

Exhibition on

# *Life and Legacy of Guru Padmasambhava*

An exhibition of rare thangkas, paintings, sculptures and photographs

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## Life and Legacy of Guru Padmasambhava

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Art Gallery Kamaladevi Complex, India International Centre 40 Max Mueller Marg New Delhi 110003

Organised by India International Centre, Centre for Escalation of Peace and Sahapedia

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Disclaimer

The material contained within this catalogue is intended to provide information about the artworks displayed at the exhibition, 'Life and Legacy of Guru Padmasambhava', held at India International Centre, Delhi. All reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the information. However, none of the organizations mentioned above can be held responsible for any errors.

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Guru Padmasambhava or Guru Rinpoche is known all over the Himalayan region as the Sage of Himalayas. He lived in the 8th century and is credited with having spread the message of Lord Buddha to the countries and regions located in the Himalayan belt, including Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal in India and in Nepal and Bhutan and Tibet to the north. He is a most revered and iconic figure in the Buddhist world today and to many Buddhists, he is the Second Buddha.

There are ritual practices, symbolic images, mandalas and iconography which are associated with the Guru Padmasambhava tradition, which are rich in meaning and spiritual messaging. There are the 8 manifestations of the Guru, which have been represented through paintings, sculpture and murals, all very rich in symbolism but also being high art in themselves. The exhibition presented rare thangkas, paintings, sculptures and photographs which have been contributed by His Majesty's Secretariat, Bhutan; Tsurphu Labrang Office of H.H. Gyalwang Karmapa, Dharamshala; Palpung Sherabling Monastic seat of H.E. 12th Tai Situ Rinpoche; Tibet House, New Delhi; Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, Dharamshala; and photographs by Deb Mukharji and Tashi Lhendup.



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Deb Mukharji

Tashi Lhendup



#### Guru Padmasambhava. The Lotus-Born One.

Words, however resonant and erudite, cannot encompass the subject of the great Guru Padmasambhava, a name that encompasses 8 major manifestations, and countless others, since words and concepts will always fail to adequately convey the essence and activities of a fully awakened being.

When speaking of Padmasambhava we need to completely let go of our preconceived notions of how the world works, especially our tightly-held limited understanding of the mind's potential. What can be coherently said in our daily vernacular of somebody who utters the following soon after spontaneous birthin a lotus as an eight year old child?:

My father is the pure awareness of rigpa, Samantabhadra, My mother, the space of all things, Samantabhadri, My line, the indivisibility of awareness and space, My name, the glorious Lotus-born, My homeland, the unborn dharmadhatu, My sustenance, consuming dualistic thoughts, My destiny, to accomplish the actions of the buddhas of past, present and future.<sup>4</sup>

And yet who later says to Tibetan King Trisong Detsen:

No father, no mother, no lineage have I. Wondrous, I have arisen by myself. I was never born, and neither shall I die. I am the Enlightened, I the Lotus-Born<sup>2</sup>

Much can be stated regarding the kindness, life and activities of Guru Rinpoche, prophesied by Shakyamuni Buddha, regarded as the second Buddha, Amitabha Buddha in human form, a subduer of demonic forces, esoteric tantric yogi-helper of Abbot Shantarakshita, without whom Buddha dharma would not have been established in Tibet in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

Let's establish first why he is regarded as a redeeming embodiment of kindness par excellence. We have been living in degenerate times for thousands of years, a moment in time when virtue is feeble and evil forces are raised high, when sentient beings' happiness is polluted and destroyed, when disease, famine and warfare arise together. Padmasambhava responded swiftly to the request of the King to come to Tibet to overcome negative forces, establish the great tradition of expounding and practicing the entire doctrine of the Buddha, in particular engaging in a very comprehensive and profound dissemination of the Vajrayana teachings. In addition he was indefatigable in visiting all the sacred places, countless mountains, lakes, valleys and caves, blessing them, and concealing many remarkable dharma treasures or *termas*, to be discovered centuries later for the benefit of generations to come. The text Lamrim Yeshe Nyingpo<sup>3</sup> further on states movingly that:

"his immeasurable kindness permeates all of Tibet, both the central and surrounding lands, and will remain right up to the last day of the final future age."

He embodies therefore, an unprecedented and powerful restorative, cleansing and healing force

comparable to the influence of Shakyamuni Buddha in an era of increasing moral darkness, within the already impure interdependence that is samsara. As a Buddha it is said he manifests countless billions of emanations in sentient beings' world systems according to the level and needs of those beings.

