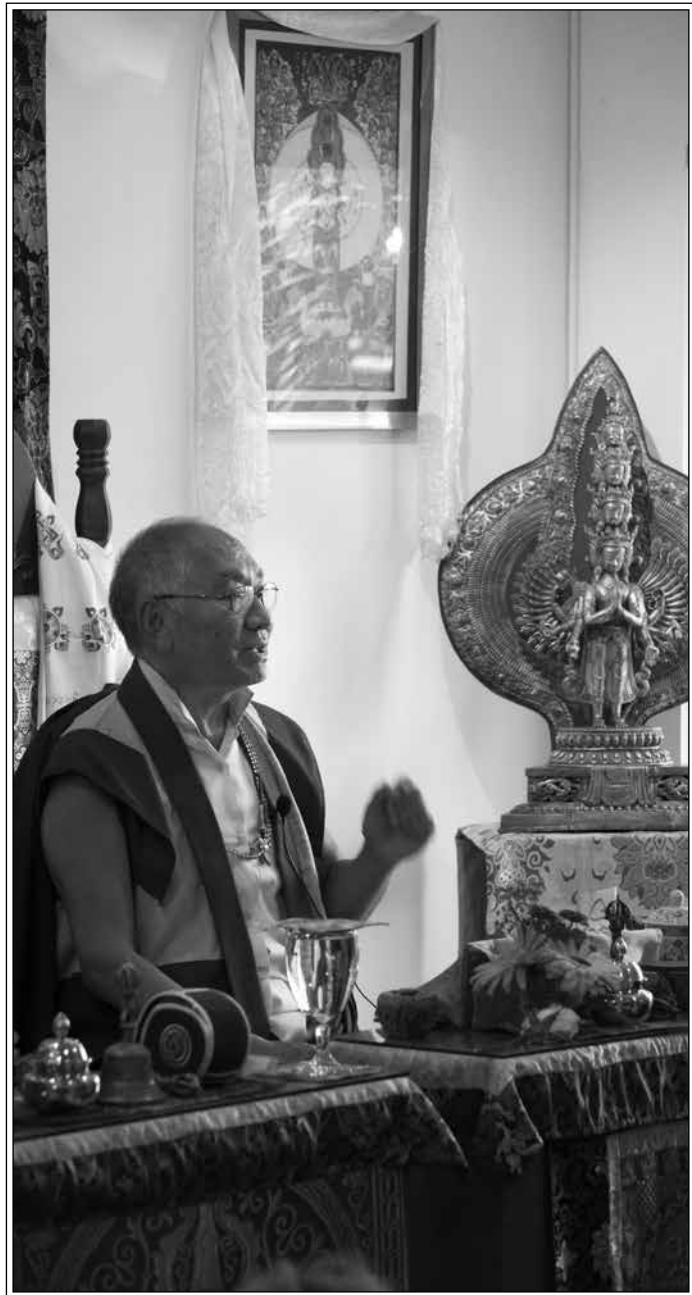


THE MAGAZINE of PADMASAMBHAVA BUDDHIST CENTER

# pema mandala

SPRING-SUMMER 2015

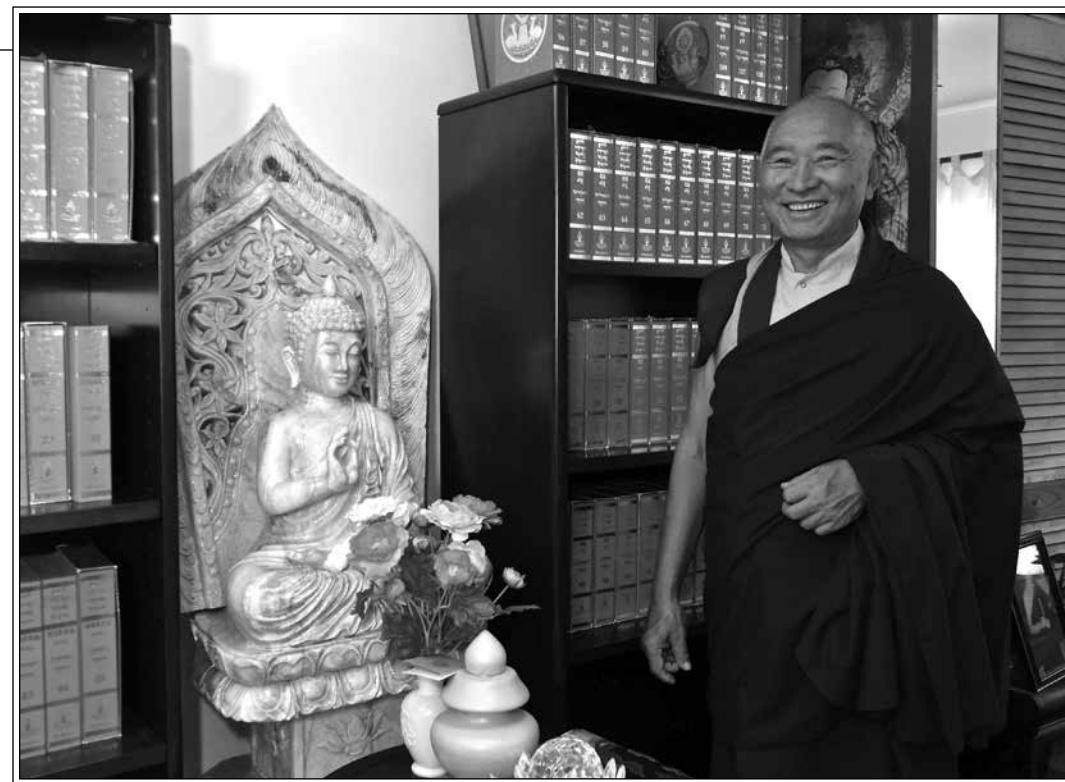




GREG KRANZ

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GREG KRANZ

### Warm Greetings and Best Wishes to All Sangha and Friends,

Every spring we enjoy the opportunity to look back and celebrate another beautiful year overflowing with many wonderful Dharma activities and events! I'm so thankful for everyone's continued support of PBC and your devotion to the Buddhadharma, the Nyingma lineage, and the legacy of our precious teacher, Venerable Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche.

This past year we consecrated Palden Sherab Pema Ling in Jupiter, Florida, and enjoyed many retreats at PSL and our other PBC Centers—including special times on the West Coast and in Mexico, as well as recent retreats in Russia and Kalmykia.

I'm looking forward to enjoying another wonderful summer season with everyone at PSL. We're all so exceptionally fortunate to be a part of this sacred, noble lineage that goes all the way back to the Buddha. What a beautiful journey we're enjoying together, and what

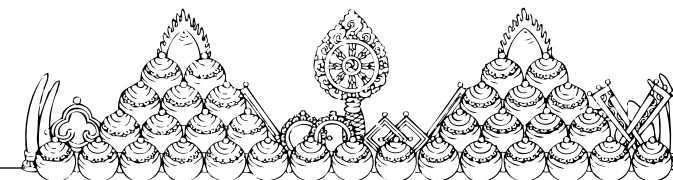
happy, meaningful times we can all look forward to as we continue on this path of love and peace!

As we all know, again and again we must examine our motivation, and reconnect to our true nature of love, compassion, and wisdom and sincerely wish the best for everyone. This is the essence of Dharma, and the sole purpose for our activities. We've all heard this many times, but it remains true. The essence of Dharma is unchanging—it is great love and compassion that reaches out and supports limitless beings according to exactly what's helpful. Even when we're busy and responsible for helping with many different things, if we pause and reconnect to the buddha-nature in ourselves and all beings, everything will become Dharma practice.

I sincerely thank you for your kindness and enthusiasm, and I pray that we all continue to deepen our study and practice, absorbing the teachings into our hearts, and letting them shine out for everyone to enjoy.

Yours in the Dharma,

Venerable Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche



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KIRBY SHELSTAD

# Lotus Land of Glorious Wisdom



LAMA

**P**ema Ling is the miraculous culmination of a long-standing dream of our precious lamas, the Venerable Khenpo Rinpoches. Through the blessings of the lineage, the vision and hard work of our beloved Khenpo Rinpoche and Lama Lorraine, and the love and devotion of many sangha members, ten acres of beautiful farmland were purchased in 2014 in Jupiter, Florida. Stands of tall trees shade the entire land. A soft breeze continuously blows, soothing even the hottest days. A large pond and nestled cypress grove is home to hawks, playful otters, a variety of birds, and many pairs of sandhill cranes. New wildlife keeps appearing everyday.

Within this natural beauty is a caretaker's home and three intricately designed barns that are being converted into a spacious, 2,500 square-foot temple complex overlooking wetlands. With the devoted efforts of sangha members from all over the country, the house has been renovated with a new kitchen, flooring, and deck, and a fresh coat of paint of rich Tibetan colors. Generous donations from sangha members worldwide

are landscaping the perimeter of the retreat land with a vajra protection boundary of native bushes and trees in honor of the Khenpo Rinpoches, masters, sangha, and beloved family and friends. Oaks, myrtles, tamarinds, palms, pines, cocoplums, and buttonwoods are already beginning to accent the land.

With the wind sweetly rustling thangkas and waving streams of incense through soft chanting, Venerable Khenpo Tsewang Rinpoche blessed and inaugurated Palden Sherab Pema Ling on January 18, 2015 with over 135 people in attendance. Beams of sunlight wrapped the inner mandala of this lush tropical land, as the Guru Rinpoche empowerment of Orgyen Khandro Norlha began turning of the wheel of Dharma. Garuda clouds and rainbows stretched across the sky. Katags waved in the air and faces sparkled with joy. Bursts of glee and dedication prayers echoed through the trees. How wonderful! What a glorious day for everyone—the beginning of a Dharma sanctuary and PBC retreat land to be enjoyed now and long into the future. ☸



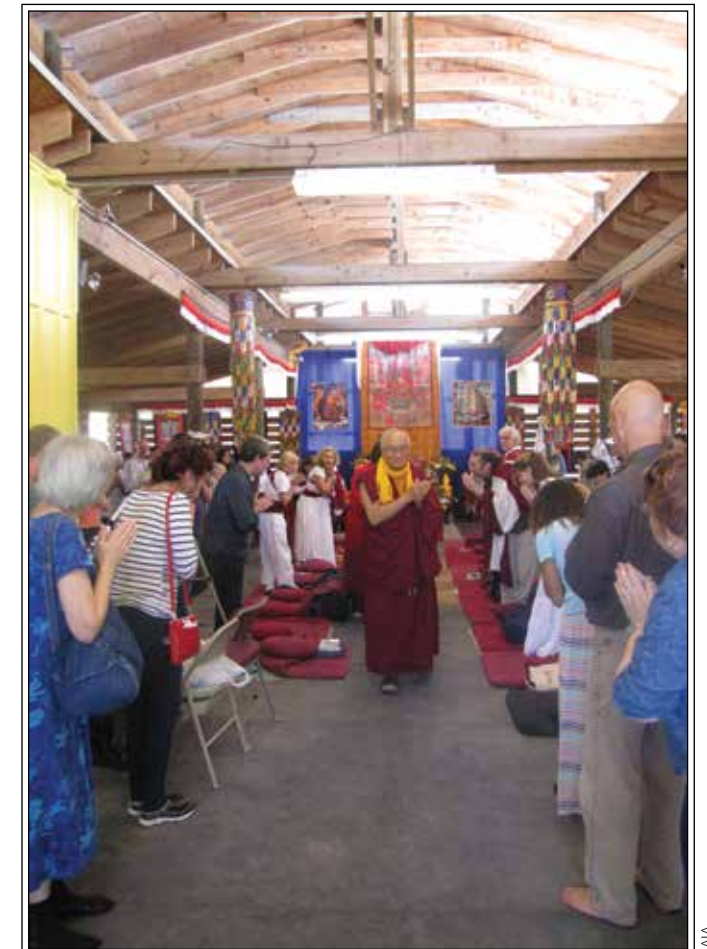
LAMA

## Sponsorship for Palden Sherab Pema Ling

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LAMA



LAMA

# Be Courageous

Excerpted from the 2012 Summer Dzogchen Retreat on Guru Dragpo  
by Ven. Khenpo Tsewang Rinpoche at Padma Samye Ling

EDITED BY AMANDA LEWIS

If we'd like to make a difference and bring more meaning to our life, there's truly nothing else to turn to than love, compassion, joy, appreciation, and devotion. It's not religious dogma or something someone said that we should follow and believe. It's just really true. With that understanding, as our great teacher Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche and all the great lineage masters often said, we should continually restrengthen our beautiful motivation. Every day and every practice session, it's so important to restrengthen our joy, devotion, and bodhichitta. That's our practice, it's what we would like to actualize, and that's why we're following the Buddha's teachings. All the Buddha's teachings are teachings on love, compassion, wisdom, respect and appreciation, and on being more humble, simple, and practical. That's entirely what the teachings are about. Therefore, that is our base, our foundation, and our home.

