

# YESHE LAMA

## Vidyādhara Jigmed Lingpa



TRANSLATED BY

Lama Chönam & Khen Sogyue Khandro



### VIDYĀDHARA JIGMED LINGPA

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# Yeshe Lama

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VIDYĀDHARA JIGMED LINGPA

From the Heart Essence of the Vast Expanse of the Great Perfection,  
A Practice Manual for the Stages of the  
Path of the Original Protector

entitled

Yeshe Lama

*Translated by*

Lama Chönam and Sangye Khandro  
of the Light of Berotsana Translation Group

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ਕੁਦਾਤ ਸ਼੍ਵੇਤ ਦੰਡ ਨ ਸ਼ਨਾਵ ਹੈ ਵੈਦੀ ਬੇਸਾ ।  
ਸਨਸਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਣ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਪਦੀ ਰੇਗ ਦਾ ਵੈਦੀ ਹੈ ।  
ਏ ਮਾਧਿਕੀ ਵੈਦੀ ਕੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਪਾਲਨ ਕੀਤਾ ।  
ਅਚੂਕੀ ਸ਼੍ਵੇਤ ਸ਼ੀਖ ਨ ਪਾਲਨ ਕੀਤਾ ।  
ਤੇਜਾਵ ਵੈਦੀ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਵੈਦੀ ਵੈਦੀ ਵੈਦੀ ਵੈਦੀ ।

The clear light Vajrayāna lies at the heart of the Victorious One's teaching,  
It was brought to the Land of Snow by the lord among vidyādhara.  
Just as his teaching illuminates existence like the sun,  
May it dispel darkness in the hearts of all sentient beings.

This prayer of aspiration is offered by the Light of Berotsana Translation Group.



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# Introduction

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BY THE VENERABLE TÜLKU THONDUP RINPOCHE

Universal nature, the union of pure awareness<sup>a</sup> and basic space,<sup>b</sup>  
Universal quality, the union of clarity and openness,  
Universal power, the union of compassion and omniscience:  
The universal Great Perfection<sup>c</sup>—to you, in the state of oneness,  
I pay homage.

THE *Yeshe Lama*<sup>d</sup> is the most important practice manual on the Great Perfection teachings. The golden words of this sublime text arose from the depths of ultimate wisdom and came to us through the all-embracing compassion of Rigdzin Jigmed Lingpa (1730-1798), one of the greatest adepts and writers of Tibet.

## GREAT PERFECTION

According to the Great Perfection teachings of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, all of Buddhism is classified into two divisions: sūtra (exoteric teachings) and tantra (esoteric teachings). Sūtric teachings are further divided into three yānas, or vehicles: those of shrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and mahāyānists. Tantric teachings are divided into six tantras: the three outer tantras of Kriyāyoga, Charyāyoga, and Yoga tantra and the three inner tantras of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga. These three vehicles and six tantras constitute “the nine yānas.”

<sup>a</sup> *rig pa, vidyā*

<sup>b</sup> *dbyings*

<sup>c</sup> *rdzogs chen, rdzogs pa chen po, mahāsandhi* or *atiyoga*

<sup>d</sup> *yeshes bla ma*

In sūtric teachings, one trains mainly in physical disciplines and mental attitudes. In tantric trainings, one develops pure perceptions: seeing, hearing, and experiencing all as enlightened form, sound, and wisdom, the union of great bliss and openness.<sup>1</sup> In Great Perfection, one realizes directly the true nature of one's own mind, the presence of the three kāyas.<sup>2</sup>

The pinnacle of all nine vehicles is the Great Perfection. It embodies the qualities of the other vehicles,<sup>2</sup> since the higher vehicles embody the merit of all the lower ones. In order to realize the Great Perfection, most of us must ascend through gradual stages of training. Lower vehicles become essential stepping stones for higher vehicles. However, many of us may never be ready for the highest vehicles, and the lower ones might be the only suitable ones to follow.

The original Great Perfection tantras are not among the teachings given by the historical Buddha Shākyamuni. These tantras are the spontaneously present natural qualities, the absolute teachings of the primordial buddha, the ultimate truth. The continuum of these absolute teachings, the universal truth, remains in basic space without the boundaries of time or space.

In the human realm, however, these tantras were revealed in the form of words by Garab Dorje (fifth to fourth century B.C.), Vimalamitra (eighth century A.D.), Guru Padmasambhava (eighth century A.D.), and other enlightened Buddhist masters. In the enlightened minds of such masters, these tantras were awakened as enlightened wisdom or were received as teachings from buddhas in pure visions. These ancient masters passed the tantras on to today's masters through the unbroken golden lineage chain of realized masters.

Realizing pure awareness, the true nature of the mind, and using it as the path of training is the Great Perfection. Rigdzin Jigmed Lingpa writes:

[Realization of] the pure awareness that transcends the mind  
Is the specialty of the Great Perfection.<sup>3</sup>

The Third Dodrupchen (1865-1926) explains:

[Meditators] use pure awareness as the path [of meditation]. They meditate on pure awareness after distinguishing it from mind.

a. *skus*; enlightened embodiments

Then they focus and remain focused only on pure awareness. They do not employ any concepts, since concepts are mind.<sup>4</sup>

Pure awareness is the union of appearances and openness.<sup>a</sup> It embodies the three kāyas. Its nature as openness is the dharmakāya.<sup>b</sup> Its intrinsic nature as clarity is the sambhogakāya.<sup>c</sup> Its power of omniscient compassion is the nirmāṇakāya.<sup>d</sup>

Realization—or the awakening of pure awareness—is instantaneous, but in order to awaken and perfect such realization, we must go through gradual stages of training. We must rely on the honest guidance of experienced teachers, the strength of meritorious deeds, and the support of enlightened blessings.

Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche (1904-1987) used to say, "The difficulty of Great Perfection meditation is that it is too easy." This statement is profound. He did not say that it is easy because it requires little effort from us, as some might imagine. Rather, the realization of pure awareness is easy because it involves returning to the simplest, unmodified nature of our own mind. It is the union of utmost peace and joy, without conditions or limitations. However, for people like me, reaching and remaining in such simplicity is the most difficult thing to accomplish. Most of us have lived our entire lives knowing nothing but afflicting emotions, pain, and excitement, rooted in our dualistic mentality. We have a long way to go to understand the meaning of "easy." So, for us, the preliminaries and lower vehicles are essential stepping stones to the Great Perfection.

## PRELIMINARIES

According to the tradition of the Great Perfection teachings of Rigdzin Jigmed Lingpa, before studying and training in the *Yeshe Lama*, one must complete the recitations and meditations of the four common preliminaries, the five uncommon preliminaries, and the training on union with the guru. Only then can one be introduced to the *Yeshe Lama*, starting with its special preparatory exercises.

<sup>a</sup> *snang stong*

<sup>b</sup> *chos sku*; enlightened body of truth

<sup>c</sup> *long spyod rdzogs sku*; enlightened body of complete abundance

<sup>d</sup> *sprul sku*; enlightened embodiment of manifestation

The four common preliminaries are thinking about and understanding (a) the rarity of obtaining a precious human life that is free of obstructions and endowed with everything necessary for pursuing dharma training, (b) the impermanence of human life and the uncertainty of the time of death, (c) the law of interdependent causation of all happenings, and (d) the fact that everything in *samsara* is permeated by suffering. These meditations free our mind from attachment to meaningless joy and fear of suffering.

The five uncommon preliminaries are the recitations of prayers and exercises in devotional meditation. Each recitation and training must be repeated one hundred thousand times. These include the recitations and meditations on (a) taking refuge in the Buddha as the guide, the teachings as the path, and the spiritual community as the support; (b) developing an enlightened attitude toward all beings as one's own kind mother with compassion, love, joy, and equanimity; (c) purifying physical, mental, and emotional impurities through meditation on the buddha of purification (*Vajrasattva*); (d) giving everything imaginable as an offering or gift without expectation of receiving anything in return; and (e) performing physical, verbal, and mental prostrations as an exercise in devotion to enlightened embodiments. These meditations strengthen one's merit and cleanse all negative afflictions on the path of enlightenment.

The final training in the preliminaries is the recitation and meditation on union with the guru. This opens one to attaining the union of pure awareness and universal openness, the meaning of the Great Perfection.

Many great masters of the Nyingma tradition, such as Longchen Rabjam (1308-1363) and Jigmed Lingpa, wrote instructional treatises and commentaries on the original tantras of the Great Perfection in order to introduce practitioners to various stages of meditation. The most important practice manual of the Great Perfection is the *Yeshe Lama*.

### *YESHE LAMA*

The *Yeshe Lama* encompasses the essence of all the Great Perfection tantras. In Great Perfection, there are three classes<sup>a</sup> of teachings: those of mind, expanse, and upadesha.<sup>b</sup> The division of upadesha has four cycles:<sup>c</sup> outer, inner, esoteric, and innermost esoteric (or heart essence). The teach-

<sup>a</sup> *sde*

<sup>b</sup> *man ngag*: pointing-out instructions

<sup>c</sup> *skor*

ings given in the *Yeshe Lama*, especially those on tögal,<sup>a</sup> are based on the innermost esoteric cycle. They are superior to all the other vehicles. Jigmed Lingpa writes:

Among the three classes of the Great Perfection, the mind class imposes mental judgments and talks about natural clarity. The expanse class focuses on basic space and relies on baselessness. These classes do not [start with] realization of pure awareness directly. Also, the [first] three cycles of the class of upadesha rely on the intermediate state<sup>b</sup> [to attain the ultimate goal]. On the other hand, the fourth cycle of the class of upadesha perfects the experience of the natural state that transcends all conceptualization and provides the crucial means of attaining liberation, the light body [in this very lifetime].<sup>c</sup>

Based on the teachings of the innermost esoteric cycle, the *Yeshe Lama* presents a meditation manual for the two main practices of the Great Perfection: trekchö<sup>d</sup> and tögal. In trekchö, by realizing the originally pure nature, one cuts all dualistic concepts from the root and simultaneously experiences both the arising of the ultimate nature and liberation from samsara. In tögal, one directly takes the three kāyas—which are present as one's own nature—as the path and realizes the union of basic space and wisdom.<sup>e</sup> Jigmed Lingpa writes:

The path of trekchö brings arising and liberation simultaneously.  
The path of tögal is the [union of] basic space and awareness.<sup>f</sup>

## TREKCHÖ

After experiencing the total awakening or a glimpse of awareness, one maintains and develops it through meditation on the four modes of placement.<sup>f</sup> Jigmed Lingpa writes:

a *thod rgal*; crossing over

b *bar do*; transitional period between death and rebirth

c *khregs chod*; cutting through

d *dbyings ye*

e *dbyings rig*

f *chog bzhag bzhi*

(a) Placement in the mountainlike view: After realizing the true nature—free of thoughts—as it is, remain in the naturally clear, great awareness that is not subject to mental efforts, grasping, or the usage of intentional meditation antidotes [against concepts]. (b) Oceanlike meditation: Sit in the lotus posture. Look at space in a state of openness. Avoid grasping at the perceptions of the six consciousnesses. Clear your cognition like the ocean free of waves. (c) Skill in activities: Abruptly relax your three doors of body, speech, and mind. Break free of the cocoon of view and meditation. Just maintain your clear, naked wisdom naturally. (d) Unconditional result: Let the five mental objects remain naturally as they are. Then natural clarity arises vividly within you.<sup>a</sup>

By means of trekchö, one can realize one's true nature, the presence of the three kāyas—openness, clarity, and omnipresence—and perfect that realization. Also, at the time of death, one can attain "rainbow body," the dissolution of one's physical body without any remains left behind. Sonam Namgyal (1874-1953) was one of the most recent meditators to attain rainbow body, as was witnessed by many people.

## TÖGAL

This is the most profound and swift path to buddhahood. However, without a solid experience of trekchö, one cannot pursue the meditation of tögal. If one meditates on mere lights, one might simply be creating another object to grasp.

In tögal, one awakens the four luminosities<sup>b</sup> that are present within oneself. Through the water luminosity of the eyes, one sees the luminosity of the space of pure awareness, the luminosity of the empty vital essence,<sup>c</sup> and the luminosity of self-emergent prajñā<sup>d</sup> in the outer space. Then both the inner and outer wisdom and basic space unite.

Indivisible wisdom and wisdom lights (buddha wisdom and buddha fields) are present in all beings. Because of that, if one skillfully uses the

a *ja'lus*

b *sgron ma bzhi*

c *thig le, bindu*

d *shes rab; incisive knowledge*

correct methods of meditation, the inner wisdom and wisdom lights will shine through the wisdom light channels of the body and one will see the same lights in outer space. Then one can realize the union of inner and outer wisdom and wisdom lights, fully enlightened buddhahood.

As a result of such meditation, one's path progresses through the attainment of the four visions:<sup>a</sup> the direct realization of the actual nature of phenomena, increasing appearance of the experience, arriving in the full extent of awareness, and the exhaustion of the ground of the nature of phenomena.<sup>b</sup>

If one fully dedicated oneself to the trainings of tögal without any wavering, one could attain buddhahood within a few years. Also, at the time of death, one could attain "the light body of great transformation"<sup>c</sup> as Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra did; and, like those masters, one could continue to serve others in that same body for as long as there were beings to benefit.

When all delusions dissolve into the absolute nature, the kāyas and wisdoms shine forth as the natural power—all in the state of oneness. One does not gain something from somewhere else, but rather realizes one's own inner nature and qualities. Jigmed Lingpa writes:

The final attainments, the kāyas and wisdoms, come from nowhere else. They [manifest as a result of being] free of impurities of the universal ground which—[as a result of] the pacification of the mind and mental events—[dissolve] into basic space.<sup>d</sup>

## CONCLUSION

*Yeshe Lama* is for those seriously devoted meditators who have matured sufficiently to undertake the Great Perfection trainings and who have been introduced to the text by a master who has perfected his or her realization. Its sole path is one of meditative skills, and its sole goal is to gain inner experience.

To study or practice any esoteric teaching like this, one must have been

<sup>a</sup> *snang ba bzhi*

<sup>b</sup> *chos nyid mngon sum gi snang ba, nyams gong 'phel ba'i snang ba, rig pa tshad phebs kyi snang ba*, and *chos nyid du 'dzin pa zad pa'i snang ba*

<sup>c</sup> *'ja 'lus 'pho ba chen po*

initiated\* or introduced to one's own inner wisdom by an accomplished teacher. Since these are profound, inner teachings charged with power, it is harmful to use them without having had an authentic initiation—like children playing with fire.

Further, no traditional teacher will let one read any material on the Great Perfection that one has not yet experienced or is not ready to experience. If one obtains intellectual information concerning different stages of experience before one is ready to realize them through meditation, one might form concepts about them. Later, it may be difficult to determine whether one is realizing those experiences or just imagining them based on information received prematurely. So until one has completed the preliminary trainings and has studied the teachings under a qualified master, one should not read books on the Great Perfection or try to do Great Perfection meditation on the basis of what one has read in books or on information gleaned during dinner-table conversations.

Using precious teachings in the wrong way causes greater harm than practically anything else. While it is relatively easy to cleanse the effects of ordinary negative thoughts and actions because they are usually at the surface of the mind, like dirt on a floor, it is far more difficult to overcome meditative mistakes because their effects become implanted at deeper levels of the mind and with greater impact. Also, the lineage holders entrusted these teachings to powerful dharma protectors who vowed to act against anyone who misuses the teachings.

My teacher, Kyala Khenpo Rinpoche (1892-1957), used to give general teachings to assemblies of hundreds of people in a stentorian voice. But, when he taught the *Yeshe Lama*, he would go to a secluded place and speak in a subdued voice, often barely more than a whisper. He addressed only experienced meditators, never more than ten at a time. His whole demeanor—unforgettable to this day—gave a sense of the great profundity of the teaching. His course on the *Yeshe Lama* usually took many months. Students would practice for days, sometimes weeks, on each exercise or training, consulting him about every new experience.

Most important, if one trains in the *Yeshe Lama* in the right way with earnest dedication, one will awaken one's own enlightened nature, universal openness. Then one's inner qualities will shine forth for the benefit of all. Even before attaining this goal, while on the path one will start to wit-

ness an easing of one's tight mental grasping, a subsiding of negative emotions, and a spontaneous arising of peace as one turns oneself into a source of joyful light that will benefit others.

I pray for the blessings of the compassionate buddhas, the lineage masters, and the powerful protectors. I pray that the skill and dedication of lotsawa Sangye Khandro and all those who helped bring this precious teaching to Western friends may awaken the true nature, buddhahood, in every being.



## Translators' Note

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**A**s THE SUPREME teaching of the nine vehicles and the essence of the eighty-four thousand categories, unsurpassed blessings abound in this precious text. This is indeed the cherished wealth of the hearts of the Three Roots including all the dākinīs. Although we lack the confidence to claim to have understood these vast and profound instructions, to have had the opportunity even to attempt to translate the words alone has been the greatest fortune. Unconcerned with personal fame or gain, our sole intention is to benefit the doctrine and sentient beings. Just as the sun and moon are renowned in this world, likewise, the glory and splendor of the instructions on the view of nondual original purity and spontaneous presence adorn the world like no other.

Our inability—due to delusion—to translate with accuracy, as well as all errors that we have made, are brought together and confessed before the watchful awareness of the guardians of mantra: Ekadzañi, Rāhula, and Dorje Lekpa. Through this confession, by fulfillment of the unconditional wishes of the wisdom buddhas who dwell in the space of the dharmakāya, may the supreme and common siddhis effortlessly shower down upon us all.

By this virtue, may the doctrine of Lord Buddha spread in the ten directions. May the lives of the lineage holders be long and firm. May the happiness of all beings ever increase. May upheavals of the four elements, strife, war, disease, famine, and all negative circumstances become pacified. May there be everlasting peace and happiness throughout the world. May all those who come into contact with these precious instructions recognize the innate peace of the originally pure dharmakāya; and, at the time of death, may we all be inseparable from the wisdom intent of the guru and retinue and achieve liberation in the great expanse of the sole essence!

This translation was made possible by the kindness of several sublime

gurus who answered questions and gave important explanations. For the first edition, the text was fine-tuned by the editor, Mary Racine, and the corrections were input by Anna Smith. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Kay Henry for all of the hard work she has done in helping to prepare, lay out, and edit this second revised translation. Her care and dedication have been an indispensable part of this process. We are also extremely grateful to the Venerable Tülku Thondup for encouraging us, reviewing the initial translation work, and writing such a wonderful introduction. Our gratitude is extended to the patrons of the dharma, who are like the wind, invisibly carrying this project along to fruition.

As Jigmed Lingpa himself states, much of this text—because of its highly secret subject matter—was written in a cryptic style. Since this is not a treatise intended for study but rather a practice manual according to the class of upadesha, we have inserted a minimum of interpretive endnotes, most of which are based on explanations given by several gurus. To fully comprehend and ultimately realize the meaning of this text, it is essential that, in addition to empowerment and oral transmission, one receives commentary from a qualified master of the Great Perfection.

More than ten years have passed since the initial translation of this text, and all copies of it have sold out. The repeated requests of many Western practitioners, coupled with the recognition that the original needed much improvement, prompted us to undertake the task of completely revising it.

Translation work is like most professions; the more you do it, the better the result. However, translating from Tibetan still requires the help, advice, and watchful eyes of qualified Tibetan lamas. Lama Chönam's expertise is evident throughout this work.

It is our sincere hope that those practitioners who own the first edition will make the effort to acquire this new edition, which illuminates many important points that were neglected the first time around. We apologize for these shortcomings and request all objects of refuge—including the community of practitioners, you who are the sangha—to understand the process of translation work and join us to partake of the offering of this new edition which we pray will bring tremendous benefit to each and every one of you.

Finally, in the transliteration of Sanskrit terms, we have departed from the standard practice by replacing ś, ſ, and c with sh, sh, and ch, respectively. A glossary of English, Tibetan, and Sanskrit equivalents will be

found at the end of the text. Superscripted, lowercase letters of the alphabet refer the reader to footnotes where—upon first occurrence—we have given the Tibetan and, where known, Sanskrit equivalents for technical terms. The numbering of these notes begins again with the first letter of the alphabet on each new page. Superscripted consecutive numerals refer to endnotes found at the end of the translation.

The headings and subheadings throughout the main text were added for the convenience of the reader and are not present in the original Tibetan. The edition of the *Yeshe Lama* that was used for this translation is unknown. However, it was given to the translators as an authentic copy of the *Yeshe Lama* to work from because it had been edited by Chatral Sangye Dorje Rinpoche. Page numbers of this Tibetan edition are delineated in brackets throughout the text. If students wish to purchase a copy of the pecha in the Tibetan, they may contact Mirror of Wisdom, info@mirrorofwisdom.org or 1-866-647-7672.

May the guardians of Secret Mantra Vajrayāna continue to guard and bless all our efforts to safeguard and propagate the doctrine of the Great Perfection during these degenerate times!

*Sangye Khandro and Lama Chönam*

३१। इषश्चप्रकेव्यर्गुदंकेव्यस्त्रिदंतिषाणीशर्वदंपविपर्श्वदंपविप्यग्नि  
दीप्यपविप्तिदंपिषाण्यतेषाण्यमालेषाण्यत्पविप्यग्निः ।

# *Yeshe Lama*

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VIDYĀDHARA JIGMED LINGPA

From the Heart Essence of the Vast Expanse of the Great Perfection,  
A Practice Manual for the Stages of the  
Path of the Original Protector

[1] *rdzogs pa chen po klong chen snying tig gi gdod ma'i mgon po'i lam gyi  
rim pa'i khrid yig ye shes bla ma zhes bya ba bzhugs*

entitled

**Yeshe Lama**  
*ye shes bla ma*



## HOMAGE AND STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

[2] Homage to the Conqueror, the Teacher of Unchanging Light,<sup>10</sup>  
Whose intrinsic nature [3] is the inconceivable nature of phenomena  
like the basic space of the sky,  
The original state where neither existence nor quiescence ever falls  
to any direction,  
Where every aspect is endowed with the supreme nature,  
The indivisibility of space and wisdom. [4]  
You are the epitome of the aspect of appearance.<sup>11</sup>  
Glorious Original Protector,<sup>12</sup> with consort and retinue,  
May you remain ever victorious within the lotus lake of my mind.

The intrinsic nature is primordially unchanging, the object to be  
purified a temporary stain.  
Through the teacher who embodies the three kāyas, a rain of  
dharma [5] descends to completely cleanse [all stains]  
In accordance with the capabilities, faculties, and intentions of  
those who approach gradually and simultaneously.

This is the sole chariot—superb spiritual path—of the Great  
Perfection which brings about simultaneous liberation. [6]  
Here, for a million ages, the most excellent merit has been amassed  
and fully dedicated by those who are life trees [of this tradition].  
By their glory, they appeared in the world as the incarnate scholars  
and translators of the past  
Who brought and upheld the undiminished victory banner of  
explanations in the Land of Snow Mountains.<sup>13</sup>  
O Lord of Speech,<sup>14</sup> life tree of the doctrine, may your feet adorn  
the crown of my head.

The meaning of the ocean of tantra is so deeply profound and  
supremely vast,  
Except for the Omniscient One, with his natural wisdom capacity,

a 'od mi 'gyur ba



The presumptuous cannot hope to comprehend this.  
Nevertheless, Drimed Ödzer<sup>a</sup> has lifted the veil of obscurity to  
expose the meaning of all that is.

Here, I will clearly synthesize whatever he revealed to fulfill the sup-  
plications of the fortunate disciples. [7]

Well then, even though the wisdom intent of the fully enlightened Buddha Kuntuzangpo never wavers from the space of phenomena,<sup>b</sup> through his wisdom mind he gives transmission to the five resultant buddhas not other than himself. Having taught the profound and vast fully endowed Secret Mantra<sup>c</sup> vajra vehicle and illuminating the three classes of tantra, transmission, and upadesha, the minds of beings—disciples to be tamed—are naturally led to freedom. Here, without taking the generation and completion stages into consideration, the nature of mind<sup>d</sup> is revealed as the intrinsic nature of the primordial buddha, the fundamental nature<sup>e</sup> of original purity.<sup>d</sup> [8] The view of “lhun grub tögal”<sup>f</sup> explains that everything is awakened as wisdom, the nature of one’s own appearances. These introductions are explicated without rhetoric or analytical investigation; rather, they serve as a direct introduction for encountering the nature of the mind.

As the path upon which the buddhas of the past embarked, that which all future buddhas will achieve, and the sole pathway of all buddhas of the present, this perfectly sublime peak of all vehicles is untouched by the intellectual tenets of the other eight.<sup>g</sup> Here, I intend to so clearly reveal the natural great expanse of the wisdom intent of genuine truth, the original buddha Kuntuzangpo, that it will seem to be spread across the palm of the hand. [9] May the hosts of dharma-keeper dākinis grant permission!<sup>h</sup>

Herein lies the threefold tradition of giving oral instructions: the tradition of giving instruction, of directly encountering, and of complete entrustment to the traveler who is crossing over the mountain pass.<sup>i</sup> [Yeshe Lama] belongs to the first and, as the tradition of upadesha, it includes the other two. This teaching will be given by means of three stages: for those

<sup>a</sup> *chos kyi dbyings, dharmadbhātu*

<sup>b</sup> *sems nyid*

<sup>c</sup> *gnas lugs*

<sup>d</sup> *ka dag*

<sup>e</sup> *lhun grub shod rgal*; crossing over with spontaneous presence



of keen faculty, who possess the force of the cause<sup>20</sup> in order to arrive in the absolute space of the original ground<sup>a</sup> in this lifetime; those of middling faculty, who will be enlightened in the bardo; and those of lesser faculty, who will take their next breath in a natural nirmāṇakāya pure realm. [10]

## FOR THOSE OF KEEN FACULTY

First, for the overview, there are two parts: the preliminaries and the actual teaching.

### PRELIMINARY PRACTICES

For the preliminaries there are three ways to train: in order to discover<sup>21</sup> the three kāyas, the way of training in the practice of the four elements; in order to discover awareness, discerning samsāra and enlightenment<sup>b22</sup> with the three doors; and in order to discover the mind, training the body, speech, and mind.

#### Training in the Practice of the Four Elements

First, of the six million four hundred thousand verses on the natural Great Perfection,<sup>c</sup> in the extraordinary root tantra *Reverberation of Sound*<sup>d23</sup> it states:

The stages of training in the three kāyas emphasize the qualities of the elements. Diligently training in the sound of earth, water, fire, and wind will bring certain accomplishment.

Thus, [11] although this quote expresses the value of practicing with the four sounds [of the elements], since this is seldom practiced anymore, it is acceptable to omit this.

a *gdod ma'i gzhi dbyings*

b *'khor 'das ru shan*

c *rang bzbin rdzogs pa chen po*

d *sgra thal 'gyur*



## Discerning Samsāra and Enlightenment

Second, for discerning samsāra and enlightenment, among both the outer and inner, first the outer discernment is according to the *Tantra of the Single Child of the Doctrine*:<sup>a</sup>

Initially, begin with conduct in order to reverse the fixation of taking things as real through body, speech, and mind.

Thus, the way of acting is as the root tantra<sup>24</sup> states:

Use the body to go, stay, twist, and perform various postures; stretching the extremities out and drawing them back in, perform many types of activity. Engage mindfully in the conduct and forms of the beings of the six classes and [12] physically enact whatever comes to mind.

As stated, this will reverse the activities of the three doors that are generated through karmic habits, eventually bringing them to a halt. To avoid the fault of the seventh downfall—namely, exposing secret conduct—one must retreat to an isolated place where it is certain no passersby can observe you. So that the local guardians of the environment will not become jealous or disturbed while you engage in impulsive conduct, offer them a torma, entreating them to enact miraculous activities. Now, in order to benefit all sentient beings, think that you must engage in the practice of discerning samsāra and enlightenment with body, speech, and mind and that hereafter rebirth in existence will not occur! Give rise to this intention. [13] Then strip down to the bare flesh and take upon yourself the extreme heat and cold of the hells; the hunger and thirst of the deprived spirits;<sup>b</sup> the mistreatment and abuse of animals; the birth, old age, sickness, and death of humans; the warfare of titans; and the exhaustion of merit and inevitable plunge of the gods.<sup>c</sup> Make this a personal experience complete with the physical drama of running here and there, jumping, twisting, and flinging the extremities back and forth. In short, put to action whatever comes to mind by following one's impulses without restriction or focus.

<sup>a</sup> *bstan pa bu geig rgyud*

<sup>b</sup> *yi dvags, pretas*

<sup>c</sup> *lha, devas*



Likewise, the practice for discerning speech is as stated in the *Reverberation of Sound*:

So as to eliminate the necessity to respond to whatever is said, express the various pleasing and displeasing utterances of devas, nāgas, yakṣhas, gandharvas, kumbhandas, and rāhulas.<sup>a</sup> [14]

In short, bring to mind and give expression to the dialects of the six classes.

Thus, as taught, make idle, senseless chatter and repeat the sounds of various languages without the least concern for what should be accepted or rejected.

The activity of the mind is as stated in the *Sole Heir of the Buddha*:<sup>b</sup>

Cultivate a variety of mental states such as joy, displeasure, bliss, sorrow, permanence, impermanence, contemplation of the view, meditation, conduct, spirituality, worldliness, attachment, hatred, delusion, virtue, nonvirtue, and so forth.

Thus, just as taught, forcefully invoking the proliferation of virtuous and nonvirtuous recollections concerning the three times, [15] the three doors will become quite weary, at which time one should rest and observe the nature of the ensuing state that has severed prideful complacency. Likewise, it states in the *Last Testament*:<sup>c</sup>

One should also engage in the activity of the Three Jewels.

Thus, that means one should assume the vajra posture, with hands in the earth-touching mudrā. Imagine wearing the robes of ordination and that light rays radiate from the hair coil between one's eyebrows. Engage in peaceful conduct such as gazing out about the length of a yoke and so forth. The activity of speech is to recite sūtras such as the *Heart Sūtra*<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> lha, klu, gnod sbyin, dri za'i, grul bum, khab 'jug

<sup>b</sup> sangs rgyas sras grig

<sup>c</sup> 'das rjes

<sup>d</sup> shes rab snying po; prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya



and others. Mentally analyze words as well as the tenets of the Prāsaṅgika<sup>a</sup> Madhyamaka philosophy.

Likewise assume wrathful postures [16] with the play of the nine characteristics of dance. The activity of speech is to shout the sounds of *rulu rulu*, *hung hung*, *phet phet*, and so forth. Train in the ability of the body and speech to adopt a variety of mannerisms. As the tantra states:

Discuss various sounds of dharma such as mantras, prayers, philosophy, existence, nonexistence, and phenomena.

In this way, the discernment practices individually correspond to body, speech, and mind. There are also practices for alternating the preliminaries of body, speech, and mind. Nevertheless, any characteristic of saṃsāra and enlightenment naturally arises as the manifestation of the three doors and three kāyas. To engage in these practices simultaneously is not only practical but extremely valuable. [17] Diligently practicing this discernment for half a month, eleven, or seven days in the short term will bring about the natural reversal of fixation [that occurs] through the three doors and the continuity of cyclic interdependence will cease. Ultimately, the body will mature as clear light,<sup>b</sup> the speech will be purified as the chakra of syllables, and the mind will be set free in awareness. It is taught that the benefits are boundless, and in brief it states in the *Realization of Empowerment*:<sup>c</sup>

Whoever engages in the discernment [practices] will never return to the three realms!

So, it is.

