



Bodhi Path Buddhist Centers

Practicing the methods to take rebirth in the Pure Land of Buddha Amitabha according to the Sutras and Tantras

1. Take Refuge, Pratimoksha (the lay or monastic vows), and Bodhisattva vows. Cultivate Shamatha during one month, focusing on the image of the Buddha with devotion in order to mature the mind.
2. Take the Bodhisattva vows belonging to the profound view tradition.
3. Read the Sutras related to Buddha Amitabha and study the commentary by Karma Chagme on the aspiration prayers to take rebirth in Sukhavati.
4. Accumulate merit and purify negative karma through 100,000 accumulations of Mandala offerings and prostrations to the 35 Buddhas.
5. Continuously recite the short sutra ritual of offering to Buddha Amitabha.
6. Do the Tonglen practice of The 7 Points of Mind Training every day.
7. If one follows the Vajrayana path, one should receive the empowerment of Buddha Amitabha according to the Namchö tradition.
8. Do the Buddha Amitabha Sadhana of the Namchö tradition, accumulating 100,000 recitations of the mantra.
9. Do the daily Sadhana of the Namchö tradition with the accumulation of mantras in combination with Powa training until the appropriate signs appear.
10. Do the Long Life Practice as it is explained in the main Sadhana.

The Abridged Sadhana of Maha Sukhavati, Dewachen

Homage.

To the Three Jewels and Three Roots,
the sources of refuge, I go for refuge.
In order to establish all beings in Buddhahood
I generate the supreme enlightenment mind of Bodhicitta.

(recite 3 x)

On a water-born lotus flower I appear as the white Bodhisattva Chenrezig. In front, on a lotus and moon disc sits the Lord of Boundless Light, Amitabha, red in color. With one face and two hands resting in the mudra of equanimity. Holding a begging bowl and wearing Dharma robes, he sits in the vajra posture. On his right side is the powerful Lord of the Universe, Chenrezig, white in color. He has one face and four arms. He holds the palms of the first two hands together at his heart. In the right hand he holds a circle of beads and in the left a lotus. He stands on a lotus and moon disc. On the left side of Amitabha in front is the Great Powerful One, Vajrapani. He has one face, two arms, and is blue in color. In his right hand he holds a dorje, in his left hand a bell. He is standing on a lotus and moon disc. Countless Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Shravakas, and Arhats surround them.

Lights radiate from the three syllables in the three places of the three main deities in front and invite the wisdom deities from Dewachen.

OM AMI DEWA HRIH
BENZA SAMAYA DZA
DZA HUNG BAM HO
TIK THRA LHEN
A TI PU HO
OM HUNG TRAM HRIH AH
ABHI KHEN TSA MAM
ARGAM PADAM PUPE DUPE ALOKE GENDE NEWIDE
SHABDA - AH HUNG

HUNG

In the Land of Great Bliss you turn the Wheel of Dharma and always look upon sentient beings with compassion, fulfilling your commitment to protect all beings. We offer praise and prostrations to you, Lord of Boundless Light, whose hands rest in the mudra of

equanimity.

EMAHO

To the wondrous Buddha of Infinite Light, to the Great Compassionate Chenrezig, to the Great Powerful Vajrapani, and to all the countless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas I pray with a mind of one-pointed devotion. Please bestow the supreme siddhi, Bless me with the realization of Amitabha.

Lights radiate to the west from the bodies of the assembled deities. Amitabha's form, strings of his mantra, and hand symbols in countless numbers fall like rain from the pure land of Dewachen and flow into me.

ཨོཾ་མི་དཔལ་མྱེ།

OM AMI DEWA HRIH

(The mantra of Amitabha should be recited as many times as possible.)

HRIH

Then the Buddha in front dissolves into light and melts into me.

(Meditate for a while now.)

My body is like a rainbow in the sky and appears in the form of Buddha Amitabha. Luminosity and emptiness have become inseparable.

EMAHO

Amazing! Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Light, with Chenrezig, the Great Compassionate Lord, to his right and Vajrapani, the Bodhisattva of Great Powers, to his left, all surrounded by innumerable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas!

As soon as I have left this existence behind, without the interval of another life, may I take birth in that wondrous Pure Land, the Realm of Joy, the place of everlasting happiness called Dewachen, and may I directly perceive the Buddha of Infinite Light.

O all you Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions, please grant your blessings so that the wishes which I have just expressed may be accomplished without any obstacles.

Tayatha Pentsadriya Awa Bodhanayé Soha.

OM

May all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas abiding in the ten directions and three times think of me.

I rejoice in their accomplishments of the two accumulations.
I offer all the virtue I have gathered in the three times
to the Three Jewels.
May the teachings of the Victorious One flourish.
I dedicate this virtue to all sentient beings
that they may attain enlightenment.
May all virtue accumulated ripen in my mind stream.
May the two obscurations be purified and the accumulations
perfected.
May life, health, practice, and realization increase.
May the tenth level be reached in this very life.

When we leave this life may we instantly be reborn in Dewachen.
Once born there, may the lotus open and may we achieve
enlightenment in that very body. After reaching enlightenment may
we manifest in order to guide sentient beings until samsara is
empty.

SAMAYA GYA GYA GYA

NAMCHO AMITABHA CONCISE PRACTICE

Terma Revelation of Namcho Mingyur Dorje

阿彌陀佛修法簡軌

南祖米久多傑巖藏傳承

༄༅། ན་མོ་དགོན་མཆོག་གསུམ་དང་རྩ་བ་གསུམ་མེད་

Na-Mo/ Kön-Chog Sum-Dang Tsa-Wa-Sum/

I take refuge in the Three Jewels, Three Roots

喃嚨 官作 深等 又哇深

皈依三寶三根本

སྐྱབས་གནས་རྣམས་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆི་མེད་

Kyab-Ne Nam-La Kyab-Su-Chi/

and all sources of refuge.

甲呢 南啦 甲素次

一切皈依之本源

འགྲོ་ཀུན་སངས་རྒྱས་ལ་འགོད་ཕྱིར་ཨེ།

Dro-Kün Sang-Gye La-Göd Chyir/

In order to place all beings in the state of Buddhahood

左官 生既 啦嚒斜

爲令衆生能證覺

མེ་ཏོག་ཅུ་སྤྱེས་པ་རྒྱུ་འཕྱེད་ཨེ།

Me-Tog Chu-Kye Ped-Mai-Teng/

Upon the lotus flower which arises from the water

咩托 粗既 啤咩定

水中所生蓮花上

བྱང་ཆུབ་མཆོག་ཏུ་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་དོ།

Jyang-Chub Chog-Tu Sem-Kyed-Do//

ལན་གསུམ།།

(repeat 3 times)

I generate the supreme Bodhicitta.

撐速 作度 閃既多

(三次)

生起勝妙菩提心

དེ་ནང་རང་ཉིད་སེམས་དཔའ་དཀར་ཨེ།

De-Nang Rang-Nyid Sem-Pa-Kar/

self-nature appears as Chenrezig, white in color

嗲能 橫咧 閃巴交

自化白色觀音相

མདུན་དུ་པདྨ་ཟླ་གདན་ལ།

Dün-Du Ped-Ma Da-Den-La/

In the space in front upon a lotus and moon seat is

端度 啤嘛 叮定啦

前方蓮花月輪上

ཞལ་གཅིག་ཡུག་གཉིས་མཉམ་བཞག་སྟེང་།

Zhel-Chig Chyag-Nyi Nyam-Zhag-Teng/

with one face and two hands in the mudra of meditative equipoise,

稍啣 測咧 音剎定

一面二臂等持印

འོད་དཔག་མེད་མགོན་སྐུ་མདོག་དམར་།

Öd-Pag Med-Gön Ku-Dog-Mar/

the protector Amitabha, red in color,

哦啪 咩杆 咕踱貓爾

無量光佛身紅色

ལྷུང་བཟེད་འཛིན་ཅིང་ཆོས་གོས་གསོལ་།

Lhung-Zed Dzin-Ching Chö-Gö-Sol/

holding a begging bowl and wearing the dharma robes

哈隆石 箭貞 灼鋸梳爾

托鉢身披三法衣

༄༅། སྐྱིལ་མོ་གྲུང་གིས་བཞུགས་པ་ལ་ཨུཾ

Kyil-Mo Trung-Gi Zhug-Pa-La/

seated in the full lotus posture.

嬌摩 沖噶 宿巴啦

兩腿雙盤伽趺坐

ཞལ་གཅིག་ཕྱག་བཞི་ཐལ་སྐྱར་དང་ཨུཾ

Zhel-Chig Chyag-Zhi Thal-Jyar-Dang/

with one face and four arms, the first two palms pressed together, and

稍唧 測司 他爾吒爾等

一面四臂前合掌

གཡས་སུ་འཛིག་རྟེན་དབང་ཕྱག་དཀར་ཨུཾ

Ye-Su Jig-Ten Wang-Chyug-Kar/

On his right is Jigten Wangchug (Chenrezig), white in color,

夜素 積定 汪足交爾

右侍白色觀自在

གཡས་གཡོན་འཕྲེང་བ་པདྨ་འཛིན་ཨུཾ

Ye-Yön Threng-Wa Ped-Ma-Dzin/

the remaining right and left hands holding a mala and lotus respectively,

耶冤 井哇 啤嘛箭

右持晶珠左持蓮

༡༡། བཞེངས་པའི་སྟབས་ཀྱིས་པད་ཟླར་བཞུགས།

Zheng-Pai Tab-Kyi Ped-Dar-Zhug/

sitting upon a lotus and moon seat.

醒披 塔嘅 啤啲爾淑

立於蓮花月輪上

ཞལ་གཅིག་ཡུག་གཉིས་སྐྱ་མདོག་སྟོ་༥

Zhel-Chig Chyag-Nyi Ku-Dog-Ngo/

blue in color, with one face and two arms,

稍積 測咧 咕多餓

一面二臂身藍色

གཡོན་དུ་ཕྱག་རྡོར་མཐུ་ཆེན་ཐོབ།

Yön-Du Chyag-Dor Thu-Chen-Thob/

To the left is Vajrapani (Thuchen Tob),

冤度 測多爾 吐前托

左爲大力金剛手

གཡས་གཡོན་རྩི་རྩེ་འཛིན་།

Ye-Yön Dor-Je Dril-Bu-Dzin/

holding a vajra and bell in the right and left hands.

耶冤 多遮 知布箭

右手持杵左持鈴

བཞེངས་པའི་སྟབས་གྱིས་པད་ཟླར་བཞུགས།

Zheng-Pai Tab-Kyi Ped-Dar-Zhug/

sitting upon a lotus and moon seat.

脛披 塔機 啤啞爾淑

立於蓮花月輪上

ཉན་ཐོས་དག་བཅོམ་དཔག་མེད་བསྐྱོར།

Nyen-Thö Dra-Chom Pag-Med-Kor/

Sravakas (hearers), and Arhats (foe destroyers),

羸唾 乍壯 啲咩哥爾

聲聞羅漢衆圍繞

སངས་རྒྱས་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་དང་།

Sang-Gye Jyang-Chub Sem-Pa-Dang/

Surrounded by a boundless retinue of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas,

生既 撐速 閃巴等

無量諸佛與菩薩

གཙོ་བོ་གསུམ་གྱི་གནས་གསུམ་གྱི།

Tso-Wo Sum-Gyi Ne-Sum-Gyi/

the three principle deities' three places are marked

左和 宋機 呢宋機

三位主尊之三處

འབྲུ་གསུམ་ལས་ནི་འོད་འཕྲོས་པས།

Dru-Sum Le-Ni Öd-Thrö-Pe/

with the three syllables, from which rays of
light radiate

朱宋 呢咧 哦嘈啤
三種子字齊放光

བདེ་བ་ཅན་ནས་སྤྱན་དྲངས་གུར།

De-Wa Chen-Ne Chyen-Drang-Gyur//

invoking the primordial wisdom beings from the
realm of Great Bliss.

嗲哇 青呢 青掙朱爾
自極樂土作迎請(智慧尊)

ཨོཾ་མི་དྭེ་ཨ་འྲི།

Om A Mi Dhe Wa Hri/ Ben-Za Sa-Ma-Ya Dza//

嗡 阿咪 嗲哇施利 病沙 沙嘛也 乍

བཛྲ་ས་མ་ཡ་ཇ།

ཇཾ་རྩུ་བོ་ཏོ།

Dza Hung Bam Ho/
吒吽崩何

ཏིཏྱ་ལྷན།

Tith-Tra Lhen/
跌叉連

ཨ་ཏི་པུ་ཏོ།

Ah Ti Pu Ho//
阿地布何

ཨོཾ་རྩུ་ཏྲ་འྲི།ཨུ།

Om Hung Tram Hri Ah/
嗡吽參施利阿

ཨ་བྱི་པར་མོ།

Ah Bhi Khen Tsa Mam//
阿必驚沙孟

ॐ 本尊 阿金 巴耽 布卑 度卑 阿路既 驚爹 呢喂爹 濕呷 叉地叉耶 梳哈

Om Ben-Za Ar-Gham Pa-Dyam Pu-Pe Dhu-Pe Ah-Lo-Ke Gen-Dhe Ne-Wi-De Shap-Ta Tra-Ti-Tsa-Ye So Ha//

Hung/ De-Chen Zhing-Du Chö-Kyi Khor-Lo-Kor/

Hung, in the realm of Great Bliss the Dharma Wheel turns

吽 爹千 升度 灼噯 歌羅哥

吽 於極樂淨土轉大法輪

Sem-Chen Nam-La Tag-Tu Thug-Je-Zig/

to constantly look upon all sentient beings with loving kindness and compassion.

閃千 喃啦 得度 禿遮蝕

恆常慈悲眷視諸有情

༄༅། དམ་བཅའ་ཞལ་བཞེས་འགྲོ་བའི་སྐྱབས་མཛད་པེ།

Dam-Cha Zhel-Zhe Dro-Wai Kyab-Dzed-Pa/

Granting protection to beings through the vow you expressed, to Buddha Amitabha, who remains in the composure of equality, I prostrate and render praise.

耽差 稍些 左喂 甲錫巴

持守弘誓護佑一切衆

ལྷ་ཚོགས་སྐྱེལ་ས་འོད་ཟེར་རྒྱབ་ཕྱོགས་འཕྲོས་པེ།

Lha-Tshog Ku-Le Öd-Zer Nub-Chog-Thrö/

From the bodies of the assembled deities, light rays radiate into the West

哈啦作 咕咧 哦些爾 麓作粗

彌陀聖衆身體齊放光

སྒྲིང་མཐའ་མཉམ་བཞག་མཛད་ལ་ཕྱག་འཆའ་བསྟོད་པེ།

Nang-Tha Nyam-Zhag Dzed-La Chyag-Tshal-Töd//

冷汰 陰剎 錫啦 測差堆

頂禮讚嘆等持無量光

བདེ་ཆེན་ཞིང་ནས་འོད་དཔག་མེད་པ་ཡི།

De-Chen Zhing-Ne Öd-Pag Med-Pa-Yi/

to Dewa Chen where Amitabha resides,

嗲千 升咧 哦啪 咩巴衣

照耀西方彌陀極樂土

སྐུ་དང་སྒྲགས་ཕྱེང་ཕྱག་མཆན་དཔག་མེད་པཾ

Ku-Dang Ngag-Threng Chyag-Tshen Pag-Med-Pa/

Countless body manifestations, mantric syllables and hand emblems

咕等 厄井 測千 啪咩巴

光返化現無數佛咒儀(身語意之表徵)

ཨོཾ་མུ་མི་དྭེ་ཨ་འི་ཱཾ་

Om A Mi Dhe Wa Hri//

(Continue after reciting no less than 200 repetitions of the mantra...)

嗡 阿咪 爹哇 施利

ཆར་བཞིན་བབ་ནས་བདག་ལ་བེམ་པར་གྱུརཾ

Char-Zhin Bab-Ne Dag-La Thim-Par-Gyur//

like poring rain descend and dissolve into oneself.

抄爾仙 白咧 得啦 添巴爾朱爾

如雨飄降融入我身中

འི་ཱཾ་

Hri//

施利

ཨོཾ་བཙོ་ཨ་རྩུ་པ་དྲུ་པུ་པེ་ཏུ་པེ་ཨ་ལོ་ཀེ་གེན་དེ་འུ་ཤུ་ཏི་ཏི་ཙེ་སྒྲུ་ཧཱུ།

Om Ben-Za Ar-Gham Pa-Dyam Pu-Pe Dhu-Pe Ah-Lo-Ke Gen-Dhe Ne-Wi-De Shap-Ta Tra-Ti-Tsa-Ye So Ha//

嗡 病沙 阿金 巴耽 布卑 度卑 阿路既 驚嗲 呢喂嗲 濕呖 叉地叉耶 梳哈

ཧུང་དེ་ཆེན་ཞིང་དུ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་བསྐྱོར་མེད།

Hung/ De-Chen Zhing-Du Chö-Kyi Khor-Lo-Kor/

Hung, in the realm of Great Bliss the Dharma Wheel turns

吽 嗲千 升度 灼機 歌羅哥

吽 於極樂淨土轉大法輪

སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས་ལ་རྟག་དུ་སྤྱུགས་རྗེས་གཟིགས་མེད།

Sem-Chen Nam-La Tag-Tu Thug-Je-Zig/

to constantly look upon all sentient beings with loving kindness and compassion.

閃千 喃啦 得度 禿遮蝕

恆常慈悲眷視諸有情

༄༅། དམ་བཅའ་ཞལ་བཞེས་འགྲོ་བའི་སྐྱབས་མཛད་པེ།

Dam-Cha Zhel-Zhe Dro-Wai Kyab-Dzed-Pa/

Granting protection to beings through the vow you expressed,

耽差 稍些 左喂 甲錫巴

持守弘誓護佑一切衆

མགོན་པོ་འོད་བདག་མེད་ལ་ཕྱག་འཆའ་ལེ།

Gön Po Öd-Pag Med-La Chyag-Tshal-Lo/

I prostrate to the protector, Buddha Amitabha.

干波 哦啪 咩啦 測叉羅

至誠頂禮護尊彌陀佛

སྣང་མཐའ་མཉམ་བཞག་མཛད་ལ་ཕྱག་འཆའ་བསྟོད།

Nang-Tha Nyam-Zhag Dzed-La Chyag-Tshal-Töd//

to Buddha Amitabha, who remains in the composure of equality, I prostrate and render praise.

冷汰 陰剎 錫啦 測差堆

頂禮讚嘆等持無量光

ནུབ་ཕྱོགས་བདེ་བ་ཅན་དུ་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག།

Nub-Chyog De-Wa Chen-Du Kye-War-Shog//

May I be reborn in the Western pure realm of Dewachen (Great Bliss).

嚕作 嗲哇 千度 噯哇爾梳

祈願得生西方極樂土

ལན་གསུ། གང་མང་མཐར།

(Repeat 3 or many times)

(誦念三次或盡力多念)

༄༅། དགེ་བ་འདི་ཡིས་སྙུར་དུ་བདག་ཅེག་།

Ge-Wa Di-Yi Nyur-Du-Dag/

By this virtue may I swiftly

既哇 地衣 玉爾度啞

我以所修諸善業

དེ་ཡི་ས་ལ་འགོད་པར་ཤོག་ཅེག་།

De-Yi Sa-La Göd-Par-Shog//

attained His glorious state.

嗒衣 沙啦 鋸巴爾梳

悉皆共證彼聖位

འོད་དཔག་མེད་མགོན་འགྲུབ་གྱུར་ནས་ཅེག་།

Öd-Pag Med-Gön Drub-Gyur-Ne/

accomplish the state of the Protector, Buddha Amitabha

哦啪 咩干 竹朱爾咧

成就護尊彌陀佛

རྩྱུ་བདེ་ཆེན་ཞིང་དུ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་བསྐྱོར་ཅེག་།

Hung/ De-Chen Zhing-Du Chö-Kyi Khor-Lo-Kor/

Hung, in the realm of Great Bliss the Dharma Wheel turns

吽 嗒千 升度 灼噯 歌羅哥

吽 於極樂淨土轉大法輪

འགྲོ་བ་གཅིག་ཀྱང་མ་ལུས་པ་ཅེག་།

Dro-Wa Chig-Kyang Ma-Lü-Pa/

and may all sentient beings without exception

左哇 積更 嗎嚕巴

及諸衆生皆無異

སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས་ལ་རྟག་དུ་བྱུགས་རྗེས་གཟིགས།

Sem-Chen Nam-La Tag-Tu Thug-Je-Zig/

to constantly look upon all sentient beings with loving kindness and compassion.

閃千 喃啦 得度 禿遮蝕

恆常慈悲眷視諸有情

སྣང་མཐའ་མཉམ་བཞག་མཛད་པའི་བྲག་ཤིས་ཤོག།

Nang-Tha Nyam-Zhag Dzed-Pai Tra-Shi-Shog//

Buddha Amitabha, who remains in the composure of equality, may all be auspicious.

冷汰 陰剎 錫啦 乍司梳

等持無量光佛願吉祥

དམ་བཅའ་ཞལ་བཞེས་འགྲོ་བའི་སྐྱབས་མཛད་པ།

Dam-Cha Zhel-Zhe Dro-Wai Kyab-Dzed-Pa/

Granting protection to beings through the vow you expressed,

耽差 稍些 左喂 甲錫巴

持守弘誓護佑一切衆

ཅས་པའང་གནམ་ཆོས་མི་འགྱུར་ངོ་རྗེའི་གདེར་མཛོ།

(This is a terma revelation of Namcho Mingyur Dorje.)

༄༅། །འོད་དཔག་མེད་གསེལ་འདེབས་བཞུགས།

Prayer to Buddha Amitābha

by the Fifteenth Karmapa, Khakhyab Dorje

རྒྱལ་ཀུན་སྤྱི་གཟུགས་ཚས་སྐྱེ་འོད་མཐའ་ཡས། །

gyal kun chi zuk chö ku ö ta yé

O dharmakāya Amitābha, embodiment of all the buddhas,

སྤུལ་རྩེ་རང་ཅུལ་མགོན་པོ་སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས། །

tukjé rang tsal gönpo chenrezik

And protector Avalokiteśvara, manifestation of compassion,

སྐྱེབས་གནས་མཐར་སྤྱག་མཆོག་ལ་གསེལ་བ་འདེབས། །

kyabné tartuk chok la solwa dep

To these ultimate and supreme sources of refuge, I pray!

བདག་དང་མཁའ་མཉམ་མ་རྒྱ་སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས། །

dak dang kha nyam ma gen semchen nam

May I and all beings, my previous mothers, as infinite as space,

ཆོ་འདིར་མི་འདོད་རྒྱུན་ཞི་ལེགས་ཚོགས་རྒྱས། །

tsé dir midö kyen shyi lek tsok gyé

Face no unfavourable conditions, only ever-increasing positivity.

སྤྱི་གཟུགས་ཡོན་ཏན་བརྒྱད་དང་དགེ་བཅུ་འབྱོར། །

dikdral yönten gyé dang gé chu jor

May we be free from misdeeds and have the eight qualities and ten virtues;

ཕྱི་མར་བདེ་ཆེན་དག་པའི་ཞིང་དུ་བསྐྱོད། །

chimar dechen dakpé shyang du drö

And, in our future lives, may we travel to the pure realm of Great Bliss!

