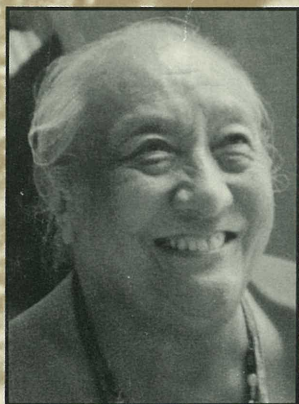
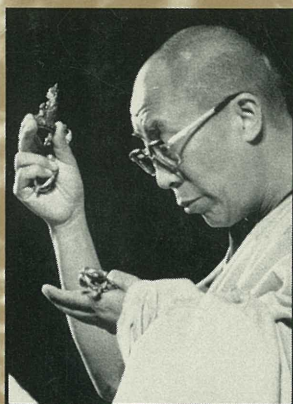


# DZOGCHEN

*And Padmasambhava*



**SOGYAL  
RINPOCHE**



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*And Padmasambhava*

SOGYAL  
RINPOCHE

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## **Dedication**

**This booklet is dedicated to the Long Life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and to the success of all his aspirations.**

**It is offered for the Long Life of H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and all the lamas of all traditions.**

**It is also offered for the swift rebirth of H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche and H. E. Kalu Rinpoche.**

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## PREFACE

This book was originally published as a commemorative volume, to celebrate the historic teachings given by His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama of Tibet in California in October 1989. On that occasion, with his customary authority, wisdom and humour, His Holiness presented a masterful vision of the scope of the Dzogchen teachings, and granted the empowerment of Padmasambhava and His Eight Manifestations. This empowerment is one of the visionary revelations of the 'Great Fifth' Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (1617–82), who brought stability and peace to the whole land of Tibet, from Kailash in the West to Kham in the East, and instituted the Government of Ganden Phodrang, which has guided the Tibetan people down to the present day.<sup>1</sup> It was the first time that such teachings had been given in the United States, and they followed on from the empowerment of Padmasambhava in Paris in 1982 and the Dzogchen teachings in London in 1984, which His Holiness had also kindly granted at the request of myself and Rigpa. The opportunity of receiving teachings like these from such a master as His Holiness evoked a tremendous response from followers of all schools of Buddhism, and they were attended by over five thousand people.

Now *Dzogchen and Padmasambhava* is being re-published to commemorate another very special event—a series of the most important Dzogchen empowerments and transmissions to be given by H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche in France at Rigpa's International Summer Retreat in August 1990, which form an auspicious sequel in the stream of Dzogchen teachings given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche is the head of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, and universally renowned as the most outstanding upholder of the Rimé—non-partisan—spirit within the Buddhist tradition of Tibet. Many are those who regard him as the greatest living master of Dzogchen, and for whom he is the very embodiment of Padmasambhava. He is the teacher of so many of the important lamas of today; in fact, for some years now, he has been giving teachings from the Dzogchen and Nyingma tradition to His Holiness the Dalai Lama himself.



*H. H. the Dalai Lama and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche*

Born in 1910 in Kham Derge in Eastern Tibet, H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche was treated with particular kindness by the great Mipham Rinpoche, who foresaw his exceptional destiny. Studying with over seventy great masters and scholars, amongst them Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, Shechen Gyaltsap Rinpoche, and Khenpo Shyenga, he was recognized as the mind emanation of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820–92), the extraordinary visionary master who spearheaded the nineteenth century spiritual and cultural renaissance in Tibet which became known as the 'Rimé' movement. Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo himself was the emanation of Jigmé Lingpa, the discoverer of the Dzogchen cycle of Longchen Nyingtik.

From an early age Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche received visions of Guru Rinpoche and he has revealed a number of termas, the treasure teachings concealed by Padmasambhava. He was one of the closest disciples of my master Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, the activity emanation of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, from whom he received a vast amount of teachings, and who in many ways prepared him to be his lineage holder in a period when the survival of the teaching of Buddha, and especially the Dzogchen teachings, would be in jeopardy.

Khyentse Rinpoche is a master who is larger than life, in a category entirely of his own. It would be no exaggeration to say that within the Buddhist tradition of Tibet, there is no other meditation master or scholar of his calibre. With more than twenty years in retreat, his poetic and inspired writings, his vast learning, his tremendous achievements in the field of building and publishing, his inexhaustible energy and the unique and effortless manner in which he continuously teaches and passes on the transmission, he epitomizes the image of the greatest lamas of the past. I feel that to receive teachings from him is tantamount to receiving teachings from the Buddha himself, and I count myself extremely fortunate in that he has always shown me the greatest of kindness, encouraging and inspiring me in my work.

I am happy to see this book reissued, as a humble offering to express my deep gratitude to both H. H. the Dalai Lama and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, and also to H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche, who was one of the major influences and sources of inspiration behind my work in the West. Though prepared in haste, and without the fuller explanation of the Dzogchen teachings and attention to detail which I should like to have seen included, many people have urged me to republish this book, saying that it had helped them understand the Dzogchen teachings and the tradition of Padmasambhava.

I have written this book with the inspiration and blessing of my master Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, and in doing so, I have drawn from teachings of H. H. the Dalai Lama, Dudjom Rinpoche, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche. Some of the materials included and quoted here are very special, and are only offered in order to facilitate understanding. I would request readers to please respect this, and not to reproduce them in any form or show them to others who may not have received such teachings before.

Sogyal Rinpoche  
Santa Cruz, June, 1990





*Padmasambhava is the founder of Tibetan Buddhism and the Buddha of our time. On seeing this statue when it was made at Samyé (8th century, Tibet), he remarked: "It looks like me ", and then blessed it, saying:  
"Now it is the same as me."*

## INTRODUCTION

**D**ZOGCHEN IS BOTH THE FINAL AND ULTIMATE TEACHING, and the heart of the teachings of all the buddhas. Though generally associated with the Nyingma or Ancient School of Tibetan Buddhism founded by Padmasambhava, Dzogchen has been practised throughout the centuries by masters of all the different schools as their innermost practice. Its origins reach back to before human history, and neither is it limited to Buddhism, nor to Tibet, nor indeed even to this world of ours, as it is recorded that it has existed in thirteen different world systems.

Dzogchen is an abbreviation of the Tibetan word *Dzogpachenpo*. *Dzogpa* means 'complete', or 'the end'; *chenpo* means 'great'. It is widely translated as 'Great Perfection', but this may imply a perfection that we strive to attain, a journey towards a goal of Great Perfection, and this is not the meaning of Dzogchen. Dzogchen is explained as ground, path, and fruition, and from the point of view of the *ground* of Dzogpachenpo, it is the *already self-perfected* state of our primordial nature, which needs no perfecting, for it has always been perfect from the very beginning, just like the sky. It is uncreated, yet spontaneously accomplished.

Traditionally, *Dzogchen* can be traced to two original Sanskrit terms. The first is *Mahasandhi*, which means the gathering of all or the quintessence, signifying that Dzogchen is the very essence, the cream, and the heart juice of all teachings. Hence many of the teachings are known as *Nyingtik* or 'Heart Essence', for example the *Longchen Nyingtik*.

The second term is *Atiyoga*, which means 'primordial yoga'; *Ati* indicates the topmost, summit, or zenith. It has the sense of scaling a mountain, reaching the peak and having a view over everything. For *Atiyoga* or *Dzogchen* stands at the apex of the characteristic Nyingmapa presentation of the Buddhist path as nine *yanas* or vehicles, with the three Inner Tantras special to the Nyingma tradition: Mahayoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga. The zenith of all *yanas*, *Atiyoga* represents the culmination of an individual's spiritual evolution, the point where all spiritual disciplines and paths have been traversed. The term *Maha Ati* has also been used for *Dzogchen* in recent times by masters like Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche.

In Dzogchen there are three transmissions: the *mind direct transmission* from the buddhas, the *sign transmission of the vidyadhara*,<sup>2</sup> and the *oral transmission* by word of mouth from realized beings. The lineage of Dzogchen, unbroken to the present day, is traced from the Dharmakaya Samantabhadra (Kuntuzangpo in Tibetan) to the Sambhogakaya, represented by the five buddha families and Vajrasattva, and then to the first human master Garab Dorje. It then passed to Mañjushrimitra and Shri Singha, and was transmitted in Tibet by Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, Vairochana, and Yeshé Tsogyal.

*Padmasambhava*, or 'Guru Rinpoche'—the 'Precious Guru'—as he is affectionately known by the Tibetan people, is the Mahaguru who introduced Buddhism to Tibet in the eighth century. Invited by King Trisong Detsen upon the advice of the great Indian Khenpo Shantarakshita, Padmasambhava is said to have stayed in Tibet for nearly fifty-five years. He travelled throughout the country, teaching and practising, taming the forces that were inhibiting the buddhadharma, and infusing his blessing into the whole landscape of Tibet and the Himalayas. As a result, the teaching of Buddha came to permeate the very fabric of the lives of the Tibetan people, and it is to Padmasambhava's compassion, his blessing and his all-encompassing vision that Tibetan Buddhism owes its particular dynamism and magic, its vitality and success. For the people of Tibet, the teaching of Buddha pervades throughout every facet of their everyday life and culture, almost like the very air they breathe. There lies the strength of Tibetan Buddhism, and the reason why Tibet was renowned as such a spiritual country.

Padmasambhava founded the first monastic university of Samyé, where many Indian pandits, such as Vimalamitra, came together with Tibetan translators to translate the buddhadharma, and the first seven Tibetans were ordained as monks. At Chimphu, he opened the mandala of the Mantrayana teachings to the twenty-five siddhas of Tibet (je bang nyer nga), who included King Trisong Detsen, Yeshé Tsogyal and Vairochana. For millions of practitioners down through the centuries, Padmasambhava has continued to be the source of their realization, and the inspiration which breathes life into the heart of their practice.

Padmasambhava's life story is extraordinary, but he is by no means limited to a historical personality; in fact he defies history or chronology. A number of prophecies, including one made by Buddha himself as

he was passing into parinirvana (in perhaps the fifth century B.C.), predicted that Padmasambhava would be born, eight or twelve years after him, to spread the teaching of the Mantrayana. Yet Padmasambhava was still in Tibet in the eighth century A.D.

Padmasambhava is the human embodiment of Dzogpachenpo, the inspiration and spirit of Dzogchen, a cosmic principle, and embodiment of all masters. In the Tibetan tradition, he is *the* enlightened principle whose powerful energy is invoked as a source of protection amidst the confusion and turmoil of this age. For today's world, the practice and mantra of Padmasambhava are treasured as being particularly effective in creating peace and harmony.

As Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, the greatest living Dzogchen master, says:

There have been many incredible and incomparable masters from the noble land of India and from Tibet, the Land of Snows, yet of them all, the one who has the greatest compassion and blessing towards beings in this difficult age is Padmasambhava, who embodies the compassion and wisdom of all the buddhas. One of his qualities is that he has the power to grant his blessing instantly to whoever prays to him, and whatever we may pray for, he has the power to immediately grant our wish.

"In this dark age," continues Khyentse Rinpoche, "the 'dregs of time', where beings are immersed in constant suffering from the three poisons of ignorance, aggression, and attachment, where the five negative emotions are more turbulent than ever before, and where terrible suffering comes from illnesses, poverty, famine, hunger, and the threat of war, the blessings of Guru Rinpoche are even quicker to act. He himself has pledged that in such an age, whenever a person prays to him, he will immediately respond with his blessings. And these were not just sweet words meant to please, but the true, undeceiving words of Guru Rinpoche."<sup>3</sup>

## DZOGCHEN VIEW, MEDITATION AND ACTION

The uniqueness of Dzogchen is the way in which it brings precise experience of the awakened state, the direct experience of the absolute. In Dzogchen a very important distinction is made between the ordinary mind, called *sem* in Tibetan, and the primordial or pure, pristine awareness of *Rigpa*. Dzogchen Pema Rigdzin, the first Dzogchen Rinpoche, pointed out:

All that appears and exists, the phenomena of samsara and nirvana are all gathered, perfect, within the state of the empty Rigpa. That is why it is called 'Dzogpa'. There is no other method greater than this to gain liberation from samsara; therefore it is called 'Chenpo'. So it is called *Dzogpachenpo*.<sup>4</sup>

For the main principle in Dzogchen is to go *beyond* mind, to transcend the ordinary, thinking mind altogether and to reach the nature of Rigpa. As Shantideva points out in the *Bodhicaryavatara*: "The Absolute is *beyond* mind, that which is within the realm of mind is called the 'Relative.'"

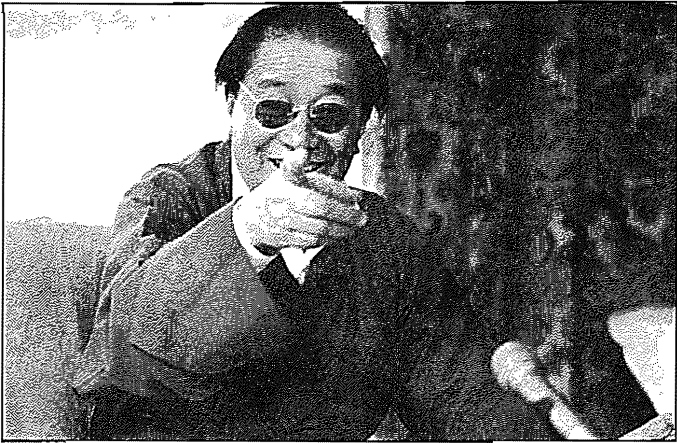
It is this Rigpa that the master introduces to the student, and recognizing it is the Dzogchen View. In Dzogchen, the *Path* is described in terms of *View, Meditation and Action*, which encompass the practical training, and specifically the practice of Trekchö and the subsequent practices of Tögal.<sup>5</sup> In the words of Dudjom Rinpoche:

*View* is the comprehension of the naked awareness, within which everything is contained: sensory perception and phenomenal existence, samsara and nirvana. This awareness or Rigpa, has two aspects: shunyata—emptiness as the absolute, and appearances or perception as the relative.

Within the vast expanse of *Dzogpachenpo*, everything there is in samsara and nirvana is perfectly complete. Although its essence is empty, pure from the beginning (known in Dzogchen as 'kadak'), its nature is rich in noble qualities, pregnant with all possibilities, a vast,

creative field, which is spontaneously perfect (called 'lhundrup').

Very simply, the essence of mind is empty, spacious and pure from the beginning, like the open, blue sky; its nature is luminous clarity, unobstructed and spontaneously present, like the sun with all its warmth and light; and its energy or manifestation is compassion, unimpeded and all-pervasive, like the rays of the sun that shine on us all impartially. "The empty nature of Rigpa", explains Dudjom Rinpoche, "and its luminosity, being non-dual, manifest themselves functionally as compassion in all times."



*H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche*

Introduction to the *View*, and resting in the state of Rigpa, is the heart of Dzogchen practice. In other approaches the realization of the nature of mind is arrived at through deduction and reasoning. In Dzogchen the actual direct experience of the state of the wisdom mind of the buddhas is transmitted through the blessing of a master who embodies this complete realization—the mind direct transmission—to a student who, as a result of past aspirations and purified karma, has arrived at a point where they have both the openness of heart and devotion to make them receptive to the true meaning of the teaching. As Jigmé Lingpa says in his *Senge Ngaro (The Lion's Roar)*:

First the student must find an accomplished Guru with whom he has a good karmic link. The master must be a holder of the mind direct transmission. The student must have single-minded devotion and faith, which makes possible the transmission of the

master's understanding.

When that powerful moment, the 'meeting of mind-hearts', takes place, the student has a direct and undeniable experience, or glimpse, of the nature of Rigpa. In that instant, the master introduces and the student recognizes. As the great Dzogchen master Patrul Rinpoche observed:

The nature of mind, the face of Rigpa, is introduced upon the *very* dissolution of conceptual mind.

In Dzogchen, this direct introduction is preceded by a special meditative investigation into the empty nature of mind and phenomena. Through the close analysis and examination of mind, the student comes to a personal realization of the nature of emptiness, 'the non-existence of samsara and nirvana', which leads to the realization of dharmakaya. Once this is established, then it serves as a preliminary to the introduction to the Rigpa by the master. But if this were not realized, and one were just to remain 'leaving the mind in its natural state', then one's practice would be mere shamatha and one's View would fall into the state of alaya (kunshyi).<sup>6</sup> In Dzogchen the main point of the introduction is to go beyond the alaya, to reveal explicitly the naked Rigpa. This is how the investigation into the View of emptiness facilitates the introduction to the Rigpa.

Now, the true realization of the nature of mind is only possible when transmitted from the heart of the master to the heart of the student, and this is exemplified by the great figures of the Dzogchen lineage in the extraordinary accounts of how, at that moment, their minds became the



Garab Dorje .

same as the wisdom mind of their master, for example when Garab Dorje transmitted his last testament, known as *Hitting the Essence in Three Words*, to Mañjushrimitra, or when Shri Singha revealed the nature of mind to Padmasambhava.

Mañjushrimitra was the only human disciple of Garab Dorje, and studied with him for seventy-five years. At the time of his parinirvana, Garab Dorje ascended into the sky and dissolved into rainbow light. At this, Mañjushrimitra cried out in despair and distress, and made a very beautiful plea: "What will become of us now that you are passing away? You are the light of the world..."

Whereupon Garab Dorje was moved, and his hand reappeared, in which was a small golden casket, the size of a thumbnail, containing the teaching of *Hitting the Essence in Three Words*, which he let fall into the hand of Mañjushrimitra. As soon as he received it, his mind became the same as the wisdom mind of his master Garab Dorje. As Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche explains, a highly realized Dzogchen master will entrust and transmit his entire wisdom mind, and the blessing of his lineage to his foremost disciple, and thereby ensure the continuity of the transmission, unimpaired. Even though he dies, his wisdom mind continues, without losing its purity, authenticity or power. At the very moment that the disciple receives it, he becomes the same as his master. Such has been the approach of Dzogpachenpo, says Khyentse Rinpoche, from the Primordial Buddha to this very day.

This is why the fundamental basis of Dzogpachenpo is the *introduction* to Rigpa. Dzogchen begins with introduction, for, in Dzogchen, meditation is simply abiding by the View of Rigpa. As Dudjom Rinpoche points out:

*Meditation* consists of being attentive to such a state of Rigpa—free from all mental constructions, whilst remaining fully relaxed, without any distraction or grasping, because it is said that ‘meditation is not striving, but naturally becoming assimilated into it’.

Out of the realization of the nature of one’s mind radiates a deep compassion for those who have not realized, and thus in Dzogchen, meditation is described as the ‘radiance, or union, of wisdom and compassion’.

Abiding by the continual flow of Rigpa becomes a reality and begins to permeate the practitioner’s everyday life and Action. As Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche points out: “When someone has realized the union of wisdom and compassion, then whatever they do spontaneously benefits beings, even if they just wink or move their little finger.”

Once the practice is truly integrated, it gives birth to a deep stability and confidence, because whatever arises, thoughts or emotions, will no longer delude one; they are liberated from their very basis. One can look into them with composure and equanimity, confident that “the Dharmakaya’s efflorescence of whatever arises is neither good nor bad.” As Dudjom Rinpoche says:



*Action* is being truly observant of one's own thoughts, good or bad, looking inwardly into the true nature of whatever thoughts may arise, neither tracing the past nor inviting the future, neither allowing any clinging to experiences of joy, nor being overcome by sad situations. In so doing, one tries to reach and remain in the state of 'great equilibrium', where all good and bad, peace and distress are devoid of true identity.

And this leads to the *Fruition* of Dzogpachenpo, which is complete enlightenment and liberation: realizing the wisdom of dharmakaya, and on a manifest level attaining the buddha body. Many Dzogchen practitioners have attained the 'rainbow body', transmuting their physical bodies into their light nature at the time of death.<sup>7</sup>

Yet, "Until one attains the fully awakened enlightened state," advises Dudjom Rinpoche, "one should always value the relative aspect of phenomena and be mindful of the non-duality of appearances and their empty nature.... Though different forms are perceived, they are in essence empty; yet in emptiness one perceives forms. Though different sounds are heard, they are empty; yet in the emptiness one perceives sounds. Also different thoughts arise; they are empty, yet in the emptiness one perceives thoughts."

The View of Dzogpachenpo is the ultimate view of all; it is not just another view in an ordinary philosophical sense, one which you can arrive at through intellectual analysis or deduction. Rather it is the fruition and culmination of all spiritual training of study, reflection and meditation, and of all purification, that transcendent state in which the obscurations of mind are eliminated. In fact, Sakya Pandita maintained: "Atiyoga is not a mere view, but the fruition of all yanās." All teachings are seen within the all-inclusive vision of Dzogpachenpo, and so, from that perspective, it is often said that the Ground is Madhyamaka, the Path is Mahamudra, and the Fruition is Dzogpachenpo. The View in which all the dharmas of samsara and nirvana are realized to be, in their inherent nature, emptiness is the Ground, the Madhyamaka. In order to realize that personally, within the nature of your mind as the unity of emptiness and clarity, the Path is Mahamudra. And the ultimate realization, which is termed the 'naturally arising Rigpa', or 'wisdom gone beyond the mind' is the Fruition, Dzogpachenpo.

