

The Lecture Notes of the Seven-Line Prayer

by Khenpo Sodargye's translation team

Lecture 1

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| A Brief Introduction | 1 |
| To Understand Vajrayana is Important | 2 |
| Why is Tantrayana Extraordinary | 4 |
| Starting from the Preliminaries | 6 |
| Homage & Supplication | 7 |
| The King of All Prayers | 8 |
| The Benefit of Seven-Line Prayer Recorded in A Terma | 9 |

A Brief Introduction

Here we will learn about the merit of the Seven-Line Prayer based on Mipham Rinpoche's *White Lotus*¹. It will take us few sessions. The *White Lotus* is an explanation of the Seven-Line Prayer that introduces the outer practice of the prayer, which reveals the literal meaning of it, and its inner and secret practices, which reveal the profound hidden meaning of the prayer. On this occasion, I will only give a brief explanation on the contents of the outer practice.

● Requirement for Students

It is best to receive empowerment before listening to this teaching because it belongs to tantric practice. But for those who have not received tantric empowerment, yet still wish to listen to this teaching, the prerequisite is that you have conviction of the power and blessing of Padmasambhava and tantric practice. If you think "Vajrayana is a path leading to evil" or "Tantra doesn't make sense", then it's best not to listen to the teaching because it might not do you any good.

Now, many people might have already realized that when you ask Dharma teachers to impart the tantric teaching, mostly they refuse. Even if some teachers might agree, they require the students to start from the basics. So this time, I'll give you a brief introduction to the benefit of the Seven-Line Prayer, an important prayer from the Vajrayana tradition, based on the *White Lotus*, but will not teach its inner, secret and extremely secret practices. In the future, when there is an appropriate opportunity, I may give you teachings on these parts.

● How I will Teach

This time, I will just give a literal interpretation by following the *White Lotus*. I will not quote many doctrinal and theoretical evidences as we usually do when teaching other texts, since it is enough for you to know the extraordinary blessing and power of the prayer, as the Vajra words of holy beings.

¹ Mipham, J. (2012). *White Lotus: An Explanation of the Seven-Line Prayer to Guru Padmasambhava* (The Padmakara Translation Group, Trans.). Shambhala.

● Why Give This Teaching

Every year I gave some tantric teachings to fellow Dharma practitioners in the academy², including some introduction to the merit of Vajrayana, instruction on tantric practices, or other pith instructions. And this time, I decided to give an explanation of the Seven-Line Prayer, along with an introduction to the merit of reciting the prayer; it belongs to tantric practice but is a relatively simple one. Through this, you will gain a better understanding of the tantric tradition, and generate a stronger faith towards it.

To Understand Vajrayana is Important

To understand Vajrayana is important. There are cases where some Dharma brothers and sisters reject or even slander Tantrayana or Vajrayana³, due to a lack of understanding of its history and merit. So, it's very necessary for you to learn about Tibetan Buddhism, particularly its tantric tradition, on a deep level, through reading reliable books or communicating with qualified teachers or practitioners. Because once you gain a full understanding of Tibetan Buddhism, you'll receive great benefits and your whole life will be changed; otherwise it's possible that you may reject its profound tantric teachings or may even find faults in it or slander it and thereby accumulate negative karmas. So, I truly hope you will cultivate a right view toward Tantrayana through a thorough, holistic investigation on its historical origin, development and so on. By having a full understanding of Tantric Buddhism, you will not easily conform with popular but wrong opinions toward it, nor will you easily reject or even slander it.

● Go Step by Step

Now, many Dharma friends traveled a long way to our academy to attend this course, which shows their eagerness for the Dharma. However, some came here only for pith instructions, without having built the necessary groundwork for them. In this case, tantric practice definitely won't be easy for them. Why? Because under the influence of family and society, many practitioners grow up with little knowledge on the law of cause and effect, not to

² Larung Fives Sciences Buddhist Academy

³ <https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Vajrayana>

mention with knowledge on Vajrayana. Later, by virtue of positive karmic force, they entered the path of Buddhism. Then the moment they entered the path of Tantrayana, they sought for the highest level of practice which, due to their lack of a solid foundation, are likely to result in their wavering or completely losing faith in the Tantric Tradition.

For this reason, in order not to go awry, Dharma friends must take gradual steps when following the path of Tantrayana. Start with learning its logic and benefit, and the most fundamental practices, then move gradually toward profound tantric practices. In this way, our mind will be transformed well, and we will not regress easily on the path. Indeed, many Dharma practitioners greatly value learning the Dharma, and they have left behind their family, job and many other things that they especially treasured before, in order to seek the Dharma in a quiet place. However, if they do not have a systematic approach in their study, the result will not be as fantastic as they have expected, and they will be very disheartened in the end.

