

THE MOTHER ESSENCE LINEAGE
by Ngakpa Chogyam Rinpoche

- Yeshe Tsogyel -

The greatest inspiration and role model for women, in terms of Tibetan Buddhism, is the enlightened yogini Yeshe Tsogyel (Ye-shes mTsho-rGyal). Yeshe means 'primordial wisdom', and Tsogyel means 'queen of the ocean-like quality of Mind'. She is the female Buddha of the Nyingma School. As an historical figure she is mother of all Nyingma Lineages. Yeshe Tsogyel, together with her incarnation and emanations are an inspiration to women as role models, and to men as teachers.

According to the teachings of the Mother Essence Lineage, there are three styles of teacher-student relationship; according to mDo (Sutra), rGyud (Tantra), and rDzogs-chen (Mahasandhi). According to Sutra one needs a teacher of the same gender. According to Tantra one needs a teacher of the other, or inverse gender. According to Dzogchen the gender of the teacher is irrelevant. From the perspective of Tantra, therefore, female teachers are role models for women and teachers for men -- whereas male teachers are teachers for women and role models for men. Within the Mother Essence Lineage, the practice of everyday life is approached from the View of Tantra, and formal practice is approached from the View of Dzogchen. This account of the Mother Essence Lineage is written in a style that emphasizes View rather than practice; and so it emphasizes the perspective of Tantra. There is tremendous emphasis on what is called living the View in the Mother Essence Lineage, and this is a style of practice that is particularly suited to women.

Yeshe Tsogyel was the sang-yum or spiritual consort of Padmasambhava. Padmasambhava is known in the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism as the second Buddha. Padmasambhava was the founder of Buddhism in Tibet, and the Nyingma (Ancient) School represents the first spread of Buddhism in Tibet when it surged with the spiritual dynamism provoked by Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyel. Padmasambhava's birth and activity were predicted by Buddha Shakyamuni, who said that a being of tremendous power and compassion would appear after his death, who had the capacity to transmit the teaching and practices of Tantra. The two primary aspects of the practice of Tantra consist of wisdom and active-compassion, and these are regarded as being female and male qualities respectively. Wisdom and active-compassion are fundamentally the enlightened human qualities of Emptiness and Form -- the ornaments of non-duality. (This is a teaching that is also fundamental to the Sutric teaching. It is found in the Heart Sutra, in which it is stated that Form is Emptiness and Emptiness is Form.) With regard to Tantra, Padmasambhava is Form or active-compassion, and Yeshe Tsogyel is Emptiness or wisdom. From this perspective, the whole of reality is seen as the dance of Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyel. Within the Ngakphang Sangha of the Nyingma School, every Lama and her or his spiritual consort are Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyel as far as their disciples are concerned.

In the Mother Essence Lineage, Yeshe Togyel and her incarnations and emanations are of primary importance, because she is the Mother of Vision, and therefore the Mother of non-dual experience. Tantra contains methods that are particularly valuable for women, because of their emphasis on the development of Vision. It is said, within the Tantric teachings, that women have greater capacity for realization than men because of their greater natural resonance with the sphere of Visionary practice. The most

inspirational example in the Tantric tradition of the profound capacity of women is Yeshe Tsogyel. She was the first Tibetan woman to achieve Buddhahood and has had numerous incarnations and emanations in Tibet and the other Himalayan countries. The Visionary origin of the Mother Essence Lineage is Yeshe Tsogyel, and her influence can be traced forward to the twentieth century through her incarnations. The incarnations of Yeshe Tsogyel include: Machig Lapdron; Jomo Menmo; Jomo Chhi-'med Pema; and, Jetsunma Khandro Yeshe Rema -- the women who gave birth to the pure-vision revelations that are called the Aro gTer of the Mother Essence Lineage.

Those interested to learn more about the life of Yeshe Tsogyel are referred to Keith Dowman's excellent book 'Sky Dancer', which chronicles her birth, life and realization -- along with a marvellous commentary on the nature of the three inner Tantras. Because this text is easily available, there is no need to discuss the life of Yeshe Tsogyel in this account of the Mother Essence Lineage.

Machig Lapdron (Ma-gChig Lap-sGron) 'Unique Mother Torch of Practice' was the incarnation of Yeshe Tsogyel. Machig Lapdron was the great Tibetan yogini who was the originator of the practice of Chod -- the Visionary practice of cutting attachment to one's corporeal form (in terms of the dualistic proclivity to relate to one's corporeal form as a reference-point that proves one's existence). Machig Lapdron too, is quite well chronicled in various texts that are currently available. Jomo Menmo is regarded generally as an emanation of Yeshe Tsogyel; but specifically, in the Mother Essence Lineage, as the incarnation of Machig Lapdron. Jomo Menmo, however, is not very well known to Western audiences, and so I will give a short account of her life that was given to me orally by Jetsunma Khandro Ten'dzin Drolkar, a great hidden yogini of the Nyingma School whom I have had the good fortune to know as a friend and mentor since 1975.

- Jomo Menmo -

Jomo Menmo Pema Tsokyi (Jom-mo sMan-mo Padma mTsho-sKyid) was born in the Earth Male monkey year (1248 CE) and passed into the sky-dimension in 1283 CE. She was born in the magical vicinity of the cave in which both Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyel once stayed. The place was called Zarmolung which was located in an area of Tibet called E-yul, which means 'primordial-awareness country'. Her parents named her Pema Tsokyi which means 'Lotus of the Ocean'. Her childhood was relatively uneventful and her parents were fairly ordinary people. She spent her childhood helping with the general work of living in a family and also helped with herding the yaks and dris. At the onset of puberty (in the Spring of 1261), whilst she was grazing the yaks and dris in the high pasture lands, she fell asleep in a meadow. The alpine meadow was overlooked by the Dewachen-puk -- the cave of great ecstasy, in which Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyel had demonstrated attainment. The place was known as Kyungchen-ling -- the place of the great Garuda. The Garuda is the 'Space-eagle', which demonstrates, in its being: the unborn, unceasing, ever present state of enlightenment that is the fundamental ground of the Dzogchen teachings and practices. Whilst asleep, she had a dream of clarity in which she experienced a profound Vision. A sonorous voice awoke her from the unconscious dream state into a state of pure and total presence. She found herself standing in front of the entrance to a secret cave in the mountain side. She entered the cave immediately and with a sense of keen enthusiasm. She did not know what she would find there, but she was consumed with a sense of immanence without hope or fear. Once inside the cave a Vision unfolded in which Yeshe Tsogyel manifested in a phantasmagorical variety of guises. These Visions melted into each other until they coalesced into the form of Yeshe Tsogyel as Dorje Phagmo. Dorje Phagmo means 'indestructible sow' or 'thunderbolt sow'. Dorje Phagmo is the ecstatically fierce Dakini, whose head is surmounted by the head of a sow whose screech shatters illusion. The sound of the screech obliterates

all concepts and sharply confides the direct meaning or ro-chig -- the one taste of Emptiness and Form. At the moment in which she apprehended Yeshe Tsogyel as Dorje Phagmo, a complete body of teaching was revealed to her. She understood its meaning in the instant of its appearance. This teaching named itself as 'The Gathered Secrets of Sky dancers'. She realized this teaching was something that she should practice in complete secrecy until its results were obtained. She knew immediately that there would be no obstacle to her fulfilment of these practices. With the arising of this knowledge the Vision of Dorje Phagmo dissolved into Cho-nyi (Chos-nyid -- Dharmata, the Space of reality).

