

# SUMMONED BY THE EARTH

BECOMING A HOLY VESSEL  
FOR HEALING OUR WORLD

CYNTHIA JURs

FOREWORDS BY

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&

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**PROSPECTA PRESS**

## ENDNOTES AND CITATIONS

### *Prologue*

1. Joanna Macy, *World as Lover, World as Self: Courage for Global Justice and Ecological Renewal* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2007), 151.
2. Thich Nhat Hanh, quoted in Macy, *World as Lover, World as Self*, 95.

### Section One: Answering the Call

#### *Chapter One: The Path*

1. For thirty years I lived with the understanding that Charok Rinpoche was 106 years old when I met him. But then, nearing the completion of writing this book, I learned from Lama Ngawang Tsultrim Rinpoche that he was ninety-six when he passed away. A mythic tale is hard to come by, and this news was hard to accept. But I hope you will agree, regardless of his actual age, all that unfolded from meeting him was extraordinarily meaningful.
2. “Meditation boxes” or *gomtri* in the Tibetan language are the typical tantric wooden meditation seats where the male or female practitioner remains throughout day and night. Generally, it is applied in three-year retreats. However, some apply this method all life long. Erik Pema Kunsang, *Blazing Splendor, The Memoirs of the Dzogchen Yogi Tulku Ugyen Rinpoche* (Boulder, Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 2005), 160–161.

3. Since radioactive waste comprises multiple substances with varying lifespans in different durations of time, it is difficult to estimate how long it will take for radioactive waste in general to decay completely. However, as of January, 2009, *Scientific American* claimed that plutonium, one of the primary elements used in nuclear weapons, would have fatal effects on humans for at least 250,000 years. David Biello, “Spent Nuclear Fuel: A Trash Heap Deadly for 250,000 Years or a Renewable Energy Source?,” *Scientific American*, January 28, 2009, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/nuclear-waste-lethal-trash-or-renewable-energy-source/>.
4. Edwin Bernbaum, *The Way to Shambhala: A Search for the Mythical Kingdom Beyond the Himalayas* (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1989), 64.
5. Ian Baker, *The Heart of the World: A Journey to the Last Secret Place* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004), 10.
6. Baker, *Heart of the World*, 26.
7. This chapter appeared in a modified form in *Tricycle*. Cynthia Jurs, “Earth Treasure Vases,” *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, Summer 1997, <https://tricycle.org/magazine/earth-treasure-vases/>.

## *Chapter Two: Stepping Stones*

1. For more information on Oddiyana, see:  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oddiyana>  
<https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Oddiyana>
2. Thich Nhat Hanh was eventually allowed to visit Vietnam again and made several important trips there with members of his extended community. Then, in 2014, Thich had a stroke that paralyzed half his body and

prevented him from speaking. Finally, in 2018, Thay indicated he wished to return to his homeland and was given permission to return at age ninety-three. He lived out his days at his home temple, Tu Hieu Pagoda in Hue, until his death on January 22, 2022, at age ninety-five.

3. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Interbeing: Fourteen Guidelines for Engaged Buddhism* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1987), 6.

Thich Nhat Hanh goes on to say, “If we combine the prefix ‘inter’ with the verb ‘to be,’ we have a new verb, ‘inter-be.’ To inter-be and the action of interbeing reflects reality more accurately. We inter-are with one another and with all life.” *The Art of Living* (New York: HarperOne, 2017), excerpted in “Interbeing,” *Awakin*, <https://www.awakin.org/v2/read/view.php?tid=2619>.

He continues, “To be means to inter-be. A flower has to inter-be—with the sunshine, the cloud, with everything else. She doesn’t have a separate existence. So being means interbeing. Existing means coexisting.” “To Be Means to Inter-Be,” Plum Village, July 12, 2021, <https://plumvillage.app/to-be-means-to-inter-be/>.

4. Open Way Sangha was the name of our sangha in the early years when I began to teach in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh and carry out the work with the Earth Treasure Vases. Elsewhere in the book we refer to Alliance for the Earth, which is the nonprofit organization that serves as the fiscal entity for our global healing work. Nowadays, our community is called the Gaia Mandala Global Healing Community, or simply Gaia Mandala.

5. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Call Me by My True Names: The Collected Poems of Thich Nhat Hanh* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1993), 73.

### *Chapter Three: The Terma*

1. For more information on the terma tradition, see: <http://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Terma>.
2. For more information on peace vases, see: <http://peacevaseproject.org/>.

### *Chapter Four: The Bomb in My Backyard*

1. In a personal conversation with Marian Naranjo on August 31, 2022, she shared that there were 125 pueblos before the Spanish came to what is now known as New Mexico.

2. Although I have had trouble documenting this, I was told by Marian (on August 31, 2022) that the “towering volcano” was the size of Mount Everest and that its explosion sent rocks hundreds of miles. She says she remembers seeing images from the first space shuttle, which showed lava from the Valles Caldera in Chicago! For more information on that explosion:

Fraser Goff, “The Valles Caldera: New Mexico’s Supervolcano,” *New Mexico Earth Matters*, Winter 2010, <http://npshistory.com/publications/vall/nmbgmr-winter-2010.pdf>.

3. Greg Mello, founder and executive director of the Los Alamos Study Group (<http://www.lasg.org>), shared in a personal communication with me on October 15, 2021, that this is a secret program so there is no single place where complete information can be found, but these links might be helpful:

- Los Alamos Study Group, “NNSA Pit Production Strategy: No Clear Goals, Plans, or Likelihood of Success; Production at LANL Has High Risks and Costs, Few or No Program Benefits” (online PowerPoint presentation, updated

Oct 3, 2020), [http://lasg.org/presentations/PlutoniumPit-Workshop\\_1Oct2020.pdf](http://lasg.org/presentations/PlutoniumPit-Workshop_1Oct2020.pdf).

- Los Alamos Study Group, “Presentation to the Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee of the New Mexico Legislature” (online PowerPoint presentation, Sept 9, 2020), [http://lasg.org/presentations/LASG-RHMC-slides\\_9Sep2020.pdf](http://lasg.org/presentations/LASG-RHMC-slides_9Sep2020.pdf).
- Los Alamos Study Group, “LANL Pit Production: Fifth Failure in Progress” (online PowerPoint presentation, Sep 30, 2021), [http://lasg.org/presentations/LASG-SantaFe-public-mtg\\_30Sep2021.pdf](http://lasg.org/presentations/LASG-SantaFe-public-mtg_30Sep2021.pdf).

In addition, as of April 28, 2021, the Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration approved the Los Alamos Plutonium Pit Production Project at Los Alamos National Laboratory to produce thirty pits per year. “NNSA Approves Critical Decision 1 for Los Alamos Plutonium Pit Production Project,” US DOE’s National Nuclear Security Administration, April 28, 2021, <https://www.energy.gov/nnsa/articles/nnsa-approves-critical-decision-1-los-amos-plutonium-pit-production-project>.

As of May 26, 2021, the *Albuquerque Journal* reported that LANL has started to expand their plutonium-producing sites into Santa Fe, NM. *Albuquerque Journal* staff, “Big development on the nuclear horizon,” *Albuquerque Journal*, May 26, 2021, <https://www.abqjournal.com/2394598/big-development-on-the-nuclear-horizon-ex-huge-growth-at-lanl-in-plutonium-pit-production-raises-ethical-issues.html>.

