



The Short Vajradhara Prayer

A Teaching on the Lineage and Sustaining One's Nature

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The Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje

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Translated by Lama Eric Trinle Thaye



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Preface

The Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje

The *Dorje Chang Tungma* is probably the most well-known of the Kagyu prayers, traditionally recited before teaching sessions and often recited by practitioners as part of their daily practice. Nearly everyone knows this prayer by heart, but such familiarity can be dangerous. It is all too easy to recite the prayer mindlessly, like a parrot, without focusing on the words or reflecting on the meaning of what we are saying. By studying it, we should gain deeper understanding and be able to appreciate its profundity more fully.

In so many ways, it is much more than an ordinary prayer. It includes all the important stages of the training in *mahamudra*: revulsion for *samsara*, renunciation, devotion to the guru, undistracted meditation, and so forth. As such, it is like a *pith instruction*.

In the beginning, the prayer recalls all the lineage masters of the Kagyu. When we talk about lineage, we mean more than the one-to-one, physical transmission from teacher to student. Lineage is an unbroken spiritual line that begins with the source and continues un-

interrupted from generation to generation. Not only that, as we recite the body of the prayer, we are reminded of the core practices of mahamudra: revulsion is the legs of the practice, uncontrived devotion is the head of the practice, nondistractedness is the core of meditation practice, and so on.

Originally, this teaching was part of the 29th Kagyu Monlam Chenmo and was given under the most auspicious circumstances. It happened at the perfect place, **Dorje Den**, the sacred site where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment; at the perfect time, just after Tibetan New Year during the Month of Miracles; and all four pillars of the **sangha** — *bhikshus*, *bhikshunis*, *upasikas* and *upasikis* — were present, along with many rinpoches, tulkus and khenpos of the Karma Kamtsang.

I should like to thank all those people who have been involved in producing *The Short Vajradhara Prayer: A Teaching on the Lineage and Sustaining One's Nature*. Thanks to their sincere effort, perseverance and meticulousness in completing the project, the teaching will become available to a wider audience. I pray that it will be of benefit to many.

Seventeenth Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje
May of 2021

Introduction

The Publishers

The Gyalwang Karmapa granted these teachings as part of the 29th [Kagyü Monlam](#) in [Bodhgaya](#), India, 26-28 February, 2012. This auspicious event was attended by around 8,000 participants, principally, members of the Himalayan Sangha but also included devotees from around the world. We are grateful to Ringu Tulku Rinpoche for interpreting for His Holiness on this occasion. For this publication, we asked Lama Eric Trinle Thaye to retranslate the teachings from the recordings in order to capture the finer details, all of which are not possible to transmit in live interpretation.

The root text of *The Short Vajradhara Prayer* presented here differs from the rendition in *The Kagyü Monlam Book*. This version was recently retranslated by Khenpo David Karma Choephel, Lama Eric, and the Marpa Translation Society in residence at the [Thrangu Sekar Retreat Center](#) in Nepal. It was put to meter so that the prayer can be easily sung in English.

The Short Vajradhara Prayer

Jampel Zangpo of Bengar

Great Vajradhara, Telo, Naro, Marpa, Milarepa,
The Dharma Lord Gampopa, knower of three times Karmapa,
And lineage holders of the elder four and younger eight —
The Drikung, Taklung, Tsalpa, glorious Drukpa and so forth.
Protectors of all beings, the unequalled Dakpo Kagyu
Who have gained mastery of the profound path, mahamudra:
O Kagyu gurus, heed my prayer; your lineage I uphold,
Please bless me so I may adopt your ways of liberation.

Just as revulsion's taught to be the legs of meditation,
This meditator does not cling to any food or wealth
And severs all the ties that bind me to this present life.
Please bless me to be unattached to honor or to gain.

Just as devotion's taught to be the head of meditation:
Continually this meditator supplicates the guru,
Who opens up the doorway to the trove of pith instructions.
Please bless me so that uncontrived devotion may well forth.

As nondistracted's taught to be the core of meditation,
This meditator just remains, not altering at all
The fresh and pristine essence of whatever thought occurs.
Please bless me to be free from thinking there's a "meditation."

Just as it's taught, the essence of all thought is dharmakaya,
Not anything at all and yet arising in all ways,
Appearing for this meditator as unceasing play.
Bless me to know samsara and nirvana are not two.

In all my future lives, may I never be apart
From the authentic gurus and embrace the dharma's glory.
May I perfect the qualities of all the paths and levels,
And may I swiftly realize the state of Vajradhara.

A Teaching on the Lineage and Sustaining One's Nature



The Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje

The *Kalachakra Tantra* talks of greater and smaller worlds, and the center of the smaller world is this special place named Bodhgaya. For all Buddhists, it is the most sacred place on earth. Today many lay men and women with faith in the *Dharma* have gathered here and together we have an opportunity to participate in a virtuous program. I think that all of us are very fortunate: the one giving this teaching, and all those who are able to listen.

Part One:

Introduction to the Prayer

The topic of this teaching is *The Short Vajradhara Prayer*. In Tibetan, we call it the *Dorje Chang Tungma*. *Dorje Chang* is Tibetan for Vajradhara, and *tungma* means “short.” At first some might think that there must be one short Vajradhara and another one who is taller, but that is not the case. In Tibetan literature, sometimes the first few words of a recitation refer to its name. In this case, the prayer begins with *Dorje Chang*, and the word *tungma* is added because there is also a longer supplication to the [Mahamudra lineage](#) that begins: *Dorje chang chen yeshe kandroma*. Thus, *Dorje Chang Tungma* means “The Shorter Prayer that Begins with Dorje Chang.”

The author of this prayer is Bengar Jampel Zangpo,¹ an incarnation of Geshe Langri Thangpa, Dorje Senge,² of the [Kadampa](#) lineage. Bengar Jampel Zangpo was a [guru](#) in the [Kamtsang](#) lineage of realization and the root guru of the Seventh Karmapa, Chödrak Gyatso.

There are two aspects to the practice of this prayer: visualizing the [field of accumulation](#) and sustaining one's nature. For the first, we visualize the lineage gurus: Vajradhara, Telopa,³ Naropa,⁴ and so forth. The gurus can be visualized in one of two ways: either gathered as a crowd or arranged vertically, one above the other. A lot of explanation could be given regarding the visualization of the gurus, but here we'll focus more on the meaning of the prayer. Then, in their presence, we practice the second, main aspect, sustaining our nature.

Part Two: The Field of Accumulation

The Short Vajradhara Prayer begins with the lineage:

Great Vajradhara, Telo, Naro, Marpa, Milarepa,
The Dharma Lord Gampopa, knower of three times Karmapa,
And lineage holders of the elder four and younger eight —
The Drikung, Taklung, Tsalpa, glorious Drukpa and so forth.

The Kagyu Mahamudra lineage began with the Indian gurus Telopa, Naropa, Maitripa and so forth, and the first Tibetan master was the translator Marpa Chökyi Lodrö.⁵ Marpa the Translator traveled from Tibet to the Noble Land of India three times. He studied with the widely-renowned scholars of the time, Naropa and Maitripa,⁶ as well as many other learned masters and siddhas. Having learned the four classes of [tantra](#) of the [Secret Mantra](#) and especially having trained in the pith instructions of the [four transmissions](#), he himself attained the state of a great siddha.

Marpa received a prophecy that his students and subsequently, their students, would become more and more advanced — like a river that grows stronger as it flows toward the sea. Of his many students, the principal among them were known as the four great pillars.⁷

There are two types of transmission of the tantras: the lineage of practice and the lineage of explication. The lineage of explication passed through Marpa's disciple Ngok Chöku Dorje. That transmission still exists today in our lineage and has also been incorporated into other lineages.

The transmission of the practice lineage was held principally by Jetsün Milarepa (Mila)⁸ who underwent a great many difficulties while serving Marpa, his guru. When he left the presence of his guru, in accordance with the latter's command, he traveled to many isolated places including snowy mountain ranges, and subsisted almost exclusively on nettles to such a degree that he was barely able to sustain himself. Through facing a multitude of intense ascetic difficulties, he attained the state of a siddha and had many students who also realized the same state.

Two disciples were foremost among Milarepa's students, one was known as the sun-like disciple and another as the moon-like disciple. The moon-like disciple was Jetsün Rechungpa⁹ who traveled to the realm of the *khecharis* without leaving behind any mortal remains.

Through him, and some of his own disciples, namely Gyun Tsangpa and Gyalwa Lo, an independent lineage or tradition called the Rechung **Aural Lineage** arose. Another of Milarepa's main students was Jangchup Gyalpo, also called the Teacher from Ngendzong, who passed down another special independent transmission called the Ngendzong Aural Lineage.

The sun-like disciple was the unequalled Dakpo Daö Zhonnu, better known as Gampopa.¹⁰ There are clear prophecies about him in three well-known **sutras** of Lord Buddha. They tell that in the future, a bhikshu-doctor will come who will have 1000 beings in his retinue, 500 pure and 500 impure, and among these disciples there will be 800 great meditators.

What we call the **Dakpo Kagyu** lineage begins with Gampopa. One of his relatives had a son, in other words he was Gampopa's nephew, whose monastic name was Gonpo Tsultrim Nyingpo and his mind was inseparable from Gampopa's mind. It is likely that all of Gampopa's disciples were also students of Gonpo Tsultrim Nyingpo. Beginning with him, a series of lineage holders presided over Gampopa's seat monastery (Tib. *densa*), and this line is usually known as the Densa Kagyu, the Dakpo Tsawe Kagyu, or the Kagyu Tsawa — "The Root of the Kagyu." These masters were the principal holders of this lineage.

Gonpo Tsultrim Nyingpo had a student named Zhang Yu Drakpa, or Zhang Tsonдру Drakpa, who founded the Tselpa Kagyu which is one of the four earlier Kagyu schools.

Gampopa's three principal disciples were known as the "Three Men from Kham." The first was the siddha Khampa Ü-se, also known as Dusum Khyenpa, who founded the lineage that became known as the Karma Kagyu. The next was the glorious Pakmo Drupa Dorje Gyalpo, otherwise known as Khampa Dorgyal. He founded what became known as the Pakdru Kagyu, and among the Three Men from Kham, his activity is probably the most vast. Pakmo Drupa is the source of the eight later Kagyu schools because they arose from his siddha disciples. The third is Seltong Shogom, and the Traleg Rinpoches are considered to be his incarnations.

The Barom Kagyu was founded by Barompa Darma Wangchuk, another direct disciple of Gampopa. Many great siddhas and scholars arose from this lineage. One such master became known as Drokpe Tishri Repa. At one point, the emperor of China traveled to the province of Ü, became his student, and granted him the title of Tishri. Barom Darma Wangchuk's activity spread widely throughout Ngari or Western Tibet. Though the strength of this lineage subsequently waned, it does still exist today.

Regarding the four elder and eight younger lineages, the four earlier or elder Kagyu schools are the Tsalpa Kagyu, the Karma Kagyu, the Barom Kagyu, and the Pakdru Kagyu. Sometimes the Densa Kagyu is added to this list to make “the five earlier schools.” These four or five earlier schools or lineages were founded by the direct disciples of Gampopa, and the eight later or younger schools were founded by their students.

If the meaning behind “lineage holders of the the four elder and younger eight [lineages]” is not explained, it’s possible that some people will think that this classification has to do with the relative importance of these lineages. That is because some have translated the Tibetan term *che zhi chung gye* literally as “the four greater and eight lesser.” That makes it sound like the four are more important, more precious or stronger and that the eight are less so.

When we were translating *The Kagyu Monlam Book*, we had some discussion regarding how to render this “four greater and eight lesser” in English. We decided to phrase it in terms of their temporal arising, thus, “the elder four and younger eight.” I thought that was more appropriate.

Some scholars have stated that this classification didn’t exist before Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye¹¹ and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo¹² and that they coined the term. However, this terminology is used in the

aspiration prayer by Taklung Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal,¹³ a great scholar of the Taklung Kagyu tradition who lived during the time of the Tenth Karmapa. Lodrö Thaye came during the time of the Fourteenth Karmapa, so it's clear that this term wasn't Lodrö Thaye's invention. It is actually difficult to say if some of these so-called “greater four” actually still exist independently. For example, the Pakdru Kagyu is one of the four earlier schools, but this lineage barely exists independently these days, if at all. It seems to have been absorbed by the Drikung Kagyu. So what is sometimes translated as “greater and lesser” is nothing more than a temporal distinction that does not allude to the scope of these gurus' activity or greater and lesser qualities of learning or realization, which are actually inconceivable. It's important that we understand this. Further, the holders of the four elder and eight younger lineages can also refer to the students of the First Karmapa, Dusum Khyenpa.

In the stories of Ling Gesar,¹⁴ there are three families that are classified as greater, middling, and lesser. Here also, this is referring to the families of the eldest, middle and youngest brothers — but the youngest brother's lineage — namely the “lesser” one — was in fact the most powerful.

From the perspective of Dharma, this labeling would be inappropriate. I feel that it's important for everyone to know the reasoning for

and meaning behind the terms *elder* and *younger* in order to foster proper understanding and respect between the Kagyu schools.

