



BUDDHIST ART Coloring Book 2

Buddhas, Deities, and Enlightened Masters *from the Tibetan Tradition*

ROBERT BEER



BUDDHIST ART COLORING BOOK

2

Buddhas, Deities, *and* Enlightened
Masters *from the* Tibetan Tradition

ROBERT BEER



Shambhala
Boulder
2016



Author's Note: Please treat the spiritual images shown here with due consideration. We invite you to follow the tradition to safely burn any of these sacred images that you may no longer want, rather than throwing them in the trash, if it is possible and convenient.

Shambhala Publications, Inc.
4720 Walnut Street
Boulder, Colorado 80301
www.shambhala.com

© 2016 by Robert Beer

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

First Edition
Printed in the United States of America

Ⓢ This edition is printed on acid-free paper that meets the American National Standards Institute Z39.48 Standard.

♻️ Shambhala Publications makes every effort to print on recycled paper. For more information please visit www.shambhala.com.

Distributed in the United States by Penguin Random House LLC
and in Canada by Random House of Canada Ltd

Designed by Lora Zorian

INTRODUCTION

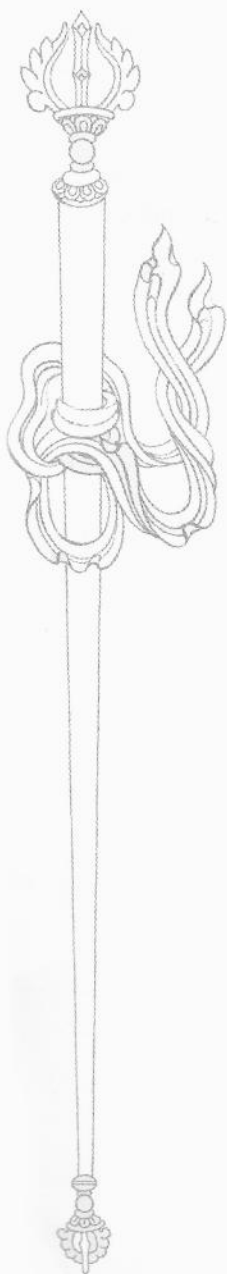
"One of the quickest ways to become a buddha is to imagine yourself as one."

—His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama

The fifty line drawings of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist deities and lineage-holders that appear in this book were originally created over a period of several years during the late 1980s. I drew them as part of an ambitious project, which involved creating around two hundred drawings of historical Indian and Tibetan Buddhist masters for a cultural handbook covering all the main Tibetan traditions. Unfortunately, after half of these figures were drawn I was told that the promised funding for my artwork was not forthcoming. Since then these drawings have remained unseen in a box, with only a small number of them ever appearing in publications.

Thus I welcome the opportunity of presenting a selection of these lineage-holder drawings for the first time. In truth, quite a few of these images are the finest drawings I ever made, and I am delighted they can now appear in print for the first time. Of special significance to me are the drawings of Green Tara, White Tara, and Padmasambhava, which were drawn separately for a limited edition of silk-screen prints. Each of these three drawings took around two hundred hours to complete, while the others took between fifty to a hundred hours. All of these figurative illustrations were drawn with an extremely fine sable-hair brush. Many of them are reproduced in their original size, with a pen only being used for ruled lines, circles, and certain minute details.

In the back of this book, I've included short descriptions and biographies of each figure. By no means do these concise texts convey the extensive range of practices, teachings, transmissions, and long retreats that many of these great masters undertook during the course of their lives, nor do they elucidate the volumes of profound explanatory commentaries they composed. However, extensive versions of their biographies can now be found on the



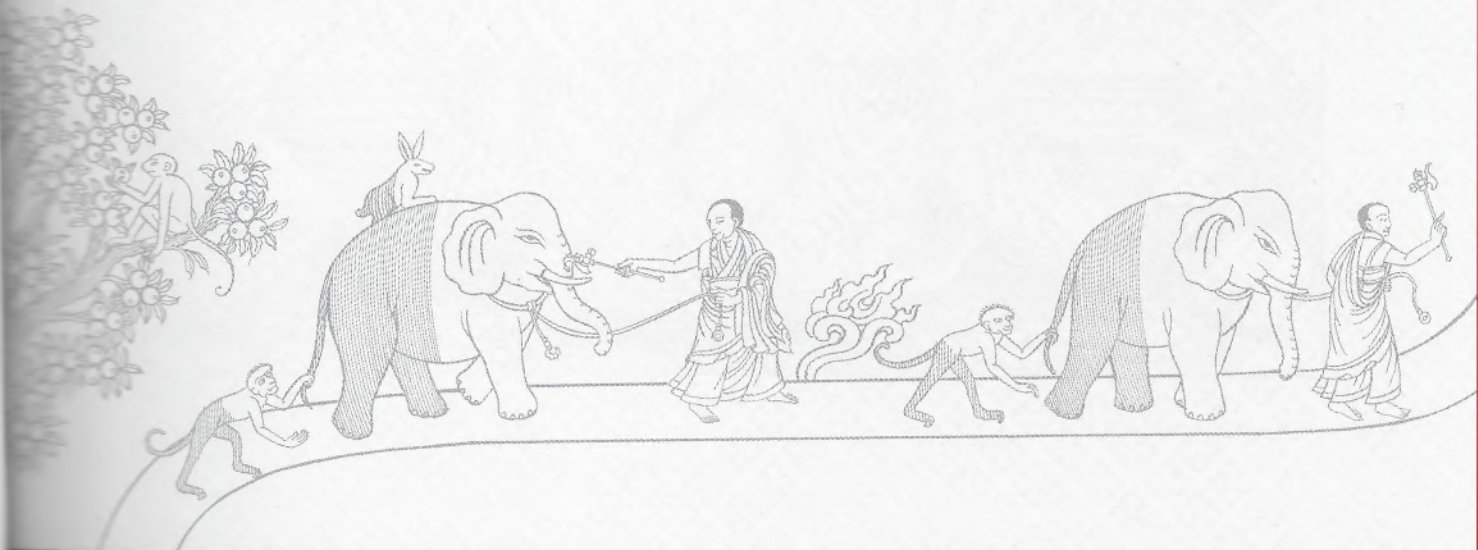
Internet, along with images that depict the colors in which they, their garments and attributes, are traditionally depicted.

Whoever you may be I wish you much creative joy in your coloring endeavors. May it help bring you peace, awareness, and the realization that what we are looking for is what is looking.

