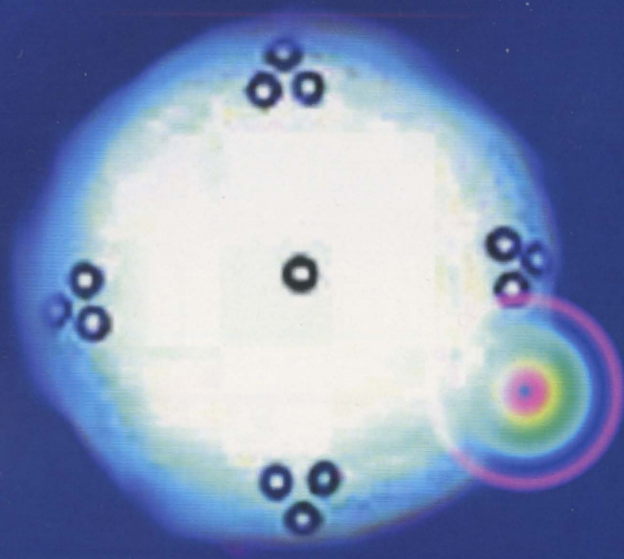


THE SEVEN MIRRORS OF DZOGCHEN

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥



Oral Teachings by

Buddhas Weg, Siedelsbrunn, Germany, 2011 - 2012

Transcribed and edited by Carol Ermakova and Dmitry Ermakov



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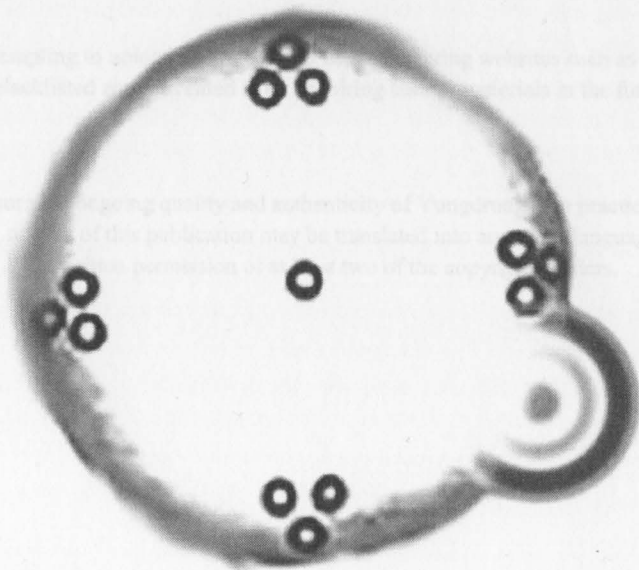
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Lachen Drenpa Namkha

SEVEN MIRRORS OF DZOGCHEN

COMPLETE EDITION



Oral Teachings by

YONGDZIN LOPÖN TENZIN NAMDAK RINPOCHE

Buddhas Weg, Siedelsbrunn, Germany,

24 - 27 September 2011 and 27 - 30 September 2012

Transcribed and edited by Carol Ermakova and Dmitry Ermakov

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Editors' Preface

The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen / རྩོགས་ཆེན་མེ་ལོང་བདུན་པ་བཞུགས་སོ། is a very concise and complete set of Dzogchen instructions by the great 8th century Bönpo master Lachen Drenpa Namkha who, together with Nyachen Lishu Tagring, Chöza Bönmo and a number of other Bönpo yogis and yoginis, managed to save the Yungdrung Bön doctrines from utter destruction at the hands of Trisong Deutsen's government.

Yongdzin Lopön Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche first taught *The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen* in the West during the inaugural retreat in Shenten Dargye Ling, Blou, France in June, 2005. Due to the short duration of that retreat, Yongdzin Rinpoche only taught Chapters I – III, while the rest of the text was delivered by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung later that summer. Carol and I edited our transcript of both these teachings, and the result was a book which became the first in a long line of titles made available to Yongdzin Rinpoche's students in Shenten Dargye Ling.

Since Rinpoche did not finish the whole text in France, he was requested to teach the *Seven Mirrors* again in its entirety during two successive retreats in Germany, in 2011 and 2012. These teachings were originally released in two volumes by the Foundation for the Preservation of Yungdrung Bön (FPYB) in collaboration with the Yungdrung Bön Stiftung for those who attended these retreats. This slightly re-edited Complete Edition amalgamates those teachings into a single volume, and a few lines which Yongdzin Rinpoche did not translate in the Colophon have been translated by myself for the sake of completion.

Recently, several Bönpo lamas have begun teaching *The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen* more widely in various locations throughout the world, so it is our hope that this book, which contains the two-in-one lucid oral translation and commentary by Yongdzin Rinpoche, will help those who have received this wonderful text from other Bönpo lamas to deepen their understanding and practice of Bönpo Dzogchen.

Dmitry Ermakov

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

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Introductory remarks

Good morning to everybody. Maybe most of you are old friends and have already attended my teachings, but there are also some other people who are here for the first time, so first of all I wanted to advise you what to do at the beginning. Practitioners must also do something, so I can remind you how to practise at the beginning, too. The text I am using is called *Melong Dünpa*,¹ *The Seven Mirrors*. This text is not very large, just seven chapters,² but it contains the condensed essence of the whole Dzogchen³ teachings. So the teachings I am going to give here are called Dzogchen and although most of you know what this is, there has to be some preparation for listening and receiving these teachings. That is what I wanted to tell you now.

I don't know who is here, but you must have some connection with this lineage and the blessings of the Masters. I would like to remind practitioners about this, too. So how can we connect with this teaching? First of all, it is very important to have a connection through prayers and Guru Yoga; it is very important to make this connection before you attend and receive Dzogchen teachings.

Guru Yoga

First of all I need to say something about Guru Yoga.

What is the Guru?

What is the purpose of practising Guru Yoga?

Why is it important to trust in Guru Yoga?

You have to know all these things before you practise, but we do not have so much time so I cannot go into all the details.

The Guru

There are various ways to practise Guru Yoga, but for this particular teaching which I am going to give here, everyone should first of all try to visualize

¹ Tib. me long bdun pa / མེ་ལོང་བདུན་པ།

² There are actually more than seven chapters in the text. See footnote 33, page 22.

³ Tib. rdzogs chen / རྫོགས་ཆེན།

Tapihritsa,⁴ *dharmakaya* form.⁵ He is the representative of all: *dharmā*, *sangha* and Buddhas.⁶ He represents them all; there is no sectarianism, nothing like this.

Tapihritsa was a normal man, and he realized the Nature of Dzogchen, what we call the Nature of Mind. Some people call it Dzogchen, but in reality it is the Nature of Mind; all sentient beings already have the Nature of their own Mind. We say 'sentient being' because the being is integrated with the mind, and the mind is completely bound and integrated with Nature. That is Dzogchen.

Nature is deeply integrated with consciousness, and all sentient beings have consciousness, but no-one knows what Nature means even though it is integrated with their consciousness. It is hard to know this. There are many different teachings or opinions or studies or research work, but no matter what you do, it is hard to find reality. So this was introduced by Tapihritsa who newly achieved Buddhahood. He is not the inventor [of this teaching], in fact he is the twenty-fifth Master in the lineage of our Dzogchen.⁷ He is important for this lineage and Refuge, *bodhichitta* and so on all go back to Tapihritsa [i.e. we use his image for visualization], including Guru Yoga.

How to practise Guru Yoga

Body

First of all you sit down in the five-pointed posture. Everybody already knows this:

- Legs crossed
- Hands in the position of equipoise
- Shoulders hanging
- Spine straight
- Neck slightly bent so the chin is tucked in slightly
- Eye gaze level with your nose
- Mouth a little open so your breath can pass through in the normal way.

⁴ Tib. Ta pi hri tsa / ཏ་པི་ཁྱི་ཙ།

⁵ Tib. bon sku / བོན་སྐུ།

⁶ Tib. sangs rgyas bon dge 'dun / སངས་རྒྱལ་བོན་དགེ་འདུན།

⁷ I.e. the lineage of Zhang zhung snyan rgyud rdzogs chen / རང་བྱུང་སྐྱུང་རྩུང་རྫོགས་ཆེན།

Mind

Visualize Taphritsa in front of you, a little bit higher than yourself, facing you. He is inside a rainbow circle, naked and also sitting in the five-pointed posture as you are. His body is not merely like an image which is made or painted; it is completely transparent and pure, a body of light. He is all-wise, full of wisdom and has purified all obscurations and defilements; that is why he is Buddha.

Try to visualize this. From the beginning, decide which size you intend to visualize him, and focus on that. Don't always change – sometimes bigger or smaller, here or there or something. If you do change or move your visualization, it will not be stable. Always try to visualize Taphritsa as one size, in one place, using one picture. Always try to visualize the same colours and so on. In this way, you can learn more and more.

Why does he appear naked? It means that he is completely pure, he has purified everything. That is the symbol.

Try to focus. For beginners, it can be helpful to look at a picture, but he is not always [static] like a picture. It is not necessary for practitioners to look at the picture.

Often people say they can't see anything, there are no visible manifestations or something, but it is not so easy for something to manifest visibly, for some signs or strange things to come. Don't expect these too early, it takes time. First of all [the visualization in] your mind has to be fixed and stable, and clear and familiar. Then you integrate with this more and more and slowly, slowly you purify all the other obscurations and thoughts. These are purified. Then afterwards, the essential meditation which you practise will come slowly, slowly, like the sun shining [as it rises].

According to the lineage of our Dzogchen, Taphritsa is the twenty-fifth Master, but you can visualize that he represents all the Three Jewels, all kinds of Buddhas. There is not only one Buddha; there are hundreds of thousands. Wherever there are sentient beings, in so many countless universes, each universe [system] has the external universes and the sentient beings within it; there are so many. And the Buddhas try to help them wherever they are, everywhere. Buddha emanated so many different Buddhas. Not all the Buddhas are the same. One person emanated many Buddhas, and there are so many sentient beings who practised and achieved Buddhahood, so those are all Buddhas. There is no difference between them in terms of knowledge or capacity, not at all; same.

Don't think: 'my Buddha,' 'his Buddha' etc; you can't differentiate them

in this way, not at all. All the Buddhas have the same knowledge, the same quality. Tapihritsa represents all the Buddhas, *dharmas* and *sanghas* – all of them. In some other cases [according to the Refuge of Tantric and Dzogchen systems] we talk about *yidams*, *gurus* and *dakinis*,⁸ and Tapihritsa represents all of these. Everything depends on your intention. If your intention is good enough, pure enough, strong enough, if you have devotion and trust, then everything will be successful.

How to visualize Tapihritsa

As I said before, he is in front of you, facing you, a little higher than yourself. First of all, briefly think what he looks like. He is inside a rainbow circle. Maybe you have seen a picture. Focus there. Focus on the whole picture as clearly as you could – how he is sitting, what the rainbow circle is like, how he is inside it, the size and so on, as I said before. Try to focus there.

Once you have visualized the whole picture, focus on Tapihritsa himself.

Your consciousness or mind is not able to stay focussed for a long time, especially if you are a beginner. So soon afterwards, the next thought will come up without any reason and will disturb your concentration on your visualization. Whenever you realize you are no longer focussing on Tapihritsa and a thought has arisen without any reason, stop and come back to your visualization again, focussing as before. Do this again and again, at least three times. If you don't do this, your visualization and meditation will not be at all successful.

You always have to do this. It is very hard for beginners to do this. First of all, try to focus intensely on Tapihritsa as long as you can. Don't move onto anything else, just focus there. Then soon afterwards, whenever you realize the next thought has come, you should immediately try to stop. Don't follow the thought, don't think. If your visualization of Tapihritsa sometimes seems bigger or smaller or things appear here or there, that is actually a disturbance; don't get excited. Someone might say it is something wonderful or they have realized something, rainbows come etc., but none [of these] can be useful; everything is a disturbance for a beginner. Always try to come back to focussing intensely. It is better for beginners to do this as much as you can. That is real meditation. If you do this more and more often, for longer and longer, then it is a kind of training and [the visualization] will become more familiar and stable. Otherwise, if you follow

⁸ Tib. bla ma yi dam mkha' 'gro / ལྷ་མ་ཡི་དམ་མཁའ་རྒྱོ།

the next thoughts which come and are always following them, then that is a disturbance and your real meditation is not useful, just wasted time.

Signs of progress

When you meditate with Guru Yoga and practise more and more, you will learn. You can see to what extent you are familiar with this, how far your meditation with Guru Yoga [has progressed]. First of all you can see this in your dreams. When you are dreaming, you can visualize Tapihritsa as you do during the daytime, and in a similar way, your mind is always integrated with your visualization of Tapihritsa.

But it is not enough just to have clear images or pictures shining in your mind or consciousness; with this, you need to trust and integrate with meditation on Guru Yoga with Tapihritsa. That leads you *so* at the time of death and also in the *bardo*⁹ you will be able to remember [your practice] as you did in your dreams. That is the purpose.

What is the purpose of remembering Guru Yoga? What is the point of meditating and practising Guru Yoga with Tapihritsa? The *bardo* is not like an ordinary dream, [it is much more intense]. Tapihritsa represents all the Three Jewels and Buddhas, and if you remember this in the *bardo*, it will certainly [be of great value]. We call this *karpo chigthub*¹⁰ – ‘the single white way is enough.’ It represents all other practices. If your devotion and trust are sufficient then this is something pure, clear and unmistakable. We practise Guru Yoga for a very important reason: if you don’t merely practise some temporary visualization but if you take this as your essential practice and integrate it with your life, then it goes [with you] to the *bardo* time and can be helpful. You can be led by Tapihritsa. It depends how far you have practised; maybe he will be your guide or teach you Dzogchen. He is the owner and Master of Dzogchen.

Practising and meditating and trying to make your visualization stable is not enough. Besides there, the important thing is to trust the Buddha and the Three Jewels in general, and in particular, whatever you are visualizing at the time – such as Guru Yoga with Tapihritsa – try to trust and believe and follow; devotion is very, very important. If you don’t have devotion and are just trying to make your

⁹ Tib. bar do / བར་དོ།

¹⁰ Tib. dkar po gcig thub / དཀར་པོ་གཅིག་ཐུབ།

visualization clear, then one side is missing; the cause is missing. So it is better to put everything together.

How to end a session of Guru Yoga

Sometimes you have to stop your practice session – you have to eat or something. So at that time, visualize that from Tapihritsa's heart or chest, he sends very powerful fire. It looks like fire but it is the essence of his knowledge and wisdom. They come from him to you, reach you and are integrated with [you, entering the crown of your head] so that all defilements, obscurations and everything are burnt by his knowledge and blessing.

Secondly, water comes from his heart. It looks like water but it is neither the element water nor material water; rather, it is his blessing. It looks like water. It comes to you from the same place, from his heart level, and washes out all the substances which are left after the burning. Everything.

Thirdly, in the same way, from the same place, a very strong wind comes. That is also his knowledge and wisdom. It looks like a wind, like a strong storm which comes to you from him, and all obscurations and defilements, external and internal, are all blown up.

Afterwards, you are completely pure and ready to receive blessings and initiations from him. You are ready to be a qualified follower.

Then a white A/ཨ comes from his forehead, a red OM/ཨྐ comes from his neck and a blue HUNG/ཧྐ comes from his heart. These seed syllables all come from him and represent his Body, Speech and Mind. But if you don't know the Tibetan letters, you can use any kind of letters, or even if you don't use any letters, it doesn't make much difference – you can use *thigles*¹¹ or sparks – white, red, blue. The important thing is that they represent his Body, Speech and Mind. They come from him and integrate with your body, speech and mind. Think, decide, believe and trust this clearly, without doubt. You have received blessings. That is what this means. Otherwise, if you talk about blessings or something, it seems quite easy but the reality is that you are taking the blessing through your devotion.

Who gives you the blessing? Who has the blessing? Who thinks about the blessing? [It seems as though you are] trying to mix object and subject together. So we take it through our devotion, it is given from him to you. That is taking and

¹¹ Tib. *thig le* / ཐིག་ལེ།

giving together, so then you have received his blessing properly and clearly. After you have integrated [the symbolic representations of his Body, Speech and Mind] into yourself, then you can trust that you have received something. That means: received. How? Because everything is created by each individual's consciousness – good, bad, everything. It is the same thing. Don't think: 'Oh, it is just my [own] emanation, there is nothing visible to see...' You might think this sometimes, but that is a disturbance; it is not reality.

When to practise Guru Yoga

You can practise Guru Yoga whenever – before you eat something, before going to sleep or when you are doing anything, any work, any time, as you begin, you can remember Tapihritsa and offer him whatever you are going to eat or drink or do. Very often, think of Tapihritsa as a friend of yours; day or night, any time, you are together. If you have devotion and trust in him, then he is also a very great, powerful guardian. You can think you receive everything from him.

If you want to help somebody else, instead of receiving the elements [representing his knowledge and blessings] yourself, you can visualize the other person is receiving them and being purified. That is great. It is not just like doing something yourself in a simple way; this is much more [powerful], you have the background of his blessings and power. So if you do this, it is also a kind of Refuge.

Tapihritsa represents all the Three Jewels and if you always remember Refuge with devotion and trust him, then this is what we call *karmo chigthub*, practising one single way which is good enough.

When you visualize Tapihritsa and do Guru Yoga, on one hand, it is important for people who will have blessings and be connected to this teaching, and on the other hand, secondly, if you mainly practise Guru Yoga, it can be helpful not only for this lifetime, but more importantly for when you die. As far as you have become familiar with this practice, depending on how strong your devotion is and how clear and stable your devotion [visualization] is, you can trust, and, if you trust, you may see him in your dreams. Depending on how deep your connection with Tapihritsa and the Three Jewels is, they will lead you in the next stage.

Everybody knows there is only one way to go,¹² whether you wish to or not. At that time, it is important to have prepared something. That situation is clear: you have to go there. Your personal conditions don't make much difference, not at all. At that time the only thing which counts is this kind of spiritual practice. So that is why I am determined to say [these things] and teach all the time. From me.

This is one point. As far as you practise, you can learn and become more familiar and stable with this. Otherwise, our school and tradition has so many different practices and each serves a purpose, they can be helpful, any time, but there are so many things, and if you start this one then that one or something, then you will never receive anything. If, on the other hand, you seriously practise [one point] intensely, then you can have some result. Otherwise, if you go and taste [new methods], always beginning this or that or something, then it will be like going to visit a museum: you can see so many things, but finally you can't get anything. So this is the same. It is better to practise in one way. Don't think Guru Yoga is just something simple. It can be helpful if your devotion is strong and you trust, then it can help in every way, both during this life and afterwards. Any time. Your practice will not be wasted, not at all. So at the beginning I am talking about Guru Yoga, but this also includes Refuge and *bodhichitta*; you can hear many things, I hope you have heard about these.

The essential purpose of practising Guru Yoga is to receive the blessings through either the seed syllables or the *thigles* which represent Taphritsa's Body, Speech and Mind. Whatever you receive from him, that is something very essential. Why? Because it is a preparation for other things; it is essential to practise Guru Yoga. If your devotion is good enough, then this is a real connection and you can receive blessings. That is preparation.

Preliminary Practices

This is the preparation, the way to forge a connection to this Bönpo Dzogchen teaching. Dzogchen practitioners must also practise with the preliminary practices, both the general ones as well as the Dzogchen preliminaries in particular. Those must be done. It is the same with every work you do; if you [are to] do something important, you have to prepare first. In a similar way, in this practice you first have to practise with the normal preliminary practices, and then, secondly, you have to

¹² I.e. everyone has to die sometime.

practise with the special Dzogchen preliminaries. You have to do those, then you can enter the [main] practice of the Dzogchen way.

I will just go through the names of the ordinary preliminary practices; we don't have much time and I don't know whether you are interested in practising them or not. But anyhow, what do we mean by 'preliminary practices'? [Initially] there are four categories:

1. The preciousness of human life

First of all you have to look and check the qualities of your own life since your childhood up until now. What have the qualities of your life been? That is one thing. We call it *dalgyor nyekawa*:¹³ it is difficult to find a qualified [human body] with all the senses [perfect], with all conditions, with health, wealth and so on. It is difficult to find all these complete in one person. So you have to remember this, and make yourself happy: you have found a qualified life! That is the first step.

2. Impermanence

Once you have got a qualified [human] life, it is not permanent; day after day, all the time, year after year, we are moving forwards to death. That is the main thing. How many times have we had a birthday? You can remember them briefly, you can see them. But finally, what is the result? You have to go to the churchyard! How many gravestones are there? All these people were in just the same condition as us. Going and looking round a churchyard is not just normal fun; you have to remember and think that the final result of your life is the same – you will go to the same place. You have to remember that. Quite often people talk about impermanence. It is quite popular, but it is not very easy to look back at your own individual condition. This is reality, it is practical. Sometimes you might say you believe, sometimes you might say you don't believe [in the afterlife], but whether you believe or not, nobody has power in the end. You cannot choose. You have to go [on towards death and beyond], there is only one way.

3. Karmic cause

Everyone is already very rich in karmic causes. Each individual being – even insects or fish or birds – everyone is full of karmic causes, they are with you. No

¹³ Tib. dal 'byor myed dka' ba / དལ་འབྱོར་རྟེན་དཀའ་བ།

matter what your present conditions are, they are all only a result of karmic cause. Nothing can happen without a karmic cause. You can see how powerful karmic cause is, and everyone must know this, but sometimes you say you believe in it, sometimes you say you don't believe, but whether you believe or not you have no power, no choice.

We have a visible example of [how] causes bring [result]: Jakob¹⁴ has a twin brother. They have the same father, the same mother, but their lifestyles are completely different. One is in America and one is in Germany, by my side, here. Nobody made these differences, neither the parents nor the boys themselves; they have no choice, these [circumstances] come spontaneously, and this is evidence as to how powerful karmic cause is.

That is an example, you see. Everyone can see, this is the same thing. We all have to follow our causes. That is the third point.

4. Suffering

Wherever we are born in the Six Realms, no matter where we are, we are always bound by sufferings and miseries in *samsara*.¹⁵ That is natural. Any place which is bound within *samsara* is a place of misery and suffering. Sometimes we have heard about the Deva Loka, the realms of the [worldly] divinities, and that seems to be the happiest place. But the kind of happiness there is limited happiness. Why? Because no matter where you are in the Six Realms, even though sometimes the conditions may be happy, this happiness is like a very sick person who is taken into hospital. He is lying on the bed, and sometimes his pain lessens and he is quite comfortable for a little while. But generally he is not very comfortable or happy, otherwise he wouldn't need to be in hospital; a happy person doesn't go to lie in hospital! Sometimes his pain or suffering lessens for a little while. Similarly, wherever you are in *samsara*, even in the Deva Loka – we have heard that that is the happiest place in *samsara* – any happiness is still like the happiness of a sick person lying in a hospital bed. That is not happiness at all, don't trust it. This is not final happiness at all. Wherever you are in *samsara* you are always bound by suffering and misery. There are no happy places.

¹⁴ I.e. Jakob Winkler, the German translator.

¹⁵ Tib. 'khor ba / འཕོར་བ།

If you think about these four points, they make you reverse [your attitude] a little bit and realize that your own life is not the final happiness, so from this you start to seek and check, you try to find what to do in order to have a better, happier life in the future. That is [the purpose of] these four points. They are very important. We call these four points 'renouncing' or 'turning one's mind away from *samsara*'¹⁶ and it is important to remember them and not to have too much attachment to the worldly living life.

Secondly, if you think about these points [and turn your mind away from *samsara*], then what do you do? You start to practise the teachings shown by the Buddha, the messages he left. First of all there are Refuge, *bodhichitta*, Confession, the Accumulation of Virtues and prayers. Those are all the methods to practise at the beginning.

OK. These are the general preliminary practices, i.e. how to find and enter the practice of Buddhism in general and Yungdrung Bön in particular.