So, despite the fact that many Dharma friends have great confidence in Vajrayana and deserve to receive the supreme pith instructions, at the same time, both the teacher and the student must be careful about which theory or practice is appropriate for the student to start with. If one rashly seeks the tantric teaching and the teacher imparts such a profound teaching to the student without thoughtful consideration, I'm afraid someday the teacher may regret giving that teaching, and the student wouldn't benefit much from it either. In this case, the teaching would bring almost no benefit no matter how extraordinary it is. This is why Buddha said in various sutras that a teacher should teach in accordance with the students' aptitude, which is quite important. In the past, great masters of India and the Tibetan region understood well the inclinations and capacities of various people, and thus gave teachings in different depths accordingly. But nowadays, it is rather difficult for most people to meet such a great teacher. Anyway, we need to be cautious and prudent and gradually understand the truth about Tantric Buddhism so we won't regress easily.

● **Delve Deep and Cultivate Faith**

Proper understanding of the Tantric Buddhism is very important, especially in these days. Some Buddhist monastic teachers and intellectuals who claim to study and research Tantric Buddhism, lack the basic understanding of its history and practice, so their study is merely academic. As a result, they did not gain real benefit from the nectar of Tantric Buddhism. For

this reason, it is necessary to have real understanding of Tantric Buddhism and cultivate real faith in it. Then you will know how supreme it is.

Take me for example, all these years of Dharma study, every session learning tantric theory and every experience of engaging in tantric practice, including reciting mantras, have strengthened my conviction in Vajrayana. This learning and these practices led me to realize that Tantric Buddhism is the truth, and thus my heart concurs with and embraces it. Tantric Buddhism is not something that seems appealing but in fact has nothing profound or special in its teachings or practices. In fact, it reveals its profundity when one learns and practices it thoroughly. It is only then that one knows its extraordinary nature.

Why is Tantrayana Extraordinary

One way to understand the excellence of Tantrayana is to first realize the value of Buddhism. Once you know how extraordinary Buddhism is, then you will realize how extraordinary Tantrayana is, as it takes up an important position in Buddhism.

- **Worldwide Acknowledgement of the Value of Buddhism**

Nowadays, Buddhism is widely acknowledged and accepted as being excellent among all kinds of philosophies and knowledges. Many scientific researchers or religious scholars, from a fair and objective point of view, consider Buddhism to be very special. The first reason is that the Buddhist view of compassion, treating all sentient beings, humans and other living beings equally, cannot be found in any other religion. The second reason is that the inclusiveness and tolerance of Buddhist wisdom can not be easily found in other spiritual traditions. In some other traditions, there are often cases of violence or cases that incur afflictions. In addition, the Buddhist teachings are very comprehensive and all-embracing, which is quite unique.

In July, 2009, the Geneva-based International Coalition for the Advancement of Religion and Spirituality (ICARUS) invited more than 200 religious leaders from every part of the spiritual spectrum in the world to vote on "The Best Religion in the World". It was interesting to note that many religious leaders voted for Buddhism instead of their own religion. Eventually the ICARUS bestowed this international award to Buddhism although Buddhists actually made up a tiny minority of ICARUS membership.

After the announcement of the award winner, several reporters interviewed some of the voting members of this conference. Jonna Hult, Director of Research for ICARUS said, "It wasn't surprising to me that Buddhism won Best Religion in the World, because we could not find literally one single instance of a war fought in the name of Buddhism." To him, Buddhists "practice what they preach to an extent we simply could not document with any other spiritual tradition."

A Catholic Priest, Father Ted O'Shaughnessy said, "As much as I love the Catholic Church, it has always bothered me to no end that we preach love in our scripture yet then claim to know God's will when it comes to killing other humans. For that reason, I did have to cast my vote for the Buddhists."

A Muslim Cleric Tal Bin Wassad agreed, "While I am a devout Muslim, I can see how much anger and bloodshed is channeled into religious expression rather than dealt with on a personal level. The Buddhists have that figured out."

Rabbi Shmuel Wasserstein said, "Of course, I love Judaism, and I think it's the greatest religion in the world. But to be honest, I've been practicing Vipassana meditation every day before minyan (daily Jewish prayer) since 1993. So I get it."

The ICARUS director said that the plan was to give the "Best Religion in the World" to the leaders from the various lineages in the Buddhist community. However, no Buddhist community would claim the award. "All the Buddhists we call keep saying they don't want the award," the director said. When asked why the Burmese Buddhist community refused the award, a Buddhist monk from Burma said, "We are grateful for the acknowledgement, but we give this award to all of humanity, for Buddha nature lies within each of us."

Even when winning such an honor, these Buddhist communities stayed humble and calm. This is a display of the spirit of selflessness, which comes from Buddhist teachings that emphasize neither seeking self-interest nor fame.

This event reveals the fact that Buddhism, with its excellent wisdom and compassionate spirit, is widely acknowledged.