I have repeated what these great masters have said so many times, again and again. I'm not just saying this like a radio—I truly feel this is what is most important. We're following in the footsteps of the great peacemakers, the great masters who remove the suffering and difficulty of all sentient beings and bring them everlasting joy, peace, and happiness. We are following in their footsteps... how wonderful, how beautiful, and how truly glorious it is!

If we get to the bottom or essence of the matter, there really aren't many things in this world that are more important than what we're talking about now. We aren't talking about someone else's qualities—this is our own treasure and goodness. This is what we'd like to explore, glorify, and practice. Don't let your treasure get lost in the midst of duality and unhealthy habitual patterns. Bring it up from the bottom to the top, and let it shine everywhere. This is so important and special.

What I'm talking about is something that you can apply to every practice. And not just every practice, but as we begin every day and every breath we breathe. We shouldn't only apply this once in a while, or once in a blue moon—this is the practice itself. As all the great masters have said: start with the foundation, with the ground where we're standing. There is no way we can hover all the time in the sky. Maybe once in a while we can jump off a cliff with a glider, and if we're lucky, fly for maybe 15 or 30 minutes. But otherwise we have to stand on the ground. From

there we can deepen and grow tall and strong. From there we can fly like birds or garudas that don't depend on any other means of support. To do this, we need the four renunciation thoughts: (1) Life is precious. (2) Everything is impermanent. (3) Everything follows cause and effect. (4) Difficulties are a part of life.

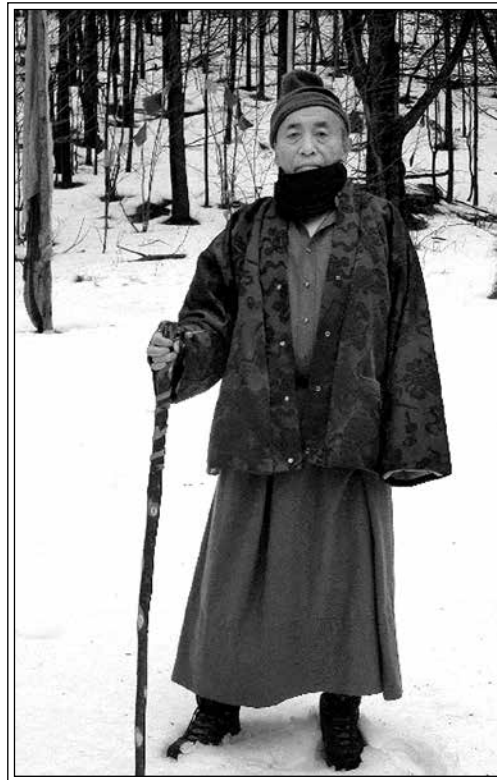
The four renunciation thoughts are not just something we think about once in a while. We should reflect on them every practice session. The great master Khenpo Ngakchung and many others have said that if

we don't contemplate these four renunciation thoughts at the beginning of our session, our practice won't be smooth because it will hover in our brain and not absorb into our heart. We want to make our practice meaningful. This makes beautiful, perfect quality practice that isn't just a historical record of how long we sat on a cushion. For example, what does it mean to go on retreat? Absorbing the teachings into the heart. That is what retreat actually means. The teachings shouldn't stay floating on the surface of our brain, or come in one ear and out the other. That isn't retreat and it isn't practice. During retreat, we absorb the teachings into our heart so that we make ourselves Dharma; so that we become the teaching.

To do this, the four renunciations are so important. The essence of renunciation is joy, appreciation, joyful effort, having less attachment, and being thoughtful of making every activity meaningful. What do I mean by every activity? There are three primary activities: activities of body, speech, and mind. Nobody else can make us be thoughtful. We're not going to use any scapegoats, or blame someone else or some object. When it comes to our heart and our practice, we have to take full responsibility ourselves. We need to be thoughtful. Thought is the starting point of everything we say and do. Every movement we make and everything we

say is ignited and reflected from our unseen emptiness mind. Everything begins with the mind. Therefore, be thoughtful.

And have courage! In samsara, there are so many difficulties and troubles—that we know. But as the Buddha said, it's a learning ground, it's exercise, it's a playground! Therefore be courageous and strong, not always so sensitive and perishable, easily getting knocked over like a blade of grass or a feather in the wind. Be strong. That is the essence of the four renunciations thoughts. ☸



Fearless Lord of Dharma  
Vajrayana Meditation Master and Scholar  
Ven. Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche

LAMIA LORRAINE



## All Teachings Are on Refuge

Public talk given by Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche  
at Tashi Choling on September 21, 2014 entitled,  
“What It Means to Be a Lay Buddhist”

EDITED BY AMANDA LEWIS

Every teaching the Buddha ever gave is based entirely on loving-kindness, compassion, and wisdom. That's all his teachings were about. And as we all know, love, compassion, and wisdom are not outside of us. They are our own nature—your nature and my nature. The Buddha didn't create some new, alien thing. He just pointed out exactly the way things are.

According to the Buddha's teaching, we are distracted from the nature of reality, carried away by unnatural forces. This is known as duality. Duality is unnatural. It carries us far away from the nature that we'd like to discover and reveal, and instead we wander on the outskirts of duality, experiencing so many different ups and downs. In reality, all of these experiences are like nightmares—they don't truly exist.

The Buddha taught that we've been continually experiencing this duality since beginningless time. No one created duality and pulled it over on us—we created this unnaturalness ourselves and we're the ones who continue holding on to it. The Buddha pointed out how we can clean up this duality, but in order to remove and release it, we're the ones who have to make the effort.

### Three Baskets and Three Trainings

Buddha Shakyamuni taught continually from age 35 until age 81, and all his teachings can be divided into three major groups, known as the “three turnings of the wheel of Dharma.” These are also known as the Three

Baskets of the Vinaya, Sutra, and Abhidharma teachings. The essential meaning of the Vinaya teachings is morality, the essential meaning of the Sutra teachings is concentration or meditation, and the essential meaning of the Abhidharma is wisdom. When we practice these Three Trainings of morality, concentration, and wisdom, we're touching our home base. We're not doing some totally different thing or working on something we don't already have. We're touching our own heart, our own essence. That is how we illuminate ourselves and release duality.

These three teachings are all connected and related to each other. The first of these is morality or vows. The simple meaning of morality is good conduct—natural, uplifting, and very simple conduct. In Sanskrit, morality is *shila*, which means “cool.” That is what morality is—conduct that benefits ourselves and others, making us cool guys and gals. It cools our burning emotions, so we become gentle and peaceful. By refraining from harming anyone with our body or speech, our mind becomes more calm and able to concentrate, which leads to greater insight into the nature of reality. The Buddha taught that morality can be divided into two groups: the conduct of (1) ordained monastic practitioners and (2) of lay practitioners.

For lay practitioners, there are three principle types of vows: (1) refuge vows, (2) timely vows, and (3) permanent vows. Timely vows are vows we take for short periods of time like 24 hours, or for two days when we practice Nyungne. These short period vows are called *dutrim* in Tibetan,

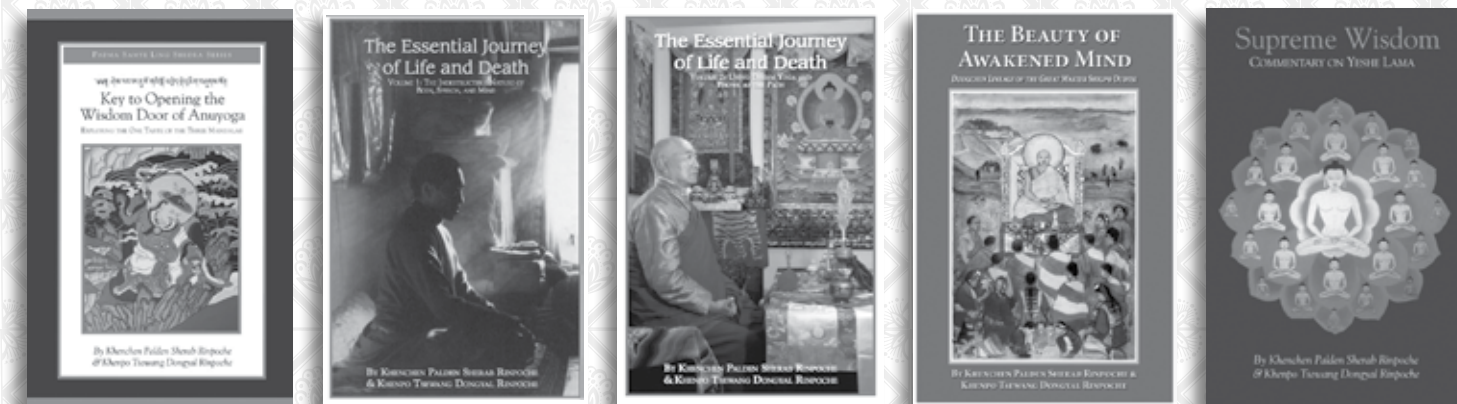
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# Chain of Golden Mountains

Excerpted from an upcoming book by the Venerable Khenpo Rinpoches on *The Life and Teachings of the Buddha*

EDITED BY AMANDA LEWIS

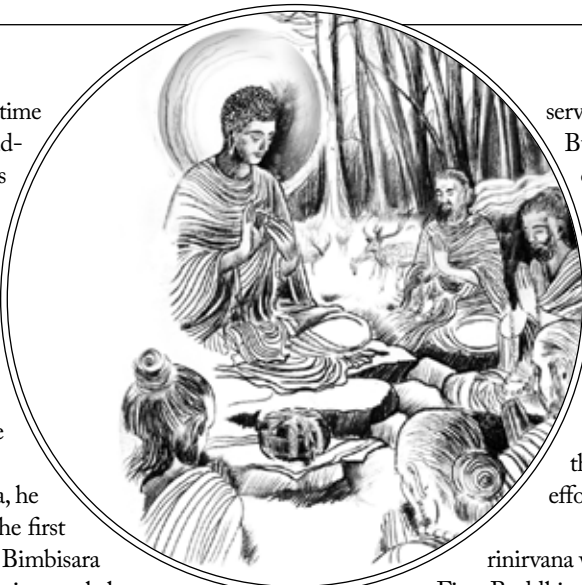
In the teachings it is said that the peak time of achievement was just after the Buddha's mahaparinirvana when hundreds of thousands of great masters and their disciples achieved the high realization known as arhathood. Just before Buddha Shakyamuni entered mahaparinirvana, he appointed Kashyapa as his regent. As regent, Kashyapa took the on-going responsibility to preserve and maintain the integrity and quality of the great message and teachings of the Buddha.

