

Three Reasons for Confidence¹

A Work Telling the Life and Liberation Story of the Great Master
Padmākara
or The Life and Liberation of Padma According to the Indian Tradition
by Tāranātha

Oṃ svasti! The Three Reasons for Confidence is a work that recounts the life and liberation of the Great Master Padmākara.

I pay homage to the guru!

*An ocean of eloquent speech, the uninterrupted teachings of the victors,
Sometimes assumes the form of a spiritual teacher,
Who fills every direction with the light of the sacred Dharma,
Displaying countless maṇḍalas while never wavering
From the luminous vajra heart essence.
Padmākara, with devotion, I bow to you.*

In this account, I discard whatever is false, and instead recount whatever I have found to be true.

There was a time when the tantric teachings of our guide, the perfectly enlightened Buddha, ranged far and wide throughout the land. King Devapāla² ruled the supreme kingdom of Magadha³ and glorious Uḍḍiyāna⁴ was ruled by King Hayalīla,⁵ and all in accordance with the Dharma. There was a learned teacher of the warrior caste who had adopted the Three Jewels as his spiritual guide. In the language of Uḍḍiyāna, this man's name was Srado, and in the language of India he was Sragdhara, Holder of the Flower Garland. Srado fathered a son, an infant born with all the physical marks of perfection. His skin was white, tinged with red, and there was the pattern of a lotus on his ring finger. His eyes and lips were like lotuses in bloom, and his skin bore many virtuous signs—marks such as lotus flowers, hooks and lassos.

The child's birth was celebrated with a great feast. When the brahmins examined the signs, some foretold that he would become a king, others that he would be ruler of a principality, and others still that he would live in charnel grounds and bring ruin upon the family line. With such a variety of good, bad and indeterminate prophecies, nothing was certain. However, all were in agreement that it would be difficult for others to prevail over him. Finally, a highly accomplished yogin was asked and he said, "This child will be most supreme among practitioners of the Secret Mantra, and, because he has all the marks of the Lotus Family, he will always carry Amitābha's blessing. Therefore, combining Padma (lotus) and Avabhāsi (shining), his name shall

be Padmāvabhāsi.”

As Padmāvabhāsi grew up, he became effortlessly skilled in all the minor sciences such as writing, grammar, logic, medicine, crafts and the eight ways of reasoning. In the temple at Saṃrakṣa, he took refuge from a vinaya-holder and received the five fundamental precepts. While there, he studied extensively both abhidharma and sūtra. Śāntirūpa, a skilled tantric adept, gave the young Master many empowerments for the maṇḍalas of kriyā-, upa- and yoga-tantras—and the flowers that Padmāvabhāsi threw invariably landed on the deities of the Lotus Family. He also sought direction from a merchant's son named Sukhadeva, a *siddha* who was indivisible from Noble Avalokiteśvara, and likewise from a prostitute, called Sukhadarī. Sukhadarī was yet another great *siddhā* who had appeared in Uḍḍiyāna, had heard the teachings directly from the Vajradhara himself, and received the instructions of the Secret Inner Tantras.

Padmāvabhāsi retreated to a pleasure grove and engaged in the practices of Approach, Close-Approach, Accomplishment and Great Accomplishment. At first, his practice caused various ill omens to arise—such as thunderous noises, frightening forms, a fire in the grove, and the destruction of his retreat dwelling. However, he meditated without falling under their power and there gained accomplishment in the *vidyā*-mantras⁶ that he had learned. In his dreams he had visions of many buddhas and bodhisattvas headed by Buddha Amitābha, Buddha of Boundless Light. He had direct visions of the King of the Wrathful Deities, Hayagrīva, the Horse-Headed One. And he brought *ḍākinīs* and minor *bhūtas* into his service.

Shortly after, the time came to take up the work of his father's family. As a Brahmin, this meant acting as counsellor to the king. He would often go to the royal palace, engage in government affairs and give explanations of astrological and other texts. This was shortly after Prince Akṣalīla, King Hayalīla's son, had become the heir to the throne. Padmāvabhāsi wished to bring the Dharma to the kingdom and thus urged the king to support him in this vast and virtuous endeavour. In the middle of the pleasure grove, Padmāvabhāsi built a temple and a residence for the saṅgha surrounded, on the boundary, by stūpas and a series of walls. The Master had three assistants: one was the king's secretary and two were ministers. However, they developed evil intentions and secretly plotted, “We three must try to take possession of this land and its people!” At length, their spokesman, the secretary, approached the king, “There is no longer any doubt: Padmāvabhāsi wants to rule the kingdom. He and the thousand monks residing in the pleasure grove are skilled in warfare. They know how to destroy their enemy, are extremely courageous in battle and when they say the pleasure grove is being turned into a temple, it's a lie. Really, encircled as they are with strong walls and more, they are quite able to fight against the king!”

The king consulted his ministers, and all agreed with the secretary. This was partly due to what the two ministers reported and partly because of their own jealousy. So the king sent off the ministers with an army.

At that time in Uḍḍiyāna, it was against the law for kings to kill brahmins, monks and paṇḍitas. All they could do was to issue a royal command, “Counsellor! You and your monks and spiritual teachers are to leave your possessions and be gone—to another land with you!” The monks followed the command and left. As the Master was preparing to leave, the ministers said, “If we do not put him to death, then we ourselves will surely come to harm,” and sent many assassins after him. But when they tied the Master up, he cut the rope and broke his chains through the power of *vidyā*-mantras. When they stabbed him with weapons, his body sustained no harm and it was the weapons that shattered. When they set fire to him, he did not burn. When they threw him into water, he simply popped up again like a little aquatic bird. When they threw him over a cliff, he was not hurt. When they put him in a hole and buried him, he tunnelled to the surface a long way off and escaped. Although they kept managing to seize him, they could not overpower him.

Following these encounters, the Master abandoned the cities and wandered across the land, making his way from one charnel ground to the next. He made use of whatever was there and was helped by the ghosts and *rākṣasas* of the charnel grounds. Within a week, all his would-be murderers—the secretary, the ministers and the hired assassins—were dead. Some died in house fires and some took their own lives, but not a single one remained. The king too was bitten by a poisonous snake and died.

The Master remained for a long time in those charnel grounds, keeping company with the formidable beings who lived there—the *bhūtas*, *rākṣasas*, *piśācas* and *ḍākinīs*. By practising the recitation of the *vidyā*-mantras with diligence, he had visions of all the wrathful vajra-kings, like Trailokyavijaya and Yamāntaka,⁷ and received teachings from them. He spoke with Mahākāla and the seven *mātrkās* as if speaking with humans. He took the cruel *nāgas* and *yakṣas* and made them his servants. He mastered ten million wrathful mantras, both worldly and transcendent.

Through the magical power of his mantra recitation, the Master went again and again, together with powerful non-human beings, to the eight great primordial charnel grounds of our world.⁸ He also met the eight divine masters of those places and accomplished an ordinary siddhi in each of them. In the charnel ground Ghorāndhakāra lived the master Dhanuṣkṛta, with whom he attained the siddhi of the sword. In the charnel ground Gahvara lived the master Bhūmiputra, with whom he attained the siddhi of the pill. In the charnel ground Jvālākulakaraṅka lived the master Sūryaputra, with whom he attained the siddhi of the balm of magic sight. In the charnel ground Vibhīṣaṇa lived the master Amṛtaprabha, with whom he attained the siddhi of fleet-footedness. In the charnel ground Aṭṭahāsa lived the master

Śivaṃkara, with whom he attained the siddhi of the medicine that heals every ailment. In the charnel ground Lakṣmīvāna lived the master Vararuci, Seeker of the Sublime, with whom he attained the siddhi of the elixir of immortality. In the charnel ground Kilikilārava lived the master Nagna, with whom he attained the siddhi of the treasure vase. In the charnel ground Caṇḍogra lived the master Bhṛgu, with whom he attained the siddhi of the alchemy of gold.

Through these attainments the Master rose to the level of a vidyādhara. He thought, “Now that I have accomplished this, I shall attain complete awakening.” However, in a dream, the Buddha Amitābha came to him with the following prophecy, “You have not yet realised suchness. Due to your wrathful, war-like actions devoid of higher perception, you are creating great obstacles to what you desire. You will not obtain the siddhi of mahāmudrā by doing that alone. Since you have a karmic connection with the teacher Buddhaśrījñāna,⁹ go to him and meditate as he instructs!” Examining himself carefully, the Master understood that although his power had increased, his current path would not lead to meditation on the nature of mind. And so he made his way to the central land of Magadha.