Finally, the most recent info comes from Tewa Women United, which

sought public comments to oppose the expansion of plutonium-pit production to thirty pits a year by 2026:

Tewa Women United, “Action Alert: Submit Public Comment on LANL’s New Sitewide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS),” accessed May 17, 2023, <https://tewawomenunited.org/2022/10/action-alert-submit-public-comment-on-lanls-new-sitewide-environmental-impact-statement-sweis>.

4. Laura Paskus, “Groundwater War: New Mexico’s Toxic Threat,” New Mexico PBS, updated April 26, 2021, accessed July 7, 2023, <https://www.newmexicopbs.org/productions/groundwater-war/2021/02/24/forever-chemicals-found-in-los-alamos-waters/>.

5. Rebecca Moss, “Cancer-causing chemicals appear to spread in regional aquifer near LANL,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, September 15, 2017, [https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local\\_news/cancer-causing-chemicals-appear-to-spread-in-regional-aquifer-near/article\\_7f368ea7-120c-57fe-ade7-aa6561db190a.html](https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/cancer-causing-chemicals-appear-to-spread-in-regional-aquifer-near/article_7f368ea7-120c-57fe-ade7-aa6561db190a.html).

6. An independent report completed by the students of Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 2020 concludes, “Chromium concentrations at laboratory borders are increasing and continue to pose a risk to the adjacent Pueblo.” Charles A. Carlo et al., *Plutonium-239 and Chromium-6 Contamination at Los Alamos National Laboratory: Analyzing Contaminant Migration and Assessing Remediation* (Worcester, MA: Worcester Polytechnic Institute, 2020), i.

On February 24, 2021, the New Mexico Environment Department sued DOE for its continuing procrastination on cleaning up nuclear waste at LANL, which poses hazardous impacts on people’s health in neighboring communities. *Albuquerque Journal* staff, “State Sues DOE over LANL

Cleanup,” *Albuquerque Journal*, February 25, 2021, <https://www.abqjournal.com/2363558/state-sues-doe-over-lanl-cleanup.html>.

In 2023, the DOE responded with a strategic vision for the cleanup of legacy contamination, including the plume of hexavalent chromium. “Los Alamos National Laboratory Strategic Vision: 2023–2033,” Office of Environmental Management, Department of Energy. accessed July 12, 2023, <https://www.energy.gov/em/los-alamos-national-laboratory-strategic-vision-2023-2033>.

However, plume cleanup was halted in late March, 2023, by New Mexico state regulators due to ongoing concerns that the current treatment process is not fixing or containing the problem. Scott Wyland, “LANL Plume Cleanup Halted Due to Water Concerns,” March 31, 2023, updated April 1, 2023, [https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local\\_news/lanl-plume-cleanup-to-be-halted-due-to-concerns-about-water/artile\\_7381e37c-cd98-11ed-ab67-4fe506af6dc5.html](https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/lanl-plume-cleanup-to-be-halted-due-to-concerns-about-water/artile_7381e37c-cd98-11ed-ab67-4fe506af6dc5.html).

7. Gregory Hooks, and Chad L. Smith, “The Treadmill of Destruction: National Sacrifice Areas and Native Americans,” *American Sociological Review* 69, no. 4 (2004): 558–75, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3593065>.

For an excellent overview examination of the legacy of the nuclear industry in New Mexico from those most impacted, please read:

Myrriah Gomez, “Nuclear Nuevo New Mexico: *Colonialism and the Effects of the Nuclear Industrial Complex on Nuevomexicanos*.” (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2022)

8. Joanna Macy, *World as Lover, World as Self: Courage for Global Justice and Ecological Renewal* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2007), 120–122.

9. “Lifeways,” for Marian, is a better, more inclusive term than “ceremonies.” She emphasizes, “Everything is a ceremony to our people!” In a



conversation on August 31, 2022, I asked her how she would define “life-ways” and she responded: “The ways, the mannerisms, and the beliefs of the Tewa people, including the annual events of our seasonal calendar that are upheld for our survival.”

10. To save the lab, firefighters engaged a back-burning solution to divert the direction of the wildfire, which sacrificed six thousand acres of lands on Santa Clara Pueblo. Kyle Dickman, “Feeling the Burn,” *Outside*, July 1, 2011, <https://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/environment/feeling-burn/>.

11. Marian observes: “LANL is located at the edge of a rift valley. Santa Clara Canyon is the biggest fault line in the area and it burned. We were so worried because if it ‘slipped’ it would be a catastrophe. It’s only three miles from LANL.” She reminds me there is only one way up and one way down to drive in and out of Los Alamos in an emergency—and no one realizes this. Marian indicates that it is not a matter of “if,” but “when” the sleeping volcano beneath LANL will awaken. “We just don’t know when . . .”

In our conversation on August 31, 2022, she went on to say how we need to stop the production of nuclear weapons, clean up the waste in the area, and educate people on what “sacred” means. This would provide jobs and be a great demonstration of something positive—and good for tourism, too!

12. Due to tritium’s unstable form, people are exposed to a small amount of it every day. Our bodies can eliminate it through urination in ten days, demonstrating that natural tritium is nontoxic. However, artificial tritium, created through nuclear-weapons production, appears in great amounts and causes cancer when its disposal is not handled properly. In this way, its radiation is fatal. More information on health risks caused by tritium

exposure can be found at: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/is-radioactive-hydrogen-in-drinking-water-a-cancer-threat/>.

13. Macy, *World as Lover, World as Self*, 185.
14. Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone, *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in without Going Crazy* (Novato: New World Library, 2012), 148.
15. Macy, *World as Lover, World as Self*, 195.
16. See: Tewa Women United, <https://tewawomenunited.org/>.

### *Chapter Six: Pilgrimage*

1. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Present Moment Wonderful Moment: Mindfulness Verses for Daily Living* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1990), 57.

## Section Two: Hearing the Cries of the World

### *Chapter Seven: Planetary Acupuncture*

1. Jhaluddin Rumi, *The Essential Rumi*, trans. Coleman Barks (New York: HarperOne, 2004), 36.

### *Chapter Eight: A Thousand Arms*

1. Vessantara, *Meeting the Buddhas: A Guide to Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Tantric Deities* (Glasgow: Windhorse Publications, 1993), 140.
2. Vessantara, *Meeting the Buddhas*, 144.
3. For Wendy Johnson's full story, see: Wendy Johnson, "A Prayer for the

Forest,” *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, Fall 1998, <https://tricycle.org/magazine/prayer-forest/>.

4. Keridwen Cornelius, “Biosphere 2: The Once Infamous Live-In Terrarium Is Transforming Climate Research,” *Scientific American*, October 4, 2021, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/biosphere-2-the-once-infamous-live-in-terrarium-is-transforming-climate-research/>.

5. Thich Nhat Hanh said this in Plum Village one summer in the early 1990s, and it rippled through us like a prophecy. Later that year he spoke to this at Spirit Rock in California, which was quoted in *Inquiring Mind*. Thich Nhat Hanh, “*The Next Buddha May Be a Sangha*,” *Inquiring Mind* 10, no.2 (Spring 1994), [https://www.inquiringmind.com/article/1002\\_41\\_thich-nhat\\_hanh/](https://www.inquiringmind.com/article/1002_41_thich-nhat_hanh/).

