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# Terma (religion)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Terma** (Tibetan: གཏེར་མ་, Wylie: *gter ma*; "hidden treasure")<sup>[1]</sup> are key Tibetan Buddhist and Bon teachings, which the tradition holds were originally esoterically hidden by various adepts such as Padmasambhava and his dakinis (consorts) in the 8th century for future discovery at auspicious times by other adepts, known as tertöns. As such, they represent a tradition of continuous revelation in Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>[1]</sup> Termas are a part of tantric literature.

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## Terma tradition

Tradition holds that terma may be a physical object such as a text or ritual implement that is buried in the ground (or earth), hidden in a rock or crystal, secreted in a herb, or a tree, hidden in a lake (or water), or hidden in the sky (space). Though a literal understanding of terma is "hidden treasure", and sometimes objects are hidden away, the teachings associated should be understood as being 'concealed within the mind of the guru', that is, the true place of concealment is in the tertön's mindstream. If the concealed or encoded teaching or object is a text, it is often written in dakini script: a non-human type of code or writing.

Fremantle (2001: p. 19) states:

...termas are not always made public right away. The conditions may not be right; people may not yet be ready for them; and further instructions may need to be revealed to clarify their meaning. Often, the tertön himself has to practice them for many years.<sup>[2]</sup>

In this way, one may see the tradition of terma and tertön as analogous to that of inspiration and providing a legitimate cultural forum to ensure continuation of tantric tradition, and ensuring Tibetan Buddhism's and Bön's

continued relevancy in an evolving world.

The terma tradition is particularly prevalent in, and significant to, the Nyingma lineage. Two of the most famous tertön in the 20th century, Jigdral Yeshe Dorje (2nd Dudjom Rinpoche) and Dilgo Khyentse, were Nyingmapa. Tertön are also prevalent in Bön and a few tertön have been Kagyupa.

Padmasambhava and his principal consorts and disciples secreted away and hid religious texts, ritual objects and relics etc., to secure and protect Buddhism during the time of decline under Langdarma. Some of these terma have been rediscovered and special terma lineages established throughout Tibet as a result. Out of this activity developed, especially within the Nyingma tradition, two ways of dharma transmission: The so-called "long oral transmission" from teacher to student in unbroken disciplic lineages and the "short transmission" of terma. The foremost revealers of these terma were the Five Terton Kings and the Eight Lingpas. In the 19th century some of the most famous were the Khenkong Choksum referring to Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, Jamgon Kongtrul and Orgyen Chokgyur Lingpa.

Terma have been relayed by nāga and the dakini - of the underworld and the heavens, respectively - and have also been hidden by teachers such as the great translator Longchenpa.

## Antecedents and analogies in other traditions

The central Mahayana figure Nagarjuna rediscovered the last part of the "Prajnaparamita Sutra in one hundred thousand verses" in the realm of nāga, where it had been kept since the time of Gautama Buddha.

The terma tradition of rediscovering hidden teaching is not unique to Tibet. It has antecedents in India and cultural resonances in Hindu Vaishnavism as well. The Vaishnava saint Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is said to have rediscovered a fragment of the *Brahma Samhita* in a trance state of devotional ecstasy.

There is another occasion involving Chaitanya who deposited his divine love (*prema*) for great saint Narottama Dasa in the Padma River in Bangladesh. When Narottama Dasa turned twelve years of age, he collected this treasure after a revelation in a dream.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Types of terma

Fremantle (2001: p. 17) affirms that according to tradition:

Termas are of two main kinds: earth treasures and intention, or mind, treasures. A teaching concealed as an intention treasure appears directly within the mind of the tertön in the form of sounds or letters to fulfill the enlightened intention of Padmakara. Earth treasures include not only texts, but also sacred images, ritual instruments, and medicinal substances, and are found in many places: temples, monuments, statues, mountains, rocks, trees, lakes, and even the sky. In the case of texts, they are not, as one might imagine, ordinary books that can be read straightaway. Occasionally, full-length texts are found, but they are usually fragmentary, sometimes consisting of only a word or two, and they are encoded in symbolic script, which may change mysteriously and often disappears completely once it has been transcribed. They are simply the material supports that act as a trigger to help the tertön reach the subtle level of mind where the teaching has really been concealed. It is the tertön who actually composes and writes down the resulting text, and so may be considered its author.<sup>[4]</sup>

The earth-terma are physical objects — which may be either an actual text, or physical objects that trigger a recollection of the teaching. The mind-terma are constituted by space and are placed via guru-transmission, or realizations achieved in meditation which connect the practitioner directly with the essential content of the teaching in one simultaneous experience. Once this has occurred, the tertön holds the complete teaching in mind and is required by convention to transcribe the terma twice from memory (if of textual nature) in one uninterrupted session. The transcriptions are then compared and if no discrepancy or inconsistency is evident, the terma is sealed as authentic. The tertön is required to realise the essence of the terma prior to formal transmission.