Second, the inner divisions of practice [18] are according to the wisdom intent of the *Clear Expanse*<sup>d</sup> tantra, which states:

At the crown, throat, heart, navel, secret place, and soles of the feet abide the syllables *ah*, *su*, *nri*, *tri*, *pre*, and *du*.

a *dbu ma thal 'gyur*

b *'od gsal*

c *dbang nye bar rtog s pa*

d *klong gsal*



Thus, once this habitual body exists, the seed syllables that bring about the six classes of rebirth abide continually, along with the previous karmic impressions. Since this becomes the circumstance perpetuating that which follows, even at the moment of death, the subtle wind-mind<sup>a</sup> will gather wherever the syllables of the channels<sup>b</sup> abide and the [consciousness] will be transferred to that state of rebirth. Therefore, during the present time of the path, this extraordinary tradition of purification which involves many easily applied methods is a special feature of this unsurpassed vehicle. [19]

The manner of purification is as stated in the *Last Testament*:

Because this body has arisen from the cause of ignorance,<sup>c</sup> the seed syllables of the six classes endure. Because awareness is actually the three kāyas, the three kāyas arise as the three syllables.<sup>25</sup>

Training with the syllables is the discernment.

Thus, as taught, the basis for the purification is the syllable of the gods, a white *ah* located at the crown; the syllable of the titans, a yellow-green *su* at the throat; the syllable of humans, a pale blue *nri* at the heart; the syllable of animals, a red-black *tri* at the navel; the syllable of the deprived spirits, a dust-colored *pre* at the secret place; and the syllable of the hells, a smoke-colored *du* at the soles of the feet. That which purifies is wisdom awareness indivisible with all the buddhas [20] which is the intrinsic nature of the three vajras appearing as a white *om* in the crown, a red *ah* in the throat, and a blue *hung* in the heart. Clearly imagine these three syllables ablaze with splendor. With the repetition of the sound of the three syllables, light rays emerge to purify the seed syllables of the six classes including all habits. Consider that everything is purified and nothing remains. Recite one hundred thousand repetitions of *om*, *ah*, and *hung* for each of the seed syllables of the six classes, along with additional accumulations to compensate for shortcomings, bringing the total to seven hundred thousand. This will bring about the signs of the purification of negativity, and ordinary fixated attachment will be purified of its own accord. In the *Clear Expanse* it states: [21]

<sup>a</sup> *rlung sems*

<sup>b</sup> *rtsa*

<sup>c</sup> *ma rig pa*



Whoever trains in the inner discernment  
Will eliminate the seeds that cause the confusion of samsāra.

Thus, it is.

### Training the Body, Speech, and Mind

Third, in order to discover the mind there are the three preliminaries to train the three doors.

#### *Training the Body*

First is training the body. In the *Reverberation of Sound* it states:

By the preliminary practice of the body,  
The causes of the individual functions cease.  
To assume the vajra posture and train with the body  
Benefits the mind.

There are two assertions explaining how to either stand or sit in the vajra posture. First, join the heels of both feet, extend the knees outward, and straighten the back. Join both palms and, while extending the elbows out, [22] bring the hands over the crown without touching it. Tucking the chin down to meet the Adam's apple, imagine the body to be a blazing blue vajra with three prongs. When tiring of this, adopt the second unchanging vajra posture. Holding the body so that it resembles a vajra, keep the torso erect, arresting the all-pervasive winds. Joining the soles of the feet eliminates the male, female, and neutral winds so that one can naturally abide within the clear light of wisdom. Placing the two heels forcefully against the secret place eliminates the basis of desire. By pressing the palms together above the crown of the head, one trains in the key point of the body. Thus, these are the assertions of the Omniscient One.

The way of implementing pure recollection is to consider that the three upper points indicate the nature,<sup>a</sup> intrinsic nature,<sup>b</sup> and compassion.<sup>c</sup> The three lower points indicate the three kāyas, [23] and the central hub that

<sup>a</sup> *ngö bo*

<sup>b</sup> *rang bzhin*

<sup>c</sup> *thugs rje*



connects them indicates that the single nature of original purity and spontaneous presence<sup>26</sup> is taken as the path.

There are three reasons for this [stage of the practice]. In general, physical exhaustion purifies physical obstructions; and, in particular, imagining that the body is a vajra ablaze with fire pacifies demonic and obstructing forces. Ultimately, attachment to the body will be reversed and the vajrakāya established. At that time, the meaning of the interdependent connection being aligned with the body so that realization arises in the mind is that—by the circumstance of such exhausting activities—one severs the unceasing flow of concepts,<sup>b</sup> leaving naked awareness free of support. [24] This makes it easy to strike the vital point of encountering the nature of mind.

### *Training the Speech*

Second is training the speech. In the *Reverberation of Sound* it states:

Since speech abides as the syllable *hung*—through sealing, training, seeking flexibility, and entering the path—training the . . .

### *Sealing*

First, of these four categories, sealing is twofold: the outer sealing of appearances and the inner sealing of the aggregates.

In an isolated place, assume the vajra posture and recite *hung hung hung hung*. By reciting with a sustained melody, imagine that the entire universe and inhabitants turn into *hung*. Just barely bringing your teeth and lips together, without distraction mingle appearances, winds, and cognition as one. [25] All appearances arise only as *hung*; and, if [appearances] become insubstantial and uncertain, this indicates the sealing. The purpose for this is that objective appearances will be naturally liberated.

Second, the inner sealing of the aggregates<sup>27</sup> is that once again, by reciting *hung*, all the outer *hungs* that emerged from one another now enter one's body through the orifices of the sense organs. As they consume the body, all internal organs—including flesh and blood—become purified and nonconceptual. Maintaining the winds is a key point while considering

a *lhun grub*

b *rnam rtog*



that the entire body becomes filled with *hungs*. [26] The purpose for this is that the elements of the body will be purified and, without contamination, the corporeal form will be liberated.

### *Training*

Second, training has two. First, by training with external appearances through the circumstance of forcefully reciting *hung hung*, sharp, swift blue-black *hungs* begin to shoot like bolts of lightning [which are] the size of the objects that will be penetrated. Consider that all mountains and houses which ordinarily appear solid are riddled with holes. The purpose of this is to recognize that appearances lack true existence.

Second, training with the inner aggregates one imagines a blue-black *hung* [27] the size of a hand span penetrating one's entire body, piercing holes so that [it] is reduced to particles. Recite *hung* with tremendous force. The sign of success is that the body muscles begin to quiver and, similar to a reflection in a mirror, the experience of there being no true, inherent existence arises. This pacifies illness and demonic-force possession of the inner aggregates and serves the purpose of liberating the body in clear light.

### *Seeking Flexibility*

Third, in seeking flexibility, one places a stick or other support in front of oneself. While reciting *hung hung*, imagine that an unceasing chain of *hungs* rises up from the base of the support, gradually wrapping itself around the stick all the way to the tip where the lead *hung* stands erect. [28] Focusing one's attention there, slowly and melodiously chant *hung*. When becoming tired, once again concentrate upon each *hung* dissolving back into the other and finally gathering into one's heart. Relax. By repeatedly practicing in this way, all outer and inner concepts become the path and the qualities of a flexible, exuberant mind are evidenced along with the ability to control and transform any visualization.

### *Entering the Path*

Fourth, for the practice of entering the path, one visualizes oneself to be a blue *hung* one cubit in size, weaving along like a worm to many different destinations. Starting with visible objects such as mountains and valleys, imagine continuing to move slowly through many familiar places, [29] like a tourist reaching the destination of a journey, while slowly reciting



*hung* in a manner that matches one's movement. The purpose is that, through this cleansing of objective habits, the body and speech can be rendered functional. Again, by reciting *hung hung*, one suddenly arrives in the eastern pure realm of Manifest Joy<sup>28</sup> or any realm of one's choice,<sup>29</sup> like an arrow shot by an archer. This establishes an auspicious connection for rebirth in the pure lands. In all cases wherever the mind is directed, uniting and maintaining the wind, mind, and *hung* with single-pointed concentration surpasses any other method for arresting concepts. [30] Through this, the speech is purified of obstructions and liberated as the sambhogakāya.

### *Training the Mind*

Third, training the mind is as stated in the *Reverberation of Sound*:

First, if the origin of the mind, the place of abiding, and the final destination are carefully analyzed, training in this way allows one to know the fundamental nature of the mind.

Thus, for training the mind, there is the actual mind training and the manner of resting in tranquility.

### *Actual Mind Training*

First, there are three, beginning with an examination of the origin of the mind and the origin of the apprehender.

If there is mind, from what direction does it originate? Does it stem from the outer universe and its inhabitants, from existing outer and inner appearances, or from the nonexistent state of emptiness and the like? [31] If one claims that [the mind] originates from the standpoint of existence, this falls to the direction of the philosophical tenets of the shravakas. One should understand [the mind] by eradicating all fixation on the true existence of appearances into particles. Through such analysis, the origin of the mind cannot be discovered, including reduction to a partless particle. Although one may recognize that [the mind] is naturally nonexistent like a dream, if the arising of the unceasing, indifferent apprehending mind—for example, the mind and mental activity—is not severed from the root, then this is like the view of the Middle Way Mind Only School<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *mngon par dga' ba*. *Abhirati*



of nonaffirming and affirming negation. Having fallen to the direction of harboring expectations about the fundamental nature, one should [32] turn within to observe the mind of the apprehender! While doing so, if one asserts that the mind that momentarily remains in natural radiance<sup>a</sup> or arises as various concepts is genuine, this is to base one's confidence on the unsupported platitude of the mind.

Still lacking a direct realization of awareness, if one claims that the mind originates from the perspective of emptiness, then the originator must certainly have shape, color, size, and characteristics. The intrinsic nature of this must be analyzed. Through such analysis, the dualistic appearance of a searcher and the sought become free from support or object. If left in a state that is nonconceptual and free of all words, expressions, thoughts, [33] and theories, the meaning of the unborn dharmakāya—"baseless from the root"<sup>b</sup>—will be able to be internalized. In the *Middle Way Consequence*<sup>c</sup> [sūtra] it states:

Since I have no definitive position, I am completely faultless.

Thus, this is to arrive there. Even the way of arriving is not like the claims of present-day philosophers who boast they hold this view [of the heart essence<sup>d</sup>]. Unlike those intellectual exercises and analyses, through this natural Great Perfection, one will arrive by beholding the nature of phenomena.<sup>e</sup> This is what I have to say!<sup>f</sup><sup>30</sup>

Second, investigating the place of abiding and the abider is as follows. If this present mind arises externally, it is the outer object. If it arises internally, [34] it is the inner body. By analyzing the place where it abides—whether outside, inside, upper, lower, head, feet, or wherever—if the place of abiding can be seen, then that shape, color, function, and so forth must also be investigated so that this false, hollow cavern can collapse. When one fails to observe anything externally or internally and directly analyzes that which abides, that is merely the natural radiance of the consciousness of the basis of all<sup>f</sup> arising as truly existing. This approaches the view of the

<sup>a</sup> rang gsal

<sup>b</sup> gzhi med rtsa bral

<sup>c</sup> dbu ma thal 'gyur [mdo]

<sup>d</sup> snying thig

<sup>e</sup> chos nyid, dharmatā

<sup>f</sup> kun gzhi rnam shes, ālayavijñāna



**False Image Mind Only School.**<sup>a</sup> Here, the mind has no cause or characteristics, being more or less like writing on water which—even while occurring—vanishes without a trace. Just like when a ship has sunk and the [captain] frantically attempts to seize anything but there is only water—at the moment of searching for the place of abiding, the searcher naturally vanishes, [35] thereby establishing the abider to be free from identification. This internalizes the meaning of the unceasing sambhogakāya.

At the present moment, through the continuity of the feelings of the three doors, wherever the experience of contact occurs, such as being poked by a thorn, it seems as though existing right there. With the compounded aggregates as the cause and the sudden onset of concepts as the contributing circumstance, the fixating mind attaches to the object of grasping, resulting in the self as the possessor. When dualistic grasping is eliminated, then at the time of arriving at the ground of the exhaustion of the nature of phenomena,<sup>b1</sup> the saying “even if surrounded by a hundred messengers of Avīchī [hell] [36] there would be no anxiety or fear” is then understood.

Third, investigating the traveler and the destination is as follows. While investigating the destination of the traveler—whether it be the outer and inner universe and inhabitants, appearances, emptiness, existence, non-existence, or something else, whatever the direction may be—by not discovering any place to go, grasping with hope and fear for a result is then reversed. If something is discovered, it is then necessary to determine the details about the traveler such as any physical characteristics. If, during this investigation, it is determined that there is nothing [that exists], one will have the assurance of knowing that materializing phenomena<sup>b2</sup> cannot result in enlightenment.

Since there is no destination, one will surely conclude that objective appearances are fabricated by the mind. Since there is no traveler, one will gain confidence in knowing that the subject is naturally nonexistent. [37] It is then that empty awareness—devoid of coming or going—is ascertained as the nirmāṇakāya. This is the extraordinarily swift path because even the pith instructions on the collapse of the constructs of the mind are included within the uncommon [instructions] on the origin, abiding, and destination. Through training in these preliminary practices corresponding to the mind, on the mundane level negativ-

<sup>a</sup> *sems tsam rnam rdzun pa, chittamātra nirākāravāda*

<sup>b</sup> *chos*



ties and obstructions are purified and obstacles are pacified. Fixation is reversed; and, in particular, by means of distinguishing samsara and enlightenment, the characteristics of the mind are liberated in the wisdom of empty awareness. Ultimately, one will become indivisible with all the buddhas and arrive at the state of the original ground of vajra mind. [38]

### *Manner of Resting in Tranquility*

For the second, there are two: resting in tranquility<sup>a</sup> and restoration.<sup>b</sup>

First, in the *Reverberation of Sound* it states:

At this time, the key point for the practitioner  
Is to rest body, speech, and mind in tranquility.

Thus, through the exceptional activity of the preliminaries, some disturbances of the physical constitution and elements are produced. In order to establish this as the innate nature of tranquility, the key point for the body involves transcending good, bad, accepting, and rejecting. The body is positioned as though it were a corpse in a charnel ground, and the speech should remain in the nature free from expression. While training, one's breath should be slow and even. Like a cloudless sky, the mind should remain free from the distraction of recollections and concepts. [39] Practice this yoga, free of action or activity, and remain in tranquility for twenty-one, seven, or three successive days. The reason for doing this is elucidated in the *Clear Expanse* tantra:

Whoever is able to remain in tranquility will pacify the circumstances that lead to imbalances of the elements and naturally liberate grasping.

Second, the practice of restoration is as it states in the *Last Testament*:

Restore through the gaze of the shravakas, bodhisattvas, and herukas. Gaining restoration through the three doors will encourage diligence in practice.

<sup>a</sup> rnal du dbab

<sup>b</sup> sorgzbug



Thus, first, with the gaze of the shrāvakas, [40] assuming the seven-point posture of Vairochana, remain without inhibiting the emergence of perceivable concepts. Second, with the gaze of the bodhisattvas, allow the eyes to gaze without any particular focus no farther than the length of a yoke. Third, with the gaze of the herukas, part the legs in the advancing posture [and], with aggressively darting eyes, stare into space. Shout aloud *ha ha*, the fierce and haunting laugh of the herukas, and sing *hi hi*, the female heruka song that is heard from afar. Train in this fearless conduct that collapses the false, hollow cavern of appearances. The purpose of this is as stated in the *Clear Expanse*:

Through the peaceful gaze of the shrāvakas, the body, speech, and mind become tranquil. Through the gaze of the bodhisattvas, [41] tranquility becomes the nature of bliss. Through the gaze of the herukas, the three qualities of tranquility will also occur.

Thus, it is.

In the older texts, there are some distinctions concerning the seven-point posture in that the gaze of the eyes is said to be focused on the tip of the nose, the gaze of the bodhisattvas is not necessarily peaceful, and so forth. These presumptions are not well thought out.

## ACTUAL TEACHING

Second, there are two ways of giving the actual teaching.

First, in order to sow the seeds of the four kāyas as well as to render the practitioner suitable for meditating on the swift path, by [the practitioner's] entering the great maṇḍala of empowerment, all activities that bring maturity are naturally acquired at this time. [42] To give all the teachings and then confer empowerment is not only illogical but an unpleasant spectacle for those who understand the meaning of the tantras.

For the second, from the perspective of definition, this—the unsurpassed vehicle of the vajra essence—takes the result as the path. That is why it is the actual basis of all paths leading to buddhahood. The nature of the result also encounters awareness. First of all, if we were to consider the ground without its actual nature, it would be like seeing a temple but not the three supports in it. To think of profound and luminous empty appearances as mere



terms that relate to one another is simply insufficient for establishing trust in the view and meditation. [43] Moreover, considering the actual nature without the ground is similar to seeing the three supports [in the temple] but failing to establish their characteristics. Although having intellectually understood this through the four dogmas and by means of the eight limitations free from elaboration,<sup>34</sup> because there is no inner experience, it is unstable. To consider that this [rigpa] is not the ground or the actual nature is like not seeing either the temple or the statue of Shākyamuni within.<sup>35</sup> The teachings state, "Phenomena are without inherent existence." Taking that as a path of mere mental speculation fails to directly encounter the nature that is without inherent existence. That is why [the Great Perfection] is not like a philosophy that ensures death will be ordinary.

Here the view of the heart essence of the natural Great Perfection includes both the actual nature and the ground. [44] Just like precisely establishing the way the support and supported abide, one is able to encounter a direct realization of natural liberation without depending on imagining there is a view or meditation.

For the second, there are two divisions beginning with the oral instructions on trekchö for those with keen faculties who, without meditation, achieve liberation with total confidence.<sup>36</sup> By meditating on tögal, those with great diligence will liberate the phenomena of the path of the three kāyas and become enlightened without leaving a body behind.<sup>37</sup>

### **Oral Instructions on Trekchö**

For the first, due to the distinction of faculties, there are two ways of encountering the nature.

#### ***Common Method***

First, for the common, if a disciple of the heart essence possesses faith but their mind is still obscured, [45] it is as stated in the *Adorned by Direct Introduction*:<sup>38</sup>

*Eh ma ho!* Introducing appearances to be the mind, the mind gains proficiency. In turn, introducing the nature of mind to be empty, emptiness is sealed with bliss. Introducing emptiness to

<sup>a</sup> *ngo sprod spras pa*



be awareness, the nature of awareness itself becomes indivisible with space—the dharmakāya nature just as it is.

Thus, similarly introducing appearances as fabrications of mind, holding to true existence is reversed. In consequence, when the fabricating mind is realized as empty, attachment to external appearances is purified.<sup>38</sup> Introducing emptiness to be awareness prevents one from the nihilistic interpretation of the nature of phenomena.

This way of teaching emphasizes these key points, but having understood that, this does not even approach the direction of the wisdom intent [46] of the heart essence as it is stated in the *Naturally Arising (Awareness)*:

The mind yoga of appearances means that everything originates from my mind. If this mind is realized, what else is there to do? I have never said that those who keep saying this will be liberated.

So, it is taught.

In other texts, it is said that ultimately there is no mind. But continuing to believe that the relative exists, there are those who will conceptualize the view and meditation and practice that as the path. Likewise, even with the dharma term “unity,” there is still a significant difference between the construction of unity by bringing two things together and this dharma of the Great Perfection—the originally pure, great, even perfection of awareness and emptiness—where nothing is united. [47] It is for this reason that this is a great, impartial distinction! Therefore, the Omniscient One said:

It must be known that approaches which introduce appearances as mind and the mind’s nature as empty are not the wisdom intent of upadeshas’ heart-essence approach. While such approaches may be found in some upadeshas, it is in order to lead the lower to the higher but definitely not the definitive meaning.

As it is explained, the direct valid cognition that appearances are not the mind is [proved] during [dreamless] sleep, unconsciousness, the two states

<sup>a</sup> (*rig pa*) *rang shar*



of union, and [the state of] perpetual lack of awareness. As it explains in *Discerning the Middle and Limits*,<sup>a</sup> [48] during these five occasions of being mindless, appearances have never gone anywhere. This is illustrated by the experience of finding a jewel in a previous night's dream and the experience of sexual pleasure; when one awakens from the joy and fixation upon its true existence, it is discovered that nothing remains. Because of that, one can gain certainty that various appearances and recollections arise from temporary circumstances.

These days, since the doctrine of the Great Perfection is declining, there are many who trust only this method of directly encountering. Here, in order to reveal the direct path, it is as stated in the *Naturally Arising*:

When the lion roars with his own voice, all other creatures of the wild pass out from fear. When the Great Perfection uses its own language, all those of the lower vehicles lose consciousness.

Thus, as taught, [49] those who lack the fortune to consider cause and result on the level of the doctrine of definitive truth and those who expect results in the Great Perfection through mental analysis will verbally abuse this system. However, the Omniscient One has said:

It should be clearly understood that the assertion that appearances are the mind is the great darkness of perverted understanding.

Thus, based on this advice, the reason for giving such an elaborate explanation is in order to polish this path.

### *Uncommon Explanation*

Second, the uncommon explanation for completely and directly introducing [the mind's nature] resembles the restoration of vision to a blind person. Asking the disciples to assume the unchanging vajra posture, with vajra and bell [the vajra master] melodiously chants the lineage supplication which transforms the ordinary mind. [50] After that, [the vajra master says]:

<sup>a</sup> *dbus mtha' rnam 'byed, madhyāntavibhāga*



*Kye!* Do not contrive or elaborate the awareness of this very moment. Allow it to be just as it is. This is not established as existing, not existing, or having a direction. It does not discern between emptiness and appearances and does not have the characteristics of nihilism and eternalism. Within this state where nothing exists, it is unnecessary to exert effort through view or meditation. The great primordial liberation is not like being released from bondage. It is natural radiance uncontrived by the intellect, wisdom unsullied by concepts. The nature of phenomena, not tainted by the view and meditation, is evenness without placement and postevenness without premeditation. It is clarity without characteristics and vastness not lost to uniformity. [51] Although all sentient beings have never been separate from their own indwelling wisdom even for an instant, by failing to recognize this, it becomes like a natural flow of water solidifying into ice. With the inner grasping mind as the root cause and outer objective clinging as the contributing circumstance, beings wander in samsara indefinitely. Now, with the guru's oral instructions, at the moment of encountering awareness—without any mental constructions—rest in the way things truly are, without wavering from or meditating on anything. This fully reveals the core wisdom intent of the primordial Buddha Kuntuzangpo. [52]

In the *Sixfold Expanse*<sup>a</sup> it states:

The mind's nature, neither eternal nor nonexistent, is phenomena free of good or bad. This is called the wisdom intent free of accepting or rejecting: I, Kuntuzangpo, have revealed it. This nature of mind, devoid of accepting and rejecting, perceives things as naturally liberated without direction. It is called the great all-encompassing wisdom intent: I, Kuntuzangpo, have revealed it. This nature of mind, devoid of lethargy or elation, is the wisdom intent of great evenness. It is called the wisdom intent of the natural condition of the six groups:<sup>39</sup> I, Kuntuzangpo, have revealed it. This nature of mind, which is fearless,

<sup>a</sup> *klong drug pa*

ରେଣ୍ଟଶାପରିଷଦ୍ସବ୍ଦା ପିତକାଶାନ୍ତର୍ଦ୍ଵର୍ଷଦ୍ସବ୍ଦା ଗୁରୁଚୂପବ୍ଦ  
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perceives things free of expectation or disappointment. [53] It is called the wisdom intent that dwells in the confidence of primordial evenness: I, Kuntuzangpo, have revealed it.

Thus, and it also states in the *Heap of Precious Jewels*:<sup>a</sup>

This nature of phenomena without base, left as it is without being sought, is the greatest of marvels. This awareness, going and coming without ever meeting, is the greatest of marvels. This great wisdom that primordially abides, devoid of antidotes, is the greatest of marvels.

Thus, and in *The All-Creating Monarch*<sup>b</sup> it states:

Even all the buddhas of the past did not search anywhere other than their own mind. Aside from what they already were, they made no adjustments. They never practiced conceptual samādhi,<sup>c</sup> and they accomplished the nature of their own minds through that which is nonconceptual. [54] Similarly, even the buddhas of the present and those to come in the future will achieve accomplishment only through the nonconceptual nature of evenness.

Thus, according to the tradition of this vehicle, the nature of the mind is—from the very beginning—great natural liberation. Recognizing that is called “awareness.” By maintaining this continuity, the state of buddhahood will be directly realized, which is why this path is more expeditious than any other. In this way, [practitioners] will gain inspiration.

In addition, [the instructions] on clarifying doubt and subduing hindrances are as follows. While maintaining the continuity of the great, indwelling fundamental nature, if one thinks that the nature of this awareness is empty, the one ascribing emptiness to this is the intellect, which has a focal point. [55] The way that meditative concentration<sup>d</sup> with a focal

a rin po che spungs pa

b kun byed (rgyal po)

c ting nge 'dzin; meditative stabilization

d bsam gtan



point does not produce buddhahood is as stated in the *Perfected Skill of the Lion*<sup>a</sup> tantra:

The meaning of the nature of phenomena cannot be seen through meditation with concentration. The samādhi of one's own appearances<sup>b</sup> eludes the direction of concentration. Free from elaboration, the nature of phenomena is equal to the limits of space. All mental considerations are devoid of conceptual fixation with objects. The dharmakāya buddha free from the four extremes,<sup>40</sup> such as existing or not, is one's own awareness.

Thus, this explains the method for purifying the encumbrance of holding to emptiness as true into the nature of great freedom from limitation.

In addition, even though there may be the confidence of thinking "this is how it is" to rest in the nature that is beyond the limitation of existence or nonexistence and [56] to be bound to such a sense of assurance is a dense veil obstructing one's own ground of being. As the *Great Garuda*<sup>c</sup> states:

Any attempt to search for or discover a state free from dogma and limitation is like a blind bird searching for the end of space. Nothing can be found. The meaning that nothing can be found cannot be adjusted by anyone. It is impossible to find a limitation with awareness that is free of elaboration.

So, it is taught.

Likewise, once concepts occur—whether virtuous or nonvirtuous, form or whatever arises as the objects of the six organs—there is no need to intentionally fixate upon them. According to the vehicles of mental analysis, objective appearances are intentionally arrested merely through the intellectual doctrines of nonaffirming and affirming emptiness and others. [57] The way this fails to bring about enlightenment is as stated in *The All-Creating Monarch*:

<sup>a</sup> *seng ge rtsal rdzogs*

<sup>b</sup> *rang snang*

<sup>c</sup> *khyung chen* (*lding ba*)



Not knowing the all-creating monarch, the six sense organs perceive the appearance of the six objects. If perceived as suffering, the sense organs thwart it. Not knowing the all-creating monarch, there is no result of freedom from origination and cessation.

Thus, it is.

Perhaps one may think that the lack of discerning between appearances and perceived objects seems to approach the view of the relative True Image Mind Only School.<sup>a</sup> For instance, in the first moment of seeing a mountain, an ordinary individual is powerless not to think, "This is a mountain." In the second moment, however, through investigation of the mountain's intrinsic nature, [58] the strength of the mind and mental activity reach maturity so the concept of "mountain" vanishes without a trace in its own place. At that time, although the aspect of the appearance of the mountain has not ceased, one is familiar with abiding in the nature of phenomena without fixation on true existence. By purifying this as simultaneous arising [of appearances] and [their] liberation, appearances and the mind mingle. This is the unerring path of the natural Great Perfection.

The *vidyādhara* Garab Dorje said:

At the time of arising, simultaneous arising is devoid of good or bad.

At the time of liberating, simultaneous liberating is devoid of good or bad.

So, it is.

Therefore, without relying upon attempts to cleanse temporary obstructing stains by engaging in the difficulties of accepting or rejecting, this is more sublime than the tainted discipline that binds one to the mental attitude of considering what to guard and what will degenerate. [59] Here, the sole vital essence<sup>b</sup> of the wisdom intent of the king of the great vehicle includes the path of the pāramitās, all methods of conduct, and the prajñā of samādhi—all of which are complete within the king of supreme

<sup>a</sup> *sems tsam rnam bden dri bcas, chittamātra sākāravāda*

<sup>b</sup> *thig le nyag gcig*



recollection, the nature of awareness. It states in the *Sūtra of the Special Request*:<sup>a</sup>

Without fixation is generosity; without abiding is discipline;  
unguarded is patience; without effort is diligence; without focus  
is concentration; without conceptualization is prajñā.

Thus, with the support of scriptural quotations such as this, it appeals to scholars and opens the eyes of the dull-minded. [60]

The way of directly engaging this nature of phenomena with the four modes of placement is as explained in the *Lamp That Illuminates Appearances*:<sup>b</sup>

Placement like a mountain is the extent of the view; placement of meditation like the ocean is the extent of meditation; placement of appearances is the extent of conduct; placement of awareness is the extent of the result. The practitioner possessing these four extents merges with the definitive meaning.

Thus, through placement of the view like a mountain one is introduced to how things are free of mental activity. The great self-radiance of awareness is not subject to the effort of mental fixation or intentional meditative antidotes. Place [awareness] in this total openness free of transition or change.

Through placement of meditation like the ocean, [61] the body sits in the lotus posture and the eyes gaze directly into the vacuity of space without creating a false trap of fixation on the perceptions of the six senses. Abiding like the ocean unaffected by the movement of waves, the mind is allowed to be lucid and pristine. Through placement in the upadesha of conduct, allow the three doors to suddenly relax and sustain naked cognizant wisdom that is exposed from the sheath of the view and meditation. Through placement of the uncontrived result, by allowing the five objects to remain natural, inner naked radiance actually dawns. As the five winds<sup>41</sup> become bound within basic space, even the clear-light purity of one's own appearances will arise according to the common secret<sup>42</sup> in the form of smoke, mirages, rainbows, and the like. [62]

<sup>a</sup> *khyad par zhus pa'i mdo*

<sup>b</sup> *sgron ma snang byed*



In brief, since the innate nature is free from activity, the way in which the three doors decisively settle within the expanse of spontaneous great evenness is a significant key point of the natural Great Perfection established through the twelve great modes of vajra laughter and the eight great words that purely define the eight groups of consciousness. This immediate awareness that transcends cause, result, accepting, or rejecting is taken as the path free from transition or change throughout the three times.

Concerning this, the great Lord of the Family, the omniscient Sovereign of Speech,<sup>43</sup> said that all great practitioners who have arrived at this nature [63] such as Padma,<sup>44</sup> Vimalamitra, Tilopa, and so forth have openly taught that there is no cause, result, virtue, or nonvirtue. He also stated that, although this may be realized intellectually, having not yet arrived at that state through experience, we must take care to observe the subtle workings of cause and result while not fearing the innate nature.

Thus, as taught by explaining how to discern the two truths, those of dull faculty will eventually come to understand this. The way this occurs is, if those of dull intellect identify whatever passions arise and leave them in their own place, in doing so the nature of the passion is rendered objectively baseless from the root. [64] The wisdom intent where passions are rendered pure will then be maintained and the skill to do so improved. All of those with superior faculties will know that the characteristic of whatever passions and concepts arise will be unable to materialize through the key point of the nature of phenomena being free in its own place. Just as a knot in a horse's tail loosens of its own accord—since arising and liberation awaken impartially, it is unnecessary to reapply any antidote. Here, there is nothing to seal as with the mind class and nothing to focus on in the space of phenomena as with the expanse class; through the upadesha [class], this is determined at the level of experience that rests free from mental focus. When one is familiar with this, it is as stated in *The All-Creating Monarch*:

... unaltered, untrained, spontaneously perfect awareness.

Thus, as taught, [65] on the ground of uncultivated and unaccomplished awareness—since everything is subsumed within the one nature of wisdom—there is no need to intentionally practice the ten bodhisattva grounds and paths through the effort-based generation and completion stages of the outer and inner classes of mantra.



## Meditation on Tögal

Second, to explain the path of the great clear light of tögal, there are two divisions: the ways this is more sublime than trekchö and the actual exceptional path.

