

# The Clarifying Light: A Prophecy of the Future

*from the Words of the Buddha*

*compiled by Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö<sup>1</sup>*

*Homage to the Three Jewels.<sup>2</sup>*

The Blessed One taught the following text, which is of benefit during an evil age.

The range of what is called Dharma is likened to a path. Why? It is on this path that all living beings travel. That is why the Dharma is said to be like a path.

Once, when the Blessed One was seated beneath the bodhi tree, he saw all the living beings of Jambudvīpa. He saw that at the end of time, in the five-hundred-year period, an age of evil would arise. As to the thoughts and deeds of all beings, those people who encounter this text through their tenfold purity will be greatly meritorious, while those who do not encounter this text will be weak in merit and experience intense pain due to the afflictions. Human beings upon the earth will feel as if hacked apart with weapons.

Then, venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One, "O Blessed One, since you consider human beings with compassion, please save them from this suffering."

The Blessed One said to venerable Ānanda, "I shall explain to you. I was abiding in the expanse of space. I directed my intention to view the living beings of Jambudvīpa. Listen, all of you, to my words. This Dharma text is a teaching that will be of benefit when an age of evil arises. To write it out and recite it and practise the visualization and recitation of the Great Compassionate One will swiftly purify all harmful actions and obscurations. Honouring this text with offerings of incense and flowers will bring about the happiness of all sentient beings. Writing out and reciting this text will lead to excellent rebirth throughout all future lives."

At the foot of the tree was a great lake, on the shores of which sat the emanation of Great Compassion, who had directed his magnanimity towards all living beings and was weeping intensely. The Blessed One said:

"Great Compassionate One, listen well. There is no need to weep. Listen well to what I have to say. In the tiger month of the new year I decided to go to the human realm.<sup>3</sup> At that time I freed all the beings of the age of evil from the ocean of suffering that is saṃsāra. They renounced all harmful action. I even guided the beings who had fallen into the hells. At that time, I spread this dharma text. Writing or reciting this text will put an end to all sickness. Any person who writes it out will benefit a whole town. Any town where it is written will benefit a whole country. The

merit of human beings will increase, and negative circumstances and obstacles will be averted. It will bring release from the sufferings of the hells. It will be of benefit in both present and future lives. This is the essential path for all beings of the six classes. It is comparable to sailing in a boat across an ocean or river. Having faith in, and pure devotion towards, this text is crucial. Until Maitreya arrives in the human realm this text will yield extensive benefit. Writing out this Dharma and sharing it with others will bring boundless merit within the same lifetime and the same body. It will cause the blood-filled ocean of saṃsāra to dry up.

"By means of ten mental impurities, beings will first be overwhelmed by the afflictions. How worthy of compassion are all beings! Thereafter, second, the human realm will become a valley filled with blood. Third, although crops are planted and the land cultivated, there will be no freedom to enjoy the results.<sup>4</sup> Fourth, human beings will experience intense suffering. Fifth, people will lack vision while travelling on paths.<sup>5</sup> Sixth, cities will be overrun by carnivorous wild animals. Seventh, buildings within countries will lie empty.<sup>6</sup> Eighth, carnivorous wild animals will be seen wandering about aimlessly.<sup>7</sup> Ninth, although a few people will remain they will not dare to stay. Tenth, hungry ghosts and harmful spirits will appear, roaming through cities. This is what will come to pass based on the ten impurities.

"People will lack respect for one another and appear to praise themselves while disparaging others. There are four classes in human society: rulers, merchants, labourers and priests.<sup>8</sup> If they all have confidence in and reverence for this text the age will be one of fortune."

The Blessed One said, "Those who distrust this text will mislead one another and fall into the hell of ultimate torment (*avīci*). They will not hear the Dharma, and their cries of anguish will be heard throughout heaven and earth. An age of epidemics will dawn.<sup>9</sup> To write down or recite this dharma text immediately upon hearing it will overcome all epidemics and famine. It will bring excellent rebirth.