Especially for the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism Padmasambhava represents the archetype of the perfect Guru, whose presence and instructions can easily launch the qualified disciple into the enlightened state. He is our Buddha Nature made manifest, as Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche explains:

On the absolute level, the teacher is one with the very nature of our own mind, which is the essence of Buddhahood, the tathagatagarbha...through the outer or relative teacher...we can bring ourselves to the realization of the inner or absolute teacher, which is awareness itself."<sup>4</sup>

So, crucially, what this means for a practitioner, (in contast to a mere academic scholar), is that practice involves erasing the dualistic mistake that sees ones own mind as separate from the awakened mind of Padmasambhava, who is also realised as united with the essence of our own personal Guru as well as with the *yidam* or meditational deity, (skt. *ishta-devata*).

The dedicated student then lives life, one might say, breathing the very atmosphere of Padmasambhava in all situations. One's body speech and mind, one's perceptions, all phenomena in fact are viewed as the display of Guru Padmasambhava, a pure awareness without any fixation whatsoever. Thus the disciple quickly gathers the accumulations of method and wisdom necessary to ensure full awakening. This is possible because whereas Padmasambhava has fully realised the all-knowing Buddha mind , we are still, as it were, hibernating Buddhas, but fully qualified to reach that exalted state.

Much detailed information is available of course to the modern student on the internet<sup>5</sup>, and indeed the reader is encouraged to study as much as possible the relative and historical aspects of this great being, (insofar as a being who is said to have been born miraculously either 8 or 12 years after the historical Buddha's parinirvana and is also turning up in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, can be viewed through a linear and limited historical framework!).

However that may be, it will be appropriate to mention a few more salient points in this short introduction to such a kaleidescopic and hugely important personality.

Padmasamabhava and his eight major manifestations embody the principles of the three kayas or essential ways in which Buddha energy manifests.

Simply put we can say that the *dharmakaya* is a spacious and open state in which confusion has never existed like an ocean, the *sambhogakaya* is continuous spontaneous energy perceivable only by exalted beings, almost like waves on the surface of the ocean and the *nirmanakaya* is the body that relates with all manner of ordinary beings, likened to a ship on the ocean that ferries beings safely to the shore.<sup>6</sup>

Like Padmasambhava we can also actualize these three kayas, if we practice well, beginning with his key instructions:

"don't conceptualize your experience, as it just makes you attached or angry. Day and night, look into your mind. If your stream of mind contains any non virtue, renounce it from the core of your heart and pursue virtue."<sup>7</sup>

Reading his colourful life story may lead one to believe that his "crazy wisdom" was at odds with

the moral foundations of the Buddhadharma.

It is probably fair, though possibly not totally accurate, to say that Padmasambhava was being straightforward and honest when he uttered his famous lines to the effect that:

"*Though my view is vast as space, my actions are precise like grains of flour.*", revealing his mastery of both relative and ultimate truth, spacious wisdom with obedience to karmic law.

Finally we can echo Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche when he says;

"since both Shakyamuni Buddha and Padmasambhava appear in one billion forms in each of the one billion world systems, is there any reason why their emanations haven't appeared in all the countries of this world? Who can state with certainty that a single place exists where a Buddha's blessings have not reached?"<sup>8</sup>

One thing is sure. Where Padmasambhava and his wondrous actions are concerned, doubt prevents benefit. We must take care not to be like the proverbial cave facing north where the sun never enters.

Kabir Saxena

Notes:

- 1. cited in www.rigpawiki.org
- 2. White Lotus. Padmakara Translation Group, Shechen Publ. 2008. p.12.
- 3. Lamrim Yeshe Nyingpo: Rangjung Yeshe Publications. 2016. p.1.
- 4. White Lotus. p.11.
- 5. Eg. wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmasambhava; www.padmasambhava.org
- 6. Crazy Wisdom. Chogyam Trungpa. Shambhala Publ. 1991, 2012. pp. 20 and 31.
- 7. Advice from the Lotus-Born. Rangjung Yeshe Publ. 1994. p.29.
- 8. Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche. Ibid. p.20.



**Guru Padmasambhava's altar at the exhibition** Thangka arranged for this exhibition from Palpung Sherabling Monastic Seat of His Eminence the 12<sup>th</sup> Chamgon Kenting Tai Situpa Rinpoche

Ritual offerings prepared by the Gelongs of Punakha Dzong, Bhutan





From the collection of His Majesty's Secretariat, Bhutan





#### THE EIGHT MANIFESTATIONS OF GURU PADMASAMBHAVA



#### Thangkas from Tsirang Dzong, Bhutan









#### THE EIGHT MANIFESTATIONS OF GURU PADMASAMBHAVA



Appliqued thangkas from Jakar Dzong, Bhutan







Photographs by **Deb Mukharji** 





According to legend, as Buddha approached *mahaparinirvana* at Kushinagar, he told his weeping disciples of a great teacher who would one day come from Uddiyana to the north-west. In fulfillment of this prophecy, Padmasambhava, or Guru Rinpoche, was born to the royal family of Uddiyana in Swat, in present day Pakistan.

