

# Words of a Gentle Sage

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Collected Teachings of  
Khenchen Appey Rinpoche

Volume 1

FOREWORD BY

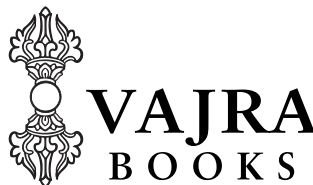
His Holiness the 41st Sakya Trizin

PREFACE BY

Khenpo Ngawang Jorden

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*His Holiness  
The Sakya Trichen*



**Tsechen Kunchab Ling**  
Seat of the Sakya Dolma Phodrang  
in the Americas

March 28, 2018

Khenchen Appey Rinpoche was the founder of both Sakya College in Dehra Dun, India, and the International Buddhist Academy in Kathmandu, Nepal. He was a great scholar and highly realized master. His teachings and writings are clear and concise and a great benefit to all, especially those committed to the Dharma path.

I am pleased to see this collection of English translations of the teachings of Khenchen Appey Rinpoche published by the Chodung Karmo Translation group, edited by Christian Bernert, which is part of a planned set of volumes introducing his teachings to the English-speaking world.

I congratulate those who have worked so hard to bring this volume to completion, and wish all those who come in contact with this book to realize the blessings of the path to Buddhahood.

The Sakya Trichen



## PREFACE

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In my view, the late Khenchen Appey Rinpoche (1927-2010) was one of the most learned Tibetan Buddhist masters of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Yet, this was not obvious to many. Because of this imperceptibility of his being a great scholar, many people missed the chance to study with him. I'm very fortunate to have been able to study with him over a period of ten years at Sakya College, India, and later managed to come to the International Buddhist Academy, Kathmandu, to serve him.

My experience of being with him for all those years has formed the basis of who I am today. Looking back gives me goose bumps. Thinking of him, I am overwhelmed by how caring, generous, and compassionate a master he was, and I realize how much I took him for granted, being busy thinking about my own selfish purposes instead of appreciating his presence.

Not only did he teach us all the major Buddhist texts of both Sutra and Tantra, but most importantly, he taught us how to live a meaningful life by his own example. In this way, he was the epitome of a true practitioner, someone whose life is one with the Dharma. The scriptures tell us that a true Dharma practitioner should have no attachment to anything, and that is what he showed us by example. This is what he taught us and it is his legacy we reflect on. Rinpoche dedicated his whole life to Dharma activities. His contribution to the revival of Tibetan Buddhism in general and, in particular, the Sakya School of Tibetan Buddhism, is truly immeasurable.

This anthology of Khenchen Appey Rinpoche's teachings will benefit everyone who is inspired to engage in the study and practice of Buddhism.

Those who study this book will certainly have a dharmic connection with the great Master himself.

May the merit gained from translating, compiling, editing, and publishing this book fulfill the noble wishes of Khenchen Appey Rinpoche.

Khenpo Ngawang Jorden  
Principal of the International Buddhist Academy (IBA)  
Kathmandu, Nepal

## INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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### A GENTLE SAGE

The teacher on the Buddhist path is a noble being, the source of knowledge and wisdom. Under the care of an able master, devoted disciples learn to unfold their potential. Through the good-hearted guidance of a qualified spiritual friend, the path to liberation becomes clear and obstacles are removed. In this sense, the Buddha stated that the teacher represents the whole of the holy life.<sup>1</sup>

Many study the words of the Buddha and his disciples, but few are able to develop unshakable confidence in his teaching based on thorough, personal investigation. Even fewer are those whose knowledge of the Dharma is both profound with regard to its nature and vast in terms of the classes of teaching mastered. And as rare as stars in bright daylight are those who, through perseverance in the practice of the liberating path, have gained true realization. Khenchen Appey Rinpoche was indeed of such caliber, revered as one of the most learned and accomplished masters in recent times.

