



The Breeze that Carries the Auspicious Melody
Replies to Questions Arising from the Life Story of
The Great Treasure Revealer, Chokgyur Dechen Lingpa
by Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo

Om svasti siddhi rastu. May there be accomplishment!

Important questions arise with regard to the vast and profound *Auspicious Melody*,¹ which presents the common life story of the great treasure revealer Chokgyur Dechen Lingpa. In order to answer these I have compiled the following notes. I shall begin with the meaning of the full title of this life story supplication, *The Melody of the Auspiciously Curling Conch*.

Generally speaking, the compositional styles of guru supplications show great variation in their expression of words and meaning. In brief, they are of three types—prayers to a master’s garland of incarnations, written primarily about his previous lifetimes; supplications known as life-story prayers,² written primarily about his present activities; and longevity prayers for times to come.

Here, we are dealing with a life-story prayer, the second type of supplication. Its very title equates it with the sweet sound of the most supreme of auspicious objects—a white conch coiling clockwise. Indeed, there are good reasons for this analogy of the white conch coiling clockwise to represent the subject—the life story that spans the three times.

The first reason is as follows: just as the white conch coiled clockwise has uninterruptedly taken the form of a conch for five lifetimes, its sound thereby becoming melodious and pleasing to all beings, this precious emanated treasure revealer has likewise taken birth exclusively as a sublime being throughout his previous lifetimes, and now fulfills the wishes of disciples.

The second reason is that, just as the white conch coiled clockwise has three extraordinary qualities, this venerable master’s life story is likewise endowed with three extraordinary qualities. The defining characteristic of the white conch coiling clockwise is its pure white color and the fact that it is supreme among auspicious objects. In the same way, the causal aspect of the biography, Chokgyur Lingpa’s extraordinary bodhicitta resolve, is wholly pure. Wherever he directs his mind, auspiciousness prevails—benefiting both the teachings and beings of

degenerate times, both now and ultimately. Also, just as the conch's shape coils clockwise, so the resultant aspect of the biography, Chokgyur Lingpa's extraordinary awakened activity, manifests in ways appropriate to each disciple, thereby guiding them individually on the excellent path of higher rebirths and liberation. Finally, just as the conch's function is to resound melodiously, so the essence aspect of his extraordinary life story captivates the attention of every fortunate person who hears it. This is a life where awakened resolve and activity are indivisible, where the great treasury of profound *termas*, mysterious and unprecedented, is upheld. Overcoming the contagious decline of the degenerate age, it is a story that raises the victory banner of virtue, fulfilling whatever one may wish for within samsara and nirvana.

The third reason is as follows: The white conch coiled clockwise that possesses these three extraordinary qualities of form, function, and defining characteristics will bring the abundant splendor of auspiciousness to any abode of gods, nagas, or humans in which it appears in times to come. Likewise, wherever the sublime and noble master appears in the infinite manifestations of his future rebirths, his life story bears this extraordinary cause, result, and essence that will provide disciples with every benefit and all the happiness that they desire.

Verse 1

The first verse of four lines gives the definitive meaning of the life story as the natural state, referencing ultimate reality, in which ground and fruition are unfailingly indivisible, as explained in the tantras of the *Mayajala*, the *Net of Illusion* (*Gyutrül Drawa*).³

Verse 2

The second verse, the life story of expedient meaning, condenses all of the common biographies into a single stanza. It can therefore stand alone as a short supplication.

Verse 3

The third verse, on the path of the four magical tamings,⁴ can be explained in detail according to the third chapter of the *Mayajala Root Tantra*.

Verses 4 & 5

Among the general, condensed life stories of Chokgyur Lingpa's previous incarnations, the following detail regarding his qualities is mentioned in the *Basic Framework for the Sadhanas of Profound Auspicious Coincidence* (*Tendrel Zapmö Druptap Doching*), from the *Ten Teachings to Ensure the Welfare of Tibet and Kham* (*Bökham Detap Chöchu*):

Lhasé, the superior qualities of your body⁵:

Are concealed as the fortune of the king, your only father.ᄃ
Read them carefully, and uplift your mind with courage and
confidence.ᄃ

Thus, one can learn about the superior qualities of his past and present incarnations from their description in the various biographies of his past lifetimes, where they are praised extensively as bringing benefit to whomever he encountered.

Verses 6 & 7

The first of the ten amazing accounts,⁶ a description of his youth, begins in precise detail with the phrase, “Among the mountain passes of Yertödra...”⁷ His place of origin is included, as are his noble family lineage, the year, month, and day of his birth, his astrological charts, and so forth. These details are explained using reliable sources, with reference to *terma* predictions. In particular, the wonders that occurred when he was playing as a child are related without exaggeration or understatement.

Verse 8

In the third account, in accordance with the *terma* prophecies and the oral tradition, four teachers are mentioned—on the outer level, the preceptor who conferred the vows of individual liberation; on the inner level, the spiritual guide who helped form the resolve to awaken; on the secret level, the vajra master who brought wisdom to maturity through the empowerments of the vajra vehicle; and on the ultimate level, the root guru who introduced the natural state, the Great Perfection of definitive meaning. As it is said, “the four great teachers of the beginning, middle, and end...”

The first of these great teachers, and the one from whom Chokgyur Lingpa received the novice monastic precepts at the age of thirteen, was Ngawang Tenpé Nyima, the glorious Taklung Ma Rinpoché Dojo tulku, an emanation of the great translator Kawa Paltsek and foremost among ten million upholders of the Vinaya.

The second was Karma Ngedön Tenpa Rapgyé, the Khenchen Dapzangchok tulku, a monk and great bodhisattva who was an emanation of Nyak Jnanakumara, and from whom Chokgyur Lingpa expressly received the bodhicitta vows at the age of twenty-five. That occurred on the fourth day of the sixth month in the Female Water Ox Year (July 10, 1853), the day the Victorious One turned the Wheel of Dharma. He held his commitments steadfastly, including that of not eating meat for three years, and there effortlessly arose in him the mind of awakening that holds others dearer than oneself.

The third teacher was Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Tayé Pema Gargyi Wangchuk Tsal, great charioteer of this world and emanation of the great translator

Vairocana, foretold in the prophecies of the Victorious One. Chokgyur Lingpa expressly received from him the ripening empowerment of the *Great Compassionate One, Assembly of All Sugatas*, thereby actualizing the authentic tantric vow, the union of bliss and emptiness. This took place in the waning part⁸ of that same lunar month, at the time of the gathering of the dakinis (the twenty-fifth day of the lunar month, July 30, 1853).

Fourth, we met for the first time, he and I,⁹ on the eighth day of the waxing period of the ninth month of that year (October 10, 1853). I offered him empowerments as a spiritual link, thereby dispelling the hindrances connected to his obstacle year. In particular, when he expressly came to see me in the eleventh month of the following year, the Male Wood Tiger Year (December 1854–January 1855), and stayed for over a month, I offered him numerous further teachings and empowerments, in particular the ripening empowerment, the instructions, and the reading transmission of the *Great Perfection Quintessence of the Guru, Wish-Fulfilling Jewel (Lama Yangtik Yizhin Norbu)*. As the wisdom blessing for the unelaborate empowerment showered down, the guru¹⁰ appeared to him as Vimalamitra in person, with dakinis holding peacock feather parasols over the crown of his head, and great hosts of dakinis circling him counterclockwise. During the pointing-out instruction that followed, Chokgyur Lingpa said that he recognized awareness in its naked state. At the end of the empowerment, as I was entrusting him with the life-force empowerment of the mantra protector, a magnificent occurrence took place: it was as if the earth were shaking, and we both saw Ekajati in person. She said, “In three years, I will grant a great siddhi to both master and disciple!” This was the sign foretelling the revelation of the *Three Sections of the Great Perfection (Dzokchen Desum)*.

Verse 9

In particular, concerning the line that says “Pema Wangchen, who was Padmakara in person,” the following is mentioned in a prophecy from the *Lotus-Crested Great Compassionate One*:

As for the manner in which the Dharma holders will appear at that
time,‡
Upon the summit of the Glorious Mountain, on the left bank of the
golden river,‡
An emanation of my speech, by the name of Pema Nyinché,‡
Will maintain the line of the conquerors and plant the banner of
practice.‡
He will hold aloft a torch in the darkness of the final age,‡
Perfect the practice of longevity, and reach the age of eighty-five.‡
If the circumstances are right, he may uphold the teachings for ninety
years.‡
Lhasé will meet him at the age of twenty-five.‡
Without reservation, he should entrust himself fully to him.‡

Then many auspicious circumstances will be naturally, effortlessly established.ᄃ

Thus it was that Chokgyur Lingpa and Pema Wangchen Situ Rinpoché met when the former was twenty-five, in the first month of the Water Buffalo Year (February–March 1853). Chokgyur Lingpa offered Situ Rinpoché the text of an extensive empowerment of Vajrakilaya, along with various other *termas*. From Situ Rinpoché's side, a sequence of obstacles was cleared away, establishing the auspicious circumstances for long life. He confidentially advised Chokgyur Lingpa of the need to perform the treasure sadhanas and to keep the seal of secrecy, and so forth, to the fullest degree. Situ Rinpoché demonstrated the highest esteem for Chokgyur Lingpa, using the kilaya he had given him as a practice support in the large Kilaya Hall during the thread-crossing ceremony.¹¹

Verse 10

In particular, regarding this occasion, the following is said in the *Basic Framework of Auspicious Coincidence*:

The profound treasures concealed in Namkha Dzö, the Sky Treasury,¹²ᄃ
Will not remain there, but will be revealed by a man with aspirations.ᄃ
Lhasé, this will be your last incarnation.ᄃ
At that time, most of the translators and scholars, the king and disciples,
will assemble.ᄃ
In particular, the ruler and his son will meet.ᄃ
And, assisting one another, their karmic propensities will gradually
awaken.ᄃ
They will receive my¹³ ultimate instructionsᄃ
And will meet me in person in pure visions.ᄃ
There, I will give them direct instructions for the practice of Secret
Mantra teachings.ᄃ
Applying these in their own experience, they will effortlessly attain
accomplishment.ᄃ
And will have numerous disciples who also achieve accomplishment.ᄃ

There are many outer, inner, and secret prophecies that describe these events in this way, with extreme clarity. Accordingly, when he was twenty-seven years old, the master purposely came to see me in the ninth month of the Wood Rabbit Year (October–November 1855), and I offered him the Kilaya empowerments and teachings according to the Khön tradition. He reported that he subsequently had an excellent sign in his dreams of slaying thirty-one negative spirits who were creating obstacles against the profound treasures. In particular, when I presented him with the grand empowerment for the *Nine Deities of Perfect Purity* (*Yangdak Lhagu*), he perceived the sky turning the color of lapis lazuli, in the center of which he beheld the guru¹⁴ as Heruka in person, who then dissolved into him through the crown of his head. Thus the knots at his heart center came undone.

This great wonder is in accordance with the Lamdré¹⁵ teachings, where the devoted person's elements are described as gathering inward, his nadi knots¹⁶ coming undone through blessings. It also accords with the key point of the yogic mudra practice taught in the pith instructions of the *Gubhasamaja* (*Sangwa Düpa*) lineage of Nagarjuna.

Vajra songs then sprang forth from him unhindered, and, though he had previously found it difficult to decode the symbolic script of the *Guru's Heart Practice, Dispeller of All Obstacles*, from that moment on he was able to understand it without trouble. We also found that not only was it identical in meaning with the *Heart Practice, Embodiment of Sugatas* that I had received, but that for the most part the words were extremely similar as well.

As mentioned in the *terma* prophecy for the *Bindu of Liberation: Spontaneous Liberation of Wisdom* (*Droltik Gongpa Rangdrol*):

Except for secret prophecies, you will be able to edit each other's texts:ᄁ
By trusting in each other, confusion will be cleared away:ᄁ

In this way, Ngari Panchen Rinpoché and the omniscient Prajnarashmi (Sherap Özer) corrected their respective *termas*—the *Assembly of All Vidyadharas* (*Rikdzin Yongdü*) and the *Bindu of Liberation: Spontaneous Liberation of Wisdom*—and harmoniously trusted in each other.

Similarly, we were able to translate the symbolic script exactly as it occurred, without adding any words of our own, in complete secrecy and without any obstacles. Also, when we performed the *terma* practices together, we had boundless pure visions of being invited in by Guru Rinpoché and his consort, in person. In addition, there appeared location lists for many further treasures. In this way, many unfathomable auspicious circumstances came together.

Personally, I performed the approach and accomplishment practices for the *Three-Kaya Guru* (*Lama Kusum*) that same winter, and thus created the circumstances for the hindrances to my life to subside, and for this profound teaching to be disseminated widely. It is merely because of this that I presume to be of service to the teachings of Guru Rinpoché, and to those who uphold them. This accords with the vision of the thousand buddhas that the master Chokgyur Lingpa had in the year of the Fire Snake (1857–58), in which they assured him that I would repay the teachings and establish great objects of worship.¹⁷ More on this can be known in detail by means of the supreme secret life story, which will be forthcoming separately.

Verse 15

The seventh amazing account, that of his treasure discoveries, concerns the three cycles of guru sadhana, which are generally known as the *Two Teachings* and *Three*

Cycles of the Guru. The “two teachings” are distinguished here as (1) the means, on the sutra level, for individually accomplishing the hundred and eight names of the Conqueror, Shakyamuni; and (2) on the tantric level, the means and instructions for individually accomplishing the hundred and eight names of Guru Padmasambhava.

The “three cycles” refers to the sadhanas for practicing the guru as dharmakaya, samboghakaya, and nirmanakaya. In this respect, the *Ultimate Instructions of Dharmakaya* (*Chöku Döntri*) is the sadhana for accomplishing the guru as dharmakaya. The *Net of Illusion* of the five families of Amitayus is for accomplishing the guru as sambhogakaya. For the guru as nirmanakaya, there is Padmasambhava as peaceful, wrathful, and as both combined. For the peaceful aspect, there is the outer sadhana, the *Dispeller of All Obstacles* (*Barché Künsel*); for the inner sadhana, the *Spontaneous Fulfillment of Wishes* (*Sampa Lhundrup*); and for the secret sadhana, the *Heart Essence of Pema* (*Tsokyé Nyíngtik*). For the wrathful aspect, there is the *Most Secret Powerful Vajra Wrath* (*Yangsang Dorjé Draktsel*). For the combination of both, there is the *Guru Ocean of Siddhis* (*Lama Ngödrup Gyatso*) and the *Heart Practice, Embodiment of All Realization* (*Tukdrup Gongpa Kundü*).

As for the way in which his thirty-seven earth treasures were successively revealed, some of these appeared with the seal of secrecy and others were concealed again as *terma*, and so forth. It is quite difficult to explain in detail, and I will only relate what we, master and disciple, experienced together:

1. To begin with, when Chokgyur Lingpa was thirteen years old, in the spring of the Female Iron Ox Year (1841), he encountered Orgyen and his consort, in person, at a place called Manika. There, in accordance with their prediction, he revealed from Drakar Dzongchung (White Cliff Small Fortress) the vajra that was the mark of Prince Lhasé’s realization, together with his mirror and the twenty-four sadhanas that were his personal practice. Later on, the tertön gave the mirror to Lama Jamgön Kongtrül and the vajra to me.

2. Following this, he revealed many more treasures, in due time and in accordance with the location lists he had found beneath Sheldrak (Crystal Rock) during the winter of his thirteenth year. At the age of fourteen, the tertön revealed a profound *terma* from the White Stupa at Samyé; however, due to the nature of the circumstances and signs, he re-concealed this *terma* immediately.

3. At the age of twenty, on the tenth day of the ninth month of the Earth Monkey Year (November 6, 1848), Chokgyur Lingpa revealed the *Heart Practice, Dispeller of All Obstacles* (*Trukdrup Barché Künsel*) as a secret *terma* from under the foot of Drak Palchenpo (Great Glory Cliff), at Danyin Khala Rongo (Sun and Moon Valley Pass).

4. At the age of twenty-one, the tertön was at Nabün Dzong. Here, at noon on

the tenth day of the eighth month in the Female Earth Bird Year (September 26, 1849), he revealed the *Lotus-Crested Great Compassionate One* (*Tukjé Chenpo Pema Tsuktor*), as well as several other objects, including an image credited with the power of “liberation upon seeing” and another of the Great Compassionate One that had been made from the bones of the Dharma King.¹⁸

5. At the age of twenty-seven, Chokgyur Lingpa revealed the *Four Teachings to Dispel Obstacles*, which are subsidiary teachings of the *Dispeller of All Obstacles*. He extracted these as a secret treasure from Kardzong Drak (White Fortress Cliff), the practice place of the Precious Master Guru Rinpoché at the summit of Wangzhu Mountain.

6. At the age of twenty-eight, in springtime at Damchen Drak (Cliff of the Oath-Bound One) in Akanishta Karma, the tertön revealed the *Sevenfold Cycle of Profoundity*, including *Vajrasattva’s Peaceful and Wrathful Net of Illusion* (*Dorjé Sempa Gyutrül Drawa Zhitro*). These are wonderful, profound teachings, utterly complete in terms of the tantras, statements, and instructions.¹⁹

7. That summer, Chokgyur Lingpa went to the Yegyal Namkha Dzö (First King Sky Treasury), also known as Lawa Kangchik (One-Legged Deer), in Kham. There, from a great casket of teachings, he revealed countless profound Dharmas, mainly including the ancillary teachings to the *Sevenfold Cycle of Profoundity*, together with two Guru representations (*kutsap*).

8. During the second month of autumn, the tertön was at Drak Palchenpo (Glorious Cliff). From a crevice at the top, he retrieved the summary list for the *Heart Practice* (*Tukdrup*), the guidebook to the sacred site, and various other things, including samaya articles bearing the seal of secrecy.²⁰

9. On the third day of the twelfth month (January 28, 1857), we, master and disciple, were up at the Pema Shelpuk (Lotus Crystal Cave) on Meshö Dzamnang Mountain. Together, we publicly revealed the sacred teaching of the *Three Sections of the Great Perfection* (*Dzokchen Desum*). From then on, most of the treasures were revealed in public.

10. On the tenth day of that same month (February 4, 1857), from the summit of that sacred site, Chokgyur Lingpa revealed as a surface treasure the relics of the vidyadhara Garap Dorjé and the two *Heart Essences*.²¹

11. At the age of twenty-nine, on the first day of the first month, Chotrul Dawa (February 25, 1857), from Pawo Wangchen Drak (Mighty Hero Cliff), he revealed the *Summary List of the Twenty-Five Major Sacred Sites*.