Credited with reviving Buddhism in Tibet and the founding of the Nyingma sect, Padmasambhava truly bestrode the Himalayan region like a colossus, leaving behind countless accounts of his presence and achievements. He first appears as the guest of King Trison Detsen of Tibet who was trying to revive Buddhism in Tibet. The king wanted to build a monastery at Samye. However, construction of the monastery was violently interrupted by a demoness and no progress could be made. King Trison Detsen was advised that only Padmasambhava could solve the problem.

Through his spiritual powers Padmasambhava found that the repeated destruction was being caused by the demoness Srin Mo, who operated from Lo Gekar in what is today Upper Mustang in Nepal. Padmasambhava slew the demoness and even today the hillsides in the valley below Lo Gekar are vividly tinged with her blood, and chortens mark her body parts. The famed monastery of Samye could now be built, though it remains predated by the monastery at Lo Gekar built by Guru Rinpoche to celebrate his victory over the demoness.

Yeshe Tsogyal, the queen of Tibet, became Padmasambhava's consort. Later, taking the form of a flying tigress, she carried Padmasambhava to what became known as Taktsang, or Tiger's nest, monastery in Bhutan where the Guru meditated for long.

The most authentic and vivid account of Guru Rinpoche's legacy comes from the writings of Ippolito Desideri a Jesuit priest who traversed Tibet on his way to Lhasa from India in 1715. Its importance lies not only in the description but in coming not from an acolyte but from a possibly skeptical man of another faith, recording what he saw and heard a full millennium after the Guru's death. This is Desideri's account:

".... arrived at the highest point reached during the whole journey in this desert called Ngnari-Giongar (Mount Kailash) on the ninth of November. It is held in much veneration by all these people, because of a certain Urghien (corruption of Uddiyana, ie Guru Rinpoche), founder of the present Thibetan religion, of whom I shall speak later. Close by is a mountain of excessive height and great circumference, always enveloped in cloud, covered with snow and ice, and most horrible, barren, steep, and bitterly cold (Mount Kailash). In a cave hollowed out of the live rock the above named Urghien is said to have lived for some time in absolute solitude, selfmortification, and continual religious meditation. The cave is now a temple consecrated to him, with a rude, miserable monastery attached, where dwells a Lama with a few monks who serve the temple. Besides visiting the cave, to which they always bring offerings, the Thibetan ....walk most devoutly round the base of the mountain, which takes several days and they believe will procure them great indulgences." Desideri was to speak of how the Tibetans believed that the cycles of the seasons and crops were all guided by the benediction of Urghien.

Sikkim reveres Padmasambhava who had halted here on his way to Tibet and blest the mountains, leaving his footprint behind at Chungthang. The Hemis monastery in Ladakh honours Guru Rinpoche annually with its renowned festival celebrating his birthday.

Deb Mukharji



Taktsang, the Tiger's Nest, monastery, near Paro, Bhutan, where Guru Rinpoche came riding a flying tigress. Among the many who later came to meditate in the caves here was the famed Milarepa, who won Kailash for Buddhism after his epic battle with the Bon master, Naro Bon Chung three centuries after Guru Rinpoche.



The Ghar monastery at Lo Gekar, Upper Mustang, Nepal (12,500') , built by Guru Padmasambhava in the 8th century to celebrate the slaying of the demoness.



8th century chortens at Lo Gekar overlooking the Charang valley



The hillsides in the valley below Lo Gekar are still stained by the blood of the slain demoness, with chortens depicting her intestines, heart and liver. Also frequent in the valley are groups of chortens with their own message – White for compassion, represented by Chensirig (Avalokiteshvara), Blue for protection, represented by Channa Dorji (Vajrapani), Red for wealth and long life represented by Amitabha and Yellow for wisdom represented by Jampelyang (Manjushri)



The monastery at Hemis in ladakh celebrates every year Guru Rinpoche's birthday in July with great festivities and dance drawing visitors from around the world.



The monastery at Hemis in ladakh celebrates every year Guru Rinpoche's birthday in July with great festivities and dance drawing visitors from around the world.