- **The Excellence of Tantrayana**

From that, you can understand the excellence of Buddhism. If you understand this point, it will be easier for you to cultivate faith in Vajrayana, because it lies at the heart of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition in Buddhism. The fact that Vajrayana takes an important position in the Mahayana tradition might not have been acknowledged by some masters of the Sutrayana tradition, which is understandable because in the early days, they rarely had access to tantric teachings. Nevertheless, if they take the time to get to know Tantrayana, they will recognize it; and the more they learn about it, the more they will recognize its excellence, such as its powerful blessing and extraordinary merit. Therefore, those with roots of virtue and faith in Mahayana Buddhism should be able to gradually accept it.

Starting from the Preliminaries

If you want to practice Vajrayana, please bear in mind the importance of the systematic approach to the study and practice of the Dharma. When you follow this path of Tantrayana, please do start from gaining a basic understanding of it by learning the biographies of lineage masters and basic tantric practices. After that, you can further approach the more profound Dharmas about the generation stage⁴ and the completion stage⁵, as well as the most profound practice of Dzogchen or Mahamudra. It is dangerous if you jump right into the most profound tantric practices without understanding the basics.

Following Tantrayana is not as simple as some people might think. We must lay a very good foundation for tantric practice through the preliminary practices. I often asked many Dharma friends about their feelings and experiences on the spiritual path, and many said that previously, their focus was mostly on the Buddhist philosophy. But in recent years, when they started engaging in the preliminary practices, like meditation on the impermanence of life or Guru yoga, they received extraordinary blessings and had some special spiritual experiences. This makes them realize the importance of practice, as it works to assimilate the blessings of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Guru into one's mind, which makes it rather easy for one to have spiritual progress and realization. Otherwise, it would be rather difficult to reach a certain realization only through theoretic learning or philosophical debate, which mostly involves

⁴ <https://rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Kyerim>

⁵ <https://rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Dzogrim>

one's own conceptual thoughts.

Homage & Supplication

- **Homage**

Namo Guru Padma Manjushri Vajra Tikshnaya!

This is a prayer to Padmasambhava transliterated from Sanskrit.

- **Supplication**

**Holder of the Vajra, you who are in truth all Buddhas of the triple time,
Lake-Born Lord, appearing as an emanation in this world,
Body of undying wisdom, sovereign of vidyadharas,
Padmakara, O glorious one, protect me now this wanderer.**

The nature of the Buddhas of the past, present, and future is the Holder of the Vajra, who appeared in front of sentient beings of this world as the Lake-Born Lord, also known as Padmasambhava. Having attained undying wisdom, you are the sovereign of tens of thousands of vidyadharas, or awareness holders. We beseech you, the Glorious Padmasambhava, to protect us, the pitiful beings, in these times of degeneration.

The more we beseech Padmasambhava, the stronger the blessing we will receive from him. When the blessing dissolves into our hearts, our practice is bound to succeed without a hitch. Now, when the Dharma is in decline, evil spirits and heretics are extremely active and our wrongful attachments and negative thoughts might come up at any time. In such a dark age, it is rather difficult to try to accomplish practice through our own feeble effort, without relying on the support of an extraordinarily powerful force. Therefore, again and again, I appeal to you, my Vajra friends to pray constantly to Guru Padmasambhava with fierce conviction. If you do so, your practice will go smoothly from its beginning till its end.

**The lotus of my heart, endowed with threefold faith,
Is turned toward the daystar of the mighty Conqueror**

And opens in the splendor of blessings.

May the honey dewdrops of this explanation sweetly fall

And satisfy the wishes of the fortunate!

When the sun shines, the lotus flower blossoms and honey dewdrops gestate, tasted only by the fortunate ones. Likewise, when the sun of Tathagata's blessing shines, the wisdom lotus of Mipham Rinpoche's faith blossoms, and these teachings come naturally, enjoyed by fortunate ones, those with a special karmic affinity for them.

The King of All Prayers

Of all the prayers to the great and glorious master of Oddiyana, embodiment of all Buddhas past, present, and to come, the invocation composed of seven vajra verse is supreme. It arose spontaneously as the natural resonance of indestructible ultimate reality and is an immense treasure-mine of blessings and accomplishments.

Many prayers to Guru Rinpoche exist, but the king of all is the Seven-Line Prayer. This prayer was not composed by Padmasambhava himself. It is a prayer with which the Buddhas of the ten directions entreat Padmasambhava to come. Emitted naturally from the sky when the blessing and wisdom of the Buddhas of the three times join together, just like the *Sole Heir of the Doctrine Tantra*, this prayer is the source or the treasury of all blessings, all merits and all siddhis.

Leaving its profound inner or secret meanings alone, just by learning the outer meaning that Mipham Rinpoche explains here, we can see how incredible the prayer is, although it contains just seven lines. Because the prayer is so beneficial, you can find it in every treasure text of the 108 tertons of the Tibetan region. This is also why every Dharma Assembly in the Tibetan region, especially that of the Nyingma tradition, begin with three times recitations of the Seven-Line Prayer.

