

Guru Rinpoche

An Anthology

Jason Espada, Editor

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Introductory Essays

Padmasambhava and the Two Kinds of Biography

The Relevance of Padmasambhava Today

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Padmasambhava and the Two Kinds of Biography

When reading the different accounts of the life of Padmasambhava, it's useful to keep in mind that there are these two kinds of biography. One tells us about the outer life, and one, for those with a connection, tells the significance of Guru Rinpoche...

There are some subjects where the usual kind of biography works well. These are the stories of people where we have dates, and locations, and events that describe their lives, all fitting together in a cohesive narrative.

When speaking of the life of the founder of a country, or a military or sports hero, this does a good enough job. I'm thinking of the stories of the athletes in the recent olympics. We heard where they were born, perhaps a little about their parents, and upbringing, the struggles they faced in their lives, and their successes that brought them to where they are today.

All of this is relatable and we can feel that we know something about the person, and perhaps admire them and celebrate their accomplishments.

This functions for almost everyone in our domain, and it's only when we come to spiritual figures that another kind of biography is needed.

We still have the conventional telling of the dates and the places and the events of their lives, but those who write of spiritual teachers and traditions insist that kind of biography does not begin to tell what should be known about them.

As Thinley Norbu said,

Because sublime beings are miraculous, their histories do not fit within ordinary, intellectual reasoning.

Think how it would be if someone reported just on the facts of the birth of Jesus, a little of his teaching, his crucifixion, reports of his resurrection, and the mere physical history of the church. Anyone with even an iota of sympathy with the Christian Tradition or a connection to Jesus would insist that you have completely missed the point.

Now, don't get me wrong, the conventional biography does have its place. I think of it now like a sketch, where we can begin to discern the outline of a teacher, or a tradition, and its meaning.

What we commonly think of as biography can be a good place to begin, but if we stop there, we will not be meeting the person or the tradition that is being talked about, and in many places revered, and seen as a source of blessing, inspiration, healing and spiritual sustenance.

Looking at the difference between conventional biography and the lives of the saints or holy beings written from a spiritual point of view, we come in fact to the problem of what is called mundane perception, compared to Sacred Outlook, or Pure Perception.

Conventional biographies work fine, as long as we don't need to talk about the sacred. Then, they leave out much more than they say.

We need then to also find a way to include such things as miracles, and magic, angelic and demonic beings, healing, revelation and enlightenment, and that is the reason we have this second category of biography, that we can call *Sacred Biography*.

For some, of course, these things don't exist, and so they will either read and write only about the conventional side of things, or else they will reject as mere mythology, or fantasy anything that doesn't fit in their narrow view of themselves and others and our world.

In religious or spiritual biographies, on the other hand, and sometimes to the extreme, there can be an absence of literal places and dates and events. What is told, they will tell you, completely overflow those narrow definitions. We can start with them, and then we are exhorted to go beyond the simple telling.

When reading the different accounts of the life of Padmasambhava, it's useful to keep in mind that there are these two kinds of biography. One tells us about the outer life, and one, for those with a connection, tells the significance of Guru Rinpoche. {In fact, almost all articles and books about him belong to this second category, and so, here we are.}

To say just a little more about the nature of biography, before recounting the story of Padmasambhava.

When we tell someone's story, where they were born, whether they were poor, or discriminated against, their education and the kinds of work they

did, it's to help us to know something about the person. It is not exhaustive, by any means, but it's a start.

We can take this a step further, if we are asking about a person, to know them. We can ask, what have they done in the past?, and, if they are still living, *What are they doing now?* This expresses still more of the person we would know.

Which brings me to Padmasambhava, the one they call *Guru Rinpoche*, *Precious Teacher*.

If we take the bare outlines of his life, to begin with, I think we can gradually get to meet him. How surprising... I think what's needed though, if that is to happen, is that we read these events both *as literal*, if in fact they are that, and *as metaphor*. For those who are not poets, or who have no appreciation of the evocative power of language, image, or story, this will all be lost on them, but I'm sure many will respond.

In addition, if what they say is true, and, for myself, it is, then the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Saints and Holy People can communicate through these forms, to uplift and to inspire and guide our lives. So the conventional telling, if we read it right, instead of being a rote explanation becomes rich and meaningful, fulfilling the purpose of all genuine spiritual teachings.

Here then is the story of Padmasambhava, in its bare form, to make of what we will. Most conventional biographies will begin with something like this. They will say that,

Padmasambhava, also known as Guru Rinpoche, was an Indian tantric master who played a major role in bringing Vajrayana Buddhism to Tibet in the eighth century... (Lion's Roar Magazine)

or

Padmasambhava ("Born from a Lotus"), also known as Guru Rinpoche (or Precious Guru) from Oḍḍiyāna, was a tantric Buddhist Vajra master from medieval India who taught Vajrayana in Tibet(circa 8th – 9th centuries). (Wiki)

Now, the problem with this, or the challenge, if we take up, is that these words have little to no meaning to the average person.

For example, What is *a tantric master?*, and, What is *Vajrayana Buddhism?*

If nothing appears to a person's mind when they hear or read these words, or if something partial or mistaken comes to their mind, then we can be sure the meaning isn't being communicated.

If we are telling the history from the outside, as it were, then it's like we are standing outside a church, and describing the edifice, and saying that people are going in and out of a building, and that we hear singing and that there is the scent of incense burning inside...

It tells us almost nothing of what we want, *or need*, to know about what's happening in there, and the Person they are talking and singing their praises about.

But we continue.

It's said that Padmasambhava was invited to Tibet by the King of that time, Trisong Detsen.

The king greatly admired Buddhism, it is told, and wanted it to be known and studied and practiced in Tibet, believing it would help the country and the people there. For that reason he invited a learned and accomplished Buddhist teacher Shantarakshita from India, to come and teach.

After some time, they decided they would build Samye, first Buddhist monastery in Tibet, to be a center for learning and practice of the Teachings. It's said that, unfortunately, they met with obstacles. From an external point of view, it's said that there were floods and fires and earthquakes that destroyed the temple they were trying to build.

{All this, by the way, can be taken on a metaphorical level, and meditated on, with good effect.}

Giving up on their project, and due to Shantarakshita being rejected by some of the local Bon teachers and population, this teacher decided to return to India. Before he left though, he advised the king to invite the holy person Padmasambhava. He told him Padmasambhava was an accomplished sage, a mystic, a magician, and sorcerer, and that he would be able to help the king build Samye, and establish Buddhism in Tibet.

Now, again, if we are just reading this as mere historical narrative, we can say, it went down like this. Whether we believe these to be realities or not, this is the story as it's come to us to this day.

We should include here the world view of the people of Tibet at that time, and in doing so, contrast this with our own world view.

The people in Tibet practiced what is to this day known as the Bon religion. They also aligned in their beliefs with what we would call shamanism, or indigenous beliefs - that the world is full of spiritual life, and that our task is to control, or to learn to live in harmony with all life in this world.

Of course this view of the world is very different than the modern, materialistic, nihilistic view, that finds little of purpose here, beyond sense gratification, and the accumulation of wealth, status and power. Perhaps we seek a little peace, and refinement here, but that's about it for the average materialist. There are exceptions, of course, but what is called mundane perception does not experience what is talked about in spiritual biographies, from any tradition.

And so here we are.

Of course this can all change, but it's good to situate the telling of the life of someone as Guru Rinpoche in modern terms. This is what most of us face, these days as westerners when we hear these stories.

It is said then that Padmasambhava came to Tibet, overcoming and converting local demons, or opposing forces, and then giving them the task

of being protectors of the doctrine {the Dharma} and the living beings practicing them {the Sangha}.

We meet again with the mundane and the spiritual when it comes to the transmission of teachings attributed to Padmasambhava. I have written about this at some length in an essay titled, *Continuous Revelation*, for those who are interested.

Suffice it to say that the contrast again between the mundane and the spiritual is seen and felt here keenly.

Either teachings have a date and a place, and were written down by this person, and preserved by this lineage, or, in the view of continuous revelation, the transmission of teachings is going on *to this very day*, and will manifest in new ways, as needed. This second view is the basis of the tradition of *terma*, or hidden and revealed teachings, inspired by and attributed to Guru Rinpoche.

To round off this briefest of conventional biographies, just telling what anyone can see, regardless of their receptivity, faith or belief, here follows a bare account of Padmasambhava's origin story, his being rejected and then accepted, and his invitation related to Nalanda Monastery that tells the origin of what has become known as the revered Seven Line Prayer.

It's said that in the mythical kingdom of Oddiyana, there was a sacred lake, Dhanakosha. Owing to the needs of the time, Amitaba, the Buddha of Infinite Light, emanated the syllable HRI to the center of a grand lotus on this lake, and Guru Rinpoche was born from this as fully formed eight year

old child, complete with all realizations and adornments. He was adopted by King Indrabodhi, but eventually sent into exile by jealous ministers.

When opposed, and on more than one occasion, they tried to kill Guru Rinpoche, most often by fire. In response to each of these attempts, the burning pyre was completely cooled, and transformed into a beautiful lake, and Padmasambhava, unscathed, was found then to be sitting peacefully on a lotus. This instilled great faith in Guru Rinpoche. It happened in this way quite a few times, it is told.

He went from the from a royal household to charnel grounds, to accomplish his practice, and to teach the Dharma and to tame disruptive spirits. He did this everywhere he went.

Then, at one time, at the monastery and learning center of Nalanda, heretical teachers came, and were on the verge of defeating the scholars and Buddhist teachers there. Many of the teachers then had the same exact dream, telling them to invite Guru Rinpoche with this Seven Line Prayer

HUM

On the northwest border of the Land of Orgyen

Upon a blooming lotus stalk is

An adept of amazing and supreme feats (siddhis)

Widely known as the Lotus Born,

Encircled by dakini retinues:

I will practice as you did.

Please come and bring your waves of splendor;

Guru bring me siddhis. HUM

{Anne Carolyn Klein translation}

This being done, Padamasambhava arrived, and defeated the heretics in debate, and in a contest of magical abilities.

* * *

As I said earlier, when we want to know about someone, we will ask what they have done, and what they are doing now.

If this were a conventional biography, it would stop at a certain point, say, in the year 2010, and if you wanted to know more about this person, or what happened after that, you'd have to read a later account, or go and interview them.

If the person is no longer living, to ordinary appearances, that's it. Story over. So here again we see the difference between conventional biography, and spiritual biography. In spiritual biography, from any tradition, or when it comes to any holy person, their lives continue.

Consider how it's been with the life and activities of Jesus. If you just go by literal, mundane historical accounts, he just taught and performed healings and miracles for three years. For believers though, and even from a standpoint of telling what his life has been for the last two millennia, there is much more to say. The factual history we can all agree on is just the beginning of the story.

The same is true of Guru Rinpoche. It's right to ask about the past, and there we will find many stories of miraculous events related to his blessing power, influence and inspiration. Whether we believe what is said in another matter, and it is a mirror to our own world view.

From there, we can we cross over from conventional biography to spiritual biography, and we can ask, as we would of a living person,

What is it that Padmasambhava does today?

What are His Activities?

In A Great Treasure of Blessings, Dudjom Rinpoche describes the breadth and scope of Padmasambhava's enlightened actions, saying:

They cannot be neatly arranged or reconciled in the conventional perceptions of ordinary people with respect to time span and physical location. For these are the kind of deeds performed by a powerful master of miracles, who has free rein to manifest them in response to the devotion, mentality and attitudes of beings...

Namo!

And the seventeenth century master Tsele Natsok Rangdrol adds:

We should understand that all Padmasambhava's deeds and the examples in his life are a magical display, shown to tame people according to their particular inclinations. By regarding him as a normal human being, we will fail to perceive even a fraction of his enlightened qualities...

If we ask an outsider about Padmasambhava, we would get very little information, of course, other than, that person over there believes this is the result of praying to Guru Rinpoche, and reciting his mantra, and they say, this happened, or that happened, miraculously, as a result.

What to make of this?

Here exactly is where we see the shortcoming of what is only conventional biography. It is not equipped to tell more than what is seen with ordinary perception, or mundane view.

If this is all we are looking for, alright, but from another perspective, it misses the power, beauty and significance of Guru Rinpoche, and for that, we need all the spiritual biographies, written by those with an affinity with Padmasambhava.

I will leave this here.

The Relevance of Padmasambhava Today

When I think of Padmasambhava, what I would most want people to know is his relevance today. It is said that Guru Rinpoche is especially needed, and his blessings are especially powerful in what are called *degenerate times*.

Reading how such times are described, it seems to me they fit our world these days exactly.

Traditionally the five degenerations are said to be those of views, the afflictive emotions, the times in general, beings or relationships, and lifespan. Here is a brief description of each. See for yourself.

Views - Perhaps it starts with this - but when we really look, we can tell that all these conditions arise interdependently.

We deny karma, or causality; we either don't see or we don't care about the effect our actions have on ourselves, and others, and our world.

In many places then, there is a breakdown of universal ethics, which only makes people more accepting of materialism, gluttony, greed, violence, and dishonesty, and in times such as these people become increasingly dumb, callous, and loud;

There is an increase of dogma, closed mindedness and intolerance. We can say it's always been like this, but in times of the degeneration of views, there is more and more of it.

We celebrate all the wrong things these days, militarism, violence in so called 'entertainment' and in our communities and world; we exalt athletes and performers and businesspeople who are rich, and while at the very same time we neglect precious lives all around; we don't pay attention to or respond at all to the needs of the world and our family;

Emotions - There is an increase in the what are called the afflictive emotions - of despair, fear, aggression, addiction, and arrogance. Antidotes to these that were once effective personally and socially no longer work completely, if at all.

The times we live in - There is more that is polluted, the environment suffers, there is an increase in the the loss of species; the quality of food and medicine decreases; and things politically and socially are uncertain, contentious, divisive and hostile; there is fear and aggression between people and nations; There are more refugees worldwide, and more exploitation, more dishonesty and mistrust between people and groups;

Beings, or relationships - There is more divorce, infidelity, and instability; there is less community and fewer lasting friendships. All these grow increasingly difficult to begin, or to foster and maintain in times such as these;

and, *lifespan* - Our length of lives here are uncertain these days, for many reasons.

Look - isn't it this way?

As Venerable Rita, in her teachings on the Medicine Buddha practice, has said,

‘We are living in what can be called degenerate times... We can see the signs. Actually, there are other signs we can see, in more detail.

‘One is that there is no more music, only rhythm; another is that people walk around with a weapon in their pocket...’

I think of how it is depicted in most science fiction, when there is no green nature, no colorful flowers or plants or trees to be seen. We also have more apocalyptic series these days that depict soul loss, as rampaging zombies, or ghouls. There is a lot of truth being expressed in these fearsome manifestations from our creative collective unconscious. The light dims, and we degrade and descend in times like this.

These are especially needful times, when almost nothing seems to work, or offer hope, and so we cry out. Individually and together as one, are seeking the light and a deeper solution to what threatens us.

*A cry in the darkness,
and the cry itself is light...*

A prayer for degenerate times reads,

Wars, and the threat of wars
that would end life on earth;

epidemics, and new diseases appearing

famines,

the increasing rate of species extinction,
and environmental destruction;

Look on these if you have the courage,
and if you can bear to:

fire, flood, earthquakes

food and medicines deteriorating,
and causing even more illness,
and addiction

lifespan, and views, emotions,
and the environments in which we live in this time,
people becoming more and more difficult to reach,
their minds more difficult to tame

people losing the ability to practice,
the motivation, and the understanding,
despite all the wise and holy beings who have come before
and left us their teachings

extreme views these days,
more and more are taken as normal,
racism, materialism, hedonism,

and fanaticism

false teachers proliferating,
divisions between genuine students,
and between students and their teachers
relationships are harder to form and are easily broken -

such are these times
and I call out
where are we to turn to now?

There is a tradition I heard of,
and have felt to be true
that said
when times get really bad,
and when it seems that nothing works,
then these particular practices -
tantra and the revelations known as terma -
would become effective
that said
when the conditions became truly dire
they would work to change the conditions,
and liberate beings from their suffering

We need you now
to stop the terrible flood of suffering
to end the great dangers we face
so whatever prayers you have made, or embodied

may they be effective now

Guru Rinpoche, not many have heard of you,
and even fewer believe
in the compassionate pledges you made
when you saw what was to come

While we can still hear you,
and receive the blessings you intend,
O all you great compassionate ones
extend your hand and your power
While there is still time
make your blessings known to us...

The contemporary teacher, Khenpo Sodargye, in his commentary on *The Seven Line Prayer* [in these videos](#), says the following,

‘Now, at this time, when the Buddhadharma is in decline, evil forces and tirthikas {heretics} become extremely active.

‘Our wrong attachments and negative thoughts might consume us at any time. In such a dark age, without relying on the support of an extraordinary and powerful force, we are confronted with difficult circumstances. If we count on our own feeble effort, we will have a hard time in accomplishing our practice.

'Therefore, I appeal to vajra friends again and again to pray to Guru Padmasambhava constantly and with fierce conviction. If you do so, your practice will be good from the beginning to the end.'

They say in Tibetan Buddhism that certain practices, such as those found in the Thought Training teachings, in tantra, and the termas, and in particular the activity of Guru Rinpoche would be even more effective in dire, truly difficult times such as these.

As Khenpo Sodargye said, 'The more defiled the world is and the more corrupted the times are, the stronger the blessing of Padmasambhava becomes.'

And if it weren't the case that I've experienced something of this for myself, my life would be very different, and I would not be moved to write about these practices, and to encourage others to explore them, to see how it is for them as well. It could be that they have an affinity with the Dharma, with Tibetan Buddhism, and these practices, and then, we can't begin to measure the benefit...

On Devas and Maras

{Formerly: A little of angelology and demonology}

If you read more than a few pages of the life of Padmasambhava, the one who brought Buddhism to Tibet, you will find references to him subduing demons on his journey there. He is said to continue this same work everywhere he goes.

For those of us in the West, we will likely dismiss that part of his story as, quote, 'just mythology', and not applying to our lives and practice, or else we will interpret it with Western religious associations. Both of these miss the mark.

To understand the great gift we have received with Tibetan Buddhist teachings, we should know a little about the environment and beliefs of the world it comes from. This includes the indigenous Bon world view, as well as that of Eastern spiritual perspectives more generally.

In the East, they recognize other worlds and various classes of spirits, and that these can either help or oppose the aims of human beings; There are also those who offer greater help, and those who can cause more harm to a person.

Of course, as modern Westerners, we are right to ask about the nature of these other kinds of conscious life.

There are hierarchies of both lower realm beings, and those living in more refined states. There are countless worlds, but for convenience sake, the sum of these worlds are described in Buddhism as being six in number. These are referred to as the hell, hungry ghost, animal, human, demi-god and god realms.

Each of these are in fact myriad, but that is too much to hold in most people's consciousness, and so we simplify the totality, to be able to talk about them. In so doing, we can miss much of the richness, the breadth and depth and complexity, but this is where we begin, if we choose to understand this life of ours more completely.

It helps to know a little about devas and maras, or what we can also call angel-ology, and demon-ology. There is truth also when expressed in those terms. If presented and understood well, we'll then be in a better position to make our way through whatever realm we find ourselves in, and to skillfully handle meeting with different types of spiritual life.

Perhaps this is a poetic way of talking about the world and our experiences. For those with sensitivity to subtle truths though, there is more to it than their being 'merely' metaphor. These ways of talking have a corresponding reality that some do experience, and it's especially for those with more refined perception that speaking of other worlds and classes of beings is useful.

For those *not* sensitive to other realms and kinds of spiritual life, we also have a completely valid psychological interpretation where many of these same terms apply.

They say, for example, that in Buddhism the ‘demons’ or maras are generally four in number:

the afflictive emotions (traditionally, greed, anger, jealousy, pride and ignorance, to which I add fear, and sadness), impermanence, the psycho-physical collections that make up a person, and the allure of and attachment to mere pleasure and comfort.

It is taught that the chief of all of these maras is ignorance.

There was a recent display of the nature of ignorance as the chief of all the causes of suffering. In the scene that is the pinnacle of the series called Game of Thrones, Arya kills the night king, and as soon as this is done, all the other demons fall.

This is exactly what is said by the Saint Tilopa, in the 11th century,

*A tree spreads its branches and leaves -
Cut its root and ten thousand branches fall...
Likewise, cut the root of mind
and all of samsara falls...*

This is a teaching on dealing with disruptive forces internally, on a psychological, or inner spiritual level.

* * *

Returning to what are most commonly thought of as devas and maras, angels and troublesome spirits, we can say generally that there are forces that help, and there are those that harm. That is also a way to think about them and to work with them, overcoming, or taming, healing and balancing them out as needed.

This has been the testimony and the basic world view of many different peoples, across cultures, and throughout the centuries, and this includes every country where Buddhism has taken root.

Now, we are in the West, which is mostly materialistic, mostly caught in mundane views, so few people actually give any thought at all to other forces, or to other planes of existence. I am not be one to argue with such people. I can only say that, it works for me to think this way, and that I have had some direct experiences that I can refer to.

When I hear people talking about this subject, of devas and maras, often I feel like they are describing what they have only read about, or what they have only imagined such things would be like. I do know a little better, and so I have to at least try to write something out, for my own clarity at least.

I was set on this journey inspired by Dante about six months ago. Reading the Divine Comedy led me to remember and then to search out other world views that aim to be comprehensive, and, this brings me this evening to what we can call demonology and angelology.

Now, the higher, angelic realms are much more rarified than this one, such that they are not easily accessed, and the beings there communicated with.

We may know something of them, and of guardians and protectors throughout the course of our lives. Their influence can be especially felt in times of crisis, or of great love and devotion. These may be memorable events, even to the point of setting our whole life's direction, but for most of us, unless we are visionaries, they are relatively rare events.

The experience of the infernal, on the other hand, those experiences of harm, or malevolence, and what I would call maras or the demonic in this world are by far more common.

A word here about the language we use to talk about these things -

If we speak of angels, or of holy beings, there is some consensus about their nature. To think of them brings peace, and confidence, a feeling of being protected.

On the other hand, in English at least, a term such as 'demon' is frightening, and we usually turn away from that, not wanting to think of it. The Buddhist word *mara* is not felt to be as threatening, which is a good thing, but... perhaps it leaves something out.

As we make our way to understanding the Dharma in the West, we are trying to use language in a way that conveys the entire meaning of an idea, or an experience. Both of these terms say something essential to understanding what is meant in full, and so I alternate in my use of them.

Now, I had the thought today of waving my arms, and shouting to my internal entire movie studio crew and director, 'Shut it down!' 'Shut it

down!' We create so many imagined worlds from what we have seen in films and on the tv, and now online that it's difficult talk at all of other kinds of beings without the interference of all those associations. They are the cause of superstition, and of so much unnecessary fear. All this comes from viewing these in an unexamined way.

Actually, ghosts and ghouls, and also angels and divinities as they are depicted in movies barely hint at the reality, and so the Hollywood depictions are something we need to mostly set off to the side, if we are to hear anything new.

If we begin by seeing what films and fiction show as representing psychological realities, then I think we are getting closer to the truth of it; And if we take that further to disembodied or subtle bodied forms, then it is an even more complete picture.

Take for example, on the negative side, what are called zombies - those who are walking in a stilted way, but who are dead inside, soulless; they are unnatural, and they are a danger to everyone; or ghouls, those without feeling, dead eyed and ravenous, and here you have a very good description of what I've been seeing in the reporting on the war against the Palestinians, to take just one example. Other wars and war criminals can be remembered or studied. I use this as an example only because it is most recent in our collective experience.

The politicians, propagandists, reporters and spokespersons are numb, and if you listen, what they say is ghastly, in truth, ghoulish; and if you see the

barbarous soldiers, right there I would say you are seeing evil; it has always been this way...

See the crazed look in their eyes, listen to their unhinged rants, and what they are actually saying... it is not different in the least from the deranged who are in institutions, and in haunted places. They have the same dangerous, disturbed minds and spirits...

The root of all this is ignorance, but this is the manifestation of evil, defined as what causes suffering in our world.

The antidote, what is to be done, is almost never found in Hollywood. There needs to be a radical awakening, and this is something spiritual teachings tell us is possible.

We do need to be more poetic when understanding what is meant by a zombie or a ghoul, or a deva, or a divinity. Then we can see both what we live with, as well as those who inhabit the lower and upper realms.

Some higher and lower realm beings *are here*, with us, and can be seen even now. Noble Ones are here too, all around. This is what we see with clear intuitive awareness.

How to approach all this safely?

Here is where we need great compassion, and wisdom to see through illusions, and especially the help of holy beings.

Can we apply this these days to war criminals, and their supporters? To militarists and deceivers in our government and media? To callous materialists?

After leaving Tibet, it is said that Padmasambhava, who is Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of Compassion, goes to pacify and illumine and to overcome what are called cannibal demons, which is descriptive. There are those who feed on the innocent, harming precious ones here, in an uncaring and utterly out of control way.

We need to call upon the Saints and Saviors for that very reason. Often we feel we cannot oppose them by ourselves, with our own limited resources.

All of the Divine Beings we have a connection with and call on then have this same effect, of pacifying suffering conditions and restoring harmony. This may happen all at once, or in stages, but the result is the same, wherever you find it.

Prayer then, and faith, reaching out, and receiving blessings from the source of healing, strength, and protection in our lives is essential.

We often don't see what we live with, or the forces that move in our own lives and psyches, but, for those who want to look, here it is. Everything they say in both demonology and angelology, or devas and maras is true of each of us as well. There is truth to it both in our shared experience, and psychologically, in our inner world.

In Buddhism, good and what we call evil are not fixed. This is related to the truth of *anatta*, or what is found in the emptiness teachings, that there is no fixed, independent self nature. We see through this appearance. This is important to understand, and then to remember, to know about, and then to practice.

Good and evil are states of being, or states of consciousness. This is actually optimistic...

The good news, *the best possible news* in fact for those of us in the human realm, or those caught in lower realm experiences is that beings of light, we can say divine celestial beings, are here to help. Their nature is compassion, and activity, and when we connect with them, they lead us from where we are to the higher worlds, to freedom, and to lasting peace.

We may not see the fullness of experience while here, but the truth of it remains, and is greatly helpful to know about.

May we all find our way, healed, and protected,
guided, and supported by beneficent teachers, all holy ones
May our freedom increase, and may we use the great good fortune of this
life to care for all others in the best of ways

Emanations

There is a concept that is important to understand, when meeting teachings from Tibetan Buddhism. They describe a Noble Teacher, and at times a Celestial Bodhisattva, or a Buddha in similar ways. Each of these are rich, complex, and full of potential.

I thought earlier today about how to illustrate the idea of an emanation, where one person, or figure expresses different qualities. They continue to be the same person, and we know them in these different ways:

I thought of how it can be when we see a talented performer on stage, expressing different qualities. They can be very soft spoken, and sweet for some time, and then fiery, impassioned, and fearsome enough to send a shiver down your spine;

they can be erudite, incisive, and eloquent, and then, on a turn, silent, and still; or they can be child-like, and then regal, and imposing.

All these different qualities, and more, can come from one person, let us say.

It's a cool word, *emanate*. We use it to communicate qualities from objects as well, such as when we say a stone being in the sun can emanate heat... that quality comes off the stone and can be felt. Scents are also said *to emanate* from a flower, or from food. They are not separate from it, and we can say the scents express something of the essence of the flower, or the food.

I also like how when something is an emanation, it means it comes from something else, from its ground or basis, rather than from itself. The warmth arises from a stone, for example, and a scent speaks to us of a flower, and the earth, rain and sun.

They say that 'One Buddha contains all Buddhas' and 'One Teacher contains all Teachers, Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas', and that they express different qualities to meet the needs of living beings.

One poem in praise of Lama Yeshe says,

*Homage to my teacher,
the Holy Exemplar,
in whom all Enlightened Qualities are found!*

When we look just at the external form, or hear just one name, and attach to particular characteristics, we see diversity, instead of the underlying unity. This concept, of emanation, helps to see through appearances, to the essence, that is the basis of all the various expressions.

They say, for example, that the retinue of Guru Padmasambhava is *his nature* revealed. They are *his emanations*. These include Sages, Dakas and Dakinis, male and female angelic beings who are Protectors, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. This is a way of understanding the richness and potential of this one who is called Padmasambhava. He can also manifest in any way that is needed, as food, water, clothing, bridges, books, medicine...

Other Divine forms are also depicted with a retinue as their emanations. Around Avalokitesvara, the Buddha of Compassion, for example, we find White and Green Tara, Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Light, as his Root Guru, or Source, pictured above the crown of his head, as well as Wrathful Dharma Protectors, such as Mahakala;

We also see those who have had human forms and histories and their disciples depicted in groups, such as Je Tsong Khapa, Padmasambhava, and other great world teachers.

This is to say, all of this is Avalokiteshvara made manifest in our world.

They say in the teachings that when a special person is incarnated with Divine Qualities, that they are an emanation of a Buddha, or of a Sacred Person from the past. They can be in particular the body, speech, mind, qualities, or activity emanations. This accounts for there being more than one born and living at the same time.

They say also that Great world teachers throughout the centuries have been the emanation, or the manifestation of one pure divine spiritual energy.

Lama Yeshe said,

It's written in many Gelug Tibetan texts that Lama Je Tsong Khapa (15th Century) was a manifestation of Padmasambhava (8th Century). Maybe I can also say that Lama Je Tsong Khapa was a manifestation of Jesus...

Another way of thinking about it is that this Holy Spirit is altogether beyond space and time, and it manifests as needed in our world, and in our lives. This leads us naturally to the realm of universality, or mysticism, beyond any one name or form, or time.

*The True Mind of all sentient beings, leads and guides every sentient being, says
The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana.*

When we find the Divine within, does it not transcend every name and form, and give it greater meaning?

Do we then see and feel this same Holy Spirit in other people and places and times?

*And yet, there is only one great thing,
the only thing, -
to live to see in huts and on journeys,
the great day that dawns, and the light that fills the world...*

- From An Inuit Song

There is this unity, and wholeness, and belonging...