12. On the ninth day of that same month (March 4, 1857), we were at Drinyen Dong, the sacred site of the body aspect of awakened qualities. Here, from the

Great Secret Cave, the tertön revealed as a secret *terma* the *Heart Essence of Manjushrimitra* (*Jampel Shenyen Nyingtik*).

13. On the fifteenth day (March 10, 1857),²² from the summit of Sengchen Namdrak (Great Lion Sky Cliff), the sacred site of the activities aspect of awakened qualities, Chokgyur Lingpa revealed description lists for various profound *termas*, along with the *Heart Essence of Tsogyal* (*Tsogyal Nyingtik*).

14. On the nineteenth day (March 14, 1857), from beneath the uppermost rock, the tertön publicly revealed a great treasury of teachings, images, and sacred substances. These included the practice cycle of the *Sacred Dharma in Six Scrolls*, the *Vajra-Arrayed Scripture* (*Lungchen Dorjé Köpa*), a secret book, Orgyen Rinpoché's crown, Prince Lhasé's seal, Buddha Shakyamuni's robes, Dharma medicine from Garap Dorjé, and various other articles.

15. On the twentieth day (March 15, 1857), from Drak Rinchen Barwa (Blazing Jewel Cliff) in the same area, Chokgyur Lingpa revealed a reliquary box of Dharma medicine belonging to the king and the twenty-five disciples, as well as a cycle of teachings.

16. On the twenty-second day (March 17, 1857), from Mengyel Drawé Drak (Rock that Resembles the King of Healing) the tertön revealed a medicine treasure as well as a piece of yellow paper. The medicine he gave to me and the yellow scroll he kept secret. All the treasures that he revealed from rocks were revealed in public.

17. On the road leading to Lhonda, at the Khandro Shelpuk (Dakini Crystal Cave) at Dzimé, Chokgyur Lingpa revealed a guide to the sacred site that had been written on a piece of the robe of Khenpo Shantarakshita, along with Gyalwa Chöyang's earrings and sundry other things.

18. From Dorjé Chongpuk (Vajra Bell Cave) at Kerong, the tertön revealed a longevity substance left by Orgyen and his consort, together with a *dzi* onyx casket and several description lists.

19. In the waning part of the tenth month (December 10, 1857), while in the Pema Wangpuk (Mighty Lotus Cave) at the sublime place of Karmé Bumdzong, at sunrise on the sacred twenty-fifth day when dakinis gather, Chokgyur Lingpa revealed the four Dharma cycles of the *Great Compassionate One Who Dredges the Depths of Samsara* (*Khorwa Dongtruk*), as well as some sacred substance cycles.

20. Within the Bumdzong lake, the naga demon Kala Raksha personally entrusted the tertön with a stone casket containing the *Dharma-Protector Cycle* (*Chökyong Kor*).

21. At Bumdzong, from Uddiyana's throne in the innermost part of the

Nyingpuk Cave, Chokgyur Lingpa revealed the Tara statue of self-arising compassion, along with pills made from the flesh of the Brahmin Prabhahasti, and the *Six Practice Cycles of Zurza*. In particular, as I personally entreated him based on prophetic guidance, he also revealed the extraordinary cycle of tantra, statement, and instruction that is the *Lotus Net of Illusion of the Great Compassionate One*, along with various other articles.

22. At the age of thirty, in the year of the Male Earth Horse (1858–59), at Palkyi De'u (Resplendent Hill) in Akanishta Karma, the tertön revealed the *General Chanting Notes for the Mother Deities (Mamo Chidü)*, as well as relic pills of awakened body, speech, and heart, from above the gate to Mamo Rolpé Dzong (Palace of the Play of Mother Deities).

23. On the tenth day of the ninth month of that same year (October 17, 1858), as I had exhorted him in accordance with successive visions and predictions that I had received, Chokgyur Lingpa revealed, from Drak Rinchen Barwa (Blazing Jewel Cliff) of the Kela Norbu Pünsum (Three Jewel Brothers of Kela), the Dharma cycle of the *Guru's Heart Practice, Wish-Fulfilling Jewel (Tukdrup Yishin Norbu)*, *The Spontaneous Fulfillment of Wishes (Sampa Lhündrup)*, and an image of Guru Rinpoché.

24. During the tenth month (November–December 1858), the tertön revealed, from Öbar Drak (Radiant Cliff) in Gotö, the sacred substance known as the *Display of Awakened Activity (Trinlé Rolpa)*, together with the practice framework and the Dharma-protector practice known as the *Wish-Fulfilling Jewel Sadhana of the Great King Vaishravana (Gyalchen Namsé Drupthap Yizhin Norbu)*.

25. When he was thirty-one, on the tenth day of the seventh month of the Female Earth Sheep Year (September 6, 1859), while we were at Devikota Tsadra Rinchen Drak (Devikota-Caritra-like Precious Cliff), the upper hermitage above Palpung, Chokgyur Lingpa revealed the *Secret Vital Essence Cycle (Sangtik Nyiingpo Kor)*, together with the sacred site's guidebook and the sacred substance known as *Jewel Crest (Rinpoché Tok)*—the pill that contains relics from all the sugatas.

26. In the early winter of that year (1859), from the Rinchen Sheldrak Cliff at Meseng in Gatö, the tertön revealed a *tsa-tsa* with a golden top and a turquoise base, inside of which was a single relic-pill magically produced from Guru Rinpoché's tooth. He also revealed description lists containing the major and minor sacred sites of Tibet, along with numerous other treasures. Some of these, like the guidebook for Doti Gangkar Mountain, he decoded into writing, while others were not propagated.

27. From Yudrak (Turquoise Cliff) in Gatö, Chokgyur Lingpa revealed Vimalamitra's White Tara longevity substance known as Moon Essence (*Dawé*

Nyingpo), together with the *Inner Heart Essence* (*Tuktig Nyingpo*) and others. For these, he maintained the seal of secrecy with utmost strictness.²³

28. When the tertön had reached the age of thirty-six, on the tenth day of the waning half of the fourth month, Sagadawa, in the Male Wood Rat year (May 30, 1864), while at Yubel Rock, situated on the southern slope of Yegyal Mountain in Namkha Dzö, he revealed the vast and profound Dharma cycle of tantra, scripture, and instructions known as the *Assembly of All Sugatas* (*Desbek Kündü*) from the *Eight Pronouncements* (*Kapgyé*), together with a statue and some sacred medicine.

29. On the western slope of that same mountain, from the rock at Khawa Teng known as Tsezhel Drak or Tsegyé Drak, Chokgyur Lingpa revealed an extraordinary longevity substance from Guru Rinpoché and his consort, as well as the sadhana cycle of the *Amrita Kundali Longevity Tantra* (*Tsegü Dütsi Khyilpa*), along with various other articles.

30. At the age of thirty-eight, on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month of the Fire Tiger Year (November 2, 1866), both of us, master and disciple, met at Chimé Karmo Taksang (Deathless White Tigress Lair) in Rongmé. On the twenty-seventh day (November 4), from the right side of the secret cave, the tertön revealed the *Essential Sacred Dharma in Five Cycles* (*Damchö Nyingpo Kor Nga*), along with several other things.

31. Following that, he successively broke the cave's thirteen seals, and, on the morning of the ninth day in the waxing part of the tenth month (November 16), Chokgyur Lingpa revealed the *Heart Practice, Powerful Vajra Wrath* (*Tukdrup Dorjé Draktsal*) from the left side of the secret cave. At dawn on the tenth day (November 17), he revealed Guru Rinpoché's personal vajra, among other things.

32. On the tenth day of the next month (December 17), Chokgyur Lingpa performed the amazing feat of revealing, without any hindrance, a great lake treasure from the Mipham Sengö Yumtso (Invincible Wild Turquoise Lion Lake), along with several other things.

33. At the age of thirty-nine, on the twenty-eighth day of the second month in the Fire Rabbit Year (April 2, 1867), from the Deshek Düpé Podrang (Palace of the Assembly of Sugatas) at Dzongshö, the hidden sacred site of qualities, the tertön revealed *tsa-tsas* of the Abbot, Master, and Dharma King,²⁴ together with a paper scroll.

34. On the tenth day of the waxing part of the third month (April 14, 1867), from the sublime site of Pema Shelri (Lotus Crystal Mountain), Chokgyur Lingpa revealed the sacred substance pills known as *Swirling Expanse of Space* (*Khalong Khyilpa*), which are praised as supports of the Buddhadharma. They bring benefit through merely being seen. In addition, he also revealed the profound scroll of the *Dakimis' Secret Practice*.

35. On the eleventh day of that month (April 15), as master and disciple together, we revealed a stone casket with compartments in which lay the *Heart Essence of All Vidyadharas* (*Rikdzin Yongdzok Nyintik*), together with sacred substances. We also revealed a *terma* casket shaped like a curved knife and containing the *Heart Essence of the Assembly of Herukas* (*Heruka Düpé Tukthik*). This was at Khyung Tsangdrak (Garuda Nest Cliff), which is the sacred site of the dakinis' awakened heart.

36. On the eighth day of the fourth month, Sagadawa (May 11), Chokgyur Lingpa revealed three stone caskets from Rudam Gangtrö Dewa Chenpo (Great Bliss Glacial Ranges of Rudam), the primary site of awakened qualities. Within the caskets were the *Union with Buddha Samvara* (*Demchok Sangyé Nyamjor*), the guidebook for the snowy ranges of Rudam, and the sacred substance known as the *Nectar That Embodies All Herukas* (*Heruka Düpé Dütsi*).

