

Seed of Faith

A Biography of the Lord of Refuge, Chatral Sangye Dorje

Namo gurubhya

Primordial protector, who realized the natural
manifestation of original purity,
Vajrasattva, the magical net endowed with seven
aspects of spontaneous presence,
Their nondual unity, the play of the Lake-Born Vajra,
In a single embodiment, Buddha Vajra, I respectfully
honor you.

The tradition of early translations, like a treasure
churning from the ocean of milk,
And Kahma and Terma, like the sun and moon,
unimpaired in his late age,
As a birth that springs from space, when undertaking
this endeavor,
Divine three roots, may you pay heed to bestow your
blessings and permission.

Like a king among the victorious ones, Padmakara is a great universal monarch of all siddhas and knowledge-holders of India and Tibet, the keepers of the lineage of the luminous Great Perfection. My Lord of the Circle whose name is difficult to utter, performs the magical dance of his three mysteries. He is the all-pervasive sovereign of all Buddha

families and mandalas. Now, for a specific purpose, I shall here mention the renown of his name, Lord of refuge Chatral Sangye Dorje Rinpoche, who pervades the three levels of existence like a white umbrella unfurled. Since, he personally has awakened, since primordial time within the expanse of Samantabhadra, the awareness that is liberated within the ground, it is exclusively the domain of buddhas to describe thoroughly the superior qualities of this great master, which are like the rivers streaming from Lake Manasarovar, which appear in the shared experience of other beings to be influenced. Let me mention a quote to illustrate this:

When even the Vajra tongue is mute for exactly
describing
A great bodhisattva who dwells on the higher levels
And whose magical display of the three mysteries is a
never-ending wheel of adornment,
They are beyond the reach of someone who is utterly
entangled like me.

The childish mind of an ignorant person like myself lacks, just as the quote above, the courage to describe his qualities in full, but nevertheless, I will adhere to authentic predictions from vajra termas and to the reliable words of truth. In doing so, I will cast far away attempts to exaggerate or underplay, to be deceitful or partisan, to excessively flatter, and other such flaws of unwholesome bonds. Instead, I see it as being exceedingly meaningful to put down in writing some brief words of straightforward narration to function as seeds of trust and faith, taking into account the way we ordinary disciples perceive things at present. A tantra mentions this point:

Compared to meditating for hundred thousands of eons

Upon the deity endowed with the major and minor
marks,
It is better to think of your guru for a single moment.
Compared to reciting the mantras for approach and
accomplishment
It is better to make a single supplication to the guru.

The master Jigmey Rigpey Lodrö said:

Compared to honoring the countless conquerors of the
three times
With music and songs of praise magically emanated
from your tongue,
Inspire yourself with the fact that the merit is greater
From praising a single pore of your guru's body.

Moreover, the *Chronicles of Padma* mention:

Because he teaches you many methods and key points
of utmost profundity,
For anyone who practices the Unexcelled Secret
Mantra
The guru's life story is therefore taught to be the most
supreme.

In accordance with these statements, this is why the
innumerable sutras and tantras, treatises and pith instructions,
mention that the mass of merit from making supplications and
honoring him with words of praise by means of bringing to
mind the qualities of the glorious guru, plants roots of
goodness superior to everything else.

That such masters and sublime beings, whom we disciples
in common perceive to appear in this world and display
activities to influence others, manifest in numbers that equal

motes of dust on a vast plain or rays from the sun and the moon, and accomplish the immense benefit for the teachings and beings — this unceasing manifestation is the play of activity of the conquerors and the bodhisattvas. The *Tantra of Vajrasattva's Great Magical Net* mentions:

Because of being linked with great compassion
They manifest to the six classes of beings, in all times
and places.

Moreover, it says:

In the ten directions and four times, in unimaginable
numbers,
They appear in various ways to benefit each being to be
tamed.
With all the higher or lower vehicles,
To untold numbers of beings with distortions,
And to all the great assemblies of peaceful and wrathful
ones,
They always manifest in ways that correspond to each
individual.

The *Uttarashastra* mentions:

Without departing from the dharmakaya,
They manifest a variety of magical rupakayas.

It also says:

Just like the reflection of the deva king's body
Appears on the clean surface of the vaidurya gem,
The reflection of the Mighty Sage's body
Likewise appears on the clean surface of a being's
mind.

Another quote mentions:

On the mirror of pure and impure realms
Appear billions of magical reflections.
These expressions of the bodhisattvas —
Though they long ago definitely renounced this world

—
They stir up the ocean of compassion
And intentionally accept the play of existence.
Just like the youthful image of the moon
Can appear in separate vessels of water,
Their activities, spontaneously accomplished,
Appear in myriad types of magical display.

Accordingly, here is the way in which he appeared as the splendor of the teachings and beings, by manifesting in the magical form of a rupakaya in this age of strife that lies at the very end of the Dark Age. Within the Gongpa Yongdü, the sublime teachings revealed by the great treasure master Dödül Dorje, we find the following predictions:

A supreme emanation of the great scholar Vimalamitra
Well appear in the area of Katok with the name
Buddha.

Another prediction mentions:

This present Gyalwa Lodrö will
In future times, to the south of Katok,
Have the name Buddha, endowed with wisdom.
It is to that person you must give this teaching.

