



**JOURNEY
WITHOUT GOAL**

The Tantric Wisdom of the Buddha

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA



Padma Trime, Jamgön Kongtrül of Sechen

JOURNEY WITHOUT GOAL

The Tantric Wisdom of the Buddha

Chögyam Trungpa



SHAMBHALA • BOSTON & LONDON • 2010

SHAMBHALA PUBLICATIONS, INC.

Horticultural Hall

300 Massachusetts Avenue

Boston, Massachusetts 02115

www.shambhala.com

© 1981 by Chögyam Trungpa

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

The Library of Congress catalogues the previous edition of this book as follows:

Trungpa, Chögyam, 1939-1987

Journey without goal.

"Based on a series of lectures delivered . . . in the Buddhist Studies Department of Naropa Institute, Summer 1974"—T.p. verso.

Reprint. Originally published: Boulder, Colo.: Prajnā Press, 1981.

Includes index.

1. Tantric Buddhism—Doctrines—Addresses, essays, lectures.

2. Spiritual life (Tantric Buddhism)—Addresses, essays, lectures.

I. Title.

BQ8918.7.T78 1985 294.3'925 85-8175

eISBN 978-0-8348-2137-8

ISBN 978-1-57062-757-6

ISBN 978-0-87773-334-8

ISBN 978-0-394-74194-9

"Lord Marpa's Praise to the Gurus" is excerpted from *The Life of Marpa the Translator*, translated by the Nālandā Translation Committee under the direction of Chögyam Trungpa, © 1982 by Chögyam Trungpa, published by Shambhala Publications, Inc.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments

Introduction

“Intensifying Devotion in One’s Heart” by Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye

1. The Tantric Practitioner
2. Vajra Nature
3. Mandala
4. Nontheistic Energy
5. Transmission
6. The Vajra Master
7. Visualization
8. Body, Speech, and Mind
9. The Five Buddha Families
10. Abhisheka
11. Being and Manifesting
12. The Question of Magic
13. The Tantric Journey
14. Anuttara Yoga
15. Maha Ati

“Lord Marpa’s Praise to the Gurus”

Index

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. *Padma Trime, Jamgön Kongtrül of Sechen* (1901?-1960). The root guru of Chögyam Trungpa and an incarnation of Lodrö Thaye, Jamgön Kongtrül I.
2. *Lodrö Thaye, Jamgön Kongtrül I* (1813-1899). Often referred to as Jamgön Kongtrül the Great, Lodrö Thaye was a leader of the Rime movement (see Chapter 10). This painting is from the lineage thangkas at Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim, India. Photo used by the gracious permission of His Holiness the Sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa, Rangjung Rikpe Dorje.
3. *The Mandala of Kalacakra*. A two-dimensional representation of the mandala of body, speech, and mind of the *Kalacakra Tantra*.
4. *Jetsün Milarepa* (1040-1123). The chief disciple of Marpa, Milarepa is renowned for his songs of devotion and realization. This statue was a shrine object of Gampopa, Milarepa's chief disciple. *Photo credit:* George Holmes and Blair Hansen.
5. *Cakrasamvara and Vajravarahi*. Two of the principal yidams, or “personal deities,” of the Kagyü school of Tibetan Buddhism, used in tantric visualization practice. This statue was a shrine object of Naropa, Marpa's guru. *Photo credit:* George Holmes and Blair Hansen.
6. *Vajra and Ghanta (bell)*. *Photo credit:* George Holmes.
7. *Vajradhara*. The dharmakaya buddha. A tantric manifestation of the Buddha Vajradhara is depicted as dark blue. Painting by Sherapalden Beru. *Photo credit:* George Holmes and Blair Hansen.
8. *Evam*. The personal seal of Chögyam Trungpa and the Trungpa tulkus (see Chapter 14). *Design:* Molly K. Nudell.
9. *Rangjung Dorje, Karmapa III* (1284-1339). A great vajrayana scholar and teacher, famous for bringing together the teachings of ati yoga with anuttara tantra. This painting is from the lineage thangkas at Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim, India. Photo used by the gracious permission of His Holiness the Sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa, Rangjung Rikpe Dorje.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Journey without Goal is based on a series of fifteen lectures presented by Vajracarya the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, at Naropa Institute during the summer of 1974. Under his guidance, Mrs. Judith Lief, then the Editor-in-Chief at Vajradhatu, began editing the lectures for publication in 1975. Working with the author and other members of the editorial department, she completed the major part of the manuscript before leaving to become the Dean of Naropa Institute in 1980.

The preparation of the final draft of the manuscript has been a collaborative effort by members of the editorial department: Mrs. Sarah Levy, Mrs. Barbara Blouin, Mrs. Helen Berliner, and myself. We have tried to maintain Mrs. Lief's approach to the material, which always respected the language of the original and showed an acute sensitivity to meaning and tone.

We are deeply indebted to the Vajracarya for the original presentation of this material and for allowing us the opportunity to deepen our own understanding through working with him on the manuscript.

