

Collected works of Eternal Bliss

Volume 1

An Introduction to Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism

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Preface

The superb essence of the Buddha Dharma is the true nature of the Tathagata. The union of the true nature [with a practitioner's mind] is most precious when it is personally realized while departing from the use of language. Although we need to annihilate the subject and object, at the beginning of sowing the seeds, it is impossible not to rely on the use of words. Lama Kan Tsao and I once wrote the second and third volumes of Changle (Eternal Bliss) Library in Shanghai. In the past four years, four, five, and six volumes have been published abroad, which is nothing more than throwing bricks to attract jade and using words to bring about words. The publication of the first three volumes was interrupted for over thirty years. Now that new volumes came out the last year. Although the karmic conditions of gathering and parting are said to be like dreams, illusory like bubbles and their shadows, the joyful events occurred when auspicious conditions were met, and it cannot be without virtuous fruits and auspicious causes. Today, the lay practitioners of our Dharma center responded to readers' demands and generously contributed to sponsoring the current reprinting. Their actions filled the previously empty bookshelf and were beneficial to the library.

We compiled the first three volumes when we were in the age of 20s and 30s. [Although] now there are new works, the readers have developed a growing interest in the legacy works. The content of the previous works is rich, and it is unlike scratching the itch through the boots. On the other hand, we recall the past from everything of the present and strife to fulfill an elegant (exquisite) motivation! In other words, the reader's love must have some karmic connection with the Esoteric teachings. Fortunately, we have encountered a wonderful audience, you will get benefits without blame. With the hope of relying on this karmic connection, it will be beneficial to the people who sponsor the publication and those who are devoted to reading, and may this merit be unequalled. May it be equivalent to the motivation to seek the ultimate path and benefit the beings, the simultaneous accomplishment of the wisdom and merit, and obtaining the fruits of the three [Buddha] bodies and five wisdoms. This is thus the preface.

Master Mi Xian

February 1991, Maha Sandhi Yoga Center, New York. (USA)

The Origin of the Changle (Eternal Bliss) Collected Works

The fundamental teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha are a splendid beacon in the development of human culture more than 2,400 years ago. They are the crystallization of the high level of wisdom developed by the Indian people in their struggle to get rid of theocratic rule and class oppression at that time: they embody the profound and vast ideals for the elevation of human awareness, the purification of life, the adornment of realms, and the realization of the perfect supreme peace and happiness of all sentient beings. For more than two thousand years, through the narration, development, and interpretation of many sages from Indian, Chinese, Tibetan, Mongolian, and other ethnic groups, Buddha's teachings have immersed and nurtured all aspects of the cultural life of various ethnic groups in Asia. In our country (China), it is very obvious that the Buddhist culture has greatly benefited from the close connectivity of the Chinese, Tibetan, Mongolian, and other fraternal ethnic groups.

We realize that the basic spirit of Buddhism is great, the fundamental doctrines of the Dharma are consolidated, the contribution and influence of Buddhism on human society are indelible, and the relationship of Buddhism to the cultural life of the Chinese people is long-lasting and far-reaching. However, we should also admit that since the establishment of Buddhism in the world, it is inevitable that it must evolve in its development historically. The results of this evolution include innovation and reorganization. Because of these reasons, one perspective is that there are various sublime [interpreted] meanings, and from another perspective, there is a lack of consensus. The current development of our society demands us to reorganize, study, and make comprehensive choices on the entire Buddhist teachings based on the fundamental teachings of Buddhism from a scientific, historical perspective. We hope Buddhism can continue to benefit society in this new era of progressive development in our culture and daily life.

The Buddha's teachings have long-established distinct traditions in the Hinayana, Mahayana, Sutrayana, and Tantrayana¹. Among them, Hinayana thinking has since retreated to a subordinate position after the development of Mahayana philosophy. Its influence on future dissemination is far less significant than that of the two principal departments of Mahayana, Sutra, and Esotericism. The objects of our current research are mainly the two major departments of Mahayana, Sutra and Esotericism. Among these two major departments, in the Sutrayana, it is recognized that the one that can best inherit and carry forward the fundamental teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha is the teachings of the two great Bodhisattvas Nagarjuna and Asanga. For Vajrayana, the teachings imparted by Guru Padmasambhava in Tibet and Tripitaka Amoghavajra in China best represented the true face of the Vajrayana teachings. Therefore, our fundamental work will focus on integrating, researching, and developing these four schools of thought to provide further information for comprehensive choices for all Buddhist teachings.

We understand that what we are committed to is a long-term and arduous task that cannot be accomplished by a few people with their meager strength. Therefore, we hope to receive full support and cooperation from the Buddhist community and sponsorship and support from all aspects of society. To start our work, we established the Changle (Eternal Bliss) Vihara as the starting point for promoting our work. Chang (Eternal) and Le (happiness) are the main content of the quality of the Buddha's land, and it is the highest goal desired by Buddhists [practitioners]. It also symbolizes the [aspiration] to achieve sustainable development of the human society and perfect peace of all sentient beings in the Dharmadhatu. We are willing to carry forward this spirit, strive to serve the great construction of a new motherland and maintain lasting world peace under the banner of great patriotism.

To research and study Sakyamuni's teachings, we attempted a science-based historical narrative on the development of important treatises on the Sutra and Esoteric teachings. We were selective on materials that were relatively simple and yet representative of the [Buddhist] doctrines and suitable for our time period. In addition, we want to include in the [future] Changle Series reviews of Sutra and Esoteric classics, the Lamas' experience in seeking Dharma, and various domestic and international [Dharma] discussions. We will organize the materials into categories and publish them in a non-periodic manner.

This is our first publication. The origin of this article is as stated above. I hope that all the great and virtuous people from all walks of life can continue to support and guide us!

July 1953 AD

Translator's notes

The thoughts to translate the works of Lama Kan Tsao and Master Min Xian started in late 2023 and early 2024. The idea crystallized when Tulku Pema la, and I met at the Stupa Consecration Ceremony of H.H. Dorjechang J.D. Sakya held on March 2024 in Phunstog Phodang, New Delhi, India. I also received some signs about this.

The Collected Works of Changle (Eternal Bliss) currently contains nine volumes. These are mainly the collected published writings of Lama Kan Tsao and Master Min Xian. Articles from their Dharma friends and students are also included. Currently, we focus on Volume One, the earliest writings of Lama Kan Tsao and Master Mi Xian when they returned from Tibet in the early 1950's.

The readers are advised to be mindful that the articles were written in the early 1950s when China underwent a significant change – the nationalist government started its exile in Taiwan in 1949. China has had a different administration since. The tone of some of the language may seem “interesting” to English-speaking readers in the 21st century. Perhaps the readers want to consider the world in the 1950s in perspective.

I have read the text at least once or twice over the decades. I consider the first three volumes of Changle beneficial literature for those interested in Tibetan Buddhism, especially those with some background in Chinese Buddhism. The translation process has allowed me the opportunity to take a deeper look at the words of Lama Kan Tsao and Master Min Xian. I must admit it was a profound experience, and yet it was personal. It is a privilege to recall and to remember the words of my guru and teacher. This effort has given me a renewed appreciation of their work, mission, compassion, and aspiration to benefit beings.

During the translation process, I realized that some insights from their works had never been translated into English before. These insights are about aspects of Dzogchen and its relevance to Ch'an Buddhism. Perhaps these ideas will find a renewed interest and will benefit a new generation of audiences.

Like my guru and teacher, I sincerely apologize for any flaws or imperfections in this translation. May this work be beneficial, and may any merit generated be dedicated to all beings, following the examples of the Great Bodhisattvas.

Sarva Mangalam

David S.W. Lim

22nd June 2024, Taiwan, ROC.

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Chapter 1: A brief account of the journey to Kham to study the Dharma

Lama Kan Tsao

In 1947, I was introduced to Master Mi Xian by Master Dao'an at Putuoqian Temple (Puji Temple), where Master Mi Xian was teaching the "Aspiration of Samantabhadra". We sat together at the lecture and listened to the Dharma teachings. Upon completion of the teachings, I then moved to Gion Hut from Changlean. With Mi Xian and Dao'an, we studied the "Treatise on Merging with the Western Land." We talked about Kham-Tibetan Buddhism, and I mentioned I was eager to pursue it. Master Mi Xian said, "This is my original wish." By the spring of 1948, we became "comrades" and planned our trip to the West. We left Putuo – the breezed Buddha realm, leaving behind the two elderly (My Dharma master, Venerable Liao Qing of the Banshan Temple, who is seventy-eight years of age now. My Ordained teacher, Master Liao Chen of Changle Temple, passed into nirvana in Putuo at the age of seventy-three on 29th June last year (1952)) For the future of Buddhism and the future of Putuo (There was no one from Putuo ever went to Kham and Tibet to seek Dharma, I was the first ever.), and I devoted myself to seeking Dharma, even for the sake of my life.

At the time, my understanding was only with the Gelugpa, and I had no idea about the Nyingma, Kagyu, and Sakya. So, when people talked about learning the Dharma, we only thought about the Gelugpa. Three days before we embarked on the journey, a large person with a hair bouquet suddenly came to my dream, "When you two come to Kham to study the Dharma, you should learn the Nyingma religion, and you can quickly achieve accomplishments." The language was clear and obvious, and I still remembered it after waking up. The next day, I shared the dream with Mater Mi Xian. Because he started with the Gelugpa teachings, he thought that the Nyingma teachings were heretics. However, I rarely had dreams, and there was no thought of Nyingma in my mind. Master Mi Xian became very hesitant. He went to the Jade Buddha Shrine at the rear of the monastery and performed divination. He laid out the four schools in front of the Buddha and then chanted mantra and prayer (Master Mi Xian experienced omens when doing the Mani Dharani). He spontaneously picked a hand, and the Nyingma one came up, and then he came to me. I was very happy. Master Mi Xian still thought that perhaps the dream and divination might not be reliable enough. On the same night, Master Mi Xian recited the Heart Sutra in front of the statue of Avalokiteshvara. The four choices were used again, and this time wrapped in fried noodles. After the recitation, I respectfully lit an incense and beseeched my request. Amazingly, Nyingma appeared again. Therefore, we made up our minds to learn the Nyingma teachings. A long time ago, a high lama named Pho Brang in central Tibet warned that those who first learned the Gelugpa teachings, the protector would come and kill the student if [the student] changed to another religion. (Pho-Brang Rinpoche promoted the idea that Nyingma and Ch'an² are evil teachings, and those who learn them will descend to the Vajra Hell. His students, such as the Ngawant Khenpo, warned if Gelugpa students changed to learn Nyingma and Kagyu, the protector would sentence them to death. In the year 1947, when we started the journey, we met a monk from Wuxi doing a pilgrimage at Putuo. He heard that we were going to Kham to study Nyingma teachings. Because of the vow he made with Pho Brang Rinpoche, he vowed in this lifetime and even the future not to learn the Nyingma religion. He also tried to persuade us not to study the Nyingma teachings.). However, the person shown in the dream [and his instructions] contradicted the vows commanded by the other master. We were confounded about what to do with these two extreme views. When we came to Chongqing, we stayed at Chang'an Temple Buddhist Society. Coincidentally, the translator Master Fa Zun (the dean of the division, the dean of the Bei Hang Hanzang Tibetan Academy) was in town for business, and we had an opportunity to meet. We inquired him about our two questions, and he replied that that protectors are emanations of Bodhisattvas, and they appear wrath externally, but they are compassionate inside. "As long as you don't learn the Tirthika teachings, you may learn the

Nyingmapa teachings because the Nyingma religion is also the Dharma. There is absolutely no reason for the protectors to punish practitioners who are learning the teachings of other schools of Buddhism.” Like I was a monk [in the Chinese Buddhist tradition] in the past and then went to Tibet to study from lamas, why wouldn't the Dharma Protector Skanda³ punish me? Today has been a long time since I returned from my Dharma study, and it is quite obviously unjust to say that the Dharma protector punishes people for changing their religion. We received his piercing and profound teachings from the respected translator Fa Zun, and all our doubts were cleared up immediately. Master Fa Zun is a true and wise spiritual friend with illuminating eyes.

After living in Chongqing for about a month, I bought a ticket and took the bus to Chengdu. Through the introduction of layman Mr. Sun Zhicheng, I got to know the Lama Dunga, who lived in the Yan Gongguan on Sanhuaishu Street. His guru is a Kagyupa Tulku with the Hutuktu⁴ title who has achieved great accomplishments in White Tara practice (his temple is in Lijiang, Yunnan). He was kind, compassionate, and tireless in giving teaching. When he heard that I was going to study Dharma in Kham, he was very happy. I was accepted by the Lama, and he gave us the Ksitigarbha initiation, making him our first guru⁵.

In July, I arrived in Khangding⁶ from Rongya. When I was in Shanghai, I corresponded several times with Mr. Shao Fuchen, a layperson and the president of the Buddhist World Service Society. Since we didn't know anyone there, we temporarily stayed at Mr. Shao's place. The layman was indeed a trailblazer for the Dharma and for the people. In the two months, he took good care of us, and it was unforgettable.

At that time, the currency was significantly depreciated, and the economy was in dire condition. We had no confidence in our lives, and Mr. Shao was also worried. However, within two months, Mr. Shao introduced us to the old Khenpo of a Sakya Monastery and Lama Drakpa Gyaltsan. During this short period of time, we studied the Tibetan and received teachings of Tara, Guru Rinpoche, a Long-Life Deity, Avaloketeshavra, etc. We also listened to the melodies of teachings from time to time. The Lama spoke a little bit of Chinese. Although he was a lama of the Sakya sect, he had also studied the teachings of other sects. Therefore, when he talked, he rarely said anything that was right or wrong. This was the second time we met a guru.

When I lived in Kangding, I paid close attention to finding out about the lamas in Kham with whom I could take refuge. I heard that the area around Derge was the highest cultural center in Kham. There were great practitioners who were proficient in the Five Sciences, mastered the Sutra and Tantra, meditated and had realized great accomplishments. Some of them lived in seclusion in the snowy mountains, or they were the abbots of monasteries. They were available wherever [in Kham]. We were willing to go there happily. Mr. Shao Jun, citing the cold climate, language barrier, lack of finances, and various difficulties outside the Pass, advised me to stay for a few months and take it easy. However, we were anxious for the Dharma and could not be bothered by all the hardships. After deciding to leave the border, we paid for the fare of the horseman. In addition to the travel expenses along the way, we estimated we would have one month's stipend when we arrived at Derge. Mr. Shao saw our firm determination. We felt sad and happy, and we bid farewell to Mr. Shao and others (and his son-in-law Liu Jun and others) in tears."

Leaving Kangding, we passed through Qianning, Daofu, Luhuo, Garze, and other counties and gradually reached Derge. After passing through Kalon, I took a letter of introduction from the Tusi⁷ Baili Wangdui of Garze and asked to see འཇམ་ལྷོ་བས་ལྷན་ Bya-Khra-tob-dan (a person with great reputation and respect in the northern Kham, who was the deputy chairman of the Xikang⁸ Tibetan Autonomous Region Government at the time) to ask for help. Chairman Bya⁹ was surprised because we traveled thousands of miles and were not afraid of the hardships. So, he called for an interpreter (we came to Kham for the first time and were not familiar with the Tibetan language [at the time]). At

first, he asked about our purpose for coming [to Kham], and we told him about studying Dharma, and he was very happy. Then, he asked about the Buddhist traditions and philosophies in China. We then analyzed the traditions of Ch'an, Sutra, Vinaya, Vajrayana, Pure Land, etc., and briefly elaborated on their philosophies. Chairman Bya said: "The teachings are very similar to those taught in Kham and Tibet. Although we should not be biased towards any one particular view, the most auspicious tradition among the five is Ch'an. Since you two understand the principles of Ch'an, if you study the Dzogchen (the Ch'an view is the same as Nyingma's "Trecho") of Nyingma (Or the so-called Red Sect¹⁰), you can realize the Three Bodies in this lifetime, and I encourage the two of you to do it." (Chairman Bya is proficient in Sutra and Esoteric teachings, and he especially has faith in the Nyingma religion.)

We said goodbye to Chairman Bya and left [the room]. The translator would lead us in to see a certain lama. When asked why, he pointed to a room and said to us, "There is a great lama here who is the representative of the Padmasambhava. Three days ago, he said to me, 'If Chinese monks come, they can be brought to see me.' Since you two are here, why don't you two meet him now?" We were surprised when we heard this and followed him into the room, where we saw a tall man with bundled hair, about fifty years old, sitting at the head of all the lamas to lead the chanting. When he heard that we were the Chinese monks from Putuo, he was extremely happy. He immediately asked the rest of the lamas to continue chanting while he got down from his throne and came to talk with us. When I saw this person for the first time, although I thought he was unusually tall, I didn't realize there was anything strange about him. After talking for a while, I suddenly recalled that I had seen this man, the one who ordered me to study from Nyingma in my dream when I was in Putuo. He was no different from this person in the dream. The person I saw in my dream spoke Chinese, but this person only spoke Tibetan. After talking with this person for two hours, I finally found out that he was the Tertön (translated as treasure revealer), and he was prophesized by the Guru Padmasambhava to benefit the beings in Tibet and China. His name was Rigzin Ozer Dorje Lingpa (translated as Knowledge Holder Luminous Vajra Continent). He had realized the profound truth and had long been respected by people in Khan and Tibet. Even Chairman Bya beseeched for his initiations and sincerely listened to his teachings. If it weren't for the fact that Chairman Bya's sister was passed to the Sukhavati and the Lama was specially invited to perform the puja, we would not have been able to find him even if we wanted to see him. The reason was that the lama's behavior was unpredictable. While talking that day, we didn't realize that the sun was about to set, so we resigned [to our rooms].

The next morning, we paid a visit to the guru. The guru gave us Dharma teachings and said that after twelve years of studying and practicing in Kham, we would be able to benefit countless sentient beings when we returned to China. Immediately, he gave us the great empowerment of the Tara according to the Highest Yoga Tantra and the Guru Rinpoche's teaching on the removal of obstacles based on the twelve-dependent arising. After the transmission, each person was given the Dharma's name. He reminded and instructed us to be diligent and invited us to meet in the future. We then left Yulong, and he was our third guru. (The qualities of the guru were very great. I wanted to share more, but it would be another day.)

