

## INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME FIVE

VOLUME FIVE BRINGS US to a series of writings that concern themselves with the themes of lineage and devotion in the context of vajrayana Buddhism and Chögyam Trungpa's transmission of dharma to America. The first two offerings in this volume, *Crazy Wisdom* and *Illusion's Game: The Life and Teaching of Naropa*, are commentaries by Chögyam Trungpa on the significance of the lives of two great lineage holders: Padmasambhava, or Guru Rinpoche, who introduced Buddhism to Tibet in the eighth century; and Naropa, the Indian guru who gave the root teachings of the Kagyü lineage to his Tibetan disciple Marpa in the eleventh century. Marpa is known as the father of the Kagyü lineage in Tibet, and it is his life and teachings that are the subject of the next two selections in Volume Five. In this case, *The Collected Works* includes Chögyam Trungpa's preface and his translator's colophon to *The Life of Marpa the Translator*, which was translated by Trungpa Rinpoche and the Nālandā Translation Committee (NTC) and first published in 1982. Since translations in general are beyond the scope of *The Collected Works*, only the preface and the colophon are included. Likewise, *The Collected Works* includes Chögyam Trungpa's foreword and colophon to *The Rain of Wisdom*, another translation undertaken by the NTC under Rinpoche's direction. Rinpoche's own songs, or religious poetry, that are part of the English edition of *The Rain of Wisdom* are also presented.

The next selection is an excerpt from *The Sadhana of Mahamudra*, the tantric text that Chögyam Trungpa received as terma in Bhutan in 1968. This is followed by "Joining Energy and Space," an article based on some of the teachings that he subsequently gave to his students about the

significance of the sadhana. *The Sadhana of Mahamudra* brings together the ultimate teachings from two great Tibetan spiritual lineages: the dzogchen, or maha ati, teachings of the Nyingma and the mahamudra teachings of the Kagyü.

Next are two short articles that present the vajrayana practice of mantra, which uses the repetition of sacred syllables to invoke the wisdom and energy of egolessness in the form of various herukas,<sup>1</sup> or non-theistic deities. The first article, “HUM: An Approach to Mantra,” is a general explanation of the basic usage of mantra as well as a specific discussion of the mantra HUM, which is the seed, or root, syllable for all of the herukas. The next article, “Explanation of the Vajra Guru Mantra,” also presents general guidelines for understanding the practice of mantra. However, the main body of this piece is an explanation of this mantra and its association with invoking the power and presence of Padmasambhava.

Next is an interview with Chögyam Trungpa on the ngöndro practices, or the four foundations, which are the entrance into the formal practice of vajrayana. This interview was part of the introduction to the English translation of *The Torch of Certainty*, a classic Tibetan text on ngöndro composed by Jamgön Kongtrül the Great and translated by Judith Hanson. Trungpa Rinpoche’s foreword from this book is also included.

“The Practicing Lineage” and “The Mishap Lineage” discuss the origins of Trungpa Rinpoche’s own spiritual lineage, the line of the Trungpas. Then there is the short piece “Teachings on the Tulku Principle” and finally three articles on Milarepa, Tibet’s most famous Buddhist yogi.

Lineage, one of the main topics of this volume, means the continuity and transmission of the awakened state of mind, which is passed down in an unbroken, direct line from teacher to disciple, beginning with the Buddha—or a buddha—and continuing up to the present day. There are many branches of transmission. Some of them trace back directly to Gautama Buddha, the buddha of this age or world realm who appeared in human form. Other lineages trace back to a transmission from one or more of the buddhas who exist on a celestial plane, such as Vajradhara or Samantabhadra, who manifest in a transcendental or dharmakaya aspect. This is often the case in the Tibetan lineages.

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1. *Heruka* is the Sanskrit term. *Yidam* is the Tibetan for a vajrayana deity.

As mentioned earlier, the teachings presented here concern themselves with two major branches within Tibetan Buddhism, both of which were part of Chögyam Trungpa's direct heritage: the teachings of the Nyingma, or "ancient," lineage of Padmasambhava; and those of the Kagyü, the "oral" or "command" lineage, which originated with the Indian guru Tilopa, who received the ultimate teachings directly from the dharmakaya buddha Vajradhara.

Chögyam Trungpa's primary intent was not to present a historical or scholarly approach to these lineages of transmission. As he says in *Crazy Wisdom*, "Our approach here, as far as chronology and such things are unconcerned, is entirely unscholastic. For those of you who are concerned with dates and other such historical facts and figures, I am afraid I will be unable to furnish accurate data. Nevertheless, the inspiration of Padmasambhava, however old or young he may be, goes on" (page 65). In his talks on the forefathers of the Tibetan Buddhist teachings, he drew on events from their spiritual biographies, which are stories of complete liberation, or *namthars*, composed in order to bring to life the journey that each of these great practitioners made. He shows us the enormous commitment to sanity that they made and the extraordinary difficulties that they endured in order to become holders of the wisdom of budhdharma and to transmit that wisdom to others. Above all, he presents their lives as examples to guide us in awakening our own sanity as we tread on the path of dharma.

Devotion, the other main theme of this volume, is the emotional attitude and experience of the student that make transmission and realization possible. Devotion is the water that flows through the teachings and maintains them as a living transmission. Devotion is the human element of lineage, the bond between teacher and student that brings vajrayana to life. If one approaches the vajrayana teachings purely with the intellect, it is like trying to use physics to fathom outer space. The physics of space may be extremely subtle and profound, but studying those principles and equations does not bring any genuine *experience* of space. In fact, it may make it seem that direct personal experience of something so far-reaching and profound would be impossible.

What makes the impossible possible is, first, meeting a genuine teacher, someone who is the embodiment of what one is seeking. Second, one has to make friends with outer space as presented in this human form. That is the role of devotion in one's relationship with the

teacher. It involves surrendering one's egotism and selfishness unconditionally in order to gain a vast perspective. It seems that there is really only one thing that allows us to sacrifice ourselves completely, and that is love. We have to begin with love—completely giving ourselves to one person, the teacher, before we can surrender properly to the whole world. Without a personal connection, devotion is too abstract and, paradoxically, too limited. You might say that it's not important to surrender to a teacher per se: you could give yourself to anyone. However, devotion is about unconditional surrender, not about creating further ego-oriented entanglements. In the student's "love affair" with the teacher, you give yourself to space; you give yourself to someone who speaks for space. That someone is the teacher, and that surrender, or abandonment of oneself, is the experience of devotion.

