

**84,000 teachings.** (Tib. cho kyi phung po gyad khri bzhi stong) 21,000 teachings on each of the Vinaya, Sutra, Abhidharma, and their combination. Their purpose is to eliminate the 84,000 different types of disturbing emotions latent in one's mind.

**Abhidharma.** (Tib. chö ngön pa) The Buddhist teachings are often divided into the Tripitaka: the sutras (teachings of the Buddha), the Vinaya (teachings on conduct,) and the Abhidharma, which are the analyses of phenomena that exist primarily as a commentarial tradition to the Buddhist teachings.

**Abhidharmakosha.** (Tib. ngön pa dzod) An authoritative scripture on Buddhist metaphysics according to the Hinayana tradition.

**Abhisheka.** (Tib. wang) Empowerment. The conferring of power or authorization to practice the Vajrayana teachings, the indispensable entrance door to tantric practice. One should also receive the practice instruction (Tib. tri) and the textual reading (Tib. lung).

**Acarya.** (Tib. lo pon) A spiritual master. (Similar to a geshe scholar)

**Afflicted consciousness.** (Tib. nyön yid) The seventh consciousness. As used here it has two aspects: the immediate consciousness which monitors the other consciousnesses making them continuous and the klesha consciousness which is the continuous presence of self. (See consciousnesses, eight)

**Afflictive obscuration.** There are two types of obscurations that cover one's Buddha nature. The obscuration of the afflictive or disturbing emotions and the obscuration of dualistic perception, or sometimes called the intellectual obscurations or cognitive obscurations.

**Aggregates,** five. (Skt. skandha, Tib. phung po nga) Literally, "heaps." The five aspects which comprise the physical and mental constituents of a sentient being: physical form, sensations, conceptions, formations and consciousness. These can also be seen from the perspective of the five basic transformations that perceptions undergo when an object is perceived. First is form, which includes all sounds, smells, etc., everything that is not thought. The second and third are sensations (pleasant and unpleasant, etc.) and their identification. Fourth are mental events, which actually include the second and third aggregates. The fifth is ordinary consciousness, such as the sensory and mental consciousnesses.

**Akshobhya.** (Tib. mi bskyod pa) The sambhogakaya Buddha of the vajra family.

**Alaya consciousness.** (Tib. kün shi nam she) According to the Cittamatra school this is the eighth consciousness and is often called the ground consciousness or storehouse consciousness.

**Amitabha.** One of the five Buddha family deities known as "Buddha of boundless light." Usually depicted as red.

**Amoghasiddhi.** One of the five Buddha families and means "all-accomplishing one." Usually depicted as green.

**Amrita.** (Tib. dut tsi) A blessed substance which can cause spiritual and physical healing.

**Anuttarayoga tantra.** (Tib. nal jor la na me pay ju) There are four levels of the Vajrayana and Anuttarayoga tantra is the highest of these. It contains the Guhyasamaja, the Chakrasamvara, the Hevajra and the Kalachakra tantras.

**Arhat.** “Free from four maras.” The mara of conflicting emotions, the mara of the deva, the mara of death and the mara of the skandhas. The highest level of the Hinayana path. Arhat is male and arhati is female.

**Arhatship.** The stage of having fully eliminated the klesha obscurations.

**Arura.** The myroblan fruit/plant held by the Medicine Buddha which represents all the best medicines.

**Aryadeva.** A disciple of Nagarjuna and author of many important commentaries.

**Asanga.** (Tib. thok may) A fourth century Indian philosopher who founded the Cittamatra or Yogacara school and wrote the five works of Maitreya which are important Mahayana works. Also brother of Vasubandhu.

**Atisha.** (982-1055 C.E.) A Buddhist scholar at the Nalanda University in India who came to Tibet at the invitation of the King to overcome the damage done by Langdarma. He helped found the Kadampa tradition.

**Avalokiteshvara.** (Tib. Chenrezig) The bodhisattva embodying the compassion of all the Buddhas. Depicted holding the wish-fulfilling gem between folded hands. One of the eight main bodhisattvas. The mantra associated with this bodhisattva is known as the king of mantras, OM MANI PEME HUNG.

**Ayatanas.** The six inner ayatanas are the five sense faculties: the eyes, ear, nose, tongue, the body as a whole, and the sixth is the mental faculty. The six outer ayatanas are the six objects of the various sense faculties: form, sound, smell, taste, touch and objects of conceptual thinking.

**Bardo.** (Tib.) The intermediate state between the end of one life and rebirth into another. Bardo can also be divided into six different levels; the bardo of birth, dreams, meditation, the moment before death, the bardo of dharmata and the bardo of becoming.

**Bindu.** (Tib. tige) Vital essence drops or spheres of psychic energy that are often visualized in Vajrayana practices.

**Bhikshu.** (Tib. ge long) A fully ordained monk.

**Bhumi.** Level or stage. There are ten bodhisattva levels which begin with the path of seeing in the sutra tradition. The tantric tradition has thirteen levels.

**Blessings.** (Tib. chin lap) Splendour wave, conveying the sense of atmosphere descending or coming toward the practitioner. One's root guru and lineage are said to be the source of blessings. When the student can open themselves with uncontrived devotion, the grace of the lineage manifests as blessings, which dissolve into them and awaken them to a sense

of greater reality.

**Blessings**, (Tib. chin lap) are the result of many great practitioners concentrating their mental energy on the lineage or deities and as a result these develop a kind of power to help practitioners. But one must open oneself up to receive the blessings, the blessings are received if the practitioner is receptive.

**Blessings**. (Tib. chin lap) The process by which one individual introduces some of their accumulated merit into another's "stream of being." The ability to bestow blessing depends on the donor's degree of spiritual attainment and on the recipient's faith. The donor is usually the root-guru, whose blessing is said to contain that of all the sources of refuge combined. Although future experiences are largely shaped by present actions, the root-guru's blessing can partially modify this. That is, it can create conditions favourable to the maturation of any religious predispositions our past actions may have generated, giving us the inspiration and energy we require to begin practising. In this way, unless our acts have been extremely unwholesome, the guru's blessing can help us overcome conflicting emotions and other obstacles. Thus the guru's blessing helps us realize the Buddha-potential we all possess.

**Bodhi tree**. The pipil tree that Buddha achieved enlightenment under. It is the ficus religiosa.

**Bodhicharavatara**. Famous text on the bodhisattva's way of life by the great Indian master Shantideva.

**Bodhichitta**. (Tib. chang chup chi sem) Literally, the mind of enlightenment. There are two kinds of bodhichitta: absolute bodhichitta, which is completely awakened mind that sees the emptiness of phenomena, and relative bodhichitta which is the aspiration to practice the six paramitas and free all beings from the suffering of samsara. In regard to relative bodhichitta there is also two kinds: aspiration bodhichitta and perseverance bodhichitta.

**Bodhisattva**. (Tib. chang chup sem pa) "Heroic mind." Bodhi means blossomed or enlightened, and sattva means heroic mind. Literally, one who exhibits the mind of enlightenment. Also an individual who has committed him or herself to the Mahayana path of compassion and the practice of the six paramitas to achieve Buddhahood to free all beings from samsara. These are the heart or mind disciples of the Buddha.

**Bodhisattva levels**. (Skt. bhumi, Tib. sa) The levels or stages a bodhisattva goes through to reach enlightenment. These consist of ten levels in the sutra tradition and thirteen in the tantra tradition. The ten are: 1. Overwhelming Joy, 2. Stainless, 3. Radiant, 4. Luminous, 5. Difficult to Practice, 6. Obviously Transcendent, 7. Far Gone, 8. Unshakeable, 9. Excellent Discriminating Wisdom, 10. Cloud of Dharma.

**Bodhisattva vow**. The vow to attain Buddhahood for the sake of all beings.

**Buddha**. (Tib. sang gye) An individual who attains, or the attainment of, complete enlightenment, such as the historical Shakyamuni Buddha.

**Buddha Shakyamuni.** (Tib. shakya tubpa) The Shakyamuni Buddha, often called the Gautama Buddha, refers to the fourth Buddha of this age, who lived between 563 and 483 BCE.

**Buddhafiield.** (Tib. sang gye kyi zhing) 1) One of the realms of the five Buddha families, either as sambhogakaya or nirmanakaya. 2) Pure personal experience.

**Buddhahood.** (Tib. sang gyas) The perfect and complete enlightenment of dwelling in neither samsara nor nirvana. Expression of the realization of perfect enlightenment, which characterizes a Buddha. The attainment of Buddhahood is the birthright of all beings. According to the teachings of Buddha, every sentient being has, or better is already, Buddha nature; thus Buddhahood cannot be “attained.” It is much more a matter of experiencing the primordial perfection and realizing it in everyday life.

**Buddha nature.** (Tib. de shegs nying po) The essential nature of all sentient beings. The potential for enlightenment.

**Buddhapalita.** Circa 4th century. An Indian master and founder of the Prasangika-Madhyamika (Middle-way) school.

**Central channel.** (Tib. tsa uma) There are three major subtle channels in the body: the right, left, and central channel. These channels are not anatomical ones but conduits through which subtle energy flows. The central channel runs roughly along (or perhaps inside the spine).

**Chakravartin.** (Tib. koro gyur wa) Literally, the turner of the wheel and also called a universal monarch. This is a king who propagates the dharma and starts a new era.

**Chakra.** A complex systematic description of physical and psychological energy channels.

**Chakrasamvara.** (Tib. korlo dompa) A meditational deity which belongs to the Anuttarayoga tantra set of teachings. A main yidam or tantra of the New Schools.

**Chandali.** (Tib. tummo) A Vajrayana term for a kind of psychic heat generated and experienced through certain meditative practices. This heat serves to burn up all the types of obstacles and confusion. One of the Six Yogas of Naropa. This technique should not be practiced without the guidance of a qualified instructor who has practiced this technique successfully him or herself.

**Chandrakirti.** A seventh century Indian Buddhist scholar of the Madhyamaka school who is best known for founding the Prasangika subschool and writing two treatises on emptiness using logical reasoning.