Thay also writes in his book *Teachings on Love*, “I am more and more convinced that the next Buddha may not be just one person, but he may be a community, a community of love. We need to support each other to build a community where love is something tangible. This may be the most important thing we can do for the survival of the Earth. We have everything except love. We have to renew our way of loving. We have to really learn to love. The well-being of the world depends on us, on the way we live our daily lives, on the way we take care of the world, and on the way we love.” Thich Nhat Hanh, *Teachings on Love* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1995), 141.

### *Chapter Nine: Twenty-One Taras*

1. Miranda Shaw, *Buddhist Goddesses of India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 353.

2. The text is the “Profound Essence Mind Treasure Tara Mandala Sadhana: Essence of the Two Accumulations,” revealed by tertön Rigdzin Chogyur Lingpa. The practice was transmitted to me by Lama Ngawang Tsultrim Zangpo Rinpoche and appears on page 27 in the unpublished practice materials for the use of practitioners at Dhognak Tharling Dharma Center.
3. Lama Tsultrim Allione, *Green Tara: Explanation and Commentary* (Machig Publications, Tara Mandala, July 2020), 8–9.

### *Chapter Ten: The Sound of the Bell in Africa*

1. See the excellent documentary film *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* for the full story of how the women stopped the war in Liberia: <https://www.forkfilms.com/pray-the-devil-back-to-hell/>.
2. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Leymah Gbowee also shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 with Tawakkol Karman from Yemen.
3. Truth and Reconciliation Committee of Liberia, *Final Report*, vol. 3, title 12, “Towards National Reconciliation and Dialogues: The Palava Hut or Peace Forums,” [https://www.trcofliberia.org/resources/reports/final/volume-three-12\\_layout-1.pdf](https://www.trcofliberia.org/resources/reports/final/volume-three-12_layout-1.pdf).
4. It was the women of WIPNET (Women In Peacebuilding Network) whose idea it was to change the name.
5. It was Prince Johnson who killed President Samuel Doe. Johnson is now a senator for Nimba County, Liberia.
6. In Thich Nhat Hanh’s tradition, the bell is considered a bodhisattva because its sound invites us to wake up. Likewise, the practice of mindfulness is a practice of nonviolence, so we never “hit” or “strike”

the bell; instead, in Thich Nhat Hanh's teaching, we "invite the bell to sound."

### *Chapter Eleven: Do Not Close Your Eyes Before Suffering*

1. Jelaluddin Rumi, *The Essential Rumi*, trans. Coleman Barks (New York: HarperOne, 2004), 36.

2. At Plum Village, in the early days, they sold handmade little pieces of wood with various gathas printed on them to hang on the wall as a reminder. I bought this gatha written on a little wooden plaque and to this day it sits above our kitchen sink near our compost bucket. Often, there is a rose in a little vase right next to it.

Over the years the language of some of Thich Nhat Hanh's gathas, like the Mindfulness Trainings, which were originally called "precepts," have changed slightly. But this is the way I learned it.

At the first retreat with Thich Nhat Hanh that I organized at the Ojai Foundation, he gave a whole teaching on the compost and the rose. The next morning, we made a special flower arrangement (as we did each day) for his talk: we placed a pile of compost in various stages of decomposition and stuck a beautiful pink rose in the center of it.

3. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Interbeing: Commentary on the Tiep Hien Precepts*, (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1987), 34.

### *Chapter Twelve: Reckoning*

1. Thanissara, *Time to Stand Up: An Engaged Buddhist Manifesto for Our Earth—The Buddha's Life and Message through Feminine Eyes* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2015), 60.

2. Thanissara, *Time to Stand Up*, 91.

3. The occurrence of babies being cut out of pregnant women and cooked is something that I heard about more than once while educating myself about the situation in the DRC. The rule of law does not operate in the DRC. It is very difficult to prove things and there is much that is covered up, especially terrible atrocities like this. That does not mean it does not happen. My Congolese collaborator, Neema Namadamu, who reviewed this chapter, did not highlight this issue to say it was inaccurate.

The brave 2007 documentary film by Lisa Jackson, *The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo*, won a Sundance Film Festival Special Jury Award and features firsthand commentary from rebels and survivors. Lisa Jackson, *The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo*, aired April 8, 2008, on HBO, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNq0WmW2nV0>.

For an overview: Max Fisher, “A Congo Mother Survives Cannibalism to Save Her Children: Why Her Photo Matters,” *The Atlantic*, April 26, 2012, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/04/a-congo-mother-survives-cannibalism-to-save-her-children-why-her-photo-matters/256405/>.

4. “DR Congo: 48 rapes every hour, US study finds,” *BBC*, May 12, 2011, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13367277>. In May 2011, US scientists found that forty-eight females, on average, are raped hourly in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which totals up to over 420,000 over twelve months. These 2011 findings (using data from 2006 to 2007) remain the baseline, although it is difficult to track the incident of rape due to many factors. A 2021 report from RAINN notes: “True prevalence rates of rape are difficult to measure. UN Women reports that 51 percent of ever-partnered women have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner vio-

lence in their lifetime, with 37 percent experiencing such violence within the past 12 months. One of the most comprehensive studies in DRC concluded that approximately 1.69 to 1.80 million women reported having been raped in their lifetimes (with 407, 397–433,785 women reporting having been raped in the preceding 12 months), and approximately 3.07 to 3.37 million women reported experiencing intimate partner sexual violence.” Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network, *Sexual Violence in Six African Nations: A Call for Investment*, 2021, 21, <https://www.rainn.org/sites/default/files/Africa-Report-2022.pdf>.

5. RAINN, *Sexual Violence in Six African Nations*, 20–21.

6. “Gendercide” is a term coined by Congolese activist Neema Namadamu.

### *Chapter Thirteen: The Heart of . . . Darkness?*

1. I am aware that calling the Democratic Republic of the Congo “the Heart of Darkness” could be considered offensive to the people of that nation. I hope that through this writing my readers will see beyond this well-known label and realize that as Neema Namadamu has said, Congo is an Eden deserving of our protection and love.

2. UN Peacekeepers have not left the DRC since their mission started in 1999. They still have over eighteen thousand troops in the country, but some believe that their capacity to “keep peace” is negligible at best. Claude Muhindo Sengenya, “Why we’re protesting against UN peacekeepers in DR Congo: ‘Who will come to save the Congo? Only us young people,’” *The New Humanitarian*, August 18, 2022, accessed July 24, 2023. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/2022/08/18/why-we-re-protesting-against-un-peacekeepers-dr-congo>. .

3. “Democratic Republic of the Congo: Economy,” Global Edge, Michigan State University, accessed April 18, 2023. <https://globaledge.msu.edu/countries/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/economy>. For more information: <https://enact-africa.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/2022-05-03-research-paper-29-rev.pdf>.
4. Oluwole Ojewale, “What Coltan Mining in the DRC Costs People and the Environment,” *The Conversation*, May 29, 2022, <https://theconversation.com/what-coltan-mining-in-the-drc-costs-people-and-the-environment-183159>.
5. Ed Ram, “‘In 10 years, we might not have forests’: DRC struggles to halt charcoal trade—a photo essay,” *The Guardian*, July 20, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/jul/20/in-10-years-we-might-not-have-forests-drc-struggles-to-halt-charcoal-trade-a-photo-essay>.
6. Since 2006, various organizations, municipalities, and governments within Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Mexico, New Zealand, and the US have sought to protect the inalienable Rights of Nature. In September 2008, Ecuador became the first country in the world to recognize Rights of Nature in its constitution, while New Zealand granted the Whanganui River legal standing in 2017.

