

Dear All Dharma sisters and brothers,

I trust you are all happy and peaceful as you are supposed to be. I was supposed to write about our winter retreat earlier this year, but I'm writing now. It's still early for me after one or two months, because this winter retreat will continue every year for many years. I announced this year's retreats: Kurukulla, Simhanukham the Lion-faced Dakini, and Guru Rinpoche - all practices to remove obstacles, increase the activity of the dharma, and increase the experience of practitioners.

The main purpose of the interdependent origination of Kurukulla is to protect the dharma from degenerate times such as these, therefore, group practice is essential because it is more powerful than individual practice.

The Tantra of Simhanukham, the Lion-faced Dakini, was first discovered by Shakyamuni Buddha for the protection from the harming influence of curses. Then later, in Guru Rinpoche's time, when the non-Buddhist practitioners used their power to attack the dharma and the Buddhist practitioners, the Buddhist practitioners requested that Guru Rinpoche defend them from these evil masters. Guru Rinpoche discovered the Simhanukham Tantric practices to defend them. Historically, it is said that through the wrathful practice of the Lion-faced Dakini, 500 powerful obstructing non-Buddhist masters were killed by thunderbolt.

Guru Rinpoche was born eight years after Buddha passed away. When Buddha passed away, he encouraged his disciples to be happy because he would return as Guru Rinpoche. The purpose of the Buddha's returning as Guru Rinpoche was to spread Buddhism further and specifically to spread the Tantric tradition. Although Guru Rinpoche is the emanation of the Buddha and one who has natural, innate wisdom, he still went through all the studies with tons of teachers. He abandoned his kingdom, where he was the Prince of Oddiyana, and went to charnel grounds and mountains to practice tantra.

Guru Rinpoche studied with many great masters, such as Manjushrimitra who taught him the peaceful and wrathful deities of Manjushri. He studied with Shri Singha who taught him Dzogpachenpo, the Great Perfection. Vimalamitra taught him the peaceful and wrathful deities of the Amrita lineage. He studied the peaceful and wrathful deities of the lotus lineage with Nagarjuna. He also studied the peaceful and wrathful deities of the eight Sutras with the dakini Karma Indranila. Guru Rinpoche had eight great masters. He studied different practices and Tantric levels, though his main practices were Dzogpachenpo and treasure revelations.

Guru Rinpoche accomplished four kinds of Vidyadhara practices, or Awareness-Holder practices. The Four Kinds of Awareness-Holder practices are: 1. The awareness-holder of maturation རྣམ་གླིན་རིག་འཛོམས་ 2. The awareness-holder of power over the lifespan ཚོ་དབང་རིག་འཛོམས་, 3. The awareness-holder of the great seal ཕྱག་ཚེན་རིག་འཛོམས་, and 4. The awareness-holder of spontaneous presence ལྷན་གྲུབ་རིག་འཛོམས་. This means that Guru Rinpoche accomplished the highest levels of realization in both the Sutrayana and Tantric paths. Guru Rinpoche practiced eight yidam deities such as Vajra Kilaya, Yamantaka, the Lion-faced Dakini, etc. Because of his high accomplishments, realization and great activities, Guru Rinpoche was known in India as “The Sun and All the Stars” and became a very important master in the history of Buddhism in India. When the ripening of karma and aspirations were complete, Guru Rinpoche came to Tibet. The essence of the aspiration and karma which led Guru Rinpoche to come to Tibet were the results of the prayers of very diligent, faithful and knowledgeable disciples in Tibet such as Yeshe Tsogyal (b. 757-817) Vairotsana (b.750?-?), Tritson Detson (b. 740-798) and so on. As a result of their devotion, Guru Rinpoche gave his instructions and treasures to Tibet and the world. Because of Guru Rinpoche’s power and compassion, Buddha dharma was able to spread everywhere in Tibet even though there were many obstacles. Without Guru Rinpoche, this complete conversion to Buddhism in Tibet would have been impossible. Guru Rinpoche gave the teachings on the Eight Mandalas of eight Deities including Manjushri, Yamataka, Hayagriva, Vajra Kilaya etc. to his first group of disciples in Tibet. This first group of twenty-five disciples including Yeshe Tsogyal, Vairotsana, Tritson Detson, etc. achieved great miraculous powers, and high realization.

