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## ESOTERIC INSTRUCTIONS



༄༅། རྟེན་གྱི་མཛོད།

Sarah Harding  
KALU RINPOCHÉ TRANSLATION GROUP

# The Treasury of Knowledge

*Book Eight, Part Four:*

## Esoteric Instructions

*A Detailed Presentation of the  
Process of Meditation in Vajrayāna*



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*A Detailed Presentation of the  
Process of Meditation in Vajrayāna*

Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé

KALU RINPOCHÉ TRANSLATION GROUP

under the direction of Venerable Bokar Rinpoché

This volume  
translated and annotated by  
Sarah Harding

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Dedicated to the memory of Bokar Rinpoché,  
an undying inspiration.





THRANGU RINPOCHE

༡༩། སྤྱིར་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་བརྟན་པ་འཕགས་པའི་ཡུལ་དུ་དར་བའི་སྐབས་འཛམ་གླིང་མཛེས་པར་བྱེད་པའི་རྒྱན་པུག་མཆོག་གཉིས། བཞི་ཏ་བཅུ་བརྟན་སོགས་དང་ཡུལ་ཐོབ་ཆེན་པོ་བརྒྱད་ཅུ་ཅུ་བཞི་སོགས་བྱོན་ནས་བརྟན་བཅོས་དང་། མན་ངག་སོགས་སྒེལ་ཏེ་བརྟན་འགྲོའི་དོན་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པ་ཞིག་ལྷུང་བར་མ་ཟད། བོད་གངས་ཅན་གྱི་ལྗོངས་སུ་ཡང་། མཁས་པ་དང་། ཡུལ་ཐོབ་བསམ་གྱིས་མི་བྱུང་པ་ཞིག་བྱོན་པ་རྣམས་གྱིས་བརྟན་པ་སྤྱོད་བའི་སྐབས། འགའ་ཞིག་གིས་རང་ལྷགས་བྱན་མོངས་མ་ཡིན་པའི་མན་ངག་རྣམས་འཛིན་པ་དང་། འགའ་ཞིག་གིས་ཆོས་ལྷགས་རིས་མེད་ཀྱི་སྒྲོ་ནས་སྒེལ་བར་མཛད་པ་རྣམས་ནི་གདུལ་བྱ་འདུལ་བའི་ཕྱིན་ལས་དུས་སུ་བབས་མིན་ལ་ལྟོས་ནས་ལྷུང་བ་ཞིག་ཏེ། དེ་དག་ལས་འཛམ་མགོན་ཀོང་སྐལ་ཡོན་ཏན་རྒྱ་མཆོན་གྱི་དུས་ཕྱིས་བྱོན་པའི་མཁས་ཡུལ་རྣམས་ལས་རིས་མེད་ཀྱི་བརྟན་པ་སྒེལ་བའི་མཛད་པ་དང་ཕྱིན་ལས་བྱད་པར་ཅན་ཞིག་ཏེ། སྤྱིར་མཛོད་ཆེན་རྣམ་པ་ལྟ་དང་། ལྷུང་བར་བརྟན་བཅོས་ཆེན་པོ་གཤམ་བྱ་ཀྱན་ལྷུང་མཛོད་ཀྱིས་བྱོགས་དང་རིས་སུ་མ་ཆད་པའི། གཞུང་དང་མན་ངག་རྣམས་ཀྱི་དགོང་དོན་བྱོགས་གཅིག་ཏུ་བསྐྱེས་ནས་བཀྲལ་བར་མཛད་པ་སྟེ། མཁས་ཡུལ་ཆེན་པོ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་རྣམ་ཐར་ལས། འདི་སྐབས་ལྷུང་བྲམ་མ་ངེས་དོན་ནས་ལྟོས་གསུམ་བརྟན་བཅོས་ཞིག་ཅིས་ཀྱང་འགྲི་དགོས། དེ་ལྷུང་ན་ཁོང་གིས་འགྲེལ་པ་བྲི་བ་ཡིན་ཅེས་གསུང་འདུག་ཀྱང་སྟོམ་གསུམ་བརྟན་བཅོས་སུ་ལའང་འདུག་པ་དང་། བརྟན་བཅོས་བྲིས་ཕྱིན་རྣམ་བཞག་ཆ་ཆར་བ་ཞིག་ཡོད་ན། ཐོས་པ་རྒྱུད་བལ་ཕན་སྒྲམས་ནས་བྱོན་པར་རྣམས་སྟེ། བསྐྱེད་གསུམ་གྱི་བརྟན་བཅོས་གཤམ་བྱ་ཀྱན་ལྷུང་ཅ་བ་བྲིས། ཕྱིས་སུ་རྩེ་བྲམ་མར་གཟིགས་སུལ་བས་དེ་སྐབས་ངེས་པར་བྲམ་མའི་བྱིན་རྒྱལ་དང་། མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཅ་སྒྲོ་བྱིས་པའི་ལྟོབས་ལས་

## FOREWORD

During the expansion of the Buddha's doctrine in the noble land of India, the world was adorned by six ornaments, two sublime ones, seventeen *panditas*, and other scholars. Eighty-four *mahasiddhas* and other adepts appeared as well. Treatises, esoteric instructions, and other teachings proliferated. The benefit to beings was incalculable. Not only that, innumerable scholars and adepts also appeared in Tibet, the Land of Snows. In upholding the doctrine, some of them adhered to the exclusive esoteric instructions of their own traditions, and some of them propagated the dharma through impartial teaching traditions, their activity of training disciples depending on whether or not the time was right. Among those, Jamgön Kongtrul Yönten Gyatso [Lodrö Tayé] was pre-eminent among the scholar-adepts of later times in his work of spreading the impartial (*rimé*) doctrine and in his enlightened activity. In general, his Five Great Treasuries, and in particular the great treatise, the treasury called *The Encompassment of All Knowledge*, bring together and set forth in one place the intended meaning of all the source texts and esoteric instructions without bias or partiality. In his own autobiography this great scholar-adept says:

Previously, Lama Ngédön had insisted that I write a treatise on the three vows. He said that if I did so he would write the commentary. But everyone has done a treatise on the three vows, and I thought that if I were to write a treatise it should be one with a more comprehensive format that would help people who have not studied much. So in between meditation sessions I had been writing the root verses of *The Encompassment of All Knowledge*, a treatise on the three trainings. Later, when I showed this to my lord guru, he gave me great encouragement,

བྱུང་བ་ཡིན་འདུག་པས། འདི་ཉིད་མཛོད་ཆེན་ནམ་པ་ལྷ་ཡི་ཐོག་མར་གཤམ་བྱ་མཛོད་དུ་ཞོག  
 རང་འགྲེལ་ཞིག་ཅིས་ཀྱང་དགོས་ཞེས་ལེགས་སའི་གནང་སྐྱེས་བཅུལ། བྱིས་སུ་མ་ཐན་གྱི་མ་  
 བཟ་གིས་འོད་ཟེར་ནས་ཡིག་བྲིས་ཀྱི་མཐུན་ཆུན་མཛོད་འདུག་པས། འདི་ནས་ལྷ་པ་བརྟན་  
 པའི་མཐུག་པར་གཤམ་བྱ་ཀྱན་ཁྱབ་མཛོད་ཀྱི་འགྲེལ་བ་བྲིས་ཞེས། འཇམ་དབྱངས་མཁྱེན་  
 བཙུའི་དཔར་པོས་བསྐྱབས་བཛོད་ཆེར་གནང་བའི་གཞུང་། དེ་ཉིད་ལ་གནས་བཅུ་དང་།  
 གནས་རེར་སྐབས་བཞི་བཞི་སྟེ། སྐབས་བཞི་བཅུ་བཞུགས་པ་ལས། གནས་བཅུད་པ་ཉིང་འེ་  
 འཛོན་གྱི་བསྐྱབ་བ་བསྟན་པའི་ནང་ཆོན། རྩོམ་ཐོག་པའི་སྐྱེས་རིམ་མན་ངག་གཙོ་བོར་བྱེད་པ་  
 བྱེད་པ་ཏུ་བསྟན་པའི་སྐབས་བཞི་པར། སྤྱི་འཇུག་རྒྱུ་མ། དཀའ་གདམས། ལམ་འབྲས།  
 མར་པའི་བཀའ་བརྒྱུད། ཤངས་པ་བཀའ་བརྒྱུད། ཞི་བྱེད། རྩོར་དུག་རྩོམ་གསུམ་གྱི་བསྟན་  
 རྒྱུ་སྟེ། རྒྱུ་བརྒྱུད་ཤིང་རྩ་ཆེན་པོ་བརྒྱུད་ཀྱི་མན་ངག་དང་། གཞན་ཡང་ཁྱིད་རྩལ་ཐོར་ལུ་  
 ཡན་ལག་དང་བཅས་པ་སྟེ་སྟེ་ཆོན་དགུ་གཞུགས་པ། དེ་དག་ཀྱང་གྲུབ་མཐའ་རང་རང་གི་མན་  
 ངག་རྣམས་ཆོག་ཏུ་ལ་དོན་ཆ་ཆར་ཞིང་གོ་བདེ་བ། འདི་ཉིད་ད་ལམ་དང་འཕྱོར་གཏོང་ཐོད་  
 དང་ལྷན་པ་ཙེ་འདྲ་ཐོན་དེ་གོན་ནས་སྦྱིན་བདག་དང་། ལོ་རྩ་བ་སེར་ཉར་དྲིང་གིས། ཆ་ཆར་  
 དབྱིན་རིའི་སྐད་ཡིག་ཐོག་བསྐྱར་བ་ནི། སྦྱིར་རྒྱལ་བའི་བསྟན་པ་དང་། ལྷག་པར་འགྲོ་བ་ལ་  
 ཐན་པའི་མཛོད་རྗེས་ཁྱད་པར་དུ་འཕགས་པ་ཞིག་བྱུང་འདུག་པས། ཀྱན་བྲིས་བསྐྱབ་སྦྱང་  
 དང་། ཉམས་ལེན་གང་གཟབ་གནང་རོག་ལྟ། ཁ་འགྲུ་སྦྱལ་མིང་པས་གོ་ལ་རྩོམ་པའི་སྦྱལ་དུ་  
 ཀྱན་མཁྱེན་དོལ་པོ་པའི་རི་ཆོས་ངེས་དོན་རྒྱ་མཛོའི་བཀད་ཁྱིད་ཞིག་བྱེད་པའི་ཆོས་བྱན་གྱི་བར་  
 གསིང་དུ་བྲིས་པ་དག་ལེགས་འཕེལ། ॥

saying, “This has certainly come from the gurus’ blessings and the power of the *ḍākinīs* opening up your energy channels. Therefore, make this *Treasury of Knowledge* the first of your five great treasures. You absolutely must write your own commentary to it.” (ff. 258-9)

And later:

A letter from Abbot Lama Tashi Özer afforded me the opportunity, so until the end of the seventh month [of 1863] I was engaged in writing the commentary to *The Encompassment of All Knowledge*. (f. 267)

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo praised the work highly in his writings. It consists of ten books, with each book divided into four chapters. Of these forty chapters, the present work comes from Book Eight on the training in meditative absorption; it is the fourth chapter called *A Detailed Presentation of the Process of Meditation in Vajrayāna Emphasizing Esoteric Instructions*. There are nine sections: the esoteric instructions of the Eight Great Chariots of the Practice Lineage—Early Nyingma, Kadam, Lamdré, Marpa Kagyu, Shangpa Kagyu, Zhijé, Jordruk, and Dorjé Sumgyi Nyendrup—and a supplement on the fragments and branches of guidance systems. Here, the comprehensive meaning of the esoteric instructions of each of those schools is presented in a few, intelligible words. Now this chapter has been translated in its entirety into English by Lotsawa Sarah Harding, with the generous and dedicated sponsorship of the Tsadra Foundation. This will have an extraordinarily beneficial effect on the Buddha’s doctrine in general, and especially for sentient beings. I therefore encourage you to study it and to carefully practice as best you can.

Written by the one named Thrangu Tulku in between the sessions of teaching an explanation of omniscient Dolpopa’s *Mountain Dharma, Ocean of Definitive Meaning* in the mountain ravines of Colorado.

—July, 2007



## PREFACE

Khyabjé Kalu Rinpoché visited Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1986 to consecrate the Bodhi Stupa that had been constructed at his dharma center. Many of his lamas and students were gathered for the occasion, as well as visiting teachers and the general public. It was a joyful reunion for many of us who were scattered in the ten directions and rarely had the opportunity to come together.

Although in no position to represent anyone, I nevertheless found myself inspired by the auspicious occasion to offer “our” everlasting translation service in whatever way he saw fit. I felt that much of the talent that Kalu Rinpoché himself had fostered in his students was not being put to use, and that naturally they were looking elsewhere for ways to be of service. But, I said, “we” would rather work for him, even—or especially—after he was gone. He simply nodded. I thought, how easy it is to express my deep gratitude in this way. Later during that same tour, Rinpoché did a radio interview in San Francisco in which he announced that he had formed a committee to translate the entire Buddhist canon! When he returned to the dharma center his eyes were sparkling with mischief and he demanded, “Now how many people know?”

That was how it began. Rinpoché bestowed the ambitious name of “The International Buddhist Translation Committee” (Dragyur Dzamling Kunkhyab) and sought to gather translators, scholars, and meditation masters of all Tibetan Buddhist traditions to work together. Luckily, he was talked down from the original idea of translating the Buddhist Canon, and chose instead the masterpiece by Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *The Treasury of Knowledge*.

Hardly less daunting, it has taken many translators many years to begin to present an approximation of this great work. It started in Bodhgaya, the site of the Buddha’s enlightenment, with three-month

translation conferences in 1987 and again in 1988. After that, Rinpoché decided to have the work continue throughout the year at his monastery in Sonada, Darjeeling. There, people were to “translate during the day and meditate on the nature of mind at night.”

After some years only the hardiest remained, eventually producing the first three books in the series. Kalu Rinpoché passed away in 1989 without seeing the fulfillment of his wish, just as he had warned on many, many occasions. Now the time frame seemed to stretch infinitely into the future, and most of us had other lives to lead in order to survive. Then Kalu Rinpoché’s worthy lineage successor, Bokar Rinpoché, Karma Ngedon Chokyi Lodrö, took up the cause. He hesitated to change Kalu Rinpoché’s game plan in any way, but the urgency called for practicality.

At a gathering in his monastery in Mirik, on the occasion of conferring the Shangpa Kagyu transmissions at the request of the young incarnation of Kalu Rinpoché, Bokar Rinpoché urged the translators to complete this work that had been so dear to his guru. He feared that at this rate it might not even be completed within the lifetimes of the very translators to whom it had been entrusted by Kalu Rinpoché.

With the generous and timely support of the Tsadra Foundation, a new phase of work began, with individual translators working on individual sections of the *Treasury* in their own homes and with all the amenities (such as electricity). Now with new direction, the remaining sections have been adopted by able translators and are well under way.

With Bokar Rinpoché all but insisting, and dear friends at Tsadra Foundation pointedly encouraging, I rejoined the *Treasury* project after many years of other work. Of the available sections, I chose the fourth part of Book Eight in the meditation section: the esoteric instructions of the eight (and counting) practice lineages of Tibet. For obvious reasons I thought this would be the most interesting and exciting. It serves me right, succumbing to the lure of the mystical. It might as well have been the Buddhist canon.

It was too easy to underestimate how much information Jamgön Kongtrul could pack into 189 pages, and to underestimate the depth and breadth of these esoteric practices. In truth, each of the sections in this current book deserves a separate treatment by a scholar-practitioner specialized in the particular lineage, with years of practice and study behind her. To accurately portray all the practice traditions in a way

that does justice to Kongtrul's presentation of them has stretched my abilities to the limit, though being thus stretched, I feel tremendously enriched and further enraptured. In any case, it was with the help and support of many others that I can now offer this effort, with the hopes that it will at least be a glimpse into the awesome inner world of these ancient traditions.





# INTRODUCTION

## A TEXT FOR THE AGES

Although I lack the intellectual capacity to compile knowledge  
correctly,  
I shall compose a short, clear, comprehensive work  
In order to ensure that those with insufficient knowledge or  
interest to understand the texts  
Will not lose their opportunity on this isle of treasures.

—“Author’s resolve” by Jamgön Kongtrul

Esoteric Buddhism is the precious crown jewel of spiritual practice in Tibet, a land once distinguished as a repository of all levels and approaches of Buddhism. The multi-layered complex of philosophical and contemplative practice opens up into a distinct spiritual path for everyone. This vast wealth of eclectic knowledge is the context that supports the profound teachings of tantra, or esoteric Buddhism. These teachings are said to offer a quick and easy way to discover one’s own nature through a variety of curiously effective techniques. The esoteric or secret quality of the tantras, however, is only revealed by direct contact with masters who embody an awakened state of mind. Then the practitioner sees directly the living teaching, and is in turn seen by the guru in his or her unique capacities and needs. It is this relationship that powers the development of spiritual growth. For that reason the direct instructions transmitted within such relationships are the most prized of all the Buddha’s doctrines. Although the immediacy of these directives in the intimate situation of guru and disciple carries the real impact, the most precious of the esoteric instructions from the greatest of the masters have been recorded and passed down through successions of teachers, who have further imbued these enduring teachings with the power of their

own realizations. It is the records of such teachings that are described in this volume.

*Esoteric Instructions* is one small section of Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé's *Encompassment of All Knowledge* (*Shes bya kun khyab*) and his own commentary to it, *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge* (*Shes bya mtha' yas pa'i rgya mtsho*). Together they are known widely as *The Treasury of Knowledge* (*Shes bya mdzod*). At three volumes, it was the shortest of what became known as his Five Great Treasuries (*mdzod chen lnga*), massive collections of Buddhist teachings that he sought out or composed during his long and astonishingly productive lifetime (1813-1900<sup>1</sup>) in Eastern Tibet.

According to the opening verse above—the requisite author's resolve to complete the work<sup>2</sup>—Jamgön Kongtrul's intention was to make the range of Buddhist subjects easily accessible to everyone. Buddhism in Tibet had been developing since at least the eighth century, and by the nineteenth century had grown into a vast and intricate web of philosophies and practices, any portion of which required a lifetime of study to master. Kongtrul felt that too much was at stake, too much could be lost, if these were available only to the scholarly elite. However, in creating a simple and intelligible work with the less than modest aim of encompassing all knowledge, he apparently underestimated his own "intellectual capacity." Although such declarations of incompetence are standard rhetoric in Tibetan compositions, Kongtrul's frequent refrain suggests a humble genius. His humility and devotion for other masters and literally all Buddhist teachings were among his remarkable qualities. It was the vast scope of his knowledge, however, and his truly boundless intellect (the meaning of "Lodrö Tayé") that must have made *The Treasury of Knowledge* seem to him a short and clear work for the average person. Some readers may not have such a perspective.

It started simply enough as a request from another lama to compose a short treatise (Skt. *śāstra*) to present the three sets of vows (*trisaṃvara*) in the Tibetan Buddhist system: those of personal liberation (*prātimokṣa*), of awakening mind (*bodhicitta*), and of the awareness holder (*vidyādhara*). Ethical behavior is indeed the foundation of all Buddhist practice and has been since the time of the Buddha. This particular threefold configuration standardized in Tibet reflects the threefold development in the Buddhist teachings of the elders (Pali, *theravāda*), the great vehicle (Skt. *mahāyāna*), and the indestructible vehicle (*vajrayāna*), one of many

arrangements that attempt to systematize the doctrine. Tibetan Buddhists are known for practicing all three approaches together on the spiritual path. A treatise on this subject could conceivably encompass the entire path, and in fact there are many such texts by other great Tibetan masters.<sup>3</sup> It is partially for that reason that Kongtrul decided to expand the basic format of his composition to cover another threefold scheme that has been present since the earliest times of Buddhism: that of the three higher trainings in ethics (*śīla*), meditative absorption (*śamādhi*), and wisdom (*prajñā*). These three categories comprise all Buddhist doctrine, as represented in the earliest canon of teachings, called the Three Baskets (*tripitaka*). Kongtrul stated these intentions in his autobiography:<sup>4</sup>

Previously, Lama Ngédön had insisted that I write a treatise on the three [levels of] vows. He said that if I did so he would write the commentary. But everyone has done a treatise on the three vows, and I thought that if I were to write a treatise it should be one with a more comprehensive format that would help people who have not studied much. So in between meditation sessions I had been writing the root verses to *The Encompassment of All Knowledge*, a treatise on the three trainings.

Jamgön Kongtrul kept to this plan, as indicated in the full title of the root verses: *The Encompassment of All Knowledge: A Treatise That Effectively Presents the Three Trainings, A Treasury of Precious Scripture Compiled from the Approaches of All Vehicles*.<sup>5</sup> He first composed the root verses (*kārikā*) in the classical Indian style, making it easy to memorize for pedagogical purposes, but difficult to understand without a commentary. These root verses, written in lines of nine syllables each, run for 154 pages in the modern three-volume edition.<sup>6</sup> Kongtrul wrote them while on retreat in 1863 at his hermitage of Kunzang Dechen Ösal Ling, near the great Kagyu monastery of Palpung in Kham, Eastern Tibet.<sup>7</sup> Though he did innumerable such retreats, his later life seems to have become ever more engaged with satisfying the spiritual needs of patrons, monastics, and laypeople, and his later collections were created amidst a flurry of such activities. One finds him complaining of increasing obscurity in practice during this time. In addition, local war and power politics were threatening all around him.<sup>8</sup> Yet apparently the focus afforded him by meditation retreat did enable him to successfully encompass all knowl-

edge into 154 pages of short verse. Kongtrul was perhaps still hoping that Lama Ngédon<sup>9</sup> would write the commentary, but when he showed his work to his close associate and guru, the great master Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo (1820–1892),<sup>10</sup> things changed:

Later, when I showed this to my lord guru, he gave me great encouragement, saying, “This has certainly come from the gurus’ blessings and the power of the *ḍākinīs* opening up your energy channels. Therefore, make this *Treasury of Knowledge* the first of your five great treasuries. You absolutely must write your own commentary to it.”<sup>11</sup>

Kongtrul began the commentary in 1864 during a three-month writing session afforded him by the abbot Lama Tashi Özer.<sup>12</sup> He resumed work in 1865, all of this during the most troubled period in the Dergé district.<sup>13</sup> At this time he had decided to gather together his collection of hidden treasure teachings, or *terma*,<sup>14</sup> and also call that by the ambitious name of “treasury,” in accordance with Khyentsé’s prophecy. This prophecy would eventually be more than fulfilled as the other treasuries followed in due order: *The Treasury of Kagyu Mantra*, *The Treasury of Precious Treasure Teachings*, *The Treasury of Precious Key Instructions*, and *The Extraordinary Treasury* or its expanded form called *The Treasury of Extensive Teachings*.<sup>15</sup> Thus there are five (or six) treasuries, as well as innumerable other writings by Jamgön Kongtrul, altogether comprising more than ninety volumes. These and similar collections formed the basis for extensive religious ceremonies in which the blessings and permission to engage in the practices were transmitted through reading and empowerment (*abhiṣeka*) to large gatherings over many months. There are several good surveys of the treasuries in English,<sup>16</sup> although *The Treasury of Knowledge* is the first to have been considered for translation in its entirety.<sup>17</sup>

Writing a treatise in the formal Buddhist sense is a much more demanding enterprise than, say, just writing an introduction to one. Treatises are meant to clarify and explain the direct teachings of the Buddha, not to be one’s own creative ideas. In that sense, calling this treasury a treatise was an apt choice in regard to Kongtrul’s aspirations for clarity and accessibility. He carefully followed all the requisites for treatise composition, as he documented clearly right at the beginning.<sup>18</sup>

*The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge* is written in the style of a word commentary, in which each word or phrase of the root verses is expanded and elucidated by explication. The commentary follows precisely the structure of the verses. An outline is also imposed on it, one that is not necessarily obvious in the original verses. In fact, one often wonders in Tibetan literature of this kind if the structure is premeditated or created afterwards. In the case of *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*, the basic outline is beautifully symmetrical, with ten “books” (Tib. *gnas*), each one containing four “parts” (Tib. *skabs*), usually progressing from the general to the more specific or profound. Thus, although a treatise should not explicitly contain personal opinions, one could say that location is everything. Kongtrul mentions that there are ten books to be equal in number to the ten perfections, and lays them out in a logical progression.<sup>19</sup> The interesting choice of the Tibetan term *gnas*, “abode” or “dwelling place,” for *chapter*<sup>20</sup> reminds one of another great prototypical Indian treatise often quoted by Kongtrul: *The Mahāyāna Highest Continuum Treatise*.<sup>21</sup> There, the work is divided into seven “vajra feet” (*vajrapada*), which the Tibetan translator chose to call immutable abodes (Tib. *rdo rje gnas*). The term is glossed as “a dwelling place of that which is realized, which is like a vajra,” because it is difficult to penetrate and only known through one’s own awareness. “The dwelling place is the words; the vajra is the meaning that dwells in the words.”<sup>22</sup> The significance of the order in that treatise is itself a profound teaching. In any case, much can be learned from the outline of the current text, as with all of Kongtrul’s treasures.

Book I deals with cosmology according to various Buddhist systems and the causes of cyclic existence (*saṃsāra*). Book II concerns the advent of the Buddha, his life and enlightenment. Book III is about the Buddha’s doctrine, and Book IV concerns the spread of that doctrine, first in India and then in Tibet. Book V covers the three levels of ethical discipline. This is the first of the three higher trainings, and forms the core of the treasury and fulfills its original intention. Book VI focuses on the topics of study that are undertaken at the outset of the spiritual path and includes secular areas of knowledge as well as all of the religious vehicles, culminating in an exposition of tantra. This leads into the higher trainings of wisdom in Book VII. Wisdom (*prājñā*) is normally listed as the third of the three higher trainings after meditation, but here it is presented first as the means for gaining certainty in the Buddhist view so that this may support actual meditation. It is in Book VIII

that all the various methods for meditation are presented in due order, beginning with calm abiding (*samatha*) and higher insight (*vipaśyana*) in part one, then meditation in the philosophical vehicles in part two, and then the elements of tantric practice as they are presented in the Buddhist tantras in part three. Part four of Book VIII is on the esoteric instructions (Tib. *man ngag*) of tantric practice, and is translated in full in the present volume. Book IX concerns the paths and levels that are traversed during these studies and practices, and Book X describes the final fruition.

After the publication of the *Treasury of Knowledge*, Kongtrul bestowed the reading transmission to a group of about twenty lamas, incarnate masters, and scholars, including his master Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo. This was one of only four times that this transmission occurred.<sup>23</sup> It took about ten days, combining an oral explanation with the reading transmission of both the root text and its commentary. After the concluding ceremonies, Khyentsé Rinpoché praised it and called it “a treatise for the ages.”<sup>24</sup> And so it would seem.

Though encyclopedic in scope, *The Treasury of Knowledge* is a true treatise and not technically an encyclopedia.<sup>25</sup> The root text is the closest thing to an index by which one could locate a subject, and the preferred method to facilitate that was simply to memorize the root verses and then be able to call up the commentary.<sup>26</sup> The question of the uses and usefulness of this text in respect to the current book on esoteric instructions will be examined in the following sections of the introduction.

## THIS BOOK

In the progression of forty parts within ten books, the groundwork for the vast and profound subject of tantric practice is laid in the fourth part of Book VI, which concerns the subjects of study and presents the theoretical bases of practice. A thorough reading of that section, which has been translated as *Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, or at least a working knowledge of the subject matter, is truly a requirement for appreciating the two parts on actual tantric practice. All of the teachings presented in *The Treasury of Knowledge* are of fundamental importance, but the special teachings that developed in Tibet were based in the tantras and became known as the *vajrayāna* in Sanskrit (Tib. *rdo rje theg pa*,

“indestructible vehicle”) or secret mantra (Tib. *gsang sngags*). This is the Tibetan specialty and the sole subject of the current work. Despite his best intentions to simplify the subject matter, Jamgön Kongtrul nevertheless assumes a great familiarity on the part of his readers.

Book VIII gets right down to the subject matter of meditation, with the last two parts specifically concerning tantric meditation. These two parts are divided according to the sources. The first concerns teachings derived from actual tantras said to have originated with the Buddha in India, and is translated as *The Elements of Tantric Practice*.<sup>27</sup> The second, presented here, emphasizes the salient points or esoteric instructions. Basically, these are records of personal teachings by masters, either of Indian or Tibetan origin, that simplify tantric or other meditations by providing pertinent examples and helpful hints to the disciples, based on the master’s own experience. Although originally oral in nature, they have been codified and passed down through specific lineages from teacher to student, or sometimes directly in visionary experiences.

These have also been called “key” or “pith” instructions. The Tibetan term is *man ngag* (pronounced “mé-ngak”), which was used to translate the Sanskrit word *āmnāya*. Sometimes *man ngag* was also used as a translation of *upadeśa*, though this is more properly *gdams ngag* in Tibetan. This suggests that very often these two terms are interchangeable, and yet it also raises the question of their distinctions, if any, as genres of literature. In Sanskrit, *āmnāya* is defined as “sacred tradition, sacred texts handed down by repetition; that which is to be remembered or studied or learnt by heart; received doctrine.” It derives from *ā* plus the root *mnā*: “to utter, mention, allege; to cite, quote, to commit to memory, hand down in sacred texts.” Similarly, *upadeśa* is given as “pointing out to, reference to; specifications, instruction, teaching, information, advice, prescription, original enunciation,” and so on. It derives from the prefix *upa* plus the root *diś*: “to point out to, to indicate,” and so on.<sup>28</sup> The distinctions are not noteworthy, so a look at the Tibetan usage might be helpful.

According to contemporary Tibetan teachers, the two are often considered synonymous.<sup>29</sup> It does seem, however, that *man ngag* tends to have a specific sense of directives that are intimately geared toward the person. The whole phrase would literally be “uncommon” or “extraordinary speech” (Tib. *thun mong ma yin pa’i ngag*), with “uncommon” referring to the disciples. This was described as a way of enhancing or



“tweaking” the spiritual instructions (Tib. *gdams ngag*) by using easy examples and clarifications. Simplification is the objective—conveying profound meaning in a few easy-to-understand words.<sup>30</sup> They were also said to benefit students who do not study very much. Here are some examples: Instructions in visualization techniques often state that one should instantly recall the deity (Tib. *skad cig dran rdzogs*). But how does one really suddenly see a deity manifest in emptiness? The esoteric instruction tells us, “like a fish jumping out of water.” Or how should one perceive all phenomena? “As reflections in a mirror.”<sup>31</sup> In some sense, all instructions can be *man ngag*, as in this example from another source: “to make milk tea, pour the milk in your cup first so that it will blend well.”<sup>32</sup> This example brings up the question of whether such directives are actually “esoteric.” This word, from the Greek for “inner,” refers to ideas or doctrines intended for a select few, with a secondary meaning of “secret.”<sup>33</sup> Following this line of inquiry, *man ngag* were described in interviews as secret in the very sense of being uncommon and for a select few, though not in a sense of being forbidden. The word therefore seems to be quite useful here. In the case of this book, the foregoing definitions are particularly appropriate since the teachings presented here assume a background of basic instruction that could then be individually augmented by esoteric instructions.<sup>34</sup>

The transmission of such instructions flows through specific lineages (though they often intersect), so Kongtrul chose to arrange them into eight sets according to a system that he made quite famous, that is, the Eight Chariots of the Practice Lineages of Tibet. Thus each chapter of the present book is self-contained and not progressive as are other books within *The Treasury*. There is no particular hierarchy in the order of presentation, which is solely chronological.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, this very arrangement—that of displaying all the lineage teachings side by side, equal but separate and distinct—is a significant methodology in itself, and one that defines all of Kongtrul’s great collections. This significance is inextricable from Kongtrul’s acceptance and appreciation of all Buddhist teachings without bias or contention. His treasuries, and those of other contemporary masters such as Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo, became the literary basis for what has been termed the nonsectarian movement, or *rimé* (Tib. *ris med*), in the nineteenth century. The text translated in *Esoteric Instructions* may be Kongtrul’s earliest expression of this style; one Tibetologist has mentioned that *The Treasury of Knowledge* “appears

to be the earliest statement of nonsectarian thought.”<sup>36</sup> However, other large collections of teachings were certainly on the scene at that time, and some were even included in Kongtrul’s treasuries.<sup>37</sup>

It is the impartial and comprehensive scope of Kongtrul’s work and his collaboration with others of similar mind that is notable and that has earned him the reputation as the founder of a movement. This simple methodology of collection and compilation without judgment is, in my opinion, Jamgön Kongtrul’s real contribution to the so-called nonsectarian movement. In light of the near-destruction in modern times of the Tibetan culture and its literary heritage, this work has been vital. It has meant that these vast collections of works have been preserved and are now available for future generations. But rimé was not a reactionary alternative set in opposition to other biased factions, as it has often been portrayed in modern scholarship.

Why did Kongtrul create these massive collections—even the relatively short selection found in *Esoteric Instructions*—that no one person could hope to practice in their entirety? What is the connection with sectarianism? How should we approach these practices? These questions will be explored below. I will not attempt to summarize the actual meditation practices presented in each lineage, for that has been masterfully done by Kongtrul himself. The fact that it is already a summary and that Kongtrul only gives enough information for a general sense of each lineage, and certainly not enough to engage in any of the practices, only begs the foregoing questions. Nevertheless, I have tried to help the reader with endnotes as needed, since just being translated into the English language is not necessarily sufficient. A brief historical overview of each lineage based on an earlier section of *The Treasury of Knowledge* (Book IV, Part 3) is presented as an introduction to each of the chapters.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF EVERYTHING

*Esoteric Instructions* is organized according to what Kongtrul calls the Eight Great Chariots of the Practice Lineage (Tib. *sgrub brgyud shing rta chen po brgyad*). This seems to be the first occurrence of an organizing principle that he would use many times over. To understand his intentions we could look at another of his treasuries with the same format: *The Treasury of Precious Key Instructions*. It differs from *Esoteric Instructions* in that it is a collection of actual instructions gathered impartially from

other sources, rather than his own summary of them. Conceivably one could even use *Esoteric Instructions* as a kind of descriptive index by which to then locate the actual lineage instructions in *The Treasury of Precious Key Instructions*. Kongtrul created a very extensive record or catalogue of contents (Tib. *dkar chag*) that is appended to the treasury, entitled *Catalogue of the Treasury of Precious Instructions, a Collection of the Ripening and Liberating Essence of the Eight Great Chariots of the Practice Lineages: An Ocean of Auspicious Renown*.<sup>38</sup> In that text, he sets the cosmic stage by first quoting the *Net of Magical Manifestation of Mañjuśrī*.<sup>39</sup>

The buddha is without beginning or end;  
The original buddha is without bias.

This is the first occurrence of the term *rimé* (Tib. *ris med*) in this text, and our first hint that it has a much broader meaning than “nonsectarian,” if it even means that at all. It is followed by a description of the unified state of reality that manifests all variety without restriction. After a summary of the sources of the dharma in India and the great masters and adepts who “mainly approached through the three methods of explication, debate, and composition to maintain the scriptural doctrine,” Kongtrul introduces the classification of the main sources for those teachings as they were assimilated into Tibet:

Here in Tibet, there were the ten great pillars that upheld the lineage of explanation, and their followers, who maintain the explanations, and the lineage holders of the chariots of the great practice lineages, who principally engaged the excellent path of practice and thereby maintained the victorious doctrine.<sup>40</sup>

The ten great pillars that upheld the lineage of explanation (Tib. *bshad brgyud 'degs pa'i ka chen bcu*)<sup>41</sup> is a parallel construction and complementary idea to what had originally been called “the eight great pillars that upheld the lineages of practice” (Tib. *sgrub brgyud 'degs pa'i ka chen brgyad*). In tracing this history, Kongtrul indicates his earliest source for the eight-chariot idea in a brief explanation of the way in which this doctrine came from India to Tibet.<sup>42</sup>

In general, here in these snowy ranges, there appeared many major and minor traditions drawn from the long traditions of the practice lineages. However, the main ones that can be condensed by type or that have gained a footing are known as the Eight Great Chariots. As was said by the great learned adept Prajñāraśmi:<sup>43</sup>

Prophesied by the Victor, the lord of beings in the snowy land,  
[Who taught] exclusively the single doctrine of the full  
intention

For his Royal Highness the ruler,  
Is the second Teacher in these snowy ranges.  
The great editor-translator Bagor Vairocana,  
The heir of the victors, Upāsaka Dromtön,  
The great scholar-adept Khyungpo Naljor,  
The great bilingual Lama Drokmi,  
The mighty yogin, honorable lord Marpa,  
The Indian Dampa who dwells on levels of attainment,  
The translator Gyijo, and the scholar-adept Orgyenpa  
Are the eight great pillars that upheld the practice lineages in  
the North.

Coming perfectly from the glorious Buddha Vajradhara,  
Eight great pillars of practice lineages in this snowy region  
Are the legacy of former adepts.

Those who desire freedom should follow their paths.<sup>44</sup>

Somewhere along the way, eight pillars became eight chariots, and the discussion now generally concerns the teaching lineages rather than the specific individuals who inspired them. In *Esoteric Instructions*, as elsewhere, Kongtrul enumerates these eight chariots as (1) Nyingma, (2) Kadam, (3) Lamdré, (4) Marpa Kagyu, (5) Shangpa Kagyu, (6) Zhijé and its branch of Chöd, (7) Dorjé Naljor Druk (or Jordruk), and (8) Dorjé Sumgyi Nyendrup. He does not list Lamdré (the Path with Its Result) as Sakya, even though that teaching is now largely transmitted within that tradition, nor Dorjé Naljor Druk (Six-Branch Vajrayoga) as Kālacakra, from which it derives. Nor does he assign Dorjé Sumgyi Nyendrup (Approach and Attainment of the Three Vajras) to the Marpa Kagyu, even though its originator, Orgyenpa, was a lineage holder in that tradition. It is clear that this framework concerns only the crucial meditation

teachings themselves as they were transmitted from India through a long line of practitioners. It is not at all concerned with sects. That, of course, is why they are called *practice lineages*. If some of them were successful in being assimilated later in monastic centers and becoming sects in their own right, that is incidental to Kongtrul's approach. Together, the ten pillars and the eight chariots form one way to classify and thereby cope with the amazing array of exegetical and practical instructions that bombarded Tibet in the formative centuries of Buddhist assimilation.

There were in fact many creative ways in which the Tibetans tried to classify the bounteous dharma that arrived on their snowy ranges. One might easily get the impression that, because the classification systems with which we are now familiar are so revered and ubiquitous, they must have been inherited from India. However, textual evidence suggests that there was a "process of creative appropriation."<sup>45</sup> The classification of tantras in particular, though such attempts certainly existed in India,<sup>46</sup> was pursued with the special urgency of one culture trying to make sense of the relatively rapid infusion of another. The two well-known systems for classifying tantric ritual according to "vehicles" (*yāna*) or approaches—that is, the nine vehicles of the ancient Nyingma system and the four vehicles used by the other, new schools—were developed in Tibet according to doctrinal and ritualistic categories that made sense to Tibetans. Studies of early texts reveal that even these were not settled for perhaps centuries, and that there was originally a bewildering variety of systems.<sup>47</sup>

The process of classification did not end, however, in those early centuries. Another doxographic decision of considerable import was made by Buton Rinchen Drup (1290-1364) as he determined which Buddhist texts would be included in the *Kangyur* (translations of Buddha's words) and the *Tengyur* (translations of treatises)—the so-called Tibetan Canon. A strict but arbitrary standard was imposed based on linguistics that excluded those tantras for which no Sanskrit original could be confirmed.<sup>48</sup> Many of the tantras most important to the Nyingma were thus left out, to be collected later by Ratna Lingpa (1403-1478) into an alternative canon, *The Collected Tantras of Nyingma* (*sNying ma rgyud 'bum*).<sup>49</sup> These early decisions, though promoting the continuity of Buddhism in Tibet in a major way, contributed to tensions between sects. It is evident that the work of compilation was of utmost importance in determining the direction that Buddhism was to take in Tibet.

From the second half of the fifteenth century through the seventeenth century, changes in Central Tibet created another form of synthesis. The brilliant Tsongkhapa (1357-1419), founder of the Gelukpa lineage and himself an avid eclectic and systematizer, had placed great emphasis on monastic discipline and education. Giant monasteries, such as Sera, Drepung, and Ganden, grew up around Lhasa, where monks could pursue scholarship *en masse*. It also must have been significant that the advent of xylographic printing occurred during this time, with Tsongkhapa overseeing the first printing. To facilitate scholarship and streamline the subject matter of study, the great institutions developed manuals (Tib. *yig cha*) corresponding to the establishment of fixed curricula. This was followed by a new genre called Collected Topics (Tib. *bsdus grwa*) written in actual debate format (Tib. *tshad ma*), which by then had become the primary methodology for gaining certainty of Buddhist subjects in those monastic colleges. On top of this, the Gelukpa monasteries also developed a hierarchical system of monastic degrees to validate scholastic achievement and perhaps to inspire scholarly ambitions.<sup>50</sup> The end result was the creation of a unified body of teachings that incorporated all the important elements of Indian Buddhist doctrine and a highly trained erudite monastic assembly able to defend these doctrines through reasoning. It has sometimes been suggested that the stylized debate format became somewhat stultifying as a pedagogical tool, fostering memorization and repetition with little true inquiry. Whether or not that is so, one could perhaps say, along with one modern Gelukpa scholar who has firsthand knowledge, Georges Dreyfus, that they “put little emphasis on the immediacy of experience, insisting instead on the truth of doctrines.”<sup>51</sup>

Meanwhile, back at the highlands of Eastern Tibet, there were always some scholars who did value the immediacy of experience as well as the benefits of study. The work of collecting and commenting on meditations and yogic practices continued with masters such as Mikyö Dorjé (1507-1554), Padma Karpo (1527-1592), and the great Tāranātha (1575-1635), who was a particular inspiration to Jamgön Kongtrul. All of these, of course, followed in the tradition of the masterful Nyingma writer of an earlier century, Longchenpa Rabjam Drimé Özer (1308-1363), who codified the philosophical and practical applications of the Great Completion (*rdzogs chen*)—the pinnacle of the nine-vehicle approach—into a cohesive system. All this academic commentary on the yogic traditions prepared the way for the nineteenth-century renaissance in Eastern

Tibet. Kongtrul relies heavily on the work of such former masters and quotes or borrows from them extensively.

The development of high scholasticism in Central Tibet that culminated around the time of the establishment of Tibet as a country (1642) under the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Losang Gyatso (1617-1682), had a far-reaching impact on the rest of Tibet, partly due to political machinations. The Dalai Lama incarnations had a close association with the Gelukpa monasteries. Others who had not supported the rise of the central coalition were targeted and in some cases the monasteries with which they were associated were suppressed. For example, the Jonangpa sect associated with Tāranātha, and so dear to Kongtrul, was banned outright, its monasteries converted to Geluk and its publications taken out of circulation. In this case, it was reportedly because of religious heresy, though it is clear that it was due more to the toxic mixture of politics in religion. Jonang monasteries survived in Eastern Tibet and are currently thriving, partly because the source texts were not actually destroyed and were later recovered. It seems even the most confident of factions could not bring themselves to defy the precepts against disrespecting even suspicious dharma; fortunately superstition is stronger than suspicion.

The emphasis on the particular expression of learning coupled with the lack of political support resulted in a decline of the non-Gelukpa schools during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This period is regarded as fraught with sectarian rivalries and elitist scholarship, all of it laced with power politics. It is often suggested by modern scholars that it was this sect-crazed environment that eventually led to the unbiased approach of Kongtrul and his contemporaries, who exemplified inclusiveness. Certainly these developments had an influence on them, and set an impressive example of how not to be. But in reading Kongtrul's accounts of his own purposes and motivations, there is very little of an antagonistic character, and very much of a genuine devotion for all teachings and a concern to keep the Buddhist vow of tolerance. Such sectarian troubles are barely mentioned.

In any case, it was in the second half of the nineteenth century that Jamgön Kongtrul and many other masters concurrently exhibited an incredibly open attitude to all teachings and shared a concern for their preservation. Shabkar Tsogdruk Rangdrol (1781-1851) is an early example. His personal inspiration derived from the inseparable triad of Padmasam-

bhava, Atiśa, and Tsongkhapa, the sources of the Nyingma, Kadampa, and Gelukpa lineages, respectively, which would seem to indicate that his open-mindedness was more than alternative in nature.<sup>52</sup> In Kham, the cluster of sublime masters that centered around the monasteries of Palpung, Dzongsar, Dzogchen and so forth includes such great names as Jamgön Kongtrul, Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo, Chokling Rinpoché, Dza Patrul, Zhenga, Mipam Gyatso, and many others.<sup>53</sup>

Whatever the confluence of factors and influences were, an incredible energy and excitement occurred at this time and at this place in Eastern Tibet, with a proliferation of dharma activity that seems almost unprecedented since the early days of Buddhist influence. In addition to the enormous compilations and compositions of Kongtrul and Khyentsé, there were revelations of hidden teachings of earth and mind, constructions of stupas and temples, intensive retreats, constant rituals, and vigorous scholarship. Zhenga and Mipam Rinpoché especially contributed to a revival of scholarship that could stand equal but distinct from the great monasteries of Central Tibet, which had perhaps inspired them.<sup>54</sup> They promoted an inclusive approach that bypassed sectarian dispute by returning to the study of source materials and commentaries rather than studious debate. This was presented as a return to the classical past when Buddhism was being introduced in the thrill of translation and study of original texts.<sup>55</sup> Together, these attitudes and activities that were characterized by deliberate inclusiveness gathered a strength and momentum that moved the direction of Buddhism in Tibet. Thus, the “Rimé movement.”

## WHAT IS RIMÉ REALLY?

Although this approach has been contrasted and compared with the so-called Gelukpa synthesis, it is very different from it in nature, and not only because of its focus on meditation practices. For one thing, rimé is not a synthesis at all. As the anthropologist Geoffrey Samuel has observed, the methodology and ideology served different purposes:

If Rimed [rimé] is considered as a synthesis, it is so in a quite different manner from the Gelukpa position. Tsongk’apa and his successors sought to narrow down, to define, to bring together in a single set of teachings all that was essential within



Tibetan Buddhism. Even the various new Tantric traditions were to be reduced as far as possible to a common framework. The Rimed approach was quite the opposite. All methods were to be gathered together and made available. Any one might contain the liberating potential appropriate to one or another student. Nor, as we have already seen, did the Rimed movement have any common philosophical standpoint.<sup>56</sup>

The development of the scholarly tradition that focused so intently on doctrine helped to systematize the teachings of the explanation lineages (Tib. *bshad brgyud*), but may have neglected the practice lineages (Tib. *sgrub brgyud*). This became the job of the great compilers of the rimé movement. Learning had been well served, but both learning and practice together had always defined the ideal Buddhist. In the *Catalogue of the Treasury of Precious Key Instructions*, Jamgön Kongtrul reaffirms the preeminence of the direct experience of meditation practice with a string of quotations, including the following from the *Tenth Maṇḍala of Kṣitigarbha*.<sup>57</sup>

Meditating in absorption will cut through all doubts.  
Without that realization, nothing else can do it.  
Therefore meditation in absorption is the best.  
The learned ones should pursue that.

He then goes on to say,

All the profound dharma that is very meaningful is contained in this *Treasury*, and if those with intelligence ensure its continuation by means of practicing it themselves and proliferating and explaining it to others, it will take on great meaning, both immediately and over the long run.

Kongtrul worried about some of the practice traditions being lost and considered it his main task to preserve them. Those traditions that were well established did not concern him so much.<sup>58</sup> In a way, his work was complementary to the work of synthesis that had already taken place, rather than corrective of it. He mentions this rationale in his *Autobiography* when describing *The Treasury of Precious Key Instructions*.<sup>59</sup>

With an attitude of deep faith in the Eight Great Chariots of the Practice Lineages, I made great effort to seek out the succession of the ripening empowerments and liberating instructions that had come from those long traditions. Although I might not have the chance to practice them all, the guru's spiritual instructions should not be wasted. For that reason I felt that even if the more famous traditions were individually widespread, the continuity of some of the very rare [transmissions] were in danger of being cut off and should be preserved at least as word lineages. I also think that just hearing once these essential doctrines of sutra and mantra gives meaning to this human existence. With this altruistic motivation I collected the essential root texts of the Eight Chariots and the most profound of their quintessential ripening empowerments and liberating instructions into one treasury.

In the *Catalogue*, he was more specific about which traditions were threatened:

The continuity of the Shangpa teachings, Zhijé, Dorjé Sumgyi Nyendrup, and some others are extremely rare and nearly going extinct. With the noble aspiration of hoping to benefit the continuity of the teachings of empowerment, reading transmission, and guidance, and in order to give meaning to my great diligence and exertion of effort, and so that the frayed rope of those long lineages would at least not break, we must pay some attention to them.<sup>60</sup>

Preservation, however, is only one salutary effect of the unbiased collection of practice materials. Another consideration concerns the basic concept of the skillful nature of Buddhist teachings—that there is a version of theory and practice that is perfectly suited to each individual according to his or her inclinations and abilities. This is an important organizing principle in many teachings, such as the “stages of the path” (Tib. *lam rim*) teachings found in the Kadampa section and others of the present volume. Illustrating this idea, it is often said that the Buddha Śākyamuni taught 84,000 different dharmas for the same number of different problems. Since it is not known which one will benefit which

being, it is best to collect them all, so that no one will miss her or his unique opportunity.

In seeming contradiction to that, another operating principle is that exposure to the vast array of techniques virtually forces one to accept that they are more or less the same, and therefore are all equally valid Buddhist teachings. The differences that are fine-tuned to the individual are, after all, very minor and the similarities in being viable techniques on the path to awakening are dominant. Each tradition is profound and brilliant in its own right, once it is glimpsed. It must be seen to be believed. But if a person comprehends only a single philosophical presentation or one esoteric instruction and becomes fixated on it as truth, then the rumors of alternatives will seem strange and erroneous. Prejudice is always a result of ignorance. Jamgön Kongtrul saw this in others and found it in himself, as we see in the following passage from his *Autobiography*.<sup>61</sup>

These days even famous lamas and geshés have a very meager vision or pure perception of the entirety (*phyogs med*) of the sage's doctrine other than just for that of their own traditions and a few sources. Most people, high and low, have done few studies and have little familiarity with the dharma. In particular, in these later times there are indeed many who, while they themselves do not live forthrightly and lack a religious outlook, yet with the arrogance of power proclaim which dharma traditions are good and which bad, which lineages are pure and which impure. To say nothing of other traditions, they even shun their own traditions with unfounded fears, like a blind yak that startles himself. Even I, one who yearns for the dharma from the depths of my heart, did not accomplish my desires because I did not have the courage of my convictions and became ineffectual. But from this point on, progressively the lotus of faith in all doctrines without bias (*ris su ma chad pa*) and all doctrine holders of the sage's doctrine unfolded freely and fully (*phyogs med*). My knowledge of the dharma has also flourished. I have not committed the grievous act of rejecting the dharma. This came about from the kindness of my precious lord guru himself.

This is a rare occurrence in his autobiography where Kongtrul criticizes sectarianism in others, and yet even here he turns this criticism on himself and divulges his own weaknesses. It hints at another benefit of cultivating an open-minded approach, namely, that seeking out one's own hidden biases is itself an integral practice of the spiritual path of insight and leads to positive results as he describes. But the point here is that for someone credited with founding an alternative movement, or worse yet, a "school," this statement hardly suffices as a manifesto of a rimé philosophy. It seems strange that nothing more on the subject is to be found in an extensive autobiography of the founder of a movement.

Western scholarship has indulged in a kind of psychological analysis of Kongtrul's behavior. Incidents and hardships from his early life are cited as the forces behind his stance. It is particularly mentioned, for example, that he was compelled to retake his monastic vows at the Kagyu monastery of Palpung, though he had already received them from a Nyingma preceptor. Kongtrul refers to this unfortunate incident only once in his autobiography, compared to the hundreds of times he attests to his devotion to the preceptor of his new vows, his guru Situ Pema Nyinje.<sup>62</sup> It is difficult for the reader to locate a sense of damaged psyche. And if there were such a thing, a more predictable psychological response would have been to take a stance against such injustices by opposition, rather than by embracing all those sects and sectarians. Though such difficulties certainly affected him, one must be careful not to impute a foreign and "normal" psychological response to this master who was anything but normal.

This brings us finally to contemplate what rimé (*ris med*) really meant to Jamgön Kongtrul and how he used the word. He did not seem to define it anywhere, and certainly not as a well-formulated political stance. Rather, it seems to be a somewhat ordinary expression that Kongtrul used so much that it became a kind of catchword for his attitude. *Ris* means "part," or "region," and *med* is a negation. It is a contraction of *ris su med pa*, "not in parts," the opposite of *ris su chad pa*, "cut in parts," and a synonym of *phyogs med*, "without directions." In other words, it means "whole," "entire," or "intact," and in usage could be translated as "unlimited" or "without regard for categories."

A search of every title with the word *ris med* in the holdings of the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center turned up twenty-two texts.<sup>63</sup> A quick survey revealed that most of them are histories, biographies, cata-

logues, aspiration prayers, songs, or praises (the doxography of doxology!) that simply cover *many* masters or lineages. Yet the given subject heading was *ris-med* while the usage was often listed as “sect name.” A close reading of one text that seemed the most promising to reveal some sort of statement of rimé philosophy by Jamgön Kongtrul turned out to be mainly concerned with tracing the history of Buddhism from India and its development in Tibet, including the beginnings of the Tibetan race. Among the many systems of both practice and philosophy, it also gives a decent short treatment of Tibet’s “other” religion, Bön, making it truly pluralistic. Before reading it, I would have translated the title as something like “Beautiful Necklace of Clear Thought: A Brief Mention of the Sources of the Nonsectarian Doctrines.” Reading with new eyes, I see now that the literal translation might just as well be “A Brief History of Everything.”<sup>64</sup>

What, then, *is* Jamgön Kongtrul’s rimé position? It is clearly not concerned with sects. I believe the hint is in the above statement, “I have not committed the grievous act of rejecting the dharma,” and elsewhere, “Rejecting the Buddhist teachings is a heavy burden which I have no wish to carry.”<sup>65</sup> In general, the Buddhist approach has always taught tolerance for all religions and is even renowned for that tolerance. In the specific understanding of the causes and effects of actions, to reject or denigrate teachings of the Buddha, in particular, is thought to have very serious consequences. It is included in the vows of refuge, the very first level of discipline adopted when becoming a Buddhist. The late great master Dezhung Rinpoché, who was a paragon of unbiased devotion with deep roots in the Sakya tradition, said in a talk in 1983:<sup>66</sup>

First of all, one who despises another Buddhist school despises the Buddha. He impairs the transmission of the Dharma. The presence of the Dharma is jeopardized by such an attitude, and one becomes cut off from its transmission. This is so because one’s refuge vows are based upon reliance on the Enlightened One, his Teachings, and the Holy Community. If one rejects Dharma, one breaks one’s refuge vow and thereby becomes cut off from the Dharma. By rejecting this Dharma that is the only door to happiness for beings and oneself, one accumulates inexhaustible sin.

In the vows of refuge in the dharma, even disrespecting a single syllable of the alphabet impairs the vow. More particularly, harboring such views of disrespect radically opposes the discipline and spirit of vajrayāna. Many of the root downfalls in that approach address it specifically. Jamgön Kongtrul describes the second root downfall:<sup>67</sup>

To transgress the Buddha's teachings, in a general sense, means to transgress what was taught by the Victorious One. To disrespect and reject the teachings, even when due to lack of understanding of them, qualifies as a downfall.

And the sixth root downfall:<sup>68</sup>

To disrespect spiritual teachings, in its general sense, means to disparage [one's own or] other religions out of desire for personal gain.

We can understand Kongtrul's great concern for not breaking these sacred pledges when we read his description of what that means:

If practitioners transgress pledges and do not restore them, the transgressions become the root cause for their fall into the hell of Unceasing Torture or another hell; thus, they are called root downfalls.

Beyond the question of specific vows, bias goes against the very idea of vajrayāna. This is expressed in the concept of "pure perception" or "sacred outlook" (Tib. *dag snang*), which is based on the idea that the intrinsic nature of all beings is actually the fully awakened awareness of a buddha. This reality is only temporarily obscured by afflictive emotions and ignorance. The approach of secret mantra purports to be implementing this true state right now. In other words, in the practice of the spiritual path one integrates the predicted result of that path while one is still practicing it. This is only logical, since that resultant awakened state is already present as the ground of being. The methods are to realize oneself and one's surroundings as manifesting this intrinsically pure state; to see with pure perception that all of one's experiences are sacred. This is the rationale for the three stages of vajrayāna practice that

one finds described in these esoteric instructions: the creation phase of visualizing oneself and others as deities in a pure land, the completion phase of yogic practice where bliss and emptiness are experienced based on the subtle body that is in itself the pure cause of awakening, or in the great completion practice of direct experience of primordially pure intrinsic awareness and spontaneous presence. This is directly implied in the sacred pledges of vajrayāna, where it applies to one's perceptions of gurus, companions in practice, and women (who apparently need to be singled out for special attention in this matter of pure perception). It is a way of experiencing everything as primordially and ultimately good *without regard for categories (ris med)*.

In terms of the doctrine, when one has access to many teachings it is easy to see that they are all worthy of respect, and certainly all to be included in this sacred outlook. If even the most ordinary or seemingly filthy substances are to be experienced as having “equal flavor” (Tib. *ro mnyam*), then what need is there to mention all the slightly differing versions of Buddhist teachings? Any other attitude contradicts all levels of discipline and is counterproductive to the intent of Buddhist practice. Dezhung Rinpoché said,

One whose Dharma career is tainted by narrow-mindedness and attachment to one's own interests while rejecting those of others will never overcome the many obstacles to the attainment of wisdom or insight.<sup>69</sup>

Unfortunately, pure perception as a concept is wide open for innocent misinterpretation and not-so-innocent abuse. It has been used to suppress criticism, to coerce obedience to dubious gurus and practices, to discourage inquiry, and generally stands in opposition to the use of discriminating intelligence. This is true particularly in the West, where two factors obfuscate the problem: our lack of cultural models of devotion except as a kind of idol worship, and a propensity for investigative inquiry. When the latter is suppressed in the name of faith, we leap to the former, that is, the opposite extreme of blind devotion that relegates discernment to the deep recesses of denial. This, of course, is fundamentalism. It is the opposite of an unbiased approach, which really requires the eyes to be wide open. It is a tragic irony that the two approaches are so intimately

connected that attempts at openness often precipitate prejudice, either as backlash or as an indiscernible mutation of pure perception into poor perception. The latter occurs when the abstract concept is used to label experiences as a way to disengage from them, like a smiley-face stamp of approval.<sup>70</sup> Kongtrul quotes Avalokiteśvara:<sup>71</sup>

Wise people respect qualities, not buddhas or mighty lords and the like. To have respect where there is an absence of qualities is folly, and arises from nonvirtuous karma.

The victorious ones and their heirs, he continues, have emphasized reliance on the dharma and not on individuals.<sup>72</sup> But even so, without the actual deep appreciation of the beauty of interdependence, the arising of the many exquisite forms of emptiness, pure perception remains shifty as a concept. The path of vajrayāna, though practiced as the result, attempts to instill this on the experiential—rather than conceptual—level, where such misappropriations are less likely. It is difficult to articulate pure perception in the context of an unbiased approach, which is perhaps exactly why Kongtrul took the route of simply presenting many, many options. That approach both helps to engender pure perception through knowledge, and displays the pure beauty of diversity to those already possessed of pure perception, such as Kalu Rinpoché:

Each of these lineages transmits the peerless word of Buddha by way of lineages of sages and adepts who are like pure gold. They transmit uncorrupted authentic Dharma that can lead beings to liberation from cyclic existence, to ultimate spiritual realization.<sup>73</sup>

The distinct transmissions of practice that are presented in this volume each provide such a training, while remaining potentially effective methods for awakening to the truth. Kongtrul does not mix them together because they are each complete and internally coherent. It is recognized that rimé does not particularly advocate a sort of mix-and-match approach of one's favorites nor a blending of all techniques and doctrines into a new, ultimate dharma. When asked about the possibility of a new religion of all truths, the fourteenth Dalai Lama said,<sup>74</sup>



I think that differences in faith are useful. There is a richness in the fact that there are so many different presentations of the way. Given that there are so many different types of people with various predispositions and inclinations, this is helpful.

Describing the *rimé* movement as “inclusive” may lead to the wrong impression. It does not mean a kind of synthetic movement wherein all the teachings and lineages are melded together in a universal approach. Nor should it be viewed as an attempt to absorb all “other” customs into one’s own, regarding them as not contradictory but also as not complete without one’s own favorite. Diana Eck, working with the Harvard Pluralism Project, describes three kinds of reactions to religious (and other kinds of) diversity. Exclusivism occurs when other traditions are simply regarded as wrong, or worse, totally dismissed or attacked. Inclusivism is a kind of liberal acceptance into the fold, but still clings to a hierarchical scheme with one’s own religion at the top. This is really a more subtle way of denying autonomy and denigrating another’s faith. Pluralism, on the other hand, is fully engaging in dialogue with other belief systems and appreciating them through mutual understanding, while not abnegating one’s own tradition. In defining pluralism, she says:<sup>75</sup>

Third, I would insist that pluralism is not simply relativism. It does not displace or eliminate deep religious commitments, or secular commitments for that matter. It is, rather, the encounter of commitments. Some critics have persisted in linking pluralism with a kind of valueless relativism, in which all cats are gray, all perspectives equally viable and, as a result, equally unconvincing. Pluralism, they would contend, undermines commitment to one’s own particular faith with its own particular language, watering down particularity in the interests of universality. I consider this view a distortion of the process of pluralism. I would argue that pluralism is the engagement, not the abdication, of differences and particularities. While the encounter with people of other faiths in a pluralist society may lead one to a less myopic view of one’s own faith, pluralism is not premised on a reductive relativism, but on the significance and the engagement of real differences.

The descriptions in *Esoteric Instructions* and the collections in *The Treasury of Precious Key Instructions* grouped according to the Eight Great Chariots of the Practice Lineages do not suggest either exclusivism or inclusivism. Here the means for enlightenment are simply laid side by side for the reader to discern, an act of deep faith in the notion that all of them would be of great benefit.

There was, of course, a reaction as this approach gained popularity and was perceived as a threat to some establishments. In Tibet of the late nineteenth century, where information traveled via rumor and Khampas were regarded mainly as bandits, it must have seemed that Kongtrul and his cohorts were up to no good. There was a strong and perhaps sincere reaction from certain teachers who regarded this apparently eclectic approach as the wrong way to go about practice. Sometimes, also, sloppy eclecticism—which *rimé* was not, but might be perceived as—can incite as much of a religious fundamentalist reaction as secularism does, as we can see in the modern world. But in Tibet the main culprit was the usual mix of power politics with religion, for never the twain were separated. It is significant that Jamgön Kongtrul's universality itself spawned a sectarian reaction. He must have known that this would happen but could not help but proceed. Gene Smith takes note of this unfortunate consequence:<sup>76</sup>

Their innovation called into question the extent to which the synthetic effort may efface the very traditions it seeks to preserve. And yet the esteem with which Kong sprul, Mkhyen brtse, and their collaborators continue to be regarded are a testimonial to the tact and judgment they possessed. Although the nonsectarian movement did engender reactionary intolerance and occasionally the denigration of other traditions of Buddhist practice, even these sectarian responses were couched in the language of eclecticism and unity.

These conflicts and troubles have left their mark even today in sectarian squabbles that constantly bubble up to the surface, even though the surface presents itself as happily nonsectarian. Far removed from the conflict in time and space, Western scholars and practitioners have insisted on perceiving the sincere devotional approach that has been termed *rimé* as a movement, a philosophy, a school, a sect in itself, a

Nyingma-Kagyü alliance, an anti-establishment stance, an anti-Gelukpa plot, or a crazy wisdom lineage. Is this co-opting of a basically straight-forward idea impossible to avoid? When students in a class on Buddhism in Tibet were presented with the histories and instructions of the eight lineages, it was taken as evidence of Tibet's sectarian tendencies. Invariably some tried to assess their relative worth, creating a hierarchy of profundity. Lately, in the Tibetan Buddhist scene in America, there has been an imagined conflict between "pure Buddhism" and "American Buddhism," even though both are meaningless, random designations that are nowhere to be found in any real people. When trenches are dug, people fall into them. Rimé becomes another exclusive club to assure one's own superiority.

In my opinion, considerable damage has been done in portraying rimé as a school or a sect set in opposition to other factions, however unintentionally. In doing that, we make it into precisely its opposite. This is not to say that many complex and sectarian factors did not exist in Tibet. But at the very least, let us exclude Jamgön Kongtrul from the sides being drawn up in our stubborn penchant to hold categories in highest regard. Dezhung Rinpoché said:<sup>77</sup>

All these attitudes are commonly found among Tibetan Buddhist monks and laypeople. These attitudes may be common, but they are not Buddhist. The great Kagyü master and proponent of the Nonsectarian (Tib. *ris med*) movement, Kongtrul Rinpoché, stated that a wise person will have faith in the teachings of all orders and will love the Dharma found in each, just as a mother cherishes all her children. A wise person's mind is vast like the sky, with room for many teachings, many insights, and many meditations. But the mind of an ignorant sectarian is limited, tight, and narrow, like a vase that can only hold so much. It is difficult for such a mind to grow in Dharma because of its self-imposed limitations. The difference between the wise Buddhist and the sectarian Buddhist is like that between the vastness of space and the narrowness of a vase. These are the words of Kongtrul Rinpoché.

## USING ESOTERIC INSTRUCTIONS

Jamgön Kongtrul has given us many suggestions on why he collected these teachings, but we must still discern how to actually use them. Despite the many aforementioned benefits of such grand collections, the stupendous array and seeming divergences of the Buddhist teachings and traditions can be confusing. That is particularly true in the present case, where by definition the instructions are designed for very personal use in practice. The only advice that Kongtrul left regarding *The Treasury of Precious Key Instructions* was intended for the preceptors who would be bestowing the collection in a transmission, rather than for the average practitioner. In the *Catalogue*, he illustrates the principle of subject-appropriate teachings by means of an example: “the great medicine of the gradual realizer will turn to poison for an instantaneous realizer, and the great medicine of the instantaneous ones will become poison for the gradualist.”<sup>78</sup> He continues with how to engage the *Treasury*:

In general, each of the teaching systems of the Eight Chariots of Practice Lineages includes the complete process for attaining enlightenment, so they are exclusively special, exalted, profound approaches. Therefore, according to the individual’s interest and mental capabilities, give the instructions of each chariot as a whole or bit by bit, and so on. Even selecting the ripening empowerments and liberating instructions as one likes can only be efficacious.<sup>79</sup>

It is reassuring to know that one’s spiritual master would be able to make these choices and that she or he could hardly go wrong. So perhaps the best use of this book, *Esoteric Instructions*, would be to bring it to one’s teacher and ask for instructions. It can also function as a survey of one’s particular lineage in which to find good ideas, since a practitioner is often unaware of what to request. Those already engaged in a particular Buddhist path could enhance their knowledge of their approach by reading the pertinent chapter, and they will find much of it familiar from previous experience. In general, it is suggested that a person will do better by following one particular tradition. There are many popular analogies to illustrate this, such as that mixing too many foods will not be delicious, and that in starting to dig many wells, one will never reach

the deep water. Khyabjé Kalu Rinpoché, in many ways the successor of Jamgön Kongtrul, said:

In general, to have faith in all the traditions is a sign of profound understanding of the teachings. However, it is absolutely necessary to engage in one given tradition, to receive detailed instructions in it, and to be introduced to its essential practices; and then, it is proper to practice mainly those teachings.

So, regardless of the school or lama from whom we receive teachings, we should try to adopt an impartial attitude and devote ourselves to practice with total aspiration. Otherwise, merely remembering some phrases here and there, taking in only certain aspects of the teachings, and playing at being practitioners will make it quite difficult for us to gain any significant benefit.<sup>80</sup>

On the other hand, *The Treasury of Knowledge* treatise in general carries the stated purpose of making the doctrine available to those with little study. More specifically, the esoteric instructions are described as directives to simplify the meditation practices. So in theory it would be very helpful to become familiar with the range of techniques presented here. As mentioned before, they are not sufficiently described to put into practice without further instruction, but there is more than enough to develop a tremendous appreciation and even awe at the brilliance of this vehicle in all its manifestations, and in this way to come to an authentically unbiased valuation of all the lineages—pure perception based on knowledge, without regard for categories. Then, in deeply practicing one's own path, one will finally fully understand all paths, and become a true pluralist, such as Kalu Rinpoché.<sup>81</sup>

All spiritual traditions, whether Christian, Hindu, Judaic, Islamic, or Buddhist, teach that the understanding of what we are at the deepest level is the main point. This understanding of the nature of mind sheds light from within and illuminates the teachings of all traditions. In every tradition, whoever gains firsthand, experiential understanding of mind and retains that kind of awareness is led to a world view that would not have been possible prior to this direct experience. Knowledge of the

nature of mind is the key that yields an understanding of all teachings; it sheds light on what we are, the nature of all our experiences, and reveals the deepest form of love and compassion.

The actual realization of the nature of mind opens onto a complete understanding of Dharma and all the traditions. To have a good theoretical knowledge of Dharma or any other spiritual tradition and to effectively realize the ultimate nature of mind, however, are profoundly different. Even a realized being who is not involved in a particular spiritual tradition would have, while living in the ordinary world, an extremely beneficial influence.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I sought help from knowledgeable sources and relied on the former work of other translators for each of the Tibetan Buddhist lineages represented here. It is important to acknowledge them all in context.

Chapter 1 on the Nyingma tradition had been roughly translated many years ago by Lama Drupgyu and the translation committee. In reworking it, I relied mainly on Gangteng Tulku Rinpoché, a Nyingma Lama in the Padma Lingpa tradition of Bhutan, with whom I have studied for years. Chapter 2, the Kadampa, had also been translated by the committee years ago. Some general questions were ably answered by Lama Tenpa Gyaltsen, who was helpful throughout, and some details on texts by Tenzin Dorjee at Geshe Gyaltsen's center. For Chapter 3 on the Lamdré lineage I was helped incalculably by Cyrus Stearns, who both shared his early translation of the chapter and offered detailed help with my endless questions. Anything accurate in that chapter is due to his knowledge of the teachings in that lineage.

Chapter 4, on the Marpa Kagyu, is quite extensive, and fortunately I found help from many quarters. The excellent translation of the six yogas section by Elizabeth Callahan was of immense benefit and could hardly be improved upon. Similarly, the translation of the māhamudrā section by Ari Goldfield, also enhanced by the teachings of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, was generously made available. Questions were answered by those two lotsāwas, as well as by Khenpo Tsultrim himself, Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoché, Ringu Tulku Rinpoché, Lama

Tenpa Gyaltsen, and probably others that I am forgetting. The sections on the Pakmo Drupa, Drigung, Drukpa, Rechung, and Kamtsang traditions were not previously translated, as far as I know. Answers and helpful notes were kindly provided on the Drigung section by Drupon Thinley Ningpo Rinpoché. For the Drukpa Kagyu, I took advantage of papers and comments by two monks from Bhutan while they were students at Naropa University: Lama Kinley Wangchuk and Loppon Sonam Bumden.

For Chapter 5, on the Shangpa Kagyu, I was fortunate to possess all the texts in that tradition as well as to have personal familiarity with it. An early translation by Matthew Kapstein proved to be very helpful as well. I had translated Chapter 6, on the systems of Zhijé and Chöd, many years earlier for the translation committee and it had gone through some revision by the group. During that first attempt, Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoché had patiently answered my many questions. Without contemporary practitioners of Zhijé, I revised my old translation based on the available commentaries. In the meantime, I had done considerable work in the Chöd tradition and was hopefully able to improve on that section as well. For Chapter 7, on the Six-Branch Yoga, I had hoped to seek the advice of Bokar Rinpoche, an expert on the Kālacakra tradition, but his untimely death precluded my complacent expectations. Cyrus Stearns again came to the rescue with his earlier translation and citations. Recent publications of important Kālacakra texts were very timely for this difficult and specialized subject. Transcripts of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso were also helpful. Chapter 8 is on Orgyenpa's instructions called Dorjé Sumgyi Nyendrup. If there are experts on this tradition, I did not find them. Luckily, Jamgön Kongtrul had collected a number of sources in his *Treasury of Precious Key Instructions*. Chapter 9 is a brief description of Śāntiguṇḍa's six transmissions, which can be found in works by Tāranātha.

These are just some of the sources on which I have depended. In many ways, I would like to express gratitude to all translators of Tibetan texts—all of them treasures in special ways. I feel as if I am standing on their shoulders and that our efforts are cumulative. Specifically, the previous publications of *The Treasury of Knowledge* that were produced in the most difficult of circumstances have provided a good foundation on which to build.

I would like to thank my good friend and Sanskritist L.S. Summer

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### TECHNICAL NOTE

*The Treasury of Knowledge* was written in Tibetan, and I have tried to translate that Tibetan for the most part into English. Occasionally I have resorted to translating certain technical terms into Sanskrit, either because that word has come into common usage (e.g., “karma,” “guru,” etc.), or because I couldn't find a good enough English term (e.g., “dharmakāya,” “vajrayāna,” etc.). In the former cases, I have dispensed with diacritical notations for any term that now appears in the *American Heritage Dictionary* (fourth edition). For all other cases, including names of persons, places, or texts of Indian origin, and terms given in Sanskrit by the author himself, I have used the standard system of spelling and diacritics. Unfortunately, there is no standard system for indicating pronunciation of Tibetan, so for personal names and occasional technical terms in Tibetan I have simply rendered them into what I think is the easiest way for English-speaking people to pronounce, borrowing the *umlaut* from German and *accent aigu* from French (perhaps adding to the problem). The scholarly system for notation of Tibetan developed by Turrell Wylie can be found in the endnotes, bibliography, and index. With the exception of the Introduction, where Sanskrit dominates, all terms and text names have been given first in Tibetan, and in Sanskrit only if appropriate. Jamgön Kongtrul often shortened the names of texts beyond recognition, or used popular alternative names. The use of brackets in the text titles in the endnotes indicates the parts of a title that were not included in Kongtrul's original, so that future scholars can more easily see my assumptions and mistakes. About that, I admit that the opportunity for errors in this book is immense, and I suspect they are



more numerous than the stars on a winter night in the Rockies. I look forward to the academic outrage that will inspire future practitioner-scholars to correct them. At least I have provided the fuel.

Finally, the short introductions at the beginning of each chapter are loose synopses of Jamgön Kongtrul's history of the Eight Practice Lineages that can be found in the *Treasury of Knowledge*, Book 4, Part 3. Since a thorough annotated translation of this section is soon to be published in this series, no attempt was made to elaborate or provide citations for the material. It was simply added to give the reader some sense of the background for each of the esoteric instruction traditions.

# THE ROOT TEXT ESOTERIC INSTRUCTIONS

*A Detailed Presentation of the Process  
of Meditation in Vajrayāna*

## [NYINGMA]

Here, amidst the snowy mountain ranges, there are eight practice lineages

That emphasize the esoteric instructions. From those, the early translation Nyingma

Has many meditation sequences in the three yogas,

But they are subsumed in two main kinds: with and without characteristics.

The *Magical Manifestation* tradition has two systems with characteristics: method and liberation.

The common technique of the upper door in the path of method uses six chakras.

The special technique involves Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri,

And the pure union of melting and controlling of great pervasion.

The lower door with four branches refines all at once.

The path of liberation has gradual and instantaneous realizers.

In the former, the view goes before.

Meditative absorption is devotional meditation and

Definitive completion, training until the ultimate five experiences.

There are five objects of meditation that correspond to

The three stages of birth, intermediate state, and death:

Great emptiness, compassion-illusion, single mudra, elaborate mudra, and assembly practice.

That further has both coarse and subtle modes of refinement.

Creation phase involves three absorptions and the coarse form.  
 Having attained proficiency in eight measures of clarity and stability,  
 Mandalas, clusters, numbers, and faces and arms emanate.  
 Five excellences lay the foundation of practice,  
 And four branches of approach and attainment straighten the  
 approach.

Awareness-holder of the desire or form realms is accomplished in six  
 months or so.

The dissipating five paths purify the habitual patterns of samsara.  
 Completing the fruition, they cause the ripening of the higher paths,  
 Which is the cause of attaining the four types of nondissipating  
 awareness-holder.

In completion phase, drawing energy-mind into the central channel  
 is great emptiness.

Meditate on luminous clarity day and night by two ways of placement.

Compassion arises from liberation in illusory forms of emptiness.

The divine form of melting bliss seals,

The single form proliferates, and clusters emanate throughout space.

The assembly practice and three mudras are the perpetuating cause

Of attaining the nondual *kāya* of the path of training.

Meditation without characteristics is settling into the suchness of  
 reality.

In *anuyoga*, the path of upper and lower skillful methods produces  
 great bliss.

In the path of liberation one rests the mind just like that, in reality  
 just as it is.

This is entrance consistent with the meaning, without characteristics.

Environment and inhabitants are mandala circles created just by  
 mantra,

Like fish jumping out of water, clear and distinct.

This is explained as entrance through syllables, with characteristics.

The path of definitive completion in general is both dissipating and  
 nondissipating.

It consists of the five yogas, such as “aspiring attitude,” and so on.

In the mind class, all relative phenomena, however they appear,

Are the expression of reality fully complete in the awakening mind.

This conveys to basic space free of identification as appearance  
 or awareness.

Therefore, appearance is mind, and mind is pristine awareness.  
 By resting in the natural state, delusion is directly liberated in itself.  
 Since there is no experience of meditation nor of its absence,  
 One rests in *dharmakāya*, the awareness-emptiness of natural  
 appearance without bias.  
 The conclusive points of the space class are subsumed and fully  
 contained in  
 “Unmistaken, uncontrived, unimaginable, and free of intellect.”  
 Natural openness, unwavering, drawing up, and not touching;  
 These four vital points are the modes for pristine awareness, basic  
 space, bliss, and reality.  
 They make the clarity, emptiness, and so on of the four  
 empowerments into the path.  
 To summarize, rest in reality without deliberate activity.  
 Experiences of abiding, unwavering, evenness, and spontaneous  
 presence  
 Are posited by Garab as the four experiences of the mind and space  
 paths.  
 Primordially pure *trekchö* and spontaneously present *tögal* are  
 Esoteric instructions that make the reality of emptiness and appearance  
 fall away.  
 Abiding in four modes of liberation, naturally occurring awareness  
 itself  
 Is recognized, and decided with confidence.  
 As enhancement one does yoga such as the threefold sky.  
 The sound of four elements, delineating samsara and nirvana,  
 And preliminaries of three doors is the training with three leaders.  
 Three vital points of physical support, basic space guidance, and  
 Objective visionary appearances; specifically from the path of four  
 lamps,  
 Four visionary appearances will convey to the level of falling away.  
 Three restings grasp the extent, strike with the nail of three  
 attainments.  
 Demonstrating the measure of liberation with fourfold confidence  
 is breakthrough.

## [KADAMPA]

The general Kadam practice is four deities, Three Baskets,  
 And three trainings; the special esoteric instruction system is  
 Five recollections: guru, deity, mantra, compassion, and emptiness.  
 As extensions of that, the relative and  
 Ultimate sixteen vital essences are integrated on the path.  
 Three traditions combined into one: the stages of the path to  
 awakening  
 Has four greatneses and reliance on a root spiritual mentor.  
 Contemplating human life, impermanence, and suffering of bad  
 existences,  
 Desiring one's own emancipation, one goes for refuge in the Three  
 Jewels.  
 The eight concerns are naturally liberated and faith is totally pure.  
 This is the meditation on the stages of the path for a person of small  
 scope.  
 Believing in cause and effect, seeing the problems of samsara,  
 With an attitude of genuine desire to eliminate its cause, karma and  
 affliction,  
 One pursues emancipation, certainty of release, and pure discipline.  
 This is the meditation on the stages of the path for a person of  
 medium scope.  
 Great love and compassion for all mother sentient beings  
 Engenders the awakening mind. Six perfections and four modes of  
 attraction  
 Enact one's own and others' welfare with totally pure noble intention.  
 This is the meditation on the stages of the path for a person of great  
 scope.  
 The Buddha's words that are intended for higher states, definite  
 goodness, and mahayana  
 Are considered to be included in this path of three stages.  
 The special branch is the enhancement of compassion  
 By the kinds of mind training to exchange oneself for others.

## [LAMDRÉ]

Supreme Precious Words with four oral transmissions and four authentic qualities.

First, the path of samsara and nirvana in common has five.

Impure, yogic experience, and pure—

These three appearances provide the path's foundation.

One maintains the view of samsara and nirvana inseparable in the causal continuum.

As the method continuum, one meditates on the profound path connected with the four empowerments.

The qualities of five kāyas and awarenesses arise in the result continuum.

All practice without exception is known through the three continua.

Scripture, narrative, esoteric instruction, and experiential practice:

These four authentic qualities and four transmissions cut through doubts.

Outer, inner, secret, suchness, and ultimate—

Five interdependent connections demarcate the path.

The worldly path of the stiff wheel has two:

The seven esoteric instructions and dispelling obstructions of the path.

Three gatherings of the constituents apply to the seven impartial.

Three modes of mental abiding are realized as the immediate cause of meditative absorption.

Whatever arises of three experiences is meditative absorption.

What has arisen is maintained as it occurs, whether or not the three warmth [arise in order].

Three modes of guidance distinguish the particular experiences.

The demarcations are known by applying three examples to three gatherings.

Three interdependent connections contain all causes and conditions, freeing one from hope and fear.

Two yogins that fall into partiality have four obstacles,

Eight protections, and fourteen in common.

Seventy great vital points, six instructions,

And the mandala circle dispel obstructions on the path.

In summary, the path of four empowerments has eight views and culminations of attainment.

Faults are qualities, and obstacles are taken up as spiritual powers.  
 When whatever appears is understood as experience, one is naturally  
 liberated  
 And reaches the culmination of accomplishment on the transcendent  
 path of the spinning wheel.

### [MARPA KAGYU]

Master Marpa's precious Kagyus  
 Teach the stages of the abiding nature of things, the path, and the  
 result  
 In vajra lines that summarize the meaning of the highest yoga tantra.  
 The two abiding natures are coarse, subtle, and very subtle.  
 Three lights all are empty, luminous mind.  
 Aggregates, constituents, channels, vital essences, and native body are  
 the ground.  
 The four states are what is to be refined, and the path that refines them  
 Is the four root dharmas with their two branches.  
 The literal meanings of the Six Dharmas have a textual tradition of  
 both sutra and mantra.  
 Their general meaning is common and special; their hidden meaning is  
 experience and realization.  
 Ultimately, they are concordant with training and the actual  
 experience beyond training.  
 The particular meditation topics are the coemergent pristine awareness  
 of  
 Bliss-, appearance-, awareness-, and clarity-emptiness, of three times,  
 and of inseparability.  
 They refine the six aggregates and constituents, and actualize the six  
 families.  
 The pillar of the path is inner heat: emptiness is the outer,  
 Short *a* is the inner, and union is the secret inner heat.  
 They sever elaborations, are the practice, and unite one with the state  
 of supreme bliss.  
 What is targeted are the three channels and four chakras.  
 The energy currents are held by four applications and five vital points.  
 The vital essences of melting bliss are joined and bound without  
 emission.

At the time of the ground, inner heat resides at the navel or secret  
 place as substance, mantra, and pristine awareness.  
 It ignites through visualizations, energy currents, and skillful methods.  
 For that, meditate on the path of total liberation using the upper door  
 of one's own body  
 With the vital points of body, time, and object.  
 There is bliss, heat, nonthought, and pristine awareness, with  
 enhancement.  
 Find another's body and experience the bliss of sexual union.  
 Ten signs, qualities, appearance-emptiness, and bliss-emptiness  
 Are all produced by inner heat, and to enhance the path is illusory  
 body.  
 The seven are examples, dream, intermediate state,  
 Luminous clarity, emanations, pristine awareness, and illusion,  
 With divisions of two, three, four, or more.  
 The practice is to see that impure phenomena are like the eight  
 examples.  
 The pure is to train with the display of the deities, mantras, and  
 pristine awareness.  
 The totally pure has time, method, cause, manifestation, and essence:  
 Five distinctions and three isolations that have preceded.  
 Without characteristics, through the force of blessings,  
 Illusory body is born from the pristine awareness of mahāmudrā  
 And manifests to intrinsic awareness.<sup>1</sup>  
 After accomplishing the root yoga with characteristics,  
 Through action- and pristine awareness-mudra, the cause of the  
 inexhaustible body  
 [Arises after] the progressive and reverse order of the three lights  
 As the kāya of the quintessential mind-energy adorned by major and  
 minor marks.  
 Postmeditation is appearances and such, integrated on the path.  
 The third of five stages, forms of emptiness of individual withdrawal  
 and meditative stability  
 Are the meaning of mahāmudrā, so are hidden elsewhere.  
 The measure, dream, is divided into example, meaning, and the end  
 of time.  
 The esoteric instructions of recognizing, training, and combining  
 Ascertain appearance, including death, to be like that.



Luminous clarity, the heart, is twofold: example and actual, experience and realization,

Or classified as four or five, such as natural, and so on.

In practice, luminous clarity at the time of the ground is introduced.

At the time of the path, vital points of the support and supported are bound;

Outer, inner, and common manifest awakenings are manifest.

Of the five occasions, sleep time is taken as the example.

The arising of illusory body with instant or subsequent dissipation

Stabilizes recognition and the actual result is perfected.

Of all intermediate states, existence is assurance.

The best ones recognize luminous clarity, the middling refine the energy of illusory body,

The lowest block the entrance to wombs and choose.

The escort on the path for highest, middling, and lowest faculties

Is transference in luminous clarity, illusory body, and creation phase.

It is explained that an auxiliary is entering from residence to residence.

The ultimate result is actualizing the six dharmas.

Sutra tradition is freedom from elaborations,

Mantra tradition of bliss-emptiness mahāmudrā is special due to coemergence and empowerment.

In general, of the three traditions of Sutra, Mantra, and Essence,

The first is perfection of wisdom in essence and mahāmudrā in name.

Its aspects are consistent with mantra.

The abiding nature of the ground is without bias, free of extremes of elaboration.

Not experiencing delusion or liberation, it pervades everywhere like the sky.

The mode of delusion appears but is not real; mere appearance itself

Is the great play of three kāyas—arising, abiding, and ceasing.

At the time of the path, coemergent mind itself is dharmakāya,

Coemergent appearance is dharmakāya's light.

No distraction, no meditation, without fabrication in the native state.

Liberation from four strayings and three deviations.

Beyond the four joys and three conditions, three ways of arising

Make the connection and one traverses the four stages of yoga.

Understanding the view and gaining experience through meditation,

Realization is perfected and fruition is attained right now.  
 The mantra tradition arises from the path of skillful methods.  
 The essence is the descent of vajra pristine awareness  
 Simultaneously ripening and liberating those of highest faculties.  
 Pakdru turned the dharma wheel in five practices:  
 Refuge, bodhicitta, devotion, creation-completion, and dedication.  
 The Karmapas introduce the three kāyas and  
 The Drukpas emphasize the eight great instructions and so forth.  
 In the tradition of Rechungpa and other holders of the hearing lineage  
 teaching system,  
 The root of all is mahāmudrā and the six dharmas.

### [SHANGPA KAGYU]

The Shangpa tradition has three stages: exegesis, debate, and practice.  
 The latter is the five cycles of Ni, Dhi, Maitrī, Abhaya, and Rāhula,  
 Along with miscellaneous fragments.  
 The main practices are Niguma's Five Golden Dharmas.  
 Having refined one's being with the hollow interior, the exceptional  
 purifier,  
 With fierce and gentle breathing exercises of inner heat, the root,  
 Consume it as food, wear it as clothing, spread it as a seat, and ride it  
 as a horse.  
 Devotion, the deity's form, and the six classes arise as illusion.  
 Through lucid dreaming, four empowerments, and nine unerring vital  
 points,  
 Dreams are recognized, refined, and ascertained; liberating actions are  
 mastered.  
 By root, branches, leaves, and flowers,  
 Light and deep luminous clarity integrates the three kāyas.  
 There is transference of suchness, union, blessing force, and  
 Higher through the path of the unerring celestial realm.  
 By dharmakāya, saṃbhogakāya, nirmāṇakāya and the unerring general  
 point,  
 One is liberated in the three intermediate states according to level of  
 faculties.  
 Preliminaries are to develop calm abiding and higher insight by three  
 naturally settled states.

The main practice is introduction and four faults liberated in their own place.

Concluding practices are the natural arising of awareness, clarity, and emptiness as the three kāyas.

This is the trunk of the dharma, mahāmudrā.

Whatever appears is the guru, appearance and sound are deity and mantra,

Appearance is mind, illusion, and dream.

Devotion, pure perception, and unreal; this is the dharma of integration, the branches.

The flowers are Red and White Khecarī, a stream of compassion

Evoked by exalted supplication. In the four chakras

Desire is liberated and the lamp of bliss-emptiness blazes intensely.

One's mind is unborn and so does not die.

The body itself is inert, not a basis for attributing "death."

Bound in unerring basic space, this is said to be the fruit.

Sukha's six dharmas, the practice of four deities together,

Guru and protector inseparable, and so on—many profound teachings.

### [ZHIJÉ AND CHÖD]

Pacification of the three sufferings is the ground.

Removing three, limitless beings obtaining three freedoms is the path.

Total freedom from obscurations, dwelling in equalness is the fruition.

Since it pacifies suffering, the general term is used specifically.

The first transmission was five instructions by example.

Defining characteristic lineages are sky-like:

Relative, absolute, unity, and non-abiding.

Father tantra is vajra-like: yogic exercise,

Vajra repetition, and mental control of energy lead to luminous clarity.

Mother tantra is lotus-like: blazing, melting,

Retaining, reversing, and spreading make one unsullied by fault.

Mahāmudrā symbol lineage is elixir-like empowerment,

Introduction, integration as path, and one comment on the unborn.

The ḍākinī symbol lineage is wheel-like:

Shooting, falling, spinning, and settling.

Integrating the intermediate state as the path, and timely action.

The middle Ma system is based on meaning and word lineages,  
Sixteen guidances and vital points introduce and cut off  
misconceptions.

The So system is nakedly seeing awareness, with three vital points.  
The Kam system is the guidance in the meaning of the *Heart Sutra*,  
and so on.

Principally, in the last, the system of the bodhisattva Kunga,  
There are white, red, and black guidances in the cycle engendering  
experience.

In the red guidance, the general preliminary severs attachment.  
The special accomplishes the path's foundation, accumulates, and  
purifies.

In the main part, the foundation act is possession of three vows,  
Keeping the six restraints of yoga undamaged.

The agent is the path. Mind training on the path of accumulation  
Lays the foundation. When refined by austerities on the path of  
application,

The secret activity of deliberate behavior is the connecting branch.  
Subsequent activity is the path of seeing, equal flavor is the path of  
meditation,

Freedom from action is the path of consummation; these are produced  
by way of exertion.

The fruition is finding one's own mind to be the totally pure four  
kāyas.

Clearing obstructions, enhancement practice, and the crucial approach  
to accomplishment.

One to one, one three, and one to one.

Severance of evil object is the activity of the profound perfection of  
wisdom.

Famous as the combination of sutric and tantric realization,  
Abiding in emptiness, not forsaking beings, acting according to one's  
word,

And the sugatas' blessing; these four are the meaning of the doctrine.  
Exceptional accumulations, incurring the crucial blessings,  
Searching the mind, methods of settling, and opening the door  
to the sky

Introduce the Mother's meaning. Objects, mind, attachment, and self

Severed in space. Alternating peaceful and wrathful equalizes.  
 There is enhancement, uprising, indications of success, and  
 consummation.

### [JORDRUK]

Six branches are plainly presented in the extensive root tantras,  
 The vajrayoga that is the final destination of completion phase.  
 Practicing with threefold confidence,  
 The complete deity's form with fourfold disregard is the approach,  
 The main practices of withdrawal, meditative stability, vital energy  
 control, and retention are near attainment,  
 Through recollection of desire, great passion is the attainment,  
 And in meditative absorption, the sublime pristine awareness body is  
 great attainment.<sup>2</sup>

The vital points of gazing and binding the functions  
 Sever all connections individually, drawing consciousnesses inward.  
 The faculties of pristine awareness interact with five alternate objects.  
 The cessation of the mandalas of method and wisdom completes the  
 ten signs.

With form and mind resting in equipoise, the five branches of  
 meditative stability are complete;

Apparent images are endowed with three certainties and five  
 properties.

Refining the channel pathways, vital energy enters into the *dhūti*.  
 If unable to bind it with the vase breath, forceful methods are to  
 block it

At the lower door, release it upwards, and taste the inner elixir.  
 Blazing blends the vital and downward-clearing energies and  
 immortality is attained.

Through retention that is unwavering and without coming and going,  
 The blended energy currents dissolve into the indestructible vital  
 essence.

Vital energy enters the forehead and is stabilized without emission.  
 According to differences in vital essence of three levels of faculties,  
 Real recollection is action-mudra, awareness-mudra, or mahāmudrā of  
 forms of bliss-emptiness.

Analogous recollection is refining the energy currents in the  
 preliminaries,  
 And then awareness-mudra, the blazing of inner heat, and so forth.  
 Transformation into meditative absorption of melting bliss without  
 emission is accomplished.  
 In the real one, through the arising and reversal of the ten signs of  
 mahāmudrā,  
 The forms of emptiness of melting bliss are bound at the tip of the  
 jewel,  
 Causing the seminal fluids and energy currents to cease.  
 Beginning with the first immutable instant until the twelfth spiritual  
 level,  
 Breathing ceases and unchanging joy increases proportionally.  
 This is union, the embodiment of wisdom and method.  
 The path, the demarcations, and increasing the yoga without  
 diminishing  
 Are added as supplementary branches.  
 The manner of cause and result of those yogas is that  
 Those virtuous at the beginning accomplish meditative absorption of  
 calm abiding and higher insight,  
 Those in the middle blend energy and mind and open the chakras,  
 Those virtuous at the end accomplish the unchanging pristine  
 awareness kāya.  
 The descent of vajra pristine awareness causes various experiences—  
 Jumping, shaking, and pain—releasing the knots of the three doors.  
 The six chakras are purified and the victors of six families  
 accomplished.

### [DORJÉ SUMGYI NYENDRUP]

Approach and Attainment is the oral transmission of the Vajra Queen.  
 Approach of vajra Body purifies the body's channels.  
 With three postures, hold the upper, lower, and middle energy  
 currents.  
 Once ten currents enter the dhūti, forms of emptiness are seen.  
 Attainment of vajra Speech purifies speech energy currents.  
 Using vital energy control, downward-clearing, joining, and  
 vajra repetition,

Entering the vital essence accomplishes all great activities.  
 Great attainment of vajra Mind purifies mind and vital essence.  
 The blazing of three fires in the heightened passion of method and  
 wisdom  
 Refines the refuse and achieves unchanging bliss.  
 The view is the way it is, meditation is the three vajras, and  
 The fruition is purifying the three obscurations and introducing the  
 three kāyas.

**[SUPPLEMENT: ŚĀNTIGUPTA]**

The great adept Śāntiguṇḍa's guidances of Six Transmissions  
 Are creation phase, mahāmudrā, inner heat, luminous clarity,  
 Action-mudra, and miscellaneous esoteric instructions, and more.  
 Clearing away obstructions and enhancing is crucial in all completion  
 phase [practices].

This concludes the eighth book on the divisions of the sequence of  
 training of higher meditative absorption from *The Encompassment of All  
 Knowledge: A Treatise that Effectively Presents the Three Trainings, a Treas-  
 ury of Precious Scripture Compiled from the Approaches of All Vehicles*

# 1: NYINGMA

## *Lineage History*

The teachings of Buddhism entered Tibet mainly during two particularly active periods. The earlier dissemination (*snga' dar*), when Buddhism was first established, occurred during the royal dynastic period of the eighth and ninth centuries. Then, after a period of suppression, a new influx precipitated a renaissance of Buddhism beginning in the tenth century, called the “later dissemination” (*phyi dar*). The lineages that began in the earlier dissemination became known as Nyingma (*nying ma*), the “old” or “ancient ones,” in contrast to all the other lineages, which belong to the later Sarma (*gsar ma*) or “new” lineages. The Nyingma adhere to a ninefold scheme that orders the teachings into nine successive vehicles. The first three are the sutra vehicles called, in Sanskrit, *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, and *bodhisattva*. The three vehicles of the outer tantras are *kriyāyoga*, *upa-* or *caryāyoga*, and *yogatantra*. The three vehicles of the inner tantras are *mahāyoga*, *anuyoga*, and *atiyoga*. This last has three further divisions into the mind class (Tib. *sems sde*), the space class (*klong sde*), and the esoteric instruction class (*man ngag sde*).

According to Jamgön Kongtrul, whose historical interest here focuses mainly on practice lineages, the basis of the doctrine known as Ancient Secret Mantra is the long or sequential lineage of precept teachings (*bka' ma*) that originated during the early dissemination.\* He cites the primary sources for this tradition as the *Net of Magical Manifestation* or *Guhyaagarbha Tantra* for the *mahāyoga*, the *Gathering of Intentions Sutra* for *anuyoga*, and the two traditions of the mind class, the eighteen tantras of mother and child, for the *atiyoga*. The Eight Transmitted Precepts (*sgrub pa bka' bgyad*) and other branches are the auxiliaries. In the

\*Synopsis based on *The Treasury of Knowledge*, Book 4, Part 3 (TOK1: 503-515).



Great Completion (*rdzogs chen*), the Secret Cycles of Vital Essence (*thig le gsang skor*), now known as the Four-Part Innermost Essence, contain the most quintessential of the instructions.

Kongtrul identifies six main transmissions (*bka' babs*) of these inner tantra teachings. The first began with the vajra master Guru Padma-sambhava from Uḍḍiyāna, known as the Second Buddha and an emanation of Buddha Amitābha. He was invited to Tibet by the Buddhist king Trisong Deutsen (705-755) to build the first monastery, Samyeling. There, although it seemed to the public that he taught only the *Garland of Views of the Esoteric Instructions*, in fact he gave inconceivable transmissions and instructions to the fortunate disciples, such as the Eight Transmitted Precepts. In addition he bestowed the Luminous Clarity Great Completion (*'od gsal rdzogs chen*), which condenses the essence of all dharma, and the instructions on peaceful and wrathful guru, and so forth. Since he perceived that most of these were not helpful at the time, he hid many teachings as treasures (*gter ma*) for future generations.

The second transmission of the inner tantra teachings began with the great translator Vairocana (eighth century), known as the first bilingual master of Tibet. King Trisong Deutsen sent him to India, where he met the awareness-holder Śrī Siṃha and requested the “effortless vehicle.” He received the eighteen instructions of the mind class of the great completion, as well as all of the empowerments and esoteric instructions of sixty tantras, and teachings of the space class. He met twenty-one other teachers, and then the master Prahevajra, or Garab Dorjé, in the great charnel ground, where he received the essential lineages of 6,400,000 great completion teachings, reaching realization simultaneously. Back in Tibet he gave these teachings secretly and translated five of the eighteen mind class teachings. Of the successions of his five main disciples, two traditions that are currently well known are that of Nyang Yeshé Jungné and Aro Yeshé Jungné.

The third is the transmission from the Indian Master Vimalamitra (fifth-sixth century), the crown jewel of the five hundred great scholars of India. In Tibet he gave the esoteric class instructions of the great completion to Nyang Tingdzin Zangpo and translated the remaining thirteen mind class teachings with the Tibetan translator Yudra Nyingpo, a disciple of Vairocana. Nyang gave the precept lineage to Lodro Wangchuk, and the written lineage was later discovered by Dangma Lungyal. He also received the precept lineage, and passed it to Zhangtön and others.

It became known as the *Vima Innermost Essence*. The treasure revealer Padma Lendreltsal (1291-1315) recovered instructions known as the *Ḍākinī Innermost Essence*, and transmitted them to Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé (1284-1339) and Shoi Gyalsé Lekpa, also known as Kumārārāja (1266-1343). The former brought forth the *Karma Innermost Essence* from the expanse of his enlightened intention, and the latter gave instructions to the omniscient Longchenpa Drimé Özer (1308-1363). He, in turn, revealed the treatises of the *Guru's Further Essence*, the *Profound Further Essence*, and the *Ḍākinī's Further Essence*. He also composed the *Seven Great Treasuries*, the *Trilogy on Natural Ease*, and many others.

Fourth is the lineage of Nup Sangyé Yeshé (832-962), who studied with masters from India, Nepal, and Gilgit. He transmitted the four main scriptures of *anuyoga*, including the *Gathering of Intentions Sutra*, with the stages of the path and all of its empowerments, explanations, and esoteric instructions. Nup also transmitted boundless spiritual instructions, such as the cycle of Yamantaka. The lineage was spread mainly by his son, Yönten Gyatso, and most of the wrathful mantra were hidden as treasure.

The fifth is the lineage of Ma, Nyak, and their successors. Most of the tantric and practice precepts, notably the *Net of Magical Manifestation* and the teachings of Yangdak Heruka and Vajrakīlāya, were first spread by Ma Rinchen Chok, one of the first seven monks of Tibet. He translated and explicated the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, producing many learned scholars and adepts who established the tradition. There is a well-known saying that the vajrayāna doctrine fell first to Nyak, in the middle to Nup, and in the end to Zur. Nyak Jñānakumāra gathered the four great rivers of precepts from Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, Vairocana, and Yudra Nyingpo. He passed all the teachings to his eight disciples with the name Pal, particularly to Palkyi Yeshé of Sogpo, from whom it was received by Nup Sangyé Yeshé. Nup Namkhai Nyingpo received the whole cycle of Yangdak Heruka from Hūṃkara in India. His successors hold the So system of instructions, which has continued to the present. Also Khön Lui Wangpo received all the instructions, including those of Yangdak Heruka and Vajrakīlāya, which have continued through the Sakya lineage until now. Many other great adepts followed. In fact, most of the great translators of the new schools were descendents of the Nyingma lineage of awareness-holders. The lineage continued through great masters until Lharjé Zurpoché Shakya Jungné, and then passed

to Zurchung Sherab Drak (1014-1074), and to his son Zur Dropukpa Shakya Sengé (1074-1134). They became famous as the three generations of Zurpas. Their descendents have continued to spread these lineages up to the present.

Sixth is the treasure tradition that appeared later. Guru Padmasambhava predicted his karmically destined physical substitutes, and hid the eighteen kinds of treasures as his verbal substitutes, such as those of the Guru and of Mahākaraṇā. The enlightened intentions of his mind were entrusted to his karmic spiritual heirs and sealed with prayers. When the time was right, these treasures were discovered by their future emanations such as Nyangral Nyima Özer (1124-1192) and Guru Chökyi Wangchuk (1212-1273), known as the two supreme treasure revealers of the upper and lower treasures. There were many treasure revealers with the name Lingpa, primarily these eight: Sangyé, Dorjé, Rinchen, Padma, Ratna, Kunkyong, Dongak, and Tennyi. The awareness-holder Gökyi Demtruchen (1337-1408) and others discovered the Northern Treasures, and there were twenty-one treasure-revealers of Nuden, primarily Dudul Nuden Dorjé (b. 1655).

During the time of Jamgön Kongtrul, which he refers to as the degenerate times, there continued to be great treasure revealers such as Orgyen Chokgyur Dechen Lingpa (1829-1870). Kongtrul remained confident that those dharma lords and their disciples would continue to uphold the holy dharma through to the final bad times. Although the doctrines of discipline and sutra will no longer exist, bits and pieces of the secret mantra vajrayāna doctrine will continue to spread. Such is the continuity of the vast enlightened activity of liberation for the sake of all those beings that are difficult to tame.

## *The Esoteric Instructions of the Nyingma*

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        - a' Preliminaries
        - b' The Main Practice
        - c' Conclusion

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This section has two parts: an introductory overview and an extensive presentation of the individual traditions.

### **Introductory Overview [I]**

Here, amidst the snowy mountain ranges, there are eight  
practice lineages  
That emphasize the esoteric instructions. From those,...

Among all of the meditation practices of sutra and mantra<sup>1</sup> found in this country of Tibet—a land situated in the midst of the snowy mountain ranges—here we are considering the vajrayāna. Of outer and inner

mantra, the highest is yoga tantra.<sup>2</sup> This has two traditions: one that emphasizes the tantras and one that emphasizes the esoteric instructions. The latter, drawing mainly from the long tradition,<sup>3</sup> is known as the Eight Great Path Traditions of the Chariots of the Practice Lineage.<sup>4</sup> Since the meaning of these meditations will be explained sequentially, that intention is indicated by the addition of the word “from” in the root text, the ablative case.

## Extensive Presentation [II]

This second section has nine parts: (1) Early Translation Nyingma, (2) Kadam, (3) Lamdré, (4) Marpa Kagyu, (5) Shangpa Kagyu, (6) Zhijé, (7) Jordruk, (8) Dorjé Sumgyi Nyendrup, and (9) a supplementary commentary of miscellaneous branch systems.<sup>5</sup>

## Early Translation Nyingma [A]

This section has two parts: An overview of the basis, and an extensive explanation of the individual traditions within the Nyingma.