At this point, King Dharmapāla¹⁰ had been ruling over Magadha for a long time. The learned and accomplished master Buddhajñānapāda was just beginning to accept disciples when the Master made his appearance. Paṇḍita Buddhajñānapāda presided as preceptor at the Master’s ordination in the monastery at Dharmānchura,¹¹ where he took full ordination and became a *bhikṣu* in the Mahāsaṅghika¹² tradition. The Master merely had to listen once to a monk reciting the text *The One Hundred Thousand Verses on Vinaya*¹³ to understand it. As he listened to the venerable master Buddhajñānapāda give the *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings, his view became as vast as the sky. Whereas other disciples had to undergo great hardships in order to receive empowerments from Buddhajñānapāda, the Master was able to receive them all quite effortlessly. Buddhajñānapāda also had a student by the name of Buddhaguhya,¹⁴ who gave the Master the empowerments and pith instructions of Yoga-tantra, while the learned Buddhajñānapāda himself transmitted the tantras and pith instructions in their totality. These included the five inner tantras: *The Gathering of Secrets, The Net of Magic Illusion, The Secret Moondrop, Union with the Buddhas and The Garland of Activity*.¹⁵ In each case, he fully realized the wisdom of the empowerments and reached a profound and clear realisation of non-duality.

Once the Master had come to realize the natural state, he asked, “Now what should I do?” The venerable master Buddhajñānapāda gave the following reply, “In the eastern country of Baṅgala, on the north side of the town Pāṇḍu, in a clearing in the forest called Parṣi, there is a small hill. Go, and engage there in the practice of the Glorious Heruka!” So, he arrived and quite effortlessly found a consort of the Lotus Family. For six months they practised the great-accomplishment of the unity of the generation and perfection stages. The Master constantly had visions of the many

buddhas of the ten directions and questioned them. After a short while he attained the supreme siddhi of mahāmudrā and actualised the vajra-body.

Activity in India

Next, the Master thought to himself, “I must now work as much as I can for the benefit of sentient beings.” Thus, he went to the Tharu kingdoms,¹⁶ such as the in country of Tirāhut,¹⁷ and to the countries to the north, such as Kāmarūpa¹⁸ and Nepal. Over a few years, for all those fortunate enough, the Master used various means—such as teaching the Dharma and instructing in alchemy and elixirs—to help many thousands of people. He extended their lives, increased their wealth, found water where there was none, and forced it underground where there was too much. Even nowadays there are many places to be found, such as in Tharu, Champa and Khasya, where the Master created springs or underground water passages. In the land of Campāraṇa,¹⁹ there is the great river Bhatī²⁰ that he made go underground for about one day’s travel, and another that travels underground for just a short time.

In those days, in the south of India, in Trimala,²¹ near Triliṅga,²² in a sandalwood forest near to the sacred spot of Lakṣmaṇa, at Śivasthān,²³ there stood a naturally arisen *śivaliṅgam* of about one cubit in height. Each day, many animals were killed there to make a blood sacrifice. Heretics recited maledictory mantras, whose mere utterance brought down pestilence and plague upon the local Buddhist community. Trimala was a thriving country, home to a large number of Buddhists, and these were the people who made most of the offerings to Odantapurī.²⁴ Therefore these practices of blood sacrifice and sorcery at the naturally-arisen *śivaliṅga* were causing considerable harm. Meanwhile, in the land of Baṅgala in the east, a small lake had sprung up southwest of Nālandā, close to a place called Bāgala. This lake was the home of a malicious nāga loyal to the heretics. Simply by offering an oblation²⁵ to the lake, they obtained limitless amounts of gold, silver, pearls and jewels, and with these they were establishing new heretical schools across the five eastern regions. Needless to say, the nāga's powerful magic was also detrimental to the Buddhist community. Further away, at Rājagrha in Magadha, a big crystal boulder had become the gathering place for local brahmin spirits and heretical deities whose powers of clairvoyance, clairaudience and divination were gained without difficult practice.

These works of evil had not long started once the Master decided to put an end to them. He built a meditation hut at the glorious Vajra Seat in Bodhgayā. There he opened six great maṇḍalas of the sovereign *vidyā*-deities. Continuously reciting the *vidyā*-mantras of the Glorious Herukas, he brought forth the twenty-one signs of accomplishment—such as blazing fires and resounding laughter. The three *kīla*-daggers of stability appeared, and the Master himself took up the *kīla*-dagger of wrathful Trailokavijaya and moved instantly, through his magical powers, to Trimala in the south. He plunged the *kīla*-dagger into a tree near the *liṅgam*.

Instantly the surrounding forest caught fire and was burned to the ground, together with most of the *liṅgam*. From then on, no further harm came to the Buddhists of the region, and their offerings to Odantapurī were able to resume as before.

The Master's spiritual consort for his meditation on this maṇḍala, the yoginī called Śīlatvā, took up the second kīla-dagger, that of wrathful Amṛtakunḍali. She hurled it into the lake in Baṅgala, turning the nāga and its retinue into ashes. After seven days and seven nights, the lake dried up and all the heretical schools were overcome. The Master's retreat attendant, a yogin from Kāmarūpa called Ratnaśīla, took up the third small kīla-dagger. With it he struck the crystal boulder in Rājagṛha, which immediately fell to pieces. This too greatly benefited the Buddhists. Śīlatvā and Ratnaśīla also had reached the vidyādhara stage, and, although they have disappeared, if they wished they could reappear in emanation bodies.

The Master stayed a little longer in Trimala and crafted a sandalwood image of Noble Avalokiteśvara. In Vikramaśīla he built a small Tārā temple. Then he went again to glorious Uḍḍiyāna, gathered together the fortunate, and they built a temple there.

During that time, near Uḍḍiyāna in a land called Kaccha, there was a highly respected Buddhist community. Even the king held the lay vows and was a paṇḍita. The Turkic king²⁶ of Pāgada in the land of Molatāna had attacked Kaccha with his army and destroyed a few of its monastic colleges, yet more were facing imminent destruction. As the invading army, swimming and in boats, approached along the river Nīli, the Master awaited them on the bank. With a wrathful stare he raised his forefinger in the threatening mudrā. This caused the entire Turkic army—seven large ships, about five hundred small wooden boats and those swimming—to sink to the bottom of the river. All were killed. For many generations there was no further harm from Turkic people in that land.

His ordination name was Padmākara, 'the Lotus Born'. The secret name he received upon initiation into the maṇḍala was Padmasambhava, 'the Lotus Born'.²⁷ In earlier times, people of Uḍḍiyāna called him Kamalakulīśa or Padmavajra, because on his forehead was a figure of a blossoming lotus decorated with a vajra. When he was young, his family name was Padmāvabhāsi, 'Shining Lotus'. The name given out of respect by his students was Śrī Mahāsukha, 'Glorious Great Bliss'. Later, when he returned, he was called Padmavajra by those of Uḍḍiyāna because his activities were similar to a previous Śrī Mahāsukha Padmavajra.

In East, West, North and Central India, the Master performed many acts that benefited beings, principal among them the ones just mentioned. He was also active north of the River Ganges—all the way to Nepal. In the land of Drāmiḍa²⁸ too, he did great acts and was the first to tame that land. A great many pure followers of the teachings remain there to this day. But, more than that, he did great acts for the beings of Tibet. In this land there is not a single being, human or otherwise, from

earlier times until today, that has not become his student, either directly or indirectly, through his manifesting in a particular form with a particular name. Although we can recount some of his activities done in this form or by that name, how could anyone possibly capture the life-story of a sage who has realized the state of primordial unity?

This Master's principal activity was subjugating non-human beings. More so than all that has already been described, his actions to benefit non-human beings on the Island of Cāmara were even greater.²⁹ Whereas those earlier actions were limited in area for small numbers of people, or lasted for a short length of time (whether one hundred or one thousand years), these later ones—in terms of area, length of time and numbers of beings—are difficult to comprehend.

According to the Indian histories, having arrived in the Land of the Snow-Mountains, the Master tamed all the nāgas, yakṣas and evil spirits and instilled the king and others with faith through his miraculous powers. Other than that, there is not an extensive record of his time in Tibet. Furthermore, it is not clear whether he tamed Drāmiḍa before or after his journey to Tibet. The Tibetans assert that he departed Tibet for the island of rākṣasas, but the people of Drāmiḍa assert that he went there from Drāmiḍa. Of course, if the Master was manifesting two physical forms at the same time, then there would be no contradiction between the two accounts. However, if we consider the time some of his students and their pupils appeared in Drāmiḍa and worked for the benefit of beings, it is clear that the Master went to Drāmiḍa after appearing in Tibet. Although the history of his coming to Tibet is well known from many biographies and chronicles, for now we will be impartial.

