



## His Eminence Khentin Tai Situ Rinpoche

### Nectar from the Stream – II

Excerpts from the Introduction to the Guru Rinpoche Empowerment at Palpung Sherab Ling Monastery, India, in 2006 during the Transmission of *The Rinchen Terdzö* of Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye the Great.

སངས་རྒྱལ་ཆོས་དང་ཆོག་གི་མཆོག་རྣམས་ལ། །  
 བྱང་ཆུབ་པར་དུ་བདག་ནི་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆི། །  
 བདག་གིས་སྤྱོད་སོགས་བགྱིས་པའི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱིས། །  
 འགོ་ལ་ཕན་ཕྱིར་སངས་རྒྱལ་འགྲུབ་པར་ཤོག །

“Until I awaken, I take refuge in  
 The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Supreme Assembly.  
 Through the goodness of generosity and other virtues  
 May I awaken fully in order to help all beings.”

\* \* \*

In the introduction to the Guru Rinpoche empowerment that Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye the Great included in *The Rinchen Terdzö* - ‘*The Precious Treasure Teachings*,’ Guru Rinpoche, Padmasambhava, described how precious and invaluable the tantric teachings of Lord Buddha are.

It may be easier to acknowledge Tantra by referring to it as Vajrayana. Students might have a different understanding when I say “tantric teachings,” so, it’s better to speak of the Vajrayana aspect of Lord Buddha’s teachings. Now, why is this? Because you need to have the merit to be able to understand Tantra correctly. Let me give a very simple example:

Although people know that they have a mind, it's hard for many to appreciate and acknowledge that their mind doesn't die when their body dies and that their mind continues from one life to the next. As long as people cannot comprehend and, instead, deny this, then virtue and non-virtue have no meaning for them. If they think that living beings are like a rock or tree, then they think that it doesn't matter if a rock or tree falls down and breaks another rock or tree. Thinking like this, they assume that it doesn't matter if a big river flows over and makes many small rivers disappear and that the life of a sentient being is like that, too. It's very hard for them to comprehend that everyone has a mind that continues from one life to the next. Once they have understood that the mind continues after death, then it's quite easy for them to realize that it's very bad to kill, to steal, to lie, etc. and that it's very good to save lives, to be generous, to be truthful, and so forth.

As long as people do not understand that the mind continues after death, it's very difficult for them to understand the Mahayana and the Bodhisattva's teachings. Such persons shrug their shoulders and think, "Even the Buddha can't make others a buddha. Then I can't help all sentient beings reach Buddhahood either!" They will argue like this. They think it's useless to recite *The Refuge Prayer* and is meaningless to say, "I wish to liberate all sentient beings and help them reach Buddhahood." Prayers like this have no meaning for them. They think, "I can get along by myself, and I can explain things to others. Maybe they can understand something that I know better than they do." It's impossible for them to understand and appreciate *Bodhicitta* ('the mind of awakening') as long as they think like that.

Likewise, it's impossible for people who have such an attitude to understand emptiness. They argue, "If things are empty, how come I can't walk through the wall? If you say that things are empty, why do you use doors?" I, for my part, answer them, "You, who ask why you can't go through the wall instead of just using the door, are also emptiness. Both you and the door are empty of inherent existence. And both you and the wall are empty of true existence as well. Everything is just a manifestation of interdependence." That's how I would respond to them. I would continue, "And if you die right now and are born in a totally different form, then you can't even see us. You will not even see the wall. You will see things totally different. It doesn't mean you become better, and it doesn't mean you become worse. But you will just be born in another dimension. Reality is variegated, not static and singular." Speaking like this, emptiness is very easy to understand, but many people can't understand.

As to Tantra, it is taught that all phenomena are appearances of Nirmanakaya ('a buddha's emanation body'). All sounds and expressions are manifestations of Sambogakaya ('a buddha's enjoyment body'). All thoughts are manifestations of Dharmakaya ('a buddha's truth body'). All sentient beings are embodiments of buddha. It's not easy to understand and comprehend the tantric teachings. Therefore, Vajrayana, the tantric teachings of Lord Buddha, are very rare.

Sometimes one misunderstands and thinks that only Buddha Shakyamuni gave tantric teachings. This isn't so. Guru Rinpoche tells us: "Many aeons before Buddha Shakyamuni, there was an aeon called *Kun-tu-sngon-pa*. During this aeon, there was a Buddha named 'King of the Past,' i.e., 'King of Whatever Came from the Past.'" Guru Rinpoche said that this Buddha presented the tantric teachings in a most elaborate way. Then Prince Siddhartha taught Vajrayana Tantra in a most elaborate way. Guru Rinpoche said that in the future, in 10 million aeons from now, there will be an aeon called "The Field of Flowers," "All Mosaic of Flowers", something like that. He said that flowers will fill in the place. Furthermore, he said that in that future *kalpa* ('aeon'), there will be a Buddha who will be known as Manjushri, which is very much like Guru Rinpoche himself. At that time, Tantra will be taught and

elaborated extensively. So these three - the past, the present, and the future - indicate that the tantric teachings of the Buddha are truly rare but not impossible. They are presented from time to time. Sentient beings who have the propensity and capacity, who are able to comprehend these teachings, who are an appropriate and worthy vessel, will receive the transmission of the invaluable tantric teachings.

So, these are the words of Guru Rinpoche and the essential meaning of this particular section of the teachings that are available to us due to the unfathomable wisdom and generosity of Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye the Great.

