king of the Sharma

A Life for Us to Live

The Story of Je Tsongkapa Teacher of the First Dalai Lama *Day one*

Herein contained is The String of Wish-Giving Gems, a Sea of Frolic which Brings Help and Happiness to All Living Beings, and which Spreads the Teachings of the Able Buddhas Far and Wide. This is a book of instructions for depicting the life story of the great and holy Tsongkapa in 153 painted scenes.

આ સિ.મ.હદમ.ટીટ્સ.ટીટ્સ.શ્ર્ય.શ્ર.મ.બ.સૈયો.હથ્ય.ખુા

I bow down to my Lama, Gentle Voice, the Lady of Song.

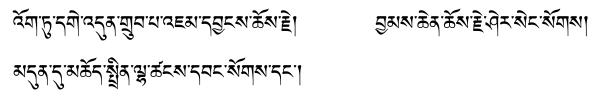
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Here first is what should be painted on the first scroll of the life of this great being, the Lord Tsongkapa. The central figure is Je Rinpoche himself, making the

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sacred gesture of turning the Wheel of the Dharma. He is seated upon a throne supported by lions, and arrayed behind him are the Six Jewels.¹

To Je Tsongkapa's own right are Gyaltsab Je and Dulndzin Drakpa Gyeltsen. To his left are Kedrup Je and Tsako Wonpo.² Above them, to the right and left, are the Eight Great Masters.³



Below are Gendun Druppa,⁴ Jamyang Chuje,⁵ Jamchen Chuje,⁶ Sherab Senge,⁷ and other disciples. In front is a massive cloud of offerings, and deities such as Brahma and Ishvara.

¹ *The Six Jewels:* Six renowned Buddhist masters from ancient India, who like living gemstones have made our world a more beautiful place. The six are Nagarjuna and Aryadeva, jewels of the teachings on the Middle Way; Asanga and Vasubandhu, jewels of the teachings on Higher Knowledge; and Dignaga and Dharmakirti, jewels of the teachings on Valid Perception.

² *Tsako Wonpo:* Ngawang Drakpa, the "Friar from Tsako," for whom Je Tsongkapa wrote the famous *Three Principal Paths of Buddhism*.

³*The Eight Great Masters:* Eight of the closest disciples of Je Tsongkapa, also known as the "Purest Eight," whom he took into deep retreat with him. Four were from the U province of Tibet: Tokden Jamkarwa, Neten Jangsengpa, Sharpay Na-gyelwa, and Neten Bang-kyongwa. Four were from the Amdo province: Tokden Jampel Gyatso, Geshe Sherab Drakpa, Geshe Jampel Trashi, and Geshe Pelkyongpa.

⁴ Gendun Druppa: His Holiness the First Dalai Lama, who lived 1391-1474.

⁵ *Jamyang Chuje:* Trashi Pelnden (1379-1449), the disciple of Je Tsongkapa who founded Drepung Monastery in 1416.

⁶ *Jamchen Chuje:* Shakya Yeshe (1354-1435), the disciple who founded Sera Monastery in 1419, and who represented Je Tsongkapa before the Emperor of China.

⁷ *Sherab Senge:* The disciple who founded Gyume Tantric College in 1433. His dates are 1383-1445.

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At the top we see Je Tsongkapa in a former life in this same world, when he was known as "The Light of Faith." He is meeting the victorious Buddha of a past eon named Topknot of Power. The Buddha, surrounded by an infinite number of bodhisattvas, sings the praises of the Lord, foretelling how he will appear in an impure world to spread Worldview, as it is found in the teachings of the diamond way. He blesses the Lord in this mission, and grants him the name, "Heart of Courage."

At the Seat of the Diamond, an emanation of Gentle Voice⁸—a bodhisattva by the name of Faith's Wisdom—appears to Je Tsongkapa, who in this previous life was born as Way of the Lotus, the child of a Brahmin. The bodhisattva takes him by the hand and leads him into the presence of The Buddha. The child offers a crystal rosary to the Enlightened One, thus setting in motion a chain of events that will cause his future disciples to perceive emptiness.

 $^{^{8}}$ The Angel of Wisdom, whose name in Sanskrit is Manjushri, or Jampel Yang in Tibetan.

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[3A] The ancient book called *Words on the Discipline* describes how, in the center of the lake named Neverwarm, there is a place where the Enlightened Ones of the past once lived. And so the Buddha travels there too, and teaches the Dharma. The water serpent whose own name is Neverwarm presents the Buddha with a conch shell, which he uses as a horn to assemble the monks during the summer retreat. [3B] At a later time the Buddha takes up residence upon the snow mountain called Ti-Se; here also he uses the conch as a horn—this time to assemble a great many serpent-beings and worldly deities such as the Mighty One of Power. He gathers them to him, and teaches them the Dharma.

[4A] Later on, at Vulture's Peak, the Teacher makes a prediction about our own Lord, and about the monastery he will found. He hands over the conch shell to be used as the assembly horn of this same monastery, and [4B] the shell is hidden at a place which is covered by water descending from the snow mountains. The mask of the Lord's face also appears at this time.

In the year of the monkey, 1356, Je Tsongkapa's Father⁹ has a dream in which Gentle Voice appears carrying a volume of scripture upon his back. The angel enters the shrine room in their family's house, which leads the Lord's Father to wonder whether a child of great wisdom may be coming to them. Then the angel named "Holder of the Diamond"¹⁰ appears and shoots a diamond arrow,

⁹ The name of Je Tsongkapa's Father was Dara Kache Lumbum Ge, and his Mother was Shingmo Achu, sometimes known also as Shingsa Achu.

¹⁰ The Angel of the Secret Teachings, named Vajrapani in Sanskrit, or Chakna Dorje in Tibetan.

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which melts into the Mother's body. And then he begins to think as well that perhaps a child of great power may perhaps be born into their family.

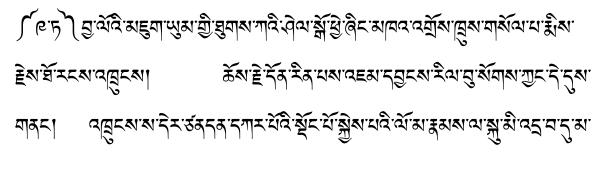
The Lord's Mother has a dream of a meadow filled with flowers. A divine youth approaches her from the east, and an angel maiden from the west. They make to her the offering of bathing her body. The family's neighbors have dreams in which the precious lord, Atisha,¹¹ is being ushered to their place. Different kinds of signs appear: the sun, the moon, and the stars all shine at the same time; a rain of flowers falls in broad daylight from a cloudless sky; sounds of divine music waft from the sky; the earth shakes; and so much more

The Dharma Lord named Dundrup Rinchen has a dream in which he sees the high angel called the "Diamond Lord of Terror." In the dream, he beseeches the angel that he might be able to meet him in real life, in person. The angel points his hand off in the direction of the district of Tsongka,¹² and says, "At about this time next year, I will be arriving in the hinterlands of that place. Until then, let your heart be at ease." With this, the Dharma Lord realizes that this other Lord is about to be born.

¹¹ The Indian saint Dipamkara Shri Jnyana (982-1052 AD), who helped start both the open and secret teachings of Buddhism in Tibet—and who is considered the father of the teachings of the steps of the path, or *lam-rim*.

¹² The site of the Tsongka River, and the source of Je Tsongkapa's name.

In the year of the bird, 1357, the Lord's Mother has a dream in which Loving Eyes¹³ calls out, "Greet his arrival!"—and then she is watching a grand procession of people, playing drums and carrying all kinds of offerings. In the sky above them appears the magnificent body of a holy being, golden, shining like the sun itself, towering high as a mountain. He comes enwrapped in sacred song, surrounded by a great mass of divine youths and maidens, themselves arrayed in the finest of vestments. He descends from the sky, ever more close, until finally he melts into her very body. And then everyone is striding in circles around her, as we do around a temple; they are presenting gifts to her as well, and singing songs of good tidings—and so much more.