And how can this ever lead to anything other than profound respect for ourselves and all others, and this world, to reverence, service, joy and peace?

When we fixate on characteristics, it can be all we see for a time, and that can be useful, but if we see these as the expressions of one truth, aah, there is much more flexibility... All the potential is there, undiminished.

We manifest this way, and then that way. We can be an ordinary person, or, we can manifest divine qualities that heal and help others, and contribute to the uplift of the world. In the Vajrayana, they say we can all realize this. That is the beauty of a human being, and this path of practice.

Continual Revelation

I begin with the thought that we perceive the world differently, and ask you, What world do you live in?

With much that I would like to say, the following is but a summary of a few ideas that have gathered for me lately on the nature of spiritual teachings appearing in our world...

In the most general terms, spiritual teachings can be thought of in two categories - the orthodox on the one hand, and as those that are independent of tradition. The independent spiritual teachings, such as those from saints and visionaries sometimes get incorporated into the larger body of a tradition, but there is always resistance, as I will try to describe.

For example, the Protestant Reformation was about direct experience of the Divine, without the intermediary of a Church, and its rituals, and its hierarchy. They are still fighting over who has legitimacy, to this very day.

A sub-group of the Protestants are the Pentecostals, who go even further, asserting that anyone who is divinely inspired has the authority to start a church, and to teach, and to heal, and to help spread the gospel. They are even more of a problem for orthodox believers, owing to the rate of growth of Pentecostal movements worldwide the last decades.

I recently became interested again in what are called 'termas' or treasure teachings in Buddhism. These are texts that are literally hidden in physical

locations, or that are 'placed' in a treasure-finder's mind to be revealed centuries later in our world, when they are desperately needed on account of extreme sufferings and confusion here. Treasure teachings are referred to then as 'a fresh transmission', or 'a short (lineage) transmission', and are considered to be full of blessings when they are revealed.

It's said also that the methods found in these teachings will be more effective in what are called times of degeneration, which is something I can personally attest to. For someone with an affinity, they have a particular power to them, and can be more effective than the methods from earlier times.

Of course, the tradition of terma in Buddhism was often denounced as illegitimate by traditionalists, and it's still something that causes division.

Lineages in Tibetan Buddhism, and all Buddhism for that matter, mostly keep to themselves, so it rarely comes up, but when it does, approaches other than theirs are usually just dismissed as 'not the Dharma', or, 'not the True Teaching'. Does that sound familiar? That is the pattern.

The Mahayana and then the Vajrayana - the Great Vehicle, aiming at the liberation of all beings, and then the esoteric practices, including visualization and the recitation of mantra have also faced these very same criticisms and outright rejection by orthodoxy. This is really unfortunate.

Many years ago, I worked in a few bookstores in the San Francisco Bay Area, including one well respected, magical esoteric bookstore here, called Fields, on Polk Street. This was in the late nineteen eighties and early

nineteen nineties. I also had some friends who owned another bookstore in the City, called The Philosopher's Stone.

Among the categories back then were what we would now call channeled teachings, for example, A Course in Miracles, the Seth material, the Conversations with God series, as well as books on the life and teachings of the clairvoyant healer Edgar Cayce. The earlier Theosophists, such as Ledbetter, Besant, Alice Bailey and Madame Blavatsky were also included there, all neatly lined up.

Now, for a long time I dismissed most of the more recent channeled teachings as not having much value, but then I remembered a widely respected book from Tibetan Buddhism, usually translated as The Tibetan Book of the Dead. (Actually this is a manual for how to direct one's mind during the process of death, and rebirth.) This well known book is considered a terma, a teaching not authored by the person who wrote it down. Recalling this increased my respect somewhat for these western channeled teachings, and I had the thought that there may very well be something genuine at work in them. We should see for ourselves if they appeal to us, and are helpful.

They say in the Tibetan Tradition that we should be careful not to judge others since we don't really know the level of their realization. I find this useful when it comes to spiritual teachings, both those that are from previous times and those that are new in our world.

The Bible has a phrase that sums up how to measure their worth, where it says, *By their fruit you will know them...*

For sure, there have always been charlatans, and this is as true in the West as it has been in the Eastern Traditions. There have always been those who would deceive others for the sake of fame, power, or profit, as well as those who are themselves deceived, thinking that they are further along the spiritual path than they actually are. This second group has been much larger by far, from what I can tell. Especially in California in the 1970's and 1980's, it was a problem. Those offering channeled teachings meant well, but for me, there was not much there. Perhaps it was just my limited perception, but I wasn't satisfied.

... and... there I go again, criticizing, after just warning against it, but, it needs to be said. There has always been this challenge to tell the true from what is a sham, or superficial, false, and misleading.

I thought again with a laugh about the game kids play called 'telephone'. Perhaps you have heard of it. This is best done in a group. One person is told a secret, and then it is shared around the room, one at a time. When the last person gets the information they announce it to the class, and it's usually funny how much the message has changed in just those few minutes. In such a short time!

One can imagine a true spiritual message being received by people with less depth of understanding, or who lose the meaning, and then that is what is passed along, getting gradually watered down, until very little of the original message remains. We can plainly see the need at times for a fresh revelation.

And not only do we misunderstand and mess up a teaching that was once clear when it first came into the world, but we can also exclude genuine teachings because they don't fit with any ordered program, or authority. Human beings can be so arrogant and narrow minded sometimes, it's incredible, and when it happens this is also our loss, such that we need more of this rain.

In Catholicism, they have a rich tradition of recognizing and canonizing saints, or holy people, but for every saint or miracle that they recognize, there are many more that they don't officially recognize. Now, what to think about those not recognized by the church but that *are* authentic?

There's a movie called *The Third Miracle* that's one of my favorites because it is on this very theme, of legitimacy, and how institutions oppose a lot of the spiritual help that comes into our world.

So I return to one of the questions I began with - *What kind of world do you live in?* or, to phrase it differently, *What kind of world do you want to live in?*

In researching this polarity - of tradition and new transmission, I came across something called '*continuous revelation*', and that is a fundamentally different view of the spiritual life than what is presented in any orthodoxy.

Continual revelation is a view that the manifestation of the divine life is ongoing. *The whole world is filled with the glory of God*, as it is said.

This allows for such things as the astonishing Marian Apparitions, for terms, and for new and timely treasure texts, and in some cases the arts, as holy writ, and equal to all the sacred texts that have come into our world.

Those from the Indian Traditions I have learned would be comfortable with this world view. The way it's told in *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Yogananda, they consider meeting a teacher in a dream or a vision to be entirely valid, and perhaps even more legitimate than finding truth in book, or a group, or a building.

In comparison, if we exclude the miraculous continually happening, then, to my thinking, we live with a truncated view of reality. This is the unfortunate norm these days.

For the average materialistic person, this life and this world is all there is. There are no divine beings, nothing is sacred; there is no revelation, and nothing more than what the senses can perceive.

In marked contrast, treasure texts, the lives of holy people, and ordinary people with experiences that are of another order of being are invitations to a larger world, one that is far richer, and more joyful, and more hopeful, at last.

Personally, this is the kind of world that I want to live in - one where no one religion has an exclusive claim on the truth, but that recognizes the divine life everywhere. You can call it mysticism if you like, and it is one that includes and honors all traditions. There is universal truth in all of them. This is a vision of continual unfoldment that sees the same love, insight and power in the saints and noble people as in the founders of our great religions.

Seeing the world this way welcomes the new expressions of the eternal,
wonder working power. Here, there is grace in abundance, and celebration.

About Guru Rinpoche

From The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava

From Guru Rinpoche - His Life and Times

From The Indian Version of the Life of Guru Rinpoche

On the Nature of Guru Rinpoche

From An Interview with Dudjom Rinpoche II

On Receiving Empowerment

From the teachings of Orgyen Chowang Rinpoche

From The Lotus Born - The Life Story of Padmasambhava

From The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava

The compassionate activity of enlightened awareness emanates continuous streams of apparitions for the benefit of beings throughout all worlds. Padmasambhava represents such emanation and his forms are numberless.

As evidenced in the biography, Padma appears sometimes as a beggar, sometimes as a child of eight, sometimes as an animal, sometimes wrathful, sometimes peaceful. Whatever guise suits the occasion, that guise Padma assumes and so works to bring to maturity all beings in all realms.

Just as the Buddha Shakyamuni taught different vehicles to his disciples according to their various abilities and understandings, so Padma disseminates innumerable manifestations and teachings each designed to counteract the karmic obscurations which surface as the life style of a being, a people, a country, an era.

The rational mind cannot conceive of the variety of his manifestations. Padma's various forms manifest wherever and whenever there is a need, so that even though the so-called 'historical' Padmasambhava departed from Tibet, his deep doctrines continue to present times.

Padma also manifests by means of terma, the teachings which he buried in caves, monasteries, rocks, statues, and in many other places, as well as manifesting through the terma masters, the reincarnations of his disciples who rediscover these teachings. These teachings are revealed continually at the appropriate times, and provide mankind with revitalizing spiritual nourishment.

From Guru Rinpoche - His Life and Times

In 1971, these words rolled off the press of Dharma Publishing in the first issue of a magazine/booklet called *Crystal Mirror*:

Padmasambhava is not intended to be viewed solely as an historical person. His bodily form is like a pure reflection, the visible appearance of the mind and compassion of all Buddhas.

Padmasambhava and Lord Buddha are identical. He is all the Buddhas, past, present, and future - timeless, beyond birth and death - but we can experience that same primordial essence within ourselves.

In Vajrayana Buddhism, Padmasambhava is neither a deity nor a mythological figure - he is the gateway through which the powers and divine qualities of the Buddha can be received, the focal point of practices that lead the aspirant to liberation.

Constant and mindful meditation on the pure essence of the Guru purifies body, speech, and mind, transforming ordinary consciousness into the highest wisdom and transcending ordinary forms.

Vajrayana teaches that transformation can be accomplished in one lifetime. This Sadhana, or spiritual practice, of Padmasambhava is especially important and effective in times plagued by excessive materialism and strong desires.

Quite obviously, then, these practices have great practical relevance to our present age. This is the real meaning and significance of Guru Padmasambhava in the Vajrayana tradition.

By practicing his teachings, we can benefit ourselves and others. It is the Precious Guru's promise:

I shall come every morning and every evening to the abode of those who have faith in me. I shall come to this world for the sake of its people...

- Crystal Mirror, vol. 1, p. 18

From *The Indian Version of the Life of Guru Rinpoche*, by Taranatha, as found in *Guru Rinpoche - His Life and Times*, by Ngawang Zangpo

The Master's Activity in Tibet

If we take [the indescribable activity of] his form and name here in Tibet as an example, how can anyone possibly express the bounds of his acts elsewhere, in lives during which he attained the state of integral union?

This Master's principal enlightened activity consists of subduing non-human spirits; compared to all that has been related so far, his deeds to help nonhuman beings in such locations as the sub-continent of Tail-Fan Island [Camaradvipa] are vastly more impressive.

This is because the acts mentioned previously were performed in short-lived countries, to help a few persons, [with an impact that lasted] for short periods of time, a matter of a few hundred or a few thousand years, whereas his later acts are immeasurable in terms of their impact on countries, of their duration, and of the numbers of persons he helped...

* * *

During this time, the Master spoke to the king,

“Sovereign, make your land a land of excellence. Make Ngomshö’s sandy grove into grassy meadows...

Send water to all areas that have none, from Dra, Dol, and Tala, up to the central region. When these sandy plains become fields, they will feed Tibet...

Take the riches of Vaishravana [a wealth god] and make Tibet the storehouse of the world’s wealth...

Control the flow of the Brahmaputra; I’ve controlled the flow of a river even greater than this...”

He gave the king much counsel, such as, “Bring all the rulers of China, Mongolia, and other lands under the dominion of Tibet...”

When the king asked whether these things could really happen or whether the Master was just testing him, the Master erected a sacred circle and meditated for one morning: at a dry place at Red Rock, a great spring emerged...

“Do some more,” the king asked. Thus, at Red Rock’s Tsomo-gu the previously sandy area suddenly became green with grass...

That afternoon, at the top of the cliff, a great forest instantly appeared. It was called La [cypress] Grove...

The following morning, the Master meditated and at the top of the valley in Zoung-kar, where there had been no water, a great river flowed...

“Now you can have fields wherever you want,” the Master said...

The king offered a full measure of gold powder to the Master, bowed and did circumambulations around him, and related his own feelings.

The Master replied, “I didn’t come here for gold. I came here to subdue the evil demons and spirits of the outlying region of Tibet, to propagate Buddhism, to make this land a better place, and to lead its people to happiness. If I wanted gold, I only have to do this” and he touched the rocks around him, turning them to gold...

Because the Master could see the future, he gave many wrathful mantras to his disciples, and concealed many texts of wrathful mantras and teachings in clay containers...

In general, he used his miraculous power to emanate forms of himself, which concealed in various regions major treasures of instructions and wealth, one hundred and eight in all.

At the time of concealment, he would repeatedly recite this prayer:

*In this and any future lifetimes,
May I and my unfailingly generous patron
Enjoy the result of Great Way yoga practice
In the sublime, holy place called the Highest Pure Land...*

On the Nature of Guru Rinpoche

From A Great Treasure of Blessings

Dudjom Rinpoche describes the breadth and scope of Padmasambhava's enlightened actions: "They cannot be neatly arranged or reconciled in the conventional perceptions of ordinary people with respect to time span and physical location. For these are the kind of deeds performed by a powerful master of miracles, who has free rein to manifest them in response to the devotion, mentality and attitudes of beings."

The seventeenth century master Tsele Natsok Rangdrol adds: "We should understand that all Padmasambhava's deeds and the examples in his life are a magical display, shown to tame people according to their particular inclinations. By regarding him as a normal human being, we will fail to perceive even a fraction of his enlightened qualities..."

Any incongruities we may find in the life stories of enlightened beings come about only because they are perceived differently by the differing levels of people who are to be trained...

The master Padmasambhava was a supreme nirmanakaya. He appeared free from faults and fully endowed with all eminent qualities. He certainly does not remain within the reach of people's solid fixation on a permanent reality, but appears according to the needs of disciples."

* Because sublime beings are miraculous, their histories do not fit within non-spiritual reality and ordinary, intellectual reasoning. If some people cannot accept these histories because they seem inconsistent and illogical, then they cannot logically accept any of the wonderful histories of the thousand Buddhas, including Buddha Sakyamuni, as well as those of all ancient, sublime scholars, the mahasiddhas, and even one's own guru. The histories of sublime beings can never be confined within samsara's boundaries because enlightenment can never fit into ordinary mind and its ordinary calculation...

- Thinley Norbu

* * *

Guru Padmasambhava is the buddha of the degenerate age in which we live. When we read the life stories of the great practitioners of all the schools of Tibetan Buddhism, we see how each one was repeatedly blessed and inspired, directly and indirectly, by Guru Rinpoche.

Guru Padmasambhava is not hindered by time and space. He is absolutely free. He can be anywhere at any moment and appear in any form. He teaches in whatever way is most appropriate and necessary for individuals. According to the needs of beings, his teachings can be applied immediately or hidden for a later time. Guru Padmasambhava will appear whenever you supplicate him...

* * *

There are a great many things to be discovered beyond our present understanding.

Beings who realize great equanimity discover the infinite energy of the true nature and can perform many beneficial activities using their eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body. They will not always act conventionally or in ways we normally understand. They may do things which don't fit in with our common perceptions. Phenomena which seem to go beyond physical limitations are sometimes referred to as miracles. At times, those who have the capacity will display miraculous phenomena in the common world.

People who don't believe in the possibility of miracles think these stories are myths, metaphors or fairy-tales. In truth, there are people who can do amazing things, just as the ancient masters did. Don't ignore certain aspects of the universe by thinking those are just stories. The universe contains an infinite variety of wondrous qualities and activities. These actions are incomprehensible from the ordinary, mundane viewpoint. They manifest to help destroy all conventional approaches to knowledge...

In order to have a deep understanding of the meaning of Guru Padmasambhava's activities, it is important to keep an open mind. We must go beyond our present conceptual limitations...

- Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche

From An Interview with Dudjom Rinpoche II

Guru Rinpoche is the most direct of all the Buddhas in giving aid in this age.

... Not only is this a very turbulent and degenerate time, but it is also an exceptional time when a great deal can be accomplished on the spiritual plane...

If people really follow him and ask his help, he will respond, and under his compassion and grace, the secret Mantrayana teachings will continue, especially Ati yoga teachings and, for that matter, the entire Buddhadharma, so there is hope...

If one feels devotion to Guru Rinpoche, how would one begin to practice?

Dudjom Rinpoche: We must put ourselves completely in his hands: our body, our speech, our mind. Complete reliance on him, following his teachings in practice, and directing his mantra are necessary as the basis of confidence and strength in the Vajrayana practice....

Guru Rinpoche's mantra can be made available to all. It is one mantra that can openly be revealed.

All this is true. The uniqueness of Guru Rinpoche's line is that we do not totally have to change our life style or take on the stricter precepts as is found in Hinayana. Working skillfully on ourselves and not totally giving up our worldly goods leads quickly to attainment.

On Receiving Empowerment

From A Commentary on the Seven Line Prayer, by Khenpo Sodargye

From Lecture Eight

Receiving empowerment does not necessarily require a teacher to appear in person in front of you holding a vase. Many people are interested in receiving empowerment, before a teacher in person. As a matter of fact, one may also receive empowerment from our Guru Rinpoche or H.H. Jigme Phuntsok by visualization.

* * *

From Lecture One

Nowadays, there are many practitioners who cannot find Lamas to give empowerments, so they are always asking around. Many Lamas are very busy, or they have health issues so they can't arrange empowerments.

If that is the case, then you can ask Guru Rinpoche for empowerment.

Recite the Seven-Line Prayer every day, then his Wisdom Body will come to you and give you empowerment. As long as we have faith, we will definitely receive his blessings and empowerments...

As told in the verse, it is the empowerment of Wisdom:

*The multitudes of Divinities of the Three Roots will gather like clouds
to grant, unhindered, common and supreme accomplishment
And in your waking life, or in your meditation,
in visions, or in dreams, you will encounter Me
Swirls of rainbow light you will see, and smell sweet scents...*

When we supplicate by reciting the Seven-Line Prayer, the Three Roots, of the Gurus, Yidams, and Dakas {and Dakinis, the Dharma Protectors} will gather like clouds, appearing in front of us to grant us blessings. They will bestow the common and the extraordinary siddhis unobstructedly...

Through such practice we will receive the blessing from Padmasambhava and many Divinities. Such feelings, experiences, and perceptions might occur at any time, even in dreams...

From the teachings of Orgyen Chowang Rinpoche

By reciting the twelve-syllable mantra, even without having received instructions, we can receive empowerment directly from Guru Rinpoche.

Through visualization and recitation of the mantra, we can receive the blessing of his mind and have the realization of the nature of mind as the ultimate body of enlightenment arise within our mind...

We can call this "the blessing of Guru Rinpoche" that has arisen in our mind precisely as it says in the teachings...

We have to receive our empowerment with the thought that we really do receive it. As we practice regularly, this becomes more of a reality. We receive empowerment continually, until gradually we can recognize self-manifest awareness.

This is the path to receiving the blessing of the lama's body, speech, and mind.

Although it may seem {initially} that we are separate from Guru Rinpoche, when we receive the blessings and empowerments, dissolve Guru Rinpoche's mind into our mind, and behold the ultimate lama in a state of non-duality, the appreciation and gratitude we have developed yield extraordinary benefits...

From The Lotus Born - The Life Story of Padmasambhava, translated by Erik Pema Kusang

Master Padma proceeded to Hepori, where the Tibetan king and his subjects had formed a welcome reception. King Trisong Deutsen weighed this thought in his mind, "I am the ruler of the black-headed Tibetans. I am the lord of the beasts with a mane. As I am also a king who upholds the Dharma, the master will pay homage to me!"

Master Padma thought, "I am a yogin who has reached attainment and, since I am invited to be the king's master, he will pay homage to me!" Their greeting was not in harmony, so Master Padma then sang the song "I Am the Great and Powerful":

Namo Ratna-Guru

Listen here, ruler of Tibet!

I see the deaths of the six classes of sentient beings
 And have accomplished the splendidous yoga,
 the vidyadhara level of longevity.
 I am the immortal Padmakara,
 Possessing the instruction on accomplishing indestructible longevity.

In the mandala of mind manifest as appearance,
 I employ the eight classes of gods and demons as my servants.
 I am the king Padmakara,
 Possessing the instruction on controlling the three realms.

From appearances, the book of samsara and nirvana,
I conduct lectures on the expedient and the definitive meaning.
I am the scholar Padmakara,
Possessing the instruction on separating samsara and nirvana.

On the natural parchment of mind essence,
I inscribe the letters beyond words.
I am the writer Padmakara,
Possessing the instruction on the teaching beyond words.

On the wall surface of whatever appears,
I sketch the drawing of nonduality.
I am the artist Padmakara,
Possessing the instruction on undivided appearance and emptiness.

The people seized by the sickness of the five poisons
I cure with the medicine of the unconditioned.
I am the physician Padmakara,
Possessing the instruction of the elixir that revives the dead.

Embodying the aims of those who have great faith,
I accomplish their welfare for both present and future lives.
I am the chief Padmakara,
Possessing the instruction on cutting the root of samsara.

Carrying the weapon of the essence of knowledge,
 I subdue the enemy of perverted thought.
 I am the heroic warrior Padmakara,
 Possessing the instruction on victory in the battle with samsara.

The hostile five poisons, materializing as opponents,
 I imprison in the magic pit of the five wisdoms.
 I am the sorcerer Padmakara,
 Possessing the instruction on annihilating the five poisons.

King of Tibet, you red-faced savage,
 Your mind is bloated with worldly conceit.
 Pride is the cause of taking birth in samsara.
 Isn't that you, the ruler of Tibet,
 Who is bedecked with the ornaments of the five poisonous kleshas?
 Your lungs are inflated with your great dominion.
 I will not prostrate to the king of Tibet,
 But I pay homage to the clothing you wear.

Having sung this, Padmakara raised one hand in the gesture of homage,
 and light rays from his hand scorched the king's dress. The king's
 ministers all became terrified, and King Trisong Deutsen himself bowed
 down.

Master Padma was then escorted to the palace, where he sat upon a
 golden throne. He was served a variety of drinks, food, and cakes, and

was offered a maroon cape of brocade to wear. As a present, King Trisong Deutsen then offered a mandala of gold and turquoise and said:

Em Ah Ho, Lord Guru,

I am the king of the red-faced rakshasas.

Since the people of Tibet are hard to tame,

I am building a shrine for the sacred Dharma.

You, nirmanakaya, please preside as the vajra master

And consecrate the foundation ground...

A selection of prayers and poetry - Contents

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Oh, Great Compassionate One,

I call to you...

Guru Rinpoche, your compassion knows no bounds, and your wisdom is unobstructed, so come now, through your great miraculous power as swift as thought...

Oh, Great Compassionate One,

Buddha of the Three Times...

Essence of all Gurus...

I call to you...

Swiftly turn your loving attention to me...

Embodiment of the Three Jewels and the Three Roots, hold me with your compassion

For myself and for all others,

May your blessings flow unceasingly throughout the three times...

Guru Rinpoche, your compassion knows no bounds, and your wisdom is unobstructed, so come now, through your miraculous power, swift as thought...

Knower of the three times...

You know me...

{pray as needed...}

ཚོག་བདུན་གསེལ་འདེབས།

SEVEN LINE PRAYER

ཧཱུྃ།

ལུ་རྒྱན་ཡུལ་གྱི་རྒྱབ་བྱང་མཚམས།

HUNG **UR GYEN** **YUL** **GYI** **NUB JANG** **TSHAM**
vocative, seed letter *Oddiyana, the* *land* *of* *north-west* *border, corner*
bija of Padmasambhava, dakinis' land
Hung. In the land of Urgyen's north-west corner,

བུ་ལོ་སར་རྫོང་པོ་ལ།

PAE MA **GE SAR** **DONG PO** **LA**
lotus *stamen* *stem* *on*
Upon a lotus stem and stamen,

ཡ་མཚན་མཚོག་གི་དངོས་གྲུབ་བརྗེས།

YAM TSHEN **CHO GI** **NGO DRUB** **NYE**
marvellous, *supreme* *siddhis, attainments* *has, got*
wonderful *(i.e. buddhahood)*
With marvellous and supreme accomplishments,

བུ་འབྲུང་གནས་ཞེས་སུ་གྲགས།

PAE MA JUNG NAE **ZHE SU** **DRAG**
Padmasambhava, Guru Rinpoche *known as* *famous*
(famed as)
The Lotus Born is your famous name.

འཁོར་དུ་མཁའ་འགོ་མང་པོས་བསྐོར།

KHOR DU **KHAN DRO** **MANG POE** **KOR**
retinue as *dakinis, sky-goddesses* *many by* *surrounded*
(here it means all sky travelling deities)
As retinue many dakinis surround you.

ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་རྗེས་སུ་བདག་སྐྱབ་ཀྱིས།

KHYE KYI **JE SU** **DAG** **DRUB** **KYI**
you *following after, emulating* *I* *practice* *by that*
Following and relying on you, I do your practice, therefore,

བྱིན་གྱིས་བརྒྱབ་ཕྱིར་གཤེགས་སུ་གསེལ།

JIN GYI LAB **CHIR** **SHEG** **SU SOL**
blessing *in order to* *please come*
In order to bless us, please come here!

གུ་རུ་བུ་སྐྱེ་བྱི་ཧཱུྃ།

GU RU **PAE MA** **SID DHI** **HUNG**
guru, master *Padmasambhava* *real attainment* *give me!*
Guru Padmasambhava, grant us the accomplishment of buddhahood!

Hung In the land of Urgyen's north-west corner, upon a lotus stem and stamen, with marvellous and supreme accomplishments, the Lotus Born is your famous name. As retinue many dakinis surround you. Following and relying on you, I do your practice, therefore, in order to bless us, please come here! Guru Padmasambhava, grant us the accomplishment of buddhahood!

ཞེས་ཅི་རྒྱུ་དང་།

[Recite this as many times as you can with true devotion from your heart.]

ཨུཾ

ཨུ་རྒྱན་ཡུལ་གྱི་རུབ་བྱང་མཚམས་མུཾ

HUNG*vocative, seed letter
bija of Padmasambhava,***UR GYEN***Oddiyana, the
dakinis' land***YUL***land***GYI***of***NUB JANG***north-west***TSHAM***border, corner*

Hung. In the land of Urgyen's north-west corner,

བརྩ་གེ་སར་སྤྱོད་པོ་ལུཾ

PAE MA*lotus***GE SAR***stamen***DONG PO***stem***LA***on*

Upon a lotus stem and stamen,

ཡ་མཚན་མཚོག་གི་དངོས་གྲུབ་བརྟེན་མུཾ

YAM TSHEN*marvellous,
wonderful***CHO GI***supreme***NGO DRUB***siddhis, attainments
(i.e. buddhahood)***NYE***has, got*

With marvellous and supreme accomplishments,

བརྩ་འབྱུང་གནས་ཞེས་སྲུ་གྲགས་མུཾ

PAE MA JUNG NAE*Padmasambhava, Guru Rinpoche***ZHE SU***known as***DRAG***famous**(famed as)*

The Lotus Born is your famous name.

འཁོར་དུ་མཁའ་འགོ་མང་པོས་བསྐོར།

KHOR DU KHAN DRO MANG POE KOR
retinue as dakinis, sky-goddesses many by surrounded
 (here it means all sky travelling deities)

As retinue many dakinis surround you.

ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་རྗེས་སུ་བདག་སྐྱབ་ཀྱིས།

KHYE KYI JE SU DAG DRUB KYI
you following after, emulating I practice by that

Following and relying on you, I do your practice, therefore,

ཕྱིན་གྱིས་བརྒྱབ་ཕྱིར་གཤེགས་སུ་གསོལ།

JIN GYI LAB CHIR SHEG SU SOL
blessing in order to please come

In order to bless us, please come here!

གུ་རུ་པདྨ་སི་ཏི་ཏཱ།

GU RU PAE MA SID DHI HUNG
guru, master Padmasambhava real attainment give me!

Guru Padmasambhava, grant us the accomplishment of buddhahood!

HUNG UR-GYEN YUL-GYI NUB-JANG SAHM

HUNG In the Northwest borderland of Uddiyana

PE-MA GAY-SAR DONG-PO LAH

In the heart of a lotus flower

YAM-SEN CHO-GYI NU-DRUB NYAY

Having realized most marvelous and supreme siddhis

PE-MA JUNG-NAY ZHAY-SU DRAH

You are renowned as the Lotus-born

KHOR-DU KHAN-DRO MANG-PO KOR

Surrounded by a host of dakinis

KAY-KEE JAY-SU DAG-DRUB KEE

Guided by you, entrusting myself

JIN-G LAB-CHIR SHENG-SU SOL

May I receive your blessing

GU-RU PE-MA SID-DHI HOONG

OM AH HUNG BENZRA GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG

Buddha of the three times, Guru Rinpoche,
Master of all siddhi, abiding in great bliss
manifest your power now to dispel all that is adverse
May we all receive your blessings
For myself and for all others,
May all outer, inner, and secret obstacles be pacified,
and may all our wishes be spontaneously fulfilled.

May all illness, and obstructing forces,
and all that stands between us and the magnificence of the higher
realms and definitive goodness be pacified...

And we may all effortlessly gain everything favorable...

May the blessings of the root and lineage teachers fill our hearts...

May the Celestial Buddhas and Bodhisattvas be with us all at all times...

For myself and for all others, may the Dharma Protectors and Guardians
dispel all obstacles...

May we all enjoy auspicious goodness...

and accomplish our path...

Namo Guru Padma Manjushri Vajra Tikshnaya!

Holder of the Vajra,
you who are in truth all Buddhas of the three times,
Lake-Born Lord, appearing as an emanation in this world,
Body of undying wisdom, sovereign of vidyadharas,
Padmakara, O glorious one, protect me now this wanderer

The lotus of my heart, endowed with threefold faith,
Is turned toward the sun of the mighty Conqueror
And opens in the splendor of blessings...