Because he rarely traveled outside India and Nepal, and never taught in Europe, America, or Australia, Rinpoche remains largely unknown to the students of Tibetan Buddhism in these parts of the world. His influence among the current masters of the Sakya school, however, and the preservation of the teachings in general, can hardly be overstated. To begin with, Khenchen Appey Rinpoche was the personal tutor of Gongma Trichen Rinpoche, the 41<sup>st</sup> throne holder of the Sakya tradition responsible for the successful preservation and flourishing of the Sakya tradition in exile, who regards him as one of his most important teachers. Secondly, Appey Rinpoche established two important centers of learning—the Sakya College in Mussoorie, India, and the International Buddhist Academy in Nepal—laying the foundations for the preservation of the

rigorous scholastic training of the Sakya school in exile.<sup>2</sup> With these institutions, Rinpoche offered the world two important containers for the lasting transmission of the wisdom teachings of the Buddha. Personally teaching the classes at Sakya College for thirteen years, from 1972 to 1985, he further played an instrumental role in the upbringing of the first generation of monastic scholars and lamas in exile. Thirdly, Rinpoche initiated the preservation of rare manuscripts by sending his disciple Khenpo Jamyang Kunga to Tibet and China, equipped with a list of important authors and texts that were unavailable in exile. The project was extremely successful, culminating in the digitization of thousands of pages of precious teachings, distributed in print to monasteries and later made widely available online.<sup>3</sup>

Rinpoche's vast activities are a reflection of his inner qualities, honed under the skillful guidance of his own teachers, most notably Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö (1893-1959) and Deshung Anjam Rinpoche (1885-1952). Despite his formidable mastery of the Dharma and his quiet, majestic presence, Rinpoche emanated a genuine sense of profound humility. Completely unpretentious in the way he delivered the teachings, he offered his students a transmission of utmost purity. During the first teaching session at IBA in the summer of 2001, when he taught Sakya Pandita's *Clarifying the Sage's Intent* (*Thub pa'i dgongs gsal*) Rinpoche explained that it was neither necessary for students to prostrate to him, nor for him to sit on a throne (his throne was in fact a most humble one). The reason he accepted the slightly elevated seat was that the Buddha himself said that the teacher of the Dharma should take a higher position out of respect for the teachings delivered and that students will benefit from this. Rinpoche also explained that due to his advanced age, the seat would allow him to sit down and get up with more ease, which was also an advantage.

Rinpoche was renowned for his mastery of the scriptures, and in particular of the tantric classes of teachings. His personal practice, however, remained his secret; he didn't even keep a statue or a painting of his tantric deity on display in his own house, which in itself was an important teaching for his followers. Grounded in his profound understanding of the tradition, Rinpoche was famous for strictly observing to the rules of conduct laid out in the Vajrayana texts. When giving teachings of tantric nature, for instance, he would remind the audience of the secrecy of the instructions and request no recordings to be made.

In this sense, thinking of Khenchen Appey Rinpoche one cannot help but be reminded of the image of the early Kadampa masters: extremely learned and humble, completely private with regard to his tantric practice, and most notably of a very gentle and joyful nature.

### **A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF KHENCHEN APPEY RINPOCHE**

The Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche was born in 1926 in Serjong, near Dergé in eastern Tibet. Although he was recognized as the incarnation of a Kagyü master, his father, who was a staunch Sakyapa, placed him in the village's Sakya monastery at the age of eight. When he was thirteen years old, he began studying Buddhist philosophy at Serjong Monastic College.

At the age of twenty-two, after nine years of intensive study under the tutelage of Lama Lodrö, Appey Rinpoche went to Dzongsar Shedra, Tibet, to continue his philosophical studies. Founded by Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodrö in 1917, this shedra was the most renowned monastic university for the study of philosophy as taught by all the Buddhist traditions. At Dzongsar Shedra, he also received the esoteric teachings of the secret mantra vehicle from Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodrö. Following his graduation from Dzongsar Shedra, he went to Lhang in Eastern Tibet to meet the great master Deshung Anjam Rinpoche. There he received many rare and valuable teachings on the Tantras, which he later transmitted to his disciples and to many high lamas.