Following this line in the prayer, some of the lineages are mentioned — “The Drikung, Taklung, Tsalpa, glorious Drukpa and so forth.”

There are many followers of the Karma Kagyu here who may not know why we sometimes refer to this school as the practice lineage of the Karma Kamtsang. We say this because Dusum Khyenpa, the First Karmapa (thus, *Karma*), made Kampo Nenang (thus, *Kam-*) his home (*tsang*).

The Karmapas

Gampopa, the Doctor from Dakpo, had prophesied to his student Dusum Khyenpa, that if he went to practice at Kampo Gangra, a sacred site of *Chakrasamvara* and part of the Litang region in Kham, his activity would spread throughout the three provinces of greater Tibet: Ü, Tsang, and Kham. This is probably where he attained realization. In Sanskrit, karma means “activity,” and in Tibetan, adding *pa* personifies it — hence *Karmapa* is the “enactor of activity.”

As for the origin of the term *Karma Kagyu*, in the old historical writings, the first holder of the black crown was Dusum Khyenpa. It was only later that he was recognized as the first in the line of Karmapas.

Initially the first Karmapa was considered to be Karma Pakshi, who was Dusum Khyenpa's reincarnation. In reality, the name was given to Dusum Khyenpa in a pure vision experienced during his hair cutting ceremony at Treka Drak,¹⁵ when he was 16 years old. In this vision he saw himself being installed as the agent of the activity of all the *buddhas of the three times*. However, although Dusum Khyenpa experienced this revelation, it was only during the time of Karma Pakshi, that people began to refer to Dusum Khyenpa as the First Karmapa. There are many explanations about why he was given this name. The most common one is that he spent a long time at Karma Göñ.¹⁶ This is important to understand.

There are many prophecies about how many successive incarnations of the Karmapas there will be. Chokgyur Dechen Lingpa¹⁷ prophesied that there will be twenty-one Karmapas in all. He further states: "From seven rebirths, thirteen emanations will arise." This means that the first to the seventh Karmapas are considered to have been actual rebirths (Tib. *kyewa* or *yangsi*) and that the following thirteen Karmapas — from Mikyö Dorje onwards — are emanations (Skt. *nirmanakaya* Tib. *tulku*) of the first seven.

There is also a prophecy by Guru Rinpoche stating that there will be only seven actual rebirths and the remaining Karmapas will be emanations. However the Fifth Karmapa, Deshin Shekpa, received a pro-

phhecy from the dakinis that there will be twenty-five Karmapas. And there is a prophecy from the [mahasiddha](#) Ngakri Selwo which says there will be 1,002 Karmapas.

There are differing explanations for these. For the prophecy describing 1,002 Karmapas, they would not necessarily all be given the name Karmapa and enthroned as such. The activity of the Karmapas is to accomplish the intentions and activity of all the buddhas of the three times and this will continue for as long as the teachings of the 1,002 buddhas remain. Further, even after the thousand buddhas' teachings have faded, the Karmapas' activity will continue until the end of samsara.

There's something else that should be explained here. There is a difference between an emanation and a reincarnation. An emanation is emanated from some basis — there is something from which the emanation arises. There are different types of emanations. First, arhats, for example, can manifest many emanations, but these emanations do not think or act independently. They act according to the intentions of that arhat, the basis for the emanations. There could be a basis for emanation in India who could emanate a manifestation in America. And secondly, emanation also refers to the nirmanakaya forms of buddhas, and these appearances of noble buddhas do have the ability to think and act independently. Reincarnation, on the other hand, refers to

this basis for emanation *itself* transmigrating and being reborn, thus returning to the world. That is, if one is to reincarnate in America, that very being who will reincarnate must first die and transmigrate to America.

It's important that we understand this difference between emanations and reincarnations. A being with such ability can emanate many manifestations — for example, sometimes there are emanations of body, speech, and mind. Whereas if one without such ability says, “this is my emanation and that is my emanation,” those would just be lies.

There are various reasons for naming someone a “tulku,” some pertaining to a type of likeness and others to connection. At times even an ordinary individual might be named or considered a tulku. If in previous births, an individual of pure ethics has made vast aspirations to benefit the teachings and beings in the future, this individual may take a birth where they are able to be of great benefit to the teachings and beings. Based upon the power of previous aspirations and through having gathered accumulations, a seed can be planted for a person to manifest the ability to be of great benefit to the teachings and other beings. If an exalted person with wisdom sees the potential for a particular person to be of benefit, it's possible that this wise one might grant the title of tulku to that person. So there can be a valid reason

for conferring the title tulku to ordinary individuals. If there is someone with the potential to be of benefit, calling them a “tulku” may afford them respect and increase their influence.

All tulkus needn’t be buddhas and **bodhisattvas** descending like birds from high in the sky and dwelling in exalted states or on the lofty bodhisattva levels. They can be lowly beings, and simply rise up from the ground like insects.

But at the same time, we shouldn’t call everyone a tulku. If everyone were to be considered a tulku, there’d be no-one left to offer them respect!

The Six Heart Disciples¹⁸

The Karmapas have had many disciples, and among them, some are proclaimed to be of equal attainment to themselves — that is, possessing the same qualities of renunciation and realization as the Karmapa. In the Karma Kamtsang, we speak of these as *gyalwa yabse*.¹⁹

The term *gyalwa yabse* is making the point that these beings are teacher and students, but using the more intimate “father and children” reflects the special, uncommon connection between these masters. A teacher can have a great many students, but fathers don’t have so many children.

The Shamar Rinpoches

The first of the heart disciples is the succession of the Shamar Rinpoches.²⁰ There is a prophecy by Karma Pakshi saying that after a hundred years or so, there will arise two emanations of him: the holder of the black crown and the holder of the red crown. In some of the old histories we see reference to these two, the Karmapa as holder of the black crown, and Shamarpa, holder of the red crown. Thus, though the Shamar Rinpoches appear as students of the Karmapas, in actuality, they are proclaimed to be possessed of equal qualities of abandonment and realization.

After ten incarnations of the Shamar Rinpoches, some trouble arose. Once the Ninth Shamar Rinpoche had passed away, two candidates were promoted as the incarnation of the Tenth Shamar Rinpoche. With one Kamtsang lama recognizing one child as the Shamar tulku and another saying that it was a different child, the dispute could not be settled. At that time, there was a well-known custom of the Chinese emperor making decisions based on choosing the name of a candidate from a golden vase. This was done and the person that emerged was enthroned. The one formally recognized was known as Tashi Tsepa Shamar who was born into the influential Tashi Tsepa family. The one not formally recognized was known as Namling Shamar who was the son of a member of the powerful Namling family.

Thus, after the ninth incarnation, two lines of Shamar Rinpoches existed, the Namling Shamars and the Tashi Shamars, but only one Tenth (Tashi) Shamar was enthroned. Then for several generations, the Namling Shamars were unofficially recognized — although not enthroned — until that line discontinued at the time of the Fifteenth Karmapa. For a long period, three generations that followed the Tenth Tashi Shamar were not permitted to be recognized until the Sixteenth Karmapa obtained permission from the Dalai Lama to formally recognize and enthrone the Fourteenth Tashi Shamar.

Though there were no formal enthronements after the passing of the Tenth Tashi Shamar, there were beings who were said to be incarnations of the Shamar Rinpoche. If we consider only those who have been formally enthroned, there have been only eleven (the first ten and the Fourteenth). But if we count the number of rebirths, there have been fourteen.

The Situ Rinpoches

The next of the heart disciples are the Situ Rinpoches.²¹ The First Situ Rinpoche was a student of the Fifth Karmapa, Deshin Shekpa. In general, all of the previous Situ Rinpoches have overseen Karma Göñ, the middle seat of the Gyalwang Karmapas.²² The Eighth Situ Rinpoche — Situ Chökyi Jungne — was especially kind to the Kamtsang

lineage. During his time, both the Karmapa and the Shamarpa died within days of each other while on a trip to China. Though there were other Dharma heirs such as Pawo Rinpoche, Situ Rinpoche was the eldest and so assumed the weighty responsibility of upholding the lineage. He founded his seat monastery of Palpung and composed many great works that contributed to the preservation of all the general and specific topics of study in Tibet. Thus he is a very important and kind figure in the history of the Karma Kamtsang — which is not to say that the other Situ Rinpoches were not kind figures! For example the Eleventh Situ Rinpoche, Pema Wangchok Gyalpo, was perceived to be very serious and a bit fierce, however he founded and sustained the monastic institute (*shedra*) at Palpung and printed the great commentaries of Gyalwang Mikyö Dorje. It is due to this kindness that the later generations of the Kamtsang have a strong connection to these texts. To this day, there have been twelve incarnations in the Situ line. With regard to this lineage, there is one more interesting point that I'll share.

The reincarnation of the Fourth Situ, Mitruk Chökyi Gocha, was Situ Norbu Sampel. It is said that he only lived to be 15 or 16 years of age. He generally isn't counted in the line of Situpas, though he probably should be. Further, during the time of Yeshe Dorje, the Eleventh Gyalwang Karmapa, Lekshe Mawa was recognized as the Seventh Situpa. At this time the Karma Kagyu had declined a bit so despite his recog-

nitition, his family did not entrust him to the monastery and he was not enthroned. He also died quite young. The Eighth Situ, Chökyi Jungne said that since he was not enthroned, he should not be included in the line of succession of Situpas nor in the lineage of Kagyu gurus, although he generally is. If Situ Lekshe Mawa was not included, but Situ Norbu Sampel was, we would still have twelve Situpas up to the present day. Personally, I think this would be preferable.

The Gyaltsab Rinpoches

The next of the heart disciples are the succession of the Gyaltsab Rinpoches.²³ The First Gyaltsab Rinpoche, Goshir Paljor Döndrup, was guru to the Seventh Karmapa. The Sixth Gyalwang Karmapa, Tongwa Dönden, knowing that the Gyaltsabpa would be the guru to his reincarnation, sent him near and far to receive empowerments, reading transmissions, teachings, and pith instructions. It is said that there was not one empowerment, reading transmissions, teaching, or pith instruction of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition that Gyaltsab Rinpoche did not receive. One of Goshir Paljor Döndrup's contemporaries was Bengar Jampel Zangpo, the author of *The Short Vajradhara Prayer*. Both of these masters served as teachers to the Seventh Gyalwang Karmapa, Chödrak Gyatso, and from them he received the lineage of realization. It is said that the Seventh Gyalwang Karmapa was ordained by Bengar Jampel Zangpo, but that he received most of his Dharma

teachings — reading transmissions, pith instructions, empowerments etc. — from Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche. Gyaltsab Rinpoche was an eminent being, both an outstanding scholar and a siddha.

Around the time of — I think — the Eighth Gyaltsabpa, the Mongols, led by Goshi Khan, started a war, and the Tibetan provinces of Ü and Tsang were fighting. In general, the teaching of the Kagyu, but especially that of the Kamtsang, declined greatly and was almost lost completely. But Gyaltsab Rinpoche must have been very savvy. Through his skillful means he was able to make a connection with the Mongolian king, and due to this, principally Tsurphu, but also other Kamtsang monasteries were spared decline and destruction. His great kindness is obvious as it is due to his activity that many Kamtsang institutions survived. The other Gyaltsab incarnations followed.

The Pawo Rinpoches

The next line of heart disciples is the Pawo incarnations.²⁴ The first of this line was Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa who was an incredible scholar. Though we needn't mention all of his activity, he made enduring contributions to Tibetan history. There are not many extant older chronicles of the history of the Dharma in Tibet, so his was very important and influential. Successive incarnations followed him.

The Treho Rinpoches

The fifth of these initial heart disciples is the Treho line.²⁵ Most don't know much about these masters. Someone asked me, "What is this Treho tradition?" It is a position or rank of which there are two — one higher and one lower. The one we are concerned with is the lower one.

The Karmapas and these five lines of masters first comprised the term, "The Father and the Five Heart Disciples, the Six."

The Sixth Heart Disciple: Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche

Up until the time of the Fifteenth Gyalwang Karmapa, Khakyap Dorje, there were the "The Father and Heart Disciples, the Six." Then arose Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye,²⁶ the first of his line. The second incarnation in that line was Jamgön Khyentse Özer, who was the biological son of the Fifteenth Karmapa, Gyalwang Khakyap Dorje. The Karmapa granted Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche the title of heart disciple, and from that time on, he has been included in "The Father and Six Heart Disciples," thus making for seven in all.

Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche is said to have been predicted by the Buddha when he mentions "the teacher of various areas of study." Jamgön Lodrö Thaye was a master who sustained the nonsectarian or Rimé tradition. This Rimé tradition probably began with him and

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, as we don't see the term *Rimé* used before that. Not only did these two masters proclaim themselves to be Rimé adherents, but they actually endeavored to hold, preserve, and propagate rare empowerments, reading transmissions, and instructions through teaching and promulgating them. By revering and placing great value in all practice instructions from the [eight practice lineages](#) and all the traditions' explication gathered in the eminent beings known as [the ten great pillars](#), he was very kind and beneficial to all the various traditions.