*Rights of Nature is the recognition and honoring that Nature has rights. It is the recognition that our ecosystems—including trees, oceans, animals, mountains—have rights just as human beings have rights. Rights of Nature is about balancing what is good for human beings against what is good for other species, what is good for the planet as a world. It is the holistic recognition that all life, all ecosystems on our planet are deeply intertwined. Rather than treating*



*nature as property under the law, rights of nature acknowledges that nature in all its life forms has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles.*

“What Are the Rights of Nature?” Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature, accessed May 17, 2023. <https://www.garn.org/rights-of-nature/>.

7. Neema Namadamu, “Quitting The Game,” *World Pulse*, September 26, 2011, <https://www.worldpulse.com/community/users/neema/posts/18111>.

8. John Dear, “Neema Namadamu, Congo’s visionary peacemaker,” *National Catholic Reporter*, October 15, 2013, <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/road-peace/neema-namadamu-congos-visionary-peacemaker>.

9. Accessed May 5, 2023, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/137/>.

10. To hear more of this story, visit: <https://www.worldpulse.org/story/congo-a-revolutionist-mind-39097>.

### *Chapter Fourteen: Poison into Wisdom*

1. For more on the Five Buddha Families and the five dakinis, see: Lama Tsultrim Allione, *Wisdom Rising: Journey Into the Mandala of the Empowered Feminine* (New York: Atria/Enliven Books, 2018).

Ken McLeod, “Dismantling Reactive Emotions,” in *Wake Up To Your Life: Discovering the Buddhist Path of Attention* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002), 207–242.

Chogyam Trungpa, “Mandala” and “The Five Buddha Families,” in *Journey Without Goal: The Tantric Wisdom of the Buddha* (Boulder: Prajna Press, 1981), 31–38 and 77–85.

## Section Three: Becoming a Holy Vessel

### *Chapter Fifteen: Taking Refuge in the Earth*

1. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Love Letter to the Earth* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2013), 27–28.

2. Hanh, *Love Letter to the Earth*, 100.

3. Miranda Shaw, *Buddhist Goddesses of India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 17.

4. Shaw, *Buddhist Goddesses of India*, 21.

5. Shaw, *Buddhist Goddesses of India*, 22.

6. The Three Refuges of Thich Nhat Hanh can be found in *Chanting from the Heart: Buddhist Ceremonies and Daily Practices* by Thich Nhat Hanh and the Monks and Nuns of Plum Village. Working with this as my foundation, I have integrated other strands from different sources, including from Thich Nhat Hanh's "Invoking the Bodhisattva's Names" for the ceremony called Touching the Earth (prostrations), along with some of my own language.

For Thay, the inclusion of Bodhisattva Gaia was a relatively new addition to "Invoking the Bodhisattva's Names" around 2010 to 2011. His original wording goes like this:

*Mother of buddhas, bodhisattvas and all beings,  
Nourishing, holding and healing all,  
Bodhisattva Gaia, Great Mother Earth, precious jewel of the cosmos,  
to whom we bow in gratitude.*

Thich Nhat Hanh and the Monks and Nuns of Plum Village, *Chanting from the Heart: Buddhist Ceremonies and Daily Practices* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2007), 88–89.

### *Chapter Sixteen: Sacred Time*

1. Arkan Lushwala, *The Time of the Black Jaguar: An Offering of Indigenous Wisdom for the Continuity of Life on Earth* (Ribera: Arkan Lushwala, 2012), 91, 96.
2. Lushwala, *The Time of the Black Jaguar*, 96.
3. Charles Eisenstein, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2013), 234, 238.
4. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Touching Peace: Practice the Art of Mindful Living* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1992), 1.
5. We now know that the “2012 phenomenon” was a misrepresentation of Mayan lifeways and the meaning of the sacred change their calendar underwent at the 2012 winter solstice. December 21, 2012, did not herald the end of the Mayan Long Count calendar, as was put forth by various New Age teachers. These misconceptions are now being corrected by Mayan traditional elders. For more information, visit: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CgURQtPMN27/>.
6. Marianne Williamson, preface to *The Law of Divine Compensation: On Work, Money, and Miracles* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2012).

### *Chapter Seventeen: Offerings*

1. Miranda Shaw, *Buddhist Goddesses of India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 26.
2. The International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers is an international association of Indigenous women who are deeply concerned with healing the Earth through projects of protecting the environment,

nurturing diverse cultures, praying, and educating children to live in Indigenous ways of life. For more information, see: <https://www.grandmotherswisdom.org/>.

3. To learn more about Evon Peter: Joaqlin Estus, “Evon Peter: Seeing Indigenous Success,” *ICT*, July 7, 2021, <https://indiancountrytoday.com/news/evon-peter-seeking-indigenous-success>.

4. David Suzuki and Amanda McConnell, *The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering Our Place in Nature* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 1999), 188.

5. Mary Oliver, “Wild Geese,” in *New and Selected Poems* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 110.

6. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Present Moment Wonderful Moment: Mindfulness Verses for Daily Living*, trans. Annabel Laity (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1990), 3.

7. The reference to a lotus blooming with each step comes from the story of the Buddha’s birth. It is said that when the baby Buddha was born, he immediately took seven steps and where his tiny feet touched the Earth, a lotus bloomed. They invited us to imagine this for ourselves.

During one summer retreat, Thay had little round stickers made for us to place inside our shoes. The stickers said “I walk for you” in English, French, or Vietnamese. Every time we slipped on our shoes to go outside for walking meditation, we were reminded to walk mindfully, not just for ourselves but for each other, too.

### *Chapter Eighteen: Becoming a Holy Vessel*

1. To see whole interview with Joanna Macy, *Vessels of the Holy*, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HfQbUg1rS0>.

### *Chapter Nineteen: Listening to the Elders*

1. Alan Ereira, *The Elder Brothers: A Lost South American People and Their Message about the Fate of the Earth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 10, 12.

### *Chapter Twenty: Welcome to Country*

1. Robert Lawlor, *Voices of the First Day: Awakening in the Aboriginal Dreamtime* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1991), 1, 18.
2. "Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country," Reconciliation Australia, <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/acknowledgement-of-country-and-welcome-to-country>.
3. *Kanyini*, directed by Melanie Hogan (Australia: Sand Hill Road Pictures and Reverb Films, 2017), [https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Kanyini&ci=instant-video&ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss](https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Kanyini&ci=instant-video&ref=nb_sb_noss).
4. The estimated time that the Aboriginal people have lived in Australia is disputed. While mainstream research usually dates only as far as forty thousand years, Aboriginal people confirm at least sixty thousand years or longer. Erin Blakemore, "Aboriginal Australians," *National Geographic*, January 31, 2019, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/aboriginal-australians>.