"There are seven forms of suffering in this world:<sup>10</sup> first, there is the suffering of heat and cold in the hells; second, the suffering of hunger and thirst among the pretas; third, the suffering of ignorance and confusion among animals;<sup>11</sup> fourth, the suffering of birth, old age, sickness and death, as well as lack of freedom, poverty and adherence to wrong views among human beings;<sup>12</sup> fifth, the suffering of hostility and conflict among the asuras;<sup>13</sup> sixth, the suffering of death, transmigration and downfall among the gods;<sup>14</sup> and seventh, the suffering of the bardo of becoming. Having confidence in this text, which is of benefit in these circumstances, will cause all wishes to be fulfilled and all disease to be eliminated. It will bring the excellent fortune of a bygone age.

"You might wonder why this is so. In a male Fire Horse year, a meteor the size of a

large rock<sup>15</sup> will fall from the expanse of space and land on the shore of a large body of water.<sup>16</sup> When that meteorite cracks open, this text will emerge from it. It will then be crucially important for this dharma text to be passed on from one person to another and not kept hidden or secret. This is not intended for only one or two individuals; it has been set down for the sake of all sentient beings. May all the sufferings of saṃsāra come to an end!

"In future, at the end of the five-hundred-year period,  
When the teachings of the Buddha are in decline,  
When the discipline of monks has deteriorated,  
When minds are occupied with negative thoughts,  
When people feast on broken pledges and misdeeds,  
When they engage in the ten unwholesome actions,  
When mantra practitioners recite evil spells,  
When the five poisons are nurtured deep within,  
When people misbehave physically and verbally,  
When dharma teaching is in terminal decline,  
When bird feathers develop on hillsides,<sup>17</sup>  
When wood is kept in an iron case,<sup>18</sup>  
When people commit wicked deeds,  
All these actions, faults and defects<sup>19</sup>  
Will surely herald a fearful time of crisis.  
This text that dispels the conditions of an evil age  
Must be written out or recited immediately upon sight—  
Have no doubt that this will avert the evils of the age.  
It is enough to inquire whether this is true.  
Let us speak and express only truth.  
All those who claim that this is untrue  
Will be struck by the symptoms of disease  
From the tips of the hair on their head  
Down to the very tips of their toes."

When the Blessed One had said this, the Great Compassionate One, Maitreya, Ānanda, and the whole world with its human beings, asuras and gandharvas rejoiced and praised the speech of the Blessed One.

Then the Blessed One extended his right hand, beautifully adorned with the marks and signs, and touched it to the ground, thereby subjugating evil demonic forces together with their retinues. One must train in this transcendent perfection of wisdom, which brings inconceivable joy and mental wellbeing and which subjugates and pacifies illness and demonic forces. Then the Blessed One entered the Ganges-like meditative absorption<sup>20</sup> and spoke this text which summarizes all the excellent teachings of the sūtras.

Ānanda then addressed the Blessed One once again: "Blessed One, this Dharma that you have taught is for the purpose of averting obstacles and negative circumstances in saṃsāra. In the male Earth Monkey year an epidemic will occur, and it will be crucial to have a profound means of addressing it. If beings should doubt the truth of this and lack confidence in this text, neglecting it out of indifference so that it cannot spread,<sup>21</sup> this will only delight the demonic forces. But for this text to be copied and trusted will bring much happiness. This dharma text will bring relief."

The Blessed One replied:<sup>22</sup>

"Good, good. That is exceedingly good.  
This is to be taught everywhere from early on,  
And an excellent wealth of virtue will result.  
Merit and qualities will fully unfold.  
All the perfect buddhas have spoken thus.  
Nanda, Upananda, and the rest of you,  
Exert yourselves in this, which is beneficial to beings.  
In future, at the end of time,  
The virtue of this will be beyond imagining.  
For anyone who has faith in this  
All wishes will be fulfilled,  
Obstacles and adversity will be banished.  
A person with faith in the Buddha's teachings  
Should make offerings with incense and flowers."

Then the protector Maitreya looked out from the expanse of space and saw that human beings were shedding tears of blood. He went before the Blessed One and said, "Blessed One, I beseech you to impart a Dharma for the future that conveys its message in few words but holds great blessings."