Moreover, we find the following passage among the predictions for the future revealed by Yönrü Chimey Dorje, a close disciple of Chagdud Pema Dödül:

A supreme mind-emanation of Padma,
A boy who is blessed by Vimalamitra,
With the name Vajra, from the year of the Ox,
Will promote the teachings of the practice lineage.

Jigdral Yeshe Dorje, the great treasure master, has written:

In particular, may you, the magical display of Kharchu
Sa,
Be victorious in the battle with the incorrigible, wrong
views of the Dark Age
And increase even further the Dharma's reaches to
fulfill our aims.
May your life last for one hundred years,
Blazing with the virtuous marks that spontaneously
perfect the two benefits,
So that the sound of the secret teachings pervades
through the triple worlds.

Numerous sublime masters who appeared in the past were eulogized with unmistakable vajra predictions relating all the details of their location, time, teacher and retinue, year sign and activities. Accordingly, we find in the terma predictions of Nyagla Pema Dūdül:

On the wondrous Southern Continent, to the east of the
Land of Snow,
The middle of the Four Valleys, famed as the great
Adzi Valley.

This describes his birthplace as being in the northern direction of Vajra Asana in Magadha that lies in the center of the Southern Jambu Continent — the realm of influence for the noble and sublime Avalokiteshvara as well as the incarnated

Dharma Kings and the accomplished translators and panditas. In that land, in the area of Zalmo Ridge, lies, in the middle of the Four Valleys, the Nyag Adzi Valley that is suffused with the blessings of the three Family Lords (Manjushri, Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani). Here, in the vicinity of Red Copper Cliff of Takhog Yak-Tamer, surrounded by an enclosure of gently flowing streams, fruit trees and vines, where turquoise foliage and myriad types of flowers abound — in other words, a place that in fact possesses the qualities of a hidden valley — lies a place of fertile grass lands.

He was born in this place as the son of Pema Döndrub belonging to the family line of Mukpo Dong and Sönam Tso, a lady of the Wakyung family. His parents had the deepest devotion and appreciation for the buddhas and spiritual teachers, cared for the lowly with loving kindness and were endowed with numerous qualities of wisdom. Our master was born from these parents in Western year of 1913. According to the Tibetan calendar, it is the 46th in the 15th year cycle, known as Careful. I have heard from the master personally that he “was unsheathed from the clouds of the womb” in the year of the Female Water Ox, on the morning of the auspicious 10th day of the fifth month — the day Guru Rinpoche manifested in the powerful form of Dorje Drollö and concealed myriad terma treasures with teachings and samaya substance in the various districts of the snowy land of Tibet.

The great treasure revealer Jigdral Yeshe Dorje, moreover, wrote:

Lineage holder of Padma, regent of the guru who tames
beings,
Sublime master and lord of Dharma,
Renunciant sky yogi, protector of the mandala,

Powerful Vajra King of the Wrathful Ones, I supplicate
you.

Accordingly, I shall now describe a vision of Nyima Gyaltsen, the Asey Bigo Tulku who was an incarnation of the Indian master Chandragomi and whose clairvoyance and miraculous powers completely surpassed the domain of ordinary people. For instance, he had visions of sublime deities including Padmasambhava of Uddiyana, the noble Avalokiteshvara, Vajrapani the lord of secrets, and Arya Tara, the mother of all conquerors. Within an experience of pure luminosity, he even journeyed to the northern land of the yakshas and remained for three days. In a lucid vision this master saw a white mule loaded with scriptures that got unloaded at the house of the Tsekho Shasey family. The next day, he went joyfully to their home and, after relating the story of his vision, crowned the child with the name Trogyal Dorje [Vajra King of the Wrathful Ones]. There is a saying,

Like knowing water from water fowl
And knowing fire from smoke,
It is from his qualities that the wise
Can recognize someone of the bodhisattva type.

Like this example, our teacher was from an early age naturally endowed with the capacity of the Mahayana type such as loving kindness and compassion, perseverance and intelligence. From that time onwards, here is a brief mention of some of the masters — sublime spiritual guides from every school — which he followed and with whom he studied.

Nyima Gyaltsen, the Asey Bigo Tulku;
Chökyi Lodrö, the incarnation of Jamyang Khyentse;
Pema Drimey, the Kongtrül incarnation of Zhechen;

Gyurmey Tenpa Namgyal, the supreme incarnation of Getsey;
 Jigdral Chogkyi Langpo, the Mogtsa Tulku;
 Jigmey Dechen Dorje, the sixth incarnation in the Drimey
 Shingkyong tulku line;
 Pema Trinley Gyatso, the incarnation of Chaktsa Tulku;
 Chökyi Gyatso, the Situ Panchen;
 The great treasure revealer Jigdral Yeshe Dorje;
 Tubten Chökyi Dorje, the fifth Dzogchen Tulku;
 Gyurmey Dorje, the son of the Dharma King Adzom Drukpa;
 Melong Dorje, the incarnation of Tokgö Tulku;
 Pema Tendzin, the incarnation of the Dzamira Tulku;
 Jowo Tashi Rabten, the great treasure master of Tsophu;
 Orgyen Trinley Lingpa, the Apang Tertön;
 The great treasure revealer Dungsey Dorje Dradül;
 Ngawang Chökyi Drakpa, the regent of Mindroling;
 The sublime incarnation Jampal Dewey Nyima;
 Tubten Chogkyi Langpo, the sublime Drubwang incarnation;
 Sangsang Ngedön Gyatso, the incarnation of Dungkar Tulku;
 Pema Namgyal, the Dungsey Gar Long-Yang;
 The sublime incarnation Chökyi Dorje;
 The sublime incarnation of Gongri Rinpoche;
 Incarnation of Mugsang Tulku;
 Orgyen Tenpel, the great scholar of Gotsa;
 The master khenpo Lekshey Jorden Dülwey De;
 The great scholar Nüden Khyentse Lodrö;
 The great khenpo Norbu Wangyal;
 The master scholar Ngawang Norbu;
 Khenpo Lodrö of Palyul;
 Drimey Özer, the great khenpo of Rishur;
 The teacher Gelek Gyatso of Garwa;
 The Nyungney teacher Rinchen Dargye;
 Lama Pema Silo from Abey;

