

BOOK SIX - PART FOUR

6

The Treasury of Knowledge  
JAMGÖN KONGTRUL  
SYSTEMS OF BUDDHIST TANTRA



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Elio Guarisco & Ingrid McLeod  
KALU RINPOCHÉ TRANSLATION GROUP

# **The Treasury of Knowledge**

*Book Six, Part Four:*

## **Systems of Buddhist Tantra**

*The Indestructible Way of Secret Mantra*

The publication of this work has been made possible through  
the generous support of the Tsadra Foundation.

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*Book Six, Part Four:*

## **Systems of Buddhist Tantra**

*The Indestructible Way of Secret Mantra*

Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé

KALU RINPOCHÉ TRANSLATION GROUP  
under the direction of Venerable Bokar Rinpoché

This volume  
translated by Elio Guarisco and Ingrid McLeod,  
introduced and annotated by Elio Guarisco,  
and edited by Ingrid McLeod

Snow Lion Publications

Ithaca, New York  
Boulder, Colorado

Snow Lion Publications  
P.O. Box 6483  
Ithaca, New York 14851 USA  
607-273-8519  
www.snowlionpub.com

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Printed in Canada on acid-free recycled paper.

ISBN 1-55939-210-X  
ISBN 978-1-55939-210-X

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:**

Ko<sup>o</sup>-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas, 1813-1899.

[ōes bya mtha yas pai rgya mtsho. English. Selections]

The treasury of knowledge : book six, part four: Systems of Buddhist  
Tantra / Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé ; translated by Elio Guarisco and  
Ingrid McLeod ; edited by Ingrid McLeod.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-55939-210-X (alk. paper)

1. Ko<sup>o</sup>-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas, 1813-1899. ōes bya kun khyab. 2. Tantric  
Buddhism—Doctrines. 3. Buddhism—China—Tibet. I. Guarisco, Elio,  
1954- II. McLeod, Ingrid, 1946- III. Title.

BQ8918.2.K66213 2005  
294.3'420425—dc22

2004028721

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## FOREWORD

The translation group Dragyur Dzamling Kunkhyab founded by Venerable Kalu Rinpoché has recently completed the translation into English of the fourth chapter of Book Six of the *Encompassment of All Knowledge* (*Shes bya kun khyab*), a major treatise authored by Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé. This particular chapter presents the complete system of the indestructible way (*vajrayāna*) of secret mantra. The publication of this work is greatly needed and will be very helpful to all who are currently studying or doing research in the Tibetan traditions of Buddhism.

Buddha, the teacher, taught innumerable spiritual methods to guide sentient beings on the path to freedom. Fortunate ones with acute intelligence practice the heart of these teachings, the indestructible way of secret mantra. This way has many special qualities. It is superior to the path of the sutras, includes many methods of practice, does not involve hardships, and is clear, direct, and enjoyable.

This book brings together, in their depth and breadth, the essential points of the four sets of tantra comprised by the indestructible way of secret mantra. It describes the classification of practices, the initiations that provide entry, the vows and commitments, the two phases of practice, the forms of conduct, and the standard and special attainments.

First, by appreciating and understanding just what is contained here, you will, so to speak, have an eye that sees the profound significance of the tantras of secret mantra. Then, you will be inspired by faith and appreciation for the indestructible way. Through study you come to understand the nature of being. Through reflection you find conviction in that understanding. Through meditation, you initially cultivate a similitude of that understanding, and finally, by joining direct understanding and cultivation, you have actual experience of how things are. You then traverse the paths and levels to attain the awakened state of Vajradhara.

This is why this translation is both necessary and worthwhile. Everyone interested in these matters should study and practice what is in it.

Through the virtuous activities of those who translated the text and those who provided financial support, may all beings together attain the awakened state of Vajradhara.

Bokar Trulku Rinpoché  
Bokar Ngedhon Choekhor Ling  
Mirik, India  
15 July 2002





# INTRODUCTION

## KONGTRUL LODRÖ TAYÉ AND *THE INFINITE OCEAN OF KNOWLEDGE*

*Systems of Buddhist Tantra: The Indestructible Way of Secret Mantra* is a section of *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge* (*Shes bya mtha' yas pa'i rgya mtsho*) and its root verses, *The Encompassment of All Knowledge* (*Shes bya kun khyab*). The author of this treatise is Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé (Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas, 1813–1899), an outstanding teacher and scholar who played a vital role in the revitalization and preservation of the Buddhist teachings in eastern Tibet in the nineteenth century.

The major works of Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé comprise massive collections of the practices, principles, empowerments, and so forth, of the different Tibetan traditions, as well as his own writings. These are referred to as the *Five Great Treasuries* (*mDzod chen lnga*). The first to be produced was *The Encompassment of All Knowledge*, which was followed by *The Treasury of Mantra of the Kagyu School*, *The Treasury of Key Instructions*, *The Treasury of Precious Treasure Teachings*, and *The Treasury of Vast Teachings*. Because of the unequalled scholarship shown in these works, Kongtrul came to be called Jamgön ('Jam mgon), Gentle Protector, which is an epithet of Manjushri, the bodhisattva who symbolizes higher wisdom.

Kongtrul's huge literary output gives the impression that his primary focus was compilation and writing. This was not the case; most of his life was spent meditating and teaching. He composed the verses of *The Encompassment of All Knowledge*, for instance, between periods of meditation while he was living in seclusion at his hermitage, Kunzang Dechen Ösel Ling, in eastern Tibet. Kongtrul wrote this work in response to a request by Ngedön Tenpa Rabgyé, the first Dazang incarnation, who asked that he produce a treatise on the three systems of Buddhist ethics: the vows of personal liberation in the individual way (*hīmayāna*), the commitments of the bodhisattva in the universal way (*mahāyāna*), and the pledges (*samayā*) of the aware-

ness-holder in the indestructible way (*vajrayāna*). Kongtrul decided to write a book that not only set out the three ethics but also contained a full presentation of all aspects of the Buddhist path from the perspectives of these three systems. Indeed, *The Encompassment of All Knowledge* touches on all fields of spiritual knowledge as well as the related secular sciences known at the time of its composition.

Kongtrul presented the finished manuscript of *Encompassment* to Jamyang Kyentsé Wangpo (1820–1892), another outstanding figure in the revival of the teachings in eastern Tibet, who, highly impressed, declared the work to be “a treasury of knowledge . . . the first of your five treasures.” Kyentsé urged him to write a commentary on it. In 1863, Kongtrul composed a three-volume commentary on these root verses, entitled *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*, completing it in less than four months. The work was revised a year later with the help of Trashi Özer, the abbot of Palpung Monastery.

*The Encompassment of All Knowledge*, together with its commentary *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*, has come to be known as *The Treasury of Knowledge*. In Tibetan religious literature, the work stands out as a unique masterpiece embodying the entirety of the theories and methods of implementation of the Buddhist doctrine as it was preserved in Tibet. It comprises ten books: the first book concerns the sphere of activity of the Buddha; the second, Buddha, the Teacher; the third, the nature of his teachings; the fourth, the spread of the teachings; the fifth, training in ethics; the sixth, study of tenets; the seventh, training in wisdom; the eighth, training in meditation; the ninth, the stages and paths of spiritual development; and the tenth, the result. Each book contains four chapters in order to treat all aspects of the subjects from the perspectives of the different traditions. The encyclopedic presentation of this *Treasury*, summarizing a broad range of history, views, traditions, and practices in an orderly and insightful fashion, reveals an author with an exceptionally broad intellect and deep experiential understanding.

## THIS BOOK

Book Six of *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge* presents the theoretical bases of practice. *Systems of Buddhist Tantra: The Indestructible Way of Secret Mantra* is the translation of the fourth chapter, which concerns the tradition of the indestructible way. As this single chapter is of considerable length, the translation has been divided into twenty short chapters, with chapter titles given by the translators.

The indestructible way of secret mantra (*gsang sngags rdo rje theg pa*) refers to the tantric path, the essence of which is the indestructible union of wisdom (understanding of emptiness) and method (immutable great bliss). The distinctive feature of this path lies in the special skill in method and wisdom used to manifest innate pristine awareness, the primordial ground of being. In this work, the author sets forth the various systems that constitute this way, those of both the ancient tantra tradition and the new tradition. Kongtrul begins with an overview of tantra, its placement in the Buddhist collections of teachings, and reasons for its superiority over other paths. He then presents the four sets of tantra of the new tradition—action tantra, conduct tantra, yoga tantra, and highest yoga tantra—differentiating them in terms of their natures, views, ways of entry, methods of meditation, forms of conduct, and results. The work concludes with an exposition of the ninefold way of the ancient tradition, culminating in *atiyoga*: knowing all things to be the pristine awareness of pure and total presence.

While *Systems of Buddhist Tantra* presents in detail the underlying principles of the various systems of tantra, with particular emphasis on the highest yoga tantra of the new schools, it does not reveal esoteric instructions for practice, which are the domain of oral transmissions and specialized manuals. Moreover, it does not include the historical origins and developments of the tantric systems, which Kongtrul treats in depth in other parts of his treasury. What follows now is an introduction to the nature of the tantric path, touching on some of the major themes treated in this important section of *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*.

## THE MEANING OF TANTRA

To those who would embark on a quest for awakening, the Tibetan traditions of Buddhism offer three markedly different and seemingly incompatible sequences of practices: the individual way (*hīnayāna*); the universal way (*mahāyāna*); and the tantric way or secret mantra way (*mantrayāna*).

While finding its foundation in the idealism (*viññānavāda*) and centrism (*mādhyamika*) trends of thought, the tantric way undoubtedly sprang from the irresistible drive to know the nature of experience directly, unmediated by cognitive interpretation or emotional confusion. Consequently, it relies on an awareness that is an expression of the inner clarity present in our very being and not on knowledge derived from rational, philosophical, or conceptual processes.

Tantra consists of a skillful blending of three different types of practice:

power methods, energy transformation methods, and intrinsic awareness methods. These methods came from a variety of sources and gradually formed into identifiable esoteric transmissions. Some practices were designed to break down social and cultural conditioning and others were developed to utilize basic energies in the body (including sexual energy) to enhance practice.

Etymologically, the word *tantra* is derived from the term for woof or weft, the thread that runs continuously through the fabric in traditional weaving methods. In Tibetan, the word means “continuum.” Both these meanings refer to the fundamental tantric perspective that the awareness that is the essence of being is always present, because it is not a thing, is not created, destroyed or subject to variation.

Although the terms *tantra* and *mantra* are often used interchangeably, they do have distinct meanings. *Mantra* denotes the pristine awareness of reality, the essence of which is emptiness and bliss, while *tantra* refers to the systems of implementation of such awareness for the sake of performing rituals and specific activities. The term *mantra* also serves as an abbreviation for “secret mantra” (*guhyanmantra*), where *mantra* signifies “that which protects the mind” from dissipation due to ordinary perceptions and attachment to them. Mantras are commonly understood as incantations comprising series of syllables or words to be recited or visualized. Although this meaning may well have been the origin of the expression “secret mantra,” this represents only one of its minor aspects. Even the lower tantras, which stress the need for ritual activity, clearly state that, as means to gain realization, mantra recitation is secondary to formless contemplation. Mantra is called “secret” not to suggest the secretiveness of cults but because the path of mantra must be practiced in secret in order to be successful and withheld from unfit receptacles who could misuse it.

The term *tantra* is also used to refer to the essential meaning of mantra, as well as the entirety of the way of secret mantra. The first distinction to be made with respect to tantra is between tantra as the meaning, or content itself, and tantra as words or scriptures, the means for its transmission. The *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja* provides an encapsulation of tantra in terms of the meaning and its different aspects:

Tantra denotes continuousness.  
It is composed of three aspects:  
Ground, nature, and inalienableness.  
When distinguished in this way,  
The nature aspect is the cause;

The ground aspect refers to the method;  
 And inalienableness, the result.  
 These three contain tantra's meaning.

Tantra as continuousness, or continuum (*rgyud*), refers to the uninterrupted presence of the original nature, or state of being, of each individual. In Buddhist scriptures, this original nature is principally referred to as "mind" (*sems*), as in "ever-perfect mind" (*kun tu bzang po'i sems*) or "mind nature" (*sems nyid*). In this context, "mind" does not mean object-bound experience but instead the ever-perfect and intrinsic awareness that has no beginning or end. Since it is free from the dichotomy of knower and known, this mind is no different from the reality it perceives. Reality is a "continuum" in the sense that its nature does not change into something else and cannot be fragmented into parts. Regardless of the degree of evolution or debasement of an individual, that reality or ever-perfect mind remains unaltered as the very essence or nucleus of one's being. From the state of an ordinary individual, the beginning, so to speak, up to the end of awakening, such reality is unceasingly present. Hence, there is no ultimate distinction between an ordinary being and an awakened one.

Tantra, or continuum, although not subject to modification or partition, may be considered from the perspectives of non-recognition (conditioned existence), semi-recognition (the path), and total recognition (awakening) of original being. Based on these three phases, tantra is set forth in terms of its three aspects: actuality, process, and result.

Continuum as actuality (*rang bzhin*), though deemed causal (*rgyu*), does not mean the presence of the original state of being as a mere potential to be actualized in the future. Actuality points to the full presence of original being, even when it is not recognized. Lack of recognition is like a veil or cloud of unawareness which, however thick, does not pollute the very nature of one's original state. As explained by the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé, actuality means "an awakened being attended by stains." Although accompanied by impurity, the being remains the same, just as a gold statue wrapped in rags is still a gold statue. "Causal" indicates that it is the fundamental element which when recognized is reaffirmed in its nature of enlightenment.

Actuality is not defined as an absolute and static emptiness. Its power of manifestation or "radiance" (*mdangs*), owing to unawareness of its nature and to emotional patterns related to unawareness, becomes the basis for the particular appearances or visions that seem to bind one. When the veils of

unawareness and emotional patterns lessen to some extent, there arise pure visions and contemplative experiences reflecting the essential purity of the actuality. When unawareness and emotional patterns are fully recognized as the mere play of the manifesting power of reality, the entire breadth of the potential of one's being unfolds.

Continuum as process, or method (*thabs*), refers to all of the various means by which one may recognize one's original nature or being. These means are not restricted to those found in Buddhist traditions. In the highest forms of tantra, continuum as a process is primarily represented in the phase of generation (*bskyed rim*, *utpatti krama*) and phase of completion (*rdzogs rim*, *niṣpanna krama*) and their ancillary aspects. This process, in being the cooperative condition for coming to know one's original state of being, is likened to manure spread over a field in order to nurture the growth of seeds. However, unlike the example, the very essence of the process does not involve external intervention but is simply original being recognizing itself. This process in tantra reflects, and is the exercise of, freedom and awakening, not in the sense of a goal attained but as a way of existing that manifests directly in every situation of life. The continuum aspect of the method or process exists in the relationship between the process and the original state of being, in the interdependent connections between the various aspects of the process, in the uninterrupted lineage of transmission of esoteric instructions, and in the contemplations and ensuing experiences.

In the ultimate sense, the actuality continuum, or causal continuum, does not denote a cause or seed that produces an effect since it already represents the fullest result. The process continuum does not refer to an outer agent but instead to an unfolding of what is already present. Likewise, the continuum as result, that of "inalienableness" (*mi 'phrogs pa*), does not mean the result of a pursuit or the attainment of a goal but the primordial condition itself. It is inalienable in that it has always been the authentic mode of being, never alienated by the split that occurs when one's true nature is not recognized. It remains unmodified by the duality of conditioned existence and perfect peace, even when one is immersed in the seemingly real troubles of life.

The reality represented by tantra is known as the "authentic condition" (*gnas lugs*), which comprises that of both the inner and the outer, one's mind and body and the totality of one's world. However, this authentic condition primarily refers to the luminous clarity (*'od gsal*) of one's mind, or pristine awareness, which all of the various tantric systems seek to manifest by way of their different methods.

## THE DOCTRINAL BASIS OF TANTRA

The tantric systems incorporate all aspects of the Buddhist teachings, which, over the course of time, have served as their doctrinal bases. In particular, one central theory, which underlies every Buddhist approach, seems to be reflected in all the essential principles constituting the views and practices of tantra: that there exists an "element" (*kham*s, *dhātu*) that enables an ordinary person to become a sublime being. That element is not the illusory and unreal self, the existence of which is negated on all levels of Buddhist philosophy. How then is it posited? The idea of such an "element" can be found in the more ancient form of Buddhism. In that context, as expressed by the analysts (*vaibhāṣikas*), and reflecting the character of a personal pursuit of liberation, it is known as "exalted affinity" (*phags pa'i rigs, ārya gotra*). It is defined as detachment from conditioned existence and worldly possessions and characterized as a state of contentment and having few desires.

From this basic formulation, the theory regarding this element has undergone a process of modification and refinement. For example, in the traditionalist (*sautrāntika*) view, which represents a slightly more sophisticated philosophical trend than that of the analysts, the element is understood as not simply detachment but as a "seed," an aspect of the mind capable of growing into supreme wisdom.

Around the time of the Third Buddhist Council, which took place two hundred and thirty-six years after the demise of the Buddha, the majority of the monastic community was turning attention to the needs and interests of the laity and trying to increase the chances for ordinary people to enter the path to freedom. This movement was accompanied by doctrinal transformations as a result of which the *arhat* or "saint" as the model for followers lost its pre-eminence. A new model emerged, that of the bodhisattva, who is willing to mingle with ordinary beings while working for their welfare and who, at the end of his or her spiritual career, achieves the goal of full awakening. Since the path of the bodhisattva leads the practitioner to the state of a buddha, or a "transcendent one" (*tathāgata*), the element capable of turning into that state came to be known in the universal way tradition as the "essence of the transcendent ones" (*tathāgatagarbha*) or "essence of enlightenment," also referred to simply as buddha nature.

The two main philosophical trends within the universal way, that of the experientialists (*yogācāra*) and that of the centrists (*mādhyamika*), view such

an element in ways that accord with their own basic tenets. The former asserts the element to be a potential present in the continuum of mind since time without beginning, capable of developing into the entire range of qualities of an awakened being. The latter asserts that it is the very nature of the mind (and of all phenomena) at the stage when mind is still attended by the stains of emotional patterns and limitations with regard to knowledge.

However defined, the essence of enlightenment corresponds to what in tantra is called "actuality" or the "causal continuum" (*rgyu'i rgyud, hetu tantra*), the original ground of being to be recognized as enlightenment itself. Thus, when we consider the above three aspects of tantra, it becomes apparent that tantra is based primarily on the theory of the essence of enlightenment or *tathāgatagarbha*. Although ancient practices of pre-Buddhist origin were absorbed into the Buddhist tantric systems, it is this theory of Buddhist origin—the essence of enlightenment—that may be said to be the fundamental basis, or core teaching, from which tantra developed.

### THE ESSENCE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

The essence of enlightenment (*bde bar gshogs pa'i snying po, tathāgatagarbha*) is taught in the *Shrimala* and a number of other universal way sutras, yet scholars seem to have struggled to define precisely its real nature. Some consider the essence to be an actual buddha, while others conceive of it as a potential that can evolve into the awakened state. This essence has been the subject of extensive philosophical speculation in ancient Tibet, the effect of which is still felt in present-day Tibetan schools.

In his commentary on Maitreya's *Jewel Affinity* (*Ratnagotravibhāga*), Kongtrul defines the element or essence, also known as affinity (*rigs, gotra*), as an unpolluted factor on the basis of which an individual can rediscover the ground of being. Referred to in the scriptures by various terms, such as ineffable emptiness, mind nature of luminous clarity, and ground-of-all consciousness, "element" does not carry the meaning of "cause" but instead denotes a "nucleus" that is hidden by obscurations. Kongtrul points out that the Tibetan term *snying po* (essence) is used to translate a number of Sanskrit terms, such as *garbha*, in which case the term indicates that the element is like a kernel inside a husk; *hridaya*, meaning essence in the sense of supreme, indicating that the element is the supreme phenomenon, the very reality of all phenomena; and *sara*, robust or firm, pointing to the unchangeable and indivisible nature of such reality.

The essence of enlightenment is thus equated with the very reality that pervades both the animate and inanimate world. How such an essence is understood would obviously depend on how reality is defined in a particular system. Within the different philosophical trends of Tibetan Buddhism (all of which claim to represent the centrist view), we can distinguish two main approaches: one considers reality to be emptiness as an absolute negation; the other, emptiness as an affirmative negation, that is to say, an emptiness that is not simply emptiness but luminosity or potency as well. It is this second view that most accords with how the essence of enlightenment is understood in the tantras.

Luminosity, which is of the same nature as emptiness, means the luminous clarity of the mind of every sentient being. Each being thus embodies the reality of the totality of the universe and stands at the center of the universe as its nature or “creator.” Luminous clarity is the principal feature of the essence of enlightenment and in the tantras is spoken of as actuality or the causal continuum characterized by bliss.

The uninterrupted presence of the causal continuum encompasses the three dimensions of awakening: empty like the sky, it is the reality dimension (*dharmakāya*); luminous like the sun and moon, it is the enjoyment dimension (*sambhogakāya*); and manifesting unimpededly in every form, it is the manifest dimension of awakening (*nirmānakāya*). In this way, the essence of enlightenment is not simply a seed or potential that can develop into the state of awakening but is the state of awakening itself. This is taught in all tantras with definitiveness. The chapter called “Pristine Awareness” in the *Kalachakra Tantra*, for instance, states:

All beings are buddhas. Another supreme buddha does not exist in this universe.

And the *Hevajra* states:

Sentient beings are actually buddhas  
But are obscured by adventitious stains.  
When these are cleared away, they awaken.

If beings are already enlightened, why do they still suffer the misery of conditioned existence? Saraha's *Doha* states:

The natural condition is not seen by the childish.  
Due to deception, the childish are swindled.

The point of tantric practice is to overcome habitual emotional patterns and, in particular, coemergent unawareness of the essence of enlightenment. When the adventitious stains that cloud one's nature are removed by means of the path, the essence reveals itself as the real buddha, and one reawakens into one's state of primordial enlightenment.

As long as the state of enlightenment is not recognized, beings continue to experience illusory birth and death, along with the happiness and suffering inherent in conditioned existence. However, whatever the experience, the essence of enlightenment remains unpolluted, unobscured, and unmodified, just as sunlight maintains its nature of light regardless of the type of object it strikes. The essence is not conditioned by any form of embodied life, whether fortunate or miserable, nor is it conditioned by any act, good or evil, or by knowledge or lack of knowledge. Although the essence is attended by impurity, its nature, like gold embedded in ore, remains always pure, untouched by emotional afflictions and conceptions.

### THE ESSENCE OF ENLIGHTENMENT AND THE GROUND OF ALL

In the writings of ancient masters of the Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism, with which Kongtrul was affiliated, certain technical terms with very different meanings were often used interchangeably. For example, the word mind (*sems*), normally denoting object-bound dualistic experience, is also used to refer to mind nature (*sems nyid*), or mind's real condition. Likewise, in this section of *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge* the essence of enlightenment (or causal continuum) is called the "ground-of-all consciousness" (*kun gzhi rnam shes, ālayavijñāna*). This seemingly free use of terms is not an indication of scholastic laxity but actually reflects the characteristic views of this school.

An apparent equation of the essence of enlightenment with the ground-of-all consciousness is found in sutras such as the *Descent to Lanka* (*Laṅkāvatāra*) and the *Gandavyūhasūtra*, as well as in Ashvaghosha's *Awakening of Faith* and other commentaries. In the *Infinite Ocean*, Kongtrul notes that the ground-of-all consciousness is known in the individualist system by particular terms such as "substratum consciousness" (*rtsa ba'i rnam shes, mūlavijñāna*), "the aggregate that lasts as long as cyclic existence" (*'khor ba ji srid pa'i phung po*), and "branch of existence" (*srid pa'i yan lag*). Both centrist and idealist philosophies speak of the "eightfold group of consciousnesses" (*rnam shes tshogs brgyad*), which, as stated in the *Gandavyūhasūtra*, comprises the mind or ground-of-all consciousness, the

subjective mind of an afflicted nature, and the six consciousnesses that apprehend objects. The subjective mind (*yid*) is an ever-present conceited mental state that carries the sense of “I” and is therefore known as afflicted mind (*nyon mongs can gyi yid*). The six sense consciousnesses (including consciousness of mind) are aspects of the mind that focus on details of objects and are therefore known as “six active consciousnesses” (*’jug pa’i rnam shes tshogs drug*).

The ground-of-all consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam shes*) is a mind, amounting to an accumulation of karmic traces, that leads to embodied existence. It focuses on a variety of objects but cognizes only their presence, not the details. Although itself neutral, the ground-of-all consciousness is capable of storing all of the traces or habitual tendencies of virtuous and nonvirtuous actions. Unlike other aspects of the mind, the ground-of-all consciousness is steady and persists throughout all mental states, even deep sleep. At death, it is projected by the force of its inherent karmic traces into a new existence.

Two aspects of the ground-of-all consciousness are distinguished: the potential and the fruitional. The potential aspect consists in karmic traces. The fruitional aspect consists in the ground-of-all consciousness that is the result of karmic traces. According to the universalists, after the “diamond-like meditative absorption” which leads directly into awakening, the ground-of-all consciousness in its fruitional aspect transforms into mirror-like pristine awareness (*me long ye shes, ādarśajñāna*). The ground-of-all consciousness is so named because it serves as the ground for both cyclic existence (*samsāra*) and perfect peace (*nirvāna*). However, as explained by Kongtrul, it does not denote a single, permanent creator of the universe as postulated by the Hindus. Instead, the ground-of-all consciousness is said to be intrinsic to every sentient being and of a momentary nature.

Asanga, the fourth-century Indian scholar considered by many to be the pioneer of experientialist philosophy (in which the ground-of-all consciousness constitutes a central tenet), equates this consciousness with mind (*citta*) and includes it in the impermanent aggregate of consciousness (*vijñāna-skandha*).<sup>1</sup> Does this implicitly negate the ground-of-all consciousness as the essence of enlightenment and the ground of all? Indeed, this would seem to be the case. However, in *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*, Kongtrul cites a verse from the *Phenomenology Scripture* (*Abhidharmasūtra, mNgon pa’i mdo*), a text no longer extant, when discussing the ground-of-all consciousness as commonly understood in experientialist philosophy and when defining the essence of enlightenment (chapter eight of this

book). This verse, found in the *Discourse That Teaches the Essence of Enlightenment* (*sNying po bstan pa'i mdo*) and cited in Asanga's commentary on it, states:

The dimension with no beginning in time  
Is the abode of all phenomena.  
Owing to its being, cyclic life  
And perfect peace are experienced.

Since this verse is cited in both contexts, one must assume that Kongtrul somehow equates the essence of enlightenment with the ground-of-all consciousness. Given the contradictory definitions of these two, what are the reasons for taking them to be synonymous?

The Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé, considered to be the source of the view underlying the Kagyu style of presentation of tantra, states that the root of all types of pristine awareness is the ground-of-all pristine awareness; and the root of all types of consciousness, the ground-of-all consciousness. The inseparability of these two is called "ordinary awareness" (*tha mal gyi shes pa*). Because ordinary awareness serves as the fundamental element for awakening, it is referred to as the "essence of enlightenment." Here, the expression "ordinary awareness" denotes the ordinary state of consciousness, a blend of two aspects: the primordial aspect called pristine awareness (*ye shes, jñāna*); and the aspect of object-bound experience called consciousness (*rnam shes, vijñāna*), in this case, the ground-of-all consciousness, the "mother" of all object-bound experiences. Recognized for what it is, ordinary awareness is the pristine awareness of intrinsic awareness, a state that is known in and by itself. Unrecognized, it is unawareness. The "distance" between recognition and non-recognition is inconceivably minute, with only a hair's breadth of space separating them.

Thus, the essence of enlightenment, or causal continuum, exists as inseparable from the ground-of-all consciousness, like water mixed with milk. In this sense, the two are equated, but are not considered identical. This paradox highlights the character of the original ground of being as open to two different possibilities: when unrecognized, it possesses the faults of conditioned existence; once recognized, it reveals the qualities of the fruition. The character of the original ground of being is endowed with the potential for all manifestation. All manifestation has the character of the ground. It

can only be recognized as it manifests embodied in the individual, whose principal modes of existence are body, speech, and mind. Unrecognized, or unpurified, body, speech, and mind are reflections of illusion; recognized, they are the three dimensions of awakening.

### METHOD AND WISDOM

Method (*thabs, upāya*) and wisdom (*shes rab, prajñā*), key principles in both sutra and tantra, have particular meanings depending on the system. The immediate sense conveyed by “method” is the way to carry out an action, and by “wisdom,” the intelligence to recognize the appropriateness of the action in any given situation. Related to those meanings, method denotes activation of one’s energy, and wisdom, the knowledge of reality gained from that activation of energy. In most systems of sutra and tantra, wisdom can arise only when sufficient energy of merit has made one’s mind receptive to such wisdom and capable of sustaining it.

In the universal way, the two principles are contained in the six “means of transcendence” (*pāramitā*), namely, generosity, ethics, patience, effort, meditation, and wisdom. Method comprises the first four, and wisdom, the last two. Without wisdom, the other means of transcendence are “blind,” said Shantideva, meaning that they cannot lead to awakening. Why? Because wisdom provides the understanding that phenomena have no intrinsic nature and exist only as illusions. When permeated by this knowledge, generosity and the other means are free of adherence to the reality of their referents. Without wisdom, generosity, ethics, and so forth would fetter rather than liberate the individual. Wisdom alone would also fetter a person because he or she would not have the impetus to work for others’ freedom and would therefore lack the basis for the attainment of awakening. Accordingly, Atisha said:

Method divorced from wisdom  
Or wisdom without method  
Is bondage: this has been taught.  
Thus, their union should not be neglected.

Moreover, both method and wisdom are necessary because, reflecting the psychophysical make-up of the person, awakening exists on two planes, that of the body, called the physical dimension (*rūpakāya*) and that of the

mind, the reality dimension (*dharmakāya*). The concordant causes for the achievement of the two planes are, respectively, the merit accrued by the first four means of transcendence, and wisdom accrued by the last two.

Method in the context of the universal way is primarily the mind of awakening (*bodhicitta*), and wisdom, the understanding of emptiness (*śūnyatā*). On a relative level, the mind of awakening means the desire to awaken for the sake of others. On an ultimate level, the mind of awakening is the concept-free knowing of reality or emptiness, endowed with the essence of compassion. This is the point in the bodhisattva's path where method and wisdom begin to merge.

Although method and wisdom are often described as two wings needed on the course to freedom, the notion of two different elements implies a duality. Every path to realization, even the fundamental one, tries to overcome such duality by explaining ways to unify these two principles into a single reality. It might well be said that the higher the system, the more refined is its application of method and wisdom in a unified way.

All of these points concerning method and wisdom in the universal way apply to tantra as well. Furthermore, as shown in the rich imagery of the tantras, these two principles, while still retaining their meanings as understood in the lower ways, take on a variety of special meanings.

From the common perspectives of the lower and highest tantras, method generally stands for relative truth (*kun rdzob bden pa, saṃvṛtī satya*), and wisdom, ultimate truth (*don dam bden pa, paramārtha satya*). In contrast to non-tantric systems, where relative truth is taken to mean the worlds of suffering produced by negative emotions and the actions motivated by them, in the context of tantra, relative truth means all appearances imagined as a divine world with divine residents. To imagine the world in that way through symbolic creation of deities and mandalas activates the practitioner's innate pure energy. In order not to attribute inherent existence to that pure vision requires the wisdom of recognizing this vision as fundamentally unreal. This wisdom can be gained by applying a subtle "deconstructive" analysis but in the uncommon way of the tantras is more often achieved by entering the nonconceptual or natural state, which is devoid of the constructs of imagination. In this way, the practitioner realizes the simultaneity of appearances (*snang ba*) and emptiness (*stong pa*). The two yogic applications of the method of creation and wisdom of deconstruction in the lower tantras are called yoga with signs (*nimitta yoga*) and yoga without signs (*animitta yoga*), respectively, and in highest

yoga tantra, phase of generation (*utpatti krama*) and phase of completion (*niṣpanna krama*).

Highest yoga tantra, as its name yoga, or union (*rnal 'byor, yoga*), denotes, is characterized by the application of method and wisdom as an inseparable union. This is symbolized by tantric deities of this system depicted in sexual union. In this imagery, the male is method; the female, wisdom. In addition to their general meanings as explained above, in this context, the meaning of method is bliss (*bde ba, sukha*) produced by way of special meditations or union with a qualified consort; and that of wisdom, the understanding of innate reality, distinguished as being the very consciousness of that bliss. For the sake of training, method and wisdom are applied, in a sense, distinctly: first, bliss is generated and then united with the understanding of the innate. In fact, wisdom is already inherent in the nature of method since knowledge of the innate is of the nature of bliss. Moreover, in the phase of completion, the realization of luminous clarity (*'od gsal, prabhāsvara*) is wisdom, and the ensuing illusory body (*sgyu lus, māyādeha*) of the deity actually manifesting is method.

Thus, it is evident that the dual principles of method and wisdom are represented in different pairs of attributes—male and female, relative and ultimate truth, yoga with signs and without signs, phase of generation and phase of completion, appearance and emptiness, bliss and emptiness, and illusory body and luminous clarity. In fact, all aspects comprised by tantra can be distinguished according to these principles. From this, one understands that the meaning of method and wisdom cannot be restricted to simply the literal meaning of the two words.

In the inner tantras of the ancient tradition, particularly anuyoga and atiyoga, we find a progressively finer gap between method and wisdom, but it is in atiyoga, or the “great perfection” (*rdzogs chen*), that the duality of method and wisdom that characterizes the lower paths is totally transcended. Practice of atiyoga does not involve distinctions in method and wisdom or levels of application since, according to the view of atiyoga, all that exists is simply a single reality, one’s own authentic condition, primordial awakening, with no differentiation between relative and ultimate truths. This point is made clear in the *Total Space of Vajrasattva* (*rDo rje sems dpa’ nam mkha’ che*), a text of the mind division of atiyoga:

A path to purity that proceeds from level to level  
Does not agree with the teaching of no action.

If there were truly paths to travel, one would never  
Reach one's goal, just as there is no limit to space.

and:

The bliss of the intrinsically perfect state  
Is found only in instantaneous presence  
Illuminated by the power of matchless wisdom.  
Reality does not come from anything else.

### SAMSARA AND NIRVANA

Samsara, or cyclic existence (*'khor ba*), and nirvana, or perfect peace (*myang 'das*), have gradually taken on the superficial meanings of "place of problems" and "place of ecstasy." What is defined as samsara in fundamental Buddhism is not a physical place, but the state of the body and mind of a person conditioned by habitual tendencies. This conditioned state entails being subject to suffering such as that of birth, sickness, old age, and death. The illusory environment where this suffering is experienced is the outcome of the shared habitual tendencies and karmic traces of its inhabitants. Nirvana is the transcendence of such suffering, attained by applying a path that overcomes the emotions and purifies their habitual patterns. This perspective on samsara and nirvana is in contrast to that of certain Hindu schools that consider samsara and nirvana as opposite poles, where samsara ceases only with nirvana's negation of it; in that view, the two cannot exist together, as one is effectively the negation of the other.

In the universal way, beings and their worlds are seen in the light of their absence of true existence, or emptiness. This emptiness is not an entity to be found outside phenomena themselves. For this reason, the famous sutra *The Heart of Wisdom* states:

Form is empty; emptiness is also form. Emptiness is no other than form; form is no other than emptiness.

In this view, it is not difficult to see a shift, though only theoretical, from the basic understanding of samsara and nirvana. Here, form, or samsara, and emptiness, nirvana, are not mutually exclusive but complementary. Nirvana is achieved not by negating samsara but by understanding its real nature. For that reason, in the literature of transcendent wisdom (*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa, prajñāpāramitā*), emptiness is also called "natural

nirvana" (*rang bzhin gyis myang 'das*). A nirvana that is something other than the ultimate nature of samsara does not exist. However, at the stage of treading the path to awakening, nirvana and samsara remain for the bodhisattva very different.

It is only in tantra that the theoretical assertion that samsara and nirvana are an essential identity bears important practical implications. The person and the environment are already nirvana. However, they appear as samsara because one's own true condition is not recognized. To rediscover the awakened condition of one's inner and outer dimensions, one familiarizes with the identity of samsara and nirvana, not only in their natures but also in their aspects.

The practitioner actualizes the identity of samsara and nirvana by realizing that the aggregates (of forms, feelings, discriminations, compositional factors, and consciousnesses) are the buddhas of the five families (Vairochana, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, Amoghasiddhi, and Akshobhya) and the elemental properties (earth, water, fire, wind, and space) are their consorts (Lochana, Mamaki, Pandara, Tara, and Dhatvishvari). The sense consciousnesses, sense powers, and all other faculties and their activities, and so forth, are understood to be the natures of enlightened deities. Body, speech, and mind are seen as the great mandala of divine energy, the very nature that pervades all existence.

### THE INNATE AS GREAT BLISS

As pointed out in Kongtrul's *Topical Commentary on the Hevajra Tantra*, the word "innate" (*lhan skyes, sabaja*) has different meanings when distinguished in terms of the ground, path, and result. At the time of the ground, the innate refers to original pure and perfect mind (*bodhicitta*) which is beyond the grasp of the conceptual mind, the "lord" pervading the totality of cyclic existence and perfect peace, the ground or essence of all. This meaning is indicated in the following words from the tantras:

From "me," all beings arise.

and:

That is the life-force of all creatures.

At the time of the path, from a general perspective, the innate refers to the view that understands the absence of intrinsic nature of phenomena,

which are beyond arising, abiding, and cessation, to be the inseparability of emptiness and luminous clarity. In this specific tantric context, the innate denotes the experience of bliss that occurs when winds dissolve in the central channel brought about by such practices as inner heat or union with a consort.

At the time of the result, the innate is that very innate of the ground, which, through the strength of being contemplated on the path, becomes the great innate free from obscurations and endowed with the two purities (*dag pa gnyis ldan*), intrinsic purity and purity from adventitious stains.

From another perspective, but still pointing to the same reality, the innate means both the natural condition (*rang bzhin lhan skyes*) of everything and the innate as bliss from the melting of vital essence (*zhu bde lhan skyes*). Both of these types of innate are known as bliss (*bde ba, sukha*). The natural condition of everything encompasses the innate of the ground, path, and result. It is the very nature of the animate and inanimate. The innate as bliss arising from the melting of vital essence relates specifically to the path.

How is the innate as bliss manifested in the path? During ordinary sexual union, the male and female experience physical and mental pleasure produced by the melting and release of vital essence. This is common sexual bliss. In tantra, this experience of bliss itself is used as the basis of a special technique: the practitioner causes the melted vital essence to flow throughout all channels of the body, producing physical and mental bliss. With bliss serving as the secondary condition and the practitioner's familiarity with the innate pristine awareness nature of the mind as the primary cause, winds and mind dissolve in the central channel. Thus stimulated, the vital essence present in the central channel melts and conceptions cease, allowing to manifest limpid, nonconceptual, pristine awareness, accompanied by the experience of the indivisibility of bliss and emptiness.

When innate bliss is still attended by the dualistic impression of emptiness as the object and bliss as the subject, it is known as example innate bliss (*dpe'i lhan skyes kyi bde ba*). When it is nonconceptual pristine awareness of the very nature of reality, resembling a clear sky, free from even the most subtle subject-object duality, it is known as real or actual innate bliss (*don gyi lhan skyes kyi bde ba*). The same kind of distinction is drawn between actual luminous clarity (*don gyi 'od gsal*) and example luminous clarity (*dpe'i 'od gsal*). In the experiential process, and according to the phases in which the innate is manifested through tantric methods, the innate as bliss is understood as the pristine awareness of the four joys.

Being emptiness beyond any definition, how can the innate natural condition of everything be called bliss? It is known as bliss for a number of reasons: the innate is free from the concepts of arising, abiding, and ceasing; it does not abide in either cyclic existence or perfect peace; it is free from adherence to self and others; it is the pristine awareness of one's intrinsic awareness, an awareness that cognizes its own nature; it pervades everything; and it is always of the nature of bliss, whatever the circumstances. Furthermore, the innate reality that derives from the melting of vital essence is spoken of as "great bliss" because it is totally free from all suffering and adherence to subject-object duality (*gzung 'dzin*). It is not the tainted pleasure experienced by ordinary persons but is manifested by "striking the crucial points of the body" (*lus kyi gnad du bsnun pa*) through the method of inner heat (*gtum mo, candāli*) or in union with a consort. This indicates that this reality is found within the "temple" of one's body. Accordingly, the tantras state:

This is the great pristine awareness  
Which abides in the bodies of all.

All highest yoga tantras, with different degrees of emphasis, teach that reliance on the method of union with a qualified consort is an indispensable step in the path to realization. In systems that present instructions not dependent on the tantric way of transformation, such as Gampopa's great seal (*phyag rgya chen po, mahāmudrā*) approach and the great perfection (*rdzogs chen*), that method (which certainly involves risks) is considered helpful but not absolutely necessary or superior to other methods since the reality of the innate is penetrated directly without the preliminary step of experience of the example bliss.

## **BODHICHITTA AND THE FOUR JOYS**

*Bodhichitta* (*byang chub sems, bodhichitta*), a term used in both the sutras and tantras, carries several distinct but related meanings. In the context of the way of the bodhisattva, where bodhichitta represents the central principle, *bodhi* means awakening, and *chitta*, mind or spirit, and the term is therefore translated as "mind of awakening" in the sense of mind directed toward enlightenment. As pointed out in the transcendent wisdom discourses, bodhichitta can be relative or ultimate depending on its focus. The relative awakening mind focuses on sentient beings and is defined as the altruistic

resolve to awaken and the actual venturing toward that goal. It springs from love and compassion and serves as the entrance to the universal way. Ultimate awakening mind consists in the direct and nonconceptual understanding of reality born from contemplation and gained at the first stage of awakening of the bodhisattva. Bodhichitta, in its twofold aspect, serves as the seed or potential that blossoms into the awakened state.

In the tantras as well, bodhichitta is understood on both relative and ultimate levels. On the relative level, the term is used not only to denote awakening mind as understood in the universal way, but also to refer to seminal essence, the seed or support of great bliss. Ultimate bodhichitta, or ultimate awakening mind, means nonconceptual understanding of reality as well as great bliss born from seminal essence. This is clearly stated in the *Hevajra Tantra*.

The relative jasmine-flower-like seminal essence  
Is the embodiment of bliss, the ultimate.

To symbolize the main deity, the indivisible single reality, and the way bliss arises, relative bodhichitta is referred to as semen (*khū ba, śukra*), its masculine and obvious form. Since it serves as the seed of great bliss, it is also termed vital essence (*thig le, tilaka*). When pointing out its energetic function, it is called "constituent" (*khams, dhātu*), "constituent of bodhichitta" (*khams byang chub kyī sems*), or simply "bodhichitta." In order to differentiate it from contexts in which the innate and other elements are called vital essence, relative bodhichitta is defined as the "inner substantial vital essence" (*nang gi rdzas kyī thig le*), meaning that it is contained in the body.

When reality is understood in terms of method and wisdom, in either the nirvanic manifestation as the male and female deity or the samsaric manifestation of subject-object duality, relative bodhichitta is distinguished according to its two aspects of the masculine and the feminine. These are called, respectively, white vital essence and red vital essence (*thig le dkar dmar*); white component (*dkar cha*) and red component (*dmar cha*); or lunar constituent (*zla ba'i khams*) and solar constituent (*nyi ma'i khams*). Because these are pairs originating from one single reality, the term "semen" (*khū ba, śukra*) in some contexts refers to both white and red essences.

According to tantra, in an embodied existence, the white vital essence originates from the semen (*khū ba*) of the father, and the red vital essence, from the ovum (*khrag*) of the mother, which have merged at the time of sexual intercourse to form the physical basis for the consciousness of the

intermediate being conceived in their midst. Throughout fetal development, these essences remain at the navel, the energy-center from where the body develops. At birth, they separate; the white settles at the head, and the red, four fingers below the navel. These are the original vital essences, representing method (great bliss) and wisdom (emptiness), respectively. They always remain at those physical places as supports for life, until death disrupts them.

The sub-product of the original white vital essence moves downwards through the net of channels of the left side of the body, while the sub-product of the original red vital essence, which has the nature of blood, moves upward through the net of channels of the right side of the body. These nourish the psychophysical complex, maintaining strength and well-being. Their residues are expelled in coarse forms through the pores of the skin and other orifices.

It is evident that such a description is a blend of coarse and subtle physiology. In fact, although the vital essences are said to be the sub-products of the original ones, at the same time, they are said to be a result of the seven-fold process of regeneration of the body spoken of in Ayurveda and Tibetan medicine, which begins with the ingestion of food. In this process, the nutrient of food turns into blood, blood turns into flesh, flesh into fat, fat into bones, bones into marrow, and marrow into reproductive fluid. A part of the reproductive fluid flows to the heart from where, through the various channels, it reaches all parts of the body, providing them with necessary sustenance. Another part becomes semen in men and ovum in women.

In this context, the tantras speak of “semen” (*kbhu ba, śukra*) and “blood” (*kbhag, rakta*). Some have taken “blood” to mean menstrual blood. However, the coarse form of what the tantras call “blood,” unlike menstrual blood, must have reproductive functions just like its male counterpart, semen. Therefore, “blood” should be understood as ovum. The subtle forms referred to by the term “blood” consist in the original and derivative red vital essences mentioned above.

The subtle vital essences are present in both males and females, but the white is predominant in the male; the red, in the female. They pervade and abide in all parts of the body, the white being mainly in the channel-wheel (*cakra*) of the head; the red, mainly in the channel-wheel of the genitals and that of the navel.

The great Tibetan yogin Gyalwa Yang-gönpa (1213-1258), who is said to have had a vision of the secret functioning and structure of the body, explains that these vital essences are subject to daily, monthly, yearly, and

life cycles (*'phel 'grib*). These cycles influence, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively, the physical functions and emotional reactivity of humans. The cycles that most clearly represent the patterns of vital essences are the daily, monthly, and yearly cycles since these correspond to the movements of the sun and moon.

Corresponding to the cycle of a day, determined by the rising and setting of the sun, the red vital essence increases with the rising of the sun and decreases with its setting. The opposite is true for the white vital essence.

Corresponding to the cycle of a month, determined by the waxing and waning phases of the moon, the white vital essence increases from the first to the fifteenth of the lunar month and then decreases from the sixteenth to the thirtieth, while the red vital essence decreases from the first to the fifteenth and increases during the waning phase of the moon. In this cycle, the past aspect, when the essence has fully completed its function and has become residual, is said to be the “dissolved” vital essence. The present aspect, the refined essence (principally the white aspect) currently performing its function, is the “engaged.” The future aspect, the cause or root of both the refined and the residual, is the “dominant” vital essence.

Corresponding to the cycle of a year, determined by what appears as the movement of the sun toward the north for six months and toward the south for six months, the white vital essence increases for six months beginning from the summer solstice and then decreases as the red vital essence increases for six months beginning from the winter solstice.

Although both cycles are necessary and complementary, generally speaking the cycle of increase of the white vital essence is one of growth and therefore has a positive influence on the human body and mind complex, while the cycle of increase of the red vital essence is one of decline and has a detrimental influence, with body and mind susceptible to obstacles.

Vital essences are also distinguished as the vital essences of body (*lus, kāya*), speech (*ngag, vāk*), mind (*sems, citta*), and pristine awareness (*ye shes, jñāna*), each of which has its particular location in the body, principally the head, throat, heart, and navel. Imprints that are the source of emotional and cognitive obscurations, accumulated since beginningless time, are present within these essences as a subtle union of wind and mind. Thus, in the ordinary state of unawareness, these four types of vital essences give rise to the four states of an individual: the waking or ordinary state (*tha mal*), deep sleep (*gnyid mthug*), dream (*rmi lam*), and sexual union (*snyoms 'jug*), respectively, together with the deceptions that are related to these states.

In order to purify the four vital essences, the practitioner trains in four methods, involving the generation of various forms, the creation of sounds, nonconceptual contemplation, and use of sexual bliss. At the time of the path, the experiences from these methods arise as the vision of empty forms (*stong gzugs*), invincible sound (*gzhom med sgra*), nonconceptual consciousness (*mi rtog pa'i shes pa*), and immutable bliss (*mi 'gyur ba'i bde ba*), respectively. As the ultimate effects of these methods, the waking state transforms into the various manifestations of awakening (*nirmāṇakāya*); the dream state transforms into the enjoyment dimension (*sambhogakāya*), inclusive of all awakened bodies and voices; sleep transforms into the nonconceptual dimension of reality (*dharmakāya*), awakened mind, free from all limitations imposed by mental constructs; and sexual bliss transforms into the dimension of great immutable bliss (*mahāsukhakāya*). These vital essences are thus possessed of a double potency: unpurified, they bind one to illusion; purified, they grant freedom from illusion. This system of purification of vital essences and the four states is expounded in the Kalachakra tantra.

There are, moreover, other means to purify the four vital essences according to the various tantras. These include esoteric instructions on the yoga of illusory body (*sgyu lus, māyādeha*) to purify the waking state; the yoga of luminous clarity (*'od gsal gyi rnal 'byor, prabhāsvara yoga*) to purify sleep; dream yoga (*rmi lam gyi rnal 'byor, svapna yoga*) to purify dream; and inner heat (*gtum mo, caṇḍālī*) to purify the experience of orgasm. Alternatively, purification is effected by means of the four seals (*phyag rgya, mudrā*): the doctrine seal (*chos kyī phyag rgya, dharmamudrā*), great seal (*phyag rgya chen po, mahāmudrā*), pristine awareness seal (*ye shes phyag rgya, jñānamudrā*), and action seal (*las kyī phyag rgya, karmamudrā*), respectively.

Central to all tantric methods is the experience of the "four joys" (*dga' ba, ānanda*). In the course of practice, the white vital essence situated at the head is intentionally melted in order to experience bliss. This process involves activating the energy of the red vital essence at the navel and causing it to blaze using breath control techniques and other means. Given the light nature of the elemental property of which it is composed (i.e., fire), the heat energy of the red essence moves upward, warming the cold nature of the white essence. The white essence melts and drips, a process in which the vital essence becomes increasingly fluid as it reaches the reproductive organs. Given the heavy nature of the elemental properties of which the white essence is composed (i.e., earth and water), this vital essence moves downward. Since the original vital essences remain at the head and below the navel until death, the blaze of the red essence and the dripping of the white

must refer to an acceleration of the energetic process mentioned above, in which the sub-products of these ascend and descend in the body.

The descent of the white vital essence is marked by four main stages of experience known as “joys.” Each of the four joys arises in turn as molten white vital essence reaches the channel-wheels (*rtsa 'khor, cakra*), or centers of energy, along the central channel. Since the tantras differ in their enumerations of channel-wheels, some asserting four, others six, the points in the descent of vital essence where the joys occur are posited differently.

According to the Kalachakra system, as the stream of white “nectar” from the upper part of the head reaches the throat, there occurs the initial joy (*dang po'i dga' ba, prathamānanda*). As it reaches the heart, there arises the supreme joy (*mchog dga', paramānanda*). As it reaches the navel, there occurs the special joy (*khyad dga', vīramānanda*). As it reaches the tip of the penis, there occurs the innate joy (*lhan cig skyes pa'i dga' ba, saḥajānanda*). In tantras such as the Hevajra that postulate four channel-wheels, this last joy occurs at the navel.

The initial joy is a slight experience of bliss. Supreme joy is that first joy increased so that it overcomes the coarse levels of the conceptual mind. The special joy, which in the Hevajra is known as joy of separation (*dga' bra!*), is the experience of bliss and emptiness becoming inseparable. As a result of this, attachment to the joy ceases and the limitation of passion is overcome. The innate joy is the nondeceptive, concept-free realization of the indivisibility of bliss and emptiness.

Innate bliss is the very nature of ordinary consciousness but remains hidden until discovered through those powerful experiences. In order to recognize this nature and stabilize one's awareness of it, it is necessary for the tantric practitioner to withhold semen, the base of bliss. For this reason, great emphasis is placed on relative bodhichitta in the tantric path of transformation, and several pledges are concerned with not allowing it to be released.<sup>2</sup>

## THE INDESTRUCTIBLE BODY

The tantras assert that all phenomena are the very essence of the deity (*lha, deva*), and have always been since beginningless time. What is meant here is the “real” deity, pristine awareness (*ye shes, jñāna*) permeated by bliss, the mind nature of every individual. The dimension (*sku, kāya*) of such awareness is its innate glow (*rang mdangs*). In the mother tantras, the glow of pristine awareness is said to be present as two very subtle aspects known

metaphorically as white semen (*khbu ba, śukra*) and red essence or “blood” (*rdul, rajas*).

It is on the basis of these two aspects that bliss arises. Coemergent with bliss is non-recognition of it as pristine awareness. When the pristine awareness of bliss is not recognized, the two subtle aspects of its glow take on coarser aspects. The red aspect transforms into the appearances of cyclic existence; and the white, into the perceiver, or mind apprehending them: this constitutes the duality of subject and object.

In describing the two aspects and the state of non-recognition, tantras use the terminology of the three qualities (*yon tan, guṇa*) of the “universal substance” (*spyi gts'o bo, prakṛti*) postulated in the Hindu *saṃkhya* philosophy, from which all knowables arise as transformations (*rnam 'gyur*) of the three. Accordingly, the red aspect is called motility (or creativity) (*rdul, rajas*); the white aspect, buoyancy (or lightness) (*snying stobs, sattva*); and non-recognition, darkness (or immobility) (*mun pa, tamas*). In the impure state of non-recognition of pristine awareness, these three qualities manifest as the body, speech, and mind of an ordinary individual. In the pure state of awakening, they manifest as the body (*sku*), speech (*gsung*), and mind (*thugs*) of a buddha.

In the world of light postulated by the father tantra, deviation from one's ground of being and entering into duality occurs owing to a shift from subtle light, which is the primordial nature of mind known as total empty (*thams cad stong pa*) or luminous clarity (*'od gsal, prabhasvara*). The shift manifests as three coarser phases of light, namely culmination of light (*snang ba thob pa, ālokapalabdī*), increase of light (*snang ba mched pa, ālokābhāsa*), and light (*snang ba, āloka*). Alternative designations for the three lights are great empty (*stong pa chen po, mahāsūnya*), very empty (*shin tu stong pa, atisūnya*), and empty (*stong pa, śūnya*).

The three lights, which manifest as black, red, and white radiances, respectively, are known collectively as consciousness (*rnam par shes pa, vijñāna*). Specifically, the black radiance is associated with ignorance (*ma rig pa, avidyā*), the red, with compositional factors (*'du byed, saṃskāra*), and the white, with consciousness (*rnam shes, vijñāna*), which in the sutra tradition form the first three links of dependent origination from which arise names and forms (*ming gzugs, nāma-rūpa*), the psychophysical aggregates of the person which represent the phenomenal world. In the idealist terminology used by some commentators on the tantras and adhered to by Kongtrul, these three are posited as the ground-of-all consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam shes*), afflicted subjective mind (*nyon yid*), and sense consciousnesses (*dbang shes*).

Thus, from the lights arise the apprehender and the apprehended, along with the conceptions and coarse elements, the principal of which is called “wind” (*rlung, vāyu*). According to tantra, this last, wind, is the actual element that instigates the creation of everything. Whenever the three phases of light occur in order of progressive coarseness (i.e., culmination of light, increase of light, and light), conditioned involvement in the duality of subject and object takes place. According to the tradition of oral esoteric instructions, these three lights occur whenever there is the appearance of an object.

Similar to the path to liberation through reversal of the twelve links of dependent origination as explained in the sutras, the occurrence of the three lights in the reverse order (light, increase of light, and culmination of light) leads to the luminous clarity of reality. This process can occur naturally, as at the time of death, when all the psychophysical constituents of the person dissolve, or can be induced through tantric methods as described briefly above. Whether the arising of the fourth light, luminous clarity, becomes a liberating experience or not depends on the practitioner’s ability first to recognize and then to abide uninterruptedly in it.

A being who is subject to confusion enters embodied existence in one of the three realms. In terms of tantric practice, the best of births is as a human. The human body is known in tantra as the “vajra body” (*rdo rje lus, vajradeha*), or indestructible body. In the view of Marpa, a forefather of the Kagyu tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, it is so named because it is a body of bliss and emptiness. Moreover, its birth is that of a truly awakened being, occurring through the five awakenings, namely, semen, ovum, consciousness of the intermediate being, merging of these, and formation of the human body. These correspond to the five awakenings through which the deity is created in the phase of generation, as well as the five awakenings of the phase of completion, and the five awakenings that precede the moment of awakening for every individual who becomes a buddha. Thus, the being is already awakened at birth in having been born from the five awakenings.

According to other masters, the human body is indestructible because its components, the aggregates and so forth, are indivisible from the those of enlightenment. It is also called the “vajra body endowed with six constituents,” the six being the four elemental properties of earth, water, fire, wind, plus the white vital essence (pristine awareness) and red vital essence (emptiness).

The indestructible body is composed of the triad of channels (*rtsa, nāḍī*), winds (*rlung, vāyu*), and vital essences (*thig le, bindu*), which represents

body, speech, and mind, the three categories under which all existence is subsumed. The channels, the very nature of the body, are the stable components of the indestructible body, likened to a house; the vital essences, the support for the mind, as elements situated within the channels, are likened to riches (contained in the house); and the winds, the moving elements, are likened to the owners of the riches.

There are three main channels, the left, right, and central channels, whose functions are of primary importance and whose positions within the body reflect the principles of method, wisdom, and nonduality. They are generally described as extending from the lower part of the body to the head and then bending toward the nostrils and the point between the eyebrows. The positions of their lower and upper extremities are explained differently depending on the tantra.

The left channel, in Sanskrit *lalanā* (*rkyang ma*), originates from the power of the white aspect of the glow of pristine awareness. It creates the illusion of an apprehender. Lalana is also called “wisdom” (*shes rab, prajñā*) because it causes the lunar wind (*zla ba'i rlung*) to flow from the left nostril. Its lower extremity controls emission and retention of urine. Fourteen channels branch off from the lalana, spreading throughout the left side of the body.

The right channel, in Sanskrit *rasanā* (*ro ma*), originates from the power of the red aspect of the glow of pristine awareness. It creates the illusion of an objective world, the apprehended. Rasana is also called “method” (*thabs, upāya*) because it causes the solar wind (*nyi ma'i rlung*) to flow from the right nostril. Its lower extremity controls emission and retention of feces. Ten channels branch off from the rasana, spreading throughout the right side of the body.

The central channel, in Sanskrit *mādhyama* (*rtsa dbu ma*), also referred to as *avadhūti*, originates from the power of wind. It is known as “central,” or “all-abandoning” (*kun spangs mā*), because it has rejected the “extremes” of both the lunar and solar winds, and because when the winds that flow in the right and left channels enter and dissolve in the central channel, the concepts of subject and object are overcome. Five channels branch off from the central channel at the heart area to reach the senses and control their functions. Its lower extremity, known as “conch-shell” (*dung can ma, śaṅkīṇī*), controls the emission and retention of semen.

The thirty-two channels (including the three principal channels) are the major pathways for the winds and vital essences and correspond to the thirty-two outer sacred places spoken of in tantra. Altogether, the channels of the

body are said to number 72,000, equal to the number of rivers of the Indian subcontinent, or millions when the very fine ones are counted.

According to the Hevajra system, at the places where these three channels meet, namely, navel, heart, throat, and head, there originate the “petals” or spokes of the four *chakras* or “wheels.” The yellow channel-wheel at the navel, comprising sixty-four channels, is known as the “channel-wheel of emanation” (*sprul ba'i 'khor lo, nirmānacakra*) because the formation of the body in the womb begins there. It is called “wheel” because by generating the inner heat at the navel, deception related to the waking state is “crushed” as if under a wheel.

The blue channel-wheel at the heart, comprising eight channels, is known as the “channel-wheel of phenomena” (*chos kyi 'khor lo, dharmacakra*) because it serves as the base for the mind of the reality dimension of awakening. It is called “wheel” because by contemplating luminous clarity at the heart, deception related to deep sleep is crushed.

The red channel-wheel at the throat, comprising sixteen channels, is known as the “channel-wheel of enjoyment” (*longs spyod kyi 'khor lo, sambhogacakra*) because it serves as the base for the experience of tastes. It is called “wheel” because through dream yoga connected to that place, the deception of dreams is crushed.

The white channel-wheel at the head, comprising thirty-two channels, is called “channel-wheel of great bliss” (*bde chen gyi 'khor lo, mahāsukhacakra*) because it serves as the base for the experience of great bliss. It is called “wheel” because by stabilizing the vital essence at the head, deception associated with orgasm is crushed.

There are various assertions concerning these channels. In his *Oral Transmission of the Ancestors* (*Mes po zhal lung*), a commentary on the *Four Medical Tantras* (*gSo rig rgyud bzhi*), the outstanding Zurkar Lodrö Gyalpo<sup>3</sup> (1509-1585), with the twofold expertise of a mystic and doctor of Tibetan medicine, seems to suggest that the left channel corresponds to the spinal column, which in Tibetan medicine is known as “white channel of life” (*srog rtsa dkar po*); the right channel, to the *vena cava*, or “red channel of life” (*srog rtsa dmar po*); and the central channel, to the aorta or “black channel of life” (*srog rtsa nag po*). These channels are indeed closely connected to the vascular and nervous systems, as well as to other components of the psychophysical complex. Therefore, meditating on the channels can induce special experiences determined by subtle changes in body and mind. However, these three channels do not physically exist in the body; they are

visualized in various ways in the course of different tantric practices and for different purposes.

The indivisible nature of mind is said to possess a “mobile quality.” This mobile quality is described as currents of energy which flow through the channels of various parts of the body, presiding over physical as well as mental functions, and pass through the nostrils as breathing. Such currents of energy, called “winds” (*rlung*, *vāyu*), serve as the bridge between body and mind.

The winds are a blend of two types of energy, one associated with emotionality, called karmic or conditioned wind (*las kyī rlung*), and the other related to the original state of the individual, called pristine awareness wind (*ye shes kyī rlung*). Distinguished in terms of the three principles, darkness (*tamas*), motility (*rajas*), and buoyancy (*sattva*), winds are of three types: wind of Rahu, solar wind, and lunar wind. Moreover, the winds are differentiated as the five root winds (*rtsa ba'i rlung*), the natures of the five elements, and five branch winds (*yan lag gi rlung*), produced through the five elemental transformations. The winds of the five elements, or five mandalas, flow back and forth through the right and left nostrils in the order of generation of the elements and of birth (first space, then wind, fire, water, earth) and in the order of dissolution of the elements and of death (first earth, then water, and so on), respectively. In one day, they are exhaled and inhaled 21,600 times, divided between the two nostrils, a time corresponding to eight periods or watches (*thun*). The outward movement of these energy currents as the breath diminishes the strength of the wind associated with pristine awareness. Therefore, when outward movement increases, there occur signs of death. If the winds are held inside, pristine awareness wind is strengthened. Hence, many extraordinary powers such as longevity are gained through breath control techniques for “holding the winds” in the central channel.

The third element in the triad of channels, winds, and vital essences has been introduced previously as relative bodhichitta. All channels, winds, and vital essences manifest from pristine awareness, the nature of mind. Essentially beyond the duality of subject and object, they represent the authentic condition of the body. Therefore, through contemplations that strike their crucial points (as mentioned above), much in the same way a doctor striking with his small rubber hammer the right point on the knee causes a reflex reaction in the leg, one can manifest the pristine awareness of intrinsic awareness (*rang rig pa'i ye shes*), an awareness that cognizes its own nature, one's primordial condition, the same reality from which arise the channels, winds, and vital essences.

### KONGTRUL'S PRESENTATION OF TANTRIC SYSTEMS

In *Systems of Buddhist Tantra: The Indestructible Way of Secret Mantra*, Kongtrul begins (in chapter one of the translation) by providing different perspectives on the placement of secret mantra in the Buddhist collections of teachings. He refers to different tantras and to the commentaries of eminent Indian and Tibetan scholars, some of whom assign the tantras to the three collections (*sde snod gsum, tripitaka*), and others, to a fourth collection known as the "awareness-holder collections" (*rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod, vidyādhara-piṭaka*). Following that, taking a somewhat epistemological approach, Kongtrul defines the nature of tantra and mantra and presents reasons for tantra's superiority over other paths by noting the characteristics that distinguish tantra from the common teachings of the individual and universal ways.

Next (chapter two), citing numerous passages from different tantras as well as the assertions of Indian and Tibetan scholars, the author sets forth the various ways in which tantra is formally classified. From his discussion, it becomes evident that while in the Tibetan tradition tantra came to be rigidly structured into four sets (in the new schools) and six sets (in the ancient school), it originally comprised many interrelated practices and observances, with no strictly defined borders separating them.

Kongtrul then explains the rationale for the division of tantra into four sets, namely, action (*bya ba, kriyā*), conduct (*spyod pa, caryā*), yoga (*rnal 'byor, yoga*), and highest yoga (*rnal 'byor bla med, anuttarayoga*) tantras. This classification is generally accepted by the new schools and represents the main body of tantras translated into Tibetan and included in the collection called the Kangyur (*bKa' 'gyur*). Some of the reasons for the fourfold division of the tantras are closely related to their views and modes of practice. Another reason stems from the correlations between the four divisions and the four views (a standard categorization of philosophical trends made in later Indian Buddhism), namely, the analyst, traditionist, experientialist, and centrist views.

In the following sections (chapters three, four, and five), starting in each case with a concise citation from the *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra (Jñānasamuccaya)*, an exegetical tantra of Guhyasamaja, Kongtrul discusses the three lower tantras—action, conduct, and yoga—explaining their names, standards for initiation, views, styles of practice, and so forth.

Action tantra, where action means ritual activities, emphasizes outer conduct, with special prescriptions for ceremonial modes of ablution, cleanliness, eating and drinking, clothing, and so forth. Such observances are based on the notion of inferiority to the deity, who is regarded as perfection and existent outside of oneself, and stem from ignorance or fear of the profound truth that everything is devoid of inherent nature. They also reflect obligations to one's social group and to a conventionally proper lifestyle. To overcome the separation between the ordinary human condition and the divine, one conforms to a way of purity in attire and behavior and visualizes the deity in front of oneself while recollecting the emptiness of one's own self. This is done until a vivid experience of the indivisibility of oneself and the deity arises.

Conduct tantra, where conduct encompasses both outer ritual activity and inner contemplation, involves training in a vast range of deeds while entering the inner reality that presents itself in visual and audible divine representations. The notion here is that of being close to the state of a perfect divine being, a state not yet fully realized. This limited view is overcome by visualizing the deity outside of oneself and, as a reflection of that, visualizing oneself as the deity, understanding that form to be the appearance aspect of emptiness.

Yoga tantra, where yoga refers to the inner union of method and wisdom, or, from another perspective, the inseparable union of the relative divine form and its ultimate empty nature, emphasizes contemplation of inner reality. In this system, the practitioner places himself in the center of a network of subjective relationships with this reality, which appears in a variety of divine features. The practitioner and the deity are viewed as absolutely equal. Method and wisdom are applied inseparably in contemplations on the indivisibility of one's body, speech, mind, and activities and those of the deity. These contemplations are known as the four seals (as understood in that system)—the great seal (*mahāmudrā*), the pledge seal (*samayamudrā*), the seal of the doctrine (*dharmamudrā*), and the action seal (*karmamudrā*)—and are to be applied with the understanding of essential reality.

In contrast to his extremely concise treatment of the lower tantras, Kongtrul provides a detailed exposition of the system of highest yoga tantra (beginning with chapter six). Citing the *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra*, Kongtrul first defines the essence of highest yoga tantra. Then, in order to elucidate the meaning of the tantra, he introduces

the subject of the three continuums, namely, the continuum of cause (*rgyu, hetu*), the continuum of method (*thabs, upāya*), and the continuum of result (*'bras bu, phala*). This threefold format stems from the Guhyasamaja but is by no means to be understood as exclusive to that tantra. Instead, it is one that encompasses all of the content of the highest tantras in general.

The next large section (chapters seven to ten) treats the causal continuum, understood principally as the luminous clarity nature of the mind of each individual. First is given a rather general explanation said to derive from Shantigupta, one of the latest great adepts of India, whose disciple Buddhaguptanata was a master of the Tibetan Taranata. Kongtrul then begins an extensive exposition of the subject based on the view of Naropa.

The causal continuum, or luminous clarity, can be said to be the reality that is neither outer nor inner but includes all that manifests as pure and impure phenomena. Since this reality presents itself as the body and mind and is discovered by one's own intrinsic awareness within the "temple" of the body, it is necessary to understand the authentic condition manifesting as mind and the authentic condition manifesting as body.

To reconnect with the sutras or common teachings of the Buddha and to show that there is indeed continuity between sutras and tantras, Kongtrul describes at length the authentic condition of existence in its pure state, equating it with the essence of enlightenment (*tathāgatagarbha*). In the uncommon experiential approach of the highest tantras, that essence is defined as "intrinsic awareness, the nature of great bliss" (*rang rig pa bde ba chen po'i rang bzhin*), where awareness means awareness of mind nature itself, or, in other words, "the inseparable union of *e* and *vam*" (*e vam zung 'jug*).

*Evam* ("thus") is the first word in the phrase "*evam mayā śrutam*" ("Thus I have heard"), with which many of the sutras and tantras begin. In the context of the ground, when the possibilities of recognizing one's real nature and straying from it are both present, *e* represents wisdom, and *vam*, method, indicating that, from the very beginning, the authentic condition of being is the inseparable union of the two aspects that encompass all existence, emptiness and manifestation. It is because the highest yoga tantras point out the authentic condition as the indissoluble union of wisdom (emptiness) and method (manifestation) that they are known as highest yoga (union). In the language typical of the father tantras, this union is known as the indivisibility of profound emptiness (*zab*) and luminosity (*gsal*). In the language of the mother tantras, such a union is the inseparability of blissful

pristine awareness and its glow, which in an embodied existence is present as subtle lunar and solar energies.

*Evam* therefore represents the individual's fundamental condition, pure and liberated. When this condition is not recognized, from the solar energy of the glow of pristine awareness, there manifests a vision of the universe conceived of as an outer entity; and from the lunar energy of the glow of pristine awareness, there manifests a perceiver of this vision conceived of as an inner entity, or "self."

Kongtrul provides a masterful explanation of how from non-recognition of one's intrinsic awareness of great bliss unfolds all of conditioned existence, which, nonetheless, is nothing but the glow of such awareness. According to the father tantras, the three realms—the realm of desire (*'dod kham*s, *kāmadhātu*), the realm of form (*gzugs kham*s, *rūpadhātu*), and the formless realm (*gzugs med kham*s, *ārūpyadhātu*)—arise from luminous clarity and the three sequential phases of light. Initially, when luminous clarity is not recognized, there arise the three lights, known as the culmination of light, increase of light, and light. These three lights become subject to and veiled by eighty conceptions or "natures" (*rang bzhin, prakṛtī*): the seven conceptions of delusion indicative of the culmination of light; the forty of desire indicative of the increase of light; and the thirty-three of aversion indicative of light. From these lights arise the five elements and their derivatives, the five aggregates of the person. When wind, or the "mobile quality," seizes the five sensory objects, consciousness joined with wind starts to operate in the conditioned world. According to the view of the mother tantras, conditioned existence arises from the experience of mundane bliss at the moment of emission of semen during sexual union. When the nature of innate bliss is not recognized, the three poisons—attachment, delusion, and aversion—are initiated.

When visions of the three realms are taken as real, the individual takes birth and acquires a body which, although formed through habitual tendencies, is at the same time the manifestation of luminous clarity: the fundamental manifest dimension of awakening, which, once purified, becomes the supreme manifest dimension. The eighty conceptions, as well as the experience of innate pristine awareness, depend on the subtle physiology of the body. To clarify this relationship, Kongtrul presents condensed yet comprehensive descriptions of the inner pathways (channels), energy currents (winds), and vital essences, which is followed by a discussion on the four states, namely, deep sleep, dream, waking, and sexual union, the focuses of

tantric practice. These sections on the “supported body” are followed by a terse definition of the innate or original body, the “support.”

Next is presented the symbolic representation of the causal continuum in the union of *e* and *vam*. First, Kongtrul explains the meaning of *evam* in the context of the ground, path, and result according to the Kalachakra system. Here, the single reality of *e*, emptiness, and *vam*, bliss, is described as thirty-seven elements: thirty-six comprising the aggregates, and so forth, of the person, and the thirty-seventh, the nature that pervades them, a triad of transparency, essential identity, and indivisibility.

Following the section on *evam* is a discussion of the ten-letter Kalachakra mantra as a symbol for the causal continuum, pointing out how the nature of the causal continuum is endowed with the ten-letter mantra in the mode of pristine awareness and how the mantra, as the environments and inhabitants of cyclic existence, arises from consciousness, the transformation of pristine awareness.

The section on the method continuum (chapter eleven) begins with an extensive explanation of the meaning of initiation, the types of mandalas in which the initiation is performed, and the tantras entered by means of initiation. It is here that a clear distinction between father and mother highest yoga tantra is made, along with the assertion that, by virtue of their natures, all highest yoga tantras are to be considered nondual tantras, possessed of wisdom and method. Following that (chapter twelve) is a detailed description of the initiation procedure, from the preparatory ritual of the site for the construction of the mandala up to introduction of the student into the mandala. In highest yoga tantra, the initiations are primarily four, with different subdivisions. The vase initiation is considered to be a lower initiation, and the remaining three—the secret, the pristine awareness through wisdom, and the word initiations—are higher. Included in these discussions are the particular functions and purificatory effects of the conferral of the four initiations.

A primary purpose of the initiation in highest yoga tantra is to authorize students to engage in the twofold contemplation of the phase of generation and phase of completion. This subject of contemplation (chapter thirteen) is treated very briefly since it is not the main focus of this book. Kongtrul does, however, elucidate in some depth the phase of completion from the perspective of the *Heruka Galpo Tantra*. The *Galpo Tantra*, an early translation tantra of the ancient school, is one of the cycle of Vishuddha, symbol of awakened mind. One might therefore wonder why Kongtrul uses this

source in elucidating the phase of completion in the context of the new schools. One reason may be that the *Galpo Tantra*, as asserted by Dudjom Rinpoché in his *History of the Nyingma School*, contains a phase of completion that is actually of the precious oral teachings of the path and fruition tradition transmitted in the new school of the Sakyapa. Possibly another reason is that the *Galpo Tantra's* presentation of the phase of completion, as outlined by Kongtrul, gives a remarkably clear picture of what that phase entails and its salient points, which encompass the styles of completion phase practices of both the father and mother tantras.

In this discussion, a distinction is made between one aspect of the phase of completion considered to be causal since it serves the purpose of eliciting the pristine awareness associated with bliss and one part considered resultant since it develops from that. Comprised by the causal phase of completion are practices such as self-blessing, mandala circle, and the tantric great seal (*mahāmudrā*). The term “self-blessing” has different meanings depending on context; here, it denotes contemplation on the subtle mind-referent within the central channel of the body, visualized in order to give rise to various experiences of bliss. The term “mandala circle” refers to the practice that swiftly elicits the experience of pristine awareness associated with the four joys through sexual union with a qualified consort. The practice of the great seal in this context entails remaining in a state of contemplation of pristine awareness and bliss in order to bring about repeatedly the dissolution of mind and wind in the central channel and experience the resultant special bliss. Moreover, in the practice of the great seal that directs the mind inward, bodhichitta is channeled into the central channel, and discursive thought is caused to enter luminous clarity, whereupon, in a way greatly superior to meditation on emptiness alone, the dualistic impressions of apprehended and apprehender cease. These procedures can also be explained in terms of the four seals, namely, action seal, pledge seal, doctrine seal, and great seal. Kongtrul therefore lists different views that interpret the meaning of these four seals in different ways.

In the discussion of the resultant phase of completion (chapter fourteen), we find practices referred to as “emptiness side,” “appearance side,” and “union of emptiness and appearance.” If we compare these to Nagarjuna's five stages of the Guhyasamaja phase of completion, they roughly correspond, respectively, to luminous clarity (*'od gsal, prabhāsvara*), illusory body (*sgyu lus, māyādeha*), and the state of union (*zung 'jug, yuganaddha*) of these two. The first is said to be the direct experience of innate pristine awareness,

bliss and emptiness; the second, the form of the deity which appears by the power of that innate awareness; and the third, the essential identity of pristine awareness and the form of the deity.

The direct experience of innate pristine awareness arises upon dissolution of the three lights (light, increase of light, and culmination of light) and the eighty conceptions. To explain that process, Kongtrul enters into a lengthy exposition of the natures and various categories of the three lights and also points out the various states, ordinary and special, in which they occur. A list is provided of the eighty conceptions, which in groups of thirty-three, forty, and seven, manifest from and are indicative of these three lights, respectively. These conceptions, or discursive thoughts, do not transcend the nature of bliss and pristine awareness from which they originate and into which they dissolve. When this is understood fully, the conceptions themselves become the very source of freedom. The actual arising of pristine awareness, bliss-emptiness, is effected by the dissolution of the lights and the conceptions through skillful methods that release the “knots” of the heart channel-wheel. These methods include vajra recitation, inner heat, and so forth, the main method being reliance on an actual consort.

Following that exposition is a brief discussion of tantric application, which comprises activations and complementary forms of conduct. To conclude the presentation of the three continuums is a statement defining the third of the three continuums, the resultant continuum of inalienableness, the actualized purified state. Lastly, there is synopsis of the view, meditation, conduct, and result of the system of highest yoga tantra in general.

Having thus set forth the meaning of tantra, or the content itself, Kongtrul then presents the subject of tantra in terms of “the words that convey that meaning” (chapters fifteen and sixteen), beginning with an explanation of how the scriptures of the action, conduct, yoga, and highest yoga tantras are classified and a survey of the tantric topics they expound. Further, the ways of teaching the lower and higher tantras are discussed, with an emphasis placed on those of the highest yoga tantra. Special mention is made of the “seven ornaments” and their twenty-eight subdivisions, principles of knowledge that stem from the *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra*. By means of these methods of exposition, listeners are able to cognize the purpose of the tantra, be introduced to its contents by means of synopsis, fathom the layers of interpretation of the root tantra, appreciate the words and meanings in accordance with their intellects, and so forth. With a short section on the special exposition method in the eso-

teric instructions system, Kongtrul completes his discussion of the tantras in the new tradition.

In the second major portion of the book are presented the systems of the ancient translation tradition (chapters seventeen to twenty). According to that tradition, all the ways to realization, which accommodate beings of different faculties, are included in nine ways: the way of proclaimers (*śrāvaka*), way of solitary sages (*pratyekabuddha*), and way of bodhisattvas (collectively, the way of characteristics); the three outer tantras, namely, action, conduct, and yoga; and the three inner tantras—mahayoga, anuyoga, and atiyoga.

The first set of three is known as the “way of the sutras that leads away from the source of suffering,” since it leads to liberation by forsaking actions that are sources of suffering. The second set is called the “way that resembles Vedic austerity,” since in this path the practitioner follows prescribed rituals of cleanliness, and so forth, emphasized in the Vedas. The third set is known as the “way of the dominating method.” In more ancient texts of this tradition, the first is said to be the mundane way of *devas* and human beings, and the ways of the proclaimers and solitary sages are considered to be one. In contrast to the simple fourfold division of the tantras in the new tradition, Kongtrul begins the discussion on the ancient tradition by citing scriptures that declare the ways to realization to be indeed limitless, as limitless as the concepts of beings, while pointing out that ultimately there exist no path, no traveller, and no journey.

Although there are interesting differences between the explanations of action, conduct, and yoga tantras given in the texts of the new schools and those given in the texts of the ancient schools, these three systems are not discussed again at this point since their natures are essentially identical. Kongtrul’s treatment of the three inner tantras, mahayoga, anuyoga, and atiyoga, although very significant, is, regrettably, extremely concise.

In the ancient tradition, all highest yoga tantras are placed in the three series of inner tantras of mahayoga, anuyoga, and atiyoga. Although the tantras of mahayoga, with some exceptions such as the Guhyasamaja and Chandraguhyatilaka, differ from those of the new schools, their systems of practice, consisting of the phase of generation and the phase of completion, basically correspond to those of the new tradition’s highest yoga tantras. However, anuyoga and atiyoga are peculiar to the ancient tradition and are not found in the new schools.

Longchenpa’s statement, “Mahayoga, the father tantra... Anuyoga, the mother tantra... Atiyoga, the nature of nonduality...,” shows the correlation

between the three subdivisions of the highest tantra of the new tradition and the three inner tantras of the ancient tradition. This does not mean that they are equivalent but indicates certain resemblances: father tantra of the new tradition and mahayoga of the ancient both emphasize the phase of generation; and mother tantra of the new tradition and anuyoga of the ancient, the phase of completion. In anuyoga, however, is taught the special principle of instantaneous perfection in both the phase of generation and the phase of completion, a feature not found in mahayoga or in the tantras of the new schools, whose application of these two phases is gradual.

As for the distinctive views of the inner tantras, mahayoga asserts that all phenomena are the magical display of the simultaneity of emptiness and appearance. Anuyoga asserts that all phenomena are the creative energy of the indivisibility of essential reality and pristine awareness. Atiyoga asserts that all phenomena are the very manifestation of primordial and naturally present pristine awareness.

Kongtrul next sets forth all aspects of mahayoga or “great yoga,” beginning with its essence, name, and initiation, up to its result. The initiation that is fundamental for entering the path of this tantra is that of the *Guhyagarbha*, or *Essence of Secrets*, the root scripture of this system. The entrance to mahayoga through application of the three contemplations consists in the contemplation of the essential nature, whereby one remains in a state of nonconceptual contemplation, vast as the sky; the contemplation of the total vision, whereby there arises illusory compassion for all beings who are fettered due to nescience; and the contemplation of symbols, whereby one visualizes seed-syllables, such as the syllable *hum*, the nature of one’s awareness, from which divine manifestations arise. Although mahayoga asserts that all things are already in the state of enlightenment, in order to understand this fully, one transforms the impure karmic view into pure divine vision by way of the three contemplations.

In the system of mahayoga, all phenomena are understood to be the indivisibility of the relative and ultimate truths. In particular, mahayoga speaks of the superior ultimate truth as the ineffable state of total presence, and the superior relative truth as the creative energy of that presence manifesting as the mandala of male and female deities. This view is approached by way of the four understandings, namely, the axioms of the identical cause, mode of letters, empowering energy, and direct cognizance.

The first is the understanding that all phenomena share an identical cause, or nature: all are indistinguishable in that, on the ultimate level, they have never being born, and on the relative level, they manifest like a magi-

cal illusion. This is an explanation in common with the universal way as it uses the terminology of the two truths, ultimate and relative. The understanding through the axiom of the mode of letters is knowing, through the system of mantra, that everything is already in a state of enlightenment. The understanding through the axiom of empowering energy is the realization that arises from the first two understandings. The direct cognizance is that which is based on wisdom and does not contradict the scriptures or esoteric instructions.

This approach to the view is mentioned in the *Guhyagarbha* and expanded upon in Padmasambhava's *Garland of Views: A Collection of Esoteric Instructions* (*Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba*), where the four understandings are explained in the context of understanding the view of the great perfection (*rdzogs chen*). In the *Treasury of Key Instructions* is Kongtrul's own commentary on Padmasambhava's text entitled *Sunlight*, which provides an interpretation of the basic text according to the principles of the tantras of the new schools. Rongzom's commentary on the *Garland of Views* is perhaps more direct and conforms to the approach of the ancient tradition and, in particular, to that of the great perfection system.

Along with the four understandings, there are presented other approaches to the view. The axiom of the three purities, for example, establishes that the elements, aggregates, and consciousnesses are already in a state of enlightenment in being the consorts, the buddhas of the five families, and the five pristine awarenesses.

Kongtrul then gives an overview of the meditation systems based on the tradition of the eight *sadhana*s, or "means of attainment," of mahayoga, the first five of which are associated with a particular enlightened deity, and the last three associated with mundane forces. Another aspect of meditation in mahayoga is that which accords with the tantra tradition, comprising the path of method and the path of liberation. In the path of method (*shabs lam*), grounded in a firm understanding of the view, one performs actions that normally would bind one to conditioned existence and applies oneself to the "upper door" (*steng sgo*) practice of inner heat and the "lower door" (*'og sgo*) practice with a real consort. The path of liberation (*sgrol lam*) is differentiated according to the levels of faculties of practitioners into two, the simultaneous and the sequential. In the first, realization is gained simultaneous with the time of initiation or with an introduction to one's original nature. In the sequential or gradual approach, a practitioner attains realization by applying the three characteristics, namely, the characteristic of knowledge or realization of the view through the four understandings mentioned

above, the characteristic of application or familiarity with that view, and the characteristic of the result, actual awakening.

Anuyoga is a method taught for those who have the capacity to contemplate in the state of total presence all that is taught in the tantras, with no stages in the generation of the deity or in the completion phase. In this system, the practitioner, rather than meditating on either the nonconceptual state of ultimate reality or the mandala of the deity, contemplates these two simultaneously. The initiation to introduce one to this tantra is that of the *All-Unifying Pure Presence* (*Kun 'dus rig pa'i mdo*), a peculiarity of which is that it comprises the initiations empowering one in the anuyoga methods of the nine ways. These exceptional methods give rise to the particular experiences and certainties that come from these nine paths.

The view of anuyoga is that all phenomena are primordially perfect enlightenment, and that perfect enlightenment is the mandala of original bodhichitta, pure and perfect mind. Crucial to this view is the understanding that the original pure mind is the indivisibility of three mandalas, namely, the mandala of primordial suchness, the mandala of the spontaneously perfect nature, and the mandala of original bodhichitta. The mandala of primordial suchness is the space of total emptiness, mind nature in which all things, pure and impure, manifest. The mandala of the spontaneously perfect nature is pristine awareness which is unceasingly present in that dimension of emptiness. The mandala of original bodhichitta is great bliss, the "offspring" of the indissoluble union of the ultimate dimension of phenomena and pristine awareness, the two previous mandalas.

In this tantra, we also find the path of method of the upper and lower doors, as well as the path of liberation which consists in remaining in the state of contemplation on the natures of the three mandalas. This contemplation can be entered by three different methods: analysis, remaining in one's natural state, and contemplation of a deity generated all at once through the simple utterance of the seed-syllable or mantra.

In the ancient tradition, atiyoga is considered to be the highest of all paths. It directly releases the individual in the very state that is primordial enlightenment. Kongtrul explains that it is called "supreme yoga" because of being the perfection or finality of the phase of generation and completion, or because it stands as the summit of all ways. That being the case, atiyoga can be understood as the final result of the other paths, or as atiyoga *per se*, an independent way or system, also known as "great perfection" (*rdzogs chen*). As the final result of all paths, atiyoga is considered to be tantra, but as an independent system, it does not fit into that category since it does not

incorporate the ten topics that constitute a tantric teaching. Moreover, the atiyoga system is based on the principle of self-liberation, not that of transformation, which is the underlying principle of all tantras.

This system is entered by means of the “initiation of the creative energy of total presence” (*rig pa'i rtsal dbang*). This is more of an introduction than a tantric initiation: one is introduced, right from the start, to one's real condition. It does not need to be preceded by the first three initiations of highest yoga tantra (vase, secret, and pristine awareness through wisdom), nor does it need as its precondition the third initiation which reveals the example pristine awareness.

As for the view of atiyoga, Kongtrul presents first the general view of atiyoga, followed by its distinctions. Other systems explain that when mind is bound by illusion, there is cyclic life, while when mind is free of illusion and gains understanding, there is enlightenment. This view is not shared by the atiyoga system, which asserts that everything that exists—all phenomena included in cyclic life and perfect peace—has always been the total sphere of naturally present pristine awareness. Since the stains of the afflictions have never existed, there are no obstacles to clear away and no qualities to develop. All phenomena are perfect from the beginning in the state of essential identity, with no need for acceptance or rejection, prohibitions or remedies: this view of primordial enlightenment is known as the great perfection. The specific and subtle distinctions of that general view correspond to the three divisions of atiyoga (mind, vast space, and esoteric instructions).

Kongtrul points out that meditation in atiyoga takes three forms: Meditation according to the mind division is to remain in the state of total presence and emptiness. Meditation in the vast space division is to remain in the state of one's own true nature, with no action or effort. Meditation in the esoteric instructions division is to remain in the state of primordial freedom, beyond renunciation and acceptance. Conduct in atiyoga is explained to be spontaneous—resembling that of a madman, with no restrictions whatsoever—born from the realization that whatever is encountered arises as the expressive energy of one's own true nature. The result is to arrive at the place of primordial freedom, spontaneously perfect Samantabhadra, present even now.

The final sections in the discussion of the ancient tradition include a survey of the various scriptures of the three inner tantras and the scriptures of the mind, vast space, and esoteric instructions divisions of the great perfection. This is followed by an overview of the exposition methods used in

mahayoga, both tantras and sadhanas, and anuyoga. Lastly, Kongtrul points out the way the great perfection atiyoga tantras are expounded using five teachings on the path for which there are examples, and one teaching on the result—spontaneous perfection which needs not be sought, the original buddha—for which there is no example but can be directly pointed out as one's natural condition.

### **ABOUT THE TRANSLATION**

The present text—written by a most highly respected and authoritative teacher and covering the vast range of Buddhist tantras in both the new and ancient schools of Tibetan Buddhism—is one of the first of its kind to be translated into English.

The translation involved a number of difficulties. First, with languages as different from each other as Tibetan is from English, a mechanical translation from the words of one to the words of the other is just not possible. Grammatical differences, differences in how words are formed, and differences in idiomatic usage make such translations stilted at best, misleading at worst. Paraphrasing is necessary to ensure that the actual meaning of the Tibetan is conveyed accurately and appropriately in readable English.

Second, in Tibetan philosophical and religious texts, one word may have a range of meanings according to context and system of thought. The educated Tibetan reader was aware of the different contexts and systems. The English reader, however, does not have the background or reference points. Sometimes these differences are slight and the right word in English can carry the range. Other times, the differences in meaning are so great that the translator has no choice but to use different words in English if the work is to be intelligible. The reader is, in this context, dependent on the understanding of the translator: if the translator's understanding is accurate, no meaning is lost and the text may even be enriched.

Third, translations and translators also evolve. As a text is translated and retranslated, later translations are informed by the work of their predecessors and produce richer results. As his or her familiarity, experience, and ability grow, a translator will find better words, phrases, and constructions to convey meaning accurately from one language to another. Such evolution is important, as to lay out the standards a priori would result in lifeless and probably inaccurate renderings. The standards evolve spontaneously and the quality of translation improves accordingly. In keeping with this principle, we have changed the way we translated certain words

and phrases in our earlier work. Our intention is to produce more clarity, not more confusion.

Fourth, Tibetan is a cryptic language. Its written form was developed explicitly as a vehicle for translating Indian Buddhism texts into Tibetan. It is an extraordinary medium for expressing profound and subtle inner teachings in a few words. Knowledge of words and grammar are often not sufficient to grasp the meaning of what is being expressed because the texts were usually supported by oral explanations and commentary. In addition, the texts do not come with explicative notes as the reader was expected to know or be able to refer to other texts. With the passage of time, however, both the tradition of oral commentary and general familiarity with other texts have declined. One of the consequences of this decline is that a well-translated English text with proper explicative notes may well be more comprehensible and useful than its Tibetan counterpart.

Fifth, Kongtrul is an extremely succinct writer. With his vast familiarity with Tibetan Buddhist literature and being able to assume familiarity in the reader, he expresses ideas with such conciseness that often only an idea of what he is saying is possible. Kongtrul's intended meaning becomes clear only when the original text he had in mind has been identified and read. For the translator, the choice is in how cumbersome to make the translation, either expanding the text or providing explanation in endnotes. The current translation has been augmented with copious notes so that the reader has the reference material and information that the translators used to arrive at the translation. In many cases, the reference material is not yet available in English.

Finally, Kongtrul does not always indicate his sources. In such situations, the translators have relied on Kongtrul's own explanations in other books that he wrote, reasoning that the utilization of these resources would keep the translation as close as possible to the author's intent. For the sections on the highest yoga tantra of the new schools, these include works such as his *Commentary on the Jewel Affinity*, *Commentary on Rangjung Dorjé's Profound Inner Reality*, *Phrase by Phrase Commentary on the Hevajra Tantra*, and *Topical Commentary on the Hevajra Tantra*. When explanations could not be found in Kongtrul's own work, we relied on texts that he has cited, including the tantras and their commentaries, as well as other commentaries that we have found clearer on certain points or that were simply available to us. These texts are listed among the reference works at the end of this book. We have checked the citations as much as possible to prevent errors in their reporting.

In preparing this translation, two editions of the text were consulted: the modern Beijing edition in three-volume book form (Beijing: rDo rje rGyal po and Thub bstan Nyi ma, 1985) and Kyabjé Bokar Rinpoché's personal copy of the Palpung woodblock print (dPal spungs Thub bstan Chos 'khor gling).

Tibetan and Sanskrit names appear in phoneticized forms in the translated text. Tibetan words—personal names, terms, text titles, and so on—transliterated in accordance with the Turrell Wylie system and Sanskrit words transliterated with diacritical marks are to be found in parentheses in the endnotes and in the Bibliography of Works Cited by Author and Reference Bibliography.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The translation of the *Treasury of Knowledge* was Kyabjé Kalu Rinpoché's most ambitious literary project. It was his intention that an English rendering of the *Treasury* would lay the foundation for its translation into many languages. During the winters of 1988 and 1989 Rinpoche summoned his students from several countries to gather at Bodhgaya, the site of the Buddha's awakening, to initiate this project. He encouraged us to continue the work full time at his main seat, Samdrup Dargyé Chöling, in Sonada, West Bengal.

Following Kalu Rinpoché's death in 1989, responsibility for the project fell to Kyabjé Bokar Rinpoché, crown ornament of the Kagyu lineage, who revitalized it by inviting individuals to choose particular sections of the *Treasury* and see them through to publication.

Work on the present volume, *Systems of Buddhist Tantra*, began nearly a decade later. Much of the research and translation was done at Kalu Rinpoché's monastery where we had access to the library's complete editions of the *Kangyur* and *Tengyur*. We travelled regularly to nearby Bokar Ngedhon Choekhor Ling in Mirik to study the entire text with the elucidation of Kyabjé Bokar Rinpoché and Khenpo Lodrö Dönyö. Despite their numerous commitments, these teachers gave generously of their time, tirelessly sharing their knowledge as well as the written commentaries from their personal libraries. Moreover, in the fall of 1998 in the auspicious place of Tso Pema (Mandi), Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoché, one of the greatest living masters of the great perfection teachings, gave one of the translators a word-by-word explanation of the Nyingma tantra section of the text. We also received clarification on several obscure points from Dodrupchen Rinpoché in Gangtok, Sikkim and from Denma Lochö Rinpoché in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh.

The completion of this complex work would not have been possible without the help of these great masters and scholars.

We would like to express our appreciation to others who contributed to this book: Adriano Clemente and Jim Valby, who offered valuable suggestions on a number of passages in the Nyingma section; Lama Karma Thinley, Ken McLeod, and Paul Fanning, who have benefited the project each in a very different and substantial way; and our editor Susan Kyser, to whom we wish to give special acknowledgment for her painstaking work on the final manuscript. Our thanks also to Sidney Piburn of Snow Lion Publications and to Eric Colombel of Tsadra Foundation for their unwavering interest in the publication of the entire *Treasury* series.

May this work, in some small way, repay the kindness of our spiritual guide Kyabjé Kalu Rinpoché who gave us the opportunity to study this exceptional treatise, and whose commitment to its dissemination has inspired and supported our labors.



THE ROOT TEXT  
SYSTEMS OF BUDDHIST TANTRA  
*THE INDESTRUCTIBLE WAY  
OF SECRET MANTRA*

[Here is presented] the resultant indestructible way of secret mantra:  
The awareness-holder collection can be included in the three  
collections since it reveals their content equally.

Alternatively, some accept the proclaimers' position on the three  
collections

While for others, that is not necessarily the case; since there are seven  
or other numbers of collections,

The mantra collection of teachings is asserted to be a separate  
collection.

The meaning of this way is epitomized in these three:

The nature of tantra, forms of meditation, and the methods of  
exposition of tantric scriptures.

*Tantra* denotes mantra and its procedures, as well as the means for  
teaching it.

It has various names such as the mantra collection of teachings and  
the way of mantra.

Tantras of worldly beings are not included here.

Its nature is to teach principally the path of awareness mantras and  
its result.

The two categories of mantra are the mundane and supramundane.

They differ in that the first is nominal; the latter, authentic. The  
mundane mantra comprises what was created by ordinary  
beings;

That which leads to definite assurance, the highest states in the three  
realms;

And the support for the mind, the paths of accumulation and  
 preparation, along with their collection of teachings.  
 Tantra is distinct from sutra, not in its ultimate aim which is identical,  
 But in its clarity, abundance of methods, and lack of hardships.  
 It is intended for one of sharp faculties. According to the master  
 Jnanashri,  
 Tantra is distinguished by its eleven forms of skillful methods.  
 Indrabhuti notes its seven special features; and Jnanapada, its  
 practitioner, path, and result.  
 Shantipa states that mantra and perfections do not differ in ultimate  
 truth,  
 But mantra has greater depth and vastness in relative truth.  
 Most believe that the distinction lies with the subject, not object.  
 Its distinctiveness is encapsulated in three features: the practitioner  
 with three qualifications,  
 A path with three distinctions in method, and the resultant state of  
 union.  
 Of four categories, sutra, tantra, both, and neither,  
 The mantra collection, which uses the result in the path, is  
 distinguished.  
 Mantra is superior by virtue of its swiftness, which is due to five  
 reasons; four sources of bliss;  
 And its skillful methods in the three trainings and all spheres of  
 experience.  
 Its essence is the union of emptiness and compassion.  
 The meaning of *mantra* is to protect the mind from conceptual  
 objectification.  
 The three forms of practice are the best, the lesser, and the secondary;  
 In essence, great bliss, pride of being the deity, and mantra with its  
 applications.  
 Alternatively, the seven forms are the complete, partial, special,  
 Initial bliss, almost complete, some measure, and slight great bliss.  
 Mantra refers to secret mantra and blissful pristine awareness.  
 Its applications as activations and powers are considered tantra.  
 Both the way itself and the means to express it are known as tantra.  
 Tantra is divided in many ways: into two sets, outer and inner;  
 Into three, action, conduct, and yoga; into four, five, six, and more.  
 The division into four sets is widely accepted because tantras were  
 taught

In consideration of four kinds of recipients of the teachings,  
 As well as the persons to be converted, different castes, faculties,  
 Objects of purification, purificatory means, states, times, and other  
 factors.

Action tantra emphasizes outer conduct.

It has six families. Its entrances, the water and diadem, establish the  
 potentials

For the two dimensions, after which the pledges are observed.

For specific purposes, initiation is conferred in four parts; the  
 mandala is a colored powders one.

The process of approaching incorporates ten auxiliary elements. The  
 main elements

Are the essential principles: that of oneself comprises six qualities;

That of the deity, deity as form, as letter, and as nature;

That of recitation, immersion in sound, mind, and base;

And that of meditative absorption, dwelling in fire, in sound, and at  
 the limit of sound.

Familiarization with the deity is perfected in a lord-subject manner.

The powers effected are articles, body, and wealth, equal in fortune to  
 that of desire realm gods.

Powers are used for provisional or ultimate goals.

Three types of powers are effected in the appropriate manner.

Attainment requires up to eight aeons for one of sharp faculties; or  
 other times.

The state attained is that of whichever of the three families one has  
 perfected.

Conduct tantra comprises equal proportions of deeds and  
 contemplation.

It has three families. The outer entering is to receive five initiations, the  
 water and the others.

One assumes vows such as the vow unobscured throughout the three  
 times.

The inner entering with signs involves the six deities.

For recitation and meditation on the two aspects of letter and base,  
 the deity is like a sibling or friend.

Practice without signs is cultivated in conjunction with the minds of  
 entering, abiding, and emerging.

The practice of approaching is to become skilled in practice with and  
 without signs.

The practice to effect powers uses outer and inner mandalas for  
ordinary and special powers  
Through which one becomes an awareness-holder of the desire or  
form realm. Progress on the mundane path  
And the supramundane depend on one's faculties.  
Even hindered, full awakening is attained in three great aeons.  
Yoga tantra emphasizes contemplation on the profound and the vast.  
It has five families. The five initiations of the student  
And the six of the master are taken gradually. An individual  
Who is free of shortcomings and possessed of four qualifications and  
the vows,  
Through the result and its fundamental cause, trains in the means of  
actualization:  
The deity yogas incorporating the four seals which serve to purify  
The ground-of-all, afflicted, mental, and sense consciousnesses.  
One of sharp faculties trains in the initial union and the two  
supremely triumphant contemplations;  
One of low faculties, by means of contemplation of the four yogas,  
Trains in attention on the coarse deity and the subtle insignia  
While applying the ten essential principles.  
Perfect penetrating wisdom is the view of the unborn.  
Powers and the pristine awareness of the seals are effected  
Through meditative absorption, recitation, and fire-offering rituals.  
One of sharp faculties swiftly crosses the stages and paths in one  
lifetime;  
And one of low faculties, in sixteen or less. The culmination of the  
five awakenings  
Is perfect enlightenment, in essence the five pristine awarenesses.  
The highest tantra is the supreme yoga of method and wisdom.  
The meaning of the tantra is contained in the three continuums.  
The causal continuum is to be understood by eliminating  
misconceptions through study and reflection.  
The continuum of method is to be relied upon through experience in  
meditation.  
The resultant continuum is to be realized through three accumulations.  
The causal continuum is to be understood by its essence;  
Principal nature of luminous clarity; four characteristics;  
Synonyms (continuum, ground, ground-of-all, and original buddha);  
Attributes of interrelated flaws and qualities, or causes and results;

Five temporal states; and immutability. The exceptional system  
 Speaks of two authentic conditions, that of body and that of mind.  
 The luminous clarity nature of mind is the naturally present  
 affinity

With three features. The evolving affinity is perfectly acquired.  
 As illustrated by nine examples, the essence is concealed by  
 adventitious stains.

Its essence is unchanged throughout the three states  
 Of the impure, both pure and impure, and utterly pure.  
 It exists from time without beginning as the source of all phenomena,  
 But is difficult to fathom, entwined by four paradoxes.  
 It is the ultimate dimension of phenomena, indivisible profundity  
 and clarity,

Abiding in the body as the pristine awareness dimension of the  
 nature of great bliss.

Sutras and tantras expound the ground continuum using many  
 synonyms:

Essence of enlightenment, transcendent wisdom, emptiness,  
 Original lord, innate pristine awareness, and other terms.  
 Coemergent ignorance creates the deception of the eightfold group,  
 from which arises

The dualism of apprehended and apprehender and the various  
 manifestations of cyclic existence and perfect peace.

The four empties and four elemental properties together form the  
 root of cyclic life.

An alternative explanation is that cyclic life arises from mundane  
 innate bliss; the indestructible vital essence

Is the root of the thirty-six psychophysical constituents.

The process of taking of birth in the three realms is gradually  
 initiated. Of possible births,

The best recipient for mantra is the manifest dimension attended by  
 stains,

In one of the three continents, having a vajra body endowed with six  
 elements.

There are the three channels, twenty-four major channels, six  
 channel-wheels,

And seventy-two thousand subtle channels, within which [winds  
 flow].