ལུས་ཉེན་དེ་ལ་བྱང་ཆུབ་མཆོག་ཐོབ་ནས། །

lū ten dé la chang chub chok tob né

Bless us, so that having attained buddhahood in that physical form,

མཐའ་ལས་འགོ་བ་འདྲེན་ལ་མགོན་ཁྱེད་དང་། །

ta lé drowa dren la gön khyé dang

We may become a guide who leads beings from extremes,

མཉམ་པའི་མཐུ་དབང་ཐོབ་པར་བྱིན་གྱིས་སྒྲོབས། །

nyampé tu wang tobpar chin gyi lop

And gain strength and power just like yours.

ཞེས་ཅེ་གཅིག་པའི་ཡིད་གྱིས་གསོལ་འདེབས་གིང་།

Supplicate like this with a one-pointed mind, and recite:

ཨོཾ་ཨི་ཝེ་ཧྲི་ཝེ་

om ami dhewa hrih

om amitābha hrīḥ

ཞེས་པའང་རིགས་ལྷན་བདེ་མཆོག་ལྷ་མོའི་ངོར་ཀུམ་པར་གྲགས་པས་བྲིས།

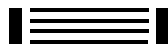
Thus, in response to a request from Demchok Lhamo of noble family, the one known as Karmapa put this into writing.

| Translated by Abraham Ta-Quan, 2017. Proofread by Lucinda Ritter.



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LOTSAWA HOUSE

DHARMA. ON THE HOUSE.

བདེ་སྤོན་ཤེས་བྱ་མ།

The 5th Karmapa's Aspiration
Prayer of Sukhavati

ཕྱེད་བཅུ་དྲུག་པོའི་སྒྲོན་ལམ་ནི།

The Fifth Karmapa's Aspiration Prayer of Sukhavati

མང་ལེ་སྤྱི་བླ་མ་ལྟོ།

Mang Ga Lam.Swa Ti.Bha Wen Tu.

ཤེས་བྱ་ཐམས་ཅད་མཛོན་སུམ་གཟིགས་པ་པོ།

She Ja.Tham Ched.Ngon Sum.Zig Pa Po.

I pay homage to those who see,

མཚོག་གི་ཡོན་ཏན་མ་ལུས་མཐར་ཕྱིན་པ་པོ།

Chog Gi.Yon Ten.Ma Lue.Thar Chin Pai.

All there is to know directly, and have found,

ཁློ་མིད་བརྟེས་པ་དེ་དང་དམ་པའི་ཆོས།

Da Med.Nye Pa.De Dang.Dam Pai Choe.

Unrivalled perfection of all supreme qualities.

བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་དཔའི་ཆོགས་ལ་གྲས་ཕྱག་འཆའ།

Jang Chub.Sem Pai.Tsog La.Gue Chag Tsal.

And to the genuine Dharma and
Sangha of Bodhisattvas.

མཐའ་ཡས་ནམ་མཁའི་མཐའ་གྲས་ཞིང་རྒྱ་མཚོ།

Tha Ye.Nam Khai.Tha Le.Zhing Gya Tso.

The limitless emanations of his body,

མཐའ་དག་སྒྲིལ་སྒྲིལ་པས་སྤང་བར་མཛད།

Tha Dag.Ku Yi.Trul Pe.Nang War Zed.

Illuminates countless realms of boundless space,

མཐའ་ཡས་འོད་མངའ་བྱལ་ཆེན་ཆོད་པག་མེད།

Tha Ye.Wo Ngang.Thub Chen.Tse Pag Med.

The inexhaustible radiance of Amitayus,

མཐའ་མིད་འཁོར་བའི་འགྲོ་བ་ཀུན་ལ་བྱལ།

Tha Med.Khor Wai.Dro Wa.Kun La Khyab.

Shines upon all sentient beings in samsara.

ཀུན་མཁྱེན་རྒྱལ་བ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་རྗེའི་འོད།

Kun Khyen.Gyal Wa.Nam Kyi.Thug Jei Wo.

I pay homage to our foremost guide,

ཀུན་ནས་རབ་རྒྱུགས་ཡི་ཤེས་འོད་འཕྲོ་བའི།

Kun Ne.Rab Zog.Ye She.Wo Thro Wi.

Who has perfected the compassionate light
of all-knowing Buddhas,

ཀུན་རྟོག་སྤིད་པའི་ཐུན་སྒྲུག་སྒྲོལ་ཆོགས་པ།

Kun Tog.Sri Pai.Mun Tug.Na Tsog Pa.

Whose light of wisdom blazing brightly

ཀུན་སེལ་རྣམ་འབྲིན་གཙོ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཆའ་ལོ།

Kun Sel.Nam Dren.Tso La.Chag Tsal Lo.

To dispel the darkness of existence
and conception.

།འོད་མེད་གསལ་བས་ཞིང་ཀུན་བྱབ་མཛད་དེ།

Wo Threng.Sal We.Zhing Kun.Khyab Ze De.

His beams of radiant light fill
each and every realm,

།ཡེ་ཤེས་སྤྱན་གྱིས་ཅུང་ཟད་གཟིགས་པས་ཀྱང་།

Ye She.Chen Gyie.Chung Zed.Zig Pe Kyang.

Even a mere glance from
his eyes of wisdom,

།བདུད་ལྗེའི་དཔུང་ཚྲགས་མ་ལུས་ཞི་མཛད་པ།

Du Dei.Pung Tshog.Ma Lue.Shi Zed Pa.

Will subdue entire horde of maras,

།དཔག་མེད་སྤྱི་ཡི་འོད་ལ་ཕྱག་འཆའ་ལོ།

Pag Med.Ku Yi.Wo La.Chag Tsal Lo.

I pay homage to his body's boundless light.

།སྲིད་དང་ཞི་བ་རབ་སྤངས་ནམ་གྲོལ་སྒྲ།

Srid Dang.Shi Wa.Rab Pang.Nam Drol Ku.

His liberation form is free from both
Samsara and Nirvana,

།ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས་ལས་མ་གཡོས་ཀྱང་།

Ngo Wo.Nyi Kyi.Ying Le.Ma Yue Kyang.

Although never deviating from the
immovable essence of mind nature.

།གང་གང་འདུལ་བ་དེ་ལ་དེར་སྟོན་པའི།

Gang Gang.Dul Wa.De La.Der Ton Pai.

He can emanate in appropriate forms
to teach beings according to their needs

།མཚན་དང་དཔེ་བྱད་གྱིས་འབར་ཕྱག་འཆའ་ལོ།

Tsen Dang.Pe Jed.Kyie Bar.Chag Tsal Lo.

I pay homage to the one ablaze with
the brilliance of auspicious signs.

།ཆོས་ཀུན་ནམ་འབྱེད་ཡན་ལག་དྲུག་ཅུ་ཡི།

Choe Kun.Nam Jed.Yen Lag.Drug Chu Yi.

A single word from him bears all the sixty tones,

།གསུང་གཅིག་གིས་ཀྱང་སྟོགས་དུས་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ།

Sung Chig.Gie Kyang.Chog Due.Tham Ched Du.

Which explain all Dharma and engage all beings,

།སེམས་ཅན་དབང་པོའི་རིམ་པ་ཇི་བཞིན་འཇུག།

Sem Chen.Wang Poi.Rim Pa.Ji Zhin Jug.

According to their faculties in all times and realms,

།དཔག་མེད་གསུང་གི་འོད་ལ་ཕྱག་འཆའ་ལོ།

Pag Med.Sung Gi.Wo La.Chag Tsal Lo.

I pay homage to the light of boundless speech.

།སྒྲ་བསམ་བརྗོད་པའི་ཡུལ་ལས་རབ་འདས་ཀྱང་།

Mar Sam.Jod Pai.Yul Le.Rab De Kyang.

I prostrate to the effortless, spontaneous words,

།འབད་མེད་སྤྱན་གྱིས་གྲུབ་པའི་ཡང་དག་ཚིག།

Bed Med.Lhun Gyie.Drub Pai.Yang Dag Tsig.

That transcend speech, thought and description -

།གསུང་གི་གསང་བ་བསམ་གྱིས་མི་བྱབ་པའི།

Sung Gi.Sang Wa.Sam Gyie.Mi Khyab Pei.

The inconceivable inner secret speech,

།ལེགས་པའི་ལམ་མཚོག་སྟོན་ལ་ཕྱག་འཆའ་ལོ།

Leg Pai.Lam Chog.Ton La.Chag Tsal Lo.

Which teaches the supreme path to enlightenment.

།རང་བཞིན་འོད་གསལ་མཁའ་ལྷར་མི་དམིགས་ཀྱང་།

Rang Zhin.Wo Sal.Kha Tar.Mi Mig Kyang.

By nature luminous and non-attached like space,

།རྣམ་པ་ཀུན་ལྷན་ཡི་ཤེས་རོལ་པ་ཡིས།

Nam Pa.Kun Den.Ye She.Rol Pa Yie.

The play of all-encompassing supreme wisdom.

།ཤེས་བྱ་ཇི་སྟོན་མཐུན་པའི་དགྲིལ་འཁོར་རྒྱས།

She Ja.Ji Nyed.Khyen Pai.Kyil Khor Gye.

Expands the mandala that knows the
nature of all phenomena

།དཔག་མེད་ཐུགས་གྱི་འོད་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ།

Pag Med.Thug Kyi.Wo La.Chag Tsal Lo.

I pay homage to the radiant light of
the boundless mind.

།ཆོས་ཀུན་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་གྱིས་ཉར་ཞི་ཞིང་།

Choe Kun.Ngo Wo.Nyi Kyie.Nyer Zhi Zhing.

Although all phenomena are naturally at peace,

།མ་འགགས་སྤང་བ་རབ་རྟུ་བཟླ་བ་གང་།

Ma Gag.Nang Wa.Rab Tu.Tra Wa Gang.

Unceasing appearances are dazzling.

།སྟོན་གྱི་གཟིགས་པ་འང་རྣམ་དག་ཞི་བ་དང་།

Khyod Kyi.Zig Pang.Nam Dag.Zhi Wa Dang.

With your pure and pacified vision,

།དེ་བཞིན་ཀུན་རྟུ་གཟིགས་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ།

De Zhin.Kun Tu.Zig La.Chag Tsal Lo.

I pay homage to you – the one who sees all.

།གང་ཞིག་འགྲོ་བའི་ཡིད་བཞིན་ཉར་འཛིན་གནས།

Gang Zhig.Dro Wai.Yid Zhin.Nyer Tsoi Ne.

You are the wish-fulfilling sustenance for beings,

།སྐྱུ་གསུང་ཐུགས་དང་ཡི་ཤེས་དཔག་མེད་སྟོབས།

Ku Sung.Thug Dang.Ye She.Pag Med Tob.

The infinite body, speech, mind and wisdom,

།ཐུགས་ཇི་འཕྲིན་ལས་དཔག་རྟུ་མེད་པ་ཡི།

Thug Jei.Thrin Le.Pag Tu.Me Pa Yi.

The immeasurable compassion and activity,

།འོད་དཔག་མེད་ལ་རྟུ་པར་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ།

Wo Pag.Med La.Tag Par.Chag Tsal Lo.

O Buddha Amitabha, I always pay homage to you.

།དངོས་དང་ཡིད་གྱི་སྒྲུལ་པས་ལུས་འོངས་སྟོན།

Ngoe Dang.Yid Kyi.Trul Pae.Lue Long Chod.

I visualize all the offerings to the Sugatas,

།ཡོངས་སུ་མ་བཟུང་ནམ་མཁའི་མཐར་ཐུག་པ།

Yong Su.Ma Zung.Nam Khai.Thar Thug Pa.

Bodies and riches, both real and imagined,

།སྟོ་ཡིས་སྒྲངས་ཏེ་བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་རྣམས་མཆོད།

Lo Yie.Lang Te.De War.Sheg Nam Chod.

And all extends to the limits of boundless space,

།དམན་ལ་བརྩེར་དགོངས་བདག་གི་འདི་དག་བཞེས།

Man La.Tser Gong.Dag Gi.Di Dag Zhe.

Behold this lowly one with love,
and accept my offerings.

ཁདག་དང་སེམས་ཅན་ཀུན་གྱི་སྒྲིག་པའི་ལས།

Dag Dang.Sem Chen.Kun Gyi.Dig Pai Le.

I confess all offences and wrongdoings,

ཉེས་པར་གྱུར་གང་མཐོལ་ཞིང་བཤགས་པར་བགྱི།

Nye Par.Gyur Gang.Thol Shing.Shag Par Gyi.

That I or any other being has committed.

སྤྲན་ཆད་ནམ་ཡང་བགྱིད་པར་མ་གྱུར་ཅིག།

Len Ched.Nam Yang.Gyie Par.Ma Gyur Chig.

May we never commit such acts again,

ལས་ཀྱི་སྤྲིབ་པའང་གཏན་དུ་ཟད་བྱེད་ཤོག།

Le Kyi.Drib Pa.Ten Du.Zed Jed Shog.

May karmic obscurations be forever eliminated.

རྒྱལ་དང་རྒྱལ་སྤྲས་ཉན་ཐོས་རང་རྒྱལ་དང་།

Gyal Dang.Gyal Sre.Nyen Thoe.Rang Gyal Dang.

The Buddhas and their heirs, the Shravakas
and Pratyekabuddhas

འགྲོ་བ་ཀུན་གྱི་དགེ་ལ་རྗེས་ཡི་རང་།

Dro Wa.Kun Gyi.Ge La.Je Yi Rang.

All rejoice in the merits of all sentient beings,

གང་ཡང་ཕྱོགས་བརྩེའི་བདེ་གཤེགས་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ།

Gang Yang.Chog Chui.De Sheg.Tham Ched La.

I humbly request all Buddhas of the ten directions,

ཐེག་མཆོག་ཆོས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་བསྐྱོར་བར་བསྐྱལ།

Theg Chog.Choe Kyi.Khor Lo.Kor War Kul.

To turn the Mahayana Wheel of Dharma.

བསྐྱལ་བ་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པར་ཡང་།

Kal Pa.Gya Tso.Pag Tu.Med Par Yang.

I humbly request them to remain,

སྤྱ་ངན་མི་འདའ་བཞུགས་པར་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས།

Nya Ngen.Mi Da.Zhug Par.Sol Wa Deb.

Not to pass beyond, for infinite oceans of kalpas,

དུས་གསུམ་བསགས་པའི་དགེ་བ་ཅི་ཡོད་པ།

Du Sum.Sag Pai.Ge Wa.Chi Yod Pa.

I dedicate any virtue gathered in the three times,

གཞན་ཕན་དོན་ཕྱིར་བྱང་རྒྱལ་ཆེན་པོར་བསྲོ།

Zhen Phen.Don Chir.Jang Chub.Chen Por Ngo.

To great awakening for the benefit of others.

ཇི་སྲིད་བྱང་རྒྱལ་སྒྲིང་པོ་མ་ཐོབ་པར།

Ji Sri.Jang Chub.Nying Po.Ma Thob Bar.

Until I reach ultimate enlightenment,

སྐྱེ་བ་འདི་དང་མ་འོངས་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ།

Kye Wa.Di Dang.Ma Wong.Tham Ched Du.

In this and all my future rebirths,

སྐྱ་མ་དམ་པས་རྗེས་སུ་འཛིན་གྱུར་ཅིག།

La Ma.Dam Pe.Je Su.Zin Gyur Chig.

May I be cared for by exalted masters,

བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་ནི་ནམ་དུ་འང་ཉམས་མ་གྱུར།

Jang Chub.Sem Ni.Nam Du.Nyam Ma Gyur.

And my Bodhicitta mind never wane or decline.

།རིགས་གཟུགས་ལོངས་སྤྱོད་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་པ་ཡི།

Rig Zug.Long Chod.Phun Sum.Tsog Pa Yi.

May I be endowed with leisure and riches,

།དལ་འབྱོར་མཚོག་ཐོབ་ཆོས་ལྷན་གྲོགས་དང་བཅས།

Dal Jor.Chog Thob.Choe Den.Drog Dang Che.

With good family, and always be in the company of Dharma friends,

།སངས་རྒྱལ་བསྟན་ལ་རིམ་བཞིན་སྦྱོབ་པ་དང་།

Sang Gye.Ten La.Rim Shin.Lob Pa Dang.

May I train step by step in Buddha's teachings

།འདུན་དང་བརྩོན་འགྲུས་བག་ཡོད་ལྷན་གྱུར་ཅིག།

Dun Dang.Tson Drue.Bag Yod.Den Gyur Chig.

With interest, diligence and mindfulness.

།དན་སོང་གསུམ་སོགས་མི་བཟད་འཁོར་བ་ཡི།

Ngen Song.Sum Sog.Mi Zed.Khor Wa Yi.

May any act that leads to birth in the three lower realms,

།མི་ཁོས་འཇིག་རྟེན་རྣམས་སུ་སྦྱེ་འགྱུར་ལས།

Mi Khom.Jig Ten.Nam Su.Kye Gyur Le.

And other non-leisure worlds in this unbearable Samsara,

།གང་དེ་ཆོ་འདི་ཉིད་ལ་རབ་སྦྱིན་ནས།

Gang De.Tse Di.Nyi La.Rab Min Ne.

Ripen on me completely in this very lifetime,

།ལན་གྲངས་གཞན་དུ་སྤྱོད་བར་མ་གྱུར་ཅིག།

Len Drang.Zhen Du.Nyong War.Ma Gyur Chig.

Never to be experienced in yet another life.

།སྦྱིན་དང་རྩུལ་བྲིམས་བཟོད་དང་བརྩོན་འགྲུས་དང་།

Jin Dang.Tsul Thrim.Zod Dang.Tson Drue Dang.

May I perfect the Paramitas of generosity and discipline, and patience, perseverance and meditation,

།བསམ་གཏན་ཤེས་རབ་ཐབས་མཁས་སྒྲུང་དང་།

Sam Ten.She Rab.Thab Khe.Med Jung Dang.

།སྦོན་ལམ་སྟོབས་དང་ཡི་ཤེས་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ཡི།

Mon Lam.Tob Dang.Ye She.Gya Tso Yi.

Wisdom, skilful means and aspiration,

།སྤྱོད་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཡོངས་སུ་རྫོགས་གྱུར་ཅིག།

Chod Pa.Tham Ched.Yong Su.Zog Gyur Chig.

Power, and infinite oceans of primordial wisdom.

།ལུས་དང་དེ་བཞིན་སྟོག་ལའང་སྟོས་མེད་པར།

Lue Dang.De Zhin.Srog Lang.Toe Me Par.

Without any concern for my life and physical being

།སེམས་ལས་རྩང་ཞིང་དབེན་པར་རང་རྒྱུད་དུལ།

Sem Le.Rung Zhing.Wen Par.Rang Gyud Dul.

My mind is trained, and my being tamed through solitude,

།ལུང་དང་མངོན་པར་རྟོགས་པའི་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་འབྱོར།

Lung Dang.Ngon Par.Tog Pai.Choe Kyie Jor.
Richly endowed with Dharma of scripture
and realization

།བརྩེ་ལྷན་རྟག་ཏུ་ཤེས་བཞིན་ལྷན་གྱུར་ཅིག།

Tse Den.Tag Tu.She Zhin.Den Gyur Chig.
May I always possess loving kindness
as well as genuine awareness.

།འཁོར་བའི་དེ་བཞིན་ཉིད་གང་ཟུང་ན་འདས།

Khor Wai.De Zhin.Nyi Gang.Nya Ngen De.
The essence of Samsara is Nirvana,

།ཀུན་རྟོག་དེ་བཞིན་ཉིད་གང་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཏེ།

Kun Tog.De Zhin.Nyi Gang.Ye She Te.
The essence of “Kleshas” is Supreme Wisdom,

།གཅིག་དང་དུ་མའི་བདག་ཉིད་ལས་འདས་པའི།

Chig Dang.Du Mai.Dag Nyi.Le De Pai.
May I realize the true nature which transcends
the concept of either single or multiple,

།ཆོས་ཉིད་རྟོགས་པའི་སློ་བྲོས་ལྷན་གྱུར་ཅིག།

Choe Nyi.Tog Pai.Lo Droe.Den Gyur Chig.
And fulfill the wisdom that knows Dharmata.

།གང་ཡང་རྟོན་འབྱུང་ཟབ་མའི་ཚུལ་གནས་པ།

Gang Yang.Ten Jung.Zab Moi.Tsul Ne Pa.
Without hindrance, may I enter
the qualities of Sugatas,

།ངེས་དོན་མཐར་ཐུག་སློས་བྲལ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་སྐ།

Nge Don.Thar Thug.Troe Dral.Cho Kyi Ku.
Who abide in the profound inter-dependence.

།སྟོབས་སོགས་ཡོན་ཏན་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཕྱིན་ལས་སོགས།

Tob Sog.Yon Ten.Ye She.Thrin Le Sog.
The Dharmakaya, definite and uncomplicated,

།བདེ་གཤེགས་ཆོས་ལ་ཐོགས་མེད་འཇུག་གྱུར་ཅིག།

De Sheg.Choe La.Thog Me.Jug Gyur Ching.
With powers, qualities, wisdom,
activity and so forth.

།གང་དུ་འགྲོ་སློ་མངོན་པར་དགའ་གྱུར་པའི།

Gang Du.Dro Lo.Ngon Par.Ga Gyur Pai.
May my mind be filled with delight,
wherever I may go,

།ཡིད་ལུས་སྦྱོད་པ་རྣམ་པར་དག་པ་དང་།

Yi Lue.Chod Pa.Nam Par.Dag Pa Dang.
And may I act in utter purity
with my body and mind,

།དབྱངས་སྒྲན་དག་གིས་ཆོས་ཚུལ་རྒྱ་མཚོ་སྟོན།

Yang Nyen.Ngag Gi.Choe Tsul.Gya Tso Ton.
With melodious speech may I teach
the oceans of Dharma

།རྒྱལ་སྐས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་སྦྱོད་དང་མཚུངས་པར་ཤོག།

Gyal Sre.Nam Kyi.Chod Dang.Tsung Par Shog.
And be no different from all the
Bodhisattvas in my conduct.

། ཇི་སྲིད་དེ་ལྷའི་ཡོན་ཏན་མ་ཐོབ་པར།

Ji Srid.De Tai.Yon Ten.Ma Thob Par.

Until I attain such virtuous qualities,

། འཛི་མེད་ཆོ་དང་དཔལ་འབྱོར་རྒྱས་པ་དང་།

Chi Me.Tse Dang.Pal Jor.Gye Pa Dang.

And possess riches and life without death,

། ཆོ་འདིའི་སྤང་བ་རྒྱུ་པར་ཉེ་བར།

Tse Dii.Nang Wa.Nub Par.Nye Wa Na.

And when this life is soon to disappear,

། འོད་གསལ་ལྷན་ཅིག་སྐྱེས་པའི་དོན་རྟོགས་ནས།

Wo Sal.Lhen Chig.Kye Pai.Don Tog Ne.

May I realize the radiant innate wisdom,

། ལྷ་ཆོགས་མཆོད་པས་བདག་གི་སྤྱན་བསུ་ཞིང་།

Na Tsog.Chod Pe.Dag Gi.Dun Su Zhing.

Bearing various offerings come to welcome me,

། རྣམ་དག་བདེ་བ་ཅན་གྱི་ཞིང་ཁམས་དེར།

Nam Dag.De Wa.Chen Gyi.Zhing Kham Der.

To the completely pure realm of Sukhavati,

། ཞིང་དེར་དམར་སེར་འོད་གྱི་ཡུང་པོའི་དབུས།

Zhing Der.Mar Ser.Wo Kyi.Phung Poi Wue.

There, in that pure realm, in a mass of orange light,

། དགེ་སློང་གྲེ་བ་འབུམ་དང་ཐབས་ཅིག་པའི།

Ge Long.Je Wa.Bum Dang.Thab Chig Pai.

Together with a thousand billion bhikshus.