We would like to thank the Nālandā Translation Committee for the translation from the Tibetan of the two poems that appear in the book. The first, "Intensifying Devotion in One's Heart" is by Jamgön Kongtrül the Great, whose contributions to the Practice Lineage of Tibetan Buddhism are discussed in Chapter Ten, "Abhisheka." The second, "Lord Marpa's Praise to the Gurus," is by Marpa the Translator, the first Tibetan holder of the Kagyü lineage. It is taken from a large work in progress, *The Life of Marpa*, to be published by Shambhala Publications. Particular thanks go to Miss Christine Keyser of the translation committee, who completed the initial draft of the translation of Jamgön Kongtrül's poem; and to Mr. Larry Mermelstein, the executive director of the committee, for editorial contributions to the entire manuscript.

We would also like to express our thanks to the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin and to Dr. Reginald Ray, Chairman of the Buddhist Studies Department at Naropa Institute, for their careful reading of the final typescript. As well, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of the many volunteers—typists, transcribers, and others—who worked on this book. Finally, we would like to thank the publisher, Mr. Samuel Bercholz, and the staff of Prajñā Press for their support of this book.

The reader may note that the language in this book is often poetic and evocative. These qualities have been treated as essential rather than incidental.

aspects of the original lectures, since they express most vividly the awake and
brilliant experience of the vajra world.

The vajrayana wisdom that is presented here is powerful and authentic. We
hope that this book will lead to a greater appreciation and understanding of
tantric Buddhism, and we share in the author's wish that this book may benefit
sentient beings and bring them to the path of dharma.

Carolyn Rose Gimian
Vajradhatu Editorial Department

Introduction

The teachings of the Buddha are a treasury of wisdom that has been passed down from teacher to student for over 2,500 years. Many styles of teaching have developed, but all of the schools of Buddhism present the means to realize the awakened state of mind, and all of them emulate the example of the Buddha, the Awakened One. This is a very important point to realize, particularly in the context of this book, which presents tantra, or the vajrayana teachings of Buddhism. Many people in America have heard about tantra as the “sudden path”—the quick way to enlightenment. Or they may have heard that tantra is a form of free expression or sexual liberation or some kind of full-blown emotionalism. But it is important to realize that tantra is not separate from the rest of the Buddhist path. Exotic ideas about tantra are not just misconceptions; they could be quite destructive. It is both dangerous and fruitless to attempt to practice tantra without first establishing a firm ground in the basic Buddhist teachings.

The Buddhist path is traditionally divided into three major *yanas* or vehicles: the *hinayana*, the *mahayana*, and the *vajrayana*. *Hinayana* literally means the “small or lesser vehicle,” but it would be more accurate to call it the “narrow way.” The *hinayana* is small or narrow in the sense that the strict discipline of meditation narrows down, or tames, the speed and confusion of mind, allowing the mind to rest in its own place. The *hinayana* is also called the “immediate *yana*” because *hinayana* practice allows simple and direct experience of our own minds and of the world. We begin to realize that whatever we experience—whether good or bad, positive or negative—is workable, tamable.

As well as the discipline of meditation, the *hinayana* also stresses the importance of postmeditation discipline. Discipline in Sanskrit is *shila*, and in Tibetan it is *tsültrim* (*tshul-khrims*). *Tsül* means “proper” or “appropriate”; *trim* means “regulation,” “law,” or “norm.” So *tsültrim* is practicing “proper conduct” or “proper discipline,” according to the example of the Buddha.

During his lifetime, the Buddha established disciplinary rules of conduct that are strictly applied in monastic life. These are called the *vinaya* in Sanskrit, or *dülwa* (*'dul-ba*) in Tibetan. Both *vinaya* and *dülwa* literally mean “taming.” So in general, *vinaya* can be understood as any discipline that we practice in order to tame our being.

In the *hinayana*, the only way to conduct ourselves is according to the message of *vinaya*, the message of discipline. Through practicing the proper conduct of

tsültrim, our body, speech, and mind are thoroughly tamed, and we are able to quell, or cool off, the heat of neurosis. Because of that, we are able to practice the greater hinayana discipline of not causing harm to ourselves and others. And finally, based on practicing such total discipline, we are able to achieve what is called “individual liberation” (Skt. *pratimoksha*, Tib. *so-sortharpa*). Individual liberation is a tremendous accomplishment, which enables us to express our basic goodness as human beings.

The *mahayana*, or the “great vehicle,” is like a wide, open highway in contrast to the narrow path of hinayana discipline. The mahayana goes beyond the hinayana ideal of individual liberation alone. Its aim is the liberation of all sentient beings, which means that everyone, everything, is included in the vast vision of mahayana. All the chaos and confusion and suffering of ourselves and others is part of the path.

The primary discipline of the mahayana is helping others, putting others before ourselves. The training of the mahayana practitioner is to exchange himself for others. As a well-known mahayana slogan puts it: “Gain and victory to others; loss and defeat to oneself.” However, it should be clear that this attitude is not based on self-denial or martyrdom, but rather springs from the development of genuine warmth and compassion. Thus, the mahayana is expansive and embracing.