### Overview [1]

...the early translation Nyingma  
Has many meditation sequences in the three yogas,  
But they are subsumed in two main kinds: with and without  
characteristics.

The teaching tradition of the Ancient or Nyingma school of the early translation<sup>6</sup> of the secret mantra has very many general and specific meditation sequences in the three yogas,<sup>7</sup> and it is difficult to condense them all into one inclusive explanation. However, the basis of all of them can be subsumed into two meditation techniques: with or without characteristics. That is because even the three phases of creation, completion, and great completion<sup>8</sup> can be subsumed into two: (1) appearance and that which is manifest, has characteristics, and is objectified; and (2) emptiness and that which is unmanifest and without characteristics. This is also expressed in *The Three Stages*.<sup>9</sup>

The phase of meditation with characteristics  
 And the meditation of suchness  
 Are taught as the two distinct kinds of meditation.

### Extensive Explanation [2]

The second part, the extensive elucidation of the meaning, has three parts: the meditation sequences of *mahāyoga*, *anuyoga*, and *atiyoga*.

### Mahāyoga [a]

This section has two parts: with characteristics and without characteristics. The first of these also has two parts: an overview and an extensive explanation.

### Meditation With Characteristics [i]

#### Overview [aa]

The *Magical Manifestation* tradition has two systems with characteristics: method and liberation.<sup>10</sup>

In the system of the *Net of Magical Manifestation of Vajrasattva*,<sup>11</sup> which is the main source for tantra *mahāyoga*,<sup>12</sup> there are two meditation methods with characteristics: the path of certainty through methods, and the path of total liberation through wisdom. As it states in the *Explanatory Tantra of the Oceanic [Magical Manifestation]*:<sup>13</sup>

The paths of liberation and methods are fully presented.

The former principally uses the special methods of amazing deliberate conduct<sup>14</sup> to bring about the swift attainment of the result. The latter principally employs the three kinds of wisdom<sup>15</sup> to liberate the bonds of ordinary being into reality itself.

### Extensive Explanation [bb]

This has two parts: an explanation of the path of method and an explanation of the path of liberation. This first also has two parts: an explanation of the upper door and of the lower door.

## The Path of Method [1']

### The Upper Door [a']

The common technique of the upper door in the path  
of method uses six chakras.

The special technique involves Samantabhadra and  
Samantabhadri,

And the pure union of melting and controlling of great  
pervasion.

When we divide the path of certainty through methods, there are the two approaches of the upper door [of one's own body] and the lower door [of another's body]. As is said in *The Three Stages*, there are "oral instructions about upper and lower doors."<sup>16</sup>

The upper door practice is further divided into the common and special techniques. The common upper door applies the union of blazing and dripping based on the six chakras (Skt. *cakra*),<sup>17</sup> generating the pristine awareness of bliss in the four chakras as a progressive training.<sup>18</sup> This is taught in the *Oceanic [Magical Manifestation]*:

In two sets of three chakras in three life trees,  
The sky cow is milked by the radiation of fire and energy.  
This is renowned as the upper door.<sup>19</sup>

The special [technique] was taught in the thirteenth chapter of the *[Secret] Essence Tantra*.<sup>20</sup> The esoteric instruction of Samantabhadra is to target the vital point of the *vaṃ*-shaped vital essence drop<sup>21</sup> of pristine awareness essence that is based on the gathering of the five quintessences in the heart chakra. The esoteric instruction of Samantabhadri is to target the vital point of the *aḥ*-shaped vital essence drop of the five mothers in the navel chakra. The esoteric instruction of pure union is to target the vital point of the *aṃ*-shaped vital essence drop of the voracious ḍākinīs in the throat chakra. The esoteric instruction of the great pervasion is to target the vital point of the *haṃ*-shaped lunar vital essence drop of Samantabhadra in the head chakra.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, the meaning of the warming and descent of the vital essence as set forth in these approaches and in the Tārā esoteric instruction of energy currents,<sup>23</sup> the root text and commentaries of the *Secret Innermost Essence of Vimalamitra*,<sup>24</sup> and so on, are found in the oral teachings of the Zur forefathers<sup>25</sup> and the Omniscient Drimé Özer.<sup>26</sup> According to



them, training in the union of melting and controlling causes all discursive thought to dissolve into the expanse of nonthought. Enlightenment occurs in the great bliss without reference or limitation.

## The Lower Door [b']

**The lower door with four branches refines all at once.**

In the practice of the lower door, the descent, retention, reversal, and pervasion of the vital essence from union based on both the “space” [of the female] and the “secret” [of the male] instantly generates the pristine awareness of inseparable bliss-emptiness. It is the path of skillful methods for the instantaneous realizer. Furthermore:

Approach and close approach;  
Attainment and great attainment.

In general, concerning the four branches of approach and attainment,<sup>27</sup> there are the four branches of approach and attainment at the time of the path, the four branches of approach and attainment at the time of attainment, and the four branches of approach and attainment at the time of union. Here, we are discussing the four branches of approach and attainment at the time of union.

The branch of approach is to first seek a qualified partner, examine the channels, arouse, increase pleasure by following the treatises on desire, and so on. The branch of close approach is encouragement by the mutual exchange of the four signs;<sup>28</sup> delighting in nonduality through the practice of the four mudras (Skt. *mudrā*)<sup>29</sup> by means of the three perceptions.<sup>30</sup> The branch of attainment is when, having entered into union in this way, the vital energy current moves in the heightened passion, causing the red aspect to descend and the white aspect to melt.<sup>31</sup> As the bodhicitta falls, the four joys arise in sequence.<sup>32</sup> Then the two sexual fluids meet at the tips of the private parts of the male and female. This is the practice of experiencing coemergent pristine awareness with the actual entity [or substance of sexual fluid]. The branch of great attainment is when the white and red constituents blend into one and are drawn up through the male’s vajra like a spider’s thread. As it ascends through the

navel, heart, throat, and head chakras the four stable joys of ascent are experienced.<sup>33</sup> Finally, it spreads [throughout the body].

Energy channels (*rtsa*; Skt. *nāḍī*) pervade the whole body, bodhicitta pervades all of the energy channels, and the pristine awareness of joy pervades all of that. At that point, the ten perfections<sup>34</sup> and all of the qualities of the stages and paths<sup>35</sup> automatically reach completion and one arrives at the fruition at once. This is for the instantaneous realizer on the path of skillful methods. From the *Extensive Sutra*:<sup>36</sup>

Spontaneous accomplishments in abundance  
Are bestowed by the sublime secret empowerment.

## The Path of Liberation [2']

The explanation of the path of liberation has two parts: a general division of the two types of individuals and the particular case of a gradual realizer.

## The Two Types of Individuals [a']

**The path of liberation has gradual and instantaneous realizers.**

If we divide the path of liberation, there are two kinds of practitioners: instantaneous and gradual. As is stated in *Sequence of the Path*,<sup>37</sup> there is “the long-term or gradual and the instantaneous.”

As for the instantaneous, there are a few individuals of exceptional faculties who attain realization, familiarity, and consummation all at once. These are called the instantaneous realizers. As it says in the *Highest Magical Manifestation*:<sup>38</sup>

In the yoga of the great vital essence  
The three meditations are completed all at once.

Those who practice realization, familiarization, and consummation by stages are called gradual ones. Their way of realizing and familiarizing will be explained next.

## The Gradual Realizer [b']

This has two parts: the cause that is the view, characterized as knowing, and the consequent condition, characterized as the entrance into the meditative absorptions, including the fruition of the path—the four awareness-holders.<sup>39</sup>

## The Cause: View [i']

**In the former, the view goes before.**

The former, the gradual realizers, train as follows: The attachment to the dual fixation of samsara (Skt. *saṃsāra*) and nirvana (Skt. *nirvāṇa*), including projections about it, are taken as the object of evaluation. The axioms<sup>40</sup> of evaluation are referenced in *The Sequence of the Path*:

Suchness: five actualities, manner, and words.

That is to say, the view of the abiding nature is ascertained through (1) the axioms of five direct actualities of previous occurrence, (2) the axioms of the five manners that are consistent with those, and (3) the axioms of the five kinds of words. The view having thus gone before, one then enters into meditation.<sup>41</sup>

## The Condition: Meditative Absorption [ii']

The second has two parts: devotional meditation and definitive completion.

## Devotional Meditation [aa']

**Meditative absorption is devotional meditation and...**

Even if one is unable to train until reaching the ultimate five experiences of meditative absorption in each of the paths, one could at least approximate the general meaning by meditating in a way that simulates the path through devoted intent to this or that. For example, in a single

session one could complete all of the ritual activities from the preliminaries up through the conclusion and dedication.<sup>42</sup> As it says in the *Lesser [Sequence of the] Path*:<sup>43</sup>

All paths instantly completed in their aspects;  
Meditate on the emanated mandala with devoted intent.

## Definitive Completion [bb']

The second has two parts: definitive completion as it is and an explanation of the path of the meditation object.

### As It Is [1"]

**...definitive completion, training until the ultimate five experiences.**

The path of definitive completion is to train until reaching the five ultimate meditative experiences resulting from meditative absorption of the two phases of creation and completion. Vimalamitra's commentary *Meditative Stability in the Mudras*<sup>44</sup> states:

Wavering, attainment, familiarity, stability, and culmination:  
These five are the way that experiences of meditative stability arise.

### Meditation Object [2"]

The explanation of the path of the object of this meditation has two parts: the general overview and the particular explanation.

### General Overview [a"]

**There are five objects of meditation that correspond to  
The three stages of birth, intermediate state, and death:  
Great emptiness, compassion-illusion, single mudra, elaborate  
mudra, and assembly practice.**

The path of the object of meditation is described in the *[Secret] Essence*:<sup>45</sup>

The way that the stages of existence are ripened  
Is laid out in the five branches of entrance.  
Since all things are reflexive awareness,  
Death is the ultimate truth,  
In between [death and] birth is the relative,  
The three stages of rebirth signify the nondual.

The paths to refine the three stages of birth, the intermediate state (*bar do*), and death all at once are taught definitively as follows: Great emptiness is the path corresponding to the luminous clarity at the moment of death. Great compassion is the path corresponding to the intermediate state. Single mudra, elaborate mudra, and the attainment of the mandala clusters<sup>46</sup> are the paths corresponding to the three stages of birth. [These refine the four kinds of birthplace:] spontaneous birth, which depends on a place, heat-and-moisture birth, which depends on flavor, and both womb-birth and egg-birth, which depend on the coming together of a father and a mother.

### **Particular Explanation [b"]**

This section has two parts, an overview and an extensive explanation.

#### **Overview [i"]**

**That further has both coarse and subtle modes of refinement.**

That which has just been described has two further modes of refinement: the coarse creation phase and the subtle completion phase.

#### **Extensive Explanation [ii"]**

This has two parts: the mode of refinement of creation phase and of completion phase.

## Creation Phase [aa"]

Creation phase involves three absorptions and the coarse form.  
 Having attained proficiency in eight measures of clarity and  
 stability,  
 Mandalas, clusters, numbers, and faces and arms emanate.

When embodied beings experience the transition of death and the sequence of outer and inner dissolution is complete,<sup>47</sup> the luminous clarity of the dharmakāya<sup>48</sup> of the death state arises. In order to integrate that experience into the spiritual path, one meditates in the *absorption of suchness* so that all things subsumed in sensory phenomena are [recognized as] the unembellished dharmakāya.

When one fails to recognize this luminous clarity in the death state, the illusory-like mental body of the intermediate state occurs. In meditation, the habitual patterns<sup>49</sup> formed from that situation are refined away by meditation in nonreferential *all-arising absorption*, the essence of which is the great compassion pervading space.

So long as one is not liberated in the intermediate state on that basis, the next stage is conception in the mother's womb through actual birth. The habitual patterns formed then are refined by the subtle and coarse methods of the single mudra. The situation of the intermediate existence, when one is about to enter into a birthplace due to the condition of growing attachment to whatever place one is to take birth, is refined by the subtle *absorption of the cause*, the essence of which is meditation on a seed syllable alone. Those, then, are the trainings in the three absorptions.<sup>50</sup>

The situation from the time that [consciousness] itself intermingles with the father and mother's seminal fluids until the awakening of the sense organs to the external world at birth is refined by training in the coarse form of the deity, such as the four actual enlightening factors, the three rites, and so on. The training in these creation phase practices accords with the manner of the four kinds of birthplace.<sup>51</sup>

The four measures of clarity are clear, luminous, vibrant, and vivid.<sup>52</sup> The four measures of stability are unwavering, unchanging, completely unchanging, and utterly unchangeable.<sup>53</sup> Once one has gained proficiency in these eight measures of clarity and stability, the habitual patterns arising from birth until maturity are refined by the four trainings

in the elaborate mudra, as indicated in the *Sequence of the Path*:

There are mandalas, clusters, numbers,  
And faces and arms.

In the elaborate mudra one emanates mandalas, one emanates clusters [of mandalas], one emanates numbers [of deities], and one emanates faces and arms [of the deities]. These four respectively comprise (1) the extensive, medium, and condensed mandalas of peaceful and wrathful deities; (2) one, three, or five [mandala] clusters; (3) numbers of one thousand, twenty-four thousand, and a spontaneously present inconceivable number of peaceful deities, and one thousand four hundred and fifty, seventy-six thousand eight hundred and fifty, and a spontaneously present inconceivable number of wrathful deities; and (4) faces and arms of the deities that are also in extensive, medium, and condensed styles.

On this, the great paṇḍita Rongzom<sup>54</sup> explained that one could condense the meaning of all the deity yogas with characteristics into three: the yoga of blessing, the yoga of imaginative construction, and the yoga of completion.

The first of these is to meditate that one's own suchness (*de kho na nyid*) is blessed by the suchness of the deity. This is like using alchemy to change iron into gold. The second is to create the form kāyas out of pure bodhicitta. This is like making statues and such by correctly melting gold or other substances. Third is for a yogin who has realized natural purity to completely emanate<sup>55</sup> [the deities] in an instant of meditative absorption. This is like the effortless appearance of a reflection in clear water. It is said that the entire extent of secret mantra practice can be subsumed into these three yogas.

Five excellences lay the foundation of practice,  
And four branches of approach and attainment straighten the  
approach.  
Awareness-holder of the desire or form realms is accomplished  
in six months or so.  
The dissipating five paths purify the habitual patterns  
of samsara.

Completing the fruition, they cause the ripening of the higher  
paths,  
Which is the cause of attaining the four types of nondissipating  
awareness-holder.

If one is trained in the elaborate mudra, the method that refines the habitual patterns of the time from maturity through old age<sup>56</sup> is the assembly practice of the cluster groups. The place where one does the practice, the time of practice, the practice materials that one uses, the teacher and entourage from whom one receives the practice, and the method of the practice mode should be the five excellences<sup>57</sup> that lay the foundation of practice. The four branches of approach and attainment at the time of practice straighten the approach. It states in the *Sequence of the Path*:

The first half-month, seeing the face is close approach:  
Clarity of the deity, emanating and absorbing, [indicates] a suitable vessel.  
The fifteenth day onwards is attainment:  
Alternating emanating and absorbing attains it.  
When the number of days is complete and signs arise,  
The spiritual power from mantra repetition is the great attainment.

Once the conditions and practice materials are assembled, as soon as one enters into the practice it is called *approach*. Once one has thus entered, up to half a month is the *close approach*. The last half [of the retreat time], except for the last day, is called *attainment*. And the very last evening when the spiritual powers are received is known as *great attainment*.<sup>58</sup>

Likewise, the results of attainment are taught in terms of the time it takes to accomplish the state of an awareness-holder. One will accomplish the fruition of being an awareness-holder in six months, if practice is done together with the addendum,<sup>59</sup> or whatever length of time is appropriate to one's particular capabilities. This was indicated by the words "or so" in the root text. Depending on whether one uses the action- mudra or the awareness-mudra,<sup>60</sup> the common spiritual powers of the creation phase are the attainment of the awareness-holder of similar



status to either the desire realm or the form realm.<sup>61</sup> The special spiritual powers of the practice of the peaceful assembly are accomplished in six [months] in the best of the best cases, in one year at the best, in fourteen months average, and in sixteen months in even the worst cases. The awareness-holder with control over life span applies to those of sharp faculties, while the awareness-holder of complete maturation applies to those with dull faculties. It states in the *Secret Essence*:<sup>62</sup>

In thirty days times six,  
Or twelve, fourteen, or sixteen [months],  
The ultimate accomplishment of empowered awareness-holder  
will be attained.<sup>63</sup>

In the practice of the wrathful deities, the time for accomplishment is even shorter: the best practitioner will become accomplished in two months, the middling in three months and six days, and even the lesser in six months. In the *Sequence of the Path* it states:

For thirty days times six,  
Or sixty or ninety plus six,  
Meditate on the mandala of great Bhairava.

Great emptiness, compassion, the single mudra, and the elaborate mudra—these four constitute the path of accumulation, while the assembly practice constitutes the path of application. These five dissipating<sup>64</sup> paths correspond to cyclic existence in the three stages of birth, the intermediate state, and death, and thereby purify its habitual patterns. Nurturing the potential of the family<sup>65</sup> will bring the result to completion. And since the path of the assembly practice causes the attainment of the deity's form of bliss-emptiness, in terms of the supreme spiritual powers, it quickly lays the foundation of the path of application, and hence brings about the maturation of the higher paths. By that, one is able to enter the completion phase, which becomes the perpetuating cause for ultimately attaining the four types of awareness-holder subsumed in the three nondissipating paths: those of seeing, meditating, and the ultimate.<sup>66</sup>

## Completion Phase [bb"]

Secondly, the way of training in the completion phase:

In completion phase, drawing energy-mind into the central channel is great emptiness.  
 Meditate on luminous clarity day and night by two ways of placement.  
 Compassion arises from liberation in illusory forms of emptiness.  
 The divine form of melting bliss seals,  
 The single form proliferates, and clusters emanate throughout space.  
 The assembly practice and three mudras are the perpetuating cause  
 Of attaining the nondual kāya of the path of training.

To explain the main pillar of the path in terms of the completion phase, one must explain the five yogas of the path, such as great emptiness, and so on.

### (1) The Yoga of Great Emptiness

The habitual patterns of the death existence are integrated on the path by the process of drawing the energy-mind into the central channel. The foundation is the view that has been ascertained. Then in a place where meditative stability will not be interrupted, awareness settles in a state of uncontrived fresh awareness by means of the seven-point posture of Vairocana.<sup>67</sup> This is the placement meditation of the *kusāli*.<sup>68</sup> Recalling the view gained from previous study and contemplation and resting in that state is the analytic meditation of the *paṇḍita*.<sup>69</sup> Resting in the equipoise of nonconceptual absorption by whichever of these two methods of placement is appropriate is the daytime yoga. At night, the two esoteric instructions for recognizing luminous clarity in sleep and in meditation sessions are combined. By means of practicing these day and night in conjunction, one trains in reaching the ultimate five meditative experiences.<sup>70</sup>

## (2) Compassion Illusion

This is the way to meditate on the path that is consistent with integrating the intermediate existence on the path. From previously stopping the mind in the state of great emptiness and luminous clarity, the appearance of forms of emptiness arise, such as smoke, mirages, firefly-like, white, red, and black. All of the waking appearances of daytime yoga and the dream appearances of the night are seen as illusion, like moons reflected in water, and so they are liberated. Then great, nonreferential compassion arises unobstructed. One trains, familiarizing oneself with that.

## (3) The Yoga of the Single Mudra

In order to refine the habitual patterns of the first stage of a person's life, one practices the path that is consistent with that. Great compassion is projected towards all appearance without partiality and, like the arising of reflections in clear water, the single mudra of the deity's form concurrent with melting bliss arises by itself in meditative absorption, and seals all appearance.

## (4) The Yoga of the Elaborate Mudra

In order to refine the habitual patterns of a person's middle stage of life one practices the path that is consistent with that. The previous appearance of a single deity increases more and more until all appearance becomes nondual deities in the form of principal deities with entourages and clusters actually emanating throughout space, proliferating, distinct, and completely arising. One familiarizes oneself with that.

## (5) The Cluster Assembly Practice

In order to refine the habitual patterns of the third stage of a person's life, one practices the path that is consistent with that. By means of one or three or five clusters, whatever is appropriate, one practices in a similar way to the creation phase with elaboration, or by relying on the unelaborated yoga in which the male and female [yogins] and the father-mother central deities are assembled,<sup>71</sup> or practicing the extremely unelaborated yoga of the union of the father, unchanging great bliss, and the mother, emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects.<sup>72</sup>

In any case, the perpetuating cause is whichever of the three mudras was appropriate to practice in relation to the categories of excellent, middling, and lesser faculties. At the end of six months, based on the inner

five enlightening factors, applying whichever is appropriate of the two nondissipating paths of seeing,<sup>73</sup> one will attain the nondual kāya of the path of training and thereby produce the actualization of the nondual union of the path of no-training.

## Meditation Without Characteristics [ii]

**Meditation without characteristics is settling into the suchness of reality.**

Once one has reached the culmination of the descending and ascending pristine awareness,<sup>74</sup> one should meditate in the manner of no meditation on the unimaginable pristine awareness of Samantabhadri<sup>75</sup> without characteristics. The body without movement like the sovereign mountain; speech without utterance like a mute; mind nonconceptual like the sky—settle into the suchness of reality. The emptiness of no mental constructions whatsoever is the ultimate pristine awareness of Samantabhadri herself. The appearing aspect distinguished in the transparent brilliance of inherently luminous awareness is the basic ground pristine awareness of dharmakāya Samantabhadra. Those two inseparable—the evenly pervading intrinsic awareness with no outside, inside, or in between—is the inseparability of basic space and pristine awareness, the nondual Samanta mother-father, the native mind of great completion.

## Anuyoga [b]

The explanation of the sequence of meditation in scriptural *anuyoga*<sup>76</sup> has three parts: the path of skillful methods, the path of liberation, and the explanation of the general path of definitive completion.

## The Path of Skillful Methods [i]

**In *anuyoga*, the path of upper and lower skillful methods produces great bliss.**

As mentioned in the *Summation of the Meaning*.<sup>77</sup>

The essence is skillful methods and wisdom.

Two paths are specified: the definitive path of skillful methods and the totally liberating path of wisdom. The first refers to whichever method is used to accomplish the pristine awareness of melting bliss, the supreme great bliss of coemergence—that is, whether it is the esoteric instructions of the upper door using the method of eliciting bliss through the coemergent pristine awareness produced by means of meditation on the four chakras, or the esoteric instructions on the lower door using the method of eliciting bliss and coemergent pristine awareness all at once by relying on the union of the “space” of the female and the “secret” of the male. That text also says:

With the methods of esoteric instruction,  
One enters the “source of enjoyment” and so on.<sup>78</sup>

### The Path of Liberation [ii]

In the path of liberation one rests the mind just like that, in  
reality just as it is.  
This is entrance consistent with the meaning, without  
characteristics.  
Environment and inhabitants are mandala circles created just by  
mantra,  
Like fish jumping out of water, clear and distinct.  
This is explained as entrance through syllables, with  
characteristics.

The totally liberating path of wisdom has two parts: establishing the meaning and the display of signs.

### Establishing the Meaning [aa]

Entrance [to the path of liberation] that is consistent with conceptual analysis<sup>79</sup> is first to ascertain the view. Then, as it says in the *Gathering of Intentions*:<sup>80</sup>

In reality just as it is,  
Just like that, rest the mind, and then  
Maintain mindfulness without distraction  
From that inexpressible state itself.

Thus, the object of meditation is reality just as it is. Within that state, the mind that meditates is also left just like that and then abides in totally nonconceptual meditative absorption without characteristics. That is called “entrance that is consistent with the meaning.”<sup>81</sup>

### Display of Signs [bb]

The entire environment and its living inhabitants are the divine palace and mandala circle. It is created totally complete and distinctly clear just by the utterance of the seed syllables or individual generative mantras, like fish suddenly leaping out of limpid water. That meditation in the absorption of the deity is explained as being with characteristics and is called “entrance through syllables.”<sup>82</sup> It says in the *Miraculous Key to the Storehouse*:<sup>83</sup>

In the vehicle of *anuyoga*  
After uttering just the heart syllable once,  
Meditate on the complete deity without creating it.

### The Path of Definitive Completion [iii]

**The path of definitive completion in general is both dissipating and nondissipating.**

**It consists of the five yogas, such as “aspiring attitude,” and so on.**

In general, the definitive completion of this system of the path of meditation includes both dissipating and nondissipating paths. Those comprise the five yogas, such as “aspiring attitude,” and so on. The dissipating paths comprise the yoga of aspiring attitude and the yoga that reveals the great family. The nondissipating paths comprise the three yogas of conferring great assurance, obtaining great prophetic declaration, and completion of the great expressive power.<sup>84</sup>

## Atiyoga [c]

There are three parts to the explanation of the sequence of meditation in the esoteric instruction *atiyoga*:<sup>85</sup> the mind class, the space class, and the esoteric instruction class.

## The Mind Class [i]

This has two parts: the view, breakthrough to basic space (*dbyings su la zlo ba*), and the meditation, resting in equipoise.

## The View: Breakthrough to Basic Space [aa]

**In the mind class, all relative phenomena, however they appear,  
Are the expression of reality fully complete in the awakening  
mind.**

**This conveys to basic space free of identification as appearance  
or awareness.**

There are three well-known classes of great completion divided according to the difference in degree of profundity in how they make naturally occurring pristine awareness into the path. In the first of these, the mind class, defining characteristics are destroyed and one achieves breakthrough or total conviction. The mind class practitioner thus trains in the context of consciousness, which is what is to be abandoned. Phenomena (*chos*, Skt. *dharma*), however they appear, are not stamped objectively by the seal of reality (*chos nyid*, Skt. *dharmatā*). Rather, relative phenomena (*chos can*, Skt. *dharmin*), however they appear, are realized to be fully contained within the reality of awakening mind, and are merely its object or display. This conveys one to the basic space, which is free of identifying appearance separately from awareness.<sup>86</sup>

## The Meditation: Resting in Equipoise [bb]

**Therefore, appearance is mind, and mind is pristine awareness.  
By resting in the natural state, delusion is directly liberated  
in itself.**

Since there is no experience of meditation nor of its absence,  
One rests in dharmakāya, the awareness-emptiness of natural  
appearance without bias.

Therefore, in the practice of meditation, one knows all appearances in this way to be the natural expression of mind, and mind itself to be naturally occurring pristine awareness. Then one settles directly into the natural basic ground of mind's essence without contrivance or calculation. Thereby deluded appearance is directly liberated in itself without being rejected. Since the object of meditation is realized to be empty, there is no experience of meditation. Since delusion has collapsed in on itself, there is no experience of the absence of the ultimate meaning of meditation.<sup>87</sup> Therefore natural appearance is experienced without bias within the state of awareness-emptiness, the dharmakāya. Free of an object to rest in or an agent who rests, there is resting in the state of spontaneously present great equipoise.

On these occasions, one first severs discursive thought at its root. In the middle, one searches for mind's hidden condition.<sup>88</sup> Finally, one investigates the arising, abiding, and departing of thought. The abiding of thought arises as the ornament of mind. Mental activity dawns as the play of mind. These two inseparable is the breakthrough to the state of equipoise. By such means, calm abiding and higher insight are duly accomplished. Then, once one has investigated external appearance, internal awareness, and the inseparability of these two, one must practice [diligently], like rock meeting bone, using the vital points of the esoteric instructions that have been imparted by a guru experienced in pointing out mind's nature and such, and who has assessed the disciple's mental type and level of cognition.

### The Space Class [ii]

In the space class there are four sections: a presentation of the conclusive points of the view and meditation, an explanation of the vital points of meditation and the four methods, a summary of the method of placement, and an explanation of the four common meditative experiences.



## The Conclusive Points<sup>89</sup> of View and Meditation [aa]

The conclusive points of the space class are subsumed and fully contained in  
 “Unmistaken, uncontrived, unimaginable, and free of intellect.”

The space class of the great completion maintains the perspective that denies origination from any other source than the expanse of reality and asserts no other destination than the reality of Samantabhadri’s expanse. The sequence of meditation is currently well established in the tradition of ripening empowerments and liberating instructions. The leading statement in the source text, the *Vajra Bridge*,<sup>90</sup> contains the conclusive points:

Homage to the unmistaken, uncontrived, unimaginable, free of intellect.

This lays out in summary the meaning of this source text. The view is unmistaken, the meditation is uncontrived, the activity is unimaginable, and the fruition is free of intellect. Since the view, meditation, activity, and fruition of this tradition are subsumed and completely contained in this, the initial statement alone liberates those of excellent faculties. This very meaning fully contains the basis of the spiritual instructions of the space class.

## Vital Points of Meditation and Four Methods [bb]

Natural openness, unwavering, drawing up, and not touching;  
 These four vital points are the modes for pristine awareness,  
 basic space, bliss, and reality.  
 They make the clarity, emptiness, and so on of the four  
 empowerments into the path.

Those of middling faculties are liberated just by the blessing of the guru’s transmission. During empowerment, the distinctive quality of this itself is conferred in the four empowerments<sup>91</sup> and one reaches the ultimate experiential realization.

Those of dull faculties must meditate on the stages laid out in the guides to experience. To summarize those conclusive points: the four

modes possessed of the four vital points make the meaning of the four empowerments into the path. The natural openness of the senses is the vital point of clarity. The unwavering lamps are the vital point of emptiness.<sup>92</sup> Drawing up the downward-clearing energy currents is the vital point of bliss. And the lips not touching<sup>93</sup> is the vital point of inseparability. With these are the mode of pristine awareness, the mode of basic space, the mode of bliss, and the mode of reality.<sup>94</sup> We can make the connection with the vital points of the four modes or four symbols as they are presented in the vajra verses as follows: In the four empowerments, the first pristine awareness makes the clarity of the vase empowerment into the path, the second makes the emptiness of the secret empowerment into the path, the third makes the bliss of the wisdom empowerment into the path, and the fourth makes the reality of the fourth empowerment into the path.

### **The Method of Placement [cc]**

**To summarize, rest in reality without deliberate activity.**

If one were to summarize the method of placement in equipoise of this tradition, it would be subsumed into three: liberation from activity, liberation from resting, and naked liberation. The significance of those, moreover, is subsumed in this: with the profound vital point of being free of any reference point, rest within the state of reality without deliberate activity.

### **Four Common Meditative Experiences [dd]**

**Experiences of abiding, unwavering, evenness, and spontaneous presence**

**Are posited by Garab as the four experiences of the mind and space paths.**

Having meditated on those profound vital points, various definite and indefinite experiences arise and ultimately the pristine awareness of realization becomes more and more clear and stable. The sequence of possible experiences is endless and cannot be estimated. However, in terms of the generic manner of arising, first there is the experience of abiding

in which the conscious mind remains undivided during the meditation session without pursuing an external object. Second is the experience of unwavering meditative absorption without any conditions such as sinking or agitation. Third is the experience of evenness in which one rests in the sky-like equipoise of the equal flavor of samsara and nirvana. In the subsequent cognition, one integrates the illusory-like nature of all things and obtains the total confidence of fearlessness. Fourth is the experience of spontaneous presence, the absorption that goes beyond meditation sessions and breaks, the falling away of intellect and of phenomena. These “four experiences” (*nyams bzhi*) of the mind and space paths were posited by the great awareness-holder Garab Dorjé.<sup>95</sup>

### The Esoteric Instruction Class [iii]

The explanation of the sequence of meditation in the esoteric instruction class of *atiyoga* has two parts: an overview and an extensive explanation.

#### Overview [aa]

**Primordially pure *trekchö* and spontaneously present *tögal* are Esoteric instructions that make the reality of emptiness and appearance fall away.**

The esoteric instruction class of *atiyoga* is far superior to the two lower classes. One achieves breakthrough by the destruction of efforts to analyze and differentiate between good and bad thoughts. Thus, the antidote is approached from the direction of pristine awareness. In this esoteric instruction class of the great completion, the sequence of meditation is as follows: From the side of emptiness, primordially pure intrinsic awareness becomes free of elaboration, causing the phenomena of emptiness to fall away. From the side of appearance, spontaneous presence purifies corporeal form in luminous clarity, causing the very reality of phenomena to fall away.<sup>96</sup> The oral instructions for these two stages are primordially pure *trekchö* (*khregs chod*) and spontaneously present *tögal* (*thod rgal*).

## Extensive Explanation [bb]

The extensive explanation has two parts: trekchö and tögal.

### Trekchö, Cutting Through [1']

Abiding in four modes of liberation, naturally occurring  
awareness itself

Is recognized, and decided with confidence.

As enhancement one does yoga such as the threefold sky.

The pristine awareness of nondual union is original liberation free from accepting and rejecting, conveying one to the state where all phenomena of samsara and nirvana are the reality free of fixation [even] to emptiness. Through this vital point, intrinsic awareness that makes no distinction whatsoever between samsara and nirvana manifestly arises as the objective field of reality. Then reflexive awareness matures as the forms of interlinking continuums<sup>97</sup> and causes liberation directly on that vital point, like sparks from striking the point [of a flint]. Just such an awareness itself has anyway never been encumbered in its essence by any kind of samsaric phenomena and so has exhausted the causes of taking on existence. Thus it is “original liberation” (*ye grol*).

Without contriving any kind of antidote, whatever arises is all free, like a snake’s coils naturally unwinding, without recourse to any outside means of liberation. Thus it is “natural liberation” (*rang grol*).

All of the eight groups of consciousness, moreover, are not divided into subject and object, but are by nature liberated in the very moment of arising in great immediacy.<sup>98</sup> Thus it is “naked liberation” (*gcer grol*).

Not abiding in the three times or in any knowable object, it is “liberation from extremes” (*mtha’ grol*).

Abiding in that way within the four great modes of liberation, one will gain certainty in the distinctive quality of this very path of naturally occurring pristine awareness—one’s own intrinsic awareness.

Through that, the enlightened perspective of utterly transparent<sup>99</sup> pristine awareness, Samantabhadra—that original, primordial, alpha-pure way of abiding just as it is—is now recognized directly in and of itself. This is “recognition directly in one’s own nature.”

That very awareness, which is not affected by objectification, is not polluted by subjective fixation, and is not engaged in rejecting or remedying; that awareness just as it is never departs from the naturally occurring pristine awareness of dharmakāya. Thus, it is “decided directly upon one thing.”

Whatever appears, whatever arises, all of it first arose as the expression of reality. Right now it abides within that reality. Ultimately, it will naturally subside within reality. Thus, “have confidence directly in liberation.”<sup>100</sup>

To enhance these [realizations], one should do the yogas such as in the spiritual instructions of the outer, inner, and secret threefold sky.<sup>101</sup>

## Tögal, Crossing Over [2']

This has three parts: The uncommon preliminaries that accomplish the proximate cause of the falling away of the corporeal, the main practice of the four visions that convey one to the level of falling away, and the conclusion that leads to the straight road of the esoteric instructions.

### Preliminaries [a']

The sound of four elements, delineating samsara and nirvana,  
And preliminaries of three doors is the training with three  
leaders.

The initial meditation in *tögal* is training in the meaning of the sounds of the four elements with the three kāyas acting as leader. It says in the *Reverberation of Sound Root Tantra*:<sup>102</sup>

The sequence of training in the three kāyas  
Makes the sense-pleasures of the elements foremost.  
Excellent train in the sounds of earth, water, fire, and air,  
And definitely become accomplished.<sup>103</sup>

Then there is the training in the conduct that delineates the gap between samsara and nirvana (*'khor 'das ru shan*) with intrinsic awareness as the leader. It states in the naturally arisen *Tantra of the Single Child of the Doctrine*:<sup>104</sup>

Accordingly, the most fortunate one  
 Who desires to enter the extreme secret meaning itself  
 Must begin with the activities of the preliminaries  
 In order to reverse compulsive attachment  
 Of the body, speech, and mind.

Then there is the training in the preliminaries of the three doors with the mind as leader. At the end of the former and latter, one “falls into the natural state.”<sup>105</sup> Through this training with the three leaders, on the common level the sins and obscurations of the three doors are refined away and obstacles are pacified. As the supreme purpose, one is liberated in the space of enlightened body, speech, and mind. As is said:

Here there are two purposes,  
 Analyzed into divisions of common and supreme.

### The Main Practice [b']

Three vital points of physical support, basic space guidance, and  
 Objective visionary appearances; specifically from the path of  
 four lamps,  
 Four visionary appearances will convey to the level of falling  
 away.

For the main body of the practice one relies on the continuum of non-dissipating pristine awareness. For physical support, the vital point of the body is not to waver from the sitting postures of the three kāyas.<sup>106</sup> For guidance, the vital point of basic space is not to waver from the gazes of the three kāyas.<sup>107</sup> For visionary appearance, the vital point of the objective field is to sit with the breathing relaxed, not separating awareness from basic space. One practices with these three vital points, or nine, if one counts the subdivisions. Specifically, the objectively appearing visions are classified into “four lamps” (*sgron ma bzhi*). The four visionary appearances will come from meditation based on those as the path. Ultimately they will convey one to the level of the falling away of phenomena.

The four lamps are the watery lamp of the far-reaching eyes, the lamp of the basic space of awareness, the lamp of empty vital essence spheres,

and the lamp of naturally occurring wisdom.<sup>108</sup> The first of these four is the gateway that causes arising, since it is through the eyes that one sees the external manifestation of the radiance of the awareness aspect. The second is the ground from which the inner basic space arises externally as the radiance of clarity. The third is the support that activates the arising forms. And the fourth is the unerring abiding nature of higher insight, the very nature of awareness arising as quintessence and not as [gross] object. Concerning these classifications, it says in the *[Great] Natural Arising [of Intrinsic Awareness]*:<sup>109</sup>

In the mandala of the empty sky  
 Four lamps uncontrived  
 Manifest clearly by unimpeded ultimate nature.  
 The lamp of the basic space of awareness arises  
 In the center of the space of the empty sky as  
 The body of light, the inherent nature of basic space.  
 Unimpeded, it manifests clearly without impediment.  
 The kāya of Mind endowed with five pristine awarenesses  
 Arises in the manner of interlinking chains.  
 These fluctuate in their movements,  
 And their comings and goings.  
 If one brings them into the lamp of the basic space of awareness  
 And the awareness does not waver,  
 It is explained as unchanging realization.  
 If the lamp of naturally occurring wisdom  
 Severs all superimpositions,  
 And the lamp of empty spheres  
 Arises without any effort,  
 And the watery lamp of far-reaching eyes  
 Views it without wavering,  
 It is said to be the measure of ultimate meditation.

As indicated by this, the awareness of higher insight views the vajra chains and through gradual familiarization trains in the stages of the four visionary appearances. The visionary appearance of the direct perception of reality opens the doors of pure realms. From that, the spheres mature into forms as one approaches the visionary appearance of the increase of meditative experience, which will result in the *nirmāṇakāya*. It will

mature as the form of the saṃbhogakāya in the visionary appearance of awareness reaching full measure. Then, once all appearances are purified in the mandala of the single great essence sphere, whatever mentally designated phenomena there are will fall away and even the fixation on reality itself will fall away and one will behold the visionary appearance of the dharmakāya.<sup>110</sup> As it is taught in the *Reverberation of Sound*:

Seeing with the direct perception of reality  
 Transcends the limits grasped by mental assumptions.  
 The increase of appearances of meditative experience,  
 Eclipses deluded appearances and  
 Actualizes the pristine awareness of the intermediate state.  
 The visionary appearance of awareness reaching full measure  
 Transcends the appearances of the path of realization of the three  
 kāyas.  
 The visionary appearance of reality falling away  
 Cuts the continuity of cyclic existence in three realms.

## Conclusion [c']

**Three restings grasp the extent, strike with the nail of three attainments.**  
**Demonstrating the measure of liberation with fourfold confidence is breakthrough.**

The aids or props for reaching the full measure of the four visionary appearances are the three unwavering states of the body that nail the vital points, the three unwavering states of speech that clear the path, and the three unwavering states of mind that ripen into the maturity of fruition. These three [sets of three] unwavering states should be the foundation. The three restings of the body make one free of activity. Through the three restings of the energy currents one grasps the extent of the unborn. The three restings of appearance cause one to gain confidence in irreversibility. With these three [sets of three] restings<sup>111</sup> one grasps the extent, and if practice reaches its full measure, one attains control over birth and can actually benefit others. By attaining control over entrance [in basic space], one is enlightened with no defiled manifestation.<sup>112</sup> And by attaining control over the energy-mind, it is impossible to return to the



three realms. Striking with the nail of these three attainments,<sup>113</sup> familiarity with that natural great completion becomes expansive and the four utter confidences are attained. The two lower kinds of utter confidence are the confidence of having no anxiety about the hot and cold sufferings of hell, and the confidence of no fear caused by the happiness and suffering of samsara. The two higher kinds of utter confidence are the confidence of having no hopes of attaining nirvana and the confidence of no exaltation over the qualities of buddhahood. Demonstrating the full liberation of these four confidences is total breakthrough.

## 2: KADAMPA

### *Lineage History*

Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna (982-1054), known as Lord Atiśa or Jowo Jé in Tibet, was the founder of the Kadampa practice lineage and the first Indian master of the later dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet, after the Tibetan translator Rinchen Zangpo (958-1051) had been sent to India. Atiśa had been the senior teacher at the monastic university of Vikramaśīla for many years, and had studied with numerous great masters. He came reluctantly to Tibet in 1042 at the age of sixty, intending to stay for only three years. He spent the next twelve years until his death teaching in Tibet, emphasizing primarily the *madhyamaka* philosophy and the monastic discipline of the *vinaya*. He brought together scripture and spiritual instructions in his composition *A Lamp for the Path to Awakening*, a great treatise that fully presents the stages of the path for the three types of individuals. Boundless openings to the sacred dharma are contained within that work.

Jamgön Kongtrul describes three lineages that developed from Atiśa's teachings: the general precept lineage or "Kagyü," and the two particular traditions of the Old and the New Kadampa.\* Atiśa had innumerable students in India and Tibet, but the first Tibetan disciple, the one who had carried the invitation to him, was the translator Naktsö Tsultrim Gyalwa (1011-1064). He attended him for nineteen years and obtained nearly all of his instructions as well as those of other masters. This root lineage became known as Naktsö Kagyü. Rongpa Chaksorwa and others also received many mantric instructions from Naktsö and, as prophesied, built a monastery in Rong Laksor. A special lineage first arose from "Rong's four boys," as the first disciples were known. The middle

\*Synopsis based on *The Treasury of Knowledge*, Book 4, Part 3 (TOK1: 516-520).

disciples in this lineage were known as Gar, Gö, and Yol in Tsang, and last were Khu, Ngok, and Drom in Central Tibet. Ngok Lekpai Sherab (the uncle of Ngok Loden Sherab) established the monastery of Sangpu Neutok in 1073. Atiśa thus precipitated boundless dharma activity.

The Old Kadampa is the precept lineage of Dromtön Gyalwai Jungné (1005-1064), Atiśa's main disciple. It is known as the Precious Kadam Embodying Seven Deities and Dharmas, a reference to its practice of four exalted deities and the Three Baskets. Dromtön's three main disciples were Potowa, Chen-ngawa, and Puchungwa. The three great teaching systems of scriptures, spiritual instructions, and esoteric instructions that they transmitted produced lineage-holders who were all great bodhisattvas. It is clearly an excellent, unerring path to enlightenment. There are six scriptures for study in this tradition: the *Garland of Birth Stories* and the *Selected Sayings of the Buddha*, which develop faith; Asaṅga's *Levels of the Bodhisattva Path*, part of the *Levels of Yoga Practice*, and Maitreya's *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutras*, which develop meditation; and Śāntideva's *Compendium of Trainings* and the *Way of the Bodhisattva*, which develop conduct. Potowa Rinchen Sal (1027/1031-1105) transmitted these to his pair of students Langri Tangpa (1054-1123) and Sharawa Yonten Drak (1070-1141). The latter passed them on to Tumtön Lodrö Drak (1106-1166), who established the monastery of Nartang, where this explanation system is maintained. Another system of explanation based on the spiritual instructions of the four noble truths was passed from Dromtön's second disciple, Chen-ngawa Tsultrim Bar (1038-1103), to his student Ja-yulpa Zhönnu Ö (1075-1138) and others. Known as the Chen-nga Kagyu, it became an excellent system focused on the practice lineage. It is thought to be currently held by the Dakpo Kagyu. The esoteric instructions of the Sixteen Vital Essences, with their empowerments and guidances, as well as Atiśa's "precious volume," fell to Puchungwa Zhönnu Gyaltsen (1031-1106). They were passed down through a one-to-one lineage until the time of Zhönnu Lodro of Nartang. From then they opened up and were absorbed into the Kamtsang Kagyu lineage and the Gelukpa lineage through Gendun Drup (1391-1474), the first Dalai Lama.

The New Kadampa refers to what is now called Gedenpa or Gelukpa. The masters of the Old Kadampa had already spread their teachings throughout Tibet and Kham, establishing monasteries and centers everywhere. Take, for example, the fact that the four thoughts that turn the

mind and other instructions of the stages of the path are the beginning practice in every teaching system of old and new schools. In later times, however, the Kadampa establishments themselves declined somewhat. Then an emanation of Mañjuśrī, Tsongkhapa Lozang Drakpa (1357-1419), appeared like the Buddha coming for a second time. He taught primarily from the Kadampa system of scriptural explanation, but also incorporated the significance of the profound esoteric instructions from all three systems. His seminal work, *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*, is the life force of the instructions. The qualities of this holy one are unimaginable. Even the yogini Machik Lapdrön (1055-1153) predicted that there would never be another like this holy being or like the Gyalwang Karmapa for as long as the Sage's doctrine remains. His activities were also incredible, like the establishment of the Great Prayer Festival and many other deeds. In short, Kongtrul says, the fact that the Buddhadharma remains in Tibet as predicted is due entirely to the beneficence of the great Tsongkhapa.

To sum up, the Kadampa tradition started with the teaching of Jowo Jé Atiśa, was opened up by Dromtönpa Rinpoché, extended and propagated by his three disciples, and had become truly widespread by the time of Langri Tangpa, Sharawa, Ja-yulpa and others.



## *The Esoteric Instructions of the Kadampa*

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### B. Kadampa (*TOK* 3: 296-305)

1. Overview of the Source Texts and Instructions
  2. Specific Explanation of the Special Esoteric Instructions
  3. The Stages of the Path to Awakening with Three Systems Combined into One
    - a. The Manner of Instruction
    - b. The Stages of the Path
      - i. The Stages of the Common Path for a Person of Small Scope
      - ii. The Stages of the Common Path for a Person of Medium Scope
      - iii. The Stages of the Exceptional Path for a Person of Great Scope
    - c. How to Include All of Those Paths
    - d. The Special Branches
- 

### **Kadampa [B]**

The presentation of the process of meditation in the Kadampa tradition has three parts: an overview of the practice of the source texts and instructions, a specific explanation of the tradition of the special esoteric instructions, and a presentation of the stages of the path to awakening with three systems combined into one.

## Overview of the Source Texts and Instructions [1]

**The general Kadam practice is four deities, Three Baskets,  
And three trainings;...**

This is the general system of the precious Kadam transmission lineage of the Great Lord, the Glorious Atiśa,<sup>1</sup> who possessed the three qualifications<sup>2</sup> and is famous throughout the earth. The Kadampa do the creation and completion practices of the four deities: Śākyamuni, the founder of the doctrine; Avalokiteśvara, the lord of love and compassion; Tārā, who clears away outer obstacles; and Acala (Akṣobhya), who clears away inner obstacles. Also the completion phases of those are first, the guide to the view; second, compassion pervading space; third, the five recollections; and fourth, the common and special six dharmas.

The media for expression are the Three Baskets or canonical collections of Vinaya, Sutra, and Abhidharma, and the subject matter is ethical discipline, meditative absorption, and wisdom, which comprise the three higher trainings.<sup>3</sup> These are practiced according to the sequence of the doctrine exactly as it is taught in the precious excellent speech of the Buddha, and not in word only.

## Specific Explanation of the Special Esoteric Instructions [2]

**...the special esoteric instruction system is**

**Five recollections: guru, deity, mantra, compassion, and  
emptiness.**

**As extensions of that, the relative and**

**Ultimate sixteen vital essences are integrated on the path.**

Of the three Kadam traditions,<sup>4</sup> the holders of the tradition of esoteric instructions that descend from Puchungwa<sup>5</sup> particularly uphold what the exalted Tārā told the victor Dromtönpa:<sup>6</sup>

Remember the source of refuge, the guru.

The body is the nature of the deity.

Through speech, continuously repeat the mantra.

Consider each and every being as your parent.

Discern the emptiness of the abiding nature of mind.

Once these five arise,

Purify all roots of virtue.

The topic of this instruction is the recollection of the five practices of the guru, deity, mantra, compassion, and emptiness. As an extension of that, the fifteen relative vital essences and the one ultimate vital essence—sixteen altogether—are integrated on the path. Those fifteen relative vital essences are five vital essences of the environment as support, six vital essences of the supported beings, including the gods, and the four vital essences of the root and lineage gurus.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Stages of the Path to Awakening with Three Systems Combined into One [3]**

The third section has four parts: a general explanation of the manner of instruction, a specific description of the stages of the path, a presentation of the way to include all of those, and a supplementary comment on the special branches.

#### **The Manner of Instruction [a]**

**Three traditions combined into one: the stages of the path to awakening  
Has four greatnesses and reliance on a root spiritual mentor.**

The system that combines into one the practices of the three traditions from the source texts, the spiritual instructions, and the esoteric instructions is called the stages of the path to awakening. While uniting the presentation of all the dharmas on the methods to attain enlightenment directly or indirectly, the root of the practice does not fall outside the two kinds of awakening mind (Skt. *bodhicitta*). Therefore, it is the very thing that an ordinary individual practices as the single initial stage. The combining of the esoteric instructions into the stages of the path is taught in the *Ornament of True Realization*,<sup>8</sup> where it says, “*Śrāvakas* who are seeking peace....”

The author of the source text for these instructions is the single god of the Snow Ranges, the Glorious Great Lord Atīśa himself. He composed many of the sources for this tradition, but the one that is like the root of the total and complete body of the path is *A Lamp for the Path to Awakening*.<sup>9</sup> This primary text is said by the great learned masters of this tradition to be endowed with fourfold greatness: (1) It has the greatness of [inspiring the] realization that there is nothing contradictory in



the doctrine, because it presents all the excellent speech of the Buddha from anything in the great or lesser vehicles as the path by which a single individual can attain enlightenment. (2) It has the greatness that all the excellent speech of the Buddha will arise as personal instructions, once one has found certainty in the vital points of this path. One need not accumulate the karma of rejecting the dharma by seeking the vital points of practice elsewhere, since the explanations of the sutras, tantras, and commentaries *are* the dharma. (3) It has the greatness that one will easily understand the entirety of the victors' intentions based on this sacred esoteric instruction. (4) And it has the greatness of reversing the bad intelligence that thinks one should learn some parts of the excellent speech of the victors but that some are unnecessary. This great malpractice is automatically prevented by just knowing that these instructions teach the direct and indirect methods of enlightenment and that therefore one should practice them.<sup>10</sup>

This profound dharma tradition is also called “the stages of entering the doctrine,” “the stages of the path for three persons,” “the stages of the awakening path,” and “the aid to entering the great chariot.” To accomplish buddhahood, henceforth one only needs to enter into this great path tradition.

Having entered this dharma, in order to present it one must first correctly rely on a qualified virtuous spiritual mentor. This is the root of all paths and the source of all happiness. The way to do this was mentioned briefly above.<sup>11</sup>

## **The Stages of the Path [b]**

This has three parts: training in the stages of the common path for a person of small scope, training in the stages of the common path for a person of medium scope, and training in the stages of the exceptional path for a person of great scope.

### **The Stages of the Common Path for a Person of Small Scope [i]**

Contemplating human life, impermanence, and suffering of  
bad existences,

Desiring one's own emancipation, one goes for refuge in the  
Three Jewels.

**The eight concerns are naturally liberated and faith is totally pure.**

**This is the meditation on the stages of the path for a person of small scope.**

Once one has received the instructions from a virtuous spiritual mentor and begins meditation on the stages of the path, if a genuine desire to find the meaning of one's life arises then that is the inner inspiration for accomplishing it. In order to induce that, one meditates on the precious human life with its eight freedoms and ten endowments,<sup>12</sup> contemplating—by means of causes, examples, and numbers—how difficult it is to obtain. Then, if the attitude of pursuing this life is not reversed, an intense pursuit of the next world will not arise. So next one actively meditates on the impermanence of this fleeting body that has been obtained and how one will wander in bad existences after death. At this point, one will feel afraid of the sufferings of bad existences. When a genuine attitude of desiring release from cyclic existence is born, it will produce a heartfelt confidence in the qualities of the Three Jewels, who can provide a refuge from suffering. And so one will abide by the common vows of going for refuge. One's previous impulsive pursuit of this life and lip service to the next life will be reversed, and the next life will take precedence while the activities of this life will become mere accessories. The fetters of the eight worldly concerns, such as pleasure in possession and displeasure in dispossession,<sup>13</sup> will be liberated in their own ground. With totally pure inspired faith,<sup>14</sup> the stages of the path for a person of small scope will be born in one's mindstream. In the beginning one should meditate until this definitely becomes part of one's being.

### **The Stages of the Common Path for a Person of Medium Scope [ii]**

**Believing in cause and effect, seeing the problems of samsara,  
With an attitude of genuine desire to eliminate its cause, karma  
and affliction,**

**One pursues emancipation, certainty of release, and pure  
discipline.**

**This is the meditation on the stages of the path for a person of  
medium scope.**

Not content with just that, one induces by many methods the faith that believes in karmic cause and effect, which is the basis of all positive action. With that stabilized, one exerts the effort to engage in virtue and reject nonvirtue, continually engaging the path of the four powers.<sup>15</sup> Then one contemplates again and again the general and specific problems of cyclic existence (Skt. *samsāra*) until one sees its defects. Once one recognizes that karma and afflictive emotion are the causes that produce cyclic existence, the attitude of genuine desire to eliminate them arises and one then pursues emancipation. That path entails the three trainings<sup>16</sup> in general and specifically the proper maintenance of whatever ethical discipline one has personally undertaken. If that is the case, then seeing the problems of cyclic existence will be the cause that produces the genuine attitude that desires the certainty of release from it. With that, one's ethical discipline will be totally pure and the stages of the path of a person of medium scope will be born in one's being. One should take up that practice and meditate.

### **The Stages of the Exceptional Path for a Person of Great Scope [iii]**

**Great love and compassion for all mother sentient beings  
Engenders the awakening mind. Six perfections and four modes  
of attraction  
Enact one's own and others' welfare with totally pure noble  
intention.  
This is the meditation on the stages of the path for a person of  
great scope.**

Not content with even that previous stage, one must train in the third stage, the basis of the path to attaining buddhahood. One brings to mind [the thought], "Just as I have fallen into the ocean of existence, so too have all beings, all of whom have been my mothers [in many lifetimes]." In cultivating the awakening mind that has love and compassion as its root, one must exert oneself in whatever causes it to arise. Without that, practicing the six perfections and two phases<sup>17</sup> is like making a roof without a foundation. When some semblance of that experience arises to some degree, then the aspiring mind of awakening is reinforced in ceremony and one endeavors in its precepts. One should make the

aspiring mind as stable as possible. Then, in listening to the great effectiveness of the bodhisattva conduct, one distinguishes between what to reject and what to engage and develops a desire to train in that. When that has arisen, the vows of engagement are taken in ceremony and one trains in the six perfections, which ripen one's own mindstream, and the four means of attraction<sup>18</sup> and so on, which ripen the mindstreams of others. In particular, one should guard against the root downfalls even at the risk of one's life and endeavor not to be tainted by the lesser and medium dissipations or infractions. If one is so tainted, one must make efforts to restore [the vows].

The last two perfections deserve special study. In becoming skilled in ways to maintain meditative stability, meditative absorption will be accomplished. One should do whatever it takes for a totally pure view of the two kinds of nonself<sup>19</sup> to arise in one's mindstream. Once it is found and one settles into that view, the knowledge of how to maintain it is generated. This kind of meditative stability and wisdom together are termed calm abiding and higher insight.<sup>20</sup> Since there is no other angle besides these two, once one has taken the bodhisattva vows, they will happen within the training of those precepts.

By training in that way, one will always be engaged in tremendous benefit for oneself and others. The noble intention will be unwaveringly pure, and the stages of the path of a person of great scope will arise in one's being. Meditate with great persistence in this purpose.

These paths, however, should not be separated. Meditation on the lower paths will increase one's desire to attain the higher, and hearing of the higher should enhance one's desire to accomplish the lower.

When meditating on them, after examining one's thoughts, one must have an equitable attitude. If it seems that devotion to the spiritual mentor who guides one on such a path has diminished, it will cut off the roots of all good things, so one must strive at the ways of service. Similarly, if the strength of one's enthusiasm for practice is weak, contemplate the freedoms and endowments, or if the strength of one's attachment to the reality of this life increases, meditate mainly on impermanence and the problems of bad existences. If it appears that one has drifted past the limits of the avowed precepts that one holds, then emphasize meditation on karmic cause and effect. If weariness with cyclic existence is modest, then the pursuit of freedom will become mere verbiage, so think about the problems of cyclic existence. If one does not have the strength of intense

conviction to work for the welfare of sentient beings no matter what, then the root of the mahayana will be severed, so cultivate the aspiring awakening mind and its causes. If, after one has taken on the vows of the heirs of the victors and learned the conduct, the fetters of fixating on attributes appear to be extremely strong, use rational consciousness to destroy the conceptual frame of reference that fixates on attributes and cultivate the emptiness that is like the sky and like illusion.<sup>21</sup> If it happens that one's mind does not dwell on the visualization and becomes a slave to total distraction, cultivate mainly the aspect of abiding in one-pointed concentration. So it has been taught by the previous masters. With these illustrations, even those situations that were not explained will be comprehensible. In short, it is taught that, without becoming partial, one needs to utilize everything appropriate to enhance virtue in one's being.

### How to Include All of Those Paths [c]

The Buddha's words that are intended for higher states, definite goodness, and mahayana  
Are considered to be included in this path of three stages.

The reason for the necessity of all the dharma spoken by the Buddha is that it is solely for accomplishing the welfare of sentient beings. That which can be accomplished is twofold: the temporary higher states and the ultimate definite goodness of liberation. From the full extent of the teachings, it is those included in the actual instructions for the person of lesser scope or in the cycles of dharma in common with it that are intended for the accomplishment of the first. What distinguishes a person of lesser scope is that he or she pursues the abundance of higher states in the next life without putting much emphasis on this life, and practices to accomplish the causes of that. It states in *A Lamp for the Path*:<sup>22</sup>

Know that those who by whatever means  
Seek for themselves only  
The pleasures of cyclic existence  
Are persons of lesser scope.

There are two kinds of definite goodness: emancipation that is merely liberation from samsara, and the state of omniscience. From the full extent of the teachings, it is those included in the actual teachings for the person of medium scope or in the cycles of dharma in common with it that are intended for the vehicles of *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha*.<sup>23</sup> A person of medium scope is one who has given rise to weariness with the whole of existence and makes the emancipation of personal liberation from existence the goal. To that end, such a person engages the methods of the three trainings. In *A Lamp for the Path*<sup>24</sup> it says:

Those who seek peace for themselves alone,  
Turning away from worldly pleasures  
And avoiding negative actions  
Are said to be of medium scope.

There are two methods for accomplishing omniscience: the mahayana of the perfections and of secret mantra. Those are both included in the dharma cycle of the person of great scope. A person of great scope is one who is compelled by great compassion to eliminate all the suffering of sentient beings and therefore makes buddhahood the goal. Therefore such a person trains in the six perfections and the two phases of creation and completion, and so on. From *A Lamp for the Path*:<sup>25</sup>

Those who, through their personal suffering,  
Truly want to genuinely exhaust  
All the suffering of others  
Are superior persons.

It is for such individuals who attain awakening by both the methods of the perfections and mantra that they were taught.

In general, this classification into three kinds of person is mentioned often in the *Summary of Ascertainment*<sup>26</sup> and the commentary to the *Abhidharma Treasure*<sup>27</sup> and so on.

There are two kinds of person of small scope: those who are dedicated to this life and those dedicated to the next life. Here, it is the second one. Moreover, it is one who has actually entered the unerring methods for attaining the higher states. Therefore, it is held that the entire extent of the well-spoken word of the Buddha is included in this path that applies the three attitude stages of individuals.

Here, we speak of three kinds of person, but since the other two are included in the path of the great person, Master Aśvaghōṣa<sup>28</sup> stated that those two are branches of the mahayana path. This being so, while not guiding people in the path of the person of small scope whose goal is the attainment of just mundane happiness, nor in the path of the person of medium scope whose goal is the attainment of their own mere emancipation from cyclic existence, some have made the paths common to those two a preliminary for the teaching of the path of a person of great scope. By making them branches of the training of the path of the great person, there occurs a further arrangement into common and uncommon paths that one should know.

If one thinks, however, that it is sufficient only to do the stage of the path of a person of great scope, there are two great necessities for guidance that distinguish each of the three kinds of persons. One is to conquer the arrogance of claiming for oneself the status of a great person in whom the attitude shared with those of small or medium scope has not arisen. Second is that there is great benefit in all three attitudes, from best to least.

Concerning the need to develop one's attitude by stages, the protector Nāgārjuna advised giving guidance in the paths of higher states and definite goodness by stages:<sup>29</sup>

First the teachings of the higher states,  
Afterwards, definite goodness occurs.  
That is because after attaining higher states,  
Definite goodness will come by stages.

Also Noble Aśaṅga said:<sup>30</sup>

And in order that bodhisattvas might bring about by stages the perfect accomplishment of what is virtuous, they first present the simple dharma to those sentient beings that have child-like intelligence, and simple instructions and follow-up teachings that engage them. Once the bodhisattvas realize that the students have come to possess medium intelligence, they present medium dharma and medium instructions and follow-up teachings that engage them. After the bodhisattvas realize that they now possess vast intelligence, they present the profound

dharma and subtle instructions and follow-up teachings that engage them. This, then, is how the conduct for the welfare of those beings falls into order.

And in the *Lamp Summary [of Conduct]*, Āryadeva states:<sup>31</sup>

After first training in the ideas of the vehicle of the perfections,  
one should practice the necessary stages for engaging the man-  
tra. To summarize the meaning of that:

For sentient beings with the karma of beginners  
To enter the ultimate truth,  
This method was taught by the perfect Buddha  
Like the steps of a ladder.

## The Special Branches [d]

**The special branch is the enhancement of compassion  
By the kinds of mind training to exchange oneself for others.**

The meditation subject at the root of the path of a person of great scope, which is the ultimate end of the three stages of the path, is relative awakening mind and the meditative absorptions of love and compassion. The enhancements are the types of mind training instructions of exchanging oneself for others. Furthermore, all of the guiding instructions that came directly from Lord Dromtönpa have also become special branches of the stages of the path to awakening.

As for mind training, the quintessence of the practices is found in *Entering the Way [of the Bodhisattva]*,<sup>32</sup> the *Compendium of Trainings*,<sup>33</sup> and so forth. The meaning is summarized in experiential guides such as those of the more famous Indian source texts composed by the three gurus of Lord Atiśa, such as Guru Dharmarakṣita's *Wheel of Sharp Weapons* and *Peacock Overcoming Poison*,<sup>34</sup> Maitriyogin's *Vajra Song of Conquering Self-Fixation*,<sup>35</sup> and Serlingpa's *Smashing Down Concepts and Eighteen Dharmas to Integrate on the Path*.<sup>36</sup> There is also Ja Chekawa Yeshé Dorjé's *Condensed into Seven Points*,<sup>37</sup> and other instruction guides such as the *Great Stages of the Doctrine*<sup>38</sup> and the *Kadampa's Hidden Guide*.<sup>39</sup>





### 3: LAMDRÉ

#### *Lineage History*

The great Indian adept known as Virūpa was empowered in the emanated mandala of the goddess Vajra Nairātmyā and attained the realization of the sixth bodhisattva level.\* He formulated the *Vajra Lines* and created the instruction cycles of the Path with Its Result based on the *Hevajra Tantra Trilogy* for the benefit of Kāhṇa. This is the first of the nine cycles of the Path with Its Result.

There is considerable divergence in identifying the other eight cycles. According to Jamgön Kongtrul, they are (1) the creation phase practices of Nine Profound Methods and the completion phase *Like the Tip of a Lamp Flame* by the great adept Padmavajra (Saroruha), based on the root *Hevajra Tantra in Two Parts*; (2) *The Commentary on Awakening Mind* by Nāgārjuna, based on the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*; (3) *Realizing Coemergence* by Ḍombi Heruka, based on the *Hevajra Tantra in Two Parts*; (4) *The Completely Perfect Path of Mudra* by Indrabhūti, based on the *Vital Essence of Pristine Awareness*; (5) *The Inconceivable* by Kuddāla, based on the *Samputa Tantra*; (6) *Olapati* by Kāhṇa (Kṛṣṇacārin), based on the *Cakrasaṃvara*; (7) *Unwritten Mahāmudrā* by Vāgīśvara, based on the *Guhyasamāja* (*Hevajra and Tārā* in other sources); and (8) *Straightening the Crooked* by Kṛṣṇa Utsīṭa the Immortal, based on all the mother tantras.

These teachings of the nine cycles of the path were transmitted in Tibet to the great guru Drokmi Lotsāwa Shākya Yeshé (993-1077). Drokmi had first mastered all the teachings of ethical discipline, the perfections, and secret mantra under the master Śāntipa and had received the Cycles of the Path from Gayadhara (d. 1103) and Viravajra. He received the very

\*Synopsis based on *The Treasury of Knowledge*, Book 4, Part 3 (TOKI: 520-526).

concise explanation of the Hevajra tantra along with very extensive esoteric instructions of the hearing lineage that Virūpa had given to Kāhṇa, which had passed through Ḍamarupa, Avadhūti, and Gayadhara. This was known as the tradition of the Hevajra esoteric instructions, now famous as Lamdré, or the Path with Its Result. The other eight cycles are called the Later Path with Its Result.

Drokmi can be considered the primary source of the secret mantra in the later dissemination of dharma in Tibet, since the other two great translators in that position, Marpa Lotsāwa and Gö Lotsāwa, also studied under him. In addition to the quintessential nine cycles of the path, he had obtained a vast number of teachings in India, including esoteric instructions from each of the masters of the six gates at Nālandā University. There he also received the transmission of Virūpa's very extensive explanation of the tantra with very concise esoteric instructions. This is known as the Path with Its Result without Root, because it was not based on the *Vajra Lines*. It is also known as the Hevajra commentarial tradition. Later esoteric instructions are also included in the Precious Excellent Words of the Path with Its Result.

The transmission of the teachings of the Path with Its Result spread from Drokmi's spiritual and physical sons. The main three transmission lineages were from Drokmi's sons Indra and Dorjé, and from his spiritual sons Drom Depa Tönchung and Sekar Chungwa, or Setön. Of the latter's disciples, the Zhangtön brothers were the superior recipients, the Zhama siblings were the middling recipients, and Segom Jangyé was the inferior recipient. From the Zhama siblings, there was a male lineage descended from the brother Khönpuwa Chökyi Gyalpo, a female lineage from the sister Machik Zhama (1062-1149), and four combined lineages through later disciples. From among a total of eighteen well-known lineages, only the traditions of Zhama and Sakya survived for an extended period. Only the Sakya remains today.

The Sakya lineage is traced through Sakyapa Kunga Nyingpo or "Sachen" (1092-1158), who was the exceptional upholder of the lineage of Zhangtön Chobar (1053-1135), the eldest of the brothers who were the superior recipients of Setön. This was the lineal transmission, and there was also a direct transmission from Virūpa under extraordinary circumstances. It is said that Virūpa, with a retinue of four, came for one month and bestowed four profound dharmas that were not to pass from within the compound, including the Path with Its Result. Among Sachen's dis-

ciples were his two sons, Sönam Tsemo (1142-1182) and Drakpa Gyaltsen (1147-1216). The former passed away to the pure realm without discarding his body, but the latter lived a long life. In a direct vision of Sachen he received the extremely direct transmission of the Path with Its Result, the *Clarification of the Meaning through Symbols*. Then it was sequentially transmitted by Sakya Paṇchen (1182-1251), Chogyal Pakpa (1235-1280), and others. Later it spread into the traditions known as Ngor, Dzong, Bodong, Geluk, and numerous others.

The chief among those was the Explication for the Assembly (*tshegs bshad*), which Ngorchon Kunga Zangpo (1382-1456) received from the great adept Buddhaśī (1339-1419/32). That lineage continues up to the present. The lineage from Ngakchang Zungkyi Palwa (1306-1389) is known as the Path with Its Result of the Dzong tradition. The omniscient Kunga Namgyal (1432-1496) came from that tradition and spread the transmission known separately as the Gangkarwa (from the name of his monastery).

The Explication for Disciples (*slob bshad*) is the Precious Excellent Words received by Tsarchen Losal Gyatso (1502-1566) from Doring Kunpangwa (1449-1524), a disciple of Dakchen Lodro Gyaltsen (1444-1495). The Tsar tradition branched off from this.

In short, those great scholar adepts upheld and spread the doctrine of the Sakya tradition, causing the enlightened actions of the creation and completion phases of Hevajra to expand like a lake in summer, even in these end times.



## *The Esoteric Instructions of Lamdré*

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### C. Lamdré (*TOK* 3: 305-321)

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## Lamdré [C]

The explanation of the Lamdré (*lam 'bras*) or “Path with Its Result” and its process of meditation has two parts: a statement of its significance by way of introduction and an extensive explanation of the meditation topics.

## Introduction [1]

**Supreme Precious Words with four oral transmissions and four authentic qualities.**

The mighty yogin Virūpa<sup>1</sup> personally practiced the completion phase of the *Hevajra Tantra Trilogy*<sup>2</sup> and formulated the source text of the esoteric instruction possessed of four transmissions and authentic qualities called the Precious Excellent Words of the Path with Its Result.<sup>3</sup> This is the indisputable king of the completion phases of this cycle of tantras, the great path tradition as famous as the sun and moon. For that reason there exist an endless number of manuals and explanatory systems about these teachings by many learned and accomplished individuals, such as the *Yellow Volume* of Jetsun Drakpa.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the summarized meaning of these very instructions that Lord Sachen<sup>5</sup> gave to Gyura Aseng<sup>6</sup> was the first Tibetan source text and seems to be like the root of the teaching. Therefore at this occasion also we will draw out the meaning somewhat in a combined summary of the essential points in keeping with this source.

## The Meditation Topics [2]

This has three parts: a presentation of the path of samsara and nirvana in common, a presentation of the worldly path of the “stiff wheel,”<sup>7</sup> and a presentation on reaching the culmination of attainment when the practice is engaged.

## The Path of Samsara and Nirvana in Common [a]

### Overview [i]

First, the path of samsara and nirvana in common has five.

### Extensive Explanation [ii]

This has five parts: the path presented as the three appearances, the path presented as three continua, the path presented as four authentic qualities, the path presented as four transmissions, and the path presented as five interdependent connections.

## Three Appearances [aa]

Impure, yogic experience, and pure—

These three appearances provide the path’s foundation.

The three appearances (*snang ba gsum*) are the impure appearance, the appearances of yogic experience, and pure appearance. Each of those has three further divisions through which it can be known: the cause of that appearance, the individual to whom that appearance arises, and the essential nature of that appearance itself. This provides the foundation of the path.

The impure appearance encompasses the problems of cyclic existence, the freedoms and endowments of human life that are difficult to obtain, and the belief in karmic cause and effect. Meditation on these three subjects delineates the path that is held in common with the *śrāvakas*.<sup>8</sup>

The appearance of yogic experience encompasses both those of common and uncommon yogins. Common yogins give birth to common experiences in their mindstreams. The meditations that give rise to them are the three meditations of love, compassion, and the awakening mind.



Uncommon yogins give birth to the conviction that experiences will happen. The meditations that give rise to that are knowing that once one has entered the profound path of vajrayāna and meditated, unimaginable visionary experiences will arise and that all of them are subsumed into fifteen.<sup>9</sup> This knowledge cuts through all doubts. Then at some point when those experiences arise they are maintained just as they occur by means of recognizing them individually.

The pure appearance encompasses recollection of the unimaginable qualities of a buddha, such as the ornamental wheel of inexhaustible body, [speech, and mind], and thinking “I too will become like that,” thus engendering exceptional enthusiasm in meditation. In short, once one has thoroughly refined one’s being through the vehicle of the perfections, making oneself a suitable vessel for the path of the vajrayāna determines the foundation. Therefore, this path of three appearances is shared with the path of the perfections.<sup>10</sup>

### Three Continua [bb]

**One maintains the view of samsara and nirvana inseparable in the causal continuum.**

**As the method continuum, one meditates on the profound path connected with the four empowerments.**

**The qualities of five kāyas and awarenesses arise in the result continuum.**

**All practice without exception is known through the three continua.**

The view of the inseparability of samsara and nirvana is maintained in the causal continuum of the universal ground.<sup>11</sup> As the method continuum of the body, one meditates on the path in connection with the four empowerments.<sup>12</sup> Ultimately, in the result continuum, the qualities of the five kāyas and five pristine awarenesses arise.<sup>13</sup> This is a way to know all vajrayāna practice without exception through the threefold division of ground, path, and result.

First, the causal continuum: For those who have refined their mind-stream through the vehicle of the perfections and been moved by great compassion, the quickest path to enlightenment is indeed the vajrayāna. However, if one wonders whether or not one has the good fortune to practice it, one does have it. To wit:

Depending on cause, family, renunciations, and conditions,  
Individuals are posited according to four aspects.<sup>14</sup>

Certainty is created with these thoughts: Because in general all sentient beings have the cause, buddha nature; because, in particular, from the perspective of the proximity of accomplishment, they fall into the definite family of one of the five buddha families determined by means of color, shape, and so on; because whatever afflictive emotion to be abandoned is greatest in them determines their definite buddha family;<sup>15</sup> and because due to conditions they definitely fall into the two types—less fortunate gradual realizers and fortunate instantaneous realizers—nevertheless both of them will ultimately be suitable to practice the vajrayāna. That is the practice of the causal continuum. The method continuum is the ripening empowerment and meditation on the two phases<sup>16</sup> of the liberating path. The result continuum is the ultimate result, the attainment of the five kāyas and five pristine awarenesses.

In this way all of the practices of the secret mantra without exception can be understood in the context of these three—ground, path, and result—because there is no secret mantra teaching that is not included therein.

Again, if one takes the two phases as the main methods, then the causal continuum would be to receive the empowerment and make oneself a worthy vessel for meditation on the path, and the method continuum would be the meditation on the two phases of the path. The result continuum would be the attainment of the five kāyas that result from that.

## Four Authentic Qualities [cc]

Scripture, narrative, esoteric instruction, and experiential  
practice:

These four authentic qualities...

The term “cutting through doubts” (*spros pa gcod*) should be applied to this [understanding of authenticity]. The four authentic qualities are stated in the *Samputa*:<sup>17</sup>

Through authenticity of treatise, the master,  
Adherence to scripture, and awareness of immanent suchness,

The secret meaning and its entity  
 Should be known from the lineage of one-to-one,  
 Received from the mouth of the sublime guru.

To lay the meaning of this out in stages: Because the authenticity of the scripture (*lung*) of the authentic word (*bka*) of the *sugata* occurred first, it is the authenticity of scripture. Based on that, the treatise emerged [proclaiming that] the limit of an entity is interdependent origination, so it is the authenticity of the narrative (*lo rgyus*). Since those instructions are taught by the guru, it is the authenticity of the esoteric instructions of all the vajra guru masters. Since those must be brought into practice just as they were taught, what ascertains the first three authentic qualities is the meditation experience of the yogin him- or herself authentically following them.<sup>18</sup> As for the order of practicing those, first one must practice the authenticity of the guru, as Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltzen said:<sup>19</sup>

At first, to establish the authenticity of the guru, meditate until devotion in the guru is deeply felt.

Then, one must put into practice the teachings of that guru for authentic experience. Those [two stages] accomplish the intention of the mighty yogin, which is the authentic treatise. And the supreme one of all authentic qualities that achieves the Buddha's intention is the authentic scripture.

The essence of the four authentic qualities is that since exceptional conviction arises in oneself, nothing else has the power to steal one's interest. The way that they cut through doubts is in the causal continuum (of the three continua), [that is, by affecting] the afflictive emotion that is the cause of the six types of beings, and the resulting six types of beings.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, the way that the four authentic qualities ascertain all the experiences of path and result should be learned from the explanations of the source text.<sup>21</sup>

## Four Transmissions [dd]

...and four transmissions cut through doubts.

It is said that all doubts about the instruction are cut through by means of the four authentic qualities and the four transmissions as soon as they are explained. The four transmissions are (1) undiminished river of empowerment, (2) unimpaired lineage of blessing, (3) unmistakable sequence<sup>22</sup> of instruction, and (4) a satisfied attitude through devotion.

The first of those four has three parts: the undiminished nature of empowerment at the time of the cause, at the time of the path, and at the time of the result.

Second, secret mantra is endowed with four culminations (*mtha'*): it is the culmination of practice, the culmination of meditative experience, the culmination of blessing, and the culmination of accomplishment.

Third, when gathering the constituents<sup>23</sup> through the three ways of gathering, one must know them to be one's path and interdependent connection, just as one knows that even a dangerous, narrow bridge that is difficult to cross is indeed one's path when [chased by] the manifestation of obstacles such as marauding cannibal-demons or when experiences of fear and terror arise.

Fourth, since those experiences also befell one just as the guru had taught when saying, "things like this will happen," an exceptional conviction arises and one develops an irreversible belief that the guru is a buddha.

As for the manner of cutting through doubts, those practices of the three continua that were presented above must be possessed of the four transmissions. If any one of these four is missing, then the instructions of this tradition will not be wholly complete. Those four, furthermore, are based on the transmission of the guru ancestors. This is the way to be certain.

## Five Interdependent Connections [ee]

**Outer, inner, secret, suchness, and ultimate—**

**Five interdependent connections demarcate the path.**

There are five interdependent connections (*rten 'brel*). The outer interdependent connection is obvious external appearances such as [those produced by] the reversal of energy currents and visual appearances. The inner interdependent connection is making the emanating and gathering of energy-mind in the palaces of the channel syllables.<sup>24</sup> The secret

interdependent connection is the actualization of the four mandalas, such as the constituent elixir mandala, in the transcendent path. As for the suchness interdependent connection, on the first spiritual level and above, the outer signs arise in the vital essence drops, the inner signs arise in the energy currents, and the signs of suchness arise as qualities in the mind. The ultimate interdependent connection is the dissolution of the four pulsations<sup>25</sup> at the thirteenth level.

The way those five demarcate the path is that the first two interdependent connections demarcate the worldly path and the last three demarcate the transcendent path. Alternatively, the outer interdependent connection demarcates the path of accumulation, the inner interdependent connection demarcates the path of application, the secret interdependent connection demarcates the path of seeing, the suchness interdependent connection demarcates the path of meditation, and the ultimate interdependent connection demarcates the path of no more training.

In regard to this, each of these five—the three appearances and so on—present a complete perfect path to enlightenment. That is because they each present the Path with Its Result common to samsara and nirvana. Or, adding these five together, it presents a single complete perfect path. A single individual on the path to enlightenment requires these four: establishing the basis of the path, the main body of the path, cutting through the doubts about the path, and demarcating the path. Therefore they were presented in due order.

Even though each of the five presents a complete perfect path, there is a need to teach all five. The path of the three appearances is taught because it is explained that “all phenomena of samsara and nirvana are set forth as the arising of three appearances in three different circumstances.” The path of three continua is taught in order to understand that “all phenomena are included in the single continuity of one’s own mind.” The four authentic qualities are taught because the path is quickly traversed with the arising of exceptional conviction. The path of the four transmissions is taught in order to understand that a single individual’s enlightenment is based on the exceptional transmission of the guru ancestors. And the path of five interdependent connections is taught in order to understand that to traverse the levels to buddhahood through the path of vajrayāna, the five interdependent connections must be complete and in alignment.

## **The Worldly Path [b]**

This has two parts: an overview and an extensive explanation.

### **Overview [i]**

The worldly path of the stiff wheel has two:

The seven esoteric instructions and dispelling obstructions of the path.

### **Extensive Explanation [ii]**

This has two parts: the seven vital points of esoteric instruction and a presentation of dispelling obstructions of the path.

## **The Seven Vital Points of Esoteric Instruction [aa]**

The seven points are (1) the vital point of freedom<sup>26</sup> in the impartial path through the three ways of gathering the constituents, (2) the vital point of knowing the immediate cause of meditative absorption through the three ways of mental abiding, (3) the vital point of knowing anything at all to be meditative absorption through the three experiences, (4) the vital point of maintaining whatever occurs as it is through the three warmth, (5) the vital point of knowing the particular meditative absorptions through the three ways of guidance on the path, (6) the vital point of knowing the demarcations of the path through the three gatherings of the constituents, and (7) the vital point of freedom from both hope and fear through the three interdependent connections.

## **Freedom in the Impartial Path through the Three Ways of Gathering the Constituents [1']**

Three gatherings of the constituents apply to the seven impartial.

The three ways of gathering the constituents are (1) those with karmic propensity gather their own constituents by themselves, (2) those with devotion gather the constituents through blessing, and (3) those with

diligence gather the constituents through exerted effort. When applied to those with karmic propensity, the seven impartialals are that (1) the impartial awakening of the karmic propensity (2) leads to the impartial reversal of the energy currents, (3) leading to the impartial blazing of the fire of inner heat, (4) leading to the impartial opening of the channels, (5) leading to the impartial gathering of the constituents, (6) leading to the impartial occurrence of dissipating clairvoyance, (7) which leads to the impartial arising of nondissipating clairvoyance. Applying those seven in a similar way to devotion and to diligence, it makes twenty-one.

Moreover, when the gathering of the constituents occurs in ordinary individuals, those lacking the esoteric instruction might depreciate it by saying, “it is not the gathering of the constituents,” or might exaggerate by saying, “it was done by bad spirits.” But if one understands these three ways of gathering, one will become free of those deprecations and exaggerations.

### **Knowing the Immediate Cause of Meditative Absorption through the Three Modes of Mental Abiding [2']**

**Three modes of mental abiding are realized as the immediate cause of meditative absorption.**

The three modes of mental abiding are the mental abiding through reversing the energy currents, the mental abiding through self-blessing of energy-mind, and the mental abiding through combining together with the support.<sup>27</sup> These three aspects of reversing the energy currents, and so on, arise appropriately from residual karma, devotion, or diligence as described above. From that, physical experiences, mental experiences, and so on cause unimaginable meditative absorptions to arise. Therefore, the reversal of the energy currents, and so on, should be known as the immediate direct cause and the residual karma, and so on, as the indirect cause.

### **Knowing Anything at All to Be Meditative Absorption through the Three Experiences [3']**

**Whatever arises of three experiences is meditative absorption.**

Of the three kinds of meditation experience, body experiences are the leaping and jumping, and so forth, that occur due to the force of meditation causing the energy currents to be reversed inwards. Mind experiences are experiences of dread and despair, desire, and aggression, and so on that occur due to having hit the vital point of the channel syllables. Dream experiences are to dream of horses and other expressions of natural movement due to hitting the vital point of energy currents. Those lacking esoteric instruction explain the discomfort of the body and the suffering of the mind and such that occur as the normal course of afflictive emotions. Dream experiences are explained as normal dreams and are not known to be meditative absorption. But in this tradition, whatever arises as the three experiences coming from the gathering and projecting of energy-mind is known exclusively as meditative absorption.

### **Maintaining as It Occurs Whatever Arises through the Three Warmths [4']**

**What has arisen is maintained as it occurs, whether or not the three warmths [arise in order].**

The three warmths<sup>28</sup> are the warmth preceded by thought, the warmth of gathering the nine constituents,<sup>29</sup> and the warmth of blazing and gathering. The cause is the interdependent connections of the energy currents and mind coming into alignment, whether or not in order, and the result is the arising of the warmths, whether or not in order. The recognition of any of those as being without characteristics and maintaining that [recognition is what is meant by] maintaining as it occurs.<sup>30</sup>

### **Knowing the Particular Meditative Absorptions through the Three Modes of Guidance [5']**

**Three modes of guidance distinguish the particular experiences.**

There is guidance by energy currents, guidance by constituent elixir, and guidance by channel syllables. They are called the three modes of guiding that are like a captain. The experience that is born from that guidance is the gathering of the constituents. At the first gathering, there is



great discomfort of the channels and energy currents. At the middle, the discomfort diminishes. At the final gathering, one is free of discomfort and gains the ability to dispel harmful conditions, such as the physical disturbance from the elements and so forth. These are the particular experiences of being guided by energy currents. At the first gathering, the meditative absorption is unclear and unstable. At the middle, it is clear and more stable. At the final gathering, there is no difference between formal meditation and post-meditation, and one cannot be affected by external conditions. These are the particular experiences of being guided by constituent elixir. At the first gathering, indefinite deluded appearances arise, evoking dread and despair. At the middle, indefinite visual appearances arise, experiences and visual appearances of the six realms. Finally, the very definite lucid appearances arise, causing one to think that the experiences of meditative absorptions up to the pinnacle of existence have occurred. These are the particular experiences of being guided by the channel syllables. In this way, those three different meditative experiences come about from the three individual modes of guidance, and one should know the particular distinctions.

These three modes of guidance on the path are demarcated by the three gatherings of the constituents on the worldly path and by the four culminations of accomplishment on the transcendent path. Although these two ways certainly occur, here I have explained by simply applying the three gatherings.

### **Knowing the Demarcations of the Path through the Three Gatherings of the Constituents [6']**

**The demarcations are known by applying three examples to three gatherings.**

This is how the demarcations are known by applying three examples to the three gatherings: At the first gathering of the constituents, the force of meditation causes the energy currents to go to all the vital points of the channels. This slightly loosens the channel knots, causing discomfort in the channels and energy. It is like the example of the winter wind with its sharp biting edge. At the middle gathering, the knots are loosened more and the energy-mind becomes slightly limpid, quieting the discomfort of the channel energy. For example, it is like the diminished

sharpness of the spring winds. At the final gathering, the channel knots are more and more loosened and the energy-mind becomes very limpid, producing the many qualities of meditative absorption. The example is the wind in summer, free of its biting edge. In this way, when there is great discomfort in the channel energy, the quieting of discomfort, and the occurrence of boundless qualities of meditative absorption, one knows undoubtedly that one has arrived at the first, middle, and final stages of gathering in order.

### **Freedom from Both Hope and Fear through the Three Interdependent Connections [7']**

**Three interdependent connections contain all causes and conditions, freeing one from hope and fear.**

The three interdependent connections are the interdependent connection of reversing the energy currents, the interdependent connection of visual appearances, and the interdependent connection of dreams. The first is when the energy currents are reversed inwards due to the force of meditation, causing the body to jump and leap and so forth.

The second has three parts. The visual appearances associated with the body's channels are visions such as mountain cliffs, due to the energy-mind entering the constrictions of the thirty-two knots in the right and left channels.<sup>31</sup> The visual appearances associated with the channel syllables are visions such as the six realms, due to the energy-mind gathering in the syllables of the six realms. The visual appearances associated with the constituent elixir are visions such as the five buddha families, due to the elixir's quintessence gathering together into the heart-syllable *bhrum*, and others.

Third, the interdependent connection of dream is when those visions as the primary cause and the state of sleep as the condition make those visions occur in dreams.

What causes those three interdependent connections to occur are the physical channels, the channel syllables, the constituent elixir, and the energy currents. Those are all contained as part of one's own body and do not depend on any external causes and conditions. Therefore, one does not hope for the spiritual power of seeing visual appearances of buddhas and such, or fear obstacles such as being attacked by

cannibal-demons. Recollecting that all the causes—the energy-mind—are complete in one's own body frees one from hopes and fears.

## **Dispelling Obstructions on the Path [bb]**

This has two parts: individual presentations and a summary.

### **Individual Presentations [1']**

**Two yogins that fall into partiality have four obstacles,  
Eight protections, and fourteen in common.  
Seventy great vital points, six instructions,  
And the mandala circle dispel obstructions on the path.**

What type of person is afflicted by obstructions or obstacles? There are two kinds of yogins who fall into the partiality of either method or wisdom, and one yogin of total integration. Of these three, it is the first two types that can be afflicted with obstacles, but not the last.

Thus, a yogin who is partial to skillful methods has four obstacles and eight protections from them. The four obstacles are (1) on entering the path, there is the obstacle of worldly concerns; (2) once having entered it, there is the obstacle of external devils; (3) when the mind is somewhat stabilized, the devils' increasing force is an obstacle; and (4) when there is great stability, there is the obstacle of not recognizing meditative absorption. The eight protections are, for the first obstacle, (1) firm faith. For the second obstacle, (2) protection circles, (3) repetition of mantra, and (4) mantra knots. For the third obstacle, since (5) all phenomena are the appearance of mind itself, and (6) mere reflections, (7) they are never divorced from the nature of the ocean of suchness. And for the fourth obstacle, (8) the knowledge of the dependent nature of interdependent connections. Those eight protect the practitioner.

The four obstacles for those who are partial to wisdom are (1) the obstacle of generating experiences and suffering, (2) the obstacle of manifested forms, (3) the obstacle of uttered sounds, and (4) the obstacle of changing views and tenets. The eight protections are that when those four are done by external devils, one is protected by the four tests<sup>32</sup> as the antidotes, and when done by internal devils, they are averted by the symbols of the four empowerments.

The fourteen common protections are protection against the six contaminations,<sup>33</sup> the six emissions of vital essence,<sup>34</sup> and the two obscurations.<sup>35</sup> Concerning the seventy great vital points of clearing away obstructions, it is said in the *Summary*:<sup>36</sup>

For discomfort in the channels, total release is most valuable,  
 Discomfort in the energy currents is averted by reinforcement.  
 For paralysis of energy currents, the three aspects of  
 Total release, blessing, and bliss meditation are taught.

Total release for discomfort in the channels is to direct the consciousness to the place where it occurs, and by drilling the awareness into it, it is pacified. Reinforcement for discomfort in the energy currents is to inhale the energy current inside and press down on its location. When it seems to become impossible, one inhales again and presses. There are three methods of fixing paralysis of the energy currents. Total release is the same as above. There are six kinds of blessing: (1) the blessing of the holy guru, (2) the blessing of the favored deity, (3) the blessing of the outer and inner *ḍākinīs*, (4) the blessing of the mahayana sutras and profound tantras, (5) the blessing of the variety of appearance, and (6) the blessing of profound interdependent connection. Two kinds of bliss meditation are taught: based on the upper waves of enjoyment and based on the lower secret union.

The six instructions for dispelling obstructions are, in relation to the view, (1) meditation on expelling poison, (2) relying on elixir, and (3) directed attention. In relation to meditative stability, they are (4) the meditation on expelling poison, (5) relying on elixir, and (6) total release. These can be learned in detail from the explanations of the source text in the section on the six instructions.

Removing obstruction with the mandala circle refers to uniting with the supreme bliss-emptiness of the blazing, wavering, and stabilizing of the vital essence by means of the path of the mandala circle. As stated in the *Summary*:<sup>37</sup>

Vital essence blazes and wavers and stabilizes,  
 These three aspects produce bliss-emptiness supreme.  
 Discomfort in the vital essences occurs during blazing—  
 Joining [the energy currents] it is stabilized.

The four animal movements reverse it,  
 And the waverings of vital essence in the body are stopped.  
 In order to suffuse it everywhere and stabilize it,  
 Rotate the body like a pestle and  
 Throw the energy lasso with the four limbs.  
 The conduct of a small child stabilizes it.

Thus it is taught that these methods will remove however many obstructions there are on the path and bring supreme spiritual powers.

### Summary [2']

**In summary, the path of four empowerments has eight views  
 and culminations of attainment.  
 Faults are qualities, and obstacles are taken up as spiritual  
 powers.  
 When whatever appears is understood as experience, one is  
 naturally liberated**

To summarize the points of the practice in the instructions on the Path with Its Result, once one has been made into a worthy vessel in the four empowerments, such as the vase empowerment, one meditates on the four paths, such as the creation phase. From this, the four views arise, such as the three essential natures, on the worldly path. On the transcendent path, one reaches the four culminations of accomplishment. Thus, these eight views and culminations summarize the necessity for meditation on the path.

The four views are as follows: (1) the view of the vase empowerment in connection with meditation on the mandala is the three aspects of the essence—the experiences of the apparent aspect, the empty aspect, and the union aspect—which are primarily the experiences of nonconceptuality. These three each possess three characteristics: they are reality (*chos nyid*, Skt. *dharmatā*) free of mental imputation, a relative nature (*chos can*, *dharmīn*) that has no connection to ignorance, and different facets of that singular essence.

(2) The view of the secret empowerment is the four naturally occurring pristine awarenesses in which clarity is primary. Due to the interdependent connection of some of the particular channel energies and

vital essences dissolving in the central channel, a semblance of intense afflictive emotion appears. This is the pristine awareness on the path of naturally occurring afflictive emotion. A semblance of intense discursive thought is the pristine awareness of naturally occurring discursive thought. The appearance of a mixture of lofty and lowly experiences is the pristine awareness of naturally occurring mixed-up blankness.<sup>38</sup> The arising of the pristine awareness of clarity-emptiness without center or limit is the great naturally occurring pristine awareness of the path, luminous and light.

(3) The view of the empowerment of wisdom is the four joys in descending sequence, in which bliss is primary. This becomes sixteenfold when each is subdivided from the point of view of place, time, what is to be abandoned, and the essential nature.

(4) The view of the fourth empowerment is the four joys in ascending sequence, in which nondual bliss-emptiness is primary. These are the epitome of the result that is in accord with the cause, the fully ripened result, the results of human actions, and the result of freedom.

The four culminations of attainment are the ultimate results of attainment from meditation on the paths of the four empowerments. From the first through the sixth spiritual level, the culmination of attainment of the vase empowerment is called “the inseparability of samsara and nirvana” (*’khor ’das dbyer med*) because it is mainly the wisdom of realization of the equality of samsara and nirvana. From the seventh up to the tenth level, the culmination of attainment of the secret empowerment is unmixed and completely perfect, in which the individual mastery of the four correct awarenesses [enables one] to teach the dharma without mixing it up, in harmony with the ideas and language of each sentient being. At the eleventh and twelfth levels, the culmination of attainment of the wisdom empowerment is bliss-emptiness of lesser extent, because the range of bliss-emptiness is measurable. At the lower half of the thirteenth level, the culmination of attainment of the fourth empowerment is called bliss-emptiness of greater extent because the range of pristine awareness is immeasurable due to the ability of moment-by-moment awareness to pervade all that is inanimate and animate.

To summarize all the methods for dispelling obstructions: knowing that faults such as the afflictive emotions and so on are one’s path and auspicious connection, they are taken as the eight qualities.<sup>39</sup> Gathering

the energy-mind in the syllable *kṣha* in the navel, the forms of obstacles such as being attacked by cannibal-demons are taken as spiritual powers. In a manner such as this—without hope to see buddhas and such, and without fear of being afraid and terrified and such—just knowing that everything is the appearance of experience naturally liberates evil and obstruction.

### Reaching the Culmination of Attainment When the Practice Is Engaged [c]

And reaches the culmination of accomplishment on the  
transcendent path of the spinning wheel.

The results of accomplishing such a path are as follows: By dissolving the four pulsations of outer and inner interdependent connections, one will reach the culmination of attainment on the transcendent path of the spinning wheel. The entire variety of greatness for oneself is perfected. When the support, the four mandalas, is transformed then the universal ground itself, the supported, is also transformed. Then the stains along with their habitual patterns are permanently abandoned and the five kāyas—the four kāyas and the extremely pure and obscuration-free *svabhāvikakāya*—are actualized. The uncommon transformation is that the physical channels transform into the *nirmāṇakāya*, the channel syllables into *saṃbhogakāya*, the constituent elixir into *dharmakāya* and great bliss, and the core energy current of pristine awareness transforms into the *svabhāvikakāya*.

At that time, without wavering from the state of the equalness of space and pristine awareness, there occurs the greatness for others: the unceasing activity for whoever needs to be tamed according to the constitution, capability, and interest of each being. The greatness for both self and others is to become enlightened together with the entourage as one group.

In short, the practice of the three appearances provides the foundation of the path, the three continua make up the main body of practice, the four authentic qualities and the four transmissions clear up doubts about practice, and the five interdependent connections demarcate the path. During practice, when one knows the points of the three gatherings

of constituents and has become skilled in the seven beneficial esoteric instructions and in the area of dispelling obstructions, if one practices one will reach the culmination of accomplishment. This is the way of guidance in the extensive path.

To condense that into the middling path, there are five topics with their subdivisions: What causes the birth of meditative absorption, what the meditative absorption is, its benefits, dispelling obstructing phenomena, and how to measure the levels of the path. Since there are no vajra lines concerning this, it is known as the “Path and Result without Root” (*rtsa ba med pa'i lam 'bras*).

Bestowal of the prediction of practice and the application of the basic words of its own source text<sup>40</sup> [to the three continua], application of them to the path, application of them to the esoteric instructions for common practice, and the application of them to the result is the concise path.

There are what are known as the four great pillars of the path for the practice of those paths and for the generation of successful realization and the five dharmas for the birth of realization. Of those, the four great pillars are to lead according to the source text, to lead by six vital esoteric instructions, to lead by eleven vital esoteric instructions, and to lead by means of the three faculty levels: superior, moderate, and inferior.<sup>41</sup> Of those, here we have been discussing the system of guidance according to the source text, which is currently the most famous tradition of guidance.

These profound instructions are famous as being the completion phase of the *Hevajra Tantra*. They are not found, however, in the words of the actual teaching of that tantra. They do appear in the very clear exposition in the same terms in the early translations of the *Heruka Galpo Tantra*,<sup>42</sup> the fragmentary section of the *Rampant Elephant Tantra*,<sup>43</sup> and the *Stainless Confession King Tantra*.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, it is actually the same kind of system as in the general highest yoga completion phases of the two traditions of the six dharmas.





## 4: MARPA KAGYU

### *Lineage History*

The lineage of esoteric instructions that started in Tibet with Marpa the Translator is traced to the great Indian adept Tilopa (or Telopa, as Kongtrul has it, 988-1086).<sup>\*</sup> He received the teachings from two sources: a long or lineal succession and direct transmission. There are a number of conflicting versions of the famous four transmissions of lineal succession. Kongtrul cites Telopa himself, who gives his four human gurus as Caryāpa, from whom he received the inner heat practice; Nāgārjuna, from whom he received illusory body and luminous clarity instructions; Lavāpa, from whom he received dream yoga; and the ḍākinī Sukhasiddhī, or Subhaginī, who bestowed the instructions on the intermediate state and transference. In addition to these, Telopa heard instructions on the practice of wisdom based on another's body from the middle Indrabhūti and on entering the residence of another's body from Matamgi.

Concerning the direct lineage, Telopa himself said, "Telopa has no human guru—my guru is the Omniscient One." In other words, Telopa heard the instructions of the four tantra classes directly from the Buddha Vajradhara. Then Vajrayoginī entrusted him with the treasury of the Three Gem Cycles of the hearing lineage, which contains all the quintessential instructions.

In the presence of Telopa, the great paṇḍita Nāropa (1016-1100) performed twelve great hardships and ultimately internalized the entire meaning of secret mantra based on words and symbols, and became an adept.

His student was Lhodrak Marpa Chökyi Lodro (1002/12-1097). Marpa traveled to India three times, spending a total of sixteen years

<sup>\*</sup>Synopsis based on *The Treasury of Knowledge*, Book 4, Part 3 (TOK1: 526-533).

and seven months attending Nāropa. During that time he received the instructions, explanations, and empowerments of many tantras, primarily *Hevajra* and *Guhyasamāja*. In particular, on his third visit he spent six months at the hermitage of Puṣpahari, or Pullahari, during which time he received the complete hearing lineage of Cakrasaṃvara from a direct manifestation of Telopa. He also studied with many other Indian adepts. His two main masters, Nāropa and Maitrīpa, empowered him as a regent of the victorious ones to convert Tibet. So this Master Great Translator commands two great teaching traditions of explanatory tantras and practice lineages.

Marpa had innumerable disciples and many lineages originated with the Marpa Kagyu. Four major transmissions are distinguished here: the Four Pillars, the Rechung Kagyu, the Dakpo Kagyu, and the Kamtsang Kagyu. The Four Pillars were Marpa's main students: Ngogtön Chödor of Zhung (1036-1102), Tsurton Wang-ngé of Dol, and Metön Tsönpo of Tsangrong, who received mainly the exposition transmission. The fourth was Mila Shepa Dorjé (1052-1135), who received mainly the transmission of the practice lineage. The great Milarepa was known as "the single earring of the snow lands," and was identical to the mighty adepts of India. He is known to have actualized the ultimate state of unity in a single lifetime, and tamed innumerable human and nonhuman beings. His name is famous throughout the world. Of his many excellent disciples, the holders of the hearing lineage, who are like the sun and the moon, are especially exalted.

The Rechung Kagyu originated with Milarepa's heart-son who was like the moon, Rechung Dorjé Drakpa (1083-1161). He was adopted by the pair Machik Drupai Gyalmo and Tepupa Drimé Shenzen and they bestowed the quintessence of the heart-treasure instructions. These were brought back from India and formulated as *The Later Dharma Cycle of the Formless Dākinī* (*Lus med mkha' 'gro'i chos skor phyi ma*). The Treasury of the Hearing Lineage was passed mainly to Gyalwa Khyung Tsangpa (b. 1115) and from him to Machik Angjo. From her the lineage continued through to Drogön Tsangpa Gyaré (1161-1211), who founded an extensive teaching tradition in the Drukpa Kagyu. Other practices originating with Rechungpa continued in many of the other lineages.

The Dakpo Kagyu originated with Milarepa's disciple who was like the sun, the monk Tsojé or the Incomparable Dakpo Lhajé, also known as Gampopa (1079-1153). He taught his regular disciples the Kadampa

stages of the path and the meditative absorption from the sutra tradition that is adorned with the name *mahāmudrā*. He taught the uncommon mahāmudrā of the mantra connected to Lama Mila's path of methods to his extraordinary disciples.

"Four Great" lineages descended from his four main disciples: the Barom Kagyu from Barompa Darma Wangchuk (1127-1199/1200), the Pakdru Kagyu from Pakdru Dorjé Gyalpo (1110-1170), the Kamtsang Kagyu from Khampa Usé, or Lord Dusum Khyenpa (1110-1193), and the Tsarpa Kagyu from Zhang Tsarpa Tsöndru Drakpa (1123-1193). At the main seat of Gampo, the succession was held by Dakpo and his two nephews, their student Dakpo Duldzin, later by the great scholar-practitioner Tashi Namgyal (1512-1587), and others in a continuous succession up until the present. This is known as the Dakpo Kagyu, making five lineages.

"Eight Lesser" or later lineages originated from the students of Glorious Pakmo Drupa (Pakdru Dorjé Gyalpo). These are the Drigung Kagyu from Jikten Sumgön (1143-1217), the Taklung Kagyu from Tangpa Tashi Palwa (1142-1210), the Tropu Kagyu from Drogön Gyaltsa (1118-1195), the Lingré Kagyu from Lingré Padma Dorjé (1128-1188), the Martsang Kagyu from Chöjé Marpa Druptop, the Yelpa Kagyu from Yelpa Yeshé Tsek (1134-1194), the Yazang Kagyu from Zarwa Yeshé Sengé (d. 1290), and the Shuksep Kagyu from Nyipu Gyergom Chenpo (Tsultrim Sengé, 1144-1204). These are known altogether as the "Four Pairs and Eight Singles." Each one of them was a thriving hub of scholar-practitioners with boundless dharma transmissions, seats, and activities.

The Drukpa Kagyu is the lineage of the students of Tsangpa Gyaré, who was the spiritual son of Lingré Padma Dorjé. His principal disciple, Götsangpa Gönpö Dorjé (1189-1258), gave rise to the Upper Druk lineage. Gyalwa Yangönpa (1213-1287/8) was in this lineage. Lorepa Darma Wangchuk (1187-1250) produced the Lower Druk. Nine "lions" held the seat of what was known as the Middle Druk.

The Karma Kamtsang Kagyu is the lineage headed by the Karmapa incarnations, beginning with Glorious Dusum Khyenpa (1110-1193), the Great Adept Karma Pakshi (1204-1283), and Omniscient Rangjung Dorjé (1284-1339), and continuing up to the present. Within that there are also other great successions, such as that of the Tai Situ, Gyaltsap, Zhamar, Pawo, and Dreho incarnations. This is the root lineage.

There are also two main branches of Kamtsang Kagyu: the Zurmang

and Nedo. The Zurmang tradition began with Masé Tokden Lodro Rinchen (b. 1386), also known as Trung Masé, who was a student of the fifth Karmapa Dezhin Shekpa (1384-1415). He received the transmission of the Cakrasaṃvara Hearing Lineage. The succession of the incarnations of his students that have held the seat of the dharma lineage constitute the Zurmang Kagyu.