། མི་མཐུན་ཕྱོགས་ལས་རྣམ་པར་རྒྱལ་བ་ཡི།

Mi Thun.Chog Le.Nam Par.Gyal Wa Yie.

May I conquer all adversities,

། བསམ་པའི་དོན་ཀུན་ཡིད་བཞིན་འགྲུབ་གུར་ཅིག།

Sam Pai.Don Kun.Yi Zhin.Drub Gyur Chig.

May I fulfill all my aspirations.

། བདེ་གཤེགས་སྤྲས་དང་བཅས་པས་བྱིན་བརྒྱབས་ཏེ།

De Sheg.Sre Dang.Che Pe.Jin Lab Te.

May I be blessed by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,

། ལྷ་དང་ལྷ་མོ་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པ་ཡིས།

Lha Dang.Lha Mo.Pag Tu.Me Pa Yie.

And then may countless gods and goddesses,

། རང་སྤང་བྱི་མེད་ཆོས་གྱི་དབྱིངས་རང་བཞིན།

Rang Nang.Dri Med.Choe Kyi.Ying Rang Zhin.

My mind filled with great bliss, may I pass easily,

། བདེ་ཆེན་སེམས་གྱིས་བདེ་སྒྲག་བགྲོད་གུར་ཅིག།

De Chen.Sem Kyie.De Lag.Drod Gyur Chig.

Pure and untainted appearance,

in essence Dharmadhatu.

། རབ་མང་རིན་ཆེན་པརྒྱའི་ཟེུ་འབྲུ་ལ།

Rab Mang.Rin Chen.Ped Mai.Zeu Dru La.

In the centre of a lotus with heaps of jewels,

། ཆོས་རྗེ་འོད་དཔག་མེད་པ་མཐོང་གུར་ཅིག།

Cho Je.Wo Pag.Me Pa.Thong Gyur Chig.

May I see the Dharma Lord, Buddha Amitabha,

|རྒྱལ་སྤྱུ་ཚོགས་ཀྱིས་ཡོངས་བསྐྱོར་བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས།

Gyal Sre.Tsog Kyi.Yong Kor.Chom Den De.

Surrounded by family of Sangha and spiritual heirs,

|ཐུན་མཚམས་འཆར་ཀའི་ཉིན་བྱེད་ལྟར་དམར་བ།

Thun Tsam.Char Kai.Nyin Je.Tar Mar Wa.

Red like the evening sun, blazing and radiant,

|འོད་འབར་བལྟ་བས་མི་ངེས་དེ་མཐོང་ནས།

Wo Bar.Ta We.Mi Ngom.De Thong Ne.

May I behold the Bhagavan untiringly and

|བྱང་རྒྱལ་ཆེན་པོའི་ལུང་བསྟན་ཐོབ་གྱུར་ཅིག

Jang Chub.Chen Poi.Lung Ten.Thob Gyur Chig.

May I receive a prophecy of great enlightenment.

|དགེ་ཚོགས་ལེགས་བྱས་རྣམ་པར་དཀར་བའི་འབྲས།

Ge Tsog.Leg Je.Nam Par.Kar Wai Dre.

May I then emanate in complete perfection,

|ངོ་མཚར་ཡོངས་ཚོགས་དཔལ་དང་ལྡན་པའི་ལུས།

Ngo Tsar.Yong Zog.Pal Dang.Den Pai Lue.

Amazingly glorious and infinite bodies.

|དཔག་མེད་སྤུལ་ནས་བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས་དེ་ལ།

Pag Me.Trul Ne.Chom Den.De De La.

The fruit of great accumulation of virtues, and praise the Bhagavan in oceans of auspicious melodies.

|བསྟོན་དབྱངས་རྒྱ་མཚོས་ཤིས་པ་བརྟེན་གྱུར་ཅིག

Tod Yang.Gya Tso.Shi Pa.Jod Gyur Chig.

|བྱམས་ཆེན་འཇམ་པའི་དབྱངས་དང་ཀུན་རྒྱ་བཟང་།

Jam Chen.Jam Pai.Yang Dang.Kun Tu Zang.

May I be inseparable always from
the great Maitreya;

|སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་མཐུ་ཆེན་ཐོབ་ལ་སོགས།

Chen Re.Zig Wang.Thu Chen.Thob La Sog.

Noble Manjushri; Samantabhadra;
Avalokiteshvara;

|རྒྱལ་སྤྱུ་རྣམས་དང་ཉག་རྒྱ་མི་འབྲལ་ཞིང་།

Gyal Sre.Nam Dang.Tag Tu.Mi Dral Zhing.

Mahasthamaprapta; and other Bodhisattvas,

|རྣམ་ཐར་རྒྱལ་ལ་མཉམ་པར་འབྱུག་གྱུར་ཅིག

Nam Thar.Tsul La.Nyam Par.Jug Gyur Chig.

May I engage likewise in the paths of liberation.

|རྣམ་ཐར་རྒྱ་མཚོ་སྤྱུ་མ་ལྟར་སྟོན་པས།

Nam Thar.Gya Tso.Gyu Ma.Tar Jong Pe.

Acting in illusion-like ways on
oceans of liberation

|ཐེག་མཆོག་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་ཐབས་རྣམས་ཀུན་བཟང་སྟེ།

Theg Chog.Gya Tsoi.Thab Nam.Kun Zang Te.

May I take up all the skilful means of
oceans of Mahayana,

|ཡེ་ཤེས་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་རྟོགས་པ་རབ་ཐོབ་ནས།

Ye She.Gya Tsoi.Tog Pa.Rab Thob Ne.

Achieve the realization of
oceans of supreme wisdom

|སྲིད་པའི་མཚོ་ལས་འགོ་ཀུན་སྦྱོལ་གྱུར་ཅིག

Sri Pai.Tso Le.Dro Kun.Drol Gyur Chig.

And liberate all sentient beings from
the oceans of cyclic existence.

ཞིང་ཁམས་རྒྱ་མཚོ་རྟག་ཏུ་སྤྱོད་བ་དང་།

Zhing Kham.Gya Tso.Tag Tu.Jong Wa Dang.

May I continually realize oceans of Buddha realms,

ཚོགས་གཉིས་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དག་ནི་སྤེལ་བར་བྱེད།

Tsog Nyie.Gya Tso.Dag Ni.Pel War Jed.

Increase the oceans of the Two Accumulations,

ཤིམས་ཅན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་རབ་ཏུ་སྒྲིན་བྱས་ཏེ།

Sem Chen.Gya Tso.Rab Tu.Min Je Te.

Mature and ripen oceans of sentient beings,

སྒྲིན་ལམ་རྒྱ་མཚོ་རྣམས་ནི་འགྲུབ་གྱུར་ཅིག།

Mon Lam.Gya Tso.Nam Ni.Drub Gyur Chig.

May I accomplish vast oceans of aspirations.

ཇི་ལྟར་སྤྱོད་གྱི་བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་རྣམས་ཀྱིས།

Ji Tar.Ngon Gyi.De War.Sheg Nam Kyie.

Just as the Buddhas of the past

Developed Bodhicitta

ཐུགས་བསྐྱེད་སྒྲིན་ལམ་མཇེད་སྟོབས་ཅི་འདྲ་བ།

Thug Kyed.Mon Lam.Zed Tob.Chi Dra Wa.

Made aspirations, performed activities and

great power,

དེ་ལྟར་བདག་གིས་ཤིམས་ཅན་མ་ལུས་ཚོགས།

De Tar.Dag Gie.Sem Chen.Ma Lue Tsog.

So too may I bring each and every sentient being,

སྙུར་དུ་སངས་རྒྱས་ས་ལ་འགོད་པར་ཤོག།

Nyur Du.Sang Gye.Sa La.God Par Shog.

Swiftly to the state of Buddhahood.

ཅེས་འོད་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པ་ལ་བསྟོད་པ་ཡན་ལག་བདུན་པ་སྒྲིན་ལམ་དང་བཅས་པ་འདི། གཟུ་པ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པས་མཛད་སྤྱོད་གྱི་སའི་ཆ་རྒྱ་འགྲམ་དུ་སྦྱར་བའོ།

This praise of Amitabha with Seven Branch Prayer and Aspiration Prayer was composed by the Karmapa Deshin Shegpa on the banks of the Yellow River in Eastern Tibet.



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ཨྲི་ལམ་བབྱང་བའི་གསལ་འདེབས་མཆོད་པ་།

Prayer to Behold Amitābha in Dreams

from the terma of Tertön Mingyur Dorje

ཨམ་ཧོ།

emaho
Emaho.

ཆོས་སྐྱ་སྒྲུང་བ་མཐའ་ཡས་དོ་མཚར་ཅན་མཆོད་པ་།

chöku nangwa tayé ngotsar chen
Wondrous dharmakāya Amitābha—'Limitless Light',

སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་མཐུ་ཆེན་ཐོབ་རྣམས་ལ་།

chenrezik wang tuchen tob nam la
Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi-Mahāsthāmaprāpta,

བདག་གི་ཚེ་གཅིག་ཡིད་ཀྱིས་གསལ་བ་འདེབས་མཆོད་པ་།

dak gi tsechik yi kyi solwa deb
I pray to you with single-pointed intention:

མི་ལམ་ཡུལ་གྱིས་བདེ་ཆེན་ཞིང་བསྐྱོད་ནས་མཆོད་པ་།

milam yul gyi dechen shyang drö né
Inspire me with your blessings, so that I may travel in my dreams

སྐྱང་བ་མཐའ་ཡས་མངལ་བར་བྱིན་གྱིས་རྫོབས་མཆོད་པ་།

nangwa tayé jalwar jingyi lob
To the Land of Great Bliss and there encounter Amitābha.

| Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2020.

The World of Dewachen

Kunzig Shamar Rinpoche



Teaching given in Dhagpo Kagyu Ling, France, in July 1992

How to Take Rebirth in the Pure Land of Dewachen, the Realm of Great Bliss.

If we observe the various beings and the different realms in which they are born, we realize that these realms are various. Some are of an impure sort and the beings who appear there, experience suffering. Other realms are mixed; beings are experiencing both suffering and pleasant situations. Finally, there are the blissful realms in which beings enjoy only happiness.

The rebirth in such or such realm is based on their individual karma. Karma induces the manifestation of the realm: past actions are the cause of its manifestation, as they are the cause of the rebirth of beings in these realms, most of which are unsustainable in nature. Some realms can be described as "good", others "bad", according that they bring happiness or suffering. In any case, from the perspective of Mahayana, they are the result of karma and are therefore of an illusory nature.

According to the Theravada Buddhist approach (*Sravakayana*), one distinguishes two things: the beings of a world and the world itself. The Theravada view asserts that the world is made of atoms having a substantial existence, but that the birth of beings in the world is only due to their karma.

Theravada or Mahayana approaches are both coming from the words of the Buddha. He taught different views to suit the different capacities of the persons who received his teachings. There is no opposition or contradiction between the views of Theravada and of Mahayana.

The Theravada teaches something that is true only to some extent, without nevertheless going completely against reality. Yet, at the deeper level of the real nature of things, the teachings of Mahayana are more accurate. Rather than contradictory, these two explanations should be seen as complementary, with regards to the level they address.

For example, the Earth is made of atoms. All the realms, good or bad, are made of earth and therefore of atoms. The beings appear in these realms according to their karma. This point of view is shared by both Theravada (as ultimate reality) and Mahayana (as provisional reality.)

The Theravada view will stop at this point. The Mahayana goes further and asserts that these worlds in which beings appear according to their karma are not, in the ultimate sense, made of substantial atoms. These do not actually exist, and belong to the domain of illusion.

With this view of Mahayana, one takes a further step, asserting that the constitutive elements of matter, or of the world, belong to the domain of karma; they are not truly existing entities. To demonstrate this, the Mahayana developed metaphysic and a multitude of logical reasoning to support the understanding that the atoms do not actually exist and one cannot find a truly existing entity.

According to Mahayana, the earth, the realm in which we live, comes from karma: this earth is simply an expression of the illusion in which we find ourselves. This illusion can be shared: despite the wide variety of karmas - each with a specific karma - common features can be found in these karmas.

It is these commonalities that make you end up experimenting with the people around you the same kind of realm, the same illusion. Beings are innumerable and yet there are collective things, the types of shared experiences that come from these common features of karma. Of course, within these collective manifestations, each individual experiences particular things; individual karma is of great variety.

The approach of Mahayana considers that both beings and the world that hosts them, the receptacle, are the production of illusion that appear to them as a location. Through this, we come to understand the true nature of phenomena. Such is the way of Mahayana.

Let's return to the world of Dewachen or Realm of Great Bliss. For now, we do not have the ability to perceive it or to go there, because we have not accumulated the necessary karma to be born in such a place, even if that realm exists somewhere, in some manner. We imagine it a bit like the moon, but we do not have yet the opportunity to see it or to be born there.

Dewachen is a manifestation of Buddha Amitabha's activity. This Buddha has completed the ten perfections, and thanks to the merit thus accumulated, he was able to create the realm of Dewachen for the benefit of all beings.

Buddha Amitabha was initially an ordinary being who generated Bodhicitta and developed a lot of efforts to achieve Buddhahood. To do this, he practiced the ten paramitas and led them to complete perfection. He also formulated many wishes and aspiration prayers to create this pure land where beings could be reborn easily.

With the completion of paramitas and his aspiration prayers, Amitabha managed to manifest this pure land, the result of a merit accumulated for a long time, expression of very meritorious actions performed in the past.

In fact, Buddha Amitabha did not practice in order to attain enlightenment. He followed another approach. At one time, he was a disciple of a Buddha who gave him specific instruction, and explained to him how a great bodhisattva can manifest a pure land beneficial to all beings. Buddha Amitabha, as a disciple, learned all that he needed to do to reach this goal and manifest a pure land able to help the beings trapped in their delusion and enduring suffering due to karma.

There are blissful lands created by the karma of some beings, but these lands are of an unsustainable nature, because they are still based on conflicting emotions. As long as there is an ego, that is to say the belief in a really existing self, one is plunged in ignorance and afflicted states and disturbing emotions develop.

These negative emotions lead us to perpetrate imperfect actions that create karma, from which emerges an illusory system. The illusion throws us even more under the power of emotions that, in turn, motivate further actions that intensify the creation of karma. It strengthens illusion, etc. Thus we turn and wander in the cycle of conditioned existence. Ignorance generates afflicted emotions, ego grasping therefore creates the realms into which ordinary beings are born. The Buddha, of whom he was the disciple, explained this to

Amitabha. The Buddha also explained him how to create a pure land devoid of illusory and emotional characteristics.

Amitabha took firmly the vow to generate a pure land by the sheer force of his wish, and labored tirelessly to manifest a pure land which is a help to all beings in suffering. With this motivation, Amitabha obtained spontaneous enlightenment and became truly a Buddha. He did not reach Buddhahood by pursuing the goal of his own enlightenment. It was an unexpected result of his selfless activity. Having obtained the spontaneous awakening due to his determination to work for the good of all beings, his wishes came true and this pure land became obvious: it is the fruit of all his wishing prayers.

We have seen that there are different worlds resulting from different conditions. Some worlds are the result of actions perpetrated in the past that ripen, producing a world corresponding to karma. Other realms are the result of both actions and wishes of the past. Finally, there are realms that are primarily the result of aspiration prayers and wishes expressed in the past. By observing the world we currently inhabit, we can realize that it is part of the second category. It is a world produced by both past actions and expressed wishes.

On the contrary, if we take the example of the infernal realms, those of the hungry ghosts and the animal states, they are the result of negative actions of the past. As for the pure land, they are the result of the aspirations and wishing prayer; in particular the *Realm of Great Bliss, Dewachen*, is the result of the aspirations and wishes of the Buddha Amitabha.

If we wish to be reborn in *Dewachen*, we must be open to the power of Amitabha's wishing prayer in order to receive the fruit of this aspiration. We create, therefore, the causes to be receptive to the influence of the Buddha Amitabha's wishes that will lead us to take rebirth in *Dewachen*.

From the moment when one connects to the Buddha Amitabha wishes, all karma present in our stream of consciousness is eliminated and does not come to fruition. On the contrary, the only thing that appears, is a rebirth in Dewachen, the fruition of the wish of Buddha Amitabha.

Indeed, we have in our stream of consciousness, a karma that is the sum of past actions. It can cause us to take rebirth in the realms characterized by pain and suffering or conversely characterized by experiences of happiness. In any case, these experiences are merely a fleeting ripening of karma. When one is able to receive the power of Amitabha's wishes, the positive or negative karma that would lead us to rebirth in conditioned worlds dissipates and gives way to rebirth in Dewachen.

To create the causes that will connect us with Amitabha's wishes, our daily practice must lead us to develop the bodhisattva attitude: it is the path of Bodhicitta.

We focus all our efforts on an altruistic life conduct, a mind attitude turned toward the others. We strive to reduce the negative attitudes of mind, veils, mental obscuration that generate suffering. Avoid, among others, to be excessively self-conscious or be trapped in states of extreme jealousy, anger or aggression.

The anger that needs to be eliminated is that leading to hatred. The anger developed, while trying to aggressively protect oneself from our entourage, is more damaging than any wrath

that might arise while helping others. The latter is not an emotion of the same nature than the first.

We practice daily, with constant efforts, Mind-Training. We enhance the qualities of love, compassion and patience and decrease the negative states of mind. It is important to take the Bodhisattva vows and firmly persevere in the Bodhicitta attitude. It is more than a mere wish, it is a commitment that needs to be renewed again and again. We can do the ritual of restoration on our own, so as to repair the damage done to this commitment through our wrongdoings.

The second most important point, after Bodhicitta, is to frequently contemplate the pure *Land of Dewachen*. Some Sutras explain where it is located, and what is to be found there: flower blossom, pools, rivers, lotus-houses, etc. They also provide descriptions of Buddha Amitabha and of the Bodhisattvas in this pure land. It is necessary to frequently contemplate Dewachen and become acquainted with it, because, from the perspective of Mahayana, the worlds are the manifestation of karma or wishes. The world of Dewachen is only the fruit of Buddha Amitabha's wishes.

According to contemporary science, all the planets are round. I cannot say whether this is the case for Dewachen because all shapes are possible. Apparently, it feels evenly flat when you experience it. One might think that flat is boring, but those in Dewachen do not feel bored at all. There are many flowers and trees, a lot of wonderful things described in texts such as the "*Prayer for rebirth in Dewachen*." I will not elaborate on these descriptions. I invite you to read these texts and let your imagination run freely.

Once one has read these descriptions one can better visualize Dewachen. Whenever possible we train to think that we are in this pure land in the company of its inhabitants: the Buddha Amitabha, Chenrezig, Vajrapani, and present in front of them, all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

We can support this, with purification practices such as *The Confession of Downfall to the Thirty-Five Buddhas*. This prayer has a great cleansing power. It's really important to focus on this aspect of purification, which comprises four phases:

1/ First, the generation of Bodhicitta

2/ Then one visualizes in this pure land, the Buddha Amitabha among the thirty-five Buddhas.

3/ Facing them, we develop a strong intention to purify all the negative actions of the past – the effect of the purification will be in proportion to the sincerity of our intent. We receive the blessings of the Buddhas and purification takes place.

4- Finally, we wish to be reborn in Dewachen and that all beings can also experience it by themselves. It ends with a prayer of dedication.

We shouldn't wait until the moment of our death and having to cross the intermediary state (*Bardo*) to generate the wish to be reborn in Dewachen! It is not at all necessary to cross the

intermediary state; we must go directly to Dewachen. The *Bardo*, the intermediate state of the becoming, only exists when the karma of this life fades away as another karma ripens slowly. It is a kind of a transition period during which the mind wanders.

If we develop a very strong aspiration to be reborn in Dewachen, the ripening is immediate and one doesn't go through the *Bardo* experiences. Therefore it is advised to strongly develop this wish and firmly focus all one's efforts to be reborn in the pure land of Dewachen, so as to directly go there. This implies an intense daily practice.

One can strengthen this wish with the practice of the *Conscious-Transferring (Powa)*, with the help of which the consciousness is transferred more quickly. Faster, does not mean that we may risk dying on the spot and reaching Dewachen right away, as we do this practice, but rather that we will have developed the ability to effortlessly go to this pure land, immediately at the time of our natural death.

The Amitabha Sadhana, A Vajrayana Practice.

The practice of Amitabha comprises several phases.

1/The first phase is to visualize yourself as four armed Chenrezig emerging from a large and excellent lotus. It means that while the upper part emerges, the lower part is still in the heart of the lotus.

Chenrezig has four arms. Two hands are joined holding a *Jewel-That-Grants-All-Wishes (Mani Ratna)*; the other two hands hold a rosary (right) and a lotus flower (left). In front of you is the Buddha Amitabha with Chenrezig on one side, and Vajrapani on the other. All three are marked with the three seed syllables *Om Ah Hung*, respectively at the forehead, throat and heart. In the heart of Buddha Amitabha is a lotus surmounted by the letter *Hri*, surrounded by the mantra *OM AMI DEWA HRI*

You are Chenrezig, and all that you have visualized in front of you, is also visualized inside your body: the pure land, the Buddha Amitabha, Chenrezig, Vajrapani, etc. Inside your body, is equally found in the heart of Buddha Amitabha, the lotus surmounted by the moon disc and letters of the mantra.

As you recite the mantra *OM AMI DEWA HRI*, you imagine that the mantra garland rotates simultaneously in the heart of Buddha Amitabha in you and of that which is in front of you. Light radiates out of the Buddhas foreheads, and out of your own. It reaches the Buddhas realms and the Pure Land of Amitabha. This light returns loaded with blessing in the form of millions of bodies of Buddha Amitabha, letters of the Sanskrit alphabet and objects such as the Buddha Amitabha alms bowl filled with Amrita, Vajra scepter, etc.

This rain of Buddha's form, letters and sacred objects is absorbed in you and in all beings. You therefore, receive the blessing of all Buddhas. Such is the visualization to be conducted while reciting the mantra.

2/ Secondly, when this practice is completed, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas present in front of you merge into light and are absorbed in you. Yourself visualized as Chenrezig, as well as the visualization inside your body, progressively dissolves into the very nature of emptiness.

At this point, you abide in Mahamudra meditation according to your capacity. When this meditation is completed, in one instant, you reappear in the form of Chenrezig, with the pure land and the Buddhas inside yourself.

3/ Finally, you make the dedication prayer through which you direct the merit accumulated by this practice towards all beings.

The practice is now completed and one can resume one's daily life.

By practicing every day in such a way, one is certain to be reborn in the pure land at the end of our life. We must, nevertheless, be very attentive to karma and the actions we perform. If we do negative actions, the result of this practice may disappear.

The strongest negative karma is mainly created by mind, more than by the ensuing actions. The most powerful negative karma is generated by states of violent anger or strong jealousy. Desire can also be a problem; though it depends on the type of desire. Being very attached to something disturbs us and may carry us away. Nevertheless, desire is a tendency that can be transformed, while very strong anger and powerful jealousy always remain negative. Jealousy cannot become positive: all of its forms are negative. Regarding anger, there are some nuances; there may be some healthy wrath, it is important to analyze what arises in the mind. If one recognizes that a strong negative emotion appears, it must be immediately remedied. The analysis of the emotions that arise in the mind is also one of the aspects of Mahamudra practice.

The Oral Commentaries
of His Holiness The Drikung Kyabgön, Chetsang Rinpoche.