The third yana, the *vajrayana*, literally means the “diamond or indestructible vehicle.” The idea of indestructibility here is the discovery of indestructible wakefulness, the discovery of our own innate awakened state of mind, or vajra nature. Since this book deals with the vajrayana teachings, it seems unnecessary to explain too much about them here. However, it is extremely important to understand at the outset that the vajrayana is a continuation of the previous two yanas and that without proper training in the hinayana and mahayana discipline it is impossible to step onto the tantric path.

Tantra literally means “continuity” or “thread.” Hinayana, mahayana, and vajrayana are a continuous thread of sympathy and sanity, which is never broken. Vajrayana is further and greater expansion. It is the expression of greater sanity and greater sympathy, arising from the practice of hinayana and mahayana.

Throughout this book the reader will find numerous warnings about the dangers of vajrayana and the importance of beginning at the beginning—with the practice of meditation. When I presented this material at Naropa Institute in the summer of 1974, I felt that it was my duty to warn people about the dangers of vajrayana and also to proclaim the sacredness of these teachings—which go hand in hand.

The audience was a very interesting mixture. There were many people who we might call “spiritual shoppers,” people sampling tantra as one more interesting spiritual “trip.” There were also a number of people who were quite innocent and open. They happened onto this class by various coincidences and had very little idea of what tantra, or spirituality at all, might be. As well, there were a number of committed students who had been practicing meditation for some time. It was quite a challenge to present tantra to such a mixed group. But for all of these people, it was necessary to stress again and again the importance of meditation and

the foundation of all Buddhist practice and the danger of ignoring the prescription.

The entire Buddhist path is based on the discovery of egolessness and the maturing of insight or knowledge that comes from egolessness. In the hinayana, we discover the nonexistence of self through the practice of meditation. Assuming a dignified sitting posture, identifying with the breath, and simply noting thoughts and feelings—basic discursiveness—we begin to make friends with ourselves in a fundamental sense.

By applying mindfulness, or bare attention, to whatever arises during meditation, we begin to see that there is no permanence or solidity to our thought process, and at some point, we begin to realize that there is no permanence or solidity to us. In Sanskrit, the meditative practice of mindfulness is called *shamatha* and in Tibetan it is *shiné (zhi-gnas)*. *Shiné* literally means the development of “peace.” The meaning of peace here is precisely this sense of taming the wildness of mind so that we are alert and able to experience ourselves directly. We are not talking about peace as some kind of trance state: shamatha is the first step in waking up.

Mindfulness naturally leads to the development of awareness, which is a sense of expansion, being aware of the environment or space in which we are being mindful. Awareness brings tremendous interest in things, people, and the world altogether. We begin to develop sympathy and caring for others. The practice of awareness in Sanskrit is called *vipashyana* and in Tibetan, *lhagthong (lhagmthong)*, which literally means “clear seeing.” Vipashyana is traditionally connected both with the practice of meditation and with the formal study of the teachings and postmeditation activities in general. Vipashyana provides a link between the insight that is developed in meditation practice and our everyday experience. It allows us to carry that meditative insight or awareness into our daily lives.

Through the insight that comes from vipashyana, we begin to make a further discovery of egolessness. We begin to develop a precise understanding of how mind functions and how confusion is generated. We are able to see how the belief in ego causes tremendous pain and suffering to ourselves and others.

From this comes the desire to renounce samsara, the wheel of confused existence—the world of ego. Renunciation is expressed as the desire to refrain from harming ourselves and others. As well, we begin to long for the path that will liberate us from confusion. We begin to develop confidence in the Buddha as the enlightened example; in the dharma, or teachings of Buddhism, which are the path; and in the sangha, the community of practitioners who follow this path. Renunciation is utterly and absolutely necessary if we wish to practice the teachings of the Buddha. This theme runs through the entire path, from beginning to end. At the vajrayana level, renunciation is connected with devotion to the teacher, the vajra master. Devotion to the teacher in the vajrayana demands the total surrender of ego, the complete renunciation of all clinging to self.

Because of the discovery of egolessness in shamatha and the development of

interest and sympathy in vipashyana, we naturally begin to expand our sense of warmth and friendliness to others. We are less interested in “this,” “I,” “me,” and more interested in “that.” The mahayana path is based on this discovery that others are more important than ourselves. Because we have discovered egolessness, because we have discovered that *me* does not exist, we find that there is lots of room, lots of space, in which to help others. That is the basis of compassion, *karuna*. Compassion in the Buddhist tradition is not based on guilt; it is based on having greater vision, because we can afford to do so.

The mahayana teachings are profound and vast, and what I am presenting here is like a drop in the ocean of the mahayana dharma. Nevertheless, helping others is absolutely essential. This is true, not only in mahayana practice, but in vajrayana as well. Trying to practice vajrayana without compassion is like swimming in molten lead—it is deadly. All of the power and the magic of vajrayana is based on working for the benefit of others and surrendering ourselves absolutely.