The Nedo Kagyu are the holders of the teachings originating with the great master Karma Chakmé (Rāga Asya, 1613-1678), a disciple of the tenth Karmapa Choying Dorjé (1604-1674) and the Sixth Zhamar Garwang Chokyi Wangchuk (1584-1630). In accordance with the aspirations of Karma Chakmé, the Nedo Kagyu developed into two systems, one emphasizing the Kagyu that is the Nedo root dharma lineage, and one emphasizing the Nyingma transmission of his student Palyul Rikdzin Kunzang Sherab (1636-1698) and Padma Rikdzin (1625-1697).

Kongtrul makes special mention of Situ Panchen Chökyi Jungné (1700-1776), the previous incarnation of his own teacher. He credits him with revitalizing the doctrine of the practice lineage, which had become a mere “reflection” of its former self by his time. But this venerable lineage that Nāropa called “longer than the source of the river” is destined to endure. According to the prophecy of Lord Marpa, as long as the victor’s doctrine survives, the lineage of experience and realization will continue unbroken.



- cc" The Yoga of Inner Heat
  - [(1) The Time of the Ground]
  - [(2) The Time of the Path]
  - [(3) The Time of Result]
- ii" The Specifics of Practice
  - aa" Total Liberation through the Upper Door
  - bb" The Path of Great Bliss of the Lower Door
- c" The Benefits
- bb' Illusory Body
  - 1" The Name and the Divisions
  - 2" The Meditation
    - a" Impure Illusory Body
    - b" Pure Illusory Body
  - c" Totally Pure Illusory Body
    - i" Understanding
    - ii" Practice
      - aa" The Illusory Body of Meditative Equipose
        - (1) The Three Isolations as Preliminary Supports
        - (2) The Main Practice Without Characteristics
        - (3) The Actual Practice With Characteristics
      - bb" The Illusory Body of Postmeditation
    - iii" Removing Doubts
- cc' Dream
  - 1" The Name and the Divisions
  - 2" The Practice
- dd' Luminous Clarity
  - 1" The Name and the Divisions
  - 2" The Meditation Topics
    - a" The Time of the Ground
    - b" The Time of the Path
    - c" The Time of the Result

## ee' Intermediate State

1" The Name and the Divisions

2" The Meditation Topics

[a" Recognition of Luminous Clarity in the  
First Intermediate State][b" Refining the Energy of Illusory Body in  
the Second Intermediate State][c" Choosing Rebirth by Blocking the  
Entrances to Wombs]

## ff' Transference

1" The Name and the Divisions

2" The Meditation Sequence

[a" Transference in Luminous Clarity]

[b" Transference in Illusory Body]

[c" Transference in the Creation Phase]

[i" Transference That Is Mental Training]

[ii" Transference That Is Physical  
Adjustment]

[iii" Transference with Forceful Methods]

[iv" Transference of Entering a Residence]

## cc. The Way That the Results Are Actualized

## b. Māhamudrā, the Path of Liberation

## i. The Long Traditions of Sutra and Mantra

[aa. The Sutra Tradition]

[bb. The Mantra Tradition]

## ii. The Three Practice Traditions

aa. Overview

bb. Explanation of Characteristics

1' The Sutra Tradition

a' Overview

b' Ground Māhamudrā, the Basic Abiding Nature  
of Things

i' The Abiding Nature of the Ground

ii' The Mode of Delusion

iii' The Way It Is

c' Path Māhamudrā: The Way to Traverse the Levels  
and Paths through Naturally Occurring Calm  
Abiding and Higher Insight



- i' Meditative Absorption
    - [aa' The Preliminaries]
    - [bb' The Introduction to Mind's Nature]
    - [cc' Enhancement]
  - ii' Cutting Off the Treacherous Path of Straying and Deviation
  - iii' The Way the Stages of the Four Yogas Arise
  - d' Result Māhamudrā: How the Real Buddha without Stains Manifests
  - 2' The Mantra Tradition
  - 3' The Essence Tradition
  - iii. Concluding Remarks on the Instructions in Individual Teaching Traditions
    - [aa. Pakmo Drupa and Drigung Kagyu]
    - [bb. Kamtsang Kagyu]
    - [cc. Drukpa Kagyu]
    - [dd. Rechungpa and the Hearing Lineages]
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## Marpa Kagyu [D]

The presentation of the meditation sequence of the Kagyu tradition of Master Marpa has two parts: the introduction that connects to the explanation and the explanation of the actual meditation topics.

## Introduction [1]

### Master Marpa's precious Kagyus

The followers of Marpa the translator, who was himself Hevajra and a master of the ocean of tantras, have manifested throughout this world of Jambudvīpa as the beautiful procession of the precious Kagyu lineage. Although I am unable to describe all of their instructions, which abide like a great ocean and are mainly connected with the highest tantra,<sup>1</sup> the main points of the meditation sequence may be summarized in the following way.

## Actual Meditation Topics [2]

This has two parts: instructions in the Six Dharmas, the path of method, and instructions on mahāmudrā, the path of liberation.

## The Six Dharmas, the Path of Method [a]

This is realized by means of three great vajra points. There are two parts: an overview and an extensive explanation.

### Overview [i]

Teach the stages of the abiding nature of things, the path, and the result  
In vajra lines that summarize the meaning of the highest yoga tantra.

The *Latter Authoritative Text*<sup>2</sup> and the *Concise Illumination of the Five Stages*<sup>3</sup> say:

The stages are the abiding nature of things,  
The path, and the arising of the results.

The abiding nature<sup>4</sup> of things<sup>5</sup> is the ground, the stages to be traversed are the path, and the way the results are actualized is the result. These three stages were taught in the amazing vajra lines that have the power to summarize the entire meaning of the tantras of highest yoga. The glorious Nāropa and his spiritual heirs in the Kagyu lineage taught these instructions in their essential, eloquent explanations.

### Extensive Explanation [ii]

This has three parts: The abiding nature of the basic ground, the stages of traversing the path, and the way the results are actualized.

## The Abiding Nature of the Ground [aa]

The two abiding natures are coarse, subtle, and very subtle.  
 Three lights all are empty, luminous mind.  
 Aggregates, constituents, channels, vital essences, and native  
 body are the ground.

The former text states:<sup>6</sup>

The abiding nature of things is twofold:  
 The abiding manner of mind and of body.

In this way there are the two: the abiding nature of the mind and the abiding nature of the body. These texts also explain each of those two as threefold:<sup>7</sup>

Know that coarse, subtle, and very subtle  
 Are their common and inseparable stages.

## [The Abiding Nature of the Mind] [1']

The abiding nature of the mind is explained by Ronyam Dorjé, the student of Lord Marpa's student,<sup>8</sup> as follows:

The abiding nature of mind-itself is presented as threefold.  
 It involves the pristine awareness of three lights.  
 Its inherent nature is explained as the essence of the coarse aspect.  
 The emptiness of everything, taught as the fourth emptiness,  
 Is the subtle aspect, and the very subtle aspect  
 Is manifest awakening, the mind of awakening.

The three lights<sup>9</sup> manifest in a progressive order from pure mind. The coarse mind evolves from that, possessing the eighty natural conceptions.<sup>10</sup> After the reverse progression of the three lights has stopped and everything dwells only in emptiness, it is the subtle mind. The ultimate mind of awakening that is free of fixation on the characteristics of the emptiness experience, named “manifest awakening” (*mngon par byang chub*), is luminous clarity. It is explained as the very subtle mind.

Therefore, the mind that is referred to as the stained causal continuum

(*rgyu'i rgyud*) is the subtle aspect, and the stainless causal continuum is the very subtle aspect of mind.

### [The Abiding Nature of the Body] [2']

In a similar way, the three of the body are described in the same source:

The abiding nature of the body is ascertained  
 To be coarse, subtle, and very subtle.  
 All the aggregates, constituents, and sense fields  
 That have the inherent nature of the support and supported  
 Mandalas of deities are ascertained to be coarse.  
 The channels, energy currents, and bodhicitta  
 Are ascertained to be essentially subtle.  
 The single bliss existing in the support and supported—  
 That coemergence is taught as the very subtle.

The coarse body is that physical impure body of aggregates, constituents, and sense fields that is the object of refinement into emptiness during the initial stage of creation phase meditation. The subtle body is the channels, energy currents, and vital essences that are accomplished as the deities of the mandalas of Body, Speech, and Mind.<sup>11</sup> The very subtle body is the native body that is inalienable from the coemergent three vajras or three kāyas at the time of fruition.

How are these the bases of refinement? The coarse is the imputed basis of refinement, the subtle is the short-term basis of refinement, and the very subtle body is the ultimate basis of refinement.

Of those, the meaning of the latter may be summarized by saying that the abiding nature of the mind is luminous clarity by nature, unrestricted, undivided, and free of all elaboration—the realm of reality (*chos dbyings*; *dharmadhātu*). The *Liberative Essence*<sup>12</sup> describes this same thing as inseparable profundity and clarity.<sup>13</sup> Native mind and the naturally abiding affinity (*rigs*) are also this very thing. The nature of this has already been mentioned many times.<sup>14</sup>

As for the abiding nature of the body, [the *Hevajra Tantra*] says:<sup>15</sup>

In the great bliss of the yogini's *bhaga*<sup>16</sup>  
 The Teacher with thirty-two major marks,

And endowed with eighty minor marks,  
Is present in the aspect called “seminal fluid.”

Without that, bliss would be lost.  
[Without bliss, that becomes naught.]<sup>17</sup>  
Because it lacks capability, it is dependent.  
Bliss comes from deity yoga.

This itself is not the thing of buddhas.<sup>18</sup>  
Nor is it a manner of non-thing.  
It has the form of faces and arms—  
The form of sublime unchanging bliss.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore all beings are coemergent.

The term “seminal fluid” (*khu ba*) refers to what is produced from relative awakening mind (*byang sems*; *bodhicitta*),<sup>20</sup> the quintessence of the channels, energy currents, and vital essences that is the apparent support of sublime unchanging bliss. Being beyond the reality of atoms, it is the essence of pristine awareness. This is the native body itself. The victor Rangjung Dorjé<sup>21</sup> explains:

Channels, energy currents, and vital essences are interdependently originated, arising from the appearances of mind.<sup>22</sup> Those appearances are produced from relative bodhicitta. Since [those channels, etc.] become the support for coemergent pristine awareness, they are taught as the abiding nature of the vajra body.

Concerning that, the Seventh Lord [Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso]<sup>23</sup> said that the innate nature, lacking the stains of the eight groups of consciousness, abides as the four kāyas and is the fully developed affinity without a beginning in time. This is the same vital point as the position taken by lord Rangjung.

In this way the abiding nature of these two—body and mind—is impossible to separate, like water from ice. So it is called the union of two kāyas at the time of the ground. This itself has the capacity to be clarified as direct [valid cognition of] reflexive awareness<sup>24</sup> only on the

strength of meditation, and not by any other means. That is because, as it occurs [in the *Highest Continuum*]:<sup>25</sup>

There is nothing at all to remove,  
And not the slightest thing to be added.  
Look genuinely at the genuine.  
When genuinely seen, it is total liberation.

## The Stages of Traversing the Path [bb]

This explanation has two parts: a general brief introduction and explanations of the individual main topics.

### General Introduction [1']

In general, there are two types of path: ripening and liberating. The path of liberation has both creation and completion phases. Completion phase is further divided into with and without characteristics, or skillful methods and liberation, and so on. All of these are described above or below in this text. Here, it is time for the explanation of the completion phase paths of skillful methods and liberation and, more specifically, the path of skillful methods known as the Six Dharmas of Nāropa. On what tantras are these completion phases based? The past gurus have said:

These instructions are based on the father tantra *Guhyasamāja*, the mother tantra *Mahāmāyā*, the essence *Hevajra*, the quintessence *Cakrasaṃvara*, and the oath-bound guardian *Catuḥpīṭha*.<sup>26</sup>

The statement that these instructions are based on these exceptional five great root tantras and their concordant tantras and branches is just an approximation. In fact, these instructions are the ultimate completion phase of the entirety of tantric mahāyoga and especially of the nondual tantras. The following reasons were posited by Mikyö Dorje<sup>27</sup> and his spiritual heirs:

It is because the cycle of father tantras such as *Guhyasamāja* contain very extensive presentations on the energy currents and

clearly teach the instructions on illusory body and luminous clarity; the mother tantra cycles of *Cakrasaṃvara* and *Hevajra* contain very extensive presentations on the channels and vital essences and clearly teach the yogas of inner heat and action-mudra; the yogas of dream and intermediate state come from the *Vajradāka Tantra*,<sup>28</sup> *Samvara Origin Tantra*,<sup>29</sup> and others; the *Samputa*, *Catuhpīṭha*, and so on clearly teach the instructions on transference; and especially, the root and condensed tantras of the nondual *Kālacakra Tantra*<sup>30</sup> and the *Trilogy of Bodhisattva Commentaries*<sup>31</sup> give very extensive and clear presentations on all three—channels, energy currents, and vital essences—and on the yogas of inner heat, action-mudra, and so forth.

The root scripture for this is the teaching of the pristine awareness ḍākinī, *Perfect Words [Esoteric Instructions of the Ḍākinī]*.<sup>32</sup> Marpa composed commentaries on the meaning of its secret words. The main sources are those composed by Telo and Naro, such as the ones known as the former and latter *Authoritative Texts on Six Dharmas*.<sup>33</sup> There appeared about thirty such major and minor indisputable Indian works that form the main source of these teachings. Then there is the related authentic supportive literature from the dharma cycle of the Cakrasaṃvara Hearing Lineage, such as *The Vajra Lines of the Hearing Lineage*<sup>34</sup> and *The Four Scrolls of the Hearing [Lineage]*.<sup>35</sup>

There are differences in the positions of the former masters as to the classification and summary of these instructions. Those of Lama Ngokpa<sup>36</sup> et al. summarize the essence of the six dharmas into mixing and transference according to Nāropa's *Eight Verses*.<sup>37</sup>

The intermediate states of birth and death, dream,  
And the intermediate state of existence remain three,<sup>38</sup>  
But in practice are subsumed into two: mixing and transference.  
Mixing is the means for awakening through meditation,  
And transference is the method of awakening without meditation.

Thus they can be called lineage instructions of the “three illusions” (*sgyu ma gsum*) or the two instructions for “mixing and transference” (*bsre 'pho*). Lord Marpa's *Stream of Elixir*<sup>39</sup> groups them in sets of four or eight:

Inner heat and illusory body are for awakening through meditation. Transference and action-mudra are awakening even without meditating. Dream and luminous clarity are for awakening by sleeping. Intermediate state and mahāmudrā are for awakening through knowing the intrinsic nature.

From Lord Milarepa we have “introducing the eight intermediate states.” In the *Eight Lines*, Tebupa<sup>40</sup> posits eight practices in four pairs:

Inner heat and action-mudra: two.  
 Dream and intermediate state: two.  
 Luminous clarity and union: two.  
 Transference and entrance: two.

Lord Rechungpa<sup>41</sup> listed “three cycles of mixing or nine cycles of mixing and transference”:

- (1) Inner heat mixes passion with great bliss.
- (2) Illusory body mixes aggression with the lack of valid existence.
- (3) Luminous clarity mixes stupidity with nonthought.
- (4) Mixing inner heat and illusory body is daytime meditation.
- (5) Mixing dream and luminous clarity is the nighttime meditation.
- (6) Mixing intermediate state and transference is the deathtime meditation.
- (7) Inner heat is for diligent individuals.
- (8) Dream is for the lazy.
- (9) The short-lived should mix with transference.

Drikung Repa<sup>42</sup> designated ten dharmas of Nāropa: First is the path of ripening by (1) empowerment. In the path of liberation, the gradual type of person practices (2) creation phase. The main practice of the path is (3) inner heat. The instantaneous type practices (4) luminous clarity. Resting clearly in reflexive awareness, (5) entrance, (6) transference, (7) dream, and (8) intermediate state are auxiliary practices. By meditating on those, the short-term results will be (9) the common spiritual powers of the five signs, the eight qualities,<sup>43</sup> the eight major attainments,<sup>44</sup> the four activities<sup>45</sup> and so forth. (10) The ultimate results will be the dharmakāya for one’s own sake and the two form kāyas for the sake of others.



Seben Repa<sup>46</sup> divided the instructions into those for attaining the supreme spiritual powers in this life and in the intermediate state. Based on inner heat, dream, luminous clarity, and transference, the diligent will attain awakening in this life. The method for the lazy to attain awakening in the intermediate state of existence is through the instructions on the intermediate state.

According to Lord Gampopa,<sup>47</sup> (1) inner heat is awakening through meditation, (2) dream is to awaken through making illusion the path, (3) luminous clarity is to awaken by making deep sleep the path, and (4) transference is how to awaken without meditating. Entrance transference is an auxiliary. Counting dream and illusory body as one, and making the intermediate state a branch of that, there are six dharmas, or alternatively, they are condensed into four root dharmas.

All the followers after that unanimously agree with *The Latter Text on Austerities*<sup>48</sup> and others that contain the enlightened intention of Nāropa and his spiritual descendents, and they hold the teachings of Gampopa et al. to be supreme. Therefore there are six dharmas: four root dharmas with two branches.

## The Individual Main Topics [2']

This has three parts: connecting that which refines with that which is to be refined, delineating the four modes, and a detailed presentation of the meditation topics.

### That Which Refines and That Which Is to Be Refined [a']

The four states are what is to be refined, and the path that refines them

Is the four root dharmas with their two branches.

For a living person to attain awakening in the current body in a single lifetime, the stains of habitual patterns of the four states<sup>49</sup> that are to be refined must be refined away. That is, they must be made into the path of the four kāyas. The special instructions for the path that refines in that way are exactly these four sets of teachings—inner heat and so on. For that reason they have been posited as the root dharmas, as it says in the *Latter Authoritative Text*.<sup>50</sup>

Sleeping, dreaming, sexual union,  
 And ordinary time; for these four  
 There are practices of four times.  
 They should be known from the guru's oral teachings.

The practices of the intermediate state and transference are taught as branch dharmas. Including those two, we have the basis for the definition of the so-called Six Dharmas of Nāropa. So which of the states is refined by which dharma? *The Concise Illumination of the Five Stages states*.<sup>51</sup>

Sleeping, dreaming, sexual union,  
 And ordinary time; for these four,  
 Identifying them with the four chakras  
 And understanding the channels, vital essences, and mind....

Taking up that idea, Lama Ngokpa et al. say:

During ordinary time, mind—the sovereign—abides at the navel, during dreamtime at the throat, during sleep at the heart, and during sexual union it abides at the crown of the head.

As it states here, the mind abides at the navel during ordinary time. Its essence is to have an idea of things, which involves many thoughts. That state is refined by the esoteric instructions of illusory body and serves as the path of the *nirmāṇakāya*. The ordinary time is synonymous with “the time of waking apart from others” since it is not tainted by the other three states.

During dreamtime the mind abides at the throat. Its essence is that the energy currents create existent or nonexistent forms. That state is refined by the esoteric instructions of dream and serves as the path of the *sambhogakāya*.

During deep sleep the mind abides at the heart. Its essence is to be totally overwhelmed by darkness, taking a form like unconsciousness. That state is refined by the esoteric instructions of luminous clarity and serves as the path of the *dharmakāya*.

During sexual union the mind abides at the crown of the head. Its

essence is to be coated by the stains of irresistible desire and to have the idea of contact between two sexual organs. That state is refined by the esoteric instructions of inner heat and serves as the path of the *mahāsukhakāya* (body of great bliss). What is called “the state of the fourth apart from others” is synonymous with the state of sexual union. The state of movement [of vital essence]<sup>52</sup> also refers to that. Since the force of the habitual pattern of that movement causes the arousal of desire for the desire [realm], there is no difference in those two. Since it is fourth in the enumeration, following the waking state, it is also referred to as “the fourth.”

### Delineating the Four Modes [b']

The literal meanings of the Six Dharmas have a textual tradition of both sutra and mantra.

Their general meaning is common and special; their hidden meaning is experience and realization.

Ultimately, they are concordant with training and the actual experience beyond training.

To apply the analysis of the four modes precisely to those Six Dharmas, first one develops an understanding by hearing the literal meaning of the Six Dharmas:

- (1) The bliss of pristine awareness *fiercely burns* (*gtum*) and conquers afflictive emotion.
- (2) All phenomena of samsara and nirvana appear only as *illusory body*.
- (3) *Dream* indicates by example that all apparent phenomena appear to our deluded perceptions but do not truly exist.
- (4) The abiding nature of all phenomena is *luminous clarity* free of all the extremes of elaboration.
- (5) Because of our deluded concepts of dualistic appearances, we wander *in between* (*bar ma dor*) samsara and nirvana.
- (6) The practice of the holy dharma of unmistaken sutras and tantras *transfers* (*'pho ba*) one onto higher and higher levels and paths.

You should know that the two perspectives of the scriptural traditions of sutra and mantra could be applied separately to each of those as well.

The general meaning of the Six Dharmas is the experience gained through reflection:

- (1) *Caṇḍālī* (inner heat) is to bond with the pledge-mudra.
- (2) Objective appearance is viewed as the *illusory* deity's *body*.
- (3) *Dreams* are recognized through the vital point of purposeful intent.
- (4) One refines *luminous clarity* through apprehending the instant visualization and the subsequent dissipation.<sup>53</sup>
- (5) The *intermediate state* is cut through by recognizing it.
- (6) The pristine awareness of the moment of death *transfers* [the consciousness] up.

Each of those also has two: the meaning found commonly in tantras and esoteric instructions, and in the special pith instructions of the vital points in the hearing lineage.

The hidden meaning of the Six Dharmas is that which is realized through meditation:

- (1) The great creative energy of bliss, warmth, and nonthought is consummated.
- (2) Energy-mind<sup>54</sup> matures as the deity's illusory form.
- (3) Energy-mind arises as the deity's form just from the four empties.<sup>55</sup>
- (4) One's own nature is recognized through example and actual luminous clarity.
- (5) The union of appearance and emptiness is liberated as saṃbhogakāya.
- (6) The ball of light is transferred by sound.

Each of those has two subdivisions: the arising of concordant experiences and the actual realization. The Six Dharmas that are explained as ultimate meaning are the concordant experiences of exalted beings in training. The actual attainments themselves are at the time of attaining the union experience that is beyond training.

## Detailed Presentation of the Meditation Topics [c']

This has two parts: a combined explanation of the essence and the objects and means of purification and individual explanations of the actual meditation topics.

## Combined Explanation of the Essence and the Object and Means of Purification [i']

The particular meditation topics are the coemergent pristine awareness of

Bliss-, appearance-, awareness-, and clarity-emptiness, of three times, and of inseparability.

They refine the six aggregates and constituents, and actualize the six families.

Concerning those Six Dharmas as explained above, the subject matter to be explained on this occasion is the particular meditation topics that come from pith instructions on the vital points in the hearing lineage. We will describe the essence of each of them in sequence.

The name “inner heat” (*gtum mo, caṇḍālā*) is used to describe the esoteric instructions on inner heat, the meditation method, the union of bliss and emptiness that arises from it, and the means of expression that teaches those two. There are many applications of the name; however, all others are imputations. The real inner heat is the coemergent pristine awareness of bliss-emptiness and so that is called its essence. Such distinctions between real and designated should be applied to the other dharmas as well.

The essence of illusory body is the coemergent pristine awareness of appearance-emptiness. Although they are a union, one cannot realize it unless ultimate truth has been actualized. So the real illusory body is the manifestation of the illusion-like pure body from the three lights occurring in reverse order,<sup>56</sup> together with the pristine awareness energy currents, arising out of luminous clarity.

The essence of dream is the coemergent pristine awareness of intrinsic awareness (*rig pa*) and emptiness. Mere optical illusions appear and yet are none other than one's own mind. Thus they are held to be awareness-emptiness.

The essence of luminous clarity is the coemergent pristine awareness of clarity-emptiness. The three consciousnesses<sup>57</sup> or three emptinesses are totally pure and everything is empty. Its clarity is not the clarity that comes from external conditions but rather it is like a gem that shines with its own light. This is explained in *The Five Stages*.<sup>58</sup>

The essence of the intermediate state is said to be the coemergent pristine awareness of the three times. This is because, as explained in the *Vajra Garland*,<sup>59</sup> although we imagine that we arise, abide, and cease in the intermediate state, it is just the subtle body of energy-mind.

The essence of transference is the coemergent pristine awareness of inseparability. This is because one may consider the essence that is free of a transferred object and a means of transference as the indivisible three kāyas or the inseparability of the three vajras.

The addition of the term “coemergent pristine awareness” (*lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes*) to all of these indicates that those very unions [of bliss and emptiness, etc.] are not something that arise in former and latter stages, but that they abide simultaneously. This is called “coemergent.” In *Coemergent Spiritual Power*<sup>60</sup> it states:

When something arises simultaneously with anything  
It is called coemergent.

Thus, “coemergent” is described as being like the equal flavor of phenomena and reality. In the same way, since all of those six dharmas are in essence the transcendent path, they are referred to as “pristine awareness” (*ye shes*, Skt. *jñāna*).

Which means of purification is applied to which object of purification? The esoteric instructions of inner heat as the means of purification are applied to the pristine awareness aggregate and pristine awareness constituent, and so on, as the object of purification. Once they have been refined, the result of purification is the actualization of the sixth or Vajrasattva family spiritual powers and the jñānakāya (pristine awareness body).<sup>61</sup>

Applying this to the other dharmas, the esoteric instruction of illusory body refines the aggregate of form, the constituent of earth, and so forth, and actualizes the tathāgata family spiritual powers and the nirmāṇakāya. The esoteric instruction of dream refines the aggregate of feeling, the constituent of fire, and so forth, and actualizes the padma

family spiritual powers and the sambhogakāya. The esoteric instruction of luminous clarity refines the aggregate of conceptions, the constituent of water, and so forth, and actualizes the vajra family spiritual powers and the svabhāvikakāya. The esoteric instruction of the intermediate state refines the aggregate of formations, the constituent of wind, and so forth, and actualizes the karma family spiritual powers and the dharmakāya. The esoteric instruction of transference refines the aggregate of consciousness, the constituent of space, and so forth, and actualizes the ratna family spiritual powers and the mahāsukhakāya.

Glorious Rangjung Dorjé, Lord Khachö Wangpo,<sup>62</sup> and others, thinking that a thorough comprehension of the objects of purification, the means of purification, and the results of purification in this way was important for a good understanding of the vital points of the path, elaborated on the brief mention of these subjects in Lord Marpa's *Stream of Elixir*.

### Individual Explanations of the Actual Meditation Topics<sup>63</sup> [ii']

This has six parts: (1) inner heat, the main pillar of the path; (2) illusory body, the enhancement of the path; (3) dream, the measure of the path; (4) luminous clarity, the heart of the path; (5) intermediate state, the assurance on the path; and (6) transference, the escort on the path.

#### Inner Heat [aa']

This has two parts: the general presentation of the meaning of the name and divisions, and the specific discussion of the meditation topics.

#### The General Meaning of the Name and Divisions [1"]

The pillar of the path is inner heat: emptiness is the outer,<sup>64</sup>

Short *a* is the inner, and union is the secret inner heat.

They sever elaborations, are the practice, and unite one with the state of supreme bliss.

The pillar of the path is inner heat (*gtum mo*)<sup>65</sup> because by generating mundane and transcendent coemergence it is like a pillar or foundation stone of the path of union. The meaning of the name is this: "heat" or "fierce" (*gtum*) means that by targeting the vital point of something,

the impure aggregates and constituents are burned up and all afflictive emotion and discursive thoughts are severed at the roots. *Vajragarbha's Commentary*<sup>66</sup> states:

Because it burns, it is described as “inner heat.”

And from Saroruha's *Commentary on the Difficult Points of Hevajra*:<sup>67</sup>

Inner heat is that which eradicates the afflictive emotions of existence from the roots.

And Nāropa's *Difficult Points* states:<sup>68</sup>

Because it performs fierce burning actions  
It is called “heat.”

“Female” (the feminine particle *mo*) means that it swiftly gives birth to the coemergent pristine awareness of bliss-emptiness.<sup>69</sup> As it states in *Abhayākara's Source Commentary*:<sup>70</sup>

*Caṇḍ* (from the Sanskrit *caṇḍālī*) is the definite realization of the inherent essence of consummate wisdom, and *ā* is great compassion. Those are called the guide to the penultimate state, hence “inner heat.”

Specifically, there are three designations: fierce *a* (*a gtum*), short *a* (*a thung*), and stroke *a* (*a shad*). The first is according to its function: conquering afflictive emotion. The second is its intrinsic nature: unborn. The third is its shape: the last part of *a* is like a brush stroke.<sup>71</sup>

There are a great many lists of the divisions of inner heat, but the glorious Khachö Wangpo set forth just three: outer, inner, and secret. His source for that was the *Tantra That Equals Space*:<sup>72</sup>

Whoever desires the pristine awareness of reflexive awareness  
Should investigate the particulars of *caṇḍālī*:  
First, natural *caṇḍālī*,  
Second, fierce *caṇḍālī*,  
Third, *caṇḍālī* of joining.



Thus, three kinds are clearly presented here: Natural *caṇḍālī* is that the nature of all phenomena is emptiness, so that is the outer inner-heat. Fierce *caṇḍālī* is the short *a* in the navel, so it is the inner inner-heat. Joining *caṇḍālī* is the union of emptiness that is sublime in all aspects and the supreme unchanging great bliss. The first one severs conceptual elaborations about the view, the second brings the meditation topic into practice, and the third joins with the state of supreme, unchanging great bliss. Therefore, in general, the meditation sequence of a single individual follows that order. But there are also particular cases where one would first practice the inner inner-heat and then, as an enhancement of that, train in the outer inner-heat and the secret inner-heat.

It is also possible to draw forth the experiences of the latter ones [fierce *caṇḍālī* and joining *caṇḍālī*] when meditating on the former [natural *caṇḍālī*], once there is the ability to join with the supreme inner-heat and successfully receive the introduction [of mind's nature]. Not wavering from the certainty of the meditation on secret inner-heat carries the outer and inner inner-heat as auxiliary practices of the path. This becomes a very amazing practice, as it guides practitioners according to the level of their faculties.

Of those, what is called “*caṇḍālī* that realizes the outer meaning with certainty” refers to coemergent union and other stages in the guidance of mahāmudrā and the experiences that arise from it. Lord Gampopa even spoke of it as the inner heat of mahāmudrā. This is in fact the ultimate inner heat, but there is no fault in referring to it as “outer meaning.” Since it presents primarily the discernment of emptiness it is consistent with the definitive meaning of both the middle and the final turnings of the wheel [of the dharma]<sup>73</sup> and is thus even more distinguished. It also has the same meaning as the *mantrayāna* practice of dissolving all the eighty natural conceptions into emptiness through the force of mental visualization. It is because of this commonality with sutra and mantra that it is described as “*caṇḍālī* that realizes the outer meaning with certainty.”<sup>74</sup>

In the expression “space-*caṇḍālī* of most hidden secret meaning,” the outer meaning of space is the emptiness that is the intrinsic nature of all phenomena, as stated in the *Supreme Glory*:<sup>75</sup>

Everything has the characteristic of space;  
Yet space itself has no characteristic.

The inner is the space of *dhūti* that will be explained. The secret is the *bhaga* of the vajra queen. The suchness is explained in the *Kālacakra*.<sup>76</sup>

Pervasive space endowed with the vajra of space.

Here, the inner space is the source of phenomena<sup>77</sup> within the unrestricted *avadhūti*, the expanse of space that contains the entire extent of the three realms. It is the realm of luminous clarity free of obscuration. The reflexive awareness of pristine awareness undivided by dualistic thinking, the absolute vajra, unchanging bliss, engages [with that inner space] in the practice of yoga. That is the *caṇḍāli* of space. It is described as “secret” or “hidden” in the *Vajra Garland*.<sup>78</sup> This means that it has the quality of being secret or hidden from those without the karmic fortune to be able to realize it.

Why is the nonduality of emptiness endowed with all aspects and unchanging bliss referred to by the term *caṇḍāli*? The meaning can be found in the profound tantra:<sup>79</sup>

The blazing of inner heat in the navel  
Burns the five tathāgatas.  
By burning Locanā and the others,<sup>80</sup>  
The moon of *haṃ* drips.<sup>81</sup>

The term is consistent in both etymology and function: the word “navel” (*lte ba*) signifies the middle or core of all phenomena, and “central” (*dbu ma*) means that all extremes are abandoned. “Inner heat” (*gtum mo*) is the reflexive awareness of pristine awareness, since it severs all conceptual thought and bestows nonconceptual pristine awareness of great bliss. “Blazing” (*sbar ba*) is made manifest through the force of the yoga. It signifies clearing away the stains of fixating to the actual true existence of the aggregates, constituents, and sense fields. This has actually been spontaneously cleared away since forever in the chakra-wheels of tathāgatas, so “burns” (*bsreg pa*) applies to all thought formations that are *not* of the five masculine or feminine buddhas of the five families or the host of bodhisattvas. The word “drip” (*’dzag pa*) or “radiate” (*’phro ba*) is used to show that this process reveals bodhicitta (*byang sems*), the excellent moon of great bliss that is the eternal illusory display of all existence.

There are other lists of divisions. Three kinds of inner heat are described in the *Awn of Esoteric Instructions*:<sup>82</sup> action, yogic, and coemergent. The *Tantra That Equals Space* explains twelve divisions of “naked” (*gcer bu*) *caṇḍālī*. The *Secret Elixir Tantra*<sup>83</sup> makes divisions such as “dense” (*stug po*) *caṇḍālī*, and so forth. And there are many more ways to classify it: action and pristine awareness; ordinary and supreme; with or without characteristics; relative and absolute; ground, path, and fruition; substance, mantra, and pristine awareness; the three inner heats of channels, energy currents, and vital essences; and so forth.

## Specific Inner Profound Vital Points [2"]

This has three parts: The object that is targeted, the method of how to target it, and the benefits of this targeting.

### The Object That Is Targeted [a"]

**What is targeted are the three channels and four chakras.**

In general, based on the yoga of channels, energy currents, and vital essences, these paths actualize the pristine awareness of coemergent bliss and emptiness and cause the accomplishment of the state of union, Vajradhara.<sup>84</sup> For that reason one must become knowledgeable in the arrangement of these channels, energy currents, and vital essences. However, here I will not elaborate for fear of being wordy. It was presented before in mere token fashion in the exploration of the stages of study.<sup>85</sup> For a thorough study, one should learn from the precious tantras and, in particular, the source commentaries on their intent that are equivalent to those tantras, such as *The Profound Inner Reality*.<sup>86</sup>

Here is a summary of the meditation object of whichever profound yoga and whatever object or support is to be targeted, from Telopa’s *Lamp That Illuminates the Esoteric Instructions of Fourfold Suchness*:<sup>87</sup>

What are the supports? Channels. How many are there? 72,000 main ones. From that it is reduced to three hundred and sixty. From that, one hundred twenty. From that, thirty-two. From that, twenty-four. From that, three. Those are the main ones. In those, the one hundred and twenty are in four chakras.

What are their locations? The navel, the heart, the throat, and the top of the head. How are they allocated? Sixty-four at the navel, eight at the heart, sixteen at the throat, and thirty-two at the head. What are their shapes? They open out in brilliance like when the sunlight converges on a bed of lotus flowers. In color, since they are made of lunar and solar substance, they are iridescent like moon-gems. What is their mode? Since they are the joining of method and wisdom, they abide joined face-to-face.

Telopa's short sources and vajra songs that include the six dharmas teach that, among those various arrangements of channels, the three channels and the four chakras are the ones to target when doing the yogas.

### **How to Target It [b"]**

This has two parts: the general presentation of the arrangement of the three yogas, and the specifics of taking up their practice.

### **The Three Yogas [i"]**

This has three parts: the yogas of energy currents, vital essences, and inner heat.

### **The Yoga of Energy Currents [aa"]**

**The energy currents are held by four applications and five vital points.**

The mount for the mind that engages objects, the maker that creates the array of beings and environments of the three realms, is the root and branch currents of energy (*rtsa*, Skt. *prāṇa*). Since binding them immovably is the foundation of all paths of liberation and skillful methods, one should know how they are used in yogic practice. The main technique is to join the upper and lower energy currents in the vase [of the abdomen] by employing the four applications and the five vital points. As it says in the *Samvara Origin Tantra*:<sup>88</sup>

Concentrate on uniting the upper and lower  
Circulating energy currents.  
When accustomed to that application,  
You will attain a state of stability.

There are four ways that those applications control the energy currents:

- (1) control of the duration as the inhalations get closer according to the measure of one's own fingers<sup>89</sup>
- (2) control of the numbers as the breaths become fewer
- (3) control of the force as the external movement becomes more gentle and relaxed
- (4) control of the benefits as the length of time increases that it stays in its own place, such as the navel, without moving out.

Of these, the first three also occur in some species of animals, so it is not the authentic yogic state. The last one is the authentic control of the energy channels since it will give rise to experiences in the mindstream.

The four applications are taught in the *Latter Authoritative Text*.<sup>90</sup>

Inhaling, filling, dispersing, and  
Shooting like an arrow:  
If you do not know these four applications  
You risk qualities turning into faults.

The five vital points are

- (1) the vital point of expelling, to prevent the energy current from reverting<sup>91</sup>
- (2) the vital point of inhaling, to hold it in its own place
- (3) the vital point of filling, to subdue it
- (4) the vital point of dispersing, to send the energy into the channel apertures<sup>92</sup>
- (5) the vital point of shooting, to blend the outer and inner energy currents.

## The Yoga of Vital Essence [bb"]

**The vital essences of melting bliss are joined and bound without emission.**

There are a limitless number of vital essences (*thig le*, Skt. *bindu*) that spread out from the indestructible root vital essence.<sup>93</sup> The principal ones used in yoga practice are the red and white bodhicitta, the two vital essences of melting bliss that join together through the yogic exercise of blazing and dripping. Based on that, the movement of concepts is bound without emission.<sup>94</sup> That, then, is the meditation of the pristine awareness of coemergent bliss and emptiness. Since this body is produced from the full development of the semen and ovum in the womb, the red and white bodhicittas are the main constituents. The rest of the body parts are manifestations of those two.<sup>95</sup>

Of those two bodhicittas, the white abides mainly at the top of the head and the red mainly at the navel. The quintessence of the red aspect that was obtained from the mother is the short *a* of inner heat. It has four characteristics:

- (1) It is the red color of the totally pure nature of the sun.
- (2) It is hot to the touch, since energy currents are the essence of fiery warmth.
- (3) It is experienced as bliss, because bodhicitta is the sublime elixir of pristine awareness.
- (4) It is emptiness by nature, because the realm of reality is the essence of the perfection of wisdom.

The quintessence of the white aspect that was obtained from the father is the essence of bodhicitta as the letter *ham*. It also has four characteristics:

- (1) It is white, because it is an aspect of the moon constituent.
- (2) It is iridescent like the surface of a pearl, since it is connected to the *caṇḍālī* that is the intrinsic nature of wisdom.
- (3) It is glossy, because bodhicitta has the potency of elixir.
- (4) It is spherical, that is, totally and perfectly round, since it is easy to entice into any of the channel locations.

That white aspect itself mainly resides at the top of the head. Parts of it pervade the body in general, and in particular the four chakras. A melted aspect of the white aspect dwells in each of the four chakras. They have the quality of acting as support for the arising of the four joys of Body, Speech, Mind and pristine awareness that occur when the stains of the four constituents of body, speech, mind, and bliss are refined. A stream of melted aspect issues from the upper chakras that has the ability to generate that kind of quality. After the sixteen joys based on the sixteen white aspects occur, the coemergent joy arises.

The red aspect resides at the navel, but aspects of it pervade the chakras. So in each of the four chakras there resides individually a melted aspect of the red aspect that has the quality of acting as the support for the arising of the bliss of the three vajras that occur when the stains of motility, darkness, and buoyancy<sup>96</sup> are refined. A stream of its melted aspect issues from the upper chakras that has the ability to generate that kind of quality. After the twelve (three times four) joys<sup>97</sup> based on the twelve red aspects occur, the coemergent joy arises.

What is the reason for calling the white and red constituents “bodhicitta”? Bodhicitta has three aspects: cause, path, and result.

(1) The causal bodhicitta is the beginningless and endless bodhicitta that has been present in the mindstreams of sentient beings since forever.

(2) The path bodhicitta is of two kinds: general and hidden. The general meaning is the bodhicitta (“awakening mind”) of the two truths proclaimed in the causal vehicle. The hidden meaning is the bodhicitta that is the unobscured quintessence of the constituent that abides since forever. By binding the vital points<sup>98</sup> of the unobscured vajra body, that bodhicitta melts and through the power of interdependent connection the bodhicitta of the two truths arises in the mindstream. Thus, the quintessence of white and red is bodhicitta. Of these two bodhicittas, general and hidden, the latter one is sublime. The general is bodhicitta of merely the mind, that which is the supported, and therefore it cannot become the irreversible and unchanging bodhicitta. The hidden is the bodhicitta of both the supported mind and the body, the support, and thus it becomes both [irreversible and unchanging].

(3) The resultant bodhicitta is Vajradhara itself. In brief, the essential red and white bodhicittas reside in the navel and the top of the head

as *a* and *ham*. At the time of being a samsaric person who proclaims “I,” the dualistic fixation of the self-entity of an individual and of phenomena is created. However, the interdependent connection created by the blazing and melting from binding the vital points of the support [the body] causes the pristine awareness of the two nonselves to arise naturally. One attains the self of nonself—the dharmakāya, which is the assurance of Vajradhara, and the form kāyas, which are the assurance of the tathāgatas. Then without moving anywhere else one accomplishes the state where enlightened activity is omnipresent and constant. This is taught in the *Vajra Garland*.

### The Yoga of Inner Heat [cc"]

At the time of the ground, inner heat resides at the navel or secret place as substance, mantra, and pristine awareness.  
It ignites through visualizations, energy currents, and skillful methods.

The uncommon, inner inner-heat that produces unchanging bliss has three phases: the time of the ground, the time of the path, and the time of the fruition.

### [The Time of the Ground] [(1)]

Most tantras say that at the time of the ground inner heat resides at the navel. The *Oral Teachings of Mañjuśrī*<sup>99</sup> says it is at the secret place. Vajragarbha’s *Commentary*<sup>100</sup> explains that it is in both. These and other views are not contradictory because, as stated in that commentary, it is “like the moon’s form in water or in the sky.” That is to say, like the moon in the sky, the real inner heat resides in the navel, and like the moon’s reflection in water, an image of inner heat arises in the secret place. So either the navel or the secret place is acceptable, or it appears to be in both places.

What is its essence? There are three explanations: substance, mantra, and pristine awareness. Inner heat as substance is explained in four ways: as vital essence in *Cakrasaṃvara*, as fire in the *Vajra Garland*, as energy current in the *Vital Essence of Mahāmudrā*,<sup>101</sup> and as channel in Vajragarbha’s *Commentary*, since the lower end of the right channel has been referred to by the name “tummo” (*gtum mo*).



An explanation of inner heat as mantra is found in the *Vital Essence of Spring*,<sup>102</sup> where it accords with teachings on the intrinsic nature of short *a*:

The form of the letter *a* in the navel  
Is well known as “short.”

Inner heat is described as pristine awareness in the [*Cakrasaṃvara*] *Abhidhāna Tantra*.<sup>103</sup>

This fire of pristine awareness, once it is stirred by the karmic  
energy currents....

So from among all those modes of explanation, what is, in fact, the essence? Here, in the context of the two truths, it is reasonable to say, from the point of view of the relative truth, that the actual thing is the vital essence and its functional power is essentially fire. This is because this very thing is described as the quintessence of the *rakta* [or red vital essence] that was obtained from the mother, and as such it is the root of all the body’s warmth and the ruler of all the constituents of the red aspect. Also because it has the functional power of burning and melting, for when it is ignited the habitual patterns of the aggregates, constituents, and sense fields are burned up and the great blissful bodhicitta melts. The other descriptions are assigned from the perspective of its individual features: energy currents because they are the contributing condition for igniting inner heat, channels because that is its place or support, and mantra because that is what blesses the inner heat, and so on. In terms of the ultimate truth, since inner heat is really the essence of pristine awareness, even though relatively it has the nature of vital essence, in fact it is held to be pristine awareness.

### [The Time of the Path] [(2)]

Three supports for the path are the conditions by which it is ignited:

(1) It is ignited by visualization of seed syllables, hand implements, deity forms, fire, vital essence drops, *nāda*,<sup>104</sup> and so on.

(2) It is ignited by the energy currents. In general it is aroused by the karmic energy currents. In particular, the *Ocean of Dākas*<sup>105</sup> says that it is ignited by the energy currents in the right and left channels, which are the intrinsic nature of the letters of the vowels and consonants [of Sanskrit]. The *Vajra Garland* says that it is ignited by the energy in the central channel alone. The *Kālacakra* says that it is ignited by the mixing of the vital energy current with the downward-clearing energy current in a mass or bundle.<sup>106</sup>

(3) It is ignited by skillful methods, by relying upon methods using one's own body and another's body.

The essence of the blazing fire is clear and unimpeded since it transcends the phenomenal nature of atomic particles, which are gross. It is experienced in meditative equipoise as a direct object of individual reflexive awareness. It is the power and force of energy current yogas and such. It elicits the four joys and four emptinesses while burning up the habitual patterns of the aggregates, constituents, and sense fields. It is what serves as the dominant condition for the fire of pristine awareness. Although it is not an external fire, it has the ability to warm like fire because of the force of the yoga's blessing.

The degrees of blazing are the lesser, medium, and great blazing that occur in the three stages of entering, abiding, and dissolving.

The essence of that path, or the actual path, is the pristine awareness itself that occurs due to the bliss of the total blazing of the inner heat fire. Since inner heat is said to be the antidote to conceptual thought, it must be pristine awareness that is the actual antidote because mere warmth does not have that ability. Concerning that, pristine awareness has three aspects: nonthought, bliss, and clarity.

(1) The pristine awareness of nonthought: The appearance of inner heat's blazing stops the movement of energy currents and the engagement with objects by the sense faculties. Once such emanating thoughts are brought to an end, one abides in total nonthought.

(2) The pristine awareness of bliss: Blazing inner heat melts the bodhicitta and the joy that is generated illustrates the pristine awareness of bliss.

(3) The pristine awareness of clarity: When all dualistic thoughts are purified within the central channel, the pristine awareness of the union of bliss-emptiness or clarity-emptiness arises through the progressive and reverse sequence of the three lights in the stages of visualization.

### **[The Time of Result] [(3)]**

It is explained that discriminating pristine awareness has the function of conquering the hordes of devils and so on, as it says in the *Kālacakra*:<sup>107</sup>

The fully expanding flames of pristine awareness totally burn up all the hosts of devils along with their objects.

### **The Specifics of Practice [ii"]**

This has two parts: the explanations of total liberation through the upper door and the path of great bliss of the lower door.

### **Total Liberation through the Upper Door [aa"]**

For that, meditate on the path of total liberation using the upper door of one's own body  
With the vital points of body, time, and object.  
There is bliss, heat, nonthought, and pristine awareness, with enhancement.

To accomplish pristine awareness of bliss-emptiness in that way through the yoga of channels, energy currents, and vital essences, one should first practice the total liberation of the upper door that relies on one's own body as the method. The *Latter Authoritative Text* says:<sup>108</sup>

There are three vital points to that:  
Body, time, and object.

As this indicates, one should meditate with these three: the vital points of body posture, the vital points of practice time, and the vital points of the object of visualization. The first is the six-point posture of meditative stability.<sup>109</sup> The second is during the time of equal movement [of breath

in the two nostrils] and so forth. The third has three parts [in relation to the branches of approach and attainment]: to develop what has not been developed, to stabilize what has been developed, and to enhance what has been stabilized:

- (1) To develop what has not been developed is to perfect the yoga of *approach* through four practices: accomplishing the body of reflected form, establishing the ground of the affinity, the movement of the three secrets, and the dance of the water moon.
- (2) To stabilize what has been developed is successful *attainment* through evoking the activity of peaceful and wrathful *caṇḍālī* of the channels, currents, vital essence drops, and pristine awareness in the body's chakras endowed with four hidden things.
- (3) To enhance what has been stabilized is to genuinely enter into *great attainment* by the application of increase, the application of change, the application of the subtle, and the application of the supreme.

One turns without bias the wheel of introductory instructions that reveal the real face of *caṇḍālī*, the great profound mystery that all phenomena are the utter inseparability of the ground that is to be purified, the path that purifies, and the purity of the result. By being skilled at gathering all phenomena of the path and its result in the essence of *caṇḍālī*—the profound appearance of the yoga of every phenomenon—then it is all gathered into the single sufficient pristine awareness of all appearance. That is the meditation.<sup>110</sup>

## The Path of Great Bliss of the Lower Door [bb"]

**Find another's body and experience the bliss of sexual union.**

This is a subsidiary practice that enhances pristine awareness by relying on action-mudra<sup>111</sup> with another's body. It is for someone who has stabilized the path of total liberation of the upper door. As explained in the *Samvara Origin Tantra*:<sup>112</sup>

Now the characteristics of yoginīs  
And their authentic virtues will be explained.

*Ḍākinī* is *padminī* (lotus),  
*Lama* is *hastinī* (elephant),  
*Khandaroha* is *śaṅkhinī* (conch),  
*Rupinī* is *citriṇī* (design).

The wise should examine partners to see  
 Which of the four families they are.<sup>113</sup>

Following that brief presentation there is a more extensive discussion about their individual bodies, attitudes, ways to find the channels, and so forth. Accordingly, using the methods for examining, attracting, and invisibility,<sup>114</sup> one should find a partner with excellent outer, inner, and secret qualities. At the time of experiencing the bliss of sexual union with one who has been matured through study and empowerment, and who has perfectly pure vows and sacred pledges, both bodies are blessed and the secret channels located. Applying the descending, holding, reversing, and spreading techniques will produce the ultimate pristine awareness of great bliss.

### The Benefits [c"]

**Ten signs, qualities, appearance-emptiness, and bliss-emptiness  
 Are all produced by inner heat...**

By targeting the vital points of the body and meditating on inner heat, there are immediate benefits such as the ten signs, the eight qualities, and so on. The ten are the well-known signs of smoke, mirage, and the rest that arise.<sup>115</sup> The eight are mentioned in the *Stream of Elixir*:

Eight qualities will arise. The quality of earth is that the body is majestic and dignified. The quality of water is that the body is glossy. The quality of fire is that it is very bright. The quality of the wind is lightness. The quality of the moon is that others do not see your shadow. The quality of the sun is being invisible. The quality of space is that the eyes are always open without blinking day or night like the autumn sky.

And:

Since all the last ones are perfected qualities and arise from within coemergent pristine awareness that is bliss free from elaborations, luminous clarity manifests continuously.

In particular, ultimately, as it says in the *Sampuṭa*:<sup>116</sup>

So, what occurs from this?  
In brief, one attains awakening.  
The awakening that is attained  
Through ten million countless aeons,  
Will be attained in this lifetime  
Through sublime bliss.

The supreme method that is distinguished by great bliss enables one to attain the body of Vajradhara, the state of union, in one lifetime. In particular, by relying properly on another's body, the immediate effects will be an unfolding of physical strength and radiance, longevity, attracting *ḍākinīs*, and an increase in mental clarity and meditative absorption. The ultimate attainment, like using quicksilver to transform iron into pure gold, is that the quintessence of the channels, energy currents, and vital essences will increase, gradually consuming the refuse<sup>117</sup> and transforming the body into the actual rainbow body of inseparable form-emptiness, the *saṃbhogakāya*. The mind is actualized as the luminous clarity of inseparable bliss-emptiness, the enlightened intention of *dharmakāya*. That is enlightenment—and that is what this does. So it is said.

### **Illusory Body [bb']**

There are two parts to the explanation of the enhancement practice of illusory body: a general presentation of the meaning of the name and the arrangement of divisions, and a specific discussion of the meditation.

### **The Name and the Divisions [1"]**

...and to enhance the path is illusory body.  
The seven are examples, dream, intermediate state,  
Luminous clarity, emanations, pristine awareness, and illusion,  
With divisions of two, three, four, or more.

The subject, great bliss itself, is enhanced by the arising of the illusory-like object. Therefore the enhancement of the path is the practice of illusory body. The name means that although there is no form, yet various forms are apprehended. Or that there is appearance without intrinsic existence. Hence “illusory body (*sgyus lus*).”<sup>118</sup>

The general divisions of illusory body are explained under seven headings: example illusions, appearance illusions, dream illusions, intermediate state illusions, luminous clarity illusions, emanated illusions, and pristine awareness illusions.

(1) Examples: These are given in the sutras where it says, “Those who create illusions emanate forms...” and so on.<sup>119</sup> Using substances and such, magicians can cause horses, elephants, and so on, to suddenly appear even though they do not, in fact, exist.

(2) Appearance illusion: As in the *Root of Wisdom*,<sup>120</sup> “like dreams, like illusions...” and so on, all phenomena are like dreams and illusions, appearing while having no true existence.

(3) Dream illusion: The *Commentary [on Valid Cognition]*<sup>121</sup> states:

They have bodies, but since they are subtle  
They are not obstructed by anything.

As it says, the body in a dream comes from habitual patterns and is composed of subtle energy-mind, but it is not obstructed by anything.

(4) Intermediate state illusion: The *Abhidharma Treasury*<sup>122</sup> says, “faculties are intact and movement is unhindered,” and so on. The body in the intermediate state arises from the mind. It has all faculties intact and it moves without hindrance.

(5) Luminous clarity illusion: *Ocean of Dākas*<sup>123</sup> says:

The King Tantra of the yogas  
Explains it and its rites.  
The illusions of luminous clarity  
Refers to illusions in the world.

Such statements refer to the forms of emptiness that occur on the strength of completion stage meditation, as in mirror divination.<sup>124</sup>

(6) Emanated illusion: This refers to the mandalas and so on that are emanated by the meditative absorption of stabilized creation and completion.

(7) Pristine awareness illusion: As it says in a sutra, “Tathāgatas are the emanated illusions of pristine awareness.” It is the ongoing cycle of the inexhaustible adornments of the three secrets of the tathāgatas.

In addition, there is a twofold division of the general meaning and the hidden meaning of illusory body and a twofold division of sitting meditation and post-meditation illusory body. There are threefold divisions into the illusory body of beginners, of the third stage,<sup>125</sup> and of union; and of outer meaning, hidden meaning, and union. There is a fourfold division into literal meaning, general meaning, hidden meaning, and ultimate illusory body. From those and other divisions, I now offer a brief presentation of the esoteric instructions from this precious lineage.

## The Meditation [2"]

This has three parts: impure illusory body, pure illusory body, and totally pure illusory body.

## Impure Illusory Body [a"]

The practice is to see that impure phenomena are like the eight examples.

The esoteric instructions of the vital points of practice in this teaching tradition must be accomplished by stages. The first of three stages is known as impure illusory body. The meaning of this name “impure illusory body” (*ma dag pa'i sgyu lus*) is expressed in the first progressive division of the *Vajradāka Tantra*:<sup>126</sup>

In the three realms, all the beings  
Without exception are like illusion.



Inanimate and animate being  
 Is without a frame of reference.  
 Visible and tangible things  
 Are all just like illusions.

The appearances of impure things in the three realms—inanimate or animate, visible or tangible—all appear, like an illusion, but have no true existence. They are therefore impure illusions. For those who do not realize that, these esoteric instructions were taught as a method for getting rid of the fixation on attributes that results from attachment to the true existence of things. The general training is described in the *Pure Gold of the Six Dharmas*:<sup>127</sup>

So, first you should view all external appearances as being like the eight examples of illusion. All of these forms and such appear to the deluded mind but there is nothing out there, as in a dream or an illusion. They arise from conditions, like echoes or reflections. They are impermanent, like dewdrops and water bubbles. They appear but have no intrinsic nature, like mirages and rainbows. By training in that way and becoming accustomed to it, you will discard any ideas based on appearances.

As it says, one ascertains through these examples of illusion, dream, and so on, that this whole appearance of samsara and nirvana—the external and internal things included in the environments and their inhabitants in the three realms—are appearing without any true existence, and one meditates on that.

The specific training is to establish that one's own body is form-emptiness, similar to a reflection; speech is sound-emptiness, similar to an echo; and mind is awareness-emptiness, similar to an illusion. Since this topic is found in the Perfection of Wisdom sutras and in the tantras, it is a teaching common to both sutra and tantra.

### **Pure Illusory Body [b"]**

The pure is to train with the display of the deities, mantras, and pristine awareness.

Transformation of the impure appearances of the environment and its inhabitants into the pure mandala of deities is the reason that this is called “pure illusory body” (*dag pa'i sgyu lus*). This is held in common among all the lower sections of tantra, but it is greatly distinguished from the path of the perfections.

It is the way of the profound mantra to teach that the aggregates, constituents, and sense fields all exist originally as the intrinsic nature of the deity. In order to realize that very thing, which has not been previously realized, one must ascertain the manner of being. Then by meditating, the special meditative absorption of illusory display will develop. Visualizing the environment and its inhabitants as the deity will refine away the attachment to ordinary appearance and then ascertaining the illusory-like empty appearance of even the deity will refine any thoughts of attachment to the supremacy of the deity. That is the sequence.

Therefore, one regards all appearances of one's own body and the environment and its inhabitants as a support palace and supported mandala of deities; all sounds as the innate sound of profound mantra; and all mental comings and goings as the play of pristine awareness. At the same time, one meditates on those too as being like an illusion—not truly existing other than as one's own imputation. The way those are illustrated by the three examples is consistent with what was taught before in words from the *Five Stages*.<sup>128</sup>

In this Kagyu tradition, ascertaining that whatever appearances arise in the impure environment and its inhabitants are all illusion is impure illusory body, and transforming those very appearances to those of deities and ascertaining the same thing is pure illusory body, conventionally speaking. The explanations on the five stages in the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* explain that the illusory body at the end of the three isolations<sup>129</sup> is the impure, and the illusory body that is one part of the union refined by luminous clarity is pure illusory body.<sup>130</sup>

### Totally Pure Illusory Body [c"]

This has three parts: understanding, practice, and removing doubts.

## Understanding [i"]

The totally pure has time, method, cause, manifestation, and essence:

Five distinctions...

Pure illusory body is posited as “pure” simply because one clarifies ordinary appearances, meditating on them as the deity. However, since it is a meditation that is essentially conceptual imputation, it is not really totally pure. Here, this is “totally pure illusory body” (*rnam dag sgyu lus*) because the body produced from the quintessence of energy-mind, like the appearances in mirror divination, is not conceptually imputed. This is the illusory body of the hidden meaning unique to the highest mantra, the main stage of the path of self-blessing by energy-mind.

There are several different explanations of “self-blessing” in the tantras.<sup>131</sup> However, self-blessing of illusory body in the *Guhyasamāja* and self-blessing of forms of emptiness<sup>132</sup> in *Kālacakra* have the same meaning. Both illusory bodies and forms of emptiness share the following:

- (1) distinctive time: they arise after gross and subtle appearances and thoughts have subsided
- (2) distinctive method: they occur from stopping dualistic energy-currents and thoughts in the central channel
- (3) distinctive cause: they are produced from the extremely subtle quintessence of energy-mind
- (4) distinctive manifestation: they are seen as clear appearances without imputation like those in mirror divination
- (5) distinctive essence: they are the appearance of pristine awareness that is totally sublime and beyond the phenomenal nature of subtle atoms.

For reasons such as these, the Eighth Lord Mikyö Dorjé and his heirs held them to be “totally equivalent.”

The basis for the practice of the illusory body that is the hidden meaning unique to the highest tantra, the preliminaries for its practice, the way it is practiced, the distinctions in the methods of the two stages of creation and completion, and so forth, that are summed up in the positions of the precious Kagyu were explained before.<sup>133</sup> Now, in the hidden meaning of *caṇḍālī*, once one has perfected the blazing appear-

ances, the four supreme joys will arise from the continuous melting bliss of the blazing and dripping from the dissolving of pristine awareness-energy into the supreme *avadhūti*. That engenders a distinctive mental isolation, which in turn produces a pseudo-illusory body with five distinctions. Then the real luminous clarity eliminates the stains and the ultimate illusory body with distinctions is produced. It is that which is called the kāya of union or saṃbhogakāya. On this subject, Lord Tepuba said:

Example illusory body is the reflection in a mirror. Real illusory body is the aggregate without obscuration. Illusory body's own essence is the marks and signs of the pure vowels and consonants. The quality of illusory body is that it is the support for overcoming devils and actualizing enlightenment. Once that occurs, that form will remain for as long as space remains.

That is a perfectly complete teaching on illusory body as cause, path, and resultant body. In the *Lamp Summary of Conduct*<sup>134</sup> it is explained that this hidden meaning of illusory body is not [present beginning with] creation phase through the end of mental isolation. In the mantra tradition it is a required component in the accomplishment of the form kāyas in the full awakening in one lifetime.

### Practice [ii"]

This has two parts: the illusory body of meditative equipoise and the illusory body of postmeditation.

### The Illusory Body of Meditative Equipoise [aa"]

This has three parts: the three isolations as preliminary supports; based on those supports, the main practice without characteristics; and with characteristics.

### The Three Isolations as Preliminary Supports [(1)]

...and three isolations that have preceded.

Both the yogas that do not use elaborations and characteristics and those that do use elaborations and characteristics are foundations for accomplishing meditative absorption. Isolation of body is the basis for the isolation of speech, the vajra repetition.<sup>135</sup> Isolation of mind develops from that. Once these three isolations have preceded, the stages of illusory body that develop from emptiness or bliss arise automatically. In this context, making a connection with the special vital points in the yoga without characteristics brings the three doors [of body, speech, and mind] to rest without movement. In the yoga with characteristics, the vital points and functions of the body are bound. The speech is the vajra repetition of energy vase-breathing.<sup>136</sup> In the mind, impressions subside within melting bliss. This is slightly different than the three isolations and the way to practice them described in the *Guhyasamāja*. However, both make the same vital point: that the arising of meditative absorption, which is the actual thing to be accomplished, is a function of the energy currents entering, abiding, and dissolving in the central channel. In addition, this tradition is a profound esoteric instruction for those of lower or intermediate faculties.

### The Main Practice Without Characteristics [(2)]

Without characteristics, through the force of blessings,  
Illusory body is born from the pristine awareness of mahāmudrā  
And manifests to intrinsic awareness.

Those who practice the yoga without characteristics should remain in the aforementioned three isolations in a solitary place. From within that state, one offers unconditionally one's body, enjoyments, and roots of virtue and arouses total devotion to the guru. That will sever mental elaborations of the three times. Resting in that equipoise, the force of the blessing will pacify the characteristics of the two obscurations in their own place and the pristine awareness of mahāmudrā will actually manifest. Focusing on that itself, meditation leads to the mental concentration, which controls the energy currents. That gives rise to the following experiential appearances:

When earth dissolves into water, smoke appears.  
When water dissolves into fire, mirages appear.

When fire dissolves into wind, fireflies appear.  
 When wind dissolves into mind, candle flames appear.  
 When mind dissolves into mental events, the moon appears.  
 When mental events dissolve into ignorance, the sun appears.  
 When all ignorance dissolves into emptiness, darkness like an eclipse  
     occurs.  
 Then everything is empty, arising like the sky free of clouds.

Again, the three lights arise in reverse order: Awareness arises out of the emptiness of everything; from that, mental events; and from that, mind. From mind with energy currents, the illusory form—which is illustrated by the twelve examples of illusion— adorned by the major and minor marks, arises as direct manifestation to the pristine awareness of individual reflexive awareness. Not only that, this will cause the sense of unhindered perception of all the pure and impure worlds and beings in the three times. This will occur either gradually, by leaps and bounds, or all at once according to the specific mental capacities.

### The Actual Practice With Characteristics [(3)]

After accomplishing the root yoga with characteristics,  
 Through action- and pristine awareness-mudra, the cause of the  
     inexhaustible body  
 [Arises after] the progressive and reverse order of the three lights  
 As the kāya of the quintessential mind-energy adorned by major  
     and minor marks.

In practice based on the yoga with characteristics, one may use vajra repetition and the isolation of mind as actually found in the tradition of *Guhyasamāja*, or what arises from the *caṇḍālī* yoga that was described before. In either case, once one has become well accomplished in the basic foundation of the root yoga with its distinctive qualities of the three isolations, one may unite in action-mudra with a qualified awareness partner or with a pristine awareness-mudra emanated by meditative absorption. With this impetus, the cause of the nondissipating body, the primordially abiding affinity itself, arises with luminous clarity as the three vajras [following] the progressive and reverse manifestations of the three lights. This makes one free of obscuration.

This form transcends the phenomenal nature of sub-atomic particles; it is produced from the quintessence of energy-mind, adorned with the visually captivating major and minor marks. Like a reflection in a mirror, it appears while lacking any inherent nature, entirely free from the four extremes of being a thing, a non-thing, both, or neither. This form that is the intrinsic nature of the minds of all buddhas and not clothed in the characteristics of the aggregates, constituents, and sense fields, appears only to pristine awareness. It is the quintessential form of emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects, its unimpeded luminous clarity arising like a rainbow.

If meditative experiences, signs, and certainty do not arise, one should undertake enhancing practices, such as using laq-dye or the physical exercises of sword and mirror, and also practice.<sup>137</sup>

This process is the hidden meaning freely elucidated in the general commentarial tradition of the Kagyu in an unbroken continuity up to the present. It is the position of the Eighth Lord and others that there are two presentations concerning this instance of illusory body: in conjunction with *Guhyasamāja* primarily, when it is based on the three isolations, and in conjunction with the intentions of *Cakrasaṃvara*, *Hevajra*, and *Guhyasamāja*, when it is based on the mudras.

### The Illusory Body of Postmeditation [bb"]

**Postmeditation is appearances and such, integrated on the path.**

Once the illusory form arises as a clear appearance in meditative equipoise, the postmeditation is that all ordinary appearances, along with dreams and intermediate states, indicated by “and such” in the root text, are integrated on the path by illusory-like meditative absorption.

### Removing Doubts [iii"]

**The third of five stages, forms of emptiness of individual  
withdrawal and meditative stability  
Are the meaning of mahāmudrā, so are hidden elsewhere.**

This [completely pure illusory form] is basically the same as the forms of emptiness—the mahāmudrā endowed with the supreme of all

aspects—that arise from the self-blessing in the third of the five stages of *Guhyasamāja*,<sup>138</sup> and from the individual withdrawal and meditative stability of vajra yoga.<sup>139</sup> It is the extremely profound, hidden meaning from the oral explanations to disciples, a pith instruction of the main practice of the hearing lineage. Therefore it is not generally presented in the practice guides, but hidden elsewhere. Scholars who are bloated by mere book learning cannot understand these points properly and are totally lost.

### **Dream [cc']**

Dream yoga, the measure [of progress on the path], has two parts: a general presentation of the meaning of the name and arrangement of the divisions, and a specific explanation of the practice.

### **The Name and the Divisions [1"]**

The measure, dream, is divided into example, meaning, and the end of time.

Dream yoga is the measure of [progress on] the path because the level of success on the path of recognizing the three illusions<sup>140</sup> can be identified through the stable or unstable experiences in dreams. It is called “dream”<sup>141</sup> because it deals with the arising of the very form of habitual patterns or the apprehension of energetic forms of objects.<sup>142</sup>

There are several divisions:

- (1) example dream: the actual dream
- (2) real dream: daytime appearances
- (3) dream at time’s end: the intermediate state.

From the perspective of essence there are

- (1) dreams of beginners
- (2) dreams of yogins
- (3) dreams of noble beings.

Also:

- (1) minor dreams: the fragmented appearances during sleep



- (2) intermediate dreams: unstable appearances of the intermediate state
- (3) major dreams: the stable deluded appearances of the waking state.

Here the presentation will concern example dream. Dreams arise due to the particular ways that the energy currents and mind congregate in the channel locations. The essence of dream is that it is the arising of various appearances of habitual patterns within the sleeping state.

The body in that dream may or may not separate from this gross body.<sup>143</sup> In either case, it is essentially a body of energy-mind. Since it mimics the habitual patterns of the present body it is also called the habitual body. That time of dreaming is double delusion,<sup>144</sup> because the power of the habitual patterns of this delusion, the current waking relative appearances, give rise to various appearances in the dream that do not exist even on a relative level. The instructions that enable one to take the dream state as the path are known as “dream instructions” (*rmi lam gyi gdams pa*).

## The Practice [2"]

**The esoteric instructions of recognizing, training, and combining  
Ascertain appearance, including death, to be like that.**

In the beginning, in order to take dreams as the path, one must embrace two vital points: unbroken mindfulness in the day and the rigorous techniques of esoteric instructions at night. There are four impediments to recognition: excessive emptiness, excessive sleepiness, excessive wakefulness, and excessive complacency. Once these are dispelled by remedial esoteric instructions, the dream is recognized to be just that, and that is dream recognition [or lucid dreaming]. Moreover, like the dream, all phenomena are essentially empty and as such can appear as anything at all. Thus the two truths are combined. The dream practice in the causal vehicle is to think, “How amazing—these reflected forms arise interdependently with no separation between the relative phenomenon (*chos can*, Skt. *dharmin*) and its nature (*chos nyid*, Skt. *dharmatā*).” The dream practice in this context of the completion phase is when one can arouse dreams themselves as mahāmudrā illusory body deities.

In the middle, once dreams are recognized, one must train in emanating deities, transforming the four elements, and so forth. One refines the illusion by deliberately forcing the knowledge that it is not real, and attains mastery in the meditative absorption in which one trains in worldly and transcendent liberating actions.<sup>145</sup>

In the end, one blends dreams and luminous clarity. Using the esoteric instruction for combining dreams with a meditation on suchness, the illusion-like daytime appearances blend with the dream appearances of the night, and then dreams will arise as illusory bodies. One must mix and integrate<sup>146</sup> those illusory bodies in the luminous clarity [that arises during the meditative stabilities] of instant and subsequent dissipation. In particular, one applies the example of night dreaming to the actual appearances of the day to ascertain their unreality and then meditates on that. By that one ascertains that the death appearances are dreams. Meditating in that way obviates the difficult passage of the intermediate state. Just as in a sleeping dream it might appear that one has died and wandered in the intermediate state and again taken rebirth, and yet none of that was real, in the same way the death and intermediate state and rebirth of actual appearance occur but they are merely like that, without any true nature. Ascertaining that is the breakthrough.

### Luminous Clarity [dd']

The fourth, luminous clarity, the heart of the path, has two parts: a general presentation of the meaning of the name and the arrangement of the divisions, and a specific discussion of the meditation topics.

### The Name and the Divisions [1"]

Luminous clarity, the heart, is twofold: example and actual,  
experience and realization,  
Or classified as four or five, such as natural, and so on.

The yoga of luminous clarity (*'od gsal*) is the heart of the path because the root of all practice is to realize that the abiding nature of all phenomena is naturally luminous clarity. The meaning of the name is that the inherent luminosity (*rang 'od*) of the abiding nature clarifies [or illuminates] (*gsal*) without restriction. Or “luminous clarity” is used because

even though there is no intrinsic nature, there is spontaneously present luminous appearance (*snang ba*).<sup>147</sup>

Of many divisions, the twofold ones are the most prominent: example and actual; experience and realization; day and night; thin and thick; mother and child luminous clarity, and so forth. But there are also divisions into four or five, such as natural luminous clarity and so forth, as in *The Concise Illumination of the Five Stages*, where it speaks of four kinds of luminous clarity: natural, of meditative absorption, conceptless clarity, and ultimate. Ronyam Dorjé's *Guhyasamāja Commentary*<sup>148</sup> describes five:

Natural luminous clarity is illustrated; the luminous clarity of sleep illustrates it; one familiarizes with luminous clarity of the path; connects with luminous clarity at the time of death; and the luminous clarity of dharmakāya is the result.

*The Latter Authoritative Text*<sup>149</sup> presents five kinds of luminous clarity and the times when they arise:

This luminous clarity is of five kinds:  
 Natural luminous clarity,  
 Luminous clarity arising as consciousness,  
 Luminous clarity of meditative absorption,  
 Luminous clarity of suchness, and  
 Luminous clarity of realization.<sup>150</sup>

The times of those are five:  
 The time of death and of abiding in the central channel,  
 When in meditative equipoise and in sleep,  
 When meditation and postmeditation become one taste,  
 When higher insight is realized.

In short, the reality of the basic ground, which is free of extremes such as eternalism and nihilism, is objective luminous clarity. The realization of that reality just as it is is subjective luminous clarity. This simple layout comes from both sutra and mantra sources, so it is called “general luminous clarity.” What is taught in the mantra highest tantras is called “hidden meaning luminous clarity.” There are several arrangements because

different names are used according to contexts. The example pristine awareness that is born during an empowerment and the luminous clarity of creation phase are similar to luminous clarity. All that arises from completion phase practice is genuine luminous clarity.

The real luminous clarity that is presented on this occasion is a special real luminous clarity that is made evident. Once the actual illusory body or a similitude is gathered in the two meditative absorptions, luminous clarity is made evident. That is the luminous clarity of training or beyond training, and there is no better luminous clarity than this.

## The Meditation Topics [2"]

This has three parts: the time of the ground, the time of the path, and the time of the result.

### The Time of the Ground [a"]

**In practice, luminous clarity at the time of the ground is introduced.**

Here we will present what must be practiced from among those divisions. First, the nature of luminous clarity at the time of the ground must be introduced for what it is. The minds of all sentient beings are naturally luminous clarity. That pervading principle of all phenomena is called “the primordial luminous clarity of the basic ground” (*gzhi gdod ma'i 'od gsal*).

Concerning this there are many philosophical positions according to intellectual abilities. The Sautrāntikas<sup>151</sup> assert that luminous clarity is consciousness merely being aware of its own object. The Cittamātrins<sup>152</sup> believe that it is reflexively aware, reflexively illuminated consciousness without subject-object dualism. The Mādhyamikas,<sup>153</sup> such as Pakpa Namdrol and Haribhadra,<sup>154</sup> make the mind’s emptiness of true existence the natural luminous clarity and then teach that itself as the buddha nature affinity.<sup>155</sup> In the final wheel of Dharma and the commentary on its viewpoint, the *Highest Continuum*, it is explained that the natural luminous clarity of mind and buddha nature are identical. This is not the same as the Cittamātrins, who believe that luminous clarity is the obscured neutral universal ground. Here it is held to be virtuous.

There are many defining characteristics, but in short, since the essence of mind is naturally pure of any stains it is called “luminous clarity.” If you wonder what the difference is between this and the mind’s nature of luminous clarity as asserted by the Cittamātrins and lower philosophical schools, the *Highest Continuum*<sup>156</sup> states:

Since it is subtle, it is not an object of study.  
 Since it is the absolute, it is not thinkable.  
 Since it is the profound nature of phenomena,  
 It is not the realm of meditation by the worldly and such.

There is a great difference in being or not being the object of worldly people’s study, reflection, and meditation.

In this context of the profound path of skillful methods of highest tantra mantra, there are four distinctive assertions about the mind’s nature of luminous clarity: appearances as mind, mind as reflexive awareness, reflexive awareness as great bliss, and great bliss itself as united with emptiness.

As for the stains that obscure that luminous clarity, in the causal vehicle it is, of course, held that once the objects [of attachment] are disproved,<sup>157</sup> from that time on the mind that fixates on them is relinquished and cast off. Here in the highest tantra vehicle, it is by seeing the nature of mind that the obscuring stains are relinquished as a matter of course. It is not asserted that afflictive emotions are relinquished once objects are disproved. This position is illustrated by the example of people afflicted with jaundice who perceive a white conch as yellow. Even if they know that in truth it is white, that knowledge does not prevent the yellow appearance. When the jaundice clears up, the mind that perceives yellow ceases automatically.

The method to see natural luminous clarity is taught in the “First Concise Account:”<sup>158</sup>

Just as fire that is always present in wood  
 Is not seen by means of cutting or splitting  
 But twirling the rubbing stick on its base by hand  
 Makes what abides there become visible,

In that way, the luminous clarity of mind  
 Will not be seen by means of conceptual meditation.

It becomes visible by the joining  
Of purified left and right channels.

Thus, the luminous clarity of mind will be seen based on the profound completion phase yoga that binds the dualistic energy-mind of the right and left channels in the central channel. This, then, is the so-called ground luminous clarity, and it is clearly introduced by saying “mind’s nature is thus.”

### **The Time of the Path [b"]**

**At the time of the path, vital points of the support and  
supported are bound;  
Outer, inner, and common manifest awakenings are manifest.  
Of the five occasions, sleep time is taken as the example.  
The arising of illusory body with instant or subsequent  
dissipation  
Stabilizes recognition...**

In ascertaining luminous clarity at the time of the path, the general technique is to rest evenly in the very essence of luminous clarity. Telopa said:<sup>159</sup>

Rest relaxed within the uncontrived native state;  
Bonds are released and freedom is sure.

This and other such instructions are expressed unanimously by the mighty adepts. Accordingly, with the body in the seven-point posture of meditative stability, the mind rests without support, relaxed and uncontrived. This will create the unerring yogic direct perception of emptiness.<sup>160</sup> This is the ultimate esoteric instruction of the completion phase found in the profound tantras. The reason is that once the vital points of the vajra body, which is the support, are bound, the mind, eyes, and energy currents remain in a state of nonthought. Because of the special interconnection between body and mind, the movement in the right and left channels is stopped and immobilized within the central channel, causing the direct experience of mahāmudrā, emptiness with aspects.<sup>161</sup>

Therefore the luminous mind, which is the supported, is realized as empty appearance arising as the mahāmudrā of forms of emptiness. This,

again, depends on the dissolution of the energy currents of the right and left channels in the central channel, the supreme support. There is no more profound method for affecting this dissolution than resting the mind once it is uncontrived and relaxed. Therefore, in all the esoteric instructions of highest tantra, this is called “the esoteric instruction of withdrawal” in the presentations.<sup>162</sup>

There is a special instruction for using a direct forceful method to identify luminous clarity. Through the profound meditative absorption in which the pure mandala of the environment and its inhabitants dissolves into luminous clarity, the energy currents of the moon, sun, and *rāhula*<sup>163</sup> are held at the heart center, causing luminous clarity to arise at the end of the three lights. If one trains in this right before going to sleep, one will easily recognize luminous clarity in sleep. If one recognizes that, one will also recognize the luminous clarity at death. Therefore it is known as the esoteric instruction that combines the three types of luminous clarity.

In addition, binding the vital points of the support and supported<sup>164</sup> will reveal the luminous clarity of the outer, inner, and common manifest awakenings.<sup>165</sup>

### Outer manifest awakening

The predawn sky is naturally totally pure; it transcends even the darkness of the interval when the moon’s light has set and the sun’s light has not yet risen. Likewise, having transcended the elaborated, unelaborated, and even the middle—illustrated by the sun, moon, and interval—the strength of wisdom does not conceive of anything at all like beginning, end, or in between. This teaching is held in common with the causal vehicle and is called the “outer manifest awakening.”

### Outer and inner [manifest awakenings]

In terms of recognizing luminous clarity based on another’s body, the arising of the sun of warmth, skillful methods with passion, is the experience of *increase*. The arising of the moon of bliss, wisdom without passion, is *light*. And the center, the interval that is neither one of those, is *full culmination*.<sup>166</sup> Beyond that is the experience of great bliss, from which arises the luminous clarity of an instant in which the three times are not conceived in any way. Since this is also in creation phase, it is not the experience of the pristine awareness of luminous clarity that comes about from the force of actualizing the four empties internally,<sup>167</sup>

but is nevertheless the manifest awakening through the force of connection with an awareness-consort. Therefore, it is referred to as common to both outer and inner manifest awakenings. That is because in addition to the presence of all the pure manifest awakenings described in the causal vehicle, luminous clarity is recognized at the climax of the three lights based on a spiritual partner.

### Inner manifest awakening

In the first awakening, the karmic energy currents for the most part dissolve into the wind energy currents,<sup>168</sup> and one sees light with five colors like a mirage. The second is when concepts associated with desire dissolve and there is the [experience of] *light*, like the arising of moonlight in a cloudless sky. The third is when anger dissolves and there is the *increase* of light, like the arising of sunlight. The fourth is when stupidity dissolves and there is the *culmination* of light, which is like the pervasion of darkness of the interval [between moonlight and daylight]. The fifth is when all consciousness dissolves, and there is an instant of luminous clarity free of darkness. Since it is free from the darkness of perceived and perceiver (or subject and object), the luminous clarity of reality manifests to the eyes of nonconceptual pristine awareness. It is like someone without eye disease seeing through the true nature of illusory strands of hair.

The Eighth Lord, Karmapa Mikyö Dorjé, gave special oral instructions in this context for “manifest awakening when the consciousnesses are absorbed” (*rnam shes sdud pa mngon byang*) and “manifest awakening when pristine awareness arises” (*ye shes 'char ba mngon byang*).

Now, as for applying this to practice, first one develops the recognition of the causal luminous clarity that has not yet been recognized. From the *Oral Teachings of Mañjuśrī*:<sup>169</sup>

The minds of embodied beings are refined  
When thoroughly familiar with experiences  
That occur in mere moments of death, faint, sleep,  
Yawning, and sexual union.

In general, there are five occasions that are explained in connection with the arising of luminous clarity. Of those, take the luminous clarity at the time of sleep as an example. The training is to recognize the emptiness of



everything, which is the last of the four empties, by uniting [meditation on] the five seed-syllables in the *avadhūti*.<sup>170</sup> The essence of that luminous clarity is the sleep that occurs after the moments of consciousness before sleep has dissolved and before dream thoughts and energy-influenced sleep, during which there arise moments of consciousness in dreams that are similar to the earlier daytime states of consciousness that dissolved as one fell asleep. For ordinary people, that sleep in between daytime consciousness and dreams is obscured by stupidity. But for yogins it is the nonconceptual dharmakāya—the pure pristine awareness of nondual bliss-emptiness—arising as luminous clarity like the core of a candle flame or the brilliant autumn sky. Nevertheless, since the three lights are impure, these are not the final experiences of luminous clarity that are a direct perception of the ultimate truth. Therefore this should be known as example luminous clarity.<sup>171</sup>

Concerning example and real luminous clarity, example luminous clarity is that which is free from the manifestations of the two obscurations that are based on the delusion of sleep. It occurs through the force of gathering the energy-mind in the heart center by means of two kinds of meditative stability, and so forth. Real luminous clarity is ground luminous clarity freed from incidental stains. It occurs when the powerful luminous clarity of the path has eliminated even the seeds of the two obscurations, which are the factors to be eliminated during the paths of seeing and meditation in relation to the delusion of sleep.

In this way, when sleep has been refined by luminous clarity, the seeds of concepts of the aggregates and constituents are killed off. Then, like Lavāpa, if one performs the conduct of a *bhasuku*, one will achieve the illusory-like form in this very life.<sup>172</sup>

The methods for stabilizing luminous clarity once it has been recognized by the esoteric instructions for recognizing are as follows. The interdependent connection or method of absorption of energy-mind causes the inner heat to blaze. This brings about the realization of the bliss-emptiness of the melting bodhicitta. One arises as the illusory form following the signs of energy-mind of the three lights with luminous clarity. In order to manifest the real luminous clarity, the very subtle energy-mind must enter into luminous clarity by means of the three types of conduct and the two types of meditative stability. The three types of conduct will be explained below.<sup>173</sup>

The two types of meditative stability will be explained according to the *Five Stages* and the *Lamp Summary of Conduct*. The instant [meditative stability] (*ril 'dzin*) is withdrawal all at once, as illustrated by the vanishing of the condensation that forms when one breathes on a mirror. Subsequent dissipation (*rjes gzbig*) is the gradual withdrawal as illustrated by the ice on a river or pond. Once the illusory body is allowed into luminous clarity through those two kinds of meditative stability, it will re-arise as a body that follows a reverse order of manifestation. That support of the trained illusory body will manifest the illusory body without training. As stated in the *Full Awakening of Vairocana*:<sup>174</sup>

This rainbow-like body  
Will be obtained by meditating on this very thing.

To put this into practice, one trains in the joining and re-arising of the two types of meditative stability, with the three gates of oneself and all sentient beings as inseparable from the three vajras and their indestructible sounds. That will dispel the manifest aspects of the two obscurations contained in the supported vital essences and their mount, the karmic energy currents. Then the clear autumn sky of luminous clarity will arise like the sky at dawn, free from the three adulterating conditions.<sup>175</sup> When familiarization with that is perfected, the recognition of luminous clarity will be stable.

## The Time of the Result [c"]

...and the actual result is perfected.

The guru points out just how one's own mindstream is luminous clarity primordially present as the ground. Using the daytime and nighttime luminous clarity as the path, one will perfect the realization of the actual result, the abiding nature. That is the resulting luminous clarity. It is the same as the stage of union that is stated in the *Latter Authoritative Text*:<sup>176</sup>

From the actualization of luminous clarity,  
From that, union arises.

This shows that the perfection of luminous clarity is [the state of primordial] union. In this context, the exalted Marpa says:

Example luminous clarity is the pristine awareness that manifests by relying on another's body, that of a wisdom consort. Real luminous clarity is the pristine awareness that arises when the universal ground dissolves into luminous clarity in the interval of full culmination. The essence of luminous clarity itself is that it is the space-pervading vajra awakening of all buddhas. The excellent quality of luminous clarity is that it frees from all tendencies to perpetuate bad states by clearing away the veiling darkness of full culmination, and it produces the dharmakāya and rūpakāya, which abide neither in samsara nor nirvana.

Those few words of vast meaning convey the whole corpus on the cause, path, and result of luminous clarity in its entirety.

### **Intermediate State [ee']**

The intermediate state yoga that provides assurance has two parts: a general presentation of the meaning of the name and its divisions, and a specific explanation of the meditation topics.

### **The Name and the Divisions [1"]**

**Of all intermediate states, existence is assurance.**

This yoga provides assurance about the path because it actualizes the state of union in the intermediate state of existence (*srid pa bar do*) through the single-minded assurance that was created by the practices of luminous clarity and illusory body. It is called “intermediate state” (*bar do*) because it does not fall into either side or because it abides in the middle between (*bar*) the former and the latter. It is classified in numerous ways, such as the following.

The exalted Milarepa listed six intermediate states:

- (1) the ultimate intermediate state of reality

- (2) the natural intermediate state of the path
- (3) the appearing intermediate state of birth and death
- (4) the intermediate state of dream and sleep
- (5) the final intermediate state of existence
- (6) the rebirth intermediate state of a continuum.

Milarepa also taught a division of eight intermediate states to Gampopa:

- (1) the intermediate state of view
- (2) meditation
- (3) conduct
- (4) dream
- (5) creation and completion
- (6) vital points
- (7) three kāyas
- (8) result.

Lord Rechungpa taught six:

- (1) view
- (2) meditation
- (3) result
- (4) with and without passion
- (6) with and without faults
- (7) the intermediate state of words and meanings.

Lord Khachöpa<sup>177</sup> referred to four:

- (1) the unified intermediate state of the four kāyas
- (2) the reflexive awareness intermediate state of pristine awareness
- (3) the temporal intermediate state of intrinsic nature
- (4) the unerring intermediate state of interdependence.

The *Easy Guide to the Wish-fulfilling Heart of the Intermediate State*<sup>178</sup> gives four:

Eradicate the intermediate state of birth and cessation,  
 Equalize the intermediate state of self and other,  
 Recognize the intermediate state of coming and going,  
 Steer clear of the intermediate state of being and nonbeing.

Of all these, Lord Marpa's summary of three is widely known:

The appearing intermediate state of birth and death,  
 The dream intermediate state of sleep,  
 The final intermediate state of existence.

The first two of these are practiced as the path in the four root dharmas. So of all those divisions of the intermediate state, the topic of the exposition at hand, that is, the yoga that provides assurance, relates to the intermediate state of existence.

*The Compendium of Abhidharma*<sup>179</sup> states:

Like the rising and falling of scales in a balance  
 Is the death transference and rebirth [of consciousness].

This is saying that the cessation of death existence and the deluded intermediate state existence occur at the same time. So once beings have died and not yet taken birth, it is referred to as the "intermediate existence." The characteristics [of a being in the intermediate state] are described in the *Lamp Summary of Conduct*.<sup>180</sup>

Beings totally relinquish their aggregates by stages as they enter the mandala of ultimate truth. Aroused by the wind constituent, they have sensation and are thoroughly bound by existence. They fully possess recollection, produced from causes concordant with the realm of reality. Having minds in the form of virtue and nonvirtue, they are the same as five-year-old children. They see everything and all of their faculties are whole. They partake of the food of *gandharvas*. Vajras and such cannot repel them. They are endowed with all characteristics. They possess the power of miraculous action. After they remain in the interim of transference for seven days, the virtuous or unvirtuous karma that comes from their own thoughts multiplies. Having obtained the causes and conditions, like a watermill again and again they will take rebirth as the five kinds of beings and experience the subsequent suffering of cyclic existence.

Thus, precise teachings were given in the descriptions of existence, and they are also clearly explained in a similar way in the early vehicle treatise, the [*Abhidharma*] *Treasury*.<sup>181</sup>

## **The Meditation Topics [2"]**

**The best ones recognize luminous clarity, the middling refine  
the energy of illusory body,  
The lowest block the entrance to wombs and choose.**

The yogas that refine those are, for the best practitioners, the recognition of luminous clarity in the first intermediate state; for middling practitioners, the refining of the energy of illusory body in the second intermediate state; and for the lowest practitioners, choosing rebirth by blocking the entrances to wombs.

## **[Recognition of Luminous Clarity in the First Intermediate State] [a"]**

At the time of death, the four elements and all coarse and subtle appearances and thoughts dissolve. The four empties along with the outer and inner appearing signs arise. When that happens, it is blended with previous experiences from dharma practice, such as direct realization that happened during the instant or subsequent dissipation practices in recognizing luminous clarity.

Especially during the arising of the three lights and luminous clarity, one settles directly into the view that was introduced by the guru. If energy-mind dissolves into the central channel at the heart center during the luminous clarity of death, the elaborations of dualistic appearances will of course be completely quelled and something like the cloudless sky will arise. At that time, for those whose previous familiarization was excellent, it will be like meeting an old acquaintance or a traveler returning home. But even if one can settle in equanimity once that is recognized, it will not become the realization of the abiding nature without sustaining it by settling directly in the view with which one has earlier cut through doubts. Therefore, in this life one must exert oneself in the child or path luminous clarity,<sup>182</sup> which is to ascertain the view of emptiness and blend that in the meditation of great bliss.

Of course most people maintain that the ground luminous clarity of death is the mother and the meditation on the path luminous clarity during day and night is the child. According to the view of Lord Marpa, Mila, and others, however, the mother is the natural luminous clarity that is the abiding nature of all phenomena, while the child is the lucid arising of meditative absorption in this waking state that comes from the interdependent connection of the gathering of the five quintessences. That is because there is a connection between what is created and what creates it.

In any case, if one is able to combine one's familiarity with the four empties from the gathering of the vital energy in the central channel now in the waking state with the luminous clarity of deep sleep, then one will be able to blend the mother and child luminous clarity during the basic death state through the force of the energy currents. If one can do that, then one will undoubtedly recognize the arising of the intermediate states subsequent to that, and so it is a most sublime method of recognizing the intermediate state.

Once the dissolution process concludes, the white and red vital essences blend. The potency of the channels, energy currents, vital essences, and mind and all of the quintessences coalesce in the center of the heart and the meditative absorption of emptiness, clarity, and great bliss is born. At that point the heat of inner heat, fanned by the energy currents of pristine awareness, burns up all obscurations. The vital essence of quintessential bodhicitta stirs. For yogins and yoginīs who have practiced the path luminous clarity, the power of their previous familiarity robs all the strength from delusion and obscuration in the supreme central channel. The *rāhula* of vajra pristine awareness devours all manifesting seeds of the dualistic sun and moon.<sup>183</sup> Meditating at that point, the essence of the luminous clarity of the realization that arose during whichever was the primary meditation—bliss, clarity, or nonthought—based on the luminous clarity of the previously mentioned occasions will at this time be intensified. The two obscurations will be conquered instantly by its power and one will attain freedom over the perfection of the two accumulations, like a wealth lord enjoying his wealth. Then, as is said, “bliss is *saṃbhogakāya* and clarity is *nirmāṇakāya* and nonthought is *dharmakāya*.” This refers to enlightenment in the essence of the three *kāyas* as explained in the direct guides on the five stages by previous masters. This is the infallible interdependent connection between the vajra body and mind.

That pristine awareness of realization is, of course, referring to the undifferentiated three kāyas. But in this context, since the luminous clarity of death mainly accomplishes the dharmakāya, we take it to mean that.

### [Refining the Energy of Illusory Body in the Second Intermediate State] [b"]

That same luminous clarity of the first intermediate state occurs at the time of death for all sentient beings possessed of six constituents.<sup>184</sup> However, those without some familiarity with the vital points of the esoteric instructions fail to recognize it or, if they do, they cannot remain with it. In those circumstances, the group of the five gathered quintessences comes apart and disappears. Then consciousness and its mount, the vital energy current (*srog rlung*), leaves through whichever of the nine orifices is appropriate.<sup>185</sup> As soon as awareness separates from the corporeal body, it immediately raises up as a mental body of the intermediate state. That birth is the actual defining moment of the intermediate state of existence. The defining characteristics [of the beings in this intermediate state] are as described before. On this occasion, most beings will be stricken by four frightening sounds,<sup>186</sup> three terrifying abysses,<sup>187</sup> and other such unspeakable horrors that are the apparent delusional manifestations of the habitual patterns of unwholesome minds. For people who have created some merit, those perverse appearances will not arise. Rather they will have pure visions of being welcomed by gods rendering service and such, and will proceed from one pleasantry to the next.

To make that intermediate state into an experience of the path, it must be recognized. In order to recognize it by means of the six definite signs, such as possessing miraculous action and so on,<sup>188</sup> one must apply whatever dharma practice one is familiar with—whether śrāvaka training, mahayana awakening mind, mantra creation phase, yogic view, and so on—to whatever positive or negative appearances arise. Just recalling that training will protect from fear and automatically liberate from danger. Therefore, one should not stray into those usual deluded appearances for even a moment. Keeping awareness in its true mind-state will strengthen consciousness and provide control over the energy currents. At that time, deluded appearances may arise fleetingly, but they will be taken as the path.



For practice to occur at a time like that, it is extremely important to be thoroughly familiar with it. Therefore, one should think, “right now is the intermediate state,” and integrate that with dharma practice. Particularly when frightening or painful kinds of circumstances occur, one can imagine that they are the deluded appearances of the intermediate state. Then one either rests within that state of suchness or meditates intently on their illusory nature, the lack of true existence. From time to time, one applies intermediate state training intently in the present moment, such as by examining whether the six definite signs of the intermediate state are present or not. Recognizing the intermediate state and meditating on it as the path are more effective than other methods. As Lord Nāropa taught:

In this intermediate state, the body, which combines energy and mind, is a most excellent support because the phenomena consistent with the saṃbhogakāya have been present in it since the beginning. Furthermore, consciousness in a dream is seven times clearer than during daytime appearances, and the intermediate state consciousness is seven times clearer than in the dream, so it is easier to change. Since the consciousness has no support, it is difficult to stabilize mindful intention. But if one can maintain mindfulness, traversing the path will be trouble-free. Meditating for one session in that intermediate state may be liberating.

However, an individual of the highest capacity need not depend on this kind of technique. It is taught in the *Lamp Summary of Conduct* and *Oral Teachings*<sup>189</sup> and others that in place of the intermediate state that occurs at the end of the dying process for others, these [people of highest capacity] will attain a saṃbhogakāya illusory body and become enlightened on the basis of that.

That process is to identify the stages of death with its three lights and rest in equipoise for a while in that luminous clarity. Then, as the three lights in reverse order are about to arise, to revive oneself by the recollection that will incur the arising of the illusory body. That is, to arise instantly in the illusory body of the empty appearance of the deity’s form. Again, since that is refined by the ultimate luminous clarity, it surpasses the intermediate state existence of impure cyclic existence.

When one arises from luminous clarity, the three lights in reverse order together with the pristine awareness energy currents will arise as the body of union instantly, like a fish leaping out of water. That is why the previous masters said, “the lazy awaken in the intermediate state.”

### [Choosing Rebirth by Blocking the Entrances to Wombs] [c"]

Those who are not liberated in the second intermediate state will wander in the intermediate state anywhere from one week at the least to seven weeks at the most. Since they have no body in the intermediate state existence they become very distressed and then, as four-name vagabonds,<sup>190</sup> their consciousness is dragged around by energy currents and habitual patterns. Out of control, they seek a place to take birth, devouring smells.<sup>191</sup> Roaming around the entrance to wombs, the five karmic energy currents stir and the five toxic emotions gather. From the interdependent relationship of mind and appearance there may arise the five light-paths of perfection,<sup>192</sup> the good and bad wombs of six types of beings, or the appearances of four types of birthplace. When these happen, one focuses on the vital points of whatever dharma practice is familiar. As the cause, one will uncontrollably enter the light-paths of perfection. As condition, it brings to mind the meditative absorption that inhibits the notions of one who enters and the entry place in those who would take birth at this rebirth juncture. If nothing prevents it, then the choice of womb entrance will be as stated in the *Verses on the Path of Method*.<sup>193</sup>

Fourth is choosing a womb entrance.  
Those whose training is very weak  
In birth, death, and dream intermediate states,  
If they cannot attain awakening in the intermediate state,  
Should apply instructions for choosing a womb.

As impetus, do this:  
Form a strong resolve with thoughts  
Of miraculously taking birth  
In the pure land of Bliss  
Or in the Lotus pure land.

Form a resolve by thinking,  
 “Even if I must enter a mother’s womb,  
 May I take a meritorious body  
 That can benefit sentient beings,  
 Or be a Brahmin or world ruler.”

Wherever you direct your thoughts  
 Is where you will undoubtedly go,  
 Like [the firing of] a catapult or mechanism.  
 One should engage with the same attitude  
 As the bodhisattvas. So it is said.

Meditating on the instructions in that body,  
 One will attain buddhahood in one body in one lifetime.

With this good support one can continue with the remainder of the path  
 and strive to attain awakening as *nirmāṇakāya* in various rebirths.

## Transference [ff']

The sixth subject, transference that provides continuity, has two parts:  
 a general presentation of the meaning of the name and divisions and a  
 specific explanation of the meditation sequence.

## The Name and the Divisions [1"]

### The escort on the path for highest, middling, and lowest faculties

Transference is called the escort (*skyel ma*) on the path because it liberates those of highest, medium, or lowest faculties from obstructions to taking a supportive rebirth to further their karmic continuity on the path. It is called “transference” (*'pho ba*) because one traverses to another state, or because it takes one somewhere despite the lack of inherent nature. *The Latter Authoritative Text* explains eleven divisions:

There is a great deal of division in transference:  
 Transference as training, and meditative absorption,

Transference by exertion and vital energy,  
 Transference by physical exertion,  
 Transference of consciousness to the guru,  
 Transference in forceful methods,  
 Transference to dharmakāya without elaboration,  
 Transference to rūpakāya with elaboration,  
 Transference to the saṃbhogakāya,  
 Transference to the nirmāṇakāya,  
 Transference to the ḍākinī that is pleasant.

Many early works give three divisions as the transference of dharmakāya, saṃbhogakāya, and nirmāṇakāya. Another threefold list is transference as training, transference of physical adjustment, and transference in forceful methods. Again, there is transference by substance, the force of energy currents, and meditative absorption. Twofold divisions are transference to a higher state and entrance into a residence; and with or without a support, and so on. Lord Khachö Wangpo spoke of three divisions: “ultimate transference of the ultimate great secret, innate transference of the native state, and luminous appearance transference of magical display.” There are limitless such divisions.

The purpose of this path is very significant, as stated in *Oral Teachings*.<sup>194</sup>

Using this ritual, any sentient being  
 Will become liberated by it,  
 Even those who commit acts of immediate consequence  
 Or ignorantly kill a Brahmin every day.

However, this refers to those who may have committed sinful actions in this life but again take empowerments and keep their sacred pledges properly, first practice creation phase, and then do the special completion phase applications of channels and energy currents. Common evil-doers who do a bit of energy training and transference visualization will not gain the genuine results of the training, though some benefit will accrue due to the blessings of the visualization.

Transference is said to be the instruction for awakening without meditating. This means that with the especially profound esoteric

instructions of transference, even great evildoers who would otherwise fall into bad existences can sometimes postpone the results of negative action and take an excellent rebirth in a higher realm that supports mantra practice. From that point of view, with the special support for accomplishing buddhahood, one will attain just that. There is also the idea that one will accomplish it gradually through practice, based on that support. Is that the same thing? It says in *Oral Teachings*:

In case you do not attain the three kāyas,  
You will most likely become an awareness-holder  
And gradually attain mahāmudrā.

Thus one attains the state of awareness-holder through transference, and in that life as awareness-holder meditates on the rest of the path and attains a state such as the first spiritual level that can be referred to by the conventional term “buddha.” It is also explained as carrying this intention.

To accomplish the authentic yoga of transference, one refines the yoga of vase-breathing, causing the downward-expelling energy current to ignite the blazing fire of inner heat. Using the force of the energy current, one must be able to move the indestructible energy-mind at the heart from its own abode as far as the crown of the head (*gtsug tor*) and pierce it. The *Vajradāka* states,

The limits of abiding must be purified.  
Once purified, if the existence to be transferred  
Goes elsewhere, it is meaningless.  
Binding the doors of vase-breathing,  
The apertures of the doors will be purified.

This is also taught in the *Catuhpīṭha* and *Samputa* tantras. According to the explanation by Bhavabhadra,<sup>195</sup> this means that the abode of joy and pain is the body and its limit is the ultimate central channel. If that channel is not purified by training with fire, energy, and resolve in the yoga of inner heat, then transference will not be accomplished and one will become exhausted for nothing.

## The Meditation Sequence [2"]

**Is transference in luminous clarity, illusory body, and creation phase.**

Lord Rangjung and others describe transference from the perspective of the *Former* and *Latter Authoritative Texts* as threefold: the highest transference in luminous clarity, the intermediate in illusory body, and the lowest in creation phase.

### [Transference in Luminous Clarity] [a"]

One becomes familiarized with the profound vital point of uniting the wisdom that realizes the abiding nature just as it is and the meditative absorption that abides one-pointedly within that state. Then, as death approaches, when the signs of the progressive dissolution of the elements arise, one rests effortlessly without resting or a place to rest, directly upon the unmistakable view of suchness that is free of any reference to the three spheres: transferring, something to be transferred, and a destination. That will blend inseparably with the luminous clarity of the basic ground, like pouring water into water. Death, which is designated as the first intermediate state, is thus enlightenment in the dharmakāya.

### [Transference in Illusory Body] [b"]

This is for those of intermediate faculties who will not recognize the luminous clarity at the end of the three lights and the dissolution process of the death phase, or who might recognize it but cannot remain in it. They should revive themselves with their previous impetus by thinking, “I will rise up in the illusory body of saṃbhogakāya,” and rise up as the deity’s illusory form at the end of the three lights in reverse order. That itself also involves refinement through the process of ultimate luminous clarity. Once one manifests the illusory form of union—like a fish leaping out of the water—totally transcending the intermediate state of cyclic existence, it is called awakening in the saṃbhogakāya intermediate state. In this lineage, the previous masters have asserted that the first two transference practices and the first two intermediate state practices are no different.

**[Transference in the Creation Phase] [c"]**

The third has four parts: transference that is mental training, transference that is physical adjustment, transference with forceful methods, and transference of entrance to a residence.

**[Transference That Is Mental Training] [i"]**

One visualizes the outer and inner hollowness<sup>196</sup> and applies the inhalation, holding, and exhalation of the breath, impelled by the three mental syllables.<sup>197</sup> One trains until attaining power over entering luminous clarity and re-arising and until the arising of signs test the experience. One must then abandon transference when it is untimely and only apply the activity when the time has come.<sup>198</sup>

**[Transference That Is Physical Adjustment] [ii"]**

When training has not been finalized but one suddenly faces death, one prepares by generating the resolve to awaken and devotion in the presence of a blessed support. Taking the posture of the tathāgata when entering nirvana and applying the seed-syllable of nonarising,<sup>199</sup> one enters into a pure realm. This is said to be a profound instruction that produces tremendous benefit for ordinary people and animals.

**[Transference with Forceful Methods] [iii"]**

Those whose previous bad karma will definitely cause them to be murdered or something like that should apply the vital point of the body, yogic exercise; the vital point of the mind, transcendence of the three times;<sup>200</sup> and the vital point of the speech, the application of two and a half vowels and consonants.<sup>201</sup> One will instantly take a special support [in the next life] for practicing mantra.

**[Transference of Entering a Residence] [iv"]**

It is explained that an auxiliary is entering from residence to residence.

The *Concise Illumination*<sup>202</sup> states:

The conclusive, quick path is transference.  
Entering a residence is an auxiliary.

This is an auxiliary of transference to a higher pristine awareness. It is called “entering a residence” (*grong ’jug*) because the consciousness moves from the residence of one’s own body and enters into the residence of another’s unimpaired body that has died. This instruction is taught in a great many of the highest tantras. But an individual who undertakes this must be someone who has appropriately obtained the empowerment, properly maintained the vows and pledges, and trained in the creation phase, which is just like transference in general. In particular, it is taught in the root tantras and their commentaries, such as *Vajradāka*, *Catuhpīṭha*, and *Samputa*, that for all three kinds of transference—the special transference, one’s own consciousness entering another’s body, and ejecting another’s consciousness that enters into one’s own body—one needs abilities. One must have the ability to block the energy currents after placing letters at the nine orifices; the ability to insert the vital energy into the *avadhūti* once those orifices are refined through vase breathing; and the ability to evoke the *hūṃ* letter of consciousness with its mount of the subtle vital energy at the heart through the force of igniting the short *a* in the yoga of inner heat.