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On The Short Sadhana of Amitabha Buddha and The Pureland of Dewachen

We begin on page 2 of the text. The first word is 'Namo'. 'Namo' means "I bow down to, prostrate to, or make obeisance to". To whom? To the Three Jewels, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. In addition to, or as another mode of manifestation of the Three Jewels, there is what is called 'The Three Roots'. They are one's teachers, the lamas; the chosen deities, the Yidams; and the Dakinis who are the forces of inspiration manifesting as enlightened females. All beings who have attained any stature of enlightenment: Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, any of those in whose mind has arisen enlightenment. In all of them, I go for refuge for the sake of establishing all sentient beings in the state of Buddhahood. In this one stanza of four lines, there are two processes, where both refuge and the generation of bodhicitta are contained. The first two lines constitute the refuge. Then the purpose for going for refuge is to place all sentient beings in the state of enlightenment; I will generate the mind of enlightenment. In this one sloka, two things are accomplished: going for refuge and the establishment of bodhicitta. These are the preliminary steps for entering the practice of the sadhana. Three things have been accomplished already. One has been obeisance. The second is the taking of refuge. The third is the generation of bodhicitta. One repeats this stanza three times.

Now one can engage in the main body of the practice. However, to engage in the practice, first, let go of your perception of yourself as an ordinary flesh and blood person, and your environment as being ordinary. Dissolve everything into emptiness. Then, from emptiness itself, arises the remainder of the practice. The dissolution of all ordinary perception into emptiness and rising of all subsequent practice from emptiness is implicit in the first syllable of this line: the syllable 'AH'. It is said that the syllable AH is the supreme sound. It is the seed of all other letters, syllables, and sounds. AH is the thirtieth letter of the Tibetan alphabet, making it the culmination of the meaning, the sound, the intention, and the vibrational frequencies of all the other letters. It is the implicit underlying, deep meaning of, and the culmination of all the other letters and all the other sounds. In the text of the "Manjushri Namsanghati", it is said that it is the supreme among all letters because it is natural. It is spontaneously self-arisen. It is not produced or contrived in any way. For example, it is the first sound made by a baby. Therefore, it is said to be unborn. As unborn, it is the symbol of emptiness itself. "AH" signifies Mahasunyata. It is called the king of all letters. Just as the letter AH pervades all the other letters of the alphabet, so emptiness pervades all other phenomena. It is the underlying substratum of reality. The letter AH personifies emptiness. First, you dissolve everything into emptiness, which means to abandon your view of yourself, companions, and your environment as being ordinary. When you practice the developing stage of deity yoga, according to tantric procedure, you need to let go of ordinary, demeaning, limited perception, and cultivate pure view. Not seeing you and others as flesh and blood (ordinary beings), but rather as Chenrezig. Not seeing

this building, as an ordinary building, rather seeing it as a celestial mansion in the midst of the Pureland of Great Bliss. The Lama is not an ordinary teacher, but is in fact the true manifestation of the Buddha Amitabha. This is called the 'cultivation of the exalted view of the developing stage'. The next line says, "All phenomena, all experiences are unborn". They are pervaded by emptiness, just as the letters of the alphabet are pervaded by AH. The next line says, "This is the nature of reality." The natural condition is great compassion and awareness of emptiness, non-dual. This is not something fabricated by the mind. This not just our idea. This is not something we create by thinking it so. It is the essential nature of reality itself. It is now, has always been, will always be the case that emptiness and compassion are the ultimate nature of reality.

The next line on page three, that begins with 'Kung Nan Rig Ped Chung Tro Ley', means that all-pervading, substratum of reality. The true nature of existence, which is compassion and emptiness, is not dormant. Just as the sun naturally emanates its rays resulting in illumination, the nature of reality manifests from the unmanifest Dharmakaya the rays of compassion and wisdom radiating into our realm of existence. The manifestation takes the symbolic form of a lotus blossom upon which is a moon seat. The lotus blossom signifies freedom from defilement. The moon seat signifies being free from attachment or desire. They both signify the white seed of the father and the red seed of the mother. The birth of a human being in our realm takes place when the white thig'le (bindu) of the father and the red thig'le of the mother come together and between them is the consciousness of the being to be born. When those three factors come together, a being is born in this world. What is symbolically presented here, is rebirth into the Pure Realm of Pure Perception of the Developing Stage of Deity Yoga. In the Pureland, birth takes place in a similar way. The lotus symbolizes the red seed of the mother, and the moon seat symbolizes the white seed of the father. One's own consciousness is between them. One then abandons the ordinary view and develops divine view. Because of that, one is born in the form of Chenrezig, having one face and four hands. The essence of the procedure of the Developing Stage of Deity Yoga is as follows. In our ordinary view we are engaged in what we consider worship: we think of the deity as something external and then offer ourselves and various substances as a service to that deity. In the Developing Stage of Deity Yoga, the procedure is different. One eliminates the view of oneself, one's environment, and one's companions in this world as ordinary. If you see yourself as an ordinary human being, then your mind is under the sway of the virulence of the five poisons. To eliminate the five poisons, one cultivates the divine view. One sees one's self, his environment, and companions as divine. The cultivation of the divine view effectively removes the five poisons from one's mindstream. If you are Chenrezig, and not an ordinary flesh and blood human being, if you are the Bodhisattva of Boundless compassion, then you have no ignorance, attachment, aversion, pride, or jealousy. Your mindstream is then, innately and primordially pure. That innate primordial purity is cultivated in the divine vision of the Developing Stage of Deity Yoga. Another reason for the cultivation of the divine view is that if you cultivate the qualities of the Buddha, by considering them you're own, then, little by little, they become your own qualities. The more you contemplate possessing these qualities, the more they actually increase. By slow stages, you develop the qualities of the enlightened being. On the other hand, the more you develop these qualities, the more you abandon negative qualities and mindsets. Little by little your negativity is lessened and the positive nature of your mind manifests. Just as when the sun rises, little by little the darkness disperses. That process takes place simultaneously. The more the light increases the more the darkness decreases. The more you contemplate the qualities of enlightenment, the more you develop those qualities, and the more your limitations are overcome. To symbolize the completion of great compassion in the form of Chenrezig, one meditates on one's own body color as being a luminescent white (moon like) color. You have one face and four hands, In the first hand, the upper right hand, you hold a crystal mala, symbolizing the capacity to liberate all sentient beings

from cyclic existence. The upper left hand holds the stem of the lotus blossom. The lotus blossom is a flower that is rooted in muck and yet grows and blossoms above it in a way that is pure. The flower is in no way stained or defiled by the muck and mire in which it is rooted. This is symbolic of the fact that although as human beings we have fallen into cyclic existence, and abides within it. Yet we have within us the inalienable core of our being our actual original nature and it is enlightened (tathagarba). That Buddha-nature is in no way defiled by the apparent stains of cyclic existence. The first pair of hands is folded in the prayer mudra in front of Chenrezig at His heart level. The gesture is quite elegant. The hands are cupping the Wish Fulfilling Jewel. The Wish Fulfilling Jewel is symbolic of Chenrezig's power to liberate all sentient beings from suffering. The next line says that Chenrezig appears in the form of Samboghakaya. In that form, he appears as an enlightened being manifesting in the body of visionary enjoyment. He wears various ornaments. There are three different groups of ornamentation. For example, there are five types of silk garments, the silk that holds together the jewels of the crown, a shawl, a skirt, a belt (or sash), and a long flowing scarf. There are eight types of jewel ornaments. The jewels in the crown are earrings, a choker necklace, a longer necklace that hangs to the heart chakra, an even longer necklace that hangs to the navel, arm bands, bracelets on the wrists and ankles, and finally, rings. These are always present in all Samboghakaya forms. His two legs (your two legs) are crossed in the full lotus position. You then meditate on that appearance with great clarity and sense of reality. However, it is not a flesh and blood construct. Rather, it is an empty, self-luminous form, devoid of self-nature, yet appearing in exact detail. Remember that you are visualizing yourself as Chenrezig. In the space in front of you facing you, appears Amitabha Buddha. He is seated upon a throne held aloft by eight peacocks, two in each corner of the throne. On top of the throne is a variegated one thousand petaled lotus blossom. On top of the lotus blossom is a moon seat. The moon seat symbolizes the assuaging of the fiery nature of delusion and afflictions. The cool rays of the moon seat calm that down. On top of the moon disk seat, standing upright is the essence of Amitabha Buddha, the syllable HRIH. It is red in color. Amitabha Buddha appears from the transformation of the letter HRIH. Amitabha Buddha is the representative of all the Buddhas of the ten directions and the three times. He is deep ruby red in body color. He has one face and two hands. His hands rest in Dhyana Mudra form. His feet are in the full lotus position. He holds in his hands a begging bowl filled with the nectar of immortality. To His right is Chenrezig. To his left is Vajrapani. Normally Vajrapani is very wrathful looking; here he is not like that. He is portrayed in a peaceful form or manifestation. Both Chenrezig and Vajrapani are standing and they are slightly turned toward Amitabha Buddha. They each have one face and two hands. They stand on top of sun and moon disks. The complete congregation of enlightened beings such as bodhisattvas and arhats surrounds them. Let us recap for a moment. You are Chenrezig. In the space in front of you is Amitabha Buddha. To His right is Chenrezig and to His left is Vajrapani. They are surrounded by the mandala of all enlightened beings. From the crown, throat, and heart chakras of the three central figures, light rays emanate white, red, and blue. Those light rays constitute an invitation to the wisdom beings in their purelands to come forth and join with the commitment beings, which have been created by the visualization. This is called an Invitation. The wisdom beings come forth and descend like downpour of light bodies in the form of Amitabha Buddha, Chenrezig, and Vajrapani. They come forth from the Pureland and merge with the visualized construct collectively known as the commitment being. At the bottom of page seven, it is written: "Hung Hrih, from the realm of Dewachen in the west. Oh Lord Amitabha! Please be on this stainless throne of lotus, sun, and moon disks." That is called the invitation. The second thing that happens here is having invited Him, You invite Him to take a seat on the throne prepared for Him. Amitabha Buddha then takes His seat and you make obeisance to Him. You prostrate to Him with your body, speech, and mind. Then you make offerings to Him. This is not a set of ordinary offerings. Instead, you offer all the elements of existence to Him. Having done that, you begin to have a heart to heart conversation with Amitabha

Buddha. In this case, you confess to Him all your downfalls and broken vows. You open your heart to Amitabha Buddha in that way. The wisdom beings have come and hovered over the assembly of commitment beings, they are still visualized as external to you as Chenrezig. You tell them to sit down and accept the offerings, and then you confess your non-virtues. They will dissolve into the commitment being (visualized as Amitabha Buddha, Chenrezig, and Vajrapani) at the recitation of the mantra *Za Hung Bam Ho* . (Here, His Holiness takes some time to demonstrate the mudra that goes with saying of the mantra.) We come, now, to the part of the sadhana that constitutes the recitation of the mantra. Having merged the wisdom beings with the commitment beings, in the heart of Buddha Amitabha on top of a lotus and moon disk (lying flat), is the seed syllable *Hrih*, standing upright. The letters of the mantra ‘*Om Ami Dewa Hrih*’ are set up on the edge of the moon disk. They are set up counterclockwise, but rotate clockwise. As you recite the mantra, light rays emanate from the mantric syllables and transform the whole universe as an external container into the Pureland of Great Bliss. In addition, with all sentient beings as the contents of that container, transform into the commitment being. While reciting the mantra, you hold the idea that the experience of what is called ‘The Three Vajras’: Vajra body, Vajra speech, and Vajra mind. That is to say, all form is the enlightened body of Amitabha Buddha, all sound is the mantra of Amitabha Buddha, and all thought is the movement of Amitabha Buddha’s consciousness. With that realization, you recite the mantra ‘*Om Ami Dewa Hrih*.’

(At this point, His Holiness leads His students in the practice of the sadhana up until the recitation of the mantra.)

When you begin to recite the mantra, you should visualize light rays boundlessly emanating from the commitment being in front of you. First, offer the light to the enlightened beings of the ten directions, then the light comes back to emanate once more to touch and purify all sentient beings. You recite the mantra for as long as you have time, or for a set number of repetitions.

As the practice winds down, you visualize that light rays emanating from the commitment being. The light rays dissolve all external environment into the three main figures of the commitment being. Then, Chenrezig and Vajrapani dissolve into Amitabha Buddha. From Amitabha’s four places, the crown, throat, heart, and navel chakras, light rays emanate and strike you in the four corresponding places. This cleanses and purifies you from all obscurations of body, speech, and mind. The light rays transfer to you the four empowerments. The Amitabha Buddha melts into light and dissolves into you through the point between the eyebrows. At this point, you enter the inseparability of emptiness and appearance. You allow the mind to rest in its own natural sphere, the state of Mahamudra.

What has gone on up to now has to do with the developing stage practice of the deity yoga of Amitabha Buddha. Everything that is concerned with the developing stage practice has a particular point of reference. It has an object of meditation, a support of meditation. When Amitabha Buddha dissolves into light and merges with you, you enter what is called the Completion Stage practice of the Deity Yoga of Amitabha Buddha. In this stage, there is no fixed frame of reference. This is a state beyond thought. A state transcends the conceptual mind. The purpose of the practice of the Developing Stage of Deity Yoga is to overcome one’s view of oneself and one’s surroundings as ordinary. It is to make divine your view of existence itself. It is to overcome your attachment to an ordinary, demeaning view. The purpose of the completion stage practice is to overcome your view of your self and your environment as divine. Therefore, having attained the beatific vision, you go beyond the beatific vision by giving up your attachment to this divine view. It is said that the developing stage practice perfects the accumulation of merit, and the completion stage practice

THE LOTUS GARLAND

Commentary to the Dewachen wishing prayer

by [Karma] Chagme [Rinpoche]¹

[Insertion: The long Dewachen prayer itself is called:

The wishing prayer of Dewachen, the pure realm of great bliss, composed by the learned and accomplished Raga Asye²]

[Insertion: The prayer starts with the following introduction, which is not mentioned in the commentary:

OM AMI DEVA HRI!

This is the treasury of the heart practice of [Karma] Chagme [Rinpoche]. Considering how great the benefit would be for many beings, I make the effort to write, although my hand is sick.

In the case that someone wishes to copy (study and practise) this text and does not have it himself, please lend it to him. Nothing has greater benefit. There is no dharma teaching more profound than this. It is the root of all dharma³. Do not fall into indifference, but take up its practice diligently. Since this text belongs to the sutra tradition you may recite it without receiving a ritual reading transmission (*lung*).]

THE FOUR CAUSES FOR REBIRTH IN DEWACHEN

This wishing prayer of the Land of Great Bliss⁴ has been written by the learned and accomplished Karma Chagme in order that immediately after this life all sentient beings which are equal to space⁵ will be born in the pure world in the West which is Dewachen and finally obtain the state of Buddhahood.

You are now invited to listen to the commentary named "The Lotus Garland" together with supplementary gradual explanations that give the exact meaning of the words one after the other.

Following the Amitabha sutra the points which need to be explained are the four causes for rebirth in Dewachen: to remember the Thus-gone-One [Tathagata Amitabha], to develop roots of virtue, to develop bodhicitta, and to make a complete dedication.

The first cause is to keep in mind the outer aspect of the pure land, the second is, to gather a great accumulation of wholesome acts, the third is to develop the mind of enlightenment, and the fourth cause is to make dedications and wishing prayers to be born in the realm of Great Bliss.

THE FIRST CAUSE: KEEPING IN MIND THE OUTER ASPECT OF THE PURE LAND

The passage to be explained first starts with "E MA HO..." and goes down to "...bright yellow colour" (...ser-tem-me):

E MA HO means "How wonderful!" and refers to the marvellous beauty of the three-thousandfold world system⁶, which is called "The Universe which cannot be distinguished":

From here, in the direction of the setting sun, beyond a multitude of innumerable worlds, slightly elevated, as if a little higher, is the land of the noble beings.⁷

The Buddha Measureless Light⁸ was born in a previous time as the King Who has the Wheel with the Spokes⁹. At that time, in front of the Victorious One, Buddha Jewel Essence¹⁰, he developed for the first time the mind of supreme enlightenment. From then on, he gathered the accumulations which made it possible to manifest the pure land of Dewachen. [He promised:] "I will only become a buddha, if all those who make the prayer to be born in Dewachen will really be able to take birth there. If however they do not have the capacity to be born there, I will not become a completely perfected one (a buddha)." Saying this he made countless prayers.

Finally he perfectly accomplished the prayers and accumulations, and at that time the former King Who has the Wheel with the Spokes became a buddha called Buddha Amitabha (Measureless Light). Since the wishes of the victorious ones are accomplished for all those who make pure aspiration prayers to be born in Dewachen it is actually possible to be reborn there. This is due to the force of the prayers of victorious ones.

One might ask: "What is this world like?" In general (there are four kinds of worlds:)

- *If the outer world is pure, made of various jewels, and is inhabited by impure beings with emotions, then it is like the realm of the gods of desire.*
- *If the outer world appears as impure with earth, stones, mountains, rocks, and so on, and is inhabited by a gathering of wisdom holders, then it is like [the land] Shambhala in the north.*
- *If the outer world is of burning iron and so on, and its inhabitants suffer from heat, cold, hunger, and thirst, then both, the container and the contents, are impure, just as in the lower realms.*
- *If however the world which is the outer vessel is pure, a land of jewels, with pure beings as its inhabitants who are noble ones¹¹, then vessel and contents are [just like] the perfectly pure realm of Dewachen.*

Although Dewachen is not visible to our human water bubble like eyes, based on hearing and contemplation it can clearly appear to our mind so that one is quite amazed.

If you wonder who lives there: There resides the Subduer and Victorious One¹² Measureless Light who is of ruby red colour and blazing radiance. He is adorned with the top knot on his head, the wheels on his feet and so on, all parts of his body are completely adorned with the 32 signs of perfection, and he is also adorned and dressed with all the secondary attributes, the 80 minor marks. He has a single face, two arms, his hands in the mudra of equanimity, holding an alms bowl filled with nectar. He wears the three dharma robes: below a shamtab¹³, above an upper garment and a gelong zen¹⁴.

With his legs in crossed vajra posture, on a jewel throne in its outer aspect decorated with eight peacocks which are in essence the eight great disciples¹⁵ who offer a seat with their bodies while listening with their ears to the nectar of the Dharma he is seated on an lotus of a thousand petals with a moon disc on which a bodhi tree bearing fruits and made of various jewels serves as a back rest.

From far away, from Dewachen which is at a long distance in the western direction, he looks at me with his eyes of compassion. On his right is the Bodhisattva "Eyes of Compassionate Wisdom" (Avalokiteshvara), of white colour, holding in his left hand a white lotus; and on his left is the Bodhisattva "Great Power" (Vajrapani)¹⁶, of blue body colour, holding in his left hand a lotus marked with a vajra. Both of them extend their right hands towards us in the refuge bestowing mudra. In this way, these three main deities appear like Mount Meru, the king of mountains.¹⁷

Radiant in splendour, their body endowed with the marks and signs of a buddha, their speech pouring forth the splendour of the pleasant melodies of Brahma's speech, and their mind illuminating (the world) with the primordial awareness of knowledge and love.

They dwell accompanied by their retinue, surrounding them, of a trillion gelong bodhisattvas¹⁸, all of them also of golden colour, adorned with the marks and signs, main divinities as well as retinue dressed in the three dharma robes, of great resplendence.

As if they were actually visible and tangible, with intense devotion and fervour, concentrate your mind on Dewachen as if experiencing it. Imagine that you have already been born there and that your prayers are already fulfilled the very moment you recite them. Develop an exulted mind that very instant.

If you make the Dewachen prayers with an inattentive mind like a shepherd who confuses sheep and children, then obstacles will arise. In that case, at the time of death, instead of taking the path to Dewachen, confused appearances of such a kind will arise that again you will fall back [into Samsara]. For this reason, to say it briefly, you should while doing the Dewachen prayer have this feeling to really see and touch¹⁹ Dewachen, as if you were already born there. You should bring forth great enthusiasm and remain non-distracted.

This was the explanation of the first cause: to keep in mind the outer aspect of the pure realm.

THE SECOND CAUSE:

GATHERING THE ACCUMULATIONS THROUGH THE SEVEN BRANCH PRAYER

First branch: Prostrations

In order to make a true dedication, prostrate with respectful devotion in front of Lama Measureless Light together with his retinue residing in Dewachen.

With a devotion that does not make any difference between near and far²⁰, I emanate as many other bodies of mine as there are dust particles in the universe and prostrate full of respect with my three doors.

The explanation of the dharmakaya, the aspect which is basis of emanation:

The Dharmakaya Limitless Radiance²¹, which is the basis of emanation, Lord of the buddha family, emanates from his right hand light rays that become Chenrezi, and from him one billion secondary emanations of the mighty Chenrezi that fill the whole "Three thousandfold Universe which cannot be distinguished". From his left hand he emanates light rays that become Tara with one billion secondary emanations of Tara similar to herself. From his heart light rays go out manifesting Padmasambhava together with one billion secondary emanations of Orgyen²² that fill the three thousandfold universe. I prostrate to all these emanations of Dharmakaya Measureless Light.

With the eyes of a buddha, during all six periods of the day and night, he constantly regards with love all sentient beings. His enlightened mind is constantly aware of whatever thoughts or ideas arise in the mind of all sentient beings. His enlightened ear constantly hears distinctly, without confusion, whatever words are spoken by all sentient beings. *Remembering the qualities of the Dharmakaya which is of benefit for oneself* I prostrate to the all-knowing Measureless Light.

Remembering the qualities of the form kayas which are for the benefit of others:

a) *Nirmanakaya*: Concerning Dewachen – except for those who have the two kinds of obstacles for rebirth there because they have rejected the noble dharma, saying that teaching and practise are of no use, or who have accomplished the extremely negative deeds of immediate retribution which will be explained below – all others who have faith in You (*Amitabha*) and make their wishing prayers will be born in Dewachen and their prayers will be fulfilled. Because it is like this, it is said that at the time when we have died and wander in the bardo, he (*Amitabha*) will send an emanation together with a retinue which will come towards us, and will guide us in one instant into this land. *Remembering his qualities* I prostrate to the guide *Nirmanakaya* Measureless Light.

b) *Sambhogakaya*: Your life span lasting for countless kalpas you stay here and do not go beyond suffering. If we pray to you with one pointed respect, it is said that – except for the complete ripening of previous karma – the coming together of the conditions for the end of our life force will happen only after one hundred years and the various kinds of untimely death will be averted. *Being aware of qualities as these*, I prostrate to the *sambhogakaya* protector Amitayus (=Amitabha).

Further qualities of his deeds and enlightened activity:

It is said that it is of comparatively greater merit simply to join the palms of one's hands out of faith on hearing the name of Amitabha and about Dewachen than to fill the worlds of countless three thousandfold universes of vast extent with all kinds of jewels like gold, silver, and so on and to offer them as gifts. For this reason I respectfully prostrate to Measureless Light.

Whosoever, whatever person or suitable sentient being, hears the name of Amitabha and develops just once a faith, which comes from the depth of his heart and bones and is not empty talk, then this faithful one will never lose the path to enlightenment and the extremes of samsara²³ will be transformed. For this reason I prostrate to the protector Measureless Light.

From the time of hearing the name of Buddha Measureless Light until obtaining buddhahood I will not be born in unfavourable conditions like for example as a woman which (due to cultural limitations) was to be considered as an inferior support for practice, but take birth in a good family and have a pure conduct in all lives to come. I prostrate to Measureless Light gone to bliss²⁴. This concludes the branch of prostration.