From among what is known as the Nyingma Kama,³⁰ in the pith instruction *A Garland of Views*³¹ and in the teaching cycles of such deities as Vajrakīlaya and Hayagrīva, the contents generally agree and are reliable, but there are also many, many minor differences. That is to say, some describe the Master taking miraculous birth, or taking a womb birth, or taking birth on a lotus—in other ways too. As for how long the Master remained in Tibet, the accounts vary: some say six years, others say twelve years, a few say eighteen years. The treasure texts state a minimum of fifty years, with the majority saying more than one hundred years. In another context, if we consider it from the point of view of disciples with pure perception, the Master remains even now among us, and is always simultaneously manifesting his enlightened form in each and every pure realm.³² This point of view allows for any length of time, but it does not allow the arranging of events into earlier and later ones! Therefore, here we must establish the story on the basis of what could have generally been perceived by ordinary persons who were alive at that time.

To this end, I have referred to what are known as the three versions of *The King's Narrative*.³³ I have read the *Testimony of Ba* along with its supplemented version that continues the history of the earlier spread of Buddhism from the point of view of the

Kadampa lineage. I have also read the *Testimony of the Lama*. In addition, I have read a few old documents that were based on the contents of the *Testimony of the King*. Apart from small differences in length, they mostly seem to contain the exact same central story. In addition, all the best, most learned scholars have complete faith in these three testimonies. Also, the stories of Master Padma contained within them appear to mostly concur with the Nyingma Kama. Whereas some say Ba is spelled *dpa'* and others *rba*, they are referring to the same text and although there is said to be another spelled *'ba'*, I have not seen it. It is possible this is an incorrect spelling of *rba*. I will now faithfully explain these three testimonies, which should inspire great confidence in the reader of the present work.

Activity in Tibet

King Trisong Detsen, an emanation of the buddhas, wished to spread the Dharma in Tibet. He thus invited Ācārya Bodhisattva, also known as Śāntarakṣita or Master Dharmasāntighoṣa, and for his residence there was erected a silk tent on the roof of the Lung Tshuk Palace.³⁴ For four months this teacher taught the Dharma, starting with the ten virtuous deeds, the twelve links of dependent origination and the eighteen constituents. This led to the demons of Tibet becoming furious, and they lashed out: The Phang Thang Palace³⁵ was washed away in a flood, Marpo Ri³⁶ was struck by lightning, throughout Tibet diseases ran rampant among humans and animals and unseasonal frost and hail increased. The people of Tibet believed all this to be happening because they were practising the Dharma.

Unable to continue practising the Dharma, the King went with five of his Buddhist ministers, including Ba Salnang,³⁷ and presented the Ācārya with a gift of one measure of gold dust. Doing so three times, they made the following request, “Ācārya, please go to Nepal for a little while. While you are away, the king will not allow the practice of the Dharma. He will offer gifts in the right places and deceive the royal ministers with his cunning.³⁸ When the time comes that it is safe to practise the Dharma again, we will invite you to return.” The Ācārya replied, “If you wish to subjugate the demons and rākṣasas of Tibet, you must invite the tantric adept Padmasambhava, the most powerful of his kind now on Earth.” Continuing, he said, “I shall give one handful of this gold dust to the King of Nepal” and accepted it, handing the remainder to the king. As he made his way out of Tibet, it appeared to the public as if the master had been exiled.

Ācārya Bodhisattva was escorted by Yang Drona³⁹ and Ba Salnang to Nepal. On his return, the King appointed Ba Salnang to the position ‘Eye of Dharma’, and so he went as an envoy, solely for the purpose of Dharma, to China with a retinue of thirty attendants. While Ba Salnang was there, all the royal ministers gathered and an agreement to practice Dharma was reached. Prior to the Master being invited to Tibet, the envoys returned from China with magnificent gifts from the emperor for themselves and ten thousand rolls of silk for the king. Ba Salnang then travelled to

Nepal to invite the two ācāryas—Śāntarakṣita and Padmasambhava.

According to *The Testimony of Ba*, at that point three persons—Ācārya Bodhisattva, Master Padmasambhava and a skilled temple architect—were already preparing for a journey to Tibet. Ācārya Bodhisattva took the main route, which was faster. Master Padma travelled more slowly, accompanied by the architect, Newar stonemasons and others. The Master tamed non-human beings wherever they went while studying the lie of the land. However, in *The Testimony of the Lama* it reads, “I invited Ācārya Bodhisattva who arrived first in Dren Zang.⁴⁰ He consulted with the king, who declared it good to invite Padmasambhava to tame the gods and demons.” And so it was that Ba Mangjé Salnang and Seng Golha Lungzik,⁴¹ together with five servants, were sent to invite the Master Padma. The Master, knowing this, had already come as far as Mangyul.⁴² While these two texts are not contradictory, I accept the former one.

As the Master entered Tibet through Kyirong,⁴³ the gods and demons of Tibet unleashed a fierce blizzard that joined the mountain slopes together with snow. While his companions remained behind, the Master went ahead, travelling through a tunnel in the mountains, and binding the gods and demons and making them swear allegiance. With the non-human beings pacified in their entirety, they could proceed along their way. The group would often travel the rivers by boat as the need arose. After O Yuk,⁴⁴ the Master went straight on, saying, “As we cross this mountain pass, there will be many ephemeral hells, so we must cultivate compassion!” On their way, as he had told them, they saw beings in agony in a fiercely boiling hot spring. The Master directed his compassion towards them, and the waters cooled down. “This is merely a demonstration of the power of a practitioner’s loving kindness. Generally, karma that must be experienced cannot be undone—even by a buddha,” he said, and as he released his attention, the water boiled as before.

When they reached the border of central Tibet, the local spirit Gangkar⁴⁵ fled in terror. Arriving in Nam,⁴⁶ the Master said, “Now I need to sort out Thanglha,”⁴⁷ and set off in his direction. Taking a copper pot, he cooked up a brew of dead sheep and donkeys. A man from Lutsa asked, “What is *this*?” Upon hearing the Master’s explanation, he said, “Ha! Ha! Look at how you subdue a yakṣa!” “Great yakṣa,” said the Master, “Please accept this foul-smelling meat!” And he kicked the pot, tipping it over. At that, the yakṣa Thanglha erupted in fury, sending thunder roaring across the glacier. Black clouds loomed and thunder, hail, and lightning crashed, crackled and stormed with a fury almost unbearable to the humans there. At this, the Master pointed at the mountain with the threatening mudrā and most of the glacier melted. From then on, the mountain was known as Thanglha Yarshu, ‘Thanglha Melted Above’. At Nying Drung,⁴⁸ he said, “Here lives a vicious nāga who does not allow the practice of Dharma.” The moment he thought about taming the nāga, it fled to the farthest ocean. The Master then went into a cave, constructed five maṇḍalas, and

spent three days and nights in meditation. As he did this, the thunder on the mountain subsided and the land became peaceful once again. The nāga and Thanglha were bound under oath and converted to the Dharma. He subdued countless gods and demons at this time, including those that lived in Lake Manasarovar and those whose abodes were on Mount Everest.

Arriving at Leshö, the Master said, “Penyü is a bad place; its red valley looks like an opened-up horse's corpse”. Without actually going there, he bound under oath its gods and demons. Then he went down through Yal Ralmo in Thölung. He made the threatening mudrā toward a collapsed mountain and straightaway it was restored as before. “If we do not remove the top of the cave Tsünmo Drang, shaped like a dancing dreadlocked sadhu,” he warned, “Tibet will be overrun with heretics,” and so he lopped off its roof. In Shongwa,⁴⁹ he addressed all the merchants, asking, “Please go prepare some tea.” When they replied, “But there is no water,” he prodded the ground with his staff and seven springs gushed forth. The place became known as Shongwa Lhachu, ‘The Divine Waters of Shong’. “A very powerful nāga resides in Kharnak,” said the Master. “I must tame it!” So in a cave he made an image of Vajrasattva. A Nepalese stonemason reflected aloud, saying, “I wonder if I can carve Tibetan stone,” so then he also carved a deer. The Master next went to Namshö and the lower part of Zurkhar,⁵⁰ where he built five stūpas at Kharda and performed the consecration ceremony.