Lama Karma Döndrub from Akyab;
Lama Chödrak from Hashur;
Lama Palden of Trakya;
The incarnation of Deshur Lama;
The life-long retreat lama at Dungkar;
Dewey Dorje, the Sera Jetsün;
Chönyi Zangmo, the Shukseb Jetsün.

In all, he studied and reflected upon the sutras, tantras and all the other topics of knowledge at the feet of more than one hundred learned and accomplished holders of the Early Translation School (Nyingma). In this way, he gained the renown of being a true mahapandita.

But especially, he was accepted as disciple by Khenchen Ngawang Palzang, the emanation of Mahapandita Vimalamitra also known as Pema Leydrel Tsal, and for six years and five months he served this master perfectly by the three ways of pleasing the teacher.

Beginning with the preliminary practices and continuing through the progressive stages of the path up to and including Trekchö and Tögal belonging to the Innermost Luminosity, he was bestowed an oceanlike amount of Dharma teachings from the sutras, tantras and oral instructions, like a vase filled to the brim. Bringing them into the sphere of practice, the realization of Dzogchen's great equanimity dawned in his mind. He realized the four levels of vision and reached a high stage among the learned and accomplished beings in this world. In this way, he is significantly replete with the qualities of experience and realization.

Nevertheless, he has throughout his entire life been quite unattached to material things, content with his own possessions and free from craving the property of others. In short, He has been concerned with the welfare of sentient beings with con-

tentment and detachment, while keeping the conduct of a yogi who hides his own qualities like keeping a lamp within a vase.

At a certain point of time, the mahapandita Ngagah Rinpoche bestowed his blessings upon our teacher, considering him his most unique disciple and successor with true realization. This was when he was crowned with the name Chatral Sangye Dorje and entrusted with the teachings and his spiritual aspirations.

Accordingly, the incarnated great treasure revealer, Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje wrote:

King of renunciants, in the definitive meaning,
Regent of the vidyadhara, incarnated to tame beings,
Lord of activity, benefiting whomever you encounter,
All-encompassing vajra master, think of me!

He also empowered our teacher to be his own regent, as the following text from his declaration shows.

“Let it be known to every sentient being, high or low, who lives in this world that I have now personally conferred the instructions of the Hearing Lineage containing the most profound teachings, the heart blood of the dakinis, upon the vidyadhara Trogyal Dorje. I have entrusted him with the realization of the true lineage, empowered him to be my regent to tame beings, and accordingly, assigned him with the task of guiding disciples of every kind to the path of liberation.

As every one of you — whether you be gods, demons or human beings — extend him your due assistance, it is a natural law that benefit and well-being will ensue both in this life and in those to follow.

In case someone possibly gives rise to malicious plans and deeds against him, even the tiniest, the guardians of the

Dharma with their powerful strength and their eyes of wisdom, will immediately join forces to cut short those who are physically embodied and diminish the faculties of the formless so that not even their names remain. About this there is not the slightest doubt, so be extremely conscientious as to these benefits and dangers.

This unambiguous letter was written at the slope of Düri, the Mountain of Blazing Meteoric Iron in Kongpo, by the crazy yogi and wrathful heruka Jigdral Yeshe Drakpo Tsal.”

In the same manner, we find in the terma predictions of Wangchen Gyepa Dorje, a descendant of Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje the following mention. (Tsarong refers to Trehor Rongpa Tsa that is situated no longer than a morning’s walk from our master’s place of birth).

In the direction of Tsarong, Sangye Dorje will appear.
With a youthful manner, he will fulfill the wishes of the
Dharma King.

Among the *Jadrin Ngön Dawa* writings of Lobsang Dönyö Dorje, the vajra-holder of Takpu, is found:

In Tibet, the one known as Buddha Vajra,
Will, by the kindness of the flawless master,
Enjoy a deep ocean of nectar.
Whoever links with him will be benefited.

Moreover, Jangchub Dorje, the master of Nyag, wrote:

Sangye Dorje, vidyadhara yogi,
With the sacred word, sign and statements and the
power of your experience, realization and
awareness,

The time is right for the altruistic resolve to nurture
disciples,
So hoist the victory banner of practice for the doctrine
of the Early Translations.
The vajra command that you will surely guide myriad
beings
Is stamped with the seal that signifies the doctrine of
unchanging secrets.

