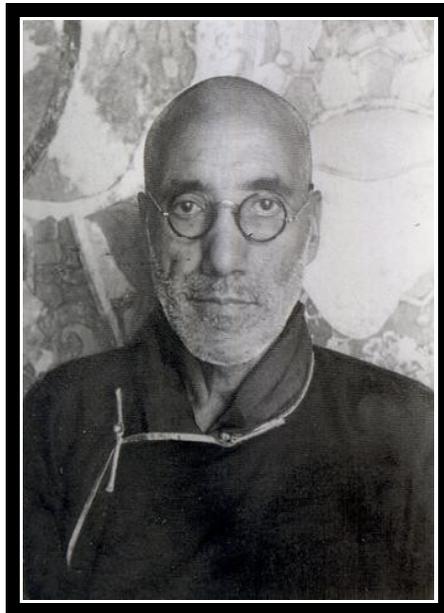


Sunlight Blessings
That Cure the Longing of Remembrance

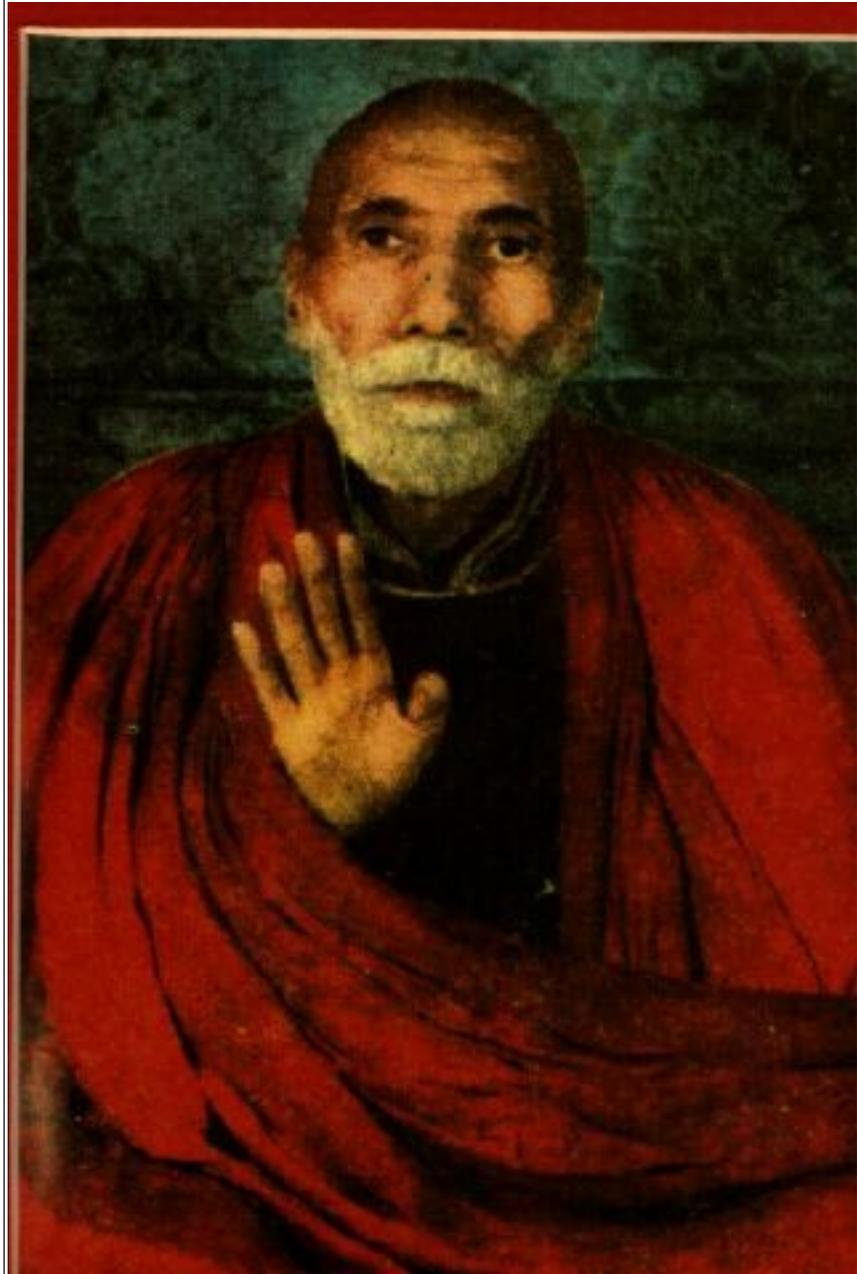
**A Biography of the Omniscient
Khunu Mahāsattva, Tenzin Gyeltsen
[Khunu Lama Rinpoche]**

By Lamchen Gyalpo Rinpoche

**Translated from Tibetan
by Erick Tsiknopoulos and Mike Dickman**



Khunu Lama Rinpoche, Tenzin Gyeltsen



Khunu Lama Rinpoche, Tenzin Gyeltsen

I pay homage and go for refuge with immense devotion to the great treasury of non-referential compassion's eminence, the glorious protector Lama and Mañjuśrī indivisible. By holding me with your great compassion in all lifetimes, please grant your blessing that I may fully complete the ocean of excellent conduct through the intentions and actions of my three doors.

In the peaceful basic space of complete emancipation, the freshly dawning sun of timeless awareness rises.

Its light rays of compassion enter accordingly into the mind of devotion, Dispelling the darkness of the view of self and opening up the mind-lotus of the two types of knowledge:

To the Buddha in person, the glorious Lama, I bow down.

The story of your life and liberation is as profound as the depths of the fathomless ocean,

Not something that can be measured by the childish minds of ordinary beings.

For all who encounter so much as a single drop of water on the tip of a grass-blade of your activity,

Seeing, hearing, remembering or touching it shall bring benefit.

Until the realms of beings are emptied, out of compassionate bodhichitta, The wondrous unceasing water and moon dance of the enlightened activity Of the glorious protector Lama increases without diminish for those to be trained:

Waxing and waning like the sun and moon within the merit-pond of beings.

For some time, the brilliant sun of your exalted form is not visible,

As you abide evenly in the luminous dharmadhātu;

So that devotion may grow in those with intelligence by means of the seed of your marvelous life history,

I shall now write down a little of it.