The life, root, and branch winds, and winds of the time conjunctions,

In the orders of generation and dissolution, always shift and move  
 [throughout the channels].  
 “Spring” and “vital essence,” the twelve refined and twenty-four  
 residual vital essences,  
 In the types of the dissolved, engaged, and dominant, flow [throughout  
 the channels].  
 The four states—deep sleep, dream, ordinary,  
 And sexual union—constitute the fundamental cause.  
 The refined elements, which transcend the nature of particles,  
 Manifest from relative bodhichitta, in essence pristine awareness,  
 The support for immutable bliss, the innate body.  
 The symbol for the causal continuum is *evam*, whose shape comprises  
 The union of the five letters of the great emptinesses and six letters of  
 the empty essences.  
 What is symbolized: “semen” and “ovum,” moon and sun, the aspects  
 of method and wisdom,  
*Vajra* and *sattva*, the source of all tantras.  
 The causal continuum manifests as the powerful ten-letter mantra  
 and Kalachakra.  
 The method continuum comprises four elements: conferral of  
 initiation,  
 Pledges and vows, contemplation, and application of tantra.  
 A person who enters the path possessed of faith, diligence, and good  
 fortune,  
 With confidence in tantra and a genuine teacher,  
 First learns the meaning of tantra and then engages in the two phases.  
 Initiation serves as the basis. The mandala precedes the initiation.  
 Mandalas are said to be of eight types or as few as two.  
 Emanated and pristine awareness mandalas are the spheres of  
 experience of realized persons.  
 Some of sharp faculties may enter the body mandala and heaps of  
 flowers mandala.  
 The mandalas appropriate for initial entry are mandalas of colored  
 powders, painted on cloth,  
 And tridimensional, each of which comprises three mandalas: that of  
 the pledge deity,  
 The invoked pristine awareness deity, and the myriad manifestations of  
 the buddha,  
 Which are the bases of the initiation. The tantras are divided

According to emphasis on method or wisdom: father tantras comprise  
 three families;  
 Mother tantras, six, of which the ultimate is the Kalachakra.  
 Each of the individual tantras has its rituals for the site and the  
 preparation,  
 The actualization, veneration, and master's self-entry, followed by  
 outer and inner entry.  
 The functions of the vase consist in the awareness initiations, the  
 deliberate behavior, and so forth,  
 The student's initiations, and the irreversible wheel initiations.  
 Kalachakra sets forth seven initiations in the pattern of childhood.  
 In the body mandala, relative mandala, and ultimate mandala,  
 The secret, wisdom, and fourth initiations are received.  
 The high and supremely high ones are given at appropriate times.  
 All are included in the entrance, main part, and permission;  
 Lesser and supreme; mundane and supramundane, and so forth.  
 Initiations purify the obscurations of body, speech, and mind, and  
 the three equally,  
 Establish potencies for the four indestructible states, ripen one as a fit  
 trainee  
 Of the generation phase, self-blessing, and example and actual  
 pristine awareness,  
 And bring about the attainment of the rank of a vajra master.  
 The initiations on the pattern of childhood correspond to the thirty-  
 seven means of purification and spheres of purification.  
 The prohibitions concern root downfalls and secondary infractions;  
 Injunctions concern contemplation, conduct, sustenance, and articles  
 not to be apart from;  
 Pledges include those for beginners, adepts of stable realization and  
 highly stable realization,  
 Or the pledges of indestructible awakened body, speech, and mind,  
 and so forth.  
 Contemplation comprises the two phases.  
 The phase of generation comprises essence, branches, divisions,  
 Stages, and actual and nominal aspects; its six topics of analysis,  
 Grounds of purification, final result, ripening effect,  
 Purpose, essence, and perfection apply to all its branches.  
 The phase of completion comprises three parts: essence, types, and  
 natures;

**And is understood through eleven topics of analysis:**

**What it is, where to strike crucial points, how to strike them,  
Experience and signs, qualities, reasons, relinquishment, measure,  
delineation of stages,**

**Overcoming obstructions and enhancing realization, and the  
distinction between the principal and auxiliary.**

**The completion phase comprises the causal and resultant phases.**

**The causal phase comprises self-blessing, mandala circle,**

**And the great seal. As methods of eliciting bliss and emptiness,**

**Generally, four seals are taught. There are three sides to the resultant  
phase.**

**The emptiness side comprises the ultimate three lights of reality  
And the relative three of interdependence, with conceptions and  
without.**

**The three lights are delineated in fifteen sets and referred to by many  
synonyms.**

**The thirty-three conceptions, the nature of which is light,**

**Forty, the increase of light, and seven, the culmination of light, serve  
as the source**

**Of deception and freedom. Pristine awareness is brought forth by  
method.**

**The essence of the appearance side is the form of a completion phase  
deity**

**Of three types. From the four lights and the four elemental properties**

**The subtle and gross constituents are created. The innate body serves  
as the ground for attainment.**

**The agent of attainment is the final example luminous clarity.**

**Actual awakening is the cause; the state of union, the result.**

**Application of tantra comprises the twelve great activations**

**And the common and supreme powers, achieved by means of  
meditation,**

**Fire offering, diagrams, and compounds. The practice to achieve the  
four ordinary powers**

**Includes direction, time, deity, necessary articles, disposition,**

**Place, meditation object, food, ritual, and mantra;**

**Uncommon substances and pledge articles are superior means to  
attain powers.**

**The complementary conduct is to engage in the elaborate, unelaborate,**

And extremely unelaborate conduct; or the conduct of forsaking  
 duality,  
 Ever-perfect, and victorious in all quarters, and so forth.  
 It is differentiated according to faculties, stages, and so on; of the  
 many types,  
 All are considered part of the three categories of time, procedure, and  
 essence.  
 The branch of tantric application of wrathful practices is of two  
 types.  
 The perfection of those contemplations leads to the resultant  
 continuum.  
 In summation, one gains certainty through the view based on wisdom  
 And traverses the path through the stages of cultivating the supreme  
 methods.  
 Realization is enhanced by using experiences in the path and engaging  
 in three conducts.  
 Within this lifetime, the state of union is thereby attained.  
 Tantric scriptures are classified on the basis of their content;  
 Both action and conduct tantras are categorized according to  
 presentation  
 As sutras, tantras, skills, detailed rituals, and retention mantras;  
 Yoga tantras are categorized as root, explanatory, subsidiary, and  
 concordant tantras;  
 Highest yoga, as root tantras, extensive and concise,  
 Two subsidiary, five explanatory, and two concordant tantras.  
 The five tantric topics concern procedures, powers,  
 Pledges, contemplations, and tantric applications.  
 An alternative system sets forth eleven points: ritual of the site,  
 method of actualization, worship, fire-offering rituals,  
 Initiation, consecration, prescribed ritual implements, and mandalas,  
 Ritual feast gatherings, familiarization, and sets of activations.  
 One must know details such as ritual implements of insignia (vajra  
 and bell) and ornaments;  
 Drawing and construction of mandalas; place and time for ritual feast  
 gatherings;  
 As well as the roles of the participants; familiarization for the welfare  
 of oneself and others;  
 And activations related to body and contemplation.

The teaching method in action tantra comprises four practices, the entrance, and so on;

In conduct tantra, three exposition approaches and two excellences;

In yoga tantra, four compendiums of analyses, all of which include purpose,

Concise meaning, literal meaning, context, and resolution of contradictions.

Points of introduction are given based on the distinction between Buddha and his followers.

Highest tantras are to be expounded by means of seven ornaments:

Five points of introduction, four correct methods,

Six parameters, four modes, group and individual teachings,

Five persons, and two truths. The special exposition methods for

*Chakrasamvara*

Are six key instructions and three unions;

For *Hevajra*, those of the three purities;

For *Mahamaya*, the shape, mantra, and reality;

For *Chatuhpita*, the four seats; *Samputa*, seven secrets;

For others, the four dwellings and four essential principles;

For *Kalachakra*, the outer, inner, and alternative levels,

All of those based on the four reliances.

In the esoteric instructions system, tantras are taught in terms of the three continuums.

A protective circle, food offering, offering to the teacher, and meditation modelled on early events are performed.

The eleven faults of the three doors are eliminated by students.

Those who expound and listen to the tantras undistractedly and endowed with the ornament of speech

Will be especially watched over by all awareness-holders, it is taught.

[Next is presented] the extraordinary ancient translation tradition of the indestructible way:

This system is said to comprise four collections from the perspective of overcoming emotional afflictions

And nine ways to realization according to different faculties.

All are epitomized in the three ways: the ground (the meaning to be explained);

The path (which presents the explanation); and the result (that which transcends explanation).

The ground comprises essence, nature, and energy;

The supreme path, the proclaimer's way up to anu;  
 The result, supreme pristine awareness, ati.  
 The ways of proclaimers, solitary sages, and bodhisattvas constitute the  
     way of liberation from the source of suffering;  
 And kriya, ubhaya, and yoga, the way resembling Vedic austerity.  
     These are essentially identical  
 To the ways described in the common explanation, from which  
     knowledge of these should be gained.  
 The tantra, elucidation, and esoteric instructions systems constitute the  
     way of the dominating method.  
 These are known as the three sets of generation, completion, and  
     great perfection.  
 The essence of mahayoga is the conjoining of understanding and  
     experience  
 Of the indivisibility of the superior truths by relying principally on  
     method.  
 Mahayoga means the great training.  
 The entrance initiations of benefit, ability, and profundity effect  
     ripening.  
 One enters by way of three contemplations: great emptiness,  
 Illusory compassion, and coarse and subtle symbols.  
 The view of the indivisibility of the two truths beyond the sphere of  
     experience  
 Is conclusively established through the axioms of the four  
     understandings,  
 Three purities, four samenesses, and the total state of being.  
 For meditation in the sadhana tradition, eight systems of knowledge  
 Are taught: the four channel-wheels; three neighs of the horse;  
 Eight syllables of *ru lu*; Pure Nectar; four piercings;  
 Channels and winds; and observance of worship and propitiation.  
 The path of method in the tantra tradition involves the upper and  
     lower doors  
 Applied with the four branches of familiarization and attainment.  
 The path of liberation is endowed with three kinds of wisdom. Some  
     achieve the result in a simultaneous way.  
 Those who proceed sequentially rely on the cause, the view of  
     wisdom,  
 And the condition, contemplation with application, which comprises  
     devotion meditation and definitive perfection.

Conduct in the path of method is deliberate behavior; and in the path of liberation, conscientiousness.  
These bring one to the result: the four kinds of awareness-holders.  
The essence of anyoyoga is the conjoining of understanding and experience of the nonduality  
Of the ultimate dimension and pristine awareness, principally based on wisdom.  
As desire is of primary importance, it is called anyoyoga.  
Its thirty-six initiations are condensed into four: outer, inner, attainment, and secret.  
Entrance is through the union of the ultimate dimension and pristine awareness, in which there is perfection without generation.  
The view is that of primordial enlightenment in original pure and perfect mind  
Which is the indivisibility of the three kinds of mandala.  
Meditation comprises the upper and lower techniques in the path of method, and establishing the meaning and expression in signs  
In the path of liberation, thus forming the utterly perfect path.  
Those are connected to the three yogas: the cause (the object of the action);  
The condition (the action); and the result (transcendence of action).  
The conduct is that of the empowering energy, the dominating conduct, and conduct of method.  
The result is great bliss, spontaneously perfect, the twenty-five aspects.  
The essence of atiyoga is direct liberation in the state of primordial enlightenment  
Without renunciation or acceptance, hope or fear.  
It is the supreme training, the summit of all ways.  
The initiations are elaborate, unelaborate, very unelaborate, and utterly unelaborate.  
One enters by way of no action or effort whatsoever.  
The view asserts that everything is the total sphere of the dimension of reality,  
Naturally present pristine awareness, effortless primordial enlightenment.  
The respective views of the divisions of mind, vast space, and esoteric instructions assert  
Freedom from the limit of something to renounce, as no phenomenon is other than mind;

Freedom from the limit of remedies, as phenomena are totally perfected in the vast space of the true nature;  
 Transcendence of renunciations and remedies, as all are of the real condition already established.

The division on mind has seven distinctions. The vast space division has four aspects.

The esoteric instructions comprise the scattered teachings, oral tradition, and textual tradition of tantras.

The last has cycles of outer, inner, secret, and most secret  
 As distinctions in the oral transmission and explanatory tantras.

Meditation in the mind division is to remain in total presence and emptiness, the dimension of reality;  
 In the vast space division, to remain in the state of the true nature without action or effort;  
 In the esoteric instructions division, to remain in primordial freedom without renunciation and acceptance.

Conduct is spontaneous; the place of primordial freedom is thereby reached.

The pledges should be learned in the context of the mantric vows.  
 Each of the three yogas may be subdivided  
 Into three subparts each, for a total of nine.

The scriptures include the eighteen tantras, the five scriptural elucidations,  
 The eighteen mother and son tantras of the *Majestic Creative Energy*,  
 and the seventeen tantras of secret pristine awareness;

In the sadhana division, there are the five supramundane  
 And the three mundane, which include general and special tantras.  
 As exposition methods, mahayoga's seven ornaments are the same as  
 in the new tradition.

As special methods, two styles of exposition, that of atiyoga and that of mahayoga,  
 Are used to teach the *Net of Magical Manifestation of Vajrasattva*,  
*The Secret Essence, King of Tantras That Ascertain Reality*.

The mahayoga style comprises the three exposition methods of the elders;  
 The Zurpa tradition of the transmitted teachings presents five topics.

At the present time, the title is taught to the most adept; an analysis,  
 to the average;

**And the meaning of the words, to the least adept; this is Vimalamitra's way.**

**The ten topics of the tantra—view, conduct, mandala, initiation, Pledges, activations, sadhanas, contemplation, offerings, mantras and mudras—**

**Serve as instrumental conditions for the path.**

**Sadhanas are understood through twenty methods: the five summaries, Five tantric guidelines, five combined elucidations, and five unification systems.**

**Anuyoga is understood through seven elucidations: view, generation phase,**

**Mantra to be recited, union, release, offering, and propitiation.**

**Atiyoga is taught using the six general meanings: five teachings**

**On the path, with examples; and the result, which is beyond examples.**

# 1. THE NATURE OF TANTRA

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- I. The New Tradition of Secret Mantra
  - A. The Indestructible Way: Its Placement in the Buddhist Teachings
  - B. The Main Discussion: The [New] Tradition of Secret Mantra
    - 1. A General Statement
    - 2. The Detailed Discussion
      - a. The Nature of Tantra
        - i. The Bases for Tantra's Distinctiveness
          - aa. The Essence
          - bb. Synonyms for Tantra
          - cc. Its Nature
          - dd. Divisions
        - ii. Distinctions between Sutra and Mantra
          - aa. The Viewpoints of Indian Masters and an Encapsulation of Those Viewpoints
          - bb. Four Categories based on Sutra and Tantra Content
          - cc. The Main Distinction according to Tibetan Masters
        - iii. The Exceptional Nature of the Mantra System
          - aa. Identification of the Essence of Mantra
          - bb. The Meaning of the Term *Mantra*
          - cc. A General Presentation of Divisions within Mantra and Tantra
            - 1' The Forms of Practice of Mantra
              - a' The Main Discussion
              - b' Ancillary: The Distinction between Mantra and Tantra

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**[Here is presented] the resultant indestructible way of secret mantra:**

The above words introduce the system of the indestructible way (*vajrayana*) of secret mantra, the exposition of which comprises two parts: the new tradition of secret mantra; and the ancient tradition of secret mantra.<sup>1</sup> The first has two parts: the placement of the indestructible way within the collections of Buddhist teachings; and the main presentation of [this] tradition of mantra.

**THE INDESTRUCTIBLE WAY:  
ITS PLACEMENT IN THE BUDDHIST TEACHINGS [A]**

**The awareness-holder collection can be included in the three collections since it reveals their content equally.**

**Alternatively, some accept the proclaimers' position on the three collections**

**While for others, that is not necessarily the case; since there are seven or other numbers of collections,**

**The mantra collection of teachings is asserted to be a separate collection.**

[Some systems] place this indestructible way within the three collections of Buddhist teachings [of the *vinaya* (discipline), *sutra* (discourses), and *abhidharma* (phenomenology)].<sup>2</sup> [In other systems,] the indestructible way is not included within these but is classified separately. Of the different ways that do include it within the three collections, some place it solely in the *sutra* collection;<sup>3</sup> others, in all [three].

The omniscient Rangjung Dorjé<sup>4</sup> [as stated in his *Profound Inner Reality*] considers the collection of teachings of the awareness-holders<sup>5</sup> [to belong to] the three collections equally because it reveals in equal proportions the inner forms of discipline, discourses, and phenomenology.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the master Shraddhakaravarman [in his *Short Guide to the Meaning of Highest Yoga Tantra*] states:<sup>7</sup>

An alternative position holds that the collection of teachings of the way of secret mantra is included in equal proportions within the three collections of Buddhist teachings. The rationale for this assertion is as follows: the nine branches of the

Buddha's words<sup>8</sup> constitute the collection of teachings of the universal way (*mahayana*); the collection of teachings of the secret mantra way is itself included within these nine branches and teaches the three trainings [of ethics, contemplation, and wisdom]. Hence, it is considered [to belong to] the three collections.

In addition, Abhayakara's view accords with this explanation for the teachings of the indestructible way being included equally in the three collections of teachings.

Another perspective is found in the *Dialogue with Subahu Tantra*.<sup>9</sup>

In order to benefit gods, demi-gods, and humans,  
 Various types of secret and awareness mantras,  
 Thirty million in number, plus five hundred thousand,  
 Were declared by the Buddha to be the awareness-holder  
 collection of teachings.

On this point, Shraddhakaravarman states:<sup>10</sup>

It is asserted that the collection of teachings of the secret mantra way does not belong to those of the three ways [of the proclaimers, solitary sages, and bodhisattvas]. Instead, it is known as the awareness-holder collection of teachings and is another bodhisattva collection. As is said,

Uphold in its entirety the sacred doctrine of the three ways  
 [to realization]:  
 The outer way, the inner way, and the secret way.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, the master Buddhaguhya [in his *Extensive Commentary on the Vajravidarana Tantra*] states:<sup>12</sup>

The doctrine taught by the supreme Buddha  
 Forms four collections: discourses, discipline,  
 Phenomenology, and the awareness-holder teachings.

Thus, secret mantra is considered to be a fourth collection, that of the awareness-holder. This is due to secret mantra's marked superiority over the teach-

ings of the outer way of characteristics<sup>13</sup> in that it is a scriptural tradition that reveals vast and profound means of swiftly gaining the resultant state of awareness-holder<sup>14</sup> during this life or a future one.

Some scholars contend that all twelve branches of the Buddha's words<sup>15</sup> must be included within the three collections. This represents the perspective of the common way [i.e., the individual way]. However, in [the context of] the universal way, that is not necessarily so, as stated in Chandrakirti's *Seventy Verses on the [Triple] Refuge*:<sup>16</sup>

According to the viewpoint of the proclaimers  
There are three collections of teachings.  
In the context of the bodhisattvas' [doctrine],  
This is not necessarily the case.

and:<sup>17</sup>

From the perspective of the bodhisattvas  
There are seven collections of teachings:  
The bodhisattvas' collection of teachings,  
The collection of the awareness-holders,<sup>18</sup>  
The discourses, phenomenology, discipline,  
Extensive teachings, and stories of the Buddha's previous lives.  
These seven collections of teachings...

Thus, the mantra collection of teachings is asserted to be a separate collection.

### THE MAIN DISCUSSION:

#### THE [NEW] TRADITION OF SECRET MANTRA [B]

This discussion consists of two parts: a general statement; and the detailed discussion.

#### A GENERAL STATEMENT [1]

**The meaning of this way is epitomized in these three:  
The nature of tantra, forms of meditation, and the methods of  
exposition of tantric scriptures.**

The indestructible way is of vast and profound meaning and is therefore limitless in scope. Nonetheless, this way is epitomized in three aspects: the

nature of tantra; forms of meditation on its meaning; and methods of exposition of the tantric scriptures that express [the meaning].

## THE DETAILED DISCUSSION [2]

This section has two parts: the nature of tantra; and instructions concerning exposition methods.

## THE NATURE OF TANTRA [a]

This is presented in three parts: the points that form the bases for the distinctiveness of tantra in the mantra way; an analysis of the distinctions between sutra and mantra; and ascertaining the exceptional nature of the mantra system.

## THE BASES FOR TANTRA'S DISTINCTIVENESS [i]

This has four parts: the essence of tantra; synonyms for tantra; its nature; and divisions.

## THE ESSENCE [aa]

***Tantra* denotes mantra and its procedures, as well as the means for teaching it.**

The term *tantra* denotes the content, or the nature of the mantra [way] itself, and the procedures that constitute the methods to accomplish that [way]. In addition, *tantra* denotes that which expresses it, that is, the collection of the words of the Buddha that expounds the meaning of the mantra [way], referred to by the name “tantra collection of teachings of the indestructible way.”

## SYNONYMS FOR TANTRA [bb]

**It has various names such as the mantra collection of teachings and the way of mantra.  
Tantras of worldly beings are not included here.**

Tantra has many different names. It is called the “mantra collection of teachings” and the “way of mantra” since it yields powers through the use of

mantras and mudras; and the “awareness-holder collection of teachings” since the deity, mantra, and pristine awareness of great bliss are all [of the nature of] awareness, and it is by these profound means that awareness is “grasped.”

According to an alternative perspective, tantra is the “way of the awareness-holder” because its collection of mantric practices leads to the attainment of the resultant state of awareness-holder within this same life; and the “indestructible way” since the three indestructible states [of awakened body, speech, and mind] are actualized through the indestructible path of the indivisibility of method and wisdom.

Tantra uses the causes for the attainment of full enlightenment, such as the thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening,<sup>19</sup> as means of cultivating the path. Hence, it is designated as “causal way” in terms of [the way of] characteristics. Moreover, tantra uses on the path, right from the present time, the forms of the result [awakening], such as the celestial palace, deities, and their sense enjoyments. Hence, it is designated as “resultant way” in terms of the mantra [way].

Another perspective is this: In tantra, the emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects<sup>20</sup> serves as the cause [of immutable bliss]. This emptiness is the principal teaching of the way of the perfections. Hence, tantra is designated as “causal way” in terms of that way. Moreover, immutable great bliss abides in the nature of the result [produced by the emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects]. This immutable bliss is the principal teaching of the mantra way. Hence, tantra is designated as “resultant way” in terms of the mantra way.

Other synonyms include the “way of method” because it has greater and more numerous techniques than the way of the perfections; “secret way” since it must be hidden from proclaimers and others who are not suitable recipients; and “continuum” because it is unceasingly present throughout the ground, path, and result.

Mantras and tantras [created] by worldly beings are ordinary mantra and tantra and therefore not included here within the indestructible way, or within its collection of teachings.

### ITS NATURE [cc]

**Its nature is to teach principally the path of awareness mantras and its result.**

The nature of the way of mantra is to teach principally the path of application of awareness mantras<sup>21</sup> and the ensuing result. Therefore, if one cultivates the path through mantra, one must certainly do so relying on mantra and tantra application.<sup>22</sup>

## DIVISIONS [dd]

**The two categories of mantra are the mundane and supramundane.**

**They differ in that the first is nominal; the latter, authentic.**

**The mundane mantra comprises what was created by ordinary beings;**

**That which leads to definite assurance, the highest states in the three realms;**

**And the support for the mind, the paths of accumulation and preparation, along with their collection of teachings.**

Tantra in the mantra way may be divided into two general categories: the mundane way and the supramundane way. These differ in that the former is a nominal mantra way because its culmination is not a stable one; it does not represent definite assurance; and its time and place are ephemeral. The latter, the supramundane mantra, is the authentic way because it is endowed with characteristics opposite to those of the mundane way.

Tantra of the mundane way category is of three types: the mundane mantra per se; the mantra that leads to definite assurance; and the mantra that is the support for the mind.

The first, the mundane mantra way per se, was created by Maheshvara, anchorites, gods, elemental spirits, secretive *yakshas*,<sup>23</sup> mantric adepts, and other ordinary beings. This is the actual mundane way. The second is the mundane mantra way that leads to definite assurance—that of the states of awareness-holders of the desire and form realms,<sup>24</sup> and the formless states which are highest within the three realms—reached through application of mantras. [This way] is derived from the awareness-holder collection of teachings. The third is the mundane way as the support for the mind [of higher paths]<sup>25</sup> consisting in the tantric path of accumulation and path of preparation.<sup>26</sup>

The latter two types belong also to the supramundane category, and all of the tantras that transmit these teachings belong to the collection of teach-

ings of the supramundane category. Even tantras created by exalted beings through their own inspiration do indeed belong to the supramundane category. Those tantras are not, however, designated [part of] the collection of teachings of the supramundane category.

### **DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN SUTRA AND MANTRA [ii]**

There are three parts to this detailed analysis of the distinctions between sutra and tantra: the viewpoints of Indian masters and an encapsulation of those viewpoints; division into four categories based on sutra and tantra content; and the main distinction according to Tibetan scholars.

#### **THE VIEWPOINTS OF INDIAN MASTERS AND AN ENCAPSULATION OF THOSE VIEWPOINTS [aa]**

**Tantra is distinct from sutra, not in its ultimate aim, which is identical,  
But in its clarity, abundance of methods, and lack of hardships.  
It is intended for one of sharp faculties. ...**

What distinguishes the mantra way from the way of sutra? Their ultimate result or goal—dynamic perfect peace<sup>27</sup>—is identical. However, the mantra way is distinctive due to the clarity of its methods, the abundance of these methods, and the freedom from hardships in the practice of them.

To explain, the way of mantra is one of clarity in its methods, such as meditation on the deity and mantra recitation, which have been preceded by the conferral of initiation as entrance to the [tantric] path.

Mantra offers not only clear methods, but also an abundance of them, not simply one method. This is due to there being an infinity of approaches within the different sets of tantra— action, conduct, and so forth—appropriate to the level of the practitioner's faculties.

The sutra way as well could be considered to have numerous methods, but it is a path that necessitates undergoing hardships such as asceticism and [the observance of] vows and is therefore a difficult one. In contrast, the methods of the mantra way, when applied according to one's own inclinations, lead to the attainment of bliss by means of bliss. Thus, [mantra] is superior in that it is a path travelled with little difficulty, free of hardship.

If tantric methods are so clear, abundant, and free from hardship, why did the Buddha not reveal [the way of mantra] to all his followers? [The

answer is that] the Buddha did not teach [simply] because he possessed the knowledge, but imparted teachings suited to [the disciples'] faculties.

Students who would be qualified to receive instructions on the mantra way are the sharpest of the sharp, while someone suited to being taught the way of the perfections is of low faculties compared to a practitioner of mantra, and thus not worthy of being a student of the mantra way. In the course of time, however, everyone without exception will qualify to be a practitioner of mantra, according to the logic expressed in the words of [Dharmakīrti's] *Treatise on Valid Cognition*, which states:<sup>28</sup>

Since [the inference] is indirectly related  
To the object....<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, Tripitakamala's *Lamp of the Three Modes* states:<sup>30</sup>

Though the aim is identical, the way of mantra  
Is superior by virtue of being clear,  
Abundant in methods, devoid of hardships,  
And intended for persons of sharp faculties.<sup>31</sup>

**... According to the master Jnanashri,  
Tantra is distinguished by its eleven forms of skillful methods.  
Indrabhūti notes its seven special features; and Jnanapada, its  
practitioner, path, and result.  
Shantipa states that mantra and perfections do not differ in  
ultimate truth,  
But mantra has greater depth and vastness in relative truth.  
Most believe that the distinction lies with the subject, not  
object.**

Other distinctions between mantra and sutra are specified by the master Jnanashri [in his *Dispelling the Two Extremes in the Indestructible Way*]:<sup>32</sup>

Tantra is superior by virtue of its eleven forms of skillful methods: the methods that rely on unsurpassable scriptures; unsurpassable practice; unsurpassable pristine awareness; and unsurpassable diligence; the power to uplift all of one's followers; the methods to bless [transform] emotional afflictions; to swiftly impart blessing; to swiftly attain liberation; to overcome emotional afflictions;

the methods of unsurpassable disposition; and unsurpassable conduct.<sup>33</sup>

Indrabhuti maintains that mantra's distinctiveness lies in seven special features: the teacher, the recipient [of the teachings], rituals, activations, pledges, views, and conduct.<sup>34</sup> The master Buddhajnanapada states:<sup>35</sup>

The way of mantra is extraordinary in three aspects: practitioner, path, and result.

Furthermore, the master Shantipa [in his *Presentation of the Three Ways*] states that the way of mantra and that of the perfections do not differ in terms of ultimate truth. The two ways differ, however, in that the relative truth has comparatively greater depth and vastness in the mantra way. He explains:<sup>36</sup>

Its focus is vast in that whatever appears is meditated upon as divine. Its support is vast because exceptional blessing occurs when one conscientiously upholds the pledges prescribed by the buddhas of the three times. Its conduct is vast, being modelled on the altruistic activities of buddhas and bodhisattvas and their purificatory blessing of realms.<sup>37</sup>

The ways followed by centrists and experientialists, as well as by proclaimers and solitary sages, lack these three special features of focus, support, and conduct. Therefore, centrists and experientialists can attain awakening only after three inestimably long aeons; and proclaimers and solitary sages, only after four. Because mantra does have these special features, its practitioners can attain awakening in a short time. Thus, mantra is profoundly different.

On this subject, Atisha, in his *Summation of Pledges*, states:<sup>38</sup>

Mantra is superior to all other ways, greater than even the universal way. In answer to why this is so, the venerable Nagarjuna<sup>39</sup> describes seven features that distinguish it:

Mantra bears the seal of Samantabhadra in that everything is understood to be the dimension of reality.<sup>40</sup> It is possessed of blessing, being made the object of veneration by the oath-

bound great worldly gods and their host of attendants. It leads to the swift attainment of powers since the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the three times are aware [of the practitioner] and impart their blessings. It provides relief and freedom from the perils of cyclic existence and the lower forms of life since its sphere of experience is identical to that of the joyful ones. It allows no hindrances whatsoever since a [mantric] practitioner possesses an indestructible mind of awakening, with body, speech, and mind being undifferentiated from those of a buddha. Its pledges are never violated due to the practitioner's conviction in the intrinsic purity of all outer and inner phenomena. Should a violation occur, the pledge is naturally restored. These are the distinctions of the mantra way.

As to the general distinction between the two ways, the mantra and the perfections have the same object: [emptiness] which transcends concepts. The difference lies in the subject [that apprehends emptiness]. In mantra, the subject is [the mind of] great bliss used as method. The majority [of Indian scholars] agree on this point. At the same time, there seem to be many different specifications of the distinctions between the two that have been posited by various masters.<sup>41</sup>

**Its distinctiveness is encapsulated in three features: the practitioner with three qualifications, A path with three distinctions in method, and the resultant state of union.**

Any of the different specifications based on those perspectives is certainly acceptable. The intrepid master Karma Trinlé<sup>42</sup> and others, encapsulating those various viewpoints, set forth three features that distinguish mantra from the perfections: the individual who will be its practitioner; the path to be travelled; and the result or goal.

First, the practitioner of mantra is distinguished by three qualifications: sharpness of faculties in that he or she enters a path that swiftly yields its result; a mental continuum ripened by the appropriate initiation; and [conscientiousness in] safeguarding the pledges from their root and branch downfalls. A mantra practitioner must definitely possess these three qualifications, whereas this is not required of followers of other ways.

Second, the path of mantra is distinguished in three ways: its methods are abundant; they are clear; and they are free from hardships.

As to the first, its abundance of methods, mantra does not dispense with any of the different methods taught in the way of the perfections, such as the awakening mind and the six perfections. In addition to those methods, mantra sets forth techniques connected to the four sets of tantra that are far more numerous and profound than those of the perfections. These include ways to gain inconceivable powers through the various practices of an infinite [number] of deity yogas: familiarization with, and attainment of, [the state of the deity], implementation of activations, methods to elicit results if these are not forthcoming, and activities to enhance realizations.<sup>43</sup>

The second, the clarity of its methods, is due to these methods being not in the least obscure. Every aspect of practice—the object of familiarization [i.e., the deity], the practitioner of familiarization, the forms of familiarization, recitation [of mantras], food offerings, fire-offering rituals, and so forth—is explained in detail and with utmost clarity.

The third, freedom from hardships in [the practice of] the methods, is because the mantra way produces its result within one lifetime or in just a few lifetimes while practice of the sutra way leads to accomplishment only after such periods of time as three inestimably long aeons.

Concerning the third feature, that of the goal or result of mantra, a direct result will be distinguished according to the particular quality of its direct cause. The culmination of the path of training in the way of the perfections gives rise to none other than the mantric path of training in the mind of its practitioner.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, the ultimate direct result of the perfections is not full awakening. The culmination of all aspects of the path of training in the mantra way directly yields the result of full awakening. That being the case, the fully awakened state is the direct result solely of the culmination of the mantric path of training since full awakening is the ultimate [state] of the path of mantra: union beyond training.<sup>45</sup>

This completes Karma Trinlé's encapsulation of the distinctions between sutra and tantra.

#### FOUR CATEGORIES BASED ON SUTRA AND TANTRA CONTENT [bb]

**Of four categories, sutra, tantra, both, and neither,  
The mantra collection, which uses the result in the path, is  
distinguished.**

A general classification based on sutra and tantra content yields four categories: sutra, tantra, both sutra and tantra, and neither sutra nor tantra. The sutra category largely includes such texts as the increasing-by-one scriptures class.<sup>46</sup> The tantra category includes the application of the garuda class of scriptures and others.<sup>47</sup> The both-sutra-and-tantra category comprises the mantra collection of teachings. The neither-sutra-nor-tantra category includes [treatises on] sophistic debates, and similar works.

Of these, the mantra collection of teachings, known as “that which uses the result in the path” because it applies the specialty of deity yoga, should alone be considered as endowed with the distinctive features explained above. This discussion on the four categories is an ancillary topic.

#### THE MAIN DISTINCTION ACCORDING TO TIBETAN MASTERS [cc]

**Mantra is superior by virtue of its swiftness, which is due to five reasons; four sources of bliss; And its skillful methods in the three trainings and all spheres of experience.**

Of all the distinctions between sutra and mantra that have been drawn by Tibetan masters, whatever their number, the main ones are described in the oral teachings of the great adept Buddhagupta.<sup>48</sup> These are expressed by the venerable master of Jonang [Taranata] in this way:<sup>49</sup>

Due to its swiftness, bliss, and skillful methods, it is said to be superior.

To expand on this, mantra is superior to sutra in swiftness. It is swift in that [through mantra], enlightenment is achieved in the time [period] of the present lifetime or within seven lifetimes, and so forth. Furthermore, it is swift by virtue of the following five reasons: the presence of merits acquired through special [tantric] rituals whereby deities actually receive and enjoy offerings made to them;<sup>50</sup> the creation, through the power of mantras, of merits equal to the grains of sand in the Ganges River through just a single “water-drop” [of practice]; the manifest [application of] contemplation whereby [even] beginners stop impure appearances and create pure realms; the ripening of sentient beings by means of each of the single features of mantra or contemplation (these special reasons apply even to someone who has merely embarked on the way of mantra); and the wisdom that, through

the principles of both relative and ultimate truth, focuses upon the aspect of the result [of awakening], the form of which is the sphere of experience of contemplation (these are present from the beginning until the end [of the mantra way]).

Mantra is superior to sutra in bliss, which means the absence of any coarse physical or mental feelings. There are four [sources of] bliss: the attainment of a body possessed of six fortunes;<sup>51</sup> the development of many miraculous powers and contemplations; the buddhas' manifest presence [near the practitioner] due to the power of mantras; and the fulfillment of all the wishes of beings by means of mantra and tantra application.<sup>52</sup>

Mantra is superior to sutra by virtue of its skillful methods, which are applied to the three trainings [of ethics, contemplation, and wisdom], as well as to all spheres of experience. Specifically, the ethics of mantra delights the deities, being equal to that of awareness-holders. Contemplation in the mantra way is connected to a superior sphere of experience. The wisdom of mantra is distinguished by its profundity and vastness both in common and extraordinary [aspects], as are the other two trainings. Furthermore, the skillful methods of deity and mantra are applied to all spheres of experience. Hence, mantra is said to be extraordinary.

### THE EXCEPTIONAL NATURE OF THE MANTRA SYSTEM [iii]

This section has four parts: identification of the essence of mantra; the meaning of the term *mantra*; a general presentation of divisions within mantra and tantra; and a detailed discussion of the systems of the four sets of tantra.

#### IDENTIFICATION OF THE ESSENCE OF MANTRA [aa]

##### **Its essence is the union of emptiness and compassion.**

The essence of mantra is the union of wisdom (emptiness) and method (great compassion). This is stated in the *Kalachakra Root Tantra*.<sup>53</sup>

*Mantra* is so called because it serves as a protection  
 For the elements of body, speech, and mind.  
 The term *mantra* denotes the immutable:  
 The pristine awareness of emptiness.

Mantra arising from merit and pristine awareness  
Has the nature of emptiness and compassion.

### THE MEANING OF THE TERM *MANTRA* [bb]

**The meaning of *mantra* is to protect the mind from conceptual objectification.**

From an etymological perspective, the meaning of the [Sanskrit] term *mantra* is explained as follows: *man* [the first syllable] means “mind” and *traya*, “to protect,” hence “*mantra*” (*sngags*), since it protects the mind from conceptual objectification. The *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* states:<sup>54</sup>

Whatever mind arises in dependence on  
The sense powers and their objects:  
That mind is referred to as “*man*”  
And “*tra*” means that which protects it.

Whatever vows and pledges are considered  
To be completely free from worldly conduct  
And safeguarded by all of the vajras:  
Those are referred to as “mantric conduct.”<sup>55</sup>

From the perspective of a direct translation, *mantra* means “secret utterance” because it is accomplished with secrecy and in concealment; or, from another perspective, because it cannot be understood by those unqualified to be its practitioners. Thus, it is called “secret mantra” (*gsang sngags*). Accordingly, the master Shradhdhakaravarman’s *Short Guide to the Meaning of Highest Yoga Tantra* explains:<sup>56</sup>

It is secret because its practices are accomplished with secrecy and in concealment, or because it cannot be understood by unqualified persons.

### A GENERAL PRESENTATION OF DIVISIONS WITHIN *MANTRA* AND *TANTRA* [cc]

In this section, there are two parts: the forms of [practice of] mantra; and divisions of tantras.

## THE FORMS OF PRACTICE OF MANTRA [1']

This section has two parts: the main discussion; and an ancillary statement on the distinction between mantra and tantra.

### THE MAIN DISCUSSION [a']

**The three forms of practice are the best, the lesser, and the secondary;**

**In essence, great bliss, pride of being the deity, and mantra with its applications.**

**Alternatively, the seven forms are the complete, partial, special, initial bliss, almost complete, some measure, and slight great bliss.**

There are three forms of mantra [practice], the best, the lesser, and the secondary. The essence of the best form is great bliss; that of the lesser, the pride of being the deity; and that of the secondary, mere mantric rituals and applications. The first is exemplified by the phase of completion; the second, by the phase of generation; and the third, by the means for accomplishing minor activations.<sup>57</sup>

The best and lesser forms represent the authentic mantra way because they pertain to the principles, or vows, of the mantra way and the awareness-holder. The latter is merely nominal.

Alternatively, seven forms of mantra are explained: the complete path, the partial one, the special one, initial bliss, almost complete great bliss, some measure of great bliss, and slight great bliss. All these forms are indeed designated as great bliss, and since this great bliss is the complete path itself, these do not need to be distinguished as separate [forms].

### ANCILLARY: THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN MANTRA AND TANTRA [b']

**Mantra refers to secret mantra and blissful pristine awareness.  
Its applications as activations and powers are considered tantra.  
Both the way itself and the means to express it are known as tantra.**

How does one differentiate between mantra and tantra? All aspects of secret mantra and the pristine awareness of great bliss are referred to as mantra.

Applications of secret mantra (the collections of [rituals] for activations and powers) are known as tantra. However, the tantras (continuums) of the ground, path, and result (the content of mantra), as well as the collection of teachings that express and expound [the meaning of mantra], are referred to as tantra. Thus, there are contexts in which no distinction is made between mantra and tantra.



## 2. THE DIVISIONS OF TANTRA

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2' The Divisions of Tantra [I.B.2.a.iii.cc.2']

a' A General Presentation of the Different Divisions of Tantra

b' A Detailed Discussion of the Rationale for Tantra's Division into Four Sets

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[This chapter is a continuation of the discussion of the exceptional nature of the mantra system and the divisions within mantra and tantra. Presented here is] part two, the divisions of tantra. This begins with a general presentation of the different ways tantra is divided, followed by a detailed discussion of the rationale for tantra's division into four sets.

### **A GENERAL PRESENTATION OF THE DIFFERENT DIVISIONS OF TANTRA [a']**

**Tantra is divided in many ways: into two sets, outer and inner; into three, action, conduct, and yoga; into four, five, six, and more.**

In answer to how many divisions exist within the tantric [system] of the secret mantra way, there are ways of dividing tantra into two sets (outer and inner) right up to a division into seven.

First, reference to the division into two sets is found in the *Indestructible Essence Ornament Tantra*.<sup>1</sup>

The divisions of tantra are to be understood  
By knowing its distinction into outer and inner.

Moreover, the master Abhayakara states:

Hold in your heart the outer and inner tantras of Vajradhara  
 That have been transmitted in a successive lineage.  
 The Teacher expanded methods such as mandala  
 Into two separate sets of tantra.

It is clear from his *Awn of Esoteric Instructions* that Abhayakara maintains that, of the two sets of tantra spoken of, outer and inner, outer tantra refers to action and conduct tantras, and inner, to the yoga and highest yoga tantras.

The master Buddhaghya presents an alternative viewpoint: the twofold division of tantra refers to action tantra and yoga tantra. Action tantra comprises the *Trisamayavyuha* and other tantras up to and including the *Vairochanabhisambodhi*; and yoga tantra, the *Summation of Essential Principles* and other tantras up to and including the *Guhyasamaja*. These two sets are also called outer and inner. Buddhaghya states:

Two sets of tantra, the outer and the inner, are explained.

Certain scholars of Tibet differentiate these two sets of tantra on the basis of six factors, namely, teacher, place [where the tantra was taught], students, articles for offering, path, and essential principles.<sup>2</sup>

The rationale for the division into outer tantra and inner tantra is that conduct tantra and the tantra below emphasize ablution and other outer physical and verbal activities, and are therefore considered outer tantras. Yoga tantra and the tantra above emphasize contemplation and other inner (mental) practices, and are therefore included within the inner set. This accounts for the division of tantra into two sets.

Reference to the division of tantra into three sets is found in the *Indestructible Essence Ornament Tantra*.<sup>3</sup>

Action tantra, tantra of both, and yoga tantra  
 Which were spoken expressly are not like that.

Buddhaghya, Lilavajra, and Anandagarbha<sup>4</sup> all explain that tantra has the three divisions of action, conduct (or tantra of both), and yoga tantra. The rationale is that yoga and great yoga tantras are alike in their emphasis on contemplation, which is an inner practice, and are therefore subsumed under yoga tantra. This accounts for the division of tantra into three sets.

[Gunabhadra's] *Indestructible Nectar Commentary*<sup>5</sup> presents an alternative way to divide tantra into three sets:

Action, union (or yoga tantra), and secret tantra...

Reference to the division of tantra into four sets is found in the *Indestructible Tent*:<sup>6</sup>

Action tantra is for those of lesser [faculties];  
 Yoga without action, for those with greater [faculties];  
 Yoga tantra, for superior sentient beings  
 And highest yoga tantra, for those even greater.

In addition, [Shraddhakaravarman's] *Short Guide to the Meaning of Highest Yoga Tantra* states:<sup>7</sup>

There are four entrances to the resultant indestructible way of secret mantra. These are generally known as action tantra, conduct tantra, yoga tantra, and highest yoga tantra.

Similar statements are found in most tantras and commentaries. Essentially the same way of division occasionally appears under a number of different names. The *Samputa Tantra* [for example] states:<sup>8</sup>

The four [sexual pleasures of] laughing, gazing,  
 Holding hands, and union are contained in the four tantras,  
 Compared to the way of worms [in wood].<sup>9</sup>

A similar reference is found in [Pundarika's] *Stainless Light*.<sup>10</sup> The rationale for this [division] will be discussed below.

Reference to the division of tantra into five is found in the *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness [Tantra]*:<sup>11</sup>

O Blessed One, what is the extent of the yoga tantra, tantra of both, conduct tantra, action tantra, and skills tantra?

The rationale for this division is as follows: The basis for the division is action tantra in general, which is split into two. Action tantras that are concerned with attainment principally of the supreme power [awakening]

are collectively designated as “action tantra.” Action tantras concerned with the attainment principally of ordinary powers<sup>12</sup> are collectively designated as “skills tantra.” Although “tantra of both” generally refers to conduct tantra, Shradhakaravarman considers yoga tantra to be the tantra of both since, in yoga tantra, inner contemplative yoga and outer activity both serve as auxiliaries to contemplation. Accordingly, here yoga tantra is given the designation of “tantra of both,” and the name “yoga tantra” is applied to the highest yoga tantra. This accounts for the division of tantra into five sets. This particular way of division of tantra is the one adhered to by Nagarjuna and other masters.

The patriarchs of the Saky school<sup>13</sup> place what is referred to as the “sutra skills tantra” into a set separate from action tantra. All of the sutra teachings that are concerned with retention mantras (*dharani*) and related rites, the *Blue Beryl Light Discourse* and its *Dharani*,<sup>14</sup> for example, constitute this set.

An alternative way of dividing tantra into five sets has as its source the *Ocean of Sky-Farers Tantra*, as well as Shantipa's *Presentation of the Three Ways*,<sup>15</sup> and other works. Here, the five sets are action tantra, conduct tantra, yoga tantra, great yoga tantra, and highest great yoga tantra. Great yoga tantra refers to the highest father tantra; and highest great yoga tantra, the highest mother tantra.

A division of tantra into six sets places the skills tantra in a set separate from action tantra, and splits yoga tantra into two, father yoga tantra and mother yoga tantra. The basis for this way of division is the *Indestructible Tent*.<sup>16</sup>

The yogini tantra is known as the sixth tantra.

Another way of dividing tantra into six is explained in [Tripitakamala's] *Lamp of the Three Modes*.<sup>17</sup> The six are action tantra, root tantra, conduct tantra, yoga tantra, high yoga tantra, and highest yoga tantra. In this system, action tantra is subdivided: tantras that emphasize outer activity are considered action tantra; and those that do not, root tantra. As in the previous [*Ocean of Sky-Farers Tantra*]'s way of division, the father tantra and mother tantra are considered to be high yoga tantra and highest yoga tantra, respectively. This accounts for the division of tantra into six sets.

Reference to the division into seven sets is found in Lord Atisha's *Commentary on the Lamp for the Path*.<sup>18</sup>

The names action tantra, conduct tantra, and so on, refer to action tantra, conduct tantra, skills tantra, tantra of both, yoga tantra, great yoga tantra, and highest yoga tantra.

The rationale for this way of dividing tantra is that the action and conduct tantras that have as their major subject-matter the minor rites performed to gain [powers of] the pills, eye-elixir, and so on, are considered to be of a separate set, skills tantra. Hence, the *Compendium of Skills* and other tantras are considered as skills tantra.<sup>19</sup> Tantras that have components of both conduct tantra (and the tantra set below) and the yoga tantra, such as the *Net of Magical Manifestation* and the *Lord of the Lotus Dancers*, are considered to be the tantra of both.<sup>20</sup> Father tantra and mother tantra are considered to be the great yoga tantra and highest yoga tantra, respectively.<sup>21</sup> This accounts for the division of tantra into seven sets. In addition, there are many ways in which further subdivision of these sets is asserted.

#### A DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THE RATIONALE FOR TANTRA'S DIVISION INTO FOUR SETS [b']

**The division into four sets is widely accepted because tantras were taught**

**In consideration of four kinds of recipients of the teachings, As well as the persons to be converted, different castes, faculties, Objects of purification, purificatory means, states, times, and other factors.**

Of those [different ways of division], the one well known as “the four sets of tantra” is found in the words of the majority of Indian and Tibetan tantric masters. The rationale for the division of tantra in this way [is explained as follows]:

Four sets of tantra were taught in consideration of the four different kinds of recipients of the teachings. A person whose inclination is [the performing of] many outer actions, such as ablution, cleanliness, and so on, is the intended practitioner of action tantra. Someone who is interested in essential reality and who prefers few outer rites is the intended practitioner of conduct tantra. One who considers many outer rites to be a source of distraction and is interested solely in meditation on essential reality is the intended practitioner of yoga tantra. A person interested in enjoying everything in the state of pristine awareness wherein method

and wisdom are inseparable is the intended practitioner of highest yoga tantra.

Additionally, the four sets of tantra were taught in order to convert four kinds of followers of mistaken paths. By presenting the tantric teachings in accordance with the emotional patterns particular to these four kinds, individuals would be uplifted spiritually and led to the true path. To convert the devotees of Shiva who are dominated by desire, the highest yoga tantra was taught. To convert the devotees of Vishnu who are dominated by aversion, conduct tantra was taught. To convert the devotees of Brahma who are dominated by delusion, action tantra was taught. To convert persons with uncertain emotional patterns who accept the tenets of whichever of the three [Hindu religious trends] they come in contact with, yoga tantra was taught. Nagarjuna, Subhutipalita, [Anandagarbha,] and other masters are known to have asserted this rationale as found in the *Summation of Essential Principles*.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, tantra was taught in four sets to accommodate recipients who are members of the four castes, or who share their traits: Brahmins dominated by delusion who practice the doctrine of Brahma and who delight in a path involving cleanliness, recitation [of mantras] and liturgy, fire-offering rituals, and austerity; members of the merchant caste, dominated by pride, who practice the doctrine of the demi-gods and who delight in physical, verbal, and mental disciplines; members of the royal caste, [also dominated by pride,] who follow the doctrine of the gods and who are incapable of [leading] an austere life, indulging instead in the many pleasures of court life, and who delight in exercising dominion over their kingdoms through sealed edicts; and persons belonging to the menial caste, dominated by both anger and desire, who practice sexual union and ritual killing in the cults of Maheshvara and other deities, and delight in engaging in various base acts, such as ingesting feces and urine, without any notions of purity and impurity. The four sets, action tantra, and so on, were taught for practitioners who are members of these four castes, respectively, principally to spiritually nurture those who among them are of superior faculties. Accordingly, the *Marvellous Cemetery [Ornament]* states:<sup>23</sup>

To convert the brahmin caste, the merchant caste,  
The royal caste, and the menial caste or outcastes,  
Tantra was presented in four parts:  
Action, conduct, yoga, and highest yoga.

Furthermore, tantra's division into four sets takes into consideration the faculties [of the recipients]. Action tantra was taught for those of low faculties; conduct tantra, for the average; yoga tantra, for the sharp; and highest yoga tantra, for the very sharp. This is stated in the *Indestructible Tent*.

Another consideration in tantra's fourfold division is the object of purification, the emotional afflictions, which may be slight, moderate, strong, and exceedingly strong in intensity. Accordingly, the *Bright Lamp* states:

Action tantra is intended for the type of person with major or average delusion; conduct tantra, minimal delusion; yoga tantra, minimal or moderate desire, aversion, and delusion; higher yoga tantra, intense desire, aversion, and delusion; and yogini tantra, the most intense desire, aversion, and delusion.

The higher yoga tantra and yogini tantra mentioned in this citation are both highest yoga tantra, and the emotional afflictions to be purified all belong to the category of exceedingly strong afflictions. Thus, there are actually just four [sets] being referred to.

Furthermore, division into four sets is based on four forms of desire to be purified. These four desires which are experienced in the desire realm are mentioned in [Vasubandhu's] *Treasury [of Phenomenology]*:<sup>24</sup>

Sexual satisfaction is gained through intercourse,  
Holding hands, laughter, and gazing [at one's partner].

To explain, gods of the desire realm in the heaven of Mastery over Others' Creations experience sexual desire that is satisfied by gazing at the partner; gods in Enjoying Creations, by laughing; gods in Joyful and Free from Conflict, by holding hands; gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-three and below, as well as men and animals,<sup>25</sup> by sexual intercourse. As remedies for sexual desire, the four sets of tantra were taught, each set providing a deity yoga that uses one of these particular forms of desire in the path.<sup>26</sup>

Tantra's division is posited in a [fourfold] order that also reflects the three aspects of the path, namely, the [different types of] view, meditation, and conduct that serve as purificatory means. The views are represented by the four major trends of Buddhist philosophy [that of the analysts, traditionists, idealists, and centrists] to which the action tantras and the other [three] tantras respectively correspond.<sup>27</sup> The meditations comprise four deity yogas, with distinctions in the meditations on the deity [accord-

ing to the tantra]: Action tantra involves meditation on an external deity only; conduct tantra, in addition, involves meditation on an inner, naturally present deity;<sup>28</sup> yoga tantra, meditation on a deity that is the essence of oneself [as the deity] inseparable from [the external deity] in front; and the highest yoga tantra, meditation on the deity [as for yoga tantra] based on the knowledge that oneself [as the deity] and [the external deity in] front are inseparable in every respect. The types of conduct comprise different degrees of physical, verbal, and mental [inner] activity. Conduct involving mainly engagement in physical and verbal activity is considered to be action tantra; equal proportions of engagement in physical and verbal activity and inner contemplation, conduct tantra; engagement principally in inner contemplation, yoga tantra; and engagement principally in pristine awareness, highest yoga tantra.

As pointed out in *Kalachakra*, the division of tantra into four sets takes into consideration the purified aspect of the four states of waking, dream, deep sleep, and sexual union;<sup>29</sup> the four eras, which refers to the era of completeness, the era of three quarters, the era of two quarters, and the era of turmoil; and the four periods of the day and night.<sup>30</sup> There are yet other bases for the fourfold division.

Thus, tantra has been taught in consideration of various factors, the recipients [of the teachings], and so forth, and therefore, [the division of tantra into] the “four sets of tantra” is widely accepted. As well, the four sets represent demarcations in sequence, caliber, and subtlety. Accordingly, the tantras state:

Based on the former, the latter arises.  
Because of levels from inferior to superior,  
And from the gross to the subtle...

The statement “Based on the former, the latter arises” is explained in [*Hevajra Tantra*] *Two Examinations*:<sup>31</sup>

Teach the student the analysts’ philosophy  
And then the traditionists’ philosophy.  
After that, teach the experientialists’.  
Following that, teach the central way.  
Once all methods of mantra are known,  
Teach [the tantra of] Hevajra.

Thus, one should understand that just as the four philosophies are learned sequentially, the four sets of tantra which nurture followers of these phi-

osophies are also practiced in sequence. The nondual highest tantra should be cultivated at the end of [the training in] the two highest tantras, that of method [father] and that of wisdom [mother].

The words “inferior to superior” are explained in the *Indestructible Tent*:<sup>32</sup>

Action tantra is for those of lesser [faculties];  
 [Yoga without action, for those with greater faculties;  
 Yoga tantra, for superior sentient beings  
 And highest yoga tantra, for those even greater.]

The phrase “gross to the subtle” is understood from these words of the tantra:

More secret than the secret, extremely secret, supremely secret...

The distinctive features particular to each of the four sets of tantra, such as the persons who are recipients [of the teachings], the initiations that constitute the entrances to the path, and so forth, will be [discussed] in detail below. What follow are the main features in a concise form:

The distinctive features of action tantra are principally the physical performance of mudras whereby the practitioner swiftly accomplishes an awakened body; the verbal recitation of mantras to swiftly accomplish awakened speech; and inner meditation on the deity, to swiftly accomplish awakened mind and qualities.

The distinctive features of conduct tantra are principally the viewing of one's body as the body of a perfect buddha, whereby the blessing of awakened body swiftly enters [one's being]; viewing one's speech as mantra, whereby the blessing of awakened speech swiftly enters; viewing one's own mind as pristine awareness, whereby the blessing of awakened mind is swiftly received; and other features. [These blessings are received] because, by using in the path [the practice of] imagining oneself as a buddha, awakened qualities are easily developed, and by using the result [of awakening] in the path, the two accumulations [of merit and pristine awareness] are swiftly brought to perfection. Furthermore, while methods that [require] complex preparations such as veneration of depictions of deities on cloth do perfect the two accumulations, making offerings to oneself [as the deity] and similar methods are performed more easily, and certainly bring about the perfection of the accumulations.

The distinctive features of yoga tantra are principally the sealing of one's body with the great seal of the body [of the deity]; the sealing of one's speech

with the doctrine seal of the [deity's] speech; the sealing of one's mind with the pledge seal of the [deity's] mind; and the sealing of one's actions with the seal of the [deity's] activity,<sup>33</sup> all of which lead to the practitioner's swift achievement of [the state of] all the transcendent ones.

The distinctive features of highest yoga tantra are principally its clarity in the profound meaning of the phase of completion; its infinity of profound methods in the phase of generation; its absence of hardships in the achievement of awakening through the practice of these two [phases]; and its being intended for persons of exceptionally sharp faculties by virtue of these features. Consequently, the yogas of the two phases [of generation and completion] are distinctive features of highest yoga tantra only, not to be found in the other tantra sets. This is the case because other tantras do not set forth a path that corresponds to the complete process of birth in cyclic existence, nor do they set forth a path of training that brings to perfection the authentic luminous clarity of death.<sup>34</sup>

### 3. ACTION TANTRA

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dd. The Systems of the Four Sets of Tantra [I.B.2.a.iii.dd]

1' The Content

a' Action Tantra

i' The Meaning of the Name and the Essence of Action Tantra

ii' Divisions

iii' The Entrance to Action Tantra: Initiations

iv' Vows and Pledges to Be Observed

v' Practice of the Path

aa' Entering

bb' Approaching

1" Auxiliary Elements

2" Main Elements: Four Essential Principles in the Practice  
of Familiarization

a" Oneself

b" The Deity

c" Mantra Recitation

d" Meditative Absorption

i" Dwelling in Fire

ii" Dwelling in Sound

iii" The Limit of Sound

cc' Effecting Powers

dd' Using Powers

vi' Types of Powers and the Way to Effect Them

vii' Stages of Awakening, Paths, and Result

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[This chapter is a continuation of the discussion of the exceptional nature of the mantra system,] section four, a detailed discussion of the systems of the four sets of tantra, which has two parts: the content of tantra; and [the tantric scriptures] that express [the meaning of] tantra. The first, the content, has four parts: action tantra, conduct tantra, yoga tantra, and highest yoga tantra. The first system, that of action tantra, is presented here in seven parts: the meaning of the name “action tantra” and its essence; its divisions; initiations as the entrance to action tantra; vows and pledges to be observed; practice of its path; types of powers to attain to; and the stages of awakening, paths, and result.

### THE MEANING OF THE NAME AND THE ESSENCE OF ACTION TANTRA [i']

#### **Action tantra emphasizes outer conduct.**

Action tantra is so named because one engages in mantric practice based on teachings that emphasize outer conduct such as ablution, cleanliness, and purity.

The essence of action tantra is as stated in the *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra*:<sup>1</sup>

To view [the profound truth] with apprehension and to observe utmost cleanliness; to be without the supreme bliss of the pristine awareness being; to lack the pride of oneself as the deity; not to be a receptacle for what is sublime; and due to that shortcoming, to be conditioned by concepts about [the purity and impurity of] things; to train thoroughly [in rituals of ablution, etc.] and thereby practice [deity yoga]: these [elements] are found in action tantra.

To practice in order to develop mastery of the eight great powers—mantra, medicine, fire-offering ritual, powder, eye-salve, swift-ness of foot, and so forth<sup>2</sup>—this [element] is found in skills tantra.

To provide some clarification of those points, the following elements are said to apply to, or be contained within, action tantra: to view the profound truth with fear and apprehension<sup>3</sup> due to an inferior intellect and to observe utmost cleanliness and purity, ablution, asceticism, and so forth; to not [develop] the pride of being the deity since there is no generation of oneself as the pledge deity;<sup>4</sup> to be without the supreme bliss of the pristine aware-

ness deity since the pristine awareness deity has not been invoked to merge into the pledge deity; not to be a receptacle for the sublime [teachings]<sup>5</sup> since one is unqualified to receive teachings on what is sublime and extraordinary, the deep meanings that were spoken with specific intention; and due to the shortcoming of being unable to fathom the sublime, being conditioned by concepts about the purity or impurity of things, to train thoroughly in [rituals of] ablution, and so forth, and thereby to practice [deity yoga] in a subject-to-lord relationship with the deity.<sup>6</sup>

Skills tantra is to practice by means of asceticism, recitation [of mantra and liturgy], and so on, in order to develop mastery of the eight great mundane powers, such as [the power of] mantra and eye-salve. (Skills tantra is an offshoot of action tantra; thus, it is included within the category of action tantra and should be considered one with it.)

## DIVISIONS [ii']

### It has six families. ...

Action tantra may be divided into what are known as the six families (or “six approaches”), three supramundane families and three mundane ones. The supramundane families are the transcendent family, the lotus family, and the vajra family. The mundane families are the jewel [wealthy] family, the family of playing with five dice [or prosperity], and the family of ordinary worldlings.<sup>7</sup>

Tantras that exemplify the [three supramundane] families are the tantra of Trisamayavyuha, lord of the transcendent family, and tantras of [other] buddhas; the tantra of Avalokiteshvara, lord of the lotus family; and the tantra of Vajrapani, lord of the vajra family. Each has its own divisions of [tantras of] the lord of the family, master, mother, *ushmisha* [class of deities], male and female wrathful deities, male and female messengers, and male and female servants.<sup>8</sup>

The wealthy family [tantras] are those taught by the *yaksha* Manibhadra; the family of playing with five dice [or prosperity] [tantras], taught by the *yaksha* Panchika, [his wife] Mekhala, Nandikaraputra, and others; and the ordinary worldlings family [tantras], taught by Brahma, Maheshvara, Vishnu, Garuda, Sun, Moon, and countless other gods.

The six families taken collectively are contained within the categories of the three supramundane families. [Buddhaguhya's] *Commentarial Notes Epitomizing the Dialogue with Subahu Tantra* states:<sup>9</sup>

The wealthy family is contained within the lotus family. The prosperity family is contained within the vajra family. One should know that the family of worldlings is generally included under these two.

Any not included within these does not arise from the blessing of the Transcendent One and has not been born into the family of transcendent ones as have bodhisattvas who abide on stages [of awakening]. They are therefore designated “dependent on the transcendent family.” On this point, the [*Subahu*] *Tantra* states:<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, some do not belong here  
But are wanderers who depend on the Joyful One.

That being the case, it would seem that those who were tamed by the Buddha and who abide by pledges are included within the three [supramundane] families.

The above citation implicitly points out that even the ordinary mundane families known as “wanderers” are included within the transcendent family because they are “dependent on the transcendent family.” Thus, all six families are included within the three supramundane families.

All six families are included as well in the two categories of secret mantra and awareness mantra. [Buddhaguhya's] *Commentary on the Dhyantottara Tantra* states:<sup>11</sup>

Awareness mantra comprises the female deity, her shape, the utterances associated with her method, and seals [mudras, insignia,] and so on. The opposite to that, [the male deity, and so on,] is characteristic of secret mantra.<sup>12</sup>

### THE ENTRANCE TO ACTION TANTRA: INITIATIONS [iii']

**...Its entrances, the water and diadem, establish the potentials  
For the two dimensions, after which the pledges are observed.  
For specific purposes, initiation is conferred in four parts; the  
mandala is a colored powders one.**

The *Essence of Pristine Awareness* states:<sup>13</sup>

It is widely known that in action tantra  
There are the water and crown initiations.

This citation indicates that, as initiations serving as entrances to action tantra, the water and diadem are widely held to be the only two. These two initiations serve to ripen [the student's mind] in that the water initiation establishes the potential for [the attainment of] the reality dimension of awakening, and the diadem initiation, the form dimension. Concerning the water initiation, the *Manjushri Root Tantra* states:<sup>14</sup>

Each [student] should be conferred the initiation five [times] according to the desired method.

Here it is specified that the water initiation is given five times: [first, with] the vase [dedicated to all beings] at the entrance outside the mandala; [second, with] the vase [dedicated] to all deities in the second mandala; [third, with] the vase [dedicated] to proclaimers and solitary sages in the third mandala; [fourth, with] the vase [dedicated] to bodhisattvas; and [fifth, with] the victory vase [dedicated] to buddhas. Such procedure is clearly mentioned in [the tantras of] all the [other] families as well.<sup>15</sup> For the diadem initiation, [use of] a crown is not specified. It is explained, however, that the act of touching the crown of the head [of the student] with the hands clasped in the mudra [representing the diadem] is to confer the initiation.

In that way, the water and diadem initiations, which form the main part [of an action tantra initiation], are received, after which the pledges of action tantra must be observed. The actual ripening process is contained in that alone. However, when subdivided to serve specific purposes, there are four parts to the conferral of initiation, as explained in the *General Tantra*.<sup>16</sup> the water and diadem initiations to gain the status of vajra master in the action tantra's own system; [the appended] vajra student initiation to bestow transmission of the mantra (of the deity on which the flower has fallen<sup>17</sup>) in order to gain power from awareness mantras; the initiation of protection through [purificatory] ablution, the activity to overcome negative influences and to pacify obstacles; and the initiation of the eight auspicious substances<sup>18</sup> to increase wealth.

The vajra master initiation in the action tantra's own system is accomplished by the water and diadem initiations in themselves. Nevertheless, as stated in the *General Tantra*, the initiation is properly accomplished by conferring, in addition to those two, the authorization to draw and teach mandala. The same tantra also states that through receiving initiation into a mandala of the transcendent family, one becomes a vajra master of all the three families; through the Avalokiteshvara initiation [of the lotus family],

a vajra master of the lotus and vajra families; and through the Vajrapani initiation [of the vajra family], a vajra master of just that family. In action tantra, the mandala used for the conferral of an initiation is said to be exclusively one of colored powders.

### VOWS AND PLEDGES TO BE OBSERVED [iv']

It is said:

The root [of attainment] is to observe one's pledges.

While this point is mentioned incidentally, the way one assumes pledges is explained as follows: The occasion for assuming pledges is, as stated in the *Trisamayavyuha Tantra*, at the conclusion of the preparatory ritual [of an initiation]. The procedure for assuming them is as described in the same tantra:<sup>19</sup>

One begins with the supplication, “Buddhas and bodhisattvas, please heed me!” and continues, “I offer myself to you. Please bless me, guard and protect me, and bestow on me the power of the great pledges.” These words repeated three times constitute the ritual for assuming the pledges.

One makes an offering of oneself in order to assume the pledges. The reason for doing so is explained in this way: A person is considered to exist on two levels, subtle and coarse. By offering body, speech, and mind—the coarse person—these three become owned by buddhas and bodhisattvas. At that point, one is possessed of the disposition of all buddhas and bodhisattvas, a disposition that is one of shunning the ten unwholesome deeds and practicing the ten wholesome ones.<sup>20</sup> Thus, one comes to assume [the ethics of the buddhas] as the very essence of the commitment of relative awakening mind. By offering the subtle person which, as the essence of emptiness, is inseparable from the reality dimension, one comes to assume ultimate awakening mind.<sup>21</sup> On the basis of those two, one assumes the other remaining pledges by repeating the last three phrases of the above supplication. This explanation is that of Buddhaghosya, as found in his *Commentary [Epitomizing] the Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra*.<sup>22</sup>

The nature of the vows and pledges to be safeguarded in action tantra is discussed in detail in a prior [book, *Buddhist Ethics*] of this [*Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*].<sup>23</sup>

## PRACTICE OF THE PATH IN ACTION TANTRA [v']

This section has four parts: entering; approaching; effecting powers; and using powers.

### ENTERING [aa']

The process of entering is as just explained: receiving the initiation and assuming the pledges associated with the chosen deity.

### APPROACHING [bb']

This has two parts: auxiliary elements; and the main elements.

### AUXILIARY ELEMENTS [1"]

#### **The process of approaching incorporates ten auxiliary elements....**

The process of approaching [the deity] incorporates ten elements: the [qualified] mantric practitioner; the deity of the mantra practice; the helper, a most excellent companion for practice; substances such as realgar;<sup>24</sup> diligence in practice; a region such as the central country;<sup>25</sup> a place for dwelling, such as a mountain top; a [specific] time [for practice], the spring months, morning, and so on; a representation of the deity complete in all details, such as a painting or a metal-cast statue; and fearlessness and enduring fortitude. The *Subahu Tantra* states that familiarization [with the deity] should be performed based on these ten elements.

### MAIN ELEMENTS: FOUR ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES IN THE PRACTICE OF FAMILIARIZATION [2"]

#### **...The main elements**

**Are the essential principles: that of oneself comprises six qualities;**

**That of the deity, deity as form, as letter, and as nature;**

**That of recitation, immersion in sound, mind, and base;**

**And that of meditative absorption, dwelling in fire, in sound,  
and at the limit of sound.**

**Familiarization with the deity is perfected in a lord-subject  
manner.**

Generally, what is received of the initiation's mind-ripening process would be used in meditation on the stages of the path, and even the result attained would be a concordant one. This is the case in all four sets of tantra. Thus, here [in action tantra] as well, this applies to the main methods in the path, the practice with signs, which uses in the path [the content of] the diadem initiation, and the practice without signs, which uses in the path [the content of] the water initiation. The method of meditation in this path may be subdivided into four essential principles: oneself, deity, recitation, and meditative absorption.<sup>26</sup>

### **ONESELF [a"]**

[The preliminary to] the meditation on the essential principle of oneself includes ablution and observing other forms of cleanliness; performing the rituals of protecting oneself and the place;<sup>27</sup> invoking the deity to merge into a painting or a statue in front and then making offerings;<sup>28</sup> and in the presence of the deity, remaining in the meditation posture appropriate to one's family.<sup>29</sup>

Next, the dimension of reality is used in the path to cultivate pristine awareness: The base to be ascertained by means of the view is the essence of enlightenment itself. This is done by meditating on the essential principle of oneself, which is the absence of intrinsic existence of the aggregates, and so on. [This meditation] includes six qualities: the absence of concepts related to an apprehender and the apprehended; absence of appearances in the nonconceptual state; absence of forms [composed] of the most subtle particles of matter; absence of the fluctuations of conceptual characteristics; being of the nature of luminous clarity, which transcends emptiness as a mere negation due to these [four] qualities; and one's essence having the characteristic of intrinsic self-awareness [i.e., awareness that cognizes its own nature].

### **THE DEITY [b"]**

For this, the manifest dimension of awakening is used in the path to cultivate merit. It comprises three deities: the deity as form, as letter, and as nature.

The deity as form is of two kinds: deity as form complete with face and arms and distinguished by particular eyes, and so forth; and deity as seal, such as a wheel or vajra. The deity as letter is also of two kinds: deity as the forms of letters [of the mantra], and deity as the sound [of the mantra]. The deity as nature, also of two kinds, comprises the deity as the emptiness

nature (the object) and the deity as nonconceptual pristine awareness (the subject).

All of these, when used as the essence of contemplation, are included within the six characteristic deities, which are stated [in the *Vajravidarana Tantra*]:<sup>30</sup>

Emptiness, letter, sound, form,  
Seal, and sign are the six.

First, the deity as emptiness is to remain absorbed in emptiness, the essence of ultimate awakening mind, in which the essential principle of oneself and that of the deity are of an inseparability beyond concepts.

Second, the deity as letter is to meditate on the particular deity [one is practicing] in the form of the written letters of the [deity's] mantra resting on a moon disk (representing one's mind) visualized in space [in front]. Also considered to be the letter deity is to meditate simply on the moon [omitting the letters].

Third, the deity as sound is to meditate on the resonant sounds of the mantra (on the moon) associated with one of the [three] deities of the three families<sup>31</sup> to which the recitation practice for complete familiarization is directed.

Fourth, the deity as form is to meditate on the complete form of the deity. [The first step involves] meditating that light radiating from the letters of the mantra fulfills two aims;<sup>32</sup> then, [as the light reconverges, the letters] transform into the deity's complete form.

Fifth, the deity as seal is to perform the hand mudras for blessing, such as the mudra of the crown protrusion,<sup>33</sup> and while reciting the appropriate mantra, to touch the corresponding places of the body with the mudra. Alternatively, one makes the pledge mudra of that particular [family].

Sixth, the deity as sign is to recall, in all circumstances, the form of the deity as meditated in the state of equipoise so that the appearances of the outer world and its inhabitants are regarded as pure visions, imagined as the deity's residence, form, and resources.

These meditations are practiced without allowing the mind to become distracted from its focuses and while holding the life [wind]<sup>34</sup> until the branches of the recitation are completed,<sup>35</sup> or for as long as possible. Thus, one remains single-mindedly absorbed in the experience of oneself visualized in the form of the deity: This constitutes the essential principle of the deity.

## MANTRA RECITATION [c"]

The essential principle of mantra recitation has a number of prescriptions: the tool for recitation (the chaplet used for counting); the place of recitation; the time when one should recite; the extent of [time, number, etc., required to complete] recitation; and the rules followed during the period of recitation. These prescriptions, as set forth in the *Susiddhi* and other tantras,<sup>36</sup> should be applied impeccably to [the following two forms of] recitation.

The ordinary recitation for familiarization is carried out as follows: A moon disk, [symbol of] relative awakening mind, is imagined in the heart of the particular deity of one of the three families [generated in front]. Located upon the moon disk is the mantra to be recited, with a sonorous quality of sound, arranged in its respective place.<sup>37</sup> The mantra is regarded as being like the secret mantra deities in actuality. The uninterrupted mindfulness that recalls this again and again dispels mistaken bad thoughts toward one's focus of practice [i.e., the deity], and leads to single-minded practice: This is the recitation of the secret mantras of the masters of the three families.<sup>38</sup>

The special recitation leads to the attainment of powers. The *Dhyānottara Tantra* states:<sup>39</sup>

Immerse yourself in sound, mind, and base.  
Dwell in the immutable base of the secret mantra.  
Recite the secret mantra without imperfections.  
When tired, rest in [the principle of] oneself.

In this citation, "base" refers to the contemplation of the [form of the] deity. "Mind" refers to the visualization of the moon disk (the nature of relative awakening mind) in the heart of the deity. "Sound" refers to the contemplation of the syllables of the mantra, possessed of a sonorous quality, on the moon disk. "Immerse yourself" means that when practicing these three contemplations, while retaining the life [wind], one focuses with undivided attention on the form of the deity in front, the moon, and [syllables of] the mantra; and performs mental or whispered recitation of the mantra. Following that, when one cannot hold the breath and exhales,<sup>40</sup> to remain in the pride of oneself as the deity, [the subjective] "base" is to "dwell in the immutable base of the secret mantra." "Recite the secret mantra without imperfections" means that these recitations of mantras are done without such imperfections as elongating some letters or clipping off others,

reciting too quickly or too slowly, or [disregarding] the bent and curved-[shaped] vowel signs.<sup>41</sup> “When tired, rest in [the principle of] oneself” means that when recitation has led to discouragement or fatigue, to rest in a state free of any concept, which is the essential principle of oneself.

This latter mode of recitation, the special, is one characterized by single-mindedness, through which mental quiescence is accomplished.<sup>42</sup> Except for periods of resting [in one’s essential nature], one directs undivided attention to the deity in front, and recitation is continued until the impression of separateness of the deity in front and oneself subsides, and a vivid experience of the inseparability of the deity and oneself occurs. By this standard, the former recitation is termed ordinary; and this latter one, special. These two constitute the essential principle of mantra recitation.

### **MEDITATIVE ABSORPTION [d"]**

The *Dhyānottara Tantra* states:<sup>43</sup>

The secret mantra dwelling in fire grants powers.  
Dwelling in sound grants contemplation.  
The limit of sound grants liberation.  
These constitute the threefold essential principle.

This citation refers to three different aspects of this essential principle, or three different meditative absorptions:

### **DWELLING IN FIRE [i"]**

In the heart of [oneself as] the deity, one imagines a very still fire, like the flame of a butter lamp, within which is a moon disk with the syllables of the mantra arranged in a string of one following the other. One visualizes this with undivided attention and, while holding the life [wind], cultivates this meditation until the experience of vivid appearance occurs. This practice serves as the basis for the performance of all forms of activations, such as appeasement.<sup>44</sup>

### **DWELLING IN SOUND [i"]**

At the heart of oneself [as the deity] is a moon disk, inside of which is the deity as base. [In the deity’s heart] is a flame within which is a string of

syllables of the mantra. Alternatively, the string of syllables is visualized on the moon disk alone. One examines the syllables closely. Once the contemplation has become perfectly vivid for at least a short while, one no longer focuses on the shape of the letters but maintains attention solely on the sonority of the spontaneously arising sounds of the mantra, resonating like the chimes of a bell.<sup>45</sup> One focuses on this single-mindedly while holding the life [wind], and trains in this until an experience of vivid appearance occurs. This meditation serves as the basis for the attainment of mental quiescence.

### THE LIMIT OF SOUND [iii"]

Analysis and precise examination of the mantra's sound alone leads to the understanding that its essence is without origin, cessation, or abiding. Based on that, [the practitioner] rests in contemplation within the state of pristine awareness, which is devoid of any concepts, the essential principle of oneself. From that contemplation arises the pristine awareness of insight,<sup>46</sup> which serves as the direct substantial cause of liberation.

The above three constitute the essential principle of meditative absorption.

To practice the various activations [of appeasement, etc.] related to special powers successfully, one must first meditate on those [four essential principles] as they have been explained. (This is not a definite requirement for the development of minor powers and activations,<sup>47</sup> which are effected even by common recitation alone.) Accordingly, first one must perfect familiarization for which the deity generated in front is regarded as superior, like a lord, and oneself as inferior, like a subject; afterwards, one works for the attainment of powers.

On this subject, Venerable [Taranata] of Jonang and his followers assert that in action tantra, as a general rule, the practice with signs involves no generation of oneself as the deity as part of the deity yoga meditation; nor does the generation of the deity in front involve [the prior] generation of the pledge deity. [The practice with signs] comprises only the invitation of the pristine awareness deity, exhibition of mudras, making offerings, recitation of the mantra, and finally the request for the deity's departure. The second practice, without signs, is contemplation on emptiness and solely that which is in common with the sutra [tradition].<sup>48</sup> The explanation of the six deities and attendant points, they say, is distinctively that of the conduct tantra, and certainly not the system of action tantra.

Most of the earlier masters of Tibet adhered to the system of the six deities and the other aspects [of familiarization] as mentioned above but maintained that there is no generation of oneself as the deity. Others have established conclusively that [action tantra] does involve the generation of oneself as the deity.<sup>49</sup> Karma Trinlé and others say that the ordinary forms of action tantra do not include generation of oneself as the deity, whereas the special forms do.<sup>50</sup> The class [of action tantra] that teaches generation of oneself as an action tantra deity through all the four branches of self-generation,<sup>51</sup> they say, represents a system of practice of action tantra like that of the highest yoga tantra, not the system of action tantra itself.

In whichever way the practice of this set of tantra is done, [with or without self-generation,] it is said to require [these elements]: austerities such as ablution, cleanliness and purity, and fasting, as well as strict purity in offering articles [to the deity], which must be untouched by the flesh of animals (except on a few occasions of performing fierce activations and for a few special practices such as that of Krodha Uchusma and Mahabala<sup>52</sup>); conformity to the vows of a celibate layperson or to higher monastic vows when doing familiarization or effecting powers. Apart from some subsections in the tantra, the path using desire is exclusively that of the practitioner looking at the male and female deities (generated in front) gazing at one another.

### EFFECTING POWERS [cc']

#### **The powers effected are articles, body, and wealth, equal in fortune to that of desire realm gods.**

Once one has seen signs of one's nearness to the deity through the yoga of familiarization, one begins to develop powers, the essence of which is to attain [the state of] awareness-holder or sky-farer, whose status in terms of articles, body, and wealth is equal in fortune to that of the desire realm gods.

The articles include sword and eye elixir, which enable one to traverse celestial dimensions.

The body is one that is purified of the coarseness of the aggregates, and so forth, and manifests eight qualities of lordliness, such as subtleness and lightness, enabling one to traverse celestial dimensions.

The wealth ranges from human wealth like that of a universal [monarch] to the wealth in celestial dimensions which is equal to that of the desire realm gods.

## USING POWERS [dd']

### **Powers are used for provisional or ultimate goals.**

Powers are used for the attainment of provisional and ultimate goals. The first, the provisional goal, has common and uncommon aspects. The common aspect, which depends on the sky-farer status of articles, body, and wealth, is the accomplishment, without hardships, of whatever one intends, both for oneself and others. The uncommon aspect is the attainment of the result of [the path of] proclaimers and solitary sages through having engaged in a mantric practice without the [altruistic] motivation of the universal way.

The ultimate goal, which depends on the support of awareness-holder or sky-farer status, is the actualization of awakening characterized by three dimensions as described in action tantra, accomplished through application of the perfections in the practice of the secret mantra system.

## TYPES OF POWERS AND THE WAY TO EFFECT THEM [vi']

### **Three types of powers are effected in the appropriate manner.**

The powers to be effected are categorized in this system [action tantra] according to principal considerations [of essence, family, etc.], each of which comprises three types.

The three types of powers categorized according to essence are the highest powers, which include the attainment of awareness-holder status, super-normal cognitive powers, and perfect knowledge of treatises; the middling powers, invisibility, youthfulness, and speed-walking; and the lowest powers, ability to control, kill, and drive away [harmful beings];<sup>53</sup> or, alternatively, as explained above, the three of articles, body, and wealth.

The three types of powers categorized according to family are the transcendent family power, which is the power of appeasement; the enriching power of the lotus family; and the fierce power of the vajra family.

The three types of powers categorized according to the deity [who grants them] are the power of appeasement granted by the lord of the family deity; the power of enriching, by the mother deity; and the power of the fierce activation, by the wrathful deity.

The three types of powers categorized according to the indication [of the attainment of powers] are [the powers gained when] substances [used to gain powers] blaze with fire; give off smoke; and give off heat.

The three types of powers categorized according to the promulgator are [the powers gained from] mantras [spoken] by exalted ones [buddhas and bodhisattvas]; by gods; and by beings living above the earth [such as *yakshas*].

Although the bestower of a power [the deity] may be of highest rank, there are known to be cases of a low power being granted owing to the familiarization not being carried out with proper diligence on the part of the practitioner. However, if familiarization is done correctly, even a low-ranking deity, having petitioned other [higher-ranking ones], may grant supreme power.

As to the way powers are effected, this is pointed out by [the words of the root verses] “effected in the appropriate manner.” To begin with, one should examine portents that indicate whether or not there will be success [in achieving powers].<sup>54</sup> If the signs are favorable, one should apply the many methods taught [in action tantra] such as effecting powers by means of fire-offering rituals or doing so simply by recitation of the mantra and meditation. [While doing so,] three times [each day], one should make offerings [to the deity], confess [unwholesome deeds], rejoice [in virtue], make noble aspirations, read the *Transcendent Wisdom* scriptures, make mandalas, observe precepts, and perform rites of protection [of oneself and the place]. For each of the three times, one should be wearing a fresh change of clothes.

On these occasions, it is not sufficient to invite the deity in front; [the deity] must be newly generated. [Then, when reciting the mantra] one does whichever is appropriate of the first two of the four-branched recitation [i.e., observing the form of the letters at the heart of the deity in front or at one's heart]. If light is seen radiating from a statue, reliquary, or other object, or a diminishment of hunger is experienced, and so forth, these are said to be indications of success in recitation and meditation and that the deity is nearly actualized.<sup>55</sup> At that point, one abjures all the faults associated with the effecting of powers as mentioned in the *Dhyanottara Tantra*,<sup>56</sup> and applies oneself with diligence. In that way, one actualizes the consummate result.

### STAGES OF AWAKENING, PATHS, AND RESULT [vii']

**Attainment requires up to eight aeons for one of sharp faculties; or other times.**

**The state attained is that of whichever of the three families one has perfected.**

It is generally asserted that eight aeons is the time required for a person of sharp faculties to attain the result. To elaborate on [the words in the root verses] “or other times,” the *Manjushri Root Tantra* says that one of superior faculties will perfect the result in one lifetime; and the *Indestructible Peak*,<sup>57</sup> that a mediocre person will do so in sixteen lifetimes. As for the least adept, the Venerable Rangjung Dorjé states [in his *Profound Inner Reality*]:<sup>58</sup>

Even with simply the skillful methods of the action and conduct ways,  
[One will attain the result] in sixty human lifetimes.

According to this, in six thousand years [considering one human lifetime to be one hundred years], a practitioner will perfect the stages and paths and attain the state of awakening of whichever of the three families he or she has practiced to effect that state.

It is taught that generally when one reaches the great stage of the path of accumulation through meditation on the path of action tantra, one meets the manifest dimension of a buddha and thereby becomes an awareness-holder of either the desire or form realm.<sup>59</sup> On that basis, one then traverses the remaining paths, thereby actualizing the state of union.<sup>60</sup> However, this explanation, according to which one can reach perfection through the path of action tantra alone, is considered to be a provisional one since to actually enter the state of union it is indispensable to rely on highest yoga tantra.

## 4. CONDUCT TANTRA

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- b' Conduct Tantra [I.B.2.a.iii.dd.1'.b']
  - i' The Meaning of the Name and the Essence of Conduct Tantra
  - ii' Divisions
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    - aa' Entering
      - 1" Outer Entering
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        - a" With Signs
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  - vi' The Way to Effect Powers
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[This chapter, a continuation of the discussion of the four sets of tantra, presents] the second system, that of conduct tantra, set forth in seven parts: the meaning of the name and its essence; divisions; initiations as the entrance to conduct tantra; vows and pledges to be observed; the practice of its path; the way of effecting powers; and the stages of awakening, paths, and result.

### THE MEANING OF THE NAME AND THE ESSENCE OF CONDUCT TANTRA [i']

**Conduct tantra comprises equal proportions of deeds and contemplation.**

This system is called “tantra of both” or “conduct tantra” because it emphasizes conduct that involves equal proportions of outer (physical and verbal) deeds and inner (mental) contemplation, or alternatively, because it emphasizes deliberate behavior.<sup>1</sup>

The essence of conduct tantra is as stated in the *Compendium [on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra]*:<sup>2</sup>

To train thoroughly in a vast range of deeds related to activations—mudras and other characteristic focuses of action tantra—as one’s objects of practice, and to practice [inner contemplation]: these [elements] are found in conduct tantra.

To clarify this passage, the following elements are said to apply to, or be contained within, conduct tantra: to practice and train thoroughly in a vast range of deeds related to activations, which are sets of outer (physical and verbal) [actions] such as mudras and other characteristic focuses as taught in action tantra, and thus [to have] objects of practice that accord with that tantra; to cultivate inner (mental) contemplation that accords with yoga tantra and to practice [deity yoga] in what is like a friend-to-friend relationship with the deity.

## DIVISIONS [ii']

**It has three families. ...**

Conduct tantra is divided into three families of tantras: the family of awakened body, that of awakened speech, and that of awakened mind.<sup>3</sup> Of the three, the family of awakened body is the principal one. The families of deities of those [three] families are the same as the three supramundane families of action tantra [transcendent, lotus, and vajra], respectively. It is said that conduct tantra may also be divided into five families without contradicting the threefold division.<sup>4</sup>

## ENTRANCE TO CONDUCT TANTRA: INITIATIONS [iii']

**...The outer entering is to receive five initiations, the water and the others.**

Conduct tantra consists of the three practices of entering, effecting powers, and using powers. The entering practice is twofold, the outer and the inner. The outer practice of entering has two parts: initiations and pledges.

Concerning the initiations, the *Essence of Pristine Awareness* states:<sup>5</sup>

It is clearly evident that conduct tantra  
Has the two initiations of action tantra,  
As well as those of the vajra, bell, and name.

As stated in this passage, conduct tantra is known to have five initiations: water, diadem, vajra, bell, and name. The *Vairochanabbhisambodhi Tantra* mentions only the water initiation, plus the authorizations [given with the symbols] of the chirurgical eye-spoon and the mirror and the authorization to teach.<sup>6</sup> Even [Buddhaguhya's] commentary on this tantra<sup>7</sup> does not refer explicitly to the diadem and the other initiations. However, the five initiations are clearly taught in the *Vajrapani Initiation*, as well as in a few other [conduct tantras]. Thus, in this system, one receives the vajra master initiation of the conduct tantra upon receiving the five initiations.

Taking the *Vairochanabbhisambodhi* as example, the first initiation of the vase purifies the stains that cause lower forms of life. The second washes away the seeds of cyclic existence. The third creates the seeds of the two accumulations associated with the first to the tenth stage of awakening.<sup>8</sup> The fourth plants the seeds for becoming a regent of a buddha. The diadem initiation plants the seeds for the [thirty-two] major and [eighty] minor marks of the body of a buddha; the bell initiation, the seeds for the sixty qualities of the melodious speech of a buddha;<sup>9</sup> the vajra initiation, the seeds for the twofold omniscience of the mind of a buddha; and the name initiation, the seeds for having one's name known throughout the three realms. The authorizations of the chirurgical eye-spoon and the mirror, the authorization to teach the doctrine, and other rites grant permission to carry out awakened activity for the benefit of others. Although the five initiations of awareness [water, diadem, bell, vajra, and name]<sup>10</sup> bear the same names as [those comprised by the vase initiation of] the higher tantra sets, they differ in meaning.

The *Vairochanabbhisambodhi Tantra* states that initiations in conduct tantra are conferred within mandalas that are elaborate, unelaborate, or extremely unelaborate. Furthermore, initiation within the elaborate mandala is of

[two] types: conferral using an outer mandala made of colored powders; and conferral using the inner mandala of one's body. The above three mandalas may also be subsumed under elaborate and unelaborate, or inner and outer initiations.

### VOWS AND PLEDGES TO BE OBSERVED [iv']

**One assumes vows such as the vow unobscured throughout the three times.**

How are the pledges and vows assumed in conduct tantra? According to the *Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra*, the pledges and vows are assumed at three different moments of the initiation: during the preparatory ritual [of an initiation]; upon entry to the mandala; and at the conclusion of the initiation by making a promise [to maintain them].

The first, taken during the preparatory ritual, is the vow [known as] unobscured throughout the three times. To take this vow, one makes an offering of one's own body [to the buddhas and bodhisattvas]. Through this act, one comes to hold the very essence of the commitment of relative awakening mind, in the way explained above in the context of the action tantra.

The second, taken upon entry to the mandala, is the formation of the ultimate awakening mind in accordance with ritual. For this, one is blessed by the mantra and hand mudra of the ultimate dimension of phenomena and meditates on [the meaning of] emptiness. Then, one is blessed with the mantra and hand mudra of the wheel of the doctrine,<sup>11</sup> whereupon one imagines oneself in the form of Vajrasattva, which is the appearance aspect of emptiness. This vow is thereby distinguished by virtue of its vast and profound aspects, or by the methods with signs and without signs.<sup>12</sup>

The third, taken at the conclusion of the initiation by making a conscious promise repeated after the master, is to assume [the pledges] never to forsake the sacred doctrine, and so on, for which one guards against root downfalls and secondary infractions, as explained in conduct tantra's own system.<sup>13</sup>

### STAGES IN THE PRACTICE OF THE PATH [v']

This section has three parts: entering; approaching; and effecting powers.

#### ENTERING [aa']

There are two aspects of entering: the outer practice; and the inner practice.

**OUTER ENTERING [1"]**

The outer practice of entering is as just explained: [receiving initiation and assuming the pledges].

**INNER ENTERING [2"]**

This section has two parts: with signs; and without signs.

**WITH SIGNS [a"]**

**The inner entering with signs involves the six deities.  
For recitation and meditation on the two aspects of letter and  
base, the deity is like a sibling or friend.**

The inner practice of entering has two aspects, with signs and without signs.<sup>14</sup> Tibetan masters present a number of different perspectives on these two and ways to identify them. According to the Venerable Taranata, practice with signs consists of the meditations of the yoga of six deities with generation of oneself as the deity and generation of the deity in front. The *[Vajravidarana] Tantra* states:<sup>15</sup>

The yogin, having first bathed,  
Takes his place on the vajra mat,  
Then offers, prays, and meditates on six deities.  
Emptiness, letter, sound, form,  
Seal, and sign are said to be the six.

Accordingly, once the outer and inner cleansing [rituals] have been performed, a circle of protection is imagined, the pristine awareness deities invited, hand mudras exhibited, and then offerings and petitions made.<sup>16</sup> That is followed by meditation on the authentic condition [of things], known as the deity as emptiness; then, in sequence, meditation on the syllables of the mantra and on the seed [syllable], known as the deity as letter; meditation on the sound of the mantra along with its light, which radiates forth and reconverges, known as the deity as sound; meditation on the body of the deity, known as the deity as form; meditation on the insignia, and so forth, at the heart [of the deity], known as the deity as seal; and meditation on one's own body, blessed by mantra, as being the body of the deity, known

as the deity as sign. [These steps] represent the general meditation using the six deities.

For the special meditation, the *Vairochanabbhisambodhi Tantra* states<sup>17</sup> that the deity to be meditated upon comprises three deities: the deity as letter, as seal, and as form. Each is divided into two aspects. The two aspects of the deity as letter are the deity as awakening mind and the deity as sound. The two aspects of the deity as seal are the deity depicted in a form and shape, such as the wheel [of the doctrine]; and the deity without form or shape, emptiness, symbolized by the azure [triangular] source of phenomena.<sup>18</sup> The two aspects of the deity as form are the deity as utterly pure form and the deity as impure form. The deity as utterly pure form is the very essence of realization in which all conceptual characteristics are totally pacified, a direct experience of the essence of enlightenment by one's intrinsic self-awareness [i.e., awareness that cognizes its own nature]. The deity as impure form is meditation on [the deity as] a form that has color, face, hands, and so forth, by means of conceptual thought.

Based on understanding [of the deity] in that way, the stages of meditation in the yoga with signs [as explained in the *Vairochanabbhisambodhi Tantra*] are practiced. As preliminary steps, one performs [the rituals] of protecting oneself, the place, and the yoga.<sup>19</sup> Following these is meditation on [the two aspects of] the deity as letter. For the first aspect of the deity as letter, the relative manifestation of ultimate awakening mind is visualized as a moon disk. For the second aspect of the deity as letter, [the syllables of] the mantra to be recited, which are standing on the moon disk, are imagined to be resonating with their sounds.

Next is meditation on the [deity as] base. For the first aspect, the [subjective] base, one imagines that the utterly pure nature of everything [syllables and moon] is oneself as the deity, and one performs blessings with mantras, mudras, and so on. For the second aspect, the [objective] base, one visualizes the deity in front, which manifests from oneself as the deity like a reflection in a mirror. Then, one focuses on [the syllables of] the mantra on the moon disk at the heart of the deity in front and retains the life [wind]. With single-minded application, one mentally recites the mantra, training [in this way] until an experience of vivid appearance occurs. Throughout this phase, one regards [the relationship between] the deity and oneself to be simply like that of siblings or friends.

Ngorchen Dorjé Chang<sup>20</sup> and others, taking the *Vairochanabbhisambodhi* as an example, present [the two practices in this way]: The practice with signs, explained in accordance with the *Sadhana [of Vairochana]*,<sup>21</sup> includes

the generation on the ground of the mandala of the reflected form [i.e., the deity in front] along with its "life" [i.e., the moon and mantra] on the basis of an external mandala, and the imagining of the ultimate mandala [of the wisdom deities] in the sky, and so on. Practice without signs has both real and nominal [aspects]. The real aspect consists of training in the union of emptiness (freedom from concepts) and compassion. The nominal aspect includes the generation of the deity in its two aspects as letter and the two bases, the performance of the mental recitation while retaining the life wind, and so on.

## WITHOUT SIGNS [b"]

### **Practice without signs is cultivated in conjunction with the minds of entering, abiding, and emerging.**

The common yoga without signs includes contemplation of [the deity's] insignia and syllable at the heart of the deity; blocking the life wind; and the use in the path of [sexual] desire [related to] the laughter of the male and female deities, and so on.<sup>22</sup>

The special yoga without signs is cultivated in conjunction with three minds: the minds of entering, abiding, and emerging, the essence of which is the ultimate awakening mind itself. The mind of entering is the realization of the unborn nature of all phenomena (the aggregates, etc.) gained by examining them in terms of the four extremes;<sup>23</sup> the mind of abiding, the direct realization of the unborn nature as the essence of the nonconceptual state; and the mind of emerging, the ensuing great compassion directed toward suffering beings who lack such realization.

Proficiency in those two kinds of yogas, with and without signs, produces resultant powers which are also of two kinds: by means of the former are attained powers with signs [i.e., the form dimensions of awakening]; and by means of the latter, both powers with signs and without signs [i.e., the reality dimension and the form dimensions of awakening]. Accordingly, the *Vairochanabhisambodhi* states:<sup>24</sup>

The sublime Victor declared that [yoga] with signs  
 Brings about powers with signs.  
 But persevering in the signless [yoga]  
 Also leads to powers with signs;  
 Since that is the case,  
 Adhere to the signless in all ways.

**APPROACHING [bb']**

**The practice of approaching is to become skilled in practice with and without signs.**

The common practice of approaching has two aspects: with signs and without signs. The first has two aspects, the outer and the inner.

The outer practice with signs is to familiarize oneself with the deity by means of the four-branched recitation [as explained in the entering practice] in conjunction with the retention of the life wind, until one has completed the recitation of the requisite number [of mantras], one hundred thousand, or however many are prescribed.

The inner practice with signs is to clearly imagine oneself as Buddha Shakyamuni, at whose heart is a moon disk on which is [the form of] Vairochana. In the heart of Vairochana on a moon disk is the arrangement [of the syllables] of the mantra. Retaining the life wind, one does the recitation [as before].<sup>25</sup>

The practice without signs is to thoroughly analyze the very nature of the color and other features of the deity's form (which is inseparable from oneself) by breaking down these imagined appearances into their most subtle particles. In accordance with what one has thereby realized, one experiences mind as simply self-awareness [i.e., awareness that cognizes its own nature], released of oneself as the form of the deity, devoid of [dualistic] appearances. Then, one mentally recites [the mantra] as appropriate. (This description of the practice without signs accords with that given by some learned masters.<sup>26</sup> Essentially, it is contained in the yoga without signs explained above, and therefore many would not consider it a separate part of this topic.)

**EFFECTING POWERS [cc']**

**The practice to effect powers uses outer and inner mandalas for ordinary and special powers**

**Through which one becomes an awareness-holder of the desire or form realm. ...**

After perfecting familiarization with the deity, one engages in practices to effect powers. By relying on outer and inner mandalas, one gains ordinary and special powers in the following ways:

For the ordinary powers, one draws the outer mandala used to effect powers, places within it a sword or other ritual object [such as noose, wheel, iron arrow, or hammer], and then recites [the given numbers of mantras]. When the object blazes [with light] and one grasps it in one's hand, one attains the state of awareness-holder (or another power).

For the special powers, one relies on the inner mandalas of the four elements [visualized within the body]<sup>27</sup> and thereby gains proficiency in breath control. This effects inner powers which depend on the mind alone, the five supernormal cognitive powers such as that of performing miracles,<sup>28</sup> and the powers to greatly effect the welfare of oneself and others, plus accompanying powers, accrued from having entered the ranks of awareness-holders.

According to this tantra, the supreme state [of awakening] can be attained through the use of articles as an awareness-holder [whose status is] equal in fortune to the gods of the realm of desire and form up to the highest gods of Unsurpassed;<sup>29</sup> through a body purified of its coarse elements (aggregates, etc.) and endowed with the eight qualities of physical lordliness, subtle [form], and so on; through the [mental body] support in the intermediate state [between lives]; and through experience in a future life.

### **THE WAY TO EFFECT POWERS [vi']**

The way to effect powers is included in the above discussion and will not be elaborated on separately. Regarding this, Venerable [Taranata] of Jonang speaks of four practices: the practice of entering, which is initiation and pledges; the practice of yoga, which is familiarization [with the deity] by means of the two yogas [with and without signs]; the practice to effect powers in which, having gained stability in the focus of meditation, the yogin makes offerings to a drawn representation of the deity or a constructed mandala and then practices [to attain powers], as a result of which he experiences a vision of the deity in the waking state or in dream [who confers power]; and the practice to effect great powers, which includes practices related to the sets of activations and powers as explained in the individual tantras.

While cultivating these four, a practitioner must maintain purity and cleanliness. However, except for special purposes, to undergo the rigors of asceticism is not necessary since [in conduct tantra] one is required to meditate on oneself as the deity.

**STAGES OF AWAKENING, PATHS, AND RESULT [vii']**

**... Progress on the mundane path**

**And the supramundane depend on one's faculties.**

**Even hindered, full awakening is attained in three great aeons.**

In this [system of] tantra, persons of the families who have entered the way of the perfections and those who have not entered that way both initially engage in mantra practice based on eight dispositions: the seed-like disposition of being motivated by faith, and the sprout-like disposition, root-like, trunk-like, branch-like, leaf-like, flower-like, and fruit-like dispositions.<sup>30</sup> In addition to these eight is the disposition that is attended by desire, which motivates one to strive for simply the happiness of humans and gods of the desire realm; and the disposition that is free of the desire [characteristic of the desire realm], which motivates one to strive for the happiness of the higher realms. These [ten] dispositions, which when subdivided include one hundred and sixty dispositions, constitute what is taught as the mundane path leading to the result of higher rebirth.<sup>31</sup>

On the supramundane path, a person of low faculties will take six great aeons to progress through the stages associated with the different degrees of realization of the two [aspects of] no-self<sup>32</sup> and enter the stage of "practice with appreciation of the universal way." A person of sharp faculties will take one aeon to enter [the same stage]. This stage represents the great level of the path of accumulation in this system.<sup>33</sup>

Subsequent to that, by means of the three minds of entering, abiding, and emerging, in one aeon [one reaches] the stage of pristine awareness, which is the culmination of the ten stages of "practice with appreciation."<sup>34</sup> At that point, one receives oceans of teachings from oceans of buddhas, whereupon one realizes the pristine awareness of [the stage] "conducive to definitive separation."<sup>35</sup> One moves through the stages of awakening, the first, and so on, and upon reaching the end of the tenth stage, becomes a buddha by contemplating the five [seed] syllables of the great hero as the very essence of realization.<sup>36</sup> It is said that the stage of omniscience, the great enjoyment dimension of full awakening,<sup>37</sup> will definitely be reached by a person of low faculties in eight aeons at the most, and by one of sharp faculties, despite hindrances of any kind, in three great aeons.

This [progression through stages] is designated by Ngorchen and others as "practice to effect [powers]." According to their view, having once attained the state of awareness-holder of the sword by means of practice to

effect powers, in that [same] body of an awareness-holder, one engages in deeds of excellence such as moving throughout oceans of buddha realms. As a result, the state of Great Vairochana is realized.



## 5. YOGA TANTRA

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- c' Yoga Tantra [I.B.2.a.iii.dd.1'.c']
  - i' The Meaning of the Name and the Essence of Yoga Tantra
  - ii' Divisions
  - iii' Entrance to Yoga Tantra: Initiations
  - iv' Vows and Pledges to Be Observed
  - v' Stages in the Practice of the Path
    - aa' The Familiarization Stage
      - 1" Four Elements of the Path
      - 2" Distinctions in the Main Yoga Practice
        - a" With Signs
        - b" Without Signs
    - bb' The Stage of Effecting Powers
  - vi' The Process of Effecting Powers
    - aa' Meditative Absorption
    - bb' Mantra Recitation
    - cc' Fire-offering Rituals
  - vii' Stages of Awakening, Paths, and Result

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[This chapter, a continuation of the discussion of the four sets of tantra, presents] the third system, that of yoga tantra, set forth in seven parts: the meaning of the name and the essence of the tantra; divisions; initiations as the entrance to yoga tantra; vows and pledges to be observed; stages in the practice of its path; powers to be effected; and the stages of awakening, paths, and result.

## THE MEANING OF THE NAME AND THE ESSENCE OF YOGA TANTRA [i']

**Yoga tantra emphasizes contemplation on the profound and the vast.**

Yoga tantra is so named because it emphasizes the inner yoga meditation of method and wisdom; or, alternatively, because based on knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the profound ultimate truth and the vast relative truth, it emphasizes contemplation that inseparably unites these two truths.

The essence of yoga tantra is as stated in the *Compendium [on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra]*:<sup>1</sup>

To have an arrangement of all the awareness goddesses together in the mandala circle; and to train in the ten essential principles, such as practices, activations, and powers, based on that arrangement, and thereby to practice [deity yoga] to effect [powers]: these apply to the tantra of both [i.e., yoga tantra].

