



## **A Bouquet of Udumbara Flowers: An Explanation of the Tenth Day**

*by Gönpö Tseten Rinpoché*

### ***1. Concise Life-Story and Presentation of the Excellent Qualities of the Second Buddha of Uddiyana***

The great sovereign amongst the victors of the three times, the glorious Uddiyana, is indivisible from the primordially free Samantabhadra, the naturally-arisen, primordial dharmakaya. From the all-encompassing space of the dharmakaya, spontaneously accomplished, he becomes the sambhogakaya of the five perfections. As its natural expression, he arises, defying imagination, as a completely liberated nirmanakaya. He manifests as the Guru in infinite forms, in infinite buddhafields, in order to guide beings in inconceivable and inexpressible ways. Thus he is the single embodiment of the sphere of activity of all the buddhas. In our particular buddhafield, he became renowned as the unrivalled great master Padmakara, the Lotus-Born. His arrival was foretold in both sutra and tantra, by the completely perfect buddhas. As stated in the *Sutra of Predictions in Magadha*:<sup>1</sup>

Within the Milk Grove at Kushinagara, just before entering nirvana, the completely perfect Buddha Shakyamuni demonstrated the impermanence of everything—world and beings, outer and inner. As the Sage gave prophecies about his passing, many of the shravakas wept and fainted. When they regained consciousness, they wept again and cried out in pain to the Blessed One: “Kyema Kyeñü! Protector of the world, if you do not remain, then who will save us from this darkness?” The Blessed One sighed before the assembly. Then, with a caring smile, the sage spoke:  
“Kyeño! Twelve years<sup>2</sup> after I pass into nirvana,  
On the northwestern border of the land of Uddiyana,  
Within the immaculate waters of Kosha Island,  
There, upon the heart of a lotus flower  
A person will appear, superior to me.  
His name will be Padmakara, the Lotus-Born.  
He will arise as the Lord of Teachings of sutra and tantra.  
Thus, do not weep!  
Like a supreme panacea among medicines,  
With infinite powers the Lotus-Born will come.

Thus, do not grieve!  
Like the sun and the moon among stars,  
With infinite powers the Lotus-Born will come.  
Thus, do not despair!  
Like the wish-fulfilling gem among jewels,  
With infinite powers the Lotus-Born will come.  
Thus, why be sad?

The darkness of the world will be dispelled!” When he had spoken thus, the whole assembly rejoiced and reflecting upon his words soothed their pain. However, the Blessed One knew that doubts could still arise about the arrival of this superior being. Thus, he spoke again: “Surpassing entirely all the victors of the three times, this exalted, noble, and marvelous being will excellently take birth, unstained by a womb, in a naturally-arisen body. Thus, through his mode of birth he will be an exalted being. Unaffected by old age and decay, a guide to all those who need to be tamed, thus he will be a noble one. He will be unaffected by death or by the extremes of samsara. Thus his longevity will be unexcelled. Defeating the maras, he will prevail, completely victorious over the maras. Thus he will be unexcelled. Without having to traverse or train in the path, without ever having to take another birth again, he will—in one body and a single lifetime—delight in the very heart of the Dharma, the vehicle of all the buddhas. Thus he will be unexcelled. Therefore, if you were to ask, I would tell you that this being will be none other than the Blessed Protector himself, the teacher of unchanging light, Amitayus in actuality.” *The Tantra of the Assembly of Herukas*<sup>3</sup> states:

Emaho! From the heart of a lotus—  
The embodiment of enlightened body, speech and mind  
The strength and majesty of resplendent qualities and activities—  
Evoked by the gods, this I will manifest  
As crown prince of the victors, the jewel of Uddiyana.

And *The Tantra of the Perfect Embodiment of the Unexcelled Nature*,<sup>4</sup> says:

Ten years and two<sup>5</sup> after I pass into nirvana,  
The Supreme Victor in all worlds,  
Whose name will be Padmakara,  
Will take birth in Uddiyana upon a blossoming lotus  
And teach Secret Mantra. This is my prophecy!

*The Magical Net of Mañjushri*,<sup>6</sup> states:

The Glorious Lotus Born Buddha is  
The treasure of all-knowing wisdom,  
The holder of the manifold Magical Net, the king of tantras,  
The greatest vidyadhara amongst all buddhas.

Thus was it clearly foretold in both sutra and tantra. The protector Amitabha—Buddha of Boundless Light—single embodiment of the compassion, power and blessing of all the victors, sent forth from his heart a golden vajra, marked with the syllable *brih*, which descended onto a blossoming lotus in the immaculate sparkling waters of an ocean in the north-west of Uddiyana. It transformed into an exquisitely beautiful eight-year-old boy, adorned with all the major and minor marks of perfection, and holding a vajra and lotus. There he remained, teaching the profound Dharma to the gods and dakinis of the island.

It so happened that Uddiyana's King Indrabhodhi<sup>7</sup> was out on the ocean at the time. He had no royal heir and his treasuries were empty – thanks to his immense generosity to the poor and his devotion to the Three Jewels. He had set out with a search-party on a voyage to find a wish-fulfilling jewel on an isle within the ocean. As they returned with the jewel, they spotted the miraculous child – first the dharma minister Trigunadhara<sup>8</sup> and later King Indrabodhi himself. Taking the child back to the palace, Indrabodhi installed him as the crown prince and asked to take his seat upon a precious throne. He was known then as Pemajungné or Padmakara, 'The Lotus-Born'—as well as Tsokyé Dorjé, 'Lake Born Vajra'. In due course he married the queen Prabhavati<sup>9</sup> and ruled the kingdom of Uddiyana according to the Dharma, thus bringing its citizens to maturity and liberation.

Skillfully, he escaped the affairs of government and went to practice yogic discipline in the eight great charnel grounds, such as Sitavana in the south. Thus he became known as Shantarakshita, 'Preserver of Peace', bringing the dakinis of the charnel grounds under his sway. He received empowerments and blessings from the wisdom dakinis—among them, Vajravaraḥi—and in each of the eight charnel grounds he accomplished one of the mandalas pertaining to the great sadhanas of the Eight Entrustments.<sup>10</sup> Each time the Lotus-Born gained the signs of accomplishment, the deities and the master's mind became inseparably united.

Then the Lotus-Born travelled to eastern India, where in the red rock cave at Garuda Grove he met the great master Prabhahasti, from whom he perfectly received all the tantric teachings. He experienced pure visions of the deities of the vajradhatu-mandala,<sup>11</sup> and displayed the signs of accomplishment. Thus he became known as Shakya Sengé, 'Lion of the Shakyas'.

Although already a great lord who had accomplished the definitive meaning, he nonetheless appeared in a way that enables us to understand him. The Lotus-Born sought out many accomplished siddhas, travelling to all the great sacred sites of India, and receiving the Maha-, Anu- and Ati-yoga teachings. Moreover, displaying the resolution of all doubts concerning the causal vehicle of characteristics,<sup>12</sup> he became known as the scholar Loden Choksé, 'Wise Seeker of the Sublime'.

Traveling to Zahor, the Lotus-Born took the royal princess Mandarava as his consort for sadhana practice. Together they went to the Maratika cave, where they practiced the sadhana of longevity. The Protector of Boundless Life, Amitayus, appeared, empowered, and blessed them. Thus their bodies were transformed into vajra-bodies beyond all birth, old age, and death. Knowing that the time had come to tame the kingdom of Zahor, they returned, and through many marvellous miracles skilfully tamed its citizens, who had no knowledge of what to adopt and abandon. Thus the entire kingdom was established in the sacred Dharma, and he was known as Padmasambhava, 'Lotus-Born'. Returning to Uddiyana, they were captured by evil ministers and burned on a pyre. The master turned the pyre into a lake to the astonishment of the crowd, and was found unperturbed and radiant, seated on a lotus. Thus he brought Indrabhodi and the entire kingdom of Uddiyana onto the excellent path of liberation and became known as Pema Gyalpo, 'Lotus King'. Taking his seat among the naturally arisen stupas at Lhundrup Tsek – the spontaneous mound – and at the other charnel grounds, he bound the dakinis and dharmapalas as his servants. Taking their heart and life-force, he established them as guardians of the teachings. Thus he became known as Nyima Özer, 'Rays of the Sun'. Other stories tell that at one point he drank five hundred measures of beer and was asked to settle his debt before sunset. Since he was unable to pay, he transfixed the sun in the sky, so it did not set for seven days. Padmakara displayed countless miracles of this sort, totally defying the imagination. Abiding as a heruka in this way, he earned renown as Nyima Özer, 'Rays of the Sun', or Nyima Dzin, 'Seizer of the Sun'. At the Vajra Throne in Bodhi Gaya, the Lotus-Born challenged five hundred evil heretics, defeating them in debate with logic and magic. When they cast evil spells against him, he reversed their magic with the aid of a wrathful mantra given to him by the dakini Marajita. Thus he liberated the heretics and burned their city to the ground. Any who remained were taken under his care and established on the Buddhist path. Thus he became known as Sengé Dradok, 'Lion's Roar'. Moreover, the Lotus-Born journeyed through all of India—the Vajra throne in the centre, the eight cardinal and intermediate directions, and all its various lands, great and small. Everywhere, the Lotus-Born tamed beings through the four enlightened activities, establishing the Dharma and thus immeasurably benefiting beings.