The Prayer for clearing obstacles from the path

From The Prayer Which Removes All Obstacles from the Path I

From The Prayer Which Removes All Obstacles from the Path II

From The Supplication to Dispel Obstacles on the Path

A Very Brief Prayer for Clearing Obstacles from the Path

From The Prayer Which Removes All Obstacles from the Path

From The Prayer Which Removes All Obstacles from the Path

Dharmakaya Amitabha

Sam̐bhogakāya Avalokiteshvara

Nirmaṇakaya Padmākara

I pray,

Dispel all outer, inner, and secret obstacles into stainless space, the clear
expanse...

From The Prayer Which Removes All Obstacles from the Path

To the dharmakaya Amitabha

To the saṃbhogakāya Avalokiteshvara

To the nirmaṇakaya Padmākara

Homage! I take refuge in You

and I pray,

Dispel outer obstacles externally...

dispel inner obstacles internally...

and dispel secret obstacles into stainless space, the clear expanse...

From The Supplication to Dispel Obstacles on the Path

Namo Guru!

Homage to the Spiritual Master!

Amitabha, Buddha of Boundless Light,
Dharmakaya body of ultimate enlightenment, to you I pray...
Avalokiteshvara, Great Compassionate One,
Samboghakaya body of perfect joy, to you I pray...
and Padmasambhava, Lotus-Born,
Nirmanakaya body of manifest enlightenment, to you I pray...

May I receive your blessings!
Lovingly guide me on the path!

Dispel our obstacles with your power!

Dispel all outer obstacles externally
Dispel all inner obstacles within
and dispel all secret obstacles into stainless space, the clear expanse...

OM AH HUNG BENZRA GURU PEME SIDDHI HUNG

A Very Brief Prayer for Clearing Obstacles from the Path (Barche Lamsel)

By Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje

Om ah hum!

Dharmakaya Amitabha, saṃbhogakaya Avalokitesvara,
Nirmanakaya Padmasambhava - the wrathful Drakpo Tsal,
We pray to you

With the force of your compassion
Dissolve all obstacles, outer, inner and secret, into space!

When beings suffer in this decadent dark age,
We have no other hope but you!

From the depth of our hearts
With fervent devotion and longing, urgently we pray

For myself and for all others,
Avert bad circumstances, outer, inner and secret obstacles,
Let our lifespan and merit increase, and our lungta {good fortune}
strengthen and grow!

{By the one who holds the name of tertön - Jalu Dorje.}

Rigpa Translations

From The Prayer Which Removes All Obstacles from the Path (Barché
Lamsel)

Revealed by Orgyen Chokgyur Dechen Lingpa

om ah hung benza guru pema siddhi hung

To the dharmakāya Amitābha we pray!

To the saṃbhogakāya - the Great Compassionate One - we pray!

To the nirmāṇakāya Padmākara we pray!

Wondrous emanation, master of mine,

In India, you were born, you studied and you contemplated;

To the heart of Tibet you came, to subjugate its arrogant demons,

In Orgyen you dwell, accomplishing the benefit of beings:

With your compassion, inspire us with your blessing!

With your love, guide us and others along the path!

With your realization, grant us attainments!

With your power, dispel the obstacles facing us all!

Outer obstacles - dispel them externally,

Inner obstacles - dispel them internally,

Secret obstacles - dispel them into space!

In devotion, I pay homage and take refuge in you!

om ah hung benza guru pema siddhi hung

From The Rain of Blessings

Great treasure-mine of love and knowledge,
embodiment of every refuge,
Precious, only refuge in these descending times

Tormented by the pains provoked by five degenerations,
I pray to you with fierce devotion...

Look quickly upon your child with loving eyes,
and from your vast expanse of wisdom,
may the skill of your compassion overflow
and bless and strengthen now my longing heart...

Quickly show to us now the signs and portents of accomplishment
May we all receive your blessings, and accomplish our path...

*Unfailing Lord of unbounded compassion, please take us as your disciples.
I and sentient beings like myself, are wandering in the three realms of samsara...*

*How pitiful we are! We count on you and rely on you. Please grant us your
blessing!*

*Just like the golden touch of Midas has the ability to turn iron into gold, the three
inconceivable qualities of the body, speech, and mind of you and your retinue offer
an immense blessing that brings about transformation...*

*Through praying with sincere devotion, may the blessing of your inconceivable
wisdom integrate into our mindstreams, such that our ordinary minds, that are
troubled by the five poisons such as desire, anger, and ignorance, can be completely
transformed into luminous wisdom...*

*Although you, Guru Padmasambhava, appear to be residing in the land of
rakshasas, we fortunate sentient beings of Jambudvipa entreat you with strong
yearning and with reverence, like an only child calling for its mother...*

*With your incredible compassion and your past aspirations, bestow your blessing
and empowerment upon us and make all of your qualities fully merge into our
hearts...*

- From The Commentary on the Seven Line Prayer, lecture four, by Khenpo
Sodargye

Five poems

It was foretold

Padmakara, You arrive

A prayer for degenerate times

In Your Presence

Truly you are

It was foretold,
that in exactly these times,
You would appear
to aid beings such as myself who struggle so to find the way

You have said that you would not abandon us now
You have said that you would come,
and somehow, miraculously, I believe it is true today

The world is so much bigger,
and the dangers, are so much more than we can face alone,
and so I pray

For myself and for all others like me,
who are searching, who are reaching out
who are seeking peace and a way to care for ourselves and others here,
make your presence known to us now

On this day, Guru Rinpoche, may you be known

Padmakara, You Arrive

There is fresh water on this jeweled-isle,
and it is so close to those of us perishing of thirst
to the left and to the right of me today, in an endless desert

There is safety and shelter, food and medicine
in this desperate, hungry, suffering wasteland of ours,
and it is nearby, I do believe, it is within reach
a few steps from here, and not even that - closer!

For so long, our Noble Ones, our Benefactors,
have worked so that the Way, and Paradise can be reached

but terrible storms and plagues have swept down now,
taking sleeping villages, whole cities lost,
so that not even their names remain
O mercy!

We have struggled mightily to honor what is worthy,
but so many of us are refugees now,
and we are frightened, and we are exhausted, and pursued
traveling with only what we can carry, and try to remember,
with each day, with each step, we are doing all we can to have hope

Padmakara, Great Compassionate One,
I pray, for myself, and for all others,
save us from the rushing currents!

from barbarism,
from the loss of sense
Help us all of us across, I pray of you!

To fall again now would be the greatest loss,
there is no way to measure it

And so I pray,
Carry us on Your strength, O Noble One!

Padmakara, You arrive, and in you I place my hope

When every one of my steps have taken me just this far,
I pray,
help us all to complete the journey to peace!

A prayer for degenerate times

{The five degenerations: lifespan, views, emotions, time, and beings}

Wars, and the threat of wars
that would end life on earth;

epidemics, and new diseases appearing

famines,
the increasing rate of species extinction,
and environmental destruction;

Look on these if you have the courage,
and if you can bear to:

fire, flood, earthquakes

food and medicines deteriorating,
and causing even more illness,
and addiction

lifespan, and views, emotions,
and the environments in which we live in this time,
people becoming more and more difficult to reach,
their minds more difficult to tame

people losing the ability to practice,
the motivation, and the understanding,
despite all the wise and holy beings who have come before
and left us their teachings

extreme views these days,
more and more are taken as normal,
racism, materialism, hedonism,
and fanaticism

false teachers proliferating,
divisions between genuine students,
and between students and their teachers
relationships are harder to form and are easily broken -

such are these times
and I call out
where are we to turn to now?

There is a tradition I heard of,
and have felt to be true
that said
when times get really bad,
and when it seems that nothing works,
then these particular practices -
tantra and the revelations known as terma -
would become effective
that said

when the conditions became truly dire
they would work to change the conditions,
and liberate beings from their suffering

We need you now
to stop the terrible flood of suffering
to end the great dangers we face
so whatever prayers you have made, or embodied
may they be effective now

Guru Rinpoche, not many have heard of you,
and even fewer believe
in the compassionate pledges you made
when you saw what was to come

While we can still hear you,
and receive the blessings you intend,
O all you great compassionate ones
extend your hand and your power
While there is still time
make your blessings known to us

I came to you hungry,
and in Your Presence I have forgotten all my hunger

I came to you cold, for dress,
and found myself wonderfully clothed

I came to you in need, suffering,
and before I could begin to describe the hurt,
I was healed

I stand here amazed then, not knowing what to say...

I came to you for a place to stay,
and found myself in Palace Gardens,
with all I'll ever need

I came to you with all my many questions,
but it seems I've forgotten them all in Your Presence

This is enough for me, teaching me all I'll need to know
Light of Light...

I came to you to confess,
but now it seems I have lost what I carried with me for so long,
my ancient regrets, all my hopes and fears,
and my aspirations to go beyond all of this

All is renewed, and made whole in Your Presence

I came to you for learning,
and instead I found in myself this river of knowledge

How can this possibly be?
I cannot count the steps to getting here,
or how many times I was carried,
only to awaken in another land altogether

and so I gather all my family and new and old friends,
to share in this great good fortune,
in celebration

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and in Your Presence I have forgotten all my hunger

I came to you cold, for dress,
and found myself wonderfully clothed

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to share in this great good fortune,
in celebration

Truly you are Vajrasattva...

Truly you are Avalokiteshvara...

Truly you are Manjushri...

Truly you are Amitabha...

Truly you are Tara...

Truly you are Army of Heroes...

Truly you are Stainless Excellent Gold...

Truly you are Supreme Glory Free of Sorrow..

Truly you are the Healing Buddha...

Truly you are Vajrapani...

Truly you are Mahakala...

Truly you are Amitayus...

Truly you are Maitreya...

Truly you are Karmapa...

Truly you are Longchenpa...

From The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel

Padma, I have no hope but you in this age of decay,
When all beings are sinking in the mire of unbearable suffering,
protect us from all this, O Great Guru...

You who are endowed with wisdom, power, and grace,
and who arrives with waves of blessing,
Compassionate One,
enhance whatever realization I may have...

{May the Six Perfections increase in me...

May the realization of impermanence, and this precious human life
increase in me...

May the Two Bodhicittas increase in me...

Mahaguru...

May the Three Trainings increase in me...

May the realization of the Buddhayana increase in me...}

You who have the ability, I pray,
purify the two obscurations.

You in whom I place my hopes,
establish me more firmly and more completely
on the path of enlightenment.

Through you,
may all the blessings of the all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas
enter my mindstream...

I pray to you now with my whole being...

Knower of the three times,
you can see that we have taken birth in these degenerate times,
full of disease and strife,
when sentient beings are violent, proud, and arrogant,
lacking diligence in the practice of dharma,
and always seeking what is unwholesome...

In these times, attachment, anger, stupidity,
illness, famine, and war are always increasing;
and here, we are experiencing the fruits of our karma...

Like a madman happy to walk into a fire,
we continue to accumulate the seeds of our own future suffering...

O Lord...

Like a blind man without a guide,
or a madman without a keeper,

we are utterly sunk in this suffering,
without even realizing it...

You, Guru Rinpoche,
can protect me and all beings
from wandering lost in this terrible wilderness...

Pray bestow upon me the vajra wisdom of your body,
speech, and mind,
so that I may realize the profound meaning of the Great Perfection...

Through your compassion,
may my realization increase,
and may you kindle within me the wisdom of the natural state...

Compassionate one, in this way,
deliver me from suffering in this and future lives...

May you continue to guide me to the higher realms,
and help us all to attain ultimate enlightenment...

A Supplication to the Guru To Dispel All Obstacles and for the Swift
Fulfillment of Wishes

How wonderful!

Embodiment of all Buddhas' compassion,
Sole infallible and everlasting refuge, Lotus-Born,
To you I pray: Swiftly turn your loving attention to me, your child,
And bestow your blessings, empowerment,
and accomplishment right now!

Although I know the degree of your liberation,
noble qualities, and kindness
Is greater than other Buddhas,
During joyful times, guru, I did not remember you.
When I prayed, I merely recited the words.

Now, when the five degenerations' spreading decline has harmed me,
When the lightening of unwanted suffering has struck,
I remember you, lord, from the bottom of my heart.
Lovingly heed this, my cries in longing and lament!

Dispel outer obstacles of the elements' turmoil without,
Such as earthquakes, fires, enemies, windstorms, droughts, and floods.

Dispel inner obstacles of the combination of humors' turmoil within,
Such as diseases of heat, cold, wind, bile, phlegm,
and their combinations.

Dispel into stainless space secret obstacles of mental turmoil,
The five unrestrained poisons, desire, anger, hope, fear, and demons.

When this world's beings' lake of suffering overflows,
Assure them of peace and happiness, Lotus-Born!

When the weapons of war rise in the central and outlying regions,
Repel the armies of these chaotic times, Lotus-Born!

When defilements, demons, contagious diseases,
and malevolent beings torment me,
Eradicate demons and disease, Lotus-Born!

When I suffer from poverty, as the world and its beings' prosperity fades,
Open treasures of food and wealth, Lotus-Born!

When the time comes to aid beings with wealth, teachings,
and sacred substances,
Give the father's inheritance to your children, Lotus-Born!

When I wander in hidden lands, solitary places, and mountain valleys,
Lead me to the right path, Lotus-Born!

When vicious fierce wild animals threaten me,
Drive away these malevolent beings, Lotus-Born!

When the four elements' volatility is about to destroy my illusory body,
Pacify the elements in their own place, Lotus-Born!

When wild men, bandits, and thieves harm me,
 Destroy their malice and hostility, Lotus-Born!

When murderers' and hateful enemies' weapons torment me,
 Place me within your vajra tent, Lotus-Born!

When my life ends and the time of death has come,
 Lead me to the pure land of Great Exaltation, Lotus-Born!

When sufferings of the intermediate state's deluded perceptions arise,
 Cast off delusion in self-liberation, Lotus-Born!

When I mistakenly stray into the karmic wheel of existence,
 Show me the path to liberation, Lotus-Born!

At all times - in this life, the next, and in the intermediate state -
 I have no other hope than you, Lotus-Born!

In short, never leave me; place your lotus feet forever
 In the center of my heart devoted to you.
 Bless me that all suffering of impure delusion be cleansed
 And that I reach the unassailable state of permanent happiness!

*I, Jigdral Yeshé Dorjé, composed this supplication for the accomplishment
 of my wishes when many outer and inner misfortunes troubled
 my body and mind. For all persons connected to this supplication as well,
 may it cause their outer and inner obstacles to be pacified and for their
 hopes and wishes to be fulfilled.*

Guru Rinpoche Supplication

E MA HO

On the magnificent Golden Mountain,
a place of great beauty and peace -
is a celestial palace of light

In this palace, seated upon a lion throne,
rests Mahaguru Padmasambhava,
emanating from the kindness of all the buddhas of the three times

He is surrounded by countless vidyadharas,
and possesses the youth and splendor of one in his prime.
You who are free of birth, old age, death and decay,
consider me!

Having accrued little merit, the beings of this degenerate time
have been born at the very decline of Noble Shakyamuni's teachings.
Unlike the great disciples of the past who were able to see his face,
we do not have the good fortune of liberating deluded mind
through the diligent study of the precious Three Baskets;

But through the light rays of your compassion, which pervades all space,
having heard your name, with great longing and pure intent
I call upon you, Guru Rinpoche

For myself and for all others, from this life until enlightenment,
with the support of your compassion,
May we turn away from hindrances and diversions on the path.

May all disturbing emotions, war, disease and poverty be pacified.
May all outer, inner and innermost secret obstacles be subdued.

May I meet my own inner wisdom guru
through the essential practice of your guru yoga,
and with loving-kindness show the path of benefit and happiness to all.
May I become an excellent noble friend to all beings.

When the appearances of this life dissolve,
may I, with ease and great happiness,
let go of all attachments to this life,
as one returning home.

And at that time may you, Great Compassionate One, receive me,
and guide me to the glorious Pureland.
With faith and devotion, I pray

{This supplication was written with one-pointed devotion by Kongtrül
Jigmé while on the Mangala Shri Bhuti sangha pilgrimage in India, in 1993.
It was revised for personal use by J Espada in 2024.}

In this life, at the time of transition, and in all our lifetimes,
May we all be guided by Noble Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
comforted and supported by beneficent celestials...

Ratna Lingpa's Prayer of Invocation for the Tenth Day

Pray with tears welling up in your eyes:

Blessings will flow like the main stream of a river.

When experiences blaze and blessings descend.

These are signs that I have come in person,

And at that moment, there is no doubt, I have arrived.

Now as I depart to the land of ogres,

I make a promise to the king and mantra practitioners.

To my children and disciples in Tibet,

That on every tenth day of the month I myself will come to them.

The Lotus-Born lets no one down.

Cast away your doubts, my followers:

If you have a fit mind.

My children who diligently pray to me

On this my day, the tenth of the month -

Even abandoned in cyclic existence, I'll be responsible for you.

Trust me wholeheartedly with body, speech, and mind.

To those of future generations who rely on me

And follow me, connected through prayers of aspiration,

In order to give them confidence and dispel their doubts,

I leave them this clear advice:

In truth, I do not depart or stay,
 I am beyond coming and going.
 Yet relatively, for those with habitual dualistic perceptions,
 I dwell in a celestial sphere.

Because their bodies are not purified
 Of their tendencies to cyclic existence
 And of the two obscurations, they will not see me.
 When they purify their afflictive emotions and obscurations
 They will see me, Padma, in person.
 And be able to converse with me in words.

Even practitioners still on the path
 Will meet me in experiences and in dreams.
 In fact, those who, developing a virtuous mind,
 Have given rise to boundless compassion,
 And remember me vividly for just an instant -
 By doing so, they are meeting me.

For those who have a thought of devotion to me.
 There is no break in the stream of my compassion.

Ultimately, for me there is no coming and going:
 When someone purifies their evil deeds and twin obscurations.
 At that moment they are meeting me.

Relatively speaking, from beings' point of view, it's true:
 On account of my aspirations I dwell in the land of ogres;

Yet, because my compassion is unceasing.
If you have devotion, I am there by your side.

More than this I shall not say.
For that would be mere verbiage.

In essence, trust me with your heart and breath,
And, whether your social status is high or low.
Depending on your devotion.
You will receive my blessings, there's no doubt.

{This text is a treasure (terma) discovered by Ratna Lingpa, and therefore contains Guru Rinpoche's own words.}

From *A Torch Lighting the Way to Freedom*, by Dudjom Rinpoche

From Clarification of the points of the training, by Dudjom Rinpoche

Kyeho

Precious teacher, embodiment of all the Buddhas
of past, present, and future,
seeing you dispels the gloom of ignorance
Hearing you cuts away the web of doubt
Thinking of you transfers the realization of the mind lineage...

Your touch bestows blessings and accomplishments
Your kindness is beyond all imagination
Your qualities are as endless as space...

With intense, unbearable yearning I pray to you,
think of me with compassion...

My body, possessions, and sources of good I offer you without
attachment...

From now on and in all my lives,
I'll have no other refuge, guide, defender, or escort
than you, my constant protector...

I entrust myself to you with body, speech, and mind
In happiness or pain, good times or bad,
wherever you send me, high or low - Teacher, it is up to you...

In all my lives, since time without beginning,
I have been dominated by ignorance and delusion.

Jailed in the three worlds of cyclic existence,
I have been tortured by the three sufferings.

Unable to bear the burden of misery and pain,
from my heart I call out to you, Noble Teacher...

Though I want to be happy,
I devote myself to deeds that lead to suffering...

Deceived by the demon {of self grasping} in everything I perceive,
on account of attachment, I wander, deluded by dualism...

For someone with these bad deeds and misfortune,
who else can give protection, other than you,
my refuge and protector?

As I pray to you, Lord Teacher,
Hold me with compassion, you who are so kind...

Grant me your blessings, you who have ability and power.
Guide me, sublime Lord of All...

I beseech you, turn my thoughts to the Dharma.
Bestow on me the four empowerments...

Purify me of these obscurations
Help me attain the four bodies, I pray...
Transmit to me the blessings of the mind lineage...

Destroy the gloom of ignorance,
and release me from the fetters of dualistic delusion...

Help me actualize knowledge and liberation,
take me to the great exhaustion of phenomena beyond mind...

Grant me liberation in the great body of rainbow light,
the naturally accomplished youthful vase body...

From A Simple Visualization for the Seven-Line Prayer

by Dodrupchen Jigme Tenpai Nyima

Homage to the Guru!

HUNG

UR-GYEN YUL-GYI NUB-JANG SAHM
 PE-MA GAY-SAR DONG-PO LAH
 YAM-SEN CHO-GYI NU-DRUB NYAY
 PE-MA JUNG-NAY ZHAY-SU DRAH
 KHOR-DU KHAN-DRO MANG-PO KOR
 KAY-KEE JAY-SU DAG-DRUB KEE
 JIN-G LAB-CHIR SHENG-SU SOL
 GU-RU PE-MA SID-DHI HUNG

HUNG

In the Northwest borderland of Uddiyana

In the heart of a lotus flower

Having realized most marvelous and supreme siddhis

You are renowned as the Lotus-born

Surrounded by a host of dakinis

Guided by you, entrusting myself

May I receive your blessing

GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG

If we now refer to the individual words of the Seven Lines and gloss them simply, then:

HUNG here is the opening, a calling out in request.

The prayer continues:

In the north-west of Oḍḍiyāna, on an island in the great lake of Dhanakośa, you were born miraculously upon the vast bed of a great lotus flower...

And the moment of your birth was accompanied by marvelous, wondrous events as all the buddhas empowered you, and the ḍākinīs presented their offerings and offered you praise...

Given that you are in essence Buddha Amitābha, you had already gained the supreme accomplishment in the past, but then you manifested from a lotus, in nirmāṇakāya form, in order to tame disciples throughout this world of Jambudvīpa...

{The meaning of marvelous and supreme siddhis:}

At first, in India, you benefitted countless followers, including kings such as Indrabodhi, yogis such as Lord Dampa Sangye, and noble women such as Princess Mandāravā;

Then, in Tibet, you established the teachings of Buddha in their entirety, bringing countless human and non-human disciples to spiritual maturity and liberation.

To pacify the ills of this degenerate age you concealed millions of treasures - so numerous as to defy the imagination;

Then, in Dravira through miraculous powers and instructions you bound fierce spirits under oath, and worked for the welfare of many human beings, before appearing in the inconceivable pure realm upon the Copper-Coloured Mountain of Glory, in the centre of a vast blue lake in the heart of Cāmara, island of rākṣasas...

{Therefore} you are renowned throughout the realms of vīras and ḍākinīs as the 'Lotus Born'.

There, in the glittering celestial palace of Lotus Light, *surrounded by many wisdom and worldly sky-farers - both vīras and ḍākinīs* - you remain even now in your vajra-like form, beyond birth and death and immune to decline and decay...

Contemplating these exceptional qualities in detail, our minds will surely be captivated by faith and devotion.

Then, the prayer continues:

Guided by you, entrusting myself

I will follow in your footsteps, Guru Rinpoche, and even if for the time being I don't practice in the most complete way the advanced path of the generation and perfection stages, still I pray one-pointedly with intense, fervent devotion...

May I receive your blessing

Although your form is in the land of rākṣasas, your compassion knows no bounds, and your wisdom is unobstructed, so come now, through your great miraculous power as swift as thought.

{For myself and for all others,}

Grant your blessings, so that here and now, at this very instant, all forms of illness, obstructing forces, harmful actions and obscurations, which affect our body, speech and mind, and all that stands between us and the magnificence of the higher realms and definitive goodness is pacified, and we may effortlessly gain all that is favorable, including long-life, merit, prosperity and the qualities of scriptural transmission and realization...

Pray fervently, invoking the guru's compassion, and inviting him to fulfill your aim...

Then, what follows is a summary of the meaning of the mantra.

Since he is 'heavy' with the burden of unsurpassed qualities, *Guru* refers to the one who has special qualities as a teacher. Then, as a sign that he belongs to the lotus family, we call out to *Pema* and pray:

GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG

*'Grant me all common and supreme siddhis (attainments) without exception,
Hung!'*

You can recite this mantra,

OM AH HUNG BENZRA GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG

several thousand times in each session, purely and clearly, never mixing it with ordinary speech.

At the end of the session, recite dedication prayers.

The benefits of practicing in this way are described in the treasure text itself:

*For children of mine who pray like this,
It goes without saying that they will have my protection,
For they are the sons and daughters of the buddhas of three times.*

We can be confident about this as the Guru never lies, and it is vital that we practice without any doubt in our minds.

Matibhadra wrote down Tenpe Nyima's words as a reminder for Sonam Palden.

Based on the translation by Adam Pearcey, 2015; revised by Jason Espada in 2024

Accomplishing the Lama through the Seven-Line Prayer

A terma revelation of Guru Chöwang

Homage to the yidam deity!

Fortunate men and women of the future, sons and daughters of an enlightened family, when you turn to me, the Guru of Orgyen, for refuge, take yourself to an isolated place, and make deep feelings arise of melancholy at impermanence, and disgust with saṃsāra - this is vital.

Then rely on me completely, heart and soul. Reflect how every kind of refuge, all your hopes, are all fulfilled and complete within me, the Guru of Orgyen. Whether in happiness or in sorrow, have total trust and confidence in me.

No need to make offerings or praise; set aside all accumulating; simply let devotion flood your body, speech and mind, and pray, pray with these seven lines:

HUNG

UR-GYEN YUL-GYI NUB-JANG SAHM

PE-MA GAY-SAR DONG-PO LAH

YAM-SEN CHO-GYI NU-DRUB NYAY

PE-MA JUNG-NAY ZHAY-SU DRAH

KHOR-DU KHAN-DRO MANG-PO KOR

KAY-KEE JAY-SU DAG-DRUB KEE

JIN-G LAB-CHIR SHENG-SU SOL

GU-RU PE-MA SID-DHI HUNG

Hūṃ. In the north-west of the land of Oḍḍiyāna
 In the heart of a lotus flower,
 Endowed with the most marvellous attainments,
 You are renowned as the 'Lotus-born',
 Surrounded by many hosts of ḍākinīs.
 Following in your footsteps,
 I pray to you: Come, inspire me with your blessing!
 guru pema siddhi hung

Pray in this way, over and over again.

Create a feeling of yearning and longing so intense that tears spring from your eyes. If the rapture of devotion overwhelms you, breathe out strongly, and then leave everything as it is. Clear and awake, focused and undistracted, look within.

For children of mine who pray like this, it goes without saying that they will have my protection, for they will be the sons and daughters of the buddhas of past, present and future. They will receive complete empowerment into the awareness of their own enlightened mind. Their samādhi will be so powerful and stable, that wisdom will naturally blossom and expand.

This great blessing, which arises of its own accord, will dispel all the suffering that will ripen on you, or be experienced by others. When your mind is transformed, others' perceptions will simultaneously change, you will accomplish enlightened activity, and all noble qualities will be complete within you.

May the sons and daughters of my heart meet with this extraordinary skilful means, one which ripens and liberates into the dharmakāya realization of my enlightened being.

A practice with a uniquely powerful blessing, the Seven Line Prayer is exceptionally profound; so let this instruction be an extremely secret treasure of my enlightened mind. May it meet with one who possesses a mind of wisdom, and is endowed with great compassion, called Chökyi Wangchuk.

Rigpa Translations, 2004

Guru Yoga - Selections

A Guru Yoga of Padmasambhava

From The Great Secret of Mind I, and

From The Great Secret of Mind II, by Tulku Pema Ringsal

On Guru Yoga Practice, by Orgyen Chowang

Guru Yoga Practice, by Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche

From The Nature of Mind

From Illuminating the Path

From Guru Yoga Practice

Guru Yoga Practice

The Result of Practicing on Guru Padmasambhava

Wake Up Practice, by Tulku Urgyen

A Guru Yoga of Padmasambhava

Adapted from the teachings of Dudjom Rinpoche and Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche

Consider that in the sky before you your kind root lama appears in the form of Guru Padmasambhava, actually present there before you.

Pray to him fervently, thinking,

The embodiment of all the buddhas of the ten directions and three times, incomparable root lama, I pray to you from the depths of my heart...

In this life and in the next, and in the bardo states, guide me with compassion, without ever parting, and grant me your blessings, continuously at all times...

Then recite The Seven Line Prayer and the Vajra Guru mantra as many times as possible in order to invoke his wisdom mind.

HUNG

UR-GYEN YUL-GYI NUB-JANG SAHM
 PE-MA GAY-SAR DONG-PO LAH
 YAM-SEN CHO-GYI NU-DRUB NYAY
 PE-MA JUNG-NAY ZHAY-SU DRAH
 KHOR-DU KHAN-DRO MANG-PO KOR
 KAY-KEE JAY-SU DAG-DRUB KEE
 JIN-G LAB-CHIR SHENG-SU SOL
 GU-RU PE-MA SID-DHI HUNG

Hūṃ. In the north-west of the land of Oḍḍiyāna
 In the heart of a lotus flower,
 Endowed with the most marvellous attainments,
 You are renowned as the 'Lotus-born',
 Surrounded by many hosts of ḍākinīs.
 Following in your footsteps,
 I pray to you: Come, inspire me with your blessing!
 guru pema siddhi hung

OM AH HUNG BENZRA GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG...

Then, consider that rays of light emanate from the three syllables at the
 Guru's three centers and dissolve into you, purifying obscurations and
 granting empowerments...

Visualize seed syllables made of light in Guru Padmasambhava's three
 centers. At his forehead is a white OM, at his throat is a red AH, and at his
 heart center is a blue HUM.

Visualize a strong white light, like a shooting star, coming from the syllable
 OM in Guru Padmasambhava's forehead and entering your forehead. It
 brings the blessings of the vajra body and removes your body
 obscurations...

Red light, as powerful as lightning, comes from the syllable AH in his
 throat and enters your throat, conveying the blessings of vajra speech,
 which remove the obscurations of your speech...