Robert Beer
Oxford, England
October 2015
www.tibetanart.com

BUDDHIST ART COLORING BOOK

2









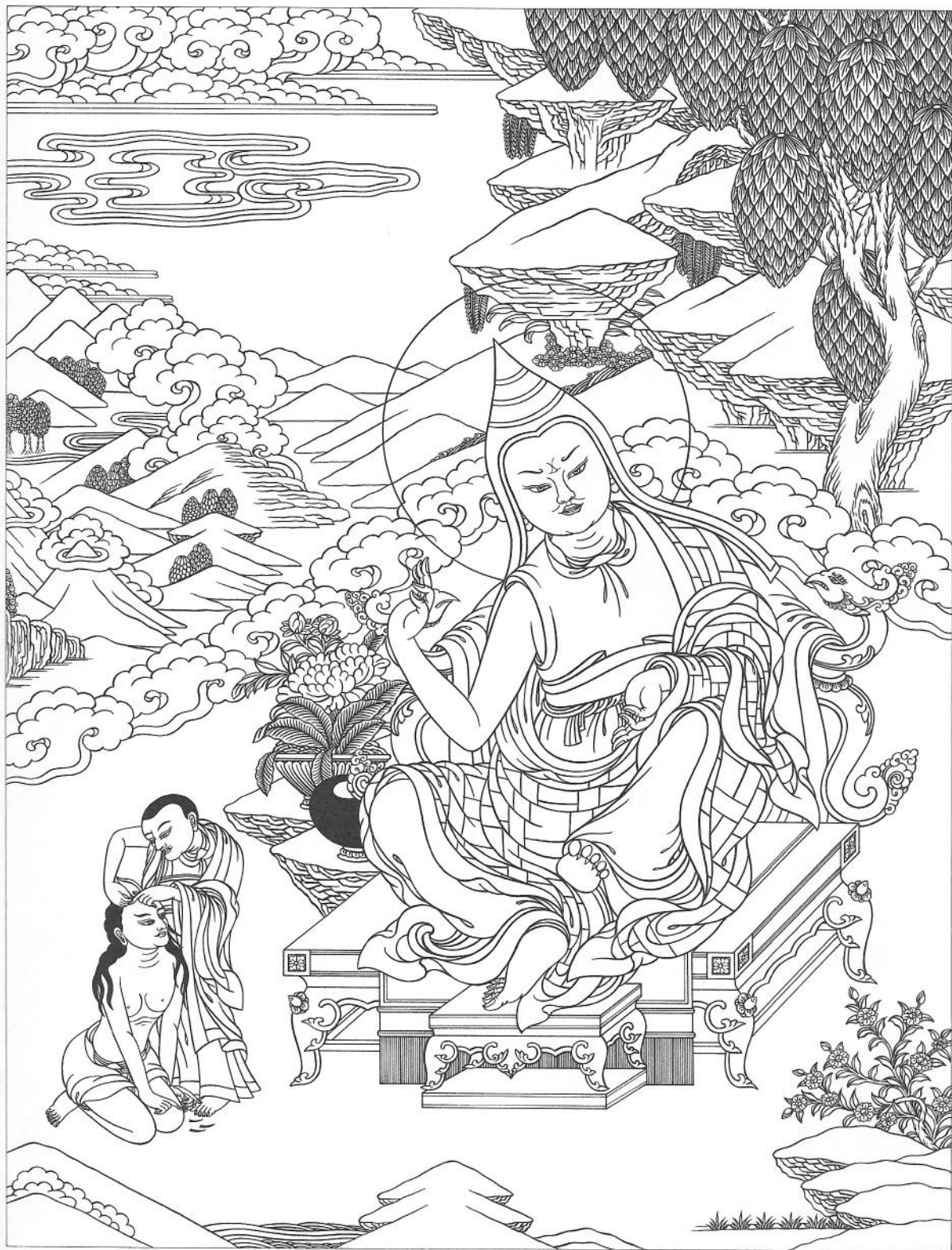














































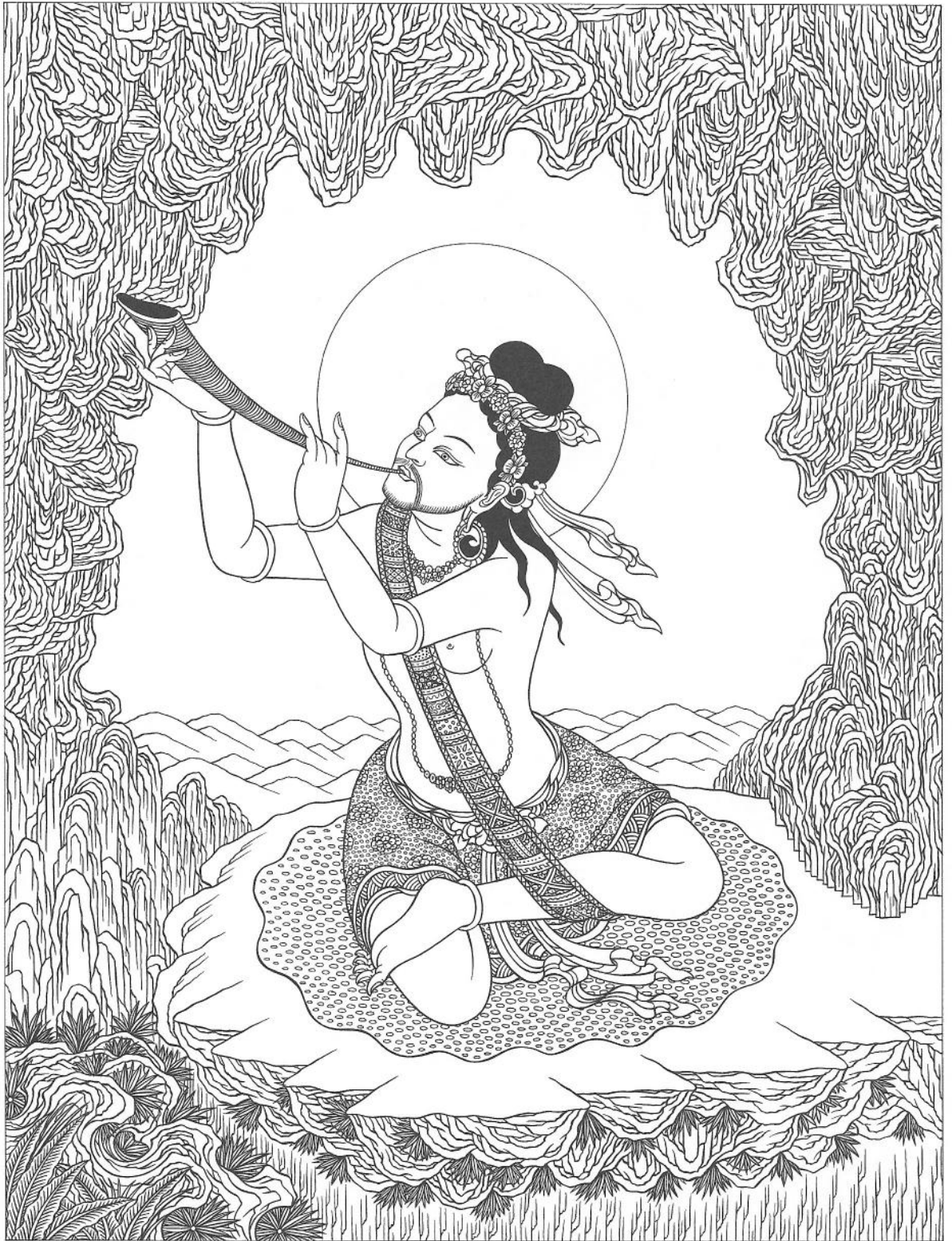






















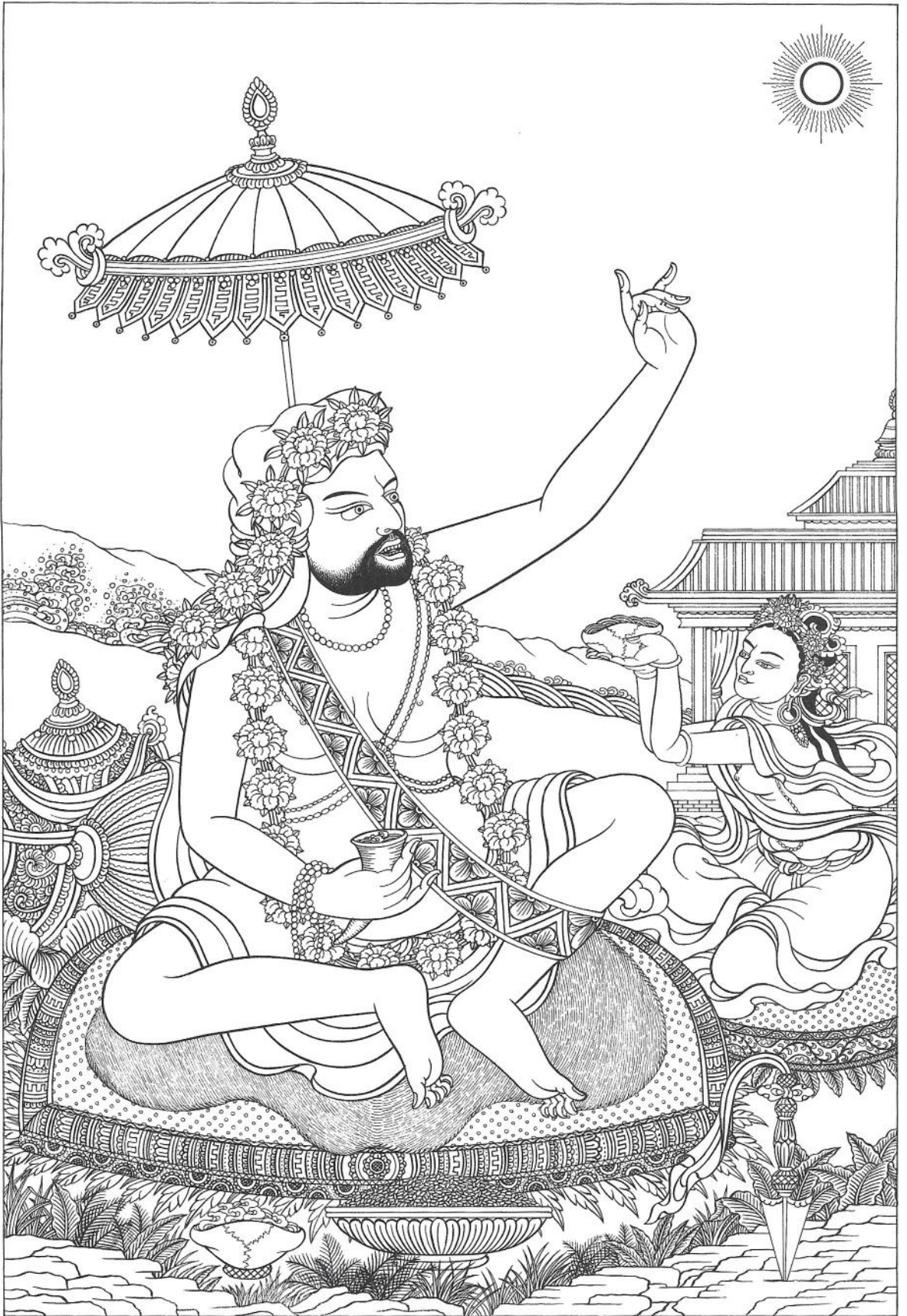








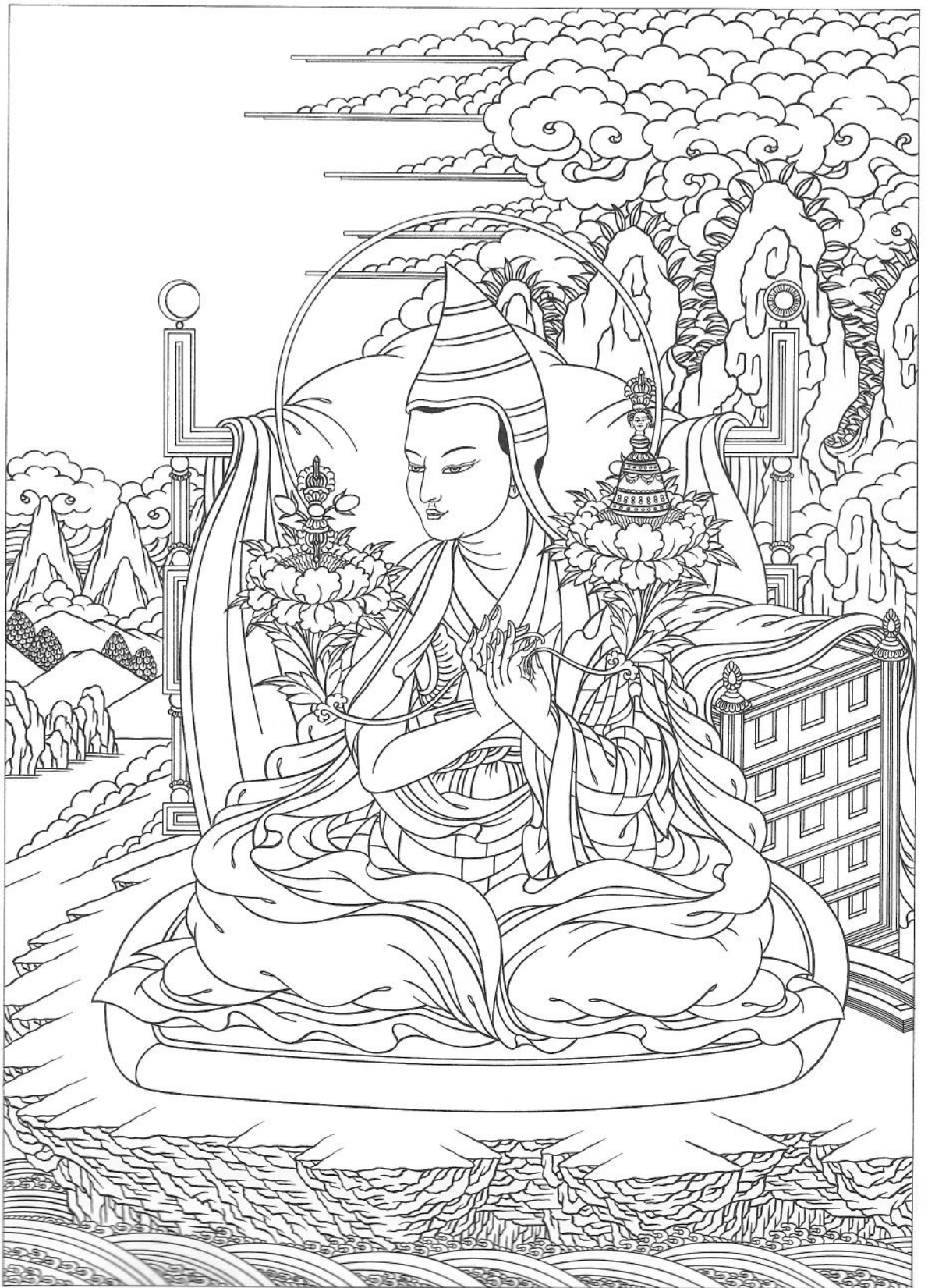


















ABOUT THE ART

BUDDHAS AND BODHISATTVAS

Amitayus (Tib. Tsepakme)

Amitayus, meaning "limitless life," is the long-life *sambhogakaya* aspect of red Amitabha, the buddha of infinite light and lord of the lotus, or *padma*, family, whose blissful Western pure land is known as Sukhavati. The practice of Amitayus is common to all traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, and as one of the three long-life deities he frequently appears in a trinity with Ushnishavijaya and White Tara. Amitayus is peaceful and ruby or coral red in color, with two arms and two eyes, and he sits in *vajra*-posture upon a white moon disc and a multicolored lotus that rests upon a jeweled throne. His body is adorned with the five silk garments and eight jeweled ornaments of a *sambhogakaya* deity. With his two hands resting upon his lap in the gesture of meditative equipoise he supports a longevity vase, which is fashioned from gemstones and filled with the nectar of immortal wisdom.

His mantra is OM PUNYE PUNYE MAHAPUNYE APARAMITAYUR
JNANA SAMBHAROVA CITTA SVAHA.



Medicine Buddha (Skt. Bhaisajyaguru; Tib. Sangye Menla)

As Bhaisajyaguru, the "teacher of medicine," the Medicine Buddha is the principal guru of the Buddhist medical tantras and the central figure in an assembly of eight medicine buddhas that includes his six brothers and Shakyamuni Buddha. He is also known as the "king of beryl radiance" (Skt. Vaiduryaprabharaja), on account of his deep blue beryl (*vaidurya*) or lapis-colored radiance, which vanquishes the defilements of ignorance, desire, and aggression and cures all afflictions that result from imbalances of the three humors of wind, bile, and phlegm. He sits in *vajra*-posture upon a white moon disc and multicolored lotus, wearing the three orange-red patchwork robes of a Buddhist monk. With his right hand he makes the gesture of supreme generosity as he holds the stem of a medicinal myrobalan plant bearing three fruits, while the nectar-filled alms bowl in his left hand bears another myrobalan fruit, the universal panacea.

His mantra is OM NAMO BHAGAVATE BHAIJAJYAGURU VAIDURYA-
PRABHARAJA TATHAGATAYA SAMYAKSAMBUDDHAYA TADYATHA OM
BHAIJAJYA BHAIJAJYA MAHABHAIJAJYA RAJASAMUDGATE SVAHA.





Manjushri (Tib. Jampalyang)