## THE HEART OF DZOGCHEN PRACTICE

The practice of Dzogchen, though seemingly quite simple, is extremely profound; the more and more you practise, the deeper and more vast it becomes and the more you realize that everything is gathered into and radiates out of the essential 'point' of Dzogpachenpo. In Dzogchen practice, the main point is to be as *natural* as possible, by releasing and relaxing effortlessly into your nature, into Rigpa. You just allow all confusion to dissolve into the absolute, and you assume your sky-like nature. The spirit of this is expressed so well by Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche:

Rest in natural great peace  
This exhausted mind  
Beaten helplessly by karma and neurotic thought  
Like the relentless fury of pounding waves  
In the infinite ocean of samsara.<sup>8</sup>

With the confidence and humour of the View, you can afford to relax the heart, in carefree abandon. And it may happen that you ask yourself the question, When is it Rigpa, and when is it not? As Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche points out: "If you are in an unaltered state, it is Rigpa." This means that if you are not in any way contriving or manipulating, but just leave your mind in its natural state then *that* is Rigpa. When you are contriving or manipulating, that is *not* Rigpa. This one simple difference points to the heart of Dzogpachenpo.

As you begin, you should sit very inspiringly, like a rocket rising. Rise up, undistracted, clear and awake! This inspiration is the key to the quality of your sitting and to Dzogchen practice. If you sit very inspiringly, you will find that even your body responds and becomes more agreeable. In Dzogchen your posture should be like a *mountain*—inspiring and majestic, yet without any rigidity or tension at all. There is a quality of really letting your mind rise and soar and fly. Many of the Dzogchen chants echo that feeling of rising up and soaring into the sky, like an eagle or a garuda<sup>9</sup> in flight and your body expresses that state of your mind. If you are in an inspiring state of mind, even your posture will say so.



*Tubten Chökyi Dorje, the 7th Dzogchen Rinpoche*

In Dzogchen, in meditation it is said that not only one's posture, but also one's *View* should be like a mountain. There is an interesting connection between the bodily posture and the *View*. You sit in the inspiration of the *View*, so that your *View* inspires your posture. It is almost as if the *View* becomes the core of your being, and expresses it in your posture. And however strong the wind blows, it does not topple the mountain. It remains firm and steadfast, yet completely relaxed and at ease with itself. It sits without sitting. A mountain just *is*, it needs no confirmation. Look at the great Dzogchen masters, like Tubten Chökyi Dorje, or Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, and the way that they sit: they *are* like a mountain. Your trust, your *View*, your understanding, your attitude, and your spaciousness should be like the mountain. Or like a Kathmandu cow. In India and Nepal the cow is so sacred that if you kill a cow or knock one down it is more serious a crime than killing a human being. The cows know that. So even if you keep sounding your horn, they do not budge. They just move gracefully on their

way, with confidence.

The eyes should be kept open. When you begin to practise, sometimes it can be helpful to close your eyes for a while and quietly go into your 'soft spot', especially if you feel disturbance from outside. Once you have established that centredness, then you gradually open your eyes, because there is no intention in Dzogchen practice to run away from anything. You should actually experience the *nature* of everything, and not slip into some state of absorption or trance, nor experience an altered state of consciousness, or 'blissed-out' state.

In Dzogchen it is said your gaze should be like the *ocean*. Also it is said that your *Meditation* should be like an ocean, vast and profound. Your gaze and your Meditation, or how you leave your mind, are linked; both are all-pervasive, like the ocean. Your gaze is your meditation, because in meditation you are expressing your View. Your eyes are like those of the Buddha, long eyes which see and understand everything. In the bodhisattva path it is said that compassion shines out through the eyes, like Chenrezi, 'Lord of Compassion', whose very name signifies 'the compassionate eyes which see the needs of all'. Or His Holiness the Dalai Lama, for example, whose gaze, along with his laughter and his very being, embody that compassion.


In Dzogchen, you do not shut off your senses; you just stay with them, alive. As Dudjom Rinpoche advises:

You leave everything fresh, natural, vivid, and unspoiled. When you leave each thing in its own state, then its shape does not change, its colour does not fade, and its glow does not disappear.

Therefore you keep your eyes open. In Dzogchen, there is a practice where you put your awareness into your eyes and your eyes into the sky, unifying your Rigpa with space, and using the nature of the sky to inspire your own sky-like nature.

Then there are other reasons why the eyes should not be closed. First of all, if you close your eyes you can fall asleep more easily. Very few people fall asleep with their eyes open. Yet the deeper significance is that in Dzogchen, for example in the teaching of Tögal, the practice of luminosity, it is said that all the light of the wisdom-energy resides in the heart centre. In fact, the Primordial Buddha Samantabhadra, with his complete mandala, is said to rest in the heart. But at the moment this luminosity is obscured and hidden, as if a lamp were

placed inside a vase: the light cannot be seen from outside, but a little light emerges from the top. The top is like your eyes, which are connected via 'wisdom channels' with your heart. So in the Tögal practice of Dzogchen, the eyes are used very much to work with the light, which is why, generally, you keep your eyes open in order not to block this wisdom channel. Although Tögal is a very advanced practice, only taught to a student who has accomplished the practice of Trekchö, yet to practise in this way will create an auspicious condition for the future practice of Tögal.

 Then, you keep your mouth slightly open, as if about to say a deep, relaxing "Aaaaaah." The syllable 'A' represents the Prajñāparamita—the Mother of all the Buddhas, and also Dzogpachenpo. In certain guru yoga practices in Dzogchen, you simply use just a white 'A', unify your mind, and enter into the state of Rigpa. 'A' embodies all the Dzogchen masters, and 'A' is Rigpa. Just say "Aaaaaah." Your jaw is relaxed. This way you can breathe through the mouth or through the nose. In Dzogchen you are recommended to keep your mouth slightly open because then the obstacles that are provoked by the 'karmic winds' are less likely to arise. This is a special method of Dzogpachenpo.

Your hands are left relaxed, covering your knees. This is the posture called 'mind in comfort and ease'.

Then, what about the mind? There is a well-known Tibetan saying which goes:

Chu ma nyok na dang  
Sem ma chö na dé

meaning: if you don't stir the water, it will clear by itself; if you don't alter or manipulate the mind, but leave it in its natural state, it becomes spontaneously at peace.

Therefore if you do not alter your mind but leave it, as it is, there is peace and bliss. All the different instructions given for meditation are only so many means of arriving at a *point of courage*, a warm atmosphere, from within which you can let go, and just leave your mind in the state of Rigpa. In Dzogchen, the way we sit is even free of sitting. As my master Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö says in his *Heart Advice*:

Remain is only an expression—

In reality it is totally free of that which remains and remaining itself.

Very naturally, leave your mind in the Rigpa. Let it settle and purify itself. And simplify. Whilst you just remain present, focused, and unaltered. This serves as a meditative preliminary to the introduction of Rigpa.

Now here there is a danger of misunderstanding the true meaning of Dzogpachenpo. These days there is a rather naive and simplistic tendency to misunderstand 'naturalness'. Many people imagine that, by just being natural, they can expect the Rigpa to arise. Simply by talking about the 'unaltered' or natural state, however, does not mean at all that you will arrive automatically at the state of Dzogpachenpo. In fact naturalness is stressed at all levels of the teaching, for the simple reason that when you are unnatural, it obscures the nature of mind. So in all practices, the practitioner is advised not to follow past thoughts, nor invite future thoughts, but to remain, attentively, in the present moment. Whatever the focus of the practice, for instance in shamatha or vipashyana, one is advised to remain 'naturally' in the awareness of the present.

In Dzogchen the very same word, naturalness, *ma chö pa* in Tibetan, is used, but it refers to something quite different: it refers to the natural and unaltered state of dharmata that was arrived at through the meditative investigation and through the master's introduction to the wisdom of Rigpa which followed. Otherwise, when you simply remain naturally, you are only resting in the nature of alaya, not Rigpa. The difference, as is said in Dzogchen, is 'greater than that between the earth and the sky.'

But...this is easier said than done! It points to how important it is in Dzogchen to actually realize *directly* the state of Rigpa. This is the crucial point, the dividing line. Otherwise there is always the danger of falling into conceptual traps, even when we talk about Rigpa, and ending up like those of whom Patrul Rinpoche remarked: "Even though they might proclaim such terms as 'emptiness' and 'dharmakaya', these are nothing more than mind-made concepts which they are just repeating." Dudjom Rinpoche adds: "Plenty of people know how to talk about it quite glibly, but they do not know how to practise it, and it is just something they recite like a parrot saying its prayers."

## THE SPIRIT OF DZOGCHEN

The spirit of Dzogchen is very much an attitude, one which springs from a deep confidence and trust. The trust comes from the realization of the true meaning of the teaching of Dzogpachenpo and from your personal experience, through practice. It is a trust in your ultimate nature, that you have the buddha, the wisdom of Rigpa, which exists even in spite of all your confusion. It is there, self-present.

What hinders us from realizing the wisdom of our Rigpa is the obscuration perpetuated by our thinking mind. So you send the thinking mind on holiday, or deport it, because it is an illegal immigrant. You don't issue it a visa. If you just leave your mind quietly in its own natural state, then out of that comes the real settling, calming, and clearing, from which arises the nature of mind—whatever that may be!

For it is important as well not to have some idea about what the nature of mind is, because when you do you will end up contemplating an idea, and that is not the point at all. Here you are simply in the true nature of your being, rather than contemplating an idea about the nature of mind, which becomes just a concept. That is why neither of the terms 'meditation' or 'contemplation' are really so appropriate for Dzogchen, because they both ultimately imply contemplating or meditating *on* something, rather than being in a particular state or view and resting in that state. We have to use the word 'non-meditation', to describe this non-dual meditation.

In Dzogchen practice, you go beyond the clouds, to reach your sky-like nature, the non-conceptual, non-dual aspect of your mind. That absolute state is the pure or pristine awareness of Rigpa, the state of the wisdom mind of all the buddhas. The main point of the practice is to strengthen and to stabilize this Rigpa, and to let it grow to maturity. As Dudjom Rinpoche used to say, at present our Rigpa is 'like a little baby left on the battlefield of arising thoughts'. We need to babysit our Rigpa.

Our absolute state or the state of Dzogpachenpo is always perfect and never spoiled by our confusion. As Dudjom Rinpoche says:

Such a state of ultimate awareness, the primordial nature of which is empty, has never been ennobled by the buddhas, nor degenerated by beings in their confusion for it is uncreated, yet spontaneously accomplished.

From the Dzogpachenpo point of view, our inherent nature is the Primordial Buddha Samantabhadra, just like the sky. Even though there may be many clouds, the sky itself always remains unstained. Or sometimes the nature of mind is likened to a mirror, open and clear, which reflects everything, yet is never dirtied or stained by the reflections.

This mirror-like nature of our mind is what we have to be reminded of, time and time again. When we remember the purity of the inherent nature of our Rigpa, there arises a tremendous inspiration, hope, and confidence, and in this state we can dissolve all confusion, because confusion is cloud-like, only a temporary obscuration, and does not have the quality of absolute reality. When you can remain in that sky-like nature, it is like a trust, like the earth which can bear the weight of everything.

With the inspiration of the teachings, and with that confidence of the absolute, of the View in one's heart, one relaxes into one's nature and rests there. And if you can find that kind of trust and confidence in yourself, it allows you to relax more. It gives rise to a spaciousness, contentment and generosity, which you could call the 'buddha humour'. When the clarity of Rigpa dawns there is an all-pervasive feeling of goodness and tremendous inspiration, a sense of transcendence and uplift, as if you were rising above everything.

Remaining in the confidence and clarity of Rigpa allows all our thoughts and emotions to naturally liberate, like writing on water, or painting in the sky. That kind of understanding is how the ocean itself views the waves. Dudjom Rinpoche points out:

...If you do not recognize this thought for what it is the moment it arises, then it will turn into just an ordinary thought, as before. This is called the 'chain of delusion', and is the root of samsara. On the other hand, if you are just able to recognize the nature of the thought as soon as it arises, and leave it alone without any follow-up, then whatever thoughts arise all automatically dissolve back into the vast expanse of the Dharmakaya Rigpa and are liberated.

Once the View of Dzogpachenpo is realized, then there is no longer any doubt. In the story of the 'Six Blind Men and the Elephant' each of the blind men, limited by their lack of vision, is only able to describe the part of the elephant they can feel. Being able to see the whole



elephant is like having the overall view, the sight of Rigpa. All doubts are dispelled by the confidence and certainty that arise from having directly realized the View of Rigpa, which is then stabilized through the practice of Dzogpachenpo. Through this stability, as Rigpa is brought into the open, you have a clear confidence that whatever arises is naturally liberated, like shining a light into darkness. "In an instant", said Guru Rinpoche, "it clears away the darkness of aeons." With the light of the View of Rigpa, you can see through to the true nature of whatever rises; there is no longer any deception.

Many people find that by far the most important feature of Dzogchen is its style, its attitude, and its *feeling*, qualities which grant tremendous relief in the ease and freedom they bring, and the absolute humour they shine onto our relative reality. As Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche says, once you have this View of Dzogpachenpo, although the delusory perceptions of samsara may arise in your mind, you will be like the sky; when a rainbow appears in front of it, it is not particularly flattered, and when clouds appear, it is not particularly disappointed either. There is a deep sense of contentment. You chuckle from inside, as you see the façade of samsara and nirvana; the View will keep you constantly bemused, with a little, inner smile bubbling away all the time.

The *profoundness* of the Dzogchen teaching lies in its tremendous clarity and vividness, its power to resonate the Truth as a living, vital experience. In fact for someone who is a true vessel for the Dzogchen teaching, and who has a very deep karmic connection with it, just to hear about Dzogchen can inspire the View. For Dzogpachenpo itself is not just a teaching, but a state, the absolute state. The teaching is a means, and a very powerful one, which links the absolute with the conditioned and relative. Yet the *wonder* of the Dzogchen path is that it does not stain the absolute with concepts, but still speaks of it in conventional terms, bringing the Truth here into this world, and into our lives, even before we become completely enlightened. The spirit of Dzogchen starts to penetrate and permeate the fabric of our everyday experience. Even though we may be imperfect at this point, we can begin to glimpse our 'perfect-ness'. All the buddhas are embodied within us, complete—that is why it is called Dzogpachenpo! They are already there, so there is no need to go out looking for them elsewhere. That would be, just like Patrul Rinpoche said, to leave your elephant at home and go out searching for its footprints in the forest.

## THE PATH

Dzogchen is an extraordinary teaching, a path through which, as Dudjom Rinpoche says: "Even the most hardened criminal can directly and speedily attain buddhahood." Yet whilst it is said to be for those of the highest capacity, even within Dzogchen there are supreme, middling, and average categories. For the supreme student, it can bring about complete enlightenment in an instant. It is said, for example, that when the first human Dzogchen master Garab Dorje sat down to receive the teaching of Dzogpachenpo from Vajrasattva, he was an ordinary being, and when he got up afterwards, he was already a buddha. The second case was Padmasambhava, and the third was Chetsün Senge Wangchuk.<sup>10</sup> These are the three great examples of *chik charwa*, beings who were enlightened directly without even having to practise, simply by hearing the teaching once.

Yet for most of us it does not follow that if we hear the Dzogchen teachings we will become spontaneously enlightened. It has a great deal to do with the purification of karma, as well as with past aspirations and prayers, which, when they mature, enable a person to understand the true meaning of Dzogpachenpo. For example, Vairochana taught the Dzogchen teaching to an old man, Pang Gen Mipham Gönpö, who had reached the age of eighty-five, and had not practised in his youth. On the very day he requested to be introduced to the nature of mind, there and then he realized it, and he was so beside himself with joy that he embraced Vairochana and held onto him, refusing to let him go the whole day long. He lived to be one hundred and twelve and attained the rainbow body. He played an important part in the transmission of Dzogchen, and it is said that in his lineage *everyone* attained the rainbow body. No doubt many old folk received teachings from Vairochana, but *he* attained realization because of the ripening of his past karma and aspirations!

Then again, in Dzogchen it is said the nature of mind is introduced upon the dissolution of the conceptual mind, but this implies that it is taken for granted that a student would have performed the practices preliminary to this, such as the investigation of the mind, so that when the introduction is made, they can truly realize the meaning of the introduction. Otherwise, as Patrul Rinpoche points out:

Amidst the turbulence of arising thoughts, the gross arising thoughts which run after the objects of perception obscure the actual face of mind itself. So, even if the nature of mind were introduced, one would not recognize it.

Nyoshul Lungtok was a very great Dzogchen master, who followed his teacher Patrul Rinpoche for about eighteen years.<sup>11</sup> They were almost inseparable, so great was the love and devotion between them. Patrul Rinpoche, who was from the Dzachukha region of Kham in East Tibet, always used to call him *a-mi*, an affectionate way of saying 'my son'. Nyoshul Lungtok would keep telling Patrul Rinpoche that he had not yet got the main point, of realizing the Rigpa. Maybe he had, but he really wanted to be sure, so he kept on asking him. Then Patrul Rinpoche gave him the introduction. It happened one evening, whilst Patrul Rinpoche was staying up in one of the retreat centres above Dzogchen monastery. It was a very beautiful night; the sky was clear, and the stars were very bright. It was very quiet, and the sound of solitude was heightened by the distant barking of a dog from the monastery down below.

Nyoshul Lungtok had not asked him anything that evening, and Patrul Rinpoche called him over, saying: "Didn't you tell me that you still hadn't got the main point of the practice of Dzogchen?" Nyoshul Lungtok replied: "Yes, that's right."

"It's very simple", he said, and lying down on the ground, he beckoned to him: "My son, come and lie down here like your father." So Nyoshul Lungtok did so. Then Patrul Rinpoche asked him, in a very affectionate way: "Do you see the stars in the sky?" "Yes." "Do you hear the dogs barking from the Dzogchen monastery?" "Yes." "Do you hear what I am saying to you?" "Yes." "Well, the nature of Dzogpachenpo is just—simply *this*."

At that moment, everything fell into place, and instantaneously Nyoshul Lungtok was completely realized. The words Patrul Rinpoche used were by no means extraordinary or esoteric; in fact they were very ordinary. But beyond the words, something else was being communicated. When a disciple like Nyoshul Lungtok, who had complete devotion and receptivity to the true meaning of Dzogpachenpo, meets a master who is completely enlightened like Patrul Rinpoche, then the nature of Dzogpachenpo can be introduced in such an ordinary, and extraordinary way.

This is why there are preliminary practices and *purification* for Dzogchen. In Mahamudra, for example, there is a lot of emphasis on the practice of shamatha, through which the student develops the insight of vipashyana. The great Dzogchen master Adzom Drukpa made his students do three years of shamatha practice which consisted of simply considering the teacher as the Buddha. In general however in Dzogchen, the preliminary is the ngöndro practice,<sup>12</sup> which purifies and transforms the student's basic being, as well as having a parallel effect to shamatha of focusing the mind and making it more stable. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche stresses the importance of this practice:

Without the ngöndro, the main practice will not resist deluded thoughts, it will be carried away by circumstances, it will be unstable, and it will not reach its ultimate point.

Therefore a person embarking on the practice of Dzogchen follows a step-by-step path of study and practice, beginning with the outer preliminary (ngöndro) of contemplation on the precious human birth, death and impermanence, karma-cause and effect, and the frustrations of samsara. In the inner preliminary, there follow the practices of taking refuge, generating the awakened mind of bodhicitta, prostrations, Vajrasattva purification, mandala offering and the thirteen hundred thousand recitations of the Vajra Guru Mantra as part of Guru Yoga. Then the practitioner progresses to the practice of sadhana, the generation and completion phases of *kyérim* and *dzogrim*, and then the yoga practices of *tsalung*. Having been directly introduced by the teacher to the nature of mind through the *Rigpé Tsal Wang*, the empowerment of Rigpa, the student then follows the actual path of Dzogchen Atiyoga. As Patrul Rinpoche says:

From the difficulty of gaining fortunate human birth,  
Up to Mantrayana, generation and completion phases,  
To the direct approach of Dzogchen (Trekchö),  
to strip the mind naked of its pretenses:  
There is no dharma which is not included here.

Dudjom Rinpoche points out:

A full understanding and realization of the true essence of Dzogpachenpo depends entirely on these preliminary practices of

ngöndro. For as Je Drikhungpa said: "Other teachings stress the profoundness of the main practice, but we here stress the profoundness of the preliminary practice"—and that is just how it is.

It should always be remembered that Dzogchen cannot be studied simply by reading books, but only through meeting and following a qualified master who embodies the complete realization of Dzogpachenpo, and who, once the preliminaries have been completed, will introduce his student to the teaching of Dzogchen. His Holiness the Dalai Lama underlines the paramount importance of this point:

In order to engage in the practices of Trekchö and Tögal, first of all the practitioner requires training in the preliminary practices. One fact that you must bear in mind is that the practices of Dzogchen, such as Trekchö and Tögal, can only be achieved through the guidance of an experienced master, and through receiving the inspiration and blessing from a living person who has himself the realization. Only through such close contact with a perfectly realized master can one accomplish the realization of Dzogchen practice.<sup>13</sup>

Even the great masters of the past, such as Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra, also followed teachers. As it is said, "Without the master, even the name 'Buddha' is not heard."