As long as you pray with sincere faith and devotion, Guru Rinpoche, as well as the Buddhas of the ten directions, the Three Roots, Dharma protectors and all the other noble beings, will gather in front of you and bestow blessings and empowerments on you. It is akin to the young

infant roaming about the crowded street, fully lost and isolated, without being attended by anyone, earnestly calls out to his mother, who then naturally appears, bringing him a sense of comfort and security. In this dark time of degeneration, even if we really wish our Dharma practice succeeds without any problems, there might be some difficulties if we rely only on our own efforts. Therefore, it is very important to pray to our lama, the Dharma protectors and the deities, especially Padmasambhava.

The Benefit of Seven-Line Prayer Recorded in A Terma

In the sadhana upon the Seven-Line Prayer taken from a Dharma treasure of Pema Garwang Chimé Yudrung Lingpa, Guru Rinpoche declares [to King Trisongdetsen and his companions],

The following part is a terma (treasure text) revealed by Padma Garwang Chimey Yudrung Lingpa, who was also known as Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, that describes the benefit of this prayer. He, as a contemporary of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, was a great tertön who was Mipham Rinpoche's spiritual teacher. His biography is documented in *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Its Fundamentals and History*⁶, as well as in many other historical records. He composed more than ninety volumes of writings in his life, including the famous *The Five Great Treasures*⁷.

In some of his biographies, there is an account that describes his incredible merits: When it comes to his writings, it seems like he spent all his life writing books; but when it comes to the termas (treasure texts) he revealed, it seems like he devoted his whole life benefitting sentient beings with termas, so on and so forth. In every regard, his activities of benefitting sentient beings and spreading the Dharma are extremely extensive and incredible.

- **Dharmakaya and Sambhogakaya**

**When I, the Lotus that Upholds All Things,
Was resting in absorption in the vast, primordial expanse,
I was invoked by Vajra sound, the play of ultimate reality,**

⁶ Dudjom Rinpoche. (2005). *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*. Wisdom Publications, U.S.

⁷ https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=The_Five_Great_Treasures

**A self-arisen melody in seven lines.
I rose then in the boundless majesty of the Sambhogakaya,
Revealing an array of Buddhas and their space-pervading fields
Endowed with fivefold certainty.**

At the beginning, I, Padmasambhava, resided in a lotus and remained abiding in the expanse of phenomena⁸, the primordial state free from all fabrications and beyond expression. Then, the wonderful sound of the Seven-Line Prayer arose spontaneously from the play of ultimate reality, due to the collective power of ultimate reality itself and the merit of sentient beings' positive karma. This wonderful melodious supplication made Padmasambhava emerge from the state of Dharmakaya⁹ and manifest himself in the form of Sambhogakaya¹⁰ with limitless power.

As we all know, Sambhogakaya has five certainties¹¹ regarding the teacher's body form, disciples, teachings, time and place. These five certainties pervade the vastness of empty space and are manifested in the majesty of a Buddhafield. This means that in the field of Sambhogakaya possessing the five certainties and in a self-risen way, Padmasambhava teaches the sublime Dharma that is beyond expression to his retinue.

● **Semi-Nirmanakaya Semi-Sambhogakaya¹²**

**Then the five exalted mothers of the ultimate expanse
Implored me with a seven-line song to work for beings' good.
And therefore on a lotus blossom raised upon its stem
Within the milky ocean in the field of supreme bliss, I was made manifest,
Renowned as Thötreng, Garlanded with skulls, in fivefold lineage.
My life and deeds are past imagining.**

At that moment, the five mothers of the five families, i.e. Mamaki of the Ratna family, Buddhalochana of the Vajra family, Dhatvishvari of the Buddha family, Pandavarasini of the

⁸ <https://rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Dharmadhatu>

⁹ <https://rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Dharmakaya>

¹⁰ <https://rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Sambhogakaya>

¹¹ Five certainties: 1) The certain *place* is the citadel of the absolute expanse, called Akanistha, "the Unexcelled." 2) The certain *body form* is the Sambhogakaya, that is perfect, luminous and majestic. 3) The certain *disciples* consist of the male and female enlightened Bodhisattvas. 4) The certain *teaching* is that of the Great Vehicle; 5) The certain *time* means that the buddha manifests activities of benefiting beings in the form of Sambhogakaya, for time as long as samsara is not emptied.