Image of Guru Padmasmbhava at 16th c Chhairo gompa near Marpha in Lower Mustang, Nepal



Gurudongmar lake (17,800'), North Sikkim, in the shadow of Mount Kangchengyao (22,700'), commemorates the visit of Guru Rinpoche on his travel to Tibet. The lake also commemorates Guru Nanak, another holy traveler to the region



Monastery in honour of Guru Rinpoche at Chungthang, North Sikkim



Guru Rinpoche's footprint on rock at Chungtang



Images at Chungtang monastery



View of North face of Kailash from above Diraphuk. Peaks guarding Kailash on either side are Vajrapani (l) and Avalokiteswara (r). Guru Rinpoche meditated at Kailash and was worshipped and remembered with veneration a thousand years later.

From the collection of **Tsurphu Labrang,** the Office of His Holiness the 17<sup>th</sup> Gyalwang Karmapa, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh





Guru Rinpoche Thangka

Kunchok Chidu of the Gatherings of all precious jewels Hand painted by Tashi Wangchuk, thangka artist from tashi Jong, Himachal Pradesh Size: 24"x36"

#### THE EIGHT MANIFESTATIONS OF GURU PADMASAMBHAVA

Painted by Kalsang Tibetan Traditional Art of Thangka Painting based in Dharamshala





#### GURU PADMASAMBHAVA

#### Four different paintings of Guru Rinpoche which is yet to be framed in brocade. Painted by the Kalsang Tibetan Traditional Art of Thangka Painting based in Dharamshala. Size of each painting: 24"x36"





TRADITIONAL TIBETAN APPLIQUÉ EMBROIDERY THANGKA

According to the Dungkar Tsigzö and The Content of the Potala Palace Appliqué Thanka, the earliest appliqué thangka produced in Tibet was the Thongwa Dönden, i.e. wish fulfilling, made by Gyaltse Choegyal Rabten Kunsang Phag in the Earth-Dog Year of the Lunar calendar (1408 CE). Subsequently, tashi Lunpho Monastery made their magnificent appliqué thangkas and all the other great seats of learning started to follow the fashion of making huge appliqué thangkas and putting them on public display on auspicious dates. The Kundu Shelthang Chenmö Namshay states this as well.

The great Fifth Dalai Lama established art schools and workshops to preserve this unique Tibetan knowledge of making these thangkas and from that day on until today, it has been preserved as a living tradition.

On view:

#### Embroidery Thangka of Guru Padmasambhava

Size: 26" x 38"

This unique appliquéd and embroidered thangka has been made by Tenzin Gyaltsen Ghadong, founder of the Traditional Tibetan Applique and Embroidery Thangka Art Centre.



From the collection of **The 12<sup>th</sup> Chamgon Kenting Tai Situpa**, Palpung Sherabling Monastic Seat





#### Guru Padmakara

Guru Padmakara, embodiment of *The Primordial Buddha Samanthabhadra* is the essence of Limitless Light, *Buddha Amithaba*, manifesting at the invocation of Limitless Compassion, *Avalokitesvara*, Father of all the Buddhas of The Three Times and Ten Directions:

With infinite manifestations to free numberless sentient beings of the countless universes of endless space, by awakening their innate, ultimate potential within.

One of the emanations miraculously manifested at Lake Dhanakosha formed by the tributary of the Sindhu river in the kingdom of Odiyana out of a divine lotus as an eight year old child, bearing all the marks of a Buddha on the tenth day of the tenth month of the year of the monkey; twelve centuries since Buddha Shakyamuni's Parinirvana as prophesized by Buddha Shakyamuni himself, instantaneously initiating and enlightening gods and spirits, and animals of the area.

Earlier on, suffering from not having a son to be heir to the throne and having lost both eyes' sight, king *Indrabhuti* of Odiyana made offerings to The Three Jewels and gave alms to the poor until all of his three thousand treasures were exhausted.

Without a prince and no eyesight, the destitute not yet eliminated either, he then embarked into the ocean to procure the wish fulfilling gem. This noble act inspired the mystical *Charumati*, princess of the Naga king who then offered the wish fulfilling gem from her own crown. Upon receiving it the joyous king's left eye was restored. On his return, guided by the noble minister *Krishnadhara* he found the extraordinary child.

The king was overjoyed and requested the boy to reveal his identity. The child exclaimed,

My father is Self-awareness, Samanthabhadra. My mother is Superior of Reality, Samanthabhadri. My caste is the union of primordial wisdom, Jnana and limitless space, Dharmadhatu. My name is Glorious Padmasambhava.

Having heard this, the blessed king realized that the Buddha's Nirmanakaya had taken birth in his kingdom. He escorted the child to his palace, as his son as well as his Guru.