In accordance with this statement, our master became the personal guru of Tibet's regent king, the honorable Jampal Yeshe Tenpey Gyaltzen of Reting, an accomplished and great knowledge-holder, who also held the rank of Hutuktu Nomenhan. Acknowledge this to be a fact, which no intelligent person can possibly refute.

Furthermore, numerous people from all the districts of Tibet and Kham — high and low lama tulkus, appearing at the end of their succession of wonderful incarnations; sublime masters, rich in the qualities of scripture and realization; eminent dignitaries, lofty in their ranks and official positions; chieftains and aristocrats, elevated by their bloodlines, power and might; male and female benefactors, decorated in their noble riches of faith, resources and generosity — bowed at the auspicious golden wheels of his lotus feet and honored him as their personal guru.

From that time onwards, throughout his entire life he has remained untainted by even the tiniest shred of attachment and dishonesty, hope and fear, spawned by the eight mundane concerns, towards every disciple, be they high or low, in his various travels in the countries of India and Tibet, Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal.

He has continued the activity of overturning samsara from its depths to benefit beings — never excluding any one of the

untold number of people from different backgrounds, countries and languages who every single day came to him — by giving them a spiritual connection in the form of personal advice, instructions, protection, empowerment, and blessings.

Never has he wasted even the smallest amount of the material goods that effortlessly flowed before him due to people's generous faith. On the contrary, he used them constructing practice centers in various sacred locations and as contributions towards the sustenance of people in retreat, for the Nyungney group practice, and the like.

In particular, as evidence that his stream-of-being is utterly replete with the awakened frame of mind, he has annually undertaken the generous activity of bestowing protection against fear to millions of helpless, doomed creatures such as fish and tadpoles, frogs, snakes, and birds, large and small. Simply in this regard his life example is unrivaled by anyone.

Chimey Dorje, the treasure revealer of Yönrü, in the following words, prophesied our master's main seat:

In the sadhana place of Yangleshö
The incarnation of Kharchu will establish a practice
center.

Düjompa declared:

Deathless lord Padma Tötreng Tsal,
Pay heed, please gaze, since your disciple Kharchupa
With good intentions will found the noble stream of
practice,
A retreat center in your sacred sadhana place,
Grant your blessings to pacify any adversity there may
be
And to fulfill his every wish.

In accord with this prediction, our master went to the land personally visited and blessed by Buddha Shakyamuni, included in his prophecies, where you find the Langru Mountain and self-appeared stupa Gomasala Gandha, the great stupa Jarung Khashor and the stupa of Prince Fortitude where he sacrificed his body to the starving tigress, and where is situated the major charnel ground Mound of Spontaneous Perfection and many other sacred places. This area is a power spot in both the spiritual and mundane sense, known as Upachandho, a place of accomplished masters. Its fame is renowned throughout all the books of Dharma history and secular travel books of this world as the kingdom of Nepal. It is here, no more than 13 kilometers to the south of the capital, that he founded the Glorious Grove of Vidyadhara Siddhas, the practice center at Yangleshö, which is the marvelous site where the precious master of Uddiyana performed the sadhana of the great glorious Vajra Kumara and attained the supreme accomplishment of Mahamudra.

At Godavari that is counted among the 24 major places, he also established the practice center known as the Sanctuary for Accomplishing the Supreme Samadhi of Unexcelled Luminosity. At Yölmo, a major sacred place encircled by snowy ranges, which has been foretold in the Avatamsaka Sutra and in the Chronicles of Padma found in the Seven Profound Cycles, he established the practice center and temple known as Kunsang Chöling.

In Sikkim that lies to the south of Tibet, which was personally visited by Padmasambhava and is regarded as the king among hidden lands, he built Pakyong Katok Monastery. And at the opening to this sacred valley, near Darjeeling, at the distance a traditional hermitage is situated from a city, he built the

practice center Kündröl Osel Tse that is connected to his monastery Püntsok Ngayab Chöling.

Moreover, in the hidden valley of Langdrak in Bhutan, the terma place that has been visited by numerous great beings including the great tertöns Dorje Lingpa, Pema Lingpa and Sherab Mebar, you find Shar Kunsang Ling, a place that is counted among the omniscient Longchen Rabjam's eight Sanctuary Seats. Not far from there was the residence of Longchenpa's son, the prince and tulku Drakpa Özer, which our master subsequently restored by building the practice center Ngesang Tagten Ling.

In this way, he has constructed places for spiritual practitioners to congregate, consisting of temples and shrines, in sacred places and remote mountainsides belonging to various countries and thereby revived the Buddhadharma in the Dark Age. Never involved in deceptive schemes in the pursuit of material gain by catering to the living and the dead, he has lived in harmony with the conduct of the sublime forefathers and spent his life exclusively by keeping the style of a true renunciant.

In the *Tokjö of Jadrin Ngön Dawa* you find these lines:

Sangye Dorje, meaningful to encounter,
A lord of yogis who engages in Secret Mantra,
Will impart the instructions on the profound path to all
fortunate beings.

For quite a few fortunate men and women, whose former merit and aspirations have opportunely ripened, and for the many retreatants completing the set three years and three fortnights, our master has vastly unfurled white canopies of the excellent activity of bestowing the profound instructions of per-

sonal guidance in the luminous Great Perfection, the swift path for awakening to enlightenment in a single lifetime. And such activity is an act of indescribable kindness, which sustains the life-force of the Buddhadharma, both in general and in particular.