A piercing blue light from the syllable HUM at his heart enters your heart and you receive the blessings of vajra mind, so that your mental obscurations are removed...

With this you should feel that all the subtle obscurations of your body, speech, and mind are gone and that you fully receive the blessings of Guru Padmasambhava...

Again, give rise to intense devotion and pray...

Consider that at this, the teacher's face joyfully breaks into a smile, his eyes filled with love and compassion, and he comes onto the crown of your head, where he immediately melts into light, dissolving upward from his throne and downward from the hair on his head to become a ball of light at the level of his heart...

This passes through the crown opening on your head and dissolves into the middle of your heart...

The teacher melts into the essence of great bliss, becoming a sphere of light an inch in size, which dissolves into the middle of my heart: my mind becomes inseparable from the teacher's mind...

Remain in evenness for as long as you can, in the natural, innate state of luminosity beyond mind - awareness-emptiness, the nature of the absolute teacher...

From The Great Secret of Mind I, by Tulku Pema Ringsal

Reflect upon verses for taking refuge and generating the awakening mind...

Then,

Visualize the root guru in the form of Padmasambhava seated in front of us, and while in a state of deep devotion induced by his blessing of mind bestowed on us and all sentient beings, recite the following prayer three or seven times:

HUNG

UR-GYEN YUL-GYI NUB-JANG SAHM
 PE-MA GAY-SAR DONG-PO LAH
 YAM-SEN CHO-GYI NU-DRUB NYAY
 PE-MA JUNG-NAY ZHAY-SU DRAH
 KHOR-DU KHAN-DRO MANG-PO KOR
 KAY-KEE JAY-SU DAG-DRUB KEE
 JIN-G LAB-CHIR SHENG-SU SOL
 GU-RU PE-MA SID-DHI HUNG

HUNG! On the northwest border of Orgyen,
 Born in the pollen bed of a lotus flower,
 With miraculous supreme accomplishment,
 You are known as Padmasambhava, the lotus-born:
 Surrounded by a retinue of dakinis,
 We follow after you,
 Please come here to bless us

GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUNG

After reciting the Seven-Line Prayer, repeat the mantra OM AH HUNG VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUNG one hundred or three hundred times...

Finally, we receive the blessing of the guru's body, speech, and mind by means of rays of white, red, and blue light flowing from the syllables OM AH HUNG in his three secret places to our own...

Then the guru melts into light and dissolves into us, and his mind becomes inseparable from our own, like water being poured into water. In that space, without modification, in a relaxed manner, sustain the view...

Alternatively, at this time we can pray to our guru and Padmasambhava as one, letting the mind stay easy and relaxed, looking at the luminosity of pure presence...

At the end of the meditation session, we dedicate our merit to all sentient beings and make wish-fulfilling prayers...

From The Great Secret of Mind II, by Tulku Pema Ringsal

Visualize the root guru in the form of Padmasambhava seated in front of us, and while in a state of deep devotion induced by his blessing of mind bestowed on us and all sentient beings, recite the following prayer three or seven times:

HUNG! On the northwest border of Orgyen,
 Born in the pollen bed of a lotus flower,
 With miraculous supreme accomplishment,
 You are known as Padmasambhava, the lotus-born:
 Surrounded by a retinue of dakinis,
 We follow after you,
 Please come here to bless us
 GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUNG

After reciting the Seven-Line Prayer, repeat the mantra OM AH HUNG VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUNG one hundred or three hundred times...

Finally, we receive the blessing of the guru's body, speech, and mind by means of rays of white, red, and blue light flowing from the syllables OM AH HUNG in his three secret places to our own...

Then the guru melts into light and dissolves into us, and his mind becomes inseparable from our own, like water being poured into water. In that space, without modification, in a relaxed manner, sustain the view...

On Guru Yoga Practice, by Orgyen Chowang, from the book From Foundation to Summit

We begin by imagining our present environment not as an ordinary appearance but as the highest pure land of Lotus Light...

We can imagine Guru Rinpoche surrounded by the three jewels and the three roots... Or we can imagine that all these objects of refuge are joined in the single form of Guru Rinpoche; this is 'the single jewel' style...

{See, and reflect upon the truth that} there is no difference in essence between Amitabha, Chenrezig, and Padmasambhava...}

*The complete embodiment of all buddhas of the three times,
Supreme root lama, I pray to you.*

*In this life, the next lives, and between lives, hold me with your compassion.
May your blessings flow unceasingly throughout the three times...*

We pray to Guru Rinpoche in this way, wholeheartedly and single-mindedly...With intense devotion and appreciation, we receive his blessings...

{At this point, we pray and recite mantra...

HUNG

UR-GYEN YUL-GYI NUB-JANG SAHM

PE-MA GAY-SAR DONG-PO LAH

YAM-SEN CHO-GYI NU-DRUB NYAY

PE-MA JUNG-NAY ZHAY-SU DRAH
 KHOR-DU KHAN-DRO MANG-PO KOR
 KAY-KEE JAY-SU DAG-DRUB KEE
 JIN-G LAB-CHIR SHENG-SU SOL
 GU-RU PE-MA SID-DHI HUNG

Hung

In the north-west of the land of Oḍḍiyāna
 In the heart of a lotus flower,
 Endowed with the most marvellous attainments,
 You are renowned as the 'Lotus-born',
 Surrounded by many hosts of ḍākinīs.
 Following in your footsteps,
 I pray to you: Come, inspire me with your blessing!
 guru pema siddhi hung

OM AH HUNG BENZRA GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG...

And after this, we receive empowerments...

We begin by imagining that at Guru Rinpoche's forehead stands a white syllable OM, clear and radiant. From it, pure and clear white light radiates and touches our forehead, blessing our body...

Then we imagine a red syllable AH at Guru Rinpoche's throat. Red light from the syllable ah streams into our throat, blessing our speech...

Then we imagine a dark blue syllable HUNG at Guru Rinpoche's heart. From it, dark blue light streams and dissolves into our heart, blessing our mind...

From Guru Rinpoche's heart comes light, that is the essence of freedom from ordinary thought. This light dissolves into our heart. It removes our habitual tendencies and the two obscurations, the obscuring emotions and conceptual obscurations, our lack of understanding...

These purify the obscurations of our body, speech, and mind... and we are blessed with inseparability from the qualities and the enlightened activity of all buddhas. ...}

Following this visualization, we imagine that our lama, Guru Rinpoche, in great joy, dissolves into light. We imagine that from the seat of Guru Rinpoche upward and from the crown of his head downward, he dissolves into a ball of light that dissolves into us...

At this point, we think that we have become completely inseparable from Guru Rinpoche...

*The lama dissolves into light and is absorbed into oneself...
Abide in indivisible awareness and emptiness,
which is the face of the absolute lama...*

From *The Nature of Mind*, by Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche

At the beginning of each meditation session, generate bodhichitta for all beings...

Reflect on impermanence...

Feel the presence of Guru Padmasambhava, and all the buddhas, bodhisattvas, lineage masters, and sangha...

Chant the seven-line prayer, which is the sound of love, joy, and devotion...

Feel the sacred sound of this prayer purifying all emotional turbulence and ego-clinging...

Feel it bringing you and all beings back into your original true nature...

If you recite any additional prayers and mantras, continue generating these beautiful thoughts...

Whether you recite for a short or long time, afterward meditate on the absolute state - open, relaxed, and free...

Meditate according to your capabilities, beginning with focus for awhile if you need it, then ultimately relaxing without any focus according to the Dzogchen teachings...

From *Illuminating the Path*, by Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche

From the chapter on Guru Yoga, lightly edited

In practicing Guru Yoga, we focus on Guru Padmasambhava as the embodiment of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. There have been buddhas in the past, and there will be buddhas in the future, but the buddha of our present age is Guru Padmasambhava...

With this understanding, you begin the Guru Yoga by visualizing your teacher as Guru Padmasambhava, who is also known as Guru Rinpoche, Peme Jungne, or Orgyen Rinpoche. He is seated in the sky in front of you in the posture of royal ease, radiating the power of blessings...

Guru Padmasambhava embodies the wisdom and compassion of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas, and represents all true masters and anyone with whom you have felt a spiritual connection...

He symbolizes the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. In the tantras, he symbolizes the gurus, the devas, and dakinis... He radiates inspiration, love and compassion, the all-pervading bodhicitta light of perfect wisdom...

This light removes all obscurations and instantly awakens the buddha nature of every sentient being, transforming the whole universe into a Pure Land, a state of total bodhicitta, compassion, and wisdom...

Open yourself to this emanation and let blissful awareness deepen...

Guru Yoga practice invokes the hidden structure and transcendent qualities of our vajra body. We do that by recollecting in an instant that the entire universe is clear light... We instantly invoke the {subtle} vajra body by visualizing ourselves in a transparent pure form, representing our original nature and sublime qualities...

Then visualize in the space in front, your root teacher as Guru Padmasambhava...

As you do this practice, feel Guru Rinpoche's presence, and see the entire surrounding universe as the mandala of the lama...

Then, full of confidence and devotion, recite,

*Embodiment of all the buddhas of the three times without exception,
Most excellent Root Teacher, I pray to you*

*In this, and future lives, and in the bardo, these three,
hold us with your compassion*

May we all receive your blessings...

{Here recite the Seven Line Prayer, and the Vajra Guru mantra...}

Open your heart to the presence of the Lama, and feel appreciation for this precious relationship...

Shift your focus to various aspects of your devotion, and feel this bond while reciting...

Bathe in the sunlight of the Lama's blessings...

{Guru Rinpoche then melts into light and dissolves into you...}

Meditate here, resting your mind in the natural state, beyond concepts...

Maintain your awareness inseparable from the Guru...

At the conclusion, dedicate the merit...}

.

From Guru Yoga Practice, by Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche

Guru Padmasambhava represents the three jewels and the three roots - all of the objects of refuge...

A simple yet complete way to meditate on Guru Padmasambhava is to recite the Seven-line Prayer and the Vajra Guru Mantra...

Visualize Guru Padmasambhava in the space in front and above you, on a lotus, sun and moon seat...

His body made of pure light... and he is smiling down at you and all beings with compassion and loving-kindness...

At this point, recite the Seven-line Prayer, and the mantra...

HUNG

UR-GYEN YUL-GYI NUB-JANG SAHM

PE-MA GAY-SAR DONG-PO LAH

YAM-SEN CHO-GYI NU-DRUB NYAY

PE-MA JUNG-NAY ZHAY-SU DRAH

KHOR-DU KHAN-DRO MANG-PO KOR

KAY-KEE JAY-SU DAG-DRUB KEE

JIN-G LAB-CHIR SHENG-SU SOL

GU-RU PE-MA SID-DHI HUNG

HUNG

In the Northwest borderland of Uddiyana

In the heart of a lotus flower

Having realized most marvellous and supreme siddhis

You are renowned as the Lotus-born

Surrounded by a host of dakinis

Guided by you, entrusting myself

May I receive your blessing

GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG

OM AH HUNG BENZRA GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG

When you finish the recitations, you receive the blessings of Guru Padmasambhava.

To do this, visualize seed syllables made of light in Guru Padmasambhava's three centers. At his forehead is a white OM, at his throat is a red AH, and at his heart center is a blue HUM.

Visualize a strong white light, like a shooting star, coming from the syllable OM in Guru Padmasambhava's forehead and entering your forehead. It brings the blessings of the vajra body and removes your body obscurations...

Red light, as powerful as lightning, comes from the syllable AH in his throat and enters your throat, conveying the blessings of vajra speech, which remove the obscurations of your speech...

A piercing blue light from the syllable HUM at his heart enters your heart and you receive the blessings of vajra mind, so that your mental obscurations are removed...

With this you should feel that all the subtle obscurations of your body, speech, and mind are gone and that you fully receive the blessings of Guru Padmasambhava.

At the end of the practice, visualize that Guru Padmasambhava dissolves into white light. This light moves until it is directly above you, then it enters your body through the top of your head and descends to your heart, filling your body with wisdom light that merges with your awareness...

As much as you can, feel at that moment that your body is no longer solid, but has become a body of rainbow light...

Remain inseparable from the wisdom of Guru Padmasambhava without being distracted by thoughts for as long as you have time...

Then, conclude by dedicating the merit of your practice for the benefit of all sentient beings...

Guru Yoga Practice

From *The Buddhist Path*, by Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche

All of the Buddha's teachings are like stairsteps leading to dzogchen, the great perfection, which is the summit of the vajrayana. The key that opens the door to dzogchen is the practice of guru yoga. If you want to practice dzogchen, you should first practice on Guru Padmasambhava, and then you will easily understand the dzogchen teachings.

When you supplicate Guru Padmasambhava with a clear and peaceful mind, filled with devotion and bodhichitta, then his blessings and those of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas will help you to realize the true nature of your mind. For people who want to do vajrayana meditation it is very important to practice guru yoga.

Guru Padmasambhava represents the three jewels and the three roots - all of the objects of refuge. When you meditate on him you are not ignoring the other realized beings, because he embodies all of the buddhas of the ten directions and the three times. In particular, he represents your personal teachers and all of the masters of the Nyingma and Kagyu lineages.

It is not necessary to visualize all the different buddhas; doing guru yoga and practicing on one buddha is enough to bring full enlightenment.

Sometimes students wonder whether the meditation deities are simply created by the mind or whether they have a reality beyond the individual mind. All of them are existing buddhas as well as displays of our own

wisdom. You can focus on the meditation deities to whom you feel the strongest connection and you do not have to practice on all of them.

A simple yet complete way to meditate on Guru Padmasambhava is to recite the Seven-line Prayer and the Vajra Guru Mantra. The preparation for guru yoga practice is the same as for sitting practice.

Start with three prostrations to the shrine, then sit down with good posture on a cushion and do the breath purification exercise three times. Although it is beneficial to have a shrine, it is not mandatory - wherever you meditate with good motivation is your shrine.

Then, visualize in the space in front of you, a little above the level of your eyebrows, a lotus with five-colored petals. Above the lotus is a sun and moon seat on which Guru Padmasambhava sits in the royal posture. He has one face, two arms and two legs. His white, youthful body is a wisdom body made of light; it is not made of substantial flesh and bone. He is sitting in a five-colored, circular rainbow that is radiating wisdom light in all directions.

See Guru Padmasambhava smiling down at you with compassion and loving-kindness. At this point take refuge and then arouse bodhichitta, the intention to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.

In this practice, while you are visualizing Padmasambhava with devotion, you are also cultivating compassion and loving-kindness for all beings.

After the refuge and bodhichitta, recite the Seven-line Prayer at least three or seven times. The Seven-line Prayer is very powerful. It was not composed by human beings; it came from the voice of the true nature, the dharmadhatu state. At the moment when Guru Padmasambhava was born in the lotus, hundreds of wisdom dakinis surrounded him and chanted these lines.

The Vajra Guru Mantra, OM AH HUM VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM, has twelve Sanskrit syllables which represent internal and external aspects of our existence. For example, in the Tibetan calendar, time is grouped in units of twelve - there are twelve signs of the zodiac, and cycles of twelve years, twelve months, and twelve hours. In Buddhism there are twelve links of interdependent origination and twelve acts of a supreme buddha. These groups of twelve are all connected, purified, and balanced by this mantra.

Even one recitation of the Vajra Guru Mantra has great benefit; it is not the same as repeating ordinary words. When you do this practice, recite the twelve-syllable mantra for as long as you have time. You should repeat it at least twenty-one times, or for one mala of 108 repetitions, or for ten malas, or one hundred malas - whatever you can do. If you are in a hurry to see Guru Padmasambhava, then you should do more. You could begin by reciting the mantra at least 108 times per session, with the goal of reciting the mantra a total of one hundred thousand times.

The sound of the mantra is also meditation, and you can use it as a technique to aid your practice. By concentrating on reciting the mantra musically, you can purify the channels and bodily systems.

As well as keeping the inner levels in proper balance, mantra recitation purifies external situations. You can use this technique to turn the whole world into a mandala of music.

When you finish the mantra recitation you receive the blessings of Guru Padmasambhava. To do this, visualize seed syllables made of light in Guru Padmasambhava's three centers: at his forehead is a white OM, at his throat is a red AH, and at his heart center is a blue HUM.

Visualize a strong white light, like a shooting star, coming from the syllable OM in Guru Padmasambhava's forehead and entering your forehead. It brings the blessings of the vajra body and removes your body obscurations...

Red light, as powerful as lightning, comes from the syllable AH in his throat and enters your throat, conveying the blessings of vajra speech, which remove the obscurations of your speech...

A piercing blue light from the syllable HUM at his heart enters your heart and you receive the blessings of vajra mind, so that your mental obscurations are removed...

With this you should feel that all the subtle obscurations of your body, speech, and mind are gone and that you fully receive the blessings of Guru Padmasambhava.

At the end of the practice, visualize that Guru Padmasambhava dissolves into white light. This light moves until it is directly above you, then it enters

your body through the top of your head and descends to your heart, filling your body with wisdom light that merges with your awareness...

As much as you can, feel at that moment that your body is no longer solid, but has become a body of rainbow light...

Remain inseparable from the wisdom of Guru Padmasambhava without being distracted by thoughts for as long as you have time...

Then, conclude by dedicating the merit of your practice for the benefit of all sentient beings...

There are many ways to meditate, but no matter which technique you use, you need to apply concentration. This involves keeping the mind on the object of focus. For example, when you recite mantras, you can concentrate on visualizing each syllable of the mantra circling around like it is written on a wheel. Concentrating on each syllable while reciting the mantra helps to transform ordinary speech into vajra speech, and at the same time you are developing the ability to concentrate in meditation.

Also, during meditation you need to apply mindfulness, to watch what your mind is doing, as a support for your concentration. This is the basic instruction for beginning your daily practice.

When you do vajrayana practice it is very important to establish a personal connection with a lama and with Guru Padmasambhava. By connecting with Guru Padmasambhava you receive his assistance in understanding the true nature of the mind.

Doing guru yoga practice also brings a very close connection to your personal teacher, who exemplifies the realization gained by the practice. When you connect with a personal teacher, you have an auspicious situation similar to that of Guru Padmasambhava's twenty-five disciples, all of whom became enlightened by following the instructions of their teacher.

The result of practicing on Guru Padmasambhava is two-fold: you attain what are known as the ordinary and supreme achievements, or siddhis. The ordinary achievement includes long life, good health, peace and happiness, as well as the ability to fulfill all of your bodhichitta aspirations. The supreme achievement is enlightenment. The ordinary and supreme achievements are considered the general result of practicing on Guru Padmasambhava.

The teachings say that we should create a daily schedule where we set aside some time devoted solely to practice. By keeping to a schedule we won't be so carried away by mundane concerns and the endless chores that accompany them. This discipline will help us refine and expand our practice, as well as maintain the original, fresh aspirations we had when we first entered the path. Of course we should conclude every practice with dedication and aspiration prayers for the enlightenment of all sentient beings.

Setting aside this time for daily practice will help us stay more connected to the absolute nature of Guru Padmasambhava within ourselves and others. In post-meditation, we should be thoughtful and consider what is good to do and what is good to avoid.

We should take care of our affairs in the mundane world using what's available and helpful on the relative level, but we should try to do this without too much emotion. Bodhichitta, devotion, joy, and appreciation are aspects of the relative truth that we should apply consistently to make our Dzogchen practice much more profound and powerful. As you progress, try to integrate what you've learned in meditation into post-meditation.

Bring your realization of non-duality into the dualistic world. Keep your mind very spacious and open, and your conduct very careful and refined. Maintain your identity as a practitioner and have courage.

We've all heard many times that the true nature of our own minds and the entire universe is already enlightened. Yet just hearing this is not enough. We have to practice with joyful effort, courage, and commitment, and if we continue to do this, we will realize the true nature. The true nature is not something that has been created by the Buddha or anyone else; the true nature is what is. Please keep practicing.

Every practice requires devotion and bodhichitta - keep yourself inspired! It's important to remember that what you learn from teachings and books is only theoretical knowledge, which by itself is not enough. You must absorb what you learn into your heart and let it fully blossom.

- Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche

Wake Up Practice, by Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche

In the morning we should begin with the practice of stirring from the sleep of ignorance.

Chant the liturgy called *Awakening from the Sleep of Ignorance...*

At the very moment of waking up one should think of Guru Rinpoche with all the dakas and dakinis, voices singing and ornaments dangling. With ornaments of jewel and bone, they play hand drums and bells. Think that:

This is what wakes me up...

Thus should one wake, not just in an ordinary manner. This is the meaning of stirring from sleep. Due to their compassion and powers, one is awakened, not merely from ordinary sleep but from the sleep of ignorance. So,

Now I have awakened into the space of awareness wisdom...

Guru Padma together with his host of dakas and dakinis, accompanied by the music of hand drums and bells, have arrived with great splendor in the sky before me. Their bodies in dancing postures, their voices as melodies of symbolic language and mantra songs, and their minds as the essence of self-occurring awareness are all directed toward me...

{Rinpoche sings the liturgy}

Waking Up From the Deep Sleep of Ignorance

By Guru Padmasambhava

Revealed by Terton Karma Lingpa

From the Cycle of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities

{At dawn, in the space in front of you, visualize the wisdom dakinis who guide you away from the dualism of virtue and nonvirtue. Bound by their commitment to safeguard the life of yogis, they appear in front of you playing the damaru and bell. They sing this song to spur and inspire you toward dharma practice and remind you of impermanence. You can also visualize singing it yourself.}

Lineage holders!

Oh no! Don't let ignorance overwhelm you!

Wake up now with joyful effort!

Since beginningless time, until this very moment,
you have been sleeping in ignorance. Enough!

Do not sleep now!

Devote your three doors to the practice of dharma!

Don't you know the sufferings of birth, old age, sickness and death?

Nothing lasts forever, not even for today.

The time has come to practice with diligence!

This is the only moment to accomplish permanent happiness,
not to fritter away time in laziness.

Contemplate death!

Accomplish your practice!

Life is uncertain!

The causes and conditions for death are innumerable.

If you do not attain the sublime fearlessness at this very moment,
then what is the use of having been alive?

What has it all been for?

All phenomena are naturally selfless,
they are empty self, and free of elaboration.

In that they appear to be self existent,
they are like magical illusions, mirages,
dreams, and reflections

They are like the cities of ghandarvas,
echoes,
like reflections of the moon in water,
like bubbles,
like optical illusions, and manifest illusions.

Understand all worldly and transcendental phenomena in these terms, and
with illustrations such as these

All phenomena are naturally {selfless}, unborn,
Devoid of {self} existence, without cessation,

Neither coming nor going,
Free from a reference point,
Empty of {ultimately defining} characteristics,
and beyond thought and words...

Today you must realize this meaning!

Today you must realize this meaning!

Lord Guru and Host of Devas

I pray you will look upon me with compassion...

Now all sentient beings of the three realms are asleep,
their minds in a state of indifference.

When waking up, they wander through experiences of confusion.

So that I, your child, a yogi who realizes natural awareness,
may guide all beings of the six realms,
to the Pureland of Celestial Realms,
I will follow you, the Father Guru...

Not remaining indifferent for a moment in thought, word, or deed,
I will gain certainty through learning, reflection, and meditation,
and arrange my life around the four sessions...

In this delightful realm of a retreat
I will accomplish the two benefits, of self and others.

Guru, may You and Your Host of Devas,
bless my body, speech, and mind...

May I accomplish the path,
and may all temporal and ultimate aims be fulfilled...

Expelling the stale breath

From beginningless time until now, the wisdom prana has been obscured by the klesha prana, the wind of disturbing emotions. This klesha prana continually leads to thoughts of attachment, aggression, and delusion, thereby creating habitual patterns. To avoid this, expel the stale breath.

At the outset of practice straighten the body. As the right nostril is the major path for the movement of the strong kleshas, first exhale through the right nostril, then the left and finally through both. Exhale the stale breath three or nine times, whichever is suitable...

The exhalation should be accompanied by a hissing sound, and the inhalation should be done slowly. When exhaling, imagine that all the karmas, kleshas, evil deeds, obscurations, sicknesses, and negative forces flow out like smoke from a chimney... Negativity leaves your body through all the pores, but mainly through the nostrils...

When inhaling, imagine that five colored rainbow lights of the blessings, wisdom, loving compassion, activities; and qualities of all the victorious ones and their sons dissolve into yourself...

Next, while imagining your root guru above the crown of your head, chant *Buddha of the Three Times*, an incredibly blessed supplication especially suited for these times.

Buddha of the three times, Guru Rinpoche,
Lord of all siddhis, Great Bliss One,
Dispeller of all obstacles, Wrathful Tamer of Mara,
I supplicate you, please bestow your blessings...
Pacify outer, inner and secret obstacles,
and bless me with the spontaneous fulfillment of my wishes...

After that, the Guru dissolves into yourself...

Inspiring words

From A Torch Lighting the Way to Freedom

Invoking Padmasambhava

We can see ourselves

In our meditation sessions

From The Sole Panacea

Marvelous and supreme

From A Torch Lighting the Way to Freedom, by Dudjom Rinpoche

When unmistakable devotion takes birth in us, obstacles on the path will be dispelled and we will make progress, obtaining all the supreme and ordinary accomplishments without depending on anything else. This is what we mean by the profound path of Guru Yoga.

* * *

The one who is much kinder than other Buddhas is Guru Rinpoche.

When we meditate on him, practice his sadhana, and pray to him, it is as if we were meditating, practicing, and praying to the infinite Buddhas and the Three Roots.

He has promised that he will constantly guide and bless us, and he will never let us down. That promise is a profound commitment made with his diamond speech. So pledge yourself to him with total conviction and heartfelt confidence.

Invoking Padmasambhava with deep yearning, devotion, pure samaya, and complete sincerity creates the proper circumstance for the natural manifestation of Padmasambhava's awakened state. The most vital element, however, is a deep yearning, like a child longing for his mother or a mother thinking of her child. If one has that kind of devotion, a complete surrender, seeking no other refuge, then there is no doubt Padmasambhava will manifest...

- Orgyen Topgyal Rinpoche

We can see ourselves in the presence of the Teacher...

We can talk to Him, and ask Him for what we need, and complain to Him of our troubles, and rejoice with Him in what is good...

For this there is no need for set prayers

We can use such words as express our desires and needs....

{Adapted from the teachings on prayer by Teresa of Avila}

In our meditation sessions, we should visualize Guru Rinpoche and his retinue of dakas and dakinis...

We should invoke him with faith and devotion, and with one-pointed concentration, and again and again receive blessings and empowerments...

We should make this our main practice as much as we can...

From The Sole Panacea, by Thinley Norbu

From the introduction by Tulku Thondup

With heartfelt devotion, pray to and meditate on Guru Rinpoche and the ocean of dakas and dakinis...

Remembering the enlightened activities of Guru Rinpoche and enjoying his enlightened qualities - all-knowing wisdom, unconditional love, and boundless power, sing the sacred prayer in the sweetest melody with a devotional heart and trusting confidence...

This will cause your mind to awaken with common and uncommon attainments. Then your life will be transformed into the blessed cycles of ultimate peace, joy, and enlightenment.

You will become the source of these same qualities for others because of the enlightened power of Guru Rinpoche and your own mind's devotional power to see, enjoy, and express such Buddha qualities...

'Marvelous and Supreme'

{siddhis - variously: magical powers, or abilities; blessings; attainments or accomplishments, that are given by a Noble One, a Holy Person}

There are siddhis...

to bring peace

to increase patience

for healing, to restore the elements, in ourselves, in a person, or a group

there are siddhis to clear away suffering, and depression

for longevity...

to purify, and to bring transformation

to remove obstacles

to have strength, physical and mental, and the ability to meditate well,

to have freedom of mind

there are siddhis to be able to learn quickly, to have a good memory, and retention

to bring clarity, to have foresight - knowledge, and to have insight -
wisdom, transcendent understanding

there are siddhis for protection

to dispel fear

to increase love and compassion

there are siddhis that are antidotes to the afflictions

there are siddhis to tame barbarians, bringing them the Dharma, and
restoring them

to tame, to influence, to illumine

that bring liberation

to stop conflict, and to bring harmony

that lead out of desolate places, and create Purelands

there are siddhis for resources

to control the weather, to bring rain, to end drought, and to stop fires

to educate

to have confidence, to be charismatic, and appealing

there are siddhis to increase our ability to communicate, to speak and to write,

to know the nature of others and to teach them according to their needs -

these are common and supreme, extraordinary, marvelous and supreme

Selected teachings

From *The Commentary on the Seven Line Prayer*, by Khenpo Sodargye,
from lecture one

On Guru Yoga Practice, by Orgyen Chowang

Creation and Completion, Approach and Accomplishment, from *The White Lotus*

From Teachings on Guru Yoga, by Penor Rinpoche

Teachings on the Vajra Guru Mantra, by Garchen Rinpoche

From The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel, by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche

Faith, Devotion, and Blessings on the Path of Liberation

A Useful Map of Four Stages

From The Commentary on the Seven Line Prayer, by Khenpo Sodargye

[Text, in pdf format](#)

[Audio](#)

From lecture one

Once the blessings of the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Guru dissolve into your heart, then any practice will become quite easy for you...

It's not necessary to quote many scriptural and theoretical references because even after learning the literal meaning the wise would know the extraordinary blessing and power of the vajra words of noble beings....

Namo Guru Padma

Majushri Vajra Tikshnaya!

Holder of the Vajra,

You who are in truth All Buddhas of the three times,

Lake-Born Lord

Appearing as an emanation in this world,

Body of undying wisdom, Sovereign of Vidyadharas,

Padmakara, O Glorious One

Protect me now, this wanderer

Glorious Padmasambhava ,

I beseech you,

please protect us, the pitiful beings in this age of degeneration...

The more we beseech Padmasambhava, the stronger the blessing we will get from him, and when the blessing integrates into our hearts, our practice is bound to succeed...

Now, at this time, when the Buddhadharma is in decline, evil forces and tirthikas {heretics} become extremely active.