Travelling to Nepal, the Lotus-Born took the Newar Shakyadevi as his consort. Together they entered retreat and practiced shri Heruka, Essence of Great Bliss, at Yangleshö in Nepal. They experienced visions of the nine deities of the shri Heruka mandala and gained each and every siddhi without exception.

Now follows the story of how the Lotus-Born came to the snowy land of Tibet. The Dharma king Trisong Detsen had invited the great scholar Shantarakshita to build a temple as a support for practice. This antagonized the evil spirits of the land, who embarked on a campaign of disaster, preventing the construction of the temple. Shantarakshita spoke to the king, urging him to seek help: "At the Vajra Throne in India resides a heart-emanation of Amitabha, the Buddha of

Boundless Light. Miraculously born, free from birth and death, he simultaneously knows past, present and future. He is renowned as the Lotus-Born, the great master from Uddiyana who makes spirits and demons his servants. If you invite him to come, he will be able to accomplish all your plans." At this, the king dispatched messengers laden with gold—both bricks and dust—to invite the Lotus-Born. Clairvoyant, the master knew when the messengers had left. From India he travelled by miraculous means to the cave of Yari Gong<sup>13</sup> in Mangyul, where he awaited their arrival. Despite already knowing the answer, when they arrived he asked them, "Where are you going?" The messengers replied, "We were sent by the King of Tibet with the words 'Go to India', to invite the great master Padmakara, the Lotus-Born." The master stood before them, without his feet touching the ground, and he said, "I am the one!" This inspired great faith in them all, and gratefully they prostrated to the Lotus-Born, making circumambulations and offering the gold bricks and dust. The master responded thus, "For me, all appearances are gold!" He threw the gold back in the direction of Ngari, and the messengers were bereft. "No need to feel sad! If you need gold, pick up some sand!" The messengers picked up some sand and instantly, to their amazement, the master transformed it into gold. "Since your Tibetan King and I share a connection through previous aspirations, I will come to Tibet." As they made their way to the dark land of Tibet, they were received by the 'layman' Dorje Lekpa, most powerful of all the gods and demons of the land, together with his retinue of 360 siblings and attendants. They offered respect to the Lotus-Born and swore their allegiance. As the Lotus-Born reached Palthagang, the twelve Tenma goddesses started creating obstacles, sending down a volley of twelve meteoric lightning bolts. Spinning the ladies overhead with the threatening mudra, he turned them as black as twelve lumps of charcoal. The most powerful of them fled and the remaining eleven were terrified, offering their hearts and life-force, and swearing their allegiance. When the master reached Oyuk Rong, the last of the goddesses squeezed herself in between two mountains to the left and right, but the master quickly came upon her from above. Frightened, she fled to Namtso Lake in the north. The master flung his vajra into the lake, striking one of her eyes. The lake began to boil, flaying the flesh off her bones. "Successor of the Buddha, Dorjé Tötrenge Tsel—Mighty Powerful Vajra! Stop this obstruction! Please let me go! I will heed your every command and be your servant!" Touching her head to the Lotus-Born's feet, she offered her life-force. The master bound her under oath and named her Gangkar Shamé Dorjé Yüdrönma, 'Fleshless Turquoise Lamp of the White Glacier.' Next, the master went to the Thangla foothills, where Nechen Thangla greeted him with obstacles of rock-like hail<sup>14</sup> and meteoric lightning. Padmakara shot fire from his threatening mudra, melting the peak of Thangla with its heat. Terrified, Thangla transformed into a child with turquoise locks. He and all his retinue of gods and spirits offered their life-force, becoming guardians of the teachings. In this way the Lotus-Born, using fiercest mudras, overpowered and subjugated each and every spirit, from the most powerful to the lowest amongst the entire eight classes of gods and demons. Thus he became known as Dorje Drolö, 'Mighty Vajra Wrath.' On the tenth day of the tenth lunar month, the Lotus-Born finally

appeared in physical form within the heart of Tibet. There he was received by the king, the ministers, and subjects with various offerings and music. This is how they invited him to Drakmar Drinzang.<sup>15</sup> When the king failed to offer him respect, the Lotus-Born manifested fire from his hand, singeing the royal robes. Immediately the king recognized his mistake and offered homage to the master. The Lotus-Born proceeded to the top of Mount Hepori, where he performed a vajra dance and restrained all Tibet's malevolent gods and spirits beneath his command. Thus Glorious Samyé, the inconceivable, unchanging, spontaneously accomplished temple, was built as a clear representation of our own world-system, with Mount Meru in the centre, then the four continents, the subcontinents, the sun and moon, and everything encircled by an outer perimeter, a ring of iron mountains. Samyé became renowned throughout the three worlds, the main object of worship for gods, humans, and nagas.<sup>16</sup> More than one hundred temples were built there. Through various magical emanations, the great master then performed the consecration (*rabné*) ceremony. For this, the deities of the main shrine, ground-floor, and surrounding temples gathered outside, whereas the deities of the middle and upper floors came down into the main shrine and the deities of the wall-paintings were seen vividly outside. The central deities of great awakening were seen to smile, emitting light rays, and fire shot forth from the curtains covering the wrathful gatekeepers, clearly seen by all. The Hayagriva statue from the arya Palo Temple neighed three times, heard by all. Like this, inconceivable and marvellous miracles occurred.

Within the secluded Chimpu Cave of glorious Samyé, the Lotus-Born transmitted teachings to his principal disciples—the sovereign king, his heir(s), and Karchen Yeshé Tsogyal. He gave them the teachings of Maha-, Anu- and Atiyoga, as well as countless other profound and uncommon teachings. As his disciples, the Lotus-Born took the twenty-five accomplished disciples, the nine heart disciples, translators such as Vairocana, vidyadharas such as Dorjé Düdjom, the first ordained monks, such as Kön Lu'i Wangpo, and countless numbers of other fortunate disciples, such as the dakinis who accomplished rainbow-body. Thus with immeasurable kindness the Lotus-Born turned the wheel of the Dharma of the unsurpassed secret.

For the benefit of beings in degenerate future times, the Lotus-Born hid profound pith-instructions in the form of treasures (*terma*) within the mountains, caves and lakes of Tibet. So that future generations might gain faith and trust, the Lotus-Born left a body-imprint (*kurjé*) in a cliff of stacked vajras in Bumthang;<sup>17</sup> he left footprints in places such as Drakmar in Paro; and he left handprints at the four great lakes—Namtso Chukmo and the others. These hand and footprints left by the Guru remain visible to the present day – testimony to his many inconceivable and marvellous deeds. Miraculously, there was nowhere in Tibet that he did not go – not even a single palm-sized scrap of land was left untrud. Thus he established places of accomplishment everywhere, to bestow great blessings on whoever might encounter them.

With manifestations beyond number, based on the capacity and inclination of beings, the Lotus-Born with his limitless deeds brought inconceivable benefit to beings in places such as Kashmir, China, Mongolia and Shangshung. In inconceivable ways he brought benefit to fortunate disciples, both those with physical form and those without, thereby pervading every dwelling place of gods, humans and nagas, as many as the grains of sand on this great earth. *The Secret Key Instructions for Accomplishing the Guru*<sup>18</sup> states:

As far as space itself extends,  
Living beings there are found;  
As far as karma and defilements last,  
So too do my activities reach.

The Lotus-Born remained in Tibet for one hundred and eleven years. Then the master departed to vanquish the land of the rakshasas. So that the king, ministers and subjects would not object to his departure, the Lotus-Born bestowed his last testament and oral instructions to all his Tibetan disciples. He gave his vajrapromise that he would come every morning and evening to those with faith, and that on every tenth day of the waxing moon he would come to protect and guard the people of Tibet.

On the tenth day of the tenth lunar month, from the Gungthang Pass, amidst an inconceivable, enchanting, miraculous display, the Lotus-Born took his leave astride the supreme steed—his destination the southwest, to subdue the rakshasas there. Gods and goddesses assembled in the sky, making boundless offerings and playing a multitude of music. Flowers rained from the sky and rainbows appeared.

There in the land of the rakshasas the Lotus-Born remains, assuming a special form in order to tame the beings there. He ceaselessly leads them to the Dharma by continuously turning the Dharma wheel, in manifold magical emanations that arouse the good at the heart of all beings.

It is clear that the Guru actually appeared, and thus it is impossible to deny his inconceivable, exalted deeds—he, whose kindness will always pervade the three realms.

This was an extremely concise account of the precious Guru's life and liberation. To read a more extensive account, please consult the Guru's biographies as recounted in the *Pema Kathang*<sup>19</sup> and other texts.