Thereafter, the Master went to the Palace Drakmar⁵¹ at the Tamarisk Grove. An envoy carried a message saying that in order to meet the king, the Master would need to first bow in front of him. The Master responded, saying, “The king could not withstand my homage,” and when he bowed towards a large boulder, it shattered to pieces. When he bowed towards some clothes that the king had taken off, they immediately caught fire. Seeing all this, the king then prostrated at the Master's feet.⁵²

Earlier, a temple had been built by Sangshi⁵³ at Drakmar Drenzang, modelled on a Chinese temple at Wutai Shan.⁵⁴ The temple had not been inaugurated, however, and the great Master was asked to visit. Although he took up the invitation, the king and the great ministers did not come for the blessing and consecration rituals. All the court officials and household staff did come to watch, though. The Master led all the great images of the deities, as if they were human, to the banquet place. Those watching could not believe what they were seeing, and at midnight, carrying butter lamps, they went back to examine the temple. Inside there was not a single clay statue—the temple was completely empty! Even when they used a staff to examine the places where the statues had been placed, there was not a thing solid to touch. Only then they did they believe. In the morning, they peeped through a hole in the temple door and saw that all the statues were now arranged exactly as before. Master Padma was making offerings, the deities were eating the food, and they were all

having a conversation. During the whole of that day, the incense and butter lamps all lit themselves, the instruments played themselves, the bells sounded by themselves, the five ornamental banners multiplied to five hundred, and, although there was only one cupped handful of grapes on a plate, the number of grapes never diminished, no matter how many were eaten by the people assembled there. Everyone was filled with amazement.

The following morning, the Master took the servant Lhalung Tshosher Nyenlek as a support and summoned an oracle, the goddess Māricī. The Master made the goddess speak through the servant. The goddess listed the names of all the evil gods and nāgas of Tibet. Amongst many things, she revealed, “Shampo washed away the Phang Thang temple in a flood, Tanglha struck Marpo Ri with lightning, the twelve *tenma* sisters spread diseases amongst humans and animals, and the nine *nyen* sent frost and hail to Tibet.” From that very morning, many children of good families became the oracles of the Four Great Kings,⁵⁵ and the fire deities revealed themselves and described the names, places and activities of all the vicious gods and nāgas. To inspire faith among the king, ministers and many more, the Master then made some of the terrible gods and demons actually appear in front of everyone, for all to see. He frightened and suppressed them, then taught the Dharma and made them swear allegiance. The gods and demons offered their life-force mantras and petitionary rituals to the Master. To those who were still not tamed even by this, the Master applied various methods, such as the fire offering,⁵⁶ and in this way he successfully subdued them. The Master performed this the rituals twice and said to the King, “From now on practise the Dharma as much as you can! Build the temple as you planned! For my part, although I have already bound the gods and nāgas under oath twice, I must do so one more time.”

The Master went to stay at the palace of Zurphü Kyangbu Tsal.⁵⁷ While there, he tamed all the nāgas, including Manasvī of Maldro.⁵⁸ Manasvī of Maldro announced, “Above ground, King Trisong Detsen is the greatest. Below ground, I am the greatest. We two should become allies. I shall offer fourteen mule-loads of gold dust to the king for the building of the temple and have ordered that it be sent from the gold mine of Lanpo Na.” It appeared exactly as he said.

The Master also tamed the gyalpo spirit Pekar.⁵⁹ He created a maṇḍala for taming him and when Pekar came to look at it, the Master struck Pekar’s eyes with his *kīla*-dagger. When Pekar listened to the mantra the Master struck his ears. When Pekar mimicked the reciting of the mantra, the Master struck his tongue. When Pekar attempted to flee, the Master struck his four limbs and he was completely incapacitated. “Now,” the Master warned, “I will burn you!” at which Pekar became terrified and swore allegiance.

After this, the Master went to tame mountain spirit Yarlha Shampo.⁶⁰ It immediately

sent a deluge down upon the Master. So he took his vajra from his cloak and raised it aloft, sending the water back uphill, into the pool from where it came. The Master then threw his vajra into the pool, which made the water boil and melted one third of the snow on Shampo mountain. Yarlha Shampo, the spirit, standing on the summit, said, “What great trouble you have caused me!” The Master echoed his words, “What great trouble you have caused me! If you refuse to swear allegiance, I will have to burn you...” At this, Yarlha Shampo prostrated at the feet of the Master, swearing allegiance and saying, “I am of an evil race and unable to practise the Dharma, but from now on at least I will do no harm.” In this way, over a period of about six months, the Master brought under oath the majority of non-human beings.

One time, the Master said, “For the benefit of the kingdom and the Tibetan people, I will perform a great fire offering ritual.” The king replied that he would wash his hair for the great festival that lay ahead. Ācārya Bodhisattva told the king, “On the north side of Mount Meru there is a spring called Taktu Nang. If water is drawn from there to wash the king’s hair, he will have a long life, his lineage will spread, and this great kingdom will definitely remain.” When asked, “Who is able to carry its water?” the Ācārya replied, “Only the tantric master has the power.” When this request was put to the Master, he stuffed some white silk into the mouth of a golden vase and placed it in the centre of a maṇḍala. Reciting mantras, the Master threw the vase into the air and it rose higher and higher, until it finally disappeared. In only the time it takes to eat a meal, the vase reappeared all of a sudden in front of the Master, just as it was before. “Wash the king’s hair in that,” Master Padma said, and he handed it to the ministers. But inside the vase was a white, cloudy liquid and when it was taken to the grand assembly of ministers, they said, “This must surely be the intoxicating liquor of Mön that brings madness. Throw it away!” And so it was thrown out—lost and completely wasted.

Then the Master gave the king and his fortunate subjects the empowerments into the kriyā tantra and the Inner Tantras of Secret Mantra. He gave the king and many of his fortunate subjects the pith instruction *A Garland of Views*⁶¹ He taught the texts *Vajravidāraṇā* and *The Hundred Thousand Verses of the Kīla*,⁶² pith instructions and practice texts—whatever was appropriate. He prophesied, “If I stay here for a long while, I shall make the whole region of Tibet peaceful and happy.” However, due to causes—the shared karma of sentient beings—and conditions—the dark forces of malevolent gods and demons that resided in the hearts of the ministers—this did not happen.

In *The King’s Narrative*, very little is written following the Master’s pronouncement that he would turn Tibet into a fine land. The omission of what followed was likely intended to prevent the history of the transmission of the Inner Tantras becoming public knowledge. For example, empowerments were referred to by the secret expression, “guiding through the stages.”⁶³ In early times, outside of their own circle, secret mantra practitioners would keep the meaning and names of even the common

empowerments hidden. The term “stages” appears in many of the old documents.

In the early histories of the pith instructions of *A Garland of Views* and *Otren Palgyi Shönu’s Guide for the Sessions of Vajrakīlaya Group Practice*,⁶⁴ and various other reliable histories, the following consistent accounts are given. While the Master was guiding the king through the stages, the supreme queens—including Queen Tsepong Zamé Togdrön and Queen Droza Tri Gyalmo Tsün, later known by her refuge name Jomo Changchub Jé⁶⁵—asked if they might act as offering consorts in the maṇḍala. The Master replied, “They are not the only fortunate ones,” and prophesied that Lhamo Tsen of Chim and Lady Tsogyal of Kharchen were also fortunate ones who would be consorts. When asked, “These ladies live far away, how can they possibly attend?” the Master replied, “It is easy as this!” The instant he focused his meditative concentration the two women arrived at the edge of the maṇḍala. Not only that, these two also generated the spontaneously accomplished enlightened mind. Later, they completely abandoned all worldly activities and entered into practice. It is stated in all three testimonies of *The King’s Narrative* that because the two queens entered into practice from a young age, they left behind no temples in their names—an assertion borne out by this story.

After the empowerments, Ma Jojo, an attendant of the king, gave the evil ministers an account of what had happened. They did not believe it, though, and thought, “How could he possibly have such power?” Also around this time, the Master wished to perform the site-pacifying ritual for the temple site. For this, the two most beautiful and pure women in all the dominions of Tibet were needed to draw out threads for creating the maṇḍala. Tibet itself was already a vast country, and it was not known who were the most beautiful. “It is said that the tantrika has power to find them,” the ministers declared. “If it is true, then please summon them!” The Master rested in meditation, and, within a few moments, the ladies Chokro Zabu Chungmen and Chokro Zalha Bumen⁶⁶ appeared—from where, no one knew. The wisdom deity entered into them and they arranged the cords perfectly. It is said that later, when all the Tibetans had gathered, not a woman among them was more beautiful than these two.

