FORMER LIVES
OF THE
KARMAPAS

as told by
the 15th Gyalwa Karmapa, Kachap Dorjé &
the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa, Rangjung Rikpé Dorje

K.D.D.L.
Karmapa Chenno

噶玛巴哈德钦波
FORMER LIVES
OF THE
KARMAPAS
(DZALENDARA & SAKARCHUPA)

Stories from long, long ago of
emanations of the Gyalwa Karmapas

Translated in Rumtek Monastery at the request of
His Holiness the XVIth Gyalwa Karmapa,
by Katia Holmes, M.A., M.Sc., from Khenpo Chodrak Tenpel's
narrative of the Tibetan texts which record the precious words
of their Holinesses the XVth and XVIth Gyalwa Karmapas.

Edited and revised by Ken Holmes
(Dharmacarya Karma Shedrup)

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These translations of stories from the former lives of the Gyalwa Karmapas are published in response to the wishes expressed by His Holiness Rangjung Rikpé Dorjé, the XVIth Gyalwa Karmapa, during Tibetan New Year 1980.

First published very shortly after the XVIth Gyalwa Karmapa's death, and now revised as his glorious reincarnation, His Holiness Orgyen Drodul Trinley Dorjé, is like the sun rising to its zenith, this translation is dedicated to the peerless Karmapa Lineage in the heartfelt prayer that it may be a cause for the healthy and harmonious continuation of the profound Kagyu Teachings and for His Holiness's longevity.

Also, it is dedicated to Dharma Arya Akong Rinpoche, whose kindness and inspiration made this and so many excellent things possible.
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Frontispiece portrays a scene from Story Five of Sakarchupa

DZALENDAZA

1. "His wings outstretched, the miraculous peacock flew to a land full of forests." 3
2. "...Surya Tsendra appeared in the form of Chenrezi..." 15
3. "...and gave them the deep 'pointing-out' instruction." 25

SAKARCHUPA

1. "...suddenly, high in the sky, they saw what seemed to be a flock of great golden birds..." 39
2. "...whistling through the air, it pierced the seven layers of the barbarian king's armour..." 47
3. "...the gigantic beast sank to the ground, happy to bear the painful agony of its death..." 55
4. "Having said this, Indra flew away into the sky and, still dreaming, the young prince flew after him." 63
5. "Therefore, I shall offer you this jewel..." 69
6. "...and they saw the hells spread out before them..." 77
7. "...as large as our Mt. Everest with eighteen arms each brandishing powerful weapons." . 83
8. "Now a bird, Sun Youth flew towards the South...". 93
9. "...the great Chakravartin flew away on his golden wheel..." 101
10. "...so please, I now humbly request you to take me under your protection"
CONTENTS

Letter from H.H. XVIIth Gyalwa Karmapa .................................................. i

PART ONE: DZALEN DARA

History of Dzalendara text ................................................................. 2
1. Dzalendara's Transformation and His Son's Exile ...................... 4
2. Homecoming and Spreading of the Buddha's Teaching .......... 16
3. Dzalendara Shares His Heart's Treasure .............................. 26

PART TWO: SAKARCHUPA

Biographical Note on the XVth Gyalwa Karmapa ......................... 34
1. The Great Golden Birds ............................................................ 40
2. Gift of the Three jewels .......................................................... 48
3. The Rescue of King Betashara ..................................................... 56
4. Prince Pure Light ................................................................. 64
5. The Wish-Fulfilling Gem ........................................................... 70
6. The Lapis-Lazuli Book .............................................................. 78
7. The Wonderful Son of Warbi ......................................................... 84
8. Sun Youth .............................................................................. 94
9. Lives in the 'Very Clear and Light-Filled' Cosmic System .... 102
10. The Mahāsiddha Who Tamed the Untamable ..................... 112

H.H. the XVth Gyalwa Karmapa's Dedication ......................... 120
Translators' Dedication ................................................................. 121

Notes ................................................................................... 123
Glossary ............................................................................ 125
As instructed by the Sixteenth Gyalwang Karmapa, Katia Holmes translated accounts of events from the former lives of the fifteenth and sixteenth Karmapas into English. I rejoice that these were translated and published and also praise the printing of this revised edition. I hope this book can show its readers the Buddhist perspective on rebirth, as well as the profundity of love and compassion when they have become second nature.

Tashi delek,
The Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje
DZAILENDARA

"The Lotus Garden"

The amazing story of one of the previous lives of His Holiness Rangjung Rikpé Dorjé, the XVIth Gyalwa Karmapa
HISTORY OF THE DZALENDARA TEXT

When His Holiness the XVIth Karmapa was eight years old, he told many a story of his previous lives to one of his Gurus, Gongkar Pandita, who carefully kept in writing the nectar of the young Karmapa’s words. However, when His Holiness had to leave Tibet, Gongkar Pandita was himself unable to escape and his precious records were no longer unavailable. In 1976, His Holiness visited Nepal to make offerings to the three great stupas and to bestow the empowerment (dbang) and the ritual reading authorising practice (lung) of the Kagyu Treasury of Vajrayāna cycle to many of his followers. His Holiness then left Nepal for Delhi and, on the way, his party drove through a place in Himachal Pradesh called, by Tibetans, Dzaledara. It was raining very slightly and peacocks were singing softly. His Holiness had the car stopped and said to his attendants, "I have come back to my motherland". He then told the following wondrous story.
I. DZALENDARA'S TRANSFORMATION 
AND HIS SON'S EXILE

Over one thousand years ago, in an area known by Tibetans 
as Dzalendara and today called Jullundur*, the line of kings 
ruling over the area belonged to a non-Buddhist sect whose 
beliefs involved animal sacrifice. Knowing this, the infinite 
mind of the Gyalwa Karmapa took birth as a king's son in 
order to be able to eradicate the people's harmful customs. He 
was named Dzalendara and that area was later called after 
him, hence its present-day name. The young prince grew up, 
completed his education and then himself ascended to the 
throne. His very first deed as monarch was to proclaim a law 
forbidding anyone in his kingdom from killing any living 
being and to establish punishments for those who disobeyed.

The new king had one hundred consorts, two of whom 
were his main wives. One, named Queen Pure Light, was an 
emanation of Tara*. The other was called Noble Sun. In a 
previous life, during the time of Buddha Sakyamuni, the 
latter had been a man called Ram Chandra, a cloth-merchant 
of what is today Varanasi; a person who disliked the Buddhist 
monks and abused them greatly. As a result he had been 
subsequently born in the hell-realms* but since he had also 
had the good fortune of seeing the Buddha he was later 
reborn as the daughter of a king. However, this princess still 
had some karmic resonance from her former birth and this 
gave her an inexplicable dislike for the sangha. She was the 
first of Dzalendara's queens to bear him a son, whom they 
named Son of the Sun. He was the emanation of a 
bodhisattva.
Dzalendara

Some time later, Pure Light, the other wife, had a dream. She saw a very spacious room in which was a throne with a small baby seated on it and she immediately felt that this was her child. The baby then addressed her, saying,

\begin{quote}
O noble mother! All beings are immersed
In the sufferings of conditioned existence.
This is caused by their ignorant belief
In a self which has no actual reality.
By means of ten powers,
I shall free all beings from their sufferings.
\end{quote}

Nine months and ten days after the dream, the mother gave birth to a son, Sun Moon, another emanation of the Gyalwa Karmapa. At the moment of his birth the earth trembled and there was a rain of flowers. As soon as he was born, the child sat upright and said,

\begin{quote}
I will personally bring to the true path all beings
Sunk in the four rivers of samsāra,
Birth, ageing, sickness and death.
From the depths of my heart and without any fear,
I take this commitment.
\end{quote}

After the birth the King summoned the brahmins' to look at the royal child and examine the various signs which would tell of his destiny. Having done this, Intelligent, who was the most qualified of the brahmins, declared the infant to have all the marks of a chakravartin, a world-ruler. Extremely pleased at the news, the King summoned Kham Maht, his minister favourable to buddhadharma, saying,
Part One

First my wife had an extraordinary dream, then Sun Moon was born with all the auspicious marks, so therefore he should become the next king. To celebrate my historic decision concerning his future accession, invite everyone in this and neighbouring kingdoms to a great reception.

Kham Maht was then to assemble the other ministers, who were non-Buddhist, to tell them of the King's decision to prepare appropriate celebrations to mark the birth of this wondrous child. The other ministers, however, disagreed, arguing that since nothing had been done for the firstborn, why should there now be a celebration for his younger sibling? Only after much discussion did Kham Maht manage to make his view prevail. Preparations commenced and invitations were sent far and wide.

On the day of the celebration the people and representatives of seven kingdoms arrived, each with presents from their own countries. They respectively voiced their aspirations and wishes to the young prince. Representatives of three of the kingdoms where there was no buddhadharma wished that he may be able to defeat all enemies and requested that he pursue the same kind of friendly policy as his father. The representatives of three kingdoms where buddhadharma was flourishing wished that through his great loving kindness and compassion the young prince would protect all beings and they requested him to take the commitment to spread buddhadharma fully, both in his own kingdom and elsewhere in the world. The child replied,

0 wonder! From the great ocean of conditioned existence I will truly liberate these beings. In
Dzalendara

according with my previous promises of aeons long
since gone, then in this very life I shall truly bring them
to liberation.

Everyone was, of course, amazed that a child so young could
speak in such a deep way but one of the non-Buddhist
ministers, Kham Ishvara, was extremely angry that the King
had chosen this child to be his successor and he decided to do
anything he could in order to stop his succession.

Minister Kham Ishvara went to see the non-Buddhist priest
Ram Singha and his disciple Bishomuk and told them that their
religion, until now prevalent in the kingdom, was being
threatened by the presence of its enemies—Queen Pure Light
and her son, Prince Sun Moon. He requested that the priests
find a way to eliminate them. Their eventual advice was that
Kham Ishvara himself, aided and abetted by Queen Noble Sun,
should use calumny in order to turn the King against the other
queen and her son. If this plan did not succeed then the two
priests would cast evil spells on them.

Accordingly, Queen Noble Sun went to see the King and
claimed that Queen Pure Light had had an amorous
relationship with one of his subjects. Later, Minister Kham
Ishvara came to see the King and said that, for the sake of his
kingdom, the monarch should banish Queen Pure Light else
her bad behaviour would bring disrepute on the royal
household and on the King himself. After the audience, the
King said he would “think about it” and seemingly went for a
walk.

In actual fact the time was now ripe for him to transform into
a wisdom-body. A dākini came to meet him and said.

To get rid of the finest traces of cognitive obscurations,
one needs bliss and voidness. For this the excellent
Part One

skills of a vajra body are required. You are one worthy of entering that domain, Please come right now.

The King followed her to Orgyen, the land of the dākinis, and took up the life of a mahāsiddha. Having transformed himself into Chakrasamvara, he taught vajrayāna to the dākinis, who offered praise to his perfect body, speech and mind,

Unborn great buddhadharmakāya—
The indivisible union of voidness and pure intelligence,
Supreme bliss sambhogakāya—
The very expression of pure intelligence,
Nirmakāya—manifestation of compassion in action:
We praise the Guru, indivisible union of kāyas three.
Clarity and voidness—vajra mind free from all conceptual complications,
Sound and voidness— ineffable vajra-speech,
All-pervading, spontaneous vajra body,
We praise you, the Lord Guru endowed with all the qualities of perfect body, speech and mind.

Meanwhile, Andar, the King's servant, found out that his royal master had vanished and was panic-stricken, terrified at the thought of being blamed for the disappearance. So much so that he tried to kill himself by climbing to the top of a large tree and throwing himself down to the ground but a dākini emanating in the form of a monkey carried him safely to the palace. There he explained the King's disappearance to the queens and ministers. As a result the non-Buddhists and the Buddhists each requested their own priests to perform prayers for the King to be found quickly.
Some time later, Queen Noble Sun started thinking that now the King had disappeared the time was right for all the
Dzalendara

non-Buddhists to get together and eliminate the other queen and her son. Therefore she asked Bright and Clear, a lady friend, to go and see the non-Buddhist minister Kham Ishvara. She was to tell him of Queen Noble Sun’s intentions to hatch a plot that would protect their own religion from its competitors.

The minister pledged his complicity. He gathered other ministers and invited the non-Buddhist priest Bishomuk, who told them that they must find a way to eliminate Queen Pure Light and her son. After some discussion they agreed on a ruse to separate them, probably when the two young princes went walking in the forest together. Once the son of the Buddhist queen was alone, they would seize him and kill him. Thus Kham Ishvara went to see the two princes and told them that their father was absent for a while but that he himself would be happy to accompany them on their outings, wherever they would like to go. He did this for a few days then, one day, he suggested that the two princes take different ways in the forest. Whilst the younger prince, the son of Queen Pure Light, was walking on his own, Harsha, another non-Buddhist minister, was lying in ambush in the middle of the forest, with one hundred soldiers. As the young prince approached, they jumped on him and started striking him with their swords but no matter how hard they tried they could not manage to hurt him. In the end, Harsha threw him from the top of a high cliff. During his fall the prince prayed,

By the power of the blessing of the Three Most Precious Refuges*, that never deceive,
And as the true fruit of my own pure and highest aspirations,
May I be freed from this obstacle to my life
And may I accomplish an ocean of bodhisattva deeds.
Part One

At this point the god Brahma, aware of what was happening, emanated in the form of a peacock and the young prince landed on top of its back. Wings outstretched, the miraculous peacock flew to a land full of forests, pastures and orchards, in the region of Bir, and landed there. There the prince spent some time meditating on all phenomena of conditioned existence being like a dream, like a magical illusion, and thus he realised the futility and senselessness of conditioned existence and the unreality of all phenomena. While living in that country, Sun Moon taught the buddhadharma to tigers, panthers and all sorts of wild animals to such a point that gradually all the beasts stopped harming each other and lived together in harmony.

Near where Sun Moon was staying there resided a demon. At the time of the first Buddha*, he had been a Buddhist who then turned against the faith. As a result, he was now living there as a demon who killed people in the daytime and who underwent the excruciating pains of hell at night. Noticing the young prince, he approached with the intention of killing him. The young prince, overwhelmed by love, thought,

This being's condition is a result of his evil deeds. If I cannot send him to a Pure Land then my commitment to help all beings to reach Buddhahood is senseless.

Having transformed himself into Avalokiteshvara he said,

Through the power of all the Buddhas and their spiritual heirs in the ten directions to speak the truth, and through the power of all the virtue I have accumulated in the three times, may this sad and wretched demon's body be cast aside. When he has been

10
Dzalendara

reborn in the Potala and has firmly taken the commitment to reach enlightenment for the sake of beings, may he quickly perfect the deeds of a bodhisattva.

Thereupon the prince transferred the demon's consciousness to the Potala* and when the latter was born there he resolved to reach enlightenment and gradually worked on the path to liberation.

Having rid themselves of the younger prince, the non-Buddhist ministers and their followers assembled and decided that their next move should be the enthronement of Son of the Sun, to ensure the stable continuity of their religion. Meanwhile, Son of the Sun himself, seeing that his brother had not come back, asked the ministers where his sibling might be. They pretended that he had gone away to another kingdom for the duration of his father's absence. However, a son of a Buddhist minister who used to be the childhood friend of both princes eventually told Son of the Sun the truth. Upon hearing that the non-Buddhists had killed his brother, with the help of his own mother, Son of the Sun was struck with grief-filled stupor. He realised the utter pointlessness of conditioned existence, ever riddled with jealousy, greed, anger and the like.

As a result, he declared that he was now leaving worldly existence and he fled to the woods. He walked and walked in a wilderness of vast forests, feeding on wild fruit and constantly calling out the name of his brother, "Sun Moon, Sun Moon!" Many days went by in this way until he eventually found himself near a mighty river. His body had become very weak. Feeling extremely tired, he lay down by the riverside and fell asleep. Many monkeys were playing
Part One

on the river bank and, as one of them passed over his body, Son of the Sun suddenly awoke and saw that he was surrounded by tigers and monkeys. With a shiver of fear, he thought they were about to devour him and said,

All the Buddhas in the ten directions and their bodhisattva heirs,
And you my special Refugee, Sun Moon,
You are all endowed with the eyes of pure wisdom.
Please look on me.
Since it is now certain that in this place
The components of this life will be torn apart, may I be born in the presence of this most excellent Son of the Victors, my brother.
May I fully complete an ocean of bodhisattva deeds
And may I bring an ocean of beings to spiritual maturity.