Pema Tsokyi awoke from the Vision, and went about her daily life. But wherever she went she gave teachings as the spontaneous expression of her Mind, voice and body. She gave Mind-to-Mind teaching as the natural expression of her presence. She sang teaching-songs as the natural expression of her conversation, and performed vajra-dance as the natural expression of her deportment. This had both fortunate and unfortunate consequences. Many ordinary people were astounded by her and recognized that she was a realized yogini, but the ecclesiastics of that place made people afraid of her. She was slandered as a psychotic, a mad-woman who had been possessed by a demon. Once fear had been stirred up by the jealous male ecclesiastics, people became nervous of Pema Tsokyi. The ordinary people lost their natural faith in Pema Tsokyi. They found themselves unable to have confidence in their own spontaneous devotion, in opposition to the ecclesiastical conservatism that styled her as a demoness. The people then began to make accusations against her as well; saying that she had gone to sleep in the mountains and been possessed by a Menmo -- a demonic female being from another dimension. It was then that she became known as Jomo Menmo -- the Demonic Lady.

Because of the ill feeling that the bigoted and narrow-minded ecclesiastics showed toward her, she decided to leave her home and family and never return to the area. It would seem to be a common problem faced by religious ecstasies and wisdom eccentrics, that they are attacked by religious moralists, academics, and philosophers. From the view of the gradual path it is regarded as highly threatening for a simple country girl to gain realization over-night, and it is often the case that the 'uneducated' have a better appreciation of naturally-born wisdom, than those who have studied for long years in search of the same wisdom. It is also the case that men, especially ecclesiastic men, are threatened by female wisdom eccentrics. For those who study to attain wisdom there is often the problem of becoming hide-bound by conventional or traditional religious semantics, and then bigotry and anger usually arise.

After a period of ecstatic wandering, she reached a place called La-yak-pang-drong in the western part of Lho-drak, where she met a great Nyingma Visionary -- the gTerton (gTer-ston) Guru Rinpoche Cho-kyi Wang-chuk (Guru Rin-po-che Chos-kyi dBang-phyug). Guru Cho-wang (as his name is commonly contracted) was one of the five sovereign Nyingma Visionaries, and one of the three major emanations of Padmasambhava. As soon as Guru Cho-wang saw Jomo Menmo he knew that she was the perfect sang-yum or spiritual-wife with whom he could bring his realization to fulfilment. Through her relationship with him, Jomo Menmo was able to clear his Spatial-nerves (tsa) of subtle dualistic eddies and currents with in the Spatial-winds (rLung). Once his tsa-lung system flowed with complete freedom he found himself with the capacity of realizing the meaning of every symbolic device within the Visionary teaching he had discovered, but which he had been unable to translate. (The Innermost Secret Heart Essence Tantra of the Eight Wrathful Awareness-beings -- bKa'a-brGyad gSang-ba yong-rDzogs man-ngak-gi rGyud chen-po.)

They stayed a brief time with each other, in which they shared songs of realization, and the quintessential instructions according to their

individual Vision. When Jomo Menmo decided to take her leave of Guru Chawang, he advised her that the time was not right to divulge the Visionary teaching cycle that she had received from Yeshe Tsogyel. He said that it would be better if her Visionary teaching benefited people at a future time. He advised her, instead, to travel throughout Tibet benefiting people in a secret manner. To 'benefit people in a secret manner' is an activity that is particular to women, and does not involve any kind of describable method. Secret activity can comprise any human possibility, and can be utterly unobservable to anyone unless they are open to that style of transmission and teaching. An enlightened woman (or more rarely, an enlightened man) can simply appear to live in the style of an ordinary person with no outer sign of accomplishment, wisdom or even knowledge. Such a woman is of profound influence merely in the ways in which her everyday life causes the innate enlightenment of others to sparkle through the fabrications of their dualistic conditioning.

On her wandering throughout Tibet she met many yogis who gained powerful realizations simply by meeting her. The most famous of these was Ling-je Repa (gLing-rJe ras-pa), who experienced the same profound purification of his Spatial-nerves and Spatial-winds as Guru Cho-wang.

Jomo Menmo spent her life this way, as a wandering yogini; changing people's lives irredeemably merely through the fact of their adventitiously finding themselves in her presence. In this way she engendered many lineages of female practitioners, two of whom entered the sky-dimension with her at the time of her disappearance from the world. At the age of thirty-six, she climbed to the summit of Tak-lha-ri (Mountain of the Sky Tiger), and on the tenth day of the seventh month (4th of August 1283) she and her two female disciples entered the Sky-dimension and were never seen again. Her extraordinary Visionary teaching returned to the Mind of Yeshe Tsogyel, and was later re-discovered by Rig'dzin Pema Do-ngak Lingpa; who was the incarnation of Guru Cho-wang.

- Pema 'o-Zer -

Jomo Menmo had various emanations in Tibet, but in 1901 her incarnation was recognized by Gomchenma Pema 'o-Zer. Gomchenma Pema 'o-Zer was raised by Jomo Chhi-'med Pema (who was herself an emanation of Yeshe Tsogyel). Pema 'o-Zer was recognized by her aunt Jomo Chhi-'med Pema, to be an emanation of Tashi Chi-dren. Tashi Chi-dren was the consort of Padmasambhava who manifested in Vision as the Tigress upon which he rode in his manifestation as Dorje Trollo -- the most wrathful of the eight manifestations of Padmasambhava.

Pema 'o-Zer's mother father and older brother died of small pox when she was about four years old, and she was left to be brought up by her ageing aunt Jomo Chhi-'med Pema, who was regarded as being a very eccentric old woman. Jomo Chhi-'med Pema lived alone and herded a few goats, but she was however a powerful yogini, and someone who could converse with the local Mountain Protectress and give people answers to questions about their lives and futures. There were heaps of stones all around her dwelling; mounds of pebbles from the river which she had arranged in circles and other shapes. She would carry stones, sometimes quite large ones, for many miles, because she felt that they were in the wrong place. She had some special knowledge, connected with the Protectors, about where certain stones should be. She treated them very much as living beings, and would read meaning into the positions in which she found them. One day, young Pema 'o-Zer fell over and hit her knee whilst she was playing outside her aunts dwelling. When Jomo Chhi-'med Pema heard her crying, she came out immediately with a large stick and gave the rock a severe thrashing, warning it to take very good care of young Pema 'o-Zer in future. Pema 'o-Zer was very moved by this. She felt very sorry for having got the rock into trouble by her stupidity, and thereafter treated the

rock with kindness and respect. She would make offerings to the rock, and everyday apologize for the beating that it had to receive. Jomo Chhi-'med would often give young Pema 'o-Zer teaching in this style and the young girl seemed to be able to take advantage of her aunt's style with very powerful effect. She learnt a great deal from her aunt.

Jomo Chhi-'med knew the positions of the larger rocks in the river very well, and made predictions about the weather and when to sow or harvest, according to what she saw. If the rocks moved, she would know immediately and it would usually portend some change in weather. The local people would always ask her advice on the weather. Sometimes they would ask her to intervene, in terms of the weather, and she had notable power as a controller of weather. This wisdom-eccentric became the adoptive mother of Pema 'o-Zer, and gave her many instructions on how to practise. She taught her the Dzogchen Long-de and many other kinds of very essential practice. She never chanted texts or used any kind of ritual implements. She had no shrine, and no thangkas in her home. People assumed that she was very poor, and ignorant of religious conventions, but always asked for her help when personal misfortunes overtook them. She did have some disciples who visited her, but they always came secretly and gave no outer sign of 'coming to visit a Lama'.

Jomo Chhi-'med would attend teachings when important Lamas came to the area, but she would sit in a state of non-conceptual equipoise rather than listening in an intellectual style. She would never make mudras of any kind, or join in the recitations when empowerments were given. Because of this many people assumed that she was a pious simpleton. When the teachings or empowerments were over she would walk away giggling. She would smile at people very broadly, and laugh very loudly, which monks in particular found rather disconcerting. When asked any question she would often only reply 'Yes!' over and over again, whilst nodding her head vigorously and grinning in an insane manner. This usually had the effect of dissuading people with intellectual pretensions from asking her questions.