Guru Rinpoche also established the treasure lineage in Tibet. The treasure lineage is a genuine lineage based on real dharma. Through discovered hidden teachings set in place by Guru Rinpoche, teachings are made available at specific times which maintains a freshness and power to the

teachings. Dharma is medicine, the fresher it is the better, so that is why Guru Rinpoche established these teachings. Through his miraculous powers, Guru Rinpoche hid these teachings in treasure revealers' minds, and in mountains and lakes, etc. all over Tibet. After the treasure teachings have been hidden, a reincarnation of Guru Rinpoche, himself, or a reincarnation of one of his main disciples, [such as Karma Lingpa an incarnation of The translator and disciple of Guru Rinpoche Lu'i Gyeltsen Karma Lingpa (b. 1326-1386) discovered or revealed what is known in the West as The Tibetan Book of the Dead or The Liberation on Hearing or Shitro.] returns to the place of the hidden teachings to reveal them. Guru Rinpoche's treasure lineage will continue forever to benefit people's lives, wealth, dharma practice and environment.

Because of the power of aspirations and the compassion of Buddha Shakyamuni, he is known as the White Lotus" in the text "The Thousand Buddha's in this Fortunate Eon". Similarity, because of his great aspiration, wisdom and compassion, Guru Rinpoche is known as "The Deathless Vajra Master of this Fortunate Eon". Guru Rinpoche has never died.

Why is Guru Rinpoche so valuable and important at this particular time? Because Guru Rinpoche has more power to benefit people in these degenerate times. He has gained that power through his diligence, specific preparation, and his unique, unequalled accumulation of merit and wisdom. Therefore, anyone who has a karmic connection and/or faith in Guru Rinpoche is very fortunate, because ordinary people do not have such wisdom. Through Guru Rinpoche's remarkable foreknowledge or clairvoyance, he was able to predict, in the eighth century, what is happening in Tibet now, and many other things going on in the rest of the world. There are many, many emanations of Guru Rinpoche in Tibet who have given or are giving teachings encompassing the dharma traditions in general, up to the highest Tantric practice Dzogpachenpo or The Great Perfection. These teachers have included the twelve Lingpas, Longchenpa (b.1308-d.1363), Jigme Lingpa (b.1729-d.1798), Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje (b.1800- d.1866), Jamyang Khyentse (b.1820-d.1892) and Lamasang Orgyen Kusum Lingpa (b.1934-d.2009). Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje was the mind emanation of Jigme Lingpa, who founded our Longchen Nying Thig lineage. Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje founded our monastery, the Longnon Monastery, in 1828.

The essence of the Longchen Nyingthig tradition is Dzokpachenpo based on the collection of the teachings by Longchen Rabjam. Longchen Rabjam, or Longchenpa, was the reincarnation of one the

great treasure revealers, Padma Ledretsal. Padma Ledretsal discovered the treasure of The Heart-drops of the Dakini. This work is a direct Dzogchen teaching from Guru Rinpoche to Yeshe Tsogyal and is considered one of the most profound Dzogchen teachings. There are two very important teachings on Dzogchen, one is The Heart-drops of the Dakini, discovered by Padma Ladratsal and the other is the Heart-drops of Vimalamitra. Longchenpa had a direct vision of Vimalamitra during which Vimalamitra taught him his Heart-drop teaching. These two teachings by Padma Ledratsal and Vimalamitra were unified by Longchenpa in the Longchen Nyingthig teachings. Longchenpa's special direct relationship with Padma Ledretsal, through being the lineage-holder, and his relationship with Vimalamitra, through his direct long-term visions, give his commentaries and unifying treatment of these two teachings a natural and profound authenticity. Like two rivers coming together these two teachings were merged by Longchenpa to become the foundation of the Longchen Nyingthig lineage established by Jigme Lingpa.

Longchenpa is known as Manjushri of the snow lands and the founder of the Dzogchen teachings in the history of Tibet. Why are Dzogchen teachings so profound? Because Dzogchen teachings are very deep and the quickest path to enlightenment. Why is Dzogchen so deep? Deep because these teachings are the essential points, made direct, and clear in communicating the nature of the mind - more so than any other teachings. Quickest path means one can, depending on one's mental sharpness, achieve complete realization of enlightenment or one's buddha nature in as little as six months, to a few years, to one's single lifetime. The actual result of Dzogchen practice is rainbow body, not only the mind but the physical body becomes rays of light like a rainbow. Many Dzogchen practitioners in India and Tibet including Garab Dorje, the founder of the Dzogchen teachings in the human realm, have achieved rainbow body. The actual rainbow-body result continues to be achieved by diligent practitioners today.

Traditionally, Dzogchen practice is done privately. There are many great masters that are known as "secret yogi or yogini". These practitioners may not be noticeable because they practice in private and don't announce what they are doing. In the Tantra of Dzogpachenpo it says that the practice is most effective in degenerate times because the Dzogchen practices do not lose the power of the blessings in degenerate times as some other dharma teachings may.

Is Dzogchen practiced by practitioners of other traditions, other than Nyingma tradition? There are many great treasure revealers in other traditions – mainly Sakyapa and Kagyupa. However their

essential practice should be Dzogchen because even if your family affiliation is Sakyapa or Kagupa your treasure revealing is in the Guru Rinpoche/Dzogchen domain. Therefore, there is great reverence for Guru Rinpoche in Sakyapa and Kagyupa lineages.

