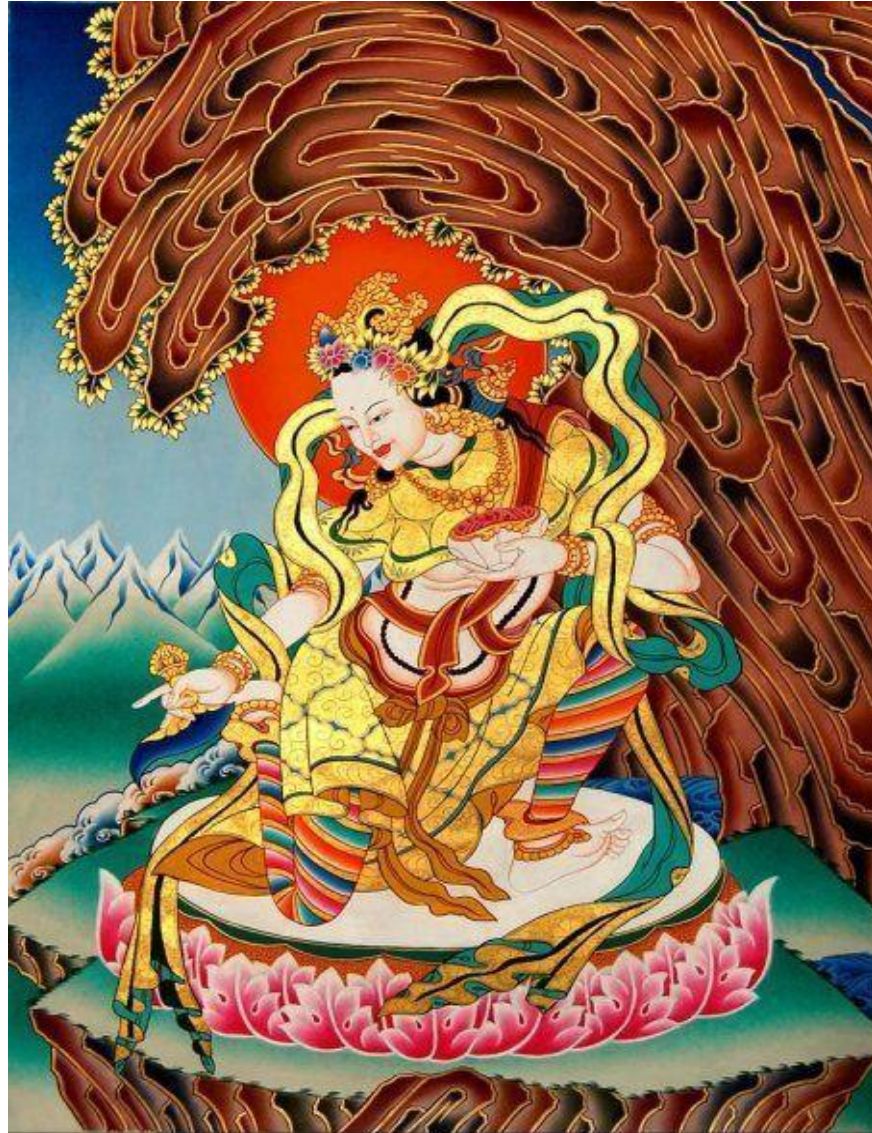


YESHE TSHOGYEL GURU YOGA

BY 15TH KARMAPA



Translated and edited by Adele Tomlin

INTRODUCTION

“You are a fully qualified *dākinī* and the mother who gives life to all triumphant buddhas. Yours is the great force of all buddhas, as the motherly loving protector of all beings of the six realms. My own qualities as Lotus-Born don’t come from me— they come from you.”

—Praise of Guru Rinpoche to Yeshe Tsogyel after she travelled to the hell realms to liberate beings

Today on the Guru Rinpoche tenth lunar day, I was delighted to discover a short text written by the 15th Karmapa, Khakyab Dorje (mkha’ khyab rdo rje, 1871-1922) of a Yeshe Tshogyel Guru Yoga. It can be found in a publication called *The Collected Works of the Garland of Karmapas*, published in Lhasa, Tibet in 2013ⁱ. The translated text is in English, Tibetan and phonetics.