The king's right eye was miraculously restored, the treasures miraculously filled and poverty in the kingdom was totally alleviated. Later *Prabhadharani*, the princess of the king Chandan Gomashree became queen and ruled the kingdom of Odiyana in accordance with the principle of the sacred dharma.

He, Guru Padmakara became popularly known as *Sikhabandh Raja*. After fulfilling the wishes of King Indrabhuti and liberating people and beings of the kingdom of Odiyana he manifested beyond his kingdom. Thus, his manifestations are known as eight manifestations of Guru Padmakara.

1 - At Dhanakosha he was known as *Padmavajra*.

2 - In Odiyana he was known as *Padma Raja*.
- 3 At Bodhgaya he was known as ShakyaSimha.
- 4 In Beta, at the sacred cemetery he was known as Surya Parabha.
- 5 In the charnel grounds of Kashmir he was known as Dimanvaruchi.
- 6 At the sacred Stupa of Bodhanath, in Nepal he was known as Simhanadu.
- 7 At Sahora, he was known as *Padmasambhava*.
- 8 At the sacred place of Tiger's Nest in the kingdom of Bhutan, he was known as Vajra Drollo.

# Guru Padmakara in Tibet

The Buddhadharma was introduced to Tibet starting with king *Lha Thothori Nyentsen* and subsequently after a number of generations major efforts were made by king *Songtsen Gampo* and major achievements were accomplished but the final establishment of the Buddhadharma in Tibet was far from complete. The 38<sup>th</sup>king *Trisong Detsen* made it his life's mission. He invited the great enlightened *Acharya Shantarakshita* from the Dharma Seat of Nalanda of India. Together with *Shantarakshita*, king *Trisong Detsen* pursued the establishment of Dharma but due to the spirits of the land and all the existing ancient religions and beliefs they encountered major impediments. Upon this, *Shantarakshita* advised the king to invite the enlightened Mahasiddha who manifested supreme miraculous power, *Guru Padmakara. Guru Padmakara* arrived in Tibet (believed to be 747 AD). He established the Dharma by transforming all the spirits of Tibet into Dharma protectors for example twelve Tenmas and 21 great glacier mountains and so many lakes and valleys etc. and finally the entire Tibet and its surrounding Himalaya, Hindukush, Karakorum mountain ranges and beyond, he transformed into Vajra Bhumi.

The first Buddhist monastery was established in Tibet and the ground was marked when Guru Rinpoche miraculously performed Vajra Nyitham in the sky in the midday sun. Then, the shadow falling onto the ground served as basis for all the shrines, major and minor building complexes and walls of Samye Monastery to be built. Subsequently 108 brilliant candidates such as *Vairochana* were chosen and trained as sacred Dharma translators. Seven candidates, including *Vairochana* were ordained to the Vinaya by *Shantarakshita*. In Samye, *Shantarakshita* headed the Vinayasangha and *Guru Padmakara* headed the tantric sangha respectively. *Guru Padmakara*, Acharya *Shantarakshita* and king *TrisongDetsen* summoned all the chiefs of ancient beliefs such as animism, shamanism, Bön and others. They gathered at Benkhar Thang and declared a thorough examination through intellectual excellency, spiritual achievement, miraculous display, etc. As a result, the Bön as we know it today was preserved in Tibet under the blessing of *Guru Padmakara*.

Other sacred knowledge such as astrology, medicine, and art, etc. was translated. Subsequently 108 main monasteries were established in sacred points, known as Tangdul and Yangdul. In each one of them the sangha was established to study, practice and perform the sacred rites to continue the Buddhadharma lineage. The enormous amount of tantras such as *Drubpa Kagye*, for example *1 Jampal Ku*, *2 Pema Sung*, *3 Yangdhatu*, *4 DütsiYönten*, *5 Phurba Thinley*, *6 Mamo Bötong*, *7 Möpa Dra-Ngak*, *8 JigtenChötö* and all levels of Dzogchen, etc. were transmitted to the king, the queen, ministers, the Vinayasangha, tantric sangha, the general public devotees, gods, spirits and all the beings.

Finally The Buddhadharma was fully established in Tibet, The Land of Snow.

Amongst Guru Padmakara's enormous sea of disciples, just to mention a few main Enlightened

Ones starting with King *Trisong Detsen*, were The 25 Mahasiddhas known as *Jebang Nyer-nga* as well as The Five enlightened Queens, *Yeshe Tsogyal* (Tibet), *Mandarava* (North India), *Kalasiddhi* (Northwest India), *Shakya Devi* (Nepal), *Tashi Kyedon* (Bhutan). They are body, speech, mind, quality and activity manifestations of Buddha Sambhogakaya Varjavarahi.