**Channels, winds and essences.** Nadi, prana and bindu; the constituents of the vajra body. These channels are not anatomical structures, but more like meridians in acupuncture. There are thousands of channels, but the three main channels that carry the subtle energy are the right, left and central channel. The central channel runs roughly along the spinal column while the right and left are on the sides of the central channel. According to the

yogic teachings of the path of skilful means, realization is attained through synchronization of body and mind. This may be achieved through meditating on nadi (channels), prana (energy), and bindu (drops) – the psychic components in the illusory body. Prana is the energy, or “wind,” moving through the nadis. As is said, “Mind consciousness rides the horse of prana on the pathways of the nadis. The bindu is mind’s nourishment.” Because of dualistic thinking, prana enters the left and right channels. This divergence of energy in the illusory body corresponds to the mental activity that falsely distinguishes between subject and object and leads to karmically determined activity. Through yogic practice, the pranas can be brought into the central channel and therefore transformed into wisdom-prana. Then the mind can recognize its fundamental nature, realizing all dharmas as unborn. This belongs to advanced practice and can only be learned through direct oral transmission from an accomplished guru. Once the meditator is well established in the experience of the fundamental nature of mind, they can meditate on it directly, dissolving the nadi, prana, and bindu visualization. Meditation using the concept of psychic channels is regarded as being the completion stage with signs, and the formless practice which contemplates the nature of mind directly is the completion stage without signs

**Chöd.** (Tib.) This is pronounced “chö” and literally means “to cut off” and refers to a practice that is designed to cut off all ego involvement and defilements. The mo chöd (female chöd) practice was founded by the famous female saint Machig Labdron (1031 to 1129 C. E.).

**Cittamatra school.** (Tib. sem tsampa) A school founded by Asanga in the fourth century and is usually translated as the Mind-only school. It is one of the four major schools (the others being the two Rangtong – Svatantrika and Prasangika – and Shentong) in the Mahayana tradition and its main tenet (to greatly simplify) is that all phenomena are mental events.

**Clarity.** (Tib. selwa) Also translated as luminosity. The nature of mind is that it is empty of inherent existence, but the mind is not just voidness or completely empty because it has this clarity which is awareness or the knowing of mind. So clarity is a characteristic of emptiness (shunyata) of mind.

**Co-emergent wisdom.** (Skt. sahajajnana, Tib. lhen chik kye pay yeshe) The advanced realization of the inseparability of samsara and nirvana and how these arise simultaneously and together.

**Cognitive obscurations.** There are two types of obscurations that cover one’s Buddha nature. The obscuration of the afflictive or disturbing emotions and the obscuration of dualistic perception, or sometimes called the intellectual obscurations or cognitive obscurations. The cognitive obscuration is the subtle obscuration of holding onto the concepts of subject, object and action.

**Cognisance.** (Tib. selwa) The mind’s inherent capacity for knowing.

**Commentary.** (Skt. shastra, Tib. tan chö) The Buddhist teachings are divided into the

words of the Buddha (sutras) and the commentaries of others on his works (shastras).

**Common tradition.** A way of referring to those teachings held in common by all traditions of Buddhism, which are the teachings on personal liberation of the Hinayana or lesser vehicle.

**Common vehicle.** The Hinayana.

**Completion stage.** (Tib. dzo rim) In the Vajrayana there are two stages of meditation: the creation/development stage and the completion stage. Completion stage with marks is the six doctrines. Completion stage without marks is the practice of essence Mahamudra, resting in the unfabricated nature of mind.

**Conditioned (cyclic) existence.** (Skt. samsara, Tib. khor wa) Ordinary existence which contains suffering because one still possesses attachment, aggression, and ignorance. It is contrasted to liberation or nirvana.

**Consciousnesses, sensory.** These are the five sensory consciousnesses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and body sensation.

**Consciousnesses, eight.** (Skt. vijñana, Tib. nam she tsog gye) These are the five sensory consciousnesses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and body sensation. Sixth is mental consciousness, seventh is afflicted consciousness, and eighth is ground consciousness.

**Consciousnesses, six.** The five sensory consciousnesses and the mental consciousness.

**Creation stage.** (Skt. utpattikrama, Tib. che rim) In the Vajrayana there are two stages of meditation: the development and the completion stage. The creation stage is a method of tantric meditation that involves the visualization and contemplation of deities for the purpose of purifying habitual tendencies and realizing the purity of all phenomena. In this stage visualization of the deity is established and maintained.

**Daka.** (Tib. khandro) A male counterpart to a dakini.

**Dakini.** (Tib. khandroma) A yogini who has attained high realizations of the fully enlightened mind. She may be a human being who has achieved such attainments or a non-human manifestation of the enlightened mind of a meditational deity. A female aspect of the protectors. It is feminine energy which has inner, outer and secret meanings.

**Dark age.** A dark age can mean when no Buddha has come, here it is referring to five degenerations: 1) of the times, meaning the outer events of the world such as wars and social unrest are becoming worse, 2) of beings, meaning their mind-streams are becoming coarser, 3) length of life is becoming shorter, 4) increase in the disturbing emotions of beings, causing instability in their minds, 5) and degeneration of view, meaning people's understanding of reality is growing further from the truth. Based on these five degenerations we are now living in a dark age.

**Definitive meaning.** The Buddha's teachings that state the direct meaning of dharma. They are not changed or simplified for the capacity of the listener, in contrast to the provisional meaning.

**Desire realm.** Comprises the six realms of gods, demi-gods, humans, animals, hungry spirits and hell-beings.

**Dharani.** A particular type of mantra, usually quite long.

**Dharma.** (Tib. chö) This has two main meanings: first, any truth, such as that the sky is blue; and secondly, the teachings of the Buddha (also called “Buddha-dharma”).

**Dharmachakra.** Sanskrit for “Wheel of Dharma.” The three vehicles of Buddhist practice; Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana. When referring to the thirty-two marks of a Buddha it is the design of an eight-spoked wheel.

**Dharma protector.** (Skt. dharmapala, Tib. cho kyong) A Buddha, bodhisattva or powerful but ordinary being whose job is to remove all interferences and bestow all necessary conditions for the practice of pure dharma.

**Dharmadhatu.** (Tib. chö ying) Dharma is “the truth” and dhatu means, “space free from a centre.” The all-encompassing space, unoriginated and without beginning, out of which all phenomena arises. The Sanskrit means “the essence of phenomena” and the Tibetan means “the expanse of phenomena,” but it usually refers to the emptiness that is the essence of phenomena. Dharmadhatu and dharmakaya are essentially the same; they are two indivisible aspects of the same thing. The dharmakaya emphasizes the wisdom aspect while dharmadhatu emphasizes the emptiness aspect.

**Dharmakaya.** (Tib. chö ku) One of the three bodies of Buddhahood. It is enlightenment itself, that is, wisdom beyond any point of reference. (see kayas, three.)

**Dharmakirti.** Famous Buddhist master of the 7th century.

**Dharmata.** (Tib. chö nyi) Dharmata is often translated as “suchness” or “the true nature of things” or “things as they are.” It is phenomena as it really is or as seen by a completely enlightened being without any distortion or obscuration, so one can say it is “reality.” The nature of phenomena and mind.

**Dhatu.** These are the six sensory objects of sight, sound, smell, taste, and body sensation; the six sense faculties, the visual sensory faculty, the auditory sensory faculty, etc., and the six sensory consciousnesses, the visual consciousness, the auditory consciousness, etc. They make up the eighteen constituents for perception.

**Disturbing emotions.** (Skt. klesha, Tib. nyön mong) Also called the “afflictive emotions,” these are the emotional afflictions or obscurations (in contrast to intellectual obscurations) that disturb the clarity of perception. These are also translated as “poisons.” They include any emotion that disturbs or distorts consciousness. The main kleshas are desire, anger and ignorance.

**Doha.** (Tib. gur) A spiritual song spontaneously composed by a Vajrayana practitioner. It usually has nine syllables per line.

**Dombi Heruka.** An Indian mahasiddha who was an early incarnation of Tai Situ Rinpoche.

**Dorje.** (Skt. vajra) Usually translated as diamond-like, King of Stones. Has several levels of meaning. Also an implement held during certain practices.

**Dorje Chang.** See Vajradhara.

**Dream practice.** (Tib. mi lam) An advanced Vajrayana practice using the dream state. This is one of the Six Yogas of Naropa (See Six Yogas of Naropa).

**Dzogchen.** (Skt. mahasandhi) Literally “the great perfection” The teachings beyond the vehicles of causation, first taught in the human world by the great vidyadhara Garab Dorje.

**Egolessness.** (Tib. dag me) Also called selflessness. There are two kinds of egolessness – the egolessness of other, that is, the emptiness of external phenomena and the egolessness of self, that is, the emptiness of a personal self. Egolessness or selflessness of person. (Skt. pudgalanairatmya) This doctrine asserts that when one examines or looks for the person, one finds that it is empty and without self. The person does not possess a self (Skt. atman, Tib. bdag-nyid) as an independent or substantial self. This position is held by most Buddhist schools.

**Egolessness or selflessness of phenomena.** (Skt. dharma-nairatmya) This doctrine asserts that not only is there selflessness of the person, but when one examines outer phenomena, one finds that external phenomena are also empty, i.e. they do not have an independent or substantial nature. This position is not held by the Hinayana schools, but is put forth by the Mahayana schools, particularly the Cittamatra school.

**Eight auspicious substances.** Conch shell, yoghurt, durva grass, vermilion, bilva fruit, mirror, givam, mustard seed.

**Eight auspicious symbols.** Precious parasol, victory banner, conch shell, vase of treasures, golden fish, wheel, lotus flower and the eternal knot.

**Eight bodhisattvas.** Manjushri, Avalokiteshvara, Vajrapani, Kshitigarbha, Sarvanivaranishkambhi, Akasharbhya, Maitreya, and Samantabhadra.

**Eight consciousnesses.** The all-ground consciousness (eighth), afflicted consciousness (seventh), mental consciousness (sixth), and the five sense-consciousnesses. The Hinayana sutras generally discuss mind in terms of six consciousnesses, namely, the five sensory consciousnesses and the sixth mental consciousness. The Mahayana Cittamatra school (Mind-only) school talks about the eight consciousness in which the first six are the same but has the seventh and eighth consciousnesses added. In the Hinayana tradition the functions of the seventh and eighth consciousness are subsumed in the sixth mental consciousness.