37. On the fifteenth day of the seventh month (September 13), as we journeyed toward Lhasa, we expressly went to the Norbu Pünsum (Three Jewel Brothers) Cliffs of Kela. This was at my persistent request, based on the prophetic guidance I had received. There, the tertön revealed the *Sacred Dharma in Seven Jewel Cycles* (*Damchö Norbu Kordün*), along with the ornaments of Guru Sengé Dradrok, several sacred images, and various other things.

This is the extent of my knowledge of the treasures of Chokgyur Lingpa, including the teachings and sacred substances that he revealed. In addition, he revealed numerous minor material treasures and description lists. For instance, as part of the single profound treasure from Sengchen Namdrak, the tertön retrieved seven kinds of lists pertaining to various other treasure sites. These were the earlier and later description lists, the main description list, the list of essential points, the summary list, the inner list, and the quintessential list.

When he was twenty-seven, after revealing the ancillary cycle for the *Heart Practice* from Kardzong Drak (White Jagged Rock), as mentioned above, Chokgyur Lingpa went to the base of Wangzhu Mountain. Here, from above the entrance to Namkhé Nyingpo's practice cave, he revealed relic pills from Buddha Shakyamuni and various types of soil taken from the Maratika Cave.

At the age of twenty-eight, in the ninth month (October–November), the tertön revealed from Mikyé Cliff the skull of the brahmin Black Heruka. At the age of thirty-one, in the springtime, he traveled to the sacred site of Pa-ok Burmo, where he revealed a pill containing the bodhicitta of Guru Rinpoché and his consort, along with a secret treasure from Tsogyal. In the autumn of that same year, from Gyamgyal Yumtso Lake, he revealed relic pills from the perfectly awakened Buddha Kashyapa.²⁵

Generally speaking, the prediction lists concerning the two of us, master and disciple, stated that we were to “receive one hundred treasures from sites of the awakened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities.” Thus, in terms of representations of the awakened body, Chokgyur Lingpa revealed about twenty-five, including a statue of Guru Rinpoché and various images of buddhas, bodhisattvas, and yidams. In particular, he revealed material for a statue of Guru Rinpoché that was unknown from previous treasure revelations. From this material, he produced new Guru Rinpoché statues that became widely renowned—the secondary representations.

In terms of representations of awakened speech, there appeared vast and profound Dharma teachings, countless in number. There are said to be one hundred Heart Essence teachings alone, so the number in the above prediction should merely be understood to indicate plurality. For instance, if one were to enumerate the sections of major Dharma texts, the *Sevenfold Cycle of Profundity* contains seven, the *Three Sections of the Great Perfection (Dzokchen Desum)* can be subdivided into seven Heart Essence categories, and so forth. These divisions are inconceivably numerous, and one can learn about them from the profound treasure inventory lists that have been recorded elsewhere.

In terms of representations of awakened mind, Chokgyur Lingpa revealed numerous kinds of symbolic implements, including vajras and kilaya daggers. However, of primary importance were the countless sacred substances that liberate by taste. Their manner of transmission can be known from the index of sacred substances and the explanations of the treasure texts; the detail would be too much to mention here.

In particular, concerning the manner of transmission of the teachings, the Oral Transmission (*kama*), Treasure (*terma*), and Pure Vision (*daknang*) categories may be further divided into the “seven transmissions”:

(1) Of these seven, the first category is the long lineage of Oral Transmission. In terms of the oral transmissions for the generation stage, completion stage, and the Great Perfection, Chokgyur Lingpa received most of the transmissions that are still in existence today. Due to the profound blessings of these lineages, he also taught and greatly propagated their various aspects, including *Scripture*,²⁶ the *Net of Illusion* or *Mayajala*, and the *Mind Section*.

He gave the grand empowerment for Scripture to the assembly at the Nyingma section of glorious Riwoché. He also conferred empowerment on the many great scholars and vajra holders at Ewam Chögar and Orgyen Mindrolling, among other places, giving explanations on the tantra for the *Illusory Display of the Peaceful and Wrathful Ones (Gyutrüil Zhitro)*. On numerous occasions, primarily to a gathering of fortunate disciples at glorious Samyé Chimpu, he turned the Dharma Wheel for the unexcelled secret of the Great Perfection. Furthermore, although the unprecedented cycles of Scripture, *Mayajala*, and Mind Section

that appeared among this master's supreme treasures are labeled as *terma*, in essence they present the exact same tenet systems and Dharma terminology as the teachings of the Oral Transmission lineage. They are truly marvels in this way.²⁷

There are two types of short-lineage Treasure Transmission teachings (*terma*): the vast earth treasures (*sater*) and the profound mind treasures (*gongter*). The first of these may be further subdivided into two manners of transmission:

- (2) the earth treasures proper that are destined for a particular treasure revealer,
- (3) the rediscovered treasures (*yangter*) of another treasure revealer.

The thirty-seven revealed treasures described above are examples of (2), the first type of earth treasure, the earth treasures proper.

The second type, the rediscovered treasures (3), refers to those treasures that were re-concealed by previous treasure revealers as *yangter*. These can be physically re-revealed or can reappear through the power of blessings, or be revived as direct lineages when the texts alone remain but the lineage of empowerment, reading transmission, explanation, and study has been interrupted. One such example is the reappearance of the *Heart Essence of the Wrathful Guru: The Red Hung*, a *yangter* from the master's previous incarnation as the great treasure revealer Sangyé Lingpa. It was thus through the power of blessings that he again received its transmission. Another such example is the short lineage transmission of the *Mother Tantra of the Dakinis' Secret Practice* of the dakini Kūnga Bum, which Chokgyur Lingpa revived and then bestowed upon Lama Jamgön Kongtrül.

There are also two modes of transmission for the Profound Mind Treasures:

- (4) the most profound mind treasures proper, and
- (5) the recollected treasures (*jedren*).

The first of these, (4), occurs when, due to the blessings of the Three Roots and so forth, the treasury of profound secrets that is concealed within the luminous expanse of the revealer's wisdom-mind bursts open and pours forth. This is what happened with the *Profound Essence of Tara*, when the noble Lady Tara gave her confirmation by exclaiming, "Excellent, excellent, excellent!"—and the mind treasure revealed itself to Chokgyur Lingpa.

The second mode of transmission (5) refers to treasures written down on the basis of present recollections of oral instructions received from the master's chief deity or guru in previous lifetimes. For example, the master wrote down the instructions for the *Vajra-Arrayed Scripture (Lung Dorjé Köpa)*, which he had received during a previous lifetime as Khulungpa Yönten Gyatso of Nup. These

instructions had been in the form of parting advice from Nupchen Sangyé Yeshe as he was about to pass away. He also wrote down a short version of *Nup's Boasting* (*Nupki Khapo*) remembered from that same incarnation. He recalled various types of melodies from those times too, including the four styles of chanting the *rulu* mantra, and he remembered countless dance movements. Furthermore, based on memories from his previous lifetime as the awakened emanation Sangyé Lingpa, Chokgyur Lingpa established in precise detail the instructions for performing the yogic exercises of the *Embodiment of Realization, the Yoga of the Ninefold Forceful Activities* (*Gongdü Tseltruk Namgü Trükkhor*). He had these and many other extensive recollections.

Third, there are also two modes of transmission regarding Profound Pure Visions:

- (6) the way of profound pure visions proper (*daknang*), and
- (7) the way of the most profound whispered lineage (*nyenggyü*).

The first of these, the way of profound pure visions proper (6), is when, due to the coming together of one's previous aspirations and current profound auspicious coincidences, the Three Roots and the Dharma protectors reveal themselves directly to one's senses in pure visions, giving profound instructions. For instance, when opening up the sacred site at Wangzhu Mountain, Chokgyur Lingpa had a vision in which Vimalamitra's practice cave became a dome of light. There in the center was the great pandita himself, who instructed him in the *Profound Guru Sadhana of Vimalamitra* (*Bimé Ladrup Zapmo*). It can also happen that a clear and stable vision of the guru or deity speaking in person may arise in meditative experience, even without anything appearing directly to one's senses. In the same way, writing may appear in the sky, one may hear the sound of teachings or have visions during dreams. All these experiences belong to this same category.

The way of the most profound whispered lineage (7) refers to those cases where one actually travels to a pure realm in the illusory wisdom body that is made up of mere vital essence (*prana*) and mind, or when ordinary experience subsides completely and is transformed into a pure land, complete with palace and deities. In these cases, instructions are transmitted directly to the ears of the individual from the mouth of the Three Roots themselves. For example, when Chokgyur Lingpa traveled in person to the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain, he received the Heart Essence of the *Profound Meaning of Ati* (*Ati Zapdön Nyingtik*) from Guru Rinpoché himself. Events such as these, which occur during extremely stable meditative visions and dreams, all belong to this category.

The meaning and categories of the scheme of the seven transmissions are widely renowned. Nevertheless, to clearly illustrate the terminology, I would like to quote a prediction from the *Three Sections of the Great Perfection* (*Dzokchen Desum*) regarding this most supreme of treasure revealers, Chokgyur Lingpa:

The unbroken Oral Lineage from the scriptures.ᄃ
 Profound actual treasures and mind treasures.ᄃ
 Rediscovered and recollected treasures.ᄃ
 Pure visions and whispered lineage—ᄃ
 The river of these seven transmissionsᄃ
 Flows as the fortune of the king and his son,²⁸ᄃ
 Doing great honor to the teachings in these degenerate times.ᄃ
 Vast and profound, they will spread further than sunlight.ᄃ

Thus the seven appear in this and many other texts. Here, I have indicated them only briefly; a more extensive explanation can be given based on scriptures and reasoning.