At Yulong, we bid farewell to our guru, our supreme refuge, and Chairman Bya of profound compassion and wisdom. We then went to Palpung དཔལ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་མོ་ལྷོ་མོ་ Monastery in Derge. Palpung is the largest monastery of the Kagyu tradition in northern Kham. Its throne holder is the Situ Rinpoche (the Four Treasures Dharma King¹¹ conferred by the Yongle Emperor of the Ming Dynasty). He was 66 years old, and according to legend, he had achieved accomplishment from the practice of White Tara. In the temple, I received preferential treatment from the throne holder. The retired Khenpo named Choden was asked to teach us Tibetan, grammar, and calligraphy. He also asked Lama Kalu to give us the initiations and teachings of the six-armed Mahakala, the Goddess White Umbrella, the Twenty-One Mother Tara, and others. He is our fourth guru.

When we stayed in the Palpung Monastery for three months, we heard that the guru Rigzin Oser Dorje Lingpa was going to Dzongsar Monastery to bestow initiations to Khyentse Rinpoche. (Khyentse Rinpoche was the most accomplished and realized Sakya master in northern Kham. He and guru Rigzin Rinpoche had mutual respect, and the fact that he invited the guru Rigzin Rinpoche to give the initiation and perform puja indicates his generous open-mindedness.) We also longed to pay respect to Khyentse Rinpoche. Considering we were separated from the guru Rigzin Rinpoche for three months, we wanted to take this opportunity to meet [him] again in preparation for a long-term study. When we left the Palpung Monastery, we braved eight or nine feet of heavy snow on the Chola Mountains (first, we used oxen to clear the snow-covered road, and then we were able to walk). We returned to Yulong, visited guru Rigzin Rinpoche, and followed him to the Dzongsar Monastery and stayed there for more than a month (there are too many details to share here). When guru Rigzin Rinpoche stayed at Dzongsar Monastery, he and Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche gave initiations to each other. Initially, guru Rigzin Rinpoche gave Khyentse Rinpoche the Goddess White Umbrella initiation, then the Yamantaka-the Lord of Death initiation. (This is the initiation according to Khyentse Rinpoche's principal request. According to the guru Rigzin Rinpoche, I heard he received this teaching in meditation personally from Manjushri and Guru Rinpoche. The image of the deity is very different from what is usually taught). Next, guru Rigzin Rinpoche asked Khyentse Rinpoche to give Avalokitesvara Great Empowerment. This was such a wonderful fortune that we were able to participate in these events, and we were able to see the two great masters show mutual respect and share mutual teachings. We were so happy and praised the events that we had never experienced before. Khyentse Rinpoche was our fifth guru, but it was a pity that we could not stay for a longer time.

In April, we returned to Yulong from Dzongsar with guru Rigzin Rinpoche and passed by the Dzogchen Monastery. (This is a model Nyingma monastery. It has a long history of producing great adepts. Lectures on thirteen major treatises were given for many years. All the khenpos in every generation are proficient in Sutra and Tantra, and they are skillful in the teachings.) We stayed here with guru Rigzin Rinpoche for more than a month. I secretly thought that the guru and his companions would travel around everywhere. Whenever they visited a great place, they would stay there for more than a month. Why is this? He wanted to let us see and learn more. [He wanted us to] consider the shortcomings and strengths of various places and know the take and give. I saw in the [Tibetan] traditions the respect [people paid] towards the reincarnated Hutuktus. Sometimes, the teachers performed the rites of students. Their respect for those virtuous reincarnated may not be unreasonable, but they seem to be slim on the bhikkhu precepts. However, with the elderly Dzogchen Khenpos the reincarnated ones are expected to seat themselves according to the same order of seniority in precepts and academic qualifications. So, this is the style of Nyingma Khenpo. For those in the world who said, "the Red Sect does not follow the precepts and only swallow knives and spit out fire," should they not reflect in their minds when they see the style of Khenpos of the Nyingma tradition?

After leaving Dzogchen, we followed guru Rigzin Rinpoche back to Yulong and met Chairman Bya again. I planned to follow the guru Rigzin Rinpoche back to Drolma Dragtsa (the Tara Rock, the temple built by the guru) in Yushu. We planned to stay there for a long time and relied on the guru for everything in life and the study of Dharma. However, Chairman Bya is concerned about the guru's unpredictable lifestyle. So, he asked us to live in his home, where we could study not only Tibetan language and conversation but also take care of the problem of food and clothing. We followed his instructions and learned The Tibetan is in his home. Chairman Bya gave the teachings on the preliminary of Dzogchen [i.e., "Words of my perfect teacher"] (this was given by Dzogchen Longchenpa, and [this teaching was] the notes recorded by his student Lama Kunzang. *The Tibetan text has a total of 280 pages*¹²). He ordered us to recite it, and he would give explanations personally when he had time. Chairman Bya was a well-known celebrity in the northern Khan and was a

devout Buddhist. He befriended great lamas, and often, they went to his home to perform puja and religious activities. I always paid attention to Chairman Bya's etiquette towards the great adepts. Since the lamas are performing Dharma practices constantly in the Bya's residence, we were able to learn the chanting, Dharma practices, and the rituals of making offerings (the ritual offerings are often made of tsampa in various styles, and some were quite complicated). [All this could happen because] Chairman Bya was our most important patron when we were studying Dharma in Kham.

Having lived in Bya's residence for half a year, we intended to learn about the style of the Gelug tradition. We heard that there was a Gelug monastery in Lihua (now Litang¹³), southern Kham, with more than 7,000 monks. We left Yulong and started to go to southern Kham in October 1949. It was a long journey from north to south. Thieves were everywhere, and the mountains and rivers were dangerous. After more than a month of travel, we arrived at the Li territory, and we stayed in the great lamasery. The resident Hutuktu of the monastery was a tulku at the age of seven or eight, and he was still in Lhasa and had not returned. The most outstanding scholar in this monastery was the Great Geshe Chowei Shiwala (a Mongolian who obtained the first-class Rabjampa Geshe degree in Lhasa. He came to this monastery due to the invitation of the previous reincarnation of the resident.)

We wanted to learn White Manjushri and study all the sutras and treatises. The first month we arrived, there was a great gathering, and more than 7,000 people came to the temple. However, there was a smallpox outbreak, and daily, there were over thirty fatalities. Even the Geshe passed away due to infection. We had no one to rely on and left the monastery in March.

After leaving the Litang territory, we went directly to Kangsongzha (ten days away from Lihua and close to Kangding). We took refuge with the Gongkar Hutuktu (Kagyü tradition) in Gongga Mountain. With kind permission, we received the initiations of Padmasambhava, Cakrasamvara, Vajrayogini, Prajnaparamita, the Protectors, and other teachings and practices. We also learned from Khenpo Karma, the Medicine Buddha, Powa, Amitabha, longevity practices, and others. We went to school every day to listen to the teachings of the Prajna-nama-mulamadhyamakakarika, Vighavyāvartanī, and others. They were our sixth and seventh gurus.

On August 7 last year, I received a letter from Chaoshan-Shantou friends in Shanghai. The letter said Master Liao Chen entered into nirvana on June 29 and urged me to swiftly travel home. Gradually, we all started to travel east towards home, and the work of studying the Dharma had to pause for the time being.

Although we [traveled] to study the Dharma for less than three years, we were grateful that we encountered favorable circumstances. The events we experienced were complex. We had both joyous and sorrowful days. The essence is summarized above, but it is less than two or three-tenths [of the actual events]. It was the most fortunate that we could put aside prejudices, engage in the righteous Dharma, and live up to the instructions in the dream. I hope that those who are interested in studying Kham-Tibetan Buddhism should embrace the attitude of seeking the truth. [In this way,] they can unearth treasures everywhere and live up to the original intent of the Buddha who taught [sentient beings] according to the conditions and circumstances.

The three laypersons, Su Huichun, Chen Faxiang, and Guo Yuanxing, came to my residence and requested that I recount my story of the journey to Kham. I thus briefly described it.

Chapter 2: The truth about different traditions¹⁴ of the Kham-Tsang Buddhism

Mi Xian

At first, I didn't believe in Tibetan Esotericism, especially in the Red (Nyingma) and White (Kagyü) Sects. I especially didn't believe in the Red Sect of the two religions. Not only did I not believe it, but sometimes I even slandered it. This was also due to my personal circumstances. Most of the people I met in the past slandered Esoteric Buddhism, so I did not dare to believe in it. Later, I gradually got acquainted with several people who studied Tibetan Esoteric Buddhism. The solemnity of the mandala and the elegance of the mantras made me involuntarily joyful. However, I wondered what was really happening, and if I could not understand it, it was just like "watching a soap opera." Although those who studied Tibetan Esoteric Teachings presented a good impression, they did not seem to understand the profound Esoteric principles. Even though I wanted to study the sublime teachings, I had nowhere to go. It was not until 1946 that I met Mr. Guan in Shanghai. He introduced me to Ven. Taikong (who traveled by sea from India) was returning to Sichuan from Tibet and passed through Shanghai. This great master had a long history of studying the "Yellow Sect" (Gelugpa). He stayed at Paoma Mountain in Xikang for seven years and remained with Geshe Jhampa for ten years. Then, he went to the Drepung Monastery¹⁵ in Lhasa (one of the three major monasteries) to study both Sutrayana and Tantrayana in Tibet. In 1946, he returned to China, and I had conversations with this eminent person once or twice. I felt that his conversations differed from those of others in the past. To uncover the truth behind Tibetan Buddhism, I left Shanghai. I followed Master Taikong to Chongqing and stayed there for ten months. While serving my teacher, Tibetan Buddhism was sometimes mentioned, and I realized that Tibetan Buddhism is not only [about] Tantric [teachings] but also the Sutra teachings were also very good. The general rule to engage in the teachings was still to start with Sutra and then Tantra teachings. Under the guidance of my master, I made much progress, and I also learned more common knowledge about Tantric Buddhism. Still, I knew too little. In Chongqing, some people followed the Red Sect and White Sect teachings, and [there were] those who followed the Yellow Sect teachings. At that time, my knowledge and opinions were primarily biased towards the Yellow Sect. I heard that the Red Sect practitioners swallowed knives and spat fire, and they did not keep their precepts and didn't know about the Sutra teachings. They just knew how to recite a few mantras. Although I had never heard of the White Sect swallowing knives and breathing fire, it was being [treated] equivalent to the Red Sect due to association. Yet I still believed in Tibetan Buddhism, but I always thought that the Yellow Sect was true Buddhism, while the Red and White Sects were heretics - "scums" among the Buddhist schools. This view remained unchanged until 1948. Later, together with Lama Kan Tsao, we went to Xikang to seek the Dharma and reached the territory of Derge. We traveled to several great places of the Red and White Sects. We visited several virtuous lamas from the "Red" and "White" sects who had rich [Buddhist] knowledge and extraordinary religious conduct. With many additional humble observations, I suddenly realized the big mistake I made in the past. I was so ashamed that I had no place to hide, so a profound change occurred in my thinking. At the same time, I understood that it was unjust and incorrect to think that the Red Sect swallowed knives and spat fire.

Instead of proving that the "Red" and "White" sects differ from the Yellow sect, I might as well report on what I saw and heard in Xikang so all my fellow readers better understand Kham Tibetan Buddhism. Before the report, I would like to make a statement: the depth and breadth of the Red and White Sects teachings cannot be easily [thoroughly] understood. Lama Kan Tsao and I stayed in Kham for less than three years, and what we learned was not even a drop in the ocean. However, we'd like to express our enthusiasm to offer and share [our knowledge and experience], but it is inevitable to take some risks [of inaccuracy and blunder]. For this, I would like to ask your forgiveness. The following is my narrative: Before elaborating this report, it is best to organize the

subject into three parts to avoid confusion. First, I will identify and correct the religious and personal terminologies of Kham Tibetan “Buddhism.” Second, I will talk about the styles of each tradition. Third, I will prove that different traditions (religions) cannot slander each other.

Now, let’s talk about the first part.

Buddhism in Kham and Tibet is generally divided into four [main] traditions. The names of the four sects are: "Red," "White," "Yellow," and "Sakya." But do these names exist in the original in Kham and Tibetan [language]? If so, that's ridiculous. This confusion has been going on for a long time! Although our Chinese Buddhism also has traditions such as “[Tian] Tai,” “Xian [Shou],” and “Conscious Only,” [we thought] the names are both pleasant and elegant. Only Kham Tibetan Buddhism has such strange and unpleasant names. How good can the teachings be if they don’t even have a good name? No wonder some people asked you, "How many years have you studied Esoteric teachings?" when they heard you came back from Xikang or Tibet. Then they said that Esoteric Buddhism is "so, so..." From their tone, it seems that Tibet only has Tantric Buddhism, and the lamas can only recite mantras. Even if you explain to them again, “Tibet has both Sutra and Tantra traditions, etc.”... the next time they meet you, they will still say, "It's like Tantra..." Although his intention was a little frivolous, there are other reasons for it. Although there is more than one reason for this, most are due to hearing the weird and mysterious terms about the red and white sects, which gave rise to mysterious ideas. Then they met several Kham Tibetan lamas who recited in Tibetan, and they misunderstood that they were reciting mantras because they heard low-pitched voices and didn't understand Tibetan. Wait until they met some who claimed to be “know-all” practitioners and asked them, “What is the lama doing there?” and the general reply was “Recite mantra.” [These “practitioners”] who studied the Esoteric Buddhism but really didn't know much. When they were asked, “Why do you have to recite the mantra like that?” They would say this was “practicing Esoteric Buddhism!” With such a strange view incubated by various strange causes and conditions, it is no wonder that people will think that Kham Tibetan Buddhism only has Esoteric teachings till the day he died.

There is another major reason: Someone heard a certain “Living Buddha” (Tulku, or reincarnated Lama, in Chinese) from Tibet has arrived. The word "Living Buddha" has caused many misunderstandings. There are probably three types of misunderstandings:

1. Most ignorant and superstitious people hear that the “Living Buddha” has arrived. He was so happy that he couldn't recognize [the directions:] east, west, north, and south. They hope that the “Living Buddha” can show some magical power and take them to the Western paradise (Dewachen, Sukhavati).
2. When people with moderate knowledge hear the word "Living Buddha," they think he must have spent at least hundreds of years practicing the Path. Or that he is different from ordinary people. Ordinary people eat and sleep, but he does not eat or sleep. Ordinary people have to poop after eating, but they never poop. When they went to see the “Living Buddha,” they sensed that he was just like ordinary people, and then they developed mixed feelings of doubt and disbelief.
3. There is also a kind of person who has some knowledge of Buddhism or has studied Buddhism for a long time but has never studied Tibetan Buddhism. They are simply baffled by the term “Living Buddha.” Therefore, based on various reasons, he denounced the "Living Buddha" as being non-human and inconsistent with the scriptures. Because those ordinary “practitioners” who studied Tibetan Esoteric Buddhism could not provide adequate answers, those who were more familiar with Buddhism gradually regarded Kham Tibetan Buddhism as a mysterious and heretical [form] of Buddhism. One cannot help but blame people who randomly fabricated names and terms for the phenomenon of cultural communication barriers.

Since there was all such nonsense, when ordinary Buddhists heard such religious terminologies as the Red and Yellow Sects and the title of Living Buddha, they led to many tasteless, strange explanations and criticisms. It cannot be denied that this did not happen! Therefore, correctly identifying [and understanding] the terminologies is also important. Please bear with me and let me analyze:

The Yellow Sect: The original name of the Yellow Sect was Dge-Lugs-Pa Or “Gadenpa” Dgah—Ldan—Pa “Gelug” is translated as the "Virtuous tradition." This term was established by the first lineage holder, Tsongkhapa, who was dissatisfied with the practices of ordinary Buddhists at that time and wanted to rectify them. After the rectification was successful [carried out], he labeled his own tradition as "Gelug" - "the virtuous tradition" to prevent his teachings from being confused with other teachings. "The virtuous tradition" has two meanings:

1. To illustrate to others that the teachings he organized are the most complete. "Virtue in the beginning, virtue in the middle, and virtue in the end."
2. In order to respect the bhikkhu precepts, "Gelug" has the meaning of bhikkhu.

The original meaning of the word "Gaden" is the Sanskrit word "Tushita." Tushita means "contentment" when translated into Chinese, and "Gaden" is the Tibetan translation. "Gaden" is translated into Chinese as "Having Happiness". The same applies to the fourth heaven of the desire realm. The name of this heaven is "Tushita" - "Gaden." But why is it named "Tushita"? Because this is the aspiration of Tsongkhapa, the founder. "I wish to be born in the inner courtyard of Tushita, to serve the Maitreya, and when born in Jambu uphold the righteous Dharma." Therefore, his followers can also be called Gadenpa (Tushita Sect).

The names of this tradition in the Chinese literature include “Yellow Clothes Sect,” “Yellow Hat Sect,” and “Yellow Sect.” But the most common ones are those who call them “Yellow Sect.” Comparing the three names, “Yellow Hat Sect” is slightly more accurate. Because the Gelugpa followers generally wear yellow hats. Some people who hear the name "Yellow Clothes Sect" or "Yellow Sect" arbitrarily interpret it as "wearing yellow clothes," "wearing yellow shoes," "using yellow bowls," etc., which is wrong. For example, if the Yellow Sect requires "wearing yellow clothes" and "using yellow bowls," then the Red Sect should use everything red, the White Sect should also use all white items, and the Sakya Sect should use all flowers (some people call the Sakya the flower sect). Does this make sense? In Xikang, I saw the highest-ranking lama (regardless of religion) wearing a yellow robe to show his dignity. The rest of the ordinary lamas, or those with low status, are not allowed to wear yellow robes, irrespective of their traditions.

Sakya Sect: Except for a few people who study and research Tibetan Buddhism, few people in China know the name of the Sakya sect. Thus, the name of this sect has stayed the same in China (The Tibetan word for Sakya is Sa-Skya, which means pale earth, which is the birthplace of this sect.) However, when Han people (Chinese) living in Kham saw the various colors on the walls of the [Sakya] temple, they said that it was the "Flower Sect." In fact, the intent of the various colors on the wall is unrelated to the word "flower." So, what is the meaning? The [Sakya] founding lama, Kunga Nyingpo, had accomplished the Hevajra. The Sakya's respect for Hevajra is the same as the Yellow Sect's respect for Yamantaka. Hevajra's three faces are blue in the middle, red on the left, and white on the right. To never forget Hevajra, [the Sakya followers] painted the colors outside the temple: “blue,” “red” and “white¹⁶.”