The Blessed One replied:

"Maitreya, that is excellent.  
Listen to this speech of mine.  
It is imparted for the sake of all beings  
Including the likes of Brahmā and Śakra.  
In order to benefit all living beings  
I have verbally communicated this message.  
It is to be respected and diligently applied,  
As it will bring an abundance of virtue.

"Later, in the first month of autumn during the male Fire Horse year and in the male Earth Monkey year, evil people who lack faith in this text will meet their deaths. Those people who copy or recite this text will lead long lives, enjoy good health and

gain much merit. All the harmful forces of this evil age will come to roam about the towns. Invisible to human beings, they will pass through uncertain places while remaining hidden. At that time the blessings of this dharma text will cause all spirits, evil forces and harmful influences to shudder and flee. It is vital that this text be disseminated throughout every land. Do not consider it untrue or harbour doubt.

"For those who lack faith in this Dharma taught by the wise and venerable Buddha, Sugata, knower of the world, guide and tamer of beings, unsurpassed teacher of gods and men, awakened and transcendent conqueror, a great earthquake will occur in a Fire Horse year. The crisis that arises at this time will intensify in a female Fire Sheep year, and some people will contract diseases due to defilement (*grib*) and die.<sup>23</sup> Some will die on roads, and some will die in landslides.<sup>24</sup>

"In a male Earth Monkey year there will be terrifying floods. In the summer, sickness brought on by famine will cause loss of life. At that time, harmful spirits will overrun the land. Copying and reciting this teaching will afford protection against harmful influences and obstacle-makers.

"In a female Earth Bird year it will be crucially important to avoid harming others, to refrain from consuming flesh or blood, and to guard one's vows.

"In a male Iron Dog year lands and cities will be overrun by tigers, leopards, bears, wolves and jackals. It will be crucial at that time to copy and recite this Dharma as a means of liberation for human beings.

"In a female Iron Sheep year<sup>25</sup> all sentient beings will come to lack self-control, like paper blown about in the wind or like a great lake that surges and overflows. At that time those people who lack faith in this text will die."

Then the Blessed One said to the Great Compassionate One:

"In a year of the Mouse the melodious sound of Dharma will emanate from the expanse of space. If one were then to copy or recite this text which radiates throughout all four cardinal and eight intermediate directions with the power and strength of the buddhas' blessings, like the light of the sun and moon, it would bring benefit until Maitreya arrives. Such is the potential of this text.

"If this is copied or recited aloud  
It will bring mountainous merit.  
In a palace upon Mount Potala  
Resides the emanation of buddha speech  
Surrounded by a retinue of bodhisattvas.  
Above, below and in each of the ten directions—  
Beings everywhere he leads to happiness.

"Moreover, the Great Compassionate One considered all human beings with compassion and disseminated this text<sup>26</sup> for the sake of sentient beings. When it is doubted and considered untrue, then in the first and middle months of summer an epidemic will arise. People will fall sick in the morning and die in the evening.<sup>27</sup> At that time, as the age of crisis unfolds, plants and forests will be hacked and hewn, rocky mountains will crumble from their base, and the earth will tremble and quake, as if incapable of remaining still. No more than one in ten people will survive. Do not think this untrue, for it is the word of the Blessed One.<sup>28</sup> How worthy of compassion are all beings!

"Then, in a female Fire Sheep year and male Earth Monkey year the evil 'five-hundred-year' period will dawn. Conflict will arise from all around—the four cardinal and eight intermediate directions. Human beings will quarrel and fight among themselves.<sup>29</sup> This is a Dharma that liberates from the ravages of time. To copy and recite it upon first sight will overcome conflict. This text, which brings wellbeing if copied or recited, will bring boundless virtue and liberate from every fear and concern.

"This dharma text is not for only one or two individuals; it was composed for the sake of all sentient beings. If this dharma text is distributed throughout every land in all directions human beings will enjoy excellent happiness and wellbeing. Through an abundance of virtue,<sup>30</sup> the sufferings of sentient beings will end.