One day when Pema 'o-Zer was in her late teens, her aunt Jomo Chhi-'med left the house and never returned. (It is not known where she went or what happened to her.) Pema 'o-Zer lived at the house of Jomo Chhi-'med Pema for a while, but one day she had a Vision during her meditation in which Jomo Chhi-'med appeared to her. Jomo Chhi-'med Pema told her to begin a life of wandering in which she would find a suitable sang-yab. Pema 'o-Zer left her aunt's house, which had almost fallen into ruins, and wandered for several years as an itinerant yogini before meeting Rang-rig Togden, a wandering Chodpa (practitioner of Chod). After wandering together through Eastern and Central Tibet, they settled in Mar-Kham where they found a cave called 'Tiger Space of Rainbow Light'. They remained there for the rest of their lives as practitioners of Dzogchen Long-de, the 'Space' or 'Vast Expanse' series of Dzogchen.

Gomchenma Pema 'o-Zer's Sangyab and disciple, Rang-rig Togden, was a powerful yogi, especially of the subjugation practices of Chana Dorje (Vajrapani), Tamdrin (Hayagriva) and Khyung (Garuda) a practice he had received from Azom Drukpa. They practiced all their lives and spent almost all their elder years in retreat. When they were in their sixties, Gomchenma Pema 'o-Zer had a Vision of Yeshe Tsogyel that lasted for seven days. When the Vision dissolved back into Cho-nyi (dharmata) she was left with the knowledge that she was going to give birth to a daughter who would be the incarnation of Jomo Menmo, the great female Nyingma gTerton. Jomo Menmo was the consort of Guru Chowang -- one of the gTerton Kings. Sang-ngak-cho-dzong holds the nine prong meteorite iron Vajra made by Padmasambhava and discovered by Guru Chowang through the inspiration of Jomo Menmo, and also the Dorje and Drilbu of Jomo Menmo.

The birth of Jetsunma Khandro Yeshe Rema was a remarkable event. She was born with great ease and without making any sound. The first thing she did was to making a very long drawn out hiss with her lips drawn up into Wrathful aspect, as if she were performing a Tsa-lung breathing exercise. A great number of eagles appeared in the sky at her birth. They swooped and glided very close to her parents' Retreat Cave entrance. All manner of sky phenomena appeared at her birth, including clouds shaped like yungdrungs and gakyils. Strong gusts of wind sprang up and subsided very quickly. The sun and moon were clearly visible in the sky at the same time. Her mother remained in a state of Vision through the birth, in which she was physically assisted by Rang-rig Togden.

Khandro Yeshe slept a great deal as a child but always with her eyes wide open. It was not always easy to tell whether she was asleep or awake because often she would sleep sitting up without any support. She didn't speak until she was five years old but then spoke fluently and without effort. Up until that point she simply listened to her mother and father practising or giving her instruction on practise. She was brought up entirely in retreat and never saw another child until she was an adult woman. As a young girl, she would wander widely in the mountains around her parents meditation cave. She would disappear whenever patrons came to visit and bring food and offerings to the couple. She expressly did not want anyone to see her apart from her parents, and they were quite happy to go along with her in this wish. They never questioned anything that she did or wanted. She wanted very little and was mostly quiet apart from peals of loud and unexpected laughter. She would sometimes be gone for several days and come back with accounts of having visited other realms and of having met Yeshe Tsogyel and Padmasambhava. Her parents instructed her in Trul-khor (Yantra yoga) from a very early age and she had mastered gTu-mo by the age of nine. She could not endure to wear clothes for most of the year until she was an adult and left the retreat cave. This is why she had the name Rema or cotton wearing lady, because she had the power to generate her own inner heat.

Khandro Yeshe Rema was about sixteen or seventeen years old when her parents took rainbow-body ('ja'-lus) together. She sewed them in a white tent together after receiving final advice, instructions, and predictions from them; and retired to a distance of twenty one paces to begin her practice. Seven days later she opened the tent and all that was left were their respective clothes, hair, finger nails, toe nails and nasal septum. They had taken rainbow body together. It is a highly unusual event for two people to achieve rainbow body together at the same time, but it was something that had her mother had predicted many years before. This event had a profound impact on Jetsunma Khandro Yeshe Rema and ripened many latent faculties. She gathered the relics of her parents and set out toward Northern Kham and Golok where her Mother had predicted she would find a suitable Sang-yab for the realization of a gTerma cycle that would come into being in the future for the benefit of beings in distant lands. Her mother had given indications that this gTerma cycle would be of immense benefit in the future if certain conditions were met, but that there would also be many circumstantial obstacles to overcome.

Khandro Yeshe travelled from place to place practising and living as a wandering yogini. She had the opportunity on several occasions to join up with other groups of practitioners but was intent on travelling alone. She sometimes pretended to be dumb, in order to avoid speaking with people -- especially if they were religious people. She would always speak to children and ordinary people -- especially if they appeared to have difficulties; but she always avoided religious people whenever she could. It took Jetsunma Khandro Yeshe Rema about year to reach Northern Kham and Golok where it was predicted that she would meet her Sang-yab. It was

there that she met 'a-Shul Pema Legden who was a monk and a disciple of Khalding Lingpa. She recognized 'a-Shul Pema Legden immediately as having the potential to realize Visions, and so they travelled together to Southern Tibet. 'a-Shul Pema Legden gave up his monk's vows and became her sang-yab. During their journey to Southern Tibet Jetsunma Khandro Yeshe Rema experienced several profound Visionary experiences of Yeshe Tsogyel in which she realized the cycles of Teachings and practice that her mother had predicted. These cycles of teachings and practice came to be known as the Aro gTer -- the teaching of the Mother Essence Lineage. These teachings survive today as a very essentialized and 'very non-elaborate' body of teachings and practice.

- The Mother Essence Lineage Today -

Tibetan Buddhism is known in the West largely in terms of monasticism. With regard to the monastic sangha, the teaching of the schools of Tibetan Buddhism, and Bon, are accessed mostly completely through the teaching of monks. It is a small minority of Western Buddhists who are aware of Tibetan Lamas who are nuns. At present the only Tibetan nun to teach in the West is Khandro Rinpoche, a female Lama of the Kagyud School. The dominant spiritual culture of Tibet appears to be male as far as most people are aware. Although this is not an entirely inaccurate portrayal of the dominant spiritual culture of Tibet, it does not convey the spiritual dynamism that existed in terms of women, and the very small family lineages that existed -- in which women were very spiritually influential indeed.

Contrary to the overt cultural impression, there were many women in Tibet who were teachers of the most profound level, and many of them had male disciples numbering amongst the highest monastic dignitaries. Some practised as ordained nuns, but many more practised both as ordained Ngakmas and lay yoginis. The Ngakmas and Ngakpas (the male equivalent) were those ordained into the Tantric Ngakphang sangha and tended to live as married couples. Both Ngakmas and lay yoginis are still to be found in the Himalayan countries that surround Tibet; but it is not an easy or simple endeavour to meet them, or even find them. One such remarkable woman is Jetsunma Khandro Ten'dzin Drolkar -- the remarkable yogini who gave me the account of the life of Jomo Menmo. I have the immense good fortune of knowing her both as a teacher and vajra-sister; and as such, have introduced several of my students to her. Jetsunma Khandro Ten'dzin Drolkar is a hidden yogini. Very few people in the West have heard of her, and even in India and Nepal she is not widely known. She is indistinguishable from any other elderly Tibetan woman you might pass on the streets of McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala where she currently lives. Despite her anonymity, she is a close friend of Ven. Sonam Sangpo Rinpoche, Ven. Tharchin Rinpoche and His Holiness Dzungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche -- and highly respected by them for the profundity of her practice and realization. She is a Dzogchen yogini who has spent most of her life in and out of retreat. She has also raised a family, and survived a somewhat difficult husband. One of her sons Trulku Ten'dzin was recognized as an Nyingma incarnation, and currently lives in semi-open retreat with Kyabje Chatral Rinpoche in Yang-le-shod in the Kathmandu valley of Nepal.

