

THE ORAL INSTRUCTION OF KÜN-ZANG LA-MA  
ON THE PRELIMINARY PRACTICES  
OF DZOG-CH'EN LONG-CH'EN NYING-TIG

# Kün-zang La-may Zhal-lung

PART TWO & PART THREE

*As transcribed by*  
Pal-trül O-gyen Jig-me Ch'ö-kyi Wang-po Rin-po-ch'e



NGA-GYUR NYING-MAY SUNG-RAB  
ENGLISH TRANSLATION SERIES  
VOLUME V

*Translated from the Tibetan and edited by*  
Sonam T. Kazi

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Diamond-Lotus Publishing

1993

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VOLUME V

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2. Vajrasattva and His consort, Nyem-ma—the Sambhogakāya Buddhas of the Vajrayāna School of Buddhism.

3. *Ts'og-zhing*, the assembly of the refuge deities according to the *Long-ch'en Nying-tig* tradition.

4. Jo-wo Rin-po-ch'e, Śākyamuni Buddha (fifth century B.C.E.). This precious, bronze image is believed to have been cast in India during Lord Buddha's lifetime. India presented it to China. Later, it was sent to Tibet as the principal dowry of the Chinese princess Kong-jo, who married Emperor Song-tsen Gam-po of Tibet. Ever since, it has been installed in the main cathedral of Lhasa.

This plate has been reprinted from Vladimír Sís - Josef Vaniš, *On the Road through Tibet* (London: Spring Books), Color Plate 135.

## Translation and Pronunciation Notes

Tibetan, a very concise language, rarely uses the plethora of articles, pronouns, conjunctions, and prepositions needed to convey meaning in English. Therefore, when such words appear in the English text, no special notation is used to indicate their absence in the original Tibetan. Significant textual interpolations, which have been made only when necessary, are set off in brackets ([ ]).

Although most Tibetan words and sentences are gender neutral, English often requires the use of gender specific pronouns. In keeping with conventional usage, the masculine forms have been used throughout; however, it should be understood that words such as Guru, Bodhisattva, and so forth apply equally to male and female beings.

As mentioned in the Introduction to Part One, the page numbers given in angle brackets (< >) in the English text correspond to those found in Volume 42 of the Nga-gyur Nying-may Sung-rab Series.

Contrary to conventional practice, for ease in reading and understanding, certain important terms have been footnoted more than once. Also, a number of common nouns, such as mind, wisdom, and truth, in instances when they refer to the highest, non-conceptual state, have been capitalized.

Two notation systems are used for Tibetan words, names, and titles: transliteration and phonetic transcription. Footnotes use both the transliteration system, which is set in italic type, and the transcription system, which is set in upright type. The body of the text uses only the phonetic transcription system. Words are set in italic type, and names and titles, due to the frequency of their appearance, are set in upright type.

The transliteration system is as follows:

i	ཨ	u	ུ	e	ེ	o	ོ
k	ཀ	kh	ཁ	g	ག	ñ	ང
c	ཅ	ch	ཆ	j	ཇ	ñ	ཉ
t	ཏ	th	ཐ	d	ད	n	ན
p	པ	ph	ཕ	b	བ	m	མ
ts	ཅ	tsh	ཆ	dz	ཇ	w (b)	མ, or བ
z	ཙ	z	ཟ	'	འ	y	ཡ

r	र	l	ल	ś	श	s	स
h	ह	a	अ				

The phonetic transcription system and its pronunciation are as follows:

<i>a</i>	as in far	<i>p</i>	as in pat
<i>i</i>	as in feel	<i>p'</i>	as on haphazard
<i>u</i>	as in food	<i>b</i>	as in bet
<i>ū</i>	as in nuisance	<i>m</i>	as in man
<i>e</i>	as in fed	<i>ts</i>	as in fits
<i>o</i>	as is go	<i>ts'</i>	as in its him
<i>ö</i>	as in French bleu	<i>dz</i>	as in words
<i>k</i>	as in king	<i>w</i>	as in wake
<i>k'</i>	as in backhand	<i>zh</i>	as in azure
<i>g</i>	as in go	<i>z</i>	as in zone
<i>ng</i>	as in ring	<i>y</i>	as in you
<i>ch</i>	as in church	<i>r</i>	as in rid
<i>ch'</i>	as in churchhall	<i>l</i>	as in lit
<i>j</i>	as in jewel	<i>sh</i>	as in show
<i>ny</i>	as in canyon	<i>s</i>	as in sit
<i>t</i>	as in ten	<i>h</i>	as in hill
<i>t'</i>	as in coathanger	<i>tr</i>	as in trill
<i>d</i>	as in done	<i>tr'</i>	like <i>tr</i> , but aspirated
<i>n</i>	as in none	<i>dr</i>	as in drill
		<i>l'</i>	as in drill hole

Sanskrit words, names, and titles are set in normal, upright type. The transliteration system and its pronunciation are as follows:

<i>a</i>	as in but	<i>j</i>	as in jewel
<i>ā</i>	as in far	<i>jh</i>	like <i>j</i> , but aspirated
<i>i, ī</i>	as in feel	<i>ñ</i>	as in canyon
<i>u, ū</i>	as in food	<i>t, ṭ</i>	as in ten
<i>r, ṛ</i>	as in rid	<i>th, ṭh</i>	as in coathanger
<i>l</i>	as in lit	<i>d, ḍ</i>	as in done
<i>e</i>	as in fed	<i>dh, ḍh</i>	as in glad heart
<i>ai</i>	as in fine	<i>n, ṇ</i>	as in none
<i>o</i>	as is go	<i>p</i>	as in pat
<i>au</i>	as in shout	<i>ph</i>	as in haphazard
<i>ṃ</i>	as in calm	<i>b</i>	as in bet
<i>ḥ</i>	as in hah	<i>bh</i>	as in abhor
<i>k</i>	as in king	<i>m</i>	as in man
<i>kh</i>	as in backhand	<i>y</i>	as in you
<i>g</i>	as in go	<i>r</i>	as in rid

gh	as in tag <b>him</b>	l	as in lit
ñ	as in <b>ring</b>	v	as in <b>vow</b>
c	as in <b>church</b>	ś, ṣ	as in <b>show</b>
ch	as in <b>churchhall</b>	s	as in <b>sit</b>
		h	as in <b>hill</b>

It will be noticed that several verses from Part One reappear in Part Two with slight variations. In some cases, the Tibetan text itself varies; in other cases, the lines were retranslated to reflect the Tibetan more closely.

Two appendices are referred to in the footnotes of the main text. Appendix A contains notes on a number of Tibetan terms that are commonly mistranslated, details of three corrections to xylographic errors found in the Tibetan text, and other notes that were too lengthy to be included as footnotes. Appendix B contains fifteen line drawings and one halftone, to be used as guides in effecting the proper visualizations.

## Introduction

*Kün-zang La-may Zhal-lung, Part Two* presents instructions on the six unique inner preliminary practices of *Dzog-pa Ch'en-po Long-ch'en Nying-tig* as given in the liturgy *Nam-k'yen Lam-zang (The Excellent Path to Omniscience)* by Kün-k'yen Jig-me Ling-pa (1729-1798). These preliminaries contain the essence of the most extraordinary Pāramitāyāna and Inner Vajrayāna techniques, which are used to dissolve the original ignorance for the realization of Ati *Dzog-pa Ch'en-po*, the primordially existent, liberated Mind in all sentient beings—the ultimate goal of the Buddhist doctrine. The following are the essential teachings of the six chapters:

*Chapter One* introduces the four different levels of taking refuge, the last being the *Dzog-ch'en* refuge. They are the vital prerequisites for the Pāramitāyāna and Vajrayāna.

*Chapter Two* explains how to generate the Supreme Bodhicitta—the highest, compassionate motivation to bring all sentient beings to Buddhahood. This is done through the practice of the Four Immeasurable Virtues—impartiality, loving-kindness, compassion, and empathetic joy.

*Chapter Three* teaches the yoga of Guru Vajrasattva, which uses the four antidotal powers to dissolve the four deep-seated defilements in oneself and others for immediate realization.

*Chapter Four* explains the offering of the maṇḍala, the method of earning relative and absolute merit to attain the transcendent realms of the Nirmāṇakāya, Sambhogakāya, and Dharmakāya for the realization of the Great Dharmakāya.

*Chapter Five* teaches the pauper's method of offering the maṇḍala, which, in one stroke, instantaneously destroys the four Māras—the causes of all samsaric miseries—bringing immediate realization.

*Chapter Six* explains the practice of the Outer Guru Yoga, by which one obtains the four essential initiations while on the path. This serves as a preliminary for the practice of the main subject, the subsequent Inner, Secret, and Most Secret Guru Yogas of the *Nying-t'ig* tradition, where higher initiations are given before starting the *Dzog-ch'en* teaching.

One should follow the above chapters in proper sequence and strictly abide by the special instructions in each. Of these six, Chapters One and Two are the most important, for they form the foundation of Mahayanic Buddhism. If one does not maintain the vows connected with the taking of refuge and the development of Bodhicitta, even by following the rest of the preliminary practices one will not be able to attain ultimate liberation. If these two practices are intact, however, any one of the remaining preliminary practices will have the power of deliverance. If we practice Buddhism without the guidance of a realized teacher, who must give us the proper initiations, oral transmissions, and vows connected with the different levels of teaching, instead of earning merit and realizing Buddhahood, we will ruin our lifetime effort and close the door of our realization for some time.

*Kün-zang La-may Zhal-lung, Part Three* teaches the five methods of transferring one's own or another's consciousness to a higher level. This complementary practice should only be done under the strict guidance of a Guru who holds the Buddhist tradition of *P'o-wa*.

When the Second Kün-k'yen, Jig-me Ling-pa, was performing his three-year-three-month retreat at Sam-ye Ch'im-p'u, the First Kün-k'yen, Gyal-way Long-ch'en Rab-jam-pa, appeared in his dream and gave him a book, telling him that it contained the topics that were hidden in *Shing-ta Ch'en-po* (*The Great Chariot*), Long-ch'en-pa's personal commentary

on *Sem-nyi Ngal-so*.<sup>1</sup> He told Jig-me Ling-pa to write a treatise that would serve as a single path to cover all the other yānas of Buddhism, by practicing which one could realize in one lifetime.

In response, Jig-me Ling-pa composed *Yön-ten Rin-po-ch'ey Dzö-kyi Tsa-wa* (*The Root Text of the Treasure Store of Precious Virtue Called "Rain of Joy"*), which consists of 121 handwritten pages. *Nam-k'yen Lam-zang*, the common outer and unique inner preliminary practices of *Dzog-pa Ch'en-po Long-ch'en Nying-tig*, is the essence of this treatise in liturgical form.

All the works of the *Long-ch'en Nying-t'ig* tradition that Kün-k'yen Jig-me Ling-pa excavated are contained in two parts. These comprise Volumes 7 and 8 of the *Jig-ling Sung-bum*.<sup>2</sup> *Nam-k'yen Lam-zang* appears in Volume 7, pages 237-265. Kün-k'yen Jig-me Ling-pa's personal commentaries on *Yön-ten Dzö* are found in two large volumes entitled *Bden Gnyis Shing Rta* and *Rnam Mkhyen Shing Rta*, which comprise the first and second volumes of the *Jig-ling Sung-bum*.<sup>3</sup>

Jig-me Ling-pa's student, Jig-me Gyal-way Nyu-gu, gave oral instructions on *Nam-k'yen Lam-zang*, which in turn were transcribed and given the title *Kün-zang La-may Zhal-lung* by one of his eminent students, Pal-trül O-gyen Jig-me Ch'ö-kyi Wang-po Rin-po-ch'e. Since these oral instructions contain extremely important information, extracts from various Indian and Tibetan root texts, and heartfelt advice, they will definitely be helpful to real seekers of realization.

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Resting of the Mind*, the first volume in the trilogy *Ngal-so Kor-sum* by Kün-k'yen Long-ch'en-pa

<sup>2</sup> the collected works of Kün-k'yen Jig-me Ling-pa in nine volumes; these correspond to Volumes 29 through 37 of the *Nga-gyur Nying-may Sung-rab Series* (published by Sonam T. Kazi, Gangtok, 1970-1975).

<sup>3</sup> Another well-known commentary on *Yön-ten Dzö*, written by Pal-trül Rin-po-ch'e's student, K'en-po Yön-ten Gya-ts'o, is contained in two volumes entitled *Zla Ba'i Sgron Me* and *Nyi Ma'i 'Od Zer*, which comprise Volumes 26 and 27 of the *Nga-gyur Nying-may Sung-rab Series*.

It should be noted that, since the complete text for *Nam-k'yen Lam-zang* is not given in *Kün-zang La-may Zhal-lung*, practitioners will be benefited by reading *Nam-k'yen Lam-zang* alongside *Kün-zang La-may Zhal-lung*. Volume III of the Nga-gyur Nying-may Sung-rab English Translation Series, which presents the translation of *Nam-k'yen Lam-zang*, will be available soon. An appendix containing line drawings has been provided for those who are performing the Five Hundred Thousand Prerequisites with the hope that it will help them to visualize properly.

In the Introduction to Part One, I noted my intention to mention at the end of the second volume the names of all those who had helped me in preparing the manuscript for this book. As it is a holy book, they have requested me not to do so. I fundamentally agree with their request, since it is mentioned in the instructions that if we offer a service to the Buddha, Dharma, or Saṅgha anonymously, it will bring the greatest blessings for the annihilation of the ego—the main goal of the Buddhist Dharma. Therefore, whatever merit we have earned for accomplishing this humble service is dedicated for the perpetuation of the paramount *Dzog-ch'en* teaching.

May all the realized Gurus live long and accomplish their compassionate mission. May all the sentient beings of this world live long and enjoy peace and happiness. May they quickly attain the state of Samantabhadra Buddha.

November 10, 1992  
Upper Montclair, New Jersey

Sonam T. Kazi



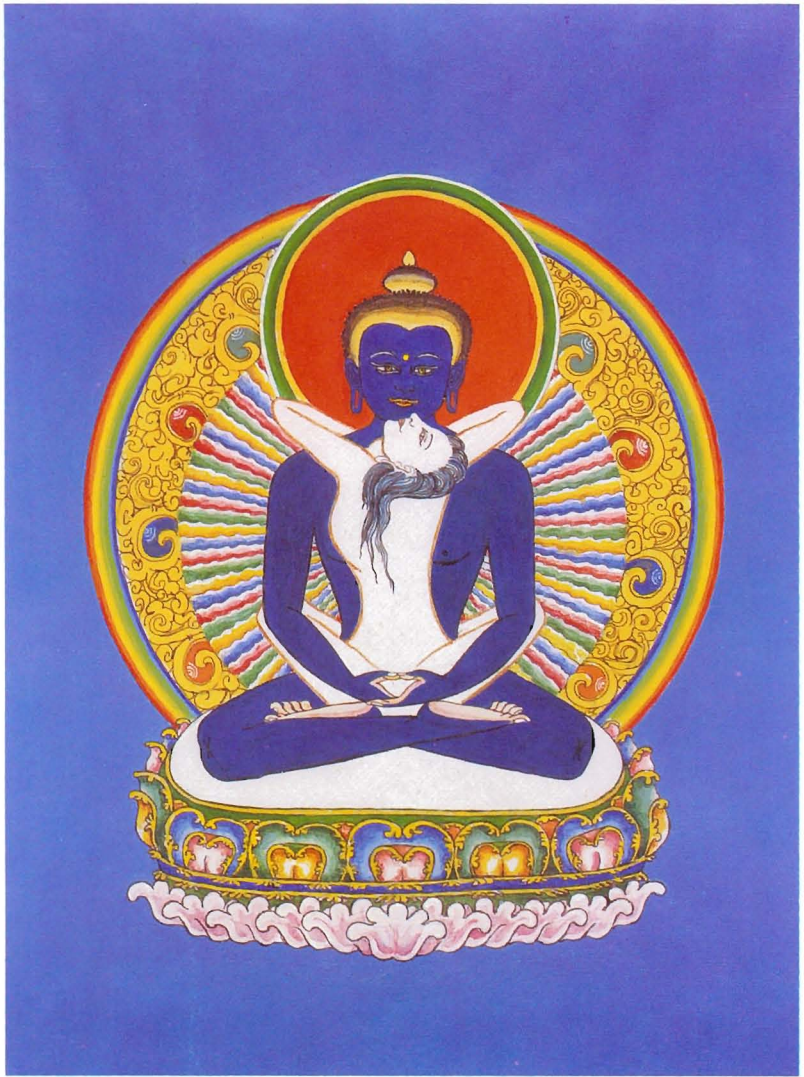


Plate 1. Ch'ö-ku Kün-tu Zang-po, the  
Dharmakāya Samantabhadra



Plate 2. Vajrasattva





Plate 3. *Ts'og-zhing*, the Assembly of the Refuge Deities



Plate 4. Jo-wo Rin-po-ch'e

## PART TWO

# The Unique Inner Preliminary Practices

<257> He carried the Three Jewels,<sup>1</sup> the outer refuge,  
as [high as his] head;  
He actually attained the Three Roots,<sup>2</sup> the inner refuge;  
He perfected in himself the Three Kāyas,<sup>3</sup> the ultimate  
refuge.  
At the feet of that unparalleled Guru, I pay homage.

The unique inner preliminary practices<sup>4</sup> have six divisions:

1. Taking Refuge, the Cornerstone of All [Buddhist] Paths;
2. The Development of the Supreme Bodhicitta, [the Core of] <258> the Mahāyāna;
3. The Visualization [of the Figure] and the Recitation [of the Mantra] of [Guru] Vajrasattva to Dissolve Sins and Obscurations, the Causes of Obstruction [to Realization];

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<sup>1</sup> *ch'og-sum* / *mchog.gsum* / lit., the three best; i.e., the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha

<sup>2</sup> *tsa-sum* / *rtsa.gsum* / the Guru, Deva, and Ḍākinī

<sup>3</sup> *ku-sum* / *sku.gsum* / the Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya, and Nirmāṇakāya

<sup>4</sup> *t'ün-min nang-gi ngön-dro* / *thun.min naṅ.gi sñon.'gro*

4. [Offering] the Maṇḍala to Earn the Meritorious Causes for [Realization];
5. The Ascetic Method of Earning Merit by Destroying All Four Māras with a Single Stroke;
6. The Guru Yoga, the Best of All Methods for Awakening the Insight of the Primordial Consciousness<sup>5</sup> in One's Mind.

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<sup>5</sup> *tog-pay ye-shey / rtogs.pa'i ye.śes*

## CHAPTER ONE

# Taking Refuge

The instruction on taking refuge,<sup>1</sup> the cornerstone of all [Buddhist] paths, has three divisions:

1. The Different Kinds of Taking Refuge;
2. The [Four] Methods of Taking Refuge;
3. The Advice on, and Benefits of, [Taking Refuge].

### 1 THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF TAKING REFUGE

In general, it is taking refuge that opens the door of all Dharmas, and it is faith that opens the door of taking refuge. Therefore, before taking refuge, it is important to develop firm faith in one's mind.

#### 1.1 [THE THREE TYPES OF FAITH]

Faith is also differentiated into three types:

1. Faith [Generated by] Attraction;
2. Faith [Generated by] Desire;
3. Faith [Generated out of] Conviction.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *kyab-su dro-wa* / *skyabs.su 'gro.ḥa* / lit., to go to take refuge for protection

<sup>2</sup> In addition to these three, there is a fourth type of faith, unchanging faith, which is described on pp. 237-238.



### 1.1.1 FAITH [GENERATED BY] ATTRACTION <sup>3</sup>

Visiting [places], such as temples, where there are many objects representing the Buddha's body, speech, and mind, meeting Lamas, spiritual teachers, and noble persons, or learning of their virtues and biographies—such circumstances can instantly generate the awe-inspiring thought, “How great is their mercy!” The faith thus developed is called “faith [generated by] attraction.”

### 1.1.2 FAITH [GENERATED BY] DESIRE <sup>4</sup>

[The faith developed out of one's] desire to be free from the suffering and so on of the lower regions of saṃsāra <259> on hearing of such suffering; [the faith developed out of one's] desire to obtain the pleasures of the upper regions [of saṃsāra] and of Nirvāṇa on hearing of such pleasures; [the faith developed out of one's] desire to earn merit on hearing of the benefits of doing so; [the faith developed out of one's] desire to abandon sinful acts on seeing the harm created by such acts: these types [of faith] are called “faith [generated by] desire.”

### 1.1.3 FAITH [GENERATED OUT OF] CONVICTION <sup>5</sup>

Upon knowing the unique virtues and blessings of the rare and supreme Three Jewels, a conviction will be born from the core of one's heart that will make one recognize the Three Jewels as the unfailing protector at all times and under all circumstances. Irrespective of happiness, misery, illness, pain, whether one is going to die or live—whatever may happen—one will surrender only to the unfailing protection of the Three Jewels, depending on them, and no others, with confidence and hope. Such a faith of complete surrendering is called “faith [generated out of] conviction.”

<sup>3</sup> *dang-way de-pa* / dañ.ḥa'i dad.pa

<sup>4</sup> *dö-pay de-pa* / 'dod.pa'i dad.pa

<sup>5</sup> *yi-chay-pay de-pa* / yid.chas.pa'i dad.pa



O-gyen Rin-po-ch'e said:

**Faith of complete surrendering draws blessings.  
If the mind is free from doubts, whatever you desire will  
be fulfilled.**

Thus, faith is like a seed for growing all the virtues of white Dharma,<sup>6</sup> and the absence of faith is like a seed that is burnt by fire.

From the Sūtras:

**In men who have no faith,  
White Dharma will not appear,  
Just as seeds that are burnt by fire  
Bring forth no green blades. <260>**

Likewise, faith is chief among the seven wealths of the Āryas. It is said:

**The precious wheel of faith  
Sets one, day and night, on the meritorious path.**

As it is said, faith is the best of all the wealths.

Similarly, it is a treasure store, for it is a source of inexhaustible virtues; it is the feet that take one along the path of freedom; it is like a pair of hands, for it gathers all the virtues of the Dharma to one's mind.

It is said:

**Faith is the best of wealth, treasure stores, and feet.  
Analogous to a pair of hands, it is the principal means  
for gathering merit.**

Although the Three Jewels have an inconceivable [amount of] mercy and blessings, the entry of their mercy and blessings

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<sup>6</sup> White Dharma is any Dharma that generates merit, as opposed to black Dharma, which generates demerit.

into one's own mind depends entirely upon one's faith and devotion.

Hence, if one has the best faith and devotion, one will receive the best mercy and blessings from the Guru and the Three Jewels. Likewise, if one's faith and devotion are mediocre, the mercy and blessings received will also be mediocre. If one's faith and devotion are of the lowest quality, the mercy and blessings received will be little. If faith and devotion are fundamentally absent, no mercy and blessings will be received at all. If one has no faith, no benefit can be derived, even if the Buddha is personally met <261> and followed. This is like the story related earlier of Leg-pay Kar-ma, the monk, and of Devadatta, Lord Buddha's cousin.<sup>7</sup>

If faith and devotion are present in the core of one's heart, even now the Buddha will appear in front of, and give blessings to, one who offers prayers. The Buddha's mercy has no partiality.

It is said:

**He whose mind is moved with devotion,  
In front of him, Buddha appears,  
Giving initiations<sup>8</sup> and blessings.**

The Great O-gyen Rin-po-ch'e said:

**For male and female devotees,  
Pe-jung<sup>9</sup> has not gone anywhere, but is sleeping by their  
door.<sup>10</sup>  
My life suffers not from death.  
In front of every devotee, there is a Pe-jung.**

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<sup>7</sup> The story of Leg-pay Kar-ma is given in *Kün-zang La-may Zhal-lung*, Part One, pp. 202-203. Devadatta is mentioned later in this chapter and in the following chapter.

<sup>8</sup> *wang* / *dḥaṅ* / *S. abiseka*

<sup>9</sup> The Lotus Born, or Guru Padmasambhava

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix A, Note 1(a).

If one has faith [generated out of] conviction, Buddha's mercy can enter anything. "Because of faith," it is said, "a dog's tooth made an old woman attain Buddhahood."

Once there was an old woman who had a son. The son visited India again and again on business. The mother told him, "Bodhgāya, in India, is said to be the place visited by Lord Buddha. Bring a special object for me from India to which I can offer prostrations." She told him this many times, but the son always forgot and so failed to bring any object. <262> Once when her son was again leaving for India, she said, "If you do not bring me an object to worship this time, I will take my life in your presence."

The son went to India and conducted his business. However, he forgot [about his mother's request] until he returned. As he was nearing his home, he remembered what his mother had said. He thought, "What am I to do now? I haven't brought any object for my old mother to offer prostrations to. If I go home without it, my old mother may kill herself."

Thinking thus, he looked right and left and saw the skull of a dog lying by the side [of the road]. He pulled out one of the teeth and wrapped it in a piece of silk cloth. [When he got home,] he handed it to his mother, saying, "Here, this is the canine tooth of Lord Buddha. Use it as an object to worship."

The old mother took the dog's tooth to be one of Lord Buddha's real teeth, and faith grew in her. She did prostrations and made offerings to it regularly. Because of this, the dog's tooth emitted many relics.<sup>11</sup> At the time of the old woman's death, a canopy of rainbow light was seen [above her]. It was not that the dog's tooth had blessings to offer. Rather, [the power of] the old woman's great faith made her believe that the tooth was a genuine tooth of the Buddha; therefore, the Buddha's blessings entered into it, making it hardly different from one of Lord Buddha's teeth.

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<sup>11</sup> *ring-sel* / *riñ.bsrel* / pearl-like pills usually found in the ashes of great yogis upon cremation / These are regarded as the signs of realization and are therefore precious. They can be pure white or of five different colors.

Again, there was once a simpleton named Jo-wo<sup>12</sup> Ben in Kong-bo. He went to Lhasa to pay his respects to Jo-wo Rin-po-ch'e.<sup>13</sup> At a time when there was neither altar keeper <263> nor anyone else in front of [the image of] Jo-wo Rin-po-ch'e, Ben went up to Him. When he saw the offerings and burning butter lamps on the altar, he thought that Jo-wo must be eating the offerings by dipping them in the butter of the lamps, and that, to prevent the butter from freezing, the lamps were burning. He thought of eating in the same manner, and mixing the barley flour of the offerings into the lamp butter, he did so. Looking at the face of Jo-wo, he said, "You keep smiling even when the dogs take away the votive offerings. You keep smiling even when the breeze disturbs the lamps. You who do so are really a good Lama. I am entrusting my boots to you—please keep them for me. I want to make a holy walk around you."

So saying, he took off his boots and placed them near Jo-wo Rin-po-ch'e. After he left to do circumambulations, the altar keeper returned. Just as he was about to throw away the boots, the Buddha image spoke: "Don't throw them away, for Kong-bo Ben has left them in my care."

Ben came back, took the boots, and said, "You are the one who is called the good Lama. Next year, come to our country. I will kill a matured pig and cook its flesh. And I will cook matured barley to brew beer and wait for you."

Jo-wo Rin-po-ch'e said, "I will come." <264>

Ben returned home and told his wife, "I have requested Jo-wo Rin-po-ch'e to be our guest. One does not know when He will come. Don't forget to watch for Him."

One day in the following year, his wife went to draw water and saw an actual image of Jo-wo Rin-po-ch'e reflected in the water. The wife hurriedly ran back home and said, "There is something in that water. Could it be the guest you invited?"

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<sup>12</sup> "Jo-wo" can be used as a spiritual or worldly title, similar to Lord, Reverend, Sir, etc., depending on a person's position.

<sup>13</sup> an ancient, precious image of Lord Buddha in the main cathedral of Lhasa. See Color Plate 4.

Ben immediately ran [to the pond]. On seeing the image of Jo-wo Rin-po-ch'e in the water, he thought, "Perhaps Jo-wo Rin-po-ch'e has fallen into the water." He plunged into the water, touched Jo-wo Rin-po-ch'e, and was actually able to hold His body and draw Him out. As he was taking Him to his house, they neared a huge rock, where Jo-wo Rin-po-ch'e said, "I will not go to a layman's house." He declined to proceed further and sank into the rock, [leaving his impression behind on it].

There [in Kong-bo], the rock where the impression of Jo-wo appeared on its own is known as Do-le Jo-wo, and the water where His reflection appeared is known as Ch'u Jo-wo.<sup>14</sup> Even today, people make offerings and do prostrations to them, for they believe that, as far as their blessings are concerned, there is no difference between these two places and the image of Jo-wo in Lhasa.

In this case also, it was because of the power of Ben's firm faith that [the blessings of] the Buddha's mercy entered him. Otherwise, what other result than incurring the penalties [of sin] could be expected for eating offerings and lamp butter and placing boots in front of a holy image? <265> The power of faith accrued virtues of this sort.

Moreover, the actual realization of the absolute truth<sup>15</sup> also depends solely on faith. It is also said [by Lord Buddha] in the Sūtras:

**Śariputra, the Ultimate Truth can only be realized through faith.**

Because of the power generated out of unique faith, the blessings of the Guru and the Three Jewels enter one's mind. This gives birth to the perfect insight<sup>16</sup> [that permits one] to see the perfect meaning of the Ultimate Truth. This in turn generates belief in the Guru and the Three Jewels, and

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<sup>14</sup> i.e., Rock Jo-wo and Water Jo-wo

<sup>15</sup> *nay-lug dōn-dam-pay den-pa* / *gnas.lugs don.dam.pa'i bden.pa*

<sup>16</sup> *yang-dag-pay tog-pa* / *yañ.dag.pa'i rtogs.pa*

unique, unchanging faith<sup>17</sup> is born. Thus, insight into the ultimate nature [of existence] and faith created by belief mutually support each other.

Long ago, when Dag-po Rin-po-ch'e was taking leave of Je-tsün [Mi-la], he asked him, "When is the [appropriate] time to take care of followers?"

The Je-tsün said, "After a while, a clear insight will grow in you. Then—unlike now—you will see the essence of the mind very vividly. When that happens, such firm faith will grow in you that you will regard even me, an old man, as a real Buddha. That is the time to take care of followers."

Hence, whether or not the mercy and blessings of the Guru and the Three Jewels flow into one depends entirely upon one's faith and devotion.

Once in the past, a disciple casually said to Jo-wo-je L'a-chig, <266> "Atiśa, bless me."

"Idle boy, please generate devotion," came the reply.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, as an opener of the door of refuge, an unswerving mind of total surrender [to the Guru and the Three Jewels] developed out of unique faith and devotion is indispensable.

## 1.2 [TAKING REFUGE CLASSIFIED BY TYPE OF MOTIVATION]

Taking refuge with such a faith, if classified by type of motivation, is also of three kinds.

### 1.2.1 [THE SMALL BEING'S TAKING OF REFUGE] <sup>19</sup>

If one strives to take refuge because one is frightened by the suffering of the three lower regions of hell-beings, pretas,

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<sup>17</sup> *ch'ir mi-dog-pay de-pa / phyir mi.ldog.pa'i dad.pa / the fourth type of faith*

<sup>18</sup> In Tibet, as in many other countries, one does not address one's parents, teachers, elders, and the like by their first names. The Great Pandit Atiśa was generally addressed as "Jo-wo-je" in Tibet.

<sup>19</sup> *kyey-bu ch'ung-ngü kyab-dro / skyes.bu chuñ.nu'i skyabs.'gro*

and animals, and one is merely attracted by the happiness of men and gods in the upper regions, it is called “the small being’s taking of refuge.”

### 1.2.2 [THE MEDIOCRE BEING’S TAKING OF REFUGE] <sup>20</sup>

Having understood that, wherever one is born, neither the lower nor the upper regions of saṃsāra are free from the nature of suffering, if one takes refuge in the Three Jewels just to attain for oneself the state of peaceful Nirvāṇa that is free from all samsaric suffering, it is called “the mediocre being’s taking of refuge.”

### 1.2.3 [THE GREAT BEING’S TAKING OF REFUGE] <sup>21</sup>

On seeing all the sentient beings living in the great ocean of the endless misery of saṃsāra afflicted by inconceivable varieties of suffering, if one takes refuge in order to bring all of them to the highest, absolutely realized, omniscient state of Buddhahood, it is called <267> “the great being’s taking of refuge.”

Thus, among these three motivations, for the present purpose, one is required to take refuge with the great being’s motivation of bringing the boundless number of sentient beings to the supreme state of Buddhahood. Although the happiness in the upper regions of gods and men may seem like happiness for the time being, in fact it is not beyond suffering. When the causes for experiencing the happiness of the upper regions are exhausted, one will again fall into the three lower regions. To search for the momentary happiness of the upper regions is not desirable.

Even if we attain the [Hinayanic] Nirvāṇa of peace and comfort for ourselves alone—the status of the Śrāvakas and the Pratyekabuddhas—if, [as Mahayanists,] we do not work

<sup>20</sup> *kyey-bu dring-gi kyab-dro* / *skyes.bu ’briñ.gi skyabs.’gro*

<sup>21</sup> *kyey-bu ch’en-pö kyab-dro* / *skyes.bu chen.po’i skyabs.’gro*

for all the sentient beings, our own parents from beginningless time who are wallowing in the ocean of the miseries of this boundless saṃsāra, it is improper.

Since taking refuge in the Three Jewels with the desire to bring all sentient beings to Buddhahood is the entrance to the great being's path of immeasurable virtue, one should depend on this sort of [motivation].

In the Rin-ch'en Tr'eng-wa, it is said:

**As the domain of sentient beings is immeasurable,  
So, too, should be one's benevolent intention.**

## 2 THE [FOUR] METHODS OF TAKING REFUGE

[1] According to the common yānas<sup>22</sup> of <268> Buddhism, refuge is taken by believing Lord Buddha to be the guide, the Dharma to be the path, and the Saṅgha to be the companions who assist one in successfully following the path.

[2] According to the practices commonly followed among the esoteric, Tantric schools, [refuge is taken] by offering one's body, speech, and mind to the Guru,<sup>23</sup> by depending on the tutelary deity,<sup>24</sup> and by regarding the Dākini<sup>25</sup> as a friend.

[3] In particular, according to the best method, the Core-of-Vajra<sup>26</sup> method, refuge is taken in the expeditious path by purifying the spiritual nerves<sup>27</sup> into the Nirmāṇakāya, the spiritual air<sup>28</sup> into the Sambhogakāya, and the procreative fluid<sup>29</sup> into the Dharmakāya.

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<sup>22</sup> doctrinal vehicles

<sup>23</sup> *la-ma* / bla.ma

<sup>24</sup> *yi-dam* / yid.dam / S. deva

<sup>25</sup> *k'a-dro* / mkha'.gro / See Appendix A, Note 1(b).

<sup>26</sup> *do-je nying-po* / rdo.rje sñiñ.po

<sup>27</sup> *tsa* / rtsa

<sup>28</sup> *lung* / rluñ

<sup>29</sup> *t'ig-le* / thig.le / See Appendix A, Note 1(c).



[4] [Finally, the ultimate refuge of *Dzog-ch'en*,] the never-failing Ultimate Vajra Refuge,<sup>30</sup> regards the great, undifferentiable triple nature of the Primordial Consciousness—empty in essence,<sup>31</sup> clear in nature,<sup>32</sup> and omnipresent in mercy<sup>33</sup>—that exists in the minds of the refuge deities, as the ultimate goal that is to be realized in one's own mind, and refuge is taken in the manner of non-conceptual absorption.<sup>34</sup>

## 2.1 [THE VISUALIZATION]

After you thoroughly know all of these methods of taking refuge, when you actually go to take refuge, the assembly of the refuge deities<sup>35</sup> is to be visualized [as follows].

Imagine the entirety of the place where you are sitting to be a beautiful and fascinating paradise made of all kinds of precious materials, with a surface as smooth as a mirror, and having no undulation caused by hills or dales. In the center of it, in front of you, is a wish-fulfilling tree<sup>36</sup> with <269> five branches whose luxuriant growth of leaves and fruits extends in all directions, filling the eastern, southern, western, and northern quarters of the sky. All the leaves and branches are decorated with precious bells, chimes, pendants, and various hangings. On the central branch are eight large lions raising a precious throne. On the throne [one above the other] are cushions of multi-colored lotus petals, a sun, and a moon. On them sits, in essence, the unique treasure store of mercy, the incomparable valorous Root-Guru, the collected essence of all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future, yet, in

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<sup>30</sup> *nay-lug do-je kyab-dro* / gnas.lugs rdo.rje'i skyabs.'gro

<sup>31</sup> *ngo-wo tong-pa* / ño.ḥo stoñ.pa

<sup>32</sup> *rang-zhin sal-wa* / rañ.b'zin gsal.ḥa

<sup>33</sup> *t'ug-je kün-k'yab* / thugs.rje kun.khyab

<sup>34</sup> *la-da-wa* / la.bzla.ḥa

<sup>35</sup> *ts'og-zhing* / tshogs.ziñ / See Appendix A, Note 1(d). See also Color Plate 3.

<sup>36</sup> *pag-sam-gyi dong-po* / dpag.bsam.gyi sdoñ.po / See Appendix A, Note 2.

appearance, the Great O-gyen Do-je Ch'ang.<sup>37</sup> He is fair with a pinkish hue and has one face, two hands, and two legs folded in the royal repose fashion. His right hand holds a five-pronged golden vajra in a brandishing gesture. His left hand, in samādhi pose, holds a skullcup containing a vase filled with the Nectar of Wisdom and decorated with a branch of the wish-fulfilling tree. He is garbed in a Tantric robe,<sup>38</sup> a monk's robe,<sup>39</sup> and a royal gown,<sup>40</sup> and he wears a lotus-[shaped] hat. He is united with his fair consort, Ḍākinī Ye-shey Ts'o-gyal, who holds a curved knife and a skullcup filled with blood [in her right and left hands, respectively].

Visualize such a figure seated in the sky before you, facing towards you. <270> All the Gurus of the lineage<sup>41</sup> are to be imagined sitting in tiers above his head. Although the lineal Gurus of the Tantras in general are innumerable, the Root-Gurus of the *Dzog-ch'en Nying-t'ig* lineage in particular are:

**Ch'ö-ku Kün-tu Zang-po<sup>42</sup>**

**Long-ku Do-je Sem-pa<sup>43</sup>**

**Trül-ku Ga-rab Do-je<sup>44</sup>**

**Lob-pön Jam-pal Shey-nyen<sup>45</sup>**

**Guru Shri Sim-ha<sup>46</sup>**

**K'ay-pa Gya-na Su-tra<sup>47</sup>**

**Pan-ch'en Dri-me Shey-nyen<sup>48</sup>**

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<sup>37</sup> Guru Padmasambhava manifesting as Vajradhara

<sup>38</sup> *p'ö-ka* / phod.ka / a blue brocade gown with sleeves

<sup>39</sup> *ch'ö-gö* / chos.gos

<sup>40</sup> *za-ber* / za.ber

<sup>41</sup> *gyü-pay la-ma* / brgyud.pa'i bla.ma

<sup>42</sup> chos.sku kun.tu bzañ.po / the Dharmakāya Samantabhadra / See Color Plate 1.

<sup>43</sup> loñs.sku rdo.rje sems.dpa' / the Sambhogakāya Vajrasattva

<sup>44</sup> sprul.sku dga'.rab rdo.rje / the Nirmāṇakāya Pramodavajra

<sup>45</sup> slob.dpon 'jam.dpal bśes.gñen / S. Mañjuśrīmitra

<sup>46</sup> guru śrī siṃha

<sup>47</sup> mkhas.pa jñānasūtra

<sup>48</sup> pañ.chen dri.med bśes.gñen / the Great Pandit Vimalamitra

**O-gyen Pe-ma Jung-nay<sup>49</sup>**  
**Ch'ö-gyal Tr'i-song Deu-tsen<sup>50</sup>**  
**Lo-ch'en Vai-ro-cha-na<sup>51</sup>**  
**K'a-dro Ye-shey Ts'o-gyal<sup>52</sup>**  
**Kün-k'yen Long-ch'en Rab-jam<sup>53</sup>**  
**Rig-dzin Jig-me Ling-pa<sup>54</sup>**

They are fully attired and ornamented in their own ways and should be imagined sitting one above the other, with the cushion of the one above not touching the head of the one below. They are surrounded by an inconceivable number of tutelary deities—the assembly of the divinities of the four Tantric classes—and by a host of *Ḍākas* and *Ḍākinīs*.

On the front branch is *Śākyamuni Buddha*, surrounded by the Thousand and Two Buddhas of the Fortunate Aeon and by the other past, present, and future Buddhas of the ten directions. All of them are extraordinary incarnations,<sup>55</sup> garbed in the fashion of those who lead celibate lives.<sup>56</sup> They are adorned with <271> the thirty-two noble marks, such as *uṣṇīṣas*<sup>57</sup> on their heads and the marks of wheels on their soles, and with the eighty exemplary bodily signs. They sit with their legs folded in the vajra pose. They are white, yellow, red, green, and blue.<sup>58</sup> Imagine their radiant bodies emitting innumerable rays of light.

<sup>49</sup> o.rgyan pad.ma 'byuñ.gnas / S. Padmasambhava

<sup>50</sup> chos.rgyal khri.sroñ lde'u.btsan (also spelled lde.btsan)

<sup>51</sup> lo.chen vairocana

<sup>52</sup> mkha'. 'gro ye.śes mtsho.rgyal

<sup>53</sup> kun.mkhyen kloñ.chen rab.'byams

<sup>54</sup> rig.'zin 'jigs.med gliñ.pa

<sup>55</sup> *ch'og-gyi trül-ku* / mchog.gyi sprul.sku

<sup>56</sup> *tsang-par chod-pay ch'a-lug* / ts'añ.par spyod.pa'i ch'a.lugs

<sup>57</sup> a goiter-like growth found on the heads of supreme Buddha reincarnates. One of the thirty-two noble marks of such Buddhas, it is known as *tsug-tor* / *gtsug.tor* in Tibetan and is a sign of extraordinary wisdom.

<sup>58</sup> The five colors describe the five different races of the Buddhas of the five directions: e.g., the eastern Buddhas are white, the southern Buddhas are yellow, and so on.

On the branch to the right [of the Guru] are the Eight Great Bodhisattvas, with Mañjuśrī, Vajrapāṇi, and Avalokiteśvara as the three principal ones.<sup>59</sup> They are surrounded by the Ārya Bodhisattva Saṅgha, who are white, yellow, red, green, and blue. They are decorated with the thirteen ornaments and garments of the Sambhogakāya, and they stand with their legs in a well-balanced pose.

On the branch to the left [of the Guru] are Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana—the two outstanding Śrāvakas—surrounded by the highly attained monks of the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha orders. Imagine them all as white, dressed in the three-piece habits of monks, carrying mendicant's staffs, alms bowls, and so on, and standing.

On the rear branch is the precious Dharma in the form of stacks of books. With the 6,400,000 *Dzog-ch'en* Tantras on top, <272> they are found in a dazzling network of light-shelves, with their index flaps facing towards you. Imagine them producing, on their own, the murmuring sounds of vowels and consonants.

The rest of the space is filled with the mighty protectors and guardians of the Dharma, who have been created by wisdom and karma. All the male ones face outward to protect you against the disruptive causes that obstruct your practicing the Dharma to attain realization. They keep external hindrances from intruding. All the female Dharma protectors and preservers face inward, offering their service to stop the internal blessings of accomplishment from flowing out. All of them are endowed with the immeasurable, virtuous power of omniscience and have great affection for you. Consider them as your great, delivering guides.

Imagine your present father on your right and your present mother on your left. Imagine that in front of you sit whoever are your hostile enemies and harmful obstructors. Headed by them, all the sentient beings of the six regions of the

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<sup>59</sup> These three, in the Vajrayāna sense, are known as *rig-sum gön-po* / *rigs.gsum mgon.po*, i.e., the three protecting lords who represent, respectively, the Buddha's speech, body, and mind.

three realms crowd together at the ground level, as in a big marketplace.

Folding their hands with due physical respect, they do prostrations; with due vocal respect, [they] recite the refuge prayers; and with due mental respect, [all of you] offer prayers, saying, “Whether I am promoted or demoted, happy or unhappy, whether things turn out well or badly, whether I am afflicted with illness or miseries, whatever may occur, <273> except for You—Guru and precious Three Jewels—I have no other protection or protector, benefactor or helping force, place of hope or refuge anywhere. Hence, from today onward until I achieve the essence of Bodhi,<sup>60</sup> I place my trust and belief in You. I will neither take advice from my father, consult my mother, nor make a decision by myself, but will depend on the Guru and the precious Three Jewels. I submit to You. I want to realize what You have realized. I declare that I have no protector or place of hope other than You.”

Thinking thus, fervently [say the refuge prayer]:

*kön-ch’og sum-ngö de-sheg tsa-wa-sum  
tsa-lung t’ig-ley rang-zhin jang-ch’ub-sem  
ngo-wo rang-zhin t’ug-jey kyil-k’or-la  
jang-ch’ub nying-pö bar-du kyab-su-ch’i*<sup>61</sup>

**In the Three Jewels, in reality the Three Roots of the  
Tathāgata,**

**[In] the spiritual nerves, air, and procreative fluid—the  
Nature of Bodhicitta,**

**[And in] the Maṇḍala of Essence, Nature, and Mercy,  
I take refuge until I realize the core of Bodhi.**

Repeat this as many times as you can during each sitting. You should say the refuge prayer at least 100,000 times by

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<sup>60</sup> *jang-ch’ub* / *byañ.chub* / the Mind that is purified of all aspects of ignorance and in which the entirety of Transcendent Wisdom has blossomed, i.e., Buddhahood

<sup>61</sup> *dkon.mchog gsum.dños bde.gzëgs rtsa.ba.gsum* / *rtsa.rluñ thig.le’i rañ.bžin byañ.chub.sems* / *ño.ḥo rañ.bžin thugs.rje’i dkyil.’khor.la* / *byañ.chub sñiñ.po’i bar.du skyabs.su.mchi*

fixing set periods of time during which to say it.<sup>62</sup> Also, always regard the taking of refuge as the tutelary deity.

## 2.2 [THE PRACTICE OF FORGIVENESS]

Thus, when you take refuge, imagine your father and mother on your right and left, respectively, and imagine your enemies and hinderers in front.

If you wonder why enemies and hinderers are to be considered more important than your parents, it is because we who follow Mahāyāna Buddhism <274> must contemplate on Bodhicitta impartially for the boundless number of sentient beings. In particular, to achieve the accomplishment of earning an enormous amount of relative merit, and in order to prevent the acquired merit from going to waste, we should treat meditation on forgiveness as the principal practice.

Also, forgiveness [should be understood] as in the saying, “If there is no object that provokes anger, how can the power of forgiveness be practiced?” By depending on the harm caused by enemies and hinderers, the power of forgiveness can be generated.

If you observe carefully, from the spiritual point of view, [you will see that] you owe more to enemies and hinderers than to your parents. Your parents teach you all the deceptive means to attain worldly success in this life, making it impossible for you to escape from the bottom of hell in your next life. Therefore, you do not owe them that much.

As for enemies and hinderers, because of their antagonism towards you, they offer you the opportunity to exercise forgiveness; [they] forcefully sever you from wealth, property, sensual enjoyment, and the like, which are [actually] the source of all miseries, the binding rope that prevents you from ever escaping from saṃsāra. Therefore, you owe them gratitude. Evil spirits and hinderers also become the object for exercising forgiveness. Thus, on account of the pain and

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<sup>62</sup> To make up for any mistakes made while counting, usually an additional 11,000 refuge prayers are recited, making a total of 111,000.

suffering they inflict on you, many sins that you have earned in the past will be absolved.

In particular, even one like Je-tsün Mi-la Re-pa met with the Dharma as a result of being deprived of all his wealth and property by his aunt and uncle. <275> Similarly, the nun Ma-pal-mo was afflicted by serpent spirits, practiced the sādhana of Avalokiteśvara, and attained absolute perfection. Thus, you are indebted to enemies for providing you with the opportunity to meet with the Dharma.

The omniscient Dharma-King [Long-ch'en-pa] said:

**If the infliction of suffering makes you find the  
Dharma,  
The Path to Freedom is found; be grateful to the  
inflictors.**

**If depression caused by sorrow makes you find the  
Dharma,  
Eternal happiness is found; be grateful for the sorrow.**

**If the harm caused by non-human beings makes you  
find the Dharma,  
Fearlessness is found; be grateful to the demons and  
evil spirits.**

**If the hostility of men and the like makes you find the  
Dharma,  
Benefit and comfort are found; be grateful to those who  
are hostile.**

**If a serious calamity makes you find the Dharma,  
The unchanging path is found; be grateful for the  
calamity.**

**If others' inspiration makes you find the Dharma,  
The essential meaning has been found; be grateful to  
the inspirers.**

**Be grateful to those who offer help and dedicate the  
merit to them.**

It is as he has said. You owe them gratitude [for their help] in this life and also as your parents in your previous lives—hence their importance.

### 2.3 [CONCLUDING THE VISUALIZATION]

Towards the end, when you conclude the practice, imagine that because of your intense devotion, immense rays of light come from the deities of the assembly of refuge <276> and touch you and all other sentient beings.

Because of this, you and all other sentient beings suddenly fly up, like a flock of birds disturbed by a stone from a sling, and merge with the deities of refuge. Starting from the edges, the deities of the refuge assembly also gradually dissolve into light and sink into the Guru in the center, who is the essence of the Three Refuges. All the deities sitting in tiers above sink downward into the Guru. The Guru, too, melts into light, which then disappears. Let the mind, devoid of the activities of projecting and withdrawing concepts, be in the Primordial State of the unshaped Dharmakāya for as long as it can.

When you come out of this state, dedicate the merit for the benefit of the boundless number of sentient beings, saying:

*ge-wa di-yi nyur-du-dag*  
*kön-chog sum-po drub-gyur-nay*  
*dro-wa chig-kyang ma-lü-pa*  
*de-yi sa-la gö-par-shog*<sup>63</sup>

**By this merit, may I quickly  
 Attain the state of the Three Jewels  
 And, without leaving a single sentient being behind,  
 Establish them [all] in that [realized] state.**

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<sup>63</sup> dge.ba 'di.yi ñur.du.bdag / dkon.mchog gsum.po 'grub.gyur.nas / 'gro.ba gcig.kyañ ma.lus.pa / de.yi sa.la 'god.par.šog



Always, under all circumstances, when you walk, keep your mind unseparated from remembrance<sup>64</sup> and watchfulness,<sup>65</sup> and visualize the deities of the assembly of refuge in the sky [above] your right shoulder: they are the objects around which you perform circumambulations. When you sit, visualize them in the sky above the crown of your head: they are the objects to whom you offer prayers. When you eat and drink, [visualize them] in the center of your throat: they [are the ones to whom you] offer the first taste of whatever you eat and drink. <277> When you go to sleep, visualize them in the center of your heart: this is the technique of dissolving illusion into clear light. Thus, during all your activities, without being separated from the clear vision of the deities of the assembly of refuge, and with the faith of absolute submission to the rare Three Jewels, you should endeavor to say nothing but the refuge prayer.

### 3 THE ADVICE ON, AND BENEFITS OF, [TAKING REFUGE]

There are three categories of advice:

1. The Three Things That Should Be Abandoned;
2. The Three Things That Should Be Adopted;
3. The Three Related Things [That Should Also Be Adopted].

#### 3.1 THE THREE THINGS THAT SHOULD BE ABANDONED

It is said:

**After taking refuge in the Buddha, one should not bow down to worldly gods, who are still caught in saṃsāra.**

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<sup>64</sup> *dren-pa* / *dran.pa* / constant remembrance of one's goal

<sup>65</sup> *shey-zhin* / *śes.b'zin* / vigilance in observing whether or not one is remembering one's goal

Devas such as Śiva, Viṣṇu, and the like, who belong to schools holding conceptual views and who are themselves not liberated from the sufferings of saṃsāra, and also the devas of a country, spirit owners of land, and similar powerful worldly gods and demons are not to be worshipped and bowed down to as ultimate protectors in [this or] your future life.<sup>66</sup>

It is said:

**After taking refuge in the Dharma, give up causing harm to sentient beings.**

Any action that harms or inflicts pain on other sentient beings should be abandoned even in your dreams. Make a great effort to observe this as much as possible.

It is said:

**After taking refuge in the Saṅgha, one must not befriend heretics.<sup>67</sup>**

<278> Do not establish close [spiritual] connections with those whose views agree with the views of heretics, who do not have faith in the Buddhist Dharma and in Lord Buddha, the teacher. Although there are no real heretics in Tibet, you should avoid making friends with those who hate and talk badly of your teacher and the Dharma, and who speak ill of the profound, esoteric Tantric teachings, as heretics do.

### **3.2 THE THREE THINGS THAT SHOULD BE ADOPTED**

After taking refuge in the precious Buddha, even as little as the broken parts of an image representing the precious

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<sup>66</sup> Those worldly devas who are helpful to one's realization are propitiated even by Buddhists for temporary benefit and to overcome hindrances, but they are not worshipped for ultimate freedom.

<sup>67</sup> *mu-teg-pa* / *mu.stegs.pa* / By and large, "heretics" are those who believe in either eternalism or nihilism, which are conceptual beliefs. One is to avoid befriending heretics so that one may not be misled by such wrong ideas.

Buddha should be respectfully worshipped, raised above the crown of your head, and kept in a clean [and proper] place. Perceive them as the precious Buddha Himself, and develop faith and *dag-nang*.<sup>68</sup>

After taking refuge in the Dharma, develop respect for even as little as a single letter torn from a Buddhist scripture. Worship it by raising it above the crown of your head, and perceive it as the precious Dharma itself.

After taking refuge in the Saṅgha, perceive even small pieces of red and yellow cloth, emblems of the precious Saṅgha, as the Saṅgha itself. Respectfully worship them, raise them above the crown of your head, place them in a clean [and proper] place, and develop faith and *dag-nang*.

### 3.3 THE THREE RELATED THINGS [THAT SHOULD ALSO BE ADOPTED]

Perceiving the Guru, a spiritual guide who teaches you what is to be abandoned and what is to be adopted, as the actual Buddha <279> of the Three Jewels, you should avoid so much as walking over his shadow. You should entertain him and look after him respectfully.

By perceiving whatever orders the Guru has given you as the precious Dharma itself, you should carry them out with great interest, without violating any part of them.

The followers of the Guru, his disciples, and his spouse should be regarded as [members of] the precious Saṅgha itself. Treat them with physical, vocal, and mental respect, and avoid doing, even for a moment, anything that upsets them.

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<sup>68</sup> *dag.snañ* / to have a transcendent outlook / This means to regard all phenomenal appearances as perfectly pure, for they are illusory and essentially non-existent, like a mirage. They are taken as good and bad because of our prejudiced minds. The unparalleled tolerance that is found in Buddhist teaching is based on the unique view that all sentient beings intrinsically have the essence of the Buddha Mind in them. Since it is difficult to find an English equivalent for *dag-nang*, the Tibetan word is used throughout.

In particular, in the esoteric Vajrayāna, the Guru is the chief refuge. His body is the Saṅgha, his voice is the Dharma, and his mind is the Buddha. Therefore, the Guru should be understood as the embodiment of the Three Jewels. You should follow him by accepting whatever he does as good. You should depend on him with full confidence and always endeavor to pray to him. If you upset him with the activities of your body, speech, or mind, it amounts to your abandoning all the objects of refuge. Therefore, with heartfelt effort and strong determination, always, under all circumstances, endeavor to please the Guru.

In general, whatever you may face, happiness or unhappiness, success or failure, illness, miseries, or the like—whatever it may be—you should rely solely on the Guru and the Three Jewels. <280> If you are happy, you should know that to be the result of the mercy of the Three Jewels. It is declared [by Lord Buddha] that whatever you experience in this world that brings comfort—even as little as the touch of a cool breeze during the hot season—and whatever things make you happy are to be attributed to the mercy and blessings of the Buddhas. Similarly, it has been said that the momentary appearance of a virtuous thought is entirely due to the unimaginable power of the blessings of the Buddhas.

From the Bodhicaryāvatāra:<sup>69</sup>

**Just as, at night, in the depth of the dense cloud of  
darkness,  
A flash of lightning displays a moment of extreme  
clarity,  
Likewise, because of the Buddha's power, at times  
There occurs the [rare] wisdom [that accrues] worldly  
merit.**

Thus, whatever benefit and comfort you enjoy should be understood to be due to the mercy of the Buddhas. Whatever may occur—illness or sorrow, interruptions by evil spirits, hinderers, or the like—you should not depend on any means

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<sup>69</sup> *chö-jug* / *spyod.'jug* / by Śāntideva

to overcome them other than praying to the Three Jewels. Even if it becomes necessary for medical treatment, curative rites, and so on to be performed, they, too, should be undertaken by understanding them to be the manifestation of the action aspect of the Buddhas.<sup>70</sup>

By knowing all [phenomenal] appearances to be the manifested aspects of the Three Jewels, develop faith and *dag-nang*. When you travel to other places for business, <281> [first] pay homage to the Buddhas—the Three Jewels—of that direction, and then go.

Always, under all circumstances, recite the main refuge prayer, “*Kön-ch’og sum-ngö . . .*,” of the *Nying-t’ig* teaching, or that which is known as the quadruple [Tantric] refuge:

*la-ma-la kyab-su ch’i-wo*  
*sang-gyay-la kyab-su ch’i-wo*  
*ch’ö-la kyab-su ch’i-wo*  
*ge-dün-la kyab-su ch’i-wo*<sup>71</sup>

**I take refuge in the Guru.**  
**I take refuge in the Buddha.**  
**I take refuge in the Dharma.**  
**I take refuge in the Saṅgha.**

This four-line refuge prayer should be treated as the tutelary deity. Tell others of the greatness of taking refuge, and let them take it. Let yourself and others pledge trust in the Three Jewels for this life and the next and make an effort to say the refuge prayers.

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<sup>70</sup> There are four kinds of compassionate actions (*trin-lay nam-zhi / phrin.las rnam.b’zi*) that the Buddhas perform in helping suffering sentient beings: mild actions, such as to bring an end to harm, disease, famine, etc. (*zhi-way-lay / zhi.ba’i.las*); actions to increase happiness, fame, gain, prosperity, etc. (*gyay-pay-lay / rgyas.pa’i.las*); actions to increase power, authority, etc. (*wang-gi-lay / d’bañ.gi.las*); and militant or drastic actions to overcome or destroy negative forces (*drag-pö-lay / drag.po’i.las*).

<sup>71</sup> *bla.ma.la skyabs.su mchi’o / sañs.rgyas.la skyabs.su mchi’o / chos.la skyabs.su mchi’o / dge.’dun.la skyabs.su mchi’o*

Also, when going to sleep, as mentioned earlier, visualize the deities of the assembly of refuge in the center of your heart; concentrate on them and go to sleep. If you cannot do that, think that all the Gurus and the Three Jewels, with mercy and affection for you, are truly sitting by your pillow; have faith and *dag-nang*, and then, without forgetting the idea of the Three Jewels, sleep.

Also, while eating and drinking, visualize the Three Jewels in your throat and entertain them with the taste of whatever you eat and drink. If you cannot do that, imagine that you are offering them the first taste of whatever you are eating or drinking. <282>

If you have new clothes to wear, raise them skyward before putting them on, thinking that you are offering them to the Three Jewels. Then wear them, assuming that the Three Jewels have given them to you.

Whatever things you see in the physical world, such as flower gardens, clear streams, magnificent buildings, pleasant woods, fabulous wealth and riches, attractive people decorated with ornaments, and so on—whatever objects there are that enchant and attract you—should be mentally offered to the precious Three Jewels.

While drawing water, first offer it to the Three Jewels, and then fill your utensils.

Comfort, pleasure, fame, gain, and so on—whatever you obtain in this life that is attractive and to your liking—should be attributed to the mercy of the Three Jewels. Generate faith and *dag-nang*, and think, “May the Three Jewels exclusively take them.”

Whatever fundamental virtues you acquire through doing prostrations, making offerings, visualizing deities, counting mantra, and so on—offer them all to the Three Jewels, and dedicate [the merit] for the benefit of sentient beings.

During the full-moon and new-moon days, during the six periods [of day and night], and so on, <283> make as many

offerings as you can to the Three Jewels. In addition, do not fail to make the other timely offerings<sup>72</sup> to the Three Jewels.

Always, under all circumstances, whatever happiness and unhappiness you may experience, do not forget to take refuge in the Three Jewels alone. If you can take refuge when you are faced with dreadful situations and so on in your dreams, then you will be able to do so in the *bar-do*<sup>73</sup> as well. You should make an effort to practice this until you gain such dexterity. In short, you are required to entrust yourself solely to the Three Jewels in such a way that you will not give up taking refuge [in them] even at the cost of your life.

Once a lay Buddhist monk was caught by heretics, who said to him, “If you give up taking refuge in the Three Jewels, you will not be killed. If you do not, you will be killed.”

He replied, “I can give up taking refuge in the Three Jewels in words, but not from the core of my heart.” The monk was killed by the heretics. This sort of firmness is required by all means. If you give up taking refuge in the Buddha, no matter what extraordinary Dharma you may be practicing, you will not be included in the Buddhist fold.

It is said that the difference between Buddhists and non-Buddhists lies in the refuge. The avoidance of demeritorious actions, the attainment of the common spiritual perfections through meditation on devas, spiritual nerves, air, and so on are found <284> even among non-Buddhists. However, since they do not know how to take refuge in the Three Jewels, they miss the path of liberation and fail to escape from saṃsāra.

There was not even the tiniest bit of the oceanic Dharmas of the Sūtras and Tantras that Jo-wo-je Atīśa had not read and understood. But, since he considered taking refuge the most vital of them all to begin with, he only taught taking

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<sup>72</sup> offerings made on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup> of every Tibetan month, which Buddhists regard as holy days. Since any deeds—meritorious or demeritorious—done on these days will bring a tremendous amount of return, these are special days for performing meritorious actions.

<sup>73</sup> bar.do

refuge to the followers who gathered around him. Hence, he was known as the Refuge Pandit.

So, after entering the path of freedom and becoming a Buddhist, you should not give up taking refuge and putting into practice the instructions on taking refuge, even at the risk of your life.

It is as said in the Sūtras:

**One who takes refuge in the Buddha  
Is an absolute upāsaka,<sup>74</sup> [who]  
Never in any other devas  
Goes to take refuge.**

**One who takes refuge in the sublime Dharma  
Forsakes thoughts of injury and harm.**

**One who takes refuge in the noble Saṅgha  
Never associates with heretics.**

Presently, we who consider ourselves followers of the Buddha do not have the slightest respect for the objects of refuge and so on. We perceive images of the Buddha and books of Dharma as material wealth <285> and sell or pawn them. Such action is called living on the ransom of the Three Jewels' body and is an extremely serious offense.

Again, except when paintings and icons of the Buddha and so on are under repair or construction according to specified measurements and the like, if critical comments on them are made from the aesthetic point of view, it is an extremely heavy sin and should not be done.

Keeping holy books and the like on the floor, walking over them, turning pages with saliva on your fingertip, and all similar disrespectful behavior will incur especially heavy sin.

The Buddha said:

**When the last period of five hundred years is reached,  
I will appear in the form of letters.<sup>75</sup>**

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<sup>74</sup> a lay Buddhist disciple

<sup>75</sup> i.e., holy books



**Believe them to be me.  
At that time, show respect to them.**

So He has said.

Even the worldly saying goes, “Do not put an image [of Buddha] on a holy book.” Just as it is said, of all the emblems that represent the Buddha’s body, speech, and mind, it is the holy books representing His voice that teach us what is to be abandoned and what is to be adopted, that uphold the continuity of Buddhism, and so on. Because of this, it is said that there is not the slightest difference between the holy books and the Buddha Himself. Hence, they are exalted.

Moreover, <286> although these days most people treat the vajra<sup>76</sup> and bell<sup>77</sup> as ordinary articles of use, and not as emblems of the Three Jewels, the vajra represents the five Primordial Consciousnesses of the Buddha and so on. The bell has a face that represents, according to the lower Tantric order, Vairocana and, according to the upper, Do-je Ying-kyi Wang-chug-ma;<sup>78</sup> thus it has the form of a Buddha’s body. It actually bears the seed letters of the Eight Great Mothers. Furthermore, it stands for the Buddha’s voice, the sound of the Dharma. Hence, it contains the three emblems representing the Buddha’s body, speech, and mind. In particular, because the bell contains the entire wheel of the Vajrayāna maṇḍala, it is an extraordinary insignia of the [Tantric] bond of trust;<sup>79</sup> a contemptuous attitude towards it is a heavy transgression. Always treat [the vajra and bell] with great respect.

### 3.4 [THE BENEFITS OF TAKING REFUGE]

Thus, taking refuge in the Three Jewels is the foundation of all Dharmas. One who simply takes refuge will sow the seed of liberation, find himself far away from the heap of

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<sup>76</sup> *do-je* / rdo.rje

<sup>77</sup> *dril-bu* / dril.bu / S. ghanta

<sup>78</sup> rdo.rje dbyins.kyi dḅaṅ.phyug.ma

<sup>79</sup> *dam-ts’ig* / dam.tshig

demerits, see an increase in merit, lay the foundation for all the vows, and become the source of all knowledge. <287> Presently, also, the virtuous deities will give one protection and will fulfill one's desires. The visionary ideas<sup>80</sup> of the Three Jewels will always persist, and one will be able to remember one's past lives. One will be happy in this life and the next, will ultimately attain Buddhahood, and so on—the benefits will be unfathomable, it is said.

The Kyab-dro Dün-chu-pa states:

**Vows are available for all,  
Except for those who have not taken refuge.**

As stated, monks, novice monks, and lay-disciples<sup>81</sup> [seeking] personal liberation also have to take refuge as a basis for receiving all the [self-liberation] vows.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, not only is the perfect taking of refuge important [as a prerequisite] for developing Bodhicitta, conferring the secret Vajrayāna initiation,<sup>83</sup> and so on, it is indispensable even for the mere performance of a day's rejuvenation of vows. Therefore, it forms the foundation for all the vows and virtues. Not to speak of [the benefit of] taking refuge with an understanding of the value of the Three Jewels, even if one merely hears the word "Buddha" or establishes a small connection with any of the insignia of the Three Jewels, the seed of freedom will be sown in one's mind and eventually Nirvāṇa <288> will be attained.

It is mentioned in the Vinaya Sūtra that a dog once chased a pig around a stūpa and that this sowed the seed of freedom

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<sup>80</sup> *nang-wa / snang.ba*

<sup>81</sup> The Tibetan words used here refer only to male Buddhist practitioners. They should be understood, however, to mean both male and female practitioners.

<sup>82</sup> *so-t'ar (gyi-dom-pa) / so.thar (gyi.sdom.pa) / S. prātimokṣa / i.e., the Hinayanic vows, which are preliminary to Mahayanic vows*

<sup>83</sup> The conferrer himself must take refuge and develop Bodhicitta every time he confers initiation on others.

in the pig's mind. Again, it is said that one *sa-tsa*<sup>84</sup> enabled three people to attain Buddhahood. Once a man saw a *sa-tsa* on the road and thought that, if left like that, it would be instantly destroyed by rain. With the intention to protect it from being destroyed, he [picked up] a shoe sole, which had been tossed aside, [and placed it] on top of the *sa-tsa*. Then another man threw the shoe sole away, thinking that it was improper to cover the *sa-tsa* with something as impure as a dirty shoe sole. As the fruit of their good motivation, both the one who placed the shoe sole on the image and the one who took it off attained a kingdom in their following lives.

It is said:

**Both the one who with a good heart  
Placed a shoe sole on the Buddha's head  
And the other who took it off  
Are said to have attained kingdoms.**

Thus, first, the one who cast the *sa-tsa*, second, the one who covered it with the shoe sole, and third, the one who removed the shoe sole, all achieved exceedingly great benefit in this life; and since the seeds of freedom were sown in them, stage by stage they achieved Buddhahood.

The refuge will also keep one away from demeritorious forces. <289> If one takes refuge in the Three Jewels with strong devotion from the core of one's heart, the bad karma one has accumulated in the past will diminish and wear away. In the future also, because one has been blessed by the mercy of the Three Jewels, one's whole outlook will become virtuous and one will never engage in demeritorious karma. It is said that even King Ajātaśatru, who had murdered his father, escaped from hell after suffering for only seven days, because he took refuge in the Three Jewels. Also, Devadatta, who committed three of the [five] boundaryless sins,<sup>85</sup> was burnt by hellfire even while he was alive. But then when he began

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<sup>84</sup> *sa.tsa* / a small, cone-shaped, clay image of a stūpa that is cast from a mold (frequently mispronounced and misspelled as *tša-tša* / *tša.tša*)

<sup>85</sup> *ts'am-me-nga* / *mtshams.med.lña* / See Appendix A, Note 3.

to believe in what the Buddha had said, and vowed that from that day onward he would take refuge in the Buddha from the depths of his heart, he became the Pratyekabuddha Rū-pachen. It is as the Buddha has said.