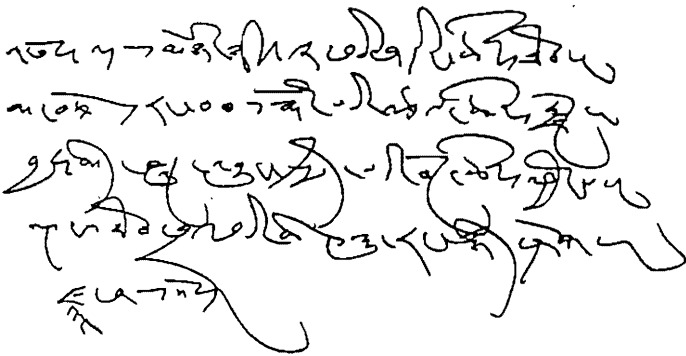
Even though Dzogchen itself is *not* a gradual path, one of 'sudden enlightenment', yet in order to ripen the student it must be taught step-by-step according to their capacity of understanding and their experience. This is why it is transmitted through the great method of *Mengak Nyongtri Chenpo*, the secret know-how and direct method of realizing the absolute, handed down from the wisdom mind of the masters and related to the experience of the student to enable them to realize their absolute nature.

Therefore the importance of meeting and following a qualified teacher cannot be over-emphasized. For when the real meaning of Dzogpachenpo is pointed out, if there is no way that the student can realize it, it leaves plenty of scope for falling into a conceptual misunderstanding, and thereby completely missing the point. Also, as Dudjom Rinpoche observes: "It is because the Dzogpachenpo is so very profound that there will be obstacles, just as making a great profit entails a great risk." The guidance of a qualified master is imperative.

Otherwise it might be easy for the practitioner to be led astray, especially when they reach a deeper, more advanced state and there is that much more room for deception.

In the Dzogchen guidelines it is stressed that in order to fully realize the true meaning of Dzogpachenpo, *three authentics* must be present: an authentic master, an authentic student, and an authentic lineage of the method of introduction. First the authentic master must meet an authentic student. Then the method is of crucial importance. For a master might give the introduction non-methodically, but if a student does not catch on, he or she will misunderstand the point of the introduction entirely, and just be left totally baffled. Hence the true understanding of Dzogchen depends upon an 'authentic lineage of the method of introduction', that very same method which made the masters of the past themselves attain realization.

The following prayer was spontaneously composed and given to me by H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche on the occasion when he first taught *Hitting the Essence in Three Words* in Europe, to an assembly of thirteen disciples in Paris. It is reproduced in Dudjom Rinpoche's own hand:



May we obtain the great confidence of the View  
Where both samsara and nirvana are one.

May we greatly perfect and strengthen Meditation  
Which is naturally resting in the unaltered state.

May we greatly accomplish the Action  
Of non-action, which is naturally arrived at.

May we self-find the Dharmakaya  
Which is free of obtaining and abandoning.



*Padmasambhava*

## THE LOTUS-BORN GURU

Whereas Buddha is principally known for having taught the Sutrayana teachings—even though he did teach the Tantras in secret, Padmasambhava came to this world, and to Tibet in particular, in order to teach the Tantra. So whilst Buddha Shakyamuni represents the buddha principle, the most important element in the Sutrayana path, Padmasambhava personifies the guru principle, the heart of Vajrayana Buddhism, and is therefore known as *sangyé nyipa*, the second buddha.

As Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche explains:

According to the general approach of the buddhadharma, the story of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni begins from the moment of his enlightenment in India at Vajrasana (Dorjeden), the modern Bodhgaya. Buddha turned the wheel of dharma on three occasions, and finally passed into parinirvana. Then Padmasambhava came to follow up his teachings, and especially to turn the wheel of the Secret Mantra Vajrayana teachings. Whereas Buddha gave the fundamental teachings, and opened up the ground, it was Padmasambhava who introduced the teachings of the Vajrayana.<sup>14</sup>

Padmasambhava, or *Padmakara* in Sanskrit, *Pemajungné* in Tibetan, means 'the lotus-born'. The lotus symbolizes the Padma or lotus family to which all human beings belong. Although the lotus grows in muddy swamps, yet it always produces an immaculate, pure flower. In the same manner, although we have negative emotions, such as desire, their inherently pure wisdom-energy can be allowed to blossom. Therefore confusion does not have to be abandoned; it can be transmuted into wisdom. The principle of the lotus represents this power of transmutation.

So Padmasambhava is the embodiment of the vision of tantra and of transmutation; he is the transformative blessing of all the buddhas. He is therefore particularly powerful in this day and age, when negative emotions are stronger, and confusion greater than ever before. It is said that the more confusion and difficulties there are, the more



powerful he is. When Tibetan people need blessing or protection, their natural reflex is to invoke Padmasambhava, and when great masters face crises, even they too call out to him, as if he were their SOS.

Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche continues:

Now, according to the extraordinary path of Dzogpachenpo, Buddha is actually the true nature of our own mind, our inherent Rigpa or pure awareness. Where did he become enlightened? In the all-encompassing space of dharmadhatu. From this point of view, events such as his manifestation as the historical Buddha, in Vajrasana, for example, are seen simply as an outer display.

The 'Primordial Buddha' dwells nowhere but in the nature of our Rigpa, the realm of *Akanishtha*.<sup>15</sup> From out of the space of dharmadhatu he manifests, for the benefit of bodhisattvas, as the sambhogakaya buddhas of the five families: Vairochana, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, and Amoghasiddhi. For this world of ours, he manifested in a nirmanakaya form as the historical Buddha Shakyamuni. In reality, though, he was no other than an emanation of the Primordial Buddha Samantabhadra who is in our own heart, our own Rigpa.

Later he manifested as Padmasambhava, the eighty-four mahasiddhas, and the great masters of India, such as: Nagarjuna, Asanga, Aryadeva, Vasubandhu, Dignaga, Dharmakirti, Shakyaprabha, and Gunaprabha, known as the *Six Ornaments and Two Excellent Ones*. For other worlds, he manifested in various ways, for each different being in their own way, appearing as a bird amongst the birds, as an animal amongst animals, and so on.

Whereas the Primordial Buddha Samantabhadra is our Rigpa on an absolute level, the nature or quality of the wisdom of Rigpa is radiant and endowed with luminosity, like the sun with its unchanging and unceasing radiance. This quality of the unceasing luminosity of the primordial nature is that *Limitless Light* or *Unchanging Light* which we call Buddha Amitabha, *Öpamé* or *Nangwatayé* in Tibetan.

ཨ་མི་ཏཱ་མ་པ་

From his heart, the Buddha Amitabha, who is the same as Samantabhadra, sent out tremendous rays of light in the form of the syllable HRIH, which descended into the north-western land of Oddiyana,<sup>16</sup> and onto the lake of Dhanakosha. In the same way as the essence of

father and mother give birth to a child and form the seed of our elemental body, Padmasambhava's birth generated from this seed syllable HRIH.

At that moment all the buddhas of the ten directions, together with hundreds of thousands of dakinis from different celestial realms, invoked the blessings and the incarnation of all the buddhas for the benefit of beings. This invocation of theirs is known as the 'Seven Verses of the Vajra', or the 'Seven Line Prayer.' It is the *Spontaneous Song of Peace of the Dharmadhatu*. This is the most important prayer, since it is the invocation through which Guru Rinpoche came into this world of ours.

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*The Seven Line Prayer and the Vajra Guru Mantra*

As Guru Rinpoche was born within a lotus flower upon the waters of the lake, the dakinis called out to him from their hearts, and their call spontaneously became the Vajra Guru Mantra. So this mantra is his heart mantra, his life-core, his heart essence, and to recite it is to invoke his very being.

Then the King of Oddiyana, Indrabodhi, took charge of him. As Padmasambhava had manifested on a nirmanakaya level, he had to act accordingly, and even though in reality he was already a buddha, he pretended that he needed to receive teachings and accomplish the practice, in order to demonstrate that he had come as successor to the Buddha and to continue his work. As he was born eight years after Buddha's parinirvana, he went to Vajrasana, where he studied under Buddha's closest disciple

Ananda. Then he went to all the Eight Great Vidyadhara masters, received the Secret Mantrayana teachings and practised them. In particular, in a pure vision he met Garab Dorje, the first human Dzogchen master, and went through the motions of receiving the Dzogchen teachings. He manifested the display of attaining complete realization.

Padmasambhava came to this world to accomplish three main aims. In general, he came to help the beings of the six realms. Then, his historical mission was to bring the light of the Dharma and the teachings of Dzogchen to the land of Tibet. It is owing to his kindness and his single-handed efforts that the teaching in Tibet has lasted for well over a thousand years. Now the teachings of Padmasambhava have come to the West, where once he was unknown, and this indeed is a sign of his blessing, a mark of his compassion and power. Thirdly, each buddha has a particular mission, and Padmasambhava's specific mission is to come in this dark age, the 'dregs of time', the kaliyuga.

The Dzogchen teachings were transmitted in Tibet primarily by Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and Vairochana, and that this transmission happened at all was mainly as a result of Padmasambhava's kindness. Under his guidance, at a retreat in Chuwori sponsored by King Trisong Detsen, out of one hundred retreatants, ninety-nine attained the rainbow body; the only one who did not was Palgyi Dorje. Padmasambhava had twenty-five close disciples who were the first mahasiddhas of Tibet, and of these all attained the rainbow body except Trisong Detsen. At Drak Yerpa, eighty students all became mahasiddhas, attained the rainbow body and never came out of retreat; there were thirty siddhas of Yangzom who all attained realization, fifty-five *tokden* (realized beings) of Sheldrak, twenty-five dakinis who attained the rainbow body, and there were also the seven siddhas of Tsang. All these, and so many more, attained the rainbow body and realization through the power and blessing of Padmasambhava. And this is because Padmasambhava is the Buddha of this time; his speciality is working with the negativity of this particular age, in which he is the quickest to act and most powerful.

When the time came for him to depart from Tibet, Padmasambhava left for the land of Ngayab Ling in the southwest, and the Copper

Coloured Mountain, Zangdokpalri. "There," writes Dudjom Rinpoche, "he manifested the inconceivable Palace of Lotus Light, and there he presides as king, with one of his manifestations in each of the eight continents of the rakshasas, giving teachings like the Eight Great Methods of Attainment of the Kagyé, and protecting the people of this world of Jambudvipa from fears for their life. Even to this day, he reigns as the regent of Vajradhara, the 'Vidyadhara with spontaneous accomplishment of the ultimate path'; and thus he will remain, without ever moving, until the end of the universe."

There are many forms of Padmasambhava. The first is called Tötrenge De Nga: the five families of Padmasambhava: Vajra Tötrenge, Ratna Tötrenge, Padma Tötrenge, Karma Tötrenge, and Buddha Tötrenge. Then there are the Eight Manifestations of Padmasambhava: Tsokyé Dorje, Padmasambhava, Loden Choksé, Pema Gyalpo, Nyima Özer, Shakya Senge, Sengé Dradok, and Dorje Drolö. There are the six Guru Rinpoches that manifest to help the hell realms, the hungry ghost realm, the animal realm, the human realm; the demi-god realm, and the god realm. These six Guru Rinpoches work against the six negative emotions. There are also twelve manifestations of Guru Rinpoche (Nam trul Chu Nyi) against various obstacles and fears that arise in our life, and many others.<sup>17</sup>

In the practice of *Sampa Lhundrupma* (*The Spontaneous Fulfilment of all Wishes*), there are thirteen emanations of Guru Rinpoche: against war, against illness, against famine and deprivation, Guru Rinpoche the same as the yidam, for travel, for protection against wild animals, for the elements, against robbery, against assailants, for the moment of death, for the bardo, against mental illness, and against suffering in the world at large.

Buddha himself said: "I came in a dream-like manner and taught a dream-like dharma, but in reality I did not teach at all, it all arose simply out of the needs of beings." Just as whatever appears in front of a mirror is reflected within it, so the teachings appeared according to the need of beings. In the same way, the Eight Manifestations of Padmasambhava are not different Padmasambhavas, but reflect his ability to appear according to needs and demands. In fact, they are called in Tibetan *Guru Tsen Gyé*, (*Eight Names of the Guru*). So, for example, for scholars he appeared as the learned pandita Guru Padmasambhava; as a great buddha Guru Shakya Sengé, he proclaimed the Mahayana; as the prince who administered the kingdom



*An aspect of Padmasambhava for Peace, with, above, Padmasambhava of Great Bliss, Guru Dewachenpo. A visionary thangka commissioned by the great Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, and photographed recently in Tibet by Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche*

with great statesmanship, he appeared as Guru Pema Gyalpo; as a yogin he appeared as Guru Nyima Özer, and so on: each manifestation demonstrating a different principle.

“If you pray to Guru Rinpoche fervently,” says Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, “there is no doubt that he will actually appear to you. For there is no other buddha who has manifested in visions to practitioners as often as has Guru Rinpoche. Some of the great tertöns,<sup>18</sup> Ratna Lingpa for example, had as many as twenty-five visions of Guru Rinpoche. Other major tertöns had twenty, others ten, some six, and all the thousand minor tertöns had at least three visions each, making many thousands of visions in all.

The details of these visions are very precisely recorded, for example: the date, the place, and the manner in which they occurred, and the teachings and prophecies Padmasambhava gave. These teachings have subsequently been written down very clearly, and practised later by other masters, many of whom have attained the rainbow body through their authentic power. This all demonstrates just how powerful Guru Rinpoche is, and how quick he is to act. If you practise him, success on the path will come more swiftly. No buddha or master has appeared as many times as Guru Rinpoche; he seems to be the most active of them all.”



*Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö*

## THE GURU PRINCIPLE

When we talk about the lama, the master or the guru principle, it is important to remember that the guru is not merely a person. The guru represents the inspiration of truth; he embodies the crystallization of the blessing, compassion and wisdom of all buddhas and all masters.

As my master Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö used to explain, although our true nature is buddha, yet from beginningless time it has been obscured by a cloud of ignorance and confusion. But despite this obscuration, our buddha-nature, or the truth within, has never surrendered to ignorance, and rebels against its confusion. This is our *inner teacher* or guru, the *active* aspect of our buddha-nature, which from the very moment when we became confused has been working for us to bring us back to our true nature. It has never given up on us; in its infinite compassion, it has been tirelessly working for our evolution, not only in this life, but in all our past lives, using all kinds of means and situations in order to teach us and guide us back to the truth. Even from an ordinary point of view, we realize that life is always teaching us. And though it may be a teaching that we often do not want, we cannot run away from this truth, for life continues to teach us. This is the universality of the guru.

As a result of our past aspirations and prayers, and our purified karma, this inner teacher actually begins to manifest more clearly and take shape in the form of the *outer teacher* whom we actually encounter. In fact, the outer teacher is none other than the spokesman of our inner teacher. He teaches us how to receive the message of our inner teacher, and how to realize the ultimate teacher within, restoring a belief and confidence in ourselves and thereby freeing us from the suffering that comes from not knowing our true nature.

The outer teacher is a messenger, the inner teacher the truth. If someone wants to reach you on the telephone, for example, they call *your* number. In the very same way, the buddhas call you through your buddha-nature, your inner teacher. He is the direct line, but until you know how to listen and hear, it is your outer teacher who answers the phone. They work through him, to you. It is important not to lose the sense of this connection between the inner and outer teacher. The outer teacher is teaching you how to find yourself, how to find the



buddha in you. He is introducing you to yourself, and until you find the buddha within you, he is that substitute.

In the Dzogchen teachings Padmasambhava embodies this universal principle. He is regarded as the incarnation of the buddhas of the past, the representative of the buddhas of the present, and the source from whom all the future buddhas will come. He is the timeless guru, within whose being all masters are embodied. Many of the great masters of the Tibetan tradition have drawn inspiration from him, and *are* his emanations, like the rays that burst out from the sun. So if you connect with any one of them, they will eventually lead to him. His human connection with you is your teacher. It is through your teacher that you can recognize him.

For whatever you consider Padmasambhava to be, or whatever you consider your master to be, is what Dzogchen is. That absolute state of Dzogpachenpo is the *wisdom mind* of your teacher. So you do not regard him as an ordinary human being. What he embodies is the truth or wisdom that he touches and inspires in you. So for you he comes to embody the wisdom mind, so much so that just to think of him crystallizes all the teaching and practice into an essential flavour. The master is not separate from the teaching; in fact, he is the energy, truth, and compassion of the dharma. He is the embodiment of Dzogpachenpo, so whenever you think of your master or Padmasambhava, it invokes this blessing into your presence. This is the principal source of inspiration for Dzogchen practice.

As Kalu Rinpoche said in his last public teaching:

What we call the buddha, or the lama, is not material in the same way as iron, crystal, gold, or silver are. You should never think of them with this sort of materialistic attitude. The essence of the lama or buddha is emptiness; their nature, clarity; their appearance, the play of unimpeded awareness. Apart from that, they have no real, material form, shape, or colour whatsoever—like the empty luminosity of space. When we know them to be like that, we can develop faith, merge our minds with theirs, and let our minds rest peacefully. This attitude and practice are most important.<sup>19</sup>

We need to humanize the truth in order to make it accessible to us. Without that how could we possibly understand the absolute? For us,

the guru is the human face of the truth. And as Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche says, “There is no buddha who became enlightened without having relied upon a spiritual teacher.” You cannot realize the absolute within the domain of the ordinary mind. And the path beyond the mind is through the heart and through *devotion*. As Buddha told Shariputra, it is through devotion, and devotion alone, that one realizes the absolute. Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche points out:

According to Dzogchen and the special approach of the great Dzogchen master, Shri Singha, there is a way of recognizing the nature of mind solely through devotion. There are cases of practitioners who simply through their heart-felt devotion attained realization, even though their teacher had already passed away or was nowhere near them physically. Because of their prayers and devotion, the nature of mind was introduced. The most famous example is that of Longchenpa and Jigmé Lingpa.<sup>20</sup>

Dzogchen cannot be realized merely with the intellect or the thinking of the ordinary mind, but only through the purity of the heart. For Dzogchen is beyond mind; it is the wisdom of Rigpa, which can only be transmitted via a closeness of the heart between master and disciple. Devotion is naturally inspired when a teacher is able to open your innermost heart and offer you a glimpse of the nature of your mind. From this there comes a tremendous joy, appreciation, and gratitude to the one who has helped you to see, and to the truth that he embodies.

That heartfelt, uncontrived, genuine feeling is true devotion. True devotion is not some kind of adoration or worship on a mundane or conventional level, but simply the natural ability to invoke the warmth and blessing of the truth in times of need, through a genuine and pure devotion. It comes from having seen the View, and from this also comes tremendous compassion. As Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche explains: “Once you realize the true meaning of emptiness or Dzogpachenpo, effortless compassion arises for all beings who have not realized; if crying could express that compassion, you could cry without end.” These three: the View, devotion, and compassion, are indivisible, one flavour—the taste of dharma.



*H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche*

## GURU YOGA

The most powerful way to invoke the inspiration and view of Dzogchen is through the practice of guru yoga, 'merging with the mind of the guru.' That is why, throughout history, the great Dzogchen masters, such as Jigmé Lingpa, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, and Patrul Rinpoche for example, have treasured guru yoga as their innermost practice. Patrul Rinpoche would even recite the words of the guru yoga involuntarily when he rolled over in his sleep.

"On an ultimate level," says Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, "it is through Padmasambhava that we can realize the nature of mind and the meaning of Dzogchen or Mahamudra. For one cannot realize them without the practice of guru yoga. Guru yoga is the key."

The practice of guru yoga is a very subtle, yet powerful, method of relating to the truth in a human, personal way, and of opening one's heart to reveal the wisdom of Rigpa. The guru is a medium and invoking him a means. Because when you think of your master it evokes the very essence, the very flavour and feeling of enlightenment, of the View, and of Dzogchen. And devotion disarms all your negative emotions. In guru yoga you open your heart and your mind to the truth that the guru embodies.

Although the truth or the buddha is within us, when we are not able to realize it ourselves, we need to invoke it. It is extremely difficult, almost impossible, to enter into the state of the absolute without any inspiration, and if you do not have the confidence of the wisdom guru within you, then you need to find a way to inspire it through guru yoga, which invokes that presence, to warm your heart and bless your mind. As Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche points out: "If you look at your mind, when a very strong devotion arises and you meditate inspired by that devotion, what happens? You find that your meditation has much more feeling, clarity, bliss, and realization. Whereas you can just sit there dumbly meditating on emptiness, and think: 'I am meditating', but it will be quite flat."