¹² https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Natural_nirmanakaya

Padma family and Samayatara of the Karma family, sing in one voice with the wondrous melody of the Vajra Seven-Line Prayer to supplicate the Sambhogakaya of Padmasambhava to work for beings' good. At that moment, a lotus blossom appeared in the milky ocean in the Western Buddhafield of Bliss¹³, and Guru Padmasambhava manifested himself on top of it as Pema Thötreng Tsal in the form of fivefold lineage, i.e. Lotus-Born of the Ratna family, Lotus-Born of the Vajra family, Lotus-Born of the Buddha family, Lotus-Born of the Padma family and Lotus-Born of the Karma family. His life and activities to benefit beings are limitless and boundless. This means that in the Land of Bliss, Guru Padmasambhava benefits sentient beings in a manner of Semi-Nirmanakaya Semi-Sambhogakaya.

- **Nirmanakaya**

- a) **How Padmasambhava Came to Our World**

**And then a hundred million wisdom Dakinis,
With one voice called to me
That I might propagate the doctrine of the Secret Mantra,
Entreating me with seven-lined song
To come into this world,
The field that Sakyamuni tamed.
And so in Orgyen's land, the cradle of the mantras,
On Dhanakosha Lake, upon a wondrous lotus raised upon its stem,
Appearing from the field of bliss I came.
As 'Lake-Born Vajra' I am therefore known.**

Then a hundred million wisdom Dakinis sang the wonderful Seven-Line Prayer in one voice, supplicating Guru Padmasambhava to come to this world from the Buddhafield of Ultimate Bliss to spread the supreme Vajrayana in Jambudvipa¹⁴ where Buddha Sakyamuni tamed beings. They prayed, and then, proper causes and conditions arose. Then within the field of Buddha Sakyamuni, in the land of Oddiyana¹⁵— the cradle of the Mantrayana, on an island in the lake of Dhanakosha, a very rare lotus flower bloomed. Then, the Buddha Amitabha in the

¹³ <https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Sukhavati>

¹⁴ <https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Jambudvipa>

¹⁵ <https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Oddiyana>

Buddhafield of Ultimate Bliss sent from his heart a letter “𑀧𑁆𑀢” (Hrih), which descended onto the pistil of this lotus flower. The letter transformed into a beautiful young boy. At that time, King Indrabhuti came to this lake and encountered the boy. Then he took the boy back to the kingdom and installed him as the crown prince. This is why Padmasambhava is also known as “Lake-Born Vajra¹⁶”. This part illustrates how Padmasambhava came to Jambudvīpa in his Nirmanakaya¹⁷ form.

In addition, according to the teachings of many great masters, Guru Padmasambhava is the conjoined manifestation of Amitabha, Buddha Sakyamuni and Avalokiteshvara. Therefore, ordinary people and even some Bodhisattvas might find it difficult to accept or understand his incredible display and activities.

b) The Mysterious Display of Guru Padmasambhava’s Stay at Tibet

That is probably why there are so many disputes concerning how long Guru Padmasambhava stayed in the Tibetan region. Some versions say that he stayed only for some months, like three, six, twelve or eighteen months; some say years, like three, six, or twelve years; and some others say he stayed more than fifty years or 111 years; so on and so forth. However, the most widely accepted opinion is that Guru Padmasambhava, manifested in front of most Tibetans and fortunate sentient beings to remain in the Tibetan region for more than fifty years. Dudjom Rinpoche’s book *“The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Its Fundamentals and History”* recorded that Guru Rinpoche came to the Tibetan region when King Trisong Detsen was twenty-one years old and stayed in the Tibetan region for another sixteen years after the King died at the age of fifty-nine. Then why some historical documents say that Padmasambhava lived in the Tibetan region for a much shorter period of time? Dudjom Rinpoche explained that in front of evil ministers, Padmasambhava appeared a much shorter time. In fact, when Guru Rinpoche manifested to leave the Tibetan region, his real body travelled from place to place, bestowing his blessing upon the whole Land of Snow.

Because of Guru Rinpoche’s incredibly miraculous power and blessing, as well as the protection of a great many Dharma protectors, Tibetan Buddhism remains prosperous and complete even till today and no other religious tradition was able to penetrate the Tibetan

¹⁶ https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Guru_Tsokyé_Dorje

¹⁷ <https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Nirmanakaya>

region. Therefore, it is very important that we pray to Guru Padmasambhava constantly for the protection of our Dharma center or our own Dharma practice. In fact, there are many great masters who value the practice of Padmasambhava very much and because of their constant engagement in this practice, their own spiritual practice was not disturbed or interrupted by any hindrance.

- **The Seven-Line Prayer, the Root of All Dharmas**

- a) **The Seven-Line Prayer Is the Root of All Dharmas**

**Revealing marvels inconceivable,
My wondrous forms are infinite.
For Dakinis and Dakas of the lake,
The secret essence of the greatly secret teachings I set forth:
One hundred million tantras, agamas, and upadeshas
Of the Magic Net of Padma,
To help the living and all those who yet will come,
According to their different inclinations.**

At the time when Padmasambhava came to the human realm, he displayed various wondrous forms in front of sentient beings and benefited them with many different wondrous manifestations. Especially for the benefit of sentient beings of that time and for those in the future, and in front of beings with different capacities and inclinations, like Dakinis, Vajra Dakas and human beings, Padmasambhava taught countless and inconceivable secret essences of Dharma, i.e. sutras, tantras, theories, and pith instructions, like *The Magic Net of Padma* and many others.