## ***2. Introduction to the Great Festival, the Tenth Day***

In general the Tibetans have various traditions for determining the beginning of the year. It is a well-accepted tradition to start the year with Magha,<sup>20</sup> or the first

lunar month. Nevertheless, according to the Kalacakra traditions, the year begins with Caitra, or the third lunar month, and according to tantras such as *The Four Vajra-Chapters*, *The Conduct of the Yoginis*, *The Ocean of dakinis of the Cakrasamvara*, *The Vajra Palace*,<sup>21</sup> and many others, the year begins with Pausha, or the twelfth lunar month. In former times in Tibet, they used to celebrate New Year during Pausha, or the twelfth lunar month. From as early as then, the tradition of determining the tenth day of the waxing and waning moon has been impartially accepted by one and all. In the tantras of the Vajrayana, the tenth day of the waxing moon each month and the tenth day of the waning moon (or the twenty-fifth day) are explained to be special days. It was specifically on the tenth day of the waxing moon that the second Buddha of Uddiyana displayed his vast and marvellous miraculous deeds of enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities and activities—throughout the entire world and particularly in India and Tibet. Likewise, in his great love for us all, the Lotus-Born promised that it would be primarily on the tenth day of the waxing moon that the blessings of his exalted compassion would descend on the people of Tibet’s snowy land, as well as on all of us faithful disciples in need of his taming hand. *The Oral Instruction on the Secret Gathering of Secrets*<sup>22</sup> states:

Upon that day of days, the tenth day of the monkey month,  
 And each tenth day of every month,  
 Sending emanations, I shall fill the world,  
 Supreme and common siddhis richly to bestow.  
 If you spend your life accomplishing the Teacher,  
 When the time of dissolution comes,  
 You’ll melt into my heart—Uddiyana.

*The Sampa Lhundrupma*—‘*The Prayer to Guru Rinpoche that Spontaneously Fulfills all Wishes*’ states:

Now, when this degenerate dark age reaches its final depths,  
 At dawn and dusk you come, for those who have devotion,  
 Riding on the rays of the rising and setting sun— And on the tenth day of  
 the waxing moon you come in person.

It says in the terma treasures of Ratna Lingpa:<sup>23</sup>

Although I have gone to the land of the rakshasas— In each monkey year,  
 on the tenth of the monkey month,  
 And on every tenth day, in each and every month  
 I will come back personally—this is a promise.  
 The Lotus-Born does not deceive other beings,  
 So be rid of your doubts, my followers.

A promise made with the Lotus-Born’s vajra-speech can never be deceiving. In *The Guide to Accomplishing the Guru*:<sup>24</sup>



On the tenth day of the monkey month, in the monkey year,  
 I of Uddiyana will appear throughout Tibet—  
 Of this be sure—it is my pledge and promise.  
 On every tenth day of the month I'll come,  
 And with my emanations fill Tibet.  
 This is my sacred pledge.  
 The Lotus-Born does not have the power to deceive.  
 Fix your minds on me, all you who have devotion.  
 Make a torma like a blazing jewel, adorn it with an incense stick,  
 And call to me with music and the skull-drum's sound.  
 Recite the prayer of seven lines, invoking me with fervent melody.  
 And from the hill of Camara, I of Uddiyana—  
 Like a mother helpless to resist  
 The weeping of her darling child—  
 Will come, my blessings to bestow.  
 This is my pledge, and hell awaits me should I fail.

The Lotus-Born made many undeceiving vajra-promises such as these. Since this was the manner of our precious Guru's birth—in the wood-monkey year, on the tenth day of the monkey month, miraculously as a nirmanakaya endowed with the 32 major and 80 minor marks on an isle in the Sindhu ocean, upon the anthers of a blossoming lotus—the tenth day is an especially powerful time. It is said that if you make a vast feast-offering on that day, the merit that you will accumulate is a hundred thousand times more exalted than on any other day. Learned scholars have variously explained this monkey month to be the fifth, sixth or seventh month of the Tibetan year. However, it is the mind of the childish that seeks to disagree upon exactly when it was that the enlightened buddha activity of taming beings actually entered our world. There is actually no conflict in choosing any of the dates. The great awareness-holder Jikmé Lingpa said:

In the sixth month, at sunrise on the tenth day,  
 He will appear from the lotus flower blossoming on Dhanakosha.

Thus, Jikmé Lingpa has identified the monkey month as the sixth Tibetan month. Nevertheless, there is no fault in choosing any of the other dates. The Cakrasamvara root tantra states:<sup>25</sup>

In particular, on the tenth day of the waxing moon and the tenth day of the waning moon (the twenty-fifth day), yoginis will come. Thus recognize this time as special and exalted. At these times, dakinis will come to the outer sacred places, lands and charnel grounds. Internally, within the vajra-body, the *nadi*, *prana* and *bindu* will gather, known as the 'subsidiary gathering'. This time is praised as supreme, when interdependent outer and inner circumstances for accomplishment come

together – for the infinite activities of pacifying, increasing, magnetising and subjugating.

Lochen Dharmashri said:

On the tenth day of the waning moon (the twenty-fifth day), the dakinis will gather in the outer sacred sites, and internally the *nadi*, *prana* and *bindu* will gather. Thus this time is exalted. Particularly during the day on the tenth and at night on the twenty-fifth, accomplished dakinis will gather in the places of practitioners. Therefore, whenever you begin an activity, strive to begin it on these days!

The omniscient Longchen Rabjam said:<sup>26</sup>

On the tenth of the waxing moon and the tenth of the waning moon, during the day and at night, strive in approach and accomplishment; offer the ganacakra, fulfilment and confession.

Ngawang Rinchen said in his testament explaining the history of the northern treasures:<sup>27</sup>

Followers of my teachings— If you wish for peace and happiness to come to Tibet— At sunrise on the tenth day of the waxing moon  
An emanation of myself, Uddiyana, will appear.  
On that day, arouse devotion towards me;  
At best, look at the natural state during your generation and perfection practices;  
Establish the outer, inner and secret practices  
With the excellent motivation of bodhicitta;  
Make vast aspirations to create the karmic connection  
To become a guide for the beings of the six realms.  
Other than this, purify the obscurations of body, speech and mind  
And strive in accumulating positive karma.  
Help by propagating the Buddha's teachings and by building objects of worship.  
Take the one-day lay vows, make *tsa-tsas*,  
Set living creatures free, and recite ransom prayers.  
Build bridges for people to cross dangerous paths safely.  
Make offerings to the sangha, make circumambulations,  
And pray to me with devotion.  
With whatever virtue you are personally drawn to, pray to me with devotion!  
At the least, at sun rise on the tenth day  
Do not engage in non-virtuous deeds, such as taking lives.  
Give whatever you can to the disabled, to beggars, dogs and animals—

All those around your home—and cultivate compassion.  
 In brief, on the tenth day of the waxing moon,  
 Whoever you are, wherever you may be,  
 Make offerings to the Buddha and assist sentient beings,  
 Reverently write out mantra syllables,  
 Or with compassion prepare and offer water bowls,  
 Perform activities such as these on the Lotus-Born's day!  
 On that day, because of my former aspirations,  
 Any merit will be multiplied a hundred thousand times  
 And my compassion will swiftly protect you.  
 My heart disciples—  
 If you wish for peace and happiness to come to Tibet,  
 Establish the excellent law of Dharma as the law of the land.  
 Through my example and liberation, you will be cared for—  
 Whichever of the outer, inner and secret sadhanas you practice  
 For accomplishing the sutras, tantras, teachings and pith-instructions,  
 Leaving nothing out, and nothing added or misspelled.  
 If you follow this advice, you can rest in certainty—  
 Have no doubt that peace and happiness will come to Tibet!

The great Fifth Dalai Lama's prayer, *Cloud-banks of Blessings*, recounts the deeds of the Guru:

During all activities—practices, offerings, prayers and praises,  
 If your wisdom-being is invoked with unshakable devotion,  
 Then at sunrise on the excellent tenth day you will come!  
 This is your vajra-speech and your promise!

From *The Secret Guide to Accomplishing the Guru*:<sup>28</sup>

When you clearly meditate  
 In the generation stage  
 Of any sadhana whatsoever—  
 There I am before you.  
 When you make the mandala  
 And set out tormas and the substances of offering,  
 Do not doubt it—I will come to you.  
 I shall come, unable to resist,  
 When with devotion and strong, fervent prayers  
 You pray to me, the Lotus-Born of Uddiyana.  
 I will come to you.

And:

Meditate on me, the Guru; accomplish me; follow me.  
 For seeing me is seeing all the buddhas.

And, because I am the very essence of all the sugatas,  
On every tenth day I shall come to Tibet.

Therefore, remembering the Lotus-Born's life and liberation, make fervent prayers. In the *Pema Kathang*, the precious Guru addresses the princess:<sup>29</sup>

In this noble field that the Buddha tamed,  
An emanation of the Teacher is in front of every being.  
In former ages I was Amitabha, Lord of Boundless Light,  
And, on Potala Hill, the Lord Who Sees,<sup>30</sup>  
And Padmasambhava upon the Dhanakosha ocean.  
Only do I seem to have these three identities,  
For they in truth are never separate from each other.  
Samantabhadra in the *dharmadhātu*,  
Great Vajradhara in the field of Dense Adornment,  
The Mighty One upon the Vajra Throne—<sup>31</sup>  
All are inseparable, by nature Padmasambhava, none other than myself.  
My blessings, which bring about beings' benefit, are great and wonderful.

Ratna Lingpa's terma *The Invocation of Uddiyana on the Tenth Day*<sup>32</sup> states:

In brief, the ways I tame are beyond imagination,  
For Uddiyana's kindness is not slight, but vast!  
Every realm shall have a most sacred place,  
That will be a monument to Uddiyana;  
At every frontier there will be a treasure trove,  
Likewise a monument to Uddiyana.

And:<sup>33</sup>

And likewise it is said that the various rituals and practices for the subjugation of evil forces, which in every village are performed by monks or lay practitioners of Secret Mantra—these too are memorials of the master of Uddiyana.