Dudjom Rinpoche writes:

In particular, it is vital to put all your energy into the guru yoga, holding onto it as the life and heart of the practice. If you do not,

then your meditation will be very dull, and even if you do make a little progress, there will be no end to obstacles, and no possibility of true, genuine realization being born within the mind. Therefore by fervently praying with uncontrived devotion, after a while the direct blessing of the wisdom mind of the lama will be transmitted, thereupon empowering you with a unique realization, beyond words, born deep within your mind. Lama Shyang Rinpoche declared: "Continue the flow of relaxed stillness, continue the flow of inner experience, continue the flow of samadhi meditation." Though there are many such words of advice, yet rare indeed is that realization born within through the blessing of the lama, invoked by the power and strength of devotion.

There are four stages in the complete practice of guru yoga:

- invocation
- merging your mind with the guru by means of the mantra, then
- the receiving of the blessing or empowerment, and finally
- uniting one's mind with Padmasambhava or with the guru and resting in the nature of your Rigpa, the Absolute Lama.

## **1. Invocation**

Invocation begins with arousing the View of true devotion. As you sit, quietly, from the depth of your heart you invoke Padmasambhava, the embodiment of all the buddhas and all the masters, in the sky before you, in the person of your master. He should be visualized radiant, like a rainbow, and not flat like in a picture, nor solid like a statue of gold, nor empty. Consider that he has the blessings and qualities of the wisdom, compassion, and power of all the buddhas. For as Padmasambhava himself said: "Those who accomplish me accomplish all the buddhas; those who see me, see all the buddhas." As you invoke him, you call upon his help and inspiration to purify all your karma and negative emotions, and bring about the realization of your true nature. With that kind of plea, you invoke him very strongly, and unite your mind with him.

If you have difficulty relating to the form of Padmasambhava, you can simply consider that perfect presence, the presence of all the buddhas and masters, and invoke the truth in the form of light.

Invocation is as if you were bringing Padmasambhava into your

presence and into your heart. As you invoke, your mind is occupied with Padmasambhava or the feeling of Padmasambhava, transforming the whole environment of your heart and mind. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche says:

It is as if Padmasambhava himself is actually present. Recognizing this, visualize him and invoke him from the depths of your heart, saying: 'Guru Rinpoche, you take care of me!' Then there is *no doubt* that the blessing will enter your heart.

When we undertake a practice of visualization like this, we are entering the dimension of a sacred realm. It is to remind ourselves that the buddhas *are* there, for as Buddha himself said: "Whoever thinks of me, I am in front of them." You are not fabricating something, instead you are tuning in to the true nature of the pure environment, the buddha realm. You do not have to 'see' buddha realms, but simply let your heart enter into them. Intrinsically, all realms are the pure realms of the buddhas, yet at present on account of our karmic vision, we are unable to see them purely. This is the pure perception (*dag nang*), the sacred outlook.

When you invoke Padmasambhava you can do so by chanting the *Seven-Line Prayer*, the prayer that is most commonly used in the Nyingma and Dzogchen traditions. "To this very prayer, you can give your whole mind, in devotion," said Guru Rinpoche. He also said:

When a disciple calls upon me with yearning devotion,  
And with the melodious song of the Seven-Line Prayer,  
I shall come straightaway from Zangdokpalri,  
Like a mother who cannot resist the call of her child.

Feeling the presence of the Buddha, Padmasambhava, or your master and just opening your heart and mind, without concepts, to the embodiment of truth actually blesses and changes your mind. On the one hand, whether Buddha was actually there or not does not really matter as long as your feelings change and your mind is transformed; at the same time, buddhas are limitless, and just as the quality of water is to quench thirst and of fire to burn, so theirs is to come immediately whenever someone invokes them. Though on an absolute level Buddha is the true nature of our mind, even so, on a relative

level, as long as there are confused beings, there will be buddhas to help. Through the blessing of invocation, the buddha within you is inspired to blossom, like a flower in the sunshine. Because at the same time as you invoke all the buddhas, your buddha-nature is awakened.

## **2. Maturing the Blessing**

The essence of the practice of guru yoga is to unify your mind with Guru Rinpoche and say the mantra **OM AH HUM VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM** as much as possible. As you recite the mantra, you keep uniting your mind one with the guru, or you just quietly rest your mind in the nature of your guru. This is called 'maturing the blessing'. Through the blessing, your ordinary mind is realized into the wisdom mind of Guru Rinpoche. Your feelings and perception are transformed, as if suddenly the heavy clouds had lifted and everything had become clear.

The Vajra Guru Mantra is the very heart essence of Padmasambhava. It is also the mantra of all the masters, buddhas, yidams, dakas, dakinis, and protectors. When you chant it, you are invoking the very embodiment of Padmasambhava.

If you enter into the right inspiration and chant the mantra it can really transform your energy, and through that transform your mind and emotion. The definition of mantra is 'that which protects the mind'; it protects it from its own negativity. In other words, it protects you from your own mind. Even if you are not able to actualize the meaning of the mantra each time you chant, it is fine. You simply rest in the natural sound of the mantra, the 'natural sound of the vajra', as is done in Dzogchen practice. Your breath, your mind, and the mantra are one. You are working with *prana*, the breath, which is the most important medium of energy. If you chant inspiringly, all the subtle channels of your body resonate and vibrate with the sound of the mantra, and through this a great transformation of energy takes place. For the emotions are very closely connected with energy, and through chanting the mantra one can slowly find balance, poise and integration. In the Dzogchen tradition, mantra is often used as a preliminary to sitting meditation, to inspire samadhi, to ease nervous tension, and to defuse volatile emotions.



*Khyentse Sangyum, Khandro Tsering Chödrön*



As you say the mantra, you invest your mind and heart in the wisdom mind of Padmasambhava. You offer your 'heart and soul', and merge and mix your mind with your master. As you do that, something ferments, and what encourages that is the mantra. "Samadhi meditation is like a fire," it is said, "and mantra is like the wind." The wind of the mantra fans the fire of your meditation and fuels your realization. As this is the main part of the practice, you should spend time on this, to mature the blessing.

The main feeling is of gradually coming closer, and closing the gap between you and the wisdom mind of Guru Rinpoche. A simple practice like this is very important: simply focusing on the mind of the Guru. And if you keep merging your mind with him and saying the mantra, whatever problems you have will be dissolved—of that there is no doubt. As you unite your mind with Guru Rinpoche, sometimes it is almost as if you forget your mind... and it is when you forget your mind that you can find yourself in a state of Rigpa Guru Rinpoche. Your mind has matured and ripened into the wisdom mind of Guru Rinpoche, and in the state of his wisdom mind, are there *really* any problems?

### The Vajra Guru Mantra



The essential meaning of the Vajra Guru Mantra is: *I invoke you, the Vajra Guru, Padmasambhava, by your blessing may you grant us ordinary and supreme siddhis.*

The complete meaning, as explained by Dudjom Rinpoche and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, is as follows:

Externally, they are also the vajra body, vajra speech, and vajra mind of the buddhas. OM represents the blessing of the body of the buddhas, AH the blessing of the speech of the buddhas, and HUM the blessing of the wisdom mind of all the buddhas. OM is the essence of form, AH the essence of sounds, and HUM the essence of mind. OM purifies all negative actions committed through your body, AH purifies all negative actions committed through your speech, and HUM purifies all the negative actions committed through your mind.<sup>21</sup> You are empowered with the blessing and transformation of the body,

speech, and mind of all the buddhas.

Internally, OM purifies *tsa*, the channels or *nadis*. AH purifies *lung*, the *prana*, inner air or flow of energy. HUM purifies *tiklé*, *bindu*, the energy or creative essence. OM purifies all perceptions, AH purifies all sounds, and HUM purifies mind, thoughts, and emotions.

Secretly, OM AH HUM represent the three kayas: OM represents the dharmakaya aspect of the lotus family, Buddha Amitabha; AH represents the sambhogakaya aspect, Avalokiteshvara, and HUM represents the nirmanakaya aspect, Padmasambhava. This indicates that the three kayas are all embodied in the person of Guru Rinpoche.

Even more secretly, OM is compassion or energy (*tukjé*), AH is nature (*rangshyin*) and HUM is essence (*ngowo*).

VAJRA, or 'dorje' in Tibetan refers to the diamond, the hardest and most precious of all stones. The diamond can cut through all other substances, yet itself cannot be cut by any of them. In the very same way: the unchanging, non-dual wisdom of the buddhas cannot be affected or destroyed by ignorance; this wisdom can cut through all delusions and obscurations; and the qualities and activities of the body, speech and mind of the buddhas benefit beings without any hindrance from negative forces. Like a diamond, the vajra is free of any defects; its strength comes from the realization of the dharmakaya nature—the nature of Buddha Amitabha.

GURU means 'weighty', someone replete with all the wonderful qualities of wisdom and knowledge, who has tremendous presence and also fully embodies this wisdom. Just as gold is the most substantial and precious of metals, so the guru is the most substantial figure because of his inconceivable and flawless qualities, and also he is the most precious of all beings. Here the guru corresponds to the sambhogakaya and to Avalokiteshvara, 'Lord of Compassion'.

Since it was Guru Rinpoche himself who showed us the path of the Secret Mantra Vajrayana, and through its practice attained supreme realization, so he is the VAJRA GURU.

PADMA indicates the lotus family or speech aspect of the buddhas. As Padmasambhava is the direct emanation or nirmanakaya of the primordial Buddha Amitabha, who belongs to the lotus family, he is known as 'Padma', as in *Padmasambhava* or *Pemajungné*.

VAJRA also means the indestructible energy of enlightenment, the truth, which we pray that we may realize in our *View*. GURU represents the luminosity or perfection of the nature of mind, which we

pray that we may actualize in our *Meditation*. PADMA stands for 'compassion' or 'action', and we pray that we may accomplish the compassion of *Action*.

So: VAJRA is the View, GURU is Meditation, and PADMA is compassion in Action. VAJRA is dharmakaya, GURU is sambhogakaya and PADMA is nirmanakaya. VAJRA is essence, GURU is nature and PADMA is energy .

In short, we pray that we realize the confidence of the View of VAJRA, perfect the great skill of Meditation of the GURU and accomplish the compassionate Action of PADMA.

SIDDHI means 'real accomplishment', attainment, blessing and realization. There are two kinds of siddhis: ordinary and supreme. Through receiving the blessing of *ordinary siddhis*, all obstacles in our lives, such as ill-health, are removed, all our good aspirations are fulfilled, we obtain benefits like wealth and prosperity, and all life's circumstances become conducive to the realization of enlightenment. The blessing of the *supreme siddhi* brings about enlightenment itself, the state of complete realization of the Lotus-born Guru, for the benefit of both ourselves and others. By remembering and praying to the body, speech, mind, quality, and activity of the Lotus-born Guru, one will attain both ordinary and supreme accomplishments.

Siddhis can be divided into the outer accomplishment of the four karmas, the inner accomplishment of the eight siddhis, and the secret accomplishment of the supreme siddhi. Also they can be the outer accomplishment of the development stage (*kyérim*), the inner accomplishment of the *tsalung* practice of channels and winds, and the secret accomplishment of the realization of the nature of mind. SIDDHI HUM is said to draw in all the siddhis like a magnet that attracts iron filings.

HUM is the wisdom mind of the buddhas, and the catalyst for the mantra. So be it!

By the infinite truth of the dharmadhatu and the power and blessing of the wisdom mind of all the buddhas, may we actualize this mantra and may its power be accomplished: OM AH HUM VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM.

Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche goes on to explain:

It is said that the twelve syllables OM AH HUM VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM carry the entire blessing of the twelve types of teaching taught by Buddha, which are the essence of his 84,000 dharmas. Therefore to recite the Vajra Guru Mantra once is equivalent to the blessing of reciting the whole of the Tripitaka,<sup>22</sup> or practising the whole teaching of the Buddha. These twelve branches of the teaching are the antidotes to free us from the twelve links of interdependent origination, which keep us bound to samsara: ignorance, karmic formations, discursive consciousness, name and form, senses, contact, sensation, craving, grasping, existence, birth, old age, and death. They are the mechanism of samsara. Through reciting the Twelve Syllable Mantra, these twelve links are purified, and one is able to completely remove and purify the layer of karmic emotional defilements (kleshas), and be liberated from samsara.

Although we are not able to see Guru Rinpoche in person, his wisdom mind has manifested in the form of mantra; these twelve syllables are actually the emanation of his wisdom mind, and they are endowed with his entire blessing. The Vajra Guru Mantra is Guru Rinpoche in the form of sound. So when you invoke him with the recitation of the twelve syllables, the blessing and merit you obtain is tremendous. In these difficult times, just as there is no buddha or refuge that we can call upon who is more powerful than Padmasambhava, so there is no mantra that is more fitting than the Vajra Guru Mantra.

Further explanations of the Vajra Guru Mantra can be found in the terma revelation of Karma Lingpa, and in the writings of Dodrup Jigmé Tenpé Nyima.

### 3. Empowerment

When you reach the end of the mantra practice, maturing the blessing, and uniting with the wisdom mind of the guru, it culminates in the receiving of the empowerment, *abhisheka* in Sanskrit, which is the third phase of the guru yoga practice. It is explained here according to the practice of guru yoga in *Longchen Nyingtik*.

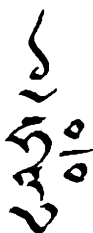
From a crystal white syllable OM in the forehead of Padmasambhava, stream out rays of white light which enter your forehead and



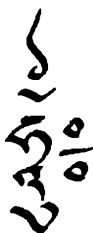
fill your whole body. This purifies all the negative karma accumulated through negative acts of the body, and purifies the channels (nadi, Skt.; tsa, Tib.). Thus you receive the blessing of the vajra body of Guru Rinpoche. This is the 'vase empowerment' (bum wäng), which empowers you for the practice of visualization (kyérim), and sows the seed for the attainment of the state of 'fully matured vidyadhara' and nirmanakaya realization.



From a ruby red syllable AH at Padmasambhava's throat stream out rays of red light which enter your throat and fill your whole body. This purifies all the negative karma accumulated through negative acts of the speech, and purifies the inner air (prana, Skt.; lung, Tib.). Thus you receive the blessing of the vajra speech of Guru Rinpoche. This is the 'secret empowerment' (sang wang), which empowers you for the practice of mantra recitation, and sows the seed for the attainment of the state of 'vidyadhara of eternal life' and sambhogakaya realization.



Thirdly, from a lapis-lazuli coloured blue syllable HUM at Padmasambhava's heart stream out rays of blue light, entering your heart and filling your whole body. This purifies all the negative karma accumulated through negative acts of the mind, and purifies the creative essence or energy (bindu, Skt.; tiklé, Tib.). Thus you receive the blessing of the vajra mind of Guru Rinpoche. This is the 'wisdom (prajña-jñana) empowerment' (sherab yeshé kyi wang), which empowers you for the yoga practice of 'bliss and emptiness' of tummo<sup>23</sup>, and sows the seed for the attainment of the state of 'mahamudra vidyadhara' and dharmakaya realization.



Finally, from the syllable HUM at Padmasambhava's heart another lapis-lazuli coloured blue HUM emanates, and 'like a shooting star' enters your heart, filling your whole body with light and merging indistinguishably with your mind. As Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche says:

All the subtle defilements masking realization are dispelled. Deluded perceptions, dualistic clinging

to subject and object, as well as all latent tendencies, are cleared. The subtle defilements upon the 'universal ground' (kunshyi) are purified. The universal ground is where the residue of past actions, one's habits and tendencies, which create obstacles on the path to enlightenment, are stored. According to the Sutrayana, the subtle obscurations that veil realization are only cleared when one reaches the tenth bhumi.<sup>24</sup> According to Secret Mantrayana, when one's awareness is seen as immaculate and vast as the sky, all the subtle defilements veiling the knowable are cleared.

Thus you receive the blessing of the vajra wisdom of Guru Rinpoche—his body, speech and mind inseparable. This is the 'symbolic empowerment' (tsik wang),<sup>25</sup> which empowers you for the practice of kadak Dzogpachenpo, and sows the seed for the attainment of the state of 'spontaneously accomplished vidyadhara' and svabhavikakaya realization.

Essentially, as the rays of light emanating from the OM AH HUM at Guru Rinpoche's three centres touch your three centres, they purify the negativity and obscurations accumulated through the body, speech and mind, and purify the channels (nadi, tsa), inner air (prana, lung) and creative essence or energy (bindu, tiklé). Your body, speech and mind are transformed into the vajra body, speech and mind of Padmasambhava.

#### 4. The Absolute Guru Yoga

At the end of the empowerment, Padmasambhava dissolves into light and becomes one with you, in the nature of your mind. Or you can consider that rays of light emanate from Guru Rinpoche, and as they touch you, you dissolve completely into light and become one with him. At that moment, you recognize that the nature of your mind is the Absolute Lama, inseparable from you. In that state of indivisibility, you quietly rest, realizing this to be the nature of Dzogpachenpo.

This is why guru yoga is said to be so powerful, because, if you open your heart and merge your mind with the wisdom mind of the Guru, your mind is realized into his wisdom mind. Then no longer is the teacher outside of you; you realize that he is actually in the nature of your mind. Your mind, now that it has become one with the truth, is no longer your ordinary mind; it has become one with the wisdom

mind of Guru Rinpoche and all the buddhas. As Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche says, it is like throwing a pebble into a lake; it plunges right down to the bottom. In the same way, at the moment that you invoke the presence and blessing of Guru Rinpoche, they enter into you and merge, one with you, in the very depths of your heart.

“According to Dzogchen,” says Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, “guru yoga is to unify your mind with Guru Rinpoche. If you put your whole reliance on him, so his vajra body, vajra speech and vajra mind enter your body, speech and mind, they effect a transformation. Outer, inner and secret obstacles are removed, and the supreme sid-dhi can be accomplished. It is only through this that the wisdom of Rigpa can be actualized.”

This is also the Guru Yoga Phowa, the most powerful practice for the moment of death.

### **The Essential Practice**

The really essential practice of guru yoga is just to unify your mind quietly with the Guru, and say the mantra. Yet although it may be simple, this is a complete practice of guru yoga. Dudjom Rinpoche used to explain the Tibetan word *naljor* which means ‘yoga’ as: *nal*, resting in the nature of mind, and *jor*, flowing with, or radiating that View. You merge your mind one with the wisdom mind of Guru Rinpoche and flow with the mantra, letting the mantra mature and ripen your Rigpa.

This is the essence of guru yoga practice: as you chant the mantra, and sit in the state of Rigpa, you recognize that Rigpa is Padmasambhava. As Padmasambhava himself said:

Mind itself is Padmasambhava; there is no practice or meditation apart from that.

When you rest in a state of Rigpa, you recognize *that* to be the Absolute Lama. Then the more you invoke the blessing, the stronger your Rigpa becomes. Your Rigpa gets more and more blessed by the Rigpa Lama. And so we invoke, with this kind of understanding:

*Recognizing and remembering that my own Rigpa is the Lama, through this may my body, speech and mind be empowered by the blessing of*

*your Vajra body, speech, and mind, and thereby may your mind and mine merge as one.*

As you just sit quietly, you invoke the blessings of all the masters and all the buddhas in the person of Padmasambhava, in the form of light. Then you unite your mind with him whilst you quietly say the mantra, whereby your ordinary mind is realized into the wisdom mind of the buddhas.

At the end you realize there is no buddha outside of you; the buddha is nowhere but in the nature of your own mind. In the confidence of that non-duality, you simply rest and abide by it. At the beginning, the mantra is an invocation and a way of maturing the blessing. By the end, when you realize non-duality, it has become just a declaration of confidence, a vajra proclamation. This is how you unify guru yoga and Dzogchen.

In Dzogchen it is said that to practise, recognizing that the lama is none other than the true nature of one's mind, embodies the whole practice of View, Meditation and Action. Dudjom Rinpoche explains that once you recognize the Lama is inseparable from the true nature of your mind, then to simply rest and abide by this recognition is 'the natural homage that arises from seeing the View'. For true homage is not an external homage, but the inner realization of the View of Rigpa. Once you discover that the true nature of all the buddhas and masters is the very same as your own Rigpa, in the confidence and blessing of that recognition, there comes a tremendous sense of joyful celebration and deep gratitude. Such a homage, the expression of that profound realization of absolute devotion, is full of dignity and grace.





Longchen Nyingtik Refuge Tree

## THE NINE YANAS

As we have seen, the natural expression of the Buddha's great compassion and skilful means was to teach spontaneously and appropriately according to the minds and capacities of different individuals, so that each one might be able to practise the teaching. Thus, there are many kinds of teaching, for beings of a wide spectrum of experience and capacity for spiritual development. Just as there are practitioners at varying levels of spiritual development, varying levels of paths are taught, and these paths reflect the type of practice emphasized at such levels. However, all these paths are equally precious, and share the common aim of attaining enlightenment, the awakened mind of a buddha.