Though it's not in Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche's collected works, there is an extensive record of all the transmissions he received. This has been published recently and is something that all of us should read as he went to so much trouble to collect all that he did. I understand that there were some textual transmissions he wished to receive, but the person holding it must not have known how to read. So Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche would read the text to the person, and the person would then repeat it back to him to give him the reading transmission. It is incredible to think about how much he went through to gather Dharma. When we now receive a transmission, it is just recited to us and that's it — it's very easy.

Considering his writings, there were principally *The Five Great Treasuries*, and many hundreds of volumes of other works. It's said that he continued writing into his eighties, and perhaps his hand trembled at

this point, for it is said that he would tie his pen to his hand to write. Thus, until the very end of his life, he continued to engage in activity to benefit beings and the teachings in a nonsectarian manner. Further, knowing at that time that great danger was coming to Central and Eastern Tibet, at the encouragement of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, he composed a prayer we recite at the Kagyu Monlam, *An Aspiration for the Well-Being of Tibet* which is included in the Kagyu Monlam prayerbook. Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo further commanded him to recite it six times each day. Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche was a master capable of understanding and realizing all the various traditions of Tibetan Buddhism in a comprehensive manner, which was very rare.

The samaya and connection between Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo was amazing and an example for us. They were each other's teacher and student. The Fifth Gyalwang Karmapa, Deshin Shekpa, prophesied that all those connected with these two masters would become liberated. To this pairing, we could also add the **tertön** Chokgyur Dechen Lingpa, whose activity was greatly enhanced by the support he received from these two masters. In short, Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche's activity was not confined merely to the Kamtsang; in a nonsectarian manner, it pervaded all the various traditions of the Snow Lands of Tibet. Throughout all the history of Tibet, it has been quite rare for such a being to arise who was a holder of all the traditions in such an all-embracing way.

The wealth of the Karma Kamtsang boasts the thirteen tantras of Marpa's tradition and many other unbroken transmissions of lesser teachings and reading transmissions. These days, our understanding of most of these lineages is due to the kindness of Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche, who documented the sources of all the transmissions and teachings he received.²⁷ Those who are curious about these can refer to his work which was published in Tibet, perhaps last year. It's a yellow book of about 1,000 pages, and it would be beneficial for us to study it.

The second incarnation of this line was Jamgön Kongtrul Khyentse Özer. As I said earlier, he was born as the son of the Fifteenth Gyalwang, Khakyap Dorje. From his writings, I get the strong sense that Karmapa Khakyap Dorje had great faith in and devotion for Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye. It seems that Jamgön Lodrö Thaye and Gyalwang Khakyap Dorje, came to the decision through some discussion that Jamgön Rinpoche would be born as the son of the Fifteenth Karmapa. It's certainly not that the Karmapa had a child and just wanted his son to have some special recognition.

The Second Jamgön Khyentse Özer Rinpoche kept very pure ethical discipline. I have further heard that when the Sixteenth Gyalwang Karmapa was practicing mahamudra and some doubts about the practice arose, it was Jamgön Rinpoche whom he called on to clarify his uncertainties about the practice. Gyalwang Rigpe Dorje²⁸ received

his monastic ordination from Situ Pema Wangchok,²⁹ but when it came to his introduction to mahamudra, he considered Jamgön Rinpoche an important guru. Therefore, both of these masters appear as teachers of Gyalwang Rigpe Dorje in the supplications to the lineage of realization — there must be some special inner significance in this. Some may think that since he was born in such a lofty position that he might have put on airs and acted high and mighty, but Jamgön Rinpoche was exceedingly kind-natured, humble, and of pure ethical discipline.

Then we come to the third incarnation, Jamgön Lodrö Chökyi Senge, who passed away some years ago. Most of you are familiar with him. He was wise in both the Dharma and the ways of the world, and, notably, he established the monastic university at the seat monastery in [Rumtek](#). He was the one capable of fulfilling all the wishes of the Sixteenth Gyalwang Karmapa as he was quite competent and astute. It is also said that when the Karmapa was ill, Jamgön Rinpoche served him very attentively — this is what I’ve heard; obviously I didn’t see this with my own eyes. As the Gyalwang Karmapa’s death was approaching, he apparently told Jamgön Rinpoche, “In this life, I’ll never be able to repay your kindness.”

When a lot of trouble and difficulty arose at Rumtek Monastery, Rinpoche was able to remain undaunted. But in the end, it appears that

his life and activity were cut short when he died in an automobile accident. Some wise ones have said that had he been present, much of the trouble we have experienced in the Kamtsang would not have arisen. In fact, on account of his special activity and way of being, when many people merely bring Jamgön Rinpoche to mind, an uncommon feeling of great affection wells up within them. This is evidently the case for many up to this very day.

Now we come to our current Jamgön Rinpoche, the fourth in the line. I am the one who recognized him and did so when I was just a child in Tibet. When I was living in Tibet, some said that I was permitted to recognize tulkus while others claimed that this was forbidden. In any case, there were some restrictions. But in the end, I recognized over forty tulkus, some of them publicly and some covertly. I did my best when doing so, relying on supplications to the gurus and *vidams*. I feel that the clearest indications I received were around Jamgön Rinpoche, and so I have confidence in this recognition. Some of the other recognitions seemed clear, some less so, and sometimes I just had to make prayers, such as, “May good come of this!”

I make special supplications, again and again, that Rinpoche will be of benefit to and sustain the teachings of the buddha-dharma in general and the teachings of the practice lineage of the Karma Kamtsang in particular. I also want to say to all of you gathered here that it will

be very important for you all to serve him in his vast activity in the future. As for myself, trouble seems to follow me everywhere. I'm always getting cast into one difficult situation or another. It's uncertain whether I'll be able to engage in extensive activity for the benefit of the teachings and beings. Just as you would do for me, it's very important that all of you assist Rinpoche in his future endeavors.

The Importance of Lineage

You may wonder why I'm sharing so much history about the lineage. In general, the Buddha, our teacher, strove over countless lives and underwent innumerable hardships in order to establish the precious teachings of Buddhism. Within Tibetan Buddhism, the inconceivable number of scholars and siddhas that have appeared have all arisen due to their perseverance through many difficulties. If we just take the Karma Kamtsang as an example — just one small lineage among all the Dharma traditions — numerous eminent beings have emerged throughout many hundreds of years. Due to their compassion, aspirations, and because of the intense hardships the past masters have endured, this precious lineage has been able to remain steadfast and flourish. The golden rosary of the practice lineage of the Karma Kamtsang consists of the Father and the Heart Disciples. They are the holders of the Kagyu teachings.

This is the reason that the lineage has survived and spread — it's not something that has come to pass easily or without effort. We are all part of this lineage and should therefore appreciate its exalted qualities.

Through following the genuine gurus of the past and by properly training, eventually the uncommon qualities of the lineage will enter our beings. If we take the availability of our tradition for granted, I think it will be difficult for the lineage's qualities to enter us. This is something we should all consider.

In recent times, much difficulty has arisen within the Kamtsang. Being ordinary people, from time to time, thoughts will arise — of attachment for those we are close to and aversion toward those we regard as “others.” If we act from the perspective of ordinary worldly beings with attachments and biases, there may, in one sense, appear to be some slight purpose or benefit. But there is a danger that this could lead to the loss of those we rely upon as the upholders of the lineage. It could lead to the disintegration of the Kagyu lineage itself. If part of this lineage is discarded, then part of this tradition would be lost.

Since we all have entered the true Dharma, we meditate on the four immeasurables, including equanimity. We strive to do away with notions of friends and adversaries, attachment and aversion. This

means, even when a challenging situation arises, we must be able to maintain composure. I see a lot of challenging situations and know how difficult this is to carry out. Regardless of how we see others behaving, from our own side, if we can do our best and act purely and with a kind heart, there will be little difficulty. Just because others do things to debase themselves, we needn't do likewise. Thus, it's important for all of you to be conscientious.

The Kagyu teachings have been established and maintained through the unmistakable activity of the Karmapas, their heart disciples and the students who are capable of holding the lineage. I'm not entirely comfortable speaking in this way. But as I hold the title of "holder of the Kamtsang teachings," it seems inappropriate for me not to speak like this from time to time — I'm requesting you all to bear all this in mind and think about it in a deeper way.

I think this is the best way to conclude the first part of the prayer featuring our lineage, which ends this way:

Protectors of all beings, the unequalled Dakpo Kagyu
Who have gained mastery of the profound path, mahamudra:
O Kagyu gurus, heed my prayer; your lineage I uphold,
Please bless me so I may adopt your ways of liberation.

Part Three:

Practice of Sustaining One's Nature

Now we come to the main part of the teaching — sustaining one's nature. There are three aspects: revulsion as the legs of meditation; devotion as the head of meditation; and nondistractedness as the body of meditation.

Sustaining One's Nature Through Revulsion

The first verse reads:

Just as revulsion's taught to be the legs of meditation,
This meditator does not cling to any food or wealth
And severs all the ties that bind me to this present life.
Please bless me to be unattached to honor or to gain.

English translators render the first word in the Tibetan, *zhen lok*, in many ways: detachment, nonattachment, revulsion, disgust, etc. I don't really have a good enough feel for the English to know

which word would be best. But to posit a crude example: if you're walking down the road and step in excrement, you might immediately feel like vomiting. That feeling is the meaning of *zhen lok*. So maybe it's something like "disgust." I'm told that the word "detachment" can refer to a mental malady where you don't have any feeling, good, bad, or otherwise. So maybe that doesn't translate the term well.

The vajra holder of all of Tibet, the crown jewel of all the *yogis*, was Jetsün Drakpa Gyaltsen.³⁰ He received pith instructions from Manjushri called, *Parting from the Four Attachments*.³¹ The four are: if you are attached to this life, you are not a Dharma practitioner; if you are attached to samsara, this is not renunciation; if you are attached to your own benefit, this is not *bodhichitta*; if fixation arises, this is not the view. This teaching and *The Four Dharmas of Gampopa* stress the same key points. If a fortunate being wishes to unerringly travel the path of ripening and liberation, one needs a head, legs, and the rest of the body. And on top of these, one needs to gather the essential points — one needn't train in many different things, just the critical ones. That is, if one has revulsion for this life, one's mind will be capable of turning to the Dharma.

Some types of revulsion are only partial, so they are incomplete, and won't serve the purpose. We need authentic revulsion. There is an old saying: "Like putting grass in front of a wolf." If you put grass in front of carnivores, they won't eat it as they have no interest in it. Further,

if you put meat in front of herbivores, they won't eat that, as they have no craving for meat. It's also said that we should be like birds and have no craving for hoarding things. I understand that, in general, birds don't hoard food — except for maybe crows. However our lack of clinging shouldn't be simply an absence of craving. Authentic revulsion is quite different from the absence of clinging that these examples illustrate. These animals instinctively feel this way from birth. They have not understood the benefit of revulsion and then habituated themselves to it. Disinterest is not revulsion, so these examples of revulsion are of no benefit to us.

What is this authentic renunciation that we need? There are varying levels of renunciation, so it depends on the individual's capacity. First, there are beings of lesser capacity, and they can be subdivided into two categories: the principal ones and the common ones.

Regarding the principal ones, an individual of lesser capacity must at least turn away from the worldly concerns for this life. An individual of middling capacity must turn away from all types of samsaric existence. And an individual of greater capacity must turn away from one-sided pacification [or one-sided [nirvana](#)]. Thus, the levels of revulsion can differ according to the mental capacity or mental fortitude of the being. In the very beginning, there is no point in reaching for something that is beyond one's grasp.

When we say that we need revulsion for the concerns of this life, it's easy to say, but when it comes down to it, it's not that easy, is it? In what manner should we feel revulsion toward the concerns of this life? How can we gauge it? There can be varying understandings. What do we mean by practicing Dharma? Practicing Dharma is doing things for the benefit of future lives. Dharma practice is not something for the benefit of this life. If you just want to accomplish some benefit for this life, you don't need Dharma, all you need to do is to train well in the methods to make your way in this world and there would be no need to bother yourself with the difficulties of Dharma.

But our existence does not end after this life. There will be many more existences to come. Since the path we will travel leads well into the future, we need to think about the long-term and plan accordingly. In practicing Dharma we are making the effort to travel the path. The principle concern for Dharma practitioners is the long-term view, that of working for the benefit of future lives. Providing for oneself in terms of food and clothing should be a secondary concern.

We can do the other things we must do, but we give them less attention. If we accomplish them, fine, but if we don't, it shouldn't trouble us since we are fulfilling our main aim. For example, if you're a businessperson, you can do your business, but don't let that be your main objective in life. Let your main concern be for future lives. If your

business goes well, great. If it doesn't, that's nothing to be devastated about. There are greater things to consider.

Authentic Dharma practice comes down to being clear about these priorities.

Some might think that having revulsion for this life means not seeking any food or clothing and wandering around naked! Of course it's not like that. That was the way of Jetsün Milarepa, but everyone can't live like him. We wouldn't be able to stay in a cave high in the mountains in the subzero weather wearing only tattered clothing, having nothing to eat but nettles, enjoying no friends as company, and having no lodging except for a cave. How could we live like that? Without some special power or capacity, you'd die of hunger, famine, cold, or sadness!