The ministers began to conspire, saying “Won’t this tantric practitioner hand over all the wonderful things of Tibet, and all our prosperity, to India?” The minister Kyungpo Taktsha⁶⁷ had no faith at all in the Dharma and thought, “I should burn Drakmar Drenzang to the ground, and this tantrika along with it!” Later when he came before the Master, right in the middle of the entire assembly, the Master said, “Is this really what you have been thinking?” Completely embarrassed, the minister left muttering, “This man from the southern borderlands knows everything!”

There was another minister, Bé Dongzik,⁶⁸ who likewise hated the Dharma. Speaking of him, the Master said, “It will not be long before he rises to great power and uses that power to prevent the spread of Dharma. The time has come for me to

vanquish him.” The Master meditated for a mere moment and at that very instant blood began to flow from the minister’s body and he died. Having repeatedly witnessed his power to subjugate both humans and non-humans, the royal ministers became increasingly nervous about engaging in evil thoughts and deeds when the Master was around. The only thing they did think about, though, was the means whereby the Master might set out for India.

Meanwhile, the Master spoke with the king:

King, make this land excellent! Make the sands of Ngamshö into gardens and meadows. Bring water to the parched lands as far Dra, Dol, Tala and Yulpoché. Transform the river banks into fields and provide food for Tibet. Take the wealth of Vaiśravaṇa⁶⁹ and make Tibet the source of all the wealth of the world. Harness this river. I have already done so to even larger rivers!

He gave much advice, such as to bring the kings of China and Mongolia under the power of Tibet.

In order to test whether this could really be done, the king requested a demonstration. The Master created a maṇḍala and meditated that morning. In a dry place in Drakmar, a great pond welled up. It was named Ludzing, the Nāga’s Pond. When urged for another demonstration, Drakmar Tsomogu, where there was once sand, turned into lush green meadow. That afternoon, at the cliff Lawé Dong, a great forest suddenly appeared. It was named Lawé Tsal, Musk-Deer Grove. The Master meditated again on the morning of the following day and from the dry lands at the top of the valley in Zungkar, a great river tumbled down. The Master turned to the King, “Now, where shall I make the fields?”

Gaining great trust that the Master's instructions could really be accomplished as he proclaimed, the king discussed the matter with his ministers at a small council. They agreed among themselves, “We can allow the fields in Yarlung. However, we fear this tantrika intends to make this country excellent and then bestow it on India. The remaining work should be cancelled and this man of the borderlands should be sent off to his own country!”

They said to the king, “You are our only Lord! This man of the borderlands is very powerful. King, your mind is fixated on the Dharma. This Indian is going to steal your kingdom!” They said many other malicious things, and for each thing the Master had said earlier they gave many poor reasons why it should not be done. They kept repeating the same demand, “You must offer great gifts to the Ācārya and tantric Master and ask them to return to India right away!”

The ministers then implored the Master directly. At that, the king was saddened and offered the Master a measure of gold dust, prostrated to him, circumambulated around him and explained his position. “Had I wanted gold, I would not have come,”

the Master replied, “I came in order to tame the vicious demons of this primitive land of Tibet, to spread the Dharma, and, having transformed the country into an excellent land, to bring happiness to its people. If I want gold, it is enough simply to do this!” and merely by touching the rocks around him, he turned them into gold. Out of respect for the king, though, the Master accepted a handful of the gold, saying “I will make an offering of this at the Vajra Seat in Bodhgayā.” Having given the remainder back to the king, the Master said:

Your good heart guides you to misfortune,
Your vast compassion causes anger,
The king’s ministers set his course,
The ministers of Tibet are evil demons!
Sentient beings’ unwholesome actions,
Can undo even the power of buddhas.

The Master then agreed to what the ministers had requested.

The king’s principal meditation deities were the five deities of Avalokiteśvara. Later, the king accomplished Hayagrīva, their inner form. We are told that, as a sign of accomplishment, the image of Hayagrīva at the temple of Ārya Palo Ling⁷⁰ emitted a horse’s neigh that could be heard across two-thirds of the world. That image of Hayagrīva in Ārya Palo Ling is the one described in the *Māyājālatantra*, *The Net of Magical Illusion*.

Before he left, the Master summarised the remainder of the pith instructions from *A Garland of Views*:

This is my teaching to you: The view must accord with the dharmakāya. The conduct must accord with the bodhisattvas. If your conduct is lost in the view it becomes nihilism, in which there is neither virtue nor wrongdoing, that later cannot be repaired. If the view is lost in conduct, being bound by the characteristics of things, there will be no liberation. In my *Semdé* teachings, the view is emphasised. In the future, there will be all sorts of people who, understanding the words but not having the confidence of experience, will come asserting that they are working for the benefit of beings.

The Master did not complete the pith instructions. The intended fire offering to secure the king’s lineage and increase his power was left unfinished. Nor did the Master complete the necessary third binding under of oath of the gods and nāgas. The Master could foresee the future, however, and therefore he taught his students many wrathful mantras and likewise hid them, and many profound teachings, in clay pots. His miraculously emanated forms concealed one hundred and eight great treasures of wealth and Dharma. Finally, he said:

In this and all the lives to come
May I and my ever-generous benefactors,
Enjoy the fruits of Mahāyoga practice
In Akaniṣṭha, the sublime and perfect realm.

The Master gave advice to each and every student and then suddenly departed, taking the Rulak road. Leading a horse, he was escorted by two loyal ministers, Loté Gunagong and Shang Nyangtang, as far as Mangyul. Even then, however, a few ministers conspired, “That tantrika has great power. If we do not kill him now, he will surely cast a curse on Tibet.” Secretly, they sent eighteen fierce assassins on horseback in pursuit of the Master. As the Master arrived in Mangyul-Gungthang, he warned his escorts, “In the morning, we will encounter harm-doers.” The following day, when they reached the precipitous path at Dongbab, the eighteen assassins, weapons in hand, were about to strike when the Master suddenly made a mudrā and they froze—motionless as clay statues and unable to utter a single word. The Master went only that far with his escort. When the escort was about to return from that mountain pass, the Master said:

Tibet’s evil hordes of demons, rākṣasas, gods, and nāgas needed to be tamed three times, but one round remains undone. Had I completed the task, the king would have a long life, the kingdom would become great, the king’s lineage would become ever more powerful and the Dharma would remain for a long time. I will remember what has been left undone. One cycle of teaching will be completed and then there will be great turmoil and obstacles to the Dharma. The nāgas and gyalpo spirits have vicious intentions. Even the king’s family line will not obey the law and all will fall into anarchy.

Giving the escorts a handful of mustard seeds, the Master instructed, “Throw these at yesterday’s assassins. I am going to tame the demons on the southwest border.” Everyone witnessed the Master depart—flying into the sky on his horse, with his Dharma robes flapping and staff clattering.

The Tibetans assert the Gungthang Pass to be site of the Master’s departure. However, since it is described as being on the other side of that precipitous path at Dongbab, it is more likely to have been a mountain on the border of India and Tibet.

The Master’s escorts left and headed back. When they reached the would-be assassins, they threw the mustard seeds on them, at which they were once again able to move and talk. The two escorts offered the Master’s words to the king’s ear and his heart filled with deep remorse. It is said that then, in order to receive the remaining teachings of the Master, the king invited the paṇḍitas Vimalamitra and Śāntigarbha.

If we follow its words literally, it is after this that the events in *The Supplement to the Testimony of Ba*, such as the king building the temple, occurred. But the ancient

documents known as the Nyingma tantras unanimously agree that the Master consecrated the Ārya Palo Ling Temple and performed the ground-blessing ritual at Samyé Monastery, and I also agree with that. It is also clear that the stories above, such as the drawing out of the thread when building the temple, refer to the Ārya Palo Ling Temple.

The Testimony of Ba states that the Master remained in central Tibet for eighteen months. *The Supplement to the Testimony of Ba* agrees that he stayed in Tibet for eighteen months, but in *The Testimony of the Lama* the number of months is not specified. In the ancient documents said to be written based on an understanding of *The Testimony of the King*, it says the Master remained in Drakmar in central Tibet for eighteen months. Therefore, apart from small details, there is general agreement.