Within the tradition of Tibetan Buddhism as a whole three yanas or vehicles of Buddhist teachings are taught. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama explains:

Owing to the historical sequence of the dissemination of the Buddhist teaching in Tibet, and as a result of certain differences in emphasis placed on particular scriptures by great masters of the past, there arose in Tibet four major traditions, which are known as Nyingma, Kagyü, Sakya, and Gelug. They are called the 'earlier' and 'later' transmissions of the teachings of Buddha in Tibet, and they differ for the reasons mentioned above, as well as in the different importance given to particular techniques of meditation, or in some cases also in the different terminology used to express, for example, experiences developed by the masters... What is common, however, to all four of these major traditions, is their emphasis on the practice of the entire structure of the Buddhist path, which comprises the essence of both Sutrayana and Tantrayana. In India, based on differences in philosophical standpoint, there were four distinct schools of thought,<sup>26</sup> but the four traditions found in Tibet do not have such fundamental differences, for they all follow the philosophical standpoint of the Madhyamika School.<sup>27</sup>

The Nyingma, or Ancient, School of Tibetan Buddhism is the name given to the followers of those original translations of the teachings of Buddha into Tibetan which were carried out up until the time of the Indian translator Smrtijñanakirti in the late tenth century. They are known as the 'Earlier Translation School', *Ngagyur Nyingma*, distinguishing them from the New Schools, *Sarma*, such as the Kagyü, Sakya, Kadam, and eventually Gelug, which followed the later translations made from the time of the great translator Rinchen Zangpo (958-1055) onwards.

Within the Nyingma tradition the full spectrum of spiritual paths is divided into nine yanas, which is taught as a system of practice bringing together all the approaches of the Buddha's teaching into a single comprehensive path to enlightenment. To begin this explanation of the Nyingma system of nine yanas it is first important to discuss the three yanas as a general context of view and practice shared by all Tibetan traditions. Each of the nine yanas will then be summarized according to the division of spiritual paths into Sutra and Tantra, and within Tantra, into the paths of Outer and Inner Tantra.

### **The Three Yanas**

'Yana' means vehicle, a means of evolution or spiritual development. In general there are three yanas or vehicles of Buddhist teachings: Hinayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. With Hinayana as the ground for beginning the path, Mahayana opens an expansive vision of the journey to enlightenment. As a special vehicle of the Mahayana, Vajrayana actualizes the enlightened state within one's own present experience.

*Hinayana*, often known in Dzogchen as the Fundamental Vehicle, is the path based on the aspiration for individual liberation. The main practice of Hinayana is the realization of the Four Noble Truths: suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the paths leading to the cessation of suffering. All beings want happiness and do not want suffering. In order to bring about happiness and to eliminate suffering three trainings are practised: discipline (*shila*), meditative concentration (*samadhi*) and discriminative awareness (*prajña*). Through the discipline of upholding the vows of individual liberation (*pratimoksha*) one protects the mind from circumstances which generate emotional entanglements and negativity. Through the one-

pointedness of mind attained through shamatha and the special insight of vipashyana meditation, discriminative awareness of selflessness is realized. By practising these disciplines, both in meditation and throughout one's life, one can actually be freed from causing harm to oneself and others. The meditative experience of Hinayana forms a basis for practice in all the yanas.<sup>28</sup>

*Mahayana* or the *Great Vehicle* expands the scope of concern beyond one's own experience to the end of suffering for all beings. The essence of Mahayana is the aspiration to attain buddhahood as the only means to help all beings find liberation from suffering. This aspiration is called *bodhicitta*, the 'heart of enlightened essence', and is realized on both an absolute and relative level. Absolute bodhicitta is the realization of emptiness, that all phenomena of self and other are dependent arisings which have no inherent or permanent characteristic of their own, and do not arise under their own power. This is the realization of absolute truth. Relative bodhicitta is both the *aspiration* to enlightenment for the benefit of beings and the *application* of practice to bring this about. Aspiration is developed in meditation on the four immeasurable qualities of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity. Application is practised through the six perfections of generosity, ethics, patience, exertion, meditative concentration, and discriminative awareness.

Through this practice of spiritual training the two accumulations of merit and wisdom are completed. Merit is based on the view of relative truth and cultivated through the six perfections. Wisdom is based on the view of absolute truth, the emptiness of all phenomena, and is realized in meditation free from conceptualization. The completion of the collection of wisdom results in the dharmakaya (the truth body of the Buddha), while the completion of the collection of merit results in the rupakaya (the form body). The achievement of dharmakaya is the fulfilment of one's own welfare, while the achievement of rupakaya, in its two aspects of the sambhogakaya (complete enjoyment body) and the nirmanakaya (emanation body), is for the sake of fulfilling the welfare of others.

*Vajrayana*, also known as the *Secret Mantra Vajrayana* (Sang Ngak Dorje Tekpa), is not a separate vehicle from Mahayana, but actually belongs within Mahayana as a distinctive vehicle of skilful means. In fact, Mahayana is divided into two vehicles: Sutra and Tantra. The fundamental intention of bodhicitta as well as the absolute view of

emptiness do not differ between the two, yet Tantra employs special techniques appropriate to the capacity of the practitioner, to quickly arrive at a profound realization of emptiness and great compassion. Amongst the qualities which mark the superiority of the Tantrayana are: its vast range of skilful means, the fact that buddhahood is quickly accomplished without hardships, and that it is suitable for those of a superior capacity.

The *Sutrayana*, which encompasses the teachings of both Hinayana and Mahayana, is known as the 'Causal Vehicle', because the path is followed in order to establish the cause for attaining enlightenment. The six perfections, thirty-seven bodhisattva practices, and a variety of ethical and intellectual disciplines are practised as causes for achieving the final result. Buddhahood emerges as the result when all such causes are complete. In Sutrayana the mind will accumulate the two collections of wisdom and merit, which are the respective causes for the attainments of dharmakaya and rupakaya. The mind is thus considered the cause of this attainment.

*Tantrayana* is known as the 'Fruitional or Resultant Vehicle', because the path is no longer based on establishing the cause, but identifying directly with the fruition. The fundamentally pure essence of mind, or buddha-nature, was seen in Sutrayana as the seed of enlightenment. Tantra begins with the view that the final attainment or result has been within the mind from the very beginning, but has been obscured by ignorance and adventitious defilements.

Both Sutra and Tantra share the same ultimate goal of buddhahood; the greatest difference between them lies in the methods employed. Although in the Sutrayana there exists the practice of meditation on emptiness, said to be 'similar in aspect to dharmakaya', there is *not* the practice of 'deity yoga', which is called 'similar in aspect to rupakaya', and which is quite unique to Tantra.

In deity yoga one first meditates on emptiness and then uses that consciousness realizing emptiness as the basis of emanation of a buddha. The wisdom consciousness itself appears as the form of a buddha. This single consciousness thus has two aspects—one of wisdom and one of method. Therefore, through the practice of deity yoga, one simultaneously accumulates the collections of wisdom and merit. This special method of deity yoga is called 'fruition', because seeing oneself in the form of a deity in which wisdom and method are simultaneously present is a method which takes the result of the

path, buddhahood, as the example and means by which the result is attained.

The essence of the tantric approach is the all-encompassing vision of pure perception (*dag nang*). Through empowerment into the mandala of deities, one actualizes the world as a pure land and all beings as enlightened buddhas. Through the yoga of channels, winds, and energy (*tsa lung tiklé*) of the vajra body, the tantric practitioner generates the experience of the union of bliss and emptiness, bringing the mind directly to realization. In tantric practice negativity is not to be abandoned, but rather transformed as the fuel of wisdom. All experience is transformed into wisdom itself, the fruition of the path. Therefore, Vajrayana is known as the 'fruition vehicle', for it truly takes the fruition itself as the path of training.

### The Nine Yanas

In the Nyingma tradition, the three yanas of Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana are divided further into:

- three causal vehicles of Sutra—Shravaka, Pratyekabuddha, which together form the Hinayana, and Bodhisattva or Mahayana; and
- six fruitional vehicles of Tantra—three Outer Tantras known as Kriyayoga, Charya– or Upayoga, and Yogatantra; and three Inner Tantras known as Mahayoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga.

The Sarma tradition recognize four classes of tantra: Kriya, Charya, Yoga, and Anuttara Yoga Tantra (Highest Yoga Tantra). The latter is divided into three: Father Tantras, such as the *Guhyasamaja*, the *King of Tantras*; Mother Tantras, such as *Heruka Chakrasamvara*; and Non-dual Tantras, such as *Kalachakra*.<sup>29</sup>

### The Causal Vehicles

In the first vehicle of the Hinayana, the *Shravakayana* or Vehicle of Hearers, one listens to the teachings of the Four Noble Truths, hears the self-evident problems of life—the truth of suffering—and looks further to find the origin of pain. One is inspired to take refuge in the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and search out a master who can show one the path towards the cessation of suffering. The shravaka realizes the selflessness of persons, understanding that there is no abiding substance to be found in the personality, but maintains

that phenomena have their basis in indivisible atomic particles and moments of consciousness which are held to be real.

In the next vehicle of the Hinayana, the *Pratyekabuddhayana* or Vehicle of Solitary Realizers, there begins a deeper analysis of suffering and its origin. Experience is analyzed in minute detail, with the ego shown to be a mere collection of the five aggregates (skandha), and using the twelve links (nidana) of interdependent origination (pratityasamutpada) to trace suffering back to its origin in ignorance of the true nature of reality. The pratyekabuddhas understand the selflessness of persons as well as phenomena; however they still maintain the indivisible moment of consciousness as the substantial basis of all experience. The pratyekabuddhas are called 'solitary realizers' because they find the view and path on their own.

The third vehicle, the *Bodhisattvayana* or Vehicle of Enlightened Beings, begins with the intention to attain enlightenment not merely for oneself but for the benefit of all beings. The bodhisattva realizes the selflessness of both persons and phenomena, finding that all phenomena are in fact empty of any inherent identity. Central to the realization of a bodhisattva is an understanding of the indivisibility of the two truths, the union of wisdom (prajña) and skilful means (upaya). The practice of a bodhisattva is to apply transcendental knowledge or wisdom (prajñaparamita) through the six perfections, bringing together the insight into the ultimate truth of emptiness, and the relative means of appropriate action. The practices of shamatha and vipashyana are employed to gradually remove obstructions to insight. Both the obscuration of conflicting emotions and the obstructions to omniscience are removed, and the realization of emptiness is discovered in the non-duality of experience, free from conceptualization of subject and object.

The teachings of the Hinayana, such as the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, derive from Buddha's 'First Turning of the Wheel of Dharma' at Sarnath. The teachings practised in the Mahayana represent those given in the 'Second' and 'Third Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma', which Buddha gave at the Vulture Peak and elsewhere. They include the Prajñaparamita and Cittamatra (Mind-only) teachings, which subsequently gave rise to the Madhyamika and Yogacara schools of philosophy.

## The Fruitional Vehicles

### *The Outer Tantras*

The union of skilful means and wisdom which is expressed in the action of the bodhisattva becomes in tantra the inseparability of appearance and emptiness, manifesting in the form of a tantric deity. The tantric path begins with empowerment into the mandala of a deity and taking the commitments of samaya to regard all of one's experience as the primordially pure appearance of the mandala. In tantric practice, one visualizes oneself as the *samayasattva* or 'commitment being' and the deity as the *jñanasattva* or 'wisdom being'. One merges the absolute nature of the *jñanasattva* into one's own perception and experience. Thus the absolute truth of phenomena as primordially pure is discovered within the relative appearance of oneself in the form of the deity. In the practice of visualization, the creation of the deity out of the pure state of emptiness or absolute truth is called the generation or development stage (*kyérim*). The appearance of the deity is then dissolved back into emptiness, and one rests the mind in its ultimate nature. This is the completion or perfection stage (*dzogrim*). These two phases of meditation form the basis of all tantric practice.

The view of *Kriyayoga*, the first vehicle of Outer Tantra, is that in absolute truth all phenomena are perceived as the inseparable nature of appearance and emptiness; however, in relative truth the appearance of deity and mandala becomes an overwhelming experience of purity. There is a clear division between the purity of the deity and the impurity of one's own being. Thus, the deity or *jñanasattva* is viewed as external and superior to oneself, the *samayasattva*. *Kriya* means action, so in *Kriyayoga* the emphasis is upon external actions, such as ritual purification, in order to be able to receive blessing and wisdom from the realized being.

The practice of *Charya-* or *Upayoga* is the same as in *Kriyayoga*; however, the View is that of *Yogatantra*. While the deity is still viewed as external to oneself, one now relates to the deity as friend, both equally pure in appearance. In *Upayoga* one balances internal practice of yoga with external actions of purification. It is thus considered a transitional vehicle between *Kriya* and *Yoga*.

The view of absolute truth in *Yogatantra*, the third vehicle of outer tantra, is that all phenomena arise as the inseparable nature of





*Vajrasattoa*

luminosity and emptiness. *Yoga* means 'union'; thus, this nature is expressed in relative truth as the union of the *jñanasattva* with the *samayasattva*. One visualizes oneself as the *samayasattva* and invites the *jñanasattva*, which merges into oneself as 'water poured into water.' In *Yogatantra* the emphasis is placed on the internal practice of *yoga*.

### *The Inner Tantras*

The tantric texts relating to the three Outer Tantras are common to both the Old and New Translation School traditions. Unique to the Nyingmapas are the three Inner Tantras: Mahayoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga or Dzogchen. Some of these appear in the *Kangyur*, the *Word of Buddha*, but there is a separate collection, the *Nyingma Gyübum*, the *Collected Tantras of the Nyingmapas*.

In the practice of Outer Tantra one maintains the relative distinction between the two truths, and practises them sequentially, rather than simultaneously in union. However, in the practice of Inner Tantra the two truths are seen as inseparable from the beginning. As Dudjom Rinpoche explains, the distinctive feature of Inner Tantra is that:

...You realize pristine awareness (*jñana*, *yeshé*), which is an undivided unity of method and wisdom—the unity of relative and ultimate realities. Through the totality of this pristine awareness, those things to be abandoned, such as the defilements together with their suffering, are utilized as aspects of the path through the application of appropriate means. This does not mean that you encourage the arising of defiled states of mind. Rather, there is no need for the deliberate act of 'abandoning' delusions; they are automatically transcended with such awareness.<sup>30</sup>

In Outer Tantra, the development and completion stages are practised separately; however, in Inner Tantra one meditates on these two stages in union. Visualization of oneself in the form of a deity is generated as the inseparable nature of appearance and emptiness. One rests in the *vajra samadhi* of the deity, the *vajra* dignity of one's own pure nature. One then dissolves this appearance back into emptiness and rests in the pure awareness of the nature of mind. Dudjom Rinpoche further explains that:

...In fact, all three inner tantras are mutually pervasive, incorporating aspects of one another. A certain practice is classified as Maha-, Anu- or Atiyoga in reference to what is emphasized or is foremost in it. The prominent feature of a Mahayoga practice is the development stage, that of Anuyoga is the completion stage, while that of Atiyoga is the cultivation of the realization of the void sphere of all things. Each of these practices, however, has development (Maha), completion (Anu) and Dzogchen (Ati) stages.<sup>31</sup>

*Mahayoga*, the first vehicle of Inner Tantra, focuses mainly on the development stage, and emphasizes the clarity and precision of visualization as skilful means. The development stage consists of three phases, known as 'the three samadhis'.

The practice of Mahayoga begins with meditation on emptiness, the 'samadhi of as-it-isness' (*deshyin nyi kyi ting ngé dzin*) where all phenomena are realized as empty in their pure nature. This is the realization of absolute bodhicitta. From this state arise exuberant waves of compassion in what is known as the 'samadhi of all-perceiving compassion' (*kuntu nangwé ting ngé dzin*). This is the realization of relative bodhicitta. The union of these two is known as the samadhi of cause (*gyui ting ngé dzin*), in which state arises a seed-syllable, from which rays of light emerge, purifying the entire environment of samsara and the beings within it into the nature of emptiness. One's mind becomes this seed-syllable, which in turn transforms into the pure appearance of the deity. The mandala is seen as the palace of the deity. The form of the deity is the indivisible appearance of skilful means and wisdom. All experience is perceived as the retinue and activity of the deity. As one realizes that all perceptions, sounds and thoughts are the vajra-nature, one rests in this state of vajra dignity.

"To practise the Inner Tantra", says Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, "one should realize that everything is primordially pure. Accordingly all outer elements are not perceived as ordinary, but as the five female buddhas. The five aggregates within the body are also not perceived as ordinary, but as the five male buddhas. In the same way, the eight consciousnesses as well as their eight objects are perceived as the eight male and eight female bodhisattvas. In this way one will not only see the purity of all phenomena, but one will also perceive the 'great evenness of samsara and nirvana'. So samsara is not considered to be something to be discarded and nirvana something to be achieved, but

as the 'great union' of purity and evenness. Such a state is not something which has to be fabricated anew; it has been there since the very beginning.

"The essence of kyérim, or Mahayoga, is to recognize all appearances as the deity, all sounds as the mantra, and all thoughts as the dhar-makaya. This is the most profound path, through which one can actualize all of the qualities of the body, speech, and mind of the Buddha."

A central figure in the transmission of the Mahayoga tantras was King Dza, who was empowered with their understanding through visions of Vajrasattva and Vajrapani. He received the oral transmission from the Vidyadhara Vimalakirti, who had been given the tantric teachings by Vajrapani at Mount Malaya in Sri Lanka. The lineage passed to the great siddha Kukkuraja, and then via Buddhaguhya to Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava, who taught them to their Tibetan disciples.

Mahayoga is divided into Tantra and Sadhana. There are eighteen Tantras, the root tantra being the *Guhyagarbhamayajalatantra* (Dorje Sempa Gyutrul Drawa Tsawé Gyü Sangwa Nyingpo), the *Tantra of the Magical Net of Vajrasattva*. The sadhanas are the *Eight Great Mandalas of Kagyé* (Drubpa Kagyé), which appear in both Kama and Terma.<sup>32</sup>

*Anuyoga* focuses mainly on the completion stage, and emphasizes the inner yoga of channels, winds, and energy (tsa lung tiklé). Visualization of the deities is generated instantly, rather than through a gradual process as in Mahayoga. In their relative appearance, all phenomena are seen as the mandala of the male Primordial Buddha Samantabhadra (Kuntuzangpo), the mandala of spontaneous accomplishment. In their absolute nature they are seen as the mandala of the female Primordial Buddha Samantabhadri (Kuntuzangmo), the mandala of primordial emptiness. To realize that all phenomena abide equally, without separation or joining, in the union of these mandalas is the realization of the mandala of great bliss, also known as the mandala of bodhicitta.

The Anuyoga tantras were also received by King Dza, from Vajrasattva and Vimalakirti. He transmitted them to the siddha Kukkuraja, and they then passed to Nubchen Sangyé Yeshé who taught them in Tibet. The tantras are classified as: four 'root tantras', six 'branch tantras', and twelve 'rare tantras', and are exemplified by the *Sutra which Gathers All Intentions* (Do Gongpa Düpa), the *Düpa Do*.

*Dzogchen Atiyoga*

The ultimate source of the teachings of *Atiyoga* or *Dzogchen* is the Primordial Buddha Samantabhadra. Whilst the root of Dzogchen is the 6,400,000 verses or shlokas, the actual tantras are said to number 22,000. Dzogchen can be categorized into *gyü*, *lung* and *mengak*. *Gyü* is the tantras, *lung* (agama) the clarification of the tantras, and *mengak* (upadesha) the experiential instruction given by the master.

The lineage of Dzogchen is traced from the dharmakaya Samantabhadra to the sambhogakaya—the five buddha families and Vajrasattva, who are Samantabhadra's own self-reflection. This is the *mind direct transmission* (gyalwa gong gyü). Vajrasattva appeared to the first human master Garab Dorje, who was born in Oddiyana, empowered him, and instructed him to write down the Dzogchen tantras. The transmission then passed to Mañjushrimitra, Shri Singha and Jñanasutra through the *sign transmission of the vidyadharas* (rigdzin da gyü), and was continued in Tibet by Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and Vairochana. From Padmasambhava onwards is counted as the *oral transmission* (gangzak nyen gyü).



*Samantabhadra*

The 6,400,000 verses of Dzogpachenpo were divided by Mañjushrimitra into three categories or series: the category of *Mind* (Semdé), the category of *Space* (Longdé), and the category of *Secret* or *Pith Instruction* (Mengakdé). Shri Singha further divided the Mengakdé into four cycles: outer, inner, secret, and innermost, unexcelled. The core of the Mengakdé are the teachings of Nyingtik, 'Heart Essence', and amongst the most important Nyingtik cycles are the *Vima Nyingtik*, taught in Tibet by Vimalamitra; the *Khandro Nyingtik*, taught in Tibet by Padmasambhava; and the *Longchen Nyingtik*, the essence of the Dzogchen teachings of the great master Longchenpa, revealed by Jigmé Lingpa. Many practitioners of Nyingtik in Tibet attained the rainbow body. The Semdé and Longdé were transmitted in Tibet mainly by Vairochana and Vimalamitra, and the Mengakdé by Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava. The three categories are taught to suit the capacities or disposition (khan) of individual students. For example, for someone who is more intellectually inclined or analytical, there is the teaching of Semdé, and for a person who is drawn more to nature and inclined towards simplicity, there is Longdé.