Manjushri, or Manjughosha (Tib. Jamyang), meaning “gentle voiced,” is one of the Buddha’s eight great bodhisattvas, or eight close sons. He is also one of the lords of the three enlightened families: the *tathagata* family of Manjushri, who embodies insight or discriminating awareness; the *padma* family of Avalokiteshvara, who embodies compassion; and the *vajra* family of Vajrapani, who embodies power. Manjushri is venerated in all Buddhist traditions, and his divine abode is the five-peaked mountain range of Wutaishan in China. Manjushri has many aspects and appears here as a princely youth with a reddish-yellow complexion. Adorned with the five divine silks and eight jeweled ornaments, he sits in *vajra*-posture on a moon disc and lotus. With his right hand he wields aloft the blazing sword of discriminating awareness that cuts through ignorance, and with his left hand he holds the stem of a lotus supporting a book that symbolizes “the perfection of wisdom” teachings (Skt. *prajnaparamita*).

His Arapatsana mantra is OM A RA PA TSA NA DHIH.



Avalokiteshvara (Tib. Chenrezig)

Avalokiteshvara, the “lord who sees,” is one of the lords of the three families and one of the eight great bodhisattvas, or close sons. As the bodhisattva of compassion he is the patron deity of Tibet, who abides at Mount Potalaka and emanates through the lineal successions of the Dalai Lamas and Karmapas. He appears here in his four-armed aspect as Sadaksari, or six-syllable Avalokiteshvara, whose famous six-syllable mantra, OM MA NI PAD ME HUM, alleviates the sufferings of all sentient beings. Serene and radiant white in color, he sits in *vajra*-posture upon a moon disc and lotus wearing divine silk and jeweled ornaments, with an antelope skin draped over his left shoulder. With his first pair of hands he makes the *anjali*-mudra of compassion as he holds a wish-granting gem in front of his heart. His second right hand holds a crystal or pearl rosary, while his second left hand holds the stem of an immaculate white lotus.

His mantra is OM MANI PADME HUM.



Green Tara (Skt. Tara, Shyama Tara; Tib. Drolma)

Green Tara, the savioress, often regarded as the mother of all the buddhas, embodies the enlightened activities of compassion and protection from the eight great fears. As Samaya Tara she is the consort of Amoghasiddhi, who presides over the activity, or karma, family, and as Khadiravani Tara she appears at the center of an assembly known as the Twenty-One Taras. She is youthful and serene, with two lotus-like eyes, full breasts, and a sweetly smiling face. Her beautiful body is emerald green, symbolizing the enlightened activities she performs. She sits upon a white moon disc and immaculate lotus in the posture of royal ease, with her right foot resting upon a small lotus pedestal. With her right hand she makes the *varada*-mudra of supreme generosity, and with her left hand the *abhaya*-mudra of protection; in each she holds the stem of an open blue lotus. She is adorned with divine silks and jewel ornaments, and a small image of Amoghasiddhi Buddha adorns her crown.