To clarify this passage, the following elements are said to apply to, or be contained within, yoga tantra: to have an arrangement within the mandala circle of all the awareness goddesses together, such as goddesses who perform the secret offering, the chief serving goddess who is the Incense Bearer, and the others;<sup>2</sup> to train by means of the ten essential principles, which include the practices (contemplation, mantras, and seals), activations (such as those of a [tantric] master, leading students [into the mandala], etc.), and the gaining of powers (that of wealth, etc.) based on that arrangement [of the awareness goddesses] or, alternatively, gaining powers associated with activations, and so forth, based on that arrangement; and thereby practice [deity yoga] to effect the two powers [ordinary and supreme]. The ten essential principles are set forth in [Anandagarbha's] *Illumination of the Summation of Essential Principles*:<sup>3</sup>

What are the ten essential principles? They are the mandala; mantra; seals; protection of oneself, the place, and so forth; the ritual of inviting the deities; recitation; meditation; fire-offering rituals (incorporating inner and outer aspects); dissolution [of the seals]; and request for departure [of the pristine awareness deities].

These ten essential principles form two divisions: the relative principles, distinguished by method (conduct); and the ultimate, distinguished by wisdom (meditation on the ultimate).<sup>4</sup> Included in these principles are both the inner yoga of contemplation<sup>5</sup> and outer deeds (as branch practices of the contemplation), owing to which yoga tantra is known as “tantra of both.”

## DIVISIONS [ii']

### **It has five families. ...**

Division of yoga tantra according to family yields five root families; hence, there are also five tantras. These [five] become one hundred when split into subdivisions. The *Indestructible Peak* states:<sup>6</sup>

Families refers to the different types,  
 Namely, permanence, stability, precious power,  
 Measureless light, and unfailing accomplishment.  
 The families are said to be of one hundred types  
 All of which are included in five types.  
 The five types are the buddha, vajra,  
 Jewel, doctrine, and action families.

The five major families are subdivided, with each major family comprising five minor families, and each of the five minor ones split into the four divisions of heart, seal, secret mantra, and awareness mantra. This yields one hundred families. These families are all contained within the two [groups of tantras] of method and wisdom. The tantras of method emphasize awakening mind; and the tantras of wisdom emphasize transcendent wisdom.<sup>7</sup>

## ENTRANCE TO YOGA TANTRA: INITIATIONS [iii']

### **...The five initiations of the student And the six of the master are taken gradually. ...**

The preliminary steps include entering the particular mandala for one of the five families; assuming the pledges and vows; the descent of the [invoked] pristine awareness deities; and determining one's special deity<sup>8</sup> by the tossing of a flower [into the mandala]. Subsequent to this is the conferral of the five initiations of the student.

The first, the initiation of water, begins with ablution performed with the action vase, followed by conferral with [the water of] the vases [held by] the deities, principally the vase of the practitioner's special deity and the victorious vase.<sup>9</sup>

The second, the diadem initiation, is conferred with the diadems of the respective families: the diadem formed by the five buddhas in the case of the transcendent family,<sup>10</sup> and so forth.

The third, the vajra initiation, is conferred with the vajras of the respective families: the transcendent vajra in the case of the transcendent family,<sup>11</sup> and so forth.

The fourth, the bell initiation, is conferred with a bell, the handle of which symbolizes the particular family: [a five-pronged vajra handle] in the case of the transcendent family, and so forth.

The fifth, the initiation of the name, is conferred by the giving of a name [indicative] of the family [of the deity] on which the flower has dropped.

In addition to these is the initiation of the master which comprises six initiations: the irreversible initiation, secret initiation, authorization, prophecy, encouragement, and praise. All together, eleven initiations are to be received in the yoga tantra.

On this subject of initiation, the *Essence of Pristine Awareness*<sup>12</sup> states that in addition to the five initiations of the five families,

The initiation of irreversibility  
Is clearly specified in yoga tantra.  
This initiation has six distinct parts  
Together known as the master's initiation.

Based on what is stated in this citation, it should be pointed out that yoga tantra has the five initiations of the student (water, etc.) and six initiations within the initiation of the master, a total of eleven. This is evident in sources such as this tantra [just cited], as well as the *Indestructible Garland* and others.

With regard to these initiations, a person may merely enter the mandala [but not be initiated];<sup>13</sup> or enter the mandala [and be initiated]. [In the latter case], the person who does not assume the vows of the five families but does assume those of the bodhisattva will be given only the student initiations; while one who assumes both vows will be given the initiations in their entirety (including those of the vajra master). These specifications are made in [Anandagarbha's] *[Illumination] Commentary on the Summation of Essential Principles*.<sup>14</sup>

The secret initiation in this context is unlike that of the highest yoga tantra. What is called secret initiation in yoga tantra refers to the student secretly entering the mandala, and having entered, viewing it, followed by the [master's] revealing of the essential principles of the mandala and deity, the ten essential principles such as the mandala, and the different activations [performed by a vajra master].

Some yoga tantras also speak of a "conferral of the pristine awareness through wisdom initiation." However, this is simply a name applied to the setting [of the student] in the training in the four seals after the transmission of mantra.

### VOWS AND PLEDGES TO BE OBSERVED [iv']

The *Indestructible Peak* states:<sup>15</sup>

Having taken refuge in the Three Jewels,  
The Buddha, his teachings, and his followers...

With this formula, the vows are proclaimed. Then, the candidate is examined, and one deemed qualified [to receive the initiation] enters the mandala. At that point, one repeats the following words:

Just as the protectors throughout the three times...

up to:

...and set all beings in the state of perfect peace.<sup>16</sup>

When one has repeated this formula three times, it is said that one has assumed, according to ritual, the mantric vows to avoid the fourteen defeating transgressions and to fulfill the prescriptions of the fourteen branch pledges.<sup>17</sup> Although this is indeed the case, for mantric vows to be complete depends upon receiving [the main part of] the initiation. Thus, as is stated in the section on the three types of ethics [in the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*], "the assuming of vows is complete at the conclusion of the initiation ritual."

The pledges and vows that are to be safeguarded in yoga tantra have been presented previously [in the *Buddhist Ethics* section of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*].

**STAGES IN THE PRACTICE OF THE PATH [v']**

This section has two parts: the stage of familiarization [with the deity]; and the stage of effecting powers.

**THE FAMILIARIZATION STAGE [aa']**

This is presented in two parts: a general statement on the four elements of the path; and distinctions in the main practice of yoga.

**FOUR ELEMENTS OF THE PATH [1'']**

**... An individual**

**Who is free of shortcomings and possessed of four qualifications and the vows,**

**Through the result and its fundamental cause, trains in the means of actualization:**

**The deity yogas incorporating the four seals which serve to purify**

**The ground-of-all, afflicted, mental, and sense consciousnesses.**

The master Anandagarbha [in his *Illumination*] asserts that all the stages of yoga tantra's path are contained in these four elements: the individual qualified to enter [yoga tantra], the result to be achieved, the fundamental cause, and the means whereby the result is achieved.

The first, the recipient [of the teachings] qualified to enter [yoga tantra] is an individual who has overcome the four shortcomings of not having engendered an awakening mind, and so on; and is endowed with [their opposites,] the four qualifications: having formed in the proper way both the aspiring and venturing aspects of an awakening mind, which is the entrance to the universal way; freedom from hesitations and doubts by virtue of one's great confidence in tantra; following the precepts of the Buddha by virtue of one's ability to observe the pledges as taught by the Transcendent One, inclusive of the points of training with respect to prohibitions and injunctions; and faith in the path and the teacher of the path [the Buddha], in the deity and in the master. In addition, the *Indestructible Peak* specifies that practitioners are required to follow the tantric path while observing either lay or monk vows.

The second, the result to be achieved, is the great enjoyment dimension of Buddha Vairochana, the embodiment of the four dimensions of awakening,<sup>18</sup> free from all obscurations and endowed with perfect qualities.

On this subject, most yoga tantra masters speak of there being a minor Vairochana, the one who emanated as the mandala on the summit of Mount Meru and other locations and taught [yoga tantra]; and Great Vairochana, possessed of the five certainties, who dwells in the Great Unsurpassed Realm<sup>19</sup> and who is the basis for [all other] emanations.

[Shakyamitra's] *Ornament of Kosala*<sup>20</sup> and [Anandagarbha's] *Illumination of the Summation of Essential Principles* explain that Vairochana is a form dimension, the essence of the dimensions of the five transcendent ones,<sup>21</sup> who resides in the Unsurpassed Realm; and Great Vairochana is the beginningless and endless ultimate dimension of phenomena, the nature of pristine awareness, free from the two obscurations.<sup>22</sup>

The third, the fundamental cause for achieving the result, is the awakening mind, Ever-Perfect (Samantabhadra), which has neither beginning nor end, in nature is luminous clarity and is characterized as one's intrinsic self-awareness [i.e., awareness that cognizes its own nature]. It serves as the manifestation ground of all the deities, mantras, and seals, being the essential reality of one's own mind, utterly pure from the beginning of time.

The fourth, the means whereby the result is achieved, comprises the following yogas: the yoga of the great seal of awakened body which serves to dispel the adventitious deceptions of the ground-of-all consciousness and thereby to actualize its nature, mirror-like pristine awareness; the yoga of the pledge seal of awakened mind, to dispel the adventitious deceptions of afflicted consciousness and thereby to actualize its nature, the pristine awareness of total sameness; the yoga of the doctrine seal of awakened speech, to dispel the adventitious deceptions of mental consciousness and thereby to actualize its nature, discerning pristine awareness; and the yoga of the action seal of awakened activity,<sup>23</sup> to dispel the adventitious deceptions of the five sense consciousnesses<sup>24</sup> and thereby to actualize their natures, the pristine awareness of accomplishment. The pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena is present in the natures of the other four.<sup>25</sup>

In summation, the means whereby one achieves the result consists of both method and wisdom. Method, which effects purification of deceptions, refers to deity yoga meditation related to the four seals, plus attendant practices.<sup>26</sup> Wisdom refers to the pristine awareness of one's intrinsic self-awareness, which directly knows mind's essential reality. The latter, the wisdom aspect, is realized by a person of low faculties in a gradual way by

means of study, reflection, and so on; and by one of sharp faculties instantaneously through the power of blessing and meditation.

## **DISTINCTIONS IN THE MAIN YOGA PRACTICE [2"]**

This section has two parts: practice with signs; and practice without signs.

### **WITH SIGNS [a"]**

**One of sharp faculties trains in the initial union and the two supremely triumphant contemplations;  
One of low faculties, by means of contemplation of the four yogas,  
Trains in attention on the coarse deity and the subtle insignia  
While applying the ten essential principles.**

A person of sharp faculties practices deity yoga meditation on the basis of three contemplations that conform to early events: the way the Buddha first became fully enlightened; the way the Buddha, in the interim, emanated the mandalas for the root and explanatory [yoga tantras] and set in motion the wheel of teachings of yoga tantra on the summit of Mount Meru and at other locations;<sup>27</sup> the way the Buddha, in the end, as the all-powerful sovereign of each [yoga tantra] family,<sup>28</sup> enacted activities such as guiding students; and related secondary events. These events applied as forms of yoga by later followers [of the Buddha] [constitute the three contemplations of] the initial union, supremely triumphant mandala, and supremely triumphant act.<sup>29</sup>

Since a person of low faculties would be unable to practice the three contemplations, he or she should practice the meditations of the four yogas: the yoga of generating oneself as the pledge deity of one's family; the subsequent yoga of merging the pristine awareness deity with the pledge deity and experiencing this [union] as one flavor; the all-inclusive yoga of meditation on this [union] as the very nature of the animate and inanimate world; and upon completion of the first three yogas, the supreme yoga in which the state of single-minded contemplation is attained. These contemplations are called "attention on the coarse [form of the] deity."

Once a practitioner has cultivated deity yoga by means of the three contemplations or the four yogas, whichever appropriate, he or she engages in what is called "attention on the minute insignia of the deity," explained as follows:

With the tongue positioned against the palate, one visualizes at the navel a minute five-pronged vajra no larger than a hair's tip or a sesame seed, the same color as the deity. One imagines that this vajra exits through the nostrils and stands erect on the tip of the nose.<sup>30</sup> One's mind then remains fixed on the vajra by means of both mindfulness and vigilance. When concentration has become stable, a distinct sensation of bliss will arise at the tip of the nose or in other parts of the body. As a result, one will achieve great serviceability of body and mind.<sup>31</sup>

Once concentration on the features of the minute vajra has become stable, one imagines that many minute vajras emanate forth and pervade everything from the inside and surroundings of one's body to all parts of the universe. Finally, one draws in all these emanated [vajras], from the tip of the nose and into the heart. This meditation yields great benefits, such as achievement of the special contemplation of mental quiescence.

These forms of yoga are trained in and brought to realization through the methods of the ten essential principles [of tantric expertise]:

The two mandalas (form and formless)... fire-offering rituals (inner and outer); dissolution; and the request for departure.

This passage refers to the following ten: the mandala, which is twofold, that of reflected images [i.e., with form] and the formless one;<sup>32</sup> mantra, outer and inner; four seals [the great seal, pledge seal, doctrine seal, and action seal] applied to the deities; [rituals of] protection of oneself, the place, and the yoga; the invitation that gathers the pristine awareness deities; [whispered] recitation of vajra words and mental recitation of mantra; meditation comprising the three contemplations, and so forth; fire-offering rituals, both outer and inner, performed for the sake of mandala worship or other purposes; dissolution, which is the release of the seals [to interrupt the contemplation of oneself as the deity]; and request for the [deity's] departure after making offerings.

## WITHOUT SIGNS [b"]

**Perfect penetrating wisdom is the view of the unborn.**

The *Summation of Essential Principles* states:<sup>33</sup>

With an understanding of the syllable *a*  
One meditates on the forms of all syllables.

Through meditation from one's mouth to another's,  
One comes to attain the powers.

The meaning of the syllable *ā* in this citation is understood to be the unborn [nature]. Applying that understanding, one examines all the syllables of mantras by breaking them down into parts, and meditates on their selfless nature. The meaning of "mouth" is understood to be the door [to liberation]. Applying that understanding, one penetrates [the meaning of] emptiness, the door to liberation,<sup>34</sup> with regard to oneself [as the deity], and likewise with regard to the deities in front and the mantras. Here, what is taught involves primarily wisdom that is conceptual. Furthermore, the same tantra states:<sup>35</sup>

That which is called perfect penetrating wisdom  
Is known to be contemplation.  
The seals should be practiced in that state:  
Meditation [in this way] brings rapid success.

The perfect penetrating wisdom spoken of in this citation is the view of the unborn [nature]; it denotes contemplative equanimity in a state without any concept whatsoever, based on knowledge of the lack of intrinsic nature of things.

The *Indestructible Peak* presents extensive teachings on the forms of signless meditations in the transcendent family, vajra family, and the other families, for which is emphasized analytical insight by means of discerning wisdom. [The signless yoga] taught in the *Summation of Essential Principles*, on the other hand, comprises both mental quiescence and insight. Meditation in which mental quiescence and insight are alternated depending on conditions of mental agitation, fogginess, and other [impediments] that arise in practice is taught in [Shakyamitra's] *Ornament of Kosala*.<sup>36</sup>

### THE STAGE OF EFFECTING POWERS [bb']

This discussion will form part of the following section.

### THE PROCESS OF EFFECTING POWERS [vi']

**Powers and the pristine awareness of the seals are effected  
Through meditative absorption, recitation, and fire-offering  
rituals.**

There are three [methods] in the process of effecting powers: reliance on meditative absorption, which brings about mainly supramundane powers; recitation of the mantra, effecting both [mundane and supramundane] powers; and fire-offering rituals, effecting mainly mundane powers. The ultimate result of all [three] is attainment of the supreme [power]: pristine awareness of the seals [of awakened body, speech, mind, and activities].

### **MEDITATIVE ABSORPTION [aa']**

Having completed familiarization, one applies oneself to the practice of effecting powers [with understanding] of the utter purity [emptiness] of the three spheres [meditator, meditation, and object meditated upon]. Subsequently, one cultivates the seals [of awakened body, speech, mind, and activities] for the benefit of others and attends to the infinite activations associated with those [four] seals, thereby experiencing [favorable] signs and developing supernormal cognitive powers. Having succeeded in that, one effects powers through collective practice<sup>37</sup> according to the procedure set out in the subsequent-practice section of the *Glorious Supreme Original Being Tantra*.<sup>38</sup> If this does not lead to success, the practice must be repeated seven times. If success is still not forthcoming, one relies on the enhancement practice called “the rite of killing the deity.”<sup>39</sup> These instructions are intended for the person of sharp faculties.

The general familiarization and the special contemplation of the minute vajra are intended for someone of low faculties and for practitioners in common. Once those are mastered, one engages in the various special meditative absorptions taught [in this tantra] and thereby attains ordinary powers, such as the skill [to find] treasure [underground], walk on water, possess [the knowledge] of awareness mantras and so forth; and the supreme power [attainment of awakening].

### **MANTRA RECITATION [bb']**

Powers are effected through two types of recitation, vajra [mental] recitation and word [whispered] recitation. A person of sharp faculties relies on vajra recitation of two forms: the relative, for which there is a focus; and the ultimate, which is without focus.

For the relative vajra recitation with focus, one first cultivates the vivid appearance of the deity in front and oneself as the deity. Having drawn in the wind and sense powers, one [mentally] recites the mantra while recol-

lecting its meaning. Then, while exhaling and right until the end of the exhalation, one continues reciting the mantra, observing the deity in front. Again, one [inhales], blocking the life wind, thoughts, and senses; focuses on the form of the deity which is undifferentiated from oneself; and continues the [mental] recitation of the mantra.

For the ultimate vajra recitation with no focus, first one meditates on the unborn [nature] of the deity in front, oneself [as the deity], and the mantra, and considers everything to be emptiness. While blocking [the movement of] the life [wind], with a mind free from grasping to anything at all, one regards the deity, oneself, and the mantra as being [empty] like the sky and mentally recites the mantra with attention on the reality dimension of the deity. When releasing the breath, one brings to mind the form [of the deity endowed] with its attributes. Again, one [inhales,] drawing in the life [wind], and so on. Thus, one continues the mental recitation, alternating between those two modes.

Persons of low faculties effect powers through the recitation of words. With one's legs in the position particular to the deity of one's family, one meditates on the deity in front and oneself [as the deity]. With the left hand in a fist [position appropriate to] the family, one holds the insignia of the family. With the right hand, one holds at the heart the family's chaplet (for counting numbers of mantras). One recites the mantra for a period of four months in a style particular to the family (silently in the case of the transcendent family [of Vairocana], and so on.) When that is completed, one recites the mantra for another four months, four sessions a day, in front of a representation of one's deity. At the conclusion [of the four months], one exerts oneself fervently in the recitation for the entirety of one night. It is taught that as a result, at daybreak, one gains powers from the representation of one's deity.

In these ways, a practitioner effects the supreme power [awakening], as well as the mundane powers associated with external articles, [the state of] sky-farer awareness-holder, and so on. The former (supreme) is the power [accrued] mainly through vajra recitation; the latter (mundane), the powers [accrued] mainly through word recitation. However, the powers effected by word recitation eventually lead to the supramundane power.

### **FIRE-OFFERING RITUALS [cc']**

On the particular fire-platform appropriate for the purpose (purification of negativities, enhancement of the [family and spiritual] lineage, or other

purpose), one performs the fire-offering ritual<sup>40</sup> every day preceded by the deity yoga. This is continued until signs indicating success (in, for example, purification of negativities) have manifested to oneself or to another. Then, one performs each of the [four] activations [appeasement, enrichment, domination, and the fierce form]. [In addition to] these explanations of various procedures to effect powers, the use in the path of the bliss derived from [the male and female] holding hands is also found in this tantra.

### STAGES OF AWAKENING, PATHS, AND RESULT [vii']

**One of sharp faculties swiftly crosses the stages and paths in one lifetime;  
And one of low faculties, in sixteen or less. The culmination of the five awakenings  
Is perfect enlightenment, in essence the five pristine awarenesses.**

Once the path of this [tantra] has been entered, a person of sharp faculties is said to traverse all the stages and paths of yoga tantra within one lifetime, while one of low faculties does so in up to sixteen lifetimes. Thus, in comparison to the previous [tantras], the time one takes is extremely brief.

To expand, at the tenth stage of awakening, a practitioner, whether of sharp or low faculties, will receive the initiation of great light [from all the buddhas], and thereupon practice the contemplation that is the perfect end of the fourth meditative absorption.<sup>41</sup> One who has attained such absorption is known as “one endowed with a mental body,”<sup>42</sup> “a bodhisattva in the last existence,” and “a bodhisattva accomplisher of all intentions” since [at that stage] to accomplish all of one’s [intended] deeds depends merely upon one’s wish to do so.

Such an “accomplisher of all intentions” attains enlightenment in the realm of Unsurpassed [called] Richly Adorned, doing so in the following way: Dwelling in the heart of awakening,<sup>43</sup> through the force of having actualized the mind of unsurpassable awakening, one remains in equanimity in the unstirring contemplation possessed of six qualities.<sup>44</sup> At that time, all the transcendent ones of the ten directions arouse one from that contemplation and impart the instructions on the five awakenings.<sup>45</sup> Thereupon, by contemplating these five awakenings [in sequence], one attains perfect awakening, in essence the five pristine awarenesses.<sup>46</sup>

This state of enlightenment possesses the characteristics of the three dimensions of awakening: the reality dimension, in flavor identical to the

four pristine awarenesses, in essence the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena; the enjoyment dimension in its major aspect, the manifestation in the Great Unsurpassed Realm as form endowed with five certainties, and the enjoyment dimension in its minor aspect, which, as the all-powerful sovereign, emanates the mandala, teaches [yoga tantra], and so forth, on the summit of Mount Meru and at other locations; and the manifest dimension which demonstrates the twelve deeds,<sup>47</sup> such as dwelling in the Joyful Realm, and so forth.

Thus, although [traversing the stages and paths in] yoga tantra does take a long time, ultimate buddhahood will be achieved within one minor aeon.

## 6. HIGHEST YOGA TANTRA

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- d' Highest Yoga Tantra [I.B.2.a.iii.dd.1'.d']
    - i' The Meaning of the Name and the Essence of Highest Yoga Tantra
    - ii' Ascertainment of the Meaning of This Tantra
      - aa' A Concise Presentation of Its Composition
        - 1" The Causal Continuum
        - 2" The Continuum of the Ground or Method
        - 3" The Resultant Continuum
      - bb' The Means of Realizing the Three Continuums
- 

[This chapter, a continuation of the discussion of the four sets of tantra, presents] the fourth system, highest yoga tantra, which is explained in two parts: the meaning of its name and its essence; and ascertainment of the meaning of this tantra.

### THE MEANING OF THE NAME AND THE ESSENCE OF HIGHEST YOGA TANTRA [i']

**The highest tantra is the supreme yoga of method and wisdom.**

The name of this system is "highest yoga tantra" (or "great yoga tantra"), "yoga" because it inseparably unites method and wisdom; "great," being supreme among all tantras; and "highest" since there is no other tantra above it. This is substantiated by the following passage from the *Kalachakra Root Tantra*:

Yoga is not composed of method alone,  
Nor is it exclusively wisdom.

The Transcendent One taught yoga  
As the union of method and wisdom.

and this statement in the *Commentary on the Indestructible Tent*:<sup>1</sup>

That which is known as “highest of all tantras” is the highest yoga tantra because it surpasses action, conduct, and yoga tantras.

The essence of highest yoga tantra is as described in the *Compendium [on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra]*:<sup>2</sup>

In the midst of an entourage of queens, in the form of an all-powerful sovereign, and by means of the contemplation of great bliss, to dwell perfectly in the *bhaga* of the queen; to train in accordance with sublime vajra words, the statements of six parameters, contrary to worldly customs; and to practice [deity yoga] to effect the objects of practice [(i.e., powers)]: these apply to great yoga tantra.

To clarify this passage, the following elements are said to apply to, or be contained within, highest (great) yoga tantra: In the midst of an entourage of queens, in the form of an all-powerful sovereign such as Heruka (in mother tantra) or Vairochana (in father tantra);<sup>3</sup> and by means of the contemplation of the great bliss of the male and female [deities'] union, to be the “king who resides in the castle” (as is said in the tantras), which means to dwell perfectly in the queen's *bhaga*,<sup>4</sup> that is, in the divine palace in the source of phenomena; to train according to the sublime vajra words,<sup>5</sup> the statements of six parameters—interpretable, non-interpretable, provisional, definitive, standard, and coined terminology<sup>6</sup>—which are contrary to worldly human customs (as is said in the tantras, “Success is rapidly achieved by relying on one's mother, sister, or daughter”<sup>7</sup>) by performing extremely base acts; and thereby to effect ordinary and supreme powers.

#### **ASCERTAINMENT OF THE MEANING OF THIS TANTRA [ii']**

This section has four parts: a concise presentation of its composition; the means of realizing the three continuums; a very detailed presentation of each of the continuums; and a synopsis of this system's view, meditation, conduct, and result.

## A CONCISE PRESENTATION OF ITS COMPOSITION [aa']

### The meaning of the tantra is contained in the three continuums.

There seem to be a few ways of condensing the meaning of the highest yoga tantra from the perspectives of the different sets of tantra and individual masters. Of these, the main one is as found in the *Continuation of the Guhyasamāja Tantra*.<sup>8</sup>

Tantra denotes continuousness.  
 It is composed of three aspects:  
 Ground, nature, and inalienableness.  
 When distinguished in this way,  
 The nature aspect is the cause;  
 The ground aspect refers to the method;  
 And inalienableness, the result.  
 These three contain tantra's meaning.

Since [this tantra's] composition of three continuums is widely known, it will be presented according to that format.

The term "tantra" ["continuum"] denotes the mind of awakening, Ever-Perfect (Samantabhadra), which has neither beginning nor end, in nature luminous clarity. It is "continuous" since, from time without beginning up to the attainment of enlightenment, it has always been present without any interruption.

Tantra has "three [aspects]": the "nature" or causal continuum, from the perspective of being the fundamental cause [for awakening]; "ground" or continuum of method, from the perspective of being the contributory condition [for awakening]; and "inalienableness" or resultant continuum, from the perspective of being the awakening that is the perfect fulfillment of the two goals [of one's own and others' welfare].<sup>9</sup>

The meaning of this alone is of crucial importance in understanding this tantra and will therefore be explained here in a concise form.

## THE CAUSAL CONTINUUM [1"]

The causal continuum denotes the natural condition of mind from the level of a sentient being to the state of a buddha, which abides, like the sky,

without ever changing. There are any number of expressions for this, such as “nature,” “essence of enlightenment,” and “naturally present affinity,” found in the sutras; and “essential principle of oneself,” “awakening mind,” and “mind of Ever-Perfect,” found in the lower tantras. In this system of highest yoga tantra, however, the causal continuum may be explained in conjunction with the meaning of the union of *e* and *vam*.

The natural condition of the mind is possessed of three features: remaining unchanged from the level of a sentient being until the state of a buddha; being an inner knowing, whose characteristic nature is one’s intrinsic self-awareness [i.e., awareness that cognizes its own nature];<sup>10</sup> and being supreme immutable great bliss. This natural condition itself, called by various names such as “reality as it is,” “causal Vajradhara,” “original buddha,” and so forth, is represented by the syllable *vam*.

That reality, owing to the crucial fact of being the mind which is the very nature of things, presents itself with form or appearance.<sup>11</sup> In the impure state, its appearance manifests as the aggregates and other constituents of an ordinary being in cyclic existence. In the both-pure-and-impure state, it arises as the infinite visions of the contemplation of a yogin. In the utterly pure state,<sup>12</sup> it appears in the form of a wheel of inexhaustible ornaments of the body, speech, and mind of a buddha. That which has the nature of these manifold forms is called “emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects,” or “totality of forms,” “totality of faculties,” and so forth, and is represented by the syllable *e*.

The union of what is represented by *e* and by *vam* is referred to as the “causal continuum,” “cause” in terms of being the fundamental stuff of awakening and “continuum,” because it exists from time without beginning as the nature of the mind and continues from the level of a sentient being until the state of a buddha. [Maitreya’s] *Jewel Affinity* states:<sup>13</sup>

From beginningless time, unfettered  
By the shell of beings’ emotions,  
The nature of mind is stainless  
And is said to have no beginning.

Another reference to “nature” is found in [Nagarjuna’s] *Fundamental Verses Called Wisdom*.<sup>14</sup>

The nature is pure and unmodified  
And does not depend on anything else.

As stated here, the nature is not something created anew by causes and conditions or some reification but is the authentic condition of mind's very essence.

### **THE CONTINUUM OF THE GROUND OR METHOD [2"]**

In a broad sense, the term "ground" refers to all possible aspects of the path which allow one to progress from [first] awakening one's affinity [for the universal way]<sup>15</sup> until realization of the [fully] awakened state; and, in a strict sense, to the initiations which ripen one and the path which effects liberation, along with all its branches. These aspects constitute the "ground" because they serve as the support for the attaining of and abiding in the result, which is awakening, just as the earth provides the ground for the growth of new shoots.

"Continuum" refers to the connectedness of all aspects of the path. The two powers (provisional and ultimate) are connected to the two phases of the path [generation and completion]; the two phases, connected to the pledges and vows as their support; and the pledges and vows, connected to initiations, which provide the entrance [to the highest yoga tantra].

The term "method" is used because the path itself serves as the contributory condition in the actualization of the result of awakening. Method includes both the distant method and the close. The distant method comprises all aspects of the path, from the three ways of the perfections [i.e., the ways of the proclaimers, solitary sages, and bodhisattvas] up to and including yoga tantra; and the close method, the two phases of the path of the great yoga tantra, as well as the branches, which are practiced after having received the initiation.

### **THE RESULTANT CONTINUUM [3"]**

The "resultant continuum" denotes becoming the foundation for others' welfare when the fundamental cause, freed from all adventitious stains, transforms into the state of full awakening as the dimension endowed with the two purities.<sup>16</sup>

Such a foundation would deteriorate or be lost if the result [of awakening] meant a state of temporary reversal of the obstacles caused by obscurations, or the perfect peace [that is the goal] of inferior [spiritual pursuits,] characterized as the cessation of the stream of consciousness.<sup>17</sup> This is not the case here, where the result means a permanent and continuous state, and is therefore referred to as "inalienableness."

As long as space exists, there will be sentient beings, and as long as sentient beings exist, the awakened state continues without interruption. The result is therefore called “continuum” owing to its permanent character. It is called “result” since it is the final main goal yearned for by all bodhisattvas who practice according to the method of mantra.

The above discussion of the three continuums is based on [Abhayakara’s] elucidation in *Awn of Esoteric Instructions*.

What follows now is an explanation of this subject that is very easily understood: All of the distinct appearances (such as environments, bodies, resources, [notions of] time, perceptions, mentations, and conceptual constructs) that are experienced by these [beings] widely known as “sentient beings of five classes”<sup>18</sup> are produced by the inconceivable force of actions perpetrated by each one of them. Like falling hairs seen by someone with a cataract, these appearances are merely deceptive visions, which seem to be separate from oneself but in fact are not, arising due to the habitual tendencies of beginningless ignorance.

Even at the very moment of the exuberance of these appearances, the ground of their manifestation, the mind which is by nature luminous clarity, is present without the tarnish of the habitual tendencies [that create] deceptive visions: This mind of luminous clarity is called the causal continuum.

By means of the esoteric instructions of an authentic master, one develops familiarity with [the understanding that] whatever appears is the very essence of luminous clarity, with nothing to be eliminated or added. Alternatively, persons incapable of that practice would cultivate the method whereby all appearances are freely enjoyed as the various displays of gods and goddesses within the limitlessly ornamented palace of the transcendent ones. Having approached the pristine awareness of luminous clarity in either of those ways, one stabilizes the practice of familiarization with this pristine awareness [so that it is] continuous like the current of a river. This is called the continuum of the path.

One develops continuous familiarization in that way, and at some point, although one’s mind manifests freely in the form of the entire range of the knowable, since the stains of deception have then been totally exhausted, dualistic impressions are absent, and the mind [is realized] as great pristine awareness of self-awareness [i.e., awareness that cognizes its own nature], the very essence of the state of union<sup>19</sup> free from all obscurations.

As this state is undefiled by even the slightest concept, construct, or subject and object duality, there manifests spontaneously the awakened ac-

tivity that completely and fortuitously fulfills all aspirations of sentient beings throughout the infinity of space, without partiality and in accordance with their interests, intentions, and faculties. This awakened activity is called the resultant continuum.

### THE MEANS OF REALIZING THE THREE CONTINUUMS [bb']

**The causal continuum is to be understood by eliminating misconceptions through study and reflection.**

**The continuum of method is to be relied upon through experience in meditation.**

**The resultant continuum is to be realized through three accumulations.**

The causal continuum is to be understood, just as it is, once misconceptions [concerning reality] have been eliminated by means of the wisdom that arises from broad and impartial study and undistorted reflection [on the teachings].

The continuum of method is to be relied upon in such a way that the significance of one's study and reflection does not remain as mere intellectual understanding, but becomes a personal experience based on meditation attended by intense faith and effort.

The resultant continuum is to be realized through having brought to perfection the three accumulations of merit, pristine awareness, and ethics.



## 7. THE CAUSAL CONTINUUM

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cc' A Detailed Presentation of the Three Continuums in Highest Yoga  
Tantra [I.B.2.a.iii.dd.1'.d'.ii'.cc']

1" The Causal Continuum

a" Shantiguṇḍa's Elucidation of the Causal Continuum

i" Essence

ii" Principal Nature

iii" Characteristics

iv" Synonyms

v" Attributes

vi" Temporal States

vii" Immutability

---

[This chapter begins] the very detailed presentation of the three continuums in highest yoga tantra, for which there are three parts: one, the basis of purification, the causal continuum, which is the nature of the ground-of-all; two, the purificatory means, the method continuum, the foundation for the stages of the path; and three, the actualized purified state, the resultant continuum of inalienableness. Part one, the causal continuum, is presented first from the perspective of the great adept Shantiguṇḍa and his lineage.

**SHANTIGUṆḌA'S ELUCIDATION OF THE CAUSAL CONTINUUM [a"]**

**The causal continuum is to be understood by its essence;  
Principal nature of luminous clarity; four characteristics;  
Synonyms (continuum, ground, ground-of-all, and original  
buddha);**

**Attributes of interrelated flaws and qualities, or causes and results;  
Five temporal states; and immutability. ...**

The causal continuum has been described by Tibetan philosophers in a number of contradictory ways. However, the prevalent view on this subject has been mentioned above. Here, the causal continuum will be discussed according to the elucidation of Shantigupta, a *heruka* in this age of conflict, and his lineage:<sup>1</sup>

Essence, principal nature, characteristics,  
Synonyms, attributes, temporal states, and immutability:  
These epitomize the causal continuum.

Accordingly, the causal continuum is explained in seven points, the first of which is its essence:

**ESSENCE [i"]**

The essence of the causal continuum refers to its aspects that ceaselessly occur from time without beginning, namely, that which is the luminous clarity nature of the mind; mind and mental events; the nature of the environment and inhabitants; the channels, winds, vital constituents, and the ultimate dimension of phenomena.

**PRINCIPAL NATURE [ii"]**

The luminous clarity nature of the mind is the principal of the above aspects. Thus, it is considered here as a separate point with this name [principal nature].

**CHARACTERISTICS [iii"]**

Four distinctive features characterize the causal continuum: its close conformity to the attributes of the result [of buddhahood], such as buddha realms, the dimensions of awakening, and pristine awareness; its nature as great bliss; its uninterrupted flow; and its presence due to the very nature of reality.

**SYNONYMS [iv"]**

Its synonyms include terms such as continuum of cause, ground of purification, ground-of-all, and original buddha. Each of these has several distinctions.

“Cause” [in “continuum of cause”] comprises the following fourteen causes: the cause of emotional afflictions; the cause of karma; the cause of thorough affliction (suffering), the environment, and the inhabitants; the cause of the path; the cause of emptiness, bliss, and their union; the cause of the coarse, the subtle, and the very subtle; the cause of the two form dimensions, and the cause of the reality dimension of awakening.

“Ground” [in “ground of purification”] comprises the following fifteen grounds: the ground of the purity of the environment, the ground of the purity of the inhabitants, the ground of the purity of offerings, the ground of the purity of the transformations, and the ground of the purity of their natures; the ground of cyclic existence, the ground of perfect peace, and the ground of their natures; the ground of the partial, and the ground of the final; the ground of the relative, and the ground of the ultimate; the ground of the coarse, the ground of the subtle, and the ground of the very subtle.

The first five, beginning with the purity of the environment, are distinctions in the basis of purification in terms of karmic actions and activities. The next three, beginning with the ground of cyclic existence, are distinctions in terms of liberation and bondage. The next two, the grounds of the partial and the final, are distinctions in terms of what is nominal and what is real. The next two, the grounds of the relative and the ultimate, are distinctions in terms of substantial and designative existence. The last three are distinctions in terms of the manner of realization.

Moreover, the ground of the coarse comprises nine [aspects], distinguished according to characteristics and types of persons. Sandalwood, utpala flower, lotus, red lotus, and jewel-like persons represent five distinctions based on characteristics.<sup>2</sup> Differentiations in emotional afflictions, karma, physical traits, and family represent four distinctions based on types. These [last four] are conceptual designations applied to persons.

The “ground-of-all”<sup>3</sup> corresponds to the way it is explained in the context of the way of characteristics. The “original buddha” is twofold: the intrinsic original buddha and the sudden original buddha.<sup>4</sup>

### ATTRIBUTES [v"]

The causal continuum is possessed of interrelated flaws and qualities, or causes and results, [explained as follows]:

In the causal continuum are obscurations of the four states (waking, dream, deep sleep, and sexual union) present as flaws or causes, together

with qualities or results, which are the four joys and the four [stages of experience of] light.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, that which has the meaning of *evam maya*,<sup>6</sup> the four channel-wheels, as well as the four winds and four vital essences,<sup>7</sup> are accompanied by stains and dispersion,<sup>8</sup> owing to which these are reified as the “four families,” “four tantras,” “four beings,” “four qualities,” “four periods,” and so on,<sup>9</sup> and are present as flaws or causes. At the same time, four habitual tendencies generate four notions: the notion that everything truly exists, the notion that everything is subtle particles, the notion that everything is mind only, and the notion that not even the mind has true existence. From these notions originate the views associated with the four [Buddhist] philosophies, the four [original Buddhist] schools, the four moments [of an act], the four joys, the four truths, and so on.<sup>10</sup>

These views, along with the four seals,<sup>11</sup> serve to purify stains. When a certain degree of freedom from stains and absence of dispersion is achieved, both flaws and qualities, or causes and results, come to be present mutually related.

[As the very nature of the causal continuum is] perfectly realized just as it is, a total freedom from stains and absence of dispersion is achieved. Consequently, the causal continuum manifests solely as qualities and results, such as the four dimensions of awakening or the four indestructible states.<sup>12</sup>

### TEMPORAL STATES [vi"]

There are five temporal states of the causal continuum: the state at which the [path] concordant with [the result of] liberation has not yet been entered; that state at which it has been entered; the state on the path of an ordinary person; the state on the path of training; and that on the path of no more training. These five are called, respectively, original buddha, causal continuum, path-entered, exalted, and resultant Vajradhara.

### IMMUTABILITY [vii"]

The immutability of the causal continuum refers to its essence, which remains unaffected when passing from a former to a later state. Thus, the causal continuum is neither destroyed nor modified by birth, old age, sickness, death, migration, [twelve] links of dependent origination, logical investigation, truths, absorption in the nonconceptual state, or the resultant indestructible contemplation.

The causal continuum should be understood by means of these seven points.

## 8. THE NATURE OF MIND

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b" Naropa's Exceptional Exposition on the Causal Continuum

[I.B.2.a.iii.dd.1'.d'.ii'.cc'.1".b"]

i" Overview

ii" Detailed Presentation

aa" The Main Topic: The Authentic Condition of Mind

(1) The Pure State: The Essence of the Authentic Condition

(a) The Common Explanation in Accordance with the Way  
of the Perfections

(b) The Uncommon Explanation: The Special Feature in  
Highest Yoga Tantra

(2) The Impure State: The Manifestation of Appearances  
Based on the Condition of Deception

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[This chapter, a continuation of the discussion on the causal continuum as the basis of purification and nature of the ground-of-all, presents] part two, the exceptional exposition on this subject by the learned and accomplished Naropa and his lineage.

**NAROPA'S EXCEPTIONAL EXPOSITION ON THE CAUSAL CONTINUUM [b"]**

This has two parts: an overview; and a detailed presentation.

**OVERVIEW [i"]**

**...The exceptional system**

**Speaks of two authentic conditions, that of body and that of  
mind.**

This exceptional system of exposition [originates with] the lord of attainment, Tilopa, who directly received from a pristine awareness sky-farer the esoteric instructions [contained in] the tantra *Perfect Words*.<sup>1</sup> The tantra states:

The [three] stages: the authentic condition of things,  
The path, and the arising of the result.

Accordingly, all of the content of the path of highest yoga tantra is included in three stages: the ground or authentic condition of things; the path; and the arising of the result [of awakening]. On the first, [Tilopa] states:<sup>2</sup>

The authentic condition of phenomena is twofold:  
That of the body and that of the mind.

To explain, “authentic condition” denotes the nature, or way of being, of all phenomena, inclusive of everything from form to omniscience. The authentic condition is also called the “total seal at the ground stage,” “primordial reality,” “original lord,” “affinity for enlightenment,” and “essence of enlightenment.” On that basis of division, there are two authentic conditions of things, that of the body and that of the mind, when distinguished in terms of the way the authentic condition manifests.<sup>3</sup>

### **DETAILED PRESENTATION [iī’]**

This section has three parts: the main topic, the authentic condition of mind; the branch topic, the authentic condition of the body; and representation [of the causal continuum] in *evam* and other symbols.

### **THE MAIN TOPIC: THE AUTHENTIC CONDITION OF MIND [aa’]**

This is presented in two parts: the pure state, the essence of the authentic condition; and the impure state, the manifestation of appearances based on the condition of deception.

### **THE PURE STATE: THE ESSENCE OF THE AUTHENTIC CONDITION [(1)]**

The causal continuum, the essence of enlightenment, is commonly known as an “affinity.” This affinity seems to be described in a number of different

ways by philosophers. Therefore, it is important to have at least a partial understanding of their views.

Analysts maintain that the mental factor of detachment with regard to worldly life and worldly possessions, with few desires and an attitude of contentment, is the affinity of an exalted person.

Traditionists consider affinity to be a mental seed, the potency that can give rise to immaculate pristine awareness.

Idealists or experientialists consider affinity to be the potency that generates immaculate qualities, which has always been present in mind's continuum from time without beginning. This potency is asserted to exist due to the very nature of reality.

In the centrist tradition, there is agreement, for the most part, in asserting that the affinity is the true nature [of mind], just as it is, attended by stains. However, the different ways of identifying that true nature are extremely numerous. This has given rise, here in Tibet, to arguments over the various distinct views [on the affinity], with a countless number of persons speaking only nonsense.

In the context of the indestructible way, the essence of enlightenment is defined in different ways. The patriarchs of the magnificent Sakya [tradition] explain that [the essence of enlightenment] is mind's nature, which is intrinsically pure. They state that although the qualities [of enlightenment] are not actually manifest in that essence, they are nevertheless inherently present as seeds. When the result [of enlightenment] is actualized by means of the contributory factors of the two accumulations [merit and wisdom] or practice of the two phases [generation and completion], the qualities of enlightenment are attained through a transformation of those seeds.

The great omniscient one of Jomonang<sup>4</sup> [distinguishes two types of affinity], the naturally present and the evolving. He maintains that the naturally present affinity endowed with the thirty-two qualities of the reality dimension of awakening<sup>5</sup> is present in all sentient beings as a natural attribute and has always been since the beginning of time. This affinity is a real buddha that is concealed in adventitious stains. The evolving affinity, on the other hand, is acquired anew, generated through the contributory factors of propensities developed in hearing the teachings, and so forth.

The outstanding Tibetan master Sangwé Jin [Bodong Choklé Namgyal]<sup>6</sup> describes affinity as the most refined essence of body, speech, and mind, known as "the indestructible refined essence possessed of three features."

Lord Tsongkapa and his followers explain affinity in terms of negation only, as the “emptiness of mind being devoid of true existence.”

The magnificent [Third Karmapa] Rangjung Dorjé maintains that the essence of enlightenment is ordinary awareness itself,<sup>7</sup> which transcends definition and conceptual characteristics. It is, in nature, the indivisibility of pristine awareness and the ultimate dimension of phenomena; like the moon’s reflection on water, it is neither true nor false.<sup>8</sup>

The omniscient Longchenpa makes the following statement in his *Commentary on the Wish-Fulfilling Treasury*:

That which is primordially uncompounded, the pristine awareness that is one’s intrinsic self-awareness [i.e., awareness that cognizes its own nature], ineffable emptiness and clarity: this is the essence of enlightenment. The *Jewel Affinity* says:<sup>9</sup>

As it was, so it shall be:  
It is the unchanging nature of reality.

Explanations on the part of followers of these masters are given solely in accordance with the above traditions, apart from minor degrees of refinement in their presentations.

This concludes an overview of the ways of defining the causal continuum. What follows now is the main discussion, which has two parts: the common explanation in accordance with the way of the perfections; and an uncommon one enhanced by a special feature in the system of highest yoga tantra.

### THE COMMON EXPLANATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAY OF THE PERFECTIONS [(a)]

**The luminous clarity nature of mind is the naturally present affinity  
With three features. The evolving affinity is perfectly acquired.  
As illustrated by nine examples, the essence is concealed by adventitious stains.**

Mind’s nature, which is undifferentiable from the sixty-four qualities of enlightenment,<sup>10</sup> is intrinsically pure, in itself luminous clarity, the empti-

ness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena. This nature of mind, referred to as the “naturally present affinity,” is the ground of everything in both cyclic life and perfect peace. It is described as having three distinguishing features: its arising in a continuous stream from time without beginning; its presence due to the very nature of reality; and its resemblance to the six superior sense fields.

The first feature indicates that since this affinity has arisen continuously since beginningless time, it is not one that is acquired anew.

The second feature indicates that the affinity is present, with no distinctions, in every sentient being, as the very nature of reality.

The third feature indicates that the affinity bears seeds that are virtually identical, and equal in fortune, to the six immaculate sense fields [of a buddha] inherent in the six sense fields of a sentient being.<sup>11</sup>

The perfectly acquired evolving affinity, according to the omniscient one of Jonang, is one that has not existed previously, but arises anew. Rangjung Dorjé describes this affinity as the mind's nature, which is intrinsically pure, undifferentiable from the emptiness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena. Being the stainless essence of the eightfold group of consciousnesses,<sup>12</sup> it exists as the nature of the four pristine awarenesses. [The evolving affinity is so called] because it is an affinity that serves as the base from which evolve the two form dimensions of awakening.

What this means is that as a result of having perfectly developed wholesome qualities, the stain of not recognizing the very essence of the eightfold group of consciousnesses is overcome. The eightfold group of consciousnesses are thereby liberated as self-awareness [i.e., awareness that cognizes its own nature]. When this occurs—[a process] called “transformation of the eightfold group of consciousnesses into the four pristine awarenesses”—the pristine awarenesses appear to others' perception as the form dimensions of awakening.

Expressed concisely, the victorious Rangjung Dorjé and others [define] the nature of mind attended by stains [in this way]: Its unborn essence is the naturally present affinity, and its unimpeded nature, the evolving affinity. Hence, mind's nature attended by stains is called the “union of the two dimensions of awakening [formless and form] attended by stains.” As for the nature of mind purified of stains, its unborn essence is the reality dimension of awakening, which serves one's own welfare, and its unimpeded nature manifests as the form dimension, which serves others' welfare. Hence, the nature of mind cleansed of stains is called the “union of the two dimensions of awakening devoid of stains.”

The continuum of the ground, or essence of enlightenment, as has just been described, pervades the minds of all embodied beings. It is, however, concealed by adventitious stains (as elucidated in the *Jewel Affinity* using nine metaphors). As is said:

Not seeing what is; seeing what is not.

Thus, there [arises] deception which misapprehends the essence. [What follows now is an explanation of] the stains that conceal the essence of enlightenment, illustrated by nine metaphors.

The stains present in the mind of a mere sentient being who has not yet entered the path are the [karmic traces of] wholesome and unwholesome actions which serve solely as the cause of cyclic existence. These stains, characterized by strong or rough mental states, are of four types—attachment, aversion, delusion, and the three mixed in equal proportions—and are illustrated by four metaphors, that of a lotus, [a swarm of] honeybees, a husk, and a swamp.

The habitual tendencies of ignorance present in the mind of an arhat, either a proclaimer or solitary sage, are the obscurations that conceal the essence of enlightenment. The nature [of these stains] is illustrated by the metaphor of the earth covering a treasure buried below [the dwelling of] a pauper.

The stains to be forsaken on the path of seeing in the universal way which are present in the mind of an ordinary person<sup>13</sup> who is training [on the path] are illustrated by the metaphor of [a shoot's] skins.

The stains to be forsaken on the [universal way's] path of meditation which are [still] present in the mind of an exalted being [who has attained the path of seeing] are illustrated by the metaphor of an old rag.

Of the stains [to be forsaken] on the ten stages of awakening which are present in beings who dwell on those stages, stains that apply to the first seven impure stages are illustrated by the metaphor of a womb, and those that apply to the three pure stages, by the metaphor of a clay mold holding a golden image.

The essence [of enlightenment] in each of the above cases is illustrated by the metaphors, respectively, of a buddha concealed in the hollow of a lotus; honey [guarded] by honeybees; a kernel within its husk; gold in a swamp; treasure buried in the earth; a shoot in its skins; a buddha statue wrapped in an old rag; a [future] ruler [still] in the womb; and a golden image [still] in its clay mold.<sup>14</sup>

**Its essence is unchanged throughout the three states  
Of the impure, both pure and impure, and utterly pure.**

When the essence of enlightenment is thoroughly impure due to adventitious stains, it is designated “sentient being.” When it is possessed of both the pure and the impure, it is called “bodhisattva dwelling on the path.” When it is utterly pure, it is called “transcendent one.”

To explain, the impure state denotes that state of being subject to cyclic existence created by karmic actions and emotional afflictions. The bodhisattva state denotes the state at which there is freedom from karma and emotional afflictions but not yet freedom from the level of the habitual tendencies of ignorance. The state of a transcendent one denotes the state at which there is freedom from karma and emotional afflictions as well as freedom from the habitual tendencies of ignorance.

These three temporal states [of the essence of enlightenment] are asserted from the perspective of relative deception, while the essence of enlightenment itself, in being the nature of the ultimate dimension of reality, never changes.

**It exists from time without beginning as the source of all  
phenomena,  
But is difficult to fathom, entwined by four paradoxes.**

The [*Mahayana*] *Phenomenology Scripture* states:<sup>15</sup>

The dimension with no beginning in time  
Is the abode of all phenomena.  
Owing to its being, cyclic life  
And perfect peace are experienced.

Accordingly, that known as the “essence of enlightenment” has been present since time without beginning and serves as the basis upon which phenomena of cyclic life and perfect peace are conceived as deception or liberation. This essence is extremely difficult to fathom by anyone other than a buddha. Because it is entwined by four paradoxes, it is said to be taught to bodhisattvas of exceptionally sharp faculties. The *Jewel Affinity* states the four paradoxes in the following way:<sup>16</sup>

Because it is pure, yet possessed of emotional afflictions,  
Because it is without thorough affliction, yet [regains] purity,

Because it has no disparity, yet [attains] qualities,  
 Because it is spontaneous, yet without concepts....

To expand, the true nature [of the essence of enlightenment] attended by stains is, at exactly the same time, utterly pure, and yet attended by the stains of thorough affliction. This paradox signifies its nature.

The true nature [of the essence of enlightenment] free from stains has never in the past been sullied by the stains that produce thorough affliction, and yet through the subsequent cultivation of the path, it regains its purity. This paradox signifies its awakening.

The essence of enlightenment is possessed of the stainless qualities of a buddha, such as the ten powers, as its very nature for which there is no disparity [even] in the state of an ordinary being; hence, it does not differ in this respect from a previous phase to a later one. Nonetheless, through the subsequent clearing away of stains, it attains these qualities anew. This paradox signifies its qualities.

The essence of enlightenment is the activity of a buddha, effortlessly and spontaneously fulfilling the hopes and objectives of those to be guided, in accordance with their individual good fortunes. Nonetheless, it is not subject to conceptuality such as resolving to do one thing or another. This paradox signifies its activity.

The intrinsically pure nature of the essence of enlightenment is the source to be realized and the base to be purified. Awakening is the very essence of the realization of one's intrinsically pure nature and the qualities that are the result arising from that realization. Awakened activity in various forms is the means through which this nature comes to be realized by others. These last three—realization, qualities, and activity—function as purificatory factors. From the base and those [three] factors arises the result, the Three Jewels. Thus, [the *Jewel Affinity*] says:<sup>17</sup>

This affinity for the Three Jewels  
 Is the domain of the omniscient ones.

Only a buddha fully comprehends the unobscured authentic condition of the affinity; others do not. Accordingly, [the *Jewel Affinity*] states:<sup>18</sup>

The inconceivable [essence] that is realized  
 By those embodying pristine awareness,  
 Being subtle, is not an object of study;

Being ultimate, is not an object of reflection;  
 Being of a profound nature, is not an object  
 Of meditation such as the mundane kind.  
 Like form to the congenitally blind,  
 It has never been seen by the childish.  
 Like the sun to a newborn still inside his home,  
 It is seen not even by the exalted ones.

Next is the uncommon explanation of the essence of enlightenment enhanced by a special feature [found] in the system of highest yoga tantra.

**THE UNCOMMON EXPLANATION: THE SPECIAL FEATURE IN HIGHEST YOGA TANTRA [(b)]**

**It is the ultimate dimension of phenomena, indivisible  
 profundity and clarity,  
 Abiding in the body as the pristine awareness dimension of the  
 nature of great bliss.**

The common perspective on the authentic condition of mind [as discussed above] is enhanced in the highest system of mantra by an additional special feature. There are several ways in which this explanation is given. However, the essence of enlightenment as spoken of in the way of the perfections can be considered to be the causal continuum in the system of the great yoga tantra, in which case the uncommon and special feature is what is known as self-awareness [i.e., awareness that cognizes its own nature], the nature of great bliss. An extensive discussion of this now follows.

[Tilopa's] *Perfect Words* states:<sup>19</sup>

*Evam*, the nature of method and wisdom,  
 Abides in the center of the body  
 As total pristine awareness present in the body.

The method [aspect] referred to in this verse is emphasized in the father tantra, while the wisdom [aspect] is emphasized in the mother tantra. Each has its own way of elucidating the union [of method and wisdom], the nature of *evam*. Simply put, the father tantra speaks of the "ultimate dimension of phenomena," which is indivisible profundity [emptiness] and

clarity [pristine awareness]. As to the way it is described, [Buddhashrijnana's] *Liberative Essence* states:<sup>20</sup>

Totally free from any kind of concept,  
Utterly inconceivable and inexpressible,  
Like space, the stainless source of everything:  
It is known as profundity beyond scrutiny.

Bearing the form of the total seal,  
It is like a magical illusion or a rainbow,  
Purifying one's own and others' minds:  
It is known as sublime clarity.

The supreme nature of their indivisibility  
Is the essence that pervades all things,  
Utterly untouched by cyclic existence:  
It is known as the ultimate dimension of phenomena.<sup>21</sup>

According to the mother tantra, the natural glow of primordially pure pristine awareness is present as "semen" [white vital essence] and "ovum" [red vital essence]. The element of "semen" generates the body, while the element of "ovum" generates speech, which is of the nature of wind. [Body and speech] are each referred to as a "body." That which depends on, or abides in, these two bodies is known as the "pristine awareness dimension of great bliss nature." In this system, this represents the essence of enlightenment. The *Hevajra Tantra* states:<sup>22</sup>

Great pristine awareness is present in the body.  
Totally devoid of all conceptuality,  
It is that which pervades all things.  
Although abiding in the body, it did not arise from it.<sup>23</sup>

The *Kalachakra [Condensed] Tantra* says:<sup>24</sup>

That being the case, the Foremost One [Kalachakra] explained the body's innate bliss<sup>25</sup> of non-emission in the way of [secret] mantra.

The mind in its aspect of not recognizing the very essence of such bliss is termed "darkness." Accordingly, "buoyancy" [white vital essence], "motil-

ity" [red vital essence], and "darkness" [ignorance] denote body, speech, and mind<sup>26</sup> in the impure phase, and the three indestructible states of awakened body, speech, and mind in the pure phase. As is said in the *Kalachakra [Root Tantra]*:<sup>27</sup>

[*Vam*] is declared to be a sphere, moon, "semen," and awakened body;  
 [*E* is] the aspiration sign, "ovum," sun, and awakened speech;  
 The syllable *a* is Rahu, awakened mind.  
 The element of space exists as *e*.

The effect of not realizing that great bliss is the unfolding of cyclic existence. The effect of realization of great bliss is becoming a buddha. Thus, bliss is also called the natural condition of, nature of, or affinity for, both cyclic existence and perfect peace.

When bliss has not been realized, all phenomena of the state of cyclic existence—the outer environment, the bodies, voices, and minds of the inhabitants [sentient beings], and so on—arise from the qualities of "motility," "darkness," and "buoyancy." When bliss has been realized, all the dimensions of buddhas and their realms manifest from the nature of that great bliss.

The darkness aspect of bliss is designated as the "luminous clarity of the total empty" and the "indestructible vital essence which is the root of cyclic existence." This constitutes the final [impediment] to be overcome by innate pristine awareness. [Aryadeva's] [*Lamp*] *Summary of Tantric Practices* states:<sup>28</sup>

All beings are without freedom  
 As they are not born out of free will.  
 The cause of their condition is luminous clarity:  
 The luminous clarity of the total empty.

The luminous clarity referred to in this verse exists within the same collection as "semen" [white vital essence], "ovum" [red vital essence], and wind; this collection is also present in the formless realm comprising very subtle elements.<sup>29</sup> It encompasses all the states of mind within cyclic existence. Therefore, in *Kalachakra*, such a collection is taught using expressions such as the "ground-of-all consciousness," "habitual tendency for emission," "mind of the fourth state" and "obscuration of dispersion."<sup>30</sup>

[Next is] a supplementary presentation of the various synonyms for the ground continuum:

**Sutras and tantras expound the ground continuum using many synonyms:  
Essence of enlightenment, transcendent wisdom, emptiness,  
Original lord, innate pristine awareness, and other terms.**

In the causal way, such terms as “essence of enlightenment,” “transcendent wisdom,” and “emptiness,” plus the other hundred names for transcendent wisdom, are used to teach this ground continuum. A very extensive range of terms is found in the mantra system, including “original lord” and “innate pristine awareness” as well as the many synonyms for ultimate truth in [Aryadeva’s] *[Lamp] Summary of Tantric Practice*,<sup>31</sup> “luminous clarity,” “indestructible pristine awareness,” and so on. Many expressions such as “suchness” and “perfect end” are found in [Buddhashrijnana’s] *Oral Teachings of Manjushri*.<sup>32</sup> In other sources, the ground continuum is taught using many synonyms such as *evam*, *aham*, and *nada*.<sup>33</sup>

#### **THE IMPURE STATE: THE MANIFESTATION OF APPEARANCES BASED ON THE CONDITION OF DECEPTION [(2)]**

**Coemergent ignorance creates the deception of the eightfold group, from which arises  
The dualism of apprehended and apprehender and the various manifestations of cyclic existence and perfect peace.**

The essence of enlightenment, or ground-of-all,<sup>34</sup> does not fall to the side of either cyclic existence or perfect peace, nor can it be partitioned. Nonetheless, it serves as the ground for the unimpeded manifestation of all appearances of cyclic existence and perfect peace; hence, it is a support. Supported by it are the ground-of-all consciousness (which is simply [a collection of] habitual tendencies), the instigative [subjective] mind, the sixth or mental consciousness, and the five sense consciousnesses.<sup>35</sup> This eightfold group [of consciousnesses] and attendant mental factors are adventitious stains that can be shed. Therefore, it is this latter appropriating consciousness,<sup>36</sup> or ground-of-all at the level of the habitual tendencies based on ignorance,

which was declared [by the Buddha] to be the root of cyclic existence. Reference to this is found in discourses and commentaries that pertain to the last cycle of [Buddha's] teachings.<sup>37</sup>

That being the case, coemergent with [mind's] true nature, just as it is—the primordial, or root, indestructible great vital essence<sup>38</sup>—is ignorance of it. Owing to this ignorance, wind that is as though mixed with that very [vital essence] activates the subjective mind. When this movement is not recognized for what it is, due to the influence of the red aspect [vital essence] of manifestation, there arise the appearances of cyclic existence and perfect peace: this is the conception of other. Due to the influence of the white aspect [vital essence], there arises the sense of self,<sup>39</sup> and thus the eightfold group of consciousnesses unfolds.<sup>40</sup>

In brief, stirred by the movement of wind, the red and white [vital essences] initiate the dualistic split into apprehended and apprehender, or appearances and mind, self and other, subject and object, and so on. All conceptions of self are the unborn essence that is [mind's] true nature, or emptiness aspect; all conceptions of other arise as the unimpeded nature, or appearance aspect: This represents the manifestation of the various deceptive appearances of both cyclic existence and perfect peace.

In that [process], of what is there ignorance? Of one's true nature, just as it is, the intrinsically pure essence.

Due to what is there ignorance? Due to the unimpeded creative energy through which the essence of that true nature falsely manifests as subject-object duality.

In what way does ignorance unfold? The cause for ignorance and deception regarding immutable great bliss is the habitual tendency for mutable [bliss].<sup>41</sup> From this tendency, the twelve links of dependent origination again arise. As stated in Pundarika's *Great Commentary on the Kalachakra Tantra*, cyclic existence arises from habitual tendency; and habitual tendency, from cyclic existence, in a circular way.

**The four empties and four elemental properties together form  
the root of cyclic life.**

Still within the uncommon system of mantra, next is explained the manner of deception in cyclic existence according to the father tantra system.

The four empties (the luminous clarity of the total empty, [great empty, very empty, and empty]) give rise to the four elemental properties [wind,

fire, water, and earth].<sup>42</sup> The group of these together is considered to be the root that determines beings' migration [in cyclic existence]. Accordingly, Aryadeva [in his *Stages of Self-Blessing*] states:<sup>43</sup>

One should understand that the eight constituents—  
The four elements, earth, and so on,  
And, likewise, the four empties—  
Are the causes of creation and destruction.

To explain, first, from the luminous clarity ground-of-all [at death], the total empty, emerges only the afflicted mind of ignorance, which is the great empty, or “full culmination.” From that emerges the variety of mental events, the very empty, or “increase of light.” From that arises “light” as [the duality of] apprehended and apprehender, manifesting as the six [sense] consciousnesses in their coarse aspects; this is the empty.<sup>44</sup> From that arise the four elements and other constituents. The way this process occurs is described in the *Compendium on the [Indestructible] Pristine Awareness [Tantra]*:<sup>45</sup>

The consciousness that arises from luminous clarity is called mind, [afflicted] mind, and [sense] consciousnesses.<sup>46</sup> That is the root of all phenomena. It is possessed of a nature that is both thoroughly afflicted and utterly pure. From that consciousness, two conceptions develop, that of self and that of other. From that consciousness, wind arises; from wind, fire; from fire, water; and from water, earth. From these elements arise the five aggregates, the six sense fields, and the five objects, all of which are mixed with consciousness.

In this way is explained the unfolding of the wheel of cyclic existence as consciousness arises from ignorance of luminous clarity, and so on.

**An alternative explanation is that cyclic life arises from  
mundane innate bliss; the indestructible vital essence  
Is the root of the thirty-six psychophysical constituents.**

According to the mother tantra system, cyclic existence arises from mundane innate bliss.<sup>47</sup> [Pundarika's] *Great Commentary [on the Kalachakra Tantra]* states:

The creator is that which possesses the characteristic of the ground-of-all consciousness: the relative and mundane innate joy [at] the moment of the emission of semen.

“That which possesses the characteristic of the ground-of-all consciousness” serves as the cause of ignorance. When “semen” [white vital essence] and “ovum” [red vital essence] meet, the mind experiences bliss. Through this experience, the ground-of-all is “blessed”<sup>48</sup> and becomes of one flavor with the bliss, as though unconscious. Such bliss is the agent of a being’s emergence into life (conception) and withdrawal from life (death).

To explain, at death, the white [vital essence], red [vital essence], and mind mix at the heart, and at conception they mix in the womb. Since nothing but the pristine awareness of a buddha can split [such a union], it is called the “indestructible vital essence.” This is what is referred to as the “*evam*” of the causal continuum, the nature or the root of the thirty-six [psychophysical constituents], the aggregates, elements, and so on.<sup>49</sup>

Holders of esoteric instructions point out that mental states of the same type are also called the ground-of-all, examples being the fourth state and the dazed state of mind when one is physically exhausted.



## 9. THE NATURE OF THE BODY

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bb" The Authentic Condition of the Body [I.B.2.a.iii.dd.1'.d'.ii'. cc'.  
1".b".ii".bb"]

(1) The Body Formed of Habitual Tendencies (The Supported)

(a) The Support for Birth

(b) Channels

(c) Winds

(d) Vital Essences

(e) The Four States

(2) The Innate Body (The Support)

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[This chapter, the continuation of Naropa's exceptional exposition on the causal continuum, presents] the branch topic, the authentic condition of the body, for which there are two parts: that which is supported, the body formed of habitual tendencies; and the support, the innate body.

### **THE BODY FORMED OF HABITUAL TENDENCIES (THE SUPPORTED) [(1)]**

This section has five parts: the support for birth [in cyclic existence]; channels; winds; vital essences; and the four states.

### **THE SUPPORT FOR BIRTH [(a)]**

**The process of taking of birth in the three realms is gradually initiated. Of possible births,**

**The best recipient for mantra is the manifest dimension  
attended by stains,  
In one of the three continents, having a vajra body endowed  
with six elements.**

The highest mantra system teaches that deception arises from the three [stages of experience of] light [i.e., the “three lights”— light, increase of light, and culmination of light]; or from the white and red [aspects] being moved by wind. The way of the perfections teaches that the ground-of-all consciousness is drawn by the afflicted mind and the force of karma created by adhering to a self, and takes birth in the three worlds. These two views are basically identical.

Within the tantra sets are found several different estimations [of the number of elements in the process of deception], such as a threefold mode [of enumeration] based on the differentiation of “semen” [white vital essence] and “ovum” [red vital essence] into apprehended and apprehender, plus wind; a fourfold mode, when pristine awareness is considered separate from ovum; and so on. Despite these distinctions, the crucial point [which will now be presented] is the same.

When the great root indestructible [essence] is not recognized, there is movement [of ignorance]. Owing to the influence of the white vital essence (the apprehending quality), there arise the three lights which have as their root a conception of intrinsic reality. The “doors” of manifestation of the three lights arise as follows:

The definitive quality of wind (whose nature is the unborn essence) manifesting as objects gives rise to the appearances of the formless realm.

The definitive quality of ovum [red vital essence] (whose nature is the unimpeded nature) manifesting as objects gives rise to the appearances of the form realm.

The definitive quality of semen [white vital essence] (whose nature is the manifold expression) manifesting as objects gives rise to the appearances of the desire realm.

By grasping to these appearances as existent in themselves, the [process of] taking birth in the three realms is gradually initiated. What is experienced [i.e., which of the three realms] is determined by how subtle or coarse is the dispersion of the elemental properties [of earth, water, fire, wind, and space]; and which of the four modes of birth occurs depends on which of earth, water, fire, or wind is predominant.<sup>1</sup>

Among these possibilities, the best [form of life, or] “support,” for being a suitable recipient of the indestructible way of secret mantra is birth in [one of] the three continents, the eastern, southern, or western. Any of those births has all the characteristics of the manifest dimension of awakening [although still] attended by stains. Of those, the most exceptional is birth here in [the southern continent called] the Land of Jambu, place of actions. Such a birth is best because one is thereby endowed with the six elements [space, wind, fire, water, earth, and pristine awareness], and replete with all features of the vajra body which is the ground where purification [through tantric practice] is effected.<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, the aggregates, elements, and sense fields are all formed from the channels, winds, and vital essences; and these three, from mind nature, the essence of enlightenment, attended by stains. For this reason, birth in the world in itself is taught to be the supreme manifest dimension of awakening, attended by stains. Accordingly, the *Hevajra Tantra* states:<sup>3</sup>

The womb's wall is one's monastic robe;  
 One's mother, the preceptor;  
 Palms together touching the head, an act of homage;  
 And life's activities, the observance of ethics.  
 The recitation of mantra, *a* and *ham*;  
 The form of the mandala at the womb, *a*;  
 And the aspect of great bliss, *ham*;  
 With a naked body and hairless head and face,  
 One is a monk who is born while reciting mantras.  
 Owing to these conditions, all sentient beings  
 Are buddhas, there is no doubt.  
 Moreover, the ten months are the stages of awakening;  
 Beings are already lords of the ten stages.<sup>4</sup>

The meaning of this passage is that of the three dimensions at the ground phase when the mind is attended by stains, birth is appearance as the manifest dimension. This impure dimension itself is the ground which becomes the supreme manifest dimension when stains are purified.

Of the six elements, [some] beings are possessed of only one element, that of space, as in the four [levels of the] formless realm; [others] have up to five elements (space, wind, fire, water, and earth), as in the first level of meditative absorption [of the form realm].<sup>5</sup> Beings of the six classes within

the desire realm<sup>6</sup> have not only all five elements but also the element of pristine awareness, which is the release of regenerative fluid,<sup>7</sup> and are thereby possessed of six elements.

The term “body” denotes a collection, which in this case comprises the following: marrow, bone, and sinew (or hair) produced by semen; and skin, flesh, and blood produced by ovum,<sup>8</sup> together referred to as the “six treasures.” The vajra body is the collection of these six, plus the thirty-six psychophysical constituents.

The thirty-six psychophysical constituents are the six aggregates (forms, feelings, discriminations, compositional factors, consciousnesses, and pristine awarenesses); the six elements (earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness); the six sense powers (eye sense power, ear sense power, nose sense power, tongue sense power, body sense power, and mental sense power); their six objects (visible forms, sounds, odors, tastes, tangible objects, and [mental] phenomena); the six action faculties (mouth faculty, arms faculty, legs faculty, anus faculty, urinary faculty, and regenerative faculty); and their six activities (speaking, taking, going, discharging faeces, discharging urine, and emitting regenerative fluid).

## CHANNELS [(b)]

**There are the three channels, twenty-four major channels, six  
channel-wheels,  
And seventy-two thousand subtle channels, within which  
[winds flow].**

According to the highest yoga tantras, the arising of pristine awareness in the mind depends upon the functioning of the channels of the body.<sup>9</sup> It is therefore important to understand their authentic condition. To mention only names, the principal of all channels, the central one, is known by several synonyms, such as *avadhuti* and Brahma’s cane; its upper end is called Rahu, its lower end, conch-shell (*shankhini*), and so on.<sup>10</sup>

There are a number of assertions about the central channel: that there are two [types of] central channel, the abiding one and the one imagined in meditation (the assertion of the majority);<sup>11</sup> that the central channel is actually the spinal cord; that it is only the thickness of a horse-hair, located in the center of the spinal cord; that it does not exist in reality, and so forth.

The perspective of the magnificent Rangjung Dorjé is as follows: The central channel is located in the middle part of the body. It is the nonduality

of the apprehended and apprehender and thus the indivisibility of method and wisdom. The root of all pristine awarenesses is the ground-of-all pristine awareness; the root of all consciousnesses, the ground-of-all consciousness. Hence, the inseparability of these two, ordinary awareness, is referred to as the “essence of enlightenment” from the perspective of its serving as the basis of enlightenment. Similarly, the root of all pristine awareness channels is the central channel; the root of all cyclic existence channels, the life channel. Hence, the inseparability of those two, the channel of Rahu, is referred to as the “life channel” from the perspective of its being the support for life.

Concisely stated, the “central channel of the ground” denotes the central channel of the body in the impure state pervaded by the dimension, or affinity, of the central channel in the pure state at the time of the result.

Through the meditations of withdrawal and the other branches [of the sixfold yoga], wind and mind enter the central channel of the body to some degree, the result of which is the manifestation externally of an empty image in the form of a black line. This is referred to as the “central channel of the path.”<sup>12</sup>

The “central channel of the result” abides in the supreme vajra body, which is the alternative [purified] dimension [the mandala]. It is of a nature free from obscurations. This [threefold] differentiation is made by the Eighth Karmapa [Mikyö Dorjé].

Owing to [the duality of] apprehended and apprehender, the *rasana* [right channel] and the *lalana* [left channel] branch off from the central channel. Above the navel, the three channels [right, left, and central] serve, respectively, as pathways for the threefold life [wind], the solar, lunar, and Rahu, and below the navel, as pathways for the movement of the threefold downward voiding of feces, urine, and regenerative fluids.<sup>13</sup>

There are twenty-four major channels which branch off from those three [principal] channels. Within the body, the twenty-four are the channels themselves; in the outer world, [these correspond to] the twenty-four [power] places; and in the alternative dimension of the mandala, these are the natures of the twenty-four yoginis of awakened mind, speech, and body.<sup>14</sup>

Adding to those twenty-four the five channels of the heart, which are supports for the [five] branch winds,<sup>15</sup> plus the three principal channels, yields thirty-two channels. [Thirty] are explained as being the fifteen goddesses of Nairatmya [in the mandala of Hevajra], the utter purity of the fifteen parts of the waxing moon and fifteen parts of the waning moon.<sup>16</sup> The [remaining two] are the conch-shell channel, which serves as the sup-

port for the sixteen white parts, and the free-from-demons channel, the support for the sixteen black parts.<sup>17</sup>

Adding the five channels that are the supports for the five root winds<sup>18</sup> to the above thirty-two makes a total of thirty-seven channels. At the ground [phase], these thirty-seven channels are associated with the thirty-six constituents [of the vajra body], plus the vajra mind [of pristine awareness] which pervades these constituents. At the path phase, they are associated with the thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, there are what are known as the five hidden channels: the triple-circle channel, which reaches the center of the eyes; the desire channel, which reaches the center of the ears; the female-householder channel, which reaches the center of nose; the fierce channel, which reaches the center of the tongue; and free-from-demons channel, which reaches the center of the uvula.<sup>20</sup> These five hidden channels are connected to the central one since their roots meet in the channel in the center of the heart. They emerge from indestructible luminous clarity at the heart [region] of the central channel and enter into objective experience, the perception of forms, and so on. During the phase of the path, these channels are bound and consequently become the source through which ten signs manifest.<sup>21</sup> Thus, they are “hidden” in being like hidden treasures or seeds.

Supported by the central channel are four (or six) channel-wheels (*chakra*). The term “wheel” is used because the configuration of channel-[spokes] (“petals”) resembles a wheel, or, alternatively, because [like a wheel which shatters what lies in its path,] by binding crucial points and striking crucial points at these places,<sup>22</sup> the deceptions of the four states are shattered.

In the system of four channel-wheels, at the navel are sixty-four channel-spokes which are the purity<sup>23</sup> of the sixty-four winds of the [twelve] time conjunctions.<sup>24</sup> By binding crucial points [through the method of inner heat], one causes the waking state to arise as the realization of the manifest dimension of awakening.

At the heart are the eight channel-spokes which are the purity [of the winds] of the eight major sessions<sup>25</sup> of the day and night. By binding crucial points [through the method of luminous clarity], one causes the deep sleep state to arise as the realization of the reality dimension of awakening, luminous clarity.

At the throat are sixteen channel-spokes which are the purity [of the winds] of the sixteen transits.<sup>26</sup> By binding crucial points [through the method of dream yoga], one causes the dream state to arise as the realization of the enjoyment dimension of awakening.

At the head are thirty-two channel-spokes which are the purity [of the winds] of the [thirty-two] major clepsydra measures.<sup>27</sup> By binding crucial points [related to] vital essence, one causes the sexual union state to arise as the realization of the pristine awareness dimension of awakening.<sup>28</sup>

The *Kalachakra Tantra* states that there are six channel-wheels: the channel-wheel at the crown of the head [with four spokes], which is of the nature of the four major sessions; the channel-wheel at the head [with sixteen spokes], the nature of the sixteen lunar days; the channel-wheel at the throat [with thirty-two spokes], the nature of the twenty-eight constellations and the four stars [of the constellation Lyra]; the channel-wheel at the heart [with eight channels], the nature of the eight planets;<sup>29</sup> the channel-wheel at the navel [with sixty-four channels], the nature of the sixty-four *danda* measures;<sup>30</sup> the channel-wheel at the secret place [with thirty-two channels], the nature of the thirty-two white and black lunar days.

The system of esoteric instructions speaks of secondary channel-wheels which branch off from those major ones: the twelve in the twelve major joints [of the limbs]; and the sixty in the sixty minor joints.<sup>31</sup> From those [branch off] 72,000 subtle channels,<sup>32</sup> as stated in the *Indestructible Garland*. Concerning these, Rangjung Dorjé [in his *Profound Inner Reality*] says:<sup>33</sup>

The twenty-four thousand through which flow  
The lunar [wind and white vital essence] are called the *lalana* type.  
The twenty-four thousand through which flow  
The solar [wind and red vital essence] are called the *rasana* type.  
The twenty-four thousand through which moves  
Wind [only] are called the central channel type.  
Moreover, by being present in the body  
The channels that are the twenty-four,  
From Undivided to Noble-Hearted,<sup>34</sup>  
Are divided into dissolved, engaged, and dominant.  
That threefold split yields a total of seventy-two,  
Each with a circle of a thousand channels.<sup>35</sup>

One hundred and fifty-six channels are said to give rise to diseases.<sup>36</sup> Further, the *Teaching to Nanda* states:<sup>37</sup>

There are eighty thousand channels in all [of the body].

Although there are many such enumerations [of channels], only those mentioned above need be known by practitioners on the path.

As to the sequence of formation of the channels in the womb, the central channel is the first to form, providing a support for the life wind. There, the *rasana* and *lalana* manifest due to the force of the conception of self [generated] by the afflicted mind, and the conception of other [generated] by the sixfold group [of consciousnesses]. These three principal channels are merely divisions into distinct entities owing to their mode of appearance and actually come into existence simultaneously.

From the points where the three meet with a common interior, the three channels branch off as spokes of the channel-wheels. Thus, the formation of the three principal channels is followed by the sequential formation of the one hundred and twenty spokes of the four channel-wheels (or the one hundred and fifty-six spokes of the six channel-wheels). Next form the seventy-two thousand secondary channels, followed by the thirty-five million subtle channels connected to the pores of the skin.

These channels exist as the nature of letters. What follows now is an explanation of how the channels form as letters. [*Chanting the Names of Manjushri*] states:<sup>38</sup>

*A* is the supreme of all letters.

Initially [at conception], the [letter] *a* forms in the upright position at the navel. Through the interrelationship of method [*ham*] and wisdom [*a*], *ham* forms upside-down at the head.<sup>39</sup> As a result, *evam* comes into being as the external world in the nature of method and wisdom.<sup>40</sup> Next develop the *bbrum*, *am*, *dzim*, *kham*, and *hum* at the heart, which are the supports for the five emotional afflictions and the five nectars.<sup>41</sup> Subsequently form the sixteen, *ra*, *hya*, *sya*, and so on, followed by the formation of the twenty-four [initial] letters of the twenty-four [power] places.<sup>42</sup> After that, an inconceivable number of letters develop, such as the one hundred and twenty letters [consonants].<sup>43</sup> Within all of these [channels in the shape of letters] is the movement of winds, through which is produced speech that carries the sound of letters.

## WINDS [(c)]

**The life, root, and branch winds, and winds of the time  
conjunctions,  
In the orders of generation and dissolution, always shift and  
move [throughout the channels].**

The channels described above are created by winds. To strike the crucial points with respect to winds forms the basis of all aspects of the phase of completion of the highest yoga tantra. The term “wind” (*rlung*) denotes that which is possessed of potency or strength.

The wind that serves as the ground for everything in cyclic existence and perfect peace is that which is great, primordial, and indestructible. To designate it as a “wind” indicates that it is life; and since it exists as the nature of the short *a*,<sup>44</sup> it is the source of all verbal expression, the speech. From it are derived [such measures as] breath, minor clepsydra measure, *danda* measure, time conjunction,<sup>45</sup> and so on. Furthermore, from this originate all letters, the vowels and consonants. Thus, although itself inexpressible, it serves as the ground for all forms of verbal expression.

With regard to letters, the root of all vowels and consonants is *a*. With regard to winds, the root of all the ten winds is the life wind in the form of *a*. With regard to pristine awareness, supreme immutable great bliss itself is termed “*a*”. Therefore, the wind that serves as the ground or source of all phenomena is this very *a*, referred to as “life.” Hence, all phenomena of cyclic life and perfect peace manifest from it.

Accordingly, during the formation of this vajra body, the great life wind is the first to come into being. This wind is supported by the ground-of-all consciousness, which has entered the midst of the white and red [regenerative fluids].<sup>46</sup> Of the five syllables, its shape is the form of the short *a*. Of the five elements, its nature is that of the element of space.

From the life wind emanates the downward-voiding wind. Of the five elements, its nature is that of earth; of the five syllables, its form is that of the syllable *li*. In a similar way is generated the upward-moving wind, whose nature is fire, and form, the syllable *ri*; the fire-accompanying wind, whose nature is wind, and form, the syllable *i*; and the pervading wind, whose nature is water, and form, the syllable *u*. These are the five root winds.<sup>47</sup>

The five branch winds are the serpent wind of the earth element, the long syllable *a*; the turtle wind of the wind element, the syllable *e*; the lizard wind of the fire element, the syllable *ar*; the gift-of-the-gods wind of the water element, the syllable *o*; and the victorious-in-wealth wind of the earth element, the syllable *al*. These branch winds, together with the root winds, constitute the ten winds.<sup>48</sup>

To expand, that which is indestructible, the totality of everything, is designated as wind from the perspective of the aspect of movement. Winds exist as a blend of karma and pristine awareness.<sup>49</sup> Wind dominated by [the quality of] “darkness” is said to be the wind of Rahu; wind dominated by

“motility,” solar wind; and wind dominated by “buoyancy,” lunar wind.<sup>50</sup> These are therefore known as the “three winds,” Rahu, solar, and lunar. The five root winds, [called “root”] since they are of the natures of the five elements, and the five branch winds, winds produced through the five elemental transformations [the five sense objects],<sup>51</sup> together make a total of ten coarse winds. When these ten are formed, the winds of the time conjunctions, which have the characteristics of inhalation and exhalation, move in and out 21,600 times daily.

From conception of the vajra body in the womb until the tenth month, the ten winds arise and develop. After [birth], their powers gradually dissolve over a period of [up to] one hundred years. During the development [of the body] in the womb, the first of the winds to form is the life wind, in the form of *a*. Then, from the second month [until the tenth], the other winds, beginning with the downward-voiding wind, arise sequentially until all ten are present.<sup>52</sup>

During the course of life, the life [wind] abides within the central channel as the dominant factor in determining the [cycles of] increase and decrease of winds.<sup>53</sup> The winds that emanate from the life wind flow at the heart [channel-wheel] as the nature of the eight periods. Each has the essential nature of five, or six, elements; when exhaled, they flow in the order of dissolution [of the elements], and when inhaled, in the order of generation.<sup>54</sup>

Likewise, at the head, [the winds flow as the nature of] the sixteen phases of the moon, divided in terms of the white and red aspects into thirty-two.<sup>55</sup>

At the throat, with the sixteen channels divided into method and wisdom, [the winds flow as the nature of] the thirty-two periods in [the mode of] the course of the constellations, or as the sixteen transits.<sup>56</sup>

At the navel, [they flow as the nature of] the sixty *dalanda* measures (with the twelve houses of the zodiac each divided into five sectors), along with the four winds [of the element] of emptiness which flow in the central channel, moving in phases of generation and dissolution.<sup>57</sup>

[Winds flow] through the seventy-two thousand subtle channels. The movement of wind alone [takes place] in the central channel type; movement of wind together with the white aspect, in the *lalana* type; and movement of wind together with the red aspect, in the *rasana* type. The winds comprising 21,600 [breaths] complete their movements in all of the three [types of] channels in the period of one day. Moreover, in each exhalation and inhalation, [the winds] shift and move to the extremities of the pores [of the skin].

In short, the way the wind flows internally parallels the wind's movement externally, and can therefore be understood from astrology. Externally, there are twelve months in one year, while internally there are twelve transits. Externally, each house of the zodiac has five *danda* measures, while internally each [breath's cycle] has five mandalas [elements].<sup>58</sup> Externally, one year is composed of 21,600 major clepsydra measures, while internally, there are [21,600] daily breaths.

The main activity of the external movement of the winds is that of the winds passing from the mandalas [elements] of the navel into the *rasana* and *lalana* channels and then being exhaled through the nostrils.<sup>59</sup> The wind that passes through the right nostril is the solar wind. Because it flows through stages when the potency [of the elements] is being exhausted, it is called "poison wind." Its nature is that of method; its essence is indestructible awakened speech. The solar wind flows through the right nostril at a rate of 10,462.5 times per day. The wind that passes through the left nostril is the lunar wind. Because it flows through stages when the elements are increasing, it is called "nectar wind." Its nature is that of wisdom; its essence, indestructible awakened body. The lunar wind flows through the left nostril at a rate of 10,462.5 times per day.<sup>60</sup>

Wind flows equally through the center [of both nostrils] at a rate of 675 [times] per day. It is possessed of power resembling that of the external [planet] Rahu and is therefore called "element of Rahu."<sup>61</sup> It creates openness like space and is therefore called "wind of space." Since it enters the central channel, it is also called "wind of pristine awareness." Its nature is indivisible method and wisdom; its essence, indestructible awakened mind.<sup>62</sup>

Three hundred and sixty movements of each one of the winds of the elements (earth, water, fire, wind, and space) through both the left and right nostrils constitute what is termed a "minor transit." All of these movements [of all five winds] together, a total of eighteen hundred, is termed a "major transit." Every day, twelve of the major transits occur, a total of 21,600 movements. Within these, there are 675 [movements] of the wind of pristine awareness. In each of the twelve major transits of the day, the pristine awareness wind flows fifty-six and one quarter times; and in each of the minor cycles, eleven and one quarter times, or, in short, one thirty-second of each breath.

Moreover, half of the pristine awareness wind flows externally, and half flows internally. In the external world, the increase and decrease caused by the winds of the phases<sup>63</sup> of the planets' [movement throughout the con-

stellations] is posited as the course of time. Similarly, this pristine awareness wind [is the basis for the internal increase and decrease and thereby] determines the phases of the [movement of] planets [i.e., winds] internally. Thus, it is called the “inner wheel of time [*kalachakra*].”<sup>64</sup>

When the external movement [of pristine awareness wind] increases, there occur signs of eventual death; when [this wind] is retained internally, immortality is attained.<sup>65</sup>

In [a lifetime of] one hundred years, the total time taken by the movements of pristine awareness wind equals three years and three fortnights. If during that period, one were to transform all karmic wind into pristine awareness wind, one would attain enlightenment. That is the meaning of the Buddha’s statement [in the Kalachakra tantra] that “the state of vajra-holder is attained in three years and three fortnights.”<sup>66</sup>

One should study works such as Rangjung Dorjé’s *Profound Inner Reality* to learn about the colors of the winds, their qualities, strengths, functions, entrances, wind retention methods, the advantages of retention, and disadvantages of non-retention.<sup>67</sup>

Concisely stated, everything of cyclic existence and perfect peace was declared by the Buddha to be of the nature of wind. All winds fall into the categories of the wind of karma and the wind of pristine awareness. Karmic wind is wind that is inseparable from thought. There are two karmic winds, karmic wind to be relinquished and remedial karmic wind.

Karmic wind to be relinquished [is threefold]. The conception of self, which has been present in the ground-of-all, is the wind of delusion. Not knowing the five lights (which are the appearance aspect of pristine awareness) to be self-manifestation, conceiving [the lights] to be “other,” and the craving that develops is the wind of desire. Based on that previous wind, the discrimination of phenomena in terms of what to accept and what to reject and the fixation that develops is the wind of aversion. The nature of those three poisons is ignorance, the power of which creates cyclic existence.<sup>68</sup>

The second karmic wind is remedial wind which stops the course of cyclic existence; this is correct thought, such as the view of the absence of self. Nevertheless, it is still designated as karmic wind.

In short, that which is called “karmic wind” is [equivalent to] thought in that it stirs [things], [is involved with] the subtle, and moves from one [thing] to the next.<sup>69</sup> The great wind of pristine awareness is mind nature, that of bliss, clarity, and non-thought. When pristine awareness wind is directly cognized, all the movements of karmic wind are overcome.

## VITAL ESSENCES [(d)]

**“Spring” and “vital essence,” the twelve refined and twenty-four residual vital essences,  
In the types of the dissolved, engaged, and dominant, flow  
[throughout the channels].**

The term “vital essence” (*thig le*) ([Sanskrit] *tilaka*) denotes the essence or seed of great bliss.

The “ineffable root vital essence” refers to one’s own mind, an invincible presence from time without beginning, the essential nature of the three dimensions of awakening. The “vital essence of deceptive ignorance” refers to the arising of the deception of dualistic apprehension as a result of the disturbance caused by the three “minds” (the white aspect [giving rise to the conception of apprehender]; the red aspect [the conception of the apprehended]; and wind [ignorance, the basis of the two]). The “imputed vital essence of mantra” refers to the four names [i.e., the aggregates of feelings, discriminations, compositional factors, and consciousnesses], as well as the nominal [remedies in the practice of mantra]. The “dependent vital essence of wind” refers to the wind and the binding of it as a remedy. The “vital essence of substance” refers to the white and red vital essences, along with the methods for binding them. This categorization [of five different types of vital essence] is set forth by Rangjung Dorjé [in his *Profound Inner Reality*].<sup>70</sup>

An alternative way of presenting vital essences speaks of two: one, the vital essence imputed as the relative, and two, the ultimate vital essence of pristine awareness. What follows now is a discussion on the vital essence imputed as the relative, or vital essence of substance.<sup>71</sup>

Thirty-six refined and residual vital essences abide within the channels. These exist like riches owned by the winds and are supported by them. The refined essence of the white aspect of the vital essence of substance is located at the upper end of the central channel in the nature of the syllable *ham*.<sup>72</sup> On this, the *Equal to the Sky Tantra* says:<sup>73</sup>

The indestructible in the shape of *ham*  
Is a gem white as a jasmine flower  
Moist with luster and radiance.

The refined essence of the red aspect in the form of a short *a*<sup>74</sup> is located at the junction of the three [principal] channels below the navel. The *Samvarodaya Tantra* states:<sup>75</sup>

Its very essence resembles the fire of the Mare-Head.<sup>76</sup>

The names of these [two refined essences, white and red] are, respectively, “spring” and “vital essence.” Krishna says [in his *Vital Essence of Spring* (*Vasantatilaka*)]:<sup>77</sup>

The invincible *ham*, the seed,  
Is that which drips like frost.  
It gladdens all creatures' hearts.  
And thus is known as “spring.”

The fire, by virtue of its great form,  
Is called Varahi, the “vital essence.”  
Fanned by the winds of karma,  
It blazes at the mandala of the navel.

As it reaches spring, it gives pleasure.  
Resting in union [with Varahi]  
Is the hero, the glorious Heruka,  
Called “vital essence of spring.”<sup>78</sup>

In the midst of the white and red aspects is the ground-of-all, accompanied by the great life wind supported by it. Thus, when represented by an outer location, [the red and white], in essence, are the Indestructible Seat, or heart of awakening.<sup>79</sup>

In short, because the white aspect yields bliss, it is said to be “spring”; and because the red aspect stabilizes bliss, it is said to be “vital essence.”<sup>80</sup> [The white and red aspects], being the place where awakening is actualized, are considered to be the Indestructible Seat.

The refined vital essences support corresponding residual essences, which also have refined and residual parts.<sup>81</sup> The refined part gives strength and radiance to the body; the residual part is emitted through the [regenerative] faculties and other orifices.<sup>82</sup>

It is those refined and residual parts which become the element of “regenerative fluid” at the end of the sevenfold [process of] refinement of the refined essences from the [inner] fire offering of food. [This process] is therefore known as the “seven births.”<sup>83</sup>

The vital essences derived from the “seven births” [process] are very numerous. However, the principal among them are twelve refined and twenty-four residual, thirty-six in all.

The twelve refined vital essences [are enumerated as follows]: Five vital essences are connected to the five branch winds.<sup>84</sup> Five are connected to the five root winds. Three vital essences are supported by the lunar, solar, and Rahu winds [flowing in the channels] above [the navel], but because the life [wind] bears the attributes of the sun, the three are considered as one, the solar vital essence. Three vital essences are supported by the channels below [the navel, which allow voiding of] feces, urine, and semen, but because the downward-voiding [wind] bears the attributes of the moon, the three are considered as one, the lunar vital essence. That makes twelve refined vital essences.

The twenty-four residual vital essences are supported by twenty-four major channels of the body. These channels are differentiated in terms of the eight places of awakened body and sky-farers below the earth; the eight places of awakened speech and sky-farers on the earth; and the eight places of awakened mind and sky-farers in space.<sup>85</sup>

Depending on whether the vital essences [in the body] and the sky-farers [in the external world] are always or occasionally present, and due to various other considerations, there exist, externally and internally, the principal and related [power] places, the two each divided into four, constituting the eight places that are the sphere of awakened mind; the fields, related fields, meeting places, and related meeting places, the four each divided into two, constituting the eight places that are the sphere of awakened speech; and the assembling places, related assembling places, charnel grounds, and related charnel grounds, the four each divided into two, constituting the eight places that are the sphere of awakened body. In the inner places [the channels], the white aspect descends, while in the outer places, the sky-farers gather.<sup>86</sup>

The twenty-four vital essences which descend through the twenty-four major channels are each divided into three [types], the dissolved, the engaged, and the dominant. This yields a total of seventy-two. The dissolved refers to the past aspect, when the vital essence has fully completed its function and has become residual. The engaged refers to the present aspect, the refined vital essence, principally the white aspect, which is currently performing its function. The dominant agent in the generation [of vital essence] refers to the future aspect, the cause or root of both the refined and the residual, and therefore a mixture of wind and blood.<sup>87</sup>

The twenty-four vital essences are also each divided into three thousand, a total of seventy-two thousand. Twenty-four thousand of these are the dissolved, mainly wind; twenty-four thousand, the engaged, mainly the white aspect; and twenty-four thousand, the dominant, mainly the red aspect.

These are the essential natures of the three elements, Rahu [wind], moon [white essence], and sun [red essence]. They flow pervasively throughout the entire network of channels, right down to the pores.

This work will not cover certain other related topics, such as the descent of bodhichitta (the principal of the refined vital essences) in sixteen [parts] and in halves of that [eight parts and four parts]; movement [according to] the essential natures of the lunar days; and techniques for retention of bodhichitta.<sup>88</sup>

### THE FOUR STATES [(e)]

**The four states—deep sleep, dream, ordinary,  
And sexual union—constitute the fundamental cause.**

When the channels, winds, and vital essences have formed completely in that way [as described above], the four states occur. [Each stems] from not recognizing the very natures of the channels, winds, and vital essences, and adhering to them in terms of apprehended and apprehender.

When the sixfold group of consciousnesses becomes unclear and withdraws into the ground-of-all, there occurs the state of deep sleep.

The emergence of a mental consciousness attended by compositional factors is the state of dream.

The emergence of active consciousnesses in the aspects of apprehended and apprehender through which the sixfold group [of consciousnesses] enters into objective experience is the ordinary [waking] state.

The experience of the habitual tendency for emission is the state of sexual union.

Connected to the particular period of those four states is a predominant consciousness. The very essence of each consciousness exists as the nature of [one of] the five pristine awarenesses. Therefore, it is necessary to have an unmistakable understanding of the authentic modes of these four states and to use on the path all deceptions related to them.

At the four channel-wheels are present the vital essences of body, speech, mind, and pristine awareness as instigators of the deception related to the four states.<sup>89</sup> Just as the potency of medicine must penetrate the area of the illness, the [practices for] binding the crucial points—the four ripening initiations and the completion phase practices of inner heat, illusory form, dream, and luminous clarity<sup>90</sup>—must be [applied] at those times [the four states] and places [the four channel-wheels].

That being the case, the four states are said to be the fundamental cause for both the pure and impure [states]. On the subject of these four states, one should study [Rangjung Dorjés] *Profound Inner Reality* to understand the sphere or ground of purification, the stains to be purified, the means of purification (the four seals), the process of purification, and the way to attain the result of purification, the dimensions of awakening and pristine awarenesses.<sup>91</sup>

### THE INNATE BODY (THE SUPPORT) [(2)]

**The refined elements, which transcend the nature of particles,  
Manifest from relative bodhichitta, in essence pristine  
awareness,  
The support for immutable bliss, the innate body.**

The vajra body, comprising the refined elements of the channels, winds, and vital essences, transcends the nature of particles [of matter].<sup>92</sup> It comes into being and manifests from relative bodhichitta, termed in the tantras “regenerative fluid.” This very support for supreme immutable bliss,<sup>93</sup> whose essence is that of pristine awareness, is called the “innate body.” The [*Hevajra Tantra*] *Two Examinations* says:<sup>94</sup>

In the great bliss of the queen's *bhaga*  
The teacher with thirty-two major marks,  
A lord with eighty minor marks,  
Abides in the aspect of “seminal fluid,” without which  
There would be no bliss, due to lack of potency:  
They are mutually dependent.  
The bliss that arises from deity yoga  
Is a buddha existing neither as tangible  
Nor as [simply] intangible [emptiness].  
Possessed of a form with arms and faces,  
It is the form of supreme immutable bliss  
And therefore innate to all beings.<sup>95</sup>



## 10. SYMBOLS FOR THE CAUSAL CONTINUUM

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cc" Symbolic Representations of the Causal Continuum [I.B.2.a.iii.dd.1'.  
d'.ii'.cc'.1".b''.ii".cc"]

(1) The Union of *E* and *Vam*

(a) The Symbol

(i) *Vam*

(ii) *E*

(b) The Symbolized Meaning

(2) The Powerful Ten-Letter [Mantra]

(a) Representation in the Powerful Ten-Letter [Mantra]

(i) The Symbol

(ii) The Symbolized Meaning

(aa) [The Ten Letters as Pristine Awareness]

(bb) [The Ten Letters as Cyclic Existence]

(1') The Pervading Agent

(2') The Sphere of Pervasion

(a') Ground

(b') Path

(c') Result

(b) Representation in Kalachakra

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[This chapter continues Naropa's exposition on the causal continuum, presenting] part three, its symbolic representations. This discussion is presented in two parts: representation in the union of *e* and *vam*, and representation in the powerful [mantra of] ten letters.

**THE UNION OF *E* AND *VAM* [(1)]**

This first section has two parts: the symbol; and the meaning symbolized by it.

**THE SYMBOL [(a)]**

**The symbol for the causal continuum is *evam*, whose shape comprises**

**The union of the five letters of the great emptinesses and six letters of the empty essences.**

Tantras teach the causal continuum by using the syllables *evam* to symbolize it. *Evam* epitomizes all unions of twofold phenomena not only of the causal continuum but also the path continuum and result continuum.<sup>1</sup>

On this subject of *evam*, the *Net of Magical Manifestation of Manjushri: King of Tantras* states:<sup>2</sup>

There are the five letters of the great emptinesses  
And six letters of the empty essences.

The union of these two sets of letters forms the shape of *evam*.<sup>3</sup> What follows now is a brief description based on [Pundarika's] *Stainless Light: Great Commentary [on the Kalachakra Tantra]* of the composition of *evam*, the word that serves as a symbolic sign. First is the discussion of *vam*, followed by that of *e*.

***VAM* [(i)]**

The syllable *vam* represents the essential natures of the five immutable great emptinesses. The first immutable great emptiness is the alternative [purified] dimension of the following [psychophysical constituents]: the aggregate of pristine awarenesses and the aggregate of consciousnesses (of the six aggregates); the element of pristine awareness and that of space (of the six elements); the mental sense power and the ear sense power (of the six sense powers); [mental] phenomena and sounds (of the six objects); the male regenerative faculty and the female regenerative faculty (of the six action faculties); and the discharging of urine and the emission of regenerative fluid (of the six activities).<sup>4</sup> [This emptiness] is the essential nature of the

letter *a*, symbolized by an inexpressible figure in the shape of a curved knife in the central position,<sup>5</sup> and is possessed of the essential nature of the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena.

The second immutable great emptiness is the alternative dimension of the aggregate of compositional factors, the element of wind, the sense power of the nose, the object of odors, the action faculty of the mouth, and the activity of speaking. [This emptiness] is the essential nature of the letter *i*,

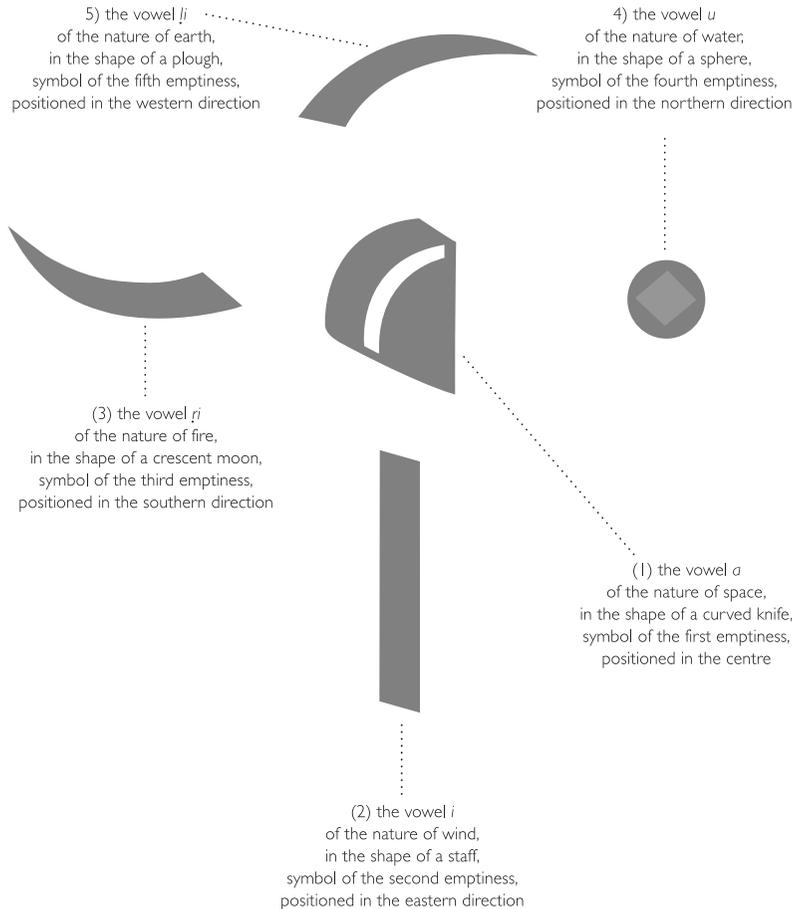


Figure 1: *vam*

From Longdol Lama (Klong rdol bla ma), *History of the Kalachakra Tantra and Its Various Sets of Terms (Dang po sangs rgyas dpal dus kyi 'khor lo'i lo rgyus dang ming gi rnam grangs)*.

symbolized by a figure in the shape of a staff in the eastern position [in front of the curved knife], and is possessed of the essential nature of the pristine awareness of accomplishment.

The third immutable great emptiness is the alternative dimension of the aggregate of feelings, the element of fire, the sense power of the tongue, the object of tastes, the action faculty of the arms, and the activity of taking. [This emptiness] is the essential nature of the letter *ri*, symbolized by a figure in the shape of the [crescent moon] aspiration sign<sup>6</sup> in the southern position, and is possessed of the essential nature of the pristine awareness of total sameness.