In one sense, all terma may be considered as mind-terma as the teaching associated is always inserted in the mind of the practitioner, in other words the terma is always a direct mindstream transmission from the vidyadhara. The terma may also be held in the mindstream of the tertön and realised in a future incarnation at a beneficent time. A vision of a syllable or symbol may leaven the realisation of the latent terma in the mindstream of the tertön. The process of hiding in the mindstream implies that the practitioner is to gain realisation in that life. At the time of terma concealment, a prophecy is generally made concerning the circumstances in which the teaching will be re-accessed. Especially in the case of an earth-terma, this usually includes a description of locality, and may specify certain ritual tools or objects which are required to be present, and the identities of any assistants and consorts who are required to accompany or assist the tertön.

Though somewhat contentious, the kind of revealed teaching embodied in the terma system is based in solid Mahayana Buddhist traditions. The example of Nagarjuna is often cited; the Prajnaparamita teachings are traditionally said to have been conferred on Nagarjuna by the King of the nāgas, who had been guarding them at the bottom of a lake. Similarly, the Six Treatises of Asanga are considered to have been conferred on him by the Buddha Maitreya, whom he visited in Tushita heaven during a vision.

"Pure visions" are pure teachings received from the vision of deities and are not necessarily terma as they do not require mindstream transmission from a vidyadhara to the practitioner experiencing the pure vision. The esoteric teachings resulting from pure vision are based on the tantras and are sometimes attributed as terma due to their merit.

## Bön terma

A terma tradition also exists in Bön. Most Bön termas were hidden during the period of decline under King Trisong Deutsen, and rediscovered around the 11th century. Teachings were hidden by masters such as Lishu Tagring and Drenpa Namkha, often inside Buddhist temples as in Samye and Lhodrak.

## The Three Treasures of Everlasting Bon

For the Bonpo, *Gankyil* denotes the three principal terma of Yungdrung Bon, the "Northern Treasure" (Wylie: *byang gter*), the "Central Treasure" (Wylie: *dbus gter*) and the "Southern Treasure" (Wylie: *lho gter*).<sup>[5]</sup> The Northern Treasure is compiled from texts revealed in Zhangzhung and northern Tibet, the Southern Treasure from texts revealed in Bhutan and the southern area of Tibet, and the Central Treasure from texts revealed in central Tibet close to Samye.<sup>[5]</sup>

## A cavern of treasures

*A Cavern of Treasures* (Tibetan: མཚོད་ཕུག, Wylie: *mdzod phug*) is a terma uncovered by Shenchen Luga (Tibetan: གཤེན་ཆེན་ལུ་དགའ་, Wylie: *gshen chen klu dga'*) in the early eleventh century.<sup>[6]</sup> Martin (n.d.: p. 21) identifies the importance of this scripture for studies of the Zhang-Zhung language:

For students of Tibetan culture in general, the *mDzod phug* is one of the most intriguing of all Bon scriptures, since it is the only lengthy bilingual work in Zhang-zhung and Tibetan (some of the shorter but still significant sources for Zhang-zhung are signalled in Orofino 1990.<sup>[7]</sup>)

## Prominent terma cycles

One of the most famous terma known throughout the world is the *Bardo Thodol* (Tibetan: བར་དོ་ཐོས་གྲོལ་, Wylie: *bar do thos grol*; "Liberation by Hearing in the State of Bardo"). It is popularly (but incorrectly) known as the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. As a set of funerary texts and practices, it had a very specialized utility, and was revealed by Karma Lingpa, who also revealed the Zhitro teachings. Among other famous terma cycles are:

- *Longchen Nyingthig*: Another well-known Dzogchen cycle of texts, revealed to tertön Jigme Lingpa in the 18th century.
- *Rinchen Terdzod*: Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, Jamgon Kongtrul, and Chogyur Dechen Lingpa assembled thousands of Terma treasure texts from the Nyingma tradition all across Tibet, creating the 108 volumes of the Rinchen Terdzod.
- *Jangter* (Wylie: *byang gter*) revealed by Rigdzin Godem. Features the prominent subcycle *Konchok Chidu* revealed by the tertön Jatson Nyingpo and is widely-practiced in Kagyu lineages as well.
- *Chokling Tersar* revealed by Chogyur Dechen Lingpa.

## Minor terma cycles

- *Nam Cho (Space Treasures)* transmissions and empowerments are considered the heart transmission specific to the Palyul. These teachings were revealed as terma to the 17th century Terton, Namchö Mingyur Dorje, and were expanded upon by his root teacher, Karma Chagme.
- *Dudjom Tersar* encompasses all the terma revelations of Dudjom Lingpa and Jigdral Yeshe Dorje (2nd Dudjom Rinpoche).