Perhaps I should also mention that there is a way to have revulsion for samsara, even if one does not have trust in the existence of future lives. Earlier I spoke about the motivation of the lesser individual, and there are two types of lesser individual — the principal ones and the common ones. The common ones are those who cling to this life and are unable to think about anything other than this life. Though they don't believe in or think about future lives, they may do some Dharma practice — whatever is suitable to their outlook and seems beneficial to them.

I have an example for this. Many people have come for the Kagyu Monlam, including many monastics. Not only are there monastics from the principal and auxiliary Kagyu monasteries, but monks and nuns from other traditions have gathered here as well. Further, there are others here who are just pretending to be monastics though they are not really ordained. We must ask ourselves why have we gathered for the Kagyu Monlam? Some just come to make a noise to make sure they get tea and bread and rush forward when monetary offerings are passed out. If we all gathered here just to hanker after these things, then there wouldn't be much point to the Kagyu Monlam, would there? There wouldn't be much point if people were coming with the sole motivation to get material things. Everyone will get tea and bread. So, what if we possessed an intention above our ordinary motivations? What if we came thinking that this is a special opportunity to gather at a holy place to make aspirations for the good of the world and all sentient beings? If we come to make prayers as best we know how — to engage in something other than what we normally would, with an excellent opportunity to gather merit — of course our motivation and ability to make aspirations won't be perfect, only a buddha can do so perfectly, but there would be some true and profound meaning in our action. We would be coming for a deeper purpose, not just to acquire things. And even if we are not able to think about future lives, that's okay. Maybe that's no problem. Gradually our ability to hold a deeper

view will develop. But if we don't accumulate merit, then it will be difficult to come to believe in future lives.

It would be a mistaken view to think that we will gain happiness and well-being in this life by acquiring outer material things. These days, many people understand this. Especially, many people from highly developed countries have witnessed incredible outer or material development. But this has only led to greater mental suffering, increased mental pressure, and a sense that life is without happiness or any discernible meaning. Why is that? It is because one will not find mental well-being by merely striving to gain material things. The acquisition of goods will not lead to mental well-being; true inner happiness comes from developing contentment. Beyond just having food in one's stomach and clothes on one's back, one needs to be concerned with inner well-being, some greater purpose, and strive for that. We need to think in this way. For that reason, I think there must be many stages to the development of revulsion.

In short, revulsion is said to be the legs of meditation. Revulsion is also said to be the caretaker or master of meditation. If this caretaker is confused or if the care of the meditation is entrusted to one who will not properly look after it, the meditation may be lost or trouble may ensue. For example, if the caretaker of meditation has clinging toward the affairs of this life, meditation may be used to simply further the

concerns of this life and meditation on true Dharma for the benefit of future lives will not be able to develop. Thus, the meditation must be entrusted to an unerring guardian. Of course we're not really giving this responsibility to someone else, we must take the responsibility ourselves. But if the meditator is attached to the affairs of this life, then no matter how much meditation he or she does, the meditation will only serve to fulfill that attachment and have no other purpose.

Once the meditator has revulsion for this life's concerns, this skillful minding of meditation will lead to the practice properly progressing along the intended path. That's why we say the meditation should be entrusted to the proper caretaker; that's why we say revulsion is the legs of meditation. A person needs legs to move about. So what are the legs that will allow us to travel from here to the state of [buddha-hood](#)? They are the revulsion which reorients the meditator in that direction. If one does not have the legs of revulsion as a basis they will not be able to make this journey. If we have the legs of authentic or true revulsion, strong and healthy without impairment, then we will be able to travel to distant places. We must consider this well.

Sometimes examples can be too lofty — maybe this one is a good one: Gyalwa Yang Gönpa³² was a mahasiddha of the Drukpa Kagyu. He must have been a disciple of Gyalwa Götsangpa³³ as it's said that he was a student who was actually equal to Götsangpa. When Gyalwa Yang Gönpa was staying secluded in the mountains, he was making

the water **torma** offering to Jambhala when suddenly, the black and yellow Jambhala deities appeared out of a bubble of water. Normally, we do the practice but don't accomplish it and don't get the **siddhis**. But for him, the deities appeared and told him that they would offer him whatever siddhis he desired. Gyalwa Yang Gönpa replied that he was a yogi for whom provisions fell like rain, even when he stayed in high, remote mountains (probably meaning that many people came and made offerings to him). He related that he didn't need any siddhis, but if they want to give siddhis to someone, they should give them to poor people. He then poured out the water from which they had arisen.

For us, we practice hard for weeks till we're dripping with sweat, trying to accomplish Jambhala. If they did appear to us, we would ask for so many things. But when the Jambhalas arose for him and offered him siddhis, he was not interested in the common siddhis — if they come, okay, if not, okay. He related that he didn't want them and told them to offer the siddhis to beggars.

Another related example deals with the mahasiddha Ogyenpa,³⁴ a disciple of Karma Pakshi and Götsangpa. It is said that Ogyenpa's practice of yogic conduct was quite great — even equal to Götsangpa's. He must have traveled to India twice. On his first trip, he saw the face of the Indian Lord of Wealth, the son of Shiva with the elephant's head, a **deity** who is also known as **Ganapati**. Ganapati told him: "I

will be your **Dharma protector**, so please offer me tormas. But the text for my practice is in Tibet, so please bring it and propitiate me here in Bodhgaya for three years. If you do so, I will offer you dominion over two-thirds of the world.” I’m not sure whether “world” refers to India or the whole world. Ogyenpa replied: “To do so, I would have to offer you flesh and blood, and I am not able to do that. You say that you’ll be my Dharma protector, but I don’t need one as I am my own protector. Also, whether I stay in Bodhgaya for three years or not is up to me alone — you have no say in that. And further, I’m a yogi — what would I do with two-thirds of the world?!” So he didn’t consent.

In short, this prayer speaks of, “sever[ing] all the ties that bind me to this present life.” We all want freedom. As it is said, “All freedom is happiness; all that amounts to being controlled by others is suffering.” When one has control over oneself, this leads to happiness. Others having power over one leads to suffering. In this life, there is no choice but to partake of the sense-objects. We must use them. If we don’t, we can’t survive; but when we do have them, we become attached. But if we become subservient to them, we will lose our freedom and they become fetters. I think this must be the meaning of *dōtak* [which is translated as “ties” in the prayer]. The nomads in Tibet would drive a stake inside a corral, tie a rope to it, and attach that to the neck of an animal. So even if the animal tugged at the rope, they wouldn’t be free to wander. Likewise, our clinging to the affairs

of this life is like this stake in the ground to which we bind ourselves. Thus, though we may wish to travel on, we are not able to separate ourselves from this life's concerns.

I have one last, very old, short story that I've told before. There once was a rich man and a beggar. The rich man was very industrious, and each night he counted his money, reviewing his income and expenses for the day. The beggar had just the barest necessities in terms of food and clothing. Each day he went out to beg food, and at night he passed his time singing. The rich man thought: "I'm very busy and it doesn't even occur to me to sing songs. Why is it that this beggar seems so happy? I must look into this."

One day, after the poor man had gone out to beg for his food, the rich man put a lump of gold the size of a goat's head in the man's house. When the beggar returned that night, he saw the gold. At first, he thought someone must have lost or dropped it and that he should return it the next day. But having reflected a bit, he figured that the [Three Jewels](#) must have seen that he was a beggar and destitute of food and clothing. He thought that they must have taken pity on him and gifted him this gold. The following day he sold some of the gold and started thinking about building a house and all the things he should do with the money. He spent the night in thought and forgot to sing.

The rich man was observing the situation through a window from above, looking to see how the beggar would react. And in the end, he came to an understanding. Ordinarily, we toil night and day to accumulate wealth, putting up with the scolding and abuse we receive from our bosses. What is it that we are willing to work so hard for — what is it that we desire? It's happiness and well-being. But some people begin to cling intensely to the money they accumulate and gradually forget that the original objective of undergoing all that work and forbearance was to attain happiness. The principal objective becomes the acquisition of wealth, and if they don't obtain it, they may even kill themselves if they lose their job or means of income. The purpose of accumulating wealth is to be happy, but the accumulation of wealth alone is not happiness. Our priorities become mixed up. We become slaves to this accumulation and we come to value that even more than our lives. If this happens, we will face many difficulties.

Sustaining One's Nature Through Devotion

The second verse reads:

Just as devotion's taught to be the head of meditation:
Continually this meditator supplicates the guru,
Who opens up the doorway to the trove of pith instructions.
Please bless me so that uncontrived devotion may well forth.

The omniscient Longchenpa³⁵ said:

With longing faith, supplicate and meditate on the guru.
With respectful faith, exert yourself in the Three Jewels' Dharma.
With confident faith, meditate on the yidam.
With inspired faith, rest in the meaning of dharmata.
With nonconceptual faith, adverse conditions arise as aids.

Rangjung Dorje³⁶ said:

From spontaneous faith, the ultimate meaning arises.

In the snow lands of Tibet, all lineages speak of the importance of devotion. These two quotations are from the *Nyingma* and Kagyu traditions. Likewise, from the Gelukpa school:

Guru yoga is the principal path. The root of the path is attending the master.

The glorious *Sakyapas* say:

Guru yoga is the path for the sharpest.

All the traditions speak of the importance of devotion. The *sutras*, *tantras*, and *shastras* speak of devotion as the entrance to the path and that which keeps us on it. In the Kagyu lineage we use the term, “The universal panacea.” This refers to a potent medicine that can cure

many diseases. Some people say that it's the expensive substance ginseng — Korean ginseng is very famous — there are varieties that are white, red, and so forth but I'm not sure if this term is really talking about ginseng. Anyway, the phrase refers to medicine that can cure one hundred ills. Devotion is like that.

You've all heard a lot about devotion, so maybe I don't need to say more. In English many translate *mögu* as “devotion,” but I have some doubts about whether this word fully captures the meaning. The Tibetan term is a combination of two words, *möpa* and *güpa*, with two separate meanings. The first part, *möpa*, means feeling inspiration toward, great appreciation or longing for something. The second word, *güpa*, means respect. Faith (Tib. *depa*) and respect are a bit different. Faith is more like a feeling; it's described as a mental state. Respect is not limited to a mental feeling; it is more active. It's not just faith, but has a sort of energy that is expressed through action. The best example of this is seen in the life of Milarepa.

Milarepa killed thirty-five people with black magic. In some biographies it says that he killed a few people even before killing the thirty-five through his spells, but the most well-known version of his life story is that he killed thirty-five. Probably no one here has killed anyone — that is rare and doesn't just casually happen. Anyway, having killed the thirty-five people, intense regret arose. He came to realize that Dharma practice was the only way he would be able to

atone for these acts. Within him an inspired interest, a yearning or longing for Dharma dawned. He didn't wish to practice casually for the rest of his life; he wanted to practice seriously, for liberation in his very lifetime. For he knew that if he did not attain liberation, he would certainly be reborn in the hell realms on account of the heavy negative karma he had accumulated.

Milarepa understood that the translator Marpa of Lhodrak was the only one who had the pith instructions that would lead to liberation in one lifetime. Therefore, he did exactly as Marpa commanded, never just sitting idly with folded hands, feigning faith and refuge in the guru. He followed Marpa's orders exactly, with no concern for life or limb. There is no comparison between his longing and respect for Dharma and ours.

Regarding longing or *möpa*, we think it's fine if we practice, but think that we'll be okay if we don't. Unlike Milarepa, we don't feel that we absolutely must practice Dharma, that there's no way to not practice. We lack that intense yearning or longing. Regarding respect or *güpa*, if we don't have the longing as described above as a basis, having respect for someone else will be difficult. We'd just think: "He's human or she's human, and so am I. Why should I pay respect to them?" If one cannot see any critical necessity for it, why would one feel the need to respect another? There would be no reason to.

For these reasons, longing and respect are more than mere faith. Having longing and respect means that we think of nothing but the guru, and regard all that occurs as the guru's blessings. This type of longing and respect can develop, but it probably takes meeting some difficulty or negative circumstance for it to be engendered. I think that if we don't face some problems, and things are always pleasant it probably won't develop.

The degree to which one has this keen aspiration depends on the power of one's mind and mental capacity. I think there are varying degrees of longing and respect — greater, middling, and lesser. In a common context when there is a genuine connection between two people there might be something like respect and longing, even if it's not authentic devotion in the context of Dharma. There can be some degree of this when we appreciate, long for, or rejoice in someone's positive qualities, in fact we should feel that sometimes. Conversely, if we are always seeing and pointing out others' faults, nothing good will come from that. Even if someone has but one positive quality, we need to appreciate it, rejoice in it and long for it. If we can aspire to train like that, slowly we can develop the respectful longing that allows us to see people as true buddhas. If we don't lay the foundation for this in an ordinary way, it would be difficult to instantly call up or generate this higher longing and respect. This more highly developed longing-respect can't be invited into our beings by playing music and burning

incense the way we do when we invite yidams in a ritual. This higher aspect of reverence is developed gradually through habituation. We don't want to be someone who can't appreciate or accept positive qualities in others. That type of mindset must be done away with. There isn't anyone who does not have at least one good quality. We have to keep training ourselves to see more and more positive traits in people. If we can do this, then gradually a profound longing and respect will arise.