Second branch: Making offerings

My body and all my possessions, together with my roots of virtue, whatever offerings that are actually present *like ablution water, flowers, incense, lamps, perfumes, food, at least a hundred of all these, or offerings emanated by mind including the eight auspicious substances which are: mirror, sindhura, kusha grass²⁵, conch shell, white mustard, durwa grass,²⁶ and yoghurt, all in limitless kinds, the eight auspicious signs which are the (infinite) knot, white conch, banner of victory, umbrella, vase, lotus, wheel, and sun²⁷, the seven precious items (signifying royalty) which are the wheel (of a universal monarch), jewel, (the earrings of the) queen, (the earrings of the) minister, the (tusks of the) elephant, supreme mount (symbolised by the horn of a unicorn), (the signs of the) general – whatever offerings exist since all times, since the first appearance of the worlds, such as billions of three thousandfold universes with their four continents, the central mountain, the sun and the moon together with all the wealth of gods, nagas²⁸ and humans – I take them up in my mind which means to visualise them very clearly and offer them to Amitabha. By the force of your compassion, accept this for my own benefit.*

This concludes the branch of offering.

Third branch: Confession

I lay open and confess all the non-virtuous deeds which have been committed from beginningless time until now by myself and by all sentient beings headed by my father and mother.

I lay open and confess the three unwholesome acts of the body: killing, taking what is not given, and impure conduct.

I lay open and confess the four unwholesome acts of the speech: lying, slandering, rough speech, and gossip.

I lay open and confess the three unwholesome acts of mind, *all that has been accumulated since beginningless time in samsara: covetousness due to desire, malice due to anger, and (holding on to) wrong views like denying the law of cause and effect or the Three Jewels (which stand for the possibility of enlightenment).*

I lay open and confess *all* the five deeds of immediate retribution which we accumulated in beginningless samsara: killing our father, our mother, and – *in following the way this explanation is given in the Kadampa tradition of Jowo Atisha – our teacher²⁹, or an arhat³⁰, and intending to cause harm to the body of a Victorious One which means actually doing the act without regret of cutting open his body so that blood comes forth. These five are the causes which will result (after death) in immediate rebirth in the Hell of Unspeakable Torment (Avici) without any possibility for other factors to hinder this rebirth.*

I lay open and confess the evil deeds similar to the deeds of immediate retribution: killing a fully ordained monastic or a novice, making a nun or monk fall into lay status (through rape or seduction), destroying a statue, stupa or temple – *except if wanting to repair it – or to unnecessarily destroy holy texts and so on.*

I lay open and confess *all* the evil acts of abandoning the dharma together with everything related to this kind of act like abandoning the three supports etc. *in front of which I have committed myself at the time of taking the vows: the Three Jewels, the temple, and the supreme texts (e.g. the dharma texts) present in front of us.*

To "lay open" means not to keep one's faults secret but to clearly say them. To "confess" means to destroy or sweep them away like dust.

I lay open and confess all these accumulated very negative, useless actions – *which are so useless that one cannot even "fill a glass of water" with them – like abusing bodhisattvas which is of greater evil than to kill the sentient beings of the three realms³¹. In general one should, whenever talking about lamas and ordained ones, be aware that there are probably bodhisattvas among them.*

Compared to the five crimes of immediate retribution it is more negative not to believe in the benefits of virtuous deeds and the difficulties resulting from non-virtue *about which we have heard* and to think that these *as well as similar teachings* are simply a pedagogical device, and this although we received explanations by a lama on the duration and extent of suffering in the hell realms, and so on. I lay open and confess this negative karma that makes liberation impossible.

This was the general confession of faults.

Now comes the more specific confession concerning transgressions of the vows of individual liberation, the bodhisattva vows and the tantric vows. Among these three, [transgressions of] the outer³² vows of individual liberation about what is to be given up are considered the roots of all faults and transgressions. They include: to take life, to steal, to have impure relationships with a woman (or man), to tell lies like pretending to have clairvoyance.

I lay open and confess all breakage and damages of the discipline of individual liberation including the five categories of faults³³: the four root downfalls, in short: killing, stealing, impure conduct, and lying, these are what one should keep in mind and protect oneself from, since they are the principal transgressions – if they occur, one is not a follower of the Buddha's teaching any more. Furthermore there are the thirteen [transgressions of vows] with a remainder, the thirty transgressions which are like downfalls, the ninety downfalls, the four individually confessed damages, and the hundred and twelve faults.

I lay open and confess the acts which we should give up once having requested the bodhisattva vows: the four negative actions³⁴ which damage (these vows), as well as the root downfalls which actually break the vows: the five which concern "kings" – referring to bodhisattvas who have obtained a power and influence similar to a great ruler, and the five similar ones of "ministers" who are executing the orders of a king and acting on his behalf, and to these are added the eight transgressions of ordinary beings in the bodhisattva family which (also) constitute a major breakage. Together they are counted as eighteen root downfalls. If they occur, they constitute a spoiling of our training in bodhicitta: you should protect yourself from them, if any of those present themselves.

The four negative actions [in relation to the bodhisattva vows] which should be given up are:

- to cheat the lama
- to employ means to make someone regret the dharma (or any dharmic activity),
- to slander the superior ones³⁵,
- to have a tricky mind which cheats the inferior ones [the ones who depend on us].

The eighteen root downfalls of a bodhisattva are:

- The five concerning a king (or powerful person) are: (1) to steal the wealth of the [Three] Jewels³⁶, (2) to [cause someone to] abandon the dharma, (3) to strike and punish a monk or nun who have become a lay person [due to having lost their discipline], (4) to commit one of the five crimes with immediate retribution, (5) to have erroneous views and to deny [the law of] cause and effect.
- Of the five downfalls for a minister the first four are the same as above (counted as 6–9), but instead of wrong views we find (10) destroying a town (or country) with an army.
- The eight principal transgressions of ordinary people (practising the bodhisattva path) are: (11) to teach emptiness to those whose mind is not prepared, (12) to create obstacles for the dharma [practice] of the great vehicle, (13) to (make someone) engage in the Mahayana while giving up the self liberation vows, (14) to instigate others to abandon the dharma of the smaller vehicle³⁷, (15) to denigrate others in order to obtain praise and fame, (16) to lie saying that one has realised emptiness when one has not, (17) to pass on the donations given to the [Three] Jewels to someone who is not worthy to receive them, (18) to take away the provisions of a meditator who then has to abandon [his practice of] meditative absorption and to give them to someone who is just doing recitations without faith.

These are the eighteen root downfalls concerning the [bodhisattva] vows. If such a transgression has occurred, one will fall into Avici, the hell of unspeakable torment. (In order to purify these acts) confess these downfalls again and again in front of the bodhisattva Akashagarbha (Namkai Nyingpo³⁸) and promise to keep the vows. In brief, you should never even abandon someone whom you consider as an enemy, (but remain open for when) the time will come that he needs your help. With this attitude I lay open and confess all the transgressions as explained concerning the bodhisattva training.

The confession of transgressions concerning the vows of the tantrayana³⁹:

These vows should not be explained in public or to unprepared, feeble minded people. You should keep them secret in your mind. The 14 root downfalls of the mantrayana are:

- (1) to disrespect the lama, (2) to transgress the Buddha's word, (3) to be angry at one's [vajra] brothers and sisters, (4) to give up love and (5) to give up bodhicitta, (6) to disrespect (non-buddhist) spiritual teachings, (7) to disclose secrets (of the vajrayana transmission), (8) to despise the 5 aggregates⁴⁰, (9) to disbelieve pure dharmas⁴¹,

(10) to have love for malicious ones⁴², (11) to apply discursive concepts to what is free⁴³, (12) to create regret in those who have faith, (13) not to rely on samaya substances⁴⁴, (14) to disrespect women (or men).

If you keep the tantric vows, they will be the root of all accomplishments. If you damage them, they are the root of all faults and downfalls. Pledging to them, they are the root of all samayas. That is why they are [called] the 14 root downfalls of the mantrayana.

The [transgressions of the] eight secondary vows are:

(1) to rely on a wisdom lady (or partner) who is not mature, (2) to quarrel at the time of the tsog gathering, (3) to accept nectar with improper characteristics⁴⁵, (4) not to teach the secret mantra to those who are fitting vessels, (5) not to teach the noble dharma to those who have faith⁴⁶, (6) to stay seven days together with a shravaka who is striving towards personal benefit⁴⁷, (7) to boast about being a "tantrika" while not having the primordial awareness of the yoga⁴⁸, (8) to explain the dharma to unfit vessels. These are the secondary tantric vows.

For this reason I lay open and confess the samaya damages of the secret mantra: the 14 root downfalls of the mantrayana, and the transgressions of the eight secondary vows.

I lay open and confess all harmful deeds which I did not understand to be harmful: the non-virtuous deeds that I have committed due to not requesting vows and all evil deeds of which I was not aware of as actually being harmful, like impure conduct (sexual activity), drinking alcohol and so on *due to desire*.

I lay open and confess the serious transgressions and downfalls due to receiving the refuge of a *genyen*⁴⁹, vows, initiations and so on, but not knowing to keep the respective vows and commitments.

Since a confession will not purify if there is no regret, I confess with great remorse, with shame, and with despair at my previous harmful deeds, as if poison had attained the depth of my being. *This is applying the "force of repentance" in relation to our previous acts.*

Since there will be no purification if I am not keeping to my vows from now on, I promise in my mind, from today onwards, never to commit non-virtuous activity even at the cost of my life. *This is applying the "force of renunciation" by keeping the vows present in our mind from now on. For a true confession these two [forces] are very important.*

Please, Sugata Measureless Light and your heirs, grant your blessing so that my stream of being may be completely purified.

This concludes the branch of confession.

Fourth branch: Rejoicing

When I hear about others who have accomplished wholesome acts, *like spreading the teaching of the victorious ones and erecting supports of enlightened body, speech and mind etc.*, I abandon all unwholesome thoughts of jealousy and rejoice in their deeds with heartfelt joy, which is said to make us *progressively* obtain a merit equal to theirs.

A previous Buddha together with his retinue was invited by a king for a meal. At that occasion, when he was requested to dedicate the roots of virtue, the Buddha said: "Great King, since your aspiration to perform virtuous deeds is small, the roots of virtue [of this feast] will be obtained by this old mother next to you who really rejoices."

For this reason, *since it is like this*, I rejoice in whatever virtuous deeds are accomplished by realised and ordinary beings.

I also rejoice in the vast activity accomplished for the benefit of beings due to developing the mind of supreme unsurpassable enlightenment.

I rejoice in giving up the ten unwholesome and performing the ten wholesome acts: *the three virtuous acts with the body which are to protect the life of others, to give offerings, and to keep one's vows; the four virtuous acts with speech which are to speak the truth, to reconcile adversaries, to speak peacefully, gently and sincerely, and to engage in conversations which are meaningful; and the four virtuous acts with the mind which are to have little desire, to cultivate love and compassion and to give up erroneous views (like for example) about acts and their consequences (karma) which make dharma practice impossible and to practise the Dharma – in all these virtuous acts I rejoice.*

Fifth branch: Requesting to turn the Wheel of Dharma

I exhort all those perfect buddhas who dwell in all the myriad worlds of the ten directions to quickly and extensively turn the wheel of dharma without waiting any longer. *Praying like this:* Please be aware of this request with your clairvoyant mind.

Sixth branch: Praying that the buddhas may not pass beyond suffering

I supplicate all the buddhas, bodhisattvas, holders of the teaching, and spiritual friends who intend to go beyond suffering to remain and not pass into nirvana.

Seventh branch: Dedication

On the basis of this very act, I dedicate all virtuous acts of the three times for the benefit of all sentient beings. *Dedicating the roots of virtue in this way will multiply the virtue a hundred thousand times.*

THE THIRD CAUSE: DEVELOPING THE MIND OF SUPREME ENLIGHTENMENT

May all of us, *myself and other sentient beings*, be liberated from samsara and quickly obtain unsurpassable enlightenment, thus stirring the three realms of samsara from their depth.

May these virtuous deeds quickly ripen for me and pacify the eighteen causes of untimely death in this life *such as being killed through fire, water, poison, arms, evil-doers, wild animals and so on.*

May I be endowed with the physical strength of a healthy adolescent in full bloom.

May the wealth *that is in accordance with the dharma* never decline, but increase as the river Ganges in the monsoon.

May I practise the noble dharma without danger through demons or enemies.

May all my wishes be fulfilled in accordance with the dharma.

May I be of great benefit for the teaching and for beings.

May I accomplish the true meaning of this human existence.

This concludes the (teaching on the) third cause.

THE FOURTH CAUSE: MAKING DEDICATIONS AND WISHES TO BE BORN IN DEWACHEN

a) Wishes to go to Dewachen

At the very moment when I and all those who have a connection with me pass beyond this life, may the emanation of Buddha Amitabha surrounded by his retinue of a sangha of practitioners of virtue actually come to meet us *without any (of the common) bardo appearances.*

On seeing him, may our mind be happy and joyful, and may there be no more suffering of death.

May *at the time of our death* by the force of their miraculous powers the eight bodhisattva brothers appear in the sky *in front*, and guide us indicating the path to Dewachen.

To be attached to wealth and relatives at that time would make me fall back into samsara. To avoid this reflect on non-attachment: The suffering in the lower realms is unbearable, and the joy and well-being of gods and humans is impermanent – understanding this, may I develop a fearful mind and *right now* develop disgust with samsara that had to be endured from beginningless time until now.

Even those who go from one supreme human life to another experience countless times *(the sufferings of)* birth, old age, illness and death. In these difficult, degenerate times when there are many obstacles and the well-being and happiness of humans and gods are similar to food mixed with poison, may I have not even a hair tip of attachment.

May I be free of even the slightest attachment to *the* relatives, food, wealth and companions *of this life*, which are impermanent and illusory like a dream.

May I understand *the* countries, places and lodgings *of this life* to have no real existence just like the places and houses in my dreams.

Like a criminal liberated from prison, may I – without ever looking back – *at the time of death* escape from this ocean of samsara that knows no freedom to the pure realm of Dewachen.

Having cut all links of attachment and desire, may I fly off in space just like a vulture freed from a net and instantly reach Dewachen travelling beyond the countless universes in the Western direction.

b) Wishes for our practice in Dewachen

Having managed to reach Dewachen without obstacles: May I see the face of Buddha Measureless Light who is actually dwelling there and purify all my veils.

May I take the superior of the four kinds of birth *which are: birth from an egg, from a womb, from warmth and moisture, and miraculous (instantaneous) birth*, and be miraculously born from the heart of a lotus flower.

Obtaining in one instant the completely perfect body, may I receive a body endowed with all the marks and the signs (*of a Buddha*).

If *now* I doubt and hesitate *wondering, if I am* to be born there *in Dewachen*, the blossom of the flower will not open for up to 500 years, but inside of it I will be happy and content with all enjoyments. Even though I will hear the word of the Buddha, may this disadvantage of delayed meeting with the Buddha's face not happen to me.

Since we might not yet be a (realised) bodhisattva the very moment we are born inside the flower, relying on the teachings of the Buddha (Amitabha), we make the following prayer to obtain the pristine awareness of a Noble One⁵⁰: May the flower open as soon as I am born so that I may see the face of Amitabha.

By the force of my merit and magical powers, may inconceivable clouds of offerings emanate from the palms of my hands as offerings to the Buddha and his retinue.

May at that moment the tathagata stretch out his right hand, place it on my head, and may I obtain his prophecy of enlightenment: *"In the future you will obtain complete enlightenment."*

Having listened to the Dharma, which is profound *in view* and vast *in conduct*, may my mind ripen and be liberated.

Chenrezi and Vajrapani being the principal bodhisattvas (*of Amitabha's retinue*), may I be blessed and guided by these two.

Every day countless buddhas and bodhisattvas *from the realms* of the ten directions come to make offerings and see Amitabha in this land. At that time, *when they arrive*, may I *myself* pay homage to all of them and obtain the nectar of the dharma.

c) Wishes concerning how our qualities manifest in Dewachen

Through my limitless magical powers, *which are present, if one succeeds in being born in Dewachen*, may I go in the morning – *when the birds start singing and a great rain of flowers is showered down by the wind* – towards the realm of True Happiness *in the Eastern direction*, to the Glorious Land *in the South*, to [the lands] Supreme Activity *in the North*, and Dense Array *in the Centre*. May I request initiations, blessings and vows of the buddhas Akshobya, Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhi, Vairocana etc. *who dwell in those realms*, make many offerings, and in the evening – *when the birds stop singing and the flower rain has become old* – without any effort return *back* to Dewachen itself.

There are a billion realms of pure emanations – such as the lands of Potala *in the South*, Alakavati *in the North*, Kurava *in the Southwest*, and the land of Urgyen *in the West* – with a billion (*emanations of*) Chenrezi, Tara, Vajrapani, and Padmasambhava *who reside in those lands*. May I encounter them and make oceans of offerings, request initiations and profound pith instructions, and *then again* quickly return without any obstacle to my place in Dewachen.

When we have succeeded to take birth in Dewachen: May I clearly see with my divine eye all the close friends, monks and students and so on *whom I have just left behind in the human realm*, and may I be able to guard and protect *all of them*, bestow blessings and at the time of their death guide them to this land.

This "Fortunate Aeon" *right now* that lasts for one *great* aeon equals only a single day in Dewachen – may I live countless Dewachen aeons without ever dying and continuously remain in this land.

From Maitreya (*the next buddha*) to Mōpa (*Thaye*), the final one of *all the buddhas who will come one after the other one into the fortunate kalpa of this present world*, may I see all the buddhas of the Fortunate Aeon when they appear in this world.

With my magical powers, may I go *from Dewachen* to meet these buddhas, make offerings to them and listen to the noble dharma, and then again, without any obstacles, return to the pure land of Dewachen.

To be born in Dewachen is similar to the capacity to be born in all other pure realms, since Dewachen unites the totality of all qualities of the buddha realms of eighty one billion trillion buddhas. May I be reborn in this land of Dewachen, outstandingly supreme among all pure lands.

This concludes the explanation on how we obtain the qualities after having managed to be born in this pure land.

d) Wishes in relation to the outer qualities of this realm

The ground which is made of *various* jewels is as smooth as the palm of a hand and vast, spacious and radiant – blazing with light rays. When it is pressed down (*on walking*), it gives way *four fingers deep each time*, and on lifting up (*one's foot*), it is as if the ground rebounds. May I be reborn in this joyful, pleasant land of happiness.

There are wish fulfilling trees made of many jewels with leaves of fine silk and fruits ornamented with jewels. On them gather flocks of emanation birds, which *are very beautiful in their colours of various kinds of jewels and chant in very agreeable and pleasant ways*, proclaiming the sounds of the profound and vast dharma – may I be reborn in this land of great wonders.

The many rivers, *all water currents*, are of perfumed water with the eight qualities⁵¹ and the water in the bathing ponds is of nectar *turning in circular movement*. They are surrounded by stairs and cornices made of the seven kinds of jewels and display *inside* fragrant lotus flowers bearing fruit and emanating countless rays of lotus light. The tips of the light rays are adorned with emanated buddhas – may I be reborn in this land of greatest marvel.

e) Wishes for our practice of the dharma

May I be born in this Land of Great Joy, where even the words "eight unfitting conditions" *for dharma practice, like being reborn in the hell realms and so on*, or "hell" are unheard of – *even on searching we would not find them* – and where never any suffering is known, neither are the five or three emotions that are like poisons – *desire, anger and ignorance making three, plus pride and jealousy* – nor the 404 kinds of sickness, mental illness, enemies, poverty, quarrels, and so on.

May I be born in this land of limitless qualities where there are *no ordinary beings*, no men or women, no beings born from a womb, since all are noble beings born from within lotus flowers. Here *in this land* all bodies of *myself and others* are without any difference, of golden colour, endowed with the marks and signs (*of a buddha*), like the topknot on their head and so on, possessing all five special powers – *the capacities of clairvoyance, cliraudience, performing miracles, remembering previous existences, and knowing the mind of others* – and the five eyes – *the physical eye, the divine eye, the eye of the dharma, the wisdom eye, and the eye of pristine awareness*.

Whatever I desire and think of, palaces, *all houses and dwelling places in this land*, made of a variety of jewels and all enjoyments arise by themselves; no effort is necessary, all needs are spontaneously fulfilled. There is no distinction between you and me, no clinging to a self. All my wishes manifest as offering clouds arising from the palm of my hand, and everyone practises the dharma of the unsurpassable Great Vehicle – may I be born in this realm, source of all bliss and happiness.

A fragrant breeze *again and again* brings great showers of flowers, and *time after time* from the trees, rivers and lotus flowers arise heaps of clouds with all sorts of enjoyments: agreeable shapes, sounds, smells, tastes and touches. There are no women, but an abundance of emanated goddesses. These many offering goddesses continuously present offerings *to me and others*.

At the time when I wish to stay somewhere, jewel palaces appear, and when I wish to sleep, beautiful thrones arise, covered with many pillows and cushions of fine silk *to place my head*, together with birds, wish fulfilling trees, rivers, music, and so on. When I wish to listen to them, they emanate the pleasant sound of dharma, and when I do not want *to hear them, because I wish to sleep or to meditate in samadhi*, no sound, *not even the slightest*, is heard. Also the ponds and rivers are exactly as I wish, cold or warm, just as it is pleasing to me – may I be born in this land where all wishes are fulfilled.

f) Wishes concerning the activity of the buddhas in Dewachen

You might wonder, for how long Amitabha will remain in this land? The perfect buddha Measureless Light will remain in this land for countless aeons, without going into Nirvana – may I act as his servant *and helper* for all this time.

Until his *final* passing into peace *when his enlightened body enters nirvana*, after two times the number of aeons as there are sand particles in the Ganges, his teaching will *not decline but remain*. At that time may I *myself* not be separated from his (*Amitabha's*) regent Chenrezi and uphold the noble dharma.

When at dusk the sun of the dharma is setting, *which means that the teaching period of Amitabha reaches its end as if it became evening for beings*, the very next morning – *as if it was the break of the next day*⁵² – will arise the time of Chenrezi's teaching and Chenrezi will be a perfect buddha *and act as such*. He will be named the "King whose light rays manifest the accumulated Splendour of all Noble Ones"⁵³. When this happens, may I see his face *and worship him*, make offerings and listen to the noble dharma.

During the sixty-six trillion million aeons that he, *the Buddha "King of accumulated Splendour"*, will live, may I continuously be his servant, *offering my services in every way*, worship him and uphold the noble dharma without ever forgetting to remember his words.

After he, *the enlightened body of Buddha Accumulated Splendour*, has passed into nirvana, his teaching will remain for three times six hundred billion million aeons – may I uphold the *noble* dharma during all this time and never be separated from *his regent the bodhisattva Vajrapani*.

When *the bodhisattva Vajrapani* becomes the buddha called "Completely reliable Tathagata King of abundant jewel-like qualities" with a life span and teaching just as those of Chenrezi, may we (!) continuously be the servants of this buddha as well, present our offerings and uphold all the noble dharma.

When, *at the end of this period*, that form of my presence is over, may I instantly obtain unsurpassable perfect buddhahood in this or one of the other pure realms.

Having obtained perfect buddhahood, may all beings – just as with Amitayus – be ripened and liberated by simply hearing my name, and may there arise, through countless emanations that guide sentient beings and through other means, spontaneously and without effort a limitless benefit for beings.