## Notes

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2. Fremantle, Francesca (2001). *Luminous Emptiness: Understanding the Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Boston, Massachusetts, USA: Shambhala Publications, Inc. ISBN 1-57062-450-X p.19
3. Premavilasa ch. 8, 10

4. Fremantle, Francesca (2001). *Luminous Emptiness: Understanding the Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Boston, Massachusetts, USA: Shambhala Publications, Inc. ISBN 1-57062-450-X p.17.
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6. Berzin, Alexander (2005). *The Four Immeasurable Attitudes in Hinayana, Mahayana, and Bon*. Berzin Archives. Source: [2] ([http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/study/comparison\\_buddhist\\_traditions/theravada\\_hinayana\\_mahayana/4\\_immeasurable\\_attitudes.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/study/comparison_buddhist_traditions/theravada_hinayana_mahayana/4_immeasurable_attitudes.html)) (accessed: Monday March 1, 2010)
7. Martin, Dan (n.d.). "Comparing Treasuries: Mental states and other *mdzod phug* lists and passages with parallels in Abhidharma works of Vasubandhu and Asanga, or in Prajnaparamita Sutras: A progress report." University of Jerusalem. Source: [3] ([http://ir.minpaku.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/10502/1286/1/SER15\\_004.pdf](http://ir.minpaku.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/10502/1286/1/SER15_004.pdf)) (accessed: Monday March 1, 2010)

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## See also

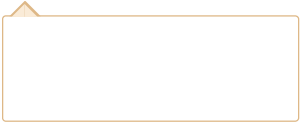
- Na Nach Nachma Nachman Meuman, the "Letter from Heaven".



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Categories: Nyingma | Tertons | Buddhist terminology | Treasure of Asia

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# Padmasambhava

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Padmasambhava**<sup>[note 1]</sup> (lit. "Lotus-Born"), also known as **Guru Rinpoche**, is the author or inspiration for terma,<sup>[1]</sup> an emanation of Amitabha that is said to appear to tertons in visionary encounters, and a focus of Tibetan Buddhist practice.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries there were several competing terma traditions surrounding, for example, Vimalamitra, Songtsen Gampo, Vairotsana and Padmasambhava.<sup>[2]</sup> At the end of the 12th century, there was the "victory of the Padmasambhava cult."<sup>[3]</sup> Nyangrel Nyima Özer (1136-1204) was the principal architect of the Padmasambhava mythos.<sup>[4]</sup>

Although there was also a historical Padmasambhava, nothing is known of the "obscure Indian sorcerer"<sup>[5]</sup> apart from him helping the construction of a temple at Samye at the behest of Trisong Detsen and shortly being chased out of Tibet.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Padmasambhava



Statue of Padmasambhava 123 ft. (37.5 m) high in mist overlooking Rewalsar Lake, Himachal Pradesh, India

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## Mythos

### Sources

Nyangrel Nyima Özer (1136-1204) was the principal architect of the Padmasambhava mythos.<sup>[7]</sup> Guru Chöwang (1212-70) was the next major contributor to the mythos.<sup>[8]</sup>

### Early years

#### Birth

[9][10]

According to tradition, Padmasambhava was incarnated as an eight-year-old child appearing in a lotus blossom floating in Lake Dhanakosha, in the kingdom of Oḍḍiyāna in Ancient India and in modern times identified with the Swat Valley of South Asia present-day Pakistan.<sup>[11]</sup> His special nature was recognized by the childless local king of Oḍḍiyāna and was chosen to take over the kingdom, but he left Oḍḍiyāna for northern parts of India.

## Tantra

In Rewalsar, known as Tso Pema in Tibetan, he secretly taught tantric teachings to princess Mandarava, the local king's daughter. The king found out and tried to burn him, but it is believed that when the smoke cleared he just sat there, still alive and in meditation. Greatly astonished by this miracle, the king offered Padmasambhava both his kingdom and Mandarava.

Padmasambhava left with Mandarava, and took to Maratika Cave in Nepal to practice secret tantric consort rituals. They had a vision of buddha Amitayus and achieved what is called the Rainbow Body of the Great Transference<sup>[note 2]</sup> in the Vajrayana tradition, a very rare type of spiritual realization.<sup>[note 3]</sup> Dzogchen Practitioners of Padmasambhava's *terma* still achieve this type of realization today. Both Padmasambhava and Mandarava are still believed to be alive and active in this Rainbow Body form by their followers. She and Padmasambhava's other main consort, Yeshe Tsogyal who was responsible for hiding his numerous *terma* later in Tibet became fully enlightened. Many thangkas and paintings show Padmasambhava in between them.



Statue of Princess Mandarava at Rewalsar Lake.

## Tibet

### Subjection of local religions

Around 760, King Trisong Detsen, the 38th king of the Yarlung dynasty and the first Emperor of Tibet (742–797), invited the Nalanda University abbot Śāntarakṣita (Tibetan *Shiwatso*) to Tibet.<sup>[12]</sup> Śāntarakṣita started the building of Samye,<sup>[12]</sup> the first Buddhist monastery on Tibetan ground. Demonic forces hindered the introduction of the Buddhist dharma, and Padmasambhava was invited to Tibet to subdue the demonic forces.<sup>[13]</sup> The demons were not annihilated, but were obliged to submit to the dharma.<sup>[14][note 4]</sup> This was in accordance with the tantric principle of not eliminating negative forces but redirecting them to fuel the journey toward spiritual awakening.