"Unless this text is diligently recollected for five or six months, an age of epidemics will dawn. Some will die from fever; some will die from colds; some will lose their sanity and die;<sup>31</sup> some will die from a sickness of the throat,<sup>32</sup> some will die from a sickness of the heart; some will experience intestinal pain and then die; some will die from sickness of the liver. There is a remedy for these harmful spirits and sicknesses.<sup>33</sup>

"Sons and daughters of noble family should keep on their bodies this text which guards against and remedies these forms of sickness and harmful influence. The mantra that guards against, and liberates from, all divine spirits, nāga spirits, elemental spirits and epidemics—**Emaho, p'en no p'en no svāhā**—<sup>34</sup> should be worn by males on their right side and by females on their left. Doing so will liberate from all epidemics and bring excellent rebirth. There is no doubt that copying, reciting and having faith in this will bring freedom from the blood-filled ocean of suffering that is saṃsāra.

How worthy of compassion are all the people between heaven and earth!<sup>35</sup> May all the sicknesses that cause untimely death among human beings be utterly pacified! May beings come to have the excellence of bygone ages! May they come to possess merit beyond measure.

For beings who lack faith in this dharma text there will be no time of liberation.<sup>36</sup> Towns will be overrun by various forms of harmful spirits. At that time the cries of people will fill the air and resound across the earth.<sup>37</sup> Although there will be nutritious fruit and grain, everyone will lack the power to consume it. The whole population will eat demonic food.<sup>38</sup>

Then, the Great Compassionate One, noble Avalokiteśvara, spoke the following<sup>39</sup> so that beings might arouse compassion in their minds: "Blessed One, I pray that you may infuse this text with your blessings. Consecrate it with magnetising powers, I pray."

Then the Blessed One said, "If this text is venerated with faith and devotion evil times will come to an end. It will bring the boundless merit of freedom from every form of contagious disease. Let all human beings on this earth be freed from the conflict, disease and misery of an evil age and gain all the excellence of a bygone era.<sup>40</sup>

"In accordance with this aspiration for the sake of virtue,<sup>41</sup> and especially if this is recited during both the horse month<sup>42</sup> and rabbit month<sup>43</sup> it will bring unimaginable beneficial qualities. People who copy and recite this text will enjoy long lives, good health and happiness.<sup>44</sup> Partially copying the text will pacify all the causes of harm in an age of evil.

This circulated once during a past Dragon year.<sup>45</sup> It was apparently unable to spread throughout the world. This is how the evil age first took hold. Later, the text was circulated in a male Fire Horse year.

This dharma text is the means of averting evil times. Unless it can spread throughout all lands, crops will be ruined by blight, hail and frost, leading to famine. An epidemic of unrecognisable sickness will emerge bringing pain and misery. There is no doubt that copying or reciting this will bring liberation from all suffering.

Until the victorious protector Maitreya arrives in this world, this dharma text serves as a refuge to beings. For those with faith in it and devotion for it let it cleanse and purify all harmful actions, obscurations and habitual tendencies. May harvests be forever excellent! May virtue be abundant! May this be a gem-like source of all that is wished for and required!<sup>46</sup> May everything throughout all these lands be auspicious! May every place become resplendent! With sickness, famine and warfare utterly overcome, may rains bring excellent harvests and may all wishes be spontaneously fulfilled! With wealth and prosperity extending throughout the land, may the Wheel of Dharma turn and forever remain secure.

When the Blessed One had said this, the Great Compassionate One, Maitreya, Ānanda, and the whole world including gods, human beings, asuras and gandharvas rejoiced and praised the speech of the Blessed One.

