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# *1. Introduction*

## **Origins of Buddhism**

The word "buddhism" comes from the Sanskrit word "buddha," which means "the awakened one." buddhism, or buddhadharma, is the proclamation of, and journey toward, an awakening of human potential.

The historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, was born around 560 B.C. at Lumbini, in present-day Nepal. He was brought up as a prince of the Shakya clan and excelled in all the worldly arts. After realizing the truth of impermanence at the age of twenty-nine, he left his kingdom to seek spiritual understanding.

After studying for six years with many spiritual teachers, Siddhartha realized that neither the extreme of worldly success nor of asceticism could lead him to full awakening. He sat under the bodhi tree on the banks of the Ganges and vowed not to rise until he had attained enlightenment. Through examining the nature of his body and mind, he attained complete awakening.

The Buddha's discovery of awakened mind cannot adequately be described as a religion, a philosophy, or a psychology. It is better described as a way of living. The buddhadharma provides a practical method for attaining the realization of which it speaks: meditation, which is the practice of mindfulness and awareness. Meditation is a natural process of allowing oneself to examine the nature of thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations and to discover the inherent purity of one's being. It is a practice based on real experience, rather than on blind belief.

A variety of schools of buddhism developed in India after the Buddha's death, or parinirvana. The schools that were prominent earlier, called hinayana, placed primary emphasis on self-liberation through personal discipline. The schools that were prominent later, called the mahayana or "great vehicle," placed greater emphasis on working for the liberation of society as a whole. Both schools -were disseminated from India throughout Asia. The tradition established in Tibet is mahayana buddhism. It is also known as vajrayana, or "the indestructible vehicle," referring to the particularly powerful and direct methods of realization it employs.

## **The Practice Lineages**

There are four major lineages of buddhism which originated in India and flourished in Tibet: Nyingma, Kagyü, Sakya, and Geluk. Some lineages, like the Sakya and Geluk, put special emphasis on an intellectual approach to the teachings, training students as scholars and logicians. Others, like Nyingma and Kagyü, put special emphasis on the practice of meditation; they are often called the "Practice Lineages." The Vidyadhara was a holder of both Kagyü and Nyingma lineages.

### **The Kagyü Lineage**

The Indian mahasiddha Tilopa was the founder of what would later be called the Kagyü lineage. He spent much of his life wandering from place to place and studying meditation with various teachers. Finally, he meditated alone for several years in a grass hut on the banks of the Ganges until he attained realization. He received direct transmission of the mahamudra teachings from the dharmakaya buddha Vajradhara.

One of his most important disciples was the Indian mahasiddha and pandit Naropa. At the height of his career as head of Nalanda University, he sacrificed everything he had accomplished in order to search for an authentic teacher. He found Tilopa and studied with him for twelve years until attaining enlightenment.

One of Naropa's principal students was the Tibetan translator, Marpa Chökyi Lodrö. At exceptional risk to himself, Marpa made three long journeys over the Himalayas to India to study the dharma with Naropa and other great teachers. He transmitted the teachings to the Tibetan ascetic and hermit Milarepa. Milarepa in turn transmitted them to Gampopa, who had already received training in the monastic Kadampa lineage. From that time until the present, the teachings of the Kagyü have been transmitted in an unbroken lineage from teacher to student.

From the time of Gampopa, the Kagyü! lineage developed into a number of branches, called "the four great and the eight lesser schools." The four "great" lineages (referring to the first generation of disciples) derive from students of Gampopa (1079-1153) and his nephew Takpo Gomtsül (1116-1169). These four are:

- (1) Karma Kagyü or Karma Kamtsang, founded by Tüsum Khyenpa, the first Karmapa
- (2) Tsalpa Kagyü, founded by Gampopa's nephew Takpo Gomtsül (1110-1109) and his student Shang Yudrakpa Tsöndril Drakpa (1123-1193)
- (3) Baram Kagyü, founded by Baram Dharma Wangchuk
- (4) Phagmo dru Kagyü, founded by Phagmo dru Dorje Gyalpo (1110-1170).

The eight “lesser” schools (referring to the second generation of disciples) developed from Phagmo Drupa's disciples. They are known as Drigung, Taglung, Trophu, Drukpa, Martsang, Yelpe, Shuksep, and Yamsang. Only three of these survive today: Drukpa, Drikung, and Taklung. In addition, there are several other well-known Kagyü lineages such as the Shangpa Kagyü and the Ugyen Nyendrup.

Some of the most important Kagyü teachers today are:

- (1) The Karmapas. The Karmapa is regarded by most Tibetans as second in rank only to the Dalai Lama. He is the head of the Karma Kagyü lineage. Traditionally the Karmapa presided over the chief monastery of the Kagyü lineage, Tsurphu, outside of Lhasa in central Tibet. Since 1959, however, the seat of the Karmapa has been Rumtek Monastery near Gangtok, Sikkim. His Holiness the XVI Karmapa, Rangjung Rikpe Dorje, was a root teacher of the Vidyadhara and visited the West to teach and to perform the Black Crown Ceremony several times. Until his parinirvana in 1981, he was a close and revered teacher for the Vajradhatu sangha.
- (2) The Four Regent Tülkus. The regents are high-ranking tülkus who have a particularly close relationship with the Karmapas. The current incarnations were discovered by the XVIth Karmapa, who aided their escape from Tibet in 1959 and was primarily responsible for their training at Rumtek. Until the XVIIth Karmapa is old enough to assume his role as leader of the lineage, the regents share this function. They are also responsible for his education. The three living regents are: His Holiness Künzig Shamar Rinpoche (b. 1952), His Eminence Tai Situ Rinpoche (b.1954), and His Eminence Joshri Gyaltsab Rinpoche (b.1954). The fourth regent, His Eminence Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche (b.1954), was killed in a car accident in 1992.
- (3) Other teachers. The Vajradhatu sangha has made a connection with the following Kagyü teachers, among others: Ven. Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, Ven. Tenga Rinpoche, Ven. Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, Ven. Ato Rinpoche, and Ven. Dzogchen Pönlop Rinpoche.

## The Nyingma Lineage

The Nyingma ("the ancient ones") lineage is the oldest of the four Tibetan lineages, dating back to the ninth century, when its founder, Padmasambhava, traveled from India to Tibet to establish the first Tibetan monastery, Samye.

His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche was the leader of the Nyingma lineage in exile until his parinirvana in 1987. His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche assumed that role until his own parinirvana in 1991. H.H. Khyentse Rinpoche was a teacher and close associate of the Vidyadhara; he was also a teacher of Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche (then the Sawang).

The Vajradhatu sangha has made a connection with the following Nyingma teachers, among others: Ven. Tülku Ugyen Rinpoche, Ven. Trülshik Rinpoche, Ven. Rabjam Rinpoche, Ven. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, Ven. Trogawa Rinpoche, Ven. Gyaltrül Rinpoche, Ven. Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche, Ven. Chakdud Tülku Rinpoche, Ven. Dzigar Kongtrül Rinpoche, and Ven. Khenpo Sönam Tobgyal.

## The Surmang Tradition

The Surmang tradition was founded by the siddha Trungma-se (circa 1400). Trungmase received mahamudra teachings from deshin shekpa, the Fifth Karmapa (1384-1415). He received the Nyingma teachings of the Khandro Nyingthik ("The Innermost Essence of the Dakinis") from the teacher Menyakpa. Trungma-se himself was not a tülku; he was the teacher of the first Trungpa.

The following is a list of the Trungpa tülkus: (I) Künga Gyaltsen, (II) Künga Sangpo, (III) Künga Öser, (IV) Künga Namgyal, (V) Tendzin Chögyal, (VI) Lodrö Tenphel, (VII) Jampal Chögyal, (VIII) Gyurme Tenphel, (IX) Karma Tenphel, (X) Chökyi Nyinje (1875-1938), (XI) Chökyi Gyatso (1940-1987).

The Surmang Kagyü is especially known for the hearing lineage of Surmang, its practice of Chakrasamvara, and for the performance of the extensive Chakrasamvara dance.

## **Vidyadhara, The Venerable Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche**

Ven. Chögyam Trungpa was born in the province of Kham in Eastern Tibet, in 1940. When he was just thirteen months old, Chögyam Trungpa was recognized as a major *tülku*, or incarnate teacher. Chögyam Trungpa was the eleventh in the teaching lineage known as the Trungpa tülkus.

Once young tülkus are recognized, they enter a period of intensive training in the theory and practice of the buddhist teachings. Trungpa Rinpoche (*Rinpoche* being an honorific term meaning "precious one"), having been enthroned as Supreme Abbot of Surmang Monasteries and Governor of Surmang District, began a period of training that would last eighteen years, until his departure from Tibet in 1959. As a Kagyü tülku, his training was based on the systematic practice of meditation and on refined theoretical understanding of buddhist philosophy. One of the four great lineages of Tibet, the Kagyü is known as "the Practice Lineage."

At the age of eight, Chögyam Trungpa received ordination as a novice monk. After his ordination, he engaged in intensive study and practice of the traditional monastic disciplines as well as in the arts of calligraphy, thangka painting and monastic dance. His primary teachers were Jamgön Kongtrül of Sechen and Khenpo Gangshar-leading teachers in the Nyingma lineage. In 1958, at the age of eighteen, Trungpa Rinpoche completed his studies, receiving the degrees of *kyorpön* (Doctor of Divinity) and *khenpo* (Master of Studies). He also received full monastic ordination.

The late fifties were a time of great upheaval in Tibet. As it became clear that the Chinese Communists fully intended to take over the country by force, many people, both monastic and lay, fled the country. Trungpa Rinpoche spent many months in a harrowing trek over the Himalayas (described in his book, *Born in Tibet*). After narrowly escaping death or capture by the Chinese, he at last reached India in 1959. While in India, Chögyam Trungpa was appointed by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama to serve as the spiritual advisor to the Young Lamas Home School in Dalhousie, India. He served in this capacity from 1959 to 1963.

Trungpa Rinpoche's eldest son, Ösel Rangdröl Mukpo, was born in India in 1962 at which time the Vidyadhara bestowed many empowerments and long life abhishekas on him. Although it was Trungpa Rinpoche's desire to bring his son with him to England when he went there the following year, he was unable to do so until several years later.

Trungpa Rinpoche's first encounter with the West came when he received a Spaulding sponsorship to attend Oxford University. While at Oxford he studied comparative religion, philosophy and fine arts. He also studied Japanese flower arranging, receiving a degree from the Sogetsu School. While in England, Trungpa Rinpoche began to instruct Western students in the dharma (the teachings of the Buddha), and in 1968 he founded the Samye Ling Meditation Center

in Dumfriesshire, Scotland. While in Great Britain, Chogyam Trungpa published his first two books in English: *Born in Tibet* and *Meditation in Action*.

In 1969, Trungpa Rinpoche traveled to Bhutan where he engaged in a solitary meditation retreat. This retreat marked a pivotal change in his approach to teaching. Immediately upon returning he became a lay person, no longer wearing his monastic robes but dressing in ordinary Western attire. He married a young English girl and moved to North America. Many of his early students found these changes shocking and upsetting. However, Trungpa felt strongly that in order to take root in the West, the dharma needed to be taught free from cultural trappings and religious fascination.

During the seventies America was in a period of political and cultural ferment. It was a time of fascination with the East. Within that context, Trungpa criticized the materialistic and the commercialized approach to spirituality he described as "the spiritual supermarket." Through his lectures and in his books, *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* and *Myth of Freedom*, Trungpa emphasized the simplicity and directness of the practice of sitting meditation as the way to cut through such distortions of the spiritual journey.

