

# BUDDHISM

BOUNDLESS JOY AND FREEDOM

# TODAY

**H.H. the 16th Karmapa on  
Guru Yoga Meditation**

**Working with Emotions**

**Transmission of Tibetan Buddhist  
Practice, Part III: Activity**

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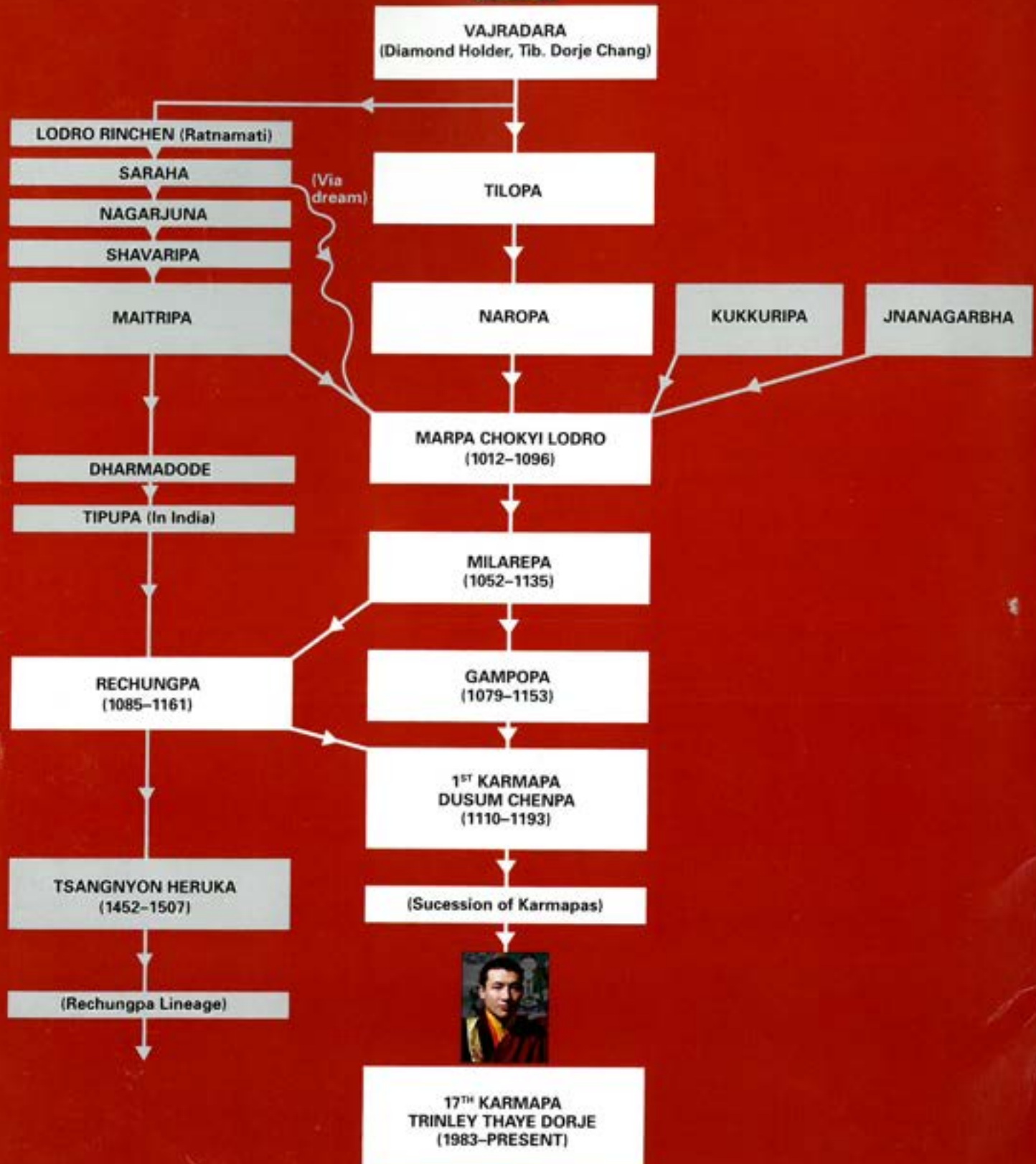
**28**