Berzin gives a more prosaic account of the events:

In 761, [Emperor Tri Songdetsen (Khri Srong sde-btsan)] invited the Indian Buddhist abbot Shantarakshita to Tibet. There was a smallpox epidemic. The Zhang-zhung faction in court blamed Shantarakshita and deported him from the land. On the abbot's advice, the Emperor then invited Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) from Swat (northwestern Pakistan), who drove out the demons who had caused the smallpox. The Emperor then reinvited Shantarakshita. Guru Rinpoche left in 774, without having completed the full transmission of dzogchen. Seeing that the times were not ripe, he buried some texts as buried treasure texts (gter-ma, "terma"). They were exclusively texts on dzogchen.<sup>[16]</sup>

According to tradition, Padmasambhava received the Emperor's wife, identified with the dakini Yeshe Tsogyal, as a consort.<sup>[17]</sup>

### Translations

King Trisong Detsen ordered the translation of all Buddhist Dharma Texts into Tibetan. Padmasambhava, Shantarakṣita, 108 translators, and 25 of Padmasambhava's nearest disciples worked for many years in a gigantic translation-project. The translations from this period formed the base for the large scriptural transmission of Dharma teachings into Tibet. Padmasambhava supervised mainly the translation of Tantra; Shantarakṣita concentrated on the Sutra-teachings.

## Nyingma

Padmasambhava introduced the people of Tibet to the practice of Tantric Buddhism.<sup>[14][18]</sup>

He is regarded as the founder of the Nyingma tradition. The Nyingma tradition is the oldest of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>[note 5]</sup> The Nyingma tradition actually comprises several distinct lineages that all trace their origins to Padmasambhava.

"Nyingma" literally means "ancient," and is often referred to as "Nga'gyur" <sup>[note 6]</sup> or the "early translation school" because it is founded on the first translations of Buddhist scriptures from Sanskrit into Tibetan, in the eighth century.<sup>[note 7]</sup>

Nyingma maintains the earliest tantric teachings. The Nyingmapa incorporates mysticism and local deities shared by the pre-Buddhist Bon religion, which has shamanic elements. The group particularly believes in hidden terma treasures. Traditionally, Nyingmapa practice was advanced orally among a loose network of lay practitioners. Monasteries with celibate monks and nuns, along with the practice of reincarnated spiritual leaders are later adaptations,<sup>[19]</sup> though Padmasambhava is regarded as the founder of Samye Gompa, the first monastery in the country<sup>[20]</sup>In modern times the Nyingma lineage has been centered in Kham in eastern Tibet.

## Bhutan

In Bhutan he is associated with the famous Paro Taktsang or "Tiger's Nest" monastery built on a sheer cliff wall about 500m above the floor of Paro valley. It was built around the *Taktsang Senge Samdup* (*stag tshang seng ge bsam grub*) cave where he is said to have meditated in the 8th Century. He flew there from Tibet on the back of Yeshe Tsogyal, whom he transformed into a flying tigress for the purpose of the trip. Later he travelled to Bumthang district to subdue a powerful deity offended by a local king. Padmasambhava's body imprint can be found in the wall of a cave at nearby Kurje Lhakhang temple.

## Iconography, manifestations and attributes

### Iconography

#### General

- He has one face and two hands.<sup>[21][22]</sup>
- He is wrathful and smiling.<sup>[21]</sup>
- He blazes magnificently with the splendour of the major and minor marks.<sup>[21]</sup>



Statues of Padmasambhava, Buddha and Amitayus at Namdroling Monastery.

## Head

- On his head he wears a five-petalled lotus hat,<sup>[21][23]</sup> which has
  - Three points symbolizing the three kayas,
  - Five colours symbolizing the five kayas,
  - A sun and moon symbolizing skilful means and wisdom,
  - A vajra top to symbolize unshakable samadhi,
  - A vulture's feather to represent the realization of the highest view.<sup>[22]</sup>
- His two eyes are wide open in a piercing gaze.<sup>[21]</sup>
- He has the youthful appearance of an eight-year old child.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Skin

- His complexion is white with a tinge of red.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Dress

- On his body he wears a white vajra undergarment. On top of this, in layers, a red robe, a dark blue mantrayana tunic, a red monastic shawl decorated with a golden flower pattern, and a maroon cloak of silk brocade.<sup>[21]</sup>
- On his body he wears a silk cloak, Dharma robes and gown.<sup>[23]</sup>
- He is wearing the dark blue gown of a mantra practitioner, the red and yellow shawl of a monk, the maroon cloak of a king, and the red robe and secret white garments of a bodhisattva.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Hands

- In his right hand, he holds a five-pronged vajra at his heart.<sup>[21][22][23]</sup>
- His left hand rests in the gesture of equanimity,<sup>[21]</sup>
- In his left hand he holds a skull-cup brimming with nectar, containing the vase of longevity that is also filled with the nectar of deathless wisdom<sup>[21][22]</sup> and ornamented on top by a wish-fulfilling tree.<sup>[23]</sup>

## Khatvanga

The khatvāṅga is a particular divine attribute of Padmasambhava and intrinsic to his iconographic representation. It is a danda with three severed heads denoting the three kayas (the three bodies of a Buddha, the dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, and nirmanakaya), crowned by a trishula, and dressed with a sash of the Himalayan Rainbow or Five Pure Lights of the Mahabhuta. The iconography is utilized in various Tantric cycles by yogis as symbols to hidden meanings in transmitted practices.