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In the same year of the bird, 1357, his Mother dreams that a crystal door within her heart is opening, and that angels have appeared to make the offering of bathing. At dawn then the child is born. [9B] It is at this time too that the Dharma Lord Dundrup Rinchen sends the newborn child his gifts, including sacred pills of the angel Gentle Voice. At the exact spot of Je Rinpoche's birth, a

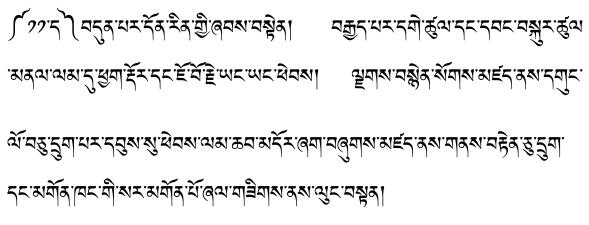
¹³ The angel of Compassion, named Chenresik in Tibetan and Avalokiteshvara in Sanskrit.

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white sandalwood tree springs up—and the likenesses of all different kinds of holy beings appear upon its leaves. On some of the leaves, the letters of the mantra of wisdom, *Arapachana Dhi*, form as well.¹⁴

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In 1359, at the age of three, Je Tsongkapa receives his lifetime layperson's vows from His Holiness Rolpay Dorje.¹⁵ The text of His Holiness' book about sites of pilgrimage relates how he looked into the future and declared that a second Buddha had come into our world.



In 1363, at the age of seven, Je Tsongkapa begins his studies with the Dharma Lord Dundrup Rinchen. [11B] In his eighth year, he receives the vows of a novice monk, and secret empowerment. [11C] The Holder of the Diamond, and Lord Atisha, are coming constantly to him in his dreams. He masters arts such as the recitation of texts and mantras, and [11D] at 16 leaves for central Tibet. On the road he stops for a day at the future site of Chamdo Monastery, where he has a vision of the Sixteen Elders¹⁶. Where the monastery cathedral itself will one day stand, he goes into a vision of the Savior¹⁷—the Great Ebony One—and receives a prediction that the monastery will be built here.

¹⁴ In time, it is said, a hundred thousand leaves covered with holy images and words sprouted from the tree, and so it was given the name "A Hundred Thousand Holy Images," or *Kumbum* in Tibetan. This then became the name of the great monastery founded at the site of the Lord's birth.

¹⁵ His Holiness the Fourth Karmapa, Rolpay Dorje (1340-1383).

¹⁶ Sixteen great sages from ancient India.

¹⁷ Whose common name in Tibetan is Gonpo, or Mahakala in Sanskrit.

In 1373, at the age of seventeen, Je Tsongkapa reaches Drikung, where he meets Chen-nga Rinpoche Chukyi Gyalpo¹⁸. From him he receives an almost infinite number of deep teachings—among them the secret instructions called the String of Diamonds; the Six Practices of Naropa; and the Great Seal, Mahamudra, with its five-step preliminary.

Je Tsongkapa then travels to Gungtang. Here he studies the eight branches of medical diagnosis with a master physician from Tsel named Hlaje Konchok Kyab. Je Rinpoche undertakes these studies as a symbolic act, to show that he is following the code of a bodhisattva, as set forth in *The Bodhisattva's Way of Life*—where it is stated that a bodhisattva should train themselves in every useful art and science. He masters the subject totally; and though he never actually practices medicine, he immediately becomes a crowning jewel among every sage of the healing arts. Tradition holds it that—in the years to follow—every doctor who ever attends upon him ends up seeking his own advice about how the treatment should proceed.

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Je Tsongkapa receives Dharma teachings from Nyetang Trashi Senge and Densa Gekongpa.

¹⁸ Rinpoche Chukyi Gyalpo (1335-1407) was the eleventh throneholder of Drikung Til Monastery, the most important center of the Drikung tradition of the Kagyu lineage of Tibet.

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Je Tsongkapa reaches the monastery of Dewachen, where he receives teachings on the four traditions of the way of the perfections from both Lama Yunten Gyatso and Loppun Ugyenpa. [15B] Lama Jamrinpa imparts to him all five of the Books of Loving One¹⁹.

Je Tsongkapa reaches the hermitage of Chudzong in Ngulchu, where the seventh Jamyang, the high lama Sunam Gyeltsen, grants him permission into the practice of Arapachana; empowerment into the practice of the mandala of the body, according to the tradition of the Indian sage Ghantapada; and permission for the secret teachings of the Keeper of the Canopy. His teacher hands his sage's cap over to Je Rinpoche, signifying that he has passed on to him all the teachings of the tradition of Buton Rinpoche.

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In 1375, at the age of 19, Je Tsongkapa takes his learning to a whole new level by participating in the debate ground at Sangpu.

Je Rinpoche expands his knowledge even further by debating at Dewachen Monastery.

¹⁹ That is, Maitreya (in Sanskrit), or Jetsun Jampa (in Tibetan).

শাশ্ড্রম'ম'শাশ্বম্বা

Je Tsongkapa travels to the province of Tsang. Traveling by way of the Karka Pass, he reaches Shalu, where he receives teachings on the Thirteen Practices of Maitri, in the secret tradition of Highest Bliss, from the master translator Kenchen Rinchen Namgyal.

Je Tsongkapa journeys to Nartang, where he receives a great many Dharma teachings at the feet of the master sage Matiwa Lodru Gyeltsen.

Je Rinpoche continues on to Sakya Monastery, where he throws himself into the debate ground with the mighty roar of a five-faced lion, fearless in the midst of a mass of master scholars.

Je Rinpoche also debates at Sangden Monastery, on the subject of the Perfection of Wisdom.

Je Tsongkapa debates at Gakrong Monastery.

Je Rinpoche debates at Ngamring Monastery.

At Jonang, in Marlam, Je Tsongkapa receives teachings on the Six Preliminaries of the Wheel of Time from the Dharma Lord Chokle Nampar Gyalwa.

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Je Tsongkapa receives teachings on the steps of the path according to the Kadampa tradition, from Chi-hle Rinpoche. According to the Dharma Lord Gyeltsen Sangpo, he also learns the Tome of the Kadampas.

Je Rinpoche debates at the Monastery of Er.

At Nartang, Je Tsongkapa receives teachings on Higher Knowledge, Valid Perception, and other subjects from Lama Dunsangwa.

Je Rinpoche debates at Ne-nying Monastery. [29B] He studies the Perfection of Wisdom with Nyawun Kunga Pel, and all his hopes are fulfilled.

At the monastery of Tsechen, Jetsun Rendawa instructs Je Rinpoche in the subject of Higher Knowledge, taking him through it word by word. This snow-white

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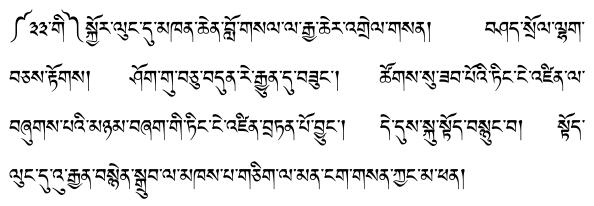
lotus of excellent explanation creates a deep bond between the precious hearts of these two holy beings.

∫ ३७ रेगीन छट सेंट नका सीट रेड हे नई करने राजन रायह माय स राय हो या माय का

At the Samling Monastery in Nyangtu, Je Rinpoche receives teachings from Jetsun Rendawa on the text of *Entering the Middle Way*, along with its autocommentary.

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The master translator Kenchen Jangchub Tsemo has arrived at Potala, in Kyishu. At the Yarlam Chudzong hermitage, Je Rinpoche takes teachings from him and creates a Dharma connection.