Verse 16

The manner in which he opened the gates to countless important vajra sites should be understood on the basis of the Concise Prophetic Guide to the Twenty-Five Major Sacred Sites. The details and clarifications can be found in the individual sacred-site guidebooks that were revealed as earth treasures, or that arose in his wisdom experience, or were given to him by deities and dakinis.

Verse 17

The eighth account, concerning his students, should be explained with reference to the prophecies, such as those concerning the holders of his teachings.

Verse 19

The ninth account, regarding his sanctification of the environment, primarily concerns his outer life story. The main feature here is that he performed an estimated thirty-three Great Accomplishment gatherings endowed with the four stages of approach and accomplishment.²⁹ This is the amazing and marvelous tradition adopted by all great vidyadharas belonging to the Nyingma School of the Early Translations. The enumeration of thirty-three is as follows:

1. First, when the master had reached the age of twenty-five, during the waxing part of the tenth month in the Female Water Ox Year (November 1853), he went directly to the foot of Wangzhu Mountain, a major sacred site. While there, Chokgyur Lingpa perfected the practice of the Great Accomplishment of Ratna Lingpa's *Most Secret Unsurpassable Heart Practice* (*Tukdrup Yangsang Lamé*) in the unelaborate *kusulu*³⁰ style. He later said that, on this occasion, only the master and a few disciples were present, so there were few distractions, and the practice was able to reach its vital point. The tertön also said that the experience was gratifying, notably because he had a vision of the precious master of Uddiyana.

2. Following this, at the age of twenty-eight, Chokgyur Lingpa performed a Great Medicine Accomplishment in the vicinity of the Pema Shelpuk (Lotus

Crystal Cave), using the *Eight Sadhana Teachings (Kagyé Dzongtrang)*. On that occasion, even though it was midwinter, the weather became summer-like, and, although they had forgotten to add yeast and other things to the mixture of sacred medicine, it matured perfectly and had an exquisite color, smell, and taste.

3. At the age of twenty-nine, during the first month, Chokgyur Lingpa performed a Great Medicine Accomplishment at Dergé Lhundrup Teng, combining the *Assembly of Sugatas of the Eight Sadhana Teachings* and the *Dzongtrang*.

4. During the fourth month, the tertön performed the Great Medicine Accomplishment of the *Eight Sadhana Teachings* at Karma.

5. During the ninth month, he performed the Combined Great Accomplishment Practice of *Yangdak Heruka and Vajrakilaya (Yangpur)*.

6. When he was thirty, at Akanishta Karma, Chokgyur Lingpa performed the Great Medicine Accomplishment of the *Eight Sadhana Teachings*, as a result of which wonderful signs of rainbow lights appeared. It was therefore named the Great Medicine Accomplishment of Shining Light.

7. At the Nyingma section of glorious Riwoché, the tertön bestowed the grand empowerment of Scripture, in combination with the sadhana of the *Great Assembly of Akanishta (Ogmin Tsokchen Düpa)*, bringing the audience to full maturity.

8. At the end of that same year, at Chang Lochen, near the royal palace of Dergé, he performed and bestowed the empowerments for the Great Accomplishment of the *Assembly of Sugatas from the Eight Sadhana Teachings*.

9. At the age of thirty-one, in the vicinity of Pawo Wangchen Drak, Chokgyur Lingpa performed a Great Medicine Accomplishment using the *Guru's Heart Practice, Assembly of All Realization*.

10. In the grand assembly hall of Palpung, he performed a Great Accomplishment combining the *Secret Assembly of the Great Compassionate One (Tukjé Chenpo Sangdü)* and the new *Hayagriva* treasure from the *Sevenfold Cycle of Profundity*.

11. At the major sacred site of the Khandro Bumdzong, Chokgyur Lingpa performed the *Heart Practice* Great Medicine Accomplishment, sponsored by the Jedrung and Phakchok monastic offices of Riwoché hermitage.

12. At the age of thirty-three, in the Iron Bird year (1861–1862), the tertön performed a series of Great Accomplishments in the Yermoché monastic temple at Akanishta Karma; they were sponsored by the encampment at Tsurpu.

Gathered in a single grand assembly were the master himself, the glorious Fourteenth Karmapa, lord of this world, his eminent nephew,³¹ the incarnated lamas of Zurmang, the supreme Chagmé Tulku of Nendo, and many other great beings, lords of the Dharma, and upholders of the doctrine. Together they performed the following series of Great Accomplishments from the New Treasures: *The Gathering of the Great Assembly from the Vajra-Arrayed Scripture (Lung Dorjé Köpa Tsokchen Düpa)*; the *Heart Practice, Embodiment of All Realization*; the *Lotus Net of Illusion of the Great Compassionate One*; the *Peaceful and Wrathful Mayajala*; and the Thirteen-Part Great Accomplishment that includes the *Mantra for Subjugating the Haughty (Drekdiül Drak-ngak)* and *White Amitayus (Tsekar)* from the Sevenfold Cycle of Profundity. The assembly, which consisted of many tens of thousands, received confirmation that they would indeed reach the level of the fourfold liberation. In this and other ways, it was a most wondrous occasion, unprecedented in terms of place, time, teacher, retinue, and teaching.

13. At the age of thirty-four, at Karma Gomba, Chokgyur Lingpa produced a large quantity of sacred medicine, in combination with the Great Accomplishment for the *Eight Sadhana Teachings*.

14. At age thirty-five, in the winter, he performed the *Eight Sadhana Teachings* Great Accomplishment at Zurmang Namgyal Tsé.

15. At age thirty-six, in the summer, Chokgyur Lingpa performed the *Wealth-God Guru (Lama Norlha)* Great Accomplishment at Gegyal Nang.

16. At Zurmang, the tertön performed an elaborate sadhana ceremony with dances that combined the *Tenth-Day Secret Assembly (Tsechu Sangdü)* and the *Heart Practice* Great Accomplishment.

17. At age thirty-seven, he performed the *Heart Practice* Great Accomplishment at Tsawa Gang.

18. When establishing the new monastery of Tenchok Gyurmé Ling at Neten Gang, Chokgyur Lingpa performed the *Vajra-Arrayed Scripture* Great Accomplishment.

19. At age thirty-eight, he performed the *Heart Practice* Great Accomplishment at Detabehu Tsangsar in Gatö.

20. At Thrangu Monastery, the tertön performed a *Kilaya* Great Accomplishment.

21. At the great Dharma institute of Palpung, he performed the *Embodiment of Realization* Great Medicine Accomplishment.

22. At the Lotus Crystal Cave in Dzamnang, Chokgyur Lingpa performed an elaborate and condensed Great Medicine Accomplishment using the *Truly Perfected King of Yidams* (*Yidam Ngöndzok Gyalpo*), which forms part of the *Three Sections of the Great Perfection* (*Dzogchen Desum*).

23. At Zangyak Namkha Dzong in Drakmar, with the Dharma king of Dergé as benefactor, the tertön performed elaborate Great Accomplishments for the *Heart Practice*, among others,, together with feasts and dances.

24. At the age of thirty-nine, during the first month, Chokgyur Lingpa acted as vajra master for the sadhana ceremony of the *Great Assembly of Akanishtha*, performed at the glorious Katok Dorjé Den Monastery.

25. In the eleventh month, immediately after establishing in writing for the first time the practice framework and so forth for the *Assembly of All Sugatas of the Eight Teachings*, the tertön performed its Great Accomplishment to maturity in the grand Deshek Düpé Podrang at Dzongshö. It is said that there appeared distinctive signs that he had thereby repelled the threat of a foreign invasion, at least for a while. Personally, I strongly felt the power of the blessings, as my own experience was to perceive infinite tantras being read aloud at the Shankarakuta Stupa.³²

26. During the waxing part of the third month, on the hilltop estate in front of the sacred Dagam Wangphuk Cave, he produced sacred medicine in connection with the Great Accomplishment for the *Assembly of All Sugatas of the Eight Sadhana Teachings*.

These last two Great Accomplishments were in fact also preparatory practices for the revelation of *termas*. Therefore, after performing the latter, he went directly to the sacred site known as Lotus Crystal Mountain, having been exhorted to do so by vajra command. There, on the evening of the eighth day, he had a detailed vision of journeying to the great palace of Lotus Light on Copper-Colored Mountain, where, together with Orgyen Guru Rinpoché and his assembly of vidyadharas, he practiced the *Eight Sadhana Teachings* and was given the entirety of the empowerments, tantras, and instructions.

27. During the waning part of that month, at the great Dharma institute of Orgyen Samten Chokling at Dzokchen, the tertön acted as vajra master for the feast-offering ceremony of the *Scripture of the Embodiment of Realization* (*Gongpa Düpé Do*).

28. During the fifth month, at Shechen Tennyi Dargyeling, he performed the tenth-day ceremony and the *Eight Sadhana Teachings* Great Accomplishment.

