CALLING THE LAMA FROM AFAR

JAMGÖN KONGTRUL LODRÖ THAYE
Calling the Lama from Afar
A Supplication to Pierce the Heart with Devotion

Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye
Namo Guruve. Supplications that call the lama from afar are well known to everyone. The key that unlocks all blessings is devotion, strengthened by disillusionment with samsara, which leads to renunciation. The words are not empty but born in the core of one’s heart and the marrow of one’s bones. With total confidence that there is no other buddha greater than your lama, chant this in melodic tones:
Lama, think of us.

Kind root lama, think of us.

Essence of the buddhas of the three times

Source of the sublime Dharma of scripture and realization,

Sovereign of the Sangha, assembly of the noble ones,

Root lama, think of us.
Calling the Lama From Afar

Great treasure of blessing and compassion,

Source of the two siddhis,

Buddha activity bestowing all that is desired,

Root lama, think of us.

Lama Amitabha, think of us.

Look upon us from the expanse of the dharmakaya, free of elaboration.
Lead us who wander samsara through our negative deeds

To rebirth in your pure land of bliss.

Lama Avalokiteshvara, think of us.

Look upon us from the expanse of the sambhogakaya, radiant clarity.

Pacify every suffering of the six kinds of beings,

And empty completely the three realms of samsara.
Lama Padmasambhava, think of us.

Look upon us from the Lotus Light of Chamara.

In dark times, protect with your swift compassion.

Your Tibetan disciples, all those devoid of wealth and refuge.

Lama Yeshe Tsogyal, think of us.

Look upon us from the celestial city of great bliss.
Bring those like us who have done many harmful things

Over the ocean of samsara to liberation’s great city.

Lineage lamas of the kama and terma, think of us.

Look upon us from the expanse of wisdom’s unity.

Penetrate the dark cavern of our confusion,

And let the sun of realization dawn.
kün khyen dri me ö ser khyen no
Omniscient Drime Özer, think of us.

Lhün drup ö ngay long ne sik shik
Look upon us from the expanse of the five lights, naturally present.

Ka dak gong pay tsal chen dzok ne
Having achieved the great power of realizing primordial purity,

Nang shi ta ru chin par dzö chik
Help us to reach the pinnacle of the four visions.

Nyam me jo wo yap se khyen no
Peerless Lord Atisha and your heart sons, think of us.

Ga den lha gyay wü ne sik shik
Look upon us from Tushita while encircled by hundreds of deities.
tong nyi nying jey nying po chen gyi
Cause bodhichitta, the heart of emptiness and compassion,

jang sem gyü la kye bar dzö chik
To arise within our minds.

drup chok mar mi dak sum khyen no
Supreme siddhas, Marpa, Milarepa, and Gampopa," think of us.

de chen dor jey ying ne sik shik
Look upon us from the space of great vajra bliss.

de tong chak chen chok ngö drup ching
Cause bliss-emptiness, the supreme siddhi of mahamudra, to arise,

chö ku nying wü se par dzö chik
And awaken the dharmakaya in our heart of hearts.
Lord of the World, Karmapa, think of us.

Look upon us from the space of training beings beyond number.

Bring us to see all things as illusory and unreal—

To know all appearances are mind, dawning as the three kayas.

Kagyu lamas of the four elder and eight younger lineages, think of us.

Look upon us from the realm of pure appearance, naturally arising.
Clear away the confusion of the four different states,

And bring us to ultimate experience and realization.

Five Sakya forefathers, think of us.

Look upon us from the expanse of samsara and nirvana inseparable.

Help us to blend pure view, meditation, and action.

Lead us along the supreme path of the secret vehicle.
Lamas of the unequaled Shangpa Kagyu, think of us.

Look upon us from the utterly pure realm of the buddhas.

By correctly mastering the paths of means and liberation,

Lead us to discover the unity beyond all learning.

Great siddha, Thangtong Gyalpo, think of us.

Look upon us from the state of effortless compassion.
Through a yogic discipline realizing the unreality of all things,

Enable us to master prana and mind.

Only father, Dampa Sangye, think of us.

Look upon us from the expanse where supreme activity is accomplished.

Bring into our hearts the blessings of the lineage.

Let auspicious connections appear in all directions.
Only mother, Lapkyi Drönma, think of us.

Look upon us from the space of perfect wisdom.

Enable us to eliminate clinging to the skandhas as a self, the source of pride,

And to see beyond concepts to the truth of freedom from self.

Omniscient Dölpo Sangye, think of us.