**Eight fold noble path.** Right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

**Eight freedoms & ten opportunities.** (Tal jor) Tal is often translated as “freedom” and jor as “endowments,” “qualities,” “resources,” and “opportunities” which constitute a



precious human birth to practice dharma. The eight freedoms are traditionally enumerated as freedom from birth as a hell being, a hungry ghost, an animal, a barbarian, a long-lived god, a heretic, a mentally handicapped person, or living in a dark age (here meaning when no Buddha has come, in other contexts, according to the teachings on five degenerations we are living in a dark age). Of the ten conjunctions or resources, the five personal conjunctions are having a human body, being born in a land to which the dharma has spread, having all of one's senses intact, not reverting to evil ways, and having confidence in the three jewels. (Having one's senses impaired to the extent that one's mind could not function properly in the study and practice of dharma would constitute the loss of one's precious human birth.) The five conjunctions that come by way of others are that a Buddha has been born in this age, that the Buddha taught the dharma, that the dharma still exists, that there are still followers who have realized the meaning and essence of the teachings of the dharma, and there are benevolent sponsors.

**Eight Medicine Buddhas.** This refers to the principle Medicine Buddha and his retinue of seven other Medicine Buddhas: Excellent Name, Appearance of Stainless Fine Gold, Glorious Supreme One Free of Misery, Resounding Dharma Melody, King of Direct Knowledge, King of Melody and King of Shakyas.

**Eight mental constructs** or complexities are mental formulations that phenomena have such attributes as arising and ceasing, being singular or plural, coming and going, and being the same or being different.

**Eight offerings.** Drinking water, water for washing the feet, flowers, incense, lamps, perfume, food, and music.

**Eight worldly concerns.** (Tib. jik ten chö gysh) These keep one from the path; they are attachment to gain, attachment to pleasure, attachment to praise, attachment to fame, aversion to loss, aversion to pain, aversion to blame and aversion to a bad reputation.

**Ekajati.** A particular protector or dharmapala.

**Emotional obscurations.** There are two types of obscurations that cover one's Buddha nature. The obscuration of the afflictive or disturbing emotions and the obscuration of dualistic perception, or sometimes called the intellectual obscurations or cognitive obscurations. The emotional obscurations prevent liberation and consist of the kleshas. (see klesha)

**Emptiness.** (Skt. shunyata, Tib. tong pa nyi) Sometimes also translated as voidness. The Buddha taught in the second turning of the wheel of dharma that external phenomena and the internal phenomena or concept of self or "I" have no real existence and therefore are "empty."

**Emptiness.** (Tib. tong pa nyi Skt. shunyata) A central theme in Buddhism. It should not lead one to views of nihilism or the like, but is a term indicating the lack of any truly existing independent nature of any and all phenomena. Positively stated, phenomena do exist, but as mere appearances, interdependent manifestations of mind with no limitation. It is not that it is just your mind, as mind is also free of any true existence. This frees one

from a solipsist view. This is interpreted differently by the individual schools.

**Empowerment.** (Tib. wang Skt. abhiseka) The conferring of power or authorization to practice the Vajrayana teachings, the indispensable entrance door to tantric practice. To do a Vajrayana practice one must receive the empowerment from a qualified lama. One should also receive the practice instruction (Tib. tri) and the textual reading (Tib. lung).

**Enlightenment.** (Skt. bodhi Tib. jang chub) According to the Buddhadharmas, theistic and mystical experiences of all kinds still fall within samsara, as long as they confirm the experiencer or solidify the experience, even in the most subtle way. Buddhist norms of experience are: universal impermanence, existence as suffering, selflessness, and peace as absence of struggle to attain or maintain anything. The Hinayana tradition defines enlightenment as the cessation of ignorance and of disturbing emotions, and therefore freedom from the compulsive rebirth in samsara. Its degrees of attainment were enumerated as four levels: stream enterer, once returner, non-returner and arhat. According to the Mahayana tradition, Hinayana nirvana is a way station, like an illusory city in the desert created by the Buddha to encourage travellers. Enlightenment requires not only cessation of ignorance but also compassion and skilful means to work with the bewilderment of all sentient beings. The arhat does not attain complete enlightenment because of their undeveloped compassion. According to the Vajrayana tradition, Hinayana and Mahayana attainment are necessary, but they contain dogma. It is necessary for the yogin to develop complete partnership with the phenomenal world and to experience a more penetrating unmasking of the root of ego. In presenting the final fruition, the Vajrayana teaches either four or six yantras. The term nirvana can have the utmost positive sense when referring to enlightenment, or it can have a limiting or pejorative sense when referring to a limited goal of cessation.

**Enlightenment.** (Tib. jang chub) The definition varies according to the Buddhist tradition; usually the same as Buddhahood. The Hinayana tradition defines liberation as the freedom from birth in samsara, with mind free of ignorance and emotional conflict. The Mahayana tradition holds that enlightenment is not complete without development of compassion and commitment to use skilful means to liberate all sentient beings. In the Vajrayana teachings, the foregoing stages of enlightenment are necessary, but ultimate enlightenment is a thorough purification of ego and concepts. The final fruition of complete liberation transcends all duality and conceptualization.

**Eternalism.** (Tib. rtag lta) The belief that there is a permanent and causeless creator of everything; in particular, that one's identity or consciousness has a concrete essence which is independent, everlasting and singular. Experience and realization. (Tib. nyam togs) An expression used for insight and progress on the path. "Experience" refers to temporary meditation experiences and "realization" to unchanging understanding of the nature of things.

**Father tantra.** (Tib. pha gyü) There are three kinds of tantras. The father tantra is concerned with transforming aggression, the mother tantra with transforming passion, and

the non-dual tantra with transforming ignorance,

**Feast offering.** (Tib. tog kyi kor lo, Skt. ganachakra) A tantric ritual connected to the sadhana practice of one of the three roots: guru, yidam or dakini. Feast literally means “gathering”: the gathering of enlightened guests, the practitioners, the feast articles, and the two accumulations of merit and wisdom.

**Five actions of immediate consequence.** Killing one’s father, killing one’s mother, killing an arhat, intentionally wounding a Buddha and causing them to bleed, and creating a schism in the sangha. They are called actions which have an immediate result in that they are the cause for one’s very next rebirth to be in a lower realm.

**Five Buddha families.** (Tib. rig nga) These are the Buddha, Vajra, Ratna, Padma and Karma families.

**Five male Buddhas.** Vairochana, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha and Amoghasiddhi

**Five female Buddhas.** Dhatvishvari, Mamaki, Locana, Pandaravasini and Samayatara.

**Five dhyani Buddhas.** Vairochana, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha and Amoghasiddhi. They are the pure aspects of the five elements and five emotions.

**Five aggregates.** See aggregates, five.

**Five degenerations.** 1) Of the times, meaning the outer events of the world such as wars and social unrest are becoming worse, 2) of beings, meaning their mind-streams are becoming coarser, 3) length of life is becoming shorter, 4) increase in the disturbing emotions of beings, causing instability in their minds, 5) and degeneration of view, meaning people’s understanding of reality is growing further from the truth. Based on these five degenerations we are now living in a dark age.

**Five paths.** (Tib. lam nga) According to the sutras there are five paths; the path of accumulation, the path of application, the path of seeing/insight, (attainment of the first bodhisattva level), the path of meditation, and the path of no more learning (Buddhahood). The five paths cover the entire process from beginning dharma practice to complete enlightenment.

**Five poisons.** (Tib. ldug nga) Temporary mental states that inhibit understanding: ignorance, pride, anger, desire, and jealousy. The three root poisons are ignorance, desire and anger.

**Five wisdoms.** The dharmadhatu wisdom, mirror-like wisdom, wisdom of equality, discriminating wisdom and all-accomplishing wisdom. They should not be understood as separate entities but rather as different functions of one’s enlightened essence. **Fixation.** (Tib. dzin pa) The mental act of holding on to a material object, experience, concept or set of philosophical ideas.

**Form realm.** God realms of subtle form.

**Formless realm.** (Tib. zug med kyi kham) The abode of an unenlightened being who has

practiced the four absorptions of: infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothing whatsoever, and neither presence nor absence (of conception).

**Four empowerments.** (Tib. wang shi) The empowerments of vase, secret, wisdom-knowledge and precious word.

**Four extremes.** (Tib. tha shi) Existence, non-existence, both and neither.

**Four foundations of meditation.** (Tib. tun mong gi ngon dro shi) These are the four thoughts that turn the mind toward dharma. They are reflection on precious human birth, impermanence and the inevitability of death, karma and its effects, and the pervasiveness of suffering in samsara.

**Four immeasurables.** Love, compassion, emphatic joy, and impartiality.

**Four kayas.** Nirmanakaya, sambhogakaya, dharmakaya, and svabhavakakaya.

**Four Noble Truths.** (Tib. pak pay den pa shi) The Buddha began teaching with a talk in India at Saranath on the Four Noble Truths. These are the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path. These truths are the foundation of Buddhism.

**Four Preliminaries.** Refers to the four general preliminaries which are the four thoughts that turn the mind and the four special preliminaries which are the four practices of prostrations, Vajrasattva recitation, mandala offering and guru yoga.

**Four reminders.** The four ordinary foundations: the difficulty in obtaining the precious human body; impermanence and death; karma, cause and effect; the shortcomings of samsara. Reflection on these four reminders causes the mind to change and become directed toward the dharma.

**Four seals.** The four main principles of Buddhism: all compounded phenomena are impermanent, everything defiled (with ego-clinging) is suffering, all phenomena are empty and devoid of a self-entity, and nirvana is perfect peace.

**Four truths.** The Buddha's first teachings. 1) All conditioned life is suffering. 2) All suffering is caused by ignorance. 3) Suffering can cease. 4) The eight-fold path leads to the end of suffering: right understanding, thought, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and meditation.

**Four Yogas of Mahamudra.** (Tib. phyag chen gyi nal byor zhi) Four stages in Mahamudra practice: one-pointedness, simplicity, one taste and non-meditation.

**Gampopa.** (1079-1153 C.E.) One of the main lineage holders of the Kagyu lineage in Tibet. A student of Milarepa, he established the first Kagyu monastic monastery and is known also for writing the Jewel Ornament of Liberation.

**Ganacakra.** (Tib. tog kyi kor lo) This is a ritual feast offering which is part of a spiritual practice.

**Gandharva.** (Tib. dri za) A class of deities that live of smells. They are also celestial

musicians.

**Garuda.** (Tib. khyung) A mythical bird that hatches fully grown.

**Gelug school.** One of the main four Tibetan schools of Buddhism founded by Tsong Khapa (1357-1419 C.E.) and is headed by His Holiness the fourteenth Dalai Lama.

**Gelugpa.** (Tib.) One of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism. It was founded by Lord Tsongkhapa as a reformation of the tradition of Atisha. The tradition of H.H. 14th Dalai Lama.