At the age of twenty-five, he was enthroned as the abbot of Serjong Monastery and conducted philosophical classes there for a period of four years. In 1956, at the age of thirty, he embarked on a very long journey to the great Ngor Evam Chöden monastery in Central Tibet, where he received the full monastic ordination as well as many special teachings of the Ngorpa lineage. The Ngor abbots immediately recognized Appey Rinpoche's mastery of Dharma and appointed him head khenpo of their philosophical institute. He taught there for approximately two years before going into exile in Sikkim in 1959.

Appreciating Rinpoche's scholastic achievements, the Queen Mother of Sikkim asked him to work at the National Library in Gangtok, a position he maintained for several years. In 1963, His Holiness the 41<sup>st</sup> Sakya Trizin had relocated to the Dehradun area in Northern India and

invited Appey Rinpoche to join him as his principal tutor. Both His Holiness and Appey Rinpoche wanted to establish an academy where monks could study Buddhist philosophy. In 1972, the Sakya College was founded to fulfill this vision, and in particular as a place for Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche, the rebirth of Chökyi Lodrö, one of Khenchen Appey Rinpoche's main teachers, to receive his formal education. Today the College has its permanent location on Hill Station Mussorie, near Dehradun, where it offers the traditional training in Buddhist philosophy to up to 250 monks. From 1972 to 1985, Khenchen Appey Rinpoche was fully responsible for teaching the classes, supervising the administration, and raising funds for the college.

When many of his students had reached a high level of proficiency and Sakya College was fully established, Khenchen Appey Rinpoche requested permission from His Holiness the 41<sup>st</sup> Sakya Trizin to go to Nepal. At first, no one knew exactly where he had relocated to, but it was later discovered that he had gone to Pharping, a renowned pilgrimage destination for Mantrayana practitioners, to devote himself to meditation in seclusion for a period of five years. As people became aware of his presence and wisdom, he began receiving more and more requests to teach.

The Venerable Appey Rinpoche made several teaching trips to Singapore. In the course of traveling abroad and giving teachings, he became increasingly aware of the need for a school that would make the Dharma accessible to foreigners. Indeed, many people asked Rinpoche for the establishment of such an institute. While he was on one such trip, a strong supporter and disciple, Madam Doreen Goh, offered financial backing for the project. Things then moved quickly and in 2001, the International Buddhist Academy was officially inaugurated by His Holiness the 41<sup>st</sup> Sakya Trizin in Tinchuli, Kathmandu.

Rinpoche established the Academy's initial goals and launched it by teaching one of the first courses himself. The main goal was to teach the Buddhadharma, making it accessible to international students in an authentic and profound way. His second priority was to translate the holy teachings and their commentaries into English, Mandarin, and other world languages. These two goals led naturally to the publishing and distribution of texts.

In 2007, Khenchen Appey Rinpoche expanded IBA's mandate to include a multiyear "Monastic Leadership Program" for post-graduate



monastic scholars to learn leadership and language skills. In 2008, a new program was developed for non-Tibetan speakers to participate in a two-year “School of Translation” intensive training program. His Holiness has encouraged both the IBA monastic scholars and the IBA translation intensive participants to develop their abilities to work together on translation teams and research projects.

