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## Deities Described

**Akashagarba** (Tibetan: Namkhai Nyingpo) *Matrix of the Sky*

Akashagarba is the principle Bodhisattva of the Jewel family. He is associated with the Eastern wisdom through the dawning of light from that direction. He wears a white robe and holds a lotus with a large sword shedding that light in his left hand. He is known for his generosity and meritorious acts.

**Akshobya** is the second of the Transcendental Buddhas. He originates from the blue seed syllable HUM and represents the primordial cosmic element of consciousness; immutable and imperturbable. The path to enlightenment through the Vajra family is one of breaking free of constraints and obstacles, transmuting negativity, and is generally more dynamic and proactive. He sits in the earth touching mudra with his left hand resting on his lap face up and his right hand resting on the right knee with the tip of the middle finger touching the earth with palm drawn inwardly as he faces the East. He is often depicted with his consort Lochana who expresses the *mirror-like primordial wisdom*.

**Amitaba** (Tibetan: Opame) *Buddha of Infinite Light*.

He is the fourth and most ancient of the five Transcendental Buddhas that embody the five primordial wisdoms meditation. He presides over the Buddha realm *Sukavati* (Tibetan: Dewachen), a Pure Land which is the expression of his own field of pure expression and nothing else. Amitaba is the Lord of the Padma or Lotus family and is the pure expression of the *wisdom of discriminating awareness*, which transmutes the poison of attachment and desire. He and the other Lotus family members support the gradual unfolding of one's spiritual petals into enlightenment. Amitaba is red in color, sits in the full-lotus posture with his two hands resting on his lap in the *mudra of meditative equipoise*. He is most often depicted in thangkas flanked by two eminent bodhisattvas, Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and Vajrapani, the Bodhisattva of Power. It is the special vow of Amitaba that to benefit beings who are caught in the realm of their own confusion and suffering, that if they remember his name with faith at the time of their death they will take rebirth in *Sukatavi*. Through this they will achieve enlightenment and not again fall into a realm of suffering. This is due to the power of the merit of Buddha Amitaba's virtuous activities accumulated throughout his countless lives as a bodhisattva. Because of this, meditation upon Amitaba is widespread and very popular. He is the particular focus of the faith of the *Pureland Schools* of Buddhism and of the meditative training of *Powas* or *Transference of Consciousness* that enables one to transfer their consciousness into the field of pure perception of *Sukhavati*, the *Realm of Great Bliss* at the time of their death. In some mandalas, Amitaba is depicted in union with his Wisdom Consort Gokarmo, who embodies the pure element of fire.

**Amitayus** (Tibetan: Tsepagme) *Buddha of Limitless Life*

Amitayus is the reflexive form of Amitaba and is the embodiment of infinite life and therefore the focus of the life practices that remove the possibility of untimely or premature death. He brings about a healing of sicknesses, degeneration and imbalances in the five elements of the

body due to karma, excess and unclean living. He is known as the Buddha of long life. He is often red but sometimes white in color. His two hands rest in his lap in *the mudra of equanimity* with the palms facing each other holding the *Vase of Life*, that is filled with the nectar of immortality. It is only in the Tantric Buddhism of Tibet and Japan that Amitayus and Amitaba are considered different deities.

**Amogasiddhi** (Tibetan: Donyo Drupa) *Buddha of Unfailing Accomplishment*

The Buddha Amogasiddhi is the fifth of the Transcendental Buddhas that embody the five primordial wisdoms. He is the Lord of the Karma family and embodies the wisdom of all-accomplished activity that transmutes the poison of jealousy. His recognition symbol is the double dorje (visvavajra), representing his *wisdom of all-accomplishing activity*. His attributes are power and energy that is both subtle and often hidden. Amogasiddhi is the Supreme Siddhi—the magic power of enlightenment. In this way the inner and outer world, and the visible and invisible are united as the body becomes spirit and the spirit embodies. He is green in color, his left hand rests in his lap in the *mudra of equipoise* and his right hand is held at chest level facing outwards in the *mudra of granting protection*. He is often depicted in union with his Wisdom Consort Damtsig Drolma, Green Tara, who embodies the pure element of air.

