A MARVELOUS GARLAND
OF RARE GEMS
Biographies of Masters of Awareness
in the Dzogchen Lineage

A Spiritual History of the Teachings
of Natural Great Perfection

NYOSHUL KHENPO JAMYANG DORJÉ
Translated by Richard Barron (Chökyi Nyima)
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Introduction

by Sogyal Rinpoche

It is an honor, and a blessing, to introduce this extraordinary work, Nyoshul Khenpo Jamyang Dorje’s definitive history of the teachings of Dzogpachenpo, the “Natural Great Perfection.” For me, this is a moving and yet daunting task, because Nyoshul Khenpo was one of my most beloved teachers. Long before I ever received teachings from him, I had heard of his reputation; what I learned was that, after the very greatest Dzogchen masters of our time, such as Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche and Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Nyoshul Khenpo was the most outstanding and knowledgeable exponent of Dzogpachenpo, the summit and heart of the teachings of the ancient Nyungma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism brought to Tibet in the eighth or ninth century by the great Guru Padmasambhava.

I came to discover that everything they had said about Nyoshul Khenpo was accurate. He was indeed someone who had about him the unmistakable air of the great masters of the past. I had been fortunate to know closely: Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro, Dudjom Rinpoche, and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. Like them, he had actually made real within his experience the truth of the teaching of Dzogpachenpo. This must have been the reason for his amazing presence—that spaciousness and lightness that everyone remarked on, that fathomless depth that seemed to go on forever and to know no kind of end or limit. When you were with Nyoshul Khenpo, you felt yourself irresistibly gathered into the well of total relaxation and peace that existed at the core of his being. A great aura of warmth, tenderness, and humor surrounded him, and all of his students knew his intense kindness. I will always remember the meticulous care, the profound love that he showed us, each and every one.

As Nyoshul Khenpo revealed himself to me more and more over the years, I was astounded to find that there were simply no bounds to the depth of his understanding or the expanse of his knowledge of the teachings. On the one hand, he had an unparalleled grasp of the teachings of Dzogchen, their systematic structure and unique vocabulary, and on the other, he had all the experience and unshakable certainty of a great Dzogchen yogi. At the same time, he possessed such a complete command of all the schools of Tibetan Buddhism, and of both suttas and tantras, that I was tempted
to think of him alongside those towering figures who inspired the Rimé, "nonpartisan," renaissance of Buddhadharma in nineteenth-century Tibet.

In paying homage to Nyoshul Khenpo, I will quote some brief excerpts from the oral teachings he gave to me or the Rigpa sangha over the years. But first, it seems fitting that in this book, which comprises a collection of biographies of the vidyadhara masters of the Dzogchen lineage, some glimpses should be included of Khenpo's own remarkable life story. After all, he too was a vidyadhara—"a holder of pure awareness, or rigpa"—and a figure of vital importance in the transmission of this lineage to the masters of the present day.1

I remember an evening in the French Alps in 1989, during one of the annual retreats that I hold with my students, when Khenpo told me the story of his life. The parts of it that I had come across before in his commentaries on his poetic songs of realization had not really prepared me for the impact of the entire story. After I left his house, I wandered home under the August moon, stunned by the sheer drama and range of his experiences, which outdid any movie screenplay you could ever imagine. He had been born into a poor family in the Nyarong district of eastern Tibet. According to the Tibetan calendar, it was on the tenth day of the Monkey month in the year of the Water Monkey, a day held particularly sacred and celebrated as the anniversary of the birth of Guru Padmasambhava. This was in July 1932. His was a large family. The father and two elder sons made their living as herdsmen, and as a child, Khenpo was sent out into the hills to look after the animals. Yet he had an instinctive yearning to practice dharma, which was encouraged by his mother and his grandmother. In fact, his grandmother had been a disciple of Nyoshul Lungtok Tenpai Nyima, the great holder of Paltrul Rinpoche's transmission of the oral lineage of Dzogchen path instructions, and it was from her that Khenpo first heard Nyoshul Lungtok's name. When she was young, she had also been a disciple of the famous Dzogchen masters Adzom Drukpa and Nyala Pema Duddul. She used to sit her little grandson in her lap and pull her warm fur wrap around him while she prayed and practiced and talked to him about taking refuge or about the great Nyoshul Lungtok. Khenpo said that meeting the dharma like this so early in life was as if the famous prayer of aspiration by the peerless Dzogchen master Longchen Rabjam were coming true:

In my life, wherever I am born,
May I obtain the seven qualities of birth in higher realms.
As soon as I am born, may I come across the dharma
And have the freedom to practice it correctly.

Then, may I please the sacred lama
And put the dharma into action day and night.
May I realize the dharma, actualize its innermost meaning,
And so cross the ocean of existence in this very life.
May I teach the sacred dharma to beings wandering in samsara
And never tire or grow weary of working to help others.
Through my vast and impartial service to others,
May all beings attain buddhahood together, as one!