The fourth immutable great emptiness is the alternative dimension of the aggregate of discriminations, the element of water, the sense power of the eyes, the object of visible forms, the action faculty of the legs, and the activity of going. [This emptiness] is the essential nature of the letter *u*, symbolized by a figure in the shape of a sphere<sup>7</sup> in the northern position, and is possessed of the essential nature of pristine awareness of discernment.

The fifth immutable great emptiness is the alternative dimension of the aggregate of forms, the element of earth, the sense power of the body, the object of touch, the action faculty of the anus, and the activity of discharging feces. [This emptiness] is the essential nature of the letter *li*, symbolized by a figure in the shape of a plough in the western position, and is possessed of the essential nature of mirror-like pristine awareness.

The assemblage of these five figures, which cannot be expressed as either vowels or consonants, creates the [*vam*] character, the trunk of which is formed by the figure of the curved knife; the head, by the plough; the limbs, by the staff; the crescent moon, by the [crescent moon] aspiration sign; and the sphere marked by the tip<sup>8</sup> above the crescent moon, by the sphere.

Thus, through the definitive qualities of body and mind,<sup>9</sup> the syllable *vam*, with the body of a consonant, is complete as the essential natures of the root vowels *a*, *i*, *ri*, *u*, and *li*.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, the meaning symbolized by the syllable *vam*, the alternative dimension of the thirty-six psychophysical constituents, the essential natures of the five pristine awarenesses, is revealed to be that of great bliss, which holds the vajra of the invincible nature.<sup>11</sup>



Figure 2: The consonant *vam* of the Vartula script, formed by the symbols of the five immutable great emptinesses, themselves the natures of the vowels.

In [*vam*], which represents those five immutable great emptinesses, are symbolized the following: the five mandalas of space, earth, water, fire, and wind; the five of space, moon, sun, Rahu, and Kalagni; the five aggregates (forms, etc.); the five internal [directions] of the center, front, back, right, and left of the body; the five of the causal continuum and the four states; the five channel-wheels; the five root and the five branch winds; the five limbs of the body; in the alternative dimension, the five colors (of the center and each direction of the mandala); its five walls; the five awakenings;<sup>12</sup> the five transcendent ones;<sup>13</sup> the five signs of the [yoga of the] day and the five signs of the [yoga of the] night, distinguished in terms of the body and the mind [method and wisdom]; and the resultant five pristine awarenesses.

### *E* [(ii)]

Next is a discussion of the syllable *e*, which represents the essential natures of the six immutable empty essences. Although the five great emptinesses are indistinguishable in terms of substance, the appearance aspect of those is posited [as six immutable empty essences] from the perspective of their unobscured aspect, that of the emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects.<sup>14</sup>

To clarify the above, the first empty essence is the unobscured aspect, that of the emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects, of the following [psychophysical constituents]: the aggregate of the consciousnesses (of the six aggregates); the element of space (of the six elements); the sense power of the ears (of the six sense powers); the object of sounds (of the six objects); the female regenerative faculty (of the six faculties of action); and the emission of regenerative fluid (of the six activities of the action faculties). This empty essence is the essential nature of the *ka* group [of consonants], symbolized by the inexpressible figure positioned above the central curved knife.

Similarly, the second empty essence is the unobscured aspect of the aggregate of compositional factors, the element of wind, the sense power of the nose, the object of odors, the action faculty of the mouth, and its activity of talking. This empty essence is the *cha* group, [symbolized by] the figure positioned east of the staff in the east.

The third empty essence is the unobscured aspect of the aggregate of feelings, the element of fire, the sense power of the tongue, the object of tastes, the action faculty of the arms, and their activity of taking. This [empty]

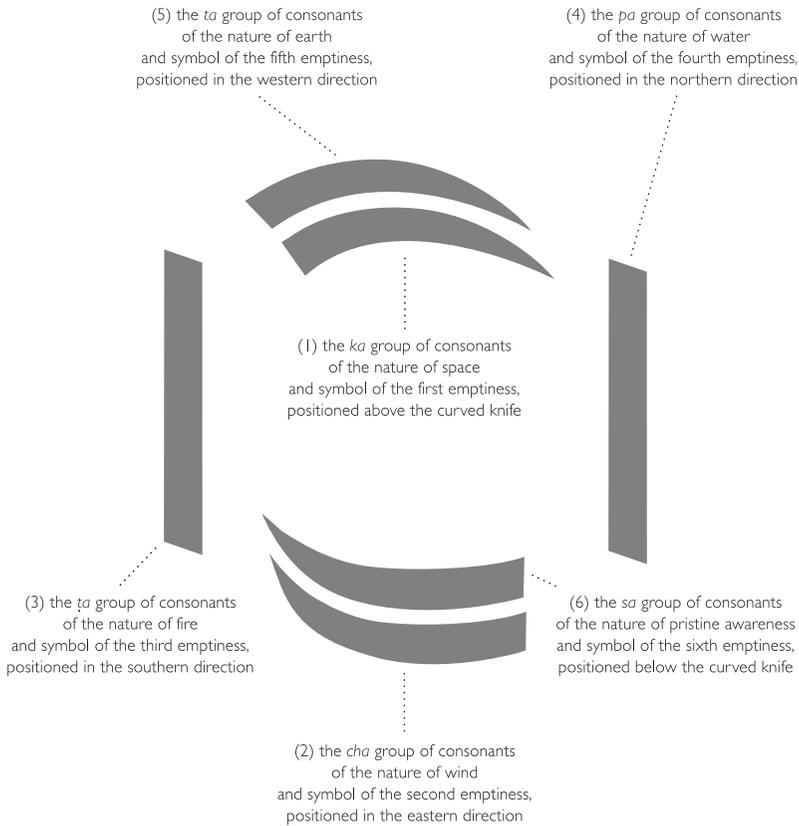


Figure 3: *e*

essence is the *ṭa* group, [symbolized by] the figure positioned south of the [crescent moon] aspiration sign in the south.

The fourth empty essence is the unobscured aspect of the aggregate of discriminations, the element of water, the sense power of the eyes, the object of visible forms, the action faculty of the legs, and their activity of going. This [empty] essence is the *pa* group, [symbolized by] the figure positioned north of the sphere in the north.

The fifth empty essence is the unobscured aspect of the aggregate of forms, the element of earth, the sense power of the body, the object of touch, the action faculty of the anus, and its activity of discharging feces. This empty essence is the *ṭa* group, [symbolized by] the figure positioned west of the plough in the west.

The sixth empty essence is the unobscured aspect of the aggregate of pristine awarenesses, the element of pristine awareness, the mental sense power, the object of [mental] phenomena, the action faculty of the male regenerative faculty, and the activity of discharging urine. This [empty] essence is the essential nature of the *sa* group, [symbolized by] the inexpressible figure positioned directly below the curved knife in the center.<sup>15</sup>

The six inexpressible figures, which symbolize the six immutable empty essences, drawn in sets of two with one part outside and one inside, form three sides. By drawing the right and left tips of the former [upper set] and latter [lower set] touching to create a triangle, there is formed a support for the syllable *vam*, that is, the syllable *e* in the shape of a triangular source of phenomena.<sup>16</sup> The assemblage of the [six] groups of consonants completes the body of the syllable *e*, owing to the definitive qualities of body and mind. The *Indestructible Garland* says:<sup>17</sup>



Figure 4: The vowel *e* of the Vartula script, composed of the figures of the natures of the six groups of consonants, symbols of the six empty essences.

*Evam*, the seal of the transcendent ones,  
Is the symbol for nonduality;  
It denotes the inseparability  
Of emptiness and compassion.

and the *Samputa Tantra* states:<sup>18</sup>

*E* is said to be wisdom;  
*Vam*, the nature of method.

As expressed in those lines, the two [syllables] *e* and *vam* represent the natures of wisdom and method and are primordially unified or connected. Therefore, each of the three (*e*, *vam*, and their union) alone is endowed with the following three attributes: the unobscured nature of the thirty-six psycho-physical constituents; the same flavor as the thirty-six; and the unification of the thirty-six. However, with respect to which is the principal, the syllable *e* (the six immutable [empty essences]) is explained to be principal in terms of unobscured nature; the syllable *vam* (the five immutable [emptinesses]), principal in terms of the same flavor; and the union of *e* and *vam*, principal in

terms of unification. To each of *e*, *vam*, and their union, the expressions “indestructible,” “invincible,” “holder of the vajra,” and others are applied; the terms “ultimate” or “great” are considered applicable [only] to their union.

By virtue of the crucial point of the nonduality of method and wisdom, the assemblage of the thirty consonants completes the body of the vowel *e*, which serves as the support; and the assemblage of the [five] vowels, the body of the consonant *vam*, which is supported. The unification of [*e as*] the support and [*vam as*] the supported represents the sameness of flavor of the union of *evam*, the symbolic sign.



Figure 5: The character *evam* of the Vartula script, of the nature of the very subtle body and mind.

### THE SYMBOLIZED MEANING [(b)]

**What is symbolized: “semen” and  
“ovum,” moon and sun, the  
aspects of method and wisdom,  
*Vajra* and *sattva*, the source of all tantras.**

[Next is a discussion of] what is represented by the symbolic sign [*evam*]: In the context of the causal continuum, *evam* symbolizes “semen” [white vital essence] and “ovum” [red vital essence], or the moon and sun; at the path phase, it symbolizes the attributes of method and wisdom; and at the result phase, it symbolizes *vajra* and *sattva*,<sup>19</sup> and being the union of those, *evam* therefore represents the source of all tantras (both the meaning to be expressed and the words that express it). The *Kalachakra Root Tantra* states:<sup>20</sup>

In the midst of the space element of syllable *e*  
The bliss of all buddhas, syllable *vam*,  
Is captured. *Vajra* and *sattva*,  
Through the yogas of awakened body, speech, and mind,  
Are proclaimed as the sphere, moon, “semen,” and awakened body;  
And the aspiration sign, “ovum,” sun, and awakened speech;  
The syllable *a* is proclaimed as Rahu, awakened mind,  
And the element of space exists as *e*.

Through the yogas of awakened body, speech, and mind,  
 Through awakened body, speech, mind, and passion,  
 The essential natures of the three worlds exist  
 In the mandalas of awakened body, speech, and mind.

According to this passage, great bliss itself [symbolized by *vam*] is, ultimately, transcendent wisdom, emptiness [symbolized by *e*]. Transcendent wisdom itself is Ever-Perfect, supreme, immutable pristine awareness. Therefore, the syllable *vam*, the five immutable great emptinesses, and the syllable *e*, the six immutable empty essences, are primordially connected as a union.

To expand, with respect to method and wisdom as the roots [of the five immutable great emptinesses and of the six immutable empty essences], the syllable *vam* pertains to method, the male [deity], “semen” [white vital essence], and moon; the syllable *e*, wisdom, the female [deity], “ovum” [red vital essence], and sun.

With respect to the six elements [of the vajra body], all elements arise [together]. Therefore, normally, when one element is present, all the others are present too. However, in terms of which is the principal, water, wind, and space are posited as method, the male deity’s body, speech, and mind; and earth, fire, and pristine awareness, as wisdom, the female deity’s body, speech, and mind.

In the relative system of the world, such associations [of elements] as method and wisdom would be inimical ones.<sup>21</sup> In the ultimate sense, however, the associations arise as [complementary] method and wisdom: earth and wind as method and wisdom, respectively; water and fire as method and wisdom; and space and pristine awareness as method and wisdom. These associations are made from the perspective common [to the highest tantras].

In the context of the unified method and wisdom of body and mind as found in this tantra [Kalachakra], in the case of water, wind, and space being the body, then earth, fire, and pristine awareness will certainly be the mind. In the case of earth, fire, and pristine awareness being the body, then water, wind, and space will certainly be the mind. Accordingly, the relative way of the world would also be included in unified method and wisdom.

That being the case, as explained above, *e* and *vam* are essentially inseparable. They are, however, differentiated in the expressions applied to them, such as “vajra” and “sattva”; “vajra” and “vajra-holder”; and “method” and “wisdom,” indicating a distinction between them.

As to this distinction, *vam* is designated as the five immutable great emptinesses since in the pristine awareness of immutable bliss (method), all of the psychophysical constituents are of the same flavor and inseparable. *E* is designated as the six great empty [essences] since in the emptiness of all aspects (wisdom), the psychophysical constituents are of an unobscured [nature]. The five and six reflect divisions in terms of the numbers of the grounds of purification. Both [*e* and *vam*] are termed empty because they are free of the obscurations of the [dualistic] phenomena of cyclic existence, such as the psychophysical constituents.

The essence of *vam* is the [aspect of] knowing, which serves as the apprehending subject, immutable great bliss: the resultant great seal. The essence of *e* is the knowable, which serves as the apprehended object, images empty of all aspects: the causal great seal.<sup>22</sup>

The two are referred to by various names:

The syllable *e* is known as empty image, appearance, lotus,  
*Sattva*, source of phenomena, element of space,  
 Abode of great bliss, lion throne, and *bhaga*;  
 And syllable *vam*, as great bliss, innate, supreme, immutable,  
*Vajra*, vital essence, essential reality,  
 Pristine awareness, and utterly pure mind.

Moreover, the syllable *e* is the appearance aspect of the syllable *vam*. Thus, in actuality, the root of all phenomena is [the nature of *vam*,] the five immutable great emptinesses. In that lies the knowledge of all the common abridged [highest yoga] tantras.<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, the [*Hevajra Tantra*] *Two Examinations* states:<sup>24</sup>

The mind, the great single reality,  
 Is symbolized in form by the five.<sup>25</sup>

Further, the *Essence of the Great Seal*, a tantra of the same class [as *Hevajra*], considers the root of all phenomena to be the indestructible vital essence. It states that the indestructible vital essence, when differentiated according to its presence in the centers of the six channel-wheels, comprises six unions: the potential for manifestation,<sup>26</sup> the vital essence, the nature, the mere nature, the supreme, and the other supreme alternative; and further states that the potential for manifestation and vital essence are considered as one when these six are condensed into a fivefold mode.<sup>27</sup>

The father tantra *Guhyasamaja* explains that the root of all phenomena is the four empties,<sup>28</sup> from which the coarse appearances of cyclic existence and perfect peace are said to arise. The *Indestructible Garland*, an explanatory tantra of *Guhyasamaja*, considers the root of all phenomena to be the indestructible [vital essence], which, it states, is differentiated according to its presence in the centers of the six channel-wheels into the following six [aspects]: life, vital essence, the indestructible, the invincible, the original supreme, and the second supreme. These statements [on the root of all phenomena] are identical in meaning. Similarly, according to this tantra [*Kalachakra*], [the root of all phenomena] is considered to be the union, or equalness of flavor, of *e* and *vam*, the causal continuum.

All of the appearances of cyclic life and perfect peace manifest from the very nature of the causal continuum. As this occurs, the cyclic existence aspect of the unobscured appearance aspect of that nature manifests as the impure environment and inhabitants; and the nature aspect, as the pure state of perfect peace. Even the resultant manifestation as the impure environment and inhabitants is one that accords with the appearances of the impure environment and inhabitants as grounded in the true nature of the causal continuum. In other words, it is a manifestation that is due to the existence of that single true nature. That this is so is logically sound in terms of the dependent arising of the result following its cause.

### THE POWERFUL TEN-LETTER [MANTRA] [(2)]

#### **The causal continuum manifests as the powerful ten-letter mantra and Kalachakra.**

There are two aspects to this subject: representation in the powerful [mantra of] ten letters;<sup>29</sup> and representation in Kalachakra.

### REPRESENTATION IN THE POWERFUL TEN-LETTER [MANTRA] [(a)]

This section has two parts: the symbol; and the meaning symbolized by it.

#### THE SYMBOL [(i)]

The true-nature aspect of the impure environment and its inhabitants, which exists grounded in the causal continuum, is the pervading agent, the inde-

structible awakened body, present as the nature of the powerful [mantra] of ten letters. The powerful ten-letter [mantra], which serves as the symbol of the causal continuum, is formed of the following: *a, i, ri, u, li* (the five root vowels); *ma* (seed of the collection of the inanimate); *kshab* (seed of the collection of the animate); *ha* (seed of the four formless realms) (these form the connection to [vowels known as] qualities); the simple sign of aspiration (the crescent moon);<sup>30</sup> and the sphere and tip of pristine awareness which stand above them.<sup>31</sup> Thus is formed [the mantra] called *ham kshab ma la va ra ya* [written one above the other].<sup>32</sup>

### THE SYMBOLIZED MEANING [(ii)]

This section has two parts: how the nature of the causal continuum is endowed with the powerful ten-letter [mantra] in the mode of pristine awareness; and how the powerful ten-letter [mantra], as the environment and inhabitants of cyclic existence, arises from consciousness, the transformation of pristine awareness.

#### [THE TEN LETTERS AS PRISTINE AWARENESS] [(aa)]

The causal continuum, the luminous clarity nature of mind itself, cannot be divided into separate substances or parts. However, when distinguished from the standpoint of conceptual categories, the unobscured aspect of that luminous clarity nature exists as the essence of the ten letters or signs, or "ten visions."<sup>33</sup> This aspect serves as the ground for the arising of the impure environment and its inhabitants, which are manifestations of the powerful ten-letter [mantra].

#### [THE TEN LETTERS AS CYCLIC EXISTENCE] [(bb)]

This section has two aspects: the pervading agent; and its sphere of pervasion.

#### THE PERVADING AGENT [(1')]

The pervading agent comprises awakened body, moon, and alternative [purified] dimension; pristine awareness, sun, and alternative dimension; the five elements; and the three seeds [*ma, kshab, ha*] of the inanimate and animate (collections of the five elements), and the subtle [formless realm], ten altogether.

## THE SPHERE OF PERVASION [(2')]

This is explained from the perspectives of the ground, path, and result.

### GROUND [(a')]

The sphere of pervasion from the perspective of the ground represents both the outer [world] and the inner [body]. As to the first, the outer [world], *a*, which is the "life" [of the consonants], symbolizes outer space; the four letters *ya*, *ra*, *va*, *la*, the mandalas of wind, fire, water, and earth,<sup>34</sup> respectively; *ma*, Mount Meru, the essential nature of the five elements; *kshab*, the collection of the animate life contained within the desire and form realms; *ha*, [the animate life within] the four levels of the formless realm; and the crescent moon, sphere, and tip symbolize the moon, sun, and Rahu, which are the ornaments of the outer world system. Thus, the outer world system exists in the nature of the powerful ten-letter [mantra].

As to the second, the inner body, *ya*, *ra*, *va*, and *la* symbolize, respectively, the soles of the feet of a person, the calves, the knees, and the hips [corresponding to] the four [mandalas] of wind, fire, water, and earth; *ma* symbolizes the backbone, Mount Meru; *kshab*, the area from the throat channel-wheel to that of the forehead, the desire and form realms; *ha*, the crown protuberance, the formless realm; and the crescent moon, sphere, and tip, respectively, the channels *lalana*, *rasana*, and central, the moon, sun, and Rahu. In this way, the vajra body exists as the essence of the powerful ten-letter [mantra].

### PATH [(b')]

The sphere of pervasion from the perspective of the path represents both the phase of generation and the phase of completion. With regard to the first, *ya*, *ra*, *va*, and *la* represent the support, the four mandalas of wind, fire, water, and earth, which form the lower foundations of the divine palace; *ma*, Mount Meru and the celestial palace; *kshab*, the supported, the deities of awakened body, speech, and mind; *ha*, the deities of the awakened mind mandala; the crescent moon, sphere, and tip, the awakened body, speech, and mind of the deities of the great bliss mandala. Thus, even the support for the deities and the supported deities of the generation phase exist as the nature of the powerful ten-letter [mantra].<sup>35</sup>

With regard to the completion phase of the path, the ten signs such as

smoke<sup>36</sup> [occurring] in the withdrawal and meditative absorption branches of the sixfold yoga<sup>37</sup> are the powerful ten-letter [mantra]. Likewise, the following aspects of the completion phase are the powerful ten-letter [mantra] and are therefore symbolized by it: the blocking of the ten mandalas [which flow with wind] in the right and left channels<sup>38</sup> in the branches of wind retention; the use in the path of the ten states of love<sup>39</sup> during subsequent application [the fifth branch]; and causing the ten (the five aggregates and the five elements) to be free from obscurations during contemplation [the last of the sixfold yoga].

### RESULT [(c')]

The sphere of pervasion from the perspective of the result is the very reality that exists at the ground stage. The *Net of Magical Manifestation [of Manjushri]* states:<sup>40</sup>

The great and powerful ten-letter [mantra]  
Is the beginningless ineffable state.

[The mantra of ten letters] should be considered as possessed of such characteristics.

### REPRESENTATION IN KALACHAKRA [(b)]

There are extensive expositions on how the essence of the meaning of the name [Kalachakra], the causal continuum itself, manifests as Kalachakra in its three dimensions of outer, inner, and alternative. At this point, however, will be provided a synopsis, noting only the essence [of this topic].

The ground-of-all causal continuum, the union of *e* and *vam* in its complete form [of the deity's body], is called "Shri Kalachakra (Wheel of Time)," wherein "time" (*kala*) refers to immutable bliss [method], and "wheel" (*chakra*), the emptiness [wisdom] endowed with the supreme of all aspects.<sup>41</sup> By virtue of being the inseparability of bliss and emptiness, [Kalachakra] is said to be "glorious" (*sbri*). That Kalachakra itself manifests as the attributes of the outer world, the inner vajra body, and the alternative circle of [deities of] the [Kalachakra] mandala.

# 11. THE PATH

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- 2" The Method Continuum [I.B.2.a.iii.dd.1'.d'.ii'.cc'.2"]
  - a" Overview
  - b" Extensive Discussion
    - i" Overview of the Path's Sequence
    - ii" Extensive Presentation of the Path and Its Sequence
      - aa" Initiation as Ripening Means
        - (1) The Mandalas That Serve as Bases for Conferral of Initiation
          - (a) Synopsis of the Meaning of Initiation
            - (i) The Essence of Initiation
            - (ii) The Meaning of the Term
            - (iii) Types of Initiation
            - (iv) Consequences of Not Conferring Initiation
            - (v) Merits of Conferring Initiation
          - (b) Extensive Discussion on Mandalas
        - (2) The Tantras Entered Through Initiation

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[This chapter continues the detailed presentation of the three continuums in highest yoga tantra. Presented now is] the second part, the purificatory means, or method continuum, which constitutes the foundation for the stages of the path.

## **THE METHOD CONTINUUM [2"]**

This discussion begins with an overview, followed by an extensive discussion.

### OVERVIEW [a"]

**The method continuum comprises four elements: conferral of initiation,  
Pledges and vows, contemplation, and application of tantra.**

These four elements represent that which is comprised by the method continuum of the path.

### EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION [b"]

This section has two parts: an overview of the sequence of the path, whereby one gains certainty in it; and an extensive presentation of the path and its sequence.

### OVERVIEW OF THE PATH'S SEQUENCE [i"]

**A person who enters the path possessed of faith, diligence, and good fortune,  
With confidence in tantra and a genuine teacher,  
First learns the meaning of tantra and then engages in the two phases.**

Whether one has entered this path [of highest yoga tantra] after having trained in the general path of the universal way (as in the case of ordinary individuals), or at the very beginning [of one's spiritual journey] (as in the case of exceptional individuals), a person on this path [must be] possessed of three special qualities: [one,] inalienable faith in the principles of the cause, path, and result [as set forth] in the indestructible way [i.e., the causal continuum, method continuum, and resultant continuum]; [two,] intense, unremitting diligence in [pursuing] areas of study, reflection, and meditation, with the wish to realize enlightenment within the same lifetime, or at least within the intermediate period before rebirth, for the sake of all beings; and [three,] the supreme good fortune of being naturally endowed with wisdom, as well as other qualities, which comes from having awakened the special potency of the affinity for the universal way.

Furthermore, such an individual must have three types of confidence, the first two of which are the prerequisites for the third: [one,] confidence

in what one is embarking upon, the profound tantra of the mantra way, which is the condition related to one's focus; [two,] confidence in the person who leads one onto the path, a magnificent master, the causal condition; and [three], based on those two, confidence in oneself as a practitioner of the path. Regarding these three, [Pundarika's] glorious *Stainless Light* states:

The Blessed One spoke of three types of confidence in [the context of] this way of mantra. First is the period of confidence in the tantras; next is confidence in the teacher; and after that, confidence in oneself. These three confidences become the perfect path to complete and perfect enlightenment.

Otherwise, without these three confidences, regardless of which path the master reveals to the student, it will not yield the result of complete and perfect enlightenment. This is due to the student being of blind faith, whereby superficial truth leads [only] to a mundane result.

To expand, confidence in tantra is to have gained certainty [in it] since tantra was definitely taught by the Buddha and therefore is valid. Confidence in the teacher is to have gained certainty [in him or her] since [the teacher holds] an unbroken transmission from Vajradhara right up to himself or herself and has not sullied the tantric pledges. Confidence in oneself is to have gained certainty [in oneself] since the strength of the practice of what one has learned has given rise to various experiences.

That being the case, a person who possesses the [first] two types of confidence initially must learn the meaning of tantra. He or she therefore studies the tantras and their commentaries. Once a sound understanding has been achieved, that student should next begin cultivation of the two phases [of practice] of the meaning of tantra, the precondition for which is to receive, in an appropriate manner, an authentic initiation and to assume properly the pledges and vows. All the stages of the mantric path are thereby included in [two steps]: first, receiving an initiation to ripen oneself and assuming pledges; then, the main element [of the practice], the cultivation of the two phases of the path that effects liberation. [Tilopa's] *Perfect Words* states:<sup>1</sup>

The path is said to both ripen and liberate.  
Revealed by the teacher, such a path  
Ripens the student to the fullest.

The doctrine taught by Vajradhara  
Depends entirely on the two phases:  
The phase that is one of generation  
And the phase that is of completion.  
Abiding in these two phases equally,  
The vajra master expounds the doctrine.

### **EXTENSIVE PRESENTATION OF THE PATH AND ITS SEQUENCE [ii"]**

This section has four parts: initiation as the means to ripen [the student]; pledges and vows; contemplation as the means to liberation; and the application of tantra.

### **INITIATION AS RIPENING MEANS [aa"]**

This section has three parts: the different types of mandalas that serve as the bases for conferral of initiation; the divisions of tantras entered through initiation; and the main subject, the conferral of initiation.

### **THE MANDALAS THAT SERVE AS BASES FOR CONFERRAL OF INITIATION [(1)]**

This section has two parts: a synopsis of the meaning of initiation; and an extensive discussion on mandalas.

### **SYNOPSIS OF THE MEANING OF INITIATION [(a)]**

#### **Initiation serves as the basis. ...**

That which serves in the beginning as the basis or foundation for the path of the indestructible way is the conferral of initiation, [the discussion of] which has five parts: the essence of initiation; the meaning of the term [for initiation]; types of initiations; the consequences of not conferring initiation; and the merits of conferral.

### **THE ESSENCE OF INITIATION [(i)]**

An initiation conferred according to an authentic procedure is what makes the [student's] mind fully ripened by planting the special seeds of the resultant four dimensions of awakening<sup>2</sup> in the aggregates, elements, and sense

fields [of the recipient]. As to what constitutes “ripened,” the *Ornament of the Scriptures* states:<sup>3</sup>

Food is considered ripe when conditions make it  
Ready to eat; a boil is ripe when it’s ready to burst.  
Likewise, one is said to be ripe when, in this life,  
One is ready to pacify and fully apply the two sides.<sup>4</sup>

As an example, at a given time, the [necessary] conditions for barley or another food to be consumed may not yet have ripened. However, once conditions are complete, before long, the food is considered ripe for eating. As [another] example, once the conditions for a boil to burst are complete, soon pus will emerge, which is taken to be the ripened [state].

Likewise, in the way of the perfections, the ripened [state] is considered to be that same life in which one is ready to relinquish what is to be relinquished [on the path of] seeing and to develop the remedy, the path of seeing. Similarly, in this context [of highest yoga tantra], to be ripened is to become someone who is ready to relinquish what is to be relinquished (the two obscurations) and to achieve the goal of the supreme power [awakening]; or, alternatively, to become someone of good fortune with the capacity to explain the profound meaning of the two phases and to cultivate them.

### THE MEANING OF THE TERM [(ii)]

The term for initiation<sup>5</sup> is derived from [the Sanskrit] *abbishimcha*, of which *shimcha* means to cast (or sprinkle). Symbolized by the casting of water in order to clean, [the student is] initiated by the casting [of water] on obscurations so that the mind is cleansed to a state of purity. Also, the word *shikta*, from *abbishikta*, means to pour into a mold. Thus, one is initiated when the potency of pristine awareness is “poured” into the clean vessel of a pure mind. The second part of the [*Hevajra Tantra*] *Two Examinations* states:<sup>6</sup>

Because it is performed by “casting” and “pouring”  
It should be referred to as “initiation.”

[Buddhashrijnana’s] *Oral Teachings of Manjushri* states:<sup>7</sup>

As a result of undergoing pouring and casting, and becoming pure,  
one becomes a great master.

[Vitapada's] *Commentary [on the Oral Teachings of Manjushri]* states:<sup>8</sup>

"Pouring" is the pouring of pristine awareness [symbolized by] water and so forth into the clean vessel [of one's mind] purified by the common vows and other vows. By having that "cast" onto one's mind, one gains the seeds for the purification of habitual tendencies of the ground-of-all [consciousness] and so on. That being the case, one "becomes pure," by means of which one becomes a suitable recipient. "Becomes a great master" means one has received the vajra master initiation.

Alternatively, *abhishimcha* means to confer authority. Through the four initiations, the student is authorized to cultivate [the four paths], respectively, of the phase of generation, inner heat, the circle of the mandala [i.e., the practice with a consort], and the great seal, which is the path of the fourth [initiation]; to teach action, conduct, and the other tantras; and to perform the activities for gaining ordinary and other types of powers. This is comparable to authorizing a person to perform royal duties by means of a coronation ceremony. Accordingly, [Rahulashrimitra's] *Light on the State of Union* states:<sup>9</sup>

The conferral of initiation authorizes one to hear about and teach mantra and tantra; and to practice [the way of] mantra.

Another etymology is as given in the [*Hevajra Tantra*] *Two Examinations*:<sup>10</sup>

...because it washes away stains and bestows good fortune.

Accordingly, the four initiations cleanse the stains of the [student's] body, speech, mind, and the three together; and bestow the good fortune of cultivation of the four paths, the generation phase and the others.

Moreover, numerous etymologies of the term for initiation are found in the sets of tantras,<sup>11</sup> their essential meaning summarized by the omniscient Butön:

It is called "empowerment" because it washes away stains,  
Empowers one to engage in [tantric] activities,  
Establishes potencies, effects attainment of the result,  
Permits [mantric] conduct, and grants liberation.

### TYPES OF INITIATION [(iii)]

Initiations are of three types: the first, the causal initiation, which ripens the unripened [student]; that of the intermediate phase, the initiation of the path, which consists in the application of what has ripened in the initiation; and the final one, the resultant initiation, which consists in the attainment of the supreme result ensuing from [tantric] practice.

The first type, which comprises the procedures for the ripening initiation conferred by the master on the student, is the one that will be discussed below. The second, the initiation of the path, refers to contemplations done subsequent to the causal initiation. While this does include [initiation] taken by oneself by means of one's own contemplation, the principal aspect is that of cultivation of contemplation on the meaning of the initiation until the result is reached. The third, the resultant initiation, is the actualization of unsurpassable awakening; it consists in the attainment of the supreme initiation and the symbolic initiation exemplified by the initiation of great light.

### CONSEQUENCES OF NOT CONFERRING INITIATION [(iv)]

If one has not received initiation, despite possessing a faultless knowledge of the tantras and applying however great an effort in the [tantric] path, it is impossible for one to attain exceptional powers, and therefore the expenditure of one's energies will have been futile. Not only will one not achieve exceptional powers (even though some minor power might have been achieved), but also both oneself and one's master will suffer extremely heavy consequences, such as birth in hell. There are countless references to such consequences as in the following passage from the *Kalachakra Root Tantra*:

To teach tantra and contemplate its profound reality  
Without the conferral of initiation,  
Despite a sound knowledge of the subject,  
Will lead to hell, not to freedom.

Furthermore, when an initiation is being given, it is essential that it be conferred according to authentic ritual as taught in tantra, and not be one's own invention. If such details as the drawing of lines, the colors, and placement of symbols [of the mandala] are not carried out as prescribed in tantra,

the consequences are said to be extremely serious. That being the case, it is needless to speak of the heavy consequences incurred should the ritual used for the actual initiation be contrary to tantra and of one's own invention. Hence, the authenticity of the procedure is of utmost importance, as noted in the *Essence of Pristine Awareness*:<sup>12</sup>

The initiation complete in all its rituals,  
 Inclusive of the branch essential principle  
 And transmitted in a lineage from one to the next,  
 Is received from the words of the supreme master.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, the *Kalachakra Root Tantra* states:

Carry out the rituals as taught in the tantras.  
 In that way, the deities will be propitiated;  
 They will grant powers to all mantric adepts  
 And secure for them the supreme and other goals.  
 To engage in rituals other than those,  
 Whether of another lineage, activity, occasion,  
 Type of mantra, place, direction, or deity,  
 Will bring the performers no result.

and the *Susiddhi* states:<sup>14</sup>

The wise do not invent their own  
 Secret mantric methods or secret mantras.

### MERITS OF CONFERRING INITIATION [(v)]

To become qualified to study the tantras and their commentaries and to cultivate the two phases; to purify the three obscurations;<sup>15</sup> and to attain the two [types of] powers—all are dependent upon having received an authentic initiation. Thus, the benefits of initiation are inconceivable. There are extensive references to this effect, such as the following from the *Indestructible Garland*, an explanatory tantra [of the *Guhyasamaja*]:<sup>16</sup>

Conferral of initiation is most important  
 As therein all powers always lie.

As I now explain its real meaning,  
[Vajrapani,] first listen carefully!

When the master begins with conferral  
Of authentic initiation on intelligent persons,<sup>17</sup>  
The recipients thereupon become qualified  
For the yoga of the completion phase.

and Krishnacharya states:

Once students have received these initiations,  
They become possessed of good qualities  
And are revered by all buddhas; even perpetrators  
Of evil deeds or acts of immediate retribution  
Are freed upon seeing the [mandala's] colors  
And simply by actually entering the mandala  
Come to be reborn in the pure heavens.

[Chandrakirti's] extensive commentary on Guhyasamaja, the *Illuminating Lamp*, states:<sup>18</sup>

Conferral of initiation into the mandala in itself brings about the  
attainment of all powers.

#### EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION ON MANDALAS [(b)]

**...The mandala precedes the initiation.**

**Mandalas are said to be of eight types or as few as two.**

In order for an initiation to be conferred, a mandala<sup>19</sup> must first be entered. To that end, prior preparation of the particular mandala that will be entered is necessary. Ghantapa [in his *Synopsis of the Initiation Procedure for Chakrasamvara*] states:<sup>20</sup>

Vajradhara has taught that the initiation  
Is preceded by [the preparation of] the mandala.

Mandalas are said to be of eight types, down to [as few as] two types. Nagabodhi [in his *Twenty Rituals of the Guhyasamaja Mandala*] speaks of eight:<sup>21</sup>

To fulfill all the aims of your students  
 Prepare the eight types of mandalas:  
 The mandala of jewels, one of grains,  
 One made of flowers, one of colors,  
 The painted one, one of colored powders,  
 The mandala of mind, and that of reality.

Some great [tantric] pioneers of India taught seven types of mandalas: painted on cloth, [made of] colored powders, [created by] contemplation, the body mandala, the *bhaga*, relative awakening mind, and ultimate awakening mind.<sup>22</sup>

The *Abhidhana Tantra* presents six types:<sup>23</sup>

The mandala of letters is the first,  
 The second is the mandala of the insignia,  
 The mudra of the hands is the third,  
 The arrangement of the image is the fourth,  
 The display of flowers is the fifth,  
 The sixth is the mandala of gathered [deities].  
 Once the mandalas have been prepared,  
 Always venerate and actualize them.<sup>24</sup>

Alternatively, the following six types are spoken of: the mandala of pristine awareness, the emanated, [created by] contemplation, [drawn with] colored powders, painted on cloth, and that of the body.

According to very profound esoteric instructions,  
 With veneration, one creates the five mandalas.

The five mandalas referred to here are the colored powders (the outer shape), the body, the *bhaga*, the awakening mind, and the wind and pristine awareness (the essence). The same text also explains mandalas as being of four types: colored powders, painted cloth, mind-[created], and the body mandala.

Another [system], that of the exceptional esoteric instructions, speaks of two categories [of mandalas]: four mandalas used for conferral, from which one receives the particular initiation; and four mandalas that serve as bases of purification, upon which initiation is conferred.

The first four are the mandala made of colored powders (the outer shape); the mandala of bodhichitta (the secret substance); the mandala of the *bhaga*

(the consort); and the mandala of ultimate bodhichitta. The second four are the mandala of the channels of the student's body; the mandala of letters, the *bhaga*;<sup>25</sup> the mandala of nectar-[like] element [white vital essence]; and the mandala of wind and pristine awareness (the essence).

Moreover, the *Kalachakra* and other tantras expound four mandalas:<sup>26</sup> three mandalas used for supreme initiations and the mandala of colored powders used for worldly [initiations].<sup>27</sup>

Ghantapa<sup>28</sup> speaks of three types of mandalas: the mandala painted on cloth for [initiation of] persons of low faculties; the colored powders mandala for those of average faculties; and the body as mandala for persons of sharp faculties.

Three mandalas are mentioned in the *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* and the *Continuation of the Samputa Tantra*.<sup>29</sup> the body mandala, the *bhaga*, and awakening mind. To these, some apply the expression "the three mandalas of the secret entities."

The master Buddhaguhya [in his *Commentary on the Purification of All Evil Destinies Tantra*]<sup>30</sup> discusses three types of mandalas: that of the natural condition, that of contemplation, and the [outer] reflected-image mandala [made of colored powders].<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the *Awakened Body, Speech, and Mind Tantra* [belonging to the] Rali [class of tantras] states:<sup>32</sup>

The [mandala] levels—contemplation, flowers, and colored powders—  
Correspond to differences in the faculties of recipients.

Referred to here are three mandalas: [created by] contemplation, [one formed of] heaps of flowers, and one of colored powders. Chandrakirti presents a similar classification in his *Commentary on the Ornament of the Realization of Guhyasamaja*<sup>33</sup> and states that mandalas made of heaps [of flowers] are intended for persons of sharp faculties. Thus, the present-day practice of using heaps of flowers as the mandala has valid sources.

The *Samputa Tantra* states that there are two [kinds of mandalas]: the artificial outer mandala and the real inner mandala.

[Nagarjuna's] *Five Stages* also speaks of two mandalas, that of colored powders [to empower a student] as a master of the phase of generation, and the mandala of illusion, as a master of the phase of completion.

**Emanated and pristine awareness mandalas are the spheres of  
experience of realized persons.**

**Some of sharp faculties may enter the body mandala and heaps of flowers mandala.**

Those [mandalas referred to in the root verses] may be explained concisely as follows: In the past, on the occasion of promulgating tantra, the Buddha Vajradhara emanated the mandala of pristine awareness, and thereupon conferred initiation on bodhisattvas on the tenth stage of awakening and expounded the tantra. Moreover, the manifest dimension of the Buddha emanated the mandala of the supreme manifest dimension and thereby initiated those who had reached stages of realization. These types of mandalas are the spheres of experience exclusively of exalted beings and are beyond the comprehension of ordinary individuals. Therefore, this limited description of them cannot encompass them.

The mandalas that are appropriate for ripening the student's mind are said to be four: colored powders, painted cloth, mind mandala, and body mandala.<sup>34</sup> Nonetheless, in the systems of most [Indian] masters (with the exception of that of the greatly accomplished Ghantapa), initiation in the body mandala must not be conferred on someone who has not previously received initiation [into a major mandala of the highest yoga tantra]. In addition, in the case of initiation conferred in a mind-[created] mandala, the master must be one who is exceptionally qualified. As a result, these two mandalas are not commonly used. Moreover, the mandala formed of heaps of flowers is said to be for persons of sharp faculties. Thus, these three mandalas are to be entered by [only] a few special individuals.

**The mandalas appropriate for initial entry are mandalas of colored powders, painted on cloth, And tridimensional, each of which comprises three mandalas: that of the pledge deity, The invoked pristine awareness deity, and the myriad manifestations of the buddha, Which are the bases of the initiation. ...**

The mandalas that are appropriate for persons of all three levels of faculties (low, average, or sharp) to first enter or be led into are those of colored powders, painted cloth, or tridimensional ones. Each of these has three mandalas which serve as bases for conferral of the initiation: the mandala

known as the “pledge deity,” newly generated; the mandala of the “pristine awareness deity,” primordially present, who is invoked and then melts [into the pledge deity]; and the mandala of “the myriad manifestations of a buddha,” the union [of the first two]. Of those, the colored-powders mandala is widely known. In some classifications (as in [Nagabodhi’s] eightfold division given above and others), it is differentiated according to the substance of the colored powders and the way the [deity’s] insignia are arranged. The mandala painted on cloth is elucidated in the *Achala Tantra*, which belongs to the highest yoga tantra system, as well as [in the works of] numerous Indian masters.<sup>35</sup>

Although not explicit in the above classifications of mandalas, a ripening initiation in a tridimensional mandala built as the celestial palace is definitely valid. In fact, it is said that the Lord of the Lineage, Manjushri-yashas,<sup>36</sup> conferred the ripening initiation in a tridimensional [mandala] of Kalachakra on thirty-five million seers and that the subsequent lords of the lineage [of Shambhala] conferred [the Kalachakra initiation] in the same mandala. An additional reason for its suitability is that it is easier for persons of low faculties to imagine the form of a celestial palace with a tridimensional mandala than with a mandala made of colored powders. Nevertheless, the reason that this method is not followed is due to such a mandala being difficult to build and therefore not normally available. Furthermore, the tantras and commentaries, with some special exceptions, emphasize the use of mandalas of colored powders in the majority of cases. Moreover, the scriptures on discipline state:<sup>37</sup>

If secure rituals are available, one should not rely on a loose procedure.

Consistent with this statement, it is generally not proper for one to use special [mandalas just] because one has the ability to actualize them. Furthermore, it is advisable for an ordinary master who cannot discern the minds of students to adopt the gradual approach [appropriate] for those of lesser fortune. In addition, if one has the means to do so, [to construct mandalas of colored powders] is a source of great merit. Consequently, an excellent system is that of the present day whereby masters first confer on students the ripening initiation using mandalas of colored powders.<sup>38</sup>

## THE TANTRAS ENTERED THROUGH INITIATION [(2)]

**...The tantras are divided**

**According to emphasis on method or wisdom: father tantras  
comprise three families;**

**Mother tantras, six, of which the ultimate is the Kalachakra.**

Highest yoga tantra is divided into tantras that emphasize method and those that emphasize wisdom to form two sets, father tantra and mother tantra, both of which may be subdivided. Father tantra, as explained in the *Indestructible Essence Ornament Tantra*, is split into three tantras: the family of desire [tantras], family of aversion [tantras], and family of delusion [tantras].<sup>39</sup> The *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* mentions [six]:<sup>40</sup>

The seals of the six universal sovereigns,  
Who are vajra-holders, kings of the families...

Referred to in that citation are [the tantras of] the six families: Akshobhya, Vairochana, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, Amoghasiddhi, and the sixth, Vajradhara.<sup>41</sup> Mother tantra also has six subdivisions, as set forth in the *Abhidhanottara Tantra* using their different names:<sup>42</sup>

Alternatively, they are Vajrasattva,  
Vairochana, Vajraditya,  
Padmanarteshvararaja,  
Ashvottama, and Heruka.

The ultimate of those six, the king of the tantras, is Kalachakra.<sup>43</sup> The subdivisions of the two [father and mother tantras] constitute the twelve subdivisions of [highest yoga] tantras. The twelve can be further split into several thousands, as is stated in the *Samputa Tantra*.<sup>44</sup>

Those five families themselves  
Become many thousands of families.  
Thus, they are of a single nature  
Serving as supreme great bliss.<sup>45</sup>

The sixth family, that of Vajradhara, encompasses all other families, and thus there are five families, which are divided into many.

As to the distinction between the father tantra [“method tantras”] and mother tantra [“wisdom tantras”], “method tantras” refers to sadhanas of the deities of the mandala that emphasize the different aspects of the phase of generation, mantras, and methods associated principally with male [deities who symbolize] method, and do not emphasize the supreme attainment or the mantras and methods of female deities [who symbolize] wisdom.

The distinguishing features of the method tantras are all present in the wisdom tantras, as are numerous crucial points that method tantras lack. Wisdom tantras are therefore more profound than the method tantras. That being so, “mother tantras” refers to the particular sadhanas of the mandala deities that extensively present the mandalas, mantras, and rituals of a host of vajra female deities [who symbolize] wisdom.

Mother tantras are of two families: tantras that teach in equal proportions both male and female deities [such as Chakrasamvara, Hevajra, and Kalachakra]; and tantras that teach primarily the female type [such as Chatuhpita].

Other sources classify [highest yoga tantras] according to whether they represent method or wisdom. There is also an explanation that father tantras represent method alone; mother tantras, wisdom alone; and nondual tantras, the union of method and wisdom.

The countless divisions all reflect the ways in which [all highest yoga tantras] are contained within the tantras of method or wisdom, or father and mother tantras, as well as the many ways in which they all pertain to the vast and profound meaning [of the tantra]. This is the case because all pertain to the path of the phase of generation and that of completion, and so on. Accordingly, Shradhakavarman [in his *Short Guide to the Meaning of Highest Yoga Tantra*] states:<sup>46</sup>

The tantras of method and wisdom should be differentiated with respect to the essential principles they present, [students] to be trained, purity, and whether [the aspects of the deities] conform to the ways of the world, and so on.

To expand, tantras that emphasize the essential principle of vastness are designated as “method tantras,” and those that emphasize profundity, as “wisdom tantras.”

Tantras that reveal, for the purpose of training men and Buddhist practitioners, mandalas largely consisting of forms of male deities are designated as “method tantras.” Tantras that reveal, for

the sake of training women and persons of non-Buddhist traditions, mandalas largely consisting of forms of female deities (whose forms conform to those traditions) are “wisdom tantras.”<sup>47</sup>

Tantras that reveal deities [the five buddhas, etc.,] as the purity of the outer and inner aggregates, elements, and sense fields are designated as “method tantras.” Those that reveal deities as the purity of the outer and inner channels and vital essences are “wisdom tantras.”

Those that reveal deities in forms that conform to the ways of the world are designated as “method tantras.” Those that reveal deities in forms that are contrary to the ways of the world are designated as “wisdom tantras,”<sup>48</sup> and so on. Moreover, it is said:

Owing to distinctions in wisdom,  
One speaks of two types of yogins.<sup>49</sup>

All of those, in essence, are included in [the category of] nondual tantras, as is stated in many sources such as the following from [Pundarika's] *Stainless Light*:

By virtue of their essence, all are tantras of yoga, possessed of the essential natures of wisdom and method.

## 12. INITIATION

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- (3) Conferral of Initiation [I.B.2.a.iii.dd.1'.d'.ii'.cc'.2".b".ii".aa".(3)]
    - (a) The Preparatory Ritual
    - (b) The Actual Conferral of Initiation
      - (i) Types of Initiations
        - (aa) The Vase Initiation
        - (bb) High Initiations
          - (1') The Secret Initiation
          - (2') The Pristine Awareness [through] Wisdom Initiation
          - (3') The Fourth Initiation
      - (ii) Categories of Initiations
    - (c) Functions and Purificatory Effects of Initiation
  - bb" Vows and Pledges to Be Observed [I.B.2.a.iii.dd.1'.d'.ii'.cc'.2".b". ii".bb"]
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[This chapter continues the presentation of the path (method continuum) and the discussion of initiation. What follows now is] the third part, the main subject, that of conferral of initiation. [The chapter concludes with part two of the method continuum presentation, a discussion on vows and pledges.]

### **CONFERRAL OF INITIATION [(3)]**

This section has three parts: the preparatory ritual for initiation; the actual conferral of initiation; and the functions and purificatory effects of initiation.

**THE PREPARATORY RITUAL [(a)]**

**Each of the individual tantras has its rituals for the site and the preparation,  
The actualization, veneration, and master's self-entry, followed  
by outer and inner entry.**

Each of the individual tantras sets forth its own procedure [for initiation], some elaborate and others condensed. There are, as well, many systems found in the commentaries. However, the following explanation is based on sources that are very renowned, such as the major works of the exalted [Nagarjuna] and his spiritual heirs [Aryadeva and Chandrakirti] and those of Abhayakara.

To begin with, it is a serious failing for a master to confer initiation, perform consecration, and so on, without having first completed familiarization [with the deity]. Therefore, prior to the initiation, the master engages in familiarization for a [prescribed] time-period or number [of mantra recitations],<sup>1</sup> or [until] signs [of the deity arise]. When the time for conferral has come, the student makes a formal request, whereupon the master should again engage in familiarization for seven days or more to seek permission [from the deity] and should also perform the protection of the student. Following that is the initiation in the mandala of colored powders, explained in three parts: the ritual of the site, the preparatory ritual, and the main part.

Concerning the first, the ritual of the site, Acharya Nagarjuna's [*Ritual of the Mandala of Guhyasamaja*] states:<sup>2</sup>

Clearing the site, blessing it,  
Taking possession of it, and protecting it.

The ritual of the site is said to comprise four parts, prior to which the site must be examined [as to its suitability] and permission requested [to use the site].

The second, the preparatory ritual, is explained in four parts:

The earth goddess, the mandala's deities,  
The pure vases, and pure students:  
These belong to the ritual of preparatory acts.

Concerning the third, the main part, [Nagarjuna] says:<sup>3</sup>

The ritual of pitching the lines,  
Spreading of the colored powders, and...

The procedure for the mandala prescribes the pitching of lines and spreading of colored powders, in addition to which is required the arrangement of the vases, the decoration of the mandala, and so on.<sup>4</sup>

[Nagarjuna's *Ritual of the Mandala of Guhyasamaja* states]:<sup>5</sup>

The blessing of the mandala,  
The various acts of worship,  
The master's own entry, and...

This passage prescribes the actualization of the mandala, worship of it, offering of food, and the master's entry into the mandala and receiving initiation therein. Prior to these must be cultivated the yoga of self-generation as the deity and, as appropriate, the generation [of the deities] in the vases.<sup>6</sup> [The master then directs] the student to enter the mandala, as stated by Nagarjuna:<sup>7</sup>

Next is prescribed that the student be made to enter  
And be fully conferred with the four initiations:  
The vase initiation, the secret initiation,  
The pristine awareness [through] wisdom initiation,<sup>8</sup>  
And, in turn, the fourth initiation.

And:<sup>9</sup>

Consecration and fire-offering rituals  
Are excellent branches of the mandala.  
These constitute the twenty-part ritual.

As stated here, rituals of consecration and fire offering are also prescribed, [thereby completing] the twenty-part [mandala] ritual as explained by Nagarjuna. To understand the points that are not explicitly mentioned in Nagarjuna's work [*Ritual of the Mandala of Guhyasamaja*], one must consult the works of Nagabodhi and Abhayakara.

The extensive applications, significance, and sequence of meditation associated with the above mandala rituals should be learned from major works [on this subject]. What follows here provides simply a synopsis.

Concerning the ritual of the site, most of the major tantras omit some of the parts associated with it, such as the examination of the site, in consideration of cases where the place has already been used for that purpose.<sup>10</sup> The *Vajradaka* and the *General Tantra* do teach the examination of the site and other rituals in consideration of such factors as the mandala being built at a new site. Accordingly, Abhayakara extensively discusses the ritual,<sup>11</sup> which is to be carried out in the following way:

Examination of the site means analysis in terms of its directions, colors, characteristics, earth, and water.<sup>12</sup>

Requesting the site involves the request [for permission to use it] made to a manifest being, the owner of the place such as a king; and to a non-manifest being such as the local guardian, the earth goddess, or both.<sup>13</sup>

Clearing the site is carried out by digging up the site [commencing at the armpit] of the *uraga* [naga] after having determined [its position].<sup>14</sup> Once



Figure 6: *Uruga*: serpent-bellied earth-lord (extracted from the *Sumpa Khenpo*)

the impurities [of the earth]<sup>15</sup> are removed, a platform that meets prescribed specifications is erected, and rituals of purification of the site through substances, mantras, contemplation, and the highest [purification of emptiness] are performed.<sup>16</sup>

Taking possession of the site involves these steps: Once the house [or platform] for the mandala has been constructed, in that place, the master contemplates the mandala [of the deities] and then seeks their permission [to draw the mandala]. Then, in response to the students' request, the master, in order to raise the mandala [into the sky] and to subjugate demonic forces, separates himself from the chief [deity of the mandala] and assumes the pride of being the appropriate [wrathful] deity,<sup>17</sup> issues commands to the obstructing forces [to leave], and expels them by performing the vajra dance and stances.<sup>18</sup>

Protecting [and blessing] the site is performed by generating the vajra dagger, trapping all the obstructing forces that did not heed the commands [to leave] and striking with the dagger [in the four cardinal and four intermediate directions].<sup>19</sup> In order to prevent the obstructing forces from encroaching later, [the master] imagines a protective circle and then blesses [the site as vajra nature].<sup>20</sup>

In a place that has already been used [for that purpose], examination of the site, digging [the earth], elimination of impurities, and so on, may be dispensed with. This does not mean that the ritual of the site is always unnecessary; it is explained that the rituals for the site ought to be performed when appropriate. Therefore, on the right occasion, it is best to do all the other parts of the ritual as well. The ritual of the site is unnecessary when the mandala is one painted on cloth, the mind mandala, or the body mandala.<sup>21</sup>

The second part, the preparatory ritual, comprises the three latter aspects [mentioned above: mandala deities, vase, and students], which are set forth in most of the major tantras. The *Samputa* and the *Net of Magical Manifestation*,<sup>22</sup> and masters such as Nagarjuna and his spiritual heirs teach in addition the preparatory ritual of the earth goddess.

As to the sequence [of these preparatory acts], various systems have developed, such as the preparation of the deities done after the preparation of the vases; the preparation of the students done once the mandala is drawn, and so on. The best order, however, would be the preparation of the earth goddess first, then that of the deities of the mandala, followed by that of the vase, and then that of the students. Within this [order], it is good do the preparation related to the earth goddess prior to [pitching] the action lines.

Nonetheless, Nagabodhi advocates performing [that preparation] after the pitching of the action lines [of the mandala].<sup>23</sup>

The method for the preparation of the earth goddess comprises several steps. In the middle of [the site upon which] the mandala [will be drawn], one generates the earth goddess [of the pledge] and [imagines that] the pristine awareness deity merges with her. One then makes offerings and presents food to the deity, asks permission [to draw the mandala], and [imagines that] she consents. Thereupon, one contemplates that she [dissolves into the site and] remains present as the essence of the earth.<sup>24</sup>

The preparation of the mandala deities has been explained by many to be done prior to pitching the action lines. However, the explanation by Nagabodhi that it should be done after the pitching of the action lines is a good one. As to the method for doing this, the material, measurement, and blessing of the strings for pitching the lines should meet the specifications prescribed for the ritual of the threads. One then pitches the action lines.<sup>25</sup> Once the spots where the deities [will be] have been determined, drops of scented water are placed there. The mandala of the pledge [deities] is contemplated there, the mandala that was raised into the sky invited [to descend and merge with it], and initiation conferred [on the deities of the mandala]. [The preparation is completed by] offering, praise, and supplication [to the deities of the mandala].

The preparation of the vase must be carried out according to the specifications prescribed for their material, dimensions, number, insignia on the vase, substances contained, neck and mouth ornaments, and so forth.<sup>26</sup> Once the vases are prepared, the pledge deities are generated within the vase, the pristine awareness deities merge with them, and initiation conferred on the deities in the vase. The making of offerings, uttering of praise, reciting of mantras, and so forth, must then be performed. Some tantric scriptures do not mention the insignia attached to the vase, their generation as deities,<sup>27</sup> and so on, owing to a difference between the extensive and concise treatments.

The preparation of students must be performed according to the specifications concerning the qualifications of the students, their number, purification with water, offering of the universe (mandala), and so on.<sup>28</sup> These are the steps to be followed: To inspire students' interest in mantra and to make them fit for initiation, [the master] adjusts their motivation and confers on them the inner initiation.<sup>29</sup> Students make [a threefold] supplication to the master, who enjoins them to maintain a firm interest in mantra, and assume the vows so that their minds become receptive. The master then blesses

their three places [forehead, throat, and heart].<sup>30</sup> In order to analyze signs of [forthcoming] powers, each throws a tooth-stick [onto a square board].<sup>31</sup> To purify faults of speech, handfuls of water are given [for rinsing the mouth and drinking]. Kusha grass is given [to be slept upon] in order that dreams be clear; and a protection string is tied [to the arm], that obstacles be eliminated. The master expounds the doctrine in order to generate enthusiasm. [The next day] dreams are analyzed to determine signs [relevant to the initiation]. Some [tantras] do not mention the adjusting of motivation, the inner initiation, and so forth, owing to a difference between the extensive and concise treatments.<sup>32</sup>

According to some expositions, initiation rituals [based on] mandalas painted on cloth, the mind mandala, or body as mandala are performed with none of the preparatory rituals, while according to others, the preparation of the vase and that of the students are done. However, it is good if the two preparations [of vase and students] are considered mandatory for mandalas painted on cloth and the mind mandala, but dispensed with for the mandala of the body.

Next is the main part, which begins with the procedure for [drawing] the mandala. The principal component of this ritual is the pitching of the pristine awareness lines in order to consecrate action lines which have been pitched with a string [to which] colored [powders have been applied].<sup>33</sup> The action lines are lines that have been pitched in advance [during the preparation of the deities], or, as explained by many great tantric adepts, [the action lines] may be also pitched at this point.

The pristine awareness lines are to be pitched while fulfilling special requirements concerning the thread's material, number, color, and consecration, as well as the place where one stands [to pitch the lines], stance, way of moving around [the mandala], and so forth. The ritual for preparing the colors, the substances of the colored powders, the colors, their consecration, way of spreading the color, and so on, must meet the specifications prescribed [in the tantras].<sup>34</sup> When the mandala is finished, the vases are arranged, the mandala is decorated, the offerings items displayed, and so on. For [an initiation that uses a mandala] painted on cloth, one must know how to spread out the canvas, and other details; similarly, for mandalas of mind and of body, [correct] placement of the vases must be known.

What follow now are [the activities of the initiating master, which involve] the actualization and worship of the mandala and the performing of self-

entry into the mandala. For all mandalas (with the exception of that of the body mandala), one cultivates the yoga of self-generation as the deity, recitation [of the mantra], and [at the end] the dissolution [of oneself as the deity]. Then, having generated the entire mandala in front, the preparatory ritual mandala [that was raised into space] is merged with the mandala of colored powders. The [mandala of the] pristine awareness deities merges with all of that, at which point one makes offerings, utters praise, and so forth, to the deities therein. Then, having completed the recitation of the mantra associated with the deities generated in the vase, one presents the offerings of food to [the deities of] the mandala and to the elemental spirits. Following these steps, one enters the mandala, takes the [four] initiations, and requests permission to have one's students enter the mandala.<sup>35</sup>

As to the method of conferring initiation in the body mandala, one visualizes the body mandala (according to the sadhana) and generates the deities in the vase and so forth. Next, one imagines that from one's body mandala, a replica separates; one enters that mandala and therein takes initiation. At the time of initiating the students, the two [mandalas] are unified.

Some masters maintain that in front of the body mandala of oneself is visualized what is like an outer mandala into which one enters and from there confers initiation on students. This procedure is not the one taught in tantric scriptures.

For the actual conferral of initiation, the procedure for the student's entry into the mandala is a close preliminary for initiation.<sup>36</sup> First is the outer entry. In order to become a candidate fit for entering the mandala, the [blindfolded] student enters [the space] outside the curtain [or the house] of the mandala. To do that, one makes a request, dons the apparel [of the deity], and, visualizing oneself as the deity, positions oneself at the eastern door [having been enjoined to do so].<sup>37</sup> There, one assumes the common [awakening mind commitments] and the uncommon [tantric] vows. One is asked [by the master who is inseparable from the deity] about one's affinity and interest. Then, one generates the [awakening] mind of all-encompassing yoga and is sworn to secrecy.<sup>38</sup>

Next is the inner entry. In order to gain divine fortune, the student enters [the space] inside the curtain of the mandala.<sup>39</sup> First, in order to gain outer divine fortune, one actually enters [the space] inside the curtain while imagining to enter the divine palace through the eastern door, feels inspired with faith in the deities, circumambulates the deities of the mandala, and [imagines oneself] prostrating to them. Then, in order to gain inner divine

fortune, as it is necessary to safeguard the pledges which are the root [of attainment] of powers, one becomes bound by oath by [assuming] the four oaths.<sup>40</sup> Following that is the descent of the pristine awareness deities [invoked by the master] into the student and the procedure that stabilizes them within oneself.<sup>41</sup>

Next is the examination of what is seen [by the student] [in the space above] the mandala to ascertain signs indicating what kind of power will be attained. The student is then examined as to his or her suitability for being revealed the mandala and receiving initiation. If deemed a fit candidate, in order to determine affiliation with one or the other of the [five] buddha families, he or she casts a flower [onto the square board which symbolizes the mandala] while repeating words of truth [after the master]. Thereupon, to create an auspicious connection so that the deity of the particular family will favor one, the student is initiated with a garland of flowers.

Finally, in order to inspire enthusiasm and give rise to great perseverance in the attainment of mantric powers, one enters the mandala and actually sees it. This is done by the master's directing one to remove the blindfold and look at the mandala, which is then described, whereupon one rejoices.

### **THE ACTUAL CONFERRAL OF INITIATION [(b)]**

This section has two parts: the different types of initiations; and their categories.

#### **TYPES OF INITIATIONS [(i)]**

Highest yoga tantra is generally considered to have four initiations. The *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra*<sup>42</sup> states:

The first is the initiation of the vase;  
And the second, the secret initiation;  
The third, pristine awareness [through] wisdom,  
And the fourth itself, the same as that.<sup>43</sup>

That citation serves as an example with which all sets of [highest yoga] tantras are in accord. There are said to be fourteen initiations in total, with the vase initiation divided into eleven initiations, plus the three high initia-

tions. As to the way the vase initiation is divided into eleven, five are initiations of the student, and six, of the master. The five of the student are the water, diadem, vajra, bell, and name initiations.

As for the six initiations of the master, there seem to be various ways of enumerating them. Ghantapa<sup>44</sup> considers the six to consist of the main part of the master's initiation, plus [five] appendages: the initiation of the mantra; the prophecy [of one's enlightenment] and the assurance [that one will be free from the suffering of cyclic existence] (considered as one); the initiation of vajra deliberate behavior; the initiation of the deliberate behavior of [tantric] conduct; and the permission [to work for all beings through tantric means].

Others explain that the six consist of the main part of the master's initiation, preceded by the assuming of the three kinds of pledges [the mind pledge of the vajra, the speech pledge of the bell, the body pledge of the seal];<sup>45</sup> the initiation of [the ten] essential principles [of tantric expertise] and their procedures; permission; deliberate behavior; prophecy; and assurance.

Yet others consider the six to consist of the main part of the master's initiation; the transmission of the mantra; plus the latter four, permission, [deliberate behavior, prophecy, and assurance]. Another assertion mentions bestowal of the three pledges; the main part of the master's initiation; plus the latter four, the permission, and so on.

Although in many explanations, the permission, [deliberate behavior, prophecy, and assurance] are considered to be parts of the master's initiation, this is not so in all cases. In some systems, they are attached to the end of the initiations of the student, and in others, they are considered to be the appendage to the four initiations.

Masters of the Ngog clan<sup>46</sup> divide the vase initiation into eighteen parts which in this case consist of five initiations of awareness, [conferral] of the three pledges, five permissions related to the five families, prophecy, praise, assurance, master's initiation, and deliberate behavior.

This completes what is merely a synopsis of the different types of initiations. The point made in the major tantras is that there are two main types of initiation: the vase initiation and the high initiations.

#### THE VASE INITIATION [(aa)]

**The functions of the vase consist in the awareness initiations,  
the deliberate behavior, and so forth,  
The student's initiations, and the irreversible wheel initiations.**

The initiation known as vase initiation, which relates to the ritual acts performed with the vase, comprises the common initiations of the student and the uncommon initiations of the master. The first are explained as follows:

The water initiation [of Akshobhya] is conferred to establish the potency [for the recipient] to wash away the stains of ignorance.

The diadem initiation [of Ratnasambhava] is conferred to establish the potency to perform the seal impression by acting as the lord of the buddha family and to produce the crown protuberance, a major sign [of a buddha].

The vajra initiation [of Amitabha] is conferred to establish the potency to realize pristine awareness, which is indivisible from essential reality.

The bell (or lord) initiation [of Amoghasiddhi] is conferred in order to realize the source of reality [emptiness], lord of the arising of the pristine awareness of indivisible emptiness and compassion.

The name initiation [of Vairochana] is conferred to plant the seed for [receiving] the name of a buddha in the future.<sup>47</sup>

The functions of the initiations of the student are explained as follows:

The initiation of the flower garland [blessed by] mantra allows the student to know the buddha family to which he or she belongs.

The water initiation establishes the potency for washing away the stains of ignorance that create obscurations to the attainment of the state of a buddha of that family.

The diadem initiation establishes the potency to be crowned with the buddha who is lord of that family.

The vajra initiation establishes the potency [to realize] the nondual pristine awareness which is the mind of the buddha in that family.

The bell initiation establishes the potency for expounding, as a buddha of that family, the 84,000 aspects of the doctrine.

The name initiation establishes the potency, as a buddha in that family, for one's name to be that of a buddha.

The above explanation is that of Abhayakara. These are called "awareness initiations" because they lead to the attainment of the goal of awareness, the five pristine awarenesses, through relinquishment of the five emotional afflictions of ignorance (the object to be relinquished).<sup>48</sup>

The uncommon initiations of the master are explained as follows:

The pledge of the vajra is bestowed in order that [the student] not be separated from nondual pristine awareness, the minds of all buddhas, or, alternatively, in order that he or she realize such pristine awareness.

The pledge of the bell is bestowed so that one reaches the understanding that all things are devoid of intrinsic nature.

The pledge of the seal is bestowed so that one may attain the state that is never separate from the great seal of the deity's body.

The actual master's initiation is bestowed so that one may attain [the status of] "sovereign over the domain of the doctrine in the three realms."<sup>49</sup>

The water initiation in this context is bestowed to wash away the stains that create obscurations to the attainment of the state of Vajrasattva.

The [set of] essential principles [of tantric expertise] is revealed so that one may realize all aspects of the mandala of the support and the supported [deities] as the nature of the qualities of enlightenment; the procedure of rituals is revealed so that one may perform the activities of a vajra master.

The mantra is transmitted in order to establish the seeds of the powers associated with the four activations [of appeasement, etc.] and so that one may create one's own pure realm, which is the power of ultimate mantra.<sup>50</sup>

The eye elixir is applied in order that the obscurations of the film of unknowing be removed and the supernormal cognition of the divine eye be attained.<sup>51</sup>

The mirror is given so that one may reach the understanding that all things are devoid of intrinsic nature, like images reflected in a mirror.

The bow and arrow are given to plant the seed [of the capacity] to strike the target of the ultimate dimension of phenomena upon conquering the four demonic forces.<sup>52</sup>

The permission is given in order to create the potency for gaining powers through the proper rituals and performing deeds and activities that benefit both oneself and others, such as teaching the doctrine.

The deliberate behavior is given so that, on the basis of such factors as never being separated from the awakening mind which is of the natures of the five pristine awarenesses, one may engage in mantric conduct.

The prophecy is made in order to praise and uplift [the recipient] with the words "As you are never without the established potency [to attain] a buddha's name, you will be victorious on the earth, below, and in the realms above."

The assurance is given that [each of] the different stages in the conferral of the initiation establishes a potency to attain buddhahood, which causes one to rejoice over the respective potency.

The above explanations are, for the most part, that of Abhayakara. This set of initiations is called the "master's initiation" since it leads one to [the

state of] sovereignty over the teachings; or the “irreversible initiation” since it establishes the irreversible seed [of the attainment of awakening].

The mandala used for conferral of this [vase] initiation is one that comprises the supporting mandala and the supported deities, a drawn one (such as the colored powders or painted cloth), the body as mandala, and so forth. The basis for the initiation here is primarily the student’s body, which is purified by removing its stains. The objective of the initiation is to establish a special potency for attaining the manifest dimension of a buddha and the performance of its deeds and to actualize the body as the nature of the indestructible body of a buddha.

**Kalachakra sets forth seven initiations in the pattern of childhood.**

In the exceptional system of the glorious Kalachakra, the vase initiation is called the “seven initiations in the pattern of childhood.”<sup>53</sup> As to their precise number and order, the *Primordial Buddha Tantra*<sup>54</sup> states:

O King, the sevenfold initiation  
Includes, in their entirety, the initiations  
Of water, diadem, silk ribbons, vajra and bell,  
Deliberate behavior, name, and permission.

[The same tantra] states concisely:<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, the elements and other constituents are purified.

and then describes the purpose of the seven initiations in the following words:<sup>56</sup>

The water [initiation] purifies the elements;  
The diadem [initiation] purifies the aggregates;  
The silk ribbons [initiation] effects the purity of the perfections;  
The vajra of the great immutable [bliss]  
And the bell of the continuous words of a buddha  
Purify the solar and lunar [channels] as one;  
Through purification of the objects and sense powers,  
The vajra deliberate behavior of non-emission is developed;  
The name effects the purity of love and other qualities;

The permission effects the purity of enlightenment itself;  
These are the seven initiations.<sup>57</sup>

The *Hevajra Tantra Five Hundred Thousand* presents the analogies related to the “seven initiations in the pattern of childhood”:<sup>58</sup>

[As if washing] their newborns, the mothers confer  
The initiation of cleansing with water.

The child’s hair bound on his head  
Is to securely fix the diadem.

The piercing of his ears and adorning him  
Is called the initiation of the silk ribbons.

The child’s talking and laughing  
Is the initiation of vajra and bell.

His enjoyment is the deliberate behavior.  
Being named is the name initiation.

Reading and writing is the permission  
Always given by the fathers.

These seven parts, thus described,  
Are known as the seven initiations.<sup>59</sup>

## HIGH INITIATIONS [(bb)]

**In the body mandala, relative mandala, and ultimate mandala,  
The secret, wisdom, and fourth initiations are received.  
The high and supremely high ones are given at appropriate times.**

The three supreme initiations—the secret, pristine awareness [through] wisdom, and the fourth—are to be received, respectively, in the three mandalas: the body mandala, the relative mandala, and the ultimate mandala.<sup>60</sup>

## THE SECRET INITIATION [(1’)]

The secret initiation is conferred for the sake of creating the conditions for faith and wisdom [in the student’s mind].

To create the conditions for faith, one clearly imagines the master [and consort] as the male and female deities and tastes the nectar of the bodhichitta [white and red vital essences] from their union. At that time, through the deity's power, one experiences an exceptional bliss, and thereby reverses doubts and misconceptions about mantric practices.

To create the conditions for wisdom, the secret substances [of bodhichitta], essence of all the buddhas, are placed [by the master] in one's mouth, from where they descend to the lotus of one's heart. That causes one to realize illusory body, which is pointed out by the twelve examples of illusion.<sup>61</sup>

The essence of the secret initiation is that of the blissful contemplative state which arises upon tasting the bodhichitta.

Concerning the meaning of its name, "secret initiation," it is so called owing to it being an initiation conferred by means of the secret substances, the bodhichitta of the master and consort in union.

As to the mandala for this initiation, conferral depends on the mandala of the relative bodhichitta of the master and consort [in union], which is the essence of all the buddhas melted. This initiation is primarily conferred on one's speech, which is made pure by removing its stains. The objective of the secret initiation is to establish a special potency for attainment of the enjoyment dimension of awakening and to actualize speech as the nature of the indestructible speech of a buddha.

### **THE PRISTINE AWARENESS [THROUGH] WISDOM INITIATION [(2)']**

The pristine awareness [through] wisdom initiation provides the example that indicates the actual innate [pristine awareness of bliss]<sup>62</sup> introduced in the fourth initiation. This initiation is conferred in dependence on a real consort for the sake of entering the states of the four joys,<sup>63</sup> innate pristine awareness in particular, through union with her.<sup>64</sup> The student and consort unite as the male and female deities, and through the ensuing inner heat of passion, bodhichitta melts and flows to the various places [channel-wheels], generating the four descendent and four ascendent joys.<sup>65</sup>

In the case of a student who is a monk, [instead of uniting with a real woman,] he visualizes a pristine awareness consort,<sup>66</sup> and imagines himself as the male and female deities in union. Then, by applying the phases of controlling the winds, he ignites the fire of inner heat, the warmth of which melts the bodhichitta, thus bringing about the experience of the four joys.

The essence of the third initiation is considered to be the experience of innate pristine awareness as the bodhichitta flows into the gem [tip of the penis].

As to the meaning of its name, “pristine awareness [through] wisdom initiation,” it is so called owing to it being an initiation that depends on a wisdom woman—a real consort or an imaginary one—so that, through the finest mind devoid of concepts [that arises], one is empowered in innate pristine awareness in dependence [on the consort].

Concerning the mandala for this initiation, conferral depends on the mandala of the *bhaga* of the consort. Initiation is conferred on the mind, which is made pure by removing its stains. The objective of the third initiation is to establish a special potency for attaining the reality dimension of awakening and to actualize the mind as the nature of the indestructible mind of a buddha.<sup>67</sup>

### THE FOURTH INITIATION [(3')]

[On the basis of] the innate pristine awareness [ensuing] from the union of the male and female favored deities that occurs at the time of the third initiation and serves as an example [for actual innate pristine awareness], the fourth (word) initiation is conferred in order to point out the actual innate pristine awareness, the great seal possessing seven features.<sup>68</sup>

To expand, what is principally introduced [in the fourth initiation] is the selflessness of all phenomena, the nature of total sameness, the unborn, the essence of emptiness, or ultimate truth of luminous clarity. However, the aspect of the relative illusory body of the deity, the bliss of the [male and female deities in] union, and so forth, should not be held to be solely non-referential emptiness. In fact, the very pristine awareness [pointed out] during the fourth initiation is explained as the state of Vajradhara endowed with seven features.

That being the case, it would amount to a partial [understanding] to maintain that the meaning [of this initiation] is the bliss of [the male and female deities in] union [pointed out] in the fourth initiation sealed by emptiness; or the bliss of the four joys, and so forth, as merely ungraspable awareness-emptiness; or the great seal of the deity's form as merely the non-referential clarity-emptiness of one's mind.

Hence, the essence of the fourth initiation should be considered to be the dimension of the union of bliss and emptiness of one's body in the aspect of the enjoyment dimension of awakening; or the innate reality which is the indivisibility of the bliss and emptiness of that dimension.

As to the meaning of its name, “word initiation,” it is so called owing to it being an initiation that is conferred through words alone on those in-

clined to both the profound and vast truths. It is also known as “precious” because it is superior to the relative initiations.

As to the mandala for this initiation, conferral depends on the mandala of the ultimate mind of awakening. Initiation is conferred on the body, speech, and mind, whose stains and karmic traces are removed. Its objective is to establish [in the student’s mind] a special potency for attaining the dimension which is the very essence of the indivisibility of the three indestructible states [of body, speech, and mind].

The above explanation [of the four higher initiations] is from the perspective of the common abridged tantras.<sup>69</sup> The three supreme initiations [secret, pristine awareness through wisdom, and word] taught in the exceptional Kalachakra tantra do have the same names [as those taught in other tantras], but are more profound and vast. They are distinguished in terms of their provisional and definitive meanings, and thus greatly superior by virtue of their many different aspects. These will not be elaborated on at this point for fear of [the explanation] being too lengthy. Likewise, in the Kalachakra system, the initiation [to confer] the rank of the sovereign vajra master and the initiation [to confer] the rank of the great sovereign vajra master are known, respectively, as the high initiation and the supremely high initiation. However, these are not to be conferred on individuals in common but on those who have succeeded in the withdrawal and retention [branches of the sixfold yoga] onward, at the appropriate time.<sup>70</sup>

## CATEGORIES OF INITIATIONS [(ii)]

**All are included in the entrance, main part, and permission;  
Lesser and supreme; mundane and supramundane, and so forth.**

All of the rituals for the conferral of initiation may be included within three categories: the entrance, the main part, and the permission as conclusion; or within the two categories of common lesser initiations and the uncommon high initiations; or the two categories of mundane initiations and supramundane initiations, divided according to their results [i.e., common or supreme powers]. “So forth” [in the root text] above refers to the categorization of rituals as relative and ultimate initiations, as presented in the *Primordial Buddha Tantra*,<sup>71</sup> or the categorization of the former three [common, mundane, and relative] as causal initiations, and the latter three [uncommon, supramundane, and ultimate] as resultant initiations, as presented in the *Essence of the Great Seal* and the *Indestructible Garland*.<sup>72</sup>

## FUNCTIONS AND PURIFICATORY EFFECTS OF INITIATION [(c)]

**Initiations purify the obscurations of body, speech, and mind,  
and the three equally,  
Establish potencies for the four indestructible states, ripen one  
as a fit trainee  
Of the generation phase, self-blessing, and example and actual  
pristine awareness,  
And bring about the attainment of the rank of a vajra master.**

The particular functions and purificatory effects of the conferral of the four initiations have already been mentioned in the course of the above discussion. Presented here, however, is a synopsis of those points for the sake of clarity.

The four initiations serve the following functions: to purify the obscurations of each of body, speech, mind, and the three together; to establish potencies for [attaining] the four indestructible states of awakened body, speech, mind, and pristine awareness; to ripen [the student] so that he or she becomes fit to cultivate the path, which comprises the generation phase, self-blessing,<sup>73</sup> the example pristine awareness and actual pristine awareness.<sup>74</sup> The permission and other parts of the initiations bring about the attainment of the rank of a vajra master of the highest tantra system.

To expand, in general, the main goal of the path of the highest yoga tantra is the dimension of union possessing seven features. Throughout the stages that accomplish that goal, one must first relinquish [the conception of] one's ordinary form and train in [self-generation as] the body of the deity. To that end, one must receive the vase initiation which [has the function of] cleansing the body of its stains and establishing the potency for the indestructible awakened body. To receive the vase initiation makes one fit to cultivate the generation phase by way of the three contemplations and their branches.<sup>75</sup>

Subsequent to that, it is necessary to train in the illusory body<sup>76</sup> associated with relative [truth]. To that end, one must receive the secret initiation [which has the function of] removing the stains of speech and establishing a potency for indestructible awakened speech. By receiving the secret initiation, one becomes fit to cultivate the phase of completion, which comprises the vajra recitation and other wind yogas, and self-blessing.<sup>77</sup>

Next, one must train in luminous clarity emptiness. To that end, one must receive the pristine awareness [through] wisdom initiation [which has

the function of] removing the stains of mind and establishing a potency for indestructible awakened mind. By receiving this third initiation, one becomes fit to cultivate the phase of completion of ultimate luminous clarity devoid of subject and object [duality].

Finally, one trains in the union of the two [truths]: the illusory body associated with the relative truth and the luminous clarity that has merged with essential reality<sup>78</sup> associated with the ultimate truth. To that end, one must receive the fourth initiation [which has the function of] removing karmic traces which are the stains of body, speech, and mind, and establishing a potency for the intrinsic dimension of awakening, which is the indivisibility of three indestructible dimensions. By obtaining that initiation, one becomes fit to cultivate the phase of completion of the union of the two truths.

Concisely stated, these initiations serve to remove the stains consisting of the faults that hinder meditation in the two liberative phases [of generation and completion] one is cultivating and to establish the potencies to accomplish whatever are one's objectives. [This explains] the necessity of first receiving initiation, which is the root of the [tantric] path.<sup>79</sup>

On occasions, one actualizes an emanation mandala [i.e., a mind-created one] and from that receives initiation. Such a procedure is one that generates a greater potency for the accomplishment of objectives through the contemplation of the two phases while removing the faults that hinder accomplishment. It is known as the "initiation in the context of the path."

**The initiations on the pattern of childhood correspond to the thirty-seven means of purification and spheres of purification.**

The seven initiations on the pattern of childhood in the *Kalachakra Tantra* have as their grounds of purification the aggregates, elements, action faculties, sense powers, and their objects, and as their means of purification, the purity of the thirty-seven elements (transcendent ones, bodhisattvas, *shaktis*, wrathful deities, and so forth).<sup>80</sup> The correspondences between the grounds of purification and their purificatory means will not be elaborated upon at this point, nor will the exceptionally profound meaning of the three high initiations.

Upon the completion of the rituals of initiation, the following activities are to be performed as the conclusion to the mandala, as explained by

Abhayakara: the appeasing and enriching forms of the fire-offering rituals (to make amends for mistakes of excess or omission in the rituals and to please the deity); worship of the mandala; accepting remuneration [for the initiation]; making food offerings to the guardians of the directions, and so forth, outside [the mandala]; prostration to the mandala followed by the dedication of merit; circumambulation of the mandala; asking forgiveness [for mistakes]; departure of the pristine awareness deity; dissolution of the emanated [i.e., pledge] deities; destroying the mandala of colored powders; extraction of the dagger [fixed in the ten directions]; carrying the colored powders to a river; and celebrating the occasion with a tantric feast gathering or by other means.<sup>81</sup>

### VOWS AND PLEDGES TO BE OBSERVED [bb"]

**The prohibitions concern root downfalls and secondary infractions;**

**Injunctions concern contemplation, conduct, sustenance, and articles not to be apart from;**

**Pledges include those for beginners, adepts of stable realization and highly stable realization,**

**Or the pledges of indestructible awakened body, speech, and mind, and so forth.**

Once an initiation has been received, one must train in the pledges which are the "life" of the initiation. Pledges belong, according to their essence, to one of two categories: prohibitions and injunctions. Pledges that are prohibitions concern the fourteen root downfalls and eight (or nine) secondary ones.<sup>82</sup> The injunctions concern the vows of the five [buddha] families,<sup>83</sup> the pledges of contemplation, conduct, and sustenance, and the pledges regarding ritual articles not to be apart from.<sup>84</sup>

Alternatively, the pledges may be included within the following set of three categories: pledges for beginners, pledges for adepts of stable realization, and pledges for adepts of highly stable realization;<sup>85</sup> or included within the set of three pledges of the indestructible states of awakened body, speech, and mind.<sup>86</sup> The "so forth" [in the root text] above refers to the set of three categories of pledges of the vase, secret, and pristine awareness [through] wisdom initiations;<sup>87</sup> or, alternatively, the pledges of familiarization [with the state of the deity], pledges related to the practices of individual mundane [deities], and pledges related to individual activations, practices of

supramundane [deities], and attainment of great power [awakening].<sup>88</sup> Each set of pledges in itself is inclusive of the entire range of pledges of the highest yoga tantra.

In general, those [pledges] derived from [tantric] procedures that have not been taught by the buddhas are not actually vows but merely deliberate behavior. The ideal [tantric] procedures [for assuming the pledges and vows] are the initiations set forth in the awareness-holders' collection of teachings. Once one has received such initiations, it is mandatory to carefully observe all the pledges one has made. The way to do so is presented in detail in the *Buddhist Ethics* section of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*, based on which one should gain an understanding of the subject.



## 13. CONTEMPLATION

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- cc" Contemplation [I.B.2.a.iii.dd.1'.d'.ii'.cc'.2".b".ii".cc"]
- (1) Overview
  - (2) Extensive Discussion
    - (a) The Phase of Generation
    - (b) The Phase of Completion
      - (i) A General Synopsis of Essential Points
      - (ii) Different Aspects of the Completion Phase in the *Great Galpo Tantra*
        - (aa) Overview
        - (bb) Detailed Discussion
          - (1') The Causal Phase of Completion
            - (a') The Main Topics
              - (i') Self-Blessing
              - (ii') The Mandala Circle
              - (iii') The Great Seal
            - (b') Ancillary: The Four Seals

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[This chapter continues the detailed presentation of the path, or method continuum, with] part three, contemplation as means to liberation. An overview of the subject is followed by an extensive discussion.

### **OVERVIEW [(1)]**

**Contemplation comprises the two phases.**

Contemplation in highest yoga tantra comprises two phases: the phase of generation and the phase of completion.

**EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION [(2)]**

This section has two parts: the phase of generation; and the phase of completion.

**THE PHASE OF GENERATION [(a)]**

**The phase of generation comprises essence, branches, divisions, Stages, and actual and nominal aspects; its six topics of analysis, Grounds of purification, final result, ripening effect, Purpose, essence, and perfection apply to all its branches.**

The phase of generation [is treated in five parts]: its essence, branches, divisions, stages, and the distinction between actual and nominal phases of generation.

The essence of the phase of generation is the contemplation of bliss [arising] from the melting [of the vital essence] in meditation focused on the form of the deity's body, which is conceptually created anew, in accordance with the three existences [of birth, death, and the intermediate state].<sup>1</sup>

Its branches include the offering and praises performed in the periods between meditation sessions, the eight branches of yoga, and so forth.<sup>2</sup> These are called "branches" because, owing to their natures, they do not use aspects of existence or the result [of buddhahood] in the path.

The divisions include [the three contemplations of] initial union, supremely triumphant mandala, and supremely triumphant act;<sup>3</sup> [the four branches of] familiarization [ritual service], near attainment, attainment, and great attainment [of the state of the deity]; and yoga, subsequent yoga, intense yoga, and great yoga.<sup>4</sup>

The stages refer to the practitioner's level of development in yoga [contemplation]: beginner's level; level of one who has experienced [a slight] descent of pristine awareness; of one who has gained [a minimal degree of] mastery with respect to pristine awareness; and of one who has attained total mastery with respect to pristine awareness.<sup>5</sup>

The actual phase of generation is one comprising seven branches,<sup>6</sup> while the other aspects of the phase of generation are nominal.

The six topics of analysis of the phase of generation are the following: the ground of purification of each aspect of the phase of generation; final result; how [the various aspects of the phase of generation] become ripen-

ing factors for [various aspects of] the phase of completion; purpose; essence; and measure of perfection.<sup>7</sup> These six are to be considered with regard to all branches of practice [of the generation phase].

### THE PHASE OF COMPLETION [(b)]

This section has two parts: one, a general synopsis of essential points to be known; and two, the different aspects of the phase of completion as presented in the *Great [Heruka] Galpo Tantra*.<sup>8</sup>

#### A GENERAL SYNOPSIS OF ESSENTIAL POINTS [(i)]

**The phase of completion comprises three parts: essence, types, and natures;  
And is understood through eleven topics of analysis:  
What it is, where to strike crucial points, how to strike them,  
Experience and signs, qualities, reasons, relinquishment,  
measure, delineation of stages,  
Overcoming obstructions and enhancing realization, and the  
distinction between the principal and auxiliary.**

The phase of completion is contained in three parts: essence, types, and natures of the particular types.

Its essence is the bliss-emptiness which manifests when mind [ground-of-all consciousness], [afflicted] mind, and winds dissolve in the central channel.

Its types, in terms of nature, are the actual and nominal phases of completion; in terms of aspect, the phases of completion with and without signs; and in terms of designation, the pervading and pervaded phases of completion.

The nature of each of these will now be elucidated. The actual phase of completion comprises innate great bliss born from the melting [of vital essence];<sup>9</sup> the illusory body [of the deity];<sup>10</sup> the innate nature;<sup>11</sup> the dimension of the state of union;<sup>12</sup> that which is attained at the end of the dissolution of the winds in the central channel, the three thoroughly afflicted lights and the three purified lights;<sup>13</sup> the three joys;<sup>14</sup> and the paths [that lead] directly to their attainment.

The nominal phase of completion comprises the yoga of the channels, yoga of the winds, the subtle yoga, yoga of vital essence,<sup>15</sup> and [practices

with] a real or imaginary consort, which serve the function of making the winds enter, dwell, and dissolve in the central channel.

The completion phase with signs comprises the three lights with signs of intrinsic reality, characterized by mind and mental events, and not yet fully transformed into luminous clarity. This phase is present in all ordinary beings and others. The nominal completion phase with signs includes whatever [aspects] are correlated with the conceptual mind associated with [generic images of] words and meanings. This phase is present in various degrees up to the point at which the actual luminous clarity is attained.

The signless phase of completion comprises that which is without signs of intrinsic reality and is present only in [the minds of] exalted beings. The nominal signless phase of completion is present in [the minds of] ordinary beings as well.

The pervading phase of completion comprises the branches of the six-fold yoga<sup>16</sup> (withdrawal of the senses, etc.); the four joys; the four empties; and the absence of the appearance side, the emptiness side, and the bliss side. It is [so called] because this phase pervades all those [types of] phase of completion.

The pervaded phase of completion comprises the five stages of the Guhyasamaja;<sup>17</sup> the four stages of the Chakrasamvara;<sup>18</sup> the three of shape, mantra, and reality;<sup>19</sup> the channels, winds, and vital essences;<sup>20</sup> the four seals;<sup>21</sup> and the four yogas.<sup>22</sup>

All aspects of the phase of completion are to be understood by means of the following eleven points of analysis: the essence of the [above] types of completion phase; where in the body to strike crucial points; methods whereby one strikes crucial points; ensuing experiences and signs; which qualities are produced from these experiences and signs; reasons for such experiences; direct and indirect relinquishment of what is to be relinquished; measure of perfection; delineation of stages and paths; activities for overcoming obstructive forces and enhancing [realization]; and the distinction between the principal and auxiliary [practices].

The above points concerning the two phases of generation and completion are, for the most part, covered in previous and subsequent sections [of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*], such as those that treat the subject of meditation,<sup>23</sup> and therefore will not be elaborated upon at this point. Earlier in this book, for instance, is presented [the nature of] the body, which serves as support, and its channels, winds, and vital essences, wherein one strikes crucial points for different forms of the phase of completion. The stages and paths are discussed in the relevant chapters.<sup>24</sup>

## DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE COMPLETION PHASE IN THE *GREAT GALPO TANTRA* [(ii)]

This section has two parts: an overview; and a detailed discussion.

### OVERVIEW [(aa)]

**The completion phase comprises the causal and resultant phases.**

All of the teachings in the tantras of highest yoga concerning the different completion phase systems, when presented in an abridged form in terms of essence, are included within two aspects: the causal phase of completion and the resultant phase.

### DETAILED DISCUSSION [(bb)]

This section has two parts: the causal phase of completion; and the resultant phase of completion.

### THE CAUSAL PHASE OF COMPLETION [(1')]

The section has two parts: the main topics; and an ancillary topic.

#### THE MAIN TOPICS [(a')]

**The causal phase comprises self-blessing, mandala circle,  
And the great seal. ...**

The causal phase of completion has three principal aspects: self-blessing, mandala circle, and the great seal.

#### SELF-BLESSING [(i')]

Self-blessing denotes meditation for which the principal focuses—a flame, sphere, syllable, and so on—are visualized within the central channel (regardless of whether or not one actually visualizes the central channel).

It is natural that winds gather wherever the mind is focused. Through practice of this meditation, the winds gather, whereupon they first enter, then dwell, and finally dissolve in the middle of the particular channel-

wheel one is focused on in meditation. When the winds dissolve, the process of dissolution of the different levels of subtle and coarse [psychophysical] constituents<sup>25</sup> occurs, along with many [experiences of] extraordinary bliss [ensuing from] the melting [of vital essence].

### THE MANDALA CIRCLE [(ii')]

The mandala circle denotes action-seal (consort) practice and an auxiliary practice [using an imaginary seal].

For the first, through controlling the life [wind that flows] in the upper part [of the body],<sup>26</sup> the sequence of the entering, dwelling, and dissolving of the winds [in the central channel] occurs. When in union with an [actual] consort, the point at which the winds are stopped is reached. At that time, through the aid of the consort, the entering, dwelling, and dissolving occur simultaneously. As a result, great bliss, which is a bliss generated by the melting of bodhichitta and its descending in the central channel, is swiftly induced.

The four joys, which occur by way of striking the crucial points of one's body, can indicate in an approximate and partial way the different aspects of bliss, emptiness, natures, and the lights. However, to indicate these experiences in a subtle and complete way requires that one rely on a real consort. To explain, when one strikes the crucial points at various places of one's body, the pristine awarenesses that manifest are dissimilar, each having a distinct mode of realization. There is also a difference depending on the kind of consort, the difference being whether or not it is possible to bring about the perfect pristine awareness of the four lights and the four joys.

The best among the consorts are the emissaries of the three places taught in the Chakrasamvara tantra.<sup>27</sup> Once one has gathered a special assembly of those consorts, in general, powers are bestowed with extreme swiftness. In particular, the channel-knots of the 21,000 channels are thereby released; the winds of the twenty-four transits cease;<sup>28</sup> and the twenty-four residual vital essences transform into refined ones.<sup>29</sup> Through the power of these supports [consorts], that which is supported by them, the pristine awareness of nondual bliss and emptiness, free from the wave[-like agitation of conceptuality], expands to infinity. Indeed other kinds of consorts will gradually bring this about, but the consorts [taught in Chakrasamvara] produce this result immediately, and are therefore the best among consorts.

The auxiliary practice involves an imaginary consort, also known as "pris-

tine awareness consort," which serves the purpose of stabilizing the pristine awareness [of bliss and emptiness], and is an appearance in the form of a consort created in one's imagination. [This means] a thought-projected image which appears although without concrete reality, referred to as the "self-manifesting awareness woman" or "great seal with form."

### **THE GREAT SEAL [(iii)']**

The great seal is of two [types]: the great seal that elicits bliss and the great seal that directs the mind inward.

In the first, once familiarization with pristine awareness coemergent with the bliss of the melted [vital essence] has become very stable, [the adept] remains in a state of even contemplation of the bliss-emptiness pristine awareness alone. Such contemplation itself serves as the condition for the winds and mind to gather [enter, dwell, and dissolve] again, whereupon a special bliss of the melted [vital essence] is experienced repeatedly: This is called "great seal without form."

In the second, the great seal that directs the mind inward, "mind" refers to both vital essence and discursive thought. Bodhichitta is directed into the central channel, and discursive thought is caused to enter luminous clarity, whereupon, in a way greatly superior to meditation on emptiness alone, the dualistic impressions of apprehended and apprehender cease. As a result, one becomes enveloped in the causal great seal which brings about the supreme power, which is one's desired power: the great seal of the nondual pristine awareness dimension of awakening.

All these aspects of the phase of completion [self-blessing, mandala circle, and great seal] are called "causal phase of completion" since they serve as causes of the pristine awareness of great bliss.

### **ANCILLARY: THE FOUR SEALS [(b)']**

**... As methods of eliciting bliss and emptiness,  
Generally, four seals are taught. ...**

All of the completion phase [practices] in highest yoga tantra are in accord in having as their objective the pristine awareness of the union of bliss and emptiness. Of the various presentations, extensive and condensed, of methods to bring forth such pristine awareness, what follows now is in keeping with the special synopsis just given.

It is generally taught that there are four seals—the action seal, doctrine seal, pledge seal, and the great seal—and this [system of four] is very widely accepted. These seals are defined in a number of different ways. [In his *Awn of Esoteric Instructions*],<sup>30</sup> the master Abhayakara relies on many tantras in his presentation [of the four seals] as they apply to three [stages]: the generation phase, the completion phase, and the resultant [awakened stage].

First, in the phase of generation, meditation on the manifest form of a female deity is the action seal; the arrangement of syllables, the seal of the doctrine; the performance of awakened activity through the emanation and reconvergence of light, and so forth, the pledge seal; and the appearance and emptiness of the form of the deity, the great seal.

Second, in the phase of completion, a real awareness woman is the action seal since she bestows joy through the action of embracing, and so forth. The central channel is the seal of the doctrine since it bestows the special innate joy. The pristine awareness of nondual bliss and emptiness is the great seal since it is the unsurpassable mind of awakening. The imaginary consort, an appearance in the form of a female deity, is the pledge seal.<sup>31</sup>

Third, at the resultant stage, the manifest dimension of awakening is the pledge seal; the dimension of great bliss, the great seal; the reality dimension of awakening, the doctrine seal; and the enjoyment dimension of awakening, the action seal.

Alternatively, the four dimensions of awakening (manifest, enjoyment, reality, plus the great bliss dimension) are explained as being, respectively, the action, great, doctrine, and pledge seals. This is held to be the system of the Chakrasamvara tantra.

On this subject of the four seals, the lordly Maitripa<sup>32</sup> and his lineage base their explanation on Nagarjuna[garbha]'s *Ascertainment of the Four Seals*,<sup>33</sup> which they consider to express the view of the Hevajra tantra. The action seal is posited as both the actual action seal (the principal one) and the pristine awareness seal, an imaginary seal (an auxiliary). The doctrine seal comprises the yogas of the winds, the vital essences, and the inner heat, and the [yoga practiced] by persons of superior faculties, that of the indestructible [state], the focus of which is solely mind's bliss. Accordingly, Sahajavajra's *Compendium of Tenets* says:<sup>34</sup>

The doctrine seal is cultivated  
By the less capable at the level of channels and letters;  
By the middling as the distinctive inner heat;

And by the best as the indestructible state.  
It is said to be the awareness that comprises  
Vital essences and subtle yogas.

The great seal is natural, authentic pristine awareness, free from all conceptual constructs. The pledge seal is the deity's form which manifests without being mentally projected. This last has as its cause the enhancement and sealing practice in the generation phase,<sup>35</sup> which is a concordant [seal].



## 14. THE RESULTANT PHASE OF COMPLETION AND THE RESULTANT CONTINUUM

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- (2') The Resultant Phase of Completion [I.B.2.a.iii.dd.1'.  
d'.ii'.cc'.2". b".ii".cc".(2).(b).(ii).(bb).(2')]
  - (a') Overview
  - (b') Extensive Discussion
    - (i') Emptiness Side
      - (aa') Lights
        - (1") The Ultimate Three Lights  
of Essential Reality
        - (2") The Relative Three Lights  
of Interdependence
        - (a") The Three Lights Attended by  
Conceptions
          - (i") The Three Lights at the  
Ground Stage
          - (aa") The Continuous  
Three Lights
          - (bb") The Three Lights That  
Occur at Particular  
Times
            - (1)) The Three Lights  
during the Death  
Process
            - (2)) The Three Lights  
during Sleep
            - (3)) The Three Lights  
during Sexual  
Union

- (4) The Subtle Three Lights That Manifest at Every Appearance of an Object
- (ii") The Three Lights at the Path Stage
  - (aa") The Three Lights Consisting of Instants
    - (1) The Three Lights at the Time of Initiation
    - (2) The Three Lights during the Generation Phase
    - (3) The Three Lights of Body Isolation; and (4) The Three Lights of Vajra Recitation
    - (5) The Three Lights of Mind Isolation;
    - (6) The Three Lights of Illusory Body; and (7) The Three Lights of Luminous Clarity
  - (bb") The Three Lights Consisting of Stages
- (b") The Three Lights Devoid of Conceptions
  - (bb') Conceptions
  - (cc') The Way Pristine Awareness Manifests from Conceptions
- (ii') Appearance Side
- (iii") Union of Emptiness and Appearance
- dd" Application of Tantra [I.B.2.a.iii.dd.1'.d'.ii'.cc'.2".b".ii".dd"]
  - (1) Activations
  - (2) Complementary Tantric Conduct

3" The Resultant Continuum of Inalienableness: The Actualized State of Purity [I.B.2.a.iii.dd.1'.d'.ii'.cc'.3"]

dd' A Synopsis of the View, Meditation, Conduct, and Result [I.B.2.a.iii.dd.1'.d'.ii'.dd']

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[This chapter continues the presentation of the phase of completion according to the *Galpo Tantra* with] part two, the resultant phase of completion. [Following that is part four of the method continuum: the application of tantra. The chapter concludes with the third of the three continuums: the resultant continuum of inalienableness, the actualized purified state; and the fourth part of the extensive discussion of highest yoga tantra: a synopsis of this system's view, meditation, conduct, and result.]

## THE RESULTANT PHASE OF COMPLETION [2']

This section has two parts: an overview; and an extensive discussion.

### OVERVIEW [a']

**...There are three sides to the resultant phase.**

The phase of completion that develops as a result of the [above-mentioned] causes comprises three [aspects]: emptiness side; appearance side; and their union.

### EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION [b']

This section has three parts: the side of emptiness; the side of appearance; and the union [of emptiness and appearance].

### EMPTINESS SIDE [i']

This is discussed in three parts: lights; conceptions; and the way pristine awareness manifests from conceptions.

### LIGHTS [aa']

**The emptiness side comprises the ultimate three lights of reality**

**And the relative three of interdependence, with conceptions and without.**

**The three lights are delineated in fifteen sets and referred to by many synonyms.**

The expression “phase of completion on the emptiness side” denotes the direct realization of the naturally stainless mind of innate pristine awareness, the indivisibility of bliss and emptiness, [which is actualized] when the eighty conceptions and the three lights<sup>1</sup> dissolve in sequence.

Here, “the three lights” signifies their root, awareness, and the transformation of that awareness into what are called “three lights.” The three are not of an essence different [from awareness]. Taking as an example three images made of gold, their root, or nature, would be said to be the gold itself, and the transformation of the gold, the three images. The gold that forms the three images and the images themselves are not separable. Similarly, in this case, self-awareness [i.e., awareness that cognizes its own nature] and the three lights are in no way separable.

To expand, the three lights (without considering the distinction between the real and the nominal) form two sets: the ultimate three lights of essential reality and the relative three lights of interdependence.<sup>2</sup>

### **THE ULTIMATE THREE LIGHTS OF ESSENTIAL REALITY [(1")]**

The ultimate three lights of essential reality refer to the root, the ultimate dimension of phenomena, mind itself, immutable great bliss, ultimate and total self-awareness [i.e., awareness that cognizes its own nature].

Their essence is the mode of arising of the very form of that great bliss in its own appearing aspect. [Such is] the inconceivable secret of awakened body, speech, and mind: light, increase of light, and culmination of light, respectively, and the luminous clarity of total emptiness, all-pervasive great bliss.

Those three lights represent an inseparable and total sameness. They constitute the ground, primordial reality; the result to be attained; and the reference for the cultivation of the path. They encompass all phenomena of cyclic existence, perfect peace, and the path. Nonetheless, their essence transcends ground, path, and result.

These three lights are not the actual ones but are called the three lights because they are the very nature of the actual three lights.

### **THE RELATIVE THREE LIGHTS OF INTERDEPENDENCE [(2")]**

The relative three lights of interdependence are known by the different names of "three lights," "three pristine awarenesses," and "three consciousnesses." These three lights form two sets: the three lights attended by conceptions; and the three lights devoid of conceptions.<sup>3</sup> Here, "attended by" versus "devoid of" indicates the presence or absence of the conceptions of emotional afflictions.

### **THE THREE LIGHTS ATTENDED BY CONCEPTIONS [(a")]**

This first set is of two types: the three lights at the ground stage; and the three lights at the path stage.

### **THE THREE LIGHTS AT THE GROUND STAGE [(i")]**

[The set of] three lights at the ground stage is of two types: the continuous three lights; and the three lights that occur at particular times.<sup>4</sup>

### **THE CONTINUOUS THREE LIGHTS [(aa")]**

The three lights of essential reality explained above are inherent to all sentient beings, and yet, like an encrustation over them, the continuous three lights arise from the minds of each and every being.

To expand, there is a habitual tendency to crave bliss which is possessed of a potency whereby mind is attracted to objects. Its three transformations, the appearances of body, speech, and mind, manifest through the potency of mind's self-cognizance, and are, respectively, light, increase of light, and culmination of light. The three are none other than the relative self-cognizant quality of mind and the aspect that looks inward.