Did Dzogchen teachings exist in Tibet before Guru Rinpoche came to Tibet? According to the history of the Buddhism which follows Shakyamuni Buddha, the answer is no, This is because the history of Dzogpachenpo is not something separate from Buddha Shakyamuni's tradition. From Garab Dorje to the present day, all Dzogchen practitioners take refuge in Buddha Shakyamuni as the main teacher and take refuge in Buddha Shakyamuni's teachings as the path. They take refuge in Buddha Shakyamuni's Sangha and take them as their spiritual friends. During the time of Buddha Shakyamuni's teachings, in the request for taking refuge in the three jewels, it is assumed that anyone who takes refuge in another system is not really a practitioner in Buddha Shakyamuni's teachings or Dzogchen. Dzogchen is a part of the real dharma of Buddha Shakyamuni and the real history of Tibetan Buddhism comes out of that real dharma of Buddha Shakyamuni and is based on the same principles and historical truths.

Now, we will talk about the history of winter retreat. Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (b.1820-1892) was the body incarnation of Jigme Lingpa, a great master, treasure revealer, and Mahasiddha. Jamyang Khyentse possessed seven kinds of transmissions such as: the oral tradition transmission, the hidden in the earth transmission, the hidden in the mind transmission, the secret outlook and recollection transmission, the hearing transmission, etc. He is the greatest tertön in the both the Ningma and Sakya traditions and we start the winter retreat according to his prophecy.

The word Golog, in Tibetan, is derived from a word that means troublemaker. Before the great Mahasiddha Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje established a significant dharma presence in Golog, Golog was a very wild, lawless, and remote area. Jamyang Khyentse prophesied that Karma Lingpa's Liberation on Hearing practice or Shitro practice would help the people of Golog tame their wildness. He saw that many people in Golog did not understand the laws of karma and cause and result. Out of his compassion, he wanted to help them. He asked Do Khyentse to propagate Karma Lingpa's The Liberation Through Hearing practice and established the Shitro tradition in Golog. Do Khyentse accomplished this and established the tradition, according to Jamyang Khyentse's prophecy. That is the foundation of our winter retreat today.

There are ten throne holders or tradition holders of our monastery - ten vajra masters historically starting with Do Khyentse and up to me in the present day. This monastery was a nomadic monastery, which means there was no building or location. So the monastery moved around using tents. The seventh throne holder was Lamasang's uncle, Sonam Kye Drup (b. app.1860- d.1940), the emanation of one of the Eight Great Bodhisattvas named Sarvanivaransvishkambhin. Sonam Kye Drup taught Shitro and Bardo teachings with such compassion and ability that he greatly increased the number of sangha members, lay practitioners and students.

The ninth throne holder was Lamasang, Orgyen Kusum Lingpa (b,1934-2009) an emanation of Vajrapani and Lhalung Palgyi Dorje, one of the twenty-five original heart disciples of Guru Rinpoche. He became a terton when he was 18 years old through seeing Samye and remembering his past lives. He had a vision of the fire blazing charnel grounds, the pure land of Hayagriva when he was 23years old. At Hayagriva's pure land he received empowerments and blessings from the wrathful deities, yidams and dakinis and purified obscurations. He also received prophecies or information about the future of Buddha's teachings and the state of people from Ekajati the main protector of Dzogpachenpo. Lamasang also received a prophecy about his own departure or death, which occurred precisely as stated in the prophecy he received at age 23

According to the prophecies of great masters such as, the 1st Dodrupchen, the 4th Dzogchen Rinpoche, and many other important lamas, Lamasang's discovered termas of the Fire Vehicle Yamaraja, the Three Wrathful forms of Guru Rinpoche, and the Eight Sutras were instrumental in preserving Buddha's teachings in Tibet. According to the prophecies, these three termas saved the life of Buddha's teachings in Tibet, despite negative factors such as the cultural revolution. That shows how important Lamasang's appearing and discovering the terma was at that time and place. Lamasang went through immeasurable difficulties - he could have died many times, but because of his aspirations, efforts and courage he not only survived but was constantly active with an inexhaustible energy. Because of his compassion and wisdom, he was able to increase activities of the dharma and the devotion of people and in particular, he made the practices of Shitro and the Six Bardo teachings more prominent and helpful for many people. Since he was young, he had dreams and visions of rebuilding Longngon Monastery. He also had visions of his future international activities of spreading the dharma to benefit many beings including his visions that displayed people with blue

eyes, big noses, a lot of body hair, and people who talk like birds and argue a lot and don't agree with each other. Through all his varied activity, he always tried very hard to protect the integrity of the Shitro tradition established by Do Khyentse and actually did a lot of very successful work here in Golog for that.