In many respects, this is even more difficult to talk about now than it was when Chögyam Trungpa first gave these talks and translated the devotional texts that are excerpted or referred to here. Throughout his years of teaching in America, Chögyam Trungpa warned against the dangers of charlatan gurus. As he said in *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*, "Because America is so fertile, seeking spirituality, it is possible for America to inspire charlatans. . . . Because America is looking so hard for spirituality, religion becomes an easy way to make money and achieve fame."<sup>2</sup> He advised people to be careful, to think twice, and to use their intelligence to seek out and connect with a genuine teacher. However, there is an entirely different approach that has become more popular in the last few years, which is to do away with the absolute nature of the student-teacher relationship altogether, so that the student goes it on his or her own, accepting advice where it is helpful but never surrendering beyond a certain point.

That is certainly one way to avoid a disastrous relationship with a fraudulent teacher. Rather than accepting a "pseudo" guru, it is preferable to keep one's own counsel. There is much that can be accomplished on one's own or with a teacher as adviser rather than as the ultimate reference point. To learn to meditate and practice loving-kindness—one could do far worse than that! For most of us, to accomplish just that is a lifetime's work.

But to deny the possibility of attaining stainless, pure enlightenment

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2. *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*, Shambhala Classics edition (2002), p. 18.

and to deny the possibility of the means—to deny the value of genuine devotion and the existence of genuine teachers—seems to be closing off one of the greatest opportunities that human beings have: the opportunity to be fully awake. Awakening is not achieved easily or comfortably, and the journey is not without dangers and extremes, but that makes it no less real or precious. In this volume are the wonderful stories of some of the outrageous and fully awakened gurus of the Buddhist lineage. What an inspiration they are! At the same time, it is almost unthinkable that these are stories about real people, not just mythical figures in the past. Yet part of Chögyam Trungpa's genius was his ability to personally introduce you to this cast of characters, as though they were sitting in front of you, as though they might walk in the front door anytime. As though one of them might be your teacher . . .

In *Crazy Wisdom*—which is made up of talks edited from two seminars that Chögyam Trungpa gave in December 1972—we are introduced to some of the main themes in the life of Padmasambhava. An Indian teacher, he brought the Buddhist teachings to Tibet in the eighth century at the invitation of King Trisong Detsen. Thus, he is regarded as the father of Buddhism in Tibet and is revered by all Tibetan lineages and by the Tibetan people. Often, biographies of a teacher present the story of how that person became a student of the buddhadharma, met his or her guru, underwent extensive trials and training, and finally became enlightened, or realized. Such stories provide inspiration and many helpful lessons to students entering the path. In this case, however, Padmasambhava is considered to have been primordially enlightened. That is, he was born fully enlightened, it is said, as an eight-year-old child seated on a lotus flower in the middle of a lake. It is a highly improbable story. As Chögyam Trungpa says, “For an infant to be born in such a wild, desolate place in the middle of a lake on a lotus is beyond the grasp of conceptual mind. . . . Such a birth is impossible. But, then, impossible things happen, things beyond our imagination” (p. 27). Rather than trying to explain or defend this tale, Trungpa Rinpoche accepts the story of Padmasambhava's birth as the ground to discuss primordial innocence. As he says, “It is possible for us to discover our own innocence and childlike beauty, the princelike quality in us . . . it is a fresh discovery of perception, a new discovery of a sense of things as they are” (p. 28). Throughout this book, he is describing not so much the life of a Buddhist saint who lived over a thousand years ago, but the aspects of our own journey

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME FIVE

and our own lives that might connect with this timeless and extraordinary energy.

Sherab Chödzin Kohn, the editor of *Crazy Wisdom*, has rendered this material artfully, with love and fidelity to the original talks. In reading this book, one has the opportunity to plumb the depths of what crazy wisdom actually is—which is both crazier and wiser than one could possibly imagine!

“Crazy wisdom” was one of a number of terms that Chögyam Trungpa coined in English. It has caught on and has come to be used to describe a variety of styles of behavior, some of them more crazy than wise. In his original meaning of the term, which is a translation of the Tibetan *yeshe chölwa*, it describes the state of being of someone who has gone beyond the limitations of conventional mind and is thus “crazy” from the limited reference point of conceptual thinking; yet such a person is also existing or dwelling in a state of spontaneous wisdom, free from thought in the conventional sense, free from the preoccupations of hope and fear. Crazy wisdom is sometimes referred to as “wisdom gone beyond.” The outrageousness of crazy wisdom is that it will do whatever needs to be done to help sentient beings: it subdues whatever needs to be subdued and cares for whatever needs its care. It will also destroy what needs to be destroyed. Padmasambhava was the embodiment of crazy wisdom; hence the title of the book. This topic is particularly alive and juicy in the hands of Chögyam Trungpa because he was a guru in the lineage of crazy wisdom. It is in part his own fearless wisdom that he communicates in this book.

Sherab Chödzin Kohn also edited the next book in Volume Five, *Illusion's Game: The Life and Teaching of Naropa*, a commentary on the biography of the great Indian teacher. Naropa's biography takes the more traditional approach of Tibetan spiritual biography: it is the inspired tale of Naropa's arduous search for his guru and his experiences while studying with the Indian master Tilopa. *Illusion's Game* is based on two seminars in which Trungpa Rinpoche reflected on the meaning of events in Naropa's life, using the biography translated by Herbert V. Guenther as his main reference point. Most of the students who attended the seminars had read Dr. Guenther's book. In *Illusion's Game*, excerpts from Dr. Guenther's translation are included to help readers understand the context of the discussion, and in his editor's introduction, Sherab Chö-

dzin also provides an excellent summary of the salient events in the biography.

Naropa was the abbot of Nalanda University. One day while he was studying, an ugly old woman suddenly appeared and asked him if he understood the words or the sense of the Buddhist teachings he was reading. She was very happy when he told her that he understood the words, but she became very angry when he said that he also understood the sense. He asked her to tell him who, then, knew the real meaning, and she answered that he should seek her brother Tilopa. Inspired by this encounter, Naropa left the university, much to the dismay of his colleagues and students, and set out to find his guru Tilopa.