Our wrong attachments and negative thoughts might consume us any time. In such a dark age, without relying on the support of an extraordinary and powerful force, we are confronted with difficult circumstances. If we count on our own feeble effort, we will have a hard time in accomplishing our practice.

Therefore, I appeal to vajra friends again and again to pray to Guru Padmasambhava constantly and with fierce conviction. If you do so, your practice will be good from the beginning to the end...

*The lotus of my heart, endowed with threefold faith,
is turned toward the daystar {the sun} of the Mighty Conqueror,
and opens in the splendor of blessings*

*May the honey dew drops of this explanation
sweetly fall and satisfy the wishes of the fortunate*

An analogy is used to illustrate how the Tatagatha's blessing is like sunshine...

The sunshine makes the lotus blossom...

There are many prayers to Guru Rinpoche, but the king of all these prayers is the Seven Line Prayer.

This prayer is the source or the treasury of all blessings, merits, and siddhis. Perhaps many of you will understand this after learning about its benefit from this text...

Whoever you are, as long as you pray with sincere faith and devotion, Guru Rinpoche and the Buddhas of the ten directions, the Three Roots and Dharma Protectors, and all other Noble Beings will gather in front of you and bestow their blessings and empowerments.

As ordinary beings, we are like child-beggars roaming about the streets among the crowds, where no one takes any notice, but, if he calls his mother sorrowfully, then his mother will naturally show up, bringing him a sense of security and protection.

In this dark time of degeneration, even if we really wish for a successful practice without a setback, there will certainly be challenges along the way.

So I think it is very important to pray...

*If thus you simply call upon me
with this melody of Vajra Sound,
I, Padma, cannot help but come to you.
I will give to you my blessings and will grant
empowerment of great primordial wisdom...*

With the Vajra Seven Line Prayer, if you entreat me, supplicate me with pleasant and melodious sound, then I, Padmasambhava will immediately come to you, cannot help but come to you...

These are Vajra Words words - it means to appear immediately in front of you and grant you blessings and empowerments of great wisdom...

* Nowadays, there are many practitioners who cannot find Lamas to give empowerments, so they are always asking around. Many Lamas are very busy, or they have health issues so they can't arrange empowerments.

If that is the case, then you can ask Guru Rinpoche for empowerment.

Recite the Seven-Line Prayer every day, then his Wisdom Body will come to you and give you empowerment. As long as we have faith, we will definitely receive his blessings and empowerments...

As told in the verse, it is the empowerment of Wisdom:

*The multitudes of Deities of the Three Roots will gather like clouds
to grant, unhindered, common and supreme accomplishment
And in your waking life, or in your meditation,
in visions, or in dreams, you will encounter Me
Swirls of rainbow light you will see, and smell sweet scents...*

When we supplicate by reciting the Seven-Line Prayer, the Three Roots, of the Gurus, Yidams, and Dakas {and Dakinis, the Dharma Protectors} will

gather like clouds, appearing in front of us to grant us blessings. They will bestow the common and the extraordinary siddhis unobstructedly...

Through such practice we will receive the blessing from Padmasambhava and many Deities. Such feelings, experiences, and perceptions might occur at any time, even in dreams... *

With devotion, everyone can receive certain blessings or empowerments. It's just a matter of whether we practice. If we do, everybody can surely benefit.

Sometimes you might see rainbow lights or smell sweet scents around your meditation room...

*And hear celestial airs and the gentle tapping of the damaru,
your body, speech, and mind with blessings drenched,
You will gain realization in a single leap,
by virtue of the strength of your awareness.
Eight classes of proud spirits will be subject to your word.*

If you practice the Seven Line Prayer like this, then you will often hear the sound of the damaru from celestial beings, and the sound of instruments performed by Dharma protectors and dakas.

In the past, around the caves or cabins where petitioners were in solitary retreat, various kinds of auspicious sounds could be heard quite often.

Also your body and speech will be greatly blessed. If your body suffers a lot through practice, the body will become very pliable and relaxed.

If you are careless with your speech, through this practice your speech will become soft and gentle.

The same goes for your mind. If you are troubled by deep rooted negative emotions, then through Guru Padmasambhava's empowerment, a very strong and powerful blessing will dissolve into your mind.

Consequently, all your greed, anger, and ignorance will transform tremendously. This is very obvious among many practitioners.

Some people change very quickly by the blessings of buddhas and bodhisattvas that integrate into their minds.

Individuals with sharper capacities will immediately gain an intrinsic awareness becoming enlightened instantly, and realizing the true reality...

And your Dharma activities will prosper...

*All you thus linked with me will gain my blessing's power,
and, swift to gain attainment as a vidyadharas,
you will never apart from me, the Lotus-Born Samaya!*

If you practice through this prayer of Padmasambhava, you will benefit the countless beings with whom you have formed a bond.

At the moment some of you are not capable of helping others, but when your Dharma practice reaches a certain level, those who

were kind or mean to you, anyone who makes a good or bad karmic bond with you will benefit from you...

Not divulged, but as deep treasure it must now be hid.

In evil times to come, my own disciple will appear;

and at that time, endowed with wisdom,

through the power of Vairotsana's prayer,

he will reveal this means of taming beings

Gleaming with symbolic lettering of light,

thus far and wide will spread a source of help for wanderers.

Samaya!

This particular instruction of Guru Rinpoche was not disseminated widely at that time. Instead, it was concealed as a treasure text...

If we understand the profound impact of Tibetan Buddhism's treasure texts, and the differences between the long oral transmission and the short transmission, we will generate great devotion towards termas.

The short transmission is completely pure and free from any defilements, such as the breaking of samayas - the broken relationship between teachers and disciples.

All these terma teachings were directly blessed by Padmasambhava, and concealed somewhere. Then, he would appoint a designated disciple as the future revealer to retrieve it, and consequently, by the power of Guru Rinpoche's aspiration and this disciples motivation and realization, when all the right conditions, timing, location, and other favorable elements come together, these texts will be revealed for the benefit of all beings.

So we should be aware that many of Padmasambhava's practices were termas, later being revealed by tertons, in specific places and times...

Tantra practice is beyond what our conceptual mind can comprehend.

There are much more profound meanings. As Vajrayana followers, we have to know this...

So, I think that for most people it is very important to pray to Padmasambhava during this age of degeneration. I hope that you can reflect on this point.

It's not because we are followers of Tibetan Buddhism that we must propagate Tibetan Buddhism.

As long as they are beneficial to sentient beings, whether they are Buddhist teachings or non-buddhist teachings, all deserve to be promoted equally...

On Guru Yoga Practice, by Orgyen Chowang

From the book *From Foundation to Summit*

In Guru Yoga practice, we develop incontrovertible faith in Guru Rinpoche as our root master or our root teacher in the form of Guru Rinpoche...

We begin by imagining our present environment not as an ordinary appearance but as the highest pure land of Lotus Light...

Guru Rinpoche's own adamant speech promised that if someone with faith in him and a karmic connection to him prayed with great yearning, in times of happiness, sorrow, or suffering, no buddha's compassionate blessing would be swifter than that of Guru Rinpoche, due to his aspirations and the connections of cause and effect...

Mipham Rinpoche commented that however strong the negative emotions become or however deep and difficult beings' situations get, Guru Rinpoche's activity would increase.

He said that, during the degenerate time, peoples' negative emotions increase, the length of their lives decreases, their busyness increases, and the parts of their lives that create suffering increase, but at that time, in the same way as when the sky gets darker, the moon gets brighter, the activity of Guru Rinpoche will increase as things get more difficult.

One of Ratna Lingpa's treasures is the practice of Sangwa Dupa (the Union of Mysteries). In that text, Guru Rinpoche says,

If you practice me, you will accomplish all buddhas. If you see me, you see all buddhas. I am the union, the epitome, of all buddhas...

This is the adamantine speech, the true words, the promise of Guru Rinpoche.

There are a number of ways to meditate on Guru Rinpoche. For example, we can imagine Guru Rinpoche, and above his head sit the series of lineage masters, one above the other, until Buddha Ever Excellent. We can imagine Guru Rinpoche surrounded by the three jewels and the three roots, as if in a crowded marketplace;

Or we can imagine that all these objects of refuge are joined in the single form of Guru Rinpoche; this is “the single jewel” style. It is fine to practice any of these styles, whatever style of meditation feels right to you.

Guru Rinpoche said that in the pure land of Great Bliss resides Buddha Amitabha. On Mount Potala lives the protector Chenrezig. And Guru Rinpoche himself was born on Lake Danakosha, as Padmasambhava. These three forms represent the three bodies of enlightenment, but in fact they are inseparable.

There is no difference in essence between Amitabha, Chenrezig, and Padmasambhava...

When we meditate on Guru Rinpoche in this way, we should meditate so that all our ordinary common appearances are blocked by the attention given to Guru Rinpoche...

We can do this elaborate invitation process; or, if we have very deep confidence and stable faith in the visualization, simply by recalling the symbols, signs, and meanings described above, the commitment divinities and the wisdom divinities can be immediately made inseparable. If that is the case, we do not have to invite the wisdom Bodhisattva Divinities from the Pureland.

We can be confident that if we have stable faith, just doing this immediate visualization will be effective for us to receive the blessing...

How is this possible? Even in the sutras, it is said that

The Buddha stands directly before whoever brings the Buddha to mind. Whoever keeps the Buddha in mind will continually receive his blessing and be freed from all faults...

This applies to Guru Rinpoche as well.

Guru Rinpoche himself said,

A form of me will appear before any person who has faith in me...

So we don't have to think of Guru Rinpoche as being far away in the Copper-Colored Mountain; with faith and devotion, Guru Rinpoche will appear directly before us.

Thinley Norbu Rinpoche comments that each of us has to judge according to our own needs and time available which visualization to do, elaborate or brief...

The complete embodiment of all buddhas of the three times,

Supreme root lama, I pray to you.

In this life, the next lives, and between lives, hold me with your compassion.

May your blessings flow unceasingly throughout the three times...

The first two lines say in effect,

Guru Rinpoche and the root lama

are the union of all the buddhas of the past, present, and future,

and to my root teacher I pray...

In the next line, we ask Guru Rinpoche to protect and nurture us with his compassion.

"In this life" means whether we're happy or suffering from sickness or psychological disturbances, regardless of our situation, we ask for Guru Rinpoche's attention to make our lives work, be successful, help clear away obstacles on our path to enlightenment, and at the very best increase our experience and realization so that we can attain enlightenment during this lifetime.

We ask for his compassion, attention, and nourishment during this lifetime. We ask particularly for Guru Rinpoche's aid in clearing away all obstacles

to our progress, most particularly for the development of the realization, or recognition, of the Dzogchen view...

We ask, as well, for Guru Rinpoche's compassionate attention for the benefit of our future lives. We wish to be reborn among human beings, to regain all the aspects of the precious human birth, to meet a qualified master, to have all our obstacles and impediments to realization cleared away, to be happy in body, speech, and mind,

and most particularly, to have the opportunity to receive the teachings of luminous Dzogchen. We also ask for Guru Rinpoche's compassion and attention between lives {during the intermediate state, the bardo...}

When we address our root lama as the embodiment of the buddhas of the three times, we are speaking of all buddhas past, present, and future...

We imagine all these buddhas of the past, present, and future joined in the one person of our root teacher...

We address our root lama as our principal, root, or source master (In Tibetan the *tsawe lama*)...

{The one who has helped us the most in this life...}

In the Ngöndro prayer, we say,

My root teacher, to you I pray...

Physically, we render homage with great respect; verbally, we pray with great devotion; and mentally, we give our faith wholeheartedly and single-mindedly to our root teacher with great reverence...

In the fourth line of the four-line prayer, we ask for our master's blessing continuously...

We pray to Guru Rinpoche wholeheartedly and single-mindedly. The image for being single-minded is a dagger. The mind is sharp, clear, intense, and focused. We bring this intensity to our prayer to Guru Rinpoche...

We develop intense devotion and appreciation toward our root teacher, receive blessings from his body, speech, and mind to our body, speech, and mind, and in this way we receive the blessing that his wisdom joins inseparably with our mind...

Once we finish the prayers to Guru Rinpoche, {and the recitation of mantra} we receive the four empowerments.

We begin by imagining that at Guru Rinpoche's forehead stands a white syllable om, clear and radiant. From it, pure and clear white light radiates and touches our forehead, which bestows the first of the four empowerments, the "vase empowerment."

In our body of fully ripened karma, the obscurations of our inner channels are purified and our body becomes the display of the body of

enlightenment. We receive in our mind the fortune of attaining the manifest body of enlightenment.

Second, we imagine a red syllable ah at Guru Rinpoche's throat. Red light from the syllable ah streams into our throat, bestowing the second empowerment-the "secret empowerment" and the blessing of Guru Rinpoche's speech.

We imagine that our voice is blessed by his; in the same way that our speech is related to our breathing, or our energy, this empowerment at the level of our throat removes the obscurations of the energy-winds throughout our body. We receive the fortune to attain the body of enlightenment's perfect splendor.

Then we imagine a dark blue syllable hung at Guru Rinpoche's heart. From it, dark blue light streams and dissolves into our heart, bestowing upon us the third empowerment-the "wisdom empowerment."

This purifies the obscurations of our mind and the vital essence (*thigle*) of our body. We imagine that our mind is blessed by the enlightened mind of Guru Rinpoche. The blue light places in our mind the fortune to attain the ultimate body of enlightenment.

Then from Guru Rinpoche's heart comes a sphere of five-colored light, the essence of freedom from ordinary thought. This clear globe of light dissolves into our heart. It removes our habitual tendencies and the two obscurations (the obscuring emotions and conceptual obscurations, our lack of understanding).

It bestows upon us the fourth empowerment, the "precious word empowerment." We are blessed with inseparability from the qualities and the enlightened activity of all buddhas.

The fourth empowerment places in our mind the fortune to attain all these qualities in one place and one time, without being mixed up, called "the essence-body of enlightenment" (svabhavikakaya).

The Vajra Guru Mantra

Depending on which foundational practice or commentary one reads, at this point we might recite the twelve-syllable mantra of Guru Rinpoche - *om ah hung benzar guru pema siddhi hung*.

According to some foundational practices, the Seven Line Prayer and the mantra are recited before the empowerments. Sometimes the mantra is recited after the empowerments.

Here is the meaning of the mantra according to the New Treasures of Dudjom Rinpoche:

Om, ah, and hung are the seed syllables of the three vajras - the body, speech, and mind of all buddhas or of Guru Rinpoche.

Benzar is a Tibetan "mispronunciation" of the word *vajra*. Phonetically, it should be pronounced *vajra*, but it has been pronounced for so long as *benzar* that there is as much blessing in mispronouncing it as in pronouncing it properly. Only recently has it been pronounced properly.

Many awareness holders and great masters of the past have attained accomplishment by saying benzar. Without a doubt some of them recited vajra, but most recited benzar. If you recite om ah hung benzar guru pema siddhi hung, you shouldn't have any doubt that this will lead you to accomplishment.

Benzar (Skt. vajra) in this case is a weapon that cannot be defeated and can overcome, or split, anything in its path. As related to our practice, vajra is the symbol of awareness and emptiness, which cannot be divided by any complications of dualistic experience or ordinary thought. Awareness and emptiness cannot be overcome by any thoughts of solid reality.

Awareness and emptiness refer to the empty and clear nature of our mind that cannot be overcome by any thing, by any ordinary thought. This is vajra, the nature of our own mind. Vajra is the nature of reality, or the sphere of totality, beyond any characteristics. In this case, it is the ultimate body of enlightenment.

Guru literally means "heavy" in Sanskrit, because the lama is heavy with all the qualities of the seven aspects of the body of enlightenment's perfect splendor (which were mentioned in the discussion of refuge).

The lama endowed with the weighty qualities of the Pureland of enlightenment is related to the body of enlightenment's perfect splendor.

Pema (or *padma*) evokes the lotus family of enlightenment, the wisdom of discernment, and great exaltation.

All forms of Guru Rinpoche belong to the lotus family of enlightenment and all were born miraculously. The Lake-Born Vajra, the eight forms of Guru Rinpoche, and so forth are all miraculous manifestations of enlightenment in the world.

Pema refers to Guru Rinpoche as the manifest body of enlightenment. The master from Oddiyana, the great Vajradhara, Guru Rinpoche, embodies all three bodies of enlightenment. In the perceptions of ordinary sentient beings, a distinction exists between the ultimate body of enlightenment, the body of enlightenment's perfect splendor, and the manifest body of enlightenment.

For Guru Rinpoche, these three bodies are inseparable, indivisible, without distinction.

The body of enlightenment's {the dharmakaya's} perfect splendor {the sambhogakaya} is the display of the ultimate body.

The manifest body {the nirmanakaya} is the display of the body of enlightenment's perfect splendor.

They are one, although it doesn't appear this way to ordinary beings.

Recalling the enlightened qualities of Guru Rinpoche, we recite the mantra as a prayer, with complete openness and simplicity of mind, without any complications or elaborations.

We allow our mind to be completely open as we recite. Reciting the mantra in that way, we receive Guru Rinpoche's blessing and accomplishment.

Accomplishment is the meaning of the next two syllables, *siddhi*. We receive both supreme and ordinary accomplishments.

In brief, the first three syllables of the mantra *om ah hung benzar guru pema siddhi hung* relate to the body, speech, and mind of all buddhas.

Benzar guru pema relates to the ultimate body of enlightenment, the body of enlightenment's perfect splendor, and the manifest body of enlightenment. *Siddhi* means "accomplishment."

We finish the mantra with the syllable *hung*, which here means "Give me this right now!"

We remember the meaning of the mantra as we recite and think to ourselves,

Body, speech, and mind of Guru Rinpoche's three bodies of enlightenment, give me blessing right now!

Guru Rinpoche takes many forms. His eight different manifestations are only some of his forms. In fact, he appears in an inconceivable number of forms.

This mantra is, in fact, a form of Guru Rinpoche. Guru Rinpoche is inseparable from this mantra.

Mipham Rinpoche's commentary to the Secret Essence Tantra, the Essence of Luminosity, states that the deities {the Celestial Bodhisattva Divinities} and their mantras are one and the same.

He explains in detail how it is possible for manifestations of enlightenment to take many different forms including that of a mantra, and how the essence of the deity appears directly in the mantra.

We don't have the fortune at this time to see or encounter his human form, the manifest body of enlightenment, as people did in the eighth century. However, this mantra helps us arrive at the experience, or realization, of the mind of Guru Rinpoche.

If there were no presence of Guru Rinpoche, reciting countless numbers of mantras would have no effect. It would be like doing something completely impossible. But we can receive, or attain, supreme and ordinary accomplishments through reciting the mantra.

It invokes the presence of Guru Rinpoche.

No matter how much ordinary talk we engage in, we won't receive the blessings of the Buddha of the three times, Guru Rinpoche's blessing, however, reciting this mantra does attract his blessing.

When reciting the Guru Rinpoche mantra, maintain very strong faith and devotion to Guru Rinpoche who appears in the sky before you.

Imagine that the mantra is the manifest form of Guru Rinpoche.

Keep Guru Rinpoche in your speech, in your mind, and in your imagined sight of him in the sky before you...

You imagine seeing the nature of your own mind as Guru Rinpoche.

If you continue to recite the mantra with that attitude, imagination will manifest as reality...

At the present time, because we have continued in the lack of recognition of our basic nature, our experience is very solid and very real. It seems evident and natural to experience the world through our ordinary thinking, through dualistic experience. We have great attachment to self and appearances.

We must begin to change this situation with ordinary thinking about objective experience and gradually loosen up and make less solid the subject-object play of our experience.

When we recognize and are aware of the nature of mind, eventually what we experience now as ordinary thought, or dualistic experience, becomes the display of wisdom.

On the path to enlightenment, all our experience is transformed directly into the experience of the bodies and wisdoms of enlightenment.

We have the experience of the three bodies of enlightenment as the path.

Although the pointing-out instruction of the nature of mind is, strictly speaking, the domain of *trekchöd*, by reciting the twelve-syllable mantra, even without having received the instructions of *trekchöd*, we can receive empowerment directly from Guru Rinpoche.

Through this visualization and recitation of the mantra, we can receive the blessing of his mind and have the realization of the nature of mind as the ultimate body of enlightenment arise within our mind.

Through practice on the path, we can have the experience of appearances as the three bodies of enlightenment. There is no difference between that experience and the experience we gain through *trekchöd* practice. We can call it "the blessing of Guru Rinpoche" or "the view of *trekchöd*" that has arisen in our mind precisely as it is in the teaching.

We have to receive our empowerment with the thought that we really do receive it. As we practice regularly, it becomes more of a reality. We receive empowerment continually, until gradually we can recognize self-manifest awareness.

This is the path to receiving the blessing of the lama's body, speech, and mind.

Although it may seem that we are separate from Guru Rinpoche, when we receive the blessings and empowerments, dissolve Guru Rinpoche's mind into our mind, and behold the ultimate lama in a state of non-duality, the appreciation and gratitude we have developed yield extraordinary benefits...

Creation and Completion, Approach and Accomplishment

From White Lotus

We should visualize the supreme Lotus King clearly and steadily in the sky in front of ourselves, seated on a spotless lotus flower in the lake of Dhanakosha in the land of Orgyen, accompanied by his retinue of dakas and dakinis as numerous as the seeds in a pod of sesame. This constitutes *the approach phase...*

To pray devotedly to Guru Rinpoche with the aspiration to accomplish the three vajras within our body, speech, and mind is the phase of *close approach...*

These two practices, of approach and close approach, constitute the generation stage.

In conclusion, like iron fragments drawn toward a lodestone, infinite Buddhas and Bodhisattvas dwelling in the ten directions come and dissolve into the Guru and his retinue. The latter then melt into light, which then dissolves into us. This constitutes the phase of *accomplishment...*

{When we realize that our mind and the Guru's mind are one}

this refers to the *great accomplishment* phase of practice.

The two steps of accomplishment and great accomplishment make up the perfection-stage practice.

The meaning of this is that we should recite the Seven Line Prayer while never parting from the practice wherein the generation and perfection stages are united.

The first five lines describe the visualization and thus constitute the phase of approach.

The sixth line expresses trust and confidence in Guru Rinpoche and is thus the phase of close approach.

Then, with the seventh line, we mingle inseparably with the Guru, and this is the accomplishment phase.

As we recite the mantra with our minds indivisible from the Guru, we behold the countenance of the great dharmakaya. This is the phase of great accomplishment.

Therefore, all four phases of approach and accomplishment are complete within this very prayer.

If we strive in the recitation of the Seven-Line Prayer as described, having established beforehand the time that we will give to the practice, and if we persevere in our efforts with one-pointed devotion and without being carried away by distraction, this constitutes the approach phase.

When we begin to feel the effect of Guru Rinpoche's blessings, this is the close approach.

When, on receiving signs of realization, whether in waking life, in meditation, or in dreams, we continue to strive in the recitation of the prayer to the Guru, this is the accomplishment phase.

Finally, when our body, speech, and mind are blessed and we realize that the Guru and our minds are inseparable, this is the great accomplishment.

From Teachings on Guru Yoga, by Penor Rinpoche

In the tantras it is stated again and again the importance of relying upon the lama as the source of blessings in one's practice. Regardless of the particular prayer that the student offers to the lama, regardless of how small or seemingly insignificant it may be, if it is based upon the student's complete trust and faith in the lama, then the blessings of the lama are always accessible to the student.

In *The Tantra of the Ocean of Timeless Awareness*, it states that it is far better to recite one small prayer to one's lama out of pure faith and devotion than it is to perform hundreds of millions of recitations of Bodhisattva Divinity mantras.

The effect of prayer is far more powerful when it is truly an expression of one's own faith and devotion in one's lama.

When one has established a connection with one's lama based upon trust, faith and devotion, there are different ways of relying upon that relationship through which various kinds of accomplishment can come about.

If a student intends to attain the most sublime accomplishment of enlightenment itself, the student identifies the lama with Vajradhara - the dharmakaya buddha.

If the student is particularly motivated to develop deeper wisdom, the student identifies the lama with Manjushri, the bodhisattva of wisdom.

In order to encourage his or her own love and compassion, the student meditates upon the lama as inseparable from Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of compassion.

To gain greater spiritual power the student focuses upon the lama as inseparable from Vajrapani, the bodhisattva of spiritual power.

To overcome various kinds of fear and anxiety one relies upon the lama as the very embodiment of the venerable Tara.

To promote one's own longevity one meditates upon the lama inseparable from Amitayus.

To overcome illness and disease, one meditates upon the lama as the Medicine Buddha.

To promote one's own wealth and prosperity one meditates upon the lama as inseparable from Vaishravana, Jambhala, or any of the wealth deities.

To purify the effects of harmful actions and to purify obscurations of one's body, speech and mind, one meditates upon the lama as inseparable from the Celestial Buddha Vajrasattva.

To increase one's own personal glory, wealth and opportunity, one meditates upon the lama as inseparable from the Buddha Ratnasambhava, the buddha of the jewel family.

To increase one's power – one's ability to exercise a powerful and beneficial influence over the world – one meditates upon the lama as inseparable from Amitabha or a Divinity such as Kurukulla.

If one wishes to enact wrathful activity, one meditates upon the lama as inseparable from Vajrabhairava or any of the more wrathful yidams.

*If one wishes to adopt the approach that combines all of these qualities in a single form, one meditates upon one's lama as inseparable from Guru Rinpoche.

In each of these cases, one's attitude is that of one's own root lama being the very embodiment of one or another of these aspects of enlightened being.

The Great Master Padmasambhava

The universal approach which subsumes all of these aspects is meditation upon one's lama as the very embodiment of Guru Rinpoche.

Guru Rinpoche should not be thought of in this case as simply an historical figure, i.e. as an individual who appeared after the Buddha Sakyamuni in our particular time and space.

The actual essence of Guru Rinpoche predates the Buddha Sakyamuni by eons.

The enlightened mindstream that is the enlightened mindstream of Guru Rinpoche is the single expression of the innate compassion, blessings and wisdom of countless buddhas from countless eons in the past, all focused in this single mindstream that is the mind stream of the great master Guru Rinpoche.

If we think of the Buddhadharma as being divisible into the teachings of the sutras and the tantras, the teachings that we know of today as Buddhism are those which were spoken and taught by the historical Buddha Sakyamuni.

In the greater sense, however, the teachings of the Buddhadharma, and particularly the teachings of the secret mantra path are not limited to the expression of that single buddha. This is where the activity of Guru Rinpoche is considered to be so universal and so far reaching.

Wherever the Vajrayana teachings have been given by any buddha in the past, or are being given or ever will be given, wherever a spiritual teacher is transmitting those teachings, the essence of Guru Rinpoche is embodied there – in that buddha, in that teacher, in that lama.

In different realms, in different universes, under different names, in different forms, the manifestations of Guru Rinpoche have appeared and continue to appear in countless numbers.

There are any number of accounts in the traditional literature that attest to this manifold display of Guru Rinpoche's activity.

In our particular time and space – as we experience the legacy of Buddha Sakyamuni as one of the one thousand buddhas who will appear during this age in which we live – all of these thousand buddhas and all the activity of these thousand buddhas, including the Buddha Sakyamuni, are all manifestations from a single source. They are all different aspects of activity that derives from a single source of blessing and a single source of transmission.

Throughout this enormous universe and this vast expanse of time, all of the hundreds of millions of manifestations of buddhas and teachers that appear are manifestations of Guru Rinpoche's energy. Therefore, the expression of Guru Rinpoche's blessings cannot be limited to a single time frame and a single region such as India or Tibet.

The accounts of Guru Rinpoche's miraculous birth in India and his journey to Tibet to bring the teachings there are simply one small aspect of the blessing and activity that is the totality of Guru Rinpoche.

Even the accounts of Guru Rinpoche's life that we have do not speak of a single figure, but of eight manifestations of Guru Rinpoche by way of expressing the enormous scope of Guru Rinpoche's blessing and activity.

This blessing and activity continues to manifest in all of the great teachers and masters who are emanations of Guru Rinpoche.

Guru Rinpoche has not died. Guru Rinpoche has not passed away. Guru Rinpoche continues to demonstrate this miraculous activity for the benefit of beings now and on into the future.

None of this teaching contradicts any of the teachings that were transmitted by the Buddha Sakyamuni.

The third turning of the wheel by the Buddha was the wheel of teachings concerning the definitive nature of reality and it is in this turning of the wheel that the basis of the Vajrayana teachings is found.

However, in our particular time and space, it is Guru Rinpoche who was most instrumental in developing and presenting these teachings of the Vajrayana.

In our ordinary perceptions, what we perceive to be the phenomenon of the Buddha Sakyamuni was someone who was born as a prince in what was then the north of India, the son of King Shudodena and Queen Mayadevi. He grew up and attained enlightenment, turned the wheel of the dharma, passed into nirvana with his remains being cremated, leaving relics that are still with us to this day.

The essence of Guru Rinpoche is birthless and deathless.

It is not something that we can limit to an entity that came into being at one point and passed out of existence at another point in time.

Guru Rinpoche's body is not a body of flesh and blood.

Guru Rinpoche's presence is not based upon any physical basis. It is ever present. It always has been and always will be, because it is not subject to the limitations of any corporeal form.

There are many occasions upon which kings and ministers in India would attempt to assassinate Guru Rinpoche. In one instance his body was committed to flames. An ordinary person would have been killed instantly, but Guru Rinpoche was never physically harmed in any way because his embodiment was not of an ordinary nature...

To meditate upon one's root lama as the very embodiment of the essence and blessings of Guru Rinpoche means that any practice you undertake of any Divinity, or any activity that you intend to enact in your practice – be it pacifying, enriching, magnetizing, or wrathful – in any and all of these ways your practice will be successful and fruitful.

If you pray to your lama as inseparable from Guru Rinpoche with your mind full of faith and devotion, Guru Rinpoche is never separate from you.

When it comes to Celestial Buddha / Bodhisattva Divinity practice, we may find judgments arising in our mind saying, for example, that this Divine Name and Form is better than that one, or this Divinity is more powerful than another one, or this blessing comes more quickly with this Celestial Buddha. These types of ordinary thoughts are not really appropriate when we are dealing with something of this nature. The only qualifying factor is the devoted interest and faith in the student's mind.