Much has been written about Yeshe Tshogyel, a yogini woman of the 8th Century who attained full awakening, and was one of the main consorts and students of Padmasambhava. More can be read about her life in the *Treasury of Lives* biography by Dr. Alexander Gardner [here](#) (see also *Further Reading* below). Yeshe Tsogyal is also considered a manifestation of Saraswati and sometimes identified with Noble Tārā. She is also considered to be an emanation of Samantabhadrī, Prajñāpāramitā, and Vajrayogini. Padmasambhava predicted that Yeshe Tsogyel would be reborn as Machig Labdrön; her consort, Atsara Sale, would become Topabhadra, Machig’s husband; her assistant and another of Padmasambhava’s consorts, Tashi Khyidren, would be reborn as Machig’s only daughter, and so on. All of the important figures in Tsogyel’s life were to be reborn in the life of Machig Labdrön, including Padmasambhava himself, who would become Dampa Sangye. Guru Padmasambhava sang Yeshe Tshogyel’s Praises on many occasions, including the quote above after she travelled to the hell realms to liberate a being who had tried to harm her (see [here](#)).

For more on the 15th Karmapa see an online [biography here](#). As I have written about [before](#), the 15th Karmapa was not only the head of Karma Kagyu but also a lineage holder of many Nyingma treasures. His connection to Guru Padmasambhava is also significant. He is said to have received the empowerment of the ‘Six Books of Guru Padmasambhava’ (rGya-chan Pod-drug) from the 6th Pawo Rinpoche. While he was meditating at the major mountain and pilgrimage destination Tsāri, it is reported he had visions of Guru Rinpoche, and the protector of Tsāri appeared and presented him with a statue of Padmasambhava and a sky-fallen scepter. These are housed at Rumtek monastery, Sikkimⁱⁱ. He was also a lineage holder of the ‘Immortal Life-Force’ practice of Guru Rinpoche and Yogini Mandāravā (see [here](#)) and of the *Seven Profound Phurba Vajrakīlaya* (see [here](#)).

The *Yeshe Tshogyel Guru Yoga*, is one of the few, if only, guru yogas of her *in outer human form* alone to be written for a female realised master in Tibetan by a Tibetan Buddhist teacher that I have seen publicly available. It is certainly the first time this text has been translated and published in English. Both the Nyingma and Karma Kagyu schools of Tibetan Buddhism recognize her as a female Buddha. There is the well-known *Khandro Tuktig*, discovered by Nyingma master, Dudjom Rinpoche, where Yeshe Tshogyel is visualised in her outer, inner and secret forms. However, this text is only of her outer form. As Guru Rinpoche and Yeshe Tshogyel are inseparable, doing a guru yoga of her would be no different than doing one with Guru Rinpoche.

Composed by the 15th Karmapa when he was eleven years oldⁱⁱⁱ, it is a very short, simple visualisation and recitation. So, ideal for a practice on the tenth lunar day, or a daily practice for those who feel a strong connection to her. In these degenerate times, with more and more cases of powerful male lamas misusing the teachings to exploit female students for sex and power, perhaps now (more than ever) is the ripe time for a female guru yoga practice, such as this one. I am sure that the powerful blessings of the emanations of Yeshe Tshogyel are immediately present when she is called upon!

May this new translation be of benefit in helping all beings realize the mind and state of Yeshe Tshogyel! In particular, I dedicate this to all the female teachers, translators, practitioners and students of Tibetan Buddhism. May they all be treated with kindness, respect, love and be free of those who seek to harm them or treat them as mere objects.

Translated and edited by Adele Tomlin, 24th November 2020.

Yeshe Tshogyel Guru Yoga

ཡེ་ཤེས་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་གྱི་སྐྱེ་མའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་ནི།།

རང་གི་སྐྱེ་བོར་པད་ལྗེའི་གདན་གྱི་སྟེང་།།

མཁའ་འགོ་ཀུན་གྱི་གཙོ་མོ་ཆེན་མོ་ནི།།

rang gi chiwor pé dé den gyi teng/

khandro kün gyi tsomo chenmo ni/

At one's crown, on a lotus and moon seat, is the great chief of all the ḍākinīs.