In other tantras [i.e., Kalachakra], these three lights are spoken of as the seed of mutable bliss or the bliss of emission [of vital essence]. The essential nature of all of the three lights is that of the ground-of-all consciousness. However, in this context, light serves as the cause that produces the mental consciousness and the sense consciousnesses. The increase of light serves as the cause for the afflicted mind. These two lights are thereby posited, respectively, [as the mental consciousness and sense consciousnesses; and afflicted mind]. The culmination of light, in a categorical sense, is simply of the nature of the ground-of-all, and only in an indirect way produces the [other] seven

consciousnesses, not directly. It is therefore posited solely as the ground-of-all. Thus, the three lights are taught to be mind [ground-of-all consciousness], [afflicted] mind, and [sixfold group of] sense consciousnesses.<sup>5</sup>

These three lights, in essence not divisible and unified as one, remain continuously present as long as cyclic existence endures. They are designated as the “three root lights.”

### **THE THREE LIGHTS THAT OCCUR AT PARTICULAR TIMES [(bb")]**

These are divided into four sets according to the time they occur: one, the three lights, very evident and clear, that occur at the time of death; two, the three lights, moderately evident and clear, that occur during sleep; three, the three lights, moderately evident and clear, that occur during sexual union; and four, the three lights, subtle and indistinct, that occur each time the appearances of the sixfold group [of consciousnesses] arise in coarse form.<sup>6</sup>

### **THE THREE LIGHTS DURING THE DEATH PROCESS [(1))]**

Prior to the actual time of death, the twenty-five gross constituents<sup>7</sup> dissolve entirely. This process is accompanied by five signs, such as the mirage [indicating their dissolution].<sup>8</sup>

[In particular,] when the winds dissolve into light, there occurs an inner whitish radiance related to the white element [descending from the head to the heart]. This is the pristine awareness of light.

When that dissolves into the increase of light, there occurs a reddish radiance, [reddish] since it is related to the red element [ascending from the navel to the heart]. This is the pristine awareness of the increase of light.

As that dissolves into the culmination of light, the potencies of the white and red elements vanish into the totality [of space], and there remains only a fraction of the life wind, owing to which there occurs a blackish radiance. This is the pristine awareness of the culmination of light.

[What is described] here is the dissolution of the three lights associated with the particular time of death, not the dissolution of the root [continuous] three lights. [This is because] at the time of death, the luminous clarity nature of mind is [still] covered by the encrustation of the ground-of-all consciousness. Through the dissolution of the appearances of objects, that ground-of-all arises as the nature of bliss and clarity. From that arise the three lights in reverse order, each in a momentary and subtle way, from which occurs the intermediate state [between one life and the next].

### THE THREE LIGHTS DURING SLEEP [(2)]

When one is asleep, there is no separation between the support, the body with its channels, winds, and vital essences, and that which is supported, the mind. Consequently, just a fraction of the subtle and gross [constituents] dissolve, not the entirety. In this case, at the stage of the ground, the threefold [sequence] of light, increase of light, and culmination of light, which occurs in the forward order, is extremely subtle and therefore difficult to recognize.

When dreams occur, they do so from a subtle manifestation of the [three] lights in the reverse order. It is explained that in waking from the dream state, the lights do not again manifest in the reverse order, while in waking from deep sleep, they do.

### THE THREE LIGHTS DURING SEXUAL UNION [(3)]

During sexual union, first is experienced pleasure [based on] the four elemental properties. Physical contact represents the earth element; moistness, water; warmth, fire; and movement, wind.<sup>9</sup> Then, as the bodhichitta present in the different channels reaches the secret channel-wheel, light occurs. As it reaches the groin region, the increase of light occurs. As it reaches, in the case of a male (method), the extremity of the “lord of the family” channel inside the gem [tip of the penis], or, in the case of a female (wisdom), the extremity of the right channel [*rasana*], the culmination of light occurs. At the instant bodhichitta is emitted, there is luminous clarity. Following emission, the red aspect ascends, and the three lights manifest in the reverse order.

### THE SUBTLE THREE LIGHTS THAT MANIFEST AT EVERY APPEARANCE OF AN OBJECT [(4)]

To use an example, by the force of the mind being directed toward an object, initially there is simply a perception of the gross form: this is posited as light. Next, there is ascertainment of the fine details of the form: this is the increase of light. Then, as the mind becomes satiated by, or tired of, the object, there occurs a slight diminishment of its clarity: this is the culmination of light. Following that, the object no longer appears: this is the fourth, luminous clarity.

Those are thereby posited as the three lights with respect to the mind's clarity and cognizance components in one or another occasion. The three

lights that occur during sexual union are likewise posited with respect to the clarity and cognizance aspects of the mind. That being the case, since thoughts arise in dependence on the appearances of objects, and, as well, each and every appearance of an object manifests from the winds' mode of stirring the mind, therefore, in relation to [the arising of] all objects [and thoughts], there exists a fraction of the three lights present at the time of the ground, which must be realized by means of the path. Hence, there are five occasions for the arising of the three lights at the ground stage [continuous, at death, during sleep, sexual union, and at the manifestation of all objects].

### **THE THREE LIGHTS AT THE PATH STAGE [(ii")]**

These form two sets: the three lights consisting of instants; and the three lights consisting of stages.

### **THE THREE LIGHTS CONSISTING OF INSTANTS [(aa")]**

This first set comprises [seven] sets: [one,] the three lights [experienced] at the time of initiation; [two,] the three lights during the generation phase; [three and four,] the three lights arising from body isolation; and from vajra recitation; and [five, six, and seven,] the three lights in the stages of mind isolation; illusory body; and luminous clarity.<sup>10</sup>

### **THE THREE LIGHTS AT THE TIME OF INITIATION [(1)]**

[During initiation,] the example pristine awareness is used in the path and thereby becomes a special method for ascertaining the authentic condition. It should be understood that, except for [that difference], these three lights are similar to the three lights at the time of sexual union, and arise in the same way.

There are four different kinds of pristine awareness [of initiation]: the pristine awareness of the initiation that is introduced to persons of low faculties (beginners); the pristine awareness [of the initiation] that ripens persons of sharp faculties, who fathom [pristine awareness] without going through stages; the pristine awareness of the initiation in the context of the path consisting of the two phases [of generation and completion]; and the pristine awareness of the initiation that serves as the proximate cause for the result [awakening].<sup>11</sup>

Of these four, in this context, the pristine awareness of the initiation [introduced to] the beginner with low faculties should be considered to be the three lights at the time of initiation.

### **THE THREE LIGHTS DURING THE GENERATION PHASE [(2))]**

During the phase of generation, the three lights are exemplified by those that ensue from the passion engendered with a real or pristine awareness [imaginary] consort. In addition, three lights manifest from focusing on subtle spheres in the profound phase of generation.

### **THE THREE LIGHTS OF BODY ISOLATION AND VAJRA RECITATION [(3)), (4))]**

As to the three lights arising from body isolation and vajra recitation,<sup>12</sup> when the winds, owing to different meditation focuses and exertion [in breath-control techniques], gather to some extent, the gross constituents dissolve slightly. Thereafter, the pristine awareness of the three lights manifests for a time, however brief or extended, after which one awakens [from the absorption], accompanied by subtle components [of the three lights] manifesting in the reverse order.

### **THE THREE LIGHTS OF MIND ISOLATION, ILLUSORY BODY, AND LUMINOUS CLARITY [(5)), (6)), (7))]**

Practitioners at the stages of mind isolation, illusory body, and luminous clarity<sup>13</sup> will attain the three lights through the stages of applying the practices. Except for differences in intensity and refinement, the ways the lights manifest will be the same as those [of body isolation and vajra recitation]. The three lights that occur as the result of [having perfected] practice represent the actual stages of the three lights.

At the mind isolation stage, during each session of equipoise, the eighty manifest conceptions are stopped. As a result, the practitioner has the impression that the pristine awareness [experienced] during that session encompasses all phenomena, but in fact it does not do so. In addition [to that experience of pristine awareness], a practitioner at the stage of illusory body will experience an infinity of appearances of mandalas. A person at the stage of luminous clarity will have a similar experience and, in addition to the appearance of all the [infinite] mandalas, will realize everything to be of the

nature of bliss. The three lights of actual awakening encompass all phenomena (as will be explained below).

Concerning the way to practice those, during the manifestation of the three lights at the stage of the ground, in accordance with the way they exist at the ground, it is necessary to strike the crucial points by means of [techniques of] the path. Therefore, one cultivates bliss [in practice] with an action seal (real consort) or pristine awareness seal (imaginary consort); cultivates the state of non-thought through the yoga of sleep; and cultivates the pristine awareness of clarity by relying on methods complementary to the first two, such as yogas involving syllables, spheres, vajra recitations, and winds. Except for differences in which is the main experience, the three [experiences of] bliss, [non-thought, and clarity] all ensue from the three methods (the action seal, [yoga of sleep, and yogas of syllables, etc.]).

The ability to use the luminous clarity of death on the path is gained by integrating the meditative absorption of luminous clarity with sleep in the present life. Although one may not gain powers in this lifetime, when death comes, one will be able to use the moment [of death] in the path. The three lights that manifest at every object's appearance in the ordinary state are to be cultivated in the post-contemplation period of [everyday] activities.

### **THE THREE LIGHTS CONSISTING OF STAGES [(bb")]**

By means of the methods mentioned above, the three lights of instants are repeatedly elicited and contemplated. As a result, the pristine awareness of bliss and emptiness that has been cultivated in relation to the three lights at the ground stage is firmly stabilized. This process is comparable to treating copper with mercury and cow dung to produce gold.

To explain, through repeated practice related to the three lights of instants, one first ripens the potency for the meditative experience of light, then that of increase of light, and then that of the culmination of light. One thereby gradually progresses from the stage of light to the stage of increase of light, from that to the culmination of light (inclusive of the subparts of each stage), and [finally] experiences the total emptiness stage.

### **THE THREE LIGHTS DEVOID OF CONCEPTIONS[(b")]**

The three lights at the stage of actual awakening<sup>14</sup> constitute the [meditative] application directed to relinquishment of the seeds of the conceptions of the eighty natures. The seeds have therefore not yet been relinquished.

However, these three lights are included in this set of three lights that are devoid of conceptions because they are conducive to [the attainment of] them.

The [actual] three lights devoid of conceptions refers to the three lights that occur in the reverse order when one has emerged from [the equipoise of] the path of seeing and to the lights that manifest as a result of the passion of great pristine awareness from the attainment of the stage of union onward (which belong to the category of three lights of instants). These lights consist in the repeated cultivation of great bliss which is “moistened” by a subtle bliss derived from the melting [of the vital essence]. Their characteristics bear only a resemblance to those of the three lights of mind isolation.

Moreover, it should be understood that, in terms of their principal characteristics at least, the three lights at the ground stage that occur at particular times are considered to be similar in that [light] is mainly concordant bliss, [increase of light,] mainly clarity, and [culmination of light,] mainly non-thought.

Thus are delineated fifteen sets of three lights: the one set of the ultimate three lights of essential reality; and the relative, the five at the ground stage, the seven plus the one comprising stages at the path stage, and the one of the three lights devoid of conceptions.

There are many synonyms for the three lights, some common to both sutras and tantras, and others exclusive to the tantras. The following are examples of just some of the terms used to designate light, increase of light, and culmination of light, respectively: method, wisdom, and androgyne; mind [ground-of-all consciousness], [afflicted] mind, and [the sixfold group of] consciousnesses; desire, aversion, and delusion; imaginary, dependent, and absolute. [These are in common with the sutras.]

[The next are terms used in tantra]: appearance side, emptiness side, and their union; mind, mental events, and ignorance; absence of desire [aversion], desire, and middling desire; empty, very empty, and total empty (these are not actual synonyms but just names given in consideration of their similarities); three lights, three emptinesses, and three consciousnesses; and pristine awareness, mind, and consciousness (these are actual synonyms).<sup>15</sup>

Next, to explain the meanings of some of those names, since light has the smallest component of the bliss of desire, it is called absence of desire [aversion]. Since the increase of light has a greater component of bliss, it is called “desire.” Since the culmination of light has equal proportions of bliss and emptiness, it is called “middling desire.”

To explain some other synonyms, light is posited as wisdom since, of the two aspects of emptiness and bliss, it has a greater component of emptiness.

The increase of light is posited as method since it has a greater component of bliss. The culmination of light is considered as androgyne since it has both equally.

Moreover, light is referred to by the following symbolic [terms]:<sup>16</sup> [the syllable] *om*, moon, lotus, woman, left side, night, smoothness; the increase of light, by [the syllable] *a*, sun, vajra, jewel, day, man, right side, and roughness; and the culmination of light, by neuter, points between [night and day], center [of left and right], middle [of a space], androgyne, and union.

### CONCEPTIONS [(bb')]

**The thirty-three conceptions, the nature of which is light,  
Forty, the increase of light, and seven, the culmination of light,  
serve as the source  
Of deception and freedom. ...**

The conceptions arising from the three lights<sup>17</sup> generally amount to all types of discursive thoughts. To establish their exact number is therefore difficult. There are many enumerations, such as that of the *Indestructible Garland Tantra*, which names one hundred and eight winds, the nature of which is conceptions.<sup>18</sup> The root source for the particular associations of the conceptions with the three lights is found in the *Compendium on the Pristine Awareness Tantra*, which sets forth seven conceptions related to the culmination of light; four associated with the increase of light; and only [the one] absence of desire [aversion] associated with light (although there are actually seven associated with light). There are various ways of pointing out how [the conceptions and the three lights] are associated. However, since the explanation in terms of eighty conceptions as found in the exalted Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* is so well known, what follows will be in keeping with that. Nagarjuna's work sets forth the thirty-three conceptions associated with light, [beginning with the words]:<sup>19</sup>

Aversion, middling aversion...<sup>20</sup>

Here, the first is the absence of desire, in essence, aversion, which means apprehending an object as unpleasant. This is differentiated into three types according to the degrees of intensity of the aversion. [The thirty-three are as follows:]

- (1) *Small aversion*, whose mode of apprehension [of the object] is slightly unclear;
- (2) *Middling aversion*, whose mode of apprehension is clear, but owing to its being brief, and to other factors, is not capable of initiating a conditioned action;
- (3) *Great aversion*, whose mode of apprehension is clear and lasts some time and therefore is capable of initiating a conditioned action;
- (4) *Mental coming and going*: mind directed outward towards an object and then directed inward (both refer to mind being directed);
- (5) *Sorrow*,
- (6) *Middling sorrow*,
- (7) *Great sorrow*: three degrees of distress caused by being separated from a pleasing object;
- (8) *Quietude*: a dazed state resembling that of fatigue or exhaustion which lacks mindfulness;
- (9) *Conceptuality*: discrimination that apprehends attributes by mixing [the generic image based on] names with that [derived from a sense perception] of an object;
- (10) *Fear*,
- (11) *Middling fear*,
- (12) *Great fear* or fright;
- (13) *Craving*,
- (14) *Middling craving*,
- (15) *Great craving*: three degrees of longing for what is pleasing to one in the past, present, and future;
- (16) *Grasping*: the wish to indulge in what is craved for;
- (17) *Hunger and thirst*: mental discomfort caused by these;
- (18) *Feeling*,
- (19) *Middling feeling*,
- (20) *Great feeling*: in essence, pleasure, pain, and neutrality, distinguished into three types based on the different degrees of intensity.
- (21) *Conception of knowing*,
- (22) *Conception of a knower*,
- (23) *Conception of an object known*: the mistaken cognitions that apprehend the three (actual knowing, the agent of knowing, and the ground of apprehension) for what they are not;
- (24) *Discernment*: analyzing what is suitable and unsuitable;
- (25) *Shame*: of being immoral, or not wishing to become immoral;

- (26) *Shunning unwholesome deeds* out of concern about others' disapproval. [The mental factor of] embarrassment is also included in this.
- (27) *Compassion*: the wish that others be free from suffering;
- (28) *Loving-kindness*,
- (29) *Middling loving-kindness*,
- (30) *Great loving-kindness*: three degrees of love and affection whereby one wishes for the happiness of other sentient beings whom one finds pleasing. These are also explained as three degrees of wishing for the happiness of attractive beings and wanting to protect them from harm.
- (31) *Qualm*: an unsteady disposition related to uncertainty and characterized by anxiety.
- (32) *Accumulation*: wanting to collect [things] and reluctance to give [things] away out of avarice.
- (33) *Jealousy*: a mind disturbed by others' prosperity.

[Next are] the forty conceptions associated with the increase of light:

- (1) *Desire* for an object not yet acquired;
- (2) *Attachment* to an object already acquired;
- (3) *Joy*,
- (4) *Middling joy*,
- (5) *Great joy*: different degrees of delight at the mere sight of a pleasing object;
- (6) *Rejoicing*: joy at having achieved what one desires;
- (7) *Rapture*: repeated enjoyment of the desired object;
- (8) *Amazement*: elation over something newly attained;
- (9) *Excitement*: mind pursuing what is pleasing;
- (10) *Satisfaction*: being content with pleasure;
- (11) *Desiring to embrace* (this stands for the wish to engage in physical and verbal actions motivated by desire for an object);
- (12) *Desiring to kiss*: (this stands for the wish to engage repeatedly in actions [motivated by] desire);
- (13) *Desiring to cling*: (this stands for the wish not to give up these actions motivated by desire);<sup>21</sup>
- (14) *Stability*: an stable disposition that cannot be changed;
- (15) *Diligence*: enthusiasm for the practice of virtue;
- (16) *Pride*: considering oneself to be superior due to family or other factors; this includes the seven types of pride;<sup>22</sup>
- (17) *Activity*: the will not to relinquish the effort to bring tasks to completion;

- (18) *Robbery*: wanting to possess the things of others;
- (19) *Force*: wanting to suppress others;
- (20) *Enthusiasm*: mind's involvement in ordinary activities;
- (21) *Forbearance of hardship*,
- (22) *Middling forbearance of hardship*,
- (23) *Great forbearance of hardship*: different degrees of indomitable courage when it is necessary to apply oneself to difficult tasks. (For this, [the translators of Nagarjuna's *Five Stages*], based on a corrupted [Sanskrit] text, have mistakenly taken *sabasa* (hardship) for *sabaja* (innate).<sup>23</sup> Therefore, [in choosing] between a doubtful translation and an edited [but meaningful] one, the second is preferable).
- (24) *Vehemence* and aggression: wanting to quarrel, and so forth;
- (25) *Flirtation*: mind directed toward what is beautiful;
- (26) *Animosity*: a mind of enmity;
- (27) *Virtue*: rejoicing in virtue;
- (28) *Lucidity*: wishing to be understood by others;
- (29) *Truth*: wishing to speak the truth;
- (30) *Untruth*: wishing to tell a lie;
- (31) *Certainty*: maintaining a steady resolve;
- (32) *Non-assumption*: not wishing to possess something out of consideration of the grief this may cause;
- (33) *Donor's disposition*;
- (34) *Exhortation*: wishing to urge others into work and action;
- (35) *Heroism*: wishing to be free from obscurations;
- (36) *Shamelessness*: not shunning the unwholesome;
- (37) *Deceit*: the wish to mislead others;
- (38) [*Wickedness*]: adherence to the bad views of evil persons (the five bad views);<sup>24</sup>
- (39) *Rudeness*: disregarding and scorning others, even when their status, health, or possessions decline;
- (40) *Dishonesty*: guile in hiding one's faults.

The seven conceptions associated with the culmination of light are as follows:

- (1) *Ignorance* that is a medium veil of desire: the result of the mind being clouded by desire (the cause); it is "ignorance" since its aspect is unclear;
- (2) *Forgetfulness*: a diminishment in mindfulness;
- (3) *Confusion*: apprehending what is big as small, form as sound, and so forth;

- (4) *Disinterest in speaking*: not inclined to speak;
- (5) *Discouragement*: overwhelmed by circumstances of any kind;
- (6) *Indolence*: lack of interest in what is wholesome;
- (7) *Doubt*: oscillating between two possibilities.

These are the seven instants of ignorance.

The eighty conceptions have as their [primary] causes the three root consciousnesses and the three root winds,<sup>25</sup> and, as their contributory conditions, the three lights that occur at particular times, accompanied by their winds. When these [causes and conditions] encounter the contributory conditions of external objects, concordant conceptions arise. However, these do not arise from the three lights of the path. All of the various conceptions arise from potencies which are nurtured by winds. Although potencies ripe [for producing conceptions] are always present, the numerous manifest conceptions do not arise simultaneously, nor do they necessarily arise all in one day. The conception that arises is the one closely related to the contributory condition.

These conceptions are exactly what are to be relinquished [on the path]. Therefore, the main conceptions [to be relinquished] are not the virtuous ones; the main ones are the emotional afflictions. Of those, the principal ones amount to the three poisons [of aversion, desire, and ignorance]. Aversion is the principal of the conceptions attendant to light; desire, the principal of the conceptions attendant to the increase of light; and ignorance, the principal of the conceptions attendant to the culmination of light. Their mode of dissolution is therefore the most important aspect of which to gain experience, as is explained in the authentic esoteric instructions.

In the first group [of conceptions], aversion appears at the beginning, and since many [conceptions of this group] are similar to aversion, earlier masters spoke of these as the thirty-three conceptions of aversion. In the second group, since many of the conceptions are related to desire, they were termed the forty conceptions of desire. In the third group, most of the conceptions are similar to ignorance; thus, they were termed the seven conceptions related to ignorance.

Division of the eighty conceptions in terms of day and night yields one hundred and sixty. The terms "day" and "night" refer to the division into method and wisdom, which is the distinction in terms of the relative and the ultimate.

Of those conceptions, the principal are ones that have the natures of the six root emotional afflictions.<sup>26</sup> They are perpetrators of the karmic actions

that propel and complete,<sup>27</sup> and therefore serve as the root of birth in cyclic existence. From the stage of the ground, the conceptions are in nature empty in that they originate from and dissolve into bliss and luminous clarity. When such nature is used in the path and [these same conceptions] dissolve into luminous clarity, they become the special cause for [the attainment of] liberation. Consequently, they represent the border where cyclic existence is either entered or shunned. Thus, one should exert oneself in [using their nature in] the path.

### THE WAY PRISTINE AWARENESS MANIFESTS FROM CONCEPTIONS [(cc')]

#### ... Pristine awareness is brought forth by method.

This is explained in two parts: the actual way pristine awareness manifests; and the conditions contributing to its manifestation.

Concerning the first, when the winds that serve as mounts for the thirty-three conceptions dissolve, the conceptions themselves dissolve, at which point light manifests. Next, the forty conceptions and their winds dissolve, whereupon the increase of light manifests. Then, the seven conceptions associated with delusion, along with their winds, dissolve, and the culmination of light manifests. That dissolves into full culmination,<sup>28</sup> the fourth moment of which dissolves into luminous clarity.

The conceptions associated with the increase of light are said to dissolve as soon as light manifests; conceptions associated with the culmination of light dissolve at the time of the increase of light. Some scholars assert that first the conceptions dissolve and then the three lights manifest. As to their manner of dissolution, they posit that initially the twenty-five gross constituents (in groups of five each) dissolve. Many of the earlier masters maintain that first the twenty gross constituents dissolve, followed by the dissolving of the five elemental properties. At the end of the dissolution of all these elements, the process of dissolution of the conceptions and the lights occurs. One should gain an understanding [of these points] from the other extensive works that examine this subject conclusively.

As for the second, the conditions contributing to its manifestation, pristine awareness arises from the gathering of the winds and mind in vital essence primarily within the central channel at the heart center. [Related to this are two points:] first, the way pristine awareness is brought forth by means of external and internal techniques; and second, based on that, the way bliss and emptiness are integrated.

First, all of the [techniques in the] phase of completion related to the upper door [of the central channel] can cause the winds to enter, dwell, and dissolve in the central channel, and thereby bring forth the three lights that are concordant with [the actual ones]. This is because these [techniques] are capable of eliciting all of the actual four joys [arising] from the vital essence melting within the *avadhuti*.

To manifest the actual three lights, one must use [a technique] to strike the crucial points at the heart, such as the vajra recitation, inner heat [yoga], vital essence [yoga], and the vase[-like breath retention]. This is because the dissolution of the winds and vital essence at the heart serves as the cause for the manifestation of the actual three lights. Nevertheless, the three lights that are mind's focus<sup>29</sup> cannot be generated until the channel-knots [that constrict] the central channel at the heart are released. Once the knots are released, there occurs the three minds of pristine awareness cultivated by the various aspects of the phase of completion: these are the three lights that are mind's focus.

One may wonder whether or not these [methods] alone have the capacity to perfect the mind isolation [stage of the completion phase]. The answer is that they do not. To perfect that one must rely on an external consort, as pointed out in the *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness [Tantra]*. The clear indication of the dissolution of all conceptions, the full manifestation of the three lights, and the full manifestation of the four joys absolutely require a consort.

One should understand that, generally, to attain a body [made only] of wind and mind is dependent on the three lights; and to transform the gross [twenty-five] elements is dependent on the descent and reversal [of vital essence].

Second is the integration of bliss and emptiness with all three lights and four joys. The full culmination of light, a state of unconsciousness, is a mind that does not arise in the form of any conceptual construct, and that absence of constructs in itself is emptiness. Thus, the full culmination of light represents the completeness of bliss and emptiness. One should gain an understanding of this and related points from other extensive works that examine this subject conclusively.

#### APPEARANCE SIDE [(ii)']

**The essence of the appearance side is the form of a completion phase deity**

**Of three types. From the four lights and the four elemental properties**

**The subtle and gross constituents are created. The innate body serves as the ground for attainment.**

**The agent of attainment is the final example luminous clarity.**

The essence of the appearance side is the form of a deity [which manifests] in the phase of completion, along with a [form] concordant to that, of which there are three [aspects]. [First is] the completion yoga: through the contributory condition of the mind being blessed by the ordinary bliss from the melting [of vital essence] and by the force of deity meditation, while in a state of non-thought, there manifests the form of a deity as a vivid appearance. [Second is] the illusory body self-blessing, the form of the deity composed of wind and mind only. [Third is] the yoga with signs, which consists in visions such as smoke.<sup>30</sup>

Of those, it is necessary that the illusory body be understood in detail and will therefore be treated in a subsequent section [of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*]. What follows now is simply an overview of the subject.

As a general explanation of the nature of cyclic existence, eight factors—the four lights of the mind and the four elemental properties of the body—determine the unfolding and the ceasing of cyclic existence. When a being with a body of gross constituents dies, the elemental properties, in their sequence of the subtle and gross, dissolve, whereupon the three lights also gradually dissolve, and the being enters luminous clarity. As one emerges from the luminous clarity, the culmination of light, increase of light, and light arise as the four elemental properties, wind, and so forth, and thus, the gross appearances of this [life] arise. Accordingly, as soon as one emerges from the luminous clarity of death, the intermediate state begins. After that, one enters the next existence, turning in an unceasing circle.

The subtle and gross constituents created by those causes and contributory conditions [are set forth] from the perspectives of body, mind, and both.

The first, body, comprises one's own body of flesh, bones, blood, and so forth (the gross constituents); the stationary channels, moving winds, and the sited vital essences (bodhichitta) (the subtle); and winds of five-colored lights (the very subtle).

The second, mind, comprises the five sense consciousnesses (the gross); mental conceptual [consciousness] and the eighty conceptions (the subtle); and the four lights (the very subtle).

The third, both mind and body, comprises the twenty-five “natures,” which refers to the five aggregates (form, etc.), the five elements (earth, etc.), the five sense faculties (the eyes, etc.), the five objects (visual forms, etc.), and the five pristine awarenesses at the ground stage (mirror-like, etc.) (the twenty-five gross); the conceptions and the winds that serve as their mounts (the subtle); and the four lights and the winds that serve as their mounts (the very subtle).

Of the five pristine awarenesses, the mirror-like pristine awareness [of the ground] is considered to be the radiant clarity of the mind; the pristine awareness of total sameness, the awareness of feelings; discerning pristine awareness, the understanding of terms and their meanings; the pristine awareness of accomplishment, the desire to undertake activities; and the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena, objects not appearing clearly. Consciousness [in the context of the five aggregates] is identified as the consciousnesses of the five doors [sense faculties].

The gross body made from those constituents is repeatedly discarded [within cyclic existence] and is therefore not the innate body. The unceasing and innate body is that of wind and mind; that is to say, the unimpeded clarity aspect of the mind, along with its support or mount, wind. Owing to the presence of this very subtle body, gross forms of body are assumed. When a gross body is discarded [dies], the subtle body remains. Again, a gross body is assumed, [a pattern] like a turning wheel. All of the subtle and gross constituents [mentioned above] follow the same pattern. That being the case, the ground for the attainment of the illusory body is the innate body itself. The causal condition that contributes to its attainment is stated in the *Five Stages*:<sup>31</sup>

The pure body, which is like a rainbow,  
Is attained by contemplation of reality.

Thus, it is taught that, generally, the illusory body is attained through contemplation of essential reality, which is the inseparability of bliss and emptiness. The agent that directly effects the attainment of the illusory body is the final example luminous clarity, termed the “final luminous clarity of mind isolation.”

When such luminous clarity is experienced, in the second moment, the awakened body of mind and wind is attained. That final example luminous clarity manifests just like the luminous clarity does in the process of disso-

lution at death. The luminous clarity of death causes the separation of the “fully ripened” [karmic] body from wind and mind. Likewise, the final example luminous clarity is designated as “that which separates the two.” Its essence, the indivisibility of one’s own life wind and mind, actually becomes the body of the deity. What kind of mind is this? It is the ground-of-all [consciousness], along with the mental [consciousness], blessed by the three lights.

The essence of the illusory body is defined as the combination of two: [one,] the special mind (the supported) which, transformed by the bliss of the three consciousnesses [i.e., the three lights], manifests as the appearance of the deity; and [two,] wind (the support for this mind), which, through such manifestation, also becomes the form of the deity. This is termed “impure illusory body” since at the present time the obscurations of emotional afflictions have not yet been overcome. It is illustrated by twelve examples, the magical illusion, moon reflected in water, and so forth.<sup>32</sup>

### UNION OF EMPTINESS AND APPEARANCE [(iii’)]

#### **Actual awakening is the cause; the state of union, the result.**

[There are several points] concerning the completion phase of union: its cause, that of actual awakening; support, the impure illusory body; essence, the pristine awareness that has relinquished the seeds of the eighty conceptions, the essential nature of the path of seeing, which is seeing anew what had not been seen, the true nature of reality, the pristine awareness wherein dualistic appearances have ceased; the way of entering [this state of union] by relying on the outer and inner actual awakenings;<sup>33</sup> and the resultant attainment of the state of union of training and beyond training. These topics will be treated in detail in subsequent sections [of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*].<sup>34</sup>

In summation, the pristine awareness of bliss and emptiness [which arises] upon the dissolution of winds and mind in the central channel is the completion phase on the emptiness side. The appearance of the deity’s body, blessed by such pristine awareness, is the completion phase on the appearance side. These two [pristine awareness and the body of the deity] being of one essence is the state of union.

The appearance side comprises three [aspects]: [the deity’s body] that manifests only to the mental consciousness; the body composed of wind and mind; and the pure body of pristine awareness. The emptiness side

comprises three [aspects]: the three lights that appear to a beginner in the context of the path; mind isolation; and luminous clarity.

These represent very important points in all highest yoga tantras. In particular, in the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*, the principal topics whose meanings are as vast as space are the three: illusory body, luminous clarity, and state of union. These are somewhat elaborated upon, where appropriate, in previous and subsequent sections [of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*].

## THE APPLICATION OF TANTRA [dd"]

This discussion of tantric application has two parts: activations; and complementary tantric conduct.

### ACTIVATIONS [(1)]

**Application of tantra comprises the twelve great activations  
And the common and supreme powers, achieved by means of  
meditation,  
Fire offering, diagrams, and compounds. The practice to  
achieve the four ordinary powers  
Includes direction, time, deity, necessary articles, disposition,  
Place, meditation object, food, ritual, and mantra;  
Uncommon substances and pledge articles are superior means  
to attain powers.**

Tantric application comprises both the tantras of activations and tantras of powers. The first includes the twelve great activations<sup>35</sup> and other activations. The second includes both common and supreme powers. The common are the minor powers such as the eight powers; middling powers, that of the status of an ordinary awareness-holder in the desire realm; and great powers, one's life span, body, and wealth experienced for an infinite number of aeons in the status of an awareness-holder of the realm of desire; and the status of an awareness-holder in the form realm.<sup>36</sup>

The main tantric applications to carry out those [activations and powers] are of four [types]: meditative absorption activations, fire-offering activations, *yantra*<sup>37</sup> activations, and the activations of the preliminary preparations.<sup>38</sup> The practice to achieve the four ordinary powers, the objectives of those activations, includes ten features: direction, time, deity, necessary articles, disposition, place, meditation object, food, ritual, and

mantras. Two features, that of the uncommon substances and that of special pledge articles, are superior ones for developing powers. In all, there are twelve features.

### COMPLEMENTARY TANTRIC CONDUCT [(2)]

**The complementary conduct is to engage in the elaborate,  
unelaborate,  
And extremely unelaborate conduct; or the conduct of  
forsaking duality,  
Ever-perfect, and victorious in all quarters, and so forth.**

Tantric conduct that aids in the development of both kinds of powers [the common and the supreme] is divided into three types, elaborate, unelaborate, and extremely unelaborate, according to forms of procedures; or into the three types of conduct [called] forsaking duality, ever-perfect, and victorious in all quarters, according to essence.<sup>39</sup>

“And so forth” [in the root verses] refers to other types, distinguished in terms of the conduct mode, such as the deliberate behaviors of using desire, and training in and enjoying desire,<sup>40</sup> and the deliberate behavior of awareness; and types distinguished in terms of states such as occasional conduct, conduct of equality, equipoise, conduct subsequent to equipoise, and conduct of states devoid of desire, with desire, and with great desire.

**It is differentiated according to faculties, stages, and so on; of  
the many types,  
All are considered part of the three categories of time,  
procedure, and essence.  
The branch of tantric application of wrathful practices is of two  
types.**

Many ways of differentiating tantric conduct have developed, [some] based on the different faculties of the individual (lower, average, or superior), [others] on the stages of realization (ranging from beginners to persons of highly stable realization), and so forth. However, as a condensation, the three categories of time, procedure, and essence,<sup>41</sup> each of which has three parts, include all those different aspects.

For the branch of wrathful tantric application, two practices are taught, one to enhance [realization of] the phase of generation and one to enhance

[realization of] the phase of completion. These are discussed in detail in the appropriate sections [of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*].<sup>42</sup>

### **THE RESULTANT CONTINUUM OF INALIENABLENESS: THE ACTUALIZED STATE OF PURITY [3"]**

**The perfection of those contemplations leads to the resultant continuum.**

When one has perfected the contemplations of the two phases [of generation and completion] as they have been explained, one gradually traverses all the stages and paths and arrives at the resultant continuum: the stainless pristine awareness dimension of awakening, the state of union beyond training. This will be explained extensively in subsequent sections [of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*].

### **A SYNOPSIS OF THE VIEW, MEDITATION, CONDUCT, AND RESULT [dd']**

**In summation, one gains certainty through the view based on wisdom**

**And traverses the path through the stages of cultivating the supreme methods.**

**Realization is enhanced by using experiences in the path and engaging in three conducts.**

**Within this lifetime, the state of union is thereby attained.**

[Next is] a synopsis of all aspects of the practice of the highest yoga tantra system. Initially, by relying on study and reflection, one gains certainty [of the path] through the view [based on] wisdom. In the middle, one traverses the five paths through the stages of correct cultivation of the two phases [of generation and completion], the supreme method. Realization is enhanced by using in the path the collections of appearances, sounds, and thoughts as the creative energy of contemplation and, at the proper time, engaging in the three kinds of conduct [elaborate, unelaborate, and extremely unelaborate]. In this way, the state of union of Great Vajradhara is attained within a single lifetime.

## 15. TANTRIC SCRIPTURES

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- 2' The Scriptures that Express Tantra [I.B.2.a.iii.dd.2']
    - a' Classification of Tantric Scriptures
    - b' Tantric Topics and Points
      - i' The Five Topics
      - ii' The Eleven Points
- 

[This chapter presents] part two of the detailed explanation of the four sets of tantra: the tantric scriptures that express [the meaning of] tantra. The main discussion, which concerns their classification, is followed by an ancillary discussion of the topics and points of the tantras.

### CLASSIFICATION OF TANTRIC SCRIPTURES [a']

**Tantric scriptures are classified on the basis of their content;  
Both action and conduct tantras are categorized according to  
presentation**

**As sutras, tantras, skills, detailed rituals, and retention  
mantras;**

**Yoga tantras are categorized as root, explanatory, subsidiary,  
and concordant tantras;**

**Highest yoga, as root tantras, extensive and concise,  
Two subsidiary, five explanatory, and two concordant tantras.**

The tantric scriptures that express [the meaning of] the four sets of tantra are classified as follows:<sup>1</sup>

In action tantra, the scriptures are classified on the basis of their content, such as the six families<sup>2</sup> and other divisions. The action and conduct tantras

are distinguished as five types according to style of presentation alone: sutras, tantras, skills, detailed rituals, and retention mantras (*dharani*).

The first type, exemplified by the *Sacred Golden Light Scripture*, refers to a single group comprising [texts that set forth] concise rituals and numerous descriptions of the stages, paths, and result.

The second comprises extensive rituals and concise [presentations of] the stages and paths and includes the three general tantras and the *Dharani of the Eleven-Faced Avalokiteshvara*. (The three general [action] tantras are the *Secret General Tantra*, *Dialogue with Subahu Tantra*, and *Susiddhi*.)

The third, exemplified by the *Yakshini's Kalpa*,<sup>3</sup> reveals in great detail only one ritual or sadhana procedure.

The fourth, exemplified by the *Manjushri Root Tantra* and the *Supreme Knowledge of Vajrapani Tantra*, comprises texts wherein both rituals and the stages and paths are extensively treated.

The fifth, exemplified by the *Marichi Dharani*, expounds only *dharani* and the benefits [of reciting them].

Additionally, conduct tantras may be divided into the three families [of awakened body, speech, and mind]. In that case, the tantra of the family of awakened body [or tathagata family] is the *Vairochanabbhisambodhi [Tantra]*. No tantras of the family of awakened speech [or lotus family] have been translated into Tibetan. The tantra of the family of awakened mind [or vajra family] is the *Vajrapani Initiation Tantra*.

Yoga tantras are classified into four types: root tantras, explanatory tantras, subsidiary tantras, and tantras concordant with particular aspects [of the root tantra]. The first is represented by the *Summation of Essential Principles*; the second, by the *Indestructible Peak*; the third, by the special *All-Secret Tantra* and *Victorious in the Three Worlds Tantra*; and the fourth, by the [*Glorious*] *Supreme Original Being*, together known as the "four families of yoga." The inclusion of accessory tantras makes [a total of] five, which is the way of identifying yoga tantras that is most well known in Tibet.

Highest yoga tantras [are classified into four types: root, subsidiary, explanatory, and tantras concordant with particular aspects].

The root tantras are of two types, extensive and concise.<sup>4</sup> The first is exemplified by the *Kalachakra Root Tantra in Twelve Thousand Stanzas* and the *Hevajra Tantra Five Hundred Thousand*; the second, by the [*Kalachakra*] *Condensed Tantra* and [*Hevajra Tantra*] *Two Examinations*.

The subsidiary tantras are of two types: continuation tantras, and continuation of the continuation tantras. The first is exemplified by the *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* and the *Continuation of the Summation*

of *Essential Principles*; the second, by the *Continuation of the Continuation [of the Summation of Essential Principles]*.<sup>5</sup>

The explanatory tantras<sup>6</sup> are of five types: clarifications of what is obscure [in the root tantra]; supplements to incomplete [topics]; systematizations of scattered [topics]; synopses of material extensively treated [in the root tantra]; and instructions on methods of teaching [the tantra].

To elaborate on these five using the *Guhyasamaja [Tantra]* as an example, the first type includes texts like the *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra*, which clarifies obscure and difficult points concerning both the words and meaning of the root tantra; the *Prophetic Declaration of Intention Tantra*, which illuminates all of the profound aspects [of the root tantra]; and the *Dialogue with Four Goddesses Tantra*, which clarifies what is obscure concerning the essential meaning [of the root tantra].

The second, supplements to incomplete topics, includes texts like the *Indestructible Garland*, which fills in details that are not provided in the root tantra of Guhyasamaja, such as the number of deities, the details of twenty rituals [of the mandala], and so on.

The third, systematizations of scattered topics, comprises what is set forth in the *Indestructible Garland*, which organizes and puts in order the rituals, stages, and so forth, that are presented in a dispersed fashion in the root tantra of Guhyasamaja.

The fourth, synopses of material treated extensively [in the root tantra], includes summaries of major expositions that detail [every aspect] starting with each of the letters of the words of the introductory remarks [of the root tantra]; summaries of major expositions that enumerate the initiations which serve to ripen [the recipient]; summaries of major expositions on the contemplations in the two phases [of generation and completion] that effect liberation; and summaries of major expositions on subjects such as the five stages, exemplified by the *Indestructible Garland*. Inherent to this type are all of the characteristics of the previous types of explanatory tantras.

The fifth, instructions on methods of teaching, includes texts like the *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness [Tantra]*, which reveals the instructions on the teaching methods of the seven ornaments [to explain the words] of the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*. It should be understood that this system [of five types of explanatory tantras] applies also to the mother tantras.

The concordant tantras are of two types: those concordant with both words and meaning; and those concordant with the meaning [of the root tantra].

All tantras are included within the two categories of root and subsidiary tantras; or within the two categories of root and explanatory tantras; or within the two categories of extensive and concise tantras.

As to the extent of those tantric scriptures, the *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness [Tantra]* states:<sup>7</sup>

The great yoga tantra bears the name  
 "Twelve thousand," but is beyond reckoning  
 When its full extent is considered.  
 The combined tantra is [called] "six thousand";  
 Conduct tantra, "eight thousand";  
 And action tantra, "four thousand."

"Great yoga" means the highest yoga tantra not split into method and wisdom [tantras]. The names, from one called "twelve thousand" down to that called "four thousand," do not refer to their sizes in terms of number of stanzas<sup>8</sup> since the [action tantra's] detailed ritual of *Amoghapasha* has eight thousand stanzas. Furthermore, the *Indestructible Essence Ornament Tantra* explicitly mentions the meaning of the title and the size of [Guhyasamaja and other] father tantras of great passion,<sup>9</sup> from which [the size of] other tantras can be inferred. [On the mother tantras], the *Indestructible Tent* states:<sup>10</sup>

*Bliss of the Sky-Farers, Ocean of Bliss, Space,  
 Golden Rain, Great Delight, Ghasmari,  
 Playful Great Bliss, Secret Inner Bliss,  
 Plus tantras that support them, Vajra Sky-Farer,  
 Hevajra Mandala of All Buddhas, Secret Treasury,  
 Derived From Indestructible Nectar, Chakrasamvara,  
 [Indestructible] Tent, and an abundance of others  
 Are known as the sixth, the yogini tantra.*<sup>11</sup>

As indicated in this and other sources, there exists an infinite number of types of tantras, and the extent of the highest yoga system in particular cannot be fathomed.

## TANTRIC TOPICS AND POINTS [b']

This ancillary section has two parts: the five topics; and the eleven points.

### THE FIVE TOPICS [i']

**The five tantric topics concern procedures, powers, Pledges, contemplations, and tantric applications.**

The following are known as the five topics concerning the elements of tantra: one, procedures, primarily the ten outer and ten secret essential principles;<sup>12</sup> two, common and supreme powers; three, pledges and vows to be observed; four, contemplations in the two phases [of generation and completion]; and five, tantric applications involving activations and powers.

### THE ELEVEN POINTS [ii']

**An alternative system sets forth eleven points: ritual of the site, method of actualization, worship, fire-offering rituals, Initiation, consecration, prescribed ritual implements, and mandalas,**

**Ritual feast gatherings, familiarization, and sets of activations.**

**One must know details such as ritual implements of insignia (vajra and bell) and ornaments;**

**Drawing and construction of mandalas; place and time for ritual feast gatherings;**

**As well as the roles of the participants; familiarization for the welfare of oneself and others;**

**And activations related to body and contemplation.**

An alternative system sets forth eleven points (topics) of tantra: one, the ritual of the site [including] examination [of the site], taking possession, purifying it, and so forth; two, methods of actualization (self-generation as the deity, generation [of the deity] in front, generation in the vase, and so forth); three, forms of worship, both common and uncommon; four, outer, inner, and secret fire-offering rituals; five, ways to nurture students and confer initiation; six, rituals of consecration by which the pristine awareness deities come to be present in the pledge deities; seven, prescribed ritual implements needed by the yogin; eight, prescriptions for mandalas; nine, ritual feast gatherings; ten, methods to develop familiarization [with the deity]; and eleven, limitless sets of activations. These eleven are considered to contain all points on tantra.

On the meaning of consecration [point six], Rongzom Pandita states that to confer initiation on a student and to perform consecration on a deity [image] are essentially identical. To explain [this statement], in initiation, the basis of purification is the innate body and mind; the object to be purified, the adventitious stains; the purificatory means, the four initiations with their branches which effect purification, whereupon the pristine awareness beings are made to merge with [and be stabilized within the pledge ones]; and the result of purification, the establishment of the seeds of the four dimensions of awakening [in the student's mind].

Likewise, in consecration, the basis of purification is an image formed of matter; the object to be purified, the stains of the artist [who made the statue] and of the donor [who commissioned it]; the purificatory means, the correct ritual procedure through which the pristine awareness deities merge with and are stabilized within the pledge ones; and the result of purification, the spontaneous activity, as the essence of the indestructible awakened body, speech, and mind of a buddha, that accomplishes others' welfare.

The rationale for this description [of four elements of basis, object, means, and result of purification] is one principally connected to the terminology of the last cycle of the Buddha's teaching. Some [scholars], the Sakyapas and others, take these to be three elements: the object to be purified, purificatory means, and result of purification. They assert that the basis of purification is posited with respect to the object to be purified, and the object, with respect to the basis, in a relationship of reciprocal dependence, and therefore the basis of purification is not discussed separately.

One should gain an understanding of the numerous elements [within the eleven points] such as the ritual implements that are insignia (the vajra, bell, mystic staff, small drum, etc.), and articles (the six [bone] ornaments, etc.);<sup>13</sup> mandala procedures such as pitching the lines, applying the colors, and constructing the divine palace; specifications for the ritual feast gatherings with regard to place [where it is performed], time, and roles of the participants; familiarization which serves the dual purpose of the cultivation of powers for the welfare of oneself and the initiation of students for the welfare of others; and the two categories of the sets of activations, the set related to the body and that related to contemplation.

## 16. EXPOSITION METHODS

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- b. Exposition of the Tantras [I.B.2.b]
  - i. Exposition Methods in the Three Lower Tantras
  - ii. Exposition Methods in Highest Yoga Tantra
    - aa. General Methods
      - 1' The Five Points of Introduction
      - 2' The Four Correct Methods
      - 3' The Six Parameters
      - 4' The Four Modes
      - 5' Two Forms [Group and Individual Teachings]
      - 6' Teachings for Five [Types of] Recipients
      - 7' Expositions on the Two Truths
    - bb. Special Methods in the Yogini Tantras
  - iii. The Special Exposition Method in the Esoteric Instructions System

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[This chapter presents] part two [of the detailed discussion of the new tradition of secret mantra]: instructions on how to teach the tantras. This is discussed in three parts: exposition methods in the three lower tantras; exposition methods in the highest yoga tantras; and the special method of exposition in the esoteric instructions system.

### EXPOSITION METHODS IN THE THREE LOWER TANTRAS [i]

**The teaching method in action tantra comprises four practices, the entrance, and so on; In conduct tantra, three exposition approaches and two excellences; In yoga tantra, four compendiums of analyses, all of which include purpose,**

**Concise meaning, literal meaning, context, and resolution of contradictions.**

**Points of introduction are given based on the distinction between Buddha and his followers.**

Without instructions on how tantric texts should be taught, one would be overwhelmed by, and unable to fathom, the profundity and vastness of their contents. Therefore, instructions for their exposition [are set forth] beginning with the three lower tantra sets.

Action tantras should be taught, as is explained in [Buddhaguhya's] *Commentary Epitomizing the Dialogue with Subahu Tantra*,<sup>1</sup> by presenting four practices: entrance, approach, effecting powers, and using powers. Whatever is incomplete or obscure in the particular root tantra is to be supplemented and elucidated by [referring to] general explanatory tantras of action tantra, such as the *Secret General Tantra*, which emphasizes entrance; *Dhyanottara*, which emphasizes approach; *Susiddhi*, which emphasizes both approach and effecting powers; and *Dialogue with Subahu Tantra*, which establishes the characteristics of all four practices.

The way conduct tantras should be taught, as explained in [Buddhaguhya's] *Commentary Epitomizing the Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra*,<sup>2</sup> involves three approaches to exposition: a statement of the title of the tantra alone (in the case of a student of sharp faculties who gains understanding from the beginning statement); a statement that scrutinizes the meaning of the title alone (in the case of a student of average faculties who gains understanding through analyses); and thorough analysis of related aspects of the words, with extensive commentary based on a successive examination (in the case of a student of low faculties who is engrossed in words).

For each of those three approaches, there should be an explanation of the two excellences: the excellence of the [tantra's] promulgator's objective for himself or herself and the excellence of the promulgator's objective for others. The first is expounded in terms of the excellence of the cause, nature, and result; the second, in terms of [the excellence of] the mandala, mantra, seals, and so forth. To provide that explanation entails expositions on both the conduct related to the mandala rituals and the conduct on the part of the practitioner in order to propitiate the awareness mantra [the female deity], the secret mantra [the male deity], and so forth, as well as the resultant [attainments]. For that, one must explain

how to propitiate the secret [and awareness] mantras, which comprises the four practices of entrance, approach, effecting powers, and using powers (or three, if [the last two] are condensed), as taught in the section [in chapter four] on the stages of the path in conduct tantra. These points are incorporated in an abridged form in the exposition of the *Vairochan-abhisambodhi [Tantra]*, and should likewise be applied in expositions of other conduct tantras as appropriate.

Yoga tantra's styles of exposition are concerned with teaching the excellence of the result through the points of introduction [that set forth] the framework of the tantra, and, after that, the means for the attainment of the result, the content of which comprises the ten essential principles with their twenty (or thirty) subdivisions.<sup>3</sup> As to the methods of exposition, the *Indestructible Peak*<sup>4</sup> states:

...forms the compendium of all analyses  
Of the great means to accomplish all objectives.

That which reveals in detail the secrets  
And elucidates the intention of yoga  
Forms the compendium of all analyses  
That imparts knowledge of essential principles.

The procedure of the vajra yoga  
And the ritual of the yoga of the circle  
Form the compendium of all analyses  
That is known as the supreme secret.

Actions that encompass all times  
And the source of all secret yogas  
Form the compendium of all analyses  
That is the great means for all activities.

These four compendiums of analyses were taught as elucidations on the knowledge of all yoga tantras, or methods of exposition, [and are described as follows:]

[The first] comprises descriptions of the way the Buddha attained enlightenment; [the way] the Buddha, for others' welfare, emanated [the mandala of] the deity and taught [the tantra]; and the definitive meaning of the words of the tantra; and expositions in condensed form of the

subject matter to be taught, all the procedures that accomplish one's objectives.

The second comprises statements from the root tantra such as:<sup>5</sup>

Having thrust the *linga* into the *bhaga*...

with explanation:<sup>6</sup>

I shall explain the meaning of *bhaga*,  
 Which is called *bhaga* because it conquers.  
 It conquers the body of emotional afflictions.  
 Hence, it is called wisdom *bhaga*.  
 What, then, is called *linga*?  
*Linga* is explained as "sign."  
 Wise ones arise from the *linga* of wisdom,  
 Bodhichitta, the supreme method,  
 Which is known as the sign.  
 Having thrust the *linga* into the *bhaga*  
 The circle's power is attained.<sup>7</sup>

which constitute expositions that reveal in detail [the meaning of] secret words. [This second also includes] explanations of the rationale for the Buddha being called Vishnu, and so on, in the root tantra:

Having cognized essential reality itself,  
 The purity devoid of fixation and so forth,  
 Being without self[-grasping] or afflictions,  
 I am therefore called Vishnu (The All-Pervading).

which constitute expositions that elucidate covert intention; and expositions that impart knowledge of the sacred essential principles, the teachings concerning the essential principles of powers, self, deity, mandala, and so forth.

The third comprises teachings on the supreme secret, that of vajra yoga, the procedure of preliminary familiarization; and the yoga of the circle [of deities], the ritual of the mandala (both in abridged forms), thereby revealing knowledge of the practices.

The fourth comprises the pledges and vows that concern actions that encompass the three times; the secret yogas, contemplation involving visu-

alization [of the deity, etc.] and recitation; and the fire-offering rituals, which accomplish all activities.<sup>8</sup>

These topics should be expounded in relation to the four compendiums in whatever way is appropriate. All these compendiums should be presented in a way similar to that of general treatises, which includes five teachings: purpose, concise meaning, literal meaning, context, and resolution of contradictions. The points of introduction [for setting the scene of the tantra] and the initial discussion [on the reason for the teaching] should be presented by distinguishing between early events [the awakening of the Buddha] and practical application intended for later followers.

### EXPOSITION METHODS IN HIGHEST YOGA TANTRA [ii]

This section has two parts: general methods; and special methods.

#### GENERAL METHODS [aa]

**Highest tantras are to be expounded by means of seven ornaments:**

**Five points of introduction, four correct methods,**

**Six parameters, four modes, group and individual teachings,**

**Five persons, and two truths. ...**

The methods of teaching highest yoga tantras are the “seven ornaments,” principles of knowledge [that stem] from the *Compendium on the Pristine Awareness Tantra*.<sup>9</sup> Some scholars apply these teaching methods as techniques for expounding only the father tantra of Guhyasamaja since they find their source in this tantra. However, these seven ornaments are considered not only as methods to expound the Guhyasamaja but also as an important framework for discourses on the [highest] tantras in general. The seven ornaments [and their twenty-eight subdivisions] are stated in [Chandrakirti’s] *Illuminating Lamp*:

The points of introduction number five;

The correct methods are of four types;

Parameters for extensive discourses, six types;

And modes of exposition number four;

The fifth ornament is divided into two;

The sixth ornament, divided into five;  
 And the seventh, divided into two:  
 The ornaments are thereby encapsulated.

Within the [seven] ornaments, there are five points of introduction containing the purpose of the tantra; four correct methods which provide a synopsis of the tantra; six parameters for the words and meanings that form extensive expositions of the tantra; four modes of teaching related to words and meanings; two forms [group and individual teachings] distinguished in terms of the subject matter; five forms distinguished in terms of the persons who are recipients of the teaching; and two types of the seventh ornament which ascertains the two truths on the basis of scriptures and reasonings, distinguished in terms of the purpose. [In this way,] the ornaments form seven categories, within which are twenty-eight subdivisions. They are referred to as “ornaments” since they delight the wise by beautifying and illuminating the tantras.<sup>10</sup>

### THE FIVE POINTS OF INTRODUCTION [1']

The first [ornament] comprises five points of introduction, which are to state the title of the tantra, [the persons] for whom the tantra is intended, the composer, the extent of the tantra, and the purpose.

The title of a tantra is given to reflect [one of] several elements, such as its subject matter, as is the case for the *Guhyasamaja*, *Chakrasamvara*, *Hevajra*, and *Kalachakra* tantras;<sup>11</sup> or the words that convey [the subject matter], as is the case for the *Prophetic Declaration of Intention Tantra*; or the extent of the tantra, as is the case for the [*Hevajra*] *Tantra One Hundred Thousand*; or its promulgator, the person who requested it, the examples used, and so forth.

If one asks for whose welfare tantra was promulgated, the answer is that tantra was taught primarily to guide persons of sharp faculties who are dominated by desire. This is so because the resultant state of great bliss must be reached principally by the path of desire. Nevertheless, tantra is not intended solely for the benefit of beings dominated by desire since it teaches the fierce [mode of] activation, and so forth, for the sake of persons dominated by aversion or other emotional afflictions.

If the composer of the tantra is not an ideal one, that tantra will not be trustworthy. Therefore, if one wishes to know who the composer of a particular tantra is, the answer must be found in the section of the particular

tantra where the author is stated. For example, *Guhyasamaja* was spoken by the great Vajradhara in the form of a [universal] sovereign; the *Chakrasamvara Root Tantra*, by the [great Vajradhara] in the form of a fearsome *heruka*.

Concerning the extent of a particular tantra, the *Guhyasamaja*, for instance, contains twenty rituals, or eighteen chapters, or five major sections.<sup>12</sup>

The purpose of a tantra is to develop ordinary powers; the most essential purpose is to attain the supreme power [of awakening].

## THE FOUR CORRECT METHODS [2']

The second [ornament] comprises the four correct methods, which are [to expound] the lineage, starting basis, definitive word, and propensity.<sup>13</sup> These four [are interpreted] in terms of the way [to become a buddha following a path] free from desire; and in terms of the way [following a path] possessed of desire.

First, the four correct methods for [the path] free from desire are as follows:

To have taken birth as a virtuous human being represents what is called “lineage” since it is in a human form alone, by having become a renunciant, that one can become free from desire.

To become a renunciant in signs, apparel, and so forth, as when [the Buddha as] a prince renounced his entourage of consorts, represents the “starting basis” since to become a renunciant is the only correct [course of action] if one aspires to freedom from desire.

In addition to having become a renunciant, to safeguard the vows prescribed in the discipline collection of teachings represents the “definitive word” since to do so is correct as an area [of training] definitely required.

In addition to safeguarding the vows, to apply the teachings with the aspiration to attain resultant awakening represents the “propensity” since this alone is correct for the attainment of freedom from desire. As is said:

Moral, learned, and reflective,  
One dedicates oneself to meditation.

Second, the four correct methods for the path of desire are as follows:

To generate oneself as [all] the buddhas of the five buddha families in accordance with one's own particular family represents the “lineage” since this is correct as the support for mantra practice.

Moreover, [the five buddhas], being transformations of Vajradhara [endowed with the seven features] of union, and so on, are of a single family, that of the great secret: this represents the “starting basis” since conviction in the mode of the path of desire is thereby imparted.

Upon accepting the vows of the five buddha families, to assume the outer, inner, and secret vajra levels [of teaching]<sup>14</sup> and so forth, and, in particular, in highest yoga tantra, to assume the deliberate behavior of pure conduct in the union of vajra and lotus<sup>15</sup> represents the “definitive word” since this is an area of training that is, without any doubt, definitely required.

To engage in the secret teaching that uses in the path the desire aroused by flirtation, laughing, and so forth, represents the “propensity” since this brings about the attainment of the dimension of great bliss.

### THE SIX PARAMETERS [3']

The third [ornament] comprises the six parameters [three pairs], which are the provisional meaning, definitive meaning, interpretable meaning, non-interpretable meaning, standard terminology, and coined terminology. They are known as “parameters” since the meaning of the words [of the tantras] do not go beyond these.

Expositions using the provisional meaning are intended for persons who do not actually possess the sublime fortune [to directly fathom the pristine awareness of the phase of completion] in order that the Victor, having concealed the real meaning of that teaching, might draw them towards it. These consist in alternative teachings such as those concerning the phase of generation and its subsidiary practices.

Expositions using the definitive meaning are of two types. The first, the definitive meaning in common with the phase of generation possessed of authentic characteristics, comprises such explanations as found in the *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness [Tantra]*,<sup>16</sup> which says: “Camphor refers to semen.” The second, the definitive meaning of the natural state which is perfect in itself, reveals the meaning of the causal continuum, the innate nature, and other aspects of the completion phase.

Expositions using the interpretable meaning are intended to reveal essential reality to someone [of sharpest faculties] who aspires to the supreme goal while preventing that person from pursuing it without [the guidance of] a master. An interpretable teaching is expressed in words that contradict the ways of the world in that they would be censured by upright persons, as

in the case of the injunction “to slay living creatures.” “To slay living creatures” would be interpreted as to block karmic winds. Such words that contradict worldly conventions are also intended to attract [to the tantric path] persons [who engage in base acts], such as butchers.

Expositions using the non-interpretable meaning teach all the essential principles of the generation-phase practice, such as total emptiness, luminous clarity, and so forth, to persons of low faculties who are not qualified to receive the interpretable teachings.

Expositions using standard terminology are those in accordance with the [three] lower tantras that concern the performance of detailed rituals related to the outer mandala, fire offerings, and so on, and the sets of activations.

Expositions using coined terminology are terms such as “*kotakhya*” [for life wind]<sup>17</sup> that were coined only by the Transcendent One on a particular occasion and are found neither in treatises nor in [common languages of] the world.<sup>18</sup>

#### THE FOUR MODES [4']

The fourth [ornament] comprises the four modes, which are [to expound] the literal meaning, general meaning, concealed meaning, and final meaning.

The first, the literal meaning, is an explanation that is simply focused on the syllables [of the words] by means of splitting them [into parts], and so forth.<sup>19</sup>

Expositions using general meaning are of two types: one, the general meaning of the sutras and tantras; and two, the general meaning of the phase of generation. The first type comprises the general meaning that counteracts regret felt by persons who have entered the sutra way; and the general meaning that counteracts regret felt by those who have entered the mantra way. The first is used in the case of a person who is aware of such statements as the following:

Despite endless austerities and vows,  
One's goal will still be not realized,  
But attainment is swiftly gained  
By enjoying all sensual pleasures.

and feels regret over not having embarked on, from the beginning, [practice of] the teachings for which the path is easily accessible and through which enlightenment is attained in the same lifetime, and thinks that it was not

good to have entered the sutra way (or the way of action or conduct tantras, and so on). In response, an explanation such as this is given: It is not the case that a person who wishes to be free from cyclic existence, attain awakening, and so on, should enter the highest yoga tantra and not the path of sutra. As it is said:

For those endowed with purity and method,  
Emotional afflictions contribute to awakening.

Even the sutras say enlightenment can be attained through an easily accessible path if one is a person of sharp faculties and possessed of special method and wisdom. Such an exposition is referred to as the general meaning [type].

The general meaning exposition that counteracts regret felt by a person who has entered the mantra path is used in the case of someone [who has entered the highest yoga tantra] and feels regret at having done so, thinking that, in the sutras and the action and conduct tantras, and so forth, the Teacher spoke of ablutions, cleanliness, fasting, and so on, and that [the highest yoga tantra] rejects these and instead expounds behavior like that of dogs and pigs, for which excrement, urine, male and female regenerative fluids, and so on, are offered to the deities and also ingested by oneself.

A general meaning exposition for a person of low faculties [who feels such regret] comprises statements such as this: This system [of highest yoga tantra] rejects the performance of ablutions, cleanliness, and other [observances] when, as in the case of those performed by brahminical Hindus, they are devoid of special method and wisdom. However, it does teach forms of cleansing that purify [the karmic traces of] negative actions and obscurations, and so on; and therefore to ingest excrement or urine and do other similar acts is to apply the practice of total sameness of flavor of the sense faculties and their objects.

A general meaning exposition for a person of sharp faculties [who feels such regret] comprises statements such as this: There is also [a way to] realization devoid of hardships and austerities which is taught in action tantras such as the *Trisamayavyuha*. To be attached to cleanliness, adverse to what is unclean, and so forth, are meaningless [conceptions] and do not favor the attainment of the pristine awareness of total sameness. Hence, to overcome such adherences, even the sutras, action tantra, and so forth, prescribe the conduct of sameness of flavor.

Second, a general meaning [exposition] of the phase of generation includes teachings on the outer aspects and general meaning of the generation phase, such as the following:<sup>20</sup>

Always contemplate at the tip of the nose  
A precious [insignia] of five different colors.

which are instructions for persons unqualified to hear the concealed teachings on sexual desire to imagine the subtle insignia of the five buddha families on the relative “tip of the nose.”

Expositions using the concealed meaning consist of teachings that explicitly present practices involving sexual desire in the union of the yogin and yogini. They are referred to as the concealed teachings on sexual desire, concealed because to speak of them in a group would cause embarrassment. The stage of practice of the illusory body, the supreme essence veiled by subtle but manifest stains, is the concealed [teaching] on the realization of relative truth. The cause for that [attainment of the illusory body] is the pristine awareness of light, increase, and culmination, the middling essence veiled by middling stains; and the cause for that, the speech isolation termed “indestructible awakened speech” and body isolation termed “indestructible awakened body,” the minor essence, or natural state, [veiled] by great stains.<sup>21</sup> Because these are concealed, their explanations are also concealed.

Expositions using the final meaning consist of teachings on the stage of luminous clarity, the final path; and teachings on the stage of union, the final result.

Each of these four modes represent the same vajra class [of tantric teachings] but expound the teachings in accordance with the different faculties [of the recipient]. Here, [the four] modes have been presented generally in relation to the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, but should be applied in a similar way to other tantras. Therefore, a general statement on each follows:

The literal meaning appraises the meaning of the syllables [of the words] according to grammar and spelling; the general meaning expounds what is in common with the sutra way and lower tantras; the concealed meaning, the uncommon profound points of highest yoga tantra; and the final meaning, the way to realization of the state of union with training and beyond training based on the first three.

This discussion on the four modes and six parameters is based on distinctions in the levels of [the students'] minds (to be explained below) but

has been set forth here according to the tradition of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* in order to be easily understood.

### **TWO FORMS [GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL TEACHINGS] [5']**

The fifth [ornament] comprises two forms of exposition, group teachings and teachings to individual students. The standard terminology, non-interpretable meaning, provisional meaning, literal meaning, and general meaning are taught to students in a group. (It is not permissible to teach tantra to someone who is not one's student.) Teachings on the phase of completion using coined terminology and the definitive meaning, and expositions using the interpretable meaning, concealed meaning, and final meaning are given only to the best students, who are like "jewels."

That being the case, with the exception of the concealed sexual practices, teachings on the generation phase and related topics are expounded to a group; and those on the completion phase and related topics, to individual students. Thus, the form of teaching depends on which of the two phases is being taught.

### **TEACHINGS FOR FIVE [TYPES OF] RECIPIENTS [6']**

The sixth [ornament] comprises expositions for recipients of five types: like a blue lotus, white lotus, [red] lotus, sandalwood tree, and jewel.

A blue lotus absorbs nutrients from various sources in the environment and retains its nectar as long as it is in water. However, it withers quickly, losing its luster, fragrance, and so on, when plucked. Similarly, a person deemed "blue lotus" listens to all of the master's teachings and is able to retain [this knowledge] for a time. However, when there are worldly distractions and other activities, he or she will instantly forget it.

A white lotus is similar to a blue one, but does not wither as easily and is more beautiful in color. However, although it keeps its nectar, it is not able to emit [its fragrance], and, like a water-sogged ball of cotton in a vase, it is difficult to pluck. Similarly, a person deemed "white lotus" acquires much knowledge and does not forget it, but owing to having little self-confidence is unable to transmit this knowledge to others.

A [red] lotus whose radiance is finer than others' emits a sweet fragrance when opened by the sun and is filled with nectar. However, the nectar is quickly released and therefore does not last long. Similarly, a person deemed "lotus," endowed with faith, compassion, and wisdom, has a fully blos-

somed mind and is able to transmit knowledge to others. However, because he or she is of an unstable nature, these qualities do not last for long.

A sandalwood tree [of inferior kind]<sup>22</sup> does not absorb nutrients from the various sources in the environment and lacks flexibility. Its roots do not spread deep into the ground, and around its many branches coil venomous snakes. Thus, it cannot afford protection for others. Similarly, a person deemed “sandalwood tree” has absorbed little knowledge yet takes pride in his social status, and so forth. Although lacking [knowledge] rooted in scriptures and reasonings, he or she talks a great deal and is therefore unable to nurture students.

A jewel devoid of faults and endowed with many fine qualities has an excellent and unchanging nature and provides the source for whatever is needed or desired. Similarly, a person deemed “jewel” maintains pure ethics, is learned in many sutras and tantras, perseveres in what is wholesome, exhibits great wisdom, and is of pure mind. Accompanied by these qualities, he or she acquires knowledge and then effectively teaches others.

The jewel is the best type of student; the other three, middling; and the sandalwood tree type, inferior. The sandalwood tree type has the good fortune to be connected to the [secret] mantra and is therefore mentioned here [among the five] for its excellent affinity [for tantra].

The first four types of individuals have the fortune to receive group teachings and the phase of completion [teachings]. The jewel-like ones are qualified to receive the individual teachings. This implies that the previous four possess the fortune [to be taught] the phase of generation.

## EXPOSITIONS ON THE TWO TRUTHS [7']

The seventh [ornament] comprises expositions on the two truths. The ascertainment of the two truths or two phases by means of scriptures and reasonings, and the elimination of doubts, and so forth, is the purpose of expounding tantra using the [previous] six ornaments. Based on that, to make the phase of completion the essence is the supreme purpose. Hence, all of the highest yoga tantras are to be expounded by means of the seven ornaments.

## SPECIAL METHODS IN THE YOGINI TANTRAS [bb]

**...The special exposition methods for *Chakrasamvara*  
Are six key instructions and three unions;**

**For *Hevajra*, those of the three purities;  
 For *Mahamaya*, the shape, mantra, and reality;  
 For *Chatuhpita*, the four seats; *Samputa*, seven secrets;  
 For others, the four dwellings and four essential principles;  
 For *Kalachakra*, the outer, inner, and alternative levels,  
 All of those based on the four reliances.**

Special styles for teaching the tantras are set forth in the yogini tantras of highest yoga tantra. The methods to expound *Chakrasamvara* are stated in the *Equal to the Sky Tantra*, which is part of the Chakrasamvara Rali tantras:<sup>23</sup>

The meaning of words, auxiliary meaning,  
 Condensed meaning, general meaning,  
 Concealed meaning, and the final meaning:  
 The tantras are definitely these alone.

Accordingly, the *Chakrasamvara Tantra* is expounded in terms of these six instructions. The general, concealed, and final meanings are the three instructions concerned with the subject matter, or the meaning to be conveyed; and the literal meaning, auxiliary meaning, and inclusive meaning are the three instructions for ways to explain the terms that convey the subject matter.<sup>24</sup> Those are to be applied individually to the meanings and the words of the scripture, as well as collectively to each word of the scripture, as appropriate for the particular exposition.

Some masters speak of four meanings:

Outer, secret, inner, and absolute:  
 These are four kinds of meanings  
 Which represent the mandala, action seal,  
 Body, and absence of intrinsic nature.

It should be understood that these correspond to the six instructions just mentioned.

In the esoteric instructions of the great sage Naropa, it is stated that the *Chakrasamvara Root Tantra* is to be expounded by means of the three unions while the *Chakrasamvara Concise Tantra* says that it is to be expounded by means of what are known as the secrecy of the path, the secrecy of the result, and the branches that bring these to completion.

The *Hevajra Tantra* should be expounded in terms of the three purities, as stated in the [*Hevajra Tantra*] *Two Examinations*:<sup>25</sup>

In a definitive way, the purity of all things  
 Is declared to be the true nature as it is.  
 Later, it should be described as the purity of the deities  
 In terms of their individual distinctions.

The essential nature of self-awareness is purity itself:  
 There is no liberation through another purity.<sup>26</sup>

The three purities may be expounded by applying them to the three continuums. In terms of the causal continuum, the true nature of all phenomena, or primordial peace [emptiness], is the purity of the true nature; manifestation in the form of a body with face and arms is the purity of the individual deities; and the experience of bliss, not experienced by any other means, the purity of self-awareness [i.e., awareness that cognizes its own nature].

In terms of the continuum of method, the view that has eliminated misconceptions on the basis of study and reflection is the purity of the true nature; the generation phase of the path, the purity of the individual deities; and the phase of completion, the purity of self-awareness.

In terms of the resultant continuum, the essential dimension of awakening is the purity of the true nature; the two form dimensions of awakening, the purity of the individual deities; and the innate dimension of awakening, the purity of self-awareness. In addition, the three continuums may be expounded by applying each to the three purities.

The *Mahamaya Tantra* should be expounded by means of [the three essential natures,] shape, mantra, and reality. The same tantra states:<sup>27</sup>

Unstained by the faults of existence,  
 The meaning of tantra should be understood  
 Through the three types of unions:  
 The natures of shape, mantra, and reality.

The essential nature of shape denotes the phase of generation, which, after the vase initiation has been conferred on the body, reveals the body itself as the manifest dimension of awakening. The essential nature of mantra denotes the inner heat, which, after the secret initiation has been conferred on the speech, reveals speech itself as the enjoyment dimension of awakening. The essential nature of reality denotes the third initiation, which, after the wisdom initiation has been conferred on the mind, reveals the mind itself as

the reality dimension of awakening. The essential nature of the ultimate reality, after the fourth initiation has been conferred on the body, speech, and mind, together with the winds, reveals the winds themselves as the essential dimension of awakening. Both the reality of the initiation and the ultimate reality are included within “reality,” thus making the three essential natures.

The *Chatuhpita Tantra* should be expounded by means of the “four seats,” the seat of oneself, the seat of others, the seat of union, and the seat of the secret, as a framework for the tantra in general from beginning to end, as well as for each of its chapters.

The four seats may be applied to the three continuums. In terms of the causal continuum, the seat of oneself refers to the revelation that everything, the outer environment and inner inhabitants, is a manifestation of one’s mind; the seat of others, the revelation [of appearances] as empty of outer objects and perceiver; the seat of the union, the nonduality of appearances and emptiness; and the seat of the secret, the essence of this union as the nature of great bliss.

The four empties—great empty, empty, very empty, and total empty (the reality dimension of awakening)—which are experienced at the moment of death of [every] being, are present as the four seats of oneself, others, union, and secret, respectively. [Likewise,] the transference of consciousness, the mental body, unobstructedness, and conception (the enjoyment dimension of awakening) [related to] the intermediate state are present as the four seats, respectively. The four components, the white [semen], the red [ovum], consciousness, and the formed body (the manifest dimension of awakening) [related to] birth are present as the four seats, respectively.

In terms of the path continuum, the seat of oneself refers to a qualified master who confers the ripening initiation; the seat of others, a qualified student; the seat of union, conferral of initiation; and the seat of the secret, the meaning of the initiation that has been experienced in the [student’s] mind. The four seats must be applied as well to each of the four initiations.

In terms of liberative means, the seat of others refers to the outer practice of the phase of generation; the seat of oneself, the inner practice of one’s body as method; the seat of the union, the secret practice with a real consort; and the seat of the secret, the essential reality of the inconceivable pristine awareness of the great seal. The four seats should be applied as well to each of these four [outer, inner, secret, and essential reality].

In terms of the resultant continuum, the seat of oneself refers to the reality dimension of awakening, the fulfillment of one's own objective; the seat of others, the manifest dimension of awakening, to guide one's students; the seat of union, the enjoyment dimension of awakening, endowed with five certainties;<sup>28</sup> and the seat of the secret, the indivisibility [of the previous dimensions] as the essence of great bliss. The *Chatuhpita Tantra* is thus expounded by applying the natures of the [four] seats [to the three continuums].

The *Continuation of the Samputa Tantra* is to be expounded by means of the seven secrets, such as the obscure. These are summarized as follows: one, the obscure, the causal continuum, the meaning to be understood; two, the concise formulation of essential reality, the eleven [vase] initiations; three, the five seed syllables,<sup>29</sup> the phase of generation; four, the concealed sacred element, the view that realizes the meaning of essential reality; five, the secret lotus, the path connected to the third initiation, the means of the mandala circle;<sup>30</sup> six, the joy at the navel, the phase of self-blessing;<sup>31</sup> and seven, that which serves all [purposes], the different branches of the path such as pledges and vows.

It is explained that some tantras are to be expounded by means of the "four dwellings": dwelling in a sphere, in water, and so on. The *Equal to the Sky Tantra*<sup>32</sup> states:

In a sphere, in water, in form,  
And in a state beyond form:  
These are the four dwellings.  
The tantras are definitely these alone.

These four dwellings should be understood in relation to the three continuums.

The four dwellings of the causal continuum are explained as follows: In the case of a sentient being who will be born from a womb, first, when the parents are enjoying the pleasure of sexual intercourse, the intermediate state is also attracted to that pleasure and as a consequence, enters the womb. This is the "dwelling in a sphere": the enjoyment dimension of awakening which experiences bliss. The stages of fetal development, such as the *mermer* stage,<sup>33</sup> which occur after the consciousness has become unconscious in the midst of the semen and ovum [of the parents], is the "dwelling in water." The stage in which the being is embodied, with all the sense faculties complete, is the "dwelling in form." The stage when the being has died is the "dwelling in a state beyond form."

As to the four dwellings in terms of the continuum of method, the four of the initiation [are explained in this way]: The articles used in the vase initiation, the diadem, and so forth, primarily represent the “dwelling in a sphere”; the substance used in the secret initiation, bodhichitta, the “dwelling in water”; the referent used in the wisdom initiation, the male and female deities in union, the “dwelling in form”; and the referent for the fourth initiation, great bliss transcending thought, the “dwelling in the state beyond form.”

The four dwellings are also applied to each initiation individually. In the context of the water initiation, the transformation of the syllable *hum* into a vajra is the “dwelling in a sphere”; the melting of the vajra, the “dwelling in water”; from that, the generation of the deity with face and arms, the “dwelling in form”; and the blessing of one’s continuum, which occurs as the deity is absorbed [into oneself], the “dwelling in the state beyond form.” The four dwellings are likewise applied to all the other initiations.

As to the four dwellings in terms of the path, there are four dwellings in the context of the phase of generation and four in the context of the phase of completion. For the first, the deity’s insignia which arises from the seed syllable is the “dwelling in a sphere”; the melting of the causal Vajradhara which arises from the deity’s insignia, the “dwelling in water”; the manifestation of the resultant Vajradhara which arises from the causal one,<sup>34</sup> the “dwelling in form”; and, at the conclusion [of the session of practice], the dissolution [of the deity] into fundamental luminous clarity, the “dwelling in the state beyond form.” The second, the four dwellings in the context of the phase of completion, are to be known through an understanding of the three higher initiations.

As to the four dwellings in terms of the resultant continuum, the enjoyment dimension of awakening is the “dwelling in a sphere” since this is the experience of bliss; the reality dimension of awakening, the “dwelling in water” since it is of one flavor [with everything], like pouring water into water, or devoid of the “corners” of discursive thought, like a drop of water; the manifest dimension of awakening, the “dwelling in form” since it has a form with face and arms; and the essential dimension of awakening, the “dwelling in the state beyond form,” since all dimensions are therein integrated.

There are many other methods of exposition, such as that of the [*Hevajra Tantra*] *Two Examinations*, which teaches all tantras by including them within the two phases [generation and completion], or that of the *Worldly Lord of*

*the Family Tantra*, which expounds the tantras in terms of the four essential principles.<sup>35</sup>

The exposition style of Kalachakra, the king of all tantras, is stated in Pundarika's *Great Commentary [Stainless Light]*:<sup>36</sup>

On the basis of the mundane and supramundane truths,<sup>37</sup> a complete elucidation is made of the total purity through the four aspects of perfect awakening or four vajras,<sup>38</sup> the four dimensions of awakening,<sup>39</sup> the six families,<sup>40</sup> the twelve truths,<sup>41</sup> the sixteen essential realities,<sup>42</sup> the sixteen emptinesses and the sixteen compassions whose essential natures constitute the subject matter and the means of conveying the subject matter,<sup>43</sup> the ten mundane initiations, and the eleventh, the supramundane one.<sup>44</sup> A complete elucidation is made of the action seal, pristine awareness seal, and the great seal, as well as the mundane and supramundane powers.<sup>45</sup> [These elucidations] are of the essential natures of the five chapters, or five analyses [of the *Kalachakra Tantra*]: the [outer] world system, the inner [vajra body], the actual conferral of initiation, the sadhana practice, and pristine awareness.<sup>46</sup>

Accordingly, the teachings of Kalachakra, such as the two phases [of generation and completion] which are based on the two truths, the four awakenings, and so forth, are expounded in relation to the outer, inner, and alternative levels. As is said:

As for the outer, likewise the inner;  
As for the inner, likewise the alternative.

To explain, with the exception of standard terminologies, every word is expounded extensively in terms of the three levels (outer, inner, and alternative), or concisely in terms of the two meanings (provisional and definitive), as is done in the *Commentaries by Bodhisattvas*.<sup>47</sup>

In short, to expound a particular tantra, one must be knowledgeable of the content of many tantras and possess the elements of the teaching methods of individual tantras and the instructions of masters. In a way appropriate to the intellect of the student, one must introduce the pith meaning and teach the tantra based on the four reliances.<sup>48</sup> The detailed explanation [of how to teach tantra] is to be learned from a master's instructions in the

context of the expositions of individual tantras. Accordingly, Vajragarbha's *Commentary [Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra]* states:<sup>49</sup>

Understanding of *Chakrasamvara* and *Chatuhpita* should be derived  
from the *Hevajra Tantra*,  
Understanding of *Hevajra* and the *Concise Chakrasamvara*, from  
*Chatuhpita*,  
And understanding of their definitive meanings, from the *Supreme  
Primordial Buddha (Kalachakra)* and the *Great Chakrasamvara*.

Those who aspire to the path should always understand  
All tantras such as those just mentioned  
Through brief and extensive presentations of other tantras  
As well as through their commentaries.<sup>50</sup>

### THE SPECIAL EXPOSITION METHOD IN THE ESOTERIC INSTRUCTIONS SYSTEM [iii]

**In the esoteric instructions system, tantras are taught in terms  
of the three continuums.**

**A protective circle, food offering, offering to the teacher, and  
meditation modelled on early events are performed.**

**The eleven faults of the three doors are eliminated by  
students.**

**Those who expound and listen to the tantras undistractedly and  
endowed with the ornament of speech**

**Will be especially watched over by all awareness-holders, it is  
taught.**

At the present time, the system widely known for the expositions of the *Chakrasamvara*, *Hevajra*, and other tantras, and which represents, in particular, the meaning of the *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra*, is that of holders of the esoteric instructions of Naropa and his followers, whereby all tantras are expounded in terms of the three continuums.

Expositions in terms of the causal continuum include teachings on the way in which the intrinsically pure nature, or state of perfect peace, exists in all sentient beings; and descriptions of [the vajra body] (possessor of this nature) with a detailed breakdown into thirty-six constituents (aggregates,

elements, and sense fields); or, concisely stated, teachings on the way in which body, speech, and mind exist.

Expositions in terms of the method continuum include teachings on the path that effects ripening [of the student], that of the initiation, and the path that effects liberation, the way of cultivating the two phases [of generation and completion] and their branches.

Expositions in terms of the resultant continuum include teachings on the actualization of the dimensions of awakening and pristine awarenesses, beginning with the conferral of initiation to ripen that which abides as the cause, followed by the cultivation of the two phases which develop contemplation [in the state] of realization and thereby the stage of attainment.

Persons who listen to [teachings on] tantras [expounded] in the ways set forth [above] must first have received initiation in the appropriate manner and have assumed the vows. When an exposition is being given, a protective circle<sup>51</sup> is first imagined, and an offering of food to the sky-farers and other [beings] is made. The environment and inhabitants are viewed as the mandala [of the deity], and an offering such as gold is made to the teacher. Modelled on early events of [Buddha's] teaching [of tantra], the master is imagined as the lord of the mandala, and the student, as the requester of the tantra, and so forth, by means of contemplation carried out by both student and teacher.

Students must eliminate the faults of body, speech, and mind, or eleven failings: physical unfitness (sleepiness, and so on), playing, joking, angry confrontation, babble, involvement in evaluations and deductions due to strong inclination towards sophism, lacking esoteric instructions, having false instructions, or having received them from an unripened [uninitiated] individual, harboring a competitive attitude, and a desire for material gain.

Those who expound and listen to the tantras in the ways described, with undistracted minds and endowed with the ornaments of speech, reap measureless benefits, both temporary and lasting. They gain the special attention of the sixth family<sup>52</sup> [Vajradhara] and the Lord of Secrets [Vajrapani], and others, and are cared for by them, as well as being protected and nurtured as cherished siblings or children by all the awareness-holders and their attendant oath-bound sky-farers.



# 17. THE WAYS OF THE ANCIENT TRADITION

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- II. The Ancient Tradition of Secret Mantra
  - A. Preamble
  - B. Extensive Discussion of the Tradition
    - 1. The Successive Grades of the Ways
      - a. Overview of the Different Ways
      - b. The Meaning Epitomized in the Three Ways
        - i. The Meaning Epitomized
        - ii. Defining the Ground, Path, and Result
      - c. The Individual Systems of the Nine Ways
        - i. The Names of the First Six Ways
        - ii. The Three Yogas [Mahayoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga]
          - aa. Overview

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[This chapter begins] the presentation of part two, the ancient tradition of secret mantra. A preamble is followed by an extensive discussion.

## **PREAMBLE [A]**

**[Next is presented] the extraordinary ancient translation tradition of the indestructible way:**

The ancient translation tradition of the indestructible way of secret mantra<sup>1</sup> is very distinctive in terms of its extraordinary system and language and will therefore be explained as a separate topic.

**EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF THE TRADITION [B]**

This section has three parts: presentation of the successive grades of the ways [to realization]; the extent of the scriptures; and the guidelines concerning methods of expounding the tantras.

**THE SUCCESSIVE GRADES OF THE WAYS [1]**

This is treated in three parts: an overview of the different ways; the meaning epitomized in the three ways; and an extensive explanation of the individual systems of the nine ways.

**OVERVIEW OF THE DIFFERENT WAYS [a]**

**This system is said to comprise four collections from the perspective of overcoming emotional afflictions  
And nine ways to realization according to different faculties.**

[Vimalamitra's] *Great Perfection Endowed with Conch Letters* states:<sup>2</sup>

Of the different collections of precious teachings, [mantra belongs to] the phenomenology collection.

Thus, the master Vimalamitra and others assert that of the two aspects of the phenomenology collection, outer and inner, mantra [belongs to] inner phenomenology. [However,] the *Mode of Transcendent Wisdom in One Hundred and Fifty Stanzas* states:<sup>3</sup>

The eighteen sets of tantras constitute the eighteen major sets of discourses (sutras).

The master Shantigarbha<sup>4</sup> and others reflect similar viewpoints in statements such as this:

Since it reveals profound topics in a succinct form, [it belongs to] the collection of discourses.

Thus, there seem to be different assertions on the place of secret mantra [within the Buddha's teachings]. However, certain masters consider what is

referred to as the “awareness-holders’ collection of teachings” as a separate collection: the [Indian] master Aryadeva, the Tibetan scholar Rok Dershek Chenpo, the omniscient Drimé Özer (Longchenpa), and the Lord of Dharma Terdak Lingpa<sup>5</sup> all maintain that, in general, this constitutes a fourth [collection of teachings]. The *Majestic Creative Energy of the Universe* states:<sup>6</sup>

The 21,000 teachings of the discipline collection  
Were delivered in order to overcome desire.  
The 21,000 teachings of the discourses collection  
Were delivered in order to overcome aversion.  
The 21,000 teachings of the phenomenology collection  
Were delivered in order to overcome delusion.  
The 21,000 teachings of the fourth collection  
Were delivered in order to overcome all of these.  
In short, although 84,000 teachings were delivered,  
All were intended to overcome afflictive emotions.

Moreover, the *Array of Qualities Tantra* states:<sup>7</sup>

The three outer collections of teachings  
Were taught as the particular remedies  
For desire, aversion, and delusion, respectively.  
The secret mantra, which equals the unsurpassable,  
Was taught as the remedy for all afflictions.

According to what is said in the general scriptures of the Buddha’s words, the ways are not considered to be limited to one specific number. This is so because the Buddha’s compassion reveals whatever is appropriate for those to be guided, in accordance with their levels of intelligence. The *[Transcendent Wisdom] Extensive [Scripture]* states:

The unsurpassable and inconceivable ways that have been taught  
Are none other than what manifests to the individual’s mind.

The *Descent to Lanka [Discourse]* states:<sup>8</sup>

In order to guide all sentient beings  
I have explained many different ways.  
It is not a case of “this is the way.”

The different stages may also be considered collectively. For example, the *White Lotus of the Sacred Doctrine* states:

There is one way, not three ways.

This kind of statement [of the Buddha] is referring to the result [of the way]; from that perspective, ultimately, there is only one way. Nevertheless, two ways are differentiated, that of the lesser way and the greater way; or, alternatively, the causal way [sutra] and resultant way [tantra]. There are three ways [when differentiated into] the ways of the proclaimers, solitary sages, and bodhisattvas; or, alternatively, the way [of sutra] that leads away from the source of suffering; the way [of outer tantra] [that resembles] Vedic austerity; and the way [of inner tantra] of the dominating method.<sup>9</sup> There are four [when differentiated into] the three causal ways<sup>10</sup> and the resultant way. Moreover, *Descent to Lanka* states:<sup>11</sup>

As long as mind continues,  
There is no end to spiritual ways.  
When the mind has been transformed  
There is neither a traveller nor a way.<sup>12</sup>

This passage points out that as long as there are various levels of conceptual mind, the ways [to realization] will be without end and are therefore inconceivable. It goes so far as to say that a so-called “way” with paths to travel, traveller of those paths, and so on, does not exist except as meanings attributed by the conceptual mind.

Nonetheless, the *General Scripture [that Unifies the Knowledge of All Buddhas]* states:<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, Lord of Lanka,  
The definitive and ultimate way  
Is taught in three precise divisions:  
The way that leads one from the source of suffering,  
[That resembles] Vedic austerity, and that of the dominating method.

Each of these three is subdivided into three sets: the three sets of the way of characteristics [of the proclaimer, solitary sage, and bodhisattva];<sup>14</sup> the three sets of outer tantras [action, ubhaya or conduct,<sup>15</sup> and yoga]; and the three sets of inner tantras [mahayoga, anuyoga, and atiyoga]. This

ninefold set of successive grades of ways is very well known. Thus, [this system] is said to comprise four collections from the perspective of the overcoming of specific emotional afflictions, or nine ways to accommodate three [levels of] faculties, superior, average, and inferior, each of which has three levels.

### THE MEANING EPITOMIZED IN THE THREE WAYS [b]

This discussion has two parts: the meaning epitomized [in the three ways]; and defining the ground, path, and result.

#### THE MEANING EPITOMIZED [i]

**All are epitomized in the three ways: the ground (the meaning to be explained);  
The path (which presents the explanation); and the result (that which transcends explanation).**

As to how the collection of teachings and the ways are epitomized, the *Majestic Creative Energy of the Universe* states:<sup>16</sup>

Listen, Great Being,  
Now I will explain my nature:<sup>17</sup>  
Its existence is not other than the one.  
Its arising occurs in the nine ways.  
Its union is unified in great perfection.<sup>18</sup>

Accordingly, everything is epitomized in these three ways: the way of the ground (the meaning to be explained); the way of the path (which presents the explanation); and the way of the result (that which transcends explanation).

#### DEFINING THE GROUND, PATH, AND RESULT [ii]

**The ground comprises essence, nature, and energy;  
The supreme path, the proclaimer's way up to anu;  
The result, supreme pristine awareness, ati.**

The way of the ground denotes the causal continuum or the ground that is to be realized. The ground is referred to by various expressions: in the

causal way, it is called the “ground-of-all pristine awareness”; in kriya (action) tantra, “essential reality of self”;<sup>19</sup> in ubhaya and yoga tantras, “the signless, ultimate dimension, the potentiality of which is viewed relatively as the deities of the vajradhatu mandala”; in mahayoga, “the great dimension of reality of the superior indivisibility of the two truths”; in anuyoga, “the mandala of original pure and perfect mind, the offspring [of great bliss]<sup>20</sup> which is the indivisibility of the ultimate dimension and pristine awareness”; and in atiyoga, “essence,” “nature,” and “compassionate energy.”<sup>21</sup>

In whatever terms it is defined, the ground is explained precisely as that which is present as the nature of the indestructible sphere, the reality dimension of awakening, or original pure and perfect mind itself, in the midst of the refined essences of the five [elements] (supports for the causal continuum) in the center of the channel-wheel of phenomena at the heart of all embodied beings. Even the pairs of the six refined essences (of the five elements, plus mind) are essentially identical [in the ground]. Thus, the ground primordially abides as the nature of the three indestructible vajras, which represent the extremely subtle three doors [of body, speech, and mind], utterly immutable.

The ground being designated as a “way” is [a case of] referring to a basis [i.e., the ground] with the name of that which relies on that basis [i.e., the way]. [Buddhaguhya’s] *Sequence of the Path* states:

The way of the ground is presented first.

Although the way of gods and humans is said to be the ground or precondition for all ways, in this context, the ground is considered to be as just stated above.

The supreme way of the path (which presents the explanation) includes everything from the way of the proclaimers up to anuyoga. These ways are correlated with the days of the lunar calendar, from the third to the fourteenth [of the waxing moon], respectively.

The way of the result is the supreme pristine awareness of natural luminous clarity which transcends explanation and thought, cause and effect, commitment and effort. This is the final result to which all other ways lead: atiyoga itself.

### THE INDIVIDUAL SYSTEMS OF THE NINE WAYS [c]

This section has two parts: a statement of the names for the first six ways; and an extensive discussion of the three yogas [mahayoga, anuyoga, and atiyoga].

**THE NAMES OF THE FIRST SIX WAYS [i]**

**The ways of proclaimers, solitary sages, and bodhisattvas  
constitute the way of liberation from the source of suffering;  
And kriya, ubhaya, and yoga, the way resembling Vedic  
austerity. These are essentially identical  
To the ways described in the common explanation, from which  
knowledge of these should be gained.**

The first [three] of the nine grades of ways are the three sets of teachings with specific characteristics [the way of characteristics]: the way of proclaimers, that of solitary sages, and that of bodhisattvas. These guide one toward liberation by means of relinquishing karmic actions and emotional afflictions which are the source or cause [of suffering], and are therefore known as the way of liberation from the source of suffering.

[The second three of the nine are] the three sets that constitute the outer tantras: kriya (action), ubhaya (conduct) or “tantra of both,” and yoga (union) tantra. In these yogas, the practitioner must engage in ritual practices such as ablution and strict cleanliness resembling the customs of Brahmin proponents of the Vedas. Hence, these three tantras are known as the way [resembling] Vedic austerity.

The presentation of those six is essentially identical to the way explained above in the context of the new schools of mantra. Thus, one should gain knowledge of them from the common explanation given above.

**THE THREE YOGAS [MAHAYOGA, ANUYOGA, AND ATIYOGA] [ii]**

This has two parts: an overview; and an extensive discussion.

**OVERVIEW [aa]**

**The tantra, elucidation, and esoteric instructions systems  
constitute the way of the dominating method.  
These are known as the three sets of generation, completion,  
and great perfection.**

The three [inner] yogas are the tantra [system of] mahayoga, the elucidation [system] of anuyoga, and the esoteric instructions [system of] atiyoga.<sup>22</sup> These yogas conclusively establish the knowledge that everything animate

and inanimate, the form manifestation of the dimensions of awakening and pristine awarenesses, mind nature, is the indivisibility of the two superior truths,<sup>23</sup> beyond any [specific] way of conduct. The yogas are therefore the skillful methods whereby all phenomena are “dominated” within the state of total sameness and so are spoken of by the general designation of the “way of the dominating method.” These three yogas are also known as the three sets, generation, completion, and the great perfection, respectively.

As to the special features of those three, Lhajé Zurchungpa<sup>24</sup> distinguishes them based on their views. Mahayoga is distinctive in its understanding that all phenomena are the magical display of the indivisibility of appearance and emptiness, mind's nature. Anuyoga is distinctive in its understanding that all phenomena are the creative energy of the nonduality of the ultimate dimension [of phenomena] and pristine awareness, mind's nature. Atiyoga is distinctive in its understanding that all phenomena are the very manifestation of primordial, naturally present, pristine awareness, which is without origin or cessation, mind's nature. Longchenpa's [*Great Chariot*] states:

Mahayoga, the father tantra, the nature of method [related to] appearance, [is taught] to benefit those whose strongest emotional affliction is aversion and who are subject to excessive discursiveness.

Anuyoga, the mother tantra, the wisdom of the completion phase [related to] the essential reality of emptiness, [is taught] to benefit those whose strongest emotional affliction is desire and who delight in stillness of mind.

Atiyoga, the nature of nonduality, [is taught] to benefit those whose strongest emotional affliction is delusion and who are tarnished by [attachment to] effort.<sup>25</sup> The *Great Array* states:<sup>26</sup>

The generation phase is for minds elevated [with many concepts];

The completion phase, for minds with attachment [to the experience of bliss];

And the great perfection, for the most secret and supreme.

Thus, the yogas are described in those terms. Furthermore, Longchenpa's *Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind* states:

Mahayoga emphasizes winds and the methods of the generation phase.

Anuyoga emphasizes the constituent [of bliss] and the wisdom of the completion phase;

Atiyoga emphasizes pristine awareness from which nothing is separate.



## 18. MAHAYOGA

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- bb. An Extensive Discussion of the Three Yogas [II.B.1.c.ii.bb]
  - 1' The Mahayoga System
    - a' The Essence of Mahayoga
    - b' The Meaning of the Name *Mahayoga*
    - c' Entrance to Mahayoga
      - i' Entrance by Initiation
      - ii' Entrance by Application
    - d' The View of Mahayoga
      - i' The Four Understandings
      - ii' The Three Purities
      - iii' The Four Samenesses
      - iv' The Total State of Being
    - e' Meditation in Mahayoga
      - i' The Sadhana [Tradition]
      - ii' The Tantra [Tradition]
        - aa' The Path of Method
        - bb' The Path of Liberation
    - f' Conduct in Mahayoga
    - g' Result of Mahayoga

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[This chapter begins] the extensive discussion of the three yogas (mahayoga, anuyoga, and atiyoga), which will be presented in five parts: the tantra system of mahayoga; the elucidation system of anuyoga; the esoteric instructions system of atiyoga; their pledges; and their divisions. What follows now is the first of those five parts: the tantra system of mahayoga.

## THE MAHAYOGA SYSTEM [1']

Mahayoga is presented in seven parts: essence, meaning of the name, entrance, view, meditation, conduct, and result.

### THE ESSENCE OF MAHAYOGA [a']

**The essence of mahayoga is the conjoining of understanding and experience  
Of the indivisibility of the superior truths by relying principally on method.**

The essence of the way of mahayoga is [a system whose] nature is the attainment of liberation by means of conjoining understanding and experience of the indivisibility of the [two] superior truths, relying principally on method, the phase of generation.

### THE MEANING OF THE NAME *MAHAYOGA* [b']

**Mahayoga means the great training.**

The [Sanskrit] term *mahayoga* is [rendered in Tibetan as] *rnal 'byor chen po* (great yoga or training) because the mind is trained in the meaning of the nonduality [of the two truths] and therefore the system is far superior to the [three] outer yogas.<sup>1</sup>

### THE ENTRANCE TO MAHAYOGA [c']

This section has two parts: entrance by initiation; and entrance by application.

#### ENTRANCE BY INITIATION [i']

**The entrance initiations of benefit, ability, and profundity  
effect ripening.**

The entrance to mahayoga is the conferral of initiation for which the setting is the mandala. Generally, seven mandalas are explained, as stated in the *Magical Manifestation*.

In this context, mandala comprises the mandala of the nature,  
 The mandala of reflected images, the superior mandala of reflected  
 images,  
 The contemplation mandala, the superior contemplation mandala,  
 The bodhichitta mandala, and the supreme assembly mandala.

The first of these, the mandala of the nature, is divided into the mandala of the nature and the spontaneously perfect mandala of the nature. Thus, there are the eight mandalas, explained as follows:

First, the fundamental nature of all cyclic existence and perfect peace, the ultimate dimension of reality which is not in the least subject to conceptual formulations, is called the mandala of the nature.

Second, the nature of pristine awareness endowed with two purities,<sup>2</sup> being spontaneously perfect as the essential cause of the sevenfold riches<sup>3</sup> and thereby effecting the welfare of sentient beings, is called the spontaneously perfect mandala of the nature.

Third, the four continents and Mount Meru existing as the reflection of the five pristine awarenesses is called the mandala of reflected images.

Fourth, [the four continents and Mount Meru] depicted in colored powders, on painted cloth, or in three-dimensional construction is called the superior mandala of reflected images. Being constructed by human effort, it is referred to as “superior.”

Fifth, the yogin’s contemplation that is devoid of conceptual constructs is called the mandala of contemplation.

Sixth, the yogin’s meditation on the mandala circle in the phase of generation is called the mandala of superior contemplation. Being imaginatively created, it is referred to as the “superior contemplation mandala.”

Seventh, the bodhichitta, or *kunda* [semen], is called the mandala of bodhichitta.

Eighth, a gathering of any number of yogins and yoginis engaged in practice is called the mandala of the assembly.

Specifically, the actual mandalas used to confer initiation are the four mandalas that correspond to the particular level [of recipient], and the [four] mandalas [of the four initiations] suited to effect the ripening of the majority of individuals in present times [the mandalas of colored powders, the *bhaga*, and relative and ultimate bodhichitta]. The former four are the mandala of the nature of pristine awareness; the superior reflected images of contemplation mandala, also called the emanated mandala; the mandala of the experience of total presence;<sup>4</sup> and the superior reflected images mandala.<sup>5</sup>

The first three of these are explained in the *Vajra of Magical Manifestation*<sup>6</sup> as mandalas used in cases of conferral of a particular initiation by a master who is a perfect buddha, one who dwells on the final path,<sup>7</sup> and one who dwells on the path of meditation or path of seeing, respectively. The students receiving the initiation would be, respectively, bodhisattvas on the final stage of awakening; those who have developed to perfection the qualities associated with the paths of seeing and meditation; and the paths of accumulation and preparation. Hence, these mandalas are the spheres of experience of exalted individuals.

The fourth is conferral of initiation into the superior reflected images mandala, performed by a qualified master who has gained at least a similitude of stability in contemplation, and conferred on students of good fortune. Depending on the type of student, there is an appropriate conferral for which a mandala of colored powders is used to initiate a student of lesser fortune; one painted on cloth, to initiate one of middling fortune; and a mandala that is no more than a tiny referent, such as a small heap [of precious stones or flowers or the deity's symbol], to initiate one of supreme fortune. Accordingly, the *Gathering of the Joyful Ones of the Eight Transmitted Precepts Root Initiation Ritual* says:

As to conferral of initiation in a particular mandala,  
Those said to be the best, average, or least adept  
Are given initiation in the three mandalas, respectively,  
Of flowers, the painted, and the colored powders.

The mandalas used to confer the profound initiations are the same as those for the three high initiations as explained above [in the section on mandala in the new tradition].<sup>8</sup>

In accordance with the *Net of Magical Manifestation*, the actual initiations are as stated in the *[Secret] Essence*:<sup>9</sup>

Knowing that he is endowed with faith and energy, and [capable  
of] deliberate behavior,  
Confer on him the initiations that bring benefit, and after that  
Confer in sequence the initiations that impart ability.

Accordingly, the ten outer initiations that bring benefit (diadem, head ornament, [the chaplet, armor, victory banner, seals, parasol, vase, food and drink, and five essences]) are conferred to ripen persons who have faith.<sup>10</sup>

The five initiations that impart ability are conferred to ripen persons who have energy. The initiation [of Ratnasambhava] concerning listening and the initiation [of Akshobhya] concerning meditation impart the ability to accomplish one's own welfare. The initiation [of Amitabha] concerning teaching and the initiation [of Amoghasiddhi] concerning awakened activity impart the ability to accomplish others' welfare. The initiation [of the five buddha families] concerning the infinite teachings of the vajra king imparts the ability to accomplish both the welfare of oneself and that of others.<sup>11</sup>

The three initiations of profundity are conferred to ripen persons of three [types]: those [capable of] the deliberate behavior of tantric conduct, the deliberate behavior of awareness, and the deliberate behavior of sameness.<sup>12</sup>

According to the general transmitted teachings [such as] *Gathering of the Joyful Ones*, there are four initiations in the sadhana tradition. The *Commentary on the Pure Scripture* states:<sup>13</sup>

The outer, inner, and secret initiations, and the initiation  
That generally encompasses all the ways and their views:  
Confer these initiations in sequence and in their entirety.