The White Sect: Its original name was Bkah-rgyudpa, translated as "oral transmission." It does not mean "white" at all. Some people say, "Venerable Atisha when he was about to pass away, all the "Sutrayana" and "Tantrayana" teachings were passed down to a layman. This lay practitioner would

transmit all subsequent Dharma. He preached the teachings as a layperson who wore a white garment, and thus, it was called the "White sect." (white garments symbolize lay practitioners in Buddhism)

But this can only be said of the tradition of the Ganden sect of Atisha's tradition, not the Kagyu tradition. However, it is unreasonable to attach the above story to the White sect. Even the Ganden sect does not mean the White sect. So, if this story is used to prove that the Ganden sect is the White sect, it does not make sense. The origin of the White Sect (referring to the Kagyu) is actually the Tibetan Patriarch Marpa, who received the heart transmission of Naropa from India and passed it on to the great yogi Milarepa. [Jetsun] Mila transmitted to Gampopa, who transmitted to Karmapa. The lineage has been passed down from generation to generation, as of now. There is no flaw with the history here. Therefore, when we refer to the White sect, we should directly call it the Kagyu sect and not call it the White sect (not to translate out of respect).

The Red Sect: The original name of the Red Sect is Rnying-ma-ba, and Nyingma means old. Some said, "This sect wears a red hat, so it is called the Red Sect." Then, when both the Sakya and White Sects wear red hats, why aren't they called the Red Sect? It can be seen that the term "Red Sect" is wrong.

The name of the "old religion (Nyingmapa)" only came into being after the emergence of the new religion. The new and the old stand side by side. It was definitely not called the Old Sect when the Red Sect first came to Tibet. The so-called old religion only refers to the tradition, which was the earliest introduction and transmission into Tibet by Master Padmasambhava.

The names of the four sects have been briefly mentioned above. The term "Living Buddha" will be explained below.

Living Buddha (Huo-Fo): A person who has attained the fruit of Buddhahood; if one cannot "Exhaustion of the five entrenchments of afflictions and perpetual termination of the two deaths," can one still be called a Buddha? Doesn't "perpetual termination of the two deaths" mean "immortality"? Since it is "immortal," of course, it is also "not born." "Neither birth nor death" is called "Great Nirvana". Therefore, when the word "Buddha" is mentioned, we cannot use the word "life or death" to measure or limit him. Since it cannot be measured or limited by life and death, there is no such thing as a "living Buddha" or a "dead Buddha." Some people say, "I only mentioned living Buddhas and never said anything about "dead Buddhas." But without a dead Buddha, there is no need for a living Buddha. Because of the existence of "death," "life" reveals itself since "life" and "death" are relative [and conceptualization of two extremes.] So why do Tibetan lamas call reincarnated people "living Buddhas"? I said Tibetans call a reincarnated person a "reincarnated person" or an "incarnation," but do not call him a living Buddha. If you don't believe it, you can ask the great lamas whether there is a title for living Buddha in Tibet? If he says "yes," ask him to find the Tibetan basis. I dare to say that not only does he have no basis for Living Buddha in Tibetan classical literature, but there is no reference to Living Buddha in the ordinary Tibetan language. They call reincarnated lamas either Hu-thog-thu, Hutuktu, or Sprul-sku. The former means "reincarnation" or "come again." The latter means incarnation, not a living Buddha. Sometimes, disciples call their master "Buddha" out of respect for their master, but this is only for the relationship between master and disciple and is by no means ordinary. Although a disciple calls him a master, it is only because he is grateful for his teacher's kindness.

Since there is no such title in Kham-Tsang¹⁷, why did it appear when it came to China? When we study its origin carefully, we find that it most likely comes from the feudal era of the Qing Dynasty. To compliment the emperor or the Queen mother, the subordinate people would use the title "Kangxi Lao Fo Ye (Ancient Buddha)" or "Queen Mother Lao Fo Ye (Ancient Buddha)." At that

time, the great lamas often communicated with the Qing court, and their statuses were, of course, very high. The phrase "The Great Good Buddha of Western Heaven..." was a title bestowed upon through the mouths of the emperor and the Queen mother. In addition, the eunuchs of the Qing Dynasty were the best at complimenting people. Above the word "Buddha," the word "Living" was added, and it has been passed down to this day. This is probably the origin of the so-called "Living Buddha (Huo-Fo)."

The origin of the Living Buddha does not come from [any] Buddhist scriptures nor the mouth of [any] lama. Although Chinese Buddhists' intent was to communicate and connect the Chinese and Tibetan cultures and emotions, it seems that we Chinese Buddhists do not need to confuse the truth with false notions and [end up] hindering the progress of Buddhism.

The style of each tradition

The religious traditions considered here refer to the four sects, Gelug, Sakya, Kagyu, and Nyingma, which were previously presented. The teachings of these four schools of tradition are all Buddhism. Of course, their styles should be within the scope of Buddhism. Since they cannot go beyond the scope of Buddhism, and [some of] their styles are probably similar, there is no need for further elaboration. But to reveal the truth of the Red and White Sect, which others have always considered to have "evil views" or heretics that "swallow swords and breathe fire," I might as well introduce to you what I saw and heard in Xikang. In addition to the four religions, there is also a Black Sect, called Bon-po in Tibetan, that is original to the Kham-Tsang region. In [some] books (Chinese books), it has always been said that they are the true heretics in Kham-Tsang. However, according to the black Sect followers I saw in Xikang, their clothing is no different from that of Buddhist lamas, and their style also has the Buddhist spirit. I would like to mention this unexpected and strange observation in passing.

Some people also know that the Red and White Sect does not "swallow swords and breathe fire," but they arbitrarily conclude that the Red and White Sect's views are wrong based on a certain prejudice. This is also a misunderstanding. But it takes more than a few words to explain such misunderstandings. Out of respect for the readers' time, I would like to mention it next time. However, as a person with limited knowledge, even though I try my best to study it, I may not be able to analyze it thoroughly because I only lived in Kangxi for a short time. Now, let's first examine the styles of each religion.

Let's start with the Yellow Hat Sect-Gelugpa.

Kham-Tsang has the most Yellow Sect temples. The ones we saw in Northern Kham include Daofu Temple, Luhuo Temple, Ganzi Temple, Dajin Temple, etc. The largest Yellow Sect temple in Kangnan and the great Lamasery of Lihua (8,000 monks) are all famous Yellow Sect temples in Xikang. Their style is the same as that of the three major monasteries in Lhasa, Tibet (Drepung, Sera, and Gaden). The three major temples are the model temples of the Yellow Sect. Although most of their personal practice is Tantric Buddhism, their education is Sutrayana Buddhism. The Sutrayana teachings are within the scope of the Five Great Treatises and the Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment. (Although there are other kinds of learning, the above six are the basic ones). Among the five major treatises, two belong to the Hinayana school - the Arvava Vinaya and the Abhidharmakośa treatises. One belongs to the Mahayana Udāra-carita paramparā (rgya-chen spyod brgyu) school - Abhisamayalankara, and one belongs to the Mahayana Gambhīradarśana paramparā (zab-mo lta brgyud) - Madhyamakāvātāra (the Entering the Middle School). The one that differentiates right and wrong, religious and heretic, is the Pramāṇa (Classical Buddhist Logic). The minimum study time for these five major treatises is ten years. During the study, [the students] have to gather in the forum every day and debate with each other. In daily practice,

sometimes they gather in the temple to recite, and sometimes they study on their own at will, but they must always stay in touch with the teachings of their respective masters. Reciting the precepts every half month and having a summer retreat yearly are the general rules of these three major temples. The famous Yellow Sect temples in Xikang all follow the example of these three major temples in Lhasa and are very similar. Regarding the Yellow Sect's style, many great sages have already introduced it in the past, so I don't need to go into details.

Sakya: The most famous temple of the Sakya sect in Xikang is the Gonchen Monastery, which is in the city of Derge. The temple is very large and could accommodate more than a thousand lamas. There was a Tripitaka printing plate inside. Several great sages had appeared in this temple in the past, and several pure monks now live there. But the Sakya Lamas do not come here to study. They all went to Tsongsar Monastery, three days away from Derge (the territory of Derge). Now, I will introduce you to the characteristics and styles of Tsongsar Monastery.

Characteristics: There was a tulku (reincarnation) here named Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, who was fifty-eight years old at the time and had been in retreat for nearly thirty years. His spiritual knowledge in previous lives has long been admired by all great sages, and his level of enlightenment is exceptionally high. At that time, his attainment of virtue was second to none among the Kham-Tsang Sakya tradition. Although he is a Sakya lama, he is highly envious of the teachings of Nyingma (Red Sect). The people of Kham respected him beyond measure. Lama Kantsao and I participated in several initiations due to the introduction of our master, Ache Tertön¹⁸ (i.e., the guru Rigzin). Although I don't know the depth of his enlightenment, I feel he is great, calm, and wise from observing his every move. This showed how deeply moved he impressed us.

Style: Tsongsar Temple is divided into two colleges. The upper college is on the mountain, and the lower college is at the foot of the mountain. The upper college is the Great Tsongsar Monastery, and the lower college is a Buddhist University. This school was founded by Jamyang Khyentse. Thirty or forty students are there year-round, studying sutras and scriptures every five years. The school provides all meals for students within the first semester. Their school rules are stringent. Not only are students not allowed to come in and out at will, but it is also difficult for outside visitors to enter. The primary texts they studied were the Thirteen Fundamental Treatises (for details, see the Red Sect section). After graduating, some asked their masters to teach them the Tantrayana and practiced it throughout their lives. Some went to Ü-Tsang, some returned to [their own] temples or lived permanently in Tsongsar Monastery. Tsongsar Khyentse Rinpoche also lectures for several months a year, and people from far away come to listen to his lectures. This is a famous Sakya monastery model in Kham.

Kagyü: Although there is more than one temple of the Kagyü sect in Kham, all the others are based on the Palpang Monastery standard model. Now let's describe a little bit about Palpang's story:

Characteristics: There are three major Hu-thog-thu in Palpang Monastery, namely Situ Rinpoche, Beru Khyentse Rinpoche, and Wanggen Tulku¹⁹. Among the three, Situ Rinpoche has the highest status. In the Ming Dynasty, he was conferred the title of Four Treasures Dharma King by Yongle. He has the highest status in the Kagyü Sect except for Karmapa (the Ming Dynasty title the Great Treasure Dharma King). At the time, he was sixty-six years old, had a calm demeanor, and loved peacocks the most. Although he had the title Hutuktu, he attaches great importance to the bhikkhu precepts concerning matters relating to Buddhist teachings. His knowledge is very upright, and he never talks about mysteries. What he likes most is that people can abide by the rules and practice well. He himself attained attainment through the practice of the White Tara. Khyentse Rinpoche of Tsongsar Monastery also asked him to impart the White Tara initiation.

Style: Palpang Temple has stringent rules. More than 700 people lived in the temple, which was divided into two colleges, the Sutrayana and the Tantrayana. The sutra teaching is an academy where Khenpo teaches thirteen major treatises. Tantric teachings are held in the retreat centers. The rules of the Kagyu sect do not emphasize debate but real practice, but they do not practice blindly. They were allowed to specialize in practice only after receiving sutra and tantric teachings. The special training place is in the retreat cells. There is more than one retreat cell, thirty or forty cells in a row. Those who enter the retreat room to practice will have a period of three years, three months, and three days, and they are not allowed to leave the retreat until after the period is over. There is also a lama guardian who is good at the practices and lives in the retreat [centers] in case something happens. If you can't continue your practice, you can ask him to resolve it. Therefore, anyone who has gone through the three-year retreat will have some benefits to some extent. But they never publicize it to the outside world. This is something I didn't know until I went there in person.

There is also a small temple in the back hill of Palpang Temple called Rinchen Drak²⁰ Temple. The rules are exactly the same as those of Palpang, and they are also of the Kagyu sect. However, this Kagyu sect is slightly different from that of Palpang, which belongs to the Karma Kagyu sect. This one belongs to the Shangpa Kagyu sect. The Kagyu sect is divided into four major and eight minor sects, but the primary one is the Karma Kagyu sect.

There is a Hutuktu in Rizhang Temple, named Kongrul Rinpoche. He was over fifty then and went to Lhasa but did not return. Kongtrul Rinpoche has also been reincarnated many times and achieved the highest achievement.

In addition, there was a lama with great virtue named Lama Kalu in the temple, who was over fifty years of age, proficient in Sutra and Tantra, and had experience in practicing Dharma. Lama Kantsao and I once heard the introduction by the Situ Rinpoche: "His qualities are very great. He knows everything I know. You can ask him for initiation and transmission of the Dharma in the future." Later, we asked the Situ Rinpoche for the teachings of the Six-Armed Mahakala. He said, "It is best to ask Lama Kalu to teach you. He has achieved accomplishment by practicing the Six-Arm Mahakala. If you ask him to teach it, you can quickly gain experience in the practice."

Although the Rinchen Drag Temple is the residence of Shangpa Kagyu, one can say whether it is separate from Palpang or not. The temple often has fifteen people in retreat [all the time], and the rules are the same as Palpang's. The Kagyu sect pays great attention to meditation practice and has no disputes with others. Near Palpang, some old practitioners live in mountains and caves.

Nyingma: The most famous Nyingma temples in Derge are Dzogchen Monastery, Kathok Monastery, and Azom Monastery. We have only been to the Dzogchen Temple. Although I have never been to the other two temples, except for the dictation from Chairman Bya of Yulong, I have encountered their Hutuktu inadvertently. When I asked them what they said, they said the same thing. Therefore, in addition to describing Dzogchen [monastery], we can also talk about Kathok and Azom monasteries.

Dzogchen: Although this temple has less than two or three hundred years of history, it has produced many earth-shattering great sages. The most famous ones, Mipham and Longchenpa, came from here.

Dzogchen is a monastery in the north of Derge. It is built on a hillside surrounded by large and small mountains. Some are covered with snow all year round, some are barren of grass, and some are fertile and sweet, with cattle and horses everywhere. Although the hillside of Dzogchen is not high, it is covered with wind and snow, and the clouds cover the sun, so there is little warm climate. Unexpectedly, many giants of the Dharma, teachers of humans and deva, were produced here.

People: The retired old Khenpos (accordingly, Khenpo is the same as the abbot here). Five or six of them were still living at the time, including Lagar and Tu Ning [khenpos]. Lagar lived in a cave in the snow-capped mountains for a long time. He was over seventy years old and rarely spoke. He taught his precepted disciples to refrain from learning catchphrases but should [focus on doing the] practices. He was the most proficient in Sutra and Tantra, especially Tantric Buddhism. He would practice meditation and self-control and fasted for three years. When his master found out and scolded him not to do this, and then he started eating [again]. His master achieved the state of a glass-like transparent body, and his mastery of spiritual practice was excellent. Khenpo Tu Ning was also over sixty years old. When we met him at Chairman Bya's place, we saw that his quiet demeanor differed greatly from ordinary people. When he talked, he was really amiable. I heard Chairman Bya say that few of the lamas in Kham-Tsang could match his profound knowledge. Although he is a lama of the Nyingma sect, he is also very knowledgeable about the teachings of the Gelug sect, and he admires Lama Tsongkhapa very much. Because he felt the presence of Lama Tsongkhapa in his concentration, he often quoted Lama Tsongkhapa's teachings in sermons.

There are more than twenty Hutuktus in this monastery, and the most important one was Dzogchen Rinpoche. There were a few people who have achieved high levels of realization. We also met Lama Asong. He was just an ordinary lama in Dzogchen. Although his knowledge was not considered very good, he had already achieved accomplishment in practicing the Four-Armed Avalokitesvara. He had many miraculous incidents in the Derge area. He often walked around and advised everyone to recite the Six-Syllable Mantra. There are too many accomplished beings in Dzogchen. In the Dzogchen Monastery, where many highly accomplished beings gathered, it is challenging for those who have not reached the highest level of study to stand out.

Style: There are more than a thousand people in Dzogchen Monastery, divided into three colleges: "Sutra," "Tantra," and "[Meditational] Practice." They all place great importance on precepts (spiritual commitments). Before their Hutuktus ascended their thrones, they followed the rule of practicing begging for alms for at least a few months or even a year. Their path is highly regarded due to the influence of khenpos in the past. The rules of Dzogchen are respected not only by other Red Sect temples but also by major monasteries in the Derge region. Both the Sakya and Kagyu sects consider its rules to be the standard. The Thirteen Great Treatises taught in the Tsongsar and Palpang monasteries are the rules of the Dzogchen Sutrayana College.

The Dzogchen Sutrayana College is half a mile away from Dzogchen Monastery. It is a school where Khenpos lectured on the Thirteen Treatises for many years. And the rules of their lectures were unanimously based on the Indian commentaries. The thirteen treatises are also called the fundamental thirteen treatises: 1. Abhidharmakośa, 2. Pramāṇa, 3. Vinayapiṭaka, 4. Mahāyānasamgraha, 5. Madhyantavibhaga, 6. Dharma-Dharmatā-vibhanga, 7. Abhisamayalankara, 8. Madhyamakāvatāra 9. Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra 10. Prajna-nama-mulamadhyamakakarika, 11. Vigrahavyāvartanī, 12. The Theory of Impermanence 13. Vimuttimagga.

These thirteen treatises were established by Shinga Rinpoche, an old Khenpo in Dzogchen. He was not only very learned and knowledgeable but also practiced the Red Chenrezi to achieve accomplishment. The aforementioned old Khenpos, such as Lagar and Tu Ning, were all his students. Those who learned the Dharma from him are all sages superb in understanding and practicing the Dharma.

Students who have attended the Sutra College for seven, eight, or ten years can enter the Tantra College if they gain a fairly systematic understanding and correct knowledge and views on Buddhism.

In the tantric college, when [it was time] to bestow the most profound and profound teachings, one needs to enter the tantric teaching hall. After receiving systematic initiation and lineage guidance in Vajrayana, one can enter the “practice” college and engage in meditation to achieve accomplishments.

The above is the general outline of the Dzogchen Monastery of the Nyingma tradition. The two other places, Kathok and Azom, are also the most famous monasteries of the Nyingma tradition.