First, the great Omniscient One asserts that there are seven ways [tögal] is more sublime. If presented here, through trekchö, there is no potential to purify the objects of confused perception such as mountains, boulders, earth, and so forth. The difference is that, through tögal, appearances arise as five lights.\* [66] That which is called “awareness that is primordial clear light” is determined through trekchö to be nonconceptual emptiness that is merely lucid. In tögal by emphasizing the key points, the difference is that the wisdom avenue opens and the nature of phenomena is witnessed through radiance. With trekchö, one searches for the clarity of having abandoned the confused projections of the impure avenues of the six sense organs. The difference is that, with tögal, since the entranceway of pure clear light is opened through the wisdom wind, the unimpeded sense organs are able to utilize the appearance of the indivisibility of space and wisdom as the four luminosities.

With trekchö, because one is dependent upon the coarse winds and channels, deviations and hindrances breed. [67] Once that occurs, due to the strength of the elements, there will be dependency upon age. Here [with tögal], since coarseness is the object to abandon, at the moment of binding through the key point of the three states of motionlessness, one takes the path of the genuine wisdom of winds and channels free from the effort of fixating. Therefore, the difference is that the body is liberated as clear light by exhausting all coarseness.

With trekchö, if the luminosities do not achieve their full extent, it is still possible for liberation from the physical body to occur. However, even though the body does dissolve into particles, it is impossible to dissolve into clear light. Without dissolution into clear light, the temporary karmic body, [68] the contaminated sense constituents, and so forth cannot reach the ultimate ground. One who is unable to attain the vajra body of the great transference endowed with great waves of clairvoyance, the eye of prajñā, and miraculous powers is incapable of accomplishing great waves of benefit for the welfare of others. Observe the difference between the

\* *'od lnga*



Lord of All Victors, Padmasambhava, and the mahāsiddhas of India and Tibet.

To summarize, even within Atiyoga—of the three classes of mind, expanse, and upadesha—the mind class [emphasizes] the platitude of one's own clarity while the expanse class relies on freedom from the ground. Neither one directly realizes awareness. Even with the three [of the four] cycles of the upadesha class, there is the expectation of liberation in the bardo. Here, since there is the key point of liberation in the light body, [69] the unconfused result will be discovered through the path of confused perception. This difference will be understood by those who possess eyes of prajñā.

For the second, there are four: the important points for tögal [practice], the path that reveals the actual key points, the signs that delineate the stages of the four luminosities, and the supplementary upadeshas.

### *Important Points for Tögal*

For the first, the key point of this king of all vehicles is to discern between mind and wisdom. The intrinsic nature of the mind is the radiance of the nature of phenomena; but, when united with the winds, [the mind] becomes like a crippled person that has mounted a blind, unruly horse. [70] In this way, [the mind] is not separate from discursive thoughts.

Concerning this, within the lungs is a channel that resembles a shaft of wheat filled with wind and is the source for all breathing. From that channel, by the strength of the expansion of individual networks of channels, there comes to be the objective appearances of the five organs which assume the functionality of the passions and karma. It states in the *Charnel Ground That Partakes of the Aggregates*<sup>a</sup> tantra:

Even though the nature of mind is wisdom, it appears as the manifestation of duality. With breath as the horse, circumstances are encountered.

So, it is.

Wisdom abides within the “luminosity of the flesh heart,”<sup>b</sup> indicating the nature, intrinsic nature, and compassion<sup>c</sup>—these three—called the

<sup>a</sup> *dur khrod phung po rol pa*

<sup>b</sup> *tsitta sha'i sgron ma*

<sup>c</sup> *ngo bo/nature, rang bzbin/intrinsic nature, thugs rje/compassion*



"luminosity of the fundamental nature of the ground."<sup>a</sup> It is similarly stated in the *Reverberation of Sound*:

In the celestial palace of the precious heart [71] is the aspect of the originally pure nature. This is the radiance of the embodiment of emptiness and clarity, appearing in the manner of a vase body with face and hands. Abiding as a spontaneously present orb of light, each color of compassion is lucid.

Thus, being naturally nonexistent, it abides only as the ground for the arising of clear light. That is why in *Entering the Middle Way*<sup>b</sup> it also states:

When the mind ceases, kāyas manifest.

Thus, similarly the method for purifying the wind-mind is that in all other vehicles up to the secret cycle—although relying upon the effort-based paths of the generation and completion stages—discursive thoughts and their functionality are merely rendered dormant. Failing to understand even the key point of remaining inactive [72] and allowing the elements to be pure in their own place, there is delusion concerning the methods for taking the result as the path in dependence upon the key point of the entranceways. That is why all activities of the body, speech, and mind—virtuous and nonvirtuous alike—must be completely forsaken. Training with the method of calming the wind-awareness is the crucial point. In the *Clear Expanse* it states:

All outer, inner, and secret activities are completely forsaken through body, speech, and mind.

Thus, it is. In this way, within a motionless state—adopting the manner of a corpse in a charnel ground—the activities of the three doors are forsaken, and the way of recognizing the path of the arising of wisdom is as follows. [73]

<sup>a</sup> *gnas lugs gzhi'i sgron ma*  
<sup>b</sup> (*dbu ma la*) *'jug pa, madhyamakāvataśa*



The channel connecting the heart to the eyes is a wisdom channel called the hollow crystal kati.<sup>a</sup> In the [Precious] *Golden Rosary*<sup>b</sup> it states:

The channel that connects the jewel to the ocean<sup>c</sup> is white, smooth, and hollow within. Here, the great wisdom of the vital essence flows unsullied by blood.

Thus, as taught, the moment the body is initially conceived, there is a knotted channel of procreation that exists through the function of water. [At the knot] two eyes come into existence: the eye of luminosity and the eye of the elements. From the eye of the elements, the body is produced. From the eye of luminosity the light of wisdom is illuminated. In the center of the pupils, there are channels resembling the horn of an ox, subtle at the base and broad at the tip. [74] Along with that, there is a clear, radiant, waterlike channel both white and dark called the “water luminosity of the far-reaching lasso.”<sup>d</sup>

To give more details, the Omniscient One has said:

Through the pure light channel, the appearance of wisdom can be sustained. From that support, the perception of confusion occurs. Therefore, those with prajñā will know that there are these two aspects of the support and the supported.

Thus, this teaching is even referred to in the *Heart Essence Tantra*<sup>e</sup> itself as follows:

That which connects the heart to the eyes is the great, naturally occurring,<sup>f</sup> secret wisdom channel called the hollow crystal kati.

Thus, these wisdom perspectives are extremely compatible. [75]

That which naturally occurs indicates the clear-light channel not generated through root cause and contributing circumstances. Through this

a *ka ti shel gyi sbu gu can*

b [*rin chen*] *gser phreng*

c *rgyang zhag chu'i sgron ma*

d *snying thig rgyud*

e *rang byung*



interdependence, the way that the four luminosities arise, such as the “luminosity of the empty vital essence”—like the fan of a peacock—is as stated in the *Naturally Arising*:

The four luminosities are as follows: the luminosity of the empty vital essence, of the space of awareness,<sup>b</sup> of self-emergent prajñā, and the water luminosity of the far-reaching lasso—all of which abide within every living being.

So, it is.

The fact that even the subtlest support of the water luminosity of the far-reaching lasso can perceive things as large as mountains, houses, and the like is due to the subtle aspect of the winds. Ultimately, [76] by purifying the four elements—including karmic winds—this matures as the four luminosities due to the wisdom wind. By perfecting the strength of the four visions, which are the support for [the luminosities], arriving at the ground of exhaustion, the manner in which the pith decision occurs is as stated in the [*Treasury of the*] *Precious Genuine Meaning*:<sup>c</sup>

First, it is necessary for the visions of tögal to arise. It is then necessary to be without fixation during meditation. Finally, it is essential that everything becomes exhausted. Since awareness is combined with winds in order to achieve the immutable resting place, it is necessary to purify the aspect of winds. With the increase of the aspect of the radiance of awareness, it is once again necessary that [the radiance of awareness] reach exhaustion in inner basic space. This wisdom intent is difficult to comprehend. Due to the kindness of the guru, [77] after a long time I was also able to realize this.

Thus, it is.

These exceptional appearances of the clear-light, natural Great Perfection are referred to in a hidden way in many of the great tantric treatises such as the *Magical Manifestation Matrix of Mañjushrī*.<sup>d</sup> Even though

<sup>a</sup> *thig le stong pa'i sgron ma*

<sup>b</sup> *rig pa'i dbyings gi sgron ma*

<sup>c</sup> *tsbig don rin po che'i [mdzod]*

<sup>d</sup> *'jam dpal sgyu 'phrul drva ba*



nothing exists within the nature of awareness, those completely blinded by pride will—through mental imputation—claim that the origin of this doctrine is based on delusion. Such claims are utter stupidity.

Just as it is characteristic of the nature of the moon's waxing and waning to naturally occur, likewise, within the nature of awareness, the characteristics of the three kāyas originally occur. Therefore, once existing in this way, [78] while perfecting the proficiency of the sambhogakāya's qualities as the appearances on the path, the vision of the direct realization [of the actual nature of phenomena] up to the [vision of the] complete extent is analogous to the waxing moon reaching maturity. The absolute perfection of the exhaustion in the nature of phenomena as the innate dharmakāya is analogous to the moon on the thirtieth day having vanished in space.<sup>47</sup>

### *Path That Reveals the Actual Key Points*

For the second, there are four: revealing the key point of the three doors, observing clear light through the three key points, directly encountering awareness through the empowerment conferral of the energy of awareness, and the supplementary, concluding summary.

### *Revealing the Key Point of the Three Doors*

For the first, there are three inner divisions. First, if one is unable to control the key point of the body, there will be no ability to control the key point of the channels. [79] If the channels are not controlled, one will be unable to control the key point of both winds and awareness. Without control, clear light will not be fully evident; therefore, one must take care to apply the key point of the body. As it states in the *Garland of Pearls*:<sup>48</sup>

The three key points assumed for the body are the posture of a lion, elephant, and sage.

Thus, these three will be taught beginning with the dharmakāya posture of the lion. Assuming an air of greatness, crouch; and, by joining the soles of both feet together in front, the mobility wind is suppressed. By straightening the body, the winds are able to flow freely. Allowing the weight of the head to rest upon the neck is a powerful way to arrest concepts. Clenching the

<sup>a</sup> mu tig phreng ba



fingers into fists [80] and placing them where both feet join together at the soles balances the physical elements.

The Omniscient One said, "Some assert that placing the soles of the feet on the ground and squatting with both palms touching the ground to the right and left of the feet [is an alternative posture]. It seems that they failed to fully comprehend this wisdom intent." Thus, it is necessary to analyze this.

The sambhogakāya posture that resembles a sleeping elephant is that, by joining the knees to the chest, the blissful heat and elements are enriched and vitalized. Placing both elbows on the ground equalizes the male, female, and neutral winds. Using palms to support the chin arrests the coarse winds. Both feet pointing straight back with soles upward balances feelings of lethargy and agitation. [81]

The nirmāṇakāya posture that resembles that of a sage is that, by sitting in a crouching position, the channels and winds are balanced. Placing the soles of the feet on the ground suppresses the water element. Keeping the backbone straight allows the wind-mind to flow as the nature of phenomena. By joining the knees to the chest, heat and winds blaze as wisdom. Pulling the lower belly slightly into the spine severs the continuity of thoughts. Linking the arms and covering the knees dispels imbalances of the heat element. In this posture, touching under the armpits dispels cold diseases. Placing the two elbows upon the knees, clenching the fists, and supporting the esophagus balance heat and cold. [82]

In this way, for all of these postures, remaining relaxed without being too tight or forceful is an important key point to avoid hindrances.

Furthermore, there are many postures such as the "fully awakened" and the "unchanging vajra."<sup>b</sup> Nevertheless, since this is the wisdom intent of those who are considered the heirs of the tantra, for those who enjoy an unelaborate approach the above-prescribed methods alone will suffice.

The specific qualities of these postures are as stated in the *Reverberation of Sound*:

With the dharmakāya lion posture, there is freedom from all fear of confusion, [83] allowing the ability to see with the vajra eye. The sambhogakāya posture that relies upon the manner of

<sup>a</sup> mn̄gon par byang chub

<sup>b</sup> mi 'gyur rdo rje



a sleeping elephant utilizes the meaning of the nature of phenomena, allowing the ability to see with the lotus eye. The nirmāṇakāya posture relies upon the manner of a crouching sage, [and] the nature of phenomena manifests as appearances, allowing the ability to see with the dharma eye.

Second, the key point of speech is as stated in the root tantra:

Speech must rely upon training, enduring, and determining.

Thus, if silence is not maintained, in dependence [upon speech] concepts, disturbances, disputes, [84] idle chatter, and so forth proliferate. Since these four obstructions will occur, one must train in the stages that reduce speech. Some individuals are extremely addicted to the elaborations of speech. If so, first, they should go to an uninhabited place. There, they should intentionally invoke and shout out whatever their favorite subjects are some hundreds, thousands, and millions of times. Once exhausted, they will lose interest in speaking, speech will be reduced, and eventually they will even be inclined to give up the recitation of dharma liturgy. [For one] content to remain like a mute, the movement of the winds will slow down and then cease. As stated in the *Clear Expanse* [85]:

Those who penetrate the key point of speech in this way will exhaust verbal circumstances and be led beyond sorrow.

Third, the key points that correspond to the mind are as stated in the *Clear Expanse*:

The mind is directed toward outer space while inner luminosity directly appears.

Thus, when the mind energized by winds—the essence of which is awareness—is directed toward external space, the wind of mobility becomes very calm and the uncompounded, clear empty radiance of inner luminosity clearly dawns as the union of space and awareness. It is similarly stated in the *Clear Expanse*:



By penetrating the key points of the mind in this way, awareness of the three kāyas will appear as emptiness. [86]

### *Observing Clear Light through the Three Key Points*

Second, observing clear light through the three key points is as stated in the *Reverberation of Sound*:

One must rely upon the key points of the entranceway, object, winds, and awareness.

[The key points] are delineated here by commas, whereas other texts refer to them as actual terms. Therefore, four [rather than three] key points are optional.

When the three key points originate as terms, they are as follows:

When winds and awareness are relaxed, wisdom will be achieved.

Thus, from the perspective of the single function of [winds and awareness], this is explained as three [entranceway, object, and winds and awareness as one]. This way of categorizing is not contradictory. In addition, there are other ways to establish this.

Concerning that, first there is the key point of the entranceway for arising as stated in the root tantra: [87]

The key point of the entranceway is to gaze upward, downward, and sideways.

Thus, since the dharmakāya possesses the eye of the nature of phenomena, the manner of gazing is upward toward the crown of the head.<sup>45</sup> This is a key point for the downward dispelling of habits. Since the sambhogakāya possesses the eye of wisdom, the manner of gazing is directly outward. This is a key point for mingling saṃsāra and enlightenment as one taste. Since the nirmāṇakāya has the eye of prajñā, the manner of gazing is downward. This is a key point for directly ascertaining the appearance of wisdom.

The key point of the entranceway does not end here. If one were to encounter the inner meaning, it states in the *Garland [of Pearls]*:



Appearing from the crown aperture of exaltation, the unceasing chain of awareness is nonconceptual. [88]

Thus, indicated by the entranceway for the wisdom of transference, the radiance of the nature of emptiness arises from the central channel of light. From within the channel of the lungs, the radiant awareness of compassion arises. Based on these descriptions, it states in the *Sun, Moon, Planets, and Stars*:

Recognizing the two ordinary channels of the eyes as the path is a limitation, indicating a lack of understanding.

Thus, it is taught. Although this point is made, at the present time of practice, two gateways are sufficient. As it states:

With eyes half open, look at the sun. [Appearances will be] lucid like constellations in the east.

So, the key point is, with eyes half open, direct the gaze to a distance one cubit away from the sun. [89] The sign that the key point of the entranceway has been accomplished will be that one is able to gaze at the object indefinitely.

Second, the key point of the object, which is the basis for the arising, is that in a place free from nonconducive circumstances—lofty, clear, and open—in late summer and fall before the harshness of winter, as well as in the springtime, a beginner should practice by gazing at the two rays<sup>49</sup> in pure space completely devoid of circumstances such as clouds or wind. Once the space-awareness separates from the point between the eyebrows, with a very relaxed face one should turn to the west in the early morning or east in the late afternoon.<sup>50</sup> Free from the circumstance of the sense organs, one rests in the water luminosity of the far-reaching lasso. [90] As it states in the *Clear Expanse*:

There will be lucidity when there is freedom from three circumstances.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> *nyi zla gza'skar*



Thus, and in the *Compendium*\* it states:

The meaning to be known here is to examine the purity of the sky.

Thus, that is why this is taught.

For the third, there are two. First, the key point of the winds is that wind is mobile so, when concepts ride this as their mount, even the essence of the sugatas<sup>52</sup> can be lured. Therefore, the method for averting the cause of that is the heart-essence tradition of breathing through the mouth rather than the nostrils. Exhaling and inhaling very slowly and calmly, with lips and teeth almost touching, is a special feature of this tradition. [91] The difference is that, in all the upadeshas which specify wind be inhaled through the nostrils, the wind is the object to be purified within the four chakras. By the force of that [wind], it is easy for obstructions and faults to occur. Here, [by bringing the wind in through the mouth], the wind that circulates through the lungs is purified by relaxing in its place; and radiance dissolves into the heart. Conceptual wind as the object to be cleansed is purified in its place without rejection. The individual qualities of each chakra are spontaneously present without being sought. That is a key point for liberating wisdom wind in clear light. Maintaining long, extended breaths without force is mentioned in the *Clear Expanse*:

When gently equalizing the flow of the breath, breathing becomes slight [92] and the coming and going of the breath will cease.

This is a crucial key point for rendering space-awareness motionless.

Second, the key point of awareness is that, by engaging in the modes of gazing and the postures just explained as well as practicing according to the three key points of the entranceway, object, and winds, one leaves aside all responsibilities and maintains a state of complete inactivity. The indication that existence has been perfectly liberated is that, by focusing on the vast openness of the clear expanse of outer space, it will seem as though awareness is dissolving. Then, an orb of very pure and radiant blue light will initially arise. From that, the way that appearances emerge is as



five radiant lights [93] of five colors resembling an unfurled bolt of brocade cloth. This is referred to as "inner space appearing outwardly." In the tantras it states:

Space is both outward and inward. Outwardly, it is like a cloudless sky; while inwardly it is luminous.

Thus, it is. Because I never noticed that any [scholar-practitioners] of the past had comprehended the meaning of this key point about outer and inner space, I am compelled to include this quote from the guru who is the original buddha:

Some people identify this only as a cloudless outer sky. That perspective is extremely unacceptable. The reason is that there is no connection between the sky and the individual. [94] Whether there is luminosity or not depends on the individual. Here, inner space is the blue radiance that arises externally, called "the outer space." Therefore, the sky is merely the avenue for the appearance of the ground [perfectly pure space] and is not the actual space. Actual space is blue, and that is the inner space. In this way, space and the visions that arise from that are called both outer space and inner space. Although referred to separately, it should be understood to be like a tent of dull rainbow light that becomes increasingly more lucid. This is not like retracting the inner or projecting the outer. One arises from the other. Outer and inner appearances must be understood in this way.

So, it is.

Therefore, by understanding this, within the luminosity of pure space, [95] that which arises as the purification of karmic wind is the luminosity of the empty vital essence. Just as when a stone drops into a well of water and circular ripples appear, rings of molecules as five-colored light and so forth become evident. By emphasizing that with the far-reaching gaze, extremely radiant inner awareness is experienced without materializing. This is the nature of the luminosity of self-emergent *prajñā*; and, from that, there is the arising of sharp and rapid *prajñā* that comprehends objects as well as the natural ability to know the meaning of words. This is the energy of *prajñā*.



Then, the awareness of true seeing<sup>a</sup> appears as the vajra chain of awareness<sup>b</sup> like a string of fine pearls or a floating golden thread. [96] This is called the “radiance of prajñā.” It is necessary to recognize that, although there is a single nature, it is distinguished in three ways. If that distinction is not made, then it is as the Omniscient One said:

Some say that cognition is the prajñā luminosity that naturally occurs. Some say it is inner radiance. Still others call this the “chain of awareness.” Therefore, they are confused.

Thus, it is taught. The radiance of awareness as the vajra chain that is seen in this way should be positioned within the enclosure of space and the vital essence. This meditation is a key point of awareness. In the *Clear Expanse* it states:

The key point of awareness is to hold the vajra chain. This should be practiced by those whose appearances are relaxed.

Thus, it is. [97]

During this time, if one falls prey to even a hair’s worth of analysis concerning the appearance of light, then the vajra-chain awareness will become materialized, binding one to hindrances and pitfalls. The visions of the luminosities are one’s own nature of phenomena itself rendered evident, so one must train in fearless conduct<sup>c</sup> without fixation. Until familiar, the appearances will move like a mirage, buoyant and shimmering. If one takes care to gradually guide this through the way of gazing, then by achieving familiarity, however much the inner nature of the channels vanishes into light will be how much space-awareness separates from the point between the eyebrows. The circumstance of depending upon external objects will decrease, thus allowing the experience of the four visions to gradually increase. [98]

Subsequently, since this is to see through the ordinary eye, it is necessary to reach the ground of exhaustion. If this is seen through the eye of

<sup>a</sup> *lhag mthong, vipashyanā*

<sup>b</sup> *rig pa rdo rje'i lu gu rgyud*

<sup>c</sup> *brtul zhugs*



prajñā, simultaneous exhaustion will occur without the certainty of gradual stages. This is due to the inconceivable differences among individuals. However, in both cases, even for someone whose channel of ignorance is superior, the manner of arising will still be unpredictable. That is why one should not assume this is a sign of [perfecting] this path. Based on the sole root cause and contributing circumstance of heat and moisture, a seed can prematurely ripen yet become impotent. Therefore, it is crucial to know one's level only through [consulting] the upadesha of the final result. [99]

### *Directly Encountering Awareness*

For the third, there are two: entering the great wisdom mandala of one's own appearances and conferral of the energy of awareness empowerment<sup>a</sup> to encounter the innate nature.

First, in a fully endowed place and time, on a mountain peak or in an extremely remote area where it is natural for the visions to directly emerge, offer a ganachakra<sup>b</sup> and torma as well as a golden mandala to the guru and repeat the following supplication:

Guru, great holder of the vajra, so that I may be liberated from samsāra, please bestow the empowerment of the energy of awareness, the great secret path of Vajrasattva.

After three repetitions, [100] the guru and all disciples remove their upper garments, symbolizing that the appearance of clear light is free from the veil of obscurity. Then, the guru gives the indication saying, "Without blinking, gaze upon the blue syllable *ah*"<sup>3</sup> in my heart and rest your mind without distraction!" The vajra master plays the hand drum; and, after the descent of blessings, suddenly the master shouts the sound of *phet* with great intensity and at that very instant slowly inquires three times, "What is the mind?" When the disciples are speechless and without focus, left in a state of shock, that sudden apparent uncontrived awareness is known as "the great seeing of that which was previously unseen," [101] which is also called the "descent of wisdom while resting in the dharmakāya."

<sup>a</sup> *rig pa'i rtsal dbang*

<sup>b</sup> *tshogs*



The actual entrance is as follows. All disciples are asked to assume the posture of the sage and, as they gaze into space without focus, to bring the natural pure realm to mind. Then, the guru says,

*Eh ma ho!* Listen, my heart children of great fortune! In the eastern direction is the extremely pleasing, magnificent pure land called Manifest Joy, where the conqueror Vajra Akṣobhya abides. He is blue and adorned with various jeweled ornaments. In the southern direction is the extremely pleasing, magnificent pure land [102] called Endowed with Glory, where the conqueror Ratnasambhava abides. He is yellow, adorned with various jeweled ornaments. In the western direction is the extremely pleasing, magnificent pure land called Lotus Arrangement, where the conqueror Amitābha abides. He is red, adorned with various jeweled ornaments. In the northern direction of the extremely pleasing, magnificent pure land called Perfectly Complete Activity dwells the conqueror Amoghasiddhi, green, adorned with various jeweled ornaments. All of them abide in indivisible union with their consorts. [103] With assemblies as numerous as the immeasurable buddhas that exist upon a single particle, all of them are listening to their individual teachers as each reveals to his respective assembly the clear-light nature of mind and the nature of Secret Mantra just as it is. O sons and daughters, with the gaze of an elephant, look into the eastern direction. Like a leaping lion, jump! With the gaze of a lion, look into the southern direction. Like a bounding tigress, lunge! With the wrathful, haughty gaze of the heruka, [104] look into the western direction. Fly there like a soaring garuda! With the gaze of Vajradhara, look into the northern pure land. Depart like the flash of a lightning bolt! *ah ah ah*

So, this is irreversibly sealed.

In this way—having been led into the four entranceways of the mandala of awareness—when a disciple with pure faith connects with a highly realized vajra master, even if the disciple fails to practice in that lifetime, he or she will be free to take rebirth in a natural nirmāṇakāya pure realm. That is the exceptional feature of this Secret Mantra.

Entering the mandala of the sambhogakāya is as follows. The disciples



are asked to assume the vajra posture, gaze straight out into space, [105] and bring the pure land of Rich Array to mind. The guru says,

*Eh ma!* All fortunate children of the mind, listen! That which completely transcends all of this is the natural nirmāṇakāya pure realm—the basis of the arising of everything without exception. Like observing one's own face [in a mirror], the pure realm of Rich Array is absolutely radiant, enveloped by the five aspects of wisdom. Completely even and motionless, it is here where the Bhagavan, Foe Destroyer, Exhauster of the Contaminants, One Gone to Bliss, Omniscient in the World, Transformer of Disciples to Be Tamed, Unsurpassed, [106] Guide of All Gods and Humans, the Perfectly Enlightened One known as Buddha Amitābha resides. He is surrounded by a boundless assembly of hundreds, thousands, and millions of perfectly enlightened buddhas and delights in the extremely pure manifestation of the nature of phenomena. O children, with the gaze of an elephant, look! Depart with the leap of a lion! *ah ah ah*

So, this is irreversibly sealed by [the view of] emptiness.

Entering the dharmakāya maṇḍala is as follows. The disciples are asked to assume the lion posture. To establish the auspicious connection for obtaining the five sublime eyes of those on the ground of buddha,<sup>a</sup> they gaze upward, [107] downward, to the right, left, and directly ahead. To introduce the wisdom of naked, empty awareness, the guru says,

*Eh ma!* Fortunate heart children of the mind, listen! That which transcends and is far beyond the two rūpakāyas<sup>b</sup> is the basis from which both of them arise, the nature of one's own awareness,<sup>b</sup> free from mental considerations as wisdom that is absorbed yet unobscured.<sup>c</sup> This nature of phenomena that has no distinctions whatsoever is immeasurable, boundless, and nonconceptual. Disciples, in this innate nature free from destination, check to determine who is the traveler and then rest.

<sup>a</sup> *gzugs sku*

<sup>b</sup> *rang gi rig pa*



By understanding empty awareness, hold fast to the key point! [108] Without any hindrance, train! With clear wisdom, train on the path! With manifold phenomena, do not fixate! Within the inconceivable . . . *ah ah*.

So, the guru speaks.

When one receives empowerment in this *maṇḍala*, ignorance is cleansed in the ground, awareness increases as wisdom, and one is empowered to actually meditate. Through this, even those with weak familiarity will be liberated in the bardo. The most supreme will be liberated in this very lifetime.

For the second, all disciples are asked to carefully assume the postures of the three doors and the ways of gazing. [109] In order to indicate the key points of the greatness of clear-light *tögal*, the guru says,

*Kye!* Fortunate children of the mind, listen! In the innate secret of the precious heart dwells the seed of the wisdom vital essence. From the perspective of the nature, this is empty and selfless; and, from the perspective of the intrinsic nature, this is unceasingly radiant. From the compassionate manifestation, inseparable *kāyas* and wisdom are all-illuminating like a lamp within a vase. The four luminosities are naturally clear as they emerge from the precious crystal channel of radiant light. Through this, directly encountering the nature of phenomena of the unceasing ornamental wheel of the enlightened body, speech, and mind of all sugatas; you have received the great empowerment of the energy of awareness. [110]

How does this occur? The clear light of wisdom-awareness is Buddha Vairochana. That unchanging nature is Buddha Akṣobhya. The ever-increasing clear-light radiance is Buddha Ratnasambhava. The immeasurable appearance of light is Buddha Amitābha. Being perfect and unsought in itself is Buddha Amoghasiddhi. In this way, the faces of all five buddhas are directly realized.

Even the nature of this wisdom appearing as stainless awareness is the mirror.<sup>57</sup> As the nonduality of clear light and the nature, this is the [wisdom of] evenness. As the arising of distinct details, this is discerning wisdom. Being spontaneously present and unsought is all-accomplishing



activity [wisdom]. [111] Primordially empty and baseless is the basic space of phenomena. This is the nature of the five aspects of wisdom.

The essence [that is] unchanging is the vajra.<sup>58</sup> The qualities fully endowed are ratna. Appearances untainted by any stain are padma. That there is no other accomplishment aside from this is the karma family. Because all of this is the path that all buddhas have traversed, it is the buddha family.

Because clear light is stainless, it is white.<sup>59</sup> Because qualities are perfected, it is yellow. Abiding without being sought is red. As the perfected skill of activity, it is green. As unchanging and firm, it is blue.

The way [awareness] abides as the five winds is as follows. [112] That these visions of clear light have never been separate from the warmth of wisdom is the heat-assimilating wind.<sup>60</sup> That the life of saṃsāra and enlightenment is maintained is the life-sustaining wind. That the discernment is made between the pure and polluted aspects of saṃsāra and enlightenment is the pure- and impure-distinguishing wind. That awareness pervades everything is the all-pervasive wind. That the life of saṃsāra is severed and one is led beyond sorrow is the merciless karmic wind of the kalpa.

The way this abides as the five states of prajñā is as follows. Based on realizing the nature of clear light or not, by discerning between saṃsāra and enlightenment, there is the prajñā of discerning. Through the vision of the increasing manifestation and so forth, the appearances of the energy of wisdom are gathered as the prajñā of gathering. [113] By pervading everything, there is all-pervasive prajñā. Through the motion of the visions of light going and coming, there is the prajñā of movement. If this is realized, to be liberated from saṃsāra is the prajñā of liberation. These are the six groups of five.

Furthermore, since the blue light is understood to be Buddha Dākinī, by including the other four aspects of awareness, one sees the faces of the five dākinī purifiers of the objects to be cleansed. All these categories of seven groups of five are the inherent nature of awareness as the path.

The way of establishing resultant appearances as ultimate perfection is also stated in the *Clear Expanse*:

From the self-manifestation of naturally occurring awareness, the five kāyas and five aspects of wisdom, five families, five lights, [114] five winds, five prajñās, and so forth abide.

Thus, it is.



In brief, this indwelling nature of phenomena is not the designing intellect of the mental experience of empty form that is analytically designated nor does it originate from interdependency based on fixating with effort in practices involving the channels and winds. The originally established experience of the visions that directly realize the undeniable nature of phenomena renders evident the phenomena of the path and result beginning with perfecting refuge in the Three Jewels according to the teachings of Buddha up to the ten topics of the ocean of tantric classifications.<sup>61</sup> The way this occurs is as stated in the *Sixfold Expanse*: [115]

The primordially perfect buddha, dharma, and sangha abide as one's own body.

Thus, the unconfused nature of the mind is the ground of buddhahood, transcending sounds and words is the genuine dharma, and freedom from vacillation is the essence of sangha. This is unlike those who take refuge momentarily through interest, anger, or delusion.

Never separate from the vajra refuge of the fundamental nature, within that one engages in the clear light of the four visions. This way of engaging is as stated in the *Lamp That Illuminates Appearances*:

Primordially, this is the way of arising. Without originating through the efforts of individuals, [116] this is the maṇḍala as well as the deity; this is mantra, mudrā, and offering; this is the generation and completion stages; the buddha, sentient beings, saṃsāra, and enlightenment; empowerment, vows, and samaya; this is one's guru as well as the deity.