Thence, in regard to the great Ārya Bodhisattvas, although they have actualized the authentic deathless kāya from the start, how they display taking birth as teachers in response to those to be trained is beyond the reaches of ordinary beings' imagination. Furthermore, the arrays of form bodies appearing to our perception now are also great beings, mahāsattvas who deliberately take on existence; the fact that this is so has been extolled not just one time from the glorious throat of Ārya Lokeshvara in person, the Universal Jewel, the omniscient Sovereign One [His Holiness the Dalai Lama]. Although it is indeed like that, in ordinary saṃsāric perception, they manifest to others, those to be tamed, merely as having all the conventional aspects of coming, remaining, growing old, and declining. There are some lamas who, although they have

great qualities, are unable to benefit to beings, as their consciousness is in decay; while there are some who, although their boastful loud claims about benefiting beings are great, their qualities are not great; and there are some who, although their qualities are great, their lifespans do not go to their furthest limit, or even if their lives are long, their activity of nourishing the Teachings and beings is scarce.

However, as for the glorious protector, the sublime Lama whose name is difficult to utter, he of omniscient vision, the Khunu Mahāsattva, Tenzin Gyeltsen Rinpoche, his lifespan and activities came to full consummation.

Moreover, not only did he become the crown ornament of the great beings of the Land of Snows, but most of the lamas, tulkus, geshe, practitioners, monks and nuns became his disciples, with almost none excluded. Regarding this, when discerning impartial people examine his amazing life story and activities, there is no need to speak much of his knowledge and ability.

Concerning the details of his outer, inner, and secret biographies:

He adopted earnest application in the manner of the Kadampa teachers of old, and hid all of his qualities like a butter-lamp inside a vase, not speaking of them in the slightest. As for his super-normal perceptions, visions, signs of accomplishment and so on, not manifesting even the slightest scent of them, he dwelt in the manner of humility.

In his way of meeting with common, ordinary individuals under the power of delusion like myself, as well, as a sign that saw the pleasures and wealth of conditioned existence as a dream display, no matter who visited him, whether famous, powerful, or rich, let alone acting in conformity with them, flattering them, or talking them up, even if they offered gold, silver, and valuables, it was not his style to say that one needed to give them a single protective cord. These days, there are some great lamas, renowned throughout the world, who when they see benefactors, obsequiously flatter them, putting on a sympathetic face like a cow or monkey. As Rechungpa sang upon seeing such sights as these at the time of Milarepa's parinirvāṇa, in his *Hymn Remembering the Lama*:

When coming upon material goods and valuables,
Like mercury that has fallen on the earth,
Rinpoche was not tarnished by stains.

Similar to that quotation, the Khunu Mahāsattva became someone to be remembered again and again. He did not disregard the low and the humble, and took even greater care of humble disciples. As he had absolutely none of the conduct which acts to subdue enemies and protect friends, since he cultivated in his mind only the Teachings, he abode tranquilly in the continuity of solely explaining the Dharma and resting in meditative equipoise, having no worldly activity at all. To whosoever requested any teachings on sūtra, tantra, or the arts and sciences, he explained the difficult points to them without complicated jargon. Like a child of the mountains without enemies or friends, like a solitary and companion-less wild animal wearing the clothing of mist, he strove only in unfixed isolation; and even when he became of

old age, he never acted with apathy or indifference towards the impartial benefit of the Teachings and beings.

At the time when the Land of Snows had reached a dangerous point where the teachings of the Victorious One were in decline, he was the one who explained and spread whatever was necessary, whether of the New or Old Traditions, the arts and sciences, the sūtras, or the tantras, thus becoming like the re-connector of the life-force of the non-sectarian tradition of the Teachings at the moment of its death.

When one just considers that, I feel that one is able to tell whether or not he was a king of renunciates, a yogin rejecting all fixation, an individual of magical illusion, someone who was free of all faults and endowed with all good qualities, a source of learning and accomplishment, a hero who had conquered the māras, a cutter through the bondage of the view of self, a dispeller of the darkness of ignorance, a crosser of the river of conditioned existence, one departed from the mud of desire, a demolisher of the mountain of pride, a teacher of immensely effective conduct, a giver of the eye that discerns what is Dharma and what is non-Dharma, an extinguisher of the concern with the eight worldly dharmas from its very root, one endowed with the awakened mind of impartiality, one in harmony with all and exalted over all, a generator of joy in the face of discouragement, a teacher of the vehicles and philosophical tenets unmixed as to their respective paths, one whose deeds nourished the Teachings impartially, one who was not in contradiction with any of the Teachings, a great leader who elucidated all texts and traditions without exception.

Now, correspondingly, what I am writing now, free from exaggeration or underestimation, is based on a passing examination of the *Staircase to Liberation*, a biography composed by Garzha Ngödrub, and Khetsün Sangpo Rinpoche's *Questions Put to the Supreme Khunu Rinpoche*, and has the following sections:

- How he took birth into a supreme physical support and an excellent family, with freedoms and endowments
- How he had a state rich with the four wheels of favorable conditions [conducive to the arising of the path of liberation]
- How he demonstrated the fruit of his listening, contemplation, and meditation
- How he worked for the benefit of sentient beings, and then passed into complete Nirvāṇa

One: How He Took Birth into a Body of Supreme Physical Support and an Excellent Family

In the mountain range of the Himachal region in the north of the noble land of India, there is a land called Khunu, a land where in the past vidyādhara became accomplished, which was maintained by gods, nāgas, yakshas, and kinnaras, called Kinnar in Sanskrit, which came to be known by the corrupt local name of “Kinor”. Also, in the writings of Garzha Ngödrub, it is explained that long ago, as was the customary pronunciation of the Kings of Rampur and so on, it came to have the local name of Nege [or Negi].

In any case, its mountains are high, steep, and immense, and the uplands are surrounded by a ring of many snow mountains such as the White Snow-Mountain of Kinnaur Kailash [Kinnar Kailasha]. From the valleys of the snowy mountain ranges, crystal-clear blue water streams down from Langchen Khabab [Elephant’s Snowfall, a source of the Ganges River in Tibet’s Ngari province], called Satlaj in the native tongue, and from others. In between, the forests are full of meadows. There are pines, and also pears and fruits such as apples, peaches, and so on, a variety of fruit-laden trees, and excellent resources such as potatoes.

The upper part of the country is Buddhist, the middle part is a mix of Buddhists and non-Buddhists, and the lower part are non-Buddhists who practice blood offerings to gods such as Īshvara [Shiva] and so on. It was in the upper part of this sort of land, called Khunu Sungnam, in the household called Dekyi Pangtsang [‘Blissful Meadow-nest’], in a family descended from kings and gods, as the son of both his father, from a lineage taking its root in Pema Lingpa, and his mother, Norkyi, that, in accordance with aspirations, the bodhisattva took on human form. It was here where that one whose name, although difficult to utter, should be spoken for the sake of benefit, Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyeltsen Pelzangpo, was born, in the 17th Rabjung cycle, in the Wooden Sheep year, 1895 by foreign reckoning.