Why are those required? Once one sees that a body does not serve the welfare of oneself or others, one takes a better one. This applies to such cases as exchanging a support that is of an inferior class for a good class, a sick one for a healthy one, an old one for a young one, and so forth. Based on the new body, the impetus of the path is extended. Since it is the latter body that accomplishes it, this is also called “entering a residence to extend the path.” The practice of this is described in *Vajra Lines of the Hearing Lineage*.<sup>203</sup>

With mastery of energy mind, and stability of creation and  
completion,  
Propel the consciousness seed-syllable into a flawless corpse.

And in the *Six Dharmas Combined*,<sup>204</sup> Nāropa sings [to Marpa]:



When your body reaches its time limit  
 The vital point is to use a qualified object, the other condition.  
 In between, the seed-syllable rides the horse of energy currents.  
 Through yogic exercise, the vital essences, energy currents, and  
 mind  
 Vacate your body like an empty house.  
 The other's body is the very essence of *nirmāṇakāya*.  
 This is called "instructions for entering a residence."  
 Translator, are your energy currents workable?

Thus, first one trains, then checks it, and finally applies the activity. This will extend the impetus of practice.

### **The Way That the Results Are Actualized [cc]**

**The ultimate result is actualizing the six dharmas.**

The results of consummating the profound path in this way are the attainment of the common spiritual powers, such as the ten signs, eight qualities, eight accomplishments, four activities, and so on. The consummate supreme spiritual powers are the seven branches, eight sovereign qualities, four *kāyas*, five pristine awarenesses, and so on. In particular, the ultimate six dharmas will be actualized: (1) the unchanging union of bliss-emptiness; (2) the rainbow body free of obscuration in the manner of an illusion; (3) the discrimination of naturally arising appearance-emptiness; (4) the great pristine awareness, the infinite expanse of *dharmakāya*; (5) the *saṃbhogakāya* endowed with five certainties; and (6) the great realm of space in which there is nowhere to transfer.

### **Mahāmudrā, the Path of Liberation [b]**

This has three parts: a general explanation of the long traditions of sutra and mantra, a specific explanation of the three practice traditions, and concluding remarks listing instructions in individual teaching traditions.

## The Long Traditions of Sutra and Mantra [i]

**Sutra tradition is freedom from elaborations,  
Mantra tradition of bliss-emptiness mahāmudrā is special due to  
coemergence and empowerment.**

This widely renowned tradition called “Incomparable Dakpo Kagyu” is reported to be no mere lineage of words but rather the lineage of ultimate meaning. This refers to the fact that it is an uninterrupted lineage of flawless realization of mahāmudrā. One’s root guru is thus whoever was the source of one’s mahāmudrā realization, and that practice system has not deteriorated right up until the present. Here we focus on the most famous instructions of this precious lineage, the mahāmudrā.

There are two well-known traditions. The one that is in common with the sutra tradition instructs one to rest in equanimity with luminous clarity as the object, without any mental fabrication on the part of the subject. The mantra tradition is the mahāmudrā of the union of bliss and emptiness, joined coemergence.<sup>205</sup> The pristine awareness arising from empowerment<sup>206</sup> and targeting the vital points of the vajra body makes it special.

### [The Sutra Tradition] [aa]

In the teachings of Dakpo Rinpoche<sup>207</sup> he says:

The sourcebook of this mahāmudrā of ours is the *Mahayana Highest Continuum* composed by the transcendent conqueror Maitreya.

Furthermore, the powerful lord Maitrīpa,<sup>208</sup> having received the instructions of the Great Brahmin Saraha<sup>209</sup> and his spiritual heirs, composed works such as *The Ten Verses on Suchness*<sup>210</sup> that give the esoteric instructions of the perfections consistent with the mantra tradition. Upon listening to them, Lord Marpa said:

The essential meaning of the ultimate vehicle  
Free of limits, unfabricated by mind,  
The dharma of mahāmudrā is introduced...  
(etc., up to:)

...This is the tradition held by the great lord Maitrīpa.

And Milarepa said:

Right now in the intermediate state between samsara and nirvana,  
Mahāmudrā introduces the abiding nature.  
Seek to ascertain the view, the basic ground.

The meaning of all these is expressed in terms of the view and meditation:

There is nothing at all to remove,  
And not the slightest thing to be added.  
Look genuinely at the genuine.  
When genuinely seen, it is total liberation.<sup>211</sup>

And again from the *Mahayana Highest Continuum*:<sup>212</sup>

The [buddha nature] constituent is empty of incidental [stains],  
Which have the characteristic of being separable from it.  
It is not empty of unsurpassed qualities,  
Which have the characteristic of being inseparable from it.

That is to say, this luminous clarity that is mind's nature has no stains at all that need to be removed because it is naturally without stains since the very beginning. There is not the slightest quality that was not there before that needs to be newly created and added because the essence of the qualities has existed inherently since forever. For these reasons, the buddha nature constituent is empty of artificial, incidental stains that have the characteristic of being completely separable from that essence. But the constituent is not empty of the unsurpassed buddha qualities, such as the ten powers, that are its own genuine nature and have the characteristic of being completely inseparable from it. For example, when a jaundiced person sees a white conch shell as yellow, the conch itself is empty of the projected yellow but not empty of the white.

Thus the desire to remove stains and the desire to add qualities are both obscuring conceptualizations of hope and fear and ought to be abandoned. The genuine suchness is the ordinary mind of the present moment, appear-

ance and emptiness inseparable, neither true nor false. Without corrupting it with acceptance or rejection, one should look at just that suchness with the wisdom of one's own reflexive awareness and meditate.

The “view” (*lta ba*) is to know and see with discernment. “Meditation” (*sgom pa*) is to rest one-pointedly within that without distraction. Concerning how to do this, the honorable Rangjung said:<sup>213</sup>

Everything is neither true nor false,  
The wise deem it all to be like water-moons.  
This ordinary mind itself  
Is called essence of the victors, the realm of reality.

And in order to clarify further, glorious Khachö Wangpo said:

This simple clarity of appearance-awareness in the present  
moment  
Is the very face of the relative truth of phenomena.  
If you know the vital point of this uncontrived norm,  
Then the ultimate truth is also just this.  
Scholars of scriptural sophistry cite the two truths  
With many references and reasonings but miss the point.  
Holding the two as different violates the nondual.

The relative truth is the incidental stains, like the yellow projected on the conch. The ultimate truth is the buddha nature, like the white of the conch. That is, there is only an appearance perceived by a confused subject. Other than that, the object of the conch itself has no white or yellow to be added or removed. Therefore, the esoteric instruction is to rest undisturbed in the uncontrived state.

In short, what are called “samsara” and “nirvana” are posited only from the perspective of mere appearances in relative reality. The inherent nature of them both is luminous clarity free of elaboration, which is said to be “buddha nature” (*bde bar gshegs pa'i snying po*, Skt. *sugatagarbha*). Therefore, in the definitive meaning, mere appearance and its inherent nature are not divisible into separate things, like fire and its heat.

For that reason, the Mother [Perfection of Wisdom sutras] say such things as, “Form is empty; emptiness is form,” and so on.<sup>214</sup> The honorable Rangjung said:

Mahāmudrā, the abiding nature free of elaboration,  
Is empty of all characteristics of conceptual elaboration.  
Without fixation on its clarity, this pure inherent nature  
Is called the buddha nature.

Concerning this, the dharma lord Sakya Panchen<sup>215</sup> asserted:

Mahāmudrā is not designated in the tradition of the perfections. The pristine awareness of mahāmudrā only arises from empowerment.

Adhering to this position, the bigshots broadcast much meaningless chatter, but as the master Jñānakīrti stated in *Entry into Suchness*:<sup>216</sup>

The other term for the Mother Perfection of Wisdom is mahāmudrā, because it is the very essence of nondual pristine awareness.

Not only did he explain the use of the term in both the perfection of wisdom taught in the sutras and the mahāmudrā of mantra, he also explained the designations of the names:

Those of the highest faculties who thoroughly exert themselves in the perfections can be truly possessed of mahāmudrā, even as an ordinary person, through meditating on calm abiding and higher insight. With this genuine realization, the signs of irreversibility will manifest.

Sahajavajra also explained it in a similar way, which will come up below.<sup>217</sup> Dakpo Rinpoché induced the realization of mahāmudrā even in beginners who had not received empowerment. Therefore this is the tradition of the perfections. These are instructions arising primarily from the Kadampa tradition. The esoteric instruction found in the second part of Joined Coemergent Mahāmudrā<sup>218</sup> written by the lord and those of this present system are similar in all respects. Even the stages of the four yogas are clearly explicated there.<sup>219</sup>

Accordingly, it is said that the majority in a congregation should be guided in the stages of the path as laid out by the Kadampas, while those

who are extraordinary should be guided in the path of method that comes from Lama Mila. It is the former that is meant here. With this in mind, the honorable Lord Mikyö Dorjé said:

The authentic spiritual power of mahāmudrā in the Kagyu, the lineage of the great Nāropa that began with Vajradhara, is only attained by actualizing the example and authentic ultimate pristine awareness by means of the higher three supreme empowerments. The system of guidance in calm abiding and higher insight taught these days that is shared with the causal vehicle of the perfections comes from the lineage of the protector Atiśa. It is the esoteric instruction of *The Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*. Lord Gampopa and the protector Pakmo Drupa have given this the name of “joined coemergent mahāmudrā” (*phyag chen lhan cig skyes sbyor*) just for the sake of those disciples in the degenerate age who would like a “really high” vehicle.

It has been the practice of most of Dakpo’s heart disciples to present the mahāmudrā instructions after having first bestowed the empowerment. This is the position of the customary path held in common by sutra and mantra.

### [The Mantra Tradition] [bb]

In general, the conventional designation of the term *mahāmudrā* (*phyag rgya chen po*, “great seal”) is used only in the mantra vehicle. It means this: the state of union is “seal” (*phyag rgya*, Skt. *mudrā*), while its inherent nature that pervades all phenomena is “great” (*chen po*, Skt. *maha[nt]*) because no phenomena are beyond it. Here, the entire extent of outer appearances is the union of appearance and emptiness; the entire extent of inner awareness is the union of awareness and emptiness, and the entire extent of feelings when appearance and awareness meet is the union of bliss and emptiness. Of these, the first two are called “emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects” (*rnam kun mchog ldan gyi stong nyid*) and the last is called “supreme and unchanging great bliss” (*mchog tu mi ’gyur ba’i bde ba chen po*). The name *mahāmudrā* is also used to describe emptiness and great bliss individually:

Beyond the reality of subtle particles,  
 Of the nature of magical mirror images,  
 She who is endowed with the supreme of all aspects,  
 To Lady Mahāmudrā I bow.

And:

Mahāmudrā is unchanging bliss.

The total perfect meaning is this: emptiness endowed with all aspects is the object to be known. When the knowledge of this emptiness in its entirety as unchanging great bliss is the knowing subject, then both object and subject are said to blend into one.

From the *Supreme Original Buddha Tantra*.<sup>220</sup>

Reflections arising from emptiness are the cause,  
 Bliss born from the unchanging is the result.  
 The result seals the cause,  
 And the cause also seals the result.

And:

The kāya of knower and known as one.

Initially, the time that this is actualized is when the fourth empowerment is received. Ultimately, the realization is when one obtains and consummates the state of Vajradhara endowed with seven aspects.<sup>221</sup>

Coemergence is twofold: Natural coemergence is the beginningless and endless existence of Vajrasattva in all animate and inanimate things, without any distinction of before or after. The coemergent bliss of melting is produced from the four joys arising successively from the sexual union of method and wisdom. This causes the engagement with the former, actual coemergence, so the same language is used.

The meditation method is not the mere conceptual meditation used on the path of inference, with the nonaffirming negation that is the result of logically analyzing and not finding anything. Rather, it is the path of actual nonconceptual experience, free of thoughts that fixate on

anything in the unhindered [display of] appearance-awareness. Instructions can be found in *Joined Coemergent Mahāmudrā*<sup>222</sup> and the illusory body and luminous clarity yogas from the Six Dharmas. The meaning can be summed up by the phrase “maintain luminous clarity directly upon appearances.” Those skilled in this method will purify conceptual fixation on the reality of appearances and transform all appearance into forms of emptiness. The forms of emptiness—such as smoke and so on that appear during dark retreats and other practices—are merely signs and indications on this path of methods that cause the realization of the abiding nature itself that was not yet realized. What one must actually realize with absolute certainty is that all of these ordinary appearances, right here and now, are themselves forms of emptiness in every respect.

Therefore, the teachings about there being nothing to add to the luminous clarity of buddha nature from the *Highest Continuum*<sup>223</sup> and the way to meditate on the mahāmudrā of inseparable appearance-emptiness in the mantra tradition must both be the same view of abiding nature as the middle way (*dbu ma*, Skt. *madhyamaka*). The middle way view is expressed as

To say “it exists” is an eternalistic view.  
 To say “it doesn’t exist” is a nihilistic view.  
 For that reason the wise do not dwell  
 In existence or nonexistence.<sup>224</sup>

And,

Not existent, not nonexistent, not both,  
 Also not the nonexistence of both—  
 Totally emancipated from these four extremes:  
 Such is the middle way known by followers.

The Eighth Lord, Karmapa Mikyö Dorjé, and his successors maintain “it is just that.”

### The Three Practice Traditions [ii]

This has two parts: an overview by means of their names and an extensive explanation by means of describing their characteristics.



## Overview [aa]

In general, of the three traditions of Sutra, Mantra, and Essence,

## Explanation of Characteristics [bb]

This has three parts: the sutra tradition, the mantra tradition, and the essence tradition.

## The Sutra Tradition [1']

This has four parts: an overview of its characteristics, and individual explanations of the ground, the path, and the result of mahāmudrā.

## Overview [a']

The first is perfection of wisdom in essence and mahāmudrā in name.

Its aspects are consistent with mantra.

The first of the three traditions is the sutra tradition or what later came to be held as the mahāmudrā that mixes ideas of sutra and mantra. In the *Commentary on the Ten Verses on Suchness*<sup>225</sup> by Master Sahajavajra it says:

In essence it is the perfection.

It is consistent with mantra.

Its name is mahāmudrā.

Thus it is clearly explained as being the pristine awareness realizing suchness endowed with these three special features.

## Ground Mahāmudrā, the Basic Abiding Nature of Things [b']

This presentation has three parts: the abiding nature, the mode of delusion, and the way it is.<sup>226</sup>

## The Abiding Nature of the Ground [i']

**The abiding nature of the ground is without bias, free of extremes of elaboration.**

**Not experiencing delusion or liberation, it pervades everywhere like the sky.**

The abiding nature of the basic ground entity does not exist as the essence of either samsara or nirvana. It has no bias in any direction whatsoever and is free from all extremes of elaboration such as existence, nonexistence, eternalism, or nihilism. Therefore it is beyond the object of expression in speech or thought. From the beginning it has not experienced bondage through delusion or liberation through realization. Its vital point, which does not exist as a specifically characterized phenomenon,<sup>227</sup> pervades like space throughout all phenomena of samsara and nirvana. This is the abiding nature—mahāmudrā, the perfection of wisdom, buddha nature, the original buddha, the causal continuum, and so forth—many names are used in the sutras and tantras. It is nondual profundity and clarity, the absolute truth, the totally pure ground of purification, and the very essence of mind that has been explained and will continue to be explained. It is the abiding nature of all that is to be known.

## The Mode of Delusion [ii']

**The mode of delusion appears but is not real;**

Natural, perfectly pure luminous clarity is the vajra of mind. When its natural expressive energy is not aware of its own essence, the afflicted mind stirs from the universal ground. On the strength of that, awareness is taken to be a self and its reflexive appearance is taken to be an object; [this is] the basic subject-object split. Under the power of this dualistic perception, various karmic action and habitual patterns are accumulated, turning into an interlinking chain of delusion and endless drifting in cyclic existence. This mode of delusion is relative truth. It is the incidental stains of the mind that are to be refined away. Since they do not abide as its basic character, they appear and yet are not truly existent. Therefore, one can become liberated through the antidote of self-recognition.

## The Way It Is [iii']

... mere appearance itself

Is the great play of three kāyas—arising, abiding, and ceasing.

All of samsara and nirvana comes from the total play of the mind. That itself abides naturally as the union of clarity and emptiness. Therefore, even though it is mere appearance, it is the great play of the three kāyas free from arising, abiding, and ceasing. That is, its unborn basic character is dharmakāya, its unhindered radiance is sambhogakāya, and its expressive energy arising as anything at all is nirmāṇakāya. All three are essentially inseparable and spontaneously present since forever. This is the way it is. By recognizing it, [one realizes that] the native state of all phenomena, suchness free of accepting, rejecting, adopting, or removing anything in the wheel of infinite basic space is the abiding nature of the ground. This is the recognition of the view of mahāmudrā.

## Path Mahāmudrā: The Way to Traverse the Levels and Paths through Naturally Occurring Calm Abiding and Higher Insight [c']

This presentation has three parts: a presentation of the meditative absorption of practice, cutting off the treacherous path of strayings and deviations,<sup>228</sup> and a description of the way the stages of the four yogas arise.

## Meditative Absorption [i']

At the time of the path, coemergent mind itself is dharmakāya,  
Coemergent appearance is dharmakāya's light.

No distraction, no meditation, without fabrication in the native state.

At the time of the path, making the meaning of the view that one has ascertained into yoga is called mahāmudrā meditation. The great charioteers who founded this system laid out this process: in order to give rise to meditation that has not arisen before, one engages in [two sets of] four preliminary practices.<sup>229</sup> Once it has arisen, it is brought to the path by three introductions. Then there are the ways to enhance it and generate good qualities.

## [The Preliminaries] [aa']

These are the four thoughts that turn the mind, which is the gradual path common to Kadampa and mahāmudrā traditions, and the practices of refuge, bodhicitta, accumulation, purification, and guru yoga. Training in these until signs of their accomplishment arises, one's mind will turn towards the dharma and dharma will become the path.

## [The Introduction to Mind's Nature] [bb']

The *Inconceivable Coemergence Tantra*<sup>230</sup> states:

Mind itself is coemergent with dharmakāya.  
 Appearance is coemergent with dharmakāya's light.  
 Appearance and mind inseparable are coemergent.

In accordance with the mighty spiritual adepts who commented on the meaning with limitless vajra speech, it is maintained that the introduction to coemergence is subsumed into three:

- (1) Coemergent native mind itself is dharmakāya. That is introduced with calm abiding and higher insight. Calm abiding is practiced both with and without support. In higher insight there are three stages: revealing the essence, recognition, and introduction. These will dispel delusion on the path.
- (2) Mind's own expressive energy is coemergent with thought. The three methods of practicing with the abiding or moving of thoughts, back-to-back thoughts, and cutting through ego-fixation will cause the thought process to blend with dharmakāya.
- (3) Mind's own radiance—appearance—is coemergent with dharmakāya's own light. One conclusively distinguishes the reflexive appearances of uncontrived awareness and the deluded appearances of fixated mind. Realizing reality itself to be the play of the native state, delusion will arise as pristine awareness.

**[Enhancement] [cc']**

Always remembering that “renunciation is the foot of meditation,” “devotion is the head of meditation,” and “mindfulness is the body of meditation,”<sup>231</sup> the stages arising from skillful methods will produce the good qualities as enhancement of the practice.

Briefly, the absorption of meditative equipoise in this system is summarized into three methods: resting in freshness without distraction, resting loosely without meditation, and resting in the native state, unfabricated natural radiance. Through these ways of resting, all the conceptual elaborations in the three times are naturally liberated and subside into reality. This is the meaning of the three doors of total freedom.

**Cutting Off the Treacherous Path of Straying and Deviation [ii']****Liberation from four strayings and three deviations.**

When meditating like this, fixation on the emptiness of all phenomena is to stray in the basic nature. Being satisfied with the attainment of just a little understanding and experience of emptiness, and so discontinuing accumulation of merit and purification, is to stray on the path of emptiness. Once one has made emptiness the path, hope of fruition at some later time without understanding that the thing to reject and its antidote are inseparable is to stray in the antidote. And one can stray in the intellectually fabricated sealing of appearance with emptiness. These are the four areas of straying based on higher insight.

If one gets attached to the three experiences of bliss, clarity, and non-thought, then one will cycle into the three realms respectively and deviate from the spiritual path. These are the three deviations to avoid based on calm abiding. One must also escape the treacherous paths where emptiness, compassion, and cause and effect rise up as enemies.

**The Way the Stages of the Four Yogas Arise [iii']**

Beyond the four joys and three conditions, three ways of arising  
Make the connection and one traverses the four stages of yoga.

Since the four joys are just an example of pristine awareness, real pristine awareness goes beyond them. Since the three conditions of bliss, clarity, and nonthought are meditative experiences, the innate countenance of realization transcends them. It is beyond even the objects of the three kinds of wisdom: the understanding from listening, the experience from contemplating, and the experiential perceptions from meditating. Once one has arrived at the vital point of meditation that is untouched by the mind of the big three afflictive emotions, the stages arise in any of three ways: gradually, by leaps and bounds, or all at once. With that connection, one will effortlessly traverse the inner levels and paths by way of the four yogas: one-pointedness, freedom from elaborations, one taste, and nonmeditation—each with the division into lesser, medium, and greater, making twelve in all.<sup>232</sup>

The stages of these four yogas are described in the *Ali Kali Inconceivable Secret Tantra*.<sup>233</sup>

The absorption of the majestic lion<sup>234</sup>

Clarifies consciousness as unmoving, one-pointed, and radiant.

Reflexive pristine awareness is awakened from within.

Stabilized patience eliminates the suffering of the lower realms.

Second, by the illusory-like absorption,<sup>235</sup>

In the great equipoise free of elaborations,

The inconceivable arises as the creative energy of absorption.

Attaining warmth is gaining control over birth.

Third, by the absorption of heroic behavior,<sup>236</sup>

The tenth level realization of the single taste of many arises.

The heirs of the victors of three times act for the welfare of others.

Having attained the peak, progress is uninterrupted.

Fourth, by the vajra-like absorption,<sup>237</sup>

Diligence in the practice of nonmeditation

Leads to the pristine awareness of knowledge that sees the buddha realms,

The effortless, spontaneously present state of supreme dharma.

With the same intention, this was also taught extensively in the *Descent to Lañka Sutra*.<sup>238</sup> The meaning has been clearly explained by the great Master Padmasambhava, Śāntipa, Nāropa, and others, with the Lord Dawö Zhönnu<sup>239</sup> (Gampopa) providing extensive elaboration. There are various ways of explanation found among all the extensive and concise arrangements done by the great spiritual adepts who hold the Kagyu lineage. Mainly, by dividing each of the four yogas into the understanding, experience, and realization of mahāmudrā, one gets twelve divisions. Each of those is further divided into lesser, middling, and greater degrees of attaining stability, making thirty-six in all. Alternatively, the four yogas each have mundane and supermundane calm abiding, and mundane and supermundane higher insight, making sixteen divisions. Dividing each of those by greater, medium, and lesser degrees of attaining stability, which become the three categories of excellent, low, and average, it makes forty-eight in all. To wrap up it all up into one, the omniscient Chen-nga Chökyi Drakpa<sup>240</sup> said:

In this context the four yogas according to the system of guidance in the mantra tradition of mahāmudrā are explained as the pristine awareness of mahāmudrā that is the essence of the four descending and ascending joys. In terms of the system of guidance common to both sutra and mantra, it refers to the mode of arising of mahāmudrā experiences similar to these four joys.

Concerning the terms “understanding” (*go ba*), “experience” (*nyams*), and “realization” (*rtogs*), the Eighth Lord Mikyö Dorjé stated in his *Hundred Thousand Expressions of Mahāmudrā*.<sup>241</sup>

The view and meditation of whatever is to be realized has three parts: understanding, experience, and realization. *Understanding* occurs when what is to be realized becomes an object of wisdom through hearing and contemplating the terms and concepts. *Experience* occurs when what is to be realized is held as the frame of reference and then becomes the object of wisdom resulting from meditation in the abiding aspect of that mental focus. *Realization* occurs when one transcends the aspect of calm abiding of mere one-pointedness resulting from

meditation that mentally grasps what is to be realized as the object, and instead makes it the object by thorough discrimination of wisdom with or without thought.

## **Result Mahāmudrā: How the Real Buddha without Stains Manifests [d']**

**Understanding the view and gaining experience through meditation,  
Realization is perfected and fruition is attained right now.**

The view is that the abiding nature of the ground is both appearance and mind dwelling inherently as the three kāyas. Cutting off all doubts about this meaning, one will reach an irrevocable understanding through the direct introduction. One gains experience of this through the meditation of settling the mind without contrivance directly in its own state, the abiding nature. This is enhanced by the conduct that arises automatically as a result of unhindered emptiness and compassion in union. The realization of the intrinsic nature of the abiding nature manifests, and when it is perfected, that is the fruition. Buddha is found in the mind. By encountering the very face of the three kāyas, dharmakāya mahāmudrā is no longer a wish for the future but is attained right now.

This gradual path accords with Dakpo Rinpoché's dream visions and Milarepa's prophecies. Dakpo Rinpoché said, "With these Kadampa teachings I can benefit many beings," and, "Now whatever bit of good I have done for sentient beings is due to the kindness of the Kadampa lamas." Once he dreamt that by beating a drum many wild deer came to listen and he fed them milk.<sup>242</sup> These and other reasons caused him to remain with this system of guidance. This is because we have reached the age where degeneration is rampantly increasing and there are progressively fewer individuals with the fortune to practice the extraordinary vajrayāna. However, those of lesser fortune and duller faculties can be guided by the gradual stages of the path of the three types of individuals and ultimately evolve into disciples of the highest fortune and become worthy recipients of the extraordinary mantra. They can gain liberation in one lifetime or, even if not, a great many of them will see the meaning of mahāmudrā and thereby enter the irreversible path through this method. This is the intention.



Therefore, this method of guidance has been upheld from the reverend lord Gampopa himself until the present time and has been the customary practice for guiding all disciples whether of greater or lesser fortune. In addition, when the fortunate ones are taught mantra's profound path of method, these instructions are named "instructions at the time of the cause," or "foundational teachings." About this, the great reverend one of Jonang<sup>243</sup> said such things as

These days the so-called abiding nature mahāmudrā  
Is a meditation sequence in the sutra tradition of the final  
turning.  
For the different levels of faculties it is congruent with mantra,  
And so it becomes like a lamp for beings.  
It is similar to the path with result practitioners' three  
appearances.<sup>244</sup>

## The Mantra Tradition [2']

**The mantra tradition arises from the path of skillful methods.**

The famous "great bliss mahāmudrā" (*bde chen phyag rgya chen po*) comes from the traditional methods of the highest inner tantras. It arises from the paths of skillful methods, which include the conferral of the supreme empowerment, the self-blessing, the stages of mudra practice, and so on. The mighty Marpa said:

The essence of the completion phase is that great bliss arises  
based on bliss.

And from the second chapter [of the *Hevajra Tantra*], "The Examination of Illusion," it says:<sup>245</sup>

In this yoga of the completion phase  
Bliss is called "great bliss."

The etymology is that since pristine awareness really arises it is called "completion phase" (*rdzogs rim*). The one from Puṣpahari [Nāropa] said:

It is impossible for pristine awareness not to arise when at this time your body is put in this posture and your mind is focused like this.

These are the divisions: The bases of refining are the waking state with many ordinary thoughts, deep sleep, the dreaming of many dreams, and sexual union with an ordinary person. The refining agents are mahāmudrā based on inner heat, mahāmudrā based on luminous clarity, mahāmudrā based on illusory body, and experience based on action-mudra. Thus according to this teaching it will be realized from the meditation on the instructions of the Six Dharmas of glorious Nāropa, and so forth.

### The Essence Tradition [3']

**The essence is the descent of vajra pristine awareness  
Simultaneously ripening and liberating those of highest faculties.**

More profound than the previous two, this path to forcefully realize the profound essence is extraordinarily amazing and incredible. Just the descent of blessings in the vajra pristine awareness empowerment bestowed by a realized guru on a fortunate student of the highest and sharpest faculties awakens ordinary mind in his or her innermost heart, causing realization and liberation to occur at the same time. Since it does not depend on elaborate techniques or strenuous training, it is this that really occurs in the prolific<sup>246</sup> liberation stories and legends of the great spiritual adepts of the four greater and eight lesser Kagyu lineages who had arrived at the higher levels. And this is the way it is described in Indrabhūti's *Accomplishment of Pristine Awareness*.<sup>247</sup>

Conferral of the vajra pristine awareness empowerment  
That attains the sublime excellent pristine awareness of  
Thoroughly abandoning all thought  
Brings accomplishment of the supreme spiritual power.

If you have all genuine pristine awarenesses  
But still take empowerments elsewhere,  
Using mandalas that are drawn,  
This will damage your sacred pledge.

The sufferings of damaged pledges  
 Are that your body and likewise your mind  
 And all functions will deteriorate  
 And very quickly death will come.

Once you are dead, you will taste  
 The suffering of hell for millions of aeons.  
 Even when you escape from that place  
 You will be born as an outcaste or in a low caste,

As a deaf person or a mute,  
 Blind in lifetime after lifetime.  
 You will take such birth,  
 Of this there is no doubt.

The pristine awareness of all the tathāgatas  
 Is explained as “pristine awareness.”  
 When the wise confer its empowerment,  
 This is what empowerment is all about.

So it is taught extensively. It is in this way that ripening and liberation arise simultaneously for those of highest faculties in this unsurpassable, supreme path.

### **Concluding Remarks on the Instructions in Individual Teaching Traditions [iii]**

**Pakdru turned the dharma wheel in five practices:  
 Refuge, bodhicitta, devotion, creation-completion, and  
 dedication.**

#### **[Pakmo Drupa and Drigung Kagyu] [aa]**

The lord of beings Pakmo Drupa,<sup>248</sup> who was really the sugata Krakucchanda (“Samsara Destroyer”), condensed all the meanings of the Three Baskets and the tantra collections into five practice systems and taught them publicly to an assembly of five thousand of the most excellent assembly. While the others did not find certainty in the profound mean-

ing, the protector of the world Drigungpa [Jikten Sumgön],<sup>249</sup> took these teachings to his heart like a vase filled to the brim and put them into practice. He understood that each of these systems could immediately and ultimately relieve all sickness and obstacles and produce all supreme and common good qualities without hindrance. Whatever profound and vast proclamations of the Buddha's word one may find, they all point to this same meaning. The so-called Ten Dharmas Three Dharmas (*bcu chos gsum chos*) also teach this vital point, for it is the great treasury of the speech of all tathāgatas.

As for the way to practice, as is said:

Practice the dharma  
Of awakening mind, the yidam deity,  
The guru, mahāmudrā,  
And dedication.

Of these five—awakening mind, devotion, creation phase, completion phase, and dedication—the first and the last are common to all vehicles, but the middle three are practices that are exclusive to the secret mantra. Therefore, it is said:

Mahāmudrā is like a lion,  
But blind if it lacks the five.

At the time of the ground, the vital point aims at the five afflictive emotions. At the time of the path, five special aftereffects are produced. The five classes of negative spirits are pacified and the five kinds of beings are subdued. At the time of fruition, five kāyas and five pristine awarenesses arise.<sup>250</sup>

When one attains stability in those, everything becomes mahāmudrā. Awakening mind without frame of reference, the deity's body of inseparable appearance-emptiness, samsara and nirvana as the play of the guru, mahāmudrā of inseparable awareness-emptiness, and the dedication with threefold perfect purity, and so on, can be aptly called awakening mind mahāmudrā, deity mahāmudrā, devotion mahāmudrā, abiding nature mahāmudrā, dedication mahāmudrā, and so on. Abiding in this meaning, then, is widely renowned as "possessing the Fivefold Mahāmudrā."<sup>251</sup>

The Karmapas introduce the three kāyas and  
 The Drukpas emphasize the eight great instructions and so  
 forth.  
 In the tradition of Rechungpa and other holders of the hearing  
 lineage teaching system,  
 The root of all is mahāmudrā and the six dharmas.

[Kamtsang Kagyu] [bb]

The sixth buddha to come, Siṃhanāda (“Lion’s Roar”), abides in bodhi-sattva activity as the glorious Karmapa Rangjung Rolpai Dorjé.<sup>252</sup> Impartially, he turned the dharma wheel of the reality of Body, Speech, and Mind, and the four vital points. Miracles of accomplishment pervaded all the realms. The root of all these dharma doors that are revealed continuously throughout the three times is this: Individuals of lesser intellect should train their mindstreams with the four preliminary teachings. Those of medium faculties should train in the postures as the vital point of the body, the vital energy control as the vital point of the energy currents, visualization as the vital point of the mind, and the physical training as the vital point of yogic exercise. The root of all four of these is the yoga of inner heat with its bliss-heat. When that occurs, individuals of the highest faculties are introduced to the three kāyas and guided on the genuine path of instantaneous mahāmudrā.

Furthermore, [when Nāropa said to Marpa], “In the lower floor of Pullahari, unhindered nirmāṇakāya rains down,” it was the symbolic indication for the introduction to nirmāṇakāya in relation to relative awakening mind. “In the middle floor of Pullahari, saṃbhogakāya indicates with symbols” was the symbolic indication for the introduction to saṃbhogakāya in relation to energy control. There was no symbolic indication for the introduction to dharmakāya in relation to the vital point of the natural resting in the native state because that transcends designations. The infinite realization of mahāmudrā is naturally occurring pristine awareness. It is said that this very sequence of practice, even if cultivated for only seven days before death, will not fail to bring one to the level of Vajradhara.<sup>253</sup>

## [Drukpa Kagyu] [cc]

In the glorious Drukpa Kagyu tradition, the very famous Upper Drukpa are known for the Eight Great Guidances and the Eight Lesser Guidances. “And so forth” above in the root text indicates the Lower Drukpa, who emphasize and explain the Fivefold Capability, the six cycles of the root Kagyu traditions, and so on.<sup>254</sup>

The basis for the famous name “Glorious Drukpa” came from the dharma lord Tsangpa Gyarepa.<sup>255</sup> He taught three cycles of mahāmudrā: the Cycle of Words of Explanation, the Cycle of Instructions for Practice, and the Cycle of Blessings for Realization.<sup>256</sup> There were six cycles of vital points on the path of method: the Cycle of Vital Points of Mixing and Transferring in the Six Dharmas, the Cycle of Mentally Striking Down Livelihood, the Cycle of Pervasive Engagement and Rejection, the Cycle of Actualizing Realization, the Cycle of Vital Oral Instructions, and the Cycle of Making Concepts the Path and Expelling Disease.<sup>257</sup> In the teachings of Equal Taste,<sup>258</sup> there is the *Treasure Treasury with Sealed Command*, *The Further Treasury*, *Mind’s Mirror*, and the *Secret Treasury*, *Opening the Hidden Eye*. [Tsangpa Gyare said,] “Interdependent relation is our system.”<sup>259</sup> He opened up and explained all of the chariot traditions of the profound path of great devotion.

The *Eight Great Guidances of the Upper Drukpa* are (1) Guidance on the Profound Path of Devotion, (2) Guidance on the Joined Coemergent Mahāmudrā, (3) Guidance on the Special Path of Methods, (4) Guidance on the Reverse Meditation on Secret Conduct, (5) Guidance on Training in Pure Realms of Sacred Outlook, (6) Guidance on Suppressing the Eight Worldly Concerns, (7) Guidance on Love and Compassion, and (8) Guidance on Causality and Interdependence.<sup>260</sup>

The second helper of the doctrine of Upper Drukpa was Gyalwa Yangönpa.<sup>261</sup> He composed the *Mountain Dharma Trilogy* consisting of the *Cycle of Origination* that teaches the necessity of all the practice teachings to accomplish, the *Cycle of Hidden Explanation* that clearly teaches the abiding nature of the vajra body, and the *Cycle of Liberation from the Treacherous Path of the Intermediate State* that brings death onto the path.<sup>262</sup> The first is the root, like the body, that is the three dharmas. The extensions, like the limbs, are the nine dharmas. The profound meaning, like the heart, is the six dharmas. The cherished, like the life

force, is the six dharmas. The red instruction, like the five senses, is the five dharmas, and so forth.

In the notes on the six dharmas by Barap Gyaltzen Zangpo<sup>263</sup> that were augmented by Jamyang Chökyi Drakpa<sup>264</sup> in the *Trilogy of Great Bliss* there are instructions for the paths of both instantaneous realizers and gradual realizers.

The *Five Capabilities of the Lower Drukpa* consists of five instructions: Mahāmudrā Death Capability, Inner Heat Cotton Capability, Secret Conduct Mountain Capability, Disease and Spirit Disturbance Capability, and Antidote Condition Capability.<sup>265</sup>

### [Rechungpa and the Hearing Lineages] [dd]

Among Lord Milarepa's heart disciples, Rechung Dorjé Drakpa was like the moon. "And others" above in the root text refers to Ngen Dzong Tönpa.<sup>266</sup> These two were holders of teaching systems of the *Cakrasaṃvara Ḍākinī Hearing Lineage* that came from the *Treasury of Three Cycles of the Wish-fulfilling Gem*.<sup>267</sup> In that, after the conferral of empowerment into the mandala of the father Cakrasaṃvara, "tantric instructions related to empowerment" refers to the root and explanatory tantras. The "instructions of the hearing lineage related to blessing based on the four empowerments," in which *sindhūra*<sup>268</sup> is the blessing object in the mandala of pristine awareness, refers to the esoteric instructions of the *Three Gems*.<sup>269</sup> And the "introduction instructions related to symbols" based on the symbol empowerment of the formless Ḍākinī are found in the *Three Dharma Cycles of the Formless Ḍākinī*.<sup>270</sup>

Those two teaching traditions [of Rechungpa and Ngendzong Tönpa] are the most widely renowned of the ones that Jetsun Mila bestowed in individual portions to his eight heart disciples when explaining the instructions of the hearing lineage. In particular, the special transmission of the profound and vast instructions of ripening and liberation of the Dakpo Hearing Lineage fell to the Zurmang Kagyu and it continues unbroken up to the present.

Each spiritual adept of the four great and eight lesser Kagyu lineages opened such an infinite multitude of dharma doors that it cannot be measured or encompassed. Nevertheless, it is said that it can all be subsumed into two: the path of method related to the tantras and the hearing

lineage related to blessing from the extent of Jetsun Mila's instructions. The root of all that is mahāmudrā and the six dharmas.

The extensive application from scriptures in connection with the intention of the profound sutras and secret tantras of those two subjects can only be realized from the excellent teachings of the all-knowing Garwang Chen-nga,<sup>271</sup> and others.





## 5: SHANGPA KAGYU

### *Lineage History*

The Shangpa Kagyu tradition was one of the fragile lineages that Jamgön Kongtrul was specifically concerned with in his compilation activities. It is also one that he took on as his own personal practice, and he considered himself a direct heir to the lineage. The first Tibetan and therefore founder of the lineage was Khyungpo Naljor of the ancient Khyung clan that had produced many great adepts. Khyungpo Naljor was born in a Tiger Year probably in the late tenth century and is reputed to have lived for one hundred and fifty years, but the precise dates vary widely. Kongtrul identifies four branches and miscellaneous subsidiaries.\*

The long lineage originates with Khyungpo Naljor receiving the “quintessence of the mind” of one hundred and fifty scholar-adepts. These included four root gurus, thirteen especially exalted gurus, and two ḍākinīs, Niguma and Sukhasiddhī, who had heard the dharma directly from the buddha Vajradhara. Although Khyungpo Naljor had already studied and mastered the traditions of Bön and Nyingma, he went in search of the profound teachings of sutra and tantra from India. He accomplished the practice of the five tantric deities (*rgyud sde lha lnga*) in the five centers of his body. These are Hevajra, the culmination of inner heat; Cakrasaṃvara, the culmination of action-mudra; Guhyasamāja, the culmination of illusory body and luminous clarity; Mahāmāyā, the culmination of dream; and Vajrabhairava, the culmination of enlightened activity. He established his seat at Zhang-zhong in the Shang region of

\*Synopsis based on *The Treasury of Knowledge*, Book 4, Part 3 (TOK1: 533-538).

Western Tsang. Henceforth he was known as the Guru of Shang, and the holders of his lineage became known as the Shangpa Kagyu.

Khyungpo Naljor's teachings can be subsumed into three: those of exegesis, debate, and practice. Of all of these, it is only the essence of the last one—the stages of practice—which has lasted until the present day. This is known as the five dharma cycles that are the root of the Golden Dharmas of Niguma and Sukhasiddhī. That is, the five cycles of Niguma, Sukhasiddhī, Vajrāsana, Maitrīpa, and Rāhula, along with various miscellaneous precepts.

Khyungpo Naljor had five principal early disciples and one later one who were foremost among eighteen thousand spiritual friends. The five early ones were Me-u Tönpa, Yarpo Gyamoché, Ngultön Rinwang, Tökön Chögar, and Zhangom Chöseng. The later one was Mokchokpa Rinchen Tsöndrü (1110-1170?). The transmission of the one-to-one lineage of the secret words of Vajradhara fell only to Mokchokpa. From him, one by one, it was transmitted to Wöntön Kyergangpa (or Chokyi Sengé, 1143-1216), Sangyé Nyentön (or Rigongpa, 1175-1255), and Drogön Tönpa (or Sangyé Tönpa, 1207-1278).

The vajra seal that limited it as a one-to-one lineage was lifted by the “seventh jewel” of that lineage, Drogön Tönpa. From then on Tibet was filled with followers of this lineage. Foremost among them were Tsangma Shangtön (1234-1309), Samdingpa Zhönnudrup, and Jakchen Gyaltsenbum (1261-1334). These three scholar-adepts established the foundation of the lineage and wrote down the instructions. Shangtön's disciple Khyungpo Tsultrim Gönpa and others become known as the Later Seven Jewels of an amazing lineage. Many lineages came from the seats of Jakchen and Samding, and some spread from Tönpa's disciple Tashipal. These are all termed “the long lineages.”

The direct lineage of Shangpa Kagyu is so called because direct transmissions of teachings from the *ḍākinī* Niguma were received by the great master Tangtong Gyalpo during three separate visionary experiences. Tangtong Gyalpo, “King of a Thousand Plains,” also known as Tsöndru Zangpo (1361?-1485), was famous for the amazing iron bridges he had built throughout the Himalayan regions as well as his rich legacy of teaching instructions. He had received the hearing lineage known as Upper Rigong from Jangsem Jinpa Zangpo (fourteenth c.) in the long lineage from Muchen Gyaltsen Palzang, a disciple of Shangtön. Then he was taken in by the *ḍākinī* of pristine awareness and received the direct

lineage from her in three stages. First, Niguma appeared in person at Riwoché in Tsang and gave guidance in the six dharmas, mahāmudrā, the three integrations on the path, deathlessness, and guru-protector inseparable. Second, she conferred the individual empowerments at the foot of a juniper tree at demon fort at Lower Dok. Third were the instructions of Khecarī, which occurred by means of unlettered symbols. These transmissions—the early, middle, and later—came through individual lineages from Mankarwa Lodrö Gyaltzen (fifteenth c.) and others, and are an unbroken lineage of precepts up to the present time.

The very direct lineage originated with the glorious Kunga Drolchok (1507-1566). He received guidance more than a hundred times in twenty-five lineage traditions. These included the direct lineage from a pure vision of the Vajra Queen Nigupta (Niguma) in which she revealed her real face and bestowed the special oral instructions twice, and the long lineages from Jakchen, Samding, Tangtong Gyalpo, and many others. He granted the guidance system over a hundred times and established many fortunate disciples in the stages of attainment. Thus Kunga Drolchok held the transmissions of the long lineage and the direct lineage, as well as the amazing very direct lineage due to being adopted by the ḍākinī. The roots of the Shangpa hearing lineage are the pure Golden Dharmas, which are adorned peripherally by incisive oral instructions of the direct lineage possessed of the ḍākinī's moist breath. These are found in the *Profound Meaning Expanded* and other texts by the Lord of Secrets Drolwai Gonpo, better known as Tāranātha (1575-1635).

The exceptionally exalted system refers to the lineage of precepts of Niguma's *Vajra Lines*. It possesses three exceptional qualities that make it superior to others: (1) The holders of the lineage were exceptional because they were exclusively bodhisattvas who are at the final stages of existence and the lineage was never interrupted by ordinary individuals. (2) The oral instructions are exceptional because the *Vajra Lines* that were set down by the ḍākinī of pristine awareness are unerring in meaning and uncorrupted in letter. They have not been afflicted with the compositions and alterations derived from the intellectual analyses of ordinary people. (3) The blessings are exceptional because even during this end-time of degeneration one can actually observe them ripening into the fruit of attainment in those with diligence and undamaged sacred pledge, such that it is not just the leftovers of exegesis and debate.

Six-armed Mahākāla, known as the Swift Wisdom Protector, is an

example of another transmission within the Shangpa tradition. In earlier times the Upper Tradition pervaded almost everywhere. Later, the Lower Tradition of Rigong also expanded greatly, from the seat of Rigong throughout Pakmodru, Kamtsang, and the Four Assemblies traditions. From Samding it spread separately in the southern Chöd lineage, and from Jakpa there were upper, lower, and middle lineages. These were received by the master Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) from Jakchen Jampa Pal (1310-1391), and by Gelekpai from Muchen Namkhai Naljor (fourteenth c.). It spread throughout the three provinces of U, Tsang, and Kham, as far as China and Mongolia. There were other later teaching lineages as well, such as those of Mahākaruṇika from Khyergangpa, the secret practice of Hayagrīva, and Nyentön's yogic exercises for deathlessness. These spread extensively throughout most of the other schools.

Jamgön Kongtrul may indeed have saved many of these teachings by incorporating them in his collections and by instituting their practices in his retreat center at Palpung, as well as by adopting them as part of his own path. In doing so, he became a major lineage holder of the Shangpa tradition. One of his successors as lineage holder and as retreat master at Kunzang Dechen Ösal Ling was the master Norbu Tondrup. In turn, Norbu Tondrup's successor in both positions was the well-known contemporary master Kalu Rinpoche (1905-1989), whose efforts in spreading these profound teachings in East and West has truly consummated Kongtrul's work. There is no danger now of this lineage disappearing, as cloistered retreats on many continents continue these practices.

## *The Esoteric Instructions of the Shangpa Kagyu*

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### E. Shangpa Kagyu (*TOK* 3: 394-407)

1. The Stages of the Path
2. The Practices to Accomplish
  - a. Overview
  - b. Extensive Explanation
    - i. The Six Dharmas of Niguma
      - aa. The Preliminaries
      - bb. Inner Heat
      - cc. Illusory Body
      - dd. Dream
      - ee. Luminous Clarity
      - ff. Transference
      - gg. Intermediate State
    - ii. Māhamudrā
    - iii. The Three Integrations on the Path
    - iv. The Two Khecarī
    - v. Body and Mind; Deathless and Unerring
    - vi. The Instructions of Sukhasiddhī and Others
      - [aa. The Extensive Path]
      - [bb. The Abbreviated Path]
      - [cc. The Very Abbreviated Path]

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### **Shangpa Kagyu [E]**

The presentation of the sequence of meditation in the glorious Shangpa Kagyu has two parts: a general presentation listing the stages of the path, and a specific description of the practices to accomplish them.

## The Stages of the Path [1]

The Shangpa tradition has three stages: exegesis, debate, and practice.

The latter is the five cycles of Ni, Dhi, Maitrī, Abhaya, and Rāhula,

Along with miscellaneous fragments.

The Shangpa Kagyu developed from the teaching system of Khyungpo Naljor,<sup>1</sup> a king among scholar-adepts. The Shangpas retained inconceivable traditions of practice and explanation in sutra and mantra and performed vast enlightened activity in exegesis, study, meditation, and practice. To summarize them, they could be subsumed into three stages of the path: exegesis, debate, and practice. An overview of these was described before.<sup>2</sup>

In the last of these, the stages in the path of practice, one finds the five dharma cycles of Niguma, Sukhasiddhī,<sup>3</sup> Vajrāsana, Maitrīpa, and Rāhula, as well as miscellaneous esoteric instructions. But those are just a conventional summary of the principal sections of teachings, and do not represent the entirety of the dharma cycles that Khyungpo himself received. If, right from the outset, the whole of his teachings could not even be contained in a single lineage system, no need to speak of the current situation.

## The Practices to Accomplish [2]

This has two parts: an overview and an extensive explanation.

### Overview [a]

The main practices are Niguma's Five Golden Dharmas.

The main practices in the accomplishment of the stages of the path are known as the Five Golden Dharmas (*gser chos lnga*): the roots are the six dharmas; the trunk is mahāmudrā; the branches are the three integrations on the path; the flowers are the white and red Khecarī, and the fruit is deathless and unerring.

## Extensive Explanation [b]

This has six parts: the basic Five Golden Dharmas and an addendum explaining the instructions of Sukhasiddhi and others.

## The Six Dharmas of Niguma [i]

This has seven parts: the preliminaries, inner heat, illusory body, dream, luminous clarity, transference, and intermediate state practices.

## The Preliminaries [aa]

**Having refined one's being with the hollow interior, the  
exceptional purifier,**

It is the tradition of this precious lineage that a person's stream of being is matured through the conferral of the four empowerments in the manner of a blessing, for it is well known that "blessing is the basis of empowerment." Then the person with faith, diligence, weariness, and renunciation, who has properly completed the common preliminary practices, refines his or her being with the exceptional purifier called the "hollow interior of *a*" (*a'i stong ra*).<sup>4</sup> The meaning of "purifier" (*dag byed*) is found in *The Fifteen Especially Exalted Instructions of the Dākinī of Pristine Awareness*.<sup>5</sup>

It will purify stains of breaches and breaks of vows in one's  
mindstream;

This is the defining characteristic of the hollow interior.

This, then, is a special yoga for refining away all the stains from sins, obscurations, faults, downfalls, and so on, in one's stream of being. It says in the *Testimonial*:<sup>6</sup>

In the hollow interior, the preliminary purifier,  
There are three supplications and three visualizations.

As is taught here, the three supplications<sup>7</sup> are done first and then one does the visualizations. They are the hollow interior of *a*, the purifier;



the hollow interior that clears away disease and negative spirits; and the three signs that distinguish the hollow interior. To posit this last as visualization is to apply the name of the cause to the result.<sup>8</sup> In this tradition there are many other cases such as this.

Next, one should engage in the main body of this profound path. As it says in the *Vajra Lines [on the Six Dharmas of Niguma]*:<sup>9</sup>

Having first been matured by four empowerments, faithful and  
diligent,  
Weary of impermanence and deficiencies,  
Whoever strives at this supreme path  
Will awaken in six months, a year, or in this lifetime.

### Inner Heat [bb]

With fierce and gentle breathing exercises of inner heat, the  
root,  
Consume it as food, wear it as clothing, spread it as a seat, and  
ride it as a horse.

In the six dharmas, which are the root of these Golden Dharmas, the first is the natural blazing of bliss-heat, the defining characteristic of the path of method. As is said:<sup>10</sup>

The arising of emptiness-clarity in the nature of bliss-heat  
Is the defining characteristic of the path of method.

Thus, this is a yoga in which the blazing and melting of *a* and *ham* generate the bliss-heat of the vajra body, giving rise to the distinctive pristine awareness of emptiness-clarity. By means of the two yogas of one's own and another's body as method and wisdom, there arise the four descending dissipating joys and the four ascending nondissipating joys that do not move or change. This stabilizes the coemergent pristine awareness of bliss-emptiness.

In this, one first tames the wild channels and wild energy currents by applying the fierce "wild fire of inner heat,"<sup>11</sup> and then forcefully generating the heat. This is inner heat's own preliminary practice. Then the main practice, called "eating the food," is the gentle yoga of the blazing

and melting of the “springtime drops”<sup>12</sup> in connection with the four-fold vase-breathing. The branches—“wearing the clothing,” “spreading the seat,” and “riding the horse”—are practiced in connection with any activities.<sup>13</sup> The concluding practices are taking the empowerment of existence<sup>14</sup> and naturally liberating obstructions. Then the fullest benefit is derived from the inner heat of the guru’s blessing. It is accomplished through these practices.

### **Illusory Body [cc]**

**Devotion, the deity’s form, and the six classes arise as illusion.**

The defining characteristic of illusory body, which is the natural liberation of attachment and aversion, is this:<sup>15</sup>

Although appearing, its intrinsic nature is not real;  
This is the defining characteristic of illusion.

This is a yoga that liberates attachment and aversion naturally in its own ground through the understanding that all phenomenal sights and sounds are illusory. For its instructions, those of the highest faculties rely on the friendship of a holy guru, those of medium faculties are guided without interruption by other words,<sup>16</sup> and those of lesser faculties develop meditative absorption on a single seat. The first of these three involves both integrating on the path one’s devotion to the guru and integrating the knowledge that whatever appears is unreal. The second involves both integrating one’s own body appearing as the empty appearance of the deity’s form and integrating whatever appears as illusion. In the third, once free of the four challenges,<sup>17</sup> meditating in the absorption with eight vital points causes the six classes of beings to arise as illusion. Then one integrates sickness and negative spirits as illusion and produces the six groups of qualities.<sup>18</sup> The natural arisings of illusion without attachment will occur automatically from those.

### **Dream [dd]**

**Through lucid dreaming, four empowerments, and nine  
unerring vital points,**

**Dreams are recognized, refined, and ascertained; liberating actions are mastered.**

The defining characteristic of dream, which is naturally pure double delusion, is this:

Double delusion, lacking validity, arises as bliss.

This is the defining characteristic of dreams.<sup>19</sup>

All double delusions arise without valid existence, so all the delusions of dreams just dissipate on their own in this special yoga. In these instructions, first one learns to recognize whatever dreams arise based on the vital point of lucid dreaming [or grasping that it is a dream while dreaming], by practicing the four empowerments of vital essences<sup>20</sup> and the nine unerring vital points.<sup>21</sup> Then one clears away the obstructions of excessive delusion, excessive wakefulness, excessive euphoria, and excessive emptiness through devotion, accumulation of merit, and so on.<sup>22</sup>

Once dreams are lucid at will, one refines the mind by means of the body, refines the body by means of the mind, [refines by means of meditation on the goddess] Nairātmyā, and by purposeful intent. When the skill with dreams is thus energetically refined, they are blended with luminous clarity.

One trains in increasing and emanating the four elements and sentient beings, large and small, that one encounters and in increasing and emanating worldly and transcendent beings for subduing them. One trains in transforming the four elements and sentient beings, large and small, and various deities, which are all transformed into empty appearance free of attachment. Thus one accomplishes the naturally arising deity's form possessed of three characteristics: bliss without attachment to it, clarity without concept of it, and appearance without intrinsic nature.

Appearing objects are ascertained through clear understanding with no reference point, clear seeing of whatever is imagined, and the mental body flying through space, which are connected with those of highest, medium, and lowest faculties, respectively, and through the three instructions on clarifying the appearance of a visualized object. Through these one will master the liberating actions of dream.

## Luminous Clarity [ee]

**By root, branches, leaves, and flowers,  
Light and deep luminous clarity integrates the three kāyas.**

The defining characteristic of luminous clarity, by which stupidity is naturally dispelled, is this:

Clarity-emptiness, the sky without center or circumference,  
This is the defining characteristic of luminous clarity.<sup>23</sup>

Clarity and emptiness are inseparable and free of all fixations, something like the sky without center or circumference. To bring this into spiritual practice, one sets the foundation by four preliminary practices: (1) [the contemplation of] impermanence and weariness is the root, (2) the conduct and sacramental substances are the branches, (3) the path of method and natural radiance are the leaves, and (4) supplication creates the flowers.

The main practice is to recognize deep and light luminous clarity through three means of grasping it.<sup>24</sup> It is integrated on the path night and day by the natural arising of the three kāyas. The training in the blending of inseparable clarity and emptiness, sitting meditation and postmeditation, day and night, and bliss and emptiness causes the sequential development of luminous clarity. The first realization of luminous clarity is the inseparability of clarity and emptiness, second is the inseparability of bliss and emptiness, third is profound tranquility free of elaboration, and fourth is the ultimately inseparable luminous clarity. Finally, luminous clarity endowed with twofold purity manifests.<sup>25</sup>

The concluding practices are to keep the general and specific sacred pledges, to clear up obstructions through the natural purity of faults and failings, to enhance practice by cutting through doubts, to identify the especially eminent doors of perception,<sup>26</sup> and the distinctions of daytime and nighttime experiential realizations. Thus one crosses the stages and consummates the four kinds of luminous clarity—bliss, clarity, non-thought, and inseparability—by means of sixteen modes of emergence.

Those sixteen modes of emergence of luminous clarity are as follows: the luminous clarity of experience and realization are two. Each of those occurs as daytime and nighttime luminous clarity, making four. Those four are each divided into two [categories of] being with or without

appearance, which is eight. Those four having appearance are divided into four that have an external connection and four that do not, making eight. Those without appearance each have both light luminous clarity and deep luminous clarity, or eight. Putting them together makes sixteen.

Those first four dharmas are known as “blending illusory body”<sup>27</sup> or the four root dharmas.

### Transference [ff]

**There is transference of suchness, union, blessing force, and  
Higher through the path of the unerring celestial realm.**

The defining characteristic of transference, which is buddhahood without meditation, is this:

Remembering it at the point of death, one is awakened;  
This is the defining characteristic of transference.<sup>28</sup>

This is a yoga that causes one to traverse to the celestial realm by merely remembering it at the point of death. The instructions for it are the transference of suchness of dharmakāya, the transference of union with the yidam, the force of blessing of the guru, and the transference higher through the path of the unerring celestial realm (Skt. *khecara*). These are the four doctrines in the source text, *Vajra Lines*.<sup>29</sup> There is also the supplemental instruction on transference, “Skylight of Pristine Awareness.”<sup>30</sup>

### Intermediate State [gg]

**By dharmakāya, saṃbhogakāya, nirmāṇakāya and the unerring  
general point,  
One is liberated in the three intermediate states according to  
level of faculties.**

The defining characteristic of the intermediate state for attaining the saṃbhogakāya of the victors is this:

Appearance-emptiness, free of attachment, the great bliss kāya,  
This is the defining characteristic of saṃbhogakāya.<sup>31</sup>

This is a yoga for actualizing the great bliss kāya that is inseparable appearance and emptiness free of attachment. The way to put it into practice is through the natural arising of luminous clarity as dharmakāya, the natural arising of the victors' saṃbhogakāya, the natural arising of unimpeded nirmāṇakāya, and the unerring general vital point that must augment the last two appropriately. Through these practices, those of highest, middle, and lowest faculties will attain liberation in excellent, medium, and lower ways during the first or successive two stages of the intermediate state, respectively. The essence, definition, divisions, and so on, of these are no different from those already discussed in the chapter on the Six Dharmas of Nāropa and therefore will not be repeated.

### **Mahāmudrā [ii]**

**Preliminaries are to develop calm abiding and higher insight by  
three naturally settled states.**

**The main practice is introduction and four faults liberated in  
their own place.**

**Concluding practices are the natural arising of awareness,  
clarity, and emptiness as the three kāyas.**

**This is the trunk of the dharma, mahāmudrā.**

This is the theme of all sutras and tantras. It is the pith of all esoteric instructions. It is the supreme one among all the methods to expediently produce the supreme spiritual power. These are the instructions of the deepest meaning of mahāmudrā, which is not mind-made. Of the many ways to guide a fortunate individual, here we are considering the one included in the Five Golden Dharmas that were Vajradhara's actual instructions to the awareness ḍākinī Niguma. They are known by the name "amulet box" (*ga'u ma*) because the scholar-adept Khyungpo Naljor valued them so highly that he put them on a paper scroll inside a Nepalese amulet box like a heart and hung it around his neck.<sup>32</sup>

The preliminaries are to practice the profound method of devotion to the guru and to accomplish faultless calm abiding through the three

methods of settling body, speech, and mind in their natural condition while developing higher insight through seeking the mind, and so on.

In the main practice, a sly glimpse<sup>33</sup> of pristine awareness is introduced by the descent of blessings of the vajra-sealed secret words and one decisively determines the nature of mind itself by means of the liberation of the four faults in their own ground. The four faults are (1) although one's own mind and the dharmakāya are beyond unity and separation, it is too close to recognize; (2) although it arises in oneself, it is too profound to grasp; (3) although just recalling it suffices, it is too easy to believe; and (4) although the three kāyas arise in oneself, it is too good to accept. These are the four faults from which one is liberated.

The concluding practice is the conviction that the ordinary mind that was from the beginning the unity of clarity and emptiness is itself the naturally arising three kāyas—its emptiness is dharmakāya, its clarity is nirmāṇakāya, and the union of those is saṃbhogakāya. Once such certainty has been born, one maintains within the settled state of just that.

The enhancement practices are to rely on immeasurable devotion, immeasurable compassion, and the special methods of blending the energy currents with ordinary consciousness, with the luminous clarity of the deity's body, and with unity consciousness. The uncommon clearing away of obstructions is to make an effort not to get caught up in one's experiences and not to lean toward either appearance or emptiness. In this way, one ascertains the three measures of natural arising<sup>34</sup> and actualizes the natural liberation of the four kāyas.

This is amulet box mahāmudrā or the so-called “three naturally settled states” (*rang babs rnam gsum*). It is the trunk of the excellent wish-fulfilling tree of the Five Golden Dharmas.

### The Three Integrations on the Path [iii]

Whatever appears is the guru, appearance and sound are deity  
and mantra,

Appearance is mind, illusion, and dream.

Devotion, pure perception, and unreal; this is the dharma of  
integration, the branches.

The way to practice the three integrations of the guru, the yidam, and illusion on the path based on appearances is this: (1) Whatever appears

is all viewed as the play of the three secrets of the glorious guru. (2) All appearing form is perceived as the form of the yidam deity, the rainbow body of empty appearance, and all sound resounds as the vibration of indestructible naturally occurring mantra. (3) Understanding appearance as mind and mind as illusion and dream, one trains in the yogas of day and night.<sup>35</sup>

The ways to practice are to exert effort in devotion based on the three convictions and on the union [of appearance and emptiness];<sup>36</sup> pure perception based on having the six constant vital points;<sup>37</sup> and the meditative absorption in clarity-emptiness free of fixation on the validity of the doors of perception.

If done like this, devotion arises based on the guru, from that comes [appreciation of his or her] kindness, from that the accumulation of merit, and from that the three kāyas arise naturally. Pure perception based on the yidam leads to the accumulation of merit, and from that the mahāmudrā of the deity's form arises naturally. [Realizing] appearance as one's own mind produces [the realization] of illusion, from that dream, and from that luminous clarity occurs as a natural arising. Through these three practices, the natural arising of clarity, emptiness, and great bliss as the three kāyas will be actualized in a matter of months or years.

Since these “Unerring Three Integrations” (*'phyug med lam khyer nam gsum*) are subsidiary practices, they are known as the dharma of the branches.

## The Two Khecarī [iv]

**The flowers are Red and White Khecarī, a stream of compassion  
Evoked by exalted supplication. In the four chakras  
Desire is liberated and the lamp of bliss-emptiness blazes  
intensely.**

The fourth Golden Dharma is the flowers, the pair of Red and White Khecarī.<sup>38</sup> To put it into practice, one evokes the stream of the vital power of nondissipating compassion of the Bhagavatī, Vajra Queen of Great Bliss, with the ardent vajra words of an especially exalted supplication. In the chakras of the four places in the body, appropriate to the specific support, the bliss-emptiness supported by the individual paths of passion and liberation intensely blazes like a lamp. In that meditative



absorption, that very support becomes the engagement in the space<sup>39</sup> of great union. Those of inferior capability will easily traverse to the vajra city of the celestial realm (Khecara) based on the secret path of forcefully blocking the five birthplaces all at once.

### Body and Mind; Deathless and Unerring [v]

**One's mind is unborn and so does not die.**

**The body itself is inert, not a basis for attributing "death."**

**Bound in unerring basic space, this is said to be the fruit.**

These instructions are a combination of the unerring body precepts transmitted to Gyalwa Nyentön Chöjé<sup>40</sup> and the deathless mind that came from Khyungpo himself. In *The Ocean of Pristine Awareness Tantra*<sup>41</sup> it says:

This body and mind are indivisible,  
Mutually dependent as support and supported.  
This should be known as the vital point of all.

This means that one first thoroughly refines the channels, vital essences, and energy currents with the thirty-two yogic exercises for accomplishing deathlessness. Once those are done, the body must be apprehended as being on the path of liberation. The master Virūpa said:

Through a great share of merit  
One certainly obtains a human body.  
From the blessing of the guru's speech  
It goes forth on the path of liberation.

The main body of the practice is described by the reverend lord Mokchokpa:<sup>42</sup>

Sutras, tantras, esoteric instructions, and experiences teach  
The vital point of deathlessness, awakening without meditating;  
How this body of karma fully ripening  
Arises as a naturally pure awareness body.  
Visualize the fully ripening karmic body as the deity's form

And meditate without fixation on it.  
 It is itself inseparable from mind.  
 No essence of mind is established,  
 So where is something that dies?  
 “Death” is just a concept.  
 The hosts of concepts are nonexistent phenomena of samsara  
 and nirvana.

According to this and other statements, since one’s own mind in essence has no real existence whatsoever, it was always unborn. Therefore the great natural liberation of deathlessness is attained. As for this body of fully ripening karma, since it is a conglomeration of inert matter, it is not a basis on which to attribute the designations of birth or death. In fact, the body even arises as a mere appearance of mind. When one gains confidence in the realization that the mind is unborn and undying, then the body appears as the deity’s form in mahāmudrā and one becomes bound to basic space without erring into the path of deluded appearance. By this kind of instruction one discovers the kāya of union in this lifetime. Even just hearing it can cause one to get enlightened in the intermediate state as the saṃbhogakāya of the victors. Of the Five Golden Dharmas, it is said to be like the ripened fruit.

### The Instructions of Sukhasiddhī and Others [vi]

Sukha’s six dharmas, the practice of four deities together,  
 Guru and protector inseparable, and so on—many profound  
 teachings.

Furthermore, Khyungpo Naljor received the six dharmas of the path of method and mahāmudrā pure awareness from the awareness ḍākinī Sukhasiddhī. He received *The Practice of Four Deities Combined*<sup>43</sup> and the instruction cycles of Guru and Protector Inseparable<sup>44</sup> from the great adept Rāhulagupta.<sup>45</sup> “And so on” above in the root verse refers to the profound dharma of Vajrāsana-Abhaya<sup>46</sup> that was actually taught in the *Jewel Ocean Tantra*<sup>47</sup> for accomplishing the five tantras in a single mandala together with the profound body mandala, and so on.<sup>48</sup> There are many such profound dharmas with undiminished continuity of blessings that ripen and liberate. In general, the great adept Khyungpo Naljor

fully received the spiritual essence of one hundred and fifty scholar-adepts of the exalted land of India. He is famous without rival in the Land of Snows as one teacher with countless dharma doors.

Currently, the individual vajra lines for Niguma's Six Dharmas, mahāmudrā, integration on the path, unerring, and deathlessness are extant. The first two and the last of these are the transmitted word of Vajradhara. The remaining two exist as vajra line treatises spoken in the first case by Niguma, and in the latter case by Virūpa.<sup>49</sup> This has occurred in other lineages as well. For example, the vajra lines of the *Cakrasaṃvara Hearing Lineage* are the transmitted word of the Buddha, whereas the *Vajra Lines of the Path with Its Result* and the *Vajra Lines of Non-Elaboration* and others appear to be treatises.<sup>50</sup>

In this system of instructions, even the supplications and numbering of the verses for visualization were established by the awareness ḍākinī herself in the *Testimonial*, so it is free of the suppositions, fabrications, and alterations of later individuals. Thus it is most exceptional and exalted.

In general, the long tradition of the Shangpa Kagyu was divided into three: the extensive, abbreviated, and very abbreviated paths.

### [The Extensive Path] [aa]

The extensive path consists of what are known as the “Fifteen Specially Exalted Instructions of the Indian Ḍākinī.” These are

- (1) the preliminary, the hollow purifier
- (2) the natural blazing of bliss-heat, the path of method
- (3) illusory body, the natural liberation of attachment and aversion
- (4) dream, the natural purity of delusion
- (5) the six special chakras
- (6) the four wisdoms in blending transference
- (7) the three unerring integrations on the path
- (8) the natural arising of the deity's form in pure perception
- (9) clear seeing of any imagined object of perception
- (10) luminous clarity, the natural dispelling of stupidity
- (11) transference, buddhahood without meditation
- (12) intermediate state, attainment of saṃbhogakāya

- (13) relative truth as illusion and dream
- (14) absolute truth as helpless and harmless
- (15) the natural arising of form kāyas for the welfare of others.

### [The Abbreviated Path] [bb]

If these are abbreviated, they are subsumed into the instructions on the three bodies. As is said:

If you do not recognize the three bodies through the instructions  
 You simply follow after delusion.  
 Fully ripening, habit, and mental bodies  
 Are the victor's kāyas if grasped through vital points.  
 Until samsara is emptied,  
 The uninterrupted welfare of beings continues.

The three bodies are the fully ripening karmic body, the habit body, and the mental body. An exposition of them is found in the scholar-adept Khyungpo Naljor's *Instructions for Unerring Three Intermediate States*.<sup>51</sup> There, the yogin's bases of refinement are the three intermediate states. The refining agents are creation and completion, dream, and luminous clarity. As it states in the *Display of Pristine Awareness Tantra*:<sup>52</sup>

Those three bodies in the intermediate states  
 Are refined by creation and completion, dream, and luminous  
 clarity.

And in *Hevajra*:<sup>53</sup>

Just as illusion and dream,  
 Just as the intermediate states...

The three intermediate states that are the bases for refinement are the intermediate state between birth and death, the intermediate state of dream, and the intermediate state of existence. The intermediate state between birth and death lasts from the time of being born until dying, during which one has a fully ripening karmic body. Why is it called fully ripening? The virtue and nonvirtue that one has accumulated ripens as

various kinds of pleasure and pain that one experiences, so it is called the body of fully ripening karma. The second, dream intermediate state, lasts from the time that one falls asleep until one wakes up, and is the habit body. Why is it called the habit body? The various habitual patterns of this life come up in one's dreams, so it is the dream body of habitual patterns. The third is the intermediate state of existence that lasts from death until one takes another birth, and it is the mental body. Why is it called the mental body? While consuming odors as its food, the mind, like a phantom, has full powers and is unobstructed by materiality, so it is a mental body.

Secondly, that which refines them: The mahāmudrā of the deity's form refines the fully ripening body; the emanation, transformation, and so on, of dreams refines the habit body; and luminous clarity refines the mental body.

Alternatively, each of those bodies has body, speech, and mind as the bases of refinement and they are refined by the three experiences of bliss, clarity, and nonthought. The result obtained is the inseparable three kāyas. This way, those of highest faculties are enlightened in the fully ripening body, those of medium faculties are enlightened in the habit body, and those of the lowest faculties are enlightened in the intermediate state due to the practice that was done during the fully ripening and habit bodies that acted as a seed.<sup>54</sup> This was all taught clearly by the scholar-adept Khyungpo, Nyentön, and others.

Thus, if one masters the fully ripening body through the methods in the instructions, then the habit body and, by that, the mental body will be mastered in turn. Therefore, first of all one should practice with this fully ripening body, which is the nature of channels, energy currents, and vital essences. Then one practices the esoteric instructions with method based on one's own body, the yoga of the blazing and dripping of *a* and *ham*, and the yoga of wisdom based on another's body, joining with *khagamukha*.<sup>55</sup> Refining and controlling the bodhicitta, it will travel from the tip of the "jewel" to the crown of the head by means of the four dissipating ascending joys and the four nondissipating descending joys. When the body is completely filled it becomes the rainbow body or vajrakāya. The speech becomes the harmonious song of the invincible *nāda*, and the mind without concept is the dharmakāya. Since this is actual, complete enlightenment, it was given the designation "highest faculties enlightened in the fully ripening body."

Those of medium faculties practice illusory body through recollection and purposeful intent during the daytime, and the recognizing, refining, increasing, and transforming of dreams at nighttime, by which the natural purity of this double delusion is refined. Therefore this is given the designation “medium faculties enlightened in the habit body.”

Those of lowest faculties practice during the fully ripening and habit bodies together. When this acts as a seed, those of highest, medium, and lowest [subdivisions within the lowest faculties] will be enlightened during one of the sequence of three intermediate states [of death]. This is given the designation “lowest faculties enlightened in the mental body.”

### [The Very Abbreviated Path] [cc]

As is said:

The three bodies are the three kāyas of the victor,  
 One's mind is undying and naturally liberated.  
 How wonderful! A precious treasure,  
 The intention of the victors of the three times.

Thus, one traverses through the final stages of the path and connects to the supreme fruition only by settling without wavering directly on the singular mind itself.

The instructions for experiential practice known as the three or four wisdoms of blending in the practice of transference and the special profound vital points of application are found in the excellent teachings of the great honorable lord of Jonang.<sup>56</sup> The specific layout of the general stages of the path in this tradition is found in the root and commentary called *Evolution of Illusion*,<sup>57</sup> which were created by the ḍākinī of pristine awareness herself. It is most important to come to a realization of these and other such teachings.



## 6: ZHIJÉ AND CHÖD

### *Lineage History*

The practice lineage known as Zhijé (*zhi byed*) or Pacification originated in Tibet with the acclaimed Indian master Dampa Sangyé (d.1117). Despite the existence of textual sources for both the history of the lineage and its practices, there do not seem to be actual practitioners at this point. Its subsidiary, Chöd (*gcod*) or Severance, on the other hand, is practiced far and wide in all sects, although not itself a sect. Severance is considered a branch of Pacification because it also traces some of its precepts to Dampa Sangyé. It is most famous as the lineage begun by the great Tibetan yoginī Machik Lapdrön (1055-1153), and for supposedly being the only Tibetan lineage that spread back into India. Dampa Sangyé, however, also had an enormous influence in Tibet. Kongtrul, like others before him, associates him with the Indian master Kamalaśīla.\*

Kamalaśīla is reported to have attended fifty-four male and female adepts. He mastered the eight common spiritual powers, such as subsisting on refined essences, and so he is said to have lived for five hundred and seventy years. He encountered buddhas face-to-face as numerous as the stars in the sky, such as the twelve sugatas and thirty-six gurus of the heavenly realms, and attained the supreme spiritual power.

Known throughout Tibet and China by the name Pa Dampa Sangyé, he came to Tibet five times. On all those occasions he would intuit the exact character and faculties of each individual and liberate him or her through a few appropriate instructions. Thus there is no single primary source or systematic tradition that one could ascribe to all of these methods. Nevertheless, according to Kongtrul, the main source texts of Pacification include the *Ali Kali Great River Tantra* and *Mahāmudrā Symbol*

\*Synopsis based on *The Treasury of Knowledge*, Book 4, Part 3 (TOK1: 538-548).



*Tantra*. Consistent with Dampa's own life example, his main methods were the three levels of vows as the support, ascetic exertion as the path, and activities for the welfare of others as the fruition.

The name applied posthumously to those teachings is the Holy Dharma Pacification of Suffering. It is said that other teachings first refine away the cause of suffering—afflictive emotions—thus averting suffering as a consequence. In this system, the result—suffering—is confronted directly and afflictive emotions are dispelled as a natural consequence of that. For this reason it is considered an extraordinarily profound method. It is believed that the appellation is based upon the phrase from the *Heart Sutra*, “the mantra that totally pacifies all suffering.”

Machik Lapdrön is the undisputed progenitor of the Severance lineage, combining at least three sources of her unique system: the Severance precepts from Āryadeva the Brāhmin, Maitreya, and other Indian masters through Dampa Sangyé; her own realizations of the teachings in the wisdom literature (*prajñāpāramitā*); and direct revelations from the bodhisattva Tārā.

The system called Sacred Dharma Severance of Evil Object (*dam chos bdud kyi gcod yul*) is essentially the sutra teachings on the perfection of wisdom that are consistent with the approach of vajrayāna. In this teaching system, the four devils that bind one in cyclic existence are the material devil (*thogs bcas*), the immaterial devil (*thogs med*), the devil of exaltation (*dga' spros*), and the devil of inflation (*snnyems byed kyi bdud*). But it is the last one, the conceptual mental inflation of self-fixation, which must ultimately be severed. Just as one must identify the objects in the landscape in order to cut down trees, the devil of inflated concepts is the object of severance in the perfection of wisdom.

After Dampa Sangyé came to Tibet, he saw a ḍākinī apparition of four ravens swooping towards him. Those turned out to be the four ḍākinīs: Lapdrön of Yé, Majo Jangchub of Nyaltö, Zhangmo Gyalting of Tsang, and Nyonma of Lhasa. Machik Lapdrön experienced the view of emptiness when she was reciting the Perfection of Wisdom sutras. She was a yoginī by nature and her mindstream was liberated by a single word of heart advice spoken from Dampa. The famous Severance Object is the realized dharma born from the experience and intention of Machik herself, based on the intended meaning of the perfection of wisdom. It

is a vast precept system that has multiplied and divided. There were an unimaginable number of instructions that she propagated, and some of them have continued to exist up until the present time.

There are many classification systems, but more inspiring are the six examples with which Kongtrul illustrates the greatness of Severance in his short history:

- (1) This Severance is like White Snow Mountain Kailash: whether snow falls upon the snow mountain or does not fall it is still white. In the same way, whether a Severance yogin has developed the intelligence of studying or has not done very well, it is fine.
- (2) It is like the lion, which is overwhelming in a group and also fearless when alone. Just so, it is fine to do Severance accompanied by many and fine to do it wandering around alone.
- (3) It is like the sound of a great drum: it is fine when accompanied by the sound of other instruments and when it is not; just so, it makes no difference in this practice whether one has other friends practicing virtue or not.
- (4) It is like the spring of spiritual powers: the waters of spiritual attainment are equal to however many people drink from them. Just so, in this tradition there is training that is appropriate to the intellectual level of the individual.
- (5) It is like chunks of broken gold or turquoise: if they are big then their value is great, but if they are small then the value is commensurate. Just so, if one knows the vast cycle of Severance there are immeasurable benefits, but if one knows a small amount it still benefits oneself and others.
- (6) It is like the hair of a fine horse: it does not matter what color the hair is on a well-formed superior horse with an excellent gait. Just so, it does not matter if an individual who consummates the practice of Severance Object is superior or inferior, they have more blessings than anyone else.

Machik Lapdrön and her spiritual descendents leave an unusually extensive legacy of teachings and transmissions, which only seem to increase with time. Perhaps it is the appeal and efficacy of the teachings, embodying as they do somewhat radical methods for realizing compassion and

emptiness, that has made them so popular. This is truly a nonsectarian practice lineage. Kongtrul pointedly considered the principal practice of Severance to be the transference of consciousness and realization of emptiness. The famous practice of offering one's corpse to demons and its graphic visualizations he relegates to a subsidiary practice. One therefore finds mainly the former discussed among these esoteric instructions.

*The Esoteric Instructions on Zhijé and Chöd,  
“Pacification and Severance”*

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F. Zhijé and Chöd (*TOK* 3: 407-429)

1. Pacification of Suffering
  - a. Ground, Path, and Fruition
  - b. The Name and Its Definition
  - c. The Three Transmissions
    - i. The First Transmission
      - aa. Overview
      - bb. Extensive Explanation
        - 1' The Sky-like Instruction
        - 2' The Vajra-like Instruction
        - 3' The Lotus-like Instruction
        - 4' The Elixir-like Instruction
        - 5' The Wheel-like Instruction and General Subsequent Activity
    - ii. The Middle Transmission
      - aa. The Ma System
      - bb. The So System
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    - iii. The Last Transmission
      - aa. The Cycle of Practice
      - bb. The Red Guidance
        - 1' The Preliminaries
        - 2' The Main Practice
          - a' The Foundation Act
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        - 3' Additional Subsidiary Methods
  2. Severance Object (Chöd)

- a. The Meaning and Definition
  - b. The Root Practice
  - c. The Sequence of Meditation Practice
    - i. Branches of Engagement in the Instruction
    - ii. The Main Practice in the Scriptures
- 

## Zhijé and Chöd [F]

The presentation of the meditation sequence of the Sacred Dharma Pacification of Suffering has two parts: the root, Pacification of Suffering, and the subsidiary, Severance of Evil. The first of these has three parts: a general framework according to the ground, path, and fruition; an explanation of the meaning of the name and its definition, and individual descriptions of the three transmissions: early, middle, and later.

### Pacification of Suffering [1] Ground, Path, and Fruition [a]

Pacification of the three sufferings is the ground.

Removing three, limitless beings obtaining three freedoms is the path.

Total freedom from obscurations, dwelling in equalness is the fruition.

The mighty lord of accomplishment Dampa Sangyé<sup>1</sup> mastered the semantic meaning of the unborn *Ali Kali* <sup>2</sup> and through *Inconceivable Secrets*<sup>3</sup> taught countless approaches to dharma corresponding to the faculties and dispositions of the disciples. Thus, there is not one single definite system, but an undeterminable amount of instructions. But since all of these are mostly consistent in that they guide the students, as in [Dampa Sangyé's] own life example, by means of the three levels of vows as the support, ascetic exertion as the path, and the activities for the welfare of others as the fruition, these methods became known collectively as the Sacred Dharma That Pacifies Suffering (*Dam chos sdug bsngal zhi byed*). It states in a sutra:

Dharma that pacifies the suffering and misery of beings with  
many dispositions.

And from a *Dhāraṇī*.<sup>4</sup>

The noble son or daughter who desires the pacification of outer,  
inner, and secret suffering ...

And from a *King Tantra*.<sup>5</sup>

Pacifying the suffering of the three sufferings,  
Removing three, limitless beings obtain three freedoms,  
Are definitely liberated from all obscurations,  
And dwell in space-like equalness.

Based on such teachings, Dampa Sangyé initially set forth the *Three Lamps of Pacification*.<sup>6</sup> The *Lamp of Conduct*<sup>7</sup> contains the meaning of the Vinaya, the collection on discipline. It principally teaches the training in higher ethical conduct, physical actions, and the semantic meaning of the thirty consonants. The *Lamp of the Path*<sup>8</sup> contains the meaning of the Abhidharma, the collection on phenomenology. It principally teaches the training in higher wisdom, verbal utterances, and the semantic meaning of the sixteen vowels. The *Lamp of Mind*<sup>9</sup> contains the meaning of the Sutras, the collection of discourses.<sup>10</sup> It principally teaches the training in higher meditative absorption, mental images, and the semantic meaning of the fifty-five sounds: the fifty consonants and vowels, the four neutral letters, and the *a* within them all. These are also subsumed under practices for inferior, medium, and superior faculties. Since this was seemingly the first of all the spoken mysteries of Dampa Sangyé, all of the instructions promulgated in Tibet from then on also came to be known by the name “Pacification.”

There are limitless methods for actual realization connected with the vital points of practice and instruction in the individual lineages of this profound dharma. They could, however, be arranged according to general ground, path, and fruition. It says in the *Lamp of the Yogic Path*:<sup>11</sup>

Myself and all living beings  
Are primordially unborn luminous clarity,

But confused by the winds of ignorance  
We experience the suffering of cyclic existence.

Where do the three sufferings come from? They come from karmic actions and afflictive emotions. These depend on the mind or energy current of coemergent ignorance.<sup>12</sup> That itself, having primordially passed into peace in the great unborn luminous clarity, is the ground for refining away the defilements. The three poisons that are the root of the three sufferings<sup>13</sup> are removed in the best cases through realization, in moderate cases through meditational experience, and in inferior cases through devoted supplication. Thus limitless beings obtain the three kinds of total liberation of śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas, or the actualization of the three kāyas of the victorious ones. This unerring method is the path that refines. Having been released from all bonds of emotional and conceptual obscurations, dwelling in the equalness of the space-like ultimate realm of reality is the fruition of refining. As it says in the *Lamp of Secret Mind*.<sup>14</sup>

Mind itself, when ready, is  
Nonconceptual genuine meaning,  
Nondual, yet not contrived as nondual,  
Unelaborated space,  
Liberated from existence and transcendence.

### The Name and Its Definition [b]

Since it pacifies suffering, the general term is used specifically.

Most of the guidance methods adopted in Tibet were primarily to encourage the student to turn away from nonvirtue, and subsequently to work at refining away the afflictive emotions within the mindstream. In this case, the name was designated based on such passages as “the mantra that utterly pacifies all suffering,”<sup>15</sup> which were taught in order to immediately pacify suffering such as having an inferior or sickly body due to previous karma. From the *Lamp of Conduct*.<sup>16</sup>

To beings tormented by suffering,  
Explain immaculate, comforting pacification.

In general, all of the sacred dharma is the same in pacifying suffering. But in particular, this method immediately pacifies the suffering of suffering and the others. Therefore, the general term came to be used for this specific system. In essence, it is called “the perfection vehicle that is consistent with the mantra vehicle.” It is the special instruction that combines all the sutras and tantras into a single vital point.

### **The Three Transmissions [c]**

This has three parts: the instructions of the first transmission, the middle, and the later lineages.

### **The First Transmission [i]**

This has two parts: an overview and an extensive explanation.

### **Overview [aa]**

**The first transmission was five instructions by example.**

In the first transmission, that of the Kashmiri<sup>17</sup> system, the reverend Dampa taught all of the instructions of the fifty-four male and female spiritual adepts by condensing them into five salient points of instruction illustrated by five examples.

### **Extensive Explanation [bb]**

This has five parts: instructions that are sky-like, vajra-like, lotus-like, elixir-like, and wheel-like, together with the general subsequent activity.

### **The Sky-like Instruction [1']**

**Defining characteristic lineages are sky-like:  
Relative, absolute, unity, and nonabiding.**

The twelve lineages of defining characteristics in grammar and logic that descend from Nāgārjuna are contained in the sky-like instruction. Illu-



sory-like meditative absorption reverses attachment to external appearances and refines the relative. Meditative absorption of the unborn, free of elaboration, reverses attachment to the interior mind and cultivates the ultimate. The meditative absorption of inseparable appearance and emptiness goes beyond logic and cultivates unity. The meditative absorption without thought and expression is free of all theories and cultivates total nonabiding.

### **The Vajra-like Instruction [2']**

**Father tantra is vajra-like: yogic exercise,  
Vajra repetition, and mental control of energy lead to luminous  
clarity.**

The eleven lineages of energy currents in the blessing father tantra that descend from Buddhajñāna are contained in the vajra-like instruction. The physical yogic exercises, verbal vajra repetition, and mental focus on the unborn nature control the energy currents and thereby propel one into immaculate luminous clarity.

### **The Lotus-like Instruction [3']**

**Mother tantra is lotus-like: blazing, melting,  
Retaining, reversing, and spreading make one unsullied by fault.**

The eleven lineages of bliss experience in the mother tantra that descend from Saroruha are contained in the lotus-like instructions. The blazing of the lower bliss, dripping of the upper bliss, and skill in retaining, reversing, spreading, and absorbing cause one to be unsullied by fault.

### **The Elixir-like Instruction [4']**

**Mahāmudrā symbol lineage is elixir-like empowerment,  
Introduction, integration as path, and one comment on the  
unborn.**

The eleven lineages of mahāmudrā symbol that descend from Saraha are contained in the elixir-like instructions. Dividing each of the four root

activities by five branches makes the twenty symbols by which empowerment is conferred. When those symbols and their essence are untouched by intellect, and one is undistracted in the unborn absolute, the immaculate symbols introduce the equal flavor of meditative equipoise and post-meditation. Judging [one's ability] by the three kinds of objects—agreeable, disagreeable, and neutral—the symbols are integrated as the path. A single word of spontaneous comment on the unborn places one within the state of mahāmudrā.

### **The Wheel-like Instruction and General Subsequent Activity [5']**

**The ḍākinī symbol lineage is wheel-like:  
Shooting, falling, spinning, and settling.  
Integrating the intermediate state as the path, and timely action.**

The eleven lineages of ḍākinī symbol and pristine awareness that descend from the yidam deities are contained in the wheel-like instructions. By shooting like an arrow, falling like a thunderbolt, spinning like a wheel, and settling like a butter lamp, the ten qualities such as “seeing the root”<sup>18</sup> are brought to perfection. When the most excellent pristine awareness arises, the four kāyas and five pristine awarenesses will be spontaneously present.

The general subsequent practice to all of these is to integrate the intermediate states as the path. Appearances are the intermediate state of illusion, and by practicing accordingly, the signs will arise in the intermediate state of habitual dreaming. Once that arises, one develops skill in the painful intermediate state of dying. When that develops, liberation from the deluded intermediate state of existence is certain.

The manner of liberation is this: The obscuration of afflictive emotion is purified by the experience of meditative equipoise in something, and the confused clinging to reality is expended. Through that vital point, the three realms are transcended. The obscuration of knowledge is purified by the experience of post-meditation and one is no longer confused by mere appearances. Through that vital point, one transcends the ten stages and actualizes unborn dharmakāya.

As an aid in this process one should apply the three levels of vows to one's conduct at the appropriate times. Then all attachment to impure

appearances will change into bounteous purity. By mastering that, the immediate result will be the experience of the equal flavor of acceptable or unacceptable thoughts, overcoming male and female negative spirits, controlling the four categories of disease, and the incapacity of signs and concepts to do any harm whatsoever, but instead assist in the birth of pristine awareness. Ultimately, it will result in actualizing the three kāyas.

### **The Middle Transmission [ii]**

This has three parts: the Ma system, the So system, and the Kam system.

#### **The Ma System [aa]**

**The middle Ma system is based on meaning and word lineages,  
Sixteen guidances and vital points introduce and cut off  
misconceptions.**

In the Ma system<sup>19</sup> of the middle transmission, sixteen direct guidances based on the meaning lineage introduce it and sixteen important vital points based on the word lineage cut off misconceptions. In the first, one comes to the recognition of the pristine awareness of one's own awareness through four endeavors that integrate characteristics, lack of characteristics, utter lack of characteristics, and the breakthrough to space. One enters directly into meditative absorption by four kinds of meditative sessions: long, short, partial, and continuous. Meditation is enhanced by four vital energy exercises and four thought severances. Mahāmudrā is recognized through the two placements. Nonmeditation is ascertained by two breakthrough experiences.

In the second, knowing [four things] integrate the mind on the path: the viewed object, the viewing method, the measure of seeing, and the benefits. The manner of existence, of being, of appearing, and of being empty<sup>20</sup> set the foundation of a sending session.<sup>21</sup> Four miscellaneous points capture the juncture of meaning: knowledge without foundation, essence without support, experience without change, and the natural liberation of characteristics. Four vital points of critique ascertain it. [Finality and increase] resolve it.<sup>22</sup>

## The So System [bb]

The So system is nakedly seeing awareness, with three vital points.

In the So system<sup>23</sup> the main instruction concerns seeing awareness nakedly, along with the three vital points. It says in the *Symbol Tantra*:<sup>24</sup>

The sevenfold posture causes energy-mind to enter the abode.

The vital point of the body is to establish practice through training with the physical postures and gazes. The vital point of energy currents is to fill up by settling in fresh exhalation, inhalation, and abiding of the breath. The vital point of the mind is to settle by pressing and placing through great all-pervasiveness in superior cases, the encounter of nakedly seeing in moderate cases, and various methods of pressing in inferior cases. There are also three methods of introducing them: those of superior faculties are introduced to pristine awareness in a forceful way, those of moderate faculties are introduced by examples and words, and those of inferior faculties are introduced by relying on persuasive words.

Obstructions of dullness and agitation are cleared away by checking the success of reversing the spills, leaks, and overflows. Practice is enhanced with the realization of the unity during meditation and post-meditation of essence, nature, and characteristics.

It is taught that one should practice with these ten clinchers of practice:<sup>25</sup> the clincher of the key instruction of certainty in changeless view; the clincher of the key instruction of fast, straightforward meditation; the clincher of actual fruition of ultimate stability; the clincher of the equal flavor of surprise circumstances;<sup>26</sup> the clincher of being like a skillful doctor realizing success; the clincher like a wheel weapon cutting through good and bad thoughts; the clincher like arriving at the golden land of ultimate experiential realization; the clincher like a precious jewel that fulfills desires and needs; and the clincher of the intermediate state practice of bliss-warmth at the point of death.

## The Kam System [cc]

The Kam system is the guidance in the meaning of the *Heart Sutra*, and so on.

The essential guidance in the meaning of the *Heart Sutra* is the preliminary to all the instructions in the Kam system.<sup>27</sup> These occur in the sixfold format of guidance in the meaning of supplication, devotion, purification of obscurations, accumulations, meditation on love and compassion, and engendering of the awakening mind. The last is divided into two: the forceful severing of discursive thoughts in meditative equipoise, and the post-meditation practice of taking discursive thoughts as reality. A great many such guidance systems arose, but later only these guidances of the Kam system continued to exist.

### **The Last Transmission [iii]**

This has two parts: a general presentation of the cycle of practice, and a specific explanation of the red guidance.

### **The Cycle of Practice [aa]**

**Principally, in the last, the system of the bodhisattva Kunga,  
There are white, red, and black guidances...**

The principal or root teaching of Pacification is the last transmission, which is from the instructions to the four-direction yogins, and is the system of the guru bodhisattva Kunga.<sup>28</sup> This teaching consists of instructions on the perfection of wisdom that are consistent with the secret mantra. The root is conferred to the mindstream, the essential meaning is introduced, and one is adorned with methods of numerous, great interdependent connections. Then one practices all the Buddhist teachings at one time on one seat. This key instruction is called the Practice Cycle of the Immaculate Drop.<sup>29</sup> In the *Great Gradual Path* of Zhikpo Nyima Sengé<sup>30</sup> it says:

This is a mahāmudrā teaching presenting the three immaculates;  
This key instruction presenting three practices called “drop”  
Is a wonderful presentation of three guidance systems of the three  
teaching cycles.

Initially, this consists of a preliminary empowerment which ripens the support that was not ripened before. Then the white, red, and black

guidances cause spiritual experience that had not emerged to emerge by way of exertion. The guru's blessing causes realization that has not arisen to arise and makes it the path. Severing conceptions that were not severed, the meaning of the word collections [of the last transmission] fill the mind.

As for empowerment, in this system there are four exceptional ones mentioned in the *Ali Kali Great River Tantra*.<sup>31</sup>

The meaning of absolute unelaborated coemergence  
Is in the complete four empowerments, the vital point of *Ali Kali*:  
The precious volume confers the four vase empowerments;  
It stabilizes and washes the body's impurities.  
The skullcup of elixir confers the four secret empowerments;  
It stabilizes and fulfills the victors' commitment.  
The profound introduction confers the four third empowerments;<sup>32</sup>  
It stabilizes and arouses understanding of symbols.  
Receiving the mantra transmission confers the four word empowerments;  
It stabilizes and the guru dissolves into oneself.

And from *The Gradual Path*:

This vase empowerment conferred by the scripture is a path  
wherein it is sufficient to behold.  
This elixir that is the secret empowerment is elixir that is sufficient  
to grasp.  
This introduction that is the third empowerment is the teaching  
that is sufficient to know.  
This mind training that is the fourth empowerment is the lineage<sup>33</sup> that is sufficient to meet.

Thus, the vase empowerment that ripens the body is elixir sufficient to behold in that it is the vital point that refines the pure appearances of objective reality by relying on the natural, total purity of the aggregates, constituents, and sense fields. The secret empowerment that ripens speech is the elixir sufficient to grasp in that it is the vital point that refines the habitual habit or mental obscuration of inward clinging by

relying on the letters of the four chakras. The wisdom empowerment that ripens the mind (*sems*) is the vital point sufficient to know in that it is the vital point that causes the birth of pristine awareness in one's being by relying on the four yogic exercises. The word empowerment that ripens the afflictive mind (*gid*) is the lineage sufficient to meet in that it is the vital point of resolving by antidotes and traversing the paths and stages by relying on the four vital points of the seed-syllables.

On the path, the white guidance concentrates solely on mind training, the red guidance concerns the practice of the five or three paths, and the black guidance brings about the realization of the types of letters. All of them produce results by way of exertion.

Furthermore, those of superior faculties behold the actual unadulterated abiding nature of the native mind beyond duality, causing instantaneous enlightenment. This is the vital point of nakedly seeing awareness in the white guidance. Those of medium faculties refine the vital essence of the three gates equally, and by consummating the path of the guru's four kāyas, attain the four kāyas in crossing over (*thod rgal*). This is the vital point of the sole sufficiency of devotion in the red guidance. Those of inferior faculties attain the five paths by engaging gradually. This is the vital point of the instruction on subtle cutting through (*phra chod*) in the black guidance.

To make the guru's blessing the path, initially when the guru is supplicated as dharmakāya, unrestricted realization arises. In the middle, when the guru is supplicated as saṃbhogakāya, unrestricted qualities arise. Finally, when the guru is supplicated as nirmāṇakāya, unrestricted benefit for beings occurs. Afterwards, when the guru is supplicated as the mahāsukhakāya, unfluctuating buddha activity occurs.

There are also four word collections: the sutras and tantras with their practices, the transmissions with the hearing lineage, the immaculate with the subtle vital essence; and the minute examinations with the collection of explanations. These are all common sections of teaching.

### The Red Guidance [bb]

This has three parts: explanations of the preliminaries, the main practice, and additional subsidiary methods.

## The Preliminaries [1']

... in the cycle engendering experience.

In the red guidance, the general preliminary severs attachment.

The special accomplishes the path's foundation, accumulates,  
and purifies.

In general, the direct guidance that was made from those explanations is the red guidance on the practice of yoga of five paths that is from the cycle of engendering spiritual experience. First, the preliminary of the general vehicle severs the attachments to cyclic existence. Then, the special mahayana preliminary accomplishes the foundation of the path through acts of accumulation and purification,<sup>34</sup> the same way as in general guides.

## The Main Practice [2']

This has three parts: the yogas of the foundation act; of the path agent; and of the fruition, freedom from action.

## The Foundation Act [a']

In the main part, the foundation act is possession of three vows,  
Keeping the six restraints of yoga undamaged.

The main part is the red guidance of the five paths. From the *Great River Tantra*.<sup>35</sup>

The final thing to preserve is the ultimate three vows.

Engage in preserving the restraints of yoga as taught.

As this teaches, possessing the three vows as support, preserve the six restraints of yoga undamaged. As is said:<sup>36</sup>

Outwardly sacred in the discipline of the śrāvakas,

Inwardly vast in the vows of the bodhisattvas,

Ultimately pure in the sacred pledge of secret mantra.



And Zhikpo Nyima Sengé explains in *The Great Gradual Path*:

With the lower vows as the foundation, the middle are the path  
and the higher are the fruition.

Inwardly, when there is choice, they are fundamentally the same;  
nevertheless, measure externally.

Look again and again at your own mind, the mirror of the three  
vows' purity.

The six restraints of yoga are not to supplicate worldly deities, not to request attainments from demons, not to expend vigor on this life, not to give one's nose-rope to others (i.e., give away one's freedom), not to emit secrets through the gate of the lips (i.e., speak of attainments), and not to brandish the tip of the victory banner of acclaim (i.e., exult proudly in attainments).

### The Path Agent [b']

The agent is the path. Mind training on the path of accumulation  
Lays the foundation. When refined by austerities on the path of  
application,

The secret activity of deliberate behavior is the connecting  
branch.

Subsequent activity is the path of seeing, equal flavor is the path  
of meditation,

Freedom from action is the path of consummation; these are  
produced by way of exertion.

There are five yogas of the path, which is the agent. From *The Gradual Path*:

Mind training, austerities, subsequent activity, equal flavor meditation, and self-confidence.

The three practices, and preparation, main part, and subsequent,  
are carried in the four sessions.

First, the mind training on the path of accumulation lays the foundation of the path. Second, when the austerities of the path of application have

been thoroughly refined, one also enacts the secret activity of deliberate behavior,<sup>37</sup> the branch that connects to the path of seeing. Third is the subsequent activity of the path of seeing. Fourth is the equal flavor activity of the path of meditation. And fifth is the final path, the yoga of self-confident freedom from action. In all five of them the preparation, creation of the support, gathering of the accumulations, and working with the path, magnify the blessings, the vital point of the lineage.

In the main practice, the manner of uttering sounds is integrating the letters on the path.<sup>38</sup> The special visualization of the four empowerments is the meditation sequence on the four chakras. The special basic introduction is the practice in both meditative equipoise and post-meditation. And the special permission blessing transmission is the four ways of invoking the guru's realization that perfects the levels and paths in one stroke. In the subsequent activity, while guarding against the four stains of reversing the spills, leaks, and overflows, the retreats are set by the four indicators of essence, signs, qualities, and amount.

The five paths also need to be produced by way of exertion. Three examples are that cutting through misconceptions while depending on a master is like a śrāvaka, practicing and accomplishing by oneself is like a pratyekabuddha, and heroically accomplishing the welfare of others is like a bodhisattva. The three types are monastic, layperson, and mendicant. The three times are long, short, and medium. The three systems of conferring empowerment are single, turned, and parallel in conjunction. These twelve divisions are crucial to avoid spills and leaks in the practice. *The Gradual Path* states:

In all the esoteric instructions, training in time, support, and system of practice,  
The guru recognizes the object and sets up whatever connections are auspicious.  
Carrying an unbearable load is the source of sickness, the holy ones teach.

This path did not occur previously in India and Tibet, but is the special teaching of Dampa Rinpoché. Outwardly, it draws on the heart of the Three Baskets. Inwardly, it takes the life of the four classes of tantra. Secretly, it opens the eyes to the essential meaning. In suchness, it opens the command-seal of the dākinīs and is the avenue of accomplishing the

practice of the entire buddhadharma at once and is adorned with many great techniques of auspicious connection. From the previously quoted source:

The salt of the general practice lineage, the great gradual path, the  
avenue of accomplishment,  
This key instruction of general tantra and sutra united is certainly  
not common.

### **The Fruition, Freedom from Action [c']**

**The fruition is finding one's own mind to be the totally pure  
four kāyas.**

This is the yoga of the fruition free of action. The essence of one's own mind is by nature totally pure. Taking that itself as the directive on the path, and with the guru's blessing as a preliminary, the incidental defilements are purified and ultimately the pristine awareness of intrinsic awareness is liberated within basic space. This is dharmakāya. In addition to that, its nature is the root of clarity, which is limitless perfection. By obtaining control of awareness, the pure kāya adorned with the marks and characteristics manifests to the perception of those to be tamed. This is sambhogakāya. In addition, the defining characteristic of mind is inseparable appearance and emptiness. From within that, the deeds of skillful methods appear in whichever way appropriate to whomever is to be tamed. This is nirmāṇakāya. The inseparability of those three is the mahāsukhakāya. Having found these four kāyas spontaneously present, effortless activity taming those to be tamed comes from the pristine awareness of the two knowledges.<sup>39</sup> In the formerly quoted source, there are many comments to this effect:

The fruition yoga is the four kāyas with the natural radiance of  
the five pristine awarenesses.  
The disciple who is karmically ready to meet such an excellent path  
as this,  
Without waiting for a future juncture, will achieve the exalted  
purpose in this life.

As for the time of attaining that fruition, the superior obtain it in the very life in which this teaching is encountered, the medium at the time of death, and the inferior no later than in the intermediate state. It is said that it will be realized in that very instance by essence, at death by signs, and in the intermediate state based on number [of repetition]. The birth of qualities comes through the lineage.

### Additional Subsidiary Methods [3']

**Clearing obstructions, enhancement practice, and the crucial approach to accomplishment.**

**One to one, one three, and one to one.**

For the yogin who practices in this way, clearing away obstructions occurs by clearing away the obstructions of imbalance in the four elements, eliminating proliferation through methods and wisdom, and clearing away the four stains on each path. Realization is enhanced by invoking the guru with devotion and the ḍākinīs' secret words on the four vital points of expertise. The "one to one" crucial approach to the way of accomplishment is to attend and please the guru, since during mind training one cannot be on one's own. "One three" means that by completing mind training, three things are accumulated, three causes abandoned, and the three blessings received. Having first done the three yogas, one engages in the three practices of austerities, subsequent activities, and equal flavor. Until the final success on the path, this is the pinnacle of the stages of accomplishment. "One to one" again means that one has reached the ultimate accomplishment of heroic self-confidence<sup>40</sup> and engages solely in altruistic activity. Thus in *The Gradual Path* it says:

In the gradual path divided into foundation, path, and yoga,  
The foundation has six and three, making nine; the path has five  
and three, making eight;  
And the fruition yoga has four and three; in short, there are  
twenty-four.

## Severance Object (Chöd) [2]

The presentation of the subsidiary practice Severance Object (*gcod yul*) has three parts: the meaning of the name and the definition, the basic point to practice, and the sequence of meditation practice.

### The Meaning and Definition [a]

**Severance of evil object is the activity of the profound perfection of wisdom.**

This system is called Sacred Dharma, Severance of Evil Object (*dam chos bdud kyi gcod yul*). The meaning of “severance” (*gcod*) is explained by Brāhmin Āryadeva in the short source text:<sup>41</sup>

To sever the root of mind itself,  
And sever the roots of five toxic emotions  
And sever extreme views, disturbed meditation,  
And hopes and fears about results in activity—  
To sever all inflation—  
That is the definition of “Severance.”