*This concludes The Clarifying Light: A Prophecy of the Future.*<sup>47</sup>

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1. This text has been described as a revelation of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö's, seemingly because the text is included in the 2012 edition of his collected writings (but not earlier editions); however, its inclusion there is because of his role in compiling the text. The Ya chen edition (see bibliography for details) ends with the following note: "Although there appear to be two different editions of this prophecy for the future by the supreme teacher, the Lord of Sages, this was taken from the original which Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, Vajradhara in person, compiled for the sake of beings of the degenerate age and which was printed in Delhi in 1979 by Tsering Tashi of Sikkim, the secretary of Gyalwang Karmapa's publishing house." See also the [benedictory verses composed by Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö](#), which are appended to the gSung 'bum edition of this text.
2. mChan bu precedes this homage with *Namo guru lokaśvaraye* (sic).
3. The tiger month is the first month of the year.
4. Ya chen: *rang gi rjes su 'brang dbang med*. gSung 'bum: *rang gi spyod dbang med*.
5. Ya chen: *lam la 'gro bar mig gis mi mthong*. gSung 'bum: *lam la 'gro ba'i mi mi mthong* ("people travelling on paths will be invisible")
6. Ya chen: *rgyal khams kyi khang pa rnam stongs par 'gyur ra*. gSung 'bum: *rgyal khams dang khang pa rnam stong par 'gyur* ("countries and houses will become desolate.")

7. Ya chen: *chags med du*. gSung 'bum: *cha med du*.
8. These are the four tiers or classes (*varṇa*) of Indian society: those of the ruler or warrior (*kṣatriya*), merchant (*vaiśya*), labourer (*śūdra*) and priest (*brāhmaṇa*).
9. gSung 'bum has: *tshe 'di la yang* "even in the same lifetime." Ya chen omits this.
10. Following gSung 'bum 592.4 here: *'jig rten na sdug bsngal bdun yod* Ya chen: *mi la sdug bsngal bdun yod*
11. Translation follows gSung 'bum: *dud 'gro blun rmongs kyi sdug bsngal* Ya chen lists the third suffering as that of the asuras.
12. Following gSung 'bum: *mi la skye rga na 'chi dang mi khom pa dang dbul 'phong lta ba log 'dzin gyi sdug bsngal*.
13. Translation here follows gSung 'bum. Ya chen lists the fifth suffering as that of holding wrong views.
14. Translation follows gSung 'bum. Ya chen has simply: *lha tshe ring po'i sdug bsngal*.
15. Translation follows Ya chen: *pha bong tsam*. gSung 'bum has *bong ba tsam* ("the size of a clod of earth")
16. The Tibetan (*mtsho chen po*) here could indicate either a sea or a large lake.
17. AZR: This could refer to fickle, unstable people who take to mountain retreats in place of more stable practitioners.
18. AZR: This could refer to gifted practitioners being kept hidden or maintaining a low profile. Think of a sword that is always kept in a sheath, so that nobody knows of its sharpness and strength.
19. Translation follows Ya chen: *las rnams nyes skyon de rnams kun* gSung 'bum has *las ngan nyes rkyen de rnams kyi*("these evil actions and harmful conditions").
20. Following Ya chen: *gaṅgā'i ting nge 'dzin*. gSung 'bum has *gang gi ting nge 'dzin*.
21. gSung 'bum has *btang snyoms su lus nas*("neglecting it out of indifference") but this is omitted in Ya chen.
22. gSung 'bum has *bcoms ldan 'das kyi* ("The Blessed One replied"); Ya chen omits this.