Guru Yoga and introduction to the Natural State

As for Guru Yoga, it is also necessary to practise this as a guide for introducing you to the Natural State later. The Natural State is always integrated with your consciousness. It has never been away from your consciousness, never, ever. But you don't realize this at all. Even if you know and see it clearly, you don't trust it at all. You may make this mistake in the future; you won't trust the reality, [won't trust your own experience]. You just follow mistakes and ignorance, and this leads you to circulate in *samsara*. Always. One life after another. There is no limit at all. And each time, how much suffering do you have? How many miseries? Yet still you don't trust, you don't practise the antidotes to purify suffering and miseries.

You have to remember these things, you have to think: 'How can I purify these sufferings?' The main thing is that we don't believe it is possible to purify all sufferings and miseries. We are always thinking, year after year, lifetime after lifetime... when you have suffering, you are sad, you are troubled but you never think: 'I will never practise [the cause of suffering] again. For ever.' That is the main mistake.

¹⁶ Tib. nges 'byung / རྒྱེས་ཡོང་

Looking back towards the thinker

So now try to visualize. When you visualize Taphritsa or something, you are thinking. You are preparing to think. Normally we are always thinking, good things or bad things etc. But actually, who thinks? How does a thought arise? Where does it come from? You think, you created the thought. But where is 'you'? Look back to who is thinking. What is the subject? Who is thinking? Is what you are thinking separate from you? We always say and think that there are two things, subject and object. But this morning I was talking about the practice of Guru Yoga, and Guru Yoga means thinking, creating, trying to make a visualization. You created all these. But where are 'you' at that time? What does 'you' look like at that time? Think about this a little bit. It is not something new. Our normal lifestyle, our manner or fashion, is like this.

So if you think where this 'you' is who is visualizing Taphritsa and focus on the visualization itself, it is consciousness which does everything. That is your work. But who is the worker? There is still the feeling that there is something else, something extra, some other place. But if you search and think about this, there is nothing which exists separately. No matter what you are thinking or visualizing, you cannot find anything at all which is separate [from your own consciousness]. Check all this properly. Who is me? How do I think? What is the source of thoughts? Where does thinking come from? Think about this, little by little.

If you don't think about this clearly but just follow normal words and general thoughts, then that will always lead you, you see, from life to life, through limitless [cycles of] time. If we seriously check what the source is – we humans have a special life, we are able to think; it is hard to help other beings check these things or to teach them or make them understand. But we can think freely. So think: who is thinking? How is it thinking? Where is the thought? Does it exist separately from me? Check all this carefully. Don't just check this temporarily; check it deeply so you trust clearly. This is not just empty words; it is our nature, our manner.

In the case of Guru Yoga, we try to think, we make objects and subjects especially and try intensively to focus; we do everything by ourselves. So at that time, it looks as though there is subject and object: 'I do visualization.' It looks as though 'I' is there somewhere separately or something. So the shortcut is not to think that they are separate.

Some people say thoughts come from the brain, whereas we Tibetans think they come from the heart or through some channel and are seen by the

different organs in different ways. But don't think about anything anymore. Keep quiet and have a rest for a little while. Meanwhile, don't think anything. Just keep in Nature, for a little while. Soon after, a thought will appear. It will come clearly. Everybody must have experience with this. When you look towards the thoughts which appear spontaneously without any planning, when you see a thought come up, look towards that thought. Where is it coming from? Do this carefully. Don't create anything, don't think anything, don't follow what you have learnt or heard previously. Don't follow anything. Just at that present moment look how the thought appears. You can see the thought itself clearly, whatever comes, but don't create any ideas about where it is coming from – from the heart or the brain or something. It just comes spontaneously, you can't find a source at all. Yet even though you don't find any source, you can still see the thought clearly. At that moment, think: 'Where is the source?' Check this. If you don't create any [ideas about the source], you will never find anything at all. If you create something, then you can say it comes from your brain or from your heart or many other things. But shortly, directly, if you look towards the source, you won't find anything at all. It appears spontaneously, and you can only see the thought itself.

When you see a thought come, just check where it is coming from and you will never find [the source]. So then the presence which remains is an unspeakable state. It is clear. It is not possible to think it is like this or like that or something. It is neither 'empty' nor is it anything material. Don't think the brain is the source, nor the heart; nothing. There is just an unspeakable state. If you check where the thought is coming from, it is not possible to find anything at all, neither externally nor internally. Nothing. The thought merely arises. Where is it? It is not possible to find where it comes from. What remains is an unspeakable state, clear and calm. That is Nature. There is no outside, no inside, nothing. From this state, a thought appears and it is seen clearly.

Who sees it? When you are looking at a thought, when you are thinking, who sees the thought? When you look: no-one. There is nothing special which exists as a watcher, nothing which sees the thought. There is nothing special, unless you create something. If you just remain in that State, there is nothing special at all which can be explained. So at that time, when you see a thought, if you look to where it comes from, you can't see anything special. Afterwards, the presence which remains is an unspeakable state. That means you are not unconscious, nor are you in a deep sleep. Your presence is clear. You can see things, but you don't distinguish between things at all. You are like a mirror which takes reflections. You can see and hear everything, but you don't [deliberately]

recognize each individual object, not at all. At that moment, you could see Nature is like a looking glass. The thoughts which come from Nature are like reflections. If you look back towards who sees them, you yourself do not exist separately from the thought, not at all. The thought and yourself – everything – is liberated back to Nature at the same time. This State is called the Natural State.

Who sees the thought which comes up at that time? It sees itself. Like a mirror. Reflections come, they are reflected in the looking glass, they shine there, but the glass doesn't catch them or recognize them or do anything. In the same way, this Nature doesn't recognize anything, it just sees all the thoughts. That is Nature. Don't say you don't know Nature or you haven't seen it; it is always together with you – it is your Nature, the Nature of yourself, no separation.

At that time, it looks as though you are watching Nature or the thought, but if you look carefully, where is 'you'? Where is the watcher? That is a mistake [if you think there is some duality]; you are integrated with Nature, together with your thought. There is no separation between you and the thought. At the same time as the thought itself is liberated back to the unspeakable state, you are completely in that State; there is no separation. You think and feel as though you are separate, as though the thought is like an object, but that is a mistake. Don't follow this. At the same time, the thought and the 'watcher' are liberated back to Nature together; there is no separation into 'you' or 'thought' or 'Nature.' All together, they go back to the unspeakable state.

After this, there is no consciousness, no person, nothing exists separately, so who sees this State, this Nature? It sees itself. That is special. It cannot be compared with any other Schools at all. People often try to compare this with the Madhyamaka¹⁷ view, but it is not possible to do so. This is special. Itself sees itself. That is called Awareness, Self-Awareness. When we speak about Nature we say it is empty, but that is only in order to give it some name; this Emptiness cannot be compared with any other understanding of emptiness, not at all. This is very special. Actually, it is not possible to give it a name or explain it – it is utterly beyond thought, beyond words. We only use these names temporarily in texts or Teachings, to try to lead students and make them understand, but the main thing is that when you look there, the unspeakable state is the Unspeakable State. It can see itself. It can be seen, but who sees it? It sees itself. What does it see? It sees

¹⁷ Tib. dbu ma /དབུ་མ།

itself. We call this Nature and Awareness.¹⁸ Awareness is Nature, Nature is Awareness; there is no separation. Not at all. Therefore Clarity is Awareness, Awareness is Clarity and Empty Nature, together. Purity, Clarity, Unity – everything is in there. The whole thing is in there.

Qualities of the Natural State

In order to speak about this State, we say [it has the qualities of] Emptiness, Clarity, Unification¹⁹ and Perfection.²⁰ We explain several aspects. But Nature itself is an indescribable State. Sometimes we say it is empty, pure and clear. The Purity aspect is called *kadag*.²¹ The Clarity aspect is called *rigpa*. The aspect of Unification is called *nyime*,²² non-dual, inseparable.

This Nature is special in that it is perfected. What does this mean? It means that good things, bad things, everything appears spontaneously from this Nature. Nature doesn't do anything special, it doesn't create anything. But this Nature has power, and so pure, impure, good, bad – anything can appear from it. So that is what we call *lhundrub* or perfected. What arises from Nature depends on the person, [whether they are] following [the visions or remaining in the State].

So we explain that this real Nature has Clarity, Unification and Perfection. We mainly explain [these aspects]. So here we can say that the Nature aspect is *dharmakaya*. The Clarity aspect is *sambhogakaya* and the vision aspect of Perfection is *nirmanakaya*. Buddha has Body, Speech and Mind, and also the visible miraculous manifestations of *trulku*.²³

Many names can be given, but the main thing is for everybody to try to have their own experience. That is worthwhile. Don't say: 'Oh, I don't believe this' or something. This is Nature! You can't choose whether you believe it or not, you see, it is Nature, your Nature. You can't deny that!

¹⁸ Tib. rig pa / རིག་པ།

¹⁹ Tib. stong gsal dbyer med / མྱོང་གསལ་དབྱེར་མེད།

²⁰ Tib. lhun grub / ལུན་གུབ།

²¹ Tib. ka dag / ཀ་དག།

²² Tib. gnyis med / གཉིས་མེད།

²³ Tib. sprul sku / སྤྲུལ་སྐུ།

First, all of you, practise Guru Yoga intensely, as I said. Then, just afterwards, new people must look towards the thought. It is not necessary for advanced practitioners to keep looking back in this way. The thought will not stay for long but will soon disappear. After it has disappeared, don't add or detract anything, just keep [that State] as it is. Everybody should look there very clearly and intensively. That should be clear first; it serves a very great purpose.

At that time, people quite often have the thought or feeling; 'I am looking at the thought.' When you have this kind of sensation, immediately look back towards who is watching the thought. Just as you look at the thought, it disappears and there is an unspeakable state, so in the same way, look back to the 'owner' [of the thought] or the subject which is the watcher. This will equally disappear into the Natural State at the same time. Both subject and object are equally liberated back to Nature. This is Nature.

Afterwards, there is no subject, no object, no separation, no differences at all, they are both equally the Unspeakable State. That is the Basic Nature.

Keep in this State for as long as you can. After a while a thought will arise spontaneously; you can see it clearly. This thought has come. At that time, you must neither reject it, nor follow it. Just leave it as a shining reflection in the mirror. You don't need to do anything, just leave it, and it will be liberated and disappear soon afterwards. It liberates into the Nature which is also the Base²⁴ from which the thought appeared.

This State looks like water in the ocean. When you look at the ocean, waves are coming and coming and shaking the water, but no matter what happens, if you look in the water, you can see reflections. Whatever you see – both reflections and waves, whatever movements there are – everything is water. Nothing is far removed from the water. That is the example. In the same way, whatever arises from Nature and appears as spontaneous visions or thoughts – thoughts are also visions; any kind of emotion or thoughts, good or bad, are called visions²⁵ – everything is like waves or reflections in water. No matter what appears in the water, it is all wet, and in the same way, whatever visions or thoughts, good or bad [arise from Nature], they are all forms of the Unspeakable State.

It is very, very important to know this. Whatever appears from this Nature, whatever thoughts come – it doesn't matter whether they are good or bad,

²⁴ Tib. gzhi / གཞི།

²⁵ Tib. snang ba / སྟང་བ།

sad or happy – everything is a form of the Unspeakable State. You must trust and believe this; that is Nature. If you follow this State, this situation as it comes, then you see that our normal life and everything appears from this Nature, yet still you follow your own thoughts, your own intentions. Sometimes they are good, sometimes bad, happy or sad, but everything appears from this Nature. Nature is ‘taking the form’ of happiness or suffering, all kinds of consciousnesses and perceptions, everything. That is real, not just made or created by visualization; there is no need to change anything, no need to think anything. There is no excuse; that is real Nature. You can follow this and trust it, it is real Nature.

Illusion or Empty Form

The thoughts and perceptions which appear from Nature are just like waves in water. They are Empty Forms,²⁶ there is no reality, nothing exists inherently at all. Therefore we always say that everything is just like an illusion.²⁷ Nothing trustable exists anywhere, not at all. This is reality. This is the real Nature. It is essential to understand this. First of all you need to know what Nature itself is, and how visions arise. Visions are not far from Nature itself. Whatever visions appear, they are all Empty Forms. That is called ‘illusion.’

We think that our life, that all the phenomena of existence are concrete and real, [we point to] this and that. But in fact it is just as though we were measuring the waves, concentrating on how high or low they are without thinking about the water, about the fact that they are wet. It is as though we are just measuring whatever we see. That is bad behaviour, a bad habit; we have been following ignorance²⁸ for too long, and that is a mistake. As far as you follow this way, you will never find the truth at all. It is like measuring whether the waves are high or low, but it is useless, you are not checking the background, so you will never find the essence at all. It is the same.

Now, as for the second part [the special Dzogchen preliminaries], I am going to follow the teaching [text].

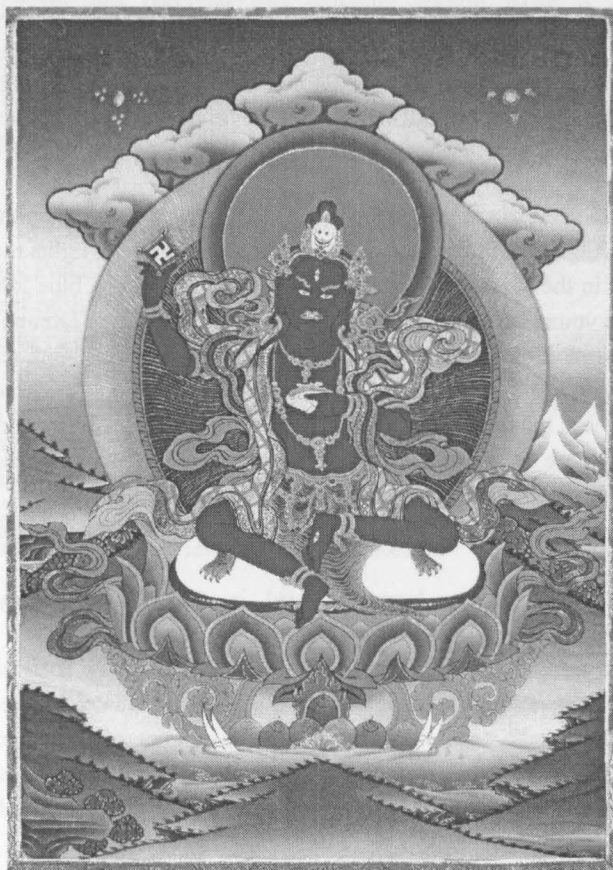
²⁶ Tib. stong gzugs / མྱོང་གཟུགས།

²⁷ Tib. sgyu ma / སྒྱུ་མ།

²⁸ Tib. ma rig pa / མ་རིག་པ།

རྫོགས་ཆེན་མེ་ལོང་བདུན་པ་བཞུགས་སོ།།

SEVEN MIRRORS OF DZOGCHEN



ལྷ་ཆེན་དྲན་པ་ནམ་མཁའ། / Lachen Drenpa Namkha

Three Drenpa Namkhas

I have been asked to teach the *Cycle of Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen*. This was composed by Drenpa Namkha.²⁹ Drenpa Namkha was a very important early *siddha*³⁰ in the Bönpo tradition who was responsible for preserving Yungdrung Bön in very difficult times. In particular, this tradition was preserved and has survived up until now through the methods, power and knowledge of Drenpa Namkha. We have to pay respect to him very often because [he preserved] the important points of the teachings, and the lineages. We have not just had one Cultural Revolution, the one perpetrated by the Chinese in the present day – long before, we have often had difficulties and revolutions and the lineage of this Dzogchen teaching nearly dried up. But it was preserved and has survived, right up until now.

There were three people called by the name Drenpa Namkha. The first Drenpa Namkha appeared miraculously in a lotus. Luminous lights radiated from *dharmakaya* in the form of a white A which reached inside a blue lotus and then the form of a young boy emerged from this A. That is the first Drenpa Namkha.

He took rebirth five times in succession, and then his sixth reincarnation was a prince of Zhang Zhung called Drenpa Namkha. That is the second Drenpa Namkha. He was contemporary with Shakyamuni in India, in centuries long ago. People know more or less when Shakyamuni lived. Some say this second Drenpa Namkha lived a bit earlier, some say he lived a bit later, but anyhow, we are not doing research work here to discover the birth date for Zhang Zhung Drenpa Namkha.

The third Drenpa Namkha lived in the eighth century and was contemporary with the Tibetan King Trisong Deutsen.³¹

This teaching – the *Cycle of Seven Mirrors* – was composed by this Tibetan Drenpa Namkha, the third one. That is mentioned here [in the text]. How did he compose it? The source of this text is the essence of Dzogchen, from the traditions of Drusha, Gyagar, and Zhang Zhung;³² he condensed all these teachings into one text in seven chapters, and that is called the *Cycle of Seven Mirrors*. He

²⁹ Tib. Dran pa nam mkha' / རྩན་པ་ནམ་མཁའ།

³⁰ Tib. grub thob / རྒུབ་ཐོབ།

³¹ Tib. Khri srong lde'u btsan / ཁྲི་སྟོང་ལྡེ་འབཙན།

³² Tib. Bru sha gyag gar zhang zhung gi rdzogs chen / འབྲུ་ཤ་རྩ་གཡག་མཆོད་ཆེན་གྱི་རྩོག་ཆེན། Drusha is Gilgit, Gyagar is India.

took the essence of all the important teachings of various traditions of Dzogchen and put them in one text, and it says that this is the important essence of all the teachings of Dzogchen.

Generally in Dzogchen, there are traditions of external, internal, and secret teachings as well as many lineages, and this is a special teaching composed from these sources.

Whoever has received this teaching should write it in beautiful calligraphy in gold, keep it and read it on important occasions. Keep it on your body and that will be of very great blessing. If you practise this Dzogchen, you will be as if gilded. When you die, keep this [text] on your body and if you are cremated, burn it with your body.

The Seven Mirrors [Contents]:

I. Preliminary Practices;

II. The Mirror of the Dzogchen View;

III. The Mirror of Meditation;

IV. The Mirror of Result or Fruit of Dzogchen;

V. The Mirror of Activities – how these are connected with the practice of the Dzogchen View;

VI. The Mirror of Visions – this explains various different kinds of visions [of *samsara* and the Buddha Realms];

VII. The Final Goal of the View, Practice and Result.

Chapter I: Dzogchen Preliminary Practices³³

The Dzogchen Preliminaries are divided into three categories:

1. Avoiding the conditions of worldly-living life;
2. Venerating the Gurus and Masters as you would your head;
3. Keeping the *samaya*³⁴ and empowerments you have received very tightly. When you have received [*samayas*], you keep them all as tightly as possible.

These are the three categories.

1. Avoiding worldly-living life

There are three subdivisions:

- Avoiding too much attachment or desire towards relatives or property;
- Avoiding unnecessary activities with body, speech and mind;
- Avoiding desire for any [sentient] being, including friends and relatives, as these are impermanent, temporary and soon afterwards you will be separated from them.

These are the three points regarding avoiding worldly living conditions.

The eight worldly concerns

This means [we should realize] that such activities are not very useful, they are for worldly living conditions. There are Eight Worldly Preoccupations by which people are always bound:

i) & ii) – people always eagerly expect to find or receive wealth, and are worried about losing it;

³³ The Tibetan text is structured in such a way that this first chapter is not actually numbered with a Tibetan character. The Tibetan text simply reads: Tib. sngon du 'gro ba'i rim pa ni / སྟོན་དུ་འགྲོ་བའི་རིམ་པ་ནི། - 'Regarding the stages of preliminary practice.' The Seven Mirrors per se and the actual numbering start from the second chapter.

³⁴ Tib. dam tshig / དམ་ཚིག་

iii) & iv) – people are always expecting to be praised and are worried about being criticised;

v) & vi) – people are always hoping to have a good reputation and image and are worried about losing them;

vii) & viii) – people are always expecting happiness, peace and bliss, and are afraid of losing them and experiencing negative feelings.

So there are four pairs of positive and negative aspects making *jigten böngye*, Eight Worldly Preoccupations.³⁵ These are the main ties of worldly living conditions.

Two responsibilities

The text says this as though it is easy to avoid all these [worldly concerns] but it is not so easy – generally a person attending the [teachings] and practising has two responsibilities³⁶ and needs certain living conditions during his/her lifetime, at least they need some food or [basic] conditions. Here, however, it means that it is not so useful to have attachment or high expectations. That leads to competition, it makes a lot of extra suffering and misery. That means you have to judge; whatever living conditions you have should be just enough. That means you have to measure yourself. You should have the right balance with not much extra. Have fewer expectations and judge what is really necessary. You have to take these two responsibilities: this lifetime, and the time after death. It is very important. According to the text it looks easy, but it is not very easy to put this into practice. For your lifetime you at least need [some basics]. It is difficult to survive just by yourself. You will either be starving or always living life as a homeless person. It is very difficult, you see. Maybe in early times conditions were different. If you read the biographies of early *siddhas*, you will see that they could practise, they could leave everything and go into solitude. But the [cultural] background [was different] – they knew that whoever saw a person going into a cave or a place of solitude would certainly provide for them – not very richly, but at least their simple needs would be provided for, so the practitioner didn't have much problem. So the text [explains] according to this system and this time. However, nowadays it is not possible [to do this]. So you have to judge, you have to think for yourself [what

³⁵ Tib. 'jigs rten bon bgyad / འཇིགས་རྟེན་བོན་བརྒྱད།

³⁶ Yongdzin Rinpoche often speaks of a practitioner's two responsibilities: to find suitable circumstances for the current life and to prepare for the next life through practice.

you have to do to take care of your needs], but don't hope for any luxuries. Don't compete too much or you'll bind yourself to sufferings and miseries. You have to be careful about that.

Then secondly it is important to remember that your life is limited and will come to an end. That will certainly come, whether you wish it or not; you have no choice at all, it will come. At that time, don't just think in the normal way that it doesn't matter what happens. That situation, [death], will come to you, certainly, and you have to think and prepare for that. This kind of teaching is a preparation for yourself. It doesn't make [your] economic [situation any better], it doesn't bring you a good reputation – nothing much.

2. Venerating the Lama

The second part says that you should venerate your Guru and Lama as you would your head. There are three subdivisions:

- To obey whatever your Master gives you;
- On your side, you should offer whatever valuable things you have to the Guru or the divinities with respect;
- You have to make an effort to try to practise whatever teachings you have heard.

These three all come under the subdivision of how to respect your Master.

Obeying your Master

In this case, when you receive teachings from a Master, you have to check that he is qualified to teach whatever teachings you are attending – Dzogchen, Sutra or Tantra. This is very important. There are specific guidelines for each [series of] teaching regarding the qualities of speech, knowledge etc. a Master should have. There are many things to check, and it is very important to find a qualified Master.

When you have found one, then you can follow him, trust him and respect him, so you can obey whatever advice he gives you. Otherwise, if a person is not a qualified Master, then whatever he says to you will be misguided, so if you follow [his advice], you will waste your life. So it is very important to measure [your teacher] at the beginning and find a qualified one; then you can obey the advice or teaching you have received from him.

Practising your Master's teachings

A follower who has received teachings from his Master must not pick and choose saying: 'I can do this' or 'I can't do this.' You shouldn't divide the teachings and decide by yourself. Once you have found a qualified Master and received teachings from him, you have to follow them; you cannot choose your own way. If you do, then that is going against the teachings – you are not completely following his advice. So you have broken his instructions because you have only chosen some part of the teachings he has given you. That is not the right way.

3. Keeping samaya promises

There are three subdivisions:

- Whatever *samaya* or faith you have received, you have to keep it carefully, tightly, clearly and purely;
- When you receive an empowerment or initiation, at that time you have to make a promise, and receive *samaya*, so you have to know, keep and practise whatever [promises] you have taken and received at that time; this is important.
- Realizing the Natural State is the final initiation. Firstly you have practised and experienced some part [such as the special Dzogchen preliminaries], then afterwards you have to be introduced properly by the Master. So then your experience, what [you have read] in qualified teaching [texts and what your Master says] – these three must agree with each other without contradicting each other at all.