Now, being aware of this, one should be able to really appreciate one's ability to comprehend. When I say "one," it means our, your, his, her, their, my capacity, the capacity of all of us to comprehend. Since we can comprehend, we have a mind. And we can comprehend that the essence of our mind can't just be what we refer to as "I" or "me," but it must be unrestricted and limitless. That's the only way. It can't be anything that is limited or restricted.

The essence of the mind is the essence of the mind; it's impossible to find an example to describe the mind's essence. Therefore the essence of the mind and the essence of everything can't be different. Since everything is the manifestation of our mind, i.e., our mind's perception, our mind creates karma. As long as our mind doesn't recognize itself, we create the notion of "I," "me." It's the "I" that creates karma, which makes samsara manifest and appear.

At the same time, we can also comprehend that there is continuation. Being here now points to the fact that we were somewhere else before we were here, i.e., in the past. It also points to the fact that we will be somewhere else later, i.e., in the future. It's impossible for there to be a present without a past and a future. It would be ridiculous to think so. When we understand this, we will be able to comprehend karma. We need to ask ourselves, "Why is there an 'I'? What is this 'I'? What am I? Is he what he is? How come she is what she is? Why do each one of us think differently, feel differently, look differently, have different problems?" Furthermore, we think, "If you had my problem, you might think it's wonderful. Maybe if I had your problem, I would think it's a wonderful thing. And maybe you think that what I think is wonderful is terrible." All this is perception. Of course, everything depends upon causes and conditions and is a result of karma. Our perceptions, thoughts, experiences are the result of karma that we created in the past. And the result of our karma is here now. We can comprehend this. When we do, we can take the next step and realize that karma is relative and not ultimate. Nobody can make or create ultimate karma.

What I am saying here is that the essence of all sentient beings is buddha. When we have realized our essence, we will have attained Buddhahood. When we have realized Buddhahood, then the karma we accumulated during countless lifetimes is relative. It's as though it never happened – it's purified. This doesn't mean we somehow found a trick that enabled us to manage to erase all our karma. That's some kind of defining corruption; there is no such thing. Because we recognize and realize the fallacy of relative truth, we realize the ultimate truth. Then we become the embodiment of ultimate truth. And that is Buddhahood, which, as far as we are concerned, can only be attained through Vajrayana practice. Whenever Vajrayana manifests, we call that "Buddha Turning the Wheel of the Vajrayana," or "Buddha Turning the Wheel of Tantra." And so, this is one thing. I want to give an example.

Sometimes we want to say or hear something very dramatic, for instance, that the Dharma is so profound, so powerful, and so deep, that if you start practicing in the evening, then at

sunrise the next morning you will be enlightened, or if you start practicing in the morning, you will be enlightened that same evening. Actually, if our karma, our merit, our wisdom, and everything is just as perfect as that of Buddha Shakyamuni while he sat under the Bodhitree at Bodhgaya, you won't have to wait for the sun to come up or for the sun to go down. You would be enlightened this very moment.

You know, in this moment you are a sentient being and a moment later you are a buddha. Being a sentient being means being in samsara and being a buddha means being free of samsara. The difference between being a sentient being and being a buddha happens in one second. You don't have to wait until the sun rises or sets. Therefore we have the saying: "One moment makes the difference." One attains Buddhahood in a moment. But it happens through the accumulation of merit and the purification of everything. It took Prince Siddhartha many aeons. Speaking relatively, before he attained enlightenment under the Bodhitree at Bodhgaya, Prince Siddhartha practiced intensively, using a rock as a cushion, for six long years at the banks of the Naranjara River, known today as the Lilajan River. That is how he manifested and appeared. He was Prince Siddhartha and became Buddha Shakyamuni. In Vajrayana, that's how we see manifestation. So, this concludes what I wanted to say about the particular teachings on Guru Rinpoche in *The Rinchen Terdzö - 'The Precious Treasure Teachings.'*

Guru Rinpoche, Padmasambhava, started practicing by listening to the teachings of eminent scholars and masters and he continued by meditating them. Having realized the teachings, he gave them to worthy disciples in Tibet, the Land of Snows, to followers who were ready to receive and practice them. Thank you very much.

### Dedication

བསོད་ནམས་འདི་ཡིས་ཐམས་ཅད་གཟིགས་པ་ཉིད། །  
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 སྤྱི་གནས་འཆི་བ་རྒྱ་བས་འབྲུགས་པ་ཡི། །  
 སྤྱི་པའི་མཆོ་ལས་འགོ་བ་སྦྱོལ་བར་ཤོག །

“Through this goodness may omniscience be attained  
 And thereby may every enemy (mental defilement) be overcome.  
 May beings be liberated from the ocean of samsara  
 That is troubled by waves of birth, old age, sickness, and death.”

By this virtue may I quickly attain the state of Guru Buddha and then  
 Lead every being without exception to that very state!

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་མཆོག་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། །མ་སྦྱོས་པ་རྣམས་སྦྱེ་བྱུང་ཅིག །  
 སྦྱོས་པ་ཉམས་པ་མེད་པ་དང་། །གོང་ནས་གོང་དུ་འཕེལ་བར་ཤོག །

“May precious and supreme Bodhicitta that has not been generated now be so,  
 And may precious Bodhicitta that has already been never decline but continuously increase!”

May the life of the Glorious Lama remain steadfast and firm.  
May peace and happiness fully arise for beings as limitless in number as space is vast in its extent.  
Having accumulated merit and purified negativities,  
May I and all living beings without exception swiftly establish the levels and grounds of Buddhahood.



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