During his seventeen years of teaching in North America, Trungpa Rinpoche developed a reputation as a dynamic and controversial teacher. Fluent in the English language, he was one of the first lamas who could speak to Western students directly, without the aid of a translator. Traveling extensively throughout North America and Europe, Trungpa Rinpoche gave hundreds of talks and seminars, and established major centers in Vermont, Colorado, and Nova Scotia. Vajradhatu was formed in 1973 as the central administrative body, directing the activities of his many meditation and study centers located throughout North America and Europe.

In 1974, Trungpa Rinpoche founded The Naropa Institute, the only accredited buddhist-inspired university in North America. He lectured extensively at the Institute, and his book, *Journey Without Goal*, is based on a course he taught there. In 1976, he established the Shambhala Training program, a powerful series of weekend programs and seminars which provide instruction in meditation practice within a secular setting. His book, *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, provides an overview of the Shambhala teachings.

In 1976, Trungpa Rinpoche appointed Ösel Tendzin (Thomas F. Rich) as his Vajra Regent, or dharma heir. Ösel Tendzin worked closely with Trungpa Rinpoche in the administration of Vajradhatu and Shambhala Training. He taught extensively from 1976 until his death in 1990 and is the author of *Buddha in the Palm of Your Hand*.

Trungpa Rinpoche was also active in the field of translation. Working with Francesca Freemantle, he brought out a new translation of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* in 1975. Later he formed the Nalanda Translation Committee to translate texts and liturgies for his own students as well as to make important texts available publicly.

Trungpa Rinpoche was also known for his interest in the arts and particularly for his insights into the relationship between contemplative discipline and the creative process. His own art work included calligraphy, painting, flower arranging, poetry, playwriting, and environmental installations. In addition, at the Naropa Institute he created an educational atmosphere which attracted many leading artists and poets. The exploration of the creative process in light of contemplative training continues there as a provocative dialogue. Trungpa Rinpoche has published two books of poetry, *Mudra* and *First Thought, Best Thought*.

Trungpa Rinpoche's published books represent only a fraction of the rich legacy of his teachings. During his seventeen years of teaching in North America, he crafted the structures necessary to provide his students with systematic training in the dharma. From introductory talks and courses to advanced group retreat practices, these programs emphasize the balance of study and practice, of intellect and intuition. Students at all levels can pursue their interest in meditation and the buddhist path through these many forms of training. Senior students of Trungpa Rinpoche are involved in both teaching and meditation instruction in such programs and at the centers. In addition to his extensive teaching of the buddhist tradition, Trungpa placed great emphasis on the Shambhala teachings which emphasize the importance of mind-training, as distinct from religious practice; community involvement and the creation of an enlightened society; and appreciation of one's day-to-day life. Preserved in the Shambhala Archives in both taped and written form, further works will be edited and made available to the public, as circumstances permit.

Trungpa Rinpoche passed away in 1987 at the age of forty-seven. He is survived by his wife, Lady Diana, and five sons. His eldest son and heir, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche (Ösel Rangdröl Mukpo), succeeds him as head of Vajradhatu, Shambhala Training and Nalanda. By the time of his death, Trungpa Rinpoche had become known as a pivotal figure in introducing dharma in the Western world. The joining of his great appreciation for Western culture and his deep understanding of his own tradition led to a revolutionary approach to teaching the dharma, in which the most ancient and profound teachings were presented in a thoroughly contemporary way. Trungpa Rinpoche was known for his fearless proclamation of the dharma: free from hesitation, true to the purity of the tradition and utterly fresh. May these teachings take root and flourish for the benefit of all sentient beings.



## **The Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin**

On August 22, 1976, in a public ceremony held at Karma Dzong in Boulder, Colorado, the Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche empowered Thomas F. Rich as his Vajra Regent. In doing so he formally authorized him as his heart son and indicated that he would continue to work closely with him in order to train him thoroughly as a lineage holder in the Practice Lineage of the Karma Kagyü and the Ancient Lineage of Nyingma. In his 1977 visit to the United States, His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa confirmed the Vajra Regent's appointment as a lineage holder of the Kagyüs. He was the first Western student to hold such a position in the Kagyü lineage.

Born in Passaic, New Jersey, in 1943, Thomas F. Rich attended Fordham University, graduating in 1965. After graduation, he worked as a physical therapist in New York and in Los Angeles. In 1966, he met Swami Satchidananda and became one of his principle students. He was given the Hindu name, Narayana. He continued his studies of the Hindu tradition until he first encountered the Vidyadhara in 1971 in Boulder, Colorado, and during a brief meeting made an instant and strong connection with him. With the blessings of Satchidananda, he moved to Tail of the Tiger (now Karmê-Chöling) to become a student of the Vidyadhara.

Thomas Rich took refuge vows while at Tail of the Tiger, receiving the name Ösel Tendzin, which means "Luminosity Holder of the Teachings." He served on the executive committee of Tail of the Tiger, and in 1972 was appointed Director of the Maitri Program, a therapeutic community the Vidyadhara established in Elizabethtown, New York. It was while he was at Karmê-Chöling that Ösel Tendzin first heard of the Vidyadhara's intentions for him, although his appointment as Vajra Regent was not publicly announced until four years later.

In 1973 Ösel Tendzin attended the first Vajradhatu Seminary, held at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, after which he moved to Boulder, Colorado. At that time, the two major practice centers as well as the assortment of Dharmadhatu were consolidated into one organization, known as Vajradhatu, and Ösel Tendzin was appointed to the first Vajradhatu Board of Directors. Later, at the time of his empowerment, the Vajra Regent was appointed Executive Vice-President of both Vajradhatu and Nalanda Foundation.

After being empowered as the Vajra Regent, Ösel Tendzin spent more and more of his time traveling and teaching the dharma. He taught extensively throughout North America and also in Europe. In particular, in 1977, the year after the Vajra Regent's empowerment, the Vidyadhara went on an extended retreat, leaving the management and primary teaching responsibilities of Vajradhatu in the hands of the Vajra Regent. The Vajra Regent was the first of the Vidyadhara's students empowered to conduct weddings and funerals, refuge and bodhisattva vows, and to confer ngöndro and other vajrayana transmissions.

In the late seventies, the Vajra Regent worked closely with the Vidyadhara in developing methods of propagating the Shambhala teachings to the general public, co-founding the series of weekend programs which came to be known as Shambhala Training.

The Vajra Regent also taught regularly at the Naropa Institute and met periodically with Naropa administration and faculty, helping to shape Naropa's development. The Regent took on sizable fund-raising responsibilities for both Vajradhatu and Naropa Institute. He founded the Regent's Club, a support organization of major donors to the Naropa Institute, to encourage generosity and involvement with Naropa, and a sense of enjoyment and elegance.

In 1981, Shambhala Publications published a book based on a series of talks given by the Vajra Regent between 1976 and 1979, entitled *Buddha in the Palm of Your Hand*. In addition to his teaching and administrative duties, the Vajra Regent also engaged in dharma art, including calligraphy, poetry, and photography.

The Vajra Regent worked with students in many ways, some of them very traditional, such as giving talks and engaging in dialogue, others more uniquely Western, such as golfing. The Regent's Open Golf Tournament, held annually in Boulder, was both a fund raising event and a general celebration of joining dharma with American culture.

For many years, the Vidyadhara had indicated his intention of moving to Nova Scotia and relocating the executive headquarters of Vajradhatu in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In preparation for this event, many senior students had begun to set up household there. In 1985, the Vajra Regent and his family moved to Nova Scotia to take up residence there and to help with this transition. At the time, the Vidyadhara was in retreat in Mill Village, Nova Scotia. In 1986, when the Vidyadhara abruptly left the 1986 Seminary to move directly to Nova Scotia and establish his seat there, he requested the Vajra Regent to present the vajrayana teachings and transmission.

Shortly after his arrival in Nova Scotia in the fall of 1976, the Vidyadhara became seriously ill and was bed-ridden until his death in April 1987. The Vajra Regent helped to guide the sangha through these difficult times. After the Vidyadhara's parinirvana, the Vajra Regent became the president of Vajradhatu and of Nalanda Foundation.

The Regent continued to travel and to teach after the death of the Vidyadhara and in January 1988 he conferred the Vajrayogini Abhisheka for the first time to a group of 250 students at Karma Dzong in Boulder, Colorado. In the summer, he presided over the 1988 Vajradhatu Seminary.

After Seminary, in the fall of 1988, the Vajra Regent met in Boston with the Vajradhatu Board of Directors. It became apparent that the Vajra Regent's health was in decline. At that time fundamental disagreements concerning the leadership of Vajradhatu surfaced, which powerfully affected the entire sangha. A time of great turmoil and chaos arose in the sangha. Relations between the Vajra Regent and the Vajradhatu Board of Directors were severely strained.

The Vajra Regent, upon the advice of His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche decided to engage in a lengthy retreat and took up residence in Ojai, California. His family and several close friends and students joined him there. While in Ojai, he again performed the Vajrayogini abhisheka, in the fall of 1989. He continued to practice and to work with a group of his closest students.

In 1989 the Vajra Regent began organizing the upcoming Vajradhatu Seminary, which he intended to conduct at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center in the summer of 1990. However, due to his declining health, the Regent was unable to do so, and requested the Dorje Loppön to teach on his behalf.

On August 25, 1990, the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin passed away in San Francisco, California. A cremation ceremony was conducted shortly thereafter at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center. The Vajra Regent's wife, Lady Lila Rich, their four children, and many close students continue to live in Ojai, California.

The Vajra Regent was both an inspiring teacher and an effective administrator. His devotion to his root teacher, the Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche was an example for the sangha. It is through his inspiration and hard work that many Vajradhatu students first encountered the teachings and embarked upon the path of dharma. The fact that the Vidyadhara trusted a Westerner to carry on his tradition was a very meaningful and inspiring statement. The Vajra Regent's example is a powerful and provocative one, and of historical significance in the task of transplanting buddhadharma in the Western world.

## **The Sakyong, Jamgön Mipham Rinpoche**

The Sakyong, Jamgön Mipham Rinpoche, eldest son of Vidyadhara the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, was born as Ösel Rangdröl Mukpo on the full moon day of the tenth month of the Year of the Water Tiger, December 11, 1962 in Bodhgaya, India.

Before the Sakyong's birth, the Vidyadhara predicted that he would be a divine emanation of a deity. At the Vidyadhara's request, Lady Könchok Paldrön, the Sakyong's mother, went on a pilgrimage of sacred buddhist sites in India. At the time of his birth, she was in Bodhgaya, where the Buddha attained enlightenment. When he was three days old, the Sakyong was given the name Ösel Rangdröl (self-liberated luminosity) by his father.

The Sakyong spent his early years with Lady Könchok in a Tibetan refugee village in northwest India. When he was a year old, his mother took the Sakyong on a pilgrimage to sacred buddhist sites in India, including Minali, Simla, and Bir. At the age of seven, he went to live with the Vidyadhara at Samyé Ling Meditation Center in Scotland. In 1971, the Sakyong joined his father and stepmother, Lady Diana Mukpo, in Boulder, Colorado. There he continued his buddhist studies as well as his western education.

In addition, the Sakyong received training in various contemplative arts, such as Japanese archery, calligraphy, flower arranging, tea ceremony, and horsemanship.

In 1978, the Vidyadhara performed a ceremony conferring on Ösel Rangdröl the title of Sawang, (earth lord,) formally empowering him as his heir. The Vidyadhara continued the Sakyong's training under his close guidance with the understanding that his son would one day be empowered as Sakyong, as he himself had been.