The text goes on to say:

Briefly told, my ways of benefit are past imagining,  
And all shall be memorials to me, Uddiyana.  
In times to come, when people yearn for me  
And think of me with longing love,  
Behold, I shall be standing at their side.  
And all who on the tenth day of the waxing moon  
Recall and make remembrance of me—  
They and I shall never separate...

And yet for me, in truth, there is no coming or going.  
You meet me when your karma and your obscurations  
Are both cleansed.  
According to the prayers and relative perceptions  
Of the ones whom I might train,  
I am indeed residing in the land of *rakshasas*.  
And yet, because the stream of my compassion is unbroken,  
I am present constantly to those with faith in me...

The great Guru of Uddiyana said:

For anyone, man or woman, who has faith in me,  
I, the Lotus Born, have never departed—I sleep on their threshold.  
For me there is no death.  
An emanation of myself, the Lotus-Born,  
Will be present in front of each and every one with faith in me.

The fourth chapter of *The Jeweled Treasury of the Oral Transmission*, discovered by Ratna Lingpa, says the following in the advice to Yeshé Tsogyal:<sup>34</sup>

From time to time, go to some pleasant place, a mountaintop or some lonely valley, and pray to me at the top of your voice—so loudly you feel as if your very head might burst. Filled with devotion, allow a weariness of samsara and a longing to be freed to flood into you until great tears well forth. This is a crucial instruction, since it will wash away a great many karmic obscurations.

Holding these, the Lotus-Born's unfailing vajra-promises, in your heart, make fervent prayers!

### ***3. Explanation of the Ganacakra***

When we embark upon the profound path of skilful means, the Secret Mantra Vajrayana, the special method that swiftly brings about the two accumulations is the ganacakra.<sup>35</sup> Within the ganacakra a distinction of four gatherings is made.<sup>36</sup> These are explained in *The Stages of Vajra Activity*:<sup>37</sup>

When there is a gathering of friends, this is called 'the gathering of practitioners.' When all the components are present, this is explained as 'the gathering of blissful abundance.' When the deities and oath-bound protectors are gathered, this is explained as 'the gathering of the great assembly.' This ensures that the continuous perfection of the two accumulations will be recognized as 'the great gathering.'

Firstly, if the assembled—the gathering of practitioners—is made up of only skilful means (male) or only wisdom (female), then the gathering is called 'the

feast of heroes’ or ‘the feast of heroines’ respectively. If both skilful means and wisdom are in attendance, then the gathering is called ‘the gathering of fortunate ones.’ Secondly, the gathering of components such as food, drink, clothes, ornaments, song and dance, and union and liberation, constitutes ‘the gathering of abundant components.’ Thirdly, setting up a representation of the wisdom mandala, both deities and palace, along with its guardians and meditation upon it as the basis of the siddhis, constitutes ‘the gathering of delighted deities.’<sup>38</sup> Fourth is the continuity of the two accumulations, called ‘the great gathering.’ The ganacakra of means, the applied conduct of the generation stage with appearances—all this is the accumulation of merit. The completion stage of wisdom is the realization and familiarization of the entire profound assemblage as unborn—this is the perfect accumulation of wisdom.

As feast substances, gather whatever you are able to acquire – in particular, the five meats and amritas. This, in turn, means that meat and alcohol are indispensable feast substances. The *Heruka Galpo*<sup>39</sup> elaborates:

*Dorje tsé, galché, jamdé, datrom, jagat, tsetri, dzagé, mamsa, trenmo, shamo, kuntugyü, amra, günbrum, agaru, nali, gegyé, and so forth.*

If we explain these secret terms, then *dorjé tsé* is dough,<sup>40</sup> *galché* is a dough of flour mixed with rice beer, *jamdé* is milk, *datrom* is butter and cheese, *jagat* is alcohol, *tsetri* are bitter tasting foods, *dzagé* is curd and pies, *mamsa* is meat, *trenmo* are condiments,<sup>41</sup> *shamo* are fruits, *kuntugyü* is salt, *amra* is human flesh, *günbrum* is elephant meat, *agaru* is horse meat, *nali* is cow meat, and *gegyé* is dog meat. In essence, gather whatever food and drink you are able to acquire. Regarding the feast substances,<sup>42</sup> the great Atisha said:

To Tibet no merit will come, because substances offered are so few!

As it is said, to offer merely as much as you can eat is inappropriate. Thus, do not thoughtlessly set down just a single bag of food. Arrange the feast articles nicely on the hide of a carnivorous animal, or on a cloth painted to represent this. Place them in a *kapala* or other precious vessel. Place the food on the right of the shrine and the drinks on the left. Sprinkle the feast substances with clean water, for purification. With *ram, yam* and *kham*, all the habits of dualistic grasping at objects are burned, scattered and washed away, and the faults and defects of the offered substances are cleansed. Through the three syllables (*om, ah* and *hum*), the substances are purified and multiplied, and thereby consecrated to become heaps of sensual delights. Next, sprinkle the feast substances with *amrita*. When you sprinkle the substances with scented water, imagine that from the scented water the gathering of wrathful ones emanates and expels all the obstacle makers. Moreover, with light radiating forth from yourself as the deity, imagine that all the sensual delights of all the world(s) are gathered up, dissolving into the feast substances. It is said that this is a key point.

Do not place as feast substances articles that are impure, improper or obtained through wrong livelihood and the like. Know what to adopt and what to abandon, and thus avoid mistakes such as eating before the feast has been offered, diminishing the remainder, and ‘feast-wolf behavior.’<sup>43</sup> The assembled pure samaya holders—the vajra-brothers and sisters—should refrain from disrespectful behaviours such as joking, chatting and inattentiveness. Maintain ‘yogic conduct of awareness’, do a full or symbolic prostration,<sup>44</sup> and take your seat.

Then, imagine the whole assembly of the deities of the mandala, together with the deities of the Three Roots, and the protectors, invited as guests from the buddha-fields of the ten directions, taking their seats in the sky in front, gathering like billowing clouds. It is explained in the *Heruka Galpo*:

First, offer the six sensual delights.

Second, make confession with the samaya substances, *amrita*.

Third, serve the aggregates of enemies and obstacle makers.

As stated, the feast-offering is divided into three portions. Elsewhere in the scriptures, the feast-offering is described as divided into four or five portions. Whatever scripture you follow, when you offer the first portion, visualize goddesses of sensual delights filling the whole of the sky and presenting cloud-banks of offerings in unimaginable array to the whole assembly of deities. And, as the assembled deities take delight in these offerings, imagine that the two accumulations are perfected.

For the second portion, the confession, imagine the samaya substances, such as the five meats and *amritas*, to be in essence the nature of wisdom *amrita*. Delighting in the offered substances, the deities are filled with love. As all defilements and breakages are confessed in their presence, all corruptions and degenerations of samaya, every deterioration, without exception, is purified. Thus, impairments<sup>45</sup> in relation to the wisdom deities are restored.

For the third portion, the liberation offering, perform the liberation of the self through actualizing the view, the fortress of dharmata; the meditation, the clearance of the pitfalls of samadhi; and the action, the life-force of compassion.<sup>46</sup> It is explained in the tantras:

The great samaya of liberation through compassion  
Is neither killing [out of anger] nor suppressing [out of ignorance].  
My whole body is transformed into vajra-body  
And my consciousness is transformed into vajra, [its true nature].<sup>47</sup>

As stated, the person performing the liberation ritual should be a holder of all the profound key-points of realization and conduct:

- being entirely motivated by great bodhicitta,
- having the capacity to liberate others through compassion<sup>48</sup>
- being stable, powerful and focused<sup>49</sup>
- performing the three clear visualizations<sup>50</sup>
- holding the samadhi of the three [satisfactions]<sup>51</sup>
- enacting the three supports of life, cleansing and place<sup>52</sup>

Such a person then liberates his enemies, those wicked evildoers who have committed the seven violations<sup>53</sup> and who thereby show all ten grounds.<sup>54</sup> He liberates them through profound methods of fierce and wrathful subjugation. Once liberated, their consciousness is sent to the Akanishtha heaven, by means of entering the place of union of the Victorious Lord and Lady. Then such beings take rebirth as sons and daughters of the awakened family. This is what is called ‘caring for others’ through the skilful means of Secret Mantra. Since sharing the full meaning of this would make the text too complex, I shall not elaborate further.

In the case of a simple feast-offering, the procedure for the third portion is as follows. Having summoned the enemies and obstacle makers and having bound, shackled and intoxicated them, imagine that the wrathful deities who ‘send the consciousness’ enjoy the third portion as the samaya of ‘vajra food.’ Thus sprinkle it with amrita, and offer the third portion.

The first, confession and liberation portions are blessed with amrita and then offered to the toma. If this is inconvenient, you can also ‘symbolically offer the portions’<sup>55</sup> and arrange them in order, in front of you, as best you can. There are various traditions for ‘offering the fulfillment’<sup>56</sup> and, as is often done, it is acceptable for this to follow on from the liberation offering. Sprinkle the fulfillment offering with amrita, visualize the general guests such as the protectors of the pure abodes, and present the fulfillment offering in a clean place outside. It is said that any of the infinite activities—such as giving empowerments, or consecration (*rabné*) or fire-offering (*jinsek*) rituals—can be inserted at this point.