As to this, as it says in the *White Lotus of Compassion Sūtra*:

“O you who are endowed with great compassion, in future times, after as many incalculable eons as there are grains of sand in one river Gaṅgā have passed, when the time comes that as many incalculable eons as there are grains of sand in two rivers Gaṅgā has gone by, during the Excellent Eon in the Saha World System, people will be able to live to one hundred and twenty years of age, and it will be a buddha-field with much old age and death, a world-system lead by the blind, laden with the roots of non-virtue. Being evil, its sentient beings will be defeated, experience great wretchedness, perform negative actions of immediate retribution, denigrate the Noble Ones, abandon the sublime Dharma, incur the roots of downfall, hold wrong views, not cherish their fathers, not cherish their mothers, not cherish spiritual practitioners, have no apprehension towards the world to come, abandon virtuous friends, and

associate with all roots of non-virtue. Because their karma will be evil, they will be overpowered, and so forth. At that time, the bodhisattva will appear, and he will be in accordance with the Teachings, indeed.”

Not only that, but as it says in the fifth chapter of the *100,000 Verse Prajñāpāramitā [Sūtra]*:

“In this regard, if it be asked what the perfect lineage of the bodhisattva might be: the bodhisattva mahāsattva takes birth in whatever lineage previous bodhisattva mahāsattvas have taken birth in.”

And, in the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* [by Ārya Maitreya and Asaṅga]:

Their aspirations are limitless,
They know the languages of gods and others,
Their confidence is like a river
Their entrance into the womb is supreme,
As are their lineage, family, clan,
Retinue, and birth.

It was, indeed, exactly in accord with such quotations.

*Out of great compassionate bodhichitta, previously,
Willingly assuming existence into this world system of Saha,
In the blessed grove of Lumbinī in the Noble Land of India,
The great guide, the Lord of Sages, was born.*

*Now, during this time of strife when the Victor's teachings are on the wane,
Since his great compassionate heart cares for living beings,
In Blissful Meadow-nest in Khunu,
The Mahāsattva, Tenzin Gyeltsen, was born.*

*EMA – How marvelous! – In this decrepit age of strife,
When the deeds of other protectors have dulled and faded,
Intentionally taking on existence in the Noble Land,
Born as a sprout of enlightenment: If not you, then who?*

Two: How He Acquired the Four Great Wheels of Favorable Conditions

The house where Khunu Rinpoche was born was a vast wooden structure, where, in earlier times, since there were many relatives who did not all get along, it was divided up and apportioned, and that time the family built a lama's residence called Tashi Chöling – 'The Dharma Sanctuary of Auspiciousness'.

With the left-over timber from that a bedroom was built, and with the left-over from that, a vast livestock shed was constructed, their property thus coming to about one mile in extent. The father, Kalanpur, had three sons: the oldest, Döndrub Gyeltsen, the middle son, His Eminence Khunu Rinpoche Tenzin Gyeltsen, and the youngest, Döndrub Tenzin. The siblings were mutually affectionate, good-natured, and positive, of an excellent type inclined towards virtue, with refined manners and conduct.

In particular, Khunu Rinpoche Tenzin Gyeltsen transcended the ordinary character of the world, and had that great renunciation and weariness which constantly contemplates only the suffering of saṃsāra, taking absolutely no delight in obsession with worldly activities and calculated exertion. He especially felt for the poor, destitute, downtrodden, and ignored, shed tears of uncontrived compassion, and so forth. His awakened mind-stream utterly filled with bodhichitta, he was one who thought of nothing but the Dharma.

From the *Mahāyānsūtrālamkāra* [by Ārya Maitreya and Asaṅga]:

For them, all phenomena are like an illusion,
And, having realized birth to be like a visit to a pleasure-grove,
At the time of increase and the time of decline as well,
They are not destroyed by afflictive mental states and suffering,
Take joy in benefiting sentient beings with their own qualities,
Manifest magical births in accordance with wishes,
And delight in playing with ornaments, feasts, and supreme places:
They are none other than the very embodiments of compassion.

In Vasubhandu's commentary to this, he says that, since bodhisattvas see everything to be like an illusion, when they attain favorable conditions, they are not destroyed by celebrations; because they see birth as like going to a pleasure garden, at the time of aging they are not destroyed by suffering; their bodhichitta reverses absolutely all ruin. Moreover, they delight in the ornaments of their own good qualities, the feast of taking joy in benefiting others, the pleasure-grove of taking birth in accordance with wishes, and the play of magical manifestation, all of which entail only bodhisattvas.

And it was in accord with such quotations.

Then, in the year 1901, at the age of seven, in the presence of Zhangpo Lama Rasbār Dās, he diligently studied reading and writing the alphabet and so on, and memorized the *Diamond Cutter Sūtra* [*Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*], the *Gangloma* [praise

to Mañjushrī], [the praise to] Tārā, and others. Until the age of 14, he stayed in the abode of Zhangpo [Lama Rasbār Dās], the village called Ropa.

Then, in the year 1909, at the age of fifteen, he went to stay at the monastery of Ngari Chöling, and then went to the village of Libpa, where Lama Sönam Gyeltsen lived, where he listened to the *Stages to the Path of Enlightenment* and others. All in all, he lived and studied at Ngari Chöling Monastery for about three and a half years.

In the year 1913, he conceived an irreversible desire to go to the Dharmic field of Tibet to engage in study, contemplation, and meditation, like how the Ārya Sadaprarudita contemplated with yearning the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata [as told in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*]. Considering the sublime Dharma and roots of virtue, and apprehensive that there would be obstructive situations of discouragement brought on by relatives and others, he set off alone, through the land of Chiti, these days known as Spiti, and the high mountain ranges and rivers and perilous cliffs of Garzha [commonly known as Lahoul], through rough roads, flash floods, and so on, completely unconcerned and without even shoes to protect his feet, all the way from the Nyungti area of the Kulu region to the place called Rīsan, where there were a few Khunu families. There he collected some money he had lent his brother Döndrub which had gathered some interest, and then bought supplies for the road. Writing his older brother a letter about this, he took a train from the Indian plain of Pathankot.

Going through a few cities on the Indian plains, he arrived in Sikkim, and thus in his 19th winter, he met Geshe Chemo Orgyen Tenzin, under whom he studied the root text and commentary of the *Voice of Sarasvatī Sūtra*, treatises on Sanskrit pronunciation such as the *Chandrāpa*, and grammar, poetry, and so on, for about three and a half years.