FALL/WINTER 2011



**On the cover:** H.H. the 16<sup>th</sup> Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje

## THE MARPA KAGYU LINEAGE



# BUDDHISM

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## TODAY

FALL/WINTER 2011 NUMBER 28

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*Buddhism Today* aims to be a living document of authentic Buddhist transmission intended for the lay person and yogi practitioner in the West. It is meant for people leading normal, active lives, who wish to understand and experience mind's vast potential.

*Buddhism Today* will challenge your mind by providing information and news that appeals to the discriminating individual. No religious truth can be above science or humanism, and *Buddhism Today's* aim is to work with and complement these areas of contemporary thought. For this reason, Buddhism appeals to educated, critical-thinking people with fresh, independent minds—people for whom nihilism rings hollow and existentialism provides no joy.

The teachings presented here are beneficial if taken at face value, but they can provide boundless levels of joy and freedom when applied at the Diamond Way (vajrayana) level. This magazine supports an authentic transmission because of its direct connection to the "hearing lineage" of accomplished practitioners in the Karma Kagyu school. Whether you are a casual reader or a devoted practitioner, we hope to provide something in these pages to support your understanding and development.

It is said that we live in "interesting times." To some, these words reflect the degenerative nature of the modern world in which we live. But to us, these words are a call to action and a statement of renewal, an opportunity for seeing new possibilities and openings. In either case, we promise to expound joy and humanism above political correctness or dogmatic assumptions.

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## Dear Reader,

This issue is dedicated to the many diverse voices of the Diamond Way Karma Kagyu lineage. For over 1,000 years the Karma Kagyu has specialized in, preserved, and accomplished some of Buddha's most profound teachings. With the lineage's monastic, yogi, and lay teachers it can be a little surprising how these teachings can be taught from, and be applicable to, so many different perspectives. This variety is something we are proud to showcase in each issue of *Buddhism Today*.

What unifies these many voices is the realization that comes from applying their instructions. Like many paths to the same destination, or many fingers pointing at the same moon, the teachings are not intended to be ends in themselves; rather, their realization is. In our tradition the main method is for the student to eventually realize that their mind and the mind of the enlightened teacher are actually the same. This passing on of enlightened experience, what we call transmission, is symbolized by the blue Buddha Diamond Holder (Tib. Dorje Chang or Skt. Vajradara) and how he appears on the Karma Kagyu refuge tree.

When we see Diamond Holder on the refuge tree he is surrounded by the realized teachers of the lineage who, in their lifetimes, were able to pass on their realization. The fact that they are all arranged around Diamond Holder shows that, in spite of their very unique personalities, they all attained the same realization. The main teacher in our lineage today who possesses and passes on Diamond Holder's realization is the Karmapa, whose 16th incarnation is featured on our cover.

In this issue we are pleased to present a previously unpublished teaching by the 16th Karmapa with advice on Guru Yoga practice. It is particularly special because the main Buddha form of this practice is the 16th Karmapa himself. Complementing this teaching is the final installment of Lama Ole's talk on transmission in Tibetan Buddhist practice, where he explains how we can use the form of the 16th Karmapa to remind ourselves of our enlightened nature and act from that perspective in even the most mundane life situations. We also feature some excellent teachings on working with disturbing emotions by Jigme Rinpoche, and on meditation by Hannah Nydahl. In addition, we have some exciting scholarship about the Yogi Rechungpa, and an article on the parallels between Buddhism and modern cosmology.

We hope you enjoy the many voices contained herein and wish you a very happy and healthy Fall and New Year.