It may be that under certain circumstances, your faith is stronger in a given Bodhisattva Divinity and therefore that practice is more effective for you, but that does not mean that at a more ultimate level there is any distinction to be made between these various aspects of enlightened being. They all arise

from the single vast expanse of timeless awareness, as equally authentic manifestations of blessing and power...

Teachings on the Vajra Guru Mantra, by H.E. Garchen Rinpoche

March 10, 2020, Arizona, USA

Om Ah Hung.

First, I would like to say “Tashi Delek” to all my Dharma friends around the world. We are very fortunate, for we are now within the month of miracles. The first through the fifteenth day of the first Tibetan month commemorate the time when, after having conquered the four māra-demons, the Lord Buddha performed various miracles. During this month, the effects of positive actions are said to be multiplied a hundred thousand times; thus, the first Tibetan month is very important.

During the age of degeneration, the Buddha Śhākyamuni appeared directly in the form of the Second Buddha, known as Guru Padmasaṃbhava, or Guru Rinpoche. Nowadays, there are a thousand million further emanations of Guru Rinpoche - so there are countless emanations of Guru Rinpoche all around the world. This is how Lord Buddha appears to beings in the degenerate age.’

During the degenerate age, sentient beings’ afflictions run unrestrained, which makes them difficult to tame. For this reason, Guru Rinpoche turned the wheel of the Secret Mantra and bestowed the teachings on self-liberation, which show how the afflictions are self-liberated without needing to be abandoned. In the Seven Chapter Supplication it says:

For the sake of sentient beings, you come riding the sunlight’s brilliant rays.

So Guru Rinpoche's emanations have been sent down continuously, uninterrupted, appearing every day all over the world, in as many forms as there are rays of the sun.

His emanations protect beings whether they have faith in him or not, as the Buddha's love is the same even for beings who do not have faith. If one has faith, though, the power of his blessings is even greater, and it is even easier to feel the blessings. It is just a question of time. All of this is why our center holds a Guru Rinpoche retreat every year during the month of miracles.

Due to my travel schedule, I have not been able to attend this retreat every year, and this year, for the sake of protecting the health of the general public, and so that people don't have to endure many hardships, the Vajra Guru retreat will be conducted in your homes. Therefore, all of the centers have made plans to hold practice via the internet this year.

So in order to engage in the Vajra Guru retreat from our homes, and especially at Gar Monastery, we first engage in the practice of the Heart-Essence of Great Bliss Mind-Accomplishment (thug-drub dechen nyingpo).

Although there are three thousand mind-accomplishment practices of the guru, it is said that by practicing just a single one of these within a single drubchen, the quintessence of all three thousand practices is included. If this is not properly understood, however, doubts can arise.

Sādhanas often say of themselves, “I am the principal one,” or “He is the principal one.” For example, in the Heart-Essence of Great Bliss Mind-Accomplishment (thug-drub dechen nyingpo), the small print says:

There are three thousand mind-accomplishment practices of me, Padmasambhava, but only this is the heart’s blood of them all.

But since the practice called the Dispeller of all Obstacles (bar-che kün sel) also says the same thing about itself, some people get confused. They develop doubts and wonder: “So then, what is the quintessence of all supposed to be?”

- but, really, it is not like that.

What Guru Rinpoche is really saying is that, though there are many mind-accomplishment practices in the world, all mind-accomplishment practices are included within one practice - just as the Buddha said that within a single Buddha, all the Buddhas of the three times are complete. A single Sangha member’s form is the Sangha, his speech is the holy Dharma, and his mind is the Buddha; thus, you have to see that the Three Jewels of the three times are complete within a single Sangha member.

To know this is to understand the Buddhist view. Otherwise, through a lack of understanding, a mistaken understanding, or an incomplete understanding, you will label one as good and another as bad, or you will judge the practices, thinking: “This is the new tantric tradition (sarma) and that is the old tantric tradition (nyingma),” and so on, but such thinking

causes your faith and abilities - as well as your potential to become liberated - to become constrained.

The mind is either in bondage or it is free, and, whatever constrains you is bondage, and when you are in bondage, your mind is not at ease.

Thoughts of “this is how it is” and “this is not how it is” will tie you down. Therefore, you should think:

The Buddha-dharma is one: all of the buddhas, including Guru Rinpoche and the Buddha Shākyamuni, are the same. Moreover, all the Buddhas of the three times are one in their endeavor to bring about the benefit and happiness of all sentient beings. There are no Three Jewels other than that.

Unbiased faith and an unbiased pure view will arise from such thinking.

And the Buddha has already said that

*All sentient beings are buddhas.
They are only obscured by adventitious stains.*

So all sentient beings already possess buddha-nature; thus, not a single real, ordinary sentient being exists. So what does the Secret Mantra say regarding this?

The Secret Mantra says,

The universe and beings are an infinite expanse of purity...

There is not the slightest difference between these words and the words of the Buddha. Everything is inherently pure on the ground: Dzogchen calls it “originally pure,” while Mahāmudrā refers to it as “primordially pure.”

Either way, this purity is emptiness, and if you understand it, you understand the Buddhist view.

Still, according to the relative truth, even though things are pure, you need to abandon your own dualistic grasping at self and other. You still need to abandon your own afflictive emotions, and the demon of this self-grasping, of this holding on to a truly existing self, is tamed by the altruistic mind. The purpose of all sādhanas is only this.

Although there is another [guru] sādhana from the Northern Treasures, the Heart-Essence of Great Bliss Mind-Accomplishment (thug-drub dechen nyingpo) that is practiced in our monastery is a terma of Lho Nüden Dorje, but, as was stated, even though there are many different guru sādhanas, *all guru sādhanas are really sādhanas of one single guru. Therefore, you should think of the sādhanas like they are one guru wearing different clothes or different hats.

For this retreat, there is a new and important instruction. The Vidyādhara Nüden Dorje travelled in actuality to the Copper-colored Glorious Mountain Pure Land, and when he received teachings on the mind-accomplishment there, he heard the sound of a gyaling.

Later he told:

“This is how I heard it at the Copper-colored Glorious Mountain”, and the sound of that gyaling is now played in all our Drikung monasteries.

We are now making recordings of the gyaling, but the hands of myself, an old man, are not very good. However, in order for the lineage to not become interrupted, the gyaling playing has been recorded - though I’m not sure if I am playing it well. It will be made available for everyone to hear.

So the Vidyādhara Nüden Dorje said that the gyaling is played like this at the Copper-colored Glorious Mountain, and in this way, it was transmitted to the disciples.

The name of the gyaling is ‘the Copper-colored Glorious Mountain One’, and nowadays, some of the newer monks play this gyaling, though they often don’t know its name, and they play they gyaling in all sorts of ways. So the name of this gyaling is ‘the Copper-colored Glorious Mountain One’.

{Playing of gyaling}

{After playing the gyaling}

Together with the gyaling there is also a mantra melody. As for the Vajra Guru mantra melody, (It is chanted) in various distinct ways throughout the world. In any case, the mantra melody according to this sadhana by Lho Nuden Dorje is as follows. So think that this is how (the mantra) is

chanted at the Copper-colored Glorious Mountain. However, since I'm already too old, my voice doesn't come out that nicely. Sorry about that! But I will chant it to the best of my abilities.

Guru Rinpoche taught about the benefits of chanting the mantra in melody.

It is said that,

It is more beneficial to chant the mantra slowly in melody than to recite many mantras quickly.

It is also said that,

Reciting mantras purely makes a hundred-fold difference.

Reciting them in melody makes a hundred thousand-fold difference.

Thus, chanting it in melody multiplies the power of mantra. And why is its power multiplied? It is because to the extent that you focus on the meaning of each word in the mantra, that much greater will be the blessings that enter your mind-stream. Some people think about the numbers of mantras accumulated, and, of course, there is benefit from accumulating a number of mantras. However, it is said that,

*The recitation should be neither too fast nor too slow,
neither too strong nor too soft.*

The elements of each syllable should be pronounced without deterioration.

So most important for mantra or any other recitation is that the elements of each syllable are pronounced without deterioration.

Pronouncing without deterioration has outer, inner, and secret qualities. The outer quality is that it is good for your physical health. By moving your tongue, stomach-related illnesses will be cured, and the circulation of your blood through your veins will be stimulated. This happens because, when you moving your tongue, your entire body, including your stomach, becomes stimulated. This is an outer quality of pure sound.

Regarding the inner quality, through chanting in melody, you contemplate the meaning of the recitation; therefore, you connect to the omniscient wisdom of all the buddhas.

Further, you connect to their compassion, and you also reflect on their enlightened activities as you chant.

Thus, chanting makes a great difference to your giving rise to faith and devotion. So this is the inner quality of the melody.

As for the secret quality of BENDZA GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG, the two words "Secret Mantra" are very meaningful. And what is the secret quality? "BENDZA" means vajra. Regarding the meaning of vajra, this is not a vajra made of brass or gold - rather, *it is the ultimate vajra that is emptiness.*

And as for PEMA SIDDHI HUNG, what does PEMA, or lotus, represent? It symbolises that, though the lotus grows from mud, inside it remains

untarnished by the mud. In the same way, though yogins live in saṃsāra, they remain untarnished by saṃsāric attachment. They are free from attachment; thus the lotus is a symbol of being free from attachment.

So taken all together it means:

Ultimate vajra that is emptiness, please grant the siddhi of freedom from clinging and attachment!

The ultimate attachment is the attachment to the self. This is the self that grasps at its own inherent existence, thinking: "I exist." Why are we attached to this "I?" It is because of our dualistic perception of self and other.

The actual nature of mind is like space, in which there is no duality - this is the ultimate truth. So why is there a duality? It arises due to the dualistic perception of self and other, due to the grasping at a concrete existence and to conceptual structures.

In the Samantabhadra Prayer it says that our many coarse and subtle imprints grow stronger day and night: this is what creates saṃsāra.

The outer world is created by collective karma, while the inner sentient beings in the six realms of saṃsāra are created by the personal karma of individual beings. So sentient beings are manifestations of their own afflictive emotions.

Lord Jigten Sumgön said,

Cause and effect is the natural expression of moment-by-moment thoughts.

What is cause and effect? The ultimate vajra is emptiness, which is the ultimate protection from cause.

And what is the ultimate vajra that is emptiness? “Vajra” means that it can destroy everything: it destroys everything, but nothing can destroy it.

“Emptiness” means devoid of self-grasping, devoid of self and other. To understand that self and other are non-dual - this is emptiness.

We can talk about outer emptiness, inner emptiness, the eighteen emptinesses, but if you don't empty self-grasping, you haven't been able to empty anything.

Once you empty self-grasping, there will be no others: the others will naturally disappear. The mind becomes like space, and no one can move or change space. Space is unobstructed within itself; from itself, there is nothing not embraced by space, by emptiness.

Thus,

Ultimate vajra - emptiness - destroy dualistic attachment!

Please help me to be able to destroy dualistic attachment!

Lastly, SIDDHI HUNG means “Grant your blessings.” So this is the meaning of the Vajra Guru mantra, and this meaning is very profound.

This is the meaning of secret mantra BENDZA GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG. In terms of the words BENDZA GURU: BENDZA is the vajra, and GURU is the lama.

And what is the connection between the guru and the vajra?

The body of the guru is human, but this here is referring to the guru’s mind, and the guru’s mind is emptiness.

It is said that if there is no dualistic grasping at self and other, this is emptiness.

And when you realize emptiness, you understand that within the mind, self and other are non-dual. This is the realization of emptiness, and emptiness is the ultimate guru.

So the actual guru is the vajra, the mind.

The mind of the lama is the dharmakāya, which means that the guru’s mind and the mind of you, the disciple, are devoid of self and other;

the speech of the lama is the sambhogakāya - since he shows the meaning of Secret Mantra;

and the body of the lama is the nirmāṇakāya.

Lord Jigten Sumgön said that to recognize this is to see that the guru, your own mind, and the Buddha are one.

He said,

I, a yogin, realized that the guru, my mind, and Buddha are identical. Thus, I have no need for fabricated devotion, but until you understand this, until you know that the guru and your own mind are indivisible, you have to walk the path of fabricated devotion.

Regarding the knowledge that the guru and your own mind are indivisible, when you see: 'There are no self and other', then you also realize that you and the guru are indivisible, but until you understand this, according to the relative truth, you have to sustain a continuum of love and compassion.

Therefore, whichever practice you engage in, it should have the nature of love and compassion, since love and compassion are like the sun, and self-grasping, which is like ice, has to melt.

How does this work? Self-grasping is like ice, and the Buddhas are like an ocean; so, the ice has to melt.

Think about it: is ice water, or is it stone? Lord Buddha said that in the beginning,

Sentient beings are actually buddhas.

They are only obscured by adventitious stains.

But even though sentient beings are buddhas, they still suffer in their various forms within the six realms of saṃsāra.

They are like ice, and ice is like stone. Think about this well. Ice is like stone. If you hit someone over the head with it, they will bleed, right?

How did beings become like this, like ice or stone? It is due to the dualistic perception of self and other; It is mainly due to thinking 'I exist' - that we are in bondage.

So when we talk about there being no self, don't say about someone else that "Well, he has self-grasping, he has afflictive emotions." Instead, you should recognize your own self-grasping - because when your sense of a self has collapsed, at that point you can also 'melt' others.

For example, if you melt a block of ice with hot water, that hot water can melt all blocks of ice. Otherwise, you might find fault with sentient beings, thinking: "Oh, these sentient beings of the degenerate age are so afflicted."

A person who perceives sentient beings is perceiving a duality between self and others: such a person has not understood that sentient beings do not actually exist. This person cannot melt others, as only someone who understands that self and other are not dual is able to melt all sentient beings.

So the body is the *nirmāṇakāya*, the speech is the *saṃbhogakāya*, and the mind is the *dharmakāya*; and within the guru's mind there is no dualistic grasping.

Thus, when you realize this non-duality, this is the svabhavikakāya: “Oh, this is my mind and nothing else.”

Je Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche said:

My own mind is Buddha, but I never realize this.

Discursive thoughts are dharmakāya, but I do not realize this.

This is the unfabricated, innate natural state, but I cannot keep to this.

*This is how things really are in their natural state,
but I have no conviction in this...*

The way things really are in their natural state *is* Samantabhadra, *is* the dharmakāya, *is* Vajradhara. When you understand this, you understand that the Vajra Guru mantra is the heart-essence of all mantras. It is that precious. So then you chant it in melody...

In general, there are secret mantras and there are retainer, or dhāraṇī, mantras. This is a secret mantra, so *you have to think that by reciting this one mantra, you are reciting all mantras, that by practicing one deity, you are practicing all deities, and that by following one guru, you are following all gurus.

So, chant the mantra in melody, the mantra melody that the Vidyādhara Nüden Dorje actually heard when he went to the Copper-colored Glorious Mountain. He said that this is the melody he heard at the Copper-colored Glorious Mountain, and though I don't have a good voice, since my Dharma friends have great love for me, I, an old man, shall teach you this melody today.

And as you chant the melody, imagine that the entire space is pervaded by Buddha and that all beings in the universe are ḍākas and ḍākiṇīs: all men are ḍākas and all women are ḍākiṇīs. All men are Avalokiteśhvara and all women are Tārā - think in this way.

The Buddha said that,

Beings are only obscured by adventitious stains.

Thus, think that all sentient beings possess the cause of buddhahood, then there will be no division.

Chant the mantra within a state of “pure sights, sounds, and thoughts,” as the old tantric tradition calls it...

[Rinpoche recites the mantra here.]

So now, in your own home, wherever you are in the world, engage in the mantra recitation for however much time you have, whether it is for five minutes, ten minutes, or just for a moment.

Think that the universe is filled with ḍākas, ḍākiṇīs, buddhas, and bodhisattvas, and that he, the heart-essence of them all - their regent Guru Rinpoche - is dwelling in large form in space.

If you have faith in the Buddha Śhākyamuni, know that there is not the slightest difference between the Buddha Śhākyamuni and Guru Rinpoche: only their outer form is different. Regarding their inner mind it is said,

All buddhas are one within the expanse of primordial awareness.

Jigten Sumgön said that,

On the level of buddhahood, there is no division between the two truths.

All buddhas are the same.

And it is the same regarding gurus: only their outer bodies are separate. Their inner mind - a mind of only wishing to benefit others, a mind of bodhicitta - is the same.

The Seven Chapters Supplication to Guru Rinpoche, which is widely-known, speaks about these pure sights, sounds, and thoughts:

Outer and inner, the universe and all beings - all things - whilst seeing them, although they appear, remain without grasping at a self.

This freedom from a subject-object duality is the very form of the deity, luminous and empty...

I supplicate to this guru - the self-liberation of desire!

Do this toward all that you hear:

all sounds, grasped as sweet or harsh, whilst hearing them, remain empty without after-thought.

This empty sound, with no beginning and no end,

is the speech of the victorious ones.

I supplicate to this empty sound, the speech of all the buddhas!

Do this toward all that stirs in the mind:

whatever thoughts and afflictive emotions of the five poisons arise,

do not invite them, do not chase after them,

do not let mind fabricate and contrive:

simply allowing them to settle in the state of their own arising,

is liberation into the dharmakāya.

I supplicate to this guru - the natural liberation of intrinsic awareness!

The Four Applications of Mindfulness, taught in the Sūtra Path, have a great connection to this as well.

The first application is

Do not grasp at your body,

which is the application of mindfulness of the body.

Then,

Do not conceptualize what you see.

Do not grasp at the sounds you hear,

which is the application of mindfulness to feelings.

Then it says,

In your mind, do not follow your thoughts,

which is the application of mindfulness of the mind.

Then there is the application of mindfulness of phenomena, which is the mindfulness that all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are created by thoughts.

Confusion concerning the concepts of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa occur due to the discursive mind. When you rest evenly within these four applications of mindfulness,

All objects that appear as outer are pure.

So do not think at all about outer appearing objects; then, when you look at your mind, whatever appears will appear like a reflection in a mirror. This is the mirror-like wisdom.

It says in the Seven Chapters Supplication to Guru Rinpoche:

May the inner grasping mind be liberated...

When this happens, whatever appears in a mirror will not stain or harm the mirror.

For example, as long as a yogin doesn't grasp at sound, merely hearing something does not harm him.

Further, if he sees people and he does not grasp at them, there is no harm.

And what is the method for non-grasping? Look at your mind: whatever appears to your mind appears like in a mirror.

And as you keep looking at the clear and empty mind directly, appearances will naturally appear as if lacking any inherent existence within the primordial vajra expanse.

Therefore, since appearances do not inherently exist, holding them to be truly existing is confusion.

So, having understood cause and effect, reflect again and again upon the impermanence of all compounded things...

Do not knowingly hold on to the true existence of something that doesn't actually exist.

The moment you think of something, remember:

This does not inherently exist. This is just like an illusion. Though I can see it now, the next moment it is gone...

When you understand the illusory nature of things, you will be able to recognize your own luminosity in the bardo; then the mind will abide in its

natural state, like space. So you will recognize luminosity in the bardo if you do not grasp at any outer forms or sounds, and instead you continue to look within, at your mind - the mind that is clear and empty like space.

As I mentioned before, the scriptures and reasoning refer to this as the view of the Middle Way, which means that when you meditate, there is nothing really to meditate upon.

What is the view of the Middle Way?

When you look at the nature of your mind, what is your mind?

There is only one single awareness that knows the nature of mind, so if you always remain within this single awareness, it becomes like space. This is what it means to be present in the actual nature of mind: it is to remain mindfully present in the true and pure nature of your mind.

This is what we call “meditation.” It doesn’t mean to assume an outer composure of meditation all the time, but rather to always remain within the true face of the pure natural state of mind. Then, naturally, you will naturally not freeze, and the ice will melt.

Thus, it says:

I supplicate to this guru - the natural liberation of intrinsic awareness!

In the Seven Chapters Supplication to Guru Rinpoche, it then says:

*By the self-recognition of luminosity in the bardo,
may the compassion of all the sugatas bless me with self-liberation.*

*Everyone first needs to liberate themselves; only once you have liberated yourself can you liberate others.

Liberation means to become liberated from dualistic grasping, or the thought that self and other exist. This thinking is false, since there is no self and other in the mind. Only in bodies is there a duality: it is like one tree with many branches, wherein the branches are like the phenomena of saṃsāra.

Think in this way.

In the above quote, “the self-recognition of luminosity” refers to pure sights, sounds, and thoughts. All appearances are the deity, and all sound is mantra. Empty appearances are the deity, empty sounds are mantra, and empty awareness is the vajra of the mind. When outer sounds and forms become empty, awareness becomes empty: empty awareness, the vajra of mind.

Awareness (rik) means to clearly know your own mind, and clear awareness is what knows itself.

Within this nature, self and other, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa - none of it truly exists; it is all empty. This is referred to as *the naked primordial wisdom of empty awareness*.

Many billions of buddhas are one and the same within primordial wisdom.

Thus, it is said that

Within the expanse of primordial wisdom, all the buddhas are one.

This is the vajra of mind: empty awareness.

Within the expanse of primordial wisdom, all the buddhas are one

- this is the meaning of primordial wisdom.

Je Milarepa said,

I do not see consciousness. I see primordial wisdom.

Once he understood consciousness, he said,

I do not see sentient beings. I see buddhas.

How did Milarepa see sentient beings as buddhas?

There is no one who doesn't have a consciousness, and since one has consciousness, when one has understood the essence of consciousness, this is Buddha.

This is the one that creates all happiness and suffering. He is the one who can throw it all away. This is important, Dharma friends.

Next, meditate for however much time you have, even if it is only for five or ten minutes. There is no separate retreat of body and speech; you can practice at any time, day or night.

At night, meditate - even if you only sit up and meditate for one minute.

This is the vajra of mind: empty awareness.

After the mantra recitation, meditate on the indivisibility of the guru's mind and your own.

As Lord Jigten Sumgön said,

I, a yogin, realized that the guru, my mind, and Buddha are identical.

Thus, I have no need for fabricated devotion.

So please meditate in this way, Dharma friends.

Many people want to come here, but they cannot due to the current measures the country has put in place for the well-being of the people, and actually, this is better. It is the body that comes to this place, but it is not good to consider the body as most important. You must consider the mind as most important, because it is with our minds that we see forms and we hear sounds.

The mind is actually just like electric energy. Even though there are a hundred phones, they are powered by the same electric energy.

Likewise, if in your mind you think of one another with love and compassion, you have established a connection between each other. This is love and trust, and the essence of faith is love and trust. If you have them, there is no distance. Then we will never separate - not in this life, the next life, or in the bardo.

There is nowhere to go where there is no space: this is how it is.

Thus,

Bless me that I may never be separate from the guru!

When you realize the nature of mind, you cannot separate from the guru, even if you want to.

In the Yamāntaka practice it says:

*I prostrate from within a state that is without meeting and parting
- the ultimate prostration.*

The natural expression of primordial wisdom is my offering.

Those of you who practice Yamāntaka, remember the meaning of these words clearly and engage in practice. Actually, now is the best opportunity for practice, and it is also a way for us to cultivate compassion for sentient beings.

Many people in this world are losing their wealth and are experiencing various kinds of suffering in the world now. Therefore, think about the suffering in the world and give rise to compassion.

Now is when we have to cultivate compassion. Through taking your own suffering as an example, really think about beings' suffering; think that this kind of suffering is being experienced all over the world... Don't just think about your own suffering...

Through the holy Dharma we can transform all faults into positive qualities, and now, temporarily, we can transform the epidemic disease into a positive quality by thinking:

This is an incredible opportunity to practice, an incredible opportunity to cultivate compassion...

School students have an opportunity to study and acquire more learning, and you yourself have an opportunity to stay at home as well. If you think of this as an excellent opportunity, your mind will become happy, and when the inner mind becomes happy, outer illnesses will be healed.

So in this way, everyone engage in the practice of the Vajra Guru mantra retreat.

You should think that our minds are together, as the mind is non-dual.

Thus,

I prostrate from within a state that is without meeting and parting - the ultimate prostration...

If you know that we are without meeting and parting, you know that the guru and your own mind are one.

Also, you should buy many prayer wheels. The virtues of body, speech, and mind are complete within you while you are spinning a prayer wheel. It is a continuous offering to the buddhas, a continuous attainment of siddhis for yourself, and a continuous purification of sentient beings' obscurations. These are the three continuations.

Guru Rinpoche said:

This samādhi is profound.

*In this world, it is not something that has originated,
it is not something that originates now,
and it is not something that will originate in some future.*

Further, the benefits of visualizing the mantra wheel also arise from spinning a prayer wheel. It combines the virtues of body, speech, and mind into one, and is easy to do but very meaningful. Thus, there is nothing more important than spinning a prayer wheel. This is my heart advice. The liberation-by-seeing is also a great protection - it is a supreme protection.

Also, use the cream from the Gyanagma prayer wheel, and please eat the Mani blessing pills.

Many Tashi Delek!

Translated by Ina Bieler and edited by Dan Clarke in March 2020.

From The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel, by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche

The Visualization - The Place as a Buddha-Field

In any visualization practice we should think that everything has been perfect from the very beginning, that what we visualize is not an intellectual product but primordially true. This means that we perceive the natural perfection of the environment as a buddha-field and the beings therein as celestial beings, dakas, and dakinis...

With intense devotion, we perceive our teacher as inseparable from Guru Padmasambhava...

If we maintain constant devotion, it is certain that Guru Rinpoche will always be near us, like our shadow. In order to support and vivify such devotion, we recite the verses of this guru yoga...

The first verse opens with

Emaho,

an expression of wonder, and continues with the words:

The self-appearing, naturally present, perfectly pure, infinite buddha-field

This refers to Guru Rinpoche's paradise, the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain, Sangdopalri, where beings are naturally free from the poisonous

emotions, naturally inclined to practice the dharma, and where one can see Guru Rinpoche face to face. This is what is called *a pure buddha-field*.

In contrast to this, we have this ordinary place where the beings are filled with strong poisons, such as craving, anger, pride, jealousy, and miserliness, where they do not behave in accordance with the dharma, and where they are completely distracted by aims limited to this lifetime. This is what is called an impure field.

If we visualize the place around us as an impure field, it will not help us, but if we visualize it as a pure buddha-field, it will become so; or, to be more exact, we will come to realize its natural purity.

Thus, we should visualize the place as a self-appearing buddha-field encompassing the whole of manifested reality. In the present guru yoga, this perfectly arranged buddha-field is the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain, Sangdopalri, the paradise of Guru Rinpoche.

Such a buddha-field is composed not of ordinary earth and rock, but of precious jewels. There are wish-fulfilling trees as well as a lake of nectarlike water that possesses the eight qualities¹ and that confers immortality. Even the wild animals living there behave in harmony with the dharma.

The calls of the birds carry the sound of dharma, and all natural sounds of water, wind, fire, and forests reverberate as mantras. The sky is filled with rainbows and vidyidharas, dakas, and dakinis, numberless as dust

¹ Water that is cool, sweet, light, soft, clear, pure, and that is pleasant to the throat, and to the stomach...

particles in the sun rays. Celestial music, vajra songs, and melodious tunes of mantras resound, bringing inexpressible bliss to the mind.

The beings are not divided into those whom we see as friends and those whom we see as enemies, but all have the nature and appearance of dakas and dakinis. All are companions on the path, behaving in accordance with the dharma.

In this buddha-field we perceive beings as free from the poisons of jealousy, pride, and aggression, and, without judging some to be superior and others inferior, we generate the same loving-kindness and equanimity to all.

If we hold in our minds this visualized buddha-field, our manner of perceiving things will gradually change. We will perceive all as pure and will be able to see the paradise of the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain everywhere.

If, for instance, we see frescoes depicting the life of Lord Buddha on the walls of a temple, our devotion increases. If the walls were simply left plain white, they would inspire nothing. To keep visualizing a place as a paradise works in a similar way.

In brief, we should perceive all the forms we see as being the display of Guru Rinpoche's body, all the sounds we hear as mantra, the voice of Guru Rinpoche, and whatever thoughts or recollections that occur in our minds as the display of the perfect wisdom of Guru Rinpoche's mind.

We should not think that this is a mental fabrication, but that things have naturally been this way since the very beginning. This pure state is something that naturally exists, but of which we are not aware.

Through the practice of guru yoga we will gradually come to recognize the true nature of phenomena. The purpose of the meditation is thus to uncloud our mistaken perception of things and to realize, instead, the innate purity of all phenomena.

In visualizing the Refuge Tree

In order to correct our ordinary impure perception of phenomena, we should not visualize {the forms of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas} with gross material bodies of flesh, bone, and blood, but rather as bodies of light—very clear and transparent, with a vivid rainbow-like appearance. They appear clearly, yet are empty of substance, like the reflection of the moon in water. At the same time, we should not feel that they are inert, lifeless displays of rainbow light, but that they are completely filled with wisdom, loving-kindness, and the ability to benefit beings.

Although we visualize Guru Rinpoche as a main figure surrounded by an infinite retinue, there is in actuality no distinction or separation between them: all deities and beings in the visualization are emanations of Guru Rinpoche himself. Since they are the display of his mind and are thus by nature identical with him, their wisdom and compassion are equal to his own.

It is said that through strong aspiration and fervor anything can be accomplished. Similarly, if we think without the slightest doubt that Guru Rinpoche is truly present above our head, his blessings will flow down to us without interruption.

We must not think that he is possibly there, that he might be there at some future time, or that the Guru Rinpoche visualized above our head is no more than a mental construct or a substitute slightly inferior to the actual Guru Rinpoche who dwells on the distant Copper-Colored Mountain. We should be absolutely confident that he is present with all of his wisdom

and compassion, and we should think that it is only due to our obscurations that we cannot readily perceive him.

Furthermore, we should not think that Guru Rinpoche dwells in so distant a place as to be unaware of us or of our supplications to him, or that in caring for so many sentient beings he could not possibly notice us or remember us. Guru Rinpoche has complete wisdom, loving-kindness, and ability.

