from the ground, the primordial Buddha Samantabhadra recognizes those manifestations as self-appearances, and thus achieves liberation at that very moment. The way of achieving liberation has six special features, which can be condensed into three. What are they? The result is not generated by a cause, the pith instructions are not offered by a teaching, and the buddha is not transformed from the ordinary mind. The primordial buddha achieves liberation with these three uncommon features.

Third, the Way the Buddha Nature Pervades. Although there are myriads of appearances in samsara and nirvana, they never waver from the fundamental nature of the tathagata. To ascertain this view, in the Sutrayana teachings, there are mainly ten sutras elaborating tathagatagarbha, and all of them belong to the third turning of the dharma wheel. In order to reveal the deeper meanings of these sutras, Maitreya expounded nine aspects of buddha nature through nine examples in his *Uttaratantra Shastra*,^a and Nagarjuna expounded six aspects through six examples in his *In Praise of Dharmadhatu*.^b In the Vajrayana of Secret Mantra, there are the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, *Buddhasamayoga*

^a *gyü lama (rgyud bla ma)*, Skt. *mahayanottaratantrashastra*; Maitreya.

^b *chöying tödpa (chos dbyings bstod pa)*, Skt. *dharmadhatustotra*; Nagarguna.

Tantra,^a and Rongzom Pandita's *Establishing All Appearances as Divine*^b and *Establishing the Subject as Primordial Wisdom*,^c as well as many great teachings given by Omniscient Longchenpa, all of which elaborate the pervasiveness of buddha nature. You should study these sutras, tantras, and shastras to understand the deeper meaning.

Fourth, the Location of Wisdom. Where is the primordial wisdom of awareness? The actual primordial wisdom abides in the immeasurable palace of the precious, eight-faceted heart jewel. The radiance abides in the immeasurable palace of the cranial cavity, in the immeasurable palace of eyes, and in the immeasurable palace of mobile channels. There are four immeasurable palaces in total. In the precious jewel palace of the heart abide the peaceful deities; in the palace of the cranial cavity abide the wrathful deities; in the palace of eyes abide the signs of light rays; and in the palace of mobile channels abides the essence of lights.

Fifth, the Pathways of Wisdom. Two white filaments, thin and coiled, come from the kati crystal channel and insert into the left and right eyes, thus revealing natural primordial wisdom.

Sixth, the Gateways of Wisdom. In the center of the physical eye, there is the luminosity of the far-reaching water lasso, with a thin base and a wide tip, shaped like a cow's horn, clear and luminous. It is through this gateway that natural primordial wisdom is revealed.

Seventh, the Objective Sphere. In the stainless sky, the objective sphere of dharmakaya is the sun, the objective sphere of sambhogakaya is the moon, and the objective sphere of nirmanakaya is a lamp. Through these three kinds of objective sphere, you can perceive the three appearances: the luminosity of the dhatu of awareness, which is the pervasive blue space surrounded by concentric rings of five-colored lights; the luminosity of the empty bindu, which is concentric circles

^a *sangye nyam jor (sangs rgyas mnyam sbyor).*

^b *nanngwa lha ru drub pa (snang ba lha ru sgrub pa); Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo.*

^c *yul chen yeshe su drub pa (yul chan ye shes sus grub pa); Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo.*

of five-colored lights overlaid one on another, like a stone cast into a spring; and the vajra chain of awareness, which is like gold threads adorned with crystal beads.

Eighth, the Actual Practice. If viewing primordial purity as the ground and thoroughly cutting through as the path, then the fruition is that all phenomena are purified as atomic particles. If viewing spontaneous presence as the ground and directly crossing over as the path, then the fruition is being liberated as the rainbow body.

Ninth, the Optimal Extent. You will attain four visions in the process of perfecting the practice, which are: the vision of direct recognition of the dharmata, the vision of the increasing experience, the vision of pristine awareness reaching its full extent, and the vision of the complete exhaustion of phenomena into dharmata.

Tenth, Appearances in the Bardo. According to the tantric teachings of the secret cycle and those inferior to the level of the secret cycle, there are six bardos; while according to the quintessential secret cycle, there are four bardos. This is the uncommon statement of the Nyingtig teachings, whereas Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra had different opinions regarding the exact boundary of each bardo. Simply speaking, the four bardos are the natural bardo of this life, the bardo of dying, the dharmata bardo, and the bardo of becoming. In the natural bardo of this life, you should dispel wrong views and doubts through listening and contemplating the dharma, recalling the instruction like a swallow entering its nest. In the bardo of dying, you should remind those deluded ones to have clear awareness of the teaching, recalling the instruction like a beauty looking in a mirror. In the dharmata bardo, you should have the conviction that all phenomena are self-appearances, recalling the instruction like a child jumping into their mother's lap. In the bardo of becoming, through positive karma, you search for rebirth, recalling the instructions like the metaphor of reconnecting a broken gutter.



9.29: Chojé with a loving smile

Eleventh, the Ground of Liberation. Here, there are two options to either be liberated as the fully perfected state of enlightenment or the fully manifest state of enlightenment.

These eleven topics encompass the Dzogchen teachings in all three categories of tantra, transmission, and upadesha. They were also the teachings that Guru Rinpoche transmitted to the mantra adept Nanam Dorje Dudjom in the center hall named Blazing Turquoise in the Samye Monastery, the Monastery of Unchanging Spontaneous Presence. This time, I've taught them to you briefly. To a certain extent, the manner of this teaching belongs to the extensive pandita approach. Many of you may not fully understand such a scholarly presentation. However, it is through the inconceivable power of interdependent arising that today at Lerab Ling, I gave you all the essential points of the Dzogchen tantras in a clear and concise manner.

Pith Instructions of Thoroughly Cutting Through

Now, at the request of Sogyal Rinpoche, I will focus on the view of trekchö, thoroughly cutting through to the ground of original purity.

Regarding the teachings on trekchö, all great vidyadharas share the same ultimate meaning, whereas their approaches to explanation are a little bit different. Rigdzin Garab Dorje explained it in his *Three Vital Statements that Strike the Crucial Point*:

Directly identify the face of rigpa as it is.

Decide upon one thing and that alone.

Achieve confidence in liberation.

Later, Shri Singha expounded upon them with three salient points: determining everything as the great exhaustion of phenomena in the ground of original purity, determining the pith resolution within effortless activity that is nakedly unimpeded, and determining the salient point that everything is fully liberated within great evenness. Further, Padmasambhava directly introduced the essence of emptiness

as dharmakaya, the intrinsic nature of luminosity as sambhogakaya, and the all-pervasive compassion as nirmanakaya.

Jnanasutra elucidated the teaching through the pith instructions of the four modes of placement: placement in the view, in meditation, in conduct, and in the result. Further, Omniscient Longchenpa had more extensive teachings on trekchö. Among them, his elaborations on the four aspects of non-existence, oneness, openness, and spontaneous presence in his *Precious Treasury of the Fundamental Nature*^a is exceptional. Finally, Rongzom Pandita taught the meaning of the Great Perfection to be that which sustains the container of great mindfulness, as well as abiding within great evenness. Through these two points, he revealed all key points of the tantra, transmission, and upadesha of the Great Perfection.

Today I will follow Omniscient Ju Mipham Rinpoche's teaching and combine all the pith instructions of the lineage holders of awareness into one sentence, which is, "When a guru directly introduces a disciple to the nature of mind, there are two kinds of methods: the guidance through the door of shamatha and the guidance through the door of vipashyana." To be more specific, the guidance through shamatha is to approach the view through meditation, and the guidance through vipashyana is to approach meditation through the view. The first one is similar to the principal teachings of Mahamudra, and the second one is similar to the principal teachings of Dzogchen. As for the guidance through the door of vipashyana, Rongzom Pandita and his followers emphasize the view on the empty essence, Omniscient Longchenpa and his followers emphasize the wisdom that recognizes the luminous nature, and Omniscient Ju Mipham Rinpoche presents his unique teaching by combining the wisdom intent of these two great masters into a single instruction.

To summarize the vast teachings of Ju Mipham Rinpoche, they can be condensed into two points, which are recognizing the face of rigpa

^a né luk rinpoche'i dzöd (gnas lugs rin po che'i mdzod); Longchen Rabjam.

and abiding in that natural state. Other than these two crucial points of his, there are no further pith instructions for the Great Perfection. But what do they mean? Whether your mind moves or comes to rest, as you observe its essence completely at ease, you will recognize that it does not exist outside, inside, or in between and that it is empty like open space. This is called *recognizing the face of rigpa*. Once you realize the mind is unborn and empty, although there is no object or subject, you can naturally ascertain its nature, like a person with healthy eyes seeing tangible phenomena directly. When this occurs, it is to *abide in that natural state*. Simply speaking, recognizing the unborn essence and remaining in the state of self-knowing awareness is to sustain *the view of the nature of mind*.

During meditation, do not lose the awareness of the unborn essence while abiding in a state that is free from any arising or movement of thoughts. Quoting Rongzom Pandita's words, "The meaning of the Great Perfection is that which sustains the container of great mindfulness, as well as abiding within great evenness." The vigilance of introspection will not allow the arising of any conceptual thoughts, and the meditator simply abides in the awareness of its unborn and cognizant nature. This is the state of great evenness and is called *the meditation of the nature of mind*.

For *conduct*, whenever a thought arises, either good or bad, just leave it alone, do not follow after it or suppress it with a particular antidote. You just sustain the natural state of rigpa without any movement and maintain cognizant awareness. This is the pith instruction of recognizing the face of rigpa and abiding in that natural state.