On the way, he encountered one horrific illusion after another. Each situation was a test by Tilopa of his prospective disciple's understanding, and on each occasion Naropa missed the point, so that he had to keep searching on and on. Eventually, he found Tilopa eating fish entrails by the side of a lake. This was just the beginning. Naropa had to undergo many trials, over many years, until finally he became fully realized. As Sherab Chödzin Kohn tells us in the introduction of the book, "Tilopa required him [Naropa] to leap from the roof of a tall temple building. Naropa's body was crushed. He suffered immense pain. Tilopa healed him with a touch of his hand, then gave him instructions. This pattern was repeated eleven more times. Eleven more times Tilopa remained either motionless or aloof for a year; then Naropa prostrated and asked for teaching. Tilopa caused him to throw himself into a fire, . . . be beaten nearly to death, have his blood sucked out by leeches, be pricked with flaming splinters . . .," and on the story goes. It is difficult to know what to make of such a tale. We could dismiss it as craziness or treat it as symbolism. But could we imagine that such things actually took place and that such people could actually exist?

Trungpa Rinpoche published a poem in *First Thought Best Thought* titled "Meetings with Remarkable People." After describing encounters with three very strange beings, who are actually vajrayana deities, he says:

Can you imagine seeing such people and receiving and  
talking to them?  
Ordinarily, if you told such stories to anybody, they would  
think you were a nut case;

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME FIVE

But, in this case, I have to insist that I am not a nut case;  
.....  
Don't you think meeting such sweet friends is worthwhile  
and rewarding?  
.....  
I would say meeting them is meeting with remarkable men  
and women:  
Let us believe that such things do exist.<sup>3</sup>

In that spirit, it may be valuable to explore the life of Naropa and how it might apply personally to oneself. Not only does Trungpa Rinpoche present the outrageous qualities of Naropa's life, but he also draws analogies to our own experience. Of Naropa's trials, he writes, "these twelve experiences that Naropa went through were a continuous unlearning process. To begin with, he had to unlearn, to undo the cultural facade. Then he had to undo the philosophical and emotional facade. Then he had to step out and become free altogether. This whole process was a very painful and very deliberate operation. This does not apply to Naropa and his time alone. This could also be something very up-to-date. This operation is applicable as long as we have conflicting emotions and erroneous beliefs about reality" (p. 186). From that point of view, the story makes good sense. However, on another level, it remains utterly outrageous. If we look at most of the stories about the lives of the Tibetan lineage holders—Padmasambhava, Tilopa, Naropa, Marpa, Milarepa, and others—we see that these were people who did not exclude *anything* from their experience. They could, in fact, be quite terrifying in their fearlessness.

In the article "Milarepa: A Warrior's Life," which appears in Volume Five, Trungpa Rinpoche includes the last instructions given by the yogi Milarepa to his students, as he lay on his deathbed: "Reject all that increases ego-clinging, or inner poison, even if it appears good. Practice all that benefits others, even if it appears bad. This is the true way of dharma. . . . Act wisely and courageously according to your innate insight, even at the cost of your life." The great forefathers of the lineage were willing to work with whatever might come up. In fact, they delighted in embodying the most extreme aspects of human experience, if

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3. *First Thought Best Thought* (1983), p. 125.

in doing so they could help others. From their point of view, they were not striving to be outrageous or even helpful; their behavior was just the natural expression of what is.

This is the training that Chögyam Trungpa had himself received. A story from his early life illustrates how he put this training into effect, in extreme as well as ordinary circumstances. When Tibet was invaded by the communist Chinese, he had to flee the country over the Himalayas to avoid imprisonment and probable death. Before he set out on his journey to India, he heard of people being tortured and killed; his monastery was sacked; there was a price on his head. The journey out of Tibet lasted ten months—an almost unimaginably long time to be trekking on foot over the Himalayas (without modern mountain gear, jeeps, or thermal underwear, one might add), constantly in fear of being discovered by the Chinese, while facing extraordinary physical difficulties, crossing one high pass after another, fording roaring rivers in the dead of winter, reduced in the end to boiling saddlebags for food.<sup>4</sup> When Trungpa Rinpoche and his party reached the Brahmaputra River, close to the end of the journey, they had to make their crossing at night in somewhat unstable boats made of leather. Someone in a nearby town had alerted the Chinese that a group of Tibetans was going across that night, and the Chinese ambushed Rinpoche's party. Out of more than two hundred traveling together, fewer than two dozen made it across. Trungpa Rinpoche luckily was one of those who did. Reaching the other side while hearing gunshots in the background, he and most of the remaining band hid in some holly trees until the next night. In *Born in Tibet*, he wrote, "We dared not open our food pack and there was no water. We could only moisten our lips with the hoar frost."<sup>5</sup> While they were hiding, hoping to reconnect with some of the rest of the party who they thought had escaped capture, they could hear and sometimes see the Chinese searching for them. Their clothes had been soaked during the crossing, and the weather was so cold that their clothing became frozen to their skin, so it crackled when they moved. Later that day, as it became dark, they climbed for five hours to reach shelter in some fir trees above the village. Hiding in the cover of the trees, after everything they had been

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4. The story of Chögyam Trungpa's voyage out of Tibet is told in his autobiography, *Born in Tibet*, which appears in Volume One.

5. *Born in Tibet* (1976), p. 233.

through, Rinpoche and his attendant quietly discussed whether or not their experiences were a test of their meditation and how their meditative equanimity would fare if they were captured the next day by the Chinese. Several members of the party made jokes about doing the yoga of inner heat to try to keep warm. Rinpoche and others found quite a lot of humor in this dire situation.

This is not exactly a crazy wisdom story, except that it is almost inconceivable that, faced with the loss of family and friends, with the prospect of capture and possible torture or death, Chögyam Trungpa and his companions—many of whom were also highly trained practitioners—approached their experience with evenhandedness and humor and seemingly very little fear. That in itself is rather crazy but also seems quite wise, and it does remind one of the lineage forefathers and their outrageous journeys to freedom.

When the going gets tough, these are people you might want to have on your team. In that vein, it is worth looking twice at what Chögyam Trungpa has to say about the life of these great Buddhist adepts. It is indeed applicable to things we may face today—or tomorrow. Their compassion was compassion for the toughest times. It may be just what the world needs now.