The prince prayed in this way but actually the tigers and monkeys had no intention at all of harming him since they had been instructed in the buddhadharma by his brother. Instead, the animals went to see Sun Moon and told him about the human who was lying by the riverside. Sun Moon, who lived naked, the hairs of his body as his only cover, ran to the river, where the two brothers fell into each other's arms, shedding many tears of joy. Thereafter they lived together in the forest, practicing meditation.

Meanwhile, the kingdom of Bala Ganj was left without either king or princes and the Buddhist and non-Buddhist ministers started gathering forces against each other, each side recruiting its own army. They were just about to start fighting when King Dzalendara came back, emanating again in his previous form. The King had the treacherous Queen Noble
Dzalandara

Sun arrested and made a servant and the non-Buddhist ministers Kham Ishvara and Harsha were eliminated.

*End of Part One*
Part One

Karmapa Chenno

14
Part Two

2. HOMECOMING AND SPREADING OF THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING

The two princes built a grass hut in the forest and lived there together. During the daytime they taught the dharma to animals and at night they meditated. One day, while meditating, the younger prince, Sun Moon, saw that the time had come for them to go and spread the dharma in their own country and in other places where it was still unknown. He told his brother that they should go back to their home now and help many beings through giving them the teachings. As they were about to leave their beautiful forest retreat, the ocean of their minds was stirred by waves of both sadness and joy; sadness at having to leave behind all their animal friends, who had been their delightful companions for so many years, and joy at the prospect of being reunited with their parents. However, they decided that, for the sake of all beings, the time had now come to go and, gathering all the animals together, Sun Moon addressed them, saying,

All conditioned phenomena are impermanent,
As ephemeral as a water-bubble.
Life is impermanent, like a flash of lightning in the sky.
When you go to the land of Yama, Lord of Death,
Nothing goes with you but your good and bad deeds.
Therefore, now that you have the choice,
Let go of evil motivations to hurt each other
And always strive for good with body and speech.
Dzalendara

As for me, in order to fulfil my previous promises,
I have to leave this place to go and help beings.
On this occasion, I pray
That all those who have any kind of link with me
May always be near me and receiving teachings,
In this and all other lives to come.

As the two brothers departed, all the animals bowed their heads in sadness. The young princes walked for a long time. One day, as they were going through a vast plain, a Brahmin who was a wealthy cattle-owner invited them into his home and offered them lavish hospitality, serving them fine foods and drinks. They spent the day here, giving the Brahmin and his family some teachings on impermanence, explaining to them that conditioned existence is devoid of any durable core, like a hollow tree, and that now that they had the good fortune of a precious human existence they should use it to the full and tread the spiritual path properly.

Continuing their journey, the princes passed through many towns and villages. One day they arrived in a town where a wild elephant had gone berserk and was devastating everything in its path, spreading terror and killing many people. The young prince thought, "May this wild elephant leave its body and may I send its consciousness to a Pure Land." Through the power and purity of his thought he transferred the animal’s consciousness to the Pure Land of the Potala and the elephant died. All those who saw what had happened were amazed and a whole crowd gathered to look at the extraordinary children (now in their early teens). Then the young princes started to teach the dharma and rumours of their exploit and of their teaching ability soon spread far
and wide throughout northern and western India; crowds of people came to hear them teach and soon their fame reached the kingdom of Bala Ganj. From there, their overjoyed parents sent a minister and some attendants to meet the two princes and bring them back home. When they arrived back in their kingdom, the two princes were welcomed by great rejoicing and celebrations. When the festivities were eventually over, they asked their father, the King, to give them six years' leave in order that they might study the dharma under a teacher. At their suggestion the King requested the bodhisattva Master of Qualities to teach them and the two princes went to a solitary place to study the mahāyāna teachings under him for six years.

At the end of their studies, the elder prince took monk's vows and received the new name of Shantibhadra (Peace and Goodness). Sun Moon took the bodhisattva vow. At their parents' request, the two brothers had to return home and, before they left, Sun Moon made this promise to their teacher,

Most kind teacher who, through purification, brings an end to all the sufferings of conditioned existence and of the lower states, you who annihilate samsāra, whatever you have ordered us to do, we promise to keep your words indelibly engraved in our hearts.

As a farewell address, the bodhisattva gave them his last piece of advice,

Generosity, right conduct, patience, diligence and meditation are, Through the hundred light-rays of prajña,
Dzalendara

Like a luminous, bright lamp.
Prajna's actual nature is the unbroken union of voidness and pure intelligence.
Ultimately, the practice of the paramitas cannot be found beyond the seal of this indivisible union.

To which, Shantibhadra, the elder brother, replied,

Excellent spiritual friend, your infinite kindness is beyond all limit.
In this life and in all those to come,
Just as we are never separate from our own forehead,
May we never be apart from you.
May we always rely upon you as our Guru.
Ultimately, may our minds fuse together with your pure mind.

The two princes took their leave by placing their teacher's feet on their heads and then they departed, returning to their parents who had prepared great festivities to celebrate the homecoming. When asked by their parents what they had learned from their meditation practice, Shantibhadra replied that they had seen the futility of royalty but that they had come back home in answer to their parents' wish.

After Sun Moon's return to the kingdom of Bala Ganj, the ministers thought that the time was now ripe to find a suitable wife for their future king. They went to consult the prince's father about this and the King asked them if they had any suggestion to offer. The ministers suggested that Princess Moonlight, the daughter of Chandrakirti, King of Bangala, would be a suitable match. The King agreed and consulted priests and astrologers to know whether the
Part Two

marriage was auspicious. It was found that all the signs were favourable. King Dzalendara then sent a minister to Bangala with a message requesting the King to give his daughter in marriage to Prince Sun Moon. King Chandrakirti was pleased to accept since an alliance with the heir of such an important kingdom as Bala Ganj would be very desirable and so, accompanied by a splendid retinue, he escorted his daughter there. The ceremonies for the coronation of the new king and his marriage to the princess were held on the same day, in the presence of all the representatives, ministers and people of the seven kingdoms previously represented at the celebration of his birth as a prince. On this occasion dances and extraordinary festivities went on for many days and thereafter the new king declared the whole kingdom to be now Buddhist.

Later, Queen Moonlight gave birth to a son and King Sun Moon went with them to Bangala, the kingdom of his father-in-law, accompanied by attendants and ministers. The King of Bangala had made extraordinary preparations to welcome his son-in-law and there were great celebrations upon his arrival. Gradually, Sun Moon managed to convince King Chandrakirti of the necessity of giving up killing any form of life and of practising dharma, after which the King himself ordered that everyone in his kingdom should stop killing and practise dharma. Thereafter, King Sun Moon gave teachings everyday to all the people.

Some people were extremely displeased at what was happening. There was a non-Buddhist priest named Karma Chakra, who had sixty thousand disciples and some miraculous powers. He went to see the non-Buddhist minister Dosum and complained that the present events
Dzalendara

were intolerable since the King was now making everyone follow the Buddhist dharma, thereby suppressing their own traditional religion. In view of this, he felt that all those who still strongly supported their sect (with its sacrificial killing) should get together and try to eliminate the King. This resulted in them agreeing to send Karma Chakra to a neighbouring kingdom to request King Rahu Nayar, himself an adept of their faith possessing some miraculous powers, to help them to defeat their king. Meanwhile minister Dosum was to remain in the kingdom of Bangala to create unrest and dissatisfaction in the country and prepare all his fellow believers to rise up against the king.

As planned, Karma Chakra went to tell King Rahu Nayar that ever since King Chandrakirti had invited Sun Moon to his country Buddhism was becoming more and more established there and that their own religion was rapidly waning. Upon hearing this, King Rahu Nayar burst into a violent fit of anger and said,

*The first thing to do is to eliminate the cause of all this trouble, King Sun Moon. Now he has brought Buddhism into your country, he will probably carry on doing this in other places. He is the enemy. We must make him disappear before our religion is made to disappear everywhere. As for your King Chandrakirti, we shall try to talk him back into reason but, if he does not listen, we shall also have to eliminate him.*

Accordingly, minister Hussein was sent as a messenger to King Chandrakirti with a letter from King Rahu Nayar saying, "You are forsaking the sacred teaching of our forefathers and following a bad religion. Please change
Part Two

your ways before it is too late and come back to your own faith. Should you not heed this warning and reject our sacred teachings forever, I will surely destroy you." Upon receipt of the letter, King Chandrakirti did not even as much as open it and the envoy returned to his own kingdom, reporting that it was now obvious that the ruler had definitely forsaken their religion. Thereupon, King Rahu Nayar started preparing his army for war. King Chandrakirti was also trying to do that but he met with difficulties since minister Dosum had been busy fomenting rebellion within the country. Worried that he might not be able to face the non-Buddhist attack, Chandrakirti sent for help from the Buddhist King Sun Moon (who had now returned to his own country after teaching the dharma in Bangala for nearly a year), asking him to send an army to defeat the invaders.

Rahu Nayar's army was marching towards the kingdom of Bangala when it met the incoming army of King Sun Moon. The Buddhist king ascended into the sky where he manifested the form of a Hindu deity. All of Rahu Nayar's army thought that their god had come to the rescue with an army and prostrated to him. Immediately after this, Sun Moon appeared in the form of Avalokiteshvara and through the power of his great loving kindness and compassion the weapons fell from the hands of the soldiers.

However, King Rahu Nayar, who himself had some miraculous powers, flew up in the sky to the form of Avalokiteshvara and said: "You can deceive my men but you will not fool me." He started throwing weapons at the King-become-Avalokiteshvara but, since the latter was immersed in a state of total love and compassion, the weapons changed into a rain of flowers. Then pointing to the heart of Rahu Nayar, Sun Moon said,
Dzalendara

0 wonder!
The three dimensions of conditioned existence
Are the field of illusion born of ignorance;
What is impermanent is held to be real and
Mere magical artifacts are mistaken for actual objects.
The kaleidoscope of mental patterns
Is the cause of infinite suffering.
It acts as the seed which creates endless samsāra.
As I now transfer your consciousness instantaneously
To the Buddhafield of True Joy, may you be born there
And may all the results of your actions be exhausted.

As he said these words Sun Moon sent King Rahu Nayar's consciousness to the Pure Land of True Joy.

Meanwhile all of Rahu Nayar's generals were moved with very strong faith towards Sun Moon and they invited him to accompany them to their country. Arriving there, he taught the dharma, telling the people that they should practise the ten virtuous actions, give up the ten unvirtuous ones and that they should stop killing all living things. He also taught them how to meditate on Chenrezi and recite his Mantra OM MANI PEME HUNG. Then many people, particularly those who used to kill—fishermen, hunters, butchers and so on—took the vow to abstain from taking life. Most people in the kingdom recited the Mani mantra and it is said that for quite some time afterwards that country remained Buddhist and particularly devoted to Avalokiteshvara.

The priest Karma Chakra also embraced Buddhism and asked Sun Moon to come back with him to Bangala to teach
Part Two

and strengthen the dharma there. To this the King replied that there was a special karmic link between the priest and his own brother, the bodhisattva Shantibhadra, therefore it was him that Karma Chakra should invite to his monastery to teach and give ordination. King Sun Moon returned to his own kingdom and requested his brother Shantibhadra to go and teach the dharma in Bangala and to ordain Karma Chakra's sixty thousand disciples. Shantibhadra spent two or three years there, giving teaching and King Chandrakirti took the bodhisattva vow from him.

Later on, King Sun Moon requested his brother to return to their own kingdom of Bala Ganj. There Shantibhadra established many monasteries, ordained a great number of monks and taught them the dharma while Sun Moon taught the lay people. Thus well established in the teachings of universal truth, the kingdom remained in great harmony and happiness.

End of Part Two
Dzalendara
Part Three

3. DZALENDARA SHARES HIS HEART’S TREASURE

One day during this excellent period when everything was good and happy in the kingdom of Bala Ganj, the King’s father, Dzalendara, and his queen, Pure Light, went out for a walk, accompanied by their two sons, Shantibhadra and King Sun Moon, the latter with his queen, Moonlight. All of a sudden, Dzalendara and his queen disappeared. Some saw them flying high in space, some saw Dzalendara holding a *katanka* and a skull-cup, some saw him surrounded by a multitude of *dākas* and *dākinis*, while others saw him wearing a tiger skin. Thus he was seen simultaneously in many different forms. Then he vanished completely.

On days of special religious importance, such as the tenth and the twenty-fifth days of the lunar month, the *dākas* and *dākinis* used to meet in one of the eight sacred charnel grounds of India in order to practise meditation, exchange dharma teachings and so on. Dzalendara vanished on such a day. He went with the *dākas* and *dākinis* to the Cool Grove charnel ground and, being made the leader of the gathering, he gave them many vajrayāna teachings, saying:

*Ah Ho! All thoughts of the five poisons
Appear as the ornaments of voidness.
Being utterly pure, the world, beings, and
The original mandala are the great Identity,
Where vast offerings blessed by the pure bliss*
Dzalendara

Of meditation are offered from within the union of Voidness and intelligence, free from all dualistic thoughts.
The expression of pure intelligence is samsāra and nirvāṇa and, within the space of great bliss,
Union, liberation, purification and practice of the path
Have all been completed.
The magical display springing from pure intelligence
And the play of its dance into myriad transformations
Spread the ineffable and indestructible melody of the dharma in the ten directions.

While saying this, Dzalendara showed a multitude of extraordinary miracles to the dākas and dākinis. Meanwhile, King Sun Moon realised that his father had gone to the Cool Grove charnel ground for the occasion of a special religious day and he told this to his brother Shantibhadra, their teacher of the old days (Bodhisattva ‘Master of Qualities’) and the Minister Kham Maht. He explained that if they all went to the cemetery together and prayed very hard to meet Dzalendara, they may be able to see him on the occasion of the next gathering, a month later. Thus they left for Cool Grove and spent a long time there, praying and making offerings, until one morning a yogi appeared in the middle of the funeral ground. His skin was brown and he had long, dishevelled hair and a long, long beard. He wore bone ornaments and a tiger-skin skirt and was holding a skull-cup in the left hand and a katanka in the right hand. At first no one knew who this yogi was but Sun Moon soon recognised him as his father and requested him to give them empowerment into the vajrayāna level of Buddhism and help them to become mahāsiddhas in that very life. In answer to this request, Dzalendara pointed his finger to
Part Three

hearts of his sons and minister and gave them the deep pointing-out instructions on the view, meditation and practice of mahāmudra,

Manifestation and sound arise
From subtle mental imprints created by thoughts.
Just as a drawing in water vanishes of itself,
False appearances also disappear automatically
When their lack of reality is understood
As being nothing beyond suchness.
This is the mahāmudra view.

All appearances manifest through the portal of mind.
If it is left unobstructed and unspoilt by concepts,
It is void of any solid reality.
It is vivid clarity- and whatever appears
Is just left to happen naturally.
This is mahāmudra meditation.

Illusory appearances are born of the belief in reality.
Supported by the constant understanding of their unreality,
One rests at ease within the spontaneous, original nature
And the space where nothing need be done is entered effortlessly.
This is mahāmudra in practice.

These three points are my heart’s treasure.
Since yogis who go to the heart of everything
Are like my own heart,
For them I speak from the heart
These words which cannot be spoken to others.
Dzalendara

When Dzalendara gave this deep teaching the earth shook and there was a rain of flowers. He then went on to tell his two sons that they should always practise bodhisattva deeds, until such time as all beings reach Buddhahood. And what of bodhisattva Master of Qualities? The pointing-out instruction given by the King made him recognise instantaneously the true nature of the mind. Achieving realisation and liberation at once, he went off to lead the life of a mahāsiddha, living in the twenty-four special places where mahāsiddhas used to stay. Through Dzalendara's words, Minister Kham Maht was introduced to the true nature of his mind and, after gradual practice of all the levels of mahāmudra instruction, he also became a mahasiddha.

After bodhisattva Master of Qualities' departure, the two princes and the minister put themselves at the feet of Dzalendara and requested him to be their guru throughout all their lives. Then the three of them returned together to the kingdom of Bala Ganj.