I have spoken about this before. When we follow a guru, we do so because we appreciate the guru's qualities, not because we focus on the guru's faults. First we have to investigate to see if the guru is qualified or not. Once you have decided that he or she is qualified to some degree, you follow them. Once you're following them, you shouldn't look to expose their faults, you should express their qualities. Do your best to copy or develop these qualities in your being. Conversely, even if the guru is authentic, if you are always searching for faults in the guru, you will find them. Even if the guru is free of any particular error, you will see errors through the power of your own conceptual projections and your way of viewing him or her.

It is said that the guru is like a mirror for the student. For example, if the student harbors great desire and attachment, they will see great desire and attachment in the guru. We can see this in ordinary ways.

Sometimes if we are angry, we project our anger onto others and think that they are expressing anger. It's important that we think about this carefully. The relationship between a guru and a student is not easy — there are a lot of possibilities for trouble. This relationship should be cultivated gradually.

To simplify the matter, we can talk about the guru or spiritual friend as a good friend. Not a friend in a worldly sense, but a friend in the context of Dharma. First, we need to search for a good friend that we can trust, someone who will stick by us no matter how bad things get. Then we can slowly come to see this person as something greater, such as a bodhisattva or buddha.

To develop longing-respect, we need to have strong appreciation for the guru's qualities of body, speech, and mind and wish to develop these qualities in our beings. If we have this true longing, we won't need to bother with all those other busy practices; through this alone, one will be able to enjoy the exalted *bhumis*. Sometimes it is said that for one who wishes to realize buddhahood, practicing only the path of longing-respect is sufficient. The principal thing that we need is for the qualities of body, speech, and mind of the qualified guru whom we are following to enter into our beings. That is the main point. For that to happen, we need veneration, an appreciation and intense yearning. If these are nurtured, the guru's qualities will gradually be transmitted to us.

Understanding this, Dakpo Daö Zhonnu [Gampopa] remarked in the presence of a gathering of Je Gomtsul,³⁷ the *siddha* Khampa Ü-se [the First Karmapa], and other disciples: “I have already undergone countless difficulties for your sake. Therefore, you will not have to weather such hardships; for you, supplication will be enough.” Further, the incomparable *siddha* Götsangpa said: “How did I realize Dharma? It was not through mere intellectual understanding. I put into practice all that was arduous. I meditated merging all adverse conditions with practice. How did qualities arise? Not by my merely wishing for them, but by mixing them with my being. The best kind of auspiciousness has been put into place. I performed all the arduous tasks and now, none of you will have to do so. I have arranged it so that all you disciples will have things easy. Supplication will be enough for you.”

There is great meaning in this. In general, the Kagyu forefathers practiced, followed their masters and prepared things for us during that time. For example, if it were like a meal to be eaten, they have already prepared everything, and it’s all ready for us to eat. The conditions have been provided. But from the perspective of our responsibility, it does still depend on our own diligence.

The Kagyu gurus can’t do it for us.

Sustaining One's Nature Through Nondistractedness

The third verse is related to [shamatha](#):

As nondistractedness is taught to be the core of meditation,
This meditator just remains, not altering at all
The fresh and pristine essence of whatever thought occurs.
Please bless me to be free from thinking there's a "meditation."

The first line reads, "As nondistractedness is taught to be the core of meditation." In general, there are two types of meditation: resting meditation and analytical meditation. In Lord Tsongkhapa's³⁸ *Great Insight* and other works, as well as in the collection of [prajnaparamita](#) source texts and commentaries, it is stated that [vipashyana](#) is analytical meditation and shamatha is resting meditation.

For the [Mantrayana](#) practice of the five stages and so forth, it is said that one definitely needs the resting meditation of the prajnaparamita. To do these tantric practices, one's mind must be inseparable from shamatha. Shamatha is also said to be present during vipashyana. It is further said that shamatha is the root of all paths, both worldly and transcendent. If one does not have shamatha, one will not be able to progress to higher levels of any path. Even for the worldly paths — for the first, second, third dhyanas, etc. — one progresses due to the power of shamatha and samadhi. Merely having good intentions or

holding positive views will not allow one to progress. For one-pointed samadhi, one definitely needs shamatha. Without that, it would be very difficult to ascend through the higher paths.

One-pointed shamatha is critical, but these modern times are very disturbing, and some say that due to the current busyness and distraction, there is no way to accomplish shamatha. They say that we should rather recite the names of buddhas, recite [Amitabha's](#) name and perform rituals and aspirations to be born in [Sukhavati](#); other than that, there is no recourse. The time for accomplishing shamatha has passed.

This is the situation we find ourselves in, and we can see why some would say this. I once wondered, if Milarepa was living in the 21st century and I showed him an iPhone, an iPad and a computer and asked him what he thought of them, maybe he wouldn't be impressed with the first one. Maybe he'd find the second one a bit interesting and then if I gave him the computer, maybe he'd be sucked in for an hour or two because there are so many distractions these days; it's very difficult for the mind to remain one-pointedly.

There are said to be two ways of practicing shamatha. One method is to go to an isolated place — a location where there is little sound from humans and barking dogs — and practice shamatha remaining in solitude. The other way, as practiced by our guru forefathers, is to

place our awareness on the resting mind when it is resting and on the moving mind when it is moving. Whether you are eating, going here and there, or working, you keep the mind on whatever you are doing, leaving it as it is. In this 21st century, we need to be able to work with the latter method — the former is too difficult. There are fewer and fewer places of solitude. With the proliferation of entertaining diversions, in the future we will probably not be able to find isolation unless we go the peak of Mt. Everest. Even if you do go to an unpopulated place, all of the sudden, your phone may ring.

The main point is that “nondistractedness is taught to be the core of meditation.” This means the same as saying “mindfulness is the guardian of meditation” or “mindfulness is the sentry of meditation.” Maintaining mindfulness and awareness while meditating is very important.

There are various ways of applying nondistractedness. We shouldn't try to create some exalted state in the mind. Whatever thoughts or emotions arise in the mind, while they are playing out merely recognize that they are there; merely be aware of them. Other than resting like that, there is nothing else to do.

When thoughts or strong afflictions arise in the mind, don't look at the object of the affliction but at the essence of the subject experiencing it. What is the difference between the object that arises and the subject for which it arises? The thought or affliction is the object and

mind is the subject for which it arises. You merely need to be awake or aware of the subjective essence of mind and not stray from that. You must maintain watchfulness. If you don't forget or stray from this watchfulness, that is meditation. If you forget or stray from it, meditation is lost. This is important to understand.

There is an example about throwing a rock at a lion and at a dog. If you throw a stone toward a lion, the lion will not be interested in the stone but will attack the person who threw it. Having taken care of the source, another stone will not be cast! But if you throw a stone toward a dog, the dog will run after the stone. And if you throw another one, it will run after that one, too. This can go on and on. Similarly, if you follow after random concepts — be they good, bad, virtuous, or unvirtuous — thoughts will do nothing but increase. By sustaining recognition of the essence from which they arose — without fixating on whether they are positive or negative and not straying, this is using mindfulness to sustain the essence. That is the proper way. Then even when strong afflictions arise, by sustaining the essence of the mind, the afflictions will lose their power and will gradually become quiet.

Some people think that maintaining mindfulness means resting upon whatever thought or emotion has just arisen. They think that their meditation is interrupted if another thought or emotion suddenly arises and interferes with resting on the initial one. There is a sense

of not being able to sustain the previous thought and being unable to rest with the next one. However, we must allow these thoughts or emotions, the objects of our awareness, to change — it doesn't matter how many come. The main point is to not let the mindfulness of them wane. Whatever arises, just continuously maintain mindfulness of sustaining the essence. As long as you can continually sustain this, all is okay. It would be difficult to continuously maintain mindfulness of any one particular thought that has arisen. But my waxing eloquently about this is not going to be of benefit to you. It would be better for you to receive these teachings from a guru with experience, who holds the pith instructions for this practice.

Sustaining One's Nature in the Essence of Thought

The next verse is related to vipashyana.

Just as it's taught, the essence of all thought is dharmakaya,
Not anything at all and yet arising in all ways,
Appearing for this meditator as unceasing play.
Bless me to know samsara and nirvana are not two.

In general, there are many explanations for how the essence of thought is dharmakaya. The essence of thought, or the nature of thought, is emptiness. This is so because if the nature of all phenomena is emptiness, then the nature of thoughts must also be emptiness. Here, we

give emptiness another name and call it dharmakaya. This is one way to understand it.

Another approach is working with the two aspects of a thought or emotion as it arises. One aspect is the clear-knowingness, and the other is its expression. For example, take the essence of anger: that essence contains a clear-knowing component, and there is the component which functions as the affliction of anger. But in essence, these two are indivisible. In practice, we need to rely on this clear-knowing aspect until we attain buddhahood, but the aspect that is the affliction of anger needs to be abandoned. From the perspective of the essence, there is no separating out the anger from the clear-knowing and abandoning it.

For example, in a river there is sediment and clear water. If you try to just pour out the sediment, you pour out the clear water, too. It can also be viewed in the same way as a wave arising out of a body of water. Though there is a difference in appearance or function between the body of water and the wave, both the body of water and the wave are, in actuality, the same water. As I said before, we need to place our awareness on the clear-knowing aspect of the thought as it arises. Then gradually, a sense of being able to analyze through discriminating *prajna* will develop.

In vipashyana, there is both analytical meditation and resting meditation. When Jetsün Milarepa first offered his meditative realization to Lord Marpa, he mentioned that beginners should, at first, principally practice analytical meditation and then proceed to resting meditation. That is the general means of progression, but some meditators of highest capacity don't need to start with analytical meditation. They can practice resting meditation from the outset and attain realization through devotion — it can be very easy for them, although not for the rest of us.

When practicing vipashyana, one looks into the nature of mind and investigates using discriminating prajna in this process. When we recite, “The essence of all thought is dharmakaya,” we understand that the nature of thought is dharmakaya or that the clear-knowing component of that thought is dharmakaya. In the secret Mantrayana, the clear-knowing is sometimes called the luminosity of mind. It is also said that the nature of mind is luminosity; this clear-knowing is related to that. Here, we don't differentiate between the thought and the luminosity. They are not different; their essence is inseparable. This corresponds to the second way of looking at it. I think that this is how the Seventh Gyalwang Karmapa, Chödrak Gyatso, talks about it. The Eighth Karmapa comes more from the prajnaparamita perspective where the nature of thought is dharmakaya. I don't really feel I know much about this so I prefer not to say more.

It says in this prayer that nondistractedness is the core of meditation. Further, it is said that loving kindness, compassion, and bodhicitta are the activity of meditation, and propriety and conscience are the armor of meditation. The purpose, function, or ensuing activity of meditating on this path is working for the benefit of all sentient beings. This is very important since we practice the Mahayana. Some say that in whatever they do, bodhisattvas must think only of the benefit of others and some say that as a bodhisattva one has to accomplish benefit for both self and others. Some say that one needs to primarily work for one's own benefit — it's not that there is no working for the benefit of others, but the main focus is on oneself. This is also a possibility.

One example I've used before is this: if a family's home catches fire, when the woman of the house sees this, she may run for the door out of fright. But when she reaches the threshold and has one foot outside and the other still inside, she may recall that there are other family members still inside, and return to help them escape with her.

We need to be like that. There is a saying that compassion is for the benefit of others and that prajna is for attaining complete buddhahood. Bodhisattvas step with the right leg thinking that they must attain the state of buddhahood for themselves, and the left leg needs to remain behind for the benefit of others. This is not striving to work

exclusively for the benefit of others — that would be a bit difficult, and there isn't anyone who thinks only of benefiting others with absolutely no concern for him or herself, so there is no point in pretending otherwise. However we can always try to have the motivation, because we are capable of thinking that way.

For example, if you have ten apples, there's no need to eat all ten. If you're stingy and keep them all for yourself, you will find that some of them will rot before you can eat them. If you eat one and give the others to various people, later maybe one of those people will get some oranges and give you one. Also, even though you only gave away one apple, you might receive various fruit in return — although you shouldn't hope for that. In any case, there is a purpose in sharing like this. Whether we are reflecting on something, eating a meal, or putting on clothes, during these activities, we should not forget other sentient beings. At all times we must keep them in the forefront of our minds, as our main focus. In all situations, we must never forget to be motivated to work for the happiness and benefit beings. We meditate and meditate, but what is the result we are hoping for? It is to be able to benefit others — that's it. It's very important that we manifest this outcome. In short, loving kindness and compassion are the activity of meditation.

Sustaining One's Nature by Setting the Goal

The prayer ends with an aspiration:

In all my future lives, may I never be apart
From the authentic gurus and embrace the dharma's glory.
May I perfect the qualities of all the paths and levels,³⁹
And may I swiftly realize the state of Vajradhara.

This verse is straightforward, and easily understood.