Her mantra is OM TARE TUTARE TURE SVAHA.



White Tara (Skt. Sita Tara; Tib. Drolkar)

White Tara, the white savior, is the principal long-life aspect of the female bodhisattva or meditational deity Tara, who along with Amitayus and Ushnishavijaya appears in a trinity of longevity deities. As seven-eyed Saptalocana Tara, her three facial eyes represent the perfection of her body, speech, and mind, while the four eyes on her palms and soles represent the four immeasurables of her compassion, loving-kindness, empathetic joy, and equanimity. She is peaceful, beautiful, and youthful with a sweetly smiling face, and she sits in *vajra*-posture upon a moon disc and an immaculate white lotus. With her right hand she makes the open-palmed gesture of supreme generosity, while at her heart her left hand holds the stem of an open sixteen-petal white lotus. She wears the five divine silk garments and the eight jewel and pearl ornaments of a *sambhogakaya* goddess, with a small image of Amitabha Buddha adorning her crown.

Her mantra is OM TARA TUTARE TURE MAMAYUH PUNYA JNANA PUSTIM KURU SVAHA.

EARLY INDIAN BUDDHIST MASTERS

Nagarjuna (Tib. Ludrup)

Nagarjuna (ca. 150–250), known as the Second Buddha, is considered to be the most important Buddhist philosopher after Shakyamuni Buddha and along with Asanga is identified as one of the two most excellent ones of early Mahayana Buddhism. He was the founder of the Madhyamaka, or “Middle Way,” school of thought, which is based on his philosophical understanding of the ultimate truth of emptiness (Skt. *shunyata*), and his most well-known work is the *Mulamadhyamakakarika*, or *Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way*. Nagarjuna is also credited with revealing the Prajnaparamita (Perfection of Wisdom) Sutras, which he retrieved from the *nagas*, the serpent-spirit guardians of the underworld. Because of this connection he traditionally appears crowned by seven serpents, with a *naga* holding the Prajnaparamita text that emerges in front of him. Although little is known about Nagarjuna’s life, his name is given to several later figures, including a ninth-century *mahasiddha* and alchemist believed to have lived for centuries.



Asanga (Tib. Tokme)

Asanga (ca. 310–390) was born in Purushapura (Peshawar) in the ancient Indian kingdom of Gandhara and along with Nagarjuna is regarded as one of the two excellent ones of Mahayana Buddhism. With his half brother, Vasubandhu, he founded the Cittamatra, or Yogacara, school, one of four main schools of Buddhist philosophy. Asanga was also a major proponent of the higher teachings of Abhidharma (Buddhist psychology), his principal work in this field being known as *The Compendium of Knowledge*. A persevering practitioner, Asanga eventually received teachings in the heavenly realm of Tushita directly from Maitreya, the bodhisattva of loving-kindness and future buddha of the next era. These teachings are known as the *Five Treatises of Maitreya*, and his commentaries on these texts form the basis of the Cittamatra school. Asanga received this boon from Maitreya after gently removing maggots from a severely wounded dog with his tongue.





Aryadeva (Tib. Phagpa Lha)

Aryadeva (ca. 150–250), the “noble god,” was born into a royal Sri Lankan family sometime during the second or third century, although legend relates that he was born from a lotus and brought up by a Sinhalese king. As a young monk he studied the *tripitaka*, or “three baskets,” of the Buddha’s training in ethics, meditation, and discriminating awareness. He then traveled to Shri Parvata, the holy mountain in modern-day Nagarjunakonda in southern India, where Nagarjuna taught. For many years he studied with Nagarjuna, who entrusted all of his teachings to Aryadeva before passing away. As one of the six ornaments of Mahayana Buddhism, Aryadeva significantly clarified and developed the Madhyamaka philosophies of Nagarjuna, and his main work is known as the *Catuhśataka*, or *Four Hundred Verses*. Like Nagarjuna, his name is given to several later figures, including the one-eyed *mahasiddha* alchemist Aryadeva, who likewise was a student of the ninth-century *mahasiddha* Nagarjuna.



Vasubandhu (Tib. Yignyen)

Vasubandhu (ca. 315–390), the “wealthy friend,” was the younger half brother of Asanga and one of the six ornaments of Indian Mahayana Buddhism. As a great scholar of the Vaibhāṣika (“Great Exposition”)—one of the two main schools of the Hinayana (“Lesser Vehicle”)—he first studied with a few Hinayana Buddhist masters in Gandhara and Kashmir. Disappointed with the rigidity of the teachings he received, however, he returned to his home in Purushapura (Peshawar) and began to compose the *Abhidharmakośha* (*Treasury of Abhidharma*), along with its autocommentary. These two monumental treatises on Buddhist psychology—which essentially analyze the elements, cosmology, karma, and the mind and its mental events—are still regarded as the most authoritative dissertations on Abhidharma. Later in life Vasubandhu embraced Mahayana Buddhism and further developed the Cittamātra teachings that his elder brother, Asanga, received from Maitreya. He is shown here giving teachings to three monks.



Shantideva (Tib. Shiwa Lha)

Shantideva (ca. 685–763), the “peaceful god,” was born of royal parents in Saurashtra (Gujarat) in western India. Although destined to ascend the throne, he was warned in a vision not to do so by the wisdom bodhisattva, Mañjuśrī. Having renounced his kingdom, Shantideva entered the great Buddhist academy of Nalanda as a monk but was despised by his fellow monks for his apparent laziness. Unaware of his connection to Mañjuśrī, they named him Bhusuku, the “idle one” who appeared to do nothing except eat, drink, and sleep. However, when summoned to teach on the monastic throne, Shantideva amazed them by spontaneously reciting a ten-chapter text while levitating high above the throne. The title of this famous text is the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (*Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life*). As a major proponent of the Madhyamaka Prasāṅgika school of philosophy, Shantideva composed a second great work known as *A Compendium of Buddhist Doctrines* (Skt. *Sikṣa-samuccaya*).

EARLY TIBETAN AND KADAMPA MASTERS

Songtsen Gampo

The first of the three great Buddhist kings of Tibet, Songtsen Gampo (reigned 605/17–649) took control of the Yarlung dynasty at age thirteen and soon expanded his empire deep into Nepal and China. His cultural ties to these countries led to marriages of alliance with princess Trisun of Nepal and princess Wengcheng of China, who were identified respectively with the goddesses Bhrikuti and Tara. They brought many spiritual treasures as dowry, including two statues of the Buddha that were later enshrined in Lhasa, his new capital. At Wengchen's request he ordered the geomantic construction of thirteen temples across Tibet to suppress the fierce underground supine demoness that controlled the country, with the Jokhang temple being built above the demoness's heart. He also sent his minister Thonmi Sambhota to Kashmir to create the script for the Tibetan alphabet. As an emanation of Avalokiteshvara, Songtsen Gampo holds a lotus and a *dharmachakra*, and the head of Amitabha Buddha protrudes from his turban.



Rinchen Zangpo

Rinchen Zangpo (958–1055), known as the Great Translator, was the foremost scholar of Indian tantric texts during the second diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet, when the Sarma, or “New Translation,” schools were evolving. Born in Guge in western Tibet, he was sent at age eighteen to Kashmir by King Yeshe-Od of Guge to learn the art of translation. He returned to Tibet after twelve years but later went to India again to find artists for the temples now being built. During these years he traveled widely across India, studying with seventy-five great Buddhist masters, some of whom came to Tibet to help with his translation projects. In 1042 Atisha arrived in western Tibet and was amazed by the number of teachings this great Tibetan scholar had received and translated. Rinchen Zangpo built many important temples with Yeshe-Od, including Alchi in Ladakh, Tabo in Spiti, and his own monastery of Tholing in western Tibet.



Atisha

Atisha Dipamkara Shrijnana (980/82–1054) was born in Bengal and in his youth learned all the philosophical systems and sciences of India. After studying with several Indian masters, Atisha took ordination and spent the next twelve years studying in Sumatra with a sublime teacher named Dharmakirti. Atisha returned to India when he was forty-five and thereafter served as *vinaya*, or discipline master, at Vikramashila and several other Buddhist academies for many years. He spent the last twelve years of his life in Tibet, where he went at the request of King Yeshe-Od and his nephew Janchub-Od, who made great sacrifices so that Atisha could come to Tibet. In western Tibet Atisha worked with Rinchen Zangpo to help clarify and reform the tantric teachings within the country, and in response to Jangchub-Od's questions he composed his celebrated *Lamp for the Path of Awakening*. Atisha's main Tibetan disciple was Dromtonpa, with whom he founded the Kadam tradition.