The website of Australia's national institution on Aboriginal People says upwards of sixty thousand years according to current research. "Australia's First Peoples," Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, accessed July 18, 2023, <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/australias-first-peoples>.

5. Mumma was totally at ease with fire. She'd had a relationship with fire all her life, as her people all do. Burning the undergrowth is their method of taking care of the land in the traditional ways. In North America we are deathly afraid of fire and have lost touch with how to take care of the land to prevent wildfires. Margaret was comfortable with and trusting of the elemental energy of fire. This was another profound teaching for me.

## Section Four: Collective Awakening

### *Chapter Twenty-One: Indra's Net*

1. Indra, a deity from Hindu mythology, is one of many such figures that were retained in Indian Buddhist teachings. The Tushita heaven of Buddhism corresponds to Indra heaven of Hinduism. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Understanding Our Mind*, (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2006), 81–82.

### *Chapter Twenty-Two: Sacred Activism*

1. Bayo Akomolafe, "Meeting the Inappropriate/d: The Liminality of Justice and Reconciliation in Canada," May 5, 2016, <https://www.bayoakomolafe.net/post/meeting-the-inappropriate-d>.

2. Thanissara, *Time to Stand Up: An Engaged Buddhist Manifesto for Our Earth—The Buddha's Life and Message through Feminine Eyes* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2015), 112.

3. Cynthia Jurs and Kim Spencer, "Turning Prayer Into Action: Indigenous Grandmothers Meet the Bioneers," September 25, 2016, documentary for Link TV, 25:21, <http://www.prayerintoaction.com/>.

4. Jurs and Spencer, "Turning Prayer Into Action," 56:25.
5. Andrew Harvey, introduction to *The Hope: A Guide to Sacred Activism* (Carlsbad: Hay House, 2009), xviii.
6. David Nicol, introduction to *Subtle Activism: The Inner Dimension of Social and Planetary Transformation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 4.
7. Thich Nhat Hanh, "Part Two: Mindfulness Must Be Engaged," in *Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life* (New York: Bantam, 1991), 91.
8. Charles Eisenstein, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2013).
9. The source of this quote has been challenged, but it appears to be a paraphrase by Ram Dass based on his interpretation of Einstein's writings, accessed July 24, 2023. [https://hsm.stackexchange.com/questions/7751/did-einstein-say-we-cannot-solve-our-problems-with-the-same-thinking-we-used-to#:~:text=124%2C%20is%20%22The%20world%20that,Ram%20Dass%20\(who%20needs%20his](https://hsm.stackexchange.com/questions/7751/did-einstein-say-we-cannot-solve-our-problems-with-the-same-thinking-we-used-to#:~:text=124%2C%20is%20%22The%20world%20that,Ram%20Dass%20(who%20needs%20his)
10. Colin Schultz, "Is This the Oldest Cave on the Planet?," *Smithsonian Magazine*, July 30, 2012, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/is-this-the-oldest-cave-art-on-the-planet-9100329/>.
11. Charles Eisenstein, *Climate: A New Story* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2018), 42.

### *Chapter Twenty-Four: Head over Heels*

1. This vase was placed inside the stupa that marks the entrance to Tolu Tharling Monastery in 2019 by Lama Ngawang Tsultrim Zangpo when he did the initial rebuilding of the monastery. Along with the Earth Treasure Vase, this stupa also holds the remains of his father, Kyabje Kyaprok Tulku Rinpoche, the previous abbot of Tolu Gompa.

### *Chapter Twenty-Five: Buddha Gotami*

1. Systems of power work in insidious ways to marginalize, silence, and devalue us. Very often, unequal power dynamics become invisible when women and others who struggle to be heard have unconsciously internalized those power dynamics. We erase ourselves and become co-opted by these systems. In this way, we become unconsciously complicit in destructive ways of life.

2. “Buddha Gotami,” the name I am giving the Buddha if he were a woman, is not to be confused with the historical Buddha’s step-mother and maternal aunt, who was named “Mahapajapati Gotami.” Mahapajapati raised the Buddha as her own when her sister died shortly after giving birth. The name “Gotami” refers to the Gotama clan, which was the ruling clan of the Shakya tribe in northern India at the time.

### *Chapter Twenty-Six: The Oracle’s Message*

1. Catherine Brooks, “The Shrine of Gaia and Python at Delphi,” on her personal blog, January 8, 2022, <https://catherinebrooks.com/the-mysteries-of-gaias-shrine-at-delphi/>.



2. For more information about the Corycian Cave, visit: <https://via-hygeia.art/john-opsopaus-the-bee-nymphs-of-mount-parnassus/><https://atemplewild.com/journal/delphi-and-the-corycian-cave>.

### *Epilogue*

1. “Thich Nhat Hanh,” Profiles of Paris, <https://profilesoparis.com/profiles/>.

## GLOSSARY

**Ani:** Ani is the Tibetan word for “nun.” The suffix “la” is a term of respect which can be affixed to the end of a title, as in “Ani-la,” or it can be affixed to the end of a personal name, as in “Tenzin-la.”

**Avatamsaka Sutra:** A Mahayana Buddhist scripture, also called the Flower Ornament Sutra, renowned for the beauty in which it describes the interconnectedness and interpenetration of all phenomena. One such metaphor found in this sutra is Indra’s Net.

**Axis Mundi:** From the Latin, meaning “the axis of the world,” referring to the center of the world or the axis of connection between heaven and Earth. For some cultures, the axis mundi is embodied by a tree of life; for others, a mountain (such as Mount Olympus for the ancient Greeks, Mount Kailash for Hindus and Tibetans). In Pueblo cultures it is the place of the Peoples’ emergence into this world. In Africa, Zulu sangoma Credo Mutwa taught that the Nilotic Meridian is the axis mundi.

**Bardo:** In Tibetan Buddhism, bardo is the transitional state between death and rebirth or reincarnation.

**Beyul:** In the Nyingma lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, beyul are hidden valleys that were blessed by Padmasambhava as holy places of refuge in Nepal, Tibet, India, and Bhutan. Protected by snowstorms, avalanches, mists, thunderstorms, and snow leopards, they are places where physical and spiritual worlds overlap and the effectiveness of our practices and prayers multiply.

**Bodhicitta:** From the Sanskrit *bodhi*, “awakened” or “enlightened,” and *citta*, “heart-mind.” Widely translated as “awakening mind,” bodhicitta is the intention to awaken in order to help others awaken. It is the state of mind of a bodhisattva, who pursues Buddhahood in order to benefit others and is dedicated to freeing all beings from suffering.

**Bodhisattva:** From the Sanskrit *bodhi*, “awakened,” and *sattva*, “being.” Awakened being. A holy being, spiritual hero, or saint. Someone who has attained wisdom and enlightenment, and who has vowed to help all other sentient beings attain enlightenment before entering nirvana and becoming a Buddha oneself.

**Charok Rinpoche:** Also known as His Eminence Kushok Mangdon Rinpoche, he resided in his later years in a cave at Charok, hence the name *Charok* Rinpoche. Charok Rinpoche belonged to the Konchok Chidu lineage and was born at Thame Monastery, which is the oldest monastery in the Khumbu region of Nepal. This is the lama that gave Cynthia the Earth Treasure Vase practice.