Part Four:

Afterword

Here, with the two Kyabje Rinpoches⁴⁰ presiding, we have a gathering of tulkus, khenpos, acharyas, the sangha, and the faithful lay people. All these vajra brothers and sisters have congregated here in one mandala to joyfully partake of a banquet of true Dharma. We are all very fortunate. In this and also in our coming lives, I hope we can again and again enjoy such a feast of Dharma and beckon forth a fortunate era which will be of great benefit to others. I am making these aspirations to the best of my ability and you all should also make such noble prayers in this holy place, on this special occasion of the Month of the Miracles and in the presence of all the lay and monastic men and women gathered here. It is said that aspirations made in the presence of both men and women will be accomplished and, that aspirations made in the presence of a retinue composed of male and female fully ordained ones as well as male and female lay people, will be accomplished quicker. And this is the situation here — the complete retinue has assembled, men and women have gathered, teachers and students

have come together. This enhances the prayers' power, expediency, and secures their intended outcomes. All of you have formulated aspirations in such a vast manner.

From the bottom of my heart I request your patience for any mistakes, confusion, omissions or additions. If there was any small part of what I said that was beneficial, may you take it with you, and I pray that it may lead to all the best kinds of well-being, happiness, and auspiciousness. Thank you.

Auxiliary Comments

by the Gyalwang Karmapa During the Teachings

During the formal teachings the Gyalwang Karmapa occasionally paused to discuss topics that were indirectly related to *The Short Vajradhara Prayer*. For that reason they are included separately here.

Offering Tea or Food

Reciting a prayer to offer tea or food is very important. It clears the obscuration that comes from taking tea and food bought by sponsors. Every day we monastics drink tea and eat food provided by offerings received on behalf of the living and the dead. If we do a prayer and visualize offering the food and drink to the Three Jewels and our gurus, this removes the obscuration that may otherwise arise from taking this type of tea and food on that day. Each time we drink tea and eat food, we can clear this obscuration through prayer. Therefore, it's very important to offer food and drink in this way.

Concerning the Grand Mahakala Ritual and Vajra Dancing

Before the teachings we had the year-end Mahakala Ritual and the New Year's celebration. The Mahakala puja was very special for me. It has been twelve years since I left Tibet and arrived in India, and during this time, I have not had the opportunity to actually participate in an elaborate year-end [Grand Mahakala Ritual](#). Of course since I stay at Gyutö, we have instituted the tradition of performing a ritual there, but we haven't had the occasion to do the Grand Mahakala Ritual in such an elaborate fashion. So I am pleased to have been able to participate in this.

The text we used was written by the Sixth Karmapa, called *The Great Activity Ritual of the Protector*. It is the most extensive text pertaining to this ritual. For some generations, many prayers in the stages of this practice had fallen out of use, and I feel fortunate that we were able to reinstate them. I am also pleased that we were able to perform the protector ritual in a very complete manner, including recitation, practice, and activity. We started with the empowerment and then recited the mantra for two days. Then we did aspects of the ritual referred to as *drup pa*, or practice, and this was followed by the activity component. Conducting the ritual so completely was very rare, even in the past.

And finally I feel that we are very fortunate that Kyabje Jamgön Rinpoche and Kyabje Gyaltsab Rinpoche both actually performed during the vajra dancing — it was wonderful. Jamgön Rinpoche's participation came about at the last-minute. By the time I asked him, there were only five or six days to prepare for the first act, the subduing of the ground. Further, having completed one or two weeks of retreat, Kyabje Gyaltsab Rinpoche presided over the ritual as the [Vajra Master](#) and, again, participated in the vajra dancing. This was all a noble example for us. Ritual is about more than just copying what someone else does. This shows that these practices are critical factors of Secret Mantra practice. All of this effort demonstrates that the traditions of the previous awareness-holders traditions are sacred and important. Again, for all these reasons I feel we are all very fortunate.

I also want to say something about the [Vajra Dances](#), which may be helpful for those watching. Usually, most who come consider it to be mere entertainment. And these days, when the monasteries are performing the dances, they will first send out invitations telling people to come and see the performance. This is a bit strange. Because of this, people may consider it to be ordinary amusement and just come for the show. I understand that in Japan they have traditional religious dances where everyone — even the spectators — is supposed to meditate. Now what they meditate on, I have no idea. There are requirements to be an observer; they have their own practice to do.

Sometimes I think it would be good if we conducted the ceremony like that.

Going for Refuge

There are two ways of going for refuge: merely going for refuge and taking the vow of refuge. When you recall the qualities of Buddha and say: “I go for refuge in the Buddha,” thinking that you are doing so out of whatever [momentary] interest, that is merely going for refuge. When actually taking the vow of refuge, you think and say that you are going for refuge in the Buddha, and you take a vow to do so for the rest of your life. You think this and maintain the thought of going for refuge throughout your life. The difference between these two is the approach the individual holds in mind.

Refuge is considered the foundation for all other vows. I think one needs to actually take the vow of refuge for it to serve as such a support. I don’t think that just thinking about and repeating the refuge prayer in a casual way as in, merely going for refuge will serve the purpose.

If one just casually goes for refuge, maybe there is no vow to adhere to. If you have taken the vow of refuge, however, in order that the vow not become impaired but becomes stable, you should search out favorable conditions and abandon unfavorable ones. Usually at this

point, some advice about this and other matters is imparted, but we don't have much time now.

As it is said: “In the case of an illness, one needs to diagnose it, remove its cause, attain a healthy state, and take medicine.” In short, we can consider the Buddha as a doctor and ourselves as a patient. The doctor gives us medicine to cure our illness and its underlying condition, and we must take the medicine just as the doctor instructs us. If we take the medicine accordingly, the illness will be cured — there will be benefit. Conversely, if we don't use the medicine according to the doctor's orders, it won't help. The path to liberation taught by the Buddha is the true Dharma. The reason for and goal of taking refuge is to be able to practice this properly. If we take refuge but don't practice and just pass time while pretending to be a serious Buddhist, there will be no benefit. It would probably be better if you told people that you weren't Buddhist. Sometimes people pretending to be serious Buddhists make trouble in the name of Buddhism, and there's no point to that whatsoever.

I'd like to share one example. Suppose a person goes to a temple and prostrates in front of a statue of Buddha while reciting: “I take refuge in the Buddha.” But what if his aspiration is that he wishes his sworn enemy to be seriously harmed. “May he suffer! May he die! May his home and family be annihilated!” What if someone prayed for some-

thing like that? It looks like he is going for refuge in Buddha, but he clearly isn't practicing Dharma. His actions, motivation, and thinking are actually contradictory to Dharma. I'm not saying everyone acts like this, but I do hear about such things all the time. And this, of course, is inappropriate. We don't go for refuge to flatter or ingratiate ourselves to Buddha. In short, it's important that we be sure that we are taking refuge as a means to reverse the difficulties we've fallen into and to be able to be of benefit.

Acknowledgments

Our heartfelt thanks go to the Gyalwang Karmapa for graciously granting these teachings. We also would like to thank Ringu Tulku Rinpoche and Lama Eric Trinle Thaye for their translations. Much appreciation to Annie Dibble who edited the transcript; to Jo Gibson who prepared the vast majority of the glossary and the endnotes; to Maureen McNicholas for the final proofreading and for preparing the book for printing by [KTD Publications](#); and to Beata Stepien for overseeing the project, designing the cover art, and preparing the eBook. Lastly, we would like to extend our gratitude to everyone else who contributed in any way and to [Dharma Treasure](#) for their continued cooperation and support.

Glossary of Names and Terms

AMITABHA [Skt.]: The buddha who resides in the Pure Realm of **Sukhavati**. He is particularly important in the Pure Land Buddhist traditions of China and Japan. Devotees believe that through recitation of the name of Amitabha Buddha, they will attain rebirth in his pure land of Sukhavati. Tibetan Buddhism also has aspiration prayers for rebirth in Sukhavati and meditation practices based on Amitabha Buddha.

ASPIRATION PRAYER: A prayer in which one's virtue is given direction by wishing for certain positive outcomes to arise.

AURAL LINEAGE: (Tib. *nyen gyü*) A type of transmission where the teachings are only spoken from master to disciple and not committed to writing. They are sometimes referred to as “whispered lineages.”

BHIKSHUS, BHIKSHUNIS, UPASIKAS, UPASIKIS [Skt.]: Fully ordained monks and nuns (bhikshu and bikshunis) as well as male and female practitioners holding lay precepts (upasikas and upasikis). These comprise the “four pillars of **Sangha**” and it is said that Buddhist

practices performed by or in presence of the “four pillars” are more effective. See Gyalwang Karmapa’s explanation in the [Afterword](#).

BHUMIS [Skt.]: The ten progressive levels of realization attained by a bodhisattva on the path to buddhahood.

BODHGAYA: The town in current day Bihar, India, where the “vajra seat” is located. This is where all buddhas of this aeon — including Buddha Shakyamuni — are said to attain enlightenment.

BODHICHITTA [Skt.]: The wish to achieve buddhahood to bring all sentient beings to perfect enlightenment.

BODHISATTVA [Skt.]: A person who has roused bodhichitta and taken the vow to achieve buddhahood for the sake of all beings. Though it can refer to an ordinary person who has taken the bodhisattva vow, most often it refers to beings who have developed realization of the nature of truth.

BUDDHAHOOD: The state of complete enlightenment, when all the obscurations have been removed and wisdom is fully developed.

BUDDHAS OF THE THREE TIMES: All buddhas of the past, present, and future.

CHAKRASAMVARA [Skt.]: One of the main *yidams* of the Kagyu tradition.

DAKPO KAGYU: A way to refer to any Kagyu lineage that passed through Gampopa.

DEITY: Usually synonymous with a *yidam* — an expression of enlightened qualities that is used as a focus for meditation.

DHARMA [Skt.]: (Tib. *chö*) A word with many connotations, most commonly referring to the teachings of the Buddha. There is further the Dharma of the scriptures — the texts — and the Dharma of the realization — the resulting wisdom from studying and practicing.

DHARMAKAYA: [Skt.] (Tib. *chöku*) One of the three bodies of Buddha. It is enlightenment itself, nonconceptual wisdom beyond reference point. See also *three kayas*.

DHARMA PROTECTORS: (Skt. *dharmapala*) Usually wrathful emanations of bodhisattvas whose charge is to protect Buddhist practitioners and perform awakened activity. They include the many forms of Mahakala and others. One of the three roots which are additional objects of refuge in *Vajrayana* Buddhism.

DORJE CHANG TUNGMA [Tib.]: This is how Tibetans refer to the prayer that is the topic of this talk, translated here as *The Short Vajra-*

dhara Prayer. See the Gyalwang Karmapa's explanation at the beginning of his teachings.

DORJE DEN [Tib.]: Meaning "vajra seat," the term refers to the site of the awakening of all buddhas of this aeon. It has come to also be how Tibetans refer to the town that surrounds the vajra seat, Bodhgaya. See *Bodhgaya*.

EIGHT PRACTICE LINEAGES: These are the eight great traditions that existed in Tibet: the Nyingma, the Kadampa, the Path and Fruit tradition of the Sakyas, the Marpa Kagyu, the Shangpa Kagyu; the Six Yogas of Kalachakra, Shije, and Chö, and the Nyendrup tradition.

FIELD OF ACCUMULATION: This refers to real or imagined objects of refuge in whose presence we accumulate virtue.

FOUR DHARMAS OF GAMPOPA, THE: Four aspirations that summarize the Dharma path from the beginning to the end: 1) May my mind turn to the Dharma. 2) May Dharma progress along the path. 3) May the path remove confusion. 4) May confusion dawn as wisdom.

FOUR TRANSMISSIONS: This refers to the four transmissions that Telopa received and passed on to Naropa. One list consists of: 1) illusory body and transference, 2) dream yoga, 3) luminosity, and 4) inner heat. Another list has: 1) mahamudra, 2) the father tantras, 3) the mother tantras, and 4) luminosity.

GANAPATI: Hindu deity, also called Ganesh, is the elephant-headed son of the Hindu god Shiva. He is associated with wealth and prosperity.

GRAND MAHAKALA RITUAL: (Tib. *Gutor*) The annual six days of extensive Mahakala practices performed in most monastic institutions at the end of the Tibetan year. Their purpose is to make vast offerings to the **protectors** and to clear away obstacles for the teachings and all living beings in the year to come. The main protector deity in the Karma Kamtsang is Mahakala Bernakchen.

GURU [Skt.]: A spiritual teacher. One of the three roots which are additional objects of refuge in **Vajrayana** Buddhism.

JETSÜN [Tib.]: An honorific title for males. Jetsünma is the equivalent title for females.

KADAMPA [Tib.]: A Tibetan Buddhist school, founded in the 11th century by Dromtönpa. This lineage was a reform movement based on the teachings which Atisha brought to Tibet from India and emphasized the stages of the path to liberation (*lam rim*) and mind training (*lo jong*). Under the leadership of Je Tsongkhapa, the Kadampa school morphed into what we now know as the Geluk tradition.