Both *Crazy Wisdom* and *Illusion's Game* are the work of a great storyteller. In his first five or six years in North America, Chögyam Trungpa taught more than forty seminars on the life and teachings of the Kagyü forefathers. (The life of Padmasambhava was a less common topic. In addition to the two seminars that were edited for *Crazy Wisdom*, he presented one other seminar specifically on the life and teachings of Padmasambhava.) He also gave several seminars on his own teacher, Jamgön Kongtrül, and on the lineage of the Trungpa tulkus. In seminars on other topics, Rinpoche often would bring up a story about Tilopa, Naropa, Marpa, Milarepa, or Gampopa to illustrate a point he was making. These stories are included in *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* and other popular books. When he told these tales, you felt that he knew these people; he definitely seemed to be on a first-name basis with them. And like any good father telling his children about their grandparents and great-grandparents, one point of his storytelling was to make the younger generation feel close to the ancestors and the ancestral wisdom. He never failed to make those in the audience feel that they were part of or just about to join this lineage of awakened mind.

*The Life of Marpa the Translator* continues the theme of perilous journeys and extreme trials on the path to realization. Marpa was the chief disciple of the Indian guru Naropa, whose search for enlightenment is the subject of *Illusion's Game*. Marpa was born and lived in southeastern Tibet. He made three journeys to India, filled with obstacles and difficult tests of his understanding and devotion. In India, Marpa obtained the teachings that form the core of the Kagyü tradition, and he translated many of these Indian teachings into the Tibetan language. Marpa's lifestyle has some parallels to those of modern students, in that he was a married householder with a number of children. He owned and operated a farm and outwardly led a rather ordinary and quite secular life. Superficially, at least, it may be easier to connect with Marpa's approach than with the more austere lifestyles of some of the other lineage holders. Nevertheless, his understanding of and dedication to the dharma were anything but ordinary.

In his preface and colophon to *The Life of Marpa*, Trungpa Rinpoche pays homage to Marpa as the founder of the Kagyü lineage in Tibet. Rinpoche also talks about the process of translating this book and the kinship that he feels with Marpa as one translator to another. Indeed, the translation process that Chögyam Trungpa organized and which continues to this day, more than fifteen years after his death, has proven very successful in furthering the translation of many Tibetan texts into English. The Nālandā Translation Committee, the group of Rinpoche's students who collaborated with him on the translation of *The Life of Marpa the Translator*, as well as on *The Rain of Wisdom*, is to be congratulated for its excellent work on these and many other projects.

The Nālandā Translation Committee's first major project for general publication was *The Rain of Wisdom*, a translation of the *Kagyü Gurtso*, songs of the forefathers and lineage holders of the Karma Kagyü lineage. Chögyam Trungpa very much wanted to bring these wonderful songs of devotion and spiritual liberation into the English language. First compiled and edited in the sixteenth century by the eighth Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje, the *Kagyü Gurtso* (literally "The Ocean of Songs of the Kagyü") was intended to be "the liturgy for a chanting service that would invoke the blessings of the entire Karma Kagyü lineage. With the same aim in mind, successive editions of the *Kagyü Gurtso* have added songs by holders of the Karma Kagyü lineage born after the time of Mikyö Dorje."<sup>6</sup>

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6. *The Rain of Wisdom* (1980), afterword by the NTC, p. 304.

(In keeping with tradition, the English edition of *The Rain of Wisdom* includes songs by a current lineage holder, Chögyam Trungpa himself.)

In the foreword, Rinpoche talks about how he read the *Kagyü Gurtso* as a child and how it made him weep with longing and devotion. This magnificent collection of poetry, with many accompanying stories, still has the power to evoke joy and sadness and the inspiration to practice the heart teachings of the buddhadharma. Trungpa Rinpoche advises readers of this book to “reflect on the value and wisdom which exist in these songs of the lineage in the following ways. First there are the life examples of our forefathers to inspire our devotion. There are songs which help us understand the cause and effect of karma and so illuminate the path to liberation. There are songs which give instruction in relative bodhichitta, so that we can realize the immediacy of our connection to the dharma. Some are songs of mahamudra and transmit how we can actually join together bliss and emptiness through the profound methods of coemergence, melting, and bliss. Other songs show the realization of Buddha in the palm of our hand. . . . Reading these songs or even glancing at a paragraph of this literature always brings timely messages of how to conduct oneself, how to discipline oneself” (p. 287).

Once again, the stories and wisdom of past teachers are not just of historical interest but are presented to inspire our own journey on the path. The courage, majesty, and conviction of the Kagyü gurus are overwhelming. Just reading Trungpa Rinpoche’s introduction and his few songs, one gains a sense of the grandeur and the heartfelt depth of realization contained in *The Rain of Wisdom*.

In what may have been purely a fortuitous coincidence, the translation of the *Kagyü Gurtso* was published in 1980, when students of Chögyam Trungpa were celebrating the tenth anniversary of his arrival in North America. The publication of this important text in the English language seems a fitting testament to all that he had accomplished in ten short years. In addition to having produced a brilliant translation, the members of the Nālandā Translation Committee must be acknowledged for the excellent afterword they contributed to the text, as well as for the extensive notes and glossary.

In 1976, one of Chögyam Trungpa’s teachers from Tibet, an elder statesman and revered guru of the Nyingma lineage, His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, made his first visit to America, at Trungpa Rinpoche’s invitation. He was accompanied by two attendants, Lama Yön-

ten Gyamtso (who had been an attendant of Trungpa Rinpoche's at Surmang Monastery, accompanying him on his escape from Tibet) and Lama Ugyen Shenpen, a student of Khyentse Rinpoche's for many years. With Khyentse Rinpoche's blessing, Lama Ugyen stayed on in America to work with the Nālandā Translation Committee after His Holiness departed. His extensive understanding of Tibetan literature and vajrayana teachings, as well as his growing grasp of English, made it possible for the NTC to make great strides in their translation work. His input was instrumental to the successful translation of both *The Rain of Wisdom* and *The Life of Marpa*. Lama Ugyen worked with the NTC until his death in 1994.<sup>7</sup>

Next in Volume Five are the excerpt from *The Sadhana of Mahamudra* and an article about the meaning of the text. The sadhana, which Trungpa Rinpoche "discovered" in Bhutan in 1968, is a particular kind of text or teaching called terma. In Tibet, Chögyam Trungpa had already been recognized as a tertön, a teacher who "finds" or reveals terma, which are the teachings that Padmasambhava concealed in physical locations throughout Tibet and in the realm of mind and space. As Trungpa Rinpoche describes in *Crazy Wisdom*, "He [Padmasambhava] had various writings of his put in gold and silver containers like capsules and buried in certain appropriate places in the different parts of Tibet so that people of the future would rediscover them. . . . This process of rediscovering the treasures has been happening all along, and a lot of sacred teachings have been revealed. One example is the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Another approach to preserving treasures of wisdom is the style of the thought lineage. Teachings have been rediscovered by certain appropriate teachers who have had memories of them and written them down from