The vajrayana teachings are very precious; they are very close to my heart and they are my inheritance, so I do not pass them on lightly. Still, I am delighted that we can present tantra in the American world. What is presented here is like a map; it is an entirely different experience to actually make the journey. It requires a guide to make this journey, and as well, we must make the proper preparations. Our minds must be tamed and trained through the practice of meditation. Only then can we see the vajra world.

As I have said, presenting these talks originally was quite demanding, but it was equally worthwhile. For those who connected with what was being transmitted, the experience of hearing these lectures was one of discovering devotion and beginning to surrender ego. It is my hope that, in a similar fashion, this book will inspire others to step onto the path of dharma.

Vajracarya the Venerable
Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
10 July 1981
Boulder, Colorado

INTENSIFYING DEVOTION IN ONE'S HEART: *The Supplication "Crying to the Gurus from Afar"*

by Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye

NAMO GURAVE

This practice of crying to the gurus from afar is well known to everyone. The key to invoking blessings is devotion, which is aroused by sadness and renunciation. This is not a mere platitude, but is born in the center of one's heart and in the depths of one's bones. With decisive conviction that there is no other buddha who is greater than the guru, recite this melodic tune.

Guru, think of me.
Kind root guru, think of me.

Essence of the buddhas of the three times,
Source of the holy dharma—what has been told and what has been
experienced—
Master of the sangha, the noble assembly,
Root guru, think of me.

Great treasure of blessings and compassion,
Source of the two siddhis,
Buddha activity that bestows whatever is desired,
Root guru, think of me.

Guru Amitābha, think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of dharmakāya, simplicity.
Lead us of evil karma who wander in saṃsāra
To the pure land of great bliss.

Guru Avalokiteśvara, think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of sambhogakāya, luminosity.
Pacify completely the suffering of the six realms.
Shake us from the depths of the three realms of saṃsāra.

Guru Padmākara, think of me.
Look upon me from the lotus light of Cāmara.¹

The wretched Tibetan people who are without refuge in this dark age,
Quickly protect with your compassion.

Guru Yeshe Tsogyal,² think of me.

Look upon me from the celestial realm, the city of great bliss.
Help us who commit evil deeds to cross the ocean of saṃsāra
To the great city of liberation.

Gurus of the kama and terma lineages,³ think of me.

Look upon me from the wisdom realm of unity.
Break through the dark dungeon of my confused mind.
Make the sun of realization arise.

Omniscient Trime Öser,⁴ think of me.

Look upon me from the realm of the five spontaneous wisdom lights.
Help me to strengthen my primordially pure mind
And master the four stages of ati yoga.⁵

Incomparable Lord Atīśa, father and son,⁶ think of me.

Look upon me from amidst one hundred devas in Tuṣita.
Arouse in me bodhicitta,
The essence of emptiness and compassion.

Three supreme siddhas—Marpa, Mila, and Gampopa—think of me.

Look upon me from the vajra realm of great bliss.
May I attain the supreme siddhi of mahāmudrā, bliss and emptiness,
And awaken dharmakāya in my heart.

Karmapa, lord of the world, think of me.

Look upon me from the space which tames all beings everywhere.
Help me to realize that all dharmas are insubstantial and illusory.
Make appearance and mind dawn as the three kāyas.

Kagyüs of the four great and eight lesser lineages, think of me.

Look upon me from the land of sacred outlook.
Help me to clear away my confusion in the fourth moment
And perfect my experience and realization.

Five Sakya forefathers,⁷ jetsüns, think of me.

Look upon me from the realm of inseparable saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.
Help me to unite the completely pure view, meditation, and action
And walk upon the supreme secret path.

Incomparable Shangpa Kagyü,⁸ think of me.

Look upon me from the completely pure buddha land.
Help me to learn properly the practice that liberates through skillful means

And attain the unity of nonlearning.

Great siddha, Thangtong Gyalpo,⁹ think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of effortless compassion.
Help me to practice the yogic action of realizing insubstantiality.
Help me to master prāṇa and mind.

Only father, Phadampa Sanggye,¹⁰ think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of accomplishing the highest action.
May the blessings of your lineage enter my heart
And may auspicious coincidence arise in all directions.

Only mother, Machik Lapkyi Drönma, think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of prajñāpāramitā.
Help me to uproot ego-fixation, the cause of pride,
And realize the truth of egolessness beyond conception.

Omniscient enlightened one of Tölpo,¹¹ think of me.
Look upon me from the realm endowed with all the supreme aspects.
Help me to still the shifting breaths in the central channel
And attain the immovable vajra body.

Jetsün Tāranātha,¹² think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of the three mudrās.
May I tread the secret vajra path unhindered.
And attain the rainbow body in the celestial realm.

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo,¹³ think of me.
Look upon me from the wisdom realm of the two kinds of knowing.
Help me to remove the obscurations of my ignorance
And expand the vision of supreme knowledge.