Many of the great and authentic ancient documents of the history of the Nyingma tantras explain, however, that the Master consecrated Samyé Monastery once it was completely finished. This agrees with what was recorded by the supreme scholar, Butön.⁷¹ Because the Master's emanations are inconceivable, this could certainly be true. We cannot know what each student experienced. Do not think that, in only such a short time, he could not go to every country and in those places actually teach the Dharma extensively, hide many treasures and the like, and demonstrate all sorts of activity, such as coming to a place, staying and then leaving. His limitless magical displays have this power. It is possible that even after his departure the Master manifested as a form or as speech that could be commonly experienced by those who were fortunate, either on their own or in a group. Indeed, it is possible that he really came to places where the fortunate assembled. As in the Noble Land of India, when masters such as Virūpa, Lūyipa, and Jalandhara⁷² appeared many times, the Master himself has also so appeared.

Activity in Drāmiḍa

From the south of India, there is a land reached by travelling in a boat directly west. There, in the middle of the sea, is a small island known as Drāmiḍadvīpa. Long ago, it was populated only by rākṣasas and ḍākinīs that fly through the sky, and so it came to have the name Drāmiḍa, or “soaring in the sky.” During that period, although the majority were women called mantradhārinīs—malicious ḍākinīs who recited many vidyā-mantras—there were also many men who were bhūtas with human bodies.

The Master Padmasambhava went there to tame those beings. He took residence in a cave on the island. There he entered meditative concentration, and through that power actually summoned the rulers of that land—the king's queens, the sixty-four mantradhārinīs, emanations of the sixty-four māṭṛkās. He tormented them with wrathful mantras and mudrās to make them faint, become paralyzed, and experience intense pain and sorrow. “Now, I will burn you in the hearth of a fire offering,” he threatened, at which they instantly became docile and agreed to do whatever the

Master commanded. They made all the other chief mantradhārinīs gather, and the Master gave them Dharma teachings. This was the first binding under oath.

Once, when the Master was staying in a town, he saw many mantradhārinīs leading away and eating some human beings of Jambudvīpa. Once again, he opened a great wrathful maṇḍala in a cave. All the dākinīs, powerless to resist, were summoned and scolded. When they were about to escape, he struck their limbs with a kīla-dagger. From that time forward they vowed never to harm the people of Jambudvīpa, and received the bodhisattva vow and generated bodhicitta. This was the second binding under oath.

Another time, the Master arrived at an inn where many women were boiling water in pots. After a little while, some of the water turned into blood, some turned into fat, some turned into sperm, some turned into human flesh, some turned into clarified butter, some turned into molasses, some turned into cooked rice, and some turned into beer and other substances. On seeing this, the Master asked them what they were doing. Not recognising that it was in fact the Master, they said, “We have summoned the essences of the food and bodies of the people of Jambudvīpa.” “Did you not take an oath in front of the Master Padmākara?” he exclaimed, and to this they replied, “Our mistress took an oath, but we did not!” So, in the same cave as before, the Master summoned the leaders and retinue of the mantradhārinīs by practising the maṇḍala. It is said that one hundred and twenty thousand appeared. He demanded, and received, their vitality mantras and their means of propitiation. Their chiefs had no choice but to enter the maṇḍala, and the retinue received the bodhisattva vows and generated bodhicitta. All had to take an oath. This was the third binding under oath.

The Master also subdued the yakṣa, rākṣasas and evil nāga of that land. The protector deity⁷³ of Drāmiḍa’s king was a violent and malicious preta called Varpaté. The Master knew that if he tamed the king, this spirit would be tamed at the same time. He thought to himself, “In order to spread the teachings of the Buddha, I must also tame these humans.” The Master thus settled in a forest near the king’s palace. Through the power of his meditative concentration, the Master repeatedly summoned the king’s queens to serve as consorts in the maṇḍala. When the king realised that his queens were missing, he disguised himself as an ordinary person, went after them, and watched them as they surrounded the Master. In the morning, the king and his army, bearing all sorts of weapons, came to destroy the Master. The Master merely threw some mustard seeds at them, whereupon the weapons of the king and his retinue burst into flame, blood flowed from their limbs, they became paralysed, speechless, and thoroughly confused. They stayed like this for three days. Then, reaching the brink of death, they prayed and supplicated the Master. He cleansed them with water from his vase, and they were instantly restored to health. The king and his retinue prostrated at the Master’s feet and said they would do whatever the Master said, at which he commanded, “Establish the teachings of the

Buddha!”

The king invited learned teachers from Magadha—a teacher of Vinaya, another of Sūtra and yet another to teach the Abhidharma. He had three temples built, called Bidha, Ardhā and Sudhā, and the Master performed the consecration ceremonies. The Master then explained the three baskets of teachings and the methods of practice until they became firmly established. The Master taught the vehicle of the sūtra tradition, but not much else in that country. To the king and his retinue, he gave many Dharma instructions. To six fortunate students, he explained the six tantras, teaching the completion phase and yogic activity many times. Those six students gained accomplishment. In the different regions, he built five or so small temples, and it is said they were completed in one hour, and all at the same time. The Master remained there for about twelve years, until finally, using his Dharma robes for wings, he lifted into the sky, departing for Cāmara in the south west, the island of the rākṣasas. I wonder whether these twelve years were actually half-years.

These days, in the island of Drāmiḍa, *The Secret Moondrop Tantra* continues to be taught and practised widely. This represents a tradition that originated only with the Master. This is so also with the great tantra *The Ornament of The Vajra Essence*⁷⁴ and the tantras of Vajrapāṇi, Vajragāndhārī, Yamāntaka, Hayagrīva, Mahākāla, and the Seven Mātrkās, along with many other, minor tantras. There can be seen even now in that country a group called the Mahāga, who follow only the venerable master Jñānapāda and consider only his four heart sons’ teachings as important. They have therefore spread, very extensively, the tradition of the Master Padmākara, namely, the *Hevajra* and *Śrī Paramādhyā*⁷⁵ and those mentioned above. You can also find commentaries that are connected with those tantras and the pith instructions of *Guhyasamāja* written by the Master.

The place where the ḍākinīs were first bound under oath was called Lampasdyā, where, in the cave, there is a hearth made by his own hand. The latter two bindings were done at a place called Alapasdyā, where there are about a thousand imprints left when the kīla-daggers struck the ḍākinīs. Activity kīla-daggers do not usually remain in the domain of ordinary beings. Yet, whereas all the others disappeared, one still remains, so that beings in the future would have faith. It is said the wisdom deity dissolved into the body of the Master, and thus a single material kīla-dagger was left behind. No substance, such as stone, wood, copper or iron, compares to it. It is as if, rather than having been made, it had spontaneously appeared, measuring about the length of three people. The story goes that at first there was a strong kīla-dagger made of wood. During practice, it increased vastly in size and could be changed to any size with the mind, could move and speak and so on, just like the actual deity. It became a whirling firebrand, too. When one of the main *piśacī mantradhārinī* made her body the size of Mount Meru and was just about to flee, the kīla-dagger also became the size of a mountain, and struck her down. Later, it is said, the wisdom deity dissolved into the body of the Master, the brilliant light and blazing fire calmed,

and this kila-dagger was what remained.

Conclusion

I arranged this history of the Master as follows: There are a few accounts that are known in the Noble Land of India, such as the oral transmission the great accomplished master Śāntiguṇḍa, and there is an even more detailed and extensive account from the lineage of the master Devakara from Drāmiḍa. I heard these stories from direct disciples of both of these two masters. In addition, the history of his activities on behalf of the beings of Tibet appears in many similar, reliable, old documents that I have complete faith in. I have also heard a tiny part of the instructions of the Master that originated in Drāmiḍa, and that was transmitted through Indian scholars. Although I have not actually seen the historical texts that tell the Indian tales, the tales are included in the texts of the history of our lineage of teachers, both scholars and masters. I have also seen many texts that contain the history of the spread of the Dharma to Drāmiḍa. They all conform to the stainless teachings of the sublime beings, the scholars and the accomplished-ones, that are transmitted from ear to ear. This being so, not even the slightest part of what is put together here should be abbreviated or removed, but rather it should be supplemented with many more truthful and amazing episodes. It is said in the Indian histories that the Master also worked for the benefit of beings on the island of Hurmuju and places such as Sikadhara, Dharmakośa and Rukma, but I was unable to find those accounts. Although I have also seen many quite wonderful stories in the context of expounding the meaning of the extraordinary Dharma instructions of Tibet, there are too many to include here.

In conclusion,

Some unintelligent people, using only blind faith, make up many stories in order to increase the faith of beings.

Most people are very stupid, so, regardless of whether they are false or meaningless, it is possible this would increase their faith.