**These doctrines all have been distilled
In sadhanas upon myself, the Guru—
Myself, embodiment of the Three Roots.
The prayer in seven lines is root of all these sadhanas.
Within the Ground, these lines denote
The seven kinds of consciousness¹⁸;
Upon the Path, they represent**

¹⁸ *nam shes bdun*. Namely, the consciousnesses of the six senses (the mind is considered the sixth sense) together with the defiled consciousness that conceives of “I.”

**The seven branches of enlightenment;
And when the Fruit is won, they are perfected
As the seven sacred riches of the ultimate.**

Padmasambhava taught sentient beings of different inclinations incredible sutras, tantras, and upadeshas, and all these Dharmas, in fact, can be summarized as practices of the Three Roots—Guru, Dakini and Yidam. And all practices of the Three Roots can be included in the practices of Guru Padmasambhava. But even regarding just Guru Padmasambhava’s practices, there are many. Each terma text or the composition of each master may have different types of Padmasambhava practice—some are practices of peaceful Padmasambhava and some are practices of wrathful Padmasambhava. Then, each terma about the peaceful Padmasambhava contains different sadhanas. Nevertheless, all Padmasambhava practices are contained in the Seven-Line Prayer.

It includes not only all the practices of the Guru, Yidam and Dakini, but also all the Dharmas of the Ground, Path and Fruit. On the level of the Ground, it encompasses all Dharmas of the seven kinds of consciousness; on the level of the Path, it covers all Dharmas of the seven elements for enlightenment¹⁹; and on the level of the Fruit, it covers all Dharmas of the seven sacred riches of the ultimate²⁰. Thus, this prayer encompasses all.

b) The Pronunciation of the Prayer

Since the root of all practices of Guru Padmasambhava is the Seven-Line Prayer, if you do not know how to practice different sadhanas of Guru Riponche, you can simply chant the Seven-Line Prayer, and that should be no problem for most people.

Of course, each person has his or her own way of chanting. Each region also has its own dialect and may chant differently. Sometimes we see that people from Lhasa and its surrounding region pronounce Dharma prayers differently from those living in Do-Kham or other places. Take the Vajra Guru mantra for example, people in some places chant “Om Ah Hum Banzer Görö Padma Söddö Hum” while people in other places chant “Om Ah Hum Banza Guru Pema Siddhi Hum”.

For this reason, it is quite difficult to set a standard for the pronunciation of chanting because

¹⁹ https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Seven_elements_for_enlightenment

²⁰ *don dam dkor bdun*. The enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities, activities, ultimate expanse, and primordial wisdom.

different regions have different dialects and thus the pronunciation is different. We cannot say the pronunciation of one place is standard, and the pronunciation of people from other places is not. Therefore, as long as people chant with faith and a pure mind, pronunciation won't be a big problem for receiving the blessing.

Once, there was a great master who practiced chanting the Vajrakilaya mantra. After practicing a long time, he was able to stab his phurba directly into a rock. One day, Sakya Pandita passed by the valley where the master abided, and heard everything, including plants and water in the valley, resonate with the sound of the Vajrakilaya mantra, so he thought that there must be a very great practitioner living around this place. However, when he listened carefully, he realized that the pronunciation of the mantra was not precisely right. He sought out to meet the practitioner and managed to find him in a cave and corrected his pronunciation. However, when the practitioner revised his chanting, the sound of resonance disappeared. Then Sakya Pandita thought maybe this is not right and let the practitioner return to his old way of chanting. When the practitioner did so, he was again able to still stab his phurba into a rock again and all the surrounding resonated with the sound of the mantra. This story shows that as long as our mind is pure, the pronunciation is not a big problem.

- **The Benefit of Chanting the Seven-Line Prayer**

- a) **The Fast Way to Receive Empowerment of Wisdom**

**If thus you simply call upon me
With this melody of Vajra sound,
I, Padma, cannot help but come to you.
I will give to you my blessings and will grant
Empowerment of great primordial wisdom.**

If you entreat Padmasambhava with the Vajra Seven-Line Prayer in a melodious sound, then Padmasambhava “cannot help but come to you”, which means that he will immediately appear in front of you, to grant you blessings and give you empowerments that bestow upon you great wisdom.