Thus, it is.

Therefore, one should never be apart from the appearance of the vajra chain of awareness in the center of the vital essence of basic space. As stated in the *Arrangement of Colorful Jewels*:<sup>a</sup>

If you wish to see the mind of all buddhas, gaze at the kāya of the vajra chain of awareness. If you wish to internalize the wisdom intent of all buddhas, never be separate from the vajra

<sup>a</sup> *nor bu phra bkod*



chain of awareness. If you wish to fully comprehend all aspects of the dharma, both concisely and extensively, observe the way in which the vajra chain of awareness abides. [117] If you wish to be learned in all of wisdom's secrets, observe the rays of the vajra chain of awareness. If you aspire towards inseparable view, meditation, and conduct, don't be distracted from the kāya of the vajra chain of awareness. If you wish to behold the celestial palace of all phenomena, internalize the genuine meaning of space and awareness. If you wish to inherit the lineage of Vajrasattva, remain ever one with the kāya of the vajra chain of awareness.

Thus, it is taught. In this way, directly seeing the meaning of awareness of the nature of phenomena is referred to as being equal to the original protector, Kuntuzangpo. It states in the *Secret Conduct*:<sup>a</sup> [118]

Whoever sees in this way is equal in fortune with the original protector, Kuntuzangpo.

Thus, as stated [by the guru],

Today, the greatest discovery has occurred! Receiving the empowerment of the energy of awareness is like encountering the faces of three thousand buddhas. By severing the cycle of rebirth, you have seized the path that leads to liberation. Even if you were to gradually traverse the ten bodhisattva grounds, it is still not certain you would directly perceive all qualities of the essence of the sugatas. Therefore, from this day onward, persevere in the practice of the ultimate qualities of the four visions [119] to reach the state of awakening in the exhaustion of the nature of phenomena!

So, [the disciples] are filled with inspiration.

Next, there are two ways to insure that the practice is on track. First, training in four sessions for those who practice with elaborations is as stated in the *Clear Expanse*:

<sup>a</sup> *grang ba spyod pa*



The way to insure that the practice of virtue is on track is to train in four sessions.

Thus, for that, during the first phase of the predawn, meditate on guru yoga. In the second phase, maintain trekchö; and, in the final phase, meditate upon empty bliss and the fierce wisdom.<sup>a</sup> From dawn to sunup, recite daily sādhanas, prayers, and so forth; and, from morning until noon, practice tögal. In the late afternoon, [120] perform prostrations and other virtuous activities. In the evening, practice tögal again. At night, offer torma and hold the winds. During the first phase of dusk, meditate on impermanence; and, for the second phase, practice generation stage and mantra recitation. In the late evening session, mingle sleep with innate clear light.

In all cases, begin each session by generating bodhichitta while maintaining the actual practice with nonconceptual awareness. In conclusion, end all sessions with dedication of merit and aspiration prayers. This is known as "practice united with the three sacred stages." These [three stages] are indispensable.

Second, being without elaborations is as stated in the *Lamp That Illuminates Appearances*:

Just like the continuum of day and night . . .

Thus, this is the field of experience for those who are experiencing the warmth of the fundamental nature [121] and who only train in clear-light tögal practice. By forsaking all daily activities and never parting from the postures, awareness rests inexpressibly in the expanse of the kāyas and vital essence. Dividing the night into three sections, at dusk, assume the posture of a sage. The key point for controlling the sense organs is to visualize in your navel an extremely hot red *ahtung*<sup>b</sup> <sup>62</sup> upon a four-petaled red lotus. From that, fire blazes up the central channel penetrating the syllable *ham* in the crown. Drops of the vital essence fluid fuel the fire that blazes profusely, incinerating all karma and habits. Rest within empty bliss.

In the middle of the night, [122] assume the lion posture and gather all knowable things within the vase as follows. Visualize that, within the heart, there is an extremely radiant white *ah*. Also, visualize a white *ah* at

<sup>a</sup> *tummo*

<sup>b</sup> ^, *ah thung*



the crown aperture. Between these two, within the central channel, visualize an unbroken chain of crystal-white *abs* that dissolve one into the other. Due to this, the central channel becomes clear like the sun shining through a window. This is a key point for mingling sleep with innate clear light.

In the predawn, at the very moment of awakening, say *ha* with three extended exhalations. Then, assuming the lion posture, imagine that, from the *ab* in the heart, a second *ah* emerges and remains perfectly poised [123] about a bow's length above the crown of the head. Focus the mind there.

Similarly, in order to develop the four states of concentration and the wisdom of nonconceptual cessation, the key point for exhausting the five branch winds in their own place is as follows. Envision that five red *abs* are stacked one upon the other, [indicating] the element fire; four white [*abs*] are stacked, [indicating] the element water; three green [*abs*] are stacked, [indicating] the element wind; and two yellow [*abs*] are stacked, [indicating] the element earth. Then, imagine a single blue *ab*, [indicating] the element space. Meditate sequentially in this way because the syllable *ab* abides as the unborn nature and mental analysis resembles fire, the experience of joy and bliss resembles water, recollections resemble wind, and [124] being bound by the antidote of mindfulness resembles earth. This is a key point for purifying that which is to be abandoned, including the antidote, taken from the extraordinary wisdom intent of the great pāṇḍit Vimalamitra.

During this practice, increasing the advantageous circumstances even through conduct is as stated in the *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon*:<sup>a</sup>

With conduct like a honeybee, experience the taste of all phenomena. With conduct like a deer, abandon all objects that become the condition for confusion. With conduct like a mute, forsake all confused speech. With conduct like a finch, sever doubt with the secret method. With conduct like a lunatic, [125] forsake a permanent location. With conduct like a lion, reject a fearful mind and wander in the charnel grounds. With conduct like a dog or pig, eliminate concepts of clean or foul.



### *Supplementary, Concluding Summary*

Thus, there are seven stages from the conduct of a beginner who is like a honeybee and has just begun listening and contemplating up to the conduct of a great practitioner for whom bliss, suffering, good, and bad are a single taste. By assessing conduct according to one's own mind, the view and meditation will be enhanced accordingly.

### *Signs That Delineate the Stages of the Four Luminosities*

Third, the explanation delineating the four luminosities is as follows. In the *Reverberation of Sound* it states:

From this, the four visions manifest. Through the vision of the actual nature of phenomena,<sup>a</sup> [126] the rhetoric of the grasping, analytical mind is transcended. Through the increasing experience<sup>b</sup> of the vision, confused phenomena vanish and the wisdom of the bardo is actualized. Through the vision of the full extent of awareness,<sup>c</sup> one transcends the appearances of the path of conceptualizing the three kāyas. Through the vision of the exhaustion of the nature of phenomena,<sup>d</sup> one severs the continuity of the three realms of samsāra.

Thus, the four distinctions are based on the object to be purified and the result of purification. Although [the path of the four visions] is similar to the five paths of the prajñāpāramitā vehicle, the distinction between them as slow versus swift is like the pace of a carriage versus the sun and moon.

Among these four visions of the natural, supreme sovereign of all vehicles, the first is the vision of the actual nature of phenomena, as follows.

### *Vision of the Actual Nature of Phenomena*

The vision of the actual nature of phenomena is [127] that—by training with the daytime supports of the dharmakāya, the sun and a fire crystal, and the nighttime supports of the sambhogakāya, the moon and a water crystal—the obstacle of heat increasing in the eyes during the daytime is removed so that the temperature of the [eyes] is normal. In the morning

<sup>a</sup> *chos nyid mngon sum*

<sup>b</sup> *nyams gong 'phel*

<sup>c</sup> *rig pa tshad phebs*

<sup>d</sup> *chos nyid zad pa*



and evening—while observing with the nirmāṇakāya support, a butter lamp—it is advantageous to practice the path of exertion. In all cases, by initially familiarizing with the object to gaze upon, take care not to focus too closely. Gradually, bring the light just below or close to the side [of the object]. While doing so, if the color white is predominant, then look to the right; if yellow is predominant, look above; if green, to the left; and, if red, look below. If the color blue is predominant, [128] look to the center. If all five colors equally appear, just leave it as is. If the appearance of the vital essence is not seen, then gazing equally with both eyes is the key point. Once the radiance of the essence of the sugatas in the heart is first seen as the vision of basic space resembling a pattern of rainbow colors, thereafter the circular light of the luminosity of the empty vital essence and three connected subtle vital essences will occasionally appear to be clear while other times obscured.

In the intermediate regions of all of this—like the sun and its rays—is the inexpressible empty radiance of the awareness of original purity, the awareness of true seeing appearing as the vajra chain. Like a face and its reflection in a mirror, [129] the aspect and the nature are one and the same. From the point of view of interdependence, it is necessary to know this is why the vajra chain of awareness is referred to as “the cause” while also being “the result.” Until an individual realizes this key point, they will fixate upon the nature of phenomena as something substantial, becoming caught in obscurity. Such an individual fails to approach the direction of the philosophical tenets of the Great Perfection.

Therefore, with awareness dependent upon the key point of the channels, the indication of liberation is that [the channels] are narrow and curved, although subtle. Relying upon the vital essence, the indication of liberation is that—at the place where they are curved—two subtle vital essences connect. Relying upon the key point of the winds, the indication of liberation [130] is that there will be movement. Without allowing [awareness] to wander, through familiarity it will be brought into the enclosure of space and the vital essence. The radiance of all luminosities will effortlessly become clearer and steadier. As the three doors relax in their own place by the arising of the samādhis of bliss, clarity, and no thoughts, extraordinary analytical prajñā becomes manifest and the mastery of a great degree of wisdom is gained. At this time, even if there is an interruption,<sup>63</sup> liberation in a natural nirmāṇakāya pure realm will occur. This is not merely due to the first indication of the appearance of outer space. This



is due to the key point [131] that the truth is being seen through the inner eye of prajñā, free from obscuring factors. It states in the *Clear Expanse*:

Actually seeing awareness is such that, due to the key point of seeing the truth, there will be no return to the three realms.

Thus, it is.

*The Increasing Experience of the Vision*

Second, the increasing experience of the vision is as stated in the *Clear Expanse*:

With the increasing vision, determine the degree to which the experience is enhanced.

Thus, otherwise bliss, clarity, and no thoughts are generated through the gathering of wind-mind. The experience of that are the ten signs of having purified the object of purification such as smoke, mirages, and so forth.

Since this involves mental fixation, the way this is not liberation is stated in the *Clear Expanse*:

The intellect is explained as the confused relative. [132]

Thus, it also states in *The Bodhisattva's Way of Life*:<sup>a</sup>

The genuine is not the domain of the intellect.

Thus, it is as taught.

Here, the natural Great Perfection is stated in the tantras:

Through the arising of the vision of emptiness from within, the radiance of wisdom is luminous from without.

Thus, when the inner empty nature of phenomena becomes apparent, that radiance is the intrinsic nature of clear wisdom, unchanging and increasingly outward. Inwardly, the channels become as clear as light; and, secretly,

<sup>a</sup> *byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa, bodhisattvacharyāvatāra*



the passions are liberated. Since this occurs simultaneously, it does not rely upon mental analysis. Due to gaining undeniable certainty, this is referred to as the "vision of the experience." The way this increases is stated in the root tantra: [133]

With the ever-increasing experience of the vision, the colors of wisdom arise externally, vertically, horizontally, unilaterally, and as varieties of vital essences and kāyas that transcend the objectivity of coarse appearances.

Thus, as the appearance of light increases, space and awareness separate from the point between the eyebrows.<sup>4</sup> Lights of the five colors appear horizontally, vertically, spherically, like stūpas, lotuses with a thousand petals, like palaces,<sup>5</sup> spears and arrowheads, latticework, like the dots on dice, and so forth. All these appearances are unpredictable. In addition, the luminosity of the vital essences appears to be the size of a bean [134] which gradually increases to the size of a shield. Awareness becomes like a bird taking flight, a deer running in the mountains, the slow movement of a sharaṇa,<sup>6</sup> and the gradual descent of a honeybee upon a flower.

In brief, however familiar one is with the practice, the vision of light increases. With relaxation into awareness, there is some familiarity, termed "having a sense of familiarity." The indication of supreme familiarity is as stated in the *Lamp That Illuminates Appearances*:

At the moment that all appearances arise as vital essences and abide as a rich array, this indicates supreme familiarity.

Thus, it can be determined that, wherever one looks, the empty atmosphere [135] is pervaded by the vision of clear light occurring without movement or vacillation. Then, when the vision of space arises like muslin, it is a key point to gaze in front if the appearances arise horizontally. If they are square, look to the right; if shaped like a half moon, above; if triangular, below; if circular, to the left; if like a tower, look directly out.

If distinctions are made concerning the indication of liberation based upon the degree of familiarity, it is as follows. When space and awareness separate from the point between the eyebrows, the appearance of the "union of the four aspects of wisdom" brings liberation such that thereafter samsāra is not reentered. When arising with angular shapes,



liberated [136] within the appearance of the group formations, there is liberation in the natural nirmāṇakāya pure realm. When all appearances mature as five lights and the vision of space is perfectly circular, [appearances] arise as group formations, each adorned with four-petaled lotuses. At the first instant of the arising of clear light, there will be no bardo and liberation will occur. As the wisdom intent of the *Sole Heir of the Buddha* tantra, it states:

How could it be possible for a fortunate one who has separated [space and awareness] four finger-widths from the eyebrows to recenter samsāra? Whoever sees the angular shapes will accomplish the noble qualities of the nirmāṇakāya. Whoever sees objective appearances as group formations will be as just mentioned.

So, it is.

For this reason, the great scholar Vimalamitra asserts [137] that the appearance of group formations just mentioned is the fruition of the increasing experience; and, once kāyas arise, that is the full extent of awareness [vision]. The great master Padma asserts that from the union of male and female deity up to the time that the increasing appearances are complete is referred to as “reaching the full extent of awareness.” He also states that the solitary deities could be the increasing experience of the vision. I perceive [their assertions] as a single wisdom intent. In the *Clear Expanse* it states:

When the vision of kāyas arises and increases to perfection, that is when the bardo appearances are exhausted, the sambhogakāya is recognized, and the bardo is emptied.

Thus, the arising of kāyas is an indisputable indication [138] that the vision of the increasing experience has reached its conclusion as well as implicitly indicating the beginning of the full extent. Analogous to seeing a mountain on the opposite side of a valley from both directions, the appearance of the solitary kāya of a deity depends upon both visions because of the interdependent nature of this accomplishment. The Omniscient One clearly defined the distinction between the wisdom intent of the two masters.<sup>67</sup> All followers who don’t understand how to assess the comparisons



concerning genuine basic space conceitedly blurt out, trying to convince themselves that they know something. Their efforts are like child's play. As the external strength of the visions of clear light increases, the inner clear light of awareness [139] also arises as samādhi, clairvoyance, omniscience, and the like.

### *Vision of the Full Extent of Awareness*

Third, the vision of the full extent of awareness is that, without any distinctions concerning the potential of the nature of phenomena—like a face and its appearance in a mirror—the nature of awareness is primordially perfect as three kāyas. Throughout all three times, the noble qualities of the sambhogakāya are perfected as the appearances of the path. It is in this way that one comes to realize that this is the ultimate meaning of the full extent of awareness at this juncture in time. Other philosophical tenets state that, since the essence of the sugatas—the qualities of kāyas and wisdom—is obtainable as something that exists, there is expectation. [140] Their attempts to pursue a goal that leads to individual achievements such as gaining the major and minor marks with physical features are predictable yet inconspicuous [to them], like a thief. Conversely, this wisdom intent of the supreme king of all vehicles is not only inconceivable, it is the greatest marvel! Those who are incapable of accurately revealing this philosophy will be unable to reveal any genuine meaning, except for meaninglessly praising the way appearances arise. The loquacious speech of those who are only partially familiar with the scriptures, yet full of intellectual knowledge about many inauthentic paths, produces the contributing circumstance of mockery. This occurs through the combination of both [141] blurting and being careless. Therefore, in order to proclaim this secret vehicle in the Snow Land of Tibet, let it be known beyond a trace of doubt this philosophy is only that of the Sovereign of Conquerors, Drimed Ödzer!

Having said that, the intrinsic nature of the full extent is when the increasing qualities of awareness gain strength and all appearances become clear light. Once one is familiar with the nature of the five wisdoms, in the center of the five formations of the vital essence, the crown protrusion and half of the deity's head [142] and then the entire solitary kāya arise, originating from the immaculate purification of the nirmāṇakāya. Once the wisdom of the sambhogakāya reaches its full extent, all five buddha families—such as the conqueror Akṣhobhya—appear as solitary figures, then with complete ornamentation, and then with consorts in their fully



perfected aspect. The principal ones and their retinues arise distinctly in group formations and are surrounded by the mandala's vajra fence and so forth, originating from the immaculate purification of the dharmakāya. The vision is so perfectly clear that ordinary phenomena are naturally arrested. Wherever cognition is directed, it is able to penetrate so inanimate forms are set into motion and even the body can be seen as partless particles. Mountains, crags, and other solid formations [can be penetrated] free from obstruction. Since the dualistic mind [143] has completely collapsed, the source of any hope and fear is discarded and one becomes like a rambling idiot. At this time, whatever appears is all-pervasive purity, as stated in the *Blazing Body Relic*:<sup>a</sup>

Whoever becomes familiar with the light will witness objective appearances such as the four elements of earth, water, fire, and wind naturally vanishing. Gradually, one will unite with the five colors, indicating inseparability with light. Furthermore, objective appearances will be seen as if by a person gone mad, and there will be the ability to travel underground and penetrate, without hindrance or obstruction, all mountains and crags. Even in water, one will not sink. [144]

So, it is.

All of this reveals the general characteristics of the full extent. To delineate the specific details, it states in the root tantra:

In the intermediate space between the particles of one's body appear windows of light. Delicate light rays emanate from them in the form of hooks captivating appearances. The corporeal body is naturally arrested, and an unimpeded, stainless light body appears marked in the center with a syllable *ah*. From the coil of hair between the eyebrows, light the length of an arm span emerges. The crown protrusion appears to be hoisted by wind. From the fingers of the peaceful deities light rays gather like mālās made of beads. This is the soundless activity of the mind. [145] From the palace in the cranium all of the wrathful

<sup>a</sup> *sku gdung 'bar ba*



deities actually manifest. At this time, one's own body reaches the full extent.

Thus, when the body reaches the full extent, appearances without exception are clearly the pure lands of the five buddhas. From the window of light in their hearts, radiant light penetrates the *ah* in one's own heart through which the great radiant-light empowerment is received. When light that is an arm span's length from the hair coil is evident, the vital essence of wisdom wind appears on the crown protrusion in stacks of nine or five, resembling metal plates. Ultimately, the crown ornament is the crown aperture.

The meaning of being [146] "hoisted by wind" is that the wisdom wind enters the space. This indicates a phenomenon unbelievable to behold: the blazing nature of the major and minor marks. When the wisdom wind enters the fingers, they appear as five lights; and even the subtle light channels blaze with the radiance of wisdom so the pores and each and every particle of one's body are perfected as the pure land of the buddhas—the essence of the sambhogakāya. The radiance of the peaceful mandala of vajra space and the mandala of the wrathful deities in the palace of the cranium emerges from the light channel in the aperture of the crown chakra. Everything in the upper regions clearly appears as the manifest mandala of wrathful deities. Since this is the lucid arising of sambhogakāya peaceful and wrathful deities, [147] it is referred to as "the full extent of the body."

Similarly, when the mind reaches the full extent, the conceptual mind, mental activity, and consciousness all vanish, leaving only the stainless space of phenomena. One achieves the six states of clairvoyance such as the ability to know the minds of others. One possesses the eye that sees the immeasurable pure lands of the victorious ones and things at a distance which are otherwise obstructed by solid matter. The appearances of the mind are perfectly pure; and, since the mind of emptiness is pure, there is mastery over the boundless gateways of prajñā and samādhi. [148]

In short, through purification of the corporeal body, the channels and winds are naturally cleansed. Due to that, the temporary gathering of the constituents<sup>48</sup> collapses and the actual coarse connection of the body and mind is reversed. The subtle dormant aspect, like the flash of a shooting star, is when one still holds to the appearances of both creation and dissolution as stated in the *Reverberation of Sound*:



This severing of the connection between body and mind is the exhaustion of the contaminated body, yet the mind's characteristic of clarity still arises externally. This is clearly observed within the element of space like the flash of a shooting star.

Thus, and the quote continues:

The body becomes pure clear light, and the wind [149] becomes like flying sparks. They do not abide anywhere, yet are the natural radiance of the ground. This occurs in the manner of two aspects of appearances. Then when the connection between body and mind is severed, there will be no returning to the three realms.

Thus, it is.

Incidentally, here in the Land of Snow, some philosophers of other tenets claim that the appearance of empty form is nothing but confused perception and that even the four visions of the Great Perfection belong to the tradition of heretics known as "viewers of the sun." Teachers who brazenly commit the root downfall of harboring aversion to the dharma [through such claims] belong to the ranks of wolves and cats. [150] Unknowingly disparaging their own favorite philosophies about the appearance of empty form, such as found in the *Wheel of Time*<sup>a</sup> and others, their limited knowledge is narrow and restricted like a hole. There are others who assert that to say the state of buddha is without kāyas or wisdoms is a perverted view. They claim that the [state of buddha] is both an illusory kāya—the ultimate object to accomplish—and genuine truth.

We, on the other hand, understand that the qualities of the essence of the sugatas are the rūpakāya and do not consider this [rūpakāya] to be a confused appearance. Just as the characteristic of the moon is by nature full, through the vision of the increasing experience, the increase in qualities is the potential of the three kāyas perfected as the appearance of the path. [151] Although appearing in this way, this is merely the reflection of the radiance of awareness arising externally and is not the essential nature just as it is. Therefore, we do not fixate upon this as genuine truth. Just as the moon on the thirtieth day by nature decreases, the key point is that

<sup>a</sup> *dus kyi 'khor lo, kālachakra*



it is necessary for the essence of externally appearing radiance to become exhausted. Therefore, we assert that awareness—including the subtle wind of motion—is perfectly pure and that the appearance of the exhaustion of the mind and phenomena occurs in the immutable resting place of the inner space of original purity. That is why a practitioner realizing this knows that philosophies are the creation of the intellect and that disputations are resolved within the inconceivable nature of phenomena. [152] When phenomena reach the stage of exhaustion, even one's own philosophy falls apart! At that time, even the upadesha of the guru vanishes, the limitations of view, meditation, and conduct are empty, and there is no vision of the dharmakāya. Since the continuum of kāyas and wisdom has ceased, there are no buddhas or sentient beings. In short, nothing whatsoever remains, nothing has gone, and nothing will ever return. Thus, one must simply rest in the wisdom intent of the Middle Way of nonabiding in any extreme.

#### *Vision of the Exhaustion of the Nature of Phenomena*

Fourth, the vision of the exhaustion of the nature of phenomena is as stated in the root tantra:

The vision of the exhaustion of the nature of phenomena means to have emptied the appearances of all other visions and to have exhausted the body, as well as the objects of the sense organs. Liberated from the confusion of concepts, [153] there is freedom from words as the basis of expression.

Thus, in the scriptures of the Great Yoga on down, from the perspective of the appearance of method there are limitless arrangements of the stages of generation that must be gathered within the completion stage prajñā of emptiness.

Similarly, here, in reliance upon the three key points, the motion of the winds increases as wisdom. By the force of having purified [everything] in the nature of phenomena, the confused appearances of objective external elements and the internal confusion of the mind, including the habit of mental activity, all naturally cease. Even all secret appearances of clear light dissolve into the nature of phenomena, which is the utterly inexpressible space of truth. [154] This is referred to as "exhausted." Ultimately, it is like the moon on the thirtieth day, where nothing at all appears even though



the nature of the moon has neither increased nor decreased. The radiance of awareness dissolves into basic space like the light of a crystal retracted within.

The nature of exhaustion occurs in two ways. Gradual exhaustion is the process of the four visions reaching their full extent. In the rare case of instantaneous realization, at the moment a practitioner of supreme intelligence such as this sees the vision of direct awareness, based on familiarity and without depending upon the stages of the increasing experience and the full extent, they arrive at the state of exhaustion.

Whatever the case, it is then that, with the vanishing of the corporeal body, the enemy of the elements cannot cause harm.<sup>69</sup> [155] With the vanishing of passions, the clarity of recollection and its basis leave no trace. With the vanishing of appearances, going, staying, the appearance of the sun and moon, and so forth all disappear without any remaining impression. Even the thought that this has occurred no longer exists. This is called "all appearances of form passing beyond sorrow." At this time, there are two attainments. Having attained freedom from rebirth, by arising in the kāya of the great transference,<sup>70</sup> one brings to fruition the purpose of beings. Then, when the stages of the visions are exhausted, as one focuses on the gathering of light at the fingers, appearances are naturally reversed so that the support and supported universe and inhabitants [156] are evident like the moon's reflection or as in a dream. Even one's own body appears as though it were a reflection in a mirror, unimpeded and lacking true existence. What one sees will not be seen by those whose eyes are impure just as when the king bowed down to the kāya of the great master Padmasambhava, only to touch his own head to the cushion.<sup>71</sup>

Similarly, by vanishing into particles and becoming clear light, one attains control over both birth and entrance, which is an exclusive feature of tögal. Through trekchö, the body vanishes into particles and the mind vanishes into the nature of phenomena so liberation occurs only in the state of original purity. At that time [through tögal], miraculous activities are so inconceivable [157] the aims of the six classes of beings are fulfilled both directly and indirectly in their individual realms.<sup>72</sup> In particular, the deed of liberating three thousand human beings with harmonious aspirations "without [physical] remains" is accomplished. Finally, enlightenment in the kāya of the ever-youthful vase of the nature of phenomena will be achieved, as demonstrated by the living examples Padmasambhava and the Stainless Teacher of Truth.<sup>73</sup>



Some of the explanations given by the Omniscient One make reference to three thousand bardo beings [being liberated]. Since human beings are in the bardo of the birthplace, there is no contradiction.<sup>74</sup>

Having mastered entrance, even though at this time there is no great wave of benefit for others through a kāya, [one can liberate] three thousand beings just by directing awareness. [158] Through the key point of being liberated from the effects of good and bad karma—like mist vanishing in space—dissolving into inner space, the enlightened activity of inseparable kāyas and wisdom is enacted for the sake of others until samsāra is emptied. The radiance of inner luminosity—absorbed without obscuration—becomes the clear, external manifestation of the pure realm of Rich Array such as the partial sambhogakāya and so forth arising like a face in a mirror. From the nature of the unceasing ornamental wheel of enlightened body, speech, and mind, the five sambhogakāya buddhas appear to the tenth-ground bodhisattvas. [159] To shravakas, pratyekas, and ordinary individuals, the supreme nirmāṇakāya [appears]; and, furthermore, by way of enacting deeds according to faculties, aspirations, and intentions of sentient beings, the nirmāṇakāya artisans, reincarnates, and so forth appear. This is clearly elucidated as well in *The Staircase to Akaṇīṣṭha*,<sup>a</sup> which describes the generation stage.

### *Supplementary Upadeshas*

Fourth, the supplementary upadeshas are as stated in the *Clear Expanse*:

The four upadeshas of the concluding support must be given after the preceding [instructions].

Thus, [the four are] holding the ground with the three motionless states, indicating the extent with the three ways of abiding, [160] striking with the three attainments, and revealing the status of liberation with four states of confidence.

### *Holding the Ground with the Three Motionless States*

For the first, it states in the root tantra:

a 'og min bgrod pa'i them skas



By one having established the ground with the three motionless states, the wind-mind reaches the full potential.

Thus, when one remains motionless in the physical posture, the channels and winds naturally relax. When one remains motionless with the gaze of the eyes, the visions increase. When one remains motionless in an uncontrived state of mind, space and awareness unite.

*Indicating the Extent with the Three Ways of Abiding*

For the second, it states in the root tantra:

By indicating the extent with the three ways of abiding, dreams are reversed and the signs and limits of the body, speech, and mind are identified.

Thus, the body abides [161] without engaging in any activity, purifying the confused thoughts of samsara. Winds abiding without increasing terminates the movement of concepts. Visions abiding without shaking allows the full extent of the pure lands to occur. At that time, there are two: signs that arise through the three doors and the extent of accomplishment recognized in the dream state.

For the first, at the time of the direct awareness of the nature of phenomena, with the maturing of the body through the vase empowerment, the meaning of effortless action enters the limbs of the body; and, through the interdependence of the channels relaxing, the body becomes like a tortoise placed on a metal tray. When the consciousness enters the channels, by the radiance of the pure basis of expression entering that which indicates speech, [162] like a mute, one makes no effort to speak. When the meaning of the natural liberation of the Great Perfection free from fixation enters the mind, the mind abides wherever it is placed, like a bird in a trap.

At the time of the increasing experience, through the dissolution of the winds in the central channel, the meaning of freedom from good and bad permeates the body. One is freed from feeling shame or self-importance like suffering from a terminal disease. As a result of the purification of speech through the secret empowerment, the meaning of the Great Perfection — free from proving and refuting — enters the speech; and, like a crazy person whose utterances are unintelligible, one speaks without regard for the outcome. When the gathering of the concepts of mental activity enter the



mind—like an individual intoxicated seven times by a poisonous herb—[163] the unborn, naturally liberated mind never engages with samsāric activities again.

At the time of the full extent, when the potential of the prajñā empowerment penetrates the channels and winds, one's body is unobstructed by the five elements. This is like how an elephant stuck in the mud is able to pull itself out through its own force. When the meaning of the Great Perfection beyond speech or expression merges with speech, through the interdependency of compassion overcome with prajñā, speech becomes like the sweet song of an adolescent kumbhanda.<sup>7</sup> Henceforth, whatever is verbalized is accepted by and benefits others. [164] When the meaning of one's own originally pure nature—forever primordially liberated—merges with the stillness of the mind, it is certain that samsāra will never be reentered, like becoming immune from smallpox.

At the time of the exhaustion of all phenomena, when the Great Perfection—having transcended the sense organs—purifies the corporeal body, like a corpse in a cemetery, one will not have the slightest trace of fear even if a hundred messengers of death are hovering. When the syllables that abide in the channels enter the lattice of wisdom wind, the inexpressible meaning of the king of all vehicles will imbue the sound of speech. The sound of empty expression will become like an echo, and only the words of others will be repeated. [165] An individual whose mind has been purified by the absolute [word] empowerment will, like the consciousness of someone whose heart has been pierced by an arrow, have the ability to instantly discern awareness. Departing for the ground of original purity like vanishing mist, the freedom of the wisdom of perfect buddhahood will instantly occur.

Incidentally, it is as stated in the *Naturally Arising*:

When exceptional prajñā arises in the mind, recognize it to be a deception of the māras. If fearless conduct suddenly bursts forth, at that moment recognize which direction prajñā should be placed.

Thus, if one is not certain about how to discern the signs of mind-based experiences, [166] there will be no liberation from māras or the narrow passageway of obscuring deviations. If the purpose of this instruction from the tantras is synthesized, three signs are taught: the signs that indicate the



obstacles of māras, the signs of experiences increasing and diminishing, and the signs of the unchanging secret.

First, some practitioners with dull faculties will grasp at visions and fixate upon them as real. Verbally proficient yet lacking the depth of understanding, they will be able to emanate bodies of various colors, in the mirror of their own shadow a second reflection will appear, they will be able to understand the minds of others, and so forth. When that occurs, [167] they should cleanse their body by anointing it with frankincense and nectar from head to toe or by smearing old clay on their limbs so that the color changes.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, hindrances can take the form of the deity. Although pure wisdom dākinīs will not enter the world, dākinīs of various activities do reveal their forms in the sky and predict that common siddhis will be achieved. The indication of a deviation will be that the mind changes to become totally different and gives rise to self-defined attachment-fixation, aversion, refuting, and proving. Becoming more and more opposed to the dharma in this way is [168] referred to as "oneself overcome by the dākinīs." It is as stated in the *Naturally Arising*:

If a prophecy from the dākinīs is received, since that is to test [one's] experience, focus on the view.