Dromtonpa

Dromtonpa Gyalwa Jungne (1004/5–1065) was the main Tibetan disciple, translator, and lineage holder of Atisha. Born in Tolung near Lhasa, he studied Tibetan language for four years with a teacher named Geshe Yungcho. At nineteen he began studying Madhyamaka philosophy and Nyingma tantric rituals with a lama named Chenpo Setsun, then learned Sanskrit grammar with a scholar named Pandit Smriti. At thirty-eight he traveled to western Tibet, where he met Atisha for the first time in 1042 and then spent the next twelve years as his main disciple. After Atisha's death in 1054, Dromtonpa and many of Atisha's disciples were invited to establish Reting monastery near Lhasa, which was founded in 1057 as the main seat of the Kadampa school. Although known for his monastic precepts, Dromtonpa himself was never ordained; he lived his life as a lay practitioner. He was considered to be an emanation of Avalokiteshvara, whose lotus attribute he holds.

NYINGMA LINEAGE MASTERS

Garab Dorje (Skt. Prahevajra, Pramodavajra)

Garab Dorje, whose name means “indestructible delight,” was the first human guru of the Dzogchen lineage, who is said to have taken birth around 55 c.e. As an emanation of Vajrasattva he was immaculately conceived in the womb of a virgin nun in the kingdom of Oddiyana. At age seven he debated the greatest scholars of his time, overwhelming them with his brilliance. Afterward he practiced on a mountain precipice, where by age thirty-two he had consigned to memory the entire 6,400,000 verses of the Dzogchen Tantras, which he received directly from Vajrasattva. Because Garab Dorje had attained the stage of “no more learning,” Vajrasattva permitted him to commit these tantras to writing, which he did with the help of three *dakinis* over a three-year period on the summit of Mount Malaya. For a century or more Garab Dorje taught the doctrine to countless beings in the Sitavana charnel ground before dissolving his body into rainbow light.



Trisong Detsen

Trisong Detsen (742–797; reigned 755–797) was the grandson of Songtsen Gampo and the second of Tibet's three great Buddhist kings—his grandson Ralpacan being the third. Considered a human emanation of Manjushri, Trisong Detsen bears the attributes of a sword and a book on his two hand-held lotuses. Enthroned at thirteen, he firmly established Buddhism in Tibet during his reign with the help of Shantarakshita and Padmasambhava, who were collectively known as the “king, scholar, and master.” Trisong Detsen invited Padmasambhava to Tibet to subdue the hostile local spirits that were impeding the construction of Samye, Tibet's first monastery. Trisong Detsen was one of the main disciples of Padmasambhava, Vairotsana, and Vimalamitra, from whom he received the profound Mahayoga and Atiyoga teachings.





Padmasambhava, or Padmakara (Tib. Pema Jungne)

Padmakara, the “lotus born,” is the principal form of Guru Rinpoche, the “precious guru” from Oddiyana in western India who, along with King Trisong Detsen and Shantarakshita, firmly established Buddhism in Tibet during the eighth century. For Nyingma practitioners of the Mahayoga, Atiyoga (Tib. Dzogchen), oral, and “spiritual treasure” (*terma*) traditions, he is revered as the Second Buddha, who manifested in eight main and four further distinct forms in order to suppress and convert malevolent non-Buddhist forces throughout India, Tibet, and the Himalayan region. His miraculous exploits are recorded in numerous biographies, several of which are attributed to Yeshe Tsogyal, one of his twenty-five main disciples. He is reddish white in complexion and wears shoes, jewel ornaments, a lotus hat, a white inner robe, a blue middle robe, an outer yellow and red monastic robe, and a heavy brown cloak. His attributes are a *vajra*, a nectar vase in a skullcup, and a trident-topped *khatvanga* (tantric staff).

His mantra is OM AH HUM VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM.



Yeshe Tsogyal

Yeshe Tsogyal (777–837), the “queen of the wisdom lake,” took auspicious birth as a princess of Kharchen in central Tibet. After early traumas she became a consort of King Trisong Detsen, who later presented her to Guru Rinpoche as a mandala offering during an empowerment. Consequently she became Guru Rinpoche’s innermost consort and gained great accomplishments through her practice of Vajrakila. Gifted with a phenomenal memory, she received virtually all the teachings that Guru Rinpoche gave in Tibet. While traveling all over the country with him as he empowered the landscape, she helped conceal these teachings in various sacred sites as *terma*, or “hidden treasures,” that would eventually be revealed by future generations of Guru Rinpoche’s disciples. Following Guru Rinpoche’s advice, she later went into retreat with a consort named Atsara Sale in Nepal and Bhutan, where she gained realization. An emanation of Vajrayogini, she holds the *dakini* attributes of a curved knife and a skullcup.



Shantarakshita (Tib. Shiwa Tso)

Shantarakshita (725–788), whose name means “lake of serenity,” was born in northwestern India. As a great scholar who combined the traditions of Nagarjuna, Asanga, and Dharmakirti, he eventually became abbot of Nalanda university. King Trisong Detsen invited him to Tibet to found Samye monastery, which he modeled on Odantapuri Mahavihara in Magadha in northern India. As the preceptor, or bodhisattva abbot, of Samye, he ordained the first seven Tibetan monks, including Vairotsana. During this time, however, many great calamities occurred in Tibet, which the king’s superstitious Bonpo ministers blamed on Trisong Detsen’s patronage of Buddhism. In response to this accusation Shantarakshita withdrew to Nepal for a period and insisted that both he and Trisong Detsen invite Padmasambhava to Tibet to subjugate, convert, and “oath-bind” all the hostile local spirits. Once this was accomplished Shantarakshita stayed on at Samye for the remaining thirteen years of his life.



Vimalamitra (Tib. Drime Chokyi Shenyen)

Born in Kashmir in the late eighth century, Vimalamitra is viewed as one of the three forefathers of the Dzogchen transmissions, along with Shri Simha and Jnanasutra. An accomplished scholar, he traveled to China, where he studied with the great master Shri Simha for many years before returning to India. Although he received many profound oral teachings directly from Shri Simha, he was not given the “Secret Heart Essence” section of the Menngagde (“Instruction Class”) teachings, nor did he receive any texts. Thus it fell upon his friend Jnanasutra to travel to China and receive these instructions and texts from Shri Simha, which he later imparted to Vimalamitra, who then spent ten years practicing and realizing them in India. At King Trisong Detsen’s invitation, Vimalamitra later spent thirteen years in Tibet, translating the Mahayoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga Tantras into Tibetan, which he then concealed at Chimpu near Samye.



Vairotsana, or Vairocana (Tib. Berotsana)

Vairotsana was born in the Tsang province of central Tibet in the late eighth century and was named after Vairocana Buddha. Because of his intelligence, King Trisong Detsen brought him to Samye to train as a translator and be ordained by Shantarakshita as one of Tibet’s first group of “seven testers,” or monks. When he became qualified, the king sent him to study in India, where he received teachings secretly at night from Shri Simha, who transcribed them in goat’s milk on white silk so that they became visible only when fumigated. Not yet satisfied, Vairotsana requested further teachings from Shri Simha, who bestowed on him all the pith instructions of Dzogchen. Then through a direct vision in an Indian charnel ground he received the 6,400,000 verses of the Dzogchen Tantras directly from Garab Dorje. Thereafter he returned to Tibet and taught these cycles, known as the *Heart Essence of Vairotsana*, to King Trisong Detsen secretly at night.



Longchenpa, or Longchen Rabjam Drime Ozer

Longchenpa (1308–1364), whose name means “vast infinite expanse,” was one of the most brilliant scholars of the Nyingma tradition, although he was also versed in many Sarma traditions, including the Kalachakra, Chod, and the Lamdre path of the Sakyas. Longchenpa’s main teacher was Rigdzin Kumaradza (1266–1343), under whose guidance he practiced the Vimala Nyingtig, or *Heart Essence of Vimalamitra*. Along with Karmapa Rangjung Dorje he spent two years of hardship with Kumaraja, who later empowered him as the lineage holder of these Dzogchen teachings. As an incarnation of Princess Pema Sal (the daughter of Trisong Detsen), Longchenpa also revived the Khandro Nyingtig, or *Heart Essence of the Dakinis*, which Padmasambhava had originally transmitted to Pema Sal. A prolific writer, Longchenpa synthesized the Vima Nyingtig and Khandro Nyingtig into a cohesive system. He wrote over two hundred fifty treatises, which include his *Seven Treasuries*, *Dzogchen Commentaries*, and *Trilogy of Self-Liberation*.



Lochen Dharmashri

Lochen Dharmashri (1654–1717) was the younger brother of the great *terton* Orgyen Terdak Lingpa (1646–1714), who founded the Nyingma monastery of Mindrolling and was both a teacher and a disciple of the Fifth Dalai Lama. As a child Lochen received his refuge and bodhisattva vows from his brother and at age twenty received full ordination from the Dalai Lama. He sought out and received teachings from all the main lineage masters of that time, gaining recognition as a scholar. His vast knowledge encompassed all the rituals, chants, sacred dances, and tantras of the Nyingma lineage, along with all the traditional arts and sciences, philosophy, and linguistics. His writings include the eighteen-volume *Lochen Kabum*, which begins with the *Sutra That Gathers All Intentions*, and the *Magical Net*. In 1717 the Mongols sacked Mindrolling monastery, and Lochen Dharmashri was one of the many killed in this attack.