Dzalendara became a holder of the knowledge of immortality, remaining forever engaged in the activity of liberating beings everywhere and living in the twenty-four special mahāsiddha places and the eight great funeral grounds, teaching vajrayāna to the dākas and dākinis.

Dzalendara's two sons and the minister returned to the kingdom of Bala Ganj. There, Shantibhadra received an invitation from the King of Bangala to come and teach dharma. He asked his brother Sun Moon whether he should go or not and Sun Moon simply replied that they should always be prepared to go wherever the task of the dharma had to be accomplished. Thus Shantibhadra went and taught the dharma extensively, making the presence of the
Part Three

teachings in Bangala even stronger than before. Under his influence the sangha grew considerably, to several hundred thousand monks. In Bala Ganj also, the sangha grew in similar proportion under the beneficial influence of King Sun Moon's teachings.

This is the End of Part Three which concludes 'The Lotus-Garden', the wonderful story of the previous lives of His Holiness the XVIth Gyalwa Karmapa as Dzalendara and Sun Moon.

DEDICATION

This wonderful story of Dzalendara is the precious nectar flowing from the lips of His Holiness the XVIth Karmapa, who told this story of his previous lives without any distortion or falsity. When he told the story, he made the wish that it may be the cause for reaching buddhahood for all those who read it— not only for those who feel faith and devotion but also for those who feel dislike or disbelief.

In answer to His Holiness' wish that "Dzalendara" be translated into English, Khenpo Chodrak Tenpel told the story to the western student Katia Holmes who, with his kind help, made this translation, hoping that it would give many beings the precious link with the one who can liberate all. May the great bodhisattvas and lamas forgive any mistake or omission.

Rumtek, February 1980,
Anniversary of the Lord Buddha's miracles
SAKARCHUPA

"Stainless Moonbeams"

Stories of the former lives of the XVth Gyalwa Karmapa, Khachab Dorje.
Listen, friend!
This Buddha, Karmapa, loves beings so deeply
That he will always manifest by our side,
In an infinite variety of forms,
Until all of us have recognised
The blissful purity of our original nature.
Tune in to the inspiring melody of this great saga.
Do not freeze it under a factual gaze.
Read it with the heart
And let the warmth of its blessing
Ripen your future harvest of pure insight.
When Khachab Dorje was born in 1871, in Shekar Gyatse (a part of Tsang, Central Tibet) a great canopy of rainbows appeared over the house and a soft rain of flowers fell. As soon as he was born the child sat up in the vajra posture, looked in each of the directions and said, "I am the Karmapa". Kongtrul Rinpoche, Drukchen Rinpoche and Chojur Dechen Lingpa were all convinced that this extraordinary child actually was the new Karmapa and so they consulted the prediction letter left by the previous Karmapa, Tekcho Dorje, before his death. Finding that all the details coincided exactly with those of the letter, they tested the child by making him choose ritual objects from a large group of artefacts that had belonged to many different people. All the ones that he selected were those that had belonged to the previous Karmapa. Having no doubt that the child was the new incarnation, they took him to Tsurpu, the seat of the Karmapa, where he was formally enthroned.

Without having to study anything, the child immediately showed extraordinary qualities of intelligence and knowledge. By the age of seven he could already give teachings and had composed several very beautiful and deep prayers, poems and mystical songs. However, for the sake of the spiritual development of beings he had to show the process of learning, of receiving transmission of the Kagyu teachings and of undergoing the experience that takes place
through the master-disciple relationship. Therefore he went to Do-Kham, the Eastern provinces of Tibet, and took teachings from many great Lamas, in particular from Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Taye and Khyentse Rinpoche, Pema Osal Dongo Lingpa. He did not just take the teachings but also practiced them, spending several years in retreat, to show his future disciples that a teaching is of little use if it is not made part of oneself through experience. Once, during that part of his life, Khachab Dorje was staying with Khyentse Rinpoche at the latter's invitation. Khyentse Rinpoche asked the then sixteen-year-old Karmapa to relate some stories of his previous lives. In answer to his request, Khachab Dorje told the ten stories of "Stainless Moonbeams", all in one day, and Khyentse Rinpoche carefully wrote down each of the Karmapa's precious words.

Khachab Dorje himself was an exceptional being in whom could be distinguished the special enlightened attributes of body, speech, mind, qualities and activity. One of the special 'physical' buddha attributes is the ability to work miracles. This was a power which he manifested on many occasions, such as the time when he was requested to consecrate the Litang Pangpo Monastery, six months by horse from Tsurpu. Being unable to attend the consecration, Khachab Dorje just drew a map of the monastery and on the day of the ceremony sprinkled upon it some consecrating rice. In Litang itself, everyone witnessed a shower of blessing-rice fall from the heavens as he did this. He also resuscitated many beings—humans who had been murdered or animals killed by hunters—stating that he had at the same time erased the bad deeds of the murderers and hunters through his compassionate action.

Amongst the special attributes of speech are the powers of clairvoyance and unhindered knowledge. Khachab Dorje
possessed these to the full. He recognised, for example, more than one thousand reincarnations of great teachers, the main ones being Chamgön Drukchen Rinpoche, Situ Rinpoche and Kongtrul Rinpoche. Sometimes, when giving teachings, he might suddenly voice the thoughts of one of his disciples (often to the latter's embarrassment). There is also the special prediction letter called "The Flower Blossoming from a Dead Tree" which he left before he passed away in 1922, in which he foretold the province and place of his next incarnation, the names of his future father and mother and the year and date of the birth.

The attributes of buddha mind are illustrated by the Karmapa's capacity to remain constantly in meditation in whatever he does. Thus, even though Khachab Dorje lived in the world of humans, his vast mind was always immersed in the sphere of the 'true nature of mind' and he often had profound visions of the pure lands of the Buddhas and Yidams.

As for his special attributes of enlightened qualities, he was endowed with the sixty-four qualities of total purity and perfect spiritual maturity. Although most people would see Khachab Dorje as an ordinary man, those blessed with spiritual realisation could actually perceive him as the Buddha, possessing the sixty-four enlightened qualities.

The fifth set of special attributes are those of enlightened activity—the constant, spontaneous and effortless work to help beings. Lord Buddha, Guru Rinpoche and many other highly-realised teachers have predicted that the activity of the Karmapas will only cease when all the impurities and sufferings of beings have been removed. This statement was made by Khachab Dorje himself and all of his actions were in accord with it. He declared (in his testament letter) that although he felt absolutely no desire to be reborn in the
Dzalandara

world, he would take birth again because of his previous commitment to help beings and to uphold the teachings of Lord Buddha. Just as a mushroom grows in the meadow in springtime, so he would manifest again and again in the world through the power of his compassion, because he would never abandon beings or the Buddha's Teaching.

"Stainless Moonbeams" is a small part of the story of that great being, perfect in all aspects of body, speech and mind, endowed with the highest qualities and whose compassionate activity constantly helps other beings in innumerable ways. This is not just a collection of fairy stories or amusing fantasies: reading these accounts can be the most meaningful of experiences. If one reads these stories thinking of Khachab Dorje as a Buddha then one will directly receive the blessings of a Buddha. If one thinks of him as a bodhisattva or as a mahāyāna teacher then one will correspondingly receive the blessings of a bodhisattva or a mahāyāna teacher. Even if Sakarchupa is just read as interesting adventures or as a nice entertainment then this will still create a link with the Karmapa and through even this small link one will be able to meet the Karmapa in one's next lives and receive his blessing.

May the readers choose their own way of reading the stories but may they read them knowing that they are not wasting their time.
Karmaapa Chenno

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I. THE GREAT GOLDEN BIRDS

The Sugatas and their spiritual heirs in the ten directions are the guides of beings.
From the immense ocean of their loving kindness and compassion,
Chenrezik, who dwells in the Buddha field of Drindzin,
Was born with the glory of all the marks and signs of perfection.
I bow down to you, indestructible sun,
the Victorious One with all enlightened qualities.

A long, long time ago, longer than you could ever imagine (about three hundred thousand cosmic aeons to be slightly more precise), to the east of a world called Infinite Light, there lay the vast kingdom of Baro Arta, its three thousand provinces spread along the coast of a vast ocean. It was a land of great affluence where people lived in ease but, unfortunately, with little or no sense of morality. The King of Baro Arta was called Mighty God and it was as his son that Khachab Dorje took birth. The young prince, unlike the other children, had a natural tendency to act virtuously, gently and without causing harm to anyone.

One day, in his fifth year, the child was playing in the magnificent parks of the royal palace in the company of many other children. Suddenly, high in the sky, they saw what seemed to be a flock of huge golden birds glittering in the sunlight, beautiful to behold and far larger than any birds any
Sakarchupa

of them had ever seen. The young prince, awestruck and amazed, asked his playmates,

*Look, can you see those strange birds flying in the sky? Someone, anyone, please tell me what they are? I will give a handsome reward to whoever can explain this to me.*

The prince's companions, however, were equally puzzled and could only reply that they had neither seen nor heard of such a thing before.

Then the young prince ran to the royal palace with his friends. He rushed in to his father and breathlessly told him of what they had just seen. He asked,

*Father, do you know what this could have been? Please, please tell me all about it, tell me all you know.*

The King listened attentively but declared that he himself was just as astonished and that he had not the faintest idea of what it could have been that they had seen. He quickly summoned his minister, Rabi Gupta, and charged him with the mission of discovering whether anyone in the entire kingdom had ever heard of such a wonderful and extraordinary phenomenon or could explain it:

*Go and inquire at once from everyone you meet and let it be known that whoever can provide the information we seek will be regally rewarded.*

And so the minister enquired hither and thither throughout the city, questioning the citizens about these unknown flying creatures but no one had a clue what they were. Eventually, however, after quite some time and many, many enquiries, he
'The Great Golden Birds'

came across an aged Brahmin, stooped over a walking stick, and he asked him about the strange 'birds'. The ancient sage knew much and he explained, to the minister's great relief, that far, far away, in the western part of their world, there was a Buddha named Immaculate Giver of the Best of Gifts whose disciples had miraculous powers and could fly. The old man was sure that the big yellow creatures seen by the children must have been those monks, flying joyfully through space in their saffron robes.

The minister returned to the palace in great haste and reported to the King all that the old Brahmin had told him. The King ordered that this old man be given anything he wished in reward and thus the minister returned to him, bringing seven elephants laden with lavish presents of food and clothes. Then he asked the sage how they could arrange for the Buddha to come to their country.

The old man reflected for a moment and then said that, since the Buddha sees and knows everything, they should arrange the most beautiful offerings for him and pray with faith and sincerity, requesting him to come. He felt certain that if they did this then the Buddha would bless them with his presence.

King and prince both were delighted to hear this news. They arranged for the whole palace to be cleansed and made beautiful. It was washed throughout with delicately-perfumed water and then decorated with banners and ornaments. Exquisite offerings, in great profusion, were harmoniously arranged; the finest things from the land. Holding incense in their folded hands, the royal father and son then prayed to the Buddha from their hearts, saying:

*Compassionate Buddha, we are blinded by our bad deeds and negativity. We pray that, through your compassion*
Sakarchupa

and by your miraculous powers, you will come to us swiftly.

At the time, Buddha Immaculate Giver was teaching in the western part of that world, in a land rules by King Koshi. The latter, his patron, was engaged in making offerings to him and the Buddha was working many astounding miracles and giving teachings to some ninety thousand bodhisattva and fifty million arhant disciples. The people of the country and many gods were also attending these teachings and making lavish offerings to the Buddha and to his disciples. It was a time of great joy. When, in the far-away kingdom of Baro Arta, the King and his son started praying sincerely, omniscient Immaculate Giver became aware of their prayers. Since his blessing embraced his disciples, they also could hear the earnest pleas but, unlike the Buddha, they had no way of knowing whence they came or whether they were the prayers of gods or men. Inquisitive, they asked the Buddha to explain.

He told them that the King of Baro Arta and his son were praying to him with true faith; that their sincere request coincided with his own compassionate wishes and that the very next morning he would go to them, adding that any of his disciples endowed with miraculous powers could also fly there with him.

The next morning, in the rosy light of the dawn, the Buddha and some of his disciples flew away into the sky, so high that even seven tall poplar trees, placed one on top of another, could not reach them. Majestically, gracefully, like a flock of great golden birds, they flew towards the east. Around them flew a resplendent retinue of gods and goddesses bearing divine offerings of rare substances. Some of them played celestial music in tones so exquisite that they
harmonised with the beauty of the dawn itself. They soon reached the land of Baro Arta and when the people of the capital saw and heard this breathtaking procession arriving in the sky they stood amazed, unable to take their eyes from the wonder they were witnessing.

The King and his son were waiting in the palace next to the jewelled throne that they had prepared for the Buddha. How overwhelmed with joy they were when that most precious of beings glided gently in, accompanied by his disciples.

Having made extraordinary offering to them all, the King and the prince spread delicately-scented flowers at the Buddha’s feet and requested him to turn the wheel of dharma*. The Buddha then gave them some teachings. The prince took the bodhisattva vow before Buddha Immaculate Giver, making the following promise,

"Until all beings, present through space in its entirety, have reached the same state as you, I promise faithfully that from today onwards I shall never turn my back on the round of existence. Without being disheartened by it, I will emanate in a hundred million forms for the good of each and every being. Without any attachment, I will give my body, my life, my regal wealth—anything I may have—and I will take to myself the myriad sufferings of other beings. I will serve the perfect teaching and with great compassion I will liberate its enemies from their evil existence, leading them to pure dimensions of being."

The Buddha then gave the young prince the bodhisattva name of Dharma Intelligence and the prediction of his future enlightenment:

'Dharma Intelligence', you are endowed with the
Sakarchupa

wonderful ability of accomplishing all tasks. You are the
greatest of the sons of all the Buddhas of the past, the
present and the future. Today, the power of your
resolution to reach enlightenment has set into motion a
mighty wave of perfect bodhisattva activity. After many
more æons than there are motes of dust, in your final
birth as a bodhisattva, you will complete these deeds. You
shall then reach perfect enlightenment as Buddha
'Supreme Drum Throb of Infinite Proclamations'.

As Buddha Immaculate Giver spoke these words the earth
shook and there was a rain of flowers. All the buddhas and
bodhisattvas of the ten directions appeared in the sky and
bore witness to his prediction, reaffirming that this
bodhisattva would become Buddha Supreme Drum Throb.
Then the sweet sound of Dharma Intelligence's name echoed
throughout all the buddhafields. At the time of his taking the
bodhisattva vow, thirty-two thousand young men, his
companions, took a promise to assist him throughout all the
future time of his deeds as a bodhisattva, until he reached
total and perfect buddhahood itself.

Immensely pleased with Dharma Intelligence's promises,
all of the gods present filled space with the celestial sound of
their wish, "May he be successful".

This was the First Story,
wherein was recounted how Khachab Dorje
was born as the son of the king of Baro Arta
and how he in that time took the resolution
to bring all beings to liberation.
‘The Great Golden Birds’
2. GIFT OF THE THREE JEWELS

Vast beyond reckoning, the two accumulations*
Are a great treasure of pure waters.
From the stirring of this infinite ocean
Arises the perfect full moon of your buddhahood,
With with every mark and sign of perfection,
Radiating the cool, soothing rays
Of your enlightened activity everywhere.
I bow down to you, Chenrezik, protector of the world.

Once upon a time, in southern India, there was the immense kingdom of Kakola, so vast that it comprised three thousand provinces, each with its local ruler. A king named Divine Jewel held sovereignty over the entire kingdom. He was Buddhist and as a result of his good actions in former lives the whole country enjoyed great prosperity. The capital of this land was called Beauty, a jewel of a city with many luxuriant green parks whose silvery-jade lakes offered their smooth surfaces as thrones for the delicate beauty of lotus blossoms and offered their hospitality to the graceful play of pure white swans and golden wild geese. Myriads of vividly-coloured birds fluttered in the city skies and filled its streets and parks with the enchanting melody of their songs. The capital was divided into four quarters, one in each of the cardinal directions and each holding some hundred thousand inhabitants. Beauty was not only an attractive place but also a peaceful and pleasant one in which to dwell, since its inhabitants had strong faith in the Three Most Rare and
Precious Refuges and were good-natured, moral people.