Normally, this last point, the Introduction to the Natural State, is the fourth level of initiation in most high Tantras, and in Dzogchen in particular. So when you practise and receive all these, you have to have a clear understanding of the Natural State. That is one thing.

But it is not enough just to know this by yourself and think you have understood and realized the Natural State. Firstly, you have to have your own experience, clearly. Secondly, you have to receive the introduction from your qualified Master; and thirdly, you have to verify [your understanding] with a text containing real, qualified teachings. These three points must all agree with each other without any of them going against each other at all. This is very important for Dzogchen, generally; you have to know what Dzogchen means. Otherwise, if

you are easily satisfied by whatever you yourself have made or just because you wish it to be like this or that, then in fact there are several [mistaken] views of Dzogchen³⁷ which are not Dzogchen at all. So this makes a mess and your own meditation is useless, worthless, so you will be disappointed.

To whom this Dzogchen cycle can be taught

This *Cycle of Seven Mirrors* may be taught to qualified pupils who are allowed to attend and receive these teachings. Once you have received them, you have to keep them in mind very tidily. This is as regards the qualified followers and practising.

If a person is not qualified but temporarily attends and listens, do not even tell them the name of this teaching. This teaching is guarded by inner and outer *dakinis* and Guardians who have protected them and kept them tidily up until now, and they will punish both a teacher and pupil who are not qualified yet still pretend to teach or listen; it will not be good for either the teacher or the followers. So you have to be careful.

That is the advice [contained in] the first Chapter.

³⁷ I.e. the mistaken views of Dzogchen discussed in *mDzad pa po Dag po Dran pa Nam mkha'*, *sNyan rgyud Rin po che nam mkha' 'phrul mdzod drang nges gnyis kyi gzhung cha lag dang bcas pa bzhugs*, Chapter: *rDzogs pa chen po snyan rgyud rin po che nam mkha' 'phrul gyi mdzod chen gyi 'grel ba bzhugs so* (Kathmandu: Library of Triten Norbutse Monastery, Deb phreng gsum pa 2004, First Edition), p. 260, lines 8-14; and *sPyi rgyud chen mo nam mkha' dkar po ye khri mtha' sel gyi gsung pod bzhugs*, Chapter: *Ye khri mtha' sel rgyud las dgos 'dod gsal byed bshad bzhi'i mchong*, (Kathmandu: Library of Triten Norbutse Monastery, Deb phreng 20, 2005) p. 314. For explanations in English see Yongdzin Lopön Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. *Namkha Truldzö: the Commentary on the Precious Oral Transmission of the Great Perfection which is called the Treasury of Space*, *Shenten Dargye Ling*, 2-21 August 2005, Trnscr. & ed. Carol Ermakova and Dmitry Ermakov (Blou, Shenten Dargye Ling, 2006), Week I, pp. 7-14; *ibid.* pp. 151-164; Gyaltsen, Shardza Tashi. *Commentary by Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Heart Drops of Dharmakaya: Dzogchen Practice of the Bön Tradition* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1993), pp. 73, Footnote 33.

Chapter II: The Mirror of the Essence of the Dzogchen View

First of all, everybody should think for themselves. This means: you should look towards your thought. Mostly, you will have heard people saying that the mind is empty; it is quite popular to speak about this and say it is the View of Dzogchen or something. But if you follow this, it has nothing to do with the Dzogchen View at all. So you will not have received any real teachings at all, you are just going your own way, just thinking it is empty. This means nothing! So it is better to try to realize what this Dzogchen teaching means. It means the realization of the Nature of Mind.

First of all, what is the mind? You have to realize this.

Then secondly, you have to look towards the mind and then search for the Nature of Mind. Without knowing or realizing this, we all know we have a mind, and in fact whatever we think is actually our mind. Sometimes good things, sometimes bad things, whatever you are thinking is your mind. In this case, look towards your thought, your thinking. Who is looking? Where are they looking? In fact, this is just [a manner of] speaking; there is no subject, no object. There are not two parts to the mind – the mind is only one mind. We speak about ‘looking,’ about who is looking, where they are looking and so on, but this is just a normal way of speaking. In this case, you have to look carefully towards a [spontaneously arising] thought which you have not created deliberately by yourself. What can you see? What can you think afterwards? Look at this first of all.

For today, look and think [about your] mind. Don’t say you don’t know [your own mind]; that is quite shameful. If you don’t know your own mind, then who knows it? People often say they don’t know. But when we talk about the Nature of Mind, that means your *own* mind, what it looks like. So look carefully.

If I say: ‘look for your mind,’ maybe somebody will go to the mountains to search, or somebody else will go to the seaside or somewhere, and maybe they will find something interesting and show it; but I don’t mean this way. Look back towards your thoughts, and see what whatever you have found – your thinking – looks like. Try to do something.

Guru Yoga, Refuge and bodhichitta practice

Meanwhile, for today, the important thing is to try to do Guru Yoga and practise for as much time as you have today. Besides this, you can recite the four sentences [of the Guru Yoga prayer] we recited this morning as much as you can

I have already mentioned Guru Yoga, and, if you are able to, recite the verses which we pray here. The first four lines are for Guru Yoga, the second four lines are for Refuge, and the third four lines are for *bodhichitta*.

So you should be able to manage to recite these at least two or three times every day. This reminds you [about the teachings]. Obviously, it is OK and is easy for you to manage to do this during this [retreat] time, but [during the course of your] normal [daily routine], this can be helpful, too. It can remind you [of the teachings], so it is necessary for you to do this, not only temporarily. [So you should think:] ‘I myself always wish benefit for this life and also for the next stage,’³⁸ which will certainly come, no doubt.’ So this can be helpful for any time. It is not necessary to read this in the Tibetan way; you can read it in the translation into your own languages – I have already translated all these sentences. There is no need to follow the Tibetan; if you want to chant them, then that is different.

That is the first step for trying to receive blessings. Meanwhile, look towards your thoughts. Don’t expect anything strange to come or appear or something like that. The real situation [of your mind] is the State and we can discuss this over the next few days. Otherwise, if you are just listening, that is not so useful. I am reading a Dzogchen text but you have no background so no traces [of understanding will remain]. Then, what is the use?

Direct Introduction into the Natural State

Now I will teach according to the text, and for this, it is very important to realize the Natural State. What does the Natural State mean? Dzogchen [teaching] explains step by step, from the beginning, how to realize and develop [the knowledge of] the Natural State.

There are many natures, you see – organic nature,³⁹ the nature of phenomenal existence, temporary nature, absolute nature – there are so many different natures. For example, the nature of fire is that it burns, the nature of water is that it is wet. These are temporary nature, these are organic.

³⁸ I.e. death and the afterlife.

³⁹ A reference to the popularity of organic products.

There are Nine Ways in our tradition, and each of them tries to realize Nature; that is the final goal, the thing which is important to know, so they try to do something to know and learn this. But the final goal, the final truth, the Natural State, is only realized by the way of Dzogchen. It is not very easy; it is difficult to trust. It seems as though it is too easy to understand, as though it is too close, very familiar, and yet still it is not easy to recognize it. So we have to do something to try to know our Nature, otherwise the rest of the teachings are not very useful if you have no foundation of recognizing the Natural State.

Most of the people who have been hearing what I have been teaching for years and years may have realized this quite well, but I still want to say this again; it may remind you.

So, what to do? With your eyes closed, everyone should now try to visualize a white A / ཨ in front of you. Think of A intensely, until I give the signal. Do this. Everybody is sitting nicely in the normal posture with five points, with their spine straight and their legs crossed. Then secondly, focus on the A in front of you, at eye level. Focus on this intensely.

[Everyone does this. After a few minutes, Rinpoche claps his hands and says: 'Stop!']

OK. You were focussing intensely on the A, then maybe everyone experienced something just after I said 'stop.' [In that instant] you were not thinking anything new, you were in an unspeakable state for a while. You must try and understand that clearly. You must try to think clearly: [create] any kind of thought, then look there suddenly, and observe. Just after [you look back towards the thought], the thought disappears. After this, for a little while, you have an inexplicable state, yet your feelings are clear and pure. You must realize this yourself. If you try to remain in Nature, this State is not influenced by any thinking; don't think anything. When I said 'stop' you were not thinking anything, you were not influenced by any new thoughts, the past thoughts had gone. In between, there is an inexpressible State. That must be clear. That is the beginning, a kind of introduction to the Nature of Mind.

When this Nature is a little clear, [when you are in] this unspeakable state for a little while, it still looks as though there is something watching, as though there were somebody behind watching this State; this is your feeling. So when you have this feeling and think there is something watching this State, at that time you

should look back again, towards whoever is watching. The watcher, and what it is watching. As for where or what it is watching, we have already [established] we cannot find anything, only an unspeakable state, and at the same time, if we look back towards who is seeing this unspeakable state, they must both dissolve into this unspeakable state together. There is no separation at all between object and subject. They are the same state, the unspeakable state; you must check this by yourself. That is the beginning, the foundation. If you are not clear with this then the rest of the teachings will be spoilt.

Distinguishing Nature from ordinary unspeakable states

Everybody has the experience of working hard and then stopping suddenly for a rest. At that moment you have some sort of unspeakable state. It looks like this, but I have to explain more; this is not the real Natural State, but it is connected with Nature. So you have to think that this is similar. The important thing is that whether you look towards the thought or not – it is not always necessary to do this – the State is very much similar, all the time, any time; if you realize the Natural State, it is with you any time, it is never far. It is with you all the time. It looks like an unspeakable state, you can't explain it saying: 'this is empty,' 'this is clear'; it is impossible to explain. We sometimes say that the feeling at that moment is *hedewa*⁴⁰ or something [like that]. It looks like an unspeakable state, but your feeling is very clear and you are not influenced by thinking or perception, nothing. I am repeatedly saying: you have to realize this clearly – that is Nature. It is very important for each individual person to have experience of this by themselves.

Normally everybody here [will have heard of] *rigpa* or Awareness, or Self-Originated Wisdom,⁴¹ or the Natural State⁴² or the Nature of *dharmakaya*⁴³ or Buddha-Nature.⁴⁴ There are many things to say, but the real meaning is only that State. That State cannot be created by perception at all; it is completely beyond perception and consciousness. It is not easy to understand. Everywhere in the

⁴⁰ Tib. had de ba / ཧད་དེ་བ།

⁴¹ Tib. rang 'byung ye shes / རང་འབྱུང་ཡེ་ཤེས།

⁴² Tib. gnas lugs / གནས་ལུགས།

⁴³ Tib. bon sku'i snying po / བོན་སུའི་སྙིང་པོ།

⁴⁴ Tib. bde gshegs snying po / བདེ་གསེགས་སྙིང་པོ།

universe, whatever you learn, all knowledge is usually connected with perception but, suddenly, here it says it is beyond perception. So it is not very easy [to realize]. People who have experience [in studying], especially very knowledgeable people, trust thoughts and perception, but here it suddenly says: beyond thought. So it is not very easy to understand. But if you trust this Nature, then everything is there – Nature, Clarity, Self-Awareness,⁴⁵ Self-Originated Wisdom – everything is only this State. There are many explanations in the text, too. [For example], *kadag* which means Purity, *lhundrub* which means Perfection, *saltong zungjug*,⁴⁶ which means Unification – Clarity and Empty Nature are united. Many things are said, but the important thing is to simply remain in Nature; everything is in there. You don't need to split it up into each of these pieces, it is not necessary to follow the names. That is the first point.

Then secondly, when you are resting normally and just relaxing, that state looks similar, it is also an unspeakable state. Your task or problem has gone, the next one has not started, and in between there is an unspeakable state for some time. This looks similar [to the Natural State]. Another [similar condition] is when you suddenly wake up from deep sleep. At that moment there is also a kind of unspeakable state, but these two are not the Natural State at all. When you are resting and having leisure time, that is one unspeakable state; another is when you wake up from a deep sleep, this is also similar to *hedewa* but these two are not the Natural State. Why not? Because the aspect of Clarity is lacking. This is not very easy [to distinguish]. Don't mistake these two states. In fact, there are many more things which can happen, but don't be mistaken.

Method of correction

When you have some doubt about whether you know the Natural State or not, about whether you have recognized it clearly, the only thing to do is similar to what I did before: you can suddenly shout: 'PHAT' very loudly. Then just afterwards, don't change anything. Keep it as it is. That shows you Nature very clearly. That is a correction. Don't do this very often. But you have to do this after

⁴⁵ Tib. rang bzhin, gsal ba, rang rig / རང་བཞིན། གསལ་བ། རང་རིག

⁴⁶ Tib. gsal stong zung 'jug / གསལ་སྟོང་རྩུང་འཇུག

practising Guru Yoga when you have doubts as to whether your own presence is Nature or not. But don't do this very often, otherwise you might upset someone.

Nature and Awareness

That State is called the Self-Originated Natural State, and Awareness or *rigpa* is not separate from it, from the Natural State; they are together. Nature is Awareness, Awareness is Nature. They are inseparable, only the names are different. In Tibetan terms, 'rigpa' means consciousness or perception, so if you follow [the words], that leads you in completely the wrong way. We very often use the same name, the same word, but the meaning is completely different, even opposite. So these things are not very easy. Even if you are reading something or following, if you don't try to gain your own experience then that leads to mistakes. So you always have to be careful. Many people say that 'awareness' is something seeing something clearly. But here, there is nothing to see yet still it is Awareness. Awareness is Nature; there is no separation in the Dzogchen way.

Chapter III: The Mirror of Meditation

For as long as you can keep on in the unspeakable state, that is pure meditation. That is what meditation means, especially in Dzogchen. Keep in that State for as long as possible, without any disturbances, clearly. Keep on, and that is real meditation in the Natural State. It is Dzogchen meditation.

When you do this, when you practise more and more and become more and more familiar and stable with this State without adding anything, with nothing missing, then that is the only way. Just trying to remain in this State stably and being familiar with it – that is the only thing to do. In the beginning, it is not very easy to keep on for a long time, but you have to try hard. Only keep on, remain in that State, become familiar with it and stable.

Integrating Dzogchen meditation with daily life

Then what to do for normal life and phenomenal existence? How to deal with this? When you are more and more familiar with this State, you can see, hear, and taste all the phenomena of existence, everything is as normal, but if your State is stable and familiar, then it is like a looking glass, a mirror: everything appears as shining reflections. These reflections are all called 'illusion.' You don't need to follow

each appearance, neither do you need to stop anything, they don't make you happy or sad, nothing. They are merely like shining reflections which come into a mirror. Your State is very stable, like a mirror. Everything can come; you don't stop anything, you don't reject anything, you don't accept anything – nothing. So that is real illusion. If you reach this level of stability in the State, then you have no desire, you don't want good things nor do you reject bad things; you do not make any choice. It is just like a looking glass, you see. Things come and go, but they don't make any change to your side. That is real practice, that is the purpose of [practising] the Dzogchen Way.

Disturbances to meditation

When you remain in this State and meditate, there can be three disturbances. There are so many different disturbances which can come, but they are all subsumed into three. This applies to all kinds of meditation, not just Dzogchen meditation:

1. *Göpa* – agitation
2. *Mugpa* – drowsiness
3. *Jyingwa* – strengthlessness.⁴⁷

These three disturb meditation very much. So first of all you have to recognize them as your enemy. If you don't know where your enemy is or what he is like, then it is no use to just try to make war.

1. Agitation

Any kind of meditation may be disturbed by agitation. That means the normal way of worrying about things, especially things connected with business. These [thoughts] are always developing and even wake you up at night so you cannot sleep properly, you see. Everybody knows this agitation already. But there are two types of agitation:

a) Rough agitation.

Everybody knows the rough one very clearly.

b) Very subtle agitation.

⁴⁷ Tib. rgod pa, rmug pa, 'bying ba / རྫོད་པ། རྟུག་པ། རྟིང་པ།

When you are keeping in meditation, after some time you realize there are some movements going on.

There are two points here:

- First of all you have to recognize the disturbances,
- Then secondly you have to know how to purify them.

How to purify rough agitation

It is not very easy to purify this. Well, perhaps it is easy if you have practised with the Preliminary Practices such as Refuge, *bodhichitta*, Impermanence and so on. If you have been thinking about all these, then this can slowly, slowly stop normal agitation and make it weaker. It is a kind of medicine, and you can use whatever is necessary.

How to purify subtle agitation

It is not necessary to stop or purify anything here. Once you realize you are disturbed by subtle agitation, don't do anything, just continuously try to keep in meditation, and it will disappear. It can be purified by itself. It is not very necessary to do anything more.

2. Drowsiness

You start meditating but soon afterwards you may lose your clarity and this leads you to dullness and soon afterwards it looks like sleeping. Either there is no Clarity, no [real Dzogchen] meditation, or [there is a meditation but] this just disturbs you and you don't [manage to] realize much [during your practice session]. These both lead you to a very dull condition and you are very sleepy. Or even if you are not particularly sleepy, you are very dull. So sometimes there is this deviation of dullness [while you are] meditating.

If you have something like this, first of all you have to realize you are disturbed, then secondly you have to try to purify this.

How to purify drowsiness

To purify dullness you have to check why it arises, from which cause it comes. It can either come from drinking alcohol, or from working hard, or from using some

drugs or something. These are all poisons which disturb your concentration in meditation. So if you find the cause, then you can use whichever method is best to purify that and bring you back to the [Natural] State. People who have more detailed experience of this know more about it; I don't know much about [drugs].

3. Strengthlessness

It is quite difficult [to recognize this]; many meditators make this mistake and it leads to the destruction of your own real meditation; it spoils your meditation. What does it look like? How does it come? As I said earlier, when you have been working hard and then have a rest, at that time you have a feeling like *hedewa*. There is no Clarity at all, no strength and no Clarity. You have lost your strength or clarity. If you realize this, you need to try to come back to the real [meditation]. Or you can suddenly and loudly say: 'PHAT' as I said before; that can purify this. It is very difficult to distinguish whether you have this disturbance or whether your meditation is the real one. So you must check very carefully; serious meditators must first know how they are disturbed by strengthlessness, and then secondly, once they have realized they are disturbed, they try to purify it, otherwise their meditation is spoilt; you are wasting your time.

What does strengthlessness look like? As I have said, when you are resting after work, or when you wake up from a deep sleep, these are states without Clarity. *Hedewa* is there, but there is no Clarity. Nature cannot be compared with this; once you have realized the Natural State clearly, [you will understand that] these two are not at all the same. When you are resting normally or relaxing, Clarity is not there, and that is called 'delusion.' If you follow this, then you are deluded and your meditation is spoilt.

So when you realize you are disturbed by strengthlessness, try to come back. How? Just remember your meditation or your Natural State, then that is enough. Just remembering is enough, there is no need to do anything more.

It is very important firstly to recognize these disturbances and secondly to purify them, otherwise your meditation will be destroyed by them.

Methods for maintaining the Natural State

Once you have realized this Natural State clearly, how can you maintain it continuously? There are methods you can use, depending on whether you are a lesser, medium or advanced practitioner. Generally, whatever methods you use to

try to maintain your [practice] and make it stable, first of all it is important to try to be sure that your [realization of the] Natural State is always clear. When it is clear, secondly, try to be stable and keep on in the right way for a longer time. There are three different methods for this.

I. Chain of three seed syllables

It is not easy for beginners to remain in the Natural State for a long time; they try to keep their meditation but are always disturbed by agitation, drowsiness or strengthlessness, so here is a method to try to help train the mind. This method uses three seed syllables.

1. Sit down in the five-pointed posture.

2. Visualize your body as the Tibetan letter or HUNG / ཧུང་. If you don't know the Tibetan letter, just think of the Latin ones, H-U-N-G. Don't think about where your head is, or where your eye is or something; just generally think that your body is in the form of HUNG.

3. Inside your heart, visualize a crystal-coloured white A / ཨ. Again, if you don't know the Tibetan letter you can visualize a Latin one, a white one.

At the tip of your nose, visualize a blue HUNG.

In the secret channel,⁴⁸ down below, visualize a [bluish-green] YAM / ཡམ་.

Visualize these three seed syllables clearly.

4. Inhale strongly. Rays of five-coloured light rise up from the A in your heart level, ascend up the central channel and come down to the nose, where they reach the blue HUNG.

The blue HUNG also emanates rays of luminous lights. These radiate out, passing outside your body, enter the secret channel [from below], and reach the YAM. The YAM is a bluish-green.

[Luminous lights then radiate up from the YAM, through the central channel, and reach the white A at your heart.]

⁴⁸ I.e. in the anus.

Hold your breath quite strongly, and the lights circulate round from the three syllables three times in one retention of the breath.

5. Exhale, and straight afterwards, remain in Nature.

Repeat this three times. Each time, you hold your breath and the lights circulate, so they circulate nine times altogether.

After each circulation, try to keep on in the meditation of the Natural State for as long as you could.⁴⁹

Benefits of this practice

It is better for beginners to do something, and this can help to protect from disturbances.

If you do this quite often, it will help your concentration with Nature and protect from disturbances, so you will develop the signs of *shamatha*,⁵⁰ such as *dewa* – Bliss,⁵¹ Emptiness, and Clarity.

This is a method for developing your meditation. If you are an advanced practitioner and do this for half a month – i.e. for fifteen days – your own meditation will develop much more. Also, it can increase your lifespan. For example, if you are fifty years old and practise with this method, it can double your lifespan. That means a hundred years! It is very important, if you want a longer life.

When you practise, this is very great and useful and can bring clairvoyance, and you can also show different forms or emanations.

This is not a very essential practice but it is a method you can use to try to remain [in the Natural State] for longer. That means you are training your mind to be stable.

⁴⁹ In reply to a question about where to visualize the central channel if we have visualized our body as a blue HUNG, Rinpoche reiterates that, as he said at the outset, we should not concern ourselves with where our eye, or head etc. is. "HUNG has no channels! That is the right question!"

⁵⁰ Tib. zhi gnas / ཞི་གནས།

⁵¹ Tib. bde ba / བདེ་བ།

It is essential to maintain [your meditation in] the Natural State between [practice sessions]. That is the essential purpose of doing meditation, but this is only a method, don't think it is the essential practice.

2. Wheel [Parasol]

There is a method for when your meditation is disturbed by too much agitation. In this case, you have to visualize a big wheel in space.⁵² You sit in the centre of the wheel in the five-pointed posture. Then you inhale and that makes the wheel slowly begin to turn. The text says it turns to the left, and that means it goes this way, anti-clockwise. Most people say this is the Bönpo way. It spins slowly at first, then faster and faster. Then it spontaneously spins too fast. You are in the centre, and you don't think too much because it is spinning too much, so meanwhile you don't think too much because you have to be careful not to fall down or get giddy. This is the method.

Before you use this method, you need to check your health. Otherwise, if someone who has a *lungne*⁵³ does this, it will disturb their health. However, if your health is OK but your meditation is not very stable, then this can be a great help for developing your meditation. Why? Because meanwhile your thoughts are concentrating so you don't have much time for agitation; you always have to think intensely, you see, because it is spinning too fast.

That is the teaching, but this method is not for everybody so you have to check yourself whether you should practise this or not. If someone has a *lungne*, then this can aggravate the problem and lead to serious disturbances such as madness, you see, seriously. It says here that you must check your health and age.

⁵² The text actually speaks of a parasol Tib. gdugs / གདུགས། This method is called Tib. pur ra / ཕུར་ར། in the text. The word is of non-Tibetan provenance and has probably been retained from the languages of Drusha or Zhang Zhung.