Look upon us from the space endowed with the supreme potential.
po way uk nam u mar gak ne
Help us to bring shifting breath into the central channel

po dral dor jey ku top dzö chik
And thus attain the immovable vajra body.

je tsün tā ra na ta khyen no
Jetsun Taranatha,²⁵ think of us.

nam sum po nyay ying ne sik shik
Look upon us from the space of the three messengers.

dor jey seng lam gek me drö ne
Help us to travel the vajrayana path free of obstacle

ja lü kha chö drup par dzö chik
And attain a rainbow body in the celestial realm.
Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo,²⁶ think of us.

Look upon us from wisdom’s space of twofold knowing.²⁷

Clear away the mental darkness of our ignorance,

And expand the vision of our supreme knowing.

Ösel Trulpay Dorje, think of us.

Look upon us from the expanse of the five rainbow lights.
Purify the flaws from prana and bindu, so that mind becomes pure,

And bring us to awakening as the youthful vase body.

Pema Do Ngak Lingpa, think of us.

Look upon us from the expanse of unchanging, empty bliss.

Enable us to fulfill all the intentions

Of the Victorious Ones and their heirs.
ngag wang yön ten gya tso khyen no
Ngagwang Yönten Gyatso, think of us.

Look upon us from the expanse of the unity of space and wisdom.

Once clinging to things as real has been destroyed,
Enable us to carry whatever happens onto the path.

Bodhisattva Lodrö Thaye, think of us.
Look upon us from your state of love and compassion.
Enable us to see all beings as our kind parents.

And to benefit others from the depth of our hearts.

Pema Gargyi Wangchuk, think of us.

Look upon us from the expanse of luminous great bliss.

Help us to liberate the five poisons as the five wisdoms.

And destroy the duality of loss and gain.
བསྟོན་གཉིིས་གཡུང་དྲུང་གླིིང་པ་མཁྱེེན་ནོ།།
Tennyi Yungdrung Lingpa, think of us.

སྲིིད་ཞིི་མཉིིམ་ཉིིད་དབྱིིངས་ནས་གཟིིགས་ཤིིག།
Look upon us from the space where samsara and nirvana are equal.

མོས་གུས་རྣལ་མ་རྒྱུད་ལ་སྐྱེེས་ནས།
Let natural devotion be born in our being.

རྟོོགས་གྲོོལ་དུས་མཉིམ་ཆོེེན་པོར་མཛོོད་ཅིིག།
Bring us great realization and liberation that arise together.

དྲིིན་ཅན་རྩ་བའིི་བླ་མ་མཁྱེེན་ནོ།།
Kind root lama, think of us.

སྤྱི་གཙུག་བདེ་ཆོེེན་གནས་ནས་གཟིིགས་ཤིིག།
Look upon us from the crown of our head, the abode of great bliss.
Let us meet the face of the dharmakaya, natural awareness,

And bring us to complete awakening in this very life.
kyai ma / dak dray sem chen le ngen dik to chen
Alas! Beings like ourselves with negative karma and bad deeds

tok me dü ne khor war yün ring khyam
Have wandered for ages in samsara without beginning.

da dung duk ngal ta me nyong gyur we
Even now we know misery without end,

kyo she ke chik tsam yang ma kye pe
But not a moment of regret do we feel.

la ma khyen no tuk je nyur du sik
Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

nge jung ting ne kye bar jin gyi lop
Bless us that renunciation come from deep within.
Our freedoms and resources we foolishly squander,
Distracted again and again by this trivial life.
We seek the goal of liberation, and laziness carries us away.
From a land of jewels, we return with empty hands.
Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that our lives be filled with meaning.
No one on this earth can escape from death.

Even now people pass away, one after another.

Our death will also come and soon,

But like fools, we plan to live on and on.

Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

Bless us to know our life here is brief and there is scant time to make plans.
We will separate from the friends and relatives we love.

Others will enjoy the wealth that we as misers kept.

Even the body we cherish will be left behind;

Still in samsara, our consciousness will wander, a stranger in the bardo.

Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

Bless us that we realize the futility of this world.
jik pay mün pa nak pö ngön ne su
In front, the dense darkness of fear waits to take us in;

le kyi lung mar drak pö gyap ne de
Behind, the raging storm of karma drives us on.

mi duk shin jey po nye dek ching tsok
Hideous messengers of the Lord of Death beat and stab us—

sö ka ngen droy duk ngal nyong gö na
We know the intolerable sufferings of the lower realms.

la ma khyen no tuk je nyur du sik
Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

ngen song yang le tar bar jin gyi lop
Bless us that we be liberated from the lower realms’ abyss.
Concealing within ourselves a mountain of faults,

We broadcast the faults of others, be they tiny as a sesame seed.