All Joys,



Jonathan Bradley  
Executive Co-Editor



Refuge tree with Diamond Holder as the central figure

Explanation on the Guru Yoga

# "The Seedlings of the Four Buddha States"

Given by H.H. the  
16th Gyalwa Karmapa  
USA, September 1980

Translated from Tibetan by  
Ngodup T. Bukhar  
Revised from Tibetan by  
Manfred Seegers



*Editor's Note: This commentary was given orally by the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje in 1980. Today, the meditation is sometimes called Guru Yoga meditation and sometimes called the 16th Karmapa Meditation. In the late 1960's the 16th Karmapa made Lama Ole and Hannah Nydahl holders of this meditation. As Diamond Way Buddhism has developed and grown in the West, this meditation has been, and continues to be, the main meditation practice.*

*This English version has never been printed. With the blessing of Lama Ole Nydahl, Michaela Fritzges and Manfred Seegers took charge of the project of making this commentary available in print.*

*The explanations given here refer to the version of the meditation that was published in a special edition in 1999*

*on the occasion of the first visit to the West by the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa Trinley Thaye Dorje. Following the wishes of the 16th Karmapa, Lama Ole Nydahl has formulated today's version of the meditation in a contemporary and accessible way for the West.*

*The complete Tibetan title of this meditation is bla ma'i rnal byor sku bzhi i myu gu skyed byed bdud rtsi i char rgyun. The English rendition of the full title is The Meditation on the Teacher, the Streaming Rain of Nectar, Which Develops the Seedlings of the Four Buddha States.*

*All footnotes in this text have been provided by the editors of Buddhism Today. The editors are especially grateful to Manfred Seegers for his careful and wise oversight of what appears here.*

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## "The Guru is the embodiment or the accumulation of the four kayas."

**A**s it is said in the teachings, the root of a thousand Buddhas is one's Guru, one's teacher. So generally, the guru plays a predominant role in one's realization. The buddha nature pervades all sentient beings. According to the Sutras and the practice of the Enlightened Attitude one works towards the liberation of beings taking many eons for one to attain the state of enlightenment. According to the Tantras the practice is the direct recognition of one's inherent potential or that of one's embodiment of the three vajras, the indestructible nature of body, speech and mind.

First, when one begins to become a teacher oneself, one's aspiration is to have the knowledge that suffering pervades all the limitless sentient beings. On the basis of this understanding one wants to liberate all sentient beings from their suffering. With one's embodiment of the buddha nature one sees the possibilities for doing that. Thus, until all sentient beings are liberated, one would like to remain in the cycle of existence working for the benefit of beings.

Such a genuine Enlightened Attitude also means that one desires to have a complete exchange in terms of giving all one's happiness to the beings and taking their suffering upon oneself. A complete exchange. That includes a determination, a confidence and courage that one will be capable of liberating all beings. This is based on the power of the inherent potential and the power of the aspiration of the Enlightened Attitude.

The experience of the awakening, the realization of the truth state, the Dharmakaya<sup>1</sup>, takes place on the basis of the inherent potential and one's aspiration [to the Enlightened Attitude]. Having attained the state of the Dharmakaya, the enlightened activities are spontaneous in terms of liberating sentient beings. At this point there is no desire any more to have the power to liberate beings, but the power to liberate beings is spontaneous. It is a natural quality of the state of the Dharmakaya, a spontaneous pervasive activity of the enlightened beings.

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<sup>1</sup> The four aspects of the buddha mind are known as the four kayas. They are: The Dharmakaya—the all pervading truth state  
The Sambhogakaya—the joy state  
The Nirmanakaya—the compassionate emanation state  
The Svabhavikakaya—the inseparability of the three kayas as the essential state.