KAGYU MONLAM: Annual gatherings of the Kagyu monastics and lay practitioners, held at Bodhgaya, India, and in many other coun-

tries around the world. The event is a week-long celebration of teachings and includes the chanting of various aspiration prayers, (Tib. *monlam*) for the benefit of all beings. Website: kagyumonlam.org

KAGYU MONLAM BOOK, THE: A collection of the prayers recited during the annual *Kagy Monlam Chenmo* in Bodhgaya. It was compiled by His Holiness the Seventeenth Karmapa and has been translated into many languages, including Mandarin, Hindi, Nepali, English, French, German, Polish, Russian et al. It is used at international Kagyu Monlams throughout the world. It is available for download at dharmaebooks.org.

KALACHAKRA TANTRA: One of the most well-known works of the highest yoga tantra distinction. It contains a detailed presentation of the universe.

KARMA KAMTSANG [Tib.]: A School of Tibetan Buddhism. It is usually taken as synonymous with the Karma Kagyu lineage, headed by the Karmapas. The Seventeenth Karmapa has explained that this term predates “Karma Kagyu.”

KHAM: A province of greater Tibet, sometimes referred to as Eastern Tibet.

KHAMPA: A person from Kham.

KHECHARI [Skt.]: A being that is often considered to be similar to a dakini. The realm of the khecharis is a type of pure land that realized beings can travel to without leaving behind any physical remains.

MAHAMUDRA [Skt.]: (Tib. *chakgya chenpo*) Literally, the “great seal” meaning that all phenomena are sealed by the primordially perfect true nature. This form of meditation is traced back to Saraha (10th century) and was passed down in the Kagyu school through Marpa. This meditative transmission emphasizes perceiving mind directly.

MAHAMUDRA LINEAGE: There are both older and more recent lineages of Mahamudra. In the Karma Kagyu tradition, two lineages of Mahamudra are recognized, both of which were received by Marpa the Translator. The older one proceeds as follows: Vajradhara, Lodrö Rinchen, Saraha, Nagarjuna, Shavaripa, Maitripa, Marpa, and so forth. The more recent lineage sequence begins with the five forefathers of the school: Telopa (988–1069 CE), the Indian yogi who received mahamudra instructions from Vajradhara; Naropa (1016–1100 CE), who perfected the methods of accelerated enlightenment described in his Six Yogas of Naropa; Marpa (1012–1097 CE), the first Tibetan in the lineage, who travelled to India and brought these instructions back to Tibet; Milarepa (1040–1123 CE), poet and master who attained enlightenment in a single lifetime; and Gampopa, Milarepa’s most important student, who integrated Atisha’s Kadampa teachings and

Telopa's Mahamudra teachings into the Kagyu lineage. You can find more information about the Kagyu lineage in the book, *Karmapa: 900 Years*.

MAHASIDDHA [Skt.]: A great adept. A person who has developed deep realization.

MAHAYANA [Skt.]: The “Greater Vehicle.” For this tradition, the goal is not a lesser state of personal liberation from suffering, but complete buddhahood for oneself and all beings. Practitioners of this tradition train in the development of wisdom and compassion and are called bodhisattvas. This term can refer to ordinary beings practicing with this motivation or, perhaps more commonly, to exalted beings who have developed realization. Mahayana practitioners cultivate the two types of bodhichitta. Ultimate bodhichitta is the realization of the emptiness of all phenomena and relative bodhichitta is the wish to attain buddhahood in order to lead all beings without exception to that state.

MANTRAYANA [Skt.]: Another name for *Vajrayana* Buddhism.

NIRMANAKAYA [Skt.]: One of the three kayas or ‘bodies’ of an enlightened being. The *nirmanakaya* (Tib. *tulku*) is the emanation body which manifests and can be seen by all sentient beings. (See also *three kayas*)

NIRVANA [Skt.]: Transcendence of suffering. It can refer to lesser states of liberation up to complete buddhahood, depending on the context.

NYINGMA SCHOOL: The oldest of the four main schools of Vajrayana Buddhism in Tibet.

PITH INSTRUCTION: Teachings that are concise and incisive, as opposed to verbose, that are meant to hasten students' progress along the path.

PRAJNA [Skr.]: (Tib. *sherap*) In Sanskrit it means “fuller knowing” and has connotations of understanding, intelligence, discrimination, and, sometimes, wisdom. Prajna can pertain to understanding of relative phenomena or realization of the ultimate nature. There are progressively deeper levels of prajna that arise from listening, contemplation, and meditation.

PRAJNAPARAMITA: Usually translated as “perfection of wisdom.” It can refer to a quality to be developed, a genre of literature, or an entire tradition of Buddhist practice.

PROPRIETY AND CONSCIENCE: (Tib. *trelyö* and *ngotsha*) These are technical terms with very specific meanings in Buddhism. *Propriety* means avoiding misdeeds on account of what others consider proper,

and *conscience* is avoiding misdeeds based upon what you consider to be correct.

RIMÉ [Tib.]: A nonsectarian movement that began in the mid-19th century that recognizes the value of all schools of Buddhism.

RUMTEK: The name of the village in Sikkim where the Sixteenth Karmapa's monastery is located, and thus a shorthand way of referring to the monastery itself. An original smaller monastery nearby was one of three built in Sikkim in the 17th century on the instructions of Wangchuk Dorje, the Ninth Karmapa. The other two monasteries are located in Ralang, near the monastic seat of Gyaltzab Rinpoche, and in Phodong of Northern Sikkim.

SAKYAPAS: Followers of the Sakya tradition, one of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

SAMSARA [Skt.]: (Tib. *korwa*) The never-ending cycle of birth-death-rebirth driven by the afflictions, especially attachment, aggression and ignorance, characterized as an “ocean of suffering” which has to be crossed in order to reach nirvana.

SANGHA [Skt.]: Generally, the community of Buddhists, but when speaking of Sangha in terms of the **Three Jewels** as objects of refuge, it refers to those who have attained realization. It can also refer to the monastics of the Buddhist tradition.

SECRET MANTRA: Another name for the **VAJRAYANA**.

SHAMATHA [Skt.]: (Tib. *shine*) The basic meditation of resting the mind. The main purpose of shamatha meditation is to settle or tame the mind as a basis for further meditations.

SHAstra [Skt.]: An authoritative treatise on a particular Buddhist point or text.

SIDDHA [Skt.]: (Tib. *drubtop*) A practitioner who has accomplished siddhis.

SIDDHI [Skt.]: Accomplishment that comes through meditation practice. Ordinary siddhis are those of the mundane level, such as swift walking and invisibility. The supreme siddhi is the nonconceptual wisdom.

SUKHAVATI [Skt.]: (Tib. *dewachen*) The pure land of **Amitabha** Buddha.

SUTRA: A written record of the oral teachings by or sanctioned by the Buddha.

TANTRA: Teachings given by the buddhas in various forms at different times and locations that emphasize esoteric methods to quickly

realize awakening. In the New Translation school, there are four classes of tantra: the action, conduct, yoga, and highest yoga tantra.

TERMA [Tib.]: means “treasure” and refers to either texts or sacred artifacts hidden by Guru Rinpoche and his consort, Yeshe Tsogyal, to be revealed at an appropriate time by “treasure revealers” or tertöns. Another type is a mind terma (*gongter*) which is “discovered” in the mindstream of the tertön.

TERTÖN [Tib.]: A “treasure revealer” who discovers a **terma** — a hidden text or ritual support — that is considered specifically relevant to the time and place in which it is revealed.

THREE JEWELS: The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha — objects of refuge for all Buddhists.

THREE KAYAS [Skt.]: Three aspects or “bodies” of buddhahood. The first is the **dharmakaya** which is formless nonconceptual wisdom. The next two are sometimes called “form bodies.” The sambhogakaya, or enjoyment body, is visible only for beings on high bodhisattva levels who have pure perception. The **nirmanakaya**, or emanation body, can be perceived by ordinary beings with impure perception. An example of a nirmanakaya would be Buddha Shakyamuni; an example of a sambhogakaya would be a realized beings’ vision of Avalokiteshvara.

TORMA [Tib.]: A sculpted representation of a yidam or an offering used in a vajrayana ritual.

VAJRA DANCES: (Tib. *cham*) Ritual dances performed as part of some vajrayana rituals.

VAJRADHARA [Skt.]: (Tib. *dorje chang*) A name for the primordial buddha who is a personification of enlightenment. Certain highly advanced beings have received teachings directly from this manifestation of awakening.

VAJRA MASTER: A qualified **Vajrayana** master with spiritual authority who is empowered to transmit the Vajrayana teachings and who may lead such practices in a group assembly.

VAJRAYANA: The “vajra vehicle” — *vajra* meaning “indestructible.” This class of teachings are said to be a swift path, boasting many skillful means, that entail fewer difficulties, and are meant to be practiced by those with sharp faculties. Some of these techniques include visualizations, mantra recitation, and working with elements of the subtle body.

VIPASHYANA [Skt.]: (Tib. *lhaktong*) Insight meditation. In this practice, one investigates the nature of mind and appearances to gain insight into the nature of reality.

YIDAM [Tib.]: A meditational deity — an expression of enlightened qualities that is used as a focus for meditation. One of the three roots which are additional objects of refuge in **Vajrayana** Buddhism.

YOGI: A great meditator who has developed realization.

Endnotes

1. The author of this prayer, Bengar Jampel Zangpo, was born in the late 14th or early 15th century. He was a close disciple of the Sixth Karmapa, Tongwa Dönden, and received the full Kagyu lineage transmissions and teachings, including those of mahamudra and the six yogas of Naropa from the Karmapa. Following his root guru's instructions one-pointedly, he became highly realized. *The Short Vajradhara Prayer* is a tribute to his accomplishments and is chanted by Karma Kagyu practitioners all over the world.
2. Geshe Langri Thangpa (1054–1123) is a [Kadampa](#) master and the author of the famous text: *The Eight Verses of Training the Mind* (see [Gyalwang Karmapa's commentary on that text](#)).
3. Telopa was an Indian mahasiddha, and a forefather of the Kagyu lineage. He is famous for his direct encounter with Vajradhara and for his profound instructions such as *The Ganges Mahamudra*. He was the teacher of Naropa.
4. Naropa was an Indian mahasiddha and a great scholar. Against his parents' wishes he became a monk and studied at Nalanda University. One day a dakini appeared and told him that although he was greatly learned, he didn't understand the deeper meaning of the teachings. She prompted

him to find Telopa. After many hardships, he found Telopa and studied with him for 12 years. He received the four transmissions from Telopa and, having practiced, he achieved mahamudra. He is best known for his compilation on the six yogas: inner heat, illusory body, dream yoga, luminosity, transference, and the bardo practice. He was one of the teachers of Marpa Lotsawa.

5. Also known as Marpa Lotsawa (Marpa the Translator), Marpa Chökyi Lodrö first trained as a translator under Drogmi Yeshe (993-1050 CE), and then traveled three times to India and four times to Nepal in search of Buddhist teachings. He is said to have studied with a hundred and eight masters and yogis, but his principal teachers were Naropa and Maitripa. His best known student was Jetsün Milarepa.

6. Maitripa (1007-1085 CE) was another Indian master who taught mahamudra to Marpa.

7. The Four Great Pillars are the four great students of Marpa Lotsawa: Milarepa, Ngok Chöku Dorje, Tsurton Wangi Dorje, and Metön Tsönpö.

8. Jetsün Milarepa (1040-1123 CE), the most renowned and accomplished of Tibet's tantric yogis, who achieved enlightenment in one lifetime.

9. Rechung Dorje Drakpa (c. 1083/4-1161 CE), known as Rechungpa, was one of the two most important students of Milarepa, and was the founder of the Rechung Nyengyü (the [Aural Lineage](#) of Rechungpa). These teachings are still practiced by the Drukpa Kagyu and by the Zurmang lineage within the Karma Kagyu.

10. Gampopa Sonam Rinchen (1079–1153 CE) was one of the two most important students of Milarepa, and one of the main lineage holders of the Kagyu lineage. Originally a lay person, he trained as a physician and was married with two children. The death of his family during an epidemic led him to become a monk. Under Gampopa, the Kagyu lineage flourished and was taught widely. Many sub-schools were founded by his direct disciples and their students. Gampopa also established the first Kagyu monastery and is known for writing the foundational text *The Ornament of Precious Liberation*.

11. Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye (1813–1899 CE) was an accomplished Tibetan Buddhist scholar, poet, artist, physician, *tertön*. He was one of the most prominent Tibetan Buddhists of the 19th century, and he is credited as one of the founders of the nonsectarian *Rimé* movement, which respected all Buddhist traditions. He was instrumental in preserving Tibetan Buddhist texts from all traditions.

12. Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, Pema Ösel Dongak Lingpa (1820-1892 CE), was a renowned teacher, scholar, and *tertön*. He was a leading figure in the *Rimé* movement and worked with Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye to preserve the teachings of all traditions.

13. Taklung Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (1594-1651 CE)

14. Ling Gesar is the king of the mythical kingdom of Ling whose heroic deeds are celebrated in an epic poem. This poem has been preserved in many different versions in written form and also as an oral tradition in Tibet particularly but also across Central Asia.