We boast of our own greatness, though lacking the least of qualities.

We call ourselves Dharma practitioners, yet our practice is not dharmic.

Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

Bless us to subdue our self-centered pride.
We harbor the demon of ego-fixation, sure to bring us to ruin.

Every one of our thoughts causes afflictions to grow.

Every one of our actions brings unvirtuous results.

We have not even turned to the path of liberation.

Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

Bless us that grasping to self be severed at its root.
A little praise makes us happy, a little blame makes us sad.

A few harsh words and the armor of our patience is gone.

When we see the deprived, no compassion arises.

When it’s time to be generous, stinginess ties us in a knot.

Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

Bless us that our minds be blended with the Dharma.
khor wa nying po me la nying por sung
We think samsara is worthwhile, though it's not.

to gö chir du ten dün ling gi bor
For food and clothes we give up our ultimate goal.

kho gu tsang yang gö gö chi chir mang
Though having all we need, we constantly seek more.

mi den gyu may chö kyi rang sem lü
Our minds are deceived by phenomena, illusory and unreal.

la ma khyen no tuk je nyur du sik
Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

tse di lo yi tong bar jin gyi lop
Bless us that we let go of attachment to this life.
Unable to bear the least physical or mental pain,

With blind courage, we’re not afraid of falling to the lower realms.

Though cause and effect is unfailing and obvious to all,

We refrain from good actions and let the bad ones thrive.

Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

Bless us that we fully believe in the laws of karma.
We hate our enemies and cling to our friends.

We’re lost in the dark, not knowing what to adopt or reject.

When practicing Dharma, we fall into dullness and sleep.

At other times, we are clever and our senses are clear.

Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

Bless us that we conquer the enemy, our very own afflictions.
Outwardly we seem to be honest practitioners;

Inwardly our minds have not mingled with Dharma.

Like a poisonous snake, we conceal our afflictions within.

When difficulties arise, all our faults come to light.

Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

Bless us that we are able to tame our own minds.
Not realizing all the bad faults we have,

We’re addicted to afflictions and unvirtuous activity.

In the guise of a practitioner, we engage in non-dharmic pursuits.

A virtuous mind is born again and again, and just as often dies away.

Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

Bless us that we ourselves see what our own faults are.
shak re song shin chi la par par nye
With the coming of each day, death draws ever near;

nyin re lön shin rang gyü chir chir gyong
With the passing of each day, our mind hardens even more.

la ma ten shin mö gü rim gyi drip
While we serve our lama, shadows darken our devotion.

che la tse dung dak nang je chung song
Our fondness and pure vision of Dharma friends decrease.

la ma khyen no tuk je nyur du sik
Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

mu gö rang gyü tül bar jin gyi lop
Bless us that we tame our wild and cunning minds.
kyap dro sem kye söl dep je na yang
Though we’ve taken refuge, roused bodhichitta, and prayed,

mö gü nying je ting ne ma kye pe
Our devotion and compassion do not spring from deep within;

tsik tsam wang gyur chö chö ge jor nam
Our Dharma activity and practice remain just words.

je lo tsam le gyü tok ma khel we
We go through the motions but remain untouched.

la ma khyen no tuk je nyur du sik
Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

chi je chö su dro bar jin gyi lop
Bless us that all we do be in harmony with Dharma.
burgher dge bzhin le du ngal dam rtse dgon

Suffering comes from wanting happiness for ourselves;

shen pen sem kyi sang gye drup sung kyang

Awakening is attained through helping others.

sem chok kye ching rang dö puk tu chuk

We develop bodhichitta and hold on to our secret desires.

shen pen ta chi shen nö shor la drup

Not benefiting others, heedlessly, we even bring them harm.

la ma khyen no tuk je nyur du sik

Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

dak shen je bar nū par jin gyi lop

Bless us that we be able to exchange self for others.
We see our lama—the Buddha in truth—as ordinary.

The kindness of giving us key instructions fades from our mind.

Not getting what we want, we are lost in despair.

We view their conduct through the veil of doubt and wrong view.

Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

Bless us that our devotion will flourish unobscured.
Our mind is the Buddha, and we do not recognize it.

Concepts are the dharmakaya, and we do not realize it.

The natural state is uncontrived, and we cannot sustain it.

The abiding nature is naturally settled, and we are not convinced.

Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

Bless us that self-awareness be released in its ground.
yong nge chi wa nying ne dren ma tup
Though death is sure to come, we cannot take this to heart.

pen nge dam chö tsül shin drup ma nü
Though genuine Dharma is sure to benefit, we cannot practice correctly.

den nge le dre lang dor tsül shin me
Though karma is sure and true, we cannot tell what to give up or take up.

gö nge dren she ma ten yeng we khyer
Though being mindful and alert is surely needed, we are carried away by distractions.

la ma khyen no tuk je nyur du sik
Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

yeng me dren pe sin par jin gyi lop
Bless us that we remain mindful and free of distraction.
ngön le ngen pe nyik may dü tar kye
Through negative karma, we’ve been born at the end of a degenerate time.

ngar je tam che duk ngal gyu ru song
All our previous actions are causes for suffering.

drok ngen nam kyi dik pay drip me yok
Bad friends cast the shadow of their negative deeds.

dön me leng mö ge jor yeng we khyer
Meaningless talk distracts us from our spiritual practice.

la ma khyen no tuk je nyur du sik
Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

chö la nying rū nū par jin gyi lop
Bless us that we persevere in the practice of Dharma.
At first there is nothing but Dharma on our mind,

Yet the final result is a cause for samsara and the lower realms.

The frost of nonvirtue lays waste to the harvest of liberation.

Like barbarians, we have lost sight of our ultimate goal.

Lama, think of us, see us swiftly with compassion.

Bless us that we perfect the genuine Dharma.
Bless us that disenchantment arise from deep within.

Bless us that we know time is short and curtail our scheming.

Bless us that we remember death from the depth of our heart.

Bless us that we come to believe in the laws of karma.

Bless us that our path be free of obstacles.

Bless us that we exert ourselves in practice.
Bless us that we bring difficult times onto the path.

Bless us that we be self-reliant in using the remedies.

Bless us that genuine devotion be born within.

Bless us that we see the true face of mind’s nature.

Bless us that self-awareness awaken in the center of our heart.

Bless us that delusive appearances be severed at their root.
Bless us that we achieve enlightenment in a single life.

We supplicate you, precious lama.

Kind one, Lord of Dharma, we call out to you with longing.

For us unworthy ones, you are the only hope.

Bless us that our minds blend with yours.
Previously, several devoted practitioners had asked me to write a prayer like this, but time slipped away. Then recently Samdrup Drönma, a lady practitioner of a noble family, and Deva Rakshita earnestly requested me to compose this text, so I, Lodrö Thaye, the mere reflection of a lama in this degenerate time, wrote this supplication at the great retreat place of Dzongshö Deshek Dupa. May virtue and goodness increase.

This present translation by Michele Martin is based on an earlier one printed in His Eminence Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche: In Memory (Jamgön Kongtrul Labrang, Rumtek, Sikkim, 1992). Appreciation is due to Gen Nyima Tsering and Khenpo Sherap Phuntsok for sharing their knowledge and to previous versions of the text by the Nalanda Translation Committee and Erik Pema Kunsang.
Endnotes

1 Often translated as “accomplishments,” the two refer to (1) the eight ordinary, or worldly, siddhis, such as becoming invisible, and (2) the supreme, or supramundane, siddhi, which is full awakening.

2 The gods, demigods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings.

3 Chamara is the name of one of the two islands on either side of the southern Continent of the Rose Apple in this universe. Lotus Light is the name of the palace where Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) resides.

4 Consort and disciple of Guru Rinpoche, she was responsible for concealing his terma, the teachings to be discovered in the future when the time was right.

5 Within the Nyingma tradition, kama refers to the oral tradition that has been passed down in a continuous lineage starting with Vajradhara and coming through to one’s present lama. Terma refers to a lineage of teachings and special objects that were hidden by Guru Rinpoche and others to be discovered at a later time when they would be especially useful.

6 Unity can be interpreted in many ways, referring, for example, to different types of inseparability: of appearance and emptiness, of clarity and emptiness, of awareness and emptiness, or of bliss and emptiness. Wisdom is not separate from either aspect: it embodies them both.

7 A name given to the great Nyingma master Longchen Rabjam.

8 This refers to the four stages of a profound practice that brings a deepening realization of mind’s nature as taught in the tradition of the Great Perfection: revelation of the dharmata, increasing experience, awareness reaching fullness, and the exhaustion of all phenomena in the dharmata.

9 The two heart sons are Ngok (Ngok Legpay Sherap, eleventh century) and Dromtön (Drom Gyalway Jungne, 1004–1063). The two together with Atisha (Jowo Je, 982–1054) are often referred to as jo ngok drom sum.
10 Tushita (Ganden, the Realm of Joy) is one of the god realms located within the realm of desire. It is here that future buddhas wait to take rebirth in the human realm.