When the learned see and hear them, they are embarrassed, and thereby doubts are generated with regard to even sublime beings and pure teachings.

Can there be a more harmful action than this work of Māra?

Abandon now any doubts about this strange story, for there is no nonsense written here.

This short composition could outshine a great volume of invented stories, one-hundredfold.

Through the merit of writing this, may I attain the level of the Master and lead all beings to liberation!

Although I have told this clear, pure and faithful story, it was only through the blessings of the Master entering my heart.

I have no wish for fame in the world, or to have followers, or to create a fierce

dispute.

It is a condition for my faith and the faith of those who follow my words—
nectar to the ears and minds of the learned.

This life and liberation of the emanation of the vajra-speech of all the tathāgatas, the Great Master of Uḍḍiyāna, Padmasambhava, is called Three Reasons for Confidence. It was motivated by my companion, Tsangnyön Kunga Palzang, who stays and travels with me, thinking it would nourish my faith. It was composed by me, Tāranātha, a vagabond, aged thirty-six, in the Jomo hermitage in Nakgyal.

May virtue increase! Maṅgalam!

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1. It is uncertain to what the title *Three Reasons for Confidence* (*yid ches gsum ldan*) refers. Adele Tomlin, who translated Tāranātha's commentary on the *Heart Sūtra*, has suggested that Tāranātha here refers to the same three confidences as in his major Kālacakra commentary, *A Hundred Blazing Lights: A Supplementary Commentary on Meaningful to See: Instructions on the Profound Path of Vajra-Yogas*, where, citing the main extant commentary on the Kālacakra Tantra, he identifies three confidences as: 1) confidence in the tantras (or scriptures), 2) confidence in the teacher, and 3) confidence in oneself.
2. King Devapāla (r.c. 812–850) was the most powerful ruler of the Pāla Empire of Bengal within the Indian subcontinent. He was the third king in the line, and had succeeded his father Dharmapāla.
3. Magadha was an ancient Indian kingdom in southern Bihar.
4. Uḍḍiyāna, often described as ‘the land of the Ḍākinīs’, was once a historical place but has transformed over time into a mythical pureland in which the tantric teachings blossom and thrive. It is commonly identified with the Swat district in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan.
5. King Hayalīla was a legendary king of Uḍḍiyāna.
6. Vidyā-mantras (*rigs sngags*) are considered key means to attain *vidyā*, esoteric knowledge.
7. Trailokyavijaya (*Khams gsum rnam rgyal*) and Yamāntaka (*Gshin rje gshed*) are two of the Ten Wrathful Ones (*Daśakrodha, Khro bo bcu*).
8. Tāranātha provides a list of eight charnel grounds, associating Padmāvabhāsi’s mastery of each of the eight ordinary accomplishments or siddhis (*aṣṭa-sādhāraṇa-siddhi, thun mong gi dngos grub brgyad*) with one of the charnel grounds. While the tantras mostly agree upon the enumeration of a set of eight

charnel grounds, their names and features differ from tantra to tantra. According to Tāranātha, who follows a list given in various Hevajra and Cakrasaṃvara commentaries, they are: 1) Ghorāndhakāra (*Mun pa nag po*, Black Darkness), 2) Gahvara (*Tshang tshing 'khrigs pa*, Dense Thicket), 3) Jvālākulakaraṅka (*'Bar ba 'khrigs pa*, Dense Flames), 4) Vibhīṣaṇa (*'Jigs byed thod pa*, Terrifying), 5) Aṭṭahāsa (*aT+TaT+Ta ha sa*, Frightful Laughter), 6) Lakṣmīvāna (*Dpal gyi nagṣ*, Auspicious Grove), 7) Kilikilārava (*Ca co can*, Loud Laughter), 8) Caṇḍogra (*Gtum drag*, Most Fierce). For a list of these and their features, see: Tsunehiko Sugiki, “The Structure and Meanings of the Heruka Maṇḍala in the Buddhist Dākārṇava Scriptural Tradition,” World Sanskrit Conference, (Japan: Hiroshima University, 2018), 7.

9. Buddhaśrijñāna (*Sangs rgyas dpal ye shes*) aka Buddhajñānapāda (*Sangs rgyas ye shes zhabs*, late 8th c.) was a disciple of Haribhadra (late 8th c.), and is also associated with the transmission of the *Guhyasamājantra*.
10. King Dharmapāla (c. 770–812) is seen amongst the Pāla emperors as the strongest of Buddhist patrons. During his reign, Dharmapāla greatly supported various monasteries and built the famous monastery of Vikramaśīla.
11. Dharmāñchura (*Chos kyi myu gu*), Budding Sprout of the Dharma.
12. Mahāsaṅghika was an important early Buddhist School and monastic tradition.
13. The *One Hundred Thousand Verses on Vinaya* (*'dul ba 'bum sde*)
14. Buddhaguhya (*Sangs rgyas gsang ba*, late 8th c.). For a short biography, see Treasury of Lives
15. *The Gathering [of Secrets]* (*Guhyasamāja*, *Gsang ba 'dus pa*), *The Net of Magical Illusion* (*Māyājāla*, *Sgyu 'phrul dra ba*), *The Secret Moondrop* (*Candraguhyatilaka*, *Zla gsang thig le*), *The Union with the Buddhas* (*Buddhasamāyoga*, *Sangs rgyas mnyam sbyor*) and the *Garland of Activity* (*Karmāvali*, *Las kyi phreng ba*).
16. Tharu kingdom may refer to the Tharu community that now inhabits the jungle and Terai valleys on the southern borders of Western Nepal. It is said that the Emperor Aśoka came from the Tharu people. For more information, see: Taranatha, *The Origin of the Tārā Tantra*, translated and edited by David Templeman, (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1995), n. 82 and n. 135.
17. Tirāhut (Tirhut) is a name for the old city of the kingdom of Videha, about 285 km north-west of Vārāṇasī.

18. Kāmarūpa was an ancient Indian kingdom located in the eastern region of the Indian subcontinent, in what is modern-day Assam, Bengal and Bhutan.
19. Campāraṇa is probably the Champaran District of North Bihar.
20. This might refer to the famous Bagmati river, the source of which is located in the hills at the edge of the Kathmandu Valley. It runs through Bihar (possibly Campāraṇa) before finally draining into the River Ganges.
21. Trimala probably refers to Tirumala, home to the famous Vēnkaṭeśvara Viṣṇu temple, in modern-day Andhra Pradesh.
22. Trilinga probably refers to the ‘country of the three liṅgaṃs’. According to legend, Śiva descended in the form of three liṅgaṃs onto three mountains in Telangana, Rayalaseema and Draksharamam. The three liṅgaṃs represent the three cornerstones of the ‘Trilinga country’.
23. Śivasthān (*gnas*) means a sacred site where Śiva resides.
24. Odantapurī also known as Uddaṇḍapura is located 10 km from Nālandā. It was established in the 8th century by King Gopāla, the father of Dharmapāla. Like Nālandā, it was one of the great ancient Mahāviharas in India.
25. An oblation, *bali* or *torma* (*gtor ma*), refers to a propitiatory offering of food.
26. A king from the historical region of Turkestan in Central Asia. It is unclear which regions Pāgada and Molatāna in Turkestan refer to.
27. Although Padmākara (*padma ‘byung gnas*) and Padmasambhava (*padma ‘byung ldan*) are two different names, they both translate into English as ‘the Lotus Born’.
28. Drāmiḍa (*‘gro lding*) is used to denote the geographical region of South India. Drāmiḍa possibly derived from the word ‘Tamil’, for the speakers of the non-Indo-European languages of South India. Later in this text, Tāranātha states that Drāmiḍa is “a small island in the middle of the sea; it can be reached by boat, bearing directly west from south India.” From this and the following mythical explanation that Tāranātha provides, the island in question could be Sri Lanka.
29. Here, Tāranātha is referring to Padmākara’s subjugation of the demons of Cāmara or Ngayab Ling (*rnga yab gling*) after he departed this world from Tibet. Cāmara, according to Buddhist cosmology, is one of the two subcontinents surrounding Jambudvīpa—our human world—and is located to its southwest.