Because of the interdependent origination of the aspirations of Do Khyentse and Lamasang the Shitro tradition has been a very rich tradition in Golog. When people die here in Golog, people arrange things very nicely. They invite lamas to practice and chant Shitro for 49 days for the deceased. They prepare food, make offerings and arrange receptions etc. for the Shitro practice.

So what is Shitro practice and how did it come to be? Shitro means Peaceful and Wrathful deities and is a practice based on the mandala of the 100 Peaceful and Wrathful deities. It also includes the female and male Five Buddha families, the female and male Eight Bodhisattvas, the Six Munis and Five Wrathful Herukas and their Consorts etc. Shitro presents a very clear introduction to the six Bardos: 1. the Bardo of life, 2. the Bardo of Samadhi, 3. the Bardo of the Moment of Death, 4. the Bardo of Dream, 5. the Bardo of Dharmata, and 6. the Bardo of Becoming or Possibilities. Nothing, among the different aspects and practices is not included in the term the Six Bardos. The Six Bardos are only taught in this complete and clear way in the Tantra of The Liberation on Hearing.

The Hundred Peaceful and Wrathful Deities seem to be like external appearances, but in fact they are one's own naturally appearing perceptions of the mind. Because of this, one will be able to liberate through hearing the teachings of the bardos and seeing the appearances of the deities as described in the teachings during the practice. This is especially so during the bardo of becoming, also known as the bardo of possibilities. In the bardo of becoming or the bardo of possibilities, one is open to the instructions and descriptions, and by following along one approaches liberation. In other words, the bardo teachings are more effective and more powerful and beneficial when one is in the bardo of possibilities, because the consciousness of one in that state is pretty fearful and hopeless and one is searching for direction. The Shitro practice is a profound teaching of dharma because it is based on the nature of the mind and the appearances of that nature as fluid, naturally occurring, organic manifestations of one's own awareness. Therefore, the main part of the Shitro practice is Ati yoga (Dzogchen) which means the highest yana of all 84,000 dharma teachings.

The lineage of this Shitro practice is the same as the lineage of Dzogpachenpo. In the Nyingma tradition, in each Tantric practice, there are transmissions of three lineages; the mind lineage, the symbol lineage and the hearing lineage. I will explain more of the hearing lineage of the Shitro practice.

King Tritson Detson, his son, translator Lu'i Gyeltson and many other of the disciples of Guru Rinpoche prepared a gold Mandala filled with turquoise, coral and many other valuable things. They said to Guru Rinpoche, "Great Vajra Master Guru Rinpoche, your kindness and compassion is vast like space, and we will never be able to repay your kindness. You have given so much that nobody else can, or will ever be able to give. We are so fortunate for that. But, we want to request that you give us a very profound teaching that has not been taught before. A teaching that is the essence of all the external and inner yantras, so that one can achieve enlightenment in one single life, a teaching where one doesn't have to undertake hardships, a teaching where one is liberated just by hearing the teachings. They requested this with tears of devotion and profound supplication to Guru Rinpoche. Then Guru Rinpoche said to them, "Lord king, you and your son, the ministers and the disciples, at your request, I have such dharma. But, this is not suitable for the little-minded and/or faithless people with wrong view. Therefore, you should not show this teaching to such people. I will bury the teaching as a treasure for the benefit of people in the future. It is the teaching of the heart essence of Samantabhadra and is the essential point of all the 6,400,000 Dzogpachenpo Tantras. It is a teaching that prevents taking rebirth in the lower realms just through hearing, a teaching leading to great bliss through hearing, a teaching with the approach which is that of the Vidyadhara level of spontaneous presence by thinking of the meaning. It is a teaching of all the essence of the outer and inner yantras, a teaching where one can achieve enlightenment in a single lifetime. Then Guru Rinpoche taught the entire teaching on the Six Bardos. That is how this teaching first came about on this earth.

Guru Rinpoche, for the benefit of the people in the future with lower levels of merit, said, "I will name this Shitro practice The Profound practice of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities that Liberates on Hearing and I will bury this as a treasure to be discovered in the future. Then miraculously with many prayers and aspirations to avert obstacles Guru Rinpoche buried the treasure at Gampo Mountain in Central Tibet and made a prophecy about Karma Lingpa who would discover the treasure.