11 Marpa (Marpa the Translator, 1012–1097) made three arduous trips to India and brought back numerous teachings, including those on mahamudra and thirteen major tantras. These form the backbone of practice in the Kagyu lineage to this day. Milarepa (1052–1135) is the spiritual heir of Marpa and Tibet’s great yogi. He is especially famous for his perseverance in practice and his inspiring spiritual songs, known all over Tibet and translated into dozens of languages. Gampopa (1079–1153), the sun-like heir of Milarepa, was first a doctor and then became a monk studying extensively in the Kadampa tradition. Subsequently, he met Milarepa and combined the two streams of Kadampa and mahamudra into one lineage, practiced to this day. Gampopa’s most famous text was *The Jewel of Precious Liberation*, a foundation for study in the Kagyu tradition.

12 Another name for Avalokiteshvara, the embodiment of compassion, of whom the Karmapa is an emanation.

13 The four elder lineages refer to the first generation of disciples of Gampopa (1079–1153): Karma Kagyu or Karma Kamtsang, Tsalpa Kagyu, Barom Kagyu, and Phakmo Drupa Kagyu. The eight younger lineages refer to disciples of Phakmo Drupa (1110–1170) and constitute the second generation: Drikung, Taklung, Drukpa, Trophu, Yelpa, Martsang, Yamsang, and Shugsep.

14 Being awake, dream, deep sleep, and coitus.

15 These five are the early great masters of the Sakya lineage: Kunga Nyingpo (1092–1158), Sonam Tsemo (1142–1182), Trakpa Gyaltsen (1147–1216), Sakya Pandita (1182–1251), and Chögyal Phakpa (1235–1280).

16 An important Kagyu lineage, founded by Barapa Gyaltsen Palzang (1310–1391).

17 Or the fifth path of no more learning, which comes after the four paths of accumulation, joining, seeing, and cultivation.

18 Thangtong Gyalpo (1361–1485) was a great Shangpa master and also builder of iron bridges throughout Tibet, thereby facilitating pilgrimage and commerce. He is
also responsible for inaugurating the famous Dege Monastery and printery as well as creating Tibetan opera.

19 Prana, or wind, refers to the energy that moves through the channels (nadis) of the illusory or vajra body.

20 Padampa Sanggye (d.1117) was a siddha from south India who visited Tibet several times and introduced the practice of pacification (zhije).

21 Machik Lapdrön (Machik Lapkyi Drönma 1055–1149) was the progenitor of the practice of chö, or cutting through, the only practice to pass from Tibet back to India.

22 The five “heaps” making up the psycho-physical parts that constitute a person: form, feeling, identifications, mental formations, and consciousnesses.

23 Dölpopa (Dölpopa Sherap Gyaltsen 1292–1361) was a great scholar and practitioner of the Kalachakra Tantra and also of the Jonang tradition, whose teachings emphasize the luminous nature of mind and buddha nature, found equally in all living beings.

24 Or the supreme of all aspects which refers to radiant clarity or primordial wisdom, inseparable from emptiness.

25 Taranatha (1575–1635) received many tantric transmissions from India and translated texts from Sanskrit. He held the zhantong (empty of other) view of Dölpopa, and among other texts, he wrote the famous History of India.

In the line below, the three messengers refer to outer, inner, and secret yoginis, who have different stages of realization. Each type is further divided into lower, average, and superior levels. For example, the three levels of the outer yogini refer to yoginis arisen from mantra, from a pure field, and to those who are spontaneously arisen.

26 The next three verses relate to Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820–1892), who was a leading figure of the nonsectarian (Rimé) movement in nineteenth-century Tibet.

27 Things as they manifest and as they ultimately are, or in their relative complexity and their ultimate simplicity.

28 In Great Perfection teachings, this is attained when the impure nadi, prana, and bindu are purified or transformed, and the dharmakaya becomes manifest. It is also
explained that the *kaya* refers to awakening and the *vase* to the fact that this contains all phenomena, which arise from it.

29 The next four verses are related to Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye (1813–1899), a brilliant scholar of the nonsectarian (Rimé) movement. He is the author of this text and of the famous *Five Treasuries*, which preserve essential teachings of the Tibetan spiritual tradition.

30 A precious human birth is taught to have eight freedoms and ten leisures, the qualities needed for practicing Dharma.

31 The state between death and birth, when we have a mental body that is driven by the positive and negative actions we have done.
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On the cover: Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye depicted on a thangka from Palpung Monastery

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