The Sakyong also received many teachings and empowerments from the great teachers of the Karma Kagyü and Nyingma lineages of Tibetan buddhism, among them His Holiness the Sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa, the Venerable Tenga Rinpoche, the Venerable Kalu Rinpoche, the Venerable Tulku Urgyen, and His Holiness Penor Rinpoche, supreme head of the Nyingma lineage. The great Nyingma teacher and previous head of the Nyingma lineage, His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, was like a second father to the Sakyong.

While the Sakyong was continuing his western academic studies in England, Khyentse Rinpoche requested him to come to Asia to live and study with him, noting that he would have to "take responsibility for continuing his father's teachings." In 1987, after the death of his father, the Sakyong moved to Nepal and studied with Khyentse Rinpoche for many years, receiving teachings and empowerments from him.

In 1990, with the passing of the Vajra Regent and at Khyentse Rinpoche's urging, the Sakyong returned from this period of practice and study to lead the international community and direct the

work his father had begun. The Sakyong's first major initiative was to bring the many activities of the Vidyadhara's students under the umbrella of Shambhala. City centers throughout the world, until that time known as Dharmadhatus, became Shambhala Meditation Centers, offering Buddhist meditation and study programs, Shambhala Training, and cultural activities all under one roof. In the Sakyong's words, this allowed "all the various traditions that we have inherited to blossom in their own way."

The Sakyong then began years of touring and teaching throughout the world, as well as presiding over major intensive training programs such as Vajradhatu Seminaries and Kalapa Assemblies. The Sakyong divides his time between these teaching activities and practice and writing retreats. As well as writing numerous commentaries on the Vidyadhara's works, the Sakyong has published a book of poetry, *Smile of the Tiger*, and composed several sadhanas – traditional practice texts.

In May 1995, the Sawang was formally installed as Sakyong, leader of both the spiritual and secular aspects of Shambhala, and given the name and title: Sakyong Mipham Jampal Trinley Dradül Rinpoche. A Sakyong, or "earth protector," is one who inspires a sense of sacredness, caring for others, and basic goodness in both individuals and society as a whole. His Holiness Penor Rinpoche, who conducted the enthronement, also recognized the Sakyong as an incarnation of Mipham Jamyang Namgyal Gyatso, the revered nineteenth-century Tibetan meditation master and scholar. The enthronement formalized Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche's lifelong commitment to work with others towards creating enlightened society.

## **Related Organizations**

### **Nalanda Foundation**

Nalanda is a term used to encompass many independent organizations integrate Shambhala principles into everyday life. Nalanda takes its name from a great buddhist university which flourished between the sixth and twelfth centuries C.E. Nalanda University was a fertile meeting place for scholars, meditation masters, and artists of many different traditions. In this same spirit, Nalanda encompasses a number of secular disciplines and activities. Each is a vehicle for integrating Shambhala art and culture with everyday life. Each of these disciplines represents a genuine contemplative path; together they bring beauty, vividness and wisdom to our lives and environment

Some Nalanda activities are organized into local or even international groups. Others are loose networks of practitioners, artists, educators, parents, health professionals, or businesspeople who share an inspiration to apply the principles of Shambhala warriorship to their personal discipline, or to their work in the world.

The activities of Nalanda may be roughly grouped into four major categories: the arts, health, education, and business. The following are some of the disciplines or pathways included within Nalanda. Some of these activities occur within structured organizations; others are pursued by individual practitioners with similar inspirations.

Here is a brief description of a few of these activities:

#### *Kyudo*

Kyudo means the way of the bow and can be described as a form of standing meditation. Under the direction of Shibata Kanjuro, Sensei and senior instructors, students learn an ancient form of archery using traditional Japanese bows. Kyudo is a form of meditation practice, not sport, and hitting the target is not considered important. The purpose of kyudo is to purify one's heart and mind to awaken the natural dignity of being human, beyond the obstacles of ambition, aggression or confusion.

#### *Kalapa Ikebana*

In 1982, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche formed a new school of ikebana (Japanese flower arranging) inspired by his own training and vision. Kalapa Ikebana, as this school is called, promotes the study and practice of flower arranging, often working closely with masters of other schools of ikebana.

### *Kalapa Cha*

In 1980, during her first visit to Boulder, Colorado, the Vidyadhara invited Mrs. Kyoko Shibata to introduce Chado, the Way of Tea. At that time, a handful of students began to study this centuries old contemplative practice. In 1999, tea masters John Soyu McGee Sensei and Alexandre Soro Avdoulov Sensei moved to Nova Scotia and have been teaching a growing number of students. Under their direction, the group has hosted public tea gatherings, presented tea for Shambhala Training programs and introduced tea practice at Magyel Pomra Encampment in 2002.

### *Bugaku*

The ancient dance and music of the Japanese Imperial Court, known as bugaku, is more than 1400 years old. The stately dance, performed in richly brocaded and highly stylized costumes, expresses contemplative mind in a cultural context. Several bugaku groups are active and study with master musician and dancer Togi, Sensei, a Living National Treasure of Japan.

### *Mudra Space Awareness*

This awareness practice is based on postures and movement from traditional Tibetan monastic dance. Simple yet demanding, these techniques train students in synchronizing body and mind, in relating with space, in maintaining awareness during intense activity, and in communication.

### *Maitri Space Awareness*

This practice is based on the principles of the five buddha families, each of which expresses a particular style and attitude of openness. Maitri Space Awareness heightens the characteristic patterns of energy of each family, so that both the neurotic and sane aspects of the student's personal style becomes apparent. This practice is used both as a contemplative discipline and as training for working with others in a therapeutic context.

### *Dharma Art*

Dharma Art is art that springs from the meditative state of mind. It is based on a collection of teachings by Chögyam Trungpa that appreciate the uniqueness of everyday sensory experience, the art of everyday life. Seeing the simplicity of things as they are provides the ground for genuine creative expression. These teachings are offered in a series of weekend programs and special events.

### *Other Nalanda Activities, Interest Groups, and Pathways*

Contemplative Disciplines: Gagaku (Court Music), Horsemanship, Dressage

Health: Amara Health Professionals, Contemplative Psychotherapy, home care, palliative care, Sarpashana (working with addiction)

Arts: Calligraphy, Dance/Movement, Graphic Design, Miksang (contemplative photography), Music, Poetics, Visual Art

Education: Early Childhood Education, Contemplative Education, Nalanda Translation Committee, Rites of Passage for eight and sixteen years olds

Business: Leadership Training, Shambhala Institute, Shambhala Guild Society (livelihood network).

## **Naropa University**

Naropa University is an accredited college offering BA. and MA. degrees in academic, artistic and mind-body disciplines. Founded by the Vidyadhara 1974, Naropa University has grown from a summer program to a year-round school with over 500 full-time degree students. Originally a division of Nalanda Foundation, Naropa is now an autonomous organization, governed by a Board of Trustees.

Inspired by the tradition of buddhist educational philosophy, Naropa University offers students the opportunity to apply and further their buddhist training through the study of specific disciplines. Opportunities for practice include sitting meditation, maitri and mudra space awareness practice, Shambhala Training, and a variety of traditional contemplative and martial arts.

Currently, areas of B.A. study being offered include contemplative psychology, early childhood education, environmental studies, foundation year, inter-arts studies, religious studies and visual arts. Graduate programs include buddhist studies, gerontology, contemplative psychotherapy, somatic psychology, transpersonal and counseling psychology and writing and poetics. The annual Summer Institute provides a variety of courses and workshops for both degree and non-degree students.



# **Stages and Characteristics of the Vajradhatu Path of Buddhist Practice**

**As Established by the Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche**

The Vajradhatu path as a whole is characterized by a strong emphasis on shamatha-vipashyana meditation as the foundation, and the practice and study of the basic teachings in English and other Western languages. In addition, the path consists of study programs originally designed by the Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche to deepen students' understanding and experience of buddhadharma in a gradual and systematic way. A careful sequence of group practice programs, such as week and month-long meditation intensives, and the Vajradhatu Seminary, insure that students are well-trained and processed. Students are also strongly encouraged to study the Shambhala teachings and to integrate their understanding of these two traditions. It could be said that the real uniqueness of the Buddhist journey as taught to us by the Vidyadhara is its inseparability with the Shambhala teachings he revealed — the path of enlightenment in the context of a secular life, accessible to all.

The sangha is for the most part composed of “yogin-householders,” who could be considered to blend elements of the lay and monastic lifestyles. There is also a growing monastic community affiliated with Gampo Abbey in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.

The Vidyadhara was in many ways unique in his emphasis on working with Western cultural forms in transmitting the teaching, rather than relying on Tibetan cultural accouterments. He was one of the first lamas to teach entirely in English. In addition, he drew from the Japanese Zen tradition, which he valued highly and with which the sangha has had many close connections.

In presenting a rough outline of the stages of the Vajradhatu Buddhist path, it is important to keep in mind that the Vidyadhara worked with students individually, in many ways and forms: meditation practice, business and livelihood activities, theater, psychology, ikebana, scholarship, education, dance, photography, kasungship, teaching, music, translation, monasticism, household service, horseback riding, construction, design, and many others. There is no “one way” for all students. At the same time, the Vidyadhara worked hard to develop a central journey by which to train his sangha, and he encouraged all his students to pursue this training.

## **The Lineage of Shambhala Buddhism**

Over the years this basic vision of practice and study has been deepened and enriched by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, the eldest son of the Vidyadhara. Following the death of the Vidyadhara the Sakyong undertook the spiritual leadership of Vajradhatu. From the outset he was concerned that the uniqueness of his father's teaching be preserved and that the inseparability of the Buddhist and Shambhala teachings remain at the very core of the students' path. At the same time, the integrity of the various streams of teaching from the Vidyadhara needed to be cared for properly and made to

grow. In order to reflect this vision, the Sakyong renamed the organization from Vajradhatu to Shambhala. The various transmissional streams of teaching then could be regarded as inseparable from Shambhala yet distinctly articulated and practiced within the context of Shambhala—the harmonizing principle. Over the next few years the Sakyong studied and practiced under the guidance of several great teachers including H.H. Dilgo Khyenstse Rinpoche, H.H. Penor Rinpoche, Khenpo Namdrol, and Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso.

At the 1999 and 2000 Vajradhatu Seminars he began to introduce a series of teachings on shamatha-vipashyana meditation and, in particular, he began to emphasize the importance of contemplative practice. The dharmic topics that were emphasized as well as the approach to sitting meditation and contemplative practice that emerged during the Seminars have evolved into the basis of the Buddhist curriculum that is now practiced at Shambhala Centers. The Sakyong's first book, *Turning the Mind Into an Ally* (Riverhead, 2003), is a basic primer on meditation and Shambhala Buddhism presenting his basic approach to the public.

### **The Acharyas**

In 1996 the Sakyong appointed a group of nine senior Shambhala Buddhist teachers to the post of Acharya—empowered teachers of the Shambhala Buddhist lineage. In general, the acharyas have been given the responsibility to teach and to provide guidance and dharmic sustenance to the community as the Sakyong's representatives and, in particular, to give the refuge and bodhisattva vows, transmissions for various Buddhist and Shambhala practices, and lead the Sutrayana Seminary and other core Shambhala programs. Over the years several more Acharya have been appointed.