**Avalokitesvara** (Tibetan: Chenrezi) *Bodhisattva of Glancing Eyes*.

Avalokitesvara is the embodiment of the compassion of all of the Buddhas and is regarded by the Tibetan people as the guardian of the country. Avalokitesvara is most often depicted white in color but sometimes red, symbolizing his passionate concern for beings. He is one of the eight Bodhisattvas and one of the two chief Bodhisattvas of Amitaba. He is one of the *Three Protectors of Beings*, that of the Padma or Lotus family. Through his sharing of mankind's misery, he positions himself to help those in distress and is considered a savior. In a sitting position, he is most often seen in two-armed and four-armed embodiments. In his two-armed form, he usually sits in the full lotus posture. The two arms represent his unfailing skillful means and wisdom. His four-armed form, sitting in the full lotus posture represents the four boundless qualities of a bodhisattva: equanimity, love, compassion and joy. His thousand-armed form is depicted standing and has eleven heads with three levels diminishing in size as they face outward and to either side, representing his all-penetrating gaze. Upon these nine heads is the wrathful head of the Bodhisattva of Power, Vajrapani, whose unfailing dynamic strength and power assist Avalokitesvara in the benefit of beings. Vajrapani's head is crowned with that of Buddha Amitaba, the Lord of the Lotus Family of whom Avalokitesvara is an emanation. The 1,000 arms represent the appearance of 1,000 Buddhas during this *Eon of Light*, whose compassion will guide beings from the darkness of ignorance and delusion into the light of Great Awakening. The eyes on his 1,000 hands symbolize his all-seeing compassionate gaze upon every being in existence throughout the past, present and future. He symbolizes infinite compassion (Karuna) for his refusal of accepting nirvana, which he considers selfish and instead choosing to reincarnate so he can help mankind. The Dalai Lama and the Karmapa are considered the living manifestations of Avalokitesvara.

**Chakrasamvara** (Tibetan: Khorlo Demchok) *Chakra of Supreme Bliss*

Chakrasamvara is regarded as the most important Yidam or meditational deity of Vajrayana Buddhism, the highest Tantric yidam. Chakrasamvara is the primary Yidam of the Kagyu tradition that finds its origin in the meditation of the 84 Mahasiddhis of India. It passed to Tibet from the great siddha Naropa, to his disciple Marpa, to Milarepa and this spread throughout the various meditative traditions of the Geluk and Sakya. His body is blue in color with four faces, each looking in one of the four cardinal directions and twelve arms. He is often depicted in his more simple one-faced, two-armed form. He is in union with his Wisdom Consort Vajravarahi. She is as simple as he is complex. She holds a skullcap in her left hand and a vajra chopper (drigug) in her right, both behind his back. Their embrace symbolizes the union of wisdom and skillful means. They symbolize the sameness in the distinctions of relative truth and the non-distinctions of absolute truth. Unity and diversity are one.

**Dorje Drolo** *Crazy Wisdom Vajra*

Dorje Drolo is a wrathful manifestation of Padmasambava and a subduer of demons. Guru Padma arose in the wrathful form of Dorje Drolo in the famous Tagstang or Tiger's Nest Cave in Bhutan in order to subdue the negative and demonic forces of these degenerate times. Ferocious in expression, amidst a mass of primordial wisdom fire, he stands upon the back of a pregnant tigress who is the wrathful form of his Wisdom Consort of enlightened activity, Tashi Kye Dren, whose ferocity is unpredictable and wild. Dressed in a robe of brocade, his body is purple in color and he wears a garland of severed heads representing the cutting of the 52 levels of dualistic mind-concepts. In his right hand he holds a vajra aloft emitting lightening bolts, and in his left a kila-purba that severs the three poisons that are the source of all suffering. The ferocious expression he wears while riding a tigress makes for a menacing figure. His body is dark brown and surrounded by a halo of flames.

**Ekajati** (Tibetan: Tsechikma or Ralchikma) *Single plaited Mother*

(Also known as Ngag Sungma, *Mother Protectress of Mantra*)

Ekajati is the supreme protectress of Ati Great Perfection Teaching, Dzogchen. She is a guardian of the tantric path and protects it from those who are unworthy. She removes obstacles to the life and accomplishment of those who do practice on the Secret Mantra path. She is a guardian of mantras who keeps them from those who are unworthy of using them and ensures those who have been empowered to use them, do so for appropriate purposes. She is wrathful and can assume a number of different forms and colors and the personal protector of the Dalai Lama. She is wrathful and can assume a number of different forms and colors. She can hold various implements and weapons. She wears a wreath of severed heads, usually has one eye in the middle of her forehead, one fang and one breast. She is nearly naked and menacing as she stands amidst a mass of wisdom fire. Ekajati is the highest of protectors. She guides those whom she protects upon the single path of unity of the innate Buddha nature. This is symbolized by the single open eye of wisdom upon her forehead, while her two eyes are sunken and dried, symbolizing the exhaustion of dualistic perception; by the single plait of hair that flows straight upward, symbolizing the single unified path of the Ati Great Perfection; by her single tooth of the realization of the single nature of all, that pierces the aorta of dualistic demonic forces; and by her single breast that nurtures the pure practitioner upon the spiritual attainments of the single essence of ultimate truth.