Thus, at this time, we have heard the pure, sublime Dharma through the kindness of both the Guru and learned religious teachers. Therefore, a small bit of interest is growing in us to acquire virtue and avoid vice. If we now endeavor to take refuge in the Three Jewels from the core of our hearts, our minds will be blessed and all the virtues of the path—faith, *dag-nang*, the will to leave saṃsāra,<sup>86</sup> the feeling of remorse for being in saṃsāra,<sup>87</sup> belief in the cause and effect of karma, and so on—will grow <290> by leaps and bounds.

But instead, if the taking of refuge and the offering of prayers to the Guru and the Three Jewels are treated as secondary, however strong our will to leave saṃsāra and our remorse for being in it may be—since at this stage our concepts are expert in deceiving us, our intellect is childlike, and our thoughts are misleading—the virtuous thoughts that we presently have can change into non-virtuous thoughts without any difficulty. We must understand that there is nothing better than taking refuge, even for preventing the continuation of non-virtuous thoughts in the future.

Again, we should also remember the saying that demons will be all the more hostile to a diligent meditator. It is said:

**Where the Dharma is more profound, the black demons will also be more active.**

We are now facing a degenerated period. Therefore, to those who are meditating on the profound meaning [of the Dharma] and earning a tremendous amount of merit, [negative forces] to hinder the practice of Dharma and destroy the merit that has been earned can appear under any guise, such

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<sup>86</sup> *ngey-jung* / *ñes.'byuñ* / the strong desire to leave saṃsāra because one is fed up with one's meaningless existence in it

<sup>87</sup> *kyo-shay* / *skyo.śas* / the remorseful thought of how one is still attached to saṃsāra even though one has hitherto suffered so much in it

as deceptive worldly allurements, delays caused by relatives and friends, obstructions [in the form] of illness and evil spirits, doubts and superstitions in our own minds, and the like. If, as an antidote to these, we make an effort to take refuge in the Three Jewels and the like from the core of our hearts, all that is unfavorable for practicing the Dharma will be transformed into that which is favorable and virtue will grow by leaps and bounds.

These days, saying that they will be insured against illness, loss, and so forth for a year, <291> laymen invite [to their homes] an unqualified Lama and his entourage, who have neither taken initiations, received any oral transmission, nor completed counting the required number of mantra. Yet they start a ceremony that involves the display of a maṇḍala of a wrathful deity. With no idea about creative [meditation]<sup>88</sup> and non-creative meditation,<sup>89</sup> by opening their eyes as wide as the inside of a cup, they generate unbearable hostility towards a figure made out of a lump of dough. They utter words to summon, kill, and hit [the evil spirits], the very sounds of which are rough and harsh, and they indulge in nothing but sacrifices of flesh and blood.

If closely examined, such actions remind one of the remarks by Je-tśün Mi-la:

**To invite the transcendent deities<sup>90</sup> to give protection to mundane people is like dethroning the king to have him sweep the floor.**

Je Dam-pa Sang-gay said:

**Believing it to be an antidote, the villager displays the secret Tantric maṇḍala in a goat-pen.**

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<sup>88</sup> *kye-rim* / *bskyed.rim* / the process of Mahāyoga meditation

<sup>89</sup> *dzog-rim* / *rdzogs.rim* / the process of Anuyoga meditation

<sup>90</sup> *ye-shey-pay l'a* / *ye.ses.pa'i lha* / S. jñānadeva

As noted by him, [such actions] will contaminate one with the transgression of performing Tantric practices in the style of *Bön*.<sup>91</sup>

In order to produce great benefit for the Dharma and sentient beings, one who has no self interest at stake is, [out of compassion,] permitted to destroy enemies and obstructors who have committed all of the ten serious crimes. However, if the destruction is carried out with great anger in order to protect one's own side, not only can the opposition not be destroyed, <292> one will surely go to hell oneself.

Without knowing Mahāyoga and Anuyoga meditation, without maintaining the bond of trust, and by making offerings of flesh and blood, nothing can be expected from the transcendent deities, custodians of Dharma,<sup>92</sup> and Dharma protectors.<sup>93</sup> Only the devas<sup>94</sup> and demons of anti-Dharma will gather to enjoy such [unwholesome] offerings, *tor-ma*,<sup>95</sup> and so on. Although temporarily there may be a sign of benefit, ultimately [such practice] offers nothing but a variety of undesirable results.

Instead, one should lay one's trust in the Three Jewels. One should invite Lamas and monks whose minds are peaceful and well subdued and request them to recite 100,000 refuge prayers. There is no protective power greater than this, for one is under the protection of the Three Jewels. One will not meet with any undesirable things in this life, and all one's desires will gradually be fulfilled. All the noble deities will offer one protection, and none of the evil spirits or obstructors of anti-Dharma will dare approach.

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<sup>91</sup> *Bön* is the name of a pre-Buddhist spiritual practice prevalent in Tibet and the Himalayan regions.

<sup>92</sup> *ch'ö-kyong* / *chos.skyoñ* / S. Dharmapāla

<sup>93</sup> *sung-ma* / *sruñ.ma*

<sup>94</sup> It should be understood that there are many types of devas, ranging from ordinary mundane devas to transcendental devas. This is also true for deities, gods, spirits, and so on. The type intended in each case depends on the context in which it is used.

<sup>95</sup> *gtor.ma* / votive offerings made of rice or flour

Once some people caught a thief. They released him after giving him a good beating with a stick. Each severe stroke was accompanied by [a line from] the refuge prayer, “I take refuge in the Buddha, . . .” and so on. Remembering clearly the words of refuge simultaneously with the aching pain, the thief passed the night under a bridge. A host of deities and demons coming in his direction said, “Here is one who has taken refuge in the Three Jewels,” <293> and they ran away helter-skelter.

Thus, if one takes refuge in the Three Jewels from the core of one’s heart, there is nothing more effective in this life for warding off the harm of spirits. In the life to come, one will attain Buddhahood, and so on. Thus, taking refuge offers an inconceivable amount of benefit.

The Sūtra Dri-ma Me-pa states:

**If the merit earned by going to take refuge  
Had a body,  
Even after filling the entire space of the sky [with it],  
What would remain would be more than what was used.**

Again, in the P’ar-ch’in Dü-pa:<sup>96</sup>

**If the merit of taking refuge had a body,  
The three realms would also be [too] small to be its  
container.**

**The ocean is a great store of water:  
How can it be measured with a measuring cup?**

Again, the Sūtra Nyi-may Nying-po states:

**Any being who goes to take refuge in Buddha  
Cannot be killed [even] by a million devils,  
Even if morally degenerated and mentally disturbed,  
He will definitely go beyond the causes for rebirth.**

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<sup>96</sup> the concise version of the Prajñāpāramitā

Sayings such as these [by Lord Buddha] describe the immeasurable benefits of taking refuge; therefore, it is imperative to pay special attention to the foundation of all the Dharmas—the taking of refuge.

**Although the Triple Refuge is followed, belief from the core of [my] heart is weak.**

**Although the three moral trainings have been received, their observance and restrictions are flouted. <294>**

**May I and beings like me, who have no heart,**

**Be blessed to have unchanging, firm faith.**

This is the instruction on taking refuge, the cornerstone of all the paths.



## CHAPTER TWO

# The Development of the Supreme Bodhicitta

Through Transcendent Wisdom,<sup>1</sup> he fully attained  
Nirvāṇa;  
Through Great Compassion, he voluntarily took an  
interest in saṃsāra;  
Expert in means, he understood that saṃsāra and  
Nirvāṇa are undifferentiable.  
At the feet of that unparalleled Guru, I pay homage.

The instruction on the development of the Supreme Bodhicitta,<sup>2</sup> the root of the Mahāyāna, has three divisions:

1. Training the Mind in the Four Immeasurable Virtues;<sup>3</sup>
2. The Development of the Mind towards the Supreme Bodhicitta;
3. Following the Instructions on Theoretical and Practical Bodhicitta.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *shey-rab / śes.rab*

<sup>2</sup> *jang-ch'ub ch'og-tu sem-kye-pa / byañ.chub mchog.tu sems.bskyed.pa /* the Buddha Mind

<sup>3</sup> *ts'e-me zhi lo-jong-wa / tshed.med bzi'i blo.sbyon.ḥa /* N.B. Generally, the word "mind" is capitalized in this translation when it refers to the Buddha Mind. Here and in the following line, it is capitalized as part of a division heading and should be understood to mean the unrealized mind.

<sup>4</sup> *mön-jug / smon.'jug*

## 1 TRAINING THE MIND IN THE FOUR IMMEASURABLE VIRTUES

Regarding the training of the mind in the Four Immeasurable Virtues—loving-kindness,<sup>5</sup> compassion,<sup>6</sup> empathetic joy,<sup>7</sup> and impartiality<sup>8</sup>—in general, it is said that one should start with loving-kindness. Yet, when one practices them in that order, since one does not start with impartiality, the practice of compassion, loving-kindness, and so on becomes biased and a flawless result is not possible. Therefore, the training of the mind begins with the practice of impartiality.

### 1.1 [MEDITATION ON] IMPARTIALITY

Impartiality means to make [all beings] equal by giving up hostility towards foes and attachment to friends and relatives. Thus, impartiality means to treat all sentient beings equally by making no distinction between them, such as close and distant, friend and foe. <295> Normally, we have strong attachment to our parents, relatives, and so on, who are on our own side. We show unbearable hatred towards our enemies and those who are on their side. This mistake is due to our lack of observation. In previous lives, even our present enemies played the role of relatives, showing affectionate friendship and extending beneficial treatment. The amount of help they offered was inconceivable. Also, there are many among those that we now count as relatives who were our enemies in past lives and harmed us.

As stated earlier, it is as Ārya Katyāyana said:

**Eating her father's flesh, hitting her mother,  
She holds the enemy born of her bad karma on her lap.  
The wife snaps at her husband's bones.  
Worldly dharma makes me laugh!**

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<sup>5</sup> *jam-pa* / byams.pa

<sup>6</sup> *nying-je* / sñiñ.rje

<sup>7</sup> *ga-wa* / dga'.ba

<sup>8</sup> *tang-nyom* / btañ.sñoms

There is also another example. In the past, when the Dharma King Tr'i-song Deu-tsen's seventeen-year-old daughter, Princess Pe-ma-sal, died, he said to Guru Padmasambhava, "My daughter, Princess Pe-ma-sal, also seems to have had good karma, for she was born as the daughter of King Tr'i-song Deu-tsen and had the opportunity to meet a learned translator such as you, who are like a real Buddha. But why did she have such a short life?"

<296> The Guru replied, "Your daughter, Princess Pe-ma-sal, was not born as your daughter because of any good karma whatever. Long ago, when I, Guru Padmasambhava, you, the great Dharma King, and the [Abbot] Bodhisattva [Śāntarakṣita] were born as three sons of a low caste family [in Nepal] and undertook the construction of the great Jarung K'a-shor [stūpa],<sup>9</sup> this princess was born as a *tray-ma* fly.<sup>10</sup> When it bit a vein in your neck, you unconsciously brushed it off, killing it with your hand. Because of the karmic debt for the life [you destroyed], that fly was reborn as your daughter."

If King Tr'i-song Deu-tsen, who was like a real Mañjuśrī, had that kind of karmically connected descendant, what can be said of other people? Thus, the line of descendants connects parents with children, making the parents extend unimaginably great love and affection to their children. When children suffer from sorrows and undesirable incidents, their parents lament more than they would if the sufferings were their own. All these sufferings are entirely due to the karmic reactions of having harmed each other in past lives.

Among those who have become our present enemies, there are none who were not our parents in the past. It is also not certain that those whom we now regard as enemies can [actually] harm us, for even if we regard them as enemies, they may not regard us as such. <297> Even if they regard us as enemies, they may not be able to harm us. Even if they harm us, this immediate harm may become the cause for

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<sup>9</sup> the Baudha stūpa, near Kathmandu in Nepal

<sup>10</sup> said to be a fly with three proboscises (tubular feeding structures)

spreading our fame in this life; it may bring us in contact with the noble Dharma and so on, which may bring us ultimate benefit and happiness. If tactful means are used to deal with a potential enemy's wishes and an effort is made, using mild words, to be agreeable to him, there may not be any difficulty in turning him into a friend.

Similarly, [among] those who are regarded as relatives, there are instances where children deceive and even murder their parents, and so forth. There are many children who, joining with and taking the side of those who are unfriendly with their parents, rob the latter of their wealth and quarrel with them. If the parents and children are seemingly on good terms, when the children suffer from sorrow, untoward incidents, and the like, the misery the parents experience [on account of them] is greater than if the calamities had fallen on themselves.

For the sake of relatives, children, and the like, we commit grave sins that will cast us into hell in our next life. Even if we want to follow the Dharma perfectly, they prevent us from doing so, and since we cannot detach ourselves from our parents and children, we neglect the Dharma and find no time to follow it. [Considered thus,] relatives and children can cause greater harm than enemies. Thus, those we now regard as enemies <298> can be reborn as our children, and those we regard as relatives, as enemies in the next life; there is no certainty about it.

Believing the momentary concepts of friend and foe to be true, we earn bad karma through hostility and affectionate attachment. What is the use of doing things that will make us the cornerstones of hell? Therefore, we should keep an intimate parent-child relationship with the boundless number of sentient beings as the great beings of the past did and view friends and foes as equal.

Thinking thus, we should first think of those [people] for whom, from the depths of our hearts, we have intense dislike and who generate anger and hostility in our minds, and try to use all possible means to see how to stop the growth of anger and hostility towards them. We should bring them up to the

middle level, equal to people towards whom we are neutral, who neither benefit nor harm us. Then, considering that these intermediate people have also played the role of our parents and so forth incalculably many times in past lives, we should train our minds and meditate until the same compassion grows for them that we have for our present parents. Towards the end, we should discipline our minds and meditate until the compassionate thought is born in us that makes us think of all sentient beings—whether friends, foes, or in between, whoever they are—as no different from our present parents.

If that is not done, our developing the simple feeling of equality, generating neither compassion nor anger towards friends, foes, or whomever, <299> is called stupid equanimity; it will not serve the purpose of limitless impartiality. Therefore, limitless impartiality is exemplified by the feast given by a sage. When a sage gives a party or a feast, he makes no distinction among his guests: whether high-ranking or low-ranking, aristocrat or commoner, noble or ignoble, superior or mediocre, all are entertained equally. [Similarly], we are required to treat all the sentient beings bounded by the sky as objects of compassion. Until this is achieved, we should train our minds.

## **1.2 MEDITATION ON LOVING-KINDNESS**

Thus, having meditated on limitless impartiality, you should treat all the sentient beings of the three realms as equal in the domain of loving-kindness. You should think of them all just as parents think of their children. Even when a child reacts in an ungrateful way, the parents, ignoring their own hardships, make an effort through actions of their body, speech, and mind to make the child comfortable, happy, and free from problems. Similarly, you should make your best physical, vocal, and mental effort in using various means to provide pleasure and happiness to all sentient beings in their present and future lives.

All the sentient beings [of the three realms], too, are searching in the hope of finding their own personal comfort and happiness. <300> None of them want discomfort and suffering. However, they do not know how to earn merit, the cause of comfort, and they indulge in the ten demeritorious acts. Thus their actions go against their intentions, and even though they expect happiness, they obtain nothing but suffering. Meditate again and again, thinking how happy you would be if all these sentient beings could obtain nothing but the comfort and happiness for which they individually yearn. Meditate until, towards the end, you feel that all the sentient beings also want nothing but happiness, just as you do, and that there is no difference between you and them.

The Sūtras make similar mention of “bodily actions of loving-kindness, vocal actions of loving-kindness, and mental actions of loving-kindness.” Accordingly, whether you are speaking or working with your hands, do not harm other sentient beings, and always behave in an honest and compassionate manner.

According to the Bodhicaryāvatāra:

**Even when you look at sentient beings,  
Do so righteously and compassionately.**

As said, even when you look at other sentient beings, you should do so with a smile, in a manner appealing to them. You should not give them hostile or frowning looks.

Once there was said to be a powerful officer who always frowned at others. Later he was reborn as a preta, eating the remnants of food left in the *ma-gye-wog*<sup>11</sup> <301> of a certain family. There are instances of [the Buddha’s] having said that a frowning look given to a spiritually attained person can cause one to be reborn in hell. All physical activities should be gentle and attractive, and aimed not at harming others but rather at helping them. Even if a single word is uttered, let it not be derogatory, irritating, sarcastic, or the like. Speak

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<sup>11</sup> *ma.sgyed.’og* / an enclosed clay shelf attached to a main hearth, used for keeping food warm

truthfully and gently. Mentally also you should wish to help others.

However, you should not anticipate receiving anything in return for this. You should behave and speak gently and unhyprocritically. Without pretentiously making an effort to make others see you as a Bodhisattva, you should, from the core of your heart, intend to do nothing but benefit others and see to their comfort. Pray again and again, “From birth to birth and life after life, let me not harm, in the slightest, even a single pore<sup>12</sup> of any other beings. Let me always be helpful to them.”

In particular, you should not mistreat animals or servants who are your dependents, from a dog on upward, by beating them or exploiting them. Always, under all circumstances, you should show kindness through the actions of your body, speech, and mind. The reason that those who are presently <302> born as serfs, servants, dogs, and so on are treated by all with scorn and hatred is that, once, when they were born as men of power, they treated others with scorn and hatred. Hence, the maturing of the fruit of their previous action is producing [a similar] karmic reaction. If you now mistreat others by reason of the fact that you have privileges [connected with your position] and wealth, in your next life, because of the karmic reaction, you will become a serf or servant of others. Hence, you should be all the more kind to your subordinates.

Especially, any physical, vocal, or mental help you offer to your parents, to patients who have been suffering for a long time, and the like [will accrue] an unimaginable amount of benefit.

Atiśa said:

**If you treat guests who have come a long distance, long-ailing patients, aged parents, and so forth with loving-**

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<sup>12</sup> *ba-pui khung-bu* / *ba.pu'i khuñ.bu* / lit., a minute hole (out of which) a bodily hair grows; *ba-pu* refers to short bodily hair, not to the hair on the head, moustaches, eye brows, etc.

**kindness, it is similar to meditating on Śūnyatā with compassion as its core.**

Parents, especially, are extremely kind to their children, and hence their children owe them a great amount of gratitude. If the children hurt the feelings of their parents during the latter's old age, they commit especially heavy sin. Even Lord Buddha, in order to express His gratitude to His mother, went to the Tuṣita Abode of the Gods to preach the Dharma to her.

It is said that even if a son were to offer his service to his parents by carrying them on his right and left shoulders around the world, <303> he would still not be able to show enough gratitude to them for all they had done for him. But if he were to help his parents to follow the Dharma, he would be able to show them the right amount of gratitude. Hence, you should always look after your parents by offering physical, vocal, and mental services. An effort should be made to interest them in the Dharma.<sup>13</sup>

The Great Padmasambhava said:

**Do not make the elderly feel sad; treat them with respect.**

As he instructed, treat all those who are older than you with loving-kindness through the actions of your body, speech, and mind, and fulfill their [wholesome] wishes.

Even though these days we say that there is no way to acquire the means to live in this world without harming sentient beings, there is a way. Once two novice monks in Li-yül did the practice of Mañjuśrī. They had a vision of Mañjuśrī in which he said, "There is no karmic link between you two and me. Avalokiteśvara is the deity with whom you have both been connected in your past lives. He is now in Tibet as a ruler. Go to him."

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<sup>13</sup> i.e., in eternal freedom from suffering



These two monks arrived in Tibet, and on seeing many people being executed and imprisoned behind the walls of Lhasa, they inquired, "Who are those [people]?"

"They are being punished by the king," came the reply.

The monks thought, "Such a king could not be Avalokiteśvara. <304> It is likely that the two of us will also be punished. We had better run away." As they were running away, the king came to know about it and sent his messengers to bring them before him.

He said to them, "You need not be afraid. As these fierce Tibetans are difficult to subdue, I have to demonstrate a miraculous drama of punishment that includes the killing, cutting, and so forth of human beings. But I do not in fact cause harm even to [so much as] a single pore of an animal."

This king ruled the kingdom of Tibet, the Land of Snow, and brought the rulers of the four directions under his control. He had to crush the military aggression of the bordering countries and maintain the security of the four corners [of his kingdom]. Even though he had to undertake the great task of subduing enemies while caring for friends, he was not inflicting harm on even the pore of an animal.

Why then is it impossible for us to avoid harming sentient beings while caring for a piece of negligible property the size of an insect's nest? When we harm sentient beings, that harmful action rebounds against us and offers the cause for our endless suffering in this and our following lives. No benefit can be acquired [from such actions] even for this life. For murdering a man, the penalty has to be paid. For stealing, compensation must be made, and so on. Hence, such actions only destroy our wealth and property; there is <305> no one who has gained wealth by depending on them.

Therefore, the practice of limitless loving-kindness is analogous to a mother bird caring for her chicks. When she hatches chicks, she first prepares a soft and comfortable nest. Then she covers the nest with her wings to make it warm. She takes care of her chicks with all her gentle behavior until they fly away. In the same way, you should learn to treat

the sentient beings of the three realms with loving-kindness through the actions of your body, speech, and mind.

### 1.3 MEDITATION ON COMPASSION

This refers to the desire to relieve a seriously suffering sentient being from its miserable situation. Think of a sentient being stricken with extreme suffering, such as a culprit imprisoned in a pit who is finally nearing his execution, or an animal about to be killed by a butcher. Regarding that [being] as the object of your affection, develop the concept of having a mother-child relationship [with it].

As it is said, look, for example, at a criminal being led to execution under a king's orders, or a sheep being caught and tied by a butcher, and so on. Give up the idea that it is such and such an animal. Think what you would do if that [being] happened to be you. Regard yourself as the suffering being. <306> What will you do? You have no place to run to, no place to hide, and no protection or protector. You dare not run away, do not know how to fly, and do not have the strength or force to fight back. Within this very moment, you will be severed from all the worldly scenes of this life, and worst of all, you will have to leave behind even your affectionately treated body and take the broad path to the next life—how horrible this will be! Thinking thus, take the suffering of the sentient being upon yourself and train your mind.

Or, consider a sheep being taken to the slaughterhouse, and think, "What would I do if that happened to my own mother?" Abandon the idea that it is a sheep. From the depths of your heart, assume that the sheep is your aged mother. "What would I do if my aged mother were being slaughtered by others although she had not done the slightest wrong? What might be the suffering my aged mother would undergo?" Thinking thus, from the core of your heart, take the suffering upon yourself. When a strong, affectionate, heartfelt desire is developed to save your aged mother from the suffering of death caused by the butcher, think as follows:

“Although this being now suffering may not be my present parent, it is certain that she was my parent [many times] in a chain of past lives. As such, she took care of me just as my present parents do, to whom I owe a great amount of gratitude; hence, she is not different from my present parents. Oh, my poor mother who is undergoing <307> such terrible suffering! How wonderful it would be if she were instantly freed from this suffering.” Develop very strong, almost unbearable compassion until you burst into tears.

When you develop such compassion towards [those who are suffering], remember that such great suffering results from past demeritorious karma. Since it is certain that those who are presently engaging in demeritorious karma will have to suffer in the same way in the future, have pity on them. Meditate on compassion by focusing on those who, by taking the lives of others and so on, are accruing the causes of suffering; after that, consider the sufferings of the beings born in the regions of hell, hungry ghosts, and so on. Take these beings as yourself and your parents, and make an effort to contemplate on compassion.

Towards the end, think of all the sentient beings of the three realms, for wherever there is space, sentient beings are found, and wherever there are sentient beings, bad karma and suffering prevail. “I pity these sentient beings who always indulge in nothing but bad karma and suffer. How happy I would be if all of them were entirely severed from the karmic visions, miseries, and aftereffects characteristic of each of the six individual regions and could attain permanent happiness, the state of Buddhahood.” Meditate thus from the core of your heart.

<308> Thus, at the beginning stage, contemplation on compassion should be done by concentrating on only one particular being who is overwhelmed by suffering. Then develop your mind stage by stage, and ultimately meditate for all sentient beings. If you do not meditate this way, but simply have a general and diffuse understanding of universal compassion, you will not achieve any perfection.

We should especially appreciate the sufferings and difficulties of our cattle, sheep, horses, and so on and contemplate on compassion. We seem not to have the slightest idea that our domestic animals suffer when we bore through their noses, castrate them, shear their wool, draw their blood, and so forth, subjecting them to all sorts of tortures, like those meted out in the hells. Careful observation shows that the reason we have not even the slightest thought that they may be suffering is that we have not meditated on compassion.

If we observe closely, we find that if a single strand of our hair is pulled out, we yell “Ouch!” to express the feeling of unbearable pain. Similarly, we forcibly pluck all the hair from our cattle<sup>14</sup> by twisting it with the help of a stick, leaving behind a raw, red blotch. From every place where a hair is plucked, a drop of blood trickles. Being unable to bear the pain and suffering, <309> the animals groan, but we do not suppose that they feel any pain. Rather, we complain of the unbearable pain caused by the blisters that are produced on our hands [in the process].

Likewise, while journeying by horse, a rider may, because of a cramp in his hip, find it impossible to sit in the saddle; therefore he rides sideways. Even at that time, he never cares to consider whether the horse has any difficulty or pain. When the horse is fatigued and cannot walk well anymore, the rider thinks that the horse is intentionally refusing to move because of its ill will. He becomes angry and beats it, having not a bit of sympathy for the horse!

In particular, at the time when a sheep is killed, because it is separated from all the other [sheep], it feels inconceivably terrified. First, a blotch of blood appears on its body, where force was used when it was seized. After that, its body is thrown upside down [onto the ground], changing the position of the sky and earth. Its limbs are tied with a rope, and its mouth with a string. Its outgoing and incoming breath are stopped. Even when it is suffering from the very severe agony of death, if it delays a little in dying, most of the ill-fated

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<sup>14</sup> in order to make rope

butchers lose their temper and beat and kick the animal, complaining, “Why doesn’t it die?” As soon as it dies, it is skinned and its entrails are taken out. At the same time, the butcher at once collects <310> so much blood from another [living] animal that it staggers. The blood collected from both the dead and living animals is mixed with the entrails of the one that has been killed, and then the mixture is eaten.<sup>15</sup> Those who can afford to act thus are like the real karmic devils [of hell]!

Think carefully and observe the suffering of these animals; see how you would feel if you were one of them! Place your palm over your lips and remain for a moment with your breath stopped to see what kind of pain and terror they have. Thus, by making a thorough observation, have pity on all those living beings who are intensely suffering around the clock. Meditate again and again by thinking, “Oh, how wonderful it would be if I had the power to protect all sentient beings from these different kinds of suffering!”

Lamas and monks, in particular, are supposed to be those who have loving-kindness and compassion. The reason that [today] they do not have loving-kindness and compassion even the size of the tip of a hair, and that they are seen inflicting pain on sentient beings in a manner worse than that of lay people, is that Buddhism is nearing its end, and the time has come when cannibals and demons are conducting the spiritual ceremonies.

In the past, our Lord Śākyamuni Buddha renounced His powerful kingdom <311> like a droplet of spit and became a monk. Followed by his entourage, which consisted of a congregation of Ārhots, He carried a bowl and a monk’s staff and, traveling on foot, sought alms. The reason Lord Buddha did not have a horse to ride, let alone pack horses and mules, was that He knew that the infliction of pain on animals was not Buddhism. It was not that Lord Buddha had no means to find an old horse to ride.

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<sup>15</sup> Such things are done in the coldest areas of Tibet, where cultivation is practically impossible and people must survive entirely on animal products.

At the present time, when our monks go to the village to perform ceremonies for their benefactors and so forth, each rides an old yak. [As a bridle], a coarse string made from [the hair of] a yak's tail runs through a hole pierced in each yak's nose. As a monk rides along on the back of a yak, [he keeps] pulling the string forcibly on alternate sides, which erodes the inside of the nostril. When the old yak is unable to bear the pain and makes a violent turn, with all his might the monk whips it on its rump using strips of leather tied to a stick. When the yak gallops because it cannot tolerate the pain caused by the whipping, the monk pulls it by the nose string. When it stops running because of the severe pain in its nose, he again resumes beating it. The journey proceeds with the yak suffering alternately from these two types of torture, its body transformed into fatigue and pain. Each of its pores drips a bead of sweat. It drags along, its tongue as large as a luggage-covering tarpaulin. When it fails to walk <312> and loudly pants for breath, the monk wonders why the yak does not behave itself. He loses his temper and again starts beating the yak on its rump. Because of the force he uses in his fit of anger, the stick breaks in two. The monk tucks the broken parts of the stick into his belt and picks up a lump of stone. While still sitting in the saddle, he turns around and, as he rides along, starts hammering the hipbone of the old yak with the stone. All this is entirely due to the fact that the monk has not even the slightest bit of compassion in his heart.

Now imagine that you are the old yak. Your back is laden with an unbearably heavy load. Your nose is being pulled with a string. Your rump is being beaten with a stick. Your ribs are being ravaged with a pair of large stirrups. You are suffering from pain on all sides of your body. With no chance to take a moment's rest, you have to walk up hills, down steep slopes, and across large rivers and plains. If you were forced to walk against your will from dawn until the red glow of the sun came to an end, with no time to eat even a morsel of food, think how tremendous the difficulty and sorrow would be that you would have to suffer, how much physical pain, hunger, and thirst you would have to bear. If you think thus,

taking the yak's suffering onto yourself, you cannot help but develop forceful, heart-rending compassion.

Likewise, <313> those known as Lamas and monks are said to be the unbiased protectors, defenders, and friends of all living beings. But they favor that benefactor who offers them food, drink, and presents as being on their side, and confer on him initiations and blessings, saying, "May the benefactor be guarded and protected." On the contrary, they regard pretas and evil spirits—harmful devils who are born as such because of their evil karma—as their opponents. They develop anger towards such spirits, use mantra that include words such as "Kill them! Hit them!" and make gestures as if they were actually beating the spirits.

The reason spirits and harmful demons are taken by them as something to be killed and beaten is that the Lamas' minds are overcome with partiality; the great compassion of impartiality has not been born in them. If a close observation is made, harmful spirits deserve more compassion than benefactors.

Harmful gods and demons, propelled by their bad karmic reaction, are born in the base form of pretas. They experience immeasurable [amounts of] pain and fear. They suffer constantly from the pangs of hunger, thirst, and fatigue. All their thoughts are composed of doubts. Since they have enormous anger and hostility in their hearts, most of them fall into hell immediately on dying. Who deserves more compassion than they? Even if a benefactor suffers from pain and agony, he is wearing away bad karma rather than earning bad karma; whereas evil spirits <314> harm others and earn bad karma because of their evil thoughts, which throws them [further] into the depths of the lower regions.

Thus, when Lord Buddha, who possessed great skill and mercy, talked about dealing with gods and demons through violent and drastic actions, He did so with great compassion for them. It was like a devoted mother beating her disobedient child. One is permitted to use drastic actions, such as the killing of the ego and so forth, if one can stop those beings who do nothing but commit sin and engage in demeritorious

actions from continuing to earn bad karma and can transfer their consciousnesses to a pure, transcendent region.<sup>16</sup>

However, [there are] those who develop attachment to benefactors, monks, and followers by regarding them as being on their own side, and who develop hostility towards harmful gods and demons by regarding them as being on the other side. It is not that Lord Buddha gave such permission [i.e., to use drastic actions] as a means to protect one's own side and attack the opposite side, being influenced by attachment and hostility. With such an intention, even if those gods and demons who possess a mental body are exorcised and beaten, they will not listen, but will again bring one harm. Even without an attitude of attachment and hostility, if one harbors delight in anticipating the departure of gods and demons by taking them as self-existent beings, they cannot be subdued.

In the past, when Je-tsün Mi-la was residing in K'ying-gi Dzong in Chong Lung, the king of the demons, <315> Vinayaka, created mischief by making five Indian mendicants with eyes as large as the inside of a cup appear inside Je-tsün Mi-la's house. Je-tsün Mi-la's prayer to the Guru and tutelary deity could not make them go away. Even counting violent mantra and visualizing himself in the form of the tutelary deity would not make them leave. At this point he thought, "L'o-drag Mar-pa introduced all phenomenal appearances to me as the mind, and the essence of the mind as clear and empty."

He thought, "There is no reason for me to anticipate happiness in the departure of inflicting and hindering spirits by taking them as externally existing entities." With the birth of the strong conviction in the doctrinal view that made him understand that gods and demons are one's own mental creation, he walked inside [the house]. At this, the demons rolled back their eyes with fear and disappeared.

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<sup>16</sup> See the stories of the sea captain, p. 176, and Tilopa's killing and eating of fish, p. 201, in *Kün-zang La-may Zhal-lung*, Part One.



Likewise, the Rock Ogress said in her song:

**In general, the devil of habit originates from the mind.  
If the Ultimate Nature of the mind<sup>17</sup> is not known,  
I'll not go away just because you tell me to.  
If you do not recognize your mind as empty,  
I am not the only demon—there will be others as well.  
If you recognize your own mind,  
Unfriendly causes will become friendly.  
Although a Rock Ogress, I will be your subject.**

As it is said, if you do not have a firm conviction in the doctrinal view that makes you understand gods and demons as your own concepts, how can you subdue them with your wrath?

Also, when Lamas and monks go to their benefactor's home, <316> whatever number of sheep the benefactor kills to feed them with, they eat happily without the least compunction in their minds. Especially when invoking protection, making offerings, and so on, they demand clean flesh as a votive ingredient and regard the steaming, blood-dripping flesh and fat of a just-slaughtered animal as clean. All the *tor-ma* and other articles of offering that are decorated with such flesh are regarded as glamorous things of wonder. Such [a practice] may be in accordance with the religions of *Bön-pos* and heretics, but it is not Buddhist.

On taking refuge in the Buddhist Dharma, one is required to give up causing harm to other sentient beings. But if wherever one goes one brings harm to living beings by killing them and enjoying their flesh and blood, isn't one breaking the vows of the refuge? In particular, according to the practice of the Mahāyāna, a Bodhisattva must be the protection and protector for the boundless number of sentient beings. But if the "protector" does not even have compassion the size of a hair for the unfortunate being who is to be protected, and when the being to be protected is killed and food is made out of its flesh and blood and placed in front of the Bodhisattva,

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<sup>17</sup> *sem-kyi de-nyi* / *sems.kyi de.ñid* / lit., the Thatness of the mind

if the “protector” happily eats it with loud sounds from his palate, <317> what could be a heavier sin than that?

In the main texts of the Vajrayāna teaching, it is mentioned:

**By acquiring flesh and blood not in accordance with the main instructions,  
Whatever displeasure is caused to the Sim-ha Tra-men deities,<sup>18</sup>  
May it be forgiven by the Ḍākinīs of the holy places.**

Thus it is said.

The proper collection of flesh and blood refers to the procurement of flesh and blood as prescribed in the main Tantric texts. According to these texts:

**The five [kinds of] flesh and the five kinds of nectar,  
[Ingredients] for eating, chewing, and drinking, are the external *ts'og* [offerings].**

The five [kinds of] flesh that are suitable for maintaining the Tantric bond of trust are those of humans, horses, dogs, and so on, [i.e., the flesh of those animals] that are not intentionally killed for the sake of food.<sup>19</sup> The display of these five kinds of sinless flesh as ingredients of *ts'og* is the flesh and blood offering that has been acquired in accordance with the main texts.

On the contrary, if under the influence of the dualistic concepts of pure and impure, one regards human flesh, dog flesh, and so on as impure and base, but the delicious, fat flesh [of animals] just slaughtered for the sake of food as clean, one is holding a view of purity and impurity that trans-

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<sup>18</sup> the names of Tantric deities

<sup>19</sup> Tantrics imagine that their offerings contain these meats as a means to transcend the dualistic ideas of purity and impurity. However, this does not mean that Tantrics are encouraged to live on them as items of food. Such a test will have no effect in the minds of those who are accustomed to eating beef, horse meat, dog meat, etc.

gresses what are known as the Earnestly Accepted Tantric Trusts:

**The Five Earnestly Accepted Tantric Trusts:  
To view them as pure and impure and enjoy them  
indiscriminately . . .**

Even the **five <318> kinds of approved flesh** are only permitted to be used for transforming food into nectar and for perfecting the fulfillment of the desired spiritual goal in solitude. If, because of one's attachment to the taste, flesh is instead enjoyed indiscriminately elsewhere,<sup>20</sup> it is called the indiscriminate use of the Earnestly Accepted Tantric Trusts. Thus, "clean meat" should refer not to the flesh of animals slaughtered for the table, but rather to the flesh of animals who, because of karma, died from old age, illness,<sup>21</sup> or accident.

If, instead, the warm flesh and blood of just-slaughtered animals are placed in the maṇḍala, according to Dag-po Rin-po-ch'e, the transcendent devas will faint. It is also said that if the transcendent devas are invited and offered the flesh and blood of slaughtered animals, it will be like killing children in front of their parents. Will parents ever be happy if they are invited to a party where they are served their own children's flesh? The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas think of all the sentient beings of the three realms with the same, unique affection that a mother has for her only child. Therefore, there is no way to please the Buddhas through offering the flesh and blood of an animal that is overpowered by the reaction of bad karma.

<319> Śāntideva said:

**Just as no one will feel comfort in seeing  
One whose body is being burned with fire from all sides,**

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<sup>20</sup> i.e., not in solitude

<sup>21</sup> i.e., from non-infectious illness

**Similarly, by inflicting suffering on sentient beings,  
There is no way to please the Compassionate Ones.**

Therefore, if the flesh and blood of slaughtered animals are enjoyed as food and made into offerings to appease the ~~protecting deities~~ and the like, since the transcendent devas and those deities who protect Buddhism are all Bodhisattvas, not only will they refuse to partake of such offerings, but they will not even go in the direction of such places, which are like slaughterhouses. The powerful devas and spirits of sinful cults who take delight in the warm flesh and blood of slaughtered animals and who always endeavor to harm sentient beings will gather at such places and enjoy the offerings of flesh and blood made by the priest there.

Temporarily, these spirits will follow the one who makes the blood-stained offerings and will bring a little benefit. But since these spirits always harm sentient beings, they may abruptly cause a virulent epidemic [elsewhere]. There, too, the sanguinary priest will appear and make an offering of blood and flesh that again brings an apparent, temporary benefit. The priest and the evil spirits become friends and help each other, prowling inseparably <320> like carnivorous animals preying on game, always driven by the greed to eat, chew, or find [something].

Since the mind of the priest who makes the blood-stained offerings will be occupied by these loathsome devas and spirits, whatever aversion and remorse [for saṃsāra], faith, *dag-nang*, and interest in the Dharma he had earlier will be obscured. Even if he sees Buddhas flying in the sky, no faith will be generated in him. Even if animals are seen with their entrails out, he will have no compassion. Like a karmic ogre bound for war with a ruddy face, wrathful mind, and a coarse feeling in his heart, he will always behave as if he is covered with **spikes**. Because of his friendship with evil devas and demons, he will develop the arrogance of believing that his words and blessings have **power**.

Immediately on dying, such a priest will fall into hell like a stone being flung. Or just because his load of bad karma is

not yet full, he will be born as a follower of evil devas and demons and cause havoc to the lives of sentient beings. Or he will be born as a falcon, wolf, or the like.

In the past, during the reign of the Dharma King Tr'i-song Deu-tsen, the *Bön* priests performed ceremonies for the benefit of the king; these involved offerings made of flesh and blood. Guru Padmasambhava—the Second Buddha, the Great Pandit Vimalamitra, the Great Abbot Bodhisattva, and the other translators and pandits were highly upset on seeing the ceremonial offerings of the *Bön-pos*.

They said:

**For one teaching, <321> there cannot be two exponents;**

**Two methods of practice cannot exist for one Dharma;  
This practice of *Bön*, which doesn't agree with the laws of the Dharma,**

**Is not an ordinary, common sin.**

**If such a thing is permitted, we will go back to our country.**

Even though the pandits had no prior discussion, they were unanimous in their decision. In spite of the king's request, they refused to teach. Although they were offered food, they refused to eat.

Nowadays, we claim to be followers of those past scholar-sages [who were] Bodhisattvas. If all the secret Tantric rituals are reduced to *Bön* and cause harm to sentient beings, it amounts to a disservice and disgrace to the Buddhist Dharma. Such actions will lead us and others to hell.

Therefore, if you always look for the lowest position, wear ragged clothes, offer as much help as you can to all the sentient beings, and make an effort to concentrate solely on developing loving-kindness and compassion until they are definitely grown in your mind, even if you are unable to practice high-sounding Dharmas such as saying prayers, earning merit, and offering spiritual service to sentient beings, it will suffice.

In the Sūtra Ch'ö Yang-dag-par Dü-pa, it is said:

**One who desires to attain Buddhahood need not learn many Dharmas; only one Dharma <322> should be learned. What that is, is Great Compassion. One who has Great Compassion is like one who has all the Buddha's Dharma in his palm.**

Long ago, four monks—the Three Brothers<sup>22</sup> and a disciple of K'am-pa Lung-pa—paid a visit to Ge-shey<sup>23</sup> Tön-pa.

Tön-pa asked them, “What is Pu-to-wa doing?”

[The visitors answered,] “He is preaching the Dharma to hundreds of monks.”

Tön-pa remarked, “Wonderful. That is also something. And Ge-shey P'u-ch'ung-wa, what is he doing?”

The visitors answered, “He is engaged solely in constructing the three representative objects<sup>24</sup> with his own and others' wealth.”

Tön-pa, making remarks similar to those above, asked, “And what is Gön-pa-wa doing?”

The visitors replied, “He does nothing but meditate.”

Tön-pa again made similar remarks and inquired, “And what about K'am-pa Lung-pa?”

[The visitors replied,] “He lives at **Drog-k'a-re**, wraps up his head, and does nothing but weep.”

Tön-pa took off his cap, folded his hands before his heart, shed an enormous amount of tears, and said, “He really practices what is called Dharma. There is much to say about the virtues of this. But if I say it now, he will not <323> be pleased.”

When K'am-pa Lung-pa wrapped up his head and kept weeping, he did so because he was meditating on nothing else but compassion for the suffering beings in saṃsāra.

<sup>22</sup> *ku-ch'e-sum* / sku.mched.gsum / three well-known *Ka-dam-pa* monks who were brothers

<sup>23</sup> the title given to a Buddhist scholar

<sup>24</sup> i.e., images, holy books, and stūpas to represent, respectively, the Buddha's body, speech, and mind

Similarly, when Chen-nga-wa was speaking about the various reasons why loving-kindness and compassion are important, Lang-t'ang-wa did prostrations and proclaimed, "From this day onward, I will meditate only on loving-kindness and compassion."

Ge-shey [Chen-nga-wa] took off his cap and repeated three times, "Extremely good news!" Even for dissolving the sin and obscuration of one's mind, there is nothing greater than compassion.

Once in the past, in India, the holy teaching of the Abhidharma was attacked three times by heretics and destroyed. At that point, the Brahmin nun Sal-way Ts'ül-tr'im thought that, being a lowly-born woman, she would not be able to clear away the obstructions to Buddhism single-handedly. However, she thought of giving birth to sons who could follow the Dharma and make the Abhidharma flourish again. From her connection with a man of royal family, Ārya Asaṅga was born, and from a Brahmin, Vasubandhu was born.

As the sons grew up, they asked about their fathers' professions, to which their mother replied, "You two have not been <324> born to follow your fathers' professions, but to propagate the Buddhist teaching. Learn the Dharma and see to it that the holy doctrine of Abhidharma flourishes."

Vasubandhu went to learn the Abhidharma from Du-zang of Kashmir. Asaṅga thought that he would go to Mount Chakang and meet Maitreya Buddha, from whom he could receive instructions. Thus he [went there] and meditated on Maitreya Buddha for six years under great hardship. But he did not even have a good dream. Concluding that he would not be able to achieve his goal, he left disheartened. On his way, he saw a man wiping a huge iron pillar with a piece of soft cloth. He asked him, "Why are you doing that?"

"I have no needle. I intend to make a needle by wearing [the iron] away," the man replied.

Asaṅga thought that there would never be time to reduce that huge iron rod to a needle by wiping it with a piece of soft cloth. Even if it were possible to accomplish that in a hundred years, how could the man live that long? [Asaṅga

further thought that], when worldly people are seen working so hard at such meaningless tasks, he really was lacking in his pursuit of the noble Dharma. He went back and, for a period of three years, <325> again pursued his meditation. But there was not even the slightest sign of achievement. Then he thought it was certain that he would never attain his goal, so he left.

Again, on his way, he found beside a huge mountain of rock that seemed to touch the sky a man who was dipping a feather in water and lashing it against the rock. Asaṅga asked, “Why are you doing that?”

“This rock is too high, and my home, which is to the west of it, never gets any sun. So I am destroying the mountain by wearing it away.”

The same thoughts [of self-reproach] occurred to Asaṅga as before, and he went back. He continued his meditation for another three years, but he did not even have a good dream. Frustrated, thinking that now he would definitely never be able to achieve his end, he left [his hermitage].

As he left, he encountered a bitch that was lame in both hind legs. Although her entire hindquarters were being eaten by maggots, she still bore hostility towards others. Dragging along the rear of her body, she seemed to advance in order to attack him with the fore part of her body. At this, he developed unbearably strong compassion for the dog. He cut his flesh and fed her, and wanted to remove the insects from the lower part of her body. But if he removed the maggots with his hands, he feared he might kill them. Having decided to remove them with his tongue, he observed the entire [rear] of the dog’s body rotting and covered with pus and could not bear to see his tongue touch it. <326> Hence, he shut his eyes and put forth his tongue. But instead of touching the body<sup>25</sup> of the dog, his tongue touched the ground! When he opened his eyes, he found not the body of the dog, but Maitreya Buddha, sitting in dazzling light.

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<sup>25</sup> *ro* / *ro* / *Ro* is commonly misunderstood to mean a dead body. Strictly speaking, it means body. Only when preceded by the word *shi* / *śi* (i.e., dead), does it refer to a dead body.



Asaṅga said, “How little mercy you have for me! You didn’t favor me with your vision for such a long time!”

Maitreya replied, “It is not that I did not show my face to you. Although you and I have never been separated, you did not see me because of the heavy obscuration of your sin. Your twelve years of meditation made the obscuration a bit thinner, so you saw [me] as the bitch. Since you just now developed great compassion, the obscuration of sin has been purified, leaving no residue, and you are actually seeing me. If you do not believe this, carry me on your shoulder and show me to the public.”

Asaṅga then carried Maitreya on his shoulder and went to a marketplace, inquiring of everyone what they saw on his shoulder. They all said there was nothing there. An old woman whose obscuration was a bit thinner said, “There is a putrid carcass of a dog on your shoulder.”

Maitreya took Asaṅga to the godly abode of Ga-den and taught him the Five Doctrines of Maitreya<sup>26</sup> and so on. Returning again to the world of human beings, Asaṅga caused the Mahāyāna Doctrine to flourish.

Thus, for cleansing sin, there is no Dharma more efficacious than compassion. <327> It is the infallible means of developing unique Bodhicitta in one’s mind. Therefore, using all possible means, one should make an effort to meditate on compassion.

Moreover, it is said that meditation on compassion should be similar to [the feeling of] a mother who has no hands and whose child has been carried away by a river. If the child of such a mother is carried away by a river, because of the mother’s affection for the child, unbearably strong sorrow will be born in her. Since she has no hands, she will not be able to rescue the child from the river. ~~Unable to figure out what to do, she will keep trying to think of a solution.~~ From the core of her heart, she will not be able to tolerate it and will run about wailing.

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<sup>26</sup> *jam-ch’ö de-nga* / byam.chos sde.lña

Similarly, all the sentient beings of the three realms are being carried away by the **river** of suffering. ~~Although you have developed unbearably strong compassion for those who are drowning in the ocean of samsāra, you have no power to protect them from suffering. You should think of your helpless position,~~ pray to the Guru and the Three Jewels from the core of your heart, and meditate [on compassion].

#### 1.4 MEDITATION ON **EMPATHETIC JOY**

Imagine a person who belongs to a noble caste and creed, who has power, wealth, luck, and so on, lives comfortably and happily in a celestial world, enjoys a long life and prosperity, and has many followers. Without having any feeling of rivalry or jealousy, wish that he might have, in addition, the might and prosperity of the extremely high regions, <328> a life free from danger, greater wisdom, and various other accomplishments. You should meditate again and again on the thought of how delighted you would be if all sentient beings could attain the same status that he has.

To start with, in order to develop this attitude easily, you should think of your relatives, friends, and the like who are learned and who have pleasure and happiness, and meditate on the joy you have for them. When your mind becomes accustomed to this, you should meditate [on having empathetic joy] for those who are neutral, [neither friends nor foes]. After that, [think of] all your harmful enemies and particularly anything that acts as the object of [your] jealousy. Root out [your] intolerable ill will towards others [generated out of jealousy for their] health, wealth, and wisdom, and meditate on all aspects of that which provides comfort as unique joy. Towards the end, remain in the non-conceptual state.

As joy is [found in] a mind that has no jealousy, you are required to use all ways and means to train the mind so that the evil thought of jealousy does not grow. In particular, the Bodhisattvas, the scions of the Buddhas, develop Bodhicitta for the benefit of all sentient beings so that they may

attain Buddhahood—the permanent state of comfort—and the present happiness of the very high stages of gods and men. When this is the case, <329> why does it make you unhappy to see sentient beings enjoying an infinitesimal amount of virtue or wealth that they have individually earned by virtue of their own karma? Once your own mind is contaminated with jealousy, you cannot see the good qualities of others and you earn terrible sin for yourself.

Again, in the past, when Je-tsün Mi-la was enjoying the height of his fame and prosperity in extending spiritual service to others, a logician named Dar-lo became jealous and came to challenge him. However much Je-tsün Mi-la showed his foreknowing power and miracles, Dar-lo would not believe in them and continued to contradict and criticize Je-tsün Mi-la. Because of this, Dar-lo was later reborn as a powerful evil spirit. Again, when a logician named Ge-shey Tsag-p'u-wa poisoned Je-tsün Mi-la, it was also done out of sheer jealousy.

Thus, a jealous person cannot be delivered even if the Buddha appears in person, for when one's mind is overwhelmed by jealousy, one cannot appreciate the virtues of others. Since one cannot see virtue, even faith the size of the tip of a hair cannot be generated. As no faith is generated, one is not a suitable recipient for grace and blessings. Both Devadatta and Leg-kar<sup>27</sup> were cousins of Lord Buddha. But because they were mentally disturbed by jealousy, they could not develop even an iota <330> of faith in the Buddha. Hence, although they spent the whole of their lives with Him, He found no means to liberate them. The matter does not end there. By always bearing ill will towards others, even if one does not cause them the slightest harm, one will continually earn heavy sin for oneself.

Once there were two renowned [celibate] *ge-sheys* who were competitors. One of them heard that the other had a woman. He asked his monk-disciple to prepare a delicious tea, for he had heard some excellent news. After the tea was

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<sup>27</sup> legs.skār (the abbreviated form of *leg-pay kar-ma* / legs.pa'i skār.ma)

prepared and served, the disciple inquired, “What good news have you heard?”

The *ge-shey* answered, “They say our competitor has a woman!”

It is said that, later, when Kün-pang Drag-gyal, [a religious teacher], heard that remark, his face became dark and he asked, “Which of them has ~~committed a greater sin?~~”

Thus, if you develop the habit of always being **jealous and competitive**, you can neither benefit yourself nor **harm others**. You earn **sin** for yourself for nothing. Relinquishing that type of evil **thought**, you should always, from the core of your heart, contemplate on the joy felt on seeing others who possess any number of virtues, such as a noble birth, wonderful physique, wealth, education, and so on. You should tell yourself, “How glad I am to find such wonderful qualities in this person! How much happier I would be if this person were to gain, over and above these attributes, power, riches, education, and so on, and become well accomplished in valor and wealth.” <331> You should meditate thus from the core of your heart.

The [proper] joy is described as being as boundless as the joy of a mother camel when she recovers her lost baby. Of all the animals, the camel has the greatest love for her young. A mother camel’s grief on losing her baby will likewise be proportionately great. Unimaginable, too, will be her joy when she recovers it. You should learn to develop such joy.

Thus, the Four Immeasurable Virtues are the unmistakable causes for the development of perfect Bodhicitta in your mind. Meditate on them by all means until they grow in your mind. The meaning of the Four Immeasurables, if condensed for easier understanding, is to have **good will**. Always, under all circumstances, you should learn how to have **good will**.

Once when Atiśa noticed a pain in his hand, he placed it in the lap of Drom-tön and said, “Please bless my hand, for you have **good will**.” He always relied on good will. “Do you have **good will?**” was what he said when he greeted a person. The principal advice he gave was, “Please **be good at heart**.”

The influence of good will and bad will transforms the strength of your good and bad karma. If you have good will, <332> all the actions of your body and speech become meritorious. It is like the story that was mentioned earlier of the shoe placed on the *sa-tsa*. Even if an action has a meritorious appearance, if the will behind it is bad, the action becomes demeritorious. It is imperative to learn always to have good will.

It is said:

**If the will is good, the spiritual stages and paths will also be good.**

**If the will is bad, the spiritual stages and paths will also be bad.**

**Since everything depends on the type of will [one has],  
Always make an effort to develop good will.**

How the spiritual stages and paths you follow become good if your will is good is [shown in the following stories]. Once an old mother and her daughter were fording a big river hand in hand, but both of them were carried away by the current. The old mother thought, “If I could save my daughter from being carried away by the river, I would not mind even if I were carried away.” The daughter thought, “So long as my mother is not carried away by the river, I do not care if I am washed away.” Thus, bearing good will for each other, both of them died in the river and took rebirth in the world of **Brahmā**.<sup>28</sup>

Again, in the past, at Ja-sa ferry [in Tibet], seven passengers—six monks and an official messenger—got into a coracle<sup>29</sup> and started crossing the river. After crossing one-quarter of the river, the ferryman said, “The boat is overloaded. If there is anyone who can swim, get out. If not, I will <333> get into the river and one of you should take

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<sup>28</sup> Even though the world of Brahmā is still in saṃsāra, there is more happiness there than in the lower regions.

<sup>29</sup> a boat made out of hide and mounted on a frame of willow tree branches

charge of the oars.” There were none among them who knew either how to swim or how to hold the oars. At this, the messenger jumped into the river, saying that it would be better if he alone died for the sake of the rest. Instantly, a light shower of rain came down and a rainbow appeared. Although the messenger did not know how to swim, he found himself safe on the other side of the river. It was not that he had been practicing the Dharma in the past—even the good will he generated momentarily had this much benefit.

How the spiritual stages and paths you follow become bad if you have ~~ill-will~~ [shown in the following stories]. Once a beggar was sleeping at the threshold of the main gate of a certain palace. He thought again and again, “How happy I would be if the king’s head were to fall off and he died and if I were to become the king.” He was late waking up on the following morning. As the king rode off in his chariot, the wheels [of the chariot] ran over the beggar’s neck, cutting off his **head**.

Again, the purpose of learning the Dharma is so that always, under all circumstances, being guided by remembrance and watchfulness, you examine your mind. If you do not, there will be no difficulty in ~~earning~~ terribly bad karma out of strong mental attachment and hatred for no purpose. On account of his impossible ambition, that old beggar reaped the result immediately. <334> There was no reason whatever why the king, sleeping peacefully and happily on his expensive bed in the center of his palace, should suffer from having his head fall off. Even if the king did die that way, why would the kingdom not go to his heir apparent? Why would his ministers, who were like tigers, leopards, and bears, not take over the administration? What valid reason could there be for a poor beggar to be placed on the throne?

Thus, if you fail to examine your own mind carefully, it is possible to develop that kind of ~~ill-will~~ for no good reason. Ge-shey Sa-wo-pa said:

**A great deal of bad karma will be generated;  
Do not reign over the kingdom of the **daydream**.**

Also, once Lord Buddha and His followers were invited by a certain benefactor to receive alms. There were two beggars there, one born of a royal family, the other of a Brahmin. The Brahmin boy went to beg when the Buddha and His entourage were yet to take their alms, so he got nothing. The other boy, born of a royal family, went to beg after they had eaten, so he received many remnants of good food out of the alms bowls of the monks. Towards evening, the boys were talking to each other on the road. The boy of the royal family said, "If I had some wealth and property, I would worship the Buddha <335> and His entire entourage by offering them clothes, alms, and all other requirements for as long as they live."

The Brahmin boy said, "If I had the authority of a king of a country, I would have all the shaven heads of those monks chopped off from the very base."

The boy of the royal family later paid a visit to another country and sat in the shade of a large tree. Although the shadows of the other trees changed, the one over the boy remained. The king of that country had died without a son, so everyone was looking for a man of good luck and fortune to be the king. They found the boy still sleeping under the shadow [of the tree], which did not leave him although it was past midday. They took him and enthroned him as a king. Later, he entertained the Buddha and His followers as he had wished. There is also a story which says that the Brahmin boy's head was cut off by a straying chariot wheel while he slept on the road.

If you learn to have good will always, you will fulfill all the desires of your present life. Good devas will protect you, <336> and all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas will bless you. Whatever you do will become meritorious, and you will not suffer at the time of your death. You will be born in the regions of gods and men in your next life and ultimately attain perfect Buddhahood. It is very important to watch your own mind constantly and to learn how to develop good will, rather than to perform pretentiously a great number of virtuous deeds, such as prostrations, circumambulations, and the

recitation of prayers and mantra, in a frantic hurry without examining your mind.

## 2 THE ACTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF BODHICITTA <sup>30</sup>

[This has two divisions:

1. The Motivation;
2. The Method.]

### 2.1 [THE MOTIVATION]

[The motivation for the actual development of Bodhicitta can be classified in three ways:

1. The Motivation Classified by Mental Fortitude;
2. The Motivation Classified by the Stages of the Bodhisattva;
3. The Motivation Classified as Relative and Absolute.]

#### 2.1.1 [THE MOTIVATION CLASSIFIED BY MENTAL FORTITUDE]

If classified according to mental fortitude,<sup>31</sup> there are three [types of motivation].

[1] The Kingly Motivation.<sup>32</sup> First, kings want to subdue the entire force of their opponents. By strengthening their defensive power, they become kings. Thereafter, they intend to care for their subjects and countries. Likewise, if one's motivation is to attain Buddhahood first for oneself and

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<sup>30</sup> The bracketed text following section headings 2 and 2.1 is provided to help readers understand ahead of time the somewhat complicated structure of the following pages. Readers should also note that the names for sections 2 and 3, when they appear in the context of the chapter, vary slightly from the names given at the opening of the chapter. This variation occurs in the Tibetan text itself and has therefore been maintained.

<sup>31</sup> *lo-tob* / blo.stobs

<sup>32</sup> *gyal-po ta-bü sem-kye* / rgyal.po lta.bu'i sems.bskyed



thereafter for all sentient beings, it is called “the motivation like that of a king.”

[2] The Ferryman’s Motivation:<sup>33</sup> Ferryman intend to go to the other bank of the river along with the passengers in the boat. Likewise, if one’s motivation is to attain Buddhahood together with all sentient beings, <337> it is called “the motivation like that of a ferryman.”

[3] The Herdsman’s Motivation:<sup>34</sup> Herdsmen will first drive their cattle and sheep in front of them to find grass and water, and they will see to it that they are safe from wolves, wild dogs, and the like. They follow after the herd. Likewise, if one wants all sentient beings of the three realms of saṃsāra to attain Buddhahood first, and only thereafter oneself, [it is called “the motivation like that of a herdsman.”]

Of these three, the first, the motivation like that of a king, is called “the motivation of great ambition.”<sup>35</sup> It is the lowest grade of mental fortitude.

The second, the motivation like that of a ferryman, is called “the motivation of noble wisdom.”<sup>36</sup> It is the middle grade of mental fortitude. For example, it is like the motivation of the revered Maitreya [Bodhisattva], said [Lord Buddha].

[The third, the motivation like that of a herdsman, is called “the unprecedented motivation.”<sup>37</sup> It entails extremely great mental fortitude. For example, it is like the motivation of the revered Mañjuśrī [Bodhisattva], said [Lord Buddha].

## 2.1.2 [THE MOTIVATION CLASSIFIED BY THE STAGES OF THE BODHISATTVA]

If classified according to the stages of the Bodhisattva, [there are four types of motivation].

<sup>33</sup> *nyen-pa ta-bü sem-kye / mñan.pa lta.bu'i sems.bskyed*

<sup>34</sup> *dzi-wo ta-bü sem-kye / rdzi.ḥo lta.bu'i sems.bskyed*

<sup>35</sup> *dö-ch'en sem-kye / 'dod.chen sems.bskyed*

<sup>36</sup> *ye-shey dam-pay sem-kye / ye.śes dam.pa'i sems.bskyed*

<sup>37</sup> *pe-me-pay sem-kye / dpe.med.pa'i sems.bskyed*

[1] The motivation that prevails while on the Path of Accumulation<sup>38</sup> and the Path of Application<sup>39</sup> is called “the motivation that works on the basis of faith.”<sup>40</sup>

[2] The motivation that prevails while ascending the first to the seventh stages [of the Bodhisattva] is called “the unique benevolent motivation.”<sup>41</sup>

[3] The motivation that prevails while in the Three Purified Stages<sup>42</sup> is called “the thoroughly matured motivation.”<sup>43</sup>

[4] The motivation that prevails at the stage of Buddhahood<sup>44</sup> is called “the motivation that is free from obscuration.”<sup>45</sup>

<338> Thus there are four [types of motivation].

## 2.1.3 [THE MOTIVATION CLASSIFIED AS RELATIVE AND ABSOLUTE]

The motivation can [also] be essentially classified into:

[1] The Relative Motivation.<sup>46</sup>

[2] The Absolute Motivation.<sup>47</sup>

### 2.1.3.1 [THE RELATIVE MOTIVATION]

The relative motivation is also internally divided into two:

<sup>38</sup> *ts'og-lam* / *tshogs.lam* / i.e., the path of accruing merit

<sup>39</sup> *jor-lam* / *sbyor.lam* / i.e., the path of applying oneself to higher practices

<sup>40</sup> *mö-pay chö-pay sem-kye* / *mos.pas spyod.pa'i sems.bskyed*

<sup>41</sup> *l'ag-sam nam-dag-gi sem-kye* / *lhag.bsam rnam.dag.gi sems.bskyed*

<sup>42</sup> *dag-pa sa-sum* / *dag.pa sa.gsum* / i.e., the eighth, ninth, and tenth stages of the Bodhisattva

<sup>43</sup> *nam-par min-pay sem-kye* / *rnam.par smin.pa'i sems.bskyed*

<sup>44</sup> i.e., the eleventh stage

<sup>45</sup> *drib-pa pang-pay sem-kye* / *sgrib.pa spañ.pa'i sems.bskyed*

<sup>46</sup> *kün-dzob sem-kye* / *kun.rdzob sems.bskyed*

<sup>47</sup> *dön-dam sem-kye* / *don.dam sems.bskyed*

- [1] ~~The Theoretical Motivation~~,<sup>48</sup>  
 [2] ~~The Practical Motivation~~.<sup>49</sup>

In the Bodhicaryāvatāra, it is said:

**Just as [you] know the difference  
 Between the desire to go and going,  
 Similarly, the wise should know  
 The difference in their sequence.**<sup>50</sup>

For example, for ~~Nyi-ma~~ to go to a place such as ~~Lhasa~~, he must first have a desire to go to Lhasa. Similarly, one's intention to have all beings attain Buddhahood is like having a desire to go to Lhasa. This is the development of the ~~theoretical motivation~~.

~~Just like the actual setting out on the journey by entering the road after packing the animals with the required accessories, one's actual training of the mind is like the actual going.~~ One does this through learning the six pāramitās—by giving ~~charity~~, observing ~~moral laws~~, practicing ~~forbearance~~, ~~perseverance~~, and ~~samādhi~~, and by developing wisdom—with the hope of enabling all sentient beings to attain Buddhahood. This is [the development of the ~~practical motivation~~, or] ~~practical Bodhicitta~~.<sup>51</sup>

The development of both the ~~theoretical~~ and <339> ~~practical motivations~~ is [the relative ~~motivation~~, or] relative Bodhicitta.<sup>52</sup>

### 2.1.3.2 [THE ABSOLUTE MOTIVATION]

While on the Path of Accumulation and the Path of Application, one trains one's mind for a very long time by depend-

<sup>48</sup> *mön-pa sem-kye* / *smon.pa sems.bskyed*

<sup>49</sup> *jug-pa sem-kye* / *'jug.pa sems.bskyed*

<sup>50</sup> i.e., the difference in the order of developing the theoretical and practical motivations

<sup>51</sup> *jug-pa jang-ch'ub-kyi sem* / *'jug.pa byañ.chub.kyi sems*

<sup>52</sup> *kün-dzob jang-ch'ub-kyi sem* / *kun.rdzob byañ.chub.kyi sems*

ing on these two kinds of [relative] motivation, the theoretical and the practical. As a result, towards the end, while on the Path of Seeing,<sup>53</sup> one sees the “Thatness Itself”<sup>54</sup>—the ultimate nature of all Dharmas, the Primordial Consciousness<sup>55</sup> that is free from any kind of [conceptual] manifestation.<sup>56</sup> The actual realization of the meaning of Śūnyatā<sup>57</sup> is the absolute motivation,<sup>58</sup> [or absolute Bodhicitta].

The perfect absolute motivation is realized through the power of meditation and is not transmitted through rites. Since the relative motivation, however, is transmitted through ritual performances, beginners should learn the manner of receiving [the vows of] the relative motivation from the Guru as prescribed in the rites of transmission. To prevent [the blessings of] the motivation thus received from growing weaker, and to enhance the growth [of the motivation], they should always, under all circumstances, rejuvenate the [Bodhisattvic] vows again and again, [as described in the following instructions].

## 2.2 [THE METHOD OF DEVELOPING BODHICITTA]

In the sky before you, imagine all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and so forth, exactly as in the assembly of refuge,<sup>59</sup> as witnesses to your development of Bodhicitta. [Think that] there is not a single one of all the sentient beings covered by the boundaries of the sky who was not your parent during one of your lives from beginningless time until now. When they were your parents, they took affectionate care of you in every possible way, just as your present parents do, <340> providing you with the best food and the best clothes. It is certain

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<sup>53</sup> *t'ong-lam* / mthoñ.lam

<sup>54</sup> *de-zhin-nyi* / de.bžin.ñid

<sup>55</sup> *ye-shey* / ye.śes

<sup>56</sup> *trö-dral* / spros.bral

<sup>57</sup> *tong-pa-nyi-kyi dön* / stoñ.pa.ñid.kyi don

<sup>58</sup> *dön-dam-pay sem-kye* / don.dam.pa'i sems.bskyed

<sup>59</sup> *ts'og-zhñg* / tshogs.žñ

that they are the ones who brought you up with extreme care and loving-kindness, and hence you owe them a great deal.

All such gracious parents are caught in the waves of the great ocean of samsaric suffering. Obscured by the dense darkness of stupidity, they do not know how to choose the right path and avoid the wrong path. They are severed from spiritual guides who can show them the perfect path. They have neither protection, protector, savior, supporters, nor relatives—no one at all—in whom they can place their hope and in whom they can take refuge.

These former parents are like blind, ignorant people lost on a desolate plain. What is the use of obtaining freedom for yourself alone while leaving them behind in saṃsāra? “I will develop Bodhicitta for the sake of all sentient beings, and having learned the great conduct of the past Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, I will make an effort to continue working until not a single sentient being is left behind.”

Thinking like that, repeat the following prayer:

**HOH**

*na-tsoḡ nang-wa ch'u-day dzün-ri-kyi  
k'or-wa lu-gu gyü-du k'yam-pay-dro  
rang-rig ö-sal ying-su ngal-so-ch'ir  
ts'e-me zhi-yi ngang-nay sem-kye-do<sup>60</sup>*

**Hark! Owing to varieties of false appearances, like the image of the moon in water,**

**Beings go endlessly astray in saṃsāra.**

**To enable them to rest in the Clear Light of their own**

***Rig-pa***

**I develop the [Bodhicitta] motivation through the Four Immeasurables.**

<341> Repeat this as many times as you can. Towards the end, because of your strong devotional respect for the

<sup>60</sup> hoh / sna.tshogs snañ.ḅa chu.zla'i brdzun.ris.kyis / 'khor.ḅa lu.gu rgyud.du 'khyams.pa'i.'gro / rañ.rig 'od.sal dḅyih.su ñal.bso.phyir / tshed.med bñhi.yi ñañ.nas sems.bskyed.do

assembly of devas, the assembly gradually disappears into light from the outer boundary and sinks into the central Guru, the embodiment of the Three Refuges. The Guru, too, melts into light and sinks into you, because of which the Ultimate Bodhicitta that exists in the devas of the assembly of refuge is suddenly born in your mind.