As a result of Guru Rinpoche's prayers and aspirations, the treasure revealer Karma Lingpa was born in Central Tibet. Karma Lingpa, was an incarnation of translator Lu'i Gyeltsen, one of the disciples of Guru Rinpoche. His father was Nyda Sange a Mahasiddha and terton. Karma Lingpa discovered the Shitro on Gampo mountain and secretly practiced Shitro all his life. Right before he passed away he taught and gave empowerments of the Shitro practice to his son Nyda Choje, who became a Shitro lineage holder. Karma Lingpa also said to his son, that he was not to show this treasure to anyone except Nyda Odzer, who is mentioned in the prophecy, and will be a lineage holder of the Shitro practices. Later when Nyda Choje met Nyda Odzer, he told him, "You are mentioned by my father and are the third lineage holder. I have not showed this practice to anyone and until the third generation of lineage holders the practice has remained secret ". The Karma Lingpa Treasure was initially a single lineage-holder transmission - from one person to one person transmission. Nyda Choje told Nyda Odzer to practice the Shitro secretly for six years, after which time, it was to be shown to others. The Karma Lingpa prophecy stated that the treasure teaching would spread from around Gampo mountain to the north. Nyda Odzer transmitted the teaching to Namkha Gyatso who gave public empowerments and the teachings eventually spread all over Tibet and the world.

As a Nyingmapa lama, one must have this teaching and practice. The Shitro practice is very openly practiced in the Sakya and Kagyu traditions as well. Hundreds of thousands of real stories exist of people benefiting from Shitro practice. In Lamasang's treasure writings, there are many references to Lamasang being a reincarnation of Karma Lingpa. Maybe that's one reason Lamasang had so much devotion and interest in teaching Shitro practice for many years to very many people. Lamasang made it very clear to me that the Shitro practices should be continued by me until I died.

Lamasang was the one who founded the modern Longngon monastery and eventually we moved to Longngon village where we are located now. Lamasang built the Amdo Samye main temple and the Great Stupa, and other buildings to house monks beginning around 1985. He established the Vajra Kilaya retreat center and the dharma school. Lamasang taught the teachings for Shitro and the winter retreat for thirty plus years.

I was recognized as the fifth reincarnation of Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje by Lamasang Orgyen Kusum Lingpa, H.H. The 4th Dodrupchen Rinpoche, H.H. Penor Rinpoche, and other important lamas. I was officially enthroned by the Longngon monastery with the required permit from the Chinese government

in 1994. I am the tenth throne holder. I received the necessary teachings, empowerments and instructions from Lamasang and other great lamas such as the H.H. Dodrupchen Rinpoche, H.H. Penor Rinpoche, H.H. Katog Moksa Rinpoche, and others. I practiced accordingly to become a dharma teacher. I did a lot of recitations of mantra for the Three Roots including Shitro and many other practices to be able to, and to have authority to, give teachings, empowerments, and instructions. Another important bit of information about me, is that I have received Dzogchen teachings from H.H. Kang Sar Tenpai Anshok who was a tertön and reincarnation of the heart-son of Vairocana, and one of the twenty-five disciples of Guru Rinpoche, Yudra Nyingpo. He was a very important Dzogchen teacher famous throughout Tibet and taught at many monasteries. H.H. Kang Sar Tenpai Anshok gave Yeshe Lama teachings at Longngon Monastery in 2011. At that time, he recognized me as the main lineage holder for the Yeshe Lama/Dzogchen lineage.

Another very great and important Dzogchen master, H.H. Kenchen Padma Wangyal was one of the main students of Tupga Rinpoche, the main root guru of Jigme Phuntsog Jongne. H.H. Kenchen Padma Wangyal was a student of, and received Nyingthig Yabshi from, Kenpo Kunzang Palden. Kenpo Kunzang Palden was student of Lord Patrul Rinpoche and wrote a famous commentary on *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* and Patrul Rinpoche's teachings and commentaries on bodhicitta based on Shantideva's *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*.

Nyingthig Yabshi is the four branches of the heart essence of the Dzogchen cycle by Longchen Rabjam, central to the Dzogchen practice now on the earth. I received, two times, the Nyingthig Yabshi and all the related empowerments, teachings, and commentaries from H.H. Kenchen Padma Wangyal. H.H. Kenchen Padma Wangyal had direct visions of Longchenpa. He received teachings and transmissions from Longchen Rabjam directly, which he used in his teachings to us. H.H. Kenchen Padma Wangyal was also a very important lineage holder of Dzogchen generally and specifically the Nyingthig Yabshi. In 2017, I and many sangha members from Longngon Monestery, went to his monastery to finish some of the teachings in the Nying Thig Yabshi. At that time, he announced to the many people in the public teachings, that he had designated me to carry on this tradition and transmit and teach this lineage in the future.

Although I have had great, masters in general and particularly in Dzogchen teachings, my main, root guru is Lamasang. He is the teacher who first introduced me to rigpa, or the nature of mind, when I

was 15 years old. That specific introduction from Lamasang was the most effective. Since then, my main practice has been Dzogpachenpo. I know I am a slow person, very busy with unimportant things, and lazy when it comes to dharma, but I still try to practice and to remain in rigpa as much as I can.