Apart from the many individual women practitioners and teachers in Tibet, there were also small lineages that existed along-side the major Nyingma lineages. These were the minor lineages of mountain recluses both male and female; and also, hidden female lineages that passed down from through children rather than through incarnation lines. The Mother Essence Lineage is one such lineage of teachings and practices. The Mother Essence Lineage is primarily a lineage of very unusual women, wisdom-eccentrics who were either solitary or married recluses. They were either itinerant Nyingma yoginis and their partners, or those who lived in communities such as the Aro Gar, where the Mother Essence Lineage was disseminated. The Mother

Essence Lineage passed initially from aunt to niece, and then from mother to daughter. With this daughter, began the direct daughter-line which was destined to pass down through a succession of women, but due to the vagaries of circumstance and the intervention of the Chinese invasion, the blood line was broken. The daughter was an extraordinary Visionary by the name of Yeshe Rema (Jetsunma Khandro Yeshe Rema) who passed her teachings on to a small group of men and women who gathered around in the final phase of her life. Amongst this small group of no more than a hundred disciples there was a predominant number of accomplished yoginis, nine of whom had remarkable yogic abilities. A-ye Khandro and A-she Khandro in particular manifested yogic powers such as telepathy, clairvoyance and the ability to converse with animals and beings in other dimensions.

Yeshe Rema was a pure-vision gTerton, that is to say a discoverer of spiritual treasures. She received several cycles of practice directly from Yeshe Tsogyel the female Buddha and consort of Padmasambhava. These practices were unique and extraordinary, as they consisted of Awareness-being (meditational deity) forms that were all manifestations of Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyel. Together with these practices were methods of the three series of Dzogchen and their ancillary psycho-physical practices. Yeshe Rema was advised by her mother to practice these in secret, and only to teach the practices to her daughter. It would then be her daughter who would transmit these teachings to the world.

Unfortunately, due to inauspicious circumstances, Yeshe Rema gave birth to a son, and the blood-line was broken. Her Sang-yab (spiritual husband) died, and she never took another consort. Her mother had advised that she should only have one Sang-yab. She also advised that she should only have one child; otherwise her life would be considerably shortened, and she would thus have little time to make sure of her daughter's spiritual training. Her Sang-yab, 'a-Shul Pema Legden, was an old Lama. He died whilst Yeshe Rema was still quite young, and before she had conceived a daughter. This could have meant that Yeshe Rema's cycles of Visionary teaching would have disappeared from the world, but through her yogic power she was able to conceive shortly before 'a-Shul Pema Legden's death. She guided him through the Bardo visions of the intermediate state between lives, and gave birth to him as her own son. It was not possible, for 'a-Shul Pema Legden to be re-born as a woman due to his own remaining karmic obscurations, and so the opportunity was lost in terms of these teachings being made widely known. Yeshe Rema's mother had given her advice about the inauspicious advent of giving birth to a son, and as a result of maintaining these instructions very exactly was able to pass the teaching on to her son by appearing to him in Visionary form after her own death, and whilst he was in solitary retreat at the age of eight.

The son of Yeshe Rema was called Aro Yeshe, and she left instructions that the Visionary practices that he would give would be called the Aro gTer. Aro Yeshe was the name that she would have given to her daughter, had she been able to give birth to a girl. During the childhood of Aro Yeshe he was kept away from other boys and from men in general. He was brought up, after the death of his mother, by five yoginis that she had appointed to attend to his education. His childhood friends were two sisters called A-ye Khandro and A-she Khandro who later becomes his Sang-yums. These two girls were the two first disciples to whom he transmitted the Aro gTer, and it was they who actually passed the teachings on to the other disciples of Jetsunma Khandro Yeshe Rema. Aro Yeshe himself taught very rarely because the transmissions were seen as more powerful if they were received from women.

Since the death of Yeshe Rema, the tradition was continued by a male lineage holder, supported by two powerful female consorts. This became called the indirect son line. It was called indirect because it came through a male lineage holder, and in this tradition male practitioners

have less power of lineal blessing. There is a prediction however, that the direct daughter line will re-emerge with greater power if sufficient women become accomplished in the Visionary methods of the Mother Essence Lineage.

My work as a Lama is dedicated to ensuring that such lineages as the direct daughter line can re-emerge. To that end Sang-ngak-cho-dzong has been established as a spiritual organization dedicated to the creation of opportunities for women. Special emphasis is placed on practice in the context of family life, and on encouraging women to engage in teacher-training within this lineage. There are now a group of significant women practitioners within Sang-ngak-cho-dzong who have had inspirational contact with Jetsunma Khandro Ten'dzin Drolkar, three of whom have been ordained into the Vajra commitment of the Ngakphang Sangha.

Of the three, one is called Khandro Dechen Tsedrup Yeshe; she is my wife and Sang-yum. She is a great inspiration to me, and we work together as a 'teaching couple'. As a 'teaching couple', an important aspect of our role is to provide an example of the dance that exists as the marriage of two Tantric practitioners. This is one of the most crucial and fundamental features of the Mother Essence Lineage, and one which I will describe at a later point in this essay. Khandro Dechen specializes in the practice of sKu-mNye, a system of psycho-physical exercises which are unique to the Mother Essence Lineage. She is currently preparing a three volume series of the one hundred and eleven exercises that comprise the cycle that stems from the Dzogchen Long-de system.

Another of the three ordained women, is Ngakma Nor'dzin Rang-jung Pamo. She is a mother of two, whose husband has also taken ordination. Ngakma Nor'dzin is a craft potter who makes gTer-bums (treasure vases), wonderful drums, and other practice artifacts for Sang-ngak-cho-dzong. She is also a healer and a woman whose simplicity and directness of explanation touches all those who come to her for advice in their lives and practice.

The third ordained woman is Ngakma Pema Rig'dzin Zangmo. She is the thangka painter, or visionary artist, of Sang-ngak-cho-dzong. She is responsible for making the visualization practices of this Lineage possible by bringing them into existence through her remarkable talent. She is an extraordinarily gifted artist, who has the unusual capacity to continue to improve at a rate that her Vajra sisters and brothers find surprising. Her husband is also an ordained Ngakpa.

All three women are experienced practitioners who have engaged in retreats and accomplished signs of practice. At present, Ngakma Nor'dzin and Ngakma Pema Zangmo do not have students of their own, but they give regular teaching input on the 'Open Teaching Retreats' that are held in Britain. When these two yoginis begin to take their own students (at some point in the future) they too will work as teaching couples along with their husbands. This was very much the style in which the Mother Essence Lineage functioned in Tibet, and my female and male students all share the hope that it will develop in this way in the West.

- Khandro/Pawo Mirroring, or
Cutting Through Spiritual Chauvinism -

Central to the Aro gTer is a teaching on practising as couples, in order to realize the hidden female and male qualities within men and women. In order to have some understanding of how such teachings function, it is necessary to have some understanding of duality and non-duality and of the functioning of the psycho-physical elements. To this end some explanation of the idea of Pawo and Khandro in Tibetan Tantra are crucial.