When Kashyapa first heard of the Buddha, he was impressed and went to see him. When he first saw the Buddha, the Buddha was with King Bimbisara and many students. The Buddha was radiating such love, compassion, and wisdom that Kashyapa was overwhelmed. Kashyapa bowed down from a distance and cried out, "Oh, Tathagata, you are my teacher; Oh, Tathagata, you are my teacher; Oh, Tathagata, I am your student!" The Buddha extended his arm towards Kashyapa and said, "Yes, that's right, I am your teacher. Yes, that's right, you are my student." At that moment Kashyapa reached arhathood.

Kashyapa was unique among the Buddha's students. He was always satisfied with whatever he had. The Buddha said, "Among all the sangha members, Kashyapa keeps the 'twelve ascetic practices' best." The teachings say that the Buddha indirectly appointed Kashyapa to be his regent when he gave his own robes to Kashyapa and said, "I will give you my whole teaching. Keep, maintain, preserve, and spread my teaching, then give it to Ananda." The word 'keep' here means to make certain the teachings are not lost. 'Maintain' means to connect with, practice, and live the teachings. 'Preserve' means not to corrupt or alter the meaning of the teachings. 'Spread' means to disseminate the teachings. This is how the teachings of the Buddha have continued uninterrupted as a living lineage, like a stainless chain of golden mountains.

Ananda was the Buddha's cousin. He was very handsome and a born orator—people were always mesmerized by the beauty and power of his speech. Ananda also served as the Buddha's attendant from Buddha's middle age until his mahaparinirvana. The Buddha remarked that "Ananda has the gift of remembering the teachings perfectly."

After the Buddha's mahaparinirvana, Ananda assumed he would be



serving Kashyapa as he had served the Buddha. But through his meditative powers Kashyapa observed that Ananda, despite having spent so many years close to the Buddha, had not yet reached arhathood. According to the Vinaya, there are two reasons people fail to become realized. (1) One is that they are overly excited, happy, and complacent due to their comfort. (2) The other is that they are too agitated and distraught. Kashyapa saw that Ananda was being deterred by the first of these, and as a result, was not putting enough effort into his practice.

The same year of the Buddha's mahaparinirvana when Kashyapa was about to preside over the First Buddhist Council, he saw that there were 499 arhats among the 500 people assembled—Ananda was the only one present who was not an arhat. Kashyapa considered how he should best help Ananda become realized. He thought, "Should I use a peaceful method or a rough one?" Kashyapa decided that since up to that time Ananda had been the recipient of only peaceful methods, he would have to be forceful. Kashyapa told Ananda to leave the community. Ananda replied, "The Buddha has passed away, so please don't reject and banish me. I never did anything wrong." Kashyapa replied, "You never did anything wrong—is that something to brag about? Is that any kind of accomplishment after being in the presence of such a great teacher for so long? Now there are 499 swans and only one crow at this council. You are the one crow. Now leave!" As Kashyapa spoke, the earth trembled and celestial music played. The gods said, "Kashyapa is as noble as the Buddha, even when he accuses." Kashyapa said to Ananda, "I will name your mistakes and you will see that I am right." Kashyapa picked up the argument stick and enunciated Ananda's eight errors. When he finished, Ananda picked up the stick and pleaded, "The Buddha said I would be looking after the great Kashyapa. Please do not make me leave." Kashyapa said, "You must leave. When you reach arhathood, you can return."

Ananda left, crying and thinking of the Buddha. He went to a town known as Brize. Everyone there had heard of Ananda, the great attendant of the Buddha, and the people honored him. Ananda began to give teachings. Many people reached arhathood, but this attainment continued to elude Ananda. Those who reached arhathood began to wonder, "What

is our teacher's realization?" By the power of their meditation, they saw that Ananda was not yet an arhat. They approached Ananda with great respect, bowed to him, and said, "Oh great teacher, why have you not reached arhathood?" Ananda replied, "How can I attain arhathood?" And his students responded, "Practice, just as you have taught us." At that moment, Ananda realized he needed more joyful effort and concentration. He meditated with greater enthusiasm and focus than ever, practiced around the clock, and in a few days reached arhathood.

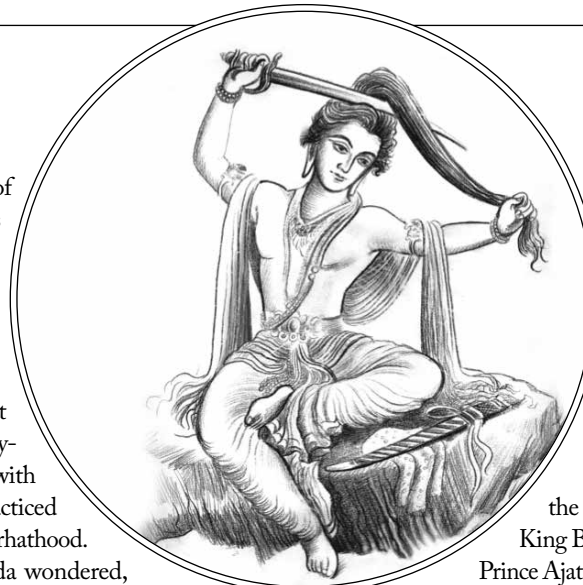
Shortly after becoming an arhat Ananda wondered, "Why was the great Kashyapa so mean to me after the Buddha passed away? Were his words and actions motivated by anger or by love?" Through his meditative power Ananda saw that Kashyapa acted solely from love, and that his only desire was for Ananda to reach arhathood. Ananda decided to go to Kashyapa to thank him. He told his students to accompany him in order to pay respects to Kashyapa and the great arhats.

When Ananda appeared, Kashyapa and the arhats welcomed him. Then the 500 arhats gathered together and began the First Buddhist Council. Kashyapa requested that the 500 robes of the 500 arhats be folded and stacked to make a throne. Kashyapa said to Ananda, "Now sit on this throne and recite for us, in their entirety, all the Buddha's Sutra teachings." Ananda bowed to each of the ten directions, thinking of the Buddha and the arhats. He sat upon the throne of five hundred robes with the same thoughts. Then he put his hands together and recited all the Sutra teachings of the Buddha that he had memorized, beginning each one with, "Thus I have heard," and concluding with, "The gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas all rejoiced, praising what the Blessed One had said." He had thoroughly repeated what the Buddha had taught and all 499 arhats heard it. Then Ananda stated that it was an accurate teaching of what the Buddha had said. In the teachings it says that these great arhats had the power of photographic memory, or *mije pai zung*, "wisdom that can never forget," or "unforgettable wisdom power that holds all the teachings." In this way, Ananda collected the Sutra teachings and recorded them.

As requested by Kashyapa, the arhat Upali went up on the throne next and recited the entire Vinaya teachings that he had received from the great enlightened one. Thinking of the Buddha he recited the homage to the Omniscient One saying, "Thus I have heard," all the way to the end. Then everyone rejoiced at the words of the great Enlightened One. Upali recited the entire Vinaya teachings to the 499 arhats.

Next Kashyapa himself went up onto the throne and sat down. Thinking of the great Compassionate One, he began to recite the entire Abhidharma teachings to the 499 great arhats.

This was the First Buddhist Council in which the Tripitaka teachings were collected: the Vinaya teachings by Upali, the Sutra teachings by Ananda, and the Abhidharma teachings by Mahakashyapa. The moment



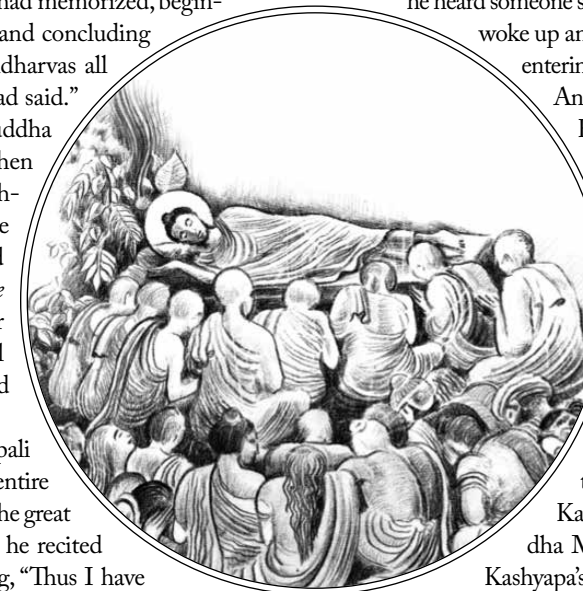
they completed their collection and recitation of the Three Basket teachings, everyone rejoiced that the Buddha's teachings were alive and well, and that his wonderful, beautiful, special message of love, compassion, wisdom, and equality was continuously echoing from the human world to the god realms. This was the general beginning of Buddhist philosophy and doctrine.

During the time when the great Kashyapa was the Buddha's regent, Prince Ajatasatru—the son of King Bimbisara—approached him. At an earlier time, Prince Ajatasatru did not have much interest in the Dharma, but that had changed. He became so devoted to the Buddha, but he wasn't able to see the Buddha before he entered mahaparinirvana. Now Prince Ajatasatru told Kashyapa that before he entered mahaparinirvana he would like to see him, and Kashyapa agreed. Yet this wasn't able to happen. Before Kashyapa entered mahaparinirvana, he appointed Ananda as the next regent, asking him to keep, maintain, preserve, and spread this teaching. Ananda would remain as regent for the next forty years before passing on the responsibility of regent to the great arhat Shanegochan.

After appointing Ananda as regent, Kashyapa went to meditate in Chicken Feet Mountain, or Riwo Chaking, where he entered mahaparinirvana. Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche mentioned many times that he thought Chicken Feet Mountain was one of the mountains between Bodhgaya and Nalanda.

Right around that time, Prince Ajatasatru was sleeping, and in a dream he heard someone say, "Your uncle is gone." Ajatasatru immediately woke up and thought this might mean that Kashyapa was entering mahaparinirvana. He quickly got up and asked Ananda where Kashyapa was. Ananda told him that Kashyapa was inside Chicken Feet Mountain, and they went there together. Through the power of Ananda's meditation, the mountain opened and they were able to see that Kashyapa had entered mahaparinirvana, and was sitting in meditation with the Buddha's robe on his lap.