Realization, or recognizing rigpa, based on accumulations, genuine devotion, profound instructions from a genuine guru, there are many other factors too, but the central parts or most important are devotion to the guru and one's own nature. Practicing outer Ngondro, inner Ngondro, and guru yoga, as well as practicing diligently and faithfully are key to attaining realization.

I have tried to practice different practices, like mind training and visualization meditations. But to me, what works the best, to make my mind calm, peaceful and clear, is to remain in rigpa because remaining in rigpa means to see directly your mind's nature. This is essentially Dzogpachenpo. Nothing is as simple or as effective as Dzogpachenpo practice. Of course, for Lamasang, it is not just that Dzogpachenpo was his main practice and Dzogchen teachings were very important to him, it is also that he had attained high realization of Dzogchen. Therefore, Lamasang constantly, and repeatedly told us to, remain in rigpa, remain in rigpa, remain in rigpa, no wandering in thoughts, no remaining in thoughts, no being distracted by thoughts, no being attached to thoughts. This is the essential point of all of Lamasang's teachings in his entire life. Since Dzogpachenpo teachings were very important to Lamasang, he always wanted Dzogchen teachings to remain on this earth for the benefit of sentient beings. Specifically, he had a lot of personal commitment to, and close connections with, the Shitro and Six Bardo teachings for this purpose. In addition, Lamasang made particular arrangements for me to listen to the teachings, receive empowerments and to receive all the necessary things for teaching, directly from him. He told me privately and in public that, "Hungkar Dorje will teach the Six Bardos, and he should teach them, and he has to teach them." Also, he believed me to be his treasure lineage holder for The Three Principal Wrathful Deities, Yamantaka, Orgyen Dzambhala, Vara Kilaya, and the Eight Sadhanas of the Eight Deities. This is how he allowed the transition from him to me, and for me to run the monastery and to lead all the dharma activities including winter retreat.

Lamasang and other lamas said that I was a reincarnation of the great Dzogchen practitioners, Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje, Tritson Detson, and Hungkara, one of the eight great Vidyadaras of India.

Although I don't know exactly if I was these great masters in the past, I believe I have practiced Dzogchen in past lives, because I have had a deep and natural devotion to Dzogpachenpo since the time I was very little. This natural condition makes everything easier and possible in practice, allowing one to improve one's experience of the practice. Even though I worked for the monastery and gave some teachings and some empowerments, which started in the 1990s, I have officially become the primary dharma teacher at the monastery since Lamasang's passing in 2009. It has been ten years since I have taken over these responsibilities and lead winter retreat.

The people have become more faithful and more trusting in me, now, than they were in the beginning. The people here including the monks, nuns, and yogis have a good foundation of knowledge of dharma, and they understand how to accept a lama as their main teacher. Here in Golog, people don't accept, very easily, just anyone to be the main guru, and this is as it should be. Knowledge from hearing many dharma scriptures, conduct that follows the dharma scriptures, and experience of the meaning of the scriptures, those three are the main qualities that must be developed for an acceptable dharma teacher.

I and many other people, have seen some geshe, and khenpos who can talk a lot, and are said to be knowledgeable in many texts, but are leading people to the wrong path. Therefore, action or good conduct is more important than knowledge. Experience of wisdom and compassion is real wisdom and compassion. Wisdom and compassion experienced is more important than mere knowledge and conduct, even seemingly good conduct that is not based on experience. Experience of anything in dharma is from real practice. Real practice is not only studying, not only thinking, but combining your action with understanding. Someone who has studied a lot in a monastery or with some lamas or teachers, that doesn't necessarily mean they are a good dharma practitioner, especially if they have not combined their understanding with their actions. That type of person can lead people to the wrong path.

Everyone knows that it is very important to follow a qualified dharma teacher who can lead you to the correct dharma way. Sometimes people follow the wrong teachers due to their bad luck, misfortune and misunderstanding. So due to their bad luck misfortune and misunderstanding, they have been unable to connect with the genuine dharma. When seeing such people one feels very sorrowful and pity, but it is not easy to save them. That is because of their heavy karma and ignorance and also because of their willfulness and kleshas. Mental kleshas are so strong. Mental kleshas are

everywhere in peoples' minds. Because kleshas, or negative emotions, are the reason we are born in the human realm. I see this human realm as very similar to the realm of the jealous gods, because jealousy is the treasure in peoples' hearts. That's why it's impossible to be with someone who is not jealous. I personally, have grown up with different kinds of jealous people everywhere, different kinds of jealous people including my friends, relatives, khenpos, lamas, and tulkus including people with very close connections. That's the reason that anyone, including me, finds it very difficult to be "the perfect one" for everyone.