The term “object” (*yul*) is explained in the *Abhidharma Treasury*:<sup>42</sup>

From unforsaken latent tendencies  
And direct contact with objects  
And improper concepts  
Afflictive emotions arise...

That which is to be severed is afflictive emotion. When afflictive emotions originate from latent tendencies and external objects and improper concepts, the yogin directly engages the object, which conjures up habitual patterns. The afflictive emotions that were preceded by improper concepts are then severed right there directly upon the object. Hence it is called “severance object” [or “the object to be severed”] (*gcod yul*).

Alternatively, it is widely held to mean “activity object” (*spyod yul*)<sup>43</sup> because it puts into practice the meaning of the phrase [found in the Perfection of Wisdom sutras], “In this way one should train in performing

the activity of the profound perfection of wisdom.” Also, in the *Heart Essence of Profound Meaning*.<sup>44</sup>

Mahayana dharma overwhelming the four devils,  
 Neither inhibiting nor indulging samsara and nirvana, the gist of  
 the perfections,  
 Making negative conditions the path; the approach of the Lord  
 Mother<sup>45</sup>  
 Who taught the severance instructions to those who wish to  
 befriend adversity.

Thus when it bears the name through being analogous to what is described in the highest yoga tantras of secret mantra, such as *Cakrasamvara*, *Hevajra*, and so on, it is the sequence of activity that enhances the path by means of instructions in the vital points of method and wisdom, such as the “secret activity,” “awareness activity,” “public activity,” “victorious in all directions,” and so on.<sup>46</sup> When it bears the name through dissimilarity, in terms of being a remedy, it refers to instructions in the causal vehicle of the perfections. In order to integrate on the path the truths of causal origination and resultant suffering from the reversed application of what to practice or abandon of the four truths,<sup>47</sup> the instructions on practicing the profound vital points of the remedial reverse meditation and equal taste are given. This is called “severance of evil object” (*bdud kyi gcod yul*). From *The Collection*.<sup>48</sup>

In fact ultimately there is nothing to sever.  
 To conquer cowardice, severance is explained.

In these instructions, the Guru’s Secret Severance, the Meaning Precept Lineage Severance, Dampa’s Pacification, and Nāro’s Secret Conduct are known as the four basic sources of Indian teachings that flourished in Tibet.<sup>49</sup> Of these, the lineage descending from Dampa produced “male” and “female” severance,<sup>50</sup> of which the female severance has the further designation of being principally from Machik herself.<sup>51</sup> Machik realized nonorigination instantly by merely seeing the extensive and intermediate [texts on the perfection of wisdom] of the middle turning of the wheel of dharma, and the instructions of severing egotistical delusion were born in her heart. It is these very instructions, which contain all of those

teachings in the aforementioned four rivers of lineage of experiential liberation based upon the Buddha's word, that will be explained here.

### The Root Practice [b]

**Famous as the combination of sutric and tantric realization,  
Abiding in emptiness, not forsaking beings, acting according to  
one's word,  
And the sugatas' blessing: these four are the meaning of the  
doctrine.**

Famous even now, this unbroken tradition of ripening and liberating instructions has the sutras on the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) as the scriptural source of its view and the various methods which distinguish the mantra vehicle. Therefore it is accepted as the combination of sutric and tantric realization. In the *Collected Verses [of the Perfection of Wisdom]*,<sup>52</sup> the meaning of this doctrine is presented as four reasons to practice:

Through four reasons a wise and strong bodhisattva  
Will be unmoved by four devils that are difficult to resist:  
Abiding in emptiness, never forsaking sentient beings,  
Acting according to one's word, and possessing the sugatas' blessing.

These four—the view that abides in emptiness, the compassion that never abandons sentient beings, the bodhisattva's discipline of acting according to one's word, and the sugatas' blessings—are the root of practice. Of these, the practice of receiving the blessings of the sugatas is going for refuge and supplication to the guru and lineage. From the short source text:<sup>53</sup>

Offer to the guru and the Jewels  
Vast offerings of real and unreal mental appearances,  
Prostrate and confess negative actions,  
Then respectfully go for refuge and arouse awakening mind.

Acting according to one's word is not senseless bragging but adhering to the promises and abstentions sworn after having given rise to awakening mind. For instance, it says in the former source:<sup>54</sup>

Renounce and encourage others to renounce  
 The ten nonvirtues such as killing.  
 Speak well of the advantages  
 Of the renunciation of killing and so on.  
 Not renouncing the ten nonvirtues,  
 The sublime path will not be found.  
 Practice and encourage others to practice  
 The six perfections.  
 Speak well of the advantages  
 Of these six perfections.

Not to forsake a sentient being means not to harm even nonhuman beings, but rather to compassionately disengage them from harming other beings and introduce them into the path of awakening. Machik said:

Give generously with an awakening mind.  
 Since everything is the naturally occurring mind,  
 Be without partiality towards apparently existent phenomena.  
 Rest in great expansive nonself.

The view of abiding in emptiness is first of all to stop regarding the aggregates that compose one's own being as the self and then to not conceptualize about the existence and characteristics of others as objects. This is taught extensively in many sources, such as the *Further Collection*.<sup>55</sup>

Leave the body like a corpse;  
 Leave it as if ownerless.  
 Leave the mind like the sky;  
 Leave it without reference point.

And in the *Scattered [Teachings]*.<sup>56</sup>

Like the sky, without hopes and fears,  
 Relax without indulging hopes and fears.  
 Like the sky, without clinging to self,  
 Do not cling to a self; give up attachment.



## The Sequence of Meditation Practice [c]

This has two parts: an additional statement of branches of engagement in the instruction and a brief account of the main practices in the source texts.

## Branches of Engagement in the Instruction [i]

The qualifications of a master who imparts teachings are described in *Heart Essence of Profound Meaning*.<sup>57</sup>

Realized in the meaning of the words, well adorned by loving kindness, endowed with eight skills, personal quest complete, accomplished in emptiness and compassion, and skilled in clearing away faults.

And the qualifications of the disciple who receives teachings:

Endowed with faith, enthusiasm, devotion, courage, perseverance, aspirations for higher existences, safety from dangers, and the desire to attain omniscience.

The reasons for needing this practice:

In order to sever the lack of realization, mistaken realization, biased realization, and doubts, the wise should adhere to this path of the victorious ones.

The object to be severed:

The devils are the gods, afflictive emotions, aggregates, and the lord of death. The special ones are these four: material, immaterial, exaltation, and inflation.

The method of severance is taught in the *Appendices*.<sup>58</sup>

When mental inflation does not enter into  
Appearance and its intrinsic emptiness,

All devils are severed within mind  
And mind is liberated in unborn basic space.

The place to practice is presented in *Profound Meaning*.<sup>59</sup>

Charnel grounds, desolate valleys, temples, isolated trees, deserted  
houses, etc.  
Stay wherever your own mind is anxious and afraid.

And the time to practice is taught:

At night, the terrifying gods and demons gather, and thoughts  
abound.  
This is the time to sever doubts, clear away obstructers, and  
enhance realization.

Concerning these, first of all:<sup>60</sup>

Obtain the excellent empowerment and become worthy to receive  
the profound.  
Through the path of accumulation and purification, seeking mind  
is introduced.

Thus to become worthy of the path one must first receive empowerment. According to the great source text<sup>61</sup> there are one hundred empowerments of the transforming lama, one hundred empowerments of the transforming buddha, and one hundred empowerments of the transforming *ḍākinī*. These are known as the three hundred empowerments of Severance. There also seems to be “a hundred feasts a hundred empowerments,” “the eighty empowerments of Severance,” and so on. The practice that is done these days is the empowerment called “the ten open doors of oral instruction” to actually open the door of dharma, and the ripening by means of the introduction, blessings, and so on in connection with “opening the door to the sky.” This is the meaning of Machik’s statement:

It is not deity empowerment bestowed on the body,  
It is the ultimate empowerment bestowed on the mind.<sup>62</sup>

## The Main Practice in the Scriptures [ii]

Exceptional accumulations, incurring the crucial blessings,  
 Searching the mind, methods of settling, and opening the door  
 to the sky  
 Introduce the Mother's meaning. Objects, mind, attachment,  
 and self  
 Severed in space. Alternating peaceful and wrathful equalizes.  
 There is enhancement, uprising, indications of success, and  
 consummation.

Machik's Severance Object consists of many systems, such as the sutra tradition, the combination of the realization of sutra and tantra, the pure vision of the later severance revealed treasures (*gter ma*), and so on. Since the root practice of them all is related to the four main points mentioned before, we could summarize as follows: In the exceptional preliminary practice, gathering the accumulations internally through the body, the devotional supplications bring down the vital blessings. In the main practice, by focusing exclusively on awareness, one searches for the faults within the mind. When this is straightened up, the methods of settling are presented. Based on "Opening the Door to the Sky,"<sup>63</sup> the meaning of the Mother is introduced: the guidance on meaning reveals it, the guidance on words establishes the meditation, and the guidance on experience cultivates the meditation. These methods are also taught in the *Great Collection of Precepts*.<sup>64</sup>

Placing your body however it is comfortable,  
 Thinking has no object; you won't find it.  
 Better to rest within nonthought.

And:<sup>65</sup>

Since everything is naturally occurring mind,  
 A meditator does not meditate.  
 Whatever arises, however it arises, all feelings of arising—  
 Let them rest: clear, steady, and relaxed.

As for the general manner of introduction, there are countless methods, such as the introduction to the sixteen kinds of emptiness from the

instructions of seeing the face of the Great Mother, the introduction to the six perfections from the revealed treasures of the female severance tradition, and also the introduction of appearance as mind, mind as emptiness, emptiness as coemergence, and coemergence as dharmakāya. In any case, it is said in the *Collection of Precepts*:<sup>66</sup>

When there is nothing whatsoever to practice,  
That itself is the practice.  
So-called experience is an object of the intellect.  
In the absolute sense, there is nothing to experience.

In other words, in meditative equipoise effortless mindfulness maintains the inherent countenance of the unutterable, unimaginable, and ineffable, and dharmakāya is accomplished on the spot. As is said:<sup>67</sup>

When the mind does nothing at all,  
Habitual patterns do not occur, stages and paths are consummated.

In post-meditation, the four devils are severed in the realm of reality. As is said:

The fetters of material objects are severed,  
The fetters of immaterial mind are severed,  
The fetters of exalting attachment are severed.  
The fetters of inflated ego are severed.

It is said that the first three are included in inflation alone. From *The Great Collection of Precepts*:<sup>68</sup>

The material devil and the immaterial devil,  
The devil of exaltation and the devil of inflation:  
The devil is divided into these four,  
But they are all included in the devil of inflation.

The method by which to sever these is also explained in the same source:<sup>69</sup>

Absence of hope and fear is sublime severance.  
 Free of the extremes of accepting and rejecting,  
 If the rope of dualistic fixation is severed  
 Buddhahood will definitely be reached.

How should one sever it? From the *Scattered [Teachings]*:

With fearless determination  
 Use whatever is difficult to sever  
 To enhance experience and realization;  
 Qualities and capabilities will be perfected.

At what time should one practice severance? From the *Appendices*:<sup>70</sup>

This sacred teaching of Severing Evil Object  
 Is different from other instructions:  
 Others just pertain to a later time,  
 Whereas this severs right now.  
 In a haunted place you will see if you have cut through or not.  
 Others gradually abandon discursive thinking,  
 Whereas this assimilates right now.

Furthermore, it states in *Severing Delusion*:<sup>71</sup>

There also occurs a classification into three: the best is the severance in the view of reality, the middling the severance by strong mindfulness, and the least is the severance of conceptual thinking.

With this kind of view and meditation, the yogin cuts through right on the spot in a haunted place and then integrates the experience of equal taste on the path. To forcefully enhance the production of experience and realization, one should go by the four modes of travel to a haunted place with the right characteristics and actively engage the path of deliberate conduct. From the *Appendices*:

Go to a haunted place and arouse awareness.  
 Encountering circumstances, put them into practice.

Other methods aim for results later on;  
This one actually manifests now.

Initially, when gods and demons outside, discursive thoughts inside, and sickness in between are aroused by the meditative absorption in which the gods and demons of the place overpower the self, then as Machik said:

Separate awareness from matter and blend it with basic space.  
Rest within emptiness as long as it remains.  
The practice is casting out the body as food.

So it is taught that the meditative equipoise is to blend awareness and basic space, and the post-meditation practice is “casting out the body as food.”<sup>72</sup> The first is explained in the short source text:<sup>73</sup>

The most excellent method  
Is to blend awareness and space,  
Stopping things and characteristics.  
Utterly abandon fixating on reference points.  
Free of both subjective and objective fixation.  
With body and mind uncontrived,  
Wherever empty space pervades:  
Settle in this expanding vastness.

This is the essence of the practice. For working with the particular practice, it says:<sup>74</sup>

Go to a haunted place and when the charismatic presence  
Of gods and demons occurs, separate awareness from matter.  
The body is matter, like a stone,  
[So it cannot be harmed.]  
The mind is immaterial, like the sky.  
So who harms and who is harmed?  
Think like that and rest in reality  
Without fear and worry.

Secondly, after that meditative absorption there are three cycles of integrating the white feast on the path,<sup>75</sup> which are peaceful. The three cycles

of the red banquet of throwing and taking and so on are wrathful. Alternating those and alternating with the peaceful and wrathful of the mixed banquet, and so on, equalizes the value of good and bad thoughts. This is enhanced by concentrating on the outer gods and demons and the inner ego-fixation as the extreme of nonself. Through this, initially ego-fixation and discursive thinking will rise up as the very embodiment of emptiness, as mentioned before. Ultimately, circumstances themselves will be the indicators of success, as taught in the *Appendices*:<sup>76</sup>

Spiritual powers will come from *nāgas* and devils.  
*Tsen* and king spirits will act as patrons.  
*Mamos* and *ḍākinīs* will provide food and wealth.  
 Fame will be spread by gods and demons of apparent existence.

It is said that ultimately, imbued with three great confidences,<sup>77</sup> one's mind will be happy. Once the three great confidences have been attained, the paths and stages will automatically be consummated. When this kind of view and action coexist, then one is a most excellent Severance practitioner, as stated in the great source text:<sup>78</sup>

The yogin invested with view and action  
 Is like the weapon-wielding warrior,  
 And like conquering hordes of enemies,  
 All evil and ego-inflation are conquered.

Lacking the confidence of view but engaging in various pretentious nonsense is called “perverse severance” and is said to be a terrible mistake.<sup>79</sup> Possessing the view but being unable to take up the conduct on the path is also of no benefit, as instructed in the *Further Collection*:<sup>80</sup>

If you do not know adversities as allies,  
 Though your view is lofty, you are lost.  
 Not internalizing the instructions  
 Or establishing confident understanding,  
 Nothing is resolved from just listening to words.

To sum up, as stated in *The Appendices*:<sup>81</sup>

Danger is great when view is wrong.  
 Enemies arise when sacred pledge is wrong.  
 Obstructions arise when mind is agitated.  
 Poisons develop from ego-fixating thought.

Thus, do not get lost in those things that should be rejected. And from the *Further Collection*:

Wandering in isolation is the vital point of place,  
 Relaxing the four channels is the vital point of body,  
 Singing songs of experience is the vital point of speech,  
 Eradicating beliefs is the vital point of mind.

Always keep these four crucial points of what to practice. And:

By facing the demon of disease, it is released in its own place  
 harmlessly.  
 By employing enemies as your escort, they will carry you fearlessly  
 to the end.  
 By using circumstances as the path, there are no unharmonious  
 adverse conditions.  
 By resolving negative circumstances inside, it is as if there were no  
 objective enemy.

This is the way to actively engage the path of deliberate conduct. From the *Appendices*:

When afflictive emotions and thoughts arise,  
 Feelings of passion and aggression, happiness and misery:  
 That is the devil, so practice!  
 At that time adhere to the cure, Severance.

One should sever discursive thoughts internally, without a perverted understanding of the severance object or eagerness to do the practice of giving the body. And, from the *Appendices*:<sup>82</sup>

Indeed there are many that desire Severance Object,  
 But there are very few who do the practice



For other than desire for fame in this life.  
If this is so, do not give it to them.

This is about inappropriate recipients. And:

Desiring to attain perfect buddhahood,  
Go into seclusion and practice.  
Staying in a haunted place, control the mind.  
Relax without distraction and liberation will be certain.

Thus, the vital points of the instruction, along with the general path and result, are taught briefly in these and other sayings. Definitely do it!

## 7: JORDRUK

### *Lineage History*

The Yoga of Six Branches or Jordruk (*sbyor drug*, Skt. *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*), in conjunction with the Yoga of the Three Vajras, contains the quintessence of all the completion phase practices that were clearly taught with one voice in the extensive root tantras, such as the *Kālacakra Root Tantra*, the *Hevajra Root Tantra*, the *Cakrasaṃvara Abhidhānottara Tantra*, the *Guhyasamāja Root Tantra*, the *Vajrabhairava Tantra*, and the *Net of Magical Manifestation*.<sup>\*</sup> It is the final destination of the two phases taught in the highest yoga tantras, the summit of all yogas, as famous in both India and Tibet as the sun and moon.

This was carefully transmitted person to person and enlightened mind to mind from seven dharma kings, such as Sucandra, and the vajra *kalkins* (*rigs ldan*), such as Mañjuśrī Yaśas. Although it arrived in India at an early date, it was Kālacakrapāda the Elder (a.k.a. Cilupa, eleventh c.) who made it known to all people. Since he established the system of this chariot tradition, he is placed at the beginning of the lineage.

Then there was Kālacakrapāda the Younger; the great adept Śavari, who bestowed direct transmission; the great adept Anupamarakṣita, who was actually graced by Kālacakra; his follower Raviśrijñāna; the great paṇḍita Nāropa, who was a disciple of Kālacakrapāda; the Kashmiri paṇḍita Śākyaśrī (1127-1225); and later the mighty adept Śāntigupta (fifteenth-sixteenth c.).

In Tibet it was also spread by many individuals, early and later. The four who appeared early on are the more famous: Gyijo (Dawai Özer), Dro (Sherab Drak, twelfth c.), Ra (Chörab, 1016-1098), and Dingri (Chökyi Drakpa, eleventh c.). The five who appeared in the middle

<sup>\*</sup>Synopsis based on *The Treasury of Knowledge*, Book 4, Part 3 (TOK1: 548-552).

were the Kashmiri Paṇchen (Dawai Gonpo, Somanātha, twelfth c.), Menlungpa (Puṇyaśrī), Vibhūticandra, Tarpa Lotsāwa Nyima Gyaltsen (thirteenth c.), and Orgyenpa (1230-1309). The two who appeared later were Vanaratna (1384-1468) and Buddhaguptanātha (ca. 1530-1610).

More specifically, seventeen lineages of the Six-Branch Yoga are identified: (1) the esoteric instructions on the Six-Branch Yoga of the great translator Gyijo Dawai Özer along with the lesser tantra and commentary specifically on the Six-Branch Yoga; (2) the Six-Branch Yoga in the tradition of the translator Ma Gewai Lodrö; (3) the Six-Branch Yoga of the translator of Trom, Padma Özer; (4) the Six-Branch Yoga that the glorious Lord Atiśa received from Kṛṣṇābhijñā; (5) the Six-Branch Yoga known as the Dro Tradition [of Dro Sherab Drak], which was the Six-Branch Yoga of the lineage descending from the great Kashmiri paṇḍita Somanātha; (6) the Six-Branch Yoga that the translator Ra Chörab received from the paṇḍita Samantaśrī; (7) the Tsami Tradition itself, which is the tradition of the *Yogamālā* composed by the translator Tsami Sangyé Drak, transmitted through Selo [Zhönnu Tsultrim] and Nyötön Öpa; (8) the Six-Branch Yoga that Rechung Dorjé Drakpa (1083-1161) received from Amoghavajra. Three lineages came through the glorious Galo that are in the lineage of Tsami but were not the same as the *Yogamālā* tradition. They are (9) the Six-Branch Yoga of the Kālacakra's own tradition that Galo gave to Zhang Tsalpa and others, (10) the Six-Branch Yoga of the mother tantra Hevajra that Galo gave to the great Sakyapa Lama, and (11) the Six-Branch Yoga of the father tantra *Guhyasamāja* that Galo gave to Geshé Kyura Akyab. Even though Galo received these all from Tsami, the methods of instruction in the *Yogamālā* and Galo traditions are quite different and so are counted separately. (12) The great Kasmiri paṇḍita Śākyaśrī gave the translator Chal Chökyi Zangpo the Six-Branch Yoga using esoteric instructions of Nāropa's great commentary on the *Hevajra Tantra*. (13) The great Śākyaśrī also gave it to the dharma lord Sakya Paṇchen, making it special with the Six Vajra Verses of the hearing lineage. (14) The paṇḍita Vibhūticandra received the Six-Branch Yoga in the tradition of the adept Anupamarakṣita from the master Ratnarakṣita. This is known as the long lineage of Vibhūti. (15) Later, in Nepal, Vibhūti had a direct experience of Śavari bestowing the Six-Branch Yoga, which is known as the direct lineage of Vibhūti. (16) The translator Chak Chöjé Pal (1197-1264) received the esoteric instructions from the Nepalese guru Ravindrarakṣita

and the Indian Rāhulaśribhadra. (17) The one known as the Menlung Guru was the great adept Puṇyaśrī, known in India as the great adept Dipaṃkara, who attained immortality and even now abides on Potala Mountain. Although at first he meditated on the esoteric instructions of both the Ra and Dro traditions, mainly the latter, later on he attained mastery without depending on any other lineage. In any case, he formulated the Six-Branch Yoga of the Litany of Names (*Nāmasaṃgītā*).

These seventeen lineages were all received by the great Kunpang Tukjé Tsöndru (1243-1313), an emanation of the *kalkins*. In this tradition those currents are brought together into one, but since he also received the traditions of four actual disciples of the direct transmission of Vibhūti, they may be counted as twenty traditions. There were many other lineages as well.

Later, when the great East Indian scholar Vanaratna traveled to Tibet, he gave Gö Lotsawa Zhönnu Pal (1392-1481), Chen-nga Chökyi Drakpa (1453-1524), and others the complete oral instructions of the tradition of the great adept Anupamarakṣita, together with the direct transmission of the hermit lord Śavari. Even later, Śāntigupta's disciple Buddhaguptanātha gave the exceptional oral transmission of Śāntigupta's Six-Branch Yoga to his disciple Tāranātha, the great Jetsun of Jonang.

Kongtrul distinguishes one special tradition that was spread by two great masters: the first was the great omniscient Dharma master Sherab Gyaltsen Pal Zangpo, known as Dolpopa (1292-1361), who was held to be an emanation of the *kalkin* Puṇḍarīka and had been prophesied in the scriptures. The second was Jetsun Drolwai Gönpö, or Tāranātha (1575-1635), who deliberately took birth at the end of the age of strife, and who had reached the level of a second Vajradhara in regard to profound secret topics. Those two who distinguish the path tradition of this chariot represent a precept tradition (*bka' brgyud*) of second kalkins that is more marvelous than the others. It is the great transmitted precepts of this practice lineage that are presented here.



*The Esoteric Instructions of Jordruk,  
“The Six-Branch Yoga”*

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- G. Jordruk, “The Six-Branch Yoga” (*TOK* 3: 429-457)
1. The Greatness of the Source
  2. Overview of Approach and Attainment
  3. The Meaning of Each Branch of Vajrayoga
    - a. Withdrawal
      - i. The Meaning of the Name
      - ii. The Time for Meditation
      - iii. The Meditation Techniques
      - iv. The Valid Signs of Meditation
      - v. Divisions of What Is Purified and What Purifies
      - vi. The Results of Meditation
    - b. Meditative Stability
      - i. The Meaning of the Name
      - ii. The Time for Meditation
      - iii. The Meditation Techniques
      - iv. The Valid Signs of Meditation
      - v. Divisions of What Is Purified and What Purifies
      - vi. The Results of Meditation
    - c. Vital Energy Control
      - i. The Meaning of the Name
      - ii. The Time for Meditation
      - iii. The Meditation Techniques
        - aa. The Object on Which Vital Energy Control Is Performed
        - bb. The Need for Meditation
        - cc. The Duration of Meditation
        - dd. The Essence of Vital Energy Control
        - ee. How to Meditate on Vital Energy Control

- iv. The Valid Signs of Meditation
- v. Divisions of What Is Purified and What Purifies
- vi. The Results of Meditation
- d. Retention
  - i. The Meaning of the Name
  - ii. The Time for Meditation
  - iii. The Meditation Techniques
    - aa. The Object on Which Retention Is Performed
    - bb. The Need for Meditation
    - cc. The Duration of Meditation
    - dd. The Essence of Retention
    - ee. How to Meditate on Retention
  - iv. The Valid Signs of Meditation
  - v. Divisions of What Is Purified and What Purifies
  - vi. The Results of Meditation
- e. Recollection
  - i. The Meaning of the Name
  - ii. The Time for Meditation
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- 

## Jordruk, “The Six-Branch Yoga” [G]

The explanation of the meditation sequence of the Six-Branch Yoga (*sb̄yor drug*, Skt. *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*) has five parts: (1) a statement about its greatness in regard to the source, (2) an overview summarizing the points of approach and attainment, (3) an extensive explanation of the meaning of each branch of the Vajrayoga, (4) a presentation of other supplementary branch yogas, and (5) a brief discussion of the connection between cause and result and the experiences and signs of the result.

## The Greatness of the Source [1]

**Six branches are plainly presented in the extensive root tantras,  
The vajrayoga that is the final destination of completion phase.**

The hidden meaning in the vajra words of so many other king condensed tantras is presented clearly without concealment in the *Glorious Kālacakra Tantra*. This is the sublime meaning that is plainly presented with one intention and one voice in all of the extensive root tantras, such as the *Supreme Original Buddha*.<sup>1</sup> It is called the Six-Branch Yoga of Mahāmudrā, the ultimate pinnacle of all completion phase practice, renowned as the profound path of vajrayoga. Its essence is taught in the *Kālacakra Root Tantra*<sup>2</sup> and the *Guhyasamāja Latter Tantra*.<sup>3</sup>

Withdrawal, meditative stability,  
Vital energy control, retention,  
Recollection, and absorption—  
These are accepted as the six branches.



The glorious *Ocean of Dākas*<sup>4</sup> also has the six branches as the meditation topic, the conduct that enhances it, and the result that is obtained, teaching the complete path and result by means of these eight topics. Also the *Cakrasaṃvara Root Tantra*,<sup>5</sup> the *[Dākinī Vajra] Tent*,<sup>6</sup> and the *[Hevajra Tantra] in Two Parts*<sup>7</sup> fully present the meaning, though in an unclear manner. What is more, this is the very path that is presented in all tantras.

## Overview of Approach and Attainment [2]

Practicing with threefold confidence,  
 The complete deity's form with fourfold disregard is the  
 approach,  
 The main practices of withdrawal, meditative stability, vital  
 energy control, and retention are near attainment,  
 Through recollection of desire, great passion is the attainment,  
 And in meditative absorption, the sublime pristine awareness  
 body is great attainment.<sup>8</sup>

How is one guided along this path? One needs to practice with three kinds of confidence, as taught in *Stainless Light*.<sup>9</sup>

The Blessed One spoke of three types of confidence for this  
 mantra vehicle:  
 First is the period of confidence in the tantra,  
 Next there is confidence in the guru,  
 And after that confidence in oneself.  
 With these three, the path of genuine buddhahood will be totally  
 complete.

Confidence in the tantra means confidence that these are the esoteric instructions of definitive meaning derived from the precise words explicitly presented in the definitive pure tantras that came directly from the mouth of the perfect Buddha, whose meaning has been expounded by authentic scholar-adepts.

Confidence in the guru is confidence that such a teaching has come from the Buddha directly to oneself in an unbroken lineage of gurus who have attained spiritual powers based on this path, or who have had

special experiences in accordance with this tantra, such that there has been no degeneration in its blessings.

Confidence in oneself is to gain confidence in meditative experience, the tantra, and the esoteric instruction, as one's own meditation leads to the arising of experiences in harmony with those explained in the tantra, and [those experiences] have occurred just as the guru said they would.

When one has these three kinds of confidence, the reason for dharma will be understood and one will gain the initial inspiration<sup>10</sup> from which arises the pure path to the attainment of supreme spiritual powers.

The uncommon preliminaries along with the main practice are included in the four branches of approach and attainment. The *Kālacakra Condensed Tantra* states:<sup>11</sup>

Approach through the five elixirs and so on, the ocean vajras,<sup>12</sup> the mantra repetition, and so on.

Near attainment comes through withdrawal and so on, and the elixir born from the vajra and lotus.

Attainment occurs in meditation upon the equal flavor of the three vajras, such as joy and so on, and the water-born lotus.

Great attainment definitely occurs from the union with wisdom whenever there is no emission and by the subtle yoga.<sup>13</sup>

In general, there are many divisions of the four branches of approach and attainment in the main practice of the completion phase. However, at this point we should calculate one time what the four branches of approach and attainment are in terms of the completion phase preliminaries and main practice in conjunction.<sup>14</sup> Since the fourfold disregard in the preliminaries lays the foundation of the deity's form in the completion phase, it is the branch of approach. That very deity's form during withdrawal, meditative stability, vital energy control, and retention constitutes the branch of near attainment. Recollection of the passionate desire of the three mudras is the unchanging bliss of great passion, the branch of attainment. And since meditative absorption accomplishes the actual sublime form of pristine awareness, it is the branch of great attainment.<sup>15</sup> The meaning of the first verse of the tantra above is explained in *Stainless Light*.<sup>16</sup>

Here the beginner should first approach through the ritual of the means of accomplishment (*grub thabs, sādhana*). Regarding the statement “approach through the five elixirs and so on,” the external five elixirs are feces and so on. “So on” refers to cow, dog, and such.<sup>17</sup> Eating these in order to please the deity is the approach. The five inner elixirs are the five aggregates. “So on” refers to the five senses, which are the five lamps. To disregard those is the approach—it is the total renunciation of bodily and material craving. Through that approach, the deities will bestow the supreme spiritual power. It is not through eating feces and such.

“The ocean vajras” refers to the disregard for physical enjoyment, the disregard for vocal enjoyment, the disregard for mental enjoyment, and disregard for the enjoyment of emission, which is restraint (vows) of body, speech, mind, and pure conduct. That is what it means. Through this the deities will bestow the supreme spiritual power, not because of attachment to the enjoyments of existence.

Possessing this fourfold disregard is the same as what is called in general terms “reliance on three isolations” (*dben gsum bsten pa*): isolation of the body from activity, of the voice from expression, and of the mind from thought.

Since the six branches of the main practice are the yogas of the four vajras, and the preliminaries that establish the foundation for that must include the four kinds of disregard, they are therefore termed “ocean vajras” (*chu gter rdo rje*). Disregard for the physical enjoyment is the preliminary that lays the foundation for the yoga of the Body vajra using withdrawal and meditative stability. Similarly, disregard for vocal enjoyment is for the Speech [yogas] of vital energy control and retention, disregard for mental enjoyment is for the Mind [yogas] of recollection, and disregard for enjoyment of emission is for the yoga of absorption in pristine awareness vajra.

As for the meaning of those terms, “approach” (*bsnyen pa*) is so called because one will grow close to the supreme spiritual power, such as when the road that takes one to the city is in sight. “Near attainment” (*nye bar sgrub pa*) means nearer to that accomplishment, as when one is preparing to travel that road. “Attainment” (*sgrub pa*) is just the beginning of

engaging in the uncommon cause of attaining the result, like entering the road and traveling upon it. “Great attainment” (*sgrub pa chen po*) means unhindered engagement with the result, like entering the city gates.

### The Meaning of Each Branch of Vajrayoga [3]

This has six parts: withdrawal, meditative stability, vital energy control, retention, recollection, and meditative absorption.

#### Withdrawal [a]

The vital points of gazing and binding the functions

Sever all connections individually, drawing consciousnesses  
inward.

The faculties of pristine awareness interact with five alternate  
objects.

The cessation of the mandalas of method and wisdom completes  
the ten signs.

Furthermore, as occurs in the *King of Tantras*:<sup>18</sup>

In the approach, the ten aspects of the first yoga use the Cakrin’s  
wrathful gaze into space.

With the gaze of an *uṣṇīṣacakrin*<sup>19</sup> and the vital points of binding the bodily functions, all connections between the ordinary five sense organs and their five objects are individually severed and the consciousnesses that stray to objects are drawn inside. Five other faculties that are the nature of pristine awareness then interact with five alternate objects that are the nature of luminous clarity. As it says:<sup>20</sup>

In withdrawal within the body, the ten physical subjects and  
objects are not engaged.

Those stages of yoga cause the right and left channel mandalas of method and wisdom to cease within the central channel, and the ten signs are quickly completed. The great adept Śavaripa said:<sup>21</sup>

Having the threefold immobility  
 Introduces the ten energy currents into the *dhūti*.<sup>22</sup>  
 Outer and inner thoughts stop and the ten signs occur.  
 This is the branch of individual severance.

Now, many past masters have cited the *Kālacakrapāda Transmission*,<sup>23</sup> which says, “All should be understood as sixfold.” Applying this idea, all the branches are explicated using a sixfold system: (1) the meaning of the individual name, (2) the time for meditation, (3) the branches of the meditation techniques, (4) the valid signs of meditation, (5) divisions of what is purified and what purifies, and (6) the results obtained from the meditation.

### The Meaning of the Name [i]

First the meaning of the name “withdrawal” (*so sor sdud pa; pratyāhāra*): *Praty-* means “individual” and *āhāra* means “withdrawal,” “rejection,” “consumption,” “severance,” or “acceptance,” depending on the context. Here it means withdrawal. Through grammatical linkage it becomes *pratyāhāra*, “individual withdrawal.”<sup>24</sup> The meaning is as explained above.

### The Time for Meditation [ii]

The first time for doing the meditation on the initial withdrawal is immediately after the energy current moves from the left nostril to the right, when the earth energy falls. If one meditates at that time, since the movements from the right [nostril] are the circulation of the sequential withdrawal [or dissolution] of the elements,<sup>25</sup> it becomes the special interdependent connection for impure appearances to absorb into space. Regardless, beginners should pursue meditation at all times except when sleeping.

### The Meditation Techniques [iii]

The essence is to have the ability to withdraw the energy currents into the central channel by means of nonconceptuality with threefold immobility. The two yogas, daytime and nighttime, are for the purification

of the twofold divisions into method and wisdom, such as the development and destruction of the environment, the birth and death of its inhabitants, the two declinations [of the sun] in a year, the two phases of the moon, day and night, right and left movement of the constituents, the balance and imbalance in the movements of time-conjunctions and energy currents,<sup>26</sup> and so on. Therefore, one definitely needs both day and night yogas. As stated in the [*Guhyasamāja*] *Latter Tantra*:

At night, the yoga with smoke and so forth, and again during the day, blazing in the sky and so forth....

In particular, the vital point is that the night yoga gathers the five mandalas on the right into the central channel and the day yoga gathers the five on the left, causing the ten definite signs of day and night and so forth to arise. This is the main significance.

### **The Valid Signs of Meditation [iv]**

There are ten objective signs of the meditative absorption of withdrawal. The four signs of the night yoga are given in the [*Kālacakra Condensed*] *Tantra*.<sup>27</sup>

In emptiness, there is smoke, mirage, brilliant immaculate sky light, and lamp flames.

The six signs of the day yoga in the *Tantra* are<sup>28</sup>

Blazing, moon, sun, vajras, lightning, and spheres will be seen.

The ten signs are definite signs included within whichever one of those ten is appropriate. But since the signs of indefinite form are limitless, they are referred to as “seeing various images.” Furthermore, they are called signs because they are the cause of the birth of the confidence that the pristine awareness of ultimate truth resides in oneself and that by meditating on the path it will be actualized. They are not signs that are merely relative deluded appearances.

The consciousness that perceives such signs is a valid cognition (*tshad ma*). The *Kālacakra Tantra* states:<sup>29</sup>

Whatever the frame of reference for the deity, it has two aspects:  
direct and inferential.

Direct [valid cognition] is union with thatness, causing many  
forms of the saṃbhogakāya, like stars in the sky.

As is taught, the valid cognition of the creation stage is inferential, but all valid cognition of the Six-Branch Yoga is direct. In terms of the defining characteristics of valid cognition, there are four: sensory direct valid cognition, mental direct valid cognition, yogic direct valid cognition and reflexively aware direct valid cognition. But in terms of essence there is a single direct valid cognition. Therefore all direct valid cognition during each of the six yogas does fully include the four parts of direct valid cognition. However, in this situation the sensory direct valid cognition is primary and, of the five eyes,<sup>30</sup> its sensory basis is the flesh eyeball. As stated in *Stainless Light*:

Here, since at first the beginner yogin lacks clairvoyance, the flesh  
eye sees various things.

The Sanskrit term for eye is *akṣa*, but it also means all the sense organs. Thus it is not taken as only the basis of seeing images of form but is applied to the entire apprehension of the form, sound, smell, taste, and sensation of emptiness. This pertains similarly to the topics below.

### **Divisions of What Is Purified and What Purifies [v]**

The ground of the stains that are to be refined in all six yogas is nothing but the reality of buddha nature, so there is nothing to divide. However, to classify that which is to be purified, in general there are thirty-six aggregates and constituents. Of those, what is to be purified in connection with withdrawal is the single set of six constituents of pristine awareness, such as the aggregate of pristine awareness and so forth.<sup>31</sup>

There are ten divisions in the agent that purifies, which is the yoga of withdrawal itself. By virtue of there being a sequential arising of ten signs, there are ten divisions of higher or lower levels of experience and realization.

## The Results of Meditation [vi]

The immediate result is the attainment of [the power of] true words<sup>32</sup> and the efficacy of mantra. The [*Kālacakra Condensed Tantra*] says:<sup>33</sup>

Through withdrawal, the yogin who is totally free of objects is  
blessed by all mantras.

The ultimate result is that at that time of attaining the state of complete awakening, infinite mandalas of the sixfold set of the pristine awareness constituent appear as deities such as Vajrasattva.

## Meditative Stability [b]

The branch of meditative stability stabilizes the images of emptiness.<sup>34</sup>

**With form and mind resting in equipoise, the five branches of  
meditative stability are complete;  
Apparent images are endowed with three certainties and five  
properties.**

As stated in *Stainless Light*:<sup>35</sup>

Meditative stability in the various forms that are the single  
unity of the ten objects and subjects.

This means resting in equipoise with one-pointed mental focus on the luminous clarity of images of emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects,<sup>36</sup> allowing one to attain control of abiding and moving [of thought] as desired. When the five branches of meditative stability such as conception, analysis, and so forth<sup>37</sup> are well completed, infinite appearing images with five properties arise endowed with the three certainties. The certain object is the great vital essence sphere, the certain time is throughout meditation and post-meditation, and the certain manifestation is with all marks and characteristics.

This also has the six topics, such as the meaning of the name, and so on.



### The Meaning of the Name [i]

*Dhyāna* in Sanskrit means unwavering attention on a point of reference.<sup>38</sup> That also means to take control of the point of reference, such as when a door bolt that is well secured prevents the door frame from shifting or warping, allowing one to control opening and closing the door.

### The Time for Meditation [ii]

The best time is at the culmination of withdrawal, but if not, then at the time that stable manifestations of the signs of luminous clarity arise.

### The Meditation Techniques [iii]

From the *Short Presentation on Empowerment*:<sup>39</sup>

Form will be seen as a dream.  
Meditate constantly on that form.

Thus the essence of meditative stability is the absorption of one-pointed focus on the manifest signs of luminous clarity. The branches of that are taught in the *[Kālacakra] Condensed Tantra*:<sup>40</sup>

Meditative stabilities are the one-pointed mental focus of discernment, conception, analysis, joy, and unwavering bliss.

(1) Discernment<sup>41</sup> is the mind in one-pointed focus on the ten signs of luminous clarity.

(2) Of conception it is said, “So-called conception (*rtog pa*) is apprehension (*’dzin pa*) of an entity.” Therefore, knowing the defining characteristic of the form of emptiness that bears the name of entity is conception. However, the manner of knowing the defining characteristics is not just through ideas but through direct experiences.

(3) The branch of analysis is the experiential certainty of mind itself arising as forms of emptiness without any overlay of elaborated characteristics whatsoever from dualism or subject-object concepts.

(4) The mental bliss that is evoked by meditative absorption occurs in two stages: focused internally and focused externally. Focusing externally is the arising of experiences of happiness and joy, like finding unprecedented great contentment. That is the branch of bliss.<sup>42</sup>

(5) The branch of unwavering bliss is the internal focus on the experience of that very absorption arising as bliss. With that as the stimulus, one is pervaded by the special bliss of an utterly pliant body—an added benefit of unwavering bliss.

First discernment alone arises. Then with conception it occurs as two-fold. Similarly, it becomes threefold with analysis, fourfold with joy, and fivefold with unwavering bliss. With just that, the branches of meditative stability have fully arisen in one's mindstream. Therefore if one sustains the continuity of that very experience and meditates, the qualities of consummation will quickly arise.

### The Valid Signs of Meditation [iv]

The *Tantra* says:

The forms of the buddhas in the center of it are the many saṃbhogakāya forms totally free of object.

This presents the uncommon signs of meditative stability. Consolidated by the ten signs, the images of the entire three existences are much greater than seen before at the time of withdrawal. Those multicolored images of various forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and sensations are seen marked by many vital essence spheres and have a form endowed with five properties called radiant, minute, glittering, vibrating, and durable.<sup>43</sup> Many images of buddhas arise in the center of the spheres. Since that too is realized to be the pure appearance of mind itself, all relative karmic appearance naturally arises like illusion. From the [*Guhyasamāja*] *Latter Tantra*:

Mind, through stable meditative stability, even abandons utterly the external entities.

The valid cognition is the same as for withdrawal, but the sensory base for it is the divine eye, and for that reason one also achieves the five clairvoyances.<sup>44</sup>

### **Divisions of What Is Purified and What Purifies [v]**

The basis of purification is the same as explained in the section on withdrawal. To classify that which is purified, it is divided into a single set of six aggregates and constituents of space, such as the aggregate of consciousness.<sup>45</sup> That which purifies is the branch of meditative stability itself. It has ten divisions: the five branches of meditative stability as subjects, and the five forms of emptiness that are their objects.

### **The Results of Meditation [vi]**

It says in the *Tantra*:<sup>46</sup>

Lord of men, five kinds of clairvoyance will be attained, purified by applying meditative stability.

The immediate result of the culmination of meditative stability is the naturally arising occurrence of the five clairvoyances. The ultimate result is that the sixfold set of the space constituent<sup>47</sup> is actualized as the Victor Akṣobhya and the other deities.

### **Vital Energy Control [c]**

The branch of vital energy control causes the karmic energy currents to cease within the dhūti.

Refining the channel pathways, vital energy enters into the dhūti.  
If unable to bind it with the vase breath, forceful methods are to block it  
At the lower door, release it upwards, and taste the inner elixir.  
Blazing blends the vital and downward-clearing energies and  
immortality is attained.

There are two versions of this: the real branch of vital energy control with full characteristics, and the analogous vital energy control that is to be accomplished by beginners. For the time being, it will be explained with reference to the latter.

The instructions from the lineage of the great paṇḍita Śākyaśrī<sup>48</sup> and the two traditions of Ra<sup>49</sup> and Dro<sup>50</sup> are combined into a single instruction known as the Six Vajra Lines:

- (1) The preliminary refines the channel pathways through vajra repetition.
- (2) Once refined, the yoga of filling and expelling with gentle breathing exercise directs the vital energy into the central channel.
- (3) Once it enters, the yoga of forceful vase-breathing binds the vital energy in the central channel.
- (4) When it has not entered the central channel and one is unable to bind it, the yoga of forceful methods binds the paths of sun and moon and blocks it. When it is blocked at the lower door by the forceful methods, it is released upwards by the yoga.
- (5) By the yoga of utilizing the uvula, the potency of inner elixir is tasted.<sup>51</sup>
- (6) The yoga of blazing inner heat blends vital and downward-clearing energy and accomplishes immortality.

The first four are considered esoteric instructions of vital energy control, and the latter two are esoteric instructions for retention.

Here, again, the six topics such as the meaning of the name can be applied.

### The Meaning of the Name [i]

*Prāṇa* in Sanskrit can be translated as vital energy [or life force]. *Āyāma* is to stop (*'gog pa*) or to control (*rtsol*) or to extend (*ring tu byed pa*).<sup>52</sup> Through grammatical linkage, it becomes *prāṇāyāma*, which means to control vital energy (*srog rtsol*) or to stop vital energy (*srog 'gog*). Here, “vital energy” (*srog*) is a name for energy currents (*rlung*, Skt. *prāṇa*) and to halt or control means to direct them [into the central channel].

## The Time for Meditation [ii]

The real branch of vital energy control is a meditation for after the five branches of meditative stability arise in the mindstream. But even a beginner may meditate in the analogous vital energy control. In particular, it is excellent to meditate on it after gaining a bit of experience in either withdrawal or meditative stability, which are virtuous in the beginning.<sup>53</sup>

## The Meditation Techniques [iii]

This has five topics:

### The Object on Which Vital Energy Control Is Performed [aa]

In general, this is all the channels, energy currents, and vital essences of the vajra body. Mainly it applies to the six channels—the right and left channels and the central channel above the navel, and the channels of feces, urine, and seminal fluid below the navel—and to both the vital energy current and downward-clearing energy current.

### The Need for Meditation [bb]

In the *Tantra* it says:

Therefore, one should meditate each day and night on the yoga of the channels as the cause of benefiting the body.

And from *Kālacakrapāda's Esoteric Instruction*:<sup>54</sup>

In order to generate unchanging bliss  
Meditate on the branch of vital energy control.

One portion of the set of causes of unchanging bliss is the mahāmudrā of forms of emptiness that was already accomplished during withdrawal and meditative stability. The other portion is attaining sovereignty over energy currents and binding them in the avadhūti that totally purifies the

vajra body, bringing about immortality and mastery over vital essence. That is the need for vital energy control.

### **The Duration of Meditation [cc]**

When meditating on the yoga, one should continue until the energy currents flow exclusively in the central channel. With that, one will achieve the power to retain and reverse the coarse bodhicitta. In reference to a person of sharp faculties being able to accomplish that in six months, the *[Kālacakra] Tantra* says:<sup>55</sup>

By six months for diligent ascetics the sensation of lower bliss  
will balance and become the mind of the path.

### **The Essence of Vital Energy Control [dd]**

*[The Kālacakra Tantra]* states:<sup>56</sup>

In vital energy control, the pathways are both deposed and  
the vital energy totally enters the central channel and becomes  
pure.

This is a meditative absorption that causes the energy currents of the right and left channels to be stopped, the energy currents that circulate in the channels of feces and urine below are also stopped in the conch-bearing channel.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, the vital energy that circulates in the central channel and the downward-clearing energy current that circulates in the conch-bearing channel are gathered into one.

### **How to Meditate on Vital Energy Control [ee]**

The practice is the vajra repetition. It is presented in the *Kālacakra Tantra*.<sup>58</sup>

Through moon, sun, “a” and so forth and “ka” and so forth,  
the three movements abide and there is repetition of the Body  
vajra, and so forth.

Filling [or inhaling] and expelling with the gentle breathing exercise straightens out the deviation of breath. As it says:

Pressing with strength on the breasts and the right and left armpits, vital energy is stopped. From that, the vital energy will suddenly flow from the right to the left channel and from the left armpit to the right. By half a month, the yogin possessing yoga will cheat the death-bringers and death-omens.

The main practice of filling and vase-breathing are also presented:<sup>59</sup>

The mouth too is closed, and from the two nostrils all outer energy currents are drawn in by the force of the vital energy [exercise] and like immaculate lightning, joined with the downward-clearing energy currents.

Also the benefits are presented:

It robs hunger and thirst for food and such for the body, and is also immortality itself.<sup>60</sup>

Furthermore, the *Stainless Light* states:

The yogas of exhalation, filling, and vase-breathing are always the approach.

Thus all the different esoteric instructions of vital energy control are also presented as such. Here, since the vase-breathing is foremost, it is definitely necessary, but the others may be applied however they are appropriate.

In the meantime, in order to prevent obstructions to one's life, it is appropriate to draw the increasingly strengthened energy currents into the central channel or to perform any other means of removing obstructions. The time for it is also presented in this and other passages [of the *Kālacakra Tantra*]:<sup>61</sup>

In fully doing vital energy control, whenever the heart or head is afflicted by fire...

### The Valid Signs of Meditation [iv]

All the signs of vital energy control that arise from the force of halting the ten energy currents in the central channel are included in these five: physical experiences, verbal experiences, mental experiences, visual experiences, and dream experiences.

As for valid cognition, there are the four direct valid cognitions with mental direct valid cognition being the main one, because pristine awareness is realized from stopping in the central channel the energy currents that are the cause of conceptual thought.

### Divisions of What Is Purified and What Purifies [v]

The divisions of what is purified are the single set of six aggregates and constituents, such as mental formations.<sup>62</sup> To classify that which purifies, vital energy exercise itself, there are ten divisions because there are ten mandalas of the right and left channels that are blended in the central channel.

### The Results of Meditation [vi]

The immediate results are taught in the *Kālacakra Tantra*.<sup>63</sup>

Purified by vital energy control, divorced from the paths of the rabbit-bearing moon and sun, the yogin is worshiped by bodhisattvas.

Among the benefits of stopping the erratic energy currents that move in the right and left channels are that the buddhas and bodhisattvas will confer prophecies and blessings, one will enjoy the sensory pleasures of form and the other five objects as manifestations of pristine awareness, develop clairvoyance of the six senses, and acquire power over humans and nonhumans. The ultimate result is that the sixfold set of the wind constituent will be attained as the deity Amoghasiddhi and so on.

### Retention [d]

The branch of retention is to dissolve the energy current into the indestructible vital essence.



Through retention that is unwavering and without coming and going,  
 The blended energy currents dissolve into the indestructible vital essence.  
 Vital energy enters the forehead and is stabilized without emission.

From the *Tantra*:<sup>64</sup>

Through the vital energy fully entering the vital essence and overcoming the circulation in both, single-pointed mind is retained.

And from the *Latter Tantra*:

Exhalation and inhalation again holds down; the branch of retention involves the vital essence.

And it is taught in *Stainless Light*:

Here “vital essence” (*thig le*) means the vital energy (*srog*) fully entering at the forehead. “Overcoming the circulation in both” means that it is free of coming and going. “Single-pointed mind” is the retention of the vital energy at the forehead.

With the yoga of extremely stable vase-breathing, the vital energy is retained without coming and going. During vital energy control, the ten mandalas of the left and right energy currents had previously come to abide in the central channel. Now, as a continuation of that, the same vital energy and downward-clearing energy currents that were blended in one mass enter into the indestructible vital essence or imperishable vital essence in the central channel. There, the energy currents with the characteristics of coming and going dissolve or vanish. Of course, that can occur in the six chakras, but the ultimate location of this is the forehead chakra. Therefore when the vital energy or energy current enters there and stabilizes without emission, the branch of subsequent mindfulness commences.

The six topics, such as the meaning of the name and so forth, apply here also.

### **The Meaning of the Name [i]**

*Dhāraṇa* in Sanskrit can refer to both retaining (*'dzin pa*) and to the object that is retained (*gzung bya*), so there are various translations. In this case, it means the retaining of the energy currents without coming or going.

### **The Time for Meditation [ii]**

In regard to the real branch of retention, one meditates on retention when the energy currents always flow through the central channel and the vital energy and downward-clearing energy currents have blended together. In the analogous branch of retention, it is the same as for the branch of vital energy control.

### **The Meditation Techniques [iii]**

There are five parts:

#### **The Object on Which Retention Is Performed [aa]**

It is the energy current of bliss, which is the energy current connected to the indestructible vital essence.

#### **The Need for Meditation [bb]**

It is for the purpose of binding the bodhicitta so that it does not move and to accomplish the blazing manifestations of inner heat, the root of the arising of the special forms of emptiness that actually elicit unchanging bliss.

#### **The Duration of Meditation [cc]**

The duration is for as long as it takes to master the ability to stop the energy currents in the five or six chakras however one wishes with the vase-breathing.

### The Essence of Retention [dd]

In general, the essence of retention is the dissolving of the upper and lower, and the right and left energy currents into the vital essence in the central channel at the places of the five or six chakras. In particular, it is the meditative absorption of mental focus on the nondissipating vital essence stabilized at the forehead once the vital energy fully enters the vital essence at the forehead.

### How to Meditate on Retention [ee]

For a beginner, the way to meditate on analogous retention is just as was previously explained. Real retention involves the energy current held at the central channel, which was the right and left and vital and downward-clearing energy currents that were formerly blended together in the six chakras by the yoga of vase-breathing. That energy current now dissolves into emptiness in the manner of entering the vital essence, which causes the inner heat to blaze.

Regarding this, there are many cases where most of the tantric commentary that presents retention does not mention an arrangement of more than four chakras. Where there is a tenfold division, the explanation includes the chakra at the crown of the head (*gtsug tor*, Skt. *uṣṇīṣa*), indicating the necessity of practicing retention even at the crown. Therefore there are two methods: one for attaining what was not previously attained at the five chakras of navel, heart, throat, head, and crown of the head, and another for stabilizing and increasing more and more what was already attained. The so-called forehead vital essence should be understood as the place where a branch of the central channel curves down from the crown of the head to between the eyebrows.<sup>65</sup>

The secret vase-breathing is not actually mentioned in the commentary on the tantra, but it is there implicitly. Since it will clear away obstructions and enhance the previous practices, it should definitely be done. It is not counted separately because it is applied as part of the vase-breathing at the crown of the head.

### The Valid Signs of Meditation [iv]

In general, this is the same as the previous branches, but in particular the *Kālacakra Tantra* says:<sup>66</sup>

Until one sees a black circle radiating immaculate light rays in the channel of time.

This is remarkable by virtue of the black circle<sup>67</sup> arising in the central channel, the manifestation of blazing inner heat, and the imperishable vibration. The valid cognition is the same as for vital essence control [that is, primarily mental direct valid cognition].

### Divisions of What Is Purified and What Purifies [v]

The divisions of what is purified are the single sixfold set of the constituent of fire, and the aggregates and constituents such as the aggregate of feeling.<sup>68</sup> To classify that which purifies, the path of retention itself, it says in the *Stainless Light*:

Retention of vital essence has ten aspects by dividing entering and leaving in the lotuses of the navel, heart, throat, forehead, and crown.

Accordingly, there are ten divisions of higher and lower experiential realization of retention.

### The Results of Meditation [vi]

The immediate results are mentioned in the *Kālacakra Tantra*.<sup>69</sup>

The force of retention weakens evils and afflictive emotions and such, and the ten powers are engaged.

Thus, the sufferings of the aggregates, such as old age and sickness, are cleared up. By understanding the nature of afflictive emotion, one is able to make it into the path. One attains some control over life, and some

conquest of the four devils,<sup>70</sup> since one is not fettered by attachment to the sense pleasures. Neither will one fall under the power of afflictive emotion. There is also the special achievement of physical, verbal, and mental powers due to the force of the ten energy currents dissolving. According to the *Kālacakrapāda Transmission*:<sup>71</sup>

No eating, no hunger; if eating it is digested.  
Downward-clearing energy drips; bliss expands.  
Magical big vajra belly,  
Physical lightness and so on—nonconceptual bliss.

And also:

Long life, health, balance of the elements.

The ultimate result is that the sixfold set of the fire constituent is actualized as the deities Ratnasambhava and so forth.

### Recollection [e]

The branch of recollection is the thorough recollection of the forms of emptiness.

According to differences in vital essence of three levels of  
faculties,  
Real recollection is action-mudra, awareness-mudra, or  
mahāmudrā of forms of bliss-emptiness.  
Analogous recollection is refining the energy currents in the  
preliminaries,  
And then awareness-mudra, the blazing of inner heat, and so  
forth.

The *Kālacakra Tantra* states:<sup>72</sup>

Whatever occurs as the appearance of inner heat is definitely  
recollected in the body as well as in the sky.

Also the [*Guhyasamāja*] *Latter Tantra* says:

Through recollection, like the moon in the sky, great rays of light will certainly move in one's body.

As taught there, the real recollection does not depend on physical training or control of the energy currents and so forth. This is for the situation when the knots in the channels of the six chakras have already been released, one has mastery of the bliss energy currents, and one can enjoy the blazing appearances of inner heat whenever one likes. Therefore, it is sufficient to practice simply according to the explanation in the actual presentation of the tantra.

Furthermore, real recollection is to accomplish primarily the various images of emptiness and bliss by recollection in either action-mudra, awareness-mudra, or mahāmudrā, depending on the difference in the thinness and thickness of the vital essence of persons of the three levels of faculties.

Analogous recollection is for beginners to stabilize the blended vital and downward-clearing energy currents by practicing the physical postures. As a branch of that, one refines the energy currents through retention, reversal, and so on, and learns the physical yoga exercises of binding the physical functions. Having done that, the main practice is to blend the three—the meditated action-mudra, the hand-mudra of one's own body, and the action-mudra of another's body—with the mahāmudrā of forms of emptiness. Meditation on the blazing and dripping based on inner heat is a branch of that.<sup>73</sup>

Now, the six topics, such as the meaning of the name and so forth:

### The Meaning of the Name [i]

*Anu* is translated as “subsequent,” and *smṛti* as “recollection” [or “mindfulness”]. The term *anu* can apply both to inferior (*dman pa*) and to superior (*lhag pa*), but in this case, it has the meaning of superior. Thus *anusmṛti* or subsequent recollection means superior recollection. Recollecting again what was previously cultivated in meditation, it is intense recollection (*shin tu dran pa*). It refers to the vigorous effort of meditating again and again on the forms of emptiness of mahāmudrā.

### **The Time for Meditation [ii]**

Once retention has been perfected and one has mastered the channels, energy currents, and vital essence, the definite time for recollection is when the appearance of inner heat arises as infinite forms of deities endowed with all sublime aspects.

### **The Meditation Techniques [iii]**

This has five parts:

#### **The Object on Which Recollection Is Performed [aa]**

In general, the object is all the channels, energy currents, and vital energy. Mainly, it is the forms of emptiness of the blazing appearance of inner heat, plus the vital essence of the four or six chakras, which is the support, and the melting bliss, which is what is supported.

#### **The Need for Recollection [bb]**

It is in order to really accomplish unchanging bliss that one learns the bliss of melting without emission.

#### **The Duration of Meditation [cc]**

One should keep meditating until the first moment of unchanging bliss arises. Even after unchanging bliss has already arisen, it is not that one abandons the continuity of recollection and meditates on a new path with different visualizations, but rather that the continuity of recollection itself transforms into that of [the sixth branch], meditative absorption.

#### **The Essence of Recollection [dd]**

The essence is the single-pointed absorption in the recurring arousal of melting bliss without emission that results from meditative equipoise in a nonconceptual and unconfused manner on subtle and coarse forms of emptiness of the manifestations of the three worlds—primarily the

forms of emptiness of the mother-father deities in union that are the blazing appearance of inner heat. This applies whether or not one relies on an actual mudra partner.

## How to Meditate on Recollection [ee]

The *Kālacakra Tantra* says:<sup>74</sup>

There is a variety according to divisions such as inferior and so on,  
but primarily the three methods of accomplishment,  
The three mudras and three states, by virtue of three modes of  
progress, are the action, the conceptual, and the sublime.

Accordingly, in the initial state of dull faculties and thin vital essence, when one is unable to completely elicit the four joys without relying on an action-mudra partner, one meditates on the recollection that combines the three practices of action-mudra, awareness-mudra, and mahāmudrā into one.

Then there is a jump<sup>75</sup> in the faculty level, and at this intermediate stage one's faculties become moderate and the vital essence thickens somewhat. Once this state occurs, when one is still unable to completely elicit bliss through mahāmudrā alone but can do without an action-mudra partner, then one should abandon the action-mudra practice and meditate on the recollection that combines the two practices of awareness-mudra and mahāmudrā into one.

Again there is a jump in faculties, which now become acute. For the state in which the bodhicitta has become quite thick, one can completely elicit the bliss of melting through mahāmudrā alone. While one has not yet attained unchanging bliss, one should meditate on the recollection that relies solely on mahāmudrā.

These [three levels of recollection are all described] with reference primarily to meditative equipoise. The connection with the behavior of deliberate conduct in post-meditation is indefinite.

Regarding these three states, there is also the view that maintains the “application of four mudras,” “application of three mudras,” and “application of two mudras,” and the progression called “application of three,” “application of two,” and “application of one.”<sup>76</sup>



### The Valid Signs of Meditation [iv]

Every occasion in which the four joys are completely elicited, the emanation of infinite blazing appearances of inner heat arise in increasingly enhanced ways. Even if one tried to emit the white jasmine bodhicitta,<sup>77</sup> it would not be emitted, but would forcefully reverse itself upwards from the tip of the jewel. Even one's own body appears as the light mandala of forms of emptiness. The images of emptiness of the pure and impure three existences radiate and absorb continuously.

As for valid cognition, all four kinds of direct valid cognition are present, but since it is the pristine awareness of intrinsic awareness involved in experiencing sublime inner bliss, it is primarily reflexively aware direct valid cognition.

### Divisions of What Is Purified and What Purifies [v]

The divisions of what is purified are the single set of the element of water, six aggregates and constituents, such as perception and so on.<sup>78</sup> The agent that purifies is the branch of recollection, which has ten divisions. As stated in the *Kālacakra Tantra*:<sup>79</sup>

Thought, desire, physical plague, a mouth with dry lips, aversion  
to food,  
Trembling, insanity, idiocy, a befuddled mind, a deep swoon,  
Ten brilliant forms, such as vajra-bearing smoke, which to the  
body of a living creature in the world are totally clear and cer-  
tain.  
Who desires victory over those disturbing situations?

Thus, when each of the forms of emptiness in the tenfold division of signs sequentially elicits bliss, it is equivalent to the state of contemplation. One attains the different ten kinds of bliss in sequence, such as the attainment of the first bliss of total purity and so forth.

### The Results of Meditation [vi]

The immediate results are mentioned in the *Kālacakra Tantra*:<sup>80</sup>

Thoroughly purified through recollection, pure mandalas of stainless light come from the forms of pristine awareness.

Since all of the channels are filled with bodhicitta, mandalas of light pervade everywhere inside and outside. Even though the body matured [by karma] has not been transformed, one's mind actually becomes the deity's form. Additionally, one attains infinite clairvoyance, miraculous ability, and so on. The experience of bliss-emptiness is unceasing.

The ultimate result is that the mandala of the sixfold set of the water constituent is actualized as the deity Amitābha and so on.

### **Meditative Absorption [f]**

The branch of meditative absorption is the unity of the forms of emptiness and unchanging bliss.

**Transformation into meditative absorption of melting bliss  
without emission is accomplished.**

**In the real one, through the arising and reversal of the ten signs  
of mahāmudrā,**

**The forms of emptiness of melting bliss are bound at the tip of  
the jewel,**

**Causing the seminal fluids and energy currents to cease.**

**Beginning with the first immutable instant until the twelfth  
spiritual level,**

**Breathing ceases and unchanging joy increases proportionally.**

**This is union, the embodiment of wisdom and method.**

The *Kālacakra Tantra* says:<sup>81</sup>

This is meditative absorption in the form of pristine awareness by virtue of unchanging bliss that is the embodiment of wisdom and method.

In accordance with this, the meditative absorption of union is the culmination of melting bliss without emission, accomplishing the transformation of the vital essence substance into forms of emptiness, that into a vital essence, and that into unchanging bliss.

While the real meditative absorption is mostly similar to the practice of recollection of mahāmudrā, practicing with many different action-mudra partners is taught as a method for advancement. Practicing in that way, once one is able to generate the complete melting bliss in forward and reverse order through the totally complete ten signs of mahāmudrā,<sup>82</sup> then it will not be long until the vital essence of the previous instant will transform into a form of emptiness in the next. Also, the form of emptiness that is the blazing of inner heat together with the blazing of the action inner heat consumes the vital essence.<sup>83</sup> With that kind of melting bliss, the [resulting] form of emptiness is bound at the tip of the jewel.<sup>84</sup> When that happens it blocks one action current that is a portion of the ten energy currents, one white [vital essence drop] in the area of the jewel, and one red [vital essence drop] in the area of the crown of the head. Hence consciousness—the phenomena made up of three elemental constituents of the seminal fluids (sperm and ovum) and the energy currents—dissolves into the forms of emptiness of pristine awareness. Through this, one attains the first instant of unchanging pristine awareness comprised of emptiness, bliss, and clarity. From that point on, each previous instant of pristine awareness changes to one progressively more sublime and as each one is attained, one should know that it is the successive instant of meditative absorption. In this manner up through twelve spiritual levels,<sup>85</sup> the movement of 21,600 breaths of the karmic energy current ceases and the unchanging joy increases proportionally. At the end of the culmination of meditative absorption, one attains the embodiment of wisdom and method, the union kāya or pristine awareness kāya. This is the attainment of the lesser level of buddhahood and the first level of a vajra-holder.<sup>86</sup>

Now, as for the vital energy as a form of emptiness: since it is free of being corporeal form and is essentially pristine awareness, it is not subject to fluctuation. Therefore it has been established as “the vital essence stabilizing.” Moreover, since it is completely bound at the end of its descent, the energy current is first blocked after the ascent. Then one portion of the red aspect stabilizes at the top of the head, causing the red to blaze downwards. That condition causes one portion of the white to stabilize at the jewel. In this, the binding of all 21,000 instants takes place only in the jewel. At first the place of stabilizing is, of course, the jewel for the white and only the top of the head for the red. There, all those that have been stabilized stack up on the previous ones, so that it appears

to be filling up gradually. From this process, there are references of from “half-filled secret chakra” to “crown chakra completely filled and stable” and “the red also stabilized in each place from the crown to the jewel.”

As for the energy currents, while certainly a portion will be stabilized along with the white and red [aspects] in the crown and the jewel, primarily those that were previously located above the heart were controlled by the vital energy and those involved with the functioning of darkness (*mun pa can*) and *rāhu* (*sgra gcan*) dissolve at the navel. Those that were previously located below the navel and mainly controlled by the downward-clearing energy current, the energy currents of darkness, the one named fire, and fire of time, dissolve at the heart and cease.

These are the main locations. In general, the three constituents of male and female seminal fluids and the energy currents all become blocked in every part of the body.

Now, the six topics, such as the meaning of the name and so forth:

### **The Meaning of the Name [i]**

*Samādhi* is meditative absorption. It also has the connotation of total adherence to a state of equipoise, and is therefore free of subject-object dualism. So it refers to the mind abiding in a state where subject and object are undifferentiated.

### **The Time for Meditation [ii]**

The time for this meditation is at the culmination of the branch of recollection, when one is able to immediately produce unchanging bliss.

### **The Meditation Techniques [iii]**

There are five subtopics:

### **The Object on Which Meditative Absorption Is Performed [aa]**

The two objects of meditative absorption are forms of emptiness and great bliss.

### **The Need for Meditative Absorption [bb]**

The purpose is to progressively increase unchanging bliss and to purify into basic space the fully ripened karmic body in order to attain the nondual pristine awareness kāya.

### **The Duration of Meditation [cc]**

The duration of the meditation is from the beginning of meditative absorption, which is the attaining of a single instant of unchanging bliss, until the 21,600 [instants] have been completely attained.

### **The Essence of Meditative Absorption [dd]**

The essence of meditative absorption is the single pristine awareness. [When it is conceptually] divided into two isolated aspects, it is wisdom that is unchanging bliss, and skillful method that is the pristine awareness kāya endowed with the supreme of all aspects. Meditative absorption is the experience of union without any aspect of dualistic appearance from perceiving these two separately.

The culmination of melting bliss without emission is the catalyst for stopping one karmic energy current. One tenth of the three channels dissolves into the central channel.<sup>87</sup> The individual movements of the white and red constituents are “stabilized,” that is, immobilized, within the central channel. In that way when the channels, energy currents, and constituents are henceforth indestructible and become unceasing forms of emptiness, the pristine awareness that is essentially one with that is called unchanging bliss.

Thus it is said, “forms of emptiness are known by bliss; great bliss is known by itself.”

### **How to Meditate in Meditative Absorption [ee]**

From the *Kālacakra Tantra*.<sup>88</sup>

Here, the yoga of coemergent pristine awareness that is peace, the singular, undiminished bliss is great attainment.

And from the *Kālacakrapāda Transmission*:

With mind resting firmly without wavering in the equal taste  
Of meditation with reference to forms of emptiness  
And without reference in bliss,  
All things arise as bliss.

The unchanging bliss of the vital essence that was previously transformed, and the melting bliss without emission produced by the descent and reversal of vital essence that will be transformed later but is not now transformed turn into a single group. The mind within this state of bliss is utterly passionate towards the forms of emptiness, causing the melting bliss without emission to be experienced again and again. In post-meditation, one should always practice the conduct with elaboration, or practice whatever is appropriate as a way of enhancement or advancement.<sup>89</sup>

### **The Valid Signs of Meditation [iv]**

The signs of this branch start from the genuine perception of one realm of worlds in the ten directions that was not previously perceived in its ultimate significance, up to the genuine perception of the significance of 24,000 world systems.

The valid cognitions are the complete set of four valid cognitions. However, with respect to the uncommon specialty, it is the yogic valid cognition, since this branch is analogous to the pristine awareness of the exalted ones.

### **Divisions of What Is Purified and What Purifies [v]**

In the divisions of what is to be purified, it is the single sixfold set of aggregates and constituents connected with the earth constituent, such as the aggregate of form and so on.<sup>90</sup>

Meditative absorption as that which purifies can be divided into twelve by dividing [two aspects into] the six chakras in which the karmic energy currents cease. Alternatively, it is said that there are ten meditative absorptions because the ten energy currents cease. Thus there are ten stages by distinguishing the total cessation of the ten energy currents,

such as the downward-clearing and so on, that have the attribute of never again arising.

### The Results of Meditation [vi]

The immediate result is described in the *Kālacakra Tantra*.<sup>91</sup>

Then, through the purification of meditative absorption, in a few days one will achieve the pristine awareness *kāya*.

If one meditates without interruption from the first arising of meditative absorption, one can actualize the level of the genuine truth of the true nature in three years and three fortnights. The karmically ripened body will dissolve into basic space and one will attain the great pristine awareness *kāya* of union. This is to be a great bodhisattva adorned with the many qualities of the ten spiritual levels and so forth.

The ultimate result is that the mandala of the sixfold set of the earth constituent is actualized as the victor Vairocana and so on.

### Other Supplementary Branch Yogas [4]

The path, the demarcations, and increasing the yoga without diminishing  
Are added as supplementary branches.

Branches of the path are valuable for beginners who have not gained full confidence in the yogas. These are the yoga of sleep, the recognition of luminous clarity at death, the instructions of transference at the moment of passing away, recognition in the intermediate state through purposeful intent, and blending meditative equipoise and post-meditation by meditating in sessions. The demarcations of the spiritual levels and paths, and the arrangement of the results, is extremely important, but they are explained only generally.

The branch of preventing the yogas from diminishing and causing their increase concerns the removal by general and specific remedies of the obstructions of devils that harm both body and mind, the obstructions of meditative absorption that harm mainly the mind, and the obstructions of the physical disturbance of the elements and their consequences that harm mainly the body.

Meditative absorption is enhanced through outer and inner instructions for introducing [mind's nature], ascertaining the valid signs, and through devotion, compassion, and deliberate behavior. The four branches of sealing with the four commands, removing obstacles, guarding the sacred pledges, and maintaining the conduct are methods for protecting and preserving the continuity of the yogas. They are also added as supplements.

### **The Interdependence of Cause and Result and the Qualities of Experiences and Signs [5]**

This has two parts: the connections and the experiences and signs.

#### **Connections [a]**

**The manner of cause and result of those yogas is that  
Those virtuous at the beginning accomplish meditative  
absorption of calm abiding and higher insight,  
Those in the middle blend energy and mind and open the  
chakras,  
Those virtuous at the end accomplish the unchanging pristine  
awareness kāya.**

These six branches of yoga also exist in a cause and effect way. If we apply cause and effect as a pair, the first five branches would be the causal path, because they cause the accomplishment of forms of emptiness. Meditative absorption would be a branch of the effect because it is the accomplishment of unchanging bliss. If we apply a threefold set, then withdrawal is the branch of the cause, with meditative stability as the branch of the effect. Similarly, vital energy control is the causal branch and retention is the result, and recollection is cause with meditative absorption as the resultant branch, according to Vajrapāṇi's intention.<sup>92</sup>

Those are included in the division of three virtues as taught by Bodhisattva Vajragarbha,<sup>93</sup> in which withdrawal and meditative stability are virtuous at the beginning, vital energy control and retention are virtuous in the middle, and recollection and meditative absorption are the virtuous path at the end.

In regard to that, generally the doctrine of the Teacher is virtuous at the beginning, the middle, and the end. That is because a beginner



trains exclusively in virtue as the cause, which leads to the attainment of the virtues of the noble dharma on the path, and the actualization of the virtue of reality as the result. However, here we are discussing the uncommon context. While the other aspects are held to be virtuous, from the point of view of this ultimate definitive meaning, [methods that] possess the characteristic of being causes of relative cyclic existence are not very virtuous. These are conceptual meditation, fixation on the bliss of action-mudra as ultimate, and meditation on the nonconceptual emptiness at the end of analysis. They are not, in fact, the ultimate mandala of great bliss and emptiness.

In this path, at first one accomplishes the absolute mandala of forms of emptiness, so it is virtuous at the beginning. In the middle, since one stops the karmic energy currents that cause conceptual thought, it is virtuous in the middle. And in the end, one accomplishes the absolute unchanging vital essence, so it is virtuous in the end. There are those three, and during all three phases—beginning, middle, and end—it is virtuous because it is the actual appearance of genuine pristine awareness that is nonconceptuality acquitted of analysis. In general, the meaning of virtue is identified as bliss and its causes.

Thus, those virtuous at the beginning accomplish uncommon meditative absorption of calm abiding and higher insight. Those virtuous in the middle blend energy and mind early on, and later open the entranceways of the chakras. Those virtuous in the end achieve the unchanging pristine awareness *kāya*. It states in the *Glorious Approach to the Absolute*:<sup>94</sup>

The vajra rising is said to be the first.

The vital energy entering the vajra fire is the second.

The glorious bodhicitta not falling is the third.

These are the three virtues of deliberate behavior.

The branches are included in these three deliberate behaviors.<sup>95</sup> The first two branches are the deliberate behavior of vajra rising, because the vajra of the ten signs is stacked up firmly in the central channel. The middle two branches are the tantric behavior of vajra fire, because the inner heat of pristine awareness is accomplished. The final two branches are the deliberate behavior of bodhicitta, because unchanging melting bliss and unchanging vital essence are accomplished.

Furthermore, there are applications of the three bases of channels,

energy currents, and vital energy; the three states of inferior, middling, and superior; the four vital essences of body, speech, mind, and pristine awareness; the four states of waking, dreaming, sleeping, and deep sleep; the four branches of approach and attainment; the four yogas of shape, mantra, dharma, and purity; the four unions; and the four kāyas and four vajras.

Since the last ones are well known, their meaning will be explained. Withdrawal and meditative stability are the yogic methods for accomplishing the vajra Body because a tathāgata's Body is the nature of a form of emptiness. Vital energy control and retention are the yogic methods for accomplishing vajra Speech, because a buddha's Speech is the indestructible vibration itself arising as all sound and speech. Recollection is the yogic method to accomplish vajra Mind, because a victor's Mind is emptiness endowed with all aspects. Meditative absorption is the yogic method for accomplishing the pristine awareness vajra, because the pristine awareness vajra of the conquerors is the ultimate great bliss itself.

In those sequences, the object to be accomplished is the form of emptiness. The way it arises is as follows: During withdrawal it is merely an image. In meditative stability that itself is understood to be the mind free of elaboration. In vital energy control it arises as forms of emptiness. In retention it arises as the quintessence of the vital essence drop. In recollection it arises as the essence of the blazing and dripping inner heat. And in meditative absorption it arises as the unchanging vital essence drop.

The bliss is also sixfold, applied in sequence: mere mental subtle bliss, bliss of very refined joy, bliss of blending the vital energy and downward-clearing energy currents, bliss of the blazing and dripping of physical inner heat, bliss of the blazing and dripping of mahāmudrā, and unchanging bliss.

There are also six ways that dualistic appearances are abandoned. In withdrawal they are abandoned in the way of nonconceptuality. In meditative stability they are abandoned through realization of them as the essence of mind. These only happen on the basis of forms of emptiness. In vital energy control they are abandoned by means of stopping the right and left movement in the channels. In retention those two are abandoned in the manner of disappearing in their own place. Those two branches slightly suppress subject-object dualism. In recollection they are abandoned by way of sealing with bliss-emptiness. And in meditative absorption they are abandoned in the way of the transformation of all

that is included in one's mindstream. These two branches abandon by preventing the manifestation of subject-object appearances while resting in equipoise.

## Experiences and Signs [b]

The descent of vajra pristine awareness causes various experiences—

Jumping, shaking, and pain—releasing the knots of the three doors.

The six chakras are purified and the victors of six families accomplished.

By practicing the Six-Branch Yoga in that way, at first one obtains a portion of the vajra pristine awareness and eventually completely obtains the blessings of the vajra descent. The visual experiences are the arising of whatever signs are appropriate, while the mind automatically rests in a nonconceptual state. The physical experiences are the jumping, shaking, and pain. The vocal experiences are various mantras and utterances occurring in the state of equipoise, while various mental experiences such as joy, regret, anger, and desire occur in post-meditation. Without regarding those experiences as problematic, the knots of the three doors will be gradually released by maintaining whatever occurs. Ultimately, the result of practice is that the three constituents of male and female seminal fluids and the energy currents will be purified and then the pristine awareness *kāya* of the six buddha families will be accomplished, as explained individually above.

## 8: DORJÉ SUMGYI NYENDRUP

### *Lineage History*

The Approach and Attainment of the Three Vajras, Dorjé Sumgyi Nyendrup (*rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub*, Skt. *vajra sevāsādhana*) are the esoteric instructions that the great adept Orgyen Rinchen Pal (1230-1309) received in essence from Vajrayoginī in person.\* The “three vajras” refers to the indivisible Body, Speech, and Mind that are experienced after the temporary deluded fixations of ordinary body, speech, and mind are purified through the three practices that are called approach, attainment, and great attainment. In the approach, one practices withdrawal and meditative stability; in attainment, one practices vital energy control and retention; and in the great attainment, one practices recollection and meditative absorption. Thus they correspond to the practices of the Six-Branch Yoga.

After Orgyenpa had completed his training in sutra and mantra, he became an eminent scholar in the Kālacakra tantras, commentaries, and esoteric instructions that he had received from the Kālacakrin Sangyé Dorjé, a holder of the Rong lineage tradition. He had discovered the ultimate realization from his teacher Götsangpa (1189-1258). He traveled many times to sacred places such as Jālandhara, and in particular he had been to the land of Uḍḍiyāna in the west. With charisma he overcame many obstacles and fearful apparitions through his view and deliberate conduct. In the central part of Uḍḍiyāna, in Dhūmatālī (Dhūmasthira), the ḍākinīs of the four families in the four directions blessed him. Then, according to the prediction of a beautiful girl, he went to a village called Kaboka where Vajrayoginī herself first appeared to him in the form of a prostitute and granted the bliss of contact and victuals. All the knots

\*Synopsis based on *The Treasury of Knowledge*, Book 4, Part 3 (TOK1: 552-554).

in his channels were released and he experienced many great omens, such as vibrations and earthquakes. Then she revealed herself as really Vajrayoginī and gave him the complete instructions. The previously encountered four ḍākinīs along with Siṃhamukha also gave him some instructions.

After returning to Tibet, his first disciple was Yazangpa, just as predicted by the ḍākinī. In response to the requests of Rinpoché Karchuwa, he composed the primary text of this tradition, the Vajra Verses. To request these instructions, Rinpoché Karchuwa had offered a mandala consisting of a gold coin for every verse of visualization instruction. He then composed a brief memorandum. His attendant, Tokdenpa Dawa Sengé (thirteenth c.), compiled all the esoteric instructions into a volume. Later this became the primary system of guidance. The lord himself was queried by Golungpa Zhönnu Pal, who wrote down his answers. The learned and virtuous Butrapa Sönam Özer did not find a clear curriculum, so Zurpukpa Rinchen Palzang (b. 1263) composed a big commentary. The learned Shangtön (1234-1309) and Nyedo Kunda Döndrup (b. 1268) wrote a complete explanation of the Vajra Verses. These four are known as the four great commentaries.

From Sönam Özer the lineage passed to the Dharma lord Gangpa and continued until glorious guru Sönam Gyaltzen. The lineage also disseminated from the spiritual heirs of Nyedo [Monastery], and many traditions arose. From among those, the second victor, the omniscient Dharma lord Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé (1284-1339), heard the entire instruction from the great adept Orgyenpa, and from that created an illuminated excellent path that is superior to the others in its significance. Then Karmapa Rolpai Dorjé (1340-1383) and other incarnations in the lineage succession studied it and spread it widely.

*Dorjé Sumgyi Nyendrup,*  
*“Approach and Attainment of the Three Vajras”*

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H. Dorjé Sumgyi Nyendrup (*TOK* 3: 457-461)

1. Introduction
  2. Extensive Explanation
    - a. The Actual Guidance
      - i. The Approach of Vajra Body
      - ii. The Attainment of Vajra Speech
      - iii. The Great Attainment of Vajra Mind
    - b. How the View Is Introduced
- 

## **Dorjé Sumgyi Nyendrup [H]**

This has two parts: The overview as an introduction and an extensive explanation of the actual topic.

### **Introduction [1]**

**Approach and Attainment is the oral transmission of the Vajra Queen.**

The birth mother of all victors, the Vajra Queen, conferred the four empowerments by the progression of the four joys on Drupchen Orgyen Rinchen Pal<sup>1</sup> in the emanated place of Orgyen (Skt. Uḍḍiyāna), and blessed his mindstream.<sup>2</sup> The renowned guidance system called Approach and Attainment of the Three Vajras or Dorjé Sumgyi Nyendrup (*rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub*, Skt. *sevāsādhana*) is the oral trans-

mission of the exceptional, secret path that enables those of sharp faculties and diligence to progress to the level of Vajradhara in a single lifetime, as found in the Vajra Verses composed in thirty-five verses.<sup>3</sup> From the *Guhyasamāja*.<sup>4</sup>

Your body is like mind  
And mind is like body  
And mind is like an utterance—imagine that.

In these special instructions, at the time of the ground, the three vajras [of Body, Speech, and Mind] are established as indivisibly connected. Then by meditating at the time of the path on the yoga of the inseparable three vajras, the principle (*bdag nyid*) of the three secrets will be actualized at the time of the fruition. As it is taught in the Vajra Verses:<sup>5</sup>

Refining the channels purifies the body's stains.  
Refining the energy currents purifies the stains of speech.  
Attaining non-emission conquers the habitual patterns of mind.  
The chakra knots are destroyed by the progression of the four  
joys.  
The sleep of ignorance is clarified by reversing unconsciousness.  
The experience of detachment is mind relieved of aggression.  
Attachment purified liberates into great bliss.

## Extensive Explanation [2]

This has two parts: the actual guidance and the introduction to the view.

### The Actual Guidance [a]

This has three parts: the approach of vajra Body, the attainment of vajra Speech, and the great attainment of vajra Mind.

## The Approach of Vajra Body [i]

**Approach of vajra Body purifies the body's channels.**

**With three postures, hold the upper, lower, and middle energy currents.**

**Once ten currents enter the dhūti, forms of emptiness are seen.**

The bases of refinement are the 72,000 energy currents of the body endowed with six constituents.<sup>6</sup> They are purified by the branch of approach in withdrawal and meditative stability, or the approach of vajra Body. First one gathers the necessities from proper livelihood and performs the common preliminary practices. Then the upper, lower, and middle energy currents are bound according to the esoteric instructions of the three postures: the upper posture for the upper energy current, the lower posture for the lower energy current, and the middle posture for the middle energy current. By exerting effort day and night in this yoga, the ten root and branch energy currents and all discursive thought will enter the avadhūti and be halted, binding the relative and ultimate bodhicitta. This causes nonconceptual meditative absorption to arise. One sees limitless signs of forms of emptiness appearing, such as smoke and so on. The measure of attainment is the supreme gift of words: the attainment of words of truth. Then when the five branches of meditative stability,<sup>7</sup> such as discernment and so on, are consummated, one attains the five clairvoyances.<sup>8</sup>

## The Attainment of Vajra Speech [ii]

**Attainment of vajra Speech purifies speech energy currents.**

**Using vital energy control, downward-clearing, joining, and vajra repetition,**

**Entering the vital essence accomplishes all great activities.**

What is to be refined are the 21,600 energy currents that are the intrinsic nature of speech. They are purified by the branch of attainment in vital energy control and retention, or the attainment of vajra Speech. When the visions of the forms of emptiness are stabilized, one does the meditation on the esoteric instructions concerning the energy currents of vital energy control above, the downward-clearing energy currents below, and the joining energy currents in between.



Also, at the outset one trains on the path by the vajra repetition that applies the arising, abiding, and concluding practices to Mind, Speech, and Body. The energy currents are made into the path by having no frame of reference, which is sought in the basic ground by applying the energy currents of the five elements. One meditates on the seat and sequential stacking of the elements by applying the lower downward-clearing energy current. The seed syllables are created by applying the upper vital energy control currents. The implements are created based on the middle energy current. Once one has attained mental control over those energies, in retention one does the yoga of raising the deity's form by applying the joining energy current; the vajra repetition of Body, Speech, and Mind, with no bead-counting, by means of vital energy control; and the silent repetition for the peaceful and other activities by applying the four energy currents of water, [and so on].

In this, “vital energy” (*srog*) refers to the upward-moving energy current, and “control” (*rtsol ba*) is the practice of guiding it that makes energy currents into the path. So by the yoga of blocking the vital energy, when the coming and going of the sun and moon<sup>9</sup> have been blocked, the all-knowing pristine awareness energy current will become manifest. This is called “vital energy entering the vital essence” (*srog thig ler tshud pa*). Holding the energy-mind in the syllable *ham* is called “retention” (*'dzin pa*). This is the result of vital energy control. It enables the accomplishment of all twelve great activities<sup>10</sup> just by thinking of them.

### The Great Attainment of Vajra Mind [iii]

Great attainment of vajra Mind purifies mind and vital essence.  
The blazing of three fires in the heightened passion of method  
and wisdom  
Refines the refuse and achieves unchanging bliss.

The mind and the “seven-births” vital essence<sup>11</sup> are what is to be refined. They are purified and become immutable by recollection and meditative absorption in the branch of great attainment, or the great attainment of vajra Mind. Consuming the five-plus-five elixirs<sup>12</sup> outwardly, inwardly, and secretly generates the body's strength. Applying the binding of upper, lower, and middle energy currents causes the pristine awareness fire of inner heat to blaze and burn up the seeds of the six realms that are

in the six chakras of space, wind, fire, water, earth, and pristine awareness. From this, the force of the four joys in both progressive and reverse order destroys the knots of the chakras. Liberated from the obscurations of the four states,<sup>13</sup> the ignorance that is the root of cyclic existence is eliminated and recollection is perfected.

As enhancement of this practice, the mutual exchange in the union of method and wisdom, where spiritual partners join body and mind as method and wisdom, causes the blazing of the three fires in the heightened passion. These are the fire at the time of youth, the fire of meditative absorption, and the fire that arises from practicing union. By this means, *rāhula* swallows the sun and moon and all residue is transmuted into quintessence. Finally, after the energy-mind is progressively blocked starting from the secret place, the refined essence of *bodhicitta* and the energy currents is stabilized in the crown chakra, and one achieves unchanging great bliss, the culmination of the branch of meditative absorption.

### How the View Is Introduced [b]

**The view is the way it is, meditation is the three vajras, and  
The fruition is purifying the three obscurations and introducing  
the three kāyas.**

The introduction to the view of the basic ground is this: The three kāyas abide spontaneously in the essence of mind itself since forever. How do they abide there? They abide in three ways: appearance the way it is, emptiness the way it is, and union the way it is. The last two are introduced as *dharmakāya* and the first is introduced as *dharmatākāya*.

The introduction to meditation on the path: The three kāyas are introduced as the path through the meaning of the names, the manner of experience arising, the measure of attainment, and the necessity of practice in each of the three: withdrawal and meditative stability for vajra Body, vital energy control and retention for vajra Speech, and recollection and meditative absorption for vajra Mind.

The introduction to the fruition: Practicing the approach and attainment of the three vajras results in the purification of the three-times-three obscurations,<sup>14</sup> which introduces the three kāyas obtained in one body in one lifetime.

The extensive scriptural application should be learned from the Vajra Verses and the four great commentaries of verifiable texts by Dasengwa,<sup>15</sup> Butrawa,<sup>16</sup> and others.<sup>17</sup>

## 9: SUPPLEMENT: ŚĀNTIGUPTA

### *Lineage History*

Jamgön Kongtrul's chapter on the histories of the Eight Chariots of the Practice Lineage in *The Treasury of Knowledge* (Book 4, Part 3) presents a brief mention of some of the numberless minor lineages (*phran tshogs*) that developed in Tibet in a supplement to the eight main sections. Interestingly, it does not describe the tradition presented here in the esoteric instructions, that of Śāntigupta. On the other hand, this lineage is often described by Kongtrul's hero and predecessor Tāranātha, who was a direct recipient of the transmission through his Indian guru Buddhaguptanātha, a disciple of Śāntigupta. In *The Seven Instruction Lineages*, Tāranātha gives the history of each of the lineages of teachings that converged in the one master, Śāntigupta. The six esoteric instructions that are described here differ from the seven only in the omission of the "word lineage," and Tāranātha himself says that the real lineage meaning is contained in the six. The adventures and trials of Śāntigupta as he relentlessly pursued his guru Jñānamitra for these precious esoteric instructions are reminiscent of Nāropa's purifying punishments at the hands of his guru Telopa. Indeed Tāranātha equates the two in their usefulness to others in every respect except for Śāntigupta's level of attainment, which he puts higher than that of Nāropa. From Śāntigupta, the six or seven esoteric instructions were transmitted in the lineage through Tāranātha and down to Jamgön Kongtrul.



## *Supplement: Śāntigupta*

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### I. Supplement (*TOK* 3: 461-463)

#### 1. Śāntigupta's Six Transmissions

[a. Creation Phase]

[b. Māhamudrā]

[c. Inner Heat]

[d. Luminous Clarity]

[e. Action-mudra]

[f. Miscellaneous Esoteric Instructions]

#### 2. Clearing Away Obstructions and Enhancement Practices

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### **Supplement [I]**

The explanation of fragments and branches of guidance systems has two parts: an explanation of the guidance of Śāntigupta's Six Transmissions and a brief mention of clearing away obstructions and enhancement practices.

### **Śāntigupta's Six Transmissions [1]**

**The great adept Śāntigupta's guidances of Six Transmissions  
Are creation phase, mahāmudrā, inner heat, luminous clarity,  
Action-mudra, and miscellaneous esoteric instructions, and  
more.**

The mighty adept in the age of conflict, Lord of Great Bliss or Śāntigupta,<sup>1</sup> gathered together into one system the esoteric instructions of six trans-

missions<sup>2</sup> and passed them on to the adept Master Buddhaguptanātha. The lineage passed directly from him to the omniscient Tāranātha, who formed a new class of chariot long traditions in the Land of Snows. The guidance systems are as follows:

### **[Creation Phase] [a]**

The uncommon preliminary for the creation phase is the lesser, middling, and greater approach practice,<sup>3</sup> which confers the blessings. In the main practice, the conceptual yoga and the yoga of single recollection accomplish clear appearances.<sup>4</sup> This is applied to the sublime completion phase.<sup>5</sup>

### **[Mahāmudrā] [b]**

Calm abiding is engendered when an appropriate level of abiding is attained by relying on three external supports for visualization and five internal mental foci,<sup>6</sup> and then settling into an unfabricated state without a frame of reference. Higher insight is developed through the eight cycles of introduction, such as the introduction to the mind's natural luminous clarity.<sup>7</sup> Clearing away the obstructions of drowsiness and agitation in the flow of thoughts, practice is enhanced by bliss, clarity, and nonthought.

### **[Inner Heat] [c]**

As a preliminary, refining the path of the channels through energy currents, channels, and vital essence blesses the channels. In the main practice, one trains the energy currents through four yogas: the culmination of inhalation, filling up, holding the vase breath, and immobilizing. One trains in visualization of the fire of inner heat through concise, middling, extensive, and reverse methods. One trains in the yoga of the vital essence with the four chakras in general, and in particular the vital essence substance at the secret place, the indestructible vital essence in the heart, the vital essence of light at the tip of the nose, and by the yoga of channels, together with the branch of meditation on the inside and outside of the body. In the vajra repetition with three syllables, there are two vajra repetitions based on vital energy and on the downward-

clearing energy current, and [vajra repetitions called] the four protectors, the four goddesses, and the six senses.<sup>8</sup> The two-syllable vajra repetition applies to inhalation and exhalation.<sup>9</sup>

### **[Luminous Clarity] [d]**

As the preliminary, one refines the illusory body through the four methods of resting in equipoise, and the two recognitions of emptiness and illusion in the post-meditation. One should cultivate illusory waking state, illusory dream, and illusory intermediate existence along with the supplementary branch of transference of Body, Speech, Mind, and pristine awareness. The main practice is to recognize luminous clarity in light, increase, and culmination<sup>10</sup> based on the extensive, middling, or concise visualizations and the application of whatever vital points are appropriate in the mudras of action, awareness, or pledge. Instant and subsequent dissipation are the enhancement.

### **[Action-mudra] [e]**

The special preliminary is the guru yoga and offering to the pure realms,<sup>11</sup> which cleanses the channels in the four chakras. The main practice is engaged once one has become accustomed to the four applications of energy currents.<sup>12</sup> The path is cultivated through the ten vital instructions, such as sublime drawing up, drawing up through the channels, drawing up through the branches, and so on. [In the main practice], the vital energy and downward-clearing energy currents are blended through gentle and forceful breathing and the mudra of vajra crown.<sup>13</sup> These are applications involving oneself only.<sup>14</sup> To clear away obstructions, first rely on the awareness mudra, in the middle on the hand mudra, and in the end on a qualified action mudra partner. The pristine awareness of the four joys will be consummated.

### **[Miscellaneous Esoteric Instructions] [f]**

There are the esoteric instructions of meditation on the yidam and on the guru. There are esoteric instructions for clearing away obstacles according to the traditions of Virūpa<sup>15</sup> and Gorakṣa.<sup>16</sup> Among the instructions on five hundred mental foci, there are sixteen of the more common



ones. And there are many sequences for clearing away obstructions and enhancements to increase one's development of meditative absorption and qualities.

The term “and [more]” in the root text is a connective particle as the last word, meaning that there is more. As illustrated by the *Six Guidances of Mitra*,<sup>17</sup> and all kinds of red instructions, there are yet an enormous number of minor guidance systems of esoteric instructions that developed in the Land of Snows. It would be impossible to describe them individually, but there is nothing that could not be subsumed into the concise meaning of two stages, or into the two practices of calm abiding and higher insight, or into the two practices of emptiness and compassion.

## Clearing Away Obstructions and Enhancement Practices [2]

**Clearing away obstructions and enhancing is crucial in all completion phase [practices].**

Clearing up the obstructions of the channels, energy currents, and vital essence in the path of method, and clearing up the obstructions to calm abiding, such as drowsiness and agitation, and the obstructions to higher insight, such as errors and deviations, in the path of liberation, as well as developing devotion, compassion, and particular conduct whenever appropriate increasingly enhances the benefits of practice. These are crucial instructions for completion phase practice in general. However, they can be found extensively in the individual guidance systems, and will not be described here.

This was the fourth chapter of the detailed presentation of the sequence of meditation in vajrayāna emphasizing the esoteric instructions.

This concludes the commentary of the eighth book on the divisions of the sequence of training of higher meditative absorption from *The Encompassment of All Knowledge: A Treatise That Effectively Presents the Three Trainings, a Treasury of Precious Scripture Compiled from the Approaches of All Vehicles*.

# APPENDIX ONE

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## APPENDIX TWO

### *General Contents of Kongtrul's Treasury of Knowledge*

Book One: *Myriad Worlds: Buddhist Cosmology in Abhidharma, Kālacakra, and Dzog-chen* (1995/2003)

Part 1: The Cosmology of the Universal Way [Mahāyāna]

Part 2: Our Universe according to the Individual and Universal Ways [Hinayāna and Mahāyāna]

Part 3: Space and Time in the Tantra of the Wheel of Time [Kālacakra]

Part 4: The Causes of Cyclic Life [and the Primordial Purity of the Universe]

Book Two: The Advent of the Buddha<sup>1</sup>

Part 1: Our Teacher's Path to Awakening

Part 2: The Buddha's Enlightenment

Part 3: The Buddha's Twelve Deeds

Part 4: Enlightenment's Bodies and Realms

Book Three: The Buddha's Doctrine—The Sacred Teachings

Part 1: What are the Sacred Teachings?

Part 2: Cycles of Scriptural Transmission

Part 3: Compilations of the Buddha's Word

Part 4: The Origins of the Original Translations' Ancient Tradition [Nyingma]

Book Four: Buddhism's Spread Throughout the World

Part 1: Buddhism's Spread in India

1 Forthcoming translation of Books Two, Three, and Four by Ngawang Zangpo.

Part 2: How Buddhist Monastic Discipline and Philosophy  
Came to Tibet

Part 3: Tibet's Eight Vehicles of Tantric Meditation Practice

Part 4: The Origins of Buddhist Culture

Book Five: *Buddhist Ethics*: [The Training in Higher Ethical Conduct]  
(1998/2003)

Part 1: The Qualities of the Spiritual Teacher and Student

Part 2: The Vows of Personal Liberation

Part 3: The Commitments of Awakening Mind [Bodhicitta]

Part 4: The Vows and Pledges of Secret Mantra

Book Six: The Topics for Study

Part 1: A Presentation of the Common Fields of Knowledge and  
Worldly Paths

Part 2: General Topics of Knowledge in the Hīnayāna and  
Mahāyāna

Part 3: *Frameworks of Buddhist Philosophy: A Systematic Presentation  
of the Cause-Based Philosophical Vehicles* (2007)

Part 4: *Systems of Buddhist Tantra: The Indestructible Way of Secret  
Mantra* (2005)

Book Seven: The Training in Higher Wisdom

Part 1: The Keys to Understanding

Part 2: Truth and Meaning

Part 3: Authentic View

Part 4: Foundations of Spiritual Discipline

Book Eight: The Training in Higher Meditative Absorption [Samādhi]

Part 1: Shamatha (Calm Abiding) and Vipashyanā (Higher Insight)

Part 2: The Stages of Meditation in the Cause-Based Approaches<sup>2</sup>

Part 3: *The Elements of Tantric Practice: A General Exposition of  
Secret Mantra Meditation Systems*<sup>3</sup>

Part 4: *Esoteric Instructions: A Detailed Presentation of the Process of  
Meditation in Vajrayāna* (2007)

2 Forthcoming translation of Book Eight, Parts One and Two, by Richard Barron.

3 Forthcoming translation by Elio Guarisco and Ingrid McLeod.

Book Nine: An Analysis of the Paths and Levels to Be Traversed<sup>4</sup>

Part 1: The Paths and Levels in the Cause-Based Dialectical Approach

Part 2: The Levels and Paths in the Vajrayāna

Part 3: The Process of Enhancement

Part 4: The Paths and Levels in the Three Yogas

Book Ten: An Analysis of the Consummate Fruition State

Part 1: The Fruition in the Dialectical Approach

Part 2: The More Common Attainments in the Vajrayāna

Part 3: The Fruition in the Vajrayāna

Part 4: The Fruition State in the Nyingma School

4 Forthcoming translation of Books Nine and Ten by Richard Barron.



# ABBREVIATIONS

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| ACIP             | Electronic files of the Asian Classics Input Project ( <a href="http://www.acip.org">www.acip.org</a> )  |
| ATG              | Acarya Tenpa Gyaltsen  |
| BA               | 'Gos lo tsa ba gzhon nu dpal, <i>The Blue Annals</i> ( <i>Deb ther sngon po</i> ). Trans. George N. Roerich. Calcutta, 1949; 2nd ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976.   |
| BD               | <i>Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo</i> ("Big Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary"). Compiled by Tshe tan zhabs drung et al. 2 vols. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1985, 1987.  |
| BE               | <i>The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Five: Buddhist Ethics</i> . Translated by the Kalu Rinpoché Translation Group. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1998, 2003.  |
| <i>Catalogue</i> | <i>Catalogue of the Treasury of Precious Key Instructions, a Collection of the Ripening and Liberating Essence of the Eight Great Chariots of the Practice Lineages: An Ocean of Auspicious Renown</i> (sGrub brgyud shing rta chen po brgyad kyi smin grol snying po phyogs gcig bstus pa gdams ngag rin po che'i mdzod kyi dkar chag bkra shis grags pa'i rgya mtsho). <i>DZ</i> , vol. 18, ff. 381-547. |
| CPR              | Jamgön Kontrul, <i>Commentary on the Profound Inner Reality</i> (rNal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud sde rgya mtsho'i snying po bsdus pa zab mo nang gi don nyung ngu'i tshig gis rnam par 'grol ba zab don snang byed). Rumtek, Sikkim: Dharma Chakra Centre, 1981.  |
| CS               | Cyrus Stearns  |
| Dg.K.            | Dergé Kangyur (sDe dge bka' 'gyur): Dergé edition of the Tibetan canonical collection of sutras and tantras.   |
| Dg.T.            | Dergé Tengyur (sDe dge bstan 'gyur): Dergé edition of the Tibetan canonical collection of commentarial treatises.  |
| DZ               | Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, <i>gDam ngag rin po che'i mdzod</i> ( <i>Treasury of Precious Oral Instructions</i> ). 18 vols. Paro, Bhutan: Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimay, 1979   |



|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| EMC           | Elizabeth M. Callahan   |
| <i>Gem</i>    | Richard Barron: <i>The Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul: A Gem of Many Colors</i> . Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2003.   |
| <i>GK</i>     | Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, <i>rGya chen bka' mdzod (Treasury of Extensive Teachings)</i> . 20 vols. Paro, Bhutan: Ngodup, 1975-76.   |
| GTR           | Gangteng Tulku Rinpoché   |
| <i>JIABS</i>  | <i>Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies</i> . Lausanne, Switzerland: Université de Lausanne.  |
| JK            | Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé  |
| KTGR          | Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoché  |
| <i>LW</i>     | Padmasambhava/Jamgon Kongtrul. <i>The Light of Wisdom, Vol. II</i> . Translated by Erik Pema Kunzang. Boudhanath, Hong Kong & Esby: Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 2001.  |
| <i>MW</i>     | Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, <i>The Treasury of Knowledge: Book One: Myriad Worlds</i> . Translated by the Kalu Rinpoché Translation Group. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1995, 2003.  |
| M-W           | Monier-Williams, Sir Monier. <i>A Sanskrit-English Dictionary</i> . Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1899, 1990.  |
| <i>NGB</i>    | <i>rNying ma rgyud 'bum (Collected Tantras of the Nyingma Tradition)</i> . 36 vols. Ed. Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche. Thimphu, Bhutan, 1973.   |
| <i>NGB-TE</i> | <i>rNying ma rgyud 'bum</i> in The Tibetan Tripitaka, Taipei Edition. Ed. A.W. Barber. Taiwan: SMC Publishing, 1991.  |
| <i>NKG</i>    | <i>rNying ma bka' ma rgyas pa. (Collected Transmitted Teachings of the Nyingma Tradition)</i> . 55 vols. Ed. Dudjom Rinpoche. Kalimpong, India: 1982.   |
| <i>NSH</i>    | Dudjom Rinpoche, <i>The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History</i> . 2 vols. Trans. Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991.   |
| <i>OSL</i>    | Khedrup Norsang Gyatso, <i>Ornament of Stainless Light: An Exposition of the Kālacakra Tantra</i> . Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004.  |
| P.            | <i>The Tibetan Tripitaka, Peking Edition</i> . 168 vols. Tokyo-Kyoto: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1955-61. ( <a href="http://web.otani.ac.jp/cril/twrp/tibdate/Peking_online_search.html">http://web.otani.ac.jp/cril/twrp/tibdate/Peking_online_search.html</a> )                |
| PKTC          | Padma Karpo Translation Committee. <a href="http://www.tibet.dk/tcc">http://www.tibet.dk/tcc</a> .  |
| <i>RHPS</i>   | Khamnyön Dharma Sengé, <i>The Religious History of Pacification and Severance: A Precious Garland Ornament of Liberation (Zhi byed dang gcod yul gyi chos 'byung rin po che'i phreng ba thar pa'i rgyan)</i> . In <i>gCod kyi chos 'khor</i> (Delhi: Tibet House, 1974), 411-597. |

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| RT                   | Ringu Tulku Rinpoché  |
| RTN- <i>NGB</i>      | Rig 'dzin tshe dbang nor bu rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum. Also known as The Waddell Manuscript, 29 volumes of which are held in the British Library, London. Online catalogue hosted by the Department of Anthropology at the University of Kent at Canterbury. ( <a href="http://ngb.csac.anthropology.ac.uk/ngbcat.html">http://ngb.csac.anthropology.ac.uk/ngbcat.html</a> )   |
| RY                   | Rangjung Yeshe On-line Dictionary. ( <a href="http://www.nitartha.org/dictionary_search04.html">http://www.nitartha.org/dictionary_search04.html</a> )  |
| <i>Shangpa Texts</i> | <i>The Source Texts of the Dharma Cycle of Five Golden Dharmas of the Glorious Shangpa</i> ( <i>dPal ldan shangs pa'i chos 'khor gser chos rnam lnga'i rgya zhung</i> ). Edited by Karma Rangjung Kunkhyab (Kalu Rinpoché). Sonada, India: Samdrup Darje Ling Monastery, n.d. 11 vols. This collection is based on the Palpung edition. Reprinted by Lama Tsengyur Rinpoche, Kagyu Kunkhyab Chuling, 1982.  |
| <i>SOP</i>           | Tsong-kha-pa, <i>The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment: Lam rim Chen mo</i> . Trans. the Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee. 3 vols. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2000–2004.  |
| <i>SBT</i>           | Jamgön Kongtrul, <i>The Treasury of Knowledge: Book Six, Part Four: Systems of Buddhist Tantra</i> . Kalu Rinpoché Translation Group (Elio Guarisco & Ingrid McLeod). Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2005.   |
| SNGP                 | Sungrab Nyamso Gyunphel Parkhang. Palampur, HP: Tibetan Craft Community.  |
| TBRC                 | Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center.<br>( <a href="http://www.tbrc.org">http://www.tbrc.org</a> )  |
| THDL                 | Tibetan and Himalayan Digital Library<br>( <a href="http://thdl.org">http://thdl.org</a> )  |
| TK- <i>NGB</i>       | <i>rNying ma rgyud 'bum</i> , gTing skyes edition. Eiichi Kaneko, <i>Ko Tanotora zenshū kaidai mokuroku</i> (catalogue of the Khyentse edition of the gTing-skyes dgon-pa-byang rnying ma rgyud-'bum). Tokyo: Kokusho Kankūkai, 1982. Online catalogue found at THDL ( <a href="http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/cgi-tibet/xsearchForm.pl?ed=tibet/tk.ed">http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/cgi-tibet/xsearchForm.pl?ed=tibet/tk.ed</a> ). |
| Toh.                 | <i>A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons/ Chibetto Daizōkyō Sōmokuoku</i> . Edited by Hakuju Ui, Munetada Suzuki, Yenshō Kanakura, and Tōkan Tada. Sendai: Tōhoku Imperial University, 1934.  |
| TOK                  | <i>The Treasury of Knowledge/Infinite Ocean of Knowledge</i> ( <i>Shes bya kun khyab mdzod/Shes bya mtha' yas pa'i rgya mtsho</i> )<br>Text 1: 3 vols. Beijing: Bod mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1982.  |

Text 2: 4 vols. Edited by Jamyang Khentse. Shechen Monastery, Nepal: Ngagyur Nyingma.