སྐྱེ་མདོག་དཀར་མོ་ནི་འཇུག་སྐྱེ་བའི་མདོག་།།

ཕྱག་གཡས་མདའ་དར་ཁ་དོག་ལྗང་ལྗང་།།

kudok karmo zhi dzum dawé dok/

chak yé da dar khadok nga den dang/

Form white in colour, peaceful, smiling and moon-coloured. Right hand holding an arrow adorned with silk scarves of five colours.

ཕྱག་གཡོན་འཆི་མེད་ཆེ་ཡི་བུམ་པ་ནི།།

བདུད་རྩི་འོ་མའི་བཅུད་ཀྱིས་གང་བ་ཇིན།།

chak yön chimé tshé yi bumpa ni/

diütsi omé chü kyi gangwa dzin/

In the left hand, a long-life immortality vase, filled to the brim with milky essential elixir.

འཁོར་དུ་མཁའ་འགོ་སྡེ་ལྗང་འཆི་གས་ཀྱིས་བསྐོར།།

གཙོ་མའི་ཕྱག་གི་ཆེ་ཡི་བུམ་པ་ནས།།

khor du khandro dé ngé tshok kyi kor/

tsomö chak gi tshé yi bum né/

She is surrounded by an assembly of ḍākinīs of the five classes^{iv}. From the long-life vase in the hand of the chief female,

བདུད་རྩི་འོ་མ་ལྟ་བུའི་ཚུ་རྒྱན་གྱིས།།

ཆོ་སྲོག་བརྟན་ཅིང་འཆི་མེད་དངོས་གྲུབ་སྩོལ།།

diütsi o ma tabü chu gyün gyi/

tshé sok ten ching chimé ngödrub tsol/

The milk-like elixir flows like water; bestowing the siddhi of immortality and stable life-force.

ཨོྫླ་ན་སྐ་ག་ར་ཇ་ཉ་རི་ནི་ས་ཡུ་ཡུཤེ་སཐ་སི་རྣེ་རྩུ་རྩིལ་ཇོ།།

om jñāna sāga ra dza ha ri ni sa āyushe sarva siddhi hūṃ hrih dza/

ཞེས་བཟླ། Recite.

དེ་ལྟར་ལྷགས་གྱི་ཇོ་ཐ་དབྱངས་སློགས་པའི་མཐུས།། མཁའ་འགོ་ལྷ་ལྷམ་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་གྱི།།

detar ngak kyi dzatra yang drokpé thü/ khandro lhacham yeshe tsogyal gyi/

Like that, with the power of the accompanying melody of the mantra, is the dākinī great Lady, Yeshe Tshogyal.

སྒྲིན་མཚམས་གནས་ནས་འོད་ཟེར་དཀར་པོ་འཕྲོས།། རང་གི་སྒྱུ་བོར་ཐིམ་པས་སྐྱལ་སྐྱུ་འགྲུབ།།

mintsam né né özer karmo trö/ rang gi chiwor timpé tulku drub/

In the spot between her eyebrows, white light rays stream out that dissolve into one’s forehead, accomplishing nirmanakāya.

མགོན་པའི་གནས་ནས་འོད་ཟེར་མར་པོ་འཕྲོས།། རང་གི་མགོན་པར་ཐིམ་པས་འོངས་སྐྱུ་ཐོབ།།

drinpé né né özer marpo trö/ rang gi drinpar timpe longku thob/

From her throat, red light rays stream out that dissolve into one’s throat, attaining sambhogakāya.

སྐྱགས་ཀའི་གནས་ནས་འོད་ཟེར་སྒྲོན་པོ་འཕྲོས།། རང་གི་སྒྲིང་གར་ཐིམ་པས་ཚོས་སྐྱུ་འགྲུབ།།

thuk ké né né özer ngönpo trö/ rang gi nyinggar timpé chöku drub/

From her heart, blue light rays stream out that dissolve into one’s heart, accomplishing dharmakāya.