These are Vajra words of Padmasambhava that will never fail. Nowadays there are many practitioners who cannot find lamas to give them empowerments because many lamas are very busy or are not in good health. If this is the case, then you can ask Guru Rinpoche for

empowerments. By reciting the Seven-Line Prayer every day, Guru Rinpoche's wisdom body will come to you and give you empowerments. As long as you have faith, then you are bound to receive his blessings and empowerments of wisdom.

b) Signs of Blessings

**The multitudes of deities of the Three Roots will gather like the clouds,
To grant, unhindered, common and supreme accomplishments.
And in your waking life, or in your meditation,
Or in the visions of your dreams, you will encounter me.
Swirls of rainbow light you'll see, and smell sweet scents,**

When you supplicate by reciting the Seven-Line Prayer, the Three Roots of Guru, Yidams and Dakas will gather like the clouds in front of you to grant you blessings and bestow upon you common and supreme siddhis without hindrances. Through such practice, you might have special feelings or experiences of receiving the blessing of Padmasambhava and many deities, or experience of seeing them in your daily life, meditation, or dreams. And, sometimes you might even see a rainbow light or smell sweet scents around your meditation room.

While I was translating this text, Padmasambhava appeared many times in the visions of my dreams. I am not saying that this is a very profound spiritual state. The reason I am mentioning it is to confirm what Venerable Longchenpa described as the six types of certainties in his text *Treasury of Pith Instructions*²¹. One of the certainties is that, if a person practices the Dharma, then it is certain that he will experience the blessings. Therefore, if you practice the Dharma with devotion, you are bound to receive blessings or empowerments.

**And hear celestial airs and gentle tapping of the damaru.
Your body, speech, and mind with blessings drenched,
You will gain realization in a single leap
By virtue of the strength of your awareness.
Eight classes of proud spirits will be subject to your word.**

If you practice the Seven-Line Prayer, then you will often hear the sound of the damaru from the celestial beings and the sound of instruments of Dharma protectors, Dakas and Dakinis.

²¹ https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Treasury_of_Pith_Instructions

In the past, various kinds of wonderful sounds can often be heard surrounding the caves or cabins where some practitioners took solitary retreats. In addition to this, your body, speech and mind will be greatly blessed: If your body used to suffer a lot, it will become very relaxed and comfortable with practice; if your speech was careless and sharp, it will become soft and gentle with practice; if you used to be troubled with deep-rooted negative emotions, through Guru Padmasambhava's empowerment, with a very strong and powerful blessing dissolving into your mind, you will experience that all your greed, anger and ignorance is transformed tremendously. Some people change very quickly, because the blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have dissolved into their minds through their devoted practice. Those with sharper capacities will even immediately gain intrinsic awareness, i.e. become enlightened instantly and recognize the true reality. Then, all eight classes of proud spirits²² will attend duly to whatever instruction you give them. They will no longer harm you. Instead, they will become your protectors and constant helpers so that your Dharma activities become prosperous.

**All you thus linked with me will gain my blessings power²³,
And, swift to gain attainment as vidyadharas,
You will never part from me, the Lotus-Born. Samaya!**

If you practice this prayer of Padmasambhava, you will benefit countless sentient beings, whoever has formed a bond with you. In addition to this, you will gain great power and force, and swiftly attain the state of vidyadhara, becoming no different from Padmasambhava himself.

Although you may not be able to help others at this moment, when your dharma practice reaches a certain level, you will benefit everyone who is linked with you, either through a good or a bad karmic bond. Meanwhile, you will gain great power yourself. There are some people, whenever they talk, their words are weak; whenever they work, their motivations are feeble; whenever they do something meaningful, they will encounter great obstacles and fail to accomplish their tasks. Why it is so? This might be due to their strong karmic hindrances or demonic spirits that come often and disturb their minds. However, if we practice this extraordinary sadhana, all these problems will be removed through the blessings of Guru Rinpoche, since we will gain force and swiftly attain the state of vidyadhara, becoming no

²² https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Eight_classes_of_gods_and_demons

²³ According to Khenpo Sodargye's translation from Tibetan into Chinese, this line should be, "All those linked with you will be benefited and you will gain my blessings power".

different from Padmasambhava himself.

- **Prophecy**

- a) **Prophecy for the Revealing of the Terma**

**The Three Roots I myself personify,
The Vajra form arisen from the lake,
Appearing as a magic net of emanations.
If you pray to me according to your aspirations,
I will grant accomplishments that correspond to them.
For you, who are now king and subjects,
And for the sake of my disciples yet to come,
I teach with love the essence of my heart.**

It means, “I, Padmasambhava, am in truth the Three Roots. In front of sentient beings, my Vajra body manifested from a lotus in the ocean, and I appeared as a magic net of emanations. If you generate faith in all my merits, and pray to me, you will receive accomplishments corresponding to your aspirations.” The most excellent supplicants will receive the best empowerments and blessings, while mediocre supplicants will gain mediocre blessings. For the benefit of the king and king’s subjects of that time as well as his future disciples, Guru Rinpoche imparted instructions endowed with great compassion, which are like the essence of his heart.