*Willfully undertaking hardships, you sought the meaning of the Sublime
Dharma,
Put your beloved parents and relatives behind you,
And alone, friendless, you crossed countries by yourself,
Engaging in the conduct of the bodhisattva: If not you, then who?*

Three: How He Did Everything Possible to Benefit the Teachings through Studying, Contemplating, and Meditating

To explain this in brief: He then gradually traveled to Tibet, and, arriving in Tashi Lhünpo in Tsang, entered into the curriculum of the monastery there. Because the precious ethical discipline is the foundation of all good qualities, he received the novice monk's vows from Guge Yongdzin, the tutor of the Omniscient Panchen Rinpoche. He deeply studied the main scriptures, root texts, and commentaries of logic and epistemology, such as the *Pramāṇavārttika* and so on, with Kachen Sangye Pelzang, and, in return, he taught on the arts and sciences.

In accordance with the expressed wish of the Omniscient Panchen Chökyi Nyima, he taught local groups of officials and executives extensively on the arts and sciences, and also later to a group of officials at the training school known as Tay-lhung Kyina Lobdra [the Tashi Lhunpo Institute of Happiness].

Then, going to Lhasa in response to the earnest requests of the aristocratic families of both Möndrong and Sampho, he carried out teachings on both the *Voice of Sarasvatī Sūtra* and the *Chandrāpa*. Then, returning to Tashi Lhünpo and then going back to Lhasa, he fulfilled the hopes of the assembled faithful by industriously teaching them the principal points of the arts and sciences.

Since the system of teachings of the grammarian Pāṇini was absent in Tibet, he went to Vārāṇasī in India and, at the feet of Paṇḍita Devanārāyaṅtripāthī, studied the principal linguistic texts of Pāṇini and its offshoots, from *The Fivefold Saṁdhi* up to the principles of composition, for a period of five years.

In the year 1922 he went to the Derge area of northern Kham, and I heard him say that at that time, it had been ten years since the supreme scholar Mipham had passed away. He studied at the lotus feet of Katog Situ Chökyi Gyamtso, listening extensively to the teachings of the Tripiṭaka in full three times, becoming rich in the qualities of an excellent sage-scholar.

In the presence of Khenpo Zhenga, who had attained a vision of the face of the Melodious Goddess [Sarasvatī], who was also known as Gyelsay Zhenphen Chökyi Nangwa Rinpoche, he listened to and contemplated his explanations of the Thirteen Great Scriptures [Khenpo Zhenga composed commentaries on all of these], along with the commentary on the second chapter of the *Hevajra Tantra* [most likely that of Sachen Künga Nyingpo].

After that, at Drukhog, he obtained reading transmissions from a guru who was a Dharma lineage holder of Terchen Chogyur Lingpa called Dru Jamyang Drakpa, and listened to the great commentary on the Kālachakra *Stainless Light*, and the entirety of the Dharma teachings of the Drukpa Kagyü, in the presence of that direct disciple of both Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and Jamgön Kongtrül, who was endowed with both learning and accomplishment.

He studied the root medical scriptures, and later the medical tantras. With his relative Tregyel, he studied astrology and the science of mathematics.

In particular, while he was receiving the *Nyingthik Yabzhi* in the presence of a lineage holder of Adzom Drukpa Gyelsay Gyurmey Dorje Rinpoche's teachings on the definitive secret Great Perfection [*Dzogchen*], the shaking of the earth and so on took place.

He listened to all the instructions of the whispered lineage of Dzogchen and Jowo Je [Atisha]'s *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* at the feet of the senior Katog khenpo Ngawang Pelzang, also known as Khenpo Ngag-ga, who was a great scholar- adept who had experienced a direct vision of Mahāpaṇḍita Vimalamitra, and who was able to reverse the flow of rivers. Khunu Rinpoche told me that during this time, on the occasion when he went with Khenpo Ngag-ga to meet Böpa Tulku, Khenpo Nga-ga said of him, "His body is young, but he is a scholar!"

Then, from Gelek Tendar, the throne-holder of Dzachu Khapar Dzasershul Thekchen Dargyeling in northern Derge, he listened to the teachings on the Stages of the Path [*Lamrim*] distilled from the four Lamrim commentaries composed by Je [Tsongkhapa], and the commentary on Chakrasaṃvara, *Totally Clarifying the Hidden Meaning*.

Then, at Denkhok Namgyel Ling, at the feet of the one known as Lama Damchö, a direct disciple of Jamgön Yönten Gyamtso who had served as his personal attendant for about fifty years, he listened to the Dharma teachings of the Karma Kagyü, such as *The Profound Inner Meaning* [by the 3rd Karmapa], a commentary on the second chapter of the *Hevajra Tantra*, the *Uttaratantra Shastra* [the *Mahāyānottaratantra Shāstra* by Ārya Maitreya and Asaṅga], *The Lamp for the Definitive Meaning of Mahāmudra*, *The Ocean of Definitive Meaning*, *The Three Volumes of Extensive Scriptures of Mahāmudra*, *The All-Encompassing Treasury of Knowledge*, and so on. Since there was no one who had sought the uncommon secret-meaning explanation of *The Profound Inner Meaning*, to avoid a break in the transmission lineage, he gave it to Nenang Pawo Rinpoche. I heard him say that he did not know whether there was anyone ahead of him who would request it or not.

Then, from Dzogchen Khenpo Lhagyel, also known as Tsultrim Lodrö, he heard the Omniscient Longchenpa's *Seven Treasuries*, the *Nyingthik Yabzhi*, the *Collected Instructions*, the commentary on the Guhyagarbha Tantra *Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions*, the *Yeshe Lama*, *Entering into the Way of the Great Vehicle* [by Rongzom Mahāpaṇḍita], a commentary on the *Recalling the Three Jewels Sūtra*, *The Pith Instruction on the Garland of Views* [by Padmasambhava], the collected works of Rongzom, the *Vima Yangthik*, and the *Gold Refined from Stone* and various other Nyingma tantras.

Under the doctor Aseng, he studied the *Four Medical Tantras*, the *Crystal Rosary*, and others.

Then, in the presence of His Eminence Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, he listened to *The Three Characteristics of the Vajrapanjara Tantra*, *The Extremely Beautiful*

Ornament of the Tantrapiṭaka, and the two classes of commentary on the *Naro Khachöma* [*Naropa's Khechari/Naropa's Goddess Who Enjoys Space*], and received the reading transmission of the *Nyingma Gyü'bum* [*the Collected Tantras of the Nyingma School*].

Then, he went to Gau Hermitage, and requested from Lama Jamgyen the reading transmission of *The Unerring Elegant Exposition*, the [Lamdre] *Commentary For the Sons*, *The Detailed Analysis of the Lamdre Vajra Verses*, and others. In response to the demands of those assembled there, he offered teachings on all the arts and sciences.