[33A] At Kyormo Lung, the Lord studies the *Extensive Commentary to the Sutra on Discipline* from Kenchen Losel. He grasps the explanation in its totality. [33B] He is memorizing seventeen folios of text a day, every day, and during the assembly of the monks he is passing spontaneously into deep states of meditation where he maintains perfect concentration. [33C] During this period he begins experiencing pain in the upper part of his body. At Tulung, he consults a master of the secret Practice of Uddiyana, who gives him some special personal teachings; but it doesn't help his problem.

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[34A] With a number of disciples, Je Rinpoche travels in 1377 to Ne-nying by way of the mountain pass in Ngurmik called Pula. [34B] At the request of many from Ne-nying, as well as those attending him, he turns the wheel of the Dharma formally for the first time, by teaching the *Compendium of Teachings on Higher Knowledge*.

In 1378, with the arrival of spring, Je Rinpoche is able to cross the Narthang Pass into Sakya. He receives teachings from Jetsun Rendawa upon the *Compendium of Teachings of Higher Knowledge*. During this time, Je Tsongkapa devotes himself primarily to learning and training himself in the *Commentary on Valid Perception*. He also receives explanations of other works, including *Entering the Middle Way* and *The Word on Discipline*.

[36A] Je Tsongkapa receives teachings upon the Secret Teaching of Lo Diamond in Two Parts, according to the system of the Sakyas, at the feet of Lama Dorje Rinchen. [36B] He receives special private teachings from a certain tantric geshe at the Sharwa Labrang of Sakya Monastery, and then retires to a mountain behind the Rinchen Gang Labrang, where he performs the secret practice of Maning Handun several times. The illness in his upper body is completely cleared away.

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The masters and disciples then spend both spring and summer of 1379 at Ngamring in Latujang. Jetsun Rendawa composes his *Great Commentary upon the "Compendium of Higher Knowledge,"* while Je Tsongkapa learns the *Commentary on Valid Perception* from him, one more time.

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A Life for Us to Live

The Story of Je Tsongkapa Teacher of the First Dalai Lama Day Two

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[38A] In the fall of that year, 1379, Je Rinpoche travels to accept offerings that have been sent to him from his home. At Meldro Hlalung, he is able to engage in practices of developing the good heart in the way of the secret word, with Lama Sunam Drakpa. [38B] Je Tsongapa then goes into retreat, where at one point he comes across a copy of *The Treasure of Reasoning, upon the "Commentary on Valid Perception."* Extraordinary realizations wash across him as he reads the text; shivers of bliss keep rolling up his spine, and tears fall in a steady stream from his eyes.

[39] Je Rinpoche spends the winter of 1379 at Dewachen Monastery, where he reads a great many volumes of scripture and gains realizations into them. He continues then on to the province of Tsang.

[40] In 1380, Je Rinpoche travels to Nartang, where he studies the commentary on valid perception composed by the master translator Lama Lotsawa Dunsang. He attends the summer debate sessions at Nartang, debating four different subjects: the *Commentary on Valid Perception*; the presentations of Higher Knowledge in both the higher and lower schools; and the *Root Sutra on Discipline*. The effort at Nartang to translate the great books from Sanskrit was also just beginning at this time.

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[41] Je Tsongkapa travels to Bodong, where the great Lama Jetsun Bodong has arrived. Je Rinpoche receives from him explanations of the Middle Way, Valid Perception, the Perfection of Wisdom, and Discipline; he is granted as well as oral transmissions of the *The Collection on Reasoning*. He studies classical poetry, Sanskrit language and calligraphy, and other similar subjects with the master translator Namka Sangpo. It is at this point that he composes his *Praise of the Sarasvati, the Lady of Song*.

[42] Je Tsongkapa then travels with Jetsun Rendawa to Sakya. Despite the fact that the Lord already knows all the Ten Great Books and so on, he still comes and participates in the debate ground, covering the same four subjects as before: the *Commentary on Valid Perception;* the presentations of Higher Knowledge in

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both the higher and lower schools; and the *Root Sutra on Discipline*. His performance in the debates steals away the heart of every holy being present.

[43] From Sakya, Je Tsongkapa continues on to the province of U. He spends the spring of 1381 at Gungtang.

[44] At Sangpu, Je Rinpoche performs a retreat centered on Sarasvati, the Lady of Song. As he comes to the end of 50 million mantras dedicated to her, he has a vision of the goddess herself. He participates in debates upon the Four Great Subjects, stealing the hearts of the assembled sages and shining in a thousand lightrays of eloquence.

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[45] At Tsetang, Je Rinpoche again debates the Four Great Subjects. He sits in the midst of a veritable ocean of sages, sages who are like deer, as he renders his eloquent answers with the roar of a five-faced lion. This mass of sages—every single one of the deer—is terrified; they are thrown into amazement. And so the great banner of our Lord's fame flies ever more high, barely fitting into the confines of this galaxy.

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[46] At Yarlung, surrounded by a convocation of 20 monks, Je Tsongkapa takes the full vows of ordination as a Buddhist monk. Tsultrim Rinchen, Master of the Four Great Subjects, acts as the vow master. The abbot of Jidzing Monastery, Sherab Gonpo, acts as ritual master; while Sunam Dorje, the chanting master of the monastery, serves as master of secrets. With this one act, our Lord becomes a crowning jewel of the whole of living kind—both men and gods.

∫ ~v રે) યાદ્દ માં છે પાં દુસ્ય સુધ્ય સ रेक् र्ये के लाकू र्रे के शतुम समामा परि प्रमाय यसुमा यहेमा हेक अमेकि येवे प्रमाय

[47] At Densa Tel, Je Rinpoche meets Chenga Rinpoche Drakpa Jangchub. He makes an offering to this master of some of his own compositions, as well as a personal epistle. Chenga Rinpoche is overwhelmed by feelings of faith for the Lord, and tears flow from his eyes like a mountain spring. At the feet of this master, Je Tsongkapa studies—among other things—the Six Practices of Naropa; the collected writings of Pakmo Drupa; the writings of Jikten Gonpo; and the teachings of Path & Goal. He completes, for the most part, his intended studies of Sanskrit language and calligraphy with the master translator Namka Sangpo.

[48] In the chapel of Keru, Je Rinpoche teaches the Perfection of Wisdom, Valid Perception, and Middle Way to Tsako Wonpo and a great number of other masters of scripture.

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During this same period, our Lord engages in an informal memorization contest with a number of other monks who are already famous in this area as master memorizers of scripture: their names are Ling Tsungme, Jampel Trashi of Domey, and Shakya Drupsum. Each is given a page of scripture that he has never laid eyes on before, and the pages are the long type—as long as an arrow with nine lines each. They have only as much time to memorize as it takes for the sun to rise to the height of the spires of the temple in the center of Tsel. Je Rinpoche finishes four pages, front and back; and he can recite them perfectly and quickly. Ling Tsungme does three pages, roughly, while each of the other two manage only a page apiece.

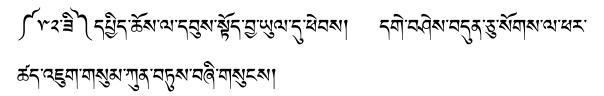
^[49] Je Tsongkapa travels to Kyishu. He stays at Tsel, where he examines and grasps the entire canons of the Kangyur and Tengyur, as they have been translated into Tibetan up to this time. New doors of insight into the entire body of Buddhist teachings suddenly burst open within his heart. He composes the *Golden Rosary of Eloquence*, an explanation of the root text and commentaries upon the *Jewel of Realizations;* his work itself then becomes a source of an entire tradition of eloquent commentaries in both Tibet and China.

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[50] Je Rinpoche travels to Lhasa, where he performs repeated fasts at the feet of a five-fold image of Lord Loving Eyes which has appeared all of its own. He and his disciple then have special dreams, and help each other to discover their deeper meaning.

[51] For the winter debate sessions, Je Tsongkapa travels to Dewachen Monastery. Here he teaches a great many scriptures.