Say the prayer:

*jang-ch'ub sem-ch'og rin-po-ch'e*  
*ma-kyey pa-nam kye-gyur-chig*  
*kyey-pa nyam-pa me-par-yang*  
*gong-nay gong-du p'el-war-shog*<sup>61</sup>

**May the Bodhi, the supreme precious Mind,  
 Be born in those in whom it has not been born.  
 May it not fade in those in whom it has been born.  
 May it flourish further and further.**

[After that,] say the “Jam-pal Pa-wö”<sup>62</sup> and the other prayers of dedication.

Development of such Bodhicitta is the core of all the eighty-four thousand Dharmas that the Buddha taught. If you have Bodhicitta, it will be sufficient. It is a secret without which there is no means to achieve the end. Bodhicitta is like the single medicine called *kar-po chig-t'ub*<sup>63</sup> that can cure a hundred diseases. All other Dharmic practices, such as ~~earning merit~~, purifying obscurations, meditating on devas, ~~saying~~ mantra, and so on, are done merely as a means to generate Bodhicitta—the wish-fulfilling gem—in your mind. Without depending on Bodhicitta—<342> by following other, individual [doctrinal] paths—you cannot attain the stage of fully enlightened Buddhahood. If Bodhicitta is born in your mind,

<sup>61</sup> byañ.chub sems.mchog rin.po.che / ma.skyes pa.rnams skye.gyur.chig / skyes.pa ñams.pa med.par.yañ / goñ.nas goñ.du 'phel.ḅar shog

<sup>62</sup> 'jam.dpal dpa'.os / This prayer is contained in the ending prayers of the *Long-ch'en Nying-tig* Preliminary, Nam-k'yen Lam-zang, by Kün-k'yen Jig-me Ling-pa.

<sup>63</sup> dkar.po chig.thub

whatever Dharma you practice will become a cause for attaining Buddhahood. Hence, always, under all circumstances, endeavor to learn all the ways and means to develop even an iota of Bodhicitta in your mind.

[Since] the Guru who shows you the secret of developing Bodhicitta in your mind is the one who puts you on the Mahāyāna path, you owe more to him than to those who show you other secret techniques.<sup>64</sup>

When Atīṣa mentioned the names of other Gurus, he folded his hands at the level of his heart. But when he cited the name of the Venerable Ser-ling-pa, he did so with his hands folded above his head and tears flowing from his eyes. At this, his disciples asked, “Why do you make such a distinction when you mention the names of your Gurus? Is it because of the amount of knowledge they have or because of the amount of gratitude you owe them?”

Atīṣa replied, “All my Gurus are fully enlightened, and hence there is no quantitative difference in their knowledge. But there is a difference in the gratitude I owe them. Since the iota of Bodhicitta I have in my mind has been obtained through the kindness of **Jo-wo Ser-ling-pa**, <343> I am more grateful to him.”

Hence, regarding the development of Bodhicitta, it is said, “**The birth of [genuine] Bodhicitta is more important than developing the desire for it.**” It is imperative that loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta<sup>65</sup>—definitely be born in your mind. Counting hundreds of thousands of Bodhicitta-generating prayers without **spiritually experiencing** the meaning of Bodhicitta in your mind will not have any essential benefit even the size of a sesame seed.

After taking the Bodhicitta vow in the presence of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, if you fail to follow it accordingly, it amounts to deceiving the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The karmic reactions accrued thereby will be very heavy. You

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<sup>64</sup> To show Bodhicitta is the duty of all teachers, but the teacher whose teachings actually awaken Bodhicitta in your mind is the most important.

<sup>65</sup> *jam nying-je jang-ch'ub-kyi sem* / byams snñ.rje byañ.chub.kyi sems / See Appendix A, Note 4.

should always, under all circumstances, avoid deceiving any living being and make an effort to develop Bodhicitta in your mind.

### 3 THE INSTRUCTIONS ON DEVELOPING BODHICITTA

This has two divisions:

1. The Instruction on **Theoretical** Bodhicitta,<sup>66</sup> which is threefold;
2. The Instruction on **Practical** Bodhicitta,<sup>67</sup> which entails the practice of the six pāramitās.

#### 3.1 THE INSTRUCTION ON **THEORETICAL** BODHICITTA

The instruction on developing theoretical Bodhicitta is threefold:

1. Meditation on How to Treat Others as Equal to Yourself;
2. [Meditation on How] to Exchange Yourself for Others;
3. Meditation on How to Treat Others More Affectionately than Yourself.

##### 3.1.1 MEDITATION ON HOW TO TREAT OTHERS AS EQUAL TO YOURSELF<sup>68</sup>

Our wandering from time immemorial in the huge ocean of samsaric suffering is due to our having affectionate attachment solely to a non-existent “I” as “I.” <344> Therefore, it should be examined as follows.

Always, under all circumstances, we seek only pleasure for ourselves and dislike pain of any sort. We show no patience and say “Ouch!” when a thorn pierces us or a spark of fire

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<sup>66</sup> *jang-ch’ub mōn-pay lab-ja* / byañ.chub smon.pa’i bslab.bya

<sup>67</sup> (*jang-ch’ub*) *jug-pay lab-ja* / (byañ.chub) ’jug.pa’i bslab.bya

<sup>68</sup> *dag-zhen nyam-pa* / bdag.g’zan mñam.pa



burns us, causing the least bit of pain. Even if a louse bites our back, a great anger instantly grows in us and we struggle to catch hold of it. With strong force we crush it between our two thumb nails. Even if the louse has already been killed, still our anger does not subside and we go on rubbing the two nails together again and again. People generally think that there is no sin in killing lice. But, in fact, since the motivating factor is anger, such an action unmistakably brings a cause for our rebirth in the Collection-Destruction Hell.<sup>69</sup> Is it not a great shame to inflict such enormous pain and suffering on others as retaliation when we cannot even bear the tiny pain [described above]?

All the other living beings of the three realms also desire pleasure for themselves. They, too, exactly like us, dislike every instance of pain. Thus, all sentient beings [equally] desire pleasure and reject pain. <345> But they do not know how to acquire the ten virtues, the cause of pleasure. They continue indulging only in vice, the cause of suffering. Since their intentions and their actions go in opposite directions, these sentient beings are always afflicted with suffering. There is not one among them who has not been our parent [at some point] from beginningless time till now. At present, we have been favored by a perfect Lama, have embraced the Dharma, and have come to know the difference between what is beneficial and what is harmful. We should treat all sentient beings, our former parents who are suffering under the influence of stupidity, equally, without making any difference between ourselves and them. We should tolerate their ingratitude and partiality and meditate on making no difference between friends and foes. Meditate again and again, thinking thus.

Always, under all circumstances, understand that just as we desire things that give us benefit and happiness, others, too, desire the same thing. Just as we make an effort and persevere in trying to attain happiness for ourselves, we should make an effort to see to the comfort of others as well. Just as

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<sup>69</sup> *dü-jom* / *bsdus.'joms*

we make an effort to avoid experiencing even the smallest amount of any kind of suffering, we should likewise try to avoid inflicting even the slightest amount of pain on others. Just as we would be glad to have comfort, happiness, wealth, and so on, we should likewise feel joy <346> from the core of our hearts for the comfort, happiness, wealth, and so on that others have. In short, having seen no difference between ourselves and the sentient beings of the three realms, we must make an effort to undertake nothing but accruing the means for immediate and eternal happiness [for all].

Je Dam-pa Sang-gay was asked by **Drung-pa Zi-na-chen** for a [secret] instruction consisting of a single word that would suffice. He replied, “Others also desire whatever you desire; act accordingly.” Hence, we should root out evil **thoughts** of affectionate attachment to ourselves and aggressive hatred towards others and look upon others as equal to ourselves.

### 3.1.2 [MEDITATION ON HOW] TO EXCHANGE YOURSELF FOR OTHERS <sup>70</sup>

Take a sentient being that you actually see suffering from illness, hunger, thirst, or the like. If such a being is not available, imagine an animal afflicted with suffering in front of you. As you breathe out, offer it all your comforts, goodness, health, wealth, and all the merit you have acquired as if you were taking off your coat and putting it onto that animal. As you breathe in, simultaneously think that you are voluntarily taking on whatever suffering it has. [This] thought, that it should have comfort and that it should be separated <347> from suffering, [i.e.,] offering [comfort] to it and receiving [suffering] from it,<sup>71</sup> should be gradually extended from a single being to all beings.

When you are actually facing an undesirable situation, such as suffering and so forth, you should think, “In the three

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<sup>70</sup> *dag-zhen je-wa / bdag.gzan brje.ḥa*

<sup>71</sup> *tong-len / gtoñ.len*

realms of saṃsāra, there are many who are experiencing these kinds of suffering, for whom I feel compassion. May their share of suffering mature in me. May they be free from suffering and have comfort.” Meditate thus from the core of your heart. If you have comfort, happiness, and so on, meditate by wishing that your comfort might bring comfort to all sentient beings.

Thus, the Bodhicitta that requires you to exchange yourself for others is the unmistakable essence of the ultimate goal of meditation for all those who have taken the Mahāyāna path. Even if it appears once in your mind, it can dissolve sins and obscurations accumulated over many aeons. It accomplishes the earning of a great deal of relative and absolute merit and frees one from the possibility of taking rebirth as an inferior being in the lower regions, where beings are born because of wrongdoings.

Long ago, our Lord Buddha was born in the hell [where the punishment is] to draw a chariot. He and his friend Kāmarūpa <348> began to draw a hell-chariot. But, being weak, they failed to pull it. At this, the hell keepers hit and pounded them with extremely hot weapons, causing them enormous pain. Then the Buddha thought, “Even if we pull together, we cannot move the chariot and the suffering is the same. Why shouldn’t I suffer by pulling it alone and let him live in comfort?”

Thinking thus, He requested of the hell keepers, “Tie Kāmarūpa’s rope, also, around my neck. I will pull it all by myself.”

The hell keepers became angry and said, “What can anybody else do when a being is suffering from his own karmic reaction?” So saying, they struck Him on the head with a hammer. Because of the power of His good will, His life in hell came to an end and He took rebirth in the region of gods. The Buddha said that this was the first benevolent thought He had for others.

Likewise, when the Buddha was born as a son of the sea captain Dza-wo, no sooner did He think of offering Himself

to suffer in place of others than He was freed from the suffering of the lower regions. This happened as follows.

Long ago, there lived a householder named Dza-wo. All the sons previously born to him had died. Once again a son was born to him. Hoping that the son might thereby live longer, his parents named him Bu-mo (daughter). The householder went to sea in search of gems but was shipwrecked <349> and died. As the son grew up, he asked his mother about his father's trade. Fearing that the son might go to sea if she told him the truth, she said that his father had been a grain dealer by trade.

When the son became a grain dealer and began to make a profit of four cowries<sup>72</sup> a day, with which he took care of his mother, the other merchants said, "Since you don't belong to the caste<sup>73</sup> that deals in grain, it is improper for you to deal in grain." When they stopped him, he went back to his mother and asked about his father's trade. She told him that his father had been an incense dealer, [so he adopted that trade.] As an incense dealer he earned a profit of eight cowries a day, with which he took care of his mother. Again, when the incense dealers stopped him [from trading], he was told that he belonged to the caste that deals in clothes. As a clothes dealer he made a profit of sixteen cowries a day, which he gave to his mother. Again, when the clothes dealers objected to his business, he was told that he belonged to the caste that deals in jewels. He took up that trade and earned thirty-two cowries a day, which he also gave to his mother.

At that point, the other traders told him, "You belong to the caste that brings gems from the ocean. You should take up the vocation belonging to your caste."

On returning home, he said to his mother, "Since, by caste, I seem to be one who <350> searches for gems, I am now leaving to bring gems from the great ocean."

At that, his mother replied, "Although you belong to the caste that brings gems from the ocean, all your ancestors,

<sup>72</sup> a shell used as a medium of exchange

<sup>73</sup> *rig* / *rigs* / caste or trade

including your father, lost their lives by going to bring gems from the sea. If you go, you may also lose your life. You had better stay here and do business.”

In spite of her intervention, he prepared for his sea voyage. On [the day] he left, his mother, who could not bear to let him go, cried and clutched at the corners of his clothes. He got furious and said, “When I am leaving to bring gems from the ocean, you are bringing me ~~ill-luck~~ by crying.” Kicking his mother in the head, he went away.

The ship [he boarded] was wrecked in the ocean. Most of the crew drowned, but he caught hold of a plank and landed on an island. There he went to a beautiful house made of precious materials in a city called **Ga-wa**. **Four attractive goddesses appeared**. They offered him a pile of silk cushions to sit on and entertained him with the three whites and the three sweets.<sup>74</sup> As he was about to leave, they told him not to go south because of the possibility of meeting with great danger. He did not listen, however, and departed [in that direction].

He arrived at the city called **Ga-wa-chen**, which was even more beautiful than the previous city. **Eight attractive goddesses entertained him as before**. They, too, <351> told him not to go south, because there he would meet with great danger. Again he did not listen and left.

He arrived at a city called **Ra-ro**, which was even more prosperous than the previous one. **Sixteen beautiful goddesses** welcomed him, entertained him, and told him not to go south because there would be a great mishap.

Again he left and came across a white castle, known as the **Castle of Lama Tsang-pa**, whose tower touched the sky. When he approached it, **thirty-two goddesses** of exquisite beauty welcomed him and offered him piles of bolsters covered with excellent silk to sit on. They entertained him with the three whites and the three sweets and asked him to live there, but he felt like leaving. As he was about to depart, they said, “If you want to leave, do not at any rate go south.

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<sup>74</sup> The three whites, i.e., milk, yogurt, and butter, and the three sweets, i.e., honey, molasses, and sugar, are regarded as pure in India and Tibet.

You will run into disaster.” However, having an urge to travel south, he left.

Then, at the door of an iron mansion whose top touched the sky, he saw a ferocious man with heavy red eyes, carrying a long iron whip in his hand. He inquired of the man what was inside the building. The man remained silent. As he approached the man, he saw many others like him. On seeing them, his body tingled and his hair stood on end. He entered the mansion, thinking that the disaster he would face might be what is called “the disaster of all disasters.” <352> He saw an iron wheel revolving on the head of a man, scattering white brain matter everywhere. He asked, “What karma did you commit?”

The man replied, “I am experiencing the karmic reaction of kicking my mother in the head. Why didn’t you stay and enjoy the comfort and pleasure of Lama Tsang-pa’s Castle, instead of coming here to purchase suffering?”

No sooner did he think that perhaps he, too, had been led there by his karma than a voice sounded from the sky saying, “May whoever is tied be untied and whoever is untied be tied.”

As this sound was heard, the wheel [landed] on his head. It started to revolve, grinding and scattering his brain, causing him unbearably severe pain. This caused him to develop strong compassion for others like himself, and he prayed, “There are many sentient beings like me in the regions of saṃsāra who are suffering for having kicked their mothers in the head. May their suffering also mature on me so that I alone may suffer. May no other being have to experience this kind of suffering in any of their births throughout their lives.” The moment he thought in this way, the wheel flew into the sky. He found himself relieved of the suffering, sitting <353> comfortably in the air at the height of seven palm trees. This kind of **Bodhicitta**—taking the suffering of others upon yourself—is the ultimate Dharma inevitably required for the attainment of Buddhahood.

In the past, the *ge-sheys* of the *Ka-dam-pa* School regarded this as the core of their contemplation. There was in the past

one Ge-shey Che-k'a-wa, who was well conversant with many books on the teachings of *Nying-ma*, *Sar-ma*,<sup>75</sup> and logic. Once when he paid a visit to Ge-shey Chag-shing-wa, he noticed a booklet by the side of Chag-shing-wa's pillow. He opened it and saw [the words]: "Give profit and victory to others; take loss and defeat for yourself."

Thinking that that must be a wonderful Dharma, he asked Chag-shing-wa, "What is the name of this Dharma?"

Chag-shing-wa said, "It is known as the eight lines of Lang-t'ang-pa."<sup>76</sup>

He asked, "Who has the secret of this teaching?"

Chag-shing-wa answered, "Lang-t'ang-pa has it."

With the intention of receiving the teaching, the *ge-shey* journeyed to Lhasa, where he halted for a few days to perform circumambulations. One evening he heard from a leper who had arrived from Lang-t'ang that Lang-t'ang-pa had passed away. He inquired, "Who is taking care of the center [now]?"

The man said, "There are two there called Zhang-zhung-pa and Do-de-pa. But they are quarreling over <354> control of the center."

In reality, these two were not disagreeing and quarreling selfishly over [who should run the center]. Rather, Zhang-zhung-pa thought that since Do-de-pa was senior, he should run the center; Zhang-zhung-pa would respect him just as he had Lang-t'ang-pa. But Do-de-pa thought that since Zhang-zhung-pa was more learned, he should run the center. Thus, they were appreciating each other's good qualities. However, this was misunderstood [by Che-k'a-wa], who took their disagreement over who should run the center as a bad sign. He concluded that, given the way they were quarreling, they must not have the teaching for which he was searching. On

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<sup>75</sup> the Old and New Translation Periods, respectively

<sup>76</sup> Lang-t'ang is the name of a place, and Lang-t'ang-pa designates someone who dwells there. In Tibet, it is common to name people after either their birthplace or place of residence. This is done for both common people and those of high status.

inquiring if there was a better person who had this secret teaching, everyone recommended Sha-ra-wa.

Che-k'a-wa found Sha-ra-wa explaining teachings from many volumes of holy books to about a thousand monks. Although he listened to him for several days, he did not hear even a fragment of a word from the Dharma he desired. He decided to ask Sha-ra-wa for it. If Sha-ra-wa had it, he would stay; if not, he would leave. Thinking thus, he went to meet Sha-ra-wa, who was then circumambulating a stūpa. Spreading his [upper] garment on the ground, Che-k'a-wa said, "Please be seated on it for a moment. I have a question to ask."

Sha-ra-wa inquired, "Jo-wo, what problem is it that you could not resolve? **I solve all issues in one sitting.**"

Che-k'a-wa said, "In a Dharma that I saw, it said, 'Give profit and victory to others; <355> take loss and defeat for yourself.' That appeals to me very much. How profound is that teaching?"

Sha-ra-wa said, "Whether it appeals to your mind or not, you cannot do without that Dharma, unless you have no desire to attain Buddhahood."

"Lama, do you have that teaching?" he asked.

Sha-ra-wa replied, "That is the essence of all my meditative practice."

Che-k'a-wa requested, "Then will you please give me that secret?"

Sha-ra-wa inquired, "Can you stay with me for a long time? If you can, I will teach you."

Che-k'a-wa stayed there for six years, putting into practice one complete course of mind training instructions, which fundamentally removed his affectionate attachment to his ego.

Such a meditation on **Bodhicitta**, which requires you to exchange yourself for others, will also mitigate any illness, sorrow, and so on you may have in this life. Even for subjugating the devas, demons, afflicting spirits, and hinderers, no secret teaching is superior to it. Always, under all circumstances, renounce the evil thought of affectionate attachment



to yourself like a poison, and try to contemplate on the Bodhicitta that requires you to exchange yourself for others.

### 3.1.3 MEDITATION ON HOW TO TREAT OTHERS MORE AFFECTIONATELY THAN YOURSELF <sup>77</sup>

<356> “Whether I remain in saṃsāra or am reborn in hell,<sup>78</sup> whether ill or afflicted, whatever loss I may suffer, I will tolerate it. May the sufferings of other sentient beings [also] mature in me. May my happiness and the fruit of the merit that I have earned be enjoyed by others.” You should think like this from the core of your heart and also put it into practice accordingly. For example, it should be like [the following stories] of the yogi Jo Lama Jam-pa, [the monk] Dharmarakṣita, and those of our Lord Buddha when He was born as King Padma, as a tortoise, as King Tsug-na Nor-bu, and so on.

Once at the place where Jo Lama Jam-pa was giving a sermon, a man hit a dog with a stone. The Lama groaned in pain and fell off his throne. “When nothing has happened to the dog, what great pretense,” thought the others. The Lama came to know this and showed them his back. Everyone was amazed to see a welt on his back in the same place where the stone had hit the dog. He had truly taken the dog’s pain on himself.

Similarly, there once was a Lama named Dharmarakṣita. He was originally a pandit following the Vaibhāṣika<sup>79</sup> philosophy of the Hīnayāna school of Buddhism. Although he had never heard of the Mahāyāna doctrine during his life, <357> he belonged to the Mahayanic race and hence possessed great loving-kindness without effort. A certain neighbor of

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<sup>77</sup> *dag-pay zhen-chey-pa* / bdag.pas gzan.gces.pa

<sup>78</sup> i.e., whether I remain in the other regions of saṃsāra or am reborn in hell

<sup>79</sup> *je-drag mra-wa* / bye.brag smra.ba / a Hinayanic Buddhist school / According to Sarat Chandra Das, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*, pp. 890-891, this is “a class of Buddhist philosophers who held that the external world and knowledge were both real.”

his had a serious illness. The doctor declared, “The only cure is the flesh of a living man, which is not available. There is no other remedy.”

The Lama said, “If that will cure him, I will provide it.” So saying, he cut off a portion of his thigh and gave it to the patient. The latter ate it and was cured. Although the Lama, who had not realized Śūnyatā, suffered great pain, he had no regret because of his great compassion. He asked the patient, “Did it help you?”

The patient replied, “Yes, it did, but I have put you in great difficulty.”

The Lama said, “If I can make you comfortable, I can tolerate the suffering even if I have to die.”

But the pain was so severe he could hardly sleep. In a moment’s sleep near dawn, a fair-skinned man appeared in his dream and said, “You will have to practice this kind of penance if you want to achieve Bodhi. Bravo! Bravo!” Saying this, the fair-skinned man applied his saliva to the wound and caressed it with his hand. Dharmarakṣita dreamt that [the pain] as well as the man who was nursing him disappeared. On awakening, he found that this is actually what had happened. He understood that the fair-skinned man was Avalokiteśvara. After that, exact [understanding] of the Ultimate Mind was born in him, and he began to recite freely the words of Nāgārjuna’s *U-ma Rig-pay Ts’og*.<sup>80</sup>

<358> Once, when the Buddha was born as a king named Padma, a terrible epidemic broke out in his kingdom, causing many deaths. He summoned all the doctors and asked them for the best cure. They said that this disease could be cured by eating rohita fish.<sup>81</sup> They reported that they could not say what else might be a remedy, for they were stupefied by the [poisonous atmosphere] created by the disease.

On the morning of a certain auspicious day, the king bathed, dressed himself in new clothes, rejuvenated his vows, and made elaborate offerings to the Three Jewels. He

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<sup>80</sup> *dḥu.ma rig.pa’i tshogs*

<sup>81</sup> *cyprinus rohitaka*

offered a fervent prayer to be reborn immediately after his death as a rohita fish in the river valley of Dog-je. He then jumped from his castle, which was a thousand feet high. In an instant, he miraculously took rebirth in the river as a rohita fish. In a human voice he said, "I am a rohita fish. Take my flesh and eat it."

At this, everyone started eating his flesh. When one side of his body was eaten, he turned over on the other side. By then, the flesh had grown on the first side, which he again offered to them. Thus he fed them, turning his body alternately [from side to side]. All the sick were cured.

Then he announced to everyone, "I am your King Padma. Since I gave up my life and took rebirth as a rohita fish in order to cure you from the disease, you should, to express your gratitude to me in return, <359> give up committing sins and perform as many virtuous deeds as possible." They fulfilled his command, and from that time onward, they did not fall into the lower regions of saṃsāra.

In another story, the Buddha was born as a large tortoise. Five hundred merchants on a sea journey suffered from shipwreck. When they were on the verge of death, the tortoise spoke to them in a human tongue, saying, "All of you ride on my back. I shall rescue you." He saved all the merchants by carrying them. Tired, he fell asleep on the shore. Eighty thousand keta flies began sucking his blood. When he woke up, he found many flies [on his body]. He thought that if he entered the ocean or moved his body, the flies would be killed. Hence, he remained in the same position and gave up his life. Later, when he attained Buddhahood, those flies were reborn as eighty thousand gods who listened to his Dharma and thereby realized the Ultimate Truth.

Again, the Buddha was born as the prince of a king named Ser-gyi Tsug-tor and a queen named Dzey-den Ga-jed-ma in the country of Sha-kyed. The prince had on his head a precious growth that could emit nectar. The nectar had the natural power to turn iron into gold on contact, and therefore the prince was named Tsug-na Nor-bu (Gem on the Crown of the Head). <360> It is said that various gems showered from

heaven at the time of his birth. He also had an excellent elephant named Zang-pö Ri. [When the prince became king], he ruled over his kingdom with spiritual law and always engaged in giving religious charity, which put an end to poverty and begging among his subjects.

The sage Bri-k'u found a girl born of a lotus flower who had the marks of greatness on her. He offered her to King [Tsug-na Nor-bu] to be his queen. A prince named Pe-may Tsug-tor, who was like his father, was born to them.

Thereafter, the king wanted to give a great amount of charity. The sage Bri-k'u, King Zo-ka, and many others gathered. At this point, to test the king's mind, Brahmā transformed himself into a demon and appeared out of the sacrificial fire. Approaching the king, he demanded food and drink. When the king offered him all kinds of food and drink, the demon refused to eat. With a short, sarcastic laugh he said, "I want the hot flesh and blood of a just-killed being."

The king fell into sorrow. He thought, "Without killing, such a thing cannot be obtained. Even at the cost of my life, I will not be able to kill. If I do not offer him [what he wants] and he is disappointed, what shall I do?"

Thinking that the time had come to offer his own flesh and blood, the king said, "I will <361> offer my own flesh and blood."

At this, his followers became horrified. They all tried to stop him, but they could not. He punctured his artery and let the demon drink his blood. The demon drank up to his throat. Then the king began to feed him by cutting off his flesh. The demon ate it until only bones were left. All the followers were overwhelmed with grief, especially the queen, who fainted and fell on the ground.

The king, however, retained perfect consciousness. Thoroughly satisfied, the demon said, "I am Brahmā. I do not take flesh and blood. [I request you to] please stop your charity." So saying, he produced divine nectar, and as he applied it to the king's wounds, the king's body was completely restored.

After that, the king offered his elephant, Zang-pö Ri, to his principal minister, Tsang-pay Shing-ta. At that moment, a student of the sage Ma-ru-tse, who was well attained in samādhi, appeared. He was offered great respect and was asked what he needed. He replied, "I have to pay a fee to my teacher for teaching me. He is old and has no servant. I intend to offer him servants, so I have come to beg for your queen and son." The king offered them. The student took them and offered them to his teacher.

King <362> Zo-ka, who was attracted to the elephant, returned to his country [discontented]. He sent a message declaring that the elephant Zang-pö Ri should be given to him. He was told that the elephant had already been offered to the Brahmin [Tsang-pay Shing-ta]. Despite that, Zo-ka said that he would declare war if it were not given to him. Thus, he initiated war against King Tsug-na Nor-bu, at which point the latter felt extremely sad and thought, "Alas! Because of the influence of desire, even the best friend has instantly become the worst enemy. I could defeat him at once were I to fight with him, but that would bring harm to many sentient beings. I had better run away."

Instantly there appeared before him four Pratyekabuddhas, who said, "O Mighty King! It is time for you to retire into the woods." He miraculously did so.

Then the ministers went to get the prince back from the sage Ma-ru-tse, who did return him. With the prince at the head of the army, a war was fought in which Zo-ka was defeated. He fled to his country, where, as a result of his ill-will, he had to face virulent epidemics and famine. He asked the Brahmins for a remedy. They said, "If the precious gem from King Tsug-na Nor-bu's head were available, it would solve the problem. It would be best to go and beg for it."

Zo-ka said, "King Tsug-na Nor-bu might not part with it."

They replied, "Since he is renowned for not refusing whatever is requested of him, <363> he will certainly give it." Hence, a Brahmin was sent to beg for his gem.

King Tsug-na Nor-bu was then taking a walk in the woods. He neared the place where the sage Ma-ru-tse lived. His

queen, who also happened to be in the woods searching for roots, leaves, and so on, was seen by a hunter. Since she found herself in danger of being harmed by the hunter, she shouted, “O King Tsug-na Nor-bu, please help me!”

The King heard it from a great distance and went to find out what was happening. The hunter saw him coming from afar and took him to be the sage. Being afraid of the sage’s curse, he ran away. The king felt very sad when he saw that his queen, who had once enjoyed the great luxury of a kingdom, was now **undergoing great suffering**. “Alas,” he thought, “there is nothing whatever that can be depended on in any conditionally existing **thing**.”

It was then that the Brahmin who had been sent by King Zo-ka approached King Tsug-na Nor-bu, related the story, and begged him for the gem from his head. The king told him, “Cut it off yourself and take it.” The Brahmin cut the gem off his head and left [with it]. This brought an end to all the epidemics and suffering in Zo-ka’s kingdom. King Tsug-na Nor-bu, because of the pain caused by the cutting off of his gem, <364> developed compassion for those who suffer in the hot hells and fainted, falling on the ground.

Moved by [the force of] the good omen of that [excellent **thought**], crowds of gods and King Tsug-na Nor-bu’s followers gathered there and inquired of the king what he had done. He stood up, wiped the blood off his face, and said, “Zo-ka sent for the gem on my head, and so I gave it to him.”

They inquired, “What do you expect in return for that?”

“Except for the desire to help Zo-ka deal with the epidemic and famine in his country, I have no vested, personal interest in anything at all. However, there is always one great desire in me,” he added.

“What is that?” they asked.

“That desire is to protect all sentient beings.”

They inquired, “You mean you do not regret what you did?”

“No,” said the king.

“Judging from the way you are suffering, we do not believe you.”

“If I have no regret for having given the gem on my head to Zo-ka and his subjects,” said the king, “let my body be restored.” It was.

His followers then requested him to return to the palace. However, the king refused. Again, four Pratyekabuddhas appeared and said, “When you bring benefit even to your enemies, how can you forsake your friends? Now <365> it is proper for you to return to your palace.” He returned there and established his followers in present comfort and ultimate happiness.

### 3.2 ~~[THE INSTRUCTION ON PRACTICAL BODHICITTA]~~

The six pāramitās are:

- [1] Charity,<sup>82</sup>
- [2] Morality,<sup>83</sup>
- [3] Forbearance,<sup>84</sup>
- [4] Perseverance,<sup>85</sup>
- [5] Concentration,<sup>86</sup> and
- [6] Transcendent Wisdom.<sup>87</sup>

The first five are the pāramitās of ~~action~~, ~~[which are] the means~~<sup>88</sup> [for ~~earning relative~~ merit,<sup>89</sup>] and the sixth is the

<sup>82</sup> *jin-pa* / *sbyin.pa*

<sup>83</sup> *ts'ül-tr'im* / *tshul.khrims*

<sup>84</sup> *zö-pa* / *bzod.pa* / Although usually translated as “patience,” this does not seem to convey the correct meaning because of its ambiguity. For example, even fishermen have to exercise patience to catch fish. “Forbearance” (used in this translation) or “forgiveness” may better convey the Buddhist meaning.

<sup>85</sup> *tsön-drü* / *brtson.'grus*

<sup>86</sup> *sam-ten* / *bsam.gtan* / S. *dhyāna*

<sup>87</sup> *shey-rab* / *śes.rab*

<sup>88</sup> *t'ab* / *thabs* / S. *upāya*

<sup>89</sup> *sö-nam-kyi ts'og* / *bsod.nams.kyi tshogs* / S. *punyaśambhāra*

pāramitā for ~~earning absolute merit~~<sup>90</sup> The instructions on practicing them [are as follows].

### 3.2.1 TRANSCENDENT CHARITY <sup>91</sup>

There are three kinds of charity:

1. The Charity of Material Objects;
2. The Charity of Dharma;
3. The Charity of Providing Protection against Danger.

#### 3.2.1.1 THE CHARITY OF MATERIAL OBJECTS <sup>92</sup>

The charity of material objects is of three kinds:

1. Common Objects;
2. Precious Objects;
3. Extremely Precious Objects.

##### 3.2.1.1.1 THE CHARITY OF COMMON OBJECTS <sup>93</sup>

The offering to others of any material thing, from a *ja-t'eb*<sup>94</sup> to a cup of barley flour on up, is regarded as the giving away of common objects. As long as the intention is pure, the quantity of the material given does not matter. The *Tung-shag* mentions how merit was gained through giving a morsel of food to a being born in the animal realm. The Buddha, who was versatile in methods and had great compassion,

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<sup>90</sup> *ye-shey-kyi ts'og* / *ye.śes.kyi tshogs* / S. jñānasambhāra

<sup>91</sup> *jin-pay p'a-röl-tu ch'in-pa* / *sbyin.pa'i pha.rol.tu phyin.pa*

<sup>92</sup> *zang-zing gi-jin-pa* / *zañ.ziñ gi.sbyin.pa*

<sup>93</sup> *tong-wa* / *gtoñ.ba*

<sup>94</sup> *ja.theb* / an offering of the ingredients for making a cup of Tibetan tea / These consist of a small quantity of tea leaves, butter, salt, and soda, which are offered to a mendicant on a plate. This word should not be mistaken for the word *ja-t'eb* / *ja.thebs* (the abbreviated form of *jay-t'eb-tsa* / *ja'i.thebs.rtsa*), which is a cash donation to a monastery used for the purpose of building up permanent capital. The interest on this is used to provide tea for the monks.



showed how, based on the power of mantra and the like, even the offering of a drop of water and a grain of barley in charity can benefit as many pretas as there are sand grains in the Ganges Valley.

The white sur,<sup>95</sup> red sur,<sup>96</sup> <366> and similar offerings are especially beneficial for the pretas that move in space. Because of these offerings, whose smell serves as food, those non-human demonic beings who live on the lives of sentient beings will be temporarily satisfied. Through the charity of [this] Dharma, the minds of those evil spirits will be liberated [from evil thoughts], they will stop harming other beings, and the lives of many beings will be saved from the danger of being killed. Therefore, it is also a charity of giving protection against danger. In fact, it contains all three types of charity.

The charity that consists of the offering and dedication of ch'u-tor<sup>97</sup> and sur is a Dharma that is easy to perform and that brings great results. Hence, offer 100,000 ch'u-tor once a year. It is also important to maintain the practice of dedicating ch'u-tor and sur regularly.<sup>98</sup>

When you have earned a little wealth, you should not hold on to it like a miser, who spends neither for the benefit of his present [life] nor his future life. If even a great amount of wealth still leaves you feeling poor, and you talk as if you are suffering from acute famine, this is a sign that the causes which agree with those that will turn one into a preta have already appeared. Therefore, instead of behaving in such a way, you should make an effort to be charitable by making offerings to the Three Jewels, giving alms to the poor, and so

<sup>95</sup> *kar-sur* / *dkar.sur* / an offering of the fragrance produced by burning substances such as flour, butter, tea leaves, etc., depending on the purpose

<sup>96</sup> *mar-sur* / *dmar.sur* / an offering of the fragrance produced by burning flesh or bone / Because of the prefix "d," *mar* is pronounced with a short, high tone, as distinguished from *mar-sur* / *mar.sur*, an offering of the fragrance produced by burning butter, pronounced with a long, low tone.

<sup>97</sup> *chu.gtor* / an offering of water and grain

<sup>98</sup> The annual offering of 100,000 *ch'u-tor* is done in a day or so with the help of others. The daily offering is done by oneself once or more a day, when one has time.

on. Je-tsun Mi-la said, “Give alms, even by taking the food from your mouth.”

If, instead, <367> latitude is given to personal desire, even if all the wealth of this world is owned by a single man, he still will not be content. Rather than making offerings and giving charity from what he already has, he will try to find wealth from somewhere else for doing so.

In general, the practice of Dharma by giving material wealth and so on in charity is particularly recommended for lay Bodhisattvas. Monks should simply learn how to lessen their desire and be content. For them, it is more important to [be ready to] face hardship and suffering in retreats and solitude with great perseverance and to practice the three higher trainings.<sup>99</sup>

There are those who give up the practice of Dharma and engage in trade, agriculture, and so on, which require them to earn wealth through dishonest means and sin. With this wealth, they make offerings to the superior powers above and give charity to lower beings. They ambitiously regard this as the practice of Dharma. This is what is meant by, “If the Dharma is not followed as the Dharma should be followed, the Dharma will become the cause for falling into the lower regions again.” Such activity has no essential meaning whatever. Hence, always, under all circumstances, it is highly important to practice contentment.

### 3.2.1.1.2 THE CHARITY OF PRECIOUS OBJECTS <sup>100</sup>

This refers to giving away horses, elephants, sons and daughters,<sup>101</sup> and so forth—things that you especially value and things that are rare.

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<sup>99</sup> *lab-sum* / *bslab.gsum* / i.e., ethics, meditation, and Transcendent Wisdom

<sup>100</sup> *tong-wa ch'en-po* / *gtoñ.ḅa chen.po*

<sup>101</sup> Such drastic action is practiced by Bodhisattvas of the higher stages in the annihilation of illusory, mundane attachment. One should understand that the giving away of one's dependents is not at all due to a lack of affection for them, nor to treating them as inanimate objects. Any actions done

### 3.2.1.1.3 THE CHARITY OF EXTREMELY PRECIOUS OBJECTS <sup>102</sup>

This refers to giving away <368> your body, life, limbs, and so on—for example, as did the brave king Nying-tob Ch'en-po, who gave away his body to a tigress, Guru Nāgārjuna, who gave his head to the son of King De-chö, and L'a-cham Men-te Zang-mo, who donated her body to a tigress. This is practiced by Bodhisattvas who have attained the stages and not by ordinary human beings.

At present, without any attachment, you should mentally dedicate your body, life, entire wealth, and so on for the benefit of all sentient beings and offer prayers that in the future you may actually do this kind of practice.

### 3.2.1.2 THE CHARITY OF DHARMA <sup>103</sup>

This refers to helping others take an interest in the Dharma through giving initiations, explaining the Dharma, transmitting the oral tradition, and so on. **However, until your own desire disappears from its very root, even if you attempt to help others, it will be [ineffective], like a mere image [seen in a mirror].<sup>104</sup>**

Atiśa's followers asked him, "When is the time to take care of followers? When is the time to work for others? When is the time to apply *p'o-wa*<sup>105</sup> to a dead person?"

Atiśa replied:

**The time to take care of followers is when you realize Śūnyatā and develop foreknowledge.**

by higher beings are directed towards bringing an inconceivable amount of transcendental benefit to all concerned.

<sup>102</sup> *shin-tu tong-wa ch'en-po* / śin.tu gtoñ.ḥa chen.po

<sup>103</sup> *ch'ö-kyi jin-pa* / chos.kyi sbyin.pa

<sup>104</sup> i.e., in the way a picture of a lamp sheds no light, or the sight of French cuisine on television cannot satisfy one's hunger

<sup>105</sup> *'pho.ḥa* / the ejection, or transference, of consciousness

**The time to work for others is when your personal work comes to an end.**

**The time to apply *p'o-wa* to a dead person is when you have attained the Path of Seeing. <369>**

He continued, saying:

**During this deteriorated period, it is not the time for exhibiting your heroic abilities, but the time for persevering.**

**It is not the time for holding a higher position, but the time for holding a lower position.**

**It is not the time for having followers and servants, but the time for seeking solitude.**

**It is not the time for purifying disciples, but the time for purifying yourself.**

**It is not the time for following the words, but the time for contemplating on their meaning.**

**It is not the time for roaming about, but the time for sitting in one place.**

The Three Brothers asked Ge-shey Tön-pa, “Which is more beneficial, meditating by oneself in solitude or helping sentient beings with the Dharma?”

**Ge-shey Tön-pa said:**

**Even if a beginner, who has no experience or insight whatever, tries to help sentient beings with the Dharma, he will not be able to do so:**

**It will be like pouring blessings from an empty vessel;**

**There will be no blessings to come out.**

**Such instructions will be like [the drink obtained from] straining fermented barley without pressing it;**

**The secret instructions will have no taste or essence.**

**One who has only achieved warmth<sup>106</sup> but not stability in meditation, who is only at the stage where one**

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<sup>106</sup> the beginning of a spiritual experience

acts on faith,<sup>107</sup> will not be suitable for helping sentient beings:

It will be like emptying a vessel full of blessings;  
As one fills the other's vase, <370> one's own becomes empty.

~~The instructions will be like a torch passing from hand to hand;~~

~~On enlightening others, one will find oneself in darkness.~~

On attaining the stages, whatever one does for the lower beings will be of service:

The blessings will be like siddhiphala<sup>108</sup> from an excellent vase;

Even if one brings about spiritual maturity in everyone else,

One will not suffer from loss or gain in oneself.

The secret instructions will act like a main source of light;

Even if they enlighten others, they will not leave one in darkness.

Hence, during this deteriorated period, ordinary followers should remain in solitude and train their minds by developing loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta.

~~It is not the time for them to actually help others;~~

It is the time for them to control their own passions.

It is not, for example, the time to cut down the sapling of the great, medicinal tree;

It is the time to protect it.

Thus, it is a bit difficult to give ~~spiritual charity~~ to sentient beings. Dharma you do not practice yourself ~~can never~~ help others, even if you teach it to them.

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<sup>107</sup> *mö-pay chö-pa* / mos.pas spyod.pa

<sup>108</sup> the ultimate blessing or fruit

To earn wealth and receive offerings and presents in return for teaching the Dharma is what P'a-dam-pa of India described as "earning wealth by using the Dharma as a commodity."

~~Until your own desires come to an end, instead of hypocritically becoming impatient to help others,~~ you should say prayers, count mantra, <371> read from books containing the teachings of Buddha, and offer prayers for the white devas and demons who protect the Dharma, so that, on listening, they will be liberated from delusion. After finishing the *ch'u-tor* and *lü-jin*<sup>109</sup> offerings, say the prayer: "*Dig-pa chi-yang mi-ja . . .*" and so on. ~~These [practices] will constitute the charity of Dharma.~~

This much should be considered sufficient. When your own desires have come to a cessation, the time has come when you should not remain idly resting in peace and comfort even for a moment. Rather, you should devote yourself entirely to working for the benefit of others. Act accordingly.

### 3.2.1.3 THE CHARITY OF PROVIDING PROTECTION AGAINST DANGER <sup>110</sup>

This refers to all actions that provide protection to those beings who have no protection, deliverance to those who have no deliverers, and support and friendship to those who have none.

The Buddha said that, in particular, of all the meritorious deeds brought about by an accumulation of causes, saving the lives of sentient beings is **the most** beneficial. Hence, those who have the power to do so should give orders that prohibit killing game in the hills and fishing in the valleys. Others should buy sheep and so forth that are being taken to the slaughterhouse and should save the lives of sentient beings, such as fish and insects, that are nearing death. We should by

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<sup>109</sup> lus.sbyin / the giving away of the body in charity

<sup>110</sup> *mi-jig-pa kyab-kyi jin-pa* / *mi.'jigs.pa skyabs.kyi sbyin.pa*

all means take an active interest in providing benefit to sentient beings.

Thus, these different varieties of **charity** are the most important among the secret Vajrayāna bonds of trust.<sup>111</sup> In the observance of the vows of the Five Races [of Buddhas] as well, [it is stated]:

**As per the bond of trust of the Gem Race<sup>112</sup> of the Buddhas, <372>  
The four types of **charity**<sup>113</sup> should always be given.**

This is in conformity with what has been said.

### 3.2.2 TRANSCENDENT MORALITY<sup>114</sup>

This has three divisions:

1. The **Moral Laws for Refraining from Bad Conduct**;
2. The **Moral Laws for Acquiring [Dharmic] Merit**;
3. The **Moral Laws for Working for the Benefit of Sentient Beings**.

#### 3.2.2.1 THE MORAL LAWS FOR REFRAINING FROM BAD CONDUCT<sup>115</sup>

This refers to giving up, as you would poison, all the ten vices committed through your body, speech, and mind, which do not bring any benefit to others.

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<sup>111</sup> *sang-ngag-kyi dam-tsig / gsañ.shags.kyi dam.tshig*

<sup>112</sup> *rin-ch'en-rig / rin.chen.rigs*

<sup>113</sup> The four types of charity should be understood to mean the three types of conceptual charity and non-conceptual charity.

<sup>114</sup> *ts'ül-tr'im-kyi p'a-röl-tu ch'in-pa / tshul.khrims.kyi pha.rol.tu phyin.pa*

<sup>115</sup> *nyey-chod dom-pay ts'ül-tr'im / ñes.spyod sdom.pa'i tshul.khrims*

### 3.2.2.2 THE MORAL LAWS FOR ACQUIRING [DHARMIC] MERIT <sup>116</sup>

This refers to making an effort, always, under all circumstances, to accrue as much merit as possible, including the smallest amount.

A common worldly saying goes:

**Merit can be earned while talking and working.  
Sin can be committed while walking and sitting.**

If you do not make an effort, always, under all circumstances, to do what you should do and avoid what you should not do by applying remembrance, watchfulness, and caution, you can commit many terrible sins even while playing.

It is said:

**Even if it is a small sin,  
Don't scoff at it, thinking that it won't cause harm.  
Even a tiny spark of fire  
Burns down a mountain of hay.**

Likewise, if always, under all circumstances, you act with full remembrance and watchfulness, you will earn an unimaginable amount of <373> merit in stride. It is said, "At the least, take off your hat to show respect to a stone chapel of *ma-ni*<sup>117</sup> by the roadside." Pass by, keeping it on the right as if circumambulating it. If you do this in the full sense of the three perfect principles,<sup>118</sup> it will be an unmistakable cause for attaining Enlightenment.

It is said:

**Even if it is a small amount of merit,  
Don't scoff at it, thinking that it won't help.**

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<sup>116</sup> *ge-wa ch'ö-dü-kyi ts'ül-tr'im* / dge.ḅa chos.sdud.kyi tshul.khrims

<sup>117</sup> the mantra of Avalokiteśvara cut into stone slabs

<sup>118</sup> *dam-pa-sum* / dam.pa.gsum



**By collecting drops of water,  
Large vessels are gradually filled.**

This idea appears in the stories about how in the past a pig, being chased by a dog, circumambulated a stūpa, and how a group of seven insects dropped from a tree leaf, fell into a river, and floated seven times around a stūpa in the water, and how these actions became ~~the cause~~ of their liberation.

Always, under all circumstances, try as much as you can to give up even a single ~~sin~~ and to earn even a single merit. The dedication of this merit for the benefit of all sentient beings summarizes all the instructions and vows of Bodhicitta.

### 3.2.2.3 ~~THE MORAL LAWS FOR WORKING FOR THE~~ ~~BENEFIT OF SENTIENT BEINGS~~ <sup>119</sup>

As mentioned earlier, when your own desire wears out from its very root, you should make an effort, by depending on the four actions that attract followers,<sup>120</sup> to actually work for the cause of sentient beings. At the beginning stage, whatever instructions on ~~earning~~ merit and avoiding demerit <374> one may put into practice, if the merit earned thereby is dedicated according to the three ~~perfect~~ principles for the benefit of all sentient beings, it will cover all that is required.

### 3.2.3 ~~TRANSCENDENT FORBEARANCE~~ <sup>121</sup>

This has three divisions:

1. ~~Forbearance in Bearing Maltreatment by Others;~~
2. ~~Forbearance in Enduring Hardship for the Sake of Dharma;~~

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<sup>119</sup> *sem-chen dōn-je-kyi ts'ül-tr'im* / *sems.chan don.byed.kyi tshul.khrims*

<sup>120</sup> *du-way ngö-po zhi* / *bsdu.ḥa'i dnos.po bz'i* / i.e., charity, soothing speech, serving the causes of others, and acting in accordance with the Dharma

<sup>121</sup> *zö-pay p'a-röl-tu ch'in-pa* / *bzod.pa'i pha.rol.tu phyin.pa*

### 3. Forbearance in Hearing the Esoteric Teachings without Being Frightened.

#### 3.2.3.1 ~~FORBEARANCE IN BEARING MALTREATMENT BY OTHERS~~<sup>122</sup>

When others actually beat you, rob you, use foul language against you, and so on, or backbite you and so on, rather than become hostile and angry with them, you should develop loving-kindness and compassion and help them. This is [what is called “forbearance in bearing maltreatment by others.”] If you do not have this, but give in to anger, it will be as in the saying: “All the merit earned in a thousand aeons is destroyed by a single outburst of anger.”

From the Bodhicaryāvatāra:

**Even that which took thousands of kalpas to earn,  
Charity, offerings to the Buddhas, and so on,  
Whatever good deeds there are,  
A single fit of anger can destroy.**

Therefore, as it is said:

**There is no sin like anger,  
Nor penance like forbearance,  
It is better to persist in forbearance,  
Meditate on it using all means.**

As stated, by recollecting the shortcomings of anger, you should always, <375> under all circumstances, make an effort to contemplate on forbearance.

Dam-pa of India said:

**As enmity is a karmic illusion,  
Give up hostility and ill-will, O Ding-ri folk!**

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<sup>122</sup> zhen-gyi log-drub zö-pay zö-pa / gzan.gyi log.sgrub bzod.pa'i bzod.pa

Atiśa said:

**Don't get angry at one who has harmed you.  
If you get angry at one who has harmed you,  
When will you exercise forbearance?**

Therefore, if someone insults you, blames you unduly, or the like, give up becoming hostile or quarrelsome with him. This will do away with a great deal of your sin and obscuration. Depending on forbearance, you will accomplish the earning of a great amount of merit. Hence, one who harms you should be looked upon as a Guru. This is exactly like the saying, "If there is no object that generates anger, to whom can forbearance be shown?"

These days people often say, "He is a very noble Lama," or, "He is a very noble monk, but he has a bad temper." Since, among samsaric faults, there is nothing more serious than anger, how can one be very noble when one has great anger?

Dam-pa of India said:

**The sin accrued in a moment's act of anger is heavier  
than that accrued through a hundred acts of lust.  
Therefore, do not get contaminated.**

A person in whom the Dharma has grown should be physically, verbally, and mentally very gentle, like cotton wool pressed under one's heel or like a lump of butter added to a broth of barley meal. <376> Often, however, just because a person has done a little meritorious work, or observed a single vow, he thinks, "I am one who has done this and that [wonderful deed]." Always filled with arrogance, he becomes very touchy and angry and reacts to even a single good or bad word used by others, saying, "I have been snubbed, I have been blamed." This is all because his mind has strayed from the Dharma. It is a sign that such a person has failed to receive even the slightest benefit from the Dharma.

Ge-shey Chen-nga-wa said:

As we keep learning, **thinking**, and **contemplating** on the Dharma, if our ego becomes bigger and bigger, our endurance becomes less than that of the sensitive layer of the skin, and [the grip of] our jealousy becomes tighter than that of the *Tsang-tsen* spirit,<sup>123</sup> it is a sure sign that the learning, thinking, and contemplation have had a contradictory effect.

Hence, always, under all circumstances, be content with a low seat and old clothes. Hold those who are great, mediocre, or inferior above you. Since the subjugation of the mind through the Dharma based on loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta—is the unmistakable crux of meditation, it is a thousand times better than any seemingly high doctrinal views and secret techniques of meditation that do not benefit the mind.

### 3.2.3.2 ~~FORBEARANCE IN ENDURING HARDSHIP FOR THE SAKE OF DHARMA~~<sup>124</sup>

In order to practice the sublime Dharma, one should be able to <377> overcome all kinds of hardship, such as heat, cold, and so on.

It is stated in the Tantras:

**Crossing over bonfires and an ocean of razor blades,<sup>125</sup>  
The search for Dharma continued to the very brink of  
death.**

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<sup>123</sup> gtsaṅ.btsan / a jealous spirit in Tsang Province in Tibet

<sup>124</sup> *ch'ö-ch'ir ka-chay zö-pay zö-pa* / chos.phyir dka'spyad bzod.pa'i bzod.pa

<sup>125</sup> This verse appears in *Kün-zang La-may Zhal-lung*, Part One, p. 17 as well, but with the variation of “sharp blades” in place of “ocean of razor blades.”

What are called the four [ultimate] resorts of the former venerable *Ka-dam-pa* monks in Tibet are:

**Take the Dharma as the ultimate resort of the mind;  
Take asceticism as the ultimate resort of the Dharma;  
Take death as the ultimate resort of asceticism;  
Take a desolate valley as the ultimate resort of death.**

These days, we think that we neither need to undergo hardship nor have **perseverance** in following the Dharma, for we hope to accomplish **it** while fulfilling the tasks of this world and while enjoying happiness, comfort, and fame. We assume that others also act in the same way, and we remark, “Well, he is a good Lama, for he is expert in handling both the **Dharma** and **mundane affairs**.”

Where is the possibility of managing both **temporal** and **spiritual affairs** simultaneously? Those who are conceited and who think that they are handling both temporal and spiritual affairs together may perhaps be having some luck in the temporal sense. But it is absolutely certain that they have nothing with regard to the excellent Dharma. To have the ambition to handle both the Dharma and mundane affairs simultaneously is like hoping to sew with **two needles**, to keep fire and water in the same bucket, or to ride two horses that are facing in opposite directions. It is absolutely impossible to accomplish.

It is [impossible] to find a human being <378> who surpasses our Buddha Śākyamuni. But even He could not see the possibility of handling **temporal** and **spiritual things** together. Hence, having abandoned His great kingdom like a droplet of spit, He underwent **penance** for six years on the bank of the river Nairāñjanā, living on a few drops of water and a few grains of wheat.

Even a yogi like Je-tśun Mi-la Re-pa had neither food to eat nor clothes to cover his back while practicing meditation. He continued to meditate, living on nettle [soup] alone. His body was reduced to a skeleton, and green hair grew on his skin. With austerity and perseverance he followed the Dhar-

ma, becoming a puzzle to behold: those who saw him did not know whether he was a man or a ghost. This shows that there is no way to ~~follow the Dharma~~ and ~~the world~~ at the same time. It is not that Je-tsün Mi-la could not follow the Dharma and worldly pursuits together out of sheer **inability**.

Similarly, the great yogi **Me-long Do-je**, living solely on the bark of the *la-k'e* plant, meditated for nine years and attained perfection. The omniscient Dharma-King Long-ch'en Rab-jam-pa likewise used only twenty-one pills of **mercury** as his food for many months. When it snowed, he slipped into a [flour] bag that served as clothes and a carpet <379> at the same time. He endured such penances for the sake of the Dharma.

**In this way, leaving the entirety of worldly affairs behind and following the practice with arduous endeavor, all the past yogis attained perfection. None among them practiced the Dharma and achieved perfection while pursuing worldly activities and enjoying comfort, happiness, and fame.**

Rig-dzin Jig-me Ling-pa said:

**When a spiritual adept makes arrangements for plenty of food, warm clothes, a comfortable place to live, and a good benefactor, he has already attained the devil before attaining the **Dharma**.**

Ge-shey Sha-po-pa said:

**If the Dharma is practiced from the core of one's heart, one should **be ready** to face poverty, ending in death. If such a thought grows in one's mind, it is certain that devas, demons, and men will never **permit** one to suffer.**

**Je-tsün Mi-la said:**

**If no one inquires of my health when I am sick,  
And no one cries when I die,  
If I can face death in this hermitage,  
The desire of a yogi is fulfilled.**

If there is no **sign of man** outside the door,  
 And no stain of blood inside,  
 If I can face death in this hermitage,  
 The desire of a yogi is fulfilled.

If no one **inquires** about where I am,  
 Nor about the destination to **which I have gone**,  
 If I can face death in this <380> hermitage,  
 The desire of a yogi is fulfilled.

If maggots eat my rotting corpse,  
 And flies suck my veins and guts,  
 If I can face death in this hermitage,  
 The desire of a yogi is fulfilled.

Thus, the ability to throw all worldly attachments of this life and all difficulties such as heat and cold to the winds is by all means necessary in following the Dharma.

### 3.2.3.3 ~~FORBEARANCE IN HEARING THE ESOTERIC TEACHINGS WITHOUT BEING FRIGHTENED~~<sup>126</sup>

When one hears the teachings on the nature of the profound Śūnyatā—especially on the nature of *Rang-zhin Dzogpa Ch'en-po*, whose core technique requires no active endeavor;<sup>127</sup> the teaching called **The Twelve Scoffing Vajra Laughters**<sup>128</sup> that transcends virtue, **sin**, and the law of cause and effect; the teaching called the **Eight Great Words of Wonder**; and other supreme esoteric teachings—one should not develop antagonism towards them. Rather, one should endeavor to understand their meanings correctly.

If, instead, one has antagonistic feelings towards them or speaks ill of them, the “karma of forsaking the Dharma”<sup>129</sup> is

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<sup>126</sup> *zab-mö dön-la mi-trag-pay zö-pa / zab.mo'i don.la mi.skrag.pa'i bzod.pa*

<sup>127</sup> *ja-tsoḷ drel-wa / bya.rtsol bral.ḥa*

<sup>128</sup> S. vajrahasa / adamantine laughter

<sup>129</sup> *ch'ö-pong-way lay / chos.spoñ.ḥa'i las*

committed, which becomes a cause for preventing one from escaping from the depths of hell for countless aeons.

[In the prayers for forgiveness,] it is said:

**A bad karma more powerful than the five boundaryless sins,  
The bad karma earned by forsaking the Dharma, is  
confessed for absolution.**

Once two Indian monks, who lived according to the twelve virtues in which they had been trained, called on Atīśa. <381> When Atīśa talked to them about the non-existence of the self,<sup>130</sup> they were glad. When he spoke about the non-existence of [external] things,<sup>131</sup> they said, “Terrible! Terrible! Don’t speak like that.” When they heard the recitation of the profound prayers, they plugged their ears.

Atīśa became disheartened and said, “If no confidence in the profound Dharma is gained as a result of subduing the mind through the practice of loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta—and so on, the mere attainment of perfection in the observance of ~~moral laws~~ and vows will not lead one anywhere.”

This is like the many stories that tell how, during Buddha’s time also, when He exposed the secret meaning of Śūnyatā, many arrogant monks vomited blood profusely, died, and took rebirth in hell and the like.

Therefore, from the core of your heart, you must have devotion and faith in the secret teachings and in the person who teaches them. Even if, because of your mental limitations, you cannot develop faith in them, it is extremely important to give up backbiting them.

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<sup>130</sup> *gang-zag-gyi dag-me / gañ.zag.gyi bdag.med*

<sup>131</sup> *ch’ö-kyi dag-me / chos.kyi bdag.med*



### 3.2.4 TRANSCENDENT PERSEVERANCE<sup>132</sup>

Transcendent perseverance has three divisions:

1. Perseverance That Acts Like Armor;
2. Perseverance That Transcends Laziness;
3. Perseverance That Prevents You from Being Content.

#### 3.2.4.1 PERSEVERANCE THAT ACTS LIKE ARMOR<sup>133</sup>

The biographies and deeds of the past great sages and of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas show how much they had to suffer for the sake of <382> practicing the Dharma. However many such stories you hear, you should not become lazy by telling yourself, “Well, they could sustain such hardship because they were Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. How can we do what they did?”

Rather, you should firmly resolve [as follows]: “They attained their realization by dealing with those kinds of difficult tasks. Since I am following in their footsteps, even if I fail to achieve more than they did, I cannot do without attaining whatever they have attained. If they had to labor and persevere so much, why shouldn’t we—pressed by heavy loads of bad karma and without the slightest experience of Dharma from beginningless time—be required to labor hard for the sake of the Dharma?”

You have been born as a well-endowed human being, have met an accomplished Guru, received secret teachings, and have the opportunity to follow the pure Dharma in the proper way. It is now that you should take a vow from the depths of your heart to follow the Dharma by voluntarily undertaking hardship, carrying heavy loads on your back, allowing your body and life to face all kinds of difficulties, and sacrificing your flesh and blood as food [for whoever needs them]. This is [what is called “the perseverance that acts like armor.”]

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<sup>132</sup> *tsön-drii-kyi p'a-röl-tu ch'in-pa* / brtson.'grus.kyi pha.rol.tu phyin.pa

<sup>133</sup> *go-chay tsön-drii* / go.cha'i brtson.'grus

### 3.2.4.2 PERSEVERANCE THAT TRANSCENDS LAZINESS <sup>134</sup>

Although you want to follow and practice the Dharma, you put it off until tomorrow and then the day after tomorrow. Thus the sun of your life sets. You should avoid letting your life come to an end while still only intending to practice meditation.

Drug-pa Pe-ma Kar-po said:

**This human life is <383> like [the life] of an animal in a slaughterhouse.**

**Each moment's passing brings you nearer to death.**

**Beware! Procrastinating from today until tomorrow**

**May make you wail from the bed [of your] last [sleep].**

Therefore, do not postpone practicing the Dharma even for a moment. [Rather], you should act as fast as a timid young man when a snake crawls onto his lap or like a beautiful woman when her hair catches on fire. Leave all worldly engagements behind. Drop them entirely and practice the Dharma as soon as possible. If that is not done, worldly affairs will never come to an end. They will come one after the other, like ripples of water, and you will have no time to practice the Dharma. Worldly affairs will come to an end only when you give them up.

The Great Long-ch'en-pa said:

**Worldly work never comes to an end until one dies.**

**It is natural that work ends when you stop it.**

And also:

**Work is like child's play.**

**It never ends by doing it; it ends when one stops doing it.**

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<sup>134</sup> *jor-way tsön-drü / sbyor.ḅa'i brtson.'grus*

Hence, as soon as the thought of practicing the noble Dharma is born in you, you should be alerted by [a sense of] the impermanency of life, and without falling under the influence of laziness or procrastination even for a moment, you should practice it immediately. This is called “**perseverance** that transcends laziness.”

### 3.2.4.3 **PERSEVERANCE THAT PREVENTS YOU FROM BEING CONTENT** <sup>135</sup>

You should not be content with whatever short period of retreat <384> you have undertaken, prayers you have said, or limited merit you have earned. Instead, you should vow to continue the practice of Dharma so that [its duration] equals [the duration] of your life. Until Buddhahood is attained, prolonged and forceful **perseverance**, like the flow of a river, is required.

According to the instructions of the past great Gurus, while practicing the Dharma you should act like a hungry yak eating grass. When a hungry yak eats grass, it looks at the second morsel while eating the first. Likewise, while practicing the Dharma, you should mentally plan what you should practice next, so that your body, speech, and mind do not remain idle, without Dharma, even for a moment. In this manner, with increasing industry from day to day, you should follow the Dharma.

Rig-dzin Jig-me Ling-pa said:

**If the more one nears death, the more one endeavors to practice the Dharma,**

**It is a sign that the adept has not been damaged by blight.**

Nowadays, people flatter renowned yogis and Lamas, saying, “You need not do prostrations or prayers, or earn good merit anymore.” It seems that they [i.e., the yogis and Lamas]

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<sup>135</sup> *ch'og-par mi-zin-pay tsön-drü / chog.par mi.'zin.pa'i brtson.'grus*

also assume <385> that they do not have to practice any of these because they are already such great beings.

Dag-po Rin-po-ch'e said:

**The feeling of not wanting to practice is a sign that one needs to practice.**

Even the Venerable [Atiśa] Dīpaṅkara of India made an effort to cast *sa-tsa* every day, smearing his hands with clay. At this, his followers told him, "If a great Lama like you works with mud, others will criticize you. Please do not take the trouble. We will do that for you."

He replied, "What do you mean? Do you want to eat my meals [for me] as well?"

Hence, until Buddhahood is attained, you still have to ~~dis-~~solve karmic reactions and mental habits, and attain the virtues of the higher stages. Therefore, rather than practice the Dharma occasionally, only when there is opportunity and leisure, you should, from the core of your heart, follow it always, without the feeling that you have done enough.

In fact, whether you attain Buddhahood or not depends entirely on your perseverance. Therefore, an effort should be made to attain the three types of perseverance. Although you may have the best intelligence, if your perseverance is only third-grade, you will only become a third-grade practitioner. However, if your intelligence is third-grade and your perseverance is of the highest grade, you will become the best of practitioners. If you lack perseverance, even the possession of other virtues will be of no use.

Kün-k'yen <386> Jig-me Ling-pa said:

**For a person without perseverance,  
Neither intelligence, authority, wealth, nor valor  
Can offer any protection,  
Just as a ferryman with a boat  
Is helpless without oars.**

Therefore, always, under all circumstances, unless food is limited, sleep is regulated, awareness is sharpened, and un-

fluctuating perseverance is maintained like a tuned bow, your practice of the Dharma will be intermittent, determined [only] by the availability of time and leisure, and will lead you nowhere.

### 3.2.5 TRANSCENDENT MENTAL CONCENTRATION <sup>136</sup>

First, if you do not retire to solitude by abandoning all meetings and distracting allurements, concentration cannot grow in your mind. Therefore, it is important that first you give up indulging in distractions.

Separation is inherent in gatherings. Parents, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, relatives and friends—even the flesh and bone born together in a body—will eventually separate. You should ask yourself, “What is the use of becoming attached to impermanent friends?” Thinking thus, you should always try to live by yourself.

Re-pa Zi-wa Ö said:

**Remaining by oneself, one is in the state of  
Buddhahood.**

**A Dharma friend is a support for earning merit.  
More than three or four [people] is cause for  
attachment and hostility.**

**Because of that too, I am one who prefers <387>  
to live alone.**

Craving is the source of all evil. Even if you have [everything], you do not know how to be content. The more amenities and wealth you acquire, ~~[the more] your avarice increases~~. It is said, “He who has wealth has avarice,” and also, “Contentment makes one feel like a rich man.” As in the saying, “If you have no wealth, you will be divorced from enemies,” enemies and thieves will harm you in proportion to the food, property, and wealth you have.

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<sup>136</sup> *sam-ten-gyi p'a-röl-tu ch'in-pa / bsam.gtan.gyi pha.rol.tu phyin.pa*

Because of the craving for wealth, one wastes one's whole life accumulating, preserving, and propagating it, which results in nothing but suffering and [the committing of] sin.

Hence, Nāgārjuna said:

**The accumulation, preservation, and propagation of wealth wear one out.**

**So be it known that wealth is a disaster that knows no bounds.**

Even if the entire wealth and property of this world were owned by a single person, except for spending it on the food and clothes that are required for one person, there would be nothing else to be done. However, the more [wealth a greedy] person gets, the more reluctant he feels to spend it, even for his own food and clothes. He abandons concern for sin, suffering, and scandals, and throws the question of future lives to the winds. He sacrifices his sog<sup>137</sup> for the present life. Even for the tiniest amount of wealth, <388> he undermines all his self-respect, sense of shame, uprightness, and the vows and trusts of the Dharma. He spends all his time greedily searching for something to eat, [always] trying to find something or gain something, like an evil spirit who looks **for tor-ma offerings**, having no leisure to enjoy even a day's happiness or pleasure.

Ultimately, the accumulation of wealth will endanger his life. For the sake of wealth, such a person will be killed by a sword or other weapon. The wealth that he has accumulated throughout his life will then be enjoyed by his enemies and the like, and will thus simply go to waste. But the heap of sin the size of Mt. Sumeru that he has earned from gathering the wealth will be taken exclusively as his share, making it difficult for him to find time to escape from wandering in the unbearable depths of the lower regions of saṃsāra.

Since this is the case, when you have full control over a little wealth, it is better to store away some wholesome

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<sup>137</sup> ~~srog / the life-sustaining force that links the physical body with the mind until one dies~~

rations in the best possible way for your future life. Learn to be content with the minimal amount of food and clothing needed to withstand the weather.

Similarly, those concerned only with the present life are called childish friends. They are ungrateful people who harm you even if you help them. You will never see them satisfied, no matter how much you do for them. It is hard to please them. If you seem better off than they, they will be jealous of you. If they are better off than you, they will snub you. The more you associate <389> with them, the more your demerit will grow and the more your merit will be obscured. Therefore, keep such individuals at a great distance.

Engaging in business, cultivation, art, intellectual pursuits, and so forth consequently brings about too many contacts and multifarious problems of a completely absorbing nature. This is called *du-dzi*.<sup>138</sup> It always keeps you busy for little purpose. However much effort you make, it will prove essenceless. Even if you subdue enemies, there will be no end to them. Even if you take care of relatives, there will be no end to them.

Abandoning these never-ending activities and causes of distraction like a droplet of spit, leave your fatherland behind and welcome a foreign country. Find a place at the base of a rock to live. Make friends with wild animals. Bring relaxation to your body and mind. Let [your desire] for food, clothes, and fame suffer. Spend your life only in places of solitude, where there are no people.