Katok: Katok Monastery is larger than Dzogchen. It is a day trip from Tsongsar Monastery, which has more than 900 years of history. Our guru Rigzin said: "The Sutrayana teachings rule in Katok Monastery are: You need to learn a hundred treatises. Since the construction of Kathok, there have been many great and skillful teachers." Chairman Bya said: "There is a Hutuktu in this temple, which was the reincarnation of a great sage from India, Ming-getse Tulku. He is proficient in the five sciences, has a wonderful understanding of Sutra and Tantra, and has achieved profound meditation. Still, his daily life is the same as that of ordinary monks, without any aristocratic attitude. " Longdor Gyatso Tulku (Kudok's Hutuktu) told me, "The history of Kathok was nearly a thousand years ago. There have been one hundred thousand lamas who practiced Dzogchen. When they were about to die, they all turned their bodies into a rainbow of light and left, leaving behind only the nails and hair, and the rest are all turned into light, but that's not even the highest achievement yet!"

On a four-day road trip from Yulong is Azom, [the monastery of] Drukpa Rinpoche, who has achieved accomplishment in Dzogchen. He has many old or young disciples, and once they receive guidance from him, they can immediately experience the practice accordingly.

The characteristics and styles of each tradition have been described above. I will also briefly talk about the Bonpo tradition (Black Sect). When we were about to go to Xikang, we passed through Chongqing and met an Indian monk who had lived in Jizu Mountain (ri-bya-rkang-can) in Yunnan for seven years and spoke Chinese fluently. He said: "I have been to Tibet, and I have seen the contents of each religion. I don't think that the Black Sect is a heretic. The Black Sect is also Buddhism!" I was very suspicious at the time, but I had neither seen it personally nor dared to judge him if he was not right. My mindset was to wait, see, and verify.

Later, when we arrived in Kangding, we heard our master, Drakpa Gyatshan, tell us that many Bonpo lamas have attained accomplishments by practicing Dzogchen. There is a Black sect lama in Zhaggo County²¹. He had a pockmarked face and a woman (consort). When he went out to beg for food every day, the lamas of the Gelug Sect monastery often laughed at him. He told his disciples one day: "They all look down on me. I am going to retreat. I plan to retreat for seven days. During the seven days, you are not allowed to bring me food or tea or to come to see me. On the seventh day. When you hear my drum, then come in and open the door to see me." After he entered the retreat, the disciples were so obedient that they hardly dared to see him for seven days. On the seventh day, they suddenly heard the sound of a drum and ran to open the door and look. His master was no longer there. Only his fingernails and hair were left, and they realized that he left in the form of rainbow light. Now, in the Zhaggo Temple, hair and nails left by him were still there, and many people came to worship.

I saw a Hutuktu of the Bonpo religion in the Derge Tsongsar Monastery. He was very young and wore the same clothes, just like a lama. I asked him what he was practicing. He answered that his practice was Sakyamuni Buddha, Tara, Padmasambhava, Guanyin, etc. were his deities. Their founder was Dempa Sherab, which shows that the current Black Sect has almost completely assimilated with Buddhism.

I gathered much evidence. Although I cannot wholly believe that the Black Sect is Buddhist, at least they prove that the words of the Indian monks are well-founded. Unfortunately, my time in Kham was very short, and I did not stay with Bonpo followers in person. This matter can be explored again when I return to Kham-Tsang.

I finished the second part by summarizing the various information. Now, I come to the third part of the [concluding] thesis, "Proving that different religions cannot slander each other."

Based on what has been said above, the explanations of various terminologies of various religions, and the explanations of the styles of each religion, we can understand the errors in the past myths. With one stroke, we can eliminate the many misunderstandings and doubts caused by the errors. Furthermore, I have run out of time to discuss many profound topics related to the Esoteric teachings.

What is the point of all my discussion here? I really don't have much more to elaborate on. Since it is not surprising that I may have said too much, I want to end this article by quoting the words of two great masters of Xikang. At the same time, I hope that through these karmic connections, we, Han, Tibetan, and Xikang fraternal cultures, will be forever affectionate and have long-lasting exchanges of new cultural and Buddhist knowledge.

When Lama Kantsao and I were about to leave Palpang Monastery, our master, Lama Kalu, said to us: "When you two leave, you can take a reference of the various teachings and practice whatever you like. However, you must remember my parting advice. When you seek refuge with a master, if that master says that only his Dharma is better than others, you must not rely on him." We firmly memorized the words of the guru when we left Palpang.

After arriving at Yulong, I met a Hutuktu Khacho. He was originally a Gelug tradition lama of the dar-rgyas-dgon Monastery, but later, he relied on an accomplished lama of the Nyingma tradition as his root guru. I asked him what religion he practiced. He said that he practiced Buddhism. I asked him again which religion, among the four religions, including Gelug and Nyingma, he studied. He said he was originally from the Gelug sect, but now he relied on the great master of the Nyingma sect as his guru, so he studied both sects.

Then he added: "Nyingma, Gelug, and the other, all four traditions each have their own masters, and they are all basically the same. It would be great if those with more knowledge could understand each other and learn from each other's strengths. If one has to distinguish [and select] "I am right, and you are not," not only does one not understand the entire Buddhist dharma, but one also does not understand the teachings of one's tradition. Let me give you an analogy. It is like the top of a snow mountain is covered with snow, and the sun melts the snow into water. It flows down from all directions from the north to the south. Those who stand on the top of the mountain and watch it will know that though the snow water flows in all directions, it all originates from the top of the mountain. Those who live in the South cannot see the North, and those who live in the East cannot see the West, so the idea of right and wrong arises. Those who live in the South only see the snow water in the South of the mountain, not the snow water in the North and East of the mountain, so they do not recognize that the North, West, and East are also snow water. They don't know that they all flowed down from the same mountain. The teachings left by Buddha Shakyamuni were distributed in various places through the great virtue of teachers' wisdom, like the sun. Due to the different natures of living beings, the Buddhist teachings they received were Nyingma, Gelug, Kagyu, and Sakya – the four traditions. From the perspective of Buddhadharma, although there are differences among the four schools, they are all teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha. Although there was non-distinction in the beginning, only those are obsessed with differences because their

learning was limited and caused many meaningless disputes about right and wrong and is as ridiculous as the snow mountain metaphor.”

[When we apply] the words of these two lamas above, it seems that we know Chinese Buddhism, but we are unable to appreciate the Buddhism in Siam, Kham, and Tibet or the Buddhist practitioners from these and other places. [Instead], we falsely slander and reject them. [These actions] are really obstacles to the propagation of Buddhism. How wrong is this?

I have said too much, and there will inevitably be mistakes. However, since I have written it based on my objective and practical experience, I also hope readers will correct me with their objective and practical opinions.

Chapter 3: The Tertons of Kham and Tibet: Guru Rigzin

Lama Kan Tsao

The climate of the Kham-Tsang region is cold, and there are many snowy mountains. When Buddhism was being devastated by Islam in India, great Indian masters of the Sutric and Esoteric traditions observed that the karma of Tibet was ripe. They rushed into Tibet to spread the Dharma and liberate the Tibetan people. Coupled with the noble thoughts of the Tibetan people, they are most likely to accept the highest form of Buddhism, so the Indian Sutra and Tantric teachings are concentrated in Tibet. Those [traditions] that could not develop in India in the past could now flourish in Tibet. Those [traditions] that were about to be destroyed in the past can now be preserved in Tibet. The one who contributed most to Kham Tsang by subjugating demons, establishing Buddhism, and spontaneously engaging in broad, compassionate activities was Guru Padmasambhava. The author will publish a summary of the red and white religions in Kham and Tibet in the journal. Now, due to auspicious circumstances, he will retell what was never heard in China in the past and make a summary to provide readers with a reference for those studying Kham and Tibetan culture.

1. The establishment of Tertonpa

Gter-stonpa, in Tibetan language (translated as hidden treasure revealer). Hidden [in Chinese also] means [hidden] treasures. Treasure revealer refers to the person who reveals the hidden treasures. Master Padmasambhava was invited by the Tibetan King Trisong Testen to come to Tibet and propagate the Dharma for twenty years. He subdued demons and liberated all sentient beings. His merits are so great that they are hard to contemplate. [Padmasambhava] contemplated, “Although what I said is without fault, I am afraid that in the future, sentient beings will be ignorant, doubtful, and will not believe in the Dharma. [These future beings] will lose the great benefits and need much compassion.” He discussed with the king of Tibet and went to India to invite five hundred great Panditas (Sanskrit translated as skillful) to come to Tibet. They were proficient in the five sciences, Sutric, and Esoteric teachings and had attained profound meditational and spiritual accomplishments. [The king immediately approved the idea.] Teachings that were yet to be transmitted by Guru Padmasambhava and those that were transmitted but yet to be spread widely were hidden in the six elements: earth, water, fire, wind, void, and consciousness. His disciples were instructed to be born on time and to reveal them to benefit beings. Those who are entrusted to appear at the right time, excavate the treasures, and retrieve Buddhist scriptures, Buddhist statues, bells, vajra, and other [religious] objects hidden by Guru Padmasambhava are called Tertonpa. When it is time for the objects to be taken out, the name of the person who revealed the treasure (who got Tertonpa) will appear on the sutras, bells, pestles, etc., to prove that the prophecies of Guru Padmasambhava are genuine. This is, thus, how the Tertonpa was established.

2. The levels of Tertonpa

There are three levels of Tertonpa: superior, middling, and junior. They are all disciples of Guru Rinpoche in the past who heard the Dharma and attained realization, ranging from low to high. They attained varying degrees of spiritual power and merits. The twenty-five superior Tertonpa are the twenty-five great disciples of Guru Padmasambhava. They received his teachings in the past and attained realization. There are 100 mid-level Tertonpa who were also disciples of Guru Rinpoche. There are a thousand junior Tertonpa who followed his instructions from afar and will

take birth at the right time to reveal the treasures and benefit beings. The best ones can reveal treasures countless times in their lifetimes. Most of the treasures they obtain are related to the supreme secret Esoteric teachings and the most blessed Buddha statues, bells, pestles, and other objects. A mid-level revealer can retrieve treasures three or four times in his life. The junior Terton gets to reveal treasure once in his life. If the superior ones were born in the world, 10,000 false Terton appeared as enemies. When a mid-level Terton is born, thousands of false ones will act as obstacles. If a junior one is born, hundreds of fake ones will make it difficult for them. Such false Tertons are the entourage of demons in the past who created obstacles and caused harm. When Guru Padmasambhava was here, they were not able to hinder him. They waited until the Tertons were reborn to reveal treasures. When they came out, the demons would create obstacles. The more powerful the Dharma, the stronger the demons who will come to create obstacles. The size of demonic obstacles will depend on the capacity of the Tertons. However, evil cannot pervade over the good, and the resultant obstacle will not be materialized at all. In the end, the [demons] will bring faults upon themselves. Because of their more substantial spiritual power, the superior and middling Terton can obtain the treasure while not losing their opportunity to achieve realization. Moreover, the superior ones can see Guru Padmasambhava at any time before and after taking the treasure, and they will benefit their beings immeasurably within their lifetimes because they have already accomplished the ultimate realization. Although the more junior ones can retrieve the treasures [once in their lifetime], their daily life will be the same as ordinary people. They will not know that they are a Terton. When the karmic conditions have ripened, relying on Guru Padmasambhava's aspiration and the persistent power of the protectors, they suddenly feel the wrath. They will naturally locate the place where the treasure is. When searching for it, their mind is clear, but their ability is involuntary. Their courage is extraordinary, and their spiritual rage is unstoppable. They are like a person riding on a horse, crisscrossing troops of millions. No one dares to stop, and the treasure will fall into their hands without hesitation. After the task of collecting the treasure is over, they will return to their normal state.

3. The Tertonpa from all five directions

Among the twenty-five great disciples of Guru Padmasambhava, some are special, and they are the five great Tertons from the five directions. Guru Padmasambhava prophesized that after he returned to the Pure Land, there would be one great person from each of the five directions, east, west, south, north, and middle, to represent me and benefit live beings on my behalf. The name of the central one is Ogyen Lingpa (translated as Ogyen Continent). The east is called Dorje Lingpa (translated as Thunderbolt Continent), the south is called Rinchen Lingpa (translated as Wealth Continent), the west is called Pema Lingpa (translated as Lotus Continent), and the north is called Thinle Lingpa (translated as Activity Continent). These five disciples are the most extraordinary among the twenty-five. They represent Guru Rinpoche, preside over the Dharma Storehouse, and liberate beings in their own way. Their merits are immeasurable. Each of the five major disciples has a "Continent" (Ling) in their names, which are their characteristics. No other Tertonpa has this name.

ལྷོ་དང་ལྷོ་མའི་ལུང་བཤམས་གུ་རུ
 ལུང་ལུང་གཞུང་གི་ཀླུ་ལ་ཚབ་ཀྱི་བོད་
 བདེ་ཤམས་ལེ་བཅོམ་པའི་ཐེག་ལུང་གུ་རུ་
 བ་མངའ་བཤམས་རིག་འཛིན་འོད་གསལ་ལ་ཚེ་
 རྗེ་གློ་མ།།

Figure 1: The original Tibetan text in which Guru Padmasambhava prophesized that the great master of the Tertonpa of the East.

4. Tertonpa in the East

The East refers to the Han and Tibetan areas. According to Guru Rinpoche’s prophesy, this Tertonpa will benefit the beings in the Tibetan and Chinese regions. Hereby, the record of his original name is as follows:

The Tibetan text above is the original text in which Guru Padmasambhava prophesized that the great master of the Tertonpa of the East. He was fifty-one years of age. Guru Padmasambhava prophesized his name as Rigzin Ozer Dorje Lingpa. When translated into Chinese, it was called the Knowledge Holder Luminous Light Thunderbolt Continent, and he was also my guru. At the time, he was traveling within the four counties of Xikang, Dan-Khog, Derge, Ser-shul, and Palyul. He was either going to various temples or among the people, doing puja to give blessings or revealing treasures for the benefit of beings. Everyone in Kham-Tsang and Qinghai knows that he was born as the Great Tertonpa according to Guru Rinpoche’s prophecy, which stated that he would diligently work to benefit beings in the Chinese and Tibetan region through skillful means. That’s why I knew that guru Rigzin also had great karma with the Chinese people. (In the special edition of Kham-Tsang Buddhism, a combined edition of the 6th and 7th issues of Juejueqing magazine, there is an article about Dharma study in the Kham-Tsang region, and there is mention of guru Rigzin.) The guru is to fulfill the mission of Padmasambhava to benefit the Sino-Tibetan beings. So, when we first met the master, we were told that he would come to Han on a certain day.

5. The Common name of guru Rigzin (Vidyadhara Guru)

Rigzin Ozer Dorje Lingpa is the name prophesized by Guru Rinpoche. Except for the great lamas and chieftains, etc. (intellectuals) who know it, the general people do not know it, though they know him by the name of the Great Tertönpa. The common people all call him Ache Tertön. The reason is that he was born in the region of Ache (a small tribe in Derge). After he became ordained, he practiced and achieved the fruit of realization. Due to his past karma, he represented Guru Rinpoche to reveal treasures and liberate beings. From then on, the name of Ache Tertön gradually became popular among the people. Therefore, Ache Tertön is the name commonly known.

6. A Brief Biography to the Vidyadhara Master Guru Rigzin

The guru became a monk in childhood at the Drikung Monastery near Lhasa (four days away from Lhasa). The Drikong Monastery is the grand monastery of the Drikung Kagyu tradition. His preceptor was a lama with good moral conduct at the monastery who upheld rigorous discipline. After staying there for several years, the guru returned to Derge and lived in Palpang Monastery for six years, studying Sutra and Tantra. Then he went to Dzogchen Monastery, relied on a virtuous master, and practiced the profound Vajrayana for five years. Later, he returned to Lhasa and stayed at Sera Monastery, where he studied debate under a certain great Geshe. Before his training was completed, his teacher passed away. My guru told me this story when I followed him to the Tsongsar Monastery. According to him, he was attending the great Geshe when he was about to pass away. When this master passed, he laid stiffly on the bed. His disciples helped him, washed his body with water, folded his legs, and sat cross-legged. He was attached to a wooden stick on the inside and put on beautiful clothes on the outside. Someone went out and told the disciples that the master had entered nirvana, and they may come quickly to worship and receive blessings. When the guru saw this, his heart was broken, and he shed tears. He sighed and said, “Alas, this is deceitful, but we are deceiving ourselves. This generation is pitiful, and I am also pitiful. If I don’t engage in true spiritual practice and strive to achieve real realization, even if I can speak [fluidly] like [water in] a river and argue with others bravely, it will not help me or others. I would rather smash this body than let it be infected with the eight [worldly] dharmas. Otherwise, it is a waste of this body.” “Having taken this oath, I resolutely traveled far away to find an auspicious spot, chose a quiet room, made offerings to a hung image of Guru Padmasambhava, and worshiped with all my heart. After three years of hard, diligent practice, my knees ulcerated, blood flowed out, and I passed out on the ground. At this critical moment of life and death, I suddenly felt Guru Rinpoche appearing in his subtle body, touching my head to give a prophecy. I realized my past karma. (At this point in his story, he relaxed his legs and showed me the scars of the ulcers still present).” From then on, his normal state suddenly changed, and he seemed to be crazy. He didn’t know whether he was hungry or full when eating, and he didn’t know how ugly he dressed, but his body was still extraordinarily strong. People in Kham are accustomed to attaching great importance to beautiful clothes. If the clothes are gorgeous, regardless of whether there is any problem with their academic and ethical [credentials], they can easily benefit from it and cultivate respect. However, the guru did not care whether his clothes were good or ugly, so no one knew his origin, and he was often easily despised. This is the opinion of common people and is not surprising at all.

After the guru realized the causes of the past, he changed from his normal state. His behavior and his mindset had all changed. From then on, Guru Rinpoche appeared numerous times, showing various causes and conditions and transmitting. He spontaneously revealed treasures among the six elements of earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness, at will. The scriptures, statues, and other things he uncovered all had the guru’s name. Thus no one in the great monasteries of all traditions in the Derge area doesn’t know this.