Next, the ritual assistant puts a feast portion aside. Having paid homage, and with arms crossed,<sup>57</sup> he says, “Please enjoy this feast offering!” and so forth.<sup>58</sup> With this, he or she offers the feast to the vajra-master. In turn, the vajra-master performs the lotus mudra and takes the feast with the three-pointed mudra. The ritual assistant(s) then distribute(s) the feast to the entire assembly, starting from the beginning of the rows. The vajra-master and students set aside mindless behaviour and maintain the three mandalas,<sup>59</sup> reciting together: “The aggregates, elements and sense organs of my body...”<sup>60</sup> Visualize the deities of the mandala of the hundred deities,<sup>61</sup> the sacred essence of the three seats of completeness of the aggregates, elements and sense fields.<sup>62</sup> Bring to mind the recollection of purity of the vajra-body. Recognizing the five fingers of your hands to be the five goddesses of sensual delights, take hold of the food and drink, visualizing it either as the



amrita of bliss and emptiness (according to the path of method) or as untainted wisdom amrita (according to the path of liberation) offer the feast so that it fulfils the six satisfactions<sup>63</sup> and delight in and enjoying the offerings. Then recite aspiration prayers, such as: “By making this feast offering, to the city of Glorious Herukas...”<sup>64</sup> As for the samaya substances of the feast, do not despise or look down on them, merely accepting some and rejecting others. Avoid the eight infractions<sup>65</sup> such as quarreling, making noises, or joking. The points of the six satisfactions, as given by Jikme Lingpa, are:

1. to satisfy the deities of the field of accumulation, with offerings,
2. to satisfy the yogins, with vajra-foods and drinks,
3. to satisfy the wisdom mandala, with the essence of amrita,
4. to satisfy the deities of the body mandala, with the wisdom of bliss and emptiness,
5. to satisfy the outer and inner dakinis, with song,
6. to satisfy the haughty spirits and their retinues, with the tormas.

While remaining untainted by hope and fear, by thoughts of clinging to pure and impure, bring to mind that all appearance and existence is the display of infinite purity, and has always been so—throughout beginningless time. Thus take the feast-offerings of the sensual delights as siddhis, and enjoy them. Visualize your aggregates, elements and sense organs as the male and female deities, and satisfy them with the white and red amrita of the essences of the channels. Imagine the delight of the entire gathering of deities of the mandala of the body. This then constitutes the outer ganacakra of sensual delights. Imagine all the yogins and yoginis to be in nature the ishṭadevatas, dakinis, viras, and viras. Then, by means of the blessing of the secret space, and the descending and ascending energy of union, ascertain the wisdom of the four joys. This constitutes the inner ganacakra. The secret ganacakra is to rest, without altering or fabricating, within the essence of the self-abiding natural state, the sphere of primordial wisdom of great bliss, free from all elaborations.

If you wish to perform vajra songs and dance, *The Garland of Pearls* has this to say:<sup>66</sup>

For the ganacakra, receiving empowerments and entering the mandala,  
Diligently perform and offer songs!

As stated, while applying yourself to the ocean of realization and conduct of the inconceivable dharmata, diligently engage in vajra songs and dance! The excellent benefits of vajra song and dance are described in *The Union of the Sun and Moon*.<sup>67</sup>

The immaculate vajra song  
Satisfies the minds of all the buddhas,  
Aids the experience of the yogins,  
Captivates the minds of the dakinis,

Averts cravings for samsara in the six classes of beings.

Like this, the tantra speaks of the benefits extensively. Next, the whole assembly, with no trace of stinginess, gives leftover food – which is collected, beginning from the ends of the rows. During an accomplishment practice,<sup>68</sup> this leftover food, the remainder, is kept ‘imprisoned’ for the duration of the practice. Then, for the accomplishment of ‘swift activity,’ the remainder is placed at the north-eastern border of the mandala. As stated in the *Heruka Galpo*:

Within the mandala of the remainder at the north-eastern border,  
Draw with rakta E’s or crescents upon a violator’s skin.

Similarly, in the mandalas in the north-east and south-west, draw for the peaceful activities a circular mandala with scented water, and for the wrathful activities, upon a violator’s skin,<sup>69</sup> a *dharmodaya*, source of phenomena,<sup>70</sup> and a crescent. During a one-day practice, the pure and impure remainder are placed one above the other<sup>71</sup> and then blessed and consecrated. The pure remainder is offered to the seven higher ranks, while the impure remainder from the yogins is offered to the seven lower ranks. Visualize within the infinite dark-blue triangle at the periphery, the remainder mandala—a palace with doors, the gathering of peaceful and wrathful deities, the sacred lands and places, the guests of the seven higher ranks and the seven lower ranks—such as the *dakinis*, *kimkaras*, and *rakshasas*. By whistling, you call and invite them. Thus, imagine that they come and gather within the triangle at the periphery, like crows landing on a plain, and recite:<sup>72</sup>

“First, offer the best portion.”<sup>73</sup>

Since the best portion belongs to the gathering of peaceful and wrathful deities, it is to be offered to the guests of the seven higher ranks, first.

“Second, enjoy the two inseparable as one.”

The assembly of *matrikas* and *dakinis* enjoy it with them.<sup>74</sup>

“Third, satisfy the guests with the remainder.”

Next, offer the remainder to its respective owners—the guests of the seven lower ranks, such as the *dakinis*, *kimkaras* and *rakshasas*. For this:

“Bless the remainder with spit.”<sup>75</sup>

By this means, the samaya with the respectful owners of the remainder, such as the *dakinis*, *kimkaras* and *rakshasas* is mixed as one.<sup>76</sup>

“Thus there is a division into three parts.”

Similar to the way things work in the mundane world, there is a great difference between the lord and the subjects.<sup>77</sup>

“Finally, mix it inseparable as one.”

For the peaceful, enriching or magnetising activity, place it below. For wrathful activity, place it on top.<sup>78</sup> Dedicate the practice according to the tradition of our sacred forefathers. At night and in order to protect from a ‘direct encounter’,<sup>79</sup> place a burning lamp in the remainder. The ritual assistant wearing the ceremonial hat goes outside and carries the remainder seventy steps away from the shrine room. This is called the ‘feeding pathway of the rakshasas’. There, the ritual assistant places the remainder on an offering plate. Beings of the seven higher ranks, according to the *Heruka Galpo*:

1. those called-upon from all-encompassing space
2. those who hold authentic blessings
3. the great method revealed as male
4. the great wisdom revealed as female
5. the eight wrathful *gauris*
6. the great *pishacis* of the lands
7. the four female wisdom gate-keepers These constitute the mandala of those of the seven higher ranks.

Beings of the seven lower ranks:

1. the thirty-two magical *dakinis*,
2. the eight great *kimkaras* who delight in union and liberation
3. the three *rakshasas* who offer the extent of their realization
4. the eight *jvalas* who inflict harm on body, speech and mind
5. the *maras*, the *rakshasas*, the seven *matrikas* and the four *bhaginis*
6. the sixty-four *dutis* of the sacred places

These are the six that own the impure remainder.

7. the twenty-eight who own both the pure and impure remainder.

On special occasions, when you wish to accumulate a hundred feast-offerings, after completing the elaborate ganacakra sadhana liturgy, you should repeat the section that begins with the blessing and continue until concluding with the remainder. One recitation of this part is counted as one accumulation. According to the Mindrolling tradition, a symbolic offering is made to the vajra-master after each accumulation, and a part of this offering to him is also symbolically dedicated as the remainder. Finally, after the ritual has been completed, the guests of the feast simultaneously depart or dissolve.

#### ***4. Teaching the Excellent Benefits of Offering the Ganacakra***

*The Vajra-Net* states:

Amongst the accumulations of merit, the ganacakra is supreme.  
All wishes of this life will be accomplished,  
Negative forces and obstacles will be pacified.  
In the next, in the realm of the victorious vidyadhara,  
One will reach the level of Samantabhadra.

As it is said:<sup>80</sup>

The faults of the transgressions of samaya will be dispelled.  
Everything unfavourable will be defeated.  
One will accomplish whatever one desires.  
One will gather and accumulate virtue.  
All the food of the feast will bestow siddhis.  
The deities and spirits of the remainder will be satisfied.  
Performing the ritual of the ganacakra  
Will swiftly grant the siddhi of mahamudra – its prophecy and  
attainment.

In essence, therefore, practitioners will by this means perfect the two accumulations and restore all impairments and breakages of samaya. Thus does one join the ranks of the herukas. Yeshé Tsogyal said:

By gathering the ganacakra  
And through merely a single ganacakra,  
The lower realms will be closed to you  
And you will never again return and take birth as a human.  
Understand that this is certainly proven!

Again, Yeshé Tsogyal said:

On the tenth day of the waxing moon and the tenth day of its waning,  
On the eight day and the fifteenth,<sup>81</sup>  
Gather the ganacakra and make offerings.  
Offering the ganacakra merely once will close the doors to the lower  
realms,  
And you will never return and take birth as a human again.  
Understand that this can be established with certainty, through logic.

The victorious Longchen Rabjam said:<sup>82</sup>

Amongst all conditioned virtue, there is no merit greater than gathering  
the profound ganacakra.

Its excellent benefits are as follows:

It perfects the accumulations of merit and wisdom.

It restores all transgressions of samaya.

Assemblies of dakas and dakinis will gather in the places of the practitioners and will accomplish the activities.

The masters and the gathering of the deities of the mandala will be delighted.

The ocean of samaya-bound guardians will guard and protect you.

Your present life will be long, free from disease.

You will enjoy renown and numerous enjoyments and helpers.