Thus, it is as taught. By maintaining equipoise in the meaning of nonexistence, one will be able to overcome the dākinīs and there will be no potential to be deceived or lured by enticing, inauthentic siddhis. Furthermore, in general, meditating upon wrathful deities, reciting wrathful mantras, melodiously reciting *hung*, and meditating upon bodhichitta will bring about reversal.

Second, the signs of increasing and diminishing experiences are as follows. By the circumstance of the way the winds and mind combine, a sudden sense of unreliable samādhi will develop. [169] In addition, if uncertain visions of forms of deities, light formations, and so forth appear in the sky, perform the following activities. Sometimes soak the body in water, other times place two pieces of flat wood sixteen finger-widths in length underneath the chin as a support and massage the body with sandalwood oil. Partake of cooling foods and recite the essential sound of the unborn nature—*ah*. The perfectly correct path will again be secured.

Third, the signs of the unchanging secret are as follows. The body becomes light like cotton, the complexion fair, and white hair and wrinkles



disappear. Hair and nails stop growing, [170] and the mudrās and syllables of the five families appear on one's body. The skin becomes youthful, white hair turns black, and new teeth grow in. One gains the mastery of a flexible, supple body. Likewise, by the accomplishment of the truth of speech, whatever is said brings benefit to others. Words that cause confusion are never spoken, and many aspects of the dharma are naturally understood. One comes to know various ancient histories, languages, and dialects of the beings of the six classes. The speech of the shrāvakas, pratyekas, and bodhisattvas can be heard, the movements of the breath are curtailed, and so forth. [171] Having cleansed the mind, one no longer needs food and clothing and can remain in samādhi for months or years. The winds [mind] can be directed at will. By purification of the concepts of the past and future, stages of activities cease; and, giving rise to immeasurable compassion, passions no longer arise in the mindstream. In short, the crucial point is to remain unsullied by the intellect that encourages refuting and proving extreme views based on positive or negative hope and fear.

Second, the extent of accomplishment recognized in the dream state is as follows. It states in the *Secret Sound Tantra*:<sup>a</sup>

For the supreme, [dreams] will cease; for the middling, [dreams] will be lucid; and for the inferior, [dreams] will be transformed.

Thus, for all of those with keen faculties and enthusiasm, the connection with karma and habits will be severed. [172] An indication that buddhahood will occur in that very lifetime is when dreams are purified in the dharmakāya and sleep arises as clear light. For the middling, dreams become lucid and, through familiarity with dream transformation, buddhahood will occur in the bardo. For the inferior, the continuum of negative habits in the dream state is severed and, by experiencing only positive dreams, rebirth will be taken in the realm of the natural nirmāṇakāya.

### *Striking with the Three Attainments*

Third, striking the nail of the three attainments is as follows. The quote continues:

<sup>a</sup> *gsang ba sgra rgyud*



By striking the nail of the three attainments, the contaminated body vanishes.

Thus, if words that convey the same meaning are not continually repeated, that meaning may not be fully understood. Once mastery over outer appearances is gained, circumstantial phenomena arise as pure lands. [173] Internally, once mastery over the magical body is gained, the corporeal body is purified in clear light. Secretly, once mastery over the wind-mind is gained, even a consciousness that has committed the five heinous non-virtues can be guided by focusing awareness.

*Revealing the Status of Liberation with the Four States of Confidence*  
Fourth, the four states of confidence are as stated in the *Heap of Precious Jewels*:

With the unchanging view of the four states of great confidence, the full extent of irreversible wisdom will be recognized.

Thus, even though one hears of the suffering of the three lower realms, the finitude of life span and so forth, one determines that it is impossible for bliss and suffering to independently exist in one's own nature which has never been confused from beginningless time. The confidence of not fearing the lower realms is aroused; and, when awareness arrives upon the ground, even the name "saṃsāra" no longer exists. [174] This is why there will be the confidence of no longer anticipating the ripening of cause and result. In this way, through liberation in the innate nature of phenomena, the thought "this is happiness" no longer occurs. Since there is no independent state beyond sorrow, there will be the confidence of not hoping for anything to be obtained. Even though hearing about the immeasurable qualities of the victorious ones, except for encountering one's own true nature, one will know that there is not even a hair tip's worth of something else that becomes buddha. By encountering this very nature, there will be confidence that joy and sorrow are pure in the nature of evenness.

Once one has perfected these four states of confidence, the instructions for entering the citadel of enlightenment are as follows. It states in *Vajrasattva's Mirror of the Heart Tantra*:<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *rdo rje sems dpa'i snying gi me long gi rgyud*



There are two states of enlightenment: [175] the state of fully perfected buddhahood<sup>a</sup> and the state of fully manifest buddhahood.<sup>b</sup> Fully perfected buddhahood means to achieve enlightenment without any trace of the corporeal body remaining; whereas, when the state of fully manifest buddhahood is attained, various signs having to do with light, sound, physical remains, kāyas, the motion of the earth, and so forth will occur.

Thus, concerning the first, this includes the great Chetsun<sup>c</sup> and all those who preceded him who were famous for their actual accomplishment. The latter case includes the Sovereign of the Victorious Ones—Drimed Ödzer—who, in the great charnel ground forest of Chimpū, manifested among the two lights, circular; of the two sounds, loud roaring; and of the two kāyas, wrathful. [176] He manifested both the sacred remains and relics that cannot be destroyed by the elements, while a great earthquake thundered, roared, shook, trembled, hammered, and pounded with great force. These six signs were repeated seven times as he revealed the state of fully manifest buddhahood. Without a single sign left incomplete, he departed for the ground of original purity.

## FOR THOSE OF MIDDLING FACULTY

The second section, for those of middling faculty, is a precise explanation of the instructions on liberation in the bardo as stated in the *Reverberation of Sound*:

If defined by categories, there are four.

Thus, the natural bardo,<sup>d</sup> the moment of death,<sup>e</sup> the nature of phenomena,<sup>f</sup> and existence<sup>g</sup> are the four decisive boundaries that delineate the bardos.

a yang dag par rdzogs par sang rgyas pa

b mngon par rdzogs par sang rgyas pa

c lce btsun chen po; Chetsun Senge Wangchük

d rang bzhin bar do

e 'chi kha bar do

f chos nyid bar do

g srid pa bar do



## THE NATURAL BARDO

First, the natural bardo is as follows. The general condition of sentient beings [177] is such that the habit of previous passions is impressed upon the basis of all,<sup>a</sup> becoming the seed that creates future habits. By the power of individual karma, there is a force that propels beings to take rebirth in various environments and classes and states of happiness, suffering, and indifference. That which is called "potential" means that, through the single cause of ignorance, the distinctions of duality are created and, based on the aspects of the corresponding results, the beings of the six classes appear.

Concerning this, a single substance is perceived differently by each sentient being through the power of their individual karma. For instance, the substance water is perceived by gods as nectar, humans as water, animals as a drink to quench thirst, deprived spirits as pus and blood, and by hell beings [178] as molten lava. Although perceived in those ways, [water] has no true, inherent existence. In *The Bodhisattva's Way of Life* it states:

Who has created the ground of the earth as an iron-hot inferno?  
Where does this fire arise from? The Buddha taught that this  
and everything like it is the result of the negative mind.

So, it is as taught.

In this way, the moment that the arrangement of appearances constituting the three realms dawns, that is entrance into the natural bardo. For those of us who are human beings, the five aggregates obscure the appearance of five kāyas. The elements and sense organs obscure the luster of clear light. Karma and passions obscure the appearance of the nature of phenomena. Consequently, there come to be the present independent [179] experiences of happiness and sorrow. Knowing that this leads only to faulted states of future rebirth, the method to reverse it is determined by understanding the way of the natural bardo in order to sever the cord of doubt. For example, among birds, the finch is extremely clever since before building a nest it carefully checks to see if there is any danger or threat from humans. Once the nest is determined safe, whenever [the finch] enters the nest, there is no hesitation. Similarly, at this moment of the narrow passageway, the unsurpassable, indispensable guide is called "the lamp

<sup>a</sup> *kun gzhi, ālaya*



of hearing that dispels the darkness of ignorance." Holding the meaning of this in mind, [180] it is important to sever all doubts with certainty derived from hearing and contemplating.

Nevertheless, since in the present time most beings are tormented by various degrees of discouragement and degeneracy, it is as stated in the [*Treasury of the*] *Precious Genuine Meaning*:

During the Age of Excellence, even all gurus were only mahā-siddhas. Based on the individual's karma and the guru's compassion and omniscience, liberation would occur solely through the potency of dharma according to personal karmic connections and aspirations. Conversely, nowadays, it is difficult to be endowed with such fortunate karma. With countless concepts proliferating, it is almost impossible to cut through even a single thought. That is why it is essential for all ordinary individuals [181] to thoroughly train through hearing and contemplating. Once one arrives at the time of the conclusion of this heart-essence doctrine, practice is then referred to as "devotion-based." Given that this king of secrets is the pinnacle of all doctrines, except for those who are capable of great hearing and contemplating and whose wisdom and fortune are supreme, it is impossible for this meaning to be realized. Therefore, to enter this vehicle it is necessary to largely depend upon the cultivation of hearing and contemplating.

Thus, and the quote continues:

In particular, the guru must know the unmistakable path, for if not, whatever is taught will be mistaken. Therefore, vast hearing and contemplation must be developed first.

Thus, these are my heartfelt words of advice for the beings of the five-hundred-year period [of degeneration]. [182]

## THE BARDO OF THE MOMENT OF DEATH

Second, the bardo of the moment of death is as follows. In the *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon* it states:



Life is impermanent, like a traveler on a journey who never stays in one place.

Thus, once there is birth, death is naturally looming. In the *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon* and all upadesha literature there are extensive explanations on how the signs of death occur and how to deceive death. By understanding this, one can reverse sudden obstacles. Otherwise, it is as the quote states:

There is no direction on this earth where anyone has ever been spared the arm of death itself.

Thus, as taught, according to the teachings given in the *Sūtra of Advice to the King*,<sup>a</sup> the actual boundary defining the time of death [183] begins when the illness causing the circumstance of death strikes until the inner breath stops. During that period of time, it is crucial to know the oral advice so that whatever is vague becomes as vivid as a damsel's image of herself in a mirror.

In the *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon* it states,

This is the time that all upadeshas from the guru must merge with the disciple's stream of mind.

Thus, if the dying individual is a Great Perfection practitioner—like a care-free child not keeping track of details—he or she will be unconcerned with the signs, place, or time of death. If that is the case, these instructions will not be necessary.

The best of middling capacity will be indifferent to the circumstances or place, whether death occurs on a road or an intersection in a city. This is how a homeless vagrant would die. [184] An average practitioner's death would be beyond concern for external circumstances, like a wild animal such as a lion who dies in the mountains, in a cave, or in an empty valley. Engaging with the kāyas and wisdom, this is referred to as “entering the innate clear light” or “entering the pure realms through powa<sup>b</sup> instructions.” In both cases [of entering] success depends upon the power of

<sup>a</sup> *rgyal po la gdams pa'i mdo*

<sup>b</sup> *'pho ba*



familiarity. The visualization for the first is as stated in the *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon*:

The way to engage the union of kāyas and wisdom is to direct awareness as follows. With the body in the sleeping-lion posture, direct awareness to the eyes. Allow the gaze to rest momentarily in space. If space and awareness [185] are stable, the person will have no bardo and buddhahood will surely be achieved.

Thus, assuming [one of] the three postures or remaining in the sleeping-lion posture, focus awareness on the eyes. With eyes directed to the space of awareness, relinquish the present life and relax uncontrived within original purity. In an instant liberation will occur. This is also called "introducing the secret path."

Since this is an extremely profound key point, even while one is alive, when the sky is pristine, direct awareness into space and think, "The moment of death has arrived. Now I must pass into the peaceful unelaborate expanse." [186] Exhale the breath and follow that by allowing the mind to remain without focus. This path is extremely swift!

For the latter, it states in the tantras:

The way of entering into various realms is as follows. The teachings for reanimating the dead and transferring consciousness are practiced by the consciousness mounting the winds. For that, it is important to have previous experience through training. It is also important to concentrate and transfer awareness. Then, with *bik*, [the consciousness] is ejected. This depends upon the guru's oral instructions.

Thus, during the final moments of the last breath, awareness as a white *ah* in the heart is ejected directly up through the crown aperture. By reciting *bik* twenty-one times, liberation will occur. [187] Just as mentioned in the tantras, it is important to train while still alive! Those endowed with this key point need not depend upon the stages of dissolution. Through the bodhisattva's manner of transferring breath, they will pass beyond sorrow.

At this time, if clarification through verbal elaboration is necessary, it is best to receive this from one's guru. If that is not possible, a vajra relative with undefiled samaya should recite as follows:



O fortunate child! This clear light is actual wisdom that originates from itself. Let your mind remain in this nature without contrivance, and you will unimpededly arrive [188] in the state of buddhahood. If through this the mind is still unable to do away with concepts, eject awareness as a white *ah* out of the crown aperture like a flung arrow. In the upper direction is the realm of perfectly pure space. It is there that the conqueror known as King of Space dwells. Endowed with the empowerment of the ground—the fundamental nature of the Great Perfection—fortunate one, fearlessly receive it! Depart for the appearance of the ground of the nature of phenomena and you will achieve buddhahood in the ground of original purity. If by chance liberation does not occur, recognize all appearances of the bardo of the nature of phenomena to be your own. [189] At the moment you recognize your own nature, joyfully depart for the space of original purity.

Thus, having repeated this three times, [the instructor] should also remain in equipoise.

These instructions are exceptionally sublime because they are drawn from the *Naturally Occurring Great Perfection*<sup>a</sup> and other texts. Here, despite having received upadesha, if one does not have full confidence, as with all ordinary individuals, retraction of the channels and winds begins with the four outer elements, with the five inner aspects of space, and with the five secret life forces. All additional twenty winds will dissolve according to the subtle stages of decomposition. Although this is explained in detail in the tantra *Naturally Arising*, that which is presented here is so that ordinary individuals can easily understand. [190] The way the elements dissolve and the winds depart is stated in the *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon*:

When the earth element dissolves back into earth, the body becomes heavy, unable to rise. The ability to stand and move diminishes. When the water element dissolves back into water, fluids issue from the mouth and nostrils. Similarly, when the fire

<sup>a</sup> *rdzogs pa rang byung*



element dissolves back into fire, the mouth and nose completely dry up. The body loses heat from the extremities inward. Likewise, when the wind element dissolves back into wind, breath becomes erratic, the limbs struggle, and the eyes roll back in the head. Whoever experiences these signs is departing from this world.

Thus, and in the *Clear Expanse* it states:

When the wind that mobilizes the body departs, [191] the body can no longer raise itself up and the hamstrings tremble. The limbs will not contract, and speech becomes difficult. The eyes roll back, and the breath is exhaled. When the wind that gives the physical complexion luster departs, the entire body—as well as the area around the mouth and nose—becomes a gray color, like smoke. Pain shoots through the muscles, and a foul stench issues from the mouth and nose. When the wind that separates impure substances from pure departs the body, one can no longer eat or drink and the strength of the body diminishes. When the wind that distributes heat throughout the body departs, the warmth of the body escapes from the extremities. The splendor and luster of the body fades. When the wind of the karma of the eon escapes, the body trembles uncontrollably and the blood in the veins and capillaries retracts into the aorta.

Thus, and the quote continues:

At that time, [192] appearances dissolve as follows. All outer sensory perceptions and recollections dissolve, so that everything becomes like the darkness of night. Awareness dissolves into the center of the heart, memory fades, and speech no longer functions.

Thus, at this point, the so-called mind is the radiance of awareness carried by the wind-mind in the lungs, like a blind horse. When this combination [wind-mind] separates and the radiance of awareness dissolves into awareness in the heart, it is like a crippled man. All winds without exception pass through the path of the windpipe to flow out the mouth and nose. When



[the wind] can no longer return, this is called the “separation of mind and wisdom” or the time of death.

At that time, it is beneficial to rely upon the three precious upadeshas of the great, profound tantra *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon*: [193]

Joining one’s mouth and nostrils with the person’s whose recollection has diminished,” forcefully exhale three long breaths of air. With the first breath, imagine a white *om*; with the second, a red *ah*; and, with the third, exhale and abide in emptiness. With each inhalation imagine that the individual’s consciousness returns to their body as a blue *hung* and in the same instant recite *hung* with such force that the intestines retract to touch the spine. The eyes of the individual should then fly open. At that time, introduce the luminosity of the empty vital essence [194] called pointing-out instructions: “O fortunate one, this is the clear light of your own nature. At this time of separation from your body, the three doors are no longer an obstruction so, although the bardo of the nature of phenomena—including all the sounds and lights—arises in all its glory, it is not other than your own appearances. You must recognize this! Since this present naked awareness is actual liberation itself, do not deviate! Do you see the appearances? Do you hear these instructions?”

Thus, if there is a response or a sign becomes apparent, the transmission was successful. If there are indications that the [individual’s] consciousness is clear [195] or the sense organs are vaguely alert, shape paper into a cone or use a piece of bamboo and place your mouth at one end while inserting the other into the individual’s ear, saying, “O fortunate child! Don’t be attached to anything! You have separated from your corporeal body of flesh and blood. It is pointless to be afraid of the bardo of the nature of phenomena’s radiant light and sound! Recognize that your own appearances do not actually exist and seize the immutable resting place. If you are unable to abide there, bring to mind the pure realm of Great Bliss.\* Generate devotion and depart! Have no doubt that you will meet with the Buddha

\* *bde ba chen, Mahāsukhā, Sukhāvati*



of Boundless Light.”<sup>76</sup> Thus, melodiously recite. It is excellent if this is recited when the [196] stages of dissolution begin. This is an exceptional key point known as “the consummate introduction.”

Furthermore, it states in the *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon*:

If the dying individual is still breathing, there is no doubt that [the individual] will be led from that state by the syllables, breath, and so forth.

Thus, most ordinary beings who have never heard this dharma before will indicate their future place of rebirth through body language and other signs.

The method to lead them to higher states from the time the death process begins until the consciousness departs is as follows. Visualize a white *ah* in the individual’s heart. Place your mouth close to their crown aperture. [197] As they exhale, slowly and melodiously recite *ah* as many times as the age of the dying person. When it is apparent that the person’s last breath has expired, at that very moment recite *ah* twenty-one times. If steam emits [from the crown], even though the individual may have committed many nonvirtues, they will be led to a higher realm. Those already destined for a higher rebirth will be able to be led to an even higher state. If by chance an individual displays the signs of a hell-realm rebirth—in order to prevent their direct descent—at the moment the person separates from their breath, visualize the consciousness in their heart as *ah* and, while reciting *ah*, simultaneously imagine that this melts into five lights. Mingle [198] this with your mind and rest. If the guide possesses high realization, because the consciousness of the deceased is by nature clear light, this will unite with the truth of the nature of phenomena. As an exceptional key point for guiding the consciousness, this is a sublime feature of the king of vehicles.

Like the example of a king on his horse struck by a cannonball fired by the minister, all the blood in the body condenses into the aorta as pools of blood surge into [the aorta] in three stages. The length of the breath is also different [at each stage] during the three exhalations. Finally, when the outer breath ceases, and the winds dissolve into the consciousness, [199] awareness momentarily falls unconscious in the center of the heart. It is



during that state of unconsciousness that the inner breath ceases, as stated in the *Clear Expanse*:

As the blood in the body condenses, when the [first] pool of blood strikes the aorta, both the mouth and eyes become pale. Breath is exhaled the length of a cubit. When the second pool of blood strikes, the head falls forward and breath is flung the distance of an arrow. When the third surge of blood strikes, with the sound of *ik'* the breath shoots out the length of an arm span. Then the outer breath ceases, awareness falls unconscious in the heart, and, when the inner breath ceases, that is when the bardo of the nature of phenomena dawns. [200]

So, it is taught.

### THE BARDO OF THE NATURE OF PHENOMENA

Third, the bardo of the nature of phenomena is as follows. Once the support of self-fixation—the heap of aggregates—has been discarded, the clear-light manifestation of one's own innate nature appears. At that time, it is necessary to possess the oral instructions in order to trust one's own appearances like a child joining his mother's lap. This analogy reflects the profound connection between mother and child. Not only that, just after birth even animals are capable of knowing their mother among many through their karmic connection, singling her out to suckle without hesitation. The practice of trekchö imbues realization of the ground of awareness as the great nature of original purity abiding like the mother. From that, phenomena that arise from the appearance of the ground are like the child. Becoming familiar with that through tögal, [201] like a child recognizing his mother and joining her, in the bardo one recognizes that both the nature and its own strength are like the sun and its own rays. Gaining certainty that this is not other than one's own appearances, at the moment of discernment buddhahood occurs without a bardo, like a child uniting with his mother.

Moreover, [the methods] on this exceptional secret path are as follows. When all stages of dissolution of the restricted corporeal body are complete



and the connection between body and mind has ended, the consciousness of the basis of all—devoid of memory and thought processes—although said to dissolve into space actually dissolves into the basic space of phenomena. In that instant, the natural clear light dawns like a cloudless autumn sky. [202] With no boundaries whatsoever, having not fallen to any extreme, empty clarity arises free from the veil of obscurity. Recognize and rest in this very nature, without contrivance. This is referred to as the “ground of the great original state of liberation.” The distinction of the six special features sets this apart from the ground of confusion so liberation is immediate in the great inner space of original purity.

Concerning this, it states in the Omniscient One’s *Ocean of Profound Meaning*<sup>a</sup> that the place where liberation occurs when space dissolves into clear light is called “the first instant.” This phrase presents the connection with what follows [the second and third instants]. Nevertheless, the complete upadeshas that represent a conclusive analysis [203] through oral instructions can be understood in the *Lamp That Illuminates the Key Points of Practice*<sup>b</sup><sup>79</sup> and other texts. In addition, the concise and extensive explanations, as well as those given on the obscured and hidden meaning presented through the six limitations and the four modes,<sup>80</sup> are not easily comprehended. Although I am inclined to shoot the arrow of scriptural reference and reasoning concerning all of this, given that this is an upadesha text and the main emphasis is on the meaning, I have taken care not to use an abundance of words.

If liberation does not occur at that time, that which is referred to as the “dissolution of space into clear light” occurs. It states in the *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon*:

This is referred to as “an ordinary individual’s consciousness [204] dissolving into clear light.” At the moment the continuum of breathing ceases, except for the aspect of one’s own organs, substantial appearances have ceased yet the thought that they are there still occurs. When the corporeal body is no longer visible, the body of light becomes evident. Then the entire field of experience appears as the mandala of five-colored light rays.

<sup>a</sup> zab don rgya misho

<sup>b</sup> nyam len gnad kyi sgron ma



Thus, although time does not change, appearances do change, so the external earth, stones, mountains, cliffs, forests, the sun, moon, and so forth—the entire support of the universe and inhabitants—will fade. Wherever one looks, it will seem as though a bolt of brocade silk was unfurling or as though covered by a thin piece of muslin while looking at the rays of the sun. All appearances [205] will be extremely bright and colorful, devoid of distinctions such as outer, inner, wide, or narrow. Everything will seem as though buoyant and shimmering with a dazzling radiance. At that time, to the extent that one is familiar with tögal practice, these appearances will be supportive aspects of awareness enduring for extended periods of time. For those who are unfamiliar, they will disappear as swiftly as a shooting star.

The manner in which awareness sustains its own place is as stated in the root tantra:

At that time, when the appearance of light is spherical, those who are knowledgeable will sustain the arising of the visions.

Thus, as the visions arise, those with naturally relaxed concentration will recognize them to be their own. In the first instant, [206] one will have the confidence of knowing one's appearances lack true existence. In the second instant, they will be liberated in their own place. In the third instant, the immutable state of liberation will be secured. From that moment onward, there will be no visions at all.

Then, clear light dissolving into nonduality is as stated in the *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon*:

Then, for ordinary individuals, that which is referred to as "clear light dissolving into nonduality" is as follows. All appearances arise only in the form of kāyas. The kāyas are not too large or small, are the same proportion, are adorned with ornaments, and have their own colors, postures, thrones, and mudrās.

Thus, when the visions arise in the form of wrathful deities, those kāyas within the palace of the cranium, although no larger than mustard seeds, [207] will seem so colossal in the bardo that it will be as though they encompass the universe. Conversely, they will also appear as minute as mustard seeds while remaining perfectly proportioned. In all cases, the way that their heads and mannerisms appear will be unpredictable. Brandishing

མகྱେତ୍-କ-ସ୍ତୁ-ମྰ୍ଗେ-ଶ-ପଦ୍-ବ୍ୟୁ-ଥ-ପର୍ବ-ଶ୍ରୀ-ଶ-ବନ୍-ତିନ୍-ଧ-ପଦ୍-ବ୍ୟୁ-ଶ-ପଦ୍-ବ୍ୟୁ-ଶ-ବନ୍-ତିନ୍-ଧ-  
 ବ୍ୟୁ-ଶ-ଶ୍ରୀ-ଶ-ବନ୍-ତିନ୍-ଧ-ପଦ୍-ବ୍ୟୁ-ଶ-ପଦ୍-ବ୍ୟୁ-ଶ-ବନ୍-ତିନ୍-ଧ- ମହେତ୍-କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍-  
 ପଦ୍-ବ୍ୟୁ-ଶ-ପଦ୍-ବ୍ୟୁ-ଶ-ବନ୍-ତିନ୍-ଧ-ପଦ୍-ବ୍ୟୁ-ଶ-ପଦ୍-ବ୍ୟୁ-ଶ-ବନ୍-ତିନ୍-ଧ- ।  
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various magical weapons, they will be striking out, causing panic and fear. Their roar will be so loud and terrifying that it will resemble the unceasing sound of a thousand dragons. Their radiance will imbue fear like penetrating weapons. It states in the *Clear Expanse*:

At that time, sounds and lights will gather, and the appearance of kāyas will be utterly terrifying.

Here, as if this were a stuffed lion, it is necessary to be fearless and gain confidence not to react to one's own appearances. [208]

The way in which even all ordinary individuals who are excellent practitioners could still revert back [to samsāra] is as stated in the *Upadesha of the Essential Wisdom Intent*:<sup>1</sup>

Alas, holder of the secret! If the nature is not recognized now, buddhahood will not be attained no matter how much meditation has been practiced. Having not encountered the key upadesha, the lights will produce fear, the sounds will bring panic, and the glare will bring terror. If you do not encounter the key point of the instructions, you will fail to recognize the sounds, lights, and glare—these three—so you will once again wander in existence.

So, it is.

All the tantras of the Great Yoga reveal—to a certain degree—the illusory body in the bardo arising as the sambhogakāya; but because they are not the tantras of upadesha, [209] the actual aspect of the appearances of natural spontaneous presence is concealed. This is more sublime than holding to independent appearances and never knowing that enlightenment occurs in the space of one's own appearances as the sambhogakāya. It is as taught in the *Sixfold Expanse*:

The bardo of the pure nature of phenomena and the magical body of the meditation deity are so similar that they can be mistaken.



Thus, it is.

Likewise, the peaceful appearances are as follows. In the *Conjunction [of the Sun and Moon]* it states:

Even all the kāyas appear in a group formation of five, each with consort, and each group formation of five is surrounded by rings of light. All the maṇḍalas of the families of the male, the families of the female, and the male and female sattvas [210] abide as one.

Thus, these visions of the group formations of the male/female five families gradually develop. The way they arise according to stages for the duration of the five days of samādhi—like shoots from a seedling—is as follows.

On the first day, Vairochana with consort and assembly appear as the principal family surrounded by a group formation of five. On the second day, Vajra Akṣobhya appears. On the third day, Ratnasambhava; on the fourth day, Amitābha; and on the fifth day, Amoghasiddhi appears as the principal in group formation. Reference to “a day of samādhi” corresponds to the duration of time that the deceased was able to remain in samādhi. [211] Here, liberation occurs through the three key points as quoted before [from *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon*]:

At this time, a very subtle shaft of light will emerge from one's heart and connect to the hearts of all the buddhas. If one can ascertain that, one will naturally abide in nonconceptual concentration. This is referred to as “awareness engaging with light.” When all these appearances manifest and completely intermingling, countless subtle vital essences will emerge from the shaft of light in the heart. Then, from one's heart a twisted, multi-colored filament of light will issue forth. As appearances arise, one will think that all kāyas are dissolving into one's body. [212] This is referred to as “light engaging back into awareness.” At that time, all individuals with confidence in their own appearances must recall the supreme method, like a child joining its mother's lap.

Thus, it is.



If stability in this is not achieved, then it is referred to as “nonduality dissolving into wisdom.” Although I will not be elucidating the vision of the union of the four aspects of wisdom—the inner path of Vajrasattva—this can be understood in the quote from the *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon*, where it states:

Once again, from one’s heart a very subtle filament of light will emerge. This will appear to be projected upward into space. If one looks at this without allowing the eyes to become distracted, [213] then it will seem enormous and unmixed with any other appearances. Then, upon a blanket of blue light, radiant vital essences will appear like overturned mirrors.<sup>11</sup> Appearing like a sapphire cup turned over, endowed with the inner radiance of wisdom, this is exceedingly bright and dazzling and naturally adorned with vital essences of five, each adorned with five. Above this, upon a blanket of white light similar to an overturned cup, appear extremely radiant vital essences arising as before, including the inner radiance of wisdom. Then, above this, upon a blanket of golden light like an overturned golden cup, [214] everything arises just as before. Above that, upon a blanket of red light like an overturned ruby cup, the appearances will arise just like the preceding ones. Above that will appear an extremely clear orb of light like the fan of a peacock. Although this is the appearance of the five aspects of wisdom, the manifestation of the wisdom of all-accomplishing activity has not been perfected, so it will not be apparent. This is called the “vision of the union of the four aspects of wisdom” and is also referred to as the “inner path of Vajrasattva.” It is here where one must recall the supreme method, like that which employs the unwavering golden needle.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, just as it is taught—in the face of each appearance—by resting in the unwavering equipoise of fresh and present awareness, [215] it is analogous to how a skillful physician drains fluid surrounding a patient’s heart. During the insertion of the golden needle, the key point is to ensure that the needle will not waver even a fraction of a hair so that the fluid can be easily drained from the heart.

Similarly, here, liberation occurs when awareness never wavers from



its own place. At this point, the statement "since the noble qualities of basic space have not been brought to completion, their full potential is not yet perfected" must be understood as referring to the "union of the four aspects of wisdom." As the Omniscient One states:

Here, when liberation in the state of original purity has still not occurred, it is posited as the "union of the four aspects of wisdom." The assertion of those with inferior intelligence that the wisdom of all-accomplishing activity does not exist is utterly unacceptable!

So, as taught, when the actual result is perfected, [216] that is the appearance of all five wisdoms. This is why it is necessary to know the depth and breadth of the tantra's wisdom intent.

Then, what is referred to as "wisdom dissolving into spontaneous presence" occurs as follows. From the thought that all previous visions and awareness dissolve into the upper orb of light, original purity arises above like stainless space. Below this, the wrathful maṇḍala of the sambhogakāya is extremely vast and rich; below that, the peaceful sambhogakāya maṇḍala of radiant light and in the surrounding regions the natural nirmāṇakāya pure realms are all perfectly arranged. Further below those, the confused appearances of six classes [217] of beings, including the six sages as their tamers, appear. One's own appearances arise as a reflection, referred to as "the appearance of the ground that never wavers from the ground." The eight ways that these appearances arise are as follows.