Thus, the four are the outer, inner, and secret initiations, and the initiation of essential reality. The outer initiation is conferred so that students who are dominated by aversion may use [the practice of] releasing [beings]<sup>14</sup> as the path. Conferral of this initiation is by means of one hundred and eight outer and inner ritual objects, such as the vase.

The inner initiation is conferred so that those students who are dominated by pride may use the deity as the path. Conferral of this initiation is by means of the physical body.

The secret initiation is conferred so that those students who are dominated by desire may use sexual union as the path. Conferral is by means of the aid of a consort.

The initiation of essential reality is conferred so that those students who are dominated by delusion may use discursive thought as the path. Conferral is by means of the mind.

In the special transmitted teachings of the sadhana practices such as that of Vajrakila, four initiations are conferred as in the general transmitted teachings common to the highest yoga tantra. Moreover, although within the especially profound tradition of accomplished masters there are many con-

ferrals of initiation, in terms of general categories, all initiations of the highest [tantra] are contained within the four initiations just mentioned.

### ENTRANCE BY APPLICATION [ii']

**One enters by way of three contemplations: great emptiness,  
Illusory compassion, and coarse and subtle symbols.**

One enters the practice of mahayoga by way of three contemplations: the contemplation of the yoga of great emptiness (wisdom); the contemplation of illusory compassion (method); and the contemplation of coarse and subtle symbols.<sup>15</sup> Mahayoga is entered in this way because it is a path in which the phase of generation is the principal teaching. The tantra *Self-Arising [State of Total Presence]*<sup>16</sup> states:

Three types of contemplation serve as its entrance.

### THE VIEW OF MAHAYOGA [d']

**The view of the indivisibility of the two truths beyond the  
sphere of experience  
Is conclusively established through the axioms of the four  
understandings,  
Three purities, four samenesses, and the total state of being.**

In a general enumeration of the views associated with the stages of the path (wherein the views are applied), the great pioneer Buddhaghya speaks of nine: one, the view of the wisdom of ascertainment of the indivisibility of the two truths;<sup>17</sup> two, the view of reality, that of great emptiness;<sup>18</sup> three, the view of all-illuminating illusory compassion;<sup>19</sup> four, the view of the single seal, the union of appearance and emptiness;<sup>20</sup> five, the view of the elaborate seal, the realization of the myriad of thoughts as the mandala;<sup>21</sup> six, the view on the path of preparation of everything-in-one-group practice,<sup>22</sup> which uses objects of desire as the path; seven, the view on the path of seeing of the power of body and life span,<sup>23</sup> which is mastery of unconditioned total presence; eight, the view on the path of meditation of the great seal, in which the mind never strays from the sameness of the true nature of things; nine, the view on the final path of spontaneous perfection, the knowledge that is pristine awareness devoid of any object. Additionally, Buddhaghya speaks of

nine types of views on the meaning of tantra as the object of practice:<sup>24</sup> the view of the pledges not to be transgressed, the view of the conduct in which there is nothing to be practiced or avoided, and the other [seven]. [These views are set forth] because all of those topics of tantra are to be contemplated having been sealed with the view of the indivisibility of the two truths.

What follows now is a detailed explanation of the meaning of the view as the characteristic of knowledge which is the [primary] cause [of awakening],<sup>25</sup> also known as the view of the wisdom of ascertainment, or the view of essential reality (among the ten topics [of the tantras]):<sup>26</sup>

The superior ultimate truth is posited as the ineffable [state of] total presence, spontaneously perfect as the essential cause of manifestation. The creative energy of that presence—the myriad of thoughts—which manifests in and of itself as the mandala of awakened dimensions and pristine awarenesses is posited to be the superior relative truth.<sup>27</sup> Neither one of these two truths represents solely the side of appearance or the side of emptiness because the truths manifest as a total sameness, in essence indivisible.<sup>28</sup>

Although the two truths are designated as “indivisible,” this indivisibility is not within the sphere of experience because it transcends the objects of the thoughts and expressions that [try to] capture it. The description “superior” is applied because the manner of realizing the two truths far surpasses that of the way of characteristics.

The axioms used to conclusively establish the indivisibility of the two truths are not ones based on sophism and fallacious reasonings but are instead the extraordinary four great [sets of] axioms:<sup>29</sup> the axioms of the four understandings, the three purities, the four samenesses, and the total state of being.

### **THE FOUR UNDERSTANDINGS [i']**

The axioms of the four understandings are the means by which all phenomena are conclusively established as the indivisibility of the [two] truths. What is taken as the basis for evaluation [in the first axiom] is adherence on the part of the dualistic mind which apprehends as separate the appearances of cyclic life and perfect peace. The means of evaluation is that of the axiom of the identical cause through which all phenomena are established as being of an unborn nature.

Likewise, adherence to the conclusion established from each of the previous axioms is then taken as the basis of evaluation<sup>30</sup> for the next axiom.

Evaluations by means of the axioms of the mode of letters, the empowering energy, and the direct cognizance establish conclusions in the following sequence: [on the basis of the conclusion that] all phenomena are of an unborn nature, the axiom of the mode of letters establishes [the radiance of the unborn nature] as unimpeded expressive energy;<sup>31</sup> the axiom of the empowering energy establishes that [the unborn nature and the unimpeded expressive energy] are in essence indivisible; and the axiom of direct cognizance establishes that such reality transcends the intellect.

As to the ways these are evaluated, the subject of the first axiom is all phenomena included within cyclic existence and perfect peace. All share an identical cause<sup>32</sup> in being mind nature, the unborn dimension of naturally present pristine awareness. [This is so] because the phenomena of cyclic existence and perfect peace seem to appear separately depending on whether or not they are realized to be of an identical nature, although they have no separate existence whatsoever. Thus is stated the axiom of the identical cause.

The subject of the second axiom is the radiance of the unborn nature of mind. The unimpeded expressive energy of such radiance manifests in and by itself as the mandalas of the dimensions of awakening and pristine awarenesses. [That this is so is] understood through the example of the [meaning represented by] the letter *a*, which itself cannot be pointed out, but which manifests as many letters that point to it. Thus is stated the axiom of the mode of letters.<sup>33</sup>

The subject of the third axiom is both the unborn nature [of mind] and the unimpeded expressive energy. Although referred to with different words, when the two are understood to be indivisible, there spontaneously arises the empowering energy of understanding their true nature as an indivisible essence. [This is so] because the superior ultimate truth is spontaneously perfect as the essential cause of the seven riches, and when its [illusory] appearances cease, the environment and its inhabitants naturally manifest as the mandalas of the dimensions of awakening and pristine awarenesses. Thus is stated the axiom of the empowering energy.<sup>34</sup>

The subject of the fourth axiom is the indivisibility of the [two] truths [unborn nature and unimpeded expressive energy]. Such indivisibility transcends mind's sphere of experience. This is so because, through direct cognizance of total presence, the indivisibility is understood to be intrinsic clarity devoid of any object, inexpressible and inconceivable. Thus is stated the axiom of direct cognizance.<sup>35</sup>

**THE THREE PURITIES [ii']**

The axiom of the three purities is taught [in the *Secret Essence Tantra*]:<sup>36</sup>

The environment, its inhabitants, and mental continuums are understood to be pure.

The subject of this axiom is outer and inner phenomena which appear in this way [as environment, inhabitants, and their mental continuums]. All are, and have always been, in a state of enlightenment as the mandalas of the dimensions of awakening and pristine awarenesses. [This is so] because they are endowed with three purities. That is because the five elemental properties of the environmental world are pure in being the five female consorts [of the buddhas]; the five aggregates of the inhabitants are pure in being the five male buddhas; and the mental continuums, the eightfold group of consciousnesses, are pure in being the five pristine awarenesses.<sup>37</sup>

**THE FOUR SAMENESSES [iii']**

The axiom of sameness is taught [in the *Secret Essence Tantra*]:<sup>38</sup>

By virtue of two samenesses and two superior samenesses  
[All things are] the mandala of the realm of Samantabhadra.

The subject is phenomena appearing in the way they do. All are, from the very beginning, in a state of enlightenment as the dimension of reality. [This is so] because they are endowed with the four samenesses.

Of the four, two are common, and two, superior. The first of the two common samenesses [is explained in this way]: A person appearing as a person is an appearance that is conventionally real. A pile of stones appearing to be a person is an appearance that is conventionally unreal. Both the conventionally real and the conventionally unreal are the same in being appearances that are illusions.

The second common sameness [is explained as follows:] To overcome only one aspect of conceptual constructs, such as to understand that a sprout does not arise from [a cause that is of the same nature as] itself, is a partial ultimate truth.<sup>39</sup> To overcome all conceptual constructed limits, such as to overcome the constructs of the four limits ([understanding] that a sprout does not arise from itself, from another, [from both, or from neither])<sup>40</sup> is

the all-encompassing ultimate truth. Both the partial and the all-encompassing ultimate truths are the same in being unborn. Those are the two common samenesses.

The first of the two superior samenesses is as follows: A thing that appears and can perform a function is conventionally real. A thing that appears but cannot perform a function is conventionally unreal. Both the conventionally real and conventionally unreal are conditioned karmic appearances and therefore conventionally unreal. Thus, both are the same in being the mandalas of the dimensions of awakening and pristine awarenesses.

As to the second superior sameness, emptiness [posited] as absolute negation, that is, as the emptiness of self-nature of all phenomena, is the partial ultimate truth. Emptiness as an affirmative negation that is the union of the ultimate dimension of phenomena and pristine awareness, the nature of mind existing as nothing whatsoever, is the all-encompassing ultimate truth. Both the partial and the all-encompassing ultimate truths are the same in being spontaneously perfect as the essential cause of the ultimate seven riches. Thus is stated the axiom of the four samenesses.

### THE TOTAL STATE OF BEING [iv']

The axiom of the total state of being<sup>41</sup> is taught [in the *Secret Essence Tantra*]:<sup>42</sup>

Naturally present pristine awareness manifests with no fixed abode.

The subject of the axiom is all phenomena of cyclic existence and perfect peace. Phenomena seem to appear as a multitude [of things], but in actuality, this is not the case. This is so because, from the very beginning, everything abides as the total state of being, that of great naturally present pristine awareness alone, the unborn nature of mind. Thus, the *Array [of the Path of the Net of Magical Manifestation]* states:<sup>43</sup>

All this appearance is consciousness alone  
 Devoid of inherent self-nature: naturally present  
 Pristine awareness, manifesting with no fixed abode.

Thus, the view of mahayoga, established conclusively by those axioms, is the understanding of uncontrived reality, the indivisibility of the [two] superior truths.

The riches referred to in the expression “seven riches” means riches like those found in a treasure of inexhaustible wealth. The seven consist of the three [ultimates], the ultimate of dimensions, the ultimate of pristine awarenesses, and the ultimate of results, the last comprising [five] subparts, the five inexhaustible ornaments of the body, speech, mind, qualities, and activity of the awakened state. The first, the ultimate of dimensions, exists as the emptiness aspect; the second, the ultimate of pristine awarenesses, as the clarity aspect; and the last, the ultimate of results, as the basis of emanations.

### MEDITATION IN MAHAYOGA [e']

There are two meditation [traditions]: sadhana and tantra.

### THE SADHANA [TRADITION] [i']

**For meditation in the sadhana tradition, eight systems of knowledge**

**Are taught: the four channel-wheels; three neighs of the horse; Eight syllables of *ru lu*; Pure Nectar; four piercings; Channels and winds; and observance of worship and propitiation.**

As for meditation in mahayoga, in the tradition that emphasizes sadhana practice, the eight [systems of] knowledge of the eight sets of sadhanas are taught.<sup>44</sup> As to their general meaning, at the time of the ground, the true nature of the eightfold group of consciousnesses is present as the essence of the nine vast spaces of pristine awareness.<sup>45</sup> At the time of the path, there is manifestation as the mudras, mantras, and contemplations of the eight major sadhanas. At the time of the result, there is full awakening to essential reality, known as “Glorious Heruka.” The particular meanings of the eight sadhanas [are explained next]:

[First,] [the practices of] the knowledge of Manjushri [tantras of awakened body] are known as the “transformation of the life[-force] into pristine awareness” by means of the rotation of the four channel-wheels<sup>46</sup> at the four places [of the body]. It is stated:

All the infinite [practices] of Manjushri Yamantaka<sup>47</sup>  
Have been concentrated in a single one

By the great master Manjushrimitra  
 To be understood in the four channel-wheels:  
 The secret channel-wheel, contained in the mind,  
 The channel-wheel of existence, contained in the navel,  
 The cutting channel-wheel, contained in the hands,  
 And the channel-wheel of emanation, contained in the feet.  
 Thus, it should be understood that the total state of being  
 Is contained in the four channel-wheels.<sup>48</sup>

The first of the four channel-wheels encompasses everything in cyclic existence and perfect peace. The second derives from the true nature of the three realms of existence.<sup>49</sup> The third accomplishes the ten awakened activities through the ten symbolic mandalas [of Manjushri Yamantaka]. The ten are these:

Appeasing, enriching, dominating, killing, summoning,  
 Expelling, dividing, stupefying, maddening, and suppressing...

The fourth is the understanding that all things are manifestations created by mind. These four channel-wheels are also connected to the ground, the path, and the result.

[Second,] all [practices] of the knowledge of Padma, awakened speech,<sup>50</sup> are contained in the "three neighs of the horse."<sup>51</sup> It is stated:

All the sadhanas of Padma, awakened speech,  
 Are concentrated in the three neighs  
 Wherein is natural pristine awareness.

Primordial, naturally present pristine awareness [manifests] with divine pride [in the form] of the glorious Hayagriva and neighs three times. With the first neigh, all phenomena of cyclic existence and perfect peace are understood to be uncreated and yet spontaneously perfect. With the second neigh, the environment and its inhabitants are transformed into an ocean of meat, blood, and bones, to be enjoyed by *mamos*<sup>52</sup> and sky-farers. With the third neigh, all *mamos* and sky-farers are persuaded to obey commands and carry out duties entrusted to them.

[Third,] all [practices] of Vishuddha are contained in the knowledge of the "holding enlightenment in one's fist" [practice of] continuous contemplation. It is said:

The single realization of Vishuddha  
 Unifies all the great bliss of the buddhas.  
 Its deep yoga perfects the three dimensions:  
 All is the mandala of secret pristine awareness.

In the essence of the single sphere of the naturally present essence of enlightenment, the pristine awareness of the Great Glorious One<sup>53</sup> is already perfected as the totality of everything. Hence, one's body is visualized as the palatial residence of the charnel ground display, within which one's mind manifests as the pristine awareness circle of Shri Heruka. All mantras and deities are complete in the emanating and reconverging of the eight syllables of the *ru lu* [mantra], as is stated:

*Om* represents the ten blood-drinking males and females;<sup>54</sup>  
 The first *ru lu* represents the eight *gauris*;<sup>55</sup>  
 The second *ru lu*, the eight *simhas*;<sup>56</sup>  
 The *hum*, the four gate-guardians, [such as] Horse-Head;<sup>57</sup>  
*Bhyo*, the twenty-eight *ishvaris*;<sup>58</sup>  
 The second *hum*, the splendor gathered in the five dimensions;<sup>59</sup>  
 Everything included [in the mantra] from *om* to *hum*  
 Ripens into the fifty-eight blood-drinking *herukas*,<sup>60</sup>  
 But their natures, or essential beings,  
 Abide in the essence of the syllable *hum*.

[Fourth,] all [practices of] Mahottara<sup>61</sup> are contained in the knowledge of Pure Nectar, as explained by the scholar Jemala [Vimalamitra]:

All of the environment and its inhabitants, the outer and inner,  
 Is contained within the five types of nectars,  
 To be realized as the buddhas of the five families.<sup>62</sup>

That is to say, everything is conclusively established as the ground, path, and result of the [five] nectars, and the finality of knowledge is achieved on the basis of the three [factors of] act, agent, and object acted upon.

[Fifth,] all Kila [practices] are contained in the knowledge of the Piercing Kila.<sup>63</sup> [Padmasambhava] states:

To free evil beings of the three existences,  
 I, King Lotus-[Born,] Garland of Skulls,

Have taught Vajra Kila, Lord of Three Existences,<sup>64</sup>  
As epitomized in the four [kinds of] *kila*.

The four kinds of *kila* are the *kila* of pristine awareness which is total presence; the *kila* of supreme bodhichitta; the *kila* of boundless compassion; and the *kila* made of composite matter. These four strike and pierce the four “objects” [respectively, of ignorance, the unrealized condition, beings of the six realms, and enemies who encompass the ten areas], thereby actualizing the four results [the four dimensions of awakening].

[Sixth,] all *mamo* [practices] are contained in the channels, winds, and bodhichitta, which correspond to the site, action, and support, respectively. It is said:

All the *mamo* of existence are included  
In the channels, winds, and vital essence.

[The syllable] *ma* [in *mamo*] represents the ultimate dimension of phenomena; [the syllable] *mo*, the pristine awareness of total presence. Hence, everything that exists in the phenomenal [world] is perfect as [original] pure and perfect mind (bodhichitta), the inseparability of total presence and the ultimate dimension of phenomena.

[Seventh,] all [practices] of worship [of worldly deities] are contained in the three [aspects] of life: the original life, the life of the refined essence [of the five elements], and the additional life.<sup>65</sup>

[Eighth,] all [practices] of fierce mantra are contained in the three ways of observing [worship] and three ways of propitiation, which are [to relate to the deity] as master, as friend, or as servant.

Of those eight sadhanas, the first five are the five sadhanas of pristine awareness deities; the latter three, the three common sadhanas.

## THE TANTRA [TRADITION] [ii']

This section has two parts: the path of method; and the path of liberation.

### THE PATH OF METHOD [aa']

**The path of method in the tantra tradition involves the upper  
and lower doors  
Applied with the four branches of familiarization and attainment.**

There are two levels of meditation in the tantra tradition,<sup>66</sup> the path of method and the path of liberation. The first, the path of method, [leads to] the attainment of the result, liberation, through engaging in actions that [normally] bind one [to cyclic existence]. [This path] principally involves a method whose distinctive feature is the conduct of deliberate behavior which enables one to swiftly achieve the sublime result. Hence, if such deliberate behavior—for which the three poisons are not abandoned but are directly overpowered—is practiced by someone endowed with the certainty of the view, he or she not only is unfettered [by the poisons], but also swiftly attains the result of liberation. However, if one who is not so endowed were to practice this conduct, not only would liberation not be achieved but there would also be a great risk of falling into bad forms of life. Such a method is therefore very risky, likened to the use of the mercury *makshika* [used in alchemy to transform iron into gold].<sup>67</sup>

This path of method comprises two aspects, as stated [in the *Oceanic Magical Manifestation*]:<sup>68</sup>

There are esoteric instructions for the upper door and the lower door.

The former instruction concerns meditation done in a sequential way. It relies on the six channel-wheels of the upper door of one's own body.<sup>69</sup> Through applying the practice of the blazing [of the inner heat] and the dripping [of vital essence], one experiences the pristine awareness of great bliss as described in the *Explanatory Tantra of the Oceanic [Magical Manifestation]*.<sup>70</sup>

The latter instruction concerns a simultaneous approach. It relies on [the union of] the “space” [of the female] and “secret” [of the male] at the lower door of another's body [that of the consort]. Through application of the four-branched practice (familiarization, complete familiarization, attainment, and great attainment), in an instant one forcibly elicits the pristine awareness of bliss and emptiness, thereby perfecting the stages and the paths at the same time.<sup>71</sup> This path of method of simultaneity is explained in the *All-Surpassing Explanatory Tantra*.<sup>72</sup>

## THE PATH OF LIBERATION [bb']

**The path of liberation is endowed with three kinds of wisdom.  
Some achieve the result in a simultaneous way.**

**Those who proceed sequentially rely on the cause, the view of wisdom,  
And the condition, contemplation with application, which  
comprises devotion meditation and definitive perfection.**

The path of liberation emphasizes wisdom of three kinds,<sup>73</sup> through which certainty and understanding are gained. As a consequence, the fetters of one's mind are released by themselves and one becomes liberated in the vast space of one's true nature. Although this path does not possess the distinctive feature of swiftness characteristic of the path of method, the two paths do not differ in terms of arriving at the result at some point. Moreover, this path is almost free of risk, like the *kaustubha* gemstone [that separates gold from ore gradually].<sup>74</sup>

This path is differentiated according to the levels of faculties [of practitioners] into two, the simultaneous and the sequential. In the first, liberation is attained [simultaneous] with the time of initiation, as in the case of [King] Indrabhuti.<sup>75</sup> Concerning the second, the *Tantra of the Secret Essence* states:<sup>76</sup>

The retention of the characteristics of knowledge and application  
Constitutes the cause and condition that bring to maturation the result.  
Whoever is possessed of their power and potency becomes renowned  
Throughout the realm of the victorious awareness-holders.

That [sequential path] has three aspects: the cause, which is the view, the characteristic of knowledge; the condition, contemplation, the characteristic of application; and the result, [the state of] awareness-holder. The first has been described above. The second aspect, contemplation, comprises the two, devotion meditation and definitive perfection.<sup>77</sup> These methods, distinguished with respect to the stages of the meditative process,<sup>78</sup> will be presented [in subsequent sections of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*].

#### CONDUCT IN MAHAYOGA [f']

**Conduct in the path of method is deliberate behavior; and in the path of liberation, conscientiousness.**

Two forms of conduct serve as aids to meditation: the deliberate behavior<sup>79</sup> in the path of method; and the conduct of conscientiousness in the path of liberation. The latter, the conduct of conscientiousness, is of seven types: the conduct of faith and effort and the conduct that accords with wisdom; the conduct that accords with compassion; unilateral conduct [in focusing on one aspect of the path]; elaborate conduct; the conduct of tantric feasts [or offerings]; the conduct of miraculous acts; and simultaneous conduct.

### RESULT OF MAHAYOGA [g']

**These bring one to the result: the four kinds of awareness-holders.**

Through those meditations, one achieves the result of acceptance on the path, the four kinds of awareness-holder,<sup>80</sup> after which one actualizes the spontaneously perfect nature of the five dimensions of awakening. These topics will be discussed in later sections [of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*].<sup>81</sup>



## 19. ANUYOGA AND ATIYOGA

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- 2' The Anuyoga System [II.B.1.c.ii.bb.2']
  - a' The Essence of Anuyoga
  - b' The Meaning of the Name *Anuyoga*
  - c' Entrance to Anuyoga
    - i' Entrance by Initiation
    - ii' Entrance by Application
  - d' The View of Anuyoga
  - e' Meditation in Anuyoga
    - i' The Path of Method
    - ii' The Path of Liberation
  - f' Conduct in Anuyoga
  - g' The Result of Anuyoga
- 3' The Atiyoga System
  - a' The Essence of Atiyoga
  - b' The Meaning of the Name *Atiyoga*
  - c' Entrance to Atiyoga
    - i' Entrance by Initiation
    - ii' Entrance by Application
  - d' The View of Atiyoga
    - i' The General View of Atiyoga
    - ii' Views Specific to the Mind, Vast Space, and Esoteric Instructions Divisions
      - aa' The General Views of the Three Divisions
      - bb' Distinctive Views within Each Division
        - 1" Distinctions within the Division on Mind
        - 2" Distinctions within the Vast Space Division
        - 3" Distinctions within the Esoteric Instructions Division
  - e' Meditation in Atiyoga
  - f' Conduct in Atiyoga

- g' The Result of Atiyoga
  - 4' Pledges of the Three Yogas
  - 5' Divisions within the Three Yogas
- 

[This chapter continues the discussion of the three yogas, presenting] part two, the elucidation system of anuyoga; part three, the esoteric instructions system of atiyoga; part four, the pledges of the three yogas; and part five, divisions within the three yogas.

### THE ANUYOGA SYSTEM [2']

The elucidation system of anuyoga is presented in seven parts: essence, meaning of the name, entrance, view, meditation, conduct, and result.

### THE ESSENCE OF ANUYOGA [a']

**The essence of anuyoga is the conjoining of understanding and experience of the nonduality  
Of the ultimate dimension and pristine awareness, principally based on wisdom.**

The essence of anuyoga is [a system whose] nature is the attainment of freedom by means of conjoining understanding and experience of the nonduality of the ultimate dimension [of phenomena] and pristine awareness, relying principally on wisdom, the phase of completion.

### THE MEANING OF THE NAME ANUYOGA [b']

**As desire is of primary importance, it is called anuyoga.**

The [Sanskrit] term *anuyoga* is [rendered in Tibetan as] *rjes su rnal 'byor* (yoga of passion) as it principally reveals the path of passion related to wisdom.

### ENTRANCE TO ANUYOGA [c']

This has two parts: entrance by initiation; and entrance by application.

## ENTRANCE BY INITIATION [i']

**Its thirty-six initiations are condensed into four: outer, inner, attainment, and secret.**

The *All-Unifying [Pure Presence]* says:<sup>1</sup>

The outer initiation, inner initiation,  
Initiation of attainment, and secret initiation  
Are complete with ten, eleven, thirteen,  
And two aspects, respectively.

To explain, there are two procedures of conferral, one according to the tantra tradition and one according to the esoteric instructions tradition. In the first procedure, thirty-six initiations, complete in the “four rivers” of the outer, inner, attainment, and secret initiations, are conferred in the mandalas of the *Root Scripture*,<sup>2</sup> in accordance with what is explicitly taught in that tantra, on exceptional students who are naturally qualified and have an earnest interest in the profound meaning [of wisdom].

In the second procedure, eight hundred and thirty-one short ancillary initiations (derived from the thirty-six root initiations of the *[All-] Unifying [Pure Presence] Scripture* which encompasses all ways [to realization]) are conferred on ordinary students who are qualified by virtue of training and have an earnest interest in the vastness [of methods]. These initiations are conferred in accordance with the *List of Rituals That Illuminates Great Bliss*<sup>3</sup> in which the tradition of the entire *[All-Unifying Pure Presence] Scripture* is subdivided into individual ancillary mandalas.

Nowadays, masters have adopted the practice of incorporating into a single system the key elements of those two traditions, the tantras and the esoteric instructions, and conferring those initiations accordingly. Such a practice has the immediate advantage of being easy to perform, as well as achieving in the long run the special purpose of ensuring that neither system declines in favor of the other and that both are propagated together.

Both those traditions are alike in that they contain all four yogas<sup>4</sup> and all the initiations of the nine ways. The *Analysis of the Meaning of Initiation* states:<sup>5</sup>

Ten initiations confer the awakened lineage;  
And eleven initiations, the inner and secret meaning.  
Thirteen initiations are known as the great master;  
The two perfect the initiations of the nine ways.

Thus, this tradition of the entire [*All-Unifying Pure Presence*] *Scripture* does not represent a general [initiation] ritual compiled from rituals specific to each of the eight ways. Instead, this is a system particular to the elucidation [i.e., anuyoga] system in which one travels through the stages [of awakening] beginning with the first undetermined stage<sup>6</sup> up to and including the tenth stage. For this, one receives the tenfold initiation sequence (action and conduct tantras counted separately) starting with the initiation of [the way of] gods and humans up to the finality of the completion phase of the anuyoga system, which is [called] atiyoga.<sup>7</sup> This tenfold initiation sequence corresponds to that of the system of the nine ways when action and conduct are considered one and is therefore called the “initiation of the nine ways.”

These ways [to realization], which are supportive paths [of anuyoga's own path], incorporate elements similar to those of their individual paths. More than that, however, being essentially possessed of mantra's skillful means, they provide a swift path that gives rise to the various qualities that are similar to the kinds of relinquishments and attainments associated with these different paths.

#### ENTRANCE BY APPLICATION [ii']

**Entrance is through the union of the ultimate dimension and pristine awareness, in which there is perfection without generation.**

The entrance to this way [of anuyoga] is by way of the nonduality of the ultimate dimension [of phenomena] and pristine awareness. The *Majestic Creative Energy* says:<sup>8</sup>

Those who aspire to the level of indivisibility in anuyoga,  
Having entered the way of the ultimate dimension and pristine  
awareness...

How does one enter? Not through generation, but through the mode of perfection. The *Lock of the Heart* says:

The unborn ultimate dimension itself is pristine awareness;  
The pristine awareness of total presence is the ultimate dimension  
itself;

The great bliss of this nondual expressive energy  
 Is not entered gradually. Instead, what is encountered  
 In all the symbols of phenomenal existence  
 Is like the flash of a fish from water:<sup>9</sup> All that exists  
 In the entire universe is [instantly] experienced as total symbol.

### THE VIEW OF ANUYOGA [d']

**The view is that of primordial enlightenment in original pure  
 and perfect mind  
 Which is the indivisibility of the three kinds of mandala.**

According to the view of anuyoga, all phenomena, from the very beginning, have always been the nature of perfect enlightenment in the mandala of original pure and perfect mind, the indivisibility of the three kinds of mandalas, the characteristic nature of which is the union of the ultimate dimension [of phenomena] and pristine awareness. The *General Scripture that Unifies the Knowledge of All Buddhas* says:<sup>10</sup>

Since everything is one in the state of pure being,  
 All is the great bliss of primordial enlightenment,  
 The essence beyond arising and cessation.  
 All is the three mandalas that transcend action,  
 Primordially present and spontaneously perfect.

Of the three mandalas mentioned in that [passage], the first, “the mandala of primordial suchness,” is the vast space of total purity of the mother Samantabhadri, the unborn nature of mind, beyond all conceptual limitations, in which everything that exists, all phenomena of cyclic existence and perfect peace, is included as the natural creative energy of mind.

The second, “the mandala of the spontaneously perfect nature,” is naturally present pristine awareness, Samantabhadra, whose very manifestation freely pervades the totality of that [vast space] without any restriction whatsoever.

The third, “the mandala of original pure and perfect mind” is great bliss, the offspring, which is the nonduality of the ultimate dimension [of phenomena] and pristine awareness, the two first mandalas being in essence an inseparable union.<sup>11</sup>

**MEDITATION IN ANUYOGA [e']**

**Meditation comprises the upper and lower techniques in the path of method, and establishing the meaning and expression in signs  
In the path of liberation, thus forming the utterly perfect path.**

Concerning meditation in the anuyoga system, the *Fundamental Meaning [of the Secret Discourse]* says:<sup>12</sup>

The essence, method and wisdom...

Thus, two paths of meditation are specified: the path of certainty through method and the path of liberation through wisdom.

**THE PATH OF METHOD [i']**

The first is the method to realize the innate pristine awareness of bliss from the melting [of vital essence], immutable supreme bliss. It comprises two [sets of] esoteric instructions. One concerns the "upper door," a sequential method to elicit innate pristine awareness through meditation techniques related to the four channel-wheels.<sup>13</sup> The other concerns the "lower door," a method of simultaneity to elicit innate pristine awareness by means of the union of the "space" [of the female] and the "secret" [of the male].

**THE PATH OF LIBERATION [ii']**

Concerning the path of liberation, the same text says:

Proceeding by means of study, reflection, and meditation,  
One enters that [path] by three approaches:  
The minds of analysis, the meaning, and letters.

First, to enter by way of analysis is to establish conclusively the view, which is a prerequisite for the path. This involves discerning examination of knowable objects by means of logical reasoning that brings about understanding of them.<sup>14</sup> As a result, the authentic condition of all phenomena, the true nature, primordial suchness, is conclusively established as

the inexpressible, inconceivable, and indescribable nature of the three mandalas. [This represents] the tenet, or view, of this system [of anuyoga], as it has just been explained.

Second, to enter by way of the meaning is to remain in contemplation without thoughts or symbolic attributes. The object of meditation is the state of the true nature of reality just as it is. Moreover, the meditating mind is placed in exactly the same state. This is known as “establishing [actually abiding in] the meaning [indicated by the view].”

Third, to enter by way of letters refers to contemplation of a deity with symbolic attributes. With the simple utterance of the seed-syllable or the mantra that generates the particular support [the deity's environment] and the supported [the deity], all of the universe and inhabitants, like the flash of a fish from water, is imagined clearly and distinctly as the palace and the circle of deities of the mandala. Practice that emphasizes this form of meditation is known as the “expression in signs.”

From the perspective of the utterly perfect path formed by those, anuyoga includes both the conditioned [or mundane paths] and unconditioned [or supramundane paths]. The first comprises the yoga of the aspiring mind [of the path of accumulation] and the yoga that reveals the great buddha family [of the path of preparation]. The second comprises the yoga that confers great encouragement [of the path of seeing], the yoga that receives the great prophetic declaration [of the path of meditation], and the yoga that perfects great creative energy [of the final path].<sup>15</sup>

**Those are connected to the three yogas: the cause (the object of the action);  
The condition (the action); and the result (transcendence of action).**

The ground to be realized, or view, and those paths that lead to realization are connected to, or included within, three yogas: the yoga of the cause (the object of the action); the yoga of the condition (the action itself); and the yoga of result (transcendence of action).

The first refers to the authentic condition of all phenomena, that which abides perfectly and distinctly as the nature of the three mandalas.

The second refers to the three ways of the proclaimers, solitary sages, and bodhisattvas, which, through application of [those] paths with effort, enable one to transcend cyclic existence and thereby enter the provisional result of peace.

The third refers to the ways of the outer and inner mantra systems which, since mind's true nature is primordially and intrinsically pure, are free from the hope and fear involved in the effort of searching for the result [of awakening] outside of oneself.

Those two latter yogas are known as the "general common path." In the anuyoga system, the above three yogas are classified according to the distinctions between the path of method and that of liberation. The first refers to the [real] meaning of tantra ["continuum"], that which is to be known; the second, to the sequential practice based on effort; and the third, to one's natural condition devoid of effort.

### CONDUCT IN ANUYOGA [f']

**The conduct is that of the empowering energy, the dominating conduct, and conduct of method.**

The conduct of anuyoga, as a general rule, is principally conduct in the state of total sameness.<sup>16</sup> The *Miraculous Key to the Storehouse* says:

Anuyoga of completion is the perfect enjoyment  
Of the ultimate dimension and pristine awareness.

Specifically, anuyoga conduct is of three types: the conduct of empowering energy, the dominating conduct, and the conduct of method. The *General Scripture [That Unifies the Knowledge of All Buddhas]* says:<sup>17</sup>

The conduct of empowering energy,  
Dominating conduct, and conduct of method  
Are likened to the sky, and to a king,  
And to a river [that quenches] fire.<sup>18</sup>

### THE RESULT OF ANUYOGA [g']

**The result is great bliss, spontaneously perfect, the twenty-five aspects.**

The result of meditation on this path is to actualize, within one lifetime, the body of great bliss, which is the essential nature of the four dimensions of awakening, the spontaneously perfect essence indivisible from the twenty-five resultant aspects [of body, speech, mind, qualities, and activity].<sup>19</sup> The *Tantra of the Supreme Sphere* says:<sup>20</sup>

Mind's nature of luminous clarity is the nonduality  
 Of the ultimate dimension and pristine awareness.  
 Whoever meditates on this great bliss will attain  
 The result of perfect enlightenment in this lifetime.

### THE ATIYOGA SYSTEM [3']

The esoteric instructions system of atiyoga is presented in seven parts: essence, meaning of the name, entrance, view, meditation, conduct, and result.

### THE ESSENCE OF ATIYOGA [a']

**The essence of atiyoga is direct liberation in the state of  
 primordial enlightenment  
 Without renunciation or acceptance, hope or fear.**

The essence of the atiyoga way is [a system whose] nature is the method to directly self-liberate in the state of primordial enlightenment, without renunciation, acceptance, hope or fear.<sup>21</sup>

### THE MEANING OF THE NAME *ATIYOGA* [b']

**It is the supreme training, the summit of all ways.**

[The Sanskrit] *atiyoga* is [rendered in Tibetan as] *shin tu rnal 'byor* (supreme training), [so called] because it represents the final level of perfection of both the generation and completion [phases], and because it stands at the summit of all ways.

### ENTRANCE TO ATIYOGA [c']

The entrance to atiyoga is twofold: entrance by initiation; and entrance by application.

### ENTRANCE BY INITIATION [i']

**The initiations are elaborate, unelaborate, very unelaborate,  
 and utterly unelaborate.**

Atiyoga initiations do not need to rely on the example pristine awareness [revealed] through the third initiation [of pristine awareness through wisdom]. Right from the start, fortunate students qualified to enter the mandala of the ultimate awakening mind are conferred the initiation of the creative energy of total presence<sup>22</sup> of the great perfection [system]. [The meaning of] this initiation is as stated by the master Manjushrimitra in his *Essential Meaning of the Net of Magical Manifestation of Manjushri*:<sup>23</sup>

The supreme initiation of profound reality is to attain  
 The initiation of the creative energy of total presence.  
 Being the realization of mind's nature, it is known as "initiation":  
 The conferral of the diadem of the pristine awareness initiation.

In particular, in accordance with the [atiyoga] division of esoteric instructions, there are four initiations as stated in the *Naturally Present Perfection*:<sup>24</sup>

The elaborate, unelaborate,  
 The very unelaborate, and utterly unelaborate:  
 Four initiations in four aspects  
 Effect the ripening of the fortunate.

The four initiations, in sequence, purify the obscurations of body, speech, and mind, and the obscurations to omniscience; and establish the potencies for awakened body, speech, and mind, and naturally present luminous clarity. They empower [the student] in the four practices: the phase of generation, meditation on inner heat, and meditation on the union of bliss and emptiness (through which are realized the pristine awareness of primordial purity), and the practice to directly experience the state of spontaneous perfection, respectively.

These initiations represent four divisions within the higher initiation [the fourth]. Hence, although in number they are equal to the common initiations of highest yoga tantra, one should understand that their meaning is different. Furthermore, one must accept that a person who has received the mantric vows of the fourth initiation in common with the highest yoga tantra will be assuming a new set of vows not previously taken when he or she receives these particular initiations.

#### ENTRANCE BY APPLICATION [ii']

**One enters by way of no action or effort whatsoever.**

Atiyoga is entered by means of no action or effort of any kind. The *Majestic Creative Energy of the Universe* states:<sup>25</sup>

Since the real nature requires no action  
[Atiyoga] is entered by way of effortlessness.

### THE VIEW OF ATIYOGA [d']

This is discussed in two parts: the general view of atiyoga; and the views specific to the divisions on mind,<sup>26</sup> vast space, and esoteric instructions.

### THE GENERAL VIEW OF ATIYOGA [i']

**The view asserts that everything is the total sphere of the dimension of reality,  
Naturally present pristine awareness, effortless primordial enlightenment.**

The view of atiyoga asserts that everything that exists, all phenomena included in cyclic life and perfect peace, is the total sphere of the dimension of reality, in essence, naturally present great pristine awareness.<sup>27</sup> As such, all is primordially enlightened, without action or effort. The *Total Space [of Vajrasattva]* states:<sup>28</sup>

Naturally present pristine awareness [requires] no effort;  
Through its own [self-]liberation, it reveals the path to liberation.

### VIEWS SPECIFIC TO THE MIND, VAST SPACE, AND ESOTERIC INSTRUCTIONS DIVISIONS [ii']

This section has two parts: the general views of the three divisions; and the distinctive views within each division.

### THE GENERAL VIEWS OF THE THREE DIVISIONS [aa']

**The respective views of the divisions of mind, vast space, and esoteric instructions assert  
Freedom from the limit of something to renounce, as no phenomenon is other than mind;**

**Freedom from the limit of remedies, as phenomena are totally  
perfected in the vast space of the true nature;  
Transcendence of renunciations and remedies, as all are of the  
real condition already established.**

The view of atiyoga is divided according to distinctions in understanding based on the [practitioner's] level of faculties. This yields three divisions, as noted in the *Great Array*:<sup>29</sup>

The division on mind is for persons inclined to intellectualization;  
The vast space division, for those inclined to the dimension of space;  
And the esoteric instructions division, for those who do not strive  
after stages.

Accordingly, the views of the three divisions of atiyoga are as follows: The division on mind [asserts] freedom from the limiting [concept] of things to be renounced since all phenomena are nothing other than mind's nature.<sup>30</sup> The vast space division which transcends action [asserts] freedom from the limiting [concept] of remedial measures since all phenomena are totally perfected in the primordial space of Samantabhadri, the true nature [of things]. The esoteric instructions division of profundity [asserts] freedom from the limiting [concepts] of both things to be renounced and remedial measures since the essential characteristic of everything is the real condition [already] established.<sup>31</sup>

### **DISTINCTIVE VIEWS WITHIN EACH DIVISION [bb']**

This section has three parts: distinctions within the division on mind; distinctions within the vast space division; and distinctions within the esoteric instructions division.

#### **DISTINCTIONS WITHIN THE DIVISION ON MIND [1"]**

**The division on mind has seven distinctions. ...**

The general view, or tenet, of the mind division [is presented first]. All that constitutes the compounded truth of the path—the stages of the ways, the two truths, generation and completion, and so forth, as well as conditioned fetters owing to rigid notions of adherence to those elements—is asserted to be the pristine awareness of total sameness, the nature of original pure and

perfect mind, the ineffable, ultimate dimension of phenomena, the fundamental nature of ultimate truth, the great dimension of total freedom from cause and result, virtue and evil, and acceptance and rejection. In short, [the view] represents the transcendence of all phenomena which manifest as the dualism of apprehended and apprehender.

In accordance with this generally accepted view [of the mind division], seven distinctions are made. The first distinction in the mind division view asserts that the result is the source of mind. The result is the primordial ultimate dimension, within which no change occurs; and therefore, in mind, there is no movement or change. [Yet] from that changeless state, the spontaneously perfect appearance aspect of the very ground of freedom manifests as what seems to be cyclic life. However, because mind has never shifted from its [changeless] state, what manifests is empty of any characteristic of impurity. In terms of its appearance aspect, [that which manifests] arises from, abides in, and dissolves back into the [primordial] ultimate dimension, like a miraculous apparition in the sky: this is primordial freedom, without endeavor or effort, left on its own.

The second distinction is the view of the transcendence of deviations and obscurations. [This asserts] that the eight ways (from the way [of gods and humans] up to anuyoga) are deviations from the [primordial] ground because they are creations of the conceptual mind. In contrast, in this system, [the ground], naturally present pristine awareness, is beyond conceptual mind, and therefore transcends causes and conditions. Thus, there are no obscurations in the true nature, that of total primordial emptiness, the real condition transcendent of thought, memory, limited positions, perceptions, and so on.

The third distinction is the view concerning the collapse of the foundation of logical reasoning. Understanding of unmodified reality in the totally ineffable nature of mind, the ground, effects freedom in the unborn essence. Since unimpeded creative energy surges pervasively throughout total openness, there is no base where karmic traces [can accumulate]; therefore the ripened results of good and bad actions do not exist. Thus, through the [indisputable] logic<sup>32</sup> of the true nature of reality, primordially empty and naturally purified, total freedom from all limits, there is freedom in the total sameness of cyclic existence and perfect peace.

The fourth distinction is the view that [the true nature of reality] does not fall to one side and cannot be partitioned. This asserts that naturally present pristine awareness, mind's nature, pervades the totality of cyclic life and perfect peace. However, it is not limited to what is substantial (appearance), nor is it limited to the nonsubstantial (emptiness). It does not fall to

the side of being neither of those or their union. Its essence is empty and therefore free from the limit of eternalism. Its creative energy is unimpeded and thus free from the limit of nihilism. As such, it is the true nature of reality, beyond action, transcending pleasure and pain.

The fifth distinction is the view that [the true nature] transcends partial and limited philosophical positions. [This asserts that] mind's essence does not abide anywhere, nor does it exist as anything; yet it appears in any way at all, manifesting with no restriction whatsoever. Thus, although it manifests, there is nothing to refute, grasp, or conceptualize.

The sixth distinction is the view that [the true nature] is beyond the conceptual mind and transcends limited positions. [This asserts] that since naturally present pristine awareness is beyond the conceptual mind, whatever appears does not exist as [something] true or false, and is therefore the expressive energy of total freedom from the limits of existence and nonexistence.

The seventh distinction is the view that everything is part of mind. [This asserts] that all these appearances are the expressive energy of mind.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, even though such energy manifests in a variety of ways, since mind itself is without essence, the various appearances are also without essence. Moreover, the aspect of mind that apprehends what appears and the appearance that is apprehended, although seeming to be separate, are inseparable in being naturally present pristine awareness, the true nature which does not exist in any way. The spontaneously perfect manifestation of the natural creative energy [of pristine awareness] arises as the duality of cyclic life and perfect peace, yet that which gives rise to appearance is devoid of [any] essence. Thus, cyclic existence and perfect peace are released on their own, right where they arise.<sup>34</sup> These are the distinctive features [of views] within the division on mind.<sup>35</sup>

## **DISTINCTIONS WITHIN THE VAST SPACE DIVISION [2"]**

### **...The vast space division has four aspects.**

The general tenet of the vast space division [is presented first]. In the vast space of Samantabhadra, the true nature, naturally present pristine awareness, all phenomena, however they arise, are simply ornaments of manifestation that appear in and of themselves. Other than that, phenomena cannot be defined as bound or free, as what appear or what generate appearance. Therefore, phenomena are not considered to be manifestations of the creative energy or expressive energy [of mind] (as they are in the view of the

division on mind). Instead, everything is understood to be boundless primordial freedom, which cannot be analyzed in terms of relational proof, existence or non-existence, being or not being, purity or impurity.

There are four distinctions [within the vast space division's general view]. The first distinction is [the view of] black vast space propounded as the absence of cause. This asserts that authentic, naturally present pristine awareness itself is unchanging, its nature transcending causes and conditions, and beyond limited aspects, and therefore unrelated to phenomena and their natures.

The second distinction is [the view of] multicolored vast space propounded as diversity. This asserts that all that manifests as the expressive energy of naturally present pristine awareness is affirmed [in the sense of] being the ornament and expressive energy of the true nature manifesting on its own as a variety, yet is negated [in the sense] that the expressive energy manifesting pervasively and unrestrictedly can be neither refuted nor proven.

The third distinction is [the view of] white vast space propounded as mind. This asserts that everything manifesting from the state of self-originated total presence—outer appearances and inner cognizance—is the expressive energy of mind. Since appearances and their conditions are liberated in their own place, all things are pure from the beginning, with nothing to be done. Such is their authentic condition of being; thus, there is nothing to be realized.

The fourth distinction is [the view of] infinite vast space in which cause and result are transcended. This asserts that all phenomena which appear from the state of naturally present pristine awareness are perceived as appearances by the mind, yet understood to be nonexistent by virtue of their authentic condition.<sup>36</sup>

Within these distinctions are twelve further divisions,<sup>37</sup> which form many categories such as the four vast spaces (expressive energy, ornament, true nature, and transcendence of action).<sup>38</sup>

### **DISTINCTIONS WITHIN THE ESOTERIC INSTRUCTIONS DIVISION [3<sup>rd</sup>]**

**The esoteric instructions comprise the scattered teachings, oral tradition, and textual tradition of tantras.**

**The last has cycles of outer, inner, secret, and most secret**

**As distinctions in the oral transmission and explanatory tantras.**

The view of the esoteric instructions division is superior to those of the previous two divisions. In this system, the true nature of reality, primordially pure and liberated from the beginning, is viewed in a way contrary to

[other systems. Other] bases and doctrines divide reality into objects of observation and observing consciousness and thereby validate the dichotomy of delusion and no delusion, or realization and no realization. [This view, however, asserts] that from the perspective of the very nature [of reality] which is beyond all conceptual constructs, both the object to be known and the subject, the knowing consciousness, are equal in not being real. Except for mere conventional usage, all thoughts and expressions that apprehend that duality are genuinely transcended. That being the case, this view directly flows to the essential point that is beyond intellect and analysis, thereby resembling moxabustion application.

There are three distinctions [within the general view of the esoteric instructions division]. The first is the view of the scattered teachings. [This asserts] that the true nature of reality is pristine awareness, which transcends the conceptual mind, arising instantaneously, without differentiation, exclusion, or reference.

The second is the view of the oral tradition. [This asserts] that the true nature of reality is, in essence, beyond the conceptual mind and free from delusion. Its nature [effects] the collapse of the foundation of conceptualization. Its character cannot be defined in any way.

The third is the view taught in the textual tradition of tantras of the esoteric instructions division itself. [This asserts] that the true nature of reality is the point of origin of all transmitted teachings. Its nature is beyond cyclic life and perfect peace, and therefore devoid of something to be renounced or something to strive for. As it does not abide in sounds or words, it is untouched by disputations concerning emptiness.<sup>39</sup>

There are many further distinctions based on different aspects of these views.<sup>40</sup> The principal ones, however, are distinctions within the third view, the four cycles that are renowned in the oral transmission and in the explanatory tantras: the outer cycle which resembles the body; the inner cycle which resembles the eyes; the secret cycle which resembles the heart; and the most secret cycle which resembles the body as a whole.

First is the view of the outer cycle. In terms of essence, [the true nature of reality] is devoid of emotional afflictions; thus, the five poisons are used on the path. In nature, it involves neither effort nor attainment; thus, whatever manifests arises as reality itself. In character, it has no parts; thus, there is no division into emptiness and appearances.

The second is the view of the inner cycle. In terms of essence, [the true nature of reality] transcends form; thus, it is a reality without conceptual characteristics. In nature, it neither comes nor goes; thus, it is unceasingly

present pristine awareness. In character, it penetrates both cyclic life and perfect peace, thereby resembling the root of a tree. Its own “face” looks in different [directions], thereby resembling the trunk. Its manifestations of creative energy extend everywhere, thereby resembling branches. Its clarity aspect is unobstructed, thereby resembling flowers. Its various aspects ripen into one, thereby resembling fruit.

The third is the view of the secret cycle. In terms of essence, since [the true nature of reality] is introduced and realized simultaneously, it is unrelated to the three kinds of wisdom. In nature, since the cessation of breathing [death] and liberation are simultaneous, reality is unrelated to the strength of experience. In character, since enlightenment and the emergence of compassionate energy are simultaneous, reality is unrelated to the two causal accumulations.

The fourth is the view of the most secret cycle. In terms of essence, [the true nature of reality] is not something to be known; thus, it is unrelated to an agent of knowing. In nature, it is directly seen; thus, reality is not the domain of analysis. In character, it is reached in the ultimate dimension of the primordial ground through the four visionary appearances,<sup>41</sup> within this very life, without generating hope for later results.

### MEDITATION IN ATIYOGA [e']

**Meditation in the mind division is to remain in total presence and emptiness, the dimension of reality;**

**In the vast space division, to remain in the state of the true nature without action or effort;**

**In the esoteric instructions division, to remain in primordial freedom without renunciation and acceptance.**

Meditation on the above views is of three forms: meditation in the division on mind is to remain in the state of total presence and emptiness, the dimension of reality. The vast space division meditation is to remain in the state of [one's own] true nature with no action or effort. The esoteric instructions division meditation is to remain in the state of primordial freedom, the true nature which is beyond renunciation and acceptance.

Generally, meditation in the great perfection tradition comprises two aspects: the approach of total relaxation and the direct leap approach.<sup>42</sup> These are explained in detail in subsequent parts [of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*].

## CONDUCT IN ATIYOGA [f']

### **Conduct is spontaneous; ...**

All appearances, whatever their forms, arise as the expressive energy of [one's own] true nature. Thus, conduct is spontaneous, without prescriptions or prohibitions. The *Total Space [of Vajrasattva]* states:<sup>43</sup>

Since there is nothing to be done, actions are complete.

Furthermore, the *Miraculous Key to the Storehouse* states:

The conduct in the atiyoga system  
Bears the life of the view and meditation  
Through which conduct is spontaneous.  
Resembling the conduct of a madman,  
One acts with no restrictions whatsoever.

## THE RESULT OF ATIYOGA [g']

### **...the place of primordial freedom is thereby reached.**

In the end, one reaches the place of primordial freedom, spontaneously perfect Samantabhadra, present even now. Through the perfection of the four assurances,<sup>44</sup> cyclic life liberates [on its own] as perfect peace.

## PLEDGES OF THE THREE YOGAS [4']

### **The pledges should be learned in the context of the mantric vows.**

One should be aware of the general, specific, common, and uncommon vows and pledges of each of the three yogas [mahayoga, anuyoga and atiyoga], which are discussed in detail in the context of mantric vows [in the fifth book, *Buddhist Ethics*, of the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge*].<sup>45</sup>

## DIVISIONS WITHIN THE THREE YOGAS [5']

### **Each of the three yogas may be subdivided Into three subparts each, for a total of nine.**

The three yogas (tantras, elucidations, and esoteric instructions) may be divided according to their structures of subparts. The division of each of the three yogas into three, the mahayoga of mahayoga, and so forth, yields nine yogas. These are explicitly mentioned in the *Garland of Views* esoteric instructions [of Guru Rinpoche]. As well, the *Supplement to the Transmitted Teachings of the Elucidation of the Attainment of the Gathering of the Joyful Ones*<sup>46</sup> provides an extremely detailed presentation, encapsulated as follows:

The mahayoga of mahayoga is the sequential generation of the mandala of the deities. The anuyoga of mahayoga is the natural mandala of spontaneous perfection. The atiyoga of mahayoga is the ultimate unborn essence.

The mahayoga of anuyoga is the generation in a simultaneous [mode] of the mandala of deities. The anuyoga of anuyoga is the perfect purity of the relative mandala of deities as the ultimate dimension of phenomena. The atiyoga of anuyoga is the nondual pristine awareness of total presence.<sup>47</sup>

The mahayoga of atiyoga is the primordial presence of the mandala of deities. The anuyoga of atiyoga is the identity of the mandala of deities and one's mind. The atiyoga of atiyoga is the essence of mind which cannot be defined in any way, its nature being spontaneously perfect.

The *Key to the Transmitted Teachings of Secret Mantra* states:<sup>48</sup>

The entirety of the secret mantra system is divided into three: tantras, elucidations, and esoteric instructions. Each of these has three divisions, the tantras of the tantras, the elucidations of the tantras, the esoteric instructions of the tantras, and so forth, for a total of nine.



## 20. TANTRIC SCRIPTURES AND EXPOSITION METHODS

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3. Instructions for Teaching the Tantras
  - a. Exposition Methods in Mahayoga
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    - ii. Special Methods
      - aa. Ways to Teach the Tantras
      - bb. Ways to Teach the Sadhanas
  - b. Exposition Methods in Anuyoga
  - c. Exposition Methods in Atiyoga

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[This chapter concludes the extensive discussion of the ancient tradition with the presentation of] part two, the extent of the tantric scriptures, and part three, the methods of exposition associated with the mahayoga, anuyoga, and atiyoga systems.

### TANTRIC SCRIPTURES IN THE ANCIENT TRADITION [2]

**The scriptures include the eighteen tantras, the five scriptural elucidations,  
The eighteen mother and son tantras of the *Majestic Creative Energy*, and the seventeen tantras of secret pristine awareness;  
In the sadhana division, there are the five supramundane  
And the three mundane, which include general and special  
tantras.**

The tantric scriptures that express [the meaning of] the three yogas are said to be limitless. The great perfection system<sup>1</sup> alone, for example, comprises six million, four hundred thousand [four-line stanzas] of tantra. Of these tantras which are as vast as the sky, those that were brought to the Land of Snow and became renowned are as follows:

The principal tantras of mahayoga are known as the eighteen principal tantras, comprising the five major root or fundamental tantras (of awakened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities); the five tantras of expression, which expound the sadhana practice; the five tantras that concern the practice of conduct; the two that are like continuation tantras, which serve as supplements for what is incomplete; and the one major tantra, which is like a condensation of all the others.<sup>2</sup> This last refers to the tantra of the *Net of Magical Manifestation of Vajrasattva*, [also known as] the *Glorious Secret Essence, Supreme King of Tantras that Ascertain Reality*. The cycle of the *Net of Magical Manifestation* itself includes the eight major texts of the *Magical Manifestation*<sup>3</sup> and the four major explanatory tantras.<sup>4</sup> All these are subsumed under the three categories of father tantras (*Guhyasamaja*, etc.); mother tantras (*Buddhasamayoga*, etc.); and nondual tantras (*Net of Magical Manifestation*, *Guhyagarbha*, etc.).

The tantras of anuyoga, in general, are composed of the twenty-one elucidation tantras, ten crucial scriptures, seventy texts of elucidation,<sup>5</sup> and so on. Among these, the principal ones are the four root scriptures (*All-Unifying Pure Presence*,<sup>6</sup> etc.), plus the especially renowned *General Scripture That Unifies the Knowledge of All Buddhas*, which constitute the five major scriptural elucidations.

The tantras of atiyoga comprise the divisions of mind, vast space, and esoteric instructions. Of these, the first, that of the mind division, contains the cycle of the *Majestic Creative Energy of the Universe: Original Pure and Perfect Mind*,<sup>7</sup> the five tantras translated first and the thirteen translated later, together known as the eighteen mother and son tantras, plus general tantras of the mind division.<sup>8</sup> The second, the vast space division, has eleven tantras, the *King of Tantras of Infinite Vast Space*, and so on.<sup>9</sup> The third, the esoteric instructions division, contains the individual tantras of the outer, inner, and secret cycles of teachings. In particular, there are what are known as the seventeen unsurpassable tantras<sup>10</sup> of the exceptionally profound and most secret [cycle], such as the *Tantra of the Great Naturally Present Perfection*, as well as many essential and quintessential tantras.

In the sadhana division of mahayoga, there are five texts on the supramundane and three on the mundane, together known as the eight

sadhana divisions,<sup>11</sup> the general tantras of which are the *Gathering of the Joyful Ones*, the *Tantra of the Totality of Secrets*,<sup>12</sup> and others. These belong to the rediscovered treasures.<sup>13</sup> There are also special tantras: To use the Manjushri tantra alone as an example, in India there were 16,000 teachings on Manjushri. Of these, the sixty-five tantras of pristine awareness and activation are known to have been translated into Tibetan. In addition, the various [special tantras] that originated from treasures are extremely numerous even today.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHING THE TANTRAS [3]

This section has three parts: exposition methods in mahayoga, in anuyoga, and in atiyoga.

#### EXPOSITION METHODS IN MAHAYOGA [a]

This section has two parts: general methods; and special methods.

#### GENERAL METHODS [i]

**As exposition methods, mahayoga's seven ornaments are the same as in the new tradition.**

Mahayoga tantras are expounded by means of the seven ornaments, which are stated in the *Heruka Galpo Tantra*:

Understanding is to be gained by way of points of introduction,  
 [Ways of] awakening, styles, distinctions [in meaning],  
 Forms [of exposition], recipients, and knowledge of the truths:  
 These constitute the seven ornaments of mahayoga.

These are discussed in detail in this tantra. Their meanings correspond to what has been described as general methods of expounding the highest yoga tantra system of the new tradition.<sup>14</sup>

#### SPECIAL METHODS [ii]

This section has two parts: methods for the tantra [tradition]; and those for the sadhana [tradition].

**WAYS TO TEACH THE TANTRAS [aa]**

**As special methods, two styles of exposition, that of atiyoga and that of mahayoga,  
Are used to teach the *Net of Magical Manifestation of Vajrasattva*,  
*The Secret Essence, King of Tantras That Ascertains Reality*.**

There are special methods to expound [certain] mahayoga tantras. By ascertaining simply [the meaning of] the title "*Net of Magical Manifestation of Vajrasattva, the Secret Essence That Ascertains Reality*" [explained] in accordance with the tantras, elucidations, and esoteric instructions,<sup>15</sup> the secret of what is contained in the unsurpassable tantra is understood. There have developed a few methods of commentary on this "king of all tantras," epitomized in two styles of exposition: commentary according to the esoteric instructions of atiyoga; and commentary according to the generation phase of mahayoga. The former represents the perspectives of the master Nyiö Sengé and the omniscient Longchen Rabjampa; the latter, of Lilavajra, Buddhaguhya, and other masters,<sup>16</sup> and, for the most part, the holders of the Zur tradition of transmitted teachings.<sup>17</sup>

**The mahayoga style comprises the three exposition methods of the elders;  
The Zurpa tradition of the transmitted teachings presents five topics.**

Widely known at the present time is the discourse style of the mahayoga system according to which the subject to be expounded is the *King of Tantras, the Secret Essence*, exalted by virtue of its eight great qualities. The means of exposition incorporates the four [explanatory tantras]—the *Explanatory Tantra of the Oceanic Magical Manifestation*; the *All-Surpassing Tantra*; the *Essence of Pristine Awareness*; and the *Indestructible Mirror*—and the three ideal cognitions.<sup>18</sup> As to how expositions are given, the earlier masters used three methods: [The first,] known as teaching "by grasping the top as one would an arrow," explains the tantra's title wherein the ground, path, and result are contained. [The second,] known as teaching "by grasping the neck as one would a spear," is as stated in the fifth chapter [of the *Secret Essence*]:<sup>19</sup>

The retention of the characteristics of knowledge and application  
Constitutes the cause and condition that bring to maturation the result.

Whoever is possessed of their power and potency becomes  
renowned  
Throughout the realm of the victorious awareness-holders.

This method of exposition incorporates three characteristics: one, the characteristic of knowledge, the view (the primary cause for enlightenment); two, the characteristic of application, contemplation (the condition); and three, the characteristic of the result brought about by the path, the four kinds of awareness-holder.

[The third,] known as teaching “by grasping the handle as one would a sword,” is an exposition that contains the four manifestations [presented] in the two verses of the last chapter [of the *Secret Essence*]: the ground, the natural manifestation; wrong notions, the manifestation of deception; students to be guided, the manifestation of the path; and the result, the manifestation of the joyful ones.

In the Zurpa tradition of transmitted teachings, the style of exposition comprises five topics: the way of being of phenomena, their nature; the way deceptive appearances arise from not realizing that nature; the way an omniscient one knows; the way compassion develops from love; and the way to accomplish the welfare of beings.

**At the present time, the title is taught to the most adept; an analysis, to the average; And the meaning of the words, to the least adept; this is Vimalamitra’s way.**

The style of exposition used at the present time is the one set forth in Vimalamitra’s *Fundamental Text*:<sup>20</sup>

To the most adept, the title is taught; to the average, an analysis [of the text];  
And to the least adept, the meaning of the words is taught.

Accordingly, there are three methods: to a person of superior faculties, an exposition on the basis of the title is given; to one of average faculties, an analysis of the general content of the tantra is presented; and to the least adept, a commentary providing the word-by-word meaning is given.

The first consists in an exposition of three [meanings of the] title in accordance with the tantras, elucidations, and esoteric instructions, com-

bined with an exposition on the path of method of the upper door and the path of method of the secret lower door.

The second consists in both analysis of the sets of contents and analysis of the sets of words [of the tantra]. The former comprises five points: origin (the source of the tantra); secondary conditions (scene of the promulgation of the tantra); result (the meaning of the tantra to be fully understood); purpose served by the tantra and the way it is connected to its purpose; and the teachings to the audience and entrustment of the tantra.

The third consists in an exposition that sets forth the essence, semantic meanings of the words, and differentiations [between terms].

Those three methods lead to direct ascertainment of the tantra by relying principally on wisdom derived from study and reflection.

**The ten topics of the tantra—view, conduct, mandala, initiation,  
Pledges, activations, sadhanas, contemplation, offerings,  
mantras and mudras—  
Serve as instrumental conditions for the path.**

The ten topics of the tantras are these: the view (essential reality); conduct (transcendence); mandala (the manifestation); initiation (the sequential process of conferral); pledges (what are not to be transgressed); activations (expressive energy); sadhana (what is to be practiced); contemplation (stillness); offerings (to fulfill the goal); mantras to be recited and mudras to be executed. Those ten serve as instrumental conditions for the path of the practitioner. All of the most important contents of the tantric scriptures are evidently categorized and expounded as the “ten topics of the tantras” owing to their association with the practice of actualization [of the deity]. In short, the ten represent sequential instructions for training in the practice of actualization [of the deity] by relying principally on wisdom derived from meditation.

#### WAYS TO TEACH THE SADHANAS [bb]

**Sadhanas are understood through twenty methods: the five  
summaries,  
Five tantric guidelines, five combined elucidations, and five  
unification systems.**

Tantras in the sadhana [tradition] are taught by means of twenty methods of exposition. The *Gathering of the Joyful Ones Tantra General Guidelines* states:

Ascertainment by means of five general summaries,  
 Five tantric guidelines, five combined elucidations,  
 And five systems of unification of the sadhana:  
 These are the twenty instructions in exposition methods.

Accordingly, the five general summaries penetrate the general meaning of the tantra. The five tantric guidelines provide an expanded commentary on that meaning. The five combined elucidations set forth general combinations of fundamental teachings. The five systems of unification integrate the contents with the student's mind. By means of these, understanding [of the tantras of the sadhana tradition] is gained.

The first five, the general summaries, serve as keys to the treasury of the secret mantra transmitted teachings. They combine the essential outlined teachings of the five elucidations of mantra and elucidations of sadhana and ascertain the teacher, the teaching, and the meanings of the words that convey the essential definitive meaning.

The second five, the tantric guidelines, provide explanatory statements on the table of contents [of the tantra]; set forth additional words and syllables through connections; present the abbreviated meaning through instructions; organize miscellaneous topics by connecting their contexts; and teach the practice through esoteric instructions.

The third five, the combined elucidations, present the merging of tantra with elucidation; the merging of elucidation with sadhana; the merging of sadhana with activities; the merging of activities with practical application; and the merging of practical application with experience.

The fourth five, the systems of unification, comprise the unification of the root [tantra] and the sadhana; unification of sadhana and activities; unification of activities and essential meditation instructions; unification of essential meditation instructions and contemplation; and unification of contemplation and esoteric instructions.

## EXPOSITION METHODS IN ANUYOGA [b]

**Anuyoga is understood through seven elucidations: view,  
 generation phase,  
 Mantra to be recited, union, release, offering, and propitiation.**

The *Heruka Galpo Tantra* sets forth the scriptural elucidations of anuyoga [tantras]:

Enlightenment in phenomenal existence is the elucidation of the view.

Clarity in the seal of the deity's body is the elucidation of the generation phase.

Perseverance in recitation and familiarization is the elucidation of mantra.

The ultimate dimension of reality enjoyed as consort is the elucidation of union.

Elimination of [beings complete in] ten areas<sup>21</sup> is the elucidation of release.

The foods of the circle of the [tantric feast] gathering is the elucidation of offering.

Receiving initiation and gaining powers is the elucidation of great attainment.

Anuyoga elucidations are to be understood in terms of those seven.

#### EXPOSITION METHODS IN ATIYOGA [c]

**Atiyoga is taught using the six general meanings: five teachings**

**On the path, with examples; and the result, which is beyond examples.**

The great perfection atiyoga tantras are expounded using six general meanings: the five teachings on the path for which there are examples, plus one teaching on the result, which is beyond examples.

These are the five teachings that use examples: teaching on the pristine awareness of the ground, using the example of pure space; teaching on the view of the authentic condition, using the example of the [baby] garuda bird which has fully developed wings [when hatched]; teaching on meditative equipoise, using the example of the ocean to which all waters have flowed and merged; teaching on overcoming the analytical approach, using the example of the lion's roar; and teaching on the perfect result, using the example of the wish-granting tree.

This is the one teaching on the result, for which there is no example: the ultimate authentic condition, spontaneous perfection which need not be sought, is the original buddha, Samantabhadra, the supreme of the reality

dimension of awakening, the great forefather of cyclic life and perfect peace. This nature cannot be realized through sophistic reasoning or conventional examples or words, but is directly pointed out as one's natural condition through the symbols of the introduction.<sup>22</sup>



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## ABBREVIATIONS

**BA** 'Gos lo tsa ba gzhon nu dpal, *The Blue Annals* (Deb ther sngon po). Trans. George N. Roerich. Calcutta, 1949; 2nd ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976.

**BGP** Butön Rinchen Drub (Bu ston rin chen grub), *General Presentation of the Sets of Tantra* (rGyud sde sphyi'i rnam par gzhag pa rgyud sde rin po che'i mdzes rgyan). Collected Works of Bu-ston, vol. 15. Reprinted by Dr. Lokesh Chandra, New Delhi. Courtesy of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala.

**CH** Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé (Kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas), *Disclosing the Secret of the Invincible Vajra: Phrase by Phrase Commentary on the Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (dPal kye'i rdo rje'i rgyud kyi rgyal po brtag pa gnyis pa'i tshig don rnam par 'grol ba gzhom med rdo rje'i gsang ba 'byed pa). Rumtek, Sikkim: Dharma Chakra Centre, 1981.

**CPR** Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *Commentary on [Rangjung Dorjé's] Profound Inner Reality* (rNal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud sde rgya mtsho'i snying po bsdu pa zab mo nang gi don nyung ngu'i tshig gis rnam par 'grol ba zab don snang byed). Rumtek, Sikkim: Dharma Chakra Centre, 1981.

**CSI** Taranata (Ta ra na tha), *Complete Elucidation of the Profound Meaning: Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation*. Collected Works, vol. 4

**Dg.K.** Dergé Kangyur (sDe dge bka' 'gyur): Dergé edition of the Tibetan canonical collection of sutras and tantras.

**Dg.T.** Dergé Tengyur (sDe dge bstan 'gyur): Dergé edition of the Tibetan canonical collection of commentarial treatises.

**ESO** Vasubandhu, *Explanation of the Scripture Ornament*. Dg.T. Sems tsam, vol. Bi (Toh. 4029).

**HBI** Taranata (Ta ra na tha), *History of Buddhism in India* (Dam pa'i chos rin po che 'phags pa'i yul du ji ltar dar ba'i tshul gsal bar ston pa dgos 'dod kun 'byung). Sarnath, India: Elegant Sayings Press, 1984. Trans. Lama Chimpa and A. Chattopadhyaya. Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi and Co., 1970.

**IBTS** *mKhas grub rje's Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems*. Trans. F.D. Lessing and Alex Wayman. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978.

**IK** *Nāropā, Iniziazione Kālacakra*. Trans. Raniero Gnoli and Giacomella Orofino. In Italian. Milan: Adelphi Edizioni SPA, 1994.

**IOK** Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge* (Shes bya mtha' yas pa'i rgya mtsho). Beijing: Bod mi rigs dpe bskrun khang, 1982. Palpung Monastery: dPal spungs thub bstan chos 'khor gling, 1844.

**KT** Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, *The Kalachakra Tantra: Rite of Initiation*. Trans. Jeffrey Hopkins. London: Wisdom Publications, 1985.

**LITE** Wayman, Alex. *The Buddhist Tantras: Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism*. New York: 1973. Reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990.

**ME** Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*. London: Wisdom Publications, 1983.

**MH** Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *General Meaning of the Hevajra Tantra: Topical Commentary* (sPyi don legs par bshad pa gsang ba bla na med pa rdo rje drva ba'i rgyan). Palpung Monastery: dPal spungs thub bstan chos 'khor gling (woodblock print).

**NGB** *rNying ma rgyud 'bum (Collected Tantras of the Ancient Tradition)*. 36 vols. Ed. Jamyang Khyentsé Rinpoché. Thimpu, Bhutan, 1973.

**NKG** *rNying ma bka' ma rgyas pa (Collected Transmitted Teachings of the Ancient Tradition)*. 55 vols. Edited by Dudjom Rinpoché. Kalimpong, India, 1982.

**NSH** Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*. 2 vols. Trans. Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991.

**NT** *sNying thig ya bzhi (Four-Part Innermost Essence)*. 11 volumes. New Delhi: Trulku Tsewang, Jamyang, and Lama Tashi, 1970.

**P** *The Tibetan Collected Words of the Buddha and its Commentaries (Tripitaka)*. Peking Edition. 168 vols. Tokyo-Kyoto: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1955-61.

**SGP** Sönam Tsemo (bSod nams rtse mo), *General Presentation of the Sets of Tantra* (rGyud sde spyi'i rnam gzhag). Sikkim: Ngor Monastery, 1995.

**Toh.** *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons*. Edited by Ui, Suzuki, Kanakura, and Tada. Sendai, Japan: Tohoku University, 1934.

**TV** Pema Karpo, Drukpa ('Brug pa padma dkar po), *Extensive Commentary on "The Three Vows"* (sDom gsum rgya cher 'grel pa/ sDom pa gsum gyi rgyan ces bya ba'i rgya cher 'grel ba). *Collected Works of Pema Karpo*, vols. Nga and Ca. Thimphu, Bhutan: Acharya Shedup Tenzin and Lama Dhondup Tharchen, 1991.

**VOWS** Dharmashri, Lochan (Lo chen dharma shri), *Commentary on the Three Vows/ The Commentary That Ascertains the Three Vows: The Wish-Fulfilling Awn of Good Explanations* (sDom 'grel/ sDom pa gsum rnam par nges pa'i 'grel pa legs bshad ngo mtshar dpag bsam gyi snye ma). Commentary on Ngari Panchen's *Three Vows*. Published at Rong phu mdo snags gling Monastery, Nepal, based on the the original wood-blocks of

Mindroling Monastery. Also found in *NKG*, vol. 37, ff. 41-675. Also: Gangtok, Sikkim: Dodrup Chen Rinpoché.

*YT* Tsong-ka-pa, *The Yoga of Tibet: The Great Exposition of Secret Mantra*. Trans. Jeffrey Hopkins. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987.

f., ff.	folio(s) (Tibetan book)
n., nn.	endnote(s)
p., pp.	page(s)
trans.	translated by
vol., vols.	volume(s)
<i>WCA</i>	Bibliography of Works Cited by the Author



# NOTES

*All references to works included in the Tohoku catalogue (A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons, edited by Ui, Suzuki, Kanakura, and Tada [Sendai, Japan: Tohoku University, 1934]) are to the Dergé edition of the Tibetan Kangyur (bKa' 'gyur) and Tengyur (bsTan 'gyur).*

## INTRODUCTION

1. See Janice Dean Willis's translation *On Knowing Reality: The Tattvārtha Chapter of Asaṅga's Bodhisattvabhūmi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), p. 24.
2. See Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé's *Buddhist Ethics* (English translation), pp. 221-222; 448n. 11.
3. Zurkar Lodrö Gyalpo (1509-1585), born in Zurkar, a place in Latok in the region of Dakpo in southern Tibet, nephew of Zurkar Nyamnyi Dorjé, founder of the Zur tradition of Tibetan medicine.

## CHAPTER 1: THE NATURE OF TANTRA

1. The new tradition of secret mantra (*gsang sngags gsar ma'i lugs*), which originated with the later translations (*phyi 'gyur*) of tantras from Sanskrit, refers to the lineages of the Kagyu (*bKa' brgyud*), Sakya (*Sa skya*), and Geluk (*dGe lugs*) traditions. The Kagyu (Transmission of Oral Teachings) lineage begins with Marpa the Translator (1012-1099); the Sakya (Grey Earth) lineage, with Könchok Gyalpo (dKon mchog rgyal po) (1034-1102); and the Geluk (Virtuous Ones) lineage, with Tsongkapa (1357-1419). The Geluk tradition was rooted in the Kadam (Words of the Buddha as Personal Instructions) tradition, which began with Atisha (982-1054) and his renowned student Dromtönpa ('Brom ston pa) (1004-1064). The main practices of these lineages are based on the tantras translated after the beginning of the eleventh century and during the later spread of Buddhism in Tibet. The pioneer of these translations was Rinchen Zangpo (Rin chen bzang po) (958-1051).

The ancient tradition of secret mantra (*snga 'gyur rnying ma'i lugs*) originated with the early translations of tantras, inspired by the mystic activity of the Indian master Padmasambhava in the ninth century. The tantric texts translated from Sanskrit prior to the end of the tenth century and during the early spread of Buddhism in Tibet are known as the tantras of the early translation (*gsang sngags snga 'gyur*).

2. The three collections of Buddhist teachings (*sde snod gsum, tripiṭaka*): the collection on discipline (*'dul ba, vinaya*); collection of discourses (*mdo, sūtra*); and the collection on phenomenology (*mngon pa, abhidharma*). These set forth the trainings (*bslab pa, śikṣā*) in ethics (*tsbul kbrims, śīla*); contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin, samādhi*); and wisdom (*shes rab, prajñā*), respectively.

3. This assertion is held by the Sakya school. See Sönam Tsemo's *General Presentation of the Sets of Tantra* (hereafter cited as *SGP*), ff. 25b6-27a3.

4. Rangjung Dorjé (Rang byung rdo rje), the Third Karmapa (1284-1339), became the receptacle for countless exoteric and esoteric teachings, those of the ancient tradition in particular. His education was overseen by the great adept Orgyenpa Rinchen Pal (U rgyan pa rin chen dpal). Rangjung Dorjé's life was filled with miracles, mystic visions, and experiences in meditation. Inspired by a vision revealing the nature of inner and outer reality, he composed his masterpiece, the *Profound Inner Reality*, along with its autocommentary. While travelling throughout the various regions of Tibet, he propagated the teachings extensively and wrote texts on a number of subjects, including astrology. In 1332, he was invited to China where he conferred the initiation of Kalachakra upon the court. When he returned to Tibet, he retired to the caves above Samyé Monastery. From there, he oversaw the preparation of a set of the entire Buddhist Canon (*bKa' gyur*) and its treatises (*bsTan gyur*). During the consecration ceremonies, he had several visions of bodhisattvas reciting the scriptures. He was invited once more to China where he passed away in 1339 at the age of fifty-six. Following his death, he was seen by his disciples sitting on a moon mandala. See *The Blue Annals* (hereafter cited as *BA*), pp. 487-539.

5. Awareness-holder (*rig pa 'dzin pa, vidyādhara*) refers to the tantric adept. "Awareness" (*rig pa, vidyā*) denotes the pristine awareness of immutable supreme bliss which is primordially present as the ground, or nature, of being. To become a "holder" (*'dzin pa*) means to reawaken such pristine awareness (in the sense of becoming aware of it again) by means of special tantric techniques. See Kongtrul's *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge* (hereafter cited as *IOK*), vol. II, pp. 135-136.

The collection of teachings of the awareness-holders refers to the collection of teachings comprising the indestructible way.

6. Rangjung Dorjé discusses this particular point in his *Profound Inner Reality* (ff. 30a4-31a1). See Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Profound Inner Reality* (hereafter cited as *CPR*), ff. 179a4-182a6.

7. *Short Guide to the Meaning of Highest Yoga Tantra* (Toh. 3713), vol. Tsu, f. 106a4.

Shraddhakaravarman (ōradh-karavarman) (Dad byed go cha) is noted as a disciple of Shantipa in the lineage of transmission of the Guhyasamaja tantra of the Jnanapada tradition (*BA*, p. 373) and also appears in the lineage of transmission of rituals associated with the deity Tara (*BA*, p. 1051). Shraddhakaravarman is rarely mentioned in histories of the propagation of Buddhism in India and Tibet. His name, however, is associated with nearly sixty works in the Tibetan-language Buddhist Canon and treatises, in most cases as translator. One must therefore assume that this outstanding scholar and accomplished master from Kashmir made a substantial contribution to the second propagation of Buddhist teachings in Tibet. He was invited by King Yeshé Öd (*Ye shes*

'od) of Gugé in western Tibet to restore the purity of Buddhist teachings and practice, which the king considered to have degenerated in various ways. Butön remarks that Shraddhakaravarman was particularly knowledgeable of yoga tantra, many scriptures of which he translated. As well, he appears in the lineages of different tantras such as Guhyasamaja and the cycle of teachings on Tara. He became the master and close associate of the great translator Rinchen Zangpo with whom he collaborated on various important translations. See Butön's *Survey of Yoga Tantra*.

8. Nine branches of the Buddha's words (*gsung rab yan lag dgu, navāṅga pravacana*): discourses (*mdo sde, sūtra*), aphorisms in prose or verse (*dbyangs kyis bsnyad pa, geyā*), prophetic declarations (*lung du bstan pa, vyākaraṇā*), verses (*tshig su bcad pa, gāthā*), meaningful or purposeful expressions (*ched du brjod pa, udāna*), legends (*gleng gzhi, nidāna*), far-ranging teachings (*rgyas pa, vaipulyā*), stories of the previous lives of the Buddha (*skyes rabs, jātakā*), and marvellous events (*rmad du byung ba, abdhutadharmā*). For a discussion of these, see *IOK*, vol. I, pp. 348-350.

9. *Dialogue with Subahu Tantra* (Toh. 805), vol. Wa, f. 136a4.

10. *Short Guide to the Meaning of Highest Yoga Tantra* (Toh. 3713) vol. Tsu, f. 106a3. Shraddhakaravarman explains the placement of the indestructible way in two ways: one in which it is included in the three collections and one in which it is a fourth scriptural division.

11. The verse cited by Shraddhakaravarman is among the standard phrases recited during initiations of the higher tantras in order to assume tantric vows. Here, "outer way" refers to that of the proclaimers; "inner way," that of the bodhisattvas; and "secret way," that of mantric practitioners.

12. *Extensive Commentary on the Vajravidarāna Tantra* (Toh. 2680), vol. Thu, f. 176b2.

Buddhaguhya (Sangs rgyas gsang ba): disciple of the great master Buddhajnanapada and contemporary of Padmasambhava, Shantirakshita, and the Tibetan King Trisong De'utsen (Khri srong lde'u btsan) (790-844). He is generally considered to have been an adept and propagator of the action, conduct, and yoga tantras only. See Taranata's *History of Buddhism in India* (hereafter cited as *HBI*), pp. 276; 280-281. Nyingmapa scholars consider this same person to be the author of works on the *Secret Essence* (*gSang ba'i snying po*) and its path and thus an expert on mahayoga and anuyoga tantras. See Dudjom Rinpoché's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History* (hereafter cited as *NSH*), pp. 465-466; 534. It is more likely, however, that these are two different persons.

13. Way of characteristics (*mtshan nyid kyī theg pa*), also known as the causal way of characteristics (*rgyu mtshan nyid kyī theg pa*), denotes the sutra way as opposed to that of mantra. It includes the ways of the proclaimers and the solitary sages, which are based on the analyst (*vaibhāsika*) and traditionist (*sautrāntika*) philosophical systems, and the way of the bodhisattvas, which is based on the idealist (*cittamātra*) and centrist (*mādhyamika*) systems.

It is known as "characteristics" because it points to the path of secret mantra and its branches leading directly to the final result (the state of union of Vajradhara). It is known as "causal" (*rgyu*) because it serves as only half of the cause of the pristine awareness of the state of union of non-abiding perfect peace, the final result (*IOK*, vol. II, p. 491). For an extensive discussion, see *IOK*, vol. II, pp. 442-560.

14. The state of awareness-holder (*rig pa 'dzin pa, vidyādhara*) here denotes the awakened state.

15. Twelve branches of the Buddha's words (*gsung rab yan lag bcu gnyis*): the nine branches mentioned above (n. 8), plus narratives (*rtogs pa brjod pa, avadāna*), parables (*de lta bu byung ba, nivṛttaka*), and established instructions (*gtan phab, upadeśā*).

16. *Seventy Verses on the Triple Refuge* (Toh. 3971), vol. Gi, f. 253a2.

Chandrakīrti (Candrakīrti) (*Zla ba grags pa*) was born in Samanta, south India, in the sixth century. Studying under Buddhapaḥita's disciple Kamalabuddhi as well as disciples of Bhāvaviveka, he gained knowledge of the entire Buddhist doctrine. Later, he moved to Nalanda Monastery in central India where he became the abbot and foremost master among its scholars. He was an elucidator of Nāgārjuna's thought and an eminent teacher of centrist philosophy. He is said to have received directly from Mañjuśrī various powers such as the ability to move freely through walls and the eloquence to defeat numberless philosophers holding opposing views. His *Lucid Exposition: A Commentary on Nāgārjuna's Fundamental Verses Called Wisdom* (Toh. 3860) and *Illuminating Lamp* (Toh. 1785), a commentary on the *Five Stages*, a tantric work by Nāgārjuna, are compared to the sun and the moon by virtue of their capacity to elucidate the sūtras and the tantras. At the end of his life, Chandrakīrti returned to southern India where he propagated the teachings extensively, after which he remained in seclusion, dedicating himself to the practice of the secret mantra system. See Taranāta's *HBI*, pp. 198-199.

17. *Seventy Verses on the Triple Refuge* (Toh. 3971), vol. Gi, f. 253a2-3.

18. Reading *rig 'dzin* for *rig ces*.

19. The thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening (*byang chub kyi phyogs sum cu rtsa bdun*) consist of the four applications of mindfulness (*dran pa nyer gzhag bzhi*): modes of discriminative wisdom applied to understanding the emptiness of body (*lus*), feelings (*ts'hor ba*), mental processes (*sems*), and mental contents (*chos*); the four perfect abandonments (*yang dag spong ba bzhi*): to renounce all that is unwholesome in oneself; to prevent all that is unwholesome from arising in oneself; to strengthen the virtuous qualities already present; and to develop virtuous qualities not yet developed; the four bases for miracles (*rdzu 'phrul rkang pa bzhi*): concentrations distinguished by will, perseverance, intention, and analysis; the five powers (*dbang po lnga*): confidence, effort, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom (these mark the preparatory stages that lead to the direct knowledge of reality); the five strengths (*stobs lnga*): similar to the five powers but differing in that they can never be destroyed by adverse circumstances (these are perfected during the last two of the four levels of the path of preparation—heat, summit, acceptance, and highest qualities—and mark the climax stage prior to the direct knowledge of reality); the seven factors conducive to awakening (*byang chub yan lag bdun*): mindfulness, investigation of the nature of things, effort, joy, psychophysical refinement, concentration, and equanimity (these mark the actual vision of reality); the eightfold exalted path (*'phags lam yan lag bregyad*): the right way of seeing; the right way of expressing that vision in thoughts; and in words; the right way of exerting oneself in that vision; the right livelihood; the right mindfulness in attending that vision; the right concentration on the vision; and the right way of expressing the vision in actions.

20. Emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects (*rnam pa thams cad kyi mchog dang ldan pa'i stong pa nyid*). According to the Kalachakra tantra, this emptiness alone is capable of producing supreme immutable bliss (*'gyur ba med pa'i bde ba chen po*), the ultimate result. Its nature is like that of the images in a divination mirror: it has all the aspects (*rnam pa thams cad pa*) of the three realms of existence, while its own nature lacks real characteristics in not being composed of particles and being free from conceptual constructs. It is direct knowledge. It is the illusory manifestation of the supreme (*mchog*) pristine awareness of luminous clarity. See *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 213-218.

Kedrup Norzang Gyatso explains that such emptiness denotes the great seal itself (*phyag rgya chen mo*) (actualized as the female deity of Kalachakra in union in the “subsequent application” branch of the sixfold yoga), the perfection of wisdom, the mother of all buddhas, endowed with the supreme of all aspects and characterized by being devoid of intrinsic existence. This seal is also referred to by the term *dharmodaya* (*chos 'byung*), the source of all phenomena, which lack inherent nature. Here, “phenomena, which lack inherent nature” refers to all of the 84,000 aspects of reality, exemplified by the ten powers, fearlessness, and so forth (*Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, p. 308a5-7).

In Kongtrul's view, such emptiness corresponds to emptiness as understood in the way of the perfections, not merely as negation of the true existence of phenomena, but as luminous clarity endowed with all of the qualities of awakening. See also Chapter 10, n. 14.

21. Awareness mantra (*rig sngags, vidyāmantra*): a general name for the three types of mantra, which are secret mantra (*gsang sngags, gubhyantra*), awareness mantra, and retention mantra (*gzungs sngags, dhāraṇīmantra*). Jnanashri writes that secret mantra refers to the indivisible union of wisdom and method; awareness mantra, to wisdom and pristine awareness; and retention mantra, to wisdom and retention. Secret mantra also refers to the male deities; awareness mantra, to the female deities; and retention mantra, to both male and female deities. One mantra can also be understood as including all three mantra types, and one deity, as including all three types of deities. There are other systems of classification of these three types of mantra. See *Dispelling the Two Extremes in the Indestructible Way* (Toh. 3714), vol. Tsu, f. 117b6-7.

Secret mantra is so called because it must be kept hidden from unsuitable persons; awareness mantra is so called because it overcomes delusion caused by attachment and other emotional afflictions incompatible with awareness; and retention mantra is so called because it enables one to maintain inner qualities (Zhuchen Tsultrim Rinchen's *Catalogue of the Tengyur* [*bsTan 'gyur dkar chag*], p. 194).

22. Tantra application (*rgyud kyi sbyor ba*). See Chapter 14.

23. Secretive *yakshas* (*gsang ba pa, guhyaka*): semi-divine beings said to live in turrets located at the four corners of the top of Mount Meru.

24. There are three types of mundane awareness-holders: the lesser awareness-holder of eight powers (*angos grub bryad kyi rig 'dzin chung ba*); the middling awareness-holder of the desire realm (*'bring 'dod pa'i rig 'dzin*); and the great awareness-holder of the desire and form realms (*chen po 'dod pa dang gzugs kyi rig 'dzin*). The lesser type, considered to be one of the lesser powers, is able to fly, and so on, and can successfully perform the

appeasing and dominating forms of activation, and so forth. The middling type, considered as a middling power, is gained by yogins on the greater path of accumulation. The power consists in having a body equal in qualities to that of a desire realm god in its capacity to use awareness mantras, perform miraculous feats, and extend life span. It is also known as the awareness-holder with a body possessing eight qualities of lordliness: lightness (*phra ba*), subtleness, (*yang ba*), mastery (*bdag por gyur ba*), freedom of movement (*gar yang phyin pa*), luminosity (*rab tu gsal ba*), wish-granting power (*'dod dgur sgyur ba*), stability (*de nyid brten pa*), and influence (*dbang du gyur ba*).

The great awareness-holder is of two types: that of the desire realm and that of the form realm. The awareness-holder of the desire realm, considered to be a great power, is gained by a yogin close to attainment or dwelling on the first stage of awakening. The power in this case is the ability to travel to buddha realms and to hear teachings from the manifest dimension of awakening. The great awareness-holder of the form realm, also considered to be the status of great power, is possessed of a body equal to that of a god of the heavens called "pure abodes" up to the realm of Unsurpassed, endowed with the eight qualities of lordliness in a very subtle form. For an extensive discussion, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 629-640.

25. Support for the mind (*sems kyi rten*).

26. The first two of the five paths (*lam lnga*) (accumulation, preparation, seeing, meditation, and no more training) which mark the steps in both the individualist and universalist ways to awakening. The path of accumulation (*tsbogs lam*) and path of preparation (*sbyor lam*) are the stages at which the understanding of reality is conceptually cultivated through study and reflection. The path of seeing (*mthong lam*) denotes the point at which direct insight of emptiness is gained. The ensuing path of meditation (*bsgoms lam*) is the stage at which one repeatedly enters contemplation on emptiness in order to remove the obscurations that prevent the arising of universal knowledge on the path of no more training (*mi slob pa'i lam*). In this context, these are not common paths but tantric paths. For an extensive discussion, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 464-533.

27. Dynamic perfect peace (*mi gnas pa'i myang 'das*): the state of awakening that, through the strength of realization of the true nature, neither dwells within the limit of cyclic existence nor passes beyond it, and through great compassion, passes beyond the limit of perfect peace.

28. *Treatise on Valid Cognition* (Toh. 4210), vol. Ce, f. 121b4.

Dharmakīrti (Dharmakīrti) (Chos kyi grags pa) was born to Hindu parents in Trimalaya in South India. At an early age, he was acclaimed as a master of the Vedas and the various non-Buddhist philosophies of the time. Upon reading certain Buddhist scriptures, he instantly appreciated the significance of the teachings, as a consequence of which he resolved to become a monk. During his monastic training, he readily surpassed his teacher in knowledge of logic. It was the master Dingipa who introduced him to the system of secret mantra. Dharmakīrti received the power of invincibility in debate through a vision of Heruka. Although already incomparably erudite, he continued his studies under the brahmin Kumaralila in order to be able to refute the secret Hindu philosophies. After he had gained an understanding of those systems, he offered the greedy brahmin silver and gold and bade him farewell. Following that, he became fa-

mous as a peerless debater, as a result of which he converted countless Hindu philosophers (including Kumarajīva) and their followers to the Buddhist teachings. See *HBI*, pp. 228-240.

29. This line from the *Treatise on Valid Cognition* concerns the inference that through the reason of the presence of smoke, one ascertains the presence of fire. Such inference directly arises on the basis of the mind that apprehends the presence of smoke as the reason. Since fire (i.e., a phenomenon) does not actually appear to that inference, it is not related directly. However, such inference correctly deduces fire (or its presence); thus, the inference and fire are indirectly related. Similarly, although practitioners of the way of mantra are of sharp faculties, all other beings, as their faculties become sharper with training, may become candidates for secret mantra in the course of time. Thus, indirectly, all beings are possible candidates for secret mantra practice.

30. *Lamp of the Three Modes* (Toh. 3707), vol. Tsu, f. 16b3-4.

31. The way of the perfections and that of mantra do not differ with respect to the view to be understood, the result to be attained, and the altruistic awakening mind as motivation. Nevertheless, mantra is superior by virtue of four features. The first is being clear with respect to the view: In the way of the perfections, at the stage of an ordinary individual, however much the practitioner ascertains the ineffable view through examples and reasons, understanding will be only conceptual. For a practitioner of mantra, pristine awareness is elicited in his or her mind at the time of the initiation through the profound crucial point of the dependent connection of the initiation's content, mantra, and contemplation (when the pristine awareness deity descends upon the student or at the time of the third initiation, and so forth). This is ineffable pristine awareness, which is an actual understanding arising by way of example and through the secret instructions of the master. Relying on that pristine awareness, actual pristine awareness can be swiftly brought forth. Source: Zhuchen Tsultrim Rinchen's *Catalogue of the Tengyur*, p. 199.

The second, abundant in methods, the means of realization, is explained as follows: In the way of mantra, the methods used to attain common powers and the supreme power of awakening are plentiful. Common powers, from invisibility and clairvoyance up to possession of magnificent wealth, outstanding discriminative wisdom, and long life, are gained slowly in the way of the perfections through generosity and the other perfections. The mantric practitioner can easily attain such common powers through innumerable "methods of attainment" (*sgrub thabs, sādhana*), such as that of Manjushri, Vasudhara, and so forth. These common powers also contribute to his or her awakening. The secret mantra way also incorporates a vast range of methods aimed at the supreme power (awakening) related to profound reality. For example, by cultivating the phase of generation of a deity with sixteen hands, one gains understanding of the sixteen emptinesses, while in the sutra system, one is able to gain mere knowledge of the state that transcends concepts. In addition, with exceptional techniques such as the practice of inner heat, the way of mantra produces states of non-conceptual contemplation. As to the means of attainment related to relative reality, secret mantra presents the methods for the creation of buddha realms and extensive forms of practice. For these reasons, mantra's methods are superior. Source: *SGP*, ff. 17b3-18a4.

The third, being devoid of hardships, is explained as follows: In the way of the perfections, awakening is achieved only with great difficulty in following a path that in-

volves undergoing hardships and austerities for three inestimably long aeons. Such hardships include giving up everything, from the top of one's head to the soles of the feet. Conversely, secret mantra is a path whereby awakening is gained through comparatively easy practices. Accordingly, the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* states:

Enlightenment will not be achieved  
 As the result of endless austerities and vows.  
 While freely enjoying  
 The pleasures of the senses,  
 With the yoga of one's deity  
 One offers them to oneself and others.  
 The master Vajrapani states:  
 Moreover, "without hardships" means using great bliss as the path.

Source: Zhuchen Tsultrim Rinchen's *Catalogue of the Tengyur*, p. 200.

The fourth, intended for persons of sharp faculties since attainment is swift, is explained by Sönam Tsemo: In the way of the perfections, to awaken, even with the utmost effort, requires three inestimably long aeons. In the indestructible way, persons of sharp faculties can become accomplished within one lifetime; those of average faculties, in the period between this life and the next; and those of inferior faculties, in seven or sixteen lifetimes (*SGP*, f. 18a3-5).

For Tripitakamala's own explanation of these four features, see Tsongkapa's *Tantra in Tibet* (English translation), pp. 145-149. See also Butön's *General Presentation of the Sets of Tantra* (henceforth cited as *BGP*), ff. 3b2-6a5.

32. *Dispelling the Two Extremes in the Indestructible Way* (Toh. 3714), vol. Tsu, ff. 115b6-116a1.

Jnanashri (Jñānaśrī) (Ye shes dpal) was a teacher of Atisha and one of the six "gatekeeper" scholars of the great monastic institution of Vikramashila at the time of King Dharmapala. Initially, he was a scholar of the proclaimers' way, but later his interest in the universal way and secret mantra way grew, and he became proficient in these. He had repeated visions of the Buddha, Maitreya, and Avalokiteshvara. See *HBI*, pp. 295; 302-303.

33. Concerning methods that "rely on unsurpassable scriptures" (literally, "focus") (*dmigs pa bla na med pa la dmigs pa'i thabs*), Jnanashri's *Dispelling the Two Extremes in the Indestructible Way* (f. 116a1-3) states that in the path of the perfections, the focus is on the *Perfection of Wisdom in One Hundred Thousand Stanzas*, the *Flower Array Scripture*, and so forth. In the path of mantra, these scriptures are not relied upon, but instead, the focus is on exceptional scriptures such as the *Hevajra Tantra in Five Hundred Thousand Stanzas*, *Glorious Yamari Tantra in Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Stanzas*, *Glorious Khasamana Tantra in One Hundred Thousand Stanzas*, and so forth.

On the "unsurpassable practice" (*sgrub pa bla na med pa*), Jnanashri states that in the way of the perfections, having gained the capacity for physical manifestations, one is able to effect the welfare of others in a hidden way. Likewise, in this path of mantra, even without gaining the capacity for physical manifestations, the practitioner achieves types of contemplations and physical manifestations unknown in the way of the per-

fections, thereby becoming able to effect the welfare of beings in a hidden way (f. 116a3).

Concerning “unsurpassable pristine awareness” (*ye shes bla na med pa*), Jnanashri states that, on the basis of a special contemplation that settles the mind, pristine awareness may swiftly arise through causes, spontaneously, and through pure actions (f. 116a3-4).

On “unsurpassable diligence” (*brtson ’grus bla na med pa*), he notes that because of the purity of the pledges one has assumed, the practitioner’s majestic diligence is exhibited unconditionally (f. 116a5-6).

On the “power to uplift all of one’s followers” (*gdul bya ma lus pa rjes su ’dzin par nus pa*), he explains that trainees from bad lineages such as butchers, and even murderers, and so on, who are rejected from the practice of other spiritual ways, here in the mantra system are accepted and declared that they will become accomplished. Therefore, mantra has the power to uplift all followers (f. 116a4-5).

“To bless or transform emotional afflictions” (*nyon mongs pa byin gyis rlobs pa*) means that through the bliss of the completion phase and by viewing afflictions as having the nature of an offering to the deities, emotional afflictions are transformed (f. 116a6).

“To overcome emotional afflictions” (*nyon mongs pa spong ba*) means that by transforming all phenomena into special divine appearances and through the pledge relating to the shape and color of the deity, one is spontaneously released from emotional afflictions (f. 116a5-6).

On “to swiftly impart blessing” (*byin gyis brlab pa myur ba*), Jnanashri comments: Unlike the path of the perfections, which states:

The blessing of the transcendent ones  
Is received once one has entered the path,

the mantra way uses skillful methods to channel into the trainee the blessings of all the transcendent ones right from the beginning (f. 116a6-7).

“To swiftly attain liberation” (*myur du ’byung ba*) is explained in this way: Owing to methods that distinguish it from the former path, in tantra, in a very short time (sixteen or seven lifetimes, or in a single lifetime), the trainee becomes released from cyclic existence and thus liberation is swift (f. 116a7).

Concerning “unsurpassable disposition” (*bsams pa bla na med pa*), Jnanashri states that disposition refers to the vajra yogas of awakened body, speech, and mind. By means of the yoga of awakened body, four qualities are accrued: the habitual tendencies for ordinary conceptual constructs are quickly removed; the ripening results of past actions are swiftly averted; an abundance of merit is acquired; and the selfless nature of phenomena is spontaneously understood (f. 116b2-3). The yoga of awakened speech yields twelve qualities: the ability to reveal the sacred words of the victorious ones; recollect the power of mantra teachings and thereby develop faith in them; accomplish the words of truth of the secret mantra; attain the wisdom of skillful methods (the power of secret mantras), pristine awareness (the power of awareness mantras), and retention (the power of retention mantras); achieve undivided contemplation; venerate the exalted ones; effect the welfare of others; swiftly reach the stages of familiarization and attainment of the deity; gain mastery over phenomena as the magical play of letters; understand that all sounds are like an echo; and directly know the selfless nature of phenomena (f. 117a1-4). The yoga of awakened mind gives rise to all qualities: At all times and in every

circumstance, phenomena are seen as an illusion, and therefore emotional afflictions are forsaken without difficulty. Free of any pride in virtue, the yogin acquires all that is wonderful in this world and beyond it (ff. 117b7-118a1).

As to the “unsurpassable conduct” (*spyod pa bla na med pa*), Jnanashri notes that unsurpassable conduct prohibits three unsuitable practices: The first involves conduct that weakens one’s energy, such as unbearable asceticism and restraints that do not lead to accomplishment. Instead, one relies on sources of pleasure and thereby becomes spiritually accomplished (f. 118b1-2). Second is distracting conduct such as reading scriptures, circumambulating reliquaries, and other physical and verbal activities. Instead, one focuses on inner practices, the contemplation of reality alone, and so forth (f. 118b4-5). Third is the conduct based on adherence to limiting concepts of what is clean and what unclean. Instead, one consumes the five meats (of horse, ox, dog, elephant, and human) and five nectars (of semen, blood, feces, urine, and human flesh) by initially contemplating their emptiness and then transforming them into divine nectars (f. 119a4-7).

34. Indrabhuti’s opinion is recorded in Ashvaghosha’s *Summation of Pledges* (Toh. 3725), vol. Tshu, f. 44a6-7. Reference to the name of the work of Indrabhuti from which the citation is drawn is not provided.

The name Indrabhuti is associated with the “Land of Oddiyana,” which is identified by some scholars as the Swat Valley region of northern Pakistan. Different persons are referred to by this name. The first, or “Great,” Indrabhuti (*BA*, p. 359) was the King of Oddiyana who requested the Buddha to expound the Guhyasamaja tantra. He is also known as King Dza and considered to be the first tantric adept and an emanation of Vajrapani. The reference here is likely to the “middle” Indrabhuti (*HBI*, p. 241), disciple of the great adept Kambala, whose story is recounted in Abhayadatta’s *Life of the Eighty-four Great Siddhas*. A third Indrabhuti is spoken of, but his identification is uncertain.

35. Buddhajnanapada’s statement is recorded in Ashvaghosha’s *Summation of Pledges* (Toh. 3725), vol. Tshu, f. 44a7. Reference to the name of the work of Buddhajnanapada (Jñānapada) from which the citation is drawn is not provided.

Buddhajnanapada, the foremost disciple of Haribhadra, was the master who consecrated Vikramashila Monastery. Endowed with miraculous powers, he would receive wealth from the deity Jambala in the night to be spent the following day in pious acts, such as supporting monks. He widely expounded the highest yoga tantra system and, in particular, the Guhyasamaja tantra (*HBI*, pp. 278-280).

36. *Presentation of the Three Ways* (Toh. 3712), vol. Tsu, f. 101b4-7.

Shantipa (Ratnakarashanti), a disciple of Naropa, is counted as one of the six gatekeepers of Vikramashila Monastery. Once, while on a teaching mission in Sri Lanka, he gave oral instructions to a modest farmer named Kotali. Later, during a meditation retreat, Shantipa received a visit from Kotali, who by that time had attained the fullest realization owing to his practice of Shantipa’s instructions. Shantipa, who had not yet attained realization himself, requested from Kotali the same instructions he had given him, and in twelve years, Shantipa also awakened.

37. See Tsongkapa’s explanation of these points in *Tantra in Tibet* (English translation), p. 134; and Buton’s *Survey of Yoga Tantra*, Collected Works, vol. Da, f. 2b1-5.

38. *Summation of Pledges* (Toh. 3725), vol. Tshu, f. 44a3-6. Kedrupje states with reason and finality that this text is wrongly attributed to Atisha (*mKhas grub rje's Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems* [English translation], henceforth cited as *IBTS*, p. 155) and that the author is in fact Ashvaghosha.