Guru Rinpoche also gave extensive prophecies for the world, for the Buddhadharma and for Tibet.

In order to preserve the pure Buddhadharma lineage, he sealed enormous amounts of Dharma treasures in the form of sacred relics, dharma texts, wish fulfilling gems and blessing medicines, etc.; described as 108 major treasures, 25 treasures of great definition and countless amounts of other important sacred treasures in upper, middle and lower Tibet. All the treasure masters to reveal them were prophesized; sacred places such as

In Ngari, 20 great snow mountains In Utsang, 21 sacred sites In Dokham, 25 holy places

And three holy places, eight great caves, five sacred valleys, 21 glaciers and 3 sacred regions were described as perfect places for the individual cultivation of all different levels; from highly evolved to someone just a beginner, they all would have enormous impact on their divine progress.

After King *Trisong Detsen's* sudden death the prince was very young. Therefore *Guru Padmakara* ruled Tibet in the place of the king. As Prince *Muni Tsenpo* reached the age he was enthroned but died very shortly afterwards. Then again, *Guru Padmakara* enthroned prince *Muthri Tsenpo* as king of Tibet who thereafter ruled as great dharma king. After some time the enlightened Acharya *Shantarakshita* passed away in Jangchub Ling Monastery near Lhasa. After one year *Guru Padmakara* was about to leave for the Southwestern distant land of the Lankas but at the request of the king and disciples he stayed one more year. After many sacred transmissions and advices *Guru Padmakara* then finally proceeded to Gungthang Mountain pass and there gave his last advice to the king, queen, ministers and all the disciples and subjects. Then from the sky, accompanied by divine music and divinities, a peacock colored mythical horse descended through the clouds. *Guru Padmakara* rode on it and surrounded by the entourage of divinity and divine music, ascended slowly into the sky, further and further Southwest into the distance and then could not be seen any longer. Then he went to the Southwestern distant land of the Lankas to help freeing them from terrible torment.

Nevertheless, until the last sentient being will reach Buddhahood, *The Immortal Guru Padmakra* constantly guides all sentient beings throughout infinite space to liberate them from the suffering of samsara and if anyone with noble motivation and sincerity prays to him, thinks of him and says the mantra, OM AH HUNG BENDZRA GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG he will manifest and guide them into the right direction to enlightenment.

Throughout Tibet and its surroundings within and beyond all the three great mountain ranges of central Asia and today throughout all continents of planet earth he is believed as second Buddha and known as *Guru Padmakara*, *Guru Padmasmabhava*, *Guru Rinpoche*, *The Precious Guru*.

His Eminence the 12<sup>th</sup> Chamgon Kenting Tai Situpa Rinpoche

# Eight manifestation of Guru Padmasambhava

Embodiment of the primordial Buddha Samantabhadra manifest from the heart of Buddha of limitless light invoke by immeasurable compassion from the divine lotus at lake dhanakosha in the kingdom of Oddiyana. He is PADMA VAJRA.

In the kingdom of Oddiyana, He liberated the beings and fulfilled the noble wishes of the king Indrabhuti. He is PADMA RAJA.

In the holy place of Bodhgaya at Vajrasana and surrounding holy places, he manifest as second Buddha. He is SHAKYA SIMHA.

In the sacred cemeteries of Mahasukha and the land of Beta, he is surrounding by dharma pala's. He is SURYA PRABHA.

At the charnel ground of Kashmir and many sacred places around Arya bhumi, he is surrounded Mahasiddhas. He is DHIMANVARUCHI.

In Magadha and south of India, he transformed all evil forces and enlightened all confusion and at the stupa of Boudhanath in Nepal. He is SIMHA NADU.

At The Kingdom of Sahora, he transformed the conflagrating fire into lotus lake and liberated the king and all the beings of the kingdom. He is PADMASAMBHAVA.

At the sacred places of the Paro Taktsang, in the kingdom of Bhutan, he tamed all the gods of the locality, blessed all the mountains, valleys, lakes and rivers as sacred realm. He is VAJRA DROLO.