⁵³ Tib. lung / ལྷུང་ནད། – wind disease or nervous disturbance. Rinpoche added: 'How can a *lung* problem be diagnosed? If you take an X-ray, the doctor will say you are fine, that there is nothing wrong. But there can be many problems – the person always feels sick, vomits, has headaches. There can be many problems, but they are all caused by the *lung*, you see. Or the person cannot sleep. Everybody is integrated with *lung* or wind, and with bile and phlegm (Tib. mkhris pa, bad kan / མཁྲིས་པ། བད་ཀན།). Everybody has these, but if one of them is out of balance or rises up, then that causes health problems. *Lung* cannot be seen by X-rays or anything like that; it can only be checked by pulse diagnosis.

These are methods to try and forcefully train our mind to remain gentle and peaceful. These are methods for meditators.

3. *Karra*⁵⁴

If it is not easy for someone to control their mind and they are always agitated – especially about worldly living conditions such as finances and so on – they must train using a visualization.

First of all, sit in the five-pointed posture in the normal way, and then just visualize your head is cut off, like in the *chöd*⁵⁵ practice. Don't think about anything, your head is simply cut off and thrown aside. Then your right and left hands are cut off, all the fingers and joints are cut off and thrown away. Then what remains after all this? You can't think anything, everything has been cut up and is lying around in pieces, only pieces exist. So then what is the point in having too much ego, in saving things, in having too much desire or going after reputation? What is useful? What is the purpose? What remains? Think about this for a while. There are only pieces around you. Who is thinking? Only your mind exists, the rest of your body is just lying around you in pieces.

This is another method [of correction] if you have too much desire connected with your living conditions – reputation, wealth, health, everything.

Do this visualization and think about this several times. After all, everything is in pieces, so what remains? Only the Mind. Mind [in this case] means the Natural State. That is what 'exists' finally. This is the real one.

If you do this visualization and practice, it can help to lessen your desire and attachment to living conditions. Normally we have too much desire and are deeply attached to our own body, but if you do this practice more and more, then your desire will lessen spontaneously and so you will not try to keep things.

This practice can also protect you from outside disturbances; it can be helpful. If someone wants something from you, [you can think:] 'I am already in pieces, so whoever needs something can take what they want.'

This practice can also be helpful if you have too much attachment to your friends or relatives or property; it can be helpful if you have too much desire and attachment and grasp [at] each other.

⁵⁴ Tib. kar ra / ཀར་ར། – this again is a non-Tibetan name.

⁵⁵ Tib. gcod / གཙོད།

After each practice session, try to keep on in the meditation of the Natural State.

These are not essential practices, but you must do them if you have too much agitation. Do seven sessions and see if it is helpful or not. If not, you can do more sessions, but the general extent is to do seven sessions.

4. *Phowa* – Transfer of Consciousness

The main section [of this chapter] deals with the meditation of the Natural State. The second [section deals with] how to purify the three disturbances if they arise. There are various practices for this. In particular, I have also taught the three exercises mentioned here for purifying our meditation: firstly, the exercise with the three seed syllables; secondly, the spinning wheel of luminous light; and thirdly, cutting our body. I have already taught these three, and now I am going to teach the fourth, which is *phowa*.⁵⁶

First you have to learn these methods properly, and then secondly you have to keep them to hand; they are not essential practices. When you need to use one – either to develop your meditation or to purify one of the disturbances – you have to check which one you need to practise, and use it. There are four methods here.

Phowa in Tantra and Dzogchen

There are many different traditions and teachings on *phowa* according to the path of Tantra or the path of Dzogchen; there are many different methods of *phowa* but this one here only belongs to the Dzogchen Way.

Phowa and *bardo*⁵⁷ [methods] are used in both Dzogchen and Tantra; the names are similar but both the real, essential practice and the purpose are different, not the same. In this case, I am not mentioning the Sutra way because [they have] neither *phowa* nor *bardo*. The Sutra tradition or School is very much against *phowa* or *bardo*. Why? They think that you cannot transfer your own mind to another person. If it were possible, then why didn't Buddha do it? He promised to help all sentient beings, he promised not to leave them in the sufferings and miseries of *samsara* any longer. That is what he promised. But it is not possible,

⁵⁶ Tib. 'pho ba / འཕོ་བ།

⁵⁷ Tib. bar do / བར་དོ།

therefore so many sentient beings are left behind after Buddha [attained *parinirvana*]. So it is not possible – that is the premise [of Sutra]. How could you put the mind of one person into another person? This is inconceivable, it is not possible, so that is the reasoning [of Sutra against *bardo* and *phowa* practices]; there are more reasons and challenges, so this is just to give you a brief idea.

As for Tantra, it is quite important to practise both *phowa* and *bardo*.⁵⁸ Why? Because it is not possible to attain the final goal of Buddhahood in one lifetime [according to Tantra], so meanwhile you have to control things yourself so you will not just freely follow karmic cause. How can you control this? The School of Tantra uses several methods. In particular, *phowa* is very important. If you are unable to attain the Illusory Body, *julü*,⁵⁹ in one lifetime, if you are unable to transform into the Illusory Body directly, then you have to try to maintain this body using certain methods, and not just automatically follow karmic cause [in the *bardo*]. You stop this, you control it by yourself, so then you keep as the Illusory Body and are ready to transform into the real Illusory Body of the Final Goal.⁶⁰ So there are many methods to use for *phowa*. It is a very important, special method for Tantra.

It is important to know that in Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen some of the general methods are common but many of them are private and specific to each Vehicle.

⁵⁸ I.e. the purification practices which help the deceased in the *bardo* such as *Zhitro* (Tib. zhi khro / ཞི་ཁྲོ།) – *Yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities and Self-Purification of the Six Realms* (Tib. rigs drug rang sbyong / རིགས་དྲུག་རང་སྟོང་།).

⁵⁹ Tib. sgyu lus / སྐུ་ལུས།

⁶⁰ This refers to the practice in the Completion Stage [Tib. rdzogs rim / རྫོགས་རིམ།] of Tantra where the form of one's *yidam* is visualized continuously, day and night, in the central channel in the heart chakra. This is called Pure Illusory Body [Tib. dag pa'i sgyu lus / དག་པའི་སྐུ་ལུས།]. At the time of death, the practitioner's purified mind and subtle wind, which constitute this *yidam*-form, are transferred to or merge with the Clear Light; this is called the Union of Illusory Body and Clear Light (Tib. sgyu lus 'od gsal zung 'jug / སྐུ་ལུས་འོད་གསལ་རྒྱུང་འབྲུག།) or (Tib. mthar thug gi sgyu lus / མཐར་ཐུག་གི་སྐུ་ལུས།) Ultimate Illusory Body. This is just a very general explanation as each Tantra has its own specific teachings and there is a huge body of commentaries both in Yungdrung Bön and Tantric Buddhism.

In particular, you must first clearly realize the view of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen to understand what the differences are and how to practise; it is very important to know these things.

Secondly, when you practise each of the Ways, you know how to do it, and you know the differences in the views of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen. So then when you practise, you should clearly follow whichever Vehicle you are practising; in that way, you can develop, the result can come according to the final goal of what you are practising. It is very important to firstly know the view and how it differs from the others, and then secondly to practise.

If you don't know and just generally practise with *phowa* or *bardo* or the Preliminary Practices as found in Sutra such as Refuge, *bodhichitta* and so on – some of which are common [to all three Vehicles] but many of which are different – then although everything is good and of benefit, it is not sure which final goal you will take. But [your practice] is not wasted at all.

The method of the Jumping Lion

Here, I am talking about *phowa* according to this text. This *phowa* is called *senge chong thab*,⁶¹ the Jumping Lion.

When to use it

The time to use this *phowa* is when you come to the moment of death, but first of all you have to learn. Then once you have learnt properly and practised, you keep this practice on one side; it is not an essential practice. After you have learnt it properly, keep it, and then when the time comes, you have to use it yourself. Here it says: 'when the time comes.' That means the *chikhai bardo*,⁶² the pre-death *bardo*. Not all sicknesses lead to death; but maybe you will know, or maybe a doctor or someone else will know when your [final] sickness starts. The period from the onset of this sickness until you finally stop breathing is called *chikhai bardo* or pre-death *bardo*. It is very important. All the texts say that this is a very critical time; you should clearly try to practise whatever you have already practised more intensively. It is very powerful, even if you did not practice much during

⁶¹ Tib. *seng ge mchong thabs* / སེང་གེ་མཆོང་ཐབས།

⁶² Tib. 'chi kha'i bar do / འཆི་ཁའི་བར་དོ།

your life. If normally you tried to practise [during the lifetime] but then at this time you lose your practice, or emotions and disturbances come, then although [the benefits of your previous practice] are not completely destroyed or disappear, this constitutes a very great disturbance for the success of your practice in the *bardo*.

How to train

As for how to learn *phowa* according to the Dzogchen way:

1. Keep in the five-pointed posture.
2. Visualize the three channels in the normal way: the right channel, the left channel and the central channel all join together [four fingers] below your navel. The side channels rise vertically from the junction and curve round through the membrane in your skull, descending to reach the two nostrils. The central channel is open at the crown of your head.

As for the colour, the right channel is white, the left channel is red, and the central channel is blue; the colour of the side channels is reversed for females.

As for the size, the central channel is the width of a walking stick – if you want to check the size you can look at my stick here – while the side channels are the diameter of an arrow shaft.

Visualize these three channels very clearly.

3. In front of you, above your head, clearly visualize a wheel of luminous light, similar to the one we mentioned yesterday.

4. Inside the central channel, at the heart level, visualize a white A / ཨ , or if you are familiar with a *yidam* and can visualize it clearly enough then you can visualize your *yidam*. Each of them represents your own mind. Visualize this clearly.

5. The central channel is open at the crown of your head and there is a [chakra like a] blue gentian flower there, hanging upside down.

Visualize all this as clearly as possible.

6. Above your head, outside, visualize a wheel of luminous light.

7. Inhale through both nostrils. [The air] goes down to the junction at the navel level and is pushed inside the central channel. This breath or wind goes up the central channel and pushes the A [or *yidam*] strongly up to the crown of your head, and outside as you exhale. It reaches the light wheel, touches it, and then immediately returns back to the heart level, to the same place. As you exhale, the A goes up and touches the wheel, then it comes down. Do this seven times.

8. Then recite the Guru Yoga prayer once.

Repeat [this cycle of] breathing and visualization seven times, then recite the Guru Yoga prayer again. Altogether you should do this [seven cycles] or 49 times, in other words, you should recite the Guru Yoga prayer seven times.

This is when you are learning. When you practise this, do it very clearly and intensively. Up and down seven times, then one recitation of the Guru Yoga prayer, for seven cycles. Do four sessions of this a day while you are learning.

Signs of progress

As for how long the learning period will be, it depends on when the sign comes.

As for the best practitioner whose visualization is strong enough, spots will appear [at the crown of your head], they will burst and blood will come. But don't worry that you are breaking your head!

As for the second [level practitioner], spots may come, but if not at least you will have a very unbearable itching on your head.

So how long it takes [for the sign to come] depends on the practitioner – maybe a year, maybe a month, or days. Who knows? It depends on your own practice. The important thing is that once you have started to practise this *phowa*, you don't stop in between. Don't think: 'Today I'll do something, tomorrow is a holiday.' If you do this, it won't be right. Practise continuously until the sign comes. Then it will be more powerful and more correct.

After the sign comes, you should remember this every day. Visualize the channels and so on in a similar way, remember the breathing one, two or three times, lift up the A, it reaches the wheel of luminous light. Do this at least three times every day. Keep on until it is necessary to use this for the last time [when you are dying].

Final Phowa

When the time comes – that means, when you are dying – if you are able to practise yourself, assume the five-pointed posture and practise as before. But this time, when you lift the A to the light wheel, it integrates with the wheel and does not come down at all. Exhale and exhale as much as you could.⁶³ At the same time, visualize that the A is integrated with the white wheel. We call it a wheel but it is Nature, so it is integrated with Nature itself. The wheel is Nature, the A is Nature, but when we learn, we keep them a little separate. We have Nature and visions, these two. This is just a symbol.

If a person cannot easily keep the body posture, they can lie down in the lion posture. That means they lie on their right side with their left hand stretched out on their left thigh. The two legs are lying one on top of the other, knees slightly bent. The visualization and practice are just the same, it is only the body posture which is different. If you are able to assume the five-pointed posture, then do so. If not, use the lion posture.⁶⁴

If the person is unable to assume the postures themselves, you should help them take up one of them.

If it is hard for someone to manage [to do this practice] at the moment of death but s/he is already connected with it and has practised but has so many problems at this time that it is not easy for them to remember their practice, then someone who has practised should go close to their head and tell them how to do this practice and remind them very clearly, speaking into their ear. Tell them: ‘You must remember the A and concentrate on it as your mind. You must push it through the central channel. The white A is integrated with your own Nature, Nature has no size, it is an unspeakable state.’ Call this clearly through the person’s ear if he is able to hear but unable to speak. At that time, go closer to the dying person and say this clearly. That is a great help to remind them at that time. If a person has some connection with this teaching, that is much better, but if not, if on your side you have a good heart and want to help, even if the other person is not close to the teachings, [it is good to do this]. We cannot be sure whether it will be helpful or not – [the person has] no connection. But anyhow, on your side, it is a good thing, you have good heart, you are being helpful, clearly reminding them and giving them [instructions].

⁶³ I.e. repeat the ejection of your mind as A as much as you can.

⁶⁴ I.e. like Buddha’s *parinirvana* posture.

This is what we call the last *phowa*. When you do this, it is not easy to breathe in, and also it is not necessary to bring the A back [to your heart level]; there is no place – the central channel and everything is completely closed, there is no place to which it can turn back.

That is the third chapter.

Are there any questions?

Q: Isn't it hard to recognize a dying person's last breath? It seems as though it is the last breath, but then a few seconds later another one comes. Also, is the consciousness still capable of practising *phowa* even if the person is on very strong drugs and pain killers?

A: It depends whether the mind is clear, you see, it doesn't matter whether they are on pain killers or whatever. If they understand and their mind is clear then at that time it is a good thing to speak and to introduce them to something, to tell them something. They are unable to reply or ask questions, but still, tell them as much as you could and they must understand something, so that is a great help. It is not necessary for them to react to what you say, to answer or ask some questions. But you can tell them whatever you want to say, and if they understand, that is very important. It doesn't matter if it is earlier – maybe [their illness] will reverse and they will come back. That is a good thing, it is not harmful! It sometimes happens, you see. I heard that someone was being taken to be cremated in a cemetery in Nepal, but then suddenly the person rose up and started moving! Then he got up completely, but the family didn't accept him so he had to spend the rest of his life near the cemetery; it was forbidden to bring him back home.⁶⁵ There are still several people alive round the cemeteries in India or Nepal. That is their tradition. So it doesn't matter – if you yourself are practising and telling [a dying person about the teachings], it is a good thing; it is helpful, greatly helpful.

Q: Is the lion posture the same for women? Do we also lie on our right side?

A: Yes, yes, it is the same, I think, because the lion posture is Buddha Shakyamuni's lion posture, and there are no differences for male or female.

⁶⁵ According to the Hindu faith, a dying person is impure so s/he is taken out of the house and dies outside.

Q: Is this a practice for advanced practitioners or can we do it while we are still doing our *ngöndro*?⁶⁶

A: Anybody has to start to learn this. This is not our culture, we don't learn it as children, so we have to learn it from the beginning like Preliminary Practices, same thing. This is practised after the Preliminary Practices; if you do this afterwards, then you are doing things in the right way. Otherwise, you can do this [any time] but it is not the proper way.

Q: What will the result of this practice be? If we manage to do this *phowa* at the moment of death, will we attain Buddhahood at the moment when the A merges with the wheel?

A: It depends on the practitioner. If you are ready to attain Buddhahood, then that is OK. Otherwise, you will take a better rebirth. So this can certainly be helpful, it is not wasted, it is a great help. But you cannot be sure; Buddhahood is not very easy.

Further Instructions on the Natural State

I have already taught all the methods, but now we have to go back and make sure the Natural State is clear [to you]; that is the base.

As I have already said, you should think, and then just look back towards that thought. What do you see once you have looked? Is there something strange, any images or ghosts or *yidams*? Don't expect some strange things to appear. Just after you have looked towards your thought, you look, but you can't see anything, you can't hear anything. What is present is an unspeakable state. It is calm, there is nothing to think for a little while. Until the next thought comes and disturbs you, there is a very clear presence. You are not thinking it is empty or clear, nothing. Just after you have looked, the thought disappears. The watcher and what it is watching both disappear. For just a moment, the State is clear. That is called Clarity. There is nothing special to see, nothing special to hear, there are no visions, you don't expect anything, there is just the unspeakable State. Keep quiet. Everybody must make sure of this themselves. Otherwise everything we are talking about here will not be very useful. Everybody has to be sure of this and try to remain clearly in that State.

⁶⁶ Tib. sngon 'gro / སྔོན་ཀྲོ། – Preliminary Practices.

When you keep in that State, you can see that the next thought soon comes, and it looks as though you forget the state you were in. Where is that next thought coming from at that time? You cannot see this. There is no object, no subject, it looks as though it appears spontaneously by itself. This thought takes you away from your realization of Nature – it seems like this. But in fact it doesn't take you away, it is just that you are not able to remain in the State; you are not often [in the State or] familiar with it, so that is why you are easily disturbed by the next thought. So where does this next thought come from? Neither from your brain, nor from your heart, nor from anywhere. It only comes from this State, into this State and that thought itself is a form of this Natural State.

Usually it looks as though these thoughts are coming from some different place, but actually they don't come from anywhere; they only come from Nature into Nature. For example, there are waves in the ocean, but no matter whether they are higher or lower, whatever movements come, they are all water; they are never far from water. So this is the same thing; whatever thoughts arise, they come from Nature into Nature and soon disappear into Nature. You don't need to search for anything in a different place. They are themselves forms of Nature. We call that Empty Form.⁶⁷ Nature itself cannot be perceived or explained, [we cannot describe] the colour or form or any [other characteristics], nothing. Thoughts are all the same thing, the only difference is that we follow them and some thoughts make us happy or sometimes they make sufferings and miseries, but we have created all that by ourselves. The real form is completely the same as Nature-Form, Empty Form, as waves in water.

At the moment when thoughts appear, there is neither object nor subject, so who could see these thoughts coming? Usually we can realize: 'I am thinking' or something. We think: 'I am seeing' or something. There is nothing [which exists] beyond thinking; no object or subject exists beyond thought. In fact, these thoughts are Nature and are seen by Nature itself. That is called Self-Awareness, *rigpa*. It is not far from Nature itself, not far from thoughts, so whatever you think, whatever visions appear to you, they are all seen by themselves. Like [reflections appearing in] a mirror; no matter what reflections come to a mirror, they are clear in the glass. So in the same way, there is no other watcher, nothing which sees or does, nothing which is separate from the thinking itself. So if you understand this, at that time, look towards the thought itself carefully; it is itself clear to itself. Soon

⁶⁷ Tib. stong gzugs / མྱེང་གཟུགས།

afterwards, it disappears, and after it disappears, what happens is that it remains just the same, as Nature itself. That is the Natural State, always. It comes from Nature into Nature and is a form of Nature.

So what is wrong is that we don't trust [our experience]. We think that thought is something else, [something other than the Natural State], that we have to follow our thoughts, and that creates something else. Then that makes good or bad; everything is created by ourselves.

This develops more and more, and then it takes and saves karmic causes – so many different qualities of karmic cause are made. These karmic causes are all created by ourselves, and they produce result and fruit which then come back to us. Everything – good things, bad things – is done by ourselves. Usually we think that somebody else does something or makes something – our enemy or our friend and so on – but in reality everything is only created by ourselves. So if you understand this, then there is no use [in having] anger or desire or anything like this; it is only a bubble.

So, all these conditions are our lifestyle. It doesn't make much difference whether you realize your own Nature or not, it will always be the same thing, it will always be Nature. Whether you realize Nature and meditate or not, Nature does not change. It doesn't get better. If you don't practise and if you don't realize Nature, Nature is still Nature, [it is always] there. It doesn't make much difference, it doesn't change at all, it is always the same thing. But if you follow your own thoughts which come from Nature, then thoughts are all 'creators' – one thought creates several things, they develop more and more, and everything is called vision.⁶⁸ These visions come from Nature – Nature is so powerful!

Usually people talk about emptiness according to the Madhyamaka system or Tantra or many other things, but it is not possible to compare this Dzogchen Nature to any other [understanding of] emptiness or nature. This is very particular and special. But the crux of the matter is that we don't trust; it is too close, too clear, too familiar, so then we don't trust it at all. And that leads to many different activities, many different actions, so many different karmic causes are collected. That develops more and more and then we are circulating in *samsara*.

Samsara is not created by any other being, by any other people; everything is created by ourselves – happiness, suffering, everything is created by yourself. Once you realize this, everything – all busy-ness, the multitude of things

⁶⁸ Tib. snang ba / སྔང་བ།

– goes into the mirror; everything is as the mirror, nothing at all is separate from the mirror. Similarly, everything – happiness, busy-ness, sufferings, miseries – everything is your own Nature. It is not a common Nature; everything is the individual's own Nature. If you realize this, then everything is as Empty Form, illusion. There is nothing special to take you away, not at all.

[On this planet], only humans can understand this; it is important to try. It is very hard to show other beings this, to teach them, for them to understand.

Trekchö⁶⁹

This shows how visions develop from Nature and arise spontaneously from it. That is our life. If you realize it is coming from Nature into Nature, then it is what we call *trekchö*. Everything is a form of the Natural State, and the Nature itself is an indescribable state. It is beyond perception; it is not influenced by thinking, not at all.

Sometimes [the text] gives the example of a place where the earth, rocks and so on are all gold. If you want to search for some normal rock there, you will not find any anywhere. Why? Because everything is gold – the earth, the rocks, everything is gold. In a similar way, for the individual person who has experience, no matter what comes from Nature into Nature – it doesn't matter whether it is emotions, suffering, miseries, happiness — everything comes from Nature into Nature and is liberated back into Nature.

There is nothing which exists beyond Nature. The purpose [of practice] is to realize that nothing is beyond Nature; Nature itself is completely Empty Form, it is not possible to explain it, there is no substance, no hard [material] things, nothing. It is important to realize this. It is not something created; it appears spontaneously and we are living in this State. So everything is naturally illusion, but we don't trust that everything is illusion or Empty Form; we think that everything is solid [matter]. However, we have created that by ourselves. When you realize this, that means you are starting to really practise Dzogchen.

⁶⁹ Tib. khregs chod / ཁྲེགས་ཆོད།

Thögal⁷⁰

Then if you go on and practise this continuously, if you use it, then the [*thögal*] visions [arise]. There are various qualities of visions, and we introduce you to the *thögal* methods. *Thögal* shows you clearly and directly, it introduces you to how visions come, to the quality of these visions, how they are made, where they come from; this is all shown clearly. This makes the Dzogchen way a little bit clear, a little bit easier. Therefore there are two methods: the *trekchö* way and the *thögal* way.

Dzogchen View

The main thing is that when you start to meditate with the Natural State, don't think anything, don't focus on anything, just leave it as it is. That is very important. Otherwise, if you are thinking: 'this is right' or 'this is wrong' or 'this is good' or 'this is bad' or something, if you are always thinking something, then you will never get Nature. Nature itself is completely beyond thinking and perception. So always remember: if you are influenced by thinking such as 'this is good meditation,' 'this is right Nature' or 'this is the wrong way,' or if you have some feeling there, then you will never get the right Nature. You should always try to leave Nature itself as it is. It is very important to check this by yourself.

We quite often talk about Dzogchen and the Dzogchen View – Dzogchen is quite a popular name. But what is real Dzogchen? You always have to think that this is beyond perception. It is very, very special. Normally our education, our learning, our knowledge is all to do with perception, with consciousness. Suddenly here it says this is completely beyond that. So it is not easy to understand. We can think: 'it is supposed to be like this' or 'this looks similar to Dzogchen' and so on – it is easy to say these things, and yes, some part may be similar, but the reality is very, very special. It is not very easy to compare it with anything else. Why? Because normally everything is connected with thinking, but here it suddenly says it is beyond thinking, so how do you manage? It is not easy to think. This is special.