In this way he lives, and while doing so, may his life remain firm like the vajra throne and brilliant like full moon among the stars.

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A Biographical Summary

This is an autobiography that hits the vital point of pith instructions, of me, a present-day crafty charlatan. May the masters and the Three Jewels gaze upon us!

At this junction, when I, the old father, am near the end of my 87th year and about to be 88, many people who I know and also some unknown to me, have encouraged me to write an autobiography for the sake of followers and disciples. But, seeing it as an obstacle and barrier for liberation, I don't feel the need for a heap of luring words. Taking as witness the fact that no one knows a person better than himself, I leave this *Testament in Three Syllables* in the manner of an advice.

The three qualities of ethics, samadhi and insight,
Untainted and proven through direct perception,
Like dry moss, free from the dampness of pretentious
falsehood,
I consumed in the space of blazing fire jvala ram.

A religious façade, the jumble of materialism and
Dharma,
I surely knew was not the friend of effective practice.
So I tossed the dry ashes of deceit and insensitivity
To the wind from the mountaintop, as the letter yam.

Funds given for the living and the dead, a hindrance to
freedom,
And the schemes to collect, hoard and invest them to
build sacred objects,

I resolved to cleanse away with the clear stream
Of renunciation, detachment and revulsion, as the
element of kham.

I would like to make it explicitly clear that these verses were only uttered in reply to a questioning introspection of myself and definitely not as a message to the sublime and authentic beings who perceive the truth of dharmata and spontaneously fulfill the aims of others and themselves. Rather than misunderstanding my intent and reacting with envious annoyance, please keep your hearts at ease in blissful equanimity.

Even though I and people like me are not above ordinary beings, may this cause instigators of disunity and distorters of the Buddhadharma, whose conceit inflates them to the sky, to understand the truth in my words and actively seek to be mindful, careful and conscientious.

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So he spoke.

The writings of our master, which he gave in response to requests from devoted disciples have statements that connect them with the sutras, tantras and shastras; they have correct logical structures that are in harmony with the rules for grammar, reasoning and what is based on fact; and they are intelligible in that they are combined with clarifying instructions. In short, they possess the characteristics of genuine treatises in that they have clear wording with profound meaning.

His writings include refutation of criticism, monastic history, collection of praises, pithy advice, and the cycle on the Hearing Lineage of the Great Perfection, as well as records of teachings received, lineage history, liturgical arrangements, and practice manuals for approach, accomplishment and enactment. There are also manuals for sacred dances, mandala proportions, and chants, as well as for the use of ritual implements and musical instruments. On the whole, they comprise a number of volumes equal to the five buddha families.

It is due to my own and other disciple's negligence and lack of concern, and due to the unfortunate circumstances of turbulent times in various countries here and there, that we have not yet found the time to effectively compile and publish them. Nevertheless, I humbly beg you well-meaning, intelligent people to extend your participation by bringing forth whatever is in your custody so that we soon can include here a list of all his writings.

Let me conclude with the prayer, repeated a hundredfold times, that our master may compassionately consider us miserable beings, so wrought up within the dense darkness of the five degenerations, and let his remarkable physical presence remain as steadfast as the vajra endowed with its seven

qualities, turning unceasingly the wheel of the Dharma in harmony with the aspirations and potentials of those to be tamed.

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Concluding verses.

Though my intellect and voice are too feeble to
adequately express
The Ganga-like deeds of past conquerors and
bodhisattvas,
How wonderful it is, to raise up with my finger a single
drop of what I have heard and seen,
As an offering to delight devoted followers!

By the goodness of this writing may the essential
teachings never wane,
May the sublime holders of the doctrine live long,
And may I and every other sentient being
Cross samsara's ocean to reach omniscient
enlightenment!

Though in dearth of eloquent and refined expression,
its meaning may possibly yield an excellent crop.
Without the conceit of pretentious scholarship, its
authentic words have a potent taste.
Free from the eight concerns and ambitious craving, its
contents bear the liberating story of our master.
Though lacking sweet words to fool people, may this
writing be auspicious with virtuous goodness!

This was written to make meaningful the insistent requests from many vajra brothers and sisters who since a long time told me to please write a concise biography of our lord of refuge, and it was also based on receiving his permission. In the *Long-Nying Kadü Gyamtso* you find these lines:

My body and possessions I offer you.
I shall do whatever you command.
If I succeed in fulfilling it, even at the cost of my life,
Please grant me accomplishment in this life!

To quote the *Kabgye Yongdü*:

Cast away the thought “I cannot fulfill
The wish he explicitly stated.”
When you carry it out without timidity,
You achieve, unhindered, your every aim.

Accordingly, this was written by the wandering simpleton who goes by the name Tendzin Özer, someone who sits at the lowest end of the line from the Omniscient One, the khenzur from Tralek Sang-Ngak Podrang, which is one of the largest branch monasteries of Katok. It happened in the Western year of 1999, which corresponds to the seventeenth year-cycle, Pramati in Sanskrit that is Nyöden in Tibetan, Cha Mau in Chinese, and using our country’s system of the four elements, it is the year of the Female Earth Hare. It was begun in the waxing part of the cloud-filled Purvasadha month (July/August), on the sacred day the incomparable King of Sages put in motion the first Dharma Wheel on the Four Truths for his human retinue of the five eminent ones and a celestial gathering of 84,000 devas.