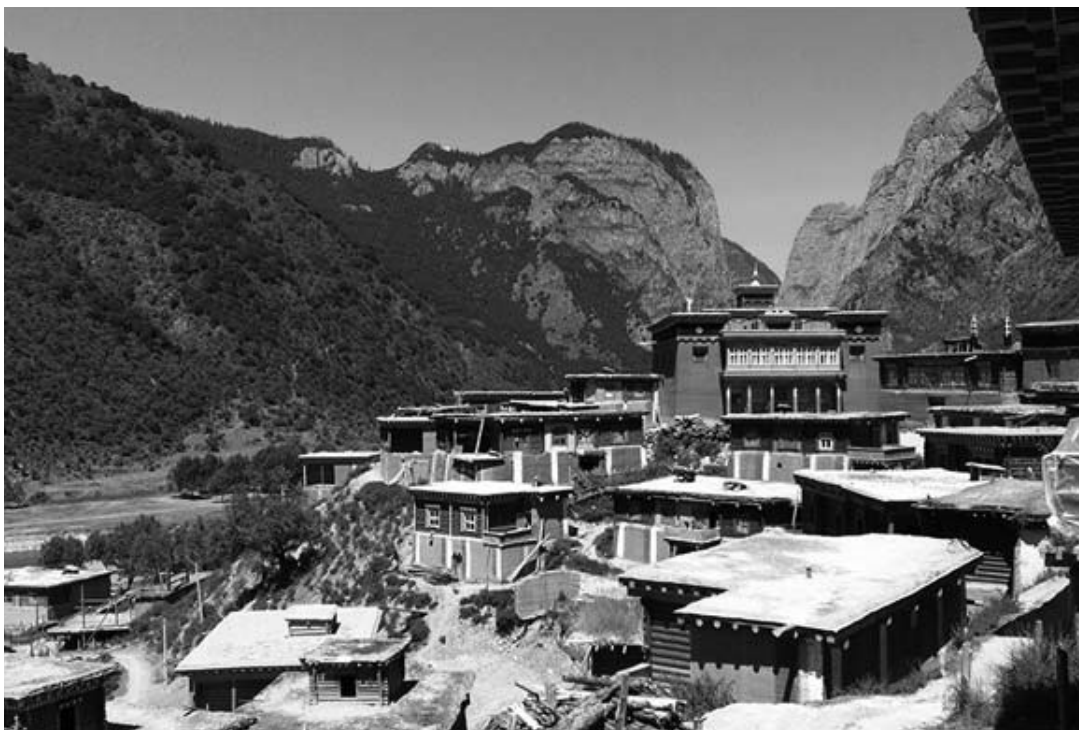
Khenchen Appey Rinpoche also twice visited his home monastery in eastern Tibet, where he gave teachings and funded the refurbishing of the ancient ruined monastic college and the construction of a new dormitory for the monks. He also provided funds for the construction of a new multistoried assembly hall. He completely furnished these buildings, providing among other important resources one thousand 8-inch Buddha statues from Nepal for the assembly hall and a historically significant collection of the complete publications from the great Dergé printing press for the monastic college. He also renovated the monastery’s old retreat center and provided his monastery with an endowment fund from which annual grand pujas and other important ritual observances are still being sponsored.

Through various means Khenchen Appey Rinpoche was able to collect many rare manuscripts of the Sakya tradition and other schools for the IBA’s library. He invested a great deal of his time and resources in collecting these precious texts, digitizing, publishing, and distributing them to monasteries, monastic schools, and libraries in many parts of the world. Another of Rinpoche’s significant contributions was designing a curriculum for the Sakya Institute of Vajrayana in Manduwala, India, a monastic college that was newly founded by His Eminence Luding Khen Rinpoche for the preservation of the tantric traditions of this school.

Khenchen Appey Rinpoche retired to a private residence in Boudha, near both IBA and the great stupa. He always made himself available, giving private teachings to those who sought his guidance, especially transmitting the teachings to lineage holders, lamas, and khenpos. He was renowned for the precision, vastness, and inspirational power of his teachings. Out of sincere humility, Khenchen Appey Rinpoche avoided the attention of admirers. He did not want people to prostrate to him and never referred to anyone as his students. Those who studied under him he would rather call his “Dharma friends.” For his personal letterhead, he simply used the letter “A” without any ornament to embellish his identity.