When Khenpo was small, he actually saw Khenpo Ngakchung (Khenpo Ngawang Palzang, 1879–1941), who was Nyoshul Lungtok's principal disciple and an emanation of Vimalamitra, when he came to the area to give the empowerments of Nyonyigyi Yatshi (The Four Higher Collections of the Heart Drop). As a young boy, Khenpo loved to dress up in the robes of a dharma practitioner, no matter how much people made fun of him. At the age of five, he took refuge with the incarnation of Katok Getse Mahapandita, and three years later enrolled in the local Sakya monastery. He began to learn to read with the head lama, Jamyang Taphé, a distant relative who had been a disciple of the legendary teachers Jamgon Loter Wangpo and Khenpo Zhenga. Once more, he took care of the livestock and tended the sheep out in the open on the slopes, beneath the vast sky of Kham. He used to go out begging for alms, fending off the ferocious guard dogs with a stout staff he carried with him.

Khenpo then went to study with an outstanding master of Mahamudra and Dzogchen, Rigdzin Jampal Dorje. He practiced ngöndro, and shamatha and vipashyana meditation, with a special emphasis on bodhichitta. So poor was he at this time that when he came to the practice of mandala offering, he had to make do with a flat piece of stone from the riverbed, and as he could not afford a single grain of rice, he used river sand. He then began to study texts and to follow the twelve-year training of a khenpo. He committed to memory the extensive great scriptures, studied hundreds of required texts by Indian and Tibetan scholars, and was appointed a khenpo at the age of twenty-four. He became very learned in both sutras and tantras. By this time, he was receiving empowerments, transmissions, and instructions from many renowned lamas, especially at Katok Monastery. They included Katok Getse Tulku, Katok Chaktsa Tulku, Choktrul Pema Gyaltset, Adzom Gyalse Rinpoche, Gemang Drungpa Tulku, Trongé Kundun Tulku, Dza Ling Ru Khachö Tulku, Trongé Khacho Tulku, Trongé Arik Tulku, and Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö.

Nyoshul Khenpo counted twenty-five great masters as his principal teachers, among whom the most central to his life was Lungtok Sherdup Tenpai Nyima (1920–?), the reincarnation of Nyoshul Lungtok and dharma heir of Khenpo Ngakchung. Khenpo served as his attendant for three years, and at the age of seventeen or eighteen, he began to receive from him the teachings of Longchen Nyungtik (The
The Combined Lineages from Longchenpa to Jigmé Gyalwai Nyugu

Khchen Chabdal Lhundrup (14th Century)

Chabdal Lhundrup was born in Dangtro, in the southern border region of Lhodrak. His father was Palden, and his mother was Sangdupley. At an early age, he clearly experienced the forceful awakening of his spiritual heritage as someone holy. He learned how to read and write at the age of five, mastering these skills without difficulty. At thirteen he was ordained as a novice monk at the center of Densa Tenchikpa in Lha Valley. At twenty, he took full monastic ordination from Khchen Sönam Drakpa, the abbot of Chölung Monastery, where he received training, practical instruction, and scriptural transmissions related to monastic discipline.

He trained with numerous spiritual mentors, becoming learned in Pajñāparāmita, valid cognition, Vinaya, and Abhidharma. He then taught at many shedras specializing in the teachings of the dialectical approach and thus became widely renowned. He was an elder who was like a mountain of gold—the very embodiment of erudition, venerability, and nobility.

He studied the systems of Lōjong and arousing bodhicitta with Gyalšé Tokmé. From Jamyang Lekdenpa, he received the Lamdre cycle and other instructions of the Sakya school; from Lama Kunrin, The One Hundred Transmissions of Mitra and other transmissions; from the great terton Donjé Lingpa and Rinchen Lingpa, their respective terma cycles; and from Yeshé Gyelpo, the transmission for the form of Mañjuśrī known as Ayushpati. In short, from numerous spiritual mentors, he received many teachings on the sutras and on the tantras of the Nyingma and Sarma schools, and mastered all of them. By order of Khchen Jangsem Sönam Drakpa of Chölung, Chabdal Lhundrup was appointed the head abbot of Jodendé Monastery in Lha Valley, where he cared for his monastic community both spiritually and materially; thus this monastery became an excellent center.

During this period, the great Omniscient One was traveling to Bhutan in the south.

Chabdal Lhundrup invited him to Mentang, where he remained for an entire summer. Chabdal Lhundrup became convinced that Longchenpa had been his guru in previous lifetimes and served him devotedly, demonstrating the three kinds of faith. He was brought to spiritual maturity by numerous empowerments and teachings concerning the unsurpassable secret.

After the Omniscient One continued on to Bhutan, Chabdal Lhundrup built a retreat hut at Zekhar, the hermitage in Lha Valley, where he spent five years without interruption practicing the yoga of the Dzogchen approach of utter lucidity, cutting off all distracting complications. He reached a consummate realization of the great perfection, perceiving awareness’s naturally manifest appearances without bias. He had visions of numerous meditation deities; and many oath-bound protective deities, such as Vaishravana and those of the five classes, listened to his commands and carried out their enlightened activities. With his untrammeled powers of higher perception, he was able to foresee things hidden from ordinary perception, things that turned out just as he foretold.

He was foremost among those who invited the Omniscient One Longchenpa to return from Bhutan. All of the people of Lhodrak honored the Omniscient Guru with devotion and requested that he turn the wheel of the dharma on a vast scale. In particular, Chabdal Lhundrup received instructions on The Heart Drop of the Dakini and wrote commentaries based on his questions about the transmissions he had previously received. The lord of the dharma Longchenpa was extremely pleased and accepted him as his heart son, entrusting him with the lineage. He instructed him, “Pass this on to Drakpa Özer.”