Again, [an explanation of the benefits of] paying respect to Lama Amitabha and his retinue while remembering their kindness: The buddha's life span is *beyond measure*, his merit is *beyond measure*, his qualities are *beyond measure*, and his pristine awareness as well as his splendour are *beyond measure*, and it is said that someone *whosoever* remembers his name – be it Dharmakaya Limitless Radiance, Measureless Light (Amitabha) or Bhagavan of Immeasurable Life and Primordial Wisdom (Amitayus) – will be protected against all dangers through fire, water, poisons, weapons, evil doers, demons, and so on, with the only exception of the full (*unavoidable*) ripening of previous karma. By remembering Your name and prostrating, please protect us from all dangers and sufferings and grant your blessing of excellent auspiciousness.

g) Concluding wishes

Proclaiming the words of truth as part of doing wishing prayers: Through the blessing of the Buddha who has mastered the three bodies, through the blessing of the unchanging truth of the nature of all things (dharmata), and through the blessing of the undivided aspiration of the sangha, may all prayers be accomplished just as wished. I prostrate to the Three Jewels. TEYATHA PENTSAN DRIYA AWA BHODHANAYE SOHA.

This concludes the practice of the wishing prayer.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS AND COLOPHON

I prostrate to the three jewels. *We recite these words from 'I prostrate...' till '...shriye soha'. When reciting NAMO MANJUSHRIYE we join our hands and clearly imagine that we prostrate with the body so that this body becomes the ground which is the basis of Manjushri. When saying NAMO SUSHRIYE we prostrate so that our speech becomes the ground for the splendour of bliss. Saying NAMO UTAMA SHRIYE SOHA we prostrate so that our mind become the splendour of the guru's mind.*

As we proclaim this meaningful mantra, making three prostrations, it is said that they are multiplied a million times. At best one does hundreds of prostrations, with an average motivation one does as much as one can, but at least one should offer seven prostrations. The best would be to recite this Dewachen prayer without interruption as a daily practice, a middling version would be to recite it for one year or one month without interruption, and the least would be to recite it occasionally. If one turns towards the West and remembers the pure land of Dewachen while joining one's hands towards Amitabha and reciting the prayer with one-pointed faith, then there is no doubt that obstacles to one's present life will be dispelled and that in the future one will be reborn in Dewachen. This is what is expressed in the Amitabha Sutra, the Pure Land Sutra, the White Lotus Sutra, the [sutra] "Sound of the drum of immortality", and so on. This was composed by the monk Raga Asye [Karma Chagme].

May it serve as a cause for the rebirth in Dewachen of many sentient beings! This perfectly concludes the explanation.

At the end (of the prayer) one should dwell without any reference point, and then make dedications, wishing prayers and prayers of auspiciousness as the final ornament of one's practice. It is very important to continuously purify the realm⁵⁴, to connect with it and in this way train oneself in the pure vision of remembering this pure land.

A supplementary wish: May all beings be liberated into the lotus family by clearly rejoicing in the name of the lotus, the aspiration path to the land of the lotus arrangement, where the regents of the lotus proclaim all kinds of excellent dharma.

Lama Pe-tse and the novice Lobzang Könchog have encouraged and incited me together with Droza Tashi Tsekyi, thus creating a favourable occasion where the conditions came together to compose the second text to accomplish this pure land, the prayer text of the practice itself. Then, although he was already engaged in other activities like explaining and listening to the dharma, Pema Namgyal who is holding the vows brought forth the superior motivation and wrote down this text. May all virtue increase!

Notes:

1 Square brackets '[...]' indicate missing words added for the understanding of the text; *normal brackets* '(...)' indicate additional explanations given by Lama Lhundrup. Everything written in *italics* belongs to the commentary (small Tibetan script in the original) and everything in normal script is part of the prayer itself (larger Tibetan script).

2 *Raga Asye* is another name for Karma Chagme Rinpoche

3 All *dharma* or all my dharma teaching, since in one Tibetan version the text reads: nga-yi chös.

4 *Dewachen* in Tibetan is alternatively spelled bde-ba-can or bde-ba-chen and is thus translated either as the *Land of Bliss* or the *Land of Great Bliss*.

5 *Equal to space* means that sentient beings are countless and that all space of the universe is inhabited by sentient beings.

6 A *three-thousandfold world system*, a trichiliocosm, is a universe of 1.000.000.000 planetary systems (one thousand multiplied by one thousand multiplied by one thousand).

7 In this auto-commentary Karma Chagme Rinpoche gives each word of the whole prayer text (normal script) and interposes his explanations of varying length (*italics*) while uniting prayer and commentary into one grammatical structure. This is a the traditional Tibetan way of giving a word by word commentary.

8 The activity of *Buddha Measureless Light* (Tibetan: Öpame, Sanskrit: Amitabha) is the source and central inspiration of the pure realm called Dewachen.

9 The *King who has the Wheel with the Spokes*, Tibetan: Gyalpo Tsib-kyi Mu-khyü-chen.

10 *Buddha Jewel Essence*, Tibetan: Rinchen Nyingpo.

11 *Noble ones* (Sanskrit: Aryas) refers to realised beings that understand the nature of mind.

12 *Subduer* (Sanskrit: Bhagavan), *Victorious One* (Sanskrit: Jina).

13 *Shamtab*: a robe covering the lower part of the body.

14 *Upper garment* refers to large saffron yellow cotton cloth wound around the shoulders (a getsul zen, Tibetan: bla-gos), sign of the novice ordination. A *gelong zen* is an almost identical yellow cloth which is the sign of the full ordination as a buddhist monk (Tibetan: snam-sbyar).

15 The *eight great disciples* of Buddha Shakyamuni (Tibetan: nye-bai-sräs-chän-bgyäd) are his most eminent bodhisattva disciples: Manjushri, Vajrapani (Thu-thob-chen), Avalokiteshvara (Chenrezi), Kshitigarbha, Sarvanirvana Viskambhin, Akashagarbha, Maitreya, and Samantabhadra,

16 Both bodhisattvas are standing next to Amitabha's throne.

17 To describe them as being like the *king of mountains* means that they are towering, unshakeable, and indestructible.

18 *Gelong bodhisattvas* have taken the full monk or nun vows as an expression of their bodhisattva commitment.

19 There are two spellings in different Tibetan texts: "reg" meaning to *touch*, and "rig" meaning to *know*.

20 This means without considering Amitabha to be far away and wishing that he would be nearer by.

21 *Limitless Radiance* (Tibetan: Nangwa Thayä) is another name of Amitabha.

22 *Padmasambhava* and *Orgyen Rinpoche* are further names of Guru Rinpoche who was the central figure in bringing the dharma to Tibet.

23 The *extremes of samsara* are all forms of clinging to existence, non-existence and so on.

24 Someone *gone to bliss* (Sanskrit: sugata) is a fully accomplished buddha.

25 In the usual list we find the bilwa fruit instead of *kusha grass*.

26 The list usually includes at this place a medicine made from *elephant brain*.

27 The Tibetan text has nyi-ma which means *sun*, but usually there would be nya-ma, fish, which stands for two golden fishes.

28 *Nagas* are beings of the animal realm, some of which have half human, half fish or serpent form.

29 In the usual list of the 5 extreme crimes of immediate retribution one includes *creating a schism in the sangha* instead of *killing the teacher*.

30 *Arhat* stands here for any realised being including bodhisattvas.

31 *Three realms* refers to the desire, form and formless realms which together make up the whole universe.

32 The self liberation vows are called *outer* vows because they concern the outer level of our existence, our visible behaviour.

33 The following *five categories* are a summarised list of transgressions of the vows of buddhist monks.

34 The *four negative actions* are called the four "black dharmas" in Tibetan. They are explained in the next paragraph.

35 The *superior ones* are bodhisattvas and all the people who have taught us : our parents, teachers, etc.

36 To *steal the wealth of the jewels* is for example misusing donations given to a community of practitioners or to destroy and rob the precious items found in a temple or monastery etc.

37 For example by claiming that the smaller vehicle does not lead to liberation from emotions.

38 *Akashagarbha* is one of the eight bodhisattvas belonging to the sangha of the Buddha. Here he represents this sangha.

39 *Tantrayana*, mantrayana and vajrayana are synonyms. The explanations given here belong more specifically to the anuttara yoga tantra, the highest form of tantra.

40 To *despise the five aggregates* means to despise one's body and mind.

- ⁴¹ *To disbelieve pure dharmas* : the Tibetan word *chö* also means *phenomena*, so this can also mean to regard phenomena as impure when, in the tantra, they are considered as being pure by nature.
- ⁴² *To have love for malicious ones* means to engage in close friendship with people whose views are against the dharma and who intend to harm.
- ⁴³ One should not *apply discursive concepts* on what is free of them by nature, on ultimate truth for example.
- ⁴⁴ *Not to rely on samaya substances* means not to accept even a tiny bit of a tsog substance because of for example a personal dietary choice against meat or alcohol.
- ⁴⁵ *To accept dütsi with improper characteristics* means dütsi which is received from an improper consort.
- ⁴⁶ *Not to teach the dharma* also means not to answer to sincere questions on the dharma, but to turn them into derision.
- ⁴⁷ *To stay seven days together with a shravaka who is striving towards a personal benefit* is a transgression because one might be influenced to rely on a lower vehicle; also the shravaka might be disturbed in his practice.
- ⁴⁸ *Yoga* refers here to the union of wisdom and means.
- ⁴⁹ *Genyen* means *friend of virtue* and refers to the first level of vows of a lay practitioner.
- ⁵⁰ *A noble One* is here a bodhisattva on the first level of enlightenment (bhumi) which is equivalent to the full entry into Dewachen.
- ⁵¹ The *eight qualities* of pure water are: sweet, refreshing, mild, light, clear, pure, agreeable to the throat and to the stomach.
- ⁵² This image of the *dusk* of Amitabha's teaching immediately followed by the *dawn* of Chenrezi's teaching means that there will be no night, no extinction of the teaching.
- ⁵³ In Tibetan: Öser Kün-nas Pagpayi Paltsek Gyalpo
- ⁵⁴ *To continuously purify the realm* means to make more and more pure aspirations.

Short Biography of Namchö Mingyur Dorje

(Tibetan: གནམ་ཚོས་མི་འགྱུར་རྟེན།, Wylie: gna chos mi 'gyur rdo rje, 1645–1667)

Tertön Mingyur Dorje (gter ston mi 'gyur rdo rje) was born in his uncle's home, near the Nabun Fortress in Ngom (ngom) in the Nangchen region of Kham in late 1645. His father was named Gonpo Tseten (mgon po tshe brtan), and was said to have descended from the Tibetan Imperial royal family. His mother, whose name is not known, was the daughter of Adrub Gyel (a grub rgyal). His paternal grandfather was named Anu Tsering Bum (a nu tshe ring 'bum). Tradition maintains several miracles related to his conception and birth.

His family fell onto hard times when he was young; they lost their wealth and were accused of wrongdoings. Nevertheless, an encounter with the great Karma Kagyu lama Karma Chakme (karma chags med 1610/1613-1678) in 1655, when he was eleven, resulted in his being identified as the reincarnation of the Katok (kaH thog) lama Trulzhik Chenpo Wangdrak Gyatso ('khrul zhig chen po dbang drag rgya mtsho, d. c.1640), himself said to be the reincarnation of Lochan Vairocana and Shupu Pelgyi Sengge (shud phu dpal gyi seng ge, d.u.). According to tradition, Mingyur Dorje had previously appeared to Karma Chakme in a dream. The lama performed three types of purification rituals and then examined the boy, finding numerous auspicious marks, including the letter tha on the sole of his right foot. Nevertheless the identification was not embraced by the monks of Katok, who refused to recognize him, despite the fact that, according to legend, the boy recalled extensive details from Wangdrak Gyatso's life.

Karma Chakme took charge of the boy, giving him the empowerment on Tsedrub Sangdu (tshe grub gsang 'dus). When the boy threw the flower it landed across the middle and eastern sections, indicating the middle deity Vairocana -- Mingyur in Tibetan -- and the eastern deity, Vajrasattva, or Dorje Sempa; thus he gained his name, Mingyur Dorje. Karma Chakme gave him additional Nyingma teachings and then sent him back to his father's house.

On the tenth day of the eleventh month of the same year Mingyur Dorje was back with Karma Chakme. Karma Chakme later explained to Dundul Dorje that since there were no Nyingma lamas in the area nor anyone to take care of Mingyur Dorje because Wangdrak Gyatso was unfamiliar there. He claimed that had he not taken him in the boy would not have lived to the age of eleven.

They made elaborate feast offerings with the young boy on a throne wearing a lotus-hat, a vajra and other ritual objects ready for his use. He is said to have given teachings and also bestowed vows in a playful child-like manner but with perfect fidelity to the rite.

The boy was gradually given many empowerments and oral transmissions of many important scriptures, including Ratna Lingpa's three cycles of supreme empowerment and the Khandro Nyingtik (mkha' 'gro snying thig). He also learned calligraphy, art, sculpture, torma making, thread-cross weaving for rituals, and many performances, rites, and rituals. He underwent several retreats with his teacher.

He was said to have experienced vision of many deities including Padmasambhava, Amitāyus and Tārā; dharma protectors including Damchen Garwa Nakpo (dam chen gar ba nag po); and past saints such as Milarepa (mi la ras pa, 1040-1123). He is said to have had the ability to bring rain and curing illnesses, and earned the name Tertön Sherab Mebar (gter ston shes rab me 'bar) meaning 'Treasure Revealer with Blazing Wisdom.

The biographies of Mingyur Dorje are somewhat explicit in their description of his erratic behavior around his treasure revelations -- most of which are classified as "mind treasure" (dgongs gter), meaning that he received them through visions rather than as physical objects. Leading up to the revelation of his most important cycle, the Namcho (gnam chos), he is said to have run and jumped about, thrown objects off of shrines, fainted and stiffened -- episodes that he would not remember upon coming out of his trance. He also suffered from skin diseases, arthritis, dyspepsia, paralysis, phlegm and other conditions that occasionally brought tears of pain.

As is described in the biographies, the revelation of the Namcho began in a dream state, in which he received a long-life empowerment and empowerment of the six types of clairvoyance from the buddha Samantabhadra that dispelled all obstructions. Later, in a meditative experience, he received most extensive empowerment on Mahākaruṇā from Avalokiteśvara followed by sādhanas, empowerments, and oral transmissions of about forty deities from Amitābha that were recorded later. Then Padmasambhava in person gave him the four types of empowerments, sādhanas, teachings, and esoteric instructions with some Sanskrit words. He later received Dzogchen teachings from Avalokiteśvara through the stages of meditation for two months.

All of this was dictated to Karma Chakme, who wrote it down, and upon whom Mingyur Dorje gave the initial empowerments and transmissions. Following the revelation he entered into a three year retreat.

Coming out of his retreat with a reputation, despite still being a very young man, not yet fifteen years old, Mingyur Dorje next went to his uncle's estate in the Chamdo region, which had previously been confiscated by the authorities. The local leaders were less than enthusiastic about his arrival, and threatened him, his uncle, and a half-brother with imprisonment. The conflict with the authorities appears to have been settled, as Mingyur Dorje spent some time opening -- that is, consecrating -- several sacred sites in the region.

First he opened the sacred place of Bum Dzong ('bum rdzong) after receiving a prophetic dream while staying at his uncle's nomad tent. Subsequently he opened the sacred place of Maja Yong Dzong (rma bya yong rdzong) where a life-sized statue of Padmasambhava was found in a ruined cave monastery. He then travelled widely and opened many sacred places of Pomne (spom gnas), Chijam (spyi byam), Drubpai Gyelmo (sgrub pa'i rgyal mo), and others.

The Namcho cycle was later transmitted through his disciple, the First Dzogchen Drubwang, Pema Rigdzin (rdzogs chen 01 pad+ma rig 'dzin, 1625-1697).

Mingyur Dorje continued to reveal treasure. He traveled with a secretary who would write down whatever he would say. Among these mind treasures were rites for effecting weather.

He once encountered a community that was facing the problem with excessive rain; Mingyur Dorje revealed a treasure and instructed the monks to perform it, and immediately the rain stopped. He revealed treasure cycles relating to Amitāyus and Avalokiteśvara, and gave the empowerments and transmission to Karma Chakme.

At the age of about fifteen in 1659, Rinchen Namgyel (rin chen rnam rgyal), a powerful king in Kham whose influence extended into China and Mongolia, requested blessings and empowerments and made considerable offerings.

The same year he cured a Chod practitioner of insanity and also subdued some harmful spirits at the Sangdzong (gsang rdzong). Subsequently he bestowed empowerments to a large crowd.

Around that time Karma Chakme met the Katok lama Rigdzin Dudul Dorje (rig 'dzin bdud 'dul rdo rje, 1615-1672) who said, “Mingyur Dorje and I have never separated from Padmasambhava's presence; today, by any means I should meet him.” He as gifts sent a horse, a gold image, a vajra and bell, and a long-life prayer. When the two met Dudul Dorje received him with great honor and made further offerings and appointed him as custodian of his own treasure teachings. In return Mingyur Dorje granted him about twenty different empowerments of the Namcho treasure and also some other teachings. They celebrated and marked the occasion by performing religious dance in supplication to the dharma protectors. Rigdzin Dudul Dorje and other lamas urged Mingyur Dorje to practice his and others' treasures, apparently in the wake of predictions that he would face severe obstacles in his seventeenth and eighteenth year. Beginning in 1661 he thus entered retreat for three years, practicing mainly teachings connected to Padmasambhava.

Karma Chakme, who was then about fifty years old, asked Dudul Dorje to take over caring for Mingyur Dorje, wanting to go into retreat himself, Dudul Dorje demurred, and recommended that he continue to serve the young man. However, he promised to spread the Namcho teachings in Powo and U-Tsang. In 1663, when Mingyur Dorje reached the age of nineteen, Karma Chakme gave him advice relating to his daily practice and then told him that as he had reached adulthood he would be independent from then on. The two thus parted ways.

Mingyur Dorje then travelled widely on invitations and requests from many regions and monasteries across Kham, teaching to Kagyu, Nyingma, Sakya, and Bon communities in Damtok (dam rtogs), Nulda (nu lda), Chakra (lcags ra), Mesho (me shod), Kyile Tang (kyi le thang), Na Dranggo (na drang 'go), Katok, Dechen (bde chen), Tsade Tsuklakhang (rtsa sde gtsug lag khang), Horpo Darsho (hor po dar shod), Wati Karchen (bar ti dkar chen), Pukhur (phu khur), Markham (dmar khams), and others. He blessed the places and bestowed empowerments and oral transmissions. At Katok Dorjeden he gave teachings, finally convincing the community that he was reincarnation of their lama Trulzhik Rinpoche.

Subsequently he also visited many other places including Ling (gling), Tongshong (tong shong), and Bumnguk ('bum ngug) influencing their kings and royal families, and public. He gave extensive Dzogchen teachings that were attended by monks from Katok, Muksang (rmugs sangs), and other monasteries.

In 1663 Mingyur Dorje also opened additional sacred places in the fifth month of the year, including Dewapuk Cave (bde ba phug brag phug) and Regla Kardzong (reg la dkar rdzong), and revealed images of Avalokiteśvara, Amitāyus, Cakrasaṃvara, Padmasambhava and so forth. He then spent a few months on pilgrimage to Tsari (rtsa ri), Jopo Mountain (jo pho ri), Nyandong (nyan dong) and so forth, and composed an introduction to them. While there he revealed images of the Buddha, Vajrasattva, Cakrasaṃvara, Vajrapāṇi, Padmasambhava, and Jambhala.

He was said to have used all offerings received to sponsor religious activities, making offerings to lamas and monks, distributing goods to the poor people and constructing icons of the Namcho deities.

While at Pukhur Monastery, at the end of 1666, Mingyur Dorje felt ill. Performing rituals designed to heal himself, he sent Karma Chakme a statue of black Jambhala and a letter in which he wrote that the statue was very important and must be preserved. He wrote that he was far from home and suffering from sickness, and that he was without any protection and needed his blessing and compassion. Karma Chakme immediately composed a long-life prayer and did healing rituals, and sent monks to bring the young man home.

On the twenty-seventh night of the third month of the fire-sheep year of the eleventh sexagenary cycle, in 1667, Karma Chakme received the news of Mingyur Dorje's death. He had passed away in the evening of the sixteenth day of the third month. He had taken two cups of nectar, sat upright in meditation posture with his left hand turning his rosary beads. In silence he nodded three times when a disciple requested him for his compassion, and then passed into nirvana. He was only twenty-three years old. Karma Chakme immediately commenced necessary prayers and rituals and made arrangements for the funeral. Rumors arose that Mingyur Dorje had been poisoned, but the accusation did not gain credibility.

Mingyur Dorje's body remained untouched for three days, after which it was washed with purified water and dressed in silk and ornaments, a scholar's hat placed on his head. The cremation was done according to tradition. It is said that in the ashes his heart and tongue were found intact, and these and other relics were distributed among the lamas and monks who had come from monasteries such as Katok, Garje (sga rje), Pelyul (dpal yul), Drigung ('bri gung), Riwoche (ro bo che) and Chamdo (chab mdo). His possessions were also distributed among the monasteries.

His disciples constructed numerous stupas to house the relics. Derge Drungpa Kunga Gyatso (sde dge drung pa kun dga' rgya mtsho, d.u.) sponsored a one-story reliquary stupa at both Muksang and Bumdzong. Rigdzin Kunzang Sherab (rig 'dzin kun bzang shes rab, 1636-1398), the founder of Pelyul Monastery, built a temple with a reliquary stupa inside to preserve Mingyur Dorje's relics, and had a statue of him made. Sanggye Dorje (sangs rgyas rdo rje, d.u.) built a large temple and a reliquary silver stupa adorned with gold. Namkha

Tashi (nam mkha' bkra shis, d.u.) constructed a one-story golden reliquary stupa. And his teacher Karma Chakme built a life-size image of the Wrathful Guru dedicated to his disciple. The matter of Mingyur Dorje's reincarnation was somewhat contested. Some believed that he would reborn after two years, as indicated by his drinking two cups of nectar before passing away, and Katok Sanggye Tashi (kaH thog sangs rgyas bkra shis, d.u.) asserted that the reincarnation would come within two years. Karma Chakme asserted that he would be reborn within three years but that early recognition could lead to obstacles. Many predictions were made that identified Tertön Mingyur Dorje as the last rebirth of Shubu Pelzang and Vairocana. Ultimately, Namcho Rigdzin Namkha Chowang (gnam chos rig 'dzin nam mkha' chos dbang, d. 1784) was identified as the reincarnation of Mingyur Dorje. He settled at Katok and was known as the First Moktsa Tulku (rmog rtsa 01).

Tertön Mingyur Dorje's composition, not including his treasure revelations, include a famous prayer called "Hundred Thousand Names of the Buddhas," and other texts on fire-puja rituals, grammar, poetry, spiritual poems, and so forth, and were collected in three small volumes.

Short Biography of Khedrub Karma Chagme

(Khentrul) Chagme Raga Asey (chags med ra ga asya) (1613-1678.)

A monk of the Karma Kagyu school, who spent thirteen years in retreat from 1649 until 1662, the last seven years of which he was joined by Mingyur Dorje 1645-1667, who entered the retreat at the age of ten. During this retreat the young Mingyur Dorje had visions that Karma Chagme wrote out as thirteen volumes of "Space-Dharma" teachings. While these were to form the heart of the Palyul Nyingma School, many of these practices are of great importance in the Karma Kagyu lineage. Karma Chagme himself composed numerous works.

Khedrub Karma Chagme, Raga Asey was the first Chagme Rinpoche. His coming was prophesied by Guru Padmasambhava in many treasure texts.