## **The Shambhala Buddhist Path of Practice and Study**

### **Overview**

The basic Buddhist path of practice received directly from the Vidyadhara begins with shamatha-vipashyana meditation practice. Oryoki and the five lay precepts are introduced at dathün—a month-long meditation intensive. There is the mahayana practice of lojong (“mind training”), working with the Kadampa slogans and tonglen (“sending and taking”) practice. Vajrayana practice begins during the Vajrayana Seminary. The student received vajrayana transmission, and begins ngöndro practice, which prepares one to request the Vajrayogini abhisheka and enter into its sadhana practice. Chakrasamvara practice follows next. These practices taken together with a corresponding program of study constitute the basic styles of Buddhist training that the Vidyadhara presented, and he hoped all of his students would complete them. This way of structuring the students' path is based on the Kagyü and Nyingma lineage traditions of progressive stages of practice and study known as the three yanas—hinayana, mahayana, and vajrayana. As discussed above this approach, combined with the Shambhala teachings on secular and societal enlightened activity in the world, make the Shambhala Buddhist path uniquely distinguished as emanating from Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche.

### ***Entering Shambhala as a New Student***

Meditation practice is the heart of our traditions of both Buddhism and Shambhala. In terms of the buddhadharma, new students are introduced to the basic Buddhist teachings and are encouraged to practice shamatha-vipashyana meditation. *Initial meditation instruction* is very important and should be received from a qualified meditation instructor or Shambhala guide. Meditation instruction is not simply presenting a technique, which could be read in a book, but is the expression of an unbroken oral transmission from teacher to student going back to the time of the Buddha. The Shambhala Buddhist path of meditation is a graduated path of instruction, which is taught in the Shambhala Training *Heart of Warriorship* programs and in the Shambhala School of Buddhist Studies, and this derives from the mahamudra and ati traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.

At this stage, a person may take part in a variety of classes and meditation programs, such as an all-day practice, or *nyinthün*. One may choose to work with a personal meditation instructor. A “new student” may include those who view themselves as part of a different tradition that they would like to enhance through meditation practice, older sangha children, people exploring different spiritual options, as well as those who will want to go further with Shambhala.

If students decide to go further, there are a number of steps that may be taken. In cultivating a daily sitting practice, they may be interested in setting up a household shrine.

In addition to sitting practice, students at their center may be introduced to morning and evening daily chants and the practice of *The Sadhana of Mahamudra*. They are encouraged to continue with their reading and study and to do intensive practice such as a *weekthün* (seven-day meditation intensive) or *dathün* (month-long meditation intensive).

### ***The Shambhala School of Buddhist Studies***

This is a four-cycle program of practice and study for anyone interested in learning about Shambhala Buddhism and meditation. Students do not need to be or become a Buddhist to take these courses, although that opportunity is provided for those who want to do so. This course of study prepares students for Sutrayana Seminary, if they desire to take their study and practice further. All students will be encouraged to take Shambhala Training levels and other offerings at the center concurrently.

Each cycle provides:

- weekly classes as well as one-day and two-day intensives
- courses in each of the three yanas
- a community practice intensive
- teachings of the Sakya, the Vidyadhara, and other teachers
- a central transmission and contemplation

These four cycles could be completed in 2 years: one cycle in the fall and one in the winter/spring of each year. Some students may take longer, and many centers and smaller groups will spread the cycles out over several years. Courses need not be taken in only one linear order—in other words a student who wishes

to begin their Buddhist studies may enter the Shambhala School of Buddhist Studies at the beginning of whichever course is being offered at that time in the Center.

### ***Dathün***

Dathün (Tibetan for "month session") is a one-month group meditation retreat led by a senior teacher. It is open to anyone and is a very powerful introduction and deepening of mindfulness-awareness meditation. Each day consists of alternating periods of sitting and walking meditation with time for talks, study, and a short work period. Silence and functional talking are observed throughout the day. Meals are served in the shrine room oryoki-style, a formal practice of mindful eating taken from the Zen tradition. There is regular individual instruction with trained meditation instructors throughout the month. Participants may attend as little as one week ("weekthün") of a dathün, which can provide an excellent introduction to intensive practice.

### ***Solitary retreat***

In his early days of teaching in North America, the Vidyadhara placed considerable emphasis on individual shamatha retreats. This was often a student's first exposure to extended shamatha practice. Retreat cabins were built at all the practice centers, and regular retreat practice was encouraged. This was before the establishment of the dathün and weekthün and the introduction of vajrayana practices.

Over time, the weekthün and dathün replaced retreat practice as most students' first introduction to intensive practice. However, the dathün was not designed to replace the solitary retreat, but to provide a powerful and supportive group situation to enter new students into intensive practice. At this point, attending a weekthün is required before doing a solitary retreat.

Solitary retreats are still highly encouraged for shamatha students, as well as for ngöndro and sadhana practitioners. In the new Buddhist curriculum, a 7 - 10 day solitary retreat is highly recommended before Vajrayana Seminary, and for some vajrayana practices, extensive retreat is necessary.

### ***Elixir of Life, A Birthday Practice***

The Sakyong wrote this short practice on the occasion of his birthday in 1999. His aspiration in writing this practice is that all beings "may be able to celebrate their birthdays with a deeper understanding of time and life." This practice is available to anyone. On Shambhala Day 2003, the year of the Water Sheep, the international Shambhala Community practiced this sadhana in order to welcome in the New Year, and this practice will be continued on future Shambhala days.

### ***Shamatha Yoga***

Shamatha yoga is a simple series of nine yoga postures developed by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche during his retreat in India in January of 2002. They are designed to develop mindfulness as well as loosen the body during breaks from formal sitting meditation.

It can be taught to students by qualified Shambhala instructors after which it is recommended to include in individual daily practice as well as during programs, retreat, and intensive group meditation sessions.

### ***Refuge Vow***

The *refuge vow* marks the decision to commit oneself wholeheartedly to the Buddhist path and to further one's practice and training. It is the formal commitment to being a Buddhist, following the example of the Buddha Shakyamuni, his teachings (the dharma) and joining the community (sangha) of fellow practitioners.

The refuge vow is a significant step on the student's path, and the Sakyong has introduced particular elements to help students in the process of making this lifetime commitment and working with it continually. A weekend program — *The Three Jewels* — is offered through the Shambhala School of Buddhist Studies and should be taken prior to taking the vow. Ideally the preparation program would be taken several months before the vow ceremony, but in some cases it is combined with the refuge ceremony weekend itself.

### ***The Practice of Taking Refuge: Arousing the Motivation for True Freedom from Samsara***

This is a short contemplative practice with commentary written by the Sakyong for those who have taken the refuge vow with an authorized Shambhala International preceptor. For students who have taken refuge with another teacher and become committed members of Shambhala the text may be made available. This practice provides a continual support for deepening one's personal understanding and practice of taking refuge, which is a lifetime practice.

### ***Bodhisattva Vow***

The *bodhisattva vow* is further commitment to put others before oneself and to work wholeheartedly for their benefit. The basis of this vow is the aspiration to develop friendliness, compassion, and genuine insight through the practice of the six paramitas and to undertake the view and practice of the mahayana. In connection with this, students receive instruction in *tonglen* practice, or "sending and taking," and begin to work with the slogans of the Kadampa tradition of "training the mind". (Tib. *lojong*). In addition, the *Mahayana Morning Liturgy*, some of which is part of the actual vow ceremony from the *Bodhicaryavattara* by Shantideva, is added to the practitioner's daily practice.

### ***Shambhala Training***

The *Shambhala Training* program is a highly complementary and enriching component for all students and perhaps the most accessible means for receiving instruction in the Shambhala teachings. This program is described in detail later in this chapter.

## **Vajradhatu Seminary**

The Vajradhatu Seminary was initiated in 1973 by the Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche as a means for training his students more deeply and thoroughly in the buddhadharma and to enter them into the study and practices of vajrayana. He took great pride in this lengthy intensive training that combined the three wheels of practice, study, and daily work activities, and felt it to be one of his greatest achievements.

The Vidyadhara conducted the first Vajradhatu Seminary in the fall of 1973 at Teton Village, Wyoming for three months. He continued to conduct a Seminary annually (except for 1977 when he was on retreat) throughout the remainder of his life. Subsequent to his passing, Seminaries have been held more or less every other year through 2000 when the format for Seminary was changed. The Seminary itself is a pivotal, once-in-a-lifetime event for many students. Attending Seminary usually involves a significant deepening of one's commitment. It is at Seminary that students formally link themselves with the lineage of vajrayana practice. The Vidyadhara placed great emphasis on this training as a prerequisite to vajrayana transmission and beginning *ngöndro* ("preliminary") practice. This is in contrast to many other Tibetan teachers and is a feature unique to Shambhala Buddhism.

At Seminary, periods of intensive sitting practice alternate with periods of study, all of which are based on the three-yana journey of hinayana, mahayana, and vajrayana. At the end, students may request *vajrayana transmission*, but are not required to do so.

At the 2000 Seminary the Sakyong introduced a new format for the program. Up to that point the program had been nearly three months in length. Splitting the programs into two month-long sessions now provides a means for students to deepen and digest the in-depth teachings and practices received in the first section, which then provides a strong support for the second part of the program where they would receive vajrayana transmission and begin *ngöndro* practice. As well, the new format makes the pragmatic aspects of attending this program and continuing to deepen one's training more flexible.

## ***Sutrayana Seminary***

The Sutrayana Seminary (hinayana/mahayana) is a one-month program led by an Acharya, assisted by other senior teachers. Students study and practice the hinayana and mahayana within a Shambhala Buddhist framework. There are days of sitting meditation alternating with days of study.

### **Preparation**

Students who have completed a dathün and the four cycles of the Shambhala School of Buddhist Studies can apply for the program. Prior to attending the program students must prepare for the gateway exam, which is given at the beginning of Sutrayana Seminary. As always, the study requirements can be fulfilled through tutorials and independent study, particularly for students who live in remote areas or belong to smaller centers where they do not have the opportunity to participate in all of the Shambhala School of Buddhist Studies courses.

## ***Vajrayana Seminary***

The Vajrayana Seminary is the gateway for entering the Kagyü/Nyingma lineage of vajrayana Buddhist practice and study as transmitted through the Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche and his lineage heir, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. This program requires a deep and personal commitment to Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche and the Shambhala Buddhist mandala.

It is a four-week program consisting of teachings by Mipham Rinpoche and other senior Shambhala teachers. The vajrayana transmission occurs toward the beginning of the program, after which students begin the special preliminary practices of ngöndro under Rinpoche's personal guidance.

### **Preparation**

Students must complete a Sutrayana Seminary program and the pre-Vajrayana Seminary course, *Entering the Vajra World*. As part of this program students receive the abbreviated practice of *The Rain of Blessings: A Guru Yoga Combined with the Seven-Line Supplication*, a Padmasambhava guru yoga. It is highly recommended that students complete Shambhala Training through Golden Key. A 7-10 day shamatha retreat is also highly recommended. A gateway exam is given at the beginning of the Vajrayana Seminary program. Students will receive the study guide for the exam after they have been accepted into the program.

### ***Sadhana of Mahamudra Abhisheka***

This sadhana is practiced by students of all levels of experience at Shambhala Centers on the full and new moon days. As a sadhana that combines the Kagyü mahamudra tradition of Karma Pakshi with the Nyingma ati tradition of Dorje Trolö, this is a unique and precious upaya ("skillful means") that speaks directly to overcoming the three lords of materialism of our current age. His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche composed an abhisheka text for this sadhana and bestowed it upon Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche alone, instructing him to empower others after several years and to instruct people in its retreat practice. Though the retreat practice itself is generally not done until after students have completed the Vajrayogini recitations and the fire offering, the abhisheka is bestowed at the conclusion of the Vajrayana Seminary.