Though he gained mastery over the entire array of teachings of the Nyingma and Sarma schools in general, Chabdal Lhundrup focused specifically on the theory and practice of the lord of the dharma’s Dzogchen tradition of the supreme secret. He brought countless fortunate students to spiritual maturity and liberation, among them such excellent holders of the teachings as Tulku Drakpa Özer, Tenchen Dorjé Lingpa, Guru Donyöpa, Jatang Gyaltsen Drakpa, Tokden Yelawa, and Tsultrim Tsen.

He lived to the age of ninety-seven, when, on the twenty-second day of the fourth month, Saga, his emanated form resolved back into the basic space of phenomena. His remains were kept in state for one month. Upon their cremation, numerous relics were found, just one of the many amazing miracles that took place, moving everyone to faith.

Gyalšé Tulku Drakpa Özer (1356–1409)

Chabdal Lhundrup’s principal student was Gyalšé Tulku Drakpa Özer. A portion of The Golden Garland of Questions and Answers from the cycle The Heart Drop of the Dakini reads:
The next incarnation of Ledrel Tsal will remain for a short time in a sambhogakaya pure realm and then take birth at Tarpa Ling in Bumthang.

From the age of fifteen, he will benefit beings. Then the son, Dawa Drakpa, an emanation of Hayagriva, will appear; he, too, will benefit beings.

In fulfillment of this and other prophecies, the great Omniscient King of the Dharma, Longchenpa, attained a sambhogakaya pure realm, for he experienced the full expression of awareness as a vision of the spontaneous presence of utter lucidity. From that state, he manifested as his own son, a tulku to guide beings; the child’s mother was named Kypala.

At an early age, Drakpa Özer felt the attributes of someone holy awaken within. He would sing songs of advice to his mother and explain the meaning of the dharma to anyone who came near him. During that period, many people saw the guardian goddess of mantra Ekajati holding him in her lap and the Serb guarding him.

When the child was five, Khedrup Chabdal Lhundrup invited him to Zekhar in Lha Valley, in keeping with the prophecy uttered by the lord of the dharma Longchenpa. There he was well looked after, being accorded both spiritual honors and material support.

At the age of eight, he took the vows of a novice monk and was given the name Drakpa Özer. [1.123a] He studied and contemplated many avenues of the dharma. Like one vase being filled from another, he received from Chabdal Lhundrup the full range of empowerments, teachings, and oral transmissions concerning the unsurpassable secret that this great khenpo had himself received from the great Omniscient One. Drakpa Özer mastered all of them.

When he was nine, he was invited to central Tibet by students of his former incarnation. He was honored by many of the faithful at such centers as Jamding in Dra Valley, Riwo in the Drak region, Shuksep in the Nyepu Uplands, and Driung in Gyama. He bestowed the nectar of the dharma on them according to their individual fortunes. The great scholar Yaké Panchen respectfully sought an audience with him, during which he praised Drakpa Özer with the following words of admiration:

You have achieved this rebirth, and with the sublime knowing of someone spiritually advanced, you have mastered the meaning of the essence of being.

Bodhisattva, mahasattva, Drakpa Özer, may you be victorious!

On his way back to southern Tibet, Drakpa Özer was welcomed at Yardrok with honors by the glorious Sakya Dakchen Lodrö Gyaltsen and the throne holder Dorjé Gyaltser, both of whom received his kind teachings. Passing through Lhodrak, Lhagang, and other areas, he traveled to Bhutan, where he founded a retreat center at Langmatil. In such border regions as Bumthang, Nganglong, and Menlok, [1.123b] he illuminated the path to liberation for many fortunate people with the torch of the dharma, including the teachings of the vajra heart essence of utter lucidity.

He returned to Tibet, where he carried out activities at the principal spiritual centers in order to create benefit and happiness on a vast scale. He especially worked to spread the traditions of the vajra heart essence of utter lucidity. He gathered many learned and accomplished students, among them Trulzhik Sang-gyé Önyó; his own son, Dawa Drakpa; Jatang Drakpa Gyatso; Sherab Palden of Lower Ling; and Zhönu Lodrö of Kyang Valley. He received whatever he could of the nectar of the dharma from all those who had been students of the great Omniscient One Longchenpa. In this way, he held the extensive lineage of the teachings and spread it everywhere.

At the age of fifty-four, on the twenty-fourth day of the fourth month in an Ox year, [12] he passed into a state of peace at Kalden Jamphling. When his remains were cremated, all those present were moved to faith by amazing signs, such as the many relics and images of deities that were found in the ashes and the canopies of rainbows that arched over the site. This great master blessed all of the places in which he stayed, his positive influence pacifying illness, famine, warfare, social unrest, and other problems. He ensured that the teachings of the heart essence would endure. [1.126a] From this master came Kunchen Dawa Drakpa and many other great teachers whose activities filled all of space, spreading the teachings and bringing beings to spiritual maturity. Today descendants of Drakpa Özer can still be found in the Bumthang region of Bhutan.