**Not divulged, but as deep treasure it must now be hid.
In evil times to come, my own disciple will appear;
And at that time, endowed with wisdom,
Through the power of Vairotsana’s prayer,
He will reveal this means for taming beings,
Gleaming with symbolic lettering of light.
Thus far and wide will spread a source of help for wanderers.
Samaya!**

This instruction of Guru Rinpoche, instead of being disseminated at that time, was hidden as a treasure text. Guru Rinpoche predicted that in the future time of degeneration when his

fortunate disciples appear, through Vairotsana's²⁴ power of aspiration, this teaching will appear as symbolic lettering of light or in Dakini script.

There are many extraordinary sadhanas of the Seven-Line Prayer, many of which, such as this sadhana of Kongtrul Rinpoche²⁵, were concealed in oceans, in mid-air, in holy mountains or elsewhere. According to some historical documents, Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal spent a hundred years concealing all of Guru Rinpoche's profound teachings after he left for the Rakshasa Kingdom. Then great masters like Nyak Jñanakumara²⁶, Vairotsana, Nang Yeshe Dorje, Vimalamitra²⁷ also concealed many supreme tantric teachings that await revelation by great tertons later.

b) The Excellence of Terma

Termas are extraordinary. In fact, treasure texts exist in Sutrayana as well. In Dudjom Rinpoche's *Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, Sutrayana scriptural texts like *the Sutra of River Games* are quoted to support this point. According to those texts, Buddha Sakyamuni hid some of his special teachings in certain places and prophesized that certain persons will come and reveal them in the future. However, since these kinds of treasure texts are not as frequently seen in Sutrayana as in the lineage of Guru Rinpoche, people therefore tend to think that they exist only in the tantric tradition.

In the history of Tibetan Buddhism, there are the 108 most widely acknowledged and famous tertons, whose biographies can be found in *The Hundred Tertöns*²⁸. In addition, in other history books of Buddhism, such as Dudjom Rinpoche's *Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, there are also biographies of great tertons such as Jigme Lingpa, Kongtrul Rinpoche, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, and Mipham Rinpoche. If we read the treasure texts revealed by the great tertons and understand their merit and profound impact, we will generate great conviction in the efficacy of termas.

The terma lineage²⁹, as the short one among the two modes of transmission of the teachings of the Nyingma School, is free from the defects that the distant oral transmission³⁰ has.

²⁴ <https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Vairotsana>

²⁵ The sadhana upon the Seven-Line Prayer taken from a Dharma treasure of Pema Garwang Chimé Yudrung Lingpa

²⁶ https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Nyak_Jñanakumara

²⁷ <https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Vimalamitra>

²⁸ https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Lives_of_the_Hundred_Tertöns

²⁹ <https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Terma>

³⁰ https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Nyingma_Kama

Unlike the distant oral transmission or the karma lineage, the terma lineage teachings are completely pure, free from any contamination that comes as a result of breaking the samayas and without the complicated and long process of transmission from teachers to disciples. Padmasambhava personally blessed all of these terma teachings, concealed them somewhere, and predicted who will reveal them in the future. In due time, when all the favorable conditions come together, through the power of Guru Rinpoche's aspiration, as well as the power of motivation and spiritual realization of the destined disciple (terton), these texts will be revealed for the benefit of all sentient beings. Sometimes termas are revealed when tertons come to a specific place where they recall their past lives. In 1990, when H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche visited Paro Taktsang in Bhutan—a place where Padmasambhava manifested in the wrathful form riding on the back of a tiger to conquer the demonic beings, His Holiness recalled what Guru Rinpoche had entrusted to him in his previous life, and revealed a terma of a wrathful Padmasambhava's practice³¹.

Tantric practice and teaching contain profound meanings that are far beyond our conceptual comprehension. It is important for Vajrayana followers to be aware of this.

Why Seven-Line Prayer

On this occasion, I will only give a concise and literal explanation rather than an extensive teaching on the treasure text of Pema Garwang Chimé Yudrung Lingpa. My intention is to let those who have faith in Vajrayana understand what kind of merit this Seven-Line Prayer has. After we complete this teaching, many of you might recite this prayer every day, even while walking or eating. After some time, however, you may no longer be so inspired and diligent, because ordinary beings' minds are unreliable and changeable. Even if this happens, once you have the fundamental understanding the prayer, you will not lose your confidence no matter what kind of adversity you may encounter.

Once again, I would like to emphasize the great importance of praying to Padmasambhava during this time of degeneration. I hope you can reflect on this point. It's not because I am a Tibetan Buddhist practitioner that I propagate teachings and practices of Tibetan Buddhism. As long as it is beneficial for sentient beings, either Buddhist teaching or others, it deserves

³¹ Daily Dorje Drolo Practice <http://www.khenposodargye.org/teachings/khenpos-short-teachings/short-teachings-of-h-h-jigme-phuntsok-rinpoche/>

being promoted equally. This is the supreme goal. So, what is the most meaningful teaching for every living being? You should all deeply reflect on this.