The Great Tertön Ratna Lingpa prophesized:

*In the place of Ngom a being called Raga Asey will be born,
He is the manifestation of Chenrezig
There will be thirteen reincarnations of this great being
Whoever sees him will be liberated in the blissful Buddhafield.*

Namchö Mingyur Dorje prophesied:

*In the vast expanse of the Immeasurable Light Buddha,
Appears the Complete sun like Avalokiteshvara Illuminating rays from the heart of
Padmasambhava
Is Karma Chagmey, who will appear in Ngom,
Dispelling ignorance of all sentient beings.
His emanation Pema Chukye in the Amitabha Buddhafield;
His emanation Dro La Sek in the Medicine Buddhafield;*

*His emanation Maja Drenpei Gyaltzen in the Ngayabling;
All his emanations appear for the benefit of sentient beings.*

Referring to Karma Chagme's thirteen reincarnations that will have the self-emerging letter 'Ah' on their foreheads. As clearly prophesied, Karma Chagmey is the embodiment of the Three Kayas who are Amitabha, Avalokiteshvara and Padmasambhava. There are many other precise prophecies about him.

In 1603 Karma Chagmey the first was born in a village called Ngom. His father was Anu Pema Wang of the Dong Khachopa tribe who were the descendants of the great Dharma King Trisong Detsen. His mother was Chokyong Kyid.

At the age of five he recognized the true nature of mind and he perfected the Kyerim skills. During his ninth year he went to Zadam to study and mastered all the philosophies and quintessential teachings and thus became one of the greatest masters.

From his root guru Garwang Chokyi Wangchuk he received Mahamudra and Dzogchen teachings. He stayed at his main seat in Pari Tse in Neydo where he had visions of deities. Dharmapalas served him as their master. He had had the signs of high accomplishments, clairvoyance and power. His level of understanding is believed to be tasteness stage of the four stages of accomplishment. Through his empowerments, teachings and writings many realized their true nature. He subdued many spirits. Thus having many qualities, he remained a great Siddha. The derivation of Neydo Kagyu Lineage came from him.

He had five main disciples who were Namcho Mingyur Dorje, Palyul Kunzang Sherab, Dzogchen Pema Rigzin, Goche Orgyen Tharchin, Neydo Dechen Rinpoche. He had many other great disciples as well.

His teachings spread all over Eastern Tibet. His writings comprised of seventy-seven volumes of Mahamudra and Dzogchen teachings from his mind treasure. All his teachings were written after having a vision of Guru Rinpoche during his strict twelve-year retreat. Having been given the permission from the deities he gave teachings which were very lucid, effective and full of blessings.

After promoting the Dharma and liberating immeasurable sentient beings he passed into Mahaparinirvana at the age of 69. After the cremation of his body many relics and self-emerging images of deities were found. On his skull was the naturally embossed letter 'Ah'.

Heavenly Ascents after Death

Karma Chags med's *Commentary on Mind Transference*


Georgios T. Halkias

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Wherefore we ought to fly away from earth to heaven
as quickly as we can; and to fly away is to become like god,
as far as possible and to become like him is to become just,
holy and wise.

PLATO, *Theaetetus* (176b)

Celestial Journeys

isionary accounts of heavenly ascents and descents by means of a ladder, a tree, a rope and so forth, play an integral part in the sacred narratives of religions around the world.¹ These varied experiences—which arguably represent an archetypical journey that connects the spiritual explorer to a supra-mundane reality—are often associated with notions of spiritual sublimation, divine kingship, and the transition of the soul from this life to a transcendent state, heaven or the underworld. Legendary reports of celestial travels reported by yogis, theurgists, and shamans are attested across traditions; for example, in Menelaus' transfer to the Elysian fields, Heracles' admission to Mt. Olympus, the assumption of Mithra into heaven by a celestial chariot, and the visions of Jacob and the prophet Muhammad of a ladder reaching towards God. Further to the East, Yudhiṣṭhira of the *Mahābhārata* rides on Indra's chariot to higher realms and the Buddha ascends and descends from the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods.

Tibetan legends speak of the 'seven sky thrones' (*gnam la khri bdun*), the first line of kings descending from heaven to earth to act as rulers. Upon completing their task, by means of a sacred cord (*dmu thag*)—a white light beam—they ascended to heaven leaving no mortal remains on earth. In the *Pillar Testament*, it is said:

¹ In his comprehensive study, *Patterns of Comparative Religion* (1958: 99–111), Mircea Eliade has noted the prevalence of sky myths and related hierophanies, commenting on their function and symbolism across diverse religious traditions.

With reference to those seven, they possessed, on their crowns, the so-called 'divine daemon-cord' (*mutak*). This was a ray of white light. When those seven passed from suffering and journeyed to the realm of the gods, they dissolved into light from their feet upwards, and after the light faded into the sky they left no corpses behind. So it is said that the mausoleums of the seven thrones were planted in space.²

Across the Eurasian continent, we encounter narratives of divine kingship. In China, the emperors were regarded as sons of heaven (*tian zi* 天子) and Tibetan rulers and hierarchs of various schools exploited, to their advantage, Buddhist sagas of celestial buddhas and bodhisattvas reincarnating as returning bodhisattvas (*sprul sku*) for the welfare of their polities, enjoying indisputable rights of secular and spiritual sovereignty over their subjects.

Tucci (1980: 246) has long noted that, for the Tibetans, the connection between heaven and earth was a primeval article of faith that found ritual expression in the worship of mountains as contact zones between this world and another, and as sacred places for pilgrimage. The symbiotic relationship between shamanism and clerical Buddhism has shaped the development and expression of Tibetan religion and society,³ and resulted in the role of the Buddhist lama appropriating the functions of a shaman. He was thus expected to display mastery of supernatural forces when performing tantric rituals to extend life, summoning wealth and prosperity, interpret dreams and omens, defeating negative beings, and guiding the spirits of the dead in their transition to the afterlife. In time, ritual mastery, along with expertise in Buddhist doctrinal learning, became the highest Tibetan ideal embodied in the person of the 'scholar-siddha' (*mkhas grub*).

Despite attempts to purge Early Buddhism from mystical elements and repackage it as a rational system compatible with modern science, 'supernatural themes' are not altogether absent. In the Pāli sources, we read of miraculous events performed at Śrāvastī by Śākyamuni: the immediate growth of a mango tree; doppelgängers of himself manifesting in heavenly and terrestrial abodes; and the emissions of fire and water from his shoulders and feet as he rose into the air. Having performed these miracles, Śākyamuni ascended to Trāyastriṃśa, the Heaven of Thirty-Three, where he spent three months teaching his deceased mother, Māyā, while seated on the Armolika rock (*ar mo ling ka'i rdo leb*). The Armolika was later

² *Bka' chems ka khol ma*, pp. 84–85; translation by Kapstein (2006:37). For an extensive discussion on Tibetan kingship and cosmogony, see Davidson (2003).

³ The implication of the Central Asian or, rather, Eurasian roots of such themes have been explored by Geoffrey Samuel in *Civilized Shamans* (1993).

identified with the celestial seat of Buddha Vajradhara, an emanation of Buddha Śākyamuni teaching the tantras in non-human realms.⁴

His descent from Trāyastrimśa, by means of a bejewelled ladder provided by Śakra, is a cause for festivities in many Buddhist countries. In Tibetan societies, it is celebrated as the Buddha's descent from the gods (*lha babs dus chen*) commemorated on the twenty-second day of the ninth month. Astral journeys to celestial realms are, in fact, at the core of Buddhist lore. Śākyamuni is said to have resided in Tuṣita heaven as the bodhisattva Setaketu (Dam pa tog dkar po) before his final rebirth in our world, and the bodhisattva Maitreya is currently there waiting to descend to earth for his final birth as a buddha. The motif of heavenly arrivals and departures is common in Mahāyāna where it is believed that all bodhisattvas who have realized the tenth *bhūmi* will take birth in Tuṣita before their final birth in our human world to attain enlightenment. Nevertheless, bodhisattvas who descend to our world can take different forms. While early Buddhism did not promote the notion of the divinity of kings, in the twelfth chapter of the late Mahāyāna sutra, the *Suvarṇabhāṣottama* ('Phags pa gser 'od dam pa mdo sde'i dbang po'i rgyal po; Noble Utmost Golden Light, King of Kings of Sūtra-s; Tōh. 557), a virtuous and moral ruler is a divine son who is said to have descended from the realm of the gods to our mortal world to teach us righteousness and justice.

Transferring one's consciousness

The tantric technique of *phowa* ('*pho ba*),⁵ or transferring one's consciousness (*rnam shes*) at the time of death to a celestial realm, may very well be situated within the framework of comparative studies in religion; however, other than pointing at some profitable areas of comparison, a detailed analysis is beyond the scope of the present study. *Phowa*, also known as 'buddhahood without meditation' (*ma sgom sangs rgyas*),⁶ belongs to the traditions of the highest yoga tantra

⁴ The appeal of this motif for later tantric teachings is evident in the preparatory training required for the performance of *phowa*, where the yogi is instructed to repeatedly fly in his dreams to the celestial seat of Buddha Vajradhara located in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three; see *Dags po'i bka' 'bum*, Kragh (2015: 356).

⁵ From the intransitive Tibetan verb '*pho ba*'; to pass, to change place, shift, migrate, eject, transfer or transit. The term is often used in the compound *tshe 'pho ba* (lit. 'transiting between lives'), referring to dying and transmigrating to another life. It is also attested to in several tantric texts with reference to the transit of energy-winds ('*pho ba dbugs*) where during the course of 24 hours, 21.600 energy-winds flow in 24 transits.

⁶ This phrase, in reference to *phowa*, is attested to in several works of a later date, such as the *Collected Works of Gampopa* (*Gsung 'bum*, vol. 32, 10b) and in the *Six Dharmas of Niguma* (*Ni gu ma chos drug*).

and it is the most popular post-mortem ritual performed in funerals by adepts on behalf of the deceased to ensure a favourable rebirth.⁷ Its unique feature entails the visualization of an interiorized ‘ladder’ (i.e. a transparent channel) inside the subtle-body that serves as passageway for the transference of consciousness directed out of the crown of the head into a state subjectivized as a Mahāyāna deity, one’s guru (lama) or, more commonly, a ‘pure land’ (*dag pa’i zhing kham*s) of one’s choice.



Illustration 1: Jade Burial Suit, Han Dynasty
(Aurora Museum, Shanghai; photo by Georgios T. Halkias).

Although *phowa* is used in the higher tantras,⁸ it constitutes the lesser of two ways to disconnect the coarse from the subtle levels of mind. Cozort (1986: 98) explains that mind-transference merely separates the coarse and subtle bodies but does not lead to the attainment of the

⁷ According to Thubten Sangay (2011: 50), *phowa* is an important ritual performed by expert lamas on behalf of the dead who may also prescribe ‘consciousness transference pills’ pressed upon the crown of the deceased.

⁸ Thubten Yeshe (1991: 1) has noted that, although mind-transference belongs to the highest level of tantra, “many skillful Tibetan lamas have extracted it from this context and have presented it in terms of the deities of the lower levels of tantra.”

illusory body (*sgyu lus*) realized during the completion-stage meditation known as the ‘final mental isolation’ (*sems dben*) that necessitates the intimacy of a physical partner, a tantric consort or ‘action-seal’ (*las kyi phyag rgya*; Skt. *karma-mudrā*). According to subtle body theory, one’s awareness circulates in the form of motility (*rlung*; Skt. *prāṇa*) across a plane comprising a thin, luminous network of conductors and circuits emanating from a trilateral axis visualized in the physical body. The middle axis, called the *avadhūti* (*dbu ma rtsa*), runs parallel to the cerebrospinal column joining the circuit-of-bliss in the crown of the head with the phallus or vagina. Two channels adjacent to the middle axis run in lateral courses or in a helix. The left (*rkyang ma*) and right (*ro ma*) channels bifurcate respectively at the left and right nostrils and join the central channel at the perineum. According to the *Condensed Kālacakra Tantra*, “when the winds of the two [channels] are stopped, an opening is made at the crown of the head, whereupon one goes to the cities of the supreme.”⁹

Consistent with general Buddhist thought, all sentient beings—propelled by the force of karma—are bound to experience a recurring cycle of deaths and rebirths labelled *saṃsāra*. The *phowa* technique enables the practitioner to evade the karmic consequences of his actions and free himself from this cycle, attaining either final release from *saṃsāra* or rebirth in a pure land. In line with tantric theory, when a person dies, his subtle-mind exits through one of nine orifices (*bu ga dgu*) that comprise the lower openings (urethra and anus) and the upper ones, namely the mouth, eyes, ears, nose, and the so-called aperture of Brahmā (Skt. *brahmarandhra*; *tshangs bug*) located on the cranium.¹⁰

For most individuals, consciousness exits through any of the eight openings leading to various rebirths in *saṃsāra*, whereas the *phowa* adept directs it to egress through the aperture of Brahmā. Among the signs of successful practice, a minute hole is said to appear at the anterior fontanelle on the crown of the head, enabling one’s subtle-mind to depart at the time of death. Concerning this process, Guenther (1963: 201) explains:

When a competent Guru imparts this instruction to his disciple, the region of the fontanel opening becomes highly sensitive to touch and remains so for some time. Moreover, when after the instruction he

⁹ Cited in Butön’s *Rgyud sde spyi’i rnam par gzhag pa rgyud sde rin po che’i mdzes rgyan*; see Hopkins (2008: 237).

¹⁰ In his massive encyclopaedic work, the *Tshig mdzod chen mo*, Dung dkar blo bzang ‘phrin las (1927–1997) lists the spot between the eyebrows (*smin mtshams*) and the navel (*lte ba*) in this enumeration. This corresponds to the orifices enumerated in the *Catuṣpīṭha-tantra* (4.3.37); see Szántó (2012: 458).

touches this region with Kusa-grass, symbolically representing the opening of the passage to the ultimate, the distinct sensation of being pierced from top to bottom is created. Needless to say, this practice is not without its dangers and under no circumstances can it be performed when there is any deformation in the bones of the skull or in the spinal cord.

This controversial esoteric technique (Skt. *utkrānti*), by which a tantric practitioner is able to sever his connection to the physical body, goes by the Indian reference to ‘yogic’ or ‘ritual’ suicide. It is attested in many Śaiva scriptures, in one *Vaiṣṇava Saṃhitā*, and a handful of Śākta Tantras.¹¹ It appears to be of non-Buddhist origin.¹² The *Catuṣpīṭha-tantra*, one of the earliest late ninth-century *Yoginī-tantras*, is likely the first Indian Buddhist scripture to contain teachings on this method. Mention of *utkrānti* is found in an earlier text, the *Dvikramatattvabhavānā Mukhāgama* of the siddha Buddhāśrījñāna/ Jñānapāda before the second half of the eighth century.¹³ Yogic methods of ejecting consciousness out of one’s body and into the body of another (*parakāyapraveśa*) finds evidence in the *Mahābhārata*, such as when Vidura enters the body of Yudhiṣṭhira to strengthen him. Mallinson and Singleton (2017: 661) note that “the entry of one’s mind into another body (*cittasya paraśarīrāveśaḥ*) is listed as one of the special powers in *Pātāñjalayogaśāstra* 3.38 (10.4), and the commentator Vijñānabhikṣu notes that this process is accomplished along a particular subtle channel.”

Tibetan references to the different varieties of *phowa* are to be sought in post-imperial sources traced, for the most part, either to Indian masters or Tibetan revelations (*gter ma*). In his commentary, *Three Convictions: A Guide to the Stages of Training in the Profound Path of Naro’s Six Dharmas* (Tōh. 5317), Tsongkhapa (1357–1419) states that there are

¹¹ See White (2009: 114). Testimonia to the Śaiva tantra *Mālinīvijayottara* (17.25–34), contains a list of Śiva texts teaching methods for exiting from the physical body and it should be distinguished from the “fanatical practices of suicide practiced by the Māheśvara laity” (Somadeva Vasudeva, 2004: 437).

¹² According to Szántó’ (2012: 456), “the earliest sources to teach something akin to *utkrānti* are brahmanical. E.g. the *Bṛhadāraṇyakaopaniṣad* describes the soul leaving the body through one of the bodily apertures (4.4.1 ff.) and its path to different levels of the Universe (5.10.1). A similar course is described in the *Chāndogyaopaniṣad* (5.10.1 ff.), while another passage (8.6.1 ff.) also describes tubes in the body and an egress through which one obtains immortality.” It seems that the belief that the soul ought to depart from the upper top of the cranium, Brahmā’s aperture, may not be confined to Brahmanical sources. A jade burial suit (175 cm in length), sewn with gold wire, that dates to the Han Dynasty (206 BCE to 220 CE) shows all bodily apertures closed save of a hole in the fontanelle; see Illustration 1.

¹³ Szántó’ (2012: 455). The Tibetan translation of *Catuṣpīṭha-tantra* (*Gdan bzhi pa*; Tōh. 428) by Gayādhara and Khug pa lhas btsas dates from the eleventh century.

a number of oral traditions on the method of transference. Its origins can be traced to the *Catuṣpīṭha-tantra* but it is also taught in the *Vajradāka* and *Samputa* tantras and their commentaries (Mullin 2005: 86, 209). All orders of Tibetan Buddhism practice it widely and trace it to different lineages, including the Bön.

For the Gelug and Kagyü schools, *phowa* is commonly included in the *Six Dharmas of Nāropa* (*Nā ro chos drug*).¹⁴ Marpa's biography recounts that, when Marpa was to die, a rainbow appeared in the sky and flowers rained down. When asked by his attendant what was happening, he replied: "Prepare excellent offerings. Glorious Naropa surrounded by immeasurable hosts of dakas and dakinis has arrived to escort me as he promised. Now I must go to the celestial realm as his attendant." (Tsang Nyön Heruka, 1995: 200).

In the tradition of the Old Kadampa, we find reference to this practice in the manual, *The Hero Entering the Battle* (*'Pho ba dpa' bo g.yul 'jug pa*) and, in the school of the Sakya, it is based on the *Hevajra-tantra* included in the *Lamdrë* (*Lam 'bras*) teachings brought to Tibet by Gayādhara and Brog mi lo tsa ba in the late tenth to early eleventh centuries.¹⁵ For the Nyingma and some of the Kagyü lineages, *phowa* is traced to revealed treasures (*gter ma*).¹⁶ It also features in the independent lineage of Chöd (*gcod*) in the technique known as *opening the gates of space* (*nam mkha' sgo 'byed*). For the Bön there are several *phowa* lineages such as, the *Six Principles of Expediency* (*lam khyer drug*), the 'sphere of accomplishment' (*grub pa'i thig le*) found in the *Three Buddhahood Tantras* (*Sangs rgyas rgyud gsum*) rediscovered as *terma* by Gu ru rnon rtse sometime early in the twelfth century.¹⁷

Although it seems that *phowa* became an integral part of the tantric repertoire of Tibetan schools from post-imperial times (*phyi dar*) onwards, there are allegedly earlier references to a unique Dzogchen procedure that leads the superior practitioner to bypass the process of dying and realize the 'Rainbow Body of the Great Transfer' (*'ja' lus 'pho*

¹⁴ For an informative study of the *Six Dharmas of Nāropa* and the inclusion of *phowa* in selective textual lineages, see Kragh (2015).

¹⁵ Related to the *Vase Initiation* in the *Lamdre*, the 'globe of light transference' (*'od kyi gong bu'i 'pho ba*) is mentioned as a transference technique (Stearns 2002: 221, fn. 64). The *phowa* practice of corpse-animation (*grong 'jug*) can be traced to Gayādhara, a mysterious and controversial figure said to have been the sole recipient of the *Lamdre* lineage in India (ibid: 48).

¹⁶ There are several *terma* on the practice of *phowa*. The most well-known among these, the *Standing Blade of Grass* (*'Jag tshugs ma*), has been adopted by the Drikung Kagyü. It was revealed sometime in the late 14th century by Nyi zla sangs rgyas and appears to be the earliest Nyingma *terma* that links *phowa* with the cult of Padmasambhava and Sukhāvati; see Halkias (2013: 154–163).

¹⁷ Martin (1994: 33) notes that four of these may be compared with the *Six Dharmas of Nāropa*.

ba chen po). For the Nyingma and Bön schools, there are a few individuals said to have attained the 'Great Transfer'; among them, Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, G.yu thog yon tan and the Bön adept Tapihritsa. The early Dzogchen masters, Garab Dorje, Mañjuśrīmitra, Śrī Siṃha, Jñānasūtra and Vairocana the translator, are reported to have realized a process akin to the 'Great Transfer' — that of dissolving their bodies into the essence of the elements at the time of death and manifesting as a 'rainbow body' (*'ja' lus*).

Despite the secretive nature of this esoteric practice, *phowa* has been popularized during a public event known as *Drigung Phowa Chenmo* (*'bri gung 'pho ba chen mo*). It was traditionally performed at Terdrom (Gter sgrom) in the district of Drigung in Central Tibet, every twelve-year calendrical cycle. Formalized by two Drigung Kagyü hierarchs, the brothers Dkon mchog rin chen (1590–1654) and Rig 'dzin chos grags (1595–1659), it was enacted in open space where initiations and instructions based on a *terma* by Nyi zla sangs rgyas, the *Standing Blade of Grass* or *Planting the Stalk* (*'Jag tshugs ma*), were granted to large number of pilgrims arriving from different parts of Tibet.¹⁸

*The Mind Treasure of the Sky Dharma:
A Compilation of Extensive Instructions
for Transferring to Sukhāvati*

The seventeenth-century monk Karma Chags med Rā ga Asya (1613–1678) is an important figure, not only for the Kagyü school, but also for the Nyingma because of his close association with the Dpal yul lineage and his contribution to the redaction of the *Namchö* (*gnam chos*) collection of treasure-teachings revealed by his gifted disciple Gnam chos Mi 'gyur rdo rje (1645–1667). A disciple of the tenth Karmapa Chos dbyings rdo rje (1604–1674) and the Sixth Zhamar Gar dbang chos kyi dbang phyug (1584–1630), he is the founder of one of the two main branches of the Kamtsang Kagyü lineage, the Nēdo Kagyü that takes its name after his hermitage in Gnas mdo in Eastern Tibet.¹⁹ Karma Chags med (hereafter KC) was a formidable scholar and prolific author who composed some sixty volumes of texts on a variety of subjects while in retreat. He is perhaps best-known for his

¹⁸ For the background history and description of the 1992 celebration of the *Drigung Phowa Chenmo*, see Kapstein (1998: 95–119).

¹⁹ The other branch is the Zurmang tradition. The Nēdo Kagyü developed into two systems, one emphasizing the Kagyü that is the Nēdo lineage, and one focusing on the Nyingma transmission of his students Palyul Rigzin Kunzang Sherab (1636–1698) and Padma Rigzin (1625–1697). For Karma Chagme's biography and that of lineage masters of the Nēdo system of practice, see *Rgyal ba gnas mdo pa'i bla brgyud dang dam pa'i chos kyi byung ba mdor bsdus dwangs shel me long*.

contributions to the Tibetan genre of Pure Land literature, with his *Aspiration Prayer to the Pure Land Sukhāvātī* and its commentary which are widely considered classic texts of the *demön* (*bde smon*) genre.²⁰

As stated in the introduction of *The Mind Treasure of the Sky Dharma: A Compilation of Extensive Instructions for Transferring to Sukhāvātī* (*Gnam chos thugs kyi gter kha las bde chen zhing du 'pho ba'i gdams pa rgyas par bsgrigs pa*),²¹ KC's commentary is included in the *Namchö* collection of scriptures dedicated to attaining Amitābha's pure land, Sukhāvātī (*bde chen zhing sgrub kyi skor*).²² Even though nowadays Sukhāvātī features as the soteriological goal for the majority of *phowa sādhana*-s, this was not the case prior to the fourteenth century. To the best of my knowledge, it was first introduced in two treasure texts (*gter ma*): *The Standing Blade of Grass* (*'Jag tshugs ma*), revealed by Nyi zla sangs rgyas, and the *Dying without Regrets* (*'Da' ka 'chi brod*) which was redacted by the Nyingma adept Sangs rgyas gling pa (1340–1396). The fact that there are no references to Sukhāvātī-*phowa* in India or East Asia would suggest that it is a unique Tibetan innovation of the *terma* tradition.