The perfection of unobstructed power through these two practices brings forth the *result*, the ultimate accomplishment of dharmakaya and rupakaya.

Or you can grasp the essentials of the Great Perfection and apply other pith instructions to directly point out the nature of mind. The view

of the Great Perfection is to recognize the unborn essence of mind. This is not difficult to understand. As you observe your own mind, whether it is distracted or rested, it never truly exists, like a reflection in a mirror. Understanding this point is called *the view*.

This should be quite straightforward. As Dodrupchen Tenpe Nyima said, “The moment you observe inward, you attain it.” If you try to look for a trace of the mind, you can never find it. It is just like the moon’s reflection on water. When the moon is reflected on water, it simply appears, and you just watch it instead of doing anything. But if you stir the water with a stick, the reflection cannot clearly manifest. Likewise, when you observe inward and use the mind to watch the mind, you will find it is not existent at all—this is rigpa. If you keep watching the mind with the mind, you will recognize its essence as lucid, cognizant, and unceasing—this is rigpa. If you keep watching the mind with the mind, you will realize it is naturally abiding, unfabricated and unrestricted, just as it is at the present moment—this is rigpa.

Orgyen Padmasambhava once also said:

*At the present moment, it is lucid, cognizant, unceasing, clear, and
vivid,
And the primordial lord Samantabhadra is none other than that.
The empty expanse without anything being established is
Samantabhadri.
Realizing such nature instantly perfects full enlightenment.*

When you use the mind to observe the mind, it does not exist anywhere, whether outside, inside, or in between. This is called *the awakened mother Samantabhadri*. While it is empty, its unobstructed power is unceasing and gives rise to various appearances. This is called *the awakened father Samantabhadra*. Realizing their inseparable nature can instantly lead you to perfect buddhahood. This is precisely the realization of the nature of mind.



9.30: Chojé on the dharma throne



9.31: Chojé's smiles

Some may think, “Is it really that easy? It should be harder than that.”

I would say this is just a misunderstanding. The omniscient guru Ju Mipham Rinpoche said:

*Since it is so simple, we doubt this mystery of the mind.
Let the guru’s instructions give us the strength to see!*

Since it is unbelievably simple, you must rely on the guru’s words to ascertain and recognize the face of rigpa and to abide in and uninterruptedly sustain that state. This is called *the meditation*. While meditating, there is nothing to be meditated on, although you do not forget your realization and rest there. Dudjom Lingpa once said in a teaching, “When meditating, you meditate on nothing. Gaze into empty space, and that’s it!”

So-called *conduct* is to play with the unobstructed power in order to enhance the realization. That is, when any kind of conceptual thought arises, do not feel happy or sad. Just like an old man watching a child at play, do not have either joy or sorrow toward good or bad thoughts, but just let rigpa sustain itself in its own ground. Except rigpa, no other things truly exist. However, ordinary people keep running after their conceptual thoughts that are manifested by the unobstructed power. If one day rigpa can sustain itself in its own ground and not be moved by any conceptual thought, this is *the result* of the perfection of unobstructed power.

Regarding the Great Perfection, I have two approaches to explain it. Sometimes, I say it is the simplest and easiest path, and sometimes I say it is difficult to understand even after practicing for numerous lifetimes throughout many eons. Today, I’m following the first approach, so that you can receive all the teachings of the Great Perfection.

In the end, in order for you to give rise to great joy, I will quote two teachings from Omniscient Longchenpa. In his *Precious Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle*, he said, “We teacher and disciples must have been

accumulating merit and purifying obscurations throughout numerous countless eons in the past, because we have now encountered the heart teaching of Samantabhadra.” The reason that you are able to receive the Dzogchen teachings in this present life is that you have spent numerous great eons accumulating merit and purifying obscurations. Aren’t you happy upon hearing this? Longchenpa further said, “We teacher and disciples will surely, swiftly attain buddhahood either in this very life, in the bardo, or in a self-occurring nirmanakaya pure realm because we have now encountered the pure resultant dharma that is the direct cause for buddhahood. It is endowed with unimpeded strength, and we also have confidence in it and are putting it into actual practice.” This reference is absolutely true. As long as you do not have serious conflicts with your guru and do not develop wrong view toward the teachings, you will definitely attain buddhahood in this life or in the bardo. This is absolutely true.

Therefore, you should feel truly happy for yourselves. Patrul Rinpoche once said:

*As the dear son of all people, this crazy monk living in a secluded
place
Has generated the supreme intention of bodhicitta and become the
reliance of all beings and
Has eliminated the partiality for you and me and developed loving
kindness equally to everyone.
Wherever I go, I am always joyful.*

Like this, you will be happy in this and all future lives and not feel any pain or sorrow, only happiness. So are you truly happy? (Laughs)

Ju Mipham Rinpoche once said:

*Those who have made an auspicious connection with the dharma
that causes one to have the last rebirth,*

Even without practice, can still enjoy ease and happiness in a relaxed and leisurely way.

While the ignorant beings are blind to true reality and wail in agony, Those who have engraved on the bottom of their hearts the pith instructions of the gurus of the three lineages

Are enjoying the nectar of medicine that is primordial wisdom and transcends the ordinary mind.

Even without practice, they can still enjoy ease and happiness in a relaxed and leisurely way.

Now you have made an auspicious connection with the Great Perfection. It is the dharma that belongs to the bodhisattvas in their last rebirth. If you can put it into actual practice, that is the best; but even if you do not practice and just sleep all day long, you are still the happiest on this land. Nobody can be much happier. Let's just stop the teaching and be happy and joyful!



9.32: A precious opportunity to receive dharma teachings

THE PERCEIVED CONNECTIONS

His Holiness didn't spend a long time at Lerab Ling. However, when many people talk about his visit thirty years later, they can still vividly recall many details because such a deep and unforgettable impression was engraved on their hearts. Recently, we interviewed several senior disciples from Rigpa, and you may be interested in their recollections of Yidzhin Norbu.

Karin Behrendt. Karin is a senior dharma teacher in the Rigpa sangha. When talking about Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche, she said, "Whenever I think of him, it awakens a distinctive taste and atmosphere. He was such a mountain of a man, majestic and at the same time incredibly humble, exuding enormous warmth and kindness. It was most heartwarming to see H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche's and Sogyal Rinpoche's deep mutual respect and closeness. I am endlessly grateful for his generosity and effort to come and visit us and let us take part in the history of Terton Sogyal. I am sure that even meeting him once to witness his vast knowledge and deep realization has had an impact on our lives far beyond anything we can fathom with our ordinary minds."

Jaborah Arnoul. Jaborah teaches the dharma at Rigpa centers in Germany. When recalling the very moment when she saw Yidzhin Norbu at Lerab Ling, she said, "I remember a deep and strong spontaneous feeling of devotion when I saw him the first time. I was really sad not to have much money or precious jewelry for the *ten shuk*⁴ at that time. I just wanted to offer him everything, and in my mind I did."



9.33: Jaborah Arnoul now



9.34: A widely circulated portrait of Chojé

Jane Packham. Jane is a senior disciple of Sogyal Rinpoche and a senior dharma teacher. She said, “One important point that I can say as a student who came in 1994 and never met H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche is that Sogyal Rinpoche often talked about him, and we still to this day have the recording of him chanting *Wangdu*. We play this chanting during daily *Tendrel Nyesel* tsok at Lerab Ling and in all the Rigpa sanghas across the world. So, we are still receiving his blessings from the *Wangdu* recording every time we do tsok.”



9.35: Jane Packham now

Renate Handel. Renate was the attendant of Sogyal Rinpoche in 1993. She said, “I was very impressed by the presence of H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche. I felt that he was a very powerful lama, different from any other lama I met before. He was impressive, very kind and compassionate. I don’t remember exactly what he taught. But I thought since he was so powerful, Terton Sogyal must have been very special as well. I also remember when Sogyal Rinpoche was preparing this visit, it was a very big thing. After his arrival at Lerab Ling, Sogyal Rinpoche was very concerned if he felt comfortable and whether our cook was cooking the food that he liked. I have never seen Sogyal Rinpoche so concerned about a visiting rinpoche than with H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche. It all felt very special. Knowing that someone is a reincarnation of Terton Sogyal is definitely a special statement.”



9.36: Chojé holding a statue of Manjushri

Janine Schulz. When recalling the visit of Yidzhin Norbu, Janine said, “In 1993, H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche, the reincarnation of Tertön Sogyal who lived in the Land of Tibet, visited Sogyal Rinpoche at Lerab Ling. I have two strong memories of that time. The first is that in spite of his very long journey, the moment Rinpoche arrived, he dashed into the main shrine tent to tell everyone that



9.37: Chojé hanging the mala on his ear

Sogyal Rinpoche was the crazy wisdom reincarnation of Tertön Sogyal, certainly not because we had many doubts about that. The other memory is that Khenpo Rinpoche would hang his mala on one of his very large ears when he wasn't using it.”

INSTRUCTIONS ON TÖGAL

On the morning of August 30th, His Holiness bestowed the *Jampal Yeshe Sempa* empowerment to the Lerab Ling sangha and taught them the instructions on the Dzogchen practice of tögal.