Ösel Trülpe Dorje, think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of the five rainbow light rays.
Help me to cleanse the impurities of bindu, prāṇa, and mind
And attain enlightenment of this youthful kāya in the vase.¹⁴

Padma Do Ngak Lingpa, think of me.
Look upon me from the unchanging realm of bliss and emptiness.
Enable me to completely fulfill
All the intentions of the victorious ones and their sons.

Ngakwang Yönten Gyatso,¹⁵ think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of the union of space and wisdom.
May the habit of solidifying reality fall apart
And may I bring whatever occurs to the path.

Son of the victorious ones, Lodrö Thaye, think of me.
Look upon me from your nature of maitrī and compassion.

Enable me to realize that all beings are my kind parents
And wholeheartedly accomplish the benefit of others.

Padma Kargyi Wangchuk, think of me.
Look upon me from the realm of great bliss and luminosity.
Help me to liberate the five poisons into the five wisdoms.
And destroy my clinging to loss and gain.

Tennyi Yungtrung Lingpa, think of me.
Look upon me from the realm in which saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are equal.
May natural devotion be born in my being.
May realization and liberation simultaneously increase.

Kind root guru, think of me.
Look upon me from the top of my head, the place of great bliss.
May I meet my own mind, the face of dharmakāya
And attain buddhahood in one lifetime.

Alas!
Sentient beings like myself, evildoers with bad karma,
Have wandered in saṃsāra from beginningless time.
Even now we experience endless suffering,
And yet not even an instant of remorse has occurred.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessings so that I give rise to renunciation from my depths.

Although I have obtained a free and well-favored human birth,
I have wasted it in vain.
I am constantly distracted by the activities of this futile life.
Unable to accomplish the great objective of liberation and overcome
laziness,
I return empty-handed from a land of jewels.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessings so that I fulfill the purpose of human birth.

There is no one on earth who will not die.
Even now, one after another they pass away.
I also will die very soon,
And yet like an idiot, I prepare to live for a long time.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessings so that I curtail my worthless schemes.

I will become separated from my lovers and friends.
The wealth and food which I hoarded in miserliness will be enjoyed by others.

Even this body I hold so dear will be left behind.

~~My consciousness will wander in the unknown pardos of saṃsāra.~~

Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.

Grant your blessings so that I realize the futility of life.

The black darkness of fear escorts me along.

The fierce red wind of karma chases after me.

Yama's hideous messengers beat and hack me.

Thus, I experience the unbearable suffering of the lower realms.

Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.

Grant your blessings so that I free myself from the chasms of the lower realms

My faults are as large as a mountain, but I conceal them within me.

Others' faults are as minute as a sesame seed, but I proclaim and condemn them.

I boast about my virtues, though I don't even have a few.

I call myself a dharma practitioner and practice only nondharma.

Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.

Grant your blessings so that I subdue my selfishness and pride.

I hide the demon of ego-fixation within, which will ruin me permanently.

All of my thoughts are the cause of perpetuating kleśas.

All of my actions have unvirtuous results.

I have not even gone toward the path of liberation.

Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.

Grant your blessings so that I uproot my selfishness.

Just a little praise or blame makes me happy or sad.

A mere harsh word causes me to lose my armor of patience.

Even when I see helpless ones, compassion does not arise.

When needy people come to me, I am tied up by a knot of miserliness.

Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.

Grant your blessings so that my mind is mixed with the dharma.

I hold on dearly to futile saṃsāra.

For the sake of food and clothing, I completely abandon permanent objectives

Though I have everything I need, I constantly want more and more.

My mind is duped by insubstantial and illusory things.

Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.

Grant your blessings so that I am not attached to this life.

I cannot endure even the slightest physical or mental pain,

Yet I am so stubborn that I have no fear of falling into the lower realms.

Though I actually see unerring cause and effect,

Still I do not act virtuously, but perpetuate evil.

Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.

Grant your blessings so that conviction in karma arises in me.

I am hateful toward enemies and attached to friends.

I am stupified in darkness as to what should be accepted and rejected.

When practicing the dharma, I fall under the influence of discursiveness, sloth
and sleep.

When acting against the dharma, I am clever and my senses are alert.

Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.

Grant your blessings so that I conquer my enemy, the kleśas.

My outer appearance is that of an authentic dharma practitioner,

But inside, my mind is not mixed with the dharma.

Like a poisonous snake, the kleśas are concealed within me.

When I encounter bad circumstances, my hidden faults as a bad practitioner
are revealed.

Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.

Grant your blessings so that I can tame my own mind.

I don't realize my own bad faults.

I maintain the form of a practitioner while engaging in various nondharmic
pursuits.

Because of the kleśas, I am naturally accustomed to unvirtuous actions.

Again and again I give birth to a mind of virtue, but again and again it falls
apart.

Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.

Grant your blessings so that I see my own faults.

As each day passes, my death is nearer and nearer.

As each day passes, my being is harsher and harsher.

Though I attend my guru, my devotion becomes gradually obscured.

Love, affection, and sacred outlook toward my dharma companions grow
smaller and smaller.

Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.

Grant your blessings so that I tame my stubborn nature.