When the beginningless Empty essence of what we are gives rise to the

vibrant display of our nature; we manifest a physical form -- the energy that shimmers between wonderment and bewilderment. Bewilderment is the momentary loss of confidence in the open dimension of our being. If we try to 'return' to the open dimension of our being (rather than finding confidence in the recognition that we've never moved from that Spaciousness) we create the illusion of duality. As soon as the illusion of duality is coaxed into illusory existence, 'groundless anxiety' arises -- like wind from an empty sky. 'Groundless anxiety' is the root of paranoia; and when paranoia becomes the pattern of perception, the sense of 'isolation' is sparked -- and fanned into flames. 'Isolation'; is the root of 'clinging' to focuses of comforting proximity -- and when this 'clinging' and 'attachment' becomes the pattern of our perception, we experience our reality as flooded by 'fear' of loss. 'Fear' is the root of 'anger' which freezes our perception -- dividing substance from substancelessness. Experiencing this division, we evolve elaborate divisive strategies in order to align ourselves with ground, and reject groundlessness. These strategies are the root of 'obduracy', the need to fix, control and concretize everything within our sense fields. Everything within this array of perceptual horizons is then manipulated as a reference-point, in order to prove that we are: 'defined', 'continuous', 'separate', 'permanent' and 'solid'.

In this web of growing confusion and alienation, we continuously cling to whatever momentary pattern arises as a perception. We then try to force these perceptions into fixed definitions of 'what we cannot be'. Because we wish to accept and prolong certain definitions, (and wish to reject and curtail others) it becomes impossible to relax into the true nature of what we are. We become increasingly divided against ourselves (which is not actually possible) through the struggle to deny our Spacious nature. Because it is not actually possible to be divided against ourselves (or to split Emptiness and Form) we find ourselves engaged in a potentially never ending struggle to remain unenlightened.

Through our struggles to deny our Spacious nature we experience the pain of illusion (of being divided against ourselves). From this illusion all divisions and divisiveness arise! When we manifest human form we experience Form-reality in terms of gender. We become female or male. In our 'physical frames of reference' as women and men, we experience the division that always stems from dualistic perception. In order to feel whole, we have to experience separation and distinction in order to re-unite with what we sense that we have lost. This is where it gets complicated. Our relationships with each other as women and men, reflect the complexities of our estranged relationships with our own Spaciousness. Our Beginningless Enlightenment is continually inviting us to be the enlightened beings that we actually are; but we're very ambivalent about this kind of invitation. From the perverse perspective of 'unenlightenment', this sort of invitation seems to betoken annihilation.

Our primary dualistic intention is to distract ourselves from the Spacious nature of being; because, somehow, that doesn't seem like a condition in which we could survive. We want to snuggle down into a dim cosiness where the whole idea of Spaciousness might disappear. But however horribly snug we try to make our experiential environment, our innate wisdom always sparkles through. Enlightenment continually sparkles through the fabric of our distracted-being, unravelling the threads of our contrived perception, and making it difficult for us to obscure what we really are. The difficulties involved in playing this game of hide-and-seek with Spaciousness, constitute the pain that we experience. These difficulties are the patterning of our conditioning -- our karmic vision. Within the sphere of karmic vision we are cut off from our own wholeness. This wholeness, according to the Vision of Tantra, can be described as the interplay of outer and inner qualities. These manifested qualities of being are the twin aspects of realization -- wisdom and active-compassion.

Wisdom is the realization of the clear self-luminous nature of all phenomena, and active-compassion is the energy or spontaneous arising of enlightened activity.

The primary difference between women and men from this perspective, lies in the reversal of the outer and inner manifested qualities of Being. Women have outer wisdom qualities and inner compassion qualities. Men have outer compassion qualities and inner wisdom qualities. When women and men realize these qualities they dance together as Khandros and Pawos; and their energies brilliantly mirror each other. But when this realization is not present women and men teeter and clump, as beings distracted from Being. In this kind of confused dancing; the man usually wants to lead, and the woman usually wants to be led. However, the man can become unsure of where he is leading and feel resentful at having to lead, and the woman can feel dominated and cease to want to be lead. Whichever way there is no freedom for either.

The word Khandro is the phonetic adaptation of what is transliterated from the Tibetan as mKha'-'Gro. mKha' means 'sky' and 'Gro means 'going' and signifies 'movement' or 'unobstructedness' can be loosely rendered into English as Sky-Dancer. This word has a very special meaning in Tibetan, because it suggests the ability to experience the innate freedom of the Sky-like Cho-ying (Spatial dimension or dharmadhatu). This term signifies the unobstructed play of wisdom-Mind in the limitlessness of wisdom-Space. The quality of unobstructed play, is the Wisdom-activity that spontaneously arises from the unconditioned state of our beginningless enlightenment. Within the Tantric Vision, all women are secretly Khandros, and men are secretly Pawos. Pawo means hero or warrior, and signifies the pure appropriateness that has no need for the illusory security of firm ground. The word Pawo is the phonetic adaptation of what is transliterated from the Tibetan as dPa-bo. The Sanskrit origin of this word is Daka as the counterpart to the female Dakini; but in Tibetan, rather than there being Khandroma and Khandropa, there are Khandro and Pawo. The idea here is that rather than speaking of a male Sky-dancer, we speak of a hero or warrior in order to emphasize activity and power. The warrior is fearless, not because death has been objectified into a future event which is regarded with nonchalance, but because death is experienced with every moment. For the warrior the Birth and Death of every Mind-moment are fully experienced -- enabling him to live with totality in the present moment. (The word Khandropa applies to a Daka who manifests his inner wisdom-display in the external dimension. There is also the female aspect of Pawo, which is Pamo. The word Pamo applies to a Khandro who manifests her inner method-display in the external dimension.)

The Khandro quality of women, manifests as outer wisdom-Space in which her internal compassion plays. In relative terms, outer wisdom/sensitivity reflects itself in both the overt and subtle appearance of women as displayed through: intuition; fluidity; flexibility; resilience; adaptability; versatility; reflexiveness; empathy confluence; allowance; facilitation; resonance; sensitivity; receptivity; harmony; euphony; ideation; sensibility; delicacy; softness; obliqueness; devotion; laterality of apprehension; plurality of perception; inchoate understanding; radiance and openness. But when the connection with inner compassion/power is obscured through dualistic perception, the outer wisdom/sensitivity becomes weak, aimless and prey to manipulation.

The Pawo quality of men manifests as outer compassion/power, which arises energetically from inner wisdom/sensitivity. In relative terms his outer compassion/power, reflects itself in the overt and subtle appearance of men displayed through: strength; intellect; objectivity; productivity; capacity; performance; durability; angularity; acuteness; accuracy; precision; sympathy; steadfastness; methodology; systematization; drive; skillfulness; inventiveness; resourcefulness; creativity; persuasiveness;

directiveness; conclusiveness; linearity of apprehension; singularity of perception; constructiveness; reductivity; discrimination; discernment; exertion; capability and rationality. But when the vital connection with inner wisdom/sensitivity is obscured through clinging to dualistic perception, the outer compassion/power stiffens into aggression, intolerance and manipulation.

Unless a man is a true warrior, he finds the Sky-dancer terrifying because she completely undermines him with her inchoate Spaciousness. Unless a woman recognizes her Sky-dancing potential she finds the Pawo overpowering because she is utterly overawed by his unending effectiveness.

We need only examine our own sexual fears of penetration and engulfment to get some inkling of how pervasive these qualities are in all our existential interactions. Emptiness and Form are continually performing within the fabric of our psychologies. The 'self preservation instinct' and the 'death-wish' go hand in hand -- we are continually riding the energy of duality; whether we do so with Awareness or through distraction is a matter of commitment to the raw texture of the moment.