**Gampopa** was trained as a physician who devoted himself to the Dharma after the death of his wife. He became the heart son of Milarepa and was the root guru of the first Karmapa, Dusum Khyenpa. It is his synthesis of the traditions of Dharma teachings melded with the experiential meditative teaching of Milarepa that formed the Kagyu tradition, as we know it today. He wrote *the "Jewel Ornament of Liberation"* and is usually depicted wearing robes and a red hat, which has become synonymous with the Kagyu School.

**Geysar of Ling** is considered to be an incarnation of Guru Rimpoche, incarnating to protect and propagate the dharma during the dark times after the persecution of the dharma by the evil King Lang Dharma, and before the reviving of the dharma once again to Tibet. This formed the scholastic and meditative traditions of the Sarma of new schools, as opposed to the original influx of teachings during the time of King Trisong Detsun, Guru Rimpoche (Padmasambava) and Shantirakshita, which became known as the Nyingma tradition. Amidst a mass of wisdom light, Geysar is depicted wearing the armor of a warrior of that period, riding a horse, holding a spear aloft in his right hand and a lasso in his left. He is most often propitiated as a protector of the dharma, but is also meditated upon as the guru. The epic tales of his heroic deeds are very popular and he is a national hero whose battles against enemies of Tibet and Mongolia have become synonymous with the defending and spreading of the Dharma itself. In this way, he is very similar to the western legends of King Arthur.

**Green Tara** is the gentle and heartfelt Bodhisattva Tara, born from the tears of Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of compassion. She offers us a hand to lift us up to a mountain of enlightenment

qualities. Tara belongs to the Karma family of unobstructed compassionate activity, symbolized by her green color and is the Wisdom Consort of the Transcendental Buddha Amogasiddhi. In a previous eon, in the presence of the Buddha Nga Dra, the beat of the Drum, she took the vow to only incarnate in a female form to ceaselessly protect beings from the fears of samsaric life and to guide them upon the path of enlightenment. She is known as the Swift One, due to her immediate response to those who request her aid. She is none other than the mothers of the Buddhas of the past, present and future; the Great Mother, the Prajnaparamita, the matrix of ultimate truth itself, Shunyata. She sits on a lotus flower with her left leg resting on her right thigh and her right leg steps down gracefully out in front of her. Her left hand is held in front of her heart with palm outward, thumb and ring finger touching so the other three fingers point upwards in the *mudra of granting refuge*. Her right hand rests on her right knee with the palm facing upward in *the mudra of generosity*.

**Jambala** (Tibetan: Dzambhala) is the God of wealth and appropriately a member of the Jewel family. His fat belly shows his prosperity and has a mongoose on his left thigh that vomits jewels as he squeezes it. In his right hand he holds a flaming wish-fulfilling jewel which is symbolic for the riches one attains with the wealth of spirituality. He is primarily black in color and has the stunted, thick form of a dwarf with a potbelly. He is seated sideways on a dragon with his right foot down and his knee up. In his white form, he is holding a trident and a scepter.

**Je Tsongkhapa** is the founder of the Gelukpa school and is the central figure in their *Refuge Tree*. He is dressed as a monk and wears the yellow pandita hat this lineage has become associated with. After studying with a reported forty five masters, he founded the Gelukpa school in 1409 that emphasized monastic discipline. One of his students, Gedundrup was retrospectively recognized as the first Dalai Lama, an emanation of Avalokitesvara. The fifth Dalai Lama consolidated Tibet politically and spiritually and became its leader. He is an emanation of Manjusri and he is often depicted with Shakyamuni Buddha in his heart. The Gelukpa Order has the greatest number of adherents of any of the lineages.

**Kalachakra** (Tibetan: Dukyi Khorlo or Dukhor) *The Wheel of Time*

Kalachakra is a yidam of the Highest Tantra. In the hidden kingdom of Shamballa, it is said the inhabitants practice Tantric Buddhism based on the Kalachakra system. He fuses time and timelessness into a non-dualistic view of absolute reality. This Tantric practice is most important to the Gelukpa sect with whom it is most closely associated. He embraces his consort Visvamata who is yellow in color with four faces and eight arms.

**Kurukulla** (Tibetan: Rikjema) She is an aspect of Tara. She represents the perception of enlightened power overwhelming and overpowering all dualistic perception. This binds and resolves it into the unity of pure enlightened perception and experience. She causes negative action to become powerless and re-patterned into wholesome, virtuous activity. She is red in color and her primary symbol is a drawn bow and arrow that causes ordinary perception to be gathered and to pierce the experience of the unity of primordial pure nature. In the teaching of Mahakala, along with Ganapati and Kamarja, Kurukulla is one of the *Three Great Red Deities* that are part of the *Thirteen Golden Doctrines* central to the lineage of the Sakya tradition.