- Cradled in his left arm he holds the three-pointed khatvanga (trident) symbolizing the Princess consort



Padmasambhava. Wall painting at Paro bridge (Bhutan)

(Mandarava).<sup>[21][23]</sup> who arouses the wisdom of bliss and emptiness, concealed as the three-pointed khatvanga trident.<sup>[22]</sup>

- Its three points represent the essence, nature and compassionate energy (ngowo, rangshyin and tukjé).<sup>[22][23]</sup>
- Below these three prongs are three severed heads, dry, fresh and rotten, symbolizing the dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya.<sup>[22][23]</sup>
- Nine iron rings adorning the prongs represent the nine yanas.<sup>[22][23]</sup>
- Five-coloured strips of silk symbolize the five wisdoms<sup>[22]</sup>
- The khatvanga is also adorned with locks of hair from dead and living mamos and dakinis, as a sign that the Master subjugated them all when he practised austerities in the Eight Great Charnel Grounds.<sup>[22][23]</sup>

## Seat

- He is seated with his two feet in the royal posture.<sup>[21][22][23]</sup>

## Surrounding

- All around him, within a lattice of five-coloured light, appear the eight vidyadharas of India, the twenty-five disciples of Tibet, the deities of the three roots, and an ocean of oath-bound protectors<sup>[23]</sup>

There are further iconographies and meanings in more advanced and secret stages.

## Eight Manifestations

Padmasambhava is said to have taken eight forms or manifestations (Tib. *Guru Tsen Gye*) representing different aspects of his being, such as wrath or pacification for example. According to Rigpa Shedra the eight principal forms were assumed by Guru Rinpoche at different points in his life. The Eight Manifestations of Padmasambhava belong to the tradition of the Revealed Treasures (Tib.: ter ma).<sup>[24]</sup>

- **Guru Orgyen Dorje Chang** (Wylie: *gu ru U-rgyan rDo-rje 'chang*, Sanskrit: *Guru Uddiyana Vajradhara*) The vajra-holder (Skt. Vajradhara), shown dark blue in color in the attire of the Sambhogakaya. Depicted in union with consort. (See image + description) (<http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm/403.html>)
- **Guru Shakya Senge** (Wylie: *shAkya seng-ge*, Skrt: *Guru Śākyasimha*) of Bodh Gaya, Lion of the Sakyas, who learns the Tantric practices of the eight Vidyadharas. He is shown as a fully ordained Buddhist monk. (See image) (<http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm/71953.html>)



A wrathful manifestation of Padmasambhava

- **Guru Pema Gyalpo** (Wylie: *gu ru pad ma rgyal-po*, Skrt: *Guru Padmarāja*) of Uddiyana, the Lotus Prince, king of the Tripitaka (the Three Collections of Scripture). He is shown looking like a young crowned prince or king. (See image + description) (<http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm/260.html>)
- **Guru Pema Jungne** (Wylie: *pad ma 'byung-gnas*, Skrt: *Guru Padmakara*) Lotus-arisen, the Saviour who teaches the Dharma to the people. He is shown sitting on a lotus, dressed in the three robes of a monk, under which he wears a blue shirt, pants and heavy Tibetan boots, as protection against the cold. He holds the diamond-scepter of compassionate love in his right hand and the yogi's skull-bowl of clear wisdom in his left. He has a special trident called khatvanga of a wandering Yogi, and wears on his head a Nepalese cloth crown, stylistically designed to remind one of the shape of a lotus flower. Thus he is represented as he must have appeared in Tibet. (See image + description) (<http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm/361.html>), on wikimedia commons
- **Guru Loden Chokse** (Wylie: *gu ru blo ldan mchog sred*; Skrt: *Guru Mativat Vararuci*<sup>[25]</sup>) of Kashmir, the Intelligent Youth, the one who gathers the knowledge of all worlds. He is shown in princely clothes, beating a hand-drum and holding a skull-bowl. (See image + description) (<http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm/670.html>)
- **Guru Nyima Ozer** (Wylie: *gu ru nyi-ma 'od-zer*, Skrt: *Guru Suryabhasa* or *Sūryaraśmi*<sup>[25]</sup>), the Sunray Yogi, who illuminates the darkness of the mind through the insight of Dzogchen. He is shown as a naked yogi dressed only in a loin-cloth and holding a Khatvanga which points towards the sun. (See image + description) (<http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm/317.html>)
- **Guru Dorje Drolo**, (Wylie: *gu ru rDo-rje gro-lod*, Skrt: *Guru Vajra* ?) the fierce manifestation of Vajrakilaya (wrathful Vajrasattva) known as "Diamond Guts", the comforter of all, imprinting the elements with Wisdom-Treasure. (See image + description) (<http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm/261.html>)
- **Guru Senge Dradog** (Wylie: *gu ru seng-ge sgra-sgrogs*, Skrt: *Guru Simhanāda*<sup>[25]</sup>) of Nalanda University, the Lion of Debate, promulgator of the Dharma throughout the six realms of sentient beings. He is shown in a very fierce form, dark blue and imitative of the powerful Bodhisattva Vajrapani, holding a thunderbolt scepter in one hand and a scorpion in the other. (See image) (<http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm/3313787.html>)