Atisha, son of a Bengal king, was inspired by Tara, his tutelary deity, to renounce his kingdom and seek a spiritual goal. He began his quest as a yogin, then became a monk, and subsequently became famous as the greatest scholar and most saintly person of his time, revered by both the individualist and universalist monastic communities. Upon receiving a prophecy from Tara and an invitation from a Tibetan king, despite the fact that his life would be shortened, he decided to travel to Tibet in 1042 to propagate the teachings of Buddhism. There he taught extensively and died in 1054 without returning to India. His contribution to the later development of Buddhism in Tibet is felt up to the present day. For the life of Atisha, see Alaka Chattopadhyaya's study, *Atīśa and Tibet* (Calcutta, 1967).

39. Nagarjuna (N>g>rjuna) (Klu sgrub) was born in southern India in a brahmin family and became the pioneer of the centrist system of philosophy and one of the foremost proponents of the universal way. He is said to have been called Nagarjuna (meaning "one who has achieved his goal with the aid of nagas") because nagas presented him with the large *Transcendent Wisdom Scripture* and other scriptures that were hidden in their world. Nagarjuna wrote the *Five Stages*, the *Ritual of the Mandala of Guhyasamaja*, and other works, which served as bases for commentaries composed by later scholars and siddhas.

40. The dimension of reality is one of the three bodies or dimensions of awakening (*sku gsum, trikāya*): the reality dimension (*chos sku, dharmakāya*), enjoyment dimension (*longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku, sambhogakāya*), and manifest dimension of awakening (*sprul pa'i sku, nirmānakāya*), which represent awakened mind, speech, and visible embodiment, respectively. A fourth, the essential dimension (*ngo bo nyid kyi sku, svabhāvikakāya*), is considered to be the essence of all three. In his *General Meaning of the Hevajra Tantra*, Kongtrul defines them in terms of the purity of different aspects of consciousness. The consciousness that perceives objects (*'jug pa'i rnam shes*), when purified through the phase of generation, is the manifest dimension, which accomplishes the welfare of others through various means. The subjective mind (*yi'd*), which exists in relation to the ground-of-all (*kun gzhi, ālaya*) as an illusory factor to be relinquished, when purified by bliss, is the enjoyment dimension, which enjoys the doctrine of the universal way. The ground-of-all purified of adventitious stains is the reality dimension. The indivisibility of these three is the essential dimension (*General Meaning of the Hevajra Tantra*, hereafter cited as *MH*, f. 37b1-3).

41. See Ashvaghosha's *Summation of Pledges* (Toh 3725), vol. Tshu, f. 44b1-5; and *BGP*, f. 20b1-5.

42. Karma Trīnlé Choklé Namgyal (Karma phrin las phyogs las rnam rgyal) (1456-1539): A renowned scholar, disciple of the Seventh Karmapa, Chödrak Gyatso (Chos grags rgya mtsho) (1454-1506), and master of the Eighth Karmapa, Mikyö Dorjé (Mi bskyod rdo rje) (1507-1554).

43. Activities, or ways, to enhance realizations (*bogs 'byin gyi sgo*) here refers to methods intended to amplify realizations in the phases of generation and completion. In the

phase of generation, enhancing activities enable the yogin to attain different common powers, and in the phase of completion, to attain the supreme power. Enhancing activities include the complex, unelaborate, and simple tantric conducts, the feast offering, and the auxiliary wrathful ritual (*drag sbul gyi sbyor ba*) to elicit results (*spogs chog*). The auxiliary ritual is known as “threatening” (*sdigs sbyor*) or “striking with the dagger” (*phurbus gdab pa*), or the ritual of killing the deity (*lha bsad pa'i sbyor ba*). This ritual compels the deity to bestow powers by striking the dagger at vital points of its form. (For an extensive discussion, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 533-566.) There are as well specific methods to elicit desired results, such as recitation of the deity's mantra in the reverse order, or remaining for an extended period in total darkness. This latter technique is used when one is engaged in the illusory body practice while contemplating phenomena as dream images. If one's adherence to the concreteness of phenomena remains fixed and the dreamlike nature not realized, the “dark retreat” is beneficial since the various visions experienced in the conditions of the retreat are more easily understood to lack reality, and the goal of one's endeavors more easily fulfilled (oral teaching of Bokar Rinpoché).

44. According to the secret mantra system, by following the perfections, a practitioner may be able to reach the tenth stage of awakening, but in order to become fully awakened, he or she must enter the mantra path. Thus, the way of the perfections leads to full awakening only indirectly. At the tenth stage, or prior to that when still on the path of training (*slob pa'i lam*), a practitioner must enter the tantric path, which involves the training of mantra, in order to attain awakening, or the path of no more training (*mi slob pa'i lam*) which leads to the final result of awakening.

45. Union beyond training (*mi slob pa'i zung 'jug*): the union of the actual luminous clarity and the pure (i.e., free from emotional afflictions and obscurations) illusory body; or union of the manifest dimension of awakening and the reality dimension. The characteristics of this union are summarized by Kongtrul as a total union exemplifying highest freedom and realization. Freedom refers to the knowledge that obscurations and their predispositions are already exhausted primordially. Realization refers to the knowledge that understands without examination all phenomena of cyclic existence and perfect peace, such as the ground, the path, and so forth, to be like the images in a mirror divination. *IOK*, vol. III, p. 657.

46. Increasing-by-one class of scriptures (*gcig las 'phros pa'i lung, ekottarikāgama*), one of the four *āgamas* (*āgama*) or traditions of scriptures into which the collection of the Buddha's discourses (*sūtrapiṭaka*) were arranged. The four *āgamas* (*lung sde bzhi*) are discourses in verses (*yang dag par ldan pa'i lung, samyuktāgama*); the long discourses (*lung ring mo, dīrghāgama*); the intermediate-length discourses (*lung bar ma, madhyamāgama*); and the increasing-by-one scriptures on enumerated items classified according to the numbers of the items in sections of ones, twos, threes, up to elevens. See *IOK*, vol. I, p. 375.

47. Application of the garuda (*mkha' lding gi sbyor ba*): a procedure to control nagas and worldly deities such as Vishnu, involving mantras, medicines, and contemplation. See Sarah's *Commentary on the Mahamaya Tantra* (Toh. 1654), vol. Ra, f. 185a7.

48. The great adept Buddhagupta is one of the Indian masters of Taranata. For his biography, see Taranata's *Seven Instruction Lineages* (*bKa' babs bdun ldan*).

49. Taranata (rJe btsun ta ra na tha) (1575-1634), also known as Kunga Nyingpo (Kun dga' snying po), was a translator, scholar, and accomplished master affiliated with the Jonang school. It is evident throughout his works that Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé holds Taranata's views on every subject in great esteem. Kongtrul was considered to have been a reincarnation of Taranata.

50. This could be interpreted to mean that since in most of the tantras one generates oneself as deities and enjoys offerings, these are actually enjoyed by deities.

51. Six fortunes (*skal pa drug*) or marvels (*phun sum tshogs pa*): lordliness (*dbang phyug*), beauty (*gzugs*), wealth (*dpal*), renown (*grags pa*), pristine awareness (*ye shes*), and diligence (*brtson 'grus*). The six fortunes, which encompass all awakened qualities, are known as *bhaga*; an awakened one, who possesses them, is known as *bhagawan*. Qualities concordant with the six fortunes of a buddha also exist in bodhisattvas. Lordliness refers to the ten powers of a buddha; beauty, to the major and minor marks of a buddha's body; wealth, to the buddha realm replete with infinite enjoyments; renown, to praise, since a buddha is worthy of the veneration of all beings; pristine awareness, to the eighteen exclusive qualities of a buddha; and diligence, to the spontaneous, fortuitous, and unmistakable altruistic activities of a buddha which are not based on conceptual motivation. These represent the results of contemplation, patience, morality, generosity, wisdom, and diligence, respectively, and are said to be the purified aspects of the six elements of earth, water, fire, air, space, and pristine awareness. See Naropa's *Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation: Compendium of Ultimate Reality* (Toh. 1351), vol. Na, f. 221b6-7; Taranata's *Complete Elucidation of the Profound Meaning: Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation* (hereafter cited as *CS1*), Collected Works, vol. 4, f. 5a3-b5.

52. Tantra application (*rgyud kyi sbyor ba*): See Chapter 14.

53. This tantra is not extant. However, some of its passages are found in the *Kalachakra Condensed Tantra* (Toh. 362), *Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation* (Toh. 361), Pundarika's *Stainless Light* (Toh. 845 and Toh. 1347), Naropa's *Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation* (Toh. 1351), and other sources. This citation is found in the work of Naropa (f. 283b6-7).

54. *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 443), vol. Ca, f. 151b1-2.

55. To be "completely free from worldly conduct" is explained by Nagarjuna as to relinquish all conceptions related to the ordinary body and to contemplate oneself in the form of the deity. "Vajra" refers to the indestructible, primordial body, speech, and mind; here, "all vajras" refers to the five primordial buddhas. For Nagarjuna's interpretation of this verse, see Wayman's *Yoga of the Guhyasamaja*.

56. *Short Guide to the Meaning of Highest Yoga Tantra* (Toh. 3713), vol. Tsu, f. 105b6.

57. Activations (*las*) refers to activities (*phrin las*) based on pristine awareness performed to enhance one's own or others' spiritual scope. The power to perform these is gained as an effect of the practice of deity yoga and repetition of a prescribed number of mantras. Although unlimited in number and mode, such activations may be classified as four, eight, twelve, or fourteen. The four are the basic ones: pacifying or appeasing (*zhi ba'i las*), enriching or enhancing (*rgyas pa'i las*), dominating (*dbang gi las*), and fierce or

forceful (*drag po'i las*). The eight are appeasing, enriching, dominating, summoning, liberating, expelling, paralyzing, and stupefying. They become twelve with the addition of purging poison, separating, pacifying epidemics, and striking with the dagger; and fourteen by adding reviving and becoming invisible. See *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 632-633.

## CHAPTER 2: THE DIVISIONS OF TANTRA

1. *Indestructible Essence Ornament Tantra* (Toh. 451), vol. Cha, f. 51b3.

2. The teachers (*ston pa*) of the outer tantra are Vairochana, Buddha Shakyamuni, and others. The teachers of the inner tantra are Vajradhara, Heruka, and so forth. The student (*khor*) of the outer tantra is one whose continuum differs from that of the teacher; the student of the inner tantra is one whose continuum is the same as the teacher's. The outer tantra was taught in places (*gnas*) such as Unsurpassed, Land of Bliss, and so forth; the inner tantra, in the *bhaga* of the Vajra Queen. The principal articles for offering (*mchod rdzas*) in the outer tantra are outer objects such as flowers and the five sense objects; in the inner tantra, primarily the five meats and five nectars of the human body and the enjoyment of the five types of consorts. As for the path (*lam*), in the outer tantra, a similitude of liberation is taken as the path, and the deity is generated according to the manner of awakening; in the inner tantra, a similitude of conditioned existence is taken as the path, and the deity is generated in a way as to purify the four modes of birth. In outer tantra, the essential principle (*de kho na nyid*) of the deity is revealed as the five pristine awarenesses, while in inner tantra, the ordinary aggregates, the five meats, the five nectars, and so forth, are revealed as the five pristine awarenesses. Source: *BGP*, ff. 50b-52b4.

3. *Indestructible Essence Ornament Tantra*, f. 52b6.

4. See Chapter 1, n. 12 on Buddhaguhya.

Lilavajra (Lilavajra, sGeg pa'i rdo rje) was a disciple of the great adept Lalitavajra (Rol pa'i rdo rje), who committed to writing many of his master's words. For details of his life, see *HBI*, pp. 244-245.

Anandagarbha (Ānandagarbha, Kun dga' snying po) was born in central India, belonged to the *mahasāṅgika* sect, and held the centrist view which was influenced by idealism (*vijñānamādhyamaka*). Having studied the various sciences at Vikramashila Monastery in Bengal, Anandagarbha became an adept of the yoga tantras taught by the disciples of the greatly accomplished Prakashachandra. While residing in a forest, he had a vision of a mandala, and as a consequence, gained special powers. The deities of the mandala instructed him to compose tantric treatises. Among his works, the most famous are the *Illumination of the Summation of Essential Principles* (Toh. 2510), the *Diamond Source* (Toh. 2516), and the *Commentary on the Supreme Original Being Tantra* (Toh. 2511). Anandagarbha is one of the renowned "three experts on yoga tantra" (*rnal 'byor rgyud la mkhas pa'i mi gsum*), Shakyamitra and Buddhaguhya being the other two. See *HBI*, pp. 284-287; and Butön's *Survey of Yoga Tantra*, ff. 59a-362b2.

5. *Indestructible Nectar Commentary* (Toh. 1650), vol. Ra, f. 22b1-2.

6. *Indestructible Tent* (Toh. 419), vol. Nga, f. 54b6.

7. *Short Guide to the Meaning of Highest Yoga Tantra* (Toh. 3713), vol. Tsu, f. 105b5.
8. *Samputa Tantra* (Toh. 381), vol. Ga, f. 115b2-3. The *Samputa* is a general explanatory tantra of Hevajra.
9. The last line of this citation, “the way of worms in wood,” refers to the essential way of using in the path the emotional affliction of desire for sensory pleasures. Worms born in wood can entirely consume that same wood. In the same way, the bliss born from the desire aroused by gazing, laughing, holding hands, and sexual union, when realized as the pristine awareness of bliss and emptiness, entirely consumes all ignorance and emotional afflictions such as desire. Thus, in highest yoga tantra, the four tantras are also known by the names “tantra of gazing,” “tantra of laughing,” “tantra of holding hands,” and “tantra of sexual union.”
10. *Stainless Light (Vimalaprabha)* (Toh. 1347): the renowned commentary on the *Kalachakra Condensed Tantra* which served as the basis for subsequent literature on the subject. Its author, Pundarika, is the legendary ninth king of Shambhala and son of the seventh king, Manjushriyasha (author of the *Kalachakra Condensed Tantra*).
11. *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra* (Toh. 447), vol. Ca, f. 284b6-7.
12. Ordinary powers (*thun mong gi dngos grub*), “ordinary” as opposed to the supreme “power” of awakening (*mchog gi dngos grub*), are classified as lesser, middling, and great. The lesser include eight powers (*dngos grub brgyad*) and various activations (see Chapter 1, n. 57). The middling powers consist of those of an awareness-holder of the desire realm endowed with the eight physical qualities of lordliness. The great powers consist of the powers of a supreme awareness-holder of the desire realm and an awareness-holder of the form realm equally endowed as the gods of that realm (see Chapter 1, n. 24). The supreme power is twofold: provisional and definitive. The former consists of the dimension of union (*zung ’jug gi sku*) of the exalted level of a bodhisattva attained through the mantric path; the latter, the state of a perfect buddha. For an extensive discussion of the various ordinary powers, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 629-640.
13. The “patriarchs of the Sakya school” (*Sa skya’i rje btsun rnams*) generally refers to the first five masters of the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism. The five early masters of the Sakya school are Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (Sa chen Kun dga’ snying po) (1102-1158); Sönam Tsemo (bSod nams rtse mo) (1142-1182); Drakpa Gyaltsen (Grags pa rgyal mtshan) (1147-1216); Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen (Sa skya paöçita Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan) (1182-1251); and Chögyal Pakpa (Chos rgyal ’phags pa) (1235-1280).
14. Toh. 504; Toh. 505.
15. *Presentation of the Three Ways* (Toh. 3712), vol. Tsu, f. 103b6.
16. *Indestructible Tent* (Toh. 419), vol. Nga, f. 54b5.
17. *Lamp of the Three Modes* (Toh. 3707), vol. Tsu, ff. 21b3-22a1.
18. *Commentary on the Lamp for the Path* (Toh. 3948), vol. Khi, f. 287a4-5.
19. Atisha’s *Commentary on the Lamp for the Path* (Toh. 3948, vol. Khi, f. 287b1) states that there are four thousand skills tantras (*rtog pa’i rgyud*) and provides numerous ex-

amples: *Tantra of the Origin of Tara* (*Tārābhavatantra*, *sGrol ma 'byung ba'i rgyud*) (Toh. 726); *Trisamayavyuha* (*Trisamayavyūha*, *Dam tshig gsum bkod pa*) (Toh. 502); and *Compendium of Skills* (\**Kalpanasamuccaya*, *rTog pa'i kun las btus pa*) (unidentified). In Sherburne's translation of *A Lamp for the Path and Commentary* (see reference bibliography), the *Compendium of Skills* has been wrongfully identified as *Sarva-kalpa-sammuccaya-nāma-sarva-buddha-samāyoga-dākinī-jāla-sambara-uttarotantra* (Toh. 367), which is a highest yoga tantra of the Samvara class, whereas the tantra discussed here belongs to the class of either the action or conduct tantras.

20. According to Atisha (*Commentary on the Lamp for the Path*, vol. Khi, f. 287b2), there are six thousand tantras in the division of tantra of both (*gnyis ka'i rgyud*, *ubhayatantra*), examples of which are the *Net of Magical Manifestation* (*Māyājāla*, *sGyu 'phrul drva ba*, Toh. 466) (a tantra of the yoga tantra class), and the *Lord of the Lotus Dancers* (\**Padmanarśvara*, *Padma gar gyi dbang phyug*). This last tantra does not seem to be part of the Kangyur; the Tengyur, however, contains six sadhanas for Padmanarśvara, including one whose author is Kukuraja (Toh. 1667).

21. For a list of tantras belonging to these classes, see Atisha's *Commentary on the Lamp for the Path* (Toh. 3948, vol. Khi, f. 287b2-7); see also Taranata's *Origin of the Kalachakra Teachings*, *Collected Works*, vol. 2, ff. 3b5-4a6.

22. This rationale for the fourfold classification of the tantras is refuted by Tsongkapa (see *Tantra in Tibet*, in English, pp. 153-154) but accepted by other masters such as Sakyapa Sönam Tsemo (see *SGP*, ff. 27a4-30b4) and Kongtrul. Sönam Tsemo specifies that the four groups of non-Buddhists are followers of the Vedas and that their peculiar "religious" observances are related to their predominant afflictions. He points out the way the four tantras accommodate and inspire these four groups.

He adds that the first chapter of the *Summation of Essential Principles* (Toh. 479) (vol. Nya, ff. 1-142), called *Indestructible Dimension*, presents deities with passionate aspects in order to accommodate beings whose strongest emotional affliction is desire; the second chapter, called *Victory Over the Three Worlds*, presents deities with wrathful aspects to accommodate those whose strongest affliction is aversion; the third chapter, called *Training Beings*, presents deities in their peaceful aspects to accommodate those whose strongest affliction is delusion; and the fourth chapter, called *Accomplishing All Aims*, presents deities varying in color and aspects to accommodate those of uncertain emotional patterns (f. 30a5-b3).

Subhutipalita is said to be one of the masters of Anandagarbha (*HBI*, p.285). The Tengyur contains only one work attributed to him (Toh. 2525), a fire-offering ritual.

23. *Marvellous Cemetery Ornament* (Toh. 413), vol. Ga, f. 254b2-5. Correspondence between the trainees of the four tantras and the four castes is also asserted by Alamkākālaśa in his *Commentary on the Indestructible Garland* (Toh. 1795), vol. Gi, ff. 3a3-4a2. See Tsongkapa's *Tantra in Tibet* (English translation), pp. 155-156.

24. Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Phenomenology* (Toh. 4089), vol. Ku, f. 9b2-3.

25. For the features of these realms, see Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé's *Myriad Worlds* (English translation), ch. 2.

26. This viewpoint is held by the master Bhava (most probably Bhavabhadra) and his followers (*BGP*, f. 32b1).

27. The assertion that the fourfold division of tantra is made in consideration of the four trends of Buddhist philosophy (*siddhanā*) is made by Smṛiti (Smṛti) in his commentary called *Vajra-vidāraṇā-nāma-dhāraṇī-vṛtti*. Sōnam Tsemo ascribes this assertion to Nagarjuna and Aryadeva and states that it is based on the *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra* (Toh. 447). One might have the impression that action, conduct, yoga, and highest yoga tantra would be correlated, respectively, with the analyst (*vaibhāṣika*), traditionist (*sautrāntika*), idealist (*cittamātra*), and centrist (*mādhyamika*) philosophical trends (as asserted by Butön in *BGP*, f. 45a7-b4). However, Sōnam Tsemo states that action tantra was taught in order to accommodate the *vatsiputriya* (*gnas ma bu ba*) and the *aparantika* (*nyi 'og pa*) (two of the eighteen original individualists' schools) who adhered to the analysts' philosophy; conduct tantra, to accommodate Kashmiri analysts and traditionists; yoga tantra, to accommodate solitary sages; and the highest yoga tantra, to accommodate idealists and centrists of the universal way.

Sōnam Tsemo correlates the four tantras' different styles of deity yoga with the views of the aforementioned followers of the four philosophical trends. He states that the action tantra's style of deity yoga is taught for the *vatsiputriya* and *aparantika*, who believe in the existence of a permanent and inexpressible self. Corresponding to their view of an inexpressible self, in action tantra, the trainee meditates on a pristine awareness deity, which is neither the painting of the deity nor the meditator who is still in ordinary form. Accordingly, the trainee arranges a painting of the deity, performs acts of veneration, such as offerings and ablutions, and then invokes and meditates on the pristine awareness deity with the attitude that this deity is like a king, and himself, the practitioner, a subject.

Conduct tantra's style of deity yoga is taught for the sake of Kashmiri analysts and traditionists who, although denying the existence of a self, believe in the reality of subtle particles (the object) and in partless moments of consciousness (the subject). Corresponding to their view, which asserts the reality of the apprehended and apprehender, in conduct tantra, one contemplates a twofold deity. Accordingly, one meditates on oneself as the pledge deity and invokes and meditates on the pristine awareness deity in front. The relationship of oneself as the deity and the deity in front is like that of friends.

Yoga tantra's style of deity yoga is taught for solitary sages who do not accept the reality of subtle particles (the object) but do believe in the reality of moments of apprehending consciousness. Corresponding to their view, in yoga tantra, the deities generated are two on the relative level, but merge as one ultimately. Accordingly, one meditates on oneself as the pledge deity, and then one merges into the pristine awareness deity. At the end of the meditative session, the pristine awareness deity is requested to depart.

Highest yoga tantra's style of deity yoga is taught for idealists and centrists of the universal way who, although accepting in a relative sense a subject, deny it in an absolute sense. Corresponding to their view, in highest yoga tantra, one meditates on two deities, the pledge deity and the pristine awareness deity (the former then merged into the latter), but no departure of the pristine awareness deity, even in between meditation sessions, is performed (*SGP*; f. 30b4-31b5).

For a discussion of the four philosophical trends in Buddhism, see Jeffrey Hopkins' *Meditation on Emptiness* (hereafter cited as *ME*) (London: Wisdom Publications, 1983).

28. Naturally present deity (*nang byung gi lha*) refers to the deity which is the nature of one's own pristine awareness. Butön's *General Presentation of the Sets of Tantra*, on which

Kongtrul relies heavily for this chapter, states that in action tantra the yogin meditates on the depicted deity or another image of the deity, as well as on himself as the inner deity (f. 20b3).

29. Commenting on the relevant lines of the *Kalachakra Condensed Tantra*, Butön states that the left face of Kalachakra taught action and conduct tantras for the sake of those who, influenced by the habitual tendencies of the state of sleep and the waking state, grasp external gross phenomena as real. The right face of Kalachakra taught the yoga tantra for the sake of those who, influenced by the habitual tendencies of the dream state, cling to phenomena as being simply mind's appearances. The central face of Kalachakra taught the mother tantra for the sake of those who, influenced by the habitual tendencies of deep sleep (when all thoughts related to external objects cease), cling to the state of no thoughts. The anterior face of Kalachakra taught the tantra of the merchant class for the sake of those who, influenced by the habitual tendency for orgasm, cling to pleasure (*BGP*, f. 20b4-7).

30. In his *Illumination of Secret Reality* (f. 349b4-5), Krishnacharya states that tantra is taught in four sets in consideration of the four eras. For the era of completeness, action tantra is taught; for the era of three quarters, conduct tantra; for the era of two quarters, yoga tantra; and for the era of turmoil, highest yoga tantra. See also *BGP*, f. 21a2-3. On the four eras, see chapter 3 of Kongtrul's *Myriad Worlds* (English translation), section entitled "Different Ways of Explaining the Four Eras."

The division of tantra in accordance with the purity of the four periods of day and night is set forth in Pundarika's *Stainless Light* in this way: The first period represents the tantra of laughing; the third period, the tantra of looking; the fifth period, the tantra of touching the breast of the consort; the seventh period, the tantra of holding hands. Hence, tantra has four divisions (*BGP*, f. 21a1-2).

31. *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 418), vol. Nga, f. 27a7-b1.

32. *Indestructible Tent* (Toh. 419), vol. Nga, f. 54b6. The view expressed here is held by Virupa, Dombi Heruka, and others (*SGP*, f. 32b5).

33. For the four seals in yoga tantra, see below, Chapter 5, nn. 23, 26.

34. On these points, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 159-275.

### CHAPTER 3: ACTION TANTRA

1. *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra* (Toh. 447), vol. Ca, f. 285a7-b1. An explanatory tantra of the Guhyasamaja.

2. Eight powers (*dnagos grub brgyad*): the power of mantra (*sngags*) refers to the capacity to influence beings in both peaceful and forceful modes, by means of mantra. Medicine (*sman*) refers to the elixir of virility and longevity (*bcud len*). Fire offering (*sbyin sreg*) is the power to perform the various forms of activation, (appeasing, enriching, and so forth) through fire rituals. Powders (*phye ma*) possibly refers to the power of the pill (*ril bu*) which, when placed in the mouth, enables the yogin to become invisible or assume any form desired, or, alternatively, to the drop of substance (*rdzas kyi thig le*) applied to the forehead that imparts the same power of invisibility. Eye-salve (*smig sman*) enables

one to see the three realms. Swiftens of foot (*rkang mgyogs*) enables one to travel great distances in short times. These are powers gained in dependence on “substances” or “objects.” If the yogin is separated from these substances, he loses the corresponding power. These eight powers are presented in slightly different ways depending on the tantra. For an extensive discussion, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 629-640.

3. As noted in Tsongkapa's *The Yoga of Tibet: The Exposition of Secret Mantra* (English translation) (henceforth cited as *YT*) in the sections concerning action and conduct tantra (pp. 9, 47), the words of the *Compendium* “to view with apprehension” (*jigs par dmigs*) have been understood as “terrified of single-minded cultivation of deity yoga.” According to this interpretation, the apprehension that trainees of action tantra feel is related to viewing the body as divine. Such apprehension is born out of the conception that one's body is unclean, and thus it would not be appropriate to meditate on it as a deity.

4. The pledge deity (lit. “pledge being”) (*dam tshig sems dpa', samayasattva*) and the pristine awareness deity (*ye shes sems dpa', jñānasattva*) are among the most important principles in tantra. Later in this book, Kongtrul states that the pledge deity is generated anew by the yogin, while the pristine awareness deity (invited from the ultimate dimension of phenomena to merge with the pledge one) has always been present.

Padmavajra, in his *Commentary on [Buddhaguhya's] Guide to the Meaning of Tantra* (Toh. 2502, vol. '1, f. 114b2-4), explains that the pledge being is the union of the trainee with the image of the deity through intense effort to achieve such union, resolve, and single-minded contemplation. The pristine awareness being is of two kinds: one born from the perfections (*pāramitā*) and one born from pristine awareness (*jñāna*). The one born from the perfections is the one who seeks higher levels by way of traversing the ten stages (*bhūmi*) and practicing the ten perfections. The one born from pristine awareness is the manifestation as the form of the lord of the mandala with retinue produced from the realization of pure awakening mind (*bodhicitta*). See *IBTS*, p. 162, n. 17, for Tsongkapa's explanation of these.

5. The phrase of the *Compendium* “not to be a receptacle for the sublime teachings” is explained by Tsongkapa as meaning “not a receptacle for using in the path deeds of desire—this being unusual or contrary to the [ways of the] world” (*YT*, p. 58).

6. The phrase of the *Compendium* “to train [while] being conditioned by concepts about the purity or impurity of things” is explained by Tsongkapa as meaning “achieve the path through practices involving thoughts on the features of faults such as birth, ageing, and so forth, in conjunction with the conception of true existence” (*YT*, p. 58).

7. Concerning these families, Butön states that Trisamaya and other secret mantra deities empowered by the transcendent ones (who have realized the ultimate nature of things, or, in other words, “have gone to transcendent reality” [*de bzhin gshegs pa*]), belong to the transcendent family (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs, tathāgatakulā*). The tantras of these families have been spoken by the transcendent ones with the aim of bestowing on humans and gods the highest attainment.

Tara and other deities empowered by Avalokiteshvara (who sees all sentient beings with the eye of compassion undefiled by emotional afflictions) belong to the lotus family (*padma'i rigs, padmakulā*). The tantras of these families have been spoken by

Avalokiteshvara with the aim of bestowing the eight powers as well as control over the three realms, on the earth, below the earth, and in the sky.

The wrathful deities and others empowered by Vajrapani (who is blessed by indestructible (*vajra*) pristine awareness generated by the practice of the six perfections) belong to the vajra family (*rdo rje'i rigs, vajrakula*). The tantras of this family have been spoken by Vajrapani with the aim of subduing secretive *yakshas*.

Manibhadra and others who are empowered as an inexhaustible source of wealth in order to eliminate the suffering of poverty amongst sentient beings belong to the wealthy family (*nor can gyi rigs, manikula*).

Panchaka, the one "playing with five dice," along with five hundred children, Mekhala (his consort), and so on, who accomplish the rites for having children, increasing wealth, and so on, belong to the prosperity family (*rgyas pa'i rigs, paustikakula*) (also known as the elephant or ox family). The tantras of this family have been spoken by Manibhadra and \*Purnapitri (Gang po pha), two divine and wealthy sages, and set forth rites to accomplish various aims such as winning wars, increasing prosperity, resolving quarrels and conflicts, providing protection, gaining power, finding a spouse, and so forth.

Gods, demi-gods, and others, excluding those belonging to the other five families, who have offered their individual secret mantras and rites to the Buddha, belong to the family of worldlings (*jig rten phal pa'i rigs, laukikakula*). The tantras of these families have been taught by gods, demi-gods, and others who had faith in the Buddha and have been spoken with his approval (*BGP*, ff. 248b2-253b3).

8. For a list of tantras of the lord (*gtso bo*), the master (*bdag po*), the mother or consort (*yum*), the *ushnisha* (*gtsug tor*) class of deities, the male and female wrathful deities (*khro bo, khro mo*), male and female messengers (*pho nya, pho nya mo*), and male and female servants (*bka' nyan, bka' nyan ma*) of each family, see Taranata's *Elucidation of the Indestructible Way*, Collected Works, vol. 8, f. 3a1-b7; *BGP*, f. 249b6; and Kedrupjé's *IBTS*, pp. 103-113.

9. Buddhaguhya's *Commentarial Notes Epitomizing the Dialogue with Subahu Tantra* (Toh. 2673), vol. Thu, f. 102a7-b3.

10. *Subahu Tantra* (Toh. 805), vol. Wa, f. 136b6.

11. Buddhaguhya's *Commentary on the Dhyānottara Tantra* (Toh. 2670), vol. Thu, f. 4a3.

12. Secret mantra (*gsang sngags*) emphasizes male deities: awareness mantra (*rig sngags*), female deities. Through retention mantra (*gzungs sngags*), the meaning of the two mantras are retained and realized by wisdom. Hence, retention mantras are part of both secret and awareness mantras. Ultimately, all three types of mantra represent pristine awareness, which is the indivisibility of method and wisdom. Since such pristine awareness cognizes ultimate reality and protects beings and their minds, it is secret mantra; as it overcomes ignorance and unveils knowledge, it is awareness mantra. In this sense, the terms "secret mantra" or "awareness mantra" can refer to any deity, male or female (*BGP*, f. 260a2-5).

See also Buddhaguhya's *Commentary on the Subahu Tantra* (Toh. 2673), vol. Thu, f. 101a6-7; and Padmavajra's *Commentary on [Buddhaguhya's] Guide to the Meaning of Tantra* (Toh. 2502), vol. '1, f. 273b2-3.

13. *Essence of Pristine Awareness* (Toh. 422), vol. Nga, f. 118a4.
14. *Manjushri Root Tantra* (Toh. 543), vol. Na, f. 127a6.
15. The *Manjushri Root Tantra* (Toh. 543) is the chief tantra of the master of the transcendent family (see *IBTS*, p. 11). For the procedure of the five parts of the water initiation, see the *Manjushri Root Tantra*, vol. Na, ff. 126b3-127a6. For the arrangements of mandalas in this tantra, see the second chapter of the *Manjushri Root Tantra* on the rite of the mandala. The vases are dedicated by the master prior to the initiation.
16. *General Tantra* (Toh. 806), vol. Wa.
17. During the initiation, students each throw a flower onto the mandala to determine their affiliation with one or other of the buddha families.
18. Eight auspicious substances (*bkra shis rdzas brgyad*): mirror; bezoar (*giwang* medicine); curd; *Panicum dactylon* grass (*durva* grass); wood-apple fruit (*bilva* fruit); conch-shell coiled clockwise; cinnabar; and white mustard seed.
19. *Trisamayavyuha Tantra* (Toh. 502), vol. Da, f. 215a4-7. Here, Kongtrul has summarized the words of the tantra.
20. Ten unwholesome deeds (*mi dge ba bcu*): murder, theft, and sexual misconduct (three related to body); falsehood, slander, abusive words, and idle gossip (four related to speech); and envy, ill will, and wrong views (three related to mind). Ten wholesome deeds (*dge ba bcu*): protection of life, generosity, and chastity (three related to body); truthful speech, praise, kind words, and meaningful conversations (four related to speech); rejoicing in others' success, compassion, and faith (three related to mind).
21. Awakening mind has two aspects, the relative awakening mind (*kun rdzob byang chub kyi sems*), the focus of which is relative, and the ultimate awakening mind (*don dam byang chub kyi sems*), the focus of which is ultimate. The relative awakening mind consists in the altruistic aspiration to awaken and the actual venturing toward that goal. The ultimate mind, which has the ultimate focus of emptiness, is nonconceptual pristine awareness which directly knows the nature of reality. See Kongtrul's *Buddhist Ethics* (English translation), pp. 171; 206-210.
22. *Commentary Epitomizing the Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra* (Toh. 2662), vol. Nyu, ff. 1-65.
23. See Kongtrul's *Buddhist Ethics* (English translation), pp. 234-235.
24. Realgar (*ldong ros*): red orpiment, an orange mineral also used in Tibetan medicine. Here, possibly a substance used to attain certain powers.
25. Central country (*yul dbus, madhyadēśa*): an area where the Buddha's teachings as transmission and as spiritual accomplishment are present.
26. Essential principle (*de kbo na nyid*) or characteristic condition; in other contexts, translated as essential reality. In the following meditations, the yoga without signs would include the meditation on the principle of oneself and the meditation on the limit of sound.
27. Protection of the place consists in the emanation of wrathful deities and the elimination of obstructive forces. Protection of oneself consists in contemplating emptiness alone. For a description of these preliminaries, see Tsongkapa's *YT*, pp. 79-101.

28. For a description of the generation in front, offerings to the deity, etc., see *YT*, pp. 115-138.
29. Meditation posture appropriate to one's family: lucky posture (sitting on a chair), lotus posture (with the soles of the feet touching), and the crossed-legged vajra posture are the three postures prescribed for the transcendent, lotus, and vajra family, respectively (*YT*, n. 68).
30. This tantra was not translated into Tibetan. The verse is cited in Buddhaguhya's *Extensive Commentary on the Vajravīdarāna Tantra* (Toh. 2680), vol. Thu, f. 179b6-7.
31. The deities of the three families (*rigs gsum gyi lha*) are Manjushri representing the transcendent family; Avalokiteshvara, the lotus family; and Vajrapani, the vajra family.
32. The two aims (*don gnyis*): to purify all beings of negativity, obscurations, and suffering; and to please the buddhas with offerings.
33. Mudra of the crown protrusion (*gtsug tor rgya, usn̄sa mudrā*): the palms stretched out together facing upward; the two thumbs held on the tips of the two ring fingers; the small fingers forming a point; likewise, the tips of the two middle fingers together forming a point; the two forefingers on the middle fingers forming a cone. For the various mudras and mantras, see *YT*, pp. 79-81.
34. Holding or retaining the life wind (*srog rtsol, prāṇāyāma*). In the context of action tantra, the term *pranayama* can be understood from its parts: *prāṇa* (*srog*) refers to the life wind which flows in and out through the sense organs, orifices, pores of the skin, and so forth, and *āyāma* (*rtsol*) means recollection (*dran pa*). The word as a whole, *pranayama* (*srog rtsol*), means to block or hold the life wind (*srog 'gog pa*). When the life wind is retained, one's mind recalls the focus of meditation without distraction. To retain means to inhale, fill, and push the upper wind down and draw the lower wind up to be held at the region of the navel. See Buddhaguhya's *Extensive Commentary to the Dhyanottara Tantra* (Toh. 2665), vol. Thu, ff. 14b1-15a2; Kedrupjé's *IBTS*, pp. 172-173; and *YT*, pp. 110-113.
- Longdol Lama specifies that *pranayama* in action tantra differs from that in highest yoga tantra with regard to its meaning, context when applied, purpose, and mode. In action tantra, *pranayama* means to stop the movement of wind which serves as the mount for discursive thoughts and to bind the wind inside. It is applied in the context of both meditation with signs and meditation without signs. Its purpose is to have signs of seeing and touching the deity. Its mode is the cultivation of clarity of visualization and pride of being the deity. In highest yoga tantra, *pranayama* refers to the stopping of the flow of the winds in the *rasana* and *lalana* channels. It is applied in the context of the phase of completion. Its purpose is to direct the wind into the central channel. Its mode is one of cultivation of the phase of isolation of speech (Longdol Lama's *Sets of Terms Derived from the Awareness-Holder Collection of Secret Mantra*, Drepung Loseling Publications, p. 184).
35. This refers to the four branches of recitation (*bzlas brjod kyi yan lag bzhi*) consisting of two grounds, the subjective ground (*bdag gi gzhi*) and the objective ground (*gzhan gyi gzhi*), plus mind and sound. The first, the subjective ground, is oneself manifesting as the deity (including the six deities). The second, the objective ground, is the deity medi-

tated in front. They are known as grounds because moon and letters are set in them. The third, mind, refers to the immersion in mind (*sens la gzhol ba*) (explained below in the context of the recitation principle), represented by the moon, a manifestation of the mind that realizes emptiness. The fourth, sound, refers to the immersion in sound (*sgra la gzhol ba*) (explained below), represented by the letters of the mantra set around the edge of the moon with the seed syllable of the deity in the center. These four are called branches of the recitation as they must be maintained while reciting the mantra. Source: *IBTS*, p. 187.

36. For an extensive discussion of these points, see *IBTS*, pp. 187-193; and *YT*, pp. 139-154.

37. The mantra may be either the long (*dirgha*), essential (*hrdaya*), or the very essential (*upahrdaya*). See *IBTS*, p. 161.

38. Manjushri is the master (*bdag po*) of the transcendent family (*IBTS*, p. 105); Avalokiteshvara, master of the lotus family (p. 125); and Vajrapani, master of the vajra family (p. 129).

39. *Dhyanottara Tantra* (Toh. 808), vol. Wa, f. 224a3.

40. Reading *rang* for *dang*.

41. The bent and curved-shaped vowel signs (*gug skyed*): the "i" (*gi gu*) and "u" (*zhabs khyu*) (the bent); and "e" (*greng bu*) and "o" (*na ro*) (the curved).

42. Mental quiescence (*zhi gnas, samatha*): a state of nonconceptual, stable concentration achieved by placing attention continuously on an object. Its attainment is characterized by the special bliss of physical and mental pliancy. It is so called because, having pacified distractions, one focuses joyfully and uninterruptedly on an inner image. On the basis of such quiescence, the meditator can unwaveringly analyze the nature of mind. See Takpo Tashi Namgyal's *Mahamudra* (English translation), pp. 26-38; also Hopkins's *ME*, pp. 86-90.

43. *Dhyanottara Tantra* (Toh. 808), vol. Wa, f. 224a6-7.

44. The flame here represents one's mind and the essential nature of all things as an indivisible unity. Contemplation in this way over a long period of time leads to numerous effects: comfort and ease in body and mind; absence of hunger and thirst; reduction of feces and urine; increase in heat and bliss; and being unaffected by subtle obstacles, outer or inner. These are indications of having accomplished dwelling in fire. Source: Longdol Lama's *Sets of Terms Derived from the Awareness-Holder Collection of Secret Mantra*, pp. 184-185. For the different activations, see above, Chapter 1, n. 57.

45. Since the four aspects of the meditation principle do not have mental or whispered recitation, here, in dwelling in sound, one listens to mantra as if it were recited by another. See Kedrupjé's *IBTS*, p. 197; and *YT*, pp. 155-171.

46. Insight (*lbag mthong, vipāśyanā*): a form of introspection applied to the nature of mind in order to gain realization of ultimate reality. For a discussion of the actual procedure of insight meditation, see Takpo Tashi Namgyal's *Mahamudra* (English translation), pp. 51-69.

47. For the special and minor powers, see the section below, "Types of Powers and the Way of Effecting Them."

48. Taranata briefly describes the action tantra style of meditation in his *Elucidation of the Indestructible Way*, Collected Works, vol. 8, f. 4a7-b2. The procedure for action tantra differs from that of highest yoga tantra for which the deity in front is generated by first visualizing the pledge being (*dam tshig sems dpa'*, *samayasattva*) in front and then imagining that the pristine awareness being (*ye shes sems dpa'*, *jñānasattva*) merges with it. For a description of the exhibitions of hand mudras or "seals" (*phyag rgya bstan*) in this tantra, see Kedrupjé's *IBTS*, p. 179.

49. See Kedrupjé's position on this point in *IBTS*, pp. 163-171.

50. Dharmashri also accepts this position. In his *Commentary on the Three Vows*, he states that in ordinary forms of action tantra, there is no generation of oneself as the deity. One simply invites the deity in front and considers oneself as simply belonging to the entourage. The special forms of meditation, however, do teach generation of oneself as the deity (*The Commentary that Ascertains the Three Vows: The Wish-Fulfilling Awn of Good Explanations*, commentary on Ngari Panchen's *Three Vows* [henceforth cited as *VOWS*], f. 212a3-4).

51. The branches of self-generation refer to the four branches of the phase of generation, which are set forth in different ways depending on the tantra. The four serve to purify the ordinary stages of life and death. To use the Hevajra tantra as an example, the first branch is the basis for the generation phase and consists in the contemplation of emptiness. The second branch consists in the contemplation of the seed syllable *hum* from which the deity is generated, with the radiation and reconvergence of light. The third consists in the contemplation of the fully manifest form of the deity originating from the letter *hum*. The fourth branch consists in the blessing of the senses, placing letters in them, receiving the initiation, and sealing the deity with the lord of the family. See Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé's *Disclosing the Secret of the Invincible Vajra: Phrase by Phrase Commentary on the Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (hereafter cited as *CH*), f. 60b3. For an extensive discussion, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 159-175.

52. Krodha Uchusma (*Khro bo 'chol pa*, also known as *rMe rsegs*), is one of the male messengers of the vajra family (*BGP*, f. 152b5). Mahabala (*sTobs po che*) is one of the ten wrathful deities in the retinue of the central five deities in the immediate retinue of Vajrapani, master of the vajra family. His retention mantra or *dharani* (*Mahābaladhāraṇī*, Toh. 757) has been classified as a tantra of the male and female servants of the vajra family. See *IBTS*, p. 118, n. 18; p. 133.

53. For a complete list of the highest, middling, and lowest powers, see *Susiddhi Tantra* (Toh. 807), ff. 185b1-186a7.

54. Kedrupjé (*IBTS*, p. 203) mentions as portents joyful dreams of the Three Jewels, one's deity, bodhisattvas, the fourfold congregation (monks, lay devotees, novices, and postulants), mountains, elephants, and waterfalls, as well as dreams of obtaining jewels, clothing, and so forth. For a detailed description of the signs, see *Susiddhi Tantra* (Toh. 807), ff. 206b5-207a4.

55. Other signs or indications mentioned by Kedrupjé (*IBTS*, p. 203) include recovery

from a disease, extraordinary awareness, great and steady radiance, auspicious and prophetic dreams, rapture during the recitation, negligible fatigue, emitting fragrant aromas, earnest application to acquiring merit, and deep reverence for the deity.

56. The *Dhyanottara Tantra* mentions the following faults: irreverence, slothfulness, overwhelming hunger and thirst, excitement, excessive desire, doubts about the ritual, not adhering to recitation and meditation, enjoying idle talk, engaging in prohibited pursuits, demonic obsession, and having bad dreams (Toh. 808), f. 225a2-4.

57. *Indestructible Peak* (Toh. 480), vol. Nya, f. 206a4.

58. *Profound Inner Reality* (Rumtek edition), f. 26a3. Reading *drug cu* (sixty) for *bcu drug* (sixteen).

59. See above, Chapter 1, n. 24.

60. For a discussion of the five paths in the context of the way of the perfections, see Gampopa's *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* (English translation), pp. 232-238. For a presentation of the paths and stages of the indestructible way, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 508-533.

#### CHAPTER 4: CONDUCT TANTRA

1. Deliberate behavior (*brtul zbugs, vrata*) is defined by Kongtrul as the transforming (*brtul*) of ordinary activity and thoughts and the entering (*zbugs*) into the mode of Vajrasattva's body, speech, and mind. To effect such transformation, the nature of which varies according to different tantras, necessitates forsaking all that is contrary to tantric teachings and safeguarding vows and pledges. For this reason, the term *brtul bzbug* conveys the sense of "vow" (*sdom pa, samvara*) and may also be translated as "observance." For its nature in the context of highest yoga tantra, see below, Chapter 14, n. 40; also, Kongtrul's *Buddhist Ethics* (English translation), p. 243; and Padmavajra's *Commentary on the Guide to the Meaning of Tantra* (Toh. 2502), vol. 'I, f. 97b7.

2. *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra* (Toh. 447), vol. Ca, f. 285a6-7.

3. Of the conduct tantras that have been translated into Tibetan, the *Vairochanabbisambodhi Tantra* (Toh. 494) represents the main tantra of the family of awakened body and the most important of all conduct tantras. The main deity it presents is yellow Vairochana in the attire of universal ruler, with hands resting in meditation posture. No tantra belonging to the family of awakened speech has been translated into Tibetan. The *Vajrapani Initiation Tantra* (Toh. 496) is the main tantra of the awakened mind family, which has as its principal deity Vajrapani in a peaceful form (Taranata's *Elucidation of the Indestructible Way*, Collected Works, vol. 8, ff. 4b7-5b7).

4. The five families (*rigs lnga*): transcendent, vajra, jewel, lotus, and action.

5. *Essence of Pristine Awareness* (Toh. 422), vol. Nga, f. 118a4.

6. Pema Karpo describes these initiations in the following way: Holding a precious vase filled with jewels and medicines, the master initiates the student with water (*chu*); the student imagines receiving the empowering energy of the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra,

Maitreya, Sarvanivaranavishkambhi, and others. Then, the master, while uttering encouraging words, holds a golden chirurgical spoon (*gyer gyi thur ma*) (used to remove cataract) in front of the student's eyes to symbolize that all the buddhas are removing his or her ignorance. Holding up a mirror (*me long*), the master explains the characteristics of phenomena with these words: "All things are like a reflection, limpid and undefiled, and cannot be grasped by the conceptual mind or expressed in words; arising from causes and actions, they lack intrinsic nature and do not endure. Understand all phenomena to be like that, and work unflinchingly for the welfare of others." Placing a wheel, symbolic of the exposition of the teachings (*chos bshad*), below the foot of the student and a fine conch-shell in the left hand, the master authorizes him or her to teach conduct tantra. See *Extensive Commentary on "The Three Vows,"* Collected Works of Pema Karpo, vols. Nga and Ca (henceforth cited as *TV*), vol. Ca, ch. 3, ff. 50b5-51b4.

7. *Extensive Commentary on the Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra* (Toh. 2663).

8. For a discussion of the ten stages of the bodhisattva leading up to full awakening, see Gampopa's *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* (English translation), pp. 239-256; also *ME*, pp. 100-103. For a discussion of the stages of the indestructible way, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 508-533.

9. The thirty-two major and eighty minor marks of a buddha's body (*sku mtshan dpe*) are the result of various wholesome deeds. For example, a buddha's palms and soles are marked with wheels as a result of generosity; his fingers and toes are connected by a web due to not destroying the friendships of others through slander, and so forth. See *IOK*, vol. II, pp. 619-624.

For the sixty qualities of the melodious speech of a buddha (*gsung dbyangs yan lag drug cu*), such as clarity, gentleness, and the power to bring joy and understanding, as explained in Abhayakaragupta's *Ornament of the Mind of the Mighty One* (Toh. 3903), see *IOK*, vol. II, pp. 625-626.

10. The five initiations of awareness (*rig pa'i dbang, vidyāseka*) are so called because they are conferred by *vidyās* (awareness consorts), such as Lochana, or because their nature is pristine awareness (*ye shes, jñāna*), which serves as remedy for the various emotional afflictions, the principal of which is unawareness or ignorance (*ma rig pa, avidyā*), by transforming them into the five pristine awarenesses.

11. The hand mudra of the ultimate dimension of phenomena is formed with the hands close to each other in fists with the thumbs inside and the index fingers erect; the mantra is *namo samanta buddhanam dharmadhatu svabhava atmako ham*. The hand mudra of the wheel of the doctrine is formed by turning the fingers and uniting them with the thumbs touching; the mantra is *namo samanta vajranam vajra atmako ham* (Jayaprabha's *Sadhana of Vairochana*, Toh. 2665, vol. Tu, f. 134a7-b1).

12. For the details of this procedure of assuming the ultimate awakening mind as one enters the mandala, see Pema Karpo's *TV*, Collected Works, vol. Ca, ch. 3, ff. 46a1-49b5.

13. For the root downfalls and secondary infractions in conduct tantra, see Kongtrul's *Buddhist Ethics* (English translation), pp. 234-235.

14. Practice, or yoga, with signs (*mtshan bcas pa'i rnal 'byor, sanimittayoga*) and without

signs (*mtshan ma med pa'i rnal 'byor, animittayoga*). According to Kedrupjé (*IBTS*, p. 207), the first is a contemplation on the deity not governed by emptiness; the second, a contemplation on the deity governed by emptiness.

15. This tantra was not translated into Tibetan. The verse is cited in Buddhaguhya's *Extensive Commentary on the Vajravīdarana Tantra* (Toh. 2680), vol. Thu, f. 179b6-7.

16. These preliminaries are discussed in *YT* as part of action tantra's meditation procedure (pp. 77-101; 115-138).

Concerning the meaning of outer and inner cleansing, Buddhaguhya states that the outer cleansing is effected with water, and the inner cleansing, through confession and supplication and by the release of the hand mudra (*phyag rgya dgrol ba*). Release of the hand mudra refers to the mudra in which the two hands (the five fingers of the right hand generated as the five primordial buddhas and those of the left as their consorts) are clasped together with the middle fingers outstretched and touching, then the hands separated while imagining that all one's negativities, unwholesome actions, and obscurations are purified (*Guide to the Meaning of Tantra*, Toh. 2501, vol. 'I, ff. 36b1-37a2).

The circle of protection (*srung 'khor*) most commonly refers to an enclosure composed of vajras, the ground and roof encircled by fire.

17. *Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra* (Toh. 494), vol. Tha, ff. 189b7-190a5.

18. Source of phenomena or qualities (*chos 'byung, dharmodaya*). Pundarika defines *dharmodaya* as that from which phenomena devoid of intrinsic nature originate. "Phenomena devoid of intrinsic nature" refers to the ten powers, the four fearlessnesses, and the other 84,000 aspects of the teachings. Their source, *dharmodaya*, is the pure realm, the abode of all buddhas and bodhisattvas, the place of bliss, the place of birth; it is not the place that discharges blood, urine, and regenerative fluids, i.e., the vagina. Source: *Stainless Light*, Toh. 1347, vol. Da, f. 237a3-5.

19. Protection of the place consists in the emanation of wrathful deities and the elimination of obstructive forces. Protection of oneself consists in contemplating emptiness alone. Protection of the yoga has two aspects: one is of the nature of the accumulation of merit and the other of wisdom. The first aspect consists in the contemplation of the four immeasurable thoughts (love, compassion, joy, and equanimity). The second consists in the contemplation of the gates to emancipation (emptiness, signlessness, wishlessness, and the unconditioned) (Nagarjuna's *Large Commentary on the Eighteenth Chapter*, Toh. 1784, vol. Sa, ff. 293b7-294a3).

20. Ngorchen Dorjé Chang or Ngorchen Kunga Zangpo (Ngor chen kun dga' bzang po) (1382-1456): founder of the Ngor subschool of the Sakya lineage. He received tantric teachings from Tsongkapa but later openly criticized some of Tsongkapa's views on tantra.

21. *Sadhana of Vairochana* (Toh. 2665), vol. Tu, ff. 132a-138b.

22. Here, the deities are those contemplated by the practitioner who takes pride in being those deities. Viravajra's *Commentary on the Samputa Tantra* states: "...within the sound of laughter, nonconceptual bliss is generated." See Tsongkapa's *Tantra in Tibet* (English translation), p. 161.

23. Four extremes: to be existent, non-existent, both existent and non-existent, and neither existent nor non-existent.

24. *Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra* (Toh. 494), vol. Tha, f. 190a3-4.

25. The outer four-branched recitation (*phyi'i bzlas brjod yan lag bzhi*) comprises one, the subjective base (*bdag gi gzhi*), oneself as the deity; two, the objective base (*gzhan gyi gzhi*), the deity in front; three, immersion in mind (*sems la gzhol ba*), meditation on one's own mind as the moon disk in the heart of the deity in front; and four, immersion in sound (*sgra la gzhol ba*), contemplation of the syllables of the mantra on the moon disk.

The inner four-branched recitation (*nang gi bzlas brjod yan lag bzhi*) comprises one, the subjective base, self-generation as Shakyamuni; two, the objective base, contemplation of Vairochana on a moon disk at one's heart; three, immersion in mind, imagining one's mind in the shape of a moon disk in the heart of Vairochana; and four, immersion in sound, imagining the syllables of the mantra on that moon disk.

The first recitation is called outer because deity, moon, and syllables are visualized external to oneself; the second, inner because one visualizes them within the subjective ground, i.e., oneself as the deity. See Kedrupjé's *IBTS*, pp. 207-208; and *YT*, pp. 189-195.

In both the outer and inner branches, mental recitation is done while performing breath-control techniques and stopping distraction. It is not possible to do the whispered recitation because the breath is held.

26. Here, "learned masters" refers primarily to Buddhaguhya. He describes the contemplation without signs in this way in his *Commentary Epitomizing the Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra* (Toh. 2662), vol. Nyu, f. 56a4-7.

27. The inner mandalas (*dkyil 'khor*) of the four elements refers to the visualization of the elements of earth, water, fire, and wind. In this context, one thinks of them as being the nature of the different parts of one's body: the yellow mandala of earth extends from the feet to the waist; the white mandala of water, from the waist to the heart; the red mandala of fire, from the heart to the eyebrows; and the black mandala of wind, from the eyebrows up. See Buddhaguhya's *Extensive Commentary on the Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra* (Toh. 2663), vol. Nyu, f. 195a6-7.

28. Five supernormal cognitive powers (*mngon par shes pa, abhijñā*): miraculous powers (*rdzu 'phrul*), divine eye (*lha'i mig*), divine ear (*lha'i rna ba*), knowing others' thoughts (*gzhan sems shes pa*), and recollection of previous lives (*sngon gnas rjes su dran pa*). A sixth, the knowledge that causes the extinction of all defilements (*zag zad mkhyen pa*) in one's mental continuum, is usually added.

29. The realm known as Unsurpassed (*'Og min, Akanistha*), the highest of seventeen heavens in the form realm, is also known as the pure domain "Lesser Unsurpassed" where only exalted bodhisattvas are born. The "Great Unsurpassed," which is not included in the three realms, denotes the place where buddhas awaken and dwell as the enjoyment dimension of awakening. See Kongtrul's *Myriad Worlds* (English translation), pp. 119-120.

30. See Buddhaguhya's *Extensive Commentary on the Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra* (Toh. 2663), vol. Nyu, ff. 83a1-85a5.

31. For a discussion of the dispositions of the mundane mantric path in conduct tantra,

see Buddhaguhya's *Extensive Commentary on the Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra* (Toh. 2663), vol. Nyu, ff. 85b4-90b6.

32. Two aspects to the absence of self-nature: that of the person (*gang zag gi bdag med*); and that of objects (*chos kyī bdag med*).

33. In a view unique to conduct tantra, the great level of the path of accumulation corresponds to the stage of "practice with appreciation" (*mos spyod kyī sa*), while "practice with appreciation", generally speaking, covers both the path of accumulation and that of preparation.

Appreciation (*mos pa*), according to Buddhaguhya, refers to a constant admiration of the qualities of the levels of awakening, the perfections, and the buddhas, known through study, reflection, and contemplation. Through the force of such admiration, the yogin develops the three minds—the mind of entering, developed by viewing the person and phenomena as mere illusions devoid of inherent reality; the mind of abiding, by resting in nonconceptual contemplation of the first mind; and the mind of emerging, by practicing (*spyod pa*) the ten perfections—the four ways of attracting students, and so on, motivated by compassion for others. Source: *Extensive Commentary on the Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra* (Toh. 2663), vol. Nyu, ff. 292a3.

34. The ten stages of practice with appreciation consist of ten levels in which the trainee, through the force of appreciation (*mos pa*), engages (*spyod pa*) in the spheres of practice of the actual ten stages of awakening (i.e., the ten perfections). These are not the ten stages of awakening of a bodhisattva but do lead to them. See Buddhaguhya's *Extensive Commentary* (Toh. 2663), vol. Nyu, f. 292a5-b7.

35. The stage conducive to definitive separation (*nges 'byed cha mthun gyī sa*) usually is synonymous with the path of preparation. It is so called because it is conducive to the path of seeing on which one separates from mistaken adherence to the self of persons and self of phenomena. See *IOK*, vol. III, p. 476.

36. The five seed syllables of the great hero (*dpa' bo 'bru lnga*): *a bhi ra hum kham*. These syllables serve as the basis for the five-branched contemplation through which a bodhisattva defeats the four "demonic" forces (the aggregates, the emotional afflictions, death, and self-contentment) and thereby becomes a great hero who has awakened. See Buddhaguhya's *Commentary Epitomizing the Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra* (Toh. 2662), vol. Nyu, f. 13a1-2; and Butön's *BGP*, f. 115a4.

37. The enjoyment dimension of full awakening (*longs sku, sambhogakāya*): one of the three dimensions of a buddha, so called because it is the dimension that serves as the basis for the complete enjoyment of the doctrine of the universal way in its realized aspect (*IOK*, vol. III, p. 597). Special mention is made here to this dimension as one of full awakening because, in this system, as one realizes the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena (*chos dbyings ye shes, dharmadhātujñāna*), the essence of which is Vairochana, one takes the form of Great Vairochana, the enjoyment dimension in the pure land of Unsurpassed. See Kedrupjé's *IBTS*, pp. 32-33.

## CHAPTER 5: YOGA TANTRA

1. *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra* (Toh. 447), vol. Ca, f. 285a5-6.

2. In yoga tantra, the retinue of the main deities of the mandala includes a variety of deities. Among others are offering goddesses emanated from the heart of oneself as the deity. The dimension of the offering accompanied by recollection of their symbology induces a state of contemplation through the sense experience produced by the offering. Muditakosha states that the eight goddesses [L>sy> (drum player), M>|> (who offers jewel garlands), G!t> (the singer), Nart! (the dancer), Dháp! (who offers incense), Puy> (who offers flowers), Ālok> (who offers butterlamps), and Gha°da (who offers perfume)] symbolize the perfections of generosity, morality, patience, effort, wisdom, meditation, aspiration, and skillful method, which turn one away from miserliness, tainted morality, aversion, laziness, tainted wisdom, distraction, pride, and ignorance of the methods, respectively (*Description of the Deities of the Vajradhatumandala*, Toh. 2504, vol. Ri, ff. 203b5-204a2).

Anandagarbha explains that, in this context, secret offering refers to the offering of dance, and so forth, made by the first four goddesses of offering emanated from one's heart. Such offerings are "secret" because they are of the nature of mind (*Illumination of the Summation of Essential Principles*, Toh. 2510, vol. Li, f. 92b5). Dhupi, who offers incense, is called chief of the attendants (*g.yog ma'i gtso mo*) because she is of the nature of transcendent wisdom. Just as a worldly attendant generates mundane pleasure and joy, transcendent wisdom produces supramundane bliss and joy (f. 93a3-4). Anandagarbha discusses in detail the offering goddesses and their functions in his *Illumination of the Summation of Essential Principles*, ff. 89b7-96b3.

3. *Illumination of the Summation of Essential Principles* (Toh. 2510), vol. Li, f. 27a1-2: Anandagarbha's two-volume commentary (vols. Li and Shi) on the *Summation of Essential Principles* (*Tatvasaṃgrahatantra*, Toh. 479). The *Summation of Essential Principles* is the main scripture of yoga tantra. It includes a *Continuation Tantra* (*Uttaratantra*, *rGyud phyi ma*) and a *Continuation of the Continuation* (*Uttaratantra*, *Phyi ma'i phyi ma*). The scripture comprises four sections or chapters known as *Indestructible Dimension* (*Vajradhātu*), *Victory over the Three Worlds* (*Trilokyavijaya*), *Training Beings* (*Jagadvinaya*), and *Accomplishing All Aims* (*Siddhārtha*). See *IBTS*, pp. 216-217, n. 6; and Butön's *Survey of Yoga Tantra*.

4. The ten essential principles of tantric expertise are explained by Pema Karpo: Mandala (*dkyil 'khor*) is of two kinds, form and formless. Mantra (*sngags*) includes the period for recitation and the number to be accomplished, a painting of the deity, the posture to be adopted during recitation, the manner of reciting, the procedure for vajra recitation, and the way to achieve results from recitation. The seals or *mudras* (*phyag rgya*) consist in the four seals of yoga tantra applied to the deities subsequent to the three contemplations of initial union, supremely triumphant mandala, and supremely triumphant act. Protection of oneself and the place (*bdag dang gnas bsrung ba*) includes ablutions, wearing new clothes, and empowering the tongue; alternatively, it refers to the safeguarding of one's yoga practice itself. The ritual of inviting the deities (*lha rnam spyan drang pa*) consists in the merging of the awareness deities with the pledge deities, preceded by the offering of praises to them. Recitation (*bzlas brjod*) includes verbal recitation and vajra (mental) recitation. Meditation (*bsgom pa*) consists in the three contemplations applied in their entirety during familiarization with the deity, the four yogas, the heart mandala, and so forth. Inner and outer fire-offering rituals (*phyi dang nang gi bdag nyid can gyi*

*sbyin sreg*) refer to rituals to be performed on the occasions of worship of the mandala, and so on. Dissolution (*nye bar bsdu ba*) consists in the ritual of releasing the seals, i.e., interrupting the contemplation of oneself as the deity. Requests for departure (*gshegs su gsol ba*) are requests to depart made to the pristine awareness deities following offerings made by the eight goddesses.

The ultimate essential principle, wisdom in nature, refers to pristine awareness free from conceptual limits, the indivisibility of the ultimate dimension of phenomena (*dharmadhātu*) and the awareness that realizes that dimension, infallible with respect to the true nature of reality itself. The relative essential principles, method in nature, refer to the body of the deity, the mantra, seals, and so forth, which appear through the power of pristine awareness, infallible with respect to the accomplishment of the welfare of sentient beings. Source: *TV*, vol. Ca, ch. 3, ff. 79a1-80a3.

5. Padmavajra explains that yoga (*rnal 'byor*) means union (*sbyor ba*) with the ultimate dimension of phenomena (*dharmadhātu*) by means of pristine awareness (*Commentary on the Guide to the Meaning of Tantra*, Toh. 2502, vol. 'I, f. 97a2). He defines contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin, samādhi*) as the mental application that serves as the door to liberation through blocking the outward movement of discursive thoughts and placing mind undividedly on the meditation object. Moreover, contemplation is of two types: that of the natural condition (*nang bzhin gyi -*) and a concordant contemplation (*rjes su mthun pa'i -*). The first denotes the liberation of the transcendent ones and the great bodhisattvas; the second, the contemplation of a yogin who engages in mantra practice which conforms to that of the transcendent ones and the bodhisattvas (f. 96a4).

Butön explains that yoga means “mind placed in a state of even contemplation” (*sems mnyam par bzhag pa*). Through the force of this even state, the various tantric methods applied by the practitioner in order to accomplish the scope of the bodhisattva (such as mantras, seals, mandala rituals, and conferral of initiations) are all connected and unified. Hence, this tantra is called “yoga tantra” (*Survey of Yoga Tantra*, f. 3b1-2).

Ratnakarashanti's *Commentary on [Nagarjuna's] Brief Sadhana [of Guhyasamaja] Called Precious Garland* (Toh. 1826, vol. Ci, f. 16a1) says: “What is the meaning of yoga (*rnal 'byor*)? In its literal meaning, it refers to the indivisibility of emptiness and compassion. In its general meaning, it refers to the unification of method and wisdom. In its hidden meaning, it refers to the union of vajra and lotus. In its ultimate meaning, it refers to the realization of the indivisible state of luminous clarity.”

6. *Indestructible Peak* (Toh. 408), vol. Nya, f. 150a2. The citation as it appears in *IOK* omits lines two and three. Translated here is the full form as it appears in the tantra itself.

Discussing the five families (*rigs lnga, pañcakula*) in the context of yoga tantra, Pema Karpo explains that *ku* in *kula* (family) is related to *kusti*, meaning “bad” (*ngan pa*); and *la*, to *laya*, meaning “to enter” (*thim pa*). The families are of two kinds, inferior (*dman pa*) and superior (*mchog*). To the inferior families belong beings who have entered (*thim pa*) miserable existences (*ngan 'gro*) as a result of their emotional afflictions. Beings who have good natures and whose emotional afflictions are in equal strength belong equally to all five families. Beings who are dominated by desire (*'dod chags*) belong to the buddha family or transcendent family (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs, tathāgatakula*); beings dominated by aversion (*zhe sdang*), to the vajra family (*rdō rje'i rigs, vajrakula*); beings dominated by avarice (*ser sna*), to the jewel family (*nor bu'i rigs, ratnakula*); beings dominated by delu-

sion (*gti mug*), to the lotus family (*pad ma'i rigs, padmakula*); and beings dominated by laziness (*le lo*), to the action family (*las kyi rigs, karmakula*).

To the superior or adamantine families belong awakened beings, buddhas, and bodhisattvas who have transcended lower destinies, are free of the obscurations of inferior families, and represent the means to remedy the emotional afflictions of the inferior families. The natures of the superior families reflect the above etymology in that they are the families of those buddhas and bodhisattvas who, by the force of their compassion for others, have entered (*thim pa*) miserable existences (*ngan 'gros*). The superior families are those of the five transcendent ones: Vairochana (transcendent family), Akshobhya (vajra family), Ratnasambhava (jewel family), Amitabha (lotus family), and Amoghasiddhi (action family). They are "transcendent families" because they are of the natures of all the transcendent ones (*TV*, vol. Ca, ch. 3, f. 64a1-b4).

Butön explains that the transcendent family is taught for the sake of beings dominated by desire. Deities belonging to this family therefore display aspects of desire. The family is of the nature of awakening mind (*bodhicitta*) and the utterly pure pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena (*chos dbyings ye shes*).

The vajra family is taught for the sake of beings dominated by aversion. Deities belonging to this family display aspects of wrath. The family is of the nature of method (to guide followers of the Buddha's teaching who are difficult to train) and the mirror-like pristine awareness (*me long lta bu'i ye shes*).

The jewel family is taught for the sake of those dominated by greed, who crave wealth and are miserly. The deities are golden in color and display aspects of bounteousness. The family is of the nature of awakened generosity, which grants the wishes of all beings, and the pristine awareness of total sameness (*mnyam nyid kyi ye shes*).

The lotus family is taught for the sake of those dominated by delusion who worship non-Buddhist deities and adhere to wrong views. Deities belonging to this family display the various aspects of Buddhist and non-Buddhist deities. The family is of the nature of the perfected wisdom of all buddhas and the discerning pristine awareness (*so sor rtog pa'i ye shes*).

The action family is taught for the sake of those who, out of laziness, do not make offerings to the Three Jewels and do not work for the welfare of others. Deities belonging to this family are green in color and manifest various aspects, peaceful and wrathful. The family is of the nature of the energy of all buddhas and the pristine awareness of accomplishment (*bya ba grub pa'i ye shes*) (*Survey of Yoga Tantra*, f. 44a3-b1).

Buddhaguhya's *Guide to the Meaning of Tantra* states that the five families are posited with respect to the five aspects of the dimension of all buddhas, namely, permanence (*rtag pa*), stability (*mi 'kbrugs pa*), precious power (*rin chen dbang*), measureless light (*'od dpag tu med pa*), and unfailing accomplishment (*don yod grub pa*). Each of the five families (of Vairochana, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, and Amoghasiddhi) are subdivided into five attendant families in terms of the five aforementioned aspects (Toh. 2501, vol. 'I, f. 11a7-b2).

The five principal and five lesser families, according to Pema Karpo, are subdivided into four, each in terms of awakened body (*sku*), mind (*thugs*), speech (*gsung*), and activity (*phrin las*). These are, respectively, the deities of the heart (*snying pa*), deities of the seal (*phyag rgya*), secret mantra deities (*gsang sngags*), and awareness mantra deities (*rig sngags*) (*TV*, vol. Ca, ch. 3, ff. 66a1-67b2).

Butön (*BGP*, f. 270a2-b4) notes that although the families number five, the four sections (mentioned above in n. 3) of the *Summation of Essential Principles* and of the *Glorious Supreme Original Being Tantra (Paramadya Tantra)* present only four families. The first section teaches the way of subjugating beings belonging to the transcendent family. The second, third, and fourth sections teach the way of subjugating those of the vajra family, lotus family, and jewel family, respectively. The action family, being of the nature of the endeavor that fulfills the wishes of all beings, is subsumed under the jewel family. The action family is, however, mentioned separately in the *Glorious Supreme Original Being Tantra*.

7. The yoga tantras of method present primarily the ten essential principles of tantric expertise and for this reason are called the father tantras, or method tantras. The *Glorious Supreme Original Being Tantra* (Toh. 487) and the *Mode of Transcendent Wisdom in One Hundred and Fifty Stanzas* (Toh. 489) are mother, or wisdom, tantras. However, each of these tantras has both the aspect of method and that of wisdom (Butön's *Survey of Yoga Tantra*, ff. 54b7-55b1).

According to Taranata, the *Glorious Supreme Original Being* is a wisdom tantra, and all other yoga tantras are method tantras (*Elucidation of the Indestructible Way*, Collected Works, vol. 8, f. 6b4). However, Butön states that each section of the *Summation of Essential Principles* includes the heart, seal, secret mantra, and awareness mantra. Heart consists in the mandala of the body (*kāya-maṇḍala*) in which the great seal is emphasized. Seal consists in the retention mantra mandala (*dhāraṇī-maṇḍala*) in which the pledge seal is emphasized. Secret mantra consists in the doctrine mandala (*dharmamaṇḍala*) in which the seal of the doctrine is emphasized. Awareness mantra consists in the action mandala (*karma-maṇḍala*) in which the action seal is emphasized. In the dharani mandala, the dharani deities are arranged as insignias (vajra, etc.), and in the action mandala, all deities, with the exception of the five transcendent ones, are transformed into female deities; thus, these two are wisdom mandalas. The other two are method mandalas. In an ultimate sense, all method and wisdom tantras teach solely the yoga of the union of method and wisdom. Differentiation into method yoga tantra and wisdom yoga tantra is done for the sake of attracting students (*BGP*, f. 271a3-b2).

8. Special deity (*lhaḡ pa'i lha, adhideva*): the main deity with which the yogin must familiarize in order to gain powers. The term "deity" (*lha, deva*) is generally understood on two levels, ultimate and relative. Padmavajra states that, on the ultimate level, the deity is characterized by being the inseparability of the deity's nature and emptiness. On the relative level, the deity is a buddha, bodhisattva, and so forth, appearing as male or female, wrathful or peaceful, or as the chief and retinue, complete with limbs and other details of the body, and possessing the most splendid attire and ornaments. Source: *Commentary on [Buddhaguhya's] Guide to the Meaning of Tantra* (Toh. 2502), vol. 'I, f. 96b1-3.

9. Action vase (*las bum, karmakalāśa*) and victorious vase (*rnam rgyal bum pa, vijayakalāśa*). The first is a ritual vase with spout containing consecrated water which is sprinkled on the mandala, offering materials, oneself (the vajra master), the place, and the students. Within the vase, the deity of all actions related to the initiation is generated; it is therefore called "action vase." The "victorious vase," a ritual vase without spout containing water, is used when the vajra master enters into the mandala and during the water initiation and other initiations. Within it, all the deities of the particular mandala, with or

without palace, are generated. See Kedrupjé's discussion of the initiation vases, *IBTS*, pp. 287-291.

10. The diadems of the respective families: a diadem formed of the five buddhas for the transcendent family; a diadem formed of the five families and a garland of vajras for the vajra family; a diadem of Amitabha and a garland of lotuses for the lotus family; a diadem of Ratnasambhava and a garland of seedlings for the jewel family; and a diadem of Amoghasiddhi and a garland of crossed vajras for the action family (*TV*, vol. Ca, ch. 3, f. 69b1-3).

11. The vajras of the respective families: for the transcendent family, a common vajra; for the vajra family, a wrathful vajra; for the lotus family, a lotus vajra; for the jewel family, a jewel vajra; and for the action family, a crossed vajra (*TV*, vol. Ca, ch. 3, f. 69b3-5).

12. *Essence of Pristine Awareness* (Toh. 422), vol. Nga, f. 118a4-5.

13. Pema Karpo, citing the *Indestructible Tent* and other sources, states that anyone may be introduced into the mandala regardless of being qualified or unqualified, provided he or she is motivated to enter. This is because by seeing the mandala of the ultimate dimension of phenomena, even persons who are very greedy, or who harbor bad intentions and are irreverent, can be turned away from lower forms of life and have established within them the seeds of all attainments. Thus, to "merely enter" (*gzbug pa tsam*) indicates that unqualified persons may be introduced into the mandala, but not initiated (*TV*, vol. Ca, ch. 3, ff. 70b2-72b2).

14. *sTod 'grel* ("supercommentary"): Anandagarbha's commentary on the *Summation of Essential Principles* called *Illumination of the Summation of Essential Principles* (Toh. 2510), vols. Li and Shi.

15. *Indestructible Peak* (Toh. 480), vol. Nya, ff. 183a7-184a1. The remaining part of the recitation is as follows:

Having taken refuge in the Three Jewels—  
 The Buddha, his teachings, and his followers—  
 As for the supremely great vajra family,  
 O intelligent one, you should assume  
 And consistently observe the pledges  
 Of the vajra, bell, and seal.  
 The mind of awakening and wisdom  
 Are taught as the vajra and the bell.  
 As well, commit yourself to the master,  
 Who is equal to all the buddhas.  
 These are the pure pledges and vows  
 Of the vajra family.  
 As for the supremely great jewel family,  
 Always practice the four kinds of generosity  
 Of material things, protection, teaching, and love  
 During the six times of the day and night.  
 You should persevere in the sacred teachings

Of the outer, inner, and secret [tantras], and three ways.  
 These are said to be the pure pledges and vows  
 Of the lotus family.  
 As for the supremely great action family,  
 You should maintain impeccably  
 All types of pledges  
 And exert yourself in making offerings.

16. Anandagarbha's *Illumination of the Summation of Essential Principles* (Toh. 2510), vol. Shi, f. 115b2-6. The entire recitation is as follows:

Just as the protectors throughout the three times  
 Made their vows to awaken,  
 I now form the sacred and unsurpassed  
 Resolve to attain awakening.  
 To honor the [transcendent family's] pledges  
 Of the yoga of the buddhas,  
 I will firmly observe the three forms of ethics—  
 The ethics of restraint, acquiring good qualities,  
 And working for the welfare of all beings.  
 Henceforth, I will commit myself  
 To the unsurpassable Three Jewels—  
 The Buddha, his teachings, and his followers.  
 To honor the pledges  
 Of the supremely great vajra family,  
 I will commit myself to the vajra, bell, seal,  
 And also to the master.  
 To honor the gracious pledges  
 Of the supremely great jewel family,  
 I will always practice the four kinds of generosity  
 During the six times of the day and night.  
 To honor the pledges of the supremely pure lotus family  
 Born from the great awakening,  
 I will persevere in the sacred teachings  
 Of outer, inner, and secret [tantras], and three ways.  
 To honor the pledges of the supreme great action family,  
 I will maintain impeccably  
 All types of pledges  
 And exert myself in making offerings.  
 For the sake of all beings  
 I resolve to attain sacred  
 And unsurpassable awakening  
 And will maintain all vows.  
 I will liberate those not yet liberated [from impediments to omniscience].  
 I will release those not yet released [from cyclic existence].  
 I will relieve those not yet relieved [in bad forms of life]  
 And set all beings in the state of perfect peace.

17. In yoga tantra, the “fourteen defeating transgressions” are to violate the following admonishments: one, do not renounce the Three Jewels; two, do not forsake the awakening mind; three, do not disrespect the deities; four, do not criticize mantra and seals; five, do not disrespect the master; six, do not step over the master’s seat, and so forth, or over the weapons, ritual implements, or insignias of deities; seven, do not eat the wrong foods; eight, do not divulge secret pristine awareness; nine, do not forsake the practice of mantra and seals; ten, do not harm others; eleven, do not delight in the individual way; twelve, do not be discouraged in the face of difficulties encountered in working for the benefit of others; thirteen, do not forsake training in the six perfections; fourteen, do not engage in what is unwholesome.

The fourteen branch pledges are condensed into the following prescriptions related to the five families: one, to take refuge in the Three Jewels constitutes the three pledges of the transcendent family of Vairochana; two, to commit oneself to the vajra seal, the bell seal, and the vajra master are the three pledges of the vajra family of Akshobhya; three, to be generous with spiritual teachings, material things, protection, and loving kindness are the four pledges of the jewel family of Ratnasambhava; four, to maintain the outer (action and conduct) tantras, the secret (yoga) tantra, and the three ways of the proclaimers, solitary sages, and bodhisattvas are the three pledges of the lotus family of Amitabha; five, to make offerings is the single pledge of the action family of Amoghasiddhi.

As to the correspondence of the pledges with the particular families, Vairochana represents the family of the awakened body of the transcendent ones. This physical dimension is the foundation for acquiring all good qualities, of which taking refuge in the Three Jewels constitutes the root.

Akshobhya represents the family of awakened mind, which is indivisible emptiness and compassion. One commits oneself to these two aspects, which are symbolized by the vajra and bell, and to the vajra master who reveals their meaning.

Ratnasambhava represents the family of awakened qualities, which, like a wish-granting jewel, provides the source of all that is desirable. Likewise, the four kinds of generosity fulfill the hopes and desires of all beings.

Amitabha represents the family of awakened speech from which originate the eighty-four thousand aspects of the teachings. These eighty-four thousand aspects are all included in the three spiritual ways: the outer way of proclaimers and solitary sages, the inner way of bodhisattvas, and secret way of mantric practitioners.

Amoghasiddhi represents the family of awakened activity, the essence of which is to venerate the buddhas and to work for the benefit of all beings. Both of these tasks are accomplished by making offerings as much as possible. See *IOK*, vol. II, pp. 148-150. For a detailed discussion of yoga tantra pledges, see Kongtrul’s *Buddhist Ethics* (English translation), pp. 235-242.

18. The dimensions of awakening are generally enumerated as three (*sku gsum, kāya*): reality dimension (*chos sku, dharmakāya*); complete enjoyment dimension (*longs spyod rdzogs pa’i sku, sambhogakāya*); and manifest dimension (*sprul pa’i sku, nirmāṇakāya*). In yoga tantra, four dimensions are taught: essential dimension (*ngo bo nyid sku, svabhāvīkākāya*), fruitional dimension (*rnam par smin pa’i sku, vipākakāya*), enjoyment dimension, and manifest dimension (*IBTS*, p. 223).

19. According to this view, Great Vairochana refers to the enjoyment dimension of awakening (*sambhogakāya*), always present in the realm called Unsurpassed. The minor Vairochana refers to the manifest form (*nirmāṇakāya*), whose emanations serve to turn the wheel of the teaching.

Great Unsurpassed Realm ('*Og min, Akanisṭha*), also called Richly Adorned Great Unsurpassed ('*Og min chen po stug po bkod pa*), is the realm where all buddhas attain enlightenment. It does not belong to any of the three realms of cyclic existence. It is called "Unsurpassed" because the enjoyment dimension of Buddha Vairochana resides there as, so to speak, a "king" of the "superior deities," that is, a bodhisattva on the tenth stage of awakening. It is called "great" to distinguish it from the heaven of the same name that is within cyclic existence. For a discussion of the various perspectives on this realm, see *IOK*, vol. I, pp. 297-300.

The five certainties (*nges pa lnga*) or perfections (*phun sum tshogs pa*) of the enjoyment dimension of awakening are as follows: certainty of abode (*gnas*) (abiding in the Unsurpassed Realm); certainty of nature (*ngo bo*) (adorned with the thirty-two major marks and eighty minor marks of a buddha); certainty of time (*dus*) (remaining for as long as cyclic existence endures); certainty of retinue (*'khor*) (attended only by bodhisattvas on the tenth stage); and certainty of the doctrine (*chos*) (proclaiming only the teaching of the universal way) (*IOK*, vol. III, pp. 597-598).

Sönam Tsemo speaks of five certainties associated with the manifest dimension of awakening that taught yoga tantra: the certainties of teacher, retinue, time, abode, and doctrine. The certainty of teacher refers to the manifest forms appearing in various places, like reflections of the moon in the water; certainty of retinue, beings who have attained levels of attainment; certainty of time, manifestation without interruption; certainty of abode, various places; and certainty of doctrine, that of the universal way (*SGP*, f. 45b2-6).

20. *Ornament of Kosala* (Toh. 2503), vol. Yi, f. 8a7-b6. Shakyamitra's large commentary on the *Tattvasamgraha*. Shakyamitra was a disciple of Acharya Shakyaprabha and lived during the period of King Devapala (810-850 C.E.) (*HBI*, p. 268).

21. Vairocana, Amit-bha, Amoghasiddhi, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava.

22. According to Sönam Tsemo (*SGP*, f. 44a1-3), in this latter view, Vairochana, or the minor Vairochana, represents the enjoyment dimension (*sambhogakāya*), while Great Vairochana is the reality dimension of awakening (*dharmakāya*).

23. Padmavajra (*Commentary on [Buddhaguhya's] Guide to the Meaning of Tantra*, Toh. 2502, vol. 'I) explains that seal (*phyag rgya, mudrā*) signifies the power to gladden or to make an impression. It "gladdens" owing to its ability to please the exalted ones; it is a "seal" because it cannot be erased and swiftly grants what is desired. It is also called "attribute" (*mtshan ma, \*nimitta*) since it issues from pristine awareness and is linked to the conception of an attribute. It is a "sign" (*rtags, liṅga*) by virtue of having the nature of great pristine awareness or issuing from its blessing. It is a "definite characteristic" (*nye ba'i mtshan nyid, \*upalakṣaṇa*) because it points to pristine awareness or because through it one enters into the state of pristine awareness (f. 94a6-b1).

The four seals—the great seal (*phyag rgya chen po, mahāmudrā*); the pledge seal (*dam tshig gi phyag rgya, samayamudrā*); the doctrine seal (*chos kyī phyag rgya, dharmamudrā*),

and the action seal of awakened activity (*las kyi phyag rgya, karmamudrā*)—correspond to the dimensions of awakened body, speech, mind, and activity, respectively.

The great seal is the image of the deity's body which reveals the mode of the form of the deity. Since it serves as the pre-eminent ground for contemplation of the authentic condition of the deity by way of her form, it is called the great seal (f. 94b5-6).

The seal of the pledge is the blessing of the seal of pristine awareness possessed of perfect qualifications which reveals the mode of the deity's mind as the seal of the fully liberated mind. Since the deity does not transcend [pristine awareness], it is called the seal of the pledge (f. 95a1-2).

The seal of the doctrine comprises the terms used in the teachings such as "indestructible pristine awareness" (*vajrajñāna*), "pledge being" (*samayasattva*), and so forth, which are the attributes or signs of pure awakened speech, and reveal the mode of the speech of the deity. This seal imparts the ultimate teachings of the deity's words (f. 95a4-5).

The action seal of awakened activity comprises the deity's actions and reveals the modes of these actions, which are of two kinds: bound and imagined. The first has the characteristics of the seal or mudra of the hands separated and forming two "vajra fists" (with the thumbs at the roots of the ring fingers), the seal of supreme awakening, and so on. The second is the four-pronged vajra imagined at one's heart whose nature reveals that at the time of attaining the state of a particular deity, the awakened activity of that deity pervades all things (f. 95a6-7).

Longdol Lama presents the four seals in terms of unfolding experiential understanding: As a result of the gradual development of stable pride and clarity of vision of one's ordinary body as the deity and the mandala, one experiences the sign of almost seeing and touching the deity. That is known as the great seal of the body. The power of the mantra is realized when the resonance of the winds of inhalation and exhalation associated with all ordinary speech is experienced for a while as the resonating sound of the mantra: this is known as the doctrine seal of speech. The method of the appearance of the circle of deities and the wisdom ascertaining emptiness increase on the basis of the bliss arising from physical and mental serviceability. The union of such appearance and emptiness is profound, luminous pristine awareness, the pledge seal of the mind. In whatever action is performed by the body, speech, and mind, the perception of ordinary appearances and grasping to them is slight. Through simply the emanation and reconvergence of light, the four activities are accomplished. This is known as the seal of awakened activities. The seal of the pledge pertains to signless meditation; the other three seals, to meditation with signs. Through the power of such method and wisdom, one attains the result. In this procedure, the symbolic outer seals are the mantra and hand mudras; the symbolized inner seal, the sealing of emptiness by bliss (*Sets of Terms Derived From the Awareness-Holder Collection of Secret Mantra*, pp. 187-188).

Pema Karpo specifies that the four seals are distinguished according to their outer and inner aspects: Outer great seal includes paintings or statues of the deity; the inner consists in the meditated image of the deity. Outer pledge seal is an external vajra or painted representation of it; the inner, meditation on the vajra, and so forth. Outer seal of the doctrine includes verbal expressions, and the inner, the meditation of syllables on the tongue, and so forth. The outer seal of awakened activity is the drawing of seals, and so forth, and the inner, the meditation on them (*TV*, vol. Ca, ch. 3, ff. 81a6-83b4).

For a comprehensive discussion of the four seals in the yoga tantra system, see Butön's *Survey of Yoga Tantra*; Buddhaguhya's *Guide to the Meaning of Tantra*, a commentary on the *Summation of Essential Principles*, Toh. 2501, ff. 5a7-7a6; and *IBTS*, pp. 223-249.

24. In the context of the universal way, centrists (*mādhyamika*) and idealists (*cittamātra*) speak of the eightfold group of consciousnesses (*rnam shes tshogs bregyad, aṣṭāvijñānakāya*): the ground-of-all consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam shes, ālayavijñāna*); afflicted consciousness (*nyon yid rnam shes, klistamanovijñāna*); mental consciousness (*yid kyi rnam shes, manovijñāna*); and the five sense consciousnesses (*sgo luga'i rnam shes*).

The ground-of-all consciousness is described as a neutral mind which serves as the ground for the accumulation of seeds or predispositions for the arising of the elements, aggregates, and sense fields of sentient beings. Such consciousness focuses on a variety of objects but knows merely their entities. It is called "ground-of-all," or the basis for everything, because it serves as the foundation of cyclic life and perfect peace. After diamond-like contemplation has arisen, this consciousness transforms into mirror-like pristine awareness. The afflicted consciousness arises in the aspect of a conceited mental state, derived from the pride associated with thinking in terms of an "I." It is neutral but obscured by afflictions and serves as the main condition for the arising of mental involvement. Upon the attainment of awakening, it transforms into the pristine awareness of total sameness. The five sense consciousnesses perceive the details of objects by clearly focusing upon them. They are neutral but arise as virtue or nonvirtue due to the types of mental factors attending them. The mental, or subjective, consciousness which perceives mental phenomena, upon the attainment of awakening, transforms into discerning pristine awareness, and the five sense consciousnesses transform into accomplishing pristine awareness. See *IOK*, vol. II, pp. 386-397.

25. Padmavajra explains that mirror-like pristine awareness (*me long lta bu'i ye shes, ādarśajñāna*) is the realization that appearances are without inherent nature. Pristine awareness of total sameness (*mnyam nyid ye shes, samatājñāna*) is the realization that does not discriminate between oneself and other. Discerning pristine awareness (*sor rtog ye shes, pratyavekṣaṇajñāna*) is the realization that the general and specific characteristics of phenomena are without inherent nature. Accomplishing pristine awareness (*bya ba grub pa'i ye shes, kṛtyānusthānajñāna*) is working for oneself and others without partiality. Pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena (*chos dbyings ye shes, dharmadhātujñāna*) is the nature of all the other four as well as their objects. See *Commentary on [Buddhaguhya's] Guide to the Meaning of Tantra* (Toh. 2502), vol. '1, f. 98a4-5.

26. In yoga tantra, the contemplation of the deity, or deity yoga, is done by way of the "impressions" of seals. The four seals constitute the path of purification. Their sphere of purification comprises ordinary body, speech, mind, and activities; as well, they purify the afflictions of desire, aversion, delusion, avarice, and laziness. The purpose of impressing the seals is to merge and unify the body, speech, mind, and activities of the pristine awareness deity with those of the pledge deity.

The seals are executed in relation to each deity, Vairochana and the others. For each seal, there is a symbolized object, as well as external and internal symbolic representations. In the case of the great seal, the former is the body of the deity. The external symbol is the hand mudra appropriate to the particular deity, and the internal, the visu-

alization of oneself as the deity's form. For the pledge seal, the symbolized seal is the nonconceptual mind of the deity and the deity itself imagined to manifest as the corresponding insignia (vajra, noose, etc.). The external symbol is the appropriate hand mudra, and the internal, one's nonconceptual pristine awareness and the visualization of oneself as the deity appearing as the insignia. For the doctrine seal, the symbolized seal is the melodious speech of the deity expressing the teachings and the deity itself. The external symbol is the arrangement of letters on the deity's tongue, and so forth, and the deity itself; the internal, the visualization of letters in oneself as the deity. For the seal of awakened activities, the symbolized object is the deity and its awakened activities. The external symbol is the crossed vajra at the heart of the deity; the internal, the visualization of a crossed vajra at one's heart, and so forth.

For a description of the actual method of execution of the seals in relation to the deities as the five buddhas, Vairochana and the others, see Butön's *Survey of Yoga Tantra*, and *IBTS*, pp. 241-247.

27. Yoga tantra was also taught in the desire realm heaven called Mastery Over Others' Creations (gZhan 'phrul dbang byed) and in various unspecified places. See *IOK*, vol. I, p. 376.

28. The all-powerful sovereign (*'khor los sgyur ba'i rgyal po, cakravartin*) likely refers to Akshobhya, Amitabha, Ratnasambhava, and Amoghasiddhi.

29. Three contemplations (*ting nge 'dzin, samādhi*): initial union (*dang po sbyor ba, prathama prayoga*); supremely triumphant mandala (*dkyil 'khor rgyal mchog, vijaya maṇḍala*); and supremely triumphant act (*las rgyal mchog, vijaya karma*). Referring to the explanation of these three given in the *Vajra Garland*, which applies to both outer (yoga tantra) and inner yoga (highest yoga tantra), Kongtrul states that they constitute the main body of deity practice (*sādhana*), and as such, are found in both yoga tantra and highest yoga father and mother tantras. In the highest yoga tantra, the three contemplations are branches of the phase of generation.

The three contemplations are explained as follows: First, the initial union comprises the steps from the generation of the residence mandala up to the generation of oneself as the male or female principal figure at its center. Because the contemplation of the central figure (who is the principal "emanator" of the other deities in the mandala) is performed prior to the other two contemplations, it is called "initial." Since such contemplation inseparably unites method and wisdom, it is called "union."

Second, the supremely triumphant mandala comprises the steps of the generation of the mandala of the resident deities (emanated from the awakening mind of the male and female central figures) arranged in their respective places. It is known as "triumphant mandala" because it perfects the mandala of resident deities within the residence mandala.

Third, the supremely triumphant act consists in the deities' performance of deeds such as purifying realms. It is called "triumphant act" because these deeds conform with the deeds of the Buddha (*IOK*, vol. III, pp. 171-172).

30. According to Tsongkapa, the "tip" of the nose (*sna rtse*) does not mean the end of the nose but the root of the nose, or point between the eyes. However, others take the tip of the nose, in this context, to be the very end of the nose (*IBTS*, p. 244, n. 44).

31. Serviceability (*shin tu sbyangs, praśrabdhi*): a state of perfect comfort and ease in which body and mind are serviceable and devoid of hardship when engaged in wholesome pursuits. See Hopkins's *ME*, pp. 86-87.

32. Because it has a center (*dkyil*) and area surrounding (*'khor*), it is known as mandala (*dkyil 'khor*). The meaning of center and surrounding are explained in two different ways: as the mandala of perfect shape and its "surrounding" wisdom of intrinsic awareness; or as the chief deity surrounded by retinue. The mandala exists on two levels, the ultimate and the relative. The ultimate mandala is the wisdom of intrinsic awareness imbued with the realization of the ultimate mind of awakening. The relative mandala is twofold, the mandala of the nature of the deities and the mandala of reflected images. Source: Padmavajra's *Commentary on [Buddhaguhya's] Guide to the Meaning of Tantra* (Toh. 2502), vol. '1, f. 96b3-6.

33. *Summation of Essential Principles* (Toh. 479), vol. Nya, f. 134b3-4.

34. Ultimate reality, although indivisible, is presented as a triad of "doors to liberation" (*rnam thar sgo gsum*) from the point of view of its nature. The emptiness door of liberation (*rnam thar pa'i sgo stong pa nyid*) refers to the emptiness of the nature of any particular phenomenon. The wishlessness door (*-smon pa med pa*), in the context of general Buddhist doctrine, refers to emptiness posited with respect to phenomena not inherently producing results. The signlessness door (*-mtshan ma med pa*) refers to the emptiness of phenomena posited with respect to phenomena not having been inherently produced from causes. A fourth door to liberation is spoken of, that of emptiness posited in terms of the absence of conditioned actions (*mngon par 'dus ma byas pa*).

35. *Summation of Essential Principles* (Toh. 479), vol. Nya, f. 134b4-5.

36. *Ornament of Kosala* (Toh. 2503), vol. Yi.

37. Collective practice: In a house appropriate to the deities of one's family, the practitioners, equal in number to the deities, arrange themselves as the deities in the mandala. They then engage in the auxiliary practice of contemplation for which sense objects are enjoyed without a sense of separation between subject and object. In this way, the yogins please the deity and, in a dominating mode, achieve realization (Dharmashri's *VOWS*, f. 216b2-3).

38. *Glorious Supreme Original Being Tantra* (Toh. 488), vol. Ta.

39. This rite consists in striking the dagger to threaten the buddhas and bodhisattvas and to get their attention forcefully. See Dombipa's *Ten Essential Principles* (Toh. 1229), ff. 37a-41a.

40. Fire-offering ritual (*sbyin sreg, boma*): a ritual that consists in making offerings to a deity visualized in the heart of the fire god. The platform (*thab khung*) where the ritual fire burns is of a particular shape and size depending on the type of activation ritual.

41. The perfect end of the fourth meditative concentration (*bsam gtan bzhi pa'i rab mtsha'*), also called the great part of the great fourth meditative concentration (*bsam gtan bzhi pa'i chen po'i chen po*), refers to the final stage of the fourth concentration included in the form realm. See Lati Rinbochay et al., *Meditative States in Tibetan Buddhism*.

According to Shakyamitra, while dwelling in the great part of the fourth concentration, a bodhisattva, through miraculous powers, ascends to the Unsurpassed Realm where, viewing

sentient beings devoid of protection, he or she dwells in the “unstirring contemplation” (*mi g.yo ba'i ting nge 'dzin, ānīñjyo nāma samādhi*), with the door of liberation of emptiness (see n. 34 above) as the principal focus, until eventually aroused from that contemplation by the buddhas. Source: *Ornament of Kosala* (Toh. 2503), vol. Yi, f. 89a2-3.

42. Shakyamitra, in his version of the Buddha's awakening, uses the term “pristine awareness body” (*ye shes kyi sku, jñānakāya*) instead of mental body (*yid kyi rang bzhin gyi lus, manomayakāya*) and adds that, while on the banks of the Naranjana River practicing asceticism, the buddha-to-be left his body to proceed to the Unsurpassed Realm. There, empowered by the buddhas, he awakened, and after having taught yoga tantra on the summit of Mount Meru, he again entered his physical body. An alternative view is that held by Anandagarbha, who states that the Buddha awakened countless aeons ago. These positions of Shakyamitra and Anandagarbha represent the two divergent views on the Buddha's awakening found in yoga tantra. For an extensive discussion, see *IOK*, vol. I, pp. 290-300.

43. Reading *su* for *sku*. Padmavajra states that the “heart of awakening” (*byang chub snying po*) is taken by some to mean the “seat of enlightenment” in reference to the physical location where the Buddha awakened under the bodhi tree, and by others to mean the banks of the Naranjana River, where the Buddha, as a bodhisattva, practiced asceticism. Others consider “heart of awakening” to mean the nonconceptual state of the dimension of reality. The positions are not incompatible, he says, since wherever a bodhisattva approaching awakening dwells, that “place” has the nature of the seat of enlightenment. It is therefore acceptable to consider the banks of the Naranjana River as also being the dimension of reality devoid of conceptual characteristics. Source: *Commentary on [Buddhaguhya's] Guide to the Meaning of Tantra* (Toh. 2502), vol. 'I, f. 108b6-7.

For Butön (*Survey of Yoga Tantra*, f. 6a1) the “heart of awakening” is the Richly Adorned Unsurpassed Realm (*'Og min stug po bkod*), so called because it is like the heart (*snying po*) of many blissful buddha realms and the place where bodhisattvas awaken.

44. Such contemplation is called “unstirring” because the outflow of the senses toward objects and the movement of the breath have stopped (Padmavajra's *Commentary on [Buddhaguhya's] Guide to the Meaning of Tantra*, Toh. 2502, vol. 'I, f. 109a1-2). The six qualities of this contemplation are enumerated by Butön (in his *Survey of Yoga Tantra*, f. 6a4): “...stopping of inhalation; stopping of exhalation (*'byung rngub pa 'gog pa*); absence of thought; undistractedness (*sems pa med cing g.yo ba med*); body unmoved by any circumstance (*lus ni gang yang mi 'gul*); and the limbs not stirring (*yan lag bskyod par mi byed*).” Shakyamitra states that to remain in such contemplation (short of perfect realization) would not have allowed the bodhisattva to attain full awakening and work for the welfare of all beings. Therefore, all the buddhas arouse the bodhisattva from this contemplation (*Ornament of Kosala*, Toh. 2503, vol. Yi, ff. 18b7-19a2).

45. Kedrupjé explains that in the yoga tantra system, there are two sets of five awakenings: one set of the awakenings of the Buddha, the teacher; and a set constituting the procedure to be practiced by later followers who would train in the way that uses the result as the path (*JBTS*, pp. 29-35).

The first set represents the final moment of a bodhisattva's attainment of enlightenment known as “awakening to purity and total perfection” (*mngon par byang chub pa*,

*abhisambodhi*). It comprises five steps, which Padmavajra names as follows: awakening through discriminative knowledge of one's mind (*rang gi sems so so rab tu rig pa las mngon par byang chub pa*); awakening through generation of the mind of awakening (*byang chub tu sems bskyed pa las mngon par byang chub pa*); awakening through abiding in the reality dimension of awakening (*chos kyi skur gnas pa las mngon par byang chub pa*); awakening through stabilization (*brtan par byas pa las mngon par byang chub pa*); and awakening through transformation into the body of the Enlightened One (i.e., Mahavairochana) (*sangs rgyas kyi skur gyur ba las mngon par byang chub pa*) (Padmavajra's *Commentary on [Buddhaguhya's] Guide to the Meaning of Tantra*, Toh. 2502, f. 109a3-4).

In the first step, one (the bodhisattva) examines one's own mind. Realizing mind nature just as it is, one sees that nature as a moon disk at one's heart. This realization has the nature of the immediate path of the causal pristine awareness characterizing the first to the tenth stages of awakening. In the second step, one sees the nature of the mind of awakening in the shape of a completely full moon disk at the heart, resembling a full moon. This is the fully liberated path (*rnam grol lam*). In the third step, one sees the natures of the five pristine awarenesses as a five-pronged vajra at the heart and dwells in that state. One thereby sees the pristine awareness of full liberation. In the fourth step, all the power of all the buddhas' bodies, voices, and minds, and their five pristine awarenesses, and so forth, are absorbed into the vajra in one's heart. As the fifth step, having actualized the great seal of awakened body, one assumes the typical form and attire of Vairochana (Padmavajra's *Commentary*, f. 109a3-b1). Anandagarbha states that such a sequence of awakenings accords with the manner of practice of later followers. At the moment of actually attaining the result, at the time of the first awakening, all the remaining awakenings occur as well since all five pristine awarenesses are of the same nature and distinguished only conceptually (Panchen Lozang Chögyen's *Presentation of the Doctrine in General and the Four Tantra Sets*, p. 52).

The second set of awakenings that constitute the particular procedure for the practice of later followers is modelled on the set of five awakenings of the Buddha and involves using the five awakenings as factors for realization. For the way to do so, see Gyalwa Yang-gönpa's *Secret Description of the Vajra Body*. In this text, Yang-gönpa also sets forth the "inner" awakenings of highest yoga tantra as opposed to those of yoga tantra, which are considered as "outer." In the highest yoga tantra in general, these are known as awakening through the moon, or mirror-like pristine awareness; through the sun, or pristine awareness of total sameness; through the seed syllable (or insignia), or discerning pristine awareness; through the merging, or accomplishing pristine awareness; and through the complete form, or the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena (ff. 3b-5b).

For a detailed discussion of both sets of five awakenings, see Butön's *Survey of Yoga Tantra*, ff. 7b5-11a1; and *General Presentation of the Tantra Sets*, ff. 125a4-128a6.

46. With the first awakening, the bodhisattva attains the mirror-like pristine awareness, which is of the essence of Akshobhya; with the second, the pristine awareness of total sameness, the essence of Ratnasambhava; with the third, the discerning pristine awareness, the essence of Amitabha; with the fourth, the accomplishing pristine awareness, the essence of Amoghasiddhi; and with the fifth, the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena, the essence of Vairochana (*IBTS*, pp. 29-35).

47. According to the universal way (Anandagarbha's view in particular), the Buddha, after his enlightenment, remained in the Unsurpassed Realm as the enjoyment dimension of awakening (*sambhogakāya*). There, without stirring from the reality dimension of awakening (*dharmakāya*), he manifested in the world in his supreme manifest dimension (*nirmānakāya*). In that emanation, he performed limitless deeds of great wonder. A fraction of these, which were witnessed by ordinary disciples, came to be known as the twelve deeds: descent from Tushita Heaven; entry into the womb of Mahamaya, his mother; birth in the Lumbini Grove; developing skill in worldly arts; enjoying the company of courtesans; renunciation; asceticism; resolute walk toward the seat of enlightenment; defeat of Mara's host; attainment of complete awakening; turning the wheel of the doctrine; and passing into perfect peace. For a complete presentation, see *IOK*, vol. I, pp. 300-316.

