

Guru Padmasambhava

*From the heart of Buddha Amitabha, light rays radiated into the bud of a lotus on Danakosha lake.
Upon its ripening, appeared an amazing child, adorned with the major and minor marks sitting atop a thousand
petalled lotus.*

Glorious Guru Padmasambhava, please protect and guide me until I attain complete enlightenment.

Inseparable from the Primordial Buddha Samantabhadra, the all-pervading Lord of the three jewels of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and master of the three roots of lama, yidam, and dakini, the glorious Guru Padmasambhava should be definitively understood as being the essence of Buddha Amitabha. In order to propagate and spread the teachings of the Dharma in general, and particularly the secret mantra and Dzogchen teachings, he appears to every being of the three thousand billion world systems in a form to benefit them according to their personal karmic vision. In this way Guru Padmasambhava has countless unimaginable biographies, one biography for each being. Although that is the definitive biography of Guru Padmasambhava, the historical figure Guru Padmasambhava's life-story as known to the common disciples is as follows. When the time for Guru Rinpoche to liberate the beings of this world approached, on the tenth day of the sixth month of the Monkey year, he appeared miraculously in the blossom of a lotus in the lake called "Ocean of Milk" in South West Odiyana, which is also known as Lake Danakosha located on the Afghanistan-Pakistan frontier. However there are different interpretations regarding his birth. Some Indian historians affirm that he was born to a minister or a King of Odiyana, and some claim that he appeared instantaneously on the summit of Mt. Malaya in Sri Lanka. But Guru Padmasambhava's treasure teachings confirm the version which states that he was born spontaneously from a lotus. This source is the most renowned and thus the following history is provided accordingly.

The great river Sindhu, one of the four great rivers that springs from the four directions of Kailash mountain, flows towards the Western Land of Odiyana and finally empties into the Arabian Sea. When the river reaches Odiyana, it forms a lake filled with lotuses. As the lotus roots produce a sweet-milky juice, it is called "Ocean of Milk." Prior to Guru Padmasambhava's birth, in the centre of the lake a large, fully mature, beautiful, red lotus grew, and from the heart of Buddha Amitabha in space, a red syllable HRI fell about eight cubits above the collar of the lotus. The syllable dissolved into light and instantly, without depending on the causes and conditions of father and mother, there arose an eight-year-old child perfectly adorned with the characteristic major and minor marks. Holding a vajra and a lotus in his hands, he immediately began giving teachings to the gods and dakinis of the area.

At that time, the ruler of the land of Odiyana, the Second King Indrabodhi, was residing in his nine-tufted palace with his queen as well as hundreds and thousands of inner and outer ministers. Because the king did not have a son, on the full moon day of the fifth summer month, he made great offerings to the Triple Gems and recited the *Dharma Cloud Sutra*. He also opened the door of his three thousand treasuries and went on distributing alms to the poor and needy until his wealth was exhausted. He then exclaimed, "Beggars have still not ceased, but I have nothing to grant!". When the remaining beggars did not receive their share, they hold the king that if he did not provide their share, whatever was done in the past would be meaningless. The king heard this and, inspired to acquire inexhaustive wealth for the beggars, he travelled to the ocean to procure the wish-fulfilling jewel from the crown of the mystical creature, Charumati, daughter of Naga. He procured the jewel without mishap and sailed back with his boat filled with the seven varieties of jewels. While travelling to meet the king, the king's religious minister, Trig Na Dzin, found the extraordinary child on the lotus and narrated the full story of the child to the king. The king was pleased by this news and went to the child and inquired about his father, mother and to which caste and country he belonged. The child exclaimed:

My father is the self-arisen Samantabhadra.

My mother is the sphere of reality, Samantabhadri.

My caste is the union of primordial wisdom and the Dharmadhatu.

And my name is the glorious Padmasambhava.