Young Khen Rinpoche carrying stones



Serjong Monastery



Jamyang Khyentse  
Chökyi Lodrö



Dzongsar monastery, Kham, Tibet (2)



Khenchen Appey Rinpoche with His Holiness the 41st Sakya Trizin



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Rinpoche with young Dzongsar  
Khyentse Rinpoche



Rinpoche with Luding Khenchen Rinpoche



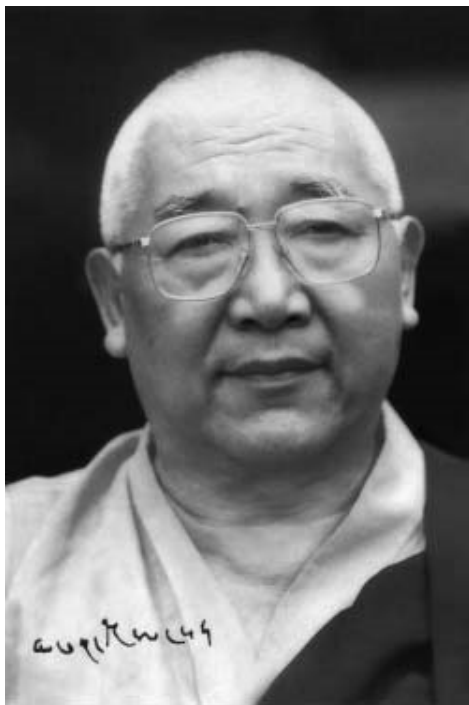
Khen Rinpoche escorted to IBA by Dzongar Khyentse Rinpoche, Khenpo Jamyang Tenzin, Lama Choedak Rinpoche, and Gendun Yarphe, 2009, © René Edde



Teaching at International Buddhist Academy (IBA), Kathmandu, Nepal



Teaching at IBA



Khenchen Appey Rinpoche



Stupa of Khenchen Appey Rinpoche  
at International Buddhist Academy,  
Kathmandu, Nepal



## THE TEACHINGS OF KHENCHEN APPEY RINPOCHE

Except for a short text entitled *The Importance of Studying the Buddha Dharma*,<sup>4</sup> no original writing of Khenchen Appey Rinpoche is extant. Rinpoche did, however, write annotations to a number of ritual texts, prayers, and commentaries, many of which have been preserved and recently published in Tibet.<sup>5</sup> He also authored an important catalogue for the study of Vajrayana and edited the latest edition of the entire Lamdré teachings in forty-three volumes, both of which have been published and widely disseminated. What follows is a brief survey of Rinpoche's legacy in terms of teachings and writings. As superficial and incomplete as it may be, we hope it provides a sense of the magnitude of Rinpoche's activities for the preservation and transmission of the Dharma.

As mentioned above, Khenchen Appey Rinpoche personally taught all the classes at Sakya College over the course of thirteen years, from 1972 to 1985. In this way he was responsible for transmitting to the first generation of Tibetan Buddhist scholars in exile the knowledge which forms the foundation for the entire system of theory and practice preserved in the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism. This feat alone will always be remembered as an act of immeasurable significance and Rinpoche, therefore, as a master of boundless kindness. When he taught the great Indian classics of Buddhist philosophy, Rinpoche did not teach from the commentaries but would refer directly to the root texts in class, drawing from memory from his extensive knowledge of various Indian and Tibetan commentaries. Unfortunately, no recordings of his teachings of these texts are available to us.

In the 1980's Appey Rinpoche traveled to South East Asia where he lectured at various Dharma centers, mainly in Singapore and Malaysia. Some of the teachings of this period have been recorded and translated, including a series of talks on Sakya Paṇḍita's *Clarifying the Sage's Intent* published in 2008 in Kathmandu as *Teachings on Sakya Pandita's Clarifying the Sage's Intent*,<sup>6</sup> as well as individual lectures on a variety of subjects.<sup>7</sup>