Vairocana said something like, "Nobody may be satisfied, but it is good enough to do things that don't upset the Buddha." It is good enough to not cheat those who believe or trust in you. It is good enough for dharma followers to not jump into a connection for the wrong personal reason, but to follow a teacher for the purpose of dharma. It is good enough to follow the dharma teacher not because of dharma politics. It is good enough to follow a dharma teacher not for the purpose of being against somebody. It is good enough to follow a dharma teacher when not knowing a lot. It is good enough to follow a dharma teacher without too much doubt.

When people follow a teacher for those wrong reasons that I mentioned, people will waste a lot of time, a lot of wealth, create bad karma and eventually they either lose their faith or regret it and meet a bad result. They also miss a good opportunity in this life and the next lives. Therefore, anyone who wants to be a dharma teacher, has to understand that one is responsible for the future of one's followers and try their best. Anyone who wants to be a dharma follower, must understand they are responsible for their future lives. Dharma is not just a toy to play with, it's not just a position from which to show your power, it's not a joke with which to tease people. Dharma is the path to liberation, the path from which you escape your bad karma. Using dharma in the correct way is amrita that destroys one's depression and negative emotions. Dharma used incorrectly is poison that destroys one's happiness and positive things. Because of that, everyone has to try sincerely and correctly.

It's important for a dharma teacher to have a good life history and an unbroken and clean lineage. That is because those conditions constitute a source of very reliable information that can help one evaluate a teacher and determine if that person will be a good teacher. All the Budhas, bodhisattvas and great masters have good life stories and clean lineages.

It is very common, for anyone, to be in possession of rumors. It is not considered appropriate to have, or spread, rumors about the relationship between a student and a teacher. Broken commitments or samaya with one's guru or root guru must be taken on a very serious level. In the Sutras and Tantras it says, that if a dharma student, or dharma teacher has samaya with their root guru, and then breaks samaya, condemns that teacher, fights with that teacher, etc., then our relationship with that person stains us and must be abandoned. If we suspect that someone has broken their samaya, by hearing, seeing or having doubts about them, as dharma people, we must withdraw from that relationship.

The biggest problem is when students break samaya with their guru, and they don't accept it. They pretend nothing has happened. This is happening in Buddhist societies. It shouldn't be happening, but it is. It is happening in the Tibetan Buddhist communities in India, in Tibet, and in the West, etc. So, therefore, be honest, smart, and be careful. If one does break samaya with one's guru, the best way forward is to accept that it happened, regret that it happened, confess it to the guru, and reconnect with the guru.

Just to be a dharma teacher is probably not that hard. But, it is difficult to be a good dharma teacher who has knowledge and who has received the actual lineage transmission. Also, it is difficult to be a good dharma teacher in important monasteries and dharma schools. What makes a monastery an important monastery is to have a good curriculum or course of study, with superior and complete texts, and also to have important lamas there. Longngon Monastery is known by many people in Tibet because of our dharma school and Lamasang. Lamasang was well-known, not necessarily for his scholarship, but for his higher perception, prophecies, miraculous signs, and profound realization. Therefore, he gave Longngon Monastery a good reputation for dharma studies and dharma practice. Lamasang lived humbly and practiced contentment very well, with little attachment to material things. He also taught us that, and how important it is to have a simple life. It's difficult to remember this teaching and even more difficult to follow this teaching. When I actually started running the monastery, after Lamasang passed away, I found that many, or some monks, and some dharma practitioners here were deeply interested in material things. Because Lamasang was either sick or busy and the monks and practitioners lacked his teachings, a lot of them were distracted by making money and not able to focus on dharma during the 2000 to 2009 period. So I tried very hard to fix that problem, and gave a lot of teachings on how to have a genuine life as a monk, a nun, or a yogi. It took

some years to really address the problem, but now it looks like it is going pretty well. Those kinds of problems exist in many monasteries in different Buddhist traditions, especially in monasteries that are tourist attractions. The monastery is continually expanding, by the numbers of monks and nuns, by geographical area, by the number of buildings, etc. We are keeping all the important traditions of Lamasang's as a foundation. When we establish new traditions like the dharma schools in the yogi center, nunnery, and The Manjushri Garden School which is for young monks, these are integrated as support for the existing traditions. I further supported existing traditions when I built the Yeshe Lama retreat centers for monks and nuns, The Meditation Center for the Heart-essence of the Dakini and the Troma Ling retreat center for Chod practice for the nuns.