**Chokgyur Lingpa:** Orgyen Chokgyur Dechen Lingpa was one of the major tertöns in Tibetan history. His termas are practiced widely in the Nyingma and Kagyu sects, and he is considered the last of the one hundred prophesied tertöns. The teachings he discovered, known as the “New Treasures of Chokgyur Lingpa,” include his practice on the Twenty-One Taras.

**Constituent Assembly:** In May, 2008, the 601 members of the first Constituent Assembly (CA) of Nepal—elected through a system of proportional representation—gathered to write a new

constitution and act as the interim legislature for a term of two years. On May 28, 2008, the CA voted to declare Nepal a federal democratic republic, abolishing the monarchy. The first CA failed to put a constitution into effect, and a second CA, later converted into a legislative parliament, was formed in 2013 to complete the task.

**Copper-Colored Mountain:** The pure land where it is said Padma-sambhava (Guru Rinpoche) can be found until the end of time. Here, he manifests as a *vidyadhara*, or knowledge holder of spontaneous presence, and offers protection to the living.

**Dakini:** From the Tibetan *khandro*, meaning “sky dweller” or “sky dancer.” A dakini is an embodiment of the sacred feminine who can appear as a human being, a meditational deity, or a protector. Depending on the situation, dakinis may appear as wrathful or peaceful, or as wisdom or worldly emanations. They are said to aid and protect practitioners striving to awaken.

**Damaru:** A small two-sided drum used as an instrument in Tibetan Buddhist meditation practices.

**Dedication of the Merit:** At the end of any dharma practice or virtuous action, practitioners will express their intention to share any merit or blessings that might have been accumulated during the practice with all living beings.

**Deities of the Bardo:** In Tibetan Buddhism, it is said that when one dies and enters the bardo, one passes through several different realms on the way to rebirth and can encounter a hundred different deities—forty-two peaceful deities and fifty-eight wrathful deities—along the way.

**Devi / Deva:** Devī is the Sanskrit word for goddess; the masculine form is deva. Devi and deva mean heavenly, divine, or anything of excellence.

**Dharma:** The teachings of the Buddha. *Dharma* is also a Buddhist, Hindu, and yogic concept referring to a divine law or principle governing the universe. To live out one's dharma is to live in accordance with this principle.

**Dharmacharya:** From the Sanskrit *ācārya*, meaning “Teacher,” therefore, “Dharmacharya” refers to a “Teacher of the Dharma.”

**Didjeridu:** An Australian wind instrument, cylindrical in shape, usually made from the branches of eucalyptus trees. When played, it creates a continuous drone through a unique technique called circular breathing. Measuring between three and ten feet long, didjeridus were first created by Aboriginal peoples in northern Australia at least a thousand years ago. Westernized spelling is usually “digeridoo,” but Aboriginal people refer to this instrument as “didjeridu” or “magu.”

**Dorje:** See “Vajra.”

**Dudjom Tersar:** The cycles of teachings revealed first by Dudjom Lingpa (1835–1904), and then by his reincarnation, Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje Rinpoche (1904–1987), the supreme head of the Nyingma lineage and one of the most important lamas of the twentieth century.

**Dzogchen:** Meaning the “Great Perfection,” these are the teachings at the heart of the Nyingma lineage. The “path” of *Dzogchen* is the realization of our primordial nature, which has always been perfect from the very beginning, just like the sky.

**Five Buddha Families:** The foundational nature of the mandala

principle. These five families (called *buddha*, *vajra*, *ratna*, *padma*, and *karma*) are characterized by the five “poisons” or reactive emotions and their transformation into wisdom. Each of the five families also relates to a color, an elemental energy, and a direction within the mandala. In their transformed state, the Five Buddha Families embody an aspect of enlightenment, with the mandala depicting the whole of enlightened awareness.

**Gabarnmung:** Jawoyn for “[place of] hole in the rock.” A sacred site in southwestern Arnhem Land, in the Northern Territory of Australia, inhabited for at least forty-four thousand years. Gabarnmung is in a remote location on the land of the Jawoyn people, the Buyhmi clan being the traditional owners. It is a cathedral-like rock shelter with thirty-six supporting pillars, featuring prehistoric paintings of fish, wallabies, crocodiles, humans, and spiritual figures.

**Gaia:** From the Greek *Gaia*, a poetical form of *gē*, “earth.” One of the deities of the ancient Greeks, a personification of the Earth, she was seen as the ancestral mother of all life. In modern times, James Lovelock popularized the term when he wrote about the Gaia principle to raise awareness of the Earth as a dynamic, living entity.

**Gatha:** From the Sanskrit, meaning “song” or “verse.” In the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh, a gatha is a type of verse that is recited (most often silently, sometimes out loud) in rhythm with the breath as part of the practice of mindfulness.

**Gompa:** Tibetan word meaning “remote place,” but it generally refers to a temple or a place for meditation and spiritual learning.

**Guru Yoga:** In the Vajrayana tradition, Guru Yoga is a devotional

practice in which the practitioner unites their mindstream with the mindstream of their guru. One is instructed to regard one's guru as an awakened Buddha.

**Indra:** In Hindu and Buddhist cosmology, Indra was the king of the gods. His net of jewels or pearls hangs over his palace on Mount Meru.

**Interbeing:** A new verb, coined by Thich Nhat Hanh, meaning the state of all things being interconnected and interdependent.

**Khata:** A ceremonial scarf, usually of white silk, representing purity and compassion. In the Tibetan tradition, it is presented on special occasions, including births, weddings, funerals, graduations, and the arrival or departure of special guests.

**Kiva:** An underground chamber used by modern and ancestral Pueblo peoples for ceremonial purposes. Kivas are entered by a ladder from the roof down to the center of the kiva floor. The ritual emergence of participants from the kiva into the plaza in ceremonies still enacted today represents the original emergence by Pueblo Peoples from the underworld into the current world.

**Konchok Chidu:** A lineage of teachings (meaning the “Embodiment of the Precious Ones”) that are an important cycle of treasure texts (terma) revealed by the great tertön Rigdzin Jatson Nyingpo (1585–1656) and practiced in the Nyingma and Kagyu traditions. Tolu Tharling Monastery is the seat of this lineage in Nepal.

**Kundalini Shakti:** Sanskrit term meaning “serpent power,” first referenced in the Upanishads. In Hinduism, Kundalini is believed to be a goddess, whose power lies dormant and coiled at the base of the spine. This primal energy, representing the potential within

us, can be awakened and cultivated through practices such as yoga, chanting mantras, and meditation.

**Lama:** A Tibetan word meaning “spiritual teacher” (“guru” in Sanskrit), often associated with monks or yogis who have completed a traditional three-year retreat.

**Ley Lines:** Ancient, invisible pathways in the Earth indicating powerful flows of energy between sites and structures. For example, a famous ley line known as the St. Michael line travels from Skellig Michael in Ireland through both St. Michael’s Mount in England and Mont-Saint-Michel in France to Assisi in Italy; Dodona, Delphi, Athens, and Rhodes in Greece; and Mount Carmel, Israel. Ley lines have been compared to the dragon lines of Chinese feng shui, as well as to the *Tē Ao Māori* of New Zealand.