We must realize that even a prayer to Guru Rinpoche, the recitation of a single Vajra Guru mantra calling upon him, or even the raising of a single hand toward our heart in a gesture of devotion toward him or simply remembering him with clear faith, will be perceived by him, for he has full knowledge of our devotion. As it is said,

The Buddha dwells in front of whosoever has faith in him.

Even if, at the same instant, an infinite number of sentient beings are praying to him, he will know precisely how each is praying, precisely who is suffering, and precisely who is happy. He will know on which level each being is, and he will know which prayer each makes and whether or not it comes from the depth of the heart. He will know all these things with great clarity, with the vividness of an image in a mirror.

Guru Rinpoche himself said:

I stand before the door of whoever has devotion...

He will always accompany us, as close as our own shadow. If we have devotion, it is promised that all the buddhas of the three times will remain with us.

This is the promise of Guru Rinpoche, who, as the emanation of the body, speech, and mind of all the buddhas, manifested especially to meet the needs of the beings of this decadent age. His prayers and compassion have great efficacy in the alleviation of the suffering of the epidemics, famines, and wars that beset such an age.

Now, when all beings are afflicted with gross poisons, when nothing remains but residues of the good qualities of former times, and when the negative influences of irreligious vow-breakers are rampant, we must pray especially to Guru Rinpoche so that he will subdue all negative forces and pacify all torments.

We must also have firm faith that our own teacher, whom we can meet face to face in this life and from whom we can hear the pith instructions directly, is identical with Guru Rinpoche. Praying to our own guru will bring us blessings even more swiftly. When rain falls upon a roof, the drainpipe collects all the water. In the same way, if we pray to our own teacher as inseparable from-Guru Rinpoche, we will be able to gather all blessings.

Guru Rinpoche, as the embodiment of all the buddhas of the three times, displays many aspects. No matter which of his aspects is the object of our supplications, our aspirations will be fulfilled...

On the meaning of the Seven Line Prayer

The prayer begins with the letter

HUNG,

which is the seed syllable of the heart-wisdom of all the buddhas.

It continues, saying,

Urgyen yul gyi nup chang tsam,

which means,

At the northwest border of the land of Oddiyalna

In this land there are four lakes, one in each of the four directions.

It is in the lake situated in the northwest corner, known as *Dhanakosa*, that Guru Rinpoche manifested in this world. In Sanskrit, *dhana* means wealth, and *kosa* means treasury.

The second line,

Pema gesar dongpo la,

means

On the pistil of a lotus blossom

In Dhanakosa Lake there are innumerable lotuses of the five colors. Since Guru Rinpoche belongs to the speech or lotus family, the family of Amitabha, whose color is red, he manifested in the middle of the lake upon the pistil of a red lotus.

The third line,

Yam tsen chok kyi ngo drop nye,

means

The marvelous one who has attained the supreme accomplishment

Guru Rinpoche was not born from causes and conditions or from the seeds of a mother and father, but, as we have said, arose suddenly from the center of a red lotus in the form of the seed syllable HRIH, as a manifestation of pure awareness from the heart of Amitabha. The HRIH then melted into light, transforming into the aspect of an ever-youthful eight-year-old child with radiant countenance and the thirty-two major and eighty minor marks of a buddha.

He thus appeared in our universe amid rainbows, a rain of flowers thrown by all the buddhas of the ten directions, celestial music, and melodious songs of praise sung by the countless dakas and dakinis who filled the sky.

The fourth line,

Pema Jungne shey su drak,

means

Renowned as the Lotus-Born

Guru Rinpoche, the ultimate and undecieving object of refuge, is renowned throughout the infinity of buddha-fields as the Guru Born from the Lotus.

The fifth line,

Khor du khandro mang po kor,

means

Surrounded by a retinue of many dakinis.

Wherever Guru Rinpoche manifests, he unfolds and expounds the teachings of the secret Mantrayana or Vajrayana. Since the dakinis are those who both hear and hold these teachings, Guru Rinpoche is always surrounded by a gathering of dakinis.

In the sixth line,

Kye kyi jesu da drop kyi,

we pray,

Following in your footsteps, I myself will become accomplished

At present, owing to our ignorance, we are wandering helplessly among the delusions and sufferings of samsara; the only way out of this situation is to receive the profound instructions of the secret Mantrayana and put them into practice.

Thus, in order to clear away our ignorance, we invite Guru Rinpoche with our supplications to come and give us the blessings, empowerments, and instructions we need to enable us to follow him on the path and accomplish, as he has, the supreme realization.

Obscured by karma and the force of negative emotions and submerged in ignorance, we are at this moment drowning in the ocean of suffering. If we fail to rely on an extraordinary being like Guru Rinpoche who is himself free from this ocean, then there is no way for us to be delivered from this misery and confusion.

The seventh line is

Chin gyi lop chir shek su sol,

or

Please come and bless me

When, through our entreaties, Guru Rinpoche comes and bestows upon us the blessings of his body, speech, and mind, we are enabled to achieve realization.

As the gilding of a statue makes it even more beautiful and precious, so our own body, speech, and mind, when blessed by the body, speech, and mind of Guru Rinpoche, become better able to achieve the supreme accomplishment.

The prayer closes with the mantra

Guru pema siddhi hung

Guru is a Sanskrit word that literally means *heavy*. It was translated into Tibetan as *lama*, which literally means *unsurpassable*.

'Heavy' shows that the guru is heavy with good qualities and that to transgress his instructions will bring heavy consequences.

Guru Rinpoche is the quintessence, the complete union, of all the wisdom, lovingkindness, and abilities of the buddhas of the three times. Thus, as he is full of innumerable enlightened qualities, we call him 'guru', 'heavy'.

The Sanskrit word *padma* (used also in Tibetan and pronounced *pema*) means *lotus*. It refers to Padmasambhava's name.

As an emanation of the heart of the Buddha Amitabha, Guru Rinpoche belongs to the lotus or speech family of buddhas and is himself a

vidyadhara or awareness-holder of this buddha family; also, he was born in the heart of a lotus.

The Sanskrit siddhi or Tibetan *ngodrop* can be understood in English as 'true accomplishment'.

HUNG is the seed syllable of the mind of all the buddhas, and, as all the buddhas are embodied in him, it is especially the seed syllable of Guru Rinpoche.

Thus, when at the end of the prayer we say *SIDDHI HUNG*, we are asking him to grant us all the accomplishments, both common and supreme.

If we recite this prayer with deep devotion again and again, there is no doubt that we will receive the blessings.

We should develop unshakable confidence that, in answer to our invocation and invitation, Guru Rinpoche will actually come to us from the paradise of the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain...

Fervent prayers to Guru Rinpoche will shut the doors that lead to rebirth in lower realms and, setting us firmly on the path to deliverance from samsara, will eventually result in our achievement of enlightenment. Thus the guru, glorious Vajradhara, is the root of all blessings, through which everything can be accomplished.

* * *

I have no object of hope but you.
In this decadent age,
when all beings are sinking in the swamp of unbearable suffering,
protect them from all this,
O great guru.

You who are endowed with wisdom, and grace,
and waves of blessing,
grant the four initiations.

You who are endowed with compassion,
enhance my realization.

You who are endowed with ability,
purify the two obscurations.

You in whom I place my hopes,
establish me on the path toward enlightenment.

Through you,
may all the blessings of the buddhas enter my mindstream.
I pray to you now with my whole being.

You, in your omniscience,
can see that I have taken birth in this decadent age,
full of disease and strife,
when sentient beings are violent, proud, and arrogant,
lacking diligence in the practice of dharma,
and always seeking what is unwholesome.

In such an age, attachment, anger, stupidity,
illness, famine, and war are always increasing;
here we are experiencing the fruits of our karma.

Like a madman happy to walk into a fire,
we happily accumulate the seeds of our future suffering.

Like a blind man without a guide,
or a madman without a keeper,
we are utterly sunk in the mire of suffering,
without even realizing it.

You, Guru Rinpoche, can protect me from wandering aimlessly
in this inferior, vile wilderness.

Please bestow upon me the vajra wisdom of your body,
speech, and mind,

and grant me the four initiations so that
I may realize the profound meaning of the Great Perfection.

Through your compassion,
may my realization increase,
and may you kindle within me the wisdom of the natural state...

* * *

We should pray to Guru Rinpoche, thinking,

Please grant me your compassion,
and deliver me from suffering in this and future lives.

Please guide me to the higher realms,
and help me to attain ultimate enlightenment.”

* * *

It is said that the way we will eventually be able to benefit beings depends on the magnitude of the prayers we have made while on the path. One of these prayers, composed by Gyalwa Longchenpa, says:

In all my lives, wherever I am born,
May I obtain the seven noble qualities of the higher realms.
On being born, may I meet the dharma
And have the freedom to practice it in the right way.

Then, pleasing the holy lama,
May I practice the dharma day and night.
Having realized the dharma and achieved its essential purpose,
In that life, may I cross over the ocean of existence.
Teaching the holy dharma to the world,
May I never tire of accomplishing the benefit of others.
Through the great wave of impartial benefit to others,
May all beings attain buddhahood together.

Thus it is essential to seal our practice by dedicating
the merit along with vast aspirations.

Faith, Devotion, and Blessings on the Path of Liberation

When studying different Buddhist Wisdom teachings, we can notice how the insight they are pointing to is the same, and, we can also honor the unique qualities of each approach.

There are different ways to come to self knowledge, and to freedom from suffering. Some traditions rely on analysis to see through illusion. Study and debate, logic and the use of reasoning are the methods that lead to insight, revelation, and freedom from wrong views.

We can also have an experience of greater understanding and freedom through connecting deeply with an accomplished teacher. This is something that is not mentioned in most traditions.

*Faith comes in a few different ways. First, there is the *intimation* of a greater truth, something in us that says, 'Yes, this is the way to go'.

This becomes *verified faith*, as we follow our intuition. Our trust in a teacher or a tradition proves itself. We become healthier, more at peace, open to others and responsive.

After this, and higher than these two is *unshakable faith*. Having this kind of trust calms and steadies the mind. It becomes more clear, and experiencing the nature of mind happens quite naturally.

This kind of faith and trust is a little more of a challenge to talk about, because we're reaching now to some of the deepest connections a person can make with another in their lifetime.

When we speak of devotion to a teacher, this is something that is well known in Indian spirituality, but less so here in the West.

When we meet a teacher, and there is a deep karmic connection, something can happen that is inexplicable to the rational mind. At this point in our history here in the West, there are already a good number of stories of highly intelligent, educated and independent people being overwhelmed by such a meeting; they spontaneously cry, their heart opens, and right away there is a love and a trust they could not have imagined only moments before.

When there is this kind of a connection between a holy being and a student, it is unmistakable, rare and precious. As Ringu Tulku said, in meeting the spiritual teacher, half the journey is already complete. We can have an experience of awakening and insight in a moment, directly.

This is not easy to talk about, and it's certainly not the path for everyone. In fact, the progressive path is still often recommended in the Mahamudra tradition, even for those who have had such a profound connection and experience. It is considered safer, with less possibility of steps being left out.

The upside of faith and devotion as a path should be spoken as well, however, and praised as it should be, for those who can take this path.

It's possible that connecting with the enlightened mind of a realized teacher communicates more in a brief time than through years of study. I can say, I have some small experience of this happening. It is mysterious, and tangible.

They say in some lineages that it's possible to meet the mind of a teacher through his writings, or by seeing a blessed statue - and Indian spirituality would add - through dreams, or a vision in meditation - and although this sounds like it's speaking metaphorically, the truth of it is, *this can actually happen*.

This is something that can't be manipulated, or bought, or else I'm sure everyone would take this easier path. Step by step learning by comparison at times can feel laborious, fragmentary, and very very slow. This is more a path of learning by intuition, and through love.

Connecting with an enlightened teacher communicates blessings. The energy is purifying, healing, illuminating, enriching, and vivifying. It brings with it a feeling of safety, and a keen, heightened awareness.

Faith and devotion we can notice here are related. Faith is *an openness*, or we can say, *a trusting receptivity*. Sometimes this comes after careful reflection, and sometimes it is just there - immediately, and beyond any amount of reason. It's amazing when this happens, and it is so unusual that it calls for our full attention. This is a kind of awakening in itself, with some part of ourselves knowing in a new way, and deeply trusting another.

Devotion comes soon after this, sensing the exceptional qualities of our teacher, as a realized being. These exceptional ones teach more by who they are than what they say. I have had the thought that *these are people I can learn from my entire life...* they are like looking up at the great Himalaya mountains, and seeing more and more...

Ringu Tulku describes devotion as *inspiration, and, an opening of the heart.*

As I mentioned, this is not at all the usual way of talking about learning, or about liberating realization, especially here in the West. Each approach has its own special strengths, and can be taken on their own terms, whatever works best for us.

*When it comes to liberation, it's in the Mahamudra and Great Perfection traditions that we hear of the great qualities of devotion.

Here are a few teachers speaking about this profound quality:

Simply by receiving the blessing of the lineage, we can automatically develop a meditative state even if we have had no meditation practice previously.

- Thangu Rinpoche

When we think with devotion of a past great teacher who has great wisdom and compassion, his or her qualities will be transmitted to our minds through the power of the unbroken lineage.

- Garchen Rinpoche

If one just focuses on devotion one does not need to spend years studying debate, philosophy, grammar, art and so forth. In the past, thousands of practitioners attained accomplishment through the path of devotion combined with the paths of Mahamudra and Dzogchen.

- Tulku Urgyen

and,

Mahamudra meditation develops strongly in a state of devotion.

- Ringu Tulku

Devotion is such a unique and precious human quality. With devotion, the mind is vividly awake, enthusiastic, and present. This is a kind of love, one that acts like a magnet for the blessings we receive from our teacher and the lineage, of inspiration, light and strength, and joy.

The closest we can come to describe devotion to a spiritual teacher, for someone who has not yet had such an experience is to say that it's something like being in love. The object of our affection is in our heart continually, shining there, bringing us joy. We cherish this connection.

It can be like this with a Noble Spiritual Friend, believe it or not, and it's possible that the connection goes even deeper. They open us to depths we didn't know we had.

A realized being, a Buddha, shows us something no ordinary relationship can ever give, and that is the way to liberation from the entirety of samsara. They themselves embody this inner freedom, peace and joy, and that is precious beyond measure. It's greater than anything else in the world. When we have doubts about the teachings, or about our own capacities, we need only think of them. They show us directly what is possible as human beings.

Since it's good for us to know and respect all valid spiritual paths, I've written these few celebratory words.

*May we all realize complete freedom,
and lead all others, without a single exception
to that very same state!*

A Useful Map of Four Stages

Imagine that you were lost, in an unfamiliar place. It would be hard to know which way to go. Of course the experience would be frightening, and it could seem to be endless.

Imagine then that you heard of *a map*, and that one actually came into your hand. Even before testing out what it shows, we'd be uplifted by it.

Such is the nature of our lives here, before we meet spiritual teachings that we can relate to. Once we hear that others have described the way, it's bound to be energizing, and onward leading.

I remember coming across a reference in East Indian spiritual teachings that described four stages of becoming familiar with Divinity.

The first was the external level.

For someone whose life is a struggle, and who meets with all kinds of oppression and hardship, to hear about something of another order and to believe it's possible is a life changing experience. Where there was fatigue and fear before, we find the energy to search.

We may find our way to a church, or to a temple, or a retreat, searching for what the books and teachers describe as the Holy One, the Sacred, or Divinity.

When we have found a place or a tradition that presents this well for us personally, we have a reference point in our life. It can be like knowing where a freshwater well can be found. We need never go thirsty for long again.

This is the place of devotion to our Spiritual Ideal, keeping that One in our mind continually, or trying to the best we can; It is a relationship of great love, unlike any other in this life.

I have heard that our faith and devotion can be like a magnifying glass, concentrating the blessings of the one we pray to, so that they enter our life in marvelous ways.

We can sense something of the power of devotion when we visit a holy place, or a temple, or a church, or view a holy object, such as a statue or a painting, or text that has been consecrated through the strength of people's prayers.

Even just hearing someone talk about their spiritual teacher, with tears in their eyes and a halting voice, brings the power through. In that moment, we can know something of the source of their faith, and it's incredible....

Of course, our faith, or our belief fluctuates, and it can be throughout our life that we lose our way, and have to find the path again, but some deep impression has been made, and I do believe this can carry over, even across lifetimes.

The second stage in knowing the Divine, as I remember it, is recognizing that this One we find in church or in the temple, and the One we connect with through our prayers and remembrance *is with us always*. There is always this connection.

In Tibetan Buddhism they have the practices of meditating upon a yi-dam, usually translated as Deity, or Celestial Buddha or Bodhisattva. The meaning of the word, yidam, as explained by my teacher Lama Lodro Rinpoche is, 'held firmly in mind'.

In Christianity there is a well known book by one Brother Laurence called *The Practice of the Presence of God*, that is keeping the sense of the Divine with one always.

It's natural at that point to be drawn more and more to solitude, and to prayer, to communion, and greater understanding.

Of course we have so many questions, and doubts to be resolved. When we feel we are always connected to the divine, we feel protected, no matter what we go through. We have that to turn to.

From this point, we become more comfortable in our own unique path, even if we lose the way at times, or fall. We know that we have a Companion, a Guide that will never abandon us. This is the nature of Benevolence. What the outer worlds offers can never compare, and so our relationship to it changes. We can stop asking from this world and from others what they cannot possibly give.

We can say at that time that we live primarily a spiritual life, or a life guided by the inner light, the light of the spirit.

After some time, the teachings tell us that we can reach a third stage, where we see that the divinity we know outside ourselves *is also within us*.

This also is truly a remarkable breakthrough to have, because from that point on we gradually become independent of external places, books and traditions, and formal worship. It's a process that can take some time, and it is surprising anytime we see this, even a little, but it is undeniable when it happens.

As with the first paradigm shift, from ordinary perception to knowing there *is* something of Divinity in our world, to feeling always connected to that One, to this, the third, where we know this same Holiness is in ourselves - these change *everything* for a person.

You can go down the whole list, of relationships, the importance we place on our bodies, or work, or recognition - all of these change when we know something of the Divine in our lives, animating, enlivening, enriching, and illuminating them.

Finding this *within ourselves* changes the reference point in our spiritual search as well. The questions and receptivity can then be directed inwardly.

With more reliance on divinity within, gradually, we develop greater sensitivity, and responsiveness. As we do this, more and more, we can hear what they call 'the still, small voice', and aim to follow what it says.

From there, greater insight can gradually develop into the nature of spiritual subjects and experiences. It is possible to recognize this Divinity that is within ourselves as the source of all the exalted names and forms in the external world.

Even if we are not a Christian, or a Muslim, or a person who practices the Jewish faith, or someone deeply connected to indigenous traditions, still, we can begin to have a sense of familiarity in all these. We start to see one divine life there in all forms of worship.

This is where we can begin to speak of mysticism, or a way of knowing that goes beyond any one expression of universal truth. We are on a very different ground then, clearly.

The fourth level described, if I remember it correctly, is about who we are, and our own relationship to this Truth. Now, this is somewhere between - not easy and impossible to talk or write anything about. If the teachings about this experience are true, then, slowly or all at once, we can sense our own identity as partaking of this divinity.

We may not jump up and claim, 'Hey everyone!, I am the creator of heaven and earth!', as we think with usual ingrained idea of divinity we have here in the West, but the kindness, the enduring quality, the strength and joy we find in the object of our worship we can also find in ourselves, and, *as ourselves*.

As with the previous paradigm shifts, this is another breakthrough. It may last just a few moments, as some visionary experiences do, or, it can be

more lasting. From what I can tell, there is no one way. The impact though is always that this changes everything for a person.

One poet said,

*Kabir saw this for fifteen seconds,
and it made him a servant for life....*

This general outline of how we know divinity can be useful because we are always somewhere along this continuum. We can see this for ourselves.

For the jaded, materialistic, doubting person, there is no sun of truth, no inspiring name or form that leads them forward and gives them hope through it all. This is by far the norm in this world at this time, it seems, and I find myself there too often as well.

Once some inkling of another kind of Being, or Possibility is felt or remembered though, or is somehow stirred in us, the search for truth is rekindled. And again, from the external, to the ever present, to the both external and internal, and then the primarily internal, to knowing this as our true nature, these remain constant, reliable references throughout all our lifetimes.

On The Introduction to Awareness

Preface, and,

Four articles on The View and The Introduction to Awareness

A consideration for all that follows

Only transcendent wisdom accomplishes the path

From Where We Find Ourselves Just Now

True Letting Go

Two differences in my interpretation of The Introduction to Awareness

The Introduction to Awareness

Preface

The Introduction to Awareness is a text pointing out the nature of mind.

It is traditionally found in the cycle of Tibetan Buddhist bardo teachings that include the well known *Liberation Through Hearing in the Intermediate State*.

This teaching makes all that is said in the more extensive bardo teachings clear and accessible, and it also stands alone as a timeless wisdom teaching from the Nyingma Tradition. For those with an affinity with this approach to liberating insight, it is a wonder and a gift.

A consideration for all that follows...

I believe all of the Buddhist wisdom traditions can accomplish a full result of liberation and enlightenment for a person.

That said, there is a difference between what can be called *provisional teachings*, and those that are *definitive*, describing the result of the practice.

A brief definition

Whatever teachings and practices are in reference to our ordinary conceptual mind, and are based on the idea of a self where there is {in fact} no self are provisional. They are meant to be onward leading, to the liberating, ultimate truth.

Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo said,

The ego (wrong view) dissolves naturally through deep insight into the nature of mind... until then it is the {apparent} self, {what is we take to be} 'the ego' that walks the path...

In comparison, whatever teachings are reference to the non conceptual, the non dual,

whichever ones teach annata, no self, emptiness, the signless, the wish-less, the unconditioned, the timeless,

Buddha nature, our true nature, our boundless original nature, unconditional love, the nature of mind itself - these are definitive.

It wasn't until reading a text by Thinley Norbu Rinpoche that I found the importance of ultimately taking wisdom as the path *highlighted* as not only another teaching among many, but as absolutely essential.

Orgyen Chowang Rinpoche and Tulku Pema Rigstal emphasize this beautifully as well.

I wrote one essay on The Introduction to Awareness called,

It is only transcendent wisdom that accomplishes the path.

Looking back now in 2024 on the liberating teachings I have studied, including those of Buddhist psychology, in my own case, I found that something was missing in my practice, or was not emphasized as much as I needed it to be to free my mind.

I'm at peace with my understanding of these methods now, in terms of where they all lead.

In retrospect, for me, it was exactly this emphasis is that was needed.

Had I known this sooner, it would have saved me a lot of time and unnecessary struggle and hardship, which is the whole purpose of the teachings.

A little explanation

Conceptual mind is still dualistic, and not final quiescence when it comes to any path of practice;

{this includes the teachings on annata, or shunyata, emptiness, madhyamika, the Middle Way, abhidharma, which is Buddhist psychology, and vajrayana sadhana}

and this - the definitive view, the true nature that transcends concepts needs to be known not only once. At some point it needs to be made central to our practice, and really to our entire lives, if we want to be liberated, free of all samsaric suffering. Without transcendent wisdom being central, we

are still in the realm of concepts, and ego grasping, cycling through the experiences of the six realms;

Further, even positive states, when they are based on a self need to be transcended, the self let go of in regard to them, or the result will be only higher rebirth, in the human or in one of the deva realms.

Attachment even to a spiritual path, or to an identity, as good as it may feel sometimes, still has the cause of continuing samsara, and so this teaching on what Robert Thurman calls 'radical non duality', is actually complete.

It's not only the Great Perfection teachings from the Nyingma Tradition, of course, that arrive there. I can see how each Buddhist path of practice can potentially accomplish a full result, when this transcendent truth is realized. There are teachings in the Nyingma however that make this explicit, and I've not seen this expressed as fully elsewhere.

The sooner we have Right View, and a clear idea of the aim of practice, the better, but how to do this?

Either we begin with a complete view, which seldom happens, or we have a workable view, one that can develop as insight becomes more clear and incisive.

As Orgyen Chowang said

The view is what we're meant to focus on. Everything else is a supporting practice.

It helps every aspect of practice to know this {taking refuge, vows, ethics, meditation, purification, devotion, study, prayer, and mantra.} The more clear we are about the wisdom we are realizing, the easier practice can be.

The provisional teachings arise from this ultimate nature, in response to what is needed. They serve the purpose of all liberating methods, leading to the ultimate goal shared by all Buddhist methods.

This is how I now understand the different Buddhist wisdom teachings, and the Mind Only School and Buddhist psychology.

Only transcendent wisdom accomplishes the path (2024)

A few notes on The Introduction Awareness [{Text}](#) [{Audio}](#)

The Introduction to Awareness is a text pointing out the nature of mind. It does this directly in various ways throughout.

In the Great Perfection teachings, the nature of mind is described as being beyond concepts; It is non dual, an inclusive totality, and a communion.

The Introduction Awareness is also distinctive in some ways. In comparison to other teachings from this tradition, there are a few points that distinguish this text.

First, it says in no uncertain terms that

** Only transcendent wisdom - fully understanding the nature of our mind and our life here accomplishes the path,*

which is quite a bold statement. This is referred to first in the beginning, where it says

Even though that which is usually called mind is widely esteemed and much discussed, still, often it is not understood, or it is wrongly understood, or it is understood in a one-sided manner only, {only partly understood}.

When it is not understood correctly just as it is in itself, there come into existence an inconceivable number of philosophical ideas and assertions.

Furthermore, when ordinary individuals do not understand it, they do not recognize their own nature, and so they continue to wander among the six destinies of rebirth in the three worlds, and thus experience suffering.

and then again in the conclusion, where it says,

Not understanding this, even Panditas {or scholars} can fall into error...

An early section then lists various Buddhist philosophies, and how they can possibly fall short of the goal. Having studied a number of these teachings over the years, I can affirm that the criticisms are valid, and deserve to be looked into carefully.

Thinley Norbu was the first teacher I read who clarified this point, and made this stand out prominently, that only transcendent wisdom accomplishes the path.

He cited the well known Four Reliances, emphasizing the fourth:

Don't rely on the teacher, rely on the teaching

Don't rely on the words, rely on the meaning

Don't rely on just the provisional meaning, rely on where they are ultimately headed, and,

Don't rely on ordinary conceptual consciousness, rely on wisdom

A passage in his Cascading Waterfall of Nectar then reads,

The common, conceptual vehicle {by itself} does not arrive at the ultimate aim...

*Although there is hope to attain enlightenment, * the basis there is ordinary mind, which is itself the root of samsara.*

*Not only does that path take a long time, but the result is extremely difficult to accomplish exactly because *the basis is mistaken...*

I so admire the clarity of explanation in the Nyingma, Great Perfection teachings, and within these, there are only a few teachers I have found that emphasize this point as much as I feel it should be known, and made central to our practice.

{Pema Rigtsal in *The Great Secret of Mind*, and Orgyen Chowang Rinpoche in *From Foundation to Summit* make this abundantly clear.}

The teachings that explain the need for a correct view right from the outset say, If our view of ourselves, and others, and our world from the beginning is in any way mistaken, or incomplete, it can be difficult to let go of that view and have a more complete view.

As Ajahn Pasanno said,

If there is {any ego grasping}, any hint of self, a position is then taken and the whole realm of samsara {the mistaken, conditioned existence that is suffering} unfolds...

Conversely, as it says in a passage in Orgyen Chowang's book,

If, through meditation, we get familiar with, and maintain, the view -

{meaning here the view as expressed in the Great Perfection, and the goal in all traditions of practice},

then our action, or conduct, in turn will correspond to our view and meditation.

This is the correct, or genuine, view, meditation, and action. All of these find their source in the {true} nature.

This is what they call 'Taking wisdom as the path'.

Another distinctive point made in The Introduction to Awareness is that

This very mind itself that we are experiencing right now, is the nature of all that we look upon with faith and adoration;

All that we aspire to is here, right now;

and all paths and practices are contained in this very nature; they are its creative, compassionate expression arising to meet our needs in various ways;

and, related to this, a third fundamental insight expressed throughout this text is that

Even all that we experience that we call common states is - this very nature.

This is bound to change how we view our everyday lives and activities, as well as meditation..

This direct insight into the true nature of mind and appearances has to be carried into our daily life at all times, otherwise we might have insight-wisdom for an hour a day during formal meditation, and then revert to ordinary thought, speech, and action, i.e, delusion the other twenty-three hours, and then, what's the use of that?

Tulku Pema Rigtsal says it this way,

The mere ability to abide in formal contemplation free of mental elaboration does not necessarily take us into informal contemplation that is different from the ordinary activity of body, speech, and mind. *If we are unable to mix the practice of unelaborated formal contemplation {meditation} with informal contemplation {the so-called post-meditation}, {ultimately} there will be no benefit... {aaah...}

As Longchenpa expressed it,

We may realize the timelessly liberating view, but if we are not constant in meditation in that view, it is not possible to turn back the delusory appearances of samsara...

It is therefore vital to familiarize ourselves *{continually}* with the natural state of pure presence...

May we all accomplish a complete liberating right view

From Where We Find Ourselves Just Now

On the view as presented in the Nyingma Tradition, and the text *The Introduction to Awareness*

This year, I've been studying what are called the bardo teachings from Tibetan Buddhism. Something interesting happened for me, cycling through these teachings again this time.

I finally read the text called *Liberation Through Hearing in the Intermediate State*, by Padmasambhava.

This is a text that is often mis-translated as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, and is actually marketed that way, to reach more people, as it is familiar in the book world by that title.

It's an interesting body of material overall, and makes more sense to me now, placing it in the context of the commentaries I've read through.

* The best thing that has come from this study though for me though has been the discovery of a text that is included in this cycle of teachings, called in an earlier translation, *Self Liberation Through Seeing With Naked Awareness*, and more recently as *The Introduction to Awareness - Natural Liberation through Naked Perception*, or *Natural Liberation Through the Recognition of Enlightened Intention*.

I liked it so much, I put together my own version of the text, based on previous versions, and made a recording of it as well, to listen to often.