When I followed the guru from Tsongsar Monastery to Dzogchen Monastery, the guru performed various Dharma activities in Dzogchen, and I stayed with him for more than a month. For various reasons, such as [matters of] life and language learning, it was appropriate to return to Yulong to Bya-Khra-tob-dan's residence. Then, I bid farewell to my master and went to Yulong. I stayed there for a month. Suddenly, I heard Chairman Bya ascend and say to the rest of the group, "Alas, It's great to see Ache Tertön demonstrate his miraculous powers, but you two don't know about it." The rest were surprised when they heard it and said, "What is it?" Chairman Bya elaborated as follows:

Dzogchen is the land under the jurisdiction of Mr. Bya, and we and Mr. Bya are all disciples of the guru. On that day, a letter was sent from Dzogchen to Mr. Bya. When Mr. Bya opened and read it, it was the news that the guru had revealed the treasure. Because there were snow-capped mountains behind Dzogchen and a pond on the mountain's ridge, people in Kang called it the sea. Although its area is small, its depth can lead to the sea. With Guru Padmasambhava indicating the cause and conditions, the guru, together with the Dzogchen Khenpo Tulku (commonly known as the "Huo Fo" Living Buddha) and the entourage, a total of more than a hundred people, approached the sea, waited for the time to arrive for the guru to enter the sea. Everyone looked at it with private sighs and fear. The water was only up to his knees when the guru stepped into the sea. For a moment, two gas streams rushed directly upward. Under everyone's gaze, they saw two dragons, one white and one blue, holding a vase together and offering it to the guru. The guru stretched out his arms to catch it and suddenly felt unbearable heat. He changed his hands repeatedly and ran straight to the shore without falling into the water. The Dzogchen Khenpo held out with six or seven layers of katag (strips of cloth of various colors) and took over the vase. There was still little heat coming through. The guru's hands had huge blisters, which showed how hot they were. After taking the treasure, he returned to the Dzogchen to look closely at the jar with everyone else. There was a stone inside, the color of which was black. When he took out the stone and looked at it, there were three characters on it, shining in gold. The master carefully observed the words and suddenly understood the essence of the Dharma that he had heard from Guru Rinpoche in the past. He dictated the text, and the one holding the pen immediately recorded it. There were more than ten kinds of secret treasures in total, including Vajrakilaya, Hayagriva, Vajradakini, Dakini, Yeshe Tsogyal, ... etc., all of whom had never been seen or heard of in the past. It happened at the end of May of the ancient calendar of 1949. When the guru revealed the treasure, he would take his consort Kalsang Drolma (translated as Good Fortune Savioress Mother) with him. The vase still existed in Dzogchen Monastery.

According to Mr. Bya's oral account, the master entered the water thrice. There was a waterfall in a large mountain on the border of Lhasa. The water was swift with a rock behind the waterfall. There was a naturally formed rock statue of Zhi-gye-Chos-kyi-Gyalpo, but the waterfall covered it. When the wind blew across the waterfall, the water flow would deflect slightly, and the image would temporarily appear, and then it would be covered again as before. If one wants to see clearly, one has to go behind the stones. However, the person can be swept away without turning the steps if there are rapid currents. It is said that if thousands try, thousands will die. Once, it was said that a Chinese monk visited the place in person, offered respect and prostrations, and returned safely. Later, when a junior Tertön came to visit personally, he drowned, and his body was not recovered. For some reason, the guru also came to visit in person. He paid homage, and he returned without any harm. To this day, people in Kham and Tibet who have spoken about this matter all praise the Chinese monks and the guru for their courage in entering the waterfall, and they have sincerely paid refuge to them.

7. The whereabouts of the guru Rigzin (Vidyadhara Guru)

Since the guru was the head of Dripong Monastery, every time Drigung Shanggan Tulku ascended the throne, the guru gave initiation to everyone. Now that the throne holder of the Monastery is about to ascend the throne, a representative lama named Byong-Pei was sent to Kangding to invite the guru in person. The guru thought there was a mountain called Chamazaza (Tara Rock) on the border of Badong, Yushu, and Qinghai, containing many treasures. However, the conditions to reveal [the treasures] were not yet mature enough. Therefore, he built a monastery and lived there. There were also dozens of lamas residing there. The intention was to guard the place while waiting for the right cause. Many lamas and scholars from all over Kathok and Dzogchen came here to meditate all year round.

8. Conclusion

Many Tertons are from the Nyingma tradition, and it is due to the instructions given by Guru Padmasambhava. Although several came from other traditions, they all practiced the Nyingma teachings. An example is the fifth Dalai Lama, whose Tibetan name is Sonam Gyatso²² (translated as Merit Ocean). Although he is the Patriarch of the Gelugpa (commonly known as the Yellow Sect), because he was the reincarnation of Niya, he was one of the great disciples of Guru Rinpoche and a Terton. Thus, the fifth Dalai Lama was quite fond of Nyingma. There are two lineages of the Dzogchen teachings of the Nyingma tradition: the long and short. The long [transmission] lineage was passed down from Samantabhadra to Guru Padmasambhava and then from Guru Rinpoche to generation after generation. Until now, there are many generations, which is called long lineage. The short lineage was due to the teachings recently revealed by the Tertons, which were then passed down the lineage and shared with the world. This is called short [transmission] lineage. The compassion of Guru Padmasambhava was profound and vast, and he wished to protect all living beings in every possible way. When we see Terton's recent activity revealing treasure, it is genuine proof of the urgency of his compassion. He supports the practitioners and manifests his presence when the opportunity arises. Therefore, Venerable Atisha said he was "extremely benevolent to Jambudvipa," which is true.

We did not stay in Kham for long, and the important points are summarized above. Due to language limitations, those who want to know more should read Guru Padmasambhava's extensive biography and study Nyingma's Esoteric texts. Although the details are limited, the factual proof has been well established. The story has been well documented through the oral account of Bya-Khra-tob-dan, and witnessed by the public at Dzogchen Temple, so it should not be ridiculed. My intent to introduce these facts is due to the concern of disbelief by the public. The great lay practitioners who practiced Nyingma Esoteric teachings for a long time may have heard a little bit of it.

However, the details of the facts may not be clear, and words can be confusing. Of the two types of ordained practitioners, few know about it. The reason why they do not understand the Nyingma tradition is the environment. The great masters from Tibet came eastward to China to propagate the teachings to benefit sentient beings. Their intention is none other than to find successors to the Dharma. At first, he had no intent to differentiate between the ordained and the lay practitioners. Yet, there are more householders than the ordained who practiced. Why is this? The biggest reason is that after the tulkus came to China, they were surrounded by ordinary laypersons. Whenever the tulkus give teachings, there must be a layperson who sets up a registration book. Each person needs to pay a certain amount of money. If you don't have money, you are not allowed to participate. What about the two types of ordained? There are monetary requirements that not only the monks and nuns but also the lay people cannot afford. Therefore, the Unsurpassable Esoteric Dharma cannot be transmitted to the monks, nuns, or impoverished lay people. Occasionally, when one or two courageous ordained persons venture to the West without considering their lives, they often

attach themselves to the Gelugpa tradition, not the Nyingma. That so-called long-time lay practitioner of the Nyingma tradition claimed to be Vajra Acharya but did not understand the underlying philosophy of his own tradition. He was only good at ringing bells and drums, but how could he resolve people's doubts? This is why the Nyingma tradition was criticized.

Nowadays, transportation in Tibet has become much more convenient compared to the past. Sino-Tibetan Buddhism and other cultures increasingly engage in communication, greatly benefiting the Sino-Tibetan people and Buddhism.

Chapter 4: A Brief Explanation of “Old School” and “New School” of Tibetan Buddhism

Mr. GUO Yuanxing

Tibetan Buddhism itself does not have the terms Red Sect, Yellow Sect, and White Sect. These terms were made up by the Chinese people. Generally, Tibetan Buddhist scholars categorize Buddhism into two periods: the Early Transmission Period (before 970 AD) and the Later Transmission Period (after 971 AD). The lineage tradition for the early transmission period is the so-called Nyingma tradition (old school), with Guru Padmasambhava as the founder. [A tradition] in the later transmission period is the Kagyu tradition (commonly known as the White sect), founded by Marpa, born in 1012. The Ganden tradition was founded by Atisha, who came to Tibet in 1042. The famous Sakya tradition was founded by Kunga Nyingpo, born in 1092. The famous second patriarch of the White Sect, Milarepa (1040-1123), also lived in this period. This was also the period in which the last Indian Vajrayana Master, Abhayākara Gupta, lived. What ordinary Chinese people talk about is that the Red Sect actually refers to a fused concept of the White Sect and the Sakya Sect because the White Sect was later divided into the Red Hat Sect and the Black Hat Sect²³ in the Yuan Dynasty. Most people think Chogyal Pagpa of the Sakya Sect is the Red sect. The royal families of the Yuan and Ming dynasties favored these two sects, which supported their political and religious authority in Tibet. The arrogant and licentious attitude of the ordinary monks created dissatisfaction among the [Chinese] educated class. The later rise of the Yellow Sect can be considered not so much a doctrinal innovation as it was a resistance to the corrupt regime at that time. Therefore, most people in the China region believe that Tsongkhapa rose to reform the Red Religion, which is not consistent with the facts. When Tsongkhapa was alive, it was the period when the Red Hat Sect of the White Sect held power at its peak, and the number of the old sect (i.e., the actual Red Sect, i.e., Nyingma) of the early transmission period was tiny. In Tsongkhapa's original biography, a disciple asked him to choose from the old school's teachings, but he declined by saying he had "no time." Therefore, it can be proved from the facts that Tsongkhapa himself had no intention of reforming the Red Sect.

The ups and downs of Tibetan traditions are closely related to the changes in the Chinese dynasties. During the Yuan Dynasty, the founder of the Sakya tradition was worshiped [by the court], so the Sakya tradition gained the most power. Although the founder of the White sect was consecrated as the Dharma King, the political power was still in the hands of the Sakya. In the Ming Dynasty, political power was transferred to the hands of the White Sect. When the Qing Dynasty was about to enter the Pass (China), the fifth Dalai Lama of the Yellow Sect obtained the help of the Mongolian Gushi Khan to overthrow the White Sect regime. Later, he established connections with the Manchu Qing Dynasty. After the Manchus entered China, they fully supported the Dalai Lama. Both emerging political and military forces supported this emerging tradition, so it quickly expanded. However, from the perspective of doctrine's development and contribution, we cannot just casually echo past remarks to provide a high regard based on political considerations.

Regarding the content of Tibetan Buddhist sects, the ordinary people's opinions are too vague. Most people's basic understanding of Tibetan Buddhism is nothing other than the following two views.

- First, Tibetan Buddhism has two branches: Red and Yellow.
- Second, because the late Red Sect had its drawbacks, Tsongkhapa rose to reform it and founded the Yellow Sect.

This is not consistent with the facts. As mentioned above, Tibetan Buddhism can be divided into two periods: "Early" and "Later." Accordingly, the Nyingma tradition is in the early transmission

period, and the Kagyu (White sect), the Gaden, and the Sakya traditions are in the early Later transmission period.

Regarding evaluating the thoughts of old and new schools, we must pay special attention to one remarkable fact. That is, the Red Sect of the old tradition of the Early transmission period and the Gaden, Sakya, and Kagyu traditions of the Later transmission period all have direct origins in India. For example, Padmasambhava, the founder of the Red Sect, came to Tibet from India, and Atisha, the founder of the Ganden sect, also came to Tibet from India. The Indian founder of the Sakya tradition is Virupa. The founders of the Kagyu tradition are Tilopa and Naropa. The Indian patriarchs of these traditions all enjoy the highest honor among local Buddhists in India.

Speaking of the Yellow Sect, it is probably the latest to rise among all the Buddhist traditions in the world. Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Yellow Sect, was born in 1357 and passed away in 1419. He was born 234 years after the death of Milarepa of the White Sect (1123), two hundred years since the death of Kunga Nyingpo (1158), and more than one hundred and 150 years since the death of Vajrayana Buddhism in India. Indian Buddhism underwent significant changes since the Chinese Master Xuanzang, Yi Jing, and Amoghavajra returned to [China in] the Tang Dynasty. The doctrine had undergone significant changes, and many important classics were lost. Therefore, later teachings gradually became more biased in certain aspects. However, the founders who came to Tibet from India can still appreciate this implication. In particular, the era when Padmasambhava, the founder of the Red Sect, came to Tibet was about the same time when Tripitaka Amoghavajra came to the Tang Dynasty in China. At that time, Sutrayana Buddhism in India had reached its peak, and Vajrayana Buddhism began to flourish. Guru Padmasambhava himself lived a very long life and personally encountered (taught) Nagarjuna the Bodhisattva. Therefore, his teachings are unique in grasping the fundamental spirit of Buddhism, unifying all Buddhist Dharma, and are unparalleled by other traditions. Several other traditions originating from India can also [fully] appreciate the essence of Sakyamuni's teachings and integrate them thoroughly. Therefore, there are deep meanings in prioritizing [the various topics in Buddhism].

Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Yellow Sect, really wanted to do some comprehensive and innovative work in Buddhism. The work he did can be considered a considerable achievement by certain standards. However, the information he relied on was limited to translated Tibetan scriptures and treatises. To be differentiated from other traditions, he has to pay particular attention to the later period doctrines of Abhayākaragupta from Vikramaśīla vihāra. Therefore, regarding Sutrayana and Mahayana teachings, he lacked many materials that the Chinese had but were unavailable in Tibet. His inheritance of Esoteric teachings was not as complete as other traditions. The former is limited by information, and the latter is limited by lineage. This is a matter that cannot be avoided or tabooed by sages. I think Tsongkhapa's spirit of practice and painstaking efforts in establishing a tradition are worthy of admiration and worship. However, the completeness and value of the doctrinal thoughts are another matter. Therefore, we cannot agree with the general opinion that Tsongkhapa is the Martin Luther of Buddhism and that the teachings of the Yellow Sect are above all else.

Regarding the propagation of Buddhism and the ranking of various traditions, Buddhism as a whole needs a large-scale comprehensive reform, including critique and review of choices available. Tibetan Buddhism is not as rich as the Chinese tradition in the perspective of Sutrayana teachings, but it has its own strengths. It can only be said that it can supplement Chinese Buddhism, but it is not enough to compete with others. This is something we should deeply understand. Regarding Vajrayana, only the old tradition (the Red Sect) can be considered comprehensive, and other traditions always have their own emphasis. China's Tripitaka Amoghavajra and Guru Padmasambhava lived in the same period, so the Tantric Buddhism of China's Tang Dynasty can be theoretically connected with the old tradition of Tibet. As for the various traditions in Tibet in the later period, it is

evident that each has unique characteristics. If we pay attention to the historical development of Buddhism, this phenomenon can be clearly seen.

Chapter 5: Kham-Tibetan Buddhist sect and Table of the Nine Yanas of the Nyingma sect

Lama Kan Tsao

A. The Buddhist Traditions

Kham-Tibetan Buddhism was first started by the Tibetan King Trisong Detsen, who invited Guru Padmasambhava from India to come to Tibet to teach Buddhism. From this, it was divided into four traditions: Gelug, Sakya, Kagyu, and Nyingma. Looking from the outside, each one is different. However, the contents are all Buddhist. It is like the snow of a mountain. When the sun shines, the snow melts, and water flows down from the mountain's south, east, north, and west sides. Although the flow is divided into four, they are all water from the same snow. How can snow water have different qualities? The only difference is that water flows down different paths. The same is true for the Nyingma and the others, the four traditions in Kham-Tibetan Buddhism today, but each has its own teachings and own perspective views.

1. **Gelugpa**, commonly known as the Yellow sect: Its founder, Tsongkhapa, was born in 1357 AD and passed in 1419 AD. According to the Madhyamakā, it is also called the "Non-arising View" (Tibetan: Ume Tawa) practice. It is to know that all dharmas have no inherent nature, neither birth nor death and concealed consciousness and images, etc., have no inherent nature. Therefore, all dharmas have no inherent nature and can achieve Buddhahood based on this.
2. **Sakyapa**: Its founder was Kunga Nyingpo (translated as Joyful Essence), who was born in 1092 AD and passed in 1158 AD. According to the Sakya's (name of the land) practice of Path and Fruit (Tibetan: Lamdre Tawa), there are two types: (1) According to the three realms: "Madhyamaka View"; (2) According to two aspects: "Mahamudra View." If you practice accordingly, you can achieve the fruit of Buddhahood.
3. **Kagyupa**—commonly known as the White Sect. Its founder, Marpa Lotsawa, was born in AD 1012—and his passing is unknown. According to the "innate wisdom view"—also known as "Dharmakaya view" (Tibetan: Lengji Yeshe Dawa) practice. It is to know that all Dharmas are inherently luminous and do not use the method of abandonment. Knowing that all Dharmas were inherently born, practice accordingly, and one will achieve perfect enlightenment.
4. **Nyingmapa** - Commonly known as the Red Sect. Its founder is Pema Jungne (translated as The Lotus Born). Guru Padmasambhava was born in 482 BC, came to Tibet in 747 AD, and left Tibet after 800 years. Practicing in accordance with the "innately pure view" - also known as the "naturally born wisdom view" (Tibetan: Rangjung Yeshe Tawa) - also known as the "Great Perfection View" (Tibetan: Dzogpa Chenpo). All living beings are originally Buddhas, there is no need to seek outward. The Dharma is the same. It exists spontaneously without birth, death, nirvana, taking and giving up, and other defilements. When all Dharmas arise, instantaneously, they are perfect.

B. The Nine Yanas (Vehicle or Stages) of the Nyingma Sect (tradition)

There are two types of Nyingma lineage:

There are three types of lineage holders:

1. The Thought Lineage of Buddhas (i.e., heart seal lineage): Dharmakaya Samantabhadra Tathagata, with a single thought of Dharma, received the transmission from the self-nature of five Dhyana Buddhas.
2. Symbolic lineage of Vidyadharas: (Symbolic Lineage) The five Dhyana Buddhas used symbols and passed them down to Vajrasattva.

3. The ear-whispered lineage of Pudgala (i.e., Ear-whispered Lineage Of The Great Individuals) means that it was passed down from Vajrasattva to Garab Dorje, who was then passed on to the Manjushrimitra. Manjushrimitra passed on to Srisimha (The Chinese monk who lived in India), and Srisimha transmitted it to Guru Padmasambhava. These five generations represent both symbol and ear-whispered transmissions. Then, it entered into pure ear-whispered transmission.

There are two other lineages:

1. Distant lineage: Guru Padmasambhava saw the Tathagata Samantabhadra on the first night at the Sava Kshetra Grove and directly received the transmission from him
2. Recent lineage: Lotus Lord of the Dance (Wyl. gar gyi dbang phyug) personally received the teachings from Guru Padmasambhava, who also transmitted them to Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal.

The teachings of the Nyingma tradition are divided into nine vehicles (yanas) based on the Sutra and Tantra, which can be organized into three branches: external, internal, and Esoteric (Tantric).