In the later part of his life, Rinpoche stayed in Kathmandu, where he taught at the International Buddhist Academy—three times in the context of the annual summer program in 2001, 2002, and 2007, and on other occasions to large gatherings of Tibetan lamas and monastics, or to smaller groups of visiting students, as well as privately to students at his residence. Fortunately a good number of teachings from this period have been preserved, including some shorter teachings on various aspects of



the Buddhist path and practice, the extraordinary three-month long course on Sakya Pandita's *Clarifying the Sage's Intent*,<sup>8</sup> which has been edited and published in Tibetan, and now represents the most extensive commentary on this important text, and the teachings from the ten-day retreat based on the pith instructions on *Parting from the Four Attachments*.<sup>9</sup> The Tibetan transcript of this teaching has been published by IBA in 2012. This edition was partially edited by Khenchen Appey Rinpoche himself and completed by Khenpo Jamyang Tenzin, a close disciple of Rinpoche who served as his interpreter for these teachings given in 2007 at IBA.

A special teaching occurred in the winter of 2001, when Rinpoche taught the *Hevajra Tantra* over a period of one month at IBA at the request of His Holiness Drikung Chetsang Rinpoche, head of the Drikung Kagyü tradition. In his private communications with Huang Ying-Chieh (a Taiwanese student of Rinpoche later recognized as Palme Khyentse Rinpoche, a tulku in the Drikung tradition), Khenchen Appey Rinpoche mentioned that he held a lineage for the explanation of the *Hevajra Tantra* in the tradition of the great Kagyü master Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche. Although he had transmitted it many years ago to one of his nephews, a khenpo from the Karma Kagyü school, he feared that this lineage may die out if it was not passed on to other lineage holders due to the internal division within the Karma Kagyü school at that time. Huang Ying-Chieh informed His Holiness Chetsang Rinpoche who then made the request to receive these teachings from Khenchen Appey Rinpoche in Nepal. This teaching was attended by a large gathering, headed by His Holiness Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Sakya Trizin, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, and many other tulkus, khenpos, lamas, monastics, and lay practitioners from various traditions. Due to the nature of these teachings, however, recording was not permitted.<sup>10</sup>

An important contribution to the literary heritage of the Sakya school was the editorial work of the great corpus of the entire collection of Lamdré teachings by Khenchen Appey Rinpoche. These teachings were published in forty-three volumes in 2008 by Sachen International (Rgyal yongs sa chen), founded by Lama Guru.<sup>11</sup> The last volume in this collection (vol. NGI) contains notes written by Khenchen Appey Rinpoche on various texts.

In 2010, Sachen International published the *Catalogue for the Study of Vajrayana*<sup>12</sup> compiled by Khenchen Appey Rinpoche. This catalogue is

systematic guide for teachers and students of the Vajrayana, laying out, lesson by lesson, the academic study of the Vajrayana according to the Sakya tradition, from the three vows (an integration of which form the foundation of tantric practice), up to the explanation of the scriptures of the highest classes of Tantra. The publication of this catalogue was particularly important as it formed the foundation for the curriculum for the Sakya Institute of Vajrayana in Manduwala (UK), India, inaugurated in 2008 by His Holiness Gongma Trichen Rinpoche, the 41<sup>st</sup> Sakya Trizin, and His Eminence Luding Khenchen Rinpoche.

In 2013, for the occasion of the twenty-second Sakya Monlam prayer festival, the Sakya College published an anthology of texts on the famous *Aspiration Prayer of Samantabhadra* (*bzang spyod smon lam*), including three teachings by Khenchen Appey Rinpoche along with several commentaries by Indian and Tibetan masters. That same year the College also published two transcripts of Rinpoche's teachings on Sakya Paṇḍita's *Clarifying the Sage's Intent*.<sup>13</sup>

In 2014, a collection of Rinpoche's works in Tibetan has been published in Tibet in four volumes.<sup>14</sup> These include the two his annotations to various important texts—mainly pertaining to the tantric teachings of the Sakya tradition (such as Jetsün Dragpa Gyaltsen's commentary on the *Hevajra Tantra*, the Hevajra sādhana composed by Ngorchon Könchog Lhündrup, and the practice of Sarvavid Vairocana)—transcripts of some of his oral teachings, as well as Rinpoche's teachings on the Aspiration Prayer of Samantabhadra and his catalogue for the study of tantra, the latter two having been published in separate volumes in Nepal and India. The full list of the content of this collection is given in the appendix to this volume.