## **Vajrayana Practice: Tantrikas**

The Vidyadhara's approach to vajrayana has sometimes been likened to the way vajrayana was practiced in India: students are introduced to a few essential practices thoroughly, rather than to many practices more superficially or before students' understanding has been prepared. It is perhaps significant that although, for the first of two times, the Vidyadhara, at the remarkably young age of fourteen imparted the entire cycle of teachings contained in Jamgön Kongtrül the Great's longest treasury, the *Rinchen Terdzö* ("Precious Treasury of Terma"), which consists of well over a thousand abhishekas as well as other texts, he chose to bestow only two formal abhishekas after his arrival in North America—those of Vajrayogini and Chakrasamvara.

## Ngöndro

The focus of practice after Seminary is on the *ngöndro*, or vajrayana preliminary practice, of the mahamudra tradition: the ordinary preliminary practice of the four reminders and the special preliminary practices of refuge and prostrations, Vajrasattva mantra, mandala offering, and guru yoga. Students must complete 100,000 of each (1,000,000 guru yoga mantras), as well as 100 half-hour sessions of tonglen, preferably accomplishing approximately half of that amount during guru-yoga practice. Upon completion of these, one may request abhisheka, for which the ngöndro practices are a preliminary. Shamatha-vipashyana, as well as tonglen practice, continue as integral aspects of ngöndro practice.

### Ngöndro in three years

At the 2002 Vajrayana Seminary the Sakyong instructed the students attending to complete their ngondro in three years. Originally when the Vidyadhara introduced these practices he instructed his students to complete each ngöndro practice before proceeding on to the next. The Sakyong feels that this is still the best way to proceed if possible. However, for some students it might be necessary to combine prostration practice with mantra and then with mandala in order for them to be able to complete the practices in a timely fashion. The ngöndro instructors have been authorized to give students permission to practice in this way, and they may consult with the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education as the need arises. Detailed guidelines are available on the Practice & Education pages on the web-site and in the Ngöndro Manual.

### *Vajra Assembly*

Having begun ngöndro, students qualify to attend Vajra Assemblies, and after the completion of at least one formal Vajra Assembly program (by attending one in person or by participating in a weekend tape program) they are authorized to study the Vajra Assembly transcripts (published as *Collected Vajra Assemblies*, vols. 1 and 2). These texts are meant to be adjuncts to such programs, not to replace them. The Vidyadhara's *Early Tantra Groups* can also be quite helpful to clarify and deepen one's understanding of vajrayana transmission. Several vajrayana courses are offered for ngöndro practitioners, which serve to enhance and inform one's vajrayana practice.

### *Ngedön School and Manjushri Practice*

Students may enroll in the Ngedön School to pursue a more in-depth study of our textual tradition throughout the nine yanas after completing the vajrayana courses, half of one's prostrations, and the Shambhala Training *Heart of Warriorship* and *Sacred Path* programs. This guideline is flexible and students who wish to pursue this course of study may make inquiries through the Ngedön School administration in Boulder. This study is complemented by the practice of a short Manjushri sadhana composed by the Vidyadhara. At present, Ngedön School is offered at only a few of our centers and, occasionally, in the form of intensive programs. The Nitārtha Institute program begun at Gampo



Abbey in 1996, and taught by Dzogchen Pönlop Rinpoche, is a natural continuation of this more traditional scholarly training.

### ***Guru Yoga Practices***

The guru yoga practice called ***Bestowing Supreme Blessings: The Guru Yoga of Trungpa Rinpoche Dharma Sagara*** is given to students at the Vajradhatu Seminary following the vajrayana transmission. This practice, along with a commentary, was given to the Vajradhatu sangha by His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. Although this practice was initially given only to sadhana practitioners, it is Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche's wish that all the tantrikas might practice this together.

***The Sun of Wisdom*** is another guru yoga and feast offering, written by the Vidyadhara to his guru, Shechen Kongtrül Padma Tri-me. This, as well as the *Sadhana of Mahamudra* feast offering, are practiced periodically by tantrikas at our centers. No lungs or other transmissions are required for these sadhanas.

Tantrikas may also receive a lung for ***The Rain of Blessings: A Guru Yoga Combined with the Seven-Line Supplication***, a Padmasambhava guru yoga and feast practice. Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche introduced this practice as a means to bring the vajra sangha together to practice on the tenth day of the lunar month. It is a rather simple liturgy and thus provides an easy way for tantrikas to come together in their mutual samaya.

The Sakyong introduced ***Dharmaraja Guru Yoga*** to tantrikas in 2005.....

### **Other practices for tantrikas**

Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche has introduced several supporting vajrayana practices, which are given to students at Shambhala Vajrayana Seminary, following the vajrayana transmission.

The ***Wheel of Wisdom*** is a short Manjushri practice for tantrikas to help “understand the profound inner meanings of sutra and tantra.” To help remove obstacles and inhibitions to the speech principle, The Wheel of Wisdom is recommended for practice before studying or teaching.

***The Sadhana of Powerful Activity Phurba*** is a short Vajrakilaya practice for tantrikas to work with the obstacles to realizing bodhichitta.

***The Sadhana of Luminosity*** is to invoke Padmasambhava, Yeshe Tsogyal, and Ekajati in order to strengthen our understanding, connection and devotion to the three roots (guru, yidam, and protector) “in times of fear, speed, hesitation, or joy.”

# Vajrayana Practice: Sadhakas

## Main Practices: Vajrayogini and Chakrasamvara

After completing the ngöndro, or preliminary practices, students receive abhisheka for the Vajrayogini sadhana and subsequently for the Chakrasamvara sadhana. There a number of supporting study and practice possibilities that students can pursue concurrently which are outlined in the following section.

### *Vajrayogini Sadhana*

The first Vajrayogini abhisheka in our community was bestowed by His Holiness the Sixteenth Gyalwang Karmapa to all tantrikas at Karma Dzong, Boulder, in late 1976. The Vidyadhara performed his first Vajrayogini abhisheka in the West soon after that in January 1977 for his students who had completed their ngöndro practice, empowering them to begin yidam practice. He continued to bestow this abhisheka nearly every year at Karma Dzong, Boulder, through 1985. The last Vajrayogini abhisheka he gave occurred in Marburg in January 1986.

Completion of the recitation practice of 1,000,000 mantras can be accomplished either in daily practice or in retreat, preferably some combination of both. After this, one's mistakes in practice are purified by performing an *amending fire offering*, which is a nine-day program. Subsequently, the student accumulates 300,000 additional recitations of the Vajrayogini mantra, after which one attends a *four-karmas fire offering*, another nine-day program. (This is the ideal approach since, as the Vidyadhara explained, he wanted students to practice Vajrayogini for some time after having performed their first amending fire offering. However, it is permissible to attend a four-karmas fire offering before completing the additional recitations.) Students are encouraged to participate in additional fire offerings thereafter—either an entire program or just a portion.

### *Chakrasamvara Sadhana*

Chakrasamvara teachings were a noted specialty of the Surmang monasteries in Tibet and were integral to the Surmang hearing lineage. The only Chakrasamvara abhisheka bestowed by the Vidyadhara in the West occurred in April 1986 at Karma Dzong, Boulder, for almost 300 students.

After completing the amending and four-karmas fire offerings of Vajrayogini as well as the additional 300,000 recitation requirement, students may request the Chakrasamvara abhisheka and enter into the outer, inner, and secret practices of Chakrasamvara. Although daily practice is also encouraged, the entire recitation requirement must be done in strict retreat, which is the traditional way most yidam practices are accomplished. However, it need not be done in one long retreat, but can be accomplished in a series of shorter retreats. The outer practice of Chakrasamvara includes 440,000 recitations of the essence mantra; the inner practice involves 770,000 recitations of the quintessence mantra; and the secret practice consists of a several-day intensive feast practice (Tib. druppa) using the entire sadhana. Just as with the Vajrayogini sadhana, one's mistakes are purified by an amending fire offering. This is usually practiced in conjunction with a four-karmas fire offering following the

amending practice, and the entire process usually takes place during a nine-day program. However, it is permissible to accomplish only the amending fire offering, as this is part of the completion of the recitation practice. Practicing a four-karmas fire offering is optional, but recommended.

### ***Daily Practice for Chakrasamvara Practitioners***

During his final work on the translation of the Chakrasamvara sadhana and practice manual, the Vidyadhara explained that for the student empowered to practice Chakrasamvara the decision of what type of Buddhist or Shambhala practice to do at home should be able to be made by the individual. From that stage onward in a student's path, the Vidyadhara did not want to prescribe any particular regimen, preferring that the student decide.

## **Supporting Practices**

In addition to these two main sadhana practices there are a number of specialized daily practices, retreats, and study options. These are optional and can be incorporated (or not) into one's practice as time and inclination permits.

### ***Mahamudra and Ati Practice***

In order to energize and deepen our understanding of mahamudra, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche requested Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoche to teach a Mahamudra Intensive at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center in the summer of 1991. Since that time, Khenpo Tsültrim has returned to teach for many years. He has taught extensively on the *Ocean of True Meaning (Ngedön Gyatso)* by Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje on the practice of mahamudra. Khenpo Rinpoche has also taught from *The Gradual Path of the Heart of Wisdom (Lamrim Yeshe Nyingpo)*, a root text by Guru Rinpoche, and its commentary *Fully Spreading the Light of Wisdom* by Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye. This text and commentary are on the view and practice of the ati tradition, and Rinpoche emphasized the core practices of the fourth abhisheka – trekchö and thögal. Khenpo Tsültrim next taught on the six dharmas, which are the inner yoga practices in both the mahamudra and ati traditions. Khenpo Rinpoche's seminars are advanced training programs for sadhakas only. For students who are not able to attend the programs, there is a well-formulated curriculum of study, consisting of video and audio tapes along with supplemental material and practice and study guidelines developed during the Khenpo's programs.

### ***Mahamudra Retreat***

This group or individual retreat concentrating on the mahamudra vipashyana investigations practiced at Söpa Chöling for three months during the first segment of their three-year retreat has been authorized by the Venerable Thrangu Rinpoche. The text used for this is *Pointing Out the Dharmakaya*, the shortest of the three mahamudra practice texts by the ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje. The format for the practice is the same as practiced at the Söpa Chöling, although the retreat can be of a much shorter length. As a historical note, the vipashyana center that the Vidyadhara

envisioned for Rocky Mountain Dharma Center was to have been for a communal retreat of three to six months.

### ***Sadhana of Mahamudra Retreat***

With the encouragement of H. H. Khyentse Rinpoche the Sakyong has instituted a retreat practice on the Vidyadhara's *Sadhana of Mahamudra*, for those students who have completed a fire offering following Vajrayogini practice (and before they complete their ati ngöndro). Though this sadhana is practiced by students of all levels of experience, intensive retreat practice requires receiving the abhisheka for this sadhana. His Holiness composed this abhisheka text and bestowed it upon Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche alone, instructing him to empower others after several years and to instruct people in its retreat practice. As a sadhana that combines the mahamudra tradition of Karma Pakshi with the ati tradition of Dorje Trolö, this is a unique and precious upaya that speaks directly to overcoming the three lords of materialism of our current age.

*The Sadhana of Mahamudra* is practiced on strict retreat for a month or more. Though it would be best for this to be at least a one month retreat, one can break it up into shorter retreats if necessary. The complete recitation practice involves accumulating five million recitations of the triple-HUM mantra or, as a minimum, at least one month of retreat and one million recitations.

### ***Jambhala Practice***

Sadhakas may receive a lung for a sadhana to black Jambhala, which is drawn from the *Rinchen Terdzö* collection. This is a short daily practice done on the 8th and 28th lunar days.