Whatever you wish for will be effortlessly and instantly accomplished.

The supreme and ordinary siddhis will be attained.

All obstacles and negativities will be purified

And in a future life you will gain unsurpassable awakening.

Like this, you will attain inconceivable and unutterable qualities!

Yeshé Tsogyal said:

On the tenth day of the waxing moon and the tenth day of its waning (the twenty-fifth day of the lunar month),

If you pray with fervent devotion from the depths of your heart

To Orgyen Tsokyé Dorje, the Lake-born Vajra of Uddiyana,

With his retinue of dakas and dakinis,

And if you generate bodhicitta—

Vast heart of the awakened mind for the benefit of beings,

If you strive in offering the ganacakra wherever you may be—

In whatever land, place, great sacred site, monastery, or city—

You will reap benefits and results defying the imagination.

In all lands and all places, crime will be averted, as will famine, war, evil, and unfavourable circumstances.

Rain will fall on time, harvests will be abundant, and auspiciousness will prevail throughout the land.

If you offer the ganacakra every month without interruption, the obstacles to your life will be pacified and whatever you wish for will be spontaneously fulfilled.

Material possessions, food and wealth will effortlessly come to you.

If you offer the ganacakra a hundred or a thousand times, you will take rebirth as a king with the power to transform the entire world.

If you offer the ganacakra ten thousand or a hundred thousand times, you will become a universal monarch with dominion over multiple world systems.

If you offer the ganacakra a million times, you will bring the three realms under your control; your glory and splendor will outshine the three plains of existence; you will accomplish without difficulty the four activities; and in your next life you will take rebirth in the buddhafield of Lotus Light, amidst vidyadharas and dakinis, where you will receive the nectar-like

speech of Guru Rinpoche. Thus blessed, you will be able to benefit beings in infinite ways.

It is also said:

Whoever strives in practicing the ganacakra  
Will reach, in the future, the pure stages of the vidyadhara  
In the realm of Lotus Light.  
There is no doubt – they will not return to samsara!

*The Guru's Jewel Ocean* by Pema Lingpa<sup>83</sup> states:

If we link the excellent benefits of practicing on the tenth day to the supreme siddhis of the four vidyadhara stages, then:  
Offering a ganacakra on the tenth day of the tiger month will lead you to attain the mahamudra vidyadhara;  
Offering a ganacakra on the tenth day of the snake month will lead you to attain the vidyadhara with power over life;  
Offering a ganacakra on the tenth day of the monkey month will lead you to attain the spontaneously accomplished vidyadhara;  
Offering a ganacakra on the tenth day of the pig month will lead you to attain the matured vidyadhara.  
Or, if we link the excellent benefits to the ordinary siddhis of the accomplishment of the four activities, then:  
Offering a ganacakra on the tenth day of the rabbit month will lead you to accomplish the pacifying activity;  
Offering a ganacakra on the tenth day of the horse month will lead you to accomplish the enriching activity;  
Offering a ganacakra on the tenth day of the bird month will lead you to accomplish the magnetizing activity;  
Offering a ganacakra on the tenth day of the rat month will lead you to accomplish the subjugating activity;  
Offering a ganacakra on the tenth day of the dragon month, will mean all illnesses, negative forces and obstacles will be pacified;  
Offering a ganacakra on the tenth day of the sheep month will mean life-span and merit will increase, and wealth and enjoyments abound;  
Offering a ganacakra on the tenth day of the dog month will mean whatever you wish for will effortlessly come to be;  
Offering a ganacakra on the tenth day of the ox month will mean all harm from unfavourable circumstances, enemies and obstacles will be pacified.

The same benefits apply to the tenth day of the waning moon (the twenty-fifth day) of every month. The blessing that comes with gathering the ganacakra on every tenth and twenty-fifth day of every month will purify, without exception, all negativity and evil accumulated with body, speech and mind, and will

guarantee that we become, in future lives, a buddha. Inconceivable and unutterable benefits such as these will be ours.

Thus it is perfectly logical that we—followers of the embodiment of all the victorious ones, the second buddha, the great master from Uddiyana, the Mahaguru Padmakara—and all holders of the Ngagyur Nyingma tradition, and each and every being of all classes and families having faith and devotion put effort into making offerings, wherever we are on the tenth day.

*This text, A Bouquet of Udumbara Flowers: An Explanation of the Significance of the Tenth Day and its Practice, was requested by my American students. Thus I, Rigdzin Trinlé Özer, often called the vidya-mantra holder Gönpö Tseten, wrote it at the Yesbé Nyingpo Dharma centre in the area of California in America. Through it, may the minds of all sentient beings enter the virtuous path, and may excellent virtue increase ever further – like the waxing moon.*

*Virtue! Virtue! Virtue!*

*Sarva-mangalam!*

*The artist from Dolpo, Pema Wangyal, served as a scribe. May everything be virtuous and auspicious!*



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- 1 The Sutra of Predictions in Magadha (dbus 'gyur tshal lung bstan pa'i mdo).
- 2 Tertön Sogyal cites this quotation as "lo ni bzhi gnyis lon pa na" instead of "lo ni bcu gnyis lon pa'i tshé". According to Tertön Sogyal the number of years in question should be four years and two months.
- 3 The Tantra of the Assembly of Herukas (he ru ka 'dus pa'i rgyud).
- 4 The Tantra of the Perfect Embodiment of the Unexcelled Nature (bla med don rdzogs 'dus pa'i rgyud).
- 5 For an explanation of this quotation, see: Tertön Sogyal's Vajra Guru Mantra Commentary.
- 6 The Magical Net of Mañjushri ('jam dpal sgyu 'phrul drwa ba).
- 7 More commonly known as King Indrabhuti.
- 8 Trigunadhara (trik na 'dzin pa, trig na 'dzin pa or tri na 'dzin pa) was King Indrabhuti's principal Dharma minister. He was the first to set eyes on Guru Rinpoche, and suggested to the king that adopt the Guru as a son.
- 9 Prabhavati ('od 'chang ma) is the name of the queen of Uddiyana, whom Guru Rinpoche took as his wife.
- 10 The Eight Entrustments (bka' brgyad) refers to a set of eight (brgyad) Mahayoga yidams of the Nyingma school entrusted (bka') to Padmasambhava and to the eight vidyadharas of India. These are: 1. Yamantaka (Gshin rje gshed), 2. Hayagriva (Rta mgrin), 3. shri Heruka (Yang dag he ru ka), 4. Mahottara Heruka (Che mchog he ru ka), 5. Vajrakila (Rdo rje phur ba), 6. 'Mamo Bötong' (Ma mo rbod gtong), 7. Lokastorapuja ('Jig rten mchod bstod), and 8. Mantrabhiru (Dmod pa drag sngags).
- 11 The vajradhatu-mandala consists of 37 deities. Its central figure is Vairocana, who is surrounded by the four Buddhas – Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Lokeshvararaja (Amitabha) and Amoghasiddhi. The vajradhatu-mandala appears in several tantras of the Nyingma and Sarma Schools. For example, it is the primary mandala of the Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-samgraha.
- 12 The causal vehicle of characteristics (rgyu mtshan nyid kyi theg pa) refers to the sutrayana and thus includes the shravakayana, pratyekabuddhayana and mahayana. It is called the vehicle of characteristics because it has all the characteristics of a path that is a direct cause for bringing about the ultimate fruition, the level of Buddhahood.
- 13 Yari Gong (gya ri gong), 'Slate Mountain'.
- 14 The Tibetan literally reads "hailstones the size of a horse head" (ser ba rta mgo tsam).
- 15 Drakmar Drinzang (brag dmar mgrin bzang) is King Trisong Detsen's residence.
- 16 The world of the gods above, world of the humans in between, and world of the nagas below.
- 17 This refers to the pilgrimage site in Bhutan called Bumthang Kurjé (bum thang sku rje).
- 18 The Secret Key Instructions for Accomplishing the Guru (bla ma sgrub pa'i gsang them gnad yig). The same passage is quoted by Mipham Rinpoche. See: Jamgön Mipham, White Lotus: An Explanation of the Seven-line Prayer to Guru Padmasambhava, Trans. The Padmakara Translation Group, (Boston: Shambala, 2015), 38.
- 19 Pema Kathang (pad ma bka' yi thang yig), the Epic of Padma, is a biography of Guru Padmasambhava hidden as a treasure text and discovered by Orgyen Lingpa

(1323–?).

20 These and the following Sanskrit words are the names of the lunar months according to the Indian tradition.

21 The Four Vajra- Chapters (rdo rje gdan bzhi), The Conduct of the Yoginis (rnal 'byor ma kun spyod), The Ocean of dakinis of the Cakrasamvara (bde mchog mkha' gro rgya mtsho), and The Vajra Palace (rdo rje gtsug lag)

22 The Oral Instruction on the Secret Gathering of Secrets (gsang 'dus them med zhal gdams). Mipham Rinpoche presents a similar quote in The White Lotus (pad+ma dkar po), see: Jamgön Mipham, White Lotus: An Explanation of the Seven-line Prayer to Guru Padmasambhava, Trans. The Padmakara Translation Group, (Boston: Shambala, 2015), 37.

23 This quote may likely be a paraphrase of Ratna Lingpa's The Invocation of Uddiyana on the Tenth Day.

24 The Guide to Accomplishing the Guru (bla ma sgrub pa'i gnad yig). This paragraph is also quoted by Mipham Rinpoche in The White Lotus, see: Jamgön Mipham, White Lotus: An Explanation of the Seven-line Prayer to Guru Padmasambhava, Trans. The Padmakara Translation Group, (Boston: Shambala, 2015), 42–43.