**Machig Labdron** is considered to be an incarnation of Yeshe Tsogyal, the Wisdom Consort and primary disciple of Guru Rimpoche (Padmasambava). She was a learned Tibetan who was known for the clarity and beauty by which she read scriptures aloud to patrons. Through her experience she gained merit and insight into the Prajnaparamita, the teachings upon *the Perfection of Wisdom*, Shuyata. In a Pure Vision of Tara, she was bestowed the teachings of the Chod Rite or Severance, a practice which cuts or severs the ego at the root. She became so famous due to the profundity of her realization and teachings, her tradition of practice spread throughout all Tibet and lineages of Tibetan Buddhism, Nepal and India. She is the only Tibetan teacher whose teachings were spread back into India, the motherland of the Dharma. She is white in color, depicted in the dancing posture on her left foot, with her right foot raised up and

the ball of her right foot suppressing the corpse of ego. She holds a chod drum (damaru) in her right hand and rings a bell in her left.

**Mahakala** is the wrathful deity that destroys mind chatter and brings our minds back into attentive focus. There are many different colors and forms of Mahakala, but he recognized universally as one of the great protectors of the Dharma.

**Maitreya** (Tibetan: Jampa) is the future Buddha within and without everyone, who is expected to come to earth from Tushita Heaven. He is a Bodhisattva whose devotion spans both Theravedic (Hinayana) and Mahayana countries. He is supposed to reappear on earth in human form, for the deliverance of all sentient beings to enlightenment by revealing that which time and ignorance have covered. He will be the last of the five Buddhas to gain supreme enlightenment in this aeon. He holds the stock of a lotus in his right hand and may be represented either standing or sitting.

**Manjusri**, the Prince of Wisdom confers mastery of the Dharma—retentive memory, mental perfection and eloquence. He is a form of the Bodhisattva and along with Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani, he is one of the three family protectors, that of Variochana's Tathagata family. In his right hand he holds the sword of truth upward to cut through ignorance. His left hand is held in a teaching gesture with the arm extending straight out from the elbow and palm facing forward.

**Marpa** was one of Naropa's main disciples, an ordinary farmer who traveled back and forth across the Himalayas from Tibet to India, bringing back teachings on each of his journeys. He was a great Tantric teacher and a link in one of the most famous teaching lineages from Tilopa to Naropa to Marpa to Milarepa to Gampopa to Dusum Khyempa, the first Karmapa who founded the Karma Kagyu sect.

**Mayadevi** is the mother of Siddhartha Gautama who became the Buddha, and the wife of King Suddhohana. Later in her life, she became a student and follower of her son.

**Milarepa** was a monk and a poet who lived in the twelfth century and arguable Tibet's most famous spiritual figure. His life started as a disaster, with him having destroyed others. He then became a disciple of Marpa who put him through tremendous physical challenges to help him purify his karma. He finally was given initiation and became an ascetic, surviving on nettles for many years. He is usually depicted as green (from the nettles), in a cave with long black hair. He converted nomadic Tibetans to Buddhism through his 100,000 songs. He holds his right hand with the fingers extended to hear the voice of the Dharma and the palm turned outward behind his right ear. His left hand holds a beggars bowl.

**Naropa** resided at the finest Buddhist University of Nalanda and was one of the greatest scholars of his time. An old woman appeared one day and showed him how his knowledge was great but his wisdom from direct experience was lacking. He sought out and found Tilopa who taught him the Tantric path of direct experience over the twelve years he spent with him.

**Padmasambava** (Guru Rimpoche in Tibetan) was a renown and highly learned tantric saint of Northern India who brought Buddhism to Tibet. He was invited by the Tibetan King Trisong Detsen to bring his knowledge to Tibet and he stayed 50 years founding monasteries and teaching tantric doctrine. He has many forms including an important set of eight that are depicted in Tantric art. He is seated on a lotus with a red cap, the legs crossed, the right hand holding a dorje (vajra) and the left resting in his lap.

**Palden Lhamo** (Sanskrit: Shridevi) is the female companion of Mahakala and is his equal in power. She is depicted in a peaceful form as Machig Palden Lhamo, sitting on a lotus, wearing a crown of jewels, holding a bowl of jewels in her left hand and holding a standard of rainbow colors in her right. In her wrathful form, she rides a mule, has flaming red hair, three red eyes and sharp fangs.

**Ratnasambhava** (Tibetan: Gyalwa Rinjun) is the third of the five Transcendental Buddhas. He is yellow and his wisdom is associated with experience and known as representing the "primordial wisdom of equality. He is associated with the human realm on the wheel of life. He is known for his equanimity reminding us that all human beings are precious. He faces the south in with his consort Mamaki.