**Geshe.** (Tib.) A scholar who has attained a doctorate in Buddhist studies. This usually takes fifteen to twenty years to attain.

**Graded path.** This refers to being guided through the path to enlightenment through the three principle paths, 1) renunciation, 2) enlightened motive of bodhichitta, 3) and a correct understanding of emptiness (wisdom).

**Guru.** (Tib. lama) A teacher in the Tibetan tradition who has reached realization.

**Guru yoga.** (Tib. lamay naljor) A practice of devotion to the guru culminating in receiving his blessing and blending indivisibly with his mind. Also refers to the fourth practice of the preliminary practices of Ngöndro.

**Guhyasamaja tantra.** (Tib. sang pa dus pa) Literally, “Assembly of Secrets.” One of the major tantras and yidams of the New School. This is the “father tantra” of the Anuttarayoga, which is the highest of the four tantras. Guhyasamaja is the central deity of the vajra family.

**Habitual patterns.** (Skt. vasana. Tib. bakchak) Patterns of conditional response that exist as traces or tendencies stored in the alaya-vijnana, the eighth consciousness sometimes called the store-house or all-base consciousness. So called because it is a repository of all karmically conditioned patterns. All dualistic or ego-oriented experiences leave a residue, which is stored in the alaya-vijnana until a later time when some conscious occurrence activates the habitual pattern. The pattern then generates a response in the form of a perception or an action. This response leaves its own karmic residue, stored again in the unconscious repository, and the cycle continues. The explanation of this system is a central teaching of the Cittamatrā tradition of Mahayana Buddhism.

**Hearing lineage.** (Tib. nyan gyu) A lineage of instruction passed orally from teacher to disciple. Teachings of a hearing lineage are usually very secret, since they can only be received by direct, personal communication with the guru. “Hearing lineage” is also a common epithet for the Kagyu lineage.

**Heruka.** (Tib. trak thung) A wrathful male deity.

**Heart sutra.** (Skt. Mahaprajnaparamita-hridaya-sutra) One of the shorter sutras on emptiness.

**Hevajra.** (Tib. kye dorje) This is the “mother tantra” of the Anuttarayoga tantra, which is the highest of the four yogas. “He” is said to be an exclamation of joy. Hevajra transforms

sense pleasures into joy through the realization of the identity of form and emptiness. He is depicted in two, four, six, twelve, and sixteen-armed forms, dancing in union with his consort, usually Nairatmya.

**Hevajra tantra.** (Tib. kye dorje) This is the “mother tantra” of the Anuttarayoga tantra, which is the highest of the four yogas.

**Higher realms.** The three higher realms are birth as a human, demi-god and god.

**Hinayana.** (Tib. tek pa chung wa) Literally, the “lesser vehicle.” The first of the three yanas, or vehicles. The term refers to the first teachings of the Buddha, which emphasized the careful examination of mind and its confusion. It is the foundation of Buddha’s teachings focusing mainly on the four truths and the twelve interdependent links. The fruit is liberation for oneself.

**Hungry ghosts.** (Tib. yid dvags) One of the six classes of sentient beings. Such beings are tormented by their own impure karmic perception causing them to suffer tremendously from craving, hunger and thirst. It is said that even if they came upon a lake of pure fresh water, due to their heavy karmic obscurations, they would see it as an undrinkable pool of pus. Pretas are depicted with very large bodies and very thin necks.

**Idiot compassion.** This is the desire to help others but it is not accompanied by sufficient wisdom, so that what one does may not really be beneficial. An example is teaching someone who is hungry to fish, yet the person receives negative karma for killing the fish.

**Illusory body.** (Tib. gyu lu) The transformation of a practitioner’s very subtle energy body into a deathless miracle body of the deity during the completion stages. When this is purified it becomes the form body of the Buddha, one of the **Six Yogas of Naropa.** (see Six Yogas of Naropa)

**Indra.** (Tib. brgua byin) The chief god of the realm of desire and said to reside on the top of Mt. Meru.

**Interdependent origination.** The twelve links of causal connections which binds beings to samsaric existence and thus perpetuate suffering: ignorance, karmic formation, consciousness, name and form, the six sense bases, contact, sensation, craving, grasping, becoming, rebirth, old age, and death. These twelve links are like an uninterrupted vicious circle, a wheel that spins all sentient beings around and around through the realms of samsara.

**Insight meditation.** (Skt. Vipashyana, Tib. lhak tong) This meditation develops insight into the nature of reality (Skt. dharmata). One of the two main aspects of meditation practice, the other being Shamatha.

**Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye.** A great non-sectarian master of the nineteenth century and author of more than one hundred volumes of books.

**Jnana.** (Tib. yeshe) Enlightened wisdom that is beyond dualistic thought.

**Jnanagarbha**—from him Marpa received the teachings of Maitreya and the early

Madhyamaka Buddhist tradition in India including Jnanagarbha's Commentary on the Distinction between the Two Truths, which examines the commitment to reason in the search for ultimate truth.

**Jnanasattva.** Jnana is awareness and sattva means mind.

**Kadampa.** (Tib.) One of the major schools in Tibet, it was founded by Atisha (993-1054 C.E.).

**Kanjur.** The preserved collection of the direct teaching of the Buddha.

**Kagyü.** (Tib.) Ka means oral and gyü means lineage; the lineage of oral transmission. One of the four major schools of Buddhism in Tibet. It was founded in Tibet by Marpa and is headed by His Holiness Karmapa. The other three are the Nyingma, the Sakya and the Gelugpa schools.

**Kalachakra.** A tantra and a Vajrayana system taught by Buddha Shakyamuni.

**Kalpa.** (Tib. kal pa, Skt. yuga) An eon that lasts in the order of millions of years.

**Kapala.** Skull cup used in Vajrayana practice.

**Karma.** (Tib. lay) Literally "action." The unerring law of cause and effect, e.g., positive actions bring happiness and negative actions bring suffering. The actions of each sentient being are the causes that create the conditions for rebirth and the circumstances in that lifetime.

**Karma Kagyü.** (Tib.) One of the eight schools of the Kagyü lineage of Tibetan Buddhism which is headed by His Holiness Karmapa.

**Karmapa.** The name means Buddha activities. The Karmapas are the head of the Kagyü school of Buddhism and were the first to implement the tradition of incarnate lamas. Karmapas are thought to be an emanation of the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara.

**Karmic latencies or imprints.** (Skt. vasana, Tib. bakchak) Every action that a person does has an imprint which is stored in the eighth consciousness. These latencies express themselves later by leaving the eighth consciousness and entering the sixth consciousness upon being stimulated by external experience.

**Kayas, three.** (Tib. ku sum) There are three bodies of the Buddha: the nirmanakaya, sambhogakaya and dharmakaya. The dharmakaya, also called the "truth body," is the complete enlightenment or the complete wisdom of the Buddha that is unoriginated wisdom beyond form and manifests in the sambhogakaya and the nirmanakaya. The sambhogakaya, also called the "enjoyment body," manifests only to bodhisattvas. The nirmanakaya, also called the "emanation body," manifests in the world and in this context manifests as the Shakyamuni Buddha. The fourth kaya is the svabhavakakaya, which is the "essence body," the unity of the other three.

**Key instructions** — a text's key instruction rests upon establishing the line of reasoning in a teaching. Seeing this line of reasoning, we can distinguish between the form and the content of the teachings. What key instructions do are wake a person up to the true nature

of the experience that the teachings generate, such as the dissolving of the objective form of the experience, which can be seen as it truly is, appreciated as having no independent reality and hence no power, as would be the case if it existed independently. The key instruction that, if acted upon, generates a liberating personality transformation, is repeated at each level of the teachings.

**King Indrabodhi.** An Indian king during the time of the Buddha who become an accomplished master. He symbolizes the person of the highest calibre who can use sense pleasures as the path of practice.

**King Trisong Deutsen.** He was a dharma king of Tibet (790 - 858 CE) who invited Guru Rinpoche and Padmasambhava to Tibet to establish the dharma there.

**Klesha.** (Tib. nyön mong) Also called the “disturbing emotions,” these are the emotional afflictions or obscurations (in contrast to intellectual obscurations) that disturb the clarity of perception. These are also translated as “poisons.” They include any emotion that disturbs or distorts consciousness. The three main kleshas are desire, anger and ignorance. The five kleshas are the three above plus pride and envy/jealousy.

**Kriya tantra.** (Tib. ja way gyu) One of the four tantras which emphasizes personal purity.

**Kukuripa.** (Tib. Shiwa Sangpo) The noted holders of the Yamantaka lineage of the Madhyamaka School of Indian Buddhist thought include siddha Saraha, siddha Lawapa, siddha Virupa and siddha Kukuri (aka Kukuripa). Mahamudra arose from Madhyamaka thought, which, however, remains obscure, especially during the period when Buddhist thought was first introduced to Tibet. A famous thangka portrays Kukuripa as a “wild yogi” at play among wild dogs.

**Lama.** (Skt. guru) La means nobody above himself or herself in spiritual experience and ma means expressing compassion like a mother. Thus the union of wisdom and compassion, feminine and masculine qualities. Lama is also a title given to a practitioner who has completed some extended training.

**Liberation.** See enlightenment.

**Lineage gurus.** The lineage gurus are the gurus of the line of transmission of what we study and practice. These transmissions date from the teachings of the Buddha himself. All of the line of gurus in that transmission from the Buddha, who first gave the teachings, up until the present time constitute what we call the lineage gurus.

**Lojong.** Mind Training. The Mahayana meditation system of the early Kadampa school, brought to Tibet by Atisha.

**Lotsawa.** Sanskrit for “translator.”

**Lower realm.** The three lower realms are birth as a hell being, hungry ghost and animal.

**Luminosity.** (Tib. selwa) In the third turning of the wheel of dharma, the Buddha taught that everything is void, but this voidness is not completely empty because it has



luminosity. Luminosity or clarity allows all phenomena to appear and is a characteristic of and inseparable from emptiness (Skt. shunyata).

**Luminosity.** (Tib. osel) Literally “free from the darkness of unknowing and endowed with the ability to cognise.” The two aspects are “empty luminosity,” like a clear open sky; and “manifest luminosity,” such as coloured light images, and so forth. Luminosity is the uncompounded nature present throughout all of samsara and nirvana.