In light of his extensive teaching career, however, these represent only a tiny fraction of his scholastic output.

## THE TEACHINGS IN THIS VOLUME

For the first volume of this collection of teachings by Khenchen Appey Rinpoche we have selected a number of shorter teachings on various subjects, ranging from pith instructions on mind training to introductory teachings on Buddhist philosophy and short commentaries.

### *1. The Importance of Studying the Buddhadharma*

Based on many quotations from canonical sources, Rinpoche explains why the teachings of the Buddha are so fundamentally important and relevant to our lives, and how it is essential to study them carefully in order to actualize their intent and preserve them for future generations. This text was first translated by Ven. Shastri Jhampa Losal and Kunga Sonam Dronma in 2006, revised in 2012 by Karen White with the help of Ven. Jhampa Losal for a publication in Vairochana magazine (issue 7), and slightly edited by Christian Bernert for this publication.

### *2. Pith Instructions by Ngülchu Thogmé*

This teaching is based on an unidentified text by Ngülchu Thogmé and contains a wealth of precious instructions of mind training. It was given at IBA in Kathmandu, to a group of Australian students of Lama Choedak Rinpoche on pilgrimage in Nepal, and was orally translated at that time by Lama Choedak. The translation published in this collection was prepared by Julia Stenzel based on the original transcript of the teaching published in Tibet in 2014 in the collection of Khenchen Appey Rinpoche's works in four volumes.

### *3. The Logic of Rebirth*

This teaching holds a singular place in this collection, insofar as it is not a direct transcript of Rinpoche's words. In the early 1980's, Khenchen Appey Rinpoche traveled through Southeast Asia giving Dharma teachings. While at the Sakya Center in Kuching, East Malaysia, Ngawang Samten (Jay Goldberg), who served as Rinpoche's interpreter during these teachings, requested him to give a teaching of the topic of rebirth. Even though no recording of this teaching has been found, it had a profound effect upon on the translator, who later wrote down what he remembered to be the main points of Rinpoche's teaching that evening.

### *4. The Passing of Enlightened Beings*

At the occasion of the passing of the great Chogyé Trichen Rinpoche, head of the Tsarpa subschool of the Sakya tradition, in January 2007,

Khenchen Appey Rinpoche gave an inspiring talk to the students of Chogyé Rinpoche who had gathered from all over the world. In it he relates the origin of the Buddhist approach to the passing of awakened masters based on the accounts of Buddha Shakyamuni's parinirvana. He further sheds light on the process of dying and the profound practice of *thugdam* used by masters of the Vajrayana tradition, of which Chogyé Rinpoche was a shining example. This talk was originally translated by Lama Choedak Rinpoche, who requested the teaching. The written translation presented here was prepared by Daniel McNamara based on the transcript of this teaching published in the collection of Khenchen Appey Rinpoche's works in Tibetan.

### *5. Transforming Our Minds: The Four Mind Changing Contemplations and Other Practices*

Beginning with the four contemplations that turn the mind to the Dharma, Rinpoche explains in this teaching how we can use the recitation of verses based on the fundamental teachings of the Buddha and his followers to integrate the Dharma into our daily lives. It covers a wide range of topics, including instructions on *Parting from the Four Attachments*, compassion, and bodhicitta. This text was translated by Solvej Nielsen based on a transcript contained in the collection of Khenchen Appey Rinpoche's works in Tibetan.

### *6. Recollecting the Three Jewels*

The *Sutra of Recollecting the Three Jewels* is an important and concise text recited daily in Tibetan monasteries, enumerating the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha as a basis for the cultivation of faith and devotion. Rinpoche gave a detailed explanation of this text at IBA which was later transcribed by one of the monks of the academy. It was translated by Ven. Jhampa Losal and Ngawang Samten (Jay Goldberg) at the International Buddhist Academy in Kathmandu, in the spring of 2014, and edited by Julia Stenzel and Victoria Scott.