Mingyur Namkhé Dorjé, the IVth Dzogchen Rinpoche <sup>33</sup>

The teachings which place more emphasis on the natural condition of the mind (*sem kyi né luk*), were classed by Mañjushrimitra as *Semdé*, the category of mind. There are twenty-one main tantras of *Semdé*, exemplified by the *Kunjé Gyalpo*. Five were translated into Tibetan by Vairochana, and thirteen translated later by Vimalamitra, Nyak Jñanakumara and Yudra Nyingpo. Longdé teachings are characterized as those that emphasize 'freedom from effort'. Chief amongst the tantras of Longdé is the *Longchen Rabjam Gyalpo*. In Mengakdé, which is superior to both *Semdé* and Longdé, there are many texts, mainly the seventeen tantras of the *Innermost Unexcelled Cycle* in the *Nyingma Gyübum*; principal amongst these is the Root Tantra, the *Dra Thal Gyur Tsawé Gyü*.<sup>34</sup> In Mengakdé, there are two

paths of training: *Trekchö* and *Tögal*.<sup>35</sup> *Trekchö* is translated as 'thoroughly cutting through' (resistance, stubbornness, toughness, and closedness), or 'breakthrough'. The practice of *Trekchö* reveals the View of *kadak trödral*. *Tögal*, translated as 'direct crossing', 'the direct approach' or 'leapover', can bring very quickly the actual realization of the three kayas in this lifetime, and thus is a more rapid way of bringing about the dissolution of the practitioner's karmic vision. The practice of *Tögal* brings the realization of *lhundrup*, 'spontaneous presence', and it can only be undertaken by a practitioner who has first gained stability in the practice of *Kadak Trekchö*. There is a saying: "Trekchö trek ma chö na, tögal tö mi gal," which means: "If the practice of *Trekchö* is not accomplished, then the *Tögal* cannot transcend." The ground in *Dzogchen* therefore, is the indivisibility of *kadak*, primordial purity and *lhundrup*, spontaneous presence. The path is the practice of *Trekchö*, through which *kadak* is realized, and *Tögal*, through which *lhundrup* is realized. The fruition is to attain the buddha body (*ku*) and wisdom (*yeshé*).

Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche outlines the whole path of *Dzogchen*:

The practice of *Dzogchen* or *Atiyoga*, is to realize the tathagatagarbha, or buddha-nature, which has been present in our nature since the very beginning. Here it is not sufficient to concentrate on contrived practices that involve intellectual efforts and concepts; to recognize this nature, the practice should be utterly beyond fabrication. The practice is simply to realize the radiance, the natural expression of wisdom, which is beyond all intellectual concepts. It is the true realization of the absolute nature just as it is, the ultimate fruition.

At the present moment our awareness is entangled within our mind, completely enveloped and obscured by mental activity. Through the practice of *Trekchö*, or 'cutting through all attachment', and the 'direct realization' of *Tögal*, one can unmask this awareness and let its radiance arise.

To accomplish this it is necessary to do the practice of 'the four ways of leaving things in their natural simplicity' (*chokshyak*) and through these, to acquire perfect stability in the *Trekchö* practice. Then will come the 'four visions of *Tögal*' which are the natural arising of visions of discs and rays of light, deities, and buddhafields. These visions are naturally ready to arise from within

the central channel that joins the heart to the eyes. Such an arising from this channel will appear in a gradual process. In the same way that the waxing moon will increase from the first to the fifteenth of the month, these visions will gradually increase—from the simple perception of dots of light to the full array of the vast expanse of the sambhogakaya buddhafi elds. The manifestation of space and awareness will thus reach its culminating point.

These experiences are not linked with consciousness or intellect as the former experiences were; they are a true manifestation or radiance of awareness. After this, in the same way that the moon decreases and disappears from the fifteenth to the thirtieth of the month, all of these experiences and visions, all phenomena, will gradually come to exhaustion and reabsorb themselves in the absolute. At this time the deluded mind which conceives subject and object will disappear, and the primal wisdom, which is beyond intellect, will gradually expand. Eventually one will attain the perfect enlightenment of the Primordial Buddha, Samantabhadra, endowed with the six extraordinary features.

This is the path intended for people of superior faculties who can achieve enlightenment in this very lifetime. For those of medium faculties, there is instruction on how to achieve liberation within the *bardo* or 'intermediate state'. When we say 'bardo', in fact we recognize four bardos: the bardo from conception to death; the bardo of the moment of death; the bardo of the absolute nature; and the bardo of coming into the next existence.<sup>36</sup>

The bardo between conception and death is our present state. In order to destroy all deluded perceptions or deluded thoughts in this bardo, the ultimate practice is Dzogchen Atiyoga. In this there are the two main paths of Trekchö and Tögal, as described above. As the ultimate fruition of this practice, the ordinary body made of gross aggregates will dissolve into the 'rainbow body of great transference' or 'vajra-body', or dissolve without leaving any remnants.

But if one cannot achieve such ultimate attainment within a lifetime, then there is still the possibility of achieving enlightenment at the time of death. If our teacher or a close dharma brother is near to us at the very moment of our death, he will remind us of the instructions—the introduction to the nature of mind. If we can recall our experience of practice and remain in this nature, then





*H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche*

we achieve realization. It is then possible to depart to a bud-dhafield straightaway with no intermediate state. If this is not accomplished, then the bardo of the absolute nature, or dharmata, will arise. At this time the ground luminosity of the dharmakaya will appear. If one can unite the ground luminosity (mother luminosity) with the luminosity which one has recognized whilst practising during one's lifetime (child luminosity), then one will be liberated into the dharmakaya.

If one is not liberated at this time, then countless manifestations will appear: sounds, lights, and rays. Great fear will arise because of these emanations and visions, but if one is a good practitioner one will realize that there is no point in being afraid. One will

know that whatever deities appear, wrathful or peaceful, they are one's own projections. The recognition of this assures liberation in a sambhogakaya buddhafiield. But if this is not accomplished, then the bardo of coming into a new existence will occur. If one practises in the right way at this time one can be liberated into a nirmanakaya buddhafiield.

In essence, the primordial nature of the Buddha Samantabhadra is like the ground or mother-nature of realization. The nature which has been introduced to us by the teacher is like the child-nature. When these two meet, one will attain full realization and seize the fortress of enlightenment.

For ordinary beings unable to achieve liberation either in this life or in the intermediate state, liberation can be attained in the nirmanakaya buddhafiields.

In brief, through the practice of the path of Trekchö and Tögal, one will reach the ultimate realization of the dharmakaya, the enlightened state of the Primordial Buddha Samantabhadra, within this very lifetime. This is the best case. If not, then one can be freed in the other three bardos: the bardos of the moment of death, dharmata, and becoming. Even if this does not happen, one can still be relieved of suffering and be liberated by the virtues or blessings of the Dzogchen teachings. Whoever has a connection with these teachings is: liberated by sight, on seeing the teaching or the teacher; liberated through hearing, on hearing the teacher or teaching; liberated through contact, on wearing the precious mantras and scriptures of Dzogchen; or liberated through taste, and so forth. As a result, one will be liberated into one of the five nirmanakaya buddhafiields."<sup>37</sup>

## **Dzogchen and the Other Yanas**

From the perspective of the Dzogchen teachings, the paths included within the system of nine yanas can be summarized into three: renunciation, purification, and transformation. The paths of Sutra are known altogether as paths of renunciation, and work primarily on the level of body, or nirmanakaya. Tantra works primarily with energy or speech, the level of sambhogakaya. It is divided into paths of purification, the two Outer Tantras of Kriya and Upa, and transformation, which begins with Yogatantra and includes Mahayoga and Anuyoga

in the Inner Tantra. Dzogchen itself is the path of self-liberation, and works at the level of mind, or dharmakaya.

The path of *renunciation* relies on reasoning to establish the meaning of ultimate truth, and on the practices of shamatha and vipashyana to gradually develop insight. Renunciation means that there is adoption or rejection of states of mind, such that positive states are cultivated and negative states are countered with antidotes. In the path of *purification* the negative is purified rather than rejected, revealing its primordially pure nature. Purification prepares one to receive the blessing of the wisdom being, through which the entrance of purity into oneself is effected. In the path of *transformation* one uses the energy of negative states as an aid to transform them into their enlightened aspects. Here neither is negativity abandoned, nor is it purified, for its nature is already pure, the realization which comes through the transformation of oneself and one's environment into the appearance of a deity and mandala.

*Self-liberation* means that whatever manifests in the field of experience is allowed to arise just as it is, abiding by the unaltered state of Rigpa. Without clinging, without attachment, without effort, whatever arises spontaneously liberates itself. Relative appearances are naturally freed in themselves, where they arise, and thus, there is no need for renunciation. Since this primordial state cannot be stained by relative appearances, there is nothing to be purified. Since appearances are already pure, there is no need to transform the relative into pure perception through visualization. Thus, Dzogchen encompasses and transcends the paths of renunciation, purification, and transformation. Jigmé Lingpa speaks of the path of Dzogpachenpo:

This is the path taken by the buddhas of the past, the practice of all future buddhas, and the one path which all the present buddhas tread. The peak of everything, it is not touched by the views of the eight pure vehicles, which rely upon the mind as the path.

For Dzogpachenpo, which transcends the mind, relies upon Rigpa as its ultimate vehicle.

To illustrate the differences in method taught in the various yantras, Dudjom Rinpoche always used to recount the story of the poisonous plant. The plant is a symbol for emotional defilements or negativity. A

group of people discover that a poisonous plant is growing in their backyard. They begin to panic, as they recognize that this is very dangerous. So they try to cut down the plant. This is the approach of renunciation, which is taught in Hinayana as the method to eradicate the ego and the negative emotions. Another group of people arrive, and, realizing that the plant is dangerous, but that simply cutting it down will not be sufficient since its roots remain to sprout anew, they throw hot ash or boiling water over the roots to prevent the plant from ever growing again. This is the approach of the Mahayana, which applies the realization of emptiness as the antidote to ignorance, the root of ego and negativity. The next group of people to appear on the scene are doctors, and when they see this poison they are not alarmed; on the contrary, they are very pleased, since they have been looking for this particular poison. They know how to transform the poison into medicine rather than destroying it. This is the tantric approach of the Vajrayana, which does not abandon the negative emotions, but through the power of transformation uses their energy as a vehicle to bring realization.

Finally, a peacock lands, and dances with joy when it sees the poison. It immediately consumes the poisonous plant and turns it into beauty. It is a Tibetan belief that the peacock owes its beauty to the fact that it eats a particular species of poisonous plant. The very nature of the peacock is such that it can actually consume poison, and *thrives* on it; hence it does not have to transform the poison, but eats it directly. The peacock represents Dzogchen, the path of self-liberation, the fruition and essence of all the nine yanas.



*Guru Rinpoche*  
*A "Looks Like Me" image made by Vairochana*

## THE ANCIENT TRANSMISSION OF THE NYINGMAPAS

The Nyingma teachings are divided into the long transmission (ring gyü) of *Kama* and the short transmission (nyé gyü) of *Terma*; other teachings were received by masters directly in pure visions (*dag nang*) from deities or gurus, in experiences or in dreams.

The *Kama*, or canonical teachings, have been transmitted in an unbroken lineage from the Primordial Buddha Samantabhadra down to the present day. Earlier on they were maintained in Tibet by Padmasambhava's disciples Nyak Jñanakumara and Nubchen Sangyé Yeshé, and later (from the eleventh century onwards) by the masters of the Zur family. There developed two kama lineages in Tibet, the Rong lineage of Central Tibet and the Kham lineage of Eastern Tibet, which were brought together by Terdak Lingpa (1646–1714) in the late seventeenth century. The kama teachings collected by Terdak Lingpa and his brother Lochen Dharmashri (1654–1717/8) were later expanded in the monasteries of Dzogchen and Palyul, and finally published in forty volumes by H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche.

The three Inner Tantras are categorized in the kama tradition under three headings: *Do Gyu Sem* (sutra, maya and mind). These refer to the Anuyoga *Do Gongpa Düpa*, the Mahayoga *Gyü Sangwa Nyingpo*, and the mind class, *Semdé*, of Atiyoga.

*Terma* are teachings concealed mainly by Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal, to be revealed at the time most appropriate for their discovery by treasure revealers (tertöns), a continuing series of emanations of Padmasambhava and his twenty-five disciples. Many of these ter were collected by Jamgön Kongtrul and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo into more than sixty volumes, the *Rinchen Terdzö*, *Precious Treasury of Terma*. Termas can be divided into earth termas (*sa ter*), which employ physical objects, and mind termas (*gong ter*), discovered within the mindstream of the tertön.

In addition to the three transmissions mentioned above (mind direct, sign and oral), three special terma transmissions also exist: authorization through prophesy, empowerment through aspiration,

and entrustment to the dakinis. Terchö literature can be in three parts: Lama, Dzogchen and Tukjé Chenpo (La dzog tuk sum), i.e. the peaceful and wrathful sadhanas on the guru, teachings on Dzogchen and sadhana cycle on Avalokiteshvara. Another division is into Kagyé, Gongdü, and Phurba.

Examples of gongter are: the *Seven Treasuries* of Longchenpa, Mingyur Dorje's *Namchö*, Jigmé Lingpa's *Longchen Nyingtik* and the termas of H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche. Examples of pure visions are: Yuthok Yönten Gonpo's *Yuthok Nyingtik*, Lhatsün Namkha Jigmé's *Rigdzin Sokdrup* and the Great Fifth Dalai Lama's *Gyachen Nyer Nga*.

Starting with the first tertön, Sangyé Lama (1000–1080) and Drapa Ngönshé (1012–90), discoverer of the Four Medical Tantras, there have been hundreds of masters who specialized in their discovery, continuing up until the present day with H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche and H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. There are said to be one hundred great tertöns and one thousand minor ones, of whom five in particular are known as the 'Five Sovereigns': Nyang Ral Nyima Özer (1124–1192), Guru Chöwang (1212–70), Dorje Lingpa (1346–1405), Pema Lingpa (b.1450), and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820–1892).

Other famous terma masters were: the lady Jomo Menmo (1248–83), the spiritual consort of Guru Chöwang; Orgyen Lingpa (1323–c.1360), discoverer of the biography of Guru Rinpoche, the *Sheldrakma*, and the *Kathang De Nga*; Rigdzin Gödem (1337–1403), discoverer of the *Northern Terma*; Sangyé Lingpa (1340–1396), who revealed the *Lama Gongdü* cycle; Karma Lingpa (14th. century), the discoverer of the *Shyi Tro Gongpa Rang Drol* cycle, from which come the teachings on the six bardos and the *Bardo Thödrol*; Ratna Lingpa (1403–78), who compiled the *Nyingma Gyübum*; Tangtong Gyalpo (1385–1510), the extraordinary mystic and engineer who lived to the age of one hundred and twenty five; Jatsön Nyingpo (1585–1656), who revealed the *Könchok Chidü* cycle; Lhatsün Namkha Jigmé (1597–c.1650), the discoverer of the *Rigdzin Sokdrup* teachings; the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (1617–82), who received the twenty-five teachings known as *Sangwa Gyachen* in pure vision; and his disciple and teacher Terdak Lingpa.

The figure of Longchen Rabjam (1308–1363) stands out as one of the greatest Dzogchen masters in the Nyingma tradition, and amongst the most brilliant and original writers in Tibetan Buddhist literature. He



*Longchenpa*

was the author of over 200 works, of which only about twenty-five survive, and amongst which the *Seven Treasuries* (Dzö Dun) and *Three Trilogies* are most well-known. It was he who brought together into a cohesive system the teachings of *Vima Nyingtik* and *Khandro Nyingtik*, on which he wrote the *Three Yangtik* or *Inner Essences*.<sup>38</sup>

As Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche explains: “Kunkhyen Longchenpa’s *Seven Treasuries* (Dzö Dun) were written to elucidate the extraordinarily profound meaning of the seventeen main tantras of Dzogpachenpo as well as the teachings of all nine yanas. For the purpose of the actual practice of Dzogchen according to these tantras, Longchenpa gathered his own termas as well as those of Chetsün Senge Wangchuk (who was later reborn as Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo) and Pema Ledrel Tsal (Longchenpa’s previous incarnation) in the form of the thirteen volume collection known as the *Nyingtik Yabshyi*. This Yabshyi is the practice aspect of Longchenpa’s writings, and the basis of the Old Nyingtik. In it he synthesized the *Vima Nyingtik* of Vimalamitra and the *Khandro Nyingtik* of Guru Rinpoche and explained all the practical details in the light of his own realization.”



Jigmé Lingpa

Through his blessing, received in pure visions, Jigmé Lingpa (1730–98), essentialized Longchenpa’s teachings in his own mind terma, the *Longchen Nyingtik*, which spread very widely throughout Tibet.<sup>39</sup> The principal holder of the *Longchen Nyingtik* was the 1st Dodrupchen Rinpoche, Jigmé Trinlé Özer (1745–1821).

Other great Nyingmapa scholars included Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo (1012–88), the first to compose major treatises within the Nyingma tradition; Ngari Panchen Pema Wangyal (1487–1543); Patrul Rinpoche (1800–87); Mipham Rinpoche (1848–1912), who wrote thirty-two volumes; the 11th Dodrupchen Jigmé Tenpé Nyima (1865–1926), author of six volumes; Shechen Gyaltzap, who composed over thirteen volumes; Khenpo Shyenga (1871–1927), whose works fill fifteen volumes; and H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche (1904–87).

The Nyingma School stresses study as well as practice. This century, for the study of the Sutrayana, the ‘Thirteen Great Texts’ have been emphasized, along with the commentaries on them by Patrul Rinpoche, Mipham and Khenpo Shyenga. They are:

1. Sosor Tarpé Do (*Pratimokshasutra*) by Shakyamuni Buddha
2. Dulwa Do Tsawa (*Vinayasutra*) by Gunaprabha



3. Ngönpa Kuntü (*Abhidharmasamuccaya*) by Asanga
4. Ngönpa Dzö (*Abhidharmakosha*) by Vasubandhu
5. Uma Tsawa Sherab (*Prajñānamamulamadhyamika*) by Nagarjuna
6. Uma la Jukpa (*Madhyamikavatara*) by Chandrakirti
7. Uma Shyi Gyapa (*Catuhśatakasastra*) by Aryadeva
8. Changchub Sempé Chöpa la Jukpa (*Bodhicaryavatara*) by Shantideva
9. Parchin Ngön Tok Gyen (*Abhisamayalankara nama Prajñāparamita*) by Asanga
10. Tekpa Chenpö Do dé Gyen (*Mahayanasutralankara*) by Asanga
11. Ü Ta Namché (*Madhyantavibhanga*) by Asanga
12. Chö dang Chönyi Namché (*Dharmadharmatavibhanga*) by Asanga
13. Tekpa Chenpö Gyü Lamé Tenchö (*Mahayanottaratantrashastra*) by Asanga.

The main tantric texts studied are: the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* with commentaries, the *Dzö Düin* of Longchenpa, the *Dom Sum* (Three Precepts) by Ngari Panchen, and texts on kama and terma by Minling Terchen, Lochen Dharmashri, and others.

In the Nyingma School there are two sanghas: the monastic and yogic communities. The Nyingma tradition of Vinaya, stemming from the Buddha's son Rahula, follows the Mahamulasarvastivadin ordination lineage, which was first brought to Tibet by Shantarakshita. The Nyingma Vinaya tradition reached its pinnacle in the eighteenth century with the reformer Dzogchen Gyalsé Tayé, who revitalized monastic standards of discipline and scholarship.

There were more than a thousand Nyingma monasteries in Tibet, and the Nyingma tradition spread throughout the whole of Tibet and the Himalayan regions of Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal, and Ladakh. In Central Tibet, the most important were Orgyen Mindroling, built by Minling Terchen Gyurmé Dorje (Terdak Lingpa) in 1676, and Tubten Dorje Drak, established by Rigdzin Ngak gi Wangpo (1580–1639) in 1610. In Kham, East Tibet, Katok was founded by Kadampa Deshek in 1159, and Palyul by Rigdzin Kunzang Sherab in 1665. In 1685 the



*Dzogchen Pema  
Rigdzin*

Dzogchen Monastery, destined to be the largest and one of the most influential of the Nyingma monasteries in East Tibet, was founded by Pema Rigdzin, who was the first in the line of Dzogchen Rinpoches. Shechen was founded in 1735 by the II<sup>nd</sup> Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche Gyurmé Kunzang Namgyal. There

were also a number of Nyingma monasteries in Golok and Amdo provinces, e.g. the Dodrupchen and Tarthang Monasteries.

## Recent History

During the last century, much was done to consolidate the teachings of the Nyingmapas during the spiritual and cultural renaissance pioneered by the *Rimé* masters such as Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, Jamgön Kongtrul the Great, and Tertön Chogyur Lingpa (1829–70) —‘Khyen Kong Chok Sum’. This period also saw the appearance of other brilliant terma masters such as Dudjom Lingpa (1835–1904) and Lérab Lingpa Tertön Sogyal (1856–1926).