Je-tsün Mi-la Re-pa said:

**In the cave of a land without man,  
There is never a time for melancholy to disappear.  
For the Guru, the Buddha of the Three Times,  
The twang of [my] affectionate devotion never departs.**

If you do as he has said, [you will find that] at a place that makes you melancholy, concentration will linger in your mind. As mentioned, the intense desire to withdraw [from

<sup>138</sup> 'du.'dzi / gathering causes for distraction

samsāra], the feeling of remorse [for being in samsāra], faith [in the Refuges],<sup>139</sup> *dag-nang*, concentration, deep meditation,<sup>140</sup> and so on—all the virtues of the path—will spontaneously grow. Avail yourself of this sort of <390> opportunity by all means.

For these reasons, the solitude of the woods was also where the past Buddhas and Bodhisattvas attained Nirvāṇa. There are no meetings or distractions there. There are no engagements in business or agriculture. One is severed from childish friends. There are birds and wild animals with whom it is easy to make friends. There are water and leaves for foods agreeable with ascetic practices. One's memory naturally becomes clearer. [It is] a place where meditation automatically flourishes. There are neither foes nor friends there, and one is severed from ties of ~~attachment and hostility~~. It is a place endowed with many virtues.

There is no question [about the benefit] of actually living in such a solitude:

**Even if the wish to go to such a solitude leads one merely to take seven steps in that direction, one accrues greater benefit than by worshipping all the Buddhas of the ten directions for as many aeons as there are sand grains in the Ganges Valley.**

The Buddha has said this in the Da-wa Drön-ma Sūtra and elsewhere.

It is as described in the following saying:

**In the retreat of solitude, the best place,  
Everything one does is meritorious.**

As said, even if no special effort is made to earn merit, the intense desire to withdraw [from samsāra], the feeling of remorse [for being in samsāra], loving-kindness, compassion, and so on—all the virtues of the path <391>—will spon-

<sup>139</sup> *de-pa* / *dad.pa*

<sup>140</sup> *ting-nge-dzin* / *tiñ.ne.'dzin* / S. samādhi



taneously grow by leaps and bounds. Thus, everything one does will naturally become nothing but meritorious. All jealousies and passions that cannot be stopped even with the best of efforts at a place of samsaric distraction will automatically lessen just by arriving in solitude. All the virtues of the spiritual path will become easier to develop in your mind. Since these are the prerequisite dharmas of concentration, they are very important from every point of view; there is no way to do without them.

The actual concentration is [of three kinds]:

1. The Concentration Practiced by Children;
2. The Concentration That Works for the Best Purpose;
3. The Meritorious Concentration of the Superior Bodhisattvas.

### 3.2.5.1 ~~[THE CONCENTRATION PRACTICED BY CHILDREN]~~<sup>141</sup>

Attracted to the experience of bliss, clarity, and the absence of thought,<sup>142</sup> if one intentionally concentrates on them along with a sense of attachment to the experience, it is called “the concentration practiced by children.”<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> *ji-pa nyer-chö-kyi sam-ten* / *byis.pa ñer.spyod.kyi bsam.gtan* / the eight types of worldly concentration—the four of the formal realm and the four of the formless realm—practiced by those who have not yet entered the five paths of the Bodhisattvas

<sup>142</sup> *de-sal mi-tog-pay nyam* / *bde.gsal mi.rtog.pa'i ñams*

<sup>143</sup> This is an experiential concentration that enraptures and attracts the novice meditator with the subtle, conceptual taste of bliss, clarity, and the absence of thought. It should be noted that here the meditator conceptually experiences the absence of thought in his mind. Hence, this is not at all the actual non-conceptual state. This concentration is so named because the attraction the meditator has to it is like a child's attraction to a piece of chocolate. It is, however, an inevitable and necessary incentive for beginners.

### 3.2.5.2 [~~THE CONCENTRATION THAT WORKS FOR THE BEST PURPOSE~~] <sup>144</sup>

When attachment to experience vanishes and even the taste of concentration is absent, but one still meditates with attachment to the antidotal emptiness, it is called “~~the concentration that works for the best purpose.~~”<sup>145</sup>

### 3.2.5.3 [~~THE MERITORIOUS CONCENTRATION OF THE SUPERIOR BODHISATTVAS~~] <sup>146</sup>

[When] one is severed from even the concept of attachment to the antidotal emptiness and ~~is~~ in the profound, non-conceptual meditation of the absolute nature, it is called “the meritorious concentration of the superior Bodhisattvas.”<sup>147</sup>

<sup>144</sup> *dön-rab je-pay sam-ten* / don.rab 'byed.pa'i bsam.gtan / the concentration practiced while on the ~~first and second paths of the Bodhisattvas~~ the Path of Accumulation (*ts'og-lam* / tshogs.lam) and the Path of Application (*gor-lam* / sbyor.lam) / This type of concentration leads one up to the third path, the Path of Seeing (*t'ong-lam* / mthoñ.lam).

<sup>145</sup> The Buddhist idea of emptiness is a unique antidote that works to dissolve the essentially non-existent concepts that continually plague all sentient beings. One should know the difference, however, between conceptual and non-conceptual emptiness. At this stage, the meditator is still attached to conceptual emptiness. However, this type of concentration serves as an essential springboard towards the understanding of the ultimate, non-conceptual emptiness. Therefore, it is called “the concentration that works for the best purpose.”

<sup>146</sup> *de-zhin sheg-gey sam-ten* / de.b'zin gśegs.dge'i bsam.gtan / the concentration practiced by Bodhisattvas upon attaining the Path of Seeing, i.e., from the first stage upward / For further information on these three types of *sam-ten*, see p. 788 of *Bden Gnyis Shin Rta* by Jig-me Ling-pa, Nga-gyur Nying-may Sung-rab Series, Volume 29 (published by Sonam T. Kazi, Gangtok, 1970).

<sup>147</sup> Still, the use of the words “the profound, non-conceptual meditation” is conceptual. One should neither be prematurely excited nor lose hope in attaining the goal. Relentless perseverance in staying on the correct path is the only answer until the one who perseveres disappears unconditionally in the full light of wakefulness, without the concept that one has disappeared.

While [one is] practicing concentration, <392> the seven physical poses of Vairocana should be maintained; the manner of posing one's gaze is also important.

It is said:

**If the body is straight, the nerves become straight.**

**If the nerves are straight, the ~~[flow of] air~~ becomes straight.**

**If the ~~[flow of] air~~ is straight, the mind becomes straight.**

Rather than lying down, leaning, and so forth, one should keep the body straight and ~~not allow the mind to conceptualize~~. Keeping the mind in a well-balanced state [of concentration], unattached to any thoughts, is the essence of transcendent mental concentration.

### 3.2.6 TRANSCENDENT WISDOM <sup>148</sup>

[This is of three kinds:]

1. The Wisdom Obtained through Listening;
2. The Wisdom Obtained through Thinking;
3. The Wisdom Obtained through Meditation.

#### 3.2.6.1 THE WISDOM OBTAINED THROUGH LISTENING <sup>149</sup>

The Guru teaches all the words of the Dharma and their meaning. Your exact understanding of what he has said through listening is [called “the wisdom obtained through listening.”]

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<sup>148</sup> *shey-rab-kyi p'a-röl-tu ch'in-pa* / *śes.rab.kyi pha.rol.tu phyin.pa* / S. *prajñāpāramitā*

<sup>149</sup> *t'ö-pay shey-rab* / *thos.pa'i śes.rab*

### 3.2.6.2 THE WISDOM OBTAINED THROUGH THINKING<sup>150</sup>

None of the meanings [of the Dharma] that the Guru has taught should be left merely as something heard and understood; they should be put into immediate practice. You should confirm [your understanding] through observation, examination, and deep pondering, and ask others about whatever you do not know. Without being presumptuously contented, thinking casually that you understand and that “it is so,” you should acquire such an absolute conviction with regard to the techniques of meditation that you can practice meditation in solitude on your own, without having to ask others for help. This is [called “the wisdom obtained through thinking.”]

### 3.2.6.3 THE WISDOM OBTAINED THROUGH MEDITATION<sup>151</sup>

When you put [the techniques] you have understood into practice through meditation, <393> the unmistakable, actual insight of the Ultimate<sup>152</sup> will be born in the mind. ~~Final satisfaction will grow from within. The ultimate state that you see on freeing yourself from knots [of doubts such as] “Is it?” and “Is it not?” is [called “the wisdom obtained through meditation.”]~~

Having first clarified doubts through listening and ~~thinking~~, when the practice of meditation is done, [you should understand it as follows]:

**Although the five external sensual stimulants are non-existent, they appear to the deluded mind, like dreams;**

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<sup>150</sup> *sam-pay shey-rab* / *bsam.pa'i ses.rab*

<sup>151</sup> *gom-pay shey-rab* / *sgom.pa'i ses.rab*

<sup>152</sup> *nay-lug dön-gyi tog-pa* / *gnas.lugs don.gyi rtogs.pa*

**When remote and circumstantial interdependent causes<sup>153</sup> come together, [phenomenal] appearances suddenly manifest, like a magic [show];**

Although non-existent, they appear as if they exist, like an optical illusion;

Although there is no truth in their existence, they appear, like a mirage;

Although they do not exist anywhere, neither outside nor inside, they appear, like an echo;

Since they exist neither as containers nor as contents, they are like the Gandharvas' city,<sup>154</sup>

**Although apparent, they have no [substantial] entity, like the appearance of a reflection;**

Although non-existent appearances, they can appear in any form, like a city wrought by miracles.

When the non-substantial, empty forms [of the phenomenal world] are observed with [the help of] these eight analogies of illusion, visible external objects will be understood as essentially false. Similarly, when the characteristics of the mind, the observer, are introspected, even though objective appearances may not cease, **conceptual attachment** to the objects will disappear. To be in the [non-conceptual] state of the Dharmadhatu, clear and empty like the sky, is Transcendent Wisdom, *Shey-rab-kyi P'a-röl-tu Ch'in-pa*.

Thus, by dividing each of these six pāramitās into three, there are eighteen pāramitās. If material charity is divided into three, there are twenty pāramitās. The addition of the following four makes twenty-four:

### 1. Transcendent Methods<sup>155</sup>

<sup>153</sup> *gyu-kyen* / *rgyu.rkyen* / *Gyu* refers to the remote or original cause, *kyen* to the circumstantial causes that activate the original cause.

<sup>154</sup> Gandharvas (*dri-za* / *dri.za*) are said to be sensual spirits who live on aromas, produce sweet music, and trick people by creating a phantom city. The Gandharvas' city is commonly used as an analogy for hallucinatory visions.

<sup>155</sup> *t'ab-kyi p'a-röl-tu ch'in-pa* / *thabs.kyi pha.rol.tu phyin.pa*

2. Transcendent Fortitude<sup>156</sup>
3. Transcendent Prayers<sup>157</sup>
4. Transcendent Primordial Consciousness<sup>158</sup>

The pāramitās may also be further elaborated by dividing each [of the six basic ones] into six, which yields thirty-six pāramitās. Take, for example, transcendent charity<sup>156</sup> out of which take, say, the charity<sup>157</sup> of the Dharma:

- [1] The three factors that constitute the charity<sup>156</sup> of the Dharma are: the Guru who teaches, the Dharma that is taught, and the student to whom it is taught. When the Dharma is delivered through the coming together of these three factors, it becomes transcendent charity<sup>157</sup>.
- [2] While thus teaching, to expect no reward, respect, and so on, to surrender<sup>158</sup> one's feeling of superiority, to teach the Dharma unpolluted with the delusion of criticizing others unduly, and so forth is transcendent morality<sup>159</sup>.
- [3] To repeat the meaning of a single word again and again while teaching the Dharma, disregarding all difficulties and tiredness, is transcendent forbearance<sup>160</sup>.
- [4] To teach the Dharma punctually, not submitting to laziness and delay, is transcendent perseverance<sup>161</sup>.
- [5] To concentrate on the meaning of the words that are being taught, not allowing the mind to wander elsewhere, <395> and to avoid errors, additions, and omissions while teaching the Dharma is transcendent mental concentration<sup>162</sup>.
- [6] To be governed, while thus teaching, by the *k'or-sum nam-par mi-tog-pa*<sup>159</sup> is Transcendent Wisdom.

<sup>156</sup> *tob-kyi p'a-röl-tu ch'in-pa* / *stob.kyi pha.rol.tu phyin.pa*

<sup>157</sup> *mön-lam-kyi p'a-röl-tu ch'in-pa* / *smon.lam.kyi pha.rol.tu phyin.pa*

<sup>158</sup> *ye-shey-kyi p'a-röl-tu ch'in-pa* / *ye.ses.kyi pha.rol.tu phyin.pa*

<sup>159</sup> *'khor.gsum rnam.par mi.rtog.pa* / the wisdom of understanding that the three apparent constituents—in this case, the teacher, the teaching, and the student—are essentially empty

Thus, all six pāramitās are included in transcendent charity.

Again, take, for example, the material charity of food and drink given to a beggar:

- [1] For that, the giver, gift, and receiver have to be present to perform the act of charity.
- [2] Not to give what is bad, defective, and so on, but to give food and drink set aside for one's own consumption, is morality.
- [3] Not to lose one's temper if one is asked for them again and again is forbearance.
- [4] Not to think that it is troublesome and fatiguing to offer them promptly is perseverance.
- [5] Not to be engaged in anything other than that particular action is mental concentration.
- [6] To know the *k'or-sum*<sup>160</sup> to be void of true existence is Transcendent Wisdom.

Thus, all six pāramitās are included [in transcendent material charity]. Morality and the rest should be treated in the same way.

Again, if all the pāramitās are summarized, [it is] as Jetsün Mi-la has said:

**Beyond giving up self-attachment,  
There isn't anything called charity anywhere.**

**Beyond giving up deceitfulness,  
There isn't anything called morality anywhere.**

**Beyond giving up the fear of the essential meanings,  
There isn't anything called forbearance anywhere.**

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<sup>160</sup> 'khor.gsum / the three principal constituents of phenomenal appearances / It is important to note that there are two types of *k'or-sum*: conceptual (*k'or-sum nam-par tog-pa* / 'khor.gsum rnam.par rtog.pa) and non-conceptual (*k'or-sum nam-par mi-tog-pa* / 'khor.gsum rnam.par mi.rtog.pa). The former refers to the relative truth and the latter to the absolute truth.

~~Beyond being in constant contemplation,~~  
There isn't anything <396> called ~~perseverance~~  
anywhere.

~~Beyond the state [when the mind] rests [in itself],~~  
There isn't anything called ~~concentration~~ anywhere.

~~Beyond knowing the nature [of the Ultimate Truth],~~  
There isn't anything called Transcendent Wisdom  
anywhere.

~~Beyond doing everything that is Dharma,~~  
There isn't anything called Transcendent ~~Method~~  
anywhere.

~~Beyond destroying the four Māras,~~  
There isn't anything called Transcendent ~~Fortitude~~  
anywhere.

~~Beyond attaining the dual purpose,~~<sup>161</sup>  
There isn't anything called Transcendent ~~Prayer~~  
anywhere.

~~Beyond recognizing the defects of delusion,~~  
There isn't anything called Primordial ~~Consciousness~~  
anywhere.

When three of Atīśa's [disciples], K'u, Ngog, and Drom, asked him, "What are the best of all the Dharmas that deal with the path?" he said:

**The best among the learned is the one who knows the meaning of the non-existence of the "I."**<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> *dön-nyi* / don.gñis / the attainment of the Dharmakāya for one's own benefit and the attainment of the Rūpakāya for the benefit of others / The Rūpakāya consists of the Sambhogakāya and the Nirmāṇakāya. One appears in the form of the Sambhogakāya in the transcendental realm to help liberated beings attain the Dharmakāya, and one appears in the form of the Nirmāṇakāya in the worldly realm to help the sentient beings realize Buddhahood.

<sup>162</sup> *dag-me* / bdag.med



The best **monk** is the one who disciplines the mind.  
 The best virtue is to be benevolent.  
 The best secret instruction is to watch one's own mind.  
 The best antidote is to know that things by nature have no entity.  
 The best rule of conduct is to disagree with worldly behavior.  
 The best **siddhiphala** is to see one's miseries getting lesser and lesser.  
 The best sign of spiritual accomplishment is to see one's desire getting lesser and lesser.  
 The best charity is to have no attachment.  
 The best morality is to see the mind at peace.  
 The best forbearance is to exercise humility.  
 The best perseverance <397> is to give up doing.  
 The best concentration is not to shape the mind.  
 The best Transcendent Wisdom is to have no attachment to anything as something.

Also, **Rig-dzin Jig-me Ling-pa** said:

Contentment contains transcendent charity; the essence of that is willingness to give.  
 If the Three Jewels are not annoyed [by your behavior], morality exists.  
 If the power of remembrance<sup>163</sup> has not faded, it is the best of forbearance.  
 As a friend to all [the pāramitās], perseverance is required.  
 To meditate on devas in place of one's weakness for phenomenal appearances<sup>164</sup> is concentration.  
 The self-dissolution of attachment is Transcendent Wisdom,  
 For that has no thought or thinker.

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<sup>163</sup> *dren-rig* / *dran.rig*

<sup>164</sup> *nang-zhen* / *snañ.žen* (the abbreviated form of *nang-wa* / *snañ-ḅa*, which means appearances, and *zhen-pa* / *žen-pa*, which means to have a weakness for)

It is not ordinary, for it is devoid of [~~post-meditative~~  
~~confirming concepts.~~  
 It is the superior peace that transcends misery.  
 It is not to be exposed to all.<sup>165</sup>  
 Hold it fast in your mind.

If all the [teachings] on the great path of the Bodhisattvas, such as the six pāramitās and so on, are summarized, they boil down to Śūnyatā with compassion as its core.<sup>166</sup>

From the Doha of the valorous Saraha:

[One who] meditates on Śūnyatā severed from  
 compassion  
 Will not find the supreme path.  
 Even the meditation exclusively done on compassion  
 Makes one remain in saṃsāra—is there any liberation?  
 Whoever has them both  
 Stays neither in saṃsāra <398> nor in nirvāṇa.

Therefore, to remain neither in saṃsāra nor in nirvāṇa is the Non-Abiding Nirvāṇa,<sup>167</sup> the State of Perfect Buddhahood.<sup>168</sup>

Similarly, Lord Nāgārjuna said:

**The Śūnyatā that has compassion as its core  
 Is found only in those who seek Bodhi.**

Drom-tön-pa asked Atiśa, “What is the ultimate end of all Dharmas?”

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<sup>165</sup> This is because its indiscreet exposure to immature seekers will damage the effectiveness of the Dharma and the efforts of the teacher and listener.

<sup>166</sup> *tong-nyi nying-jey nying-po-chen / stoñ.ñid sñiñ.rje'i sñiñ.po.can /* the non-conceptual unification (*zung-jug / zuñ.'jug*) of Emptiness and Compassion—Ultimate Bodhicitta, according to the Pāramitāyāna

<sup>167</sup> *mi-nay-pay nyang-day / mi.gnas.pa'i myañ.'das*

<sup>168</sup> *dzog-pay sang-gyay-kyi go-p'ang / rdzogs.pa'i sañs.rgyas.kyi go.'phan*

Atiśa said:

The ultimate end of all Dharmas is the *Śūnyatā* that has compassion as its core. For example, there is a medicine in this world called *pa-wo chig-t'ub*<sup>169</sup> that is a panacea for all ailments. Just like *pa-wo chig-t'ub*, if the meaning of the Ultimate Emptiness<sup>170</sup> is understood, it will work as an antidote to all ~~miseri~~<sub>es</sub>.

Drom-tön-pa asked again, “Then why is it that those who claim to have realized *Śūnyatā* have not parted with ~~attach-ment and hatred?~~”

Lord Atiśa said:

All such claims are empty speeches. If the real meaning of *Śūnyatā* is understood, one's body, speech, and mind will become [subdued], like cotton wool pressed under one's heel or like a lump of butter tossed into a broth of barley meal. Guru Āryadeva said, “Even having a mere doubt as to whether the absolute nature of all dharmas [i.e., things] is empty or not will render the whole of saṃsāra tattered and torn.” Thus, if the meaning of *Śūnyatā* <399> is unmistakably understood, it is like the medicine *pa-wo chig-t'ub*. It contains all the Dharmas of the path.

Again, Drom-tön-pa asked, “How does the realization of *Śūnyatā* contain all the Dharmas of the path?”

Atiśa replied:

All the Dharmas of the path are included in the six pāramitās. When the meaning of *Śūnyatā* is unmistakably understood, one has no heartfelt desire, craving, or attachment for any external or internal thing. Hence, Transcendent Charity continues without ~~break~~<sub>s</sub>.

<sup>169</sup> dpa'.ḥo chig.thub / another name for *kar-po chig-t'ub*

<sup>170</sup> ch'ö-nyi tong-pa nyi-kyi-dön / chos.nid ston.pa nid.kyi.don

Since demerit cannot defile a mind that has no craving or attachment, Transcendent **Morality** continues without break.

Since such [a mind] has no **wrath** caused by attachment to “I” and “my,” Transcendent **Forbearance** continues without break.

Since there is exceptional joy in understanding the meaning [of **Śūnyatā**], Transcendent **Perseverance** continues without break.

Since such [a mind] is devoid of distracting attachment to things as substantial, Transcendent **Concentration** continues without break.

Since there exist no thoughts of conceiving anything in terms of the **k’or-sum**, Transcendent **Wisdom** continues without break.

He was asked again, “If that is so, of all understandings, is it enough to realize Buddhahood by meditating solely on the doctrinal view of **Śūnyatā**?”

Atiśa **said**:

Among everything that is seen, heard, and so on, there is nothing that does not stem <400> from [one’s] mind.

**The [non-conceptual] insight that transcends the dualistic concepts of the cognizer<sup>171</sup> and the emptiness [of the mind]<sup>172</sup> is the doctrinal view<sup>173</sup> of **Śūnyatā**.**

To remember to be in that undistractedly is the meditation.<sup>174</sup>

<sup>171</sup> *rig-pa* / rig.pa

<sup>172</sup> *tong-pa* / stoñ.pa

<sup>173</sup> *ta-wa* / lta.ḅa

<sup>174</sup> *gom-pa* / sgom.pa

To accumulate the **illusory** dual merit while in that **state** is the conduct.<sup>175</sup>

If one gains command over one's practice in this way [in the waking state], one will also be able to do so in the dream state.

If [one can practice thus] while dreaming, one will also be able to do so at the time of death.

If [one can] do this at the time of death, one will also be able to do so while in the *bar-do* state.

If one can practice in the *bar-do* state, it is certain that one will achieve the **Unique Accomplishment**.<sup>176</sup>

Hence, the eighty-four thousand doors of Dharma shown by the Buddha are the means of giving birth, in one's mind, to the Bodhicitta that has *Śūnyatā* with compassion as its core. If such Dharmas are severed from this precious Bodhicitta, however seemingly profound their views and meditation may be, they will be of no use at all in the attainment of Buddhahood.

The **creative** and **non-creative** meditation and so on of the esoteric Tantric practices will work as causes for attaining Buddhahood in this life if they are governed by Bodhicitta. But if they are severed from Bodhicitta, these practices will not be any different from the paths of **heretics**. For heretics, too, have many practices, including the visualization of deities, the incantation of mantra, yogic exercises using the **nerves** and **breath**, the **earning** of good karma, and the avoidance of bad karma. But because of the absence of the teachings on taking refuge and developing Bodhicitta, <401> they cannot escape from the regions of saṃsāra.

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<sup>175</sup> *chö-pa / spyod.pa*

<sup>176</sup> *ch'og-gi ngö-drub / mchog.gi dños.grub / i.e., Buddhahood*

Ge-shey K'a-rag Gom-ch'ung said:

**Even if all the vows, beginning with the taking of refuge up to those of the Tantras, are taken, if one's mind has not turned away from the worldly dharmas, it will be of no help.**

**Even if one always preaches the Dharma to others, if one's own arrogance is not annihilated, it will be of no help.**

**Even if one makes progress, if one fails to follow the Dharma of taking refuge, it will be of no help.**

**Even if one diligently follows the Dharma day and night, if one's mind is not governed by Bodhicitta, it will be of no help.**

If, without laying a sound foundation through taking refuge and developing Bodhicitta, one attempts to learn, think, and meditate on the Dharma extensively, it will be, for example, like constructing a nine-story building on the ice during winter and plastering and painting it. Towards the end, it will be of no use at all. Therefore, instead of regarding the taking of refuge and the development of Bodhicitta as inferior Dharmas, or neglecting them as Dharmas meant [only] for beginners, one must follow them in such a way that the **three perfect principles of** all the paths are accomplished within them. It is very important for every practitioner, good or bad, high or low, to lay special emphasis on perfecting them.

In particular, Lamas and monks <402> who accept offerings from those having faith, and who accept fees for helping deceased persons, require unhypocritical Bodhicitta in their hearts. If one's heart is severed from Bodhicitta, whatever ritual performances, purification of defilements, and so on are done will help neither the deceased nor the living. **Since such seemingly benevolent help for others is intrinsically mixed with personal interest, the performers themselves will accrue ineradicable defilements** for the remunerations they

have received and will deserve nothing but to fall into hell in the next life.

Suppose there were an extraordinary person, one who could perform miracles such as flying in the air like a bird, entering the earth like a rat, walking through rocks and mountains unobstructed, predicting future events without difficulty, leaving impressions of his palms and feet in stone,<sup>177</sup> and other wonderful feats. No matter how [wonderful] these [feats] might be, if there was no Bodhicitta in his mind, he ~~would~~ be either a heretic or one possessed by a very malicious spirit. Because of ignorance, people might initially show great devotion to such a Lama and make offerings and so forth, but [ultimately] this would end in the downfall of both parties.

On the other hand, even if a Lama has no virtue other than pure Bodhicitta, **getting in touch** with him will be meaningful. However, no one knows the whereabouts of the Bodhisattvas. <403> [The Buddha] said that there are many skillful Bodhisattvas among butchers and harlots as well. Hence, it is rather difficult to know whether Bodhicitta is present or not in others' hearts.

Lord Buddha said:

**Only I and those like me, not common human beings, can evaluate another human being's mind.**

Therefore, whoever has helped one to develop Bodhicitta in one's heart, whether deva, Guru, or ~~spiritual guide~~, should be regarded as a real Buddha.

Whatever seemingly indicative signs of progress one senses on the spiritual path, such as the feeling that one has understood the meaning of the Ultimate Truth, acquired fore-knowing power, attained deep meditation, had visions of the

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<sup>177</sup> This refers to the miraculous power a meditator gains through spiritual practice. Such a person can leave deep impressions of his or her hands and feet in hard stone, as if in wet clay. This happens unintentionally when one is in a mystic ecstasy. It is not done for the sake of showing one's power. Followers worship such impressions as a source of inspiration and blessings.

~~tutelary deities~~, and so forth, should definitely be regarded as virtues if, on account of them, the progressive growth of unchanging loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta—is noticed. However, if they obscure [the progressive growth of] loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta—these seeming indications of progress on the path are undoubtedly to be regarded as obstructions of Māra or as signs of having followed a mistaken path.

Particularly, when the unshaped insight of the Ultimate [Nature of ~~Sūnyatā~~] is born in one, one cannot help but develop an extraordinary devotion and veneration for those at a higher level, and loving-kindness, compassion, and so on <404> for those at a lower level.

Dag-po Rin-po-ch'e asked Je-tsün Mi-la, "When is the [appropriate] time to take care of followers?"

Je-tsün Mi-la replied:

**After a while, the essence of a Mind unlike the present one, free from all doubts, will be seen with unprecedented vividness. At that time, even I, an old man, will be perceived by you as a real Buddha in an extraordinary way. Then unhypocritical loving-kindness and compassion will definitely grow for all sentient beings. That is the time to take care of followers.**

Therefore, with loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta—as the basis, the Dharma should be practiced without ~~disturbing the order~~ of learning, ~~thinking~~, and meditating. For, to begin with, if one does not learn how to clarify [doubts] through learning, one cannot know how to practice [the Dharma].

As the saying goes:

**Meditation without learning  
Is like a man without hands climbing a rock.**

Clarifying doubts by learning does not mean that one is required to learn all the elaborate and innumerable [teachings that are available]. It would be impossible to learn them all



during one short life in this deteriorated period. But one should thoroughly and unmistakably learn the beginning, middle, and end of all the technical methods of the Dharma that one is going to practice. All doubts regarding [these methods] should be clarified by having a thorough understanding.

In the past, when Jo-wo Atīśa was sojourning at Nye-t'ang,<sup>178</sup> <405> three monks, namely, Zhang Na-ch'ung Tön-pa, K'yung Tön-pa, and L'ang Tsang Tön-pa, asked him about the doctrine of logic.<sup>179</sup>

Atīśa replied:

**Heretics and Buddhists have many doctrines. All of these are rosaries of concepts. The number of concepts cannot be counted, and they are not needed. Since one's lifetime is short, it is time to acquire the essential meaning.**

Zhang Na-ch'ung Tön-pa asked, "How does one acquire the essential meaning?"

Atīśa said:

**Practice having loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta—for all living beings covered by the sky. Make an effort to earn the dual merit for their sake. The merit thus obtained should be dedicated to all sentient beings as a whole for their attainment of Buddhahood. Know all these [i.e., the subject, object, and action] by nature to be empty and to have the character of dreams or magic shows.**

Thus, if one does not know how to understand the essential key to meditation, various kinds of knowledge, learning, and understanding will not help one at all.

When, in the past, Atīśa went to Tibet, the great translator Lo-ch'en Rin-ch'en Zang-po received him. When Atīśa sys-

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<sup>178</sup> sñe.thañ / a village about five miles west of Lhasa

<sup>179</sup> ts'e-ma / tshad.ma

tematically mentioned the names of many different Dharmas and inquired of the translator whether he knew them or not, there didn't seem to be any that the translator did not know. <406> This pleased Atīśa, who said, "It is really amazing. When a learned one like you is present in Tibet, there is no necessity for me to come here."

Atīśa again asked, "How do you practice all of them as basically one?"

The translator replied, "They are practiced as prescribed in each individual text."

Atīśa was displeased and said, "A rotten translator! It is necessary for me to come to Tibet."

The translator asked, "Then how do you practice?"

Atīśa replied, "The gist of all the Dharmas should be consolidated into one and then put into practice."

Hence, it will not do if one does not know how to base the technique of meditation on the secret instructions of the Guru. But if, on knowing this [technique], one does not practice it, it will not be of any help.

As Je-tsün Mi-la said:

**A hungry man must not only have a piece of bread, he must also eat it.**

Merely having knowledge of the Dharma will not help; it must be put into practice. The purpose of practicing the Dharma in this manner is to see to it that it works as an antidote to the ~~miseries<sup>180</sup> caused by the attachment to the ego<sup>181</sup>~~

Je-tsün Mi-la said:

**Whether one has eaten the food or not can be known by the color of one's cheeks.**

As he said, whether one knows the Dharma or not, and whether one has put it into practice or not, can be understood

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<sup>180</sup> *nyön-mong* / ñon.moñs

<sup>181</sup> *dag-zin* / bdag.'zin

by observing whether it is acting as an antidote to one's miseriaes.

Similarly, Pu-to-wa asked Ge-shey Tön-pa, “What is the plumb line <407> to determine what is Dharma and what is not Dharma?”

Tön-pa replied:

If it works as an antidote to miseriaes, it is Dharma.  
If it does not, it is not Dharma.

If it does not agree with all the **worldly** people, it is Dharma.

If it does, it is not Dharma.

If it agrees with the traditional teachings of the Buddha, it is Dharma.

If it does not, it is not Dharma.

If it leaves a noble impression, it is Dharma.

If it leaves an ignoble one, it is not Dharma.

Again, a Guru named Che-gom said:

To believe in the **cause and effect** of karma  
Is the perfect view for practitioners who have the lowest faculty for understanding.

To understand all external and internal dharmas as the four *Zung-jugs*<sup>182</sup>—of Appearance and Emptiness, Cognizance and Emptiness,<sup>183</sup> and so forth—  
Is the perfect view for practitioners who have a mediocre faculty for understanding.

To recognize no difference between the seer, seeing, and the seen  
Is the perfect view for practitioners who have the highest faculty for understanding.

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<sup>182</sup> *zung-jug zhi* / zuñ.'jug bži / the four states of non-conceptual unification

<sup>183</sup> *nang-tong* / snañ.stoñ // *rig-tong* / rig.stoñ

**To have one-pointed deep meditation  
Is the best meditation for practitioners who have the  
lowest faculty for understanding.**

**To be in the deep meditation of the four *Zung-jugs*  
Is the best meditation for practitioners who have a  
mediocre faculty for understanding.**

**To know the non-existence of the *k'or-sum*<sup>184</sup> and to  
remain non-conceptual  
Is the perfect meditation for practitioners who have the  
highest faculty for understanding.**

**To guard the law of karma like the pupils of one's eyes  
Is the perfect conduct for practitioners who have the  
lowest faculty for understanding.**

**To treat all phenomenal appearances as dreams and  
magic shows <408 >  
Is the perfect conduct for practitioners who have a  
mediocre faculty for understanding.**

**Not to be engaged in anything  
Is the perfect conduct for practitioners who have the  
highest faculty for understanding.**

**To see the attachment to one's ego, miseria, concepts,  
and so on growing smaller and smaller  
Is the warmth [i.e., indication] of the development of  
perfection for all three types of practitioners—having  
low, mediocre, and high faculties for understanding.**

Nyam-me Dag-po [Rin-po-ch'e], in his work entitled *Lam-ch'og Rin-po-ch'e*, has said something similar. Hence, when you are listening to the Dharma, you should know how to sum up its essential techniques.

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<sup>184</sup> in this case, the meditator, that meditated upon, and the experience of meditation

The Great Kün-k'yen [Long-ch'en-pa] said:

**Knowable things are [as numerous] as the planets and stars in the sky;  
There is no end to the subjects to be studied.  
Yet, at this time, it is best to grasp the meaning of the essence of the Dharmakāya,  
The unchanging place of safety.**

When you are contemplating on the Dharma, you should have a **firm conviction in your understanding**. Dam-pa of India said:

**While searching for the secret teaching of the Guru, one should be like a mother hawk searching for food.  
While listening to the Dharma, one should be like a wild animal listening to a sound.  
While meditating, one should be like a dumb man enjoying a taste.  
While contemplating on the Dharma, one should [concentrate] like a Northerner<sup>185</sup> shearing a sheep.  
At the time of fruition, one should be like the sun and moon that are free from clouds.**

Hence, the practice of Dharma requires that the three aspects of listening, thinking, and meditating not be separated from one another.

Nyam-me Dag-po Rin-po-ch'e said:

**The alternating manner of listening, thinking, and meditating <409> while practicing the Dharma is a flawless technique.**

Thus, as a result of listening to, thinking about, and meditating on the Dharma, one's loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta—should progressively grow. One's attachment to the ego and one's miseries should progressively diminish.

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<sup>185</sup> *chang-pa* / *byañ.pa* / a herdsman of northern Tibet

Therefore, the instruction on how to generate Bodhicitta is the **heart essence** of all the Dharmas, the **pith** of all the paths. If it is available, it alone will suffice; if it is not available, it is [such a] Dharma that its absence will certainly cause a breach in the means [of achieving Buddhahood]. Hence, instead of setting [the Bodhicitta instruction] aside presuming one has “heard it” or “knows it,” it is imperative to put it into **practice** from the core of one’s heart.

**Although I boast of generating Bodhicitta, it has not  
grown.**

**Although I am learning the path of the six pāramitās,  
I pursue it with self-interest.**

**May I and beings like me, who are small-minded,  
Be blessed so that we work for the growth of Bodhicitta.**

This is the instruction on the root of all the paths, the Mahāyāna, the development of the mind for the best Bodhi.

## CHAPTER THREE

# The Visualization and Mantra of Guru Vajrasattva

Although undefiled by the dual obscuration, he showed  
the method of purification;  
Although certain of having accomplished the journey of  
the supreme path, he acted as if he were learning to  
follow it;  
Although he had gone beyond the boundaries of  
saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa, he appeared in saṃsāra.  
At the feet of that unparalleled Guru, I pay **homage.**

The third subject, the instruction on the visualization and mantra of Guru Vajrasattva,<sup>1</sup> [has two parts]: <410> the manner of listening to the Dharma and so on, which is the same [as in Part One, Chapter One],<sup>2</sup> and the particular Dharma to be explained, [which is as follows].

The principal obstructions to the growth of the extraordinary experiences and insights<sup>3</sup> of the **esoteric** path are the obscurations of **sin** and ~~[one's karmic] habits~~. In order for the image of insight to be reflected in the “mirror” of the *kün-zhi*,<sup>4</sup> it is important to remove the obscurations, just as for a

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<sup>1</sup> *la-ma do-je sem-pay gom-day* / bla.ma rdo.rje sems.dpa'i bsgom.bzlas / “Mantra” is the plural form of “mantram,” and here refers to both the long and short Vajrasattva mantra.

<sup>2</sup> These instructions are to be repeated at the beginning of every chapter.

<sup>3</sup> *nyam-tog* / ñams.rtogs

<sup>4</sup> *kun.gzi* / the fundamental, or all-foundation, mind

reflection to appear in a mirror, it is important that it be clean. To this end, from among the innumerable methods that Lord Buddha showed for cleansing obscurations, the visualization [of the form] and the recitation [of the mantra] of Guru Vajrasattva is the best.

In general, there is no sinful act that cannot be absolved by doing penance.<sup>5</sup> The Noble Ones of the past said:

**Although, in general, sin has no virtue, it can be atoned for through penance; that is the “virtue of sin.”**

Thus, breaking the outer vows of self liberation;<sup>6</sup> transgressing the inner instructions on Bodhicitta;<sup>7</sup> weakening the secret Tantric bond of trust; and so forth—whatever grave, sinful acts one has committed—there are none that cannot be absolved through penance. Even the Brahmin boy Mi-dung-wa, also known as Sor-mö Tr’eng-wa-chen, who murdered 9,999 men, absolved his sins through penance and attained Arhathood during the same lifetime. Although King Ma-kyey-dra killed his father, <411> he later absolved his sin through penance and attained Nirvāṇa after just a moment’s suffering in hell. Many such stories are related by the Buddha in the Sūtra Piṭaka.

The protector Nāgārjuna also said:

**Whoever was unrestrained in the past  
But later becomes well restrained,  
Becomes as beautiful as the moon free from clouds,  
Like Ga-wo, Sor-tr’eng, T’ong-den, and De-je.<sup>8</sup>**

Absolution is possible if penance is done very carefully from the core of one’s heart by utilizing all four antidotal

<sup>5</sup> *shag-pa* / *bśags.pa* / anything done to atone for wrongdoing

<sup>6</sup> *ch’i so-thar-gyi dom-pa* / *phyi so.thar.gyi sdom.pa* / S. pratimokṣa / i.e., the Hinayanic vows

<sup>7</sup> *nang jang-ch’ub sems-kyi lab-ja* / *nañ byañ.chub sems.kyi slab.byā*

<sup>8</sup> the names of individuals found in the stories related by the Buddha in the Sūtra Piṭaka



powers.<sup>9</sup> However, if one merely recites the words [mechanically], while letting one's lips, eyes, and mind be distracted by other thoughts, or if one thinks, "Even if I commit sins hereafter, it will not harm me, so long as I do penance later on,"—if one does penance with these kinds of assumptions, one's sins will not be absolved.

Je-tsun Mi-la said:

**If you wonder whether penance can dissolve sin, it can,  
if you remember virtuous deeds.**

Therefore, while doing any penance, it is by all means very important that the four antidotal powers be present.

## 1 [THE FOUR ANTIDOTAL POWERS]

These are:

1. The Power of Objects [Representing the Buddha's Body, Speech, and Mind];
2. The Power Attained through Repenting Past Misdeeds;
3. The Power of Vows;
4. The Power of <412> the Practice Done as an Antidote.

### 1.1 THE POWER OF OBJECTS [REPRESENTING THE BUDDHA'S BODY, SPEECH, AND MIND] <sup>10</sup>

At this point, to take Vajrasattva as a refuge and to have theoretical and practical Bodhicitta<sup>11</sup> [in one's mind constitute] the power of objects [representing the Buddha's body, speech, and mind]. At other times as well, the object of power is the one before whom penance is done for the absolution of sin. For example, when monks do penance by reciting the P'ung-po Sum-pa [Sūtra], the thirty-five Buddhas of confession before whom they offer penance become the

<sup>9</sup> *nyen-po tob-zhi* / *gñen.po stobs.bži*

<sup>10</sup> *ten-gyi-tob* / *rten.gyi.stobs*

<sup>11</sup> *mön-jug-gi jang-sem* / *smon.'jug.gi byañ.sems*

objects of power; similarly, when one does penance before spiritual teachers and objects representing the Buddha's body, speech, and mind, these become the objects of power.

In the same way, the development of theoretical and practical Bodhicitta is indispensable for any kind of penance done for the absolution of sin. It is said that, without the development of Bodhicitta, even though the penance one does by using the four antidotal powers will make the effect of the sin a little lighter, the sin will not be dissolved at the root.

It is also said that if genuine Bodhicitta is developed in one's mind, all the sinful deeds one committed in the past, however many there are, will be naturally cleansed.

The Bodhicaryāvatāra states:

**Even if extremely intolerable sin is committed,  
By depending on [Bodhicitta], one attains instant  
deliverance,  
Like overcoming great danger with a hero's help.  
Why shouldn't cautious ones depend on such a means?  
For, like the fire at the end of time, it definitely burns  
down  
Great sins in a single moment. <413 >**

## 1.2 THE POWER ATTAINED THROUGH REPENTING PAST MISDEEDS<sup>12</sup>

This refers to repenting all the sins and unwholesome deeds one has committed in the past. However, unless one recognizes sin as sin and does penance by confessing one's sins with a strong sense of regret and without concealing them, the sins will not be dissolved.

As stated in the P'ung-po Sum-pa [Sūtra]:

**~~I committed it; I ask for pardon; I do not conceal it;  
I do not ignore it.~~**

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<sup>12</sup> nyey-jay sūn jin-pay tob / ñes.byas sun 'byin.pa'i stobs

Similarly, **K'ay-drup Kar-ma Chag-me** said:

Since, without ~~repentance,~~ ~~penance~~ cannot absolve  
~~[sin],~~  
 [Treat] ~~sins~~ done in the past like swallowed poison.  
 With a sense of shame, fear, and great regret, do  
~~penance,~~

### 1.3 THE POWER OF VOWS<sup>13</sup>

This refers to remembering the ~~sinful deeds~~ one has done in the past and to thinking, “From today onward, even at the cost of my life, I will not commit such ~~sinful deeds~~ again.”

The P'ung-po Sum-pa [Sūtra] states:

~~In the future also, it will be stopped and controlled,~~

Similarly, in the **De-mön**,<sup>14</sup> it is mentioned:

Since ~~absolution~~ cannot be obtained without intending to refrain from [committing ~~sin~~] in the future,  
 The vow, “Hence onward, even at the cost of [my] life, ~~demeritorious actions~~  
~~I will now not commit,~~” should be held in [one's] mind.

### 1.4 THE POWER OF THE PRACTICE DONE AS AN ANTIDOTE<sup>15</sup>

This refers to performing, as an antidote for ~~sinful deeds~~ done in the past, as many ~~meritorious~~ deeds as possible—in particular, <414> to doing prostrations to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas; ~~appreciating~~ the merit earned by others; dedicating the accumulated merit towards the attainment of

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<sup>13</sup> *dom-pay tob* / *sdom.pa'i stobs* / This is developed by making vows and then maintaining them.


<sup>14</sup> *bde.smon* (the abbreviated form of *de-ch'en mön-lam* / *bde.chen smon.lam*) / Prayers for (Taking Rebirth in the Paradise of) Great Bliss

<sup>15</sup> *nyen-po kün-tu chö-pay tob* / *gñen.po kun.tu spyod.pa'i stobs*

Bodhi; developing theoretical and practical Bodhicitta; continuing to be in the essence of the unshaped nature of the Mind;<sup>16</sup> and so forth.

Once in the past, a meditator-disciple of Nyam-me Dag-po Rin-po-ch'e felt regret on remembering how he had used the money he had obtained by selling a holy text. He reported it to Nyam-me Dag-po Rin-po-ch'e, who advised him to write a replacement for the text. As the disciple attempted to do so, he was confronted with many distractions. Vexed, he went to tell Dag-po Rin-po-ch'e of his problems. The disciple inquired whether anything could be better, even for dissolving sin, than to continue in the essence of the Ultimate Mind. Pleased, Dag-po Rin-po-ch'e said, "In fact, that is the very meaning. Even if your past sins are as great as Mt. Sumeru, they will dissolve the very moment you see the essence [of the Ultimate Mind]."

Thus, to cleanse sin, nothing is more effective than the two [practices] of contemplating on Bodhicitta and maintaining the continuity of the unshaped nature of the Mind. Here also, while remaining unseparated from these, and by visualizing Vajrasattva, one should bring down the nectar to dissolve one's sins, count the hundred-syllable mantram, and so on. In this way, while one remembers the four antidotal powers, <415> the actual visualization and recitation of the mantra of Vajrasattva are done as follows.

Be seated, assuming yourself to be an ordinary person, and imagine in the sky, at an arrow's length above your head, a thousand-petalled, white lotus blossom. Visualize a full moon disk on [the blossom]. "Full" refers not to its size, [but to its shape]: it is full on all sides and perfectly circular, like the moon seen on the fifteenth day of the month.<sup>17</sup> On it, imagine a sparking, brilliant, white syllable HŪM (  ).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *nay-lug ma-chö-pay ngo-wo kyong-wa / gnas.lugs ma.bcos.pa'i ño.ḅo skyoñ.ba*

<sup>17</sup> In the Tibetan calendar, the fifteenth day of the month usually corresponds to the full moon.

<sup>18</sup> For a visual aid, see Appendix B, Figure 1.

According to the methods prescribed in other teachings, the syllable **HŪM** radiates rays in all directions and then withdraws them, but this is not done in our method. [Rather], in an instant, the **HŪM** syllable transforms into your unparalleled, valorous Root-Guru, the holder of the treasure of **Meru**. He is essentially the sum total of all the Buddhas of the three times. In appearance, he is the Sambhogakāya Buddha Vajrasattva,<sup>19</sup> white as a snow mountain illuminated by a million suns.

He has one face and two arms. His right hand holds, as if lifting it to his heart, **a five-pronged vajra**, symbolizing *Rig-tong*.<sup>20</sup> His left hand, posed towards his hip, **holds a bell**, symbolizing *Nang-tong*.<sup>21</sup> He sits with his legs folded in the vajra pose. <416> He wears the thirteen ornaments and clothes of the Sambhogakāya. These include five pieces of silk clothing and eight jeweled ornaments.

The five silk items are:

1. ~~a pair of ribbons;~~<sup>22</sup>
2. ~~an upper garment;~~
3. ~~a silk scarf;~~
4. a sash;
5. ~~a lower garment.~~

The eight jeweled ornaments are:

1. ~~a diadem;~~
2. right and left earrings, counted as one;
3. a necklace;
4. two armlets, counted as one;
5. ~~long and short jeweled beads, counted as one;~~
6. two bracelets, counted as one;

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<sup>19</sup> See Color Plate 2.

<sup>20</sup> *rig.stoñ* / the non-conceptual unification of **Cognizance** and Emptiness

<sup>21</sup> *snañ.stoñ* / the non-conceptual unification of **Appearance** and Emptiness

<sup>22</sup> These are attached to either end of the diadem and hang from behind the ears.

7. finger rings, counted as one;
8. two anklets, counted as one.

He non-dualistically embraces the white Nyem-ma,<sup>23</sup> his consort. [Their] forms are visible yet non-substantial, like the reflection of the moon in the water or like the clear reflection of an image in a mirror. Visualize them above your head, facing in the same direction as you. This [visualization] represents “The Power of Objects [Representing the Buddha’s Body, Speech, and Mind].”

The figures thus visualized should neither be flat, like those painted on scrolls or walls, nor of a material nature, like perishable, inanimate <417> icons made of earth and gold. As regards the [vividness of] their appearance, even the black and white lines of their eyes are distinct. As regards their [essential] emptiness, their bodies are not conditionally composed of [any matter, such as] flesh, blood, and entrails, even as large as the tip of a hair. They should be like rainbows in the sky or like a clean, transparent glass jar.

The protector Vajrasattva, essentially and non-dualistically the gracious Root-Guru, possessing the omniscient power of wisdom, sits with a feeling of great compassionate affection for you and all other sentient beings. In his presence, [think of] all the sins you have committed from beginningless time until now through your body, speech, and mind, [such as]: the ten demeritorious actions;<sup>24</sup> the five boundaryless sins;<sup>25</sup> the four heavy sins;<sup>26</sup> the eight sins contrary [to the Dharma];<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> sñems.ma dkar.mo

<sup>24</sup> *mi-ge-chu* / mi.dge.bcu / the ten demeritorious deeds, which comprise the three of the body, the four of speech, and the three of the mind / See *Kün-zang La-may Zhal-lung*, Part One, Chapter Four.

<sup>25</sup> *ts’am-me-nga-yi dig-pa* / mtshams.med.lha.yi sdig.pa / See Appendix A, Note 3.

<sup>26</sup> *chi-wa-zhi* / lci.ba.bzi / to take a seat above a learned person, to appropriate the wealth earned by a Tantric practitioner, to accept prostrations offered by a monk as a gesture of respect, and to use the rations of one who is doing a retreat

<sup>27</sup> *log-pa-gye* / log.pa.brgyad / to speak against meritorious actions, to praise demeritorious actions, to disrupt another’s earning of merit, to

the breaking of the outer Hinayāna vows, the inner Bodhi-sattva instructions, and the esoteric Tantric trusts of the *Rig-dzins*;<sup>28</sup> the taking of [improper] oaths for worldly purposes; the telling of lies; the lack of conscience and shame; and so on. By actually recollecting all the **sins** you have accumulated, with a strong sense of shame, fear, and regret that makes the hairs of your body stand on end and your skin creep, <418> think that you are confessing them and doing **penance** in the presence of Guru Vajrasattva.

Similarly, there certainly are **sins** accumulated since beginningless time that you cannot recollect. Think that you have no intention to conceal them and that you strongly want to confess all those mistakes and ask **pardon** for them. To think of [Vajrasattva's] compassion, which can remove and cleanse all sins and obscurations without leaving any trace, at this very moment, immediately, right here where [you] are, is "The Power Attained through Repenting Past Misdeeds."

Think that in the past, being influenced by ignorance and stupidity, you ~~committed these sins~~ through **demeritorious deeds**. Now, however, because of the kindness of the gracious Guru, you have come to understand loss and gain, and hence, from now onward, you will never commit such **sins again**, even at the cost of your life. Such determination is called "The Power of Vows."

While thinking of such purity, begin the prayer:

ĀḤ

*dag-nyi t'a-mal chi-wo-ru . . .*

Above the head of my ordinary body . . .

disturb a devotee's mind, to abandon the Guru, to abandon the deva, to abandon spiritual guides, and to break the rules of the maṇḍala

<sup>28</sup> *Rig-dzin* (S. Vidyādhara) is the name given to a member of the Vajrayāna Saṅgha, just as those who follow the Pāramitāyāna are called Bodhi-sattvas, and those who follow the Hinayāna are called Pratyekabuddhas and Śrāvakas. There are qualitative differences, however, with regard to the follower's attainment in each case, since the names may refer to beginners as well as to those who have attained the higher stages.

up to the line:

... *ma-lü jang-war dze-du-söl*<sup>29</sup>

... may all these be dissolved in their entirety.

Then, in the heart of the non-dualistically unified Vajrasattva and His consort,<sup>30</sup> on a moon-disk ~~half~~ the size of a mustard seed, imagine a white syllable HÜM<sub>1</sub> written as if with the tip of a hair. As you chant the hundred-syllable mantram “OM VAJRA SATTVA SAMAYA . . . ”<sup>31</sup> once, <419> imagine the hundred syllables standing [upright] like horns around the syllable HÜM<sub>2</sub> without touching each other.

As you [continue to] recite the hundred-syllable mantram as a prayer of invocation, from these syllables the Nectar of the Compassionate Primordial Consciousness<sup>32</sup> rapidly drips, like water dripping from icicles being heated by fire. [The nectar ] flows through their bodies, conforming to their shapes, and emerges from their point of unification. It then enters through your own head and the heads of all other sentient beings.

It expels all the diseases of the body in the form of putrefied blood and pus; the inflictions of evil spirits in the shapes of animals such as spiders, scorpions, frogs, fish, snakes, tadpoles, lice, and so on; and sins and obscurations in the form of a soot and charcoal solution, dust, smoke, clouds, and vapor. Just as a gush of water washes away particles of earth, the flow of nectar purges these defilements, unresisted, through the heels, the lower doors, and the pores of your skin. It flows in the form of a black stream to the bottom of a fissure in the earth beneath you and falls into the awaiting mouths, hands, and claws of the karmic Yama, the Devil of Death, and all his followers—the male and female avengers

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<sup>29</sup> ah / bdag.nid tha.mal spyi.ḥo.ru . . . / . . . ma.lus byan.ḥar mdzad.du.gsol

<sup>30</sup> yab-yum / yab.yum

<sup>31</sup> See the hundred-syllable mantram in Appendix B, Figure 2.

<sup>32</sup> thug-je ye-shey-kyi dü-tse / thugs.rje ye.śes.kyi bdud.rtse



and creditors surrounding him, to whom you owe debts. Imagine thus,<sup>33</sup> and recite the hundred-syllable mantram.

If you can imagine the whole process all at once, do it that way. If not, at times contemplate on Vajrasattva's <420> body, face, hands, and so on, and recite the mantram. At times contemplate on the ornaments and garments, at times on the stream of nectar cleansing the diseases, inflictions of spirits, sins, and defilements, and at times on your repentance and the deterrent vows you have made, and recite the mantram.

Then eventually imagine that the karmic Yama of Death and all the different karmic creditors, avengers, and so on sitting in the earth below are fully satisfied, [for] the karmic debts are fully paid, the loans are settled, their vengeance is fully pacified, and the sins and obscurations are cleansed. The Yama's mouth and claws close, and the crack in the earth also seals up.

Your own body becomes transparent and glows with light, with the middle nerve<sup>34</sup> standing [like a pillar] in the center of the body. The nerves branching off the middle nerve, shaped like the ribs of an umbrella, form the four *chakras*.<sup>35</sup> Imagine that the sixty-four branch nerves of the *Nirmāṇa chakra* at the navel face upward; that the eight branch nerves of the *Dharma chakra* at the heart face downward; that the sixteen branch nerves of the *Sambhoga chakra* at the throat face upward; and that the thirty-two branch nerves of the *Mahāsukha chakra* at the crown of the head face downward.<sup>36</sup>

Again, the stream of nectar flows as before, filling all four *chakras* of your body, beginning with the *Mahāsukha chakra* at the crown of your head, and all the other nerves branching off them in your entire body, <421> up to the tips of your fingers and toes. Like a bottle filled with milk, your body is filled fully with the flow of white nectar. The four

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<sup>33</sup> For a visual aid, see Appendix B, Figure 3.

<sup>34</sup> *tṣa-u-ma* / *rṣa.dḥu.ma*

<sup>35</sup> S. *cakra*

<sup>36</sup> See Appendix B, Figure 4 for an illustration of the four *chakras*.

initiations—the Vase Initiation, the Secret Initiation, the Wisdom Initiation, and the Word Initiation—are received. The four obscurations caused by karma, delusion, [failure in] understanding,<sup>37</sup> and habits are cleansed. The four joys of the Primordial Consciousness—Joy, Best Joy, Extraordinary Joy, and Simultaneously-Born Joy—are born in your mind. Imagine that you have established in your mind the status of the four Kāyas—the Nirmānakāya, Sambhogakāya, Dharmakāya, and Svabhavikakāya.

Then say the prayer beginning with:

*gön-po dag-ni mi-shey mong-pa-yi . . .*

**O Lord! Because of my ignorance and stupidity . . .**

up to:

*. . . jang-zhing dag-par dze-du-söl*<sup>38</sup>

**. . . please help to cleanse and purify [my sins].**

No sooner do you utter the words confessing your guilt than Guru Vajrasattva becomes pleased and says with a smile:

*rig-kyi-bu*<sup>39</sup> *k'yö-kyi dig-drib nyam-ch'ag t'am-che dag-pa yin-no . . .*<sup>40</sup>

**Nobly born child, all your sins, obscurations, weakening of vows, and breaking of trusts are absolved . . .**

Thus announcing the absolution of [your sins], he melts into light and dissolves into you.






<sup>37</sup> *shey-jay drib-pa* / *śes.byā'i sgrib.pa* / the failure to understand that the three principal constituents (*k'or-sum* / *'khor.gsum*) are essentially empty

<sup>38</sup> *mgon.po bdag.ni mi.śes rmoṅs.pa.yis . . . / . . . byañ.zhiṅ dag.par mdzad.du.gsol*

<sup>39</sup> See Appendix A, Note 5.

<sup>40</sup> *rigs.kyi.bu khyod.kyi sdig.sgrib ṅam.chags thams.chad dag.pa yin.no . . .*

Because of this, you are transformed into a Vajrasattva, like the one you visualized before. Imagine in your heart, in the center of a moon-disk the size of half a mustard seed:

a blue syllable HŪM   
 with a white syllable OM in front   
 a yellow syllable VAJRA on the right   
 a red syllable SAT at the back   
 and a green syllable TVA on the left 

<422> and recite “OM VAJRA SATTVA HŪM.”<sup>41</sup> As you recite thus, white, yellow, red, green, and blue rays of light simultaneously radiate upward from the five syllables, bearing entertaining goddesses on each of their tips, who carry in their hands various kinds of offerings, such as the eight lucky signs, the seven regal insignia, festoons, parasols, banners, ceiling canopies, thousand-spoked gold wheels, left-handed white conches,<sup>42</sup> and innumerable other items of offering.

By multiplying these items, offer them to please all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who dwell in the inconceivable paradises of the ten directions. [Thereby] the earning of merit is completed, obscurations are cleansed, and all the mercy and blessings in the form of various-colored rays sink in you. [This enables you to] imagine that you have received the blessings of the Unique and common accomplishments<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> For an illustration of the short Vajrasattva mantram in the center of the heart, see Appendix B, Figure 5. See also Figure 2.

<sup>42</sup> A left-handed white conch shell is an extremely rare object. It is used for spiritual ceremonies, for it is said to be the shell of a realized animal. The left-handed whelk, which is only available in Florida, is not the white conch that is meant here.

<sup>43</sup> *ch'og-gi ngö-drub* / *mchog.gi dños.grub* / the Unique Accomplishment, i.e., the attainment of Buddhahood; and *t'ün-mong-gi ngö-drub* / *thun.moñ.gi dños.grub* / the common accomplishment, i.e., the achievement of

the stages of the four *Rig-dzins* connected with the paths; and your thought of actually attaining the Ultimate Fruit—the *Zung-jug* state beyond learning<sup>44</sup>—offers the cause for your attainment of the Dharmakāya for your own sake.

Again, imagine the five syllables emitting hundreds of thousands—an incalculable number—of colored rays that project downward, touching the sentient beings in the six regions of the three realms. The sins, obscurations, and suffering, along with the karmic habits in the minds of those beings, are thoroughly cleansed, just as darkness is <423> dispelled by the sun. All the worlds—the external containers—turn into the Eastern Paradise called Ngön-par Ga-wa.<sup>45</sup> The beings—the inner contents—are transformed into white, yellow, red, green, and blue Vajrasattvas, all of whom recite the mantram “OM VAJRA SATTVA HÜM” loudly.<sup>46</sup> Reciting the mantram with this imagination offers the cause for your attainment of the Rupakāya<sup>47</sup> for the sake of others.

Also, in the liturgy *Bag-chag Rang-dröl*,<sup>48</sup> it is said:

**By projecting and withdrawing, serve the dual purposes and purify the conceptual obscurations.**

This saying is based on the type of visualizing technique [just described]. By depending on this type of skillful, secret, Vajrayāna technique of visualizing, one can earn an unimaginable amount of relative and absolute merit even in a single moment. Also, the purposes of sentient beings, who exist wherever space exists, are fulfilled together with your own.

miraculous powers, used to propagate the Dharma, help sentient beings, and expedite the attainment of the higher stages

<sup>44</sup> *mi-lob zung-jug* / *mi.slob zuñ.'jug* / the final Vajrayāna state of non-conceptual unification, parallel to the attainment of the fifth path of the Pāramitāyāna

<sup>45</sup> *mñoñ.par dga'.ḥa* / Extremely Joyful Paradise


<sup>46</sup> For an illustration of the five races of Vajrasattva, see Appendix B, Figure 5.

<sup>47</sup> *zug-ku* / *gzugs.sku* / i.e., the Sambhogakāya and the Nirmānakāya

<sup>48</sup> *bag.chags rañ.grol* / The Dissolution of Mental Habits on Their Own

In this manner, recite the mantram as many times as you can. After that, when you withdraw the visualization,<sup>49</sup> visualize that all of ~~the outer worlds~~, the containers, which are imagined as the **Ngön-par Ga-wa Paradise**, withdraw into the inner essence, the congregation of the devas of the five ~~faces~~ of Vajrasattva. These also systematically dissolve into light and are drawn into you.

Beginning with the outer border of your body, you yourself gradually vanish into light, which sinks into the syllable OM in your heart. The OM sinks into the VAJRA, that into SAT, <424> that into TVA, and that:

	into the vowel U <sup>50</sup> of HŪM	∪
	that vanishes into the small HA	𑖦
	that into the curve of HA <sup>51</sup>	𑖧
	that into the head of HA <sup>52</sup>	—
	that into the <del>moon-crescent</del> <sup>53</sup>	∩
	that into the spot <sup>54</sup>	○
	and that into the flame. <sup>55</sup>	𑖧

<sup>49</sup> *du-rim* / *bsdu.rim* / the process of gradually dissolving the created image into the non-conceptual state

<sup>50</sup> *zhab-kyu* / *ḥab.kyu*

<sup>51</sup> *ha-k'og* / *ha.khog*

<sup>52</sup> *go* / *mgo*

<sup>53</sup> *da* / *zla*

<sup>54</sup> *t'ig-le* / *thig.le* / See Appendix A, Note 1(c).

<sup>55</sup> *na-da* / *na.da* / The fine line with three curves depicts the subtle air that is the essence of the three realms, and which, on realization, becomes the essence of the extreme, unchanging bliss of the Three Kāyas. / See Appendix B, Figure 6 for an illustration of how the five syllables dissolve.

The flame, too, vanishes like a rainbow into the sky. Then relax in the non-conceptual, unshaped state of meditative equipoise<sup>56</sup> for a while.

Then again, as soon as thoughts begin to appear,<sup>57</sup> very clearly visualize all [the appearances] of the contents and containers in the [non-substantial, illusory] forms of Vajrasattva [and His] Paradise.

Then say the dedication and prayer:<sup>58</sup>

*ge-wa di-yi nyur-du-dag*  
*do-je sem-pa drub-gyur-nay*  
*(dro-wa chig-kyang ma-lü-pa*  
*de-yi sa-la gö-par-shog)<sup>59</sup>*

**By this merit, may I quickly  
 Attain the state of Vajrasattva  
 (And, without leaving a single sentient being behind,  
 Establish them [all] in that [realized] state.)**

In this way, while you are visualizing Vajrasattva and reciting His mantra and other similar mantra and prayers, it is by all means very important to keep the mind undistracted and focused on the object of contemplation, and to recite mantra and prayers uninterrupted by worldly talk.

It is said in the Tantras:

**If this deep samādhi is absent,  
 Like a boulder in the ocean's depths,  
 Even recitation for aeons yields no result.**

<sup>56</sup> *nyam-shag* / mñam.bshag

<sup>57</sup> *je-thob* / rjes.thob / the conceptual appearances that follow non-conceptual meditation

<sup>58</sup> *ngo-wa* / bsño.ḥa // *mön-lam* / smon.lam // It is important to distinguish between these terms (abbreviated *ngo-mön* / bsño.smon). *Ngo-wa*, the dedication, specifies who should enjoy the benefit of the merit earned. *Mön-lam*, prayer, is the expression of good wishes for realization.

<sup>59</sup> *dge.ḥa 'di.yi ñur.du.bdag* / rdo.rje sems.dpa' 'grub.gyur.nas / 'gro.ḥa gci.g.kyañ ma.lus.pa / de.yi sa.la 'god.par.śog

Similarly, it is said:

**Correct or incorrect recitation makes a difference of a thousand.**

**The presence or absence of deep samādhi makes a difference of a hundred thousand.**

If the reciting and counting of mantra are done by mixing them with ordinary, impure, mundane talk, the mantra become impure. For example, if silver or gold is mixed with even a little bit of brass or copper, <425> it becomes a different metal, something other than gold or silver; it cannot serve [anymore] as gold or silver.

Therefore, the Great Guru of Uḍḍiyāna said:

**A month's silence**

**Is better than a year's muttering of contaminated mantra.**

Therefore, it is very important by all means for those monks who perform ceremonies in the villages these days to stop talking while offering prayers and reciting mantra. Prayers and mantra will have no meaning if they are mixed with mundane gossip. Especially when a service is conducted for the benefit of a deceased being, [extreme care should be taken]. When a being who is in the *bar-do* stage is afflicted with intense fear, terror, suffering, and so on, he runs to benefactors, monks, and Lamas in the hope of finding help. If, at this point, their deep meditation is diffused, their vows and trust are impure, and gossip and other thoughts of attachment and hatred are flashing in their minds, since the being in the *bar-do* has psychic power, [he will know these defects]. On account of this, if he develops negative feelings or anger towards the Lamas and the ceremony, it is said that this will cause him to fall into the lower regions. Therefore, it is better to do without [spiritual assistance] than to have such Lamas and monks.

In particular, in the ritual prayers of the secret Vajrayāna, “the words are uttered to guide the creative meditation.”

Thus, <426> the words are uttered only to clarify the important points of the visualization. [Usually], however, the meaning of the ~~creative and non-creative~~ visualizations is not given even the slightest consideration. [Insincere practitioners] find themselves simply repeating many varieties of words, such as “be clear,” “meditate,” “visualize,” and so on, without understanding what these mean, lost in the great confusion of a jumbled amalgam of sound.

When the essential point of reciting the mantra is reached, such monks and Lamas relax their minds completely, and even their bodies, hitherto held erect, are seen to slump. Some of them even smoke cigarettes, the source of a hundred-and-one kinds of demerit. They open mines of irrelevant gossip about [what is happening] up on the mountain and down in the valley, and engage in counting empty beads by the thousands, as if they were stuffing a black sausage;<sup>60</sup> thus the time is wasted. After a while, they roll their eyes skyward and say, “*Vajra Pupay Dhupay . . .*,” playing the cymbals to produce a loud noise. This is a reflection of a reflection of the poorest type of ceremony.<sup>61</sup> Instead of engaging in this type of ceremony, it would certainly be better for them to recite the ~~confession and penance prayers~~ or the Zang-chö Mön-lam<sup>62</sup> once, with a very pure motivation.

Thus, these types of Lamas and monks, who count and recite prayers incorrectly or who perform mere shadows of rituals, fling deceased persons into hell. Similarly, they will bring more harm than good even if they are assigned to perform ceremonies for [the benefit of] those still living. For such <427> individuals, taking remunerations for ritual service<sup>63</sup> will be like eating blazing iron hammers.

Hence, whether Lama or monk, those who accept offerings presented to them out of faith, or offerings made as remuner-

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<sup>60</sup> a sausage stuffed with blood and other ingredients

<sup>61</sup> This is to be understood as follows. The reflection of an object cannot be compared in quality to the object itself. The reflection of the reflection of an object, like a photocopy of a photocopy, is of even poorer quality.

<sup>62</sup> bzañ.spyod smon.lam / The King of Prayers for Noble Conduct

<sup>63</sup> kor / dkor



ation for their service for deceased persons, should not make the size of the meat, the thickness of the cheese, or the amount of payment the target of their meditation. Whether the one facing a critical juncture is a patient or a deceased being, it is the same: that person should be taken as one who is deeply suffering, for he or she is without a protector. With the benevolent motivation [based on] loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta—to help the suffering individual, one should make an effort from the depths of one's heart to perform undistractedly whatever one knows of the ~~creative and non-creative meditation~~.

Those who do not know how to do this should at least remember the meaning of the words they are saying. Or, minimally, they should have loving-kindness and compassion for the needy sentient beings, and should have devotion, faith, and so on in the never-failing power of the truth of the Three Jewels. If, through the joint efforts of body, speech, and mind, ritual performances, mantra, prayers, and the like are performed with utter clarity and purity, then, because of the grace of the Three Jewels, the effective power of the un-failing law of cause and effect, and the immeasurable good will of Bodhicitta, the patient or deceased person will certainly derive benefit.