The teachings say that Kashyapa will sit in meditation there until the fifth Buddha Maitreya comes. After Maitreya reaches enlightenment and he is about to give his first teaching, he will take all of his students to Chicken Feet Mountain, and will show them Kashyapa still sitting in meditation there. Buddha Maitreya will then pick up Kashyapa, putting Kashyapa's arm in his palm, and will say, "This is the regent of Buddha Shakyamuni, the fourth Buddha of this aeon. Among all of Buddha Shakyamuni's disciples, Kashyapa was supreme in practicing the twelve ascetic practices. Kashyapa had the most satisfaction and contentment among all the Buddha's disciples." Then Maitreya will pick up the robe in Kashyapa's lap and say, "This is the robe of the fourth Buddha, Buddha Shakyamuni." That very moment, Kashyapa will self-emanate fire burning his entire body, and all of his aggregates will dissolve into the elements. This will inspire so many of Maitreya's disciples and they will immediately reach arhathood. ☸



ILLUSTRATIONS BY YAROSLAV GRIBACHEV

# Everything is Mind

Excerpt from *Supreme Wisdom: A Commentary on Yeshe Lama*  
by the Ven. Khenpo Rinpoches, to be published in Summer 2015

EDITED BY CLINT SIDLE WITH ELIZABETH GONGDE AND PEMA DRAGPA

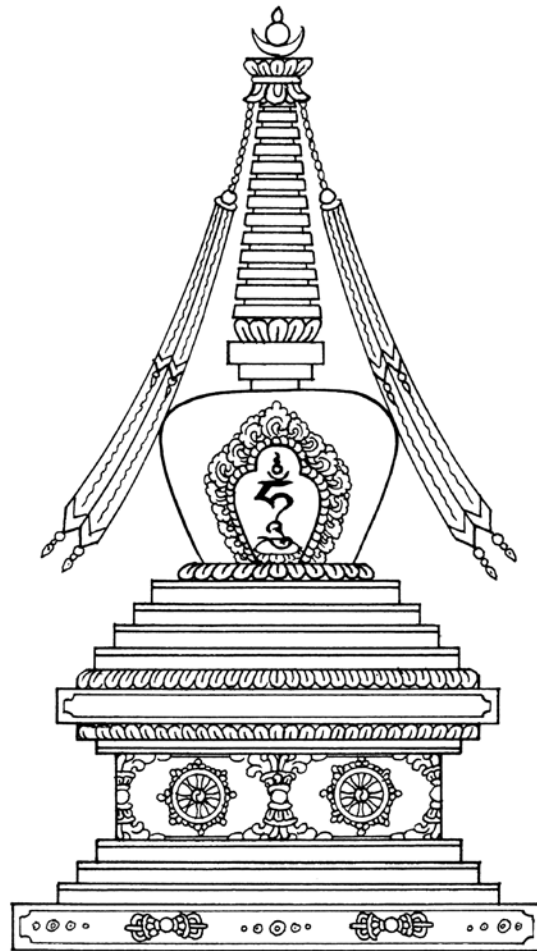
The first thing to realize is that everything you see, everything you hear, and everything you think is none other than your own mind.

Intellectually maybe you think you already know this, but that is not enough—you have to settle this realization in your heart. You cannot just hear it and say it and leave it at that. It must sink into your heart and mind until you see all perceptions as mind—your seeing is your mind, your hearing is your mind, and your thinking is your mind. It is yours and nobody else owns it, forced it, or threw it on you.

When you see beautiful things, your seeing and your thoughts of them are your mind. In the same way, high, low, big, small, good, and bad—every conception—as well as whatever you hear or perceive with your eyes, are all the baggage of your mind. If you see dirt, it is your mind. If you see “clean,” it is your mind. Likewise if you feel pain, sorrow, or happiness, it is your mind. One hundred percent of appearances and your thinking is your mind. The moment you look at the world, see it as a display of your mind.

If we think about our conceptions, they are not stable or something we can rely on. They are not firm because they are duality, and duality is deluded. Therefore our conceptions are not perfect. In the early part of our lives we may have believed in something 100%, thinking it was perfect. Yet later in life we might completely refute this and adopt the opposite idea. So what happened? Who made that? It was none other than our mind. Deluded mind is not reliable. If we think something is 100% beautiful and then change our mind 100% the other way, it is not real. Every creation and division comes from our deluded, unreliable mind. The Dzogchen and Vajrayana teachings say that the first thing practitioners must realize is that all appearances and everything they hear and think is their mind.

We may wonder where all the stones in the earth come from. They come from atoms, which come from subatomic particles... which come from emptiness. Each particle is in the state of emptiness. Trees are emptiness, stones are emptiness, and mountains are emptiness because they're all constructed from emptiness. Everything is empty—even our ignorance and perceptions of duality. Our intellectual knowledge doesn't see it this way exactly, but that is the reality whether we believe it or not. Our experience is structured by our conceptions, names, and labels,



which we turn into compounded things. Yet if we go deep down, we see that these names and labels come from the mind. For this reason, the Prajnaparamita teachings say, “Form is emptiness, and emptiness is form.”

When we look at the world itself, we only see three things reflected outwardly and inwardly. Everything we experience is either form, sound, or empty space. If we understand the meaning of our body, speech, and mind, and use them in the right way, not only can we begin to transform ourselves and this body that we think is ours, but also the whole universe.

What are we purifying with our practice? We're purifying our clinging and the habitual tendencies of our body, speech, and mind. In general, we're not trapped in samsara because we have a body, speech, and mind. We're caught because we grasp to our body, speech, and mind. This clinging is what locks us in samsara.

Things appear according to how the mind perceives them. The more attachment we have for an object, the more it will be attractive to us. The more fear we have for an object, the more it will appear frightening to us. Even in this very short lifetime, we have already accumulated many habitual patterns. However, according to Buddhism, there is not just this life. We have accumulated habitual patterns life after life for countless aeons. Over time, these habitual patterns become very dense, strong, and concrete.

We have three different kinds of habits: (1) habits of how we perceive the whole world or universe, (2) habits of how we perceive the objects of our five senses, and (3) habits related to our body. These are also called (1) habits of objects, (2) habits of the subject, and (3) habits of using one's own body, respectively. Of these three, the first habit includes things that are far away, the second includes things at a medium distance, and the third includes things that are very close. By purifying all of these habits, we begin to see the purity nature of the mind.

Knowing that all appearances are mind is very important. We need to look closely at this point and realize it ourselves. This realization is what will completely break our ego fabrication, our perceptions of duality, and our clinging to things as solid and existing. This is what Dzogchen is pointing out. It undermines the solidity of the ego and of grasping to subject and object by pointing out and realizing that all appearances are our mind. Duality mind is unreliable and always moving, therefore appearances are not reliable or fixed. Everything is flexible. ☸

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# The Two Truths

Excerpted from the 2012 PSL Shedra on Madhyamaka, Ven. Khenpo Tsewang Rinpoche taught according to Ven. Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche's book, Heart Ornament of Nagarjuna

“Remembering the kindness of the compassion and wisdom of the great masters, I’m going to list some of the different ways that they have explained the characteristics of the two truths.”

*Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche*

## Great Indian Masters

“Relative truth is what you find by false conception. Absolute truth is exactly what you see by beholding the truth.”

Absolute truth is perfect understanding as it is.

Relative truth is not seeing as it is.”

*Chandrakirti, Entering the Middle Way*

“Relative truth is the subject of conventional mind. Absolute truth is beyond conception. Absolute truth is not the subject of the mind.

The subject of the mind is relative truth.”

*Shantideva, The Way of the Bodhisattva*

“Whatever is subject of birth and decline is relative truth. That which is beyond birth, decline, and is free from complexities is absolute truth.”

*Shantarakshita*



“What duality mind beholds is relative truth. What you behold beyond duality is absolute truth.

Something that cannot deceive is absolute truth. Knowledge that can deceive is relative truth.

Therefore whatever you see by duality conception is relative truth.”

*Jnanagarbha, Two Truths*

“Whatever deluded conception understands is relative truth. Absolute truth is conception that is not deluded.”

*Kamalashila*

## Great Tibetan Masters

“What you see, but has no essence is relative truth. Absolute truth is the nature behind the scenes of relative truth.”

*Ar Jangchub Yeshe*

“Relative truth is merely the state of conception that you have to look at and judge. Absolute truth is beyond judging and speaking.”

*Chung Rinchen Drag*

“When you attach, that will bind you. Binding and attachment to the conventional level is relative truth.

Once you realize it and release all bindings, that is absolute truth.”

*Tsangnagpa Tsondu Senge*

“What is true to conceptual mind when you don’t analyze is relative truth. Absolute truth is finding it exactly as it is after investigation and analysis.”

*Chapa Chokyi Senge*

“Relative truth is the conventional level with deluded mind. Not being deluded in the meditation state of the Noble Ones is absolute truth.”

*Mabja Jangchub Tsondu*

“Whatever is subject to birth and decline is relative truth. That which is beyond birth, decline, and is free from complexities is absolute truth.”

*Shantarakshita*

“Whatever you see in the deluded state is characteristic of relative truth. Whatever one finds on the knowledge-investigation level is characteristic of absolute truth.”

*Zeringpa Dharma Rinchen*

“Varieties of combinations of interdependent appearances is relative truth. The characteristic of absolute truth is beyond any complexity, beyond knowledge based on speaking, and beyond any investigation.”

*Buton Rinchen Drub*

“Things that exist when you don’t investigate or analyze is characteristic of relative truth. Things that do not exist or are not there with analysis are absolute truth.”

*Jamgon Sakya Pandita*

“Whatever you find through conventional truth is characteristic of relative truth. Whatever you find using absolute reason is absolute truth.”

*Je Tsongkhapa*

“What you find that is not connected to the truth is characteristic of relative truth. What you find that exactly corresponds with the truth as it is, is absolute truth.”

*Kunkhyen Rongton*

“Knowledge that exists due to the force of deluded mind is characteristic of relative truth.

The characteristic of absolute truth is beyond every complexity.”

*Panchen Shakya Choden*



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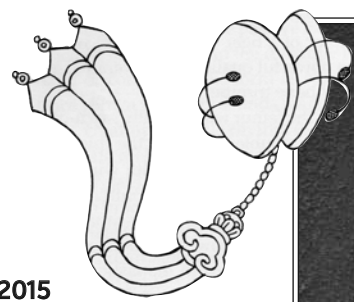
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# Revealing the Buddha Within

Excerpted from a teaching given by  
Ven. Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche in New York City in 1981

EDITED BY RICHARD STEINBERG AND AMANDA LEWIS

“**B**uddha-nature,” or *tathagatagarbha* in Sanskrit is the “seed,” “essence,” or “power” that enables us to attain enlightenment. All beings possess this extraordinary power. Whether human, cockroach, worm, lion, or elephant—we all have this special energy or cause of enlightenment. Every being also has this buddha-nature in equal measure. Insects and human beings, the rich and poor, males and females—whatever their state of existence or class of being—everyone possesses this potential in the exact same amount. Considering the differences between a human being and a cockroach, you may have doubts about whether this is true or not. However, there really is no difference in their buddha-nature. The *ultimate* nature of a cockroach is the same as a human being. It’s the same for enlightened beings and sentient beings as well—the only difference is to what degree the buddha-nature is obscured. Sentient beings have obscurations while buddhas do not. On the ultimate level, however, there is no difference between the buddha-nature of an enlightened being and the buddha-nature of a sentient being.