30. Nyingma Kama (*rnying ma bka' ma*) or the collection of texts of the oral transmission lineage of the Nyingma School.
31. For an English translation of *A Garland of Views* (*man ngag lta phreng*), see: Padmasambhava and Jamgön Mipham, *A Garland of Views*, translated by Padmakara Translation Group, (Boston: Shambhala Publications), 2016.
32. That is to say that in as many worlds as there are in the universe and beyond, in each of them there is an emanation of the Master present guiding beings to enlightenment.
33. In what follows, Tāranātha presents a summary of *The Three Royal Narratives* (*rgyal po'i bka' chems kyi yi ge rnam pa gsum*), drawing information from all three. They are, respectively, *The Testimony of Ba* (*r/sba bzhed*), *The Extended Testimony of Ba* (*r/sba bzhed zhabs brtags pa*) and *The Lama's Testimony* (*bla bzhed*). As Tāranātha states, apart from small differences in length, the three royal narratives mostly seem to contain exactly the same central story—the taking of the Buddha's doctrine to Tibet. As such, they constitute an important historical source concerning not only the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet, but also the construction of Samyé monastery and the religious and political debates taking place at the time. These narratives have been the subject of extensive scholarly discussion. For a detailed discussion of *The Testimony of Ba*, its various versions, and a translation, see: Wangdu, Pasang, and Hildegard Diemberger, *dBa bzhed: The Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet*, (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000). For an interesting discussion of the depiction of Padmākara in the *Testimony of Ba*, see: Cathy Cantwell and Robert Mayer, "Representations of Padmasambhava in Early Post-Imperial Tibet," in *Tibet after Empire: Culture, Society and Religion between 850-1000*, (Lumbini, Nepal: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2013), 35-39.
34. Lung Tshuk Palace (*pho brang klung tshugs*)
35. Pang Thang Palace (*pho brang 'phang thang*) was once of the palaces in upper Yarlung. It was built by King Tride Tsukten (*Khri lde gtsug bstan*, 710–755/56), the father of King Trisong Detsen.
36. Marpo Ri (*dmar po ri*), the 'red hill', later to be the site of the Potala in Lhasa.
37. Ba Salnang (*r/sba gsal snang*) is credited with having composed the *Ba Testimony* and is said to have been one of the first seven Tibetans to take ordination from Śāntarakṣita.
38. This refers to the ministers (*zhang blon*) ranking both high and low who controlled the affairs of state for the King. See: Wangdu, Pasang, and Hildegard

Diemberger, *dBa bzhed: The Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet*, (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 29 n. 36.

39. Yang Dronar (*yang dro snar*)
40. Dren Zang (*'gran bzung*)
41. Ba Mangjé Salnang (*rba mang rje gsal snang*) and Seng Golha Lungzik (*seng mgo lha lung gzigs*). See: Wangdu, Pasang, and Hildegard Diemberger, *dBa bzhed: The Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet*, (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 44 n. 99 & 100.
42. Mangyul (*mang yul*) was the border gateway between Nepal and India.
43. Kyirong (*skyid grong*)
44. O Yuk (*'o yug*)
45. Gangkar (*gangs dkar*)
46. Nam (*gnam*) likely refers to Namtsho Lake (*gnam mtsho*), which is situated close to the highest peak in the Nyenchen Thanglha range (*gnyan chen thang lha*).
47. Thanglha (*thang lha*) is the name given both to a 700-mile-long mountain range of Northern Tibet, and to the protector deity associated with it.
48. Nying Drung (*snying drung*) is located in Dam (*'dam*). See: Wangdu, Pasang, and Hildegard Diemberger, *dBa bzhed: The Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet*, (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 53 n. 149.
49. Shongwa (*zhong ba*) is west of Lhasa, in the lower area of the Tölung Valley (*stod lung*).
50. Zurkhar (*zur mkhar*) is a locality to the south-west of Samyé. See: Wangdu, Pasang, and Hildegard Diemberger, *dBa bzhed: The Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet*, (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 57 n. 172.
51. Drakmar (*brag dmar*) is the name of the area that includes Samyé and extends both north and north-west. Many place names in this area, including those of several temples and royal residences, derive from ancient toponyms.

52. See: Wangdu, Pasang, and Hildegard Diemberger, *dBa bzhed: The Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet*, (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 54, n. 152.
53. Sangshi (*Sang shi*) is mentioned in the extant *Testimony of Ba* as a Chinese boy, a skilful dancer, who was the son of a Chinese messenger called Ba De'u ('ba' de'u). He had been a playmate of King Trisong Detsen, when the latter had been sent to China in quest of the doctrine. See: Wangdu, Pasang, and Hildegard Diemberger, *dBa bzhed: The Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet*, (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 42 n. 91 & 44-45 n. 101.
54. Wutai Shan ('go'u de shan) is identified as the worldly abode of Manjushri, the bodhisattva of Wisdom, and is located in Shanxi Province, China. It is home to many Buddhist temples.
55. The Four Great Kings (Skt. *Caturmahārāja*; Tib. *Rgyal chen sde bzhi*) are four deities who live on the lower slopes of Mount Meru in the Heaven of the Four Great Kings. They are the guardians of the four cardinal directions. Each is leader of a class of semi-divine beings living in their realm.
56. The fire offering, *homa* or 'jinsek' (*sbyin sreg*) is a fire oblation in which offerings are made into fire, symbolizing the deity.
57. Zurphü Kyangbu Tsal Palace (*pho brang zur phud rkyang bu tshal*).
58. Manasvī (*gzi can*) is the name of a nāga king. Maldro (*mal gro*) is a district south of Lhasa.
59. Gyalpo Pekar (*rgyal po pe dkar*) is more commonly known as Gyalpo Pehar (*rgyal po pe har*), the guardian spirit of Samyé Monastery.
60. Yarlha Shampo (*yar lha sham po*) is a powerful local spirit who presides over the mountain peak that bears the same name.
61. *A Garland of Views* (*man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba*) is preserved in the Nyingma Kama (*rnying ma bka' ma*).
62. The Hundred Thousand Verses of the Kīla (*phur bu 'bum sde*) is probably a reference to the legendary *Vidyottama*, which Padmākara received during his retreat at Yangleshö. Upon the completion of his retreat, Padmākara composed *The Black Hundred Thousand Words Commentary on the Kīla* (*Phur 'grel 'bum nag*) which is also preserved in the Nyingma Kama. The Tengyur (*bstan 'gyur*) contains two commentaries on the *Vajravīdāraṇā* (*rdo rje rnam par 'joms pa*), attributed to Padmākara, namely *The Vajra Lamp* (D 2679, *Vajrāloka*, *rdo rje*

- sgron ma) and *The Secret Inscription* (D 3049, *Guhyapatrikā*, *Them yig gsang ba*).
63. ‘Guiding through the stages’ (*rim pa byed pa*) and ‘stages’ (*rim pa*).
 64. Otren Palgyi Shönu’s Guide for the Sessions of Vajrakīlaya Group Practice (*o bran dpal gyi gzhon nu’i phur bu’i gtong thun*)
 65. Tsepong Zamé Togdrön (*Tshe spong bza’ me tog sgron*) was the mother of Prince Mutik Tsenpo (*Mu tig btsan po*). Droza Tri Gyalmo Tsün (*‘bro bza’ kri rgyal mo btsun*) was a queen in the later years of Trisong Detsen’s reign. Later, this queen took ordination from Ba Ratna (*Rba ratna*) and became a nun, taking the ordination name Jomo Changchub Jé (*Jo mo byang chub rje*).
 66. Chokro Zabü Chungmen (*lcog ro bza’ bu chung sman*) and Chokro Zalha Bumen (*lcog ro bza’ lha bu sman*)
 67. Kyungpo Taktsha (*khyung po rtag tsha*)
 68. Bé Dongzik (*dbas ldongs gzigs*)
 69. Vaiśravaṇa (*rnam thos sras*), one of the four great kings (*rgyal chen sde bzhi*), is associated with wealth and prosperity.
 70. The Ārya Palo Ling temple (*ārya pa lo gling*), dedicated to Avalokiteśvara, is one of the four temples surrounding the main temple at Samyé monastery.
 71. Butön Rinchen Drup (*bu ston rin chen grub*, 1290–1364)
 72. Three of the most famous Indian Siddhas, whose lives are recorded in Tāranātha’s *The Seven Instruction Lineages*. For a translation, see: Tāranātha, *The Seven Instruction Lineages (Bka’ babs bdun ldan)* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1983).
 73. The protector deity, literally ‘Male deity’ or polha (*pho lha*), refers to a spirit that is considered a protector of humans and their families.
 74. *The Ornament of the Vajra Essence* (D 490, *vajramaṇḍālaṃkāra*, *rdo rje snying po rgyan*)
 75. Śrī Parmādhyā (*dpal mchog dang po*), that is the Yogatantra version of *Adhyardhaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā*.



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