After the Tibetans went into exile following the events of 1959, H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche (1904–87) was unanimously acclaimed as the supreme head of the Nyingma tradition. Born in 1904 in the south-east Tibetan province of Pemakö, one of the ‘four hidden lands’ of Padmasambhava, he was recognized as the incarnation of the great Tertön Dudjom Lingpa.

It is said that at the age of only five he began to discover termas. At the age of fourteen, he gave the full empowerment and oral transmission of the *Rinchen Terdzö*, and at seventeen composed his first famous work on Dzogchen. A prolific author and meticulous scholar, he wrote more than twenty-three volumes of gongter and treatises, amongst the most well-known of which are his monumental *Fundamentals and History of the Nyingmapas*.<sup>40</sup> At the request of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he wrote a *Political History of Tibet*. His writings exhibit an encyclopedic knowledge of all traditional branches of learning, including poetics, history, medicine, astrology and philosophy. Just as Jamgön Kongtrul had collected the terma teachings, so Dudjom Rinpoche collected and published the kama.

Dudjom Rinpoche was regarded as the living representative of Padmasambhava. He was the greatest tertön and Dzogchen master of his time, and holder of all the Nyingma lineages. A master of masters, he was acknowledged by the highest Tibetan lamas as possessing the greatest power and blessing in communicating the nature of mind, and it was to him that they sent their students when prepared for this mind direct transmission. After leaving Tibet in 1958, he settled in India and later in Nepal, where he became a key figure in the revival of Tibetan culture amongst the refugee community. In the Himalayan

regions of Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal, and Ladakh, he has many thousands of disciples. He travelled widely in the East and West to establish the Nyingma teachings, founding centres in Hong Kong, the United States, and France.

H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche (b. 1910), the foremost living Dzogchen master, has played a crucial role in the transmission of the Nyingma teachings, travelling tirelessly to teach his thousands of disciples in Bhutan, Nepal, India, and the West. He is one of the principal disciples of the great Rimé master, Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, the incarnation of both Vimalamitra and Trisong Detsen and a key figure in the Nyingma transmission, who passed away in Sikkim in 1959. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche's seat is the Shechen Tennyi Dargyé Ling Monastery in Baudhanath, Kathmandu.

The IVth Dodrupchen Rinpoche (b. 1927), holder of the Longchen Nyingtik lineage, received teachings from many masters, including Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö and Yukhok Chatralwa, a disciple of Adzom Drukpa. He has been very active in printing, notably the works of Longchenpa, and directs monasteries and centres in Gangtok in Sikkim, in Bhutan, and in Massachusetts in the U.S.A. Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche (b. 1920) the great grandson of Chogyur Lingpa, is a master of both Dzogchen and Mahamudra. The teacher of Gyalwa Karmapa and the regents of the Karma Kagyu lineage, he has established several monasteries and retreat centres in Nepal. Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche (b. 1926), renowned for his mastery over the works of Longchenpa, is a leading exponent of Dzogchen practice, and has many students in Bhutan, Nepal, India, and the West.

In the East, other great masters continue to uphold the living tradition of the Nyingmapas: Kyabjé Minling Trichen Rinpoche, the throne-holder of the great Mindroling tradition, who is one of the foremost leaders of the Nyingmapas, and has his residence at Dehra Dun; Penor Rinpoche (b. 1932), who has made a really major contribution to the success of the Nyingma transmission and heads a thriving community with a very important Scholastic College and retreat centre at Thekchok Namdrol Shedrub Dargyé Ling monastery at Bylakuppe in South India; the renowned Dzogchen master Chatral Rinpoche, whose seats are Darjeeling and Nepal; Trulshik Rinpoche, a highly respected and important Nyingma master who resides in Nepal; the VIIth Dzogchen Rinpoche; the VIIIth Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche, Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche, Choling Rinpoche, Chökyi



*H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche  
and Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche<sup>41</sup>*

Nyima Rinpoche, and Garjé Khamtrul Rinpoche.

In the United States, masters like Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche, Gyatrul Rinpoche and Gönpö Tseten have done much to spread the Nyingma teachings. Special mention should be made of the work of Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche, founder of the Tibetan Nyingma Meditation Center, Nyingma Institute and Odiyan–Center of Nyingma Culture, in the United States, especially in the field of publication. Khenpo Palden Sherab, Khenpo Tsewang Döngyal and Khenpo Tubten have taught widely in America, upholding the teachings of the Nyingmapas, which have also been brought to a wider audience through the translations and writing of Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, an accomplished scholar.

A central focus for the Nyingmapas in the West has been the Dordogne area of south-west France, where H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche founded one of his most important centres and where he passed away in 1987. His tradition is continued by his son and dharma-heir, H. E. Shenphen Rinpoche. To fulfil the wishes of the late Kangyur Rinpoche, another great master whose inspiration played a major part in the spread of the Nyingma teachings to the West, both H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche and H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche have given teachings in Dordogne, in particular to students practising three year retreats, guided by Kangyur Rinpoche's son, Tulku Pema Wangyal Rinpoche, one of the more prominent of the younger Nyingmapa lamas.

## *Appendix*

### THE DZOGCHEN VIEW OF NGÖNDRO

A Teaching by H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche

Whatever practice we do, relative truth and absolute truth co-exist, skilful means and wisdom co-exist, experience and emptiness co-exist. This being the case, we have the practice of ngöndro as a skilful means, then at the end of that, in the guru yoga, we reach the level of wisdom when the lama dissolves and becomes one with you and you remain in the absolute nature of things, the state of meditation.

So since the lama is the one who really shows the way and is the centre of the whole spiritual path, we pay homage to the lama at the beginning of all practice.

After having begun by giving homage to the lama, first we think about the difficulty of gaining this precious, free and well-favoured human form, because this form is the basis of the spiritual path of liberation. Then we reflect on impermanence and death; everything that exists is subject to change and death. Then, even though one dies one is not free, one goes on circling in samsara from birth to rebirth and that is why the nature of samsara is suffering; we contemplate on that. Then we reflect that whatever one does, whether good or bad actions, the pattern of karma is inescapable. These are called *Lo Dok Nam Zhi*: the *four thoughts* which reverse the mind. Their purpose is to make the mind turn away from samsara and turn towards the practice. That is why it is important to dwell on them at the beginning and to realize their truth.

Doing this is like smoothing out a ploughed field to make it even and ready for sowing.

Now, sowing the seed itself: receiving refuge, generation of bodhicitta, offering the mandala which is for the accumulation of merit and wisdom, and purification through the Vajrasattva practice. These are like seeds sown in the ground which is already prepared by these four thoughts.

Without relating to the relative in this way it is not possible to realize the absolute. Without using the relative body as a basis we cannot



*H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche*

*(Photo taken as he was giving this very teaching.)*

realize the true nature of the mind. In the same way, without this relative practice, this skilful means, we cannot grasp directly the nature of shunyata. The relative and absolute co-exist, go hand in hand. It is very important to realize this.

Taking *refuge* as an example: externally speaking there are what are called the *Kön Chok Sum*, the 'three precious ones', the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The precious Buddha is the source of the Dharma, the guide; what Buddha showed is the precious Dharma, the path; and those whose minds are turned towards the Dharma are the

precious Sangha.

Because we exist in samsara, because of delusion and suffering, we take refuge in order to be freed from suffering. Because of not seeing our true nature, and because of delusion when the various elements come together, this illusory body is created. And this illusory body remains very real until we see the true nature of things. So until we are completely freed from delusion the body exists, and suffering exists, and the three precious ones exist to take refuge in.

So externally speaking, one should take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha with devotion. But internally the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha are symbolic, a profound and skilful way to lead us out of samsara. From the point of view of absolute truth even the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha are within us. On the absolute level, this mind of ours which is empty, which is radiantly self-luminous, and which is Rigpa, awareness, this mind itself is the precious Buddha. Externally the Dharma manifests as sound and meaning, you hear it and you practise it, but from the internal point of view it is empty. In essence it is the unceasing, unobstructed, self-luminous display of Rigpa, primordial mind. Externally the Sangha is those whose minds turn towards the Dharma, but internally the Sangha is the all-pervading, all-encompassing aspect of the mind.

They are all fully accomplished within us, but since we do not recognize this we must take refuge in the external Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. When you really do ngöndro properly you visualize the refuge tree with your mind in fervent devotion, you do prostrations with humility with your body, and you recite the refuge formula with your speech. Then when you sit down at the end of your practice and dissolve the visualization into yourself, you realize that all these three things, subject, object, and activity, are all one's own Rigpa. The meditator is oneself; the refuge tree is one's own creation. Just remain in the nature of Rigpa; other than Rigpa there is nothing to find.

Buddha said in the *Dodé Kalpa Zangpo*, "I manifested in a dreamlike way to dreamlike beings and gave a dreamlike dharma, but in reality I never taught and never actually came." From the viewpoint of what is the Buddha never came and the Dharma never came. All this is mere perception, existing only in the apparent sphere of things.

As regards the practice of refuge, the relative aspect is the object of refuge to which you offer devotion and prostrations and so on, and the absolute aspect is without effort, when you dissolve the visualization

and remain in the natural, effortless state of mind.

The generation of *bodhicitta* or enlightened thought means that if we just act for ourselves alone we are not following the all-knowing path of the Buddha, the path of enlightenment is blocked. Therefore it is for the sake of all beings who have been our fathers and mothers, in order to free them, that we generate this enlightened thought, which is the thought of the Buddha.

Beings are as limitless as the sky, and they have all been our fathers and mothers; they are suffering in samsara so the thought of freeing them from this suffering really is the enlightened thought. In the words of the Bodhisattva Vow: "From now until samsara is empty I shall work for the benefit of all beings who have been my fathers and mothers." So from the relative point of view there are sentient beings to be liberated, and there is compassion to be generated, and there is the 'T', the generator of compassion. The way of generating and showing compassion is actually explained by the Buddha himself. Such is the relative *bodhicitta*.

So in this relative practice of *bodhicitta* you visualize all beings and generate the enlightened thought and try to free them from suffering until enlightenment is reached, and you recite the generation of *Bodhicitta* as many times as your practice requires. It is also instructed that one must exchange one's own happiness for the pain of others. As you breathe out you give all your happiness, joy, merit, and even their causes to sentient beings; and as you breathe in you take all their pain and suffering so that they are free of it. This practice is also very important. Without the development of *bodhicitta* and without freeing ourselves from our attachment to this life we cannot attain enlightenment. It is because of our inability to show compassion to others and because of being attached to ourselves and to this life that we are not free. All these things are the relative aspect of the practice of *bodhicitta*.

As regards the absolute aspect of *bodhicitta*, the Buddha said to his disciple Rabjor, "All dharmas are like an illusion and a dream." The reason why the Buddha said this is that whatever manifests is subject to change and dissolution, nothing is inherently solid or permanent. We see the world as solid, we tie it with the rope of entanglement with desire as a lead, and so we get drawn into activities which can never be finished; that is why samsara is endless. We might think that though samsara is like a dream perhaps enlightenment is solid and



permanent, but Buddha said that even nirvana itself is like a dream and an illusion. There is nothing that can be named which is nirvana, nothing called nirvana which is tangible.

Buddha said, directly, "Form is emptiness." For instance, the moon is reflected in water, but there is no moon in the water, there never has been. There is no form, it is empty. Then he went on to say, "Emptiness itself is form." Emptiness itself has appeared in the form of form. You cannot find emptiness apart from form. You cannot separate the two, you cannot grasp them as separate entities. The moon is reflected in water, but the water is not the moon and the moon is not the water; yet you cannot separate the water and the moon. Once you have crossed over this samsara, that is *paramita* or 'transcended samsara', there is no nirvana; in the realm of nirvana there is no samsara.

You may say, "But it is there, you can see it!" But when you really examine it, it is not there. So then if you were to ask how this has actually come about, in fact everything comes from interdependent origination. What is this interdependent origination? The moon and the water do not exist separately, but the moon appears in the water simply because things come together like that. The clear water is the primary cause and the moon is the secondary or contributory cause; when these two causes meet interdependent origination manifests. It is the coincidental appearance of the primary cause and the contributory cause.

To put it directly, the primary cause or basis of samsara is the grasping *T*, then all these illusory manifestations become the contributory cause, and meeting together they bring about the manifestation of the three realms of samsara. Everything exists only within this interdependent pattern. One must be quite sure of this. Nagarjuna said, "Apart from interdependent origination there is no separate dharma." When you go further and examine the nature of interdependent origination you find that it is no other than emptiness; therefore apart from emptiness there is no dharma. The ultimate view of the Mahayana is emptiness; this viewpoint does not exist in the lower teachings.

If you really examine you begin to see everything as the play of emptiness; all the dharmas are exhausted and you finally arrive at their nature which is emptiness. But then you might say that in that case we should not need anything. But whether you need anything or not is up to you, it depends on your mind. Just dryly talking of emptiness is not enough, one must actualize it and then see. If your

mind is really empty then there is no hope, no fear, no joy, no pain, no negativity; you don't necessarily have to eat or wear clothes, your mind is free of that. It is like waving your hand in the sky, completely unobstructed. The purpose of meditation is to remain in this natural state of emptiness, then in that state all outer phenomena are directly realized as emptiness. That is why we practise meditation, to purify everything into its empty nature, to reach that stronghold of emptiness. First we must realize that the absolute, natural state of things is empty, then how it manifests in the relative way.

Out of this empty nature arise all the relative manifestations in which samsara exists. One must clearly understand how it is in reality and how it appears. It is very important to have this view, because without the view one's meditation becomes dull. Just simply sitting and saying 'it is all empty' is like putting a little cup upside down: that little empty space in the cup remains a very narrow, limited emptiness. It is essential to know the heart of the matter, as it is. In the absolute sense there are no sentient beings who suffer, no samsara, no pain, all these are as empty as the clear sky; but because of interdependent origination and illusion the relative sphere of things comes about and there are sentient beings who suffer in samsara.

In praise of the Great Mother, Shunyata, it is said: "Though one thinks of expressing the wisdom-gone-beyond, one cannot put it into words." It is totally beyond utterance, beyond thought, beyond concept. It was never born; it has never died. If you ask what it is like, it is like the sky. You can never find the limit of the sky; you can never find the centre of the sky. So this sky-like nature is symbolic of emptiness: it is spacious, limitless, free, with infinite depth and infinite expanse.

Then you might say, "So one's own Rigpa, the nature of one's own mind, is like the sky, free from all limitations." But it is not just empty. If you look into it there is something to see—and 'see' is just a word we have to use in order to communicate. You can see that, you can meditate on that, you can rest in that. If you see the true nature of emptiness as it really is, this is the 'mother of all the buddhas'. All this talk has been an elaboration of the absolute bodhicitta.

Next is the *purification through Vajrasattva*. In the absolute sense there is nothing to purify, no one to purify with and no purification. But since we could not leave it at that, defilements and obscurations arose. In the illusory perception of the grasping ego, we are subjected to endless suffering, therefore there is a need for purification so we

have this practice as a relative skilful means. In order to purify, Vajrasattva arises from one's true state or Rigpa and his flow of nectar completely cleanses our defilements. You do visualization and say the Hundred-syllable Mantra which is a means of purification. In the natural state of things, in the state of what is, everything is pure from the very beginning like the sky. This is the absolute purification of Vajrasattva.

Now we come to the *offering of the mandala*, which is for the accumulation of merit. Why do we need to accumulate merit as a cause of wisdom? It is because of grasping that all these illusory phenomena have come about. Because there is illusion there is a way of purifying illusion, and because one can purify there is also a way of accumulating merit. When you offer 'my body, my possessions and my glories' this is the relative, symbolic offering of the mandala. From the absolute point of view these things never existed, like the clear, empty sky. So if you remain in the state of primordial awareness, that is the absolute mandala offering and the absolute accumulation of merit.

Even in the *guru yoga*, because of interdependent origination the mind is deluded, and so the lama appears as the one who inspires purity of mind, he is the object towards whom one feels purely. Because the mind is defiled and because one feels purity of perception towards the lama, so the lama exists, and oneself, who offers devotion, exists in the relative sphere. Therefore externally you visualize the lama and make prayers and then you receive his empowerment and blessing. These are all the external, relative practices of *guru yoga*.

So far you have been praying to the symbolic, apparent lama. Then you say,

*The Lama dissolves into light and becomes one with me.*

*Recognize—one's own Rigpa is the Absolute Lama.*

If you ask where the Absolute Lama is, he is there in the absolute nature of the mind. The absolute state of Rigpa is where the lama is fully accomplished. Just continuing in that awareness of how it is, is the absolute practice of *guru yoga*.

This is how the outer ngöndro relates to the inner ngöndro.

*A teaching given by H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche in London on May 19th 1979, and translated by Sogyal Rinpoche.*

## Notes

1. The Vth Dalai Lama was the incarnation of the enlightened activity of the great King of Tibet, Trisong Detsen, the chief disciple of Padmasambhava, and was thus empowered to reveal the profound Pure Vision teachings of the *Gyachen Nyer Nga*, as was prophesized by Padmasambhava himself. His *Collected Works* are divided into Outer, Inner and Extremely Secret teachings, the last including the Extremely Secret Visionary teachings, which comprise twenty-five texts and their compiled means of accomplishment (sadhana), the *Gyachen Nyer Nga*. These are classified as a cycle belonging to the Ancient Tradition of Nyingma, and in particular to the category known as 'Zabmo Dagnang', *Profound Pure Visions*. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has said that he feels a particularly close link with the Great Fifth and the XIIIth Dalai Lamas, both of whom had a special connection with Dzogchen teachings, and both of whom were called upon to lead their people with sagacity and strength at crucial moments in their history.
2. Vidyadhara, or Rigdzin in Tibetan, according to Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, indicates someone who constantly abides in the state of pure awareness of 'Rigpa'.
3. From a teaching by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche given in Paris in August 1986 to bless the beginning of the Rigpa Sangha's recitation of One Hundred Million Mantras of Padmasambhava for World Peace.
4. The 1st Dzogchen Rinpoche, Dzogchen Pema Rigdzin (1625–97), an emanation of Saraha, Vimalamitra, and Padmasambhava, was the great siddha who founded the Dzogchen Monastery in Kham, East Tibet in 1684–5. It was after his master Bakha Tulku Rigdzin Chökyi Gyatso told him: "I have heard of Dzogpachenpo as a teaching, but I have never seen Dzogpachenpo as a person except in you", that he became known as Dzogchen Pema Rigdzin, or Dzogchen Rinpoche. The monastery he founded was destined to be one of the most important and influential in the whole of Tibet for the spread of the Nyingma and Dzogchen teachings.
5. On Trekchö and Tögal, see pp. 66–7.
6. Alaya, kunshyi in Tibetan, see p. 49.
7. Fully accomplished Dzogchen practitioners can dissolve their body at the time of death. Through the practice of Trekchö, the practitioner can attain the so-called 'rainbow body' (ja lü), in which the body becomes smaller and smaller as it dissolves, emanating rainbow light, and finally only the hair and nails are left behind. Through the practice of Tögal, the practitioner can dissolve his or her body into the 'light body' (ö ku), where the body transforms

into light and disappears completely into space. This was done by Garab Dorje, Mañjushrimitra, Shri Singha, Jñanasutra, and Vairochana. Another accomplishment of Tögal practice is the 'rainbow body of great transference' (ja lü phowa chenpo), where the master dissolves his body into rainbow light and lives for centuries in order to benefit others. Such was the case with Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, Nyang Tingdzin Zangpo, and Chetsün Senge Wangchuk.

8. From *Rest in Natural Great Peace, Songs of Experience* by Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, Rigpa, London 1989.

9. The garuda, a mythical bird, is often used as an image in Dzogchen, as it is the highest flying of birds, and is said to be born fully grown from its egg.

10. Chetsün Senge Wangchuk (11–12th century) was an important figure in the Nyingtik lineage. Vimalamitra appeared to him and gave him empowerments, guidance and instructions, and at the age of one hundred and twenty-five, he vanished into the sky in a cloud of rainbow light. Before passing away, he gave his last instructions to the dakini Palgyi Lodrö. He was reincarnated as the great nineteenth century master Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, who, recollecting his past life in a vision and receiving the teaching back from the dakini, brought out the very important cycle of teachings known as Chetsün Nyingtik.

11. Nyoshul Lungtok Tenpé Nyima received the experiential instruction of Dzogpachenpo, the *Mengak Nyongtri Chenpo*, from Patrul Rinpoche. Amongst his great disciples were Tertön Sogyal and Khenpo Ngawang Palzang (1879–1941) (otherwise known as Khenpo Ngaga, or Ngakchung), who was an emanation of Vimalamitra, predicted by Patrul Rinpoche. Khenpo Ngakchung became the main holder of Nyoshul Lungtok's Dzogchen lineage, and was one of the most influential Dzogchen masters of this century.

12. See Appendix: *The Dzogchen View of Ngöndro*, by H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche.

13. From a teaching given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Helsinki, Finland on September 30, 1988.

14. From a teaching by Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche given at Rigpa, Paris, April 12, 1986.

15. Akanishtha, in Tibetan Omin, literally 'the highest' celestial realm.

16. Oddiyana, Orgyen in Tibetan, is accepted by all traditions as the place where the tantric teachings originated. It was the birthplace of both Garab Dorje and Padmasambhava, and also the kingdom of King Dza. In the north-west of Oddiyana is the lake known as Dhanakosha, meaning 'treasury of

wealth'. Oddiyana is thought by many to be situated in the Swat Valley in Pakistan.