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7. The translation committee has quite a large number of other members, and it is not feasible to name all of them here. However, in the acknowledgments to *The Rain of Wisdom*, a central translation committee for this project is identified, "consisting of Robin Kornman, John Rockwell, Jr., and Scott Wellenbach in collaboration with Lama Ugyen Shenpen, Loppön Lodrö Dorje Holm, and Larry Mermelstein [the Executive Director of the NTC]." In *The Life of Marpa*, the core group is identified as David Cox, Dana Dudley, John Rockwell, Jr., Ives Waldo, and Gerry Weiner, in collaboration with Loppön Lodrö Dorje and Larry Mermelstein—with much guidance from Trungpa Rinpoche and Lama Ugyen. These are just some of the members of the NTC who worked on these translations. The large membership of the translation group points out how quickly and to what extent Rinpoche was able to share the wealth of his tradition, including so many bright minds and dedicated students in his work.

memory. This is another kind of hidden treasure” (pp. 142–43). *The Sadhana of Mahamudra* is such a mind terma.<sup>8</sup>

This text is particularly important to our discussion here because of how it joins together the teachings of both the Nyingma and Kagyü lineages. As Chögyam Trungpa says in the accompanying article, “Joining Energy and Space,” “The lineage of *The Sadhana of Mahamudra* is the two traditions of immense crazy wisdom and immense dedication and devotion put together. The Kagyü, or mahamudra tradition, is the devotion lineage. The Nyingma, or ati tradition, is the lineage of crazy wisdom. The sadhana brings these two traditions together as a prototype of how emotion and wisdom, energy and space, can work together” (p. 312). Additionally, the sadhana contains a vivid description of the obstacles presented by physical, psychological, and spiritual materialism in the modern age and prescribes unwavering devotion to wakefulness as the antidote to the materialistic outlook.

While in England, Chögyam Trungpa had been tutoring the crown prince (now the king) of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuk, while the prince was studying at Ascot. At the invitation of the queen of Bhutan, Trungpa Rinpoche journeyed to Bhutan in 1968. Rinpoche was accompanied to Asia by one of his young English students, Richard Arthure (who worked with Rinpoche on the translation of the sadhana and was also the editor of *Meditation in Action*).<sup>9</sup> In preparation for the publication of *The Collected Works*, Richard kindly contributed information about their journey and the circumstances under which the sadhana was received:

It would be a sad thing if *The Collected Works* were published without including at least an excerpt from *The Sadhana of Mahamudra*. Along with the Shambhala teachings, it seems to be the quintessential expression of his [Trungpa Rinpoche’s] enlightened mind and was openly recognized as such by both Tulku Ugyen Rinpoche and H. H. Dilgo Khyentse. The Vidyadhara [Chögyam Trungpa] himself wanted it to be propagated and practiced widely and without restric-

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8. Traditionally, when a terma text is written out, a special mark or sign is placed at the end of each line of text. The terma marks have been omitted from the excerpt from *The Sadhana of Mahamudra* that appears in Volume Five.

9. See the introduction to Volume One for Richard Arthure’s comments on the editing of *Meditation in Action*.

tion, and he gladly shared it even with acquaintances, such as Thomas Merton, who were not Buddhist.<sup>10</sup>

Before going into retreat at Taktsang, Trungpa Rinpoche and I traveled with Khyentse Rinpoche by jeep from Bhutan to Sikkim in order to spend some time with H. H. the sixteenth Karmapa. At [Trungpa] Rinpoche's request, the Karmapa performed the Karma Pakshi empowerment for us. Immediately, the Vidyadhara, with my assistance, set to work to prepare an English language translation of the Karma Pakshi sadhana.<sup>11</sup> (There exists a photograph—tactfully suppressed for general purposes—of the two of us sitting side by side in the guest house at Rumtek smoking cigarettes and working on this translation.) It was to be my daily practice at Taktsang. It is unlikely that this translation has survived.

On our return to Bhutan, we received the Dorje Trolö [the wrathful aspect of Guru Rinpoche, in which he manifested at Taktsang before entering Tibet] empowerment from Dilgo Khyentse in a very informal setting, with just a handful of people present in Khyentse Rinpoche's tiny bedroom. Then we went up to Taktsang, traveling on horseback and then on foot up the steep trail, to begin our retreat. Once there, my morning practice was the Karma Pakshi sadhana. At noon I would go to Trungpa Rinpoche's room and we would have lunch together. In the afternoon I would sit with Rinpoche in the main shrine room while he performed a Dorje Trolö feast practice, tormas and butter lamps having been prepared by a Bhutanese monk and a Tibetan yogi who were students of Dilgo Khyentse. We would share a light meal in the early evening and generally stay up late talking. A principal topic of our wide-ranging discussions was how to create an enlightened society, what form it would take, etc., Rinpoche favoring a combination of democracy and enlightened monarchy. The idea of the *delek*<sup>12</sup> system was first proposed during these

10. It was during the 1968 visit to Asia that Rinpoche met Thomas Merton, shortly before Merton's untimely death.

11. Karma Pakshi (1203–1282) was the second Karmapa. He was invited to China by Prince Kublai Khan and by his rival and older brother, Mongka Khan. When His Holiness the sixteenth Karmapa made his second visit to the United States in 1976, Trungpa Rinpoche asked him to perform the Karma Pakshi abhisheka as a blessing for all of Rinpoche's students, which he did.

12. *Delek* is a Tibetan word that means "auspicious happiness." Chögyam Trungpa used it to refer to creating a system of governance that fosters peace and good communication within the meditation centers he established. The discussion here is of the genesis of the

discussions. A young Australian woman traveler, Lorraine, showed up with a copy of Erich Fromm's *The Sane Society* in her backpack. We devoured it. Rinpoche had me write a synopsis of the main ideas in it to add fuel to our discussions.