As is said, "Dissolve your own ~~sin~~ by dealing with that of others." Merit for oneself and others <428> will be simultaneously earned, and whomever one contacts can be established on the path of liberation. By all means, efforts should be made to attain this sort of accomplishment.

In general, these days, Lamas or spiritual people who are supposedly slightly advanced in knowing the law of cause and effect do not even bestow blessings, dedicate merit, or say prayers for sick or deceased sentient beings, being afraid of the mere karmic reaction of taking remunerations; they thereby cut the root of loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta. Most of them are too selfish. They join the congregation at a benefactor's home, but they will not say the prayers needed by the benefactor. They take out a dirty, worn-out book containing their own prayers and pretend that they must

say them. No matter who they are, they pay special attention and take great care while saying a meager number of prayers and counting beads for their own benefit. They regard this as the means to dissolve their obscurations or the hindrances caused by accepting payments. [But] when it comes to offering prayers for the benefactor, they [casually] recite the prayers with absolutely distracted mouths and eyes, as if [reluctantly] paying taxes.

Those who do not understand the needs of one who requires protection, whether living or dead, have broken the root of loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta. Even if they take steps later to cleanse the obscurations caused by taking remunerations for their service, their evil, selfish minds will find it difficult to dissolve the obscurations. From the very beginning, one should rely on loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta—<429> as the foundation. From the core of one's heart, one should make an effort to perform however much one knows and whatever one can of the ~~creative and non-creative~~ meditation and so on, without being severed from the benevolent motivation to help sentient beings. If this is done, it makes no difference even [the size of] the tip of a hair whether one performs the ~~creative and non-creative~~ meditation and says the mantra and prayers at one's own house or another's. In any case, the requirement that one surrender one's selfish needs and think of others is the same. It is imperative for one to have such a thought.

Thus, if one's mind is not distracted from the object of concentration, and one's speech is not adulterated with ordinary talk, and one counts the hundred-syllable mantram 108 times [in a row], Guru Vajrasattva has guaranteed that all sins, obscurations, and the weakening and breach of vows committed in the past will definitely be absolved.

It is stated in the Dri-me Shag-gyü:<sup>64</sup>

**The essential core of the hearts of all the Buddhas, the dissolver of all weakening and breaking of vows and of**

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<sup>64</sup> dri.med bśags.rgyud / a well-known Tantra that explains how to dissolve sin by doing penance

all that obscures insight, is that which is called the hundred-syllable mantram. If this king of all penances is repeated 108 times in a row, all weakening and breaking of vows will be amended and one will be liberated from falling into the three lower regions. If an adept regards this as a tutelary deity and recites it, that person will be <430> regarded in this very life as the best Bodhisattva by the Buddhas of the three times and will be given protection. There is no doubt that such a person will become the chief of the Bodhisattvas after death.

Likewise, whatever main roots and branches of the [Tantric] trust one may have weakened or broken after entering the secret Vajrayāna gate, it is said that if one counts the hundred-syllable mantram twenty-one times a day while visualizing Vajrasattva, it will bring about what is called “the blessing of the transgressions” and further propagation of the sins committed will be stopped.

That all the transgressions will be dissolved from their very roots if the hundred-syllable mantram is counted 100,000 times is mentioned in the Nying-po-gyen [as follows]:

If, having properly visualized Vajrasattva—  
The sitter on the lotus-moon cushion—  
The hundred syllables are, according to ritual,  
Counted twenty-one times,  
Since the various moral lapses will be blessed,  
Further propagation [of the sins] will be stopped.  
So say the superior yogis.  
Put this into practice always.  
If [it is] said 100,000 times,  
One will attain the being of utter purity.

These days, there is hardly anyone in Tibet among the Lamas, monks, and male and female householders who has not received an initiation. <431> Therefore, there are none who have not entered the secret path of the Tantrayāna. Once one has entered the Tantric path, if the bond of trust is

not observed, one falls into hell; if it is observed, one attains Buddhahood. Other than to these two [destinations], there is nowhere else for one to go. It is said to be, for example, like putting a snake into a bamboo tube. Once there, except for going out through the opening in the top or bottom, there is nowhere else for it to go.

From the Yön-ten Dzö:<sup>65</sup>

**One who enters the Mantra[yāna] either goes to the lower regions**

**Or becomes a Buddha; except for these two, there is no third destination.**

Thus, the ~~Tantric trusts~~ are not only subtle, but innumerable and difficult to observe. Even a [great] scholar like Atiśa said that on entering the Tantric path, ~~he suffered from innumerable penalties for breaking the vows~~. If even he admitted that, what can be said of us, whose antidotal power is small, whose power of remembrance is weak, who lack watchfulness, and who lack knowledge with regard to the varieties of transgressions? There is no doubt that the varieties of transgressions we commit will be numerous, like a shower of rain. As a remedy for them, it is very important, always, under all circumstances, to hold the visualization and mantra of Vajrasattva very close to our hearts and to say the hundred-syllable mantram at least twenty-one times every day without fail.

Maybe, from one's own point of view, one is learned <432> in the techniques of the creative and non-creative

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<sup>65</sup> yon.tan rin.po.ch'e mdzod / The Treasure Store of Precious Virtue by Kün-k'yen Jig-me Ling-pa / This text is published along with the author's exoteric and esoteric commentaries on it, *Bden Gnyis Shing Rta* and *Rnam Mkhyen Shing Rta*, as Volumes 29 and 30 of the Nga-gyur Nying-may Sung-rab Series (published by Sonam T. Kazi, Gangtok, 1971). *Yon Tan Mdzod* and *Rnam Mkhyen Shing Rta* form Volume 30, and *Bden Gnyis Shing Rta* forms Volume 29.

Another well-known commentary on this work, by K'en-po Yön-ten Gya-tso, in two volumes entitled *Zla Ba'i Sgron Me* and *Nyi Ma'i 'Od Zer* comprises Volumes 26 and 27 of the same series (published in 1969 and 1971, respectively).

meditation, and by depending on clear remembrance, watchfulness, and the like, one may be free from all the defects of the breach of vows. But, just by talking to others who have broken the fundamental trusts, by maintaining contact with them, or merely by drinking from the same water source, one will suffer the penalties of the weakening of vows [called] *day-nyam*<sup>66</sup> and *zhor-nyam*.<sup>67</sup> Hence, one should always make an effort to purify oneself through penance.

From the Tantras:

**For associating with a transgressor<sup>68</sup> and for granting  
pardon for a breach,  
For teaching the Dharma to transgressors and to  
improper recipients,  
For ignoring contact with transgressors and whatever  
Defilements of the breach of trust they have  
contaminated me with,  
[Thereby] offering the cause [for hindrances] in this  
life and obscurations in the next—  
For these personal mistakes, confessed with a regretful  
heart, I pray for pardon.**

Even if only one member of an **assembly** has broken the bond of trust, because of the defilement caused by the weakening of the bond of trust by that person, hundreds or even thousands of those who maintain the pure bond of trust will be contaminated and stopped from achieving even the tiniest result from their meditation. It is like a drop of sour milk spoiling a pot full of fresh milk, or a frog with an infected wound infecting all the other frogs.

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<sup>66</sup> *zlas.ñams* / One's vows are weakened because one says prayers and counts mantra together with someone who has broken the bond of trust.

<sup>67</sup> *zor.ñams* / One's vows are weakened because one appreciates the deeds of someone without knowing that he or she has broken the bond of trust.

<sup>68</sup> *dam-nyam* / *dam.ñams* (the abbreviated form of *dam-ts'ig nyam-pa* / *dam.tshig ñams.pa*) / *Dam-ts'ig* is the Vajrayāna vow of trust; *nyam-pa* means to decay or become weak. Thus, one who transgresses the *dam-ts'ig* is called a *dam-nyam*.

As it is said:

**Just as when a drop of milk  
Goes bad, the rest goes bad,  
An adept who has broken the bond of trust  
Makes the rest unsuitable. <433 >**

No one, not even a Lama—a great being—is immune to the defilements caused by the breach of the bond of trust. The story of a highly attained Siddha goes as follows.

Once when **Dro-gön Ling-je Re-pa** went to Tsa-ri on pilgrimage, the protecting Dākinīs of that place contrived to obstruct him by causing a dense darkness in broad daylight, which made even the stars shine brightly. But that did not hinder him from going to the shore of the **Red Lake**, called Mar-nag Trag-ts'o, where he performed a dance, sang a vajra song, and left his footprint on a stone—[a footprint] that can be seen even today. **Although he was such a great yogi, later a disciple who had broken the bond of trust came to see him, and that defiled him.** The story goes that this disturbed the yogi's mind and he lost his power of speech.

Similarly, Drub-t'ob U-gyen-pa mentions in his song:

**Rin-ch'en-pal, the beggar of the Snow Land,  
Was undefeated except by the enemy, ~~the breach of~~  
~~trust,~~<sup>69</sup>  
Nor was there any friend except the Guru who offered  
protection.**

Thus, the secret Vajrayāna ~~bond of trust~~<sup>1</sup> is very difficult to maintain, and if it is broken, the penalties are also very heavy. To believe arrogantly that one is an upholder of the bond of trust without inspecting one's mind will not do.

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<sup>69</sup> *nyam-drip* / *ñams.grib* / the defilement caused by the breach of *dam-ts'ig*

From the main Tantric texts:

**It is also said that even if one fails for a moment to assume the three doors [i.e., the body, speech, and mind] to be three maṇḍalas, the secret Mantrayāna <434> bond of trust will be transgressed.**

As such, the ~~bond of trust~~ is difficult to maintain. If elaborately differentiated, the varieties of *samaya*, or vows, will run to hundreds of thousands. The penalties for breaking them, according to the Tantras, are:

**The vajra demons will drink the blood of your heart; Your life will be short, and you will suffer from many illnesses, the loss of wealth, and the danger of enemies; And in the Maximum Torture Hell of extreme terror, Undergoing unbearable suffering, you will remain for a long time.**

As an antidote for all weakening and breaking of the ~~bond of trust~~ and for the bad reaction of wrongdoings, whether one recollects them or not, one must always, under all circumstances, make an effort to visualize, and recite the mantra of, Vajrasattva. ~~Pray for absolution~~ by counting the hundred-syllable mantram as ~~penance~~.

The great sages of the past said:

**Right from the beginning, one should not let oneself be contaminated by sin. If one is contaminated, it is important to do penance.**

If ~~penance~~ is done, the breach of the secret Tantric ~~bond of trust~~ is easily repaired. According to the Śrāvaka's rule, once the principal vows are broken, it is like the breaking of earthen pots: there is no means to repair them.

Breaking the Bodhisattva vows is like breaking articles made of precious metals: if they are broken, they can be repaired with the help of a skillful smith. Similarly, the breach

of such vows can be rejuvenated with the help of an outside agent, such as <435> a spiritual teacher.

[The breaking of] the secret Mantrayāna vows is like the slight diminishing in size of articles made of precious metals: it is said that, even by oneself, by depending on devas, mantra, and deep meditation, one can ~~do penance and absolve the sin~~ without leaving any residue. Of course, if the penance is done immediately, the absolution will be easier. If time is allowed to pass, the sin will keep on multiplying and its dissolution will be all the more difficult. After three years have elapsed, the mistakes are no longer in the domain of **dissolution**. Even if penance is done, the sin will not be absolved, it is said.

Moreover, depending on vocal power and blessings, [one may like] to give protection to others, avert droughts and hailstones, stop the spread of disease, treat patients, or save children's lives from the harm of evil spirits—for one's own sake, for the sake of others, or both. In order to have vocal power and blessings, one's vocal obscurations must be purified. Since there is nothing greater for purifying vocal obscurations than the essential hundred-syllable mantram, always, under all circumstances, it is important to make an effort to count the hundred-syllable mantram.

Je Lama [Jig-me Gyal-way Nyu-gu] also said mirthfully:

**Before protecting others and receiving fees for offering spiritual services, one should first of all dissolve one's own vocal defilements, which one cannot do without saying the *yig-gya*<sup>70</sup> at least 100,000 times. <436>**

Among his followers, there were many who had said ten to twenty million *yig-gya*. Even among his ordinary followers, there were none who had not said two to three hundred thousand *yig-gya*.

Essentially, Guru Vajrasattva is He in whom the hundred races of Buddha are manifest as one. He is called "The

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<sup>70</sup> *yig.brgya* (the abbreviated form of *yi-ge gya-pa* / *yi.ge brgya.pa*) / the hundred-syllable mantram of Vajrasattva



Great, Secret, Single-Raced, Vajra Mind.”<sup>71</sup> There are none among the inconceivable number of peaceful and wrathful tutelary deities who are not found in Vajrasattva. Moreover, since one visualizes Vajrasattva as essentially no different from one’s own Root-Guru, this is also called “The Guru Yoga Meditated on in the All-Inclusive, Gemlike Style,”<sup>72</sup> which is the extremely profound, ultimate end.

The fact that there is no greater mantram than this essential *yig-gya* is as stated before. It should be known that nowhere is there a greater Dharma than this.

**Although the beneficial, secret doctrine has been heard,  
it is left as [mere] words.**

**Although a little bit of it is practiced, [the effort is  
ruined] by deceptive distractions.**

**May I and beings like me, in illusory bodies,  
Be blessed to attain the essence of the creative and  
non-creative levels of practice.<sup>73</sup>**

This is the instruction on Guru Vajrasattva’s visualization and the recitation [of His mantra] for the dissolution of obscurations.

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<sup>71</sup> *sang-ch'en rig-chig do-je sem-pa* / gsañ.chen rigs.gcig rdo.rje sems.dpa'

<sup>72</sup> *kün-dü nor-bü lug* / kun.'dus nor.bu'i lugs

<sup>73</sup> *kye-dzog* / bskyed.rdzogs (the abbreviated form of *kye-rim* / bskyed.rim and *dzog-rim* / rdzogs.rim)



## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Maṇḍala

<437> Although he understood that the relative truth is illusion, he earned the dual merit;<sup>1</sup>  
Although he understood that the absolute truth is non-meditative, he practiced Samādhi;  
Although he attained the perfection of the *Zung-jug*,<sup>2</sup> he made an effort to generate perseverance;  
At the feet of that unparalleled Guru, I pay homage.

### Instructions on Earning Merit by Offering the Maṇḍala

If the two types of merit, relative and absolute,<sup>3</sup> are not fully earned, there is no means to attain the Buddhahood of Dual Purity.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, without completely earning the dual merit, the unmistakable meaning of Śūnyatā will not be able to grow in one's mind.

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<sup>1</sup> *ts'og-nyi* / *tshogs.gñis*

<sup>2</sup> i.e., the non-conceptual Ultimate Truth

<sup>3</sup> *sō-nam kyi-ts'og* / *bsod.nam kyi.tshog* // *ye-shey kyi-ts'og* / *ye.ses kyi.tshog*

<sup>4</sup> *dag-pa nyi-den-gyi sang-gyay* / *dag.pa gñis.ldan.gyi sañs.rgyas*

From the Sūtras:

**Until the sublime dual merit is fully earned,  
The sublime Śūnyatā cannot be comprehended.**

So the Buddha taught.  
Similarly, it is said:

**[Realization of] the Ultimate Truth,<sup>5</sup> the *L'en-chig Kyey-pay Ye-shey*,<sup>6</sup>  
Is exclusively due to the **handprint** of having earned  
merit and purified obscurations,  
And to the blessings of the realized Guru.  
Know that it is foolish to seek any other methods.**

Even after the **perfect realization** of Śūnyatā, higher and higher stages of the path have to be ascended until the state of Buddhahood is attained; therefore, an effort should be made to ~~accumulate relative and absolute merit.~~

The great yogi Tilopa <438> said:

**O son, until these appearances, born of dependent  
causes,  
Are understood in fact as **unborn**,  
From the wheels of the chariot of the dual merit,  
Do not be separated, Nāropa.**

Also, the Doha of the great yogi Bir-wa-pa states:

**Even if you have great conviction in not depending on a  
relative Buddha,  
**Do not stop** earning great relative merit; **earn** as much  
as you can.**

<sup>5</sup> *dön-dam* / don.dam

<sup>6</sup> *l'en-chig kyey-pay ye-shey* / lhan.gcig skyes.pa'i ye.śes / *L'en-chig kyey-pa* means simultaneously born, and *Ye-shey* is the Primordial Consciousness. *L'en-chig Kyey-pay Ye-shey* refers to the primordial state of the mind—synonymous with the Ultimate Truth—that exists simultaneously with the purifiable ignorance.

And Nyam-me Dag-po Rin-po-ch'e said:

**Although the earning of merit and the purification of defilements do not exist in the Ultimate Truth, accumulate merit, starting with the smallest amount.**

Therefore, the compassionate Buddha, skilled in techniques, has shown innumerable ways to earn merit. Of these, the offering of the maṇḍala is the most excellent.

The Tantras state:

**If all of the billion world-systems,  
Adorned with objects of sensual pleasure,  
Are offered to the Buddhas of all the Paradises,  
One attains Buddhahood, having fully earned the  
[relative and] absolute merit.**

While offering the maṇḍala according to our [*Nying-t'ig*] tradition, there are two kinds of maṇḍalas:

1. The *Drub-pay* Maṇḍala,<sup>7</sup> [representing those to whom the maṇḍala is offered];
2. The *Ch'ö-pay* Maṇḍala,<sup>8</sup> [representing the maṇḍala that forms the offering].<sup>9</sup>

The materials to be used for the maṇḍala depend on what one can afford. The best, most precious maṇḍala is a base made of gold, silver, or other costly metals. A mediocre one is made of bronze or other good metals. At worst, even a smooth-surfaced slab of stone, wood, or the like on a support <439> will do. The best materials for constructing the heaps on it are pieces of turquoise, coral, amethyst, pearls, and other precious gems; the mediocre materials are medicinal fruits such as myrobalan, amala, and the like; and the ordinary materials are beans, barley, rice, wheat, and similar

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<sup>7</sup> sgrub.pa'i maṇḍala

<sup>8</sup> mchod.pa'i maṇḍala

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix B, Figure 7 for an illustration of the *Drub-pay* and *Ch'ö-pay* Maṇḍalas.

grains. Even the poorest materials, such as stones, rubble, and sand, are enough to serve as tokens for visualization.

Whatever may be the case, the base of the maṇḍala should be thoroughly **cleansed**. First, the *Drub-pay* Maṇḍala is prepared by making five heaps of material [on the base]. Imagine the center heap as the Buddha Vairocana surrounded by the assembly of the devas of the Buddha race; the heap in front of the center [i.e., in the east and closest to you] as the Buddha Vajra Akṣobhya surrounded by the assembly of the devas of the Vajra race; the heap to the south of the center [i.e., to your left] as the Buddha Ratnasambhava surrounded by the assembly of the devas of the Ratna race; the heap to the west of the center [i.e., farthest from you] as the Buddha Amitābha surrounded by the assembly of the devas of the Padma race; and the heap to the north of the center [i.e., to your right] as the Buddha Amoghasiddhi surrounded by the assembly of the devas of the Karma race.<sup>10</sup>

Or, imagine the center heap as the Root-Guru—who is no different from the Great Guru Padmasambhava—with the Gurus of the *Dzog-ch'en* lineage sitting in tiers above him; the heap in front [of the Guru] as Śākyamuni Buddha surrounded by the One Thousand and **Two** Buddhas of this fortunate aeon; <440> the heap to the right [of the Guru] as the group of the eight great Scions<sup>11</sup> of the Buddha surrounded by the Ārya Bodhisattva Saṅgha; the heap to the left [of the Guru] as the **two** eminent Arhats surrounded by the excellent monks of the Hinayāna Saṅgha; and the heap [in back of the Guru] as a pile of books containing the precious Dharma on shelves made of light. [Thus], imagine the figures like those in the *Ts'og-zhing* assembly of refuge.

The *Drub-pay* Maṇḍala should be placed on a stand. If available, the five items of offering<sup>12</sup> should be arranged

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix B, Figure 8, in which the emblems of the five cardinal Buddhas represent the five heaps in the *Drub-pay* Maṇḍala.

<sup>11</sup> i.e., Bodhisattvas

<sup>12</sup> The five items of offering refer to the stimulants of the five sense organs. The items usually seen in paintings include: a mirror, a pair of cymbals or a stringed instrument, a conch shell containing perfume, a piece of

around it. [It should be offered] by placing it in front of the emblems of the Buddha's **body, speech, and mind.** If the *Drub-pay* Maṇḍala is not available, it does not matter; visualize the deities of the assembly of refuge in your mind.

Then hold the *Ch'ö-pay* Maṇḍala in your **left hand.**<sup>13</sup> Wipe [its surface] for a long time with the wrist of your right hand. With undistracted concentration on the visualized object, say the "Seven-**Limbed** Prayer"<sup>14</sup> and so on. The cleansing is not done because the maṇḍala contains something impure that has to be wiped away. The maṇḍala is cleansed with great effort as a symbolic gesture of cleansing the contamination of the dual obscuration in your mind.

When the great *Ka-dam-pas* of the past suffered from sores [caused] by wiping the maṇḍala with the insides of their wrists, they [then] wiped it with the sides of their wrists. When those also were injured, they used the backs of their wrists. <441> Such are the stories that exist from the past. Thus, they did not use even a piece of woolen or cotton cloth while wiping the maṇḍala; they did it solely with their wrists and so on. This being the tradition of the great *Ka-dam-pas* of the past, **do it that way.**

Then, when you are making the heaps, chant the "Thirty-Seven Point Maṇḍala."<sup>15</sup> This prayer was composed by Drogön Ch'ö-gyal P'ag-pa of *Sa-kya*. Since it has been found practical, it is widely used by both the old and new Buddhist schools of Tibet. Here as well, there is a tradition to begin a maṇḍala offering with this prayer; therefore, do it accordingly.

fruit, and a scarf, to represent, respectively, sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. These are arranged from left to right, as illustrated in Appendix B, Figure 7.

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix B, Figures 9 and 10 for illustrations of the different parts of a maṇḍala.

<sup>14</sup> *yen-lag dün-pa* / *yen.lag bdun.pa* / This prayer comprises the third stanza of the Guru Yoga in the *Long-ch'en Nying-tig* Preliminary, Nam-k'yen Lam-zang, by Kün-k'yen Jig-me Ling-pa.

<sup>15</sup> *man-dal so-dün-ma* / *maṇḍal so.bdun.ma* / See Appendix B, Figure 11 for an illustration of the "Thirty-Seven Point Maṇḍala."

All [Tantric] Buddhist schools, whether old or new, have many methods of offering maṇḍalas according to their own traditions. In particular, each unearthed teaching<sup>16</sup> of the *Nying-ma* school has its own maṇḍala. According to our *Nying-t'ig* tradition, there are many elaborate liturgies prescribed by the Great Kün-k'yen to be used for offering the Trikāya Maṇḍala. Any of these methods are acceptable in offering [the maṇḍala].

When done according to the "Thirty-Seven Point Maṇḍala," [the maṇḍala should be offered as follows].

As you say,

**OM**

*vaj-ra bhū-mi . . .*<sup>17</sup>

**Vajra Ground . . . ,**

hold the maṇḍala in the left hand and sprinkle the *ba-jung*<sup>18</sup> and *dri-zang*<sup>19</sup> on it with the [fingers of the] right hand.

Then hold a blossom with the thumb and ring-finger of the right hand, and in synchrony with the recitation of the mantra,

**OM**

*vaj-ra re-k'e . . .*<sup>20</sup>

**Vajra Line . . . ,**

make a clockwise <442> circular motion with the blossom on the surface of the maṇḍala; then place the blossom in the

<sup>16</sup> *ter-k'a* / *gter.kha*

<sup>17</sup> om / *vajra bhū.mi . . .*

<sup>18</sup> *ba.byuñ* / cow dung and urine from a consecrated cow, used for purification during ceremonies

<sup>19</sup> *dri.bzañ* / perfumed water / This is a decoction of six aromatic ingredients, viz., saffron, red and white sandalwood, cardamom, clove, and nutmeg.

<sup>20</sup> om / *vajra re.khe . . .*



center. If there are rings, place [the largest of the three] on the surface of the maṇḍala at this point.<sup>21</sup>

Then put a large heap of offerings in the center as you say,

*ri-yi gyal-po ri-rab . . .* <sup>22</sup>

**Mount Sumeru . . .**

When the four heaps that represent the four continents are placed [in the four cardinal directions while saying],

*shar lü-p'ag po . . .* <sup>23</sup>

**The Eastern Continent . . . ,**

you can regard either the side facing you or that towards which the maṇḍala is offered as the east—either way is correct. Starting from whichever side is taken as the east, place the heaps clockwise.

When the heaps are placed to represent a pair of subcontinents, put [the first] heap to the left and the second to the right of each individual continent, while chanting,

*lü-dang lü-p'ag . . .* <sup>24</sup>

**The Eastern Subcontinents . . .**

Then place [four] heaps to represent, respectively, the Precious Mountain to the east, the Wish-fulfilling Tree<sup>25</sup> to

<sup>21</sup> Although the text does not specify whether the rings are to be placed all at once or not, normally they are placed in stages, beginning with the largest, followed by the middle-sized one, and then the smallest, as the heap develops. For illustrations of the three rings, or circles, which represent protective cosmic walls, refer to Appendix B, Figures 9 and 10.

<sup>22</sup> ri.yi gyal.po ri.rab . . .

<sup>23</sup> shar lus.'phags po . . .

<sup>24</sup> lus.dañ lus.'phags . . .

<sup>25</sup> pag-sam-gyi shing / dpag.bsam.gyi śiñ

the south, the Milch Cow<sup>26</sup> to the west, and the Uncultivated Crop<sup>27</sup> to the north.

Then<sup>28</sup> place eight heaps to represent the Seven Regal Insignia and the Great Vase of Treasure on and in between the four cardinal points.

Then place four heaps [to represent] the Outer Entertainers, of celestial beauty and so on, at the four cardinal points; and four heaps for the Inner Entertainers, who carry flowers and so on, at the four points midway between the [cardinal points].

Then<sup>29</sup> place four heaps to represent, respectively, the Sun in the east, the Moon in the west, the Jeweled Parasol in the south, and the Banner of Victory in the north.

Then, when the prayer,

*l'a-dang mi-yi long-chö ma-ts'ang-wa me-pa*<sup>30</sup>

**Not leaving behind any items of the wealth of gods and men,**

is said, pile more over all the previous heaps, irrespective of the directions, and finally, if there is a crest or the like, place it <443> on top.

Then say:

*di-nyi je-tsün . . . nam-la wül-war gyi'o*<sup>31</sup>

**This is being offered to all the valorous, holy Gurus who are connected with the Root-Guru, and to the assembly of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.**

<sup>26</sup> *dö-jö-ba* / 'dod.'jo'i.ba / a miraculous cow that yields an inexhaustible supply of milk

<sup>27</sup> *ma-mö-pay lo-tog* / ma.smos.pa'i lo.tog / a miraculous crop that does not require cultivation

<sup>28</sup> Place the second ring at this time.

<sup>29</sup> Place the third ring at this time.

<sup>30</sup> lha.dañ mi.yi loñ.spyod ma.tshañ.ḥa med.pa

<sup>31</sup> 'di.ñid rje.brtsun . . . rnam.la dḥul.ḥar bgyi.'o

At this point, it is also said:

*ma-tśang-wa me-pa tsang-zhing yi-du wong-wa . . .*<sup>32</sup>

**This maṇḍala, which is not lacking in anything, which is pure and attractive . . .**

However, while giving oral instructions on these visualizations, Je Lama [Jig-me Gyal-way Nyu-gu] did not have the practice of saying this; therefore, it has been omitted here as well. Those who wish to know the elaborate description [of the maṇḍala] should look in Gong-dü Nam-she,<sup>33</sup> which [Je Lama] referred to in his basic instructions.

The offering of the Trikāya Maṇḍala according to the *Nying-t'ig* tradition is as follows. First, [to construct] the general Nirmāṇakāya Maṇḍala, take four such continents as were described earlier when the heaps were constructed and a Mount Sumeru, including the heavens of Brahmā, as one unit. [A group of] one thousand such units makes the Universe of the First Thousand Worlds.<sup>34</sup>

A group of one thousand such First Thousand Worlds complete with all their subcontinents makes the Middle Universe of the Second Thousand Worlds.<sup>35</sup>

A group of one thousand such Middle Universes <444> of the Second Thousand Worlds makes the Great Universe of the Third Thousand Worlds.<sup>36</sup>

One Nirmāṇakāya has the power to deliver the sentient beings of one such group of one billion worlds, each having

<sup>32</sup> ma.tshañ.ḅa med.pa gtsañ.ziñ yid.du 'oñ.ḅa . . . / In the original, the word *tśang* / tshañ, meaning "complete," is repeated twice. According to Gong-dü Nam-she (see footnote 33), the second *tśang* should read *tsang* / gtsañ, meaning "pure." This correction has been made.

<sup>33</sup> dgoñs.'dus rnam.bśad / See Nga-gyur Nying-may Sung-rab Series, Volume 32 (Volume 4 of the Jig-ling Sung-bum), first title, pp. 237-241 (published by Sonam T. Kazi, Gangtok, 1972).

<sup>34</sup> *tong-dang-po chi-p'ü-kyi jig-ten* / stoñ.dañ.po spyi.phud.kyi 'jig.rten

<sup>35</sup> *tong-nyi-pa bar-may jig-ten* / stoñ.gñis.pa bar.ma'i 'jig.rten

<sup>36</sup> *tong-sum-gyi tong-ch'en-po jig-ten-gyi k'am* / stoñ.gsum.gyi stoñ.chen.po 'jig.rten.gyi khams

their four continents. This is, for instance, like the domain of Śākyamuni Buddha.<sup>37</sup>

The supreme belongings of gods and human beings, the seven precious regal powers, and the like, whether they have owners or not—whatever there are in an inconceivable number of domains—mentally acquire these. On top of them add your own body, wealth, life, and fortune—whatever you possess, including the roots of the merit **earned** during the three times, pleasures, comforts, and their sources. Pile up everything you value, leaving nothing behind. The offering of all this to the Guru and the assembly of the Nirmāṇakāya devas, without any attachment or weakness for it even the size of a sesame seed, is the general Nirmāṇakāya Maṇḍala.<sup>38</sup>

On top of that, imagine the incredible realms and architectural glamour of the celestial palaces of the Five Great Paradises. Imagine them adorned with innumerable goddesses of physical beauty and sensual entertainment. The offering of these to the Guru and the assembly of the Sambhogakāya devas <445> is the extraordinary Sambhogakāya Maṇḍala.<sup>39</sup>

Consider the Unborn Dharmadhatu<sup>40</sup> to be the base of the maṇḍala. Pile up the **Four Transcendent Appearances**<sup>41</sup> and whatever thoughts arise as the heaps on the maṇḍala. The offering of this to the Guru and the assembly of the Dharmakāya devas is the unique **Dharmakāya Maṇḍala**.<sup>42</sup>

Having fully understood such techniques of visualization, and with a strong sense of respectful devotion, say the prayer:

OM ĀH HŪM

*tong-sum jig-ten je-wa tr'ag-gyay zhing . . .* <sup>43</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *me-jey jig-ten-gyi kham / me.mjed 'jig.rten.gyi khams*

<sup>38</sup> *t'ung-mong trül-kü man-dal / thuñ.moñs sprul.sku'i maṇḍal*

<sup>39</sup> *t'ung-min long-kü man-dal / thuñ.min loñs.sku'i maṇḍal*

<sup>40</sup> *ch'ö-ying kye-wa me-pa / chos.dbyiñs skye.ḥa med.pa*

<sup>41</sup> *nang-zhi / snañ.bži*

<sup>42</sup> *k'ye-par ch'ö-kü man-dal / khyad.par chos.sku'i maṇḍal*

<sup>43</sup> *om.āḥ.hūm / stoñ.gsum 'jig.rten bye.ḥa phrag.brgya'i žiñ . . .*

**By completely offering the millions of billions of worlds  
contained in the three systems of one thousand  
universes . . .**

While counting the number of offerings, hold the maṇḍala in the left hand in the same manner that you did when the first maṇḍala was offered. With your right hand, pile a small amount after each prayer that you say, and keep count.

When it is done like this, the left hand suffers from such an acute pain that it cannot, as it were, hold the maṇḍala anymore. Until that happens, make a heartfelt effort to hold up the maṇḍala with your hand.

The general saying, “While practicing the Dharma one should face hardships and have perseverance,” refers not only to facing the difficulty of finding food. It means, always, under all circumstances, that everything difficult to accomplish should be undertaken by facing hardship with heartfelt effort. That is what is meant. Even in doing this much, [by undergoing the difficulty associated with bearing the maṇḍala], through patience and perseverance, a greater power will be obtained to accomplish the earning of merit. Hence, one should practice accordingly.

When it becomes absolutely impossible to hold the maṇḍala <446> any longer, you can place it on a table in front of you. Continue to offer the heaps and count the number [of offerings]. When you break for tea and the like, dismantle the whole maṇḍala. Build it again, initiated by the “Thirty-Seven Point Maṇḍala” as before, and then continue counting [the Trikāya Maṇḍala].

One should offer a full 100,000 maṇḍalas in this way. At times, when you are unable to offer the Trikāya Maṇḍala, it is permissible to offer the maṇḍala by saying the “Seven-Heap Maṇḍala,”<sup>44</sup> “*sa-zhi pö-ch’ü jug-shing . . .*”<sup>45</sup> In any case, you should start the maṇḍala by remembering the noble Bodhicitta motivation; second, you should remember the actual

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<sup>44</sup> *man-dal ts’om-bu dün-ma* / maṇḍal tshom.bu bdun.ma

<sup>45</sup> *sa.gzi spos.chus byugs.ñin . . .*

non-conceptual meditation; and at the end, you should do the full dedication. The importance of remembering these three perfect principles is the same for all the practices.

When barley, wheat, or other [types of] cereal are used for the maṇḍala offering, if you can afford it, never use the [same] grains over again. Use only fresh cereal. Whatever has thus been offered should be given away in charity either to birds or beggars, or piled up in front of the emblems of the Buddha—whichever way is convenient. You should not keep it for your own consumption. <447> If you do not have fresh grain to offer, reuse the old until you obtain fresh grain. If you are very poor, you are permitted to reuse the already offered grain again and again. Whatever may be the case, you should see that the grain is clean and free from grit, grass seeds, and bird droppings. It should be treated with perfumed water made with the [six] aromatic ingredients—saffron and the like.

There are those who, like paupers, have no wealth at all to offer, and also those who are so highly developed spiritually that they can actually visualize innumerable paradises, as one would imagine innumerable particles of dust on a single particle of dust. Considering them, [the Buddha] has said that even earth and sand can be used to offer maṇḍalas. However, there are those who have means but are reluctant to spend it on offerings or charity.<sup>46</sup> They cite many seemingly true and valid reasons [for their reluctance], such as [the power of their] mantra and visualizations. Such ambitious convictions on their part amount to their deceiving themselves.

Moreover, all the Tantras and secret instructions mention: “The pure [ingredients] purely prepared for making offerings . . .,” and also, “This offering that is purely prepared . . .” No mention is made of providing “impure and unclean” offerings. Hence, the offering of food that one has

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<sup>46</sup> *ch'ö-jin* / *mchod.sbyin* / offerings made to higher spiritual powers to obtain blessings, and charity given to lower beings to alleviate their suffering

partially eaten, of things that are contaminated and dirty, and so on, <448> and making use of the best portion of barley for oneself while leaving the portion unfit for consumption to make offerings<sup>47</sup> and the meal for preparing votive *tor-mas*, are [unacceptable practices].

Similarly, the saying of the *Ka-dam-pa* monks of the past goes:

**Enjoying the good portion for oneself and offering the bluish portion of cheesecake<sup>48</sup> and the yellowish part of leafy vegetables to the Three Jewels will not do.**

Take butter and the like, for example. People tend to use the rancid and rotten portion of butter for decorating *tor-ma* and for holy lamps, and the good portion for themselves. This will be the cause for wearing away one's good fortune. Therefore, it should be avoided.

When barley meal is prepared for making *zhal-zay*<sup>49</sup> and *tor-ma* offerings, the hardness or softness of the dough should be determined by the standard one uses when preparing it for one's own consumption. It is improper to make the dough too soft for the purpose of making [the *tor-ma*] easy to shape.

The venerable Atiṣa remarked:

**Tibetans cannot become rich, for they are making the dough for *tor-ma* offerings soft.**

And also:

**Water alone will suffice to earn merit in Tibet. India is a hot country, and there is no water there as good as that found in Tibet.**

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<sup>47</sup> "Offerings" refers to unground barley grains used for filling altar cups and offering the maṇḍala.

<sup>48</sup> *t'ü* / *thud* / a cheesecake prepared from dry grated cheese, butter, and molasses; it is sliced and mixed with barley meal.

<sup>49</sup> *žal.zas* / a votive offering that represents food in general; it is placed on the altar as the last of the seven offerings (see footnote 51).

As he said, if one has perseverance in earning merit, even offerings of clean water can bring an inconceivable amount of benefit. While preparing the water offering<sup>50</sup> in seven cups and so on,<sup>51</sup> **cleanse the cups thoroughly.** When arranging them, let the space between them be neither too wide <449> nor too narrow; a **suitable distance should be maintained.** The line of cups should not be crooked, and there should be no grain, hair, dust, or insects in the water. The amount of water in the cups should be neither too much nor too little.<sup>52</sup> The water should not be spilled on the altar, and the cups should be arranged on it in such a way that they look beautiful and attractive.

Similarly, in the Zang-chö it is stated:

**With everything arranged in an extraordinarily  
excellent fashion . . .**

As stated, whatever the items of offering may be, if at the least the arrangement and style of display are beautifully and attractively done, by reason [of the fact that one is] showing respect to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, one will earn a great amount of relative merit. Hence, by all means, one should make the best effort.

On the other hand, this does not mean that those who are handicapped by poverty are debarred from making offerings of contaminated, impure, and inferior things with the greatest purity of heart. This is because the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have no attachment to concepts of purity and impurity. The story goes that, in the past, a **beggar woman** in a village offered the Buddha a lamp [~~in the bone socket of a dead animal~~]. Similarly, a leper woman, by begging, once obtained a bowl of rice water. She offered it to Kaśyapa, the Great

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<sup>50</sup> *yön-ch'ab* / yon.chab

<sup>51</sup> "And so on" should be understood to mean that the number of cups used may vary. The seven cups stand for offerings of drinking water, water for washing the feet, flowers, incense, lamps, perfume, and food.

<sup>52</sup> A space the size of a barley grain should be left between the water and the top of the cup.



Arhat. By accident, a fly fell into the rice water. As she tried to remove <450> it, her own finger dropped off into the bowl. To fulfill her intention, the Great Kaśyapa drank the rice water, which served him as alms for a day. This made the leper woman happy, and she took rebirth in Tuṣita Heaven.

Thus, while offering the maṇḍala as well, the sublime crux of the technique is to offer whatever one can in a clean and aesthetic manner with the utmost purity of heart. Making an effort to offer this sort of maṇḍala and so on as a means to earn merit is a practice that should not be given up at any stage of the path.

From the Tantras:

**Without earning merit, there is no siddhi;<sup>53</sup>  
By pressing sand, no oil can be obtained.**

To hope for siddhi without earning merit is like expecting oil by pressing the sand of a river bank. Even an amount of oil the size of the tip of a hair cannot be extracted by pressing sand a hundred times. To expect siddhi by earning merit, however, is like extracting oil from sesame seeds. The more they are pressed, the more oil they produce. When even a single sesame seed is pressed between [two thumb]nails, the entire surface of the nails <451> is lavishly covered with oil. Similarly, to expect siddhi without earning merit is to expect butter from churning water. To look for siddhi after earning merit is like expecting butter from churning milk.

Hence, the achievement of the ultimate, extraordinary Siddhi is the unmistakable fruit of having completely earned the dual merit. That it is impossible to attain the Dual Purity of Buddhahood without earning the dual merit has been mentioned earlier as well.

Protector Nāgārjuna said:

**Through this virtuous deed, may all sentient beings  
Accomplish the earning of relative and absolute merit.**

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<sup>53</sup> *ngö-drup* / *dños.grub* / accomplishment

**And—the result of ~~relative and absolute merit~~—  
May they attain the two sublime bodies.<sup>54</sup>**

On completing the earning of the conceptual, relative merit, [one] attains the sublime Rūpakāya. On completing the earning of the non-conceptual, ~~absolute merit~~, [one] attains the sublime Dharmakāya.

Likewise, all temporary, worldly success also results from the completion of the earning of merit. Without earning merit, no matter how much effort one makes, one will not derive any benefit at all. Take, for example, even presently needed amenities like food and means for enjoyment. Because of the power of previously earned merit, some people, without making the least effort, <452> are never without such means. Others engage throughout their lives in business, agriculture, and so on, making efforts with all sorts of means to accumulate wealth; but, without reaping any benefit even as large as a sesame seed, they ultimately die of hunger. One can [easily] understand this, for such things are commonplace.

Likewise, with regard to expecting siddhi by worshipping the god of wealth and the caretakers of the Dharma, if one does not have the fruit of previously earned merit, these deities cannot offer any siddhi.

Once there was a hermit who suffered from a dearth of food. The hermit worshipped [a deity called] **Dam-chen**,<sup>55</sup> [expecting help from him]. Dam-chen actually appeared and talked to him, as if person to person, yet [the hermit] did not receive any siddhi. Dam-chen then said, “Since you have not earned an iota of merit through charity in your past life, I cannot help you.”

One day the hermit received a bowl of broth when he was standing in line with many beggars. When he came back, Dam-chen said, “Did you notice the siddhi I gave you today?”

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<sup>54</sup> i.e., the Rūpakāya (*zug-ku* / *gzugs.sku*) and the Dharmakāya (*ch’ò-ku* / *chos.sku*)

<sup>55</sup> *dam.can* / the name of a Tantric Dharma protector

The hermit replied, “The bowl of broth that was found was not a treat for me. It was there for the rest of the beggars as well. I did not know whether it was your siddhi or not.”

Dam-chen said, “When the broth was served, didn’t a large piece of fat fall into your bowl? That was, of course, the siddhi I gave you.”

Thus, if one has no past merit earned through charity, even by worshipping deities and the like for wealth, one cannot be relieved of one’s poverty.

If the worldly <453> devas of wealth and so on have the power to offer the siddhi of wealth, what about all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, whose power and miracles are a thousand times greater than theirs and who readily extend their help to all sentient beings even without being asked? [If possible,] they would certainly bring showers of wealth to this world to relieve poverty once and for all. But they cannot do so; for even wealth and riches are derived entirely from the fruit of the merit one has earned. Thus, instead of making an effort as large as a mountain [to earn wealth], it is better to earn an amount of merit as small as a spark of fire.

In general, these days, on seeing someone who has obtained a little amount of wealth and fortune, which is rare in an undeveloped country, everyone remarks with surprise, “O my Guru! How is it possible?” But, in fact, it is not necessary to earn a great deal of merit for that much [wealth], if the object to whom an offering is made is great and one’s motivation is pure.

For example, the story goes that King Nga-lay-nu, the lord of men, as the result of the merit he earned in offering just seven bean seeds, was able to wield his authority over all regions up to Tuṣita Heaven. And also, it is said that the power King Sal-gyal obtained was the result of the merit he earned by offering a lump of saltless dough <454> in charity. Although Atīśa Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna visited Tibet at a time when it was enjoying far more prosperity than now, he said, “Tibet really looks like a kingdom of hungry ghosts. Although Tibet is a holy country, there is no one here enjoying

the merit that would result from having given even four ounces of barley in charity.”

When one sees a small amount of material wealth and power and regards it as a uniquely amazing sight, it is because: first, one is small-minded; second, one has great attachment to the appearances of the world; and third, one has not understood exactly the manner in which the fruit of karma multiplies, as illustrated earlier with the seed of the banyan tree and so on. This is a sign that even if one has heard about this,<sup>56</sup> one does not believe it. If one has developed from the core of one’s heart an unhyocritical intention to withdraw from saṃsāra, even if one sees someone as wealthy as a serpent spirit, as high as the sky, as powerful as lightning, or as gorgeous as a rainbow, one will know that these [attributes] essentially have neither permanency nor reliability even the size of the hull of a sesame seed. One ought to feel repelled [by them], like a jaundiced patient when given oily bread.

The efforts one makes to accumulate merit for the sake of gaining worldly wealth and so on for this life <455> are acceptable for common, worldly people. But they are not anywhere near the real Dharma that makes one turn away from saṃsāra. If one really wants a genuine Dharma that leads one to realize the Ultimate Freedom, one should do as repeatedly instructed earlier. One should drop all saṃsāric attachments like droplets of spit, leave one’s fatherland and live in a foreign land, prefer to live only in solitude, be happy when sick, and be glad when dying; in such a mood one should attain perfection.

A student said to Nyam-me Dag-po Rin-po-ch’e, “During this degenerated period, while trying to practice the Dharma in the most perfect way, it is difficult to find food, clothes, and accessories. Should I do a bit of *nor-drub*,<sup>57</sup> learn a good

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<sup>56</sup> i.e., the multiplying effect of karmic reactions

<sup>57</sup> *nor.sgrub* / the Tantric ritual of propitiating deities—for example, Kubera, the god of wealth, or Lakṣmi, the goddess of wealth—to gain their favor and obtain wealth

*ch'ü-len*,<sup>58</sup> or am I definitely required to let myself die? What [should I do]?”

He replied, “Even if you try to find wealth by *nor-drub*, unless you have earned the merit of having given charity in the past, [wealth] will be difficult to find. For practicing the Dharma as it should be practiced, from the core of your heart, the earning of wealth for the sake of this life is also contradictory.

“Even if *ch'ü-len* is practiced, the effect it had in the past, when the essence of earth, stones, water, and trees was not lost, **will not be there now.** Hence, it will be of no use at present.

“It is also definitely not advisable to let yourself die, for it will be difficult in the future to obtain again a human body that has the full leisure and endowment<sup>59</sup> of the present one. <456> But certainly, whether you die or not, if a strong will is developed from the core of your heart to practice the Dharma, you will not suffer from lack of food and clothes. There is no example of a person practicing the Dharma who died because of famine. Lord Buddha said, ‘Even if there is a famine, at a time when a *dray*<sup>60</sup> of flour is sold for a *dray* of pearls, my followers will not suffer from want of food and clothing.’”

Thus, when the Bodhisattvas earn merit and dissolve the obscurations [of sin], they do so exclusively for the benefit of all sentient beings bound by space. It is out of the question to practice the Dharma for the sake of your present life. Even if you desire to attain Buddhahood for your own sake, you are not at all following the Mahāyāna path. Hence, the earning of merit, the purification of obscurations—whatever [wholesome deeds] you do—should be done exclusively for the benefit of the boundless [number of] sentient beings. It is

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<sup>58</sup> *bchud.len* / to live on spiritual power by using special ingredients, such as flower petals, pebbles, mercury pills, and limestone powder, or by eating space, or the like

<sup>59</sup> *dal-jor* / *dal'byor*

<sup>60</sup> a unit of measure; one Kosala *dray* equals approximately one pint.

extremely important to see that these activities are not, under any circumstance, mixed with your own personal interest.

If you act accordingly, even without searching for them, your own comfort and happiness in this life will be achieved automatically. This is similar to how, when a fire is made, smoke appears, or when barley is sown, straw appears as a by-product. Any particular thought to acquire them [i.e., personal comfort and happiness] should be discarded like poison.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> N.B. The closing prayer and ending line for the instruction on the maṇḍala are given at the end of the following chapter, since the latter is considered complementary to the maṇḍala. Likewise, the opening prayer for this chapter serves as the opening prayer for the following chapter as well.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# The Simultaneous Destruction of the Four Māras: The Pauper's Method of Earning Merit

<457> Since this short practice of offering the body in charity, known as The Pauper's Method of Earning Merit,<sup>1</sup> has been connected with the Guru Yoga in Sem-nyi Ngal-so,<sup>2</sup> it is permissible to treat it as complementary to the practice of Guru Yoga. It is also not incorrect to treat it as a branch of the maṇḍala ceremony for earning merit. It is here treated in conformity with [both of] these.

The word *ku-su-lu* means pauper. Yogis who have renounced their worldly lives, like hermits in solitude and so on, who have no other material means to earn merit, depend on their imagination and make offerings and alms of their bodies. All other worldly objects are laboriously sought, acquired, accumulated, and preserved with care and attention only for the sake of keeping the body alive. It is certain that we have greater affectionate attachment to the body than to any other wealth. Hence, cutting one's affectionate attachment to the body and using the latter for offerings and charity is far more beneficial than using other objects.

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<sup>1</sup> *ku-su-lü ts'og* / *ku.su.lu'i tshogs* / the practice usually known as *chö* / *gcod*

<sup>2</sup> *sems.nid nal.gso* / *The Resting of the Mind*, a trilogy by Kün-k'yen Long-ch'en-pa / This work, translated under the title *Kindly Bent to Ease Us* by Dr. Herbert V. Guenther, is now widely known in the western world.

As it is said:

**Offerings of horses and elephants yield a hundred-fold merit,  
Children and wives, a thousand, <458>  
And corporeal offerings and alms, a hundred thousand.**

**Ma-chig<sup>3</sup>** said:

**For having affectionate attachment to my body,  
Without knowing that the unattached offering of  
corporeal charity  
Is [the earning of] dual merit,  
O **Mother Nirmānakāya!** [I] confess to you; pardon  
[me].**

First, if you are accustomed to [direct] visualization, eject your consciousness<sup>4</sup> into the sky and instantly visualize it as a [black] **Tr'ö-ma**.<sup>5</sup>

Or, if you are not accustomed to this, [first] visualize the essence of your consciousness in the form of a black *Tr'ö-ma* in the center of your heart in a dancing pose. [The *Tr'ö-ma*'s] right hand raises a curved knife towards the sky, and her left hand holds a skullcup of blood at the level of her heart. [~~Be-  
hind~~] her right ear lobe is the head of a **black sow** producing a grunting sound. Imagine the *Tr'ö-ma* in that sort of form. As you shout "PHET!" the figure shoots through the passage of the middle nerve and out through the **Brahmā** hole<sup>6</sup> in the top of your head.

At that very instant, your body turns into a corpse and collapses [onto the ground]. **Imagine it to be not like your present body, but large, plump, luscious, and equal in size to the three realms.**

<sup>3</sup> a highly realized female Guru of Tibet and a great exponent of *chö*

<sup>4</sup> *nam-shey* / *rnam.śes* (the abbreviated form of *nam-par shey-pa* / *rnam.par śes.pa*) / the unrealized sentient being's conceptual mind

<sup>5</sup> *khros.ma* / a wrathful female deity / See Appendix B, Figure 12.

<sup>6</sup> *ts'ang-pay bu-ga* / *tshañs.pa'i bu.ga*



Having visualized yourself as the black *Tr'ö-ma*, imagine that the mere touch of the curved knife at the level of the corpse's eyebrows makes the whole skull fall off the body. The skull also is not like your present one: <459> imagine it as large as the area covered by the one billion world-systems.

Then, with her left hand, the *Tr'ö-ma* picks up the skull and, with the front towards her, sets it on a tripod made of **three human heads**, [each] as large as a cosmic mountain. Using the curved knife in her right hand, she lifts up the entire corpse and places it inside the skull.

Then, in the sky above the skull, imagine an [upside-down] white syllable HAM (𑀧) that stands for the nature of nectar and, beneath the skull, a short-A syllable (𑀅), red in color, that stands for the nature of fire. As you recite OM ĀḤ HŪM, the short-A syllable generates a fire and heats the skull, causing the corpse in it to melt with a simmering sound into the nature of nectar. The nectar boils up to the brim of the skull.<sup>7</sup> Contamination, bad odor, and all aspects of impurity overflow in the form of froth and a creamy scum. When the vapor [rising from the skull] strikes the syllable HAM, the latter is also heated, and a stream of white and red nectar flows from it and mixes as one [with the nectar in the skull]. Towards the end, the HAM syllable, too, completely melts into light and sinks into the nectar in the skull, becoming one with it.

Then say the prayer:

**PHEṬ**

*lü-chey dzin . . .* <sup>8</sup>

**Blast the attachment to the body . . .**

When you say OM ĀḤ HŪM, imagine that OM removes all the defects of color, aroma, taste, and so on [in the nectar]; ĀḤ multiplies the nectar; and HŪM transforms it into all kinds of desired <460> articles. Imagine [the nectar]

<sup>7</sup> For a visual aid, see Appendix B, Figure 13.

<sup>8</sup> phaṭ / lus.gces 'dzin . . .

transmuted into the undefiled Nectar of the Primordial Consciousness, which displays itself as great clouds having the nature of fulfilling all needs as desired.

Then, in the sky in front of you, on a precious throne with piles of cushions made of silk and brocade, visualize your gracious Root-Guru sitting in person, with the Gurus of the lineage sitting above him.

The assembly of the ~~tutelary deities~~ is in the middle portion of the **space**.

In the space at the level of the brim of the skull sits the assembly of the seventy-five **Pal-gön**<sup>9</sup> and other Dharma ~~custodians~~ and protectors, who are of transcendent as well as karmic types, and also those who are the spirits of the country, the owners of the particular place [where the performance is being done], and so on.

On the ground below, imagine the ~~eighty-four thousand varieties of obstructors~~, the **fifteen major tormenters** of children, and other varieties of hinderers—all the karmic creditors—as principal guests, together with all the six ~~aces~~ of sentient beings of the three ~~realms~~, gathering like the dust particles that are seen in the rays of the sun.

The Gurus of the lineage and the assembly of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas sitting above partake of the essence of the nectar by using their tongues, which are in the shape of a vajra with a hole in the tip. Think that thereby you have accomplished the ~~earning~~ of merit, that the obscurations are cleansed, that the weakening and breaches of the bond of trust are repaired, and that the Unique and common accomplishments are attained.

In the middle, the assembly of the deities belonging to the four or six classes of Tantra drink the essence of the nectar through their tongues, which resemble the emblems they carry, such as vajras, wheels, <461> gems, lotus blossoms, crossed vajras, and the like,<sup>10</sup> with holes in their tips. Think that you have accomplished the ~~earning~~ of merit, that the

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<sup>9</sup> dpal.mgon

<sup>10</sup> The various emblems represent the races to which they belong.

obscurations are cleansed, that the weakening and breaches of the ~~bond of trust~~ are repaired, and that the ~~Unique and common accomplishments~~ are attained.

The *Pa-wo*, *K'a-dro*, *Ch'ö-kyong*, *Sung-ma*, *Pal-gön Dün-chu Tsa-nga*,<sup>11</sup> and the like partake of the nectar through their sun-ray-like tongues that have a hole in the tip. Think that you have accomplished the earning of merit, that the obscurations are cleansed, that the negative forces that obstruct the practice of the sublime Dharma have been removed, and that all the anticipated favorable causes have been multiplied. These are the white offerings<sup>12</sup> for the guests above.

After that, if you are used to [elaborate] visualization, while still imagining yourself as a black *Tr'ö-ma*, imagine that hundreds of thousands of white, yellow, red, green, and blue serving *Dākinīs*, innumerable as the particles of dust in the rays of the sun, radiate from your heart. They offer a wisdom-skull<sup>13</sup> full of Transcendent Nectar to each of the sentient beings of the six races of the three realms. Think that [these beings are] fed to their full satisfaction.

If you are not used to [such elaborate] visualization, [simply] imagine yourself as a black *Tr'ö-ma*, and with the skullcup in your left hand, <462> scoop out the nectar, throw it [into space], and imagine it as a shower of nectar falling in the regions of the six races of the three realms. Think that these beings drink it and are fed to their full satisfaction. This is the white offering for the guests at the level below.

Again, imagine the vapor of the boiling nectar producing inconceivably voluminous clouds of offerings [in the following forms], and worship the higher ones above: water for drinking, water for washing the feet, flowers, incense, lamps, perfumes, food, music, the eight lucky signs, the seven regal insignia, festoons, parasols, ceiling canopies, thousand-spoked gold wheels, left-handed conch shells, and so on. Think that

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<sup>11</sup> dpa'.ḥo, mkha.'gro, chos.skyoñ, sruñ.ma, dpal.mgon bdun.cu rtsa.lña / *Dākas*, *Dākinīs*, Dharma upholders, protectors, seventy-five valorous helpers

<sup>12</sup> *kar-gye* / *dkar.gyed*

<sup>13</sup> *ye-shey-kyi kapāla* / *ye.śes.kyi kapāla*

[because of these], your own and others' merit is completely **earned** and that obscurations are cleansed. These are the variegated offerings<sup>14</sup> for the guests above.

Again, imagine that all articles necessary to suit the individual needs of the sentient beings of the six races—the guests below—are being showered on them like rain, making them happy and thoroughly satisfied. Think especially of those who have been your creditors throughout your beginningless samsaric existence up until now, to whom you owe karmic debts of the following types:

- debts of killing, resulting in [your own] short life;
- debts of robbing, resulting in poverty;
- debts of physically harming other beings, resulting in illness;
- debts of having received protection from those above you;
- debts of having been served by those below you; <463>
- debts of having enjoyed the friendship [of your equals] at the middle level;
- debts of [killing living beings and using the services of others] while building houses high [above the earth];
- debts of [killing living beings and using the services of others] while cultivating fields down [at the level of the earth];
- debts to marital partners and friends who have helped establish your social life in the world;
- debts incurred through having children and grandchildren, and keeping animals;
- debts incurred through food that has been consumed;
- debts incurred through clothes that have been worn;
- debts incurred by taking loans;
- debts incurred by taking milk from animals;
- debts incurred by using animals for carrying loads;
- debts incurred by using animals for plowing fields;
- debts incurred by exploiting [others];

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<sup>14</sup> *tr'a-gye / khra.'gyed*

and various other debts incurred by [harming] the life and using the flesh and bone of others.

[Visualize that] all the male and female lenders to whom you owe these debts gather around you with their containers, as if pressing you for payment. Imagine that their individual needs are met [by providing], for example:

food for those in need of food;  
clothes for those in need of clothes;  
wealth for those in need of wealth;  
parks for those in need of parks;  
riding-animals for those in need of riding-animals;  
dwellings for those in need of dwellings;  
life-partners for those in need of life-partners; and  
so on.

Imagine that a hundred-and-one different types of inexhaustible treasure stores of wealth shower on them like rain. These are enjoyed by all of them individually. [Because of this], whatever you karmically owe them is repaid, debts are settled, adverse relationships of blood enemies are resolved, and defilements of sin are cleansed. Imagine that all the beings are happy, since their desires are fully satisfied.

Whatever remains of these offerings is given to those who are weak, <464> powerless, lame, blind, deaf, dumb, and, in general, to all the sentient beings of the six regions who are afflicted with miseries and poverty. Imagine that they are given things to suit their individual wants, for example:

protection for those who need protection;  
saviors for those who need saviors;  
supporters and friends for those who need supporters and friends;  
life-partners for those who need life-partners;  
children for those who need children;  
medicine for those who are sick;  
life-giving nectar for the dying;  
miraculous legs for the lame;  
wisdom-eyes for the blind;

transcendent ears for the deaf;  
[and] tongues of wisdom for the dumb.

Thus, transform [the leftovers] so that the beings enjoy them to their hearts' content.

Imagine that the sentient beings of the six races are severed from the karmic visions, miserias, and habits pertaining to their respective regions. All the male beings [among them] attain the status of Ārya Avalokiteśvara, and all the female beings attain the status of the venerable Ārya Tārā. Thus [all the beings of] the three realms are fundamentally liberated. This is the variegated feast for those below. Until these visualizations are properly done, keep saying OM ĀḤ HŪM.

After that, say,

**PHET**

*yar ch'ö-yül drön-gyi . . .*

**Those guests above are pacified . . .**

and so on, up to,

*shi dzog-pa ch'en-po ma-chö ĀḤ*<sup>15</sup>

**Remain in the unshaped nature, "ĀḤ," of Dzog-pa  
Ch'en-po.**

Saying thus, dissolve the concepts of the offering, the offerer, and the ones to whom the offering is made <465> in non-conceptual Samādhi.

In general, the main teaching of *chö* describes four different types of offering, called the white, the red, the variegated, and the black. Here, however, only the white and the variegated offerings are described, not the red or the black.

Nowadays, those who ambitiously claim to be *chö* practitioners think that it is a drastic method to destroy evil gods and devils by killing, cutting, chopping, beating, and exorcising them. Hence, the so-called *chö-pas* [themselves] also

<sup>15</sup> phaṭ / yar mchod.yul mgron.gyi . . . / gśis rdzogs.pa chen.po ma.bcos āḥ

believe that they should always, under all circumstances, bank on the heroic strength generated out of being hot-tempered, disturbed, ferocious, angry, and arrogant. They think, as it were, that they are required to be like the executives of Yama [the King of Hell]. When they perform *chö* ceremonies for patients or the like, they take a combative attitude by becoming angry, disturbed, and aggressive, with ferocious eyes as big as [the inside of a] cup. They use harsh words while punching the patients with their fists. They hit them, grab them, and even tear the ragged clothes off their backs. Although they hope to subdue gods and demons with this kind of behavior, they are following a mistaken Dharma.

Ma-chig said:

**From beginningless time, with bad karma as their remote cause, driven by the wind of their bad circumstantial [cause], engaged only in illusory visions and miseries, these notorious gods and demons, upon dying, <466> have nowhere to go but to become the foundation stones of the lower regions. I catch them with my compassionate hook, feed them on my own hot flesh and blood, change their vision with the help of loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta—and attract them as my followers. But the [so-called] great practitioners of *chö* in the future will attempt to kill, drive away, and strike these wicked gods and demons, who are my wealth held by the hook of my compassion. That kind of perverted *chö* will propagate the teaching of the devil.**

And further:

**There will be several kinds of perverted black *chö* practices, like the one known as Nag-po Gu-tr'ug.<sup>16</sup>**

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<sup>16</sup> nag.po dgu.phrug / a black magic practice having nine branches / Do not confuse this with *ja-wa gu-tr'ug* / *bya.ba dgu.phrugs*, the nine kinds of high, actionless meditation in *Dzog-ch'en*.

All these practices that have been mentioned are [condemnable] because they are divorced from loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta. Such actions may work for subduing one or two weak spirits, but if the practitioners come across vicious and malicious spirits, it is evident that the latter will threaten their lives. Moreover, it is difficult to discern whether the power of subduing devils that comes to a person who is practicing a very pure Dharma is a virtuous sign of progress on the spiritual path or a [tantalizing power] caused by devils to hinder one's progress.

Most of those whose minds have fallen under the sway of wicked gods and spirits appear to possess <467> foreknowledge and psychic power. Eventually, however, they turn more and more against the sublime Dharma, and ultimately they find themselves without any virtue left in their minds even the size of a sesame seed. Being pressed under loads of karmic debts, they cannot even derive benefit for the present life from the remunerations they obtain. Ultimately they can barely even obtain food and clothes for their survival, and they die. Such people will, as mentioned earlier, definitely be reborn in Nyi-ts'e-wa<sup>17</sup> Hell and so on.

Hence, the gods and demons that are to be subdued by *chö* practitioners are found not outside, but inside. All the illusory figures of gods and devils seen outside are caused by one's failure to cut the internal root of one's attachment to "I" and "mine."

Ma-chig said:

**The substantial and non-substantial devils,  
The devils of [deceptive] pleasure, and the devils of  
attachment  
Are all generated by the devil of ego-attachment.**

Thus, the thing called evil spirit<sup>18</sup> is the devil of one's attachment to the ego.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> ñi.tshe.ḥa / See *Kün-zang La-may Zhal-lung*, Part One, p. 97.

<sup>18</sup> dre / 'dre

<sup>19</sup> nyem-je-kyi dü / sñiems.byed.kyi bdud



Elsewhere it is mentioned:

**The so-called “multiple evil spirits” are one’s perceptions.<sup>20</sup>**

**The so-called “youthful evil spirits” are one’s attachment to the ego.<sup>21</sup>**

**The so-called “overly active evil spirits” are one’s concepts.<sup>22</sup>**

**If one cuts these evil spirits, then one is called a *chö-pa*.**

Also, from what Je Mi-la told the Rock Ogress:

**The evil spirit stronger than you is your attachment to the ego. <468>**

**The evil spirits more [numerous] than you are your perceptions.**

**The evil spirits more spoiled than you are your concepts.**

The varieties of *chö* are explained as follows:

**To dwell in frightening places and in solitude is the [practice of] external *chö*.**

**To give away the body as food is the [practice of] inner *chö*.**

**The cutting of the single strand<sup>23</sup> [of attachment to the ego] at the very root is the essential *chö*.**

**One who has these three [kinds of] *chö* is indeed a yogi.**

The performances of all the different kinds of *chö* are meant to cut the root of one’s attachment to the ego, the main source of ignorance and of all illusory phenomena. Thus the cutting of the single root of one’s attachment to the

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<sup>20</sup> *du-shey* / 'du.śes

<sup>21</sup> *ngar-zin* / ñar.'zin

<sup>22</sup> *gö-po* / rgod.po

<sup>23</sup> *nyag-chig* / ñag.gcig

ego is called the essential *chö*. Until that attachment is cut, the externally apparent, illusory evil spirits cannot be killed by killing them, beaten by beating them, buried by burying them, suppressed by suppressing them, or exorcised by exorcising them. For example, it is just like [the way] smoke cannot be done away with without extinguishing the fire. Likewise, until the internal root of one's attachment to the ego is fully cut, the external appearances of illusory gods and evil spirits cannot be annihilated.

The Rock Ogress, too, said to Je-tsün Mi-la:

**If the evil spirit is not understood as the root of the  
mind,  
There are many evil spirits besides me.  
I won't leave just because you tell me to.**

[Thus, dealing with the ego] is similar to what she said to the Je-tsün.

The Je-tsün replied:

**If an evil spirit is taken as an evil spirit, it brings harm.  
If an evil spirit is understood as the mind, it brings  
liberation.  
If an evil spirit is understood as empty, it is cut.**

<469> And further:

**The visions of harmful male and female Gandharvas,  
When not understood, are devils.  
They defy you and cause obstruction.  
If recognized, even devils are gods;  
All siddhis are obtained through them.**

As Je-tsün Mi-la has said, it is the cutting of the internal concept of attachment to evil spirits at its very root that is called *chö*: it is not that evil spirits are killed, beaten, exorcised, buried, or destroyed. Thus it should be understood that the object to be cut is inside, not outside. In general, the tactic used by all other dharmas is to turn the sharpest edge

of their action, the power of their militant force, the tips of their “arrows” and “bayonets” outward, aimed at external enemies and obstructors.

However, the method of Dharma we follow agrees with what Je-tsun Mi-la said:

**According to the method of my Dharma, by cutting one's attachment to the ego at the root and throwing the eight worldly dharmas to the winds, the Four Māras are abashed.**

Accordingly, all who practice *chö* [correctly] should turn their attention inwards and direct all available hundred-and-one forces and powers towards [destroying] the attachment to the ego. Hence, instead of saying, “Guard it, protect it,”<sup>24</sup> a hundred times, it is better to say, “Eat it, take it,” once. Instead of seeking <470> help from a hundred devas and protectors, it is better to let a hundred devils and evil spirits eat [the ego].

As said:

**Hand the patient over to evil spirits;**

**Depend on enemies as escorts.**

**Rather than saying, “Guard it, protect it,” a hundred times,**

**It is better to say, “Eat it, take it,” once.**

**This is the style of A-ma Jo-mo's<sup>25</sup> Dharma.**

Thus, if the root of inner attachment to evil spirits is cut, a pure vision will dawn and what is called “devils changing into Dharma custodians and Dharma custodians into **Nirmāṇa-kāyas**” will take place.

Whereas, without knowing this, these days, those who call themselves *chö* practitioners think that gods and evil spirits exist externally. They always remain attached to concepts of them. All they see are appearances of evil spirits and

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<sup>24</sup> i.e., the ego

<sup>25</sup> a.ma jo.mo / Lady Mother, i.e., Ma-chig

**gyal-gong**.<sup>26</sup> They find no mental peace in themselves, and they tell others also: “There is an evil spirit up in that valley. There is an evil spirit down in that valley. That is an evil spirit. That is a *dü*.<sup>27</sup> That is a *tšen*.<sup>28</sup> I saw him. I have caught him. I have killed him. [A spirit] has been sneaking around you. I have exorcised him. Of course he looked askance at me,” and so on. They will always deceive others by telling nothing but lies. The wives [of such individuals] will also support their husbands by telling tales of their husbands’ heroic deeds.