Padmasambhava's various Sanskrit names are preserved in mantras such as those found in the Yang gsang rig 'dzin youngs rdzogs kyi blama guru mtshan brgyad bye brag du sgrub pa ye shes bdud rtsi'i sbrang char zhe bya ba<sup>[25]</sup>

## Attributes

### Pure-land Paradise

His Pureland Paradise is Zangdok Palri (the Copper-Coloured Mountain).<sup>[26]</sup>

## Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri

Padmasambhava said:

My father is the intrinsic awareness, Samantabhadra (Sanskrit; Tib. ལུན་ཏུ་བཟང་པོ་). My mother is the ultimate sphere of reality, Samantabhadri (Sanskrit; Tib. ལུན་ཏུ་བཟང་ཚོ་). I belong to the caste of non-duality of the sphere of awareness. My name is the Glorious Lotus-Born. I am from the unborn sphere of all phenomena. I act in the way of the Buddhas of the three times.

## Five Wisdom Dakinis

Padmasambhava had five major female tantric companions, the so-called 'Five Wisdom Dakinis' (Wylie: *Ye-shes mKha-'gro lnga*) or 'Five Consorts.' In Padmasambhava's biography, they are described as the five women "who had access to the master's heart", and practiced tantric rites which are considered to have exorcised the previous demons of Tibet and converted them into protectors of the country.' They were:

- Mandarava of Zahor, the emanation of Vajravarahi's Body;
- Belwong Kalasiddhi of (north-west) India, the emanation of Vajravarahi's Quality, Belmo Sakya Devi of Nepal;
- the emanation of Vajravarahi's Mind, Yeshe Tsogyal of Tibet;
- the emanation of Vajravarahi's Speech
- and Mangala or Tashi Kyedren of "the Himalayas", the emanation of Vajravarahi's Activity.<sup>[27]</sup>

### Princess Sakya Devi from Nepal

On Padmasambhava's consort practice with Princess Sakya Devi from Nepal it is said:

In a state of intense bliss, Padmasambhava and Sakyadevi realized the infinite reality of the Primordial Buddha Mind, the All-Beneficent Lord (Samantabhadra), whose absolute love is the unimpeded dynamo of existence. Experiencing the succession of the four stages of ecstasy, their mutual state of consciousness increased from height to height. And thus, meditating on Supreme Vajrasattva Heruka as the translucent image of compassionate wrathful (energized) activity, they together acquired the mahamudra of Divinity and attained complete Great Enlightenment.<sup>[28]</sup>

## Teachings and practices ascribed to Padmasambhava

### The Vajra Guru mantra

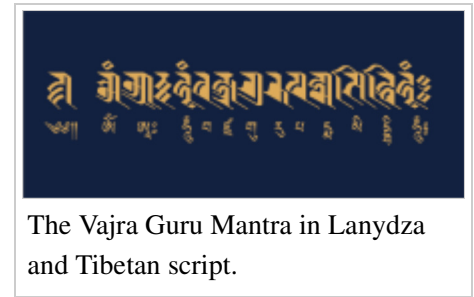
The *Vajra Guru* (Padmasambhava) mantra *Om Ah Hum Vajra Guru Padma Siddhi Hum* is favoured and held in



Padmasambhava in Yam-yum form with his Shakti



esteem by sadhakas. Like most Sanskritic mantras in Tibet, the Tibetan pronunciation demonstrates dialectic variation and is generally *Om Ah Hung Benza Guru Pema Siddhi Hung*. In the Vajrayana traditions, particularly of the Nyingmapa, it is held to be a powerful mantra engendering communion with the Three Vajras of Padmasambhava's mindstream and by his grace, all enlightened beings.<sup>[29]</sup> In response to Yeshe Tsogyal's request, the Great Master himself explained the meaning of the mantra although there are larger secret meanings too.<sup>[30]</sup> The 14th century tertön Karma Lingpa has a famous commentary on the mantra.<sup>[31]</sup>



The Vajra Guru Mantra in Lanydza and Tibetan script.

## The Seven Line Prayer to Padmasambhava

The Seven Line Prayer to Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) is a famous prayer that is recited by many Tibetans daily and is said to contain the most sacred and important teachings of Dzogchen.