He requested the *Lama Yangthik* from Lama Künga Pelden, also known as Khenpo Künpel, received the *Yeshe Lama* from him as well without requesting it, and also studied *The Trilogy of Commentary on the Essential Meaning* under him.

After that, in the presence of Palpung [Tai] Situ Pema Wangchok, he received *The Collected Teachings of the Dakpo Kagyü in Two Volumes*, the authorization empowerment of White Tārā together with the Sādhanā, and the *Sukhāvati Prayer* by Rāga Āśya .

In the presence of the king of scholars Beri Khyentse, he received the *Doshema* commentary on the Drikung [Kagyü] text *The Single Intention* [by Jigten Sumgön], *The Great Commentary on the Essence of the Drikung Teachings*, and also the *Fivefold Mahāmudra*. In return, he offered instruction on the arts and sciences.

Once more in the presence of Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, he listened to *The Trilogy on the Innate Mind*, Rangtön's commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, and Ngülchu Thokme's commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* , and not only that, but also *The Five Dharmas of Maitreya* in their entirety, as well as Dodrubchen's *Key to the Treasury of the General Meaning of the Guhyagarbha*.

Then, together with the son of the Derge king Akya, in the presence of Gomchen Khenpo Samten Lodrö, who was said to be Yamāntaka in person, he received the empowerments and so on of Yamāntaka, and in return offered instruction on the arts and sciences. He stayed there for about eight months, and in response to the requests of many of the local khenpos and sangha members to instruct them in the arts and sciences, he taught them the sciences and arts.

During those few months while he was staying there, he composed *The Lamp of Speech that Clarifies the Words of the Commentaries*, a compilation of notes that he had taken as the student of many scholars.

He listened to Dakpo Rinpoche's *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* from Khenpo Wöntö Khyenrab, and, in return, offered the subjects of the arts and sciences.

He heard the pith instructions on Lamdre and so on from Gatön Ngawang Lekpa.

When he went back to Gau Hermitage, it seems that the Chinese army was invading from the other side of the Trichu River, forcibly occupying a vast Tibetan area. At that time, it was around 1932.

Then, he came to Khangmar Retreat Center to stay for a few months, and taught those who doing the three-year retreat there the *Seven Treasuries* and the *Yeshe Lama*.

While staying at Peljor Monastery for a few months, he went to examine the Khampa Gar Library and, after briefly teaching the librarians there the arts and sciences, set out for Chamdo, where he remained for about one year, teaching the arts and sciences to many aristocratic government officials.

He said that in his fortieth winter, he went back to the region of Ü, and met with Drikung Drubchen Agön Rinpoche, who pointed his finger at a Bönpo bell and said *Shar! Shar! Shar!* [Manifest! Manifest! Manifest!], thus giving introduction [to the nature of mind]. This was similar to how Shrī Siṃha gave an introduction to Padmasambhava by saying *Gang-shar ma-zhen gang-shar ma-zhen shik! Ma-shar! Ma-shar! Shar! Shar! Shar! Ma-shar!* ["Whatever manifests, don't be weak! Whatever manifests don't be weak! Unmanifest! Unmanifest! Manifest! Manifest! Manifest! Unmanifest!"].

While he was staying at the Lhasa Men-tsi-khang [Department of Medicine and Astrology] teaching languages and so forth, even though Regent Reting readied excellent provisions for all who were to attend [his classes], not a single person from the major monastic seats came to listen. This was around the time that he composed the piece called *The Dancing Display of Lightning: A Tale of Impermanence*. Aside from Dezhung Lungrik Tulku who was born in the region of Ga, not a single person from Tibet showed up to study the works of the grammarian Pāṇini.

Because Panchen Rinpoche's secretary Karleb wrote objections concerning the grammar, [Khunu Lama Rinpoche] composed a letter one time in regards to this, however, it was never sent, fearing it might become a basis for meaningless worldly argument, and so he burnt the letter. Recently, it seems that those letters written by Karleb have been published in Tibet and released as *A Wee Bit of Refutation to the Scholar of Ü, Tsang, and Kham, Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyeltsen*.

In the year 1938, as he reached his 43rd winter, he arrived in the noble land of India, and in Calcutta listened to the *Treasury of Deathlessness* under the Paṇḍita Haripa, and with the notes that he took, composed a book as well.

Seeking guidance from multitudes of holy ones with devotion of the three doors,

Becoming a great ocean of traditions such as grammar and logic,

Growing into an ambrosial river of the Eight Great Chariots' quintessential instructions,

Upholding well the excellent central axis of discernment,

And abiding in the mountain hermitages of the Land of Snows,

You amplified the vital strength of the Victorious One's teachings in their entirety.

A lion among humans with the magnificent turquoise mane of learning and

realization,

Striving for the benefit of the Teachings and beings: If not you, then who?

Then, he went to his homeland. His father, mother, and maternal uncle were gone, having passed away. He went to meet briefly with relatives and local people. Although it was his heart's intention to stay only in solitude in Vārāṇasī, in response to the insistent requests of his relatives and countrymen, he gave teachings on impermanence and karmic causality, and explanations on refuge and *Entering into the Conduct of the Bodhisattva* [*Bodhicharyāvatāra*], staying there for a few years. At that time, so that the songs of the local people might become in accord with the Dharma, he composed *The Song of the Alphabetical Bee* and *The Corn-Cob of Two Benefits: A Praise to the Melodious Goddess*.

Then, going to Kalimpong and Vārāṇasī, for the most part he stayed only in isolation for about fifteen human years. Inwardly in perfect repose, he engaged in meditation on the precious mind of awakening, bodhichitta, as his essential practice.

For one year, every day he composed one stanza of his *Verses in Praise of Bodhichitta*. One of his disciples, a geshe, having heard this, asked him if it would be appropriate to print this work. He said, "It is appropriate to give the non-sectarian Dharma." And so, a certain khenpo of Vārāṇasī, Gen Goser, also known as Thubten Jungnay, made a gift of the Dharma and had it published, he said.