29. During the sixth month, at Palpung Tupten Chökhör Ling, Chokgyur

Lingpa performed a Great Accomplishment combining the *Heart Practice*, *Embodiment of All Realization*, and the *Dispeller of All Obstacles*. This was a marvelous and extensive Great Accomplishment, complete with all the practices and activities exactly as they are described in the Concise Manual of Oral Instructions.

While at Zangyak Namkha Dzong in Drakmar, the tertön wrote down a brief version of the *Cycle of Ten Teachings of Excellent Coincidence to Ensure Happiness for Tibet and Kham*. With this completed, he then arranged for extensive commemoration ceremonies to be held at Katok, Dzokchen, and Palpung monasteries for the Abbot, Master, and Dharma King. In combination with this, he had the monks perform sutra ceremonies and expound the Dharma, while the tantric practitioners were performing sadhana rituals, and grand vajra feasts and dances were being held. In this way, Chokgyur Lingpa arranged extraordinary, auspicious circumstances for the flourishing of the Buddhadharmā, with its three aspects of teaching, practice, and activity.

30. During the waxing part of the seventh month, he performed the *Combined Practice of Yangdak Heruka and Vajrakilaya* Great Accomplishment at Donang.

31. At the age of forty, he performed countless Great Accomplishments and dances for the *Combined Practice of Yangdak Heruka and Vajrakilaya* at the glorious Tsurpu of Akanishta.

32. At the age of forty-one, in the Earth Snake Year (1869–70), the tertön returned from Central Tibet and went immediately to Neten Ridge. There, he performed authentic versions of the group sadhanas for the grand mandalas of the Scripture of the *Embodiment of Realization*, the *Peaceful and Wrathful Net of Illusion*, the *Yangdak Heruka*, *Yamantaka*, *Kilaya*, and *Amitayus*—all as Great Accomplishment combinations of *kama* and *terma*, as well as a *mamo terma* practice. The tradition of performing these is still flourishing today.

33. In the summer he went to Gegyal, where he performed an extensive version of the *Heart Practice* and *Net of Illusion*, together with their root dances. Moreover, as described above, when Chokgyur Lingpa performed practices such as the *Heart Practice* sadhana at Wangzhu Mountain and the Great Medicine Accomplishment at Pema Sheldrak, the Lotus Crystal Cave, the gatherings were sometimes small, which meant that these practices were not performed in a detailed or elaborate manner. However, since all parts of the ritual, including the preparation, main part, and conclusion, were performed to completion, and because they were endowed with the splendor of blessings, they were in fact none other than genuine Great Accomplishments.

Verse 12

In addition to these group practices, the following is a rough outline of the

master's solitary practice. While still young, Chokgyur Lingpa frequently performed the approach and accomplishment recitations for the *Most Profound Assembly of the Three Jewels* (*Yangzap Könchok Chidü*) and the *Most Profound Longevity Practices* (*Yangzap Tsedrup*) from the Drikung tradition, among others. In Palpung, later, he learned from Lama Sang-ngak Tendzin the ritual practice details for the *Three Kayas of the Peaceful Guru* (*Lama Zhiwé Kusum*), a *terma* by Ratna Lingpa. Practicing the sadhanas authentically, Chokgyur Lingpa also performed the approach recitations for the *Wrathful Guru* and *Kilaya*. Likewise, he effectively completed the recitations of approach, accomplishment, and activities for *Manjushri, Lion of Speech* (*Jamyang Mawé Sengé*), from the Dampa tradition. He also performed the appropriate number of recitations for the activities connected with the *Sovereign King of Nagas* (*Luwang Gyalpo*) and *Vajrapani, Subjugator of the Haughty* (*Chakdor Drekdül*), according to Ledrel Tsal. At different points in time, as appropriate, the tertön would perform the approach and accomplishment for the *Eight Sadhana Teachings* according to the Nyang *termas*, the approach and accomplishment for the *Innermost Essence of the Great Compassionate One* (*Tukjé Chenpo Yangdü*) according to Guru Chöwang, and likewise the approach and accomplishment for the New Treasures of Mindrolling, the *Great Compassionate One Embodying All Sugatas* (*Tukjé Chenpo Deshek Kündü*).

In particular, at the age of twenty-eight, in the year of the Fire Dragon (1856–57), directly after writing the *terma* scroll for the *Sevenfold Cycle of Profundity*, Chokgyur Lingpa traveled to various extraordinary major sacred sites, where he practiced the *terma* sadhanas until signs appeared.

When he was thirty-one, starting in the late winter of the Female Earth Sheep Year (1859–60), the tertön remained for three years in the retreat center at Akanishta Karma, where his main practice was to complete the approach and accomplishment recitations for the root and auxiliary texts of the *Dispeller of All Obstacles*, to their full effect. He also performed the *terma* sadhanas for most of his other treasures, such as the *Guru's Heart Practice*, *Spontaneous Fulfillment of Wishes*, and the *Lotus Net of Illusion of the Great Compassionate One*, in their extensive or condensed form, as appropriate. In addition, he recounted that when performing the approach and accomplishment for the secret sadhanas of Tsokyé Dorjé, his experience blazed forth so that he was able to suspend his vajra and bell in midair.

By his own account, Chokgyur Lingpa also obtained auspicious signs at various times during the approach and accomplishment sadhanas for White Tara of the Karma Kagyü tradition and the *Heart Essence of the Immortal Noble Lady* (*Chimé Pakmé Nyingtik*).

Verse 20

In Tsurpu, by means of these amazing activities, Chokgyur Lingpa established

the tradition of performing the authentic Great Accomplishment of the *Combined Practice of Yangdak Heruka and Vajrakilaya*, together with the middle-length version of the root dances. This was at the Dharma center in Tölung known as Jikten Wangchuk Gyepé Podrang. Likewise at Zurmang Dogön Monastery, the tertön established the same tradition of performing the Great Accomplishment of the *Combined Practice of Yangdak Heruka and Vajrakilaya*, with liberation dances that emphasize the lower activities. Later, when performing the land-taming ceremony at Norbu Ling, he performed the extensive version of the root dances—a tradition that endures there still.

At Ladro Monastery in Gyamzhung too, Chokgyur Lingpa firmly established the tradition of performing the Great Accomplishment and dances for the *Combined Practice of Yangdak Heruka and Vajrakilaya*, as well as the extensive sadhana practice (*drupchö*) for the *Great Compassionate One Who Dredges the Depths of Samsara*, and the ritual of the *Fourfold Mandala (Mandal Zhipé Choka)*.

At the lamas' residence in the upper hermitage of glorious Riwoché, the tertön established a retreat center and a daily practice for the *Sadhana of the Great King Vaishravana*.

At the lamas' residence in Palpung Tubten Chökhör Ling, he established a new protectors' shrine for Vaishravana and requested that a continuous practice be held of the *Guru's Heart Practice, Spontaneous Fulfillment of Wishes*, with Vaishravana as protector. In particular, at the great practice center of Devikoti—the upper hermitage of Künzang Dechen Ösel Ling—Chokgyur Lingpa established the *Secret Vital Essence* as the retreatants' daily practice and the Six-Armed *Terma* Guardian as the primary protector.

These are a few examples of how Chokgyur Lingpa established the uninterrupted practice of most of the yidams and Dharma guardians of the New Treasures in the various monasteries of the area, thereby bringing great benefit both to beings and to the teachings.

At Dzigar, he had a new temple built for the *Guru's Heart Practice*, and correspondingly established there the continuous unfolding of the twofold *Heart Practice*.³³ Furthermore, at Sang-ngak Chöling, the monastic seat of the omniscient Drukpa, Chokgyur Lingpa recommended establishing the daily practice of Yamantaka from the *Sevenfold Cycle of Profundity*. At Namgyal Tsé Monastery of Zurmang, he bestowed an extraordinary statue of Guru Rinpoché and spoke of the need to establish a regular practice there, for the grand Tenth-Day ceremony. The tulku brothers accepted, and this request will certainly be carried out. These examples show how Chokgyur Lingpa's activity will expand into the future as well.

Most important of all, the teaching cycle of the *Guru's Heart Practice, Dispeller of*

All Obstacles is spreading and flourishing in all directions, and there is likewise a flourishing of the many other cycles he established—for instance, the *Guru's Heart Practice*, *Spontaneous Fulfillment of Wishes*, the *Combined Practice of Yangdak Heruka and Vajrakilaya*, and the *Great Compassionate One Who Dredges the Depths of Samsara*.

Verse 18

There are many great masters among the doctrine holders who have explained and propagated Chokgyur Lingpa's *terma* teachings. These include Vajradhara Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Tayé, the one foretold by the Victorious One, along with the many others connected to Chokgyur Lingpa as both guru and disciple. Even I myself am there on the outskirts, a silly man who, due to mundane concerns, is far removed from the two traditions.³⁴ Many such masters have explained and propagated the threefold aspect of empowerment, reading transmission, and instruction, and have one-pointedly offered their services in the spreading of the Great and Minor Accomplishment practices (*drubchen* and *drubtren*), the making of the secondary representations,³⁵ and the continuing of the tradition of sacred substances that liberate through taste.