The King’s palace was the choicest of gems set in the very heart of this delightful city. Surrounded by seven walls, each of a different colour, its beauty was so exquisite that people thought it might well be the palace of a god. King Divine Jewel had some five hundred wives and his extraordinary wealth was kept in a million treasure-chests. Only one shadow hung over this idyllic life—the King had never managed to father a son. He longed so much for one and prayed fervently and repeatedly to the Three Refuges that this might be possible, each day offering food to forty thousand monks in the hope that this would one day help him have the male heir he wanted so desperately for his kingdom.

On the western coast of India there was another kingdom, ruled by a ruthless king violently opposed to the Buddhist faith. In theory, he worshipped the deity Ishvara but in practice he followed no religion at all and behaved unscrupulously, never hesitating to use black magic whenever it furthered his own evil purposes. His goal was to annihilate Buddhism and the wealthy Buddhist kingdom of Kakola became one of his main targets, towards the conquest of which he amassed a huge army of three million men.

Such was the situation that inspired Khachab Dorje to incarnate with a two-fold purpose: he would be able to fulfil the wishes of the Buddhist king Divine Jewel, by becoming the son he had prayed for, and he would also subdue the barbarian king, thereby protecting the Buddhist faith.

Khachab Dorje entered the womb of the principal queen, whose name was Dharma Tara. One day, during the month when the baby was due to be born, the queen happened to be walking in the beautiful Grace and Joy Park when she came
Gift of the Three Jewels

to the nayagrodha tree—the ‘tree of no pain’—and there the child was born to her without the slightest discomfort or difficulty. At that moment, the earth shook. One of the ministers hastened to the King to inform him of the birth of his son. The overjoyed monarch exclaimed that an heir had truly been given to him by the Three Most Rare and Precious Refuges in answer to his fervent prayers and he accordingly named him Gift of the Three Jewels. He made lavish offerings to all the monks and had it proclaimed throughout the land that the time of uncertainty and worry was over and that there were now brilliant prospects for the future of their kingdom.

The young prince grew up well, receiving a perfect education and he soon excelled in all branches of knowledge; linguistics, poetry, mathematics, astrology, the arts, crafts and Buddhist philosophy. So excellent was this youth that people referred to him as Fearless Lion, since no one could possibly match him. Like his father, the prince felt great faith and devotion for the Three Refuges and he would always make offerings to the monks. In his free time he enjoyed walking in the gardens and parks of the city with his friends.

As the years went by and King Divine Jewel grew older, he decided to put his power and wealth into the hands of his son. On the day of the prince’s enthronement a blazing radiance shone from his body, a pure celestial light that filled the whole palace. The wish, the aim, closest to the heart of the new king was that all in the kingdom should work in harmony with the principles of the Buddha’s teaching. He distributed much of his fabulous wealth among the poor and needy until not a beggar or pauper was left in the land. Since everyone practised the dharma, the whole country enjoyed a plenitude of goodness and happiness, even more than during
the reign of his father.

However, during all this time, the barbarian king had been busy preparing a bitter war against Buddhism and had set out for distant Kakola, destroying many other Buddhist countries on the way. As the imminence of his advance became felt, King Gift of the Three Jewels was obliged to prepare for battle. He formed an army of four main divisions: horse cavalry, elephant cavalry, infantry and charioteers. Having gathered several hundred thousand soldiers, he made offerings before representations of the Buddha, praying that, for the sake of the Buddhist teaching and for the happiness of all beings, he may be able to defeat the unscrupulous king and liberate him from his evil-bent existence. The monks joined him in his prayer, that his wish might be fulfilled. Confident that the Three Refuges would answer his pleas, the King donned a golden helmet and armour of lapis-lazuli. He led the army from the city, riding nobly at its head in the royal chariot. Around him rode his ministers of state and foreign affairs.

Some time passed and they eventually reached a northern province of the kingdom. The local ruler, King Splendour of Virtue, brought them up to date with the movements of their aggressor, who had by then invaded the neighbouring kingdom west of Kakola, killing its ruler, Divine Holder of the Inner Truth. There, his forces had destroyed all the Buddhist images, books and stupas; the symbols of the Buddha’s perfect body, speech and mind. Addressing his men, the Buddhist king inspired them to march against the enemy and to engage them with great courage.

The two armies eventually met and the fighting began. The evil king advanced on his elephant. Without even pausing to give battle to anyone on the way, he urged the beast straight
Gift of the Three Jewels

ahead, intent on direct confrontation with his enemy, the Buddhist king. King Gift of the Three Jewels was also advancing rapidly with the same intention and the two soon came face-to-face. Just seeing the Buddhist king sparked off violent anger in the dark-hearted monarch, who shot arrow after arrow at his adversary but to no avail: King Gift of the Three Jewels' mind was brimming with great compassion for his 'enemy', despite his seemingly belligerent attitude. The Buddhist king then set an arrow to his bow and prayed,

In order to prevent this person from destroying the Buddha’s teaching and from harming many beings, may I now free him from his evil life and hereafter lead him on the way to greater and greater happiness, until he eventually reaches enlightenment.

He then let fly his shaft. Whistling through the air, it pierced the seven layers of the evil king’s armour, went straight through his heart and even through the three ministers who were aligned behind him. Silence suddenly fell upon his awe-stricken army. They abandoned their fight and surrendered to the Buddhist king, placing themselves under his protection. Now at the head of both armies, King Gift of the Three Jewels continued on to the kingdom of his aggressor.

In that land there was a religious leader of four thousand disciples, who followed the same mistaken path as the bad king. When the Buddhist king arrived, this high priest challenged him to a debate on religious topics, the winner of which would gain the conversion of the other, along with his followers, to his own faith. The debate lasted for a week but, despite all his efforts and verbal skill, the high priest was unable to outwit the king and he lost the contest. Unwilling
Sakarchupa 2

to accept defeat, he ran to his temple to prepare a powerful curse of black magic that would overcome the Buddhist king. Aware of his adversary's intentions, the King prayed sincerely to the Three Refuges for protection. Through their blessing and through the power of the high priest's own bad karma, the latter was buried under a dreadful avalanche caused by the collapse of a nearby mountain, his body lost beneath tons of earth and rocks. Following this, his disciples turned to the King and offered their lives to his service. The King then busied himself with the conversion of the land, building stupas and establishing five hundred monasteries.

There were many Arhants living in Central India at that time and the King prayed that all of them endowed with clairvoyance and miraculous powers might come to assist him. Heeding his prayer, they came to the kingdom, flying high in the air. They were five hundred in number and the King invited each of them to be Abbot of one of his newly-founded monasteries. Young boys from the neighbourhood of each of the monasteries were sought for ordination, one thousand for each monastery. There had formerly been ninety thousand, seven hundred Ishvarite priests and these all took Buddhist ordination. Having established the sangha and placed it under the guidance of the arhants, the King then aligned the law of the country with the principles of Buddhism. The new edicts were based upon the ten virtuous actions and no one was permitted to kill or to harm any other being. Amongst the King's ministers there was a man of great insight and goodness, whom the King enthroned as sovereign of the converted land. He then left to return to his own country. On his way, he restored the dreadful damage caused by the incursions of the savage ruler, rebuilding what had been destroyed, giving new strength and inspiration to the
Gift of the Three Jewels

Buddhist faith, appointing new rulers where necessary and remodelling the laws to agree with the ten virtuous actions.

When King Gift of the Three Jewels finally reached his own kingdom, he was greeted with a warm and sumptuous homecoming reception from his father and his people. Tremendous festivities went on for many days to mark the return of the victorious army and their quelling of the enemies of dharma. In a park called Pleasant Array of Jewels, which was to the western side of the palace, the King had built a large monastery of remarkable architectural beauty. When it was completed, he invited fifteen hundred Arhants to reside there.

Since everyone in the kingdom lived according to the ten virtues, life there was peaceful and harmonious, without trouble or fighting. The King eventually had a son, whom he named Splendour of the Three Jewels and when the latter acceded to maturity, the kingdom was passed to him. Free from the demands of kingship, the ex-monarch could now devote more of his time to his spiritual life and he took the bodhisattva vow from a bodhisattva named Beautiful One. Thereafter, he remained in one wing of the palace, teaching the dharma every day to hundreds of thousands of people. When he passed away, his physical appearance dissolved into a blaze of light and his mind fused with that of Chakrasamvara.

This was the Second Story wherein Khachab Dorje, in the form of 'Gift of the Three Jewels', destroyed the enemies of the Buddhist faith and caused the teachings of the Buddha to flourish in many places.
3. THE RESCUE OF KING BETASHARA

Worthy of the offerings made by everyone
In conditioned existence and in the peace beyond,
You possess the great blazing halo
Of the stainless, infinite threefold light of
Perfect knowledge, compassion and power to help beings.
All-embracing, you are the most excellent of sublime forms,
Fulfilling all the hopes and wishes of beings.
Heir of the Buddhas, great wealth of compassion,
Indestructible sun, I bow down to you, Chenrezik.

Seven cosmic aeons ago, King Betashara ruled over the country of Nita Pakshi, a land where no one adhered to any faith or system of moral values. The people there lived in total ignorance of natural principles of virtue, unaware of what actions should be avoided or which human qualities should be developed. The King, who held sovereignty over the 908,500 communities of the land, was himself an extremely violent person. Sometimes he would flare up into terrible tempers and would not hesitate to draw his dagger to kill anyone who irritated him. He was fond of leading hunting expeditions in the wooded hills and there, at the head of a group of soldiers from his army, he would kill any wildlife he could find.

While King Betashara was wasting his life away in killing like this, Khachab Dorje had manifested in India as the
bodhisattva Blossomed Intelligence, who lived in the city called Glorious Example of Beauty as the head of a community of two thousand monks. He was also the personal guru of King Moon Crown, the local monarch. Khachab Dorje was endowed with the power of clairvoyance and could see very clearly all that would happen, in future lives, to the evil King Betashara, due to the karma he was accumulating. This vision moved him deeply. Since King Betashara was nearly always engaged in committing some evil deed or another, he and his followers and accomplices were destined to go straight to hell* states when they died. Nine cosmic æons later, he would be reborn as a butcher. Although still engaged in much killing in that life, he would meet the Buddha of the time—Beautiful as Daylight, Full of Realisation—and he would take teachings from him.

However, even though Betashara would meet that Buddha, Khachab Dorje could also foresee that he would later turn against the Buddhist teachings through losing faith. Then he would try to kill the Buddha and destroy statues, books and stupas, which are respectively the representations of the Buddhas' perfect body, speech and mind. He would also cause a division in the sangha. As a result of all this, in his next life he would be reborn as a gigantic sea-monster, with a body huge enough to coil around our world three times. He would remain in that state for three thousand years, small fishes constantly devouring his huge body throughout that time. Later, he would fall back into hell for a whole cosmic æon and eventually Buddha Stainless Tower of Glory would be moved by such great compassion for this pitiful creature that he would release him. By touching Betashara with the light rays emanating from his body, he would liberate him from the hell and then Betashara would take a precious human birth, endowed with all the freedoms and qualities
The Rescue of King Betashara

necessary for good dharma practice. At that time, he would receive monastic vows from the Buddha and eventually reach the level of a bodhisattva.

Bodhisattva Blossomed Intelligence could see this true and gruesome picture so vividly that he was moved to the very core of his being by a great wave of compassion as he foresaw the almost endless chain of sufferings that Betashara would have to endure before he could become a bodhisattva. He thought that so much suffering was unnecessary and that he must devise a way to prevent it all from happening.

To help this man directly in the ordinary dharma way was an almost impossible task, for how can one influence another person to stop doing evil when they have no heed or respect for the universal laws? This sorry human could only be aided indirectly, by him creating a powerful and positive karmic link with what is good and wholesome and incarnated in the human form a saintly being. Blossomed Intelligence knew that if King Betashara were to kill him and eat him then that would create the necessary link, through the power of the bodhisattva's compassion in offering even his own flesh. However, were King Betashara to kill him in his present bodhisattva form, then there would be an immediate and very powerful negative result and he would go almost instantly to the abysmal states.

So great was Bodhisattva Blossomed Intelligence's wish to help Betashara that he decided to leave his present birth as Abbot and take on animal form, knowing that the bad effects of King Betashara killing and eating an animal would not be as serious as those of his killing and eating a human bodhisattva. He went to see King Moon Crown, his disciple, and told him of his plans for liberating Betashara and how he must leave that life in order to accomplish all successfully. He inspired the king and the monks to continue and increase
their practice and to always uphold the teachings of the Buddha. Shortly afterwards, he passed away.

He took rebirth as a large elephant in Betashara's kingdom. Ever maintaining an immaculate bodhisattva conduct, he lived purely, never harming other animals and feeding only on the leaves of the forest. And so it happened that one day King Betashara was out hunting with a retinue of a thousand guards. They had wandered through the forests for the greater part of the day without having killed much game and they were very hungry by the time they reached a very dense part of the woodland where suddenly, without any warning, eighteen tigers leapt out and attacked their party. They had been disturbed by the noisy clamour the soldiers made as they pushed their way through the foliage. Turning left and right to see where the cries and shouts were coming from, no one had the time or swiftness of reaction to retaliate. Very quickly the tigers were gone, leaving a bloody trace of partly-eaten and gored bodies.

Hardly a few seconds had passed when the elephant appeared. Now, however, the King had gathered his wits and he loosed three arrows in rapid succession. One entered the elephant's forehead, one pierced its heart and the third entered a kidney. The gigantic beast sank to the ground, happy to bear the painful agony of its death because its task was fulfilled—the King would certainly soon be eating it. King and soldiers, much in need of nourishment after their mixed experiences, were overjoyed at having such a magnificent solution to the growling of their stomachs and they swiftly set to work on devouring it, falling on the great mountain of flesh with wild delight. Little did they know that this feast was offered to them through a bodhisattva's compassion or that he would, seven lives later, bring them to
The Rescue of King Betashara

the path of liberation and that they would also become bodhisattvas.

After their eventful hunting expedition, King Betashara and his party returned to Binpasarta, his palace, where he soon became extremely ill through violent stomach pains. He died three days later. Without even passing through the 'state between lives' (bardo) he was immediately reborn in the outskirts of the city Glorious Example of Beauty as the son of a poor Brahmin.

His birth was a catastrophe for the parents, who were so destitute that they had extreme difficulty feeding even themselves. They felt the only solution was to offer their son to the abbot of a Buddhist monastery called Sri Vajrayaya. This monastery was about eighty kilometres from the city and its Abbot, Shantabhadra, took the child into his tender care, eventually giving him the monastic and bodhisattva vows. Through his Buddhist training in this monastery, the reborn king was able to reach the threshold of profound bodhisattva realisation.

Back in the kingdom of Nita Pakshi, the son of the late king had grown up to be just as evil as his father used to be. He was also over fond of hunting and one day, whilst chasing some game, he fell from a rock and died. Going straight to hell, he had to experience all the horrific hallucinations of those states, which are, of course, no more than vivid external manifestations resulting from an inner hateful mind. In those states he experienced one excruciating torment after another: his body was marked with lines and then cut open with sharp saws; he was boiled in a huge pot of water; his body was pierced through and through with spears, crushed between enormous anvils, devoured by wild beasts and so on. He endured these torments for a seemingly infinite duration of
time, the prisoner of the experiences his evil deeds had caused him to perceive.

Seeing the utter misery of that pitiful being, Khachab Dorje was moved with great compassion and went to the hells to help him. There, through the strength and purity of his pure bodhisattva motivation, he was able to send the consciousness of Betashara’s son to the Heaven of the Thirty-Three and whilst he was there he emptied the hells completely.

In the southern part of a world in a different dimension from our own, on the coast of an ocean, there was a country called Mind Made where the humans were not born from a womb, as is the general case, but from eggs. Khachab Dorje manifested there and was able to introduce and establish the dharma. He then took birth in the remote land of Biruhu and through his influence people there were able to start abandoning the ten unvirtuous actions and practising the ten virtues. After this, in another place, called Joyful World, he took birth as the son of King Stainless Light Beams and was able to bring the whole population there to the happiness of practicing the ten virtuous actions. Later still, he took birth in Hirba Sarka, another world where he greatly helped beings through his bodhisattva deeds. He then dissolved into a form of light and went to the buddhafield known as The Highest of All.