Karma Lingpa

The *terton* (“treasure finder”) Karma Lingpa was born sometime during the sixty-year Tibetan calendar cycle that extended from 1327 to 1387. He was recognized as an emanation of the Tibetan translator Cokro Lui Gyaltzen, who had worked with Vairotsana, Shantarakshita, and Trisong Detsen during the eighth century. From an early age Karma Lingpa was gifted with the powers of precognition and enlightened activity. At age fifteen he extracted an important *terma* (“hidden treasure”) from Mount Gampodar in southern Tibet, which Padmasambhava is believed to have concealed during the eighth century. Originally known as the *Peaceful and Wrathful Deities: The Natural Liberation of Enlightened Intention*, these treasure texts have since been widely disseminated as *The Great Liberation by Hearing in the Intermediate State*, or more familiarly as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Karma Lingpa died young, entrusting his son as the first lineage holder of these transmissions.



Orgyen Chokgyur Lingpa

Chokgyur Lingpa (1829–1870) was a famous *terton* (“treasure revealer”) and a contemporary of Jamgon Kongtrul and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, who likewise were great *tertons*. Born in Kham in eastern Tibet, he was recognized at an early age as an incarnation of King Trisong Detsen’s second son. At thirteen he encountered Guru Rinpoche in a vision, and at nineteen he revealed his first great earth treasure (*terma*). Known as the *Tukdrub Barchey Kunsel (Dispeller of Obstacles)*, this *terma* was later revealed as a shared mind treasure by Jamyang Khyentse. Although he was at first sometimes doubted as a treasure finder, his amazing abilities were later validated by many of the great hierarchs of the Kagyu and Nyingma traditions, including the Karmapa, Tai Situ Rinpoche, and especially Jamyang Khyentse, with whom he shared a close relationship. Chokgyur Lingpa’s collected treasures are known as the *Chokling Tersar* and consist of forty volumes, each of about seven hundred pages.



Patrul Rinpoche

Dza Patrul Rinpoche (1808–1887) was a contemporary of Jamgon Kongtrul, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, and Jamgon Mipham. Although he had been recognized in childhood as a *tulku*, or incarnate lama, Patrul chose to live in the guise of a wandering beggar. His main teacher was Jigme Gyalwai Nyugu, a heart disciple of the great *terton* Jigme Lingpa (1729–1798), who received the *Heart Essence of the Vast Expanse* (Tib. *Longchen Nyingtig*) directly through visionary transmission from Longchenpa (1308–1364). Patrul received instructions on the *Longchen Nyingtig* twenty-five times from Jigme Gyalwai, along with teachings on Dzogchen and the “inner yoga” (Tib. *tsa-lung*) practices of the *Longchen Nyingtig*. Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje, another eccentric Dzogchen master of that time, introduced Patrul to the true nature of mind, and he studied with many other teachers. Patrul Rinpoche’s humility, stories, and exploits continue to inspire practitioners, as do his writings, such as *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*.



Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye

Jamgon Kongtrul (1813–1899) was born in Kham in eastern Tibet and is considered to be an emanation of Vairotsana, the Great Translator, because of his encyclopedic knowledge. From age ten he began studying the works of great masters from all traditions; the scope of his learning included the arts, crafts, sciences, medicine, Sanskrit grammar, logic, and all branches of Buddhist philosophy and knowledge. At nineteen he was ordained into the Nyingma tradition, and a year later into the Karma Kagyu tradition. By age thirty he had received transmissions from over sixty teachers and had been recognized as a *tulku* by Orgyen Chokgyur Lingpa. Thereafter he worked with the great scholar Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820–1892) to initiate the eclectic Rimay movement, which attempted to counteract the sectarianism in Tibetan culture. Most of his written works are contained in the ninety-volume collection known as *The Five Great Treasures*.



Jamgon Mipham Gyatso

Jamgon Mipham Gyatso (1846–1912), or Mipham Rinpoche, was born in Derge in eastern Tibet and went on to become a leading figure in the nineteenth-century revival of the Nyingma tradition. His main teachers were Patrul Rinpoche, Jamgon Kongtrul, and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, who were all involved in the eclectic Rimay, or nonsectarian, movement. Jamyang Khyentse considered Mipham his spiritual son and “the most learned man of his time.” From Patrul he received teachings on Dzogchen and *bodhicitta*; from Jamyang Khyentse, the Nyingma “treasures” (*terma*) and “orally transmitted” (*kama*) lineages. Mipham was ordained at age twelve and at sixteen undertook a one-year Manjushri retreat, after which all knowledge was accessible to him. He studied a diversity of subjects, such as the arts and sciences, alchemy, astrology, medicine, and philosophy. He also developed a systematization of the sutras and tantras along with their commentaries, which he compiled into a series of thirty-five volumes.

KAGYU LINEAGES MASTERS

Vajradhara (Tib. Dorje Chang)

Vajradhara, the “*vajra* holder,” is the primordial buddha of the Sarma, or “New Translation,” schools of Tibetan Buddhism, which date from the eleventh century and include the Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug schools. In the early Nyingma tradition, however, Samantabhadra is the primordial buddha, whereas Vajradhara is his activity emanation. Both of these blue buddhas personify the *dharmakaya*, or “truth body,” as the pristine source of the fully enlightened mind from which the tantric systems of Vajrayana arise. But while Samantabhadra is naked and bears no attributes, Vajradhara is adorned with the five silk garments and eight jeweled ornaments of a *sambhogakaya*, or “enjoyment body,” deity. He is peaceful, majestic, and deep blue in color, and he sits in *vajra*-posture upon a white moon disc and multicolored lotus. With his hands crossed in *vajra-humkara*-mudra he holds the twin method and wisdom attributes of a five-pointed *vajra* and a *ghanta*, or ritual bell, in front of his heart.



Tilopa

The *mahasiddha* Tilopa (988–1069) was the first guru of the Mahamudra lineage, having received this transmission directly from Vajradhara Buddha. Born as a Brahman in Bengal, Tilopa chose to enter the Buddhist academy of Somapuri as a monk, where he received initiation into the Chakrasamvara Tantra through the visionary medium of a *dakini*. However, after taking a courtesan as his consort he was expelled from Somapuri and began learning from other great itinerant Indian *siddhas* while earning a living from pounding oil from sesame seeds (Skt. *til*). Tilopa later combined these received teachings into four oral instruction doctrines that focus on the esoteric tantric practices of illusory-body yoga, dream yoga, the yoga of clear light, and the yoga of inner heat. Tilopa is shown here wearing the loincloth, meditation belt, and bone ornaments of an Indian *mahasiddha*. He holds a nectar-filled skullcup and a golden fish as symbols of spiritual transformation.



Naropa

Born into an aristocratic Bengali family, the *mahasiddha* Naropa (1016–1100) first studied in Kashmir before being called back home for an arranged marriage. After eight years of married life he returned to Kashmir and became ordained as a monk, eventually graduating to become an abbot of Nalanda university in Bihar. However, eight years later an old hag, who claimed to be Tilopa’s sister, completely undermined his understanding of the teachings. Upon hearing Tilopa’s name Naropa left Nalanda and set out to find him. His apprenticeship under Tilopa was severe, involving twelve terrifying ordeals and much hardship before his realization came to equal that of his guru. Naropa is particularly known for his six yogas, or dharmas: inner heat, illusory body, clear light, intermediate state, dreams, and consciousness transference. A similar lineage of advanced tantric practices, known as the six dharmas of Niguma, came from his yogini consort or dharma-sister. Here Naropa is shown inside his cave, triumphantly blowing on an antelope horn.





Niguma

Niguma (ca. eleventh century) was born in Kashmir and was one of the five teachers of Khyungpo Naljor, founder of the Shangpa Kagyu tradition. She is regarded as either the consort, dharma-sister, or actual sister of Naropa. Niguma first received teachings from the *mahasiddha* Lawapa the Younger and became highly realized after just one week. Thereafter she received teachings directly from Vajradhara and is renowned for the six dharmas of Niguma, which were transmitted into Tibet by Khyungpo Naljor. These six dharmas, or yogas, are: inner heat (*tummo*), illusory body (*gyulu*), dreams (*milam*), clear light (*osal*), consciousness transference (*phowa*), and intermediate state (*bardo*). Niguma is associated with the Sosaling charnel ground near Bodhgaya. She is semiwrathful, three eyed, and brown in color, and she dances upon a moon disc and lotus. She wears the five bone ornaments, holds a blood-filled skullcup and a pellet drum (*damaru*), and supports a tantric staff (*khatvanga*).