The teaching you are going to receive today is Dzogchen, the Great Perfection. It is the pinnacle of all paths, the all-embracing commentary of all noble teachings, and the deepest wisdom intent of all buddhas of the three times. The Dzogchen teachings can be divided into three categories: the outer category of mind, the inner category of space, and the secret category of pith instructions, all of which can be further divided into many different subdivisions. Now I will instruct you on the actual practice of clear light tögal. It is the immaculate approach being contained exclusively in the quintessential secret Nyingtig cycle

and cannot be found in any other category of teachings below the level of the secret category of pith instructions.

The actual practice of *tögal* includes three sections: the preliminary practice, the actual practice, and the concluding practice.

The preliminary practice has three sections: the preliminary of body, speech, and mind leading to the three doors, the preliminary of the yoga of the four elements leading to the three kayas, and the preliminary of discerning the two extremes of samsara and nirvana leading to pristine awareness.

For the preliminary of body, speech, and mind leading to the three doors, visualize your own body as a blue, three-pronged vajra and assume the vajra posture for as long as possible. At the point when all your conceptualizations are exhausted, observe the essence of mind and rest naturally in that state for as long as you can. This is the preliminary of the body.

Visualize that your body, speech, and mind become one and take the form of the syllable *hung*. As it is taught in *Yeshe Lama*,^a single-pointedly engage in the fourfold training of sealing, training, seeking flexibility, and entering the path. This is the preliminary of the speech.

While examining where the mind originally comes from, where it currently abides, and where it eventually goes, that it has no origin is introduced as dharmakaya, that it has no place of abiding is introduced as sambhogakaya, and that there is no destination for it to go to is introduced as nirmanakaya. This is the preliminary of the mind.

The above three are known as the preliminaries of the body, speech, and mind.

Next is the preliminary of the yoga of the four elements leading to the three kayas. Generally speaking, prior to the time of Omniscient

^a *ye shes bla ma*; Jigmed Lingpa.

Longchenpa, there was a tradition to engage in the extensive practice of the yoga of the four great elements, but following his time onward until today, only very few practitioners practice this preliminary in an extensive way. Following the teachings in the tantras, allowing the mind to dissolve into the sound of each of the four elements of earth, fire, water, and wind, single-pointedly focusing on that state, and sustaining the nature of awareness is the preliminary of the four elements.

For the preliminary of discerning the two extremes of samsara and nirvana leading to pristine awareness, imagine yourself as the sentient beings of the six realms and randomly enact whatever behavior of theirs through your three doors of body, speech, and mind. When all sorts of discursive thoughts are proliferating, cut them through abruptly by shouting *phat*, the syllable representing wisdom and skillful means. Then, repeatedly observe the nature of mind and discern the extremes of samsara and nirvana. This is the practice of discerning samsara and nirvana. When the discernment is perfected, rest with your three doors; do not move your body, do not speak with your mouth, and your mind abides single-pointedly. Abide single-pointedly in the samadhi of resting at ease. Then, through the samadhi of the union of shamatha and vipashyana, reenter the path or gain restoration. To do so, first engage in the peaceful and well-tamed conduct of shravakas, then progress to the intermediate conduct of the bodhisattvas, and finally, perform the wrathful conduct of the wrathful deities. Apply this practice into your everyday conduct.

This is a concise introduction to the preliminary practice of *tögal*.

Second, for the actual practice, by and large, there are a variety of instructions of *tögal* transmitted by the great vidyadharas, but here I will instruct you according to the teaching of Omniscient Ju Mipham Rinpoche, which provides six key points.

The first is the key point of the body. Assume any one of the postures of the three kayas and rest in that posture. The postures of the three kayas are the dharmakaya posture of straightening the body like a lion, the sambhogakaya posture like a sleeping elephant, and the nirmanakaya posture of sitting like a crouching rishi.

Second, the key point of the speech is to remain silent and inhale and exhale slowly and gently through the mouth. Concentrate single-pointedly on the practice.

Third, the key point of the mind is to cut through all conceptual thoughts of past, present, and future in the dharmadhatu and rest naturally.

These are the key points regarding the three doors.

Fourth is the key point of the gateways, the eyes. The dharmakaya gaze is upward, the sambhogakaya gaze is sideways, and the nirmanakaya gaze is downward. Meditate with any one of the three ways of gazing corresponding to the postures of the three kayas.



9.38: Chojé smiling and rubbing his head

Fifth, the key point of the place is to rely on the stainless sky, the sun, the moon, and a lamp or the like.

Sixth, the key point of appearances is to perceive the spontaneous appearances of the luminosity of the dhatu of awareness, the luminosity of the empty bindu, and the vajra chain of awareness. The luminosity of the dhatu of awareness is the all-pervasive blue space surrounded by concentric rings of five-colored lights. The luminosity of empty bindu appears like the concentric ripples overlaid on one another when a stone is cast into a spring. The vajra chain of awareness appears

like gold threads adorned with crystal beads that is undulating and quivering.

The inner luminosity of self-occurring prajna is that with the view obtained through the four modes of placement that is ascertained in the actual practice of trekchö, your eyes, mind, and wind are not disturbed by the appearance of the vajra chain of awareness. Instead, you confine the vajra chain to the boundaries of the luminosity of the dhatu of awareness and the luminosity of empty bindu. Like this, remain single-pointedly in that state.

This completes the six key points for the actual practice of tögal as introduced above.

When you meditate accordingly, in the beginning, the luminosity of the dhatu of awareness, the luminosity of the empty bindu, and the vajra chain of awareness will be evidently perceived. This is the vision of direct recognition of the dharmata. As their appearances become more and more apparent, stable, and increased, you come to the vision of the increasing experience. When all ordinary and impure appearances become pure, the luminosity of the dhatu of awareness appears as pure lands, the luminosity of the empty bindu is perfected as immeasurable palaces, the vajra chain of awareness matures into kayas, and the unobstructed power that causes all appearances to be pure reaches its full measure, this is the vision of pristine awareness reaching its full extent. At last, all pure appearances dissolve into the inner radiance of basic space as the youthful vase kaya, you achieve the stable ground of no appearances, and this is the vision of the complete exhaustion of phenomena into dharmata.

For the concluding practice, engage in the practice properly with the three kinds of motionlessness as the foundation, and the three kinds of resting as the extent. Seal the practice with the three attainments and arrive at the state of liberation by attaining the four kinds of confident certainty.

This completes the essential points for the actual practice of clear light *tögal*. Now, I have given the teaching completely without error according to the pith instructions of the vidyadhara lineage gurus.

HEARTFELT WORDS BEFORE PARTING

When the teaching event at Lerab Ling was approaching its end, Chojé shared some words with the disciples at the center:

This time, depending on special interdependent conditions, I and my disciples—a group of six people in total, equaling the number of the Six Munis, each of whom is the great guidance in each of the six realms—took a dharma tour around the world. Having an undeserved name of masters of the Tripikata, we circumnavi-



9.39: Chojé holding a microphone to teach

gated the earth from the east to the west, following the movement of the sun and the moon and in the end came to Lerab Ling. Here, I received inconceivably kind hospitality from Sogyal Rinpoche and all the disciples of your center, like a mother's reception for a returning son who has traveled afar. For all your kindness, I would like to express my total and heartfelt gratitude. I have seen that you are very earnest and devoted to the practice of the pure dharma, and I sincerely rejoice in this. This is not a flattery given intentionally because I am in your presence.

As the representative of Lerab Ling just said, the two reincarnations of Tertön Sogyal Lerab Lingpa have been working hard, and this is indeed true. Sogyal Rinpoche has spent great efforts in subduing the

yellow-haired people, and I also need to make great efforts to tame the black-haired people (Laughs). But the difficulties we have been undertaking in this lifetime are little and even negligible; what we will encounter in future lives may be more challenging and arduous. The aspirations and activities of both of us are in line with those of the bodhisattvas, that is, trying to spread the dharma and benefit sentient beings for as long as empty space exists. All of this is becoming more and more difficult in these increasingly degenerate times.

All of you disciples must have seen the difficulties and hardships we have undergone. For both of us, it is not considered a great kindness if you only provide us with food and drink because we can handle these by ourselves. The single most important thing is that since it is undeniable that there are and will be incredible obscurations in the process of benefiting beings, I hope that you will not expel your old lama alone from this country and abandon him. Rather, all of you should stick together and accomplish the activity of spreading the dharma and benefiting sentient beings with your wholesome motivation and perfect conduct. These are my sincere words from the depth of my heart.



9.40: Chojé and Lerab Ling sangha

Our karmic connection as a teacher and disciples is like what is described in this old Tibetan saying, “The words said earlier are like the knot of a khata scarf, and the words said later are like the stamps imprinted on it.” Our connection is not established and existent only in this life; it will last and remain unchanged in all future lifetimes to come. Tsangyang Gyatso also said:

*The letters written in black ink
Can be smudged by a drop of water.
The paintings in the mind that are not drawn out
Cannot be erased even if one tries to.*

In the future, not just Sogyal Rinpoche, but if any of his authentic disciples goes to the Land of Tibet, I will welcome him or her sincerely from my heart. If I give you the promise that I will provide you with all services, that will be unrealistic. To me, the one who has the greatest kindness in this world is none other than H.H. Penor Rinpoche, but even when he visited Tibet last year, I could hardly make an offering of currency to him. So, if you go to Tibet, although I cannot promise to provide everything that you need, I will do whatever I can to help you.