In accordance with statements in the tantras, Padmasambhava pledged to kindly accept, and to bestow his

compassionate blessings on, all devoted followers of the Old School in this world on the tenth day of every waxing moon, in general, and all trustful Tibetan disciples, in particular. In the extraordinary astrological system included in *Lama Gongdü*, the tenth day of the sixth month is the blessed day Guru Rinpoche miraculously took birth in a physical form endowed with the major and minor marks upon the anthers of a lotus flower in a Sindhu island. On this auspicious day, accompanied by the radiant constellation Goddess Jungdenma, this writing was completed at the first rays of the sun.

By this merit, may we in all lifetimes be protected by our glorious lord guru's compassion! Sarva dakaleyanam bhavantu! May it be virtuous! May it be virtuous! May it be virtuous!

According to Khenpo Tendzin Özer's wish and with his explanations, Erik Pema Kunsang translated this in 2003 with the aspiration that it may extend the life and activities of Kyabje Chatral Rinpoche. Corrected by Marcia Binder Schmidt and Idan.

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*A Rough Sketch of the Enlightened Deeds
of Kyabje Chatral Sangye Dorje Rinpoche
Arranged as a Remembrance
by Shelge Jamyang Tenpa*

In earlier times at Yangleshö in 1976, the fire dragon year, the Great Renunciant Kyabje Chatral Rinpoche went on a picnic with some students. I, Shelge, along with Degyal Rinpoche and a few other students were at my place, and I posed a few questions to Rinpoche. I jotted down his perfect responses as recollections.

Kyabje Chatral Rinpoche was born in Nyarong, in 1913, the year of the water ox. When he was about three years old, the people of that area began fighting. Due to this, Kyabje Rinpoche's father and mother took him to Sertar in Golok and stayed there. When he was fifteen, as instructed by his uncle, he became the student of Sera Khandro (left) and received in entirety all of her New Treasures. She infused him with the importance of spreading these Treasures as her Dharmacustodian. She told him that his prophesied guru throughout all lifetimes was Khenpo Ngawang Palzang from Katok monastery. Immediately upon hearing this, Rinpoche experienced a very special surge of faith, devotion, joy, and happiness.

At age seventeen, with his uncle's counsel and without the knowledge of his parents and siblings, Rinpoche departed secretly and alone for Nyoshul, about one month's journey. On that journey at a rest-house, he heard that the summer river had swelled such that it was impassable, but the caretakers there told him, "We have to help practitioners," and they gave

him a yak, which he rode to cross the river.

At a Katok-affiliated monastery, Chatral Rinpoche asked a divination from a lama named Trangan who said that he saw a golden vajra standing straight upright on a white road, and that [this was a sign] he certainly would benefit the Dharma. When Rinpoche came in sight of the main residence at Nyoshul, he met a lady carrying a full container of milk coming from another direction. When he asked her, “Is this the lama’s residence,” she directed him right to it, and he attained the great fortune of meeting Khenpo Rinpoche and becoming his student. “What is your name?” Khenpo Rinpoche asked, and when Rinpoche responded, “Trögyal Dorje [Wrathful Vajra],” Khenpo Rinpoche said, “From now on you should be called Sangye Dorje [Buddha Vajra].” For six years he stayed at Nyoshul, studying, contemplating, and meditating, and he completely severed all doubts and confusion.

After consulting Khenpo, Sangye Dorje returned once to his home for a visit. Then he went to Guru Rinpoche’s sacred sites in central Tibet – Samye Chimphu and Shelkar – to do a three-year retreat. After this he planned to return to Nyoshul, as Khenpo Rinpoche had instructed. When he was practicing at Samye Chimphu, King Reting Rinpoche and his entourage arrived and in the course of their conversation, King Reting related that he had wished to invite Khenpo Rinpoche to Lhasa, central Tibet, to confer the transmission of the Treasury of Precious Revelations. In particular King Reting said he wished to receive the profound instructions connected with these, and he had sent someone especially for the purpose of making this request to Khenpo Rinpoche who had sent back an

answer. Khenpo said he was old and physically unable to make the journey, and if King Reting wished to receive these instructions, he could receive them from Sangye Dorje. Sangye Dorje himself also received a letter telling him to offer the transmissions. Thus he completely fulfilled King Reting's wishes, exactly as desired.

Following that, Sangye Dorje was practicing at Sheltrak when three Dharma sister nuns arrived with the news that Khenpo Rinpoche had passed into the state of ultimate peace. However, just as his lama had instructed, only when he had finished his three-year retreat did he return to Golok, journeying once to his birthplace. Then again Sangye Dorje went back to central Tibet.

The Great Renunciant Kyabje Sangye Dorje travelled to Sikkim, Bhutan, and India before the uprisings in Tibet. Around 1958 he went to Tiger's Nest in Paro, Bhutan where he built a new statue of Guru Dorje Trölo about the size of a full-grown human. Around 1960 some Bhutanese offered him a monastery in Jorbungalo, and there in 1961 he constructed a Tashi Gomang stupa and a statue of Guru Rinpoche, and I served him at this time.