This was the Third Story

wherein Khachab Dorje, taking birth as an elephant,

was able to save an unscrupulous king

from the sufferings of the lower states

and wherein he also helped beings extensively

through adopting various forms.
The Rescue of King Betashara
4. PRINCE PURE LIGHT

The very instant your pure form is reflected
In the ocean of the minds of all those various beings
To be brought to maturity by the dharma,
Like on the resplendent surface of a new crystal mirror,
It dissolves the dirt of impurity entirely.
I bow down to you Chenrezik, lotus-holder.

Ten million cosmic æons ago, in an age called The Time of Lotus Light, King Brilliant Sunshine of Victory ruled a country called Land of Plenty. Located in the central regions of the world, it was composed of three hundred provinces, each with its local ruler. King Brilliant Sunshine of Victory was the supreme monarch governing all the others. He and his seven hundred wives lived in the capital which was an extremely beautiful town built on the banks of a majestic, slowly-flowing river. Many wild birds filled the city with their enchanting songs and the young people of the town gathered in the public gardens to chat and play.

Khachab Dorje took birth as the youngest of the King's sons, named Energy of Pure Beautiful Light. Let us call him Prince Pure Light. He had a very peaceful nature and was always extremely careful and mindful in everything he did. Intelligent and well-educated, he had very good knowledge of both worldly science and religious philosophy. The practice of the ten virtues, which was part of his country's law, was highly favoured by the Prince. The people hoped
dearly that he who would one day succeed the King.

One fine morning, when the birds were singing even more sweetly than usual and the flowers filled the air with their subtle incense, the Prince and some of his companions went for a stroll in one of the parks in the southern quarter of the city. They were enjoying the exquisite splendour of the day and of their surroundings when, in a brief instant and without any warning, the sky turned black with thick clouds, a strong gale started howling and the birds flew hurriedly to their nests. The delightful peace and beauty of the park, the enchanting backdrop of birdsong and the relaxed ambience of the young men's enjoyment all vanished in an instant, shattered by a violent hailstorm. The change was so sudden, the contrast so vivid, that the Prince realised in the instant the im-permanence of all conditioned phenomena. He saw how things that are here in one moment are gone in the next. He felt the utter vanity and futility of his royal life and decided to devote all his efforts to the one worthwhile task of achieving buddhahood, the only state beyond all changes and sorrows.

Filled with a great sadness, Prince Pure Light returned to the palace. Traces of tears on his downcast face betrayed his inner feelings and his father asked him why he looked so unhappy. The Prince knew that if he told the truth, his father would prevent him from realising his wish to become a monk and that he would be forever tied to his royal duties. Thus he told a 'white lie', saying that he really felt well and happy but that dust from the road had irritated his eyes and made him cry. However, that night, when the Prince retired to bed, he knew that the next day he would once again be confronted with the impossibility of embracing the religious life and that having fooled his father this once was of little help. He prayed with deep longing,
Prince Pure Light

Buddhas, bodhisattvas, gods and nāgas,
Please look upon me with compassion.
Free me from the prison of royalty.
Help me, since I am unable to help myself.

Praying fervently in this way, he eventually fell asleep. In the middle of the night he dreamt that Indra spoke to him from the midst of the heavens, saying:

**Pure Light, tell me what is worrying you so and I will try to help you.**

The Prince replied,

*I want to lead a meaningful life. I realise that the vicious circle of conditioned existence is like a pit of fire and I, unfortunately, am chained to it by the shackles of karma and negativity and I cannot free myself. You have the ability to work miracles, so please, please, help me break loose from my bonds and lead me to a good mahāyāna teacher.*

The god replied,

*I will take you to the Grove of Great Beauty and Felicity wherein dwells Bodhisattva Freedom from the World. He is exactly the kind of teacher you long to meet.*

Having said this, Indra flew away into the sky and, still dreaming, the young prince flew after him.

He awoke to find himself surrounded by a sky that the dawn was painting pink. He was on top of a very high mountain, far, far away from his home. Looking towards the
pastel daybreak and the newly rising sun, he saw a vast plain in the middle of which were all sorts of luxuriant trees, rich greenery and attractively-shaped rocks. He knew immediately that he must be looking at the Grove of Great Beauty and Felicity of which Indra had spoken in his dream. He made straight for it and once there found the bodhisattva giving teachings to a large assembly of people and gods. The Prince wished he had an offering to present to the bodhisattva, but he had nothing with him, so he gently, carefully, picked some of the beautiful wild flowers which covered the ground like a pastel carpet and with his heart full of pure intention he offered them to his teacher, tossing them in the sky. The flowers fell to the ground like raindrops and an unusual, delicious fragrance filled the whole place.

The teacher asked the Prince who he was, from where he had come and whether his journey had been tiring. The Prince replied,

I come from The Land of Plenty, to the north of here, where my father, King Brilliant Sunshine, is ruler. I am his third and youngest son, Prince Pure Light, but I no longer wish to be involved with the royal life. I have seen the vanity of the round of conditioned existence, where everything is impermanent and breeds suffering and I truly wish to be able to help those who are immersed in this suffering to escape from it. This is why I have come to you, in the hope that you will give me a teaching capable of fulfilling my aspirations.

The teacher replied,

You are truly one who already long, long ago has resolved to reach enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.
Prince Pure Light

Therefore, you should now take monk's vows and the bodhisattva vow and work in this life for the good of other beings to the best of your ability.

Filled with joy and gratitude, the Prince took pratimoksa and bodhisattva vows from his teacher. When he was given his new name, Intelligence of Dharma, it echoed three times through space.

His teacher then told him,

Now you should go to a place about eight hundred kilometres from here because there is a being there you are meant to help through your compassion.

Full of joy, Intelligence of Dharma went to fulfil his duty of compassion. One day, as he was walking through a very dense forest, he met a tigress accompanied by two cubs. They were hungry, trying to find something to eat. Intelligence of Dharma understood that he had reached the goal of his journey and with great joy and overwhelming compassion he opened his veins and let his blood pour into the tigress' mouth. He then gave her his body to devour and passed away, uniting his mind with that of Chenrezik, the compassion aspect of total enlightenment.

This was the Fourth Story wherein Khachab Dorje, as the son of King Brilliant Sunshine, offered his body to a tigress.
5. THE WISH-FULFILLING GEM

From the very beginning
You had already achieved buddhahood,
Yet, with pure compassion, free from concept,
You cherish all beings and never abandon them,
Showing yourself in the form
Of the greatest of the great bodhisattvas.
I bow down to you, Chenrezik,
Protector of the Land of Snows.

In the long-gone cosmic æon called Immeasurable Light, a certain king, known as King Gift of Brahma, was sovereign of an entire world, located in space to the west* of our own world. He was a very remarkable king in many respects, were it only for the fact that he had five thousand sons. In order to help beings everywhere, Khachab Dorje consciously entered the womb of Queen Singha Tibha, knowing he would be the King's five hundredth son. When the time of his birth came, he left his mother through the right side of her chest. A rain of flowers fell and multitudes of gods and goddesses gathered in the skies, singing beautiful songs of joy at the child's birth. The child himself said,

I have come to free all beings from their sufferings,
 Everywhere in the three dimensions of conditioned existence;
To help them find the temporary joys of gods and men
Realising that his son was a very exceptional being, probably a great bodhisattva, the King treated him with the utmost respect. Wanting to care for the child in the best possible way, he engaged sixteen nannies. These young maidens had to come from the best families, to be intelligent and well-educated and to have natural gentility. Thus the child was brought up with care and love. He used to play in the palace gardens with his young friends from the town and they and everyone noticed how he always acted with compassion: he never harmed even the smallest insect and he stopped his playmates from harming them too. His mind was as clear as his heart was pure and he quickly developed skill in all the arts, crafts and sciences that he studied.

He was walking in the parks one day when he encountered a large group of poor people. They were undernourished and skinny—so poor that the adults covered their bodies with leaves from the trees and the children went naked. He was overwhelmed by this sight and confused, because poverty was unknown to him, the young prince brought up in luxury with every need catered for. This totally foreign picture of destitution before his eyes made no sense, yet he could feel intuitively the pain and misery of these poor people. He asked them what was wrong, who they were and how they had come to be that way. They replied that they were paupers who had almost nothing to eat, drink or wear. The prince asked them question after question and his naive, sincere enquiries gradually led him to an understanding of what it really meant to suffer from poverty. This sad discovery shook him to the very core of his being and such overwhelming compassion was awakened in him that he made a deep
The Wish-Fulfilling Gem

resolution there and then that he would free all beings from the pains of poverty.

All that he could give the poor people at that moment was the jewel necklace that he was wearing, but he invited them to come later to the royal palace where he would give them whatever they needed. Returning to the palace, the Prince discussed his morning's discoveries with his father and said that he had a request to make. The King agreed in advance to grant anything he might wish for. After explaining a little more his realisation that there were many poor people in their kingdom and that they were continually in a state of suffering because of their destitution, the prince said,

I'm convinced that the best way to help these paupers is to try to obtain the fabulous 'Wish-Fulfilling Gem' that is said to belong to the nāgas. My heart is set upon sailing to the land of the nāgas and asking them to let me have that priceless jewel.

He begged his father to give him all the help necessary for his plans. The King eventually agreed, provided that the expedition would not last too long, for he knew that he would sorely miss his saintly young son and be burdened with worry during his absence. A royal proclamation was issued, the King declaring to his people that the prince wanted to set out on an expedition to the land of the nāgas in order to procure the wish-fulfilling gem and that he needed stalwart, experienced companions to adventure with him on the great sea.

An important, wealthy, jewel trader who had already mounted three successful maritime expeditions responded to the royal request and came to the palace to offer his services, accompanied by five hundred good and hearty men. He
estimated that the voyage would take some seven months at most, and since this did not seem too long a time to the King, the latter consented to their going. Work started immediately on the construction of a new ship.

When all was ready, the Prince and his companions set sail. After only a week at sea they came to land and this was already a place where they could find jewels but the prince told them that these were only ordinary jewels and that they must go on until they found the very special gem in the care of the nāgas—the gem that granted all wishes. He decided that the best thing would be for him to set off alone in a smaller boat, whilst his companions waited there for him. So the crew made him a small boat and he set off alone on his quest. His journey was long and hazardous and his adventures in overcoming the many dangers that faced him and his small craft were too long to recount here. Suffice it to say that through the strength of his determination and the blessings and power of the Three Most Precious Refuges, the brave young prince eventually arrived in the land of the nāgas.

Once there, he went directly to the palace of the nāga-queen. Receiving the royal traveller, she asked him whence he came and whether he was searching for precious stones and gems. The Prince replied that he had come from very far and endured many hardships on the way. He had not done all that just for pretty jewels and his purpose was much more vital:

I believe that you possess a wondrous gem, the king of jewels: one that fulfils any wish instantaneously. This is why I have come: to beg this jewel from you so that I can use it to relieve the sufferings of all the poor people under the sun.
The Wish-Fulfilling Gem

The nāga queen replied that she did indeed have such a jewel, known as 'The Jewel from Which All Needed or Longed-for Arises'. However, she added that the jewel was vitally important for the nāgas themselves and that they had to use it whenever they encountered difficulties and problems. The Queen paused for a while, contemplating the matter deeply. Then she said,

However, you are a great bodhisattva and it would be both wrong and unwise for us to create any obstacle to your noble generosity. Therefore I shall offer you this jewel, but I request you to pray that nothing bad will happen to us and I request you to protect us with your power of blessing once we are left without our wishing-gem.

The prince agreed and he made many prayers for the well-being of the nāgas, who, as a result, never encountered difficulty. Then, expressing his gratitude for their kindness and hospitality, the prince took leave of the nāga queen. Now that he had the gem, all he had to do was wish to return to his companions and he was there in an instant. Wishing a second time, they were all transported safely to the kingdom.

Home at last in his kingdom, the prince had it proclaimed that anyone, anywhere in the land who was in need of food, clothing or other necessities should come to him. Before long, hundreds of thousands of people had gathered around the palace and then the prince requested the wish-fulfilling gem to provide their needs. Instantaneously, a miraculous rain of all they wished for floated down from the sky, in perfect fulfilment of each of their needs.

From then on, poverty disappeared totally from that world.
and the rest of the Prince's life was spent in the practice of perfect generosity.

This was the Fifth Story wherein Khachab Dorje, as the son of King Gift of Brahma, helped all beings through his deeds of generosity.
The Wish-Fulfilling Gem

Karmapa Chenno

སྐད་འགོག་ཅེན་ནོ།
6. THE LAPIS-LAZULI BOOK

Lotus-holder, incomparable great treasure of compassion,
For those who even just think of your name
There is freedom from the round of existence and its
causes.
I bow down to you, Chenrezig,
Supreme manifestation of the Buddha,
Who shines with the lustre of an immaculate pearl.

In the north of our world, there was once a land called Siddha Saddha where the king and people lived a most pleasurable existence, free from any material worry, their time passing in leisure, entertainment and games. It was as the son of this country's king that Khachab Dorje decided to take birth. When the child had grown up, the monarch died and the ministers and people requested the prince to accede to the throne.

One day, the new king was walking in his flower-garden, admiring the beauty of the day in the company of many ministers and friends. Their blooms were glowing vividly in exotic colours and the breezes made their perfumes dance along the verdant paths when suddenly, to everyone's surprise, a long, thin book, in loose pages and with a beautiful cover of lapis-lazuli, fell from the sky into the King's hands. Gasping with wonder, the King's friends thought it was a gift from the gods, but the King himself
knew better. He declared the book a gift of the Buddha:

This is a teaching of the vajrayāna. If you can have faith in it and practice it, you will be reborn in the pure land called 'Highest', a wonderful place where one dwells in great felicity. However, if you cannot believe in that teaching and you develop wrong views about it, you will surely fall into the hell realms—dreadful mental states of seemingly endless torments.

The friends and ministers were all anxious to know more about what the King had just said and they pressed him with their questions, "What is this enchanting place known as 'Highest'?", "What are these 'hells'?", "We don't understand these terms, please explain them for us....".

The King replied that he could not show them the pure dimension straight away, since one had to be prepared for such an experience through vajrayāna practice, but he would show them the hells. Without their knowing, he sent myriads of emanations behind a tall mountain that stood to the south of the city, and there he manifested a faithful replica of the hells. Asking the people with him to go and look behind the mountain he told them that there they would see the 'hells' he had mentioned.

As the people approached the mountain, they started to
The Lapis-Lazuli Book

hear bloodcurdling screams and pitiful wailing as well as many people crying and shouting for help. As they got closer, great waves of scorching heat blew over them, bringing the nauseating smell of burning flesh. They soon reached the other side of the mountain and they saw the hells spread out before them. The vast, awesome panorama of suffering was beyond all words and the mere sight of these atrocious torments was unbearable for them. Everyone was deeply shocked, terrified beyond belief, and they all ran back to the palace as quickly as their trembling legs could carry them.

Once back at the palace, they threw themselves at the feet of the King. With awful realisation that they might have the causes of such future sufferings already within them, they begged him to show them the way to free themselves from this terrifying prospect. He gave them the following advice,

Now, all of you should return to your homes and, during the next week, prepare beautiful offerings, the finest you can manage. Then return here to me and I will take you to the Highest Realm. Bring your offerings and make sure that your minds are free from attachment to material possessions. Also, you must be sure to tell everyone else in the country to do as I have just instructed.

The week passed quickly. At the end of the week, the King prayed to Buddha Vajradhara. Through the power of his former resolution to reach enlightenment he was able to request that Buddha to emanate in the form of a teacher who could give his people the vajrayāna teachings. The emanation of Buddha Vajradhara came soaring through the air like a bird and, seeing this, everyone came running to the palace with their offerings. After the Teacher had given the people the teachings contained in the book which had fallen from the
Sakarchupa 6

sky, he showed himself in the form of Chakrasamvara and manifested a complete mandala of Chakrasamvara, destroying all their obscurations, even the finest of their dormant impurities.

All the people of the kingdom were now totally purified and, led by their King, they were able to go to the Highest Pure Realm, there and then, without leaving their bodies.