Among these, the great Vajradhara Jamgön Kongtrül received the Dharma nectar of teachings such as the *Sevenfold Cycle of Profundity* some time around the Male Fire Dragon Year of the fourteenth calendrical cycle (1856–57).³⁶ Journeying to Central Tibet immediately afterward, in the Fire Snake Year (1857–58), he opened wide the door of the teachings for noble beings such as the gurus and chief disciples of the Karma and Drukpa Kagyü lineages, and others such as Minling Trichen Rinpoché, for example.³⁷ The mighty Ganden Palace provided the finest resources and services, ensuring that the approach, accomplishment, and activities for the *Heart Practices* and the *Sevenfold Cycle of Profundity* were performed at the three great doctrinal centers (Samyé, Lhasa, and Tradruk) and at the sacred hermitage sites related to body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities. Due to this kindness, the benefit and welfare of both beings and teachings increased even further in Central Tibet and Kham.

The extraordinary Great Accomplishment of *Amrita* at Sheldrak (Crystal Rock) is just one example of how the spiritual life of Chokgyur Lingpa can be known in all its vast profundity. Its elegant explanations, imbued with a hundred thousand melodious aspects, are uttered as elixir for the ears of the fortunate and wise. Also, the annual practice of the *Three Roots of White Amitayus* (*Tsatum Tsekar*) that Chokgyur Lingpa established at Chimé Yamalung has remained until today and continues to expand. The grand empowerment rituals for the twofold *Heart Practices* are like jeweled lamps of scripture, no different from the words of the Guru himself, shining with ever-brighter radiance. They are like eyes to see with, for all intelligent disciples.

With the master as well as others providing the funds, Chokgyur Lingpa

performed the sadhana practice for the *Guru's Heart Practice, Dispeller of All Obstacles*, both in its primary and subsidiary aspects, until he became fully ripened. This is just one example of how he perfected the sadhana practices for the New Treasure cycles. In general, this great charioteer for the Dharma in this world was repeatedly praised—and the manner of his coming foretold— by Shakyamuni, victorious Lion of the Shakyas, the truly and completely Awakened One, as well as by the Second Buddha, master Padmasambhava, and his disciples. There is no one else who, in their mere pretence of learnedness or accomplishment, can contend with him. Even if they did presume to challenge him, it would be like a firefly competing with sunlight. As for the prophecies concerning him, they are nothing like those that foretell ordinary dignitaries—painted lamps that don't actually do anything. The prophecies concerning Chokgyur Lingpa are full of meaning—like a bright torch of the teachings held high, his illumination of the vast topics of Sutra, Tantra, and the sciences in general, and particularly his elucidation of the vast and profound treasures of the Secret Vajra Vehicle, including his own teachings as supreme treasure revealer, are vast and unstoppable.

Even a fraction of this wonder cannot be matched by the great beings and doctrine holders of the present day—even those renowned as buddhas, in that just to connect with them is sufficient. Nor can it be matched by Vinaya holders, or by scholars as conceited as the great Brahma; nor by those proclaimed far and wide as tertöns or siddhas, who are really just like crazed elephants charging across a battlefield; nor yet by those realized meditator renunciates, who soar freely through the sky, like winged lions.

This great wonder will never be understood by anyone puffed up with jealousy and prejudice. Conversely, those whose intelligence is impartial and who investigate thoroughly will indeed understand. Moreover, although even what is stated here may not be fully understood at this time, the accounts of Chokgyur Lingpa's sublime life story will spread and become increasingly renowned in the future. This is inevitable.

Verse 21

In the tenth amazing account, the wonderful signs surrounding the year, month, and particular time of Chokgyur Lingpa's parinirvana are all presented in detail, along with descriptions of the memorial services and funerary stupa that was built. According to the calendrical calculations of the Tsurpu tradition, it appears as though he departed this world on the first day of the fifth month, although the Phuk tradition gives a different account in this respect. According to the Phuk system, the intercalary months³⁸ are not counted, and thus it was on the first day of Saga Dawa (the fourth month) that he departed. My own opinion is that the scheduling of commemoration ceremonies and so forth should be made on the basis of the Phuk system.

Although I have written here the rough extent of what I know, a mere seed, it is nevertheless still important to investigate repeatedly and to ask questions of knowledgeable and truthful people. For example, there may still be errors in terms of the years, months, and particular dates given here. The content of the master's life story should be written truthfully, without any exaggeration or understatement in its expression.

Regarding the virtue at the end, generally speaking, the *terma* predictions state the manner in which he will continue to act for the welfare of beings in his future incarnations here in Tibet—by means of the five emanations of his body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities—as well as other details. Attempting with the mind of an ordinary person to fully evaluate the life example of someone who has attained the level of a noble being would be like presuming to pass the entire sky through the eye of a needle. Nevertheless, in this context, by considering unmistakable vajra pronouncements free from exaggeration and understatement that the venerable master uttered on various occasions, we may gain an understanding of what will happen in the future. With these pronouncements as a basis, we can also consult texts such as the *Profound Embodiment of the Families of the Three Kayas*, as well as the aspiration for rebirth in the Lotus-Covered Realm,³⁹ taken from Jamgön Lama's vajra speech.

In general, there are countless ways of composing a life story—according to the expedient or definitive meaning, according to the outer, inner, and secret level, and so forth. In this case of Chokgyur Lingpa, however, his life story of the three times can be eloquently and clearly organized into the following seven topics:

1. The spiritual life stories of his former incarnations, or the biographies of his succession of lives, combined with the *terma* predictions.
2. The general, common biography of his present life, which is entitled *Ocean of Qualities of Auspicious Speech*. This text is not “common” in the sense of the opposite of “special.” While its focus is on the outer biography, it does also go into the inner, secret, and most secret biographies. Thus it is “common” in the sense that it is general rather than specific.
3. The general biography on the outer level, which consists of accounts of where he traveled and stayed. The specific outer biography traces the vajra predictions of Orgyen Rinpoché. Included within this specific biography are the auspiciousness of explanation, namely his explanations of sutra and tantra; the auspiciousness of practice, namely his showering of vajra blessings upon major practice sites; his performance of Great Accomplishment practices; and the auspiciousness of activity, which includes the hitherto unknown vajra feasts and dances that he performed. Common to all of these are some important aspects of his activity, such as the various commemoration ceremonies he held for the Abbot, Master, and Dharma King.
4. The general biography on the inner level, which concerns his treasure

discoveries by means of the seven transmissions, and the specific biography. The specific inner biography describes the all-pervasive propagation of his activity involving the treasure substances that liberate by sight and taste, and gives an account of how he directly and indirectly opened the gates of the vast and sacred major vajra sites.⁴⁰

5. The secret biography concerning his boundless pure visions.

6. The supreme biography of ultimate reality regarding his supreme experiences and realization. One aspect of this is his manifestation of the great qualities of *tummo*, as demonstrated when he dried freezing wet sheets and blankets through this practice.

7. The biographies of his future incarnations, including the basis of emanation and the ocean of emanations.

These accounts have been drawn from the statements and reasonings provided by great spiritual teachers. Skilled translators have fashioned them into melodious poetry. Bright people have eulogized them with Samantabhadra wheels,⁴¹ and teachers with experience and realization have discussed them with reference to the paths and bhūmis. Even I, who know nothing at all, have honestly written down what I have seen and heard, without exaggeration or understatement.

In short, by disseminating this sublime master's biography far and wide, we should plant excellent seeds of happiness and well-being in the minds of ourselves and others, flinging wide the doors of auspicious coincidence that will propagate in numerous ways the precious Dharma of teaching, practice, and activity.

This was written in response to insistent written requests and encouragement from the eminent Karma Rinchen Dargyé, the vow holder and great upholder of both Tripitaka and Tantra, the preceptor of Tupten Ewam Chögar. It was written by Manjugosha,⁴² who is but a lowly reflection of an uninvolved renunciant. It is a mere seed, based on whatever I have heard and whatever I know, without exaggeration or denigration. May it bring virtuous goodness!

Sarvad kalyanam bhavatu. May there always be auspiciousness!



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1 *Auspicious Melody* (*bKra shis dbyangs, Tashi Yang*) refer to both Chokgyur Lingpa's autobiography *A Melody to Delight the Fortunate* and to Jamgön Kongtrül's *Melody of the Auspiciously Curling Conch*.

2 Note found in the original text: "If we take the Sanskrit *vimoksha* as the source for the Tibetan *rnam thar* ['complete liberation,' used here in the sense of 'story of liberation'] we may interpret the term as follows: The Sanskrit verb root *muç* (referred to in the Dhatupatha as *muç mokshane* (*muçll grol ba la'o*), when preceded by the prefix 'vi,' can refer equally to liberation from samsara and the lower realms, and to the opening and blossoming of a flower. Based on this latter meaning of *vimuc*, the term *rnam thar* signifies the elucidating of the guru's life story—the life story being rather like a blossoming lotus. Moreover, the special meaning of the word is 'form of liberation' (*thar pa'i rnam pa*), or 'representation of liberation.' Put briefly, the biographies of extraordinary sublime masters can be understood in terms of the entirety of the five paths, starting with the path of accumulation. Thus one may 'give instruction by means of teaching the life story.' From this and other examples, we can see that the significance of the term *rnam thar* may be explained in vast detail.

3 In his extensive biography of the first Chokgyur Lingpa, the second Chokling incarnation, Könchok Gyurmé, explains this reference as follows: "The *Mayajala Tantra* states, 'Unbound, not liberated, / primordially, spontaneously perfect: such is the Buddhadharmā.' Although, in the context of cyclic existence, the mind appears to be bound, and in the context of nirvana, it appears to be liberated, in reality the true nature of mind is neither bound nor liberated and is the basis, or essence, of both samsara and nirvana." *dKon mchog 'gyur med, gTer chen mchog gyur bde chen gling pa'i rnam thar bkra shis dbyangs kyi yan lag gsal byed ldeb*, in *sPrul pa'i gter chen o rgyan mchog gyur bde chen zhig po gling pa phrin las 'gro 'dul rtsal gyi zab gter yid bzhin nor bu'i mdzod chen po*, Vol. 39 (Kathmandu: Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling Monastery, 2004), 8.