The Buddha gave many teachings in the Mahayana sutras stating that all beings equally possess the same essence of buddhahood. There are many ways to examine whether this is true. In the *Uttaratantra*, the great protector Maitreya taught the “Three Ways of Reasoning” to logically prove that all beings possess buddha-nature, the true nature of mind. In general, Buddhism explains that all phenomena have three characteristics or principles: (1) causes and conditions; (2) the result of these causes and conditions; and (3) the nature, or identity of being dependently arisen and empty of inherent existence. Everything in both samsara and nirvana depends on causes and conditions, produces results, and has the nature of emptiness.

Maitreya’s first reasoning is that by examining a result, you can know its cause. For example, if you look at a crop of corn, or a harvest of apples, you can reasonably infer that they have arisen from a seed. Each one came from a seed in relation to the kind of fruit it produced. If you examine the life of Buddha Shakyamuni, you will see that at one time he was an ordinary being like us, but through practice he achieved buddhahood. In the same way, all sentient beings have the cause by which they can achieve buddhahood. This is an example of looking at the result to prove that sentient beings have the inherent cause of buddha-nature.

The second reasoning involves looking at the ultimate nature of the way things are. In Buddhism, this is often referred to as emptiness, or *shunyata*. By relying on this, one will see that the ultimate nature is all-pervasive and resides within all sentient beings, as well as the Buddha. When we say ‘ultimate nature,’ what exactly does this refer to? It is the original nature of great emptiness, which is pure from the beginning and

inseparable from clarity. Since profound, great emptiness is pervasive to everyone and never changes, regardless of whether we recognize it or not, all beings are able to achieve enlightenment.

The third reasoning is that buddhas possess complete, supreme knowledge and have attained the ultimate degree of loving-kindness, compassion, and power. They have revealed 100% of their buddha-nature. Although sentient beings possess some of these qualities, they haven’t yet developed them to the fullest extent. We all have the causes and conditions to develop buddha-nature to our full potential in the same way a mango seed can develop into a tree. The seed which develops into buddhahood includes loving-kindness, compassion, and great emptiness. These qualities are the very nature of our minds. By recognizing and maintaining these innate qualities within ourselves, we will eventually bring them to full realization. Seeing that we do already possess some degree of the qualities of buddha-nature is the third reasoning.

After we establish without a doubt that all beings possess the seed of buddhahood, we can then determine that the reason we don’t recognize our ultimate nature is because we’re temporarily deluded by the two obscurations of negative emotions and confusion. Buddha-nature is like the sun, and obscurations are like clouds that cover the sun. Are the sun and clouds the same? No—clouds only temporarily obscure the sun; they arise suddenly and disappear suddenly. When clouds cover the sun and then disperse, we know that the sun and its rays didn’t reappear from somewhere else. The sun was always there, but the clouds temporarily obscured it. In the same way, obscurations temporarily cover our buddha-nature. Once they’re purified, it’s not as if our buddha-nature suddenly arrives from some other place—it was there all along.

If all sentient beings didn’t already have buddha-nature they would not be able to attain enlightenment. If you press sand trying to get oil out of it, you will not be able to. If you take charcoal and try to wash the black color out of it, you will never succeed. Yet because sentient beings do possess buddha-nature, if they practice and accomplish the teachings of the Dharma by purifying their obscurations, they will eventually achieve enlightenment.

Once we establish that all sentient beings have this exceedingly precious nature filled with infinite goodness qualities and without any faults, then we have to *realize* it through meditation. Its essence is emptiness, and its nature is luminous clarity. It possesses all positive qualities, is without any flaws, and it has always been inseparable from us. Through the course of our existence, we have constantly fluctuated between happiness and suffering. Yet the buddha-nature is unchanging and without fault. It remains constant. Buddha-nature is like the sky—no matter what happens, it does not change. ☸

## A Wealth of Translations by Dharma Samudra Publications

Dharma Samudra is a publishing company that was founded by the Venerable Khenpo Rinpoches in 1985. Its name is the Sanskrit translation of the Tibetan Chökyi Gyamtso, which means “Ocean of Dharma,” and comes from the name of the great tertön Orgyen Tsasum Lingpa Chökyi Gyamtso.



Dharma Samudra has translated into English and published over 65 practice texts of many Nyingma lineages. Here is a partial list of some of the main sadhanas at PBC Centers:

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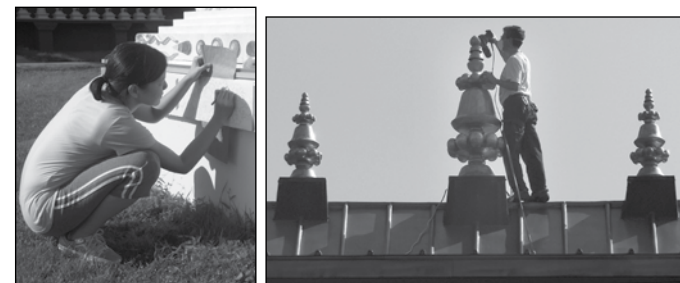
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# Great Purity

## The Life & Teachings of Rongzompa Mahapandita

In 2009, the Venerable Khenpo Rinpoches taught a One Month Dzogchen retreat on Rongzompa's famous teaching *Establishing Appearances as Divine* that is scheduled to be published in 2016, along with a week-long commentary on Rongzompa's *Black Snake Teachings on the Nine Yanas*.

EDITED BY CRAIG BIALICK

Rongzompa Mahapandita came from central Tibet in the U-Tsang region, in an area known as Rong, which means “forested valley.” He was part of a very renowned *ngakpa* family that goes back to the days of Guru Padmasambhava in the 8th century. Ngakpas are Vajrayana householder practitioners. Like his grandfather and great grandfather, Rongzompa's father was a very prominent and highly accomplished *ngakpa* named Rongben Rinchen Tsultrim.

Rongzompa was born in the early 11th century, although the exact date and year of his birth are not so clear—it is based on a famous story of a meeting with the great master Atisha when Rongzompa was still a baby being carried by his mother.

Soon after he was born, Rongzompa began to murmur words and phrases in what sounded like Sanskrit. His parents wondered if it was really Sanskrit, but neither of them knew the language. Around 1044, after spreading the Buddha's teaching in northern Tibet for three

years, Atisha was invited to central Tibet by Dromtonpa. With the child in her arms, Rongzompa's mother came to Atisha and said, “My boy always talks in what sounds like Sanskrit. Can you understand anything he is saying?” Atisha immediately took the child from her. As he held the boy, Atisha started speaking in Sanskrit and Rongzompa responded to everything Atisha said. “This child is the immediate reincarnation of the Indian master Nagpopa, one of the 84 Mahasiddhas,” said Atisha. “He was my teacher, so I'm not going to discuss the Dharma with him. I cannot do that.” With that, he handed the baby back.

Other masters recognized Rongzompa as the great Indian masters Mriti Jnana and Trhalaringmo, as well as Nubchen Sangye Yeshe, who was one the nine heart-like students of Guru Padmasambhava and a founding master of the Anuyoga teachings in Tibet.

When Rongzompa was ten years old he began studying with Garton



Rongzompa

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Tsultrim Zangpo, a renowned Nyingma teacher. He was very smart and debated with everyone, but nobody could defeat him. He was also very wild and disobedient. One day Rongzompa's father came to see him and brought a supply of food. His fellow students asked the teacher, “Could you please ask his father to take him home because he is so restless and always disturbing us.” The father overheard this and asked the teacher, “Shall I take my boy home? What do you think?” Garton Tsultrim Zangpo said, “No, don't take him. Whatever I teach, he immediately understands. He absorbs the meaning of everything I say. Never mind what these boys say, leave him here.”

Around the age of 12, Rongzompa became an expert in Buddhist logic and reasoning and completed his studies when he was 13. There was nothing more that he needed to learn. He didn't have to study Sanskrit at all because he already knew it. Beyond that, it is said that Rongzompa knew the languages of animals and birds and was able to communicate with all of them. Around the age of 14 or 15 he wrote a

famous commentary to Mriti's text on Tibetan grammar, called the *Weapon of Language*. At one point he said, “Since there is no teaching that I did not study, my learning is not insignificant. But neither were my studies great, since I never needed to review the teachings I received more than once.” Rongzompa was a profound scholar and a master teacher with extraordinary inborn wisdom. He was a natural genius. The moment he received a teaching or the very first time he read a text it was imprinted in his wisdom memory. He didn't have to study or go over anything. He just knew everything with photographic memory wisdom. He knew the different philosophies of all the non-Buddhist schools like the Vedas without having studied any of them.

Rongzompa had a recurring dream that the entire text of the *Gubhyagarbha Tantra* became like *tsampa*, or roasted barley. Another famous tantric text known as *Sangye Nyamjor* was transformed into vegetables. He combined

these together in a soup and he ate them. He had this dream many times and finally mentioned it to his teacher who said that he would write commentaries on those texts someday. And that is what he did. Besides commentaries on the *Gubhyagarbha* and *Sangye Nyamjor Tantras*, he wrote one on the *Manjushri Yamantaka Tantra* and many others.



Ashvagosha

While translating teachings from Sanskrit into Tibetan, Rongzompa worked with many Indian teachers and scholars who encouraged him to write. They said, “There are people writing books in India who do not have even half your knowledge and experience of the Buddha's teachings.” They pleaded with him to write commentaries to clarify the meanings. Rongzompa thought there was not much need to write because there were so many commentaries on the Buddha's teachings already in print by the great masters of India, as well as renowned Tibetan masters from the 8th century. However, moved by their encouragement and his own compassion, Rongzompa began to write on topics associated with the Buddhadharma, including works on morality, concentration, and wisdom. He wrote on a variety of subjects, but in particular he produced many Vajrayana wisdom teachings.

There were also many Tibetan teachers who thought Rongzompa shouldn't be composing teachings at all because he was Tibetan. Anyone who had the means would go to India, Nepal, or the border areas to connect with teachers. All the available teachings and commentaries could always be traced back to India. Many people felt that all the Buddha's teachings must come from India and conform to a certain style based on Sanskrit, and not from the writings of a Tibetan. That was the general idea in Tibet. Many of the teachers who had gone to India, as well as their translators criticized Rongzompa because he'd never been there and yet he was translating texts. A number of them came to discuss and debate with Rongzompa, but in the end they were all satisfied with his knowledge and realization. Their criticism quickly evaporated.

Among them was one Kawa Paltsek, a renowned translator and very strong opponent of Rongzompa's writings. This was his opinion until he finally read one of Rongzompa's books known as *Entering the Way of the Mahayana*. Reading this text, his heart melted. Kawa Paltsek completely changed his mind and became Rongzompa's disciple.

The well-known Tibetan history book, the *Blue Annals* say that Rongzompa embodied the knowledge of five great Indian masters: the sharp intelligence of Dignaga and Dharmakirti, Vasubandhu's vast comprehension of the Buddhadharma, Master Chandragomin's eloquent speech and style of composition, and the great Indian master Ashvagosha's poetic genius. All of these masters came together in the Mahapandita Rongzompa Chokyi Zangpo. So many great teachers said this. No Tibetan scholars have ever received praise equal to what has been said about Rongzompa.