1. The three outer vehicles are divided into sravakas, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas. This was taught by the Buddha Sakyamuni, Nirmanakaya of Tathagata Samantabhadra, who pervades all realms. The four noble truths, the twelve links of dependent origination, and the six paramitas are “Añkita Three Vehicles” (Tibetan "Kun Byung Tenpe Tese"). This is the Sutrayana teaching.
2. The three inner vehicles are divided into Kriya (action), Charya (Performance), and Yoga (Yoga). Vajrasattva, Sambhogakaya of Samantabhadra Tathagata, taught this in the Akanishta (the highest of all the form realms). The method of arduous practice, asceticism, and diligent practice. These belong to the three lower Esoteric methods. – The Kriya and Charya tantras also share commonalities with the Sutrayana.
3. The Three Secret Vehicles are divided into Mahayoga (Great Yoga), Anuyoga (Follow Yoga), and Atiyoga (Extreme Yoga). They were what Samantabhadra Dharmakaya Buddha taught. The five poisons are the five wisdoms. Impureness is purity. Defilements are Bodhi. This is called the method of spontaneous self-transformation. It belongs to the three higher tantras – Unsurpassable Yoga Tantra. - Mahayoga belongs to the father's tantra. Anuyoga belongs to the mother's tantra. Atiyoga - Dzogchen (Sanskrit Maha Sandhi) belongs to the heart tantra.

Atiyoga – Dzogchen. The common treatises are divided into three parts:

1. The outer category of mind: instructions for the mind. All the dharmas that appear in the six realms of cyclic existence are caused by the mind. If not understood, this fundamental principle can lead one to fall into extremes easily. There are three practices:
 - Practice of body: Stand naked on a wide and comfortable seat, visualize the body like a vajra, ... etc.
 - Practice of speech: seal, strength, seeking, gentleness, tending to the path ... etc.
 - Practice of mind: The observation of arise, the observation of abide, and the observation of cessation ... etc.
2. Inner category of space: instructions of emptiness. Although the external objects of confusion have been exhausted, to purify the causes and seeds of the three inner gates, one should adopt important rituals, arouse bodhicitta, invite the guru, purify the seeds of habitual habits of the six realms, etc. All these Dharma cannot transcend the Dharma Realm of the Samanthabhadra Father and Mother. Therefore, all Dharmas are of the nature of the Dharmatā of Samanthabhadra. Without deep insight, it is easy to fall to the edge.

3. Secret pith instructions category: Instructions for the luminous body. Abide in nature and merge into the primordial origin. This method is passed down from teacher to teacher through oral transmission and experience of the mind. Principally, it transcends beyond the realm of equanimity of thoughts. Thus, the prevention of the two extremes and the self-nature and luminous body of everything are manifested nakedly.

The *secret pith instructions* category - Sanskrit: Sangmen Agade - is divided into three parts: Ati, Cheti, Yangti

1. Ati: It is the unsurpassable most superb teaching, the originally pure Trecho and the spontaneous of Togonal.
2. Cheti: It is the supreme Dharani, with a total of eighteen categories of meanings.
3. Yangti: It is the Dharani of Dharani, the heart center of Dzogchen.

Now, the nine levels of Sutra and Tantra are listed below:

Three outer vehicles

- The nirmanakaya of Samantabhadra
- The Sutrayana teachings spoken by Sakyamuni Buddha
 - Sravakas-The Four Noble Truths: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path.
 - Pratyekabuddha - Twelve links of dependent origination: ignorance, formations, consciousness, name and form, six bases, contact, feeling, craving, grasping, existence, birth, old age, and death.
 - Bodhisattva - Six paramitas: generosity, moral conduct, patience, diligence, meditation, and knowledge wisdom.

Inner three vehicles

- Secret teachings taught by Vajrasattva, Sambhogakaya of Samantabhadra.
 - Kriya – Action tantra parallel to the Sutrayana teachings - focusing on rituals, mandala, bathing, protection boundary, blessing, rosary, the shape of a syllable, the sound of the syllable, recitation, etc., to achieve accomplishment.
 - Charya—Performance Tantric—Pay attention to how to serve the deity: there is form yoga and formless yoga. There are four external limbs of chanting and four internal limbs of chanting. One can achieve accomplishment based on this.
 - Yoga - Corresponding Tantric - There are form, formless, coarse, and fine. There are student initiations and Acharya initiations. There are Buddha, Vajra, Lotus, and Wealth categories. In short, it is appropriate to summarize the transformation of one's body, speech, and mind to the deity's body, speech, and mind. It is called concomitant.

Three Secret Vehicles

- Unsurpassable yoga taught by Samantabhadra, the Dharmakaya Buddha.
 - Maha Yoga - Great Yoga – Mainly practices the generation stage - Father Tantra. Such as Yamantaka and Guhyasamāja
 - Anuyoga – Follow yoga. Mainly practice the perfection stage. Mother tantra. Such as Vajrayogini and Khachoma
 - Atiyoga - ultimate yoga - the great perfection – the mind continuum.
 - The outer mind - the instructions of the heart - Ati - the most precise and important.
 - The Inner Space—The Instructions of Emptiness—Cheti—The Supreme Sustainability—A Total of Eighteen Parts
 - Secret pith instruction - Instructions on the Luminous Body - Yangti – Dharani of Dharani, which is the heart center of Dzogchen.

The divisions between the four categories, Kriya yoga, Charya yoga, Yoga yoga, and Unsurpassable yoga above, are designed to describe the four castes in India at that time. Because the caste hierarchy in India was extremely strict, they were Kshatriya, Brahmin, Sudra, and Chanda. Kshatriyas are the royal race; Brahmins are nobles; Sudras are peasants; and Chandas are the humble slave race. The four secret tantra are designed for these four different clans and surnames:

1. **Kriya:** It is designed for Kshatriyas and mainly focuses on making altars, offering prayers, bathing, fasting, and various other things. You serve the deity as your master and yourself as your slave. One can become a Buddha in no later than sixteen lifetimes.
2. **Charya:** This category was designed for the Brahmin caste and includes chanting, asceticism, mandala, making offerings, fasting, bathing, etc. Serve the deity as your parents and yourself as your children and achieve enlightenment within at most seven lifetimes.
3. **Yoga:** Established for Sudra. It uses the blessings of the three secrets to self-transform the blessed illusory body and to achieve accomplishment. Serve the deity as a friend and have the same status as the deity. At the latest, he will become a Buddha within three lifetimes.
4. **Unsurpassable:** Designed for Chandala, there are three types of yoga: Maha Yoga, "passionately following" Yoga and Unsurpassable Yoga. Mahayoga (Father Tantra) mainly focuses on the practice of the generation stage and the five major winds. One relies on the sublime heavenly crown, clothes, and palace as ornaments. One views the five races as Buddhas to attain accomplishment. The longest is to achieve Buddhahood in the next life. The "passionately following" yoga (Mother Tantra) mainly focuses on the perfection stage and self-nature luminous dots. One views the five aggregates of oneself as the Buddha. One uses corpses, skin, bones, charnel grounds, impure appearance, etc., as ornaments. At the latest, one can achieve Buddhahood in the bardo. The Unsurpassable Yoga is the Dzogchen Mind Tantra. Based on original purity Trecho (thoroughly cutting through) and spontaneous Tegal (direct crossing), one attains the realization of the rainbow body and accomplishment of longevity. One realizes equanimity between sentient beings and Buddhas, and the transformation to Nirvana is the playful realm of the Samantabhadra. Therefore, one can immediately realize the Three Bodies and five wisdoms and merge them with the essential nature of Samanthabhadra. This is considered the highest accomplishment.

In summary, the teachings of the four traditions have minor differences but are essentially the same. However, the nine-vehicle (yana) order is unique to the Nyingma tradition and is recognized by all traditions. It is divided into nine vehicles (yanas), covering the Three Bodies, the Sutrayana and Tantrayana. This cannot be compared with those who insist on one sutra and one theory. Considering that all sentient beings have different karma and experience, thus there are different teachings. Although the nine vehicles (yanas) (stages of the Path) are the convergence of all Dharmas, one should not cling to convergence and ignore the differences. One must know that "all Dharmas flow from this Dharma Realm and all return to this Dharma Realm." The summary is as above. May the wise correct [any errors]!

Chapter 6: Ch'an (Ch'an) and Great Perfection (Dzogchen)

Lama Kan Tsao and Master Mi Xian

Overview

The phrase "instantly becoming a Buddha in one's own body" has long been noticed by Buddhists and is considered a question worthy of discussion. Where does this question arise? It is nothing more than a difference between Sutric and Esoteric teachings.

It is said in the Sutra: "To become a Buddha, it takes three countless eons to accumulate the merits for Buddhahood, practice the Six Perfections and Tens of Thousands of Activities. One has to go through countless hardships and ascetics. To be able to do what is difficult to do, and to be able to endure difficult to endure. Only then can one achieve the goal of becoming a Buddha."

The Esoteric teachings say: "Becoming a Buddha does not require three innumerable eons. As long as you meet a qualified guru, go through the three stages of initiation, teaching, and guidance. Then, once you practice according to the instructions, you can instantly achieve perfect Buddhahood."

The Sutras seem to consider it challenging to become a Buddha, while the Esoteric teachings make it seem so easy. This difference is enormous, and it cannot be said it is not serious. To resolve this problem, those responsible for expounding the Dharma and those studying Buddhism have used several methods: some study it from the subjective doctrinal aspect, and some study it from the objective historical aspect. Their research and verification are summarized as follows:

There are two results from an objective historical aspect:

1. It is believed that although Buddha Sakyamuni mentioned several kinds of Dharani in the Sutras, they were only used for protecting monks from disasters, such as poisonous snakes and beasts when they lived in Aranya²⁴. Regarding the rituals such as mandala, protection wheel ... etc., and activities such as pacifying, increasing, magnetizing, and subjugating are considered as heretics – Brahmins' rituals. Therefore, it is concluded that except for a few mantras in the Vinaya, later generations make up other Esoteric teachings, and there were no such [things as Esoteric] teachings at all. This is a subjective criticism based on the objective perspective of history.
2. Some who consulted several versions of Indian Buddhism history conclude that Tantra is the last period of Indian Buddhism. One said: "After the death of great sages like Nagarjuna and Aśvaghōṣa, the remnants left behind were the old and the weak, and their wisdom and eloquence were no match for the heretics. The reputation of Buddhism was declining daily, and the power of Brahmins was becoming increasingly powerful. To maintain the status of Buddhism, the Buddhists secretly plagiarize some Brahmin rituals to keep up with their appearance. They mixed them with some profound Buddhist philosophy as the backbone. This has led to a speculative and lingering phenomenon circulating now - Tantra." This view is a slightly more advanced form of the historical perspective and a slightly objective criticism mixed with prejudice.

There are four results come from research on the subjective aspects of doctrine:

1. From a Consciousness-only tradition perspective, beyond [the doctrine of] the Five Phenomena, Three Natures (Tri-svabhāva), Eight Consciousnesses, and Two Selflessness, its criticism is that there cannot be any establishment of "Tantrism." Not only does it not exist, but it is not

allowed to exist. It does not recognize the establishment of "Esoteric Buddhism" and considers the term "attainment of Buddhahood with one's own body" to be akin to the "Rebellion of Yue Fei²⁵." (i.e., it is impossible.)

2. According to the view of the Habitual Tendency tradition, some say Tantric Buddhism is the secret teaching among the four methods [in the Tiantai tradition²⁶]. They say that Tantric Buddhism is used by the Bodhisattva at the Perfectly Enlightened level²⁷ to finally enter the Vajra Concentration and engage in the elimination of rebirth, forms, and ignorance. Therefore, Tantric Buddhism can only be achieved by the Perfectly Enlightened level of Bodhisattva when they are about to reach Buddhahood.

Of these two views, the former describes Tantric Buddhism as easy but not profound, and the latter as capable of being profound but not easy. However, the former statement can still receive some one-sided explanations. As for their high views on "instantly becoming a Buddha in one's own body," they still believe that only the Sudhanakumāra in the Avatamsaka Sutra and the Nāgā-Kanyain in the Lotus Sutra have the possibility of "instantly becoming a Buddha." Ordinary people want to "instantly become a Buddha in one's own body," which is still a "dream."

3. From the perspective of Pure Land Buddhism, Tantra is considered to be the same as reciting Amitabha. As long as you recite Amitabha, you are practicing Tantra. As for the "attainment of Buddhahood with this very body" is just a reasonable [theory] and is by no means a practical matter. Even if there is a possibility for instant Buddhahood, one can only achieve it in one lifetime after passing through rebirth in the Pure Land.
4. The study based on Chinese scripture-based doctrines finds that it can barely agree with the "attainment of Buddhahood in one's own body" from certain perspectives, but it still cannot completely solve the problem. In fact, three phenomena come forth:
 - A. Lazy people who cannot yield any results from the research simply ignore it and let them go easily. They might as well enjoy a rest to avoid worrying about hurting their brains.
 - B. Narrow-minded people who regard the Tantric "instantly become Buddha in one's own body" as an eyesore because of the difficulty of resolving the [idea]. They try their best to defeat it, but after years of hard work, they still cannot defeat it. So they decided to hate the term "instantly become Buddha in one's own body," they hated these words to the very core and resisted them until their death.
 - C. Those who cannot find the answer from within the scriptures have no choice but to look further into Ch'an, the teachings that transcend beyond the scriptures. He said: "Ch'an Buddhism is the direct pointing to the mind of sentient beings to see the true nature and instantly becomes a Buddha. The method of directly pointing to the person's mind and becoming a Buddha can be accomplished in this very life. Isn't this the same as "becoming a Buddha in one's own body" in Esoteric Buddhism?" However, the "Buddhahood" referred to here is the attainment of "plain" Dharmakaya²⁸. This is nothing more than realizing merely the "original nature." If we talk about ordinary people instantly realizing the Three Bodies, equivalent to the state of Vajradhara, who dares to admit such a big claim? Therefore, "attaining Buddhahood by seeing one's nature" cannot be the same as "becoming a Buddha instantly [in one's own body]." For the reason the "becoming a Buddha in one's own body" of the Esoteric Buddhism has become an empty theory that is "high but not vast enough and is useless." This method to attain an understanding thoroughly has been exhausted at this point. Yet to "become a Buddha in one's own body" has become a source of sadness.

Summing up the above various studies and phenomena, we know that few are [worthy of] discussion except for the Ch'an Buddhism's "attain Buddhahood by seeing one's nature" is worthy of comparison with the "attain Buddhahood with one's own body" in Esoteric Buddhism. However, in the case of Ch'an Buddhism, usually only seeing one's nature to "instantly attain Buddhahood by

seeing the mind” (realization of the principles) is discussed, the other half to “attain Buddhahood in one’s own body” (actual complete realization) has not been emphasized. As soon as this is said, people will inevitably want to deny it because Ch’an is the highest tradition among all Buddhist sects in our country. Now, there is actually a method of “becoming a Buddha in one’s own body” that is higher than “becoming a Buddha by seeing one’s nature.” This is an appallingly weird theory! How can it not be opposed by people? If you don’t object, that’s fine. But once you object to it, things get worse. The bad result is not only will it fail to defeat the idea of “becoming a Buddha in one’s own body,” but it will also defeat the Ch’an tradition that one has always considered to be the supreme one! Why? Because the person had underestimated Ch’an Buddhism and believed that Ch’an Buddhism is complete once one could see one’s true nature. He thought that this was what Bodhidharma taught: “moving one step upward.” Little did he know that if it were this case, why would the Fifth Patriarch’s “midnight [lineage] transmission” have been considered so very valuable? The singular direct “robe and bowl” transmission of the Ch’an tradition only lasted up to the Sixth Patriarch. After the Sixth Patriarch, the “Dharma text” transmission replaced the “robe and bowl” transmission. How many people knew what happened in the previous [five generations] of singular transmission? Those students seeking spiritual friends [for guidance] either beseeched about the method or asked for confirmation [of their realization]. When they talk about “moving upward” of the “intention of coming from the West,” people either stick out their tongues and raise their hands, frown their eyebrows and blink their eyes, or make a series of “koan”-like comments or make strange remarks. If only we take these as the “intention of coming from the West,” then wouldn’t there be many Bodhidharmas today?