4 The four magical tamings (*'dul ba bzhi*) refer to the taming of students through (1) body, (2) speech, (3) mind, and (4) miracles. This is a reference to one of the ten superior qualities of a treasure revealer. The full list of ten is as follows: (1) superior intellect, (2) superior body, (3) superior qualities, (4) superior learning, (5) superior contemplation, (6) superior meditation, (7) superior confidence, (8) superior debating, (9) superior recollection, and (10) superior patient endurance. *dKon mchog 'gyur med, gTer chen*, 29–30.

5 The particular meaning here is that life stories hidden as treasures recount the superior qualities of Prince Murup Tsenpo, so that his future reincarnations can also read about them and be inspired.

6 This presentation follows the framework established by Kongtrül and Khyentsé for this life story: "The main body of the text is structured into three sections: (1) a brief teaching on the definitive and expedient

hagiographies, (2) an expanded explanation by means of ten amazing accounts, and (3) a conclusion by means of supplication and aspirations.” The ten amazing accounts are the following: “(1) his youth, (2) the awakening of his karmic potential, (3) his teachers, (4) his spiritual development, (5) his meditative realization, (6) his visionary experiences, (7) his treasure discoveries, (8) his students, (9) his sanctification of the environment, and (10) his passing into nirvana.” Andreas Doctor, *Tibetan Treasure Literature: Revelation, Tradition, and Accomplishment in Visionary Buddhism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 2005), 79–80.

7 Yertödra (*yer stod grwa*) is an unclear geographical reference.

8 Throughout this text, the first half of the lunar month is referred to as the waxing period, while the second half is called the waning period.

9 Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo and Chokgyur Lingpa.

10 Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo is referring to himself in an indirect way as “the guru,” so as not to appear to identify with this experience or take any pride in it.

11 The thread-cross (*mdos*), according to Kyapjé Dūdjom Rinpoché, “is a wooden-framed structure crossed with many layers of thread or silk. Used as a device for the trapping and exorcising of evil forces, its structure varies in size and appearance depending upon the deity invoked and the function of the rite.” Dūdjom Rinpoché and Jikdrel Yeshé Dorjé, “Notes,” in *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Its Fundamentals and History*, transl. and ed. Gyurmé Dorjé and Matthew Kapstein (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991), 60.

12 Namkha Dzö, or “Sky Treasury” in English, is Chokgyur Lingpa’s birthplace and the site of numerous treasure revelations.

13 This is text spoken by Guru Rinpoché.

14 The guru here is Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo.

15 Lamdré (*Lam ’bras*), literally “Path and Fruition,” is the generic name for the teachings of the Sakya School, to which Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo belonged.

16 *Nadi* are knots in the energy channels (*nadi*) of the subtle body.

17 Kōnchok Gyurmé’s extensive version of the *namtar* cites the assurance given by the thousand buddhas, as follows: “The general and extraordinary awakened activities of both the great emanated treasure revealer and the omniscient Jamgön [Khyentsé Wangpo] are the utmost repayment for the precious teachings of the Conqueror, through which they have established and will establish great objects of worship beneficial to beings.” *dKon mchog ’gyur med, gTer chen*, 153.

18 Note found in the original text: “Some manuscripts mention that this took place during the Dog Year (1850–1851), when he was twenty-two. However, when I personally received the first empowerment and reading

transmission and asked for details, he told me the story in the way that I have recounted it here.”

19 The tantras, statements, and instructions (*rgyud lung man ngag*) refer to the teachings of *Maha-*, *Anu-* and *Atiyoga* respectively.

20 Note found in the original text: “In the decoded lists for this sacred place, some copies mention that he was twenty-nine when he retrieved these treasures. However, he was twenty-eight at the time, and twenty-nine when he later decoded the summary list for the *Heart Practice*. Therefore, it seems that this was a mistake.”

21 This refers to: 1. *The Heart Essence of Vairocana (Vairo Nyingtik)*, also known as *The Three Sections of the Great Perfection (Dzogchen Desum)*, which the Great Tertön had previously revealed from the same sacred site, and 2. *The Heart Essence of Garap Dorjé (Garap Nyingtik)*, which the Great Tertön revealed along with sacred relics of Garap Dorjé, the original holder and propagator of these essential teachings on the nature of mind.

22 That is Chotrul Düchen (*cho 'phrul dus chen*), the 'Festival of Miracles'.

23 Note found in the original text: “This sacred site was opened by Dödül, and a guidebook for it exists. The precious Great Tertön Chokgyur Lingpa identified it as Hedrak, the sacred site for the activity aspect of the awakened body, one of the twenty-five major sacred sites.”

24 The Abbot, Master, and Dharma King are Shantarakshita, Padmasambhava, and Trisong Detsen, respectively.

25 Note found in the original text: “On the journey to Lhasa, at the age of forty, in the Earth Dragon Year (1868–1869), Chokgyur Lingpa is said to have stopped at Yangdzong Cliff, where he revealed Nubchen Rinpoché’s thumb ring and a page of yellow paper. This is merely a rumored event, and no one knows the precise details. On this same occasion, according to another rumor, the tertön also went to Chimpu and, arriving at Shotö Tidro at the beginning of the Earth Snake Year (1869), revealed some kind of profound *terma* from this site too.”

26 The *Scripture (mDo, Do)* refers to the *Scripture of the Embodiment of Realization (dGongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo, Gongpa Düpé Do)*, the fundamental *Anuyoga* text of the Nyingma system; *Mayajala* refers to an important Nyingma Mahayoga text, the *Net of Illusion*; and the Mind Section refers to one of the three categories of teachings in the Great Perfection. Khyentsé Wangpo’s statement thus indicates that Chokgyur Lingpa received and taught all three of the inner tantric vehicles according to the Nyingma system: *Mahayoga*, *Anuyoga*, and *Atiyoga*.

27 Note found in the original text: “Annual sadhana ceremonies have been established at the great dharma institute of Namgyal Jangchub Ling for the twenty-seven great mandalas of all the existing empowerment and reading-transmission traditions of the Oral Transmission Lineage of the Early Translations. This followed from our combined request, master and disciple, to Do-Ngak Tendzin, the Gyatrül Rinpoché of Palyül, and is just one more amazing aspect of the awakened activity of Chokgyur Lingpa. The carving

of new wood blocks for the entire set of Oral Transmission scriptures at Palyül is also the work of this master and his sons. This note was added by Jnana.”

28 The king and his son are Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo and Chokgyur Lingpa, respectively.

29 The four stages of practice are known as (1) approach, (2) close approach, (3) accomplishment, and (4) great accomplishment.

30 A *kusulu* is a type of yogic practitioner who, externally, does not appear to put effort into his practice, but internally practices what his or her teacher has taught. On the outside, he therefore appears to be lazy and not do anything more than take care of his vital necessities. The word is formed from three Sanskrit root syllables *ku*, *su*, and *lu* that respectively stand for eating, sleeping, and excreting.

31 What is translated here as “his eminent nephew” (*rje dbon zung*) might also be a reference to another master.

32 Known in Tibetan as the Chöten Deché Tseka (*mChod rten bde byed rtsegs pa*), this is the stupa of Sitavana, the charnel ground near present-day Bodh Gaya where Khandroma Lekyi Wangmo revealed the *Eight Sadhana Teachings* to Guru Rinpoché and the eight vidyadharas of India.

33 The twofold *Heart Practice* designates the *Guru’s Heart Practice, Dispeller of All Obstacles* and the *Guru’s Heart Practice, Spontaneous Fulfillment of Wishes*.

34 The two traditions refer to the tradition of teaching and the tradition of practice.

35 This refers to the Guru Rinpoché statues that were made from a special *terma* substance that Chokgyur Lingpa had revealed.

36 Though the Tibetan text indicates the Wood Dragon Year, this appears to be a mistake, as Chokgyur Lingpa was still very young and had not yet met with Jamgön Kongtrül at that time. According to Jamgön Kongtrül’s autobiography, this event occurred in the Fire Dragon Year, for which the dates are indicated in the translation. Similarly, the next sentence erroneously refers to the Wood Snake Year in the original text.

37 According to Jamgön Kongtrül’s autobiography, Chokgyur Lingpa met at that time with the Karmapa and visited many other monasteries. Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Taye and Richard Barron, *The Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrül: A Gem of Many Colors* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2003), 114.

38 This refers to extra months (*zla bshol*) that are sometimes added to the Tibetan calendar to even out the year.

39 This aspiration, written by Jamgön Kongtül, is found in chapter 20.

40 Note found in the original text: “There is also an extensive explanation that may be given, starting here, with the meaning of the inscription on his

personal great seal, which reads, ‘Universal master encompassing Kama and *Terma*.’”

41 A Samantabhadra wheel (*Kun tu zang po skor lo*) is a traditional poetry technique in which a text is written in a grid, and, in a manner similar to a crossword puzzle, has meaning whether it is read vertically, horizontally, or diagonally.

42 Note found in the original text: “Manjugosha refers to Zhapdrung Rinpoché, Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo.”