When one sees the way things are and recognizes that their mind is like space (Dharmakaya), then one becomes fearless. With nothing to be afraid

of, one is joyful in every way (Sambhogakaya). And from this basis of good feelings brought about by seeing the nature of one's mind, one is naturally compassionate (Nirmanakaya) because from this vantage point, it is the only reasonable activity. These three kayas are seen ultimately as being the inseparable characteristics of the buddha mind, or in this case the guru mind (Svabhavikakaya). Even more simply put, it can be said that "highest truth is highest joy" and "highest joy is highest functioning."

The state of the Dharmakaya is actually inconceivable, beyond concepts, beyond the explanation in words and thoughts. If one asks whether or not this state actually exists, it is not possible to say that it exists. But one also cannot say that something like that is not taking place, because the enlightened state of the Dharmakaya pervades all beings, yet it is beyond thoughts, beyond all extremes. It is beyond all reference points.

Such a Dharmakaya state of enlightenment is beyond ordinary terms or explanations. It goes beyond the four extremes and the eight mental fabrications. The natural quality of the Dharmakaya

is great compassion for all sentient beings; the awakened energy is all-pervading and working for the benefit of all beings, yet it is beyond ordinary perception and conceptualizations. If one says that it is not contained in the eight-fold group of consciousness, this is not true, because it pervades all sentient beings. But even if it is present in the eight-fold group of consciousness, it goes beyond the perception of ordinary beings; it is completely beyond conceptual states of mind.

Then, from the power of the Dharmakaya naturally manifests the Sambhogakaya. Among the four states of a buddha the manifestation of the Sambhogakaya also does not arise through some kind of concept or through a certain thought which would be like a wish to manifest, but it is a natural, spontaneous manifestation of the power of the Dharmakaya that appears in the form of the Sambhogakaya.

And through the spontaneous power or blessing of the Sambhogakaya again the Nirmanakaya is manifested in order to benefit and

help beings to get rid of all confusion and neuroses. The power of the Dharmakaya as a cause can be compared to the power of the sun, and the Sambhogakaya corresponds to the rays of the sun. And the warmth of the sun's rays that we feel on our body is like the power of the Nirmanakaya. Even if beings are under the influence of confusion, they can be permeated by the blessings of the Nirmanakaya.