Rongzompa was a lineage holder of Vajrakilaya as well as a Dzogchen master. He demonstrated his realization by external signs like making hand and footprints in stone, and plunging his phurba into solid rock. He could also pass over boulder fields as if they were flat, walking along without any kind of support as if he was hovering in the air above them. He was able to walk above river water without touching it, as well as stand or sit in space. All of these were signs of his realization—his understanding of

the equanimity state—the breakthrough beyond grasping and duality. He held the entire lineage of the three Inner Tantras of Mahayoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga, which came from Guru Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, Vairochana, as well as Nubchen Sangye Yeshe. All of this came through Rongzompa so that he became a river of lineage teachings on the three Inner Tantras.

Rongzompa's life stories say that he wrote a lot—maybe more than 60 books—but most of these no longer exist. One of the most famous is his commentary on the *Gubhyagarbha Tantra*. Others are listed but are hard to find if they even exist. In ancient Tibet there was no technology to reproduce texts except to copy it by hand, page by page. There was no other way. Because of this, there might be only one or a very few copies of some works which could easily be lost.

In the early 19th century, there was a very famous Nyingma master known as Gyalse Shenpen Thaye. Having seen all Rongzompa's teachings listed in a table of contents, he made great efforts looking in every monastery and library all over central and eastern Tibet, asking everyone to try and help find the lost teachings of Rongzompa. Gyalse Shenpen Thaye knew that Rongzompa had authored a commentary on the *Gubhyagarbha Tantra* which was no longer to be found. When a text or scripture is incomplete or unwanted, it is the custom in Tibet to not just discard it, but always to bring it to a stupa where the pages are passed through a hole in the base and they pile up there and are left to nature. On pilgrimage, Gyalse Shenpen Thaye would visit almost every stupa to look through these heaps of old, unwanted texts. In one of these stupas somewhere



Dharmakirti

in central Tibet, he found one half of Rongzompa's commentary on the *Gubhyagarbha Tantra*. On another pilgrimage to eastern Tibet, after searching through the rotting piles in many stupas, he found the other half. When he put them together there were only two extra pages in their overlap. He now had a perfectly complete copy of Rongzompa's teaching on the *Gubhyagarbha*. Through the efforts of master Gyalse Shenpen Thaye, these lost teachings were rediscovered.

Rongzompa's lifespan was very long. Mipham Rinpoche wrote that Rongzompa lived about 119 years. Tsongkhapa thought Rongzompa lived to be 150. Rigdzin Jigme Lingpa said Rongzompa was 140 when he passed.

Rongzompa's children and disciples carried his lineage teachings forward. He had two or three sons and a daughter, and it is said that they all became highly realized Vajrakilaya practitioners. Rongzompa had many students, including about 17 translators, 35 mahasiddhas who achieved high realization, 180 hermitage meditators, and over 500 renowned masters, among whom was Dorje Wangchuk who authored a detailed biography of Rongzompa.

Rongzompa was one of the greatest Nyingma masters. In Tibet, we refer to the “Two Crowns,” or the “Two Omniscient Ones.” Rongzompa and Longchenpa. They are widely considered to be two of the greatest masters to have ever appeared in Tibet, and are among the few Tibetan masters to be honored with the title *kunkhyen*, or “omniscient.” It isn't just the Nyingma schools that praises these two. Rongzompa is openly

accepted by the New schools of Tibetan Buddhism as a renowned scholar and realized practitioner.

This is a brief telling of the life of the omniscient Rongzompa, touching on the depth of his knowledge, contributions to Buddhism in general, and to the Nyingma school in particular. He was one of the great Tibetan lineage holders, a realized ngakpa, and master of the Inner Tantras.

## NATURAL PURITY

The original nature of both samsara and nirvana is not something developed through practice or a path. This isn't an event that happens at some point in time. This is the nature of all appearances, which are basically perceptions and conceptions. Everything is always already in that divine state. This is what we have to meditate on and will come to understand through practice.

The emptiness nature we hear so much about is not something newly created. It didn't start with the Buddha or Rongzompa. This nature abides originally as it is. The great infinite nature free from all complexities, pure from the beginning, is known in the Buddha's teaching as dharmakaya. It has always been just as it is now. It is called primordially enlightened,



Vasubandhu

beyond duality, free from grasping and ego-clinging. This is the Dharmakaya Buddha.

The infinite nature is not a blank space, a black hole, or any kind of negation. Rather, this immensity is filled with rich energy or *dang* in Tibetan. This flow of energy is never separate from the infinite nature, pure from the beginning and free of every complexity. This presently arising display of energy manifests in many ways. The first stage is known as sound, the energy arising as the power of speech. In Buddhism, this is

known as sambhogakaya. The immense power of this unceasing radiance is the Sambhogakaya Buddha, inseparable from great emptiness.

This is the unchanging nature of the way things are. All appearances begin in great emptiness inseparable from the creative power of this arising energy. The infinite qualities of great emptiness combine with this unceasing power in more active ways, giving rise to this vivid emanation and display of appearances. This is expressed in the perception of forms and images. Based on their realization, these forms are known as Nirmanakaya Buddhas.

When we look into the self-existing nature of our own mind, free from complexity, pure from the beginning and infinite, that is dharmakaya. When we connect our mind to emptiness, the tremendous power and energy ceaselessly arising as the sound and flow of mental events is sambhogakaya. Actively engaging in relations is the sphere of nirmanakaya. All of these abide in the natural condition of great purity with nothing to sort out. All is perceived by mind as pure from the beginning and therefore everything is arising within this enlightened mandala.

To practice this, we have to develop our understanding, recognizing all forms as the emptiness of the body mandala, perceiving all sounds as the mandala of speech, and all thoughts and ideas as the mandala of the mind. When we visualize deities, we are actually meditating on the true nature of these three vajras. That is what our mind is connecting with.



Chandragomin

This is the ultimate realization of visualization practice.

If we visualize ourselves as the deity while the rest of the world remains as it appears to dualistic perception and we practice with that idea, our visualization is flawed, dualistic, and incomplete. To begin visualization practice, immediately see everything within the great emptiness space of dharmakaya. That is the first step. From that emptiness, the whole universe arises as the mandala of the deity.

Rongzompa then poses a question as if it came from an opponent. "How can you say that everything is already in an enlightened condition? The characteristics of subjects and objects, the actions, perceptions, and vision of all these beings, their conduct and communication are neither pure nor divine. These are all perceptions based in impure, deluded states of mind."

Rongzompa replies by agreeing with this. "Yes, it is true. The way sentient beings presently perceive everything is deluded. All of their perceptions are mistaken and they do not see things correctly. Sentient beings perceive things that are not there. In their delusion, nothing appears as it is. It is all based in error. So yes, what you say is true."

The dualistic perspective is very restricted and we cling to that narrow viewpoint. Our true nature is a totally open state of perfect freedom. Seeing that everything sentient beings know is based in delusion, the future Buddha Maitreya defined liberation, or enlightenment as "freedom from error." Once you no longer make the mistake, you are liberated. Enlightenment is nothing other than freedom from making this error. How did these delusions begin? It all starts with grasping. Grasping is the number one root mistake.

Why is everything pure from the beginning? There is no true, solidly existing core to delusion. Therefore we can say delusion itself is emptiness free of all labels and imputations. We can say that delusions are based on the mistaken perceptions of our mind. But if we start looking into our mind, searching for mistakes, there is nothing to be found because the nature of these thoughts is emptiness. They are like clouds in the sky. If you recognize and abide in the true nature, these will clear away.

In the Vajrayana and Dzogchen teachings, you hear terms like "self-liberated" or "originally liberated." These expressions are part of the renowned pointing-out teachings or pith instructions. There is not a single thing that is liberated by others or dependent on something else for liberation. This is why the great master Rongzompa says there is nothing to be removed from deluded states of mind because delusion itself is inseparable from originally pure emptiness. Delusion is already empty and there is nothing to be removed. It is already pervaded by natural purity. ☸



Dignaga

# All Teachings Are on Refuge

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

which means "measured time." The vows we take and keep for as long as we live in this world are called *tantrim*, which means "permanent."

## Refuge Vows

Refuge vows are not only for lay practitioners, but for all Buddhist practitioners, because refuge is the foundation of all the Buddhist teachings and practices. For this reason the great master Atisha said that there aren't any other vows without the refuge vows. If you think about it, the Buddha didn't teach anything else besides refuge. All the teachings the Buddha gave are on the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. So in a way, they're all teachings on refuge.

Refuge is so natural. It's how we uplift and maintain our qualities and beauty. What is the cause of taking refuge? We develop refuge through (1) devotion, (2) by understanding the situation of samsara, and (3) according to the Mahayana teachings, out of compassion for all beings. These three are the essence and principle causes and conditions for taking refuge.

## Devotion

Devotion is so important in the Buddha's teachings because if we have devotion, we will practice. If we don't have devotion, we won't practice. So in a way, everything relies on devotion. For this reason, in the *Jewel Garland* the great Nagarjuna said, "You practice because of devotion and you understand the nature because of wisdom. These two are so important." Then he said, "Among these two, which is more important? Wisdom is important, but before wisdom you must have devotion. Wisdom isn't ignited without devotion." That's why devotion is so important. Wisdom and devotion are always side-by-side.

Devotion basically means we see the beautiful qualities of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. When we hear stories of the Buddha, or when we read the life stories of great masters, it brightens our mind. It warms our heart and we feel calm, peaceful, and uplifted. Devotion brings so many beautiful, soothing qualities. When we hear what they did, how calm, peaceful, and down to earth they were, so humble, simple, courageous, and determined to continue discovering the innate nature to benefit all beings—how wonderful! How beautiful! Even if we haven't been able to do those things ourselves, when we hear about them it rings so deeply, waking up the light in our heart.

That's why the Buddha taught that devo-



Enjoying Portland, Oregon

tion is the door that let's in the light. If there's no door or window, light can't come inside. But when we open the door, we experience a beautiful breeze and the light of the wisdom of the lineage really begins to shine.

Devotion is also connected with respect and appreciation. When we have devotion we're not easily blocked or carried away by our old habitual patterns of ego-clinging, pride, and arrogance. Those are the troublemakers. When we have arrogance we don't learn anything. We're like a solid iron ball—no matter how much water we pour on it, it won't seep inside and gather the moisture. This means we won't learn anything and we won't grow. At the same time, we won't see the good qualities of others. We're completely blocked, like a porcupine that can't get close to anyone. We blind ourselves to the qualities of the buddhas, the Dharma, the Sangha, and the great masters and teachers—everything is completely blocked. We're basically heading in the opposite direction.

Essentially, arrogance comes from ego-clinging. Ego is the biggest troublemaker. That's what the great master Shantideva said. Since beginningless time, all the difficulties, troubles, and fears that we continually experience are because of the ego. In addition to arrogance, the ego brings other negative emotions like doubt and hesitation, ignorance and attachment. We're so completely filled and overloaded with these unnatural things that they often just burst up. That's how we've created so many duality fabrications and nightmare situations. Devotion is so important for removing these difficulties.

Our realization and understanding develop according to the degree of our devotion. Many great teachers in ancient times mentioned the story of a student who asked a master, "Please give me blessings." And

the master replied, "Please give me devotion." Without devotion, blessings are just words. With devotion, blessings come so beautifully because our windows and doors are open and the light easily shines through, blossoming our lotus heart. When we have devotion, everything happens so perfectly—we naturally absorb the teachings. We aren't interrupted or carried away by intellectual doubts because the teachings seep in so deeply.