Trulzhik Sang-gyé Önyó Sherab Gyatso (14th–15th Centuries)

Drakpa Özer’s main student was Sherab Gyatso, also known as Trulzhik Sang-gyé Önyó. He was born in the vicinity of Samye Semkyl Ling, son of the Buddhist layman Pema-khyap and his wife, Önyó Kypa. From an early age, the boy experienced an awakening of his noble predisposition. Upon hearing groups of monks chanting, he felt certain of the need to seek release from samsara [1.126b] and longed to enter the religious life. But because he was their only son, his parents prevented him from doing so until, at the age of seven, he was bitten by a rabid dog. Only then was he allowed to take monastic ordination from the abbot Sheringpa and the preceptor Shegalwa and to enroll in the monastic community of Samye.
At first, while he was learning the daily liturgies and other texts, he did not do well, having been exposed to leprosy while attending to someone afflicted with the disease. From Lama Shakti Rinpoche in the Chimpu Uplands, he requested the transmission for White Manjushri. Having engaged in this practice intensely, he dreamed one night that a person, completely white, gave him a crystal mala and that he picked white flowers the size of plates. With this, his intelligence increased greatly.

At various stages of his life, he received a vast range of teachings on the sutras and on the tantras of the Nyingma and Sarma schools, studying with more than fifty holy mentors, including four successive abbots of Chöling Monastery. Among his teachers were the lord of the dharma Karmapa Wangchug Dorje, Buton, Gyalsepa, Lama Sönam Gyaltse, Jonang Chokgyalwa, and Khenchen Sönam Drakpa. Later, at the age of eighteen, he was given full monastic ordination by Lama Sönam Gyaltse and the master Mandzhua as abbot and preceptor, respectively. [1.127a] In a bird year,14 Lama Sönam Gyaltse led the gathered leaders of many chapters of the sangha in the consecration ceremonies for the restored monastery of Sanyê. To all those assembled, Sherab Gyatso gave an original explanation of Prajñaparamita, for which he was highly honored.

He later attended the shedra of Tsetang,15 where he studied with Goshiri Shakyi Gyaltse, the master Palgyalwa, and other scholars. He trained in Prajñaparamita, valid cognition, Vinaya, and Abhidharma, gaining stature as a scholar. When the lord of the dharma, the great Omniscient One Longchenpa, was returning from Bhutan in the south and staying at Zhung Mountain, Sherab Gyatso met with him. He offered him gifts and distributed alms to the three hundred people in Longchenpa's retinue. He received many empowerments, teachings, and pith instructions of the secret Dzogchen cycles, as well as kama and terma transmissions, including the tantra

The All-Creating Monarch.

Longchenpa's attendants encouraged him, saying, "You surely are the lineage successor. You should stay and be the guru's personal secretary." But with real affection, the lord of the dharma advised him, "When one is young, it may be profitable to study; but this dialectical approach is for those of little faith, so do not waste your time on it." [1.127b] He gave Sherab Gyatso symbols of enlightened form, speech, and mind, as well as his hat, robes, and sitting mat, and authorized him to pass on the lineage of ultimate meaning.

Although Trulzhik continued to undertake appropriate study and contemplation, he came to feel that no external events or pursuits had any ultimate point, so he went into solitary retreat at the hermitage of Gyalmang. Thus a dynamic and sublime knowing born of meditation blossomed in him.

When the great Omniscient One was staying in Drigung, Trulzhik invited him to the Chimpu Uplands, where Longchenpa bestowed the empowerments and gave teachings from the Nyingtik cycles. After he had finished teaching the path of}

{trekchö, Longchenpa passed away into a state of peace. Trulzhik made offerings and honored his guru's remains, and erected outer and inner supports, each of which included a shrine.

His parents then died, one after the other, and he decided to spend the rest of his life meditating in solitude. So he went to the central region of Uru, where he sought a spiritual connection with the great scholar Panchenpa at Ewam.16 Most notably, he met with Lama Orgyenpa at the mountain hermitage of Lhundrup Ling, pleasing him greatly. He undertook an intensive retreat on the deity Vajrayarsha and perceived signs of having received the deity's blessings. The same teacher conferred on him many transmissions of the dharma from the Nyingma and Sarma schools, foremost among them the tradition of the lord of the dharma Longchenpa, [1.128a] as embodied in the empowerments, teachings, oral transmissions, and background material for the Dzogchen approach of the secret Nyingtik cycles.

He then decided to improve his meditation in places where he was unknown, but just as he was setting out for the area around Mount Kailash, his guru ordered him not to go; he therefore spent time meditating in the mountain hermitages of lower central Tibet, Penyul, and other regions. He also established connections with several other holy teachers before returning to Chimpu. There he received from Tsangnê Osel Rangdrol, also known as Guru Wadrapa, the entire range of empowerments, teachings, and pith instructions of the secret Nyingtik teachings. He alternated periods during which he received these teachings with periods of intensive practice, relying on this teacher for six years without interruption.

When Gyaltsé Tulku was returning from the southern region of Lhodrak, Trulzhik and his students went to meet him and made extensive offerings. On several occasions, Trulzhik received the entire range of teaching cycles from the tradition of the great Omniscient One, such as the two Nyingtik cycles, and trained in the practices of these cycles. The guru was extremely delighted, and their minds merged, becoming one. Drawing from prophecy, Gyalse confirmed that Trulzhik was the custodian of his teachings, and Trulzhik considered the transmissions he received from this teacher to be the primary source of his lineage.