In the year 1965 by foreign reckoning, Tsering Drölma passed away, who was the older sister of the Sovereign Ruler, the Ultimate Guide of Gods and Humans, the Supreme Victorious One, the Great Fourteenth Dalai Lama, and for the sake of her roots of virtue, it was published again. For this, Khunu Lama Rinpoche was greatly praised by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the forward thus:

Abundant with mastery over the seven riches of the Noble Ones, a Mahāsattva retaining hidden courageous conduct, His Eminence Tenzin Gyeltsen Rinpoche, who comes from a family lineage of Western Indian lands, from the time of his youth has continually studied at the lotus feet of numerous non-sectarian scholars and adepts in the realm of the Land of Snows; he has engaged in profound listening and contemplation on all the ordinary and extraordinary arts and sciences in their entirety. In particular, he has engaged in listening, contemplation, and meditation on the text of the great Bodhisattva Shāntideva's text, *Entering into the Conduct of the Bodhisattva* [*Bodhicharyāvatāra*], without falling into a limited approach. He has increased ever-further the heart-felt aspiration of that precious bodhichitta which cherishes others more than oneself, the highway of the Victorious Ones and their Heirs. And thus, through the power of engaging in this itself as his essential spiritual practice, on one occasion, he composed one or two stanzas every day of verses in praises of bodhichitta, leading to this poetic commentary itself, *The Jewel Lamp*. And recently, the faithful one Phuntsok Tashi, for the sake of a positive journey for my older sister Tsering Drölma, has created roots of virtue by publishing it.

In this kind of time, which is generally a negative age of atomic weapons, disease, and famine, I make prayers of dedication that this work will contribute to the expansion in the ten directions of the great treasury of all-healing, soothing, and cooling nectar, the precious teaching of the Buddha, and, in particular, that the situation of the pervasively spreading five degenerations, the thoughts and actions of deception, deceit, harm, and violence, and the decrepit kinds of actions which lead to ruin for oneself and others both in this life and the next will be gradually pacified, and that it may become the cause of giving rise to love, compassion, and the precious bodhichitta in the mental continua of all, myself and others.

Moreover, in regards to this treatise, I make heart-felt aspirations that all those engaged in study, contemplation, and meditation, monastic and lay, without being tainted by the faults of seeking one's own happiness and fame, will hold in their hearts and contemplate the meaning of this very stainless teaching itself of the flawless Victorious One, which has a way of healing the downtrodden, and, never being in contradiction with the aspirations of excellence, that they will be able to clearly analyze and maintain completely pure views and conduct both outwardly and inwardly, in all ways. Doing so is important. Saying this, I join my hands and make prayers.

In the holy place where the Victorious One turned the wheel of the Dharma of the Four Noble Truths, Vārāṇasī, in the Tibetan monastery of Shaydrub Dö'khyil, the fully-ordained monk of the Shākya, Tenzin Gyatso, wrote this on the 9th day of the 11th month of the Tibetan wood-snake year, the 1st day of the 1st month of the year 1966 by foreign reckoning.

This can be known clearly by looking at it.

As he stayed in front of the holy site in Vārāṇasī, under the conditions of bustle, busyness, and distraction, he maintained careful vigilance. On the corner of this bright city, in the village known as Laksā, there was an old Hindu temple, the owner of which, known as Lord Gangāgiri, was previously his fellow student when he had studied grammar, and he stayed above it in a single room. Later, after they came to know that Khunu Rinpoche was living in that very place, the Sanskrit University of Vārāṇasī gave him an honorary award in the manner of a supreme individual of vast learning who is a teacher of textual traditions [similar to an honorary doctorate], and offered him the position of scholar professor, but he refused the salary and so on, and remained earnestly in solitary isolation.

After that, in accordance with the wishes of the Crown Jewel, the Sovereign Ruler, the Protector of Refuge, the Great Omniscient Beholder of the Wisdom of All Victorious Ones [the Dalai Lama], he stayed at the college in Mussouri for around six months, where he taught classes on all the arts and sciences to about fifty scholars of the four great Dharma lineages, and in particular on *The Praise of the Special Noble Qualities*

[the *Viṣeṣastava*, a praise of the Buddha composed by Siddhasvamin]. At that time, a group of scholars composed a book on the notes they had taken from these teachings, called *The Root Text and Commentary on the Praise of the Special Noble Qualities*, in the colophon of which they wrote:

The teachers at Mussourie College were delighted to have received explanatory teachings on *The Praise of the Special Noble Qualities* by the Āchārya of the Noble Land Siddhasvamin from the great mighty lord of learning and accomplishment who took birth in the Western direction of India, His Eminence Lama Tenzin Gyeltsen Rinpoche. This root text together with its commentary was compiled from the notes taken at the time that he bestowed this. And thus, a committee of devout people, providing the expenses, has had it published through the Drildrak Publishing House in Dharamsala.

And in the introduction to the publication:

His Eminence Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyeltsen Rinpoche, one consummate in study and meditation on the ordinary and extraordinary arts and sciences, a great being who in his heart has become adept in the precious bodhichitta, the distilled essence of the ocean of Dharma methods, most willingly gave easily understandable explanatory teachings, with a mixture of both the literal meaning and the essential meaning, on *The Praise of the Special Noble Qualities* by the Āchārya of the Noble Land Siddhasvamin to the teachers from the Government College at Mussourie. The notes from this form this root text together with a commentary, the words of which, if understood, will lead to knowing the difference between the non-Buddhist and Buddhist teachers and the supreme and lesser teachings; it will lead to comprehending that the unique Teacher, the Buddha, was an undeceiving and authoritative individual who taught what should be adopted and what should be abandoned; it will lead to establishing a basis for refuge, the door to entering the Teachings, by recognizing the teachings of transmission and realization that He taught and the authentic Sanghas which practice them correctly. Many purposes and reasons will be seen. The teachers of the College, with encouragement, had exactly 500 copies of this book published by Drildrak Publishing House, and the Tibetan Government's Department of Religious Affairs covered the expenditures.

After this, he taught the Dharma uninterruptedly in Vārāṇasī, Bodhgaya, and other places, to Indians, Tibetans, Sikkimese, Bhutanese, Nepalese, Khunus, Garzhas, Ladakhis, and so on. Back then, as this was at that devastating time when China had gained control over Tibet, most of the Dharma students were Tibetan refugees: monastics and laypeople, old and young; and to each of them he taught in accordance with their aspirations. He mostly stayed in Bodhgaya.

In March of the Water Ox year of 1973, he stayed at the abode of the Divine Mother of Sikkim at her request. Staying there in Taktser for about one month, he gave Dharma

teachings to Sikkim's queen, prince, and so on. He then went to the cottage of Bartsik in Kalimpong, Darjeeling, and so on, completely fulfilling the hopes of disciples, engaging ceaselessly in explaining and spreading the Dharma.

After that, he lived mostly in Bodhgaya, performing explanation and dissemination [of the Dharma] to all the non-sectarian monastics and laypeople, both high and low, giving whatever was needed in accordance with their mentalities. He stayed only in meditative equipoise, totally disengaged from ordinary discourse and conversation. At night, he mostly sat in upright posture and so forth; day and night he spent in practice, without distraction.