The *tšens*, gods, evil spirits, and hungry ghosts know the minds of such people and follow them wherever they go. Those women who are easily deceived <471> are occupied by these spirits, who make them say, “I am the god. I am the evil spirit. I am the spirit of the deceased person. I am your old father. I am your old mother,” and many similar things that may seem quite believable and true. Some, by declaring, “I am a deva. I am a Dharma protector. I am Dam-chen,” and so on, give many false predictions and forecasts.

The evil spirits deceiving the Lamas and the Lamas deceiving the benefactors is like the worldly saying, “The father is deceived by the son and the son is deceived by the enemies.” These are clear indications of the dawn of the **Kali-yuga**.<sup>29</sup> when the whole country will be brought under the spell of demons.

The Great Guru Padmasambhava predicted:

**During the deteriorated time, male evil spirits will enter men,  
Female evil spirits will enter women,  
**T’eu-rang**<sup>30</sup> will enter the minds of children,**

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<sup>26</sup> rgyal.goñ (the abbreviated form of *gyal-po* / rgyal.po and *gong-po* / goñ.po) / names of mischievous spirits

<sup>27</sup> bdud / demon

<sup>28</sup> btsen / red-faced, angry spirit

<sup>29</sup> the present, degenerate time

<sup>30</sup> the’u.rañ / mischievous evil spirits who can change into any form in order to disturb others’ minds

**Dam-si**<sup>31</sup> will enter the hearts of monks.

Every being in Tibet will be occupied by an evil spirit.

According to this, and also [the following], the time predicted by him has come:

**When a *t'eu-rang* is seen as a deva, the time has come for Tibet to suffer.**<sup>32</sup>

Hence, instead of lending support to external, illusory gods and evil spirits who appear in the form of obstructors by confirming and authenticating their existence, one should train oneself to take them as dreams and as illusions. The temporary appearances <472> of patients as the inflicted [on one hand] and of gods and evil spirits as the inflictors [on the other] are the result of the bad karma [of both parties], which has caused the illusory visions that make them treat each other as such.

Therefore, instead of treating them as close and distant or as loved and hated, you should contemplate on having loving-kindness and compassion—Bodhicitta—for them both. By cutting your affectionate attachment [to your ego], you should [imagine] giving away your life and body as food to the gods and evil spirits without regret.<sup>33</sup> You should pacify your anger and hostility. From the core of your heart, you should offer prayers and the like and give religious instructions to turn the minds [of gods and evil spirits] towards the sublime Dharma. Finally, all [ideas of] the inflictor and the inflicted; visions of gods and evil spirits; [feelings of] hope and doubt, love and

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<sup>31</sup> dam.sri / the evil force developed out of the breach of the bond of trust

<sup>32</sup> The original prediction by Guru Rin-po-ch'e, who visited Tibet at the turn of the eighth century, is cited here by Jig-me Ling-pa's (1729-1798) student, Jig-me Gyal-way Nyu-gu, while explaining the outer and inner preliminary practices.

<sup>33</sup> The actual giving away of one's life and body can only be practiced by fully realized Bodhisattvas such as Nāgārjuna, who gave away his head. However, one who is practicing Bodhicitta should perform such charity theoretically, until (when the Path of Seeing is found) he or she can perform it practically.

hatred, good and bad, happiness and unhappiness—all these concepts should be thoroughly investigated.

As the saying goes:

**To see the non-existence of gods and evil spirits is the conviction of the doctrinal view.**

**To remain undistracted and unattached is the secret of meditation.**

**Neither to accept nor reject is the secret of conduct.**

**To have neither hope nor doubt is the secret of the Ultimate Fruit.**

As said, if all [concepts of] the cutter and the cut are rendered equal in the balanced state of the [non-conceptual] Dharmadhātu,<sup>34</sup> internal attachment to the ego, the root of the harmful tormenters, is [actually] cut, and ultimately the state of having the full success of cutting will reveal [itself].

**Although the non-existence of an “I” is intellectually understood, the concept of “I” remains coarse.**

**Although one intends to give up attachment to dualism, hopes and doubts keep arising.**

**May I <473> and sentient beings like me, who have egoistic views,**

**Be blessed to understand the position of the non-existence of “I.”**

This is the instruction on the maṇḍala [offering] for earning merit.

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<sup>34</sup> the Great Śūnyatā

## CHAPTER SIX

# The Guru Yoga

**First, he followed a perfect Guru and did what he was told to do;  
Second, overcoming hardship, he put his [Guru's] instructions into practice;  
In the end, attaining the realization identical [to that of his Guru], he upheld the tradition of the lineage.  
At the feet of that unparalleled Guru, I pay homage.**

Sixth, the method of generating the insight of the Primordial Consciousness<sup>1</sup> in one's mind, the ultimate of all methods, the door through which the blessings enter, is the instruction on the Guru Yoga.<sup>2</sup>

In general, if an absolutely pure Dharma is to be practiced, a perfect Guru—a Dharma teacher who has all the required qualifications—should first be sought. It is extremely important to perceive him as a real Buddha from the core of your heart and to do whatever he tells you to do.

The Sūtras, too, state:

**The Ultimate Truth is realized through faith.**

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<sup>1</sup> *tog-pay ye-shey / rtogs.pa'i ye.ses*

<sup>2</sup> *la-may nal-jor / bla.ma'i rnal.'byor*

Similarly, the Venerable Atiśa said:

**Friends, until you attain Bodhi, you need a Guru; follow  
a noble teacher.**

**Until the [Ultimate] Nature is understood, you must  
learn; listen to the Guru's instructions.**

**Since all pleasures are due to the Guru's blessings, be  
grateful to him.**

<474> Ge-shey K'a-rag Gom-ch'ung said:

**One must understand the Guru as the source of all the  
accomplishments of this world and the world beyond.  
Even if one knows the Tripiṭaka, it will be of no benefit  
if one has no devotion and respect for the Guru.**

In particular, in all the secret Vajrayāna paths, the Guru [Yoga] alone is regarded as the most important. The practice of Guru Yoga is prescribed in all the Tantras and surpasses all the ~~creative and non-creative meditations~~.

From a Tantra:

**A moment's remembrance of the Guru  
Is superior to meditating on a hundred thousand  
images of devas  
For ten million aeons.**

In particular, *Rang-zhin Dzog-ch'en Nying-t'ig*<sup>3</sup>—the Essence of the Vajrayāna—does not confirm the meaning of the secret Truth by examining, by referring to learned conclusions,<sup>4</sup> or the like, as is done in the lower, [non-Tantric] yānas. Nor does it speak of attaining the Unique Accomplishment by first attaining the common accomplishment, as in the Lower Tantras.<sup>5</sup> Nor, as in the other Upper Tantras,<sup>6</sup> does it specifi-

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<sup>3</sup> rañ.bžin rdzogs.chen sñiñ.thig

<sup>4</sup> *ten-tsig* / *gtan.tsigs*

<sup>5</sup> Kriya, Caryā, and Yoga; also known in Tibet as Kriya, Upa, and Yoga

<sup>6</sup> Mahāyoga and Anuyoga



cally introduce [one to] the **Essential** Primordial Consciousness<sup>7</sup> by citing the Symbolic Primordial Consciousness<sup>8</sup> referred to in the Third **Initiation**<sup>9</sup> as an example.<sup>10</sup>

Rather, it speaks of following only such a Guru who possesses supreme insight and holds a lineage that, undefiled by the breach of trust, <475> is like an untarnished gold chain. By perceiving him as an actual Buddha, and by fully relying on him and offering prayers to him with strong devotional respect, one should merge one's mind undifferentiably with his. Because of this, the Guru's blessings are transferred and the [ultimate] insight is born in one's mind.

As mentioned before:<sup>11</sup>

**[Realization of] the Ultimate Truth, the *L'en-chig*  
*Kyey-pay Ye-shey*,  
Is exclusively due to the handprint of having earned  
merit and purified obscurations,  
And to the blessings of the realized Guru.  
Know that it is foolish to seek any other methods.**

Saraha said:

**One into whose heart the Guru's instructions enter  
Is like one who sees a treasure in one's palm.**

Similarly, the omniscient Dharma-King Long-ch'en-pa said in his work, **Gyu-ma Ngal-so:**

**The ~~creative and non-creative~~ meditations and so on  
cannot effect liberation by the essential methods of  
their individual paths. They depend on various [medi-**

<sup>7</sup> *dön-gyi ye-shey* / don.gyi ye.śes / i.e., the Fourth Initiation, the direct introduction to the Essential Primordial Consciousness

<sup>8</sup> *pey-yi ye-shey* / dpe.yi ye.śes

<sup>9</sup> *wang-sum-pa* / dḥaṅ.gsum.pa / i.e., the Wisdom, or Ḍākinī, Initiation

<sup>10</sup> i.e., introducing the Essential Primordial Consciousness by describing it as being somewhat like that which is introduced in the Third Initiation

<sup>11</sup> The same quotation appears in Chapter Four, p. 396.

tative] practices,<sup>12</sup> on the enhancement of progress made,<sup>13</sup> and so on, whereas the Guru Yoga effects liberation by generating the insight [of the Ultimate Truth] through the essential method of its own path. That is why the Guru Yoga is the most profound of all methods.

It is also said <476> in the Dam-ts'ig Kö-pa Tantra:

**Remembrance of the Guru for a moment is superior to  
Meditation for a hundred thousand years  
On devas adorned with marks and signs.  
The offering of one invocation prayer to the Guru is  
superior to  
Counting eleven million mantras and doing *drub-pas*.<sup>14</sup>**

From the **Ati-kö-pa** [Tantra]:

**He who visualizes his gracious Guru  
On the crown of his head, in the center of his heart,  
Or in the center of his limbs  
Enjoys the blessings of a thousand Buddhas.**

Je Gö-ts'ang-pa said:

**Upon doing the Guru Yoga meditation,  
Defects will wear away and virtues will be fully  
accomplished.**

And also:

**There are many kinds of creative meditation,  
Yet none are above the Guru Yoga;**

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<sup>12</sup> *chö-pa* / *spyod.pa*

<sup>13</sup> *bog-dön* / *bogs.'don*

<sup>14</sup> *sgrub.pa* / the performance of the *sādhana*s of devas to attain spiritual perfection

There are many kinds of ~~non-creative~~ meditation,  
Yet none are above reliance [on the Guru] with full  
conviction.

Similarly, Dri-gung Kyob-pa Rin-po-ch'e said:

**If the sun of devotion does not shine  
Upon the Guru, the snow mountain of the Four Kāyas,  
The river of blessings will not flow.  
Please pay careful attention to your devotional faith.**

And Je-tśün Rang-rig Re-pa said:

**To expect the non-conceptual Primordial Conscious-  
ness  
Without offering prayers to the Guru  
Is like waiting for the sun in a cave facing north.  
Such a person will have no occasion to merge the *nang-  
sem*.<sup>15</sup>**

<477> Thus, the birth of the unshaped insight of the [Ultimate] Truth in one's mind is possible only through ~~faith-  
ful devotion~~ and the proper practice of the Guru Yoga. No other method can generate this insight.

This is why, even though Nāropa became learned in the teachings of the three yānas,<sup>16</sup> when he was acting as a paṇḍit to guard the northern gate of Vikramaśīla University and was routing the challenges of the heretics there, still a Jñāna Ḍākinī told him, "You are expert only in words. Since you are not expert in their meaning, you still have to follow a Guru."

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<sup>15</sup> snañ.sems (the abbreviated form of *nang-wa* / snañ.ḅa and *sem-pa* / sems.pa) / *Nang-wa* refers to phenomenal appearances and *sem-pa* to the mind that observes them. The merging of these refers to the dissolution of dualistic concepts into the great, non-conceptual Śūnyatā through the *Zung-jug* process.

<sup>16</sup> *t'eg-pa-sum* / theg.pa.gsum / the Śrāvakayāna, Pratyekabuddhayāna, and Mahāyāna; or Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna, and Tantrayāna

As she predicted, he followed Guru Tilopa, undergoing various hardships. Tilopa said, “Even after showing you this much, you do not understand.” So saying, Tilopa hit Nāropa on the forehead with his [i.e., Tilopa’s] sandal, upon which the insight of the Ultimate Truth equal to that of his Guru grew in Nāropa.

The phlegm expectorated by Nāgārjuna was said to have been taken [as a blessing] without any hesitation by Nāgabodhi, who thereby achieved the Unique Accomplishment.

Similarly, Rig-dzin Jig-me Ling-pa said:

**On seeing the works of the Second Gyal-wa [i.e., Longch’en-pa], I developed a genuine faith that made me perceive him as a real Buddha. Because of my prayers offered with one-pointed devotion, <478> his Jñāna<sup>17</sup> attracted me [as his follower], and that gave birth to the self-perfected insight in me. From that time onward, I gave instructions to hundreds of seekers. [As a result], those who were diligent transcended the worldly type of concentration. Those who were intelligent gave up indulgence in [intellectual], discursive investigations. All of them turned out to be individuals whose validity of attainment could be weighed on the scale of faith—the manner in which the realization of the Ultimate Truth is ascertained.**

Similarly, when the great translator Vairocana was banished to Gyal-mo Tsa-rong, there was an extremely infirm, eighty-year-old man there named Pang-gen Mi-p’am Gön-po. He was provided with a meditation belt and stick,<sup>18</sup> and was given the blessings of the practice of this Guru Yoga. Unmistaken understanding of the doctrinal view of *Ka-dag Tr’eg-*

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<sup>17</sup> a Sanskrit term equivalent to *ye-shey* / *ye.śes*, the Primordial Consciousness

<sup>18</sup> To help a meditator keep the spinal column straight while sitting in a cross-legged position, a “T”-shaped stick is used on which one rests one’s arms or chin.

*ch'ö*<sup>19</sup> grew in his mind. His body dissolved into invisible particles, and he attained Buddhahood.

No more profound path can be found beyond this [Guru Yoga], even if it is compared with the doctrines of the nine *yānas*. Although it is called “a preliminary practice,” it is, in fact, the ultimate secret of all the paths of the main doctrine. If, always, under all circumstances, this alone is regarded as the basis of meditation, it will serve the purpose, even if one has no other practices. Hence, it is extremely important that [the Guru Yoga] be done from the core of one’s heart.

Such a profound Guru Yoga <479> as this consists of three practices:

1. The Visualization of the Paradise of the Assembly;
2. The Making of the Seven-Limbed Offering;
3. The Offering of Prayers with One-Pointed Concentration.

## 1 THE VISUALIZATION OF THE PARADISE OF THE ASSEMBLY <sup>20</sup>

The exercise of ~~imagining a transcendent world~~<sup>21</sup> is an act of one who has great will-power. Hence, visualize the entire area, as far as your imagination extends, as the Pe-ma Ö Palace,<sup>22</sup> perfect in all its attributes. To make yourself suitable to receive initiation,<sup>23</sup> to develop the Bliss and Emptiness of the Primordial Consciousness,<sup>23</sup> and as a propitious omen in having been personally accepted as a follower, imagine [yourself] as essentially the *Ḍākinī Ye-shey Ts'o-gyal*, but in the form of *Vajrayoginī*. She is red, has one face, two hands,

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<sup>19</sup> *ka.dag khregs.chod* / one of the highest Atiyoga meditations; it directly cuts through mental obscuration.

<sup>20</sup> *ts'og-zhing* / *tshogs.ñiñ*

<sup>21</sup> *zhing-k'am* / *ñiñ.khams*

<sup>22</sup> The Pe-ma Ö (Lotus-Light) Palace on Zang-dog Pal-gyi Ri-wo (the Glorious Copper-colored Mountain) is the palace of Guru Rin-po-ch'e.

<sup>23</sup> *de-tong ye-shey* / *bde.stoñ ye.śes*

and her three eyes are focused on the heart of the Guru with a yearning look. The yearning look signifies the gesture of impatient excitement due solely to the anticipated happiness of meeting the Guru.

**Her right hand raises towards the sky a curved knife that cuts the three poisons at their roots. Her left hand holds a skullcup of blood at the level of her heart, [in a gesture of] drinking the three realms in the form of blood.<sup>24</sup>**

Visualize that her bare body is decorated with bone ornaments and flower garlands, and that it is visible, yet non-substantial, like a rainbow in the sky.

Above her [i.e., you] <480> in the sky, at the distance of an arrow's length, imagine a hundred-thousand-petaled lotus made of various precious gems. On that, [imagine] a sun disk and, above that, a moon disk. On that, imagine the unparalleled treasure store of Compassion, the Valorous Root-Guru, who, in essence, represents the core of all the Buddhas of the three times, but who, in form, is the Great O-gyen Do-je Ch'ang, the Vajradhara from Uḍḍiyāna. He is white with a pinkish hue. He has one face, two arms, and his two legs are folded in royal repose. He is dressed in a royal gown, a monk's robe, and a Tantric robe. He wears a lotus hat.<sup>25</sup>

O-gyen Rin-po-ch'e's hats are of three kinds. O-gyen Rin-po-ch'e—the Second Buddha—was not born from parents, but from a lotus blossom in the Milky Ocean in the north-western direction through a sudden outburst of *Rig-pa* that cognized the secret of phenomenal appearances [as manifestations of the Ultimate Truth]. The hat then offered to him by the Ḍākinīs, as the principal Buddha of the [Lotus] race, is known as Pe-ma K'a-bü.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Blood represents the ignorance that causes sentient beings to continue their existence in the three suffering realms. The gesture of drinking blood stands for the termination of this cause and the deliverance of all suffering beings to the state of Buddhahood.

See Appendix A, Note 6(a) for information on the text in bold type in this paragraph.

<sup>25</sup> *pe-zhu* / pad.ḥu

<sup>26</sup> pad.ma kha.'bus / Lotus Bud

When he performed his yogic practices at the eight great charnel grounds and understood that concepts of good and bad ultimately end in Emptiness, the Dākinīs offered him a hat as a mark of his greatness; this hat is known as **Sha-way Nyen-zhu.**<sup>27</sup>

When Tsug-lag-dzin, the King of Zahor, <481> burned him alive, his Vajra Body could not be harmed by the element of fire. At the wondrous sight of him sitting naked, cool, and unburned in the center of a lotus blossom, the king was awed and faith grew in him. He ordered the door of the storeroom for his new brocade gowns to be opened and all his clothes and hats to be brought. He offered O-gyen Rin-po-ch'e all his belongings, including his kingdom and subjects. The hat offered at that time is known as Pe-ma T'ong-dröl.<sup>28</sup>

Here, [reference is made to] Pe-ma T'ong-dröl, or Dab-den Rig-nga.<sup>29</sup> The two aspects of the hat, its inside and outside, stand for the *Zung-jug* of the ~~creative and non-creative meditations~~. To represent the Three Kāyas, it has three tips pointing upward. To represent the help offered to sentient beings by the five Buddhas, it has five colors. To represent means and wisdom,<sup>30</sup> it has a sun and moon. To represent the [skylike] unending boundary of the ~~bond of trust~~, the tips of its flaps have blue borders. To represent the unmoving Samādhi, it is crowned with a vajra. To represent the understanding of the highest doctrinal view and the final attainment, it is mounted with a vulture plume. These are [the descriptions of] the hats.

[The Guru's] right hand holds, near his heart, a golden vajra in a threatening gesture. His left hand, in a meditative gesture, holds a skullcup containing a vase of life which is

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<sup>27</sup> sha.ḅa'i mñen.zu / the name of a hat made of a certain variety of gold brocade

<sup>28</sup> pad.ma mthoñ.grol / Liberation on Seeing the Lotus

<sup>29</sup> 'dab.lḅan rigs.lña / With Petals of the Five Races / The five petals represent the five races of the Buddhas.

<sup>30</sup> t'ab-dang shey-rab / thabs.dañ śes.rab

filled with the Immortal Nectar of Wisdom and topped with a wish-fulfilling tree.<sup>31</sup>

Tucked under <482> his left arm, he holds a trident to indicate, as it were, that his consort, the **Queen of the Dākinīs**, is concealed there. The three prongs of the trident pointing upward indicate the *Ngo-wa*, *Rang-zhin*, and *T'ug-je*.<sup>32</sup> The three heads [on the trident]—a skeleton head, a decomposed head, and a fresh head—represent the Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya, and Nirmānakāya. To represent the nine yānas, there are nine iron rings [attached to the base of the two outer] prongs. The five colored scarves stand for the Five Primordial **Consciousnesses**.<sup>33</sup> To indicate the yogic practices done at the eight great charnel grounds, where [two types of] female spirits—**Ma-mo** and **K'a-dro**—were subjugated, [the trident] is decorated with locks of hair from dead and living [female] beings, and with other [objects].

Around [the figure of the Guru], in the center of circular haloes of rainbow light, within a lattice of five-colored rays, imagine the eight *Rig-dzins* of India, the twenty-five realized followers of Tibet—the king, subjects, and the like—the Gurus, Devas, and Dākinīs, and the oceans of **trustholders**<sup>34</sup> in such a way that ordinary mental concepts cease.

In general, in practicing the Guru Yoga, there are three different ways to visualize:

1. While one is taking refuge, the Gurus in the assembly are visualized in a vertical array.<sup>35</sup> Above the figure of the Great O-gyen Rin-po-ch'e, all the *Dzog-ch'en* lineage Gurus are visualized, one above the other.

<sup>31</sup> *pag-sam jön-shing* / dpag.bsam ljon.shin

<sup>32</sup> no.bo, ran.bzin, thugs.rje / Essence, Nature, and **Merely**—aspects of the Buddha Mind according to Atiyoga

<sup>33</sup> *ye-shey-nga* / ye.ses.lña

<sup>34</sup> *dam-chen gya-ts'o* / dam.chan rgya.mtsho / *Dam-chen* (S. Samaya-dhara) refers to one who maintains the bond of trust, and *gya-ts'o* means ocean.

<sup>35</sup> *t'o-tseg-su gom-pa* / tho.brtsegs.su sgom.pa / lit., stones piled one above another to mark a boundary



2. The style adopted while visualizing Vajrasattva and counting His mantra is called “The All-Inclusive, Gem-like Style.”<sup>36</sup> <483> [According to this method], Guru Vajrasattva is to be visualized as one in whom all the lineage Gurus are included.
3. The visualization done during the Guru Yoga is called “Imagining All the Gurus Gathering as in a ~~Market~~ place.”<sup>37</sup> Here, all the Gurus of the *Dzog-ch'en* lineage, the Gurus, Devas, and Ḍākinīs, and the oceans of trust-holders assemble around the Great O-gyen Rin-po-ch'e as people gather in a marketplace.<sup>38</sup>

Then start the prayer that begins:

**E-MA-HO**

*rang-nang l'ün-drub dag-pa rab-jam-zhing . . .*

**How wondrous!**

**My vision [turns into] a self-existent paradise of absolute purity . . .**

up to:

*sal-tong nyam-nay ch'en-pö ngang-du-sal*<sup>38</sup>

**Visualize them in a great, equilibrious state of clarity and emptiness.**

Visualize in conformity with the words and their meanings.

Then, developing strong, moving faith, say:

**HŪM**

*o-gyen yül-gyi nub-jang-tsam . . .* <sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *kün-dü nor-bü lug / kun.'dus nor.bu'i lugs*

<sup>37</sup> *tr'om-ts'og-su gom-pa / khrom.tshogs.su sgom.pa*

<sup>38</sup> *e.ma.ho / rañ.snañ lhun.grub dag.pa rab.'byams.ñin . . . / gsal.stoñ mñam.gnas chen.po'i nañ.du.gsal*

<sup>39</sup> *hūm / o.rgyan yul.gyi nub.byañ.mtshams . . .*

**At the northwest boundary of the country of  
Uḍḍiyāna . . .**

up to:

**GURU PADMA SIDDHI HŪṀ**

**May I attain the accomplishment of the Lotus Born  
Guru.**

Imagine that, the moment this is said, the entirety of the contents and the container of the Pe-ma Ö Palace of Zang-dog Pal-ri<sup>40</sup> actually descends and non-dualistically merges, like water placed in water, with the forms and figures you have visualized.

## **2 THE MAKING OF THE SEVEN-LIMBED OFFERING <sup>41</sup>**

The Vajrayāna path has many methods, is not difficult [to follow], and is meant for those having sharp mental acumen. If one practices it constantly with great mental power, <484> the amount of merit that [a follower of] the Pāramitāyāna earns in a great kalpa is here earned in a fraction of a moment and one can liberate oneself in a single lifetime or so.

Because of this, and also because the unique, secret doctrine regards the Vajra Guru alone as the best and most excellent field for earning merit, [the practice of the seven-limbed offering] has been attached to the Guru Yoga.

### **2.1 THE FIRST LIMB: PROSTRATIONS**

From among the boundless means for earning merit, summed up into seven limbs, first comes the limb of doing prostrations, the antidote for arrogance.

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<sup>40</sup> bzañ.ldog dpal.ri / the Paradise of Guru Rin-po-ch'e

<sup>41</sup> yen-lag dün-pa / yan.lag bdun.pa

Imagine your body multiplied hundreds of thousands of times, equal to the number of atoms of the innumerable paradises of the Buddhas, and think that all the sentient beings, equal [to the number that could be] bounded by the sky, are doing prostrations together with you.

Then recite:

**HRĪ**

*dag-lü zhing-gi dül-nyed-du*

*nam-par tr'ül-pay ch'ag-tsal-lo*<sup>42</sup>

**I do prostrations by transforming my body  
Into the number of atoms in a [Buddha]-realm.**

In general, those who are simply completing the practice of the Five Hundred Thousand Prerequisites<sup>43</sup> can do the 100,000 prostrations together with the counting of refuge prayers, for there is such a practice. However, according to the actual instructions, if the prostrations are done in conjunction with the Guru Yoga, they will be perfect in every respect.

When a prostration is done, the body is physically engaged in doing it; vocally, the word “prostration” is mentioned and prayers are recited; and mentally, one surrenders to, and fully relies on, [the Guru] with complete trust <485> and devotional respect.

If, when doing prostrations with one’s body, speech, and mind, one visualizes doing so together with all other sentient beings as a concentrated group, it is a great technique.

Instead, some may allow their eyes and mouths to be distracted and their minds to run after external objects. They may divert their eyes and attention towards their right when someone walks, sits, or talks on that side, touching their hands to their left cheek. Or again, if something happens on

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<sup>42</sup> hrī / bdag.lus zin.gi rdul.sned.du / rnam.par 'phrul.pas phyag.'tsal.lo

<sup>43</sup> bum-nga / 'bum.lña / the offering of 100,000 of each of the following: the refuge prayer, the prayer for developing the motivation, the long Vajrasattva mantram, the maṇḍala, and prostrations

their left side, they may divert their eyes and attention in that direction, touching their hands to their right cheek. If one allows the mind to be thus distracted and practices the prostrations hypocritically with one's staggering body alone, one should know that one will achieve essentially nothing other than to punish the body.

Moreover, while doing prostrations, it is necessary that the two palms form a cavity inside, so that they look like an opening lotus bud. Pressing the two palms against each other without leaving any cavity in them, or only touching the tips of the fingers [and not the base of the palms], is improper.

The Sūtra called T'ar-pa Ch'en-po Ch'og-su Gyay-pa states:

**Like the opening bud of a lotus,  
Two hands cupped above the head,  
[And] with bodies numerous as cloudbanks,  
Prostrate to the Buddhas of the ten directions.**

Also, from Yön-ten Dzö: <486>

**Not in a habitually undisciplined manner, but with a  
duly submissive body  
As a demonstration of the reverence born in one's  
heart,  
With cupped hands like flower petals tightly held by  
their bract,  
The subdued disposition of the *ga-bu-ch'ung*<sup>44</sup> flower is  
to be adopted.**

Then, systematically, when holding your palms on the crown [of your head, imagine that] physical obscurations are cleansed, when holding them at the throat, that vocal obscurations are cleansed, and when holding them at the heart, that mental obscurations are cleansed.

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<sup>44</sup> *ga.bu.chun* / said to be the name of a yellow flower that is found in Tibet

Then follows what is called the “bringing of the five principal points of the body to the ground.” This means prostrating by touching the forehead, the two palms, and the two knees to the ground. This has the benefit of purifying the defilements of the delusions of the five poisons, of obtaining the blessings of the transcendent Body, Speech, ~~Mind, Virtue, and Action~~,<sup>45</sup> and so on. Therefore, do it accordingly.

When you get up, you should keep your waist straight, cup the hands, and prostrate as before. Waving the hands without properly joining the palms, prostrating by only bending a little—without touching the forehead and knees to the ground, performing crooked prostrations by not standing up straight, and so on are all disrespectful gestures and should never be done.

As a penalty for performing crooked prostrations, it is said that one will have to suffer rebirth as a hunchbacked dwarf <487> who walks crookedly. [Since] prostrations are done with the hope of attaining benefit, there is no point in prostrating in a way that will only [cause one to] obtain a defective body. Even if one cannot do many prostrations, those that one does should be done perfectly. If one does prostrations against the slopes of hills, banks, or the like for the sake of making the task easier, it will have no meaning at all.<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, these days, when one meets Lamas and so on, one does the first prostration perfectly and then finishes off with two imperfect ones.<sup>47</sup> This is regarded as the aristocrat’s style of doing prostrations. Many innocent people follow this style, which is extremely unfortunate.

The purpose of listening to the Dharma is to learn from the Guru what one does not know—at the least, how to do a single prostration [in a perfect way]. Whatever is learned should be remembered and put into practice always, under all

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<sup>45</sup> *ku / sku // sung / gsuñ // t’ug / thugs // yön-ten / yon.tan // tr’in-lay / phrin.las*

<sup>46</sup> See Appendix B, Figures 14, 15, and 16 for illustrations of the correct way of positioning the hands and body while doing prostrations.

<sup>47</sup> Prostrations are usually done three times to express the respect of one’s body, speech, and mind.

circumstances. However, if one does not want to practice even that which is easy to learn and accomplish, no ultimate benefit can be expected from learning the Dharma. Hence, there should be a marked difference even in the performance of a single prostration by one who has heard the Dharma compared with one who has not.

In the past, <488> Je-tsün Mi-la went to receive teaching from Lama Ngog-pa. From a great distance Je-tsün Mi-la prostrated to Lama Ngog-pa, as he saw the Lama preaching the Hevajra Tantra to a multitude of monks. Lama Ngog-pa was pleased and reciprocated the prostration by taking off his cap. An interval in the preaching also synchronized with that auspicious event. [Lama Ngog-pa] said, “The one prostrating over there follows the style of prostrations found among the followers of L’o-drag Mar-pa. Ask who he is.”

In general, finding a Guru and learning from him should be like dipping a piece of woolen cloth in dye. What is expected is that [the student] learn the exact style of the noble Guru. For example, when a piece of woolen cloth is put into a vat of dye, there should be some qualitative difference in color [upon removal]. How can it come out the same color, without changing at all?

These days, there are those who, even after hearing the Dharma a hundred times, show not even a hair’s breadth of improvement in their nature and whose activities and behavior reveal not an iota of difference compared with those of mundane people. This is a sign that they have developed immunity to the Dharma<sup>48</sup> and have become *dam-nyams*.<sup>49</sup>

This is like the saying:

**Even though the Dharma can subdue sinners,  
It cannot subdue those who have developed immunity  
to it.**

**Even though oil can soften a stiff substance,  
It cannot soften a hide used for packing butter.**

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<sup>48</sup> *ch’ö-dre* / chos.dred

<sup>49</sup> *dam.ñams* / a betrayer of the bond of trust

As said, <489> even if such people hear of the benefit of merit, the bad reaction of sin, and any amount of virtues of the Buddhas, except for their feeling, “So it is said,” not the slightest conviction or faith [capable of] changing their mental attitude will be generated in them. Even if Lord Buddha were to come in person, He would not be able to benefit them.

The Great O-gyen [Rin-po-ch’e] said:

**Do not have a follower who knows about Dharma,  
speaks about it, yet is immune to it.  
Do not keep a friend who places a limit on his bond of  
trust.**

Therefore, even if one knows the meaning of only a single word of Dharma, one should practice it until it merges with one’s mind and one knows it well. The purpose of following a Guru is to watch the activities of his body, speech, and mind, and to learn how to follow them.

Even the worldly saying goes:

**Everything done is done by mimicking.  
The best of mimickers is the expert.**

As said, all the external, internal, and secret virtues of the Guru should be acquired like a *sa-tsa* taken from a mold.

In general, a prostration is a gesture to express devotional respect. There are many styles of doing prostrations according to the different fashions of different countries. Here, the manner of doing prostrations should be in conformity with the Buddha’s teaching, which has been heard and understood from the Guru. <490> If, in spite of this [hearing and understanding], the prostrations are not performed properly, either out of preference for following an easier way or to demonstrate one’s greatness, it amounts to showing disrespect to, and taking advantage of, the object to which the prostration is done. It should be understood that such a prostration, [grudgingly] done as if paying a tax, generates demerit and

therefore is of no use. But a prostration done according to the rules will accrue an immeasurable amount of benefit.

In the past, when a monk was prostrating towards a stūpa containing Lord Buddha's hair and nail clippings, Ānanda asked the Buddha about its benefit.

Lord Buddha replied:

**By doing one prostration, the kingdoms ruled by the Universal Emperor will be enjoyed as many times as the number of atoms in the volume of earth covered by your body, down to where the universe touches its cosmic ~~base of gold.~~ But even then its benefit will not be exhausted.**

Similarly, in [one of] the Sūtras, Lord Buddha mentioned that He obtained the magnificence of His uṣṇīṣa from the extreme devotional respect that He paid while doing prostrations to one who acted as a Guru. Therefore, [proper prostrations] will become the ultimate cause for obtaining the inconceivable uṣṇīṣa of the Buddha.

## 2.2 THE SECOND LIMB: MAKING VOTIVE OFFERINGS

As mentioned earlier in the maṇḍala offering, whatever offerings you can actually offer should be neatly and cleanly arranged. <491> They should not be contaminated with avarice, hypocrisy, or ostentation. Treat these offerings just as a basis for imagination.

Then think that both the earth and sky are filled with the items of offerings of gods and men: flowers, incense, lamps, perfumes, food, and the like; palaces, countries, and parks; the seven regal insignia and eight lucky signs; and the sixteen vajra goddesses singing, dancing, and playing music. In particular, these should be miraculously transformed so that they follow the pattern of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva's offerings.

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, because of the power of his Samādhi, projects hundreds of thousands of rays of different colors from his heart, equal in number to the atoms of the



innumerable paradises of the Buddhas. On the tip of each of these rays, he imagines a Samantabhadra Bodhisattva like himself, who again sends forth innumerable rays as before. On the tip of those rays, he keeps imagining innumerable miraculous figures of Samantabhadra—up to the point where the number is inconceivable. Each of them carries an unimaginable variety and number of articles for worship and offers them to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions. <492> [Such offerings] are called “Ārya Samantabhadra’s Clouds of Offerings.”

As many of these kinds of offerings as you can mentally manage should be imagined and then offered, by reciting:

*ngö-sham yi-trül ting-zin-gyi*  
*nang-si ch’ö-pay ch’ag-gyar-bül*<sup>50</sup>

**By actually arranging them, mentally imagining them,  
and by the power of Samādhi,  
All possible phenomenal objects are presented in the  
gesture of offering.**

If you have the power to offer, the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas have the power to accept. Whatever enjoyable things of gods and men that are available in the worldly realm and that are not owned by others should also be mentally acquired and offered. If offerings are made of as much as you can imagine, there will be no difference, even the size of a hair, between the imagined and actual offerings as regards the fulfillment of the earning of merit. You do not have to think that you have nothing to offer.

Thus, always, under all circumstances, imagine offering whatever you and others possess, and whatever you see, first to the Three Jewels and the Gurus of the lineage. The least you can do, when you come across clear waterfalls by the side of a road or a meadow covered with flowers—anything that you find attractive—is acquire it mentally and offer it to the

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<sup>50</sup> dños.bśams yid.sprul tiñ.’zin.gyis / snañ.srid mchod.pa’i phyag.ryar.’bul

Three Jewels. In this way, you earn merit while doing other things. So it should be done like that.

### 2.3 THE THIRD LIMB: ~~DOING PENANCE FOR THE~~ ~~ABSOLUTION OF SIN~~

<493> [Consider] all the sins and causes of downfall you have committed from beginningless time up until today with your body, speech, and mind, both those you can and cannot recollect: the ten demeritorious actions; the five boundaryless sins; the five demerits that are close to them; the four heavy sins; the eight sins contrary [to the Dharma]; defilements made to whatever has been offered to the Three Jewels; and all sinful actions in general.<sup>51</sup>

All these sinful deeds that have been committed should be confessed with a strong sense of guilt and regret; you should pray for pardon, think of not committing them again, and so on. While remembering the four antidotal powers of purification as explained in the instructions on the visualization and mantra of Vajrasattva, you should seek absolution.

Imagine drawing all the sins together in the form of a black heap on the tip of your tongue. As the rays of light from the body, speech, and mind of the congregation of devas fall on it, imagine that the sins are completely cleansed.

Then recite the following lines:

*go-sum mi-gey lay-nam-kün*  
*ö-sal ch'ö-kü ngang-du-shag*<sup>52</sup>

**All the demeritorious actions committed through the  
three doors<sup>53</sup>**

**Are absolved in the Clear Light Dharmakāya State.**

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<sup>51</sup> *k'a-na ma-t'o-way lay / kha.na ma.tho.ḅa'i las / sins of two types—  
general sins and those committed by transgressing monastic rules*

<sup>52</sup> *sgo.gsum mi.dge'i las.rnams.kun / 'od.gsal chos.sku'i ñaṅ.du.bśags*

<sup>53</sup> i.e., the body, speech, and mind

## 2.4 THE FOURTH LIMB: ~~FULL APPRECIATION FOR THE GOOD DEEDS OF OTHERS, AN ANTIDOTE FOR JEALOUSY~~

The turning of the great wheel of Dharma by the Buddhas for the benefit of the sentient beings; the great, benevolent deeds of the Bodhisattvas; the **relative merit** and the merit [called] *t'ar-pa ch'a-t'ün-gyi gey-wa*,<sup>54</sup> **earned** by sentient beings; whatever [virtuous deeds] you have done in the past, are doing at present, and will do in the future—all these <494> should be contemplated with full appreciation<sup>55</sup> and great joy from the core of your heart.

While doing so, recite the following lines:

*den-pa nyi-kyi dü-pa-yi*  
*ge-tso'og kün-la jey-yi-rang*<sup>56</sup>

**All the accumulated merit encompassed by the Two Truths—  
I approve [of it] with full appreciation.**

There is no Dharma taught in the nine yānas of Buddhism that is not covered by the relative truth and the absolute truth. The entire mass of perishable and imperishable [merit]<sup>57</sup> covered by these two truths, **earned** by yourself and others, should be fully appreciated and commended. This kind of full appreciation for good deeds will accrue immeasurable benefit.

Once, in the past, King Sal-gyal invited Lord Buddha and His followers every day for four months to a midday meal and entertained them with all kinds of offerings. At that, a beggar woman thought, “This King Sal-gyal accumulated merit in the

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<sup>54</sup> ~~thar-pa cha-mthun-gyi dge-ba / perishable merit that makes one take rebirth temporarily in the three upper regions of samsāra~~

<sup>55</sup> *jey-su yi-rang / rjes.su yi.rañ*

<sup>56</sup> *bden.pa gñis.kyis bsdus.pa.yi / dge.tshog skun.la rjes.yi.rañ*

<sup>57</sup> *zag-chay / zag.bcas // zag-me / zag.med //* relative merit that perishes once it is used, and absolute merit that does not perish, but keeps increasing even after one attains Buddhahood

past also, which has enabled him to acquire this much wealth and fortune and to meet with a unique Buddha such as this—a fortunate means for earning merit. How wonderful it is that he is again accruing such vast merit as this!” Thinking thus from the core of her heart, she concentrated on [the king’s action] with nothing but deep appreciation; because of this, she earned an immeasurable amount of merit, which was noticed by Lord Buddha.

In the evening, when Lord Buddha had to say the dedication, <495> He asked the king, “Shall I dedicate the merit by referring to the merit you have earned, or to the merit of one who has earned more than you?”

The king replied, “Please dedicate the merit by citing the name of whoever has earned more merit.” Lord Buddha dedicated the merit by citing the name of that beggar woman.

When Lord Buddha did the same for three consecutive days, the king became displeased. He consulted with his ministers to see how [Lord Buddha] could be stopped from doing that. The ministers suggested that, on the following day, while Lord Buddha and his followers were being served, a great deal of food be spilled [intentionally] from the serving dishes. Then, when the beggars came forward to get it, they could be beaten and prevented from doing so. That, the ministers thought, might help the situation.

When they did as planned, the beggar woman who had meditated formerly with full appreciation also came forward to collect the spilled food. When she was forcibly prohibited from doing so she became furious, and that destroyed her merit. That day the dedication was done in the king’s name.

Thus, meritorious or demeritorious results do not depend in the least on the actions of one’s body and speech; they depend entirely on one’s mental attitude. This fact was repeatedly stressed before, as well.

Rather than pretentiously doing elaborate, meritorious deeds that are contaminated by poisons of the eight worldly dharmas—such as the development of competitive feeling at the sight of others’ pious work, the feeling that “I have <496> done such and such pious deeds,” and the develop-

ment of arrogance on recounting one's accomplishments in this life—if, on seeing all the meritorious work done by others, one contemplates on it with full appreciation and absolute purity of heart, and dedicates the root of the merit others have earned for the benefit of attaining the Ultimate Bodhi, that alone will [earn] a greater amount of merit. Lord Buddha mentioned this in great detail in the Sūtra that records His advice to a king.

In the same way, Ch'ag-me Rin-po-ch'e said:

**If, on hearing of another's earning of merit,  
[You] give up the demeritorious thought of jealousy  
towards him and  
Happily appreciate his deeds from the core of your  
heart,  
You will equally enjoy the merit he has earned, it is  
said.**

And from the Dū-pa [Sūtra]:

**Although one billion worlds and the cosmic mountain  
can be measured by weighing them on a scale,  
It is not so with the merit of appreciation.**

Full appreciation is easy to practice and brings enormous return. Hence, always, under all circumstances, put it into practice.

## 2.5 THE FIFTH LIMB: THE PRAYERS TO PREACH THE DHARMA

There are Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Lamas, spiritual teachers, and the like who can tolerate the tremendous burden of helping others. But, becoming vexed by the sentient beings' heresy, complaints, and lack of perseverance [in practicing the Dharma], <497> they discontinue preaching and intend to retire in peace.

Imagine that by multiplying yourself hundreds, thousands, millions—innumerable—times, you go to such noble beings

and make offerings to them of [Dharma] wheels, gems, and so on.

Then recite:

***rig-chen sum-gyi dül-ja-la***  
***t'eg-sum ch'ö-k'or kor-war-kül***<sup>58</sup>

**To the three types of followers,  
I beseech you to preach the teachings of the three  
yānas.**

This prayer generally refers to the doctrines of the Śrāvākayāna, Pratyekabuddhayāna, and Mahāyāna, in which all the teachings of Lord Buddha are included. [More specifically,] it can mean the Outer Yānas,<sup>59</sup> which include Śrāvākayāna, Pratyekabuddhayāna, and Mahāyāna; the Inner Yānas,<sup>60</sup> which include the three types of ascetic Yogas, namely, Kriya, Upa, and Yoga;<sup>61</sup> and the Secret Yānas<sup>62</sup> that use [four types of] initiation as means for transcendence, which include Mahā, Anu, and Ati Yogas. This further division of the three yānas into nine yānas is meant to suit the adepts' capabilities, and the prayer is offered [to the Buddhas and so on] to continue to preach these teachings accordingly.

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<sup>58</sup> rigs.can gsum.gyi gdul.byā.la / theg.gsum chos.'khor bskor.ḅar.bskul / The first line of this couplet is missing in many Tibetan texts, as well as in some of the available English translations. This line is intact, however, in the text used at Shug-seb Monastery, as well as in the text of Nay-ch'ung Monastery, Lhasa. The latter contains a note saying that the missing line was added by Jam-yang K'yen-tse Wang-po.

<sup>59</sup> also called *ch'i kün-jung dren-pay t'eg-pa* / phyi kun.'byuñ 'dren.pa'i theg.pa / lit., the outer yānas that draw one away from the causes of all suffering

<sup>60</sup> also called *nang ka-t'ub rig-je-kyi t'eg-pa* / nañ dka'.thub rig.byed.kyi theg.pa / lit., the inner yānas that require various ascetic practices

<sup>61</sup> *ja-gyü* / bya.rgyud // *chö-gyü* / spyod.rgyud // *nal-jor-gyü* / rnal.'byor.rgyud

<sup>62</sup> also called *sang-wa wang-gyur t'ab-kyi t'eg-pa* / gsañ.ḅa dḅañ.gyur thabs.kyi theg.pa (or *nal-jor la-na me-pay-gyü* / rnal.'byor bla.na med.pa'i.rgyud) / lit., the three highest Yoga Tantras

## 2.6 THE SIXTH LIMB: PRAYING FOR THEM NOT TO RETIRE IN NIRVĀṆA

In this world and in others, there are Lamas, Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas who, having finished their mission of preaching to living beings, are now determining to retire into Nirvāṇa. Just as Upasaka Chunda did in the past, imagine multiplying yourself many times, going to them, and praying <498> that, until saṃsāra comes to an end, they remain to help sentient beings.

Then recite:

*je-si k'or-wa ma-tong-bar  
nya-ngen mi-da zhug-söl-deb*<sup>63</sup>

Until saṃsāra becomes devoid [of sentient beings],  
Pray remain—do not retire into Nirvāṇa.

## 2.7 THE SEVENTH LIMB: THE DEDICATION

Beginning with the merit just earned, all merit earned by yourself and others in the past, present, and future is dedicated for the benefit of all sentient beings in the manner in which Heroic Mañjuśrī so thoroughly dedicated his merit.

While remembering this, as well as the seal of Non-conceptual Wisdom,<sup>64</sup> at the end, recite:

*dü-sum sag-pay ge-tsa-kün  
jang-ch'ub ch'en-pö gyu-ru-ngo*<sup>65</sup>

All merit earned in the three times  
Is dedicated for the cause of attaining the Great Bodhi.

This sort of dedication should be made always, under all circumstances, after earning any amount of merit, whether

<sup>63</sup> je.srid 'khor.ḥa ma.stoñ.bar / mya.nān mi.'da' b'zugs.gsol.'debs

<sup>64</sup> mig-pa me-pay shey-rab / dmigs.pa med.pa'i śes.rab

<sup>65</sup> dus.gsum bsags.pa'i dge.rtsa.kun / byañ.chub chen.po'i rgyu.ru.bsño

large or small. If the dedication is not done this way, any merit earned will bear fruit once only and then disappear. If the merit is dedicated so that it becomes the cause of attaining the Bodhi ultimately, even if the fruits of the merit are tasted a hundred times, the root of the merit will not disappear, but will go on producing [fruits] until Buddhahood is attained.

From the Sūtra Lo-drö Gya-ts'ö Zhü-pa:

**Just as a drop of water fallen into a large ocean  
Does not dry up until the ocean dries up,  
So also the merit thoroughly dedicated for Bodhi  
<499> Will not be exhausted until Buddhahood is  
attained.**

Thus, whatever ultimate goal one wants to attain, [whether the Arhathood of] the Śrāvakas and the Pratyekabuddhas, or the Buddhahood [of the Bodhisattvas], or likewise [if one's goal is] to be reborn in the higher regions of gods and men, or to live a long time with good health or other temporary benefits—merit earned for whatever reason should be [particularly] dedicated for that purpose.

Dri-gung Kyob-pa Rin-po-ch'e said:

**If the dual merit, the wish-fulfilling gem,  
Is not cleansed with [proper] prayers,  
It will not produce the desired fruit.  
Please take particular care with the concluding  
dedication.**

Hence, whether or not the merit one has earned can become the cause of one's realization of Buddhahood is determined by the power of the dedication. Whatever colossal amount of perishable merit one may earn, if it is not guided by the proper dedication, it cannot become the cause of attaining ultimate freedom.



Ge-shey K'am-pa Lung-pa said:

**Since all conditionally earned merit is in a fluid state,  
Offer far-reaching prayers [dedicating it] for the  
benefit of sentient beings.**

Similarly, the merit earned for one's own parents, relatives, and so on, and <500> also for those who are dead and gone, will not be enjoyed by them if the merit is not dedicated [to them]. If it is dedicated, they will obtain it as one has wished.

In the past, the people of the city of Vaiśālī invited Lord Buddha to a midday meal [to be held] on the following day. When those who had invited Him went away, five hundred *yi-dags*<sup>66</sup> came and requested of the Buddha, "Please dedicate to us the merit that the people of Vaiśālī will earn tomorrow by offering alms to You and Your entourage."

Although Lord Buddha knew who they were, He said, "Who are you? Why should the merit of the people of Vaiśālī be dedicated to you?"

They replied, "We are the [former] parents of the people of Vaiśālī. But, because of our miserly action, we have been born as *yi-dags*."

"If that is the case," said Lord Buddha, "at the time when the dedication is made tomorrow, you should also come. I will dedicate [the merit] to you."

They said, "Since we have taken on such an ugly form, we are ashamed to come."

The Buddha replied, "You ought to have felt ashamed at the time when you were earning evil karma, but you did not. What benefit can you now derive by feeling ashamed after having taken on an ugly form? If you do not come, there is no way to make the dedication."

They said, "Then we will come," and then left. <501>

On the following day, at the time of dedication, when the *yi-dags* came to receive the dedication, the people of Vaiśālī

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<sup>66</sup> *yi.dvags* / a hungry ghost / S. preta

were frightened and began to run away. Lord Buddha announced, “You don’t have to be frightened. These are your former parents, now born as *yi-dags*. They are requesting [that the merit be dedicated to them]. Should the merit be dedicated [to them] or not?”

“If that is the case,” the people said, “by all means, please dedicate it to them.”

The Buddha pronounced:

**Whatever merit is earned by this charity,  
May it follow the *yi-dags*.  
May the *yi-dags* not have ugly forms, and  
May they enjoy the happiness of the upper regions.**

The Buddha related that all the *yi-dags* [instantly] died and took rebirth in the thirty-third region of the gods.<sup>67</sup>

Je-tsun Mi-la Re-pa similarly said:

**The yogi who meditates in the mountains  
And the benefactor who provides him food  
Have the cause-and-effect connection to attain  
Buddhahood together,  
[For] the essence of dependent cause and effect is the  
dedication.**

However, the dedication thus made for the sake of attaining the fully realized state of Buddhahood should be governed by the wisdom of the non-conceptual *k’or-sum*.<sup>68</sup> If, instead, the *k’or-sum* is contaminated with one’s attachment to the three principal constituents as truly existent, [the dedication] is called a poisonous dedication.

<sup>67</sup> *sum-chu tsa-sum-gyi l’a-yül* / *sum.chu rtsa.gsum.gyi lha.yul* / S.  
Trāyastrimśā

<sup>68</sup> The non-conceptual *k’or-sum* refers to the Transcendent Wisdom that shows that the three principal constituents of any act—for example, in the act of charity, the giver, the charity, and the receiver—do not, in reality, exist.

From the Dū-pa <502>:

**Just like the eating of good food mixed with poison,  
So is the [practice of the] pure Dharma mixed with  
concepts, the Buddha said.**

The *k'or-sum* here refers to: [1] the merit that is dedicated, [2] the beings to whom it is dedicated, and [3] the purposes for which the dedication is made. A genuine, non-poisonous dedication governed by the wisdom that recognizes these three as truly non-existent is impossible for an ordinary person. Therefore, if one dedicates [merit] by thinking, “Just as the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the past had dedicated, so I also dedicate,” that will serve the purpose of making a dedication with an absolutely pure *k'or-sum*.

From the Tung-shag:

**Just as the past Buddhas had fully dedicated,  
Just as the future Buddhas will fully dedicate, and  
Just as the present Buddhas are fully dedicating,  
In the same way, I, too, fully dedicate.**

From the Zang-chö:

**All [the manners of dedication] known to Heroic  
Mañjuśrī [Bodhisattva] and  
Likewise to Samantabhadra [Bodhisattva],  
May I learn them by following [these great beings]  
And fully dedicate all the merit [I] have earned.**

<503> Thus, the unmistakable means for turning merit into the cause for attaining Buddhahood depends entirely on making a thorough dedication towards the end. Therefore, under all circumstances, an effort should be made to do this.

### 3 THE OFFERING OF PRAYERS WITH ONE-POINTED CONCENTRATION<sup>69</sup> AND DEVELOPING THE ESSENCE OF THE FOUR VAJRA NATURES<sup>70</sup>

The valorous, noble Guru is one who has attained the authority of a Heruka<sup>71</sup> of a maṇḍala. Merely by seeing, hearing, remembering, or touching him, one can sow the seed of ultimate freedom in oneself. Since his skillful actions are equal to those of all other Buddhas, he has come as the Fourth Jewel. For an individual, the Guru's kindness is even greater than that of a Buddha, since, with his gracious, compassionate blessings, he can forcibly deliver one to the state of Vajradhara in a single life and body through the profound, direct path of maturation.

If the virtue of the Guru is to be measured, his ~~thoughtfulness~~ is as wide as the sky, the depth of his wisdom and ~~affection~~ is as immeasurable as the ocean, his compassion is as forceful as the current of a river, his nature is as steady as the cosmic mountain, and to all sentient beings equally he is as [kind] as a parent.<sup>72</sup> Thus, even a single aspect of his virtue is difficult to measure. "Like a wish-fulfilling gem, by merely offering prayers to you, my wishes are effortlessly fulfilled. I adhere to you, I look to you, it is your <504> attainment

<sup>69</sup> *p'ur-tsug-su söl-wa deb-pa* / phur.tsugs.su gsol.ba 'debs.pa / lit., the offering of prayers in a single direction like driving a peg

<sup>70</sup> *do-je zhi ngo-wo* / rdo.rje bzhi'i no.bo / The four Vajra Natures refer to *ku do-je* / sku rdo.rje / the Vajra Body // *sung do-je* / gsuñ rdo.rje / the Vajra Speech // *t'ug do-je* / thugs rdo.rje / the Vajra Mind // *ye-shey do-je* / ye.ses rdo.rje / the Vajra Wisdom. "Developing" should be understood to mean confirming one's belief in the four adamant Vajra Natures, which are innate qualities of the Primordial Mind.

Readers should note that the name for section 3, when it appears here, is more detailed than when introduced on p. 437. This variation occurs in the Tibetan text itself and has therefore been maintained.

<sup>71</sup> also known as *tr'ag-t'ung* / khrag.'thuñ, i.e., blood drinkers. They are the ferocious aspects of the Buddhas of the father, mother, and non-dualistic classes of the Inner Tantras followed by all schools, new and old, in Tibet. A Heruka functions as the sole authority or chief deity of a maṇḍala.

<sup>72</sup> These transcendent virtues are due to his attainment of the Ultimate State.

alone that I want to achieve”—generate such devotional feeling with tears in your eyes, [and recite the following prayers].

First, while you generate the siddhiphala,<sup>73</sup> say the prayer:

*je-tsün gu-ru rin-po-ch'e*  
*k'yey-ni sang-gyay t'am-che-kyi . . .*

**O Great Being, Precious Guru,  
You manifest all the Buddhas' . . .**

up to:

*je-tsün ch'en-po pe-jung-k'yen*<sup>74</sup>

**O Great Being, born of a Lotus, I look to you for help.**

Having recited these lines, concentrate fully on saying only the following invocation mantram: “OM ĀḤ HŪM VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HŪM.”<sup>75</sup> After every round of one hundred siddhi mantra, repeat, “*je-tsün gu-ru rin-po-ch'e . . .*” as before. In this way, complete half the total number that you are planning to say.

At the time of invoking the granting of the siddhiphala, after every round of one hundred siddhi mantra, repeat the following prayer in full:

*dag-la rey-sa zhen-na-me . . .*

**None have I to turn to . . .**

up to:

*drib-nyi jong-shig nü-t'u-chen*<sup>76</sup>

**O Powerful One, cleanse [my] dual obscuration.**

<sup>73</sup> the ultimate goal that one is striving to achieve

<sup>74</sup> rje.btsun gu.ru rin.po.che / khyed.ni sañs.rgyas thams.cad.kyi . . . / rje.btsun chen.po pad.'byuñ.'mkhyen

<sup>75</sup> also known as the siddhi mantram

<sup>76</sup> bdag.la res.sa g'zan.na.med . . . / sgrib.gñis sbyoñs.sig nus.mthu.can

Then, at the time of receiving the siddhiphala, the imagination of the Four Initiations<sup>77</sup> should be done as follows.

[First, visualize and recite the prayer for the First Initiation, i.e., the Vase Initiation:<sup>78</sup>]

*gu-rü min-tś'am-nay om-yig ch'u-shel ta-bu ts'er-wa-lay ö-zer-tr'ö*

*rang-gi chi-wo-nay zhug*

*lü-kyi-lay (sog-chö ma-jin len-pa dö-pay log-par yem-pa sum)<sup>79</sup> -dang (lü-kye-je tsa-yin-pay) tsey-drib-pa-dag*

*ku do-jey jin-lab-zhug . . .*

*trül-kü go-p'ang t'ob-pay kal-pa gyü-la zhag-(par-sam)<sup>80</sup>*

From the Guru's [forehead], at the point where the eyebrows join, the crystal-like sparkling letter OM ( ॐ ) projects a ray of light;

It enters through the crown of one's head;

The (three) bodily actions (of killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct) and the obscurations of the nerves (that form the body) are all purified.

The blessings of the Vajra Body are received . . .

(Think that) the good fortune of attaining the status of the Nirmāṅakāya is established in the mind.

<sup>77</sup> *wang-zhi* / dḥaṅ.bḥi / See Appendix A, Note 7.

<sup>78</sup> *bum-wang* / bum.dḥaṅ

<sup>79</sup> In the description of the Four Initiations, the phrases in parentheses are not part of the main sādhana. These were included by Jig-me Gyal-way Nyu-gu in the commentary for the sake of explanation. Hence, during actual practice, the phrases in parentheses are not to be recited.

<sup>80</sup> *gu.ru'i smin.mthams.nas om.yig chu.śel lta.bu 'tsher.ḥa.las 'od.zer.'phros / raṅ.gi spyi.ḥo.nas žugs / lus.kyi.las (srog.gcod ma.byin len.pa 'dod.pas log.par gyems.pa gsüm).daṅ / (lus.skyed.byed rtsa.yin.pas) rtsa'i.sgrib.pa.dag / sku rdo.rje'i byin.rlabs.žugs . . . / sprul.sku'i go.'phaṅ thob.pa'i skal.pa rgyud.la bžag.(par.bsam) / N.B. When one is instructing others, one should say *gyü-la zhag-par-sam*, which means, "Think thus." But when reciting the prayer by oneself, one should say only *gyü-la-zhag*.*

[Then, the Second Initiation, i.e., the Secret Initiation:<sup>81</sup>]

*drin-pa-nay āḥ-yig pe-ma ra-ga-tar bar-wa-lay  
 ö-zer-tr'ö  
 rang-gi drin-pa-nay zhug <505> ngag-gi-lay (dzün  
 tr'a-ma ts'ig-tsub ngag-kyal zhi)-dang  
 (ngag-p'el-je lung-yin-pay) lung-gi drib-pa-dag  
 sung do-jey jin-lab-zhug . . .  
 long-chö dzog-kü go-p'ang-gi kal-pa gyü-la zhag-  
 (par-sam)<sup>82</sup>*

From the [Guru's] throat, the ruby-like sparkling letter  
 ĀḤ ( ཨྐ ) projects a ray of light;  
 It enters through one's throat;  
 The (four) vocal actions (of telling lies, slandering,  
 using rough words, and gossiping) and  
 The obscurations of the air (since air is the medium for  
 increasing the voice) are all purified.  
 The blessings of the Vajra Voice are received . . .  
 (Think that) the good fortune of attaining the status of  
 the Sambhogakāya is established in the mind.

[Then, the Third Initiation, i.e., the Wisdom Initiation:<sup>83</sup>]

*t'ug-kay hūm-yig nam-k'ay dog-chen-lay ö-zer-tr'ö  
 rang-gi nying-ga-nay zhug  
 yi-kyi-lay (nab-sem nö-sem log-ta sum)-dang  
 (yi-p'el-je t'ig-le yin-pay) t'ig-le drib-pa-dag  
 t'ug do-jey jin-lab-zhug . . .  
 ch'ö-kü go-p'ang-gi kal-pa gyü-la zhag-(par-sam)<sup>84</sup>*

<sup>81</sup> *sang-wang* / gsañ.dḥaṅ

<sup>82</sup> mgrin.pa.nas āḥ.yig pad.ma rä.ga.ltar 'bar.ḥa.las 'od.zer.'phros / rañ.gi  
 mgrin.pa.nas žugs ṅag.gi.las (rdzun phra.ma tshig.rtsub ṅag.kyal bži).dañ /  
 (ṅag.'phel.byed rluñ.yin.pas) rluñ.gi sgrib.pa.dag / gsuñ rdo.rje'i  
 byin.rlabs.žugs . . . / loñ.spyod rdzogs.sku'i go.'phañ.gi skal.pa rgyud.la  
 bžag.(par.bsam)

<sup>83</sup> *sher-wang* / śer.dḥaṅ

<sup>84</sup> thugs.ka'i hūm.yig nam.mkha'i mdog.can.las 'od.zer.'phros / rañ.gi  
 sñiñ.ga.nas žugs / yid.kyi.las (brnab.sems gnod.sems log.lta gsum).dañ /

From the [Guru's] heart, the azure-blue letter HŪṂ ( ཨུམ )  
 projects a ray of light;  
 It enters through one's heart;  
 The (three) mental actions (of covetousness, ill will, and  
 heresy) and the obscurations of the *t'ig-le*<sup>85</sup> (the  
 propagator of thoughts) are all purified.  
 The blessings of the Vajra Mind are received . . .  
 (Think that) the good fortune of attaining the status of  
 the Dharmakāya is established in the mind.

[Then, the Fourth Initiation, i.e., the Word Initiation:<sup>86</sup>]

*lar-yang t'ug-kay hūṁ-lay hūṁ-yig nyi-pa-zhig*  
*kar-da p'ang-pa zhin-du-ch'e*  
*rang-sem-dang t'a-de me-par-drey*  
*(go-sum-gyi ten-zhi) kün-zhi-lay-dang shey-jay drib-*  
*pa-dag*<sup>87</sup>  
*ye-shey do-jey jin-lab-zhug . . .*  
*t'ar-t'ug-gi dray-bu ngo-wo-nyi-kü (go-p'ang-gi) kal-*  
*pa gyü-la zhag-(go)*<sup>88</sup>

Again, from the letter HŪṂ ( ཨུམ ) in the [Guru's] heart,  
 a second letter HŪṂ breaks off like a shooting star;  
 It merges non-dualistically with one's mind;  
 (The foundation of the three doors)—the action of the  
*kün-zhi*—and the obscuration of knowledge are  
 purified.

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(yid.'phel.byed thig.le yin.pas) thig.le'i sgrib.pa.dag / thugs rdo.rje'i  
 byin.rlabs.zugs . . . / chos.sku'i go.'phaṅ.gi skal.pa rgyud.la b'zag.(par.bsam)

<sup>85</sup> thig.le / procreative fluid

<sup>86</sup> ngo-wo nyi-kyü-wang / no.ḥo ñid.sku'i.dḥaṅ

<sup>87</sup> In the *Long-ch'en Nying-tig* Preliminary, Nam-k'yen Lam-zang, *jang* / sbyaṅ is given; here, however, *dag* / dag is used. Although both mean to cleanse or purify, *jang* refers to the process, *dag* to the result. *Dag* is appropriate in the context of the Fourth Initiation, the final goal.

<sup>88</sup> slar.yaṅ thugs.ka'i hūṁ.las hūṁ.yig gñis.pa.zig / skar.mda' 'phaṅs.pa  
 b'zin.du.chad / raṅ.sems.daṅ tha.dad med.par.'dres / (sgo.gsum.gyi rten.gzi)  
 kun.gzi'i.las.daṅ śes.byā'i sgrib.pa.dag / ye.śes rdo.rje'i byin.rlabs.zugs . . . /  
 mthar.thug.gi 'bras.bu no.ḥo.ñid.sku'i (go.'phaṅ.gi) skal.pa rgyud.la  
 b'zag.(go)



**The blessings of the Vajra of the Primordial Consciousness are received . . .**

**The good fortune of attaining the status of the Svabhavikakāya, the Ultimate Fruit, is (thus) established in the mind.**

While saying and thinking thus, ultimately merge your mind undifferentiably with the Guru's mind in Samāhita.<sup>89</sup>

When the meditation is to be ended, say the prayer:

***nam-zhig ts'e-yi dü-jay-ts'e . . .***

**At the time when [my] life comes to an end . . .**

up to:

***sam-dön drub-par dze-du-söl***<sup>90</sup>

**Please [help me to] fulfill my desired end.**

In synchrony with your saying this, <506> because of your having generated a heart-rending devotion, Guru Rin-po-ch'e smiles, gives you an affectionate look, and projects a hot, red ray of light from his heart. The moment it touches your heart, you, who have visualized yourself as Vajrayoginī, become a pellet of red light the size of a pea seed. This ultimately disappears with a crackling sound, like a spark of fire, and merges with the heart of Guru Rin-po-ch'e in Samādhi.

Thereafter, [as you come out of the meditation], visualize the entire phenomenal world as you did in the Guru Yoga. Say the entire dedication prayer, beginning with:

***ge-wa di-yi nyur-du-dag***

***pal-gön la-ma drub-gyur-nay . . .***<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> *nyam-shag* / mñam.bshag / the meditative state where the concepts of the meditator and the meditated-on are in a non-dualistic equilibrium

<sup>90</sup> nam.zig tshe.yi dus.byas.tshe . . . / bsam.don 'grub.par mdzad.du.gsol / N.B. At this point, the siddhi mantram is counted again.

<sup>91</sup> dge.ba 'di.yi myur.du.bdag / dpal.mgon bla.ma 'grub.gyur.nas . . .

**By this merit, may I quickly  
Attain the state of the valorous Guru . . .**

and say the Zang-dog Pal-ri Mön-lam.<sup>92</sup>

Such a Guru Yoga visualization should be imagined in the sky above your right shoulder when you are walking; it will serve as the spiritual object for doing circumambulations. When sitting, imagine it in the sky above your head; it will serve as the spiritual object for offering prayers. When eating and drinking, imagine it in the center of your throat; it will serve as the spiritual object to whom you offer the first taste of whatever you are eating and drinking. When you go to sleep, imagine it in the center of your heart; this summarizes the technique called “withdrawing the imagination within the Vase.”<sup>93</sup>

In short, always, under all circumstances, constantly remember to visualize wherever you are residing as the real Zang-dog Pal-ri [Paradise]; <507> practice considering all phenomenal appearances as the form of the Guru and generate respectful devotion. When you are sick, disturbed by hindering spirits, or facing unwanted circumstances, do not try to shun them. Rather, feel happy, thinking that the Guru has given them to you to dissolve your bad karma. If you are enjoying happiness and comfort and are making progress in the practice of the Dharma, regard that also as the kindness of the Guru. Do not develop arrogance and do not become over-elated. If depression, fatigue, dullness, or over-excitement develop because of improper concentrative meditation, merge your *Rig-pa* undifferentiably with the Guru’s Mind and continue meditating on the ultimate doctrinal view’s own light. Combine the efforts of offering prayers and counting the Vajra Guru mantram. If you do that, all phenomenal appearances will reveal themselves as the forms of the Gurus and devas. All your activities will then become virtuous.

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<sup>92</sup> This refers to the prayers of Zang-dog Pal-ri, the Paradise of Guru Rin-po-ch’e. There is more than one version of these prayers.

<sup>93</sup> *shey-ja bum-jug-gi ne / ses.bya bum.’jug.gi gnad*

Je-tšün Mi-la said:

**When I walk, I take phenomenal appearances as [my] path;**

**This is the walking style [of one whose] six senses are self-liberated.**

**When I sit, I sit in the unshaped, original state;**

**This is the essentially meaningful style of sitting.**

**When I eat, I eat the food of emptiness;**

**This is the eating style of the abandonment of *zung-dzin*.<sup>94</sup>**

**When I drink, I drink the water of *dren-shey*;<sup>95</sup>**

**This is the drinking style that has no break.**

Moreover, once one has entered the Vajrayāna path, the rejuvenation of the weakening <508> or breaking of the ~~bond of trust~~; the authority to practice the ~~creative, non-creative~~, and *Dzog-ch'en* meditations; protection from being hindered or misled; the accumulation of more and more heaps of virtues; and so on—all these also are fundamentally dependent on taking ~~initiation~~, which effects maturity.