When his precious teacher Guruwa passed away in the Chimpu Uplands, Trulzhik completed the memorial services following his guru's final wishes. [1.128b] He then devoted himself one-pointedly to practice at numerous isolated places in the mountains, making do with meager food and shabby clothing and cutting off all complicating entanglements in his life. Although he had mastered the avenues of the dharma without making sectarian distinctions, he taught only the tradition of the great Omniscient King of the Dharma. And he taught only to those with faith, compassionate with their individual fortunes. He had countless learned and accomplished students who gained meditative experience on the profound path of practice, among them Shakyi Shri of Gyangchen and Sherab Palden of lower Ling. In particular, he en-
sacred dharma from Gyalsé Dawa Drakpa included many famous teachers, such as Panchen Sonam Namgyal of Jamling and the throne holder Sherab Palden of Lower Ling. He also brought countless other students to spiritual maturity and liberation, among them those of vast learning, such as Drupchen Kunzang Dorjé (who passed on his personal style of exegesis), Tsongor Sherab Zango, and Lama Tuchepa. He thus spent forty years working for the welfare of beings, then passed into nirvana on the day of the new moon of the Pig month in a Rat year at Samten Ling. After his remains were cremated, many relics, as well as images of deities such as Vajrayogini, were found in the ashes. Throughout Bhutan and the central region of Tibet, memorial services were held to fulfill his last wishes, and outer and inner supports were erected.

**Drupchen Kunzang Dorjé (14th–15th Centuries)**

Drupchen Kunzang Dorjé was the main student of the sacred guru Gyalsé Dawa Drakpa. He was born in Menlok, Bhutan, south of Tibet. From an early age, he experienced an uncontrived sense of disenchantment, certain of the falsity of all happiness within conditioned existence. [1.131b]

In his moral conduct, he instinctively considered the ineluctable cause and effect of karma when weighing his options. From several holy masters, he received all of the appropriate transmissions of the dharma, including detailed discussions of the results of karma, the vow of refuge, empowerments and permission blessings for meditation deities, and oral transmissions of mantras for recitation. He diligently applied himself to the practice of these, inspiring faith and praise in all who met him.

Kunzang Dorjé first met Gyalsé Dawa Drakpa when the latter came to Bhutan. At that moment, Kunzang Dorjé felt an unshakable, irresistible respect and devotion awaken, and he relied on this teacher for seven years. [1.132a] Like one vase being filled from another, he received from Dawa Drakpa the empowerments, teachings, oral transmissions, and background material for the two Nyingrig cycles of the Dzoogchen teachings concerning the unsurpassable secret. He also received the empowerments, teachings, oral transmissions, pith instructions, activity rituals, and practical methods for the tradition of the great omniscient King of the Dharma, such as the three Yangrik cycles. [20] With great diligence, he gained mastery through contemplation, meditation, and training and became Dawa Drakpa's great regent in the ultimate sense. [21] Encouraged by his guru's instructions, he also spread these teachings to others whenever appropriate.

When the lord of the dharma, the great Gyalsé, passed away, Kunzang Dorjé oversaw the memorial ceremonies and completed all of the activities necessary to fulfill his guru's last wishes. Then, cutting himself off from all distractions—material pos-

sessions and ordinary activities—he frequented solitary mountain sites, such as Tarpa Ling and Kujedrak in Bumthang, Taktsang in Paro, and the forest retreat of Khotang. Relying on meager food and simple clothing, he one-pointedly practiced the heart essence of the profound path. To those fortunate seekers of liberation who gathered around him, he bestowed empowerments, teachings, and pith instructions. He never lapsed in these pursuits and so reached the consummate level of meditative experience and realization of the profound way of abiding, thus ensuring his own welfare; by mastering the activity that brought benefit and happiness to his students, he ensured the welfare of others. [1.132b]

Once, Kunzang Dorjé went to central Tibet, visiting the principal holy sites—Lhasa, Samye, and so forth—and making offerings and prayers of aspiration. In Lhasa he was honored by a large number of his students and patrons from the Yo area, among them the lord of the dharma Kunga Gyaltshen Palzang, Dzoogchen Sonam Rinchen, and Zhonnu Lodro of Chang Valley. According to their wishes, he bestowed on them the nectar of the sacred dharma. He ensured enormous benefit for beings, as illustrated by the fact that numerous great teachers such as the lord of the Drigung tradition, Rinchen Punsok, bowed at his feet and listened to his teachings.

Eventually, he spent most of his time in strict solitary retreat in the wilderness of Bumthang, occasionally bestowing the appropriate empowerments and teachings of this profound path, so that he was continually bringing about the two kinds of benefit. He did this unfailingly for a long time, until he passed away into the peaceful basic space of dharmakaya amid amazing signs. Drupchen Kunzang Dorjé was a contemporary of Tsewang Drakpa, the son of Ratna Lingpa.