By [appearances] arising as compassion, with the force of the energy of compassion that engages in saṃsāra, there is no differentiation between saṃsāra and enlightenment. By [appearances] arising as light, the aspect of appearance is radiant within. By arising as kāyas, appearances are completely undivided. By arising as wisdom, they are unimpeded. By arising as indivisible, awareness abides single-pointedly. By arising free of boundaries, appearances are cleansed within the nature as it is. By arising impurely, the origin of existence remains unceasing. By [appearances] arising purely, the primordial mother and child unite. [218]

At this time, as if reuniting with an old acquaintance, there is confidence free from doubt that the appearances are one's own. As in the analogy of the unhesitating thrust of the golden needle, remain confident without distraction and seize the immutable resting place. As in the example of



the irreversible thrust of a flung arrow, seize the immutable ground and liberation will occur by unwaveringly resting in the innate nature.

Although this reveals the eight modes of arising, they are unsullied by the mind that disengages from samsāra and engages in enlightenment. Nevertheless, the way of revealing the faults associated with what seems to be a connection [between the eight modes and the mind] is similar to the way a single consciousness seems to engage the six organs individually. The meaning is understood through that example.

In the *Heap of Precious Jewels* tantra [219] it is clearly revealed that the nature is in accord with great space; however, those who are deluded about the profound meaning of this crucial point explain in many ways that the visions of precious spontaneous presence are eight independent objective appearances. These are all mistaken. For that reason, in the *Precious Genuine Meaning* it states that "from this, even I [Longchenpa himself] have discovered certainty about the key points of the heart essence." Thinking over these genuine explanations, I am extremely pleased to express the great joy I feel in knowing that the doctrine of the Great Perfection still endures even now in this world, much like the setting sun.

Moreover, it states in the *Clear Expanse*: [220]

At this time, fortunate child, nine states of clairvoyance will arise.

Thus, as stated, if one thinks carefully, one will understand that [the states of clairvoyance] are not other than the magnificent potential or energy of the great visions of spontaneous presence.

Generally, here, the way of internalizing the five states of clairvoyance and the stages of pure recollection is according to the wisdom intent of the great commentary called the *Precious Golden Rosary*. Based on that, pure recollection initially occurs as stated in the *Sun and Moon*:

By recalling the meditation deity, at that moment one will see the face of the deity. By recalling all the paths, one will achieve mastery in the bardo of the nature of phenomena. By recalling the place of rebirth, [221] all those of inferior faculties will breathe the breath of rebirth in the natural nirmāṇakāya pure realms.<sup>13</sup> By recalling all states of meditative concentration, one will abide for five days in concentration. By recalling the



teacher's upadesha, one's phenomena will be indivisible. By recalling the view, this will be like recognizing an old acquaintance from the past.

Thus, as stated, by recalling the wisdom deity, at that moment a vision of the deity will occur. All those with yearning devotion for a supreme guru will, at the moment of recalling the guru with fervent regard, see the guru arriving in the space before them to reveal upadesha instructions. [222] In order to be liberated from the city of the bardo through the force of recalling the teachings, it is crucial to become familiar in the immediate present. It is similarly stated in the *Clear Expanse*:

There are six states of clairvoyance, each with six.

Thus, this quote refers to functionality with the faculties and mind, mastery of prajñā, pure perception of wisdom, unerringly seeing the nature of phenomena, and unerringly seeing as a buddha. Each of these six has six degrees of purity: pure, extremely pure, exceptionally pure, supremely pure, [223] and so forth. These categories, which total thirty-six, are to be understood according to the teachings of the supreme vehicle.

It states in the *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon*:

The six states of clairvoyance will arise for those who are fortunate ones. They will become aware of the immediate past lifetime, where death occurred, and where the next place of rebirth will be. They will acquire the ability to know what is in the minds of others, to understand all mysterious appearances, and to see the six realms of samsāra. These six states of clairvoyance will arise with all faculties perfectly pure.

Thus, this synthesizes the meaning.

Similarly, all spiritual transmissions received in the past will simultaneously come to mind, [224] and even dharma instructions that were never heard before will arise without limitation within the mind. This is the power of total recall. The quote continues:

At that time, even the power of total recall arises in the mind and all previously received dharma transmissions simultaneously



dawn. Likewise, even dharma that has never been received comes to mind. Therefore, this is referred to as the "bardo of the nature of phenomena."

Thus, the continuity of the mind is purified in the inconceivable nature of phenomena, so the manner in which one peacefully abides in samādhi is as stated in the *Conjunction [of the Sun and Moon]*:

When the continuity of samādhi naturally arises within the stream of mind, negative thoughts are permanently put to rest.  
[225]

Thus, at this juncture, the signs of liberation occurring in the bardo are uncertain due to the degrees of the faculties.

According to the *Perfected Skill of the Lion*, it takes five days; according to the *Blazing Body Relic*, it is but five seconds.<sup>4</sup> In the *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon* it states:

Therefore, according to faculties, there are three levels. The superior are liberated in three seconds, the middling achieve stabilization after five days, and it is certain that the inferior achieve stabilization after twenty-one seconds.

In addition, the *Naturally Arising* states:

According to individual capacities, after twenty-one days . . .

Although these explanations are given, here those who fail to discern a "second" and a "day" of samādhi, counting them as the same, [226] will be wounded by the claws of the scriptural intelligence of the Sovereign of Speech [Longchenpa]. Based on that, when awareness of an appearance occurs, the time it takes to think that this is an objective perception is a second of complete freedom. A "second" of a completed action is even longer than that. For example, it is like the difference between the sense organs ascertaining an object, knowing the characteristic [of the object], and the completion of the process.

Regardless, when the previously arising visions of spontaneous presence dissolve within, the manner in which the eight modes of dissolution occur



simultaneously is as stated in the *Naturally Arising*:

Compassion dissolving into compassion resembles the rays of the setting sun. [227]

Thus, because the appearances of the six realms no longer exist in this nature, the name “confusion” is nonexistent.

Wisdom dissolving into wisdom is like a child joining his mother's lap.

Thus, wisdom is not other than the mingling of the mother and child nature of phenomena.

Light dissolving into light is like a rainbow vanishing in the sky. Kāyas dissolving into kāyas are like the vase embodiment.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the meaning is that wisdom is inwardly radiant without establishing specific characteristics such as heads and arms.

Nonduality dissolving into nonduality is like a river merging into a river. Freedom from extremes dissolving into freedom from extremes is like [228] space dissolving in space.

Thus, by the mingling of the object dissolving and the dissolution—with emptiness as the objectless focus—this is the manner in which one abides in the wisdom intent, the great state beyond thoughts.

The entranceway of pure wisdom dissolving into the nature of original purity is like a snow lion poised on a snow peak.

Thus, this indicates the measure of fearlessness and lack of anxiety that is achieved because awareness has arrived in its own place.

The impure entranceway of samsāra dissolving into the entranceway of pure wisdom is like gathering up the ropes that stake down a tent.



Thus, this is analogous to gathering [everything] within the sole vital essence.

The key point for achieving liberation in this way is to abide in unimpeded empty awareness, as the nature of original purity, beyond thought and [229] expression. Having actually realized the ultimate ground of liberation, it is then necessary to encounter that which already is, decide upon that alone, and have confidence within liberation.<sup>26</sup> Appearances by nature, when observed objectively, seem to be limitless; but, when observed subjectively, nothing whatsoever exists. However, even fixation upon the thought of nonexistence is naturally liberated in the first instant that one's own nature is nakedly revealed without mental analysis. This is the key point clearly defining the original ground of liberation. In whatever way compassion engages with objects, do not try to stop this pursuit or hold this within. With awareness placed precisely upon its own source, [230] unimpeded cognition is without the distinctions of outer, inner, and between. In this way, the bardo appearances will be naturally pure in the radiance of awareness. This is a key point of the quintessential heart essence for recognizing the state of liberation with precise awareness.

These three key points of upadesha were left behind as my share of good fortune by the Omniscient Guru on the occasion when he went to the forest of Chimpū. They are:

Cryptic and potent, concise and pithy, profound and of great import: except for heart disciples, this upadesha must otherwise be sealed in secrecy!

So, sealed with the weight of his command, it will be difficult for others to understand this.

Having discovered this from the vajra tantras—[231] although I have realized this [meaning] and many others—if I try to explain it to other beings, they will be incapable of comprehending or realizing this. Once again dissolving back into me, this will vanish like waves emerging and dissolving into the ocean.

Thus, he spoke.

In brief, these revelations on the visions of spontaneous presence dissolving in eight ways and so forth apply at any time in the bardo while



securing the ground of one's own nature. Awareness is more exalted than the initial basis of confusion. One's own nature of phenomena is clear. The defining features of one's own discerning awareness are known. Liberation occurs in the domain of wisdom. [232] The result is not dependent upon the circumstance of another source. Wherever the inconceivable nature of phenomena is directly ascertained, that is known as "the great ground of original liberation." In the *Naturally Arising* it states:

The ground of liberation is wherever the original ground abides.

So, it is taught.

If this is explained according to the nature, the aspect of outer clarity is like the light of a crystal dormant within. Having dissolved, yet not being obscured, is the nature of the dharmakāya. The intrinsic nature, clear and nonconceptual, is the basis for the arising of both aspects of rūpakāya. The engaging of compassion is the inexhaustible ornamental wheel of the nature of enlightened body, speech, and mind of all sugatas. This nature of phenomena is able to arise in the minds of those to be tamed like how the reflection of the moon is able to appear in however many [233] vessels are filled with water. This is the way the ever-youthful vase embodiment of the dharmakāya abides. It states in the *Clear Expanse*:

The nature of empty radiance is the kāya of wisdom. The intrinsic nature of compassion is without bias or direction. Great inseparability is the primordial buddha.<sup>17</sup>

So, it is. Although manifestations do not diverge from the state of the ground of original purity, the rūpakāya arises from the energy of the spontaneously present ground of appearances. Those who believe in these tenets must understand this key point.

The Sovereign of all Victorious Ones<sup>18</sup> also said that emanations do not manifest from the state of original purity, because the ground transcends the coarse appearances of kāyas and wisdom manifestations. [234] The emanations that manifest appear to actually accomplish the welfare of sentient beings. This will manifest from original purity as the arising of the appearance of the ground of spontaneous presence.

When these manifestations occur on the path, there are two: the body



of the great transference and the natural nirmāṇakāya, both of which appear to be other than the beings they are taming. One must recognize that, whenever emanations appear in the bardo, they benefit one's own appearances arising as saṃsāra through the entranceway of spontaneous presence. Although the purpose of beings seems to be accomplished even in the dream state, it occurs merely as one's own appearances without actually benefiting others. Since this is a key point concerning the exceptional tenets of the Great Perfection approach, [235] it is somewhat difficult to comprehend.

## THE BARDO OF EXISTENCE

Fourth, the bardo of existence is as follows. The outer body is now a mental body with all the sense organs and the ability to move about without obstruction. The inner mind has many notions that engage with anything. The combination of both body and mind can engage anywhere unimpededly with the exception of two places: the vajra seat and the mother's womb. Here, in general, the vajra seat of India<sup>9</sup> is the undeniably great, supreme power spot where the deed of enlightenment will be revealed by all the buddhas of this fortunate age. [236] If this place is obvious to most pure and impure beings, why would a magical body in the bardo that instantly arrives at any place that comes to mind be prevented from going there? If the answer is because of negative karma, then why can even groups of heretics and barbarians wander there these days without any difficulty?

There is no cause or circumstance why the mental bodies spoken of here should be obstructed; yet because there is an object to be purified, the ground of liberation is obscured. The mother's womb is obstructed through the force of karma. The way of ascertaining the two places according to the assertion of the Sovereign of all Victorious Ones, Pema Ledrol,<sup>10</sup> [237] is that, although some ordinary teachers recognize the vajra seat to be Bodhgayā, India, here it refers to the inner space of unchanging original purity—the supreme place where all buddhas will be enlightened. This is the pure entranceway to enlightenment. The womb of the mother is the impure entranceway to saṃsāra, including any birthplace of the six classes of beings. One should, therefore, know that these places are not meant to be taken literally.

Furthermore, it can be understood that the beings of the bardo of



existence are capable of entering anywhere unobstructedly, be it mountains, crags, or any of the elements. That beings can enter crags, boulders, eggs, [238] the trunks of trees, and so forth is obvious to everyone. If they were to actually possess independent flesh bodies and organs, it would contradict the meaning of a "mental body." Nevertheless, this is referred to as a "mental body" because they think they exist according to their own phenomena like the arising of dream appearances. It is taught:

... those who [are mental bodies] who have the corporeal form of their previous existence, with faculties complete, who are unimpeded, perceived by the same class and by those with the pure vision of the gods, and who are gandharvas unable to return.

Thus, except for other bardo beings of the same class and those who have achieved the eye of the gods, bardo beings cannot be seen by anyone else; yet they can see all other beings in their respective places. [239] In bodies that are a collection of four names<sup>91</sup> propelled by karmic winds and like feathers carried by the breeze, they are unable to find their own place to rest. Their state of mind is uncontrollable and uncertain, yet their power of memory is seven times keener than before. In that state of mind, they think, "I am dead"; and that thought alone is an overwhelming source of misery. At that interval, for however long the remaining time in the bardo is, the first half will be in the image of the body left behind and the second half in the expression of the body of the future rebirth. However, if the place of rebirth is to be the formless realm, it is important to know that, because there is no form that will appear, nothing arises except emptiness. [240]

In addition, even though one may have entered the path of Secret Mantra, if the great samaya with the vajra master has been corrupted, rebirth will be taken in vajra hell. Through the karma of having accumulated any of the heinous nonvirtues, including rejecting the dharma and so forth, one will directly descend [to the lowest rebirth]. If liberation occurs due to realization, there will be a direct ascent. Those who have accomplished powa will be able to take rebirth anywhere unimpededly, and the bardo will cease. Others who were never introduced to this dharma<sup>92</sup> or who were but had no confidence, impaired samaya, or failed to practice will experience the bardo of the nature of phenomena only briefly; and the opportunity for liberation will not occur.



For those in a state of perpetual reaction and fear, [241] the way in which they will relentlessly wander in the bardo of existence is as follows. Every seventh day, the phenomena of rebirth and death will arise, causing intense suffering. That is why the strength of virtue through practice is increased every seventh day and the ceremonies performed for the deceased are so extremely beneficial.<sup>93</sup>

In general, it is taught that the longest period one remains in the bardo is forty-nine days, while the shortest is seven. Otherwise, it is also taught that, by force of virtue, a sudden transference may occur and, according to individual karma, the time in the bardo may be longer than usual. For instance, although the predetermined life expectancy may be one hundred years, in the desire realm there is also the unexpected circumstance of untimely death. [242] By ingesting pills that enhance the life force, it is also possible to extend the life expectancy. Nevertheless, analogous to the restoration of a defective irrigation canal by the insertion of a spout, at this time in the bardo with the miraculous ability to instantly arrive wherever wished, those who have seen this dharma<sup>94</sup> will recognize the bardo; and, in that instant, the *nirmāṇakāya* pure realms of the ten directions will be brought to mind. Then, by directing the mind [to those realms] with intense concentration, the habit of holding to the bardo of existence as a true experience will be purified. By the blessings of the truth of the nature of phenomena entering the stream of mind, the potential to take future rebirth [in samsāra] will be exhausted. [243] By taking rebirth in these pure realms, enlightenment will be achieved!

Otherwise, even if the truth of this dharma is not realized, as long as the bardo being is familiar with the wisdom kāyas of the Great Yoga, then as Shāntapuri<sup>95</sup>—who possessed the eye of dharma—stated:

By the reversal of the clear light of sleep or death, once again the consciousness of the basis of all emerges only as the arising of mental activities, the mind of the dream state. A mental body complete with all sense organs is attained similar to the instantaneous generation of the five fully purified states.<sup>96</sup> In the manner of generating the original protector, may the magical bardo body arise as the sambhogakāya!

Thus, one must bring this to mind. [244]

At this point, for those who lack freedom, the signs that indicate a



connection with negative rebirth must be severed as stated in the *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon*:

[Bardo beings who are destined to become] gods and humans will see the color white; titans and animals, yellow; deprived spirits, light that looks like smoke; hell beings will see something similar to logs or shredded black wool; otherwise, animals will see what looks like blood, and titans a downpour of rain.

The orientation of the head is as the quote continues:

At this point, the head will be like this: gods and humans will face upward; titans and animals will look straight ahead; and deprived spirits and hell beings will face downward. These are the signs of the future place of rebirth. [245]

Thus, the indications of the future place of rebirth in the six classes will arise as light, images, and other substantial appearances in the following way. If rebirth is to be taken in the higher realms, the bardo being will see white light about a mile long and his or her head will be facing upward. Those who will take impure rebirth in a lower realm as deprived spirits will see smoke. Hell beings will see what appears to be a log or shredded black wool. Animals will see dark-colored blood, and titans will see a downpour of sleet. The heads of [those destined to become] titans and animals will be oriented horizontally. Those of hell beings and deprived spirits will face downward. The differences should be carefully considered. Furthermore, the [bardo being] who will become a god or human will actually see that future place of rebirth. [246] Similarly, animals will see forests and islands, hell beings and deprived spirits will see dazzling flames of fire, and so forth.

In brief, all those who will take rebirth in the desire realm will experience a yearning for objects. Those who will take rebirth in the form realm will feel a yearning for light. Those who will be born in the formless realm will experience a yearning towards the mind in a state of nothingness. Whenever rebirth is to occur, the mind will constantly return to that place; and the yearning will continue to escalate while the consciousness goes there to take a look. Haunted by terrifying appearances, the consciousness will see the place as a refuge; and the mind that wants to take shelter will, in a



split second of attachment, be reborn there. Because of the lack of a coarse physical support, [247] the desire to search for a body will be predominant; but no matter how strongly that increases, great care must ensue so as to not enter a negative realm.

Concerning the shortcomings of the future place of rebirth, in many of the commentaries written by well-known scholars and accomplished masters, they do not explain that the signs just mentioned pertain to the future rebirth but rather that they are signs that occur after conception such as gods feeling that they are in a celestial palace, titans in a wheel of light, humans in a lovely dwelling place, and so forth. Understand that this is incorrect! It states in the *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon*:

A fire wheel, a rainstorm or coldness, mist, many people noisily crowded together, a temple or a multi-leveled house, and a tall house being constructed will be seen; [248] those destined for the lower realms will see a thatched hut, a hole that dead-ends, and a dry well. These are signs that a womb will be entered. Although wishing to proceed, [the consciousness] is sealed, trapped, and obstructed.

Thus, this clarifies that point.

Similar explanations given in the *Ocean of Cloud Banks*<sup>a</sup> [by the Omniscient One] tend to follow the works of previous scholars. Nevertheless, just as there are differences in the realization and abandonments while traversing the grounds, according to the perfected upadesha of the precious *Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle*,<sup>b</sup> those assertions [of previous scholars] are not accepted in the same way.

Furthermore, according to some other explanations, if rebirth is to be taken in the eastern continent, the form of a goose will become apparent; [249] if in the northern continent, a fish. If rebirth is to be taken in the western continent, a cow; and, if in the southern continent, the [consciousness] will see a male and female copulating.

The best [practitioners] will abandon attachment, aversion, and jealousy and train to see that those appearances have no true, inherent existence.

Middling practitioners will recall the practice during the time of empowerment and, meditating upon the guru or meditation deity in union with

<sup>a</sup> *rgya mtsho sprin phung*

<sup>b</sup> *theg mchog mdzod*



consort, by experiencing the secret empowerment, will embrace the path of empty bliss through the *prajñā* empowerment. If they lack this potential, then in accordance with the teachings of the sūtra classifications of bodhisattvas, they will rely upon the antidotes for reversing fixation such as the nine states of impure recognition towards desire and the rest. By bringing the pure realms to mind, [250] the entrance to the womb will be blocked and miraculous rebirth will occur within the heart of a lotus flower in the realms such as Manifest Joy, Great Bliss, and others. Although possessing weak diligence and considered to be of inferior faculties, from the stand-point of *prajñā*, those who are able to recognize the key point of the path will seek rebirth in the support of the six elements,<sup>7</sup> a human rebirth in the southern continent which is an exceptional support for attaining siddhis.

The way one enters a womb endowed with the five glorious personal endowments and the five precious circumstantial endowments is as *Shāntapurī* states:

The way the bardo body enters the mother's womb is to first enter the body of the protector Akṣobhya. Through generation of the vajra mind [251] and the body's arrangement as a mandala, the three doors are purified and blessed. Meditating on the arrangement of the three sattvas, the desirable qualities of the consort are partaken of. Through familiarity during the time of being awake, birth, death, and the bardo, may the nirmāṇakāya rebirth be achieved!

Thus, by gaining familiarity with this meaning at the present time, apply it when the time arrives.

For inferior practitioners of the lowest capacity who have no dharma habit, it is as stated in the tantras:

For instance, like dry grass caught by fire, like being sucked into quicksand, or tricked and trapped like a bird who alights on the ground in pursuit of food, [the consciousness] is powerlessly trapped through its own attachment. [252]

Thus, due to the power of being caught as a bardo consciousness in the trap of the sexual union of father and mother, their act of copulation becomes the support for entering the womb. Of the limitless beings in the



bardo of existence, those with karma will be like flies attracted to soiled meat in the summer and will enter through the lower orifice without any control. At that time, by praying to be reborn in a pure realm and taking refuge, the bardo being can close the entranceway to negative rebirth. By choosing and directing the mind to an excellent rebirth, the bardo being will obtain a precious human body with eighteen qualifications. Then, by meeting a virtuous spiritual teacher who accepts one as a disciple, [253] liberation will be attained.

This brief explanation and illumination of the process of the bardo is intended for those few individuals who, by the power of merit and time, have devotion for the heart essence and are inclined to practice. Knowing that it is rare for beings to flawlessly realize the fundamental nature and to have confidence that they will be liberated during their life or at the time of death, it is my fervent prayer that there is still some chance for liberation during these occasions.

### FOR THOSE OF LESSER FACULTY

The third general topic is the teaching on how to release the breath in the natural nirmāṇakāya pure realm for those of lesser faculties. Despite having directly encountered clear light in this way, there are those who squander their human life in a state of leisure, grow old and fail to internalize practice, [254] are never under the guidance of a precious guru while engaged on the path, still consider their own point of view superior to others, and experience nothing other than mental elation. [Such individuals] will receive no signs of progress on the path or any increase of the visions. Since their faculties are inferior even though claiming to practice the lineage of the Great Perfection, the individual has not attained the level of the Great Perfection so there is limited potential.

However, if there is still faith in the dharma and a thin layer of non-virtue and one still possesses the karma to be able to transform a dream into a virtuous experience, then when arriving in the bardo of existence, where appearances are dreamlike, one will recognize them and think, "I have died." With faith and fervent regard for the guru as the foundation, [255] by bringing the guru to mind, the teachings received will be recalled. Since the bardo of the nature of phenomena was not previously recognized and the power of truth undiscovered, one will recognize that one is still wandering in the bardo of existence. At the moment of thinking, "Now I



must go to a natural nirmāṇakāya pure realm," through the blessings of the nature of phenomena, one will be miraculously born in the heart of a lotus flower as it states in the *Conjunction of the Sun and Moon*:

By recalling the place of rebirth, all those of lesser faculties will exhale their breath in a natural nirmāṇakāya pure realm.

Thus, this oral instruction leaves nothing uncovered, is easily applied, and is endowed with great potential.

In order to accomplish this, one must—in the present lifetime—have yearning faith for the guru from whom one has received upadesha, [256] coupled with directly observing one's own appearances during the day-time. Even when falling asleep at night, with intense concentration one must think, "I am dying so I must recognize the stages of dissolution and go to the natural nirmāṇakāya pure realm!" Then, one will fall asleep envisioning the arrangement and qualities of the nirmāṇakāya realm. Between [practice] sessions, as mentioned earlier, it is essential to have developed the skill of training the consciousness that rides the winds. This heart advice is given to those who have fear towards samsāra and the lower realms.

The explanation of the qualities of the nirmāṇakāya pure realms is as follows. [257] In the great tantra *Naturally Arising Awareness* it states:

From here, in the eastern direction of this world system, is the pure realm known as Manifest Joy. In this nirmāṇakāya pure realm dwells the nirmāṇakāya Vajrasattva. In this place, where all of the sugatas have received sacred empowerment, the qualities of the celestial palace are boundless. The palace itself is composed of precious crystal, with four entranceways that possess jeweled staircases. Even the ground is made entirely of precious crystal. It is extremely pleasing and beautiful to behold. [258] There are windows and skylights at the four entranceways through which rays of the sun strike the precious crystal, creating an unceasing array of five-colored rainbow-light prisms throughout the day-time. Around the perimeter of the palace is a moat containing water with the eight attributes of purity that has the power to cure the disease or illness of anyone who drinks it. Along the perimeter of [the moat] are eight lagoons with many varieties of birds singing melodiously. Among them, the sovereign bird is



the golden swan, joined by wild ducks, kati birds, parrots [259] who speak human languages, cuckoos, cranes, wild pheasants, and the like. In total, there are some eighty thousand classes of song birds. The types of birds that are pleasing to behold are vultures, hoopoes, phoenixes, and the birds of the gods, whose voices sound like pealing bells. The vultures' bodies resemble golden vajras. Some are blue like turquoise, while some are white like a conch. Some are red like coral, while others are green like emerald. Their charming, melodious songs are inconceivably wondrous. Encircling the periphery [260] is an iron fence made of seven precious jewels.

In the center of all this is a dharma-teaching dais made of seven precious gems, complete with cushions. It is here where the nirmāṇakāya Vajrasattva is seated. In the evening, he teaches the causal path<sup>\*</sup> to an assembly of disciples; while at midnight, he teaches the dharma of outer Secret Mantra. In the early hours of dawn, he teaches inner tantra; and, at high noon, he teaches the doctrine of the unsurpassed resultant path of the Great Perfection. In the course of a day there are four teaching sessions, and those in attendance are bodhisattvas who will definitely be liberated in their next lifetime. Their life expectancy is five hundred and fifty years.

In this pure realm [261] the desire for food or drink is satisfied by the mere thought of it. Free of disease, it is a place of supreme bliss; and, even if an illness does occur, it is dispelled by drinking the water of the eight attributes. There are multitudes of flowers which everyone is offering in great abundance to the nirmāṇakāya. In the four corners of the palace are stūpas made of pearls. Connecting these four are bells with hanging ringers linked together by latticework cords. When the breeze blows the cords, the various chimes of ringing bells can be heard. In the four directions are four banners made of various silks. [262] When the breeze moves them, the flags emit a blend of luscious fragrances.



This celestial palace is located to the east about five hundred miles above [this earth] in a place where the bodhisattvas who are born there enjoy endowments equal to the thirty-third level of the gods. This is a description of the nirmāṇakāya pure realm of the eastern direction.

Thus, likewise, the pure realms of the other three directions are understood to be similar except for a few subtle differences in terms of arrangement, life expectancy, abundance, and so forth.

Other epithets for the support and supported pure realms are mentioned in the *Great Arrangement of Ati*<sup>a</sup> as follows:

Endowed with Glory, [263] Lotus Arrangement, and Perfectly Complete Activity are the fully perfected realms of Ratnasambhava, Padma Garwang as Hayagrīva, and Amoghasiddhi and their retinues, whose cognitive-based obstructions have been cleansed. The colors are white, yellow, red, and green.

Thus, and in the center of all of these is the conqueror Sovereign of Form<sup>b</sup> abiding in the aspect of the mandala of the wrathful deities, as it states in the *Naturally Arising*:

In the region of space in front of these pure realms is the wrathful nirmāṇakāya pure realm known as the Great Charnel Ground of the Blazing Ring of Fire.<sup>b</sup> The celestial palace appears as follows. [264] It is square and composed of skulls. The base is made of dried skulls, the walls of sharari skulls.<sup>100</sup> The roof is composed of overturned skulls complete with scalp and hair. The width and height of the palace are measureless. The nails are made of meteorites, and blood descends from the roof gutters. The sun and moon form the bases of the pillars. The capitals are makaras,<sup>101</sup> and the beams are the eight great gods. The beams supporting the cornice are the Great Supreme One.<sup>102</sup> In the daytime, the wind wails; and, in the nighttime, fires blaze. In the four directions of this celestial palace are parasols of flayed humans. The

<sup>a</sup> ati bkod pa chen po

<sup>b</sup> dur khrod chen po me ri 'bar ba



five goddesses dance, and the entire ground of the support is a turbulent ocean of blood. [265] Within this palace is the conqueror Youthful Mighty Warrior.<sup>a</sup> Although his wisdom intent never wavers from enlightenment, he displays all the aspects of a wrathful kāya. He is surrounded by countless dākinīs and assemblies of wrathful deities. They include the dākinī Completely Peaceful,<sup>b</sup> the Brahmin Conch-Necked One,<sup>c</sup> the ḥṣi Youthful Moonlight,<sup>d</sup> and their retinues of dākinīs, Ekadzaṭī and her six siblings, the fourteen attendants, and the fifty-eight female servants. In addition, there are countless dākinīs in Ekadzaṭī's retinue, including one trillion attendants. [266] Members of the retinue who have emanated from the conqueror's heart include inconceivable wrathful maṇḍalas such as Vajrapāṇi and countless humans such as Garab Dorje and others. Turning the wheel of the resultant doctrine of the unsurpassed Secret Mantra for the retinue, all peaceful nirmāṇakāya bodhisattvas achieve liberation. All of the deities possess the expressions of wrath, and the celestial palace is immensely expansive.

Thus, it is. [267]

The five pure realms where the great breath of liberation is taken are as follows. Given that this is naturally arranged from the blessings of the conqueror Vajradhara, it is referred to as a "natural nirmāṇakāya pure realm." The cause for those of fortunate karma to perceive this directly is within the heart of the all-pervasive essence of the sugatas. That is the entranceway of the precious, spontaneously present, radiant appearance of the ground, the four wisdoms such as mirrorlike and the rest. As with the sambhogakāya, this has arisen as the natural clear light of the appearances of the path since beginningless time and is designated as "east" and the other directions. However, one should not consider that this exists as an ordinary direction according to the common way of thinking. [268] If one thinks that explanations in terms of distance contradict this, the answer is that the distance is far beyond the nature of the phenomena of the three realms. This is the reason for the reference [to direction]; however, it is not to be taken

<sup>a</sup> *gzhon nu dpa' bo stobs ldan*

<sup>b</sup> *mkha' 'gro ma pur na nye bar zhi ba*

<sup>c</sup> *tsangs pa dung mgrün can*

<sup>d</sup> *drang srong zla 'od gzhon nu*



literally. Similarly, although [it is stated that] the wrathful maṇḍala exists in the “upper regions,” since the assembly of wrathful deities primordially abides in the palace of the cranium, that is where they arise.

Furthermore, that which is called “intrinsic nature” refers to the intrinsic nature of abiding, which is an emanation, and the intrinsic nature of enumerations for which there are two. This holds profound import. In the first case, this is as stated in the *Seed of Secret Conduct*<sup>a</sup> tantra:

Within the appearance of the nature as it is, the kāya of the nature as it is arises, [269] resembling oneself and one’s reflection.

Thus, from the resultant sambhogakāya which is like the face, the sambhogakāya of the nature of phenomena—like a reflection appearing in a mirror—arises as the path of the bardo perceived by all beings. Since this directly accomplishes the aim of the objects to be tamed, it is posited as the aspect of partial sambhogakāya. In terms of the latter, the appearance of the transcendent eleventh bodhisattva ground of Always Light is such that all bodhisattvas who are on the path hear the speech of the Buddha; but, because of their cognitive-based obstructions, they are still unable to see the kāya. When they are able to see the kāya, the cognitive-based obstructions are fully exhausted so it is asserted that they will then achieve buddhahood. [270] This is a key point to be known by those who uphold the tenets of this lineage.