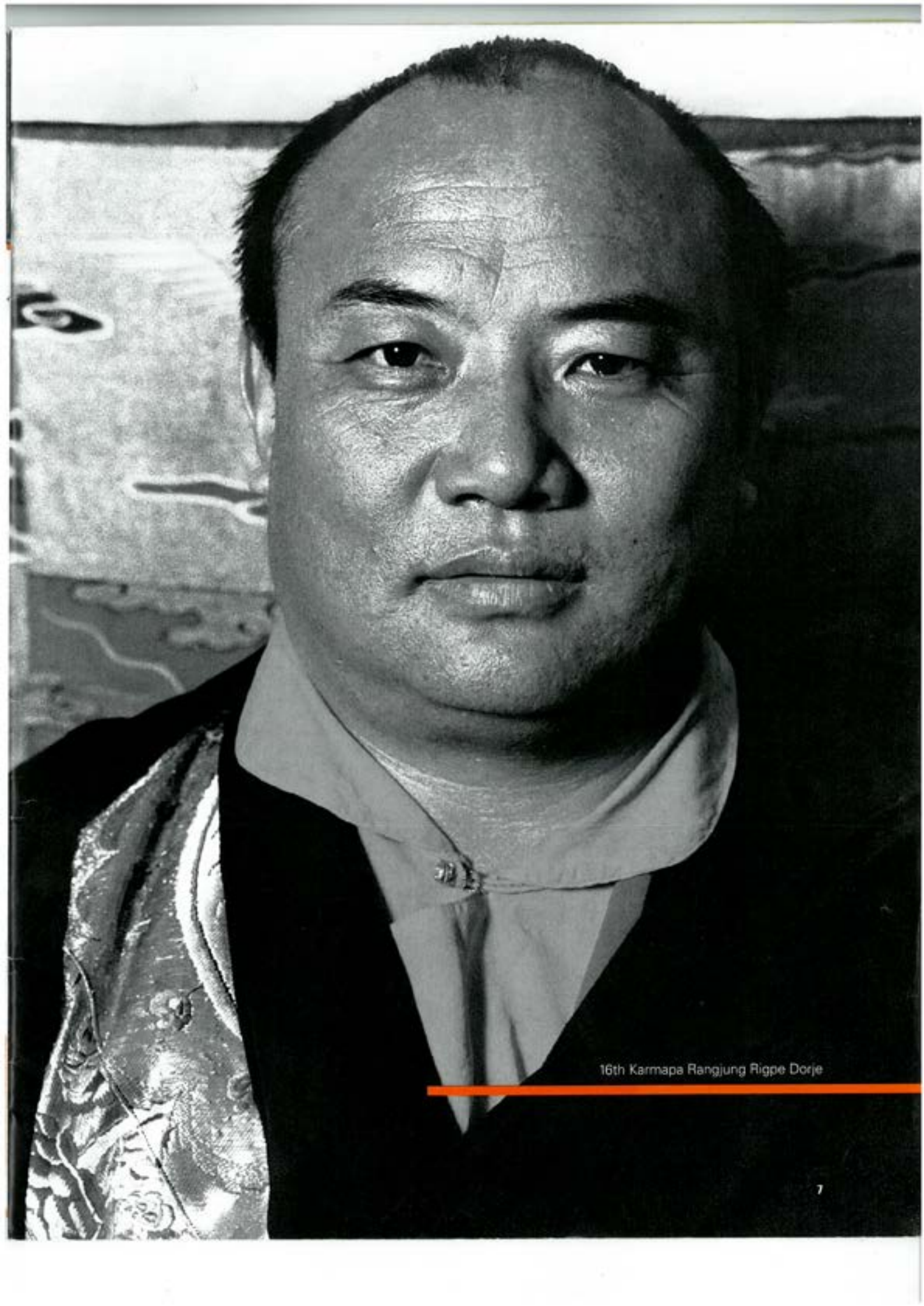
If one asks whether or not these three states are the same, the answer is that they are definitely the same, because in the same way as in the above example their nature is like the sun, that is the Dharmakaya. Even if there are different states, like the sun, the sun's rays and the power of the sun's rays, they are not different in essence, not different from the sun. Whether one looks at it from the point of view of the essence or from the point of view of the effect of that essence, in terms of being the sun they are the same. All this in essence is the Dharmakaya; and the inseparability of the three kayas on the basis of the Dharmakaya is called the Svabhavikakaya or Vajrakaya.

**"The natural quality of the Dharmakaya is great compassion for all sentient beings."**



Loving Eyes (Tib. Chenrezig)





16th Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje

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“Even if beings are under the influence of confusion, they can be permeated by the blessings of the Nirmanakaya.”

And the Guru is the embodiment or the accumulation of the four kayas.

This particular Guru Yoga is also called the *The Seedlings of the Four Kayas*. The name shows the purpose of this practice. Since the ultimate nature of the lama is that of the Dharmakaya, one could also say that this nature is the inseparability of emptiness and phenomena. This is expressed through the OM SOBHAVA mantra at the beginning. In the actual practice it is said that from the play of the sphere of phenomena which is free from mental fabrications and unborn in front of one in the sky there arise vast clouds of offerings. Here, when speaking about the empty space which is limitless, one might need to receive more instructions. For the practice of the Guru Yoga one actually needs to work on a lot of preliminaries. It is not very easy to do the

practice. But the basic point is to understand the guru in the way just explained.