Towards the end of our retreat, *The Sadhana of Mahamudra* arose in Rinpoche's mind, and the main part of it was written down very quickly, in one or two days. Several more days were spent in refining and polishing. We began translating it into English almost immediately, although most of the work was done after we had come down the mountain from Taktsang and were staying in a guest house belonging to the Queen's mother on the outskirts of Thimphu. Here's how the process worked, more or less (and you should understand that I don't speak or read Tibetan): Word by word and phrase by phrase Rinpoche would explain the meaning to me, as far as his vocabulary allowed. From those basic building blocks of meaning, it became possible to construct the English language version of the *sadhana*. I tried to create something that would transmit the dharma in a powerful and poetic way, utilizing the natural cadences and rhythms of spoken English. For example, Rinpoche would say something like: "All . . . *namthok* is thoughts . . . disappear. . . . Shunyata . . . like a bird in the sky, doesn't make, how would you say, footprints?—not like a horse or man walking in snow, but same idea." And this, after a few tries, would give rise to: "All thoughts vanish into emptiness, like the imprint of a bird in the sky."<sup>13</sup> Later, I saw that same simile translated as "like the traceless path of a bird in the sky," which I think is pretty good. I chose the word *imprint* because it gives the echo or faint suggestion of *footprint*, so carries the resonance of that image into the dimension of space.

Perhaps the Dakinis inspired our work together. Rinpoche

idea of the *delek* system in 1968. Trungpa Rinpoche did not actually introduce *deleks* until 1981. At that time, he suggested that people in the Buddhist communities he worked with should organize themselves into *deleks*, or groups, consisting of about twenty or thirty families, based on the neighborhoods in which they lived. Each neighborhood or small group was a *delek* and its members, the *delekpas*. Each *delek* would elect a leader, the *dekyong*—the "protector of happiness"—by a process of consensus for which Rinpoche coined the phrase "spontaneous insight." The *dekyongs* were then organized into the *Dekyong Council*, which would meet and make decisions affecting their *deleks* and make recommendations to the administration of *Vajradhatu*, the international organization he founded, about larger issues.

13. This line is not part of the excerpt printed in Volume Five.

seemed to think they were taking an active interest, at least. While we were staying in that guest house, tremendous rainstorms and floods caused landslides and destroyed roads and bridges so that we were unable to travel. Rinpoche commented: “This is the action of the Dakinis, making sure we don’t leave until the translation is finished.”<sup>14</sup>

Richard’s commentary provides quite a lot of new information about the circumstances surrounding the “discovery” of *The Sadhana of Mahamudra*. It has previously not been widely known that Chögyam Trungpa received both the Karma Pakshi and Dorje Trolö empowerments prior to entering retreat at Taktsang. He undoubtedly would have received these abhishekas earlier, while studying in Tibet, but having them “refreshed” in his mind may have had some influence on what occurred at Taktsang. These two gurus, visualized as yidams or vajrayana nontheistic deities, are combined as one central figure in *The Sadhana of Mahamudra*, thus unifying the energies of their respective lineages, the Kagyü and the Nyingma. We also see in Richard’s reminiscences that Trungpa Rinpoche’s facility with the English language was still limited in 1968. It is, therefore, remarkable both how accurately the translation of the sadhana captured the spirit and meaning of the original Tibetan (the translation used today is virtually the same as the original)<sup>15</sup> and also how fast Rinpoche’s grasp of the language developed after 1968. We have recordings of him teaching in America as early as 1970, and his sentence structure and vocabulary are nothing like the fragmentary approach that Richard reports less than two years earlier. His remarks complement Trungpa Rinpoche’s own description of the retreat, which appears in “Joining Energy and Space.” Richard sets the outer scene for us; Rinpoche describes more of the inner experiences he had, empty at the beginning, charged with energy and power at the end.

Although this article and the attendant excerpt are brief, they deserve significant commentary, because *The Sadhana of Mahamudra* had such a

14. Letter from Richard Arthure to Carolyn Rose Gimian, December 2001.

15. The Nālandā Translation Committee did prepare a more literal translation of *The Sadhana of Mahamudra* in 1990, for students’ use in studying the text. The beginning sections of this translation were done with Chögyam Trungpa. He himself felt that the original translation captured something that would be lost by making extensive changes. The NTC’s work is available to interested students.

huge impact on Trungpa Rinpoche's development as a teacher and on the whole thrust of his teaching in the West. In a sense, the most articulate presentation of spiritual materialism and the most profound understanding of how to vanquish it are presented in this sadhana. In this, as well as other areas of his teaching, Trungpa Rinpoche first had the main realization, full and complete within itself, received almost in an instant. He then spent years sharing that understanding with others. This was also true with his propagation of the Shambhala teachings, which were heralded by his receiving another terma text, *The Golden Sun of the Great East*, well before he began to lecture publicly on the Shambhala path of warriorship. This approach is, in fact, quite orthodox. The Buddha first became enlightened; only some weeks later did he begin to teach. Similarly, Chögyam Trungpa discovered the heart teachings of his lineage—the ecumenical tradition of Ri-me—in Taktsang in 1968. He spent the next two decades sharing that realization with sentient beings.

As Richard also points out in his letter, after discovering and translating *The Sadhana of Mahamudra*, Trungpa Rinpoche was delighted to share this practice with anyone who might be interested. When he returned to England, his students there took up the practice of the sadhana immediately. In an unpublished memoir, Rinpoche's wife, Diana Mukpo, describes the practice of the sadhana at Samye Ling, Rinpoche's meditation center in Scotland: "When I was visiting Samye Ling with my mother in 1969, Rinpoche had only recently returned from this trip to Bhutan. Now, in addition to traditional Tibetan practices, students at Samye Ling chanted an English translation of *The Sadhana of Mahamudra*, crudely printed on coloured paper."

Once he arrived in America in 1970, in spite of his insistence on the sitting practice of meditation as the main discipline, Trungpa Rinpoche encouraged students to gather together and read the sadhana on the new and full moon. This practice continues to the present day. During Trungpa Rinpoche's lifetime, he conferred the formal empowerment, or abhisheka, for this sadhana twice that we know of: in India in 1968 and slightly later in England. In 1982, His Holiness Khyentse Rinpoche requested that Trungpa Rinpoche write down the abhisheka text, which he had spontaneously composed when he gave the transmissions years before. He did not accomplish this before he died, but Khyentse Rinpoche, who had a very close connection to Trungpa Rinpoche and to his students, completed both the abhisheka and the feast liturgy in 1990. Rinpoche's eldest

son, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, who inherited the leadership of the Shambhala Buddhist community in 1990, has conferred this abhisheka in a number of ceremonies, beginning in 1993. Several thousand students, both senior students and recent meditators, have taken part in these events. Carried out of a lonely retreat in a cave in Bhutan, the lineage of transmission has traveled far and grown quite large in less than three decades.