I am always saying that Guru Yoga is the only help, that [understanding] has to come from the Lineage Masters, from their blessing, and by this we can develop and understand Nature. It looks easy, but it is not easy. It is quite a hard

⁷⁰ Tib. thod rgal / ཐོད་རྒལ།

thing to understand but it is very easy to say. It is very popular to say: ‘the Dzogchen View is like this or that.’ It is easy to say.

OK. I have already taught the Dzogchen View many times. There are also seven points which are facing towards the Dzogchen View but which are in fact mistaken. From the beginning, these [views] all try to know the Dzogchen View, but then in some cases they make a mistake here or there, and there are seven main points [of deviation].⁷¹

OK. It is better to stop now. Meanwhile, everybody should think, and if anybody wants to ask anything, questions are welcome. It is of fundamental importance [to have a clear understanding of this]; do not just make yourself satisfied; you always have to check with a real, authentic text. Not just any text – there are many different types of teachings, but [you should verify your understanding with] a real, authentic text. The authentic text, the teachings of a qualified Master and your own experience must all agree exactly. Then you can trust your knowledge and realization. Until then, if you just think this or that or something – don’t trust it, OK?

It is important to realize it clearly. So first of all, don’t be fed up that I am repeating things about the Natural State every day and always talking about it. It is necessary to check. Otherwise, if you just think: ‘it is supposed to be this’ then although it is easy to hear about the Natural State, it is rather difficult to really know it and be familiar with it.

ཁ། ག། Chapter IV: The Mirror of Result

Three Buddha Bodies

So first of all, according to the text, it says that whatever mind thinks at any moment is bound with the Three *Kayas*.⁷² The Three *Kayas* are *dharmakaya*, *sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya*,⁷³ and each has three aspects even though the names are the same: *dharmakaya*, *sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya* of the Base;⁷⁴

⁷¹ See above, Footnote 37, p. 26.

⁷² Tib. sku gsum / སྐུ་གསུམ། – Three Buddha Bodies.

⁷³ Tib. bon sku, rdzogs sku, sprul sku / བོན་སྐུ། རྩོགས་སྐུ། སྤྲུལ་སྐུ།

⁷⁴ Tib. gzhi'i sku gsum / གཞིའི་སྐུ་གསུམ།

dharmakaya, *sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya* of the Path;⁷⁵ *dharmakaya*, *sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya* of the Fruit.⁷⁶ These describe different aspects but the names are same.

For just a moment, focus your mind, which is already pervaded by the Three *Kayas*, on one point. Suddenly a thought appears. Check this thought. It has no colour, no form, you cannot find any object or subject at all. Then: what remains after the thought comes, stays a while and then disappears? After the thought disappears, no traces [are left]. Where has it disappeared to? It has simply gone into the unspeakable State. That is the Nature of the presence of this thought which comes up.

The thought comes from there, not from anywhere else, yet this Nature and thought are not separate. Just as waves appear in water; the wave is water, and the water only shows movements which are the forms of waves. This is similar. The thought itself is a form of Nature. So Nature itself is unspeakable, there anything special which can be seen by any perception. So that aspect is called Empty Nature, *dharmakaya*. It has power, visions are ready to come, and this aspect, the power aspect, is called *sambhogakaya*, Nature *sambhogakaya*. When the thoughts appear, they are formed by Nature itself and so they are *nirmanakaya*. So altogether, one thought, one point of thought, is already subsumed within the Three *Kayas*. That is called the Three *Kayas* of the Base.

Samsara and Nirvana

In this case, here it explains about arising thoughts; these thoughts are visions, and by 'vision' we mean something which appears from Nature. Any kinds of movements appear, and they are all called visions. These visions are not far from Nature at all; it depends on the person. If you follow the vision-side then [they] will develop more and more, and *samsara* is created. Everything [is created]. If, on the other hand, you do not follow the visions but simply remain in Basic Nature without caring about whatever visions appear, if you remain in the Nature-side as much as you can without interruption, then that leads to *nirvana*. That is the only route which you are going. If you stay in the Nature-side, you don't need to add

⁷⁵ Tib. lam gyi sku gsum / ལམ་གྱི་སྐུ་གསུམ།

⁷⁶ Tib. bras bu'i sku gsum / བླ་བུ་འི་སྐུ་གསུམ།

anything – neither body postures nor mantra recitation nor prayers, nothing – just remain stably in Nature and that will certainly lead you to *nirvana*. No doubt.

Tsal and Rolpa⁷⁷

First of all, a thought comes, and you can check where it is coming from: Nature. You must realize Nature. Nature has not made anything, it has not done anything to develop visions or thoughts, it does not support them in this way, yet they can spontaneously come from Nature. Nature has this power, this potential, and this is sometimes called Emptiness⁷⁸ or *tsal*. That is *tsal*. When the thought itself appears, that is *rolpa*. Sometimes we say that both the potentiality and the vision are *tsal*; it depends on what you are explaining. But anyhow, the thought is vision, and vision means that it is not removed from Nature as Nature itself is formed as thought. It is necessary to know that the thoughts, our own thinking – it doesn't matter whether they are good or bad thoughts – appears as visions coming from Nature. You always have to think it is similar to waves in water.

Visions

On the vision-side, more and more movements come with thoughts – not only thoughts. There are firstly sounds, rays and lights which arise in the vision-side. There are two modes: firstly, whether you remain in the Nature of the Base; or secondly, whether you follow the vision-side. If you follow the vision-side, then as you follow more and more, the visions develop more and more, like water becoming ice. Then there is some judgement about good or bad, higher or lower; many things develop. You can follow as much as you could, but no matter how far you go, there is no limit. If you try to check how far they go, if you try to search for the final goal of the visions, you will never find the end, not at all; [there is] no limitation. You might find a black hole or something, but that is still not the final end – you can go still further, there is no limit. Yet no matter how much you follow the visions, they never lose Nature. The vision itself is a form of Nature. Nature itself doesn't do anything to help the visions [develop]; there is no following.

⁷⁷ Tib. *rtsal, rol pa* / རྩ་ལ། རོལ་པ།

⁷⁸ Tib. *stong* / ལྷོང་།

Three categories of vision

We are talking generally about visions, but actually there [are different categories]: normal visions, practitioner's visions, and final Nature visions.⁷⁹ There are three different levels of vision.

Normal visions

Our normal life is vision,⁸⁰ and that is normal vision. Here, by 'vision' we mean that it never loses Nature, that it is a form of Nature, in other words, it is Empty Form, a vision. This is what we mean by vision.

Secondly, we use an example which everyone has experience of: if you look into space or sunlight or if you go into a [completely] dark room, you can see some movements in front of your eyes. It looks as though you see them with your eye sense, but in fact these are not seen by your ocular sense at all. How do we know this? If you go into a [completely] dark room, you can spontaneously see something like stars or some movements in the dark; quite a lot of people [here have already had this experience]. These are normal visions – the darkness doesn't create anything, but it acts as a support for Nature so the visions appear. The source of the visions is Nature, they are Empty Form, but then it depends on the person who sees them; there is a great difference depending on whether you realize this or not. If you just look in the normal way [without realizing they are Empty Form], then that is normal vision. But practitioners have some special visions which come. That means that they have practised something, they have looked into their own mind, and then some signs appear.

There are also many different types of normal vision, but most of the time people just look in space and see something like threads or black or white lines or sometimes it is a bit different and it looks like hair moving. If you go to see the doctor they might say you have an eye defect or something. In some cases you might have an eye defect, but most of the time there is no defect at all; these visions naturally come from Nature. They are not seen by the eye-sense at all. If the lines or spots and so on which appear to the individual came from somewhere external or were something material, then you would be able to show them to the person

⁷⁹ I.e. final stage of *thögal*.

⁸⁰ Tib. *snang ba* / སྟང་བ། – this means: sight, vision, idea, conception, appearance, to arise, display, phenomena etc. so it does not only refer to objects of the eye-sense but to objects of all senses and all kinds of appearances and manifestations, both inner and outer.

next to you, you would be able to say: ‘look here!’ and they would see them, too. But that is not possible. The individual sees something, but you cannot show anyone else the movements you see; the other person cannot see them. Similarly, you cannot see the other person’s visions. The reason for this is because they are not seen by the eye-sense at all. So how do we see the visions? Only [by] Nature itself – whatever appears from Nature into Nature is seen by itself. It is not seen by any kind of sense or perception, nothing. It appears to itself, like [reflections in a looking] glass. That is called Self-Awareness. Nature itself is empty; Awareness is Emptiness; Emptiness is Awareness. This is called *rigpa* or *rangjyung yeshe*.⁸¹ *Rangjyung yeshe* is as *rigpa* or Clarity; Clarity is Emptiness. These two are united, they are forever inseparable. This is Nature, this is special. Many things [I am teaching about here] are completely different from any other teachings. These are all particular to Dzogchen; they are the special methods and knowledge of Dzogchen.

Those are all called ‘normal vision.’

***Thögal* visions**

As for what we call the practitioner’s visions, when you do something to start to concentrate with meditation – any kind of meditation which begins to control your thoughts and perceptions – then you will begin to have visions such as sparkles or mirages or sometimes everything goes as the sky, empty. Or sometimes lights will come – oh, many things can come as visions, and these are all ‘practitioner’s visions.’ These visions are not specific to Dzogchen practitioners; if you do any kind of [practice whereby you are] trying to control your mind, these can come as signs.

There are various things, but in particular I wanted to say something about *thögal* visions – people quite often talk about these. What I have described so far is not *thögal* vision at all. You have to understand: these [visions] are not beyond Nature, they are formed as Nature itself. ‘Nature’ means Empty Form; these visions are all Empty Form. ‘Empty Form’ means that they are like water becoming ice. In other words, if you follow the visions then everything becomes more and more concrete and looks like reality. We think [they are real] but there is no reality. There are many ways to check that there is no substance, that nothing concrete at all exists behind [the Empty Forms]. There are many different methods

⁸¹ Tib. rang 'byung ye shes / རང་འབྱུང་ཡེ་ཤེས།

to use to check phenomenal existence according to the different Schools. But in this case, first of all you must realize that these visions come from Nature into Nature and disappear or are liberated back to Nature. It is important for a practitioner to know this, to have this experience.

On the vision-side, first of all, it is important for a Dzogchen practitioner to realize the Natural State; that is the Base.⁸² Secondly, they should realize that there is nothing to be added to the Natural State by perception or consciousness; they should practise the Natural State itself purely, becoming stable and familiar with it.

The whole of phenomenal existence is not far from Nature; everything is as Empty Form. That is called 'illusion.' If you realize, trust and believe Nature itself is formed as visions, then everything is as illusion, so then it is not necessary to make anger or, especially, desire or to do anything additional. None of that is useful. Why? Because everything is as illusion, there is no background, nothing concrete, [there is] no reality whatsoever.

So this much must be understood by *trekchö* practitioners; they must realize this. When your meditation with *trekchö* [has advanced] quite far and is quite stable, practise and use the *thögal* methods, such as a dark room, sunlight or space, the sky, with this [base of *trekchö*].

These three are only supports; if you use them, they act as supports and the visions appear. The visions come to you clearly, but for your part, you are very stable with the Natural State, you are very familiar with it. You stay [in the Natural State], and with this, you see and hear everything, there are movements there. You don't stop them, you don't follow them, you don't check anything. So these are all like movements or reflections appearing in a looking glass. Whether reflections come or not, it doesn't make any changes for the glass. In a similar way, Nature itself is very stable and familiar. Movements, sounds, rays and lights shine and appear. This time, your Base is very stable – the Natural State – and with this, visions appear; they are there. These two are combined: you see the visions and these don't stop or disturb your stable meditation with Nature. Nature doesn't disturb or block the visions at all. These two – the reflections and your stability in Nature – are very much comfortable together. That is called *thögal* vision.

This kind of *thögal* practitioner has many kinds of visions, and these visions show the practitioner how far he has come in his practice. We have four or

⁸² Tib. gzhi / ཀམི།

five degrees of *nangwa* or visions [in *thögal*].⁸³ The visions show different colours and forms, and this relates to the level the practitioner has reached. The movements of the visions also relate to this:

1. First of all, the visions move very fast, like a waterfall cascading from a high cliff.
2. Secondly, they are like a flowing river.
3. Thirdly, they are like an ocean.
4. Finally, they are like the ocean depths which are hardly shaken, which hardly move.

These are all signs, and everything is clearly measured so you can see and check [your progress] according to the signs.

Generally, people get excited about visions and talk about them a lot. Visions are not so surprising! You have to understand the cause, the Base. If you understand that all the visions are as Empty Form, then that can help you follow and grasp at emotions much less; happiness, sufferings, miseries – everything is created by perception. Perception itself is vision, so it is not trustable. So it is not necessary [to follow perception and thoughts] – that is the important point. Otherwise, visions themselves are not so surprising. Practising and having experience with visions has many purposes. Also, it can show evidence as to how the situation will be after the body and spirit or mind⁸⁴ are disconnected; proof of this can also be shown through the visions.

[The text] explains that *thögal* practitioners are quite often excited by their visions. First of all, *mandalas*, then divinities [within them] – many things appear. At that time, if a complete cycle of a *mandala* of one *yidam* appears to a person who is an advanced *thögal* practitioner, the *yidams* inside the *mandala* are all perfect and clear. The colour, form, posture, attributes – these are all seen clearly. The practitioner sees this all clearly in the vision of his practice.

Thögal and Tantra

Whatever visions he has of *yidams* and *mandala* cycles, they all come from his Dzogchen practice. His vision of *yidams* has nothing at all to do with Tantra

⁸³ Five stages according to *Zhang Zhung Nyengyud* and four stages in other Dzogchen cycles.

⁸⁴ In this case it is Tib. *mam par shes pa* / རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ། – consciousness.

practice. The case of Tantra practitioners is different; when they have visions which come as divinities or *mandalas* – many things are explained – these are very similar [in appearance]. They look very similar; the posture, colour, forms and so on are similar, but the cause is very different. That is one point. There is a very big difference; the root of Dzogchen and Tantric practice is completely different.

Also, the quality of these *vidams* is really very different. This second one is created by perception – the Tantric practitioner has made it by their own practice. They focus and created it by their imagination, and it comes into a visible form. In the case of a *thögal* practitioner, there is nothing particular to do – no mantras, no prayers, nothing – they only practise the Natural State, so visions appear and develop spontaneously. The forms of the divinities appear among these visions. So these are all very different. If you just read the text or hear something, it seems very similar, but it is really necessary to distinguish these clearly, to know this. It is much better to know.

The Dzogchen practitioner who has advanced this far has these things appearing in his vision, but still he sometimes uses what looks like Tantric *ganapujas*⁸⁵ or recites mantras and prayers. He does everything, but these are only for other people who ask him to do this, or he wishes to do them. But in the Dzogchen way it is not necessary to practise anything at all in addition to Dzogchen. Sometimes people say that our Twenty-Four Dzogchen Masters⁸⁶ practised with Meri.⁸⁷ They did practise. They had so much time after they had achieved the *thögal* visions, so sometimes people used these Tantra cycles for others, or sometimes for themselves, but it is nothing to do with a support for Dzogchen practice, not at all. Don't imitate what they did. The text is very clear, and we have Nine Ways, each of which explains the Base, Path and Result very clearly. Everything is clear, it is not a mixture.

If you do mix up Sutra, Tantra and so on, even though everything is good and of benefit, you cannot be sure whether you are following the way of Sutra, Tantra or Dzogchen. Whatever you do is good, not a waste of time.

⁸⁵ Tib. *tshogs mchod* / ཚོགས་མཆོད།

⁸⁶ A reference to the twenty-four lineage masters of the *Zhang Zhung Nyengyud*, all of whom realized Rainbow Body.

⁸⁷ Tib. *Zhang zhung Me ri* / རང་ལྷུང་མེ་རི། – a Bönpo *vidam*, a form of Tib. *dBal chen Ge khod* / དབལ་ཆེན་གེ་ཁོད།

Visions, death and dreams

There are still more things to say about the visions. I am quite often talking about visions. Maybe people are excited and think they will see some strange things. But if you think about the real purpose of visions, these are evidence of something great; they show what our normal vision is. If you understand vision, it means that the background is Emptiness, there is nothing concrete, nothing special. But you can see and hear the visions temporarily. That shows you evidence for what will happen after you are disconnected from your material body – that means the time of death. Consciousness does not disappear, and this shows you what the situation will be like, what it will feel like. It is as though you are alive. You should not just neglect this lightly. When our conditions are OK we can say: ‘I believe’ or ‘I don’t believe.’ You can say many things, but when the time comes, nobody has power, it is not possible to choose, you have to go one way. You must prepare for that time, and that means you must realize that everything is vision, you must realize what to do and [how to] control [your mind]. You have to learn and keep this in mind – that is preparation. Here it quite often talks about visions and practice, and there is a great purpose behind this; it is a great thing.

Vision is only connected with the ‘self,’ with [your own] consciousness, like a dream, you see. You can have experience [of this] with dreams and understand that they have nothing to do with the material body. For example, you are lying in bed, your body is there, but if you wake up slightly from very deep sleep, you will have a dream. Sometimes happy conditions come in your dream and you are laughing; sometimes sadness comes and you are crying. So the feelings are just the same as in the daytime. That is further evidence that the next stage is like this. You cannot make any excuses [that you don’t know] – everything is shown to you precisely, it will all come to you clearly [similar to what you experienced during your practice while alive].

Here, this teaching says that the only thing to do to prepare for that state is to practise with your mind alone. Otherwise, here it doesn’t give you any advice about what to do for your work or job or how to save money or get a good reputation. Scholars look at practitioners and think they are kind of stupid, you see, they don’t think well of them. It is better to practise! That is real preparation which you do for yourself. At that time, whatever you yourself have practised, whatever experience you have, that goes along with your spirit [or consciousness].

Quite often people say they will help each other [during the dying process] or something, or they might ask a high lama or somebody and the lama

can say: ‘Yes, I will do something’ but, practically, it is hard to help. So it is better to practise by yourself. You can learn that everything is created by yourself, and you can learn together with consciousness and perception, so at the time [of death], you remember this by yourself. That is useful. That is why we learn this practice. It is necessary to always keep this in mind and practise. It can save you – you can be helped by yourself. This is the purpose of practising. It is not just fun. And don’t expect to achieve Rainbow Body or something – [it is] too early! But at least this is practical and useful. It is better [not to have high expectations]. You can expect Rainbow Body or Buddhahood or something, but you can see how your own situation is, what you are doing, what you are thinking, and so in this way [you realize that] it is not easy to achieve the Final Goal.⁸⁸

Empty Form

I sometimes say that visions will come when you practise with the Natural State. These visions are all Empty Form. Maybe that is not easy to understand – empty and form – that is not very easy to understand. But everybody has experience of the television. You can look at the television and see all the movements there, but if you suddenly actually look at the object, there is nothing at all on the side of the television, only the screen or something, just a big window, nothing. This shows you [an example].

‘Empty Form’ means that you can see and hear everything, and if you don’t follow [what you see], everything is just Empty Form. If you think there is something there, something concrete or solid, this is wrong because you see the objects, you see the visions, and you follow them. So whatever good things you see immediately make you want to follow them and do something. Or if you see something not very pleasant then it makes you get angry or you show [some other emotion]. This is just the same as what we are doing [in our life]. There is no background, yet we follow the vision-side, and that makes us collect more and more karmic cause. This is how karmic causes are collected: we make them, we made them by ourselves, and they are saved in the *alaya* or *kunzhi namshe*.⁸⁹ As long as the *kunzhi namshe* is supported, we keep them, and karmic causes are

⁸⁸ I.e. *sangs rgyas pa* / སངས་རྒྱལ་པ། – final Buddhahood of Dzogchen.

⁸⁹ Tib. *kun gzhi mam shes* / ཀུན་གཞི་རྣམ་ཤེས།

saved. Otherwise, if we don't use any antidotes to purify karmic causes, it is not easy for them to disappear or be cleaned away.

Q: Are visions only optical, or are the other senses involved? Do we hear and smell things?

A: Oh yes! Many things. Most of the time it explains about the forms we see, and it is difficult to 'see' smells and so on. We usually practise in the dark room or using space, and when you have experience of seeing things, at the same time, you can hear or smell things – the situation and quality [of the optical, tactile visions etc.] is just the same; you can judge this. As for the individual practices, we have some methods using sound. [This text] doesn't say much about taste or smell, but these are similar. In the dark room, you can have visions of eating something or good food can be arranged in the vision.

Q: If someone dies very quickly, in an accident, is there still enough time to do the *phowa* practice?

A: Well, it depends. He himself has no time, you see, but someone else could do *phowa* for him, anytime. But even if the person who dies in an accident is a practitioner, he cannot remember, there is no time. That is true.

Q: I am quite new to this tradition, so I don't really understand why there are so many visualizations of deities etc. if really we are just trying to understand that forms are empty.

A: As for the visualizations, it depends on which [Vehicle] you are following. For example, in our tradition, we have Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen. If you follow the Sutra way, you can visualize the Refuge Tree [externally];⁹⁰ that is the only [kind of] visualization you do of divinities, Guardians and so on. But this does not have anything to do with [the process of] inner transformation, [of transforming your own mind] into the divinities [as in Tantra]. It doesn't say much about this in Sutra.

Secondly, if you follow Tantra, then first of all there are several ways. In general, in the Buddhist way, when you practise Tantra you must first practise the Three Contemplations. The first is [the Contemplation of] the Natural State, *dezhinnyi kyi tingngedzin*.⁹¹ This must be very clear and stable. Then the second is [the

⁹⁰ Tib. *tshogs zhing* / ཚོགས་ཁིང་།

⁹¹ Tib. *de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin* / དེ་བཞིན་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཉིང་ངེ་འཛིན།

Contemplation of] Compassion;⁹² you must practise properly so you are familiar with it and can easily think [and hold all the beings in your compassion]. Thirdly, these two – Nature and Compassion – are united. This is the cause which makes the form of the divinities.⁹³ It doesn't matter which one; there are a lot of peaceful and wrathful deities, but it is not necessary for one person to practise them all; that is not possible. You only practise whichever one you are connected with or interested in. Only take one of them, that is just enough. Or even if you don't practise the visualization of divinities, this unification – of the Natural State and Compassion – can be the form of A or even a pebble, it doesn't matter. Or of a Buddha. That is good enough for real practice; it is not necessary to do everything.

Why were all these taught by Buddha? It depends on the people who are following him; there are so many different categories of sentient beings and they do not all have the same attitude, the same way of thinking. So these methods are not all for one person. So don't go after them all. Whichever you choose, practise it as it much as you could. You have to have the base, you see. This Unification [of the Natural State and Compassion] is very, very important [in Tantra as the cause of any *yidam*].

These Three Contemplations are very, very important for the visualization of divinities. The first, [the Contemplation of] Nature, is the antidote which purifies the whole of *samsara* or ignorance. The second, [the Contemplation of] Compassion, is [the means] to achieve the Final Goal. These two are very, very important as the base for practising with *Mahamudra*⁹⁴ or Tantra.

It doesn't matter which forms you are visualizing or practising – peaceful, wrathful or whatever – that depends on the practitioner's choice. Maybe you receive something by yourself or maybe you are instructed by someone else, but that doesn't make much difference; it is these two points which are important. Otherwise, without these Three Contemplations, you can visualize something – the forms of any divinities and so on – and something may appear or you may hear many things, but those are not the antidote to sufferings and miseries.

⁹² Tib. kun tu snang ba ting nge 'dzin / ཀུན་རྒྱལ་བ་ཉིང་ལོ་འཛིན།

⁹³ Tib. rgyu'i ting nge 'dzin / རྒྱུའི་ཉིང་ལོ་འཛིན།

⁹⁴ Tib. phyag rgya chen po / ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ།

Q: When people die they often have visions of their dead loved ones. Practitioners are not usually distracted by this, but non-practitioners are very much distracted. Is there anything I can do to help them not to be distracted by the visions?