[52] For the spring sessions, Je Rinpoche travels to Jayul, in the northern part of the province of U. He teaches four subjects—the classic three of the Perfection of Wisdom; Valid Perception; and the text of *Entering the Middle Way*, along with the *Compendium of Higher Knowledge*, to a gathering which includes seventy geshes.

[53] Je Tsongkapa then returns to Tsel, where he writes additional material for his *Golden Rosary of Eloquence*.

[54] At Dewachen, Je Rinpoche completes the final section of the *Golden Rosary of Eloquence*.

[55A] At Kyormo Lung, Je Rinpoche makes a request to the supreme sage from Tsel—Tokden Yeshe Gyeltsen—to impart to him the teachings of the Kalachakra: the Wheel of Time. He accepts the invitation and comes; and Je Tsongkapa has an opportunity to learn, in depth, the *Great Commentary* to the Wheel of Time, as well as related subjects such as the preparation of astronomical charts.

[55B] Here also the Lord himself grants, in addition, a great number of teachings on both extensive and briefer classics to a great number of scripture masters.

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[56] In the following year, Je Rinpoche spends the summer debate sessions at Dewachen Monastery. Here he grants a great many explanations of scripture to a great gathering, a veritable ocean, of bright-minded disciples.

[57] Je Tsongkapa spends the winter at Tsomey in Tulung, where he throws himself into further studies of the Wheel of Time. He again teaches sacred texts to a great number of spiritual guides.

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[58] At Ngangkar as well Je Rinpoche continues to master the secret teachings of the Wheel of Time. Once more he grants a great many teachings on the spiritual classics to a great number of clear-minded students.

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[59] At the invitation of Drakpa Rinchen of Dzingchi, Je Tsongkapa then travels on to Sinpori. During this same time, Gompa Chugyal is at Gonkar; and here Je Rinpoche resides for the length of the spring. At the Rik-Nga Temple, he grants teachings to over seventy masters of scripture on subjects including the Perfection of Wisdom; Valid Perception; the presentations of Higher Knowledge in both the higher and lower schools; the *Root Sutra on Discipline;* and *Entering the Middle Way*.

[60] Je Rinpoche then travels to Yarlung, where he teaches a great number of scriptures at Munkar. At this time as well he grants secret empowerments, rites of permission into the hidden practices, and private advices on these teachings, as appropriate, to his disciples. At Trashi Dong in Munkar, the Lord covers 17

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different volumes of spiritual knowledge in a single series of teachings presented to a great gathering including a hundred masters of scripture.

[61] At Okar Drak in Yarlung, the Lord spends the summer in a deep retreat centered upon the secret angel of Highest Bliss. He does a mantra practice, secret meditations, and the rite of bringing himself into the secret world. He performs the Six Practices of Niguma, and inner breathing exercises, a hundred times each during every session. And thus he reaches high states of spiritual experience.

[62] During the autumn, Je Rinpoche and Jetsun Rendawa reside together at Potala in Kyishu, where they engage in a great many spiritual discussions with each other, and grant their disciples fine explanations of many subjects.

[63] In the winter of the same year, Je Rinpoche travels to Drak in Kyormo Lung, where he gives a great many teachings, including the Wheel of Time; the Perfection of Wisdom; and Valid Perception to many masters of scripture.

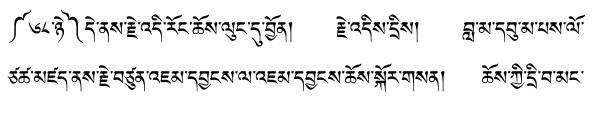
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[64] In the following spring—of 1390, the horse year—Je Rinpoche completes a thorough study of the great teachings of the secret way, and then travels on to the province of Tsang. At Nubchu Lung in Rong, he receives a number of teachings and oral transmissions from the abbot of the assembly, Drakpa Shenyen.

[65] It is during this time that the Lord grants permission into the secret practices of the Lady of Song, Sarasvati, to Lama Umapa. He tells Lama Umapa that he must examine the Lama's claim that Gentle Voice is appearing to him. And so—with Lama Umapa acting as the go-between—Je Rinpoche begins asking questions of Gentle Voice. The Lord digs to the very bottom with his questioning, checking carefully, and in the end he believes absolutely that Lama Umapa really is communicating with Gentle Voice.

[66] Je Tsongkapa travels then to Dzongka in Taktsang. The master translator Kyabchok Pel Sangpo acts as host to four great sages: the master translator Drakpa Gyeltsen, Jetsun Rendawa, the master translator Dunsangwa, and our Lord, along with their followers. They all pass the time together in spiritual teachings and discussions with each other. At this juncture, Master Drakpa Gyeltsen imparts his commentary on the perfection of wisdom to Je Tsongkapa—while Master Kyabchok Pel Sangpo does the same with his commentary upon the *Secret Teaching of Lo Diamond in Two Sections*, as does Jetsun Rendawa with his explanation of the *Commentary on Valid Perception*.

[67] At Bau Banyer, our Lord learns the root tantra of the Secret Collection from Jetsun Rendawa. Je Tsongkapa has a dream here, a foretelling where he sees that the Lama Gongsum Dechenpa has taken teachings seventeen times from Buton Rinpoche on the *Great Commentary to the Wheel of Time*. He later learns from the Lama that this was indeed the case.



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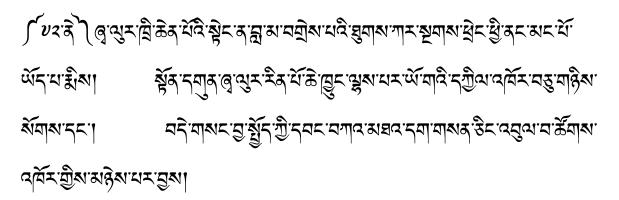
[68] Je Tsongkapa then travels to Chulung, in Rong. Here he receives teachings on the *Secrets of Gentle Voice*, seeking clarifications from the Angel himself, with Lama Umapa acting as intermediary. The Lord proffers a great many questions on various points of the Dharma.

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[69] At Nyangtu, Je Rinpoche meets the above-mentioned Rinpoche who had received teachings on the *Great Commentary to the Wheel of Time* seventeen different times from Buton Rinpoche. He offers him a golden towel of silk; and then on the next day he makes a ritual offering of fine tea, and the gift of a bolt of emerald-colored silk. Je Tsongkapa requests an entire transmission of the great commentary, and receives a complete explanation of both the root text and the commentary, along with word-by-word instructions on the actual practices, and a presentation of the six preliminary stages based on actual experience.

[70] Je Tsongkapa travels to the border between Nyangtu and Nyangme, where he stays at Tritsakang with Master Gunsang, a master of the yoga class of tantra. From him Je Rinpoche becomes a master of sacred dance and song, as well as the construction of mandalas. During one of his nights here, the Lord has a dream where the lama Kyungpo Hlepa comes to him wearing a jeweled head ornament and holding a ritual diamond and bell. The Lama honors Je Rinpoche by circling him three times; he then places the diamond and bell upon his head and says, "Karmā Vajra." King of The Dharma Day Two

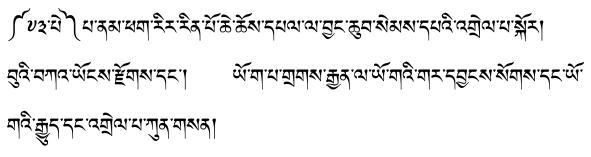
[71] Towards the end of spring, Je Tsongkapa travels to Dechen in Nyangtu. From Rinpoche Chukyi Pelwa, he receives empowerment into the secret teachings of the String of Diamonds, as well as an oral transmission, a word-byword commentary, and a more general explanation. He makes himself a master in the Three-Part Teachings of the String of Diamonds, learning the sacred dance, songs, and mandala construction related to this practice. He also receives a great many teachings, detailed and profound, including the empowerment, oral transmission, and personal advices upon the Great Wheel of the Angel named Holder of the Diamond: Vajrapani.