The assertion sometimes made within Sutric Buddhism, that women cannot attain Enlightenment until they are re-born as men, can be looked at in two ways. At face value such a statement is reflection of male delusion which springs from the neurotic need for protection against the threat of Spaciousness. Men are afraid of the inchoate or that which lies beyond rationality. But at a deeper level -- in order to attain Enlightenment, not only do women have to be re-born as men, but -- MEN MUST BE RE-BORN AS WOMEN. What needs to be re-born or discovered is the secret male in women, and the secret female in men. Both men and women need to re-discover their beginningless connection with their inner qualities -- in order to be complete. From this perspective, women and men are either a constantly available source of teaching for each other -- or, a constant source of conditioning. This is the reason for monasticism within the Sutrayana. Because the goal of the Sutrayana is Emptiness, its principle is renunciation. The method of renunciation is to work with attachment to the world of form through celibacy, non-ownership, and many forms of abstinence. Within Tantrayana however, there is no insistence on celibacy or any form of abstinence with regard to engaging with the world of form -- because the basis of Tantra is Emptiness. There is no insistence on celibacy or abstinence unless you are a monk or nun who practices Tantra as an internal discipline, whilst maintaining the monastic vows.

The principle of Tantra is transformation and its method is one of achieving the realization of the innate purity of all phenomena. With realization of Emptiness, there is no need for celibacy, because the Pawo and Khandro principles are emergent -- they're no longer occluded through fear of Emptiness. It is very important to understand this distinction between Sutrayana and Tantrayana, because otherwise there can be confusion over why celibacy is advocated in one vehicle and not by another.

In Sutra men and women are seen as being sources of conditioning for each other, whereas in Tantra women and men are seen as sources of inspiration for each other. So in Tantra, relationships are definitely described as being a support for practice rather than as a distraction. However, there needs to be the experiential basis of Emptiness. This is the fundamental qualification. If women and men reflect their true outer and inner qualities they provoke each other into relaxing their habits of division and divisiveness. When these habits are relaxed, through the practice of Tantric View -- men and women can realize their completeness. The practice of Tantric View entails the maintenance of pure-vision. Pure-vision is experienced through receiving Empowerment from the Lama, and maintaining that experience in everyday life by hearing all sound as Awareness-spell (mantra) and all phenomena as the radiated quality-sphere of the

Awareness-being (mandala of the deity). But if men and women only reflect their outer qualities, divorced from their inner qualities, then inequalities arise. Then all that is provoked are patterns of dependency and domination, with the woman as the 'sex object', and the man as the 'success object'.

Men need to be in contact with their sensitivity, and women need to be in contact with their power. Without this contact we forget what we are and become distracted from Awareness in the continuity of our essential nature. From this condition of dualism, our Energies become distorted and we flounder in the fog of forgetfulness with which we have all become so tediously familiar. We become confused and out of balance with ourselves, so that our outer qualities become, discordant and harmful to each other. The man or woman who could be our opportunity for liberation merely becomes our co-dependant imprisoned prisoner.

When a man loses contact with his inner-quality sensitivity, his outer-quality becomes distorted. Disconnected from his inner Khandro (his secret Wisdom), his outer-quality of Being which should spontaneously manifest active-compassion, manifests assertiveness. This assertiveness then ranges from force to brutality and violence; depending to what extent the inner Khandro has become occluded. With regard to his spiritual life, he could 'grow' into some kind of 'cosmic gorilla'. The 'cosmic gorilla' is some man who has developed 'spiritual muscles', someone who has learnt a few tricks and knows how to win bananas with his performance. He has some sort of 'power of his own', derived from being very linear, which is then bolstered by the power he is lent by others. The 'cosmic gorilla' might even be in search of Siddhis -- extra-normal powers, through which he could expand his carefully sharpened and polished ego, until it looked like a bullet.

When a woman loses contact with her inner quality power, her outer quality becomes distorted. Disconnected from her inner Pawo (her secret compassion) her outer quality of Being which should spontaneously manifest as encompassing wisdom, manifests decorativeness. This decorativeness then ranges from the inconsequential to superficial obsession with surface appearance, depending to what extent the inner Pawo has been occluded. With regard to her spiritual life, she dwindles into insignificance and insipidity, satisfied to arrange the flowers in the shrine room. She becomes a mindless devotee -- the kind of delicate presence who hovers around the teacher. At the teacher's discourse, she continually fills his glass of water; but she does so in such a way as to be noticed by everyone. There is no sense that she will ever practice, but she is always there as a very obvious and omnipresent nonentity. If she does meditate she wants to cultivate 'beautiful experiences' with which to ornament her psyche. She may consider herself to be a 'sensitive', and 'feel' things that are 'deeply mysterious'. She may sit attempting to feel serene and very special in a way that she would not define.

This is a depressing picture; but, in the Tantric Vision, no matter how far we wander into the intricacies of duality -- we're just toying or torturing ourselves with endless distortions of what we actually are. This means that whatever our perception is, it is not removed from Enlightenment. So, however our Energies have become distorted we simply need to allow them to relax into their natural condition. To allow our Energies to relax into their natural condition is the purpose of meditation -- we simply need to stop producing unenlightenment. As soon as we let go of our fear of our own Spacious nature our inner qualities manifest spontaneously.

Men and women are attracted to each other; this is not an unusual statement to make, but that attraction is composed of the openness to our innate Enlightenment and our fear of our innate Enlightenment. Attraction

is both a very simple fact and a very complex issue. This is always the condition in which we find ourselves. As long as we attempt to create a division between Emptiness and Form, everything we do has this dual quality; there is always attraction in our aversion and aversion in our attraction. This is why the love-hate relationship can manifest, and why ambivalence is one of the prime keys to understanding the nature of Tantra.

Women are attracted to the distorted male image because they seek to reconnect with power in some way. Women have a natural relationship with power. But if they fail to realize that their inner quality is the very nature of power, they will find no other solution but to seek it externally. However, women are also attracted to men through the recognition of the reflection of their own inner Pawo. Both happen simultaneously -- enlightenment and unenlightenment flicker.

Men are attracted to the distorted female image because they seek to reconnect with sensitivity in some way. Men have a natural relationship with sensitivity; but, if they fail to realize that this is because their own inner quality is the very nature of sensitivity, they will find no other solution but to seek it externally. However, men are also attracted to women through the recognition of the reflection of their own inner Khandro. Both happen simultaneously -- enlightenment and unenlightenment flicker.

As long as a woman attempts to find her inner Pawo vicariously through seducing (or making herself available to) a man by means of her distorted outer sensitivity, she is likely to lose even what small conventional power she had. She stands the chance of being dominated by an insensitive emotionally inarticulate aggressor. As long as a man tries to obtain his inner Khandro through wooing or coercing a woman by means of his distorted outer power, he is likely to trap himself with some fading glamour-puss with little on her mind but demands for the provision of endless chintz and tinsel.

These are obviously extreme examples -- caricatures of how people can be if they work very hard to obscure their inner qualities. But everyone finds themselves on the continuum that includes these caricatures, and it is possible that everyone could see some dim reflection of themselves in this pattern of dissatisfaction and incomprehension. This is a situation in which nobody gets what they want. Nobody gets 'what they want', because 'what they want' is not possible to obtain through getting 'what they want'. We see 'what we want'; but, when we get it -- it turns out to be something else. It turns out to be something that seems almost entirely different from what we initially saw.

Men and women need to look within themselves for completion, rather than trying to find it in an-other incomplete person. Men and women fail to get what they want from each other, because it's not actually there to be had; unless, they have it already anyway. Another paradox. It is only possible to get what we want if we have it already. If we already have the connection with our inner Pawo or inner Khandro then we no longer need to find anything outside ourselves. But it is just at this point when the need is no longer there that we can really begin to dance with each other. Something else arises, which replaces our unrequitable neurotic need. Once this need (which is born of disassociation with our own inner qualities) dissolves into its own Empty nature; a tremendous appreciation for each other can arise.