As the saying goes:

**Esoteric practices cannot yield perfection without depending on ~~initiation~~;**

**Just as a boatman cannot row without oars.**

Again:

**Without ~~initiation~~, no accomplishment can be achieved,  
Just as no oil<sup>96</sup> can be produced by pressing sand.**

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<sup>94</sup> *gzun*.*'dzin* / *Zung* refers to phenomenal objects, i.e., the outer stimulants, and *dzin* to the inner subject, i.e., the mind.

<sup>95</sup> *dran.śes* (the abbreviated form of *dren-pa* / *dran.pa* / remembrance and *shey-zhin* / *śes.bžin* / watchfulness)

<sup>96</sup> Usually the Tibetan word *mar* / *mar*, used as a noun, refers to butter. However, it can also be used for oil, e.g., *til-mar* / *til.mar* / sesame oil.

[Initiation is administered as follows.] To start with, a perfect Vajra Guru introduces [a beginner] to a maṇḍala by giving the initiation. This is called the *zhi-yi-wang*.<sup>97</sup> The receiving of the initiation by depending on the Guru Yoga, and on no other agent, is called the *lam-wang*.<sup>98</sup> Ultimately, at the time of fruition, on receiving the Initiation of the Great Rays of Light, or the Initiation of the Non-dualistic Profundity and Clarity,<sup>99</sup> fully realized Buddhahood is attained; this is the *dray-bü-wang*.<sup>100</sup> Since these contain unimaginably many subtle, secret techniques of accomplishment, maturity, and purification,<sup>101</sup> while one is doing the main meditation practice,<sup>102</sup> none of the preliminary practices are to be discarded. Particularly, when one is doing the creative, non-creative, and the like meditations, <509> the best of all techniques is to take the *lam-wang* [path initiation] connected with the Guru Yoga without fail as a prelude to every session.

Hence, by perfectly following the [instructions] of the path up to this point, one who has absolutely pure, devotional respect and [maintains an unimpaired] bond of trust can, without depending on the main course of the teaching, also enter the Paradise of Guru Rin-po-ch'e.<sup>103</sup> There, in that pure paradise, the paths taken by the Four *Rig-dzins* to attain the stage of Samantabhadra are even faster than the speed of the sun and moon.

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<sup>97</sup> *gzi.yi.dḥaṅ* / basic initiation

<sup>98</sup> *lam.dḥaṅ* / path initiation, i.e., receiving the initiation by oneself while following the path

<sup>99</sup> *ö-zer ch'en-pö-wang* / *wod.zer chen.po'i.dḥaṅ*, or *zab-sal nyi-me-kyi wang* / *zab.gsal gñis.med.kyi dḥaṅ* / This is administered to one by all the Buddhas of the ten directions on the verge of one's attainment of Buddhahood.

<sup>100</sup> *'bras.bu'i.dḥaṅ* / fruit initiation

<sup>101</sup> *dzog-pa* / *rdzogs.pa* // *min-pa* / *smin.pa* // *jang-wa* / *sbyaṅs.ḥa* // (also abbreviated as *dzog-min-jang-sum* / *rdzogs.smin.sbyaṅs.gsum*)

<sup>102</sup> *ngö-zhi* / *dños.gzi*

<sup>103</sup> *nga-yab pal-gyi ri-wo* / *rña.yab dpal.gyi ri.ḥo* / another name for Zangdog Pal-ri

#### 4 [CONCLUDING COMMENTARY WITH REFERENCE TO THE THREE INNER YOGAS]

During such an occasion as this, [when the instructions are nearing their conclusion], for the purpose of bringing joy and so on to the listeners, there is a tradition of describing, in the form of an anecdote of elaborate or moderate length, how the Buddhist doctrine [in general] and the three Inner Yogas in particular have descended. If a short account is to be given here as well, [it is as follows].

The principal teachings of the three Inner Tantric doctrines of the Old Translation period [of Tibet], known as *Kye*, *Dzog*, and *Dzog-ch'en*—or Mahā, Anu, and Ati Yogas<sup>104</sup>—descended through three lineal traditions. These are:

1. *Gyal-wa Gong-pay Gyü-pa*,<sup>105</sup> the Buddhas' Mind-to-Mind Tradition;
2. *Rig-dzin Da-yi Gyü-pa*,<sup>106</sup> the *Rig-dzins'* Gesture Tradition; and
3. *Gang-zag Nyen-k'ung-du Gyü-pa*,<sup>107</sup> the [Superior] Beings' Ear-to-Ear Tradition.

#### 4.1 GYAL-WA GONG-PAY GYÜ-PA, THE BUDDHAS' MIND-TO-MIND TRADITION

Out of the primordially realized Buddha Samantabhadra's unlimited, miraculous manifestations of compassion, all the Buddhas' paradises, realms, and expounders [in the form of] <510> the Four Kāyas appeared. To five followers known as *L'ün-drub Rig-dzins*,<sup>108</sup> who were no other than His own manifestations, and to an inconceivable, oceanic multitude of Victorious Ones, the Dharma was not taught through

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<sup>104</sup> These are the three authentic Yogas that have been followed traditionally by the *Nying-ma* school.

<sup>105</sup> rgyal.ba dgon.pa'i brgyud.pa

<sup>106</sup> rig.'dzin brda.yi brgyud.pa

<sup>107</sup> gañ.zag sñan.khuñ.du brgyud.pa

<sup>108</sup> lhun.grub rig.'dzin / self-perfected, realized beings

words and gestures; rather, the Buddha taught them in the style of teaching without speaking,<sup>109</sup> by means of [His] Great Compassion—the ~~Self-cognizant Primordial Consciousness~~'s<sup>110</sup> own illuminating glow that effortlessly shines on its own. The followers unerroneously understood the actual meaning of the [Primordial Buddha's] Mind, and thereby the virtues [they acquired] in transcending the [dual] obscuration and [in gaining the dual omniscient] insight became equal to His.

The manner in which He showed three vehicles, as an aid in ascending the path for those who did not have the luck to understand the [Mind-to-Mind] teaching, is [as follows]. In general, in all the inconceivable regions of saṃsāra, He manifested innumerable incarnations to suit the nature of the followers and to work for the cause of sentient beings. In particular, the six kinds of sentient beings who are meant for deliverance<sup>111</sup> are being helped by means of six Buddha incarnations. Specifically, in the region of the gods and men in this world, Śākyamuni Buddha turned the wheel of Dharma at three levels and expounded the Vinaya, Sūtra, and Abhidharma of the Causal Vehicle,<sup>112</sup> the outer Tantras of Kriya, Upa, and Yoga, and so on.

As it has been said:

**As an antidote for subduing the delusion of craving,**  
<511> **Twenty-one thousand Vinaya Piṭakas were taught.**

**As an antidote for subduing the delusion of anger,**  
**Twenty-one thousand Sūtra Piṭakas were taught.**

**As an antidote for subduing the delusion of stupidity,**  
**Twenty-one thousand Abhidharma Piṭakas were taught.**

<sup>109</sup> *mi-sung-war sung-wa* / mi.gsuñ.ḅar gsuñ.ḅa

<sup>110</sup> *rang-rig-pa ye-shey* / rañ.rig.pa ye.ses

<sup>111</sup> *dül-ja* / 'dul.byā / the particular beings who are delivered through a particular Dharma, by a particular Buddha. This refers to the specific followers who are destined to be delivered by a certain teacher or Dharma due to their previous karmic connections.

<sup>112</sup> *gyu ts'en-nyi-kyi t'eg-pa* / rgyu mtshan.ñid.kyi theg.pa

**As an antidote for equally subduing the three poisons,  
Twenty-one thousand of the Fourth [~~i.e., the Tantric~~]  
Piṭakas were taught.**

Thus it is said.

#### **4.2 RIG-DZIN DA-YI GYÜ-PA, THE RIG-DZINS' GESTURE TRADITION**

At the time when Lord Buddha was passing away, He predicted the coming of the teaching of the secret Anuttarayoga<sup>113</sup> in the future as follows:<sup>114</sup>

**In eight and twenty years  
After I disappear from here,  
At the eastern border of the world,  
A man of extraordinary fortune and birth  
Known as King Dza  
Will receive an omen predicting [the coming of]  
A supreme essence of Dharma,  
Renowned in the three godly realms.  
Vajrapāṇi will reveal [this Dharma]  
At a mountain called Turbulence  
To friends of lower caste,  
The King of Lanka, and the like.**

Having given this prediction, Lord Buddha showed the sign of His demise. Thereafter, in conformity with the prediction, the three Inner Anuttarayoga teachings of <512> *Kye-Dzog*<sup>115</sup> appeared.

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<sup>113</sup> *sang-ngag la-na-me-pay ten-pa / gsañ.sñags bla.na.med.pa'i bstan.pa*

<sup>114</sup> The order of many lines in the following poem inevitably had to be shuffled in translating it into English.

<sup>115</sup> i.e., *Kye-pa* Mahāyoga, *Lung* Anuyoga, and *Dzog-pa* Atiyoga

### 4.2.1 MAHĀYOGA

The teachings of the Mahāyoga Tantras appeared twenty-eight years after the demise of Lord Buddha. After **King Dza** had a dream of seven good omens, he found on his palace roof many volumes of valuable, secret, Tantric texts written in refined lapis lazuli ink on gold pages, and a cubit tall statue of Vajrapāṇi. On offering prayers to them, he [intuitively] understood the chapter on “Seeing the Face of Vajrasattva.”<sup>116</sup>

Using that and the statue of Vajrapāṇi as a basis, he meditated for six months. Vajrasattva appeared and blessed him. Because of that, he understood the entire meaning of all those books. Gradually, the teachings [of Mahāyoga] began to spread.

### 4.2.2 ANUYOGA

At [about] that time, five excellent persons<sup>117</sup> of superior race [went to] the top of **Malaya** Mountain, visualized all the Buddhas of the ten directions in their minds, [and offered prayers], saying:

**Alas! Woe! Alas!**  
**If the illuminating light of the Teacher sets,**  
**What [else] can dispel the worldly darkness?**

When they offered twenty-three such heart-rending lines of prayer, all the Buddhas invoked Vajrapāṇi, saying:

**Vajrapāṇi, listen.**  
**Has your previous armor [to protect beings] vanished?**  
**Don't you know the miseries of the world?**  
**Compassion should make you descend to earth**  
**And remove the <513> miseries of the world.**

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<sup>116</sup> *do-je sem-pa zhal-t'ong-gi le'u / rdo.rje sems.dpa' źal.mthoñ.gi le'u*

<sup>117</sup> *dra-ma-nga / dra'ma.lña*



When Vajrapāṇi was thus invoked, he promised to preach the Dharma and said:

**Neither at the beginning nor at the end  
Will I abandon my vow.  
Whenever [I am] reminded [of it],  
I, too, will make miracles appear accordingly.**

Saying thus, at the top of Malaya Mountain, he preached the Do Gong-pa Dü-pa<sup>118</sup> and the like to the five persons of superior race. In the western country of Uḍḍiyāna, on the island of Dhanakoṣa, Vajrapāṇi preached the Tantras and secret teachings of Pal-sang-wa,<sup>119</sup> the Tantras of P'ur-pa and Ma-mo,<sup>120</sup> and the like to the incarnation Ga-rab Do-je.

O-gyen Pe-ma T'o-treng [Guru Rin-po-ch'e] was chosen to receive them, and thus they gradually spread.

### 4.2.3 ATIYOGA

The Atiyoga teaching in particular first **flourished** in the realms of the gods. In the Tuṣita heaven of the gods, the deva Zang Kyong had about five hundred sons born of the mind. Physically and intellectually, Kün-ga Nying-po, the eldest son, was found superior to all the others. He was fond of **saying** the **Vajra mantram** while remaining alone in a meditation house. He was renowned as Sem-l'ag-chen,<sup>121</sup> the son of a god. In the Female-Water-Bull year, this son of a god had four dreams:

[1] He dreamt that all the Buddhas<sup>122</sup> projected rays in the ten directions; <514> these rays turned into six Buddhas [for the six regions of saṃsāra] who circumambulated the living beings and then sank into the crown of his head.

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<sup>118</sup> mdo dgoṅs.pa 'dus.pa

<sup>119</sup> dpal.gsaṅ.ḅa'i rgyud.daṅ man.ṅag

<sup>120</sup> phur.pa.daṅ ma.mo'i.rgyud

<sup>121</sup> sems.lhag.can / lit., one whose good will excels the rest

<sup>122</sup> S. sarvabuddha

[2] He dreamt that he swallowed Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva.

[3] He dreamt that he was holding in his hand the sun and moon, whose light flooded the whole world.

[4] He dreamt of a gem-colored cloud in the sky, from which showered a nectar-like rain that made crops, woods, jewel-sprouts, blossoms, and fruits all mature at the same time.

On the following morning, he related the dreams to Ko-u-shi-ka, the king of the gods, who praised him thus:

**How wondrous!**

**The time has come for the appearance of the essence of  
an effortless doctrine;**

**A Bodhisattva, an incarnation of the Buddhas of the  
three times,**

**Lord of the ten stages, great light of the world,**

**Ornament of the realm of gods—how miraculous you  
are!**

The first dream was an indication that he [Sem-l'ag-chen] would understand the Mind of all the Buddhas and would be their Regent. The second dream indicated that he would subdue all the demons and cut the three poisons at their roots. The third dream was a sign that the darkness in the minds of his followers would be cleared and that he would be the light of the Dharma. The fourth dream indicated that the nectar of the self-evolved Atiyoga would dispel the heat of delusion and that the effortless fruit, the Yāna of Atiyoga, <515> would reveal itself.

Again, all the Buddhas of the three times unanimously urged Vajrasattva, saying:

**[You who] have miraculous, precious means,  
Open the door for whatever the followers desire,  
And provide the treasure that requires no effort.**

When he was thus invoked, the valorous Vajrasattva took from his heart a self-luminous wheel made of gems, handed it to Sem-pa Do-je [i.e., Vajrapāṇi], and said:

**The secret meaning of the Non-dualistic Primordial  
Consciousness<sup>123</sup>  
Is the primordially realized Buddhahood that requires  
neither labor nor effort,  
Renowned as the Great Middle Path;<sup>124</sup>  
Expose it to [your] gathering of followers.**

At this injunction, Sem-pa Do-je made a vow to expound the Dharma as follows:

**O Vajrasattva as great as the sky!  
That which is not within the domain of words  
Is indeed very hard for me to expound.  
Those who cannot understand will be taught  
To understand through the signs of words,  
And by various means, the yogis will be liberated.**

Thus, Vajrapāṇi agreed to teach. With a vajra in his hand, he visited the Eastern Realm of Vajras<sup>125</sup> [and met] the Tathāgata Do-je Sang-wa and others belonging to the Vajra race; in the Southern Realm of Gems<sup>126</sup> [he met] the Tathāgata Rin-po-ch'e Zhab and others belonging to the Gem race; in the Western Realm of Lotus Piles<sup>127</sup> [he met] the Bhagavān Pe-may Ö <516> and others belonging to the Lotus race; in the Northern Realm of the Accomplishment of Pure Action<sup>128</sup> [he met] the Tathāgata Drub-par Nang-wa and others belonging to the Boundless Karma race; and in the Central Realm

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<sup>123</sup> *nyi-me ye-shey / gñis.med ye.śes*

<sup>124</sup> *u-ma ch'en-pö lam / dḅu.ma chen.po'i lam / S. Mādhyamika*

<sup>125</sup> *do-je nang-way zḥing / rdo.rje snañ.ḅa'i žin*

<sup>126</sup> *rin-po-ch'ey nang-wa / rin.po.che'i snañ.ḅa*

<sup>127</sup> *pe-ma tseg-pa / pad.ma brtsegs.pa*

<sup>128</sup> *nam-dag drub-pa / rnam.dag grub.pa*

That Is Devoid of Boundaries<sup>129</sup> [he met] the Tathāgata Śrī Vairocana and many Buddhas of the Buddha race. He verified with them the meaning of Atiyoga—the unique essence of the Buddhist doctrine, the effortlessly self-existent Mind, the teaching that transcends [the law of] cause and effect.

Having acquired the essential views of all the Buddhas, Vajrapāṇi then went to Tuṣita Heaven and visited Sem-l'ag-chen, the son of a god, who he knew had good karma and fortune. Sem-l'ag-chen was then residing in the central room at the very top of the excellent, victorious palace that had its axis [crowned] with a nine-pronged vajra. Vajrapāṇi took his seat on a dazzling throne of gems on the nine-pronged vajra of the axis.

A parasol made of all varieties of gems was opened over Sem-l'ag-chen, and he was entertained with many celestial offerings. The complete initiation of *Gyal-t'ab Chi-lug*<sup>130</sup> was conferred upon him through the Gesture [Tradition]. The Ten Oral Transmissions of Miraculous Secret Teachings,<sup>131</sup> the Seven Initiations and the Five Secret Instructions,<sup>132</sup> and many other tantras and secret instructions were also given to him in their entirety within a fraction of a moment.

After crowning [Sem-l'ag-chen] as the Supreme Regent of the Buddhas, [Vajrapāṇi declared]:

**May this unique <517> essence of Buddhism  
Be propagated in Tuṣita Heaven, and  
May your heart reincarnation in human form  
Propagate it in the center of the world.**

Accordingly, the doctrine flourished in Tuṣita Heaven.

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<sup>129</sup> *wü-ch'og t'a-dang dral-wa / dḥus.phyogs mtha'.dañ bral.ḥa*

<sup>130</sup> *rgyal.thabs spyi.blugs*

<sup>131</sup> *men-ngag tr'ül-gyi-lung chu / man.ñag 'phrul.gyi.luñ bcu*

<sup>132</sup> *wang-dün / dḥaṅ.bdun // men-ngag nga / man.ñag lña*

#### 4.2.4 HOW, AFTER THAT, ATIYOGA APPEARED IN THE HUMAN WORLD

In Uḍḍiyāna, the land of Dākinīs, in western India, on the island of Dhanakoṣa, near the shore of Lake Gu-tra, in the sacred palace of Do-je Ling-p'u, where there was a park filled with flowers, there lived a princess called Me-tog-sal, born of King Uparaja and Queen Nang-sal Ö-den-ma. She had the marks of greatness, was extremely pious, and had exceptionally great Bodhicitta. Being honest and well disciplined, she observed flawlessly the moral rules of the senior nuns and was living with her five hundred fully-fledged nun-students.

In a dream, on the morning of the eighth day of a summer month of the Female-Wood-Bull year, she saw all the Buddhas emitting rays of light that transformed into the sun and moon. The sun then sank downward from the crown of her head, and the moon rose up from her heels. The following morning she noticed the growth of spiritual insight [in herself]. As she was taking a bath on the shore of Lake Gu-tra, Vajrapāṇi miraculously transformed himself into a king of swans and transformed Sem-l'ag-chen into the letter HŪM, <518> which changed into four swans. They alighted on the lake from the sky, and after bathing, three flew away. The swan who was the incarnation of Vajrapāṇi touched the heart of the princess three times with its beak, embedding in it a glittering letter HŪM, and then flew away.<sup>133</sup>

The amazed princess told the incident to her father and her followers. Her father, the king, was also amazed and said that it might be a sign of the coming of a Buddha. The princess was showered with presents, and elaborate ceremonies were performed. Without any sign of pregnancy, when the time came, a glimmering nine-pronged vajra emanated from her heart. This melted into a baby decorated with the noble marks and signs. He carried a vajra in his right hand, a

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<sup>133</sup> This story may be explained as follows. Out of the four swans created from the letter HŪM, three flew away. The remaining one, representing Sem-l'ag-chen, was transformed back into the letter HŪM, which the king of swans embedded in the heart of the princess.

jeweled slate in his left, and he uttered the prayer entitled “O Vajrasattva as Great as the Sky!”<sup>134</sup> and so on.

Everyone was delighted, and they showed [the baby] to a Brahmin seer. The Brahmin was extremely amazed and said, “He is an incarnation who is going to be the exponent of the teachings of the highest yāna.”

Since everyone was exceedingly delighted, and since the incarnation was carrying a vajra in his hand, he was named Ga-rab Do-je<sup>135</sup> (Exceedingly Delightful Vajra). Since everyone was pleased, he was called Gyey-pa Do-je<sup>136</sup> (Pleasing Vajra). Since he laughed, he was called Zhe-pa Do-je<sup>137</sup> (Laughing Vajra). In order for [Ga-rab Do-je] to rule <519> the kingdom, Vajrapāṇi appeared in his true form, conferred upon him the complete initiation of *Gyal-t’ab Chi-lug*, and gave him [the oral transmissions of] the tantras and secret instructions of Long-gu, Bam-po Nyi-tr’i,<sup>138</sup> and the like within a fraction of a moment. Ga-rab Do-je was crowned as the Lord of the Dharma. The trustholders were asked to extend their help to him and were appointed guardians of the doctrine. Then and there, within a fraction of a moment, Ga-rab Do-je attained the effortless *Dzog-ch’en* stage of Samantabhadra Buddhahood.<sup>139</sup>

At that time, there lived in Ārya Bharat [i.e., India] a Brahmin named De-kyong and [his wife] Ku-ha-na. They had a son named Brahmin Nying-po Drub-pa, or De-ch’og Nying-po, who was an incarnation of Mañjuśrī. Later he took the

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<sup>134</sup> *do-je sem-pa nam-k’a-ch’e* / rdo.rje sems.dpa’ rnam.mkha’.che

<sup>135</sup> *dga’.rab rdo.rje*

<sup>136</sup> *dgyes.pa rdo.rje*

<sup>137</sup> *b’zad.pa rdo.rje*

<sup>138</sup> *kloṅ.dgu / bam.po ṅi.khri* / two sets of works on *Dzog-ch’en*. Long-gu refers to nine subdivisions of the three main classes of Atiyoga. Bam-po Nyi-tr’i, or Twenty Thousand Volumes, refers to collections of *Dzog-ch’en* works, similar to the Abhidharma Piṭakas.

<sup>139</sup> This is the sixteenth and final stage, called the stage of *Ye-shey Lama*, the final goal of Atiyoga.

monk ordination, became the head of five hundred pandits, and became renowned as Lob-pön Jam-pal Shey-nyen.<sup>140</sup>

Ārya Mañjuśrī made a prediction to him, saying, “To the west of this place, near Lake Gu-tra, in the country of Uḍḍiyāna, at the center of the Ser-ling He-ch’en Dal-wa<sup>141</sup> charnel ground, in the holy cave of Do-je-ling, there lives the incarnation of Vajrasattva, the upholder of the effortless teaching of all the Buddhas, who was initiated by all the Buddhas. He is the incarnation known as <520> Ga-rab Do-je. You should go there and receive from him the unique core of Dharma called Atiyoga, the Dharma that leads one to realize Buddhahood without any effort. You should also be the convener of all the reincarnations.”

As predicted by Mañjuśrī, Jam-pal Shey-nyen informed the other pandits, “In the western land of Uḍḍiyāna there seems to be one who teaches a Dharma that transcends the law of karma. We should go there and defeat him.”

After conferring thus, seven of them, including Chief Rajahasti, went to Uḍḍiyāna, a place that was not that easy to visit. They could not defeat Ga-rab Do-je through debate or discussion no matter what subject they dealt with—whether the seed yāna [i.e., the Pāramitāyāna] or the fruit yāna, [which is composed of] the outer and inner secret Tantric teachings.

Jam-pal Shey-nyen asked his friends whether they would like to receive the Dharma that transcends karma from the incarnation [Ga-rab Do-je]. Chief Rajahasti said that he would like to, but dared not, since they had criticized the incarnation. But some of them said, “Since we can also certainly be transformed, we would like to receive it.” They began to talk about asking him for pardon. Some of them circumambulated [him] and did prostrations [to him]; some cried and shed tears.

Jam-pal Shey-nyen prostrated and wailed, saying, “I have disrespectfully criticized the incarnation. I have used so many challenging words <521> indiscriminately.” Thinking thus,

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<sup>140</sup> slob.dpon (i.e., Guru) ’jam.dpal bśes.gñen / S. Mañjuśrīmitra

<sup>141</sup> gser.glin he.chen brdal.ḅa

he searched for a razor to cut off his tongue and express his repentance.

The incarnation knew this, and said, “By cutting off your tongue, the ~~sin cannot be absolved~~. Compose a work of praise showing how this teaching is superior to the Dharma that teaches the law of karma. That will dissolve the ~~sin~~.”

Those who had neither luck nor a good karmic [connection] returned home. But Jam-pal Shey-nyen, who could instantly comprehend merely through gesture, understood all the Dharma. To cover the entire doctrine, he was given the *Gyal-t’ab Chi-lug* initiation. Further, he was given the Long-gu, Bam-po Nyi-tr’i, and the like Tantras, and also the secret instructions in their entirety. The name Jam-pal Shey-nyen was bestowed on him.

Then the incarnation Ga-rab Do-je gave in writing the meaning of the instructions he had imparted, saying:

**The Nature of the Mind<sup>142</sup> is primordially a Buddha.  
The Mind, like the sky, has no birth and death.  
If the meaning of the evenness<sup>143</sup> of all dharmas is fully  
understood,  
And if that is left on its own without being searched for,  
that is meditation.**

Jam-pal Shey-nyen, having fully understood the insight of the Dharma, described his understanding:

**I, Jam-pal Shey-nyen, <522>  
Have received the siddhi of the Destroyer of Yama.<sup>144</sup>  
I have understood the great sameness of saṃsāra and  
Nirvāṇa.  
The Primordial Consciousness of all wisdom has  
dawned [in me].**

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<sup>142</sup> *sem-kyi rang-zhin* / *sems.kyi rañ.bžin*

<sup>143</sup> *nyam-pa-nyi* / *mñam.pa.nid* / the non-dualistic, ultimate state of the Mind, i.e., the great, non-conceptual Śūnyatā

<sup>144</sup> *shin-je-she* / *gśin.rje.gśed* / i.e., Lord Mañjuśrī



To express his repentance, he composed the work called **Jang-sem Do-la Ser-zhün**.<sup>145</sup> He also became the convener of all reincarnations.

Jam-pal Shey-nyen passed the teaching on to Shri Sim-ha, who was born at a place named Sho-sha-ling in China. [Shri Sim-ha's] father's name was Gey-den, and his mother's, Nang-sal. He learned the five principal subjects, which included Sanskrit, logic, astrology, and so on, from Hastibhala. At the age of twenty-five, he met Guru Jam-pal Shey-nyen, and by receiving the complete Tantric teachings and secret instructions of the sublime Atiyoga doctrine, he fully realized the highest, unshaped insight.<sup>146</sup>

O-gyen Rin-po-ch'e—the Second Buddha, K'ay-pa Gya-na Su-tra, Pan-ch'en Vimalamitra, and the great translator Vairocana received the doctrine from Shri Sim-ha.<sup>147</sup> Up to that point, the teaching is known as the **Gesture Tradition of the Rig-dzins**.

### 4.3 [GANG-ZAG NYEN-K'UNG-DU GYÜ-PA, THE SUPERIOR BEINGS' EAR-TO-EAR TRADITION:] THE SPREADING OF THE ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE IN TIBET, THE LAND OF SNOW

When Lord Buddha lived in India, Tibet was uninhabited. Later, human beings appeared there because of the union between a **monkey**, who was an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara, and a **rock ogress**. At that time, Tibet had neither Dharma, <523> secular laws, rulers, nor leaders; it was in a disorganized state. It was then that a son was said to have been born to the Indian **King Mag-gya-pa**. He had webbed toes and fingers like those of a duck, and his **eyes were covered** with

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<sup>145</sup> byañ.sems rdo.la gser.żun

<sup>146</sup> tro-dral / spro.dral

<sup>147</sup> For the spellings of the names in this sentence, see Chapter One, pp. 242-243, footnotes 46-49 and 51.

long eyelashes.<sup>148</sup> His father took him to be the son of a non-human being and thought of banishing him. When he grew a little bigger, he was indeed banished [by his father].

Karmic force carried his legs to the foreign land of Tibet. There he met some herdsmen who asked him, “Who are you? Where are you from?” He pointed his finger skyward. They took him for a god of the sky. Carrying earth and stone on their shoulders, they constructed a throne for him, and he was crowned as a ruler. He was the first king [of Tibet], known as Nya-tr'i Tsen-po,<sup>149</sup> and was an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Drib-pa Nam-sel.<sup>150</sup>

Then, after several reigns, came the reign of **L'a-t'o-t'o-ri Nyen-tsen**,<sup>151</sup> an incarnation of Kün-tu Zang-po. He found on the roof of his Yum-bu L'a-k'ar Palace an image of Cintāmaṇi<sup>152</sup> as a representation of Buddha's body; two volumes of Dharma books, namely, Do-de Za-ma-tog Kö-pa and Pang-kong Ch'ag-gya-pa,<sup>153</sup> as a representation of His voice; and a cubit-tall glass stūpa as a representation of His mind. The Dharma thus began in Tibet.

The fifth king <524> after [L'a-t'o-t'o-ri Nyen-tsen] was Song-tsen Gam-po,<sup>154</sup> an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara. [During his reign, Song-tsen Gam-po] had the *t'a-dül* and *yang-dül*<sup>155</sup> chapels and the Lhasa Cathedral built. He married the Chinese princess Kong-jo, an incarnation of Tārā, and the Nepali princess Tr'i-tsun, an incarnation of the goddess Tr'o-nyer-ma. Two precious Buddha images [from China and Nepal] were brought to Tibet as their dowries.<sup>156</sup> [The first

<sup>148</sup> According to the text, his eyes were like those of birds, with their upper portion covered. Elsewhere, however, his eyes are described as covered with long lashes.

<sup>149</sup> gña'.khri btsan.po

<sup>150</sup> sgrib.pa rnam.sel

<sup>151</sup> lha.tho.tho.ri sñan.btsan

<sup>152</sup> tsin.tā.maṇi

<sup>153</sup> mdo.sde za.ma.tog bkod.pa / spañ.skoñ phyag.brgya.pa

<sup>154</sup> sroñ.rtsen sgam.po

<sup>155</sup> mtha'.'dul / yañ.'dul

<sup>156</sup> Both images were initially cast in India during Buddha's lifetime.

Tibetan scholar,] T'ön-mi Sambhoṭa, introduced a writing system for Tibetan, which had not been available previously. He learned Sanskrit from an Indian pandit named L'a Rig-pay Seng-ge, and translations of books such as the Ratnamegha Sutantra were started. The king miraculously projected from his forehead a monk called Ākarmati, who subdued the heretic king of India. [Ākarmati] brought back five self-existent images of Avalokiteśvara discovered inside a sandalwood tree called Drül-gyi Nying-po (Heart of a Snake) in a desert situated on the border between India and Zangling, and also constructed in Lhasa the unique eleven-headed image of Avalokiteśvara.<sup>157</sup> During the reign of this king [i.e., Song-tsen Gam-po], Buddhism was **formally** established in Tibet.

The fifth king born after that was Tr'i-song Deu-tsen,<sup>158</sup> an incarnation of Ārya Mañjuśrī. When he was thirteen, his father died. Until he was seventeen, advised by ministers such as Ngam Ta-ra Lu-gong, L'a-zang Lu-pal, and so on, <525> he indulged in warfare, plundering, and conquering many countries, which he annexed to his kingdom. Later, on going through the archives of his ancestors, he found that Buddhism was started during the reign of L'a-t'o-t'o-ri Nyen-shal<sup>159</sup> and formally established during the reign of Song-tsen Gam-po. On learning that all his ancestors were interested solely in following the Dharma, he thought that he, too, would propagate the Dharma and help it flourish.

Tr'i-song Deu-tsen talked to Gö Pe-ma Gung-tsen, the Dharma Minister. To the other ministers, he tactfully conveyed the order to have a monastery built, and they all consented. When a priest was sought to spiritually prepare the site for the monastery, they consulted with **Nyang-ting-dzin Zang-po**, the royal priest then residing at Sam-ye Ch'im-p'u. Through the clarity of his concentrative meditation, he came

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<sup>157</sup> See Appendix A, Note 8.

<sup>158</sup> khri.sron lde'u.btsan (also spelled lde.btsan)

<sup>159</sup> i.e., L'a-t'o-t'o-ri Nyen-tsen, as mentioned above. There is a variation in the spelling of the name here.

to know of the existence of Abbot K'en-ch'en Zhi-wa-tsh'o,<sup>160</sup> son of Dharmarāja Go-ma-de, residing at a place called Zahor in East India. Having been informed, the king sent for him to come [from India].

[The abbot came and] prepared the site. But at a [particular plot of] land, named Ārya Pā Lo, there was a wild rose bush occupied by a ~~serpent spirit~~. [The ~~serpent spirit~~] knew that the bush would be cut down [during the construction]. Hence, it asked all the gods and evil spirits, the twenty-one *ge-nyen*<sup>161</sup> spirits, and human and non-human beings for militant assistance. Whatever the human beings <526> constructed during the day, the gods and evil spirits pulled down at night. They returned the earth and stone to their original places. [Faced with this,] the king asked the K'en-po, "Is this happening because of the heavy obscuration of my ~~sin~~, or is it because you have not blessed the project? Do [these events] mean that my wishes will not be fulfilled?"

"I dealt with the gods and evil spirits," the K'en-po said, "with my Bodhicitta. However, it seems that they cannot be subdued by peaceful means but rather that wrathful means are required to subdue them. Now, at Bodhgāya in India, there is one who is known as O-gyen Pe-ma Jung-nay.<sup>162</sup> He was miraculously born, has mastered the five principal subjects, has accomplished perfection in practicing the Ultimate Truth, and has attained both the ~~Unique and common accomplishments~~. He destroys demons and makes the group of eight spirits serve him. He makes all the gods and malicious spirits tremble [~~with fear~~] and is the subduer of evil spirits. If he is invited, no gods or evil spirits will be able to challenge him and the king's intention will be entirely fulfilled."

The king said, "Perhaps such a being cannot be invited."

The K'en-po replied, "He can [indeed] be invited, because there is a past karmic connection."

<sup>160</sup> mkhen.chen zhi.ḅa.'tsho / S. Śāntarakṣita

<sup>161</sup> dge.bsñen ñer.gchig / the name of a group of twenty-one spirits

<sup>162</sup> o.rgyan pad.ma 'byuñ.gnas / the Lotus-Born of Uḍḍiyāna

Saying this, he related the following story to the king. “Long ago, in Nepal, De-ch’og-ma, the daughter of the poultry keeper, Sal-la, had four sons whose fathers were keepers, respectively, [of the king’s] horses, pigs, poultry, and dogs, and who built the Ja-rung K’a-shor stūpa and offered prayers.”<sup>163</sup>

Accordingly, the king [dispatched] Ba-tr’i-zher, Do-je Dü-jom, Ch’im <527> Śakyaprabha, Shü-bu Pal-gyi Seng-ge, and others to India, providing each of them with one *dray* of gold dust and a gold *pa-ta*.<sup>164</sup> When they requested the Guru to come to Tibet to bless the ground for the construction of the monastery, he accepted the invitation and set out, journeying stage by stage [to Tibet].

On his way, he subdued all the gods and spirits of Tibet, such as the *ten-ma chü-nyi*, *kyong-ma chü-nyi*, and *ge-nyen nyer-chig*,<sup>165</sup> and arrived at Drag-mar.

[There] he blessed the ground and constructed a three-storied monastery named Sam-ye L’ün-gyi Drub-pay Tsug-lag-k’ang. [It was surrounded by chapels in the shape of] the four continents and [eight] subcontinents, and by two buildings [called] Yag-sha Tag-ög,<sup>166</sup> [to represent] the sun and moon. The whole complex was enclosed by a protecting wall. The K’en-po, Guru Pe-ma, and Vimalamitra—the three [teachers]—showered consecration flowers three times. Many wonderful signs of miraculous phenomena occurred.

The K’en-po introduced the Vinaya and Sutantra Doctrines [in Tibet], and Guru Pe-ma and Vimalamitra introduced the Tantric Doctrine. During that time, for intimate disciples [such as] the Je-bang Drog-sum,<sup>167</sup> Nyang-ben

<sup>163</sup> These four sons, because of their past karmic connection, were later reborn as Guru Padmasambhava, K’en-ch’en Zhi-wa-tsh’o, King Tr’i-song Deu-tsen, and the Great Pandit Vimalamitra.

<sup>164</sup> pa.tra / leaf of gold

<sup>165</sup> brtan.ma bchu.gñis / skyoñ.ma bchu.gñis / dge.bsñen ñer.gchig

<sup>166</sup> yag.śa ltag.’og / These two buildings are to the east and west of the main temple.

<sup>167</sup> rje.’bañs grogs.gsum / i.e., King Tr’i-song Deu-tsen, Vairocana, and K’a-dro Ye-shey Ts’o-gyal

Ting-zin Zang-po,<sup>168</sup> and similar fortunate students who were suitable for the teaching,<sup>169</sup> <528> Guru Pe-ma—the Second Buddha—and the Great Pandit Vimalamitra turned the Wheel of Dharma pertaining to the Three Inner Yogas, that is, *Dzog-ch'en* Atiyoga and the like, which actually showed the secret **Shen-je**, **La-da**, and **Rang-dröl** teachings.<sup>170</sup> The teaching lineage from that period onward is called the Ear-to-Ear Tradition.

Moreover, the Great O-gyen—the Second Buddha—gave the fortunate king and his subjects inconceivably many teachings that were suited to each individual's capacity, according to his karma.

To maintain the continuity of the teaching, he wrote the texts on yellow paper and concealed them with prayers as sealed treasures for the benefit of future generations. Later, when the predicted time came, a yogi—an incarnation who was previously ordained by prayers—suddenly appeared and opened the door of the secret treasures, helping many fortunate followers. The tradition transmitted by this method is known as the **Six or Nine Lineages Tradition**.<sup>171</sup>

Thus, there appeared innumerable miraculous *ter-tön*<sup>172</sup> incarnations. Among them, Rig-dzin Jig-me Ling-pa<sup>173</sup> was the real [embodiment] of Ārya Avalokiteśvara called Sem-nyi Ngal-so,<sup>174</sup> who appeared in the form of a Dharma teacher.

<sup>168</sup> myañ.ban tiñ.'zin bzañ.po / one of the famous *Dzog-ch'en* meditators who attained the rainbow body

<sup>169</sup> Out of the twenty-five well-known initial followers of Guru Rin-po-ch'e, the three—Je-bang Drog-sum—and Nyang-ben Ting-zin Zang-po account for four. "Similar fortunate students who were suitable . . ." refers to the twenty-one remaining ones.

<sup>170</sup> śan.'byed / la.bzla / rañ.grol / important *Dzog-ch'en* terms that refer, respectively, to the differentiation between the ordinary mind and the Buddha Mind; how to be in the liberated state; and how to understand that the Buddha Mind is self-liberated

<sup>171</sup> gyü-pa drug-den-nam gu-den / brgyud.pa drug.ldan.nam dgu.ldan

<sup>172</sup> gter.ston / one who takes out a previously buried treasure

<sup>173</sup> rig.'zin 'jigs.med gliñ.pa

<sup>174</sup> 'phags.pa sems.ñid ñal.gso / There are several aspects of Ārya Avalokiteśvara, of whom Sem-nyi Ngal-so, who has two hands, is one.

He received from O-gyen—the Second Buddha, Pan-ch'en Vimalamitra, the Omniscient Guru Long-ch'en Rab-jam-pa, and so on the essence of the Three Traditions<sup>175</sup> <529> simultaneously. Having expounded the teachings that covered the entire doctrine of Buddhism to those who had good fortune and karma, he remained in the state of Buddhahood.

It is like the saying:

**Although the body may be that of a god or man,  
The Mind is the actual, sublime Buddha.**

Thus, even Je Lama [Jig-me Gyal-way Nyu-gu] said:

**If you can put the teaching into practice and offer prayers to my Guru Vajradhara, the holy one, the protector of sentient beings, [you will obtain the result]. It is not only that I desire to praise him as such, being prejudiced by my devotion to him; he really was the Buddha, the Great Vajradhara, who came in human form for the benefit of living beings. Between him and you, no other link exists except me. I also, ever since meeting Guru Vajradhara, did whatever he told me to do. I followed him by offering three types of services to please him. And I did nothing that caused him to give me even the least look of displeasure. Therefore, the lineage I hold is definitely one that, undefiled by the breach of trust, is like an untarnished gold chain, and, hence, the blessings of this lineage are different from those of others.**

<530> [Also,] from the Tantra Ni-da K'a-jor:

**If the anecdote told is not based on facts,  
The direct teaching of the Great Secret  
Suffers the defect of being disbelieved.**

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<sup>175</sup> i.e., *gong-gyü* / *dgoñs.brgyud* // *da-gyü* / *brda.brgyud* // *nyen-gyü* / *sñan.brgyud* // the Mind-to-Mind, Gesture, and Ear-to-Ear Traditions

Since a statement proving the greatness of the teaching by linking it with an authentic tradition has the benefit of generating faith in the minds of its followers, the lineage history has been related here in connection with the Guru Yoga.

The required amount of mantra to be said in [performing the] Guru Yoga is ten million. [This number] must by all means be recited. There are those who ignore this, thinking that the preliminary practices<sup>176</sup> are not that important; banking on hearsay about the profundity of the main practices, they attempt to perform the ~~creative and non-creative practices~~ before completing the preliminary practices.

Such people are following the worldly sayings:

**Reaching for the tongue before the head is cooked,  
Stretching the legs before the bed is warmed up.**

Just as these sayings indicate, practicing meditation while failing to accomplish the preliminaries will have no meaning even the size of a sesame seed. Even if a sign of the warmth of success is accidentally experienced, it will be akin to constructing a house without a foundation. Also, if the preliminary practices are hypocritically done at the beginning and are discarded as unnecessary when the main practices are done <531> by thinking, [“now it is not necessary,”] the same [above-cited] mistake will be made. If the preliminary Dharma, which is the foundation of the path, is given up, it will be like painting a fresco on a non-existent wall. It amounts to breaking the roots of the Dharma.

Hence, always, under all circumstances, one should make an effort to practice the preliminary Dharma until one develops an **unhypocritical conviction**. In particular, to make an effort to focus on the Guru Yoga—the medium through which the blessings enter—as the main theme of meditation is the supreme technique.

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<sup>176</sup> *ngön-dro* / *sñon.’gro*



**Although the gracious Guru is seen as a real Buddha,  
Because of my obstinate nature, I disobey the orders of  
the Noble One.**

**Although I know that the sentient beings of the three  
realms are my parents,  
Because of my rudeness, I use harsh words with my  
spiritual friends.**

**May I and ill-fated beings like me,  
Throughout this and all future lives,  
By being peaceful, subdued, and adaptable,  
Be blessed to follow religious teachers.**

This is the instruction on the Guru Yoga, the door through which the blessings enter that forcibly generate the insight of the Primordial Consciousness.

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## **PART THREE**

# **The Instruction on the Transference of Consciousness, A Direct Method That Complements the Main Practice of Meditation**

**To ignorant beings, he showed all the more compassion;  
To heavy sinners, he gave all the more help;  
In dealing with stubborn natures, he displayed all the  
more skill.  
At the feet of that unparalleled Guru, <532> I pay  
homage.**



## CHAPTER ONE

# Secret Instructions on Dying <sup>1</sup>

### 1 THE INSTRUCTION ON THE TRANSFERENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS (*P'O-WA*), THE ATTAINMENT OF BUDDHAHOOD WITHOUT MEDITATION

In general, there are five types of *p'o-wa*:<sup>2</sup>

1. The First Grade, Dharmakāya *P'o-wa* That Seals the Consciousness in the Doctrinal View;<sup>3</sup>
2. The Second Grade, Sambhogakāya *P'o-wa* That Is Done by Means of Combining the Mahāyoga and Anuyoga Practices;<sup>4</sup>
3. The Third Grade, Nirmāṇakāya *P'o-wa* of Immeasurable Mercy;<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *da-ka-may men-ngag* / 'da'.ka.ma'i man.ṅag / Please note that Part Three has only one chapter, which has the following structure. The first section (pp. 493-498) describes the five types of *p'o-wa* in general; the second section (pp. 498-516) describes the fourth type of *p'o-wa*, The Ordinary *P'o-wa* Performed by Means of Three Assumptions, in particular.

<sup>2</sup> 'pho.ḥa / to transfer / That which is transferred is the consciousness (*nam-shey* / rnam.śes) found in unrealized beings, as opposed to the Primordial Consciousness (*ye-shey* / ye.śes) found in those who are realized. It is the *nam-shey* of beings that is transferred from a lower to a higher state. The *Ye-shey* cannot be transferred, for it is the Ultimate State itself.

<sup>3</sup> *ch'ō-ku ta-wa gay-deb-kyi p'o-wa* / chos.sku lta.ḥa rgyas.'debs.kyi 'pho.ḥa

<sup>4</sup> *long-ku kye-dzog zung-jug-gi p'o-wa* / loṅ.sku bskyed.rdzogs zuṅ.'jug.gi 'pho.ḥa

<sup>5</sup> *trül-ku ts'e-me t'ug-jey p'o-wa* / sprul.sku tshad.med thugs.rje'i 'pho.ḥa

4. The Ordinary *P'o-wa* [Performed] by Means of Three Assumptions;<sup>6</sup> and
5. The Hooklike *P'o-wa* of Mercy to Help [the Consciousness of] the Deceased.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.1 THE FIRST GRADE, DHARMAKĀYA *P'O-WA* THAT SEALS THE CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE DOCTRINAL VIEW

This refers to [the technique used by] those in whom the correct understanding of the unshaped doctrinal view<sup>8</sup> has been born in this life, and who are accustomed to it; at the time of their death, they [transfer their] consciousness into the Vastness of the Dharmakāya through the secret path of *Ka-dag Tr'eg-ch'ö* by depending on [the *Zung-jug* of] Emptiness and Cognizance.<sup>9</sup>

### 1.2 THE SECOND GRADE, SAMBHOĀKĀYA *P'O-WA* THAT IS DONE BY MEANS OF COMBINING THE MAHĀYOGA AND ANUYOGA PRACTICES

Those who are accustomed to the Yoga that treats the creative and non-creative meditations as undifferentiable,<sup>10</sup> and who have gained perfection in the practice of imagining the illusory forms of the devas,<sup>11</sup> can, when the illusory visions

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<sup>6</sup> *t'a-mal dü-shey sum-den-gyi p'o-wa* / tha.mal 'du.śes gsum.ldan.gyi 'pho.ḅa

<sup>7</sup> *shin-po jey-zin t'ug-je chag-kyü p'o-wa* / gśin.po rjes.'zin thugs.rje lcags.kyu'i 'pho.ḅa

<sup>8</sup> *nay-lug ma-chö-pay ta-wa* / gnas.lugs ma.bcos.pa'i lta.ḅa

<sup>9</sup> *ying-rig* / dbyiñs.rig

<sup>10</sup> By understanding the paradoxical, non-conceptual state through the *Zung-jug* of the creative (*kye-rim*) and non-creative (*dzog-rim*) meditations, dualistic concepts are dissolved by them into the Dharmakāya Mind.

<sup>11</sup> The assumption that all one's concepts are illusory devas is a strong and optimistic antidote to the ignorant belief that phenomenal things substantially exist on their own and forever.

of the *bar-do* dawn after their death, transfer themselves into the *Zung-jug* state of Jñānakāya.

### 1.3 THE THIRD GRADE, NIRMĀṄAKĀYA P'O-WA OF IMMEASURABLE MERCY

[This is meant for] those who have received initiation for [spiritual] maturity, whose bond of trust is free from defects, who have faith in the creative and non-creative meditations, and <533> who are endowed with the teachings on the secrets of the *bar-do*.

It is said:

**Having closed the door of the womb, remember to reverse the direction.**

**This is the time when heartfelt effort and *dag-nang* are needed.**

As it is said, close the doors of the impure wombs and eject [the consciousness] with great compassion. [This refers to] taking rebirth in the pure realms by following the method of taking the miraculous path of the Nirmāṅakāya.

### 1.4 THE ORDINARY P'O-WA [PERFORMED] BY MEANS OF THREE ASSUMPTIONS

[The following are the three assumptions:]

1. Assume the middle nerve to be the path;
2. Assume the mind, a spot [of light representing the] consciousness, to be the guest;
3. Assume the place, the blissful Pure Land,<sup>12</sup> to be the destination.

Thus, with these assumptions, the *p'o-wa* is applied.

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<sup>12</sup> *dag-pay zhing-k'am* / *dag.pa'i zin.khams* / i.e., Amitābha Buddha's Western Paradise, called *de-wa-ch'en kyi zhing-k'am* / *bde.ba.chen kyi zin.khams* / Paradise of Great Bliss

## 1.5 THE HOOKLIKE *P'O-WA* OF MERCY TO HELP [THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF] THE DECEASED

This is a *p'o-wa* that is applied to others at the time of their death or when they are in the *bar-do* by a yogi who, by virtue of having attained supreme insight and control over mental appearances, knows the nature of the consciousness in the *bar-do*. In general, one who applies *p'o-wa* to a deceased [person] must, by all means, have attained the Path of Seeing.

As Mi-la Re-pa said:

**Until the truth of the Path of Seeing is attained,  
Do not apply *p'o-wa* to the deceased.**

However, the unmistakable time for the application of *p'o-wa* is when the outer breathing stops but the inner breathing has yet to stop. <534> If this exact moment is found, anyone having a little experience of the secret technique of *p'o-wa* can apply it. It will be of great benefit, for it can prevent [the deceased] from taking rebirth in the lower regions and so on. It is like giving friendly assistance to a guest on his journey.

Otherwise, once the consciousness is separated from the body, it is difficult to apply *p'o-wa*. To apply *p'o-wa* in such a case, a yogi who knows the birthplaces in the *bar-do*<sup>13</sup> and who has control over the mind is required. If a yogi of that type is available, he can transfer the [consciousness] to the pure regions by applying *p'o-wa* in the *bar-do* itself, since, in the *bar-do*, the consciousness is severed from the bondage of the mortal body and is easily influenced by any cause. The ambitious attempt to apply *p'o-wa* after death by summoning the consciousness back to the corpse has no essential value whatever.

Nowadays, most individuals who apply *p'o-wa* to deceased persons merely hold the titles of Lama, Tulku, and the like. If their action is motivated by loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta—and from the very root is uncontaminated by personal interest, because of the power of their Bodhicitta, the

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<sup>13</sup> *bar-do kye-nay* / *bar.do'i skye.gnas*



deceased will be greatly helped and the Lamas themselves will not be obscured [by bad karma]. But if, on the contrary, by depending on the mere knowledge of reciting prayers, they apply *p'o-wa* for the sake of their own material gain <535> and take away a horse or the like as a fee for their service to the deceased, it is a most condemnable act.

As it is said:

**You yourself have not gone to the dry land of freedom,  
Yet you undertake to liberate others.  
These two seem to be a bit at odds.  
It is like men, swept away by a river, holding on to each  
other [for help].**

Once, in the past, when Tog-den<sup>14</sup> Ten-dzin Ch'ö-p'el was traveling to Tsā-ri,<sup>15</sup> he had a mental vision of a man to whom he had applied *p'o-wa* in the past and [from whose survivors] he had taken a horse as a fee. He saw that man lifting his head from a lake of red blood and calling [the Lama] by his name, saying, "What must I do now?"

Being frightened, [Ten-dzin] replied, "I offer you [the merit I have earned by undertaking] my Tsā-ri pilgrimage." At that, it is said, the vision disappeared.

Even if one has attained the best insight, if one fails to perform the death rites after accepting a fee, one's own progress in ascending the spiritual paths and stages will be hindered.

In the past, when Dzog-ch'en Rin-po-ch'e Gyur-me T'eg-ch'og Ten-dzin died, Dri-me Zhing-kyong Gön-po was invited to perform the death rites. He took the whole day summoning the deceased, doing the purification ceremony, and applying *p'o-wa*. He did this just as he would have for an ordinary person [who died]. Seeing this, the monks <536> inquired of him why he was performing [the death rites] that way. He replied, "In the past, [the deceased Lama] took a black horse as a fee to perform ceremonies and offer prayers

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<sup>14</sup> rtogs.ldan / one developed in spiritual insight

<sup>15</sup> a holy mountain on the border between Tibet and northeast India, famous as a center where Tibetans go on pilgrimage

and dedication on behalf of a heavy sinner who had died, but he then forgot to actually perform them. This obscured [the deceased Lama's] progress a bit in ascending the stages and paths. However, the spiritual help that we have now jointly generated has helped him a lot." That sinner is said to have been one Go-log Ten-dzin.

Therefore, if those Lamas and Tulkus holding high positions do not, after having taken fees for the performance of death rites, [generate] Bodhicitta, offer prayers and dedication, and perform ceremonies effectively, but merely think that they [are incarnations] of so-and-so, it will not do. Even those who are unerroneously regarded as reincarnations of past holy Gurus must begin with the letters of the alphabet and learn how to read [and write], like ordinary children. It is certainly not the case that the knowledge of how to read and say prayers that they had in their previous life has been forgotten but that their knowledge of the creative and non-creative meditations has not been forgotten!

Therefore, instead of going to collect remunerations as soon as they know how to hold the reins [of their horses], I think that they should learn a little bit about developing the Bodhicitta motivation and do the *ts'am-drub*.<sup>16</sup> <537>

## 2 [THE ORDINARY P'O-WA PERFORMED BY MEANS OF THREE ASSUMPTIONS]

The *p'o-wa* that is being explained at this point is The Ordinary *P'o-wa* [Performed] by Means of Three Assumptions, or The Transference of the Consciousness [Based on] the Lama's [Instruction].<sup>17</sup> It corresponds to the following in

This type of *p'o-wa* is not required for one who has attained the perfection of the supreme insight. The Tantras describe [death] for such an individual as follows:

**The thing called death is a concept;  
It leads one to the transcendent realms.**

And also:

**That which is called “the death, the death”  
Is the attainment of a small nirvāṇa for the yogi.**

As said, [as for] those who have attained secure refuge in this life and gained control over birth and death, even if they appear to die, [for them] it amounts to going from one place to another.

Those who are accustomed to the techniques of the creative and non-creative levels of meditation, as described before, transfer themselves to the states of the Three Kāyas by [any of the] three meditations done [at the time of] taking rebirth, at death, or during the intermediate stage.<sup>18</sup>

Thus it is said:

**If one's practice of the path is poor,  
The practice of *p'o-wa* should come forward to receive  
[one halfway].**

As stated, this technique is required for those who have not yet attained steadiness on the path, for those who are heavy sinners, and so on. No matter how heavy a sinner one may be, if one has this kind of secret technique, it is certain that one can close the doors to the lower regions. <538> If they find this secret technique, even those who have commit-

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<sup>18</sup> *kye / skye // ch'i / 'chi // bar-do / bar.do //* These refer, respectively, to (i) the practice of the Nirmāṇakāya meditation, done at the time of searching for a place of rebirth by closing the doors of the wombs that lead to the samsaric regions and taking rebirth in the Pure Land; (ii) the Dharma-kāya meditation, done at the time of death; and (iii) the Sambhogakāya meditation, done while in the *bar-do* stage.

ted transgressions as terrible as the [five] boundaryless sins, and hence are falling directly into hell, definitely do not have to go to the lower regions.

The Tantras mention:

**Even [those who have] killed one Brahmin<sup>19</sup> a day or  
Have committed the five boundaryless sins  
Will be liberated by this method;  
Sins cannot contaminate them.**

Also:

**If [one's consciousness is] transferred through the  
imagination  
To the place above the nine apertures,  
One will not be defiled by any sins  
And will be [re]born in the Pure Land.**

There are other sayings, such as:

**If one knows how to follow the white, silken path of the  
nerve  
To the feet of the father, the well-attained Guru  
Sitting on sun and moon cushions at a place above the  
crown of the head,  
[One will attain] liberation even after having  
committed the five boundaryless sins.**

Therefore, this profound method, the technique of *p'o-wa*, is a Dharma that enables one to attain Buddhahood without meditation. It is a secret path that abruptly liberates heavy sinners.

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<sup>19</sup> Citing a Brahmin in particular emphasizes the gravity of the sin. When it is a terrible sin to kill an ordinary man, one can imagine the magnitude of sin involved in killing Brahmins, who, according to Hindu belief, are the holiest human beings.

The Buddha Vajradhara said:

**Even for one who kills a Brahmin every day  
And commits the five boundaryless sins—  
There is no doubt of his being liberated  
If he meets with this technique.**

The Great O-gyen, too, said:

**By meditation everyone can attain Buddhahood;  
<539> I have the Dharma that requires no meditation.**

The Great Pandit Nāropa said:

**Nine doors are exits to saṃsāra.  
One door is the door of Mahāmudrā.  
Close the nine doors and open the one:  
Doubt not the path of liberation.**

L'o-drag Mar-pa Lo-tsa-wa said:

**At this time, I am practicing *p'o-wa*;  
Practicing and practicing, again and again, I practice.  
I have no fear even if I die an ordinary death,  
For I have the confidence of prior acquaintance.**

Je-tsun Zhe-pa Do-je said:

**The secret technique of the introduction to the highest  
state through transferring and merging<sup>20</sup>  
Is an important guide to annihilate the *bar-do*.  
Is there any man who has this method?  
The man whose life force has entered the *u-ma*<sup>21</sup> enjoys  
bliss.  
How wondrous it is to arrive at the Dharmadhatu!**

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<sup>20</sup> *se-p'o ts'am-jor-gi dam-ngag* / bsre.'pho mtshams.sbyor.gyi gdams.nag

<sup>21</sup> *dḥu.ma* (short for *tsa-u-ma* / *rtsa.dḥu.ma*) / the middle nerve

This instruction on *p'o-wa* has two stages:

1. The Practice;
2. The Application.

## 2.1 THE PRACTICE

At present, you should receive the instruction on *p'o-wa* and strive to practice it again and again until you attain the sign of perfection. Now, when your spiritual nerves, spiritual air, and procreative fluid are not deteriorated, but flourishing, it is a bit difficult for you to actually transfer your consciousness by means of *p'o-wa*. But when the time of death comes, or when you grow extremely old, <540> it is easy to do so through *p'o-wa*. For example, in summer, when fruits are green, they are difficult to pick. But in autumn, when they are ripe and ready to fall, even the slight touch of your clothes can make them drop.

## 2.2 THE APPLICATION

[*P'o-wa*] should be applied when you notice that the signs of death repeatedly appear in you [even after you have taken measures to ward off death, which indicates] that there are no means to avert it,<sup>22</sup> and when the systematic signs of the sinking of the elements appear. At no other time should it be applied.

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<sup>22</sup> Just as there are various medical tests and treatments for physical ailments, there are several spiritual ways of testing whether one is facing an untimely death that could be warded off by obtaining blessings from Amitāyus, the Buddha of Life, by saving the lives of animals, by paying ransom to the karmic demons, and so on. If one is facing a timely death, however, there is nothing one can do to save one's life.

It is said in the Tantras:

**When the time comes, [the consciousness] is to be transferred.**

**Untimely application amounts to killing the devas.<sup>23</sup>**

There are many kinds of systematic signs of the sinking of the elements.<sup>24</sup> To make them easier to understand, they are classified as follows. The sinking of:

1. The Five Senses;
2. The Four Elements;
3. The Three Visions Called *Nang-ch'e T'ob-sum*.<sup>25</sup>

### 2.2.1 [THE SINKING OF THE FIVE SENSES]

A group of monks may be reciting prayers near your pillow, but on listening to them, you do not hear the individual words distinctly, but rather a buzzing sound. Even if that is not the case, only the sound and not the words of the conversations that others are having may be heard, [as it were] from a distance. This indicates the cessation of the ear consciousness.

Similarly, when your eyes see an object only as a hazy movement and cannot see it distinctly, it indicates the cessation of the eye consciousness. In the same way, when the nose fails to smell, the tongue fails to <541> taste, the body fails to feel touch, and so on, you are experiencing the outer stages of sinking. Introductory instructions should be given at this time. If there is someone who can apply *p'o-wa*, this is the right time to apply it.

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<sup>23</sup> This refers to the devas of the maṇḍala of one's body. Although they are actually beyond being killed, premature application of *p'o-wa* amounts to killing them.

<sup>24</sup> *t'im-rim* / *thim.rim*

<sup>25</sup> *snañ.mched thob.gsum* (or *nang-sum* / *snañ.gsum*) / These are abbreviated forms for the terms *nang-wa kar-lam-pa* / *snañ.ba dkar.lam.pa* (the white path); *ch'e-pa mar-lam-pa* / *mched.pa dmar.lam.pa* (the red path); and *nyer-t'ob nag-lam-pa* / *ñer.thob nag.lam.pa* (the dark path).

### 2.2.2 [THE SINKING OF THE FOUR ELEMENTS]

Then, when the flesh element sinks into earth, [you feel] as if your body is falling into a ditch, and [you feel] a sense of heaviness as if you are being pressed by a mountain. This is the reason a dying man asks one to pull him up, to raise his pillow, and the like.

When the blood element sinks into water, the mouth and nose discharge water and the like.

When the warmth element sinks into fire, the mouth and nose dry up. The heat of the body withdraws from its extremities and is seen, in some people, rising in the form of vapor from the top of the head.

As the breath-element sinks into air, the air which causes upward movement, that which causes downward movement, that which spreads the heat equally, and that which prevails all over—all four airs—merge with the [fifth] air, the air that holds the life, and [the dying person] finds it difficult to inhale.<sup>26</sup> The air continually tends to rush out from the lungs, its main retainer, through the white and black passages.<sup>27</sup>

Thereafter, all the blood in the body collects in the artery of life,<sup>28</sup> causing three drops of blood to fall [gradually], one after the other, into the center of the heart and causing three long exhalations.<sup>29</sup> Then the external breathing<sup>30</sup> stops completely.

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<sup>26</sup> The five different kinds of air, just mentioned, that activate the movement inside the system are *gyen-gyu* / *gyen.rgyu* // *t'ur-sel* / *thur.sel* // *me-nyam* / *me.mñam* // *k'yab-je* / *khyab.byed* // *sog-dzin-gyi lung* / *srog.'dzin.gyi rluñ*.

<sup>27</sup> The white passage refers to the windpipe and the black to the gullet. The gullet is the passage used by the air retained in the stomach—for example, through which one belches.

<sup>28</sup> *sog-tsa* / *srog.rtsa*

<sup>29</sup> It should be understood that each drop is followed by one long exhalation.

<sup>30</sup> *ch'i-wug* / *phyi.dbugs* / External breathing refers to inhalation and exhalation.



### 2.2.3 [THE SINKING OF THE THREE VISIONS CALLED NANG-CH'E T'OB-SUM]

At that time, from the crown of the head, <542> the white portion of the procreative fluid,<sup>31</sup> inherited from the father, runs downward. As an external sign, the white path<sup>32</sup> dawns, resembling moonlight striking a clear sky. As an internal sign, you experience a sense of clarity and the thirty-three concepts of anger stop. This is known as *nang-wa*.<sup>33</sup>

From the navel, the blood,<sup>34</sup> the red portion [of the procreative fluid], inherited from the mother, rushes up. As an external sign, the glow of the red path<sup>35</sup> dawns, like sunlight striking a clear sky. As an internal sign, you experience a greater sense of bliss and the forty different concepts of craving stop. This is known as *ch'e-pa*.<sup>36</sup>

Then the consciousness is caught between the white and red lights that meet in the center of the heart. As an external sign, the dark path<sup>37</sup> dawns, resembling darkness spreading in a clear sky. As an internal sign, a sense of unconsciousness dawns and **the seven concepts of stupidity stop**.<sup>38</sup> You then fall into a deep unconscious state of darkness. This is known as *nyer-t'ob*.<sup>39</sup>

After you recover a bit from the swoon, the Primordial Clear Light<sup>40</sup> dawns, resembling a sky free from the three

<sup>31</sup> *t'ig-le* / thig.le

<sup>32</sup> *kar-lam* / dkar.lam

<sup>33</sup> *snañ.ḅa* (also called *nang-wa kar-lam-pa* / *snañ.ḅa dkar.lam.pa*) / N.B. This is not the Primordial Clear Light (*ö-sal* / 'od.gsal).

<sup>34</sup> *rak-ta* / S. rakta

<sup>35</sup> *mar-lam* / dmar.lam

<sup>36</sup> 'mched.pa (also called *ch'e-pa mar-lam-pa* / *mched.pa dmar.lam.pa*)

<sup>37</sup> *nag-lam* / nag.lam

<sup>38</sup> See Appendix A, Note 6(b) for information on the text in bold type.

<sup>39</sup> *ñer.thob* (also called *nyer-t'ob nag-lam-pa* / *ñer.thob nag.lam.pa*)

<sup>40</sup> *zhi-dü-kyi ö-sal* / *gzi.dus.kyi 'od.gsal* / This is what is called the Mother's Light (*may ö-sal* / *ma'i 'od.gsal*), the innate Primordial Light. If it is not cognized, the visions of the *bar-do* will begin thereafter.

interfering causes.<sup>41</sup> If you cognize this as your own light and go into Samādhi, it is known as the best, the Dharma-kāya, *p'o-wa*. You will realize Buddhahood without passing through the *bar-do*.

[But if you cannot do this], thereafter the intermediary stages of the *Ch'ö-nyi* and *Si-pa Bar-dos*<sup>42</sup> systematically dawn. Since these are constituents of the main subject, they will not be dealt with here.<sup>43</sup> <543>

For those who are less acquainted with these [three] paths, the right time to make use of *p'o-wa* is as soon as the experiences of sinking begin to appear. At that time, you should completely cut off all your attachments to this world. You should think as follows: "This present death enables me, by depending on the secret instructions of the Guru, to go to the Pure Land, like an arrow shot by a hero. How happy I am!" You should thus develop your moral courage.

If you find the visualizations of *p'o-wa* and so forth difficult to imagine and if you have a friend who can visualize them, let him assist you. Whatever may be the case, at this point, as you will have previously practiced, you are required to transfer [your consciousness] forcibly by depending on the important instructions on the secret path of *p'o-wa*.

Thus, whether at the time of practicing it or [finally] applying it, the steps of putting the actual instructions into practice are as follows. On a comfortable seat, assume the vajra asana and the like poses. Keep your body upright. Do the preliminary practice<sup>44</sup> clearly and elaborately, beginning with

<sup>41</sup> *long-je kyen-sum* / sloṅ.byed rkyen.gsum / This refers to the dawning of the white, red, and dark paths just mentioned.

<sup>42</sup> The *Ch'ö-nyi Bar-do* refers to the state of Sambhogakāya, the intermediary stage of visions, and the *Si-pa Bar-do* to the state of Nirmāṇakāya, the intermediary stage just before the soul enters a womb, where the choice of rebirth becomes available.

<sup>43</sup> i.e., since the detailed explanations of these two stages are the main subject of the work entitled *Bar-do T'ö-dröl Ch'en-mo*, they are not dealt with here.

<sup>44</sup> *ngön-dro* / sñon.'gro

the invocation to the Guru<sup>45</sup> up through the entirety of the withdrawing visualization of the Guru Yoga.

The main instruction on the systematic visualization of *p'o-wa* [is as follows]. In an instant, transform the fundamental heap of your body into a Vajrayoginī; she is red, has one face, <544> two hands, two legs evenly folded in the vajra pose, and three eyes gazing towards the sky. At the time of *p'o-wa*, visualize her with an expression that is peaceful yet wrathful.<sup>46</sup>

**The right hand raises towards the sky a curved knife that cuts the three poisons at their roots. The left hand holds a skullcup of blood at the level of her heart, [in a gesture of] drinking the three realms in the form of blood.**<sup>47</sup>

Her bare body is ornamented with bone beads and a flower garland. Visualize her as visible, yet having no substance, like the red glow of light seen inside a red silken tent. This is the external, empty shell of the body.<sup>48</sup>

In the center of that body, you are required to imagine the middle nerve, straight like a pillar fixed in an empty house. Since it stands straight in the middle of the body without tilting to the right or left, it is called *tsa-u-ma*, the middle nerve. To represent the unchanging [nature] of the Dharmakāya, its skin is blue; to indicate that its obscuration of karmic habit is thin, its skin is thin like a lotus petal; to indicate that it is free from the darkness of ignorance, it is bright like a sesame oil lamp; to indicate that it does not lead to an inferior or wrong path, it is straight like the trunk of a banana tree. It is endowed with these four characteristics.

To indicate the path to the upper realms and liberation, its top end opens like a skylight<sup>49</sup> through the Brahmā hole in the crown of the head; <545> to indicate that the doors of the lower regions of saṃsāra are sealed, its lower end is

<sup>45</sup> *la-ma gyang-bö* / bla.ma rgyaṅ.'bod

<sup>46</sup> Compare this with her expression during the Guru Yoga, Tibetan text page <479>, p. 438 of this text.