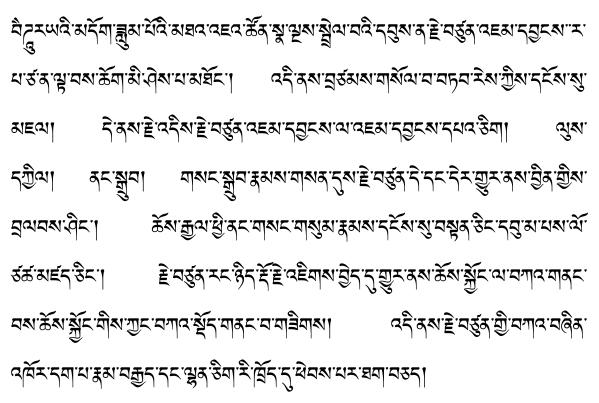
[72] One night, Je Rinpoche dreams of an elderly monk; he is at Shalu, seated upon a mighty throne. Within the Lama's precious heart are circles within circles of words: strings of secret mantras. Je Tsongkapa spends the autumn and winter at Shalu with this Lama—the master Kyungpo Hlepa—and receives from him teachings on the yoga class of tantra, including the twelve mandalas. Our Lord receives the entire empowerments and scriptures of the secret teachings of Highest Bliss; the Secret Collection; and the action and activity classes of tantra. He pleases his Lama by presenting him with offerings, and the circle of the gathering.

king of the Sharma A Life for Us to Live

The Story of Je Tsongkapa Teacher of the First Dalai Lama Day Three



[73] At Pakpari in Panam, Je Tsongkapa receives teachings on the Collection of the Commentaries of the Bodhisattvas, and the entire instructions of Buton Rinpoche. He learns sacred dance, songs, and other subjects of the yoga class of tantra from the master of the teachings of this class named Drakpa Gyeltsen [Gyeltsen Drakpa]. He receives teachings upon all the original secret teachings and commentaries upon this class of tantra as well.



[74A] In the autumn of the year of the monkey, 1392, Je Tsongkapa travels with Lama Umapa to Gawa Dong in the province of U. Here he makes supplications to the image of the Lord in Lhasa.

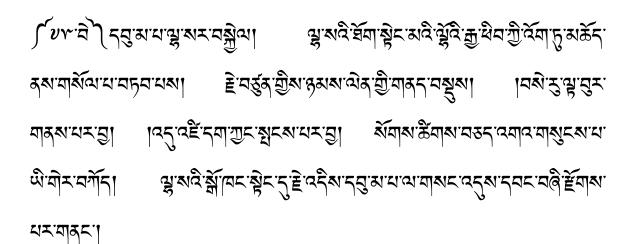
[74B] Both master and disciple determine to go into retreat. They stay in separate rooms for their practice, but take their tea together; and Je Rinpoche again makes special supplications to his Lama and his Close Angel, indivisible one from the other.

[74C] And then one day our Lord sees the holy one, Gentle Voice of the Mantra of Wisdom, within a sphere of lapis light, surrounded in a radiant rainbow of five different colors. He gazes upon the Angel's lovely form, unable to tear his eyes from it. He receives the teachings of Gentle Voice in the form of a single warrior, and then instructions on the body mandala, the inner practice, and the secret practice. Whichever of these teachings of the Angels he is granted, the Angel appears to him in the form of that particular divine being, granting his blessing.

In this way our Lord receives as well the outer, inner, and secret instructions into the practice of the King of All Things, the Lord of Death, directly from the Angel; Lama Umapa is continuing to act as an intermediary as well. At one point, he

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watches on as the holy one, Gentle Voice, transforms once again—this time into the Diamond Lord of Terror, Vajra Bhairava. This Lord orders the Lord of All Things to his task, and this second Lord undertakes then to preserve the teachings in the world. It is at this time that Je Tsongkapa, following the instructions of Gentle Voice, makes his decision to go into deep retreat at a mountain hermitage with a group of close followers known as the Purest Eight.

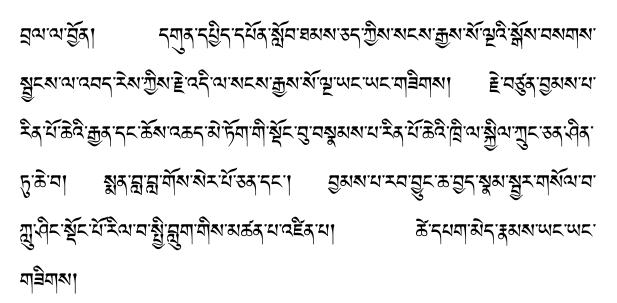


[75A] Je Tsongkapa escorts Lama Umapa as far as Lhasa. Below the southern tower of the Toktengma in Lhasa, he sets forth offerings and makes supplication to the holy one, Gentle Voice. The Angel speaks to him a number of verses, which the Lord sets down on paper. These are instructions about crucial points of personal practice, and include the lines—

Live like the rhinoceros, Who always lives alone; Like him, avoid The busyness of humanity.

[75B] In a chapel atop the Gokang in Lhasa, our Lord himself imparts the entire four empowerments of the Secret Collection to Lama Umapa.





[76A] Near the end of the autumn, Je Tsongkapa travels to Kyormo Lung, where he grants a great number of teachings. In the winter of his 36th year—that is, in the tenth month of the year of the monkey, or 1392—he departs from Kyormo Lung with the Purest Eight. Making the crossing in a leather raft, the nine of them journey to Olkar, where they will go into deep retreat, abandoning every worldly activity.

For the entire length of this winter and the following spring, both master and disciples each focus their meditations upon the 35 Buddhas, devoting themselves to the practices of accumulating new good karma and purifying themselves of past bad karma. At this point, the 35 Buddhas themselves are appearing to our Lord, over and over. The holy being named Loving One, Maitreya, also comes to him: the Angel is covered in jewels and in his hand he holds the stem of a flower, his fingers in the sacred gesture of teaching the Dharma.

His precious form is massive, and he is seated upon a throne of precious gemstone. So too comes the enlightened Lama of Medicine, wearing a monk's inner robe, of yellow color. Loving One appears before the Lord, also dressed in the manner of one who has left the home life: he wears the outer robe of a full monk, and in his hands he holds a full monk's water vessel, carved from the trunk of a *nagavirksha* tree. The Angel of Limitless Light, Amitabha, comes to the Lord as well. He begins to see all these beings constantly.

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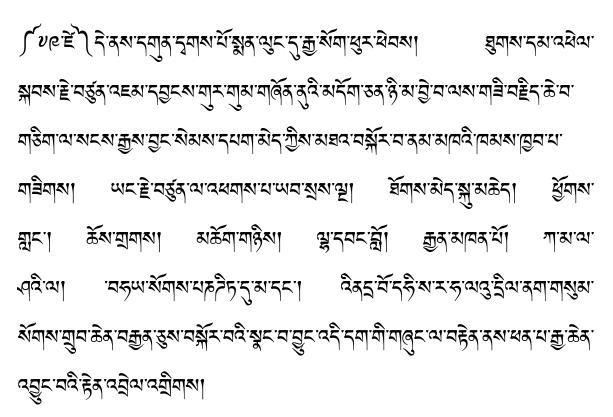
[77] Je Rinpoche remains in deep retreat at this same site, devoting himself to methods for collecting new good karma and removing old bad karma, and working at gaining personal experiences into all the various activities of the victorious Buddhas and their children—the bodhisattvas—as described in the scriptures known as the "Mass of Buddhas." He keeps working until he reaches such a pure mastery of these practices that the joy he feels in them is like that of a mighty elephant sporting in a lotus pond. During this time he continues to meet Gentle Voice; the 35 Buddhas; Loving One; the Lama of Medicine; and Limitless Light. He begins to think that he would like to come out of retreat and continue his mission of teaching; but the holy one, Gentle Voice, speaks to him the following advice:

The people of this world Are like wild beasts, And difficult to tame. It's hard to say Whether any great good Would come from trying To teach them.