This sense of appreciation arises, because people catch glimpses of their completeness and can begin to relate to each other in an authentic way. No matter how distanced we are from our inner qualities, our enlightened nature continually sparkles through. The frequency of sparkling depends on

how much we cooperate with the sparkling or howmuch we resist it. The nature of this cooperation is our practice of the Inner Tantras. For a Ngakpa, one of the most important vows is never to disparage women. For Ngakpas women are the source of wisdom, and their practice is to See the phenomenal world as female -- as wisdom-display; the dance of the Khandros. When the world is Seen as the scintillating sparkling dance of the Khandros, the inner Khandro is incited. When the inner Khandro is incited, the elements begin to relax into their own condition and the fabric of duality begins to dissolve.

The vow for a Ngakma is to regard the entire phenomenal world as male -- as method-display as the powerfully direct dance of the Pawos. When the world is seen in this way, the inner Pawo is incited. When the inner Pawo is incited, the Elements begin to relax into their own condition and the fabric of duality begins to dissolve. Men and women who can enter into this kind of reality have the capacity to relate with each other; not through neurotic need, but through a fundamental appreciation of each other's inner qualities and outer qualities. When we waken to the nature of our inner qualities, we are able to mirror each other in a delightful manner. In this way we are able to undermine each other's conditioning rather than entrenching each other further in our respective patterns of conditioning. It is not possible to describe or explain how it is possible to See the world in this way, because fundamentally this capacity itself arises from realization of Emptiness.

For relationships to have any spiritual meaning, or even any worthwhile purpose, it is essential to maintain the View of one's partner as either Pawo or Khandro. Some remote sense of this is often artificially arrived at through creating mystery or by absence (which makes the heart grow fonder); but, both these are simply reflections of Emptiness. Any authentic glimpse of the Inner Pawo or Khandro can only come through meditative experience and Openness to the insecurity or fundamental chaos of each moment.

GLOSSARY
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'a-Shul Pema Legden::

The sang-yab of Jetsunma Khandro Yeshe Rema, and the father of Aro Yeshe 'a-Shul Pema Legden was a monk-yogi who was a gTer scribe and Visionary artist for Khalding Lingpa the previous incarnation of His Holiness Kyabje Khordong gTerchen Tulku Chhi'm.d Rig'dzin Rinpoche

Aro Gar::

The Aro Gar, was the encampment where the Mother Essence Lineage was received in Vision by Aro Yeshe from his mother Jetsunma Khandro Yeshe Rema. These teachings were first taught at the Aro Gar by Aro Yeshe who transmitted the teaching to his two sang-yums -- the sisters A-ye Khandro and A-she Khandro

Aro gTer::

The Visionary Teaching cycle of Aro Yeshe, which was received directly from Jetsunma Khandro Yeshe Rema, the incarnation of Jomo Menmo

Aro Yeshe::

Ngakchang Drupchen Aro Yeshe was the son of Jetsunma Khandro Yeshe Rema and discoverer of the Aro gTer. The incarnation of 'a-Shul Pema Legden

Bon::

The shamanic systems that existed in Tibet before Buddhism. Bon in Tibet within the last five hundred years is theoretically

indistinguishable from Tibetan Buddhism. Both Buddhism and Bon incorporated each others practises to such a degree that there are only superficial differences between them. These differences exist at the symbolic level, and at the level of Lineage. Bon lays historical claim to a lineage of Dzogchen that pre-dates the entry of Buddhism into Tibet.

Chatral Rinpoche::

Kyabje Chatral Rinpoche is an important Nyingma Lama who lives in Yang-le-shod in the Kathmandu valley of Nepal. He is one of the teachers of Lama Tharchin Rinpoche.

Chod::

The charnel ground practice in which the practitioner severs attachment to his or her corporeal form. The practice originated by Machig Labdron, the great Tibetan yogini. See Machig Labdron

Cho-nyi::

Chos-nyid -- Dharmata, the Space of reality.

Cho-ying::

Spatial dimension or dharmadhatu. This term signifies the unobstructed play of wisdom-Mind in the limitlessness of wisdom-Space

Dorje Phagmo::

Indestructible sow' or 'Thunderbolt sow'. She is the ecstatically fierce Dakini, whose head is surmounted by the head of a sow whose screech shatters illusion

Dorje Trollo::

Indestructible Rage - the most wrathful of the eight manifestations of Padmasambhava

Dri::

Large Tibetan ox -- the dri is the female of the yak

Dzogchen::

The Great Completion. The innermost Tantra, which transcends ritual and symbol

Dzogchen Long-de::

One of the three series of Dzogchen -- the 'Space' or 'Vast Expanse' series. It deals with subtle-sensation as the focus of meditative absorption, and employs a great variety of yogic postures and corresponding physical pressure-points that stimulate the rLung, prana, or Spatial-winds of the vajra-body. Details of such practices are kept highly secret and can only be received through transmission from a qualified Lama

E-yul::

Land of primordial awareness

Gar::

Encampment. The place where Jetsunma Khandro Yeshe Rema settled in Southern Nepal was called the Aro Gar. See Aro Gar.

Garuda::

See Khyung

Golok::

Northern Kham, a very wild area of Tibetan which is notorious for brigandry. There are many nomads in this area, and yogic encampments as well as tent monasteries.

Gomchenma::

Gomchenma means 'greatly accomplished female meditator'

rGyud::

Tantra, Tantrayana, Vajrayana or Secret Mantrayana. The vehicle which derives from Long-ku (Sambhogakaya) Visionary transmission. The path of transformation -- in distinction to the Sutric path of renunciation. See Sutra

Ja-lu::

'Ja'-lus -- the rainbow body. Dzogchen practitioners who have mastered the Trek-chod phase of Dzogchen in which pure and total presence is stabilized, are able to practice To-gal. To-gal is the final practice of Dzogchen, which enables the yogi or yogini to dissolve his or her physical body into the essence of the elements at the time of death. The yogi or yogini then disappears into a body of light, leaving only hair toe & finger nails, and nasal septum behind

Jetsunma Khandro Ten'dzin Drolkar::

A great living Dzogchen yogini who lives in Himachal Pradesh North India

Jetsunma Khandro Yeshe Rema::

The incarnation of Jomo Menmo whose Visionary teachings are called the Mother Essence Lineage or the Aro gTer. Jetsunma Khandro Yeshe Rema was the daughter of Gomchenma 'o-Zer Pema and the niece of Jomo Chhi-'med Pema who was an emanation of Yeshe Tsogyel

Jomo Chhi-'med Pema::

Emanation of Yeshe Tsogyel who was the aunt and adoptive mother of Gomchenma Pema 'o-Zer. See Gomchenma Pema 'o-Zer

Jomo Menmo::

The incarnation of Machig Lapdron, and emanation of Yeshe Tsogyel who was the consort of Guru Chowang. The previous incarnation of Jetsunma Khandro Yeshe Rema, mother of Aro Yesh See Aro Yeshe, Yeshe Tsogyel and Machig Lapdron

Kagyud::

One of the four Schools of Tibetan Buddhism. One of the three Sarma, or New Translation Schools, that is closest in practice to the Nyingma School

Karmic vision::

The way, or style, in which we see things. The karmic vision of every type of being is distinct. Every being's Karmic vision is comprised according to the particular style in which they maintain the illusion of duality.