25 We were unable to locate this quote within the Cakrasamvara literature. It appears that the quote comes from a Tibetan commentary. It could relate to a passage such as the following from the Laghusamvara (Töb. 368, bde mchog nyung ngu), the Cakrasamvara root tantra: "Strive in making offerings on the tenth day of the waning moon as well as on the tenth day of the waxing moon. If you offer, with devotion, with intoxicants and meats, to the vajra goddesses, the herukas will be greatly delighted. Their hearts and minds thus satisfied, they will bestow the sublime—and thus the yogins come to rest in the hands of the supreme ones." (mar gyi ngo yi tshes bcu dang/ zla ba yar ngo'i gang gyur la/ myur du 'bad pas mchod bya ste/ rdo rje lha mo myos byed sha rnam kyis/ skye bo gus pas de rnam mchod byas pas/ he ru ka dpal mngon dgar gyur pa la/ mgu ba'i thugs kyis mchog ni stsol 'gyur te/ de rnam lag gnas mchog rnam so/)

26 This quote comes from Longchenpa's Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind (sems nyid ngal gso).

27 Ngawang Rinchen's testament explaining the history of the Northern Treasures (mnga' dbang rin chen gter gyi bang mdzod kyi lo rgyus zhal chems)

28 Jamgön Mipham, White Lotus: An Explanation of the Seven-line Prayer to Guru Padmasambhava, Trans. The Padmakara Translation Group, (Boston: Shambala, 2015), 37–38.

29 Jamgön Mipham, White Lotus: An Explanation of the Seven-line Prayer to Guru Padmasambhava, Trans. The Padmakara Translation Group, (Boston: Shambala, 2015), 41.

30 i.e. Avalokiteshvara.

31 This and the two preceding lines refer to the three kayas, or dimensions of Buddhahood: the dharmakaya aspect, or Samantabhadra, in the dharmadhatu; the sambhogakaya aspect, or Vajradhara, in the buddhafiield of Dense Adornment or Ganavyuha; the nirmanakaya aspect, or Buddha Shakyamuni, in Vajrasana (the Vajra Throne, in Bodh Gaya).

32 For a full translation of this text, see: Ratna Lingpa's The Invocation of Uddiyana on the Tenth Day.

33 Jamgön Mipham, *White Lotus: An Explanation of the Seven-line Prayer to Guru Padmasambhava*, Trans. The Padmakara Translation Group, (Boston: Shambala, 2015), 39–40.

34 The *Jeweled Treasury of the Oral Transmission* (snyan brgyud nor bu'i mdzod khang). See also: Jamgön Mipham, *White Lotus: An Explanation of the Seven-line Prayer to Guru Padmasambhava*, Trans. The Padmakara Translation Group, (Boston: Shambala, 2015), 43.

35 In Tibetan the word *tsok* (*tshogs*) is used to refer to both the two accumulations and the ganacakra. Thus Gönpö Tseten plays on the word here, by stating that the gathering—the ganacakra or tsok—brings about the two gatherings, that is the two accumulations.

36 Again Gönpö Tseten plays on the word *tsok* here, by stating that the gathering—the ganacakra or tsok—implies a fourfold gathering or tsok.

37 The Stages of Vajra Activity (rdo rje las rim) could refer, as also suggested by Sangye Khandro, to a commentary attributed to Buddhaguhya entitled Stages of Vajra Activity [for the Mayajala] (Mayajalavajrakarma, [Sgyu 'phrul dra ba] rdo rje las [kyi] rim pa.). However, we were unable to locate the quote within this text. Instead, we found the quoted passage within *The Magical Net of Vajrasattva, the Mirror of All Secrets* (Vajrasattvamayajalaguhyasarvadarsha, Rdo rje sems dpa'i sgyu 'phrul dra ba gsang ba thams cad kyi me long) attributed to the translators Vimalamitra and Jñānakumara.

38 That is to say that the support for the siddhis constitutes both a representation of the wisdom mandala, such as a thangka or statue, and the practitioners' visualization of the wisdom mandala.

39 The Pal Heruka Galpo (shriherukavashyaka, dpal he ru ka rgal po), "The Essence of shri Heruka", belongs to the cycle of scriptures dedicated to the ishṭadevata (yi dam) shri Heruka (Yang dag heruka). The Heruka Galpo outlines a variety of rituals common to the Nyingma schools and is as such frequently quoted to by Tibetan authors, especially when commenting upon the ganacakra.

40 The dough (zen) made from mixing roasted barley (tsham pa) with hot water or tea is one of the main traditional foods of the Tibetans.

41 This refers to condiments and seasonings (tshod pa) that are added to some traditional Tibetan foods, such as dried cheese, dried fruits, roots etc.

42 Feast substances (tshogs gtor) here could be translated more literally as the feast tormā. However, since the explanation below addresses foods and drinks in general, the term has been rendered here as feast substances.

43 The term 'feast-wolf behaviour' stresses the importance of a "controlled ritualistic enjoyment". Accordingly, Gönpö Tseten Rinpoche recommends an organized distribution of the foods, starting with the vajra-master and advise the participants not to behave like a 'feast-wolf' or 'jackal' (vrika; spyang ku), that is, to indulge in the sense pleasures and consume the feast to satisfy hunger and thirst. Instead they are instructed to consume the substances with awareness and without falling prey to mindless activities, thus fostering the cause of the substances leading to realization.

44 A full prostration (gral phyag) is the prostration usually performed when entering a temple or when the teacher has taken his seat. A symbolic prostration (tshul phyag) refers to a hand-waving gesture traditionally done to show respect.

45 By acting in inappropriate ways with respect to the samaya connection that the practitioners share with the deities, they impair the samayas and thus the connection

that can bring them to enlightenment. (Oral clarification by Khenpo Pema Namgyal.)

46 Here, Gönpö Tseten Rinpoche, without elaborating further, reminds the reader of the pith-instructions on 'the fortress, pitfalls and life-force' (rdzong 'phrang srog gsum) of the mahayoga practice. For an explanation of these, see: Khangsar Tenpe Wangchuk. "The Light of the Sun and the Moon—Generation and Perfection Stages: Notes Explaining the Words of the Rigdzin Düpa, the Inner Sadhana for the Longchen Nyingtik Cycle," in *The Gathering of Vidyadharas: Text and Commentaries on the Rigdzin Düpa*, edited and translated by Gyurme Avertin, (Boulder: Snow Lion, 2017), 153.

47 See also: Khenpo Chemchok, "The Words of the Vidyadhara That Bestow the Majesty of Great Bliss: Notations on the Rigdzin Düpa, the Inner Sadhana for the Longchen Nyingtik Cycle," in *The Gathering of Vidyadharas: Text and Commentaries on the Rigdzin Düpa*, edited and translated by Gyurme Avertin, (Boulder: Snow Lion, 2017), 77; and Martin Boord, *The Cult of the Deity Vajrakila*, (Tring: The Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1993), 79.

48 For an explanation, see: Khenpo Chemchok, "The Words of the Vidyadhara That Bestow the Majesty of Great Bliss: Notations on the Rigdzin Düpa, the Inner Sadhana for the Longchen Nyingtik Cycle," in *The Gathering of Vidyadharas: Text and Commentaries on the Rigdzin Düpa*, edited and translated by Gyurme Avertin, (Boulder: Snow Lion, 2017), 77.

49 Tib. log rdugs 'byams dang bral ba. Lit. not reversing, or being weak and scattered. In order that the practitioner does not accumulate negative karma, the practitioner's samadhi should be stable, by clearly visualizing him or herself as the deity. In order for the liberation to be effective, the weapon used for the liberation must be visualized as the powerful kila. The practitioner must remain focused on the object of liberation—the enemy of egohood—visualized as Rudra. (Oral clarification by Drokpa Tulku based on Jikme Lingpa's explanation.) Jikme Lingpa states: "Visualize yourself as the deity so that the ritual does not reverse. Visualize the weapon—the dagger—clearly as the kila so that the ritual is effective. Visualize the object of liberation as Rudra so that the ritual is focused." (mi ldog pa'i phyir du rang nyid lhar gsal/ mi rdugs pa'i phyir du sgröl byed phur pa ki la ya gsal/ mi 'byams pa'i phyir du bsgral bya'i rudra dngos su gsal/) 'Jigs med gling pa, *Bla ma dgongs 'dus kyi cho ga'i nam bshad*, (Gser rta rdzong: Gser ljongs bla ma rung lnga rig nang bstan slob grwa chen mo, 2005), 288. For a further explanation, see also: Khangsar Tenpe Wangchuk. "The Light of the Sun and the Moon—Generation and Perfection Stages: Notes Explaining the Words of the Rigdzin Düpa, the Inner Sadhana for the Longchen Nyingtik Cycle," in *The Gathering of Vidyadharas: Text and Commentaries on the Rigdzin Düpa*, edited and translated by Gyurme Avertin, (Boulder: Snow Lion, 2017), 153 (therein the terms have been translated as "irreversibility", "repulsiveness" and "to be without sympathy").