### ***Three-Year Retreat***

Thrangu Rinpoche established the retreat center of Söpa Chöling at Gampo Abbey in 1990 for the purpose of conducting extended retreat practice. He devised a program of approximately six months in retreat and six months out of retreat, alternating, over about six years. The first series of five long retreats began late that year for two groups, which alternated doing retreats at Söpa Chöling.

The curriculum has since been modified to three longer retreats (9, 10, and 11 months, respectively), which consist of:

- (4) Gampopa, Milarepa, and Marpa guru sadhanas (3 months)
  - Könchok Chidü sadhana (3 months)
  - Mahamudra meditation with guru-yoga practice (3 months)
- (5) Inner Vajrayogini (4 months)
  - Secret Vajrayogini (2 months)
  - Chakrasamvara sadhana (4 months)
- (6) Six dharmas of Naropa (6 months)
  - Jinasagara (red Avalokiteshvara) sadhana (3 months)

## Mahakala sadhana (2 months)

Prospective applicants must complete their Vajrayogini recitation requirements, including an amending and four-karmas fire offering, in order to enter the retreat. The Söpa Chöling retreat is an optional course of practice, primarily for those students seeking extensive retreat experience. The curriculum is similar to the traditional three-year three-fortnight retreat in the Karma Kagyü tradition. It is conducted entirely in English, just as the Vidyadhara had wished.

## Post-Chakrasamvara Practice

The path of vajrayana practice for our community was carefully developed by the Vidyadhara through the practice of the Chakrasamvara Sadhana. Thrangu Rinpoche stressed the importance of practicing fully those teachings that the Vidyadhara spent so many years presenting: the mahamudra teachings of the vajrayana transmission, Vajrayogini, and Chakrasamvara. The richness and intimacy with which the Vidyadhara communicated such teachings are ultimately so precious to us.

Dating back to the 1970s, there were many conversations with the Vidyadhara concerning teachings and practices that he intended for his students to practice in the future. Many of these were to be regarded as further options for those wishing to pursue certain directions in their practice. These possibilities had been discussed and outlined, but not yet formalized or instituted. Since the parinirvana of the Vidyadhara in 1987, much discussion and consultation has occurred, notably with the Kagyü princes and H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, as well as the Venerable Thrangu Rinpoche and the Venerable Tenga Rinpoche. After the contents of these previous discussions with the Vidyadhara were presented to H. H. Khyentse Rinpoche in 1987, he gave some of the appropriate teachings and abhishekas to our tantrikas following the Vidyadhara's cremation. The Sakyong wanted to share with students the various opportunities for practice that are available for sadhakas, and he is certainly available for individuals to have further discussion with him about this, if they desire.

Up through the practice of Chakrasamvara, the Vidyadhara provided us with a well-defined path, everyone for the most part doing the same sequence of practice. However, it was his view that eventually there would be some variety of approaches, based on the personal inclinations of the students. Nonetheless, as is seen from this description, the different options for students are more like variations on a theme—differences of timing and emphasis—rather than distinctly different paths as such. It is useful to realize that experientially these practices are not all that separate. However we do it, we have to go through a certain basic evolution as practitioners.

Whenever we take on a commitment to accomplish a particular practice—whether it is a million recitations of the Vajrayogini mantra, Chakrasamvara retreat, Vajrakilaya recitations, or whatever—it

is important that we follow through on that commitment. All of these practices invoke and further connect us with sacred world, as does rousing the mind of our guru through our devotion.

The Sakyong has stressed the importance of understanding the relationship between various sadhana practices, especially as we begin to have some experience of them. Each practice is not properly viewed as a “step forward”; and consequently the practice we began with is not then “behind us.” Within any group of teachings there is usually a beginning, middle, and end. However the accomplishment of any sadhana is not regarded as superior or inferior to any other.

The legacy of practice we received from the Vidyadhara is part of the central stream of the Kagyü and Nyingma traditions. Though the experience of mahamudra could be said to permeate the entire Vajradhatu path, beginning with shamatha, the formal practice of mahamudra, introduced to us in the vajrayana transmission, begins at that point and continues with the ngöndro practices. The sadhanas of Vajrayogini and Chakrasamvara, the practice of shamatha and vipashyana mahamudra, and the six dharmas of Naropa are all intimately connected and are the principal means through which the Kagyüpas have transmitted mahamudra teaching through many generations.

In broad terms, vajrayana teaching could be said to include two aspects of training: *utpattikrama* (“development stage”), which involves visualization and mantra-recitation practice, and *sampannakrama* (“completion stage”). The latter can be divided into two paths: the path of skillful means, which is the inner yoga, such as the six dharmas of Naropa; and the path of liberation, which is the practice of mahamudra or ati. As an example, Marpa brought together these paths in receiving instruction from his two principal gurus—Naropa, from whom he received the six dharmas, and Maitripa, who taught him the tradition of dohas and the supreme sampannakrama of formless mahamudra.

In his guidance of students, the Vidyadhara put principal emphasis on utpattikrama training and the path of liberation through the vehicle of the vajrayana transmission, indicating that the inner yoga would come later on. H. H. Khyentse Rinpoche concurred with this, saying that we should first develop a firm foundation in mahamudra.

## **Guidelines for Post-Chakrasamvara Practice**

The system of meditation practices created by the Vidyadhara for his students in the West could be seen as a hallmark of his brilliance in appreciating our culture and knowing what would be appropriate to teach us. While the particular progression of practices is quite traditional, for the most part, having an entire community engaged in the same regimen up through two major sadhana practices (Vajrayogini and Chakrasamvara) could be viewed as somewhat unusual—and especially with such a strong emphasis on shamatha and vipashyana from the start. It is, perhaps, more common for Tibetan lamas to instruct each individual student somewhat differently, possibly suggesting a wide variety of vajrayana practices. As noted earlier, the Vidyadhara did often speak of the vajrayana approach of the Indian mahasiddhas as an important ideal—both in

terms of integrating practice with one's entire life and in the simplicity and directed focus of relatively few yidam practices.

After completing Chakrasamvara, the student can choose from a number of meditation practice opportunities. On what basis do we do so? How does one know what is best to do? How do you know if a particular yidam is your main yidam, the one best for your path? To quote Tenga Rinpoche in response to such a question:

In general, Trungpa Rinpoche presented special skillful means, and so he led many people, a large group of practitioners, through these stages of the practices. For example, you begin yidam practice with Vajrayogini, and then when you finish that, you go on to Chakrasamvara. This is the special, particular method or progression of the Kamtsang tradition. For example, in drupkhangs or three-year retreats, you first do the practice of Vajrayogini—you do the outer and inner practices. Then you do the jinsek, the fire offerings, and when you have done that, you then go on to Chakrasamvara. These are the special methods or particular ways it is practiced in the Kamtsang tradition.

There is a reason for this progression. First, you practice Vajrayogini, who is the very embodiment of emptiness, the dharmakaya. This is the essence of our minds. The basis of all samsara and nirvana is emptiness. For this reason, the first practice we do is Vajrayogini, and this is because it is a method for bringing about the actualization of the dharmakaya, emptiness. This is followed by luminosity, or you could say clarity, and Chakrasamvara is the very embodiment of luminosity, great bliss. So it is on the basis of first practicing emptiness, the dharmakaya, which is for your own benefit, that you then engage in the practice of clarity, great bliss, and activity. In the practice of Chakrasamvara, the principle aspect is that of clarity and great bliss. The relationship of these two practices, Vajrayogini and Chakrasamvara, illustrates that it is on the basis of actualizing the dharmakaya that buddhas then engage in activity to benefit sentient beings. They benefit sentient beings through the four types of activity. In the practice of Chakrasamvara, the main emphasis is on benefiting others. Once you have completed the practices of Vajrayogini and Chakrasamvara, if you wish to take Vajrayogini as your main yidam, your root yidam, that's fine. If you wish to take Chakrasamvara as your root yidam, that's fine. And if you wish to take another yidam as your root yidam, that's also fine [Laughter].

How do you recognize your root yidam? How is it that you know what yidam is your root yidam? When you are practicing a particular yidam, you may have very exceptional experiences, different dreams, the signs, your mind may feel very happy, your devotion may be very strong, or any of these things may seem to increase. Through these you would recognize that the yidam is your root yidam. If you do not have any particularly special indications yourself, then if your guru is alive, you can go and ask your guru. On the basis of what he has advised, then you can take that as your main yidam practice. If your guru is not alive, then you can supplicate your guru, you can observe your dreams, and you will be able to tell what yidam practice you should do. Rinpoche said at the end "There's no problem."

We may seek the guidance of the Sakyong and other teachers with whom we may have a connection. Senior practitioners and meditation instructors, our friends in the sangha, may serve as excellent guides. Ultimately, as the Vidyadhara was fond of saying. "It's up to you!" "Good luck madam/sir!" "I don't see any problem, particularly."

After Chakrasamvara, if one chooses to go on to explore more practice possibilities, the main alternatives are (1) to continue with mahamudra practice and perhaps the completion stage of Chakrasamvara and (2) to embark on the ati lineage of teachings beginning with “The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel,” Vajrakilaya, and another cycle of ngöndro practice in preparation for more ati—yana sadhanas.

H. H. Khyentse Rinpoche advised our Chakrasamvara practitioners to practice the completion stage (samppannakrama) of Chakrasamvara, which is the six dharmas of Naropa, for those students who (a) had the aspiration to practice this and (b) had the time to do so. He said you could do all six or just several of these. His example for us to consider regarding the time involved was to say that if you thought it might take some twenty-five years to complete the three-roots sadhana practices of the Könchok Chidü and Longchen Nyingthik terma cycles (guru, yidam, and dakini practices with each) for which he gave all tantrikas abhisheka in 1987, then perhaps it would be best to forego the six dharmas practices and get on with the ati ngöndro. For those with more time to do intensive practice and who had such aspiration, he advised that they complete their practice of the six dharmas before beginning ati ngöndro, since these practices serve as a conclusion to the Vajrayogini/Chakrasamvara tantric cycle.

## **Post-Chakrasamvara Practices**

### ***Six Dharmas of Naropa***

For those students that are so inclined and who are able to dedicate a lot of time to retreat, some or all of the six dharmas or yogas of Naropa can be practiced after completing the Chakrasamvara retreat. The six dharmas are the samppannakrama practice of Chakrasamvara. The Vidyadhara spoke of eventually introducing this practice as an optional intensive retreat practice, rather than a required path for all his students. In fact, he even picked a site at RMSC for a six-dharmas retreat center.

The Sakyong feels that it is important to have a strong foundation in mahamudra practice before undertaking the six dharmas retreat and, in addition, that it would be helpful to work with meditation instructors who are experienced in these practices. Some of those who have completed the three-year retreat at Gampo Abbey have been authorized to help with this training, and it is recommended that you connect with one or more of these instructors.

This practice involves an abbreviated ngöndro, which can be done at home in daily practice in retreat, followed by the main practices, which must be done in strict retreat. For example, the first doctrine, chandali practice, which is the root teaching for all six dharmas, includes fourteen topics, each of which must be practiced for at least a week on retreat. The retreats can be as short as one week each. A lung on the six dharmas practice text is required, which may be requested from designated senior instructors.



As for daily practice during the time when one is accomplishing these retreat practices, one could accumulate the recitations for the “Wish Fulfilling Jewel” guru yoga. When those are completed, one could begin the ati ngöndro as daily practice. (See below for description.)