These days, when the presence of the doctrine of the Great Perfection resembles the last rays at sunset, I have synthesized the essential points which illuminate the way of being led to the ground of the resultant, spontaneous presence of the three kāyas. If one possessing prajñā truly aspires to comprehend the description of the intrinsic nature in its entirety, it can only be understood through the excellent speech of the Buddha, the words and syllables of which are superior and without any delusion. The secret nature of enlightened speech [271] is the sum total of all inconceivable qualities, and the blessings of this Word<sup>b</sup> are undisputed.

For a time in this land of Tibet, teachings like that of the great charioteer Nāgārjuna—possessing the two qualities of protecting and guarding—as

<sup>a</sup> *gsang ba spyod pa sa bon*

<sup>b</sup> *bka'*



well as many oceanlike wisdom commentaries, excelled to the highest peak, leading all those who remained embodied to the citadel of great liberation. The chariot of the three categories, the wisdom commentaries, and so forth are ultimately spontaneously present as a great treasury of the inexhaustible ornamental wheel of the enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities of the victorious ones of the three times. Subsequently, when the king of all vehicles [272] became threatened by the encroaching philosophical tenets of the unfortunate barbarians who resemble wild animals, in order to annihilate them with the weapons of logic and reasoning the excellent definitive words of the Seven Precious Jewels<sup>103</sup> offered total protection, like the supreme fearless conduct of the master Dharmakīrti.

Thus, I entrust this to all of my disciples.

A follower of the exalted path, like the sun and the moon, whose intelligence is stainless,

Gives excellent teachings which hold the ultimate result of supremely vast qualities like an udumbara<sup>a</sup> flower.

One who hears and fully understands this profound import will cherish it like the crown jewel of the nāga king's head. [273]

Such a person is a supreme vessel for the Great Perfection, a bodhi-sattva for whom rebirth in samsāra has come to an end.

Based on the happiness and sorrow of this life's phenomena, it is unbearable to consider the next life's existence—like the flashing tongue of a cobra.

In the extremely dense forest of self-fixation, the one who slumbers in ignorance will revolve on the wheel of existence wherever he goes.

The one whose mind conceptualizes existence cannot hope to cross to the shore beyond the four rivers.

Although the weight of many miseries is borne upon one's shoulders, jaded and without feeling, there is no commonality with the sacred guides.

Lacking the dharma eye of the three times, like a lotus lacking the moon, [274] even the long trunk of glory and wealth will support and provoke dormant tendencies that perpetuate samsāra.

Whoever comes to know the nature of this elephant and goes



on to accomplish the precious dharma will be the best among humankind!

There is no nonvirtue that eclipses anger; try to reverse it at the cost of your life.

Since there is no practice harder than patience, that is the bodhisattvas' path.

By befriending the conduct of the six pāramitās, such as nonconceptual prajñā and the rest, it befits a great being to depart for an extremely peaceful forest.

There, in an uninhabited place with a naturally formed cave and [275] in a forest of flowers where the sound of a cascading waterfall can be heard, a sense of renunciation is invoked from within.

The birds and wild animals are harmless like the place of Brahmā of the four supports.<sup>104</sup>

May my body and mind abide in this way to accomplish the personal aim of actual awakening.

Beings, equal in number to the particles in the world system, have concepts equal to the sand in the great oceans.

Likewise, the taming powers of the dharma ocean are in harmony with this.

By the blazing glory of my activity, bringing all beings without exception to maturity,

Having pleased the ocean of victorious ones,

May I effortlessly merge with the ocean of the original inner space!

Although this treatise was originally requested by the Crazy One from Kong, Holder of Immeasurable Qualities,<sup>a</sup> [276] and other sublime teachers, since the time for its dissemination had not yet arrived, it was sealed in the expanse of the ocean of dākinīs. Whenever the emanation of the female keeper of mantra—powerful dākinī Guardian of Immortality, Tseringma<sup>b</sup>—proclaims the prophecy with the laughing sound of *hi hi*, the time for this dharma to benefit beings will have arrived.

At the Mountain of Immortality, the learned scholar of perfect qualities, Venerable Tenzin (Upholder of the Doctrine), offered a precious crystal mala of 108 beads and a golden flower to request [this teaching]. In

<sup>a</sup> kong smyong dpa' bo'i dbang phyug

<sup>b</sup> zhing skyong da'k ki'i dbang mo tshe ring ma



the Forest of Bodhi Trees called Tsering Jong;<sup>a</sup> [277] this was written by one who totally relies on the blessings of Padma, Rangjung Dorje Jigmed Lingpa, so that exhausted wanderers struggling in the ocean of samsara can inhale the breath of freedom.

There are those who claim that, when the wind moves the reflection of the moon in a pond, children think the reflection is really the moon. Adults determine that it is not the moon moving but rather the wind. They claim that the water moon doesn't really exist. [Such a view] does not exist in the dharma teachings of the state of perfect awakening. [278] Therefore, during the time of degenerate views, even though sentient beings are controlled by their minds, at the moment these teachings are encountered, the unscrupulous mental activity of the perpetual mountainlike view of existence will collapse; and the interdependent existence of both the person and phenomena will be pacified in the inconceivable space of the Great Perfection! During the time of the five degenerations, may there be the auspiciousness of never squandering the difficult-to-guard enlightened activity of the victorious ones!

*Sarwa Mangalam Dzayantu Geo Geo Geo!*

<sup>a</sup> *byang chub ljon pa'i nags khrod tshe ring ljongs*





### EKADZATI

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## RĀHULA

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## DORJE LEKPA

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# Biography of Rigdzin Jigmed Lingpa<sup>105</sup>

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BY THE VENERABLE TÜLKU THONDUP RINPOCHE

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RIGDZIN JIGMED LINGPA<sup>106</sup> was the incarnation (tülku) of both King Trisong Detsen (790-858) and Vimalamitra. He is also known as Khyentse Ödzer, Rays of Wisdom and Compassion. He discovered the vast and profound *Longchen Nyingthig* cycle of teachings as mind ter.

In the *Secret Prophecy of Lama Gongdu*,<sup>107</sup> discovered by Sangye Lingpa (1340-1396), Guru Rinpoche foretold Jigmed Lingpa's coming seven hundred years hence as follows:

In the south [of Tibet], there will come a tülku named Ödzer.  
He shall liberate beings through the profound teachings of  
Nyingthig.

Whoever is connected to him will be led to the pure land of the  
vidyādhara.

Jigmed Lingpa was born in the early morning of the eighteenth [day] of the twelfth month of the Earth Bird Year of the twelfth Rabjung (1730) in a village in the Chongye Valley of Southern Tibet, not very far from the royal tombs of the Chögyal dynasty, known as "red tombs." Although his parents came from significant families in past history, they were of simple means, which Jigmed Lingpa acknowledges as a blessing that allowed him to undertake his religious life without being forced into social obligations or aristocratic pomp.

From childhood, he remembered his previous incarnations, such as being the great tertön Sangye Lama (1000-1080?). One of his teeth was marked with the Buddha's speech syllable *ah*, known as the sign of his being the reincarnation of Vimalamitra. Also, as indicated in a prophetic writing, he had thirty small reddish-colored moles in the form of a vajra

at his heart, about thirty small red moles at his navel in the form of a ritual bell, and lines in the form of a *haya* or *hri* letter—the seed syllable of the deity Hayagrīva—on his right thumb. From childhood, his mind was detached from worldly enjoyments, and he was extraordinarily compassionate, intelligent, and courageous.

He acknowledged being the thirteenth incarnation of Gyalse Lharje,<sup>108</sup> the receiver of the *Kadü Chökyi Gyatso* teachings from Guru Rinpoche, all of which incarnations were tertöns. Also, in his lineage prayer which he wrote for his disciples, Jigmed Lingpa mentions many of his past and one of his future lives as he saw them:

1. Samantabhadra, all-pervading lord of samsāra and enlightenment, the continuum of the basis, the very essence of buddha nature,
2. Then, [the union of] compassion and emptiness arose as Avalokiteshvara, and
3. Prahevajra, to you I pray.
4. Then manifested as the son of King Kṛkṛi in the presence of Buddha Kāshyapa,
5. Nanda, the younger brother of the Buddha,
6. Ākarma[tishila], a manifestation of [King] Songtsen Gampo,
7. [King] Trisong Detsen, to you I pray.
8. [Mahāsiddha] Virvapa [of India],
9. Princess Pemasal,
10. Gyalse Lharje, the lord in person,
11. Drimed Künden [of India],
12. Yarje Orgyen Lingpa (1323-?),
13. Da'od Zhonnu (1079-1153) [of Kagyu], and
14. Trakpa Gyaltsen (1147-1216) [of Sakya], to you I pray.
15. Then, Longchen Rabjam (1308-1363), the manifestation of the very mahāpaṇḍita Vimalamitra,
16. Ngari Pañchen (1487-1542),
17. Chögyal Phüntsok (sixteenth century) [son of Drikung Rinchen Phüntsok],
18. [Changdak] Tashi Tobgyal (1550-1602?),
19. Dzamling Dorje [of Kongpo], and
20. Jigmed Lingpa (1789-1798), to you I pray.
21. After this, through manifestation of Yeshe Dorje (1800-1866).<sup>109</sup>

At the age of six, as an ordinary novice, he entered Palri (Shriparvata) Monastery in Chongye Valley, the seat of Trangpo Terchen Sherab Ödzer (1517-1584). Tsogyal Tülku Ngawang Lobzang Pema gave him the name Pema Khyentse Ödzer.

From the ages of six to thirteen, he spent more time, as he says, "playing dust" with novices of his age than on his studies. He lived the life of a poor novice with little to facilitate learning and faced very strict disciplinary tutors year after year. However, the intensity of his zeal for the dharma, his spontaneous devotion to Guru Rinpoche, and his innate compassion for all living beings—especially toward animals—sustained him and made his childhood extremely joyful and meaningful. Although he seemed an insignificant novice, his inner life was full of richness. His days were filled with meditative attainments and inspiring pure visions. His nights merged into dreams of spiritual experiences and visions.

In such circumstances, he mastered grammar, logic, astrology, poetry, history, medicine, and many scriptures of sūtra and tantra. Apart from receiving the transmissions of esoteric empowerments, he felt no need to have a master or study an intellectual subject in detail, as other students were doing. He learned various subjects merely by overhearing bits of the classes of other students or glancing at the texts.

Many masters became learned by studying and then realized by meditating. Jigmed Lingpa was born learned as the result of awakening the wisdom realization within himself. However, the outward manifestation was that his final and full bursting forth of boundless wisdom took place much later, when he had the visions of Longchen Rabjam, at the age of thirty-one. He writes:

By nature, I felt very happy when I was able to study any [subject such] as language, secular writings, canonical scriptures and their commentaries, or the Vajra[yāna] teachings on the ultimate nature. I would study them with great respect, both by daylight and lamplight. But I hardly had the opportunity to develop the knowledge by studying with a master, even for a single day. However, at the glorious Samye Chimpū, by beholding the wisdom body of Longchenpa three times and by receiving the blessings through various signs, my karma [of the "learning-wisdom" was] awakened from [the depth of] the Great Perfection.<sup>110</sup>

From Neten Kunzang Ödzer he received his first major transmission, the transmission of *Trolthig Gongpa Rangtröl* teachings discovered by Trengpo Terchen Sherab Ödzer (also known as Drodül Lingpa), the cycle of *Lama Gongdu* discovered by Sangye Lingpa (1340–1396), and the *Seven Treasures* and *Three Chariots* by Longchen Rabjam (1308–1363).

At thirteen Jigmed Lingpa met the great tertön Rigdzin Tükchok Dorje<sup>111</sup> and instantly experienced a strong devotion that awakened his wisdom mind. From the tertön he received transmissions and instructions on Mahāmudrā and other teachings. Tükchok Dorje became his root teacher, and he received blessings from him in visions even after the master's death. Jigmed Lingpa also received transmissions from many other masters, including Tekchen Lingpa Drotön Tarchin (also known as Drimed Lingpa, 1700–1776), his uncle Dharmakīrti, the Seventh Chakzampa (Tenzin Yeshe Lhundrup), Tangdrok Tülku Pema Rigdzin Wangpo of Kongpo,<sup>112</sup> Trati Ngakchang Rigpe Dorje (also known as Kong-nyön) of Kongpo, and Mön Dzakar Lama Dargye.

At the beginning of his twenty-eighth year, he started a three-year strict retreat at Palri Monastery, with seven vows to be observed for the whole of seven years. These vows show us the importance of perfecting oneself before going out to help others to fulfill the goal of life. His seven vows were as follows. (1) He would neither enter any layperson's house nor enjoy any entertainment. (2) Even if he were living in the midst of a community, he would abstain from receiving many people (in his cell) or leading any gathering that fostered hatred or attachment. (3) He would not correspond with anyone; neither would any word from outside come in nor any words from inside get out. (4) He would maintain a life of austerity and would refrain from exchanging dharma teachings for any material gain. (5) He would refrain from any distracting activities, dedicating his efforts only to the ten activities that concern dharma training.<sup>113</sup> (6) He would live with simple sustenance and not carelessly enjoy any materials offered with faith. (7) He would not perform any of the four activities<sup>114</sup> and would dedicate all activities to liberation from samsāra.

He concentrated his meditation on the development stage and the perfection stage, based on *Trolthig Gongpa Rangtröl*. His mindful awareness enabled him to secure his mind from distractions in meditation, even for the duration of a snap of a finger. When he read the *Seven Treasures* by Longchen Rabjam, they answered all the questions he had about his inner meditative experiences.

As he progressed through the stages of realization, he experienced numerous physical and mental signs of attainments. He experienced the visions of many lamas and divinities, including Guru Rinpoche, Yeshe Tsogyal, Mañjushrīmitra, and Hūmkara, which awakened various stages of his inner wisdom. Suddenly, he found that within himself the point of reference of all his mental experiences had been uprooted. He had gained dominion over the process of his karmic energies. All the caves of delusory appearances (i.e., the objects on which conceptual mind relies to forge the dualistic samsāra) had totally collapsed. Through the strength of awakened realization he could review many past lives clearly. But all those experiences and visions were in the nature of oneness in his realized mind.

Through yogic trainings he achieved control over the channels, energies, and essence of his vajra body. As a result, his throat opened as the "cycle of wealth" of teachings. His physical channels transformed into the "clouds of letters." All the phenomenal appearances turned into "signs/gestures of dharma." His speech became the songs of profound realization. His writings became treatises of great wisdom power and scholarship. An inexhaustible ocean of teaching phenomena continued to burst forth for him and from him.

Then he composed his first major writing, *Khyentse Melong Ödzer Gyawa*, an explanatory treatise on the *Lama Gongdu* cycle.

Guru Rinpoche, appearing in a vision, gave him the name Pema Wangchen. In a vision, Mañjushrīmitra gave him blessings which caused him to realize the meaning of symbolic wisdom.<sup>a</sup> Thereafter, he changed his maroon monastic robes to the natural garb of an ascetic, uncolored white robes and uncut long hair.

At twenty-eight, he discovered the extraordinary revelation of the *Longchen Nyingthig* cycle, the teachings of the dharmakāya and Guru Rinpoche, as mind ter. In the evening of the twenty-fifth day of the tenth month of the Fire Ox Year of the thirteenth Rabjung cycle (1757), he went to bed with an unbearable devotion to Guru Rinpoche in his heart; a stream of tears of sadness continuously wet his face because he was not in Guru Rinpoche's presence, and unceasing words of prayers kept singing in his breath.

He remained in the depth of that meditative experience of clear

<sup>a</sup> *mtshon byed dpe'i ye shes*

luminosity' for a long time. While being absorbed in that luminous clarity, he experienced flying a long distance through the sky while riding on a white lion. He finally reached a circular path, which he thought to be the circumambulation path of Charung Khashor, now known as Bodhnath Stūpa, an important Buddhist monument of giant structure in Nepal.

In the eastern courtyard of the stūpa he saw the dharmakāya appearing in the form of a wisdom dākinī. She entrusted him with a beautiful wooden casket, saying:

For the disciples with pure mind, you are Trisong Detsen.  
 For the disciples with impure mind, you are Senge Repa.  
 This is Samantabhadra's mind treasure,  
 The symbolic scripts of Rigdzin Padma[sambhava], and  
 The great secret treasures of the dākinīs.

The dākinī vanished. With an experience of great joy, he opened the casket. In it, he found five rolls of yellow scrolls with seven crystal beads. At first, the script was illegible, but then it turned into Tibetan script. One of the rolls was the *Dug-ngal Rangtröl*, the Sādhana of Avalokiteshvara, and another was *Nechang Thukkyi Drombu*, the prophetic guide of *Longchen Nyingthig*. Rāhula, one of the protectors of the teachings, appeared before him to pay respect. As he was encouraged by another dākinī, Jigmed Lingpa swallowed all the yellow scrolls and the crystal beads. Instantly, he had the amazing experience that all the words of the *Longchen Nyingthig* cycle with their meanings had been awakened in his mind as if they were imprinted there. Even after coming out of that meditative experience, he remained in the realization of intrinsic awareness, the great union of bliss and emptiness.

Thus, the *Longchen Nyingthig* teachings and realization, which were entrusted and concealed in him by Guru Rinpoche many centuries earlier, were awakened; and he became a tertön, the discoverer of the *Longchen Nyingthig* cycle of teachings. He gradually transcribed the teachings of the *Longchen Nyingthig* cycle, starting with the *Nechang Thukkyi Drombu*.

He kept all his discovered teachings secret from everyone for seven years, as the time had not yet matured to teach them to others. It was also essential for the tertön to practice the teachings himself first.

Although he was maintaining the life of a hidden yogi, respect for and faith in him grew spontaneously in the people around him, and he became a source of benefit for many people, as he had perfected the power of the four actions without needing to work to acquire them.

At thirty-one, he started to observe a second three-year retreat at Chimpū near Samye. First, he started his retreat in a cave known as Upper Nyang Cave. Then, he discovered another cave and recognized it as the Sangchen Metok Cave, or the Lower Nyang Cave, where King Trisong Detsen had received the *Nyingthig* teachings from Nyang and meditated on them. For the rest of his retreat he lived in the Sangchen Cave.

During his retreat at Chimpū, the highest realization of the Great Perfection was awakened in Jigmed Lingpa, and that awakening was caused by three pure visions of the wisdom body of Longchen Rabjam (1308-1363), the dharmakāya in pure manifestation. In the Upper Nyang Cave he had the first vision, in which he received the blessing of the vajra body of Longchen Rabjam. Jigmed Lingpa obtained the transmission of both the words and the meaning of Longchen Rabjam's teachings. After moving to Sangchen Phuk (the Great Sacred Cave), he had the second and third visions. In the second vision he received the blessing of the speech of Longchen Rabjam, which empowered him to uphold and propagate the profound teachings of Longchen Rabjam as his representative. In the third vision Jigmed Lingpa received the blessing of the wisdom mind of Longchen Rabjam, which awakened or transferred the inexpressible power of enlightened intrinsic awareness of Longchen Rabjam to him.

Now, for Jigmed Lingpa, because there was no objective reference point, all the external appearances had become boundless. There was no separate meditation or meditative state to pursue. As there was no subjective designator in his inner mind, all became naturally free and totally open in oneness. He composed *Kunkhyen Zhallung* and some other writings as the true meaning of the *Seven Treasures* of Longchen Rabjam, which had awakened in his wisdom mind. He expressed his wisdom power in vajra songs to his devoted hermit companions concerning various situations:

The nature of the mind is like empty space, but it is superior, as it possesses the wisdom.

Luminous clarity is like the sun and moon, but it is superior, as there are no substances.

Intrinsic awareness is like a crystal ball, but it is superior, as there are no obstructions of coverings.<sup>115</sup>

And:

Son, mind watching mind is not the awareness of the innate nature.

So, in the present mind, without modifications and waverings, just remain naturally.

Son, apprehending [anything] with your recollections lacks crucial skills of meditation.

So, in the natural and fresh state of the intrinsic awareness, remain without any grasping.

Son, people think that [one-pointed] dwelling [of mind] is meditation, but it lacks the union of tranquility and insight.

So, without accepting and rejecting either dwellings or projections of the mind,

Let the intrinsic awareness dwell freely without any reference point.<sup>116</sup>

And:

Son, the rigid, clear, and stable visualization is not [perfect] Mahāyoga.

Dissolving the [mind of] grasping at the faces and arms [of the deities], dwell in the vastness,

The Great Perfection of the evenness of intrinsic awareness and emptiness.

Son, clinging to the experiences of four joys is not [the perfect] Anuyoga.

Having admitted the mind and energy into the central channel, remain in [the union of] bliss and emptiness, the great freedom from thoughts . . .

Son, mere understanding of the spontaneous accomplishment of the three kāyas is not the ultimate Atiyoga.  
 In the nature of vajra-chain insight, let the falsehood of mental analysis collapse.<sup>117</sup>

And:

Sicknesses are the brooms sweeping your evil deeds.  
 Seeing the sicknesses as the teachers, pray to them . . .  
 Sicknesses are coming to you by the kindness of the masters and the Three Jewels.  
 Sicknesses are your accomplishments, so worship them as the deities.  
 Sicknesses are the signs that your bad karmas are being exhausted.  
 Do not look at the face of your sickness, but at the one [the mind] who is sick.  
 Do not place the sicknesses on your mind, but place your naked intrinsic awareness upon your sickness.  
 This is the instruction on sickness arising as the dharmakāya.

The body is inanimate and mind is emptiness.  
 What can cause pain to an inanimate thing or harm to emptiness?  
 Search for where the sicknesses are coming from, where they go, and where they dwell.  
 Sicknesses are mere sudden projections of your thoughts.  
 When those thoughts disappear, the sicknesses dissolve too . . .  
 There is not better fuel [than sicknesses] to burn off the bad karmas.  
 Don't get into entertaining a sad mind or negative views [over the sicknesses],  
 But see them as the signs of the waning of your bad karmas and rejoice over them.<sup>118</sup>

Then, he received the transmissions of the *Seventeen Nyingthig Tantras*, *Vima Nyingthig*, *Lama Yangthig*, and some other Nyingma transmissions and teachings from Drubwang Orgyen Palgön (Shrīnatha) of Mindroling Monastery, who was also a distant relative of Jigmed Lingpa's. Earlier, he had also received the transmissions of *Nyingthig* teachings and Longchen

Rabjam's writings from Thangdrokpa and Neten Kunzang. However, the absolute and short line of transmission of the ultimate *Nyingthig* teachings came to him from Longchen Rabjam directly in the three pure visions.

When he came out of his retreat, he found that his body had totally exhausted its strength because of scarcity of food and lack of proper clothing during years of cave living. He writes:

Because of having little food and being exposed to a harsh environment, all the residues of bad karma and karmic debts of my previous successive lives had started to ripen upon my body. Because of the humors of the winds,<sup>11</sup> my back hurt as if someone were hitting me with a rock. As the result of the stirring up of winds and blood circulation, my chest was in pain, as if someone were driving nails into my body. Because of bām ailment [elephantiasis], my body was too heavy for my legs to hold up. Like a hundred-year-old man, I had worn out all my physical energies. I didn't have much appetite for food... If I took three steps, my body would start shaking. [But I thought], "If I die, I will be fulfilling the advice given by the early masters, which says, 'Entrust your mind to dharma. Entrust your dharma practice to the life of a beggar.'" As I had attained confidence in the realization of the Great Perfection, no thought of worry was even a possibility in my mind, but it aroused in me a great compassion for those who are [suffering from] old age and sicknesses.<sup>119</sup>

Then, he had a pure vision of Thangtong Gyalpo, a sage of longevity; and, for Jigmed Lingpa, all the happenings merged into the union of bliss and emptiness. Thereupon, he sang the power of his realization in the following words:

I bow to the lord, the Great Sage [Thangtong Gyalpo]!  
 I have realized the summit of the views, the Great Perfection.  
 There is nothing on which to meditate, as all is liberated as the view.  
 I have unfurled the banner of meditation, the king of activities.  
 Now I, the beggar, have no repentance, even if I die...  
 I, the beggar, who knows "how to turn sicknesses into the path,"

Visualizing the lama, the source of the virtues,  
 At the blissful chakra of my head,  
 Meditate on the profound path of guru yoga.  
 Since sicknesses and pain are the brooms for sweeping the evil  
 karmas,  
 By realizing sicknesses as the blessing of the master,  
 I meditate on the sicknesses as the lama and receive the fourfold  
 empowerments from them.  
 Finally, by realizing the lama as my own mind,  
 I release [all] into the true nature of the mind, which is primordially  
 pure and free from any reference point.<sup>120</sup>

He realized the face of the ultimate Samantabhadra, the dharmakāya, and all the sicknesses dissolved into ultimate space. Quickly, his physical body also gained strength without any more pain or obstructions.

Then, the time for revealing the *Longchen Nyingthig* teachings to the disciples arrived, after seven years of secrecy. Although no one had a clue of the discovery of *Longchen Nyingthig*, his teacher-disciple Kongnyön Bepe Naljor,<sup>121</sup> because of his clairvoyance, beseeched Jigmed Lingpa to transmit his mind ter teachings. As an auspicious sign, he also received requests to reveal the teachings with offerings from three important tulkus from Southern Tibet.

On the tenth day of the sixth month of the Wood Monkey Year (1765), for the first time Jigmed Lingpa conferred the empowerments and explanations of the *Longchen Nyingthig* cycle on fifteen disciples. Gradually but swiftly, the *Longchen Nyingthig* teachings reached every corner of the Nyingma world; and they became the heart core of meditation instructions for many realized meditators and for ceremonial liturgies to this day.

At thirty-four Jigmed Lingpa moved from Chimpu to Tsering Jong, the Long-Life Land in Tönkhar Valley of Chongye in Southern Tibet. There, with the patronage of the house of Depa Pushü,<sup>122</sup> he built a hermitage with a meditation school and named it Tharpa Chenpö Trongkhyer Pema Öd Ling, the Garden of Lotus Light of the City of Great Liberation. He did not want to have a big institutional structure and frequently quoted the verse from *Thirty Pieces of Essential Advice* by Longchen Rabjam as his guide:

To assemble numerous associates by various means,  
 To have a monastery with comfortable accommodations—  
 If you try, it will come about for a while, but it distracts  
 the mind.  
 So my advice from the heart is to remain alone.<sup>123</sup>

Tsering Jong became the residence of Jigmed Lingpa for the rest of his life. A stream of great disciples came to this very simple hermitage to receive the profound, nectarlike teachings and transmissions from the great master of the Great Perfection, Rigdzin Jigmed Lingpa, but the disciples returned to their own places to share the teachings with others. So Tsering Jong remained a simple hermitage and Jigmed Lingpa a simple hermit.

He took no interest in wealth or power and spent all that was offered to him for religious purposes. Also, throughout his life, he was active in ransoming the lives of animals from the hands of hunters and butchers. He said:<sup>124</sup>

I care not for any activity of business or harvest.  
 I do not roam about performing ceremonies in towns [for donations].  
 I keep no more than ten khals<sup>125</sup> of barley [as living subsistence] with me.  
 As long as I am alive, I vow to continue this ascetic life.

Sometime after Jigmed Lingpa's time, Tsering Jong hermitage became a nunnery, and it remained so until around 1959, when everything disappeared in the political turmoil. Since the beginning of the 1980s, once again Tsering Jong has been reestablished as a nunnery.

Jigmed Lingpa's character was profound, forceful, and direct; but he was also loving, simple, and easy to be with. He writes:

My perceptions have become like those of a baby. I even enjoy playing with children. When I encounter people with serious shortcomings, I throw their personal faults in their faces, even if they are respected spiritual leaders or generous dharma patrons ... In every action of sitting, walking, sleeping, or eating, I secure

my mind [in the state that is] never dissociated from the brilliance of the ultimate nature. If it is the service of the dharma, I dedicate myself to its completion, even if it is thought to be an impossible task.<sup>126</sup>

At forty-three, he gathered together and commissioned the copying of the Nyingma tantras in twenty-five volumes, and he composed the *History of Nyingma Tantras*.<sup>127</sup> Later, on the advice of Jigmed Lingpa and Dodrupchen, the king and queen-regent of Derge commissioned the wooden blocks of his Nyingma tantra collection, and those blocks are still in use for printing.

At fifty-seven, at the invitation of Ngawang Palden Chökyong, the Sakya Trichen, he went to Sakya and gave teachings and transmissions to the Trichen, his brother, and Ananda Shribhava, the sitting khenchen of Sakya, and many others.

On his return from Sakya, Lama Sonam Chöden, who later became known as Dodrupchen (1745-1821), came from Kham to receive teachings from Jigmed Lingpa.<sup>128</sup> Dodrupchen saw him as Thangtong Gyalpo, and Jigmed Lingpa in turn recognized Dodrupchen as the tulku of Lhase Murum Tsepo and gave him the name Jigmed Trinley Ödzer. Though Dodrupchen, the Third Dzogchen Rinpoche, and the king of Derge sent messengers to invite him to Kham, he refused to go because of his age and health, as well as his concern for the hardship for the horses during the arduous trip.

Barchung Gomchen Rigdzin and Mange Pema Kunzang from Kham came to receive teachings and transmissions. Pema Kunzang later became Jigmed Lingpa's renowned disciple Jigmed Gyalwe Nyuku (1765-1843). While Rigdzin and Pema Kunzang were in Lhasa, before they reached Tsering Jong, someone stole a piece of silver, the only material they had for their living and traveling expenses. Jigmed Lingpa wrote a poem to console them:

If you know how to take [sufferings] into the path of equal taste,  
 All unfortunate circumstances will arise as the support of virtues.  
 So refrain from entertaining reversed views.  
 If you practice as I teach you,  
 Your minds and my mind will unite as one.

There will arise the realization that transcends all the concepts,  
And you will remain in the vast nature of dharmakāya, in which  
there is no duality.

May all your wishes be fulfilled.<sup>129</sup>

In 1788, when he was sixty,<sup>130</sup> Jigmed Lingpa gave teachings and transmissions to the king and queen of Derge at Samye. They became his devotees, and the queen became one of the main patrons. At sixty-two, at the request of Gontse Tülku, he visited Gontse Gonpa of Tsona in Mön and gave teachings and transmissions.

At that time, Jigmed Lingpa had an eye problem.<sup>131</sup> Textual transmissions<sup>a</sup> had to be given by Dodrupchen on his behalf to his disciples, who included Götsang Tülku Jigmed Tenpe Gyaltsen. They sent Jigmed Gyalwe Nyuku to get a doctor, who performed a successful operation.

When he was sixty-three, in 1791, military forces of Nepal attacked Western Tibet, and many people suffered. Jigmed Lingpa performed a number of ceremonies and sent offerings to various temples for peace and protection.

When he was sixty-five, he and his consort, Gyalyum Drolkar from the house of Depa Pushü,<sup>132</sup> had a son called Gyalse Nyingche Ödzer (1793-?).

Jigmed Lingpa was unable to accept the numerous invitations offered to him. However, through Gyantse, he went to Thekchok Chöling Monastery in Tsang and gave teachings and transmissions to many disciples headed by Khenpo Orgyen Palgön and at many places on the way. This monastery became a follower of the *Longchen Nyingthig* lineage. At Dorje Trak Monastery, he gave a series of teachings and transmissions to Rigdzin Chenmo and others.

He received messages of prayers and offerings from the Mongolian king, Chögyal Ngawang Dargye (1759-1807),<sup>133</sup> a disciple of Dodrupchen and the teacher of Zhapkar Tsoktruk Rangtröl (1781-1851).<sup>134</sup>

Meanwhile, based on a communication between the last Dzogchen Rinpoche and Jigmed Lingpa, the lamas of Dzogchen Monastery were strongly inquiring whether his son could be the tülku of the Third Dzogchen Rinpoche, but Jigmed Lingpa didn't indicate any possibility. Gyalse himself remembered his past life and had kept saying, "I am going to Dri-

<sup>a</sup> *lung*

kung," since he was small.<sup>135</sup> Then Sakya Trichen recognized him as the tülku of Chökyi Nyima (1755-1792), the Fourth Chungtsang,<sup>136</sup> one of the two heads of the Drikung Kagyu tradition.