**Madhyamaka.** (Tib. u ma) The most influential of the four schools of Indian Buddhism founded by Nagarjuna in the second century C.E. The name comes from the Sanskrit word meaning “the Middle-way” meaning it is the middle way between eternalism and nihilism. The main postulate of this school is that all phenomena – both internal mental events and external physical objects – are empty of any true nature. The school uses extensive rational reasoning to establish the emptiness of phenomena. This school does, however, hold that phenomena do exist on the conventional or relative level of reality.

**Mahakala.** Dharmapala. A protector of the dharma and dharma practitioners.

**Mahamaya tantra.** (Tib. gyu ma chen mo) The mother tantra of the Anuttarayoga tantra, which is one of the four main tantras in Tibet.

**Mahamudra.** (Tib. cha ja chen po) Literally means “great seal” or “great symbol” meaning that all phenomena are sealed by the primordially perfect true nature. This form of meditation is traced back to Saraha (10th century) and was passed down in the Kagyu school through Marpa. This meditative transmission emphasizes perceiving mind directly rather than through rational analysis. It also refers to the experience of the practitioner where one attains the union of emptiness and luminosity and also perceives the non-duality of the phenomenal world and emptiness; also the name of Kagyupa lineage.

**Mahapandita.** (Tib. pan di ta chen po) Maha means great and pandita Buddhist scholar.

**Mahasandhi.** Same as Dzogchen. Literally, “Great Perfection,” the most direct practice for realizing one’s own Buddha nature according to the Nyingma, or Old School.

**Mahasiddha.** (Tib. drup thop chen po) A practitioner who has a great deal of realization. Maha means great and siddha refers to an accomplished practitioner. These were particularly Vajrayana practitioners who lived in India between the eighth and twelfth century and practiced tantra. The biography of some of the most famous is found in The Eighty-four Mahasiddhas.

**Mahayana.** (Tib. tek pa chen po) Literally, the “Great Vehicle.” These are the teachings of the second turning of the wheel of dharma, which emphasize shunyata (see shunyata), compassion and universal Buddha nature. The purpose of enlightenment is to liberate all sentient beings from suffering as well as oneself. Mahayana schools of philosophy appeared several hundred years after the Buddha’s death, although the tradition is traced to a teaching he is said to have given at Rajagriha, or Vulture Peak Mountain.

**Maitripa** - was a guru of Marpa, the Tibetan forefather of the Kagyu lineage. Thus it is through Maitripa that Maitreya and Asanga’s crucial work on Buddha nature, the

Uttaratantrasastra (Anuttara), became widely followed in Tibet. It is said that he had been a student of Naropa when the latter was head of Nalanda monastic university. Maitripa also transmitted to Marpa the esoteric aspect of Buddha nature embodied in the Mahamudra teachings, which treat the topic of mind in great detail and provide a wide range of progressive, highly refined meditations. Maitripa was brought to enlightenment through Mahamudra under his guru Savari, who received the complete teachings of Mahamudra from Nagarjuna, who received them from Sahara, whom Marpa encountered in his dream state.

**Maitreya.** The Loving One. The bodhisattva regent of Buddha Shakyamuni, presently residing in the Tushita heaven until becoming the fifth Buddha of this kalpa.

**Mala.** (Tib. trengwa) A rosary-like loop that usually has 108 beads.

**Mandala.** (Tib. chil kor) Literally “centre and surrounding” but has different contexts. A diagram used in various Vajrayana practices that usually has a central deity and four directions.

**Manjushri.** One of the eight bodhisattvas. He is the personification of transcendent knowledge.

**Mantra.** (Tib. ngags) 1) A synonym for Vajrayana. 2) A particular combination of sounds symbolizing the nature of a deity, for example OM MANI PEME HUNG. These are invocations to various meditation deities which are recited in Sanskrit. These Sanskrit syllables, representing various energies, are repeated in different Vajrayana practices.

**Mantra.** (Tib. ngags) The energy of sound. A power-laden syllable or series of syllables that manifests certain universal forces and aspects of the Buddhas, sometimes also the name of a Buddha. Continuous repetition of mantras is practiced as a form of meditation in many Buddhist schools. In Tibetan Buddhism mantra is defined as a means of protecting the mind. In the transformation of body, speech and mind that is brought about by spiritual practice, mantra is associated with speech, and its task is the sublimation of the vibrations developed in the act of speaking. Recitation of mantras is always done in connection with detailed visualizations and certain bodily postures. In the Tibetan tradition, the function of mantra is defined differently for the individual classes of the Tantras. In reciting for example, concentration on the sacred written form of the syllables is distinguished from concentration on their sound.

**Mantra vehicle.** Another term for the Vajrayana.

**Mara.** (Tib. du) Difficulties encountered by the practitioner. The Tibetan word means heavy or thick. In Buddhism mara symbolizes the passions that overwhelm human beings as well as everything that hinders the arising of wholesome roots and progress on the path to enlightenment. There are four kinds: skandha-mara, which is incorrect view of self; klesha-mara, which is being overpowered by negative emotions; matyu-mara, which is death and interrupts spiritual practice; and devaputra-mara, which is becoming stuck in the bliss that comes from meditation.

**Marpa.** (1012-1097 C.E.) Marpa was known for being a Tibetan who made three trips to India and brought back many tantric texts, including the Six Yogas of Naropa, the Guhyasamaja, and the Chakrasamvara practices. His root teacher was Tilopa, the founder of the Kagyu lineage and the teacher of Naropa. Marpa initiated and founded the Kagyu lineage in Tibet.

**Mental consciousness.** (Tib. yid kyi namshe) The sixth consciousness is the faculty of thinking which produces thoughts based upon the experiences of the five sense consciousnesses or its own previous content. (see eight consciousnesses).

**Mental factors.** (Tib. sem yung) Mental factors are contrasted to mind in that they are more long-term propensities of mind including eleven virtuous factors such as faith, detachment, and equanimity, and the six root defilements such as desire, anger, and pride, and the twenty secondary defilements such as resentment, dishonesty, harmfulness.

**Middle-way.** (Tib. u ma) or Madhyamaka school. A philosophical school founded by Nagarjuna and based on the Prajnaparamita sutras of emptiness.

**Milarepa.** (1040-1123 C.E.) Milarepa was a student of Marpa who attained enlightenment in one lifetime. Mila, named by the deities and repa means white cotton. His student Gampopa established the (Dagpo) Kagyu lineage in Tibet. Mind-only school. Also called Cittamatra school. This is one of the major schools in the Mahayana tradition founded in the fourth century by Asanga that emphasized everything is mental events.

**Mother tantra.** (Tib. ma gyu) There are three kinds tantras: the father tantra, which is concerned with transforming aggression; the mother tantra, which is concerned with transforming passion and the non-dual tantra, which concerns transforming ignorance.

**Mudra.** (Tib. chak gya) In this book it is a “hand seal” or gesture that is performed in specific tantric rituals to symbolize certain aspects of the practice being done. Also can mean spiritual consort, or the “bodily form” of a deity.

**Nadi.** The channels in the vajra body through which the winds flow.

**Naga.** (Tib. lu) A water spirit which may take the form of a serpent. It is often the custodian of treasures either texts or actual material treasures under ground.

**Naga.** (Tib. lu) Beings with snake-like bodies who may be benevolent or malicious, often associated with guarding the earth’s treasures. They are generally considered to be members of the animal realm.

**Nagarjuna.** (Tib. ludrup) An Indian master of philosophy. Founder of the Madhyamaka school and author of the Mula-prajna and other important works. (2nd - 3rd century)

**Nalanda.** The greatest Buddhist University from the fifth to the tenth century located near modern Rajgir which was the seat of the Mahayana teachings and had many great Buddhist scholars who studied there.

**Naropa.** (956-1040 C.E.) An Indian master best known for transmitting many Vajrayana teachings to Marpa who took these back to Tibet before the Moslem invasion of India.

**Ngöndro.** Tibetan for preliminary practice. One usually begins the Vajrayana path by doing the four preliminary practices, which involve 111,000 refuge prayers and prostrations, 111,000 Vajrasattva mantras, 111,000 mandala offerings, and 111,000 guru yoga practices.

**Nihilism.** (Tib. chad lta) Literally, “the view of discontinuance.” The extreme view of nothingness: no rebirth or karmic effects, and the non-existence of a mind after death.

**Nirmanakaya.** (Tib. tulku) There are three bodies of the Buddha and the nirmanakaya or “emanation body” manifests in the world and in this context manifests as the Shakyamuni Buddha. (see kayas, three.)

**Nirvana.** (Tib. nyangde) Literally, “extinguished.” Individuals live in samsara and with spiritual practice can attain a state of enlightenment in which all false ideas and conflicting emotions have been extinguished. This is called nirvana. The nirvana of a Hinayana practitioner is freedom from cyclic existence, an arhat. The nirvana of a Mahayana practitioner is Buddhahood, free from extremes of dwelling in either samsara or the perfect peace of an arhat.

**Non-distraction.** (Tib. yengs med) Not straying from the continuity of the practice.

**Non-fabrication.** (Tib. zo med) The important key point in meditation of Mahamudra and Dzogchen; that innate wakefulness is not created through intellectual effort.

**Non-meditation.** (Tib. gom med) The state of not holding on to an object meditated upon nor a subject who meditates. Also refers to the fourth stage of Mahamudra in which nothing further needs to be meditated upon or cultivated.

**Non-thought.** (Tib. mi tog) A state in which conceptual thinking is absent.

**Nyingma.** (Tib.) The oldest school of Buddhism based on the teachings of Padmasambhava and others in the eighth and ninth centuries.

**Obscurations.** There are two categories of obscurations or defilements that cover one’s Buddha nature: the defilement of disturbing emotions (see five poisons and afflictive obscurations) and the defilement of latent tendencies or sometimes called the obscuration of dualistic perception, or the intellectual/cognitive obscurations (see cognitive obscurations). The first category prevents sentient beings from freeing themselves from samsara, while the second prevents them from gaining accurate knowledge and realising truth.

**Occurrence.** (Tib. gyu ba) The period when thoughts are arising in the mind. Compare with “stillness.”

**One-pointedness.** (Tib. Tse cig) The first stage in the practice of Mahamudra.

**One taste,** (Tib. ro cig) The third stage in the practice of Mahamudra.

**Oral instructions.** (Tib. man ngag, dams ngag) As opposed to the scholastic traditions, the oral instructions of the Practice lineages are concise and pithy so they can always be kept in mind; they are practical and to the point so they are effective means to deal

directly with the practice.