A: According to the text, in our tradition, we keep a list of ancestors. If somebody comes and asks [a living relative for something], they do dedication for them. Whether they receive something practically is not sure, but if the living have a lot of sympathy and think that their ancestors have not completely disappeared, then that is of benefit for the person who does it, but also their good heart can reach the deceased person at any time. Hopefully. This is according to the teaching. There is no limit; try to think of your ancestors for as long as possible, and try to dedicate your practice or meditation to them, any time. According to the text, this is not wasted at all. In particular, this is something real for the living person who does it. We are always talking about compassion towards limitless beings and about practising *bodhichitta*, and this is a practical method.

Q: Is there anything I can do to help a dying person not to be distracted by the visions of their deceased loved ones?

A: Well, that depends. We have so many rituals. We do a ritual called *dur*⁹⁵ for anyone who has died, it doesn't matter whether they were a practitioner or not. This is to separate disturbances.⁹⁶ We say [to the disturbing spirits]: 'Leave the dead person alone! Whatever karmic causes s/he has to follow, let them go along [with them]. Do not disturb them!' There are many different [versions of these rituals], long or short. We do this after someone has died. Practitioners and non-practitioners all have so many disturbances, and some of them [are bothered by] ghosts or demons. These rituals are to separate them. But it is not possible to say they are free from karmic cause; it is not easy to say that if they haven't practised themselves.

There are many interesting things. Whether a person is a practitioner or not, before they die, if they feel too much anger or worry and die with that, then just after they die, they will become a ghost, a very powerful evil [being].⁹⁷ And that causes disturbances. Then there can be many spirits. There are many mentioned [in our texts].

⁹⁵ Tib. 'dur / འདུར།

⁹⁶ Tib. gshed / གཤེད།

⁹⁷ Tib. 'dre / འདྲེ།

We have *srungma*,⁹⁸ the guardians. Maybe you have heard of them. Maybe you have something like that in Germany! First of all they were a man, but then just before they died they had too much anger, it was very strong, and then they died, and after that they become a spirit, a very powerful one. But not everybody! There are many stories, we have so many different ones. Some of [these malevolent] spirits have already been tamed and conquered and made into guardians, while others still cause disturbances everywhere. That is visible, and you can hear them. There are stories – some of them are true, we can't judge!

The simple ones, the ones who are not so wrathful, often hang around what they were attached to so their [attachment to this world] is not broken, and this can cause harm to the living, you see.

Q: When we attain *dharmakaya* or Rainbow Body, is it definitive? It is said that there is still some subtle ignorance in the Natural State and that is the cause for dualistic vision, so does that mean we can still fall back into *samsara*?

A: Well, if you are really asking about *dharmakaya*... I have already said that there is the *dharmakaya* of the Base, of the Path and of the Fruit or Result; there are three aspects. The *dharmakaya* of the Base is always together with sentient beings, no matter whether they go down to the hells or the realms of the *pretas*,⁹⁹ animals or anywhere else in *samsara*; everyone is integrated with the *dharmakaya* of the Base, or in other words, with the Natural State. If a practitioner realizes Nature and practises – it is a matter of knowing or not knowing [the Natural State], not a matter of having or not having [it]. If you know the Natural State and *dharmakaya* very well, if you practise certainly, then you will achieve the *dharmakaya* of the Fruit, no doubt. That *dharmakaya* means that you have purified all karmic causes, emotions and everything, nothing [is left behind]. That is Buddhahood.

Q: Could you explain a little more about the *dur* rites, or is it too big a topic to go into now?

A: Yes, I can say something about this. During your lifetime, you have two aspects, good and bad. We talk about good and bad conditions, good and bad karmic causes, and some people talk about good divinities or guardians. When we talk about the negative aspect, we say 'bad karma' or talk about evil [spirits] which

⁹⁸ Tib. *srung ma* / སྤུང་མ།

⁹⁹ Tib. *dri za* / འྱི་བ། – hungry ghosts.

are always disturbing your mind or spirit. After death, it depends. We have Nine Ways, and [*dur* rites] do not belong to high Tantra or Dzogchen; these rites are not mentioned much there. But according to the teachings of Lower Tantra, and in people's general thinking, everyone has three aspects: *la yid sem sum*.¹⁰⁰ *La* is always like dreaming, it always follows karmic cause which can sometimes be good, sometimes bad, anything. *Yid* is the movement of air [or subtle *lung* through a person's channels which] influences *sem*, the mind. These three are not stable, they are always disturbed by good or bad and so on.

When a person dies, it is the same situation. These spirits or bad things always follow [the deceased's consciousness] and create trouble. So sometimes we do a ritual after a person has died. We first talk peacefully [to the harmful spirit], advising it to go away and leave the deceased in peace, not to disturb the deceased. But if the spirit does not obey and does not leave, then the practitioner performs a wrathful *dur*.¹⁰¹ We have so many rituals to use to separate [these spirits] from the deceased's [*la*], to make sure they leave the dead person alone with their consciousness, and to send all disturbers away. That is the meaning. We call it *dronjug*.¹⁰²

After someone dies, the lama or whoever is practising nearby brings the spirit or consciousness or mind of the dead person and integrates it with a figurine¹⁰³ with the name of the deceased, and gives advice to [the consciousness of the deceased].

Then he sends the disturbers away and gives them a ransom. First he tries to send them away by peaceful means, but if this is not successful, he uses wrathful means with mantras, prayers and so on. We always do this.

¹⁰⁰ Tib. bla yid sems gsum / ལྷ་ཡིད་སེམས་གསུམ།

¹⁰¹ Tib. mu cho khro 'dur / མུ་ཅོ་ཁྲོ་འདུར།

¹⁰² Tib. grong 'jug / རྫོང་རྩུག་ – it also can refer to an advanced Tantric practice when a highly realized *yogi* transfers his/her mind into a fresh corpse of a recently died young person. The body is thus brought to life again but is occupied now by a *yogi's* mind. This was done in the past in order to preserve the continuation of practice and attain the result of Tantra quickly, bypassing the *bardo* and rebirth. This practice is no longer used nowadays.

¹⁰³ Tib. byang bu / བྱང་བུ།

Whether you know a person who has died or not, a good method to use is *sur*,¹⁰⁴ this is a support. We have four supports, four rituals: *sang*, water offering,¹⁰⁵ *sur* and *chöd*. These are what we call the Four Generosities.¹⁰⁶ In general we offer to the Four Guests:¹⁰⁷ the Buddha, *Dharma* and Three Jewels; the high guests [the Protectors; the Eight Classes of gods and spirits];¹⁰⁸ and [beings of the Six Realms of *samsara*], including all kinds of dead people.

When we make offerings to the high divinities, that is of benefit to the practitioner. Then we offer to the high guests, the Guardians, and ask them to guide and protect us. Then when we offer to normal sentient beings and they receive whatever they need – anything. This is a great method, it doesn't matter whether you are connected with the deceased or not, whether you know them or not; if you think with sympathy and generosity then that will help any being. It is hard to say how it can actually help them; that is not easy to say, it is difficult to see, but from the practitioner's side, it is of great benefit. We can use [these Four Generosities] normally, they are not so complicated. You must do at least one of these four as often as you can; it will be of great benefit.

The Three Kayas

How do you understand this Natural State? It is the Unspeakable State. It looks as though you are resting for a little while and can see all objects without judging or perceiving them. At that time, you are remaining in Basic Nature, Basic Nature. Basic *dharmakaya*¹⁰⁹ has the potential which allows many different things to appear. That is called Basic *sambhogakaya*.¹¹⁰ Whatever thoughts appear from there – good or bad, anything – they are all Basic *nirmanakaya*.¹¹¹ This is what we

¹⁰⁴ Tib. *bsur* / བསུར།

¹⁰⁵ Tib. *bsang, chu gtor* / བསང་འུ་གཏོར།

¹⁰⁶ Tib. *byin pa mam bzhi* / བྱིན་པ་མཁ་བཞི།

¹⁰⁷ Tib. *sgron ma bzhi* / སྒྲོན་མ་བཞི།

¹⁰⁸ Tib. *lha srin sde brgyad* / ལྷ་སྤྱན་སྡེ་བརྒྱད།

¹⁰⁹ Tib. *stong pa bon nyid dbyings kyi sku* / སྟོང་པ་བོན་ཉིད་དབྱིངས་ཀྱི་སྤྱ།

¹¹⁰ Tib. *gnas pa longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku* / གནས་པ་ལོངས་སྤྱོད་རྫོགས་པའི་སྤྱ།

¹¹¹ Tib. *'gag med cir yang sprul pa'i sku* / འགག་མེད་ཅིར་ཡང་སྤྱུལ་པའི་སྤྱ།

call the Three *Kayas*.¹¹² The Three *Kayas* are perfected in the Base, that is Nature. That is the first point which is explained in this passage.

If you have been listening to Dzogchen teachings for a long time then maybe you will be familiar with these Three *Kayas*. Usually we explain the Three *Kayas* in relation to Buddha, but here, we are talking about three sets of the Three *Kayas*: the Three *Kayas* of the Base, the Three *Kayas* of the Path and the Three *Kayas* of the Result. These are often explained in different ways. When you have experience with Nature, it is very important to try to keep on as clearly as possible. When you remain in this clear Nature, then from there, thoughts appear. These thoughts maybe good or bad – anything, even ignorance, emotions, anger, desire – but they all appear from this Nature. Everything, including *samsara*, appears from there. These are all connected with the Three *Kayas* of the Base.

When a thought such as anger or desire arises, it doesn't matter. The text says there is no need to remove or avoid them as everything is a form of the Three *Kayas*. Don't try to avoid any part of phenomenal existence; everything is a decoration of the Nature of the Three *Kayas* of the Base. As for all happiness, suffering, miseries, don't try to avoid them; everything appears as *dang*¹¹³ of Awareness.

Any kind of thought or vision comes spontaneously and that is not far from Basic Nature. It is called 'great vision'¹¹⁴ and does not move from Nature nor change Nature at all. If you understand that all visions and thoughts appear from there, that they are not far from Basic Nature, that they are non-dual, non-stop, without missing anything, then this is the pure result of the liberation of Nature. If you understand this Base or root, then it is liberated by itself, that is the root of all karmic causes. The Fruit – everything is completely integrated with this Nature. So if you understand this State clearly, then the Result is already there. There is no need to avoid anything or try to push anything away or clean anything; nothing is needed. Only understand purely that everything is a form of Nature. It is not necessary to determine by yourself to know this and practise it; everything already exists as Empty Form, a form of Nature. There is no need to search externally or anywhere else; it is not possible, you will not find anything.

¹¹² Tib. sku gsum / སྐུ་གསུམ།

¹¹³ Tib. gdangs / གདངས། – radiance, energy.

¹¹⁴ Tib. dgongs pa'i mchog / དགོངས་པའི་མཆོག་ – excellent vision, primordial state.

All the phenomena of existence are all the *rolpa* of *dharmakaya*. All kinds of thoughts – it doesn't matter which kinds of thoughts, good, bad, anything – are a form of Self-Aware Wisdom. All sufferings and miseries are all as the decoration of Empty Nature. This State cannot be found by rigorous and determined research or cultivated [in any way]; it is Nature. Whether you practise or study or whether you do nothing [it does not change]; this is real Nature. It is not found by meditation. If you don't practise meditation, everything is still forms of Nature; this is Nature, it never goes separately nor does it unite.

In this case, when I say here that thoughts are all as Self-Wisdom, these words can easily be misunderstood. In early times, many scholars and practitioners said: 'Now we have realized Nature so there is no need to do anything about our thoughts, they are all completely Nature!' But this is completely mistaken. The thought itself is a form of Nature, but if you don't realize this Nature, then you follow your thoughts just like measuring waves without thinking about where they come from, without knowing that they are water. So we say [that] *namtog*¹¹⁵ or thoughts are all Nature-forms. But the thought itself is not Wisdom. Don't mistake these kinds of things otherwise it can make a great mess.

The whole of phenomenal existence as well as any thoughts, good or bad, never changes and is never far away from Awareness. If you understand that all phenomena of existence are forms of Nature, then you don't need to avoid anything, you don't need to check good or bad, this or that; that is not necessary. All visions are as forms of Wisdom, Self-[Aware] Wisdom. There is nothing which exists beyond the Natural State. If we don't realize this Nature, then we are all living in and using the vision aspect.

The problem is that we don't check what the background is, we don't check the Base of these forms. For example, we are just measuring whether the waves are higher or lower, we don't check whether they are water. So one side is missing. We only measure visible things. This is similar. We explain that the forms of waves in the water are water. And in a similar way, all the phenomena of existence, our life – everything – is a form of Nature, of the Unspeakable State. You must realize this. If you understand and trust this Nature, that is Dzogchen.

There is another example: the sun itself is never dark, nor is it ever brighter. It is always the same, no difference. But for those who look at the sun, in the daytime it appears brightly and the night-time is dark [with no sun to be seen].

¹¹⁵ Tib. *mam rtog* / མཐ་རྟོག

So the sun is always bright and clear, but the difference depends on the beings looking towards it. In the same way, Nature is always pure, it can never be dirtied, nor can it be obscured or defiled. But if a sentient being does not look towards this Basic Nature, then Ignorance and Wisdom are separate, different. This distinction is made by the being, not by Nature itself. On Nature's side there is no distinction between liberation or non-liberation, no difference. They are both equally Empty Nature. Just as all the elements disappear in space and no traces are left afterwards, so in a similar way, all the phenomena of existence and all beings are but a form of Nature and after they are liberated into Nature, there are no traces, no obscurations at all. This is all the Fourth Chapter. It is unmistakable. It is the Mirror of the Heart.¹¹⁶

Additional Comments

Now, before I open this next chapter, I want to explain a bit about what I said earlier. I said that everything is a form of Nature, and Nature is an Unspeakable State. You can't say it is empty, clear, material or anything else. If you try to explain Nature, that is completely the wrong way, The crux of the matter is simply to leave it as it is because it is beyond thought and speaking. It is not possible to understand it or teach it in the normal way through reading; [understanding] doesn't come that way. The only method is for you to try to make yourself understand your own Nature. But this still needs to be helped by the blessings of the Lineage Masters. That is the reason for trying to develop devotion and trusting Guru Yoga. That is very important. This is not just some common knowledge.

I said before that all thoughts and emotions are a form of Nature. So then if you see this coming up as thoughts or emotions, and if you follow it [thinking that] this is wisdom, then you are going in a completely wrong way. What I am saying is, for example, [that it is] similar to looking at an image or a statue and measuring how old or how valuable it is without checking what it is made of; it is like this. What is the real background and cause of these emotions and thoughts? We only follow the visible thought itself, and so that sometimes makes us happy or sad, good or bad – many things change. We never check what the thoughts are formed from, what their nature is. That is what differentiates [between remaining in Nature and going the wrong way], our life and our situation. Our text says:

¹¹⁶ I.e. Tib. don mi 'chug pa 'bras bu snying gi me long / དོན་མི་འཕྲུག་པ་འབྲས་བུ་སྡིང་གི་མེ་ལོང་། – The Heart Mirror of the Ultimate Meaning of the Result.

‘thought is Wisdom,’ but that means that the background is Wisdom, not the actual visible thought itself. In the same way, we can measure and check how old or how valuable a statue is – people normally do this, but they don’t check the cause [or material] from which it was made. This is similar.

འཇུག་ Chapter V: The Heart-Mirror of Activities

If you understand Nature well, then Nature itself remains familiar and stable with the practitioner. Then with this, how can you deal with phenomenal existence and your life? You have the foundation, the understanding of Nature, but with this, you [have to] move your body, you speak and do whatever you [have to] do. If you have this understanding of the Base, then everything is Empty Form. So you can do many things, and if you understand that all these activities are forms of Nature, then there is no real collection of karmic causes, not at all. Why? Because everything is as illusion, like a rainbow. You can see things, there are movements there and so on, but afterwards there are no traces, neither good nor bad. You can do, see and hear everything, but no trace is left behind. Why? Because you have understood the Basic value, the Nature. So with this, you can do everything, but here it says everything is spontaneously liberated back to Nature itself. That is called Self-liberation.¹¹⁷ There are no good things to accept nor bad things to avoid; it doesn’t make much difference at all. Why? Because everything is equally encompassed by this Nature. It is like space – it doesn’t make any difference whether you look East or West, [space is always empty]. So good or bad, everything is equally encompassed by the empty, unspeakable State. That is how a practitioner normally does something, those are the activities. It can be difficult for beginners, unless you are familiar and stable with this Nature.

When a practitioner has advanced this far and has more experience, then he takes the Path of the View.¹¹⁸ This means that no matter what comes into his visions – good or bad – it doesn’t make much difference for him. Nothing changes for him, neither fear nor happiness.

¹¹⁷ Tib. rang grol / རང་གྲོལ།

¹¹⁸ Tib. lta ba lam / ལྟ་བ་ལམ།

In the same way, an advanced practitioner is able to integrate his meditation with the methods of the Path.¹¹⁹ In this way, whatever appears as a vision helps him develop his meditation.

Also, for a practitioner who has advanced this far, he takes the Path of the Result¹²⁰ such that he has no desire, no anger, no judgement of good or bad; there are no distinctions.

For such an advanced practitioner, on his side, in his activities, there are no good things to accept, no bad things to reject; there is not much difference at all because for him, the background [of all phenomena, thoughts, emotions etc.] is that everything is equally encompassed by Nature.

For this kind of advanced practitioner, there are no impure things which he needs to avoid, no good things which he should accept. Good or bad doesn't make much difference at all, you see, from his point of view. So then his activities are like those of a child; he has no special desire, nothing makes him particularly unhappy. Also, he neither does nor grasps at any activities, nor are there any good or bad [things which can] make him change. Everything is integrated with his understanding of Empty Form, of Nature, and so then his activities look like madness. Or sometimes his actions are as illusion – everything is liberated into Empty Form, so he doesn't experience much desire. Sometimes, such a person does something very serious, like an evil act, [but] his activities are like those of a king who is able to subdue everything. Or sometimes this person's activity or thinking is like a big fire which burns and destroys anger, desire and [all other emotions]. Or sometimes his activities and wishes are all like very strong water which washes everything, blows it up. Sometimes his view and activities come up as a very powerful Garuda flying in space who can take everything under his control.

The knowledge of a practitioner who has advanced this far is like a wish-fulfilling jewel; whatever he wants to do to help other beings [is successful] and all his wishes are fulfilled, he can meet their needs. Also his activities are never mistaken; whatever he does is according to his knowledge, understanding and Basic Nature. So then when he passes away from his body, there is no doubt that he will be integrated in heaven [of the Natural State]. He will be liberated into the [dimension] of the Natural State. That is the fifth chapter.

¹¹⁹ Tib. sgom pa lam / སྒོམ་པ་ལམ།

¹²⁰ Tib. 'bras bu lam / འབྲས་བུ་ལམ།

Three points of checking

These explanations all relate to an advanced practitioner. [But] before [you can arrive at this level], you have to go back to the basics, how we have to practise in a simple way.

First of all, after you have practised Guru Yoga, you look back to the thought, the thought disappears and you keep on for as long as possible. For beginners, it is not possible to keep on for very long. When a thought comes, you either follow it or judge it or something, and that is a disturbance. Otherwise, if you keep on in this State, at first it is clear and pure, wonderful! But if you keep on for longer and longer, after some time, the Clarity aspect diminishes. If you still go on, then the Clarity aspect will be lost. You will see the visions of phenomenal existence and although you are not in a deep sleep, things are not very clear. Maybe you don't realize how long you have been in this kind of meditation. You might think it is a wonderful meditation, you are sitting for a long time, integrating with meditation. But actually, beginners must follow these three points:

1. *Jog* – keep or settle;
2. *Shig* – open or check;
3. *Kyang* – continue or keep on.¹²¹

You have to use these three methods to check [your meditation] from time to time, until you become an advanced practitioner.

1. Jog

I have been talking about looking back at your thoughts. First of all you have to look towards your thought, then you can realize how it arises, what it does, and how it goes into the Unspeakable State. Once you have done this and have your own experience, there is no need to always do this, to be constantly checking your thoughts, not at all. Just come back to your Nature or meditation. If you look one time, if you are familiar with this State, then there is no need at all to keep looking back at your thoughts. Once you remember your meditation or Nature, you are clear in Nature. There is no need to check your thoughts or look at them. Just remember and you are in the State. And then keep on continuously. Don't keep wrestling your thoughts, always looking and checking. That is a waste of time.

¹²¹ Tib. 'jog bshig bskyang gsum / འཇོག་བཤིག་བསྐྱང་གསུམ།

Here, it is talking about beginners, about how to recognize Nature. Once you have recognized Nature, there is no need at all to keep on doing this.

Once you have realized Nature, just keep on for as long as possible; that is what we call 'settling it as it is.'

2. Shig

When you remain clearly in Nature, you can see and hear the whole of phenomenal existence clearly, like reflections appearing in a mirror. But you are not checking or following them. Keep on in this State for as long as you can. Then after a while, you have to check whether [your meditation] is the same as before. Sometimes, as time goes by, the Clarity [of your meditation] grows less and less. So if that happens, stop. Otherwise, if you go on, you are losing the Clarity aspect, so although it seems very comfortable, you are very calm, gentle and peaceful but it is as though you are resting; this is called *jingwa*¹²² and disturbs your meditation.

So if you are able to keep [in Nature] for quite a long time, you have to check, you have to shake [your body etc.]. Stop, and come back to Clarity. Put [your meditation] in the right way. That is what *shig* means: check from time to time. Don't let your meditation go on [without Clarity], in a state which is not sleep but which has lost the aspect of Clarity.

3. Kyang

Thirdly, once you have checked whether your meditation is OK or not, and if you haven't lost the Clarity – don't trust just keeping on in a gentle, peaceful, quiet state, having a nice time; this is not always a good way. You need to check. Whenever you lose the aspect of Clarity, your meditation is not right. This is according to the Dzogchen way. In this case, it is a disturbance for your meditation, it disturbs what you want to practise. Your mind is quiet and half asleep, and this is not the right way. So you always have to check. In the beginning [when you first start a meditation session], your meditation is clear and stable. That is like a measure; your meditation should be like this [throughout the session]. That is an important point for this [Dzogchen] way.

If you are always watching whether you have lost your Clarity or not, if you are always focussing on this with your thoughts, then this is wrong, too! So

¹²² Tib. bying ba / རྟེན་བཞག

you always have to judge: you must not lose the aspect of Clarity, you have to be stable, and try to keep everything level and balanced. You can only do that by yourself. You can't discuss with anybody else whether it is right or not; nobody knows what your condition is.

Three Disturbances

When you are doing any kind of meditation, but in particular when you are meditating in the Dzogchen way, there are many disturbances which can come until you have become an advanced practitioner. There are so many different disturbances which can arise, we cannot count them, but then can be summed up in three points:

1. *Göpa*¹²³ – agitation;
2. *Jingwa* – drowsiness;
3. *Mugpa*¹²⁴ – strengthlessness.

You must make sure whether you are being disturbed by these three or not. If we don't purify these disturbances then our meditation will be completely spoilt, just a waste of time.

1. Agitation

There are two types of agitation: rough and subtle.

Rough agitation

This is when you are thinking too much, making plans, or worrying too much. Or sometimes if you are happy this can cause agitation. Or sometimes you are too sad, and this causes agitation. There are many types of rough agitation, everybody knows them, and sometimes you even can't sleep.

In this case, you either have to think about the Preliminary Practices such as meditating on impermanence, or that *samsara* is a place of suffering and miseries, or on Refuge or *bodhichitta* or something. You can think of any of these things which change the mind. This can purify rough agitation.