**Lineage Masters:** The transmission of teachings in Tibetan Buddhism is dependent upon the concept of a lineage and lineage holders, or lineage masters. A lineage is an unbroken line of transmission, and lineage masters are lamas who have received the transmission of the dharma teachings and are therefore part of the lineage.

**Lung:** Lung (pronounced “loong”) is Tibetan for “repetition.” Lung is one of three types of initiation or empowerment in Tibetan Buddhism, which allow one to receive the transmission of a teaching or lineage. The first is called *tri* and is a full explanation of the transmission and the meaning of the text. The second is called *lung* and is an oral transmission whereby the teacher recites the entire text and gives authorization to do the practice. The third is called *wang*, which is an elaborate empowerment ceremony. The wang is most often bestowed first, to facilitate the receiver being able to absorb the initiation into a practice ceremonially, followed



by the oral transmission, or lung, and then the explanation, or tri.

**Mala:** Prayer beads used for reciting mantras. Counting the movement of beads (usually there are 108 total) on a mala every time a mantra is recited is a way of tracking the accomplishment of a mantra. The recitation of a mantra one hundred thousand times is considered a good foundation for realizing a practice.

**Mandala:** From the Sanskrit mandala meaning “circle.” A mandala is a geometric pattern that symbolically and metaphysically represents the universe, and at its most basic is made up of the center and the four directions. Each of the four directions and the center of a mandala can be seen to embody a quality or energy that is one aspect of the whole. *See also:* Five Buddha Families.

**Mantra:** A sacred sound, syllable, word, or phrase, usually in the Sanskrit language. The sound of the Sanskrit syllables when chanted are said to carry spiritual power and meaning. *Om* is the simplest and best-known mantra; many believe it to be the first sound, which blossomed into the creation of all things.

**Mara:** From the Sanskrit *māra*, meaning “demon” or “destroyer.” In Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, there are several classes of mara; these are considered forces that act as obstacles to enlightenment. Mara, the Lord of Demons, tried to tempt Prince Siddhartha from attaining enlightenment as he sat beneath the Bodhi Tree.

**Melissae:** *Melissa* (singular) and *Melissae* (plural). A feminine proper name, from the Greek meaning “honeybee.” The word “Melissae” also refers to the priestesses of Delphi, the oracular bee nymphs of ancient Greece. Originally, there were three bee nymphs, also known as the Thraia, who inhabited the springs within the Corycian Cave high on the slopes of Mount Parnassus. They were the

first prophets and oracles at Delphi and were believed to have taught Apollo the art of divination.

**Mo Tzu:** A Warring States–period Chinese philosopher who lived from the late fifth to the early fourth centuries BC and taught that everyone is equal in the eyes of heaven. His teachings placed special value upon universal love, social order, the will of heaven, the sharing of wealth, and honoring the worthy.

**Mudra:** From Sanskrit, a mudra is a ritual hand gesture in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism. These gestures are thought to increase the efficacy of one’s prayers.

**Ngöndro:** The preliminary, preparatory, or foundational practices of Vajrayana Buddhism, which offer a complete path to enlightenment. The practice begins with the contemplation on the four thoughts that turn the mind towards the dharma, then turns to taking refuge and awakening bodhicitta, purification with the Vajrasattva prayer, accumulating merit and wisdom with the mandala offering, and, finally, Guru Yoga (uniting one’s mind with a guru as a living embodiment of the Buddha). It then ends with closing the visualization and dedicating the merit. Each section of the ngöndro is generally repeated one hundred thousand times.

**Nyingma:** From the Tibetan, meaning “old” or “ancient,” Nyingma refers to the “Old School” (or lineage or tradition) of Tibetan Buddhism. It basically follows the teaching brought to Tibet by Padmasambhava and translated, mainly during the reign of King Trisong Detsen in the eighth century up to Rinchen Sangpo in the ninth century, by the great masters Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, Shantarakshita, and Vairocana. The other three major

schools of Tibetan Buddhism—the Gelug, Kagyu, and Sakya—together comprise the School of New Translations. There is also a prominent nonsectarian Rimé movement.

**Omphalos:** An ancient Greek term meaning “navel.” According to myth, Zeus set two eagles free to find the center of the world. They flew through the skies westward and eastward, and their paths crossed in Delphi, which Zeus declared to be the center of the world. The Omphalos stone marks the spot that the ancients considered to be the navel of the world, the umbilicus of the Earth. Some say this sacred round stone may have been made from meteorite.

**Ouroboros:** A circular symbol that depicts a snake or dragon devouring its own tail and represents the eternal cycle of destruction and rebirth. Literally meaning “tail-devourer” in Greek, the ouroboros symbolizes nature’s cycles and the mystery of cyclical time, which flows back into itself. In alchemy, the ouroboros represented the idea of eternity and endless return, the unity of time’s beginning and end. From a Gnostic point of view, the opposing ends of the ouroboros were interpreted as divine and earthly human nature which exist in union, comparable to the Chinese yin and yang.

**Padmasambhava:** Known as Guru Rinpoche or Precious Teacher, born in the eighth century, Padmasambhava is the founder of Tibetan Buddhism. He was responsible for having brought the teachings of Vajrayana to Tibet from India and is known in Tibetan Buddhism as the “second Buddha.”

**Pecha:** A Tibetan spiritual text in the form of a traditional loose-leaf “book” of long, thin, rectangular pages, with writing or printing on both sides and top and bottom covers made of firm materials.

- Prasad:** From Sanskrit, meaning “favor” or “grace.” In Hinduism, during worship, food and water called *prasad* are offered to a deity.
- Primordial Wisdom Awareness:** Meaning “As it is, from the beginning.” The fundamental state of consciousness before it is divided into “I” and “other” or into the various emotions; the innate wisdom present in all sentient beings.
- Prithvi:** From the Sanskrit, meaning both “earth” and “ground,” as well as the name of a goddess called Prithvi Mata, or Mother Earth. Prithvi is revered in Buddhism for both protecting Gotama Buddha and serving as witness to his awakening. She dispelled the tempter Mara by attesting to Gotama Buddha’s worthiness to attain enlightenment when he summoned her by touching the Earth.
- Rigpa:** A Dzogchen term referring to the experience of the nature of mind. Sometimes translated as “clarity,” “wisdom,” “intelligence,” “awareness,” or “knowledge,” rigpa is our innermost nature of mind, our ultimate nature, a state of being that goes beyond all limits or concepts.
- Rinpoche:** An honorific title meaning “precious teacher.”
- Root Teacher:** One’s primary teacher in Tibetan Buddhism. The one who introduces you to the nature of mind.
- Sa Chü Bumpa:** The Tibetan term for Earth Treasure Vase, meaning “vase to invigorate the Earth.” Most agree that the practice of burying an Earth Treasure Vase to bless and to empower the area where it is placed was given to us by Padmasambhava, but this practice could be even older, possibly dating back to the pre-Buddhist Indigenous Bön religion of the Zhang Zhung empire.

**Sadhana:** From Sanskrit, meaning “means of accomplishment.” This is an Indian yogic term that refers to any type of spiritual practice that aims to bring practitioners closer to their goal. In Tibetan Buddhism, it usually means a ritual practice that outlines the means of accomplishing or realizing the nature of one or several deities.