Now, with all buddhas and bodhisattvas as my witness, I will make some prayers. First, may Sogyal Rinpoche live long, and may his activities spread and flourish. Second, may Lerab Ling continuously grow stronger and naturally enjoy fourfold well-being. Third, may all disciples contribute their part to



9.41: Lerab Ling now

the peace of the world with their kind hearts and virtuous acts and accomplish without hindrance both worldly and transcendental virtuous activities. Finally, may we as teacher and students reunite again

in this life to enjoy the sublime dharma of the Great Vehicle, and as soon as we depart this life, may we be born in the western land of Sukhavati, behold the countenance of Buddha Amitabha, listen to his teachings in person, and receive from him the prophecies for our future attainment of buddhahood. Thereafter, may we become the companion of Bodhisattva Manjushri, and together with him, may we work actively and extensively spreading the dharma and benefiting beings until space no longer exists.

In order for these prayers to be accomplished, I pray for the blessings of buddhas and bodhisattvas throughout the ten directions and the three times. In particular, for all the great lamas and virtuous spiritual teachers, as well as all the wise and devoted disciples present here, please offer your greatest possible support as well.

ANOTHER INTERVIEW WITH TWENTY QUESTIONS

In the afternoon, Chojé accepted an interview from the representative of Lerab Ling.

Q1: All the questions covered in this interview will be used as learning materials. Initially, we prepared a lot of questions, but most of them have been answered in your teachings these last few days. However, there are still a few questions. May I ask them now?

HHJP: Yes, please.

Q2: This is your first visit to the West. What prompted you to come at this particular time?

HHJP: I came with the wish to spread the dharma and benefit sentient beings. During my trip this time, as I have observed those who listened to my teachings, from the changes of their facial expressions and transformations of their mindset, I believe that the teachings have

brought great benefit to them. Besides this, I had no other purpose to come here at such a time.

Q3: What impressions do you have of western dharma practitioners? Are they fundamentally different from Tibetan practitioners?

HHJP: They have left a very good impression on me. In the Land of Tibet, there are a lot of ordained monastics, while in the West, monastics are relatively rare. But still, many western people love and follow Buddhism, and this was relatively unexpected for me. Apart from that, I don't think they have any fundamental differences.

Q4: Life in the West is very different from the Land of Tibet. There are many more ways for people to get distracted. So, what aspects of Tibetan Buddhism would you emphasize for the benefit of future western practitioners?

HHJP: Generally speaking, the very fundamental teaching of Buddhism is to try to abandon the eight worldly concerns, and the quintessence of Buddhism lies only in loving kindness and compassion. It is, of course, impossible to completely abandon the eight worldly concerns within one day. However, if one would try to detach him or herself from the eight worldly dharmas step by step, and in the meanwhile, take loving kindness and compassion as the main training, this is of great benefit to the practitioner.

Q5: Should western practitioners also take these as their main practices?

HHJP: Yes.

Q6: Rinpoche, you have mentioned in your own teachings how important devotion to the lama is. Sogyal Rinpoche also places great emphasis on this. Your own root teacher was the great master Khenpo Thubga. What is your strongest memory of him?

HHJP: The main activities of Thubga Yidzhin Norbu and the things that he cared most can be summarized with the prayer to him composed by Dzogchen Khenpo Abu Lhagang, which reads:

*The one who is extremely pure in observing precepts,
Who teaches, practices, and propagates the dharma of transmission
and of realization,
Who cuts off the lasso of the demonic parade of the eight worldly
concerns—
In front of the glorious guru of noble qualities, I pray.*

Q7: What was special about his approach to teaching Dzogchen to his disciples?

HHJP: Except for a few disciples of karmic fortune, Thubga Yidzhin Norbu would not confer the Dzogchen empowerments and teachings in public.

Q8: What was it that he held in the highest regard?

HHJP: As is described in the previous prayer, what he and his lineage disciples placed the greatest importance on was to observe pure precepts, to propagate the dharma of transmission and of realization, and to cut off the lasso of the demonic parade of the eight worldly concerns. These are the activities that Thubga Yidzhin Norbu and his lineage disciples devoted their whole lives to. Also, these were the primary teachings they taught others.

Q9: Rinpoche, you are said to be one of the two or perhaps three principal reincarnations of the great Tertön Sogyal Lerab Lingpa. Many westerners have no difficulty in believing in reincarnation. What we find more difficult to understand is how it is possible to have several reincarnations. Will you explain?

HHJP: Starting from the first bodhisattva bhūmi onward, bodhisattvas can display different numbers of manifestations within one single

instant, the shortest unit of time. For example, bodhisattvas of the first bhumi can manifest one hundred manifestations instantaneously. Bodhisattvas of the second bhumi can have one thousand manifestations in an instant. Bodhisattvas of the third bhumi can have one hundred thousand manifestations, and so on. When one reaches the ground of buddhahood, one can display manifestations as many as the number of atoms in the entire world.

Regarding the tertön Lerab Lingpa, he already displayed several manifestations when he was still alive. One of his manifestations went to the Han regions, and one stayed in U Tsang to teach the dharma. You can find the detailed records in his biography. So, in the future, it was fairly easy for him to have two reincarnations simultaneously.

Q10: Do you have anything particular to say about the reincarnations of Tertön Sogyal?

HHJP: It is said in the prophecies regarding the great Tertön Lerab Lingpa that he would have one hundred and one reincarnations. His chief dharma holders and disciples have said this before, but I have never personally seen any written records in this regard. However, in the *Later Compendium of Scriptures*,^a there are detailed records about his reincarnations.

Q11: Will you say something about the future activities of the various reincarnations of Tertön Sogyal?

HHJP: It was said by Lerab Lingpa himself that his next reincarnations would have vast and more prosperous activities and that their teachings would remain in the world for as long as five hundred years.

Q12: Rinpoche, many great masters have said that you are certainly one of the reincarnations of Tertön Sogyal. Do you yourself have any memories of your previous life?

^a *ka yong dzog du pa'i dō jang chi ma (bka yongs rdzogs 'dus pai mdo byang phyi ma).*

HHJP: Personally, not many. Even if I had some, as a Buddhist, I am supposed to keep them a secret. I am a bhikshu and a bhikshu is prohibited from talking about this kind of thing unless it is particularly necessary.

Q13: Terton Sogyal was a legendary terton. What are the unique features of Terton Sogyal's terma objects and terma doctrines?

HHJP: Regarding Terton Sogyal's terma objects, within one or two days, he could reveal many boxes of gold buddha statues and jewel caskets. Among his terma doctrines, there are many profound teachings that are unprecedented in the Tibetan Land of Snows, one example being the *Sadhana for Longevity Practice, the Wish-Fulfilling Treasure*. This is indeed inconceivable.

Q14: Is it true that the terma of *Tendrel Nyesel* was discovered with the help of a dakini or somebody in the West?

HHJP: It is better to take a look at Lerab Lingpa's biography. I cannot recall it now.

Q15: We have been constantly practicing the *Tendrel Nyesel* and *Vajrakilaya* termas. In the future, which of the other of Terton Sogyal's termas would be important for the Rigpa sangha to learn and practice?

HHJP: These two cycles of teachings were the ones Lerab Lingpa treasured the most while he was alive. There are many more termas collected in his works, and you should try to put them into actual practice. Don't worry that you engage in too many kinds of practice. The most important ones among them, however, are still *Tendrel Nyesel* and *Vajrakilaya*.

Q16: There were many great tertons who had appeared in this world and propagated terma doctrines extensively. What is your vision of the future of the terma tradition in the Land of Tibet and other places?

HHJP: As long as the dharma does not vanish from the world, the activity of Orgyen Rinpoche will not cease. As long as his activity does not cease, tertons will continuously appear in this human world and reveal all kinds of termas. Just as it is said, "Tertons will emerge everywhere, like mushrooms sprouting from grasslands."

Q17: Will tertons appear in the West?

HHJP: Of course. Wherever there are beings to be tamed, there will be tertons appearing. How could they possibly stay only in one place?

Q18: Since you have been in the Land of Tibet most of your lifetime, how did you manage to teach, practice, and safeguard the teachings in times when the dharma was being destroyed?

HHJP: The only thing I did was to pray to the Three Jewels. By the great compassionate power of the Three Jewels, I myself was free of any form of harm or difficulty, and no obstacle occurred when I was practicing and teaching the dharma. This was indeed the blessing of the Three Jewels.

Q19: More recently I understand that you were able to give teachings at High-Level Tibetan Buddhism College of China as a visiting professor. Were students there learning and practicing the dharma seriously? Did you notice any signs of change of the Han Chinese attitude toward the dharma?

HHJP: There were not many students in the college, but these small number of students were all fond of the dharma and enthusiastic about actual practice. When I was giving a dharma teaching, all of them were very delighted and practiced the teaching earnestly. Besides this, I don't know too much about the attitude of the majority of Han Chinese.

Q20: Finally, Rinpoche, what specific advice do you have for us?

HHJP: Of course. It is very important that you have faith in the Three Jewels and, in particular, have sincere devotion to your lama, Sogyal Rinpoche. Also, you should cultivate loving kindness and compassion for all sentient beings. Last, persevere in the practice of the clear light Great Perfection, the path for swiftly attaining buddhahood that is rare and hard to encounter. Apart from this, I have no more advice.

A PERSONAL MEETING WITH KHENCHEN YIDZHIN NORBU JIGME PHUNTSOK RINPOCHE

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche was the oral translator for Yidzhin Norbu at Lerab Ling. When we interviewed him years later, he wrote the following words:

When Khenchen Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche visited Lerab Ling in France in 1993, I had the most precious opportunity of serving him as his English translator. He was accompanied at the time by his sister Ani Medron and his niece Jetsunma Mumtso Rinpoche, and two most brilliant young khenpos, Khenchen Sodargye and Khenchen Namdrol. Before then, I had heard many inspiring stories about this great master, and I knew about Larung Gar. Yet receiving from him so many profound teachings and empowerments on this occasion became, in truth, one of the most wonderful events of my entire life.