**Choje Kunga Gyaltshen Palzang (1497–1568)**

Kunzang Dorjé's main student was the lord of the dharma Kunga Gyaltshen Palzang. He was born in a Female Fire Snake year at Tenchar in the border country of Bhutan, [1.133a] into the clan of the eight brothers of Masang Arwa. At the time of his birth, a spring burst forth from the ground. He later said that his habitual tendencies from previous lifetimes were quite evident. He clearly exhibited the attributes of someone holy—for example, tracing the six-syllable mantra in rock faces as though they were soft clay.

At the age of fourteen, he went to central Tibet, encouraged by Zhonnu Tsewang of Sordrang, a guru of Lhundrup Choide Monastery. He was ordained as a novice monk by Chen-nga Choödrak, who gave him the name Kunga Gyaltshen Palzang and cared for him well, both materially and spiritually. [1.133b]

Taking a nonsectarian approach, Kunga Gyaltshen Palzang studied and trained in the various avenues of the dharma, listening to and mastering the teachings of the
various avenues of the dharma—sadhana practices, empowerments, teachings, oral transmissions, and path instructions—to people commensurate with their fortune, so that everyone who made contact with him found the connection meaningful. Among his students in the sacred dharma were many great masters, such as Zhamargpa Kónchok Bangö and the Drigung Zupha; holders of personal transmissions of profound terms, including Tulkjung Jangchub Lingpa, Gargyi Wangpo of Nangtse, and Dechen Lingpa; many scholars, such as Palding Rabjampa and Palkhang Lotsawa; and many accomplished yogins, including the great master Longyangpa and Kunzang Palbar. In particular, he taught Tendzin Chökyi Gyalpo, his heart son Kunga Drakpa, Paljor Gyaltse of Shami, and many others who maintained the very essence of his tradition, as well as many secular rulers such as the governors of Yardro and Chongyé. As well, he benefited many men and women, including monastics, lay tantric practitioners, hermits, and householders. Many of his students, and their students in turn, came to maintain his lineage in the central, southwestern, western, and eastern areas of Tibet, in the southeastern region of Kongo, and in Bhutan. In this and other ways, this single holder of the Nyingma lineage accomplished tangible results through his widespread activities.

Natsok Rangdrol lived for seventy-seven years in this world, passing away on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month in an Iron Horse year [1366] near the temple of Tradruk in Yuru, central Tibet. His remains were brought in state to his monastic seat to be venerated and committed to the flames of the funeral pyre. An inner monument containing his death mask and a casket of precious substances, as well as other memorials, were erected on a vast scale in fulfillment of his last wishes, and throughout this time amazing signs manifested.

Tulku Tendzin Drakpa (1536–1597)

Tulku Natsok Rangdrol’s main student was Tulku Tendzin Drakpa. He was born in a Fire Monkey year in Ngenlung Genlar, Bhutan, the son of Tashi and his wife, Samten Zangmo. In keeping with prophecies concerning his birth, he was recognized as the tulku of Tertön Pema Lingpa. As soon as he could speak, he clearly described residual memories of his previous lifetimes. At the age of four, he was invited to Bumthang by Pema Lingpa’s sons, who paid him great honors at their respective seats. He remained at Pema Ling as heir to one of the sons, Kónchok Zangpo, and was ordained there as a novice monk. He spent his time receiving the empowerments, oral transmissions, sadhana practices, and activity rituals of the terma cycles of his former incarnation and training in these practices. Before long, however, the lord of the dharma Kónchok Zangpo passed away, so Ten-
APPENDIX

Lineage Diagrams

KEY TO THE DIAGRAMS

These lineage diagrams represent the mainstream transmission of Dzogchen teachings as outlined in this book. The diagrams do not depict all possible connections between these masters.

Teacher-to-student lineage

Incarnation lineage

Familial relationship, although not necessarily consecutive generations; this is often a teacher-to-student lineage as well

[Drawing of a lineage diagram with symbols indicating connections between individuals.

* Dalai Lama (b. 1935)

A dagger denotes that a given master appears in another location in the diagrams.
Diarmad@yus
Samantabhada
Mind-to-mind transmission

Buddhism of the five Jñānaśas (Vajrayana, Vajraavata)

(\textit{Nirmanakaya})

Garab Dorje
Mindtransmission
Shri Sambhara

Vimalakirti

Jñānaśa (8th-9th centuries)

Nyang Tongzin Zangpo
(8th-9th centuries)

Bé Lodö Wangshuck (7th century)

Dron Khenchen Bar (9th-10th centuries)

Droma Kunzang Gyatsho (7th-8th centuries)

Chenrezig Nyen Wangchuk (7th-8th centuries)

Gyurme Samten Thrad Dorje (1097-1767)

Drubchen Khyopa Nyima Rimpoche (113-124)

Guru Jomtse (1136-1243)

Treldok Seng gé Gyatsho (13th century)

Drubchen Methon Dorje (1245-1303)

Ragzin Chosje Kunzang (1246-1343)

Yula Nyuroopa

Pang Senggye Gongpo (13th century)

Ngondom Jamguy Choyang (17th century)

Zhada Norbuling (17th century)

Khyungpo Narzang (17th century)

Nyeng Chogyal Drak and others

Kunsang Dampa Drakpa (1122-1192)

Princess Pemsel (late 8th century)