### 7. *The Seven-Branch Practice*

The seven-branch practice forms an essential path of both the Sutrayana and the Mantrayana traditions, skillfully condensing the practices for the accumulation of merit and the purification of negative deeds into seven simple practices. Rinpoche explains the practice according the Sutrayana system based on the seven-branches contained in *Samantabhadra's Aspiration for Excellent Conduct*, the widely recited prayer excerpted from the *Gaṇḍavyūha* chapter of the *Flower Ornament Sutra* (*Avataṃsaka Sūtra*). This text was translated by Daniel McNamara based on the transcript of this teaching (probably given in the 2000's at IBA) published in the collection of Khenchen Appey Rinpoche's works in Tibetan.

### 8. *Cultivating a Heart of Wisdom: Mind Training in Seven Points*

The *Mind Training in Seven Points* is an important text from the Lojong class of teachings introduced to Tibet in the eleventh century by the Bengali master Jowo Atiśa. In over fifty short lines, its author, Chékawa Yeshe Dorje, gives pithy advice on how to radically change one's outlook on life and one's relationship to others, based on the profound training in bodhicitta. Rinpoche's commentary on this text was translated by Christian Bernert and originally edited by Vivian Paganuzzi and Suzanne DeRouen for publication in 2014.

### 9. *An Introduction to the Abhidharma*

The Abhidharma is one of the three categories of teachings comprising the Buddhist canon, dealing in particular with the development of wisdom. In this talk, Rinpoche gives a general overview of the origin and history of the Abhidharma tradition, including an outline of the entire *Treasury of Abhidharma* (*Abhidharmakośa*) by Vasubandhu, followed by a lucid explanation of the five *skandhas* (aggregates) comprising the human experience.

*10. Refining the View: On the Four Schools of Buddhist Thought  
with an Emphasis on Madhyamaka in Tibet*

The study of Buddhist schools of thought or tenet systems (*siddhānta*, 'grub mtha) holds important place in the Tibetan traditions. It gradually introduces students to an increasingly refined understanding of reality, beginning with the realist views of the Vaibhāsika and culminating in the profound view of emptiness of the Madhyamaka school. After a general explanation of the four schools, Rinpoche presents the three systems of Madhyamaka prevalent in Tibet: Shentong Madhyamaka, Madhyamaka as taught in the Gelug tradition, and the view “free from all extremes” as taught in the Sakya tradition.

The last two teachings in this collection were given by Khenchen Appey Rinpoche in Singapore at Sakya Tenphel Ling, possibly in the early 1980's, when they were orally translated by Jay Goldberg. For the present volume, the recording of Rinpoche's teachings were transcribed by Tenzin Jinpa of Esukhia and translated by Christian Bernert.

The reader will notice that each translator has a personal approach to the words of Khenchen Appey Rinpoche. We have tried to give the entire collection a common voice and terminology, while at the same time being respectful to each translator's individual style. Since most of these texts are based on oral teachings, the titles and subheadings they contain were added in the process of editing the translations for this volume. In commentaries, the words and phrases which have been lifted from the text commented on are in bold, to make it easy for the reader to distinguish between commentary and quote.

## THE TRANSLATORS

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Christian Bernert  
Chödung Karmo Translation Group  
Hanoi, April 2018



## MEMOIRS OF AN OLD MAN

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The deluded mind fluctuates faster than lightening,  
The restless body moves like the wind.  
May these teachings be a healing balm for the minds of my beloved  
    friends  
With whom I have not severed the knots of attachment.

To those faithful and fortunate ones,  
Who mentally fold their hands on the crown of their heads with the  
    three types of faith,  
And uninterruptedly pray with longing devotion,  
I here present the story of my life.

I grew up among sheep and lamb,  
Went through the stages of a monastic life,  
And walked along the winding path—  
These are the memoirs of an old man.

Khenchen Appey Rinpoche