**Ordinary Mind.** (Tib. tamal kyi shepa) There is no need to do anything to your present wakefulness at the moment of recognizing; it is already as it is. That is the true meaning of naked ordinary mind, a famous term in Tibetan. It means not tampered with. There is no “thing” which needs to be accepted or rejected; it is simply as it is. The term ‘ordinary mind’ is the most immediate and accurate term to describe the nature of mind. No matter what terminology is being utilized within the Middle-way, Mahamudra or Dzogchen, naked ordinary mind is the simplest term.

**Padmasambhava.** (Tib. Guru Rinpoche) Or the “Lotus Born.” The great 8th century Indian mahasiddha who came to Tibet taming all the negative elemental forces and spreading the Buddhadharma. In particular he taught many tantras and Vajrayana practices, and concealed many texts to be later revealed by his disciples.

**Pandita.** A great scholar.

**Paramita.** “Transcendental” or “Perfection.” Pure actions free from dualistic concepts that liberate sentient beings from samsara. The six paramitas are: generosity, moral ethics, patience, diligence, meditative-concentration, and wisdom-awareness. The ten paramitas are the above six and, skilful means, aspiration, strength, and primordial wisdom.

**Path of Liberation.** (Tib. drol lam) The path of Mahamudra practice.

**Path of Means.** (Tib. thab lam) Refers to the Six Yogas of Naropa as well as to the stages of creation and completion with attributes.

**Partial compassion.** The desire to feel sorry for and want to help others, but only if they are of a certain gender, race, ethnic group, social status, etc. Paranirvana. After the Buddha Shakyamuni passed from this realm: Buddhas are not said to have died, since they have reached the stage of deathlessness, or deathless awareness.

**Phowa.** (Tib.) There are different kinds of phowa practice. The highest result of dharmakaya phowa and sambhogakaya phowa is full enlightenment. In this text, reference has primarily been to nirmanakaya phowa, called “the phowa that one practices” and Kacho Phowa, an advanced tantric practice of dream yoga and clear light yoga concerned with the ejection of consciousness at death to a favourable realm or rebirth.

**Pointing-out instructions.** (Tib. ngo sprod kyi gdampa) The direct introduction to the nature of mind.

**Prana.** Life supporting energy. The “winds” or energy-currents of the vajra body.

**Prajna.** (Tib. she rab) In Sanskrit it means “perfect knowledge” and can mean wisdom, understanding or discrimination. Usually it means the wisdom of seeing things from a high (e.g. non-dualistic) point of view.

**Prajnaparamita.** (Tib. she rab chi parol tu chinpa) Transcendent perfect knowledge. The Tibetan literally means, “gone to the other side” or “gone beyond” as expressed in the prajnaparamita mantra, “Om gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha.” The realization

of emptiness in the Prajnaparamita Hridaya or Heart Sutra made possible by the extraordinarily profound dharma of the birth of Shakyamuni Buddha in the world and the practices that came from it, such as the Vajrayana tantras, which make use of visualization and the control of subtle physical energies.

**Prajnaparamita sutras.** Used to refer to a collection of about 40 Mahayana sutras that all deal with the realization of prajna.

**Prasangika school,** or Consequence School. The Rangtong middle way has two main schools, the Svatantrika and the Prasangika. The tradition comes down from Buddhapalita (his commentary on Nagarjuna) and then Chandrakirti and is the tradition of not asserting anything about the nature of genuine reality, because reality is beyond conceptual fabrication.

**Pratimoksha vows.** “Individual liberation.” The seven sets of precepts for ordained and lay people according to the vinaya.

**Pratyekabuddha.** “Solitary Awakened One.” These are the body disciples of the Buddha. One who has attained awakening for himself, and on his own, with no teacher in that life. Generally placed on a level between arhat and Buddha. It is the fruition of the second level of the Hinayana path through contemplation on the twelve interdependent links in reverse order.

**Provisional meaning.** The teachings of the Buddha which have been simplified or modified to the capabilities of the audience. This contrasts with the definitive meaning. **Puja.** Ritual, worship or ceremony.

**Rangjung Dorje.** (1284-1339 C.E.) The Third Karmapa, especially well known for writing a series of texts widely used in the Kagyu school.

**Rangtong school.** The Madhyamaka or Middle-way is divided into two major schools; Rangtong (empty of self) and Shentong (empty of other). Rangtong is from the second turning of the wheel of dharma and teaches reality is empty of self and beyond concepts. **Ratna.** (Tib. kern cho) Literally “a jewel” but in this context refers to the three jewels which are the Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha.

**Ratnasambhava** (Tib. rinchen jungnè) The sambhogakaya Buddha of the ratna family.

**Rebirth.** Continuous, cyclic rebirth into the realm of samsara. Consciousness of an individual enters form according to his or her karma, the causes and conditions created by previous actions.

**Recognition.** (Tib. ngo shes, ngo phrod) In this context it means “recognizing the nature of mind.”

**Relative truth.** (Tib. kunsop) There are two truths: relative and absolute or ultimate truth. Relative truth is the perception of an ordinary (unenlightened) being who sees the world with all his or her projections based on the false belief in “I” and “other.”

**Root lama.** (Tib. tsa way lama) A practitioner of Vajrayana can have several types of root

**guru:** the vajra master who confers empowerment, who bestows reading transmission, or who explains the meaning of the tantras. The ultimate root guru is the master who gives the “pointing out instructions” so that one recognizes the nature of mind.

**Rupakaya.** (Tib. zuk kyi ku) The form bodies that encompass the sambhogakaya and the nirmanakaya.

**Sacred outlook.** (Tib. dag snang) Awareness and compassion lead the practitioner to experience emptiness (shunyata). From that comes luminosity manifesting as the purity and sacredness of the phenomenal world. Since the sacredness comes out of the experience of emptiness, the absence of preconceptions, it is neither a religious nor a secular vision: that is, spiritual and secular vision could meet. Moreover, sacred outlook is not conferred by any god. Seen clearly, the world is self-existingly sacred.

**Sadhana.** (Tib. drup tap) Tantric liturgy and procedure for practice, usually emphasizing the generation stage.

**Sakya Pandita.** A hereditary head of the Sakya lineage. A great scholar (1181-1251 C.E.)

**Samadhi.** (Tib. tin ne zin) A state of meditation that is non-dualistic. There is an absence of discrimination between self and other. Also called meditative absorption or one-pointed meditation; this is the highest form of meditation.

**Samantabhadra.** Samanta means all and bhadrā means excellent. “He who is All-pervasively Good” or “He whose Beneficence is Everywhere.” There are two Samantabhadras, one is the dharmakaya and the other is one of the eight main bodhisattvas, embodiment of all Buddha’s aspirations. In the Vajrayana tradition Samantabhadra is the primordial Buddha and representative of the experiential content of the dharmakaya.

**Samaya.** (Tib. dam sig) The vows or commitments made in the Vajrayana to a teacher or to a practice. Many details exist but essentially it consists of outwardly, maintaining a harmonious relationship with the vajra master and one’s dharma friends and inwardly, not straying from the continuity of the practice.

**Sambhogakaya.** (Tib. long chö dzok ku) There are three bodies of the Buddha and the sambhogakaya, also called the “enjoyment body,” is a realm of the dharmakaya that only manifests to bodhisattvas (see kayas, three).

**Samsara.** (Tib. kor wa) “Cyclic existence.” The conditioned existence of ordinary life in which suffering occurs because one still possesses attachment, aggression and ignorance. It is contrasted to nirvana. Through the force of karma motivated by ignorance, desire and anger one is forced to take on the impure aggregates and circle the wheel of existence until liberation.

**Sangha.** (Tib. gen dun) “Virtuous One.” Sang means intention or motivation and gha means virtuous. One with virtuous motivation. One of the three jewels. Generally refers to the followers of Buddhism, and more specifically to the community of monks and nuns.

The exalted sangha is those who have attained a certain level of realization of the Buddha's teachings.

**Santarakshita.** Indian master who was an abbot of Nalanda University. He was invited by king Trisong Deutsen to Tibet in the 8th century and thus helped establish Buddhism there.

**Saraha.** (circa 9th century) One of the eighty-four mahasiddhas of India who was known for his spiritual songs about Mahamudra.

**Sautrantika school** or Sutra school. One of the four major schools of Indian Buddhism and one of the two main Hinayana schools. This school has further subschools, but basically its view is that relative truth refers to what has only general characteristics, e.g. the objects of our thoughts such as when we think fire (this appears as a concept to our mind and not the five senses), and ultimate truth is that which has specific characteristics and can perform a function such as a specific instance of fire which appears to the senses and can actually burn. In terms of general perception we mix these two together.

**Secret mantra.** (Tib. sang ngak) A name for the Vajrayana.

**Selflessness.** (Tib. dag me) Also called egolessness. In two of the Hinayana schools (Vaibhashika and Sautrantika) this referred exclusively to the fact that "a person" is not a real permanent self, but rather just a collection of thoughts and feelings. In two of the Mahayana schools (Cittamatra and Madhyamaka) this was extended to mean there was no inherent existence to outside phenomena as well.

**Sending and taking practice.** (Tib. tong len) A meditation practice promulgated by Atisha in which the practitioner takes on the negative conditions of others and gives out all that is positive. **Sentient beings.** With consciousness; an animated being as opposed to an inanimate object. All beings with consciousness or mind who have not attained the liberation of Buddhahood. This includes those individuals caught in the sufferings of samsara as well as those who have attained the levels of a bodhisattva.

**Seven articles of royalty.** Seven distinguishing articles of a chakravartin: precious jewel, precious wheel, consort, precious minister, precious excellent horse, precious elephant, and the precious general. Inwardly they represent the seven limbs of awakening.

**Seven branch prayer.** 1. Prostrating to all lamas of the lineage. 2. Making offerings. 3. Confessing negative actions. 4. Rejoicing in the merit of others. 5. Requesting the lamas, Buddhas, and bodhisattvas to remain in cyclic existence and to teach the dharma. 6. Beseeking them not to pass away. 7. And dedicating the merit that has arisen through our practice that all sentient beings attain enlightenment. Paying homage counteracts pride; presenting offerings counteracts greed; acknowledging and confessing evil acts counteracts aggression; rejoicing in the good that others do counteracts jealousy; requesting spiritual teachings counteracts stupidity; asking the Buddhas and teachers to remain present in the world counteracts the view of permanence; and dedicating virtue to the welfare of others leads to the attainment of full awakening.



**Seven limbs of awakening.** The virtue of faith, insight, samadhi, joy, diligence, mindfulness, and equanimity. Externally they are represented by the seven articles of royalty.