9.42: Ringu Tulku Rinpoche now

I was hesitant to ask for an audience because he was not that well, but one morning the khenpos unexpectedly took me into his bedroom and

allowed me to have some private time with him. When I was in front of a great master like him, all my questions disappeared. So, I found myself telling him about my monastery in the Land of Tibet. My monastery is a small Karma Kagyu monastery in Kham called Rigul Gompa, and the monks who had survived the Cultural Revolution were rebuilding the monastery with the help of the local villagers. I told him that we were trying to educate the young monks there, but we could not get a khenpo to teach them. In fact, I was sending some money every year and asking them not to use it for anything apart from educating young monks. Khenchen Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche then emphasized to me just how important education is because without study, we will not know how to practice fully. So, as it turned out, I did not spend that much time with him, nor did I expect anything further, as his presence and his teachings were more than enough.

What I heard some years later surprised and shocked me. When Khenchen Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche went back to Tibet, he started a Kagyu shedra in his encampment and assigned one of the most learned and experienced khenpos to teach those students the Kagyu treatises. I do not know if this is true, but I even heard that one of many reasons why he did this was because one Kagyu tulku who translated for him in the West had requested it. I am not sure if any other Kagyu tulku translated for him, but his Kagyu classes produced some of the most brilliant Kagyu khenpos in the Land of Tibet. Some of the monks from my monastery also studied at Larung Gar and became not only good scholars, but really good dharma practitioners. Everybody who spends some time at Larung Gar says that the atmosphere there completely transforms their feelings, and their dharma practice becomes so easy and natural for them.

Larung Gar continues to radiate the blessings and the living dharma experience of Khenchen Yidzhin Norbu Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche, and today the great khenpos uphold that same pure lineage. Larung Gar continues to be the largest Buddhist encampment on earth, and its influence with regard to the dharma is most probably the strongest in the world as well.

THE BENEVOLENT HAVE NO ENEMY

Patrick Gaffney, who graduated from Cambridge University, is a well-known translator and writer. In 1993, he was also one of the team members who organized Chojé's visit to Lerab Ling. He had a lot memories and reflections about Khenpo Rinpoche to share:

When Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche came to Lerab Ling in France in 1993, I had the good fortune to serve as one of the team organizing his visit. At the time, we were all aware of his incredible reputation for leading a renaissance of Tibetan Buddhist learning and practice in Asia, as much as we were intrigued by the prospect of a meeting between the two reincarnations of Lerab Lingpa, Terton Sogyal.



9.43: Patrick Gaffney now

Back then, thirty years ago, teachings at Lerab Ling took place in a large and spacious tent, which is where Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche gave his teachings surrounded by lamas and the audience, most of whom were there for a three-month summer retreat led by Sogyal Rinpoche. As Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche spoke, I was struck right away by his enormous energy, enthusiasm, and joyfulness, not to mention his erudition and the profound reach of his teachings. His whole being, voice, and presence were magnetic. Day after day, as he taught on the Nyingma lineage, the Dzogchen teachings, *Vajrakilaya*, and on trekchö and tögal, the flow of his eloquence was captivating. The eminent lamas who were present remarked on the depth of his learning.

Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche granted empowerments of Lerab Lingpa's treasures, *Tendrel Nyesel* and *Yang Zab Nyingpo*, which are so important for the Rigpa sangha, as well as his own revelation of the *Peaceful*

Manjushri. During the empowerments, his whole bearing conjured an atmosphere of almost otherworldly blessing and pure perception. When he spoke of Dzogpachenpo, it was with such confidence and decisiveness, and he spoke with utmost clarity about the nature of mind, connecting us directly with the masters of the lineage going back to Garab Dorje—as if he knew them personally. Yet, alongside his exuberant kindness and generosity, there was an air about him of self-effacing humility as well.

One day, I had the opportunity to interview him. It was during his rest time, and he kindly accepted a short meeting, with Ringu Tulku Rinpoche translating. The encounter took place in the inner room of the original house at Lerab Ling. That afternoon, Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche was reclining on his bed, resting. I plucked up the courage to ask how he had managed to survive during the harrowing years of the Cultural Revolution, and the brevity of his reply transfixed me. He said: “I just put all of my faith in the Buddha, dharma, and sangha, and things worked out.” In those few deceptively simple words, he was clearly giving a compelling message about the power and vitality of faith and what it can achieve.

Aside from the extraordinary qualities and spiritual presence of this great master, I often wonder about the impact of his visit on Lerab Ling. For us as a community, the timing of Khen Rinpoche Jigme Phuntsok’s visit proved, I believe, to be providential. From 1993 onward, Lerab Ling grew and witnessed teachings, drupchens, retreats, and visits by many eminent masters. Then, in 2003, ten years later, work began on the construction of the temple Palri Pema Osel Dargye Ling. Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche’s visit left a lasting impression not only on the people, but on the spiritual landscape of Lerab Ling and Rigpa, and their future.

Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche’s presence and teachings at Lerab Ling represent a key moment in the history of our sangha, one of profound meaning and unforgettable blessing and one whose magnitude and reverberations will be felt for a long time.



9.44: A radiant smile on Chojé's face

In this recollection, Patrick mentioned the far-reaching impact that Chojé left on Lerab Ling. I have the same feeling about this. Actually, not just Lerab Ling, but also other dharma centers, such as Dorje Denma Ling, Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche's dharma center, Gyatrul Rinpoche's Tashi Choling, and Yeshe Nyingpo Orgyen Dorje Den, were somewhat new centers when we visited there. Up to the present, all those centers are thriving and continue to actively carry out dharma activities. This gives an obvious and direct sense that Yidzhin Norbu's visit to the West in 1993 created an auspicious interdependence for the growth and prosperity of many dharma centers.

At this point, Chojé's dharma trip to France was complete.



10th Stop

August 31st–September 24th

RETURNING

SCHEDULE

August 31st

Left Lerab Ling

September 1st

Took a flight from Paris to Hong Kong

September 2nd

Arrived in Hong Kong

September 3rd

Gave the Dzogchen empowerment of *Peaceful Manjushri*

September 4th

Gave the *Tendrel Nyesel* empowerment

September 5th

Gave the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* empowerment and dharma teachings

September 6th

Flew to Taiwan

September 7th

Gave the Padmasambhava empowerment and dharma teachings

September 8th

Gave the *Yang Zab Nyingpo* empowerment and dharma teachings

September 9th

Gave the *Jampal Yeshe Sempa* empowerment and dharma teaching

September 10th

Gave the instruction and teachings on phowa

September 11th

Gave the empowerments of *Peaceful Manjushri* and *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma*

September 12th

Gave the *Guru Dorje Drola* empowerment and dharma teachings

September 13th

Returned to Hong Kong

September 14th

Arrived in Shenzhen and took the flight to Chengdu

September 15th

Gave the longevity empowerment of Amitayus to Lama Qingding in the morning and was hospitalized in the afternoon for a physical examination

September 16th & 17th

Had a physical examination

September 18th

Discharged from the hospital

September 19th & 20th

Gave dharma teachings and empowerments to Buddhists at Chadianzi, Chengdu

September 21st & 22nd

Arrived in Dartsedo and reported the entire trip to the proper authorities

September 23rd & 24th

Left Dartsedo and went back to Larung Gar

PASSED THROUGH HONG KONG

On August 31st, Chojé and entourage left Lerab Ling for the Montpellier airport by car. After a flight of one hour and a half, we arrived in Paris and stayed there overnight. The next afternoon, we took the flight to Hong Kong. After more than ten hours in the sky, we arrived in Hong Kong on September 2nd, and were accommodated at the Hong Kong Palyul Center.

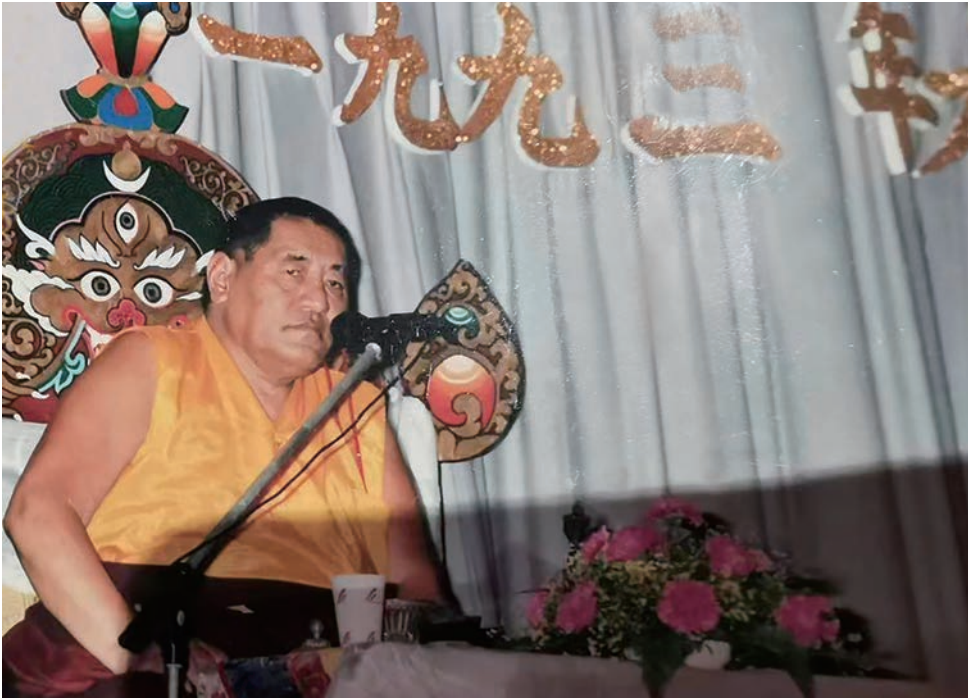


10.1: Arriving in Hong Kong

In order to benefit sentient beings in a vast and extensive way, H.H. Penor Rinpoche had established a great number of Buddhist centers around the world. The Hong Kong Palyul Center was one of them, founded by Rinpoche in early 1990. Later in that year, Lama Yidzhin Norbu passed through Hong Kong on his way back from Nepal and stayed in this center for a couple of days. Like the other Palyul centers, this center was directly guided by the Namdroling Monastery, a large Nyingmapa teaching center established by H.H. Penor Rinpoche in India. The Namdroling monks of excellent study and practice were appointed to be resident teachers in this center and to give dharma teachings there.