According to the colophon of the *Transferring to Sukhāvātī*, it was composed by KC at the behest of Gnam chos Mi 'gyur rdo rje to elucidate the *phowa-sādhana* as it was revealed to the latter during his visionary encounter with Buddha Amitābha in the year 1657. The *sādhana* titled *Means for Attaining Sukhāvātī: Empowerment and Oral Instructions* consists, in addition to the practice of *phowa*, instructions for visiting Sukhāvātī in one's dreams (*rmi lam du bde chen zhing mjal thabs*), an Amitābha long-life *sādhana* (*snang ba mtha' yas kyi tshe sgrub*), related empowerments (*bde chen zhing gi dbang*) and supplication-aspiration (*gsol 'debs dang smon lam*) prayers for taking rebirth in Sukhāvātī.²³

In the opening passage to the *Transferring to Sukhāvātī*, KC presents Mi 'gyur rdo rje as a legitimate *tertön* citing prophetic proclamations from O rgyan gling pa's fourteenth-century treasure-text, the *Five Chronicles* (*Bka' thang sde lnga*). He further relates that he is the single emanation of Vairocana the translator and the 'religious minister' (*chos*

²⁰ For an introduction and English translation of the *Rnam dag bde chen zhing gi smon lam*, see Skorupski (1994). For Karma Chagme's contributions to Tibetan Pure Land literature, see Halkias (2013: 113–116).

²¹ The same text with a slightly different title, *Gnam chos thugs kyi gter kha snyan brgyud zab mo'i bskor las: bde chen zhing gi 'pho ba'i gdams pa rgyas par 'grel pa*, is found in the *Collected Works of Karma Chags med*, Vol. 6: 413–436. Skorupski (2001: 145–154) has brought attention to this text from a block-print manuscript he acquired in Nepal.

²² For a list of various editions and liturgical texts of the *Gnam chos bde chen zhing sgrub kyi skor*, see Appendix II in Halkias (2013: 209–212).

²³ For an introduction and English translation of the *Bde chen zhing sgrub dbang las tshogs zhal gdams dang bcas pa*, see Halkias (2006).

blon) Pälseng (Dpal gyi seng ge) of the Shud pu clan and concludes with a prophetic prediction (*lung bstan pa*) that Mi 'gyur rdo rje will become, in the future, the Buddha Jñāna-Samantabhadra (Ye shes kun bzang). Having situated his commentary within the *Namchö* corpus, he explains that, although there are many *phowa* lineages in the New and Old schools, Mi 'gyur rdo rje's transmission is fresh and 'warm with the voice' (*gsung dron mo*) of Buddha Amitābha and therefore it carries great blessings. This is a common strategy for the legitimation of *terma* since they are not only novel teachings but are more intimately connected to an 'enlightened source' in contrast to the 'oral lineage' (*bka' ma*) of canonical scriptures that may get diluted along the way.

Having presented the credentials of his lineage and its legitimate source, KC invokes the authority of Padmasambhava who endorses the method of *phowa* for 'lazy yogis' (*rnal 'byor le lo can*) and extolls the virtues of this practice for distracted and unconfident practitioners who do not find time to meditate. It is even applicable to those who have committed grave unvirtuous actions;²⁴ even if one is unable to complete the technique at the time of death, having received the *phowa* oral transmission ('*pho lung*) will make it easier for the lama to perform it on his behalf after death. He then goes on to reference the Tibetan version of the *Catuspīṭha-tantra*, the earliest source referring to this teaching in Buddhist scriptures, to substantiate his claim that this method is supreme for crossing over *saṃsāra* to the other shore.

Then follows an enumeration of six different kinds of transference: 1. *dharmakāya phowa* (*chos sku 'pho ba*); 2. *saṃbhogakāya phowa* (*longs sku 'i 'pho ba*); 3. *nirmāṇakāya phowa* (*sprul sku 'pho ba*); 4. common *phowa* (*tha mal pa 'pho ba*); 5. forceful *phowa* (*btsan thabs kyi 'pho ba*); and 6. entering other bodies *phowa* (*grong du 'jug pa*).²⁵ The *dharmakāya phowa* is

²⁴ He will return to this theme later in the commentary. It is said that even those who have committed the five inexpressible deeds entailing immediate retribution (i.e., matricide, patricide, killing an arhat, causing schism in the sangha and wounding a buddha) will take rebirth in the higher realms or attain liberation. Stated in a similar way in the *Catuspīṭha-tantra* (4.3.52cd–53): "[Even] a destroyer of gods [and a murderer] of brahmins, [even] one who performs the five [acts] of immediate retribution, [even] one who steals [and/or] relishes pleasures will become pure through this path (i.e. *utkrānti*). He shall not be tainted by sins, and [will be] far [removed] from the conditions of existence;" Szántó (2012: 467). This stands as a challenge to the long *Sukhāvāṭīvyūṭha-sūtra* where the bodhisattva Dharmākara declared that beings who aspire to be born in Sukhāvāṭi and dedicate their merits for that purpose, will take rebirth there except for those who have committed the five heinous deeds; see his 19th vow in the Sanskrit version of the sūtra (Gómez 2002: 71).

²⁵ Jamgön Kongtrul (2007: 202–203) explains that many early works give three divisions (i.e., *dharmakāya*, *saṃbhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya phowa*), but according to Nāropa's *Bka' dpe phyi ma*, there are eleven divisions. In the *Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*, Rdza dPal sprul rin po che (1808–1887) enumerates five kinds of *phowa*,

intended for those practitioners who are able to unite the mother and son luminosities at the time of death because of their practice of Mahāmudrā or *trekchö* (*khregs chod*) of the Great Completion (*rdzogs chen*). Given that this is the highest of all kinds of *phowa*, free from concepts of agency and agent, it is said that there are no good or bad openings.²⁶

As for the signs of successfully performing the *dharmakāya phowa*, the external sign (*phyi rtags*) is the appearance of a pure and clear sky, the inner sign (*nang rtags*) is that of one's body retaining a lasting lustre of radiance, and the secret sign (*gsang ba'i rtags*) is the appearance of a white syllable *āh*, a blue *hūṃ*, and so forth (on the skull or bones left behind after the cremation). Without explaining the workings of the *sambhogakāya phowa*,²⁷ KC lists the outer sign as a sky replete with rainbows and lights, and the inner sign as blood or pus emerging from the aperture of Brahmā, or as a dew-like moisture. From the cranial swelling, steam and heat will rise, and some hair will fall out. And as for the secret sign, relics of the five Buddha families (*gdung rigs lnga*), and either forms or hand gestures of deities will appear (on the bones and skull of the cremation). Concerning the *nirmāṇakāya phowa*, KC advises that one lies on his right side, breathes from his left nostril, and places in front of himself a representation of Śākyamuni, Padmasambhava, or another deity. While meditating on the image, he recommends the performance of transference from the left nostril with the intention of returning as a *nirmanakāya* (emanation) for the benefit of sentient beings and reciting aspiration prayers towards that end.

starting with the common three divisions and adding 'ordinary transference using three metaphors' and 'transference performed for the dead with the hook of compassion.' Patrul Rinpoche (2010: 351–366).

²⁶ Dharmakāya *phowa* does not rely on any formal visualization and is free from notions of a subject transferring from one place to another, let alone of locating a pathway of transference. The recognition of one's own nature of mind is the 'son luminosity' (*'od gsal bu*) or the 'luminosity of the path' (*lam gyi 'od gsal*), that unites with what is innately present, the 'mother luminosity' (*ma 'od gsal*) or 'ground luminosity' (*gzhi'od gsal*). In effect, there is no actual transference here. It corresponds to the transference of consciousness into empty space, which is known in the Chöd tradition as opening the gates of space (*nam mkha' sgo 'byed*).

²⁷ In the *Quintessence of Nectar: Instructions for the Practice of the Six Dharmas of Nāropa*, the Zhwa dmar Chos kyi dbang phyug (1584–1630) explains that, during the *sambhogakāya phowa*, one transfers one's consciousness into the heart of a wisdom being, a Buddhist deity like Vajrayoginī visualized about an inch in size in the heart of a guru (Roberts 2011: 371). Jamgön Kongtrul (2007: 205) further explains: "This is for those of intermediate faculties who will not recognize the luminous clarity at the end of the three lights and the dissolution process of the death phase, or who might recognize it but cannot remain in it. They should revive themselves with their previous impetus by thinking, 'I will rise up in the illusory body of sambhogakāya,' and rise up as the deity's illusory form at the end of the three lights in reverse order."

During this session, the outer sign is seeing clouds or rainbows in the form of a tree and the raining of flowers. The inner sign is blood, pus, bodhicitta or mist coming out of the left nostril. And the secret sign comprises hand gestures of the deities on the skull or many small relics (*ring bsrel*) manifesting (after cremation).

As for the forceful *phowa*, it is not appropriate to rehearse it even if all the signs of impending death (*'chi ltas*) are present, for one should first carry out the ritual of ransoming death (Skt. *mṛtyu vanācana*; *'chi ba bslu ba*) three times.²⁸ Not doing so will incur the offence of 'killing the deities' (*lha bsad*). It is inappropriate to do so even if one is condemned to death by the king, is seriously ill or in pain. 'Deities' means the assembly of one hundred deities that reside inside the body.²⁹ This is the reason why it is inappropriate to perform the forceful *phowa* at any time other than when the lifespan has been exhausted. KC invokes the authority of the *Catuṣpīṭha-tantra* to illustrate this point³⁰ and the *Transference: Liberation through Recollection*, a treasure-text attributed to Padmasambhava.³¹

What follows is a brief mention of the *phowa* of entering other bodies (i.e. reanimating corpses). KC informs us that the textual tradition (*bka' ma*) exists but the lineage of practice has been lost.³² KC

²⁸ The oldest Tibetan canonical Buddhist texts prescribing rituals for 'cheating' or 'ransoming' death are found in the Tengyur, indicating their Indian origins and dating from the eleventh century onwards. Namkhai Norbu asserted that these ransoming rites were part of Bön religion that date to Tibetan imperial times (Mengele 2010: 104). For an informative introduction on this subject, see Mengele (2010).

²⁹ This is in reference to the one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities (*zhi khro rigs brgya*) said to reside throughout the body and the head.

³⁰ The relevant section in this tantra (4.3.55) is given by Szántó (2012:468): "[The yogin should perform] the egress only when the time [of death] is nigh. [Should he do it] at an improper time, [he will be tainted by the sin of being] a murderer of the deity. Therefore, the wise one should start [undertaking this procedure only after] the signs [of death have manifested] on the body." He further writes, "If [the yogin] performs *utkrānti* when the time of death is not yet nigh, he will become a murderer of the deities from the five [Tathāgata-]families. For the five skandhas have as their nature the five families." The *locus classicus* for this idea is the *Guhyasamāja* (17.50ab).

³¹ Although not stated in the commentary, KC is quoting from the '*Pho ba dran pa rang grol*, a *gter chos* included in the Zhitra cycle discovered by Gar dbang rdo rje (1640–1685).

³² In *Three Convictions*, Tsongkhapa apprises that, should one wish to delve deeper into the principles of this extraordinary technique, he ought to consult the *Oral Tradition of the Body-Form of Glorious Guhyasamāja* (*Dpal 'du pa'i sku lus kyi man ngag*); see Mullin (2005: 218). Marpa Chökyi Lodro (1012–1097) was apparently a virtuoso of this practice as attested in his biography; see Tsang Nyön Heruka (1995: 146–155). It is traditionally believed that the transmission of "entering another's body" ended with the death of the son of Marpa, Darma Dodé, who transferred his

reserves the most detailed treatment for the so-called common *phowa*. Given that death may come unexpectedly because of a variety of causes and conditions (i.e., falling into a pitfall, drowning, killed by weapons and so forth), whenever one is scared or in a panic, he should direct his awareness towards Amitābha or Padmasambhava as visualized above his head. Through the force of familiarizing oneself with this, should the circumstances of mortality arise, one's consciousness will exit from the crown. For this type of transference, one should lie on his right side with his head facing north envisioning the Tathāgata Ratnaśikhin (Rin chen gtsug tor can)³³ or the Medicine Buddha above his head. By reciting the names of the Three Jewels, dhāraṇī-mantras and prayers, one will not take rebirth in the lower realms.

Quoting from *The Vajra Song that Captures the Six Dharmas* (*Rje btsun nā ro pas rje mar pa la gsungs pa'i chos drug dril ba rdo rje'i mgur*) attributed to Nāropa (956–1040), we read: "Eight doors are the cavities of *saṃsāra*, one door is the path to Mahāmudrā."³⁴ Then follows a quote from the *Profound Inner Principles* (*Zab mo nang gi don*), an extensive work on the subtle-body by the Third Karmapa Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339), which draws from many tantras. It explains that if the 'ālaya-consciousness' (*kun gzhi rnam shes*) departs from the opening of Brahmā, it will lead to rebirth in the 'formless realms' (*gzugs med kham*s),³⁵ from the *bindhu* (*thig le*) to the Great Goddess (*lha mo che*),³⁶ from the navel as a god of the desire realm,³⁷ through the eyes as a powerful human being, from the nose as a *yakṣa*, from the ear as a god of accomplishment (*grup pa'i lha*),³⁸ from the 'door of existence' (*srid*

consciousness, after being mortally wounded, into a pigeon and flew to India. However, as noted by (Roberts 2011: 9) "there are a number of instances in the biographies of medieval Kagyü master, where they display their mastery of this practice by briefly reanimating a dead animal or bird while in meditation. In any period, however, accounts of permanently abandoning one's body and continuing one's life in another body are rare."

³³ He is the last buddha in the line of buddhas of the first great eon. KC is likely referring to the story of Siddhartha's previous life as Jalavāhana who saved ten thousand fish by adding water in a dried-up pond. He then recited, for their benefit, epithets of the Buddha Ratnaśikhin having been told that anyone who hears the name of this Buddha will be reborn in the heavens; see the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra*, chapter 17.

³⁴ *sgo bryad 'khor ba'i skar khung can / sgo gcig phyag rgya chen po'i lam.*

³⁵ I.e., one of the four formless realms (Skt. *arupadhātu*).

³⁶ I.e., born as a god in one of the sixteen form realms.

³⁷ I.e., one of the six heavens of the desire realm.

³⁸ I.e., a vidyādhara in Trāyastriśa Heaven.

pa'i sgo)³⁹ a hungry ghost, from the urethra an animal, and from the lower door⁴⁰ in the hell realms.⁴¹

KC goes on to clarify the assertion that, if one departs from Brahmā's aperture, he will take rebirth in the formless realms as opposed to the oral instructions that assert rebirth in the pure lands. He quotes from Nāropa's *Vajra Verses of the Hearing Lineage* (*Snyan brgyud rdo rje'i tshig rkang*; Skt. *Karṇatantravajrapada*, Tōh. 2338)⁴² which states that all nine doors should be blocked. In this case, the aperture that is located four fingers back from the hairline leads to the formless realms, whereas the actual Brahmā opening, located eight fingers back from the hairline, leads to rebirth in the celestial worlds (pure lands). Although these two traditions exist, according to Padmasambhava there are substantial differences with the paths of transference which are divided into superior, middle and lower.⁴³ The three superior pathways are egress from: (a) the aperture of Brahmā for rebirth in the pure realms (*dag pa mkha' spyod*); (b) the eyes for rebirth as a *cakravartin* king (*khos los bsgyur ba'i rgyal po*); and (c) the left nostril for rebirth in a purified human body. The middle paths include transference through the right nostril that leads to rebirth as a *yakṣa*, from the ears as a god in the form realm and from the navel as a god in the desire realm. The lower pathways involve the urethra for rebirth as an animal, from the so-called 'door of existence' for rebirth as a hungry ghost and the anus for rebirth in the hell realms.

KC then quotes instructions from the *Catuṣpīṭha-tantra* for employing the visualization of syllables and *prāṇa*, but his description is as obscure in the Tibetan text as it is in the Sanskrit.⁴⁴ Citing from the *Vajra Verses of the Hearing Lineage*,⁴⁵ he explains that the process of transference is transformative in that it brings buddhahood without meditation. It entails drawing inside the *avadhūti*, or subtle central channel (*rtsa dbu ma*), the syllable *hūṃ* that is indivisible with *prāṇa* and mind.⁴⁶ The transference to the buddha-field of the dharmakāya-lama is accomplished by propelling the syllable *kṣa* through the path of Brahmā. KC cites, from an unidentified source, a quote attributed to Padmasambhava: "If you are unable to attain *nirvāṇa* without

³⁹ I.e., the mouth.

⁴⁰ I.e., the anus.

⁴¹ The nine doors here correspond exactly to the after-death destinations prescribed in the *Catuṣpīṭha-tantra*; Szántó (2012: 458–461).

⁴² See Jamgön Kongtrul's *Gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 7.

⁴³ KC is quoting from the 'Pho ba dran pa rang grol.

⁴⁴ Szántó (2012: 462–465).

⁴⁵ Cf. *Gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 7, p. 91.

⁴⁶ According to tantric physiology, the central channel runs from the base parallel to the spine and ends at the crown of the head.

reminder in this life and desire to reach the pure lands apply yourself to the activities and training.” And also, “these teachings are a powerful method for bringing buddhahood even to those who have committed grave sins. They are like a miraculous dharma made of gold, through which a yogi will be liberated from the seal of the body and attain buddhahood.”⁴⁷

The rest of the commentary is divided in two parts: (a) training in *phowa*; and (b) the application of the practice. These sections are detailed and are clearly intended for practitioners of this method. I will provide here only a general outline on the specific instructions for applying the method of transference. First, as for training in *phowa*, one should: (a) offer a maṇḍala to his guru requesting the teachings of transference; (b) go for refuge to the three jewels, the three roots⁴⁸ and all other sources of refuge; and (c) generate the mind of awakening (*bodhicitta*). The following visualizations for generating oneself in the form of Avalokiteśvara, namely the transference prayer, the aspiration prayer to Sukhāvātī and the long-life prayer, are taken from Gnam chos Mi 'gyur rdo rje's *Means for Attaining Sukhāvātī: Empowerment and Oral Instructions* (*Bde chen zhing sgrub dbang las tshogs zhal gdams dang bcas pa*).⁴⁹ KC offers details for the visualization of the subtle central channel and of Buddha Amitābha envisaged above the crown of one's head. He continues with the prayer for successful transference and offers guidelines on the sealing of thirteen orifices⁵⁰ with light-rays in the form of the syllable *hrīḥ*. Then come the actual instructions on how to perform the technique of *phowa* utilizing breath and visualization. The practice ends with the recitation of an aspiration prayer to take rebirth in Sukhāvātī, a prayer to Amitāyus for longevity and the dissolution meditation. After practicing *phowa*, there will be signs of accomplishment visible on the aperture of Brahmā such as, swelling, numbness, heat, blood or pus.

⁴⁷ *tshe 'dir lhag med ma grub na / 'pho tshe mkha' spyod 'grub 'dod pas / sbyang dang las la sbyar ba'o / zhes dang / sdig po che btsan thabs su sangs rgyas par byed pa'i gdams ngag / rnal 'byor pa lus rgya grol ba dang sangs rgyas pa dus mtshungs pa'i gser chos 'phrul zhun du gdams pa 'di ston par byed /*

⁴⁸ I.e. the guru (*bla ma*), deity (*yi dam*), and *dākinī* (*mkha' 'gro*).

⁴⁹ See Halkias (2006: 115–116). For a depiction of Amitābha's pure land executed in Tibetan style, see illustration 2.

⁵⁰ I.e. the anus, urethra, secret place, mouth, navel, two ears, two nostrils, two eyes, spot between the eyebrows and the cranial opening that leads to rebirth in the formless realms.



Illustration 2: Tibetan depiction of Sukhāvati
(courtesy of Himalayan Art Resources).

The next section deals with the actual application of *phowa* performed for oneself when all the signs of death are present and for others when their outer breath has ceased. It is well-known that the consciousness remains in the body for up to three nights and a day and, therefore, it is important that the transference is performed during this time. The *Book of the Kadam* (*Bka' gdams glegs bam*) explains that it may remain up to seven days so it acceptable to practice *phowa* until the seventh day. The village priests maintain that it is appropriate to invite the consciousness in a name-card used in death rituals since they have the tradition of summoning the consciousness into a corpse after the passing of many days and then transferring it from there.⁵¹ KC states that he does not see any contradiction even though this method is not mentioned in the tantric scriptures.

KC concludes that there is great benefit in giving the oral transmission of the authentic *Namchö* root text,⁵² and goes on to cite the root text of the stages of transference, the prayer for transference

⁵¹ The tradition of village priests utilizing an effigy, after disposing of a corpse to ensure that the deceased goes to Sukhāvati, is also observed among the Sherpas of Nepal; see Furer-Haimendorf (1964: 235–237). The ritual for summoning the consciousness of the dead to an effigy-card (*byang chog*) and directing it to take rebirth in Sukhāvati is detailed in another Namchö text authored by KC, the *Gnam chos thugs kyi gter kha snyan brgyud zab mo'i skor las bde chen zhing sgrub gi byang chog thar lam dkar po*.

⁵² See fn. 23 in this work.

and the prayer of aspiration. The colophon informs us that, having been urged to do so by the *nirmāṇakāya* (Gnam chos Mi 'gyur rdo rje), this elaborate commentary on *phowa* was composed by Rāgasya who takes on the responsibility for any mistakes and contradictions that may be found in the text.

The *phowa sādhana* is well-established in Hindu and Buddhist tantric scriptures but that should not deter us from searching for fruitful parallels in spiritual traditions across Eurasia relating visionary ascensions to celestial realms and shamanic transferences to other bodies. It is noteworthy that, for Tibetan Buddhists, the possibility of meeting Buddha Amitābha can be accomplished through the technique of transference, which might involve the visualization of a luminous hook attracting one's consciousness in the shape of an incandescent globe projected from Amitābha's heart. Tucci (1991: 365) explains:

Out of Amitābha's heart a hook of light is projected, which draws towards itself the devotee's conscious principle, represented by a luminous globe, the size of a grain, residing in his heart; the principle, thus attracted, disappears and is dissolved into the god's heart, with which it is substantially unified; next, it is once again emanated from it, in order to give birth to the new divine incarnation in the center of the lotus miraculously sprung up in front the of the god.

The popularity of one's own ascent to Sukhāvātī may explain why Amitābha's descent from Sukhāvātī to meet the pious in the hour of death—a widespread theme in Chinese Buddhist literature and art—occupies a surprisingly subordinate position in Tibetan culture.

Although the *Transferring to Sukhāvātī* was evidently written by KC, it is marked by *terma*-signs (*gter tshag*) by virtue of its inclusion in the *Namchö* collection of treasures which, even if attributed to Mi 'gyur rdo rje, were presumably redacted by KC himself. KC labours to endorse Mi 'gyur rdo rje as a genuine *terton* suggesting that, in the early times of their inception, the sky-dharma *termas* had to undergo a process of legitimation and acceptance before being incorporated in the ritual corpus of the Nyingma and Kagyü traditions. Moreover, they stand witness to the creative collaboration between the Kagyü and Nyingma schools, and to an age-old symbiosis between lay ascetics (*sngags pa*) and monastic bodies (*dge 'dun*) which contributed to the revitalization of Buddhism in Tibetan history despite, or rather because of, the competitive tension that arises between individual creativity and institutional orthodoxy.

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