Text 3: Lotsawa Tony Duff, Padma Karpo Translation Committee, ed. "The Treasury which is an Encyclopedia of Knowledge." Published electronically by PKTC, 2003. <http://www.tibet.dk/tcc>.

TR Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoché

Xylo. Xylographic edition (woodblock print).

# NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

- 1 Jamgön Kongtrul's death date has often been given as 1899, but it seems that this calculation has failed to take into account the differences in Tibet's lunar calendar and our western system of dating. According to Nesar Karma Tashi Chöpel's *Account of the Passing and Funeral Observances of the All-Seeing Lord, the Venerable Jamgön Ngag-gi Wangchuk Yönten Gyatso*, he died around midnight on the twenty-seventh day of the eleventh month of the Earth Pig year (f. 12a-b). This would place his death sometime in January of 1900, shortly before the new Tibetan year of the Iron Mouse. See the translation of the above text as "The Marvelous Gem-like Vision" in Richard Barron, *The Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul*, 371-410. Also see page 403, note 30 in that book.
- 2 This and the other opening verses can be found in the first volume of this series, *The Treasury of Knowledge: Myriad Worlds (MW)*, 87-8.
- 3 For instance, Sakya Paṇḍita's, *Analysis of the Three Vows (sDom gsum rab dbye)* and Ngari Panchen's (mNga' ris Paṇ chen) *Ascertainment of the Three Vows (sDom gsum mam nges)*. There are also several smaller texts on the three levels of vows by Kongtrul, such as *Tshogs gsoḡ gi rim pa dang rjes su 'brel ba'i sdom gsum gyi gso sbyong rgyas bsdus thar pa'i them skas* (GK, vol. 13, ff. 177-225) and *bLa ma bkra 'phel gyi dris lan* (GK, vol. 9, ff. 243-257). The section in the treasury where Kongtrul did focus on the three vows is translated as *The Treasury of Knowledge: Buddhist Ethics (BE)*.
- 4 *Phyogs med ris med kyi bstan pa la 'dun shing dge sbyong gi gzugs brnyan 'chang ba blo gros mtha' yas kyi sde'i byung ba brjod pa nor bu sna tshogs mdog can* (*Autobiography*) (GK, vol. 16, ff. 100b-101a). Or in translation by Richard Barron: *The Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul: A Gem of Many Colors (Gem)*, 131.
- 5 *Theg pa'i sgo kun las btus pa gsung rab rin po che'i mdzod bsal pa gsum legs par ston pa'i bstan bcos shes bya kun khyab*. For Kongtrul's explanation of the title at the beginning of the *Treasury*, see *MW*, 80-1.
- 6 The modern edition of the root verses plus commentary is in book form, as opposed to Tibetan folio format (*dpe cha*). It was edited by Dorjé Gyalpo (rDo rje rGyal po) and Tubten Nyima (Thub bstan Nyi ma). It was first printed in 1982 and again in Beijing in 1985 by the People's Publishing House (Mi rigs dpe skrun khang). This was the main edition used for this translation, and all page references are to

this edition. It was checked against the four-volume edition by Jamyang Khen-tse ('Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse) of Ngagyur Nyingma (sNga 'gyur snying ma), and occasionally the annotated electronic version entitled *The Treasury which is an Encyclopedia of Knowledge* prepared by Tony Duff, Padma Karpo Translation Committee.

- 7 Palpung, also written Pelpung (dPal spung), is the main Karma Kagyu monastery in Kham in Eastern Tibet, in what used to be the kingdom of Dergé, which was at the height of its influence during Kongtrul's time. Palpung was founded in 1727 by the eighth Situ, Chökyi Jungné (Chos kyi 'byung gnas, 1699-1774), and has remained the seat of the important Tai Situ line of incarnations. The area above the monastery was called Tsadra Rinchen Drak (*Tsa 'dra rin chen brag*), "The Jewel Cliff that is like Tsari" (the inspiration for Tsadra Foundation). This area was revealed as sacred ground by Kongtrul and a three-year retreat center was built there, which is back in operation today after a thirty-year hiatus. It is here that Kongtrul Rinpoché often stayed in retreat and guided many others in retreats. For a thorough account, see Ngawang Zangpo, *Sacred Ground: Jamgon Kongtrul on "Pilgrimage and Sacred Geography."*
- 8 See evidence throughout his *Autobiography*, but especially ff. 101a-109b (*Gem*, 131-42).
- 9 Nges don bstan pa rab rgyas (1808-1864 or 1867) was the first Dabzang Tulku (Zla bzang sprul sku) and the founder of Tilyag Monastery in Nangchen (Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 328, n. 802).
- 10 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse dbang po (1820-1892) was a towering figure in the life of Jamgön Kongtrul and Eastern Tibet in general. Associated with Dzongsar monastery, he was a scholar, compiler, treasure revealer, and all-around brilliant master, who was considered an emanation of the bodhisattva of wisdom, Mañjuśrī. For a "tree" of his many incarnations, which continue to appear in numbers, see Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 268-9.
- 11 *Autobiography*, f. 101a (*Gem*, 131). This probably occurred in 1863.
- 12 Ibid., f. 105a (*Gem*, 137). Tashi Özer (bKra shis 'od zer bLo gros rgyas pa'i sde, 1836-1910) was a famous scholar and abbot of a subsidiary of Palpung Monastery (TR). Also see Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 329, n. 804.
- 13 *Autobiography*, f. 105a-b (*Gem*, 137-8). Kongtrul was directly involved in the troubles of Dergé and acted as mediator between warring factions. He was considered by some to have prevented an attack on Palpung.
- 14 *gter ma*, literally "treasures," are spiritual teachings or objects that are hidden by great masters, primarily Guru Padmasambhava, to be discovered at a later time when they will be most appropriate and efficacious.
- 15 In Tibetan these are (1) *bKa' brgyud sngags mdzod*, (2) *Rin chen gter mdzod*, (3) *gDams ngag rin po che'i mdzod*, and (4) *Thun mong ma yin pa'i mdzod* or *rGya chen bka' mdzod*.

- 16 For Kongtrul's own description of the five treasures, see *The Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul: A Gem of Many Colors*, 263-75, and Richard Barron's outline of them in the appendix, 517-49. Another good description of Kongtrul's literary output emphasizing particular titles of interest in the five treasures is E. Gene Smith's "Jam mgon Kong sprul and the Nonsectarian Movement," in *Among Tibetan Texts*, 262-7. Finally, the first volume of the present series, *Myriad Worlds*, contains a summary of them in its excellent introduction to Jamgön Kongtrul's life, 33-5.
- 17 This ambitious project was initiated by the venerable Kalu Rinpoché in 1988 and continues through the efforts of the Kalu Rinpoché Translation Group with the support of Tsadra Foundation. See pp. oo for a list of available and upcoming publications in this series.
- 18 See *Treasury of Knowledge (TOK)*, vol. 1, pp. 164-70, or in translation, *MW*, 80-9. In addition to these guidelines for the composition, there are also requirements for the writers of treatises: in the best cases, realization of reality; in the average cases, visions of deities; and at the least, the author should be perfectly learned in the five major sciences (Ngari Panchen, *Perfect Conduct: Ascertaining the Three Vows*, 3).
- 19 *MW*, 91-2.
- 20 A much more common term would have been *le'u*, "chapter."
- 21 *Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra*, more properly called *Jewel Affinity (Ratnagotravibhāga; Tib. Theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos*, Toh. 4024). It is attributed to Maitreya through Asaṅga, but was rediscovered in the eleventh century by the great adept Maitripa, a teacher of Marpa and many other Tibetan masters.
- 22 See Takasaki, *A Study on the Ratnagotravibhāga (Uttaratantra)*, 142, or Kongtrul's commentary in Arya Maitreya, *Buddha Nature*, 99.
- 23 *Autobiography*, f. 202a (*Gem*, 275). A previous occurrence was in 1867, when it was given to the Ngor master Ngawang Rinchen and others (f. 110b; *Gem*, 144).
- 24 *dus gsum khegs pa'i bstan bcos*: literally, "a treatise that defies the three times," *Autobiography*, f. 136b (*Gem*, 178). This occurred in 1876.
- 25 For one thing, it is not in alphabetical order. For a discussion on this, see Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 250-1. In the same book see also "A Tibetan Encyclopedia from the Fifteenth Century" (209-24) for analysis of a comparable work.
- 26 This is still the preferred method in Tibet, and is maintained today by some Western students of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoché.
- 27 *The Elements of Tantric Practice: A General Exposition of Secret Mantra Meditation Systems*. This is a translation of Book Eight, Part Three by Ingrid McLeod and Elio Guarisco, forthcoming from Snow Lion Publications.
- 28 Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 147 (*āmnāya*) and 199 (*upadeśa*).
- 29 Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoché was particularly insistent on their similarity, and in most cases Jamgön Kongtrul also treats them as synonyms.

- 30 *tshigs nyung nyung thog nas don chen po*. This agrees with a definition given by the late great translator Herbert Guenther in *The Royal Song of Saraha* (30), who translated it as “significant communication,” though only in reference to *upadeśa*. He quotes Karma Phrin-las-pa (*Do-hā skor-gsum*, f. 58b): “man-ngag means to point out an important topic in a few words, or to elucidate the meaning of existence by having singled out the means of its understanding” (cited in Smith, 281, n. 95).
- 31 These examples and the foregoing descriptions are from Gangteng Tulku Rinpoché, a Bhutaneſe Nyingma maſter in the Peling (Pad gling) tradition, interviewed on 11/7/05.
- 32 Ringu Tulku Rinpoché, who preferred “key instructions” for this reaſon.
- 33 *Webſter’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 624: “Gr. *esōterikos*, from *esōteros*, inner, comp. of *esō*, within.” This is often uſed to deſcribe vajrayāna Buddhism in general, in comparison to other “exoteric” kinds of Buddhism. For ſome diſcuſſion, ſee Richard D. McBride, II, “Is there really ‘Esoteric’ Buddhism?” in *JLABS* 27, no. 2 (2004).
- 34 For a brief diſcuſſion of this type of literature, ſee Matthew Kapſtein, “gDams ngag: Tibetan Technologies of the Self,” in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, 275-89.
- 35 In his catalogue to *The Treasury of Precious Key Instructions*, which has the ſame order, Kongtrul ſtates, “This profound dharma itſelf came into Tibet in earlier and later ſtages, ſo this is arranged like that” (*Catalogue*, f. 393). However, judging by reſpective length, one might ſuſpect a ſpecial intereſt in the Kagyu lineage, which takes up thrice as much room as any other chapter.
- 36 Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 237. But elſewhere in the ſame book (25) the very ſame is ſaid of the *Royal Genealogy of Degé* (*sDe dge’i rgyal rabs*) by the prince of Dergé. It is truly difficult to pinpoint a ſingle beginning to this wiſeſpread movement, ſince it has always been preſent in ſome form in the religious life of Tibet.
- 37 For inſtance, *A Hundred Guidances of Jonang* (*Jo nang khrid brgya’i skor*) is included in volume 18 of *The Treasury of Precious Key Instructions*, with ſimilar comprehensive (*ris med*) hiſtories of the lineages (*DZ*, vol. 18, ff. 1-380).
- 38 *sGgrub brgyud shing rta chen po brgyad kyi smin grol snying po phyogs gcig bstus pa gdams ngag rin po che’i mdzod kyi dkar chag bkra shis grags pa’i rgya mtsho* (*Catalogue*), in *The Treasury of Precious Key Instructions*, vol. 18, ff. 381-547.
- 39 *sangs rgyas thog ma tha ma med/ dang po’i sangs rgyas ris med pa*, from ‘*Jam dpal sgyu phrul drwa ba* (Toh. 360), a name for *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgiti*. Quoted in *Catalogue*, f. 385.
- 40 *Catalogue*, f. 390
- 41 The ten great pillars who upheld the exegetical lineages were Thönmi Sambhota, Vairocana, Kawa Peltsek, Chokro Lüi Gyaltſen, Zhang Yeſhedé, Rinchen Zangpo, Dromtön Gyalwai Jungné, Ngok Lotsāwa Loden Sherab, Sakya Paṇḍita, and Gö Khukpa Lhetsé (*NSH* 1: 851 and 2: 165).
- 42 *Catalogue*, f. 405

- 43 Prajñāraśmi (1517-1584), a Nyingma master known as 'Phreng bo gter ston Shes rab 'od zer.
- 44 The Lord of Beings was of course Padmasambhava, or Guru Rinpoché, who was predicted by the Buddha Śākyamuni as the second Teacher. He taught the Dharma King Trisong Deutsen in the eighth century. The eight pillars are (1) Vairocana (Be ro tsa na), born in the family of Bagor and the author of many translations in the early Nyingma period; (2) Lord Atiśa's disciple Dromtön Gyalwai Jungné ('Brom ston rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas, 1005-1064), a layman holding the five vows of non-monastic ordination, or *upāsaka* (Tib. *dge bsnyen*, but the Sanskrit is used here); (3) Khyungpo Naljor (Khyung po rnal 'byor, 978?-1127?), who studied with 140 Indian gurus and founded the Shangpa Kagyu lineage; (4) Lama Drokmi ('Brog mi Lotsāwa Śākya ye shes, 993-1077?), who studied with Indian and Nepali masters for thirteen years and then translated a large number of tantric scriptures, such as the *Hevajra Tantra*; (5) Lord Marpa (Mar pa Chos kyi blo gros, 1000-1081), another great translator who studied with Indian masters such as Nāropa and Maitripa, whose teachings form the basis of the Kagyu lineage; (6) Dampa Sangyé (Dam pa sangs rgyas, d. 1105), the only Indian in the list and sometimes identified with Kamalaśīla, who visited Tibet five times and spread the teachings known as Pacification (*zhi byed*), and its subsidiary Severance (*gcod*); (7) Gyijo (Gyi jo Zla ba'i 'od zer), the first to translate the *Kālacakra Tantra* and its teachings of the Six-branch Vajrayoga; and (8) Orgyenpa (O rgyan pa Rin chen dpal, 1230-1309), a bit later than the others. He was already established in the Kagyu tradition but encountered the awareness *ḍākinī* directly on a trip to Uḍḍiyāna ("Orgyen") and returned with a *Kālacakra* transmission.
- 45 Matthew Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, 17.
- 46 In "A Crisis of Doxography" (*JIAS*, 2005), Jacob Dalton explores the works of Buddhaguhya and Vilāsavajra in particular.
- 47 See *ibid.*, 121. See also Kapstein, *op. cit.*, 10-20.
- 48 E. Gene Smith describes the situation: "These purists devised formal criteria that enabled them to exclude even sacred texts for which there was some evidence of Indic originals by exacting linguistic and stylistic considerations. These savants rejected all of the tantras of the *Vajrakīla* cycle, even though the great Sa skya Paṇḍita had seen, copied, and translated a palm leaf manuscript of the *Phur pa rīsa dum* at the Sreg zhing Hermitage in Shangs" (*Among Tibetan Texts*, 238; also see 16-17).
- 49 Although the Dergé and Lhasa editions of the Kangyur include three volumes of Nyingma tantras, these texts were largely excluded from other editions (Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 280, n. 90). For a more precise history of the development of the Nyingma Gyubum, see Gyurme Dorje, "Guhyagarbha Tantra: An Introduction" ([www.wisdom-books.com/FocusDetail.asp?FocusRef=36](http://www.wisdom-books.com/FocusDetail.asp?FocusRef=36)). Also see "A Brief History of the Tibetan bKa' 'gyur" by Paul Harrison, "The Canonical Tantras of the New Schools" by Tadeusz Skorupski, and the "Editors' Introduction" by Cabézon and Jackson, all in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*.
- 50 Georges B. J. Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping*, 142-6.



- 51 Ibid., 321.
- 52 Matthieu Ricard, *The Life of Shabkar*, xv.
- 53 Jam mgon Kong sprul, mKhyen brtse dbang po (1820-1892), mChog 'gyur gling pa (1829-1870), rDza dpal sprul (1808-1887), 'Ju Mi pham rgya mtsho (1846-1912), and gZhan dga' gZhan phan chos kyi snang ba (1871-1927). See especially Smith, "Jam mgon Kong sprul and His Friends," in *Among Tibetan Texts*, 247-50.
- 54 Khenpo Zhenpen wrote the commentaries on the thirteen great Indian texts used by most of the non-Geluk institutions, and Mipam Gyatso wrote a number of philosophical texts and commentaries that are taken by the Nyingma as orthodox statements of their views (Dreyfus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping*, 29-30).
- 55 Ibid., 148.
- 56 Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, 542.
- 57 *Sa'i snying po 'khor lo bcu pa* (Toh. 239), quoted in *Catalogue*, f. 404.
- 58 *Catalogue*, f. 385.
- 59 *Autobiography*, f. 198b (*Gem*, 269).
- 60 *Catalogue*, f. 386.
- 61 *Autobiography*, ff. 66b-67a (*Gem*, 190-1; also in *MW*, 29).
- 62 Si tu Pad ma nyin byed (1774-1853). See *Autobiography*, f. 18a-b (*Gem*, 22).
- 63 The Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC) is an extremely useful resource for text research set up by E. Gene Smith that can be found at TBRC.org (accessed on 7/6/06).
- 64 *Ris med chos kyi 'byung gnas mdo tsam smos pa blo gsal mgrin pa'i mdzes rgyan*, in *The Treasury of Extensive Teachings* (*rGya chen bka' mdzod*), vol. 9, ff. 69-99 (TBRC resource code W5429). I was alerted to this text by articles by E. Gene Smith and Matthew Kapstein. *A Brief History of Everything* is, of course, a title co-opted from author Ken Wilber. Considering that Wilber's brief history is 339 pages, while Kongtrul's is only thirty, perhaps *A Briefer History of Everything* is better.
- 65 *Autobiography*, f. 42b (*Gem*, 53).
- 66 sDe gzhung rin po che Kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma (1906-1987), "Dezhung Rinpoché on Buddhism without Sectarianism," translated by Jared Rhoton, in Jackson, *A Saint in Seattle*, 490.
- 67 *Buddhist Ethics*, 258.
- 68 Ibid., 260.
- 69 Jackson, *A Saint in Seattle*, 492.
- 70 Recently, under the deluge of a devastating hailstorm in Colorado, a devotee told me, "It's Rinpoché's blessing." I doubt this will make Buddhists of the farmers.

- 71 *Autobiography*, f. 5b4-5 (*Gem*, 5). This is probably not the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.
- 72 The first of the famous Four Reliances taught by the Buddha and found in several sutras. The others are to rely on the meaning, not on the words; to rely on the definitive meaning, not on the provisional meaning; and to rely on timeless awareness, not on consciousness.
- 73 *Luminous Mind*, 5-6.
- 74 *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight*, 49.
- 75 “A New Religious America: Managing Religious Diversity in A Democracy: Challenges and Prospects for the 21st Century.” Keynote Address delivered by Professor Dr. Diana L. Eck, Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies, Harvard University, USA, at MAAS International Conference on Religious Pluralism in Democratic Societies, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from August 20-21, 2002. <http://www.usembassymalaysia.org.my/eck.html>, accessed 7/7/06.
- 76 Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 237.
- 77 Jackson, *A Saint in Seattle*, 489-90.
- 78 *Catalogue* (f. 393), referencing the *Early and Later Authoritative Texts on the Six Dharmas* (*Chos drug bka’ dpe snga phyi*, Skt. *Pravacanottaropamā*), two texts attributed to Nāropa, or to Tilopa and Nāropa, respectively (Toh. 2333). The two types of individual are described in the first chapter on Nyingma, and mentioned many times throughout other chapters.
- 79 *Catalogue*, f. 393.
- 80 Kalu Rinpoché, *Luminous Mind*, 6.
- 81 *Ibid.*, 4.

## THE ROOT TEXT

- 1 In all copies the root text here is different from the order in which it is presented in all copies of the commentary. Since it makes better sense as it is in the commentary, and because it is much easier, I have changed the order here to match the commentary.
- 2 This last line from the root text is missing in the commentary.

## CHAPTER 1: NYINGMA

- 1 *mdo sngags*: Sutra (*mdo*, Skt. *sūtra*) refers to the teachings attributed directly to the Buddha and to the practices based on them. Mantra (*sngags*, Skt. *mantra*), or often “secret mantra” (*gsang sngags*), refers to the practices based on the tantras, and is here synonymous with *vajrayāna* (*rdo rje theg pa*), “the indestructible way” or vehicle. Kongtrul has explained the meaning of mantra and its distinctions from tantra in an earlier section of *The Treasury of Knowledge* (TOK 2: 560-766; Book 6,

Part 4, translated as *Systems of Buddhist Tantra* [SBT]). Briefly, the Sanskrit term *mantra* means “to protect the mind” and can also mean “secret utterance,” as in the more popular usage of it as a kind of incantation. The essence of mantra is the union of emptiness and compassion. Kongtrul states, “All aspects of secret mantra and the pristine awareness of great bliss are referred to as mantra. Applications of secret mantra (the collections of [rituals] for the activations and powers) are known as tantra” (SBT, 86-7).

- 2 For a discussion on the divisions of tantra, see the chapter by that name in *SBT*, 89-98. Generally “outer” (*phyi*) refers to the first two tantric systems of the fourfold division, that is, action and conduct tantras, because they are mostly concerned with outer physical and verbal practices such as ablution. “Inner” (*nang*) refers to yoga and highest yoga tantras because they are concerned primarily with contemplation and interiority. Highest yoga tantra (*rnal ’byor bla med* or *bla med rgyud*, Skt. *anuttaratantra*) is said to be for recipients of the highest faculties. In the Nyingma tradition, highest yoga tantra is represented by *mahāyoga*, *anuyoga*, and *atiyoga*. Most of the esoteric instructions in this book fall into this category.
- 3 *ring lugs*: this really just means a lineage tradition, but is sometimes contrasted with a short lineage (*nye brgyud*) of direct visionary experience of teachings from a past master.
- 4 *sgrub brgyud shing rta lam srol chen po brgyad*: a system of classification emphasized by Jamgön Kongtrul (1813-1900) and Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo (1820-1892). But see Introduction, p. 00, for a sixteenth-century reference to “the eight great pillars of practice.”
- 5 (1) *snga ’gyur snying ma*, Early Translation of the Ancient Ones; (2) *bka’ gdams*, Precept Instructions; (3) *lam ’bras*, Path with Fruition; (4) *mar pa’i bka’ brgyud*, Marpa’s Precept Lineage; (5) *shangs pa bka’ brgyud*, Precept Lineage of Shang; (6) *zhi byed*, Pacification; (7) *shyor drug*, Six-Branch Yoga; and (8) *rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub*, Approach and Attainment of the Three Vajras.
- 6 *snga ’gyur rnying ma*: The ancient tradition of secret mantra originated with the early translations of tantras as they made their way into Tibet, inspired by the activity of the Indian master Padmasambhava and sponsored by the Buddhist kings in the eighth and ninth centuries. The tantric texts translated from Sanskrit prior to the end of the tenth century and during the early spread of Buddhism in Tibet are known as the tantras of the early translation. This period is also known as “the early dissemination of the doctrine” (*bstan pa snga dar*), in contrast to the “later dissemination” (*bstan pa phyi dar*).
- 7 *yo ga rnam gsum*: These are the last three vehicles in the Nyingma traditional ninefold scheme (*theg pa dgu*). The first three are the sutra vehicles of the *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and *bodhisattvas*. The three vehicles of the outer tantras are *kriyāyoga*, *upāyoga* or *caryāyoga*, and *yogatantra*. The three vehicles of the inner tantras are *mahāyoga*, *anuyoga*, and *atiyoga*, which correspond roughly to highest yoga tantra (*bla med rgyud*; Skt. *anuttaratantra*) in the fourfold system of the new traditions (see note 2 above). Tibetan texts generally keep the Sanskrit terms for the three yogas, although the

- Tibetan equivalents are *rnal 'byor chen po* (“great yoga”), *rjes su rnal 'byor* (“yoga of passion”), and *shin tu rnal 'byor* (“extreme yoga”). The views, practices, and conduct of all the tantra sections, including the three yogas, are described in some detail in the sixth book of the *Treasury of Knowledge* (TOK 2: 736-66 or *SBT*, 301-57). This should be studied as background to the following description of the esoteric instructions.
- 8 Creation phase (*bskyed rim*) and completion phase (*rdzogs rim*) are the two main aspects in vajrayāna practice of deity visualization and yogic meditation on the energetic body. Great completion (*rdzogs chen*) is the ultimate realization. The three of these can be said to encompass all mantra practice. See Kongtrul’s *Creation and Completion* and TOK 3: 159-275.
  - 9 *Rim [pa] gsum*, Skt. *Māyājālopadeśakramatrāya* (P4742), a commentary on the *Secret Essence Root Tantra* by Vimalamitra, one of the greatest masters and scholars of Indian Buddhism. He taught in Tibet in the ninth century and translated many Sanskrit texts. Along with Padmasambhava, he is one of the principal sources for the great completion (*rdzogs chen*) teachings in Tibet. See *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* (NSH 1: 480-81).
  - 10 The Beijing edition of the text (Text 1) has *thabs srol gnyis* (“two traditions of method”), but Khentse’s edition (Text 2) has *thabs grol gnyis*, which reading seems to be suggested by the commentary, and was also confirmed by Gangteng Tulku Rinpoché (GTR).
  - 11 *rDo rje sems dpa' sgyu 'phrul drwa ba*, Skt. *Vajrasattvamāyājālaguhyasarvadarśa* (Toh. 833), a name for the *Secret Essence Tantra* (*gSang ba'i snying po'i rgyud*) as well as a general name for the texts of the cycle of the Net of Magical Manifestation (*sGyu 'phrul drwa ba*). There are eighteen principal tantras in the *mahāyoga* system: five root tantras, five of expression, five concerning conduct, two that are like continuations, and one major tantra which is like the condensation of all the others. This last one is the *Net of Magical Manifestation of Vajrasattva*, the root text for all the *mahāyoga* tantras. The *Net of Magical Manifestation of Vajrasattva* itself consists of eight major texts and four explanatory tantras (TOK 2: 761; *SBT*, 350). It is thus of primary importance in *mahāyoga* and its depth and profundity have warranted much study over many centuries. For a complete list of all eighteen tantras plus subdivisions, see *SBT*, 518-9, nn. 2-4; Tulku Thondup, *Masters of Meditation and Miracles*, 360, n. 32; and Tulku Thondup, *Buddha Mind*, 30-1.
  - 12 *rgyud mahāyoga*: The three inner tantras are often associated with three different types of source texts, and appended with those names. Thus it is “tantra *mahāyoga*,” “elucidated” or “scriptural *anuyoga*” (*lung anuyoga*), and “esoteric instruction *atiyoga*” (*man ngag atiyoga*). *Mahāyoga* is called tantra because it presents in their entirety the ten topics (*dnegos po bcu*): the view, conduct, mandala, initiation, pledges, activation rituals, powers, contemplation, offerings, and mantras and mudras (*SBT*, 505, n. 22).
  - 13 *bShad rgyud rgya mtsho*, or *sGyu 'phrul rgya mtsho*, “Oceanic Magical Manifestation” (TK-NGB, vol. Ba): one of the four major explanatory tantras of the *Net of Magical Manifestation*.

- 14 *brtul zhugs kyi spyod pa*: sometimes translated as “yogic conduct,” “vanquishing conduct,” or “deliberate behavior.” Kongtrul defines it as the transforming (*brtul*) of ordinary activity and thoughts and the entering (*zhugs*) into the mode of Vajrasattva’s Body, Speech, and Mind. Again, it is the conduct of a yogin who has brought under control (*brtul*) ordinary actions conditioned by passions and has adopted (*zhugs*) the special behavior intended for overcoming dualism. See *BE*, 243.
- 15 *shes rab gsum*: the wisdom or discernment of listening or studying (*thos pa*), of contemplation or reflection (*bsam pa*), and of familiarization or meditation (*sgom pa*). These three lead to the experience of certainty.
- 16 This quotation is attributed to the *Explanatory Tantra of the Oceanic Magical Manifestation* in *NSH* 1: 277. Upper and lower doors refer respectively to the higher chakras and the secret or sexual chakra of one’s own body or in that of one’s sexual partner in tantric practice. Also see Longchenpa, *Dispelling Darkness in the Ten Directions*, f. 453.
- 17 The six chakras or “channel-wheels” forming the upper door of one’s body (*rang lus steng sgo ’khor lo drug*) are energy centers situated within the meditator’s own body where the channels converge. They are (1) the sky chakra at the crown center (*gtsug tor nam mkha’i ’khor lo*); (2) the great bliss chakra at the head center (*spyi bo bde chen gi ’khor lo*); (3) the enjoyment chakra at the throat center (*mgrin pa longs spyod kyi ’khor lo*); (4) the dharma chakra at the heart center (*snying ka chos kyi ’khor lo*); (5) the emanation chakra at the navel center (*lte ba sprul pa’i ’khor lo*); and (6) the bliss-maintaining chakra at the secret center (*gsang chen bde skyong gi ’khor lo*) (*NSH* 2: 150).
- 18 *rim gyis pa*: a “gradualist.” This training of the “upper door” is for a person who is best suited for a gradual or step-by-step practice. The “lower door” is for an “instantaneous one” (*cig car ba*), a practitioner capable of attaining instant results. These categories are described below.
- 19 The “three life trees” (*srog shing gsum*) refers to the three channels (*rtsa*, Skt. *nāḍī*) in the energetic or subtle body through which the vital energies or “winds” (*rlung*, Skt. *prāṇa*) move. They are the central channel (*dbu ma*, Skt. *avadhūtī*), the channel to the right of it (*ro ma*, Skt. *rasanā*), and that to the left (*rkyang ma*, Skt. *lalanā*). “Sky cow” (*nam mkha’i ba*) refers to the syllable *ham* that is visualized in the great bliss chakra in the head center in practices of inner heat (*gtum mo*, Skt. *caṇḍālī*). Typically, the fire that is visualized as a letter in the navel center blazes up and causes the *ham* to secrete white seminal fluid. Thus it is “milked.” The secretion drips down and causes the experience of bliss in the four lower chakras (GTR, personal communication, 7/24/03). Also see nn. 21, 22 and 30 below.
- 20 [*dPal gsang ba*] *snying po’i rgyud*; Skt. *Guhyagarbhatattvaniścayamahātāntra*, *The Glorious Secret Essence Tantra* or simply the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, the same as *The Net of Magical Manifestation of Vajrasattva* (*rDo rje sems dpa’ sgyu ’phrul drwa ba*) (see n. 11 above). This is the basic *mahāyoga* tantra of the Nyingma tradition, though the original Sanskrit work is lost. There are three major Indian commentaries by Līlāvajra, Sūryasiṃhaprabha and Buddhaguhya, and three main translations into

- Tibetan. See Herbert Guenther, *The Matrix of Mystery*, 212, n. 8. Chapter thirteen referenced here is entitled “The Essential Extremely Secret Esoteric Instructions” (*shin tu gsang ba man ngag gi snying po*).
- 21 *thig le*, Skt. *tilaka* or *bindu*: According to Kongtrul (*SBT*, 181), “the term ‘vital essence’ denotes the essence or seed of great bliss.” It also can mean a drop or sphere. In teachings concerning the subtle or vajra body, it refers to the essence of the seminal drops, and is also called *bodhicitta* (“awakening mind”). Then it is specifically referring to the vital essence as substance (*rdzas*).
  - 22 The vital essence, which is the seed of great bliss, is visualized in the shape of “seed syllables” (*’bru yig*) of the Tibetan alphabet in the various locations within the central channel of the vajra body. The practitioner concentrates on a different chakra in each of these practices. These are basically the names of esoteric instructions with a minimal description. Kongtrul’s intentions are to survey the esoteric instructions, rather than provide enough material for actual practice, or even comprehension (!).
  - 23 *sGrol ma lung gi man ngag*: a branch commentary maybe found in the *sNying ma rgyud ’bum* (GTR). However, I have been unable to find it there.
  - 24 *Bi ma’i gsang thig*: not located under this name. It is probably a way of referring to the *Bi ma’i snying thig* cycle, with its commentary by Longchenpa, perhaps a variant title imbedded in some of the many small texts buried in the larger collection.
  - 25 *Zur pa mes dbon*: Kongtrul identifies the three forefathers or three generations of the Zur family lineage earlier in the *Treasury* as Zurpoché, “the Great Zur” (Lha rje Zur po che Śākya ’byung gnas, tenth-eleventh c.), Zurchungpa, “Zur the Younger” (Zur chung Shes rab grags, 1014-1074), and Dropukpa, “Lord of Secrets” (gSang bdag sgro phug pa [Śākya seng ge], 1074-1135). For a history of this family and their legacy see *NSH* 1: 617-49.
  - 26 Kun mkhyen Dri med ’od zer (1308-1363), known as Longchen Rabjampa (kLong chen Rab ’byams pa) or Longchenpa, the greatest Nyingma scholar-adept and recognized authority. He was the author of two hundred and sixty-three works, the most important known as the *Seven Treasuries* (*mDzod bdun*).
  - 27 *bsnyen sgrub yan lag bzhi*: also translated as “four branches of ritual service and rites of attainment.” These are used to describe different phases of a practice, and, as mentioned, can be applied to various practices. They are (1) approach (*bsnyen pa*), (2) close approach (*nye bsnyen*), (3) attainment (*sgrub pa*), and (4) great attainment (*sgrub pa chen po*).
  - 28 *brda bzhi*: conventionally, the four symbols or signs are clarity, bliss, nonthought, and indivisibility, as mentioned later in this book. In the current subject of “encouragement” (*bskul*) in tantric sexual practice (Skt. *karmamudrā*), they refer to the exchanges of four phrases between male and female consorts. These are *badzar samaya stom*, *badzar samaya ho*, *ragaya ham*, and *ragaya mi*. See Dodrup Jigmé Tenpai Nyima, *Key to the Precious Treasury* (*mDzod kyi lde’u mig*) in the *NKG* edition, Tibetan folio 38a. (I wish to express my gratitude to Tulku Thondup Rinpoché for this information).

- 29 *phyag rgya bzhi*: again, in this particular context, the four mudras or gestures are to unite with the four syllables *dza*, *hum*, *bam*, and *ho*, which stand for the four actions of summoning (*'gug*), binding (*bching*), fettering (*sdom*), and pleasing (*mnyes*) or intoxicating (*myos*). Again thank you to Tulku Thondup Rinpoché for this.
- 30 The three perceptions (*'du shes gsum*), as explained by Kongtrul in *Fully Spreading the Light of Wisdom* (f. 395), his commentary to the treasure text *The Wisdom Essence of Oral Instruction on the Stages of the Path* (*Zhal gdams lam rim ye shes snying po*), are (1) both the yogin and his or her awareness consort visualize themselves as deities in union, (2) perform the mutual blessing of the space and secret as a vajra and lotus, and (3) have the same wish to accomplish the state of Vajrasattva, great bliss, for the benefit of others by relying on this method. (Thanks to Elizabeth Callahan for finding this reference.)
- 31 *dmar cha dkar cha*: “red and white aspects,” or *khamd dkar dmar*, “white and red constituents,” refers to the vital essence, conceived of as drops, that are particularly associated with the two procreative potentials in the sexual fluids (*khru rdul*). They are also code-named “bodhicitta” (*byang sems*) or “awakening mind.” The red aspect, or essence of female ovum (*khrag*), is inherited from the mother at conception, and the white aspect or essence of sperm (*khru ba*) is inherited from the father. They merged at the time of sexual intercourse to form the physical basis for the consciousness of the intermediate being conceived in them at conception. Throughout fetal development, these essences remain at the navel, the energy-center from where the body develops. At birth, they separate; the white settles at the head, and the red, four fingers below the navel. These are the original vital essences, representing method (great bliss) and wisdom (emptiness), respectively. They always remain at those physical places as supports for life, until death disrupts them. In yogic practice such as this, it is the sub-product of the original that moves.
- 32 *dga' bzhi'i rim 'grod*: as the stream of white vital essence from the upper part of the head falls through the chakras in the central channel, the practitioner has an experience called “joy” (*dga' ba*) at each occurrence. These four experiences are named initial joy (*dang po'i dga' ba*), supreme joy (*mchog dga*), special joy (*khyad dga*), and coemergent joy (*lhan cig skyes pa'i dga' ba*). This is called the “four joys in order,” meaning in descent, as opposed to in reverse, as follows (see note 33).
- 33 *mas brtan pa'i dga' bzhi*: the four joys experienced in reverse as the bodhicitta rises up again during this practice. It is a realization that occurs in the practice of inner heat, from the teachings of the completion phase of the mother tantras of highest yoga. If the bodhicitta is stabilized, it ascends in reverse up from the tip of the penis through the four chakras of the navel, heart, throat, and head, generating four joys (*BD*).
- 34 *pha [rol tu] phyin [pa] bcu*: the ten spiritual perfections or transcendent practices (Skt. *pāramitā*) are the more common set of six: (1) generosity (*shyin pa*), (2) morality (*tshul khrims*), (3) patience (*bzod pa*), (4) diligence (*brtson 'grus*), (5) meditation (*bsam gtan*), and (6) wisdom (*shes rab*), plus the additional four: (7) method (*thabs*), (8) power (*stobs*), (9) aspiration (*smon lam*), and (10) pristine awareness (*ye shes*).

- 35 *sa lam*: the ten stages (Skt. *bhūmi*) and five paths (Skt. *mārga*) describe the spiritual progression of the bodhisattva on the way to total awakening. The five paths are those of accumulation (*tshegs lam*), application (*sbyor lam*), seeing (*mtshong lam*), meditation or cultivation (*sgom lam*), and consummation (*mtshar phyin pa'i lam*) or no more learning (*mi slob pa'i lam*). The ten stages begin on the path of seeing. For Kongtrul's exposition on the qualities that develop at each stage, see *TOK* 3: 464-533.
- 36 *rGyas pa* [*Sher phyin stong phrag brgya pa*]: Skt. *Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*, *Perfection of Wisdom Extensive Sutra* (Toh. 8).
- 37 [*sGyu 'phrul*] *lam rim*; Skt. *Māyājālapathakrama*, *The Sequence of the Path (of Magical Manifestation)* by Buddhaguhya (Sangs rgyas gsang ba), *NKG*, vol. 23. Buddhaguhya was a disciple of Buddhajñānapāda (*NSH* 1: 465) and said to be a teacher of Vimalamitra (*BA*, 191). For more on him see *NSH* 1: 464-6. However, this may not be the same person as the author of this book.
- 38 *sGyu 'phrul bla ma* (TK-NGB, vol. Pha): one of the eight major texts of the *Net of Magical Manifestation* (*sGyu 'phrul sde brgyad*). Kongtrul does not elaborate on this "instantaneous enlightenment" (*cig car ba*), associated with the Chinese Ch'an tradition of Hwa-shang and supposedly expelled in the eighth century.
- 39 *rig 'dzin bzhi*: an awareness-holder (*rig pa 'dzin pa* or sometimes *rigs pa 'dzin pa*, Skt. *vidyādhara*) is a realized being of high attainment, the result of practice in the vajrayāna. Kongtrul defines the word as follows: "Awareness' (*rig pa*) means the pristine awareness of great bliss of supreme subject-object nondualism. 'Hold' (*'dzin pa*) means a way of re-illuminating that very thing that was there all along" (*TOK* 2: 135-6). According to the Nyingma tradition, there are four higher levels of awareness-holders corresponding to the ten or eleven stages of the bodhisattva path. They are (1) the awareness-holder who is ripening [or "with corporal residue"] (*rnam smin rig 'dzin*), (2) the awareness-holder with control over life span (*tshe dbang rig 'dzin*), (3) the awareness-holder of the great seal or *mahāmudrā* (*phyag rgya chen po rig 'dzin*), and (4) the awareness-holder of spontaneous presence (*lhun gyis grub pa rig 'dzin*).
- 40 *gtan tshigs*, Skt. *hetu*: defined as "a section or verse of lines that ascertain the meaning" (*don gtan la 'bebs byed kyi tshig phreng gi tshigs sam dum bu ste*) (*BD* 1: 1036). Also "proof," "reasoning," etc.
- 41 (1) *sngon byung dngos lnga'i gtan tshigs*, (2) *rjes 'jug tshul lnga'i gtan tshigs*, (3) *tshig lnga'i gtan tshigs*. These are not the usual logical reasonings but particular to the *mahāyoga* system. Dudjom Rinpoche says, "The abiding nature of the continuum of the ground is established as the view which is to be realized, but it is not established by the ostensible reasoning of sophistry. Rather it is established by the three kinds of all-embracing valid cognition and should be realized by the direct perception of intrinsic awareness" (*NSH* 1: 275).

Note that these are different than the four sets of axioms in the *mahāyoga* section of book six in this *Treasury* (*TOK* 2: 739-43; *SBT*, 317-21 and 508, n. 29). Those are based on the *Guhyagarbha*, whereas these are from the tantra of the *Net of Magical Manifestation* related to the *Guhyagarbha*. References to these axioms can be found



in Buddhaguhya's *Sequence of the Path of Magical Manifestation* and its commentaries. The following description is excerpted from *Key to the Precious Treasury* (*dPal gsang ba'i snying po'i rgyud kyi sbyi don nyung ngu'i ngag gis rnam par 'byed pa rin chen mdzod kyi lde mig*, NKG, vol. 35, ff. 75-96) by Dodrup Jigmé Tenpai Nyima (thanks to Gangteng Tulku Rinpoché for this reference):

(1) The previously occurring Teacher's five *kāyas* taught the direct actuality of the meaning of reality through the five [modes of] Buddha-speech to five [members of] the entourage. Dharmakāya Teacher spoke the meaning of the unborn to Wisdom Ocean. Sambhogakāya spoke the enlightened perspective symbols to Ripening Ocean. Nirmāṇakāya spoke the expressive words to Devotion Ocean. Vajrakāya spoke the vajra to Indivisible Vajra. Abhisambodhikāya spoke the blessing of intrinsic awareness to Victor Ocean. By these [five] speeches the communication was made.

(2) The five manners are that for the highest of the sharp faculties, all appearing and resounding entities reveal the continuum meaning in a manner consistent with the speech of the previously occurring five *kāyas*. In sequence, then, the axioms that are consistent with the speeches of the Teacher as *dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya*, *abhisambodhikāya*, *vajrakāya*, and *nirmāṇakāya* are (a) the axiom of the meaning of the unborn is the illustration of the unborn, like the sky. (b) The axiom of the enlightened perspective symbols is the identification of obscuration, like the reflected form in a mirror. (c) The axiom of actual clarity of reflexive awareness is nonconceptual inherent clarity, like the heart of the sun. (d) The axiom of indivisible vajra is the inseparability of sound and emptiness, like an echo. (e) The axiom of the expressive words is that all minds engage with it, like Brahma's voice. These are similar to when former great masters experienced all phenomena as the guru and scripture.

(3) The five words are the actual expressive words that teach those five manners. The words that teach the inherent appearance of the unborn are words of *dharmakāya*. The symbolic words of the concealed intention are the words of the *sambhogakāya*. The words that teach the indivisible vajra-like nature are the words of the *vajrakāya*. The words and letters that teach the inherent appearance of pristine awareness are the *nirmāṇakāya* words.

- 42 For example, the practices commemorating Padmasambhava done on the tenth lunar day or of the *ḍākinīs* done on the twenty-fifth day fulfill all these parts in a single session (NSH 2: 24, n. 351).
- 43 *Lam [rim] chung [ba]* or *sGyu 'phrul drwa ba'i lam rnam par bshad pa chung ngu* by Buddhaguhya (DZ, vol. 1; NKG, vol. 23). This is a shorter version of his *Sequence of the Path* (NSH 1: 466 and 2: 263).
- 44 [*sGyu 'phrul*] *phyag rgya bsam gtan [bsdus pa]*, Skt. *Māyājālamudrādhyāna* (P4732), Vimalamitra's commentary on the *Net of Magical Manifestation*. For Vimalamitra and his works, see NSH 1: 480-1.
- 45 [*dPal gsang ba*] *snying po'i rgyud*, Skt. *Guhyagarbhatattvanīśayamahātāntra* (Toh. 832). Also see NSH 1: 278, and LW 2: 88 (where it is quoted from *Sequence of the Path*) with Jokyab Rinpoche's comment (172, n. 120) on the five branches, which

- are “the dying state of existence as the ultimate truth, the intermediate state of existence as the relative truth, and the reborn state of existence which has three progressive stages. These three are the stage from taking birth to childhood, the stage of youth and prime of life, and the stage from adulthood to old age. In this way there are five stages.” These stages are refined by the three absorptions of creation phase, as described below (GTR).
- 46 *phyag rgya gcig spros bcas tshom bu tshogs sgrub*: the single mudra is a deity on its own. The elaborate mudra is a more complex visualization of a single deity. The mandala clusters or gathered-assembly mudra is a group of deities. See also *SBT*, 507, nn. 20–22.
- 47 *thim rim*: these are the appearances of the signs of death—the dissolution of the physical elements and the arising of the three lights or appearances: light, increase, and attainment.
- 48 *chos sku* (Skt. *dharmakāya*): the body or dimension of reality or truth. This term is equivalent to the ultimate reality and refers to the all-pervasive, inconceivable dimension of the awakened state.
- 49 *bag chags* (Skt. *vāsanā*): trace; propensity; latency; or habitual patterns—the residual effects of karmic actions that remain as part of the consciousness until conditions cause them to manifest. This is the basic function enabling the experience of karmic results.
- 50 *ting nge ’dzin gsum*: these three meditative absorptions or *samādhi* are the first phases of visualization practice. The practices correspond to the experiences of death, intermediate state, and conception respectively, and therefore can purify or recreate those experiences. The absorption of suchness (*de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge ’dzin*) in emptiness, associated with wisdom, is to remain in meditative equanimity, free from concepts, in an all-pervasive state like space. All-arising or “total vision” absorption (*kun nas snang ba’i ting nge ’dzin*) is the arising of impartial compassion, associated with methods, like a magical illusion, directed toward all beings who lack understanding of reality. The union of these two (as wisdom and method) produces the absorption of the cause (*rgyu’i ting nge ’dzin*), the coarse and subtle symbols, consisting of the visualization of a seed syllable, which is the essence of intrinsic awareness (*rig pa*) and the seed of the deity to be visualized. See Kongtrul’s *Sunlight* (f. 12a), or *Creation and Completion* (38).
- 51 These are sequences of visualization practice corresponding to the experiences of birth in different manners. The five actual enlightening factors (*mngon byang lnga*) refine womb birth, the four vajras (*rdo rje bzhi*) refine egg birth, the three rites (*cho ga gsum*) refine warmth and moisture birth, and the instantaneously complete (*skad cig dran rdzogs*) visualization technique refines miraculous birth. For further discussion on these topics by Kongtrul, see *Creation and Completion* (37–9), and his commentary on Padmasambhava’s *Lam rim ye shes snying po*, translated as *The Light of Wisdom* (particularly 2: 88–92), as well as Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche’s *Pure Appearance* (8–30). In Tibetan, see Rangjung Dorje’s *Profound Inner Reality* (*Zab mo nang don*), f. 41, or Tashi Namgyal’s *Jewel Light* (*Nor bu’i ’od zer*), f. 40.

- 52 The four measures of clarity (*gsal ba'i tshad bzhi*) are *sa le*, *sang nge*, *lhag ge*, and *lhang nge*. Translation of these onomatopoeic “experiential” words is provisional. See a description by Jokyab Rinpoche in *LW* 2: 177-8.
- 53 The four measures of stability (*brian pa'i tshad bzhi*) in Tibetan are *mi g.yo*, *mi 'gyur*, *mngon par mi 'gyur*, *cir yang sgyur du mi btub pa*.
- 54 Rongzom Pandita Chökyi Zangpo or Rongzompa (Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po, 1012-1088). Together with Longchenpa, he is regarded as the Nyingma scholar of outstanding brilliance.
- 55 Spelling of *'khrul* in the Beijing text is a mistake for *'phrul*.
- 56 *nar son nas rgan po'i bar*: the third of the three phases of birth, which are, again, from conception in the womb to the moment of birth (*mngal du skye ba bzung pa nas btas pa'i bar*), from the moment of birth to adult maturity (*btas nas nar song pa'i bar*), and from adult maturity to old age.
- 57 *phun sum tshogs pa lnga*: these are normally excellence of the teacher (*ston pa*), of the retinue (*'khor*), of the place (*gnas*), of the teaching (*chos*), and of the time (*dus*). Here, teacher and retinue are combined, and practice materials (*sgrub pa'i yo byad*) are added to make five.
- 58 *bsnyen sgrub yan lag bzhi*: this definition of the four branches of approach and attainment in relation to the retreat practice of a deity is the more common, as opposed to the specific application to sexual yoga described above.
- 59 *spogs chog*: For instance, this could be the 11,111 repetitions that are added to the usual suggested 100,000.
- 60 *las rgya ye rgya*: There are four or five sets of practice bearing the name *mudrā*, “seal” or “gesture” (I have kept the Sanskrit word to indicate that it is a technical label for specific practices). Elsewhere Kongtrul lists them as follows: “action-mudra is a woman, dharma-mudra is all appearance, pledge-mudra is inner heat, awareness-mudra is the meditated deity, and nondualism is great mudra or *mahāmudrā* (*las rgya bud med chos rgya snang ba kun/ dam rgya gtum mo ye rgya sgom pa'i lhal gnyis med phyag chen...*). Here, the relative results of practicing either with an actual sexual partner or by visualizing deities in union are being compared.
- 61 Awareness-holder (*rig 'dzin*, Skt. *vidyādhara*) here is referencing the set of three that are the resultant states of realization connected with common spiritual powers (*thun mong gi dngos grub*) as opposed to those with supreme powers (*mchog gi dngos grub*) that are mentioned next (see note 39 above). These three types of mundane awareness-holders are the lesser awareness-holder of eight powers (*dngos grub bryad kyi rig 'dzin chung ba*); the middling awareness-holder of the desire realm (*'bring 'dod pa'i rig 'dzin*); and the great awareness-holder of the desire and form realms (*chen po 'dod pa dang gzugs kyi rig 'dzin*) (*TOK* 3: 629-40).
- 62 [*gSang ba*] sNying po[’i rgyud], the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* (Toh. 832), but this quote is found in *Secret Essence Certain Suchness* (*gSang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid nges pa*, also called *Highest Magical Manifestation* [Toh. 834], chapter 9, verse 32 [f. 217]).

63 *dbang bsgyur rigs kyi dam pa 'grub*: this translation is based on the commentary by Longchenpa in *Dispelling Darkness in the Ten Directions*, (361-3), which reads: “The genuine accomplishment (*dam pa*) of (*kyi*) the awareness (*rigs*) -holder who is empowered (*dbang bsgyur*) with control over the life span will be achieved (*'grub*) by those of highest acumen and perseverance within six months, or literally six times thirty days (*zag ni sum cu phrag drug*) or (*'am*) by those of mediocre acumen in twelve months (*bcu gnyis*), or by those of inferior acumen in fourteen (*bcu gnyis*), or even by the basest in sixteen (*bcu drug gis*)” (translation by Dorje, “The Guhyagarbhatantra and its XIVth Century Tibetan Commentary, *phyogs bcu mun sel*,” 852). Also see *NSH* 1: 281 and 2: 20, n. 276.

64 *zag bcas*: a much-used Buddhist technical term, means literally “outflow” (Skt. *sāsrava*) or dissipation (of pristine awareness), subject to degeneration or decay. This results in being contaminated or defiled (another common translation of the term), specifically by afflictive emotion (*nyon mongs pa*, Skt. *kleśa*). The opposite is *zag med*, nondissipating or undefiled and pure. One way of classifying the five spiritual paths is into dissipating (the first two) and nondissipating (the last three) (*TOK* 3:465).

65 *rigs kyi nus pa gsos 'debs*: in other words, developing the inherent buddha nature.

66 There could be confusion here because the word “path” (*lam*) is being used for the five practices described in this section as well as in the usual sense of the five paths of accumulation, application, seeing, meditation, and consummation. Here, what I am calling “the five dissipating paths” are (as described in the immediately preceding section on the objects of meditation) great emptiness as the path corresponding to the luminous clarity [at the moment of] death; great compassion as the path corresponding to the intermediate state; and single mudra, elaborate mudra, and the practice of the assembly clusters corresponding to the three stages (*rim pa*) of birth. In the traditional five paths, the first two (accumulation and application) are said to be dissipating or defiled (*zag bcas*) while the last three beginning with the path of seeing are nondissipating or undefiled (*zag med*). In any case, the main point here is that the five practices, although technically associated with the first two paths that are dissipating, lay the foundation for the higher three nondissipating paths. The following chart might be helpful:

| <i>Situation:</i>       | <i>Propensity refined by:</i>                        | <i>Path:</i> |
|-------------------------|--|--------------|
| (1) death               | (1) great emptiness: suchness samādhi                | accumulation |
| (2) intermediate state  | (2) great compassion: all-arising samādhi            | "            |
| (3) conception to birth | (3) single seal: subtle and coarse:                  | "            |
| (a) about to enter womb | causal samādhi                                       |              |
| (b) conception to birth | coarse deity (4 enlightening factors, 3 rites, etc.) |              |
| (4) birth to maturity   | (4) elaborate seal: 4 trainings:                     | "            |
|                         | (mandalas, clusters, numbers, faces, & arms)         |              |
| (5) maturity to old age | (5) cluster assembly practice                        | application  |
|                         | (4 branches of approach and attainment)              |              |

67 *rnam snang gi chos bdun*: this position is described as the legs in full lotus, the spine straight, the shoulders broadened, the neck slightly bent, the hands in the gesture

of equanimity, the tip of the tongue touching the palate, and the gaze placed in the direction of the nose.

- 68 *ku su lu*, Skt. *kusāli*: sometimes refers to a beggar or a bum, but mostly to a type of yogin who does what comes naturally in an uncontrived way. “Placement meditation” (*jog sgom*) is a non-analytic practice of unwavering focus with or without an object and is what most practitioners in the West associate with the word “meditation.”
- 69 *paṇḍita*: a Sanskrit term, from which we get the term *pandit* or *pundit*, meaning a learned or skilled person, a scholar, teacher, or philosopher. “Analytic meditation” (*dpyad sgom*) refers to a focus on a specific line of reasoning or inquiry into the nature of the mind. Here it specifically means a nonconceptual state of equipoise after analysis has been achieved.
- 70 See above: “wavering, attainment, familiarity, stability, and culmination.”
- 71 The male and female yogins (*rnal ’byor pho mo*) are peripheral in the mandala, and so form the retinue of the central or foremost divine consorts (*gtso bo yab yum*) (*NSH* 2: 20, n. 275).
- 72 *rnam pa thams cad kyi mchog dang ldan pa’i stong pa nyid*: This kind of emptiness is not the mere negation of intrinsic existence but refers to the manifested aspects of emptiness that can appear as anything at all. It is only this exceptional emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects that has the power to generate unchanging great bliss (*mchog tu mi ’gyur ba’i bde ba*). See *TOK* 3: 213–7. In the present volume, see Chapter 7 on the use of this term in the Kālacakra system, and the section on *mahāmudrā* in Chapter 4.
- 73 *zag med mthong lam gnyis*: I believe this refers to the first two nondissipating paths, that is, the path of seeing and the path of meditation or training (*slob pa’i lam*). One will attain the result of that path, whether one is actually practicing in it or in the path of seeing. Then, that will produce the result of the path of no more training (*mi slob pa’i lam*), another name for the path of consummation. However, there do exist two divisions within the path of seeing which might be the reference here. They are (1) the path of no obstacles (*bar chad med pa’i lam*), in which the object to be abandoned and the antidote are still in some conflict, and (2) the path of total liberation (*rnam grol lam*), when that is overcome and one is about to pass over to the path of training (*ATG*, 9/27/05).
- 74 *yas brtan dang mas brtan gyi ye shes*: the pristine awarenesses that arise concurrent with the experiences of joy as the bodhicitta descends and ascends through the chakras. See notes 31 and 32.
- 75 Samantabhadri (Kun tu bzang mo) is the personification of the primordial awakened state in feminine form, and as such is the embodiment or principle of emptiness. Samantabhadra (Kun tu bzang po) is the primordial awakened state in masculine form and embodies the aspect of inherent luminous awareness (*rang gsal rig pa*) and the unimpeded appearances that are perceived by it. Since these two qualities were never separable, the union of the two deities reveals the complete and perfect native state of awareness.

- 76 *lung anu yoga* (Skt. *āgama anuyoga*): see note 12. *Anuyoga* is known as scriptural or elucidation (*lung*) because, in addition to the ten topics contained in tantra *mahāyoga*, it fully sets forth the most essential points of those ten.
- 77 [*gSang ba'i mdo*] *don bsdud [pa]*, Skt. *Guhyasūtrapiṇḍartha* (P4751), *Summation of the Meaning of the Secret Sutra* by Dharmabodhi.
- 78 *rol pa'i ka ra*: According to *NSH* (2: 20, n. 282), the Tibetan *ka ra* is a corruption of Sanskrit *ākara*, meaning “the source.” Thus *rol pa'i ka ra* is the source of enjoyment, play, excitement, or manifestation, i.e. the partner’s sexual center.
- 79 *rtog dpyod kyi rjes su 'jug pa*: This is the first of the three “entrances” (*'jug pa rnam gum*) into the meditation on the liberating path of wisdom in *anuyoga*. They were described in slightly more detail by Kongtrul in *TOK* 2: 750-1, translated in *SBT*, 334-5.
- 80 [*sPyi mdo*] *dgongs 'dus*: *The General Sutra That Gathers the Intentions of All Buddhas* (Toh. 829), one of the fundamental tantras of *anuyoga*. For a list of *anuyoga* texts, see Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, *Buddha Mind*, 31-2.
- 81 *don rjes su 'jug pa*: the second of the three entrances. It means that since the “object” of meditation is phenomena just as they are, the meditator’s mind must be consistent with that in being just as it is (ATG).
- 82 *yi ge'i rjes su 'jug pa*: the third of the three entrances; refers to the practice of imagining the deity instantaneously as soon as the seed syllable is uttered, rather than gradually building up the visualization.
- 83 *Bang mdzod 'phrul [gyi] lde [mig]* (TK-NGB, vol. Kha): teachings on the entire nine vehicles in the Nyingma tradition. See variant translation in *NSH* 1: 368.
- 84 These correspond to the five paths of the causal vehicles. According to Kongtrul (*TOK* 2: 751) they are (1) the yoga of the aspiring attitude on the path of accumulation (*tshogs lam 'dun pa sems pa'i* [or *dpa'i*] *rnal 'byor*); (2) the yoga that reveals the great family on the path of application (*sbyor lam rigs chen 'byed pa'i rnal 'byor*); (3) the yoga that confers the great assurance on the path of seeing (*mthong lam dbugs chen 'byin pa'i rnal 'byor*); (4) the yoga that obtains the great prophetic declaration on the path of meditation (*sgom lam lung chen thob pa'i rnal 'byor*); and (5) the yoga that completes the great expressive power of the ultimate path (*mthar lam rtsal chen rdzogs pa'i rnal 'byor*). Also see *NSH* 1: 287-8 and 2: 147.
- 85 *man ngag atiyoga*: *Atiyoga* is called esoteric instruction (*man ngag*) because it principally provides special instructions and does not present all the topics contained in the tantras (*SBT*, 505, n. 22). See note 12.
- 86 The views of the mind class and the other two classes of *atiyoga* are explained in more detail by Kongtrul in *TOK* 3: 754-9. Here the focus is on meditation.
- 87 Reminiscent of “Not experiencing meditation, not experiencing departure from it: Do not depart from the meaning of no meditation,” quoted in Patrul Rinpoche’s *The Special Teaching of the Wise and Glorious Sovereign and its Commentary* (*mKhas pa śrī rgyal po'i khad chos 'grel ba dang bcas pa*) (see *Lion’s Gaze*, 89).

- 88 *mtshang btsal* (*sems kyi mtshang btsal ba*): this can mean to search the innate mode of mind or search out the mind's secret (RY); or looking for the faults in the mind (*skyon*) (GTR).
- 89 *'gag don* could also be translated as “negating points” since all of these points describe what the view is not.
- 90 *rDo rje zam pa*: a teaching according to the space class of the great completion, so known because its practice leads to the attainment of the rainbow body in one lifetime (NSH 1: 45, n. 591). The actual quote as found in *kLong sde rdo rje zam pa'i man ngag gi gzhuṅ zhal gdam dang bcas pa* (DZ, vol. 1, f. 384), again in *bKa' brgyud rin po che'i nyams kyi phreng ba* (f. 387), and in *Zam chung bsodus pa* (f. 387) reads: “Homage to the unmistakable, uncontrived, unimaginable, **ineffable state**” (*ma nor ma bcas bsam 'das brjod med ngang la phyag 'tshal lo*). The interlinear note in the first text is exactly as Kongtrul has here, except that the last line comments that “the fruition is ineffable” rather than “free of intellect.” These texts are found in the Mind Class (*sems sde*) section of Kongtrul's *Treasury of Precious Key Instructions* (DZ, vol. 1, ff. 384-467). The words hearken back to the famous verse from Nāgārjuna's (or Rāhulabhadra's) *Eulogy to the Perfection of Wisdom* (*Sher phyin bstod pa*, Skt. *Prajñāpāramitāstotra*, Toh. 1127): *smra bsam brjod med shes rab pha rol phyin/ ma skyes mi 'gag nam mkha'i ngo bo nyid/ so so rang rig ye shes spyod yul pa/ dus gsum rgyal ba'i yum la phyag 'tshal lo!*
- 91 *dbang bzhi* (*abhiṣeka*): the four empowerments or initiations of highest yoga tantra are the vase empowerment (*bum pa'i dbang*), the secret empowerment (*gsang ba'i dbang*), the pristine awareness [through] wisdom empowerment (*shes rab ye shes kyi dbang*), and the fourth or word empowerment (*bzhi pa'i tshig gi dbang*). For extensive discussion, see TOK 2: 656-82; SBT, 217-37.
- 92 See the description of *tögal* in the following section on the esoteric instruction class.
- 93 Oral commentary from GTR and others explains that breathing through the mouth is a unique feature of great completion practice. However, another translator interprets this as “without the tip of the tongue touching anything” (LW 4: 63).
- 94 The names are slightly different in *Lam rim ye shes snying po*, a treasure text discovered by Chokgyur Lingpa and attributed to Guru Padmasambhava. Kongtrul's own commentary on that text is worth comparison (LW 4: 63).
- 95 dGa 'rab rdo rje (Skt. Prahevajra, 360 B.C.E.-?), “Vajra of Highest Delight.” Garab Dorjé is considered the earliest human source of the *atiyoga* or great completion lineage. It is said that he was immaculately conceived by a nun, the daughter of King Uparāja (Indrabhūti) of Uḍḍiyāna. He received all the tantras, scriptures and spiritual instructions, including 400,000 tantras of the great completion, from Vajrasattva and Vajrapāṇi. Having reached the state of complete enlightenment through the effortless great completion, Garab Dorjé transmitted the teachings to his retinue of exceptional beings. At the end of his life, as he dissolved into a mass of light, Garab Dorjé bestowed his testament on Mañjuśrimitra. Subsequently, Śrī Siṃha, Jñānasūtra, and Vimalamitra were successively enthroned as regents by

receiving testaments from their immediate predecessors. Padmasambhava is also known to have received the transmission of the Dzogchen tantras directly from Garab Dorje's wisdom form. See *NSH* 1: 490-4.

- 96 *chos nyid zad pa*: the fourth vision of *tögal* practice. A good, concise explanation of the four visions, including this one, can be found in Rikdzin Gyurmé Dorjé, ff. 552-557.
- 97 *lu gu rgyud*, also called “vajra chain formation” (*rdo rje lu gu rgyud*): this refers to inherent visual experiences resembling interlinking chains and other formations that are cultivated in the *tögal* practice.
- 98 *thog bab[s] chen po*: a supreme and innate state of immediacy.
- 99 *zang thal* from *zang ka ma thal du byung ba*: *zang ka ma* is that which is rough or unrefined, as in ore; *zang thal*, crushed or reduced to dust (i.e., nothing); therefore *zang thal* refers to the simplicity that reduces illusion to dust, and is considered equivalent to “unobstructed” (*ma ’gags pa*).
- 100 These are based on the famous *Three Phrases That Strike the Vital Points* (*Tshigs gsum don gyi gnad du brdeg pa*) that are known as the last testament of Garab Dorjé. Jamgön Kongtrül's version is slightly different: *ngo rang thog tu sprad pa* (JK: *ngo rang thog tu ’phrod*); *thag gcig thog tu bcad pa* (JK: *thag gcig thog tu chod*); *gdeng grol thog tu bca’ ba* (JK: *gding grol thog tu bca’*). Garab Dorjé's *Three Phrases* are translated by me in *Lion's Gaze* (79-81) as “introduction directly to one's own nature,” “to decide directly upon one thing,” and “to have confidence directly in liberation.”
- 101 *nam mkha’ sum phrugs*: an enhancement practice involving gazing at the sky.
- 102 (*sGra*) *thal ’gyur (rtsa ba’i rgyud)* (TK-NGB, vol. Tha): A main tantra in the esoteric instruction class of *atiyoga*. It explains how to attain the level of *nirmāṇakāya* and how to accomplish the welfare of others through practices related to sound (Rangdrol, *The Circle of the Sun*, 82).
- 103 This is also quoted by Jigmé Lingpa (’Jigs med gling pa, 1730-1798) in *Yeshe Lama* (4-5), where he comments, “Although this quote expresses the value of the yoga of sound, these days so few actually perform this practice that it is acceptable to omit it.” GTR agrees and adds that these practices mainly resulted in the common spiritual powers (*thun mong gi dngos grub*).
- 104 *bsTan pa bu gcig gi rgyud*: discovered by Rikdzin Gödem (Rig ’dzin rGod kyi ldem ’phru can, 1337-1408), founder of the Northern Treasure tradition.
- 105 *rnal du dbab*: defined in Rikdzin Gyurmé Dorjé, *Total Illumination of the Essence* (f. 542): “‘natural state’ is a name for uncontrived and ‘falls’ means to rest directly in the basic ground of that itself” (*rnal ma ni ma bcos pa’i ming dang dbab pa ni de nyid gzhi thog tu ’jog pa yin la*). This is a distinct practice in *tögal*, which in the above source is classified in the main body of teachings under *trekchö*, after the preliminaries. In *Yeshe Lama*, it is part of a twofold subcategory of training the mind, still in the preliminaries.



- 106 *bca' ba lus kyi gnad gsum*: three supportive essentials of the body: the postures of lion, elephant, and sage.
- 107 *sku gsum gyi gzigs stangs*: looking upwards, downwards, and sideways (*sdog phabs zur*).
- 108 In Tibetan: *rgyangs zhags chu'i sgron ma, rig pa dbyings kyi sgron ma, thig le stong pa'i sgron ma, shes rab rang byung gi sgron ma*.
- 109 [*Rig pa*] *rang shar [chen po'i rgyud]* (TK-NGB, vol. Tha): one of the main tantras of the innermost essence (*snying thig*) of the mind class of *atiyoga* transmitted by Garab Dorjé. It teaches how to resolve the view, meditation, and action. See alternative translation in *NSH* 1: 338-9.
- 110 The names for the four visionary appearances (*snang ba bzhi*) in Tibetan here are *chos nyid mngon sum, nyam gong 'phel ba, rig pa tshad phebs*, and *chos nyid du 'dzin pa tsam yang zad pa* (usually shortened to *chos zad*).
- 111 *sdod pa gsum*: these are somewhat different from the description in Jigmé Lingpa, *Khrid yig ye shes bla ma* (f. 49a-b) translated in *Yeshe Lama* (72) as “three ways of abiding,” and in *NSH* (1: 343) as “three presences,” where, however, they are not elaborated. Basically, it concerns the three restings of body, energy channels, and appearances.
- 112 *'jug pa la rang dbang thob pa zag bcas mi snang bar 'tshang rgya*: this refers to the state of liberation without any return or remaining physical manifestation for beings (GTR, personal communication, 11/6/05).
- 113 *thob pa gsum*: control over birth (*skye ba*), entrance (*'jug pa*) and energy-mind (*rlung sems*), again somewhat different than in *Khrid yig ye shes bla ma* (ff. 52b-53a), where they are appearance, illusory body, and energy-mind (*snang ba, sgyus lus*, and *rlung sems*). It is identical, though, in Kongtrul's own *Light of Wisdom* (LW 4: 108).

## CHAPTER 2: KADAMPA

- 1 Atiśa Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna (982-1054), often referred to just as the Great Lord (Jo bo rje), is the great Indian master from Bengal, abbot of Vikramaśīla and source of the Kadampa tradition. His move to Tibet in 1040 initiated the beginning of the second great dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet.
- 2 *miśhan [nyid] gsum*: the three characteristics or qualifications of a master are to be learned (*mkhas pa*) in sūtra and tantra, to be strict (*gtsun pa*) in the three levels of discipline, and to be excellent (*bzang po*) in one's altruism regarding sentient beings (ATG, 10/10/04).
- 3 The Three Collections or, literally, the Three Baskets (*sde snod gsum*, Skt. *tripitaka*) form the Buddhist canon compiled at the first council held shortly after the Buddha passed away, originally written on palm leaves that were held in baskets. They consist of the collection of the monastic rules (*'dul ba*, Skt. *vinaya*) of discipline; the collection of discourses (*mdo*, Skt. *sūtra*) of the Buddha's teachings, mainly the methods of meditation; and the collection of metaphysics or phenomenology (*chos*

*mngon pa*, Skt. *abhidharma*). These three comprise the three higher trainings (*bslab pa gsum*, Skt. *trīṣikṣā*).

- 4 The three teaching systems of source texts or scriptures, spiritual instructions, and esoteric instructions fell to the three main disciples of Atiśa's disciple Dromtönpa, who are known as the Three Brothers (*sku mched gsum*) and who became the lineage holders of those three transmissions. The Three Brothers are Potowa (Po to ba, 1031-1105), Chen-ngawa Tsultrim Bar (sPyan snga ba Tshul khirms 'bar, 1038-1103), and Puchungwa (Phu chung ba, 1031-1106). See the following notes, TOK1: 518, and BA, 263-4.
- 5 Phu chung ba (1031-1106), one of the Three Brothers or three main disciples of Dromtönpa.
- 6 rGyal ba 'Brom: Dromtönpa Gyalwai Jungné ('Brom ston pa rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas, 1005-1064), Atiśa's chief disciple, who founded Reting Monastery in 1057, three years after Atiśa's death. It became the center of the Kadampa school.
- 7 According to ATG, the fifteen relative vital essences refer to the five realms of sentient beings (without the gods' realm, since it is pure), the six kinds of beings of those realms (including gods), and the guru and Three Jewels. "Vital essence" (*thig le*) here refers to the general essence or meaning (*gnad*) rather than to *bindu*.
- 8 *mNgon [par] rtogs [pa'i] rgyan*, Skt. *Abhisamayālamkāra* (Toh. 3786), attributed to Maitreya, a commentary on the meaning of the perfection of wisdom doctrine.
- 9 *Byang chub lam gyi sgron ma*, Skt. *Bodhipathapradīpa* (Toh. 3947), Atiśa's summary of the path divided into advice for the three kinds of students. It became the prototype for the genre of literature known as "stages of the path" (*lam rim*), notably Tsongkhapa's massive commentary, *Lam rim chen mo*, translated as *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (SOP). Atiśa's work is translated by Ruth Sonam in Geshe Rinchen's *Atiśa's Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*.
- 10 See an explanation of these four in SOP1: 46-54, and in Tenzin Gyatso, *Illuminating the Path to Enlightenment*, 40-42.
- 11 See *slob dpon dang slob ma'i mtshan nyid* in TOK 2: 1-33. In English translation: "The Qualities of the Spiritual Teacher and Student" in BE, 35-77.
- 12 The precious human life (*mi lus rin po che*) is defined by its eight freedoms (*dal ba brgyad*) and ten endowments (*'byor ba bcu*). The eight freedoms from unfavorable conditions are the freedom from being a hell-being, a hungry ghost, an animal, a barbarian, a long-living god, from having aberrant views, from existence during a time without buddhas, and from severe handicaps to understanding. Of the ten endowments, the five personal endowments are to be human, to be born in a central place, to have complete faculties, to have not deviated into the worst actions, and to have trust in the appropriate teachings. The five endowments due to external circumstances are that the Buddha has appeared in the world, the noble dharma has been taught, the teachings still exist, there are those who uphold it, and there are those who support it.

- 13 *jig rten chos brgyad*: this pair of the eight worldly concerns or dharmas is also known as gain and loss (*rnyed pa dang ma rnyed pa*). The others are fame and disgrace or obscurity (*snyan grags dang ma grags*), praise and blame (*bstod pa dang smad pa*), and pleasure and pain (*bde ba dang sdug bsngal*).
- 14 Text 1 has *dang po'i dad pa*, “initial faith,” but Text 2 has *dang ba'i dad pa*, “inspired” or “enthusiastic faith,” one of the four kinds of faith where interest arises from knowing the qualities of the object of faith (*dad yul gyi yon tan shes nas skyes pa'i mos pa*), which is the subject in this discussion.
- 15 [*gnyen po'i*] *stobs bzhi*: The four powers for remedying nonvirtuous actions are the power of support (*rten gyi stobs*), the power of remorse (*rnam par sun 'byin pa'i stobs*), the power of not repeating the offence (*nyes pa las slar ldog pa'i stobs*), and the power of applying the antidote (*gnyen po kun tu spyod pa'i stobs*).
- 16 *bslab pa gsum*, or *lhag pa'i bslab pa gsum*: the three higher trainings in ethical discipline (*tshul khrims kyī bslab pa*), meditative absorption (*ting nge 'dzin gyi bslab pa*), and wisdom (*shes rab kyī bslab pa*). These three encompass all Buddhist teachings. See note 3.
- 17 The six perfections of generosity, ethical discipline, patience, diligence, meditation, and wisdom constitute the path of the bodhisattva. The two phases of creation and completion are the path of the tantric practitioner.
- 18 *bsdu [ba'i dngos po] bzhi*: four things that attract or magnetize others. These are generosity (*sbyin pa*), kind speech (*snyan par smra ba*), purposeful activity (*don spyod pa*), and agreement in purpose (*don mthun pa*). See BE, 204–5.
- 19 The two kinds of nonself (*bdag med*, Skt. *anātman*) are that of the person and that of phenomena. The realization of both of these constitutes wisdom (*shes rab*, Skt. *prajñā*).
- 20 *zhi lhag*: the combined meditation of calm abiding (*zhi gnas*, Skt. *śamatha*) or “remaining in quiescence” after thought activity has subsided, and higher insight (*lhag mthong*, Skt. *vipaśyana*) or “superior seeing,” usually referring to insight into emptiness.
- 21 To fixate on attributes (*mtshan 'dzin*) is to perceive phenomena as having actual attributes or to reduce phenomena into substantive categories, a kind of reductionism. Rational consciousness (*rigs shes*) is the thought process that analyzes the abiding nature of entities (*dngos po'i gnas lugs dpyod byed rigs shes*). Once that analysis has destroyed any fixation by revealing the emptiness of such concepts, one can practice in that emptiness that is as open as the sky (*nam mkha' lta bu*) and as unreal as an illusion (*sgyu ma lta bu*).
- 22 [*Byang chub*] *lam [gyi] sgron [ma]*, verse 3. The Tibetan text may be found in *Atisha's Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*, 163–80. My translation in the following verses is based closely on Ruth Sonam's in this book.
- 23 *Śrāvaka* (Tib. *nyan thos*), the “hearers” or “disciples,” refers to a classification of Buddhist practitioners who hear the teachings of the Buddha, practice them, and transmit them to others with a view of their own liberation from samsara. The

pratyekabuddhas (Tib. *rang sangs rgyas*) are “solitary buddhas,” who do not rely on a teacher and attain the cessation of suffering by meditating on the twelve links of interdependent arising. These are classifications of the early Buddhist approaches from the point of view of the later mahayana.

- 24 [*Byang chub*] *lam* [*gyi*] *sgron* [*ma*], verse 4.
- 25 Ibid., verse 5. In *TOK* (all copies) the first word is misprinted as *nang*, where it should be *rang*.
- 26 [*rNal 'byor spyod pa'i sa rnam par*] *gtan la phab pa'i bsdu ba*; Skt. *Yogacaryābhūmi-nirṇayasamgraha* (Toh. 4038), a part of Asaṅga's treatise on the spiritual levels (*Yogacaryābhūmi*).
- 27 *mDzod 'grel*, probably the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the auto-commentary of the *Abhidharmakośa* by Vasubandhu. The definition of the three kinds of person is cited in *SOP* 1: 131-2 as being on 220.4.3-5 (P5591).
- 28 Aśvaghoṣa (rTa dbyangs, second-third century): a Hindu scholar who converted to mahayana Buddhism, famous for his poetic account of the Buddha's life, *Acts of the Buddha* (*Buddhacarita*). This subject is found in his *Cultivation of the Relative Mind of Awakening* (*Samvṛtibodhicittabhāvanā*, P5307: 18.3.4-7). See *SOP* 1: 132-3 for a nearly identical discussion.
- 29 Nāgārjuna (kLu grub) was the great second-century master of the mahayana, responsible for the dissemination of the *prajñāpāramitā* or Perfection of Wisdom, which he is said to have recovered from the *nāgas*. He is considered the forefather of the *madhyamaka* philosophy, based on his interpretations of the *prajñāpāramitā*. This quote is from *Precious Garland of Advice to the King* (*Ratnāvalī* [P5658], 173.5.2-5). See *SOP* 1: 140.
- 30 Asaṅga (Thog med, c. 350 C.E.) is a major figure in mahayana Buddhism, considered the co-founder of the *yogacara* philosophy, along with his brother Vasubandhu. According to tradition, he received teachings directly from the future buddha, Maitreya, which he set down in the *Five Dharmas of Maitreya* (*Byams pa'i chos lnga*). Another composition, the *Yogacaryābhūmi*, is probably the source for this quote.
- 31 *sPyod* [*pa*] *bsdu* [*pa'i*] *sgron me* (or *ma*); Skt. *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* (Toh. 1803, f. 60b5). Āryadeva ('Phags pa lha, third century) was the direct disciple and spiritual son of Nāgārjuna, and the principal advocate of his *madhyamaka* teachings. Note: there is a different text by Atīśa with the same Tibetan name but a different Sanskrit title.
- 32 [*Byang chub sems pa'i*] *spyod* [*pa la*] 'jug [*pa*], Skt. *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* (Toh. 3871), by Śāntideva (Zhi ba lha, 685-763), the great Indian adept and teacher at Nālandā University in Northern India. *Entering the Way of the Bodhisattva* is one of the most famous and beloved of all mahayana treatises. Śāntideva is said to have spontaneously uttered it in its perfection while being challenged by the monks at the college, rising and disappearing into the sky when he came to the ninth chapter on wisdom.

- 33 *bsLab* [pa kun las] *btus* [pa], Skt. *Śikṣāsamuccaya* (Toh. 3940), by Śāntideva, a supplement to *Entering the Way of the Bodhisattva*.
- 34 [*bLo sbyong*] *mTshon cha 'khor lo* and *rMa bya dug 'joms* (DZ, vol. 4): Dharmarakṣita, also called Dhanarakṣita, composed *Wheel of Sharp Weapons* as a teaching on mind training. It was brought to Tibet by his disciple Atiśa, who translated it from Sanskrit into Tibetan with his own disciple Dromtönpa (1005-1064). An English translation has been published by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1976. (It is also available on DVD!)
- 35 *bDag 'dzin 'joms pa rdo rje'i glu*, by Maitriyogin (Byams pa'i rnal 'byor), an Indian master, teacher of Atiśa.
- 36 *rTog pa 'bur 'joms* and *Lam khyer gyi chos bco brgyad* (not located) by gSer gling pa, Skt. Sauvarṇadvīpa or Suvarṇadvīpiya ("The Sumatran"). Also known by the name Dharmakīrtiśī and Maitripāda. (See *SOP* 1: 379, n. 27).
- 37 *Don tshan bdun du bsdus pa*, by Chekawa (Bya 'Chad ka ba Ye shes rdo rje, 1101-1176). This text, often known as the *Seven Points of Mind Training* (*bLo sbyong don bdun ma*) (DZ, vol. 3), condenses the teachings received from Atiśa and forms the basis for most commentaries and modern expositions of the mind-training (*blo sbyong*) system.
- 38 *bsTan rim chen mo* by Lodro Jungné (bLo gros 'byung gnas) of Drolung, a Kadampa geshé and a student and contemporary of Atiśa and the chief disciple of the great translator rNgog (BA, 331). Drolung (Gro lung) is his native place in Tibet, so he is often referred to as Geshé Drolungpa (BA, 331-2). (Thanks to Tenzin Dorjee for help with this note.) For a brief analysis of this text, see David Jackson, "The bsTan rim ("Stages of the Doctrine") and Similar Graded Expositions of the Bodhisattva's Path," in *Tibetan Literature*, 229-43.
- 39 *bKa' gdams lkog khrid*: this is described as a direct transmission from Geshé Shapogangpa (Shwa pho sgang pa) received by Mumenpa (Mus sman pa) and then Drotönpa (Gro ston pa) in *Lineage Stories of One Hundred Guidances of Jonang* (*Jo nang khrid brgya'i lo rgyus*, DZ, vol. 18, f. 79). Atiśa is the source before Shapogangpa in the lineage prayer (DZ 18: 7). It is counted as one of the Four Great Guidances of the Kadampa (*bKa' gdams pa'i khrid chen bzhi*).

### CHAPTER 3: LAMDRÉ

- 1 Virūpa (Bi ru' pa, c. 650) was the great Indian adept (Skt. *mahāsiddha*), abbot of Nālandā University. He was empowered in the emanated mandala of Vajra Nairātmyā and attained the realizations of the sixth bodhisattva level. He formulated the *Vajra Lines* and created the instruction cycles of the Path with Its Result based on the *Hevajra Tantra Trilogy* (see notes 2 and 3). It is these teachings that form the basis of this tradition (*TOK* 1: 520). For the tales of Virūpa's life, see Tāranātha, *The Seven Instruction Lineages*, 15-23. There are several other adepts by this name, including his own student Kāla Virūpa (*ibid.*, 17).

- 2 *Kye rdor rgyud gsum*: (1) the basic source text of the *Hevajra Tantra* (*Kye'i rdo rje rgyud*, Toh. 417); (2) the uncommon explanatory tantra, *Dākinī Vajra Tent Tantra* (*mKha' 'gro ma rdo rje gur*, Toh. 419); and (3) the common explanatory tantra, *Sampuṭa Tantra* (*Yang dag par sbyor ba zhes bya ba'i rgyud chen po*, Toh. 381).
- 3 *gSung rab rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa*: this is the full name of these teachings, transmitted in the *Vajra Lines of the Path with Its Result* (*Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i gzhung rdo rje'i tshig rkang*) mentioned in note 1. As a text, it never existed in India; it was transmitted for five generations orally (Stearns, *Luminous Lives*, 8).
- 4 Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen (rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan, 1147-1216). He is the third of the five forefathers of the Sakya lineage. *The Yellow Volume* ([*Lam 'bras gzhung bshad*] *Pod ser ma*) is in Sa-skya Lam-'bras Literature Series (Dehra Dun: Sakya Centre, 1983), vol. 11, pp. 9-345. For an extensive discussion of the *Pod ser ma*, see Stearns, *Luminous Lives*, 32-5.
- 5 Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (Sa chen Kun dga' snying po, 1092-1158), the first of the five forefathers of the Sakya lineage. The teaching referred to here, known as the *Asengma* (*A seng ma*) or *Explication for Aseng*, is entitled *Verses on the Summary of Everything* (*Thams cad kyi don bsdus pa'i tshigs su bcad pa*) and is in *The Yellow Volume*. For the life story of Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, see *ibid.*, 133-57.
- 6 sGyu ra a seng (a.k.a. rDo rje brtan pa) was the nephew of Gyura Akyap (sGyu ra A skyabs), one of Sachen's teachers. Sachen gave the *Asengma* to Gyura Aseng in 1141. It was the first of Sachen's eleven commentaries on the *Vajra Lines* (*ibid.*, 18-9).
- 7 *'khor lo 'cham pa* (here spelled *'sham pa*): this refers to the worldly path as the "stiff" or "sticking" wheel, as opposed to the transcendent path of the spinning wheel (*'khor lo skor ba*) that is well aligned and working smoothly and properly due to fully refining the channels and energy currents of the subtle body. Thanks to Cyrus Stearns for this explanation that does not appear in this text.
- 8 *Nyan thos* (*śrāvaka*): the "hearers" or "disciples"; refers to a classification of Buddhist practitioners who hear the teachings of the Buddha, practice them, and transmit them to others with a view of their own liberation from cyclic existence. The "path in common with the *śrāvakas*" means teachings that are fundamental to all Buddhists.
- 9 The fifteen experiences (*nyams bco lnga*) are grouped into five sets of three: (1-3) the three paths—the path of eliminating entry, the path of severing attachment, and the path of great enlightenment; (4-6) the three experiences—the physical experiences, mental experiences, and dream experiences; (7-9) the three dependently arisen connections—the dependently arisen connections of the reversal of the vital energy currents, the visual appearances, and dreams; (10-12) the three warmth—the warmth preceded by thought, the warmth of the gathering of the nine constituents, and the warmth of the blazing and gathering of the vital essences; and (13-15) the three meditative absorptions—the absorption of the characteristic as a variety, the absorption of the nature as emptiness, and the absorption of the

essence as total integrations. From Sachen Kunga Nyingpo's *Explication for Nyak* (*gZhung bshad gnyags ma*), f. 24, in *The Yellow Volume* (CS).

- 10 The path or vehicle of the perfections (*pha rol tu phyin pa'i lam/theg pa*, Skt. *pāramitāyāna*) is also known as the *bodhisattvayāna* and is basically equivalent to the mahayana. Since the teachings referred to here are seen as a prerequisite for the vajrayāna, it is a shared or common teaching.
- 11 *kun gzhi* (Skt. *ālaya*): literally the ground or foundation (*gzhi*) of everything (*kun*). According to mahayana, it is the substratum or indeterminate level of the mind where karmic imprints are stored. The "causal continuum" (*rgyu'i rgyud*) is the original ground of being to be recognized as enlightenment itself. In this context, the two words are being used as equivalent.
- 12 *dbang bzhi*: the four empowerments or initiations of highest yoga tantra are the vase empowerment (*bum pa'i dbang*), the secret empowerment (*gsang ba'i dbang*), the pristine awareness through wisdom empowerment (*shes rab ye shes kyi dbang*) and the fourth or word empowerment (*bzhi pa'i tshig gi dbang*). For extensive discussion see TOK 2: 656-82 or SBT, 217-37.
- 13 *sku* (Skt. *kāya*): the buddha bodies or dimensions of the state of total awakening. They are categorized as two, three, four, or five. When five are mentioned, they are the body of reality (*chos sku*, Skt. *dharmakāya*), body of perfect enjoyment (*longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku*, Skt. *sambhogakāya*), emanation body (*sprul pa'i ku*, Skt. *nirmāṇakāya*), immutable vajra body (*rdo rje'i sku*, Skt. *vajrakāya*) and the essence body (*ngo bo nyid sku*, Skt. *svabhāvikakāya*). In the Nyingma tantras, the list of five in the fruitional dharmas includes the body of complete enlightenment (*mngon par byang chub pa'i sku*, Skt. *abhisambodhikāya*) in place of the essence body.  
 The five pristine awarenesses (*ye shes lnga*, Skt. *pañcajñāna*) are the awareness of the expanse of reality (*chos dbyings kyi ye shes*, Skt. *dharmadhātujñāna*), mirror-like awareness (*me long gi ye shes*, Skt. *ādarśajñāna*), discriminating awareness (*so sor rtog pa'i ye shes*, Skt. *pratyavekṣaṇajñāna*), awareness of equality (*mnyam nyid kyi ye shes*, Skt. *śamatājñāna*) and awareness of accomplishment (*bya ba grub pa'i ye shes*, Skt. *kṛtyānuṣṭhānajñāna*).
- 14 From *Entrance to Tantra* (*rGyud la 'jug pa*) by Garvaripa (Garbha ri pa), according to Gorampa (CS). Not located under this name in the Tibetan canon.
- 15 The five buddha families (*rigs lnga*), representing five aspects of buddhahood, are the buddha or *tathāgata* family (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs*), the indestructible or *vajra* family (*rdo rje'i rigs*), the jewel or *ratna* family (*rin chen rigs*), the lotus or *padma* family (*padma rigs*) and the action or *karma* family (*las kyi rigs*). They are associated with the five afflictive emotions (*nyon mongs pa*, Skt. *kleśa*) of stupidity (*gti mug*), hatred (*zhe sdang*), pride (*nga rgyal*), desire (*'dod chags*), and jealousy (*phrag dog*), respectively. In practice, these can be recognized as the five pristine awarenesses in essence.
- 16 *rim gnyis*: the creation phase of visualization (*bskyed rim*) and the completion phase (*rdzogs rim*) of yogic practices with the subtle energy of the body.

- 17 *Samputa* (or *Sambhuṭa*) *Tantra*, *Yang dag par sbyor ba zhes bya ba'i rgyud chen po* (Toh. 381), vol. Ga, f. 104a1-2 (where the last line is different). It is included in the *Hevajra Tantra Trilogy* (see note 2), and is one of the thirty-six root tantras found in Indrabhūti's commentary. It is a shared or common (*thun mong ba*) explanatory tantra, and although some lamas consider it an explanatory tantra of the Hevajra, Buton (Bu ston, 1290-1364) and others consider it an explanatory tantra of many tantras, particularly of *Samvara*. Kongtrül considers the *Samputa* to be an explanatory tantra shared by both the Cakrasamvara and the Hevajra systems (EMC).
- 18 According to Dezhung Rinpoche, the four authentic qualities (*tshad ma bzhi*) are that of the teacher, of direct experience, of the scripture (*Hevajra Tantra*), and of the treatise, i.e., the *Vajra Lines* (*The Three Levels of Spiritual Perception*, xxxiii).
- 19 From Drakpa Gyaltsen's auto-commentary to *Rin chen snang ba* called *Commentary on the View of Samsara-Nirvana Inseparable* ('*Khor 'das dbyer med kyi lta ba'i 'grel pa*), in *The Yellow Volume* (*Pod ser*), 203.
- 20 *rigs drug*: this refers to the causes and the actual experiences of birth in the realms of gods, demigods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings.
- 21 *gzhung bshad*: a term for the commentaries on Virūpa's *Vajra Lines* (CS).
- 22 *sarga*: (*legs*) *le'u'am rab byed*, but in the Lamdré itself, the term *sarga* is explained as sequence or order (*go rim*), etc. (CS).
- 23 *kham*s, Skt. *dhātu*, a word with many uses, here refers to the vital energy. Gathering the constituents (*kham*s 'dus pa) of vital energy refers to yogic energetic practices. Wherever visualization is focused, the vital energy gathers there. Through this kind of practice, the vital energy currents are said to gather and then enter, dwell, and finally dissolve in the particular chakra upon which one is focused. In ultimate yogic practice the energies enter and dissolve into the central channel, discursive thought is arrested, and the experience of nonconceptual bliss-emptiness occurs.
- 24 *rtsa'i yi ge'i pho brang*: In the Lamdré teachings, "channel syllables" (*rtsa yig*) refers to crooked channels that have the approximate shape of syllables. The energy currents (*rlung*) and bodhicitta (*byang sems*), or "energy-mind," which are also referred to as elixir (*bdud rtsi*), gather in these *rtsa yig* as a result of certain practices. Since the ḍākas and ḍākinis (which are actually another term for bodhicitta and energy currents) gather in these key locations, the *rtsa yig* are referred to as "palaces" (*pho brang*) of the ḍākas and ḍākinis (CS).
- 25 *'gros bzhi*: The four empowerments (*dbang*) in sequence bring about the dissolution of these four in sequence: (1) channels (*rtsa*), (2) letters (*yi ge*), (3) elixir constituents (*kham*s *bdud rtsi*), and (4) energy currents (*rlung*). 'Gros is the pulsation of these four into and out of the three channels ('*jug ldog*), whereas dissolution (*thim*) is when they have entered into the central channel and never exit again (CS).

The thirteenth level (*sa bcu gsum pa*) is the ultimate state of buddhahood. Three additional levels (*sa*, Skt. *bhūmi*) were added later to the traditional ten spiritual levels that map the path to enlightenment to reflect the increase of qualities. In the Lamdré tradition, they are the eleventh level of incomparable pristine wisdom (*dpe*



*med ye shes*), the twelfth level of great pristine awareness (*ye shes chen po*), and the thirteenth level of the vajra holder (*rdo rje 'dzin pa*). See Tsele Natsok Rangdrol, *Lamp of Mahāmudrā*, 54-6.

- 26 *bral ba*: but the original list in the text by Go ram pa has *bsrel* here (CS).
- 27 The support (*rten*) is the vital essence. The vital essence originally in the chakras and channels and the vital essence that has expanded and moved into the channels due to meditations blend together (CS).
- 28 *drod*: literally “warmth” or “heat,” generally refers to a level of proficiency in which one is “warming up” or attaining an increasing degree of experiential realization. It also refers specifically to the first of four stages in the path of application (*shyor lam*). When it refers to the practices of inner heat, as in the third case here, then the meaning is quite literal.
- 29 *kham* *dgu*: the nine or often ten essential constituents. Five of the essential constituents are the five vital energy currents of earth, water, fire, wind, and space, which are also referred to as the five *ḍākinis*. The essential physical constituents of feces, urine, blood, reproductive fluid, and flesh are also referred to as the five elixirs, or as the *ḍākas* or the enlightened bodies of the *tathāgatas*. Sometimes the vital energy current of space is considered to be all-pervasive, and so the reference is to just nine essential constituents (CS).
- 30 *byung rgyal*: this means not to examine or scrutinize whatever or however much occurs (*gang byung mang byung ste ma brtags pa*).
- 31 The mind (*sems*) riding on the vital energy (*rlung*) moves through the channels (*rtsa*) of the subtle, energetic body. According to the esoteric instruction tradition of the Hevajra tantra (i.e., *lam 'bras*), the thirty-two knots (*bdud pa*) are arranged in twelve groups, corresponding to the twelve spiritual levels. The first and last of these twelve locations have one knot, and the ten in between have three knots each, making a total of thirty-two. When these knots are released as a result of the various practices, the yogin experiences the realization of the respective spiritual levels. The “constrictions” (*dog sa*) are in the channels, in this case corresponding to the thirty-two knots (CS).
- 32 *sad pa bzhi*: (1) testing by means of experiences, (2) testing by means of meditative absorption, (3) testing by means of mantra, and (4) testing by means of the view and [culmination of] accomplishment (*nyams kyis sad, ting nge 'dzin gyis sad, sngags kyis sad, lta grub kyis sad*). From the *Explication for Nyak* (*gZhung bshad gnyags ma*) by Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (CS).
- 33 *grib ma drug*: the contamination of (1) sacred pledge (*dam tshig*), (2) bad spirits (*gdon*), (3) bad friends (*grogs ngan*), (4) food (*zas*), (5) place (*gnas*), and (6) corpses (*ro*) (CS).
- 34 According to the *Explication for Nyak* (*gZhung bshad gnyags ma*), f. 66, the six emissions of the vital essence are (1) emission due to the arousal of bliss and the filling [of the channels], (2) emission in a dream due to an evil spirit and habitual propensity, (3) loss due to the confluence of an illness and water, (4) emission due to the arousal

- of passion caused by the catalyst of the female embodiment of intrinsic awareness, (5) emission by natural deterioration due to disagreeable food, and (6) emission due to the confluence with perspiration caused by activities.
- 35 *sgrib gnyis*: emotional obscurations (*nyon mong gi sgrib pa*) and cognitive obscurations (*shes bya'i sgrib pa*).
- 36 *Don bsdus ma*, “*Verses on the Summary of Everything*,” by Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, f. 190. Same as the *Explication for Aseng*; see note 6.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 *snrel zhi*: out of order, or sideways (*go rim 'chol ba*; *'phred dam logs*).
- 39 *yon tan brgyad*: As quoted from the *Stream of Elixir* in the Marpa Kagyu section, these are as follows: the quality of earth is that the body is majestic and dignified. The quality of water is that the body is glossy. The quality of fire is that it is very bright. The quality of the wind is lightness. The quality of the moon is that others do not see one's shadow. The quality of the sun is being invisible. The quality of space is that the eyes are always open without blinking day or night like the autumn sky (*TOK* 3: 345).
- 40 There is a separate text by Drakpa Gyaltsen made up of two sections that is the basic work for both the middling path and the concise path: *Presentation of the Middling Path and also There Is the Condensed* (*Lam 'bring du bstan pa dang bsdus pa'ang yod*) in *The Yellow Volume*, 292-300 (CS).
- 41 The “four great pillars” or fundamental works (*gzhung shing chen po bzhi*) and the “five dharma for the birth of realization” (*rtogs pa skye ba'i chos lnga*) refer to nine texts that are in the *Yellow Volume* (*Pod ser*), 300-23 (Stearns, *Luminous Lives*, 34).
- 42 *He ru ka Gal po* (TK-NGB, vol. Ra). Dudjom Rinpoche echoes Kongtrul in attributing the Lamdré teachings to this Nyingma tantra in the cycle of Viśuddha (Yang dag), awakened Mind (*NSH* 1: 923 and 2: 240). Sakya masters would attribute it solely to the *Hevajra Tantra* cycle (CS).
- 43 *gLang chen rab 'bog/gLang po che rab 'bog gi rgyud*, TK-NGB, vol. 19, ff. 199-288. One of the eighteen tantras of mahāyoga.
- 44 *Dri med rgyal po bshags pa'i rgyud* (n.p., 1972. Library of Congress Control No. 73907636).

## CHAPTER 4: MARPA KAGYU

- 1 *bla med*, for *bla med rnal 'byor rgyud* (Skt. *anuttarayogatantra*) or *gsang ngags bla med rgyud sde*, “the class of tantras of highest secret mantra.” In the classification system of the new traditions (*gsar ma*), the highest yoga tantra is the fourth and highest classification of the tantras.
- 2 *bKa' dpe phyi ma*, Skt. *Pravacanottaropamā* (Toh. 2332), by Nāropa.
- 3 *Rim lnga bsdus gsal*, Skt. *Pañcakramasamgrahaprakāśa*, by Nāropa. This quotation found in the Tengyur (Dg. T. rGyud, vol. Zhi, f. 276a7-b1) (Toh. 2333). It is also

quoted earlier by Kongtrul (*TOK* 2: 620; *SBT*, 154) and attributed to Telopa's *Perfect Words: Esoteric Instructions of the Dākinī* (*bKa' yang dag pa'i tshad ma zhes bya ba mkha' gro ma'i man ngag*), where it is found on f. 35a4-5 (*DZ*, vol. 7).

- 4 *gnas lugs*: Kongtrul gives a definition of his use of “abiding nature” or “authentic condition” as “the abiding nature of all phenomena from form to omniscience. It is also known as ‘ground mahāmudrā,’ ‘the native state,’ ‘the original lord,’ and ‘the essence or affinity of the tathāgataga.’” (*zugs nas rnam mkhyen gyi bar gyi chos thams cad kyi rang bzhin nam gnas tshul de gzhi dus kyi phyag rgya chen po dang g.nyug ma'i de nyid dang/ dang po'i dgon po dang/ de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs sam snying po zhes kyang bshad la*) (*TOK* 2: 620; *SBT*, 154).
- 5 *ngos po* means “thing” or “entity.” If the teaching concerns meditation, it means the actual thing upon which one meditates; the basis of the meditation. In this case, that is the mind and the body (Khandro Rinpoche, oral communication, 11/2003). It is also used in this sense elsewhere in the chapter. I have not translated it every time in this section, as it is redundant. For a detailed discussion of the term *ngos po'i gnas lugs*, see Michael Broido's article in Aris, *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*, 59-66.
- 6 *Rim lnga bsduḡ gsal* (Toh. 2333), f. 276b1. In the same quotation in *TOK* 2: 620, the last line reads “the abiding nature of mind and body” (*lus dang sems kyi gnas lugs so*), rather than “abiding manner” (*gnas thabs las*).
- 7 *Ibid.*, f. 276b1.
- 8 Ronyam Dorjé (Ro mnyam rdo rje) from Kham was a student of Marpa's student Tsurtön Wang-ngé (mTshur ston dbang nge) of Dol, who was specifically given the transmission for transference (*'pho ba*). (See Tsang Nyön Heruka, *The Life of Marpa the Translator*, 186, 191, and *BA*, 364). When Ronyam Dorjé was on his way to India to study the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, he met two Indians coming to Tibet to study it with Marpa, so he returned with them to Tibet. However, Marpa had died by this time, so he received the instructions from Tsurtön Wang-ngé. Ronyam Dorjé wrote the *Guhyasamāja Commentary* (*'Dus pa'i 'grel pa*) quoted later in this section (*TOK* 3: 356), and also mentioned in *BA*, 418.
- 9 *snang ba gsum*: the three lights or three “appearances” or “experiences” in progressive or arising order are light (*snang ba*), increase of the light (*snang ba mched pa*), and culmination of light (*snang ba thob pa*). When the true nature of mind as luminous emptiness is not recognized, it shifts to three coarser phases of appearance in reverse order: culmination, increase, and light. Alternative designations for the three lights are great empty (*stong pa chen po*), very empty (*shin tu stong pa*), and empty (*stong pa*). The three lights, which manifest as black, red, and white radiances respectively, are known collectively as consciousness (*rnam par shes pa*, Skt. *viññāna*). See Kongtrul's extensive discussion of the three lights in *TOK* 2: 689-707 or *SBT*, 251-72.
- 10 *rang bzhin brgyad bcu'i rtog pa*: The three lights become subject to and veiled by eighty conceptions or “natures” (*rang bzhin*, Skt. *prakṛti*). They are called “natures” because they are the nature or obscuring transformations of the three lights. They are the seven conceptions of delusion indicative of the culmination of light, the

forty of desire indicative of the increase of light, and the thirty-three of aversion indicative of light. In the final stages of the death process, or in the yogic realization of reversing the three lights, the eighty conceptions dissolve. They are listed and discussed extensively in relation to the three lights in *TOK* 2: 689-707 or *SBT*, 251-72, based on Nāgārjuna's *Five Stages*.