<sup>47</sup> See Appendix A, Note 6(c) for information on the text in bold type.

<sup>48</sup> *tong-ra* / stoṅ.ra

<sup>49</sup> *gya-t'ong* / rgya.mthoṅ / lit., sky-window

closed like an umbrella at a distance of four finger-widths below the navel; visualize like that. This is the internal empty shell of the nerve.<sup>50</sup>

Then, inside the middle nerve at the level of your heart, imagine a joint like those found in bamboo stalks. On top of that, imagine a light-green air bubble that naturally moves and vibrates. On top of that, imagine the essence of the consciousness of your mind in the shape of the long, red letter HRĪḤ ( ཧྲིཿ ), producing a crackling sound and continuously fluttering, like a flag in the wind. Used as an object for mental concentration, this represents the *Rig-pa*.

Then, in the sky, about a cubit above your head, imagine eight large peacocks supporting a jeweled throne piled with three cushions—made, respectively, of multi-colored lotus petals, a sun, and a moon. On this sits the one who is essentially the embodiment of all the Buddhas of the three times, the incomparable store of mercy, the valorous Root-Guru, who, in form, is the Lord Protector, the Buddha of Boundless Light [Amitābha Buddha]. He is red in color, like a Mount Sumeru of ruby lighted by a hundred thousand suns. He has one face, and in his two hands, which are in samādhi pose, rests an alms bowl <546> filled with the Nectar of the Primordial Consciousness. He is in the form of a unique, celibate incarnation. He is dressed in the three pieces of a Dharma robe and has an uṣṇīṣa on his head, the marks of wheels on the soles of his feet, the rest of the thirty-two noble marks, and the eighty exemplary bodily signs. Visualize him radiating boundless light and rays.

On his right stands Ārya Avalokiteśvara, the embodiment of the mercy of all the Buddhas. He is white and has one face and four hands. The two upper hands are folded at his heart. The lower right hand counts a rosary of white glass, and the lower left hand holds the stem of a white peony, which unfolds its petals near his [left] ear.

To the left of Amitābha stands the one who manifests the might and power of all the Buddhas, the Lord of Secrets,

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<sup>50</sup> nang tsay-tong-ra / snañ rtsa'i.stoñ.ra

Vajrapāṇi, who is blue and has [one face and] two hands that hold a vajra and a bell crossed [at his heart].

Both of them are dressed in the thirteen items—ornaments and garments—of the Sambhogakāya. Amitābha Buddha sits in a crossed vajra pose to indicate that he is resting neither in the realm of saṃsāra nor in Nirvāṇa, whereas the two Bodhisattvas are standing to indicate that they are not tired of working for the benefit of sentient beings.

These three principal figures <547> are surrounded by the profound lineage Gurus of the *p'o-wa*, who are like masses of clouds accumulated in a clear sky and who turn their compassionate faces towards us and all sentient beings. With smiling eyes they look at us, and in their cheerful minds they think of liberating us and others—all sentient beings—from the miseries of saṃsāra and its lower regions.

Think of them as great sea captains who lead us to the great, blissful Pure Land, [and begin the prayer to aid the visualization as follows]:

*rang-nyi zhi-lü do-je nal-jor-ma . . .*

Imagining my basic body as Vajrayoginī . . .

and so on, up through:

*chen-sum nam-k'ay t'ong-la-zig*

*de-yi k'ong-wü tsa-u-ma . . .*

*ts'en-pe dzog-pay p'ung-por-sal*<sup>51</sup>

With three eyes looking towards the sky;

Inside her body, in the center, the middle nerve . . .

A body completely adorned with the marks and signs.

Imagine thus.

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<sup>51</sup> rañ.ñid gzi.lus rdo.rje rnal.'byor.ma . . . / spyan.gsum nam.mkha'i mthoñ.la.gzigs / de.yi khoñ.dbus rtsa.dbu.ma . . . / mtshan.dpe rdzogs.pa'i phuñ.por.gsal

Then, with deep devotion, relying absolutely on the deities, and with the hair on your body standing on end and tears dropping from your eyes, say the following prayer:

*chom-den-day de-zhin-sheg-pa dra-chom-pa  
yang-dag-par dzog-pay-sang-gyay  
gön-po ö-pag-tu me-pa-la  
ch'ag-tś'al-lo ch'ö-do kyab-su-ch'i-wo*<sup>52</sup>

**Bhagavān, Tathāgata, Arhat,  
Samyaksambuddha,  
Lord of Boundless Light—**

**[I] prostrate [to you], worship you, [and] take refuge  
[in you].**

After repeating this as many times as possible, say the following prayer:

**E-MA-HO**  
*nay-rang-nang dön-gyi ög-min-na . . .*

**How wondrous!  
At the self-conceived, meaningful, highest paradise . . .**

and so on, up through:

*ying-ch'ö-kü gyal-sa zin-par-shog*<sup>53</sup>

**May I attain Śūnyatā, the kingdom of the Dharmakāya.**

Recite this in full, three times.

After that, beginning with [the line]:

*yi-mö-gü . . .*<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> bcom.ldan.'das de.bzin.gśegs.pa dgra.bcom.pa / yañ.dag.par rdzogs.pa'i.sañs.rgyas / mgon.po 'od.dpag.tu med.pa.la / phyag.'tshal.lo mchod.do skyabs.su.mchi'o

<sup>53</sup> e.ma.ho / gnas.rañ.snañ don.gyi 'og.min.na . . . / dbyiñs.chos.sku'i rgyal.sa zin.par.śog

<sup>54</sup> yid.mos.gus . . .

**With a devotional mind . . .**

recite the prayer to the end three times.

Again, <548> after that, repeat the last line three times:

***ying-ch'ö-kü gyal-sa zin-par-shog***

**May I attain Śūnyatā, the kingdom of the Dharmakāya.**

While offering these prayers with devotional respect for the Guru and Buddha Amitābha in such a way that tears come from your eyes, focus your *Rig-pa* solely on the letter HRĪḤ, the object of concentration.

Then, when the consciousness is to be transferred, repeat “HRĪḤ” five times in a row from the depth of your upper palate [again and again].<sup>55</sup> The red letter HRĪḤ, [representing] the *Rig-pa* and being used as an object for mental concentration, rises higher and higher and quivers, being lifted by moving air in the form of a light-green bubble. As [the letter HRĪḤ] comes out of the Brahmā hole on the crown of your head, pronounce “HIK” and imagine that the *Rig-pa* is shot upward like an arrow let go by a hero and sinks in the heart of Amitābha Buddha.

Again, imagine the letter HRĪḤ in your heart. Visualize as before, and pronounce “HIK” seven or twenty-one times, and so on. There are other traditions in which the utterance of “HIK” ejects [the HRĪḤ], and the utterance of “KA” brings [the HRĪḤ] back down, but this tradition does not have such a practice.

Then, again, do the practice beginning with:

***chom-den-day . . .***

***gön-po ö-pag-tu me-pa-la . . .***

**Bhagavān . . .**

**Lord of Boundless Light . . .**

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<sup>55</sup> i.e., HRĪḤ HRĪḤ HRĪḤ HRĪḤ HRĪḤ; HRĪḤ HRĪḤ HRĪḤ HRĪḤ HRĪḤ; HRĪḤ HRĪḤ HRĪḤ HRĪḤ HRĪḤ; and so on

and the like, and offer prayers, conducting the process of transference as before, as many times as possible.

Then, again, recite the prayer beginning with:

***chom-den-day . . .***

**Bhagavān . . .**

up through:

***. . . ch'ö-do kyab-su-ch'i-wo***

***. . . worship you, [and] take refuge [in you].***

seven <549> or three times, and so on.

Thereafter, say the following short prayer, “The P’o-wa Ja-dzug-ma” by Ter-tön Nyi-da Sang-gyay, as transmitted through the *Dzog-ch'en* lineage:

***sang-gyay ö-pag me-la ch'ag-tsal-lo  
o-gyen pe-ma jung-nay-la söl-wa-deb  
drin-chen tsa-way la-may t'ug-jey-zung  
tsa-wa gyü-pay la-may lam-na-drong  
zab-lam p'o-wa jong-par jin-gyi-lob  
nyur-lam p'o-way k'a-chö drö-par jin-gyi-lob  
dag-sog di-nay ts'e-p'ö gyur-ma-t'ag  
de-wa chen-du kye-war jin-gyi-lob***<sup>56</sup>

**We prostrate to Amitābha Buddha.**

**We pray to the Lotus Born of Uḍḍiyāna.**

**May we be helped by the compassion of the gracious  
Root-Guru.**

**May the Root-Gurus of the lineage guide us on the  
path.**

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<sup>56</sup> sañs.rgyas 'od.dpag med.la phyag.'tshal.lo / o.rgyan pad.ma  
'byuñ.gnas.la gsol.ḅa.'debs / drin.can rtsa.ḅa'i bla.mas thugs.rjes.bzun /  
rtsa.ḅa brgyud.pa'i bla.mas lam.sna.droñs / zab.lam 'pho.ḅa 'byoñs.par  
byin.gyis.rlobs / myur.lam 'pho.ḅas mkha'.spyod bgrod.par byin.gyis.rlobs /  
bdag.sogs 'di.nas tshe.'phos gyur.ma.thag / bde.ḅa can.du skye.ḅar  
byin.gyis.rlobs



**Please bless us in practicing the profound method of  
*p'o-wa*.**

**Please bless us to reach the transcendent realm through  
the expeditious path of *p'o-wa*.**

**At the very moment we transfer our lives from here,  
Please bless us to take rebirth in the [Paradise of]  
Great Bliss.**

Repeat the prayer three times. At the end of the third repetition, recite the [last line] three times:

***de-wa chen-du kye-war jin-gyi-lob***

**Please bless us to take rebirth in the [Paradise of]  
Great Bliss.**

Repeat the prayer of transference as before, and continue to practice as many times as may be suitable.

Again, as before, begin the prayer:

***chom-den-day de-zhin-sheg-pa dra-chom-pa . . .***

**Bhagavān, Tathāgata, Arhat, . . .**

and so on, and recite the prayer of the Nam-ch'ö *p'o-wa* of the *Pal-yül* tradition:

**E-MA-HO**

***shin-tu ngo-ts'ar ö-pag me-gön-dang  
t'ug-je ch'en-po ch'ag-dor t'u-ch'en-t'ob  
dag-sog tse-chig yi-kyi söl-wa-deb  
zab-lam p'o-wa jong-par jin-gyi-lob  
dag-sog nam-zhig ch'i-way <550> dü-jung-ts'e  
nam-shey de-ch'en p'o-war jin-gyi-lob*<sup>57</sup>**

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<sup>57</sup> e.ma.ho / śin.tu no.mtshar 'od.dpag med.mgon.dañ / thugs.rje chen.po phyag.rdor mthu.chen.thob / bdag.sogs rtse.gcig yid.kyis gsol.ḥa.'debs / zab.lam 'pho.ḥa 'byoṅs.par byin.gyis.rlobs / bdag.sogs nam.ñig 'chi.ḥa'i dus.byuñ.tshe / rnam.ses bde.chen 'pho.ḥar byin.gyis.rlobs

**How wondrous!**

**The exceedingly wonderful Protector Amitābha,  
The Great Compassionate [Avalokiteśvara], and  
Vajrapāṇi of Great Might—**

**We pray to you with one-pointed minds.**

**Please bless us in practicing the profound method of  
*p'o-wa*.**

**When the time of our death comes,**

**Please bless us to transfer our consciousnesses to the  
[Paradise of] Great Bliss.**

Repeat this three times; in addition, repeat the last line [three times]. The prayer of transference is the same as before.

These last two prayers are not from the *Long-ch'en Nying-tig* tradition handed down by Jig-me Ling-pa. Nonetheless, Kyab-je Do-drub Rin-po-ch'e, who received their oral transmissions from Dzog-ch'en Rin-po-ch'e, Go-ch'en, and so on, and combined them like two rivers merging into one, had the custom of reciting them. Hence, Je Lama [Jig-me Gyal-way Nyu-gu] also seems to have recited them.

[However,] even though Drub Je Rin-po-ch'e had the oral lineage of the *Ka-gyü* instructions that descended through Dag-po, and there also exists a liturgical prayer composed by Do-drub [connected with that lineage], Je Lama did not follow that system. Anyway, all the different styles follow the same technique with regard to the visualization, which definitely confirms that these different lineages have [essentially] merged into a single river. Je Lama heard [the transmission] many times from Kyab-je Do-drub. Hence I think it will be all right for those who have received instructions on *p'o-wa* from Je Lama [to recite these prayers], assuming that they have received the oral transmission of the *Ka-gyü p'o-wa* and recite its lineage prayers.

With regard to these two condensed prayers, <551> it is not certain whether they were also composed by Drub Je himself or not. In any case, they seem to differ a bit from the

rest. Here it is recorded according to the manner in which Je Lama instructed.

Again, while giving the oral transmission of the Nam-ch'ö *p'o-wa* to a large gathering, Je Lama adopted the style of saying:

***di-nam nam-zhig ts'e-ye dü-jay-ts'e . . .*** <sup>58</sup>

**These [people], when they come to the end of their lives . . .**

However, this has been wrongly understood, and these days some say, “*dir-nang nam-zhig . . .*,”<sup>59</sup> and also, “*di-nay nam-zhig . . .*,”<sup>60</sup> and so on. I feel that these are a bit incorrect.

Thus, having practiced it again and again, towards the end, in order to seal [your consciousness] in the Śūnyatā of the Five Kāyas, pronounce “PHET!” five times, and remain in the unshaped state of Samādhi.

Thereafter, imagine that all the lineage Gurus above the crown of your head dissolve [downward] into the three principal figures; the two Bodhisattvas dissolve into Amitābha Buddha; He dissolves into light and sinks into you; and you instantly transform into the Buddha Amitāyus, the Lord of Boundless Life. He is red and has one face and two legs. His legs are folded in the vajra pose. His two hands [rest] in samādhi position, holding a flask filled with the Nectar of Life <552> and decorated with a wish-fulfilling tree.<sup>61</sup> He is dressed in the thirteen items—ornaments and garments—of the Sambhogakāya.

Imagine [yourself] thus and count the mantram “OM AMĀRAṆI JĪVANTI YE SVAHĀ” one hundred times. Also recite the life-giving mantram [known as] *Ts'e-zung* and so on. This will protect your life from being harmed, and

<sup>58</sup> 'di.rnams nam.ḥig tshe.ye dus.byas.tshe . . .

<sup>59</sup> 'dir.snañ nam.ḥig . . . / The appearances here until the time . . .

<sup>60</sup> 'di.nas nam.ḥig . . . / From now until the time . . .

<sup>61</sup> *pag-sam jön-shing* / *dpag.bsam ljon.ñin*

because of the power of the truth of the law of interdependent cause and effect, obstacles to your life will be vanquished. However, at the time of applying *p'o-wa* to others who are dead or about to die, or of applying it to yourself at the time of your own death, these mantra and prayers are not necessary.

After you have practiced thus, the sign of your perfection will be, as mentioned in the main text, that a bead of serum will appear in the center of the crown of your head, where a piece of kuśa grass could be easily fixed. Until such a sign is seen, you should carefully practice the *p'o-wa*. Conclude the practice by reciting the dedication prayer, the De-ch'en Mön-lam, and the like.

Thus, this instruction on the Secret Path of *P'o-wa* does not depend on varieties of creative and non-creative practices, as do other methods that take a long time to practice. By practicing it for about a week, you will certainly notice a sign of perfection. Hence, as has been said, it is a Dharma that can lead one to Buddhahood without meditation. It is worthwhile for all to regard such a unique shortcut as their tutelary deity.

**Without knowing how to save my own head, I chatter  
over the head of a dead body.**

**Without practicing the Dharma, I give [theoretical]  
explanations like the unfolding of an umbrella.**

**May I and sentient beings <553> like me, who are  
impostors,**

**Be blessed so that we can persevere in attaining  
perfection.**

This is the instruction on *p'o-wa*, the attainment of Buddhahood without meditation.

## Colophon

**Thus, considering how difficult it is to attain leisure and endowment, make the best use of the body, the basis of leisure.**

**Considering the nature of the impermanency [of life], use the whip of perseverance.**

**Knowing that characteristically the entirety of saṃsāra is but misery, generate the intention to extricate [yourself] from it, and develop Bodhicitta.**

**Knowing the varieties of the cause and effect of karma, avoid sin and accumulate virtue.**

**By recollecting the benefit of freedom, look forward to achieving the result.**

**By following a perfect Dharma Guide, learn the way he thinks and acts.**

**These are the six common outer preliminary instructions.**

**Holding the Three Jewels as the refuge, lay the foundation of the path to freedom.**

**Having developed Bodhicitta, be guided by the oceanic practices of the Bodhisattvas.**

**Depending on the visualization of [the form] and the recitation of the mantra of Vajrasattva, dissolve sin, the root of all downfalls, through the four antidotal powers.**

**Offering the maṇḍala of the Trikāya paradises, accumulate relative and absolute merit, the root of all virtues.**

**Offering prayers to the Guru, the source of all blessings, let the insight of the Primordial Consciousness grow in your mind. <554> These are the five unique inner preliminary instructions.**

**[Lastly is] the *p'o-wa*, Buddhahood without meditation, A means of delivering a practitioner to the Pure Land in the event of sudden death before the attainment of liberation. This makes, in all, twelve chapters of instruction.<sup>1</sup>**

**By [understanding] the benefit of freedom and by developing a genuine interest in extricating yourself from saṃsāra, open the door of all the paths [to Nirvāṇa]. Following a teacher, the fountain of all wisdom, prepare the interdependent causes of the path. Beginning with the taking of refuge as a foundation, develop the mind for the attainment of the best Bodhi. By learning the methods of the six pāramitās, be led along the profound path of the fully-realized, omniscient Buddha. All the technical methods [given in] other renowned instructions, such as Nang-wa-sum,<sup>2</sup> Kye-bu-sum,<sup>3</sup> the Ch'ag-ch'en Do-lug style,<sup>4</sup> and the like, boil down to this.**

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<sup>1</sup> Chapters Four and Five, “The Maṇḍala” and “The Simultaneous Destruction of the Four Māras: The Pauper’s Method of Earning Merit,” are treated here as one.

<sup>2</sup> snañ.ḥa.gsum / The Three Appearances

<sup>3</sup> skye.bu.gsum / The Three Grades of Followers

<sup>4</sup> phyag.chen mdo.lugs.su khrid.pa / The Instructions on Mahāmudrā Imparted in the Sūtra Style

The Vajrasattva Yoga and the Maṇḍala offering, the  
 two supreme techniques<sup>5</sup> for dissolving sin and  
 earning merit,  
 The Guru Yoga, the secret means of obtaining the  
 profound blessings,  
 And the secret instructions on *p'o-wa*, the means of  
 attaining Buddhahood without meditation,  
 Are the unique instructions of this paramount Dharma.

Still, to enter the unparalleled door to the main goal of  
 the path of *Nying-t'ig Do-je Nying-po*,<sup>6</sup>  
 One must practice the special <555> preliminary<sup>7</sup> and  
 then receive instructions on the Three Kāyas, the  
 [unrealized] mind,<sup>8</sup> and the Realized Mind.<sup>9</sup>  
 After that, one is given the *Rig-pa Tsal-gyi Wang*,<sup>10</sup> the  
 highest initiation,  
 And thereafter one is introduced to one's Buddha Mind  
 by means of the direct experiential process.<sup>11</sup>

While dealing with all these [topics], I have neither laid  
 emphasis simply on the sweetness of the words  
 Nor on the beauty of the sentence construction,  
 But have made the utmost effort to follow the exact  
 manner in which Je Lama [Jig-me Gyal-way Nyu-gu]  
 delivered his instructions.

I have done my best to avoid adulterating them with my  
 own words and have focused principally on writing  
 in a way that would be easy to understand and would  
 benefit the mind.

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<sup>5</sup> *t'ab la-na me-pa* / thabs bla.na med.pa

<sup>6</sup> *sñiñ.thig rdo.rje sñiñ.po* / i.e., The Core Heart of the Vajra Essence

<sup>7</sup> *k'ye-par-gyi ngön-dro* / khyad.par.gyi sñon.'gro

<sup>8</sup> *sem* / sems

<sup>9</sup> *rig-pa* / rig.pa

<sup>10</sup> *rig.pa rtsal.gyi dpañ* / i.e., the very special initiation of *Rig-pa*

<sup>11</sup> *nyam-tr'i mar-ch'ang-du deb-pa* / ñams.khrid dmar.chañ.du 'debs.pa /  
 N.B. These high instructions are to be explained in detail by one's Guru at  
 the appropriate time. Premature exposition will end in disaster.

**Besides this, there are many instructions that he gave particularly to point out the defects of the mind. Whatever I could recall of them has been suitably incorporated, wherever appropriate, as additional illustration in this work.**

**However, they are not to be used as round eyes to see others' defects,<sup>12</sup>**

**But are to be used introspectively as mirrors to see one's own mistakes.**

**Observe carefully whether you have these defects or not. If they are present, recognize them.**

**Having fundamentally eradicated the defects, you are required to discipline your mind in such a way that you can follow the sublime path with the greatest ease.**

**Hence Jo-jay L'a-chig [the Great Atīśa] said:**

**"The best of [all] Dharma teachers is the one who attacks your hidden defects.**

**The best of secret instructions is that which strikes at one's <556> defects.**

**The best of friends are remembrance and watchfulness.**

**The best of inspirations are obstructions, enemies, illness, and suffering.**

**The best of [all] techniques is to leave [your mind] unshaped."**

**As he has said, let the instructions strike at the defects.**

**Correct your mind by comparing it with [the instructions of] the Dharma.**

**Always be guided by remembrance and watchfulness, for you will have to bear the consequences [of your actions].**

**Even when a single bad thought occurs, do not let it go astray;**

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<sup>12</sup> i.e., in the sense that one's eyes become wider when focusing on others' mistakes



**To subjugate one's mind with the Dharma is the best secret.**

**If that is done, you owe gratitude to yourself.**

**Then the Dharma has really benefited you—you have fulfilled the purpose of following the Guru.**

**The Great Atiśa said:**

**“The best of all help is that which brings one to the Dharma.**

**The best of all benefits is that which turns the mind towards the Dharma.”**

**In short, you have now obtained a well-endowed human body,**

**Have met with a perfect Guru, and have received profound instructions.**

**This is the time when you can practice the nine yānas and attain Buddhahood.**

**You can succeed in realizing eternal [freedom] at this very time; you can also fail to do so at this very time.**

**You can generate good thoughts at this very time; [you can] also fail to do so at this very time.**

**[This time] is the boundary between one's success and failure; it is like a centennial feast that comes only once in a lifetime.**

**Hence, you should help yourself with the sunlight of the Dharma and always let the [thought of] death remind you of the <557> impermanence of life.**

**You should curtail your samsaric interest and persevere with heart and soul in making efforts to acquire virtue and avoid vice.**

**You should follow a well-qualified Guru and do whatever he instructs you to do.**

**Having entrusted your body, heart, and soul to the Three Jewels,**

**Know that when you enjoy happiness, it is because of the blessings of the Three Jewels,**

**And when you suffer, it is because of the bad karma you  
have committed in the past.**

**With the excellent thought of Bodhicitta, endeavor to  
earn merit and dissolve sin.**

**And finally, through the purest devotional faith and  
bond of trust,**

**Merge your mind with that of the Guru who holds the  
perfect lineage, attain the safest place of refuge in  
this life,**

**And have the mental strength to carry the burden of  
liberating all sentient beings, your old parents, from  
the imprisoning pit of saṃsāra.**

**[This] summarizes the essence of all the secret  
instructions.**

**Thus, the nectar-like river of the secrets of the Three  
Traditions,**

**The essence of the sweet water from the mouth of the  
Guru who holds the lineage,**

**The core meditation techniques of the nine yānas—**

**This is the only instruction that unerroneously includes  
them all.**

**Frivolous description, the chaff of words, having been  
fully abandoned,**

**The taste of the extremely secret knack<sup>13</sup> of meditation  
having been added,**

**The essence prepared by the instructions from  
experienced lips—**

**This well-delivered commentary is like a well-prepared  
meal. <558>**

**For one [who is] ill-natured, indulgent in the three  
poisons, and undisciplined,**

**This critical instruction uses a vajra plough and,**

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<sup>13</sup> *ne / gnad* / an important term that refers roughly to technical know-how in some area

Like an expert, applies the moisture of the pure  
Dharma—  
This well-delivered commentary is like a skilled farmer.

On the fertile field of a renunciative mind,  
The seeds of Bodhicitta are thoroughly sown;  
By means of earning [merit] and purifying [sin], the  
fruits of wisdom are grown—  
This well-delivered commentary is like the crop of a  
fortunate aeon.

It digs out and casts away one's defects from their  
roots;  
It skillfully speaks a hundred times [to enjoin] virtue;  
It always undertakes that which is beneficial—  
This well-delivered commentary is like an excellent  
governess.

It differs greatly [from other teachings] not only in  
words, but in the profundity of its meaning,  
Maintaining still the vapor<sup>14</sup> from the unparalleled  
Guru's mouth.  
Those who have received such well-delivered commen-  
tary as the gem of their hearts  
Have certainly found the Absolute Path.

The noble teachings especially meant for earning  
[present] benefit and [ultimate] happiness  
Have not been sought through Sanskrit or poetic words;  
Using the simple language of rural people to show the  
purest path,  
Providing thorough instructions, is the special style of  
the Bodhisattvas.

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<sup>14</sup> i.e., the unbroken oral tradition

**Although the main subjects [of Dharma] are explained  
with the extensive use of words,<sup>15</sup>**

**It is difficult for them to enter the small hut of a  
clouded mind.**

**Even the high verbal instructions on profound  
[esoteric] views and the accomplishment of  
perfection <559>**

**Are hard for an undisciplined, small-minded person  
of the Kaliyuga to put into practice.**

**For this reason—to make the main teaching under-  
standable—it has been summarized.**

**In the small heart-cavities of a small mind, this  
teaching is like the essence of gold.**

**For [dissipating] the mental darkness of the vulgar  
mind, it is like a butter lamp.**

**This self-explanatory, noble commentary [is] like a  
teacher who has no anger.**

**If scholars who are attached to empty words and  
Even great teachers in whom the exoteric teachings  
have not blossomed into secret instructions**

**Drink the essence of this secret instruction of the Noble  
[One], hereafter**

**The physical strength of [their] technique of meditation  
will definitely flourish.**

**Meditators who meditate on emptiness, like throwing  
stones in darkness,**

**Practitioners who brag about the virtuous deeds they  
have accomplished, and**

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<sup>15</sup> *zhung-she* / *g'zuñ.bśad* / explanations of main exoteric, or Sutric, teachings, as opposed to explanations of esoteric, or Vajrayanic, teachings (*men-ngag* / *man.ñag*)

**Fake meditators who have not understood the depth of  
their own minds:  
If they see this path, it will work like a heart-spoon.<sup>16</sup>**

**Although I have read many literary works written in an  
exaggerated style  
And am expert in painting a colorful rainbow with  
sweet-sounding words,  
This work contains nothing but the oral instructions of  
the Gracious Guru.  
It has not been adulterated with drawings of words  
concocted on my own.**

**The unparalleled Guru appeared in the form of a real  
Buddha and  
Transformed the world of the Snow Land<sup>17</sup> into a  
fortunate aeon;  
This took place not so long ago,  
For there are [still] vajra friends living who belong to  
that period.**

**For this reason, a documentation of this absolutely  
pure teaching [has been made].  
The incentive for this effort is also due to the kindness  
of the Noble One.  
This benevolent hand-drawing of faith and respect  
Should merit the appreciation <560> of the gods and  
vajra friends.**

**Also, if those fortunate beings who come hereafter  
See this teaching, they will instantly develop the faith  
Of having seen the Guru as a real Buddha and  
Will, I feel, not make mistakes in understanding the  
crucial points of his instruction.**

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<sup>16</sup> *nying-gi t'ur-ma* / *sñiñ.gi thur.ma* / the fine gold spoon said to have been used by Tibetan doctors in the past as a surgical instrument for removing the deposit of fluid in a patient's heart

<sup>17</sup> i.e., Tibet

**Whatever virtue has accrued from this  
 Is being dedicated to all the sentient beings, my  
 parents,  
 So that they can attain the excellent result of having  
 practiced  
 The sublime Dharma under the guidance of a noble  
 Guru.**

**Especially, may I see all those who have the blessings of  
 Hearing the nectar-like teachings from this  
 unparalleled Guru-Buddha  
 Realize the perfect state of Buddhahood in a group, and  
 [May I] see them return to deliver sentient beings.**

**Those who drink the essence of the nectar-like, sublime  
 doctrine  
 And attract the heart of fortunate beings with their  
 ecstatic songs of secret teachings  
 Are the superb Regents of the Gracious Guru.  
 Long may they sit on their vajra thrones.**

**May I, from now onward, throughout all my future  
 lives,  
 Serve the Gracious Guru and his disciples  
 And be able to fulfill all their commands; and  
 Being pleased with my service, may they take me as  
 their follower.**

**So long as the boundary of saṃsāra and the boundary  
 of formal beings exist,  
 May all my bodies, wealth, and merit be accumulated  
 And offered to serve all my former parents who are in  
 need of help,  
 And may they all <561> embrace the Dharma that  
 makes them attain Buddhahood.**

**For the time being, as well, may the blessings  
 Of the sun of the precious lineage fully shine in their  
 hearts.**

**May their present lives come to a successful end in  
solitude  
So that they may go [where] the unparalleled Guru  
[lives].**

Thus, the outer and inner instructions of *Long-ch'en Nying-tig* were written according to my unparalleled Guru's oral teachings. This was done at the request of Drön-ma Ts'é-ring, a monk-disciple of Je Lama, who turned over to me his notes in which he had recorded whatever he remembered of the oral teachings [of Je Lama]. He repeatedly insisted that, based on [those notes], I should write [a book] faithful to the oral instructions delivered by Je Lama.

In particular, Trül-ku Rin-po-ch'e Kün-zang T'eg-ch'og Do-je, the Regent who holds the Venerable Je-tsün Lama's teachings that bring maturity and liberation, gave me writing materials and two or three times encouraged me to write it.

Also, Ku-zhab Zhen-p'en T'a-yay Ö-zer, the custodian of the entire teaching, chief of all the closest disciples who hold the Secret Teaching Lineage of the Savior and Protector, Je Lama, said that if I wrote a book in the manner in which Je Lama delivered his oral teachings, it would be an aid in generating devotion to the memory of [that great] Guru. He bestowed on me the inspiration to write this book at all cost.

There are many vajra friends as dear as my eyes who are sure to be connected with me, like light with the wick of a lamp, until I reach the last boundary of Bodhi. Their wise suggestions and appreciative words gave me additional encouragement. Because of that, Rig-dzin Jang-ch'ub Do-je, the unparalleled crown ornament of a hundred yogis, granted me the name O-gyen Jig-me Ch'ö-kyi Wang-po (Fearless Dharma Essence of Uḍḍiyāna). But, in fact, I am the one known as the Ragged Old Man<sup>18</sup> who behaves like an outcast and in whom the five poisons burn like fire.

At that retreat, that solitude of solitudes that is fully adorned with the ornaments of all the virtues of solitude, where the trees receive the essence of heat from the rays of

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<sup>18</sup> *a-bu hral-po* / a.bu hral.po

the sun through their heads and drink the nectar-like drops of the essence of cold [water] with their feet, there are large trees, twigs, shrubs, clumps of grass, and many other such varieties of plants. Their branches are laden with leaves, blossoms, and fruits that resemble a colorful network of precious beads, ribbons, and festoons. Between them peep patches of blue sky, like faces of maidens whose sparkling smiles offer every pleasure one may desire.

May this work, which was well accomplished in that place, be the best path. By treading it, may the boundless sentient beings earn the cause of achieving the fully liberated stage of the Primordial Buddha.

**Long-ch'en-pa is the unique ornament that beautifies  
Buddhism;**

**Jig-me Ling-pa is the patron of the teaching and  
meditation [aspects of the Dharma].**

**Until saṃsāra comes to an end, may the teachings of  
these unparalleled Gurus**

**Be upheld through learning, thinking, and meditating.**

May goodness always prevail everywhere for all.





# **Appendix A**



## Notes

**NOTE 1.** The Tibetan language has quite a few homonyms. These have to be carefully understood while translating, for there is a great possibility of creating misunderstanding. If one is not careful in noting the spelling of such words, the esoteric meaning of the original teaching will be lost. The following terms are some instances:

(a) གོ / go / sgo / door

In the line, “Pe-jung has not gone anywhere, but is sleeping by their door” (page 234), the idea of the Guru sleeping by the door contradicts the instructions on the Guru Yoga, the highest means of realization.

Followers of both the old and new Tantric schools of Buddhism in Tibet are required to pay the greatest respect to their Root Guru as the essence of all the Buddhas. They are taught to visualize the Guru above their head during the day as their great refuge. At night, as they fall asleep, they are to visualize him in the center of their heart, or if that is not possible, they should visualize him sitting by their pillow. (See paragraph 1, page 254.) And in the morning, when they wake up, they are to request the Guru to rise up from the blossoming lotus flower in their heart to sit above their head as their protector. They never expect the Guru to rise up from the threshold of their door.

Since the Tibetan words for “head” (མགོ། /go / mgo) and “door” (སྐྱོ། /go / sgo) are homonyms, it is probable that “head” in this instance has gradually been changed to “door.”

(b) མཁའ་འདྲོ། / *k'a-dro* / mkha'.gro / S. Ḍākinī

The word *k'a* normally means “sky,” and *dro* means “to go” or “to travel.” Hence, *k'a-dro* can refer to anything, animate or inanimate, that lives or travels in space. Spirits; visible beings such as birds, butterflies, bees, and other insects; inanimate things such as helicopters, airplanes, kites, and so on are examples.

In this text, however, *k'a-dro* is an abbreviation for *k'a-dro-ma*. These are female spiritual beings who can be trans-worldly (*Ye-shey K'a-dro*), karmic (*lay-kyi k'a-dro*), worldly (*jig-ten k'a-dro*), and so on. *Ye-shey K'a-dro* are the female aspects of the Buddha who bring the highest realization to seekers, for they represent the Ultimate Nature of the Buddha Mind.

*Ye-shey K'a-dro-ma* refers to the projection of compassion through the skylike emptiness of the Primordial Consciousness. This is the Ultimate *Zung-jug*, the non-conceptual unification of Compassion and Emptiness.

The word *dro* (འདྲོ། /'gro), as found in *k'a-dro-ma* (མཁའ་འདྲོ་མ། / mkha'.gro.ma), should not be confused with the homonym *dro* (བློ། /bro), as found in *dro-pa* (བློ་པ། / bro.pa), meaning a male secular dancer.

(c) ཐིག་ལེ། / *t'ig-le* / thig.le / S. Tilaka

In general, *t'ig-le* refers to a spot of color. When used in esoteric practices, however, *t'ig-le* means either:

(i) seminal, or procreative, fluid

(ii) a spot of light

(iii) the non-conceptual, indestructible, great spot of light in the center of the heart, known as *nying-wü mi-shig-pay t'ig-le ch'en-po* (སྣོང་དབུས་མི་ཤིགས་པའི་ཐིག་ལེ་ཆེན་པོ། / sñiñ.dḅus mi. śig.pa'i thig.le chen.po)

It should be noted that there is a great difference in the spelling and meaning of the words *t'ig-le* (ཐིག་ལེ། / thig.le) and *t'ig-pa* (ཐིགས་པ། / thigs.pa). The latter merely means “drop,” as in a drop of liquid.

(d) འོགས་ཞིང། / *ts'og-zhing* / tshogs.ziñ

*Ts'og-zhing* refers to an assembly of refuge figures (representing the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha) in a paradise, used as a visual aid for accumulating merit.

In the ordinary sense, *zhing* refers to a field for growing crops. In the spiritual sense, it refers to a paradise. Although the words *zhing* (ཞིང། / ziñ), meaning “paradise,” and *shing* (ཤིང། / śiñ), meaning “tree,” are neither spelled nor pronounced the same, translators often confuse them due to the slight similarity in pronunciation. Thus, *ts'og-zhing* is often mistranslated as “refuge tree.”

This mistake may also have been made because of the five-branched tree that appears in the visualization of the paradise of the refuge assembly.

**NOTE 2.** The text uses the following three synonyms for wish-fulfilling tree:

(a) *pag-sam-gyi dong-po* / dpag.bsam.gyi sdoñ.po (p. 241)

(b) *pag-sam-gyi shing* / dpag.bsam.gyi śiñ (p. 401)

(c) *pag-sam jön-shing* / dpag.bsam ljon.śiñ (pp. 440, 515)

These terms are synonymous with *pag-sam-shing* / dpag. bsam.śiñ.

**NOTE 3.** མཚམས་མེད་ལྗ། / *ts'am-me-nga* / mtshams.med. lña

*Ts'am-me* means “without a boundary,” and *nga* means “five.” Thus, *ts'am-me-nga* refers to the five sins—killing one’s mother, killing one’s father, killing an Arhat, intending to shed the blood of a Buddha, and causing a schism in the Saṅgha—that have no interim boundary, such as the *bar-do*, for they are the cause for one’s direct fall into the lowest hell.

The word “boundaryless” has been introduced in this translation to convey the idea of having no interim boundary. It is to be distinguished from the word “boundless,” as used, for example, to describe the boundless number of sentient beings.

Nor should *ts'am-me-nga* be confused with ཚད་མེད་བཞི། / *ts'e-me-zhi* / tshad.med.bzi, the four immeasurable virtues of Bodhicitta.

**NOTE 4.** *jam nying-je jang-ch'ub-kyi sem* / byams sñiñ.rje byañ.chub.kyi sems

The first half of this term, *jam nying-je*, is an abbreviation for *jam-pa*, meaning “loving-kindness,” and *nying-je*, meaning “compassion,” which are the two principal practices of the four immeasurable virtues that constitute relative Bodhicitta. The second half of the term, *jang-ch'ub-kyi sem*, refers to the precious, absolute Bodhicitta.

Therefore, the term *jam nying-je jang-ch'ub-kyi sem*, used again and again in the text, and translated as “loving-kindness, compassion—Bodhicitta,” covers both the relative

and absolute aspects of Bodhicitta (*kün-dzob jang-ch'ub-kyi sem / kun.rdzob byañ.chub.kyi sems* and *dön-dam jang-ch'ub-kyi sem / don.dam byañ.chub.kyi sems*).

When a Bodhisattva is still learning how to practice both the relative and absolute aspects of Bodhicitta, he is said to be treading the Path of Learning (*lob-pay-lam / slob.pa'i.lam*) and, hence, still dealing with the conceptual aspects of Bodhicitta. When he transcends the dualistic concepts of relative and absolute Bodhicitta and enters the Path of Non-Learning (*mi-lob-pay lam / mi.slob.pa'i lam*, or *mi-lob-pay zung-jug / mi.slob.pa'i zuñ.'jug*), he is then a Mahābodhisattva. When he ultimately transcends the last (i.e., the tenth) stage of this path, he attains the eleventh stage, or Buddhahood, which is Ultimate Bodhicitta.

**NOTE 5.** *rig-kyi-bu / rigs.kyi.bu*

Normally *bu* and *bu-mo* mean “son” and “daughter.” They are an abbreviation for *bu-pho* and *bu-mo*. *Bu* basically means “child.” In this case, when Vajrasattva declares རིགས་ཀྱི་བུ། / “*Rig-kyi-bu*” (page 378), he is addressing both sexes. It is therefore proper to translate the phrase as “nobly born child” rather than “nobly born son,” as is sometimes seen.

“Nobly born” refers to the Buddhist theory that all sentient beings have the essence of the Buddha Mind in them. From the spiritual point of view, until they realize this Mind, they are children.

**NOTE 6.** I am grateful to Cha-tral Rin-po-ch'e for locating the following errors, made while preparing the xylograph and found in all available Tibetan editions of *Kün-zang La-may Zhal-lung*, including the one published recently by People's

Press, Szechuan, in 1988. In this translation, the corrections are given in bold type.

(a) On page <479> (Tibetan page 240r and page 438 of the translation), the description of the objects held by the Vajrayoginī is incorrect. She should be carrying a curved knife in her right hand and a skullcup of blood in her left, as given in the *Long-ch'en Nying-tig* Preliminary, Nam-k'yen Lam-zang, by Kün-k'yen Jig-me Ling-pa. Instead, she is described as carrying a skulldrum in her right hand and a curved knife in the left, which are the objects held by the Dākini Queen of Great Bliss, known in *Long-ch'en Nying-tig* as K'a-dro De-ch'en Gyal-mo.

The lines beginning with ཕྱག་གཡས་ན་མ་རིག་གཏི་སྐྱག་གཉིད་ལས་ up to གྱི་གྲུགས་དཀྱར་བརྟེན་པ། should be replaced with the correct lines:

ཕྱག་གཡས་དྲུག་གསུམ་རྩྭ་ནས་གཙོད་པའི་གྱི་གྲུག་ནམ་མཁར་ཕྱར་ཞིང་།  
གཡོན་པས་ཁམས་གསུམ་ཁྲག་ཏུ་རྩེ་པའི་ཐོད་ཁྲག་གྲུགས་ཀར་མནམས་པ།

In the Rumtek edition, refer to Tibetan page 264r.

(b) On page <542> (Tibetan page 271v and page 505 of the translation), the phrase *ti-mug-gi tog-pa-dün gag / gti.mug.gi rtog.pa.bdun gags*, translated as “the seven concepts of stupidity stop,” had been totally omitted. It has thus been reinstated.

Insert གཏི་སྐྱག་གི་རྟོག་པ་བདུན་འགགས། between the lines ཉམས་འཆར་ཞིང་ and དེ་ནས་ནག་གུམ་གྱིས་བརྒྱལ་འགྲོ།

In the Rumtek edition, refer to Tibetan page 295v.

According to Cha-tral Rin-po-ch'e, the seven concepts of stupidity are described by the Buddhist sage Āryadeva as follows:



- (1) mediocre (or vague) craving འདོད་ཆགས་བར་མ
- (2) forgetfulness བརྗེད་ངེས
- (3) the state of being illusioned འབྲུལ་པ
- (4) unwillingness to speak མི་ལྟོ་བ
- (5) sadness ལྟོ་བ
- (6) laziness ལོ་ལོ
- (7) doubt བྲོ་ཚོམ་རྣམས་སོ།

For a detailed explanation, refer to *Nyi Ma'i 'Od Zer* (Tibetan page 128v), a commentary by K'en-po Yön-ten Gya-ts'o on *Yon Tan Mdzod*. (See page <256> of the Nga-gyur Nying-may Sung-rab Series, Volume 27, published by Sonam T. Kazi, Gangtok, 1971.)

(c) As in 6(a) above, on page <544> (Tibetan page 240r and page 507 of the translation), the description of the objects held by the Vajrayoginī is incorrect. Although the English translation in both cases is the same, the correct Tibetan text here varies slightly.

The lines beginning with ལྷུག་གཡམས་མ་རིག་གཏི་མུག་གི་གཉིད་ལས་སྒྲོང་བའི་ up to གྲི་བྲུག་དགུར་བརྟེན་པ། should be replaced with the correct lines:

ལྷུག་གཡམས་དུག་གསུམ་རྩྱད་ནས་གཅོད་པའི་གྲི་བྲུག་ནམ་མཁར་ཕྱར་བ།  
གཡོན་པས་ཁམས་གསུམ་བྲག་ཏུ་རྩོམ་པའི་ཐོད་བྲག་ལྷུགས་ཀར་མནམས་པ།

In the Rumtek edition, refer to Tibetan page 296r.

**NOTE 7.** The Tibetan word *wang* / *dban* means “permission,” or “authority.” When used in the spiritual sense, *wang* refers to the Guru’s granting a neophyte authority to practice an esoteric teaching. As a result of practicing the teaching, the adept develops spiritual power.

The word for “power” in Tibetan is *shug* / *śugs*. There is no ready-made power that could be transferred to a follower right from the beginning. If that were possible, the Buddhas would already have liberated all the sentient beings. Also, one may have power—for example, military power—but one cannot use it unless one has the authority to do so.

Therefore, it seems more accurate either to maintain the Tibetan word *wang* or to translate *wang* as “initiation,” rather than as “empowerment,” commonly used today.

**NOTE 8.** This image of Chen-re-zig (S. Avalokiteśvara) in the main cathedral of Lhasa was destroyed during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. However, the second of the eleven heads, the ferocious one, was miraculously salvaged by a refugee and brought to His Holiness the Dalai Lama in India. It is now installed on a newly made image of Chen-re-zig in His Holiness’s private chapel.

## **Appendix B**



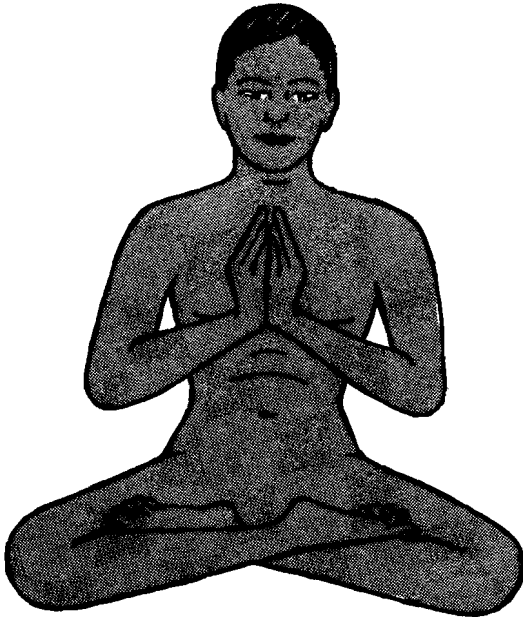


Figure 1. Initial Vajrasattva visualization

ॐ वा जरा सा त्वा सा मा या मा नु पा  
om va jra sa tva sa ma ya ma nu pa



ला या वा जरा सा त्वा ताय नो पा थी  
la ya va jra sa tva tay no pa thi


ता द्री धो माय भा वा सु तो कायो माय  
ta dri dho may bha wa su tho kayo may




भा वा सु पो कायो माय भा वा अ नु  
bha wa su po kayo may bha wa ah nu

राक तो माय भा वा सार वा सिद्धी माय  
rak tho may bha wa sar va sid dhi may











प्रा या त्सा सार वा कार मा सु त्सा माय  
pra ya tsa sar va kar ma su tsa may


























  
 tse tam shri yam ku ru hum ha ha ha











  
 ha ho bha ga wa na sar va ta tha











  
 ga ta va jra ma may mun tsa va zri











  
 bha wa ma ha sa ma ya sa tva ah

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

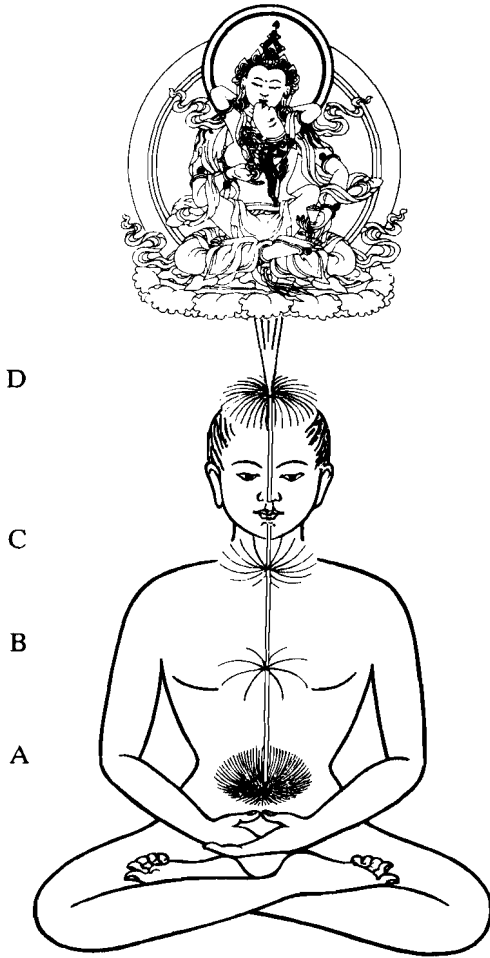





  
 om vajra sa tva hum

Figure 2. Long and short Vajrasattva mantra



Figure 3. Vajrasattva visualization illustrating the purging of defilements





- A. The sixty-four branch nerves of the *Nirmāṇa chakra*
- B. The eight branch nerves of the *Dharma chakra*
- C. The sixteen branch nerves of the *Sambhoga chakra*
- D. The thirty-two branch nerves of the *Mahāsukha chakra*

Figure 4. Vajrasattva visualization illustrating the four *chakras*



Figure 5. With the five syllables OM VAJRA SATTVA HÜM in your heart, transform yourself and others into the five races of Vajrasattva.

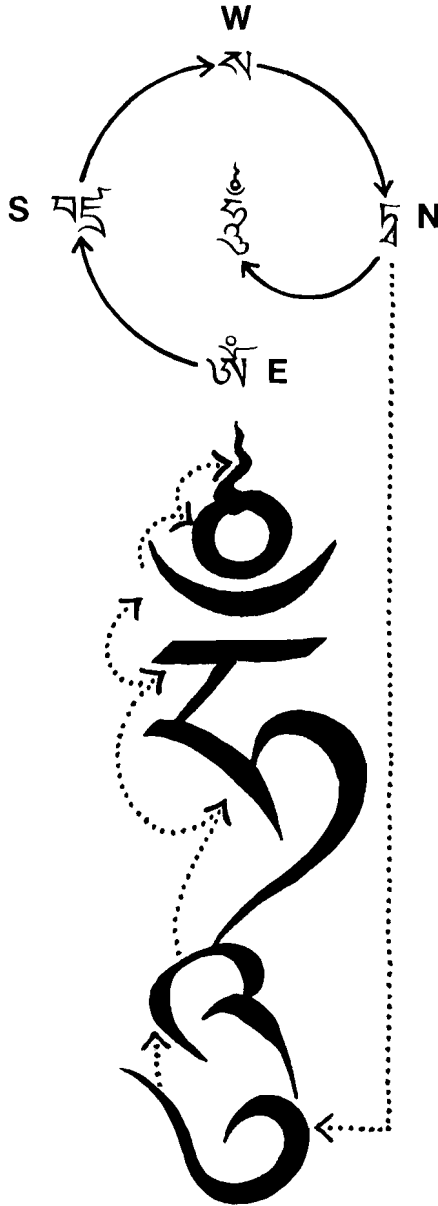
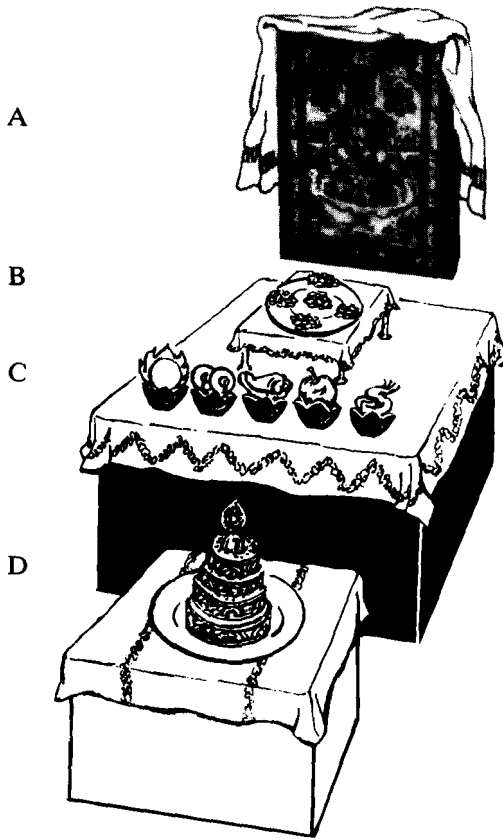
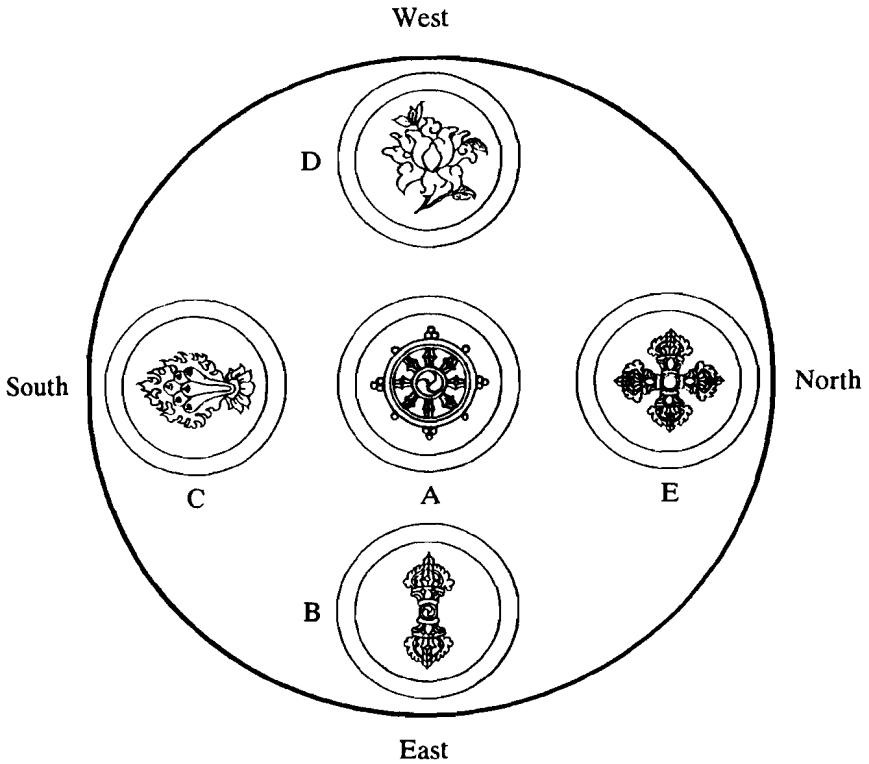


Figure 6. The syllables OM VAJRA SAT TVA systematically dissolve, one into the other, into the base of HŪM in the center, and the HŪM dissolves from the base to the tip into emptiness, as illustrated by the dotted arrows.



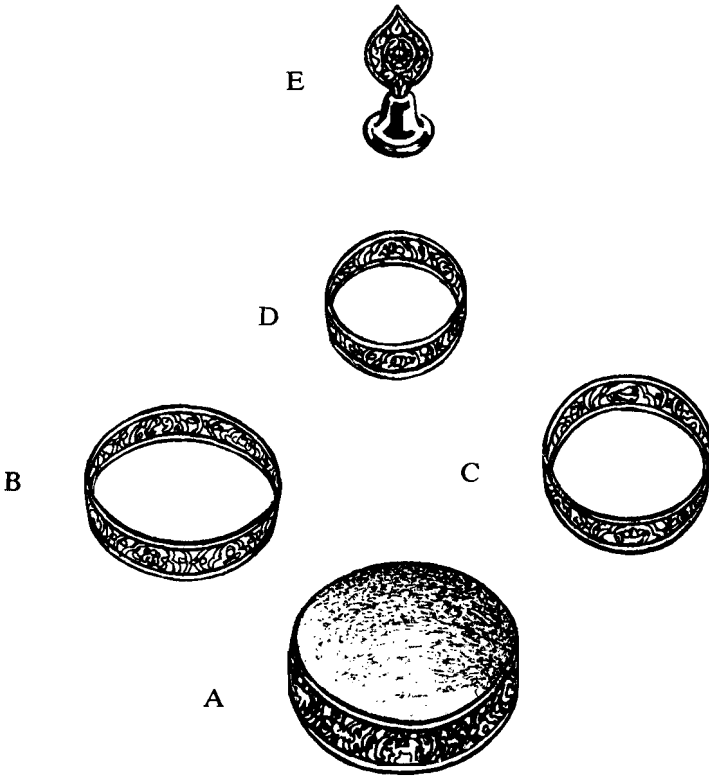
- A. Emblems of the Buddha's body, speech, and mind
- B. *Drub-pay* Maṇḍala
- C. Five sensual offerings
- D. *Ch'ö-pay* Maṇḍala

Figure 7. *Drub-pay* and *Ch'ö-pay* Maṇḍalas



- A. The wheel represents the Buddha Vairocana
- B. The vajra represents the Buddha Akṣobhya
- C. The gem represents the Buddha Ratnasambhava
- D. The lotus represents the Buddha Amitābha
- E. The double vajra represents the Buddha Amoghasiddhi

Figure 8. Composition of the *Drub-pay* Maṇḍala



A. Maṇḍala, or base

B. First circle, for the Nirmāṇakāya Maṇḍala, the Universe of the First Thousand Worlds

C. Second circle, for the Sambhogakāya Maṇḍala, the Middle Universe of the Second Thousand Worlds

D. Third circle, for the Dharmakāya Maṇḍala, the Great Universe of the Third Thousand Worlds

E. Crest

Figure 9. Different parts of a maṇḍala



Figure 10. Fully constructed *Ch'ö-pay* Manḍala

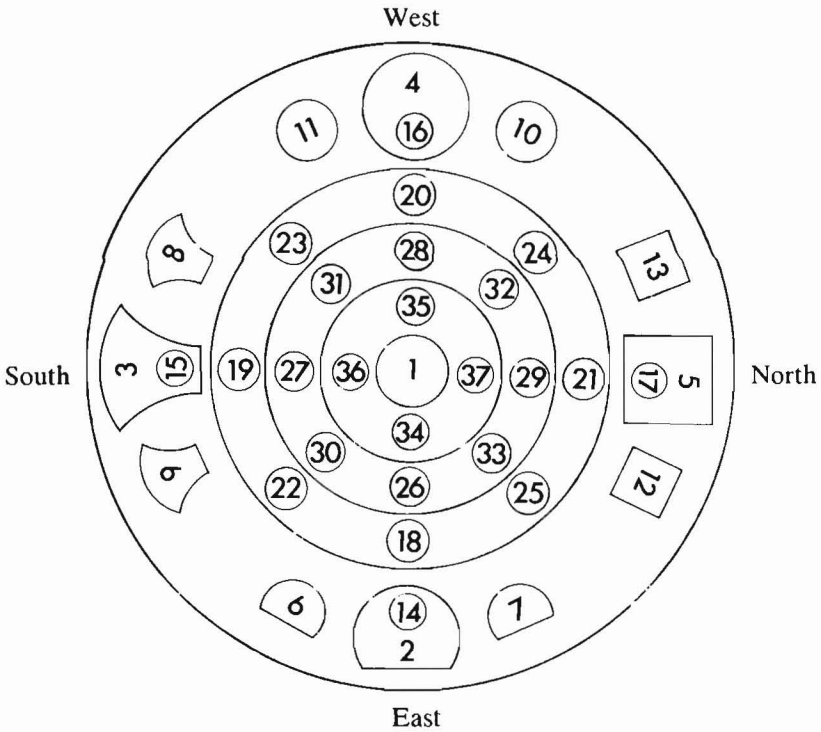


Figure 11. Composition of the “Thirty-Seven Point Maṇḍala”

- |     |                             |                        |
|-----|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1.  | <i>Ri-yi gyal-po ri-rab</i> | Mount Sumeru           |
| 2.  | <i>Shar lü-p'ag-po</i>      | Eastern Continent      |
| 3.  | <i>L'o dzam-bu-ling</i>     | Southern Continent     |
| 4.  | <i>Nub ba-lang-chö</i>      | Western Continent      |
| 5.  | <i>Jang dra-mi-nyen</i>     | Northern Continent     |
| 6.  | <i>Lü-dang</i>              | Eastern Subcontinents  |
| 7.  | <i>Lü-p'ag</i>              |                        |
| 8.  | <i>Nga-yab-dang</i>         | Southern Subcontinents |
| 9.  | <i>Nga-yab-shen</i>         |                        |
| 10. | <i>Yo-den-dang</i>          | Western Subcontinents  |
| 11. | <i>Lam-ch'og-dro</i>        |                        |
| 12. | <i>Dra-mi-nyen-dang</i>     | Northern Subcontinents |
| 13. | <i>Dra-mi-nyen-gyi-da</i>   |                        |



14. <i>Rin-po-ch'ey ri-wo</i>	Precious Mountain
15. <i>Pag-sam-gyi-shing</i>	Wish-fulfilling Tree
16. <i>Dö-jö-ba</i>	Milch Cow
17. <i>Ma-mö-pay lo-tog</i>	Uncultivated Crop
18. <i>K'or-lo rin-po-ch'e</i>	Precious Wheel
19. <i>Nor-bu rin-po-ch'e</i>	Precious Gem
20. <i>Tsün-mo rin-po-ch'e</i>	Precious Queen
21. <i>Lön-po rin-po-ch'e</i>	Precious Minister
22. <i>Lang-po rin-po-ch'e</i>	Precious Elephant
23. <i>Ta-ch'og rin-po-ch'e</i>	Precious Horse
24. <i>Mag-pön rin-po-ch'e</i>	Precious General
25. <i>Ter-ch'en po'i bum-pa</i>	Great Vase of Treasure
26. <i>Geg-mo-ma</i>	Goddess of Physical Beauty
27. <i>Tr'eng-wa-ma</i>	Goddess Who Offers Beads
28. <i>Lu-ma-ma</i>	Singing Goddess
29. <i>Gar-ma-ma</i>	Dancing Goddess
30. <i>Me-tog-ma</i>	Goddess Who Offers Flowers
31. <i>Dug-pö-ma</i>	Goddess Who Offers Incense
32. <i>Nang-sal-ma</i>	Goddess Who Offers Lamps
33. <i>Dri-ch'ab-ma</i>	Goddess Who Offers Perfume
34. <i>Nyi-ma</i>	Sun
35. <i>Da-wa</i>	Moon
36. <i>Rin-po-ch'ey dug</i>	Jeweled Parasol
37. <i>Ch'og-lay nam-par gyal-way gyal-ts'en</i>	Banner of Victory

*Note:* The figure shown here is drawn in accordance with the instructions given in Gong-dü Nam-she (referred to in Chapter Four, p. 403 above).



Figure 12. Black *Tr'ö-ma*

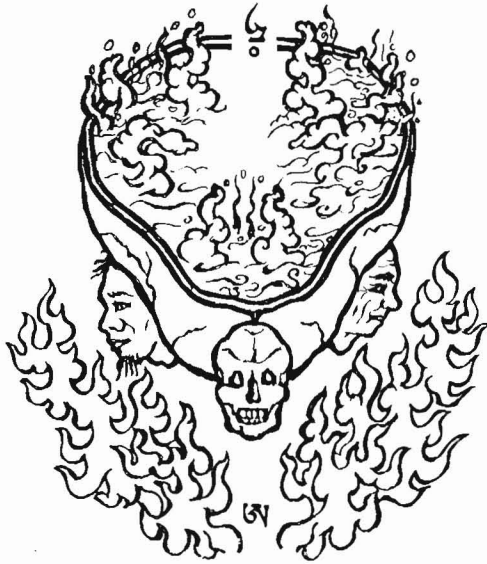


Figure 13. Skullcup on tripod of heads representing the Three Kāyas

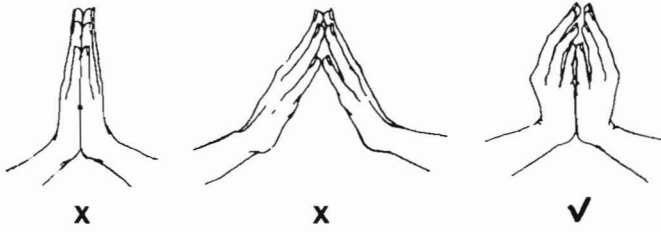


Figure 14. Proper way of holding the palms

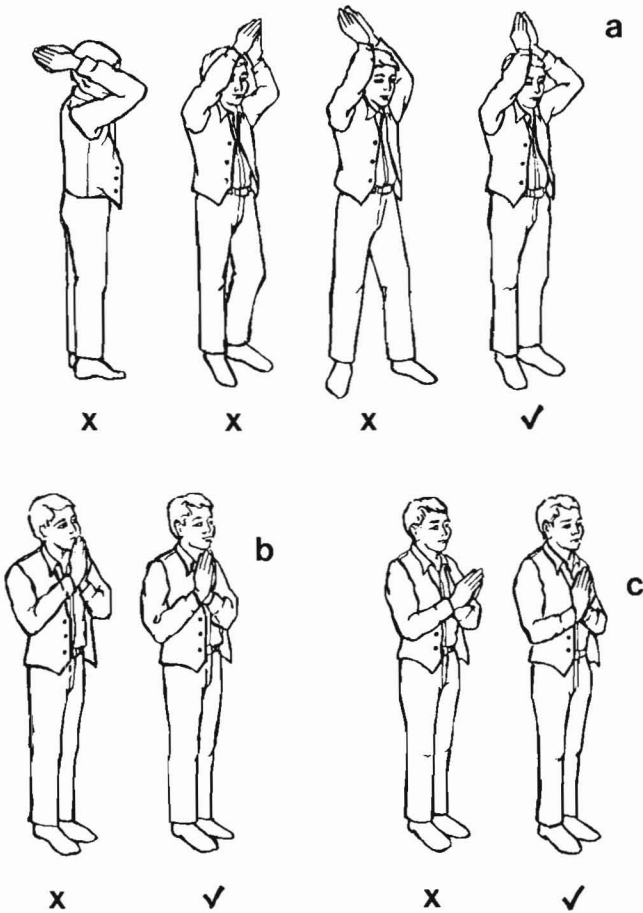


Figure 15. Proper way of positioning the palms (a) on the crown of the head, (b) at the throat, and (c) at the heart while doing prostrations

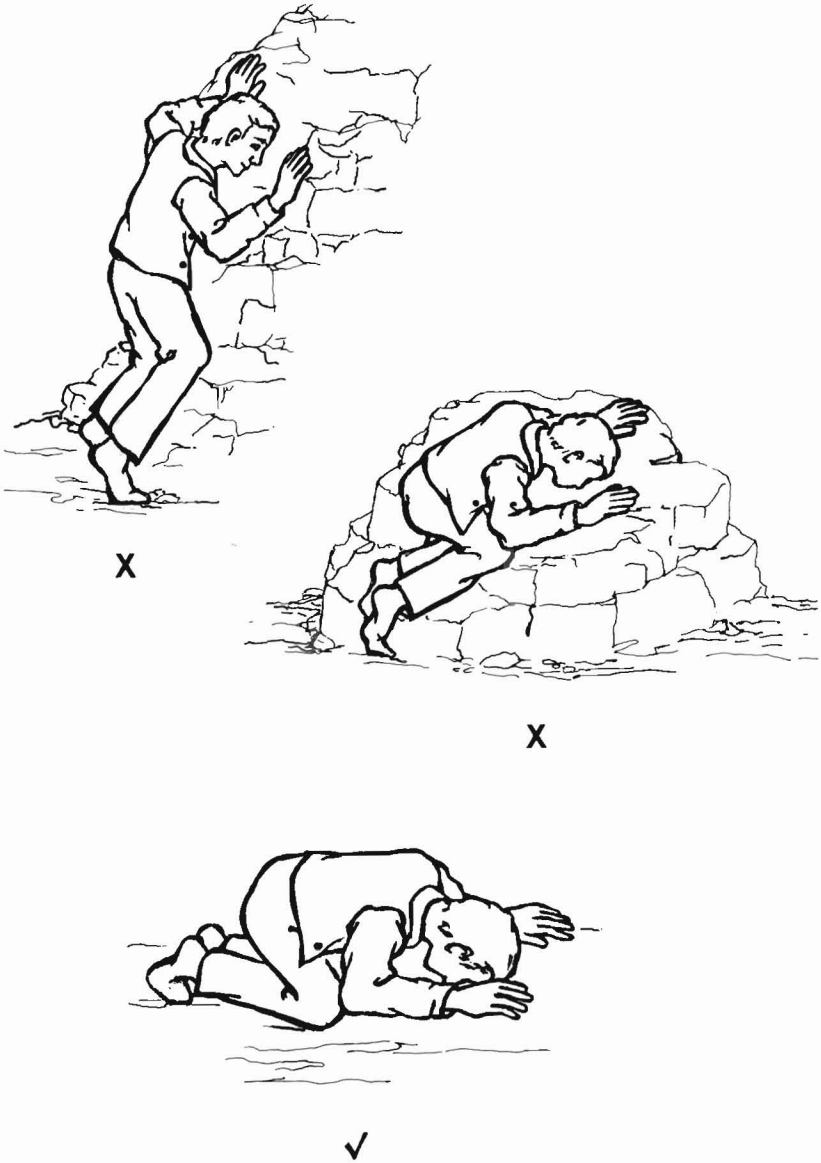


Figure 16. Proper way of bringing the five principal points of the body to the ground