Jamgon Ju Mipham Gyatso composed a famous commentary to the Seven Line Prayer called *White Lotus*. It explains the meanings, which are embedded in many levels and intended to catalyze a process of realization. These hidden teachings are described as ripening and deepening, in time, with study and with contemplation.<sup>[32]</sup> Tulku Thondup says:

Enshrining the most sacred prayer to Guru Padmasambhava, *White Lotus* elucidates its five layers of meaning as revealed by the eminent scholar Ju Mipham. This commentary now makes this treasure, which has been kept secret among the great masters of Tibet for generations, available as a source of blessings and learning for all.

There is also a shorter commentary, freely available, by Tulku Thondup himself.<sup>[33]</sup> There are many other teachings and Termas and widely practiced tantric cycles incorporating the text as well as brief ones such as Terma Revelation of Guru Chöwang.<sup>[34]</sup>

## Termas

Padmasambhava also hid a number of religious treasures (*termas*) in lakes, caves, fields and forests of the Himalayan region to be found and interpreted by future *tertöns* or spiritual treasure-finders.<sup>[35]</sup> According to Tibetan tradition, the Bardo Thodol (commonly referred to as the Tibetan Book of the Dead) was among these hidden treasures, subsequently discovered by a Tibetan tertön, Karma Lingpa.

## Tantric cycles

Tantric cycles related to Padmasambhava are not just practiced by the Nyingma, they even gave rise to a new offshoot of Bon which emerged in the 14th century called the New Bön. Prominent figures of the Sarma (new translation) schools such as the Karmapas and Sakya lineage heads have practiced these cycles and taught them. Some of the greatest tertöns revealing teachings related to Padmasambhava have been from the Kagyu or Sakya lineages. The hidden lake temple of the Dalai Lamas behind the Potala called Lukhang is dedicated to Dzogchen teachings and has murals depicting the eight manifestations of Padmasambhava.<sup>[36]</sup> Padmasambhava established Vajrayana Buddhism and the highest forms of Dzogchen (Mengagde) in Tibet and transformed the entire nation.

## Twenty-five main disciples

*Twenty-five Main Disciples* of Padmasambhava (Tibetan: རྗེ་འབངས་ཉེར་ལྔ་, Wylie: *rje 'bangs nyer lnga*) -also called the disciples of Chimphu<sup>[37]</sup>- in various lists these include:

- King Trisong Detsen (Tibetan: ཁྲི་སྲོང་ལྗེ་བཟའ་བཙུན་, Wylie: *khri srong lde'u btzan*)
- Denma Tsémang (Tibetan: ལྡན་མ་རྩེ་མང་, Wylie: *ldan ma rtse mang*)<sup>[38]</sup>
- Dorje Dudjom of Nanam (Tibetan: རྡོ་རྗེ་བདུད་འཛོམ་, Wylie: *rdo rje bdud 'joms*)<sup>[39]</sup>
- Khyechung Lotsawa (Tibetan: ཁྱེུ་ཚུང་ལོ་ལྷ་བ་, Wylie: *khye'u chung lo tsā ba*)
- Gyalwa Changchub of Lasum (Tibetan: ལ་སུམ་རྒྱལ་བ་བྱང་ཚུབ་, Wylie: *la sum rgyal ba byang chub*)<sup>[40]</sup>
- Gyalwa Choyang (Tibetan: རྒྱལ་བ་མཚོག་དབྱངས་, Wylie: *rgyal ba mchog dbyangs*)<sup>[41]</sup>
- Gyalwe Lodro of Dré (Tibetan: རྒྱལ་བའི་བློ་གྲོས་, Wylie: *rgyal ba'i blo gros*)<sup>[42]</sup>
- Jnanakumara of Nyak (Tibetan: གཉག་ལས་ཇོན་འུ་ཀུ་མ་ར་, Wylie: *gnyags dzny' na ku ma ra*)<sup>[43]</sup>
- Kawa Paltsek (Tibetan: ལྷ་བ་དཔལ་བརྟེན་, Wylie: *ska ba dpal brtsegs*)<sup>[44]</sup>
- Khandro Yeshe Tsogyal, the princess of Karchen (Tibetan: མཁར་ཆེན་བཟའ་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་, Wylie: *mkhar chen bza' mtsho rgyal*)
- Konchog Jungné of Langdro (Tibetan: ལང་གོ་དཀོན་མཚོག་འབྲུང་གནས་, Wylie: *lang gro dkon mchog 'byung gnas*)<sup>[45]</sup>
- Lhapal the Sokpo (Tibetan: སོག་པོ་སྣ་དཔལ་, Wylie: *sog po lha dpal*)<sup>[46]</sup>
- Namkhai Nyingpo (Tibetan: བཀའ་མཁའི་སྙིང་པོ་, Wylie: *nam mkha'i snying po*)
- Zhang Yeshe De (Tibetan: རང་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ་, Wylie: *zhang ye shes sde*)
- Lhalung Pelgyi Dorje (Tibetan: ལྷ་ལུང་དཔལ་གྱི་རྡོ་རྗེ་, Wylie: *lha lung dpal gyi rdo rje*)<sup>[47]</sup>
- Palgyi Senge (Tibetan: དཔལ་གྱི་སེང་གེ་, Wylie: *dpal gyi seng ge*)<sup>[48]</sup>
- Palgyi Wangchuk (Tibetan: དཔལ་གྱི་དབང་ཕྱུག་, Wylie: *dpal gyi dbang phyug*)<sup>[49]</sup>
- Palgyi Wangchuk of Odren (Tibetan: འོ་དྲན་དཔལ་གྱི་དབང་ཕྱུག་, Wylie: *'o dran dpal gyi dbang phyug*)<sup>[50]</sup>
- Palgyi Yeshe (Tibetan: དཔལ་གྱི་ཡེ་ཤེས་, Wylie: *dpal gyi ye shes*)
- Rinchen Chok of Ma (Tibetan: ལྷ་རིན་ཆེན་མཚོག་, Wylie: *rma rin chen mchog*)<sup>[51]</sup>
- Sangye Yeshe (Tibetan: སངས་རྒྱས་ཡེ་ཤེས་, Wylie: *sangs rgyas ye shes*)<sup>[52]</sup>
- Shubu Palgyi Senge (Tibetan: ལྷུ་བུ་དཔལ་གྱི་སེང་གེ་, Wylie: *shud bu dpal gyi seng ge*)
- Vairotsana, the great translator (Tibetan: བེ་རོ་ཙན་, Wylie: *bai ro tsa na*)
- Yeshe Yang (Tibetan: ཡེ་ཤེས་དབྱངས་, Wylie: *ye shes dbyangs*)<sup>[53]</sup>