So, what exactly is “moving one step upward” of “intention of coming from the West?” Although I dare not conclude here that it is the “Togal” of Dzogchen, I believe it is very much related to “Togal.” Even if there may not be a direct relationship, at least the two must have something in common. The ancients either kept it secret or pretended not to know about the “moving one step upward.” They occasionally reminded students of one or two things, and the reactions of students were either to turn a deaf ear (to ignore it) or to gaze at the ocean and sigh. What did the ancients remind students of? As Mi Patriarch said: “Although “sudden enlightenment” is like the Buddhahood, there are still profound habitual tendencies from many past lives. The wind has calmed, but the waves have yet to subside. There is still the intrusion of karmic consciousness.” These words are so obvious. They clearly instruct students that after “sudden enlightenment,” they have not obtained the “intention of coming from the West” yet. If they want to obtain the “intention of coming from the West,” they still need to regroup. Otherwise, how can they save sentient beings if their own many habitual tendencies and karmic consciousness have not been cleaned up? If one’s karma and habitual tendencies are not exhausted, one is unable to benefit sentient beings. If this is called Buddhahood, how can one really say that? Therefore, after Ch’an’s “sudden enlightenment,” if you don’t seek to move forward, you can only solve the problem of the mind. If you can make further progress and make both body and mind function, then you can benefit all sentient beings through infinite futures. The “becoming Buddha in own’s own body” of the Esoteric Buddhism is about solving physical and mind problems. If one can only “see one’s nature with a luminous mind” and without working hard on cultivating the physical body, one can only become a “plain” Dharmakaya Buddha. If one wishes to achieve the complete perfect Buddhahood, it’s impossible. If you don’t believe it, please read Mi Patriarch’s teachings, and you will know. To enable future Ch’an tradition to achieve the true fruit of Buddhahood and to restore the original Ch’an [tradition] of Bodhidharma, we should briefly study the Great Perfection taught by the Nyingma tradition as a reference:

The Trecho view of Dzogchen

Because the Esoteric teachings are divided into the Action, Performance, Yoga, and Unsurpassable Yoga tantra, Dzogchen is the highest part of the Unsurpassable Yoga Category. The highest of the

Esoteric teaching is the Unsurpassable Yoga, and it has three categories, namely Maha Yoga (generation stage), Following Yoga (perfection stage), and Supreme Yoga (the Great Perfection (Dzogchen)). Among these three levels, the highest is Great Perfection. In Dzogchen, there are also the heart instructions, and the layers-by-layers more profound lineage of the heart of heart. The Dzogchen that is usually taught now has roughly two stages, namely "Trecho" and "Togal." The former is translated as "thorough cutting through," and the latter is translated as "Direct crossing." The "thorough cutting through" belongs [to the method of] departing from conceptual elaboration, which refers to the aspects of seeing the true nature. The importance of "Direct crossing" lies in manifesting the great application²⁹ (capability). One can instantly manifest the rainbow body. It is ultimately related to benefiting living beings. This does not mean that Trecho cannot manifest great application, but it takes slightly longer to take effect. If, after attaining Trecho, one can work diligently and courageously to practice Togal and rely on the power of the auspicious skillful means, one can instantly merge one's own body with the nature of Primordial Tathagata Samantabhadra. The luminosity of the Dharmatā illuminates the ten directions and to the future and vastly benefits all sentient beings. Not entering Nirvana will be another [topic for] future discussion. What is to be mentioned here is the Trecho view of "immediate cutting through," which is to realize in an instant that "all sentient beings are equal to Buddhas (not imaginary equality, but equality with proof). Original purity, no bondage, no liberation, no original differentiation between Samsara and Nirvana, ...". This view is almost the same as that of Ch'an, but the skillful mean is different. The method of Ch'an Buddhism requires decades of winters and summers of study and practice. Once the opportunity arises, [it is like] the bottom of the bucket falls off, water streaming out decisively and clearly. One sees true nature. The skillful means of Trecho started with receiving the empowerment and blessing from the guru to develop the seed of one's own nature. Then, one receives guidance from the guru to instantly experience the "original purity" (Trecho is the originally pure nature) that appears before oneself. From then on, one rests in the non-dual nature of luminosity and emptiness at any time and anywhere. In primordially pure nature, free and unobstructed, one abides in the spacious spontaneity. Any cursive thoughts [arise], no deliberate action [is needed], and the distraction will automatically subside. If you practice like this, you will be able to experience a concomitant connection after a very short period of time. If one practices casually like this, as long as it is uninterrupted every day, at the moment when one passes into the bardo, one will suddenly merge into the great interplay realm of Perfect Dharma in an instant. The Three Bodies and Five Wisdoms will appear together. Except for the fingernails and hair, the rest of the body will transform into rainbows and depart. (This is a sign that it affects the previous body after realizing the ultimate truth. Even if they obtain great supernatural powers in this life, those who have not realized the ultimate truth will still have no confidence when they die. Not to mention, passing away with the body turns into a rainbow. Because of the faith, there are signs which can prove the authenticity of the Buddha's teachings. If it is said that these people are "breathing fire," then the Sixth Patriarch had his neck knifed and was not hurt after three swings. Isn't he a "swallowing knife" kind of person? There must be evidence to prove the true nature of Dharma. The transformation of the rainbow body is true and real evidence. It would be ridiculous to talk about it with "cow ghosts and snake gods" and "swallowing force and spitting fire"!). Even for less skillful practitioners who do not transform into a rainbow and leave behind nails and hair, their bodies can at least shrink to a foot or a few inches. One can achieve this kind of auspicious accomplishment when one practices only the Trecho of the Great Perfection (Dzogchen) tradition.

The Togal View of Dzogchen

This teaching can guide practitioners to spontaneously manifest the nature, appearance, and application (capacity) in the realms of the Three Bodies and other realms so that they can instantly transform their own bodies and realize the rainbow bodies for the ultimate benefit of sentient beings. There are many aspects of guidance, and there are generally four types of guidance: light guidance, sunlight guidance, water-light guidance, and darkness guidance. These four kinds of guidance all

use the “visual sensory” (eye sense) as a helping condition. The six senses have two types: “floating dust” and “ultimate.” What the floating dust eye sense sees is coarse, and it cannot see when blocked [like a] wall blocks a window. The “ultimate” “visual sensory” (eye sense) is pure and unobstructed. One can see it even when separated by the sea or blocked by mountains. One can see the upward, the downward, the interior, and the exterior. One can see afar and near, and one can see the Sages, the ordinary, the pure, and the contaminated. When a person can remove the obstacles of “floating dust,” the “ultimate” primordial capability can be discovered and brought forth. When [the person] can see through “the floating dust” that cannot be seen, that is clairvoyance. The Tegal teachings are based on the highest view of the Trecho, which uses the “ultimate sensory” of the eyes. Additionally, with the guidance of the guru, the person who relies on his teachings and performs the practices will immediately activate the capacity of the “ultimate sensory.” The practitioners can see for themselves the field of the Three Bodies inherent in one’s own true nature. At the same time, the person can realize for themselves the Three Bodies, Bodies, Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Nirmanakaya, of one’s true nature, which is the same as that of the Buddha. So, what is the guidance of the guru? That is to say, everyone has “innate wisdom” in their bodies. This wisdom has been contaminated by the defilements and habitual tendencies when we entered the womb [created by] the father’s sperm and the mother’s blood. The channel and senses have form, but insubstantial are formed. This channel runs from the heart to the eyes. This is the only channel in the human body to communicate with all the Buddhas. Although it can communicate with the Buddhas, it is polluted by the contaminated wind, which causes its original wisdom to aggregate and underdevelop. The so-called underdevelopment means its capability becomes deluded when encountering the contaminated, defiled wind. However, the deluded confusion is just a temporal illusory phenomenon. If one does not cling to it, it will disappear instantly. If one gets attached to it, the confusion will turn into afflicted karma and suffering. Is that not like a silkworm moth that makes a cocoon and spins silk to twine itself? Suppose one understands that there is innate primordial wisdom within the body, even though confusion arises from external conditions when activated. In that case, its nature is ultimately empty, and the afflictions (Klesha) instantly transform into enlightenment (Bodhi). Even though one occasionally encounters confusion and illusions due to conditional circumstances, one’s primordial wisdom is unharmed at all. For example, if the visual sensory has a fire disease, when the eyes are luminous and occasionally look at fire, one sees illusions of flowers falling from emptiness. A person who comprehends this realizes that the sight of flowers in space is an illusion caused by occasional visual aberrations. Regardless of the presence of flowers in space, he will consult medical treatment for eye fire disease. Naturally, fire is no longer an obstacle. People who don’t understand will do the opposite. However, the luminosity of the eyes will not be lost whether they are exposed to fire or not. From this example, we can understand the capability of primordial wisdom. Regardless of its encounter with contaminated wind, it will never be damaged.

Practitioners of the Vajrayana tradition use wind (breathing) techniques to expel all the winds contaminating primordial wisdom. They then use the ultimate channel from the heart to the eyes, combined with contact with the luminosity of the sun, moon, lamps, and water outside the body (excluding black guides), to connect with the Buddhas. At the moment of concomitant, boundless realms are manifested in an instant, or one sees all colors of precious lights or sees Buddha realm, or see many Buddha realms, or see countless Buddha realms, or see one Buddha, or see many Buddhas, or see countless Buddhas, depending on the depth of the efforts. Even the realm of the Three Bodies of the Buddhas can be manifested within. When the objects of the senses arise, one should understand their origin, and in the field of self-nature, the Three Bodies Dharmakaya, and so forth. One can actually realize the various spheres according to the teachings. These are all light guidance. How about darkness guidance? Upon receiving the instructions from the guru, one finds a quiet room and stays in it. Use paper to seal all the light-transmitting holes to ensure no light can enter, creating a dark room where you can’t recognize all your fingers. Sit quietly in this dark room (commonly known as a dark retreat) for one week, two weeks, up until seven weeks. Follow the pith instructions of the guru, stay motionlessly, and watch quietly. Then, various visions will appear.

Some may appear in the form of the deity and protector or as the spheres of the three lower realms, the spheres of the three virtuous realms, the bardo realm, or various spheres of the sentient and animate realms. Just to name a few. At that time, the practitioner should recall the guru's pith instructions and understand that all these are the contaminated seeds of the eight consciousnesses, and their natures are empty. Accordingly, one spontaneously abides (rest) on the knowledge of primordial purity. Without taking it or letting it go, one can instantly realize the various states of Samadhi according to conditional circumstances. Those with sharp capacity can instantly realize Buddhahood. This is the outline of the darkness guidance (the [actual] guidance is both profound and detailed, and what I said here is just like introducing one or two terminologies. We are still outside the door, and the precious readers must know it). The Dzogchen Togal, as mentioned above, is just a rough outline. There are still various profound guidance from the above, some of which I can't even mention.

A person who practices Togal can realize the luminous rainbow body in this life (that is, without the transitioning of the physical body). After realizing this body, the person is not limited by time and space, and life and death cannot bind the person. If this person wishes to live in this world for a long time to liberate sentient beings, they can keep this body in the limitless future, and it will never be damaged. If this person doesn't want to live in this world for a long time, they can transform into light and depart. This type of transformation into light leaves no trace of the body's muscle, bone, skin, or flesh, and even his nails and hair can be transformed away. At the same time, when the person is transformed into light, three thousand people are witnessing. They can all transform into light and follow him. From the perspective of Chinese Buddhists, this kind of statement is shocking and appalling, but for people in Kham and Tibet who have common knowledge of Sutras and Tantras, this is very reasonable. It is inevitable, and there is nothing unusual about it.

The Ch'an Beyond the Sixth Patriarch

The two types of Dzogchen, "Trecho" and "Togal," were mentioned earlier. If compared with the Ch'an view, some "Ch'an" views can be the same as "Trecho," but those who practice "Trecho" spontaneously live and die at will. In the Ch'an tradition, if one can attain "great realization" and afterward cannot practice based on the realized self-nature, one is still stuck in the Samsara cyclic existence of life and death. There are many examples, such as Wuzu Jie's and Caotangqing's stories³⁰. This is not to slander the Ch'an tradition. Except for a few who aspired to return [to benefit beings] and those with superb capacity, most of them in the Ch'an tradition are like this after the Sixth Patriarch. So, what about the Ch'an sects before the Sixth Patriarch? After realizing the ground of his mind, he obtained confirmation from the Patriarch, who further transmitted the method of the secret teachings in preparation for the "great application." For example, when the Sixth Patriarch asked the Fifth Patriarch for teachings in the middle of the night, the Fifth Patriarch covered him with the robe, secretly imparted the Dharma seal, and thus established [the Sixth Patriarch as] the lineage holder's position. (According to the story, when the Sixth Patriarch attained realization, like the "Trecho view" of Dzogchen. Later [he] received the Secret Dharma Seal from the Fifth Patriarch, which may be equivalent to the transmission of the "Togal." Therefore, the Sixth Patriarch's magical powers and wisdom were immeasurable and boundless. Countless miracles appear during his lifetime and after his passing.) Most monks always think that the "secret transmission" of the Five Patriarchs is nothing more than the mind-to-mind seal, the so-called "mind seal." [Some said] this so-called "mind-seal" is nothing more than "exchanging glances, making gestures, or saying Jifeng"³¹, and then the Fifth Patriarch took out his robe and bowl and gave them to the Sixth Patriarch. The Fifth Patriarch further urged him to depart quickly, and that was it." [However,] what is the application after the "mind seal," what is the practice to bring about the application? Not only does the other person not know this, but even if you try to explain it clearly to him, he does not want to believe it and scolds you. He thinks Buddhism is only about theoretical under-

standing of the reasoning, and people who realize the Dharmatā are only an [intellectual] understanding. Regarding application, he either thinks it is “confused and delusional” or “possessed and crazy.” If it was really as simple as some old man said, the various actions the Fifth Patriarch carried out with the Sixth Patriarch were just a big fuss for the very simple task of realizing the heart-to-heart seal. When the Sixth Patriarch was saying the verses, the Fifth Patriarch already had to engage the heart to seal with him, and why wait until midnight? Moreover, regarding the heart seal, only the people who have seen the self-nature can understand each other. People who have not seen their self-nature considered the matter inexplicable [and confused] even though they have witnessed and heard of it. So, if the Fifth Patriarch did the seal in public, are you still afraid that he will not be able to seal it? Some people also said, “The reason why the Fifth Patriarch must wait for the secret teaching at midnight is to pass on the robe and bowl because as soon as the Sixth Patriarch received them, he became the [next] Patriarch. When it comes to the Patriarch, who doesn't want to fight? So, the Fifth Patriarch must wait for midnight (the Third Watch) to give secret instructions. It's just about passing on the robe and bowl (mantle)!” This doesn't make sense. Since it was just a small matter of passing of the robe and bowl, [it was done] in the middle of the night, when no one else was around, the Fifth Patriarch could have just handed over the robe and bowl when the Sixth Patriarch came in, and that should be it. [However,] why cover [the Sixth Patriarch with] the robe? Therefore, the Fifth Patriarch's secret transmission should not have been merely a matter of mind-seal and the passing of robe and bowl. (The robe and bowl were the proof of the Dharma [lineage] transmission and were incidental.) The question is definitely about the term “Dharma [lineage] transmission.” Because it was a singular transmission, and the teaching would not be transmitted if one was not in the suitable capacity. There were many secret tantric teachings in Kham and Tibet, and the master only transmitted the teaching to one student in his lifetime, similar to Bodhidharma's single-person transmission. Some would say: “Ch'an is Ch'an, and Tantra is Tantra. The two cannot be mixed.” Yes, we are here to illustrate the similarities between Ch'an and Dzogchen. For the Ch'an tradition before the Sixth Patriarch, there is room for comparison regarding the styles and views.

However, the lineage of Dzogchen originated from Ati Buddha (Samantabhadrarāja Tathāgata). The Ch'an Buddhism was passed down by the Buddha Sakyamuni and the 28th patriarch Bodhidharma³², who sailed to the east. The Buddha taught this singular transmission teaching, which began spreading in the Eastern Xia Dynasty³³. However, the realization of Bodhidharma was inconceivable, and his merit should not be judged based on these two traditions, Ch'an and Scripture-based doctrine. The reason being that [it is believed] he also traveled to Tibet. The Tibetans said he was Pha Dampa Sangye (translated as the Holy Excellent Buddhahood), who also had another name, Byang-chub-chos-mchog (translated as Bodhi Victory Dharma). He also gave teachings in Tibet, and Tibetans recognized him as a great accomplisher of Esoteric Buddhism. When it comes to Buddhism, China and Kham-Tsang (Tibet) are not only connected but also have fraternal relations! Since we are brothers and sisters, we shouldn't divide the rivers for drinking water and force ourselves to be isolated to spare our mother from sadness and shedding tears.

Conclusion

Though the authors are inevitably guilty of making mistakes in the above study about the Chinese Ch'an and Nyingma Dzogchen traditions, if [this effort] can attract the attention of readers, help them study, and bring about renewed and updated understanding of the old teachings of the past, it will bring new glory to the history of Buddhism. This is what the author most prays for.

Summing up the above study, we know that the Dzogchen of the Nyingma tradition has rarely been mentioned in the past, and of course, few people know it. Now that these terminologies are introduced with the hope to bring about at least two effects:

1. What has always been said about “attaining Buddhahood in one’s own body” is still denied by most people. Now that there is another method of attaining Buddhahood within an even faster timeframe – Dzogchen- this "strange, weird, and shocking" perspective is bound to differentiate from the popularized doctrines [of Buddhism in China]. I understand this is inevitable. However, in Buddhism, this [type of situation happened] not only for Esoteric teachings but also for Sutrayana teachings. From the Sutrayana perspective, when the Mahayana became popularized, Hinayana scholars, from the perspective of [Abhidharma] Kośa and Satyasiddhi traditions³⁴, felt that Mahayana was unreasonable. Thus, many attacks and rebuttals were more severe than the current voices against the perspective of “attaining Buddhahood in own’s body.”
2. It can be seen from this [work] that the Ch’an tradition before the Sixth Patriarch was not like today (in most cases). [The practitioners] only stick to Huatou³⁵ till death or only focus on fighting Jifeng. These phenomena evolved after the Sixth Patriarch. But once this is said, inevitably, people will not believe it. However, since the author lived in Kham for two to three years and has returned today, it seems a bit unreasonable to say nothing at all. If readers think there is still value in investigating it, they [are encouraged to] develop great motivations to explore [this topic] further. If one thinks it's not worth talking about, one might as well laugh it off.

We have studied Chinese Buddhism in the past and have also visited several Buddhist colleges. The blessings bestowed upon us by our great spiritual friends can indeed reflect the depth and breadth of their compassion and aspirations. However, the only thing that makes us feel like imperfection is that we were not allowed to go beyond the scope of the Tiantai, Consciousness-only, and Xianshou traditions in the thoughts and words of these doctrines. Although this is a painstaking effort to restrain students and prevent them from having [too many] “different opinions without consensus.” It seems that from the standpoint of Buddhism as a whole, it should not be so rigid because Buddhism in China has not absorbed all the Buddhist teachings from India. If we compare [the works in China] with the translated work of Sutra and Treatises in Kham-Tsang, we know we lack too much material. If we inherit a small number of teachings and restrict the import of many new teachings, we are “corroborating with the party and rejecting the differences,” this will inevitably lead to “heartbreak and frustration.” Ever since Guru Padmasambhava introduced to Tibet the Dzogchen teachings and its gradual stages of practice and realization, countless people have achieved accomplishments by engaging in these practices. Even now, they are still passed down from generation to generation without interruption. Among them, if there is any mistake or deception, the lineage holders of all generations would have already reaped the consequences, and the author's sin is not tiny [for saying this]. The authors have taken the trouble to introduce one or two terms in Dzogchen. They may have used some “arrogant words” as an opening to set the stage for the introduction. The nectar of the profound and wonderful Dharma is still waiting for those with lofty ideals to visit the treasure troves and explore the treasures personally.

Chapter 7 To refute and resolve [misconception of] “to teach with one voice”

Ven. Sheng Guang

The only reason that those who recently denounced Vajrayana teachings and slandered Tibetan Esoteric Buddhism is, “Why can't such and such a Tibetan Living Buddha (tulku) teach the Dharma in one voice so that the listeners can interpret it according to the sound of the other side? Therefore, the theory that the Tibetan Vajrayana Tradition says, “becoming a Buddha in one's body” cannot be established.” Those who say this obviously have three prejudices in mind.

1. “Becoming a Buddha in one’s body” is a Tibetan theory and was not said by the Buddha.
2. A certain “Living Buddha” (tulku) in Tibet is a person who has attained “immediately obtain Buddhahood in one’s body.”
3. After attaining Buddhahood, He preaches the Dharma in one voice. When sentient beings hear it, they say the Buddha speaks in their own language.