Tsong Kha (9th-10th centuries)

Gyurme Lekpa Gyatsho (1290-1366)

Pema Lodrö Tsal (early 17th century)

Gyurme Lekpa Gyatsho (1290-1366)

Longchen Rabjam (1455-1494)

Rigdzin Pema Lingpa (1510-1521)

2nd Pem Lingpa, Terdaka Chokey Drakpa (1538-1599)

3rd Pem Lingpa, Kunzang Tsakrim Dorje (1558-1619)

4th Pem Lingpa, Zhegyal Tsipal Tsal (1600-1723)

5th Pem Lingpa, Kunzang Tsongk (1723-1762)

6th Pem Lingpa, Kunzang Enjai Gyatsho (1765-1807)

7th Pem Lingpa, Pema Tendzin (1817-1842)

8th Pem Lingpa, Kunzang Dachen Dorje (1843-1891)

9th Pem Lingpa, Terdaka Chokey Drakpa (1894-1922)

10th Pem Lingpa, Pema Chod Kruyen Dorje (1925-1955)

11th Pem Lingpa, Kunzang Pema Kunzang Namgyal (b. 1949)

Klochen Chishilpa Lhundrup (16th century)

Gyurme Tulku Drakpa Gyaltsen (1356-1409)

Tshangla Tsewang Gyatsho (14th century)

Gyurme Dawa Drakpa (14th century)

Drubchen Kunzang Dorje (14th century)

Chöjé Kunga Gyatsho (14th century)

Tulku Namsak Rangdrol (1489-1574)

Tulku Tendzin Drakpa (1538-1597)

Khedrup Dorje (17th century)

Ngari Chenpo Ygel Lhundrup (1612-1642)

Tenchey Gyurme Dorje (1646-1717)

Dorje Chenpo

Ogyen Chöje (14th century)

Gurö Ösel Rangdrol (14th century)

Tulku Palter Gyatsho (14th century)

Dokhampa Dragpa Chödub Dorjé (1444)

Khegyü Drul Gyatsho (14th century)

Tulku Jampa Drakpa (14th-15th centuries)

Guru Tharmpa (14th-15th centuries)

Ngok Tsen Khen (15th-16th centuries)

Ösel Lungdran (15th century)

Dzogchenpa Sokam Drakpa (15th-16th centuries)

Kunzang Ngawang Pema (16th century)

Dzogchenpa Sokam Drakpa (15th-16th centuries)

Kunzang Ngawang Pema (16th century)

Tsema Tharchin (15th century)

Nangtsang Napper (1597-1637)

Dzogchenpa Longchenpa (15th century)

Note: The term lineage of Pem Lingpa, generally associated with the Category of Direct Transmission (men-ngo dpal dbu), also associated with the Category of Dharmakaya, includes elements of both the karma and terma lineages. The karma lineage of Stiantasa, generally associated with the Categories of Mind and Expression (sem döl and long dbu), Baimian was also a teacher of King Trongpa Densem, due to space constraints, this could not be shown on the diagram.
Notes

Unless otherwise indicated, all dates refer to the Common Era.

*The Precious Lamp: Author's Introduction*

1. The lineages of: mind-to-mind transmission by victorious ones; transmission through symbols by masters of awareness; and oral transmission by human individuals.
2. The Indian abbot Shantarakshita, the master Padmakara (or Guru Rinpoche), and the Buddhist king Trisong Detsen of Tibet.
3. King Trisong Detsen sponsored the training of Tibetan translators, invited Buddhist scholars from India, and supported their collaboration in the translation of Buddhist scriptures from India into the Tibetan language.
4. “Early Translating school” refers to the Nyingma school, the most ancient of the four major schools in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, which was established in the eighth century by Guru Padmakara and others. More recent schools are collectively referred to as Sarma (New) or Later Translation schools.
5. The Tibetan term *kama* refers to teachings that have been passed on from generation to generation in an unbroken succession. *Terma* refers to teachings that were concealed by a great master such as Padmakara and later revealed under very specific conditions by a *tertön*, i.e., a recognized rebirth of the student who originally received the teaching when it was concealed and who is capable of revealing the teaching in an authentic way. Once a terma has been revealed, the lineage becomes one of transmission from generation to generation.
6. Minling Terchen is a name for Terchen Gyurme Dorjé (1646–1714), also known as Terdak Lingpa. He produced the first standardized collection of the *kama* teachings, in thirteen volumes.
7. Longchen Rabjam. The title “Kunchen” (Omniscient One) is sometimes appended to the names of masters (e.g., Kunchen Jigmé Lingpa); used alone, however, it refers to Longchenpa.
8. Guru Rinpoche was active in Tibet during the eighth century; Sang-gey Lama lived ca. 1000–1080.
9. The guru yoga has not been included in the present volume.
10. This section comprises three separate texts: the fulfillment ritual, in five folios; the concise *ganachakra*, in one folio; and the song for the *ganachakra*, in three folios. These have not been included in this volume.
11. These have not been included in this volume; selections can be found in Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche's *Natural Great Perfection*, trans. Lama Surya Das (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 1996).

12. At this point in the original Tibetan text, Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche outlines the contents of the book; we have omitted the outline here, however, and incorporated it into a standard table of contents at the front of the book.