17. The twelve manifestations are related to a cycle of teachings known as *Barché Lamsel (Dispeller of All Obstacles)*.

18. On tertöns or 'treasure revealers', see p. 73.

19. From *The Last Public Teaching of Lama Kalu Rinpoche*, Sonada, March 28, 1989, courtesy of The International Translation Committee, Drajur Dzamling Kunchab.

20. Although separated in time by some four centuries, Jigmé Lingpa was tremendously inspired by the teachings of Longchenpa, and during a three-year retreat in the caves of Chimphu between 1759–62, he invoked him fervently with a guru yoga he had composed. Longchenpa appeared to him in three visions, through which he received the blessing and transmission of the wisdom body, speech, and mind of Longchenpa, empowering him with the responsibility of preserving the meaning of the teachings of Longchenpa, and of spreading them. Longchenpa appeared to him three times: first he appeared as quite old, the second time he appeared he was younger and smiled at him, and the third time he was very youthful, came alive, took the whole teaching in the form of a book and placed it on his head, granting him the Rigpé Tsal Wang. At that instant his mind became one with the wisdom mind of Longchenpa.

21. There are three negative actions of the body: killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct; four of the speech: lies, harsh words, slander, and gossip; and three of the mind: avarice, malice, and wrong views.

22. The Tripitaka are the three collections of teachings of Buddha: Vinaya, Sutra and Abhidharma. Vinaya includes all the teachings concerning monastic discipline; Sutra includes the discourses of Buddha on view and practice; Abhidharma presents a complete teaching on the structure of mental functioning and psychology.

23. Tummo, or chandali, is the practice of 'inner heat', one of the Six Yogas, and the root of the path, according to Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche.

24. The path of the bodhisattva is summarized into ten bhumi or grounds, upon which the bodhisattva progresses along the path to enlightenment. Each ground forms the basis of the bodhisattva's understanding, from which to continue in training to fully realize the wisdom of a buddha.

25. Or *Tsik gi Tsönpa Dön Dam kyi Wang*: 'the empowerment of the absolute truth, symbolized by the word'.

26. Vaibhasika, Sautrantika, Cittamatra and Madhyamika.

27. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Finland, 1988.

28. In this context, it should be noted that the term Hinayana, literally 'lesser', 'lower' or 'small' vehicle, in no way carries the sense of being inferior. On the contrary, it means that it is fundamental to the whole Buddhist path.

29. The *Kalachakra Tantra* can be designated either as a mother tantra or non-dual. See *Kalachakra Tantra, Rite of Initiation* by the Dalai Lama and Jeffrey Hopkins, London: Wisdom 1985, p. 165-6.

30. In *An Introduction to Dzogchen: The Four-Themed Precious Garland*, by Longch'en Rabjampa, Dudjom Rinpoche and Beru Khyentze Rinpoche, trans. Alexander Berzin, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharmasala, 1979, p. 34.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

32. On kama and terma, see p. 73. The eight kagyé are known as: Jampal Ku, Pema Sung, Yangdak Tuk, Düdtsi Yönten, Phurba Trinlé, Mamo Bötong, Jigten Chötö, and Mópa Drakngak.

33. Mingyur Namkhé Dorje (b. 1793), the IVth Dzogchen Rinpoche, was an extraordinary master who was the teacher of some of the greatest lamas of the last century, such as Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, Do Khyentse, Patrul Rinpoche, and Mipham. He reached the state of realization of Dzogpachenpo called 'chö nyi zé sa', 'the wearing out of phenomenal reality', and had completely transcended all worldly concerns and conventional norms. Mingyur Namkhé Dorje became something of a legend and stories about his clairvoyance and supernatural deeds abound.

During a large ceremony one day at the Dzogchen Monastery, over which he was presiding as head of the monastery, something rather out of the ordinary took place. It had come to the point in the practice where the monks were all silently reciting the mantra. Suddenly Mingyur Namkhé Dorje was seen to begin agitatedly muttering: "Come on... You can do it!... Come on..." as if he were egging someone on. It was with the same kind of enthusiasm that a football fan would cheer on his favorite player. Finally, he just relaxed and sat back contented. A short while afterwards, one of the monks rushed into the temple, ashen-faced and aghast, and spoke to the master of discipline, who in turn conferred with the chant-master. They all looked outraged. Then they approached Dzogchen Rinpoche and told him that a thief had climbed up on top of the temple and made off with the priceless golden sun-and-moon ornament which had crowned the roof. "Yes, I know," he replied, "I helped him." "But, how could you possibly do such a thing?" they asked. "This is *your* monastery!" "Yes, but he really wanted it," pleaded Mingyur Namkhé Dorje,

"and he wanted it *much* more than I did."

34. According to the tradition of Vimalamitra, there are eighteen, with the addition of the *Tantra of Tröma* (practices connected with the protector Ekazati). According to Guru Rinpoche and the *Khandro Nyingtik*, there are nineteen, with the addition of the *Tröma Tantra* and the *Tantra of Longsal Barma*.

35. The terms Trekchö and Tögal are extremely difficult to translate accurately into English.

36. Sometimes these bardos are translated as: the natural bardo of this life, the painful bardo of dying, the luminous bardo of dharmata and the karmic bardo of becoming. See *The Mirror of Mindfulness* by Tsele Natsok Rangdrol, Shambhala, Boston, 1989.

37. From a teaching on the Longchen Nyingtik Guru Yoga, given by H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche in Dordogne, France in August 1984, at the request of Sogyal Rinpoche and the Rigpa Sangha.

38. Altogether, Longchenpa is credited with two hundred and sixty three works. The Dzö Dün or *Seven Treasuries* are: Yishyin Rinpochei Dzö, Mengak Rinpochei Dzö, Chöying Rinpochei Dzö, Drubta Rinpochei Dzö, Tekchok Rinpochei Dzö, Tsik Dön Rinpochei Dzö and Neluk Rinpochei Dzö.

Longchenpa's *Three Trilogies* are: Ngelso Kor Sum—*The Trilogy of Comfort and Ease*, consisting of: Sem Nyi Ngelso, Gyuma Ngelso and Samten Ngelso; Rangdrol Kor Sum—*The Trilogy of Self-Liberation*: Sem Nyi Rangdrol, Chönyi Rangdrol and Nyamnyi Rangdrol; and Mun Sel Kor Sum—*The Trilogy on Dispelling Darkness*: three commentaries on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*.

Longchenpa's *Three Inner Essences* are the Lama Yangtik, Khandro Yangtik and Zabmo Yangtik. The Nyingtik Yabshyi, or four 'sections' of Nyingtik, are composed of two 'mothers', Vima Nyingtik and Khandro Nyingtik, and two 'branches', Lama Yangtik and Khandro Yangtik. The Vima Nyingtik passed through the Kama, and Khandro Nyingtik through Terma. Longchenpa clarified and condensed the Vima Nyingtik (and the 119 Instructional Treatises of Mengakdé) in his Lama Yangtik, and clarified the Khandro Nyingtik through his Khandro Yangtik. The teachings which were too secret to include there, especially from Khandro Nyingtik, are contained in his detailed commentary on both Vima Nyingtik and Khandro Nyingtik, the Zabmo Yangtik.

39. Jigmé Lingpa produced nine volumes of written and discovered texts, the most famous being his *Yönten Rinpochei Dzö* and its two volume auto-commentary *Den Nyi Shing Ta* and *Nam Khyen Shing Ta*. He also collected the tantras of the *Nyingma Gyübum* and wrote a catalogue with history of the lineage.

40. Shortly to appear in English under the title *The Nyingma School of Tibetan*



*Buddhism, Its Fundamentals and History*, by Dudjom Rinpoche, translated by Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein, and published by Wisdom Publications. This brings together two great works of Dudjom Rinpoche. The first, the *History of the Nyingmapas* is the definitive historical work on the evolution of the Nyingma school and was written by Dudjom Rinpoche in 1962, in order to bring stability to the Nyingmapas during a period of great difficulty. His companion volume, the *Fundamentals*, composed in 1966 in Kalimpong, is a masterful survey of the teaching of Buddha from the perspective of the Nyingmapas and the nine yanas.

41. Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche was born in Bhutan in 1960, and recognized as the activity emanation of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö. He has received teachings from many accomplished masters, including H. H. the Dalai Lama, H. H. Sakya Trizin, H. H. Karmapa, H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche and H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, and he directs the Dzongsar Institute in Bir, Himachal Pradesh, India, as well as centres in Australia and South East Asia.

Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche is the seventh incarnation of the great master who founded the Shechen Monastic University in Kham, East Tibet, and since the age of five has been constantly with H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, receiving teachings and empowerments. He is the head of the Shechen Tennyi Dargye Ling Monastery in Baudhanath, Kathmandu, Nepal, and its branches in the West.

### Recommended Reading

*The Buddhism of Tibet*, H. H. the Dalai Lama, Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1987.

*The Dalai Lama at Harvard*, H. H. the Dalai Lama, Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1988.

*Kindness, Clarity and Insight*, H. H. the Dalai Lama, Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1984.

*The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, Dudjom Rinpoche, Boston: Wisdom Publications, forthcoming.

*The Excellent Path to Enlightenment*, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Kathmandu: Shechen Tennyi Dargyeling, 1987.

*The Wish-fulfilling Jewel, the Practice of Guru Yoga according to the Longchen Nyingtik Tradition*, by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Boulder: Shambhala, 1988.

*The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava*, Emeryville: Dharma Publishing, 1978.

*Buddha Mind*, Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1989.

...and countless others.

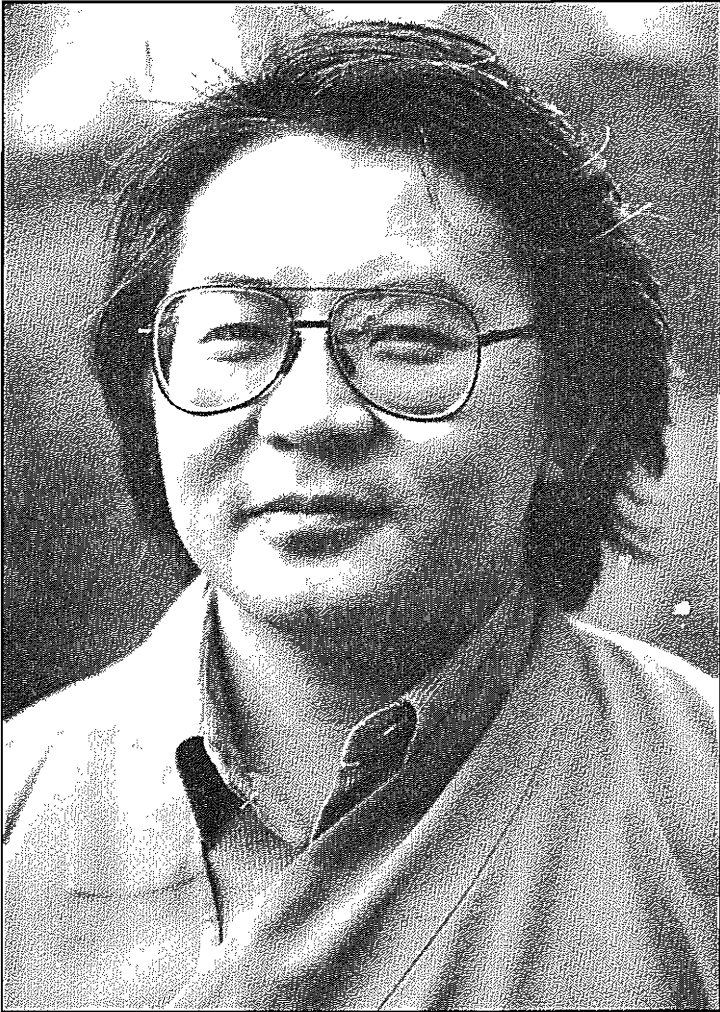
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Sogyal Rinpoche

Tibetan calligraphy by Sogyal Rinpoche, except the Seven Line Prayer and Vajra Guru Mantra on pages 29 and 44 by Drungyik Tsering, the famous calligrapher of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö.

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Production and layout by Mary Ellen Rouiller.



*Sogyal Rinpoche*

**SOGYAL RINPOCHE** was born in Tibet, and raised as a son by one of the greatest Buddhist masters of this century, Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö. He was recognized as the incarnation of Tertön Sogyal, Lerab Lingpa, discoverer of treasures (ter) concealed by Padmasambhava, and personal friend and lama of the XIIIth Dalai Lama. Rinpoche is also considered to be an emanation of Do Khyentse and of Lingsang Gyalpo, a direct descendant of Gesar of Ling. After Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche passed away, he studied with H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche and H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, his other principal teachers, and for a number of years he served as translator and aide to H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche, who was the inspiration behind his work in the West. He studied at Cambridge University and now has nearly twenty years' experience of living and teaching in the western world.

The clarity, ease and humour with which Rinpoche presents the teachings and practices of buddhadharma, along with his special gift for by-passing cultural barriers to reveal the vitality of the Buddhist perspective in today's challenging world, have led him to teach worldwide, and he is much sought after as a speaker at international conferences on a wide range of subjects, such as healing, psychology, the environment, peace, the arts and sciences. He is acknowledged as a pioneer in drawing out the common insights shared by the ancient Buddhist wisdom of Tibet and modern experience and research. Widely known for his work in the field of death and caring for the dying, Rinpoche is currently writing a long-awaited book on death, to be published next year, which will be the first of a series. Other titles will include a deeper investigation into the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, and books on meditation and Dzogchen.

Rinpoche has founded Rigpa Buddhist Meditation Centres in Britain, France, the United States, Germany, Ireland, and Australia, and teaches widely in America and in many other countries around the world, especially Holland, Switzerland, Australia, and New Zealand.



## RIGPA

*Rigpa is the true Nature of our Mind. Introduction to, and resting in the state of Rigpa is the heart of Dzogchen practice.*

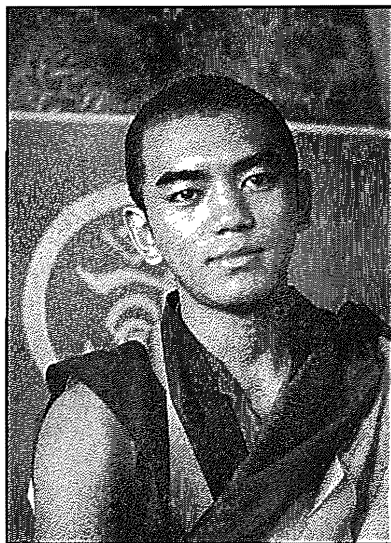
*Rigpa Fellowship is a group of practitioners dedicated to realizing Rigpa, and to helping others do the same.*

Rigpa is an international association of Buddhist meditation centres in Europe, the United States, and Australia, under the direction of Sogyal Rinpoche and Dzogchen Rinpoche. The overall aim of these centres is to encourage a true understanding of the teaching of Buddha, to provide facilities for its practice, and at the same time to make possible a real exchange between the Buddhist approach and that of related western disciplines. They offer a complete introduction to the teaching and practice of buddhadharma, whilst providing the continuity and graduated presentation most appreciated by students.

A central, and very special, feature of Rigpa's programme is an annual series of retreats held in a rural setting, led by Rinpoche and designed for both beginners and older students. These retreats take place in the United Kingdom at Easter, in France in August, in Germany after Christmas, in the United States in the summer and at Thanksgiving, and in Australia between January and February. Attended by often up to five hundred people, Rigpa's retreats provide an environment of practice in which a deeper understanding of the teaching can unfold, and they are known for their warmth and supportive atmosphere. A number of very great masters regularly join the Rigpa Sangha on retreat, and a frequent visitor is Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, amongst the most eminent khenpos in the Nyingma tradition, and one of the foremost exponents of Dzogchen. In 1992, Sogyal Rinpoche will lead Rigpa's first three-month retreat.

Rinpoche makes regular visits to Rigpa's city centres, which also offer ongoing courses on meditation and the Buddhist view of life, regular practice and study groups, and, in the spirit of Rimé, seminars by visiting teachers from all Buddhist traditions. Practice and study groups meet regularly in a number of cities across Europe and the United States.

Complementing these city centres are Rigpa's retreat centres. Dzogchen



*Dzogchen Rinpoche*

Beara, Rigpa's retreat centre in Ireland, is located amidst the remote and haunting beauty of West Cork. After 1992, it will become the site for more long-term retreats by individuals and groups from the Rigpa Sangha. Dzogchen View in California, which commands the panoramic views of the horizon and the Pacific ocean its name suggests, is to be developed as Rigpa's main retreat facility in the United States. In London, Rigpa is near to purchasing a larger building to serve as its International Centre, where new programmes will be developed to fulfil the full range of its aims and activities. As well as its annual Tibetan Calendar, Rigpa publishes an international journal from London, 'Khyentse Özer'.

Rigpa supports the work of Dzogchen Rinpoche, and the rebuilding of the Dzogchen Monastery in Mysore, South India. There, a very important phase, the reconstruction of the Study College (Shedra), to be modelled on the famous Shri Singha Shedra of the original Dzogchen monastery, has already begun. Rigpa also raises funds for a number of other projects in India and the Himalayas, and towards the work of some of the greatest living Dzogchen masters. These and many other projects in the East and the West, as well as major aspects of Sogyal Rinpoche's work worldwide, have been drawn together into one Appeal Fund, 'Tenpé Jindak', details of which are available from Rigpa.

## DZOGCHEN MONASTERY

The original Dzogchen monastery, known as Dzogchen Rudam Orgyen Samten Chöling, was built by the 1st Dzogchen Rinpoche, Dzogchen Pema Rigdzin (1625-97) upon the instructions of the 'Great Fifth' Dalai Lama. Until its destruction in 1959, it was one of the principal centres of the Nyingma and Dzogchen teachings in Tibet. At its peak, Dzogchen monastery, almost like a city in size, and with thirteen retreat centres, accommodated up to two thousand monks and became famed throughout Asia, sending out highly accomplished scholars to its more than two hundred branch monasteries. It had perhaps the best scriptural college and retreat centre in the Nyingma and Dzogchen tradition.

**THE VIII<sup>TH</sup> DZOGCHEN RINPOCHE**, Jigmé Losel Wangpo, was born in Sikkim in 1964. He was recognized by the IV<sup>th</sup> Dordrupchen Rinpoche, and enthroned in 1972. Among the other great lamas from whom he has received teachings are H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche and H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, and his education has been very closely and personally supervised by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who feels very strongly that link between himself and Dzogchen Rinpoche created during the time of the V<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. The present Dzogchen Rinpoche has long been regarded in India as being a great teacher of the future, showing remarkable qualities—profound intelligence and inner awareness along with quiet dignity and humility. Since 1985, at the invitation of Sogyal Rinpoche and Rigpa, he has made several visits to the West.

According to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's instructions, Dzogchen Rinpoche is rebuilding the Dzogchen Monastery in Kollegal, Mysore, South India on land chosen by His Holiness himself just below his own residence. The monastery serves as a focus for the large local Tibetan community, catering to its spiritual and educational needs. At present the ground floor of the temple has been completed and much of the interior decoration of the shrine, including fittings and images, has been installed. The construction of the second floor, designated as quarters for His Holiness the Dalai Lama as well as other visiting teachers, is now underway, in preparation for the opening of the monastery by His Holiness in 1991.

Dzogchen Monastery will become a major centre for the Nyingmapa teachings, and will re-establish the great living tradition of Dzogchen, where both study and practice are equally emphasized. Therefore the next most important phase of the development of the monastery is to establish the *Study College* (Shedra) modelled on the renowned 'Shri Singha Shedra' of the original Dzogchen monastery, which produced such outstanding masters and scholars as Patrul Rinpoche and Mipham. Provision of teachers and facilities for study are of crucial importance for the young monks who have joined the monastery. Four salaried teachers provide a well-rounded education and give instruction in all traditional subjects, including grammar, logic and debate, scriptural studies, arts and crafts, as well as English, mathematics and other topics which will enable them to transmit the teachings in relation to present-day needs. Currently all the monks receive lessons in one room of the kitchen/dining hall, newly constructed and lacking even the most basic fittings. As long as the hall is used for classes, it cannot even be used for its intended purpose.

The total construction cost of the Study College, including building materials is just over 1,000,000 rupees (approximately \$58,600).

A start has been made on planning the complementary *Retreat Centre* (Drupdra), located a little way from the monastery. The retreat facility will be open to both monks and lay people. The cost of constructing the most basic buildings required is 200,000 rupees (\$11,700).

A complete sponsorship programme exists for the resident monks at Dzogchen Monastery. For the sum of \$250 a year, a mere \$20 a month, a monk can be fully supported in his training and education.

*Full details on sponsorship and helping Dzogchen Monastery, along with up-to-date news on its progress are available from Rigpa centres in their respective countries.*



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