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Having heard this, the king was thrown into a wonder of delight. He thought a Nirmanakaya had taken birth and invited the child to the palace as his son as well as religious guide. The child was named "Padmasambhava" meaning "lotus-born." Later he married Prabhadarani, the daughter of king Chandan Gomashree, and ruled the kingdom in accordance with the Dharma. He became renowned as Shikhabandh Raja or "The King With Plaited Hair."

He perceived that since politics is contradictory to the teachings of liberation, and his position would not fulfil the purpose of sentient beings, he performed a mystical activity of killing the son of a wicked minister and lifted his consciousness into the Charadhātu. As a result he was banished from the country to the fearful cemetery of Sitavana. Gradually by performing mystical activities at the cemeteries of Nandanvan, Daanbhumidvipa, Parushakavan, and so forth he accomplished the common and uncommon siddhis and came to be known as Rodravajrakala, "The Wrathful Vajra Display."

In order to inspire faith towards the teachings in the disciples of the future, he then went to Bodhgaya and many other places displaying the act of receiving teachings from many great scholars, accomplished masters and Dakinis. By listening just once, he comprehended and accomplished the whole canon of the three baskets of Vinaya, Sutra and Abhidharma, as well as the teachings of the outer and inner secret mantra, oral transmissions, and the pith instructions of the highest and innermost tantra of Atiyoga. Even if he did not propitiate, the deities of the mandala displayed their forms and he became a peerless erudite and accomplished master. Thus he showed the signs of perfecting the level of the Fully Ripened Awareness Holder. Thereafter he was known as the Guru Dhimana Varruchi, "The Supreme Love Endowed With Wisdom."

He then took princess Mandarava, daughter of Shastradhara, the king of Zahor, as his consort. Possessing the marks of a dakini, he took her to the mountain cave of Maratika, known as Halesha, in present day, Nepal, where they performed the accomplishment rituals of longevity for three months and actualised the Immortal Vajra Body which marks the attainment of an Immortal Life Awareness Holder.

In order to tame the people of Odiyana he returned there disguised as a mendicant but many people recognised him and he was set to be burned alive in a sandalwood fire by a host of evil-minded ministers and people. When the fire was lit, he miraculously transformed the fire into a huge lake filled with lotuses. Sitting himself with consort over a giant lotus in the middle of the lake, the king, ministers, and people were astounded and developed great faith towards him. In addition, at the cave of Yanglashod in Nepal he practised the Vishuda deity depending on the accomplishment consort Sakya Devi of Nepal and very soon both of them became supreme Mahamudra Awareness Holders. Thus were some of the achievements of Guru Padmasambhava prior to coming to Tibet.

THE MASTER SPREADS THE DHARMA IN THE LAND OF SNOWS

When Lord Buddha gave Avalokiteshvara the responsibility of taming the backwards land of Tibet, Avalokiteshvara looked at the barbaric land and shed tears of compassion. From these tears the Goddess Ganga and Gangchungma were born. One day Goddess Gangchungma stole some celestial flowers and due to her decline in merit, when she died she was unable to again take rebirth as a god and fell to the human realm. She took birth as the human woman, Dechogma, the daughter of Sale from the Jardzinma caste.

Being born from Avalokiteshvara's tears, she naturally had great faith in the Dharma and thus commissioned the construction of a magnificent stupa in Boudha near Kathmandu in Nepal. However she died before the stupa was completed. Her four sons vowed to complete the unfinished stupa, and in honour of their mother, and out of supreme faith in the Dharma, they made solemn prayers from the bottoms of their hearts. Upon completion of the stupa, they each fervently prayed to be reborn as a Dharma king, a great learned khenpo, a powerful tantric master, and a messenger that would bring the previous three together. Legend also has it that during the construction of the stupa a wise donkey was commissioned and overheard the four sons' prayers. Hearing this, the donkey thought, "I have

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done so much work for them and they don't even remember me in their prayers! I vow to do my best to destroy the fruits of their prayers."