**Samantabhadra** (Tibetan: Guntu Sangpo) is the primordial Buddha associated with compassion and is known as a protector of the sutra. He is the antecedent of all and the expanse of reality. He holds sway over existence and quiescence in their entirety. He is naked and blue in color, and is most often pictured embracing his white consort Samantrabhadri. They are another emanation of Adibuddha, the ever-present potential for Buddhahood, that has always been and always be.

**Senge Dongchenma** (Sanskrit: Simhamukha or Simhavaktra) is known as "the lion-headed one", a particularly powerful guardian dakini emanation of Padmasambava. She is most often dark blue but she can be red, as she dances with a vajra chopper and skull cup.

**Shakyamuni** attained enlightenment after six years of fasting and meditation, became known as Buddha and founded Buddhism. He was born about 2500 years ago as Siddhartha Gautama, a prince and son of the king Suddhodana and queen Mayadevi. He is believed to have had 550 incarnations with more yet to come, but he is called Shakyamuni (the Sage of Shakya Clan) and when a reference is made to "the Buddha", he is the one.

**Tsongkhapa** ([See: Je Tsongkhapa](#))

**Tromo Nogma** is a wrathful form of Vajrayogini. With great splendor of original nature, she suppresses demonic forces. In particular, she is an exponent of the Chod lineage with emphasis on severance, cutting all extremes.

**Vairochana** is an emanation of Adibuddha and represents the cosmic element of form (rupa). He is the primordial wisdom of the sphere of reality. His is in the center of the mandala consisting of the five Transcendental Buddhas, and his rites pacify negative emotions. He is white and his two hands are held against the chest with his thumbs and forefingers touching. He radiates the light of Buddhahood and his consort is Akashadhateshvari, who is the sovereign lady of infinite space. So the dance of light and the space for it to radiate through creates the united dance of Dharmadhatu. It is this dance that is represented by these unions and the sexual imagery depicted in Tantra.

**Vajradhara** is an emanation of Adibuddha, considered by some to be the highest deity of the Buddhist Pantheon in Vajrayana Buddhism, and its source. He is the central figure in the Refuge Tree of Kagyupa lineage. He is the Tantric form of Shakyamuni and his name means the bearer of the thunderbolt. Vajradhara embodies the primordial awakened mind and many Tantric teachings are attributed to him. He is an expression of Buddhahood itself in both single and yabyum form. He is depicted with his arms crossed on his chest, each holding a dorje.

**Vajrakilaya (Vajrakila)** is a wrathful form of Padmasambava. He is a Tantric deity who is embodied in the purba. He has at least six arms and wears a crown of skulls.

**Varjrapani** is a wrathful Bodhisattva and along with Avalokitesvara and Manjusri, he is one of the three family protectors. He fights a spiritual battle against the forces of ignorance, craving and samsara. He is a blue Tantric figure that is surrounded by a flamed halo, and wears a garland of skulls and a wreath of snakes.

**Vajrasattva** is the priest of the five Transcendental Buddhas. His practice is one of purification through the realization that in your true nature, you were never impure. He is visualized in the foundation meditation practices of Tantra, with the aim of generating Bodhichitta, the cosmic

will to enlightenment. He is represented in two forms, single and yabyum. He is usually white in color and sits crossed legged with a dorje (vajra) in his right hand with palm upward against his chest and a bell in his left resting on the left thigh.

**Vajravahari** (Tibetan: Dorje Phamo) is the essence of the five kinds of knowledge and is the embodiment of pleasure. She is a two-armed red goddess who exhibits a dorje (vajra) in her right hand along with a raised index finger and in her left.

**Vajrayogini** (Tibetan: Dorje Naljorme) is one of the most important dakinis. She is a yidam of the Highest Tantra and appears in many Tantric practices. She is youthful and passionate for the Dharma. Her eyes are red and she has a forked tongue protruding through her teeth. A tiger skin is draped on her and wears human skulls while dancing on a human corpse. She dances with her right leg raised and has between four and twenty-four arms.

**White Tara**, the Mother of all the Buddhas, bestows the gift of longevity and is an elegant emanation. She energizes those who visualize her, and that energy can be invested in one's spiritual practice. She is still and centered sitting in a full lotus, belonging to the Lotus Family of Amitaba. She has seven eyes: one each on the soles of her feet; one each on the palms of her hands; one each in the normal place on her face and one in the "third eye" position on her forehead. Several important White Tara practices have been passed down through the Karmapas and Dalai Lamas.

**Yamantaka** (Tibetan: Shinjeshe) is the conqueror or slayer of death as the wrathful emanation of Manjusri. He is a member of the Vajra Family of Akshobya and concerned with overcoming the poison of hatred. He is usually dark blue and is depicted in his simplest form (usually rupas) with one bullhead and two arms. He wears a crown of skull, has a third eye, a skullcap in his left hand and a chopper in his right. In thankas he most often has nine heads, sixteen feet and thirty four arms, all hold tantra symbols.

