



S H A M B H A L A

## Office of Practice and Education

### Update on Werma Feast practice March 28, 2006

During the Vajra Assembly, which took place at Karme Choling last fall, the Sakyong taught on the Shambhala terma and the Sadhana of Mahamudra (which he also did last summer at the Vajrayana Seminary). The Sakyong likened the Werma sadhana to the Sadhana of Mahamudra. They are both terma texts (or a terma-based text for the Werma Sadhana) at the heart of our lineage, and are both short and relatively simple sadhanas. Since the very beginning, the Vidyadhara had all practitioners practice the Sadhana of Mahamudra as a group practice. It has been a strong binding force in our community. Similarly, the Sakyong would like to include all tantrikas in our monthly Werma feasts, even if they have not yet received the Werma sadhana or the Kalapa Assembly transmission. He would like Werma practice to be a strong binding force in our vajrayana community.

At this point, all tantrikas have been introduced to the experience of feast by participating in monthly Padmasambhava feasts. Tantrikas who have not received stroke and lungta transmissions may practice the Werma feast much like they do the Sadhana of Mahamudra feast, i.e. not emphasizing the details of the practice and the self-visualization, but rather tuning in to the heart and atmosphere of blessings and lungta. A short talk could be given at the feast to help people who are new. Also, acharyas and senior teachers may be asked to provide basic instruction on how to approach self-visualization for the benefit of ngöndro practitioners.

Tantrikas who do not have the Werma sadhana will need to receive a lung for both the Werma sadhana and feast practice. **In receiving this lung, they are not receiving permission to do the Werma sadhana as a daily, group intensive, or solitary retreat practice.** For this, and to read Kalapa Assembly transcripts, students need to complete the Primordial Rigden ngöndro and receive the Rigden abhisheka. To do the monthly Werma feast, they will not need to own a copy of the sadhana text, feast liturgy, or Werma Manual. They could simply look on with someone who has the texts. (This is analogous to the situation with the Sadhana of Mahamudra- tantrikas are encouraged to get together to practice it, but they do not engage in daily or solitary practice, or own the text, until they have received the abhisheka.)

Detailed discussion and instructions on how to conduct a werma feast have been prepared by the Nalanda Translation Committee and are now available as an Addendum to the Werma Sadhana Manual (March 2006). Those who have the second printing (prior to July 2003) may also want to obtain the errata to the Werma Sadhana Manual (July 2003). Both are available at no charge on the NTC website:

<http://www.shambhala.org/ntc/publications/new-publications.html>