Chojé was quite tired after just finishing all the dharma activities in Europe and North America. However, he did not choose to rest but spent all his three

days giving dharma teachings in Hong Kong. At that time, I served as the Chinese interpreter for him, and someone else did the Cantonese interpretation.



10.2: Choje continuing to give teachings during his short three-day stay in Hong Kong

On September 3rd and 4th, Khenpo Rinpoche gave two private empowerments and teachings to some students at the Hong Kong Palyul Center. On the first day, it was the empowerment of *Peaceful Manjushri*, and on the second day the empowerment of *Tendrel Nyesel*.

On September 5th, the Vajrakilaya Dharma Assembly was held in a big hall with a capacity of 1,000 people. There, Choje bestowed the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* empowerment, conferred refuge vows, and gave a teaching on great compassion and bodhicitta to the audience. It was apparent from their faces that all of them had great faith in Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche. During the dharma

assembly, the organizers worked lucky-draw activities into it, and the audience was quite active to join in.

Having stayed in the West for three months, I found there were big differences between easterners and westerners in their characteristics. The points that would move them to cry or burst into laughter varied a lot. Although Hong Kong was ruled by Britain at that time, people there were still more oriental. They were emotional, passionate, open-minded, and straightforward in expressing their feelings. While receiving the teachings, they would show their delight and joy toward Rinpoche without reserve. Seeing this, he felt more relaxed and gave them a lot of beneficial instructions.



10.3: The assembly hall filled with thousands of disciples

WENT TO TAIWAN

On September 6th, we flew to Taiwan from Hong Kong, and after a flight of nearly two hours, we arrived at Taoyuan Airport. A lot of local Buddhists, followers of Tibetan Buddhism and Han Buddhism, monastics, and lay people all warmly received Yidzhin Norbu with bouquets of flowers and khatas at the airport.



10.4: Taipei



10.5: Monastic and lay disciples warmly receiving Chojé at Taoyuan Airport

We went directly to Hsin Tien Palyul Center in Taipei after leaving the airport. It is one of the seven Palyul centers that H.H. Penor Rinpoche established in Taiwan, with the name Palyul Jangchub Dhargye Ling Dharma Center. This was where we stayed while in Taiwan. For the next six days, Chojé gave a series of empowerments and teachings to different audiences, and I was the translator interpreting Tibetan to Chinese.



10.6: Khenpo Sodargye translating Chojé's oral teaching into Chinese

On the afternoon of September 7th, at Hsin Tien Palyul Center, Khenpo Rinpoche gave the Padmasambhava empowerment and the teaching on taking refuge. Lama Mumtso gave the empowerment of Avalokiteshvara. On the

morning of September 8th, at Hsin Tien Palyul Center, Chojé gave the *Yang Zab Nyingpo* empowerment and a teaching on bodhicitta.



10.7: Tian Bishuang paying homage to Chojé




10.8: Chojé at Hsin Tien Palyul Center



10.9: Chojé giving teachings at different dharma centers and occasions



10.10: Chojé and his entourage in Taiwan



白玉祥丘達吉林佛法中心
HSIN TIEN PALYUL CHANG CHUB DHARGYE LING DHARMA CENTER

台北縣新店市中正路542-4號6樓
6F, 542-4, CHUNG CHENG ROAD, HSIN TIEN, TAIPEI, TAIWAN, R.O.C.
TEL: (02)2182486-7 FAX: (02)2183463

晉美朗措法王傳法預見表

		上午	下午
9月7日 星期二			14:00 (新店白玉中心) 蓮師灌頂(法王傳授) 觀音灌頂(法王七弟些措嘉師傳授)
9月8日 星期三	10:00 (新店白玉中心)	金剛普巴灌頂(法王前在尋獲之密藏)	
9月9日 星期四	中午(台中密藏院)	蓮師或文殊灌頂加持	
9月10日 星期五	10:00 (新店白玉中心)	頗哇法	
9月11日 星期六			14:00 (太平西路火車站礼堂) 文殊和普巴灌頂(法王在尋獲之密藏)
9月12日 星期日	10:00 (新店白玉中心)	念慈蓮師灌頂 大圓滿開示	14:00 (新店白玉中心) 共修荟供

貝諾法王
白玉傳承領袖

HEAD OFFICE: NYINMAPA MONASTERY, P.O. BYLAKUPPE DT. MYSORE KARNATAKA INDIA 571104

10.11: Choje's teaching schedule in Taiwan

On September 9th, after a three-hour drive, we arrived at the Tantrayana Treasury Dharma Center in Taichung, which was established by the lay practitioner Tian Bishuang in 1985. There, Rinpoche gave the *Jampal Yeshe Sempa*

empowerment and talked about the importance of the practice of Secret Mantra. After that, we returned to Taipei by car.

On the morning of September 10th, at Hsin Tien Palyul Center, Yidzhin Norbu gave the instruction on phowa. On the afternoon of September 11th, at the Taiwan Railways Performance Hall, Rinpoche gave the empowerments of *Peaceful Manjushri* and *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma*.

On the morning of September 12th, at Hsin Tien Palyul Center, he gave the *Guru Dorje Drolu* empowerment and talked about the origin and qualities of the Great Perfection. In the afternoon, he led the audience in a ganachakra feast and met the organizers of the dharma activities in Taiwan.

On September 13th, we flew back to Hong Kong.



10.12: Chojé meeting the main organizers



10.13: Chojé waiting in the airport lounge

GURU'S GURU

Recently, we interviewed Ding Naichu, who was one of the principal organizers for Yidzhin Norbu's dharma activities in Taiwan. Naichu was a first-generation student of Tibetan Buddhism and had invited a number of great Tibetan lamas to Taiwan to give dharma teachings in the 1980s. Speaking of Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche, she recalled:

During my undergraduate study of philosophy at National Taiwan University, I was introduced by friends to Tibetan Buddhism and joined Wufun Ratnasambhava of the Southern Realm Dharma Center. It was one of the earliest Tibetan Buddhist dharma centers in Taiwan. Since the mid-1980s, I started to invite Tibetan rinpoche's to Taiwan to teach the dharma, and I was fortunate enough to have been able to invite H.H. Penor Rinpoche, the supreme head of the Nyingmapa lineage, to come. Rinpoche stayed at my home during his first visit, and then he came several times more. Within those several short years, Rinpoche established the Palyul centers and accepted a great number of disciples.

Around 1990, when H.H. Penor Rinpoche came to Taiwan again to spread the dharma, one day he said to me personally, "Kyabjé Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche is my root guru. When he comes to Taiwan, please receive him in the best way you can and support his dharma activities as much as possible." Hearing this, I was a bit surprised because Penor Rinpoche himself was already such a great master and a highly realized being with tremendous influence. What a great being would his root guru be?

Entrusted with the task by H.H. Penor Rinpoche, we attached great importance to Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche's visit to Taiwan. Together with the Hsin Tien Palyul Center and the Tantrayana Treasury Dharma Center, we made full and meticulous preparations for his arrival. In September 1993, Yidzhin Norbu came as planned, and all of us witnessed the grandeur of his dharma propagation in Taiwan.



10.14: Chojé sitting on a two-meter-high dharma throne

Every event, whether in Taipei or Taichung, attracted a lot of Buddhists of both Tibetan Buddhism and Han Buddhism. Though they followed different Buddhist lineages, they all came to Rinpoche with the same wish to receive dharma teachings and build a connection with him, a great teacher of this age. During Chojé's stay in Taiwan, there was a grand empowerment held in the Taiwan Railways Performance Hall. For that day's event, we specially customized a nearly two-meter-high dharma throne for him in advance and decorated it with various ornaments, such as the eight auspicious symbols and beautiful flowers.

When I first met Yidzhin Norbu, I had a strong feeling that he was an extremely powerful lama. His energy was so infectious that I was

completely overwhelmed by it. Before meeting H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche, I was fortunate to have had several private meetings with H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche and H.H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. These two great masters also had overwhelming energy. Dudjom Rinpoche displayed a maternal energy of utmost gentleness, and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche exhibited stately and majestic splendor. Compared to them, H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche's magnetic charisma was completely different. It was direct and sharp, like a keen-edged blade. Such energy left a vivid and lasting impression on me.