I've taken refuge, aroused bodhicitta, and made supplications,

But devotion and compassion are not born in the depths of my heart.

I give lip service to dharmic action and spiritual practice,

But they become routine and I'm not touched by them.

Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.

Grant your blessings so that I may be one with the dharma.

All suffering comes from desiring happiness for oneself.

Although it is said that buddhahood is attained by considering the welfare of
others,

I arouse supreme bodhicitta but secretly cherish selfishness.

Not only do I not benefit others, I casually cause them harm.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessings so that I exchange myself for others.

The guru is buddha in person, but I regard him as an ordinary man.
I forget his kindness in giving profound instructions.
When he doesn't do what I want, I lose heart.
His actions and behavior are clouded over by my doubts and disbelief.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessings so that unobscured devotion will increase.

My own mind is the Buddha, but I never realize this.
Discursive thoughts are dharmakāya, but I don't realize this.
This is the unfabricated, innate state, but I cannot keep to this.
Naturalness is things as they really are, but I have no conviction in this.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessings so that my mind will be spontaneously liberated.

Death is certain to come, but I am unable to take this to heart.
The holy dharma truly benefits, but I am unable to practice it properly.
Karma and its result are certainly true, but I do not properly discriminate what
to accept or reject.
Mindfulness and awareness are certainly necessary, but not stabilizing them,
am swept away by distractions.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessings so that I maintain undistracted mindfulness.

Because of my former evil actions, I was born at the end of the dark age.
All that I have previously done has caused me suffering.
Because of evil friends, I am darkened by the shadow of evil deeds.
My dharma practice has been sidetracked by my meaningless chatter.
Guru, think of me; look upon me quickly with compassion.
Grant your blessings so that I completely accomplish the holy dharma.

Grant your blessings so that I give birth to deep sadness.
Grant your blessings so that my worthless schemes are curtailed.
Grant your blessings so that I take to heart the certainty of death.
Grant your blessings so that conviction in karma arises in me.
Grant your blessings so that the path is free from obstacles.
Grant your blessings so that I am able to exert myself in practice.
Grant your blessings so that unfortunate circumstances are brought to the
path.
Grant your blessings so that I continually apply my antidotes.
Grant your blessings so that genuine devotion arises in me.
Grant your blessings so that I glimpse the natural state.
Grant your blessings so that insight is awakened in my heart.

Grant your blessings so that I uproot confusion.

~~Grant your blessings so that I attain buddhahood in one lifetime.~~

Precious guru, I supplicate you.

Kind lord of the dharma, I cry to you with longing.

I am an unworthy person who relies on no one but you.

Grant your blessings so that my mind mixes inseparably with yours.

I was first requested by some devoted monks to compose a supplication, but I was delayed in fulfilling their request. Recently, Samdrup Drönma, a lady practitioner of noble family, and Deva Rakṣita earnestly urged me. Therefore, I, Lodrö Thaye, who merely hold the appearance of a guru in this dark age, wrote this at the great meditation center, Dzongshö Deshek Düpa.¹⁶ May virtue increase.

Translated by the Nālandā Translation Committee.

NOTES

1. Cāmara is one of the two islands next to the southern continent of Jambudvīpa. On this island Padmākara (Padmasambhava) is said to now reside in a palace on the Copper Colored Mountain.
2. Yeshe Tsogyal is one of the two chief consorts of Padmākara (Padmasambhava), the other being Mandaravā. She is the author of a biography of Padmasambhava (*Padma thang yig*).
3. The kama lineage is the unbroken oral tradition that has been passed down from Vajradhara Buddha, one's present root guru. The terma lineage consists of sacred objects and teachings that were hidden by Padmākara and other teachers until the time was right for their unveiling. Then, they would be discovered and promulgated by teachers known as tertöns ("terma discoverers").
4. This is the name that was conferred on the famous Nyingma teacher, Longchen Rabjam (1308-1364) by Padmākara in a vision.
5. These four stages (snang bzhi) are: revelation of dharmatā, increasing experience, maturation of insight, and exhausting dharmatā.
6. Atīśa's (982-1054) spiritual son here is Dromtön (1004-1063), his main Tibetan disciple and the founder of the Kadampa school.
7. These are five great and early teachers in the Sakya lineage. They are Künga Nyingpo (1092-1158), Sönam Tsemo (1142-1182), Trakpa Gyaltsen (1147-1216), Sakya Paṇḍita (1182-1251), and Phakpa (1235-1280).
8. The Shangpa Kagyü is a sect of the Kagyü lineage founded by Barapa Gyaltsen Palzang (1310-1391). However, it traces its origin back to Shang Khyungpo Naljorpa (990-1139?), a follower of Pön who converted to Buddhism. He had many Indian gurus, one of them being Niguma, Naropa's wife and disciple.
9. Thangtong Gyalpo (1385-1464) is famed throughout Tibet as a great siddha and builder of iron bridges.
10. Phadampa Sanggye (died 1117) is a South Indian teacher who brought the practices of shi (pacifying) and chö (cutting) to Tibet. His main disciple and consort was the Tibetan woman, Mach Lapkyi Drönma (1055-1149) who spread the lineage of the chö teachings in Tibet.
11. Tölpopa Sherap Gyaltsen (1292-1361) is the founder of the Jonangpa school which mainly emphasizes the *Kālacakra-tantra* and the teaching of tathāgatagarbha. The shen tong (gzhan stong, empty of other view of mādhyamika that the Jonangpa evolved was quite controversial among the mainstream adherents of the rang tong (rang stong, empty of self) view; however, this shen tong view was a powerful principle of the Rime thought in general and in particular for Jamgön Kongtrül.
12. Tāranātha (born 1575) is one of the most famous teachers of the Jonangpa school, having written a well-known history of Buddhism in India as well as several important texts on the *Kālacakra*.

13. Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820-1892) is one of the leaders of the nineteenth-century Rimé movement in Tibet. He was the root guru of Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye. Ösel Trülpe Dorje and Padma Do Njak Lingpa are the names given to him from a prophecy of Thangtong Gyalpo (see following two stanzas).

14. This image is used in ati teachings to describe the nature of primordial enlightenment. The youthful kāya is enlightenment which is always present. The vase contains all dharmas and gives rise to all phenomena.

15. The next four names all belong to the author of this text, Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye. The first name he received when he took the vinaya vows, the second when he took the bodhisattva vow, and the third when he received abhiṣeka—formally becoming a student of the vajrayāna. The last name was given to him when he was formally recognized as a tertön, a discoverer of terma.

The reason Jamgön Kongtrül includes himself in the guru supplication is that he composed this text for his disciples' practice at their request.

16. This meditation center is northeast of Shigatse, located at Zambulung in upper Shang. Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo also resided here at one time and had an important vision of the eight manifestations of Padmākara.



Illustration 2

The Tantric Practitioner

The tantric teachings of Buddhism are extremely sacred and, in some sense, inaccessible. Tantric practitioners of the past have put tremendous energy and effort into the study of tantra. Now we are bringing tantra to North America, which is a landmark in the history of Buddhism. So we can not afford to make our own studies into supermarket merchandise.

A tantric revolution took place in India many centuries ago. The wisdom of that tradition has been handed down orally from generation to generation by the great mahasiddhas, or tantric masters. Therefore, tantra is known as the ear-to-ear, whispered, or secret, lineage. However, the notion of secrecy does not imply that tantra is like a foreign language. It is not as though our parents speak two languages, but they only teach us English so that they can use Chinese or Yiddish when they want to keep a secret from us. Rather, tantra introduces us to the actuality of the phenomenal world. It is one of the most advanced, sharp, and extraordinary perceptions that has ever developed. It is unusual and eccentric; it is powerful, magical, and outrageous; but it is also extremely simple.

In order to understand the phenomenon of tantra, or tantric consciousness, we should be quite clear that we are not talking about tantra as a vague spiritual process. Tantra, or *vajrayana* Buddhism, is extremely precise, and it is unique. We can not afford to jumble the vajrayana into a spiritual or philosophical stew. Instead, we should discuss tantra technically, spiritually and personally—in a very exact sense—and we should discuss what the uniqueness of the tantric tradition has to offer to sentient beings.

In this book we will examine tantra theoretically. We are viewing the area that we might arrive at, at some point in the future. So it is a somewhat hypothetical situation, but at the same time we still could develop an experiential connection with it. The future of Buddhism depends on continuing to discover what the Buddha experienced and on sharing such experience with others. So there is a need to identify ourselves personally with tantric experience, rather than regarding tantra as one more spiritual trip.

Fundamentally, the vajrayana comes out of a complete understanding and comprehension of both *hinayana* and *mahayana* Buddhism. The development of the three yantras—*hinayana*, *mahayana*, and *vajrayana*—is one continuous process.

In fact, the word *tantra*, or *gyü(rgyud)* in Tibetan, means “continuity.” There is a continuous thread running through the Buddhist path, which is our personal experience and our commitment to the Buddhist teachings. Usually we think of a thread as starting somewhere. But according to the Buddhist teachings, the thread has no beginning, and therefore there is continuity. In fact, such a thread does not even exist, but at the same time, it is continuous.

At this point we are not yet in a position to discuss what tantra is. Since the continuity of tantra is based on personal experience, we first need to understand the person who is having the experience. That is, we need to know who is studying tantra: who is it, or what is it? So, to begin with, we have to go back to the beginning, and find out who is perceiving tantra, that is, who is the *tantrika* or tantric practitioner.

We could say that some people are tantric by nature. They are inspired in their lives; they realize that some reality is taking place in the true sense, and they feel that the experience of energy is relevant to them. They may feel threatened by energy or they may feel a lack of energy, but they have a personal interest in the world: the visual world, the auditory world, the world of the senses altogether. They are interested in how things work and how things are perceived. That sense of enormous interest, that interest in perceptions, is tantric by nature. However, one problem with inspired, future tantric practitioners is that they are often too fascinated by the world of the senses. There is something lacking: although they are inspired, they may not have made a genuine connection to the world of the senses, which presents problems in understanding true tantra. Still, they could be regarded as tantric fetuses, or potential members of the tantric family.