50 The three visualisations (gsal ba gsum) are specific to the liberation offering and are mentioned in the Vajrakila tantras. For an explanation, see: Khangsar Tenpe Wangchuk. "The Light of the Sun and the Moon—Generation and Perfection Stages: Notes Explaining the Words of the Rigdzin Düpa, the Inner Sadhana for the Longchen Nyingtik Cycle," in *The Gathering of Vidyadharas: Text and Commentaries on the Rigdzin Düpa*, edited and translated by Gyurme Avertin, (Boulder: Snow Lion, 2017), 153.

51 The vajra-master's samadhi, or meditative concentration, must have the power to be able to fulfil the three satisfactions ('tsheng pa gsum). This implies that 1. the being liberated is satisfied since its mind is liberated into the dharmadhatu; 2. the deities are satisfied upon receiving the flesh and blood that has been transformed into wisdom nectar; and 3. the vajra-master performing the ritual is satisfied, since as a result of the ritual his or her life force increases. (Oral clarification by Drokpa Tulku)

52 For an explanation of the three supports of life, cleansing and place (tshe khurus gnas gsum), see: Khangsar Tenpe Wangchuk, "The Light of the Sun and the Moon — Generation and Perfection Stages: Notes Explaining the Words of the Rigdzin Düpa, the Inner Sadhana for the Longchen Nyingtik Cycle," in *The Gathering of Vidyadharas: Text and Commentaries on the Rigdzin Düpa*, edited and translated by Gyurme Avertin, (Boulder: Snow Lion, 2017), 154.

53 The seven violations (nyams pa bdun) are to forsake; 1. the life-force, 2. the authentic meaning, 3. the teachings, 4. the samayas, 5. karma; and to violate 6. out of wrong-view or 7. from desire. (yang srog sa nyams pa/ don las nyams pa/ bka' las nyams pa/ dam las nyams pa/ las kyi nyams pa/ mtshan mas nyams pa/ 'dod pas nyams pa bcas so/)

54 The ten grounds (of liberation) ((bsgral ba'i) zhing bcu) refer to the ten evil deeds which – when all present in a single enemy – makes the enemy suitable for liberation. Such a person or spirit is called 'an enemy showing all ten grounds' (zhing bcu tshang ba'i bstan dgra). According to the Nyingma School these are: 1) a general enemy of the Three Jewels (dkon mchog spyi dgra), 2) the personal enemy of the vajra-master (rdo rje slob dpon gyi sgos dgra), 3) a samaya corruptor (dam nyams pa), 4) one who has gone opposite to samaya (dam las log pa); 5) one who has shared secret samayas with those who are improper vessels for the path of secret mantra (dam la 'khus pa ste gsang ba snod ngan la spel ba), 6) one who arrives at a congregation of practitioners and berates them (sgrub pa'i 'du bar 'ong nas gshe ba), 7) one who, like the chief of a band of armed robbers, harms everyone (yongs la gnod pa'i jag dpon lta bu), 8) one called 'hostile to samaya' – who is the sort who needs to be exorcised (dam dgra zhes bya ba ste bzlog pa mkhan lta bu); 9) one whose style of negative conduct is non-virtuous through-and-through (mi dge ba kho na longs spyod pa ngan pa'i ngang tshul can) and 10) beings of the three lower realms (ngan song gsum).

55 Symbolically offer' ('bul tshul) implies that those assembled can simply imagine the three portions being blessed and offered to the deities, one by one.

56 Following the third portion, it is common in the Nyingma tradition to recite a special fulfillment (bskang ba) liturgy, which intends to further enhance the fulfillment power of the ritual.

57 This refers to a particular hand gesture performed by the ritual assistant at this point.

58 At this point the ritual assistant recites a short verse while offering the feast, to which the vajra-master will reply in verse accepting the offering. The ritual assistant may, as translated above, recite "tsok kyi chö pa gyen du rol" (tshogs kyi mchod pa rgyan du rol) or a similar verse. Accepting the offering the vajra-master may reply "a la hoh."

59 The three mandalas refers to the perception that outer, inner and secret phenomena arise as the deity and are offered in the ganacakra.

60 At this point the assembly recites the famous prayer attributed to Longchenpa, beginning with the line, as translated above, “dak lü pung kham kyé ché...” (bdag lus phung khams skye mched...).

61 The hundred peaceful and wrathful deities (zhi khro rigs brgya)

62 The deities of the three seats of completeness (gdan gsum tshang ba'i lha), often referred to as the mandala of the three seats [of completeness] (gdan gsum [tshang ba'i] dkhyil 'khor), are: 1) the tathagatas residing in the aggregates (skandha) and elements (dhatu), 2) the male and female bodhisattvas residing in the sense fields (ayatana), and 3) male and female wrathful deities residing in the limbs (anga).

63 The six satisfactions (tshim pa drug) are explained immediately below.

64 This is a famous four-line prayer, commonly recited within the Nyingma tradition before offering the remainder. The first line of the prayer changes depending on the main deity of the sadhana. The prayer, as quoted by Gönpö Tseten, in full reads: “Hum! By making this feast offering, to the city of Glorious Herukas, may I and others, every single sentient being, attain realization within the same mandala!” Hung, heruka pal drongkhyer du/ tsok kyī chöpa pulwa yi/ dakshyen drowa malüpa/ kyilkhor chik tu drubpar shok/ (hum/ he ru ka dpal grong khyer du/ tshogs kyī mchod pa phul ba yis/ bdag gzhan 'gro ba ma lus pa/ dkyil 'khor gcig tu 'grub par shog/).

65 For an explanation of the eight infractions (sbom po brgyad kyī ya gyal), see: Jigme Lingpa, *Treasury of Precious Qualities Book Two: Vajrayana and the Great Perfection*, Trans. Padmakara Translation Group (Boston: Shambala, 2013), 190–191.

66 The Garland of Pearls (mu tig phreng ba). The same verse also appears within the tantra quoted next, The Union of the Sun and Moon (nyi zla kha sbyor).

67 The Union of the Sun and Moon (nyi zla kha sbyor)

68 The accomplishment practice (sgrub pa) here refers to either a Drupchö (sgrub mchod) or a Drupchen (sgrub chen). Both are two forms of intensive group practices that epitomizes the depth, power, and precision of the Vajrayana, drawing together the entire range of its skilful methods.

69 Tib. zhing lpags. Eng. violator's skin. The skin of a being who has fulfilled the ten grounds of liberation. See the section above on the liberation offering for more details. Rather than using the skin of an actual human being, at this point usually a painting or drawing of a skin is used and sometimes also animal skin. (Oral clarification by Drokpa Tulku.)

70 Dharmodaya (chos 'byung), source of phenomena, is a technical term referring to the drawing of a special triangle used within Vajrayana rituals.

71 This is a reference to the particular way in which the pure and impure remainders are mixed.

72 Here, Gönpö Tseten Rinpoche gives a short line-by-line commentary on a prayer that is often recited in the context of a more elaborate Nyingma sadhana when offering the remainder. Please note that the lines of this prayer can vary from sadhana to sadhana. Rinpoche provides a commentary for the following lines: dangpo pü kyī mi chö gyū/ bardu nyimé chik tu mi rol gyū/ tama lhakmé mi kang gyū/ lhakma khachü mi dren gyū/ detar rimpa sum du mi yé gyū/ tar nyimé chik tu mi sé gyū. (dang po phud kyis mi mchod rgyu zhes/ bar du gnyis med gcig tu mi rol rgyu zhes/ tha ma lhag mas mi bskang rgyu zhes/ lhag ma kha chus mi bran rgyu zhes/ de tar rim pa gsum du mi dbye rgyu zhes/ mthar gnyis med gcig tu mi bsre rgyu zhes/)

73 This refers to the first portion of the remainder that is offered.

74 That is to say that the matrikas and dakinis enjoy the 'best portion' together with the peaceful and wrathful deities.

75 Adzom Gyalse explains that if there is vajra-master with the realization of the view, then he or she can bless the remainder with spit... If the vajra-master does not hold the highest view, the remainder is sprinkled with amrita. Were one to spit on it, it would be as if the guard were contaminating clean food.

76 That is to say that the practitioners now share a samaya connection with the remainder guests.

77 That is to say that it is important to follow the above mentioned three points in the correct order, because some of the deities receiving the remainder are wisdom deities (lords) while others are worldly deities (subjects).

78 This is a reference to the impure remainder that is collected from the assembled. It is either first placed on or below depending on purpose or activity of the sadhana.

79 Since the remainder guests can be potentially harmful, the ritual assistant should avoid direct contact with them. Placing a candle at night within the remainder offering is said to prevent this direct encounter (gdong thug).

80 The relevant passage is from *The Wish-fulfilling Jewel: A Ritual Manual for the Ganacakra* (Tōh. 2494, Tshogs kyi 'khor lo'i cho ga yid bzhin nor bu) preserved in the Tengyur and attributed to Ratnarakṣita.

81 Here, Yeshé Tsogyal instructs the yogins to especially strive in practice on the eighth day (Medicine Buddha & Tara), the tenth (Guru Rinpoche), and the twenty-fifth (dakini) day of the Tibetan calendar.

82 The passage comes from Longchenpa's *Wish-fulfilling Ocean: The Stages of the Feast Offering* (tshogs mchod kyi rim pa yid bzhin rgya mtsho).

83 The *Guru's Jewel Ocean*, Lama Norbu Gyamts'o (bla ma nor bu rgya mtsho), is a terma-treasure revealed by Pema Lingpa (1450–1521).