23. Following A 'dzom: *mi la la grib kyi nad kyis zin nas 'chi* NLMa, NLMb, NLMc, Ya chen and gSung 'bum have *'gril nas 'chi* ("die en masse"?) here.
24. Following A 'dzom: *sa rnyil nas 'chi*. Ya chen: *la la dran pa snying nas 'chi*. gSung 'bum: *la la ni dran pa nyams nas 'chi* ("some will lose consciousness and die").
25. Following Ya chen and gSung 'bum. A 'dzom, NLMa, NLMb and NLMc have Pig (*phag*) in place of Sheep (*lug*) here.
26. Following A 'dzom. Ya chen and gSung 'bum omit *yi ge 'di* ("this text").
27. Following gSung 'bum: *snga 'dro na nas dgong mo 'chi* Ya chen: *nam lang nas dgung mo 'chi*. A 'dzom: *nam lang nas dgong mo'i bar la 'chi*
28. Following gSung 'bum and A 'dzom. Ya chen has: *mi bden bsam na bcom ldan 'das kyi bka' yin* ("You might think this is untrue, but it is the word of the Blessed One.")
29. Following Ya chen: *nang dme byed*. gSung 'bum: *rme byed nas zad* ("fight among themselves and become extinct"?).
30. Following gSung 'bum: *dge ba phun sum tshogs pa yis*. Other editions have *yin* in place of *yis*.
31. gSung 'bum: *la la smyo nas 'chi*. A 'dzom: *la la ni myid pa na nas 'chi* ("some will die from throat sickness").
32. Ya chen: *la la ni lkog ma na nas 'chi*
33. A 'dzom: *gdon nad de rnams la sman yod do*/This line is omitted in gSung 'bum.
34. Following gSung 'bum and Ya chen: *e ma ho/ phan no phan no svāhā*/. A 'dzom and mChan bu have *e ma ho/ om ma phan ni phan ni svāhā*/
35. Following Ya chen, A 'dzom, mChan bu: *gnam sa'i bar gyi mi rnams thams cad snying re rje*/. gSung 'bum: *'jig rten khams kyi mi rnams snying re rje*/"How worthy of compassion are the people of this world!").
36. Following gSung 'bum, A 'dzom and mChan bu. Ya chen, NLMa, NLMb, NLMd have *sngon yang*, which would transform the whole sentence: "In the past, for beings who lacked faith in this dharma text there was no time of liberation."
37. gSung 'bum: *de dus mi rnams ngu 'bod kyis gnam sa gang* This line is omitted in Ya chen.

38. gSung 'bum: *mi grangs mang pos bdud zas byed*. This line occurs earlier and differs in some editions. mChan bu: *mi grangs mang yang bdud zas byas*. A 'dzom: *mi grangs med kyang bdud zas byed*. NLMa, NLMb, NLMc, NLMd: *mi grangs kun kyang bdud zas byed*. Ya chen omits the line altogether.
39. Ya chen: *gsung pa'i yan lag*. A 'dzom and mChan bu: *bsrung ba'i sngags* ("protective mantra"). NLMa, NLMb, NLMc: *bsrung ba'i legs* ("protective excellence"). NLMd: *bsrung ba'i srung ba'i sngags*.
40. There is considerable variation between editions here. Most differences are minor. Note however that gSung 'bum omits *sngon gyi* ("bygone").
41. mChan bu omits *dge ba'i phyir*.
42. i.e., the first month
43. i.e., the second month.
44. Following Ya chen, A 'dzom and mChan bu. gSung 'bum, NLMa, NLMb, NLMc, NLMd makes the sentence imperative through the ending *gyur cig*.
45. gSung 'bum: *'di sngon byung 'brug lo la gcig dar/*. NLMa has *thal* in place of *dar*. mChan bu: *sngon 'drug lo nang la cha gcig song yang/*
46. Following A 'dzom, mChan bu, NLMa, NLMc: *nor bu lta bu'i dgos 'dod 'byung bar gyur cig/* gSung 'bum, Ya chen and NLMd omit *lta bu'i*.
47. mChan bu concludes with the following additions: May this Mahāyāna Dharma entitled *The Clarifying Light: A Prophecy of the Future* be fulfilled. Do not doubt this Dharma. This is spoken before the bodhi tree by all the buddhas and bodhisattvas for the sentient beings of the degenerate time of the five-hundred-year period in order to dispel the terrors of that evil age. May it spread throughout the whole of space. As the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (X, 37) says: "From birdsong and the rustling of trees,/ From beams of light and even from the sky,/ May all embodied beings forever perceive/ The sound of dharma in a constant stream." In keeping with this, this prophecy spoken by the Buddha first descended from the expanse of space in a former male Fire Horse year. Thereafter, noble Avalokiteśvara spread it throughout all lands for beings' benefit. In future, from the male Fire Horse year onwards, since it is said that the various crises will gradually occur, it is important to pray to the Three Jewels, who are the unfailing sources of refuge, and especially Avalokiteśvara, protector of the Land of Snows. It is also vitally important to cultivate virtue and abandon wrongdoing, and above all to persevere in writing and reciting this text of prophecy as a means to avert the various crises that it foretells. May this be a cause of temporary protection from fear and the pacification of

disease, famine and conflict, and ultimately the attainment of the state of omniscience. This note was written by the one named Chö. May it be virtuous. May it be auspicious.



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