In 1963 Chatral Rinpoche established the retreat center Kundrol Osal Tse [All-Liberating Luminous Peak] and began the first three-year retreat with eight participants. Around 1965 in Sonada he built a nunnery with living quarters, and in 1982 the first four nuns began their three-year retreat. In 1971 he constructed a retreat center at the holy sanctuary of Yangleshö, on land that had been gifted by the King of Nepal and began the first three-year retreat there with eight

participants and two attendants. Later the monastery expanded and the residence for monks along with retreatants increased in scope. In Salbari, beginning in 1975, Chatral Rinpoche – with the assistance of two patrons, Khansab from Kashmir and the Hindu Kaliparasat – constructed a series of stūpas and also a residence. Around 1978 in Tinchuli he built a retreat for four practitioners and began the first three-year retreat there.

In 1980 Chatral Rinpoche took his first pilgrimage to the hidden land of Yolmo to explore the sacred places. In 1981 he constructed a four-person retreat center in Dashmile at the monastery he had been given and began a three-year retreat there. In 1983 he put his daughter Saraswati into a three-year retreat at Sangchen Trakngak Ling, in Tropatrong in Yolmo. In 1986 he began the first three-year retreat at Neyding in Yolmo and re-opened many sacred places in the area. Then gradually more retreat cabins were built and in total the three-year retreatants and others staying on the outside increased to about seventy.

For the health of the retreatants at Yangleshö, in 1985 Chatral Rinpoche went to visit the sanctuary of Godavari and there he constructed a retreat center with a ceremonial temple and all needed facilities. Then he began the first three-year retreat with eight participants and one attendant. The retreat stipends were offered by the sponsor Drangjon Bu Kalzang.

In 1985 he opened the sacred place Beylang Drak in Bhutan, and in 1988 he began a three-year retreat there with the sponsorship of both Sherig Tenzin and Dasho Pasang Dorje. In 2004 Kyabje Katok Situ Ngedon Chokyi Dronme Rinpoche stayed in three-year retreat, and he continues to

reside there up to the present.

In 1989 at His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche's monastery in Boudha, Chatral Rinpoche built the stupa for the precious wisdom kāya of Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche. Then in 1989 and 1990, the prince of Sikkim sponsored the construction of a new retreat center in Taktser, Sikkim along with four groups of eight retreatants who progressively stayed in three-year retreats. After assembling all the conducive circumstances, Chatral Rinpoche bestowed the ripening empowerments and liberating instructions and began the first one.

In 1992 near Yangleshö, Bu Kalzang sponsored the construction of another three-year retreat center and retreat began there with eight participants. In 1993, near to Yangleshö in the village of Satikhel, Drangjon Bu Kalzang sponsored the construction of a Shugsep nun retreat center, Neysum Daki Yongdu Ling, and a three-year retreat began there. In 1994 at Chumichangchup, Gangkar Bu Wangchug provided the sponsorship and Gekal took the responsibility for building a retreat center and all associated facilities including a temple with statues, and another three-year retreat with eight participants began.

In 1994 at the Dharma Garden of Peace and Freedom in Godavari, Chatral Rinpoche enthroned the incarnation of Dudjom Rinpoche, Sangye Pema Zheba on a indefatigable golden lion throne. Then in 1995 at the Lhakang in Yolmo, retreat facilities for four groups of eight retreatants each were constructed along with additional housing for other practitioners and a lama's residence. In 1996 in Sermantang, Yolmo, Gangkar Wangchug sponsored another retreat.

For all the retreatants, earlier and later, in the three-year retreats mentioned above, it need not even be mentioned that food was provided during the three-year periods. Additionally all provisions and helpful circumstances were provided such as retreat huts or rooms, shrines, mattresses, tables and so forth. Each year Chatral Rinpoche gave teachings, from the preliminary practices all the way to the profound teachings, as well as ripening empowerments and liberating instructions, and thus tamed each person in tune with his or her mental capacity. He himself walked to each and every retreat center, wherever it was located, and many students were sustained by this great kindness.

Once the stūpa and temple at the sacred place of Salbari were completed, every year during the first Tibetan month about one-hundred men and women gathered and undertook the ritual fasting and purification practice of *nyungney*. In 1991 an excellent temple filled with precious Dharma supports such as statues was constructed. From then on every twelfth month Rinpoche provided the funds to observe this practice and about one-hundred men and women gathered annually for eighteen years to maintain this tradition. Always at all of Chatral Rinpoche's Dharma centers it was standard that meat and alcohol were completely prohibited.

Kyabje Chatral Rinpoche himself had refrained from meat since 1960. Previously at the great Nyingmapa Prayer Ceremony in Bodhgaya sometimes meat had been given as part of the food offerings, but from 1990 onward it became standard that meat was not allowed as per the strong insistent command of

Chatral Rinpoche. From that time on vegetarianism was adopted, and for as long as the teachings of the Buddha endure, this virtuous move to stop the accrual of negative karma engendered by over ten-thousand sangha members eating meat will be in place.

Similarly, the fame of Chatral Rinpoche's constant activity of fish liberation has now spread far and wide. From the time he left Tibet and came to this region until now, Kyabje Chatral Rinpoche has himself personally gone to the fish merchants for many many years, forbearing hardships and spent hundreds of thousands of rupees, establishing all beings connected to this activity on the path to liberation.