There were two nuns in Rinpoche's entourage, his sister and his niece, a reincarnation of Khandro Yeshe Tsogyal. Several monks accompanied Yidzhin Norbu as well; one was Khenpo Sodargye. To be honest, I was so surprised that as a young Tibetan monk, Khenpo Sodargye could speak Mandarin so fluently. Maybe because of his young age, Khenpo was a bit reserved, which made us feel that he was a little serious, but very handsome.

Almost all H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche's dharma events in Taiwan were giving empowerments, and all of us very much cherished each and every empowerment and the teachings we received from him. One thing special to me was that after bestowing empowerments, he always asked his niece to give us the oral transmissions of related sadhanas or practice manuals. She was young, dignified, and quiet, and her whole being exuded an aura of extreme softness, like water. In those days, not only in Taiwan, but throughout western countries there were very few female masters to transmit the dharma. So, I still remember that scene vividly and clearly until today.

During empowerments, Rinpoche would share his personal experiences with us from time to time. I remember once he told us about a special experience of him revealing a terma. The terma appeared while he was asleep flying on a plane, and somehow he revealed it. I cannot recall all the details now.

I also heard from others about another experience that Chojé had. When he was a young monk, he exerted himself fully in the study and practice of the Buddhadharma. One day, a beautiful young lady came to him and said that she was his prophesied karma mudra, had deep connections with him, and asked him to receive her as his consort. After thinking for a while, Chojé rejected her suggestion, but the lady told him that she would stay at a certain place for a month to wait for him to change the mind. One month passed, Rinpoche did not go to the lady, and then she disappeared. Later, when he met one of his teachers, he reported this experience to the teacher. With a sigh, the teacher said to Rinpoche, “You have learned only the adornment of the Buddhadharma, while having not realized its other aspect.”

This story inspired me a lot, especially the words of his teacher. It is not that only by becoming a monastic can one achieve spiritual accomplishments; one is also able to gain attainments as a lay practitioner. Relying upon the power of the Buddha’s teaching, every practitioner can attain supreme accomplishments, no matter whether they are monastics or lay people.

As one of the organizers in 1993, I was honored and fortunate to have the opportunity to meet Yidzhin Norbu privately. I took my youngest daughter with me, letting her meet him and receive the blessing of his touch so that a virtuous seed would be planted in her mind stream. The moment Rinpoche placed his big palm on my head and recited prayers for me, a warm stream filled my whole body. Back then, I knew that he was suffering from an eye disease and could hardly see things around him. However, as I was so close to him, had I not known it in advance, I wouldn’t believe at all that he had an eye problem.



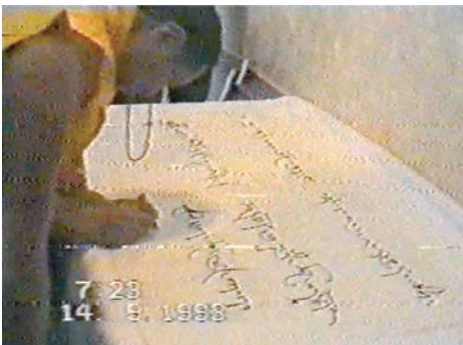
10.15: Ding Naichu now

Actually, I was extremely busy at the time when Rinpoche visited Taiwan. I needed to take care of my two daughters, had regular jobs to do in the daytime, and also had to assist my husband Stan Lai (Lai Shengchuan) to deal with the duties of our performance workshop. But still, I managed to arrange my schedule and attended all the dharma events of Yidzhin Norbu in Taipei. To each of us, Chojé's arrival was indeed a great blessing, and all of us were all deeply grateful for that.

Although H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche passed into parinirvana twenty years ago, every time I think of him, I am embraced by a surge of powerful energy.

At the end of the interview, Naichu rubbed over her hair and said half-jokingly, "My hair was dyed in rainbow colors because I really love rainbows. I may not be able to attain rainbow body this life, but I can wear the rainbow on my head as a reminder that there is always a lifetime when I can obtain such supreme accomplishment."

BACK TO CHENGDU



10.16: Chojé writing a blessing verse to the Hong Kong disciples

Early on the morning of September 14th, we passed through customs from Hong Kong to Shenzhen by car. During the three-month trip, I was worried every time when we went through customs, not sure whether there would be some deliberate difficulties or inspections. Fortunately, this time we passed through customs smoothly.

Afterward, Chojé had breakfast in a restaurant. Some people came all the way from Hong Kong to bid farewell to him and requested him to write something for them. Then, he wrote a verse in Tibetan, which translates as:

May the Buddhadharma pervade throughout the ten directions.

May auspiciousness and merit flourish and increase.

May patrons enjoy good health and long life.

May their possessions, fortune, and happiness increase.

Rinpoche said that this verse was also a prayer for all beings who had built connections with him during the whole trip.



10.17: Chojé being received by excited monastic and lay students in Chengdu

We then boarded the plane at Shenzhen Airport and after about two hours arrived at Chengdu Shuangliu Airport. It was very hot in Chengdu at that time, but not as warm as the enthusiasm of the disciples who were waiting for Chojé at the airport. Hearing that he was about to come home, a lot of monastics from Larung Gar had been waiting in Chengdu several days in advance. Many tulkus and khenpos, such as Tulku Tendzin Gyatso, Khenpo Tsultrim Lodro, Khenpo Sherab Zangpo, and Khenpo Chimé Rigdzin, also came all the way from Larung Gar to welcome Rinpoche. A great number of Buddhists also came from different places around the country and gathered at the airport. When they

finally saw the beloved lama they had been yearning to see and he appeared in front of them, their longing for Rinpoche over the past one hundred days and nights turned into tears. They cheered loudly and excitedly and expressed their longing in various ways. That day, the airport was crowded with cheerful people, and it was said to be the most bustling day since it was built.

As we left the airport, Rinpoche was accommodated in the Dartsedo Hotel (now Garze Hotel). On the way to the hotel, Khenpo Chimé Rigdzin, Khenpo Norpa, and I were in the same car, and we joyfully shared various experiences with each other. Since communication was not convenient during those three months, I wondered how my parents were doing and whether they were still alive or not. Then, I was told that my parents had been staying in Larung Gar waiting for my return.

When I arrived at the hotel, seeing Chojé being surrounded by so many senior disciples, my uneasy heart finally truly relaxed. To be honest, when we were abroad, I had all kinds of worries. Now that Rinpoche had returned safely without any unpleasant incidents, I could finally breathe a sign of relief and let go of the heavy burden on my shoulders. That night, I slept very well, and it was the best sleep I had had for three months.

THE UNCHANGEABLE FAITH

Through this trip, I developed an even stronger faith in my guru, Lama Yidzhin Norbu. As a close attendant, I would always witness his extraordinary wisdom. He would naturally exude inconceivable states of realization on certain necessary occasions. All of these were Rinpoche's innate qualities, not developed through effort in this life. This is also valid evidence of the existence of present and future lives.

In my mind, a genuine virtuous spiritual teacher should be exactly someone like H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche, and there would be no guru better than him. Even if compared to the great lineage masters, such as Guru Padmasambhava and the venerable Longchenpa, except that they lived in different times, there were no differences between Rinpoche and them. Had he lived in their times, he would be exactly the same as them in all aspects. I have always had such a conviction.

This faith was not cultivated deliberately through pure perception. It arose naturally in my mind, because every aspect of Rinpoche, be it his speech or deportment, went far beyond those of ordinary people. Whoever saw his body could be quickly transformed; whoever heard his voice could be attracted spontaneously; whoever prayed to his mind could easily receive great blessings. These are special qualities that make buddhas and bodhisattvas different from ordinary beings.

I met Yidzhin Norbu for the first time in 1985 and parted with him after our last meeting in early 2004. During my nineteen years of following Rinpoche, I never generated any negative thoughts toward him, not even for an instant. Now, as I think of this, this is my greatest accomplishment in my life.

Chojé always said that even if the disciples didn't want to, they would eventually part from their guru. After Rinpoche passed into parinirvana, I was left forlorn in this world, like an orphan who had lost his parents. Every time I think of Lama Yidzhin Norbu, my heart is empty, and I feel so lonely. I always console myself, "Though Rinpoche's physical body has dissolved into the dharmadhatu, his wisdom body will never leave and will always be present with me." But undeniably, except for seeing Chojé in videos, hearing his voice in audio recordings, and touching his body in my dreams, I can never find my guru in this world.

To many people, the closer they are to their gurus, the more they may consider their gurus as ordinary people and the easier it is for them to find fault in their gurus. On the contrary, the closer I was to Chojé, the stronger the faith I developed in him. Following him for so many years, my faith in him became increasingly solidified day by day, rather than wavering in the slightest. After my parents passed away, my longing for them may fade with the passing of time. Yet, after Rinpoche left this world, I only miss him more and more. As he said, "Once I leave this world, you, my disciples, may develop deeper faith in me." It has indeed been true.

THE ILLNESS DISAPPEARED

Back in 1991, we established several dharma centers in a few cities near Chengdu, including Mianyang and Chongqing. At the invitation of disciples of these centers, Yidzhin Norbu agreed to visit them and give teachings on September 15th of that year. However, early that day, Rinpoche suddenly learned that Lama Qingding was critically ill, and in addition, Ani Medron was also in bad physical condition. So, Chojé had to cancel his visit and appointed his four disciples, including Khenpo Tsultrim Lodro and Tulku Tendzin Gyatso, to go to these centers on his behalf.

In the morning, Rinpoche went to Chengdu Zhaojue Monastery to visit Lama Qingding. He was emaciated and very sick. Chojé gave him the longevity empowerment of Amitayus. Relying upon this special blessing, Lama Qingding gradually recovered.