There are four levels of devotion according to the degree of our growth: (1) interested devotion, (2) desiring devotion, (3) trusting devotion, and (4) unailing devotion. In the beginning we have interested devotion—we hear the teachings and our interest is sparked. When that becomes stronger and we want to get more involved, that is desiring devotion. Then as we continue investigating and applying

Dudjom Tersar Transmissions at Tashi Choling



LAMA LORRAINE

the teachings, confidence and trusting devotion come. Once our confidence becomes so certain that our devotion can't be defeated, that is known as unshakable devotion.

## Clear Understanding of Samsara

Along with devotion, we go for refuge by clearly understanding the situation of samsara. We practice this in Ngondro when we contemplate the Four Renunciation Thoughts, or the Four Mind Trainings. (1) The first of these is the preciousness of life, (2) second is impermanence, (3) third is the inevitability that causes and conditions bring results, and (4) fourth is that samsara brings suffering and difficulty. The first two truths of Buddha's Four Noble Truths are the Truth of Suffering and the Truth of the Cause of Suffering. The Truth of Suffering is a teaching about this situation of samsara. Samsara has suffering, difficulty, and so much turbulence because it is the result of karmic actions and the negative emotions of ignorance, attachment, and anger and their combinations of arrogance, jealousy, doubt, and hesitation. Whatever activity we do with these emotions creates karma that is imprinted or registered within the subconscious storehouse of our *alaya*, which is not just going to go away. We planted the seed so eventually it's going to bring the result. Emotions are not pleasing or peaceful. They're not comfortable and they don't bring happiness. Ignorance is not peaceful. Attachment, anger, jealousy, and arrogance are not peaceful. When we're caught up in these emotions, we don't feel peaceful—they immediately create a suffering, tormented, and uncomfortable state of mind. Then when our emotions reflect outwardly, our friends and family members also feel uncomfortable. That energy creates a negative, uncomfortable environment. This begins with discomfort, is continually carried with discomfort, and the uncomfortable result is known as suffering.

We can see this is the same process with external objects: if we plant a medicinal seed it will bring a medicinal fruit. If we plant a poisonous seed, it will bring a poisonous result. The results follow exactly according to the causes and conditions that we planted. According to the Buddha's teaching, we've been in samsara from beginningless time until now. Once we see that we've been in samsara for so long, we begin feeling tired and even a little bored. We start to feel, "Enough is enough." We have to really want to reverse this situation. That is why we take refuge. Knowing the situation of samsara exactly as it is, and feeling tired and bored to some degree, we realize that the Three Jewels are the perfect example to follow. The Buddha is the perfect example of how to leave this deluded situation of samsara, practicing the Dharma is the perfect way to attain realization of the true nature, and relying on Sangha members is the perfect support along the path.

## Compassion

The third cause of true refuge is developing compassion. In Mahayana, compassion is also known as *bodhichitta*, the heart of enlightenment. When we go for refuge, we know that we're not the only one trying to find protection. We can see what it's like in samsara—how many beings are experiencing difficulties and troubles? We're not the exception.



Moment with a New Friend

LAMA LORRAINE

Therefore, we want to protect, help, ease, and support our fellow sentient beings, and it's for that very reason we take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Connecting the teachings closely to our heart, seeing the Buddha as our role model, and continually learning and moving forward with the help and support of sangha members—that is refuge. Once we really feel a very close connection, we naturally take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

The teachings always say that when the great master Atisha came to Tibet, one of his principle practices was refuge. He practiced refuge all the time. In Tibet they even gave him the nickname "Refuge Teacher." Refuge is so, so important. It's the foundation of everything, no matter what we practice. Even in Vajrayana, without refuge there is no *sadhana*. Every *sadhana* practice begins with refuge. It's the

root—everything develops from there. Again, the essence of refuge is the combination of devotion, knowing the situation of samsara, and compassion for all beings.

## Buddha

The Buddha is a totally enlightened being, which means he removed all obscurations—all negative emotions, as well as duality, grasping, and clinging. The Buddha completely cleaned and cleared those away in the state of great emptiness, revealing his own original nature of true love, compassion, and wisdom. The Buddha's love is boundless, his compassion is boundless, his wisdom is boundless, and his abilities are boundless. That is what he revealed. This is the true nature. We all have this same "buddha-nature." The *Prayer of Kuntuzangpo* says, "I and all the beings of the six realms share the same nature." The Buddha recognized this nature, but we're still deluded. We covered up our nature, trapping ourselves within our own cocoon. We created that duality. Our buddha-nature is so tightly shelled up within duality that it's not radiating so much. Even though it's so thickly covered, because our nature is so powerful it's still shining! We have love, compassion, and wisdom—that is how we can even survive in samsara. The Buddha totally revealed his nature, and that's why he is our role model.

## Dharma

The Buddha's teachings are the exact method we use to reveal our own nature. What do the teachings say? Increase your love and compassion, joy and appreciation, and remove all negative emotions. The Buddha taught so many different techniques to achieve this. For instance, the Dzogchen teachings always say to "naturally self-liberate" our emotions, without clinging to them or holding them back. With devotion, when we apply all the beautiful tools that the Buddha laid out in his teachings—keeping them close to our heart and practicing them with joy and devotion—that is known as taking refuge in the Dharma.

## Sangha

We also take refuge in the Sangha. *Sangha* is a Sanskrit word that means "inseparable and unshakeable." The bond we have with the

Three Jewels—and therefore one another—is so deep and strong. Even though all Buddhist practitioners are sangha members, the Buddha taught that there are two different levels of sanghas: beginners and advanced. The advanced sangha is further divided according to how much they've revealed their buddha-nature, such as first or second bhumi sanghas. Some sangha members are very advanced, like Manjushri, Avalokiteshvara, and Maitreya. Even though they're already enlightened beings, they are the sangha of great bodhisattvas. This isn't just about creating different levels. The Buddha taught about the beautiful signs of realization that occur when we discover more of our innate buddha-nature so that we can measure ourselves, see how much we've improved, and continue to move forward. Many of us are beginning sangha members, helping, supporting, and learning from each other. Sangha members give us the opportunity to practice what we've learned, like courage, confidence, and commitment. We also learn patience, tolerance, and understanding. We grow together with sangha in samsara situations too, helping one another to never lose courage and confidence, and to continually uphold our goal and vision. We stay closely connected within the ring of Dharma brothers and sisters, continually moving forward together.

## Particular Refuge Vows

I'm sure many of you have participated in the refuge ceremony. There are particular refuge vows and general refuge vows of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Once we take these vows, how do we maintain them? For the particular vows, when we take refuge in the Buddha, if it's convenient where you live, keep a statue or picture of the Buddha that you honor and respect. That supports our taking refuge in the Buddha. Taking refuge in the Dharma means always keeping the Dharma practices close to your heart, and at the same time, avoiding violence or harming any being, including yourself—even if it's in a playful manner. When we take refuge in the Sangha, always try to be in the company of virtuous friends that share a similar common goal of love, compassion, and peace. Even if we don't share the exact same vision, we should never be influenced by the power of negative or unvirtuous friends. These are some of the particular refuge vows of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.



Fire Puja in the PSL Meadow

DRAGPA

## General Refuge Vows

The general refuge vows are keeping the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha in the center of our hearts. No matter what the situation is or how circumstances change externally, we never lose confidence and devotion to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. We always keep them in our heart and mind. There are a few general vows, and this is one of the most important ones. A second general vow is making offerings to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, like when you offer flowers, incense, and candles to your shrine. According to your situation, never forget to cherish and honor the Three

Jewels with devotion and joy. The next general vow is sharing your experiences or understanding of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha with others. If they're interested and they'd like to know, then share with them about the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Another vow is that wherever you go, always remember the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha before your journey.

## Three Motivations for Taking Refuge

According to the *Jewel Garland* of Nagarjuna, there are three reasons to take refuge. (1) First, we want to avoid pain and enjoy pleasure. This is known as a low-level motivation. We fear the lower realms and hope to be reborn in the higher realms. The lower realms include the hell, hungry ghost, and animal realms, while the higher realms include humans, asuras, and gods. (2) Second, when we realize that the three higher realms are in fact part of samsara—they're unstable, transitory, and ultimately painful—we desire to be free from all six realms, and instead achieve final peace, or nirvana. This is a medium-level motivation. (3) Yet we're not alone. When we consider the limitless beings caught in the net of samsara, with great love and compassion we want all of them to be free from suffering. This is a

high-level motivation. Among these three, we must develop the highest-level motivation. The merit of this kind of refuge is infinite because the number of sentient beings is infinite.

## Benefits of Taking Refuge

There are three benefits of taking refuge. We will enjoy a wonderful life filled with health, prosperity, and long life. We will become free from ego-clinging and attain great, unshakeable peace, and eventually we will realize buddhahood, the ultimate state beyond samsara and nirvana. ☸

White Tara Overlooking Ensenada, Mexico



# Unfolding Beauty of Padma Samye Ling

This past year was filled with numerous activities to preserve and glorify the beautiful mandala of Padma Samye Ling which we all love so much. We're so grateful for the dedicated efforts of our sangha to nourish and expand our precious hermitage as a living center of Buddhist study and practice.

In particular, we would like to sincerely thank all the long-term residents who continuously support PSL: Lama Laia, Lama Dragpa, Amanda Lewis, Kate Mueller, Andy Millar, Pema Lodro, and Pema Dondrup.

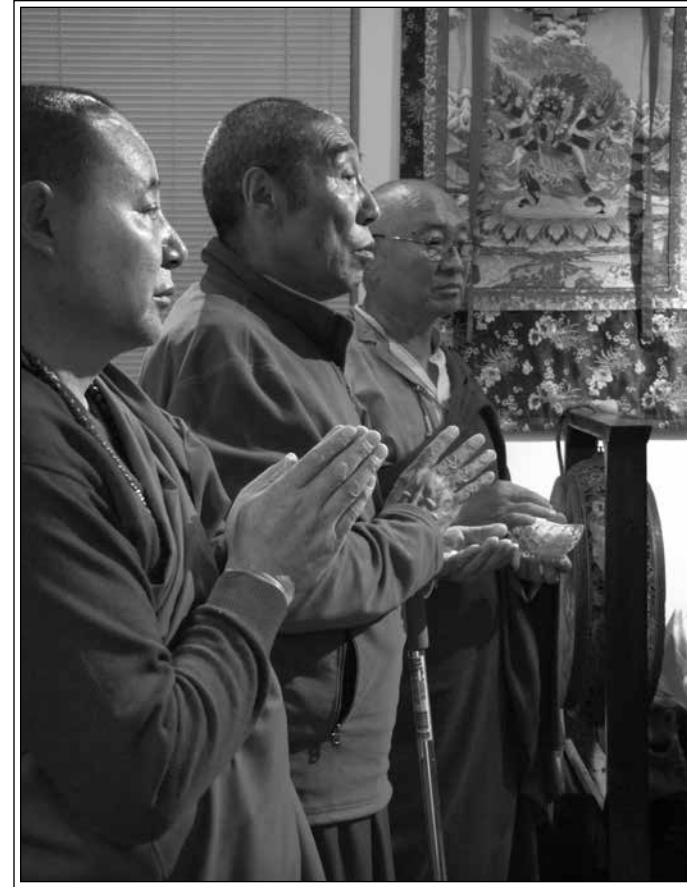
Thanks also to all 2014 *Learning Dharma Skills Program* participants and local sangha volunteers: Cathy Allen, Mikell Bursky, Andrew Cook, John DiLeo, Olga Dobrosko, Kerry & John Foose, Evan Ganick, Jane Harter, Bonnie Holsinger, Jack Housman, Roberto Irizarry, Jeychalie Kriete, Dylan Lewis, Susan Magovern, Jeremy Miller, Dara Norman, Marleen Pennison, Andrew Serow, Don Shaffer, Mark Simons, Judy Sprague, and Carol Stromek.