According to their aspirations, one son was reborn as Trisong Deutsen, the 38th king of Tibet and an incarnation of Manjushri. One son was reborn as the kings' messenger who invited both the great Khenpo Shantarakshita and the tantric master Guru Padmasambhava from India, who were the reincarnations of the other two sons. Guru Padmasambhava, recalling his past aspirations, accepted the invitation, and on his way he subdued all the harmful gods and demons of Tibet, making them faithful guardians of the Dharma. After meeting in Tibet, the king, guru and khenpo together constructed Tibet's first great monastery at Samye and fully furnished it with statues. In addition they gave monk's vows to Tibet's first seven monks, standardised translation methods, supervised translation of most of the sutras and tantras from Sanskrit to Tibetan, and for the first time in Tibet, firmly established the tradition of study, contemplation and meditation, thereby radiating the Buddha Dharma in Tibet like rays of the sun.

As for the donkey, he was later reborn as Langdharma, the 41st king of Tibet, and subsequently almost succeeded in eliminating the Dharma from Tibet.

Not leaving even the space of a horse-hoof untouched, Guru Padmasambhava miraculously walked upon the entire land of Tibet and generally blessed all the mountains, lakes and caves as places for accomplishment. Specifically in the Ngari region of upper Tibet he blessed twenty mountain caves. In Utsang he blessed twenty-one sacred places of accomplishment. In Dokham he blessed twenty-five sacred places, as well as the three kingly treasure places in upper, central and lower Tibet, the five provinces, three valleys, one island and so forth. In addition, for the sake of beings to be tamed in the future, Guru Padmasambhava concealed eighteen varieties of treasure which include treasure texts, material wealth, holy images and so forth, and gave explicit prophecies regarding the future manifestation of these treasures, including the revealer and protector of the treasure, as well as the time of revelation.

So forth were the enlightened activities performed for the sake of sentient beings by Guru Padmasambhava's eight manifestations which are as follows:

Padmavajra, Vajra of the Lotus, severed the roots of the five poison.

Padmaraja, King of the Lotus, provided mundane and ultimate benefits to sentient beings.

Padmasambhava, the Lotus-born, blessed beings endowed with faith.

Dorje Droled tamed the Yakshas and haughty beings.

Suryaprabha, the Rays of the Sun, taught the essence of secret mantra.

Sakyasimha, the Lion of Sakyas, guided beings towards the path of liberation.

Simhanada, Roar of the Lion, defeated the outside aggressors of non-Buddhists.

And Dhimanvaruchi, the Supremely Wise Love, showered the teaching of sutra and mantra.

The results of Guru Padmasambhava's activities include the attainment of liberation by his twenty-five disciples and eighty other disciples who attained rainbow body. In addition, three million disciples achieved stability in tantric generation stage practice, one hundred thousand disciples showed signs of accomplishment, ninety thousand disciples achieved the uncontaminated Illusory Body, and eighty million disciples had some attainment. Having accomplished these great activities, knowing his personal beings to be tamed on Earth were exhausted, he departed for the South-western universe of the magical cannibals, to help the beings there and to protect Earth from their harm.

Guru Padmasambhava is said to have lived for three thousand and six hundred years in India upholding the Buddha's teachings and benefiting sentient beings. But for his stay in Tibet there are many unreliable versions claiming he stayed for three years, six years, thirteen years and so forth. Despite these differences, according to Guru Padmasambhava's own kama teachings, he actually stayed for fifty years and three months, directly manifesting the meaning of the teachings by benefiting countless sentient beings in incredible myriad ways according to their desires and propensities, which is a reliable and trustworthy fact.

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*With kindness as vast as the sky, Guru Padmasambhava powerfully served the beings of the god, human, and naga realms.
Remembering his past aspirations, with infinite profound treasure teachings and material wealth,
He especially benefited the beings of the snowland of Tibet.*