This was the Sixth Story, wherein Khachab Dorje took the form of a king in a northern country and led all of its inhabitants to the perfectly Pure Realm.
The Lapis-Lazuli Book
7. THE WONDERFUL SON OF WARBI

The cooling rays of your perfectly pure activity,
Like radiant soothing nectar, remove the thick layers
Of outer and inner darkness with their light.
At the same time, you are skilled
In manifesting the great feast of dharma
To those who are ready.
I bow down to Chenrezik, most kind guide,
The guru with one thousand eyes.

In a time long since gone by, some billion æons ago, during
the cosmic æon of Infinite Perfect Brilliance, there was a
world to the east of ours which was ruled by Emperor
Stainless Perfect Victory. His empire was composed of three
hundred provinces, each of which had a local monarch.
Glorious Beautiful Light was one such monarch and Khachab
Dorje took birth as the son of one of his subjects, whose name
was Warbi. The boy was always referred to as Warbi’s Son.
Even as a child, Warbi’s Son thought to himself,

The round of existence is a great ocean of suffering.
Beings sail this ocean in the boat
Of forsaking true, lasting happiness,
Seeking their ill-gotten loot.
There they find nothing but bitter grief.
The cause of their misery is their ignorance
Of the way to liberation.
Through the skilful means of compassion,
I shall make them leave behind
Sakarchupa 7

Their useless boat, their meaningless loot,
And I shall rescue them from the ocean of suffering.

He spent much of his time in meditation and he easily acquired miraculous powers and clairvoyance. One day, whilst meditating, he perceived that the time had come for him to lead the people of his country to a pure dimension and he knew that the way to achieve this would be through a great display of miracles.

New Year was a time of great rejoicing and celebrating in the land—a happy period when people would gather and families reunite. This was especially so in the capital, the seat of the great emperor, where many thousands of people from all over the empire would assemble to see the extraordinary festivities. Knowing that the capital would be thronging with people, Warbi’s Son decided to fly there using his miraculous power. The crowds saw him flying overhead. Breathless and awestruck, they watched in amazement as the child performed a prodigious airborne ballet, flying to and fro in the morning summer sky with all the natural ease of a swallow. As he flew close by them, some of the people who had traveled to the capital from his neighbourhood, recognised him and exclaimed, "Look, that’s Warbi’s Son!" Others, who did not know him, said that such a miracle could only be performed by a Buddha. Above their amazement and discussion, Warbi’s Son glided, hovered and pirouetted with marvellous grace until he was sure that everyone had seen him. Then he flew away, disappearing beyond the horizon.

His flight continued until he reached a thick forest, some distance away from the capital. Settling there, he taught the dharma to all the wild woodland animals—tigers, leopards, monkeys, deer and birds of all kinds. One day, some people from a nearby hamlet were collecting wood from the forest
The Wonderful Son of Warbi

when they happened to see Warbi’s Son talking to the animals. Some time later, these same people went to the capital to sell their wood and they spread the unusual news of a hermit-youth who talked with animals. Opinions varied: some of the older, wiser, people had heard that in another world, to the south of their own, there was a Buddha giving teachings. They thought that the young man that the villagers had seen must be an emanation of this Buddha, teaching the animals.

Others remembered the extraordinary miracle of the New Year when Warbi’s Son had flown over the city and they thought that he must be the mystery hermit. Whatever their opinions, they all felt that this must be a very special being and that they should consider him as the Buddha of their eastern world and thus eventually a group of prominent citizens went to invite him to come and teach in the capital. He accepted their offer and from that time onwards he gave teachings not only in the capital but in towns and villages throughout the land, instructing men and animals alike according to their needs, abilities and aspirations. Through practising the well-chosen teachings of Warbi’s Son, which varied from Taking Refuge to the deepest vajrayāna teachings (according to which was best-suited to each student), the whole empire gradually became more and more established in the Buddhist faith.

However, the evil spirits who lived in that country became more and more upset as this happened and their anger eventually brought them together to decide how they could create difficulties and obstacles to stop dharma from growing further. They agreed that the best solution was for the most powerful amongst them to kill Warbi’s Son. The fiercest present was a red-faced giant of hideous, terrifying appearance who, brandishing sword, set off to attack his
Buddhist foe. His breath was a pestilential microbe culture that would bring sickness to all who practiced the dharma. When he came face-to-face with Warbi’s Son, the latter knew that he was, as are all demons, no more than the embodiment of his former thoughts of hatred and aggression and he felt great compassion towards the pitiful creature. In order to subjugate him, Warbi’s Son manifested his own wrathful aspect, as large as our Mount Everest with eighteen arms each brandishing powerful weapons. Using the power of his meditation, he drew the demon close to him and the miserable being came, powerless, as if drawn by magnetism. Stepping on him and uttering the sounds of ‘Hung’ and ‘Pék’, Warbi’s Son united the creature’s consciousness with the dharmadhātu and burned his body in a fire of pure wisdom.

Indra, Brahma and other dharma-loving gods were so pleased and impressed with his compassionate subjugation of the demon that they sang the praises of Warbi’s Son. Having conquered the obstacles created by the demonic forces, he himself continued to teach the dharma according to the capacities of his countrymen, giving them each the power to ripen the seeds of the four buddhakāyas, already naturally present in their minds. Seeing that his work in bringing the people of that country to spiritual maturity was completed, he one day left the empire, flying to the southern world of Jambudvipa.

There was a king in that world who followed a corrupt form of the cult of Ishvara. He was very devoted to his mistaken beliefs and every day he would make offerings to five hundred of the pseudo-Ishvarite priests. Warbi’s Son decided to appear to him in the form of a very pure and gentle monk, in order to lead him and his subjects to the Buddhist path, the true way to happiness.
The Wonderful Son of Warbi

On the day that Warbi's Son first appeared in that world, the chief priest of the cult, accompanied by his disciples, was giving teachings to the King. Many of the King's ministers and subjects were also in attendance. Suddenly becoming aware of a presence, the assembly turned to see Warbi's Son gracefully walking towards them through the air, his countenance smooth and beautiful, radiant with love and grace, and his bearing tranquil and noble. Seeing this great wonder, the King and others present felt a natural awe and respect, knowing instinctively that this was a great spiritual being. They started to talk with each other, commenting upon the gentility, peacefulness and perfect bearing of this monk, some even saying that his glowing spirituality outshone that of their own Ishvarite teacher. Becoming aware of this, their teacher exclaimed,

Don't let yourselves be fooled by appearances! You are all making a very serious mistake, because this monk is in fact an enemy of our sacred religion. He will eventually eliminate our cult if we do not act first, decisively, and kill him.

Following his guru's advice, the King summoned his guard, ordering them to kill the monk. Armed with bows and arrows and lassos, his best soldiers came running to his summons, but each time they fired at Warbi's Son their arrows disintegrated in the air and their lassos were unable to ensnare him. Finally they all rushed at him. He gave them an intense, powerful glance and they fell senseless to the ground. Recovering, they withdrew and reassembled to charge again, but each time they tried they were numbed by the power of his mind. Becoming more and more frightened, the guards eventually gave up. Speaking for them, the King
told the Ishvarite teacher,

_We have tried everything we could to kill this monk, as you ordered, but all to no avail. Now, my men are terrified and we will either have to surrender to him and take our refuge in him or else you must go and kill him yourself since we cannot manage it._

The teacher replied, "If I cannot manage to kill him with my magic spells, then I am no teacher!" So saying, he left for his ashram to join his five thousand ascetic disciples and engage in his sorcery.

As soon as the Ishvarite teacher had left, Warbi's Son descended from the sky. All present could all see him and feel his presence even more powerfully than before. He looked so peaceful and gentle and his aura was so overwhelming that everyone could not help prostrating with devotion before him. He went to the Ishvarite teacher's throne and sat down. He gave them a teaching on _karma_—the inevitable link between the nature of an action and that of its consequences. As his audience listened to his clear and convincing explanation, they started to realise how mistaken their former path had been. Impressed and inspired by his teachings, they asked if he would accept them as his followers. Warbi's Son gave the King, ministers and people present the Refuge precepts. The King subsequently gave the order that everyone in his country should also take Refuge and thereby become Buddhist.

While all this was happening, the Ishvarite teacher had been working on his magical formulae and invocations. After a week of fervent magical ritual, some demonesses who were his protectors appeared before him. He ordered them to go and destroy Warbi's Son. They sped to their work, but when
they reached their foe he entered the 'immobilising meditation' and they became completely paralysed, frozen in their movements like helpless statues. They pleaded for their freedom and begged him to let them also become his followers, take Refuge in him and protect his teaching. The Ishvarite continued with his spells, using his power in black magic to produce a dreadful thunderbolt which hissed like a meteor towards the Buddhist monk. Immersed in meditation, Warbi’s Son did not even bat an eyelid and remained unharmed. Emerging from his meditation he made the 'threatening mudra' with his hands. There was a great burst of flames and eighteen dazzling thunderbolts flashed towards the Ishvarite temple, destroying it completely. Warbi’s Son immediately merged the dying teacher’s consciousness with his own; they became one. The naked ascetics who were the Ishvarite’s followers were panic-stricken and could only think, amidst this frightening turmoil, to put their faith in the Buddhist teacher that had defeated their own. They went to him and placed themselves under his protection. Following his advice, they took shelter in the Three Most Precious Refuges.

The whole country was now Buddhist and eventually the King, Queen and people started asking for a teaching that would not be too difficult for them to practise and that would enable them to reach Buddhahood in that very lifetime. Seeing that the people there were fit vessels for the diamond-like teachings of the vajrayāna, Warbi’s Son manifested the mandala of Chakrasamvara in front of them, giving them the Four Empowerments and pointing directly to the true nature of mind. This profound experience made everyone lay aside their habitual work and routines. Fired with the ardent desire to practise and deepen their realisation, they all meditated devotedly, day and night, for seven months, according to the
teachings that they had received. At the end of the seven months they all achieved spiritual realisation.

*Celestial music without instrument*
*Divine sound everywhere from nowhere*
*Precious fragrance without incense*
*Rare perfumes in purest air*
*Filled the three dimensions*
*And the Pure Lands were manifest there*
*A LA LA A LA LA AH*

Amidst many wondrous signs, the people’s consciousnesses were transferred to pure dimensions. Seeing that it was time to leave that country, Warbi’s Son departed.

One day as he was travelling, he met some destitute people lying by the roadside, almost lifeless through malnutrition. There was a man, his wife and his child, all in the agonies of starvation and on the brink of death. When he saw their wretched misery, Warbi’s Son was deeply moved and the fire of compassion blazed within him. Without the slightest regret, he cut off a piece of his own flesh and gave it to them to eat. The poor people ate avidly and soon finished it but still their hunger was not satiated. Warbi’s Son realised that all the people that he had to help in that life had been helped by him and so he continued to cut off his flesh, piece by piece, for the starving people to eat. Since he gave with such pure generosity, the karmic link created through this feast of compassion enabled these three to later take rebirth in a pure dimension.

As Warbi’s Son passed away, the skies cried a great rain of flowers. Many gods who had faith in the dharma came and
The Wonderful Son of Warbi

respectfully gathered his bones. These sacred relics were carried off to the heavens in a jewelled casket and a stupa was built to preserve them forever.

This was the Seventh Story wherein Khachab Dorje took birth in an eastern world as the layman Warbi’s Son and worked extensively to help beings in various places.

Karmapa Chenno


8. SUN YOUTH

From the space of the unborn - Dharmakāya
-Arises the unceasing dance of miraculous emanations -
Sambhogakāya-
And you take the immaculate form of the great treasure of compassion free from concept -Nirmanakāya.
You are the only Refuge of the unprotected,
A wealth of unfathomable qualities.
Incomparable Chenrezik, may your lotus feet
Always be the crown upon my head.

Fifteen thousand cosmic aeons ago, there was a very fortunate age known as Vivid and Bright, blessed by the coming of two thousand buddhas. It was a time when people could live for several hundred thousand years. In the central part of a world of that age, lay the kingdom called Beauty of Wonderful Dharma, set within a sparkling crown of immaculate snow mountains. It was an immense kingdom of sixty thousand provinces, each having a population of about nine hundred thousand families.

Beauty of Wonderful Dharma was ruled by King Divine Purity. His palace was as inconceivable as the country was impressive—a creation of extraordinary beauty beyond the grasp of the mind. The kingdom was quite advanced and the palace and towns could be as brightly illuminated at night as in the day. Readily-available chariots and good roads made moving about the towns, as well as long distance travel, very
easy. Khachab Dorje took birth as King Divine Purity's son. He was born amidst many miraculous signs and rare and wondrous manifestations and all seemed to indicate an auspicious future. The child, known as Sun Youth, was cared for by thirty-two nannies. Eight were charged with feeding him, eight played with him, eight kept him and his clothing spotlessly clean, and eight were particularly entrusted with the loving task of lavishing affection on him—giving him cuddles and kisses and the warmth of their maidenly tenderness.

As Sun Youth grew up, he studied arts, crafts, medicine, astrology and mathematics, the martial arts and Buddhist philo-sophy. In his free time he went for outings in the capital with his many friends, riding beautiful chariots drawn by well-bred horses.

By the time that his education was completed, he had become a scholar of outstanding brilliance, well-versed in all subjects. The King decided to invite the best scholars and most skilled men in the country so that there could be a great contest between them and his son to test the prince's ability. When this took place, Sun Youth triumphed over all the great opponents with ease and splendour, impressing everyone. They all agreed that no ordinary being could have such skill and knowledge and that he must be an emanation of the Buddha. As time went by, the King decided to pass his kingdom into the hands of his brilliant heir.

The new king's first goal was to try to promote greater honesty and truthfulness in all the country's affairs, so that everything would function in harmony with the principles of dharma. The resulting higher moral standards of the people brought the country even greater fortune and blessed it with plentiful crops, peace and harmony.
Sun Youth

Eventually, after some years had passed, his father died and King Sun Youth called all of the country’s monks together to say prayers for him. He distributed a great share of his wealth at this time, not only to the poor of his own country but to those of other lands, eradicating poverty in a vast area. By this time, he had married and had fathered of a good son, called Three Jews. He brought the child up to be well-educated in both worldly and religious affairs and passed the royal power into his hands as soon as the latter was of age, since he had himself grown weary and increasingly disillusioned with the ways of conditioned existence. King Sun Youth left the beautiful royal palace, accompanied by his queen, and went to a forest where they lived together, eating wild fruits and practicing meditation all the time. All the wild animals of the forest eventually became their friends and the King taught the dharma to tigers, leopards, deer and birds, planting the seed of their future liberation in their minds.

One day, after sixty thousand years spent in that forest, Sun Youth rose from his meditation and departed from his forest grove. He left alone since his wife had long since died. He walked for some time and eventually reached some beautiful hills covered with rich green meadows, full of wild flowers. There he saw the corpse of a twenty-year old youth who seemed to have died very recently. Leaving behind his own body, Sun Youth transferred his consciousness into the corpse and continued walking in the direction of India. He arrived at the Shri Vajraya monastery and there he took monk’s vows and the bodhisattva vow from the Abbot, Stainless One. Sun Youth stayed there for five thousand years, taking teachings from the venerable Abbot and maturing his understanding.

Now, at that time there was a religious teacher, an Ishvarite
called Godsgift, who was an extremely clever man and also a brilliant scholar excelling in the art of debate. In those days, the winner of a debate gained not only the satisfaction of victory but also the conversion of his opponent to his point of view. Thus, all the scholars defeated by Godsgift had to accept his philosophy and their followers were also obliged to do the same and many a Buddhist monk had been forced to embrace the Ishvarite doctrine after their teachers had been outwitted by his cleverness.

His powerful reputation had already reached Shri Vajraya and when the monks there heard that he would be coming to their monastery they were totally downcast: who could ever defeat him? Who would ever be able to save their community? No one had the confidence or ability to enter into debate with Godsgift, except Sun Youth, who was prepared to face him.

When Godsgift eventually came, the debate was prepared according to ancient custom. The King himself had to set the date and he would preside over the contest.