Chatral Rinpoche never accepted contributions from abroad. The offerings made with faith on behalf of the deceased and for the living he used solely for making supports for the Dharma or for putting into the retreat centers. His use of resources only to enact tremendous benefit in sustaining the Buddha's teachings and helping sentient beings was apparent to everyone. Likewise here is just a summary of the incredible sublime activities of this great saint. A general description of Chatral Rinpoche's work in building supports for the Dharma follows.

In Jorbungalo he constructed a one-story copper and gold statue of Guru Rinpoche in the form of "Subduing with Splendor all Apparent Existence." As supports for wisdom speech, he made a large and a small mani prayer wheel from copper and brass. As supports for wisdom mind he constructed a Tashi Gomang stupa made from gold and copper

up to the Dharma wheel and gate house, as well as a Kadam stupa, and a Namgyal stupa; all three are about three stories in size. (image right)

Inside his Salbari monastery, Chatral Rinpoche constructed a Nirvana stupa about five stories high housing very special precious relics. (image below) Inside on a lion throne is a temple which houses a statue of the Buddha about the size of a person and over two hundred volumes of Buddhist scripture from the Kangyur and Tengyur. Also at Salbari Rinpoche constructed a mani temple, the shape of which appears externally as a stupa about two stories high. Inside is a mani wheel filled with 100 million mantras and next to it is a Khangbu stupa about one and a half stories, filled with 600,000 sacred tsa-tsa clay molds and the entire collection of Nyingma tantras. He also constructed a temple specifically for the annual fasting practice: the Kamed Gepel Temple, which holds about two-hundred people. Inside are eleven painted images, the main Dharma supports, which are pure and perfect in every way in terms of complexion and the images of deities, lamas, and dharma-protectors.

In Nepal at the sacred site of Yangleshö Chatral Rinpoche constructed a temple along with monk's quarters and retreat rooms which he called "The Vidhyadharas' Pleasure Grove for Practice." The temple measures about six stories, from the lowest part up to the gold and copper ornament on its crest. The main supports for the temple are a statue of Guru Rinpoche about the size of a human and many statues belonging to His Holiness himself, both old and new. The principal support for wisdom speech are the volumes of the precious Kangyur as well as many volumes of teachings from

the great Indian and Tibetan scholars and masters. The support for wisdom mind is a stone stupa filled with very special substances including the thumb of Rigdzin Jigme Lingpa. It measures about one story in height, and is perfect and replete with blessings. In Godavari are two stupas - one called “Choten Tongdrol Chenmo,” The Great Stupa Which Liberates Upon Sight, and the other “Lhakang Choten” The Stupa Temple – made according to the Burmese tradition, about three stories high.

Finally, I myself have seen a few of Chatral Rinpoche’s teachings and I list these below. Before His Holiness departed Tibet for India, he wrote as a letter especially for the Tibetan people *Mirror that Distinguishes Flaws and Virtues* and *A Long Soliloquy of Sadness upon Reaching Misfortunate Times*. After arriving in India His Holiness wrote *A Prayer Inciting the Oath-Bound to Reverse the Troubles of Misfortunate Times*; *A Brief Account of the Evils of Tobacco*; *Praise for the Holy Sanctuary of Yangleshö Explained from the Letter Ka*; *The Great Code of the Monastery: Beautiful Ornament of the Three Vows*; *A Response to the Deceptive and False Speech of Dzemad - A Fiery Downpour of Vajra Scripture and Reasoning*; *The History of Derge Katok Monastery*; *Praise to Padmasambhava’s Sacred Forests of Yolmo*; *An Offering for Jomo Yangri, Guardian of the Sacred Place*; *Spiritual Advice Given to all Disciples Gathered at Yangtrö Kunzang Choling*; *The True Meaning of Maratika Cave: A Tambura to Delight Saraswati*; *The Benefits of Saving Lives*; and *Spiritual Advice for Disciples*, given when a few went to receive the transmissions of the Treasury of Precious Revelations at the hidden land of Tashi Ding; a prayer for calling out to the lama entitled *The Excellent Path of Supreme Great Bliss*; the list of

contents for filling the 100 million mani prayer wheel at Dzobang Monastery, and so forth. There are many other teachings that I have not seen, and they can be added to the list above. As I am sometimes ignorant, if there are repetitions or omissions in what I have listed above, please forebear and make the corrections.

Since it is said that realization of wisdom depends on blessings, and blessings depend on devotion, the purpose in writing this is because devotion arises when we see and hear about the sublime noble activities of the lama. I have composed this in order to help a little bit the newer disciples of His Holiness, and because I thought that this brief sketch might be beneficial for other scholars who might write about the profound and vast activities of His Holiness' liberating life story. At the Salbari monastery with a few students I, the ordinary Shelge Jamyang Tenpa wrote this down and offered it on April 7, 1993, the Tibetan year of the water bird on the 16th day.

*When we properly examine with honest minds
the way that such genuine benefit
for the Buddha's teachings and sentient beings
has been enacted by His Holiness –
how can ordinary individuals compare in any way
to the incredible activities of such a sublime and noble being?*

His Holiness' activities after 1993 along with the three volumes of his collected writings are being supplied by Shelbu Damtsig Dorje and offered as a gift of Dharma.