Guru Nyima Ozer/Surya Parva (top image) Guru Senge Dradok/Simha Nadu (bottom image) Size: 17"x26"



Guru Pema Jungne/Padma Vajra (top image) Guru Lodhen Chogsey/ Dimanvaruchi (bottom) Size: 17"x26"



**Guru Rinpoche** Size: 17"x26"



Guru Pema Sambha/Padmasambhava (top image) Guru Pema Gyalpo/Padma Raja (bottom image) Size: 17"x26"



Guru Shakya Senge/Shakya Simha (top image) Guru Dorjee Drolo/ Vajra Drollo (bottom image) Size: 17"x26"











Padmasambhava: Eight Forms (Tib: gu ru mtshan brgyad) Origin: Tibet Period: 19th Century Material: Ground Mineral Pigment on Cotton

## Description:

The eight special forms representing eight different time periods and locations in the life story of Padmasambhava. Here the Eight Forms are surrounded by the famous Eighty-four Indian Adepts (Mahashiddha) of the Abhyadatta System. The depictions of these Eighty-four Mahasiddha are based on the documented descriptions of Jonang Taranata (1575-1635) as commissioned and painted as murals in the Ganden Puntsogling Monastery, Tibet.



Guru Tso-kye Dorje Zangdok Palri (Pure Land-Copper Coloured Mountain) Origin: Tibet Period: 18th Century Material: Ground Mineral Pigment on Cotton

## Description:

At the invitation of the second religious king, Trisong Detsen, Guru Padmasambhava came from the western country of Uddiyana to Tibet in the 8th Century, to firmly establish the teachings of Buddha there. He founded the first Tibetan monastery Samye and the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. The picture shows, in a vision, the pure existence plain of the Tantric master, Zangdok Palri, which means 'Glorious copper-coloured mountain'. In the connection of the 'Lotus-Born' with Avalokitesvara and Amitabhas embodied the three plains of existence of Enlightenment. The varied clothing and attributes are allergories of his enlightened qualities and knowledge. The Vajra held in the right hand in front of his heart is a symbol of immeasurable compassion, and the overcoming of the emotions. The staff Khatvanga, held in the crook of his arm, is a symbol indicating his mystical companion. On his right sits his disciple-consort Mandarava, the daughter of a Mandi King of Kullu Valley, and on his left is Yeshe Tshogyal, a Tibetan queen. Grouped around the three central figures are the 'Eight Principal Manifestations of the Guru' (Gu-ru mTsan-brgyad), which are related to the stages of his spiritual life. In the rainbow dance Kingaras to the sound of their hand-drums, the Enlightened Beings Amitayus, Manjushri, Vajrasattva, Vajrapani and Syama Tara complete the holy gathering.



**Guru Tso-kye Dorje** Origin: Tibet Period: 18th Century Material: Ground Mineral Pigment on Cotton

## Description:

Along with King Trisong Detsen and Acharya Santarakshita, Padmasambhava is considered one the principal early teachers to bring Buddhism to Tibet in the 8th Century, Padmasambhava has numerous forms representing outer, inner and secret aspects of his spiritual being. He is also known by many different names which generally follow chronologically his life story. Aside from Trisong Detsen and Santarakshita, the most important figures to interact with Padmasambhava were his principle Tibetan consort Yeshe Tshogyal and the principal Twenty five Disciples.



**Guru Padmasambhava** Origin: Tibet Period: 12th Century Material: Bronze

#### Description:

Padmasambhava, "lotus-born," an Indian teacher said to have been miraculously born in a lotus flower, is revered by all Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Padmasambhava is credited with taming the forces opposed to Buddhism in Tibet, such as indigenous gods, which he transformed into Buddhist protectors. It is also said that Padmasambhava concealed his teachings, known as treasure teachings, throughout the Himalayan landscape to be discovered by foretold disciples at opportune times in the future. Revered by Tibetans as the Second Buddha, Padmasambhava can be recognized by his lotus hat and elaborate dress, which combines secular, Tantric, and monastic elements (boots, long sleeves, and outer robe).



**Guru Zahorma** Origin: Tibet Period: 13th Century Material: Tibetan Bronze

#### Description:

Padmasambhava, "lotus-born," an Indian teacher said to have been miraculously born in a lotus flower, is revered by all Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Padmasambhava is credited with taming the forces opposed to Buddhism in Tibet, such as indigenous gods, which he transformed into Buddhist protectors. It is also said that Padmasambhava concealed his teachings, known as treasure teachings, throughout the Himalayan landscape to be discovered by foretold disciples at opportune times in the future. Revered by Tibetans as the Second Buddha, Padmasambhava can be recognized by his lotus hat and elaborate dress, which combines secular, Tantric, and monastic elements (boots, long sleeves, and outer robe).