Many people gathered in a huge forum to witness the historic event. The King’s throne was erected in the centre, with Godsgift, surrounded by his followers, to the King’s left and Sun Youth, accompanied by the Buddhists, to his right. The debate began and the two great scholars parried and thrust their swords of concept with subtle artistry—mental sabres that flashed and glistened in the sunlight of truth, dealing blows that each met with a cunning counter. For a whole week the debate continued, until Godsgift had to accept the superiority of Sun Youth’s Buddhist arguments. He and his followers were converted to Buddhism.

Following this, Sun Youth and his fellow Buddhists firmly planted the victory banner of the Buddhist teaching in the
Sun Youth

land and more and more people throughout the country came to embrace the buddhadharma.

Sun Youth returned to Shri Vajraya for a short time but did not stay long. He left for the northern part of the kingdom and reached a dense forest where he met some animals in a sorry state, dying from starvation. Moved by compassion, he offered them his body to devour and transferred his consciousness into the dead body of a bird that was lying on the ground. Now a bird, Sun Youth flew towards the south where he saw the dead body of an adolescent. Leaving his bird body, he entered the vacated body of the dead youth. He then went to a remote, dense forest where he meditated for five hundred years. Knowing that the time had come for him to lead the Indian King Silshin on the path of dharma, he set off for his palace.

The king, queen and entourage were sitting on the roof terrace of the palace, enjoying the beauty of the scenery, when, to their surprise, they saw someone walking in the sky, coming towards them. It was Sun Youth. As he stepped down onto the terrace they were filled with amazement and exclaimed, "Extraordinary! You must be the Buddha to work such miracles!" They all prostrated at his feet and requested him to give them teachings. He fulfilled their request and continued teaching the royal family and the whole population for a long time, explaining the outer, inner and secret teachings according to the different aptitudes of his followers. Through his planting the seed of liberation in them, some were able to bring it to fruition in that very lifetime whilst others progressed enough to ensure their future liberation.

When Sun Youth knew that his task in that particular land
Sakarchupa 8

and time was completed, he transformed himself into a Heruka, the form of a wrathful yidam, and flew to the Highest Pure Land, escorted by many dākas and dākinis.

This was the Eighth Story wherein Khachab Dorje was born as the son of King Divine Purity and wherein he took various forms in order to work for the good of many beings.
Sota Youth

Karma Chenpo

Karma Chenpo
9. LIVES IN THE "VERY CLEAR AND LIGHT-FILLED" COSMIC SYSTEM

Your body is like infinite garlands
Of the lilies, one upon another,
Of the great loving kindness of all the Buddhas,
The guides of beings;
Like delicate mandala blossoms radiating
Hundreds of immaculate rays of buddha-activity.
I bow down to Chenrezik, peerless protector
Endowed with the splendour of all qualities perfect.

Two thousand cosmic aeons ago there was a small cosmic system known as the Very Clear and Light-Filled universe, composed of four principal worlds, one in each of four directions. No Buddha had ever visited it. The ruler of the entire 'southern' world, Rose Apple Land, was King Divine Virtue Power. He was no ordinary ruler for he was a chakravartin—one of those great universal emperors who hold sovereignty over one or even several planets in a given cosmic system. Such rulers possess special attributes, the principal of which is a miraculous wheel, hence their name of chakravartin ("those who rule through the power of a wheel"). The highest chakravartins rule through a golden wheel, the second most powerful through a silver wheel, the third through a copper wheel and the least powerful through an iron wheel. This wheel is in fact a vehicle, enabling them to travel to the different parts of their worlds in the twinkling of an eye. The more noble the metal of the wheel, the faster it
can travel and the greater the powers of its owner. King Divine Virtue Power was a Chakravartin with an iron wheel.

Khachab Dorje saw that the southern world was without dharma. Deeply moved by compassion, he decided to take birth there and entered the womb of Queen Young Beauty, the king’s wife. Ten months later he was born, in the House of Victory, as the royal palace was called, and his birth was accompanied by many miraculous signs. The child grew up and became very learned in the arts, crafts and sciences. He also excelled in sports and the martial arts. When he came of age, his father passed the royal power into his hands, although as it transpired this was only to be a symbolical transfer since the young prince was himself a natural chakravartin of the highest order. His power did not have to be acquired: it simply came as an intrinsic quality of his being as the consequence of his many virtuous deeds of former lives. At the time of his enthronement, the seven special attributes of his sovereignty came down from the sky. The great golden wheel with its thousand spokes would carry him anywhere he wished in the four main planets of the cosmic system. His precious horse could gallop one thousand miles in a day; so could his precious elephant. His precious minister accomplished all the king’s wishes with amazing grace and efficiency. His precious queen was an ideal companion endowed with all the finest qualities and free of all fault. His precious commander-in-chief was so awe-inspiring that his mere presence frightened off any would-be opponents and his precious jewel shed brilliant light everywhere, eradicating famine, quarrels and wars.

Having received his insignia of power, the great chakravartin flew away on his golden wheel. Even before he had landed on the three other planets of his cosmic system, he had automatically gained sovereignty over them, through the
power of his former good deeds. Travelling through space to visit his vast empire, he commenced his noble task of establishing the ten virtuous actions as the law of his four worlds. He requested many of the realised beings who had reached the bodhisattva levels to come and teach dharma throughout his empire and, in response, countless bodhisattvas came, manifesting in many different forms—as monks, laymen and laywomen. They taught the dharma everywhere and there was great well-being and prosperity because of this.

The positive power of the great virtue generated by the chakravartin's invitation to all those bodhisattvas to teach enabled him to travel to the land of the gods and there also he gained power automatically. Once again, he established the ten virtuous actions as the law and invited the bodhisattvas to teach the gods in those heavens. He then returned to his original southern kingdom of Rose Apple Land. Once there, he had all the poor and underprivileged gather together and he provided them with all they needed. Then he did much work to exalt the glory of the Three Most Precious Refuges in that place, by having religious texts copied, statues carved, stupas built and monasteries constructed. For many years the whole cosmic system was blessed with great harmony, happiness and goodness. When the chakravartin passed away, his mind united with that of Chakrasamvara.

In that same cosmic system there was a small continent in the western world where people were born from eggs. Khachab Dorje once again took birth as a prince. He was called Splendour of Beautiful Light and was the son of King Great Moon, the sovereign of that world. The child grew into a young man and when his father passed away he was requested by the ministers and representatives of the people
to be their new king. One of his first actions as the new monarch was to summon all the poor people. He fed the hungry, dressed the ragged and naked and gave money to the destitute. So great was the King’s generosity that he lavished all the royal fortunes on the poor. The palace treasuries emptied and King Splendour of Beautiful Light decided that the best course of action was to go to the land of the Nāgas to procure a wish-fulfilling gem. His journey was successful and he returned to his land bearing the rare jewel. As soon as he wished for his treasures to be replenished, they were so, bursting with precious riches. The King continued giving and giving, until even the word of poverty had disappeared from the face of that world.

Now, as it happened, there was a small island off the northern shore of that kingdom where there lived a king called Glory of Richness and Power. Because of a bad karmic link formed in past lives this king was extremely hostile to King Splendour of Beautiful Light, to such a point that he had it in his mind to kill him. His plan was cunning and clever. He summoned seven men and gave them instructions:

You have all heard how generous King Splendour of Beautiful Light is: he always gives anyone anything that they ask for. So go now, disguised as beggars, and ask him to give you his own head. If he gives it to you, bring it back to me straight away. Success will bring you great reward and I promise that, if you succeed, you shall each be appointed governor of a province.

The King was sure that his plan would work, because he had often heard that the one he so much hated always gave anything requested. Thus, full of gruesome hope, he sent his seven envoys sailing.
Lives in the Very Pure & Light-Filled Cosmic System

Having touched land, the pretend beggars headed straight for the palace. At first they asked for food and clothes. Having received these they then said, somewhat timidly, that they still wished for something else. In fact, they were trembling with apprehension inside, awed at the thought of asking a king for his own head, but the temptation of being rewarded with power and position enabled them to overcome their fear and their scruples. They made their gory request and, to their surprise, the King was overjoyed. "Indeed!" he said, "I shall be very happy to give you my head", thinking that in his previous lives he had taken and left behind an infinite number of bodies but had never had the chance to give one to anyone. So, filled with inner joy at being able to make use of his body, the King took a long sword and severed his own head. It fell to the floor whilst the rest of his body dissolved into light. The earth shook and a precious rain of flowers fell from the sky. The seven men hastily took the head and sailed away to their own island. King Glory of Richness and Power was delighted and, true to his promise, made them each the governor of a province.

In the southern island, known as Full Flourishing of the Very Best, in that same western world, there lived a dharma king called Famed and Glorious, whose chief minister was called Tsong Peshen. Khachab Dorje then took birth as the third son of this minister and was named Lustrous Jewel. At the age of nine, Lustrous Jewel felt in the core of his being that all worldly pursuits were utterly pointless and he became a monk, receiving the new name of Stainless Intelligence. He took his vows from Abbot Glorious Excellent Happiness of Open Blossom Monastery and stayed there to study with him. The Abbot was a very gifted scholar and a good leader for the five thousand monks of the community. Stainless
Sakarchupa 9

Intelligence himself became a celebrated scholar and eventually assumed the position of Abbot of the monastery when his old teacher passed away.

The peaceful, beatific life of Open Blossom Monastery was disturbed by the arrival of 'Godscholar', a teacher who worshipped the deity Ishvara. He had come to challenge the Abbot to a debate, hoping to convert the whole community to the Ishvarite doctrine, since it was the custom in those days that the winner of a religious debate gained the conversion of his opponent and all of his opponent's followers. He had already defeated many an Abbot with the sharp, agile logic of his mind.

The debate was no short affair. Covering many topics and comparing the qualities of their two different approaches, the two debated intensely for seven months. At the end, the non-Buddhist had to admit his defeat. He and his followers accepted the Buddhist faith and the many Buddhists formerly converted by him were free to return to their own faith. Godscholar himself took monk's vows and studied Buddhism. Stainless Intelligence remained Abbot of his monastery for five hundred years, during which time he imparted many precious teachings. He then appointed one of his foremost disciples, Stainless Senses, as his successor and left the monastery to go and live in the jungle.

His search for an ideal hermitage led him to the heart of a jungle where there was a high, white, cliff face which had a natural cave. Eating wild fruits and drinking the pure, crystal-clear waters of the nearby streams, he passed his time meditating, seated on a mat of dried leaves. One day a demon came, with the intention of disrupting Stainless Intelligence's meditation. Rushing into the cave, his dishevelled hair standing on end, his wild eyes rolling out of their orbits and his long fangs bared in a terrible grimace, the demon dug his
long claw-like nails into Stainless Intelligence's body. Grabbing him even more firmly, he tried to start devouring him. Stainless Intelligence did not budge an iota, remaining immersed in meditation, calm within a deep-rooted loving kindness. The demon then changed instantaneously into a beautiful youth, dressed all in white—a graceful young man carrying a garland of fresh flowers in one hand and a dish of the tastiest, most palatable foods in the other. Offering them to Stainless Intelligence, he said,

I have now become your servant. Please, I humbly beg you, stay here for a long time and teach both myself and all the animals. I will serve you, feed you and take care of all your needs.

Stainless Intelligence accepted his request and stayed there for five hundred years, teaching dharma to the ex-demon and also to the wild animals, giving them mahāyāna and vajrayāna teachings. Through serving his master and practicing his teachings properly, the ex-demon eventually became a good bodhisattva.

Having fulfilled his tasks in that particular place, Stainless Intelligence left the jungle, heading for the western city called Beauty. On the way, he was bitterly assaulted by five brigands who ripped his clothes apart and even tore off his limbs. Despite this, Stainless Intelligence did not harbour even a second of hatred. Instead he died with this thought in mind,

Through this murder, these bandits now have created a karmic link with me. In the future, may they be reborn connected to me and taste the nectar of the pure dharma.
With their bloody swords have they severed my limbs but with the stainless sword of deep understanding may I in the future sever the root of ignorance from their minds.

Khachab Dorje later took birth as King Great Clarity, Splendour of Divine Power, ruler of a northern country in the southern world. He spent all of his time and wealth in the practice of generosity but so profound was his dissatisfaction with all modes of conditioned existence that he abdicated, giving his throne to Pure and Beautiful Light, one of his ministers. Leaving the royal court, he led the life of a wanderer, roaming through wildernesses, villages and forests. One day, he was walking through a desert area when he came across a man lying on the ground, weeping loudly. Great Clarity asked the man to tell him why he was so grieved. His words emerging between heart-rending sobs, the man explained that he had become blind and that he had no one to help him or look after him. He asked if Great Clarity could lead him to the next town.

Once he realised that Great Clarity was really intent on helping him, he timidly suggested that "the honourable gentleman may even be kind enough to give him his eyes". The blind man's suggestion filled Great Clarity's heart with happiness. He never carried a knife, but taking a bamboo, he split it open and used it to gouge out his eyes. He gave them to the blind man and through the power of his compassion and pure prayers the 'transplant' was successful and the blind man recovered his sight. The King then said to him,

Now I have given you these ordinary eyes of flesh—the eyes through which one sees all the things of relative reality. I pray that I may be able, in the future, to give you the eyes that see the ultimate nature of everything.
Great Clarity continued on, eyeless, but although he was deprived of his organs of ordinary sight he was still able to see everything through his clairvoyance. After some time he encountered an old man lying unconscious by a road which led to a small village. He knew that the man had fainted through starvation and, taking him very gently, he helped him to sit up. The poor man came to his senses a little but he was so weak that he could hardly utter a sound. Feeling great compassion for him, Great Clarity acted without a moment’s hesitation or even the shadow of a second thought. Taking the beggar’s knife, he cut off a piece of his own flesh for him to eat. As the old man ate, Great Clarity continued cutting off pieces of his flesh and said,

*Here, take this with you as provisions for your journey. It should help you to make it to the village.*

He then made the wish,

*I have given you my flesh and satisfied your physical hunger. In the future, may I be able to give you the dharma that will satisfy your spiritual hunger.*

Having spoken these words, he passed away, his mind uniting with that of Chenrezik.

This was the Ninth Story
wherein Khachab Dorje took various forms
in different places in order to help beings everywhere.
10. THE MAHĀSIDDHA WHO TAMED THE UNTAMABLE

Adorned with fine gems -
The jewels of an infinity of qualities;
Great blaze of pure white light, so bright.
Father of all the Victors, iridescent
With the splendour of limitless perfect knowledge,
I bow down to you, indestructible sun, Chenrezik, Protector of the World.

Many cosmic aeons ago there was a world system that had been visited by many buddhas and to which many more would come. King Purest Moon ruled a kingdom situated in the central region of the 'southern' planet of that system. Khachab Dorje consciously took birth as the son of this king. His actual birth occurred in a beautiful park, beneath a 'tree of no pain' and at the moment of birth the heavens covered the earth with a rain of delicate blue utpal blossoms and the sound of Ah La La rang through space thrilling those present with a sense of wonder. The child grew up to be a master of both secular and religious knowledge and when he was of age to take over the royal duties his father enthroned him and transferred all his royal power to him. The new king's career, however, turned out to be very ephemeral. During his short time as king he tried to bring everything in line with dharma but he was quick to realise that all worldly endeavours hold little meaning and he saw, with utter clarity, that conditioned existence is like a pit of fire. Feeling not the slightest
inclination to continue as king in such a context, he abdicated in favour of his younger brother, Mighty Beauty, and, having enthroned him, left his royal life.

He sought out Bodhisattva Stainless Essence and took monk’s vows and the bodhisattva vow from him, receiving the new name of Great Bodhisattva Intelligent Joy of Dharma (Dharma Joy for short). Then he set himself to meditation, spending all of his day in its perfection. His contemplative skills were so outstanding that gods would come and prostrate before him, paying homage to the extraordinary being who could simultaneously be in one hundred different states of meditation. He also acquired considerable miraculous powers and could, in any one instant, go to one hundred buddhasfields, make offerings before one hundred buddhas and emanate to help one hundred beings. These buddhas gave him teachings on mahāyāna and also the special teachings of the vajrayāna, so that he eventually became one of those rare beings who hold the key to the treasure-house of the tantras.