In *The Sadhana of Mahamudra*, the seed syllable HUM plays a major role in invoking the power of sanity to overcome the forces of materialism in the world. The next offering in Volume Five is “HUM: An Approach to Mantra,” a short article on the mantra HUM, which was originally published in 1972 in *Garuda II: Working with Negativity*. As he so often does, Chögyam Trungpa begins his discussion by dispelling preconceptions. That is, he first tells the reader what mantra practice is *not*. It is not, he informs us, “a magical spell used in order to gain psychic powers for selfish purposes, such as accumulation of wealth, power over others, and destruction of enemies.” He explains that the genuine usage of mantra arises from an understanding of the teachings of the Buddha on the four marks of existence: impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and egolessness. Mantra is the invocation of egoless or nontheistic energies of wisdom and insight. He also distinguishes the Buddhist understanding of mantra from its usage in Hindu tantra, explaining that the divinities invoked in Buddhist tantra are not external but rather represent “aspects of the awakened state of mind.” Trungpa Rinpoche then describes a number of ways in which the mantra HUM has been used. It was employed by Guru Padmasambhava “to subdue the force of the negative environment created by minds poisoned with passion, aggression, and ignorance.” For beginning meditators, he suggests that chanting the sacred music of HUM can quiet the mind and ease the force of irritating thoughts. For advanced meditators, he states that the syllable HUM is a means of developing the wisdom of the five buddha families, innate wisdoms arising from emptiness, which one finds within oneself, not somewhere in the external world. He also describes HUM as the “sonorous sound of silence” and as “that state of meditation when awareness breaks out of the limits of ego.” Finally, he describes the relationship of the mantra HUM to the Vajrakilaya Mandala, in which the power of egolessness is visualized as a dagger that pierces through the seductions of ego.

When this article was reviewed for inclusion in *The Collected Works*, an early, unpublished version was uncovered. In most respects, it was very similar to the final form in which the article appeared in *Garuda II*. However, the closing paragraph of the original was omitted when it was published. Here, Trungpa Rinpoche suggests that those who practice *The Sadhana of Mahamudra* would benefit from studying this essay on the mantra HUM. This paragraph has been restored in the version that appears here.

Next in Volume Five we have “Explanation of the Vajra Guru Mantra,” an article never before published, which deals with the mantra that invokes Guru Rinpoche, or Padmasambhava. Here, Chögyam Trungpa describes mantra as creating “a living environment of energy.” This article was probably written while Chögyam Trungpa was still in England or shortly after he arrived in the United States. He translates each syllable of the mantra (if it is translatable) and then discusses the meaning of each syllable in some detail. There is a very pithy but penetrating discussion of the guru principle, which presents three aspects of one’s devotion and relationship to the teacher. First, one sees the guru as the superior teacher to whom one opens and surrenders oneself completely. Second, the guru manifests as the spiritual friend, because—as Rinpoche points out—“you must be able not only to surrender but to communicate.” Trungpa Rinpoche relates this aspect of devotion to the meeting of two minds: “Your mind is open to the open space and the guru’s mind is open to the open space. In this way, your mind becomes one with that of the teacher—both are inseparable from unconditioned space.” Finally, Rinpoche talks about the guru as environment, which is seeing occurrences in life as the manifestation of the energy of the teacher. One learns to appreciate the wisdom of the phenomenal world and to see life situations as messages that embody wisdom. If the practitioner ignores the meaning of experiences, then a stronger message, in the form of chaos, will provide the feedback that one has lost touch with “the life situation as teacher.” Recognizing this affords the student an opportunity for further opening and communication. The result is that one develops compassion, the genuine ability to communicate with and help others, as well as the power of *siddhi*, which is sometimes translated as “magical power” or the ability to perform miracles. Here, Trungpa Rinpoche suggests that *siddhi* is a situation that develops unexpectedly, a sudden unforeseen coming together of circumstances. He ends the

article with the suggestion that the real miracle is the “power of compassion, ultimate communication.”

The next offering is Rinpoche’s foreword to *The Torch of Certainty* and the interview with Chögyam Trungpa that appeared in the introduction to the book. The foundation practices that are discussed here are often referred to as the four extraordinary or special preliminaries. They are a practitioner’s first formal introduction to visualization practice and other distinctly tantric aspects of Buddhist yoga and are prerequisites for more advanced meditation practices in the vajrayana. The foundations include 108,000 repetitions of the refuge formula combined with 108,000 prostrations, 108,000 repetitions of the Vajrasattva mantra, and 108,000 mandala offerings, concluding with a guru yoga recitation. These ngöndro practices are a process of surrendering, purifying, offering, and identifying with the lineage by developing longing for the teacher and the teachings.

For a student who has connected with the preceding teachings on lineage and devotion, the ngöndro practices offer the way to actually embark on the path. Although sometimes they are given to students with no other formal background, Trungpa Rinpoche makes it clear that, from his point of view, these practices are only appropriate or helpful for students who have experience in taming and training the mind, which are accomplished through the sitting practice of meditation.

The next two articles, “The Practicing Lineage” and “The Mishap Lineage” are edited versions of the first two talks in “The Line of the Trungpas,” a seminar taught by Chögyam Trungpa at Karmê Chöling meditation center in Vermont in 1975. Both of these talks present an introduction to the Kagyü lineage. It was only in the later talks from the seminar, which remain unpublished, that Rinpoche talked more specifically about the teachers in his particular lineage. In “The Practicing Lineage” he talks about the literal meaning of *Kagyü* as “the lineage of the sacred word,” but he focuses on the lineage as *drubgyü*, or “the practicing lineage,” as it became known during the time of Milarepa. The importance of having a teacher and the necessity of transcending spiritual materialism and ego-clinging are stressed: “The practicing lineage teaches us that we have to get rid of those ego-centered conceptualized notions of the grandiosity of our development. If we are truly involved with spirituality, we are willing to let go of trying to witness our own enlightenment.” In “The Mishap Lineage,” Trungpa Rinpoche talks about how the Kagyü have always loved desolate mountain peaks and practicing in

wild and sometimes haunted places. This, he suggests, has made them adept at conquering extreme, foreign territory of all kinds, and thus they have long been known for spreading the dharma in foreign lands. That love of harsh extremes is combined in the Kagyü lineage with profound gentleness and devotion. He also describes how constant mishaps are welcomed by the Kagyü practitioner as further fuel to spark awareness. This also harks back to the story of Rinpoche's escape from the Chinese at the Brahmaputra River.