He abandoned the offerings of the faithful that were given to him at the monastery of that very land where he staying, and was content with merely food, clothing, and the bare necessities.

Avalokiteshvara said:

Scholars have respect towards education,
While none towards the lord Buddhas and so on.
Why should one respect those with no good qualities?
This foolishness arises from non-virtuous karma.

Likewise, this eminent individual himself, who possessed the supreme qualities taught of in the sublime Dharma, in 1976, the Fire Dragon Year, on the 3rd day of the 1st Tibetan first month, went to the supreme holy site of Tso Pema. On the third day of the first Tibetan month [the same day], he gave careful instructions on the *Yeshe Lama* to the diligent practitioner from Drikung Terdro, Her Eminence Nene Rinpoche Sherab Tharchin and her devotees and so forth, and to the diligent practitioners who lived there.

I remember him saying as an aside, "Khenpo Künpel gave me the *Yeshe Lama* without my having to request it. When I came before [Khenpo] Zhenga in Satin Hollow, Khenpo Rinpoche Künpel had gone. I asked him, 'Please give me the *Lama Yangthik*.' His attendant Tenlo agreed."

Also, I recall him saying that since the transmission of the *Sambhota Tantra* was rare, he studied it with vigor under Khen Rinpoche Apay.

After that, in Kulu Nyungti, these days known as Kulu Manali, in a place called Kuluta, among the eight sites of the twenty-four physical chakras underneath the earth, he gave teachings on the *Yeshe Lama* to the diligent practitioners there.

*From your churning sea of understanding and love,
You brought down the gentle rain of sublime Dharma, gleaming with the
pure light of elegant exposition.
Crown ornament of all the Teachings and beings in the the Land of Snows,
Reviver of the Victor's entire Teaching: If not you, then you?*

Four: How He Passed into Complete Nirvāṇa

Furthermore, on the 1st day of the 9th Tibetan month, in response to the invitation of the faithful disciples of Garzha, that extremely cold poor land of high mountains, steep cliffs, and great hardship, a place where in the winter blizzards occur and journeys are cut off, there he went, out of compassion, considering the welfare of others.

From the *Anuttaratantra*:

In this way, for beings filling limitless space
They are always spontaneously present.
These wise unobstructed ones
Are authentically involved in the benefit of others.

Similar to this teaching, Khunu Rinpoche came to this land known as Cold Toe Castle, a vast country that is one of the eight sites of subterranean places related to the twenty-four chakras of the body, recognized as such by the Great Drikungpa, the protector Jigten Sumgön, as well as by the Mahāsiddha Oddiyana [Padmasambhava]. It is distinguished as being a retreat place where the whole vast assembly of peaceful and wrathful deities and dakas and dakinis gather. In particular, at this Cold Toe Castle, one of the [aforementioned] twenty-four locations, there is a holy site for Vajravārāhī widely renowned as Garzha Sow; there is Mt. Vajragantha [Dorje Drilbu], blessed by the heruka Shri Vajragantha and a sacred site of Cakrasaṃvara; there is a great holy site where the All-Seeing Noble One, the protector of beings Ārya Avalokiteshvara is formed from marble; there is a chained Mahākala, and an image of Jetsün Milarepa that has great blessings, which has, as a sign of his entering directly into primordial wisdom, hair which grows continuously. There are many things to be encountered as a feast of direct perception for the sense faculties. He came to this landscape decorated by many amazing things, to Kardang Gumpa, Drukgyel Chöling, established by Zhöl Lama Norbu, in front of Mt. Vajragantha.

He gave explanations to the sangha of nuns there on the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* by Dakpo [Gampopa], the *Jewel Rosary of Madhyamaka* by Nāgarjuna, the *Commentary on Mahāmudra*, *The Treasury of Dohas*, a concise summary of the practices of *The Six Sections on Equal Taste*, and, at the request of the disciples, his own work *The Jewel Lamp: Verses in Praise of Bodhichitta*.

Then, at the invitation of the old main Drukpa [Kagyü] monastery Gemön, these days known as Gemur Gumpa Samten Chöling, he went to the upper region of Garzha, and, taking under his care all those to be trained, both high and low, he satisfied them with the Dharma according to what each of them was interested in, leading them along the path of liberation. Since there the weather is cold and the winter season had arrived, he stayed in lower Garzha in the old room of the benefactor of lower Bartsi, Rinchen. Because there were many there who came to meet him, he went to the isolated spot in northern Kyelang, the Drukpa [Kagyü] monastery of Tashi Shuklang, called Shashur Jawa in the local language, a place where the shape of the earth around the monastery

has become like the expanse of Vajravārāhī, the mother of the basic space of phenomena, and for his residence stayed in the room of a young monk of the upper Bartsi, Ngawang Tenpa.

While he was staying giving teachings every day on Gampopa's *Jewel Ornament of Liberation: The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel of the Sublime Dharma* at Tashi Shukling Gumpa to the Dakini of Drikung Terdro named Sherab Tharchin Rinpoche, the High Ladies of Chaklung named Tenzin Drölma and Tenzin Zangmo, the High Lady of Khunu named Tenzin Chödrol, and the lamas, monks, ngakpas, and nuns who had gathered there, on the 3rd day of the Fire Snake Month, during the Month of Miracles [the first Tibetan month], in 1977, at the age of 83, while he was happily giving teachings on the *Wisdom Chapter* of the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, suddenly, he said, "I am a little unwell", and ended the Dharma teaching.

He went to his room, sat upright, coughed, expelled a little bit of phlegm with blood in it, and, while resting evenly in exactly the same sagely sitting position as the Omniscient Jigme Lingpa did as he passed away, his face remained with an undiminished radiant glow as it was before, and, like a vase broken open to the sky, he entered meditative equipoise in the basic space of the all-pervading Dharmakāya, immaculate and lucid.

And thus, this great unique loving friend of all beings, this supreme guide whose kindness had no boundaries, was no longer someone who could be met with, and became someone to be missed for some time.

As for this, it was similar to how our Teacher, when on the road which arrives at Kushinagar, displayed the manner of becoming sick, rested, and, when he came to a place close to the rich land of Kushinagar, in the time that it takes for a piece of wood to be stuck in the ground, passed away.