**Seven dharmas of Vairochana.** These are the main positions of posture for meditation: (1) Straighten the upper body and the spinal column, (2) Look slightly downward into space straight across from the tip of the nose while keeping the chin and neck straight, (3) Straighten the shoulder blades in the manner of a vulture flexing its wings, (4) Keep the lips touching gently, (5) Let the tip of the tongue touch the upper palate, (6) Form the legs into either the lotus (Skt. padmasana) or the diamond (Skt. vajrasana) posture, and (7) Keep the back of the right hand flat on the left open palm with the inside of the tips of the thumbs gently touching.

**Shamatha.** (Tib.) See tranquillity meditation.

**Shamatha with support.** (Tib. shinay ten cas) The practice of calming the mind while using an object of concentration, material or mental, or simply the breath. Shamatha without support. (Tib. shinay ten med) The act of calming the mind without any particular object, resting undistractedly. This practice serves as a prelude for Mahamudra and should not be mistaken for the ultimate result.

**Shantideva.** A great bodhisattva of classical India, author of the Bodhicharyavatara: The Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life. - (late 7th century - mid 8th century CE.)

**Shariputra.** One of the Buddha's ten main disciples. He is known for his intelligence and when the sutras say, "Thus I have heard..." it is Shariputra who recited this sutra.

**Shastra.** (Tib. tan chö) The Buddhist teachings are divided into words of the Buddha (the sutras) and the commentaries of others on his works, the shastras.

**Shentong school.** The Madhyamaka or Middle-way is divided into two major schools; Rangtong (empty of self) and Shentong (empty of other). Shentong is from the third turning of the wheel of dharma and explains ultimate reality is emptiness and luminosity inseparable.

**Shravaka.** "Hearer" corresponds to the level of arhat, those that seek and attain liberation for oneself through listening to the Buddha's teaching and gaining insight into selflessness and the four truths. These are the Buddha's speech disciples.

**Shunyata.** See emptiness.

**Siddha.** (Tib. drup top) An accomplished Buddhist practitioner.

**Siddhi.** (Tib. ngodrup) "Accomplishment." The spiritual accomplishments of accomplished practitioners. Usually refers to the "supreme siddhi" of complete enlightenment, but can also mean the "common siddhis," eight mundane accomplishments.

**Simplicity.** (Tib. spros ral) 1) The absence of creating mental constructs or conceptual formations about the nature of things. 2) The second stage in the practice of Mahamudra.

**Six consciousnesses.** The five sensory consciousnesses and the mental consciousness.

**Six realms.** (Tib. rikdruk) The realms of the six classes of beings: gods, demigods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts and hell beings. These are the possible types of rebirths for beings in samsara and are: the god realm in which gods have great pride, the jealous god realm in which the jealous gods try to maintain what they have, the human realm which is the best realm because one has the possibility of achieving enlightenment, the animal realm characterized by stupidity, the hungry ghost realm characterized by great craving, and the hell realm characterized by aggression.

**Six Yogas of Naropa.** (Tib. naro chödruk) These six special yogic practices were transmitted from Naropa to Marpa and consist of the subtle heat practice, the illusory body practice, the dream yoga practice, the luminosity practice, the ejection of consciousness practice and the bardo practice.

**Skandha.** (Tib. pung pa) Literally “heaps.” The five aspects which comprise the physical and mental constituents of a sentient being: physical form, sensations, conceptions, formations and consciousness. These can also be seen from the perspective of the five basic transformations that perceptions undergo when an object is perceived. First is form, which includes all sounds, smells, etc., everything that is not thought. The second and third are sensations (pleasant and unpleasant, etc.) and their identification. Fourth are mental events, which actually include the second and third aggregates. The fifth is ordinary consciousness, such as the sensory and mental consciousnesses.

**Skilful means.** Ingenuity in application.

**Spiritual song.** (Skt. doha, Tib. gur) A religious song spontaneously composed by a Vajrayana practitioner. It usually has nine syllables per line.

**Stillness.** (Tib. gnas pa) Absence of thought activity and disturbing emotions, but with subtle fixation on this stillness.

**Stupa.** (Tib. chorten) Objects of offering, or objects for accumulating. A stupa is a monument symbolic of the dharmakaya and contains the relics of Buddhas or other enlightened beings. These, like your Guru, are focal points for veneration and our path to Buddhahood. Any disrespectful act toward them is disrespect for enlightenment itself.

**Subtle channels.** (Skt. nadi, Tib. tsa) These refer to the subtle channels which are not anatomical ones but ones in which psychic energies or “winds” (Skt. prana, Tib. lung) travel.

**Sugata.** An epithet for the Buddha.

**Sugatagarbha.** The Buddha nature.

**Sukhavati.** (Tib. Dewachen) The pure realm of Buddha Amitabha, “The Land of Great Bliss.”

**Supreme siddhi.** Another word for enlightenment.

**Sutra.** (Tib. do) Literally “Junction.” The combination of the Hinayana and Mahayana, or

the combination of wisdom and compassion. Texts in the Buddhist canon attributed to the Buddha. They are viewed as his recorded words, although they were not actually written down until many years after his paranirvana. They are usually in the form of dialogues between the Buddha and his disciples. These are often contrasted with the tantras which are the Buddha's Vajrayana teachings and the shastras which are commentaries on the words of the Buddha.

**Sutra.** (Tib. do) Sometimes "sutra" is used to cover all of the teachings given by the Buddha himself. At other times it is used more precisely to mean one of the three sections of the dharma called the Tripitaka or Three Baskets. In the Tripitaka there are the Sutras, the Vinaya, and the Abhidharma. The sutras are mainly concerned with meditation or samadhi, the Abhidharma is mainly concerned with the development of wisdom and understanding, and the Vinaya is mainly concerned with discipline and the rules of morality and conduct. In the narrow sense sutra means one of these three sections of the Buddha's teachings, and in its broad sense it means all of the teachings given by the Buddha.

**Sutra Mahamudra.** (Tib. mdo'i phyag chen) The Mahamudra system based on the Prajnaparamita scriptures and emphasizing Shamatha and Vipashyana and the progressive journey through the five paths and ten bhumis.

**Sutrayana.** The sutra approach to achieving enlightenment which includes the Hinayana and the Mahayana.

**Svatantrika** or Autonomy School. The reason why this school is called the autonomy school is that they assert the autonomous existence of valid reasons that prove their point. The Rangtong middle way has two main schools, the Svatantrika and the Prasangika. The Svatantrika has two main sub-schools which both assert conventional reality to be like illusions, but do so according to either the sutra school or the Mind-only school. Ultimate reality it asserts is emptiness and free from conceptual fabrication.

**Svabhavakakaya.** (Tib. ngo bo nyid kyi sku) The "essence body." Sometimes counted as the fourth kaya, the unity of the first three.

**Tantra.** (Tib. gyu.) Literally, tantra means "continuity," and in Buddhism it refers to two specific things: the texts (resultant texts, or those that take the result as the path) that describe the practices leading from ignorance to enlightenment, including commentaries by tantric masters; and the way to enlightenment itself, encompassing the ground, path, and fruition. One can divide Buddhism into the sutra tradition and the tantra tradition. The sutra tradition primarily involves the academic study of the Mahayana sutras and the tantric path primarily involves practicing the Vajrayana practices. The tantras are primarily the texts of the Vajrayana practices.

**Tantra Mahamudra.** (Tib. sngags kyi phyag chen) The same as mantra Mahamudra. The Mahamudra practice connected to the Six Yogas of Naropa.

**Tara.** (Tib. drol ma) An emanation of Avalokiteshvara, she is said to have arisen from one of his tears. She embodies the female aspect of compassion and is a very popular

deity in Tibet. Her two common iconographic forms are white and green.

**Tashi Namgyal.** (1512-1587 C.E.) A famous teacher who wrote many texts and acted as Gampopa's regent and presided over Gampopa's Daglha Gampo monastery in later years.

**Tathagatagarbha.** The same as Buddhature. The inherently present potential for enlightenment in all sentient beings.

**Ten directions.** These are the four cardinal directions, their mid-directions (i.e. NE, SE, etc.) plus up and down. Basically it means "everywhere."

**Ten non-virtuous actions.** Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, slander, abusive words, idle gossip, covetousness, ill-will, and wrong views. Acts are non-virtuous or unwholesome when they result in undesirable karmic effects. Thus, this list of ten unwholesome acts occurs generally in discussions of the functioning of karma. The first three are actions of body, the next four of speech, and the last three of mind. The ten virtuous actions are the opposites of the above ten non-virtuous actions.

**Ten stages.** The stages or bodhisattva levels in the Mahayana path which are: 1) The Joyous One with an emphasis on generosity, 2) The Stainless One with an emphasis on discipline, 3) The Illuminating One with an emphasis on patience, 4) The Flaming One with an emphasis on exertion, 5) The One Difficult to Conquer with an emphasis on samadhi, 6) The Manifest One with an emphasis on wisdom, 7) The Far Going One with an emphasis on skilful activity, 8) The Unshakeable One with an emphasis on future, 9) The One of Good Discrimination with an emphasis on efficacy, 10) Cloud of Dharma with an emphasis on accomplishing enlightenment. In the tantric (Vajrayana) literature there are three more stages of manifesting enlightenment, making thirteen in total.

**Tenjur.** Commentary on the Kanjur; also tantras of meditation, healing, scientific and technical instructions etc.

**Thangka.** Religious cloth scroll painting, depicting various aspects of enlightenment.

**Therevada.** (Tib. neten depa) A school, sometimes called the Hinayana, which is the foundation of Buddhism and this school emphasizes the careful examination of mind and its confusion.

**Thogal.** Tib. Great leap. The literal meaning of this is to proceed directly to the goal without having to go through intermediate steps.

**Three jewels.** (Tib. kön chok sum) Literally "three precious ones." The three essential components of Buddhism: Buddha, dharma, sangha, i.e., the Awakened One, the truth expounded by him, and the followers living in accordance with this truth. Firm faith in the three precious ones is the stage of "stream entry." The three precious ones are objects of veneration and are considered "places of refuge." The Buddhist takes refuge by pronouncing the threefold refuge formula, thus acknowledging formally to be a Buddhist.