"Teachings on the Tulku Principle" is a brief article on the history and meaning of reincarnation and the Tibetan practice of realized teachers taking rebirth in successive incarnations. Such a teacher is called a *tulku*, which literally means "emanation body." The first Karmapa, the head of the Karma Kagyü lineage to which Chögyam Trungpa belonged, was in fact the first tulku to be recognized in Tibet. "Teachings on the Tulku Principle" clarifies that a tulku does not represent the continuation of ego or self, but rather expresses the continuity of awake mind, generated by compassion, from one incarnation to the next.

The final group of articles in Volume Five presents three quite distinct discussions of the life of Milarepa. As is the case with his lectures on the life and teachings of Marpa, Trungpa Rinpoche's seminars on Milarepa have not yet been edited for publication. One of the first teachings he gave in America was a sixteen-talk seminar on the significance of Milarepa's life. Over the next ten years, he gave many other teachings on Milarepa, including a long seminar titled "The Yogic Songs of Milarepa" at the Naropa Institute in the mid-1970s. We can hope that this material will eventually be made available. For now, the three articles included in *The Collected Works* give us a good indication of the richness of Rinpoche's insights into Jetsun Milarepa's teachings.

Milarepa is undoubtedly the most famous and beloved yogi of Tibet. Students from all lineages study his spiritual songs. Trungpa Rinpoche pays tribute to both the rugged quality of Milarepa's realization and its simplicity. Milarepa's austere life in mountain caves and his deep devotion to his guru, Marpa, epitomize the qualities that Trungpa Rinpoche points to in "The Mishap Lineage" as the core of the Kagyü sensibility.

"Milarepa: A Warrior's Life" is a previously unpublished article that was prepared in 1978 as a text to accompany a calendar of reproductions of Tibetan thangka, or scroll paintings, that depicted scenes from Milarepa's life. The calendar was never published, so the article was filed

away. It was one of the first articles that I worked on with Rinpoche. I uncovered it tucked away in some files in the Shambhala Archives while I was in the process of searching for material for inclusion in *The Collected Works*. It presents the basic events in Milarepa's life story, with commentary on their significance, making the other two articles easier to follow for readers unfamiliar with the story. The careful reader will notice that each of the three articles differs in some small respects in presenting the details of Milarepa's life. There are a number of versions of his namthar, or spiritual biography, and quite probably Chögyam Trungpa consulted different texts at different times. In working with me on "Milarepa: A Warrior's Life," Rinpoche suggested that I consult Lobsang Lhalungpa's translation of *The Life of Milarepa*.

The second article is simply called "Milarepa: A Synopsis." It too emerged from the files when I was searching for material for *The Collected Works* and has never been published before. It presents a series of scenes from Milarepa's life, with little commentary on their significance. The writing is quite vivid, however. Excerpts from a number of Milarepa's songs are included, based on the translation of *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* by Garma C. C. Chang. Although it was impossible to definitively confirm this, it is likely that this article is actually an early treatment prepared by Chögyam Trungpa for a movie on the life of Milarepa, which he began filming in the early 1970s. He and several of his students, including two filmmakers from Los Angeles—Johanna Demetrakas and Baird Bryant—traveled to Sweden to film some exquisite thangkas of the life of Milarepa, which were to be featured in the movie. More information about the film itself—which was also to be an exploration of the qualities of the five buddha families—appears in the introduction to Volume Seven, which presents Rinpoche's teachings on art and the artistic process.

Volume Five closes with "The Art of Milarepa," which originally appeared in *Garuda II*. The title is somewhat misleading in that the article has little to do with Milarepa's artistic expression—his songs—in and of themselves and more to do with his art of life. The opening part of the article is a discussion of how the secret practice of Buddhist yoga evolved in India, especially in the ninth century in the great universities of Nalanda and Vikramashila. The connection that Marpa (Milarepa's main teacher) had to this tradition is also discussed. In this article, one sees Trungpa Rinpoche's brilliant insight into Milarepa's journey through life,

the obstacles he encountered, and his final attainment. Throughout, Rinpoche brings together immense appreciation for Milarepa as a highly developed person on the one hand, with a down-to-earth insight into the humanness and ordinary quality of his practice on the other.

After he met his guru, Milarepa lived an austere, ascetic life and spent many years in solitary retreat in caves in the wilderness of Tibet. His lifestyle might seem distant from that of most people, especially in this modern age. Yet Trungpa Rinpoche makes Milarepa's experience accessible by demystifying it, while maintaining his tremendous appreciation for the attainment of his forefather. He tells us that Milarepa remained an ascetic simply because "that physical situation had become part of his makeup. Since he was true to himself, he had no relative concept of other living styles and did not compare himself to others. Although he taught people with many different lifestyles, he had no desire to convert them." Milarepa's asceticism is treated here as an ordinary but very sacred experience, one that really does not have much to do with embracing austerity per se. As Rinpoche concludes, "Simplicity is applicable to the situation of transcending neurotic mind by using domestic language. It becomes profound without pretense, and this naturally provokes the actual practice of meditation."

It seems fitting that Volume Five should end with these three articles celebrating the life of Milarepa. Although outwardly his was a life marked by the trappings of a secular existence, Chögyam Trungpa, like Milarepa, gave up everything familiar and cozy to bring the dharma of his lineage from Tibet to North America. He, like his forefathers, was rugged and direct, yet supremely sweet and gentle, and marked by an almost unbearable sadness, which became the expression of bliss. As he says in "The Dohā of Sadness," one of his songs in *The Rain of Wisdom*:

You, my only father guru, have gone far away,  
 My vajra brothers and sisters have wandered to the ends of  
 the earth.  
 Only I, Chögyam, the little child, am left.  
 Still, for the teachings of the profound and brilliant practice  
 lineage,  
 I am willing to surrender my life in sadness.

In many thangkās, Milarepa is shown holding his hand up to his right ear. It is often said that he is listening to himself singing his own songs

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME FIVE

of realization. But I wonder if he is not listening to hear who will pick up the song of dharma that Trungpa Rinpoche sang in the West. Who will carry forward that melody? The Kagyü gurus are waiting to hear that song sung completely in a foreign tongue, echoing the same wisdom they have guarded with their lives for so many, many years. Let us aspire to join them in their song!

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*February 6, 2002*

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