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I think it better you remain in solitude, And master single-pointedness: Go and find that path Which will fulfill the needs Of both yourself and others.

[78] In the summer of 1393, in his 37th year, Je Tsongkapa has an opportunity to come before the sacred image of Loving One at Dzingji. He makes offerings and prayers that will have great and far-reaching consequences.



[79A] From here, Je Rinpoche travels to Gyasokpu, at Menlung in Dakpo. Spiritual realizations are pouring down upon him at this point. He has a vision of Gentle Voice, his body the color of fresh saffron, shining in majesty greater

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than the light of millions of suns. He is surrounded by countless Buddhas and bodhisattvas, filling the entire expanse of the sky.

[79B] Again he has a vision of the holy Gentle Voice, this time encircled by a great many masters, including the Five Realized Beings, father and spiritual sons; the brothers Asanga; Dignaga; the Two Supreme Ones; Devendra Buddhi; Alankara Pandita; Kamalashila; Abhaya. Present in the circle as well are the eighty great sages, including among them Indrabodhi; Saraha; and the three of Luipa, Ghantapada, and Kirshna Acharya. These visions plant seeds for Je Rinpoche's use of the great classics composed by these holy beings to be of farreaching benefit.

[80] Later on, at the same place, Je Rinpoche sees the conquering one, the glorious Diamond Lord of Terror—he is in the form with many faces and arms, all complete, and he shines in a majesty which is nearly unbearable to look upon, like the fire that ends the world. The Angel dissolves into light, which melts down into the Lord himself. From this point on, Je Tsongkapa performs the ritual of bringing himself into the mandala every day, without missing a single day; there is also a prophecy in this regard. In this same locale as well Je Rinpoche performs a fire offering on a stone platform which has been shaped for the purpose. A fierce snowstorm starts, by not a single flake lands in the area around him; everyone present sees it.

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[81] At this same location, our Lord again has a vision of the holy one, Gentle Voice. He has the same form, and is surrounded once more by a mass of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, masters, and sages who fill the entire sky. A great sword forms—its hilt is set in the precious heart of the holy one, and the tip of its blade is thrust into our Lord's holy heart. The nectar of deathlessness descends down the sword: it has a light golden color and glistens as it moves, like a stream of honey or quicksilver, and sinks into Je Tsongkapa's heart. The nectar fills his body, and an inconceivable sensation of immaculate bliss spreads everywhere within him.

As this was happening, Je Tsongkapa had a further vision that there were an infinite number of disciples standing with their mouths opened to the sky; some were aware of it, and some were not. And into the mouths of the infinite went much; into the mouths of many went some; and into the mouths of others went nothing. Je Rinpoche then made a foretelling, in these few words:

The pleasure gardens are blooming In the city of Kadhira, And many bees are frolicking there. They drink as well Of that highest nectar.

When Je Tsongkapa mentions "many" in these lines, what he means is that there will come many disciples—both during his own life, and in the future time to follow—who will practice the path of the stages of creation and completion, and attain single-pointed meditation upon bliss and voidness. When he says that "they will drink as well of that highest nectar," he is saying that there will come as well many who will reach the ultimate goal. Simply opening our mouths to the sky represents that we are making efforts in the two forms of the teaching on the steps of the path, trying to reach bliss and voidness. The simple act of opening our mouths to receive the nectar, even if none of the nectar comes to us now, creates seeds—he is foretelling—for us to attain this goal later, in the paradise of miracles.

It is mentioned—in Kedrup Je's own biography, entitled *The One with the Five Visions*—it is explained that those who make sincere efforts in the steps of the path of both the open and the secret teachings, and who make a single-pointed prayer to do so, will take birth in this paradise. A great many thinkers then have interpreted the lines this way. There are admittedly some who fail to understand that this is their meaning; but there are always so many who wander off on some mistaken way. And so it is that in this one holy place, our Lord experienced an inconceivable number of visions and high realizations such as these.

In this same place, Je Rinpoche makes extensive offerings for the duration of the 15-day Festival of Miracles. He calls upon the Angels of his offering with such fierce devotion that he sees the entire sky to the east covered with Angels Unshakable: Akshobya. They fill up the entire space like sesame seeds stuffed into a wooden box. The sky to the south is covered in the same way, with holy beings in the form of the Angel of Jewels, Ratnakara; the western sky with Angels of Limitless Light—Amitabha; the sky to the north with Angels of Attainment, Amoghasiddhi; and the sky overhead is filled with Angels of Appearances, or Vairochana. The offering then becomes completely inconceivable in power, and for the entire 15 days he continues throughout the day wrapped in the same vision.

[82] In the spring, Je Tsongkapa travels to Dzingji in Olka. He receives a direction from the holy being, Gentle Voice, that he must restore the decaying temple walls and roof there. The master and his disciples collect anything they might have of any worth—their personal effects, the materials they have brought along for making torma cakes, and everything else—but altogether they add up to no more than twelve silver coins. Our Lord has the idea to perform a ceremony to the Angel of Prosperity, Vaishravana, to implore him for his help; but he doesn't even have enough butter to make offering lamps. Then a monk comes along and offers a small package of butter; and the very next day a number of nomads pass by and make a present of large quantities of butter mixed with cheese. From this point on, offerings begin to pour in. Every time later that they ever ask the Angels for any kind of help this way, the very same thing always happens.

As soon as the new walls of the temple are finished and plastered, they sketch a mural of Gentle Voice's paradise upon it. When they perform the consecration of the painting, Je Rinpoche has a vision of Gentle Voice as a being of wisdom arriving and melting into it. They offer a tiny butter lamp before the mural, and

it doesn't burn down for two and a half days. When the entire renovation is completed, they construct a mandala of Gentle Voice in his form of secrecy. Je Tsongkapa performs an extensive ceremony of consecration, and then grants empowerment to more than ten disciples. They offer tiny clothes of pure silk to each of the images upon the altar, as well as fine offering scarves. They place silk coverings along the murals, and then have a meal of celebration. Everyone speaks of how the ceremony itself took over a full day to complete.

They also undertake to paint the images of the 35 Buddhas. The painters are unsure about certain details, such as the color of each different Buddha's form, and so they ask Je Tsongkapa for his help. Je Rinpoche makes supplication to the 35 Buddhas, and is then able to see each of them directly. He goes through the images, one by one, explaining to the painters what colors to use for each. The accomplished sage named Chakna Dorje, deep in practice elsewhere, has a vision of the 35 Buddhas traveling through the sky; he asks them where they are going, and they reply that they're on their way to the consecration ceremony being held at Dzingji. Later on they find out that this happened on the very same date as the actual ceremony did. Other sages have dreams, in which they see divine beings engaged in painting images.

[83] At this same time the holy one, Gentle Voice, directs Je Rinpoche to compose several pieces. The first is a praise of Loving One, Maitreya, entitled *The Lamp of Jewel*. Here he is instructed to sing praises of Loving One structured around an empowerment granted by the enlightened beings living in every corner of the universe. The second work is to be a prayer to be born in the Heaven of Bliss, and the third a prayer to attain just such a Buddha paradise of his own, in the future. The Lord then does compose all three. A prophecy granted to Kenchen Chakna Dorje by the Holder of the Diamond himself is fulfilled when a letter of introduction is sent to the Lord, imploring him to come to Hlodrak. Je Tsonkapa complies.

[84] Je Tsongkapa travels to Drao Gun monastery. Kenchen Chakna Dorje himself comes to welcome the Lord; and in the moment of their first meeting Je Rinpoche sees Kenchen as the Lord of Secrets himself, fierce and terrible—while Kenchen sees the Lord as Gentle Voice himself, stepping towards him engulfed in a stunning halo of light. Flowers rain down from the sky, and rainbows burst forth, covering the sky in every direction.