The empty sphere of phenomena is compared to space. One should fill this space with the offering cloud of Samantabhadra<sup>2</sup>, which again has a lot of elaborate explanations. In short, there are three kinds of offerings: the outer, the inner and the ultimate offerings. In terms of the outer and inner offerings we can imagine all kinds of pleasant things, whether they have been taught or not. We can offer Mount Meru<sup>3</sup>, the four greater continents and the eight lesser continents, and all precious objects of offerings such as the seven precious offerings, the eight auspicious offerings, then the offering goddesses, etc. In this way all material as well as imagined offerings, one's body, speech and mind, all one's belongings, one's family,

<sup>2</sup>There are two different aspects called Samantabhadra. One is the Buddha Samantabhadra and the other is the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. Here the Bodhisattva is meant. He was praised by the historical Buddha for being able to present perfect offerings to the buddhas. He created huge offering clouds until the whole universe was completely filled up. There was not the slightest space left. Thus he became the perfect example of how one should make offerings towards enlightenment.

<sup>3</sup>Mount Meru is the symbolic center of the Buddhist universe. Here, Karmapa is indicating that we offer everything that appears from space (mind) back to its essential truth nature.

<sup>4</sup>The lama in this meditation represents the Buddha, who is simply a mirror that shows us our own enlightened nature. When we are fully concentrated and invested in our meditation, a contact is made with our own enlightened nature.

everything altogether should be given. The ultimate offering of suchness refers to Buddhahood and the collections of teachings. It actually requires at least a slight understanding of the Dharmakaya. So, every object that is worthy should be made as offering, letting go, surrendering, and every object that one can imagine should be included in the offerings.

The visualization of one's own root Guru is as follows. There is a beautiful throne that is lifted by eight lions. On top of that appears a reddish-white lotus [flower] with a thousand petals. On top of that traditionally there is a sun and a moon disk, but in this particular case there is just a moon seat symbolizing the unborn nature of bliss-emptiness. On top of this seat instantaneously there appears one's own root Lama, majestic and radiant, being the embodiment of the Three Roots, the Lama, the yidams, the protectors, and the power of all the buddhas. At that particular time, even if one can let arise only one moment of unconditioned confidence and devotion, just the moment of a finger snap, that could be the cause for immeasurable accumulations of meritorious qualities.\*

Having visualized the Guru in this way, experiencing the radiant and majestic blessings of the Guru, with one-pointedness of one's mind, as sincerely and genuinely as one can, one recites the Guru's mantra of KARMAPA CHENNO. With a sense of tremendous supplication one is doing the mantra, and one develops a deep openness. And while one is doing that, at a certain time one could also receive the body, speech and mind blessings of the Guru, meaning that from the Guru's Three Vajras the white, red, and blue light

emanate out simultaneously, and enter one's own three doors of body, speech and mind. In this way one is receiving the four empowerments; one constantly receives the blessing of the body of the Guru going through the purification of all obscurations of body, speech and mind while receiving the three lights. Having received the four empowerments with the understanding that the Guru is the embodiment of the three kayas—the Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya plus the Svabhavikakaya—one could repeat: KARMAPA CHENNO.

Finally, the Guru is dissolving and melting into one; and one is remaining in that inseparability of the Guru and one's mind. One remains in that meditative state.

Then, as has been said earlier, the Guru is the embodiment of the four kayas; and the attainment of that state of enlightenment arises through the power of the Enlightened Attitude that one wants to liberate all sentient beings, that until all sentient beings are liberated one remains in samsara, and that one will guide all sentient beings to liberation. After having experienced again the inseparability with one's Guru, one should have the same powerful attitude that henceforth one will also be able to liberate all sentient beings, and that until all sentient beings are liberated one will remain in samsara. One wishes that one may be able to take over the responsibility of liberating the sentient beings, even if it is only one. In that way one is concluding the practice. So once again one develops this aspiration, now with the sense of dedication. 🙏



#### **About the 16th Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje.....**

The 16th Gyalwa Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpe Dorje (1924–1981) was spiritual leader of the Karma Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. He spearheaded the transmission of Tibetan Buddhism to the West, establishing dharma centers and monasteries in various places around the world in order to protect, preserve, and spread the Buddha's teachings. He was considered by many to be a living Buddha.