¹²³ Tib. *rgod pa* / རྫོད་པ།

¹²⁴ Tib. *mmug pa* / མུག་པ།

Smooth or subtle agitation

When you are meditating, there is some movement of thoughts after some time. You are not thinking very roughly. You may not even realize when this type of smooth disturbance has started. Once you realize you are disturbed in this way, it is just enough to leave it, and soon after you can integrate with real meditation again.

2. Drowsiness

Sometimes this is caused by being too hot or too tired or something, and then your meditation is not very clear.

At that time, either try to make it clear, or go and get some fresh air, or have a wash etc. If this drowsiness is caused by your health, then you have to take some medicine or do whatever helps best. It is necessary to change, to purify this, because if you just carry on, you will either waste your meditation or your own health.

3. Strengthlessness

I have already said, you need to check [your meditation] after some time. Otherwise, if you continue meditating, in the beginning Clarity, Emptiness and Unification were all clear, but if you go on and on, you will soon begin to lose the Clarity aspect. You may not be very clear as to whether you have lost it or not, but your meditation will look very deep.

At that time, as I said earlier, it is necessary to check, and you may need to look back towards a thought again. Once. Then this makes your meditation clear. Otherwise, if you just carry on, this is a disturbance, not a very good one.

So first of all, you have to understand these types of disturbance, realize whether you are disturbed or not, and then you have to try and purify them. Otherwise your practice will be wasted.

Chapter VI: The Heart-Mirror of the Pure Realms and Places of Samsara

‘Prostrations to the manifesting visions of *tsal*, emanations of the Nature of *dharmakaya*!’

This teaching shows how all the higher and lower, the pure and impure realms manifest.

The subject of this chapter is how everything ‘evolves’ from Nature without activities and with activities; there are these two parts.

However, first of all I have to explain a little bit, otherwise, if I go according to the text, you will get lost in what I am talking about here.

First of all, something practical. I have already talked about the Natural State and hopefully everybody has already realized it. How do visions come from there? You know that clearly. You all have the experience of sitting for a while without any plans, when your past work is finished and you have not yet started your next activity. There is a gap between these two and you are resting. At this moment, you can see everything, you can hear everything, but you are not following these one by one. Meanwhile, what is your state? Make sure of this; you must know this and have experience. Because that present state is like a mirror, like a looking-glass. You can see things clearly but you don’t grasp them with your perception, you don’t follow them. You must realize this. This is the Natural State. Don’t think that the Natural State is something very important, very high or something. Yes, we say that, and that is true, the Natural State is important, but it is always integrated with you and with all sentient beings. Any sentient being has consciousness, and so Nature is there. This is important. You don’t need to search here or there for this or that or something. Usually we explain this and talk about it very highly, with respectful commentaries and so on, but personally, you yourself look at this gap between [thoughts] while you are resting. At that time, you are not dull, there is no agitation, there is just a clear presence. That is Nature, and you must trust and realize this. That is real Nature.

The Seven Mistaken Views

If you add anything to this State then there are countless mistakes and mistaken explanations about Nature, but they are all summed up in seven points. These

seven points all think they are focussing on the Dzogchen View, but in fact they are mistaken:

1. Dzogchen Nature is perfect. It is something certain.¹²⁵
2. Nothing is certain, it is nothing.
3. The Dzogchen View is something which can be recognized by consciousness.
4. The Dzogchen View can change into anything as it can be integrated with anything and everything.
5. The Dzogchen View does not accept anything; there is nothing certain.
6. Since Nature is integrated with the whole of phenomenal existence, anything can be accepted as the Dzogchen View; there is nothing special.
7. Pure Dzogchen is called *kadag*, but if you think: 'this is *kadag* or Purity' and integrate this idea with consciousness, then this is still a mistake.

These are all erroneous views. They think they are focussing on Dzogchen, but none of these are real Dzogchen.¹²⁶

You need to know these mistaken views, and you must not integrate any thoughts or ideas with this View which I have said is found in the gap between past and present, when your past [thought] is finished and the next has not started. Between these, you are not sleeping, you are not unconscious, your presence is clear. Yet what is clear cannot be recognized. This part is only the pure Dzogchen View. It is not integrated with any perception. You must make sure of this. Otherwise, if you think and add something, then that is a mistake. Here, it shows these seven points, but for the moment it is difficult for me to comment on them.

I said that the present State is the Unspeakable State, and the summary of all these seven mistakes is that if you add something and think: 'Nature is this or that,' then that is completely mistaken. If you don't think anything but just leave it as it is, then at that moment the Natural State is very pure and clear. This presence, this Nature, [has various qualities]. The Emptiness aspect is called *ngowo*¹²⁷ or Emptiness. The Clarity aspect which enables it to know itself is *rangzhin*.¹²⁸ This Clarity and Emptiness are not separate; Emptiness is itself clear,

¹²⁵ I.e. it is something which can be ascertained.

¹²⁶ See footnote 37, page 26.

¹²⁷ Tib. ngo bo / ངོ་བོ།

¹²⁸ Tib. rang bzhin / རང་བཞིན།

Clarity is itself empty, and although we explain them separately, Nature itself is just the same, there are no distinctions at all. This is very special. This Nature is empty yet it can be clear. 'Clear' means that itself knows itself. We usually give the example of a lamp. If you light a lamp, the lamp itself is clear. In the same way, this Nature is itself clear to itself. There is no object, no subject. This is peculiar, special. So leave it as it is. That is real Nature. This is the Base. If you leave it as it is and keep on for as long as possible without either adding or detracting anything, then this is real, pure meditation. That is needed.

Thögal visions

Keep on in this State continuously and when you are more familiar and stable with it, you can use eye gazes and stare into the sky. If you do this, you will see some movements and have some visions. Your basic meditation with the Natural State is not moving, it should be stable. Then you can use eye gazes and gaze into the clear sky. You will see some visions in space and they are integrated with your knowledge of the Basic Natural State. You may see more visions or not so many, but don't be excited at the beginning and expect to see some images or some wonderful things. It doesn't matter; whatever movements come in space, they are *thögal* visions. Or if you go into a dark room where all light sources have been blocked, then you will see some visions. This is also [a manifestation of] Nature. These visions don't come from the dark or from space; they come from Nature into Nature, but they are helped by either the clear sky or the darkness or sunlight.¹²⁹ These visions are called *thögal* visions because you don't follow the visions, you don't refuse anything, you are simply, purely integrated with the Natural State, so meanwhile, as long as you remain in the State, the visions are there, and it is as though you are looking into a mirror. You are not concentrating on the mirror itself, nor are you checking whether the reflections are good or bad – you are just seeing. This is similar. These are called pure visions, *thögal* visions.

First of all, as I have already said, the basic thing is to remain in the Natural State which you have experienced in the gap between past and future activity. That State is clear, and that is the Natural State. If you keep on, [your practice] develops so that all visions become more and more pure and can be the same as *thögal* visions. The next stage is that if you keep on in this State for a little while, a thought comes spontaneously: 'Oh, it's already time for me to go!' and

¹²⁹ i.e. the dark, space or sunlight are used as supports.

you follow the thought, you are led by the thought, you jump up and go out, and grab your car or bike or set off on foot, and so you start your next activity. This goes on and on continuously. That is how all visions are made. Visions start from thoughts, and the thought comes from Nature. You can see this clearly. You don't arrange anything, you can't see them in either the brain or the heart [when you look back to the origin of a thought], the thought just appears spontaneously: 'Oh, it's time for me to go!' It appears, you follow it, you walk, you grasp, and that develops more and more. That is the start of evolution. That is real evolution. If you want to study evolution, there are the general and private aspects, there are many things you could study, but this is the simple way to introduce you to how evolution begins.

Now all these visions come up in the State. On the vision-side, there can be good things or bad things, many things. Good things are things like *bodhichitta*, compassion and so on. Bad things are things like anger, desire, ignorance and so on. So then within this there is the division into good, bad and neutral; we can make many distinctions, and that is our life, how everything starts. Everything is impure because we don't look back to the source. Everything appears in front of us and we follow it, and that sometimes makes good or bad, but nothing is trustable, everything is impure. There is an example: the sun shines in the sky and it is always the same, equally bright. Whether down below it is dark or clear, warmer or colder, hot or whatever, there is never any difference [for the sun itself]. But for those down below who are watching, the sun can be covered by clouds. There can be white clouds or black clouds, but they both equally cover the sun. In the same way, good things like *bodhichitta*, compassion and all your good intentions all cover the sun – the Natural State is disturbed. Or bad things like emotions also cover the Natural State, just as black and white clouds both equally cover the sun. Why? Because you are far away; in both cases, you are not looking back to the source. Therefore, according to Dzogchen, from the point of view of the Natural State, they are both called impure.

Hopefully you are not thinking that it is useless to practise *bodhichitta* or Refuge or such kinds of things. These are very useful! How are they useful? After you leave the Natural State and follow the visions, we can say that there are two parties or two groups: Nature's side and the side of visions. Whatever good things you do are very useful, while bad things are very damaging and not good. That is according to the side of visions. On this side, there is good, bad and so on, and we are living in this part, for the moment. So good things are useful and helpful while bad things are damaging and the result is bad. Everything follows on in that way.

You should never think it is useless to practise; it is only when we are talking about real Nature, the Dzogchen View [that there is no distinction between good and bad]. Here, everyone is pretending to follow Dzogchen, so you should know something about Dzogchen properly, little by little. But don't think that if you practise Dzogchen all other practices are of no use; don't ever think this. They are useful, and how they are useful is that they are useful for this group, this side [i.e. the vision-side, the practitioner].

Earlier I said that when you have finished one activity or thought and not yet started the second, there is a gap, and this is a kind of junction; you can choose which way you go. That is how [everything] starts. Most of our life [evolves] because we are familiar with the second way: we follow the visions. Within the visions, there are normal visions and great ones, many various ones. But the main thing is that most sentient beings grasp their own body very tightly. All sentient beings, even animals and insects, grasp their body and feel it is very important. So the text explains two ways [two methods of introducing the arising display of Energy and Visions].¹³⁰

Introduction with effort and visualization

Visualize your body as the whole universe, both internal and external, and visualize this as a *mandala*. Offer everything. The universe, the centre, east, north, west, all the directions, above and below are what we call the external universe [or the container]. Then internally, there are all the sentient beings of the Six Realms, the different places they inhabit. They all have different conditions – hardships or happiness, they can have many things. So think. This is a practice, this is real, but first of all we have to visualize our own body as the external universe. Internally, all sentient beings are there. Then offer this universe to the Three Jewels. Visualize them in front of you. This is similar to the *mandala* offering, using your own body.

The body itself is the form or vessel of all the important realms. That means that all the Six Realms are integrated with each individual's body. Why? Because they are connected with the five poisonous consciousnesses and each of these is the cause for one of the impure realms. Anger, desire, ignorance, pride and jealousy are the cause for the Six Realms, and everything is connected with the body. So we don't need to be too attached to our body, to think it is very important

¹³⁰ Tib. *rtsal snang rol pa* / རྩ་སྒྲུང་རོལ་པ།

and always grasp after it tightly. It is much better to do something useful such as practising *chöd*.

Whoever needs something from the body – flesh, bone, consciousness, the external body, the internal body – can take them. ‘Take them, I will never be afraid.’ Give your body to them openly. This is great generosity, like the practice of *chöd*. The practice of *chöd* is much more professional. It is good to say [prayers for] protection one hundred times, but the best thing is to say: ‘just take whatever you like! I don’t care!’ that is much better. It is loosening up. That is open generosity.

So this is [the first of] these two methods, one relating to the body. The purpose is to try to loosen [attachment to the body], to try not to grasp at your desire to hold on to the body.

Now, try not to keep too much desire or attachment to your body or treat it with too much respect. It will soon be thrown away. It is not valuable, not trustable. Maybe you will choose a place for the coffin, but that is useless. It is better to practise *chöd* beforehand, to try to give them whatever they need. That means you should try to learn. This is a way to learn a kind of tolerance. Very often, all sentient beings serve and protect their body too much, part of the body. But each birthday you have to realize you are moving towards the coffin, the churchyard, nowhere else. If you realize this, you don’t need to be too tied up with [attachment to your body]. What is the result?

Introduction through one's own mind-stream

The best thing is to try to look back towards your consciousness, to what the situation is like. Good or bad, it is permanently with you, you have to go with your own consciousness. Even after the disconnection of your material body, the mind goes alone. This is not just empty words. There is great evidence which is clearly shown by dreams. When you go to sleep, your body is lying in the bed, you made it as comfortable as possible, but soon afterwards you have a dream. In the dream, there can be good things or bad things, but whatever situation comes up in the dream [appears as] something real. We say: ‘Oh, it’s only a dream’ but it can show you real evidence as to the situation after mind and material body are disconnected.

The body is only temporary, it is not trustable at all. But we do our best for it! If you have some small thing like toothache, you immediately rush to the dentist or try to preserve your tooth in some way. It might be OK for the moment, but it won’t be cured forever, not at all. Next year it will be the same thing, so then

you will have to spend all your savings, either in the hospital or at the dentist's! There is no limit at all. So the best thing is to try to preserve and train your mind. That is really trustable. Good or bad, [no matter what your mind is like], you will never lose it. You yourself are consciousness, not anything separate. So if you want to preserve yourself and have good conditions, then the best thing is to train your mind. That is *you*, not your property.

I am saying that we should look after our own consciousness and try and train it in the best way. How can we do this? What is the best way to train our consciousness? We should not just follow what some ordinary being says is good; that is not pure, not trustable. According to this kind of text which is pure, solid and trustable, it says that the best way to train [your mind], preserve [good conditions] and have peace for the future is to look to some thought.

Liberating the five negative emotions into the Five Wisdoms

Anger

In particular, if you have anger, look at that anger. You are angry with somebody. Or with your family. At that time, look there. Anger does not stay there permanently, not at all. Soon afterwards, it will disappear. How does it disappear? It just disappears, and no trace is left. After anger disappears, the Unspeakable State remains, and this is called Mirror-like Wisdom.¹³¹

Ignorance

When ignorance arises – ignorance is always coming, it is very familiar and it is difficult to explain it separately, you see. 'Ignore' means not knowing something. In this case, it doesn't refer to not knowing some things in general, but in particular, it refers to not knowing that the root of all emotions is ignorance. How does this ignorance start? When visions first arise, we immediately follow the object-side, we don't look back to the source. If we ignore the source, if we don't know the source, the place, or the origin of thoughts, then that is ignorance. Is that clear? It is important. All the time, all our consciousnesses are integrated with

¹³¹ Tib. me long lta bu ye shes / མེ་ལོང་ལྷ་བུ་ཡེ་ཤེས། Here the text speaks of Five Bodies rather than Five Wisdoms. The Body related with this Wisdom is Tib. me long ye shes g.yung drung sku / མེ་ལོང་ཡེ་ཤེས་གཡུང་རླུང་སྐུ།

ignorance, some more tightly than others, but they are all influenced by this ignorance. That is why anger, jealousy – everything – has been influenced by this ignorance.

You must realize that ignorance means we don't look back to the source of our thoughts. We don't look, we don't know, we are ignorant. If you realize this is ignorance, look there – it does not stay. Just look, and soon after it will disappear or be liberated. After it is liberated, the Unspeakable State is there in the same way, and it is called the Wisdom of Emptiness.¹³²

Pride

This is clear, everybody knows what pride is. It doesn't matter what you have done – good or bad or whatever – people feel proud. Whenever pride arises, look at it. Soon after, it will be liberated, disappear. Afterwards, what remains is the Unspeakable State. This Unspeakable State is called the Wisdom of Equanimity.¹³³

Desire

Whenever you feel desire, look there, and before you follow it and do this or that, just look there, and it will be liberated by itself. So look, and there is the Unspeakable State. In this case, the State is called Discriminating Wisdom.¹³⁴

Competition [jealousy]

This is the worst thing. Everybody is always competing with each other. There are many different causes, but when you realize this competition is disturbing you – it mainly disturbs people so that they cannot remain peaceful, they are looking round and trying to compete in many ways. You don't need to do it on purpose; if you see something, it creates competition [jealousy]. So at that time, it is better not to

¹³² Tib. stong nyid ye shes / བོན་དབྱིངས་ཡེ་ཤེས། ; Tib. stong nyid bder gshegs sku / ལྷོང་
ཉིད་བདེར་གཤེགས་སྐུ།

¹³³ Tib. mnyam nyid ye shes / མཉམ་ཉིད་ཡེ་ཤེས། ; mnyam nyid ye shes sku / མཉམ་ཉིད་
ཡེ་ཤེས་སྐུ།

¹³⁴ Tib. so sor rtog pa'i ye shes / སོ་སོར་རྟོག་པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས། ; kun rtogs pad ma'i sku / ཀུན་
རྟོགས་པད་མའི་སྐུ།

do anything or follow this, but instead, just look at it. It will soon disappear. After it has disappeared, the State is called All-Accomplishing Wisdom.¹³⁵

So in this way, all the five poisonous consciousnesses are turning back into the Five Wisdoms.

Normally, the five poisonous consciousnesses are the cause of unhappiness and miseries and suffering. So if you are able to control these, that is great medicine, you see, it makes peace and happiness. Talking about peace and happiness doesn't really work well. So here, this teaching gives advice and says how you should practise with this if you are a practitioner of best [capacity].

Naturally, the five poisonous consciousnesses are the base of Nature *bodhichitta*.¹³⁶ So in a similar way, when anger comes up, look there, and it will liberate back to Nature. That is called 'the Nature of anger is Empty Awareness.'¹³⁷ This Emptiness is also called *dharmakaya*, unchangeable *dharmakaya*.

When you remain continuously in unchangeable *dharmakaya*, as long as you are integrated with this State, that is called the Nature of *sambhogakaya*.

Soon afterwards, if you keep on in this State, the next visions will arise. Whatever visions are integrated with Nature and Self-Wisdom are *nirmanakaya*, *nirmanakaya* of the Base.

So everything is liberated back to Nature. If you follow the vision-side, that will lead you to *samsara*. If you don't follow the vision-side but instead remain in Nature, then you are in the Natural State which has the following three qualities: *ngowo*, *rangzhin*, *thugje*.¹³⁸

Anger liberates back to Nature and is already integrated with *dharmakaya*, *sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya*. This State or Nature which remains [is perfected with] the Three *Kayas* and these are called Direct Form of *bodhichitta*.¹³⁹ There are four *Kayas* altogether - *dharmakaya*, *sambhogakaya*, *nirmanakaya* and the *Kaya* of *bodhichitta*. These become more and more familiar and stable as the practitioner's meditation develops, and the final achievement is

¹³⁵ Tib. bya grub ye shes / བྱ་གྲུབ་ཡེ་ཤེས་། ; bya grub phrin las sku / བྱ་གྲུབ་ཕྱིན་ལས་སྤྱ།

¹³⁶ I.e. the Natural State.

¹³⁷ Tib. zhe sdang ngo bo rig par stong / ཞེ་སྤང་ངོ་བོ་རིག་པར་སྟོང་།

¹³⁸ Tib. ngo bo, rang bzhin, thugs rje / ངོ་བོ་རང་བཞིན་རྒྱལ་ཇེ།

¹³⁹ Tib. mngon par byang chub pa'i sku / མངོན་པར་བྱང་ཆུབ་པའི་སྤྱ།

called Buddhahood. After the practitioner achieves Buddhahood, he will naturally lead and help all sentient beings purify all their defilements, obscurations, sufferings and miseries.

This section explains how all the pure realms of Buddhas, [such as] Sukhavati [develop], or how, if you don't follow Buddhas' way, all the Six Realms of *samsara* develop; they are also in your hand. Which way you practise and choose to go and what you expect to achieve is in your hand. Either Buddhahood, or circulating in *samsara*. The cause of *samsara* and *nirvana* has already been explained in the text. From the beginning, the original source is the Natural State, and from there, you either remain continuously practising and meditating with the Natural State, and that is the cause of *nirvana*, or if you follow the visions when they begin to appear as thoughts which come up, then that leads you to *samsara*. Both of them are in your Nature, and you can choose which you follow.

This chapter has already explained how the Buddha realms or *samsara* [manifest]. This is the sixth chapter.

Question and Answer

Are there any questions? Anything? You have to check! Don't just keep some doubts or ideas, thinking: 'Oh, it is supposed to be like this, he said it's like this...' Don't rely on what is said or on what you read; you yourself must make sure what this Unspeakable State is like. This is very important. Otherwise, if you think: 'This is Dzogchen' or 'That is Dzogchen' and just follow what you read or what you hear, then everything is only created by your perception, your consciousness and you don't have your own experience. Whatever experience you have, you must be sure [it is correct.] There are three points which must agree:

- Firstly, your own experience, what it seems to be like. That has to be clear;
- Secondly, try to listen to a qualified teacher who you have already decided is valuable;
- Thirdly, read solid Dzogchen teachings.

Compare these three; they must all agree and come to one point. Then you can trust. That is the real purpose; you must know clearly and then trust. Don't just follow this or that or something – that is created by perception. If you integrate with any kind of perception, then that is impure, you created it, you think: 'It is supposed to be like this.' But Nature itself has to be completely pure, beyond all thoughts and perception. No thoughts, no thinking, no creation. Nothing. Let it

remain as it is. That is clear Nature. It is very special; this is not a normal way of teaching, it is not like normal knowledge.

Q: Can you explain a little more about the relation between Mirror-like Wisdom and the Natural State?

A: We know that anything can be reflected in a mirror. The mirror doesn't make any distinctions between good or bad or anything else. The mirror just shows a picture. That is an imitation. Nature itself is like a mirror, you see. It doesn't distinguish between whether some good things appear as visions or bad things appear as visions. 'Good things' means *bodhichitta*, compassion and so on. Whatever comes into the visions, Nature itself is the same! If anger, desire or emotions appear as visions in Nature, Nature itself doesn't change; it is the same. Therefore it looks similar to a mirror, so we say 'mirror-like wisdom.' Nature is like a mirror, and visions are like reflections. The visions don't disturb the mirror, the mirror doesn't recognize anything, yet they are shining there clearly.

Secondly, whatever reflections come into the mirror, they are not far from the mirror at all. Whatever comes, everything is 'inside' the mirror. In the same way, no matter what visions arise, they are all totally integrated with Nature. Nothing at all can go away from Nature. Anything – good, bad, pure, impure – everything is a reflection, everything is in Nature, the Natural State. So therefore it is similar.

Q: In Mahamudra they speak of the Five Wisdoms. Is this the same as the Five Wisdoms in Dzogchen teachings?

A: Well yes, the name is the same, but the base is completely different. For Mahamudra, they have to have the influence of wisdom consciousness, or pure perception. But in Dzogchen, it is completely beyond all perceptions, it doesn't matter whether they are pure or impure. So the name is the same.

In the initial stages of Mahamudra and Dzogchen, some parts are the same and are common to both teachings, so quite often people say they are the same; some names and practices are the same. There are explanations of many commonalities, but in reality they are different.



Chapter VII: The Heart-Mirror of the Six Points of Completion

First of all, I have to follow this last chapter. It mainly teaches the View, Meditation, Activities, how to purify disturbances, and then finally, the Fruit or Result of practising. Generally, Dzogchen teachings are taught in a similar way, with View, Meditation, Activities and Result. Here, it also has a special section on Purification.

‘Prostrations to the excellent View of total liberation’.

Final View

[Firstly,] the final goal of the View of Dzogchen is not grasped [or apprehended] by any perceptions.

Secondly, it doesn’t grasp any sides, [it is impartial]. If you integrate this with thoughts or any perception, or if you grasp some object, then that is a completely wrong way, not Dzogchen.

When you try to check or look – we say ‘look’ but we do not use our eyes at all, nor any other senses. Neither do we use any consciousness at all. ‘Look’ is just a way of talking about it. It means that you yourself are concentrating; you check your own condition in the present time. Just look towards the thought, nothing remains, you can’t find anything, and there is nothing special which you can explain after the thought itself has disappeared. The unspeakable State is there. That is what it means when it says: ‘Look, but you don’t find anything.’ Nothing found, that is found!