### ***Vajrakilaya Sadhana Retreat Practice***

The Vidyadhara had often spoken of Vajrakilaya practice as an important component of our path in the future as well as its root connection with his Shambhala terma. H. H. Khyentse Rinpoche felt strongly that, upon completion of Chakrasamvara retreat practice, students could concentrate on Vajrakilaya practice and the Longchen Nyingthik guru yoga of “The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel,” a guru yoga of Padmakara. He said that Vajrakilaya practice is very helpful in dispelling obstacles and providing a proper foundation for later practices. (For this same reason, Vajrakilaya is often practiced at the beginning of a long retreat in order to remove any obstacles.) However, His Holiness also encouraged students in our sangha to regard their practice of Vajrakilaya as a main yidam practice, not just as a preliminary step toward something else. Vajrakilaya retreat practice requires the Vajrakilaya abhisheka. His Holiness conferred this abhisheka for all tantrikas in each of the three centers he visited in 1987, as did His Holiness Penor Rinpoche during his 1997 teaching tour in Chicago, Seattle, and Amsterdam.

Like Chakrasamvara, Vajrakilaya is practiced in strict retreat. The recitation requirements for Vajrakilaya include 1,000,000 approaching mantra recitations, 1,400,000 or 1,000,000 accomplishment mantra recitations, 10,000 application of the activities mantra recitations, and 100,000 long-life mantra recitations. His Holiness felt that it would be best for students to accomplish the full recitation practice, if possible. For those students who would find it difficult to make a commitment to retreat practice perhaps of a similar length as Chakrasamvara, he said that one could elect to do Vajrakilaya retreat by time (a total of at least one month of retreat) rather than by number of mantras recited. It is up to each student which approach to choose. Only those students who elect to accomplish the recitations for Vajrakilaya (numbers, not time) should perform a fire offering at the conclusion of their practice. For this fire offering a special text, compiled by Dilgo Khyentse and Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lödrö is used.

### ***The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel Guru Yoga***

“The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel” is a Padmasambhava guru yoga. Both the Vidyadhara and Khyentse Rinpoche felt this would be an excellent means of connecting to the ati lineage of instruction. Though this text is actually the guru-yoga section of the Longchen Nyingthik ngöndro, it is often both published and practiced separately from the ngöndro. Khyentse Rinpoche’s book of the same title is a commentary on this liturgy and practice.

The practice of “The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel” requires a lung. Khyentse Rinpoche gave the lung for this Longchen Nyingthik guru yoga in Halifax, and the Sakyong along with other designated senior students are also authorized to confer this lung. This guru yoga can be practiced either as a daily practice or on retreat. (The daily practice can begin after one has completed the Chakrasamvara retreat and before completing the Chakrasamvara fire offerings.) There is a

recitation requirement of either 1,200,000 (preferable) or 400,000 (minimum) mantra recitations of the vajra-guru mantra.

### ***Ati Ngöndro Practice***

During a number of discussions with the Vidyadhara, he expressed his hope that his students would accomplish a second cycle of ngöndro practice, in the Nyingma tradition, in preparation for the mahayoga, anu, and ati practices. He mentioned the possibility of our practicing both the Könchok Chidü (“Embodiment of the Three Jewels”) and Longchen Nyingthik (“Heart Essence of the Great Expanse”) ngöndros. His Holiness later advised us to practice concurrently (and in the order of their discovery) the ngöndro texts for the terma traditions of Könchok Chidü, Longchen Nyingthik, and “Illuminating the Profound Path,” the ngöndro for a cycle of His Holiness's own terma known as Rangjung Pema Nyingthik (“Self-Existing Heart Essence of Padma”). In this way, we will complete one full ngöndro using each of these one-third of the time. After completing the recitation requirement for “The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel,” students may begin the ngöndro practices in preparation for various ati-yana sadhanas. This can be done in one’s daily practice or on retreat—either before, during, or after completing the Vajrakilaya retreat. A lung is required for these ngöndro texts, and the Sakyong has asked Lady Könchok and other Tibetan lamas to help us with this.

### ***Könchok Chidü (“Embodiment of the Three Jewels”) Sadhanas***

The ati ngöndro practices prepare the student for further ati sadhana practices. The first of these that His Holiness prescribed is that of Könchok Chidü, a terma tradition discovered by Jatsön Nyingpo in the seventeenth century. Preferably, in strict retreat, one would practice the three-roots practices of Könchok Chidü (guru), Guru Trakpo (yidam), and Simhamukha (dakini). For those students involved with the Söpa Chöling retreat, practice of the Könchok Chidü sadhana is part of the first segment of retreat. Students must have received abhishekas for these three sadhanas, which were conferred in 1987 by His Holiness in each location.

### ***Longchen Nyingthik (“Heart Essence of the Great Expanse”) Sadhanas***

After completing all the three-roots practices of Könchok Chidü, the student begins the three roots of Longchen Nyingthik: Rigdzin Düpa (guru), Palchen Düpa (yidam), and Dechen Gyalmo (dakini). This terma tradition was discovered in the eighteenth century by Jigme Lingpa. These sadhana practices would preferably be accomplished on strict retreat. Students must have received abhishekas for these three sadhanas as well, which were also conferred in 1987 by His Holiness.

### ***Other Group Retreats***

Our practice centers are considering the possibility of organizing strict retreats for a group of practitioners. The sense of strictness would be exactly like that of Chakrasamvara retreat, however several people would participate in such a retreat together. This is similar to the three-year three-fortnight retreat model and that at Söpa Chöling. The entire group would remain isolated, meals would be organized (perhaps with a resident cook), practice would be done

individually in one's room, and the entire group would come together for protector chants and feasts. The length of time of group retreats could vary. Such retreats could be organized for Chakrasamvara, Vajrakilaya, the six doctrines of Naropa, or any other sadhana practice. The inspiration for creating such programs depends on rousing such interest among practitioners.

### ***Bardo Retreat***

The Vidyadhara often spoke of establishing a bardo retreat for his students. He even picked a site for this at Karmê Chöling. Khenpo Tsültrim began teaching this practice during his 1996 program on ati, and further teachings are planned.

## **In Conclusion**

Since the time of the second and third Karmapas, Karma Pakshi and Rangjung Dorje, many Kagyü masters have practiced ati teachings in addition to mahamudra practice. The Vidyadhara spoke often about the excellence of joining these two traditions together, and his teaching seemed always to embody the union of mahamudra and ati realization. His discovery of *The Sadhana of Mahamudra* terma was an expression of how the wisdom of mahamudra and ati could be combined in practice through the manifestation of Karma Pakshi Dorje Trolö, the union of Karmapa and Padmakara. The Vidyadhara's use of the nine yanas as a basic map of the entire buddhist path is another integration of the Nyingma tradition with our Kagyü heritage.

Both the Kagyü and Nyingma traditions are a complete path to enlightenment by themselves. The Kagyü siddhas attained their realization through mahamudra. Yeshe Tsogyal and many practitioners in her tradition attained liberation through Vajrakilaya, to cite just a few examples. So at this stage we should be clear that we are not talking about “graduating from one practice to the next.” Rather we will be exposed to a variety of skillful means, and as the stream of our practice matures, gradually we will bring together the blessings of the mahamudra and ati traditions. At a certain point, based on individual connections, students may take a certain practice or set of practices as their fundamental path to realization, the principal expression of their guru's mind.

Although we have primarily addressed the future of our buddhist practice path, more remains to unfold in our practice of the Shambhala tradition. The practice of the stroke of ashe and lungta are not counting or recitation practices, obviously. Nor are the many contemplative traditions of kyudo, ikebana, chanoyu, and so forth. However, the Werma Sadhana does have a recitation requirement, as difficult to accomplish as it may seem. There is also the vision of a retreat practice and abhisheka connected with this. Such possibilities lie in our future, and we look forward to when the Sakyong begins to explore these further.

# **The Shambhala Path**

## **The Shambhala Tradition**

*The world is not going to be saved purely by religion alone, but the world can be saved also by secular enlightenment as well. So that is the meaning of Shambhala.* (Chögyam Trungpa 1982, New York City)

A basic truth of the Shambhala teachings is that we all want to lead sane, dignified lives, and that this is possible. If we look directly at our own experience, we can discover a continuity of wakeful dignity underlying all changing conditions. This wholesome, wakeful presence is referred to in Shambhala Training as *basic goodness*.

The Shambhala teachings recognize that this truth of innate human wisdom and basic goodness does not belong to any one religion or doctrine. We can appreciate all genuine contemplative paths, whether they stem from the great religions, the arts, or from native spirituality; however, this wisdom arises only when the grasping and confusion of ego is stilled through a commitment to a contemplative discipline.

The Shambhala Training is inspired by the ancient legend of the Kingdom of Shambhala, said to be a society which drew its gentle and fearless sense of social responsibility from the practice of meditation. The legend of the Kingdom of Shambhala has been a guiding vision for many centuries in Asian culture and has parallels in Western traditions. Shambhala represents the ideal of secular enlightenment—a view that all that makes up civilization—family, commerce, education, science, the arts, religion—can be permeated with a natural sense of sacredness.

## **Shambhala Training Levels**

Shambhala Training is a series of contemplative workshops, suited for both beginning and experienced meditators. The simple and profound technique of mindfulness and awareness is the basis of a secular path of meditation which can benefit people of any spiritual tradition and way of life. Shambhala Training is the study and practice of Shambhala warriorship—the tradition of human bravery and leadership. This path shows how to take the challenges of daily life in our modern society as opportunities for both contemplative practice and social action.

Shambhala Training is contained in three main sections:

- The Heart of Warriorship
- The Sacred Path of the Warrior
- Warrior Assembly and Post Warrior Assembly Curriculum

Each of these segments of Shambhala Training takes approximately one year to complete.

## **The Heart of Warriorship**

The Heart of Warriorship consists of five consecutive weekend workshops. These weekends provide a strong foundation in mindfulness and awareness meditation practice, which enables us to look precisely at our state of mind without trying to alter it. The practice emphasizes the development of genuine confidence, humor, and personal dignity within the complexity of daily life. The workshops are recommended for new and experienced meditators, as well as for those looking to enrich their existing religious and spiritual traditions.

These five workshops include meditation training and practice, talks by senior instructors, personal interviews and group discussions.

### **Level I: The Art of Being Human**

Discovering basic goodness in the world and ourselves.

### **Level II: Birth of the Warrior**

Cultivating the willingness to observe our cocoon of habitual fear and defense mechanisms.

### **Level III: Warrior in the World**

Developing the bravery to step outside of our cocoons.

### **Level IV: Awakened Heart**

Opening to increased awareness and inquisitiveness about the world as it is.

### **Level V: Open Sky**

Sharpening one's awareness, one finds the open clear sky of mind—a delightful source of wisdom and uplifted energy. Trusting our nature enough to let go into the present moment.

## **The Sacred Path**

The Sacred Path program introduces further warriorship practices, that extend the basic meditation training. These practices are based on a societal vision and aspiration to help the world. This level of training cultivates one's dignity and natural gifts that are able to widen one's sphere of compassionate and practical influence. During a series of visionary experiences that took place between 1976 and 1980, the Dorje Dradül wrote down what became known as the Shambhala texts. The Sacred Path of the Warrior is based on these texts and on the extensive commentaries the Dorje Dradül gave on these teachings and on how to practice them in modern times.

## **Great Eastern Sun**

This weekend program teaches how to see the Great Eastern Sun, the primordial energy and brilliance that is the basis of all that exists; an introduction to membership in Shambhala—a living context for building a sane society.