Ani Medron was diagnosed with acute appendicitis after having an examination at the Chengdu Military General Hospital. Since Rinpoche was very tired from the trip and also needed a physical examination to check his health, both of them were hospitalized. I took care of them as their interpreter and

attendant. Ani Medron was supposed to have surgery after the first diagnosis, but after a review, the doctor said she could start with an infusion to reduce inflammation. After one day's infusion treatment, the symptoms disappeared. Chojé had a two-day physical examination, and nothing abnormal was found. Thus, two days later, they were discharged from the hospital together.



10.18: Chojé visiting Lama Qingding at Zhaojue Monastery

Then, we went to Chadianzi, a district in Chengdu. Rinpoche stayed there to receive a traditional Chinese medicine treatment to improve his health. Learning that Yidzhin Norbu was at Chadianzi, many of his followers came all the way from different places around the country to meet him. They lined up for the meeting before dawn, and the corridor where Rinpoche stayed was completely crowded. In order to satisfy everyone, he gave them blessings

of touch, empowerments, and teachings from the early morning to the late evening.

While we were in Chengdu, Chojé bought two Dongfeng trucks for the sangha at Larung Gar, one for the monks and one for the nuns, to provide them with more convenience. The two trucks were filled with bags of rice, all of which would be distributed to the sangha at Larung Gar after we went back. I also developed some photographs of Rinpoche in the West for gifts to the sangha when we returned.



10.19: Chojé and Lama Qingding

RETURNED TO LARUNG GAR

On September 21st, we departed from Chengdu and arrived in Dartsedo. Chojé stayed there for one day, reported the entire trip to the proper authorities, and also attended a seminar.

On September 23rd, we left Dartsedo and were on the way back to Larung Gar. When we were passing through Lhagang, Rinpoche was invited by Lhagang Monastery to consecrate the Jewel Hall of Relics inside the monastery. Then, in front of the statue of Jowo Shakyamuni Buddha, Yidzhin Norbu led us to chant the *King of Aspiration Prayers for Excellent Conduct* and also blessed the local monks and lay Buddhists.

As we arrived in Barmé, Tulku Lungtok had already set up a tent by the roadside to welcome Rinpoche for a rest. The site where the tent was put up is exactly the place where his monastery is now located. Tulku Lungtok offered Chojé two large conches, and Rinpoche blew them on the spot and then gifted them to Dule Namgyal Ling, the Victorious Mara-Subduing Land of Larung Gar, the Han college of Larung Gar that is under my responsibility.

We arrived at Rabsgang Monastery in the Nakdrin grassland around dusk and stayed there for the night. Since many disciples who welcomed Rinpoche in Chengdu had followed him back to Larung Gar, in order to arrange their accommodation, each monk of the Rabsgang Monastery took one person to their room to rest, and the others slept in the main hall. We left the monastery the next morning. When the motorcade arrived in Dawu, Rinpoche stopped and consecrated a great white stupa. He also gave blessings of touch and a brief teaching to the local Buddhists.

On our way back, monastics of various monasteries and lay Buddhists were seen everywhere by the roadside to welcome Chojé. Some of them set up tents

to invite Rinpoche to have a rest, and some were burning aromatic woods for smoke as a ritual to welcome him home. In response to them, Chojé would roll down the car window from time to time to give them blessings of touch and also occasionally have a short stop to give brief teachings.

On the afternoon of September 24th, we were finally back in Larung Gar. To welcome Yidzhin Norbu, all the monks and nuns wore yellow robes and lined up on both sides of the road. Everywhere, they burnt the aromatic wood and played ritual instruments. It was a grand reception ceremony. Rinpoche went directly to the main



10.20: Monastic and lay disciples waiting eagerly for Chojé

dharma hall and talked about the trip abroad to the sangha. Then, amidst the joy of the reunion of the teacher and disciples, Chojé returned to his residence.

This marked a perfect ending for all the dharma events upon Chojé's return.



10.21: The entire sangha burning incense and performing ritual instruments to solemnly receive Chojé

EPILOGUE

At the end of October, Tulku Tendzin Gyatso and I went to Sertar County, and we spent five days sorting out the audio and video materials that I brought back from abroad into a documentary, recording the dharma activities of H.H. Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche in the West. The whole documentary was about three hours, with narrations in both Tibetan and Chinese. It was produced as VCDs for circulation in our academy.

Then, according to the prophecy of Ekajati given in the US, Chojé decided to establish a Tibetan lay Buddhist college and started to build a dharma hall in the lower valley of Larung Gar. It was to benefit those old people who were of similar age with Rinpoche and those who didn't have the opportunity to become a monastic. Initially, there were four registered families, including my parents. Later, with the construction of a dharma hall being completed and the teaching being offered regularly, more and more lay Buddhists came and settled. As the community grew day by day, the wooden cabins they built gradually covered the slopes of the lower Larung valley. Before Khenpo Rinpoche, there had been no tradition to establish lay Buddhist colleges in the Land of Tibet, so this great initiative undoubtedly opened a new chapter for Tibetan Buddhism.

In fact, he not only established the lay Buddhist college, but Yidzhin Norbu also performed many incredible and unprecedented undertakings throughout his entire life. To name a few, he rectified problems within the monastic sangha after the Cultural Revolution, putting into actual practice the Buddha's order that those who violated the root pratimoksha vows and samaya vows were not allowed to live together with the sangha. He established a large college for nuns at Larung Gar, extensively gave ordination to female practitioners, and

received them as his disciples. He also went to the Han regions to propagate the Buddhadharma and accepted Han practitioners as his students. I would say all of these deeds are enduring milestones in the history of Buddhism and are powerful evidence of Chojé's great vision and unparalleled aspirations.

After returning to Larung Gar, Rinpoche renewed his routine duties to give teachings to the sangha on a daily basis. In the winter of that year, he taught the great treatise of the venerable Longchenpa, the *Great Chariot*, the commentary on *Finding Rest in the Nature of Mind*. Though it was extremely cold in winter, to be able to surround Chojé to enjoy the supreme Mahayana dharma and listen to his earnest and sincere teachings, each of us felt extremely warm in heart.

Like this, sitting at Rinpoche's feet, we continued to listen, contemplate, and meditate on the dharma as we had always done in the past.

*The guru's teachings are like drops of sweet nectar,
And the warmth of his blessings has never faded away.
In order to delight the fortunate wise beings,
I hold the banquet of this recollection.*

*The vitality of the body is declining day by day,
But the sun of the wisdom mind is shining luminously moment by
moment.
After following the guru's teachings faithfully, the result is that
I have tasted the ambrosia of the sublime dharma.*

*For the words and teachings of my benevolent guru,
I dare not miss even one syllable of them.
With great diligence, I have compiled them into this book
In hope that it will delight all fortunate beings.*

*There are no mistakes in this book in terms of its meaning.
If the wording is occasionally inappropriate,*

*In front of the Three Roots, dharma protectors,
And all dharma friends, I make confession.*

*Whatever slight virtue may arise from writing this book,
I dedicate it entirely to all mother sentient beings.
May they attain the fruition of the guru,
And directly arrive at the primordial ground instantaneously.*

This book, *A Journey to the West*, was completed by the one named Sodargye on the 25th day of the second month in the year of Water Rabbit in the Tibetan Calendar (April 15th, 2023).



11.1: Larung Gar

TIBETAN SEED SYLLABLES

ah		啊
hung		吽
(Inverted) hang		(倒立) 杭
hri		舍
cha		恰

The Syllables that Represent the Fivefold Expanse

a	ཨ་	阿
ah	ཨེ་	啊
ha	ཨོ་	哈
sha	ཨུ་	夏
sa	ཨཱ་	萨
ma	ཨྀ་	玛

NOTES

1. This refers to a Tibetan writing of Khenpo Sodargye that compiles and records some histories of Mount Wutai.
2. It is a partial A triangle, Λ .
3. *Borneol* is a component of many essential oils, and it is a natural insect repellent as well as used to reduce the latency of sleep onset and to increase the depth of sleep and the perception of well-being.
4. It is a long life practice which involves making offerings to a teacher and requesting him to remain long in this world for the benefit of beings.

TRANSLATORS' NOTE

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To help readers have a better understanding of the teachings, we created a glossary for special dharma terms, mainly Dzogchen terms, which includes their original Tibetan words, Khenpo Sodargye's Chinese, and our English translations. We also provided a table for all the Tibetan seed syllables that need to be visualized in actual practice.

If there are any mistakes or errors, either in words or in meaning, they are due to our incorrect translation, and we sincerely ask forgiveness in the presence of the guru and the Three Jewels. Meanwhile, any corrections and comments are always welcome to improve the quality of this translation.

We dedicate the merit accumulated through this project to the long life of Khenpo Sodargye Rinpoche. May the dharma teaching of His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche dispel the darkness of ignorance in the age of five degeneracies. May all sentient beings throughout limitless space attain ultimate peace and happiness.

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October 2023





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ཡི་གེ་ཉི་ཤུ་རྩ་བུ་གཤམ་འདི་དཔེ་ཚའི་ནང་དུ་བཞག་ན་དཔེ་ཚ་དེ་ཅི་འདྲར་
བཞག་མཁས་ཀྱང་ཉེས་པ་མི་འབྱུང་བར་འཇམ་དཔལ་ལ་རྩ་རྒྱུད་ལས་གསུངས་སོ། །