As I said earlier, look at who is looking. Just as you looked at the subject, [the thought], so in the same way, look back at that observer, [the object]. Just as before, you cannot find anything, it is liberated back into the State. There is no object, no subject, nothing you can describe. Your presence is an Unspeakable State. You are not in a deep sleep, nor are you unconscious. Your presence is clear, but it is impossible to explain what is clear. There is no thinking, no idea of

‘emptiness,’ ‘clarity’ or anything else. Nothing. It is just a clear state of *hedewa*.¹⁴⁰ That means you are seeing Nature clearly. This Nature is perfected. If you understand – open everything and leave it freely. There is no attachment to any side, to any subject, to any material. There is neither subject nor object, only you yourself have experience in this State.

That is the View of Dzogchen.

Final Meditation

There is an important point here. At that time, it might seem as though all meditating or looking seems to be done by yourself. You have the feeling that you are somewhere. It seems as though you are looking or meditating or holding this View. If you have this idea or experience, then at that time you must look back to yourself; you yourself are integrated in the Natural State in the same way [as your meditation]. Otherwise, some part [of your meditation] is not very clear and clean, and you are bound by some attachment. This is very important. Just as everything is liberated into the Unspeakable State, so in the same way, the State is your Nature, not something separate. Always try to integrate this State with your Nature. Don’t separate the View and yourself. That is very important. Otherwise, you can talk about meditating and you [may think of] yourself as an important person or something... But if you feel this sometimes, then you must integrate with the Unspeakable State. You do not exist anywhere separately from this Nature.

If you do this, you might sometimes be a little bit afraid that you will lose yourself completely and will no longer exist or something. If you are not meditating deeply, this won’t be a problem. But if you are concentrating, have understood and keep meditating in the right way, you will sometimes have the experience of everything going into the Unspeakable State, and you may have fear: ‘Where am I?’ But you don’t need to be afraid. This is not dangerous, it is OK. [This experience comes as a sign of realization] as you become more and more familiar with this practice, that is the reason why you have to go into that State.

¹⁴⁰ Tib. had de ba / ཧད་དེ་བ། – *hedewa* has different meanings depending on the context. It may refer to a blank mental state but in this case it refers to remaining in the Natural State.

Your Nature is empty *bönnyi*,¹⁴¹ Emptiness; there is no focussing on anything. There is no subject anywhere, so how do you meditate? You might wonder this. Look: how are you meditating without any intention, without any subject object, with no separation between the two? What is your meditation? Look carefully. You can't find anything, neither a subject to meditate on nor an object, no meditator, no meditation, nothing. So without finding any meditation, how can you be meditating? [If] you are looking and thinking about this, then you can't find anything, so just keep on. That is meditation. This is a kind of openness; you don't find anything, but the presence is clear. If you keep on in this State which you experience, only, then that is meditation.

Final Activities

This section teaches the final Activities according to a Dzogchen practitioner.

Whatever activities the practitioner does, everything is integrated with the *bodhichitta* of the Nature of Mind. So everything is realized as an emanation of Nature, a vision which comes from Nature. That means that the practitioner has become more familiar with the understanding of the Nature of the Base and more stable with this, so then he doesn't lose this State, and then whatever he says – good or bad – is as illusion. Why? Because no influence is coming from either consciousness or perception.

Also, whatever you do with your body, if you are integrated with this Nature, then everything you do is like an illusion. No traces are left. If no traces are left behind, then that means these actions do not make any karmic causes at all. Everything you do is just like drawing with chalk in space; no marks are left behind. If you are this far advanced and have this experience, then you can integrate any kind of activities of body, speech and even mind [with your Natural State].

When you are very deeply and clearly [integrated] with Nature, visualizing *yidams* or *dakinis* and so on does not disturb you; you don't lose your concentration with the Natural State. So at that time, all the activities of your consciousness are like shining reflections in a mirror.

For an advanced practitioner of Dzogchen, whatever he says, or does, or thinks, everything is as a reflection which does not leave any traces behind, so it doesn't make any karmic causes at all. Even if such a person does something like

¹⁴¹ Tib. bon nyid / བོན་ཉིད།

killing or telling lies, no matter what he does, it doesn't leave a trace behind, so no karmic causes are collected. That means everything is like *siddha's* work. Maybe people have heard many tales about what the *siddhas* did. But if you pretend to behave like a *siddha* and do what you see them doing without having so much knowledge [or experience of integration as your] background, then everything you do is like madness.

Final Correcting of Faults

As I have already said, the experience of a practitioner who has advanced this far is very stable and familiar. With this, whatever he does with his body, speech and mind, whether good or bad, is a shining reflection in a mirror. From the point of view of the advanced practitioner, it looks as though all kinds of emotions are growing in his thought, but still, this person can have a kind of 'imitation' of emotion; this can happen. Wrath, jealousy, desire – it looks as though he shows all kinds of emotions, but whatever he shows is integrated with the Natural State or Self-Awareness. They appear like waves in water. In the same way. It is not possible to stop [emotions arising]; the 'stopper' is also a form of Nature. The thought or whatever is trying to stop these faults is already the Natural State. It doesn't matter; the antidote and what looks like an emotion are both equally formed of Nature. If the person who has this experience looks at them, he will not find anything special apart from the Nature which he has already been clearly engaged with. So just leave them. There is no antidote, no path, nothing. Everything is self-liberated into the Natural State. So it appears as though he manifests wrathfully, thinking and doing and saying things, but in fact he has developed much Wisdom. This kind of person who has advanced so far is a real *siddha*. That is what this means.

If inside, the practitioner's knowledge is not so far advanced yet they act as *siddhas* do, then here it says it is like putting a lion's skin on a donkey; the donkey doesn't do any lion-work!

Final Experiences

So what is the final experience or *nyam*?¹⁴² For such an experienced practitioner, he does things which may appear to be virtuous or negative, but whatever he does,

¹⁴² Tib. nyams / ཉམས།

on his side, everything is as illusion and is integrated with Wisdom; nothing is separated from Wisdom. So there is nothing to avoid, nor does he need to search for an antidote to purify impure things; nothing. Everything is deeply integrated with Self-Awareness and Wisdom. There is no object, no subject, no bad things, no antidotes, no impure, negative things. On his side, nothing exists. Even if we think he does some bad, negative things, on his side, everything is as Wisdom, different forms of Wisdom. That is called Self-Liberation and equanimity; his knowledge comes into the Final Goal. That is the practitioner's final experience.

Final Result

What kind of final Result does such a practitioner achieve? He achieves the Three *Kayas*. That means he will have the Wisdom of the Three *Kayas* only by continuing to practise what he has already been practising continuously from the beginning, no more, no less: the unification of Emptiness and Clarity. Practising continuously with this is the Base; [that is] the best.

As he goes on and on, he grows more familiar and stable with this, gains more and more experience, and all the other impure things – thoughts, emotions, everything – are spontaneously purified. There is no need to add anything special in particular as an antidote, not at all. Only practice is developing, he becomes more familiar and stable with it, and so thoughts diminish spontaneously; impure emotions grow less and less. Why? Because this is like the sun shining: when the sun shines, there is no need to add light and heat, they appear spontaneously. This is the same. When you practise continuously with this unification without mistakes, then it will come up to the Final Goal which is the achievement of Buddhahood.

Within Buddhahood, there are Three *Kayas*: *dharmakaya*, *sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya*. We have already talked about Emptiness, Clarity and Unity. Emptiness is *dharmakaya*; Clarity is *sambhogakaya* and Unification is *nirmanakaya*. Finally, this can only be integrated with his Result. There is neither cause nor practice [which can bring it about]. It only comes from this State [itself]. So therefore it says you cannot find Buddhahood externally, from beyond your practice of *thigle nyachig*,¹⁴³ the Single Dot. That comes from yourself. I am always saying: don't think or hope that Buddha will come from somewhere external. The only way is for you to find [Buddha within] yourself. It

¹⁴³ Tib. *thig le nyag gcig* / ཐིག་ལེ་ནག་གཅིག་

says: Just practise with Nature, go along with this, and finally you will achieve Buddhahood by yourself. If you realize that this is important and then trust this, you already have the cause of Buddha in your hand.

That part is the seventh chapter. The text is over. This is a very important text, everything is taught here. Not many words are used, it is not very detailed, but it is condensed.

Colophon

*“Prostrations to the Precious Treasury which satisfies all wishes and needs!
Here is the Heart Mirror explaining the benefit of meeting this teaching.
Keep and cherish this teaching in your mind for it is as vital as the heart to your body.*

Keep and cherish it in your mind for it brings the realization of the ultimate meaning of self-awareness in a manner similar to seeing your own face in a mirror.

The value of this teaching is unfathomable.

One who continuously remains true to its real meaning will enjoy the inexhaustible treasure of accomplishment as if the doors of an immeasurable royal treasury were flung wide open.

In such an endowed individual, the inconceivable realization of the primordial state beyond thought will arise in a manner similar to the sun's core illuminating the entire universe.

Whoever possesses such realization will have the power to cut through appearances like a lion which freely roams atop the mountain ridges.”¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ At this point Yongdzin Rinpoche missed a few lines, so for the sake of completion this passage has been translated by Dmitry Ermakov. These are the lines: གཤམ་འདོད་རིན་ཆེན་མཛོད་ལ་ཐུག་འཆལ་ལོ། འདི་འཕད་ཡོན་གཏན་བསྟན་པ་སྤིང་གི་མེ་ལོང་ནི། ལུས་ལ་གཙུག་པའི་སྤིང་ལྟར་དུ། བསྟན་པ་འདི་ཡི་སྤིང་པོ་ཡིང་ཆོངས། མེ་ལོང་རང་གི་བཞིན་མཐོང་ལྟར། རང་རིག་གསལ་འདི་དོན་མཐོང་ཆོངས། འདི་ཡི་ཡོན་གཏན་བསམ་མི་བྱུང། རྒྱལ་པོའི་དཀོར་མཛོད་ཁ་ཐུང་ལྟར། འདི་དོན་གནས་པའི་གང་ཟག་དེ། འབྲས་བུ་མི་ཟད་གཏོར་ལ་སྦྱོད། ཉི་མའི་སྤིང་པོས། ཀྱན་བྱབ་ལྟར། འདིར་ལྷན་དགོངས་པ་བསམ་མེད་འཆར། མེང་གེ་རི་སུལ་འགྲིམས་པ་ལྟར། འདིར་ལྷན་སྦྲང་བ་ཤུགས་ཀྱིས་ཆོད།

If you write this part of the text in gold and keep it with you as a necklace, then it can purify many obscurations, defilements and so on.

If you read this text during a solar or lunar eclipse or during an earthquake or during some other natural phenomenon, it can be helpful.

If you read this aloud, whoever hears it can be connected [to the Teachings] and purify some part [of their negativities] forever.

If you write this in gold or silver or in any way and [place it on the corpse] at the time of [cremation], wherever the smoke goes, beings can be connected [to the Teachings].

Whoever hears this teaching properly and keeps it in their mind should not try to split it, add to it or compare it; you can't do this. This text has very special, very strict Guardians; it is guarded by *khandro*.¹⁴⁵

Keep this [teaching] secretly and tightly as though it were your own heart.

This was composed by Drenpa Namkha and transmitted to Tsewang Rigdzin,¹⁴⁶ and to Lungbön Lhanyen¹⁴⁷ who was a Tibetan Master. It has been transmitted successively up to now and has never been broken.

Final Remarks

OK. Now what to do? The text is finished! OK. Keep quiet.

Practitioners who practise with Dzogchen. Well, we are all kind of Dzogchen practitioners. Maybe sometimes people have heard that Dzogchen is nothingness, like nihilism or something. Or sometimes it sounds like eternalism. Many things are said, Dzogchen is described in many ways, but whatever you have heard, either now or any other time you have heard teachings, don't be mistaken. Don't add anything. Try to make sure that your understanding is pure, that you have understood what Nature is. This is very important.

Secondly, it is not easy to understand the Dzogchen View and Nature. Why? Because normally our knowledge and learning all come through the use of consciousness; that is very popular. But suddenly here we say: after you have practised with the Preliminary Practices, more or less, and in particular we have people who are interested in and devoted to Dzogchen, so after they have practised

¹⁴⁵ Tib. mkha' 'gro / མཁའ་གྲོ།

¹⁴⁶ Tib. Tshe dbang rig 'dzin / ཚེ་དབང་རིག་འཛིན།

¹⁴⁷ Tib. Lung bon lha gnyen / ལུང་བོན་ལྷ་གཉེན།

the Dzogchen preliminaries, then you search for the mind. That doesn't mean that the mind is lost. Normally we don't care, we think as much as we can. Even in the teachings it always says: 'Think.' Nobody says: 'Don't think.'

Very often when we explain Dzogchen it seems as though we don't need to [worry about] karmic causes or negative things or practise Tantra or Sutra in the normal way, but it depends; you must realize that the Dzogchen View itself does not need to add anything at all. With this, Dzogchen does not neglect anything, it is not against any practices, neither good nor bad, not at all. We always say: 'No need to do this, no need to follow karmic cause, it doesn't follow the cause or fruit of sufferings, miseries' and so on. That means that Nature itself is in no way integrated with these sufferings and miseries but Dzogchen doesn't reject anything. It neither accepts nor rejects anything. Dzogchen itself is Purity, *kadag*, *lhundrub*. It is very important to make sure what Dzogchen really is, not just think: 'Dzogchen says this or that or something.' Don't play with this. It is really great [knowledge]. If you just say this or that or talk about some pieces you have heard without knowing very much or very deeply, then, without any reason, that makes big rumours. It makes very heavy negative things. Leave it. You can practise as much as you know, but don't tell people who are not really integrated with Dzogchen. There is nothing useful if you tell them something about Dzogchen. They can be mistaken, you see, they can develop a wrong view. Therefore, there are four vows of Dzogchen. These are very strict.

The Dzogchen Vows

These are: *mepa*, *chyalwa*,¹⁴⁸ *lhundrub* and *chigpu*.¹⁴⁹

These are all Tibetan words – it would be better to learn Tibetan, otherwise it is difficult to translate!

Mepa

This means that Dzogchen Nature does not exist inherently at all, If you think of the Dzogchen Nature as existing inherently [you are mistaken]; even though many things were written about this in early times, that doesn't matter. Don't think that the Dzogchen Nature exists inherently.

¹⁴⁸ Tib. med pa, phyal ba / མེད་པ། ཕྱལ་བ།

¹⁴⁹ Tib. gcig pu /གཅིག་པུ།

Chyalwa

Dzogchen is Emptiness, Clarity and Unification, and this is called *thigle nyagchig*, which means Single Dot. That encompasses the whole of existence, everywhere. There are no sides, no partiality, neither here nor there or anything like that; everything is equally encompassed. That is the second, *chyalwa*.

Lhundrub

This means that everything is allowed to appear from this Base of Nature. Nature itself is not integrated with anything – neither good nor bad, pure nor dirty. Nothing. It is completely pure, *kadag*. But this Base of Nature is the Base of All;¹⁵⁰ anything can appear spontaneously.

What does that mean? You can see this clearly. While you are having a rest, a thought appears spontaneously, a thought just comes up. The thought comes from Nature itself. You didn't create anything. It comes from Nature because Nature is *lhundrub*, it has power. You didn't plan anything, there is no cause coming either from the brain or the heart, nothing. The thought just appears spontaneously. You can see it, but usually you don't trust [that it just arises spontaneously] so usually you search for some other source.

Chigpu

This name means Clarity, Emptiness, Unification or something, but the reality is that this Nature itself is only [single] Unspeakable State. It can appear itself. That is Self-Awareness. This is the real Nature.

Finally, everybody has to keep Nature itself. You don't need to follow single pieces, thinking: 'This is clear' or 'This is empty' or something. Don't split it up. Just keep it as it is. That is good enough, everything is in there. Don't integrate [with discursive thoughts such as] 'Nature is like this' or 'Nature is like that' or something. If you think, if you add something mentally, then that means you are making a mess with Nature. Nature has nothing added to it, you see, so just leave it as it is. That is purity.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ I.e. Tib. kun gzhi mam shes / ཀུན་གཞི་མཐ་ཤེས།

¹⁵¹ For an extended explanation of the Four Vows of Dzogchen see Drenpa Namkha, *Yetri Thasel: dGos 'dod gsal byed bshad gzhal'i mchongs Commentary Chapters regarding the Base of the Teachings that Elucidate One's Wishes (and Needs)*, Teachings by Yongdzin

Sutra, Tantra, Dzogchen

Normally we talk about Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen and I wanted to say something about this briefly. We practise the Preliminary Practices, and usually the subject is very much similar. First of all there are the four points:

- how precious human life is and how unique it is to have the good chance of being born as a human;
- this life is not permanent;
- wherever you are in *samsara*, it is a place of misery, there are no happy places at all;
- everything is dependent on karmic cause and you can't get away from this even if you say karmic cause and the result are not true. Sure, you can say this while everything is going well with you and you have good conditions; you can say anything but the reality is that you cannot go beyond karmic cause. There is clear evidence, but people don't trust. I am always saying it is like twin brothers, like this gentleman here.¹⁵² Twins have the same parents but different lifestyles. The parents didn't train them or teach them in any special, different way, but their lifestyles are different. So that depends on their individual cause. They think they have chosen by themselves, and yes, some part can be choice, but, actually, you are not completely free to choose, not at all. You have to follow karmic cause. Whether you like or you don't like, you have no choice. So in the same way, the final goal for everybody is clear.¹⁵³ We can see history. The archaeologists can dig, but what do they find? In early times, people's lifestyle was just the same as ours! But finally, what happens? That shows, it is evidence, it is the same for everyone. We don't have a free life, we are not eternal at all. So those all show clear evidence. And these are the general Preliminary Practices.

After you have done the Preliminary Practices, then you choose whether you are going to continue to be a Buddhist practitioner, and you can either choose Sutra, Tantra or Dzogchen. There are three ways, and [which one you follow] depends

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¹⁵² A reference to the translator, Jakob Winkler, who has a twin brother.

¹⁵³ In this case it refers to death.

on what is convenient for you, on what you are interested in; no-one can judge for you or order you [to follow a particular path]. It is absolutely up to the individual person's wish, which is convenient [suitable] for you.

Sutra

If you are going to be a practitioner of Sutra, that means that after the preliminaries have been done, secondly you practise with Refuge, *bodhichitta*, and continue to practise with the Ten Paramitas, not only just reading them or learning the names, but seriously practising each of them intensively. In particular, the Ten Paramitas are divided into two parts: [the accumulation of] the cause for wisdom and [the accumulation of] the cause for virtue. 'Wisdom' here means the knowledge of emptiness. The high way is the Madhyamaka view; that is the highest view of emptiness according to Sutra. Otherwise, there are several views and several differences, but anyhow, according to the path of Sutra, the highest view is the Madhyamaka view of emptiness, and this is integrated with the other Paramitas. There are two parts: the accumulation of wisdom and the accumulation of virtue, and each of these is the cause for the final achievement of *dharmakaya* and *rupakaya*.¹⁵⁴ That is the cause, that is what they practise. It is not possible to calculate how many years it takes, but there are three unlimited aeons.¹⁵⁵ Finally, they can achieve [Buddhahood]; all the time, from life to life, without stopping, they practise throughout numerous lifetimes and finally achieve Buddhahood. That is the way of Sutra.

Sometimes people think that visualizing divinities and deities makes [the difference between] Tantra and Sutra. But this is not really the case. It depends on how you do it. In Sutra, practitioners have to visualize divinities as the Refuge Tree! Yet still that is nothing at all to do with Tantra. The main thing is that practising with the Ten Paramitas belongs to the Sutra way.

Tantra

Sometimes people call this Mahamudra. There is one practice which is common to both Tantra or Mahamudra and Dzogchen. In Tantra, there are three basic contemplations which are very important. These are: *dezhinnyi kyi tingngedzin*, [*kuntu nangwa tingngedzin* and *gyui tingngedzin*: Contemplation of Nature,

¹⁵⁴ *Rupakaya* (Tib. gzugs sku / གཟུགས་སྐུ) includes *sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya*.

¹⁵⁵ I.e. this is the time frame for achieving Buddhahood of Sutra.

Contemplation of Totality (Union of Nature and Compassion), Contemplation of the Cause]¹⁵⁶ – you can also learn this in Tibetan!

The first one is a kind of meditation [in the] Natural State, the second one is meditation with compassion, and the third is contemplation with visualization of divinities. These three are basic to the practice of Tantra or Mahamudra. It is similar to making a statue; if you make a statue, you have to have the ‘cause,’ the material – gold, silver, some other metal or whatever. Here, contemplation with the Natural State and compassion are practised separately, then afterwards, they are put together and that unification is the ‘cause’ of the divinity. You visualize the divinity and the divinity is formed from this unification. Then this is real Tantra. Otherwise, if you just visualize the divinity in a simple way without the base of the contemplation of the Natural State and compassion, then yes, you can visualize what you want and maybe you can hear something, maybe divinities will come and speak to you, but this has nothing to do with any Buddhist way, nothing to do with our way of visualizing a divinity. That is a very important point.

So in this case, the first contemplation, the contemplation with the Natural State, is very common; it is common to both Dzogchen and Mahamudra or Tantra. From the beginning – searching for the mind, finding the Nature of Mind and trying to make this stable and established – that part is common and equal. The same.

After you have established this Natural State clearly and are familiar and stable with it, then if you add compassion or visualization – there are many other things to practise, too – then that is the way of Mahamudra, Tantra. Many different *yogas* are added, many things are necessary, many different exercises and so on. That goes the Mahamudra way. There are four levels of Tantra. They mainly practise the Three Contemplations; that is the base for practising with Mahamudra or Tantra. And as I have already said, the first contemplation is common [to both Tantra and Dzogchen].

Dzogchen

Dzogchen means that nothing is added to this first contemplation which is equally established in Tantra and Dzogchen. In Dzogchen, practitioners only practise with this first contemplation in a single[-pointed] way. This contemplation is practised

¹⁵⁶ Tib. de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin, kun tu snang ba ting nge 'dzin, rgyu'i ting nge 'dzin
/ དེ་བཞིན་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཏིང་ངེ་འཛིན། ཀུན་ཏུ་སྣང་བ་ཏིང་ངེ་འཛིན། རྒྱུའི་ཏིང་ངེ་འཛིན།

by itself, and you go on as much as you could. As you practise with this continuously, everything will be spontaneously integrated. There are two parts: *trekchö* and *thögal*,¹⁵⁷ but you don't need to add anything at all. Once you have established *trekchö* and it is quite stable and you are familiar with it, you just try to go on meditating in this single way without mistaking the Natural State. You become more and more familiar with it, and that is practising *trekchö*. The name is *trekchö*, but you try to naturally realize that all phenomena of existence are integrated with Nature itself. You don't need to do anything. After, then you have to use several methods which can be added, and that is the practice of *thögal*. But you still continuously practise with the Natural State, and that is the same. No changing, nothing missing, nothing taken away, nothing added, nothing. So that is the Dzogchen way.

It depends on the individual's capacity, on their knowledge and belief. Someone might say: 'Well, there is nothing to visualize, no recitation, no activities... ah, no, no, this must be a mistake!' and so they don't trust [the Dzogchen View] or believe it. If you need to visualize something, then that is the way of a Tantra practitioner. If, on the other hand, you are satisfied and have understood [the Dzogchen View] very well, then you can go along with this, practising the single way without adding anything, and that is the Dzogchen way. If you sometimes do this or that or something, then that makes a mixture, so you will have to make [your own] special way. Maybe finally you will become a special Buddha!

¹⁵⁷ Tib. khregs chod, thod rgal / ཁྲེགས་ཆོད། ཐོད་རྒལ།