*KYEMA – Alas! A lord illumining with a thousand beautiful lights
Appeared at that time through the power of the merit of myself and others.
Companion radiating the sunlight of Dharma that dispels darkness:
How can I bear his disappearance behind the Western Mountain?*

*This demonstration is like a pond quit by its swan.
It's as though this transient being is like a blind one without eyes to see.
This one without a Dharma guide only now realizes;
This one without the fortune to see and hear someone like you is sad.*

*Guide, although I tasted the supreme flavor
Of the pith instruction you directly spoke,
I was like one without serious engagement;
Only now I understand that I was like one possessed by the demon of
grasping at permanence.*

And thus, as a sign that the Dharmakāya had been actualized, that day was clear of wind, without even a hair swaying, and the sky became stainless and pure blue. The people of Garzha present there sent news of this sad event to Shimla, the capital of Himachal [Pradesh] state, via a telegram from the the post office of the Kyelang district. A message arrived over the radio from a group of Khunu authorities and concerned people who had consulted, saying:

“Tomorrow we will fly directly in an airplane to transport the precious bodily remains. Until then, it is imperative that absolutely no mistakes such as cremating the body be made.”

It was arranged like that. The following day, as the precious bodily remains stayed in the state of the basic space of profound and immaculate luminosity, the disciples present made supplications of longing with intense devotion, praying that rain would fall so that the airplane would not come. In a stainless sky, white clouds suddenly expanded into two parallel rows and then three parallel rows, like rope, and then the clouds became extremely overcast. A telegram arrived saying, “The airplane cannot come”.

Moreover, just as our Teacher [Shākyamuni Buddha], considering the Ten Purposes [of passing away] such as teaching impermanence to disciples grasping at permanence, reminding them of sorrow, and merging with the Dharmakāya, displayed the manner of passing into Nirvāṇa for a while, the Khunu Mahāsattva, too, displayed the manner of going away for a while.

Thus, at that time, those who had become disciples became overwhelmed with grief, and just as, when our Teacher passed into Nirvāṇa, Ananda had made vast offerings for seven days before his bodily remains and arranged all the preparations for the cremation of the bodily remains, the disciples present made offerings for seven days.

On the tenth day of the the Month of Miracles [the 1st month of the Tibetan year], one group offered funerary rites by way of a mandala of the glorious Akshobhya, and one by way of Vajrasattva. The land of Garzha is a place where wood is extremely scarce, but offering a little wood to the crematory spot, lighting only a small fire, the flames of timeless awareness spontaneously flared, and the corpse transformed into a heap of relics.

Furthermore, when the coffin containing our Teacher's bodily remains was opened to the public, the bones had turned into a heap of relics like mustard seeds, and these, along with all of the parts, outer and inner, that remained from the burning, was poured into a golden vase, lead to the center of the city, and venerated. At that time, the monastics and laypeople of the Shākya royal class, the Licchavi of Vaishālī, the Varsika of Magadha, and others assembled to get their share of the bodily remains. In a similar way, in order to receive the precious bodily remains of the Khunu Mahāsattva, the Khunus and Garzhas and so on assembled, and divided the upper part among the Garzhas, the lower part among the Khunus and so on; and they also each came to make their own stūpas with the bodily remains.

On the 10th day of April, 1977, all the disciples, the Garzhas and so on, who were gathered there practiced the dedicatory consecration rites excellently, and because a crowd of Garzhas of unprecedented size had gathered, they performed extensive ceremonies, consisting of the offerings of incense, flowers, supplications, aspirations, and auspicious wishes. One scripture says:

Through the power of this, may the aspects of my prayers
Manifestly adorn this Earth.
And so, to these bodily remains robed in silk brocade,
May the kings of gods, nāgas, and humans,
And the lords of humans, nāgas, and yakshas,
Make vast offerings with intense respect.

And thus it came to be, just exactly as it says.

In brief, from the ordinary arts and sciences to the extraordinary Sūtra, Tantra, Kama, Terma, Mahāmudra, Dzogchen, Madhyamaka, Lamdre, Zhijey, the Six Yogas of Nāropa and so on, the Supreme Glorious Protector, the Sublime Lama, explained and spread the ambrosia of the Dharma, the vast and profound Teachings, in accord with the wishes of those to be trained; and the teachings that he taught were given clearly. Illuminating the vitality of the good qualities of the levels and paths which arise from much study, the confidence of wisdom's skill, experience, and realization for those endowed with insight, discernment, and meditative absorption, he vastly increased the lotus clusters of spiritual attainment.

I tell you: EMA – Wondrous. The biography of the Mahāsattva is complete.

*Compared to the Noble Ones, with their experiential dimension of primal
wisdom's vision,
I am an inferior ordinary being without grounds for valid comprehension.
However, in order to awaken faith and virtuous propensities
Towards some small fractions of the Sublime One's excellent deeds,
I have uttered here the few deeds I have seen and heard;
The throat-gates of the learned disciples have merely been unlocked.*

*Though I have never come to see the Great Garuda himself
Cutting through the heights of the sky with agile wings-flaps,
Like an insect who, out of dark confusion, approaches lamplight,
I did this with a mind of utterly pure faith.*

*Since my diligence in training and mental acumen are extremely inferior,
I am nothing but unrealized, backwards, messed up, contradictory, and
mistaken.*

*Before the Glorious Protector Lama, the Vajra Friend,
I confess this from the heart! I seek cleansing, purification, and non-
obscuration.*

*Through the virtue of writing this, may I be inseparable from the Glorious
Protector Lama
And the expanse of his enlightened intent, and may I actualize
enlightenment.
I dedicate this so that all beings pervading space
Attain the sublime level of the Great Vajradhāra.*

*In all lifetimes, may I never be separate from the supreme Lama,
And, like You, may I accomplish great benefit for the Teachings and beings,
With impartial activities of the three secrets,
For all beings experiencing karma, afflictions, and suffering.*

This was written with a mind of faith by the monk king of wild yak-kind¹, the last in
the row of disciples of the Mahāsattva whose kindness was limitless in its reach,
Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyeltsen Rinpoche. Virtue! Virtue! Virtue!

¹This is in reference to how from 1955, Drikung Lamchen Gyalpo Rinpoche [born
1939], the leader of the citizens of Nangchen in Kham, served as the president of the
weavers of Bir in the state of Himachal [Pradesh], then as the senior official of the
Committee of Internal Affairs, and after that as the secretary of the Drikung Central
Dharma Organization in Shimla from 1973.

A note on the translation:

Erick Tsiknopoulos did the main translation, and Mike Dickman reviewed it. The
Tibetan text and translation were gone over thoroughly with Gen Dawa Tsering, a
Tibetan language teacher and scholar, in Darjeeling. Ned Branchi provided the
Sanskrit diacritics. Erick Tsiknopoulos began the translation in June of 2011 in
Sidhpur, India, continued it in Kathmandu, Nepal, and finished it in Darjeeling, India,
in December of 2011.