- 11 *sku gsung thugs*: Body, Speech, and Mind are capitalized to indicate the honorific sense, as the three faculties of enlightened beings, which are distinct words from ordinary body, speech, and mind (*lus*, *ngag*, *yid*).
- 12 *Grol* [*ba'i*] *thig* [*le*], Skt. *Muktītilaka*, by Buddhaśrījñāna (or Buddhajñānapāda). The quotation that this statement seems to be based upon was cited previously in *TOK* 2: 627 (*SBT*, 162) and is found in Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Di, ff. 49b4-50a1 (Toh. 1859).
- 13 Profundity (*zab*) refers to emptiness, and clarity (*gsal*) to pristine awareness (KTGR).
- 14 See, for instance, the discussion on *rigs* (Skt. *gotra*), translated as “affinity,” “family,” “potential,” or “buddha nature,” and its synonyms in *TOK* 2: 620-2.
- 15 Part Two, Chapter 2, verses 41-44a (Toh. 418). The rest of this section may be found verbatim in the *Commentary to the Prayer of Mahāmudrā* (*Nges don phyag rgya chen po'i smon lam gyi 'grel pa grub pa mchog gi zhal lung*) by the eighth Tai Situ (ff. 16-17), including the missing line from the *Hevajra Tantra* (see note 17). This would lead one to believe either that Kongtrul borrowed it from Tai Situ's commentary, or that both of them were relying on the same third source.
- 16 *btsun mo'i bhaga*: *btsun mo* can be “queen,” “princess,” or “lady,” but in this context refers to Vajrayoginī (RT, personal communication, 10/14/03). The text retains the Sanskrit word *bhaga*, which has very many referents but seems to have been used in Tibetan translations and commentaries primarily for the vagina.
- 17 *bde ba med na de med 'gyur*: this line from the *Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 418) is missing here.
- 18 In the *Hevajra Tantra* it reads, “therefore it is not the thing [or being] of buddhas” (*de phyir sangs rgyas ngos po min*, rather than *de nyid sangs rgyas ngos po min*).
- 19 In the *Hevajra Tantra* it reads, “sublime bliss is formless” (*mchog du bde ba gzugs med pa* rather than *mchog tu mi 'gyur bde ba'i gzugs*).
- 20 Relative awakening mind or bodhicitta here is referring to the vital essence (*thig le*) within the channels of the subtle body. The quintessence or pure refined extract (*dwang ma*) of that is the seminal fluid (*khu ba*).
- 21 Rangjung Dorjé (Rang byung rdo rje, 1284–1339), the third Karmapa, was one of the greatest masters of the Kagyu and Nyingma lineages, a student of Orgyenpa (Grub chen U rgyan Rin chen dpal, 1230–1309/1312) and Kumārārāja (1266-1343). The activities of Rangjung Dorjé were extremely widespread. He founded many monasteries and composed some of the most important texts of theory and practice in the Kagyu tradition.

- 22 *sems kyi snang ba*: an alternate translation would be “radiance of mind.”
- 23 Chödrak Gyatso (Chos grags rgya mtsho, 1454–1506), the seventh Karmapa patriarch. He was a prolific author and composed many texts on vinaya, madhyamaka, and tantra, including a commentary on the seven books on logic by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti.
- 24 That is, of four kinds of direct valid cognition (*mngon gsum tshad ma bzhi*), that of the senses (*dbang po*), of the mind (*yi*), yogic (*rnal 'byor*), and of reflective awareness (*rang rig*).
- 25 This famous verse (v. 154) can be found in *Mahayana Highest Continuum* (*Theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos*, Skt. *Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra*) (Toh. 4024).
- 26 In some systems highest yoga tantra is divided into the three categories of father (*pha rgyud*), mother (*ma rgyud*), and nondual tantras (*gnyis med rgyud*), although the categories are not universal. Here, *Guhyasamāja* (*gSang ba 'dus pa*, “*The Secret Assembly Tantra*”) is the father tantra and the mother is *Mahāmāyā* (*sGyu ma chen po*, “*Great Illusion*,” but usually the Sanskrit is retained). *Hevajra* (*Kye'i rdo rje*) and *Cakrasaṃvara* (*Khor lo sdom pa*) are called the essence or “heart” (*snying po*) and the quintessence (*yang snying*), and are also mother tantras. *Catuhpīṭha* (*[bKa' srung dam can gyi] gdan bzhi*), “Four Seats of the Oath-bound Guardian”) is from the yoginī tantra *Catuhpīṭhamahāyoginī* (*rNal 'byor ma'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal gdan bzhi pa*, Toh. 428).
- 27 The eighth Karmapa Mikyö Dorjé (Mi bskyod rdo rje, 1507–1554) was from Damchu in eastern Tibet. He was one of the most brilliant and prolific of the Karmapas, composing over thirty volumes, including texts on linguistics, religious law, abhidharma, vinaya, logic, tantra, madhyamaka philosophy, art, poetry, and mahāmudrā.
- 28 [*rGyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal*] *rdo rje mkha' 'gro*, Skt. *Śrīvajradākanāmamahātantrarāja* (Toh. 370) and the *Vajradāka Later Tantra* (*rDo rje mkha' 'gro zhes bya ba'i rgyud phyi ma*, Skt. *Vajradākanāmottaratantra*) (Toh. 371) are Cakrasaṃvara texts.
- 29 *sDom 'byung* or *bDe mchog 'byung ba shes bya ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po*, Skt. *Mahāsaṃvarodayatantrarāja* (Toh. 373).
- 30 *rtsa dang bsdu pa'i rgyud*: These are the *Kālacakra Root Tantra* (*Kālacakramūlatantra*), compiled by Sucandra, which is not fully extant, and the *Kālacakra Condensed Tantra* (*Laghutantra*), also called the *Supreme Original Buddha* (*Paramādibuddha*) by Mañjuśrī Yaśas (Toh. 362 and 1346).
- 31 *Sems 'grel skor* [*gsum*], also known as *Byang chub sems dpa'i 'grel ba*. These are three commentaries on the tantras: *The Stainless Light* (*'Dri med 'od*) by Puṇḍarīka, a Kālacakra tantra commentary (Toh. 1347); the *Commentary That Summarizes the Hevajra Tantra* (*Kye'i rdo rje bsdu pa'i don gyi rgya cher 'grel pa*, Skt. *Hevajrapīṇḍārthajīkā*) by Vajragarbha, a Hevajra tantra commentary (Toh. 1180); and the *Commentary That Summarizes the Condensed Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* (Skt. *Lakṣābhīdhānāduddhṛtalaghutantrapīṇḍārthavivaraṇa*, known in Tibetan as *Phyag rdor stod 'grel*), a Cakrasaṃvara tantra commentary (Toh. 1402). All three explain

the tantras in a way corresponding to the Kālacakra system. See Mullin, *The Practice of Kālacakra*, 341–2.

- 32 *bKa' yang dag pa'i tshad ma* [*zhes bya ba mkha' 'gro ma'i man ngag*], Skt. *Ājñāsam yakpramānanāmadākinīyupadeśa* (Toh. 2331), the original teachings spoken by the pristine awareness ḍākinī to Vajradhara (KTGR), usually attributed to Telopa, and translated by Marpa. According to Padma Karpo's *Index of Nāropa's work* (*rJe btsun Nāro chen po'i bsre skor gyi tho yig nyin byed 'od kyi snang byed*, f. 1), it was maintained in Uḍḍiyāna for seven generations and then the ḍākinīs spread it to those who were somewhat worthy. Eventually it spread throughout the world in the Four Great Rivers of Hearing Lineage. It was brought forth in full by Telopa.
- 33 *Chos drug bka' dpe snga phyi*, two texts about the six dharmas: *bKa' dpe snga ma* and *bKa' dpe phyi ma* (Skt. *Pravacanottaropamā*, Toh. 2332). The earlier seems to refer to Telopa, while the latter is by Nāropa.
- 34 *sNyan brgyud rdo rje'i tshig rkang*, Skt. *Karṇatantravajrapada* (Toh. 2338), by Nāropa. "Hearing lineage" refers to the lineage that is transmitted orally from one person to another rather than written down in books.
- 35 *sNyan gi shog dril bzhi po[i man ngag]*: this is listed in the Rechung Hearing Lineage (*Ras chung snyan brgyud kyi chos skor*) in Kongtrul's *Catalogue* (*dKar chag*, f. 451) as being Marpa's teachings to Tsurtön Wang-ngé.
- 36 rNgog pa, Ngoktön Chödor (rNgog ston Chos kyi rdo rje, 1036–1102) from Zhung, one of Marpa's main students, chief among those known as the "four pillars" (*ka bzhi*) who received the exposition and practice transmissions. Mainly the exposition transmission fell to him (*TOKI*: 528).
- 37 *Tshigs bcad brgyad ma*: not located in Nāropa's works. However, a text of this name is listed under the works by Marpa (Chos kyi grags pa) in the TBRC knowledge base.
- 38 *skye shi rmi lam bar do dang/ srid pa bar do gsum du gnas/*: There would seem to be four intermediate states here, unless "birth and death" are considered as one.
- 39 *bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*: not located. Mention is made of a text by this name on the six yogas for the benefit of his son (*Sras kyi don du chos drug bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*) in *Biography of Reverend Marpa* (*rJe btsun mar pa'i rnam par thar pa grub pa'i ngo mtshar brjod pa*).
- 40 *Tshigs brgyad*: not located. Te bu pa, also spelled Te pu pa, Ti pu pa, Te phu pa or Ti phu ba (Skt. *Pāravatapāda*), was a direct disciple of both Nāropa and Maitripa and considered to be an incarnation of Marpa's son Darma Dodé (Dar ma mdo sde, eleventh c.); *BA*, 437. More precisely, Darma Dodé's consciousness, which had occupied a pigeon's corpse at his death, flew to India and took up residence in the corpse of a recently deceased youth, thus Tebupa, "the Pigeon" (Thrangu Rinpoche, *Rechungpa: A Biography of Milarepa's Disciple*, 7–10).
- 41 Rechung Dorjé Drakpa (Ras chung rDo rje grags pa, 1083–1161): one of Milarepa's two main disciples, who was like the moon (along with Gampopa, who was like the sun), and one of the "eight cotton-clad brothers" or *repa* (*ras pa mched brgyad*).

Kongtrul calls him the heart-son of Tebupa and recipient of the special *Hearing Lineage of the Formless Dākinīs* from him and the yoginī Drubpai Gyalmo (TOK 1: 529). For his biography, see Thrangu Rinpoche, *Rechungpa: A Biography of Milarepa's Disciple*.

- 42 'Bri khung ras pa, more properly Drigom Repa ('Bri sgom ras pa), also known as Drigom Linkawa ('Bri sgom gling kha ba): a former bandit who became one of the eight cotton-clad disciples of Milarepa. For the story of his conversion, see "The Bandit-Disciple" in Chang, *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* 1: 157-8. Also BA, 435.
- 43 *rtags lngal yon tan brgyad*. But *ten* signs and eight qualities are mentioned later in this chapter (TOK 3: 345).
- 44 *grub chen brgyad*: the eight spiritual powers or attainments (Skt. *siddhi*) are celestial land, sword, pill, swift feet, vase, yakṣa, elixir, and eye lotion (RY).
- 45 *phrin las bzhi*: four kinds of enlightened activity or function: pacifying (*zhi ba*), increasing or enriching (*rgyas pa*), overpowering or magnetizing (*dbang*), and wrathful (*drag po*).
- 46 Se ban ras pa, from Ötri ('Od khri): one of the eight cotton-clad yogins (*ras pa*), disciples of Milarepa (BA, 435).
- 47 Gampopa Sönam Rinchen (sGam po pa bSod nams rin chen, 1079–1153), also known as Dakpo Lhajé (Dwags po lha rjes), "the Doctor from Dakpo," was the sun-like disciple of Milarepa. He is known for having assimilated the teachings of Milarepa with the Kadampa lineage of Atiśa, thus forming the Dakpo Kagyu lineage, as well as establishing the monastic tradition of Kagyu.
- 48 *dKa' ba spyad pa'i yi ge phyi ma*: a text by this exact name has not been found—possibly it is the same as the oft-quoted text by Nāropa, *Latter Authoritative Text* (*bKa' dpe phyi ma*).
- 49 *gnas skabs bzhi*: the four states, occasions, or situations are deep sleep, dream, waking, and sexual union. Kongtrul comments: "After the channels, vital energy, and vital essence of the body are completely formed, four states occur. Due to the force of dualistic attachment from not recognizing the innate nature of those three, the six collections of consciousness become unclear and withdraw into the universal ground, which is the state of deep sleep. From that, the mental consciousness and its formations emerge as the state of dreaming. From that, the engaging consciousness emerges with dualistic grasping, and when the six collections of consciousness engage with their objects as normal it is the waking state. From that, the experience of the habitual tendency for emission [manifests during] the state of sexual union" (TOK 2: 644-5). A discussion on how to refine them follows. For a more thorough discussion by Kongtrul, see CPR, ff. 107-20.
- 50 *bKa' dpe phyi ma*, by Nāropa (Toh. 2332), f. 273b1.
- 51 *Rim lnga bsodus gsal*, by Nāropa (Toh. 2333), f. 276b1-2.

- 52 *[thig le] 'pho ba*: the ordinary, habitual movement or emission of vital essence causing desire for the desire realm. It can be refined by the practice of inner heat (KTGR, “Tibetan Transcripts,” 5).
- 53 *ril 'dzin; ril por 'dzin pa'i bsam gtan*: the meditation of apprehending as a whole. “Instant means that it goes into the realm of emptiness at once, while subsequent dissipation means that it goes gradually” (KTGR, “Tibetan Transcripts,” 8).
- 54 *rlung sems*: it is said that the mind (*sems*, Skt. *citta*) moves with the energy currents (*rlung*, Skt. *prāṇa*) like a rider on a horse. Because of this close association, the two are inseparable in practice and the two terms are used as one. *Sems* in this case also refers to *byangs sems* or *bodhicitta* in Sanskrit as an energy-substance that moves through the subtle body, equivalent to vital essence (*thig le*, Skt. *bindu*).
- 55 *stong pa bzhi*: four levels or degrees of emptiness; the luminous clarity of the four empties: “empty” (*stong pa*), “great empty” (*stong pa chen po*), “very empty” (*shin tu stong pa*), and “all empty” (*thams cad stong pa*). In this case, it is the four empties of luminous clarity: light, increase, culmination, and full culmination (luminous clarity itself). Once one has attained the four lights, then gradually emptiness dissolves into luminous clarity and from within the state of luminous clarity just energy current with mind arises as the deity’s form (KTGR, “Tibetan Transcripts,” 10).
- 56 “The three lights in reverse order (*lugs ldog gi snang gsum*) refer to the emergence from luminosity. There are three lights that arise as one moves toward luminosity (i.e., light, increase, and attainment). They arise in reverse order as one emerges from luminosity (i.e. attainment, increase, light.) The reverse three lights and the pristine awareness *prāṇa* are the matrix from which the practitioner arises in pure form that is like an illusion, which is the actual illusory form” (KTGR, *The Six Dharmas of Nāropa*, 123). “Consciousness dissolves into light, light dissolves into increase, increase dissolves into culmination, culmination dissolves into luminous clarity, into pristine awareness emptiness... from within the state of empty luminous clarity, together with the pristine awareness energy currents, the illusion-like deity’s body manifests” (KTGR, “Tibetan Transcripts,” 12).
- 57 *rnam shes gsum*: the consciousness of the three lights, namely, light, increase, and culmination. The three consciousnesses are of light, increase, and culmination that ultimately seem to dissolve into emptiness. The state of three consciousnesses becomes the totally pure three emptinesses and everything is empty. This is explained more later, but it is not the luminous clarity that depends on external conditions (KTGR, “Tibetan Transcripts,” 13).
- 58 *Rim [pa] lnga [pa]*, Skt. *Pañcakrama*, by Nāgārjuna (Toh. 1802): an explanation of the five stages of the completion phase in the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*.
- 59 *rDo rje phreng ba*, Skt. *Vajramālā* (Toh. 445): an explanatory tantra of the *Guhyasamāja*. The special theme of the *Vajra Garland Tantra* is to reveal and clarify the hidden meanings of the forty introductory syllables of the root tantra. For the completion stage, the root tantra is explained in terms of five stages, which is the particular way it is explained in the *Vajra Garland* (Panchen Sonam Dragpa, *Overview of Buddhist Tantra*, 57).



- 60 *Lhan cig skyes grub*, Skt. *Sahajasiddhi*, by Indrabhūti (Toh. 2260), f. 2a1.
- 61 The usual set of five aggregates and five constituents that are transformed into the five pristine awarenesses of the five buddha families that will be enumerated are made into six here by the addition of the pristine awareness aggregate and constituent, refined in the Vajrasattva family (KTGR, “Tibetan Transcripts,” 15). The five buddha families (*rigs lnga*), representing five aspects of buddhahood, are the buddha or *tathāgata* family (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs*), the indestructible or vajra family (*rdo rje'i rigs*), the jewel or ratna family (*rin chen rigs*), the lotus family (*padma rigs*) and the action or karma family (*las kyi rigs*). They are associated with the five afflictive emotions or their pure aspect as the five pristine awarenesses, as well as with the aggregates, constituents, and kāyas mentioned here.
- 62 Zhamar Khachö Wangpo (Zhwa dmar mKha' spyod dbang po), also known as Karma Zhamarpa: the second Zhamar Rinpoche (1350–1405), successor of Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé (1284–1339) in the Karma Kagyu lineage (*BA*, 540–5).
- 63 In all texts this is mistakenly titled from the previous section as “3. Detailed Presentation of the Meditation Topics.”
- 64 Text 1 has *phye*, and Text 2 has *kyi*, but according to the commentary that follows, it seems that *phyi*, “outer,” is the correct word.
- 65 *gtum mo* (pronounced “tumo”) translates the Sanskrit *caṇḍālī*, which is sometimes kept in the Tibetan texts and is then written *tsan da li*. Whenever the Sanskrit is used I have retained it, and whenever the Tibetan *gtum mo* is used I have translated “inner heat,” which certainly does not convey the whole meaning as defined here or even the literal meaning, but is just a provisional referent.
- 66 *rDo rje snying 'grel*, literally “*Vajragarbha's Commentary*,” is the title commonly used to refer to Vajragarbha's *Commentary That Summarizes the Hevajra Tantra* (*Kye'i rdo rje bsdus pa'i don gyi rgya cher 'grel pa*, Skt. *Hevajrapīṇḍārthaṭīkā*) (Toh. 1180).
- 67 *Kye'i rdor dka' 'grel*, or *Kye'i rdo rje rgyud kyi dka' 'grel padma can*, Skt. *Hevajra-tantrapāñjikāpadmin* (Toh. 1181). Saroruha is often considered a manifestation of Padmasambhava (see *NH* 1: 471). Also in *BA*: “mTsho skyes rdo rje translates the Sanskrit Saroruha or Padmavajra. In Tibet among the rNying ma pas, Saroruha is said to have been Padmasambhava” (389, n. 1).
- 68 [*rDo rje'i tshig gi snying po bsdus pa'i*] *dka' 'grel*, Skt. *Vajrapādasārasaṃgrahapañjikā* (Toh. 1186, author listed as sNyan grag bzang po [Yaśobhadra], a name for Nāropa): a commentary on the *Hevajra Tantra*. This quote is in Chapter 5, a commentary for verse 2 (EMC).
- 69 In Vajrayāna Buddhism, the feminine is associated with emptiness and the intelligence or awareness (*shes rab*, Skt. *prajñā*) that experiences emptiness.
- 70 *Mi 'jigs pa'i gzhung 'grel*, Skt. *Abhayapaddhati*, also known as *Sangs rgyas thod pa'i rgyud*, Skt. *Buddhakapāla Tantra* (Toh. 1654) by the Indian master Abhayākara Gupta (c. 1100).

- 71 This refers to the fact that in the practice of inner heat the heating element is visualized in the specific shape of a brush stroke, which is part of both the Sanskrit and Tibetan letters *a*, abiding in the central channel below the navel.
- 72 *Nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud* [*kyi rgyal po*], Skt. *Khasamatantrārāja*, in the *Cakrasaṃvara* cycle (Toh. 386).
- 73 The Buddha taught three cycles of the doctrine (*chos kyi 'khor lo*, Skt. *dharmacakra*) that each flourished at different times historically. The First Turning presents the four noble truths and the eightfold noble path of the middle way. The second or middle cycle is represented primarily by the wisdom literature (Skt. *prajñāpāramitā*), which emphasizes the emptiness of all phenomena and the cultivation of compassion for all beings who lack that realization and therefore suffer needlessly. The Third Turning is represented in the teachings of buddha nature (Skt. *tathāgatagarbha*), which describe an inherent true nature that is an unchanging presence inherent in all beings.
- 74 *phyi don nges shes rtogs pa'i tsandali*: In the usual Tibetan hermeneutic of outer, inner, secret, and sometimes suchness, “outer” usually refers to the most exoteric or least subtle explanation. However, here it refers to the highest realization of the state of union, called *mahāmudrā* or the “Great Seal” in the Kagyu system. Kongtrul explains that this is not contradictory because it refers to the highest realization held in common in both sutra and tantra. Thus, “outer meaning” can be interpreted here as meaning “in common” or “shared.” (*phyi don* also means “outer object,” but that is not the interpretation here, according to ATG.)
- 75 *dPal mchog* [*dang po'i sngags gyi rtog pa'i dum bu*], Skt. *Śrīparamādyamantrakalpaka haṇḍa* (Toh. 488), f. 234a7.
- 76 *Dus 'khor* [*bsdu rgyud*], the *Kālacakra Condensed Tantra* (Toh. 362), f. 48b3. The Tibetan is *mkha' khyab mkha'yi rdo rje can*.
- 77 *chos 'byung*, Skt. *dharmodaya*: the source of all phenomena or qualities. It is devoid of intrinsic nature, and yet the source of all phenomena. When visualized within the *avadhūti* or central channel, it has a specific inverted pyramid shape and is associated with *bhaga*—the womb or vagina. This, in turn, is also called “space” (*mkha*). “Vajra” (scepter, diamond, etc.) is also a word for the male organ or masculine principle, as well as for indestructibility. The language here is obviously suggestive of sexual union, though emphasizing the ultimate or “real” meaning of it, in classic tantric style.
- 78 *rDo rje phreng ba*, Skt. *Vajramālā* (Toh. 445), f. 247a7.
- 79 *Zab mo'i rgyud* refers to the *Hevajra Tantra*. This quote is found in Part One, Chapter 1, verse 31, folio 5, with some variations (EMC).
- 80 *spyān ma mig la sogs pa*: Though Chenmamik (sPyān ma mig) is the feminine buddha Locanā, here it refers to the earth element (*spyān ma*) and the other four elements and the eye organ (*mig*) and the other four organs of sense, which are all purified in this process.

- 81 “Moon” is translating *ri bong can*, literally, “with rabbit,” a traditional reference to the moon marked with the shape of a rabbit, like the Western “man in the moon.” The bodhicitta falls from the circular shape of the “*ṃ*” in the inverted *ham* syllable visualized in the top of the head.
- 82 *Man [ngag] snye [ma]*, Skt. *Upadeśamañjari* (Toh. 1198) by Abhayākara Gupta. This is a commentary on the *Saṃpūṭa Tantra*, a shared explanatory tantra.
- 83 *gSang ba bdud rtsi'i rgyud [kyi rgyal po]*, Skt. *Amṛitaguhyantrārāja* (Toh. 401): This is one of the Rāli tantras in the Cakrasaṃvara cycle.
- 84 Vajradhara (Tib. rDo rje 'chang), the “Vajra-holder,” represents the absolute dimension of reality (*chos nyid*, Skt. *dharmakāya*), the state of union (*zung 'jug*), for the Kagyu and other new traditions (*gsar ma*) of Tibetan Buddhism. It is represented as a blue male buddha holding a vajra and a bell in his two crossed arms, symbolizing the union of emptiness (bell) and compassion or method (vajra). In the old tradition of Nyingma, Vajradhara is regarded as a saṃbhogakāya buddha.
- 85 This is a reference to Book Six, Part Four, “The Stages of Study” (*thos pa'i rim pa*) of the *Treasury of Knowledge* (TOK 2: 204-766), which has been translated as *Systems of Buddhist Tantra*. See especially 169-85.
- 86 *Zab mo nang don* by the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé.
- 87 *De kho na nyid bzhi'i man ngag gsal sgron*, Skt. *Tattvacaturupadeśaprasannadīpa* (Toh. 1242).
- 88 *sDom 'byung*, Skt. *Samvarodayatantra* (Toh. 373), f. 271b5-6.
- 89 Alternate interpretation: “Control of the distance occurs when [the duration of] one’s fingers comes closer [to one’s nostrils]” (EMC, in Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoché, *The Six Dharmas of Naropa & Other Completion Stage Practices*, p. 68. This interpretation is based on Chapter 2 of *Profound Inner Reality*).
- 90 *bKa' dpe phyi ma* (Toh. 2333), f. 273b2-3 (where the order is different).
- 91 Expelling or blowing (*'bud pa*) the breath is to clear away the stale air, which prevents various kinds of prāṇa disorder (KTGR).
- 92 *rtsa mig tu gdab pa*: alternate translation suggested by RT was “hit the spots [of the channels].”
- 93 *rtsa ba mi shigs pa'i thig le*: the indestructible vital essence is considered the root or basis of both saṃsara and nirvana, as well as of all other vital essence drops. It has many synonyms, including *dharmatā*, etc. Here the discussion concerns the development of the physical and subtle body. Kongtrul: “Mind-itself, in association with the dependent natures of white and red [vital essences], and the energy currents, is called the subtle body (*phra ba'i lus*). It cannot be destroyed by anything, except for the vajra absorption at the end of the continuum; therefore, it is referred to as the ‘indestructible vital essence of consciousness’” (CPR, f. 32a-b). And, “It is ‘indestructible’ in the sense of being indivisible, and ‘vital essence’ in the sense of encompassing many appearances” (CPR, f. 29a3-b2).

- 94 *'pho ba'i kun rtog 'dzag med du 'chings*: “One must be liberated from the concepts associated with the movement of vital essence, it must be set free on its own” (KTGR).
- 95 See note 31 in the Nyingma section. There are many teachings in vajrayāna describing the pre-and post-natal development of the human body, which is seen on two levels of coarse and subtle at the same time. The subtle body and its intimate relationship with the mind forms the context of all completion stage practices and is considered the actual ground for enlightenment, so it is thought important to understand it. For Kongtrul's descriptions, see *TOK* 2: 631-44 (*SBT*, 169-84) and, more extensively, *CPR*, ff. 32-107.
- 96 Motility (also translated as “passion” or “creativity”) (*rdul*, Skt. *rajas*); darkness (or “immobility”) (*mun pa*, Skt. *tamas*); and buoyancy (or “lightness” or “clarity”) (*snying stobs*, Skt. *sattva*) are three qualities (*yon tan*, Skt. *guṇa*) borrowed from the ancient Hindu Sāṃkhya school. According to that school, they are the three main constituents of the universal or primal substance or “nature” (*rang bzhi*, Skt. *prakṛti*) that evolve into all categories of existence. Furthermore, lightness is associated with the white constituent and motility with the red. Here, however, they are all ascribed to the red aspect, and can be associated with desire, hatred, and stupidity (KTGR). See *CPR*, f. 85b.
- 97 *dga' ba bzhi gsum bcu gnyis* (*bzhi* is mistakenly omitted in text 2, RT). This is four chakras plus the three joys of desire, hatred, and stupidity being perfectly pure (KTGR).
- 98 *gnad bcings pa*: I have preferred *gnad* here as in text 2, vol. 4: 42, over the *gnas* in text 1. As Kongtrul explains, “A special feature of the vajrayāna is that the suchness of mind—the supported—is made manifest by binding the functions of the body—the support” (*CPR*, f. 32b). Binding the vital points of the body refers to yogic methods where one focuses intently on particular points of the body, such as the chakras or the vital essence within, to bring about specific experiences and ultimately the actualization of pristine awareness. Binding the vital points or vital essence counteracts the habitual tendency for the emission of the white and red constituents (*kham dkar dmar 'pho ba'i bag chags*), which is the cause of cyclic existence.
- 99 *'Jam dpal zhal lung*, Skt. *Mañjuśrīmukhāgama* (Toh. 1853), a name for *Meditation on the Reality of the Two Stages* (*Rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na nyid bsgom pa zhes bya ba zhal gyi lung*, Skt. *Dvikramatattvabhāvanānāmamukhāgama*, by Buddhāśrījñāna (alias Buddhajñānapāda). It is referred to as the *Oral Teachings of Mañjuśrī* because Dārika (Ban de mchung ma can), Buddhāśrījñāna's master, was considered to be a manifestation of Mañjuśrī. On this text and its tradition, see *BA*, 167-9.
- 100 *sNying 'grel*, Skt. *Hevajrapīṇḍārthaṭīkā*: “*Commentary That Summarizes the Hevajra Tantra*” (Toh. 1180).
- 101 *Phyag [rgya chen po'i] thig [le]*, Skt. *Mahāmudrātilaka*: This is the *uttaratantra* or final text of the Hevajra cycle (Toh. 420).

- 102 *dPyid [kyi] thig [le]*, Skt. *Vasantatilaka* (Toh. 1448) and its commentary (Toh. 1449), also by Kṛṣṇācārya (Nag po spyod pa ba). “Spring” is a term used to indicate the white constituent or vital essence.
- 103 In Sanskrit here: *Abhidhāna-uttaratantra*, Tibetan: *mNgon par brjod pa'i rgyud bla ma*: an explanatory tantra in the *Cakrasaṃvara* cycle (Toh. 369).
- 104 *nāda* in Sanskrit means a tone or sound (*sgra dbyangs*), often used to indicate the subtle vibration or the primordial sound. It is given as a synonym for indestructible vital essence, ground continuum, essence of mind, etc. Specifically, it is the nasal sound represented by a semicircle and used as an abbreviation in mystical words (Monier-Williams). Thus, for instance, it is the tip of a visualized syllable or tip of the vital essence drop. More specifically, it is the tip of the *gtum mo* fire as it blazes up from the navel center.
- 105 *mKha' gro rgya mtsho [rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud]*, Skt. *Ḍākārṇavamahāyoginītantra*, a *Cakrasaṃvara* tantra (Toh. 372).
- 106 *srog thur gong bur 'dres pa*: For more on this technique, see Chapter 7 on the esoteric instructions of the Six Branch Yoga of Kālacakra. There are ten main energy currents or “winds” (*rlung*) in the subtle body. The life-force or vital (*srog 'dzin*) energy current is the source of all ten energy currents, and is present in all parts of the body, but is based in the central channel, upon which all channels depend, and lies right in the center of the body. It is connected to and supports the universal ground. During life, this energy current generates the conception of self and all conceptual constructs and is known as the afflicted mind. The downward-clearing (*thur du sel ba*) energy current dwells below the navel where the three main channels meet and flows downward. Its function is to regulate the voiding or withholding of refined and residual constituents such as feces, urine, semen, and blood. See *CPR*, ff. 68b-70a.
- 107 *Dus 'khor [bsdus rgyud]*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), f. 112b6-7.
- 108 *bKa' dpe phyi ma*, Skt. *Pravacanottaropamā* (Toh. 2333), f. 273a6.
- 109 *bsam gtan gyi chos drug*: According to Khenpo Jigme of Vajravidya Retreat Center, these are the same as the seven points of Vairocana with the exclusion of the tongue touching the palate.
- 110 This last paragraph that beautifully sums up the whole meditation practice is positioned to be a commentary on the last rather technical line of the root text: “bliss, heat, nonthought, and pristine awareness, with enhancement.” However, there is no actual comment about this line, perhaps an oversight.
- 111 *las kyi phyag rgya*, Skt. *karmamudrā*: the yogic practice that uses sexual intercourse as a technique for controlling the energies of the subtle body.
- 112 *sDom 'byung*, Skt. *Samvarodayatantra* (Toh. 373), Chapter 31, verses 1-2: “Explanation of the Four Kinds of Yoginīs, the Arrangement of the Four Chakras and the Transformation of the Bodhi-Mind,” f. 306a1-2.

- 113 The four types of female spiritual consorts described here are lotus (*pad ma*; *pad-mini*) elephant (*glang po che*; *hastinī*), conch (*dung can ma*; *śaṅkhiṇī*) and design, or picture (*ri mo can*; *citrinī*). In this tantra they are correlated with the four retinue ḍākinīs, embodiments of the four elements. Their descriptions follow this verse and can be found in Shinichi Tsuda's translation, *The Samvarodaya-Tantra: Selected Chapters*, 324-5. Also see Guenther, *The Life and Teaching of Nāropa*, 77 and Simmer-Brown, *Ḍākinī's Warm Breath*, 225-9.
- 114 *mi snang ba*: To make the spiritual partner invisible (RT). "If you can go visit the awareness-consort without being seen, it's much easier," since, after all, it is "secret conduct" (KTGR).
- 115 *rtags bcu*: The ten signs are smoke, mirage, brilliant pure sky light, lamp flames (the four signs of the night yoga), blazing, moon, sun, vajras, lightning, and spheres (the six signs of the day yoga). They are called signs because they are the cause of the birth of the confidence that the pristine awareness of absolute reality resides in oneself and that by meditating on the path it will be actualized. They are not signs that are merely relative deluded appearances (*TOK* 3: 434-5). See Chapter 7, p. 000, below.
- 116 *Sampuṭa Tantra* (Toh. 381), f. 80a4-5.
- 117 *snyigs ma rnam rim gyis zos*: that is, the refuse dissolves into basic space (KTGR).
- 118 *sgyu lus*: It is interesting to note that Kongtrul considers illusory body in a general sense to be the essence of all Buddhist practice and calls the following dharmas of dream and luminous clarity "branches" (*yan lag*) or even "leftovers" (*lhag ma*) of this. In the section immediately preceding this book, which emphasizes practice based on the tantras, he says, "In general, the esoteric instruction of illusory body is the most excellent, cherished profound meaning of the entirety of sutra and mantra. If one does not get this, then all of it is useless trouble" (*TOK* 3: 262).
- 119 *sgyu ma byed pa dag gis gzugs sprul nas*: "When magicians conjure up forms, creating various horses, elephants, or chariots, what appears to be there does not exist at all. Know that all phenomena are this way." From the *King of Absorption Sutra* (*Ting nge 'dzin gyi rgyal po*, Skt. *Samādhirājasūtra*) (Toh. 127), quoted in Tsong-kha-pa, *SOP* 3: 306.
- 120 [*dBu ma'i*] *rtsa [ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa] she[s rab ces bya ba]*, Skt. *Prajñānāmamūla madhyamakakārikā*, "Root Verses of the Middle Way called Wisdom" by Nāgārjuna (Toh. 1798), f. 5b7 (Chapter 7, verse 34): "Like a dream, like an illusion, like a city of Gandharvas, so have arising, abiding, and ceasing been explained" (Garfield, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, 22).
- 121 [*Tshad ma*] *rnam 'grel*, Skt. *Pramāṇavarttika* (Toh. 4210), f. 110b5. One of the seven treatises on logic authored by Dharmakīrti (*Chos kyi grags pa*), the great logician from South India.
- 122 [*Chos mngon pa'i*] *mdzod*, Skt. *Abhidharmakośakārikā*, by Vasubandhu (Toh. 4089), f. 7b1 (Chapter 3, verse 14).

- 123 *mKha' 'gro rgya mtsho*, Skt. *Ḍākārṇavamahāyoginītantra* (Toh. 372), f. 262b6-7 (where it is slightly different).
- 124 Mirror divination (*pra phab pa*) is a form of divination where certain adepts can see images of the past or future in a sacred mirror. The metaphor means that the forms of emptiness are as clear as reality, like appearances in a mirror (RT).
- 125 [*gSang ba 'du pa'i*] *rim pa gsum pa*: the third of the five stages, according to the *Guhyasamāja* system, is called illusory form (EMC).
- 126 *rDo rje mkha' 'gro*, Skt. *Śrīvajradākanāmamahātāntrarāja* (Toh. 370), f. 2a7.
- 127 [*Na ro*] *chos drug gser zhun ma* (DZ, vol. 9): a commentary on the Six Yogas of Nāropa by the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé.
- 128 *Rim [pa] lnga [pa]*, Skt. *Pañcakrama*, by Nāgārjuna (Toh. 1802). The *Five Stages* is used as a basis for Kongtrul's description of illusory body in the chapter on meditation based on the tantras (*TOK* 3: 159-274). There he says, "When the energy current dissolves in the heart center and only energy-mind arises from special emptiness as the deity, it is the real illusory body. When just the energy current dissolves normally (*rang gar*) and only energy-mind arises as the deity, it is posited as the concordant illusory body. The way this illusory body is illustrated by the twelve examples is the same as [described] before. [In the *Five Stages*] Nāgārjuna states: 'A reflection in the mirror should be known as an illusory body. The colors are like a rainbow. It pervades like a water moon.' The form is instantly complete, like one's reflection in the mirror. The colors are clear and unmixed, like a rainbow. A single one pervades everywhere, like the moon's reflections in water. These are the three examples that illustrate [illusory body]" (*TOK* 3: 265-6).
- 129 *dben pa gsum*: isolation of body, of speech, and of mind. See the "Practice" part of the following section.
- 130 "Union" is translating *zung du 'jug pa*, which literally means "entering into a pair." In this instance, it refers to the union of pure illusory body and actual luminous clarity, the highest freedom and realization. One part (*ya gyal*) of this is the illusory body aspect.
- 131 *bdag* (or *rang*) *byin gyis brlab pa*, Skt. *svadhiṣṭhāna*, is an aspect of the phase of completion. As mentioned, there are many explanations. In describing it as one of three main aspects of the causal phase of completion (with mandala circle and mahāmudrā), Kongtrul states that whether or not one is meditating on the actual central channel, it is the meditation where one visualizes usually either fire or vital essence drops or letters, etc., in the central channel, because wherever one focuses the mind, the energy currents will gather there (*TOK* 2: 686; *SBT*, 243-4). In this case, based on the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, self-blessing is equivalent to the third of the five stages, the stage of illusory body. Also see note 139.
- 132 *stong gzugs* is short for *stong pa nyid kyi gzugs bsnyan*, an image or reflection of emptiness. These perceptions are not empty of something; they are the form of emptiness. For more on this, see Chapter 7.

- 133 See *TOK* 3: 262-8. In the Kagyu tradition, the teachings of the ultimate illusory body come mainly from the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*.
- 134 *sPyod bsdud* [*pa'i sgron me*], Skt. *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* by Āryadeva (Toh. 1803).
- 135 *rdo rje'i bzlas pa*, Skt. *vajrajapa*: sometimes translated as “vajra recitation,” although nothing is recited—rather, the meditation is performed again and again. In general it is a name for breathing practices associated with visualized syllables. There are many types of vajra repetition, but the general designation is of a way to practice mantra silently rather than an actual recitation. Here it is the stage of speech isolation (*ngag dben*) in the five-stage format of the completion phase in the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* (see note 139). In this, the principal energy currents, especially that of the life-force (*srog*), are made to enter, abide in, and dissolve in the central channel. Essentially it is a practice to purify the energy currents.
- 136 *rlung bum pa can*: a technique of breath retention that holds the upper and lower energy currents in the abdomen, like in a vase. Here it is the way to practice vajra repetition in the isolation of speech.
- 137 I was not able to find information on these special practices.
- 138 The five stages in the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* are (1) speech isolation (*ngag dben*) or vajra repetition (*rdo rje'i bzlas pa*); (2) mind isolation (*sems dben*); (3) illusory body (*sgyu lus*) or self-blessing (*bdag byin rlabs*); (4) luminous clarity (*'od gsal*); and (5) union (*zung 'jug*). Body isolation (*lus dben*) is included in speech isolation as its preliminary.
- 139 See Chapter 7 on the six branches of vajrayoga in the Kālacakra tradition.
- 140 *sgyu ma sum brgyud*: KTGR believes these to be the dream illusion, intermediate state illusion, and deluded illusion (oral communication, 1/1/04). Alternately, they could refer to impure, pure, and totally pure illusory body, or to birth and death, dream, and existence, as indicated on p. 150.
- 141 *rmi lam*: in this term for dream, *rmi ba* means “to dream” and *lam*, which literally means “path,” in this case means “object” (*yul*) or “state” (*gnas*).
- 142 *srog gzugs*, literally “life-force forms” or possibly “animated forms,” are mental images in dream that are a creation of one’s vital energy (RT).
- 143 It could be taking place outside or inside the actual body (RT). It will go to other places if it separates from the physical body. If it does not separate, it is limited by the physical body (KTGR).
- 144 *nying 'khrul*: delusion on top of delusion, or double delusion. The practitioner who gives too much weight to dream experiences may be reminded with great amusement that this is even more delusional than trusting in their waking perceptions, by great masters such as Kalu Rinpoche (personal experience). Having said that, it may be noted that Jamgön Kongtrul’s autobiography consists largely of recounted dreams.
- 145 *'jig rten dang 'jig rten las 'das pa'i rnam thar*: sometimes translated as “exploits” or “adventures.”



- 146 KTGR's comments on this passage and the use of the word *'pho* here ("integrate," but usually "transfer" or "move"); the discursive thought of attachment to the reality of the illusory body (and it is only a thought) is integrated, or released, in the luminous clarity experience. It is the same thing indicated by the phrase "naturally arisen, naturally liberated" (*rang shar rang grol*), since it is beyond any transferring or thing to be transferred (*'pho bya 'pho byed las 'das pa*).
- 147 It seems valuable here not to lose the dual meaning of *snang ba* as both "appearance" or "perception" and "light" or "luminosity."
- 148 *'Dus pa'i 'grel pa*: Ronyam Dorjé's commentary on the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, based on that of his teacher Marpa (*BA*, 418).
- 149 *bKa' dpe phyi ma* (Toh. 2333), f. 274b2-4.
- 150 Although the spelling in all copies is *rtog pa*, usually understood as concept or discursive thought, KTGR feels it is best translated here in the ultimate sense as "realization" (*rtogs pa*). However, he notes that from the point of view of the third turning on buddha nature, the luminous clarity of concepts and thoughts is not contradictory (personal communication, 11/29/05).
- 151 *mdo sde pa*: the "Followers of Sūtras." The Sautrāntika was a philosophical school of early Buddhism that developed around 150 C.E. Its adherents based their philosophy only on the sūtras, rejecting the abhidharma theories. They posit a refined consciousness, an uninterrupted succession of moments that persist from one rebirth to the next. See Chapter 3 in *Treasury of Knowledge: Frameworks of Buddhist Philosophy*.
- 152 *sems tsam pa*: adherents of the "Mind-only" school of Mahayana Buddhism that developed in the fourth century, originating with Asaṅga (Thog med, c. 350 C.E.) and Vasubandhu (dByig gnyen), and based on the scriptures of the third turning of the wheel of Dharma. This school asserts the reflexively aware or self-cognizing (*rang rig*) mind as the ultimate reality and identifies luminous clarity or emptiness as the absence of the subject-object dualism that obscures pure consciousness. See Chapter 6 in *Frameworks of Buddhist Philosophy*.
- 153 *dbu ma pa*: adherents of the Middle Way or Centrist school of Mahayana Buddhism. Madhyamaka is based on the philosophy of Nāgārjuna and holds the teachings on the intrinsic emptiness of all phenomena taught in the second turning of the wheel of dharma to be the definitive meaning. For Kongtrul's explanation of all these philosophical schools, see *TOK* 2: 442-560, and its translation, *The Treasury of Knowledge: Frameworks of Buddhist Philosophy: A Systematic Presentation of the Cause-based Philosophical Vehicles*, translated by Elizabeth Callahan. The Madhyamaka is found in Chapters 7-12.
- 154 'Phags Seng: Pakpa Namdrol De ('Phags pa rnam grol sde) a fifth-century Indian scholar, student of Vasubandhu, who wrote a commentary on the *Ornament of Clear Realization*; and Sengé Zangpo (Seng ge bzang po, or Haribhadra, eighth c.), an important Indian scholar of the prajñāpāramitā and yogācāra-svātantra-madhyamaka school, disciple of Śāntarakṣita and Vairocana, author of *brGyad stong 'grel chen* and *'Grel pa don gsal* (KTGR).

- 155 This represents an intrinsic emptiness interpretation of the *Highest Continuum* (KTGR). Intrinsic emptiness (*rang stong*) and extrinsic emptiness (*gzhan stong*) are two interpretations of the meaning of emptiness that developed in Tibet. Intrinsic emptiness means that all phenomena are empty of intrinsic nature or existence, and that this emptiness itself is buddha nature. The extrinsic or other-empty philosophy asserts that mind is empty of incidental or extrinsic defilements that temporarily seem to obscure its true nature, which is the luminous clarity of buddha nature. The *Mahayana Highest Continuum* (Skt. *Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra* or *Uttaratantra*) by Maitreya and Asaṅga, the most important commentary on the buddha nature theory (*tathāgatagarbha*), generally seems to present this latter view, as Kongtrul's discussion demonstrates, although it has been interpreted according to both. See *The Buddha Within* by S. K. Hookham or *The Buddha from Dolpo* by Cyrus Stearns.
- 156 [*Theg pa chen po*] *rgyud bla* [*ma'i bstan bcos*], Skt. *Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra* (Toh. 4024), f.63b4-5 (verse 199).
- 157 *sun phyung*, from *sun 'byin pa*: to disown; to be disenchanted; or to undermine and disprove [another's philosophical position]. In other words, in the system of the causal vehicle of the sutras, one must become convinced through logical analysis that objects have no true existence, and then attachment to them ceases. But in the highest tantric vehicle, first mind itself is realized to be naturally free of stains (i.e., extrinsically empty) and then its true luminous nature becomes manifest.
- 158 *mDor bsdus dang po*: the first chapter of *Stainless Light* (*Dri med 'od*, Skt. *Vimala-prabhā*) by Puṇḍarika, the great commentary on the *Kālacakra Tantra* (Toh. 1347), verses 51-52.
- 159 The second verse of *Mahāmudrā Esoteric Instructions* (*Phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag*, Skt. *Mahāmudropadeśa*) (Toh. 2303), also known as the *Ganges Mahāmudrā* (*Gang ga ma*) because it was taught by Telopa on the banks of the Ganges River.
- 160 *rnal 'byor pa'i mngon sum* [*tshad ma*]: Of the four types of direct valid cognition (*mngon sum tshad ma bzhi*), yogic direct valid cognition is a nonconceptual and unconfused state of mind that arises within or through meditation. There are many types of this; here it is the profound experience that is produced through the application of completion phase practice.
- 161 *rnam pa dang bcas pa'i stong nyid*: This is emptiness inseparable from form. What kind of emptiness has no form? Emptiness inseparable from great bliss (KTGR). See Chapter 7, notes 35 and 37.
- 162 *sor sdud*, Skt. *pratyaḥhāra*, individual withdrawal or sense withdrawal, is the first of the six branches of yoga in the Kālacakra system, also described in the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* and elsewhere. See Chapter 7 on the Six-Branch Yoga.
- 163 The *rāhula* energy current refers to the energy current of the central channel, since it is strong and powerful like the planet Rāhula, which is said to cause eclipses. Moon and sun are the energy currents in the right and left channels (KTGR).

- 164 As above, the support is the channels and so on of the vajra body and the supported is the luminous clarity of mind, or (according to KTGR) great bliss.
- 165 *mngon [par] byang [chub pa]*, Skt. *abhisambodhi*: the factors of manifesting awakening or enlightenment (Skt. *bodhi*). Generally there are two sets of five factors, one set that represents the final moment of a bodhisattva's attainment of enlightenment, and another set that constitutes the particular procedures for followers to practice on the path, which are specifically connected with the stages of the visualization process. See *SBT*, 414-5, n. 45. From the following discussion, it seems clear that there are many kinds of awakening factors.
- 166 These are references to the three lights or appearances (*snang gsum*), which in forward order are light (*snang ba*), increase (*mched*), and culmination or full culmination (*nyer thob*), and in reverse order are the opposite. Here the order is different than either, for which KTGR had no explanation.
- 167 *stong pa bzhi*: the four empties, corresponding to the four lights: light, increase, culmination, and full culmination (or luminous clarity itself). See notes 9 and 56.
- 168 *rlung gi rlung*: of the five inner energy currents or *prāṇa* (*nang gi rlung lnga*) associated with the five elements ('*byung ba lnga'i rlung lnga*'), this is the green current of wind. The others are the yellow earth current (*sa rlung ser po*), the red fire current (*me rlung dmar po*), the white water current (*chu rlung dkar po*), and the dark blue space current (*nam mkha'i rlung mthing ga*).
- 169 *'Jam dpal zhal lung*, Skt. *Mañjuśrīmukhāgama* (Toh. 1853).
- 170 The vital essence, which is the seed of great bliss, is visualized in the shape of "seed syllables" ('*bru yig*) of the alphabet in the various locations within the central channel of the vajra body. The practitioner focuses concentration on different chakras.
- 171 Thanks to Ari Goldfield for helping to clarify this difficult passage.
- 172 Lva ba pa, or bLa ma dGe slong, Skt. Kambalapāda, was a tenth-century master who, with others, discovered the yoginī tantras in the country of Oḍḍiyāna (*BA*, 753), and was important in the lineage of *Guhyasamāja*. He was known as the Sleeping Bhikṣu (monk) because he is said to have slept for three years at the gate of king Indrabhūti's palace (*BA*, 362). A *bhasuku* or *bhusuku* is similar to a mendicant (*sprang bu*), that is, free of purposeful action (*bya bral pa*) (KTGR 2005). Sleeping for three years would probably qualify!
- 173 They are elaborate, unelaborate, and very unelaborate.
- 174 *rNam snang mngon byang*, Skt. *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi*, also known as the *Mahāvairocanasūtra* (Toh. 494).
- 175 Clouds, darkness, and sunlight (KTGR).
- 176 *bKa' dpe phyi ma* (Toh. 2333), f. 274b4. The stage of union (*zung 'jug gi rim pa*) is the fifth of the five stages. *Zung du 'jug pa* means to enter a state of primordial union.
- 177 Zhamarpa Kachö Wangpo. See note 61.

- 178 *Bar do yid bzhin snying po'i bde khrid*: not located.
- 179 *mNgon pa kun btus*, Skt. *Abhidharmasamuccaya* (Toh. 4049): one of the major works by Asaṅga himself and not attributed to Maitreya. This text is often quoted as a source for extrinsic emptiness (*gzhan stong*) philosophy, for example in the *Mahayana Highest Continuum*.
- 180 *sPyod bsdud [pa'i sgron me]*, Skt. *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, by Āryadeva (Toh. 1803), f. 80b5-7.
- 181 *theg dman gyi bstan bcos mdzod*: The original *Abhidharmapiṭaka* ("Basket of Higher Knowledge" or "Phenomenology") of the Sarvāstivādin canon consisted of seven treatises (*bstan bcos*, Skt. *śāstra*), of which only one can be found in Tibetan translation. However, Vasubandhu's *Abhidharma Treasury* (*Chos mngon pa'i mdzod*, Skt. *Abhidharmakośakārikā*, Toh. 4089) is believed to summarize all these texts.
- 182 The luminous clarity that one is practicing in the six dharma and other completion phase practices is called luminous clarity of the path (*lam*) or of the child (*bu*), in relationship to the inherent and primordial luminous clarity of the ground (*gzhi*), which is called the "mother" (*ma*). When, through cultivating the path, the ground luminous clarity is recognized and integrated, it is called mother and child meeting (*ma bu 'phrad pa*) or mother and child uniting (*ma bu sbyor ba*).
- 183 "Sun and moon" refers to the right and left channels, and "rāhula" to the central channel. When the energy currents move through the right and left channels, they are considered deluded or dualistic, but when they are brought into the central channel, dualistic conceptions dissolve.
- 184 *kham drug ldan*: these are the elements of earth (*sa*), water (*chu*), fire (*me*), wind (*rlung*), space (*nam mkha*), and consciousness (*rnam shes*) or pristine awareness (*ye shes*). Having these six constituents, a being is fit to be a buddha.
- 185 It is taught that the orifice through which the consciousness departs is determined by the realm into which the being will be born, which of course depends on its karma. The nine orifices through which the consciousness can transfer (*rnam shes 'pho ba'i bu ga dgu*) are the crown aperture (*tshangs bug*), the point between the eyebrows (*smiṃ mtshams*), the eyes (*miḡ*), the ears (*rna ba*), the nose (*sna*), the mouth (*kha*), the navel (*lte ba*), the urinary tract opening (*chu lam*), and the anus (*bshang lam*).
- 186 *'jigs pa'i sgra bzhi*: the expression of the four energy currents, they are the roar of collapsing mountains, the sound of blazing forests, the crashing of tumultuous seas, and the shrieking of a gale like the winds at the end of time (Kangyur Rinpoche, *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, 280-1).
- 187 *ya nga'i g.yang sa gsum*: the embodiment of hatred, desire, and confusion, the three chasmic precipices are white as ash, dark red, and black (*ibid.*, 281).
- 188 *nges pa'i rtags drug*: the usual list, however, is of five definite signs that one is in the intermediate state of existence: (1) one leaves no footprints, shadow or sounds from the body, (2) one can move unimpeded through matter, (3) one has miraculous power, (4) one's voice is not heard by relatives, and (5) one cannot see the sun or

moon (because there is no inner sun and moon of bodhicitta). Then, there are six indefinite signs (*ma nges pa'i rtags drug*): location, resting place, behavior, sustenance, companionship, and mental condition. See Kangyur Rinpoche's description of these last six in *Treasury of Precious Qualities*, 279–81.

- 189 *Zhal lung*: possibly the now famous *Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* by Paltrul Rinpoche (dPal sprul O rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po, 1808–1887), where there is relevant discussion on the intermediate state (see p. 351–65). However, because of the near contemporary dates with Kongtrul, I am inclined to think this refers to the *Oral Teachings of Mañjuśrī* (*'Jam dpal zhal lung*, Skt. *Mañjuśrīmukhāgama*, Toh. 1853), which has been quoted several times earlier.
- 190 *ming bzhi 'khyams po*: the four names refer to the four non-form aggregates (Skt. *skandha*) of feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness.
- 191 *dri za*: interpreted here as a descriptive activity, the intermediate state being or disembodied consciousness is traditionally called a “smell-eater” (Skt. *gandharva*), which is also the name for spirits who take sustenance from odors.
- 192 *rnam byang 'od kyi lam lnga*: that is, of perfection or enlightenment, the total purity from obscuration.
- 193 *Thabs lam tshigs bcad ma* by Dorjé Gyalpo (rDo rje rgyal po, 1110–1170).
- 194 *Zhal lung*: probably *'Jam dpal zhal lung*, Skt. *Mañjuśrīmukhāgama* (Toh. 1853). See note 189.
- 195 Bha ba bha dra: One of the twelve masters who were renowned at the monastic university of Vikramaśīla. This is probably a reference to his *Explanation of Vajradāka Tantra* (rGyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal rdo rje mkha' 'gro shes bya ba'i rnam par bshad pa, Skt. *Śrīvajradākanāmamahātāntrarājavivṛti*) (Toh. 1415).
- 196 One visualizes one's ordinary body as the outer hollowness or empty enclosure (*stong ra*) and the central channel within it as the inner hollowness.
- 197 The three syllables are *om*, *āḥ*, *hūṃ* that are applied to the inhalation, holding, and exhalation of the breath as visualizations. They are mental syllables because they are not actually recited.
- 198 That is, at the actual time of death. Continuing to practice transference after one has successfully generated the signs of accomplishing it is said to shorten one's life and possibly result in accidental suicide.
- 199 *skye med kyi yig 'bru*: the stainless white “*a*” (KTGR).
- 200 *dgu gsum* in both texts should be *dus gsum* (KTGR).
- 201 *dbyangs gsal phyed dang gsum pa'i sbyor ba*: This passage is quite obscure and I am unable to find textual reference to it. *dbyangs gsal* means vowel and consonant, and usually refers to the vowels and consonants of the Sanskrit alphabet. KTGR suggests that it could refer to the syllable “*pha*”—the “*pha*” as one syllable and then the reverse “*ta*” (which represents the retroflexive or cerebral ṭ in Sanskrit) is one

and a half. So it could be an opaque instruction to shout “*phaṭ*” (KTGR, email communication via Ari Goldfield, 1/13/06). Rinpoche also said that it means to recite *he ka* and *ka hek*.

- 202 [*Rim lnga*] *bsdus gsal* (Toh. 2333), ff. 277b7–278a1.
- 203 *sNyan brgyud rdo rje'i tshig rkang*, Skt. *Karṇatantravajrapada*, by Nāropa (Toh. 2338), f. 303b2–3.
- 204 *Chos drug dril ba*: This is part of a song that Nāropa sang to Marpa, as recorded in *The Liberation Story of the Translator Marpa Lotsāwa: Meaningful to Behold* (sGra sgyur mar pa lo tsā'i rnam par thar pa mthong ba don yod pa), f. 116. There are differences in the second and fourth lines of the song as presented here. In Marpa's biography, line 2 reads “the sacred object is the qualified body of another” (*gzhan lus mtshan ldan dam pa'i yul* instead of *gzhan ldan yul gyi gnad*) and line 4 reads “through contingency of energy current chakras” (*rten 'brel rlung gi 'khor lo yis* instead of *thig le rlung sems 'khrul 'khor gyis*). See Tsang Nyön Heruka, *The Life of Marpa the Translator*, 95–7.
- 205 *lhan cig skyes pa* (Skt. *sahaja*) means literally “occurring together since the beginning” (*thog ma nas mnyam por byung ba*). It is translated as “coemergent” or “connate” and, by extension, “innate,” “inherent,” or “natural” (*sahaja* was also sometimes translated as *rang bzhin gyis* in Tibetan). *Lhan cig skyes sbyor* can be translated as “joined coemergence.” On this term, Kongtrul quotes Gampopa: “The triad of mind, concepts, and dharmakāya first emerged together. Since the instructions join them in one, shouldn't one say ‘joined coemergence?’” (*sems dang rnam rtog chos sku gsum/ dang por lhan cig skyes pa stel gdams pas gcig tu sbyor ba'i phyir/ lhan cig skyes sbyor mi zer ram/*) (DZ, vol. 18, f. 431).
- 206 Reading *dbang las skyes pa'i* for *ba las skyes pa'i* (TOK 3: 375), as it appears in the same exact description of sutra and mantra mahāmudrā in Kongtrul's *Catalogue* (DZ, vol. 18, f. 430).
- 207 Dwags po rin po che (“Precious One from Dakpo”) is Gampopa (sGam po pa bSod nam rin chen, 1079–1154). See note 46.
- 208 Maitrīpa (mNga' bdag me, 1007/1012–1085), also known as Advayavajra (Nyi su med pa'i rdo rje, BA, 731) was a Brahmin scholar from Nepal who became a Buddhist when he met Nāropa. He became a monk at Vikramaśīla Monastery, where he received the ordination name of Maitripagupta and studied with Śāntipa and others. He was evicted from the monastery on the grounds of having been seen drinking beer in the company of a woman. Later he became a student of the peerless yogin Śavari (TOK 2: 527). Maitrīpa is particularly linked with the transmission of mahāmudrā. His students include Sahajavajra, Śūnyatāsamādhi, Vajrapāṇi, Rāmapala, and the Tibetans Kyungpo Naljor of the Shangpa Kagyu and Marpa the Translator.
- 209 *bram ze chen po*: The great Brahmin is Saraha, born as Rāhula in the region of Lada. Among his many teachers were Viṣukalpa, King of Odiviṣa and Avitarka who, it is said, were initiated into the *Guhyasamāja* in the country of Oḍḍiyāna by a nāga who had assumed the form of a yoginī. Rāhula became known as Saraha when he

adopted the lifestyle of a yogin. From Oḍḍiyāna, Saraha recovered many volumes of tantras, such as the *Buddhakapāla*, and composed commentaries on them. Before his time, the yoga tantras and highest yoga tantras were known only through mystic visions beheld by a few adepts, and these did not endure. After Saraha, these tantras spread far and wide and their transmissions continued without interruption. For this reason, he is acknowledged to be the first known pioneer of the tantras and the forefather of tantric adepts. He is an important source for the transmission of mahāmudrā in the Kagyu lineage.

- 210 *De kho na nyid bcu pa*, Skt. *Tattvadaśaka*, by Maitripa: found in Toh. 2236, where it is attributed to Advayavajra, a later name of Maitripa (see note 208). There are three different texts of the same Tibetan name listed in the Tengyur, authored by Drimé Drakpa (Dri med grags pa), Ḍombipa, and Gyenpa (rGyan pa), and a commentary by Sahajavajra (Toh. 2254).
- 211 This verse is found in the sutras and in Maitreya's *Ornament of Clear Realization* (*Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, Toh. 3726) and in *Mahayana Highest Continuum* (*Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra*, Toh. 4024), verse 154.
- 212 [*Theg pa chen po*] *rgyud bla [ma'i bstan bcos]*, Skt. *Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra* (Toh. 4024), f. 61b6 (verse 155).
- 213 From *Revealing the Essence* (*sNying po bstan pa*), a commentary on the buddha nature by the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé, lines 50–53.
- 214 Mother (*yum*) refers to the Perfection of Wisdom sutras. This quotation in particular is famous from the *Heart Sutra* (*Shes snying*, Skt. *Bhagavatīprajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*) (Toh. 21).
- 215 The “Great Paṇḍita”: Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyaltsen (Sa skya paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, 1182–1251), one of the five main patriarchs of the Sakya lineage and one of the great scholars of Tibet. He sometimes took a stand against tenets of the Kagyus, as in this example, where he seems to be denying that there is such a designation as sutra mahāmudrā. This discussion follows that in *BA*, 724–5. For the life of Sakya Paṇḍita, see Stearns, *Luminous Lives*, 159–69.
- 216 *De kho na nyid la 'jug pa*, Skt. *Tattvāvatāra* (Toh. 3709), by Jñānakīrti (Ye shes grags pa).
- 217 Sahajavajra (Lhan skyes rdo rje, eleventh–twelfth century) was a wine merchant in the Guhyasamāja lineage (*BA*, 362), a student of Maitripa (the author of *Ten Verses on Suchness*). The reference is to the *Commentary on the Ten Verses on Suchness* (*De kho na nyid bcu pa'i gral pa*, Skt. *Tattvadaśakaṭīkā*, Toh. 2254). More on this follows in the sutra mahāmudrā section. Also this whole discussion appears verbatim in *BA*, 724–5.
- 218 *Phyag chen lhan cig skyes sbyor go cha gnyis pa*. The “lord” (*jo bo*) usually refers to Atiśa Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna (982–1054), the source of the Kadampa tradition. As indicated by Mikyö Dorjé in the quote that follows, it would seem that the teachings on the union of calm abiding and higher insight in a later section of Atiśa's

*Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* are considered esoteric instructions and have been dubbed “joined coemergent mahāmudrā.” See especially verses 58–59.

- 219 The four yogas are the specific progressive stages of the mahāmudrā path. They are presented in the following section. Concerning this discussion, which also appears in *The Blue Annals*, the translator George Roerich adds, “Present day Tibetan scholars, especially those belonging to the dGe-lugs-pa school, do not admit the Mahāmudrā doctrine as belonging to the Sūtra class. However in a treatise entitled ‘dGe-ldan Phyag-rgya chen-po’...it is maintained that there had existed a Mahāmudrā doctrine belonging to the Prajñāpāramitā class” (725).
- 220 [*mChog gi*] *Dang po’i sangs rgyas kyi rgyud*, Skt. *Paramādibuddha*, or the *Kālacakra Condensed Tantra* (Skt. *Lagbutantra*) (Toh. 362).
- 221 *yan lag bdun ldan gyi rdo rje ’chang*: As described in *TOK* 3: 658, these are (1) perfect splendor, the complete perfection of the major and minor marks; (2) embrace, union with the consort of self-appearance; (3) great bliss, abiding in the essence of natural and coemergent bliss; (4) no inherent nature, the emptiness that is the freedom from all fabrications; (5) replete with compassion, permanent endowment with nonreferential compassion for sentient beings; (6) uninterrupted, permanent continuity of both kāyas and pristine awarenesses; (7) free from cessation, enlightened mind does not enter the cessation that is empty of appearances, and the continuity of the form kāyas is also unceasing. See *SBT*, 474, n. 68.
- 222 For instance, *Joined Coemergent Mahāmudrā Guidebook* (*Phyag chen lhan cig skyes sbyor gyi khrid yig*) by Rangjung Dorjé (DZ, vol. 9).
- 223 A reference to the previous quotation from the *Mahayana Highest Continuum* (Toh. 4024), verse 154; see p. 000..
- 224 From Nāgārjuna’s *Root Verses of the Middle Way Called Wisdom* (*dBu ma’i rtsa ba’i tshig le’ur byas pa shes rab ces bya ba*, Skt. *Prajñānāmamūlamadhyamakārikā*) (Toh. 1798), Chapter 15 (“Examination of Intrinsic Nature”), verse 10.
- 225 *De kho na nyid bcu pa’i [rgya cher] ’grel pa*, Skt. *Tattvadaśakaṭīkā* (Toh. 2254).
- 226 *gnas lugs*, *’khrul lugs*, *yin lugs*: According to KTGR, the abiding nature (*gnas lugs*) and the way it is or the way of being (*yin lugs*) are basically the same, but there is a threefold progression in how they are presented. First, the abiding nature of the basic ground is introduced. Then, the manner in which one is confused (*’khrul lugs*) about that nature and the quality of the confusion is explained. Finally, the view of mahāmudrā is pointed out within that confusion. Thanks to Ari Goldfield for these comments.
- 227 *rang mtshan*: phenomena that are conventionally established through their own specific characteristics.
- 228 *gal shor gyi ’phrang bcad*: *gal* in both texts is a mistake for *gol*.
- 229 Both texts have *bzbin sbyor*, a mistake for *bzhi sbyor*. The two sets of four preliminaries that are mentioned next are the four thoughts to turn the mind, which are called the common preliminaries, and refuge and bodhicitta, accumulation, puri-



fication, and guru yoga, which are the four uncommon preliminaries. The first set turns one's mind towards the dharma, and the dharma becomes the path through the second set.

- 230 *Lhan skyes bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i rgyud*: not located.
- 231 This is a reference to a very famous prayer to the Kagyu lineage called "The Short Vajradhara" (*rDo rje 'chang thung ma*) said to have been composed by Bengar Jampal Zangpo when he realized mahāmudrā. Bengar Jampal Zangpo (Ban sgar 'Jam dpal bzang po, fifteenth c.) was the disciple of the sixth Karmapa and the guru of the seventh.
- 232 *rnal 'byor bzhi*: The four yogas: (1) one-pointedness (*rtse gcig*), since the mind focuses single-pointedly on a reference point; (2) freedom from elaborations (*spros bral*), since there is realization without mental elaboration; (3) one taste (*ro gcig*), since there is realization of appearance and mind as one taste; and (4) nonmeditation (*sgom med*), since there is no meditation with characteristics (*BD* 1: 1579). A good description of all twelve levels individually is found in Wangchuk Dorje, *Mahāmudrā: The Ocean of Definitive Meaning*, 211–26.
- 233 *Ali Kali Inconceivable Secret [Great River] Tantra* (*A' li ka' li gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i [chu klung chen po'i] rgyud*, Skt. *Alikaguhyatsindhapanibhaya*); in *DZ*, vol. 13.
- 234 *seng ge bsgyings pa'i ting nge 'dzin*: this meditative absorption (*ting nge 'dzin*, Skt. *śamādhi*) is described in *The Flower Ornament Sutra* (*Āvatamsaka Sūtra*, Toh. 44).
- 235 *sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin*: the absorption in the illusory nature of all things, taught in the *Sutra of Illusory-like Absorption* (*Mayopamāsamādhi Sūtra*, Toh. 130).
- 236 *dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin*: the *śamādhi* of bravery, "going-as-a-hero *śamādhi*" or "*śamādhi* of courageous movement"; described in the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* (Toh. 132).
- 237 *rdo rje lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin*: In the early vehicle, this absorption is the final stage of the tenth level which results in buddhahood. The illusory-like, heroic behavior, and vajra-like absorptions are known as the three meditative stabilities of mahayana (*theg chen gyi bsam gtan gsum*).
- 238 *Lang kar gshegs pa'i mdo*, Skt. *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (Toh. 107), a third-turning sutra.
- 239 *Zla 'od gzhon nus*: another name for Gampopa. In some accounts, Gampopa was an incarnation of a person named Dawö Zhönnu who received the teachings on the *King of Absorption Sutra* from the Buddha in a previous life.
- 240 *sPyan snga Chos kyi grags pa* (1453–1524), the fourth Zhamar incarnation.
- 241 *Phyag chen sgros 'bum*: in the Collected Works of Karma pa Mi bskyod rdo rje, vol. 15.
- 242 This dream would be interpreted as an auspicious sign that these teachings of the sutra mahāmudrā received from the Kadampa lineage would be heard by many peo-

ple and that they would be nourished by them. Such indications in dreams are followed closely by Tibetans. Gampopa interpreted the dream more specifically to mean that some people who are not fit for a higher approach should be trained in the stages of the path, while retreatants (the wild animals) would be sustained by the methods of Milarepa (Khenpo Könchog Gyaltsen, *The Great Kagyu Masters*, 189-90).

- 243 Jo nang btsun chen, Tāranātha (1575–1635) the great master, scholar, and historian associated with the Jonang monastery in Tsang, which was founded by Zhang Tukjé Tsöndru (Zhang Thugs rje brtson 'grus, 1243–1313). The monastery originally followed the Sakya tradition, but during the time of the Omniscient Dolpopa (Kun mkhyen Dol po pa, 1292–1361) it became the seat of an independent tradition, the Jonangpa, where the renowned extrinsic emptiness (*gzhan stong*) philosophy developed. Tāranātha was considered an incarnation of Kunga Drolchok (Kun dga' grol mchog, 1507–1565/6), another great master of the Jonang school, and Kongtrul regarded himself as an incarnation in this line. Tāranātha, like Kongtrul, practiced and taught a wide variety of tantric teachings from different lineages, and was unbiased (*ris med*) in his approach to realization, although the same might not be said for those who opposed him. See Stearns, *The Buddha from Dolpo*, 68–70. Also see Chapter 5 of this book.
- 244 The three appearances (*snang ba gsum*) are explained in the *Path with Its Fruition* (*lam 'bras*) teachings (see Chapter 3 in this book). They are impure appearance (*ma dag pa'i snang ba*), the appearances of yogic experience (*rnal 'byor nyams kyi snang ba*), and the pure appearance (*dag pa'i snang ba*). Impure appearances describe the stage of things as they are known in the world when there is no analysis of the nature of genuine reality. Appearances experienced by yogins describe the stage where appearances are experienced as illusory, at the stage of some analysis into the nature of genuine reality. Completely pure appearances describe the stage where appearances are realized to be of the nature of space, at the level of thorough analysis into the nature of genuine reality. The three appearances form a sutra explanation that is in harmony with vajrayāna teachings, and therefore Lord Jonangpa compares them to the sutra mahāmudrā tradition (KTGR).
- 245 *sGyu ma'i brtag pa'i le'u gnyis pa*, from the *Hevajra Tantra*, Part Two, Chapter 2, verse 34ab. *rnal 'byor gyis* should read *rnal 'byor 'dis* (EMC).
- 246 *rngul tsam* should be *rdul tsam*, meaning “many” (TR).
- 247 *Ye shes grub pa*, Skt. *Jñānasiddhi* (Toh. 2219).
- 248 Pakmo Drupa Dorjé Gyalpo (Phag mo gru pa rDo rje rgyal po, 1110–1170) was one of the three main disciples of Gampopa and before that a disciple of Sakya Kunga Nyingpo. He established the monastery of Dhensatil in Lhoka in Southern Tibet and founded the Pakdru Kagyu lineage, one of the four great (*che bzhi*) Kagyu lineages all started by disciples of Gampopa. Among many students of Pakmo Drupa, eight of his disciples developed Pakdru Kagyu into eight sub-schools. For his life story, see Khenpo Könchog Gyaltsen, *The Great Kagyu Masters*, 205–25.
- 249 'Jig rten gsum mgon (here, 'Jig rten mgon po, 1143–1217) was the founder of the Drigung Kagyu ('Dri gung bka' brgyud) lineage, one of the eight lesser (*chung*

*brgyad*, meaning “later”) Kagyu lineages, all started by disciples of Pakmo Drupa. See *ibid.*, 227–55.

250 At the time of the ground, the vital point (*gnad*) of the five practices targets the five afflictive emotions: awakening mind aims at anger, the yidam at pride, the guru at jealousy, mahāmudrā at stupidity, and the practice of dedication at desire. During practice on the path, the five special after-effects (*lag rjes*) are (1) meditation on relative awakening mind produces realization of ultimate awakening mind, (2) meditation on the yidam exhausts ordinary appearance and leads to meeting the pure deity, (3) meditation on the exemplary guru leads to realization of the ultimate guru, (4) meditation on mahāmudrā divests one of hope and fear about samsara or nirvana so that one can realize mahāmudrā, and (5) dedication accomplishes the welfare of oneself and others without effort. The five practices pacify the five negative spirits (*gdon*), respectively: the male negative spirit that is the cause of anger, the lord of death spirit that is the cause of pride, the *avitarka* spirit that is the cause of stupidity, the god spirit that is the cause of jealousy, and the female negative spirit that is the cause of desire. The five kinds of beings that are subdued (*’dul*) are, respectively, hell beings, humans, gods and demigods, animals, and hungry ghosts. The fruition of the five practices is the purification of the five afflictive emotions resulting in the five kāyas that embody the five pristine awarenesses: mirror-like, equality, all-accomplished, realm of reality, and discriminating awareness. I wish to thank the Drigung lama Drupon Thinley Ningo Rinpoché for this detailed information.

251 *Phyag chen lnga ldan*: the Fivefold Mahāmudrā is the special Drigung Kagyu system structured around those five topics just mentioned. These instructions have been translated by Khenpo Könchog Gyaltsen and Katherine Rogers in *The Garland of Mahāmudrā Practices*. The name “Fivefold Mahāmudrā” was first applied by Pakmo Drupa himself (*ibid.*, 13).

252 Karma pa Rang byung rol pa’i rdo rje: The third Karmapa was Rangjung Dorjé (1284–1339), and the fourth was Rolpai Dorjé (1340–1383). It is not clear which one is indicated here, though it was the former who initiated many of the most important teaching systems in the lineage.

253 Pullahari was a hillock near the ancient monastic university of Odantapur in East India, where Nāropa’s hermitage was located. Here Marpa is said to have spent seven months during his third trip to India and received many teachings from Nāropa, either directly or in visions. Another instruction to Marpa reminiscent of this one reads:

Beneath the foundation of Pullahari Monastery  
Are gathered the scattered Four Tantra Teachings;  
In the middle of the monastery  
Is established the meaning of the mother Tantra;  
At the summit of the monastery  
Is taught the meaning of the father Tantra.

(Khenpo Könchog Gyaltsen, *The Great Kagyu Masters*, 114).

- 254 The Upper Drukpa (*stod 'brug*) was founded by Götsangpa (rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje, 1189-1258) and was known to be like the “stars in the sky.” The Lower Drukpa (*smad 'brug*) was founded by Lorepa (Lo ras pa Dar ma dbang phyug, or Lo ras pa dBang phyug brtson 'grus, 1187-1250) and was known as “chiefs of the earth.” There was also a Middle Drukpa (*bar 'brug*) founded by Darma Sengé (Dar ma seng ge, 1177-1237), known as “nine lions” (*TOK* 1: 531). This lineage entered present-day Bhutan. The teaching lineages indicated by these geographical designations later became known as simply North and South Drukpa Kagyu, indicating roughly Tibet and Bhutan (Lama Kinley Wangchuk, personal communication, 4/4/04).
- 255 ['Gro mgon] gTsang pa rgya ras Ye shes rdo rje (1161-1211), the first Drukchen Rinpoché, a disciple of Lingré Pema Dorjé or Lingchen Repa (1128-1188), the founder of a branch of Pakmo Drupa originally called Lingré Kagyu. Tsangpa Gyaré changed the name to Drukpa Kagyu after founding the monastery of Namdruk (gNam 'brug, “Sky Dragon” or “Sky Thunder”). See Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 44.
- 256 (1) *bShad pa tshig gi skor*, (2) *gDams ngag nyams len gyi skor*, (3) *rTogs pa byin rlabs kyi skor*.
- 257 Six cycles of vital points on the path of method: (1) *Chos drug la bsre 'pho gnad kyi skor*, (2) *Brul tsho blo rdeg gi skor*, (3) *'Jug ldog spyi khyab kyi skor*, (4) *mNgon par rtogs pa'i skor*, (5) *Zhal gdams gnad kyi skor*, (6) *rTog pa lam khyer gnad 'don skor*.
- 258 *ro snyoms*: these three sections are mentioned here: *gTer mdzod bka' rgya can*, *Yang mdzod thugs kyi me long*, and *gSang mdzod sbas pa mig 'byed*. The catalogue for the cycles of Equal Taste (*ro snyoms kyi dkar chag*) says these are the quintessence of the teachings of Nāropa. There are also the *Six Cycles of Equal Taste (Ro snyoms skor drug)*, a treasure teaching concealed by Rechungpa and rediscovered by Tsangpa Gyaré (Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 44). The Six Equal Tastes are (1) taking conceptualization as a path, (2) taking delusion as a path, (3) taking illness as a path, (4) taking gods and demons as a path, (5) taking suffering as a path, and (6) taking death as a path (Lama Kinley Wangchuk).
- 259 *rten 'brel kho bo lugs*: a reference to Tsangpa Gyaré's great emphasis on the teachings of interdependent origination, an instruction that he received directly from seven buddhas, called *The Guidance of Seven Excellent Interdependent Connections (rTen 'brel rab bdun gyi khrid)* (Lama Kinley Wangchuk). Also see the Drukpa Kagyu Padma Karpo's *The Sequence of Meditation on Interdependence (rTen 'brel gyi sgom rim dam pa'i chos kyi za ma tog)* (DZ 10: 123-30).
- 260 The Eight Great Guidances of the Upper Drukpa (*khri chen brgyad*): (1) *lam zab mos gus kyi khrid*, (2) *phyag rgya chen po lhan cig skyes sbyor gyi khrid*, (3) *thabs lam kyed par can gyi khrid*, (4) *gsang spyod ldog sgom gyi khrid*, (5) *dag snang zhing sbyong gi khrid*, (6) *chos brgyad 'go snyoms kyi khrid*, (7) *byams snying rje'i khrid*, and (8) *rgyu 'bras rten 'brel gyi khrid*. These are taught in another exposition by Padma Karpo: *The Beautifying Ornament of the Eight Great Guidances (Khri chen brgyad mdzes par byed pa'i rgyan)* (DZ 10: 175-87). The Eight Lesser Guidances by the same author can be found in *Instructions of the Eight Lesser Guidances of the Precious*

- Drukpa: The Exclusive Distinct Teaching* ('Brug pa rin po che'i khrid chung brgyad kyi gdams pa kun la med pa'i khyad chos) (DZ 10: 189-208).
- 261 rGyal ba Yang dgon pa, or simply Yangönpa (1213-1287/8) was a disciple of Götsangpa (who is apparently the first "helper" [*tsa lag*]), and one of the main masters of the Drukpa Kagyu lineage.
- 262 *Ri chos skor gsum* in *Collected Writings of rGyal ba Yang dgon pa rGyal mtshan dpal*. The three cycles mentioned here are *dGos pa kun 'byung gi skor*, *sBas bshad kyi skor*, and *Bar do 'phrang sgrol gyi skor*.
- 263 'Ba' rab rGyal mtshan [dPal bzang po] (1310-1391), a great master of the Drukpa Kagyu. His text, called *The Summarized Essence of Mahāmudrā plus the Six Dharmas* (*Phyag chen chos drug bcas mdor bsdu snying por dril ba*), together with two others, is found in DZ 10: 349-82.
- 264 'Jam dbyangs Chos kyi grags pa (or Jamyang Chödrak for short) (1478-1523), the third Drukchen Rinpoche, master of both Kagyu and Nyingma. *Trilogy of Great Bliss* (*bDe chen skor gsum*) was not located.
- 265 The distinctive teaching of the Lower Drukpa Kagyu (*smad 'brug bka' brgyud kyi khyad chos*) are the *Five Capabilities* (*Thub pa lnga ldan*): (1) *Phyag rgya chen po 'chi thub*, (2) *gTum mo ras thub*, (3) *gSang spyod ri thub*, (4) *Nad gdon 'khrugs thub*, (5) *gNyen po rkyen thub*. Teachings on these can be found in *Guiding Instructions on the Five Capabilities: Naturally Arising Dharmakāya* (*Thub pa lnga ldan gdams khrid chos skur rang shar*) by Kongtrül himself (signing as Jamgön Guna). In the colophon to this text, he says that this very rare transmission is based on that of the Venerable Jonang Kunga Drolchok (DZ 10: 223-41).
- 266 Here Ngan rdzong sTon pa, but usually Ngam rdzong, a disciple of Milarepa (*BA*, 449).
- 267 The Kakrasaṃvara Hearing Lineage (*bDe mchog mkha' 'gro snyan brgyud*) from the *Treasury of Three Cycles of the Wish-fulfilling Gem* (*Yid bzhin nor bu skor gsum gyi mdzod*) is often referred to as *The Three Gem Cycles of the Kakrasaṃvara Ḍākinī Hearing Lineage* (*bDe mchog mkha' 'gro'i snyan rgyud nor bu skor gsum*). There are three main cycles of this: the Dakpo Hearing Lineage (*Dwags po snyan brgyud*), the Rechung Hearing Lineage, (*Ras chung snyan brgyud*), and the Ngamdzung Hearing Lineage (*Ngam rdzong snyan brgyud*).
- 268 *sindhūra*: the red dye powder used in ceremony to confer certain parts of an empowerment.
- 269 *Nor bu rnam gsum gyi man ngag*: see note 267.
- 270 There are nine cycle of the formless or disembodied ḍākinī (*Lus med mkha' 'gro'i skor dgu*) that were received by Telopa from the pristine awareness ḍākinī at the Gondhala Temple. The teachings were then transmitted to Nāropa, and then in part to Marpa, Milarepa, and their disciples. When Rechungpa went to India, he received them and brought them back to Tibet. They became a part of the Rechungpa Hearing Lineage (*Ras chung snyan brgyud*). They also became part of

the Zurmang Hearing Lineage maintained at the Zurmang monasteries in Eastern Tibet.

- 271 Gar dbang sPyan snga ba, probably the same as Chen-nga Chökyi Drakpa (sPyan snga Chos kyi grags pa), the fourth Zhamar Rinpoche (1453-1524), a disciple of the seventh Karmapa, Chödrak Gyatso (Chos grags rgya mtsho, 1454-1506).

## CHAPTER 5: SHANGPA KAGYU

- 1 Khyung po rnal 'byor, “Yogin of the Khyung (eagle) Clan,” is the founder of the Shangpa Kagyu lineage, a lineage entirely distinct from Marpa Kagyu or any of its subsects. (The word *bka' brgyud* literally means a lineage of precepts or teachings and may be used in that sense for any lineage.) Khyungpo Naljor's dates are given as 978-1127, for he is traditionally said to have lived for one hundred and fifty years. For discussion of variants see Kapstein, “The Shangs-pa Kagyu: An Unknown Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism,” 143, n. 8, and Zangpo, *Timeless Rapture*, 404, n. 35. Roerich (*BA*, 728) puts his birth at 1086. Khyungpo Naljor established his seat at Zhang-zhong, in the valley of Shang (Shangs) in Western Tsang, from which the lineage derives its name. For his life story see *BA*, 728-33; Zangpo, *Timeless Rapture*, 254-66; and Riggs, *Like an Illusion*, 44-92. For information on the Shangpa lineage see Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 53-7.
- 2 See Kongtrul's historical survey of the Shangpa Kagyu in *TOK* 1: 533-38, paraphrased in the introduction to this chapter.
- 3 Niguma and Sukhasiddhī were two ḍākinīs of pristine awareness (*ye shes kyi mkha' 'gro ma*) who heard the dharma directly from Buddha Vajradhara. These two women are considered the foremost among Khyungpo Naljor's one hundred and fifty gurus. Niguma was reputed to be the sister or spiritual partner of Nāropa, an uncertainty arising from scanty information and the indeterminate usage of the term *lcam* or *lcam mo* (“lady,” “sister,” “wife,” etc.). Most encounters with her have been described as taking place in dreams or visions, so any “historical” information is dubious. Sukhasiddhī was a disciple of the adept Virūpa (*BA*, 731), although this is not the same Virūpa responsible for the Lamdré tradition, but rather Eastern Virūpa (Shar phyogs Birwa pa). See below for the other masters named here.
- 4 *a'i stong ra*: the hollow or empty interior practice involves visualizing and reciting the syllable *a* (pronounced as in English “ah”) as it moves through the central channel and throughout the whole body (the hollow interiors) as purifying elixir. It is not the syllable itself that is hollow. In the preliminary practices (*sngon 'gro*) of the Shangpa Kagyu, this purification practice takes the place of the Vajrasattva hundred-syllable mantra purification practice done in many other lineages.
- 5 *Ye shes mkha' 'gro'i khyad 'phags kyi gdams pa bco lnga pa* in *Shangpa Texts*, vol. 6, f. 187 (appended to *Ni gu ma'i chos drug rdo rje tshig rkang*, ff. 161-232). Also found in *Shangpa Texts*, vol. 7, ff. 538-43, with *Thems yig* (see the following note). The basic Shangpa texts are also found in the Peking edition of the Tengyur but not in the Dergé edition.

- 6 *Them[s] yig*: a short summary of topics by Khyungpo Naljor on Niguma's *Vajra Lines*, found with several others texts, together entitled *Clear Lines of the Six Dharmas; Testimonial; Layout of the Ground, Path and Fruition; Fifteen Especially Exalted Instructions of the Ḍākinī of Pristine Awareness; and the Sixfold Illusory Body* (*Chos drug gi tshig gsal dang/ them[s] yig dang/ gzhi lam 'bras bu'i rnam bzbag dang/ khyad 'phags kyi gdams pa bco lnga/ sgyu lus drug ldan rnam[s]*). This quotation is found in vol. 7, f. 533.
- 7 According to Tāranātha (1575-1635) in his commentary on Niguma's Six Dharmas, *Profound Meaning Expanded: A Guidance Manual for the Six Dharmas of Niguma*, better known simply as "*Tangdalma*" (*Thang brdal ma*), these three supplications are supplication to the guru for the pacification of disease and negative spirits, for the removal of sins and obscurations, and for the arising of meditative absorption.
- 8 That is, since visualization is the path or cause, and the results are various signs of success in the meditation, those signs are not technically creation phase visualization practices, but rather the result of it.
- 9 *Ni gu ma'i chos drug rdo rje tshig rkang* (*Shangpa Texts*, vol. 6, ff. 163-4, or *DZ*, vol. 11, f. 9, including interlinear commentary by Khyungpo Naljor).
- 10 In *Fifteen Especially Exalted Instructions of the Ḍākinī of Pristine Awareness* (*Ye shes mkha' 'gro'i khyad 'phags kyi gdams pa bco lnga*), *Shangpa Texts*, vol. 6, ff. 187-8.
- 11 The wild fire of inner heat (*gtum mo me rgod*) is actually the name of this visualization in the inner heat preliminary (Tāranātha, *Profound Meaning Expanded*, f. 358).
- 12 *dpyid thig*: "These are the *a* and *ham*. They are so called because the yoga focusing upon them produces a pleasant feeling of well-being, like the spring after a hard winter" (Dezhung Rinpoché, cited in Kapstein, "Kong-sprul Rin-po-che on the Shangs-pa bKa'-brgyud," 45).
- 13 These four techniques of inner heat—"eating the food" (*zas su za ba*), "wearing the clothing" (*gos su gyon pa*), "spreading the seat" (*gdan du 'ding ba*), and "riding the horse" (*rta ru zhon pa*)—are described in Tāranātha's *Profound Meaning Expanded*, ff. 363-77.
- 14 *srid pa'i dbang*: This involves visualizing receiving the four empowerments from one's guru in a technique very similar to those found in guru yoga practices. Tāranātha comments: "All purposes and vital points are encompassed by receiving the four empowerments from the guru's body" (*ibid.*, f. 380).
- 15 In *Fifteen Especially Exalted Instructions of the Ḍākinī of Pristine Awareness* (*Ye shes mkha' 'gro'i khyad 'phags kyi gdams pa bco lnga*), f. 188.
- 16 Instructions concerning the fact that everything is none other than self-visualization of guru/yidam, whether thoughts or outer appearances.
- 17 *sad pa bzhi*: according to Tāranātha (*op. cit.*, f. 396), one must be free of these four challenges: too much activity challenges dharma practice, too much moving and resettling challenges dharma practice, having too many attitudes challenges

dharma practice, and too much talk challenges dharma practice. In the Lamdré section, another set of *sad pa bzhi* has been translated as “four tests,” according to the *Explication for Nyak* (see Chapter 3, note 32).

- 18 *'char byed yon tan tshogs drug*: (1) warmth arising, (2) vital essences stabilized, (3) dreams refined and expanded, (4) the six realms appearing, (5) sentient beings ripened and liberated, and (6) illusion arising naturally (Tāranātha, *Profound Meaning Expanded*, f. 405).
- 19 From *Fifteen Especially Exalted Instructions of the Ḍākinī of Pristine Awareness*, f. 188. However in the *Vajra Lines* the first line reads *gnyis 'khrul bden med bde bar 'char*, rather than as here, *nying 'khrul bden med bde bar shar*. This would render it as “two delusions, lacking validity, arise as bliss.” The interlinear notes explain that “two” means daytime and nighttime experiences, and that if one comprehends them both as dream, then they arise as bliss without true existence. In Kongtrul’s text, *nying 'khrul* (“double delusion”), on the other hand, refers to the fact that dreaming is even more unreal and illusory than waking life—delusion on top of delusion, so to speak.
- 20 *thig le dbang bzhi*: these involve four visualizations of the red and white vital essences while sustaining the recognition that one is dreaming (Tāranātha, *Profound Meaning Expanded*, ff. 408-12). The four empowerments are as follows: the vital essence circling in the heart is the vase empowerment, touching is the secret empowerment, touching bliss is the wisdom empowerment, and one dissolving into the other is the fourth empowerment. See *Guidance on Niguma’s Six Dharmas* (*Ni gu chos drug gi kbrid*), vol. 7, f. 551.
- 21 *'phyug med kyi gnad dgu* (*'phyug med* in text 1, but usually spelled *'chug med*, as in text 2 and commentaries): the nine are three concerning time, three concerning posture, and three concerning the object of meditation (Tāranātha, *Profound Meaning Expanded*, f. 414).
- 22 See instructions on the dream yoga in the Marpa Kagyu section of this book (*TOK* 3: 355) where the list of four varies slightly: excessive emptiness, sleepiness, wakefulness, and complacency.
- 23 *gsal stong nam mkha' mtha' dbus med/ 'di ni 'od gsal mtshan nyid yin*. This was not found in the *Vajra Lines*, but in *Fifteen Especially Exalted Instructions of the Ḍākinī of Pristine Awareness*, where the first line reads: *gsal stong 'dzin med bde ba che*, “clarity-emptiness without fixation is great bliss” (*Shangpa Texts*, vol. 6, f. 189).
- 24 *'dzin pa'i thabs gsum*: Grasping luminous clarity based on Nairātmyā, the syllable *a*, or the guru (Tāranātha, *Profound Meaning Expanded*, f. 455).
- 25 *dag pa gnyis ldan*: inherent or primordial purity and the natural purity of having removed all temporary obscurations (*ngo bo ye dag dang rang bzhin gsal dag or rang bzhin gyis rnam par dag pa dang glo bur gyi dri ma dag pa*).
- 26 *'char sgo*: the media or doors of perception, here referring to the specific emergence of signs and sensations of practice that one should recognize. According to Tāranātha (*Profound Meaning Expanded*, f. 476), they are the modes of emergence



- of clarity (*gsal ba'i 'char sgo*), nonthought (*mi rtog pa'i 'char sgo*), bliss (*bde ba'i 'char sgo*), and union (*zung 'jug gi 'char sgo*).
- 27 *bsre ba sgyu lus*: as mentioned above, the four blendings are of inseparable clarity and emptiness, sitting meditation and subsequent attainment or post-meditation, day and night, and bliss and emptiness (Tāranātha, *Profound Meaning Expanded*, f. 481).
- 28 *'chi kar dran pas mngon 'tshang rgyal 'di ni 'pho ba'i mtshan nyid yin*. Again, this is found in *Fifteen Especially Exalted Instructions of the Ḍākinī of Pristine Awareness* (f. 189), where the first line reads *'chi kar dran pas mngon sangs rgyas*, carrying the same meaning.
- 29 [*Ni gu ma'i chos drug*] *rDo rje tshig rkang*, (DZ, vol. 11, f. 5a1-2). There is one cryptic verse of the actual *Vajra Lines* on the subject of transference, as with each of the other five yogas, and then that is filled with interlinear notes by Khyungpo Naljor. It is in his notes and later rephrasing of the original that we find mention of these four kinds of transference: *chos sku de bzhin nyid kyi 'pho bal zung 'jug yi dam gyi 'pho bal byin rlabs bla ma'i 'pho bal 'chugs med mkha' spyod kyi 'pho ba*.
- 30 *Ye shes skar khung ma*: a version of transference in which the consciousness is propelled out the crown aperture (the “skylight”) and blended with the sky and space. It is described in Tāranātha’s *Profound Meaning Expanded* (ff. 489-95), and again in Kongtrul’s *Practice in One Sitting* (*sTan thog gcig ma*), in *Shangpa Texts*, vol. 3, ff. 548-50.
- 31 In *Fifteen Especially Exalted Instructions of the Ḍākinī of Pristine Awareness*, f. 189.
- 32 Another, perhaps creative, interpretation often heard in oral teachings is that the two sides of the amulet box (*ga'u*) represent the unity of pairs such as method and wisdom or appearance and emptiness. (See Kapstein, “The Shangs-pa Kagyu: An Unknown Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism,” 143-4, n. 20, citing Thu'u-bkwan.) Concerning that, Tāranātha had this to say: “Other explanations of the term such as that the ‘jewel’ of the awareness mind is inserted in the amulet box of method and wisdom is just utterly meaningless gossip” (*thabs shes nyi kyi ga'ur rig pa sems kyi nor bu bcug pa sogs kyi sgra bshad byed pa ni snying pos dben pa'i 'chal gtam tsam mo*). From *Supplement to the Lineage Stories of One Hundred Guidances* (*Kbrid brgya'i brgyud pa'i lo rgyus kha skong*), DZ, vol. 18, f. 104.
- 33 Text 1 has *ye shes sku thabs su ngo sprod*, but I believe it is more correctly written in text 2 as *rku thabs su*, or as *brku thabs su*, as in Tāranātha’s *Guidance Manual for the Amulet Box Mahāmudrā or Three Naturally Settled States* (*Phyag chen ga'u ma'am rang babs mnam gsum zhes bya ba'i kbrid yig*), f. 667.
- 34 *rang shar gyi tshad gsum*: three experiences or measures of success in the practice of the preliminaries, the main practice, and the concluding practices, respectively. See Tāranātha’s *Guidance Manual* (ibid.), ff. 681-2.
- 35 *nyin mtshan rnal 'byor*: illusory body by day and the refining, increasing, emanating, transforming, etc., of dreams by night, according to Tangtong Gyalpo’s *Guide to the Three Integrations* (*Ni gu'i yan lag lam khyer gsum gyi kbrid*), part of his *Guide*

to *Niguma's Amulet Box Mahāmudrā, a Branch Practice* (*Ni gu'i yan lag phyag chen ga'u ma'i kbrid*), f. 701.

- 36 *thag chod gsum*: to be convinced that all appearance is the guru, to be convinced of the guru as one's own mind, and to be convinced of one's own mind as free of elaboration; with these one practices the unity of appearance and emptiness (*ibid.*, f. 697).
- 37 *bral me gnad drug*: the guru is constantly on one's head, one's body is constantly the yidam, speech is constantly supplication or the recitation of mantra, food and drink is constantly elixir, all thought is constantly illusion and dream, and the dharma protectors and guards are constantly in front of one (*ibid.*, f. 700).
- 38 mKha' spyod dkar dmar: In the Shangpa tradition, these are two aspects of Vajrayoginī, one white (mKha' spyod dkar mo) and the other red (mKha' spyod dmar mo), who is sometimes known as Nāro mkha' spyod ma. In general usage, *mkha' spyod ma* (Skt. *khecari*) is equivalent to *mkha' 'gro ma*, (Skt. *ḍākinī*), "she who moves in space." The same word (*mkha' spyod*, Skt. *khecara*) may also refer to the space itself, the place where ḍākinis dwell, and when it carries that sense it has been translated as "celestial realm." See the following note.
- 39 *mkha' la spyod pa*, a literal rendering of the name Khecari: engagement or activity (*spyod pa*) in space (*mkha' la*). "Space" is also a relevant metaphor for vagina.
- 40 rGyal ba gNyan ston chos rje or Sangyé Nyentön Chokyi Sherab (Sangs rgyas gnyan ston Chos kyi shes rab, 1175-1255), the disciple of Kyergangpa Chokyi Sengé (sKyer sgang pa Chos kyi seng ge, 1143-1216) and counted as sixth in the Shangpa lineage. See BA, 741-43. Sangyé Nyentönpa is also sometimes called Bepé Naljor (sBas pa'i rnal 'byor, "hidden yogi") and Rigongpa, for his main residence. For his story, see Riggs, *Like an Illusion*, 131-7.
- 41 *Ye shes rgya mtsho'i rgyud*. This tantra has not been located, and may not be extant. The quotation can be found in *The Guidance Manual of Deathless Mind, by the Wise and Venerable Gyaltsen Bum* (*Sems 'chi me kyi kbrid yig bzhugs/ mKhas btsun rgyal mtshan 'bum gyis mdzad pa*), in *Shangpa Texts*, vol. 7, f. 94.
- 42 rMog lcog pa, also known as Rinchen Tsöndru (Rin chen brtson 'grus, 1110-1170?) from Mokchok in Upper Shang in Western Tibet. Mokchokpa was the last of the six great disciples of Khyungpo Naljor and his successor. "The Vajra Song of Deathless Mind" (*Sems 'chi med rdo rje'i mgur*) is found, with slight variations, on folios 310-1 of Kongtrul's *Collected Vajra Lines and Songs of the Glorious Shangpa Kagyu* (*dPal ldan shangs pa bka' brgyud kyi do ha rdo rje'i tshig rkang dang mgur dbyangs phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pal thos pa don ldan byin rlabs rgya mtsho*), which is also in *DZ*, vol.12, ff. 463-560.
- 43 *Lha bzhi dril sgrub*: an important creation phase practice in the Shangpa tradition. The four deities are Six-armed Mahākāla, Vajrayoginī, Avalokiteśvara, and Green Tārā, with one's guru as Vajradhara visualized in the center. Kongtrul explains in his guidance manual to this practice that these four deities first actually appeared to the great adept Savari, and then were codified in a practice manual by Maitripa. Khyungpo Naljor apparently heard it from him, and it became known as the Bless-

ing of Constant Four Deities (*Byin rlabs lha bzhi 'bral ba med*). However, the main source for this current of transmission was the great adept Rāhulaguptavajra. After receiving it from him in Tibet, Khyungpo Naljor could be seen by his fortunate disciples as actually manifesting as these four deities. There is also “The Practice of Four Deities Individually” (*Lha bzhi'i sgos sgrub*). See Kongtrul's *Radiant Light of Pristine Awareness: The Practice of Four Deities Combined Guidance Manual* (*Lha bzhi dril sgrub kyi khrid yig ye shes 'od 'phro*), in *Shangpa Texts*, vol. 3, ff. 163-89.

- 44 *bLa ma mgon po dbyer med*: this is the special practice of the Shangpa Kagyu of the Six-armed Mahākāla, the swift-acting wisdom protector (*myur mdzad ye shes kyi mgon po*), who is thought of as inseparable from one's own root guru. Apparently Khyungpo Naljor also received from Maitripa the White Six-armed Mahākāla practice specifically for wealth (*BA*, 730).
- 45 Rāhulagupta[vajra] was a great Indian master and guru of Khyungpo Naljor, as well as of Atiśa, the founder of the Kadampa lineage and also one of Khyungpo Naljor's gurus. He is called the yogin of the black mountain (*ri nag*), which Roerich puts as Kālakuṭa near Rājagṛha, “a forest-clad mountain belt of the Himālayas” (*BA*, 732), but it may refer to Kṛṣṇagiri in South India. In any case, Rāhulagupta is said to have miraculously visited Khyungpo Naljor at his monastery in Tibet, arriving from India in less than a day. He bestowed the cycle of Six-armed Mahākāla (*Phyag drug pa*), the Five Tantric Deities (*rGyud sde lha lnga*) and other doctrines (*BA*, 732). See also Zangpo (*Timeless Rapture*, 245-8) for a brief story and a supplication to him by Kongtrul.
- 46 rDo rje gdan pa A bha ya: Dorjé Denpa can be translated as “The One at the Vajra Seat” (Skt. Vajrāsana) referring to Bodhgaya in India. There were at least four successors to that title: (1) Puṇyākara Gupta, (2) Ratnākara Gupta, (3) Abhayākara Gupta, and (4) Tsa mi Lo tsā ba. There is much confusion around this, and both Tibetan and Western writers have avoided it by simply calling him/them Dorjé Denpa or Sanskritizing it as Vajrāsana. One Tibetan author, Kaḥtok Rikdzin Tsewang Norbu (1698-1755), who tried to sort it all out, posits Puṇyākara Gupta as Khyungpo Naljor's guru. See *Biographies of Some Holy Ones* (*Mar mi dwags po jo bo rje yab sras sogs dam pa 'ga' zbig gi rnam thar sa bon dus kyi nges pa brjod pa dag ldan nyung gsal*) in *Selected Writings of Kaḥ-thog rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu*, vol. 1, ff. 669–705. (Thanks to Cyrus Stearns for providing his translation of the relevant section.) In any case, the story of Khyungpo Naljor's Dorjé Denpa or Vajrāsana can be found in the biographies of the Shangpa lineage. There are supplications to both Vajrāsanas—Puṇyākara Gupta and Abhayākara Gupta—in Kongtrul's supplications to the lineage (*rnam thar gsol 'debs*). The “Vajrāsana-Abhaya” specified here is apparently the famous ācārya Abhayākara Gupta (ca. 1100), who is known for serving as abbot at Vajrāsana, Vikramaśīla, and Nālandā monasteries in India. He was inspired and authorized by the deity Vajrayoginī, and wrote many profound and vast treatises on tantra (*BA*, 1046-7).
- 47 *Rin chen rgya mtsho'i rgyud*: this is the tantric basis for much of the distinctive Shangpa teachings, particularly those of the Five Tantric Deities. It was transmitted to Khyungpo Naljor by Vajrāsana, but never translated into Tibetan and perhaps not extant in Sanskrit. Tāranātha states that the Shangpa teachings derive from this

and from the *Ocean of Vows* (*sDom pa rgya mtsho*) (not located). See *Supplement to the Lineage Stories of One Hundred Guides* in *DZ*, vol. 17, f. 104.

- 48 *rGyud sde lnga* or *rGyud sde lha lnga*, the Five Tantric Deities, is a special practice for visualizing the deities of five main tantras abiding in the five main chakras of the subtle body. The five tantras are Hevajra, the culmination of inner heat; Cakrasaṃvara, the culmination of action mudra; Guhyasamāja, the culmination of illusory body and luminous clarity; Mahāmāyā, the culmination of dream; and Vajrabhairava, the culmination of enlightened activity (*TOK* 1: 534).
- 49 In this list of five, the teachings of unerring (*'chugs med*) and deathlessness (*'chi med*) are counted separately. Niguma's Vajra Lines and other source texts of the Five Golden Dharmas are contained in the text entitled *Vajra Lines on the Six Dharmas of Niguma* (*Ni gu ma'i chos drug rdo rje tshig rkang*) in *Shangpa Texts*, vol. 6, ff. 161-231. This text contains Niguma's vajra lines on the Six Dharmas (161-71), followed by a commentary; the vajra lines on mahāmudrā (192-6) [this is not the same as the vajra lines on mahāmudrā in *Shang pa mgur mtsho*, *DZ*, vol. 12, 467-9 and translated in Zangpo, *Timeless Rapture*, 47-8]; and the root text on the three integrations (ff. 196-203). Then follows the sādhana of White Khecari (203-4) attributed to Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna and of Red Khecari (204-10) attributed to Lama Rāhula. Then there are the root texts on deathlessness of the body (ff. 210-25), called "Deathlessness Attained" (*'chi med grub pa*) attributed to Virūpa, translated by the Indian Lalitavajra and Marpa Lotsāwa, and the deathlessness of the mind (225-31), called "Glorious Deathless Great Pristine Awareness" (*dPal 'chi med ye shes chen po*) bestowed by the ḍākini in the teakwood forest, translated by Lotsāwa Lendarma Lodrö, and edited by him and Rinchen Zangpo. This last is given the name of vajra lines as well. All of these were received by Khyungpo Naljor after he offered 500 golden coins each time.
- 50 *Lam 'bras rdo rje tshig rkang: The Vajra Lines of the Path with Its Result* is Virūpa's *Vajra Lines* (see Chapter 3 in the present volume). This seems to refer to the fact that these teachings were not written down in India, but passed down through a series of Indian teachers and several generations of Tibetans as oral instructions, until they were finally written down. (See Stearns, *Luminous Lives*, 8-16, and Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, 183-94). The *Vajra Lines of Non-Elaboration* (*sPros med rdo rje tshig rkang*) have not been identified, but must also have been composed later and thus considered a treatise. The *Vajra Lines* of Niguma and those of the *Cakrasaṃvara Hearing Lineage* (*bDe mchog snyan brgyud*; see Chapter 4) were formulated immediately upon being received from Buddha Vajradhara by Niguma and Telopa, respectively, and thus are considered Buddha's word (*bka'*, Skt. *vacana*). (The latter text is traditionally attributed to Nāropa). This is indicated also by the statement concerning the uncorrupted nature of Niguma's *Vajra Lines*.
- 51 *'Chug* (or *'Phyug*) *med bar do gsum gyi gdams pa* in *Shangpa Texts*, vol. 8, ff. 187-207. Here Kongtrul quotes verbatim from folios 188 through 191, leaving out only some useful sentence divisions and interlinear notes.
- 52 *Ye shes rol pa'i rgyud*: not located.