One day he was walking through a very thick forest. He came to a place where a stone stupa had manifested spontaneously and he found a yogi sitting by it. This yogi was Shri Vajra Jnana who, through his realisation of the vajrayāna teachings, had completely transcended birth and death. He no longer had a coarse body of flesh and blood but a subtle rainbow body. It was from this great fountain of pure knowledge that Dharma Joy drank the incomparable nectar of vajrayāna, as precious and rare in our world as water in the desert. His new teacher gave him the four empowerments and simply dissolved into him. Like water poured into water, their minds became one—no different from the original perfection of Buddha Vajradhara.

After this, Dharma Joy adopted a variety of different forms,
demonstrating many different styles of bodhisattva activity. He subdued many demons, ghosts and evil spirits, making them promise to stop doing harm. Those who were incapable of improvement he dissolved into his heart. Accompanied by many dākas and dākinis, he would also go to the charnal grounds where, as was the custom then, the corpses were laid out for wild birds to devour. There they would bless the deceased through the profound power of their meditation.

Some time later, Dharma Joy was staying in a forest in a southern country. One day whilst he was there, the local ruler was out with a hunting party and they happened to catch sight of him, wearing a tiger-skin lower garment, an elephant skin shawl and a headdress of skulls and bone ornaments. Seeing this most bizarre of apparitions, they thought he must be some dangerous creature—perhaps a ghost intent on causing them trouble—and the King ordered his party, brave soldiers all, to kill him. However, when they tried to kill him, he simply placed his hands in the ‘threatening’ mudra and all their razor-sharp arrows disintegrated into space, whilst the soldiers themselves fell unconscious to the ground. They seemed dead and the King started to panic, throwing himself at Dharma Joy’s feet. He apologised profusely, saying, “I am so, so sorry. I hadn’t realised that you were a great mahāsiddha.” Pleading, the King begged Dharma Joy to give him some teachings. Through his infinite compassion, Dharma Joy reanimated the unconscious soldiers and gave all present the four empowerments of Chakrasamvara, along with the corresponding Vajrayāna teachings. They then accompanied him to a quiet, unfrequented place, ideal for their meditation practice, and eventually gained the realisation of a siddha.

Dharma Joy then went back to his native land, still under the
sovereignty of his younger brother. He did not go to the palace but roamed around and his strange dress and unconventional and often shocking behaviour soon made a reputation for him. Rumours spread swiftly. Since much of his behaviour contravened the laws and accepted moral customs of the land, the people found him too outrageous. One day, as he neared the capital, the King and some of his men spotted this strangest of vagabonds. The King sent eighteen strong men, armed with lassos, to go and catch him. Poor fellows! Their lassos whirled and twirled in empty space. Dharma Joy's body was totally intangible, like the reflection of the moon in water. Then they tried to grab him with their hands. Suddenly, instead of being intangible he became immovable, as solid and heavy as a huge mountain. They were unable to shift even one of his hairs or capture this strange man through any of their efforts.

Dharma Joy's unusual powers caused the King such grave concern that he ordered him to be put to death. The soldiers struck with their axes, slashed with their swords and thrust with their spears, all to no avail. Their weapons broke yet he remained unharmed. The citizens (who had been gathering in ever increasing numbers) grew more and more aggravated and a sudden wave of anger overtook them. Seizing stones and rocks from the ground, they started to lapidate Dharma Joy. But as soon as the stones had been thrown they became a glorious rain of flowers, falling softly all around him. He just sat there calmly, in meditation. Then he started to gaze at the people in such a way that they became frozen, like statues, in whichever position they happened to be. Only then did a slow realisation of what was really happening dawn upon them. It was the King who voiced their thoughts,

*You must be a great mahāsiddha, an emanation of the*
The Mahasiddha Who Tamed The Untameable

Buddha. We have been very, very silly; so stupid that we did not even recognise who you were. Please, please, forgive us for trying to hurt you and kill you. Free us so that we can move again and then, please, will you come to our palace to teach us.

Dharma Joy compassionately freed them from their temporary paralysis. As they tested their freedom to move again, they felt inspired and amazed by his extraordinary powers. The King insisted the mahāsiddha ride in his own chariot and, acting as charioteer himself, the monarch drove slowly to the palace, the now happy population of the capital thronging around them, cheering, throwing flower garlands, singing songs and making music. When they arrived at the palace, the mahāsiddha was presented with a host of offerings. He then gave everyone the four empowerments, some vajrayāna teachings and meditation instruction.

Later, Dharma Joy left the sophisticated life of the palace and went to stay in a charnel ground, where he meditated in the company of many dākas and dākinis. At one point, after they had held a great feast of celebration, Dharma Joy departed to meditate alone in the cemetery of Khamsum Longdrul. It was whilst he was meditating there that the powerful being known as Mighty Master of the Gods decided to attack him and make obstacles to his practice. Mighty Master could subdue men, gods, ghosts, demons and many other creatures. As his attack commenced, ominously heavy black clouds gathered in the sky, roaring thunder bellowed and crashed, rocking a hundred million cosmic systems. It felt as if the whole galaxy were about to explode. A deluge of thunderbolts fell from the sky. Heralded by this great fury of the elements, Mighty Master of the Gods suddenly appeared
amidst the violent chaos of the firmament. His eyes were like two blazing fires raging beneath his wild, dishevelled mane of hair, his gaping mouth an endless abyss large enough to engulf heaven and earth, his tongue a gigantic dragon spitting lethal lightning flashes. This nightmare creature was holding a knife in his right hand and a skull-cup full of blood in his left, from which he drank noisily. Around him was a host of equally horrific creatures.

Imagine his surprise when Dharma Joy did not so much as quiver an eyelid! Imagine his awe that his vivid display of supernatural powers had not even ruffled a single hair of Dharma Joy’s body! The latter just sat there, deep in the tranquil absorption of meditation.

Then Mighty Master started to feel himself overpowered and defeated. His energy fading, the unfamiliar, sour taste of failure in his mouth, he tried to retreat, taking the demon army away with him but Dharma Joy drew them back with the power of his meditation. They came as if pulled by a magnet. Surrendering, the fierce creature prostrated at Dharma Joy’s feet, saying,

There is no one in a billion cosmic systems who can match my powers or resist my influence. Until now I was stronger than any other being but today I could not even manage to ruffle a hair on your body. So please, I now humbly request you to take me under your protection. From this day, and for all the duration of your holy activity, I will be your servant; your shadow wherever you go. I will protect your teaching, the places where you stay and the people with you. I will eliminate all obstacles and create favourable circumstances, always trying to serve you in all possible ways.
Dharma Joy made the demon drink the nectar of sacred commitment and he touched his head with the vajra of commitment. The now ex-demon then took an oath that from that day onwards he would obey all Dharma Joy’s orders. The mahāsiddha then made him enter the jnana-mandala—the pure sphere of the original knowledge of the true nature of phenomena. Mighty Master gained the highest level of spiritual realisation and his mind became that of the Buddha. Even though he had then reached the state of enlightenment, he never forsook his promise and continued to manifest in the form of the Great Wrathful One, following Dharma Joy as his shadow, protecting his teachings and aiding the unhindered accomplishment of his activity.

The Mahāsiddha then returned to the country where his brother was king. Flying in, he landed at the gate of the palace. As soon as the people saw him they were filled with that deep happiness that only the return of one’s vajrayāna master can bring. News of his return spread like a forest fire and everyone went running to the palace to see him. There, Dharma Joy manifested the mandala of Chakrasamvara and gave everyone the four empowerments. They all meditated for seven days and three hundred thousand people became siddhas. The sweet sound of celestial music filled the galaxy and wondrous, indescribable miracles of all kinds occurred in a hundred million cosmic systems as the siddhas entered the Pure Land.

This was the Tenth Story, wherein Khachab Dorje was born as the son of King Purest Moon and wherein he accomplished the good of beings in many different ways.
THE FIFTEENTH KARMAPA'S DEDICATION

In a boat can one go to find flawless jewels
In far-off lands beyond the seas.
Those who long to be omniscient and free
Should sail the boat of bodhisattva deeds.
To gain the peerless gem of the kāyas three.
For cosmic aeons innumerable
Have I followed the unmistaken ways
Of the buddhas and bodhisattvas
Of aeons past, of the present day
and of all the future,
My intention never spoilt, ever pure.
From this wondrous ocean of deeds did I take
But a few drops which I crystallised these tales to make.
These words make a garland of azure flowers interlaced
With sparkling jewels full of pure meaning’s grace—
Greater than a great mountain made of the motes
Of dust gathered from the galaxy’s planet hosts.
May the virtue springing from this work profound
Flood the whole of existence and great peace beyond
With a blaze of white and brilliant light,
And may its stellar brilliance so bright
Dispel the sorry darkness of difficulty
And shed the light of circumstances arising favourably,
The sunshine of joyful coincidence which fulfils every wish
And opens the khumata flower of beings’ awareness
Until it unfolds into the full bloom of happiness.
May all beings share good fortune’s great feast
And the supreme state of total liberation reach.
TRANSLATORS' DEDICATION

In the realm of purity of wisdom primordial,
Buddhas and bodhisattvas can savour to the full
The rich nectar of stories of long-gone lives
Of the Buddha appearing in human guise,
Khachab Dorje—the Fifteenth Gyalwang Karmapa.
These biographies are truly beyond the grasp
Of most of us, ordinary mortals that we are.
However, feeling that at this time
These stories could plant the seed of liberation
In many human beings’ minds,
Glorious Rangjung Rikpe Dorje,
The sixteenth Gyalwang Karmapa emanation
Gave Kempo Chodrak Tenpel of Rumtek Monastery
And the westerner Katia Holmes of Samye-Ling
The pleasant task of cooperation on this English translation.

The words of the Fifteenth Karmapa are so profound
And sculpted into such exquisite poetry,
One can only attempt to convey what they recount
In an everyday prose and with simplicity.
Lacking real knowledge or qualities ourselves,
What we have managed to bring back
From this ocean of deep words and meanings
Is but a dew-drop atop a blade of grass.
Therefore we beg all the bodhisattvas, lamas
And great teachers to forgive all our mistakes,
And whatever adaptations we had to make
Thinking of the western reader
Who had not grown up in a Buddhist culture.
If, by way of our pure intention,
Some small benefit is to come of this work
We dedicate it so that the sun of the Buddha's teaching
May rise everywhere, dispelling the darkness of ignorance,
And so that in all our future lives we may emulate
The deeds of all the realised beings
And encourage others to do the same.

Rumtek Monastery, Sikkim, India, April 198
NOTES

Dzalendra Part 1

Dzalendra: one of the ‘j’ sounds in Sanskrit was transcribed as ‘dz’ in Tibetan and has long been pronounced that way. It would be tempting to correct for this, and to write Jalendra throughout this story but the translators decided to retain the sound as it was used by the Karmapa himself and as it is most familiar to Tibetans these days.

hell: see note to Sakarchupa 3, below.

Tara: one of the main female aspects of enlightened compassion.

brahmins: holy men of the time and those of highest caste.

three countries where dharma flourished: Varanasi, Kashi and Bangala

Three Most Precious Refuges and similar epithets are translations of triratna, referring to the Buddha, the Teaching (dharma) and the Buddhist community (sangha).

the First Buddha: Sakyamuni is considered to be the fourth Buddha of this Good Aeon. The first was Vipashyi, ‘All-Seeing’.

Sakarchupa Story 1

to ‘turn the wheel of dharma’ generally means to give Buddhist teachings. Sometimes, as here, it means to introduce those teachings of universal truths to a land or a world where they do not exist.

Sakarchupa Story 2

two accumulations: virtue, on a relative plane of truth, and wisdom of the ultimate truth.

Sakarchupa Story 3

hell: Some people are surprised to find that the notion of hell occurs in
Buddhism. Hells are clearly defined, by Gampopa, as being states of mind rather than actual places, even though, like an alcoholic’s delerium or a dreamer’s nightmare, they seem totally real and all-encompassing to the tortured mind locked in that experience. Such horrible experiences are said to occur due to the klesha and karma (see glossary) imprinted in the experiencer’s consciousness.

Sakarchupa Story 5

_west_ in vajrayāna Buddhism is a notion related to meditation experience rather than geographical location determined by the sun or the Pole Star. The same applies to the other cardinal direction mentioned in a similar way in later stories. As this topic relates to the vajrayāna level of teachings, it is not appropriate to develop it here.
GLOSSARY

arhat: a being who has completely removed the causes of suffering (i.e. karma and klesha) from the mind.

Avalokiteshvara: the embodiment of the compassion of all the Buddhas. Known as 'Chenrezik' (spyan ras gzigs) to Tibetans, he was the most popular of vajrayāna meditations in that land. The Karmapas are seen as his emanations, hence the verses of praise to Avalokitesvāra at the beginning of most stories in this book.

bodhisattva vow: the promise to dedicate this life and all future lives to attaining enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. Just as 'taking refuge' is the basic precept of Buddhism, this is the basic precept of mahāyāna Buddhism.

brahmin: male of the priestly caste, very respected.

buddhadharma is the global term for the teachings given by the Buddha and since practised by Buddhists. The three countries without dharma were called Munen, Lahul and Sik in the Tibetan text.

Buddhakāya: these are the various ways in which the perfect Buddha mind is experienced, either by totally pure beings (dharmaśaśa), exceedingly pure bodhisattvas (sambhogaśaśa) or worldly beings (nirmanakāya). The svabhavaśaśa is the essence of these three.

Chenrezik: see earlier entry on Avalokitesvāra.

dāka and dākini: the dākini are female being holding some spiritual power. There are five main types, the lesser being in human form and the highest being emanations of the enlightened mind. See Tilopa, KDDL. The dāka are their male counterparts.

karma, literally 'action', is a Sanskrit term used in Buddhism to mean an action in its entirety. It often occurs as 'karma, cause and effect' to make it clear that the notion does not refer simply to the initial momentary deeds of body, speech or mind but more globally to all that each of those actions can set into motion and more specifically the repercussions for the doer of the action in future lives.

katanka: a staff, often three-pronged.
klesha: the things which pollute the mind. Traditionally there are the three main ones—ignorance, desire and hostility—and twenty-one subsidiary ones, such as narcissism, jealousy, dissimulation etc.

mahāsiddhā: someone who has attained great spiritual accomplishments.

mahāyāna means the 'greater way'. It refers to traditions of Buddhism which teach that the Buddha not only showed his disciples the way to total personal liberation (arhat's nirvana) but also the way of compassion and of an even deeper wisdom which leads to the Buddha's nirvana. The latter is absorption in the timeless, pure and perfect, ultimate condition of reality which radiates infinite help to all beings.

nirvāṇa: the definitive end of samsara (see below). This is not a 'state'. the term in fact covers a whole series of possibilities, from being simply a permanent release from samsara, through that same freedom enhances by the spiritual skills and qualities of the arhants and bodhisattvas, to the total freedom, wisdom, compassion and skill of a Buddha: the 'Buddha's nirvana'.

Potala: the name of Avalokiteshvara's pure land.

pratimoksa means 'self liberation'. It refers to the various commitments which can be helpful in freeing one's mind from the burden of karma and habitual harmful thoughts and feelings.

samsāra: a self-perpetuating state of delusion and suffering.

sangha: the community of Buddhist followers and the term is nearly always used to denote the monastic community.

stupa: originally mounds built over relics, these Buddhist monuments became more and more complex representations of the spiritual path and its outcome—the perfect mind of the Buddha.

vajrayāna: the teachings which enable a meditator to recognise his or her innate purity (buddha nature) in the very moment. Vajrayāna practices, known also as tantra, often involve visualisation, mantra recitation etc. and are, by their very nature 'secret', inasmuch as they only make sense to those made ready to receive them, by their own expertise in meditation and purity of being.
First and foremost of the Tibetan "tulkus" (reincarnate lamas), the seventeen incarnations of the Gyalwa Karmapa have long been famous as the guiding light of the Karma Kagyu tradition and erstwhile gurus of the emperors of China.

The 15th Karmapa once told Khyentse Rinpoche about ten former lives, mainly in other time-space dimensions, in a series of stories now known as 'Sakarchupa'.

Later, as a refugee in India, HH the 16th Karmapa one day stopped the jeep in which he was travelling and told the tale of one of his former incarnations in that very place, as a famous king called Dzalendara.

These eleven tales describe vividly the power and purity of the Karmapa emanations and show us their determination to work skilfully for the welfare of all beings-human, animal and yet others-sometimes at the cost of their own lives.