I'll try to explain a little of why this teaching is especially meaningful exactly here.

I have had the feeling the last couple of years, looking back, that something fundamental has been missing in my practice of the Dharma, the Buddhist teachings. This is related to what they call Right View. If the view we begin with in any practice is mistaken, or is incomplete in some way, then everything that follows, of course will also be in error, or not complete as well.

I have looked at the Middle Way teachings, and these make this point clear, explicitly, only when we get to incorporating their insight in later stages of practice, namely the Varjajana.

Then, I felt keenly that if our mundane view is the basis of what we do in our lives and practice, it is likewise incomplete, or very much flawed. This ordinary perception is remedied in Buddhism and other traditions by *sacred outlook*, or what they call *pure perception* - knowing the divine nature of our world, our ancestry ourselves and one another.

Of course, our view can evolve, even if we start with an incomplete view of ourselves and our world, but it has to be accommodating as we go, and sometimes it's hard to let go of one view, and realize another., more complete view.

The Nyingma Lineage is the oldest of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism. From this Lineage, their *Dzogchen*, or *Great Perfection* teachings say that their view is the pinnacle of the nine yantras, or vehicles.

You should know, I am skeptical whenever *anyone*, in *any* tradition claims that their view is the highest. I've traveled too far and too long through traditions that say this to just accept it without investigating, critically.

And you know what? At this time in my life, I can see what the Nyingma teachings mean. For me, the view that they express is actually the highest that I've found, but how to ever communicate this?

We can read and reflect on their teachings and see if it is so, for ourselves. I have faith we can all make our way to freedom and peace, which is the whole purpose of engaging any of the Buddhist teachings, or any spiritual teaching.

The text *The Introduction to Awareness* has lines that spell out the need for a complete view, in no uncertain terms. We can get caught in many ways, attached to any partial view, and then, that's not it.

We can also continue with whatever path we are on, and, as this text says, these paths are also included in the Great Perfection. Even in our ordinary, or afflicted states, of confusion and suffering, there is something here, and this is our own true nature. It is undiminished and knowing, and it has all the qualities, at all times.

So we are encouraged at every step to understand our nature, our aspirations, our confusion or sorrow, our joy, all of it.

Whatever state we find ourselves in, all the virtues we seek, all the companionship, and guidance we need is *here*.

* * *

Two books I can recommend that express with precision the Nyingma View, as it is taught in The Introduction to Awareness are The Great Secret of Mind, by Tulku Pema Rigstal, and From Foundation to Pinnacle, by Orgyen Chowang:

Notes from two teachers

See also Selected teachings by Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche

True Letting Go

I heard the way of liberating right view expressed recently in a talk on social change, and creating something altogether new.

They said that

The *antithesis* of something, in a way, always contains the *thesis* {or the original idea, as its reference point};

and when you bring to mind an anti-thesis, it is responding in terms of that original statement, or idea

{no matter how wrong or unfounded the first idea was, such as the idea of self}

This only makes sense.

To create something altogether new, something radically different, we need to actually let go of all that, or go beyond it altogether, not as something gotten beyond, but free of the concepts of one or the other, or both, or neither, and this is straight Buddhism.

In pointing out the nature of the mind, as in *The Introduction to Awareness*, we are encouraged to know our mind free of entanglement with thought and suppositions altogether; open, clear and awake, blissful and at ease.

Two differences in my interpretation of The Introduction to Awareness

I have based my own version of The Introduction to Awareness on those by John Reynolds, in his book, *Self Liberation Through Seeing With Naked Awareness*; An audio reading of this can be found on youtube;

the version by Robert Thurman, in his translation of the Tibetan Book of the Liberation Through Hearing in the Intermediate State; The audio is chapter 8 of the audio book;

and that by Gyurme Dorje, in his 2007 complete translation of the Bardo Thodol cycle of teachings. An audio recording of this is also available, as chapter 4 of that book.

Compared to these versions of The Introduction to Awareness, there are two main differences in the written and the audio version I have prepared.

The first point of departure occurs in the latter part of section 5, where the original translations read,

Even though the Sravakas and the Pratyekabuddhas wish to understand it in terms of the Anatman doctrine, still they do not understand the nature of mind as it is in itself.

I have changed this to

...still they may not understand the nature of mind as it is in itself.

I have done this in the passages that follow as well, on the other Buddhist philosophical schools.

My reason for doing this is that I do believe each tradition and lineage has produced outstanding teachers, and completely realized and liberated beings.

Not a reader of Tibetan myself, I don't know if the original text was this absolutely critical of every other approach (and I don't think it was intended that way), so saying that *they may not understand the nature of mind as it is*, in each case, leaves room, respectfully, for there to be accomplishment in any of these approaches, as long as the nature of mind itself is fully understood.

I have made one more substantial change to the text I am reflecting on, and this applies in both verses 11 and 26, where it says

There exist no phenomena other than what arises from the mind -

I have changed this throughout this verse to

All that is experienced is known in the mind...,

and similarly again in verse 26, where there is a longer passage that reads

Everything that appears is but a manifestation of mind.

and then lists different experiences and realms and states of being, with the concluding phrase such as,

...is but a manifestation of mind

and,

...they are but a manifestation of mind...

For me, these are the most potentially problematic verses, and so I have replaced the one repeating line in verse 26, in a way that I think makes a small but significant difference.

I have replaced all these concluding phrases with

What you experience depends on your mind

The difference here for me is that one that moves from theory to practice.

It also avoids what I don't feel entirely comfortable saying, that everything is merely a manifestation of mind, which is the proposition of the Mind Only School in Buddhism, for example where they say 'the object of mind is mind itself'.

While this may be true, ontologically, it does seem to be an absolute statement, and one that could easily be heard as viewing the world as we know it through our senses and suffering and leaning too much in the

direction of their dream-like nature or their non-existence for my preference. There is a middle way balance to be found just here.

I thought of this while driving recently, where we have the necessary distinction between the thought of other cars, and their actuality.

What you experience depends on your mind places it back in the realm of practice, and questioning, and keen investigation, and insight whenever there are appearances to the mind.

The Introduction to Awareness - Natural Liberation through Naked Perception

Audio

1. Herein is contained The Introduction to Awareness - Natural Liberation through Naked Perception. This is an extract from the Peaceful and Wrathful Divinities {cycle}, and is a Profound Sacred Teaching, entitled *Natural Liberation Through the Recognition of Enlightened Intention*.

2. Homage to the Three Kayas, and to the Divinities that express the inherent luminous clarity of intrinsic awareness.

3. Herein I shall teach Self-Liberation Through Seeing with Naked Awareness, which is a direct introduction to intrinsic awareness.

Truly, this introduction to your own intrinsic awareness should be contemplated well, O fortunate ones of noble family!

SAMAYA gya gya gya

[The Importance of the Introduction to Awareness]

4. Emaho!

Although the single nature of mind completely pervades both cyclic existence and nirvāṇa, and has been naturally present from the beginning, you have not recognized it.

Even though its clarity and presence has been uninterrupted, you have not yet encountered its face.

Even though its arising has nowhere been obstructed, still you have not comprehended it.

Therefore, this direct introduction is for the purpose of bringing you to self-recognition.

Everything that is expounded by the Victorious Ones of the three times in the eighty-four thousand Gateways to the Dharma is incomprehensible unless you understand intrinsic awareness.

Indeed, the Victorious Ones do not teach anything other than the understanding of this.

Even though there exist an unlimited numbers of scriptures, equal in their extent to the sky, yet with respect to the real meaning, it can be expressed in a few words that will introduce you to your own intrinsic awareness.

This introduction to the manifest Primordial State of the Victorious Ones is disclosed by the following method for entering into the practice, where there exists no antecedent nor subsequent practices.

[The Actual Introduction to Awareness]

5. Kye-ho!

O fortunate ones, listen!

Even though that which is usually called mind is widely esteemed and much discussed, still, often it is not understood, or it is wrongly understood, or it is understood in a one-sided manner only. When it is not understood correctly just as it is in itself, there come into existence an inconceivable number of philosophical ideas and assertions.

Furthermore, when ordinary individuals do not understand it, they do not recognize their own nature, and so they continue to wander among the six destinies of rebirth in the three worlds, and thus experience suffering.

Therefore, not understanding your own mind is a grievous fault.

Even though the Sravakas and the Pratyekabuddhas wish to understand it in terms of the Anatman doctrine, still they may not understand the nature of mind as it is in itself.

Also, there exist others who, being attached to their own personal ideas and interpretations, become fettered by these attachments and so do not perceive the Clear Light.

The Sravakas and the Pratyekabuddhas can be obscured by their attachments to subject and object.

The Madhyamikas can be obscured by their attachments to the extremes of the Two Truths.

The practitioners of the Kriya Tantra and the Yoga Tantra can be obscured by their attachments to sadhana practice.

The practitioners of the Mahayoga and the Anuyoga can be obscured by their attachments to Space and Awareness, and with respect to the real meaning of nonduality, when they divide these into two, they fall into deviation. If these two do not become one without any duality, you will certainly not attain Buddhahood.

In terms of your own mind, for everyone, samsara and nirvana are inseparable, and if you persist in accepting and enduring attachments and aversions, you will continue to wander in samsara. Therefore, your active dharmas and your inactive ones both should be abandoned.

However, since self-liberation through seeing nakedly by means of intrinsic awareness is here revealed to you, you should understand that all dharmas can be perfected and completed in the great total self liberation, and therefore, whatever practice you do can be brought to perfection within the Great Perfection.

SAMAYA gya gya gya

[Synonyms for Mind]

6. As for this bright awareness which is called mind, even though one says that it exists, it does not actually exist {it cannot be found};

On the other hand, as a source, it is the origin of the diversity of all the bliss of nirvana and all of the sorrow of samsara;

And as for its being something desirable, it is cherished alike in the Eleven Vehicles.

With respect to its having a name, the various names that are applied to it are inconceivable in their numbers.

Some call it "the nature of the mind", or "mind itself."

Some Tirthikas call it by the name Atman, or "the Self."

The Sravakas call it the doctrine of Anatman, or "the absence of a self."

The Chittamatrins call it by the name Chitta, or "the Mind."

Some call it the Prajnaparamita, or "the Perfection of Wisdom."

Some call it by the name Tathagatagarbha, or "the womb of the Tathagata, the Buddhas, the Awakened Ones."

Some call it by the name Mahamudra, or "the Great Symbol."

Some call it by the name "the Unique Sphere."

Some call it by the name Dharmadhatu, or "the dimension of Reality."

Some call it by the name Alaya, or "the basis of everything."

And some simply call it by the name "ordinary awareness."

[The Three Considerations]

7. Now, when you are introduced to your own intrinsic awareness, the method for entering into it involves three considerations:

First, recognize that past thoughts leave no traces behind;

Second, recognize that future thoughts have not arisen;

And third, recognize that the present moment abides naturally, and is unconstructed.

Awareness at this moment in itself is quite ordinary;

And when you look into yourself in this way, nakedly, without any discursive thoughts, since there is only this pure observing, there will be found a lucid clarity without anyone being there who is the observer;

Only a naked manifest awareness is present.

This awareness is empty and immaculately pure, and is not created by anything whatsoever.

It is authentic, and unadulterated, without any duality of clarity and emptiness.

It is not permanent, for it is lacking inherent existence in all respects; however, it is not a mere nothingness, because it is lucid and present.

It does not exist as a single entity because it is present as many;

On the other hand it is not simply a multiplicity because it is of a single flavor.

And this inherent self-awareness is not based on anything else.

This is the real introduction to the actual condition of things.

8. Within this intrinsic awareness, the three kayas are inseparable and fully present as one.

Since it is empty and without self existence, it is the Dharmakaya;

Since its luminous clarity represents the inherent transparent radiance of emptiness, it is the Sambhogakaya;

And since its arising is nowhere obstructed, or interrupted, it is the

Nirmanakaya.

These three, being complete and fully present as one, are the very essence of awareness itself.

[Consequences of the Introduction to Awareness]

9. When you are introduced in this way, through this exceedingly powerful method for entering into the practice, you discover directly that your own immediate self-awareness is just this and nothing else, and that it has an inherent self-clarity which is entirely unfabricated. How can you then speak of not understanding the nature of the mind?

Moreover, since you are meditating without finding anything there to meditate upon, how can you say that your meditation does not go well?

Since your own manifest intrinsic awareness is just this, how can you say that you cannot find your own mind?

The mind is just that which is thinking, and yet, although you have searched for the thinker, how can you say that you do not find him?

With respect to this, nowhere does there exist the one who is the cause of such activity, and yet, since activity exists, how can you say that activity does not arise?

Since merely allowing thoughts to settle into their own condition, without trying to modify them in any way, is sufficient, how can you say that you are not able to remain in a calm state?

Since allowing thoughts to be just as they are, without trying to do anything about them, is sufficient, how can you say that you are not able to do anything with regard to them?

Since clarity, awareness, and emptiness are inseparable and are spontaneously self-perfected, how can you say that nothing is accomplished by your practice?

Since intrinsic awareness is self-originated and spontaneously self-perfected without any antecedent causes or conditions, how can you say that you are not able to accomplish anything by your efforts?

Since the arising of discursive thoughts and their being liberated occur simultaneously, how can you say that you are unable to apply an antidote?

Since your own immediate awareness is just this, how can you say that you do not know anything with regard to it?

[Observations Related to Examining the Nature of Mind]

10. It is certain that the nature of the mind is empty and without any foundation whatsoever. Your own mind is insubstantial like the empty sky. You should look at your own mind to see whether it is like that or not.

Being without any view that decides that it is empty, it is certain that original awareness has been clear and luminous from the very beginning, like the heart of the sun. You should look at your own mind to see whether it is like that or not.

It is certain that one's intrinsic awareness is unceasing, like a river that flows. You should look at your own mind to see whether it is like that or not.

It is certain that the diversity of movements arising in the mind are not apprehendable when memories; they are like insubstantial breezes that move through the atmosphere. You should look at your own mind to see whether it is like that or not.

It is certain that whatever appearances occur, all of them are simply known, like the images in a mirror that simply appear. You should look at your own mind to see whether it is like that or not.

It is certain that all of the diverse characteristics and appearances are liberated into their own condition, like clouds in the atmosphere that are self-originated and self-liberated. You should look at your own mind to see whether it is like that or not.

11. All that is experienced is known in the mind. Other than the meditation that occurs, where is the one who is meditating?

All that is experienced is known in the mind. Other than the behavior that occurs, where is the one who is behaving?

All that is experienced is known in the mind. Other than the samaya vow that occurs, where is the one who is guarding it?

All that is experienced is known in the mind. Other than the fruition that occurs, where is the one who is realizing the fruit? You should look at your own mind, observing it again and again.

12. When you look upward into the space of the sky outside yourself, if there are no thoughts occurring that are emanations being projected, and when you look inward at your own mind inside yourself, if there exists no projectionist who projects thoughts by thinking them, then your own subtle mind will become lucidly clear.

Since the Clear Light of your own intrinsic awareness is without self, it is the Dharmakaya, and this is like the sun rising in a cloudless, illuminated sky.

Even though this light cannot be said to possess a particular shape or form, nevertheless it can be fully known.

Whether or not this is understood is especially significant.

13. This Clear Light was not produced by something before it - amazing!

This nature of mind does not experience birth, nor does there exist a cause for its death - amazing!

Although it is evidently visible, yet there is no one there who sees it -
amazing!

Though it has wandered throughout samsara, it has come to no harm -
amazing!

Even though it has seen Buddhahood itself, it is not itself improved -
amazing!

Even though it exists in everyone everywhere, yet it has gone unrecognized
- amazing!

Nevertheless, you hope to attain some other fruit than this elsewhere -
amazing!

Even though it exists within yourself and nowhere else, yet you seek for it
elsewhere - amazing!

[Intrinsic Awareness As View, Meditation, Conduct, and Result]

14. How wonderful!

This immediate intrinsic awareness is insubstantial and lucidly clear. Just
this is the highest pinnacle among all views;

It is all-encompassing, free in every way, and without conceptions. Just this
is the highest pinnacle among all meditations;

It is unfabricated, and inexpressible in worldly terms. Just this is the highest pinnacle among all courses of conduct;

Without being sought after, it is spontaneously self-perfected from the very beginning. Just this is the highest pinnacle among all fruits;

15. Here is the teaching of the four great media, that are without error:

First, there is the great medium of the unmistaken view. Since this immediate awareness is lucidly clear, and this lucid clarity is without error or mistake, it is called a medium.

Second, there is the great medium of the unmistaken meditation. Since this immediate awareness is that which possesses clarity, and this lucid clarity is without error or mistake, it is called a medium.

Third, there is the great medium of the unmistaken conduct. Since this immediate original awareness is that which possesses clarity, and this lucid clarity is without error or mistake, it is called a medium.

And fourth, there is the great medium of the unmistaken fruit. Since this immediate awareness is lucidly clear, and this lucid clarity is without error or mistake, it is called a medium.

16. Here is the teaching on the four great, unchanging, essential points, called nails.

First, there is the great nail of the unchanging view. This immediate present awareness is lucidly clear. Because it is stable in the three times, it is called a nail.

Second, there is the great nail of the unchanging meditation. This immediate present awareness is lucidly clear. Because it is stable in the three times, it is called a nail.

Third, there is the great nail of the unchanging conduct. This immediate present awareness is lucidly clear. Because it is stable in the three times, it is called a nail.

And fourth, there is the great nail of the unchanging fruit. This immediate present awareness is lucidly clear. Because it is stable in the three times, it is called a nail.

17. Then, as for the secret instruction which teaches that the three times are one -

You should relinquish all notions of the past, and abandon all precedents;

You should cut off all plans and expectations with respect to the future;

And in the present, you should not grasp at thoughts that arise, but allow the mind to remain in a state like the sky.

Since there is nothing upon which to meditate while in the natural

state, there is no need to meditate, {as when you put something in front of yourself and run after it}, and since there does not exist any distraction here, you continue in this state of stable mindfulness without distraction.

In this state which is without {ideas of} meditation, and without any distraction, you observe everything with a naked awareness.

Your own awareness is inherently knowing, inherently clear, and luminously brilliant.

When this arises, it is called the Bodhichitta, the enlightened mind.

Being without any activity of meditation, it transcends all objects of knowledge.

Being without any distraction, it is the luminous clarity of the essence itself.

Appearances, being empty in themselves, become self-liberated,

and clarity and emptiness being inseparable are the Dharmakaya.

Since it becomes evident that there is nothing to be realized by means of a path to Buddhahood, at this time you will actually behold Vajrasattva.

18. Then, as for the instruction for exhausting the six extremes and overthrowing them -

Even though there exist a great many different views that do not agree among themselves, when seeing this mind which is your own natural awareness, there is no duality of viewing, and that which is viewed;

And when you look and observe, *seeking* the one who is looking and observing, since you search for this observer and do not find him existing anywhere, at that time your view is exhausted and overthrown. Thus, even though it is the end of your view, this is the beginning with respect to yourself.

Without its falling excessively into emptiness and non-existence even at the beginning, at this very moment your own present awareness becomes lucidly clear. Just this is the view, the way of seeing of the Great Perfection. Therefore, understanding and not understanding are found to be not two different things.

19. Although there exist a great many different meditations that do not agree among themselves, your own ordinary present awareness is directly penetrating. The meditation and the one who meditates are not two different things.

When you look for the meditator who is meditating or not meditating, since you have searched for this meditator and have not found him anywhere, at that time your meditation is exhausted and overthrown. Thus, even though it is the end of your efforts in meditation, this is the beginning with respect to yourself.

Without its falling under the power of delusion, drowsiness, or agitation,

your immediate unfabricated awareness becomes lucidly clear;

And this unmodified state of even contemplation is concentration.

Therefore, remaining in a calm state or not remaining in it are not two different things.

20. Although there exist a great many different kinds of behavior which do not agree among themselves, your own original awareness is the Unique Sphere. Behavior and the one who behaves are not two different things.

When you look for the one it is who behaves with action, or without action, since you have searched for the one who acts and have not found him anywhere, at that time your behavior is exhausted and overthrown. Thus, even though it is the end of your contrived conduct and behavior, this is the beginning with respect to yourself.

Without its falling under the power of errors and inherited predispositions, your immediate awareness is an unfabricated inherent clarity.

Without accepting or rejecting anything, just letting things be as they are without trying to modify them, such conduct or behavior alone is pure. Therefore, pure and impure action are not two different things.

21. Although there exist a great many different fruits that do not agree among themselves, the nature of the mind that is inherent awareness is none other than the spontaneously perfected three kayas. What is realized and the one who realizes it are not two different things.

When you look for the fruit, and the one who has realized it, and have not found them anywhere, at that time your fruit is exhausted and overthrown. Thus, even though it is an end to your fruition, still this is the beginning with respect to yourself.

Without its falling under the power of attachments or aversions, or of hopes and fears, your immediate present awareness becomes spontaneously perfected inherent clarity.

Understand that within yourself the three kayas are fully manifest. Therefore, this itself is the fruition of original, uncreated Awareness.

[Synonyms for Awareness]

22. This intrinsic awareness is free of the eight extremes, such as eternalism and nihilism, and the rest. Thus we speak of the Middle Way where one does not fall into any of the extremes, and we speak of intrinsic awareness as uninterrupted mindful presence.

Since emptiness possesses a heart that is intrinsic awareness, therefore it is called by the name Tathagatagarbha, that is, the heart of Buddhahood.

If you understand the meaning of this, then that will transcend and surpass everything else, therefore, it is called by the name of Prajnaparamita, that is, the Perfection of Wisdom.

Because it cannot be conceived of by the intellect, and is free of all conceptual limitations from the very beginning, therefore it is called by the name of Mahamudra, that is, the Great Symbol.

Because of that, in accordance with whether it is specifically understood or not understood, since it is the basis of everything, of all of the bliss of nirvana and of all the sorrow of samsara, therefore it is called by the name of alaya, that is, the foundation of everything.

Because, when it remains in its own space, it is quite ordinary and in no way exceptional, this awareness that is present and lucidly clear is called by the name of ordinary awareness.

However many names may be applied to it, even though they all are well conceived and fancy sounding, with regard to its real meaning, it is just this immediate present awareness, and nothing else.

23. To desire something other than this is just like having an elephant at home, but searching for its tracks elsewhere.

Even though you may try to measure the universe with a tape measure, it will not be possible to encompass it.

Similarly, if you do not understand that what you experience depends on your mind, it will not be possible for you to attain Buddhahood.

By not recognizing this intrinsic awareness itself for what it is, you will then search for your mind outside of yourself, and if you seek for yourself outside of yourself, how can you ever find yourself?

This is just like a fool, who, going into a crowd of many people, and having let himself become confused because of the spectacle, does not recognize himself, and, even though he searches for himself everywhere, he continually makes the error of mistaking others for himself.

Similarly, since you do not see the natural condition of the real nature of things, and you do not know that what you experience depends on your mind, you are thrust once again into Samsara.

By not seeing that your own mind is actually the Buddha, nirvana becomes obscured.

With respect to samsara and nirvana, the difference is simply due to ignorance, or to awareness respectively,

but at this single instant of pure awareness, there is in fact no actual difference between them, in terms of their essence.

If you come to perceive samsara and nirvana as existing somewhere other than in your own mind, this is surely an error. However, even error and non-error are actually of a single essence, that is the nature of the mind.

Since the mind-streams of sentient beings are not two by nature, the unmodified, uncorrected nature of the mind is liberated by its being allowed simply to remain in its own natural condition.

If you are not aware that the fundamental error or delusion comes from the mind, you will not properly understand the real meaning of the Dharmata , the nature of reality.

24. You should look into what is self-arising and self-originated.

With respect to these appearances, in the beginning they must arise from somewhere, in between they must remain somewhere, and at the end they must go somewhere.

When you look into this matter, it is, for example, like a crow gazing into a well. When he flies away from the well, his reflection also departs and does not return.

It is this way with experiences. They arise and are liberated in the mind.

The nature of the mind, which has the capacity to know every thing and be aware of every thing, is empty and clear;

As is the case with the sky above, its emptiness and its clarity have been inseparable from the very beginning.

Original awareness becomes manifest, and becomes established as luminous clarity. Just this is the Dharmata, the nature of reality.

Even though experience seemingly manifests as entirely external to you, you are aware of it in your own mind, and as the nature of the mind.

Since the mind is aware and clear, it is understood to be like the sky. However, even though we employ the example of the sky to indicate the nature of the mind, this is in fact only a metaphor or simile indicating things in a one-sided fashion.

The nature of the mind, as well as being empty, is also intrinsically aware, everywhere it is clear, but the sky is without any awareness. Therefore, this metaphor only goes so far.

So, without distraction, simply allow the mind to remain in the state of being just as it is.

[The Nature of Appearances]

25. Moreover, as for its diversity of appearances, which represents relative truth, not even one of these appearances is actually created {permanently} in reality, and so, accordingly, they disappear again.

All things, all phenomenal existence, everything within samsara and nirvana, are merely appearances, {phenomena or experiences}, which are known by the individual's single nature of the mind.

On any particular occasion, when your own internal mind-stream undergoes changes, external changes will also be perceived.

Therefore, everything that you see is experienced by the mind, and, moreover, all of the beings inhabiting the six realms of rebirth perceive everything with their own distinct karmic vision.

26. The Tirthikas who are outsiders see all this in terms of the dualism of eternalism as against nihilism;

Each of the nine successive vehicles sees things in terms of its own view. Thus, things are perceived in various different ways and may be elucidated in various different ways.

Because you grasped at these various appearances, becoming attached to them, errors have come into existence. Yet with respect to all of these experiences of which you are aware in your mind, even though these appearances that you perceive do arise, if you do not grasp at them, then that is Buddhahood.

Appearances are not erroneous in themselves, but because of your grasping at them, errors come into existence. If you know these thoughts only grasp at things which are experiences in the mind, then they will be liberated by themselves.

What you experience depends on your mind.

Even though the entire external inanimate universe appears to you...

Even though all of the sentient beings of the six realms appear to you...

Even though the happiness of humans and the delights of the Devas in heaven appear to you...

Even though the sorrows of the three evil destinies appear to you...

Even though the five poisons, representing ignorance and the passions appear to you...

Even though intrinsic awareness which is self originated appears to you...

Even though good thoughts along the way to nirvana appear to you...

Even though obstacles due to demons and evil spirits appear to you...

Even though the gods and other excellent attainments appear to you...

Even though various kinds of purity appear to you...

Even though remaining in a state of one-pointed concentration, without any discursive thoughts appears to you...

Even though the colors that are the characteristics of things appear to you...

Even though a state without characteristics and without conceptual elaborations appears to you...

Even though the nonduality of the one and the many appears to you...

Even though existence and non-existence appear to you...

what you experience depends on your mind...

This is true of all that is known.

27. Because of the unobstructed nature of the mind, there is a continuous arising of appearances. Like the waves and the waters of the ocean, which are not two different things, whatever arises is liberated into the natural state of the mind.

However many different names are applied to it in this unceasing process of naming things, with respect to its real meaning, the mind of the individual does not exist other than *as one*;

And, moreover, this singularity is without any foundation {- that is to say, it is not based on anything else} and, it is devoid of any root;

Even though it is one, you cannot look for it in any particular direction; it cannot be seen as an entity located somewhere;

Nor can it be seen as just being empty, because there exists the transparent radiance of its own luminous clarity and awareness;

Nor can it be seen as diversified, because emptiness and clarity are inseparable.

Immediate self-awareness, like this, is clear and present.

Even though activities exist, there is no agent who is the actor;

Even though they are free of any inherent nature, experiences are actually experienced.

If you practice in this way, then everything will be liberated.

[Conclusion]

With respect to your own sense faculties, everything will be understood immediately without any intervening operations of the intellect.

Just as is the case with the sesame seed being the cause of the oil, and the milk being the cause of butter, but where the oil is not obtained without pressing and the butter is not obtained without churning, so all sentient beings, even though they possess the actual essence of Buddhahood, will not realize Buddhahood without engaging in practice.

If he practices, then even a cowherd can realize liberation. Even though he does not know the explanation, he can systematically establish himself in the experience of it.

It is like when one has had the experience of actually tasting sugar in one's own mouth, one does not need to have that taste explained by someone else.

Not understanding this intrinsic awareness, even Panditas can fall into error. Even though they are exceedingly learned and knowledgeable in

explaining the nine vehicles, it will only be like spreading rumors of places which they have not seen personally, and with respect to Buddhahood, they will still be far from it.

If you understand intrinsic awareness, then all of your merits and sins will be liberated into their own condition, whereas if you do not understand it, any virtuous or non virtuous deeds that you commit will accumulate as karma, leading to transmigration in heavenly rebirth, or to rebirth in the evil destinies respectively.

Understanding this selfless original awareness which is your own mind, the consequences of merit and of sin will never come to be realized, just as a spring cannot originate in the empty sky. In the state of emptiness itself, the object of merit or of sin is not even created.

To see everything clearly, this instruction is most profound, and this being so, you should become intimately acquainted with it.

Profoundly sealed!

28. How wonderful!

EM AH HO!

As for this Self Liberation Through Seeing with Naked Awareness, which is a direct introduction to one's own intrinsic awareness, it is for the benefit of those sentient beings belonging to the later generations of those future

degenerate times that all of my Tantras, Agamas, and Upadesas, though necessarily brief and concise, have been composed;

And even though I have disseminated them at the present time, yet they shall be concealed as terma, precious treasures, so that those whose good karma (fortune) ripens in the future shall come to encounter them.

SAMAYA gya gya gya

This treatise which is an introduction to one's actual intrinsic awareness or state of immediate presence, is entitled Self Liberation Through Seeing with Naked Awareness. It was composed by Padmasambhava, the Master from Uddiyana.

*Until Samsara is emptied of living beings,
May this Great Work of liberating them not be abandoned!*

* * *

{This version is based primarily on the translation by John Reynolds, with reference to the translations by Robert Thurman and Gyurme Dorje. It was revised by Jason Espada in August of 2024.}

Sarva Mangalam