**Yeshe Tsogyal** a female siddha, was Padmasambava's chief female disciple and main consort, and represents the feminine principle. She is responsible for memorizing, documenting and then concealing many of the termas left by Padmasambava. She was a dakini who took human form.

Notes: We use the term Transcendental Buddha that is interchangeable with Tathagata, Dhyani and Jina Buddhas.

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## Glossary of Terms

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**ABHIDHARMA-** Buddhist philosophy. One of the three branches of Buddhist teaching it is the scholastic system that originated in Buddha's discourses regarding mental states and phenomena.

**ADIBUDDHA-** The original Buddha, eternal with no beginning and with no end. In Mahayana Buddhism, the idea evolved, probably inspired by the monotheism of Islam, that ultimately there is only one absolute power that creates itself. He is infinite, self-created and originally revealed himself in the form of a blue flame coming out of a lotus. However over time this symbol was also personified in the form of the Adibuddha. There are various names and manifestations in which this

supreme essence of Buddhahood becomes manifest.

**ALAYA-** Storehouse of consciousness.

**AMRITA-** The blissful nectar of the Gods.

**ANIMAL REALM-** One of the six realms of existence, it is where consciousness is consumed by survival.

**ARHAT-** One who has become detached from cyclic existence. In contrast to the Bodhisattva, one who has chosen personal liberation from suffering.

**ASURAS-** Titans who are the symbolic manifestation of the ego, who war with the Gods. They represent certain states of mind.

**ASURIS-** Female Asuras

**BARDO-** The state between two other states, usually between life and death.

**BODHI-** "Awake" or enlightened.

**BODHISATTVA-** A being who has generated Bodhichitta and chosen to reincarnate, to help alleviate the suffering of sentient beings by achieving enlightenment.

**BODHICHITTA-** "Awakened mind," including the passionate desire to become and enlightened being so that all sentient beings may gain enlightenment.

**BUDDHA-** One who is awake, who has gained enlightenment. Most commonly, Buddha refers to Siddhartha Gautama who became known as Shakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism.

**CHAKRA-** A center of energy visualized in the body. Most Tantric systems use seven of these "wheels."

**CYCLIC EXISTENCE-** The endless cycle of birth, sickness, death and rebirth that is born out of ignorance.

**DAKA-** The male equivalent of a Dakini

**DAKINIS-** Divine intermediaries who are said to have access to the Transcendental Buddhas. They play an important and integral part in Tantric teachings and are wrathful or semi-wrathful. They can pass the wisdom of the transcendental Buddhas to the seeker/practitioner. If her intention is to mobilize the sexual power of the yogi (one who practices Tantra) in order to proceed towards enlightenment, she will appear as a seductive maiden Yogini.

**DEVA-** A "shining one" or celestial being who is still subject to cyclic existence.

**DHARMA-** One of the "three jewels" of Buddhism, this refers to the teachings and practice, specifically as they pertain to the path of enlightenment.

**DHARMAKAYA-** One of the "three kayas" or bodies, this one refers to the "body of the great order" or Buddha mind. It is the teaching and unity of Buddha with all of existence

**DHARMAPALA-** A protector of the Dharma

**DHYANI (MEDITATION) BUDDHAS:** See Transcendental Buddhas

**DORJE:** See Vajra

**DZOGCHEN-** The "Great Perfection." A set of Tantric practices, advance by their simplicity, they are most commonly associated with the Nyingmapa lineage. It is based on the idea that all appearances are creations of the mind.

**EIGHTFOLD PATH-** This is the path that leads to the cessation of suffering. The eight qualities are right view (based on understanding the Four Noble Truths), right thought, right speech (truth), right action, right livelihood (avoiding work that harms), right effort, right mindfulness and right meditation



(or concentration).

**ENLIGHTENMENT-** The state of mind where perfect wisdom that grows out of pure awareness (pristine mindfulness) exists contemporaneously with loving kindness (limitless compassion).

**FIVE PATHS-** First: the path of accumulation; second: the path preparation; third: the path of seeing; fourth: the path meditation; fifth: the path of no more learning.

**FIVE POISONS-** Ignorance, hatred, pride, craving and envy.

**FIVE WISDOMS-** The qualities manifest in the five Transcendental Buddhas.

**FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS-** The truth of suffering (sickness, old age and death); The truth of the origin of suffering; The truth of the cessation of suffering; The truth of the path that leads to the cessation of suffering (the eight-fold path).

**GELUPKA-** The largest of the four main lineages or schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Founded by Je Tsongkhapa, it is headed by the Dalai Lama and sometimes known as the Yellow Hat sect.