Khalding Lingpa::

The incarnation of Nuden Dorje Drophan Lingpa whose incarnation line goes back to Kye-chung Lotsa, one of the twenty-five siddhas of Chhimphu -- the twenty-five disciples of Padmasambhava. He was the twin incarnation, with Dudjom Lingpa of the line that came from Nuden Dorje, Shariputra, Hungkara, Gagasiddhi, and Kye-chung Lotsa. H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche was the incarnation of Dudjom Lingpa, and His Holiness Kyabje Khordong gTerchen Tulku Chhi'med Rig'dzin Rinpoche is the incarnation of Khalding Lingpa

Khandro::

Literally 'sky-goer'. Either the outer quality of a woman or the inner quality of a man. A wisdom-display manifestation

Khandropa::

A man who has recognized his 'inner Khandro' and manifests this realization in terms of his external activity in the world

Khandro Dechen Tsedrup Yeshe::

The sang-yum of Ngakpa Chogyam Rinpoche

Khandro Rinpoche::

A female incarnate Lama of the Kagyud School, currently teaching in Europe

sKu-mNye::

Literally -- 'subtle-dimension massage'. sKu-mNye in the Aro gTer system, is associated with the Dzogchen Long-de teachings (see Dzogchen Long-de). The Aro gTer sKu-mNye comprises of exercises that stimulate the tsa-lung system (see rLung and Tsa-lung). These exercises are divided into six animals that relate with the elements. There are one hundred and eleven exercises -- twenty-one for each elemental animal: lion / earth; vulture / water; tiger / fire; eagle / air; and garuda / space. These add up to one hundred and five. The remaining six exercises belong to the dragon, which represents the unified sphere of all the elements

Khyung::

The Space-eagle. An Awareness-being (meditational deity) who embodies the unborn nature of the Dzogchen teachings. The Khyung is born from its egg full grown, symbolizing the self-existent maturity of the enlightened state, which is the natural unfabricated condition of all beings.

Lama::

Teacher, especially of Tantra. The word Lama pertains not only to the external teacher, but to the inner teacher or enlightened nature. The Lama, therefore, is one who reflects the beginningless enlightened nature of their students.

La-yak-pang-drong::

The western part of Lho-drak, where Jomo Menmo met Guru Cho-wang

Ling-je Repa::

A gTerton of the Nyingma School who gained profound spiritual experience from his meeting with Jomo Menmo. See gTer and Jomo Menmo

rLung::

Spatial-wind or prana in Sanskrit.

Machig Lapdron::

'Unique Mother Torch of Practice', the incarnation of Yeshe Tsogyel who originated the practice of Chod. See Chod

Ngakma Pema Rig'dzin Zangmo::

The thangka painter of Sang-ngak-cho-dzong. A female disciple of Ngakpa Chogyam Rinpoche who has taken ordination into the Vajra commitment of the Ngakphang sangha

Ngakma Nor'dzin Rang-jung Pamo::

A female disciple Ngakpa Chogyam Rinpoche who has taken ordination into the Vajra commitment of the Ngakphang sangha

Ngakphang Sangha::

The White Sangha, or non-monastic Sangha. Ngakphang means 'Mantra-holding' and applies to those who have taken Tantric ordination rather

the Sutric ordination of monks and nuns

Nyingma::

The Ancient School of Tibetan Buddhism -- the 'early spread' of Buddhism in Tibet which grew under the enlightened inspiration of the second Buddha -- Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyel

Pema Tsokyi::

The name given to Jomo Menmo by her parents

Padmasambhava::

The second Buddha who brought the Tantric teachings to Tibet

Pamo::

A woman who has recognized her 'inner Pawo' and manifests this realization in terms of her external activity in the world

Pawo::

Literally 'warrior' or 'hero'. Either the outer quality of a man or the inner quality of a woman. A method-display manifestation

Rang-rig Togden::

The yogi who became the sang-yab of Gomchenma Pema 'o-Zer. He practised the subjugation practices of Chana Dorje (Vajrapani), Tamdrin (Hayagriva) and Khyung (Garuda) a practice he had received from Azom Drukpa

Rema::

Cotton wearer. The female of Repa, as in Milar.pa. A Rema, or Repa, is one who is accomplished in the practice of gTu-mo -- the practice of Spatial-heat, one of the Naro-cho-drug (six yogas of Naropa). These practitioners wear white cotton and often live naked above the snow-line

Rinpoche::

Literally 'precious one'. Rinpoche is used as a respectful form of address to one's teacher. It is a mistaken assumption that the term Rinpoche indicates an incarnate Lama; although all incarnate Lamas are called Rinpoche by their students

Sang-ngak-cho-dzong::

The spiritual association dedicated to the preservation of the Mother Essence Lineage and the Ngakphang sangha. It was founded by Ngakpa Chogyam Rinpoche, and named by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche.

Sang-yab::

Secret Father - spiritual-husband or consort

Sang-yum::

Secret Mother - spiritual-wife or consort

Sonam Sangpo Rinpoche::

The Nyingma Lama who is the abbot of the Vajrayana Retreat Centre in Yang-le-shod, Nepal. He is the friend of Ngakpa Chogyam Rinpoche, Jetsunma Khandro Ten'dzin Drolkar, and Lama Tharchin Rinpoche of Pema Osel Ling in Santa Cruz

Sutra::

The teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha: Sravakabuddhayana; Pratyekabuddhayana; and Boddhisattvabuddhayana. Known in the New Translation Schools as the Hinayana and Mahayana

Tak-lha-ri::

Mountain of the Sky Tiger. The place from which Jomo Menmo and her two female disciples entered the Sky-dimension.

Tantra::

Continuum, continuity or thread, see rGyud

Tashi Chi-dren::

One of the spiritual consorts of Padmasambhava

Tharchin Rinpoche::

Nyingma Lama and current Holder of the Repkong Ngakpa Lineage. Friend of Ngakpa Chogyam Rinpoche, Jetsunma Khandro Ten'dzin Drolkar, and Lama Sonam Sangpo Rinpoche. Tharchin Rinpoche is a married Lama who is an ordained member of the Ngakphang sangha

gTer::

gTer is the shortened form of the word gTerma, which refers to a cycle of teaching and practices that have been discovered in visionary form

gTerton::

A discoverer of gTerma

Thinley Norbu::

His Holiness Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche is the elder son of His Holiness Kyabje Jigdrel Yeshe Dorje, Dudjom Rinpoche, and one of the most important living Lamas of the Nyingma School.

Trul-khor::

Literally 'apparitional circle' or 'magical-wheel'. Called yantra yoga in Sanskrit, it is a system which resembles hatha yoga combined with pranayama and linked by movement. The Trul-khor of the Aro gTer is allied to the practice of Dzogchen Sem-de (see Dzogchen). In this practice, one moves between different physical postures in a rhythmic manner linking the movement with the breath. This system is designed to purify the rLung (see rLung)

Togden::

Possessor of accomplishment. A yogi or yogini with matted hair

Tsa-lung::

Yogic exercises involving breath and visualization. The Tsa-lung system is the Vajra-body of Spatial-nerve and the Spatial-winds that move within them

Yak::

Large Tibetan ox - the yak is the male of the dri

Yeshe Tsogyel::

The female Tantric Buddha, and sang-yum of Padmasambhava

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NOTES

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1. Sang-ngak-cho-dzong is spelt with an umlaut over the "o" in "cho" this has been removed in this version as have various other accent marks.

2. For more information about Sang-ngak-cho-dzong, please contact:
the Secretary, Sang-ngak-cho-dzong, 5 Court Close, Whitchurch, Cardiff,
CF4 1JR, Wales, U.K. tel: 0222 620332.

3. Sang-ngak-cho-dzong is a Registered UK Charity, No. 1019886.

NGAKPA CHOGYAM RINPOCHE is the Spiritual Director of Sang-ngak-cho-dzong. An English-born Lama of the Nyingma Tradition, Ngakpa Rinpoche was recognized by H.H. Chimed Rigdzin Rinpoche as the rebirth of 'a-Shul Pema Legden. He is the author of //Rainbow of Liberated Energy// and //Journey into Vastness// (published by Element Books). Rinpoche is a Tantric artist, poet, singer, healer, and Doctor of Tibetan Tantric Psychology.

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