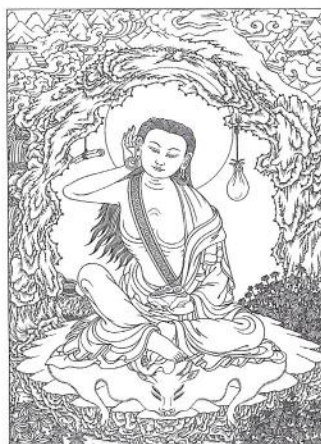
Marpa Chokyi Lodro

Marpa Chokyi Lodro (1012–1097), also known as Marpa Lotsawa or Marpa the Translator, was the founder of the Kagyu lineage and the first person to introduce the Mahamudra teachings into Tibet. As an unruly child Marpa was sent away to study Sanskrit and Tibetan grammar with a translator named Drokmi Lotsawa. Inspired by Drokmi's example, Marpa later made three trips to India, first studying with two of Naropa's disciples in Nepal for three years. Marpa spent over twenty years in India, practicing and realizing all the profound teachings he received from his teacher Naropa and other *mahasiddhas*, such as Kukkuripa, Maitripa, and Niguma. From Maitripa and Naropa he received two unique lineages of Mahamundra teachings, the latter descending directly from Vajradhara to Tilopa and Naropa, with its focuses being Tilopa's four special oral instructions and Naropa's six yogas or dharmas. In between his travels Marpa lived with his wife and sons on their farm in southern Tibet, and his most famous disciple was Milarepa.



Jetsun Milarepa

Tibet's most beloved saint and poet is Milarepa (1040–1123, or 1052–1135), the "venerable cotton-clad yogi" whose life story and songs of realization continue to inspire generations of practitioners. In his youth Milarepa's embittered mother forced him to train in sorcery so that he could destroy their cruel and greedy relatives. But after slaying them Milarepa repented of his heinous deeds, eventually seeking redemption with Marpa, who was a hard taskmaster. For six years Marpa treated Milarepa like a slave, demanding that he single-handedly build various stone towers and then destroy them, only to rebuild them again, repeatedly. When Milarepa's terrible karma was finally exhausted, Marpa bestowed all of his teachings upon Milarepa, preparing him for the nine years of solitary retreat he was destined to lead in various remote mountain caves. After attaining full enlightenment Milarepa's fame grew and he began to teach his own disciples, the two main ones being Gampopa and Rechungpa.





Gampopa

Gampopa (1097–1153) was also known as Dagpo Lhare, the “doctor from Dagpo” in southern Tibet, where he trained as a physician in his youth. Following the tragic death of his young wife he vowed never to marry again and at the age of twenty-six took ordination as a Kadampa monk with the name Sonam Rinchen. As a follower of Atisha’s *lam-rim*, or “graduated path to enlightenment,” he soon developed a profound understanding of the Buddha’s teachings—and then he overheard a beggar mention Milarepa’s name. Filled with devotion, he sought out Milarepa, who readily bestowed many of his teachings onto this destined disciple, especially the practices of Mahamudra and “inner heat” (Tib. *tummo*). After many years of retreat he assimilated the Kadam teachings with his own direct realization of Mahamudra. Gampopa’s most famous work is *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, and his four main disciples later established the four major branches of the Kagyu tradition.



Rechungpa

“Moon-like” Rechungpa (1083/85–1161), or Rechung Dorje Drakpa, is the second great disciple of Milarepa. (“Sun-like” Gampopa is considered the foremost.) He met Milarepa in his youth and spent much of his life practicing under his guidance as a cotton-clad yogi or *repa*. Like Marpa, he made three journeys to India, returning with certain teachings that Marpa had failed to obtain. These included the cycle of the formless *dakinis*, which he received from Marpa’s re-embodied son, Tiphupa. His main practice was the hearing lineage of Rechungpa, which focuses on Chakrasamavara and is now taught mainly in the Drukpa Kagyu tradition. Milarepa’s early biographies contain many wonderful stories about Rechungpa and himself, revealing that Rechungpa received all of Milarepa’s teachings. Here Rechungpa appears like Milarepa, with his right hand behind his ear as he sings a song of realization (Skt. *doha*). He wears a white cotton outer robe, and a victory banner crowns his conical white hat.



Sukhasiddhi (Tib. Dewa Ngondrup)

Sukhasiddhi (ca. eleventh century), meaning “blissful attainment,” was the name given to a kind Kashmiri woman who lived an impoverished life with her husband and six children. Legend relates how she gave all their rice to a starving beggar and as a consequence was chased out of her home by her family. In nearby Oddiyana she began selling beer. One of her customers was the consort of Virupa the Younger, a *mahasiddha* who was a master of the Vajrayogini Tantra. Delighted with the quality of her beer, Virupa initiated Sukhasiddhi into his most profound tantric yoga practices, where she soon gained realization. Even though she was sixty-one at this time, overnight her physical body transformed into that of a sixteen-year-old wisdom *dakini*. Sukhasiddhi (along with Niguma) was a teacher of Khyungpo Nalgor, who founded the Shangpa Kagyu tradition. White in color and having three eyes, she holds a skullcup of nectar and points into space with her forefinger.



Jigten Sumgon

Jigten Sumgon (1143–1217) was the main disciple of the great Kagyu master Phagmo Drupa (1110–1170), who was a disciple of Gampopa. He founded the Drikung Kagyu tradition, one of the eight lineages derived from Phagmo Drupa's disciples. In 1179 he established his seat at Drikung Thil monastery to the northeast of Lhasa. His great-grandmother was Achi Chokyi Drolma, who later became deified as a protector of the Drikung and Karma Kagyu traditions. Jigten Sumgon stayed with Phagmo Drupa during his last years, before undertaking a seven-year retreat in a cave. While interrupting this retreat to make a pilgrimage to Phagmo Drupa's memorial stupa, he contracted leprosy; thereafter he practiced assiduously in his cave until his disease was cured and he attained buddhahood. Ordained at age thirty-five, Jigten Sumgon was believed to be an incarnation of Nagarjuna. His teachings include the *Five Profound Paths of Mahamudra* and the *Heart Essence of Mahayana*.



Karmapa Rangjung Dorje

Rangjung Dorje (1284–1339), the “self-created *vajra*” and Third Karmapa, was the self-proclaimed incarnation of the Second Karmapa, Karma Pakshi (1204–1283). At age five he was recognized as the Third Karmapa by the great Tibetan *siddha* Orgyenpa Rinchen Pal (1229–1309). Orgyenpa had previously been Karma Pakshi's main student but now became Rangjung Dorje's teacher, bestowing upon him many of the empowerments he had received in his previous life as the Second Karmapa. Rangjung Dorje was later enthroned at Tsurphu monastery near Lhasa, the Tibetan seat of the “black hat” Karmapa incarnations, and studied both the Nyingma and Kagyu traditions before being ordained at eighteen. He trained together with Longchenpa under Rigdzin Kumaradza (1266–1343), which resulted in him bringing the Dzogchen and Mahamudra traditions closer together in the Karma Nyingtik lineage. After an eventful life he traveled to China at the Yuan emperor's request. His sixteen volumes of collected works include *The Profound Inner Principles*, *A Treatise on Buddha Nature*, and *Instructions on Sahajayoga Mahamudra*.



Thangtong Gyalpo

Thangtong Gyalpo (1361–1485, or 1385–1464) was an enlightened Tibetan polymath and an incarnation of Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltzen, the renowned Jonangpa master who propounded the *shentong* view of emptiness. His activities included architect, blacksmith, bridge builder, philosopher, and a dramatist and composer who introduced the Ache Lhamo operatic tradition into Tibet. He studied with many great masters, especially those of the Shangpa Kagyu and Nyingma Jangter (“Northern Treasures”) traditions. He traveled widely across Tibet and Bhutan, establishing monasteries, temples, and elaborate stupas. He built fifty-eight iron suspension bridges and more than one hundred ferry crossings. He experienced prophetic visions, revealed many *terma* (“hidden treasure”) teachings, taught extensively, worked ceaselessly for all beings as a bodhisattva and divine madman, and made journeys to Kashmir, Ladakh, India, Nepal, Mongolia, and China. Traditionally he appears as a brown-complexioned *mahasiddha* with white hair and a beard, who holds the attributes of an iron chain and a longevity vase inside a skullcup.

JONANG LINEAGE MASTERS

Taranatha (Tib. Kunga Nyingpo)

Taranatha (1575–1634) was born Kunga Nyingpo in southeastern Tibet and received the name Taranatha later through a vision. He is regarded as the greatest scholar of the Jonang school of Tibetan Buddhism, widely disseminated by Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen (1292–1361) from Nepal. At age four Taranatha was recognized as the incarnation of Kunga Drolchok and received teachings from his predecessor's disciples, as well as from many other great Indian and Tibetan masters. The Jonang tradition combines the Kalachakra Tantra practices with the *shentong* philosophy of other-emptiness. However, the *shentong* teachings were suppressed at the time by the dominant Gelugpas, who absorbed the Kalachakra practices of the Jonangpa while forcibly seizing control of many of their monasteries in Tibet. Around 1615 Taranatha went to Mongolia, where he founded several monasteries and was later reborn as Zanabazar, the First Jetsun Dampa of Mongolia. Taranatha's prolific writings include his *History of Buddhism in India*, *Origin of the Tara Tantra*, and *The Golden Rosary*.