**GOD REALM-** One of the six realms of existence, this refers to those in a blissful or heavenly state of mind.

**GURU-** "One who dispels darkness." A teacher who leads others towards enlightenment

**HINAYANA (THERAVEDA)-** The original Buddhist school and the one that remains closest to Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings. Literally the "Lesser Vehicle" a term considered derogatory by the Theravedic practitioners who are labeled this way by Mahayana practitioners, it is aimed at removing obscurations. The Hinayana school of Buddhism is most commonly found in Southeast Asia. The emphasis is on individual liberation.

**HUMAN REALM-** One of the six realms of existence when one has gained a balance of compassion and awareness. It is the starting point on the path to enlightenment.

**HUNGRY GHOSTS-** One of the six realms of existence when beings cannot consume enough to satisfy their cravings or hunger. It is depicted by a being with a huge stomach and a pin hole for a mouth.

**JEWEL FAMILY:** The family headed by Ratnasambhava

**JINAS (CONQUERORS) BUDDHAS:** See Transcendental Buddhas

**KAGYUPA-** One of the four main lineages of Tibetan Buddhism, this school was founded by Gampopa and is the sect of the Karmapa and is also known as the "Red Hat" sect.

**KARMA-** Literally "deed", it is most commonly used to refer to the doctrine of cause and effect.

**KENSHO-** A moment of genuine insight that leads to Samadhi.

**KOAN-** An inquiry that the mind cannot answer intellectually and through that inquiry, one can gain true insight. The most well known one is "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"

**LAMA-** A spiritual teacher and authority who may head one or more monasteries and is considered a master of certain areas of Buddhism.

**LOTUS (PADMA) FAMILY-** This family supports the notion of a gradual unfolding of ones own spiritual petals in the process of revealing enlightenment. It is the path of gentleness and receptiveness, love and compassion. Members include Shakyamuni, Avalokitesvara, Amitaba, Padmasambava, White Tara, Hayagriva and Padmanarteshvara.

**MAHASIDDHI-** "A great master" who exhibits "perfect capabilities" and in Vajrayana there is a group of eighty-four that are recognized.

**MAHAYANA-** The "Great Vehicle" and the first reformation branch of Buddhism that emphasizes the path of the Bodhisattva; that is personal gains for the benefit of all. Vajrayana is a later developed branch of Mahayana.

**MANDALA-** A painted circular diagram or sacred circle of the process by which the cosmos unfolds from its center. It is used as a point of focus in Tantric meditation, and demonstrates total interdependence and the void nature of all apparently separated things.

**MANTRA-** A ritual using seed sounds for the purpose of concentration. Using mantra helps the practitioner connect with the aspect of enlightenment the deity embodies.

**MUDRA-** These are hand gestures that have specific meanings and certain deities can be identified by the ones they use.

**NAGAS-** The rain givers and the guardians of water, these serpents have the same associations as dragons. They are the guardians of the deep and are suppose to carry a jewel in their foreheads signifying the treasure of wisdom.

**NGONDRO-** The preliminary practice of Tantra.

**NIRMANAKAYA-** One of the "three kayas" or bodies, this one refers to the physical body of a Buddha.

**NIRVANA-** A goal of some Buddhist practice, it is a departure from cyclic existence.

**NYINGMAPA-** The "Ancient Ones" are the oldest of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism. They are the direct descendents of Padmasambava (Guru Rimpoche).

**OBAKU-** The smallest and least known of the three remaining schools of Zen in Japan.

**PHOWA-** The release of consciousness at the moment of death.

**PRAJNAPARAMITA-** Certain Mahayana texts that are concerned with the "Perfection of Wisdom."

**PURBA-** A ritual three sided pointed dagger that is used in Tantric ritual.

**REFUGE-** The three things upon which a Buddhist relies: Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

**RIMPOCHE-** A "Precious One," one who is a master or emanation of highly developed Buddhist practitioner.

**RINZAI-** One of the three remaining schools of Zen in Japan, it was founded by Rinzai Gigen in China during Tang Dynasty. It is known for the use of koans as a way to enlightenment.

**ROSHI-** An honorific title given to a Zen Buddhist master. Literally "old man," this title is also denotes a lineage holder.

**RUPA-** "Form" but most commonly used to refer to a Buddhist statue.

**SADHANA-** A type of spiritual practice.

**SAKYAPA-** One of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

**SAMADHI-** The ongoing state of reality within genuine insight.

**SAMAYA-** The Vajrayana principle of commitment

**SAMBHOGAKAYA-** One of the "three kayas" or bodies, this one refers to enlightened experience that is concerned with speech.

**SAMSARA-** "Cyclic Existence" or being imprisoned in the three poisons: hatred, craving and ignorance.

**SANGHA-** The community of Buddhist practitioners both locally and globally.

**SENTIENT BEING-** A being that possesses consciousness.

**SEED SYLLABLES-** Sounds that are symbols that enlightened beings use to communicate to Dharma practitioners, who also visualize them.