## **Drala**

Through exploring the depth of perception, one engages the elemental and magical strength inherent in the world. The principle of drala refers to the energy and power that exists when we step beyond aggression. Participants receive the text *The Letter of the Black Ashe*.

## **Windhorse**

During this weekend program, one studies the instruction for “raising windhorse,” a practice which opens the heart and refreshes one’s confidence. The practice is a way to bring about skillful and heartfelt social engagement, enabling the warrior to go forward in the midst of whatever challenges occur. Participants receive the source book, *Windhorse*, compiled from talk given by the Dorje Dradül at the 1978 Kalapa Assembly and 1978 Director Training.

## **Meek**

“The four dignities” are introduced as a path and a process, which describe a warrior’s maturing and widening sphere of benevolent and skillful engagement in the world. The training in the dignities allows one to maintain awareness and delight at each stage. *Meek* is a study of the grounded, humble and gentle beginning stages of a warrior’s journey. Here one trains to overcome arrogance--the primary obstacle to learning. Participants receive *The Dignities of Shambhala* source book, which contains talks by the Dorje Dradül from the 1978 Kalapa Assembly and 1978 Director Training.

## **Perky**

As the second of the four dignities, this level focuses on cultivating sharp, vibrant and uplifted energy through natural discipline. Overcoming the trap of doubt, the warrior of perky is able to accomplish his or her activities with a sense of nobility and ease.

## **Outrageous and Inscrutable**

These fruitional dignities refer to the extraordinary skill of a practiced warrior. No longer afraid of making mistakes, the unconventional and visionary perspective of the outrageous warrior combines with the skill of spontaneous inscrutability to create benefit for others on a large scale.

## **Golden Key**

This program is based on the text and source book, *The Letter of the Golden Key Which Fulfills Desire*. The text works with our relationship to the “material world” and our sense perceptions. It teaches the practice of *enriching presence*—the ability to instantly sense the inner wealth within oneself, phenomena, and the natural world.

# **Warrior Assembly and Post Warrior Assembly Curriculum**

## **Warrior Assembly**

The Warrior Assembly, the jewel of Shambhala Training and the culmination of the Sacred Path program, is a living teaching in creating enlightened society. Participants receive the transmission of advanced Shambhala warriorship practices and study the root text and commentary, *The Golden Sun of the Great East*. This text describes the principles and practice of *Ashe*, a simple and powerful practice that enables one to transform confusion and hesitation into wisdom and authenticity.

## **Practice of Authentic Presence**

This course of study is required for all those who wish to apply to Kalapa Assembly in that it prepares warriors to enter fully into Shambhala societal perspectives. At the heart of the course is the transmission of the sadhana *The Windhorse of Authentic Presence: Arousing the Confidence of Warrior-King Gesar* by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche.

## **Kalapa Assembly**

Kalapa Assembly is a fruition program for both the Shambhala Training as well of the Shambhala Buddhist Path. Participation in this program is through an application process, and represents a level of deep commitment to Shambhala and the work of creating enlightened society. It is in this context that participants pledge with the Sakyong to work in any way that they are capable, in any location in which they may be living, to bring pragmatic and compassionate ideals down to earth. The *Werma Sadhana* is transmitted as a way of invoking imperial dralas and liberate the practitioner's energy into a state of delight.

Pre-requisite: completion of the Shambhala Training Path including The Practice of Authentic Presence

## **Solitary and Group Retreat**

### **Group Retreat: Weekthun and Dathun**

A Dathun (Tibetan for "month session") is a one-month group meditation retreat lead by a senior teacher. One may also attend one week of a dathun, referred to as a "weekthun." These retreat situations take place at one of the beautiful Shambhala Practice Centers and are open to everyone. Retreats provide very powerful opportunities to deepen ones practice of mindfulness and awareness, work with a meditation instructor, and learn the traditional Japanese three bowl meal service.

### **Solitary Retreat**

Under the guidance of a meditation instructor, solitary retreats are highly encouraged for Shambhala warriors who are engaged in the Sacred Path and beyond. Retreat cabins are situated at all Shambhala Practice Centers.

## Lineage

Shambhala Training was founded in 1976 by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, a Tibetan Buddhist meditation master, artist, and poet. He is often referred to in the Shambhala Training context as the Dorje Dradül, Tibetan for *indestructible conqueror of enemies*.

Today the Shambhala lineage is carried on by Trungpa Rinpoche's son, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. The Sakyong or earth protector is one who inspires a sense of sacredness and caring for others within the context of creating an enlightened world community.

## Other Warrior Education Classes

### *1) "Shambhala, Sacred Path of the Warrior" Book Class*

An introductory six-week course on the Shambhala teachings open to the public. The syllabus for this class is available through Shambhala Training International.

### *2) The Four Dignities in Daily Life, A Discussion Course*

This course is offered in four weekly meetings during the Sacred Path program to review the four dignities with special emphasis on how they apply in daily life. The syllabus for this course is available in the Sacred Path of Warriorship Teaching Guide.



## **Vajradhatu & Shambhala Authorized Preceptors**

Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche is authorized to confer all buddhist and Shambhala vows, abhishekas, and transmissions listed below. Additional preceptors are noted, as are special requirements for receipt of particular transmissions. In all cases the preceptor must have received the lung (and preferably done the practice) before being able to confer this.

### **Buddhist Transmissions**

	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Additional preceptors</b>
<b>Refuge Vow:</b>		Acharyas
<b>Bodhisattva Vow:</b>	Refuge Vow	Acharyas
<b>Vajrayana Transmission:</b>	Vajradhatu seminary, or special dispensation	Acharya Dorje Loppön Lodrö Dorje (with SMR permission)
<b>Ngöndro Transmissions:</b>	Vajrayana transmission (for prostration permission). Completion of at least 50,000 mantra, mandala, or guru yoga recitations for following practice.	Acharyas
<b>Vajrayogini Abhisheka:</b>	Completion of ngöndro practices.	
<b>Chakrasamvara Abhisheka:</b>	Completion of Vajrayogini recitations	

## Buddhist Reading Transmissions (Lung)

	Requirements	Additional preceptors
<b>Nyingma ngöndro liturgies:</b> <i>Könchok Chidü, Longchen Nyingthik, Rangjung Pema Nyingthik</i>	Completion of Chakrasamvara retreat practice	Lady Könchok Paldrön Acharyas,
<i>The Rain of Blessings: A Guru Yoga Combined with the “Seven-Line Supplication”</i>	Vajrayana transmission	Acharyas Mark Nowakowski Tomek Pietrzykowski

In addition to the **Sakyong** and the **acharyas**, the following people are authorized to confer lungs for all of the remaining practices on this list except the Six Dharmas of Naropa:

**Melissa Robinson, Clarke Warren, Cynthia Kneen (Colorado)**

**Additional preceptors for particular practices are noted below**

	Requirements	Additional preceptors
<i>Bestowing Supreme Blessings: The Guru Yoga of Trungpa Rinpoche Dharma Sagara</i>	Vajrayana transmission, attendance of introductory weekend, or special dispensation.	Mark Nowakowski, Scott Wellenbach.
<i>The Daily Practice of Vajrakilaya</i>	Vajrayana transmission	Various senior students have also been authorized to give this lung
<i>The Heart of Siddhi: The Sadhana of the Water Offering to Arya Black Jambhala</i>	Vajrayogini abhisheka	Scott Wellenbach
<i>The Practice of Kshitigarbha</i>	Vajrayana transmission; for finance and fund-raising workers	
<i>The Sadhana of Glorious Four-Armed Wisdom Protector with Thirteen Deities</i>	Chakrasamvara abhisheka	

<b><i>The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel: The Outer Guru Yoga Practice Drawn from The Heart Essence of the Great Expanse</i></b>	Completion of Chakrasamvara retreat practice	
<b><i>Six dharmas of Naropa: ngöndro, supplications, main practice liturgies: Instruction in trulkhor yogic exercises</i></b>	Completion of Chakrasamvara retreat practice	Cicely Berglund, David Brown, Brian Callahan, Jerry Chapman, Susan Chapman, Migme Chödrön, Ted Clarke, Sarah Cox, Jeanne Ellgar, Ron Hilburn, Brian Hilliard, Brad Hoffman, Andrew Holecek, Richard John, Phil Karl, Sharon Keegan, Liza Matthews, Nancy McBride, Scott McBride, Kristine McCutcheon, Noreen Morris, Tingdzin Ötro, Joseph Parent, Lodrö Sangpo, Steve Seely, Susan Shaw, Cara Thornley, Tsultrim Palmo, Emily Weidman, Barbara Winn
<b><i>The Source of the Precious Karmas: The Abridged Fire Offering</i></b>	Completion of Vajrayogini recitation requirement	All fire-offering leaders are authorized to give this lung
<b><i>The Sun of Prajna: The Sadhana of Manjushri Vajratikshna</i></b>	Vajrayana transmission, completion of 50,000 prostrations, permission	Mark Nowakowski,
<b><i>The Sadhana of the Powerful Activity Phurba</i></b>	Vajrayana transmission	
<b><i>The Sadhana of Luminosity</i></b>	Vajrayana transmission	
<b><i>The Wheel of Wisdom</i></b>	Vajrayana transmission	
<b><i>Dharmaraja Guru Yoga</i></b>	Vajrayana transmission	

## Other Practices

There are several other short, daily practice texts used for specific purposes, some health related. Each requires a lung, to be given by either the Sakyong, an acharya, or, most often, by a designated physician, as noted below:

**Lamen Mitchell Levy (Providence)**  
**Michael Baime (Philadelphia)**  
**Paul McIntyre (Halifax)**  
**Otto Pichlhöfer (Vienna)**  
**Jim Sacamano (Victoria, B.C.)**  
**Philip Weber (Boulder)**  
**Antonio Wood (Boulder)**

	Requirements	Additional preceptors
<i>The Daily Practice of the Medicine Guru</i>	For health professionals—tantrikas who practice Vajrasattva mantra or beyond	
<i>A Very Condensed Daily Practice of White Tara</i>	For those needing to overcome obstacles to fertility or childbirth tantrikas who practice Vajrasattva mantra or beyond	Polly Wellenbach
<i>The Practice of Wrathful Guru Padmakara</i>	For those with terminal or very serious chronic illness	
<i>White Tara by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche</i>	Associated with compassion and nurturing; helpful for those working with illness	
<i>Ground Lungta by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche</i>	Contemplation of the four dignities “to gain energy and confidence in terms of how we enter into the world for the day”.	

## Shambhala Transmissions

	Requirements	Additional preceptors
<b>Five-Step Lungta</b>	Sacred Path: Windhorse level	Designated senior students
<b>Lungta with visualization</b>	Warrior Assembly	Designated senior students
<b>Stroke practice</b>	Warrior Assembly	Designated senior students
<b>Gesar Sadhana</b>	Warrior Assembly	Acharyas, designated senior students (who have received this directly from SMR)
<b>Shambhala Lodge</b>	Various	designated senior students (approval through Warrior General Martin Janowitz)
<b>Werma Sadhana lung</b>	Shambhala Lodge Transmission	Lady Könchok, Acharyas, designated senior students

## Ceremonies

	Additional Preceptors
<b>Weddings</b>	numerous senior students
<b>Funerals</b>	numerous senior students
<b>Children's Blessings</b>	Lady Diana J. Mukpo, Sangyum of the Vidyadhara, Acharyas
<b>Eight Year old Rites of Passage</b>	Lady Diana J. Mukpo, Sangyum of the Vidyadhara, Acharyas
<b>Sixteen year old Rites of Warriorship</b>	Lamen Mitchell Levy