The first prejudice is held by those who do not study the [Buddhist scriptures], and they speak of nonsense and not worthy to argue with.

The second prejudice is also a misunderstanding of the Chinese people who do not understand the principles of Vajrayana. It has been corrected in the article “The Truth of Kham-Tsang Buddhism,” authored by Master Mi Xian in the sixth and seventh issues of Volume 12 of the “Juejueqing” Journal. The third view is held by those who have not fully understood even the Chinese Sutrayana tradition. They still want to discuss blindly and confuse people. They really don’t know that there are still mud plows³⁶ in the world.

According to Chapter thirty-two of the Yao Jing Sutra³⁷. In the past, when the Buddha, the Banghavan, preached to the Four Heavenly Kings, two understood the language of the Middle Kingdom (referring to the language of Magadha). Still, the other two could not understand it. He spoke the Damila language and explained the Four Noble Truths to the two who didn't understand. Although one person understood the Damila language, the other did not. For the one who didn't understand it, he spoke the Miliche language. All the Four Heavenly Kings understood the Four Noble Truths at that time.

The Seventy-nine Decisions of Abhidharma Mahāvibhāṣā Śāstra says this. Question: If there is praise, “The Buddha speaks the Dharma with one voice, and all sentient beings can understand it according to their category. They thought the Bhagavan spoke my language and spoke to me solely for me the various meanings.” ... Therefore, when the Bhagavan spoke in three languages to the Four Heavenly Kings [to teach] The Four Noble Truths. ... Question: How should one comprehend the praise above? Answer: it is unnecessary to understand it because it is not the Tripitaka. All praises to the Buddha are more words than truth. (The original text is very long and has not been recorded.)

From this point of view, the Buddha used a single voice to teach the four heavenly kings with immeasurable supernatural powers and transformations can be considered as figurative speech. The four heavenly kings cannot fully understand it, let alone all sentient beings if we follow the idea to refute the argument that Vajrayana practitioners must act like the Buddha to preach in one voice. That means all sentient beings hear it. The Chinese hear Chinese, the Germans hear German, the French hear French, and the British hear English. Even when chickens hear crows, dogs hear bark, flies hear humming, and mosquitoes hear buzzing. Is this the original meaning of the praises? If it

is said that the Buddha can speak the languages of many countries, although there are few in modern times who can speak several or even do Ch'ans of languages, are they all Buddhas? Moreover, the Buddha's knowledge of the "sixty-four book languages" was something he learned in the palace before he became ordained, and it has nothing to do with "becoming a Buddha." Most alphabetic languages are similar, so knowing the sixty-four characters is not impossible or difficult? If this is used as the standard for "becoming a Buddha," it seems to have lightened the "Buddhahood"? In short, using this rhetoric to challenge Vajrayana does not hurt the Vajrayana. It only reveals its shallowness and ignorance. Alas, it is a sad time; one should loosen up the "attachment" to dharma and focus more on seeking the truth and not waste efforts on the arguments of "abstinence of food" and "barking."

Chapter 8: Resolving the doubts about esoteric tradition

Ven. Ben Jing

I was reading a certain monthly magazine, and I read about a layman talking about "the difficult path and the easy path." Judging from his tone, although he claimed to be a great scholar who thoroughly understood the Tripitaka and was an expert with the Right View. What he said was nothing more than suppression of Ch'an and promotion of the pure land traditions and to denounce the inappropriateness of Esoteric Buddhism. He inevitably contradicted his own words and had no correct and clear [supporting] materials. Most of the content is just talking nonsense, which is not worth the laugh of those who know it. To talk about the vastness or narrowness of his mind, he just does not wish to have every sentient being achieve Buddhahood at one time, and [it is skeptical] he knows how to develop bodhicitta.

Since he regards the Pure Land as the most precious [teaching], he suppresses the Ch'an and Esoteric teachings. This is no different from jealousy. He knows that "excluding others while only respecting me" should not be the correct reasoning. He murmurs that he despises Ch'an tradition as "easily falling off the Dharmakaya and easily hurting the wisdom life." Esoteric tradition only focuses on the "form" accomplishment and does not know of the formless samadhi.

Even if there is a small experience, it is often said to connect with flesh-eating ghosts and deities. It goes like this: "The Pure Land Dharma is the highest and most wonderful. If the supremely enlightened Bodhisattva does not aspire to be reborn in Sukhavati, one will not be able to achieve Bodhi (Buddhahood) quickly. Suppose the inferior ordinary person has unredeemable sins, as long as the person can sincerely recite the name of the [Amitabha] Buddha, the person can reserve a place in the Lotus Pond [of Sukhavati.] The stories of those reborn [in the pure land] are recorded in the hagiography of sages." If these are not "excluding others and respecting only me," what is not?

Such [behavior] of failing to study the Sutra and Esoteric scriptures while making up false theories is certainly pitiful to the Buddhas and Deities. If they use such an attitude to promote the Pure Land tradition, they not only fail to achieve any success but are laughed at by the past patriarchs of the Pure Land tradition. How can anyone be joyfully convinced by them?

I believed in the Pure Land in my early years. Although I now believe in Esoteric tradition, my heart for the Pure Land has not changed. I just want to expand its scope and deepen my motivation. I don't want to be wary of the world and wait for death, nor do I just cling to one and discard the others. Ultimately, is Pure Land superior to Esoteric tradition, or does Esoteric tradition not have the Pure Land perspective?

The scope of the Pure Land is extremely vast and extensive. If one follows the aspiration of Manjushri and Samanthabhadra to be reborn there (most people do not understand the profound meaning of the skillful means. They follow what everyone says and falsely claim that the two great Bodhisattvas can only become Buddhas after being promoted by the Bhagavan Amitabha), and determine that the most highly enlightened Bodhisattvas can only quickly reach Buddhahood after being reborn in the Sukhavati.

However, since Buddha Sakyamuni in our realm did not take birth in Sukhavati, does that mean Sakyamuni has not yet become a Buddha? The Buddhas in other directions have not sought guidance from Amitabha; does that mean they have failed to achieve Buddhahood? Moreover, before the Bhagavan Amitabha became a Buddha, there was no Paradise of Sukhavati today. Where did he seek rebirth if the Bhagavan Amitabha wished to attain Bodhi (Buddhahood) quickly?

Although many stories recorded in the “Records of Saints and Sages” and “Stories of Rebirth” [about rebirth in Sukhavati] are real, modern records of rebirth in Sukhavati lack sustainable proof. There are also those who want to be reborn [in Sukhavati] and recite the Buddha's name, but they do not apply their minds well, and then they are still being reborn [in samsara], or they [end up] being possessed and go crazy. How can we say these did not happen? The number of practitioners who practice Ch’an and Esoteric Buddhism, just in China, according to the teachings and achieve accomplishments are not second to the Pure Land tradition. How about those in Japan, Kham, Tibet, and India? Therefore, those who know how to master their minds do not distinguish between "Pure Land," "Esoteric," "Doctrine," and "Ch’an," and they will attain the accomplishment based on their karmic opportunity. "Those who are not skilled at mastering the mind, even when they are taught to 'recite Buddha [Amitabha]'s name with faith and aspire to seek rebirth in the Sukhavati, still cling to the distinction between sentient beings and Buddha and are unable to grasp the profound meaning within." They hide others' virtue while promoting shortcomings and hide one's own shortcomings while only promoting one's virtue. This is why all Buddhas can only look at them with compassion and sadness.

As for the misunderstanding of the term "teaching with one voice" and the Tibetan lamas who come to China as representatives of "instantly attain Buddhahood in one's own body," these stories are full of holes and become a lot of jokes.

Those attached to the Pure Land tradition while slandering the Esoteric tradition are stuck in the old sayings or fighting to hold on to the remnants of one or two sages' words as the golden rules. They often deviate from the scriptures and rebel against the path, making it difficult for them to accept the profound teachings. In return, they regard those who pursue the profound [teachings] as “having different ideas and changing minds.” It is nothing more than shutting up the knowledge of the Buddha and blocking the path to Bodhi for the sake of “corroborating with the party and rejecting the differences.” How sad it is!

References

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- ¹ Although Tantrayana, Vajrayana, and the Esoteric vehicle are synonymous and used interchangeably, the Esoteric vehicle is used commonly in this work due to its relatively neutral sense when referring to the teachings. Vajrayana is used when the term 密乘 refers to the tradition or vehicle. Tantrayana is used when Tantra is mentioned.
- ² In this translation, the term Ch'an, or Ch'an Buddhism, refers to the teachings Bodhidharma transmitted in China in the early 5th century. Ch'an is considered the originating tradition of Zen Buddhism.
- ³ Skanda (Chinese: 塞建陀, 室建陀), also known as Wei Tuo (Chinese: 韋馱) and Idaten (Japanese: 韋駄天), is a Mahayana bodhisattva regarded as a devoted guardian of Buddhist monasteries who protects the teachings of Buddhism. He is commonly seen in Mahayana monasteries in East and Southeast Asia.
- ⁴ Hutuktu, Khutuktu, Hotogtu, or hütügütü, རྩོམ་ལྷན་པོ། is a title granted to some senior reincarnated lamas of Tibetan Buddhism in the Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China. Its status is second to the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama but higher than the average reincarnated lama. This title no longer exists. It was the highest among the five lama titles in the Qing Dynasty.
- ⁵ In this translation, I use the term “guru” mainly for the teachers and masters whom Lama Kan Tsao and Master Mi Xian studied in Kham and Tibet. The term “Lama” will be used more generally, though both terms have the same meaning.
- ⁶ Kangding (Chinese: 康定), also called Tachienlu and Dartsedo (Chinese: 打箭炉; Tibetan: དར་རྩེ་མཚོ།), was the capital of the province of Xikang during the time of the Republic of China. It is now a county-level city and the seat of Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in the Sichuan province of the People's Republic of China.
- ⁷ Tusi (Chinese: 土司 Tibetan རྩོམ་ལྷན་པོ།), often translated as “headmen” or “chieftains,” were hereditary tribal leaders recognized as imperial officials by the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties of China. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tusi>)
- ⁸ Xikang (formerly romanized as Sikang or Hsikang, lit. 'Kham-in-the-West' or 'Kham to the west [of Sichuan]') was a nominal province formed by the Republic of China in 1939 on the initiative of prominent Sichuan warlord Liu Wenhui and retained by the early People's Republic of China. The former territory of Xikang is now divided between the Tibet Autonomous Region and Sichuan province. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xikang>)
- ⁹ The translator uses the terms “Chairman Bya” or “Mr. Bya” to refer to Mr. བླ་མོ་རྩོམ་ལྷན་པོ། Bya-Khra-tob-dan throughout the text, even though his name can be phonetically translated as Chairman Bya in Chinese. The author would like to preserve the Tibet heritage of this very important person in Lama Kan Tsao and Master Mee Sian's lives.
- ¹⁰ Red Sect and Red Hat Sect are synonymous with the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. I will use the translation “Red Sect” in this work when the original authors use the short form 紅教 instead of the full term “Nyingma.” The term Nyingma is used only when the original authors use the explicit Chinese transliteration 寧瑪.
- ¹¹ In 1407, Chokyi Gyaltsen (now known as Tai Situ Rinpoche) received the titles of “Guang Ding Tai Situ” and (ཀུན་ཉིང་དབུ་མ་མཚོ་མོ་ལོ་སྟེ།) “Kuan Ting Yuan Thong Miao Tsi Guo Shi” from the Yongle Emperor of the Ming Dynasty. Situ was one of the highest-ranking government offices in ancient China. Established in the Western Zhou dynasty, it was originally written as 司土 (pinyin: Sītǔ), meaning Administrator of Land.
- ¹² This part may be recorded erroneously in the original text. The text “Kuzang Lame Zalung” or “Words of My Perfect Teacher” was written by Patrul Rinpoche.
- ¹³ Litang (Tibetan: ལི་ཐང་རྫོང་།; Chinese: 理塘县) is in the southwest of Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan, China.
- ¹⁴ Similar to the original text, I will use “Red Sect” to refer to the Nyingma tradition and “White Sect” to the Kagyu tradition. The “Yellow Sect” for the Gelugpa tradition or the “Yellow hat.” Although the term “Flower Sect” was used for the Sakya tradition, it was seldom used. However, the translator tried to use the term “tradition” when the context was general, and the authors were not specific about any particular sect.
- ¹⁵ Drepung Monastery (Tibetan: འབྲུག་གྲོང་པོ་དགོན་པ།, Wylie: bras spungs dgon pa, THL: drépfung gönpa.[1] "Rice Heap Monastery"), located at the foot of Mount Gephel, is one of the "great three" Gelug university gompas (monasteries) of Tibet. The other two are Ganden Monastery and Sera Monastery. It is located on the Gambo Utse mountain, five kilometers from the western suburb of Lhasa. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drepung_Monastery)
- ¹⁶ Another explanation of the “blue,” “red,” and “white” is they represent the Three Bodhisattvas: Vajrapani, Manjushri, and Avalokiteshvara (Chenrezi).
- ¹⁷ Kham-Tsang refers to two regions. Kham (Tibetan: ཁམས་, Wylie: khams; Chinese: 康; pinyin: Kāng) is one of the three traditional Tibetan regions, the others being Ü-Tsang (དབུས་གཙང་། Wylie: dbus gtsang) in central Tibet and Domey is also known as Amdo in the northeast.
- ¹⁸ Ache Terton is the nickname for guru Rigzin Ozer Dorje Lingpa among the people of Kham.

- ¹⁹ The translator is not able to find recent literature about Wanggen Tulku, but the text may refer to Jamgon Kongrul Rinpoche. However, the author has yet to verify this with literary proof.
- ²⁰ Rinchen Drag Temple is the well-known great retreat center of the Kagyu tradition, and it is the seat of Jamgon Kongrul Rinpoche (<https://shangpakagyu.org/his-eminence-kyabje-kalu-rinpoche/>)
- ²¹ Zhaggo or Luhuo County (Chinese: 炉霍县; Tibetan: ལུ་ཨོ་རྩོ་རྫོང་།) is a county of Sichuan Province, People's Republic of China. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luhuo_County)
- ²² Sonam Gyatso was the name of the 1st Dalai Lama, and 5th Dalai Lama is usually referred to as Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (Tibetan: འགྲུབ་ལོ་བཟང་ལོ་བཟང་ལྷ་བཟང་།, Wylie: Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho; Tibetan pronunciation: [ŋəwəŋ lópsəŋ cətsó]; 1617–1682).
- ²³ This Red Hat Sect may refer to the Sharmapa tradition, and the Black Hat Sect, the Karmapa tradition.
- ²⁴ Aranya (अरण्य) means forests or an open space in the forest in Sanskrit. In Buddhism, it refers to a gathering place and the residence of Buddhist monks and nuns. It is a synonym for a Buddhist temple.
- ²⁵ “Rebellion of Yue Fei” means it is impossible. Yue Fei was a Chinese military general who lived during the Southern Song dynasty and is remembered as a patriotic national hero of Song China. He was well-known for his loyalty to the Chinese Song dynasty at the time.
- ²⁶ Tiantai or T'ien-t'ai (Chinese: 天台; pinyin: PRC Standard Mandarin: Tiāntāi, ROC Standard Mandarin: Tiāntái, Wu Taizhou dialect (Tiantai native language): Tí Taī) is an East Asian Buddhist school of Mahāyāna Buddhism that developed in 6th-century China. Tiantai Buddhism emphasizes the "One Vehicle" (Ekayāna) doctrine derived from the Lotus Sūtra as well as Mādhyamaka philosophy, particularly as articulated in the works of the 4th patriarch Zhiyi (538–597 CE). (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiantai>)
- ²⁷ Perfectly Enlightened Bodhisattva is the term used here to translate 等覺菩薩. Another term is Samyak-sambodhi in Sanskrit. The Bodhisattva, who is in the fifty-first of the fifty-two Mahayana stages, is said to be fully enlightened. This is the ultimate position of Bodhisattva.
- ²⁸ “Plain Dharmakaya, undeveloped dharmakaya, is the term that appeared in Tiantai literature, and it refers to sentient beings who have attained realization, the fundamental *dharmakāya* nature, but have not yet cultivated the perfect merits and virtues to ornate the Dharmakaya. (<https://www.wisdomlib.org/buddhism/compilation/a-dictionary-of-chinese-buddhist-terms/d/doc6762.html>)
- ²⁹ The word application is used here to translate 作用. It is related to Karitra or Tibetan: Bye Pa
- ³⁰ Wuzu Jie and Caotangqing are two cases in Ch'an Buddhism where both highly accomplished Ch'an practitioners were not able to go beyond Samsara but had to be reborn as mundane beings. Wuzu Jie was an accomplished Ch'an master in the Song dynasty, and he was eventually reborn as Su Shi, the famous Chinese poet, essayist, statesman, calligrapher, painter, gastronome, and travel writer but eventually had to endure a series of political exiles. Caotangqing is another highly accomplished Ch'an master in the same period and was also reborn in the house of a prime minister as a baby girl. However, she passed away shortly afterward.
- ³¹ Jifeng is a pointed, sharp dialog with or between Ch'an practitioners.
- ³² Bodhidharma is the patriarch of both Ch'an and Zen traditions.
- ³³ Eastern Xia also known as Dongxia, Dongzhen (東真) or Dazhen (大真), was a short-lived kingdom established in Manchuria (including Northeast China and Outer Manchuria) by the Jurchen warlord Puxian Wannu in 1215 during the Mongol conquest of the Jin dynasty. It was eventually conquered by the Mongols, and its former territories were later administered by the Liaoyang province of the Yuan dynasty. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Xia)
- ³⁴ The Key Hinayana tradition of Chinese Buddhism differs from that of Tibetan. In Tibetan tradition, the two main Hinayana traditions are Vaibhasika and Sautrantika.
- ³⁵ Hua Tou (simplified Chinese: 话头; traditional Chinese: 話頭, Korean: hwadu, Japanese: watō) is part of a form of Buddhist meditation in the teachings of Chan Buddhism, Korean Seon and Rinzai Zen. Hua Tou can be translated as 'word head,' 'head of speech,' or 'point beyond which speech exhausts itself.' A Hua Tou can be a short phrase used as a meditation subject to focus the mind. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hua_Tou)
- ³⁶ The translator believes “mud plow” refers to a description of a level of hell.
- ³⁷ The proper translation corresponding to 曜經 Yao Jing is yet to be confirmed. One possible candidate is Lalitavistara Sutra, but more research is still necessary.