15. Treka Drak was the [Kadampa](#) Monastery where Dusum Khyenpa received teachings in the Kadam tradition and also took novice vows as a monk. With other Kadam lamas, he entered into a two-year retreat at Treka Drak, learning the [Chakrasamvara](#) and other tantric lineages in the tradition of Atisha Dipamkara. His teachers were Yol Chöwang, who was a direct disciple of Atisha, and Geshe Trarawa, a disciple of Yol Chöwang.
16. Karma Göñ monastery was founded by the First Karmapa, Dusum Khyenpa, in the 12th century. It is located on the eastern bank of the Dzachu River in Chamdo, eastern Tibet. After Tsurphu near Lhasa became the seat of the Karmapas, Karma Göñ became the temporary seat of the Tai Situpas.
17. Chokgyur Dechen Lingpa (1829-1870) was a contemporary of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye, and a renowned [tertön](#) or “treasure revealer,” who was also a strong proponent of the [Rimé](#) movement.
18. The Six Heart Disciples are commonly called the “Heart Sons,” however the Gyalwang Karmapa has advised translators to use gender-neutral terms where possible.
19. Gyalwa yabse [Tib.] literally means “the victors, the father and sons.”
20. The Shamar Rinpoches:
 1. Drakpa Senge (1283-1349)
 2. Khachö Wangpo (1350-1405)
 3. Chöpel Yeshe (1406-1452)

4. Chökyi Drakpa Yeshe Pal Sangpo (1453-1524)

5. Könchok Yenlak (1525-1583)

6. Chökyi Wangchuk (1584-1630)

7. Yeshe Nyingpo (1631-1694)

8. Chökyi Döndrup (1695-1732)

9. Könchok Gewe Jungne (1733-1740)

(Tashi Tsepa) Shamars:

10. Shamar Chödrup Gyatso (1741/42-1792) reinstated as:

14. Shamar Chökyi Lodrö (1952-2014)

(Namling) Shamars:

10. Konchok Garwang Gyatso (1735?-1792?)

11. Tenzin Trinley Namgyal (born 1793?)

12. Jampal Ngawang

13. Garwang Karma Khedrup

The most recent Namling Shamar was recognized by the Fifteenth Karmapa, Khakhyap Dorje, and passed away in 1982.

21. Tai Situpa Rinpoche is one of the highest-ranking lamas of the Karma Kagyu lineage. The title “Tai Situ” is Chinese, for Grand Situ and was conferred on Situ Chökyi Gyaltsen in 1407 by the Yongle Emperor of Ming China. He was a close disciple of the Fifth Karmapa, Deshin Shekpa, who appointed him abbot of Karma Gönpön, the Karmapa’s principal monastery at the time. The full title bestowed was *Kenting Naya Tang Nyontse Geshetse Tai Situpa* which is shortened to *Kenting Tai Situ*. The full title means “far reaching, unshakable, great master, holder of the command.” The Eighth

Tai Situpa founded his own monastery at Derge in Kham, Palpung Thupten Chökhörling. The current Tai Situpa is based at Palpung Sherabling, near Dharamsala, in Himachal Pradesh, India. The Tai Situ Rinpoches:

1. Chökyi Gyaltsen
2. Tashi Namgyal
3. Tashi Paljor (?-ca.1512)
4. Mitruk Chökyi Gocha (?-1561)
5. Norbu Samphel (1566-1578)
6. Chökyi Gyaltsen Gelek Pelzang (1586-1632)
7. Mipham Trinle Rabten
8. Chökyi Jungne aka Situ Panchen (1699-1774)
9. Pema Nyinche Wangpo (1774-1853)
10. Pema Kunzang (1854-1885)
11. Pema Wangchok Gyalpo (1886-1952)
12. Pema Donyö Drupa (born 1954)

22. The three monastic seats of the Karmapa refer to the three monasteries founded by Dusum Khyenpa, the First Karmapa. In chronological order they are: Kampo Nenang (1164 CE) in Lithang, modern day Sichuan, Karma Gön (c.1184 CE) in Chamdo, eastern Tibet, and Tsurphu (1189 CE) near Lhasa, Central Tibet. Kampo Nenang is said to represent the body of Dusum Khyenpa, Karma Gön represents his speech, and Tsurphu represents his mind.

23. *Gyaltsab* [Tib.] means “regent” or “representative.” In Tibet, the Gyaltsab Rinpoches were also known as Tsurphu Goshir Gyaltsab

Rinpoche, and acted as regents for the Karmapas, looking after Tsurphu monastery and the Karmapa's administration during the inter-regnum. Their monastery in Tibet, Chogar Gong, sits directly behind Tsurphu, the Karmapa's monastery. In India, Gyaltsab Rinpoche's monastery is in Ralang, Sikkim. He maintains close contact with Rumtek, the Karmapa's monastery in Sikkim. The Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoches:

1. Paljor Döndrup (ca.1424-1486)
2. Tashi Namgyal (1487-1515)
3. Drakpa Paljor (1516-1546)
4. Drakpa Döndrup (1547-1613)
5. Drakpa Chokyang (1616-1658)
6. Norbu Zangpo (1660-1698)
7. Könchok Özer (1699-1766)
8. Chöpal Sangpo (1769-1822)
9. Dragpa Yeshe (ca.1823-1862)
10. Tenpe Nyima (ca.1863-1894)
11. Drakpa Gyatso (1895-1952)
12. Drakpa Migyur Gocha (born 1954)

24. The Pawo Rinpoches are traditionally the heads of Nenang Monastery in Ü-Tsang, Central Tibet, not to be confused with Kampo Nenang monastery in Kham, Eastern Tibet.) The Nenang Pawo Rinpoches:

1. Chöwang Lhundrup (1440-1503)
2. Tsuklak Trengwa (1504-1566)
3. Tsuklak Gyatso (1567/68-1633)

4. Tsuklak Kunsang (1633-1649)
5. Tsuklak Trinley Gyatso (1650-1699)
6. Tsuklak Chökyi Döndrup (1701-1718)
7. Tsuklak Gawa (1719-1781)
8. Tsuklak Chökyi Gyalpo (1782-1841?)
9. Tsuklak Nyingje (?-1910)
10. Tsuklak Mawe Wangchuk (1912-1991)
11. Tsuklak Tenzin Künsang Chökyi Nyima (born 1994)

25. The Treho Shabdrung lineage began in 16th century Tibet, and Treho Rinpoche's seat was at Tagna monastery, also known as Shang Namling, in northern Tsang. The Treho Rinpoches came to play an important role in the Karma Kagyu lineage during the time of the third reincarnation, Treho Tenzin Dargye (1653-1730/1731). After receiving teachings from the Tenth Karmapa, Chöying Dorje (1676-1702), Treho Tenzin Dargye became teacher to the highly learned Situ Panchen, the Eighth Situ Rinpoche (1699- 1774). Treho Tenzin Dargye presided over the funerals of both the Tenth and Eleventh Karmapas. The Tenth Treho lived and died in Tibet. The Treho Shabdrung Rinpoches:

1. Khedrup Chökyi Gyatso (lived 16th century)
2. Pagsam Wangpo (d. mid-17th century)
3. Tenzin Dargye (1653-1730/31)
4. Jangchup Chökyi Nyingpo (aka Losang Chökyi Wangpo)
5. Chökyi Wangpo
6. Chökyi Norbu
7. Chime Drupa

8. Trinle Wangpo
9. Karma Jigdrak Mawe Wangpo
10. Gelek Pel Sangpo (deceased early 21st century)
26. The Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoches: (cf Note 16)
 1. Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye (1813-1899)
 2. Jamgön Kongtrul Khyentse Ozer (1904-1953)
 3. Jamgön Kongtrul Chökyi Senge (1954-1992)
 4. Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Chökyi Nyima (born 1995)
27. The title of this work is: *A Trove of Jewels, The Source of all Desires: A list of the transmissions from the sutras, tantras, and traditional sciences, along with their respective lineages, received by Jamgön Kongtrul Yonten Gyatso*. འཇམ་མགོན་འོང་སྤུལ་ཡོན་ཏན་བྱ་མཆོས་དམ་པའི་ཆོས་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་མདོ་སྤྲུག་སྤུལ་རིག་གནས་དང་བཅས་པ་ཇི་ལྟར་ཐོས་ཤིང་དེ་དག་གང་ལས་བརྒྱུད་པའི་ཡི་གེ་དགོས་འདོད་ཀྱན་འབྱུང་ནོར་བུའི་བང་མཛོད།
28. Gyalwang Rigpe Dorje (1924-1981 CE) was the Sixteenth Karmapa.
29. Situ Pema Wangchok (1886-1952 CE) was the Eleventh Tai Situpa.
30. Jetsün Drakpa Gyaltzen (1147-1216 CE) was a spiritual leader in the Sakya tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. He was the third of the Five Sakya Patriarchs of Tibet. He is renowned for his pith instruction *Parting from the Four Attachments*. He was also the guru and uncle of the great Tibetan scholar, Sakya Pandita, who was the fourth of the Five Sakya Patriarchs.
31. See an eBook with [commentary on this text by the Fourth Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche](#).

32. Gyalwa Yang Gönpa Gyaltsen (1213-1258 CE) was born into a [Nyingma](#) family. He became a monk, and, while still a novice, he met the great Drukpa Kagyu yogi, Götsangpa, and became his student. Under his supervision, he practiced the six yogas of Naropa in retreat. He recounts that, after meditating for eleven months without breaking his vajra posture, he experienced a breakthrough and his “energy became workable.” Subsequently, he wrote a famous text on tantric anatomy: *Description of the Hidden Vajra Body*. Throughout his life he spent eight months each year in strict retreat — four in summer and four in winter — and tried to live in semi-retreat for the rest of the time.
33. Gyalwa Götsangpa Gonpo Dorje (1189-1258 CE) was a [mahasiddha](#) of the Drukpa Kagyu school, and founder of the Upper Druk lineage within the Drukpa Kagyu. He is particularly known for his songs of realization (Tib. *gur*) and was said to have been an emanation of Milarepa. His students included Yang Gönpa and Ogyenpa Rinchen Pel.
34. Ogyenpa Rinchen Pel (1230-c.1309 CE) was a student of Karma Pakshi and Gyalwa Götsangpa. He was the founder of the Approach and Accomplishment of the Three Vajras tradition, one of the eight great practice lineages of Tibet. He was also one of the principal holders of the [Kalachakra Tantra](#) lineages. He was responsible for recognizing Karma Pakshi’s reincarnation, Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, and served as his tutor during the Karmapa’s early years.
35. Longchenpa (1308-1363 CE) was perhaps the most famous of the realized scholars in the [Nyingma](#) school. He is commonly recognized as

one of the three main manifestations of Manjushri to have taught in Central Tibet, along with Sakya Pandita and Tsongkhapa. His monumental work of Tibetan literature is the *Seven Treasuries*.

36. Rangjung Dorje (1284-1339 CE) was the Third Karmapa and a very important early master of the lineage. Rangjung Dorje wrote on the buddha nature teachings and was an early proponent of the Other Emptiness view. He composed many important texts for the tradition including *The Profound Inner Meaning*, a commentary on the completion stage practices of the *Vajrayana*.

37. Je Gomtsul, Gampo Tsultrim Nyingpo (1116-1169 CE), was a famous meditator and lineage holder of the Kagyu, and nephew of Gampopa. From 1150 to 1169, he was abbot of Daklha Gampo, Gampopa's monastery. During this time, he was instrumental in resolving a violent conflict which erupted between monasteries in Lhasa, and was responsible for the restoration of the badly-damaged Jokhang Temple, the holiest shrine in Lhasa.

38. Je Tsongkhapa, Lobsang Drakpa, (1357-1419) founder of the Geluk school of Tibetan Buddhism. He was born in Amdo and his name means "the man from the onion valley". He received the lay vows when he was only three years old, from the Fourth Karmapa Rolpe Dorje. At the age of seven, he was ordained as a novice monk by Döndrup Rinchen, abbot of Jakhyung Monastery and received the ordination name Losang Drakpa. He was fully ordained in the Sakya tradition at the age of 24. He received teachings from all Tibetan traditions, but was particularly influenced by the Kadam tradition which preserved the teachings of Lord Atisha. He was

an accomplished Buddhist philosopher and scholar. His most famous work is the *Lamrim Chenmo*, *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*. He remains highly respected by all Tibetan Buddhist schools. In *Praise of the Incomparable Tsongkhapa*, a poem composed by the Eighth Karmapa Mikyö Dorje reads:

“When the teachings of the Sakya, Kagyu, Kadam
And Nyingma sects in Tibet were declining
You, O Tsongkhapa, revived Buddha’s Doctrine
Hence I sing this praise to you of Ganden Mountain.”

39. The “levels and paths” are descriptions of the path to enlightenment. There are five paths and ten levels.

40. The Karmapa is referring to the two Heart Disciples — Gyaltsab Rinpoche and Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche — who were attending the Monlam Chenmo in Bodhgaya.

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Translation © Lama Eric Trinle Thaye

Root text translation © Khenpo David Karma Choephel,
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First eBook edition: June 2021

eBook ISBN: 978-1-934608-64-7

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