**SHAMATHA-** "Dwelling in tranquility", referring to calming and training the mind to concentrate on the meditative focus. It is the foundation of Vipassana.

**SHUNYATA-** The principle that essentially all things are "empty or void" and exist only in the phenomena of appearance.

**SIDDHA-** An enlightened master in the Tantric tradition.

**SIDDHI-** The "perfect abilities" exhibited by a human but not enlightenment. In Vajrayana there are eight ordinary ones and eighty-four Mahasiddhas.

**SKANDAS-** There are five of these that classify the processes or personality that are the make up of a human being. They are form, sensation, perception, mental formations and consciousness.

**SOTO-** One of the three schools of Zen in Japan, the other being Rinzai. It is most concerned with sitting meditation without koan.

**STUPA-** A structure built to house sacred relics and to symbolize the mind of the Buddha.

**SUTRA-** Written teachings based on discourses of the Buddha

**TANTRA-** In the context of Buddhism it refers to the texts that outline the practices of Vajrayana. These practices make use of yoga, visualizations, mantra, mudras and other ritual.

**TERMA-** Hidden treasures. They can be hidden anywhere including people, animate and inanimate objects.

**TERTON-** One who discovers treasures or termas

**TATHAGATAS (PERFECT ONES) BUDDHAS:** See Transcendental Buddhas

**THANGKA (THANKA, TANKA)-** A Buddhist painting that has a deity or other symbol (usually a mandala) with aspects of consciousness as its theme. Western art historians refer to them as "Tibetan Painted Scrolls."

**THERAVEDA:** See Hinayana

**THREE MARKS-** Impermanence, suffering and no self, which are the characteristics of existence and the foundation of Abidharma.

**TRANSCENDENTAL BUDDHAS-** Most commonly referred to as Dhyani Buddhas; they are emanations of Adibuddha and serve as the meditation Buddhas. These five Buddhas in meditation are inseparable, and represent different aspects of Buddhahood. They incarnated forms of mystical wisdom have been placed in a sophisticated system that has developed over many centuries. Each one represents a family with their related aspects and a direction. Each is related to a skanda and how it can be transformed. These five Buddhas are also known as Tathagatas (the Perfect Ones) and Jinas (Conquerors). They are shown in five different seated meditation poses (mudras). Vairochana occupies the center with Akshobya in the East, Amitayus in the South, Amitaba in the West and Amogasiddhi in the North.

**UPAYA-** Skillful means.

**VAJRA (Dorje)-** A ritual scepter symbolizing thunderbolt suddenness and diamond pristine understanding.

**VAJRAYANA-** The "Diamond Vehicle" is a branch of Mahayana.

**VIPASSANA-** Insight and recognition of the three marks of existence, it is often used to refer to a type of Theravedic meditation. Along with shamatha, it is also one of the two factors in gaining enlightenment.

**Yab-Yum-** "Honorable Father-Honorable Mother," this term is most commonly used to describe a male and a female in sexual union symbolizing an aspect of Buddha mind.

**YIDAM-** A deity that embodies a particular aspect of enlightenment and manifestations of

Sambhogakaya.

**YOGA-** "Union," meaning the integration of personal experience into wisdom, both from physical and meditative practices.

**YOGI-** A Tantric practitioner. A female is called a yogini and a male a yogin.

**ZAZEN-** The central meditation practice of Zen

**ZEN-** A school of Mahayana Buddhism developed in China and continued to be practiced in Japan and Korea, its emphasis is on seated meditation.

## Chart of the Five Buddhas

The Five Transcendental Buddhas are also known as the Dhyani, Tathagata and Jina Buddhas

Deity	Vairocana	Akshobya	Ratnasambhava	Amitaba	Amogasiddhi
<b>Path</b>	Pure Awareness	Transmuting Negativity	Equinimity	Gradual Unfolding	Power and Energy
<b>Direction</b>	Center	East	South	West	North
<b>Mudra</b>	Preaching	Earth Touching	Granting	Meditation	Fearlessness
<b>Symbol</b>	Wheel	Vajra	Jewel	Lotus	Double Vajra
<b>Primordial Wisdom</b>	Sphere of Reality	Mirror-Like	Equality	Discrimination	All-Accomplishing
<b>Element</b>	Sky	Water	Earth	Fire	Air
<b>Vehicle</b>	Lion	Elephant	Horse	Peacock	Griffin
<b>Consort</b>	White Tara	Lochana	Mamaki	Pandara	Green Tara
<b>Aggregate</b>	Consciousness	Form	Sensation	Perception	Volition
<b>Color</b>	White	Blue	Yellow	Red	Green

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