**Three kayas.** Dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, and nirmanakaya. Fully enlightened beings, Buddhas, and their manifestations are often understood by way of the three kayas: The

dharmakaya is enlightenment itself, wisdom beyond any reference point which can only be perceived by other enlightened beings; The sambhogakaya, often called the enjoyment body, manifests in the pure lands which can only be seen by advanced bodhisattvas; and the nirmanakaya which can be seen by ordinary beings as in the case of the historical Buddha, but this can also be any type of being or relative appearance to assist ordinary beings.

**The three natures** or three aspects of experience are: the imaginary nature (Skt. parikalita, Tib. kun rtag), the dependent nature (Skt. paratantra, Tib. gzhan dbang) and the truly existent nature (Skt. parinispanna, Tib. yongs grub).

**Three realms.** These are three categories of samsara. The desire realm includes existences where beings are reborn with solid bodies due to their karma ranging from the deva paradises to the hell realms. The form realm is where beings are reborn due to the power of meditation; and their bodies are of subtle form in this realm. These are the meditation paradises. The formless realm is where beings due to their meditation (samadhi), have entered a state of meditation after death and the processes of thought and perception have ceased.

**Three roots.** Guru, yidam and dakini. Guru is the root of blessings, yidam of accomplishment and dakini of activity.

**Three sufferings.** These are the suffering of suffering, the suffering of change, and pervasive suffering (meaning the inherent suffering in all of samsara).

**Three vehicles.** Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana.

**Tilopa.** (928-1009 C.E.) One of the eighty-four mahasiddhas who became the guru of Naropa who transmitted his teachings to the Kagyu lineage in Tibet.

**Tögal.** (Tib.) “Direct crossing” or “passing above.” Dzogchen has two main sections: Trekcho and Tögal. The former emphasizes primordial purity and the latter spontaneous presence. **Tonglen.** Giving and taking. A bodhichitta practice of giving one’s virtue and happiness to others and taking their suffering and misdeeds upon oneself.

**Torma.** (Tib.) A sculpture made out of tsampa and moulded butter, used as a shrine offering, a feast offering substance, or as a representation of deities. There are traditional designs for each of the many types of torma.

**Tranquillity meditation.** (Tib. Shinay, Skt. Shamatha) One of the two main types of meditation, calm abiding, the meditative practice of calming the mind in order to rest free from the disturbance of thought activity; the other is insight or Vipashyana. **Treasury of Knowledge.** The name is applied to the combination of a verse form work and its commentary that are known respectively as “Encompassment of all Knowledge” and “Infinite Ocean of Knowledge” by the great 19th century master Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye.

**Tripitaka.** The three collections of teachings; Vinaya, Sutra and Abhidharma.

**Tsampa** (Tib.) Dried barley flour that Tibetans eat by mixing with butter.

**Tsurphu.** A monastery about 20 miles from Lhasa in Tibet which is the main seat of the Karmapa in Tibet.

**Tulku.** (Tib. Skt. nirmanakaya) The Tibetan means “Multiple body.” It is the term used for describing the emanation body of an enlightened being or bodhisattva. The syllable tul has both direct and indirect meanings. The direct meaning is “multiple” and the indirect meaning, “manifestation,” which refers to the sending out of compassion. It is the illusory emanation of the dharmakaya as a nirmanakaya form. Ku means body. In Tibet, however, it came to mean the emanation of an advanced Buddhist master who chooses to continue to incarnate for the benefit of others.

**Tummo.** (Tib.) An advanced Vajrayana practice for combining bliss and emptiness which produces heat as a by product. This is one of the Six Yogas of Naropa.

**Tushita paradise.** (Tib. gan dan) This is one of the heaven fields of the Buddha. Tushita is in the sambhogakaya and therefore is not located in any place or time.

**Two accumulations.** (Tib. shogs nyis) The accumulation of merit with concepts and the accumulation of wisdom beyond concepts.

**Two obscurations.** There are two categories of obscurations or defilements that cover one’s Buddha nature: the defilement of conflicting emotions (see five poisons & afflictive obscurations) and the defilement of latent tendencies or sometimes called the obscuration of dualistic perception, or the intellectual/cognitive obscurations (see cognitive obscurations). The first category prevents sentient beings from freeing themselves from samsara, while the second prevents them from gaining accurate knowledge and realising truth.

**Two truths.** Relative truth and ultimate truth. Relative truth describes the superficial and apparent mode of all things. Ultimate truth describes the true and unmistaken mode of all things. These two are described differently in the different schools, each progressively deeper leading closer to the way things are.

**Ultimate truth.** (Tib. dondam) There are two truths or views of reality: relative truth which is seeing things as ordinary beings do with the dualism of “I” and “other” and ultimate truth, which transcends duality and sees things as they are. Uncommon preliminaries. (Tib. Ngöndro) One usually begins the Vajrayana path by doing the four preliminary practices which involve 111,000 refuge prayers and prostrations, 111,000 Vajrasattva mantras, 111,000 mandala offerings, and 111,000 guru yoga practices.

**Upaya.** (Tib. thabs) Skilful means. Generally, upaya conveys the sense that enlightened beings teach the dharma skilfully, taking into consideration the various needs, abilities, and shortcomings of their students. Upaya is an expression of compassion. In the bodhisattva’s discipline, it corresponds to the first five paramitas and to relative bodhicitta. By prajna alone, without upaya, the bodhisattva is fettered to a quietistic nirvana. By upaya without prajna, one remains bound to samsara. Therefore the

practitioner must unify them. In Vajrayana, upaya arises from shunyata. It is joined with prajna and represents the male, form aspect of the union of form and emptiness.

**Vaibhashika school.** One of the four major schools of Indian Buddhism and one of the two major Hinayana schools. Sometimes translated as the Particularist school. It defines relative truth as whatever can be broken down into parts and ultimate truth as that which cannot be broken down, eg, indivisible atoms and moments of consciousness.

**Vairochana.** (Tib. nam par nang dze) The sambhogakaya Buddha of the Buddha family.

**Vajra.** (Tib. dorje) Usually translated “diamond like.” This may be an implement held in the hand during certain Vajrayana ceremonies, or it can refer to a quality which is so pure and so enduring that it is like a diamond.

**Vajra posture.** This refers to the full-lotus posture in which the legs are interlocked. When one leg is placed before the other as many Westerners sit it is called the half-lotus posture.

**Vajradhara.** (Tib. Dorje Chang) “Holder of the vajra.” Vajra means indestructible and dhara means holding, embracing or inseparable. The central figure in the Kagyu refuge tree, and indicating the transmission of the close lineage of the Mahamudra teachings to Tilopa. Vajradhara symbolizes the primordial wisdom of the dharmakaya and wears the ornaments of the sambhogakaya Buddha, symbolizing its richness.

**Vajrapani.** (Tib. Channa Dorje) A major bodhisattva said to be lord of the mantra and a major protector of Tibetan Buddhism.

**Vajrasattva.** (Tib. Dorje Sempa) The Buddha of purification. Vajrasattva practice is part of the four preliminary practices. A sambhogakaya Buddha who embodies all the five families. He is also a major source of purification practices.

**Vajravarahi.** (Tib. Dorje Phagmo) A dakini who is the consort of Chakrasamvara. She is the main yidam of the Kagyu lineage and the embodiment of wisdom.

**Vajrayogini.** (Tib. Dorje Palmo) A semi-wrathful yidam. Female.

**Vajrayana.** (Tib. dorje tek pa) Literally, “diamond-like” or “indestructible capacity.” Vajra here refers to method, so you can say the method yana. There are three major traditions of Buddhism (Hinayana, Mahayana, Vajrayana) The Vajrayana is based on the tantras and emphasizes the clarity aspect of phenomena. A practitioner of the method of taking the result as the path.

**Vase breathing.** (Tib. bum can gyi lung byor) An advanced breathing practice which has to be learned under the supervision of an experienced teacher and involves the retention of the breath in the abdomen which is thus like an air filled vase.

**Vasubandhu.** (4th Century C.E.) A great fourth century Indian scholar who was brother of Asanga and wrote the Hinayana work the Abhidharmakosha explaining the Abhidharma.

**Vidyadhara.** Holder of knowledge or insight: the energy of discovery and

communication. An accomplished master of the Vajrayana teachings.

**View, meditation, and action.** (Tib. ta ba gom pa yodpa) The philosophical orientation, the act of growing accustomed to that – usually in sitting practice, and the implementation of that insight during the activities of daily life. Each of the three vehicles has its particular definition of view, meditation and action.

**Vimuktikaya.** Enlightenment can be divided into the vimuktikaya and the dharmakaya with the vimuktikaya representing the untainted qualities of Buddhahood and the dharmakaya representing the qualities of all-pervasiveness of Buddhahood (both these are aspects of what is generally referred to as dharmakaya). Vimuktikaya, means the “embodiment of liberation.”

**Vinaya.** One of the three major sections of the Buddha’s teachings showing ethics, what to avoid and what to adopt. The other two sections are the sutras and the abhidharma.

**Vipashyana meditation.** (Tib. lhak tong) Sanskrit for “insight meditation.” This meditation develops insight into the nature of reality (Skt. dharmata). One of the two main aspects of meditation practice, the other being Shamatha.

**Wangchuk Dorje.** (1556-1603 C.E.) The Ninth Karmapa.

**Wheel of dharma.** (Skt. dharmachakra) The Buddha’s teachings correspond to three levels which very briefly are: the first turning was the teachings on the Four Noble Truths and the teaching of the egolessness of person; the second turning was the teachings on emptiness and the emptiness of phenomena; the third turning was the teachings on luminosity and Buddha nature.

**Whispered lineage.** Instructions that concern emptiness and that come from jnana yoga dakinis. **Yana.** Means capacity. There are three yanas, narrow, (Hinayana) great (Mahayana) and indestructible (Vajrayana).

**Yidam.** (Tib.) Yi means mind and dam means pure, or yi means your mind and dam means inseparable. The yidam represents the practitioner’s awakened nature or pure appearance. A tantric deity that embodies qualities of Buddhahood and is practiced in the Vajrayana. Also called a tutelary deity.

**Yidam meditation.** (Tib.) Yidam meditation is the Vajrayana practice that uses the visualization of a yidam. **Yoga.** “Natural condition.” A person who practices this is called a yogi, characterized by leaving everything natural, just as it is, e.g. not washing or cutting your hair and nails etc. A female practitioner is called a yogini.

**Yogatantra.** (Tib. naljor gyi gyu) Literally, “union tantra” and refers to a tantra that places emphasis on internal meditations.

**Yogi.** (Tib nal yor pa) Tantric practitioner.

**Yogini.** (Tib nal yor ma) Female tantric practitioner.