**Samsara:** The seemingly endless cycle of birth and death. The Sanskrit term means “world,” and the Tibetan means “wheel” or “cycle.” It refers to wandering aimlessly through this life (or these lives) in this illusory world of suffering. When one awakens, one is no longer caught in the endless cycle of suffering.

**Sangoma:** From the Zulu, meaning “healer.” In South Africa, a traditional healer is involved in physical and emotional healing, divination, counteracting witchcraft, etc., as well as carrying the oral history of their tradition. A sangoma is connected to the ancestral spirits and can guide and protect the living, both in this life and the next.

**Seed Syllable:** In Sanskrit, *bījā*, or “seed.” A seed syllable is a mystical syllable that is both contained within and contains the entirety of a mantra or a teaching. A deity is said to be invoked from the sound of its seed syllable when the syllable is chanted. A seed syllable can appear in many sadhanas in order to increase the power and efficacy of the practice.

**Shaktipat:** From the Sanskrit, *shakti*, (psychic) energy, and *pāta*, to fall. The transmission or conferring of spiritual energy in the Hindu tradition from one person to another. It can be transmitted by a look, a touch, a word, or even a thought, and is considered a gift from the guru.

**Siddhartha Gotama, Shakyamuni:** From the Sanskrit, *Śākyamuni*, meaning “Sage of the Sakyas.” The historical Buddha, Prince Siddhartha Gotama (alternatively spelled “Gautama”) was born in the sixth century BC to King Suddhodana and Queen Mahamaya in Lumbini, in present-day Nepal. Seven days after the Buddha was born, his mother, Queen Mahamaya, died. The Queen’s sister, Mahapajapati Gotami, then raised the child as if he were her own. After leaving behind the life of a prince and following ascetic practices for many years, he eventually came to sit beneath the Bodhi Tree and attained enlightenment. When the demonic figure Mara tried to prevent him from doing so, the Earth attested to his worthiness and supported his awakening. After that, he spent forty-five years teaching.

**Sixteenth Karmapa:** The sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpe Dorje (August 14, 1924–November 5, 1981), was the spiritual leader of the Karma Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. The sixteenth Karmapa was considered to be a “living Buddha” and was deeply involved in the transmission of Vajrayana Buddhism to Europe and North America following the Chinese invasion of Tibet.

**Songlines:** For the Aboriginal peoples of Australia, songlines are “dreaming tracks” or “energetic highways”—and refer to the energy system of the planet. They can travel across the land and through the sky, and mark the route followed by the creator-beings. Ancestors played a great role in the Dreaming, or Dreamtime, in the creation of all things on Earth and in heaven, as well as in the foundation of sacred sites, such as Uluru. The songlines connect creation events and sacred places through the song cycles,

stories, dances, and art of the Aboriginal people, to which the songlines are known as the “footprints of the Ancestors.”

**Stupa:** A geometric and circular structure symbolizing the enlightened mind and containing precious Buddhist relics. In Tibet, there are eight different types of stupas, each with its own meaning. They are objects of meditation, and to circumambulate a stupa is a devotional practice said to bring great merit. The stupa is similar to the pagoda in China and Japan.

**Sutra:** From the Sanskrit *sūtra*, meaning “thread,” “string,” and “discourse.” In Buddhism, it refers to the teachings, or discourses, of the Buddha, which were given during the forty-five years that he taught. After his death, these were recorded by his disciple Ananda and the Buddhist councils.

**Take Refuge:** This is a practice or way to give ourselves over to something larger than ourselves. By taking refuge in the Three Jewels (the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha), one can receive the spiritual support we need to stay on the path and awaken from confusion.

**Tara:** From the Sanskrit *Tārā*, meaning “she who liberates.” Tara is a female deity of compassion revered in all schools of Tibetan Buddhism who appears in twenty-one forms and guises—each of which has a different color, and purpose. The most popular is Green Tara, who is associated with accomplishment and protection, and White Tara, who is associated with long life.

**Terma:** Hidden spiritual treasure. Spiritual treasures are believed to have been hidden by Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyal to be discovered at the appropriate time by “treasure revealers,” or tertöns. There are two main types of hidden treasures: physical

objects known as earth-treasures, like scrolls written in a special dakini script, statues, vajras, and phurbas; or, *termas*, discovered within the mindstream of the *tertön*, called mind-treasures, which depend on seeing, hearing, or understanding of words and sounds.

**Tertön:** A revealer of spiritual treasures, or *termas*. There have been numerous *tertöns* since the time of Padmasambhava. There are said to be one hundred great *tertöns*, which include the reincarnations of Guru Rinpoche's twenty-five main disciples, as well as one thousand minor *tertöns*—even some in the present time, including Kyabjé Dudjom Rinpoche and Chokgyur Dechen Lingpa, who were major *tertön* and gave us many important *sadhanas* still practiced today.

**Three Jewels:** There are three sources of refuge in Buddhism. They are the Buddha, the one who shows us the way in this life; the Dharma, the teachings of understanding and love; and the Sangha, the community that practices harmony and awareness. The Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha are called “jewels” because they are considered the most precious source of protection, guidance, inspiration, and wisdom. *See also:* Take Refuge

**Tjukurrpa:** An Aboriginal word used by the Pitjantjatjara people of central Australia to describe the Dreaming, which refers to the origins and powers embodied in the land, sacred places, objects, songs, and stories. It is a way of seeing and understanding the world and connects people to “Country” and to each other through shared social and knowledge networks.

**Tonglen:** A Tibetan word meaning “giving and receiving,” or “taking



and sending.” It is the practice of taking on the pain and suffering of others with the inhale of one’s breath and sending peace and well-being to them on the exhale.

**Vajra:** In Tibetan, “dorje.” A mythical weapon originally associated with the Vedic deity Indra, the vajra is said to be as indestructible as a diamond and as powerful as thunder and lightning. Capable of penetrating anything, the vajra came to symbolize indestructible wisdom and is used as a ritual instrument along with a bell in Vajrayana ceremonies. Held in the right hand, the Vajra represents the male principle and symbolizes compassion; the bell, held in the left hand, represents wisdom and the female principle.

**Vajrayana:** The “diamond vehicle,” from the Sanskrit, *vajra*, meaning “diamond,” (see above) and *yāna*, “vehicle.” This is the form of Buddhism that developed in India and blossomed in Tibet, and from there it was carried to other Himalayan states and on to China, Mongolia, and Japan. Its teachings are esoteric, and its practices include the use of mantras, mudras, mandalas, and the visualization of deities as personified aspects of our Buddha Nature.

**Yeshe Tsogyal:** An important historical figure in the Vajrayana, Yeshe Tsogyal was born a princess in Karchen, Tibet, in 777 AD, and attained enlightenment in her lifetime. Primarily known as the principal consort of Padmasambhava, she—through the power of her unfailing memory—collected all the teachings he gave in Tibet and concealed them as terma to be revealed at a later time. At the end of her life, it is said she flew through the air to find him in his pure land, the Copper-Colored Mountain.

- Yoni:** From the Sanskrit, meaning “source,” “womb,” or “vagina.”  
In Hinduism, Yoni is an abstract representation of the goddess Shakti, the feminine pro-creative power.
- Zen:** A Japanese school of Mahayana Buddhism emphasizing meditation and insight into the nature of mind as the path to enlightenment.