At sixty-nine, with huge ceremonial pomp arranged by Drikung followers, Jigmed Lingpa traveled with his son to Drikung for the son's enthronement. It was an amazing opportunity for people at different places along the way to see and hear him, the great master. But, it was physically exhausting for the old and frail master to travel for days and perform endless religious activities. Soon, because of the change of water and environment, he fell seriously ill; and, for a while, people even lost hope for his recovery. Then unexpectedly, a disciple of his brought a Tibetan medicinal pill called "karpo chikthup" from the sacred place of Yama Lung; and, after taking it, he miraculously recovered and even appeared younger, like a new person.

At seventy, he returned to Tsering Jong from Drikung, stopping at a great number of holy places on the way and performing ceremonies, making offerings, and giving teachings. His health appeared good, but he cared little about eating or sleeping. Day and night, he remained sitting up in either the Vairochana posture or the sage posture. His eyes didn't blink. He said that his body remained alive owing to his control over his life-force energy. Many times, he gave hints that he would die before long. But, when his disciples became overwhelmed with grief, he would change the subject or sometimes would even say, "Oh, there will be no danger to my life." He told a close disciple in private that he was dying and that he would reincarnate, but there was no need to search for his new incarnation. They should hold a simple funeral ceremony, but he hinted that they should preserve the body by explaining the ways that it is done. When his disciples expressed their wish to bring a doctor, he would say, "Yes! If you wish, you can bring one; but as there is no sickness in me, what is there for a doctor to do? Anyway, don't get one from a far distance; it will only cause hardship for people and animals."

Still, in a quiet way, he kept seeing people and giving blessings and teachings as requested. For days, there was a rain of flowers around his residence and mild earthquakes again and again. One day he moved to Namtröl Tse, the new upper hermitage, and expressed his great joy at being there. He entertained some visitors and gave teachings.

On the very next day, the third day of the ninth month of the Earth

Horse Year (1798), he gave a teaching on White Tara meditation. From early morning, a strong, sweet fragrance filled the whole hermitage. The sky was totally clear and there was no touch of wind, but a gentle rain sprinkled continuously from the blue sky. All were amazed but worried. Then, in the early part of the night, he asked for new offerings to be arranged on the altar. As he sat in the sage posture, all expressions of his manifestation merged into the primordial nature.

His disciples discovered two different testaments, hidden at different places. They included meditative teachings to his disciples and instructions about his funeral ceremony and reincarnation. One of them included the following lines:

I am always in the state of ultimate nature;  
 For me, there is no staying or going.  
 The display of birth and death is mere relativity.  
 I am enlightened in the great primordial liberation!<sup>137</sup>

After months of ceremonies at Tsering Jong and at many monasteries and temples in Central and Eastern Tibet and Bhutan, his body was placed in a small golden stūpa in Tsering Jong hermitage; and it was preserved there until Tsering Jong nunnery was destroyed a couple of decades ago. After his death, his well-known incarnations included: Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje (1800-1866), known as his body incarnation; Paltrul Rinpoche (1808-1887), the speech incarnation; and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820-1892), the mind incarnation.<sup>138</sup>

Jigmed Lingpa produced nine volumes of written treatises and discovered ter texts. The prominent ones among them are *Longchen Nyingthig*, a collection of meditation instructions and ritual texts in two (or three) volumes, which were discovered as ter teachings; *Phurba Gyuluk*, one volume of liturgy on Vajrakila, considered as both ter and canonical; *Yonten Rinpoche Dzöd* with its two-volume autocommentary, his most famous scholarly work; and *Yeshe Lama*, which has become the most comprehensive manual of Great Perfection meditation in the Nyingma tradition.

The *Longchen Nyingthig* remained as an important ter tradition; and, with his scholarly writings, Jigmed Lingpa's lineage became one of the most popular subschools of the Nyingma School until the present. In the *Longchen Nyingthig* lineage, all the disciples and grand disciples were equally great adepts, as Jigmed Lingpa himself prophesied:

In the lineage of my Nyingthig of Luminous Clarity, there will come children [disciples] who are greater than their fathers and grandchildren who are greater than their grandparents.<sup>139</sup>

Among his many great disciples, the main ones are prophesied by Guru Rinpoche in *Nechang Thukkyi Drombu*, the prophetic guide of *Longchen Nyingthig*:

By the incarnations of Namkha'i Nyingpo, Nyang, Chok-yang,  
And the Divine Prince, the door of the teachings will be opened.<sup>140</sup>

The disciples are<sup>141</sup> Nyangton Trati Ngakchang Rikpe Dorje (also known as Kong-nyön Bepe Naljor),<sup>142</sup> the incarnation of Namkha'i Nyingpo; Lopon Jigmed Küntröl of Bhutan, the incarnation of Nyang Tingdzin Zangpo; Thekchen Lingpa Drotön Tharchin (Drimed Lingpa, 1700-1776), the incarnation of Ngenlam Gyalwa Chok-yang; and Dodrupchen Jigmed Trinley Ödzer, the incarnation of Prince Murum Tsepo. Thekchen Lingpa, Thangdrokpa, and Trati Ngakchang were both teachers and disciples of Jigmed Lingpa.

Among his disciples, the masters who were most effective in propagating the *Longchen Nyingthig* teachings were the following. The First Dodrupchen, Jigmed Trinley Ödzer (1745-1821), was the principal doctrine-holder<sup>a</sup> of *Longchen Nyingthig*. Dodrupchen built three monasteries:<sup>143</sup> Drodon Kunkhyaop Ling at Shukchen Tago in Do Valley, Ogmin Rigdzin Phelgre Ling at Getse To in Dzachukha Valley, and Yarlung Pemako in Ser Valley. Jigmed Gyalwe Nyuku of Kham Dzachukha remained in Tramalung hermitage for many years and later moved to Dazgya monastic hermitage. Jigmed Kuntrol of Bhutan built the Dungsam Yonglha Tengye Riwo Palbar Ling Monastery<sup>144</sup> in Eastern Bhutan. Today, it is known as Yongla Gon under Pema Gatsal District in Eastern Bhutan.

Among his main patrons, Depa Pushu sponsored the building of his hermitage at Tsering Jong, and the king and especially Queen Tsewang Lhamo of Derge, who was prophesied as the incarnation of Phokyongza Gyalmotsun, the queen of King Trisong Detsen,<sup>145</sup> commissioned wooden printing blocks of old tantras,<sup>b</sup> many volumes of *Longchen Rabjam*, and

<sup>a</sup> rtsa ba'i chos bdag

<sup>b</sup> rnying ma rgyud 'bum

the nine volumes of Jigmed Lingpa. Also, Tatsak Tenpe Gonpo (d. 1810), the regent of Tibet, and the Thirteenth Karmapa, Dudul Dorje (1733-1797), with great respect, consulted him through correspondence.

Although disciples who were prominent members of Tibetan society flocked to Jigmed Lingpa, he was only concerned to find true lineage holders, who come mostly from people of simple background. Quoting past masters, he expressed his view:

It is better to have a single beggar who can hold the lineage than to have a thousand prominent people as your disciples.<sup>146</sup>

Jigmed Lingpa's life was full of miracles, but he kept his mystical power hidden and his rich life simple. He was a born scholar who didn't train in traditional disciplines, but all his expressions turned into teachings, and all his activities were in the service of others. He remained hidden as an ascetic in an isolated place in Tsering Jong, but the light of his wisdom reached all corners of the Nyingma Buddhist world; and it still shines in many open hearts around the world. He was born with physical marks of auspicious signs, an *ah* letter on his tooth,<sup>147</sup> a *haya* letter on his thumb, a vajra design at his heart, and a ritual bell image at his navel. He had visions of the buddhas, deities, and lineage masters and received teachings and blessings as from person to person. From his tooth and his hair came ringsels as the sign of his high Great Perfection attainments. The most important imprint that he left for us are the words of the dharmakāya, the ultimate truth, in the form of his writings and discovered ter teachings.

# Glossary of Translation Equivalents

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ENGLISH	TIBETAN	SANSKRIT
actual attainment	dngos grub	siddhi
actual realization of the nature of phenomena	chos nyid mngon sum	
appearance	snang ba	
awareness	rig pa	vidyā
bardo being (lit. smell-eater)	dri za	gandharva
bardo of existence	srid pa bar do	
bardo of the moment of death	'chi kha bar do	
bardo of the nature of phenomena	chos nyid bardo	
baseless from the root	gzhi med rtsa bral	
basis of all	kun gzhi	ālaya
channels	rtsa	nādī
clarity	dvangs	
clear light	'od gsal	prabhāsvara
cognition	shes pa	
compassion, compassionate	thugs rje/snying rje	karuṇā
concepts	rnam rtog	vikalpa
consciousness	rnam shes	vijñāna
consciousness of the basis of all	kun gzhi'i rnam shes	ālayavijñāna
crossing over	thod rgal	vyukrāntaka
crossing over with spontaneous presence	lhun grub thod rgal	anābhogavya-krāntaka

crystal kati channel	ka ti shel gyi sbu gu can	
cutting through	khregs chod	
demon (spirit)	bdud	māra
deprived spirit	yi dvags	preta
discernment between samsāra and enlightenment	'khor 'das ru shan	
enlightened embodiment	sku	kāya
enlightened embodiment of complete abundance	longs spyod rdzogs sku	sambhogakāya
enlightened embodiment of form	gzugs sku	rūpakāya
enlightened embodiment of manifestation	sprul sku	nirmāṇakāya
enlightened embodiment of truth	chos sku	dharmakāya
exhaustion of the nature of phenomena	chos nyid zad pa	
expansc class	klong sdc	
experience (meditative)	nyams	
foe destroyer	dgra bcom pa	arhat
four modes of placement	cog bzhag rnam pa bzhi	
full extent of awareness	rig pa tshad phebs	
fundamental nature	gnas lugs	
Great Perfection	rdzogs pa chen po	Atiyoga
ground, basis	gzhi	āshraya
hearer	nyan thos	shrāvaka
heart essence	snying thig	chittatilaka
incisive knowledge	shes rab	prajñā
increasing experience	nyams gong 'phel	
intermediate period	bar do	antarābhava
intrinsic nature	rang bzhin	svabhāva
light	'od	

long-life god	lha	deva
luminosity, lamp	sgron ma	
luminosity of self-emergent prajñā	shes rab rang byung gi sgron ma	
luminosity of the empty vital essence	thig le stong pa'i sgron ma	
luminosity of the flesh heart	tsitta sha'i sgron ma	
luminosity of the funda- mental nature of the ground	gnas lugs gzhi'i sgron	
luminosity of the space of awareness	rig pa'i dbyings gi	
magical body	sgyu lus	
manifestation, energy	rtsal	
meditative concentration	bsam gtan	dhyāna
meditative stabilization	ting nge 'dzin	samādhi
mental activity	sems byung	chaitasika
mind (ordinary)	sems	chitta
mind class	sems sde	
monument to the nature of mind	mchod rten	stūpa
natural abiding	rang babs	
natural bardo	rang bzhin bar do	
natural Great Perfection	rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po	
natural radiance	rang gsal	
nature of mind	sems nyid	
nature of phenomena	chos nyid	dharmaṭā
nonrecognition (ignorance)	ma rig pa	avidyā
one gone to bliss	bde gshegs	sugata
one's own appearances	rang snang	
one's own awareness	rang gi rig pa	svasaṃvedana
original ground of basic space	gdod ma'i gzhi byings	
original purity	ka dag	

originating from itself	rang byung	
phenomenon, phenomena	chos	dharma
pith instructions	man ngag	upadesha
radiance	gdangs	
resting in tranquility	rnal du dbab	
restoration	sor gzhug	
ritual cake	gtor ma	balingta
sky-gocr	mkha' 'gro	dākinī
solitary realizer	rang sangs rgyes	pratyekabuddha
space	dbyings	dhātu
space of phenomena	chos kyi dbyings	dharmadhātu
spontaneous presence	lhun grub	anābhoga
transcendent qualities	pha rol tu phyin pa	pāramitā
transference of consciousness	'pho ba	sañkrānti
vajra chain of awareness	rig pa rdo rje'i lu gu rgyud	
vehicle	theg pa	yāna
vision	snang ba	
vital essence	thig le	bindu
water luminosity of the far-reaching lasso	rgyang zhags chu'i sgron ma	
winds	rlung	prāṇa
wind-mind	rlung sems	
wisdom	ye shes	jñāna

# Works Cited

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## SŪTRAS

Compendium, *sdud pa, āryaprajñāpāramitāśāntayagāthā*  
Heart Sūtra, *shes rab snying po, prajñāpāramitāhṛdayasūtra*  
Sūtra of Advice to the King, *r্যal po la gdams pa'i mdo*  
Sūtra of the Special Request, *khyad par zhus pa'i mdo*

## TANTRAS

Adorned by Direct Introduction, *ngo sprod spras pa*  
Arrangement of Colorful Jewels, *nor bu phra bkod\**  
Blazing Body Relic, *sku gdung 'bar ba\**  
Charnel Ground That Partakes of the Aggregates, *dur khrod phung po rol pa*  
Clear Expanse, *klong gsal*  
Conjunction of the Sun and Moon, *nyi zla kha sbyor\**  
Garland of Pearls, *mu tig phreng ba\**  
Great Arrangement of Ati, *ati bkod pa chen po*  
Great Garuḍa, *khyung chen lding ba*; one of the eighteen Dzogchen tantras  
of the mind class, one of the five earlier translations by Berotsana  
Heap of Precious Jewels, *rin po che spungs pa\**  
Heart Essence Tantra, *snying thig rgyud*  
Lamp That Illuminates Appearances, *sgron ma snang byed*  
Lamp That Illuminates the Key Points of Practice, *nyam len gnad kyi sgron ma*  
Last Testament, *'das rjes*  
Magical Manifestation Matrix of Mañjushri, *jam dpal sgyu 'phrul drva ba*  
Naturally Arising Awareness, *rig pa rang shar\**  
Naturally Occurring Great Perfection, *rdzogs pa rang byung\**  
Ocean of Cloud Banks, *rgya mtsho sprin phung*  
Ocean of Profound Meaning, *zab don rgya mtsho*  
Perfected Skill of the Lion, *seng ge rtsal rdzogs\**

[Precious] Golden Rosary, *[rin chen] gser phreng*  
 Realization of Empowerment, *dbang nye bar rtogs pa*  
 Reverberation of Sound, *sgra thal 'gyur\**  
 Secret Conduct, *gsang ba spyod pa*  
 Secret Sound Tantra, *gsang ba sgra rgyud*  
 Seed of Secret Conduct, *gsang ba spyod pa sa bon*  
 Sixfold Expanse, *klong drug pa\**  
 Sole Heir of the Buddha, *sangs rgyas sras gcig*  
 Sun, Moon, Planets, and Stars, *nyi zla gza' skar*  
 Tantra of the Single Child of the Doctrine, *bstan pa bu gcig rgyud*  
 The All-Creating Monarch, *kun byed gyal po*  
 The Staircase to Akaniṣṭha, *'og min bgrod pa'i them skas*  
 Upadesha of the Essential Wisdom Intent, *man ngag snying dgongs*  
 Vajrasattva's Mirror of the Heart Tantra, *rdo rje sems dpa' snying gi me long\**  
 Wheel of Time, *dus kyi 'khor lo, kālachakra*

## TREATISES

Discerning the Middle and Limits, *dbus mtha' rnām 'byed, madhyāntavibhāga*;  
 Maitreyanātha  
 Entering the Middle Way, *dbu ma la 'jug pa, madhyamakāvatāra*; Chandrakīrti  
 The Bodhisattva's Way of Life, *byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa,*  
*bodhisattvacharyāvatāra*; Shāntideva  
 [Treasury of the] Precious Genuine Meaning, *tshig don rin po che'i [mdzod]*;  
 Longchenpa  
 Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle, *theg mchog mdzod*; Longchenpa

\* One of the seventeen upadesha tantras.

## Notes

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- 1 In this introduction, the term *stong pa* is translated by Tülku Thondup as "openness." In the translation of the text itself, we have translated *stong pa* as "emptiness."
- 2 See folio 62a/4, *chos dbyings mdzod 'grel lung gi gter mdzod* by Longchen Rabjam (Adzom Edition).
- 3 Folio 42b/4, *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod* by Jigmed Lingpa (Adzom Edition).
- 4 Folio 7b/4, *rdzogs chen (thor bu)* by Jigmed Tenpa'i Nyima (Dodrup Sangye Lama).
- 5 This passage is summarized from folios 18b/4 and 19b/6, *ye shes bla ma* by Jigmed Lingpa (Adzom Edition).
- 6 See folio 3b/1, *khregs chod zin bris snyan brygyud chu bo'i bcud 'dus* by Khenpo Pema Legrel Tsal (Ngawang Palzang) (published by Zenkar Rinpoche).
- 7 Folio 44b/4, *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod* by Jigmed Lingpa (Adzom Edition).
- 8 Folio 45a/1, *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod* by Jigmed Lingpa (Adzom Edition).
- 9 Folio 45a/1, *yon tan rin po che'i mdzod* by Jigmed Lingpa (Adzom Edition).
- 10 Kuntuzangpo, Samantabhadra.
- 11 This refers to the nature of all appearances as the nature of the dharmakāya.
- 12 Another epithet for Kuntuzangpo.
- 13 Tibet.
- 14 Here the author, Jigmed Lingpa, pays homage to his root guru, the Omniscient Longchenpa, referring to him by one of the many epithets for his name.
- 15 Omniscient One and Drimed Ödzer are both epithets for Longchenpa.
- 16 Vajrayāna.
- 17 The eight lower vehicles [Skt. *yāna*], namely, shravaka, pratyeka, bodhisattva, kriyātantra, upatantra, yogatantra, mahāyoga, and anuyoga.
- 18 When a teaching such as this is written, it is traditional for the author to first pay homage, followed by his statement of commitment. These two stages are now complete, and the actual body of the teaching begins here.
- 19 In the third tradition of complete entrustment to the traveler who is "crossing over the mountain pass," this is a metaphor for one who has reached the time of their death and will be transitioning at any moment.
- 20 This refers to the awakening of dormant karmic tendencies that exist in the stream of mind due to previously accumulated merit. There is a force or a seed to this karmic "cause" which will ripen in future lifetimes with the onset of certain stimulating conditions.
- 21 The term that we have translated here as "in order to discover" is *sna khrid pa*, which literally means "to lead." Our translation is based upon the meaning in this context.

- 22 The term *'das*, which means "to transcend," is translated here as "enlightenment" since that is the goal of this level of practice. Otherwise, this may refer to the state transcending sorrow or *"nirvāṇa."*
- 23 Among the seventeen upadesha tantras of the Great Perfection, the *Reverberation of Sound* is the root tantra.
- 24 "Root tantra" refers to the *Reverberation of Sound*.
- 25 *Om, ab, and hung.*
- 26 The three upper points are the head and the two arms extended above it to resemble the three prongs of a vajra. "Nature" corresponds to dharmakāya or emptiness; "intrinsic nature" to sambhogakāya or clear light; and "compassion" to nirmānakāya or the quality of unobstructed compassion. The three lower points are the soles joined together and the two knees extended.
- 27 The five aggregates are form, feeling, recognition, reaction, and consciousness.
- 28 Manifest Joy (*mngon par dga' ba/Abhirati*) is the pure realm of Buddha Vajrasattva or Akṣobhya to the east; Endowed with Glory (*dpal dang ldan pa/Shrimat*) is the pure realm of Buddha Ratnasambhava to the south; Lotus Arrangement (*padma bkod pa/Padmakūṭa*) is the pure realm of Buddha Amitābha to the west; and Perfectly Complete Activity (*las rab grub pa/Karmaprasiddhi*) is the pure realm of Buddha Amoghasiddhi to the north.
- 29 This passage was translated exactly as it was presented in the pecha. Generally, in the context of Mahāyāna, these are presented as two different divisions.
- 30 The *vidyādhara* Jigmed Lingpa refers to himself.
- 31 This refers to the fourth vision of tōgal, *chos nyid zad pa*.
- 32 This refers to relative truth that is based on conventional analysis.
- 33 The Tibetan term *sor gebug* was explained by Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche to mean the process of reengaging in the path of virtue. We have chosen to translate the term as "restoration," which also conveniently implies that one is reentering the path to restore one's virtue.
- 34 The four dogmas are existence, nonexistence, both, and neither. The eight limitations are origination, cessation, permanence, negation, going, coming, identity, and separateness.
- 35 Here, the term "temple" is referred to in the text as *'phrul snang*, which is a way of referring to the central cathedral in Lhasa called the Rasa Tsuglakang. This temple contains the famous rūpa of Jowo Shākyamuni.
- 36 The term for "total confidence" is *la zla ba*, which, according to Lama Chönam, means having total confidence in the one nature of the view being the sole vital essence (*stbig le*).
- 37 This refers to the accomplishment of rainbow body (*ja 'lus*).
- 38 Although the term *spang*, which means "to reject" or "to abandon," is used in the text, Dungsei Rinpoche (Thinley Norbu) explained that, according to the path of the Great Perfection, there is no rejection. It would, therefore, be better to translate the term as "purified" or "cleansed," which implies that attachment will not recur. If something is merely rejected, it is possible that it may reemerge or return.
- 39 The six groups of consciousness: visual, audial, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and mental.
- 40 For the four extremes, see note 34 on the four dogmas.
- 41 The five winds are the life-sustaining, upward-moving, all-pervasive, heat-assimilating, and downward-moving winds.
- 42 This refers to the outer schools of Vajrayāna, namely, kriyā-, upa-, and yogatantra.
- 43 Longchenpa.

- 44 Padmasambhava.
- 45 This is the Sanskrit name for the wisdom channel.
- 46 "The jewel" refers to the heart and "the ocean" to the eyes.
- 47 The thirtieth day of the lunar month.
- 48 This corresponds to the cranial protrusion (*gtsug tor, ushnyisha*), which is one of the thirty-two major marks of a buddha.
- 49 The sun and the moon.
- 50 Once the separation referred to here occurs, the practitioner no longer needs to rely upon the objects of support, so the gaze is in the opposite direction of the object.
- 51 Clouds, fog, and mist.
- 52 "Essence of the sugatas" refers to the precious buddha nature.
- 53 As stated later in this text, *ah* (pronounced like the "a" in "father") is the syllable of non-origination, the sound of the unborn nature of phenomena.
- 54 The five eyes are fleshly eyes, the eyes of the gods, dharma eyes, the eyes of prajñā, and buddha eyes.
- 55 Enlightened embodiments of form, sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya.
- 56 The phrase "wisdom, absorbed yet unobscured" (*ye shes thim la ma rmugs pa*) was explicated by Dungsei Thinley Norbu Rinpoche as follows. Here, "wisdom" refers to the six fields of consciousness, including both subjectivity and objectivity, as being unconfused. This is likened to the natural condition of a crystal in which light is inherent or indwelling. The nature of the six consciousnesses is self-contained within primordial awareness. In this way, it is self-absorbed. Like the spontaneous presence of all enlightened qualities of the buddhas (kāyas and wisdom) abiding as the nature of wisdom, it is unobscured. This is likened to light penetrating a crystal such that the indwelling light becomes naturally radiant (unobscured).
- 57 This refers to the mirrorlike aspect of primordial wisdom. The other four aspects will follow.
- 58 Of the five buddha families, this refers to the vajra family. The remaining four will be defined.
- 59 This refers to the color of the vajra family. The colors of the other four families will follow.
- 60 This is the first of the five root winds to be defined.
- 61 The ten topics are (1) the view of the nature as it is, (2) conduct, (3) the arrangement of maṇḍalas, (4) the stages of empowerment, (5) the maintenance of samaya, (6) the display of miraculous activity, (7) the accomplishment of siddhi, (8) unwavering samādhi, (9) the making of offerings, and (10) mantra recitation and mudrā.
- 62 The *abtung* is the source of the fierce wisdom fire in the shape of an English syllable *A* without the horizontal bar between the lines.
- 63 Meaning untimely death.
- 64 Until this level of proficiency occurs, the tögal practitioner views space and the vital essences as very close, if not connected, to the eyebrow area. At this stage of the increasing experience of the vision, the practitioner is able to clearly see the vision at a distance. This explanation is based on oral instructions given by Khenpo Munsel ('Tṣultrim Gyatso).
- 65 Asian-style palaces with slanted roofs.
- 66 According to the Jataka accounts of the Buddha's lifetimes before his enlightenment, he was once an animal known as a *sharaṇa*—a peaceful, noncarnivorous beast that moved very slowly and carefully. According to oral commentary given by Yangthang Tulku Rinpoche, the *sharaṇa* could also be interpreted as reference to a river.

- 67 Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava.
- 68 The "temporary gathering of the constituents" refers to the five aggregates, the six sense organs, and their fields of perception.
- 69 This means the practitioner can no longer be harmed by any disturbances of the elements. In an ordinary sense, the passage literally refers to the elements being out of balance.
- 70 The rainbow light body.
- 71 This refers to the account in the *Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava* in which the head of King Trisong Detsen actually passed through the body of Padmasambhava, which was nonexistent due to the guru's accomplishment of the fourth vision of tögal. Still, the guru could be perceived by others according to their level of awareness. It seems that, because of his profound faith, the king experienced this truth the moment his head touched the cushion instead of the guru's body.
- 72 On this level, one can enter the six realms in order to benefit beings.
- 73 Vimalamitra.
- 74 This passage is intended to prevent any misinterpretation of Longchenpa's words. Jigmed Lingpa assures us that the three thousand bardo beings who will be liberated through the aspiration of one who achieves rainbow body include human beings, who are in their own bardo, the natural bardo.
- 75 "Kumbhanda" is the Sanskrit term for a member of the yaksha class, an ocean-dwelling creature with a human form and the heads of different creatures. Its name is often invoked in poetry because of its beautiful singing voice.
- 76 According to oral commentary given by Yangthang Tulku Rinpoche, the term *khra bor* in Tibetan may be a spelling error. Some teachers say that this should read *kbro wo*, which means "a wrathful deity." If that were the case, the sentence would then read, "... so that wrathful deities can be seen."
- 77 This first method seems somewhat similar to the modern medical emergency method of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- 78 Amitābha.
- 79 This text is one of the "three lamps" in the Lama Yangthig.
- 80 The six limitations and the four modes are indispensable keys for unlocking the meaning of the tantras. The six limits are the views of the conventional meaning, the definitive meaning, the implied meaning, the unimplied meaning, the literal, and the nonliteral meaning. The four modes are the literal, general, concealed, and ultimate.
- 81 Tibetan mirrors are shaped like a shallow bowl.
- 82 This refers to the golden needle used by skillful Tibetan physicians to pierce the sac of fluid surrounding the heart of a patient in order to drain the fluid. It is said to be "unwavering" because even the slightest deviation of the instrument at the time of insertion could be fatal.
- 83 "Breathe the breath" refers to giving a sigh of relief when one is finally able to rest. Specifically, it refers to taking birth in a pure realm so that rebirth in samsara need not occur again.
- 84 "Days" and "seconds" refer here to the duration of samādhi.
- 85 Here, "vase embodiment" refers to an embodiment within a vase that one cannot see though one knows it is there. Similarly, kāyas abide in the dharmakāya, although they may not be perceived.
- 86 These are the "Three Statements That Strike the Crucial Point," the exceptional dharma of the learned Shri Gyalpo Garab Dorje.
- 87 Here, Jigmed Lingpa refers to emptiness, compassion, and their great inseparability or

union (as opposed to essence, nature, and quality) as the three aspects of enlightened mind.

88 Padmasambhava.

89 Bodhgaya.

90 Padmasambhava.

91 The "four names" are the aggregates of feeling, recognition, reaction, and consciousness.

92 Secret Mantra.

93 Traditionally, qualified gurus perform special recitations every seven days to help the bardo consciousness through this difficult time.

94 This text, the *Yeshe Lama*.

95 Also known as Sherab Ödzer.

96 This refers to meditation on the form of the deity in generation-stage practice. The five fully purified states are the moon seat, the sun seat, the seed syllable, the hand implement, and the complete kāya of the deity.

97 A human being who possesses the six elements is a suitable vessel for accomplishing the Secret Mantra vehicle. The six are space, vital energy, fire, water, earth, and primordial wisdom.

98 Specifically, the causal vehicle of characteristics, the sūtra division of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

99 Buddha Akṣobhya.

100 A sharari skull is a skull with some flesh still attached. It is referred to as a "semi-fresh skull."

101 Sea monsters.

102 The dharma protector Rāhula.

103 The *Seven Treasures* of Longchenpa.

104 The essence of the path of saṃsāra as practiced by the god Brahmā—who abides in ordinary bliss—is the four ways of abiding in compassion, love, joy, and equanimity.

105 From Tülku Thondup, *Masters of Meditation and Miracles: The Longchen Nyingthig Lineage of Tibetan Buddhism* (Boston: Shambhala, 1996), pp. 118–135. Reprinted by permission of the publisher. (For a key to the bibliographical abbreviations used in the following notes, the reader is referred to pp. 351–357 in the original publication.)

106 This life is based on LYN and also on DSC, TCG, NTG, KNR 635/16, LNG 310b/2, PKD 124b/5, RD 6b/6, RBP 219a/3, NN, and KKR 40b/2.

107 LK 101a/1.

108 LYN 7a/1 and others recognize Khyentse Wangpo, an incarnation of Jigmed Lingpa, as the thirteenth one.

109 KS. See KNN.

110 LYN 9a/3.

111 See KNR 582/20 for his life.

112 KNR 638/15. LNG 311a/4: *thang 'brog dbon padma mchog grub*.

113 Copying scriptures, making offerings, giving charity, listening to teachings, memorizing them, reciting scriptures, teaching dharma, saying prayers, and pondering the meaning of the dharma and meditating upon it.

114 Peaceful, increasing, powerful, and wrathful.

115 LYN 42a/4.

116 LYN 44a/6.

117 LYN 45a/2.

118 LYN 46b/1.

119 NYR 68b/5.

- 120 NYR 69b/2.
- 121 KZ 38b/1, KNR 724/17; he is also known as Trati Ngakchang.
- 122 KNR 638/2.
- 123 LYN 209b/2.
- 124 LYN 82b/5.
- 125 A khal is twenty tres and a tre is about two pints.
- 126 LYN 118b/4.
- 127 That is DKG.
- 128 LYN 164a/5.
- 129 GL 212/1, LYN 168b/5.
- 130 According to GNP 93/4.
- 131 LYN 191b/2, DGN 79b/5, GL 65b/5.
- 132 KZ 33a/1 and 39a/2, KNR 641/24, 725/7.
- 133 Dates are based on TKT 273/3.
- 134 Dates are based on SB, TKT, and LS. For Zhapkar's (Shabkar's) life, read LS.
- 135 LYN 220a/2.
- 136 KNR 725/1, KZ 38b/1, NPG 9a/5.
- 137 LYN 240b/6.
- 138 DB 6b/4.
- 139 NGR 57b/1.
- 140 NTG 3b/6.
- 141 KKR 42b/1.
- 142 KNR 724/19, KZ 38b/1, LYN 80b/5.
- 143 KNR 644/8.
- 144 LYN 203a/6.
- 145 LYN 204a/3, NTG 4a/5, KGT-I, 350/19. She reigned 1790-1798. Her husband was King Sawang Zangpo (or *kun 'grub bde dga' bzang po*), c. 1768-1790. Her son was King Tsewang Dorje Rigdzin (also known as *byams pa kun dga' sangs rgyas bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan*).
- 146 LYN 105a/6.
- 147 LYN 202a/1.

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