When we begin to explore who the tantric practitioner actually is, our inquiry takes us further and further back, right to the basis of Buddhist practice, which is the hinayana teachings. From this point of view, hinayana *is* tantra. One of the most inspiring glimpses or experiences of the hinayana practitioner is the absence of self, which is also the absence of God. When we realize that there is no individual being or personality who is perceiving external entities, the situation becomes open. We don't have to limit things by having a conceptualized divine being, traditionally known as God. We are simply examining who we are. In examining who we are, we find, according to both the hinayana and the tantric observation, that we are nobody—rather, nonbody. We might ask, “How is that possible? I have a name. I have a body. I eat. I sleep. I lead my life. I wear clothes.” But that is precisely the point: we misunderstand ourselves, our nonexistent selves. Because we eat, we sleep, we live and we have a name, we presume that something must be there. That common misunderstanding took place a long time ago, and it still takes place constantly, every single moment. Just because we have a name doesn't mean we have a self. How do we realize that? Because if we do not use such reference points as our name or our clothing, if we stop saying, “I eat, I sleep, I do such and such,” then there is a big gap.

In a similar fashion, we often use reference points to show that we do not exist. We say we do *not* exist because of something else. We might say, “I do not exist because I am penniless.” There is something wrong with that logic, because w

still have a penny to be less of. However, this does not mean that we should try to destroy relative reference points. As an extreme example, during the 1960s some people made hysterical attempts not to exist. By destroying references and credentials such as draft cards and birth certificates, they hoped to become invisible. But creating their draft-card-less-ness was still a statement of deliberate individuality, and it was still fighting over the question of existence by struggling not to exist.

In the Buddhist tradition, discovering nonexistence, or egolessness, has nothing to do with destroying relative reference points. Whether we try to maintain such reference points or destroy them, we still have the same problem. The Buddhist approach is not to use any reference points at all—none whatsoever. Then we are not finding out whether we exist or not, but we are simply looking at ourselves directly, without any reference points—without even looking, we could say. That may be very demanding, but let it be so. Let us get to the heart of the matter.

When we attempt to see ourselves without reference points, we may find ourselves in a situation of not knowing what to do. We may feel completely lost and we may think that what we are trying to do is very strange indeed: “I cannot even begin. How can I do anything?” Then we might have an inkling of beginning at the beginning. Having to relate with the bewilderment of not knowing how to deal with ourselves without using reference points is getting closer to the truth. At the same time, we have not found the root of reality, if there is one at all.

We cannot find the beginning of the tantric thread unless we come to the conclusion that we do not exist. We might try to work out our nonexistence logically. However, the conclusion that we do not exist has to be experiential, and it also has to be beyond our stupidity and confusion. Our confusion at this point is not knowing how to begin. From that, we can start to feel the beginninglessness of the thread, and its endlessness as well. So we are getting somewhere, but we still might feel rather stupid, like jellyfish or robots. There is no sense of discovery at all, and the whole thing seems rather flat.

According to the tantric tradition, the only way to find our way out of the confusion, or our way in, is by having a sense of humor about our predicament. We are trying to find ourselves, but we are not able to do so, and we feel enormously flat and heavy and in the way. Something is being a nuisance, but we cannot put our finger on exactly what it is. Nevertheless, something, somewhere is being a nuisance. Or is it? If we view this with humor, we begin to find that even the flatness, the lack of inspiration, the solidity, and the confusion are dancing constantly. We need to develop a sense of excitement and dance rather than just trying to feel better. When we begin to dance with our humor, our apparent stupidity becomes somewhat uplifted. However, we do not know for sure whether we are just looking at ourselves humorously while our stupidity grows heavier as the time, or whether we might actually be able to cure ourselves. There is still something that is uncertain, completely confused, and very ambiguous.

At that point, we finally could start to relate with the ambiguity. In the tantric tradition, discovering that ambiguity is called “discovering the seed syllable.” Ambiguity is called a “seed syllable” when it becomes a starting point rather than

- [read Fäbulas \(Penguin Cläsicos\) book](#)
- [Chocolates and Confections: Formula, Theory, and Technique for the Artisan Confectioner \(2nd Edition\) here](#)
- [read The Apex Book of World SF: Volume 2](#)
- [Lights, Camera...Travel! for free](#)

- <http://www.khoi.dk/?books/Functional-Analysis--Springer-Classics-in-Mathematics-.pdf>
- <http://www.rap-wallpapers.com/?library/Primal-Body--Primal-Mind--Beyond-the-Paleo-Diet-for-Total-Health-and-a-Longer-Life.pdf>
- <http://www.mmastyles.com/books/The-Golden-Age-of-Air-Travel.pdf>
- <http://www.uverp.it/library/Galactic-Dreams.pdf>