14. This is a reference to indications in the Buddhist teachings that we currently live in a cycle of degeneration and that, in the distant past, human beings' lives were much longer.

15. Approximately one hundred line drawings from the original Tibetan text have been reproduced in this volume.

16. A Tibetan title meaning "great scholar."

17. A Tibetan title meaning "lord of refuge."

18. A Tibetan title meaning "lord of siddhas" or "lord of accomplished masters."

19. This common Tibetan idiom refers to the point in a major empowerment when one casts a flower onto a depiction of the mandala of deities. Where the flower falls on the mandala signifies the karmic connection one has with that cycle.

20. The term "youthful vase (body)" is unique to the Dzogchen approach. It refers to the ultimate nature of being, "youthful" in that it is not subject to degeneration, comparable to a "vase" in that its integrity is inviolate, and a "body" in that it serves as the foundation for the qualities of enlightenment.

**The Precious Mirror: Preliminary Remarks**


2. The Tibetan master Baizotsana was named after the sambhogakaya buddha Vairochana ("Baizotsana" being the Tibetan pronunciation). In this volume, we use the Tibetan rendering to distinguish between the master and the buddha.

3. The first Teacher in this instance was the primordial buddha, Samantabhadra.

4. Upper Tibet consists of the mountainous western region; middle Tibet, of the steppes, plateaus, and valleys of the central region; and lower Tibet, of the lowland valleys of the eastern region.

5. A Tibetan title meaning "learned and accomplished one."

6. The term "heart son (or daughter)" refers to a student who has received the most complete transmission (both scriptural and experiential) that a master has conferred in that lifetime.

7. "Tulku" (the Tibetan equivalent of the Sanskrit term *nirmanakaya*) indicates one who is recognized as the rebirth of a great master.

8. A Tibetan title meaning "master of awareness."

9. It is held that after a highly realized master passes away, the master's mind can manifest under certain circumstances in a form similar to that of the living master. This manifestation is perceptible to those who have great devotion for the master and a significant degree of realization.

10. Primarily *The Seven Treasuries of Longchenpa*. 

11. *Kusub* (or *kunzal*) is a term of Sanskrit derivation for a spiritual practitioner whose way of life is very simple and whose approach to spiritual practice is direct and experience-based, with little emphasis on study of the scriptures.

12. Daknang, or pure visionary, transmissions are received by highly realized practitioners during visions of deities or past masters.

13. Nyak Jampa Kunga (eighth century), Nup Sang-gye Yeshe (ninth century), and Zurchen Shakyi Jungné (1002–1062) were important figures in the early development of the Nyinmapa school.

14. Rongzom Chikyi Zangpo (eleventh century), also known as Rongzom Mahapandita or Rongzom Lotsawa, was one of the most important early writers in the kama tradition of the Nyinmapa school.

15. Ngari Panchen Pema Wangyal (1487–1542) was the author of *Ascertaining the Three Levels of Ordination*, an important Nyinmapa work on the relationship between the Hinayana vow of individual liberation, the bodhisattva vow of the Mahayana, and the samaya of the Vajrayana. An English translation of a commentary on this source text by Dodjom Rinpoche Jigdal Yeshe Dorje has been published as Ngari Panchen, Pema Wangyal, *Perfect Conduct: Ascertaining the Three Vows*, trans. Khenpo Gyurme Samdrub and Sangye Khundro (Boston: Wisdom, 1996).

16. Terchen Gyurme Dorje (Terdak Lingpa) and his younger brother, Lotsawa Chöpal Gyatso (Lobden Dharma Shri).

17. That is, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo. When it stands alone, the name "Khyentse" does not take the case ending "-i."

18. See Chapter 23.

19. Based on the teachings of the Buddha, as interpreted by the Indian master Nagarjuna, Madhyamaka (the Middle Way) is the highest expression of philosophy according to the Buddhist sutra tradition.

20. *The All-Creating Monarch* is the primary source tantra for the Category of Mind; *The Entire Array of Space* is an important source for the Category of Expansive teachings.

21. "The changing times" is a euphemism often used by Tibetan authors for the Chinese Communist military occupation of Tibet.

22. A way of indicating how perverse certain customs or behavior patterns can be.

23. The term "equal taste" or "one taste" refers to a level of realization where dualistic frameworks have been transcended and everything is experienced as having the same ultimate nature—the same taste.

24. Although the term "naturally occurring lamp of sublime knowing" often signifies one of the four or six so-called lamps in the practice of tīgal (see Chapter 5, note 38), it is also a more general idiom for a state of realization in which knowledge flows effortlessly, without the need for training or study.

25. Located at the crown of one's head.

**The Precious Lattice: A Synopsis of the Oral Lineage of Dzogchen**

1. The two approaches in the teachings and practice of Dzogchen. Treschö (cutting through seeming solidity) is said to be for those with lesser diligence and places emphasis on allowing the mind to rest in the authentic view of reality; tīgal (surpassing the pur-
12. Benefit that can be directly sensed or perceived by the recipient.

13. In Mahayana cosmology, our universe is one of many held in the hands of a cosmic Buddha, a form of Vairocana known as Gangechenmo (Glacial Ocean).

Colophon
2. The early summer of 1980.

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