[85A] That same evening, Je Rinpoche receives a teaching from Kenchen on the practice of serving ones Lama; both of them suddenly undergo the same vision, of melting down in the Holder of the Diamond, Vajrapani. At dawn the following morning, the Lord of Secrets himself comes to Kenchen, and tells him: "You must request a teaching on the *Compendium* from Loving One, Maitreya." When Kenchen then approaches Je Rinpoche and requests the teaching, the Lord replies only, "Did the Lord of Secrets tell you to ask me?" Kenchen replies "He did," and so Je Rinpoche does instruct both Kenchen and the assembled monks of the monastery in this work.

[85B] To Rinpoche Hlodrakpa himself—to Kenchen—Je Tsongkapa grants empowerment and permission into the practice of the Five-Point Mantras, as well as other teachings. [85C] Kenchen in turn instructs Je Tsongkapa on the two lineages of the steps of the path, and empowerments into oral secret teachings such as the Five Eagles of the Holder of the Diamond, and the Great Wheel of this same Angel. Even as he receives these empowerments, Je Rinpoche sees those very Angels, and they grant him their blessing. He would later say that, in his 45th year, a major obstacle to his life-force appeared, but that he was able to repel it by concentrating upon this practice of the Great Wheel—and that Kenchen had thus paid him a great kindness.

[86] Je Tsongkapa begins to think to himself that he should travel to India, in order to meet the accomplished saint Mitra Jogi. The Holder of the Diamond though speaks to Kenchen, and tells him that-although amazing things will occur if Je Rinpoche does go to India-it will as well be detrimental for the disciples following him now. The Angel further says that great events will be set into motion if, rather, Je Tsongkapa makes an offering to the holy being Loving One of an entire set of accoutrement of one who has left the home life, along with verses of praise beginning with "the crown of the Pure One." The holy one, Gentle Voice, also instructs Je Tsongkapa to make these offerings, saying that, if he does so, then forces will be set into motion for his founding an order of greatly pure monks and nuns in the future. Gentle Voice also predicts the same problems with making the trip to India. As such, Je Rinpoche dispatches a package of the three sets of monk's robes-as well as a monk's staff, wisdom bowl, cloth seat, water strainer, and all the rest, along with the eulogy entitled Crown of the Pure One-to be offered to the image of Loving One at Dzingji; and he turns his steps instead to Nyel, in Tibet.

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[87] In Nyel, Je Tsongkapa spends five months at Loro. A copy of Geshe Trinley's *Great Book on the Steps of the Teaching* has been brought here earlier; Je Rinpoche escorts the text to his room, and first sets fine offerings down before it. He then reads the work, and immediately comes to a total realization of how it contains all the open and secret teachings of the victorious Buddhas, set forth in a path of a specified number of steps that any one person can use: a truly practical path for these days of people who cannot see emptiness, and all according exactly to the teachings of the two great innovators in the history of Buddhism. At this same place then he grants teachings on the entire text, one time through.

[88] At Dragor in Nyel, Je Rinpoche grants Kenchen Chukyab Sangpo oral transmissions on discipline, higher knowledge, the middle way, and other subjects. He himself completes thorough studies of a great many open and secret instructions held by the Keepers of the Word, including Sharawa's work on the steps of the path; the *Annals of Sapphire* (both root text and commentary); the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*; and texts on developing the good heart.

[89] Je Tsongkapa passes a summer in the wilds of Yardren at Sel Je Gang in lower Nyel. He has a vision of the holy being, Gentle One, who foretells that our Lord will grasp the worldview of the middle way by utilizing a classic text composed by one of the great sages of India. The sources say as well that he has a vision of the great king, Prince of Learning: the Angel of Prosperity.

[90] Master and disciples, thirty in number, travel to Tsarima Chen. They visit the hermitage there, and perform ceremonies such as bringing themselves into the secret world of Highest Bliss. Many amazing portents of the future are revealed to them.

[91] Journeying from Tsari to Nyel, they spend a day at the base of Mola Pass. An image of the holy being, our protector, Loving One, appears to Je Rinpoche; it is massive, majestic as the mountain at the middle of the world, and blazing in glory. Loving One gives Je Tsongkapa the glad tidings: "You must realize, o child of noble family, that your coming into the world is the same as a Buddha coming into the world." These words are in keeping with what the Lord of Secrets has said to Kenchen, that "A tradition is rising which is like the coming of a Buddha into the world"—and they match as well the words Machik Labdrun, who has said, "One is coming who will turn the Wheel of the Dharma in the same way that Lord Buddha did, when he came to Varanasi." All of these statements are nothing less than a revelation of who our Lord really was.

[92] Je Tsongkapa travels to Senge Dzong in Nyelme, where he devotes himself to delving into practices such as the Six Preliminaries of the Wheel of Time. By so doing, he reaches a total grasp of how infallible these teachings are—and he then composes the text of the *Treasure Chest of Words of the Diamond*. During this period he is having a continuous vision of the Angel of the Wheel of Time, in the form of the solitary warrior, with a body of gold. One night, this Angel appears in our Lord's dreams, and says to him: "You have come into this world as did King Chandra Bhadra, to spread these teachings of the Wheel of Time."

[93] While Je Rinpoche is residing at Nyel, the Angel of Song appears to him and says, "You will live to the age of 57. In the years up to then, your actions will be of inestimable benefit both for you and for others. Our Lord then undertakes special practices to reach the Lady of Victory and other Angels, and he asks them whether there isn't some way to extend his life any longer. Each of them replies that the power of his prayers in the past and his concentration on developing wisdom has not had that much effect upon how long his physical body will remain. According to Tokdenpa, Je Rinpoche asks Gentle Voice whether anything can be done, and he replies that—if Je Tsongkapa continues the practices that he has been doing so far in his life to prevent obstacles, and if makes tremendous efforts to set in motion karmic forces to extend his life—then he will be able to prevent this early death.

[94] During his stay at Senge Dzong in Nyel, our Lord undergoes extraordinary visions of the holy one, Gentle Voice. He asks the Angel about a great number of crucial points in the teachings: about the very nature of the path, the exact enumerations of certain items, and most especially concerning meditative stillness and the extraordinary vision of emptiness. Gentle Voice then gives him

the following advice: "At this point, there is no great need for you to seek my guidance very frequently. Study the great spiritual classics, delve into their finest details, and everything will come out just the way I myself have taught it. If you come across small points that seem a bit contradictory, you can thrash these out with those close disciples who you teach on a personal basis; but you must never, ever, reject any of the concepts set forth in these major classics." Gentle Voice further advises Je Tsongkapa, "From this moment on, devote everything you ever do, say, or think to the good of others." And this is exactly what our Lord then actually does.

[95] Je Tsongkapa then travels to Serche Bumpa, in Nyelme, where he makes extensive offerings. The holy one, Gentle Voice, advises him: "You must now assure that you maintain every one of the most subtle outer points of discipline for those who have left the home life: everything from the ritual for assuring that water has no tiny living creatures in it before drinking it, on up." Our Lord attempts to impress upon Gentle Voice how difficult it is, given the times, even for Je Tsongkapa himself to observe all these customs; and he moreover points out how contrary to most people's current thinking these instructions will be. Gentle Voice though refuses to listen, and simply replies, "Do it."

Both the Master and all his disciples then begin to carry around with them all three of the monastic robes, the required cloth seat, and everything else of the

like—all properly sewn with patches—as well as their sage's bowl and other monastic accoutrement. Their fame then as upholders of the monastic discipline begins to spread in every direction. From this point on, all these accoutrement in their perfect form begin to be found everywhere in Tibet.

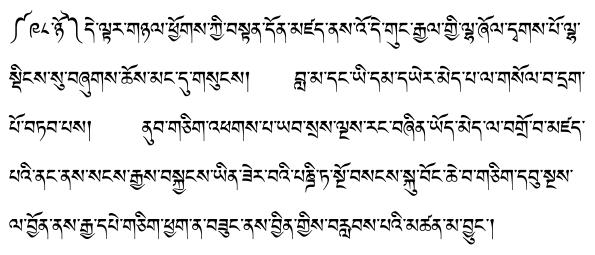
[96] Je Tsongkapa spends the spring at Pangchung, in Nyel. He gives a wide variety of spiritual teachings to a great number of assembled monks. He guides an infinite number of people from the surrounding towns into the practice of taking refuge, and then—with our Lord himself taking the lead—all of them work to fashion many hundreds of thousands of clay images pressed from molds. He urges people to continue this work even after he leaves, and the custom continues to the present time.