- Yudra Nyingpo of Gyalmo (Tibetan: ག་ཡུ་སྐྱ་སྡིང་པོ་, Wylie: *g.yu sgra snying po*)

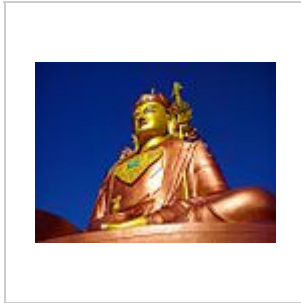
Also:

- Vimalamitra (Tibetan: ལྷ་མེད་བཤེས་གཉེན་, Wylie: *dru med bshes gnyen*)
- Tingdzin Zangpo (Tibetan: ཏིང་འཛིན་བཟང་པོ་, Wylie: *ting 'dzin bzang po*)<sup>[54]</sup>

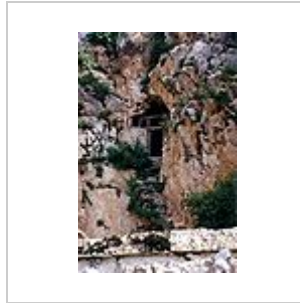
## Gallery



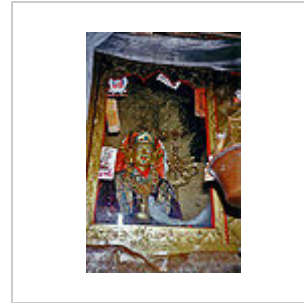
Padmasambhava statue in Hemis Monastery, Ladakh, India.



The Holy Statue of Guru Padmasambhava at Samdruptse, Namchi, Sikkim, India.



Entrance to Dawa Puk, Guru Rinpoche's cave, Yerpa, 1993.



Statue of Guru Rinpoche in his meditation cave at Yerpa, Tibet

## See also

- Crazy wisdom
- Dampa Sangye
- Dudjom Rinpoche
- Kōbō Daishi

## Notes

- sanskrit: पद्मसम्भव *Padmasambhava'* Tibetan: པདྨ་འབྲུང་གནས།, Wylie: pad+ma 'byung gnas (EWTS), ZYPY: *Bāmajungnä*); Mongolian ловон Бадмажунай, lovon Badmajunai, Chinese: 蓮花生大士 (*pinyin*: Liánhuāshēng)
- Wylie 'pho ba chen po, pronounced Phowa Chenpo
- Wylie: 'ja' lus, pronounced Jalü.
- The subjection of concurring deities and demons is a recurrent theme in Buddhist literature. See also Vajrapani and Mahesvara and Steven Heine's "Opening a Mountain".<sup>[15]</sup>
- The other three being the Kagyu, Sakya and Gelug
- Tibetan: སྐ་འགྱུར།, Wylie: *snga 'gyur*, ZYPY: Nga'gyur, "school of the ancient translations.
- The Tibetan script and grammar was actually created for this endeavour.

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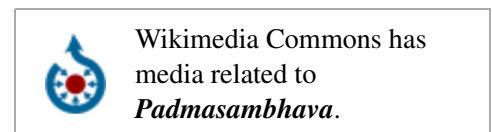
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