# Padmasambhava and Bhutan

Padmasambhava or Guru Rinpoche, as he is known in Bhutan, is without any doubt the most important and universal of all historical and religious figures in Bhutan. The Bhutanese world is imbued with his presence so much that he can be considered the patron saint of Bhutan. From the grand state festivals to the first prayers that toddlers mumble, from the giant monuments to fleeting dreams of hermitic monks, the figure and worship of Guru Rinpoche permeate Bhutan's spiritual and religious culture. To most Bhutanese, he is both a precious teacher (Guru Rinpoche) and the quintessential divinity.

He is often described as the second Buddha and perceived as the embodiment of enlightened wisdom, compassion and power of all Buddhas. He is seen as the epitome of immeasurable power and beneficence and one that is particularly kind to people of hidden lands, such as Bhutan. It is traditionally believed that Bhutan is the destined field of activity for Guru Rinpoche, just as India is for the Buddha and Tibet is for Avalokiteśvara.

In the theological formulation of Guru Rinpoche as the focus of prayer and meditation, he is not merely a historical person but an enlightened energy or state of being. The historical figure of Guru Rinpoche symbolically represents the divine and enlightened being, which transcends the vicissitude of life and death and the notions of time and space. In the ultimate state, he is the primordial Buddha, his enlightened nature immanent in all phenomena and beyond individuality. He is the state one must aspire to reach as indicated by the popular mantra dedicated to him, om aḥ hum vajra guru padma siddhi hum (May I attain the state of the adamantine guru Padma).

Karma Phuntsho



Painting of Guru's consort, Khandro Yeshi Tshogyel in Tamshing Lhakhang. Restored in 2015, it is one of the earliest paintings in Bhutan which was documented and preserved by the Department of Culture.



Image of Guru Padmasambhava in Dungkhor Lhakhang. The mural was painted in 1960s and has more of a Chu Tshoen style that refer to a water-mixed shaded technique It was painted on a cotton cloth and then pasted onto a wall plaster.



Image of Guru Padmasambhava in Thadrak Lhakhang, a religious meditation centre and a school of Vajrakila tradition located near Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan.



Image of Guru Padmasambhava in Nobgang Lhakhang. Such murals date back to the 19th century and were painted with locally prepared canvas attached to a wall plaster.



Image of Guru Rinpoche in Chakarzur Lhakhang, which is believed to have been built in one day by Yab Tenpai Nima (father of Zhabdrung).. The mural of Guru Rinpoche was painted in the 1960s on extended walls.



Painting of Guru Rinpoche in Khangza Lhakhang at Phajoding. The image shows Guru Tshengyed, Tshepadme, Chenrize, Kaygued Lams and Gongdue Lha Gue. The painting was prepared on a cotton cloth and then pasted onto an earthen plaster.



Painting of Guru Padmasambhava from the 19th century in Nyangmed Chum Lhakhang.



Statue of Guru Rinpoche in Phudrup Goenpa in Paro, Bhutan.



Painting of Guru Rinpoche in Ta Rimochen Lhakhang in Bumthang. The monastery was built by Terton Pema Lingpa in the 14th century to mark the sacred place where Guru Rinpoche mediated. The mural was painted directly on an earthen plaster with pigments and organic dyes.



Statue of Guru Rinpoche in Shugdrak Goenpa, which is located on one of the four holy cliffs in Bumthang where Guru Rinpoche mediated and left his foot prints.



Painting of Guru Rinpoche in Changangkha Lhakhang, which was founded by Sey Nima, son of the 13th century Drukpa Kagyu master, Phajo Drugom Shigpo. The painting, which dates back to mid-19th century, was prepared directly on a mud plaster with mineral pigments.



Image of Guru Rinpoche in Tag Ga Lhakhang in Bumthang. The mural was painted directly onto an earthen plaster.





### KATHANG DENGA

Text of the Five Chronicles

A terma (spiritual hidden treasure) biography of Guru Padmasambha revealed by Ogyen Lingpa at the Crystal Cave in Yarlung (Yarlung Shel Kyi Brag), in Tibet Published period: Contemporary

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## Guru Padmasambhava

Gild Bronze Statue Period: About 17th Century Height: 30.5 cms

Donated by the Private Office of H.H. Dalai Lama (28 July 1971)

Arranged for this exhibition by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives Museum



## Guru Padmasambhava

Gild Bronze Statue Period: About 17th Century Height: 16.7 cms

Donated by the Private Office of H.H. Dalai Lama (28 July 1971)

Arranged for this exhibition by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives Museum



# Garab Dorje

Gild Bronze Statue Period: Unknown Height: 8.5 cm

Donated by the Private Office of H.H. Dalai Lama (03 May 1975)

Arranged for this exhibition by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives Museum