With the ongoing help of Pema Lodro, and John and Kerry Foose,

we were also able to expand the PSL organic vegetable garden with new fence lines, several raised beds, many plants and fruit trees, and built a new greenhouse!

At the Bodhichitta Inn, all the outdoor window frames got a fresh coat of paint, and the railings around Khenpo Rinpoche's House and the Sangha House were all newly sealed. We also translated and edited new sadhanas and books, made hundreds of tsa-tsas, welcomed visiting lamas and Buddhist pilgrims, received complete sets of the Kangyur and Tengyur, ornamented the grounds with new landscaping, hosted ongoing group and personal retreats throughout the year, posted daily inspiration on PBC social media, mailed biweekly Chiso store orders, held weekly study sessions and daily group meditations, kept the road, paths, and roofs clear of snow during the winter months, and savored delicious vegetarian sangha meals every day.

We warmly invite everyone to come and experience this special retreat land that is overflowing with blessings, wonderful community, and the sacred Dharma. ☸



Sonam Topgyal Rinpoche & Yeshe Gyaltzen Rinpoche at PSL



Annual Spring Kriya Yoga Work Retreat



Lama Laia [R] and Lama Dragpa [L] during the Summer Chod Retreat



Happy Birthday Khenpo Rinpoche!



Weekly Dharma Study Groups



Sitar Sangha Dinner



New Greenhouse and Expanded Organic Garden



Tibetan Buddhist Wedding



Raising New Prayer Flags Around PSL



First Annual PSL Teen Retreat



Landscaping the PSL Sangha House

# 2014 in Review



Flight of the Garuda, Year Two

DRAGPA



HH Dudjom Yangsi Rinpoche  
at Yeshe Nyingpo in NYC

LAMA LORRAINE



Annual Nyungne Retreat at PBDC

GREG KRANZ



Live Webcasts of the 37 Practices of a Bodhisattva

DRAGPA



Chod Retreat at Padma Gochen Ling

KIRBY SHELSTAD



Beautiful Mandarava House

GREG KRANZ



PBC Chicago Retreat on the Dudjom Tersar Ngondro

MATT LENTZ



Ven. Gyatrul Rinpoche at Tashi Choling

LAMA LORRAINE



Light the Mandala in Nashville

LEWIS ROBARDS



Anniversary of Khenchen Rinpoche's Mahaparinirvana at PBC Nunnery in India

SHERAB THARCHIN



Annual PBC New Years Retreat in NYC

DRAGPA



Fire Puja Teachings

DRAGPA



Tulku Sang-ngag Rinpoche Visiting PSL

DRAGPA



White Tara Retreat in Puerto Rico

PEMA NYINGE



Refuge Ceremony in Florida

LAMA LORRAINE



Dudjom Tersar Ngondro Retreat in Ensenada, Mexico

# Heart Advice of Padampa Sangye

*Padampa Sangye's Eighty Verses of Advice to His Heart Children was translated by the Ven. Khenpo Rinpoches during the Annual Dzogchen Winter Retreat at the Palm Beach Dharma Center in West Palm Beach, Florida on January 16, 2006.*

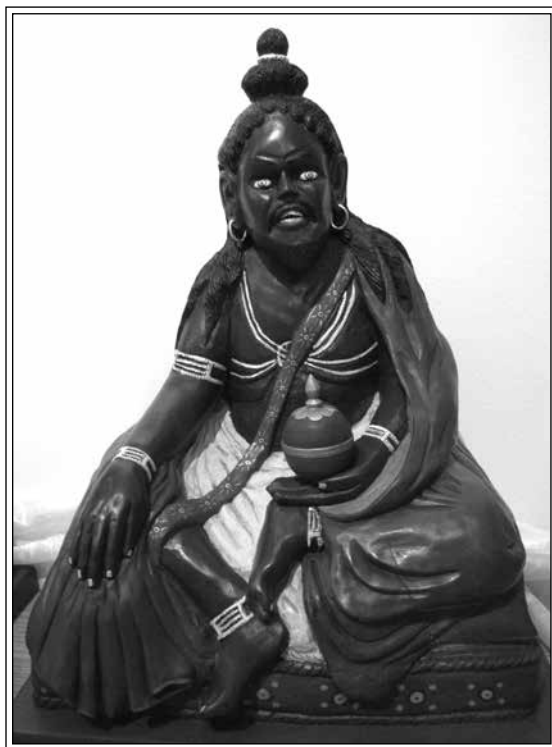
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It was said that Padampa Sangye could emanate 42 manifestations at once; he could understand all sound systems, be they conscious or elemental; he had five omniscient states; he was a master of interdependence; and wherever he went he was a friend to all. When meditating on the meaning of the four empowerments, he contacted Manjushri Nangwa Senge (Speech of the Lion) in person and received teachings directly from him. Padampa Sangye meditated on Tara for twelve years at Drolma Ri (Mount Tara). In India he meditated and subsisted on the essence of the elements, mastering his psychophysical aggregates. Then he mastered wind-walking at Mount Nagarjuna. In brief, he was free of the eight worldly concerns.

Late one afternoon in the eleventh month of the Earth Sheep year (December, 1117 A.D.), Padampa Sangye, then residing in Tingri, told his gathered disciples, "I am sick." His student Ghuranashri came to Padampa weeping and asked, "If you die, who will answer my questions?"

Padampa Sangye replied, "Oh my child, you don't need to cry. Keep the Guru, king of the Three Jewels on your crown chakra at all times and pray. If you do so with devotion, realization will come easily. Keep the Three Roots in your heart and recite mantra, and you will get realization of the clear light luminosity. If you continuously keep all the buddhas of the three times in your mind, you will experience the beauty of great wisdom. Stay alone in a hermitage. Watch your mind without distraction. Great realization comes from within. Generally speaking, without grasping you will fulfill all goals. Deities and dakinis have invited me to the pure land, and my work in Tibet is complete. I have been in this world for 517 years and am now ready to go to the pure land. Last year I told the people of Tingri that they would soon see my corpse—but even when I am dead, if you pray to me, I will never be separate from you."

Speaking thus, Padampa Sangye exhorted his students to remember his words. He then addressed his final advice to his student Dampa Sa Chung:



Padampa Sangye

CARVED BY FELIX FEBO

1. Child, don't be sectarian.
2. Child, understand the differences between the yantras with wisdom, not with grasping and clinging.
3. Child, the sign of a great scholar is seeing everything as "one taste."
4. Child, if you realize that everything is mind, then there are no contradictions.
5. Child, if you drink the milk of the sky, you will be totally satisfied.
6. Child, if you give up all karmic activities, you will achieve permanent peace.
7. Child, if you continue residing in caves and hermitages, the dakinis and dharmapalas will always gather around you.
8. Child, if you meditate alone, you will naturally receive blessings.
9. Child, if you meditate that the lama is always on your crown chakra, you will easily receive all the blessings.
10. Child, if you contact all the dakinis of the three places, you will accomplish every beneficial activity.
11. Child, if you give up all worldly affairs, that itself is Dharma.
12. Child, if you exhaust your self-importance, the benefit of all beings is right there.
13. Child, if you accomplish the fearlessness of realization, you achieve the highest of Dharma activities.
14. Child, if you contact your inner wisdom, you will never be separate from great bliss.

15. Child, if you remember the instructions all the time, you will always gain great certainty wisdom.
16. Child, if you fear birth and death, meditate on rigpa awareness.
17. Child, if you feel physical discomfort, you must rely on rigpa-awareness meditation.
18. Child, if you are distracted by external activities, you should focus your mind inward.
19. Child, if your meditation becomes foggy and dull, merge your awareness with the sky.
20. Child, if you are tired and bored with the practice, relax your mind in the deep nature.
21. Child, if your mind is scattered, be in a state of "single thought."
22. Child, if your practice is increasing, there is no other commitment needed.
23. Child, if grasping obscures your view, don't be timid about cutting it away.
24. Child, keep the Lama in your heart all the time, and all good qualities will come naturally.
25. Child, give up worldly concerns and focus on the practice.
26. Child, all the beings of the six realms are our parents; therefore, do not forsake your compassion for them.
27. Child, all the activities of this world have no meaning; therefore, don't get carried away by them.
28. Child, everything is illusion; therefore, see everything as a display of the unborn.
29. Child, this body is no different from earth and stone; therefore, don't grasp.
30. Child, this life is nothing but a dream; therefore, relax your mind in the original state.
31. Child, death is inevitable—don't be afraid.
32. Child, the five poisons are constant obstacles; therefore, restrengthen your five wisdoms.
33. Child, body and consciousness will certainly separate; therefore, meditate on the natural state.
34. Child, the body is rented and must be abandoned; therefore, keep permanent residence in the true nature.
35. Child, death will come soon; therefore, use your time well.
36. Child, the bardo passage is long and narrow, so prepare now for that voyage.
37. Child, concepts are wild and stubborn, so remain mindful at all times.
38. Child, if you have no duality, that is the view.
39. Child, when you realize that your mind is dharmakaya, that is meditation.
40. Child, if you are not hypocritical and out of control, that is conduct.

41. Child, if you don't have deceitful thoughts, that is samaya.
42. Child, if you realize that the nature of mind contains the three kayas, that is the fruit.
43. Child, if you have realization that is unceasing and free from being born, then you are free from death.
44. Child, if you control your winds and mind, all your wishes will be fulfilled.
45. Child, if you perform the ganachakra (tsok) ceremony often, the dakinis will gather.
46. Child, if you perform tsok and offer tormas, dharmapalas will gather around you.
47. Child, if you complete the mantra recitations with meditation, powers will come.
48. Child, if you meditate on the unborn, you will cut down samsara.
49. Child, if you complete the six perfections, realization will come.
50. Child, if you purify the winds of the life force, disease will disappear.
51. Child, by accepting ascetic hardship, joy comes naturally.
52. Child, if you master your mind, bliss will come.
53. Child, if you don't grasp to your body and mind, in your next life you will become famous.
54. Child, if you give up your body, this is the ultimate protection.
55. Child, if you become forgetful of the teaching, you go against the teachings of the Buddha.
56. Child, if you give Dharma for worldly reasons, you will be punished by dakinis.
57. Child, if you speak beautifully but behave badly, you become the worst of practitioners.
58. Child, talk won't help others; therefore, act for their benefit.
59. Child, if you realize that mind is the source of samsara and nirvana, that is Buddha.
60. Child, the final reward is the realization that there is nothing to be gained.
61. Child, give up your concerns with this life: think of your future lives.
62. Child, use the three poisons as the path, and the three kayas will naturally come.
63. Child, if your mind is not wandering in duality, that is dharmakaya.
64. Child, if you can benefit others without distraction, that is rupakaya.
65. Child, the fruit of the three kayas comes from your mind and nowhere else.
66. Child, if you listen to what I say and keep it in your heart, you will become my supreme heart child.
67. Child, when you have anger and attachment, watch those thoughts.





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