སྒྲེ་བའི་གནས་ནས་འོད་ཟེར་སེར་པོ་འཕྲོས།། རང་གི་སྒྲེ་བར་ཐིམ་པས་སྐྱུ་བཞི་ཐོབ།།

tewé né né özer serpo trö/ rang gi tewar timpé ku zhi thob/

From her navel, golden light rays stream out that dissolve into one's navel, attaining the four kāyas.

དེ་ལྟར་དབང་བཞི་ཐོབ་པས་སྐྱིབ་བཞི་དག།

མཚོག་དང་མུན་མོང་དངོས་གྲུབ་མ་ལུས་ཐོབ།།

detar wang zhi tobpé drib zhi dak/

chok dang tünmong ngödrub malü thob/

Like that the attainment of the four empowerments purifies the four obscurations^v. One attains all the siddhis, supreme and ordinary.

གནས་སྐབས་སུ་ཡང་འགལ་རྒྱུན་མཐའ་དག་ཞི།།

མཐུན་རྒྱུན་ཚེ་བསོད་དཔལ་དང་འབྱོར་བ་རྒྱས།།

nekab su yang gal kyen thadak zhi/

thiin kyen tshe sö pal dang jorpa gyé/

Infinite, temporary adverse conditions are pacified. Harmonious conditions of long-life, merit, glory and wealth flourish.

གསང་སྔགས་ཟབ་མོའི་རིམ་གཉིས་མཐར་ཕྱིན་ནས།།

མཐར་ཕྱག་མཁའ་སྦྱོང་དོ་རྗེའི་ཞིང་ཁམས་སུ།།

sang ngak zabmö rim nyi tharchin né/

tharthuk khachö dorjé zhing kham su/

སྐྱེ་ཤི་མེད་པ་དོ་རྗེའི་སྐྱེ་ཐོབ་ཤོག།།

kye zhi mepa dorjé ku thob shok/

Having perfected the two stages of the profound secret mantra, in the pure realm of the Ultimate Vajra Sky-Goers; may we attain the vajrakāya, absent of birth and death!

ཅེས་པ་འདི་ནི་ཀམ་པ་ཀུན་བཟང་མཁའ་ཁྱབ་ལྷན་དོ་རྗེས་རང་ལོ་བརྒྱ་གཅིག་གི་སྐབས་སུ་ཡབ་གཞིའི་ཤག་གོང་གི་གཟིམས་རྒྱང་ཚོ་དབང་བདེ་ལྡན་དུ་གང་ཤར་ཡི་གེར་སྐྱེལ་བ་དགོ།།

This was composed by the Karmapa, Kunzang Khakyab Dorje when he was eleven years old in a small room of his former ancestors' estate, endowed with the bliss of long-life empowerment and whatever words arose. May virtue expand!

Translated and compiled by Adele Tomlin, 24th November 2020.

ⁱ ye shes mtsho rgyal gyi bla ma'i rnal 'byor/ karma pa sku phreng rim byon gyi gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs/ Volume 95 Pages 74 – 76. TBRC W3PD 1288.

ⁱⁱ That account comes from Douglas and White (1976) *Karmapa: The Black Hat Lamas of Tibet*. The 15th Karmapa also wrote a short supplication prayer to Yeshe Tshogyel, which has been translated into English here: <https://www.lotsawahouse.org/tibetan-masters/fifteenth-karmapa/prayer-to-yeshe-tsogyal>

ⁱⁱⁱ The Tibetan colophon reads: 'ces pa 'di ni kar+ma pa kun bzang mkha' khyab rdo rjes rang lo bcu gcig gi skabs su yab gzhi'i shag gong gi gzims chung tshe dbang bde ldan du gang shar yi ger spel ba dge//'

^{iv} The five dakini aspects. 1) {rdo rje mkha' 'gro} Vajra dakini. 2) {rin chen mkha' 'gro} Ratna dakini 3) {pad ma mkha' 'gro} Padma dakini 4) {las kyi mkha' 'gro} karma dakini 5) {sangs rgyas mkha' 'gro} Buddha dakini.

^v The four obscurations are said to be karmic, emotional, habitual, and cognitive.