- 53 dGes pa rdo rje, an alternative spelling for Kye'i rdo rje, referring to the *Hevajra Tantra in Two Parts* (*brTag gnyis bshad rgyud*, Toh. 417 and 418). This is from Chapter 9, verse 30. The whole verse reads:

Just as illusion and dream,  
Just as the intermediate states,  
So, with the application of continuous familiarization,  
Are the mandalas considered to be.

- 54 Here ends the section on the abbreviated path that was taken from *Instructions for Unerring Three Intermediate States*. In this last line I have used the slightly different original (*Shangpa Texts*, vol. 8, f. 191) for the sake of clarity.

- 55 *kha ga mu kha*: *khaga* is “bird” in Sanskrit, and both this and *khecara* (“moving in the air, flying”) are listed in M-W as derivatives of *kha*, “cavity, hollow, cave, cavern, one of the nine apertures of the body,” etc., and hence moving (*car*) in space. Here it seems to imply action-mudra (*karmamudrā*), the spiritual partner in tantric sexual practice. According to Dezhung Rinpoche, this is the channel of action-mudra (Kapstein, “Kong-sprul Rin-po-che on the Shangs-pa bKa'-brgyud,” 49, n. 69).

- 56 Jo nang rje btsun chen po. Both Kunga Drolchok (Kun dga' grol mchog, 1507-1566) and his reincarnation Tāranātha (1575-1634) were known as the “reverend lord of Jonang” due to their associations with the Jonang monastery, the seat of the sect associated with the Kālacakra tantra and the philosophical viewpoint of extrinsic emptiness (*gzhan stong*). The monastery of Jonang was established in Jomonang in western Tibet by Kunpang Tukjé Tsöndru (1243-1313) and was entirely distinct from that of Khyungpo Naljor in Zhang-zhong, but because of these two great masters the two lineages are often associated. It seems most likely that the reference here is to Tāranātha, who figures most prominently in Kongtrul's own writings. Tāranātha wrote extensively on the instructions of the Shangpa lineage, for instance in the text known as *Profound Meaning Expanded* (*Thang rbdal ma*). See Stearns, *The Buddha from Dolpo*, 64-7, and Zangpo *Timeless Rapture*, 312-39.

- 57 *sGyu ma lam rim* and *sGyu ma lam rim 'grel pa* by Niguma, in *Shangpa Texts*, vol. 6, ff. 705-98.

## CHAPTER 6: ZHIJÉ AND CHÖD

- 1 Dampa Sangyé, often called Pa Dampa “Father Dampa” (Pha Dam pa sangs rgyas, d.1117). According to *Machik's Complete Explanation* (90), the appellation “father” (*pha*) might have been first used by Machik Lapdrön's grandson and lineage-holder: “Tönyön Samdrup developed exceptional faith in Dampa Rinpoché and would say, ‘My father is Dampa Rinpoché.’ Three times a day and three times a night he would pray intently to both his Father Dampa (Pha Dam pa) and his One Mother (Ma gcig). Thus Dampa became known to everyone as Pa-Dampa.” He is often identified as the Indian scholar Kamalaśīla (See *TOK* 1: 538), and is said to have lived for 570 years. He traveled five times to Tibet, teaching the three main traditions of Ma, So and Kam in central Tibet during his fourth visit (*TOK* 1: 539). On

his fifth visit he went to China for twelve years and then came to Dingri. With a life span of 570 years, Dampa Sangyé's exact dates are hard to come by, although his death date is often given as 1117. His identity as Kamalaśīla and also sometimes as Bodhidharma is similarly problematic. In *The Religious History of Pacification and Severance* (RHPS), Khamnyön Dharma Sengé reports that when a group of the faithful asked his name, Dampa replied, "In India I am called Paṇḍita Kamalaśīla, in Tibet I am known as Dampa of India. This learned paṇḍita is a spiritual adept. Previously I've come many times to Tibet. Now again I have arrived in Tibet" (f. 434). Gö Lotsawa (1392-1481) also identifies him as one Kamalaśrī (BA, 907). However, with respect to his identity as Kamalaśīla, Buton tells the grisly story of "four Chinese butchers, sent by the Hva-shang, killed the teacher Kamalaśīla by squeezing his kidneys," a sad event that happened during the life of King Trisong Deutsen, making his identity with Dampa Sangyé temporally inconsistent. (Buton, *The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet*, 198). Of course, this is only one of many problems with Dampa Sangyé's identity and life span.

- 2 *a' li ka' li* is the Sanskrit alphabet of sixteen vowels and thirty consonants, in which resides profound levels of meaning. RHPS (ff. 573-4) mentions the *Ali Kali Great River Tantra* (*A' li ka' li chu klung chen po'i rgyud*) as the significant tantra in Pacification from among the many divisions of tantra in mother, father, and nondual categories.
- 3 *gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa*: part of the full title of the *Ali Kali Tantra*, which is *Ali Kali Inconceivable Secret Great River Tantra* (*A' li ka' li gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa chu klung chen po'i rgyud*, DZ, vol. 13, ff. 1-39). Kongtrul is using the title of the main source text in a descriptive manner.
- 4 *gZungs*: this is likely one of the *prañāpāramitā dharanī*, such as that of the hundred thousand, twenty-five thousand, or eight thousand lines, etc. (Toh. 576-584). The name "pacification of suffering" is often said to derive from the description of the mantra in the *Heart Sutra*, "the mantra that pacifies all suffering."
- 5 *rGyud kyi rgyal po*: Again, there are any number of king tantras (*tantrarāja*) that this might be referencing. Kongtrul himself says there are twelve thousand root king tantras. A similar quote in RHPS (f. 574), is attributed to the *Net of Magical Manifestation of Mañjuśrī* (*mTshan brjod*).
- 6 *Zhi byed sgron ma skor gsum*, here listed as *sPyod pa'i sgron ma*, *Lam gyi sgron ma*, and *Thugs kyi sgron ma*. But nine cycles are listed in RHPS (f. 488) (*zhi byed sgron ma skor dgu'i chos skor*) and in BA (905-6) and even by Kongtrul himself in TOK1: 541. These can be found in the Tengyur (Toh. 2315-2330), where they are attributed to Kamalaśīla.
- 7 [*Byang chub*] *spyod pa'i sgron ma*, Skt. *Bodhicaryāpradīpa* (Toh. 2321), "*Lamp of Bodhisattva Conduct*."
- 8 [*rNal 'byor*] *lam gyi sgron ma*, Skt. *Yogapathapradīpa* (Toh. 2322), "*Lamp of the Yogic Path*."
- 9 [*gSang ba*] *thugs kyi sgron ma*, Skt. *Cittaguhyaṣṭadīpa* (Toh. 2323), "*Lamp of Secret Mind*."

- 10 Altogether, these are the three collections or “baskets” of the Buddhist canon (*sde snod gsum*, Skt. *tripiṭaka*): the collection on discipline (*’dul ba*, Skt. *vinaya*), the collection of discourses (*mdo*, Skt. *sūtra*), and the collection on phenomenology (*mngon pa*, Skt. *abhidharma*). These set forth the trainings (*bslab pa*, Skt. *śikṣā*) in ethics (*tshul khrims*, Skt. *śīla*), meditative absorption (*ting nge ’dzin*, Skt. *samādhi*), and wisdom (*shes rab*, Skt. *prajñā*), respectively.
- 11 *rNal ’byor lam [gyi] sgron [ma]*, Skt. *Yogapathapradīpa* (Toh. 2322), f. 264b4.
- 12 *lhan gcig skyes pa’i ma rig pa*: the lack of awareness of one’s original true nature or luminous clarity that is present along with that nature, thus “coemergent.” It remains present as the potential for confusion to arise when meeting with the right conditions. However since it does not exist substantially, it is really no different than luminous clarity.
- 13 The three poisons (*dug gsum*) or toxic emotions of anger or aversion (*zhe sdang*), desire or attraction (*’dod chags*), and stupidity or ignorance (*gti mug*), all arising from basic ignorance (*ma rig pa*), are the causes of the three kinds of suffering: the suffering of suffering (*sdug bsngal gyi sdug bsngal*), the suffering of change (*’gyur ba’i sdug bsngal*), and the pervasive suffering of formations (*khyab pa ’du byed kyi sdug bsngal*).
- 14 *gSang ba thugs kyi sgron ma*, Skt. *Cittaguhyaṭṭhāna* (Toh. 2323), f. 265b1-2.
- 15 This line is from the *Heart Sutra* (Skt. *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*, Toh. 21) and introduces the mantra of that sutra.
- 16 [*Byang chub*] *spyod pa’i sgron ma*, Skt. *Bodhicaryāṭṭhāna* (Toh. 2321).
- 17 *kha che lugs*: preached to the Kashmiri Jñānaguhya (*TOK* 1: 540; *BA*, 871).
- 18 The ten qualities are enumerated in *Quintessence of Elixir: The Compiled Guidances of Early, Middle, and Later Pacification* (*Zhi byed snga phyi bar gsum gyi khrid yig rnam* *phyogs gcig tu bsdebs pa bdud rtsi’i nying khu*) by Dharmaśrī (*DZ*, vol. 13, f. 321): (1) seeing the root [of mind] (*rtsa ba mthong ba*); (2) clear visualization (*dmigs pa gsal ba*); (3) swift acuity (*rno la ’khyug pa*); (4) [attention] goes where sent (*biang snga ’gro*), (5) stays where placed (*bzhag sar sdod*), (6) arrives when needed (*dgos dus sleb*), (7) penetrates the vital point (*gnad du tshud*), and (8) is serviceable (*bkol du btub*); one is (9) proficient in awareness (*rig pa la byan tshud*), and (10) has control over mind (*sems la dbang thob*).
- 19 *rma lugs*, from Magom Chökyi Sherab (rMa sgom Chos kyi shes rab), born in 1055, as the son of Ma Mönlam (rMa smon lam) at sKyer sna of Yar stod (*BA*, 872 and *TOK* 1: 540).
- 20 *stong lugs* here, but in *Quintessence of Elixir* (f. 331) it is given as *rtogs lugs*, “manner of realization,” explained as “realization that samsara and nirvana need not be rejected or accepted.”
- 21 Here *gtong thun*, and earlier in *The Treasury* spelled *gtang thun* (*TOK* 1: 540), but in *Quintessence of Elixir* it is *stong thun*, a much more common phrase, meaning a kind of “synopsis.”

- 22 Though not specifically indicated here, there are two parts in this last, fifth section of the teachings in the lineage of words which I have drawn from the *Quintessence of Elixir* (f. 332). The two points of finality and increase that resolve (*mtsha' rgyas gnyis su la bzla ba*) are that there is nothing enumerated elsewhere that is not included in the miscellaneous teachings (*kha 'thor*) and that the guidances of the word lineage of Ma are as helpful as the texts of the great sugatas and will increase. See also *BA*, 876.
- 23 Named for So chung ba, “So the Short” (So chung dGe 'dun 'bar, 1062-1128), so called because he was much smaller than his younger brother So ring, “So the Tall.” Sochung Gendunbar was a disciple of Magom Chökyi Sherab, but also received teachings directly from Dampa Sangyé and became his attendant (*TOK* 1: 540; *BA*, 876-81).
- 24 Possibly *Mahāmudrā Symbol Lineage*, [*Phyag rgya chen po*] *brda'i*] [*b*]r<sub>gyud</sub>, Skt. *Mahāmudrābhigīti* (Toh. 2439). This quote is found in *Quintessence of Elixir*, *DZ*, vol. 13, f. 336.
- 25 *chings ba bcu*, the enumeration is uncertain here, since there seem to be nine “clinchers” or “points” (*chings*) mentioned. TR suggests counting the previous two points of clearing obstructions and enhancement together as the first of the ten. In *Quintessence of Elixir*, eight clinchers are specifically mentioned, the same that appear here but without the clincher of the wheel weapon (*DZ*, vol. 13, ff. 345-6).
- 26 *gnas skabs glo rdeg 'byung ba*, but in *ibid.*, f. 345, *gnas skabs blo ldog 'byung ba*: “circumstances that turn the mind.”
- 27 Named after Kam Yeshé Gyaltsen (sKam Ye shes rGyal mtshan), a disciple of Geshé Drapa (dGe shes Gra pa) (*TOK* 1: 541; *BA*, 896-900).
- 28 bLa ma Byang chub sems dpa' Kun dga' (1062-1124): Dampa's chief disciple (*BA*, 920-23). Of the so-called four direction yogis (*sgo ba'i rnal 'byor pa bzhi*), or four main disciples, he is in, or from, the north. The others are Dampa Charchen (Dampa phyar chen) in the east, Vajratrodha in the south, and Charchung (Phyar chung) in the west (*RHPS*, f. 581; *TOK* 1: 541). The four direction yogins were the most prominent of the many disciples gathered in Dingri during these teachings.
- 29 *Dri med thig pa phyag bzhes kyi skor*.
- 30 Zhig po Nyi ma seng ge (1251-1287): a disciple of Gyalwa Tenné (rGyal ba ten ne), a disciple of Patsab (Pa tshab), a disciple of Kunga (Kun dga') (*BA*, 937). He composed both a short and a long version, the latter cited here called *Lam rim chen mo* (not located).
- 31 *A' li ka' li* [*gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa*] *chu klung chen po'i rgyud*, Skt. *Alīkali guhyatsindhapanibhayamahātāntrānāma* (*DZ*, vol. 13, ff. 9-10). See note 2.
- 32 I have used *gsum pa'i dbang bzhi* (*ibid.*, f. 10), which seems to be the correct version, rather than “four secret empowerments (*bsang ba'i dbang bzhi*, *TOK* 3: 414). The second empowerment is the secret empowerment, and the third empowerment is usually called the wisdom [through] pristine awareness empowerment (*shes rab ye shes dbang*).



- 33 *rgyud* in all versions of the text seems to be a mistake for *brgyud* (TR, based on the immediately following commentary).
- 34 Reading *spyod bya* as *sbyong bya*.
- 35 *A' li ka' li* [gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa] chu klung chen po'i rgyud, Skt. *Alīkali guhyatsindhapanibhayumahātantranāma* (DZ, vol. 13, f. 10). These two lines follow directly on the last quotation from this source. There it reads *gdams gsum* (three instructions) rather than *sdom gsum* (three vows).
- 36 Found in *Quintessence of Elixir* by Dharmasīri (DZ, vol. 13, ff. 366-7).
- 37 Deliberate behavior (*brtul zhugs kyi spyod pa*, Skt. *vratacaryā*) is the conduct of a yogin who has brought under control (*brtul*) ordinary actions conditioned by passions and has adopted (*zhugs*) the special behavior intended for overcoming dualism. See note 14 in Chapter 1.
- 38 The letters are the consonants and vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet (*a' li ka' li*) which, along with all perceived sound, are integrated on the path. See *Quintessence of Elixir*, DZ, vol. 13, f. 374.
- 39 *mkhyen pa gnyis*: The two knowledges or twofold knowledge of a buddha are the knowledge of things as they really are (*ji lta ba'i mkhyen pa*) and the knowledge of the full extent (*ji snyed pa'i mkhyen pa*) of phenomena (*chos nyid ji lta ba mkhyen pa dang chos can ji snyed pa mkhyen pa*).
- 40 Here *bdag stod*, but previously *bdag gtod*, which is the more correct version (TR).
- 41 “Short source text” (*gzhung chung*) refers to one of the two primary source texts for *gcod*, Brāhmin Āryadeva's *Āryaprajñāpāramitopadeśa* (Tib. *'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag* or *Ārya de bas mdzad pa'i shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i tshigs su bcad pa chen mo*) (DZ, vol. 14, ff. 2-7). It is translated by Jérôme Edou in *Machig Labdrön and the Foundations of Chöd*, 15-23. This quote is on folio 5 of the Tibetan text, where, however, the third line reads, “And sever extreme views and mental formations in meditation” (*'du byed* rather than *rgyu byed*). Kongtrul's rendering may be found verbatim in *RHPS*, f. 415 (where it is attributed to Machik), suggesting that this was Kongtrul's source.
- 42 [*Chos mngon pa*] *mdzod*, Skt. *Abhidharmakośakārikā* by Vasubandhu (Toh. 4089), f. 17a4-5 (verse 34).
- 43 *spyod yul*, a homonym of *gcod yul*, “severance object,” both pronounced “chö yul.”
- 44 *Zab don thugs kyi snying po* (DZ, vol. 14, ff. 17-22): the *Heart Essence of Profound Meaning* is one of the three texts included in *Source Texts of Severance Object*, along with Āryadeva's *Grand Poem* and Machik's *Great Collection*. Kongtrul considered these three essential and placed them first in the DZ collection of *gcod* texts. The *Heart Essence of Profound Meaning* is attributed to Lochen Dharmasīri, also called Ngawang Chöpel (Ngag dbang chos 'phel, 1654-1717) (*RHPS*, f. 549). For his life story, see *NSH* 1: 728-32. This quotation is part of the opening praises to Machik (f. 17), where the fourth line reads, “Who wrote the severance instructions for those

who will befriend adversity” (*mi mthun grogs su byed ba bcod kyi gdams pa ’bri*). There are many such discrepancies in Kongtrul’s quotations here and the texts in the *Treasury of Spiritual Instructions* (DZ) and they will only be mentioned if there are significant differences in meaning.

- 45 A ma Jo mo: this refers to Machik Lapdrön (Ma gcig sLab sgron, 1055-1153), who was often called simply Jomo, an honorific title for women. *Ama* is “mother,” usually shortened to *ma*.
- 46 *gsang spyod*, *rig spyod*, *tshogs spyod*, and *phyogs las rnam rgyal*, and so on, are various kinds of conduct that enhance tantric practices. Kongtrul devotes a whole section of the *Treasury* to these, called “Enhancing Conduct, a Branch of the Path” (TOK 3: 533-66). For some descriptions of different types of conduct, see BE, 489-90, n. 39.
- 47 “*spang bya* becomes *blang bya* and vice versa in *gcod*” (TR). In the traditional teachings on the four noble truths, the first and second truths (suffering and its cause) are what is to be abandoned, while the third and fourth (cessation and the path) are to be practiced. In the profound practice of Chöd, it is the opposite.
- 48 *The Collection* (Tshom[s]) usually refers to *Ma gcig gi bKa’ tshoms chen mo*, “Machik’s Great Collection of Precepts” (DZ, vol. 14, ff. 7-16) found in *Source Texts of Severance Object* (see note 44 above). However, this quotation is found in her *Further Collection* (*Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i man ngag yang tshom zhu len ma*), DZ, vol.14, f. 109, line 1.
- 49 These are *gu ru’i gsang gcod*, *bka’ brgyud don gcod*, *dam pa’i zhi byed*, and *na ro’i gsang spyod*. Sometimes these four are cited differently, with Āryadeva mentioned in place of the precept lineage of Severance. For example, in the *Slightly Abridged Definitive Explanation of Severance*, Karma Chakmé says, “The four source rivers of Indian Severance are Āryadeva’s Grand Poem, Nāropa’s Equal [Taste] and Secret Conduct, Pa Dampa’s Pacification, and Orgyen Padma’s Severing Illusion” (f. 231). This is basically the same, since the ultimate meaning precept lineage of Severance refers to the so-called sutra lineage, which, in all three sub-lineages, descends from Āryadeva the Brāhmin. Kongtrul seems only to be emphasizing the lineage transmission rather than the textual aspect. For more on these lineages of transmission, see Harding, *Machik’s Complete Explanation*, 97-101; Gyatso, “The Development of the gCod Tradition” in *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization*, 325-8; and Edou, *Machig Labdrön and the Foundations of Chöd*, 29-31.
- 50 Karma Chakmé explains, “The male severance from the one father Dampa Sangyé is the lineage descended through Mara Serpa and the questions that the disciples posed to Machik. The female lineage is that received from Machik by the four Gyens and others” (ibid., f. 233).
- 51 Machik Lapdrön (Ma gcig sLab sgron, 1055-1153): the great yoginī famous for developing this practice of Severance and founding the lineage based on these teachings that have assimilated into every sect of Tibetan Buddhism. For her life story and her teachings, see Harding, *Machik’s Complete Explanation*.

- 52 [*Phags pa shes rab pha rol tu phyin pa*] *sdud pa tshigs su bcad pa*, Skt. *Prajñāpāramitā-saṃcayagāthā* (Toh. vol. 13). This stanza is also quoted and discussed in *BA* (981), and in Buddhāśrījñāna's *Commentary* (Toh. 3798), f. 169b4-6.
- 53 *gzhung chung*: that is, "Āryadeva's Grand Poem" (*DZ*, vol. 14, f. 2a5).
- 54 *Ibid.*, f. 3a1-3. There the fifth line reads, "By just renouncing the ten nonvirtues" (*mi dge bcu po spangs tsam gyis*). This might be a better interpretation, since two sets of vows are being presented.
- 55 *Yang tshom*: *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag yang tshom zhu len ma*, "Further Collection of Dialogue: Esoteric Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom" (*DZ*, vol. 14). This quotation on f. 107a4-5, where only the first three lines are the same, makes one wonder from where the oft-quoted four lines are derived. The whole poem reads:
- Leave the body like a corpse;  
 Leave it as if ownerless.  
 Leave the mind like the sky.  
 Like a candle unmoved by wind,  
 Leave it in nonconceptual luminosity.  
 Like the ocean unmoved by wind,  
 Leave it in sparkling pure clarity.
- 56 *Kha 'thor*: Various teachings not included in any others from the set of ten teachings attributed to Machik Labdrön. In *Machik's Complete Explanation* (101) it is explained that "the limitless, scattered interior instructions on the *prajñāpāramitā* were given to Tödé Ngakgi Wangchuk, Drolde Gyalwai Jungné, the sixteen individuals who were the special recipients of Machik's precepts, and so forth."
- 57 *Zab don thugs kyi snying po*, by Lochen Dharmasri (*DZ*, vol. 14, f. 17, lines 4-6, for the following four quotations).
- 58 Machik's *Le lag* (or *Le'u lag*) (*DZ*, vol. 14, f. 130b6-7). The *Appendices* consist of eight common, eight uncommon, and eight specific appendices (*thun mong gi le lag brgyad*, *thun min gyi le lag brgyad*, *khyad par gyi le lag brgyad*) (see Harding, *Machik's Complete Explanation*, 97-8 and 304, n. 46). *RHPS* (ff. 547-8) presents the whole list, and they are found together in *DZ*, vol. 14, ff. 130-65.
- 59 Lochen Dharmasri's *Zab don [thugs kyi snying po]* (*DZ*, vol. 14, f. 17a6-7, for the following two quotations).
- 60 *Ibid.*, f. 17a4-5.
- 61 The great or longer source text (*gzhung chen*) is the *Great Collection of Precepts* (*bKa' 'tshoms chen mo*) by Machik Labdrön; however, no mention of these empowerments is to be found there. They are mentioned in *Machik's Complete Explanation* (*Ma gcig rnam bshad*), where they are part of the *Heart Essence Dispelling the Darkness of Ignorance* (*Thugs bcud ma rig mun sel*), the third tantra that Machik received from the bodhisattva goddess Tārā (*Machik's Complete Explanation*, 99-100, and 301, n.16).

- 62 *lha dbang lus la bskur ma yin/ chos dbang sems la bskur ba yin/* See reference to the bestowal of this empowerment in Harding, *Machik's Complete Explanation*, 69 (Tib. f. 48b), where it is described as coming from the sutra tradition in the lineage of Dampa Sangyé.
- 63 *Nam mkha' sgo 'byed: Opening the Door to the Sky* is the name of the particular transference of consciousness practice (*'pho ba*) and its empowerment in Machik's system, a transmission that she received from her guru, Sönam Lama. In his commentary to the Chöd practice, *A Delightful Grove*, Kongtrul calls transference "the main practice of the Mother's enlightened intention, and the ultimate meaning of Severance of Evil Object consistent with the uncommon vajrayāna" (ff. 6b-7a). For a detailed description of the practice, see *Machik's Complete Explanation*, 156-61.
- 64 *bKa' tshom chen mo*, *DZ*, vol. 14, f. 13a1-2. There it reads, *rang lus gang bder 'dug byas nas/mi bsam bsam par mi bya'o/bsam pa yul min de nyid yin/des na mi bsam ngang la bzahag*:
- Placing your body however it is comfortable,  
Do not think, do not engage in thought.  
Thought is not an object; it is suchness.  
Therefore, rest within nonthought.
- 65 *Ibid.*, f. 9a3-4.
- 66 *Ibid.*, ff. 9a7-10b6. The third line reads, "Experience is an object of knowing, an intellectual experience" (*nyams ni shes bya blo yi nyams* rather than *nyams zhes bya ba blos bya yin*).
- 67 *Ibid.*, f. 15a5.
- 68 *Ibid.*, f. 7a5-6.
- 69 *Ibid.*, f. 10b3-4, where the last two lines read, "Other than severing the rope of fixation, how could there be definite buddhahood?" (*'dzin pa'i thag pa bcad pa las/nges par sangs rgyas ga la mchis*).
- 70 *Le lag*, in *DZ*, vol. 14, f. 135a4-5.
- 71 *'Phrul gcod [bka' rgya ma'i man ngag]*, "*Esoteric Instructions of the Seal That Severs Delusion*," presumably by Machik but not located.
- 72 *phung po gzan bskyur*. This is the actual name for the practice of invoking demons and mentally cutting up and preparing one's body in order to feed it to them that has commonly become known as "Severance" or "Cutting" (*gcod*). Kongtrul presents it as a post-meditation practice or a branch of the real Severance, which is the "blending of awareness and space" based on an understanding of the perfection of wisdom.
- 73 *gzhung chung*, i.e., *Āryadeva's Grand Poem*, in *DZ*, vol. 14, f. 4b3-5, where it is considerably different and includes two missing lines that lend a more complete sense. That version translates as follows:
- The most excellent method  
Is to blend awareness and space.

At the times of mixing space and awareness  
 Things and characteristics, stopping and doing,  
 And fixating on reference points are self-purified.  
 Dwell in the absolute reality that is  
 Free of both subjective and objective fixation.  
 In that way, with body and mind uncontrived,  
 Wherever empty space pervades  
 Is pervaded by awareness-emptiness.  
 Settle in this expanding vastness.

- 74 Ibid., 6b2-3. All texts mistakenly have *sems* (“mind”) instead of *lus* (“body”) in the third line, and are missing the fourth line, which I have added.
- 75 The “feasts” (*tshogs*), or sometimes “banquet,” or literally “distribution” (*gyed*), refers to the different visualizations in which one offers one’s corpse, which is left over from the transference practice, to various kinds of “guests” (*mgroṇ po*). The white feast is peaceful, the body transformed into sacred substance, and offered to the honored guests. The red feasts and mixed feasts are more visceral and offered to the gods and demons. This is the more famous part of the Severance practice, but note that Kongtrul places it as a post-meditation practice. For details on these visualizations, see Kongtrul’s *A Delightful Grove*.
- 76 *Le lag* (DZ, vol. 14, f. 134b1-2). There, the last two lines instead read, “Whatever various bad conditions occur, integrating them as allies is the excellent instruction” (*rkyen ngan sna tshogs ci byung yang/grogs su ’khyer ba gdams ngag mchog*).
- 77 *gding chen gsum*: of learning, contemplation, and meditation.
- 78 *gzhung chen*: *Great Collection of Precepts* (DZ, vol. 14, f. 11a6-7). The last line there reads, “All devils are conquered in the basic space of noninflation” (*bdud rnam snyems med dbyings su ’joms*).
- 79 Perverse or aberrant severance (*gcod log*) is described in some detail in *RHPS* (ff. 550-8) and in great detail in the form of prophecy in chapters nine and ten of *Machik’s Complete Explanation*.
- 80 *Yang tshom* (DZ, vol. 14, f. 110b1-2). Kongtrul seems to have joined two fragments of sayings here. This text consists of questions and answers from Machik. The first part of the quotation is the last stanza of a longer answer:

If you do not know adversities as allies,  
 Though your view is lofty, you are lost.  
 Puffed up over mere mental emptiness,  
 You are seized by a secret devil.

The last three lines come in the middle part of a different answer and concern the importance of taking the instructions to heart. The first line of it is not in the negative:

[You should] internalize the instructions!  
 If you do not acquire confident understanding,  
 Nothing is resolved from just listening to words.

- 81 *Le lag* (DZ, vol. 14, f. 133a1-2). In this case, the third line from Kongtrul is missing in *Le lag*, and the last line reads, “Poisons are great ego-fixating thought” (*che* instead of *bskyed*).
- 82 Ibid., f. 136b4. Only the first two lines are the same as in the *Appendices*, which is a long poem that continues along the same vein. However, the sense of the last line in Kongtrul’s quotation—not to give these teachings to such people—is not apparent in the DZ text.

## CHAPTER 7: JORDRUK

- 1 *mChog gi dang po sangs rgyas*, Skt. *Paramādibuddha*: *Supreme Original Buddha* refers to the *Kālacakra Tantra*, “Wheel of Time Tantra,” the full name of which is *Kālacakra King Tantra That Issued from the Supreme Original Buddha*. The original or *Root Tantra* (*rtsa ba’i rgyud*, *mūlatantra*) is no longer fully extant, although a part of it exists as the *Short Presentation on Empowerments* (*dBang dor bstan pa*, Skt. *Sekoddeśa*, Toh. 361). Most references are to the *Kālacakra Condensed Tantra* (Skt. *Lagbutantra*, Toh. 362) by Mañjuśrī Yaśas. See NSH 2: 245; Khedrup Norsang Gyatso, *Ornament of Stainless Light (OSL)*, 25-51; Wallace, *The Inner Kālacakratantra*, 3-5; Mullin, *The Practice of Kalachakra*, 338; and Newman, “A Brief History of the Kalachakra,” in Geshe Lhundub Sopa et al., *The Wheel of Time*, 51-90.
- 2 [*Dus ’khor*] *rtsa ba’i rgyud*, Skt. *Kālacakramūlatantra*: the Buddha’s words written down by Sucandra, not fully extant. See the preceding note.
- 3 *gSang ’dus rgyud phyi ma*, Skt. *Uttaratantra* (Toh. 443), f. 154a6. This refers to the last or eighteenth chapter of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*.
- 4 *mKha’ ’gro rgya mtsho* [*rnal ’byor ma’i rgyud*], Skt. *Ḍākārṇavamahāyoginītantra*, a *Cakrasaṃvara tantra* (Toh. 372).
- 5 *bDe mchog rtsa rgyud*, Skt. *Cakrasaṃvaramūlatantra* (Toh. 368): originally written in three hundred thousand verses, then condensed to one hundred thousand verses, then condensed further to seven hundred verses in fifty-one chapters. These are the three root tantras (Panchen Sonam Dragpa, *Overview of Buddhist Tantra*, p. 51).
- 6 [*Phags pa mkha’ ’gro ma rdo rje*] *gur*, Skt. *Āryaḍākinīvajrapañjaramahātāntrarāja-kalpanāma* (Toh. 419).
- 7 *brTag gnyis* [*bshad rgyud*], or the *Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 417-418).
- 8 This last line from the root text is missing in the auto-commentary.
- 9 *Dri med ’od*, Skt. *Vimalaprabhā* (Toh. 1347), also known simply as the *Great Commentary*, is the renowned commentary on the *Kālacakra Condensed Tantra* that served as the basis for subsequent literature on the subject. Its author, Puṇḍarīka, is the legendary ninth king of Shambhala and son of the seventh king, Mañjuśrī Yaśas (the author of the *Kālacakra Condensed Tantra*).
- 10 *dang ba* or *dang pa* in text 1, but *dad pa*, “faith,” in text 2.

- 11 *bsDus rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), *sGrub le'u* ("Chapter on Accomplishment"), verse 113 (f. 89a5-7).
- 12 *chu gter*, literally "water treasure," refers to the ocean and is the code word for the number four (perhaps because there are four great seas around Mt. Meru). Here it refers to the fourfold disregard (*ltos med*), as explained below. "Mantra repetition" refers to binding the vital energy. "And so on" refers to the yogas of inhalation, exhalation, and the vase retention (CS).
- 13 Subtle yoga (*phra mo'i rnal 'byor*) is defined in *Vimalaprabhā* as the practice of the sixth branch, meditative absorption (CS).
- 14 This section is lifted from Tāranātha's *A Hundred Blazing Lights* (*Lhan thabs 'od brgya 'bar ba*), in his *Collected Works*, vol. 3: 655.
- 15 The correspondence here is somewhat different from that in a previous section on tantra in this *Treasury* (Book 8, Part 3). In the discussion of the completion phase of Kālacakra, the preliminaries are not included. There, withdrawal and meditative stability constitute approach, while vital energy control and retention constitute the branch of near attainment (*TOK* 3: 232). The rest is the same.
- 16 *Dri med 'od*, Skt. *Vimalaprabhā*, *sGrub le'u*, f. 561 (CS).
- 17 *go* for cow, and *ku* for dog; *Ṣaḍaṅgayogopadeśa*, f. 299. Mentioned in *sGrub le'u*, verse 127 (CS). The reference is to the outer five elixirs (*bdud rtsi*)—urine, excrement, blood, semen, and brains—and five meats (*sha*)—human, cow, dog, elephant, and horse—that are ingested and transmuted as part of the ritual feast circle practice (*tshogs kyi 'khor lo*, Skt. *gaṇacakra*). The commentary is clarifying how this is actually meant to be effective, since it is possible to mistakenly think that the benefits arise merely from consuming these substances.
- 18 *rGyud kyi rgyal po*, that is, the *Kālacakra Condensed Tantra* (*bsDus pa'i rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra*), *sGrub le'u* ("Chapter on Accomplishment"), verse 120.
- 19 *gtsug tor 'khor los sgyur ba*, Skt. *uṣṇīṣacakrī* (or *uṣṇīṣa-cakravartin*): literally, a "wheel-turning [monarch] with a top-knot (or turban)"; here the reference is to the wrathful protector beings specifically protecting the upward direction in the mandala, usually described as having three heads with three eyes (presumably gazing upwards for danger), hair blazing upwards, and holding a wheel (Skt. *cakra*) in one of four hands (Bunce, 567). This gaze is described as both eyes looking upward (Khedrup Norsang Gyatso, *Ornament of Stainless Light* [OSL], 413).
- 20 From the *Kālacakra Condensed Tantra* (Toh. 362), *sGrub le'u*, verse 116 (f. 89b3), or see *OSL*, 402.
- 21 From *Six Yogas*, *rNal sbyor yan lag drug pa*, Skt. *Yogaṣaḍaṅga* (Toh. 1375), 251a6. Śavaripa (Sha ba ri pa) was a great Indian master of tantra and the guru of Saraha. He is especially associated with the mahāmudrā teachings, the *dohā* tradition, and the practice of the Six-Branch yoga of Kālacakra. For the story of his life according to the Six-Branch yoga tradition (*saḍaṅgayoga*), see Stearns, "The Life and Tibetan Legacy of the Indian Mahāpañḍita Vibhūticandra," in *JlABS* 19.1: 139-41.

- 22 *Dhūti* is short for *avadhūti*, a Sanskrit name for the central channel. Although *dhūti* and *avadhūti* are often interchangeable terms for the central channel, it seems that *avadhūti* is used to indicate the central channel at the point of the chakras (*OSL*, 636, n. 48). The ten energy currents (*rlung bcu*) are the five root energy currents that start from the life energy, the nature of space, which then emanates the downward-clearing energy (earth), the upward-moving energy (fire), the fire-accompanying energy (wind), and the pervading energy (water). The five branch energy currents are the serpent energy, the turtle energy, the lizard energy, the gift-of-the-gods energy, and the victorious-in-wealth energy. Kongtrul defines *rlung* as that which is possessed of potency or strength (see *TOK* 2: 637-40; *SBT*, 176-80).
- 23 *Dus zhabs snyan brgyus*, same as *sByor ba yan lag drug gi man ngag*, Skt. *Ṣaḍaṅgayogopadeśa* (Toh. 1372), f. 224a5. Kālacakrapāda the Elder (Dus zhabs che ba), alias Upāsakabodhi and Cilupa, was a scholar at Nālandā and an important figure in the Kālacakra transmission in India (*BA*, 755-6). He was a contemporary of Nāropa, and he or his successor, Kālacakrapāda the Younger, is sometimes identified as Nāropa. Kongtrul describes Nāropa as the Elder's disciple.
- 24 *Praty-āhāra* has been translated in Tibetan as *so sor sdud pa* or *sor sdud*, and is sometimes translated into English as “specific withdrawal,” “individual withdrawal,” and “retraction.” The dictionary definitions are drawing back (troops from a battle), retreat; withdrawal (especially of the senses from external objects); withdrawing (of created things), re-absorption or dissolution of the world (M-W, 677).
- 25 The dissolution is in the order of earth, water, fire, air, and space.
- 26 *dus sbyor*, Skt. *lagna*: In the Kālacakra system of calculating time, a healthy person takes 21,600 breaths in one solar day. In that time, there are twelve movements or time-conjunctions. Each time-conjunction thus equals 1,800 breaths or movements of energy. Kongtrul says that a time-conjunction is the basis for all calculations of time (*MW*, 159). A time-conjunction (or “ascendant”) occurs whenever the sun enters a constellation of the zodiac, and so the sun has twelve time-conjunctions in a year. In a single day a new time-conjunction occurs approximately every two hours, whenever a new constellation appears on the horizon (*OSL*, 676). The balance in the outer and inner timing, a major motif of the *Kālacakra Tantra*, affects the quality of life. See Kongtrul's discussion in *MW*, 161-2.
- 27 [*bsDus pa'i*] *rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), *Ye shes le'u* (“Chapter on Pristine Awareness”), verse 115.
- 28 *Ibid.*, *Ye shes le'u*, verse 115 (f. 113a3).
- 29 *Ibid.*, *sGrub le'u*, verse 232.
- 30 The five eyes (*mig lnga* or *spyān lnga*) or five kinds of special vision are the flesh eye (*sha'i mig*), the divine eye (*lha'i mig*), the wisdom eye (*shes rab kyi mig*), the dharma eye (*chos kyi mig*), and the buddha eye (*sangs rgyas kyi mig*).
- 31 This set of six consists of the aggregate of pristine awareness, the element of pristine awareness, the mental sense power or mind, sound, the conch-bearer (central channel below the navel), and the emission of urine. For an explanation of the six sets of six, see *OSL*, 173-5, and the helpful chart on 600.



- 32 For example, by saying, “Let there be no poison,” the poison disappears (*OSL*, 460).
- 33 *bsDus pa'i rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), *sGrub le'u*, verse 118 (f. 89b6).
- 34 *stong pa'i gzugs brnyan*: often shortened to *stong gzugs* and translated as “empty form,” the longer term reveals that in most cases it means actual manifestations or embodiments of emptiness itself, rather than forms that are merely empty by nature, which of course can be said of all forms. In connection with this important concept, see note 36 below.
- 35 *Dri med 'od*, Skt. *Vimalaprabhā* (Toh. 845), 237b6, commenting on *sGrub le'u*, verse 115.
- 36 *rnam [pa] kun [gyi] mchog [dang] ldan kyi stong gzugs* (also see note 34): These are the forms or images of emptiness that potentially manifest all distinct aspects. The forms of Kālacakra and the consort Viśvamātā are themselves forms of emptiness. Kongtrul defines this as the very embodiment of the union of emptiness and compassion, or bliss (see “The Mantra Tradition” of māmamudrā in Chapter 4). Elsewhere in the *Treasury* he states that the understanding of this term in the Kālacakra system holds for all other tantras, and so he defines it at some length while refuting alternate views, as follows:

Furthermore, if the form endowed with the supreme of all aspects were possible whether or not the pristine awareness of great bliss had arisen, then in either case the pristine awareness of freedom from all dualistic elaborations would mean merely the cessation of all dualistic appearances. Then there would be no other appearances at all and it would become emptiness. If that is what you think, it is wrong. That freedom from elaboration itself arises as all aspects of the three realms of samsara and nirvana, such as the circles of the mandalas and so forth. Such arisings, moreover, are not the appearances of the relative truth, nor appearances due to karma, nor deluded appearances. They are appearances of pristine awareness, or appearances of reality (*chos nyid*; *dharmatā*), or primordial appearances. Thus, when form, sound, and so on arise in an analogous aspect, one might suspect that [such appearances] are phenomena made of sub-atomic particles. Realizing [this tendency, the great masters] mention again and again that these [appearances] transcend the phenomena of sub-atomic particles. Concerning this explanation of emptiness, some have said, “This is not the real ultimate emptiness but the emptiness of being empty of particle phenomena that they believe.” This is talk that prejudicially pollutes the profound meaning. This fully aspected emptiness is taught as emptiness with visualization (*dmigs pa*). It is not visualization with elaboration, nor with characteristics, nor with concepts, nor with effort. Visualization here means to experience by actually seeing. Therefore, it is the actual direct appearance of nondeluded pristine awareness. Since this is the real emptiness, the realm of reality, it is generally known as the ultimate truth. (*TOK* 3: 216-7)

- 37 The five branches (*yan lag lnga*) of meditative absorption according to Kongtrul are wisdom or discernment (*shes rab*), conception (*rtog*), analysis (*dpyod*), joy (*dga*), and bliss (*bde*) (*TOK* 3: 234).
- 38 The Sanskrit *dhyāna* was translated into Tibetan as *bsam gtan*, literally “stable thought” or meditative stability. Other translations include meditative concentration or meditative absorption. It is defined by Kongtrul as “one-pointed focus without afflictive emotion (*rtse gcig nyon mongs med*)” (*TOK* 2: 493).
- 39 *dBang mdor bstan pa*, Skt. *Sekoddeśa* (Toh. 361), f. 15a3-4. *The Short Presentation on Empowerment* was originally the fifth chapter of the *Kālacakra Root Tantra*, which is no longer fully extant.
- 40 *bsDus pa'i rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), f. 89b3 (verse 116).
- 41 *shes rab*, Skt. *prajñā*: “discernment,” or even “intelligence,” is more appropriate in some contexts than “wisdom.”
- 42 Although it says “bliss” (*bde ba*) in all copies, this definition is for joy (*dga' ba*), equating that with normal bliss, in contrast to the unwavering bliss (*g.yo med bde ba*) of the fifth branch.
- 43 “(1) [*’od zer*.:] They radiate light and rays of light, just as the sun or an electric light appears to radiate light and rays of light. (2) [*cha phra ba*.:] The empty forms themselves and the rays of light that they radiate are very subtle or very fine. (3) [*’tsher ba*.:] They are gleaming or brilliant. The distinction between this and the first characteristic is that the first identifies them as sources of light, which comes out from them. The third characteristic is that they themselves are also very bright. (4) [*’dar ba*.:] They shake or quiver. (5) [*gzhib par dka’ ba*.:] They are difficult to break down. ‘Difficult to break down’ means that, when looking at them, it would be very difficult to analyze them conceptually. They appear in a way that is beyond analysis” (KTGR, “Six Limbs of Application,” 150).
- 44 *mngon shes lnga*: the five clairvoyances or supernormal cognitive powers are the divine eye (*lha'i mig gi mngon shes*), divine ear or clairaudience (*lha'i rna ba'i mngon shes*), recollection of past lives (*sngon gnas rjes dran gyi mngon shes*), knowledge of others' minds (*gzhan sems shes pa'i mngon shes*), and miraculous abilities (*rdzu 'phrul gyi bya ba shes pa'i mngon shes*).
- 45 The consciousness aggregate, the space element, the organ of hearing, the element of mental phenomena, the sexual organs, and the control of seminal fluid.
- 46 *Kālacakra Condensed Tantra*, [*bsDus pa'i*] *rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), *sGrub le'u*, verse 118.
- 47 The consciousness aggregate, the element of space, the organ of hearing, the element of mental phenomena, the secret organ, and the control of seminal fluid are all purified to become the six unobscured phenomena, beginning with Buddha Akṣobhya (*OSL*, 472).
- 48 Mahāpaṇḍita Śākyaśrī (1127-1225): a Kashmiri scholar who spent the years from 1204 to 1213 in Tibet, during which time he taught extensively to adherents of all the major Tibetan schools (*NSH* 2: 59, n. 807; *BA*, 599, 710, 1063).

- 49 Rwa: the Kālacakra tradition introduced into Tibet by the Nepalese paṇḍita Samantaśrībhadra (c. 1100) and the Tibetan translator Ra Chörab (Rwa Chos rab).
- 50 'Bro: the tradition of Kālacakra introduced by the Kashmiri paṇḍita Somanātha and the Tibetan translator Dro Sherab Drakpa ('Bro Shes rab grags pa, 993-1047) or Drokmi ('Brog mi).
- 51 'Tasting inner elixir' (*nang gi bdud rtsi'i bcud myong*) is primarily a metaphor for the descent of vital essence drops within the body, which will be discussed later in the branch of retention. "Generally, the expression 'tasting the inner amrita' [elixir] refers to the bliss of melting. It is produced when the *caṇḍālī* below the navel, which is the essence of the mother Vajrayoginī, blazes upwards causing the letter *ham* at the top of the head, which is the white element, to melt and descend through the chakras. The extraordinary experience of bliss that is produced by this process is called 'tasting inner elixir' or 'experiencing inner bliss'" (KTGR, "Six Limbs of Application," 164).
- 52 This last is the definition one finds in M-W (148), where *āyāma* is "stretching, extending," and also "restraining, restrained, stopping."
- 53 *thog mar dge ba*: see the discussion below in section 5, under "Connections."
- 54 *Dus zhabs pa'i man ngag*, that is, *Esoteric Instruction on the Six Branch Yoga* ('Byor ba yan lag drug gi man ngag, Skt. *Ṣaḍaṅgayogopadeśa*, Toh. 1372), which is the same as the *Kālacakrapāda Transmission* (*Dus zhabs snyan brgyud*).
- 55 [*bsDus pa'i*] *rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), *Ye shes le'u*, verse 117.
- 56 Ibid., *sGrub le'u*, verse 116.
- 57 The conch-bearing channel (*dung ma can*, Skt. *saṅkhiṇī*) is the lower end of the central channel and is said to increase bliss.
- 58 [*bsDus pa'i*] *rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), *sGrub le'u*, verse 112.
- 59 Ibid., *sGrub le'u*, verse 194 (f. 97b1).
- 60 Ibid., *sGrub le'u*, verse 194.
- 61 Ibid., *Nang le'u* ("Inner Chapter"), verse 116.
- 62 The set of six is mental formations (also known as compositional factors, Skt. *saṃskāra*), the air element, the nose, touch, the anus, and the discharge of excrement.
- 63 [*bsDus pa'i*] *rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), *sGrub le'u*, verse 118 (f. 89b6).
- 64 Ibid., *sGrub le'u*, verse 116.
- 65 "Most commentaries on the *Kālacakra Tantra* present the limb of retention in a format that speaks only of four chakras. However retention is divided into ten subsections, five chakras are spoken of, each of which is dealt with twice. The four usual ones are inside the head, inside the throat, the center of the body at the level of the heart, and inside the body at the level of the navel. The fifth one is the *uṣṇīṣa*,

- or crown protuberance chakra. In a buddha, the *uṣṇīṣa* arises as an actual protuberance on the top of the head, therefore the fifth chakra is found there. However, in an unenlightened being the *uṣṇīṣa* is not ripened, therefore the fifth chakra is actually found at the forehead. It is clear in the tenfold division of retention that there must be retention in the *bindu* [vital essence] at the forehead, which is nevertheless referred to as the *uṣṇīṣa*, or crown protuberance chakra. In that tenfold division then there is a method given for first bringing the winds [energy currents] into each of these five chakras and then stabilizing the entrance or dissolution of the winds into each of these five chakras, which gives the tenfold division of the branch of retention” (KTGR, “The Six Limbs of Application,” 167-8).
- 66 [*bsDus pa'i*] *rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), *Ye shes le'u*, verse 116.
- 67 *re kha'*: “This refers to the fact that the empty form of a black border, or black circle, arises within the avadhūti. The signs at this time—the empty forms and so on that arise during this limb—are distinguished by the appearance of the blaze of *caṇḍālī*, arising as an empty form, and by the empty sound, which is called indestructible sound” (KTGR, “The Six Limbs of Application,” 168).
- 68 This set of six consists of the feeling aggregate, the fire element, the sense faculty of the eye, taste, the faculty of the arms, and the activity of going.
- 69 [*bsDus pa'i*] *rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), *sGrub le'u*, verse 118. *The Commentary* (Toh. 845) adds that this “refers to the mind apprehending the empty forms” (f. 238a2, cited in *OSL*, 521).
- 70 *bdud bzhi*: the four devils or māras that threaten spiritual progress are the devil of the aggregates (*phung po'i bdud*), the devil of afflictive emotion (*nyon mongs pa'i bdud*), the devil of the Lord of Death (*'chi bdag gi bdud*), and the devil of being a divine child (i.e., spoiled) (*lha'i bu'i bdud*).
- 71 *Dus zhabz snyan brgyud*, Skt. *Ṣaḍaṅgayogopadeśa* (Toh. 1372), f. 225a5.
- 72 [*bsDus pa'i*] *rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), *sGrub le'u*, verse 117.
- 73 This refers to pledge-mudra (*samayamudrā*), the blazing and melting of inner heat practice (KTGR, “Six Limbs of Application,” 172).
- 74 [*bsDus pa'i*] *rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), *sGrub le'u*, verse 117.
- 75 Here *na 'phos*, similar to *na 'phar*, as it appears a few lines later.
- 76 In the first system, the four mudras would be simultaneously cultivated by someone whose vital essence is still thin: using an awareness partner as an external support is action-mudra; the visualized mother and father deity in union is awareness-mudra; the visualized enhancement of the blazing of inner heat is pledge-mudra; and the meditative equipoise on the forms of emptiness associated with this branch is mahāmudrā. When their vital essence has somewhat thickened and they progress to the intermediate level, they would practice the three mudras. They would no longer need an action-mudra partner, but they would integrate the practices of awareness-mudra, pledge-mudra, and mahāmudrā. When they progress to the

- highest level, they would need only the mahāmudrā together with either the pledge-mudra or the awareness-mudra (KTGR, “Six Limbs of Application,” 174-5).
- 77 *kunda byang chub kyī sems*: a poetic name for seminal fluid, bodhicitta as substance.
- 78 This set of six consists of the aggregate of perception, the water element, the tongue, visible forms, the faculty of the legs (or voice), and the activity of taking.
- 79 [*bsDus pa'i*] *rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), *sGrub le'u*, verse 126.
- 80 Ibid., *sGrub le'u*, verse 119.
- 81 Ibid., *sGrub le'u*, verse 117.
- 82 Here, *māhamudrā* is in the Tibetan feminine form *phyag rgya chen mo*.
- 83 *las kyī gtum mo*: Activity *caṇḍālī* refers to the natural *caṇḍālī* that is produced by sexual union. “Consume” or “digest” (*ju ba*) here means to purify into forms of emptiness (KTGR, “Six Limbs of Application,” 182).
- 84 *Nor bu rtse mo*: “In the male it is the tip of the jewel; in the female it is the stamens of the lotus. It is caught or locked there, and remains there” (Ibid., 182).
- 85 *sa*, Skt. *bhūmi*, but here “...not the twelve *bhūmis* of an *ārya*. They are the concordant twelve *bhūmis* within the limb of *samādhi*, which culminate in the attainment of the first bodhisattva level” (ibid., 183).
- 86 *rdo rje 'dzin pa*: see the explanation of “full and perfect enlightenment by single instances” in *OSL*, 560-61. Also, “...although the Kālacakra tradition talks of twelve levels, in other tantras the state of Vajradhara is known as the eleventh level, *all light*” (*OSL*, 670, n. 406).
- 87 “...at each moment of *samādhi* one of the 21,600 karmic winds ceases and at the same time 1/21,600th of the three channels dissolves into the ultimate *avadhūti*. At that time, the movement or transference of 1/21,600th of both the white and red elements is stabilized or locked without movement into the *avadhūti*” (KTGR, “Six Limbs of Application,” 184).
- 88 [*bsDus pa'i*] *rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), *sGrub le'u*, verse 120.
- 89 “...either continually, or occasionally as a mode of enhancement, whichever is appropriate...” (KTGR, “Six Limbs of Application,” 185).
- 90 This set of six consists of the aggregate of form, the earth element, the organ of the body, the sensory source of odors, the anus, and the activity of speaking.
- 91 [*bsDus pa'i*] *rgyud*, Skt. *Laghutantra* (Toh. 362), *sGrub le'u*, verse 119.
- 92 In *Vajrapāṇi's Upper Commentary* (*Phyag rdor stod 'grel*, Skt. *Vajrapāṇistotraṭīkā*), Toh. 1402.
- 93 In *Commentary That Summarizes the Hevajra Tantra* (*rDo rje snying 'grel*, Skt. *Hevajrapañḍārthaṭīkā*), Toh. 1180.
- 94 *dPal don dam bsnyen pa*, Skt. *Śrīparamārthasevā* (Toh. 1348), by Padma Karpo.

- 95 In general, deliberate conduct (*brtul zhugs*, Skt. *vrata*) is defined by Kongtrul as the transforming (*brtul*) of ordinary activity and thoughts and the entering (*zhugs*) into the mode of Vajrasattva's body, speech, and mind (*BE*, 243). Again, deliberate behavior is the conduct of a yogin who has brought under control (*brtul*) ordinary actions conditioned by passions and has adopted (*zhugs*) the special behavior intended for overcoming dualism (*SBT*, 513 n.79). Here the meaning is quite specialized, as described.

## CHAPTER 8: DORJÉ SUMGYI NYENDRUP

- 1 Grub chen O rgyan rin chen dpal, or Orgyenpa (1229/1230-1309): a disciple of the early Drukpa Kagyu master Götsangpa (rGod tshang pa, 1189-1258), he brought ḍākinī teachings from Uddīyāna (Tib. Orgyen) to Tibet. He was a contemporary of the second and third Karmapas. He also practiced Drukpa Kagyu and mainly spread those doctrines (*BA*, 696-705). These teachings are largely based on the Six-Branch Yoga of the Kālacakra tradition and will be enhanced by the descriptions in Chapter 7.
- 2 According to *BA* (701): "There, a Vajra-yoginī (Vajravārāhī) in the form of a prostitute's daughter, offered him a bowl of curry and blessed him, and by this all the remaining defiling elements of his former karmic deeds were first brought out, and then consumed, and he was able to master the meaning of the Trivajra. Then the Vajra-yoginī manifested her true form and bestowed on him the Oral Instructions."
- 3 *rDo rje'i tshig rkang*: "Vajra Verses" is not so much a title as a description of the source text, which can be found in volume 15 (ff. 499-509) of *The Treasury of Precious Key Instructions* (*DZ*) under the title *Source Text of the Great Adept Orgyenpa's Spiritual Instructions on the Approach and Attainment of the Three Vajras* (Grub chen o rgyan pa'i gdams ngag rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub kyi gzhung). It is also sometimes referred to as the *Source Text of Method and Wisdom Bestowed by the Four Types of Ḍākinīs* (*Rigs bzhi mkha' gros gnang ba'i thabs lam gyi gzhung*) (*Catalogue*, 457).
- 4 *gSang ba 'dus pa*, Skt. *Guhyasamājahātantra* (Toh. 422).
- 5 *rDo rje'i tshig rkang* (*DZ*, vol. 15, f. 506). See note 3.
- 6 *kham drug ldan pa'i [rdo rje'i] lus*: The six outer constituents are the five elements and the constituent of mental objects (*chos kham*). The six inner constituents are flesh, blood, warmth, breath, vacuities, and the universal ground consciousness. The six secret constituents are the channels as the stable earth element, the syllable *ham* at the crown of the head as the liquid water element, the *a*-stroke at the navel center as the warm fire element, the vital essence energy (*srog gi rlung*) as the moving wind element, the avadhūti as the empty space element, and the universal ground pristine awareness as the cognizant wisdom element. This last category is special (RY).
- 7 *bsam gtan gyi yan lag lnga*: (1) discernment (*shes rab*), (2) conception (*rtog pa*), (3) analysis (*dpvod pa*), (4) joy (*dga' ba*), and (5) unwavering bliss (*g.yo med bde ba*). See the branch of meditative stability in Chapter 7 for a short description.

- 8 *mngon par shes pa lnga*: the capacities for performing miracles, divine sight, divine hearing, recollection of former lives, and cognition of the minds of others.
- 9 *nyi zla'i 'gro 'ong*: the movement of the energy currents in the right (sun) and left (moon) channels.
- 10 *las chen bcu gnyis*: activities (*las*) refers to enlightened activities (*phrin las*) based on pristine awareness performed to enhance one's own or others' spiritual scope. The power to perform these is gained as an effect of the practice of deity yoga and repetition of a prescribed number of mantras. Although unlimited in number and mode, such activities may be classified as four, eight, twelve, or fourteen. The four are the basic ones: pacifying (*zhi ba*), enriching (*rgyas pa*), controlling (*dbang*), and wrathful (*drag po*). The eight are appeasing, enriching, dominating, summoning, liberating, expelling, paralyzing, and stupefying. They become twelve with the addition of purging poison, separating, pacifying epidemics, and striking with the *kila* dagger; and fourteen by adding reviving and becoming invisible (*TOK* 3: 632-3). See *SBT*, 385-6, n. 57.
- 11 *skye ba bdun pa'i thig le*: this refers to a sevenfold process of refinement that ingested nutrients go through to become, in turn, blood, flesh, fatty tissue, bones, marrow, and regenerative fluids. At each step of this process, through the action of metabolic heat, the refined essences are separated from residue, or waste. The end result of this cycle is the quintessence known as the seminal fluids (*khu ba*, Skt. *śukra*). Regenerative fluids have a coarse and fine component. The coarse component becomes semen in males and ovum in females, and the fine part flows from the heart to the entire body through a network of manifest vessels and nerves and less manifest pathways, giving radiance and strength to the body. See *SBT*, 447, n. 83.
- 12 *bdud rtsi lnga phrag lnga*: the five elixirs are feces (*dri chen*), urine (*dri chu*), blood (*khrag*), semen (*rdo rje'i zil pa*), and human flesh (*mi'i sha*). These five are the basic constituents of one's body. The other five here may be the five meats of horse, ox, dog, elephant, and human. All are transmuted into pure elixirs.
- 13 *gnas skabs bzhi*: the four states are waking (*sad pa*), dreaming (*rmi lam*), deep sleep (*gnyid stug*), and sexual intercourse (*chags rtogsnyoms 'jug*).
- 14 *sgrib pa gsum tshan gsum*: the three are obscurations of the knowable (*shes bya'i sgrib pa*), of afflictive emotions (*nyon mongs pa'i sgrib pa*) and of habitual patterns (*bag chags kyi sgrib pa*).
- 15 *Zla seng ba*, or Dawa Sengé (*Zla ba seng ge*), was Orgyenpa's successor or "throne-keeper" (*khrid gnyer*) (*Catalogue*, f. 421). Three of his commentaries are *Wish-fulfilling Gem: An Explanatory Commentary on Approach and Attainment* (*bsNyen sgrub kyi 'grel bshad yid bzhin nor bu*, *DZ*, vol. 15, ff. 511-74), *Preliminary Ritual from the Approach and Accomplishment of the Three Vajras* (*rDo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub las sngon 'gro'i cho ga*, *DZ*, vol. 15, ff. 575-85), and *Guide to Approach and Accomplishment* (*bsNyen sgrub kyi khrid yig*, *DZ*, vol. 15, ff. 603-17).
- 16 *sBud tra ba* (elsewhere spelled *sPa dra pa*) Sönam Özer (*bSod nams 'od zer*) from Butra (*BA*, 528). He composed an extensive exposition on the Vajra Verses (*BA*, 703).

- 17 Another commentary included in Kongtrul's collections is by the great Drukpa Kagyu master Padma Karpo (Padma dkar po, 1527-1592), who wrote *Innermost Essence of Spiritual Power: Esoteric Instructions of Immutable Bodhicitta for Meditation to Become a Great Adept in One Sitting of Approach and Attainment of the Three Vajras* (rDo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub grub chen gdan rdzogs su bsgom pa'i byang sems 'gyur med kyi man ngag grub pa'i snying thig), DZ, vol. 15, ff. 587-601.

## CHAPTER 9: SUPPLEMENT: ŚĀNTIGUPTA

- 1 Śāntigupta (Zhi ba sbas pa, late fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries) was the master of Buddhaguptanātha, the Indian guru of Tāranātha. He lived after the decline of Buddhism in India, hence “the age of conflict.” Tāranātha provides a lengthy account of Śāntigupta's life in his *Biographies of the Lineage with Seven Transmissions* (*bKa' babs bdun ldan gyi rgyud pa'i rnam thar*), translated by David Templeman in *The Seven Instruction Lineages* (75-101). Born in southern India, Śāntigupta became a monk and studied all aspects of the Buddhist doctrine including tantra under Rātigupta. He preserved and transmitted the surviving precepts of seven successive lineages. He is one of the “cross-over” masters claimed by both Buddhists and Hindus (see *NSH* 1: 504).
- 2 *bka' bab drug*: “the Lineage with Six Transmissions” (*bka' babs drug ldan gyi rgyud pa*) differs somewhat from “the Lineage with Seven Transmissions” (*bka' babs bdun ldan gyi rgyud pa*), although they are mostly overlapping. The Seven Transmissions are mahāmudrā, the goddess Caṇḍikā (inner heat), action-mudra, luminous clarity, creation phase, the word tradition, and miscellaneous esoteric instructions. See Templeman, *The Seven Instruction Lineages*, 15-23. Instructions for the six transmissions can be found in the *Guidebook on the Six Transmissions: Oral Teachings of the Adepts of India* (*bKa' babs drug ldan gyi khrid yig 'phags yul grub pa'i zhal lung*), DZ, vol. 17, ff. 219-295.
- 3 *bsnyen pa*: The approach practice in creation phase concerns visualization and recitation of mantra. The three approaches are the minimal visualization of one's chosen deity while reciting the appropriate number of its mantras; the middle level visualization of internal deities in the body with the appropriate recitation; and the full-blown visualization of the entire mandala with all deities complete and the requisite number of mantras for each of them (*Guidebook on the Six Transmissions*, DZ, vol. 17, ff. 221-2).
- 4 *gsal snang*: clear appearance in the conceptual yoga (*rtog pa'i rnal 'byor*) is described as when the whole mandala of deities appears clearly, and more clear appearance (*yang gsal snang*) is when all phenomena appear as the forms of deities (ibid., f. 222). Clear appearance in single recollection (*dran pa gcig pa*) is when any of the three visualizations on inner vital essence mandalas becomes clear (ibid., f. 224).
- 5 It is mentioned that when one is successful in any one of three internal visualizations of the subtle vital essences, then even if one never practices completion phase *per se* in this life, in the next one will be primed for it (ibid., f. 225).



- 6 Three external supports for visualization (*phyi'i dmigs rten gsum*) are to place in front of oneself something like (1) a black stick, (2) a small, flat stone with a red *svastika* drawn on it, and (3) a stack of round grains such as barley or *rdi'u'i dpal ra* (unknown). The five inner mental foci (*nang gi sems 'dzin lnga*) are more involved processes of visualization involving (1) a black vital essence drop at the navel, (2) oneself dwelling in the basic space of empty sky and disappearing, (3) black human heads arising from the right and left, meeting in the middle, (4) the sky in all ten directions, and (5) mentally following a path that one has previously experienced (ibid., ff. 226-7).
- 7 *ngo sprod skor brgyad*: these are eight different and very specific ways to point out to the practitioner the nature of the mind. See the *Guidebook on the Six Transmissions*, DZ, vol. 17, ff. 228-230.
- 8 Vajra repetition [*rdo rje zlas pa*] refers to yogic exercises where visualized syllables are synchronized with the breath. In vajra repetition with three syllables, various techniques are described for visualizing the syllables *om*, *ah*, and *hūṃ* joined with the inhalation, exhalation, and abiding of the breath. The four protectors (*mgon po bzhi*) and the four goddesses (*lha mo bzhi*) are names of practices and do not involve protectors or goddesses (ibid., ff. 243-4).
- 9 The two syllables in this case are *hūṃ* for exhalation and *ho* for inhalation (ibid., f. 244).
- 10 *snang mched thob*: the three lights are light (*snang ba*), increase of light (*snang ba mched pa*), and culmination of light (*snang ba thob pa*), experiences that occur at death and on other occasions such as yogic practice (see chapter 4, note 9).
- 11 *zhing khams*: here, “pure realms” refers to visualized pairs of deities in the four chakras, who are venerated with mandala offerings and who then cleanse the channels with elixir, bestowing empowerments (*Guidebook on the Six Transmissions*, DZ, vol. 17, ff. 263-5).
- 12 *rlung sbyor bzhi*: these are the vase breathing and other techniques described in the inner heat practice. In other words, inner heat is to be accomplished first (ibid., ff. 265-6).
- 13 *rdo rje gtsug tor gyi phyag rgya*: this refers to actual hand gestures or mudras (ibid., f. 271).
- 14 In other words, the main practice here is cultivation of yogic practices involving the energy currents by oneself. Practice with a consort is one part of the follow-up practices for clearing away obstacles to this main practice.
- 15 Here the instructions of Virūpa (Bi ru' pa, c. 650), the great Indian adept so important in many of these lineages, are divided into three phases: meditations for the beginner, applying these practices to the conditions in one's household, and finally testing them while moving around in charnel grounds and such (*Guidebook on the Six Transmissions*, DZ, vol. 17, ff. 282-4).
- 16 The instructions of Gorakṣa include six meditation subjects and also the application of them in action by travelling to charnel grounds and so on (ibid., ff. 281-2).

Gorakṣa was a former cowherd who attained spiritual powers based on the esoteric instructions of his guru Macendra. For Tāranātha's brief history of him, see Templeman, *The Seven Instruction Lineages*, 79.

- 17 *Mi tra khrid drug*: texts from the teaching cycle known as the Six Guidances of Mitra (*Mi tra khrid drug*) are found in *DZ*, vol. 16. They include the means of practice for Avaloketiśvara, Mañjuśrī, Vajrapāṇi, Amitābha, Tārā, Jambhala and so forth. Often known as Mitradzoki or Mitrayogin, Kongtrul gives his full name elsewhere as Śrī Dzagata (Jagata?) Mitra Ānanda. He was born in Rāḍhā in Orissa, in Eastern India, and became a disciple of Lalitavajra, a direct disciple of Telopa. Mitra gained realization after meditating on Avalokiteśvara for twelve years. He was invited to Tibet by Tropu Lotsāwa Jampa Pal (Khro phu Lo tsā ba Byams pa dpal, 1172–1236), and taught for about eighteen months. For the stories of his life, his teachings, and an impressively long list of his works, see *BA*, 1030–42.



# BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS CITED BY THE AUTHOR

## SCRIPTURES

### *Ali Kali Inconceivable Secret Great River Tantra*

Alikaliguhyatsindhapanibhayumahātantranāma

A' li ka' li gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa chu klung chen po'i rgyud

In *Dam chos sdug bsngal zhi byed kyi gzhung gsang ba bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i rgyud*  
*sde'i dum bu rin po che'i snying po*

DZ, vol. 13, ff. 1-39

### *Cakrasaṃvara Abhidhānottara Tantra*

Abhidhānottaratāntranāma

mNgon par brjod pa'i rgyud bla ma

A Cakrasaṃvara root tantra

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 247a-370a (Toh. 369)

### *Cakrasaṃvara Root Tantra/Cakrasaṃvara Concise Tantra*

Cakrasaṃvaramūlatantra/ Tantrarājaśrīlaghusaṃvara

bDe mchog rtsa rgyud/ rGyud kyi rgyal po dpal bde mchog nyung ngu

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 213b-246b (Toh. 368) (P16)

### *Catuḥpīṭha Tantra*

Catuḥpīṭhamahāyoginītantrarāja

rNal 'byor ma'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal gdan bzhi pa

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 181a-231b (Toh. 428) (P67)

### *Collected Verses of the Perfection of Wisdom*

Prajñāpāramitāsañcayagāthā

'Phags pa shes rab pha rol tu phyin pa sdud pa tshig su bcad pa

Dg.K. Shes phyin, vol. Ka, ff. 1b-19b (Toh. 13) (P735)

### *Ḍākinī Vajra Tent Tantra*

Āryaḍākinīvajrapañjaramahātantrarājakaḷpanāma

'Phags pa mkha' 'gro ma rdo rje gur shes bya ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po'i brtag  
pa

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 30a-65b (Toh. 419) (P11)

*Descent to Lanka Sutra*

Laṅkāvatārasūtra

Lang kar gshegs pa'i mdo

Dg.K. mDo sde, vol. Ca, ff. 56a-191b (Toh. 107) (P775)

Translation: D.T. Suzuki. *The Lankavatara Sutra*. London: Routledge, 1932.

*Dhāraṇī*

Aryamahādharmaṇī

'Phags pa gzung chen po

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Na, ff. 90b-92b (Toh. 529 and 888) (P317)

*Display of Pristine Awareness Tantra*

Ye shes rol pa'i rgyud

Not located

*Explanatory Tantra of the Oceanic Magical Manifestation*

bShad rgyud rgya mtsho/ sGyu 'phrul rgya mtsho

TK-NGB, vol. Ba, ff. 338-420

*Full Awakening of Vairocana/ Mahāvairocanaśūtra*

Mahāvairocanaḥhisambodhi/ Mahāvairocanaḥhisambodhivikurvitadhiṣṭhānavaipulya-  
sūtreन्द्रarājanāmādharmaparyāya

rNam snang mngon byang/ rNam par snang mdzad chen po mngon par rdzogs par  
byang chub pa rnam par sprul pa byin gyis rlob pa shin tu rgyas pa mdo sde'i  
dbang po'i rgyal po zhes bya ba'i chos kyi rnam grangs

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Tha, ff. 151b-260a (Toh. 494) (P126)

*Gathering of Intentions Sutra/ General Sutra That Gathers the Intentions of All Buddhas*

Sarvatathāgatacittajñānaguhyārthagarbhaveyūhavajratantrasiddhi-  
yogāgamasamājasarvavidyāsūtramahāyānābhisamayadharma-  
paryāyavyūhanāmasūtra

sPyi mdo dgongs pa 'dus pa/ De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi thugs gsang ba'i ye  
shes don gyi snying po rdo rje bkod pa'i rgyud rnal 'byor grub pa'i lung kun 'dus  
rig pa'i mdo theg pa chen po mngon par rtogs pa chos kyi rnam grangs rnam par  
bkod pa zhes bya ba'i mdo

Dg.K. rNying rgyud, vol. Ka, ff. 86b-290a (Toh. 829)

TK-NGB, vol. Da, ff. 2-537

*Great Natural Arising of Intrinsic Awareness Tantra*

Rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud

TK-NGB, vol. Tha, ff. 2-334

rNying ma'i rgyud bcu bdun, vol. 1 (Thimphu, Bhutan: Drug Sherig Press, 1983)

*Guhyagarbha Tantra, see Secret Essence Tantra*

*Guhyasamāja Latter Tantra*

Uttaratantra

'Dus pa phyi ma

The last or eighteenth chapter of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 148a-157b (Toh. 443) (P81)

*Guhyasamāja Tantral Glorious Guhyasamāja Tantra*

Sarvatathāgatakāyavākcittarahasyaguhyasamājanāmamahākālpārāja/

Śrīguhyasamājamahātantrarājanāma

De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi sku gsung thugs kyi gsang chen gsang ba 'dus pa

zhes bya ba brtag pa'i rgyal po chen po/ dPal gsang ba 'dus pa zhes bya ba rgyud

kyi rgyal po chen po

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 90a-148a (Toh. 442) (P81)

*Heart Sutra*

Bhagavatiprajñāpāramitāhṛdaya

bCom ldan 'das ma shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i snying po

Dg.K. Sher phyin, vol. Ka, ff. 144b-146a (Toh. 21 and 531) (P160)

*Heruka Galpo Tantra*

He ru ka gal po'i rgyud

TK-NGB, vol. Ra, ff. 93-421

*Hevajra Tantra Trilogy (Kye rdor rgyud gsum):*1) *Hevajra Tantra [in Two Parts] / The Exposition Tantra of the Two Parts (brTag gnyis bshad rgyud)*

Hevajratantrarājanāma

Kye'i rdo rje zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po (part I)

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 1b-13b (Toh. 417) (P10)

Kye'i rdo rje mkha' 'gro ma dra ba'i sdom pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po (part II)

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 13b-30a (Toh. 418) (P10)

Translation: D. L. Snellgrove. *The Hevajra Tantra*. Parts I and II. London: Oxford University Press, 1959; reprinted 1971.Also: G. W. Farrow and I. Menon. *The Concealed Essence of the Hevajra Tantra*. Delhi: Motilal Barnarsidass, 1992.2) *Ḍākinī Vajra Tent Tantra*

Āryaḍākinīvajrapañjaramahātantrarājakaḷpanāma

'Phags pa mkha' 'gro ma rdo rje gur shes bya ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po'i brtag pa

Uncommon explanatory tantra of Hevajra

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 30a-65b (Toh. 419) (P11)

3) *Samputā Tantra*

Samputānāmamahātantra

Yang dag par sbyor ba zhes bya ba'i rgyud chen po

Common explanatory tantra of Hevajra

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, ff. 73b-158b (Toh. 381) (P26)

*Highest Magical Manifestation*

sGyu 'phrul bla ma/ gSang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid nges pa'i sgyu 'phrul drwa  
ba bla ma chen po

A branch of *The Net of Magical Manifestation*

TK-*NGB*, vol. Pha, ff. 572-638

*Inconceivable Coemergence Tantra*

Lhan skyes bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i rgyud

Not located

*Jewel Ocean Tantra*

Rin chen rgya mtsho'i rgyud

Not located

*Kālacakra Condensed Tantra/ Glorious Kālacakra Tantra/ Kālacakra King Tantra That  
Issued from the Supreme Original Buddha*

Laghutantra/Paramādibuddhoddhṛtaśrīkālacakranāmatantrarāja

bsDus pa'i rgyud/mChog gi dang po sangs rgyas las phyung ba rgyud kyi rgyal po  
dpal dus kyi 'khor lo

Authored by Mañjuśrī Yaśas

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 22b-128b (Toh. 362 and Toh. 1346) (P4)

*Kālacakra Root Tantra/ Supreme Original Buddha*

Kālacakramūlatantra/ Paramādibuddha

Dus 'khor rtsa rgyud

Transcribed by Sucandra

Not fully extant

*King of Absorption Sutra*

Samādhirājasūtra/Aryasarvadharmasvabhāvasamatāvīpañcitasamādhirājanāmamahā  
yānasūtra

Ting nge 'dzin gyi rgyal po/'Phags pa chos thams cad kyi rang bzhin mnyam pa nyid  
rnam par spros pa ting nge 'dzin gyi rgyal po zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

Dg. K. mDo sde, vol. Da, ff. 1b-170b (Toh. 127) (P795)

*King of Tantras*

*Net of Magical Manifestation: The Great King of Tantras*

Māyajālamahātantrarājanāma

rGyud kyi rgyal po/ rGyud kyi rgyal po chen po sgyu 'phrul drwa ba zhes bya ba

Dg. K. rGyud, vol. Ja, ff. 94b-134a (Toh. 466) (P102)

*Mahāmāyā Tantra*

sGyu ma chen po

Śrīmahāmāyātantrarāja

dPal sgyu 'phrul chen po zhes bya ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po

Dg.K. rGyud, vol. Nga, ff. 167a-171a (Toh. 425) (P64)

*Miraculous Key to the Storehouse*

Bang mdzod 'phrul gyi lde mig/ Byang chub sems kyi man ngag rin po che'i phreng  
ba

TK-NGB, vol. Kha, ff. 148-208

*Net of Magical Manifestation of Vajrasattva*

Vajrasattvamāyājālaguhyasārvādarśa

rDo rje sems dpa' sgyu 'phrul drwa ba gsang ba thams cad gyi me long

A name for the *Secret Essence* (*gSang ba'i snying po*) as well as a general name for the  
texts of the cycle of the Magical Manifestation (*sGyu 'phrul*)

Dg.K. rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, ff. 132b-198a (Toh. 833) (P456)

*Ocean of Dākas*

Dākārṇavamahāyoginītantra

mKha' 'gro rgya mtsho rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud

Dg. K. rGyud, vol. Kha, ff. 137a-264b (Toh. 372) (P19)

*Ocean of Pristine Awareness Tantra*

Ye shes rgya mtsho'i rgyud

Not located

*Oceanic Magical Manifestation: see Explanatory Tantra of the Oceanic Magical Manifestation**Perfection of Wisdom Extensive Sutra*

Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā

Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin stong phrag brgya pa/ rGyas pa

Dg.K. Sher phyin, vol. Ka, ff. 1b-394a (Toh. 8) (P730)

*Rampant Elephant Tantra*

gLang chen rab 'bog/gLang po che rab 'bog gi rgyud

TK-NGB, vol. 19, 199-288

*Reverberation of Sound Root Tantra*

Śabdatadratramahāratnakaratāntra

sGra thal 'gyur rtsa ba'i rgyud/Rin po che 'byung bar byed pa sgra thal 'gyur rtsa  
ba'i rgyud

TK-NGB, vol. Tha, ff. 386-530

*Samputa Tantra*

Samputanāmamahātantra

Yang dag par sbyor ba zhes bya ba'i rgyud chen po

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, ff. 73b-158b (Toh. 381) (P26)

*Samvara Origin Tantra*

Mahāsamvarodayatantrarāja

sDom 'byung/bDe mchog 'byung ba shes bya ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po



A Cakrasaṃvara explanatory tantra

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Kha, ff. 265a-311a (Toh. 373) (P20)

*Secret Elixir Tantra*

Amṛitaguhyantrārāja

gSang ba bdud rtsi'i rgyud kyi rgyal po

Dg.K. rGyud, vol. Ga, ff. 233a-235a (Toh. 401) (P46)

*Secret Essence Tantra/ Tantra of the Secret Essence That Ascertains Reality*

Śrīguhyagarbhatattvaviniścayamahātantra

rGyud gsang ba snying po/ dPal gsang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid rnam par nges  
pa/ dPal gsang ba snying po'i rgyud/ sNying po'i rgyud

Dg.K. rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, ff. 110b-132a (Toh. 832) (P455)

TK-NGB, vol. Pha, ff. 317-415

*Short Presentation on Empowerment*

Sekoddeśa

dBang mdor bstan pa

Extracted from the fifth chapter of *Kālacakramūlatantra*

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 14a-21a (Toh. 361) (P3)

*Stainless Confession King Tantra*

Dri med rgyal po bshags pa'i rgyud/Dam tshig thams cad kyi nyams chag skong ba'i  
lung bshags pa thams cad kyi rgyud dri ma med pa'i rgyal po

Not located

*Supreme Glory*

Śrīparamādyamantrakalpakaṇḍa

dPal mchog dang po'i sngags gyi rtog pa'i dum bu

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ta, ff. 173a-265b (Toh. 488) (P120)

*Supreme Original Buddha: see Kālacakra Tantras*

*Tantra of the Single Child of the Doctrine of all Buddhas*

Buddhasarvapuṭyekaguhyaprisamātantra

bsTan pa bu gcig gi rgyud/Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi bstan pa bu gcig pa'i rgyud

NGB, vol. 56, ff. 492-519 (NGB-TE, 4760)

*Tantra That Equals Space*

Khasamatantrārāja

Nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, ff. 199a-202a (Toh. 386) (P31)

*Vajra Bridge*

rDo rje zam pa/ kLong sde rdo rje zam pa'i man ngag gi gzhung zhal gdam dang  
bcas pa

DZ, vol. 1, ff. 384-477

NKG, vols. 18-19

*Vajra Garland Tantra*

Vajramālā/Vajramālābhidhānamahāyogatantrasarvatantrahṛdayarahasyavibhaṅga  
 rNal 'byor chen po'i rgyud dpal rdo rje phreng ba mngon par brjod pa rgyud thams  
 cad kyi snying po gsang ba rnam par phye ba  
 Dg. K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 208a-277b (Toh. 445) (P82)

*Vajraḍāka Later Tantra*

Vajraḍākanāmottaratānta  
 rDo rje mkha' 'gro zhes bya ba'i rgyud phyi ma  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Kha, 125b-136b (Toh. 371)

*Vajraḍāka Tantra*

Śrīvajraḍākanāmamahātāntarārāja  
 rGyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal rdo rje mkha' 'gro  
 A Cakrasaṃvara tantra  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Kha, 1b-125a (Toh. 370) (P18)

*Vital Essence of Mahāmudrā*

Mahāmudrātilakamahāyoginītantrarājādhipati  
 dPal phyag rgya chen po'i thig le rnal 'byor ma chen mo'i rgyud kyi rgyal po'i mnga'  
 bdag  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 66a-90b (Toh. 420) (P12)

## TREATISES

Abhayākara Gupta ('Jigs med 'byung gnas sbas pa)

*Abhayākara's Source Commentary*

Śrībuddhakaṇḍamahātāntarārājaṭīkābhayapaddhati  
 dPal sangs rgya thod pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po'i rgya cher 'grel pa 'jigs pa med  
 pa'i gzhuṅ 'grel/ Mi 'jigs pa'i gzhuṅ 'grel/ Sangs rgya thod pa'i rgyud  
 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ra, ff. 166b-225b (Toh. 1654) (P2526)

*Awn of Esoteric Instructions: Extensive Commentary on the Samputa Tantra*

Upadeśamañjari/ Saṃputatantrarājāṭīkāmnāyamañjari  
 Man ngag snye ma/dPal yang dag par sbyor ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po'i rgya cher 'grel  
 pa man ngag gi snye ma  
 Author sometimes given as Indrabhūti  
 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Phu, ff. 1b-94b (Toh. 1198) (P2328)

Advayavajra (gNyis su med pa'i rdo rje): see Maitrīpa

Āryadeva ('Phags pa lha)

*Lamp Summary of Conduct*

Caryāmelāpakapradīpa  
 sPyod pa bsdu pa'i sgron ma/...sgron me  
 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ngi, ff. 57a-106b (Toh. 1803) (P2668)

Asaṅga (Thogs med)

*Compendium of Abhidharma*

Abhidharmasamuccaya

Chos mngon pa kun las btus pa

Dg.T. Sems tsam, vol. Ri, ff. 1b-77a, 44b-120a (Toh. 4049) (P5550)

Translation from French: Sara Boin-Webb. *Abhidharmasamuccaya*. Fremont, CA:

Asian Humanities Press, 2001.

*Summary of Ascertainment*

Yogacaryābhūmiviniścayasamgraha

rNal byor spyod pa'i sa rnam par gtan la dbab (phab) pa'i bsdu ba

Same as *Viniścayasamgrahāṇī*, a part of the *Yogacaryābhūmi*

Dg.K. Sems tsam, vol. Zhi, ff. 1a - vol. Zi, ff. 127a (Toh. 4038) (P5539)

Aśvaghōṣa

*Cultivation of the Relative Mind of Awakening*

Samvṛtibodhicittabhāvanā/Samvṛtibodhicittabhāvanopadeśavarṇasamgraha

Kun rdzob byang chub kyi sems bsgom pa'i man ngag yi ger bris pa

Dg. T. dBu ma, vol. Ki, ff. 13b-15a (Toh. 3911) (P5307)

Atiśa Dipaṃkara Śrījñāna (Jo bo rje Mar me mdzad ye shes dpal)

*A Lamp for the Path to Awakening*

Bodhipathapradīpa

Byang chub lam gyi sgron ma

Dg.T. dBu ma, vol. Khi, ff. 238a-241a (Toh. 3947) (P5343)

Translation: Richard Sherburne. *A Lamp for the Path and Commentary*. London:

George Allen and Unwin, 1983.

Also: *Atiśa's Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*. Commentary by Geshe Sonam

Rinchen. Trans. and ed. by Ruth Sonam. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications,

1997.

Bhavabhadra

*Explanation of Vajradāka Tantra*

Śrīvajradākanāmamahātantrarājavivṛti

rGyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal rdo rje mkha' 'gro shes bya ba'i rnam par bshad  
pa

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Tsha, ff. 1b-209a (Toh. 1415) (P2131)

Buddhaghya (Sangs rgyas gsang ba)

*Lesser Sequence of the Path/ Lesser Complete Explanation of the Path of the Net of Magical Manifestation*

Lam rim chung ba/ sGyu 'phrul drwa ba'i lam rnam par bshad pa chung ngu

DZ, vol. 1, ff. 1-15

NKG, vol. 23, ff. 135-157

*Sequence of the Path of Magical Manifestation*

Māyājālapathakrama/Mārgavyuha

sGyu 'phrul drwa ba'i lam rnam par bshad pa/Lam rnam par bkod pa

P. rGyud 'grel, vol. Bu, ff. 465b-506b (P4736)

NKG, vol. 23, ff. 5-133

Buddhasrijñāna/ Buddhajñānapāda (Sangs rgyas dpal ye shes)

*Liberative Essence*

Muktililaka

Grol ba'i thig le

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Di, ff. 47a-52a (Toh. 1859) (P2722)

*Oral Teachings of Mañjuśrīl Meditation on the Reality of the Two Stages*

Mañjuśrīmukhāgama/ Dvikramatattvabhāvanānāmamukhāgama

'Jam dpal zhal lung/ Rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na nyid bsgom pa zhes bya ba zhal  
gyi lung

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Di, ff. 1b-17b (Toh. 1853) (P2716)

Dampa Sangyé ([Pha] Dam pa Sangs rgyas), a.k.a. Kamalaśīla

*Three Lamps of Pacification (Zhi byed sgron ma skor gsum):*1) *Lamp of Bodhisattva Conduct*

Bodhicaryāpradīpa

Byang chub spyod pa'i sgron ma

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Zhi, ff. 263b-264b (Toh. 2321) (P3160)

2) *Lamp of the Yogic Path*

Yogapathapradīpa

rNal 'byor lam gyi sgron ma

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Zhi, ff. 264b-265a (Toh. 2322) (P3161)

3) *Lamp of Secret Mind*

Cittaguhyapradīpa

gSang ba thugs kyi sgron ma

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Zhi, ff. 265a-265b (Toh. 2323) (P3162)

Dharmabodhi

*Summation of the Meaning of the Secret Sutra*

Guhyasūtrapiṇḍārtha

gSang ba'i mdo don bsdu pa

P. rGyud 'grel, vol. Bu, ff. 597b-601b (P4751)

Dharmakīrti (Chos kyi grags pa)

*Commentary on Valid Cognition*

Pramāṇavarttikākārikā

Tshad ma rnam 'grel gyi tshig le'ur byas pa

Dg.T. Tshad ma, vol. Ce, ff. 94b-151a (Toh. 4210) (P5709)

Dharmaraksita/Dhanaraksita

*Peacock Overcoming Poison*

bLo sbyong rma bya dug 'joms

DZ, vol. 4, ff. 61-72

Translation: *Peacock in the Poison Grove: Two Buddhist Texts on Training the Mind.*

Trans. Geshe Lhundub Sopa, et al. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001. Tibetan text included.

*Wheel of Sharp Weapons*

bLo sbyong mtshon cha 'khor lo

DZ, vol. 4, ff. 47-60

Translation: *Peacock in the Poison Grove: Two Buddhist Texts on Training the Mind.*

Trans. Geshe Lhundub Sopa, et al. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001. Tibetan text included.

*Esoteric Instruction on the Six Branch Yoga:*

see *Kālacakrapāda Transmission*

Garvarīpa/ Garbharipa

*Entrance to Tantra*

rGyud la 'jug pa

Not located

Indrabhūti

*Accomplishment of Pristine Awareness*

Jñānasiddhināmasādhana

Ye shes grub pa shes bya ba'i sgrub pa'i thabs

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Wi, ff. 36b-60b (Toh. 2219) (P3063)

*Coemergent Spiritual Power*

Sahajasiddhi

Lhan cig skyes grub

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Zhi, ff. 1b-4a (Toh. 2260) (P3107)

Jñānakīrti, Yeshé Drakpa (Ye shes grags pa)

*Entry into Suchness*

Tattvāvatārākhyāsakalasugatavācasamkṣiptavyākhyāprakaraṇa

De kho na nyid la 'jug pa shes bya ba bde bar gshegs pa'i bka' ma lus pa mdor bsdu  
te bshad pa'i rab tu byed pa

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Tsu, ff. 39a-76a (Toh. 3709) (P4532)

Kālacakrapāda

*Kālacakrapāda Transmission/ Esoteric Instruction on the Six Branch Yoga*

Ṣaḍaṅgayogopadeśa

Dus zhab snyan brgyud/ 'Byor ba yan lag drug gi man ngag

Dg.T. rGyud 'bum, vol. Pa, ff. 224a-226b (Toh. 1372) (P2088)

Same Sanskrit title by Cilupa, Toh. 1374

Kṛṣṇācārya (Nag po spyod pa ba, Nags kyi rin chen)  
*Extensive Commentary on the Vital Essence of Spring*  
 Vasantatilakāṭikā  
 dPyid kyi thig le'i rgya cher 'grel pa  
 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Wa, ff. 306b-349a (Toh. 1449)

*Vital Essence of Spring*  
 Vasantatilaka  
 dPyid kyi thig le  
 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Wa, ff. 298b-306b (Toh. 1448) (P2166)

Kurukullātārā  
*Mahamudra Symbol Lineage*  
 Mahāmudrābhigīti  
 Phyag rgya chen po brda'i brgyud pa  
 Author listed as bDe bar gshegs pa bcu gnyis  
 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Zi, ff. 50a-55b (Toh. 2439) (P3267)

Maitreya (Byams pa)  
*Mahāyāna Highest Continuum/Jewel Affinity*  
 Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra/ Ratnagotravibhāga  
 Theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos  
 Dg.T. Sems tsam, vol. Phi, ff. 54b-73a (Toh. 4024) (P5525)

*Ornament of True Realization*  
 Abhisamayālaṃkāranāmaprajñāpāramitopadeśaśāstrakārikā  
 Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag gi bstan bcos mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan  
 Dg.T. Sher phyin, vol. Ka, ff. 1b-13a (Toh. 3786) (P5148)  
 ACIP TD3786

Maitrīpa/ Maitrīpāda (mNga' bdag mai tri), also known as Advayavajra (gNyes su med pa'i rdo rje)

*Ten Verses on Suchness*  
 Tattvadaśaka  
 De kho na nyid bcu pa  
 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Wi, 112b-113a (Toh. 2236) (P3080)  
 Not to be confused with Ḍombipa's *Daśatattva* of the same Tibetan name, Toh. 1229  
 DZ, vol. 7, ff. 62-63  
 Sanskrit critical edition: "Advayavajrasaṅgraha." *Annual of the Institute for the Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism, Taisho University*, no. 13 (March 1991): 291-342.

Maitriyogin (Byams pa'i rnal 'byor)  
*Vajra Song of Conquering Self-Fixation*  
 bDag 'dzin 'joms pa rdo rje'i glu  
 Probably same as *bLo sbyong gyer bsgom rdo rje'i glu*  
 DZ, vol. 4, ff. 73-93

Nāgārjuna (sLob dpon kLu sgrub)

*The Five Stages*

Pañcakrama

Rim pa lnga pa

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ngi, ff. 45a-57a (Toh. 1802) (P2667)

*Precious Garland of Advice to the King*

Ratnāvali/Rājaparikathāratnamālā

rGyal po la gtam bya ba rin po che'i phreng ba

Dg.T. sPring yig, vol. Ge, ff. 107a-126a (Toh. 4158) (P5658)

Translation: John Dunne and Sara McClintock. *The Precious Garland: An Epistle to a King*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1997.

*Root Verses of the Middle Way called Wisdom*

Prajñānāmamūlamadhyamakārikā

dBu ma'i rtsa ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa shes rab ces bya ba

Dg.T. dBu ma vol. Tsa, ff. 1b-19a (Toh. 3824) (P2663)

Translation: Jay L. Garfield. *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Nāropa

*Concise Illumination of the Five Stages*

Pañcakramasamgrahaprakāśa

Rim pa lnga bsdu pa gsal ba

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Zhi, ff. 276a-278a (Toh. 2333) (P4790)

*Difficult Points*

Vajrapādasārasamgrahapañjikā

rDo rje'i tshig gi snying po bsdu pa'i dka' 'grel

A commentary on the Hevajra Tantra

Author listed as sNyan grags bzang po

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ga, ff. 58b-146b (Toh. 1186) (P2316)

*Eight Verses*

Tshigs bcaḍ brgyad ma

Not located

*Former Authoritative Text*

bKa' dpe snga ma

Sometimes attributed to Telopa

*Latter Authoritative Text*

Pravacanottaropamā

bKa' dpe phyi ma

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Zhi, ff. 273a-276a (Toh. 2332)

*Latter Text on Austerities*

dKa' ba spyad pa'i yi ge phyi ma  
Not located; possibly same as above

*Six Dharmas Combined*

Chos drug zil ba  
Found in *The Liberation Story of the Translator Marpa Lotsāwa: Meaningful to Behold*  
sGra bsgyur mar pa lo tsā'i rnam par thar pa mthong ba don yod pa  
In *bKa' brgyud pa'i rnam thar*, vol. 1, ff. 215-484. Edited by Khams sprul Don brgyud nyi ma. Tashijong, Palampur, India: Sungrab Nyamso Gyunphel Parkhang, Tibetan Craft Community, 1972.

*Vajra Lines of the Hearing Lineage*

Karṇatantravajrapāda  
sNyan brgyud rdo rje'i tshig rkang  
Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Zhi, ff. 302b-304b (Toh. 2338) (P4632)

## Niguma

*Evolution of Illusion and Commentary on the Evolution of Illusion*  
sGyu ma lam rim/ sGyu ma lam rim 'grel pa  
In *Shangpa Texts*, vol. 6, ff. 705-798

*Vajra Lines on the Six Dharmas of Niguma*

Ni gu ma'i chos drug rdo rje tshig rkang  
In *Shangpa Texts*, vol. 6, ff. 161-231  
DZ, vol. 11, ff. 1-10

## Puṇḍarika (Padma dkar po)

*Stainless Light! The Great Commentary on the Kālacakra Tantra*  
Vimalaprabhā/Vimalaprabhānāmamūlatantrānusārīṇidvādaśasāhasrikālaghukāla-  
cakratantrarājaṭika  
'Grel chen dri med 'od/bsDus pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po dus kyi 'khor lo'i 'grel bshad  
rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi rjes su 'jug pa stong phrag bcu gnyis pa dri ma med pa'i 'od  
Dg.K. gZungs 'dus, vol. Shri, ff. 1b-469a (Toh. 845) (P2064)  
Alternate translation: Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Tha, ff. 107b-297a (Toh. 1347)

## Sahajavajra (Lhan cig skyes pa'i rdo rje)

*Commentary on the Ten Verses on Suchness*  
Tattvadaśakaṭikā  
De kho na nyid bcu pa'i rgya cher 'grel pa  
Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Wi, ff. 160b-177a (Toh. 2254) (P3099)

## Saroruha/Padmavajra (mTsho skyes)

*Commentary on the Difficult Points of Hevajra*  
Hevajratantrapañjikāpadmin  
Kye'i rdor dka' 'grel/ Kye'i rdo rje'i rgyud kyi dka' 'grel padma can  
Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ka, ff. 126-173 (Toh. 1181) (P2311)



Suvarṇadvīpiya Dharmakīrti (gSer gling pa chos kyi grags pa)

*Eighteen Dharmas to Integrate on the Path*

Lam khyer gyi chos bco brgyad

Not located

*Smashing Down Concepts*

rTog pa 'bur 'joms

Not located

Śāntideva (Zhi ba lha)

*Compendium of Trainings*

Śikṣāsamuccaya

bsLab pa kun las btus pa

Dg.T. dBu ma, vol. Khi, ff. 3a-194b (Toh. 3940) (P5336)

Translation from Sanskrit: C. Bendall and W.H.D. Rouse. *Śikṣāsamuccaya: A Compendium of Buddhist Doctrine*. 2nd ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971.

*Entering the Way of the Bodhisattva*

Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra

Byang chub sems pa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa

Dg.T. dBu ma, vol. La, ff.1b-40a (Toh. 3871) (P5272)

Translation: Stephen Batchelor. *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. Fifth ed.

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Padmakara Translation Group. *The Way of the Bodhisattva*. Boston & London: Shambhala, 1997.

Śavaripa

*Six Yogas*

Yogaṣaḍaṅga

rNal sbyor yan lag drug pa

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Pa, ff. 251a-251b (Toh. 1375)

Telopa/Tilopa/Tillipa

*Lamp That Illuminates the Esoteric Instructions of Fourfold Suchness*

Tattvacaturpadeśaprasannadīpa

De kho na nyid bzhi pa'i man ngag gsal ba'i sgron ma

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Nya, ff. 155b-162a (Toh. 1242) (P2371)

*Māhamudrā Esoteric Instructions/Māhamudrā of the Ganges*

Mahāmudropadeśa

Phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag/Gang ga ma

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Zhi, ff. 242b-244a (Toh. 2303) (P3132)

*Perfect Words: Esoteric Instructions of the Ḍākinī*

Ājñāsamyaḥpramāṇanāmāḍākīnyupadeśa

bKa' yang dag pa'i tshad ma zhes bya ba mkha' 'gro ma'i man ngag/ bSre 'pho'i lam gyi snying po bka' yang dag pa'i tshad ma zhes bya ba mkha' 'gro ma'i man ngag

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Zhi, ff. 271a-283a (Toh. 2331)

*Trilogy of Bodhisattva Commentaries (Sems 'grel skor gsum/ Byang chub sems dpa'i 'grel ba):*  
see entries for Puṇḍarika, Vajragarbha, and Vajrapāṇi.

Vajragarbha (rDo rje snying po)

*Commentary That Summarizes the Hevajra Tantra*

Hevajrapīṇḍārthaṭīkā

Kye'i rdo rje bsdu pa'i don gyi rgya cher 'grel pa/rDo rje snying 'grel

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ka, ff. 1b-126a (Toh. 1180) (P2310)

Vajrapāṇi (Phyag na rdo rje)

*Commentary That Summarizes the Condensed Cakrasaṃvara Tantra/Vajrapāṇi's Upper Commentary*

Lakṣābhīdhānāduddhṛtalaghutantrapīṇḍārthavivaraṇa/ Vajrapāṇistotraṭīkā

Phyag na rdo rje'i stod pa'i 'grel pa

Commentary on the first chapter of *Tantrarājaśrīlaghusaṃvara* (Toh. 368) (P16)

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ba, ff. 78b-141a (Toh. 1402) (P2117)

Vasubandhu (dByig gnyen)

*Abhidharma Treasure Commentary*

Abhidharmakośabhāṣya

Chos mngon pa'i mdzod kyi bshad pa

Dg.T. mNgon pa, vol. Ku, ff. 26b-95b (Toh. 4090) (P5591)

*Abhidharma Treasury*

Abhidharmakośakārikā

Chos mngon pa'i mdzod kyi tshig le'ur byas pa

Dg.T. mNgon pa, vol. Ku, ff. 1b-26b (Toh. 4089) (P5590)

Translation: Louis de La Vallée Poussin. *L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*. 6 vols. Brussels, 1971 [reprint] [in French].

English translation from French: Leo M. Pruden. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*. 5 vols.

Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1988-90.

Vimalamitra (Bi ma la)

*Meditative Stability in the Mudras*

Māyājālamudrādhyāna

sGyu 'phrul bsam gtan bsdu pa

P. rGyud 'grel, vol. Bu, ff. 448b-450b (P4732)

*Secret Innermost Spirituality of Vimalamitra*

Bi ma'i gsang thig

Not located. Possibly the Bi ma'i snying thig (P4724)

*The Three Stages*

Māyājālopadeśakramatraya

Rim pa gsum/ sGyu 'phrul drwa ba'i man ngag rim pa gsum pa

Vimalamitra's commentary on the *Secret Essence Root Tantra*

P. rGyud 'grel, vol. Bu, ff. 567a-569a (P4742)

Virūpa

*The Vajra Lines/ The Instructions, Together with the Esoteric Instructions, of the Path with the Result*

Mārgaphalānvitāvavādaka

rDo rje tshig rkang/ Lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i gdams ngag dang man ngag dang  
bcas pa

*Sa-skya Lam-'bras Literature Series*, vol. 11, pp. 10-19. Dehra Dun: Sakya Centre, 1983.

Dg. T. vol. Zhi, 139a-143b (Toh. 2284) (P3131)

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Bar do yid bzhin snying po'i bde khrid

Not located

Āryadeva the Brahmin (Bram ze Ārya de ba)

*Āryadeva's Grand Poem on the Perfection of Wisdom/ The Esoteric Instruction on the Perfection of Wisdom/Short Source Text*

Āryaprajñāpāramitopadeśa

Ārya de bas mdzad pa'i shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i tshigs su bcad pa chen mo/  
'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag/ gZhung chung

In *Source Texts of Severance Object*, DZ, vol.14, ff. 2-7

Also in *gCod kyi chos skor* (Delhi: Tibet House, 1974), pp. 1-9.

Barap Gyaltsen Zangpo ('Ba' rab rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po)

*The Summarized Essence of Māhamudrā plus the Six Dharmas*

*Phyag chen chos drug bcas mdor bsdus snying por dril ba*

DZ, vol. 10, ff. 349-82

Dawa Sengé (Zla ba seng ge)

*Guide to Approach and Accomplishment*

bsNyen sgrub kyi khrid yig

DZ, vol. 15, ff. 603-617

*Preliminary Ritual from the Approach and Accomplishment of the Three Vajras*

rDo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub las sngon 'gro'i cho ga

DZ, vol. 15, ff. 575-585

*Wish-fulfilling Gem: An Explanatory Commentary on Approach and Attainment*

bsNyen sgrub kyi 'grel bshad yid bzhin nor bu

DZ, vol. 15, ff. 511-574

Dorjé Gyalpo (rDo rje rgyal po)

*Verses on the Path of Method*

Thabs lam tshigs bcad ma/ bLa ma bgyud pa'i gdams ngag dpal phag mo gru pa'i  
gsung las byung ba'i thabs lam tshigs bcad ma

Palampur, Kangra, HP: Khampa gar Monastery, 1985, pp. 401-496.

Drakpa Gyaltzen, Jetsun (rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan)

*Commentary on the View of Samsara-Nirvana Inseparable*

'Khor 'das dbyer med kyi lta ba'i 'grel pa

In *The Yellow Volume*

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*Presentation of the Middling Path and also there is the Condensed*

Lam 'bring du bstan pa dang bsdus pa'ang yod

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Drolungpa Lodro Jungné (Gro lung pa bLo gros 'byung gnas)

*Great Stages of the Doctrine*

bsTan rim chen mo

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*Mountain Dharma Trilogy*

Ri chos skor gsum: dGos pa kun 'byung gi skor/sBas bshad kyi skor/ Bar do 'phrang  
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*Condensed into Seven Points/Seven Points of Mind Training*

Don tshan bdun du bsdus pa/ bLo sbyong don bdun ma  
DZ, vol. 3, ff. 421-428

*Kadampa's Hidden Guide*

bKa' gdams lkog khrid

Not located

Khyungpo Naljor (Khyung po rnal 'byor)

*Clear Lines of the Six Dharmas; Testimonial; Layout of the Ground, Path and Fruition;  
Fifteen Especially Exalted Instructions of the Ḍākinī of Pristine Awareness; and the  
Sixfold Illusory Body*

Chos drug gi tshig gsal dang/ them yig dang/ gzhi lam 'bras bu'i rnam bzhag dang/  
khyad 'phags kyi gdams pa bco lnga/ sgyu lus drug ldan rnam

In *Shangpa Texts*, vol. 7, ff. 525-543

*The Fifteen Specially Exalted Instructions of the Ḍākinī of Pristine Awareness*

Ye shes mkha' 'gro'i khyad 'phags kyi gdams pa bco lnga pa

In *Shangpa Texts*, vol. 6, ff. 161-232

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