SAKYA LINEAGE MASTERS

Virupa (Tib. Birwapa)

The great miracle worker Virupa (ca. ninth century) is listed as the first of the eighty-four Indian *mahasiddhas*. In the Tibetan Sakya tradition he is venerated as the first guru in the lineage of teachings known as *The Path and Its Fruit* (Tib. *Lamdre*). Virupa received this transmission directly from Nairatma, the consort of the Highest Yoga Tantra deity Hevajra. From Virupa the lineage passed through the *mahasiddhas* Krishnacharya, Dam-arupa, Avadhuti, and Gayadhara and then entered Tibet through the translator Drokmi Lotsawa (992–1072/74). Virupa is shown with his hand raised as he halts the sun's movement for three days while drinking a tavern dry. The tavern maid offers him more wine in a skullcup, while the unmoving shadow of his ritual dagger transfixes the sun. Behind him is the Ganges River, whose waters he miraculously parted to enable him to cross, another example of his accomplishments (Skt. *siddhi*), or psychic powers.



Sachen Kunga Nyingpo

Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (1092–1158) was the first of the five patriarchs of the Sakya tradition, one of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The monastery of Sakya (literally, "Gray Earth") was founded by Kunga's father, Khon Konchog Gyalpo, in 1073. Kunga was only eleven when his father died, so the acclaimed translator Bari Lotsawa temporarily served as abbot of Sakya and tutor to Kunga. That same year Kunga received a vision from Manjushri, who transmitted a four-line teaching to him, known as *Parting from the Four Attachments*. After that the lineage of teachings known as *The Path and Its Fruit* (Tib. *Lamdre*), which descended from Virupa, was taught to Kunga over four years by the lineage holder Zhangton Chobar. In a month-long vision, Kunga later received many other teachings directly from Virupa. As an emanation of Avalokiteshvara, he holds a lotus. The second of his four sons, Sonam Tsemo (1142–1182), became the second Sakya patriarch.





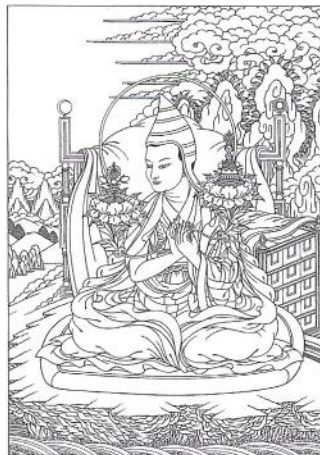
Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen

Sakya Pandita (1182–1251) was one of Tibet's greatest scholars and along with Longchenpa and Tsongkhapa is considered one of the three supreme Tibetan emanations of Manjushri, whose lotus-mounted sword and book attributes he holds. At birth his body was adorned with auspicious marks, and as the fourth Sakya patriarch, he was the nephew of the second and third patriarchs, Sonam Tsemo (1142–1182) and his younger brother Drakpa Gyaltsen (1147–1216). At age twenty-six Sakya Pandita was ordained by the Kashmiri master Shakya Shribhadra, who tutored him in all the doctrines of Indian Buddhist monasticism. A formidable debater, he defeated many erudite opponents, and as a prolific Sanskrit translator he authored over one hundred important texts. In 1244 he was summoned to the court of Godan Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan, where, after his arrival in 1246, he cured Godan of an illness, converted him to Buddhism, and was made temporal ruler of Tibet in 1249.



Drogon Chogyal Phagpa

As a monk Sakya Pandita appointed his nephew, Drogon Chogyal (1235–1280), to succeed him as the fifth patriarch of the Sakya tradition. At age eight he discoursed on the Hevajra Tantra to a vast assembly of monks, which earned him the title Phagpa (Tib. *phags-pa*), meaning “noble one.” At ten he took novice vows at the Jokhang temple in Lhasa, before traveling with his uncle and younger brother to Godan Khan's court in Liangzhu (Wuwei), which they reached in 1246. Godan Khan and Sakya Pandita both died in 1251, so Phagpa stayed on at Godan's court, adopting Mongolian dress, language, and customs, while his seven-year-old brother was married to Godan's daughter. When Kublai Khan became emperor of the Yuan dynasty, Phagpa designed a unified alphabetic script for his empire, which is still known as Phagpa script. At Kublai's invitation Phagpa taught extensively in China, where they established a firm Sakya-Mongol alliance.



Buton Rinchen Drub

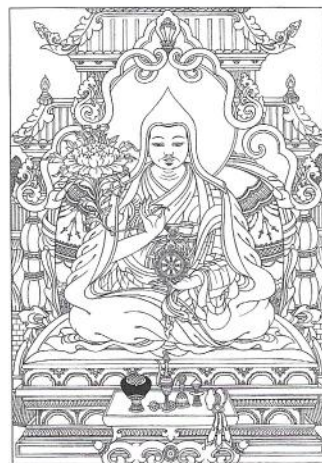
Buton Rinchen Drub (1290–1364), the eleventh abbot of Shalu monastery in central Tibet, is revered as Tibet's greatest historian and archivist. The Sakya college of Shalu, rebuilt in Mongolian style in 1333 after an earthquake, is renowned as a center of learning and for its exquisite wall paintings. Ordained as a novice monk at eighteen, Buton received full ordination at twenty-three. During the interim he received many teachings and tantric empowerments from various masters and went on to study Sanskrit grammar with a notable translator for four years. At age thirty he was inaugurated as the abbot of Shalu, where he taught for thirty-seven years. During this time Buton cataloged the 4,569 texts of its library into a cohesive system and compiled new editions of both the Kangyur and the Tengyur. He resigned as abbot in 1356, by which time Shalu housed 3,800 monks, and spent his later years writing his monumental *History of Buddhism in India*.

GELUG AND MONGOLIAN LINEAGE MASTERS



Tsongkhapa Lobzang Drakpa

Popularly known as Je Rinpoche, Tsongkhapa (1357–1419) was the great reformer who founded the Gelug, or “virtuous,” school. This school is based on the Kadampa tradition of Atisha, which became the predominant monastic “yellow hat” school of Tibet. Tsongkhapa was born in the Tsongkha region of Amdo in eastern Tibet and as an emanation of Manjushri studied from an early age. At sixteen he moved to central Tibet, where he studied the sutras and tantras with the greatest masters of that time, training especially in logic, philosophy, meditation, and *vinaya*, or ethical discipline. He undertook long retreats; engaged in Highest Yoga Tantra practices; received visions from Manjushri, Nagarjuna, and other enlightened masters; and wrote over two hundred treatises, which include his *Exposition on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (Tib. *Lamrin chenmo*). Tsongkhapa founded Ganden monastery, and his disciples later founded Drepung, Sera, and Tashilhunpo monasteries.



The Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso

Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (1617–1682), the “Great Fifth” Dalai Lama, is one of the most important figures in Tibetan history. His abilities first came to the attention of the Fourth Dalai Lama’s attendant, who kept his existence secret until his ordination by the Fourth Panchen Lama, Lobsang Chokyi Gyaltsen (1570–1662). His recognition came at a time of political turmoil; however, through the intervention of the Mongolian hierarch Gushri Khan, he was enthroned in 1642 as the spiritual and political leader of Tibet. A prolific scholar and visionary, he studied with many important Nyingma masters, especially those of the Jangter (“Northern Treasures”) tradition. His many projects included the construction of the Potala Palace with his regent, Desi Sangye Gyatso, who kept the Great Fifth’s death a secret for fifteen years after his passing. As an emanation of Avalokiteshvara, the Dalai Lama bears his lotus emblem, along with the golden wheel of religious power.



Zanabazar, the First Jetsun Dampa

Jetsun Dampa, the “lord of refuge,” is a lineage title given to the spiritual head of Buddhism in Mongolia. The first Jetsun Dampa, Lobsang Tenpai Gyaltsen (1635–1723)—commonly known as Zanabazar—was the son of a Mongolian khan. Identified as an incarnate lama by the Khalkha Mongols at the age of seven, he was sent to Tibet for recognition by the Fifth Dalai Lama, who along with the Fourth Panchen Lama became one of his two main teachers. The Dalai Lama gave Zanabazar the title Jetsun Dampa and recognized him as the reincarnation of Taranatha, the great historian and tantric master of the Jonangpa tradition. Taranatha’s influence rivaled that of the Gelugpas in Mongolia at the time, which implies that the Dalai Lama’s recognition of Zanabazar was politically motivated. A true renaissance man, Zanabazar was a famous statue maker—he took fifty Tibetan and Newar artists to Mongolia with him to enshrine Taranatha’s remains. He died in Beijing on his second visit to China.