There are around sixty more khenpos at the monastery now than eight years ago in 2012. There are more dharma activities now than before, such as, the Dzambhala Monlam, the Sukuvati Prayer Festival, the Kurukulla Prayer Festival, Longchenpa's Anniversary Practice, Lamasng's Anniversary Practice, Manjushri Recitation, and Green Tara Prayer Festival. Every winter Solstice, we practice Kshitigarbha. We also chant the King of Aspiration Prayer for Good Conduct for two days. This is specifically for people who give money to request prayers for the deceased (This supplements all the other rituals and prayers for the dead including Shitro). We try to serve people, particularly the people who attend the winter retreat. We give out free medicines – Tibetan, Chinese and Western medicines. We give rice, cooking bowls, flour, and oil as part of our free food distributions. We regularly offer tormas, flowers, incense, wine and water, and tsog, etc. as part of our ceremonies and rituals.

Lamasang taught winter retreat teachings outside. There were not many formal ceremonies like now. It was simple. It was difficult for peoples' health because there were no facilities and it was cold and it effected their joints and made them bent over. Therefore, I wanted to protect their health from the sharp wind and extreme cold, so we built big teaching rooms that could hold 4-5000 people. Even though the room may reduce the cold a lot, it is still cold inside when it is very cold outside, which is most of the winter months. We also prepared offering things according to the text for different ceremonies. So including all ceremonies and the Shambala Prayer Festival we were spending over one million yuan in a year, very easily.

Lamasang was a great master, therefore it was okay for him to be unelaborate. But the most common way for most Buddhist people including high lamas, is to be fairly elaborate and to do things formally, but, of course, according to one's conditions. Doing dharma activities formally takes a lot of energy, time, and expenses. But, this is also a sincere way to pay respects to the Buddha, and a way to accumulate merit through taming stinginess. Buddha taught and allowed to be simple and informal, those who are very much without desire, and those who are beggars. But, Buddha requested that people with the ways and means, should do things for the dharma as nicely as possible. So I think, I have a different style, in that respect, from Lamasang, because, I like to lead people and show people things that are supposed to be done in rituals and practice. Even though we are trying to make things proceed as nicely as possible, we are not doing anything too extremely.

Keeping a kind of big monastery, like this monastery, is not easy, especially if it is in a very high, cold in the winter and hot sun during the day in the summer, place, again, like this monastery. Where conditions are tough, at high altitude, with unskilled workers who have not worked under those conditions and do bad work because of it, combined with the punishing environment can destroy construction projects very easily. Therefore, I can say, in fact, this monastery has had to be built two times, for everything, from 1985-2020. During Lamasang's time, the main temple and the Great Stupa had to be built twice. The living quarters for the monks, nuns and yogis I have had to build twice. Not only that, but everything else other than the main temple and the Stupa, I have had to rebuild, or build at least twice. People may think, it's very relaxed and enjoyable to be the head of this monastery, in fact, if you wish to take my place, you are welcome to, so, then I can retire. These facts may not be directly related to winter retreat, but if this monastery dies, this very beneficial and historical winter retreat tradition and many other meaningful things will disappear too.

There are some very lucky heads of monasteries who don't have to spend money on the monastery or for the activities in the monastery. They just have to give some teachings. Some of them are not prepared to give teachings. Sometimes they are not willing to teach out of a sense of humility. Some unlucky ones, have to take care of everything, and give all the teachings. I am that kind of unlucky one. A lot of heads of monasteries are very smart so they don't tell you what they have, although they have everything. I'm not smart, so I tell everything. In fact, I have a lot of things, but I can tell you, I don't have any savings. I am very happy about this, because I have courage not to have any savings. This is because when I have things, I want to use them to make the monastery an interesting and

beautiful place that will continue to amaze and please people beyond my lifetime. When I have money, I want to spend it. What I spend it on is for a positive result, like the school, the clinic, charity and monastery. I'm not trying to be critical of anyone specifically, but to give you genuine information within a realistic context. We have a very good system which enables us to keep track of every dollar we spend. We have checks and balances at multiple levels, so for instance, when I allocate money for something, it is reviewed and signed off on by two different people. All of those purchases and/or allocations go to the board of the monastery who also review them. At the end of every year, we release and publish everything that has come into the monastery and what has gone out and where that money was spent. We have a good reputation because of this method of transparency which keeps everything clear to everyone.

My main reason to run this monastery is because of Lamasang's request – his request and his final words. It was not something I really always wanted. What I'm doing for the monastery is to repay Lamasang's kindness and to follow his instructions. Not only Lamasang's instructions, but also the instructions of my other kind gurus who told me to continue this tradition. Therefore, it will be very beneficial for us – beneficial for the tradition here, and beneficial for you, not only now, but for your future lives, as well, to participate physically, mentally, and in all ways, showing everyone your respect for Lamasang, and love for Lamasang and even more so your love for the Buddha and your path.

Longngon Monastery January 5, 2020
Hungkar Dorje
Secretary: John Crigler