[97] Je Tsongkapa then spends the summer at Radrong in Nyeltu. It is at this time that the greatest of his spiritual sons—Gyaltsab Rinpoche, Lord of Reasoning, and an emanation of Rikden Pema Karpo himself—first meets the

Master. He comes to a teaching on the subject of Je Rinpoche's *Presentation of the Path of the "Commentary on Valid Perception,"* and as a result immense faith springs up in his heart.

Gyaltsab Je makes a prostration to the Lord, and racked with sobs begs his permission to serve at his feet, and never be separated from him for a moment, for as long as they both might live. The Lord then grants this permission.

Je Rinpoche then turns the wheel of the Dharma for the assembled monks of the four great monastic communities of Nyel, thus instituting the spiritual festival known as the Great Assembly of Nyelung. He encourages them to continue this festival on an annual basis, and it has been held ever since, up to the present time.



[98] Having furthered the teachings of the Buddha thus in the lands of Nyel, our Lord travels on to the hermitage of Dakpo Hlading, at Hlashul in Odey Gunggyal. Here he gives a great many teachings. He also makes urgent supplications to his teachers, seeing them as inseparable from the close Angels. One night he has a vision of the realized being, Nagarjuna, along with his four spiritual sons. They are discussing whether or not things have any nature of their own—and then one of them, a sage who introduces himself as Buddha Palita, descends to the Lord's side just as he is setting his head down upon his pillow. He is holding a Sanskrit scripture in his hand, and blesses Je Tsongkapa with it.

The Lord takes it as a sign, and on the following day he re-reads the Indian scripture known itself as *Buddha Palita*. He gains deep realizations into subjects such as the difference between the higher and lower schools of the Middle Way on the question of just what it is that we deny exists when we say that something is "empty." Suddenly the way in which he has been holding things as having qualities of their own dissolves completely. Moved by renewed feelings of faith in the Teacher, Lord Buddha—the kind of faith that comes from knowledge, and not just simple believing—he composes the text of *A Praise of Dependent Origination*. And he tells his disciples that it will be an "auspicious thing" [the Tibetan word for *dependent origination*] if his followers of later generations read this very work.

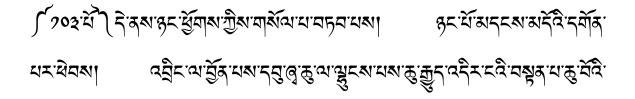
[99] In the autumn, Je Rinpoche travels to Garpuk, in Olka. He teaches the Dharma to the assembled monks of Olka.

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[100] Je Tsongkapa travels to Teura in Eh, where he spends the summer, teaching the Dharma to the assembled monks of Eh.

[101] Je Rinpoche spends the winter at Drakdong, in Olka.

[102] Je Rinpoche then goes to the image of the Lord, Loving One, at Dzingji. During the Holiday of Miracles, he spends 15 days making extensive and lovely offerings. He makes a prayer that the teachings of the Buddha spread widely, and that they contribute in both an immediate and an ultimate way to the benefit and happiness of every living being. Because of the intense devotion in his heart towards the holy beings to whom he is making the offering, he suddenly seeds the entire sky filled with the Angels of the Five Families—millions upon millions jammed into the space, like sesame seeds in a wooden box. For the next twenty days and nights then he continues to see these Angels all the time; whether he is moving or sitting, laying down or walking. It becomes obvious that he will be forging a path for an infinite number of living beings on all the planets of the universe, leading them to freedom and the state of all-knowing. In the spring he gives a great number of teachings to Gyaltsab Je and others.



[103] At the request of disciples from the area of Nyang, Je Rinpoche travels to the monastery of Dangdo in Nyang. When he comes to Dring, his sage's cap falls off his head, into a river. Je Tsongkapa then makes a prediction about a monastery starting at Sangsang in Nyangpo, saying "Where this river flows, my teachings too will flow like a river. Where the cap stops, a tradition of the Middle Way will flourish." And just so, the Tekchen Chunkor Ling Monastery of Sangsang in Nyangpo is later built at this very location.

Je Rinpoche spends the summer here, giving a great many teachings to the assembled monks, and benefiting large groups of laypeople by giving them instructions in refuge and the like.

[104] In response to repeated requests from the government official Namka Sangpo, conveyed through a high monastic Lama of Sangpu named Konchok Tsultrim—and due as well to his own desire to see the image of Jowo there—Je Tsongkapa travels to Tun Kyishu. Here he stays at Potala. Here he gives teachings upon the *Light on the Middle Way*, monastic discipline, the steps of the path, and other subjects to many hundreds of scripture masters, headed by high Lamas of the three monasteries known collectively as Sang-De-Gung.

[105] Later on, in the spring, Je Rinpoche travels to Gawadong. He teaches repeatedly on the commitments of the secret way, and the bodhisattva vows, and how we must always honor these pledges. After the teaching has been concluded, Jetsun Rendawa arrives with a small group—just the Master and a few attendants. Je Rinpoche and his group—this Master with a great many of his disciples—greet the Lama's arrival, forming a huge chain of monks dressed in the golden robes. Je Tsongkapa makes a prostration to Master Rendawa, and then the Master himself begins to return it with one of his own. Je Tsongkapa begs him not to do so, and prevents him from continuing. Lovely expressions of respect, as well as gifts, are made from both sides. Both the spiritual father and his son then give teachings.

[106] Given their mutual delight in the joys of solitude, the spiritual father and son together travel to Radreng—the Kadampa monastery so highly praised for this type of practice by that earlier father and son, Lord Atisha and Dromtun Je—along with a large group of masters of scripture. Je Tsongkapa here gives a teaching on meditative stillness, culled from works such as *Distinguishing the Middle from the Extremes; Jewel of the Sutras;* and *The Levels of the Listeners.* He urges his listeners to then go into deep meditation upon this practice, and as a result a great many of them develop an extraordinary level of meditative stillness. Jetsun Rendawa himself quietly studies the *Root Text on Wisdom* and the *Light of the Lamp* once through each from Je Rinpoche. They also enjoy a great many spiritual conversations with each other, on subjects of both the open and secret teachings.

[107] Je Tsongkapa has been receiving a steady stream of invitations asking him to come to Drikung Monastery. And so in the spring he travels to Drikung, where he receives teachings on the Six Practices of Naropa, the preliminary stages to the spontaneous practices of the Great Seal, and other subjects. Je Tsongkapa himself teaches the Dharma to a great many assembled monks.

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[108] In the summer then, Jetsun Rendawa and Je Tsongkapa—spiritual father and son—along with the master translator Kyabchok Pel Sangpo head the monastic summer retreat at the Namtsip Teng Temple of Ar Chenpo Jangchub Yeshe. More than 600 monks are in attendance, and teachings on the subject of monastic discipline are given by each of these three Lords of the Dharma.

On this occasion, Je Tsongkapa succeeds in instituting the monastic practices precisely as they are described in *The Seventeen-Point Foundation* and *The Divisions of Monastic Discipline*. The monks begin to observe more strictly a great many practices. They start holding ceremonies for confessing any violations of the monastic code, and also keep the kind of confession where we first re-bless and leave the robes. They perform the rituals for blessing their personal articles, and for setting off a kitchen area. And they begin keeping the rule about never being without their robes for a night, and such. In short, Je Rinpoche is able to reinvigorate and spread this very root of the entire teachings of the victorious Buddhas.

Here too he turns the Wheel of the Dharma by teaching the middle way, valid perception, and other subjects as well.