## CHAPTER 6: HIGHEST YOGA TANTRA

1. Text not identified.

2. *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra* (Toh. 447), vol. Ca, f. 285a4-5.

3. Here, Heruka is a name for the deity Chakrasamvara and other chief male deities of the mother tantras (such as Hevajra, Buddhakapala, and Mahamaya). Vairochana (rNam snang) refers to Guhyasamaja, Vajradhara, Vajrasattva, and other central figures in the mandalas of father tantras.

The term "heruka" has been translated into Tibetan as "blood drinker" (*khrag 'hung*), a translation deemed somewhat improper by Butön, the compiler of the Tibetan-language Buddhist Canon. More often than not, however, the term has been left untranslated in Tibetan scriptures. As for the meaning of the term "heruka," Kongtrul explains that *he* means *hetu* (cause), where cause indicates emptiness, in that no phenomenon is born from itself, from other, from both, or from no cause. *Ru* means *rupa* (form), where form indicates absence of any abiding or perishable aggregation. *Ka* stands for *kachita thista*, meaning "not abiding" in either of the two extremes of permanence or annihilation. Source: *CH*, f. 117b1-6.

4. The first part of the citation from the *Compendium*, "...in the midst of an entourage of queens, ... and by means of the contemplation of great bliss, ...to dwell perfectly in the *bhaga* of the queen ..." is typical of the opening lines of various highest yoga tantras such as Hevajra. This line is explained according to its literal meaning, general meaning, concealed meaning, and final meaning. Although according to the literal meaning, this opening line explicitly refers to the teacher or proclaimer of the tantra, according to the other meanings, it points out the very essence of the highest yoga tantra.

To explain the literal meaning, the divine palace, which is of the nature of bliss, rests on a double vajra; and the double vajra itself, on a variegated lotus. The entire mandala dimension is contained within the source of phenomena (*chos 'byung, dharmodaya*), or source of all awakened qualities, also called *bhaga* (vagina). In its symbolic form, the source of phenomena is a triangular pyramid; in actuality, it is emptiness, the nature that encompasses all existence. Thus, the consort's *bhaga* stands for emptiness; and the consort is called "queen" (*btsun mo*) since she elicits unsurpassable joy. The source of phe-

nomena is referred to as “vagina” as a means to draw beings dominated by desire (*CH*, f. 7a2). The plural “queens” is used because the consort with whom the teacher is united embodies all queens. See Abhayakara’s commentary on the opening lines of the *Sampua Tantra* in *Awn of Esoteric Instructions* (Toh. 1198), vol. Cha, f. 5a2-b5.

Corresponding to the above, taking the result as the path, a male trainee of highest yoga tantra generates himself as the main deity of the mandala in union with the consort. The union is both symbolic and actual. The former is the union of method (bliss) and wisdom (the understanding of emptiness). The latter is the physical union of the male and female, by means of which a blissful consciousness is generated and directed to the understanding of reality. In that way, the adept “resides in the castle” of great bliss which realizes emptiness.

5. Vajra words (*rdo rje'i tshig*): words of the tantras, which are presented according to six parameters (provisional meaning, definitive meaning, interpretable meaning, non-interpretable meaning, standard terminology, and coined terminology) and four modes (literal meaning, general meaning, concealed meaning, and final meaning).

Kongtrul states that the most profound teachings are self-concealed since they are not comprehended by certain non-Buddhist philosophers, proclaimers of the individual way, practitioners at the beginning of their training in the universal way of the perfections, and practitioners inclined to emptiness alone. This does not mean that tantric teachings were withheld by the Buddha but that they were given in a way suited to the capabilities, inclinations, and fortunes of disciples. Thus, the profound points of the tantras are concealed in vajra words so that they remain naturally hidden from those of lesser fortune, to prevent those of inferior faculties from committing the ill deed of forsaking the doctrine, and to prevent those under demonic influences and proud scholars from following their own inclinations with respect to the tantras (*CPR*, ff. 10b2-11a2).

6. The six parameters (*mtha' drug, saṅkoti*) refers to six levels of meaning in the content of the tantras and the words that convey that content. These six parameters that express the different meanings are applied to the tantras to correctly understand them; thus, they constitute means of examination and ascertainment of the tantras (Taranata's *CSI*, f. 11a3-5). See Chapter 16, “Exposition Methods in Highest Yoga Tantra”; also Shradhakaravarman's *Revealing the Seven Ornaments as Set Forth in the Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra* (Toh. 1789).

7. *Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 442), f. 97b2. These words from the *Guhyasamaja* are not to be taken literally. They have been spoken in order to attract to the practice of Buddhist tantras certain types of persons (for example, worldly persons drawn by Vishnu and others' advice to engage in perverted conduct such as sexual union with family members). In the provisional sense, the words “mother...” are spoken in reference to the yogin's consort, whom he wishes to benefit as a mother, and so on. In the ultimate sense, mother, sister, and daughter refer to the luminous clarity of the three awakened dimensions: mother refers to dharmakaya; sister, to sambhogakaya; and daughter, to nirmanakaya (*BGP*, f. 57a1-6).

“Mother” and the others are names that also appear in the group of eight types of consorts or wisdom women (*rig ma, vidyā*), on which the yogin relies to experience great bliss. These eight types are known as mother (*ma*), sister (*sring mo*), daughter (*bu mo*),

niece (*sring mo'i bu mo*), maternal uncle's wife (*zhang po'i chung ma*), maternal aunt (*ma'i spun*), mother-in-law (*sgyug mo*), and paternal aunt (*pha'i sring mo*). The names do not refer to familial relations. When one is conferred the secret initiation, the master's consort is considered as one's mother. When one is initiated at the same time as the vajra master, his consort is considered one's sister. The female one initiates is one's daughter; the female initiated by the aforementioned sister, one's niece; the wife of the yogin who has been initiated with the aforementioned mother, one's maternal uncle's wife; the female who has been initiated with the aforementioned mother, one's maternal aunt; the wife of the master who confers the secret initiation on one's master, one's mother-in-law; and the female initiated with one's master, one's paternal aunt. This is the most prevalent explanation of the eight consorts. See Naropa's *Commentary on the Summary of the Initiation* (Toh. 1351), vol. Na, f. 239b5.

There are other explanations of the eight consorts. The *Pristine Essence Tantra*, for instance, states that mother refers to a brahmin girl (*bram ze bu mo*); sister, to a dancer (*gar ma*); daughter, to a washerwoman (*gyung mo*); niece, to a dyer (*tshos mkhan ma*); maternal uncle's wife, to a girl of the artisan or merchant caste (*rje ma*); maternal aunt, to a girl of the warrior or royal caste (*rgyal rigs*); mother-in-law, to a girl of the menial caste (*dmangs rigs*); and paternal aunt, to an outcaste girl (*gdol pa mo*) (*CH*, ff. 284a5-285a4).

The system of the Kalachakra tantra enumerates ten consorts corresponding to the ten perfections, for which the ninth is a *chandali* (one dedicated to unlawful works), and the tenth, a fisherwoman (*nya pa mo*). See Pundarika's *Stainless Light* (Toh. 1347), vol. Da, f. 158a4-5.

8. *Continuation of the Guhyasamāja Tantra* (Toh. 443), vol. Ca, f. 150a1-2.

9. The three aspects of tantra are said to be interconnected and are described as being like the continuous flow of a river. The continuum of the nature (*rang bzhin gyi rgyud*) is also known as causal continuum (*rgyu'i rgyud*); the continuum of the ground (*gzhi'i rgyud*), which is the fundamental nature of phenomena (*gzhi dngos po'i gnas lugs*), is also known as the continuum of method (*thabs kyī rgyud*) and the [continuum or] stage of the path (*lam gyi rim pa*). The indivisibility of body and mind is the continuum of the nature. The indivisibility of the phase of generation and the phase of completion is the continuum of the path. The indivisibility of the two dimensions of awakening is known as resultant continuum. The nondual purity of body and mind, or pristine awareness, is known as continuum because it is of the same nature as perfect awakening (*MH*, f. 20a2-6).

10. One's intrinsic self-awareness (*so so rang gi rig pa*): "one's intrinsic" inasmuch as the ultimate nature of the mind (*sems nyid*) is not acquired from others but is naturally present in each individual, this "self-awareness" (*rang gi rig pa*), or awareness of awareness itself, is mind knowing itself, free of subject and object duality (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).

11. Form (*rnam pa*) or appearance (*snang ba*) indicates the unobstructedly present (*ma 'gag pa*) quality of the mind and its inherent potential for manifestation (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).

12. Impure state (*ma dag pa'i gnas skabs*), both pure and impure state (*dag la ma dag pa'i -*), and utterly pure state (*shin tu rnam dag gi -*) correspond, respectively, to the condition in

which the very nature of mind is attended by impurities, that is, the obscurations of emotional afflictions and obscurations to knowledge; the condition of a bodhisattva who has removed the first type of obscurations but has yet to overcome the obscurations to knowledge; and the condition of a buddha who has removed all types of obscurations (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).

13. *Jewel Affinity* (Toh. 4024), vol. Phi, f. 60b5-6.

14. *Fundamental Verses Called Wisdom* (Toh. 3824), vol. Tsa, f. 8b5.

15. Awakening one's affinity (*rigs sad pa*): the evolution of the affinity for the universal way from a latent state to a state in which a person's qualities manifest. These qualities include spontaneous compassion for others; interest in the universal way; ability to withstand hardships [for others' sake]; and virtuous engagement in the six perfections. Source: Vasubandhu's *Explanation of the Scripture Ornament* (Toh. 4029), f. 137b4.

16. The reality dimension of awakening (*chos sku, dbarmakāya*) has a "static" aspect and a "dynamic" aspect, referred to, respectively, as the essential dimension (*ngo bo nyid sku*) and pristine awareness dimension of reality (*ye shes chos sku*). "The two purities" (*dag pa gnyis ldan*) (the natural purity and the acquired purity) is an expression used in connection with the essential dimension. The first purity describes the essential dimension of awakening in its aspect of original purity (*rang bzhin rnam dag gi char 'gyur ba'i ngo bo nyid sku*) or emptiness. The second purity describes that dimension in its aspect of newly gained purity from adventitious impurities (*glo bur rnam dag char 'gyur ba'i ngo bo nyid sku*).

17. The analysts of the individual way, in the context of the final attainment of an arhat, speak of perfect peace with remainder and perfect peace without remainder. An arhat who still possesses a physical body has attained perfect peace with remainder. At death his stream of consciousness is severed (*rig pa rgyun chad pa*) and he attains perfect peace without remainder.

18. Humans, gods, animals, starving spirits, and hell beings.

19. See Chapter 1, n. 45.

## CHAPTER 7: THE CAUSAL CONTINUUM

1. Shantiguṇḍya (āntiguṇḍya) (Zhi ba sba pa) was the master of Buddhaguṇḍya, the Indian guru of Taranāta. Taranāta provides a lengthy account of Shantiguṇḍya's life in his *Seven Instruction Lineages*. Born in southern India, Shantiguṇḍya became a monk and studied all aspects of the Buddhist doctrine including tantra under Ratiguṇḍya. For six years, he performed menial tasks for his teacher before being granted the highest instructions. He became abbot of a monastery but eventually found his duties to be uncondusive to his practice and entreated the monks to excuse him from his position. In the end, however, he was forced to convince them to expel him by taking up drinking and other prohibited activities. Having left the monastery, he engaged in meditation on the banks of a river and was befriended by six "messengers of knowledge" who manifested as prostitutes. Later, he came across a wine seller who revealed herself to be Vajrayogini and instructed him to seek the guidance of Jnanamitra. For several years, Jnanamitra had him undergo various trials, much like those Tilopa imposed on Naropa. On one occasion, when his

master was performing a fire ritual, Shantigupta, acting as his assistant, made a few mistakes. Jnanamitra, seemingly infuriated by his actions, hurled burning charcoals at him. At that moment, Shantigupta experienced profound awareness and thereby became an adept of highest attainment. He then dedicated himself to the awakening of his disciples.

2. This set of five distinctions based on students' characteristics is derived from the commentarial literature on the Guhyasamaja tantra. Shradhdhakaravarman, in his *Revealing the Seven Ornaments* (Toh. 1789, f. 10a4), following Aryadeva's *Clear Lamp Commentary [on the Guhyasamaja Tantra]* (Toh. 1794), speaks of these five persons who have been initiated as causal continuum. On the characteristics of these students, see Chapter 16, section entitled "Teachings for Five Types of Recipients."

3. The ground-of-all (*kun gzhi*, *ālaya*) is a term often used in reference to the ground-of-all consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam shes*, *ālayavijñāna*) (see Chapter 5, n. 24), which serves as the foundation for the arising of all projected phenomena. In other contexts, ground-of-all refers to reality (*de bzhin nyid*) or the essence of enlightenment (*tathāgatagarbha*). See Kongtrul's *Commentary on Differentiating Consciousness from Pristine Awareness*, f. 23a6-b1.

That which is known as the "ground-of-all," the basis for cyclic existence and perfect peace, or ultimate dimension of all phenomena, may be divided into two: the pure state of mind, or ground-of-all pristine awareness; and the impure, or ground-of-all consciousness. The ground-of-all pristine awareness is explained to be the essence of enlightenment and is present mixed with the ground-of-all consciousness, like water and milk. See *CPR*, ff. 17a5-19a5.

4. The causal continuum is referred to as the "intrinsic original buddha" (*rang bzhin gyi dang po'i sangs rgyas*) and "sudden original buddha" (*glo bur gyi dang po'i sangs rgyas*) because, on the one hand, the causal continuum is intrinsically or primordially pure and, on the other hand, once the causal continuum is freed from adventitious stains, a "sudden" buddha occurs.

5. The four states (*gnas skabs bzhi*)—waking (*sad pa'i gnas skabs*), dream (*rmi lam gyi* -), deep sleep (*gnyid stug po'i* -), and sexual union (*snyoms 'jug gi* -)—are obscured in that they are dominated by dualistic experience. Through the four seals (*phyag rgya*, *mudrā*), the deceptive natures of the four states are gradually purified, and the four states manifest as the four dimensions of awakening (see Chapter 9, section entitled "Four States").

The four joys (*dga' ba gzhi*, *caturānanda*), according to the *Kalachakra Tantra*, are, one, the joy (*dga' ba*, *ānanda*) experienced as the moon-like vital essence at the upper part of the head descends to the throat; two, supreme joy (*mchog dga' ba*, *paramānanda*), experienced as the vital essence descending from the throat reaches the heart; three, special joy (*khyad dga' ba*, *vīramānanda*), experienced as the vital essence descending from the heart reaches the navel; and four, innate joy (*lhan cig skyes pa'i dga' ba*, *sahajānanda*), experienced as the vital essence descending from the navel reaches the tip of the penis. In the ordinary condition, the joys are present as the very nature of the individual's mind. Experientially, they arise from the melting of the vital essence, which then descends through the central channel by means of the inner heat, action seal, and so forth (Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, f. 194b2-4).

The four lights (i.e., stages of experience of light) (*snang ba bzhi*): light (*snang ba, āloka*), increase of light (*mched pa, ālokābhāsa*), full culmination of light (*nyer thob pa, upalabdha*), and luminous clarity (*'od gsal, prabhāsvara*). In the ordinary condition, these are present as the intrinsic awareness of every being. Experientially, they are elicited through yoga that causes the winds to dissolve in the central channel. Generally speaking, lights in the given order are stages of increasing clarity of the mind and mark the dissolution of gross and subtle mentation until luminous clarity is fully manifest. However, the first three stages of light (in the ordinary condition) are also understood as the progressive deviation from the luminous clarity nature of mind into coarser levels of dualistic involvement with objects. (See below, Chapter 9, for various ways of positing the three lights.)

6. *Evam maya* forms part of the expression "*Evam mayā śrutam*" (*'di skad bdag gis thos pa*), "thus I have heard," which are the opening words of all sutras and tantras. *Evam* is the symbol of all the buddhas; its syllables *e* and *vam* represent method and wisdom and are like the father and mother of all the eighty-four thousand aspects of the teachings. *E* symbolizes the vowels, and *vam*, the consonants, which are the bases of words and therefore the bases of the 84,000 aspects. *Evam* is stated first in all scriptures. The meaning of *evam* is presented from different perspectives; here, the four syllables, *e vam ma ya*, represent, and resemble in shape, the four channel-wheels (at the head, throat, heart, and navel). The channel-wheel at the navel is represented by, and has the shape of, the letter *e*; that at the heart, the shape of the letter *vam*; that at the throat, the shape of the letter *ma*; and that at the head, the shape of the letter *ya*. This association is clearly set forth in Vajragarbha's *Commentary Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 1180), vol. Ka, f. 15b5. See also Sönam Tsemo's *SGP*, f. 65a1; Gyalwa Yang-gönpa's *Secret Description of the Vajra Body*, f. 7a5; and *Awakened Body, Speech, and Mind Tantra* (part of the Rali tantras) (Toh. 388), vol. Ga, f. 207a5.

7. The four winds (*rlung, prāṇa*) are the upward-moving, downward-voiding, fire-accompanying, and pervading winds. The life wind is omitted presumably because all these four types of winds express different functions of the life wind.

The four vital essences (*thig le, bindu*) are the vital essences of body (*lus kyī thig le, kāyabindu*); speech (*ngag gi -, vāk-*), mind (*sems kyī -, citta-*); and pristine awareness (*ye shes kyī -, jñāna-*). See Chapter 9, section entitled "Winds" and section entitled "Vital Essences."

8. Stains (*dri ma*) refers to habitual tendencies, which are the source for the deceptive appearances associated with the four states. Dispersion (*'dzag pa*) refers to the instability or movement of vital essence (*thig le*) within the body's channels, as well as its outflow through orifices, pores of the skin, and so forth, and principally its emission (*'pho ba*) through the sexual organs. At a mental level, dispersion occurs owing to concepts (*rnam rtog*) inherent to the duality of subject and object (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication). See also Chapter 9, n. 1.

9. For the association of these sets of four with the four channel-wheels, see Vajragarbha's *Commentary Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 1180), vol. Ka, ff. 15b3-16a6.

The meanings of these sets of four is unclear. According to Bokar Rinpoché, families (*rigs, kula*) are the elements that constitute the body-mind complex as they emerge from

the single reality of great bliss. In their pure aspects, they are the buddha families. In this context, there are four families corresponding to four channel-wheels. When a different number of channel-wheels is posited (such as six as in the Kalachakra tantra system), the number of families varies accordingly. The four tantras (*rgyud*) refer to the action, conduct, yoga, and highest yoga tantra systems, which are distinguished according to the pleasures derived from gazing, laughing, hand holding, and sexual union, respectively. The meaning of four beings (*gro ba*) remains in doubt; it may refer to the four modes of birth—womb birth, egg birth, birth from warmth and moisture, and miraculous birth. It is not clear what the four qualities (*yon tan*) mentioned here refer to; possibly to the sensory fields for tastes, smells, visual forms, and objects of touch. The four periods (*thun tshod*) are morning, corresponding to the forehead; midday, to the throat; afternoon, to the heart; and midnight, to the navel (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).

10. In this context, the four Buddhist philosophies, four original Buddhist schools, four moments, four joys, and four truths are being spoken of in a provisional way (*drang don*), according to which the four philosophies represent trends of Buddhist thought (*grub mtha', siddhānta*) known as the analyst (*bye brag smra ba, vaibhāṣika*), traditionist (*mdo sde pa, sautrāntika*), idealist (*sems tsam pa, cittamātra*), and centrist (*dbu ma pa, mādhyamika*). The main view of each of these is represented by the four conceptions mentioned in the text. For a comprehensive discussion of these philosophies, see Hopkins's *ME*.

The four schools (*sde pa*) of followers of the Buddha are the *sthavira* (*gnas brtan pa*), the school comprised of those who did not stray from the exalted affinity; *sarvastivāda* (*thams cad yod par smra ba*), proponents of the theory of the substantial existence of the three times and the true existence of all things; *sammitiya* (*mang po bskur ba*), those who followed masters respected by many different people; and *mahasāṅgika* (*dge 'dun phal che ba*), the school to which most of the monastic community belonged. Explained with respect to their concealed, or inner, meanings, the four schools stand for the four channel-wheels (*'khor lo bzhi, cakra*) to which they correspond in ascending order. Like the eighteen branch schools which developed from the four original ones, the four channel-wheels are the source for all the subtle channels that produce vital essence and consequently bliss (*CH*, f. 32a4-b4).

The four moments (*skad cig ma, kṣāṇa*), posited in relation to an action, are the moment of variety (*rnam pa sna tshogs pa, vicitra*), moment of fruition (*rnam par smin pa, vipāka*), moment of consummation (*rnam par rnyed pa, vimarda*), and moment that lacks characteristics (*mtshan nyid dang bral ba, vilakṣaṇa*). The beginning of any action, as it initiates conditioned involvement on a variety of levels, is known as the moment of variety. Just as a barley seed becomes a barley plant, a particular action will yield a result concordant with the cause (*rgyu mthun pa'i 'bras bu, niḥsyanda-phalam*). The result of such an action, developing through the potential it leaves on the ground-of-all consciousness, is known as the moment of fruition. Just as a result develops through a variety of conditions and circumstances, the result of an action does not go unexperienced, and thus is a fruition (*rnam par smin pa'i 'bras bu, vipāka-phalam*). The repeated endeavor with respect to the result once it has been experienced is known as the moment of consummation. Like the attainment of awakening through continuous cultivation of merit and pristine awareness, such endeavor is a result produced by personal effort (*skyes bus byed pa'i 'bras bu, puruṣakāra-phalam*). When the result has been fully experienced,

there is a moment which is not characterized either by action or by agent, known as lack of characteristics. Such a moment is the result of separation (*bral ba'i 'bras bu, visamyoga-phalam*), when, like a burnt seed which can no longer sprout, that which is desired or avoided is exhausted. The four moments, in terms of their inner meanings, are the moments of the four joys. The moment of variety is associated with the joy produced by a variety of means (embracing one's consort, etc.), that cause the vital essence to descend from the head. This joy stops conceptions related to the waking state. The moment of fruition occurs when the vital essence reaches the throat and produces the supreme joy. Then, with the slightest effort, bliss increases in intensity. This joy exhausts the dream state. The moment of consummation occurs when bliss is repeatedly experienced due to the mingling of bliss and emptiness at the heart. This joy exhausts the state of deep sleep. The fourth moment, that which lacks characteristics (i.e., not distinguished by passion or lack of passion) occurs when the white and red vital essences mingle with the wind at the navel, eliciting innate joy. This joy burns away the habitual tendency for the emission of vital essence as regenerative fluid (*CH*, ff. 29b2-30b2).

The four truths are the truth of suffering, the truth of the source of suffering, the truth of the path, and the truth of cessation, as usually understood in the context of Buddhist philosophy. In an inner sense, the truth of suffering is the hardship involved in the quest for undefiled bliss; the source of suffering is the dispersion of the pure vital essence; the truth of cessation is preventing the outflow of vital essence by means of wind control techniques and *yantra* exercises; and the truth of the path is the contemplation of clarity and bliss while retaining the vital essence. These truths are associated with the four channel-wheels in descending order, respectively (*CH*, f. 32a3-4).

The four joys (*dga' ba, ānanda*) represent stages in the experiential process of the tantric path. Joy consists in a slight experience of bliss generated from the melting of vital essence through the application of graduated methods. Supreme joy is the increase of that slight joy which overcomes gross discursiveness. Separation from joy, which in the Kalachakra tantra is known as special joy (*khyad dga'*), is bliss and emptiness becoming undifferentiable. As a result of this, attachment to bliss ceases and the extreme of passion is thereby overcome. Innate joy is the unmistakable nonconceptual realization of the indivisibility of bliss and emptiness which arises through the absence of "passion," "lack of passion," and "in-between passion and lack of passion" acting as support. These are associated with the channel-wheels in descending order (*CH*, ff. 31b4-32a4).

On the correspondences between the channel-wheels and the philosophical trends, Buddhist schools, four moments, four joys, and four truths, see Vajragarbha's *Commentary Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 1180), vol. Ka, ff. 15b6-16a2.

11. The four seals (*phyag rgya, mudrā*): action seal (*karmamudrā*), pledge seal (*samayamudrā*), doctrine seal (*dharmamudrā*), and great seal (*mahāmudrā*). These represent the four ways to actualize the pristine awareness of the four joys.

These are interpreted differently in the various highest yoga tantras. In the context of the Hevajra tantra, in the generation phase, the action seal refers to the initial stage of yogic practice (still attended by conceptions) which uses attachment in the path. In this case, with the aid of a consort, the yogin causes the inner heat at the navel to blaze and thereby experiences the four joys. The joys burn away adherence to the aggregates and

elements. By controlling energies, the yogin withholds the vital essence at the genitals, and familiarizes with the unification of nonconceptual bliss and emptiness.

For the pledge seal, the yogin contemplates the vowels, consonants, and syllables of the five poisons at the channel-wheels of the body in the aspect of the illusory form of the deity. Then the yogin draws up the lower winds, causing the inner heat to blaze. This burns away adherence to the aggregates and elements, together with the syllables of the five poisons, and causes the descent of vital essence and the consequent experience of the four joys. Simultaneously, the yogin meditates on a *heruka* (i.e., Hevajra) at each spoke of the four channel-wheels, or, alternatively, on a five-colored drop of vital essence emanating lights of five colors at each of these points.

In the doctrine seal, the yogin, with the understanding of transcendent wisdom taught in the Buddha's discourses or through the tantric method of inner heat, contemplates the emptiness of the aggregates, sense fields, elements, and so on, which are viewed as the five buddhas (Vairochana, etc.), their consorts (Lochana, etc.), and so forth. Three levels of effectiveness are noted: the best is to cognize phenomena, as they arise, free from the conceptual elaborations of good, bad, or neutral; the middling is to view them as like a dream or an illusion; and the least, to regard phenomena as Vairochana and his consort in union.

The great seal is the experience of the inseparability of great compassion and emptiness free from all extremes, generated by the power of inner heat. Such experience burns away all conceptions of cause and result, and nonconceptual pristine awareness arises. The vital essences (at the channel-wheels) radiate immense light, and through the power of great compassion, the adept emanates various bodies, reaching beings who are fettered by the habitual tendencies for dispersion. Such is the specialty of the great seal in the mother tantras (*CH*, ff. 34a4-36a1).

In the context of the phase of completion, the four seals are explained as follows: For the action seal, the yogin elicits, through union with an action seal, actual pristine awareness or nonconceptual understanding of reality, which is the undifferentiable unity of innate bliss and emptiness.

For the seal of the doctrine, the yogin practices the contemplation that directly realizes the fundamental sameness of flavor (i.e., the union of appearance and emptiness) of all inner and outer, animate and inanimate phenomena. In such contemplation, the object of meditation, the meditator, and the meditation are of one flavor, equal in the nature of emptiness. As a result of understanding cyclic life and perfect peace to be of one flavor, the yogin, free from concepts regarding what to practice and what to abandon, remains totally absorbed in intrinsic reality. Once the yogin has gained such realization, though he may be destitute of merit, or have little potential due to having committed a deed of immediate retribution, he will become accomplished in that same lifetime without any doubt.

For the great seal, the yogin contemplates that the environment and all beings are naturally present pristine awareness, free from all fabrications. Having realized the lack of intrinsic existence as the nature of all things, this contemplation is not a construct of mind; meditator, meditation, and object of meditation are all beyond fabricated notions of emptiness, and so forth. Here, the yogin contemplates that all things, from the animate down to blades of grass, regardless of their appearances, are nothing but the very nature of his or her own mind.

For the pledge seal, the yogin practices in order to gain realization that the three worlds are, in actuality, the body, speech, and mind of all buddhas of the three times, the inseparability of bliss and emptiness. The continuous cultivation of such realization is that which yields the final result of the achievement of the great seal (*CH*, f. 122a3-145b4).

12. The four indestructible states or vajras (*rdo rje bzhi*) (body, speech, mind, and pristine awareness) represent the primordial condition, or purity, of body, speech, mind, and pristine awareness. These correspond to the manifest, enjoyment, reality, and essential dimensions of awakening, respectively.

## CHAPTER 8: THE NATURE OF MIND

1. Tilopa's *Perfect Words: Esoteric Instructions of the Dakini* is found in Kongtrul's *Treasury of Precious Key Instructions* (*gDams ngag rin po che'i mdzod*), vol. 7, f. 35a4. It is noteworthy that there is a work with the same title (*Ājñāsamīyakpramāṇanāmadākīnyupadeśa*, *bKa' yang dag pa'i tshad ma zhes bya ba mkha' 'gro ma'i man ngag*) in the Dergé Tengyur (Toh. 2331), the author of which is not given in the Tohoku Catalogue but may be attributed to Naropa or Tilopa. An English translation of this text by Fabrizio Torricelli is found in "The Tanjur Text of the Ājñāsaṅgyakpramāṇa-nāmadākīnyupadeśa" from *East and West*, ISIAO, vol. 47, nos. 1-4 (December 1997).

Sky-farer (*mkha' 'gro ma, dākini*), a yogini who has attained uncommon powers, so called because in one instant she can travel anywhere in the sky owing to miraculous abilities, or because she can playfully come and go as she pleases from the ultimate dimension of phenomena (*CH*, f. 207b3-5).

2. Tilopa's *Perfect Words: Esoteric Instructions of the Dakini*, in Kongtrul's *Treasury of Precious Key Instructions* (*gDams ngag rin po che'i mdzod*), vol. 7, f. 35a4-5.

3. Concerning the authentic condition (*gnas lugs*) of body and that of mind, Gyalwa Yang-gönpa explains that the vajra body, speech, and mind of every buddha are the authentic conditions of ordinary body, speech, and mind. Vajra pristine awareness, which is the indivisibility of all buddhas' body, speech, and mind, is the authentic condition of the indivisibility of ordinary body, speech, and mind. In this context, vajra means "indivisibility." Accordingly, the *Equal to the Sky Tantra* states: "In all respects, the supreme bodies of the buddhas/ And in all respects, the supreme voices and minds of all buddhas/ Are one with all animate and inanimate phenomena./ Therefore, they are designated as vajra." Thus, ordinary body, speech, and mind, and Heruka's body, speech, and mind are indivisible in terms of the ground, path, and result, and are therefore awakened body, speech, and mind. Moreover, the pristine awareness winds that govern the totality of channels, letters, and vital essences are, respectively, the vajra bodies, voices, and minds of all buddhas. The channels which resemble a house, the vital essences which resemble wealth, and the winds which resemble the householder are also awakened body, mind, and speech, respectively. Channels are the nature of body; winds are the "body" of speech; and bodhichitta (vital essence), the mind's support (*Secret Description of the Vajra Body*, ff. 2b5-3a5).

4. Jomonang: a valley in the Shigatsé region of Tibet, location of the Jonangpa Monastery. The master referred to here is Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen (Dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan) (1292-1361).

5. The thirty-two qualities of the reality dimension of awakening (*chos kyī sku'i yon tan sum cu rtsa gnyis*) comprise the ten powers (*stobs bcu*), the four fearlessnesses (*mi 'jigs pa bzhi*), and the eighteen unparalleled qualities (*ma 'dres pa bco brygad*). For a description of these qualities, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 609-618; and Kongtrul's *Commentary on the Treatise on the Essence of Enlightenment*, ff. 13b6-16a1.
6. Bodong Choklé Namgyal or Bodong Panchen (Bo dong phyogs las rnam rgyal) (1376-1451): an eminent scholar of the Jonangpa school and tantric master in the Kalachakra lineage; also a prolific writer who composed about one hundred volumes of commentary. He founded Palmo Chöding (*dPal mo chos sdings*) and other monasteries, and tutored Tsongkapa, founder of the Gelukpa order, in the Kalachakra tantra. Originally an upholder of the Sakya lineage, he started a school bearing his name which has not survived as an independent school.
7. Ordinary awareness (*tha mal gyi shes pa*): uncontrived, unmodified, direct knowing.
8. Here, Kongtrul has paraphrased the following words from Rangjung Dorjé's *Treatise on the Essence of Enlightenment* (*sNyīng po bstan pa*), ff. 5b6-6a1: *thams cad bden min rdzun min tel chu zla bzbin du mkhas rnams bshad/ tha mal shes pa de nyid la/ chos dbyings rgyal ba'i snying po zer* (edition of Dharma Chakra Centre, Rumtek, Sikkim).
9. Maitreya's *Jewel Affinity* (Toh. 4024), vol. Phi, f. 57a2.
10. Sixty-four qualities of buddhahood (*sangs rgyas kyī yon tan drug cu rtsa bzhi*): thirty-two of these are the qualities of the reality dimension of awakening (*dharmakāya*) mentioned above (see n. 5); the other thirty-two are the qualities of the form dimension of awakening (*rūpakāya*) and refer to the thirty-two major marks of a buddha's body. See *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 609-629; and Kongtrul's *Commentary on [Rangjung Dorjé's] Treatise on the Essence of Enlightenment*, ff. 13b6-16a1.
11. The six sense fields refer to the six sense powers and their objects: Eye sense power and visible forms; ear sense power and sounds; nose sense power and odors; tongue sense power and tastes; body sense power and tangible objects; mental sense power and mental phenomena.
12. Eightfold group of consciousnesses: See Chapter 5, n. 24.
13. Ordinary person (*so so'i skye bo*): a person on either the path of accumulation or that of preparation, in contrast to an exalted being (*'phags pa*) who has reached the path of seeing.
14. See Asanga's *Explanation of the Jewel Affinity* (Toh. 4025) for an explanation of the nature of these stains, the means by which they are removed (f. 110a1-6), and the significance of the different metaphors (f. 110a7-b2).
15. The original text is apparently no longer extant. The citation is found in Maitreya's *Jewel Affinity* (Toh. 4024) and the *Discourse That Teaches the Essence of Enlightenment* (*sNyīng po bstan pa'i mdo*), one of ten sutras that explain the essence of enlightenment. The citation, with differences in the first line (...*dus can kyī khams* instead of ...*dus kyī dbyings* as in *IOK*) and third line (... *'gro kun* instead of ... *'khor ba* as in *IOK*), appears in Asanga's *Compendium of the Universal Way* (Toh. 4048, vol. Ri, f. 3a7) and in his *Explanation of the Jewel Affinity* (Toh. 4025, vol. Phi, f. 111b6-7).

16. Maitreya's *Jewel Affinity* (Toh. 4024), vol. Phi, f. 56a1-2.

17. *Ibid.*, f. 56a2.

18. *Ibid.*, f. 63b4-5.

19. Tilopa's *Perfect Words*, f. 35a6.

20. Buddhashrijnana's *Liberative Essence* (Toh. 1859), vol. Di, f. 47b2-4.

21. Vitapada explains that profundity (*zab mo*) denotes that which is free from mistaken concepts and primordially transcends thoughts and words. Within the [profound] nature, stainless like space and devoid of phenomena, manifests the pristine awareness of clarity. It is free from ideas and associations held by ordinary beings, and so forth, and thus is called profundity beyond scrutiny. What is meant by "clarity" (*gsal ba*)? Clarity is that which holds the form of the great seal (*mahāmudrā*), such as signs (*rtags*) and other characteristics that manifest within that profound state. Such clarity, in nature like an illusion or a rainbow, is the dimension of awakening that has never been born, within which all of one's own and others' emotional afflictions are purified. That is called sublime clarity (*yang dag gsal ba*). The inseparability of profundity and clarity is the nature that is present in everything without distinctions. Unconditioned by the circumstances of cyclic life, it is called the "ultimate dimension of phenomena" (*chos dbyings, dharmadhātu*). Source: *Commentary on [Buddhasrijnana's] Liberative Essence* (Toh. 1870), vol. Ni, ff. 49b4-50a1.

22. *Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 417), vol. Nga, f. 2a5-b1.

23. On the outer level, explains Kongtrul, body (in "is present in the body") refers to the appearances of the three realms which arise as manifestations of innate pristine awareness, the essential reality. On the inner level, body refers to the aggregates, elements, and sense fields, or to the body of channels, winds, and vital essences, which are of the nature of the deity. On the alternative level, body refers to the body of the circle of deities of the mandala. In all these "bodies," innate pristine awareness is present. Its nature is not to be found somewhere other than mind nature, which manifests as all these phenomena [bodies]. Such mind nature is one's own intrinsic awareness; intrinsic awareness is bliss; and bliss transcends all concepts. The variety of its expressions is the manifest dimension (*nirmāṇakāya*); the clarity of awareness, the enjoyment dimension (*sambhogakāya*); the freedom from conceptual elaborations, the reality dimension (*dharmakāya*); and the bliss, the essential dimension (*svabhāvikakāya*) of awakening. Hence, innate pristine awareness exists in the nature of the four awakened dimensions (*kāya*). It is "great" in that bliss is sealed by emptiness and emptiness by bliss. Thus, one speaks of "great pristine awareness present in the body."

Such pristine awareness is totally devoid of all concepts: the concepts of external objects when all things are realized as the "body" of mind; the concepts of subject and object when the mind is realized as intrinsic awareness; and the concepts of suffering and indifference when intrinsic awareness is realized as bliss. Like space, it pervades all things. Although it has primordially abided in the body, pristine awareness has never arisen as a real object; in the interim, it does not exist as an object apprehended by mind; and in the end, it does not cease when the body dies, just as space in a vase is not destroyed when the vase is destroyed.

According to the provisional meaning of the passage, and in accordance with its words, that which is present in the bodies of all ordinary beings, without beginning or end, is great pristine awareness, the very nature of mind, in the manner of a pervading element. Its nature has never been defiled by adventitious conceptions; thus, it is free from all conceptuality. It is that which pervades all things pertaining to cyclic existence and perfect peace; although it abides in the body as the pervading factor, it is not produced by the body.

When the passage is explained according to its definitive sense but not in accordance with its words, the body refers to the centers of the four channel-wheels, which are of the nature of wisdom and method embodied in *evam*. Pristine awareness refers to supreme, immutable, intrinsic awareness, which transcends the luminous clarity experienced in the generation phase or with the aid of an action seal or imaginary seal. This pristine awareness abides in the body as the pervader, but it is the essence of awakening or the ineffable pristine awareness of indivisible bliss and emptiness. It is the pristine awareness dimension (*jñānakāya*) and thus pervades all things but is not found outside the mind itself. It abides in everything, but, being free from birth and death, does not arise from the body.

According to its concealed meaning, the body is the vajra body possessing six elements. Great pristine awareness is the innate pristine awareness of the bliss of the melting of vital essence. "Abide" means that it pervades the body. Devoid of conceptuality means that at that time, all dualistic conceptions are stopped. That it pervades all things means that all animate and inanimate things arise in the nature of innate bliss and emptiness. Source: *CH*, ff. 18a2-20a3.

24. *Kalachakra Condensed Tantra* (Toh. 362), vol. Ka, f. 98a4.

25. Bliss in this context has a twofold meaning: the innate bliss of the melted vital essence (*zhu bde lhan skyes kyī bde ba*) and the natural innate bliss (*rang bzhin lhan skyes kyī bde ba*). As to the first, by applying the key instructions, the yogin causes the melted white vital essence of relative bodhichitta to flow to all parts of the body producing a feeling of bliss throughout body and mind. With this serving as the contributory condition, and the familiarity with the nonconceptual pristine awareness of the very nature of the mind serving as the primary cause, winds and mind enter and dissolve in the central channel. Stimulated by this process, the vital essence (*dvangs ma*) present in the central channel melts. With the gradual ceasing of all layers of the conceptual mind that such melting brings about, there arises a clear and limpid pristine awareness which is free from any concepts regarding the experience of the indivisibility of bliss and emptiness.

Natural innate bliss is the ultimate bliss of luminous clarity, which is the lord that pervades all phenomena. Why is natural innateness, the emptiness beyond the grasp of the mind, said to be bliss? It is bliss because it is free from all suffering and concepts. Moreover, it is posited as bliss since it is free from concepts of arising, abiding, and cessation; since it does not abide in either cyclic life or perfect peace; since it is free from apprehension of self or others; since it is the pristine awareness of one's own state; since it pervades everything; and since in every circumstance it has the nature of bliss (*MH*, ff. 92b5-93b5).

26. Motility (also translated as passion or creativity) (*rdul, rajas*); darkness (or immobility) (*mun pa, tamas*); and buoyancy (or lightness; clarity) (*snying stobs, sattva*). These three attributes or qualities (*yon tan, guṇa*) are concepts borrowed from the ancient

Samkhya philosophy, according to which these qualities are the three main constituents of the universal or primal substance (*rang bzhin, prakṛti*) (lit. nature) and evolve into all categories of existence. In addition, they denote the three intrinsic aspects of the original ground-of-all: lightness represents the empty nature of the original ground; motility, its radiance; and darkness, the ground not recognizing itself. With the ground not recognizing, body, speech, mind, and all phenomena come into being as transformations (*rnam 'gyur*) or aspects of emptiness and radiance. Furthermore, in an embodied existence, lightness and motility are the white (*kham s dkar po*) and red constituents (*kham s dmar po*), or vital essences (*thig le*), respectively, which permeate and sustain the psychophysical constituents. The coarse aspect of the white constituent is semen (*khu ba*) and that of the red constituent is ovum (*khrag*). On this subject, see Abhayakaragupta's *Awn of Esoteric Instructions* (Toh. 1198), f. 191a5-191b7.

27. This citation is recorded in Pundarika's *Stainless Light* (Toh. 1347), vol. Tha, f. 136b3-5. The root tantra itself is not extant.

28. This citation is not from Aryadeva's *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice* (Toh. 1803). It is found in Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802), f. 52b2-3.

29. In the way of the perfections (*phar phyin theg pa, praññāpāramitāyāna*), it is asserted that beings in the formless realm do not have form. However, highest yoga tantras (Guhyasamaja, etc., and their commentaries) maintain that beings of that realm do have form since all sentient beings possess a very subtle body of wind and mind (*shin tu phra ba'i rlung sems*), the very subtle wind being light of five colors. The *Kalachakra Tantra* and its commentaries assert that beings of the formless realm also possess very subtle particles of the five elements, as well as a subtle white vital essence (*khu ba*). Commentaries on Guhyasamaja and other tantras state that every sentient being possesses the indestructible red and white vital essences of the very subtle wind and mind, always present without even the briefest moment's interruption (Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 35b2-36a4).

30. The *Kalachakra Tantra* and other tantras teach that the habitual tendency, reinforced throughout many lifetimes, for the emission of the white and red constituents (*kham s dkar dmar 'pho ba'i bag chags*) is the very cause for spinning within cyclic existence. It is only by means of binding and non-emission of the white and red constituents through different yogic methods that the state of union of empty form and immutable bliss of a buddha is achieved (Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, f. 93a3-4). The mind of the fourth state (orgasm) and the obscuration of dispersion are alternative expressions for the habitual tendency for emission. On the ground-of-all consciousness, see above, Chapter 5, n. 24.

31. Aryadeva provides lists of synonyms for ultimate truth in his *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice* (Toh. 1803), vol. Ngi, ff. 88b6-89b2.

32. Buddhashrijnana's *Meditation on the Reality of the Two Stages* (Toh. 1853) is referred to by this name. It is known as the *Oral Teachings of Manjushri* because Darika (Ban de mchung ma can), Buddhashrijnana's master, was considered to be a manifestation of Manjushri. On this text and its tradition, see *BA*, pp. 167-169.

33. *Evam* represents the indivisible authentic condition of the individual. *E* stands for emptiness and wisdom, and *vam*, for bliss and clarity. *A* stands for the red constituent,

and *ham*, the white constituent. As well, *a* and *ham* represent the sounds inherent in inhalation and exhalation of the winds through the nose and have the literal meaning of "I am." *Nāda* is the primordial sound, which has the ability to manifest as the totality of awakened speech.

34. Kongtrul states that what is known as the ground-of-all (*kun gzhi, ālaya*), the basis for cyclic existence and perfect peace, or ultimate dimension of all phenomena, may be divided into two: the pure state of mind, or ground-of-all pristine awareness; and the impure, or ground-of-all consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam shes, ālayavijñāna*). The ground-of-all pristine awareness is explained to be the essence of enlightenment (*tathāgatagarbha*) and is present mixed with the ground-of-all consciousness, like water and milk. See *CPR*, ff. 17a5-19a5.

The ground-of-all attended by stains of the mind (*sems*), which manifests as apprehended and apprehender, the afflicted subjective mind (*yid*), and the sixfold group of sense consciousnesses (*rnam shes tsbogs drug*), is the foundation of everything attended by stains, which serves as the root of deception or the ground-of-all consciousness. That ground-of-all, in terms of being naturally present with a stainless nature though attended by the stains of the eightfold group of consciousnesses, is called the essence of the buddhas or transcendent ones; it is present without change throughout the ground, path, and result. Source: Kongtrul's *Commentary on [Rangjung Dorjé's] Differentiating Consciousness from Pristine Awareness*, f. 38a2-4.

35. In the eightfold group of consciousnesses (*rnam shes tsbogs brgyad*), the instigative subjective mind (*de ma thag pa'i yid*) is included within the afflicted subjective mind (*nyon mongs pa can gyi yid*), being two aspects of the subjective mind (*yid*) present in the ground-of-all consciousness. Kongtrul isolates the instigative subjective mind as the agent that serves as the condition for the immediate arising of the six sense consciousnesses. It is also the agent that, as soon as the six sense consciousnesses cease, serves as the condition for establishing the potencies or seeds of these on the ground-of-all consciousness. Thus, it occurs whenever the six sense consciousnesses arise or cease.

The afflicted subjective mind is an aspect of the instigative subjective mind. The afflicted subjective mind, not recognizing the stainless nature of the mind, focuses on the ground-of-all, the ultimate nature of mind attended by stains, conceiving of it as a self, grasping it with pride as supreme, cherishing it more than others, and not understanding it to be unreal; thus, such a mind is always defiled by four emotional afflictions: apprehension of a self, pride, attachment, and ignorance. Source: Kongtrul's *Commentary on [Rangjung Dorjé's] Differentiating Consciousness from Pristine Awareness*, ff. 20a5-22b5.

36. Appropriating consciousness (*len pa'i rnam shes, ādānavijñāna*): a synonym for the ground-of-all consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam shes, ālayavijñāna*) used in the scriptures of the universal way. It is known as an appropriating consciousness because it repeatedly enters into the three realms, takes on a physical form, and becomes bound to a life. Source: *IOK*, vol. II, p. 389.

37. The last of three successive cycles of teachings (*chos 'khor rim pa gsum*). The first cycle, on the four noble truths, was taught at Sarnath and forms the basis of the individualists' doctrine; the second, on the lack of intrinsic reality of phenomena, was taught at Vulture Peak and forms the basis of the doctrine of the universal way; and the last

cycle, on the luminous clarity nature of mind and essence of enlightenment (*tathāgatagarbha*), was taught in unspecified locations.

38. The primordial indestructible great vital essence (*gdod ma'i mi shigs pa'i thig le chen po*), which is the root or ground of all of cyclic life and perfect peace, is known as primordial (*gdod ma*) because it has no beginning or end; as indestructible (*mi shigs pa*) because it is indivisible; as vital essence (*thig le*) because it pervades the various appearances; and as great (*chen po*) because there is nothing that it does not encompass.

There are countless synonyms for the primordial indestructible great vital essence, such as "great seal" (*phyag rgya chen po, mahāmudrā*), "great bliss" (*bde ba chen po, mahāsukha*), "primordial sound" (*nāda*), "all-pervading vajra of space" (*mkha' khyab nam mkhā'i rdo rje*), "ordinary awareness" (*tha mal shes pa*), "pristine awareness channel" (*ye shes kyi rtsā*), "pristine awareness wind" (*ye shes kyi rlung*), "invincible ham" (*gzhom med kyi ham*), "invincible vital essence" (*gzhom med kyi thig le*), "essence of enlightenment" (*sugatagarbha*), and "transcendent wisdom" (*shes rab phar phyin, prajñā-pāramitā*) (*CPR*, f. 29a3-b2).

39. "Other" (*gzhan*) means that which is apprehended, appearances, objects, and so forth; in reality, simply the intrinsic luminosity or appearing aspect of mind itself. "Self" (*bdag*) means the apprehender, mind, or subject; in reality, simply the nature or emptiness aspect of the mind (*CPR*, ff. 29b6-30a2).

40. For an explanation of how deception occurs with respect to dualistic appearances, see Kongtrul's *CPR*, ff. 20a3-21b6.

41. Immutable bliss (*mi 'gyur bde ba, aksarasukha*) refers to nondual awareness, the expanse of blissful pristine awareness free from mental constructs, which is the unity (*gcig tu 'dres pa*) of the changeless nature of reality and the bliss of non-emitted vital essence. Since this great bliss ends the suffering of oneself and others, it is called great compassion.

In the Kalachakra system, immutable bliss is termed "ultimate" due to the absence of the conceptual elaborations of apprehended and apprehender. The empty image comprehensive of all aspects, the great seal (*stong gzugs phyag rgya chen po*), is termed "relative" because its appearances are similar to relative phenomena. Nevertheless, immutable bliss and the emptiness comprehensive of all aspects are in fact a single union (*IOK*, vol. III, pp. 217-221).

The habitual tendency for mutable (*'gyur ba'i bag chags*) bliss refers to the habitual tendency for the emission (*'pho ba'i bag chags*) of vital essence and particularly its coarse aspect of regenerative fluids.

42. Aryadeva specifies the properties and functions of the four elements in this way: Earth is the elemental property of heaviness and solidity. Its action is that of making firm and providing support. Water is moisture or wetness and fluidity. Its action is that of cohesiveness. Fire is warmth and ripening. Its action is that of drying. Wind is movement (extension and contraction, inhalation and exhalation). Its action is that of creating lightness and movement. Source: *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice* (Toh. 1803), f. 65b1-3.

43. *Stages of Self-Blessing* (Toh. 1805), vol. Ngi, f. 112b4-5. In the Dergé Tengyur version, the passage reads: *gnas ni rnam pa brgyad po dang! skye dang 'jig pa'i rgyur shes bya.*

44. Commenting on these lines, Abhayakara explains that here the pristine awareness of the total empty is that of death. The great empty, or culmination of light, refers to the mind that has the nature of a *gandharva* being. Method, the increase of light, denotes the mind that appropriates [out of] desire [for existence]. Wisdom, light, refers to the mind that has taken birth. From the mind of light, there arises in a progressively more manifest way the wind produced by karmic actions and other elements. All are of the nature of mind. This sequence in reverse order (i.e., with the dissolution of the elements starting with earth) causes the death of beings. Source: *Awn of Esoteric Instructions* (Toh. 1198), f. 193a3-5. See also Chapter 14, section entitled "Lights: The Continuous Three Lights."

45. *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra* (Toh. 447), vol. Ca, f. 282b2-4.

46. Mind (*sems*), afflicted mind (*gid*), and sense consciousnesses (*rnam shes*). These three might be understood as mind, afflicted mind, and perception; or ground-of-all consciousness, afflicted mind, and the six sense consciousnesses. In the analyst and traditionist systems, the three terms, mind, afflicted mind, and sense consciousnesses, are considered to be general expressions for the sixfold group of consciousnesses. In the centrist and idealist systems, these generally refer to the eightfold group of consciousnesses; mind denotes the ground-of-all consciousness (*kun gzhi rnam shes*); mind (*gid*), the afflicted subjective mind (*nyon gid*); and consciousnesses (*rnam shes*), the sixfold group of sense consciousnesses. See *IOK*, vol. II, pp. 386-387.

47. Kongtrul explains that not recognizing innate pristine awareness of bliss as it gives rise to cyclic existence, the deceptive appearances of which are devoid of any reality. Sentient beings, who still have the impurities of dualistic grasping, hold perceiver and perceived as being separate and are therefore ignorant of instantaneous innate great bliss. Not recognizing it as present in their own beings and conceiving it to be different is the ignorance of taking bliss to be an object. Such ignorance causes a deterioration of the bodhichitta of great bliss, initiating the manifestation of the three poisons of desire, aversion and delusion. Because of this, beings unwillingly spin in cyclic existence. See *CPR*, ff. 115b1-116a6.

48. "Blessed" (*byin gyis brlabs*): the mind entering the nonconceptual state. Accordingly, Yang-gönpa's *Secret Description of the Vajra Body* states that in the initial stages of the development of the body, the being receives the four initiations: The father's semen striking the consciousness of the intermediate-state being is the vase initiation. The coming together of the white and red constituents as the ovum is enveloped by semen in the mother's womb is the secret initiation. The experience of innate joy is the initiation of pristine awareness through wisdom. The being's consciousness becoming unconscious and entering the nonconceptual state through bliss is the fourth initiation (f. 34a4).

49. See Chapter 9, section entitled "The Support for Birth in Cyclic Existence."

## CHAPTER 9: THE NATURE OF THE BODY

1. According to the Kalachakra tantra, the dispersion (*'dzag pa*), that results in birth in the form and formless realms involves the five elements (space, wind, fire, water, and

earth) divided into sub-elements (the wind of the space element, etc.), and is of two types: physical and mental. The first, physical dispersion, refers to the outflow of vital essence (*bodhichitta*). The second, mental defilement (*zag pa*), refers to obscurations caused by the discursiveness of emotional afflictions (*nyon mongs pa'i rtog pa*). Such dispersion leads to birth in the sixteen levels of the form realm and the four formless realms; twenty forms of dispersion determine the particular birth in the corresponding twenty places. See *CPR*, ff. 34b5-35b1.

The four modes of birth (*skyes gnas rnam pa bzhi*): womb birth (*mngal skyes*), egg birth (*sgong -*), birth from warmth and moisture (*drod gsher -*), and miraculous birth (*rdzus -*). Beings in the desire realm are born through one of these four modes; beings in the form and formless realms experience miraculous birth only (*Stainless Light*, vol. Tha, f. 234b1-3). Gods, hell beings, and intermediate state beings experience the miraculous mode of birth; starving spirits experience both womb and miraculous modes; and animals, any of the four modes. Womb birth (as in the case of elephants) is associated with the fire element; egg birth (as in the case of garudas), with the wind element; warmth and moisture birth (as in the case of butterflies), with the water element; and miraculous birth, with either the earth element (in the case of ordinary miraculous birth) or space element (in the case of special miraculous birth). See Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, f. 81a6-b7.

2. All six types of beings in the desire realm (gods, demi-gods, humans, animals, hungry spirits, and hell beings) are endowed with the six subtle elements (earth, water, fire, wind, space, and pristine awareness of bliss). Beings in the lower forms of life, gods and demi-gods, and humans of the continent Unpleasant Sound (*sGra mi snyan*)—the northern one of the four continents of our world-system—are inferior candidates for the indestructible way. This is the case because hell beings are devoid of leisure; and humans in Unpleasant Sound as well as the gods experience mainly the positive results of virtuous action done in the past and therefore lack motivation for engaging in virtue and applying remedies to emotional afflictions, and hence, are not suitable candidates for the vows of personal liberation. Those who experience the best forms of life are humans of the other three continents (southern, eastern, and western) and, in particular, humans of the Land of Jambu (this world), called the "land of actions" because actions performed in this life bear results in the same life. Therefore, these humans are the best candidates to receive the key instructions for attaining enlightenment in one lifetime and in one body. See *CPR*, ff. 36a4-37a3.

3. *Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 418), vol. Nga, f. 21b5-7. Reading 'don for don (line 9).

4. Kongtrul explains that the reddish walls of the womb which encase the fetus are like the monastic robes. The mother is like the abbot who instructs and nurtures spiritual growth. At the time of birth, the two hands are bent, and the newborn exits with hands folded; this resembles the prostrations done when a monk assumes his vows. After birth, the being performs the actions of the particular class born into, observing the customs of eating, drinking, and so forth; this resembles someone who, having become a renunciant, observes and trains in the monastic ethical code. As soon as the being is born, the sonority of his voice is heard as the sound of syllables *a* and *ham*, resembling the repetition of the words of the preceptor in the ordination ceremony. The meaning of *aham* is the interconnectedness of the inner heat (*gtum mo*) in the

shape of the letter *a* at the juncture of the three channels at the navel area and the pure white essence resembling the shape of the letter *ham* at the channel-wheel of great bliss. Moreover, after separation from the womb, the being is naked and without hair on the head and face, resembling a shaven monk. While reciting the mantra (*a ham*), the being is born as a monk; this is the case because “bhikshu” (*bhikṣu*) (monk) means “one who lives on alms” or “one who is liked by his mother, father, and others.” Source: *CH*, f. 253b1-6.

Owing to these conditions, humans, who are born endowed with the six psycho-physical elements, exhibit attributes concordant with those of the buddhas (*sangs rgyas*) and are therefore, without any doubt, buddhas. They are “pure” (*sangs*) because the impurities to be forsaken are primordially exhausted, and they are “developed” (*rgyas*) in being complete in all the qualities of the Three Jewels. Not only are beings buddhas but also they attain higher realizations and renunciations during the ten months spent in the womb, which represent the ten stages of awakening. On the ten stages, the body, which is the support for, and which is supported by, the three dimensions of awakening, develops and become firm. Thus, such sentient beings are the lords of the ten stages, and therefore are called buddhas (f. 253a1-b1).

5. Four formless realms (*gzugs med bzhi*) refers to four levels of absorption (*sn'yoms 'jug*): the absorption of infinite space; that of infinite consciousness; that of nothing whatsoever; and that of neither discernment nor no discernment. The form realm comprises seventeen heavens grouped according to the four meditative concentrations (*bsam gtan bzhi*). See Kongtrul's *Myriad Worlds* (English translation), pp. 123-126.

6. Gods, demi-gods, humans, starving spirits, animals, and hell beings. See Kongtrul's *Myriad Worlds* (English translation), ch. 2.

7. The sixth element is called pristine awareness or pristine awareness of bliss (*bde ba ye shes*) and refers to the bliss or pleasure resulting from the release of regenerative fluid (*khu ba lung ba'i bde ba*) (*CPR*, f. 36a3).

8. Ovum, literally, blood (*khrag*). Yang-gönpa, in a similar discussion, in place of semen and blood, speaks of “refined essence” (*dvangs ma*), which here indicates the male and female regenerative fluids (*Secret Description of the Vajra Body*, f. 5b1).

9. Functioning of the channels (*rtsa'i kun spyod pa*): Discussing this term in the context of the Kalachakra system, Taranata states that the specifications concerning the six pathways (three of the life wind and three of the downward-voiding wind), such as the major channels that branch off from them, the manner of the flowing of the winds in the six channels, and the manner of the flowing of the vital essences in these channels, are known as the “functioning of the channels” (*CSI*, f. 45b5).

10. The central channel (*rtsa dbu ma, avadhūti*) is explained as the basis for the arising of the vajra body of coarse elements, aggregates, and so on, and subtle channels, winds, and vital essences. It stands straight in the center of the six channel-wheels (*cakra*), from the crown of the head to the secret place. See *CPR*, ff. 48b6-51a4, for a detailed description of the central channel.

The Sanskrit *avadhūti* has also been rendered in Tibetan as “all-shaking” (*kun 'dar ma*), related to the experience of innate bliss from the movement of bodhichitta within it. Another meaning of *avadhūti* is “overcoming negativity” (*sdig pa 'jom pa*) because it

overcomes the negativity represented by dualistic concepts (*CSI*, f. 37b1-2.) The central channel is also known as “devoid of all” (*kun spangs ma*) since it is free from all dualistic concepts (*CH*, f. 21a6).

11. Those who assert that there are two central channels say that the meditated central channel (*sgom pa'i dbu ma*) is the domain of experience of the contemplation of the yogin, while the abiding central channel (*gnas pa'i dbu ma*) is present in the body from birth until death, after which it dissolves (*CPR*, f. 49b5).

12. The appearance of a black line (*re kha nag po*) emitting light is one of the signs experienced by means of the yoga of the day in the specific withdrawal (*sor sdud*, *pratyāhāra*) branch of the sixfold yoga (*sbyor ba yan lag drug*). The black line does appear in other branches as well. The sixth sign in the withdrawal branch is that of an azure sphere (*thig le sngon po*). In the middle of the sphere is seen a black line, as thin as a hair. In the black line, which emits stainless light, is seen the enjoyment dimension (*sambhogakāya*) of Vajrasattva with consort, along with myriad forms of the three realms. The empty images and the enjoyment dimension of Vajrasattva in particular constitute the basis on which the resultant empty form of Kalachakra in union is attained (Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 207a7-b2; 238b4). See also Naropa's *Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation* (Toh. 1351), f. 251a7-b4.

The black line, the ten signs, and various other images, which are like illusions or forms seen in a divination mirror, manifest through practice of the yoga of the day and the yoga of the night and are empty images (*stong gzugs*). Although they manifest in colors, and so forth, these images, like the magical illusion of the city of *gandharvas*, are without substance. The empty images are simply appearances or reflections of the innate mind of luminous clarity (*gnyug ma 'od gsal gyi sems*) which is like a limpid sky: they are not fabricated by the mind but appear by themselves to the yogin. Such a mind of luminous clarity is beyond dualistic apprehension of phenomena as existent or non-existent. As it is experienced by means of directing the winds into the central channel, its reflections or images appear like the sun and its sunlight. As the winds increasingly enter the central channel, the mind of luminous clarity becomes more and more evident, and signs such as smoke appear (Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 236b4-237b2). See also note 21 of this chapter. For the sixfold yoga, see Chapter 10, n. 37.

13. The right channel, known as *rasanā* (*ro ma*), and the left channel, *lalanā* (*rkyang ma*), branch off from the central channel four finger-widths below the navel. They knot themselves around the central channel at the navel and separate again, then join at the kidneys, coming together at the heart region, where they knot again around the central channel. At the throat, they form another knot around the central channel. Again they separate and then join at the celestial aperture (*tsbangs bug*) at the crown of the head. From there, the right and left channels bend downward. The right enters the right nostril, and the left, the left nostril. Four fingers below the navel, after joining the central channel, they extend downward. The lower extremity of the right channel expels menstrual blood in females, and holds and voids fecal waste in both males and females. The lower extremity of the left channel in both males and females holds and emits urine. See *CPR*, ff. 51a7-52a5. *Lalana* is so called because it is never satisfied with bliss; *rasana*, because it determines the experience of various tastes (*CH*, f. 23a1-3). For a discussion

of the positions, functions, names, and so forth, of the three channels in the Kalachakra system, see Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 88b2-7; 170a1; 202a3-203b2.

14. The names of the channels, their positions, and their functions vary from one tantra to the next. The power places (*gnas, pīṭha*) corresponding to the various channels are also listed with different names and enumerated in different ways. For example, the *Chakrasamvara Tantra* lists twenty-four power places; *Mahāmudrātilaka*, twenty-eight; and *Hevajra*, thirty-two. In terms of their outer meaning, the power places refer to specific locations in the Indian subcontinent. They also exist in every region of this world that has one million settlements. Abhayakara explains that the channels are called the names of outer places for purposes of secrecy from unqualified recipients such as the proclaimers (*Awn of Esoteric Instructions*, Toh. 1198, f. 203a5-6). For the correlations between channels, power places, and yoginis, see *MH*, ff. 73b1-76b1; Yang-gönpa's *Secret Description*, ff. 10a6-12a6; *Samvarodaya* (trans. Tsuda), chs. 7 and 8; *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 514-515; and *Hevajra Tantra* (trans. Snellgrove), pp. 68-70.

15. The following channels serve as pathways for the five branch winds: victor (*rgyal*), pathway for the serpent wind (*klu, nāga*); victory (*rgyal ba*), for the turtle wind (*rus sbal, kūrma*); hanging (*a lam bu sha*), pathway for the lizard wind (*rtsangs pa, krkara*); *ida*, also called "ram" (*lug*), pathway for the gift-of-the-gods wind (*lha sbyin, devadatta*); and *kuba* (*tshul 'chos pa*), pathway for the victorious-in-wealth wind (*nor las rgyal, dhanañjaya*). See Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation*, f. 89b3-5.

16. The outer meaning of the parts (*cha, kalā*), fifteen white (*dkar*) and fifteen black (*nag*), is that of the days of the waxing and waning phases of the moon; the inner meaning, the fifteen light moments and fifteen dark moments of the vital essences. According to Longdol Lama, sixteen kinds of vital essences are associated with the sixteen days of the waxing moon, three groups of five vital essences associated with the waxing moon, plus an aspect of abiding, a total of sixteen. Three groups of five vital essences are associated with the waning moon, plus the completing aspect of the absence of moon, a total of sixteen. When, by means of an imaginary or real consort or the great seal, the inner heat at the secret place blazes, the vital essence descends from the top of the head to the line of the hair, giving rise to five moments of joy known as delight (*dga' ba, nandā*), goodness (*bzang pa, bhadrā*), victory (*rgyal ba, jayā*), void (*stong pa, riktā*), and fullness (*rdzogs pa, pūrṇā*). As the vital essence descends from the line of the hair to the heart, the same five moments of joy occur. As it descends from the heart to the secret region, the five moments again occur. At the tip of the penis, the bodhichitta gives rise to innate bliss, which is distinct from the preceding five joys—the sixteenth moment known as "full moon." These are the sixteen moments of joy in descending order. As to the association with the sixteen joys in the ascending order, when the vital essence is drawn from the tip of the penis back to its center, the five joys occur in a way similar to those just mentioned. As the vital essence moves from the center of the penis to the navel, the same five joys occur; from the navel to the head, the five joys occur again; from the head to the crown of the head, the innate bliss which is not distinct from the five preceding joys arises—the sixteenth moment known as "absence of moon" (*naṣṭacandra*). These are the sixteen joys in the ascending order. These sixteen are known as the sixteen kinds of compassion, and the emptinesses of true existence, their objects, are known as the

sixteen emptinesses. More precisely, however, these are joys that block material phenomena and karmic winds (Longdol Lama's *Kalachakra Tantra's Sets of Terms According to Tsongkapā's Treatises on the Subject*, p. 156). See also Naropa's *Iniziazione di Kalacakra* (in Italian), pp. 68-80; 305-308. For the fifteen goddesses or yoginis of the Hevajra mandala, see *Hevajra Tantra* (trans. Snellgrove), part I, chs. 8 and 9.

17. The conch-shell channel (*śaṅkhinī*) (the lower end of the central channel) increases bliss and hence is analogous to the waxing phase of the moon. The free-from-demons channel (*māradārikā*), states Abhayakara, is fused (*'dres pa*) to the central channel. It arises at the navel and extends to the uvula. It draws up vital essence to the uvula and is analogous to the waning phase of the moon (*Awn of Esoteric Instructions*, Toh. 1198, f. 210a4).

18. The channels that serve as pathways for the five root winds are the following: the conch-shell channel, pathway of the downward-voiding wind; noble-hearted (*yid bzang ma*), pathway for the life wind; constellation chariot (*snaṅ ma*), pathway for the fire-accompanying wind; elephant's tongue (*glang chen lce*), pathway for the upward-moving wind; and pale yellow (*ser skyā*), pathway for the pervading wind (Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, f. 89b3-5).

19. For the thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening (*byang chub kyī phyogs kyī chos so bdun*), see Chapter 1, n. 19. The association of these with the channels and goddesses is set forth in Krishnacharya's *Vital Essence of Spring* (*Vasanatīlaka*, Toh. 1448, vol. Wa), ff. 302b4-303a6, and in an alternative way in Pundarika's *Stainless Light*, vol. Da, f. 172a1-b7.

20. The five hidden channels (*sbaṅ pa'i rtsa*) are so called because they are hidden (i.e., not specifically named) in the Chakrasamvara and Hevajra tantras but are clearly set forth in the Kalachakra and because their functions are hidden (*CPR*, f. 55a4). The five are the triple-circle channel (*sum skor ma, traivṛtta*); the desire channel (*'dod ma, kāminī*); the female-householder channel (*khim ma, gēhā*); the wrath channel (*gtum mo, caṇḍikā*); and free-from-demons channel (*bdud bral ma, māradārikā*).

21. The ten signs (*rtags bcu*), specifically related to the sixfold yoga (*ṣaḍāṅga yoga*) of the Kalachakra tantra, are empty images (*stong gzugs*) to be meditated upon for the actualization of the vajra body. These empty images are not produced by thoughts and are extremely clear. They are the manifestation of pristine awareness, free from subject-object dualism. They resemble space in that they are devoid of mental constructs, beyond existent and non-existent phenomena. They are the luminous clarity nature of one's own mind and also the totality of the dimensions of awakening.

Empty images manifest in infinite ways but are explained to be ten in number when considered in terms of their special importance and what they purify. The ten signs pertain to the yoga of the day (*nyi mo'i rnal 'byor*) and the yoga of the night (*mtshan mo'i rnal 'byor*). The four signs of the yoga of the night are smoke (*du ba*); mirage (*smig rgyu*); light in the sky (*mkhā'i snang*) resembling fireflies; and blazing lamp (*sgyon me 'bar ba*). The six signs of the yoga of the day are flame (*me*) (blazing yellow light); moon (*zla ba*) (blazing white light); sun (*nyi ma*) (blazing red light); Rahu (*sgra gcan*) (blazing black light); lightning (*klog*); and great sphere (*thig le chen po*) (an azure moon globe). After the appearance of these, in the center of the tenth sign, the great sphere, the yogin sees

the image of Kalachakra and, simultaneously and instantaneously, the manifold images of the universe, as clear as water in one's hand. These are called "signs" because they indicate the presence within oneself of ultimate pristine awareness and because they constitute the basis for the confidence that by experientially cultivating the path, one will be able to actualize pristine awareness. See Taranata's *Meaningful to Behold*; CSI, f. 25a1-7; and Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 235b7-236a2.

On the nature of these signs, Naropa explains that since they manifest adventitiously in emptiness, they are "apparitions." Since they pacify all forms of discursive thought, they are "inconceivable." Since they are portents of fruition, they are "signs." They are "images of wisdom" in that they are the cognizance of emptiness, in nature free from perceiver and perceived and, as such, appear only to yogic perception. Being undefiled by external or internal impurities, they are "equal to space." As they cannot be symbolized by concepts of existence or non-existence, they transcend existence and non-existence. They lack intrinsic nature, yet are comprehensive of all aspects, uncreated and sublime in being utterly devoid of a collection composed of subtle particles. See Naropa's *Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation* (Toh. 1351), ff. 259b1-260a5.

22. Binding crucial points (*gnad bcings*) and striking crucial points (*gnad du bsnun pa*): methods whereby one focuses on major points of the body in order to bring about specific meditative experiences and ultimately the manifestation of pristine awareness. Some methods involve focusing on the channel-wheels and the upper and lower extremities of the central channel. Other methods principally involve focusing on the winds and vital essences. Through binding crucial points (i.e., binding the functions of the body) by means of these special techniques, pristine awareness is manifested. See Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation*, ff. 203b7-204a4.

23. The channels symbolize (*mtshon*), or are the purity (*dag pa*) of, the winds that flow in them (Yang-gönpa's *Secret Description of the Vajra Body*, ff. 6a6-7a1).

24. Time conjunction (*dus sbyor, lagna*): one time conjunction equals 1800 breaths or 120 minutes. Twelve time conjunctions equals one solar day.

The channel-wheel at the navel is composed of sixty-four channels. The root four branch off from the central channel. These are of the emptiness-pristine awareness element. Each of the root four split into three to make twelve channels. These twelve form the pathways for the winds of the twelve major transits (*'pho chen*) (one major transit equals 1,800 breaths, or 120 minutes, or one twelfth of a solar day). Each of these twelve channels splits into five to make sixty branches (these, plus the four root channels, constitute the sixty-four channels of the navel). The sixty channels form the pathways for the winds of the minor transits (*'pho chung*) (one minor transit equals 360 breaths, or 24 minutes, or one sixtieth of a solar day) or the five elemental mandalas (*'byung ba'i dkyil 'khor*) which flow in the nature of sixty *danda* measures (*dbyu gu*) (one *danda* equals 360 breaths, or 24 minutes, or one sixtieth of a solar day). See *CPR*, f. 56a5-b5.

Just as the sun transits the twelve houses of the zodiac (each having five phases) every day, the winds flow through the twelve "houses" or channels (each having five branches) at the navel channel-wheel every day. Such movement is known as the twelve major transits and occurs within twelve time conjunctions. Twelve time conjunctions (one

day) equals a total of 21,600 breaths. The basic unit of time for the time conjunction is the breath (inhalation, pause, and exhalation) of a young and healthy person.

25. One major session (*thun chen po*) lasts 2,700 breaths (or 180 minutes; one eighth of a day). Eight major sessions equals the time of the twelve time conjunctions (*dus sbyor*), one solar day.

26. One transit (*'pho ba*) lasts 1,350 breaths (or 90 minutes; one sixteenth of a day). Sixteen transits represent a period equal to twelve time conjunctions. "Transits" (lit. "shift") indicates the sixteen shifts of the winds from one channel to the other of the channel-wheels at the throat.

27. One major clepsydra measure (*chu tshod, ghaṭikā*) is a period of time equivalent to 360 breaths (or 24 minutes; one sixtieth of a solar day).

28. The navel channel-wheel, yellow in color, is known as "emanation wheel" (*nirmānacakra*); the blue channel-wheel at the heart, "reality wheel" (*dbarmacakra*); the red channel-wheel at the throat, "enjoyment wheel" (*bhogacakra* or *sambhogacakra*); and the white channel-wheel in the upper part of the head, "wheel of great bliss" (*mahāsukhacakra*). See *CH*, ff. 28b4-29a3; 250b3-253a2.

29. The channels that form the heart channel-wheel are the eight channels associated with the planets (*gza'*). The channel "chariot constellation" (*snar ma*) is associated with the Sun; the channel "elephant tongue" (*glang chen lce*), with the Moon; the channel "pale yellow" (*ser skya*), with Mars; the channel "victor" (*rgyal*), with Mercury; the channel "victory" (*rgyal ba*), with Jupiter; the channel "hanging" (*'phyang ba*), with Venus; the channel "ram" (*lug*), with Saturn; and the channel "contriver" (*tshul 'chos pa*), with Ketu. See also the discussion on the heart channel-wheel in Wayman's *The Buddhist Tantras*, pp. 152-163.

30. One *danda* measure is equal to 360 breaths or 24 minutes, or one sixtieth of a solar day.

31. The twelve channel-wheels in the twelve major joints each have thirty channel-spokes, for a total of three hundred and sixty. The sixty channel-wheels in the minor joints also have a total of three hundred and sixty channel-spokes. These, in their pure aspect, correspond externally to the three hundred and sixty days in the twelve months of the year, and alternatively to the three hundred and sixty deities of the mandala of awakened body and the vowels and consonants. For details on these secondary channel-wheels, see *CPR*, ff. 61b3-62b2.

32. Gyalwa Yang-gönpa comments that the number 72,000 matches the number of rivers of the Land of Jambu (Jambudvīpa) (*Secret Description of the Vajra Body*, f. 6b2).

33. *Profound Inner Reality*, f. 9a2-4. The citation is actually from the *Indestructible Garland* (Toh. 445), vol. Ca, f. 242a2-5.

34. Undivided (*mi phyed ma*) is the channel listed as the first of the twenty-four channels. Noble-Hearted (*yid bzang ma*) is one channel in the third circle of channels among the twenty-four associated with the power places.

35. Dissolved (*thim pa*); engaged (*longs spyod*); and dominant (*bdag po*). See this chapter's section entitled "Vital Essences."

36. Channels that give rise to diseases (*nad skyed pa'i rtsa*): The four outer channels at the crown protuberance and the sixteen outer channels at the head (altogether, twenty) give rise to diseases related to phlegm (*bad kan*); the thirty-two channels at the throat and the eight at the heart (forty in total), diseases related to bile (*mkbris pa*); the sixty-four channels at the navel and the sixteen outer channels at the secret place (eighty in total), diseases related to wind (*rlung*); and the sixty inner channels at the secret place, diseases of phlegm, bile, and wind combined. See *CPR*, ff. 62b2-63a2.

Kedrup Norzang specifies that an aspect of the six inner channels and the ten intermediate channels at the secret place produces diseases of a combination of wind, bile, and phlegm. The four at the crown protuberance and the sixteen at the head level possess an aspect that produces phlegm diseases. The thirty-two channels at the throat and the eight at the heart possess an aspect that produces bile diseases. The sixty-four channels at the navel and the outer sixteen at the secret place possess an aspect that produces wind diseases. These one hundred and fifty-six channels, which exist in the nature of male and female deities, may cause death to ordinary persons deprived of skillful methods. When the channels are focused on with skillful methods of deity yoga and the six-branched yoga, they impart long life, good health, and supreme attainment. See *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, f. 170a3-b1.

37. The citation from Rangjung Dorjé's own commentary on the *Profound Inner Reality* is cited in *CPR*, f. 64a6-b1.

A brief discussion of channels is found in two discourses in the *dKon brtsegs* division of the Kangyur: *The Teaching to Nanda on the Condition in the Womb*, Toh. 58, vol. Ga, ff. 205b1-237a1; and *The Teaching to Nanda on Entry into the Womb*, Toh. 58, vol. Ga, ff. 237a1-241a7. The Buddha states that there are twenty main channels in the body, five in front, five in the back, five in the left, and five in the right. Each of these has forty minor branches, and from each of the branches, one hundred secondary channels branch off, a total of 80,000 (f. 241a4-6).

38. *Chanting the Names of Manjushri* (Toh. 360), f. 3a3.

39. Yang-gönpa explains that at the moment of conception, the consciousness of the intermediate being (in the shape of the letter *a*), accompanied by the pervading wind, is enveloped by the father's semen and subsequently by the mother's ovum. The union of these three elements remains at the navel. At the time of birth, the three elements of such union separate. The white essence from the father's semen moves upward in the central channel and settles at the crown of the head (in the shape of the letter *ham*) and is held there by the power of the left channel, *lalana*. The red vital essence from the mother's ovum or "blood" descends to the secret place at the lower extremity of the central channel and is held there by the power of the right channel, *rasana*. The pervading wind diffuses throughout the whole body, and the other winds start to flow through the nostrils with the sound of *aham*. The mind moves to the heart. Source: *Secret Description of the Vajra Body*, f. 26b7-27a3.

40. In this view, the inner level (the body) corresponds to the outer level (the external world). For an explanation on how the body, in its initial formation, life, and death, exists as method and wisdom, see Gyalwa Yang-gönpa's *Secret Description*, ff. 96b1-97a2.

41. In the center of the channel-wheel at the heart is a knot formed by three channels. This knot is in the shape of the letter *hum*. It is slightly bound and surrounded by the

tips of the great bliss channel and the enjoyment channel. Inside the knot are four spokes which have knots in the shape of the four letters *bhrum*, *am*, *kham*, *dzim*. In their center is a channel whose knot is in the shape of the letter *hum*. These five are the seeds of the five emotional afflictions and are called the “five hidden channels.” Their purity represents the buddhas of the five families (Gyalwa Yang-gönpa’s *Secret Description*, f. 13a).

The syllable *hum* stands for Akshobhya, and is the seed of the emotional affliction, or “poison,” of aversion and serves as the support for urine. The syllable *bhrum* stands for Vairochana, and is the seed of delusion and serves as the support for feces. The syllable *am* stands for Ratnasambhava and is the seed of pride and serves as the support for blood. The syllable *dzim* stands for Amitabha and is the seed of desire and serves as the support for semen. The syllable *kham* stands for Amoghassiddhi and is the seed of jealousy and serves as the support for human flesh. This correspondence is set forth in Pundarika’s *Stainless Light Commentary*, vol. Tha, f. 230a6-7.

42. Abhayakara lists the syllables of the twenty-four power places in the following way: *pu* for Pulliramalaya; *ja* for Jalandhara; *ho* for Oddiyana; *ah* for Ahrbhuda; *go* for Godavari; *ra* for Rameshvara; *de* for Devikoti; *ma* for Malava; *ka* for Kamarupa; *o* for Otre; *tri* for Trishakuni; *ko* for Kosala; *ka* for Kalinga; *la* for Lampaka; *ka* for Kanchi; *hi* for Himalaya; *pre* for Pretapuri; *gri* for Grihadeva; *sou* for Sourashtra; *su* for Suvarnadvipa; *na* for Nagara; *si* for Sindhu; *ma* for Maru; and *ku* for Kulata (*Awn of Esoteric Instructions*, Toh. 1198, f. 147a4-6).

43. See *Awn of Esoteric Instructions* (Toh. 1198), ff. 113-114; also *IK*, pp. 220-221, n. 3.

44. The “short letter *a*” is the *a* without sign below or above.

45. One breath is a four-second period. One minor clepsydra measure (*chu srang, pānipāla*) is a period of time equal to six breaths or twenty-four seconds. For *danda* measure, see note 30 of this chapter. For time conjunction, see note 24 of this chapter.

46. At conception, the ground-of-all consciousness of the intermediate being enters the womb drawn by the afflicted mind (*nyon yid*) attended by various habitual tendencies. This consciousness is of the nature of wind and is thus called “subtle wind of five-colored light.” See *CPR*, f. 40a4-6.

47. The life wind (*srog ’dzin, prāṇa*), source of all ten winds, is present in all parts of the body, right out to its hair pores, but is based in the central channel, upon which all channels depend, and dwells right in the center of the body. It is connected to and supports the ground-of-all. During life, this wind generates the conception of self and all conceptual constructs and is known as the afflicted mind.

The downward-voiding wind (*thur du sel ba, apāna*) dwells below the navel where the three main channels meet and flows downward. Its function is to regulate the voiding or withholding of refined and residual constituents such as feces, urine, semen, and blood.

The fire-accompanying wind (*me dang mnyam du gnas pa, samāna*) arises from the constellation chariot channel at the heart and is connected to the stomach. Its function is to digest food and drink, separate the refined elements from the residual, convey refined nutrients throughout all the channels, thereby nourishing and strengthening the organism, and ridding it of impurities.

The upward-moving wind (*gyen du rgyu ba, udāna*) arises from the elephant’s tongue channel at the heart. It presides over the functions of the throat, swallowing food and

drink, and so forth, the movements of arms and legs, such as walking, and the activities of speech, talking, singing, and so forth.

The pervading wind (*khyab byed, vyāna*) flows through the pale yellow channel connected to the *rasana*. It dwells in all joints of the body. Its function is to give strength to the body to allow stretching, contracting, and so forth.

For a detailed discussion of these winds, see *CPR*, ff. 68b6-70a5. There are numerous discrepancies from one tantra to the next concerning the locations, colors, elements, and buddhas associated with the root and branch winds.

48. The five branch winds—serpent wind, turtle wind, lizard wind, gift-of-the-gods wind, and victorious-in-wealth wind—are also known by the alternative names of moving (*rgyu ba*), moving thoroughly (*rnam par rgyu ba*), moving perfectly (*yang dag rgyu ba*), moving strongly (*rab tu rgyu ba*), and moving resolutely (*nges par rgyu ba*); or known as winds of the five goddesses (*lha mo lngā'i -*); or winds of the five faculties (*dbang po lngā'i -*). They serve as the mounts for the eye sensory consciousness, ear sensory consciousness, and so on, respectively. They are red, blue, yellow, white, and green, respectively (Longdol Lama's *Sets of Terms Derived from the Awareness-Holder Collection of Secret Mantra*, p. 234).

Concerning these winds, Gyalwa Yang-gönpa explains that the serpent wind dwells like a serpent in the intestines. It causes all diseases, and therefore is called serpent. The turtle wind dwells like a turtle in the liver. It determines contraction and extension of limbs and therefore is called turtle. The lizard wind dwells like a lizard in the lungs. It causes anger and agitation, hence is called lizard. The gift-of-the-gods wind dwells like a divine gift in the heart. It produces excitement and desire, hence is called gift-of-the-gods. The victorious-with-the-bow (alternative name for the victorious-in-wealth wind) dwells like a bow in the kidneys. It produces sneezing and maintains life and thus is called victorious-with-the-bow (*Secret Description of the Vajra Body*, ff. 19b-20b).

Kedrup Norzang specifies that the serpent wind, turtle wind, lizard wind, gift-of-the-gods wind, and victorious-in-wealth wind originate in the victor channel, victory channel, *alambusha* channel, *ida* channel, and *kuba* channel, respectively. These channels also serve as their principal locations. However, these five winds are found throughout all the channels of the body (*Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, f. 91b5-6).

In the Kalachakra system, the ten winds are not distinguished as root and branch (Changkya Rolpai Dorjé's *Concise Presentation of Channels, Winds and Vital Essences According to the Kalachakra System*, p. 243).

49. The indestructible wind (*mi shigs pa'i rlung*), the root of all pristine awareness winds, and the great life wind (*srog rlung*), the root of all karmic winds (*las rlung*), are mixed, like water and milk, in the Rahu wind, which may therefore be called "life wind" since it sustains life (*CPR*, f. 50b4-5).

50. As well, these qualities characterize the three principal channels: buoyancy characterizes *lalana* (the left channel); motility, *rasana* (the right channel); and darkness, *madhyama* (the central channel).

51. Elemental transformation (*'byung 'gyur*) usually refers to the seven qualities of touch (smooth, rough, heavy, light, cold, hunger, and thirst) arising from the transformation of the four elements. Here, however, the term refers to the five sense objects: visual

forms, odors, tastes, and so forth, which are also transformations or combinations of the elements.

52. The great life wind is already present at the time of conception. In the second month, the downward-voiding wind emanates from the life wind. In the third month, the upward-moving wind emanates from the life wind. In the fourth month, the pervading wind emanates from the life wind. In the fifth month, the fire-accompanying wind emanates from the life wind. Then, the branch winds start to emanate—the serpent wind in the sixth month, the turtle wind in the seventh month, the lizard wind in the eighth month, the gift-of-the-gods wind in the ninth month, and the victorious-in-wealth wind in the tenth month. See *CPR*, ff. 42b5-45b1, for an extensive discussion of these winds.

The dissolution of these winds, from the perspective of a life span of one hundred years, begins in the tenth year after birth with the vanishing of the victorious-in-wealth wind into the gift-of-the-gods wind. Thus, every ten years, the potency of a wind dissolves (*CPR*, f. 67b2-3).

53. Like a king, the great life wind, the nature of the Rahu element, dwells in the central channel from its formation in the mother's womb until death. Like ministers, the root and branch winds emanate from the great life wind and perform specific functions throughout the body (*CPR*, f. 71b2-4).

54. Kedrup Norzang explains that, according to the Kalachakra system, in each of the eight channels at the heart channel-wheel, winds flow 2,700 times (for a total of 21,600 times daily). This figure includes the 675 movements of pristine awareness winds, which occur 56.25 times between each major period (*Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, f. 97a2-b3). The winds of the natures of the five elements flow inward (during inhalation) through the right and left nostrils in the order of generation of the elements and of birth (from space, wind arises; from wind, fire; from fire, water; and from water, earth) and flow outward (during exhalation) in the order of dissolution and of death (from earth, water; and so on).

55. The Chakrasamvara, Hevajra, and other tantras speak of thirty-two channel-spokes at the head channel-wheel, associated with the union of method and wisdom. From another perspective, the sixteen outer spokes carry mainly the red vital essence, and the sixteen inner, the white vital essence and winds. Thus, the Kalachakra system speaks of sixteen spokes at the head. As to the actual mode of circulation of the winds in these channels according to the Kalachakra system, see *CPR*, ff. 72a4-73a2.

56. Period (*yud tsam*): a measure used in the Kalachakra system equal to two *danda* measures (*dbyu gu*). One *danda* measure is equivalent to 360 breaths; a period (*yud tsam*) is therefore a time equal to 720 breaths (or 48 minutes; one thirtieth of a day) (Abhayakara's *Awn of Esoteric Instructions*, Toh. 1198, f. 202a2).

The Hevajra, Chakrasamvara, and other tantras speak of sixteen channel-spokes in the throat channel-wheel, while the Kalachakra speaks of thirty-two (sixteen pairs of method and wisdom). According to the system of thirty-two spokes, the aspect of pristine awareness-emptiness flows in four spokes, and winds that move in accordance with the course of the twenty-eight constellations flow in the other twenty-eight. According to the system of sixteen spokes, the winds of the sixteen transits flow in these sixteen spokes. See *CPR*, f. 73a4-b5.

57. See note 24 of this chapter. For a detailed discussion of the movement of wind at the navel channel-wheel, see Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation*, ff. 93b5-96a1.

58. In one year, the sun transits the twelve houses (*khyim, rasi*)—Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces—that exert the most influence, both positive and negative, on the affairs of the world. Likewise (internally), in one day, the wind moves through the twelve (inner) houses (groups of channels at the navel). Externally, the sun transits one house in 1,800 *danda* measures (*dbyu gu*) (one *danda* equals 24 minutes; 1,800 *danda* equals 30 days); internally, the wind moves 1,800 times for each sign of the zodiac.

59. From the mandalas or elements at the navel, the winds flow through the right and left channels up to the right and left nostrils from where they are exhaled and then inhaled to return to the navel. The winds exhaled are predominantly karmic winds, which flow in the left and right channels. These karmic winds constitute the five root and five branch winds, so called in terms of the functions they perform in the body (*IK*, pp. 251-252). Kedrup Norzang explains that the greater the distance reached by the winds during exhalation, the shorter the distance reached on inhalation (and the converse). The wind of the space element reaches the center of the navel; that of the wind element, one fingerwidth below the navel; that of the fire element, two fingerwidths below the navel; that of the water element, three fingerwidths below the navel; and that of the earth element, four fingerwidths below the navel. Then, they are exhaled again (*Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, f. 98b5-6).

In addition to the nostrils, wind has other pathways through which to exit the body, such as the pores of the skin in a subtle way and the doors of the senses in a coarse way (*CPR*, f. 76a1-2).

60. According to ancient Indo-Tibetan cosmology, the external world comes into being beginning with the space element (empty particles left after the destruction of a previous world-system), followed by wind, fire, water, and lastly, the earth element. At the end of the era of abiding, the world starts to disintegrate in the opposite order. Because the wind that flows in the right nostril follows the sequence of disintegration (beginning with the wind of earth) of the external world, it is called "poison wind." Because the wind that flows in the left nostril follows the sequence of the arising (beginning with the wind of space) of the external world, it is called "nectar wind" (*CH*, f. 33a3-b1).

61. Like Rahu, which causes solar and lunar eclipses, this wind overshadows the karmic winds that flow in the right and left channels.

62. Half of the pristine awareness wind, together with the wind of the time conjunctions, flows outward, causing exhaustion of life; half, together with the power of longevity, flows in the central channel, increasing life and pristine awareness, as well as enhancing the power of longevity (*CPR*, ff. 78b6-79a1).

63. Kedrup Norzang states that each of the twenty-four constellations is divided into four parts; each of these is called a phase, literally, "foot" (*rkang*). Nine such phases constitute a house (*khyim*) or time conjunction (*dus sbyor*) (*Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, f. 50b4-5).

64. See *CPR*, ff. 78b6-79a4.

65. The signs of premature death called “signs of the moon” occur in relation to the lunar and feces channels; and those called “signs of the sun,” in relation to the solar and urine channels. Such signs are determined by the malfunctioning of the life wind and downward-voiding wind in these channels due to their flowing beyond measure. Signs of premature death do not occur in relation to the channels of darkness and the descent of semen. Malfunction in these occurs gradually and leads to a natural death (Taranata’s *CSI*, f. 35a6-b3).

66. For a being possessed of a vajra body, in the course of a life that lasts for one hundred years, winds move seven hundred and seventy-seven million six hundred thousand times, of which twenty-four million three hundred thousand are movements of the pristine awareness wind. Thus, the pristine awareness wind flows for a total of 1,125 days, i.e., three years and three fortnights. When a year is calculated on the basis of the lunar day (which is shorter than the solar one), the period amounts to three years, two months, and a little more than two days, but the expression “three years and three months” is used because at the end of that time, the lunar phase of the next month, the third, has already begun.

67. These topics are presented in *CPR*, ff. 79b5-87a2.

68. For an extensive discussion, see *CPR*, ff. 87a2-88a3.

69. Reading *skyod* for *spyod*. See *CPR*, f. 87a2-6.

70. When the ultimate nature of the mind (*sems nyid*), pristine awareness, or root ineffable vital essence (*rtsa ba spros bral gyi thig le*), is not directly recognized, the deception of ignorance arises. The vital essences of substance, mantra, and wind are the remedies to such deception. See Kongtrul’s *CPR*, ff. 89a6-90b5.

71. Rangjung Dorjé states that the vital essence of substance comprises an outer vital essence contained within the outer world and an inner vital essence contained within the vajra body (*CPR*, f. 91a1-2).

Kedrup Norzang explains that the vital essence of substance is generally distinguished as white and red (*thig le dkar dmar*). Thirteen months after conception in the womb, the two essences begin to develop and continue the process of development until the male is sixteen and the female twelve years of age. At the age of twelve for a female, the red vital essence emerges as the ovum through the uterus; at the age of sixteen for a male, the vital essence can be ejaculated as semen through the penis. In general, the white and red vital essences abide in and pervade, like oil in sesame seeds, all parts of the body. The white vital essence abides mainly in the channel-wheel of great bliss at the crown of the head; and the red vital essence, mainly in the channel-wheel at the secret place and the channel-wheel at the navel. Moreover, the white vital essence abides in and emerges from the left channel, *lalana*. The red vital essence abides in and emerges from the right channel, *rasana*. Both white and red vital essences emerge as fluid from the conch-shell channel or “supreme” channel located below the navel (*Detailed Elucidation*, f. 92a2-6).

72. In form, the white aspect resembles an upside-down *ham*, mustard seed size. It is white, shiny, limpid, and shimmering with great radiance, emitting light like a pure crystal sphere. Acquired from the refined white vital essence of the father, the best of vital essences, it is the nature of the male *beruka* and the method of great bliss (*CPR*, f. 91b3-5).

73. *Equal to the Sky Tantra* (Toh. 386), vol. Ga, f. 200b5.

74. The form of the short *a* here refers to an upside-down “*ashe*” (*a shad*), a stroke indicating divisions into phrases, verses, etc., of the *lantsa* script. It is of the nature of Vajravahni, pristine awareness-emptiness (*CPR*, f. 92a2-3).

75. *Samvarodaya Tantra* (Toh. 373), vol. Kha. Citation not found.

76. Mare-Head (*rgod ma*) refers to the volcanic iron mountain range that resembles the head of a horse (*rta gdong ri*). According to ancient Indo-Buddhist cosmology, this mountain range encircles our world-system as the most outer rim around the ocean furthest from the center of the world-system. From the mouths of the mountains issues the fire known as the “fire of the mare,” which is said to cause the excess water of the oceans to evaporate, thereby maintaining their proper level. See Kongtrul’s *Myriad Worlds* (English translation), ch. 2; also Abhayakara’s *Awn of Esoteric Instructions* (Toh. 1198), f. 204b7.

77. *Vital Essence of Spring (Vasantatilaka)* (Toh. 1448), vol. Wa, f. 301a4-5. In both the *Vasantatilaka* and its commentary, the syllable mentioned in the first line is *hum*, not *ham* as it appears in the Beijing edition of *IOK*. The second line of this passage in the Dergé Kangyur reads *tsam* in place of *lta bur* as in *IOK*; the fifth line reads *rgod gdong ma me ngo bo nyid* in place of *me ni chen po'i gzugs kyis ni*.

78. In his auto-commentary on these lines, Krishnacharya states that at the heart of all beings is a wheel of phenomena with anthers and corolla, a channel-wheel with eight petals existing in the nature of the eight pure periods of day and night. At the center of this wheel is the triple-circle channel (*sum skor ma, trairvṛtā*), the lower face resembling a plantain flower, luminous like the flame of a sesame oil lamp.

In the center of that, ready to melt like morning frost as the rays of the sun strike, is the letter *hum*, half the size of a small mustard seed. Being inexpressible, it is invincible. Being devoid of any fear with respect to any conceptually created phenomena, it is called hero. Resembling the season of spring which gladdens the heart of all creatures, it is called spring (*dpyid*). It is the blessed Heruka to be realized, not the one with four faces and twelve arms. Fanned by karmic winds that have the characteristic of the perfect union of the male and female, the fire of pristine awareness, which resembles the fire of the Mare-Head Mountain Range, blazes at the navel. Moving in the upward direction causes the spring flow of nectar of the syllable *hum* to descend, which melts that fire. Because they join in an inseparable union, it is said that they rest in union. Such is known as “vital essence of spring.” This, in the *Vasantatilaka*, is indicated with the words “...Heruka.” The syllable *hum*, which has the characteristics just described, is Heruka. Because it blazes with pristine awareness, it is  $V>r>h!$ , the vital essence (*thig le*). Source: *Extensive Commentary on the Vital Essence of Spring* (Toh. 1449), vol. Wa, f. 324b1-4.

Perfect awareness (*yang dag rig pa*) in the form of fire is the woman of wisdom (*shes rab ma*), naturally present, like the moon and its light. In this context,  $V>r>h!$  (*phag mo*, sow) means the following: in *vārāhī*, *va* stands for *vāyu* (wind, *rlung*) and *Vīrihotra* (the fire god, *Byin za*); *rā* stands for *rāmatī* (“giver of joy,” *dga' bar byed*), since through the action of wind and fire, the *ham* melts and drips, causing joy. Here, Varahi does not refer the sow-faced deity (f. 347a1-3).

79. Indestructible Seat (*rdo rje gdan, vajrāsana*): the place of awakening for all buddhas, known as the ground for the essence of awakening (*byang chub snying po'i gzhi*). Likewise, these two vital essences, white and red, are the ground for actualizing the inner state of union (*CPR*, f. 92a6-b1). In our world, the Indestructible Seat refers to the place where the Buddha awakened, located in present-day Bodhgaya in the state of Bihar in India.

80. Kedrup Norzang states that at the head, at the center of the penis, and at its tip abides mainly the white vital essence, with the red vital essence also present minimally. The white vital essence that is the very basis for the increase of all white vital essence is located at the head. At the center of the channel-wheels at the navel, throat, and secret place abides mainly the red vital essence, with the white one also found in those places in small proportion. At the center of the channel-wheel at the heart, the white and red vital essences abide in equal measure. According to the *Indestructible Garland Tantra*, the vital essences located in those places of the body are the size of mustard seeds and are mixtures of white and red vital essences (*Detailed Elucidation*, ff. 204b5-205a6).

81. The residual elements of the two original refined vital essences (located at the head and below the navel) have two aspects, residual and refined. The refined aspect also has two aspects, the red and the white. The red aspect or solar constituent (*nyi māi kham*), the nature of blood, is produced by the heat of the short *a* at the navel and ascends through the right channel. The white vital essence (*thig le dkar po*) descends from the *ham* at the head, moving through the left channel. The residual part of the residual is expelled in coarse form (*CPR*, f. 92b2-4). For a discussion of vital essence in relation to the elements of the body, see Yang-gönpa's *Secret Description of the Vajra Body*, ff. 26a4-27a6.

82. The orifices are usually listed as nine: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the mouth, the anus, and the urinary tract. Some add the uvula extremity and the upper and lower ends of the central channel (Longdol Lama's *Kalachakra Tantra's Sets of Terms*, p. 164).

83. Here, inner fire offering (*nang gi sbyin sreg*) refers to the ingestion of food and drink as an offering to one's psychophysical constituents as deities (fashioned on the outer fire-offering ritual). The nutrients of the food ingested, according to the system of Tibetan medicine, go through a sevenfold process of refinement to become, in turn, blood, flesh, fatty tissue, bones, marrow, and regenerative fluids. At each step of this process, through the action of metabolic heat, the refined essences are separated from residual, or waste. The end result of this cycle is the refined essence known as the regenerative fluids (*khu ba, śukra*). Regenerative fluids have a coarse and fine component. The coarse component becomes semen in males and ovum in females, and the fine part flows from the heart to the entire body through a network of manifest vessels and nerves and less manifest pathways, giving radiance and strength to the body. See also *CPR*, ff. 92b6-94a3.

84. The four refined vital essences (*dvangs ma*) are connected to the eye, ear, nose, and tongue consciousnesses through the channels at the heart where the branch winds flow. They serve as the principal conditions for the apprehension of the four objects, visual forms, and so forth. The fifth, the white refined vital essence that comes through the free-from-demons channel (where the gift-of-the-gods wind flows) ascends and enters the uvula, where it is reversed, and, hence, is obscured. This channel and the vital essence within it serve as conditions for one aspect in the experience of objects of touch (*CPR*, f. 94a5-b5).

85. For an explanation of the twenty-four channels, their functions, and association with outer power places and deities, see *CPR*, ff. 96a5-99b2. According to Krishnacharya (Kanha), the sky-farers who gather in these places are known as yoginis of the sky, of the earth, and of the netherworld because they are associated with the upper, middle, and lower points of the body, respectively (*Extensive Commentary on the Vital Essence of Spring*, Toh. 1449, vol. Wa, f. 326a3).

86. Gyalwa Yang-gönpa states that power places (*gnas*) and related power places (*nye ba'i gnas*) correspond to the channels pervaded by vital essences that are not subject to increase and decrease, and that are refined at one time and residual at another. Fields (*zbing*) and related fields (*nye ba'i zbing*) correspond to the channels where the white vital essence increases and expands. Meeting places (*tshan dho ha*) and related meeting places (*nye ba'i tshan dho ha*) correspond to the channel junctions for the red vital essence. Assembling places (*'du ba*) and related assembling places (*nye ba'i 'du ba*) correspond to the channels in which vital essence assembles. Charnel grounds (*dur khrod*) and related charnel grounds (*nye ba'i dur khrod*) correspond to channels in which the flow of the vital essence is stopped or occasionally interrupted. Places of drinking (*'hung spyod*) and related places of abstinence from drinking (*nye ba'i 'hung gcod*) correspond to channels in which the vital essence produces a sensation and those in which it does not produce a sensation (*Secret Description of the Vajra Body*, f. 12a6-b1). See also *MH*, f. 76a1-4.

87. The vital essences, or bodhichitta, white and red, shift to different places of the body in a daily cycle, monthly cycle, annual cycle, and life cycle. In the monthly cycle, bodhichitta engages in its active function in the place where it is situated on a particular day. In the place where it was situated the preceding day, there is a residue known as the dissolved part. In the place where the bodhichitta will be the next day, there is already its dominant aspect in the growing phase. The cycle begins on the first day of the lunar month when the vital essence is at the tip of the big toe (of the left foot in males and right foot in females). This is so because the male vital essence is predominant in the white essence and thus flows through the left channel. The female vital essence is predominant in the red essence; thus, it flows through the right channel. On the second day, the residue of the vital essence dissolves at the big toe, and at the same time the vital essence is performing its active function at the ankle. Its dominant part shifts to the calf where the vital essence will be active on the third day.

According to treatises on astrology, the vital essence shifts daily to a different location of the body: in the case of a female, it moves from the right toe to the ankle, then to the anterior part of the knee, to the posterior part of the knee, to the lateral side of the thigh, to the hips, to the region above the kidneys, to the ribs, to the shoulder and upper arm, to the medial forearm, to the palm of the hand, to the neck, to the temples, up to the fifteenth lunar day, when it pervades the entire body. On the sixteenth day, it descends to the temples, and so forth, on the left side of the body to reach the top of the foot on the twenty-ninth day of the lunar month and pervade the entire body on the thirtieth.

For a clear description of the various cycles of the vital essence, see Gyalwa Yang-gönpa's *Secret Description*, ff. 27b6-30b2.

88. These topics are discussed in *CPR*, ff. 100a4-102b4.

89. Kedrup Norzang states that the vital essences of body, speech, mind, and pristine awareness (*lus ngag sems ye shes kyi thig lé*) are equivalent to the vital essences of awakened body, speech, mind, and pristine awareness (*sku gsung thugs ye shes kyi -*); and to the vital essences that produce the four states (*gnas skabs bzhi skyes pa'i -*) (*Detailed Elucidation*, ff. 204b3-205a1).

Two sets of vital essence determine the four states. Four are situated in the upper part of the body, and four, in the lower. At the center of the channel-wheel at the head, the vital essence of the body, or awakened body, determines the waking state. At the throat, the vital essence of speech, or awakened speech, determines the dream state. At the heart, the vital essence of mind, or awakened mind, determines the deep sleep state. At the navel, the vital essence of pristine awareness determines the fourth state, orgasm. These vital essences depend on the life wind.

The four kinds of vital essence situated in the lower part of the body are as follows: at the navel, the vital essence of the waking state (thus, the vital essence at the navel has two potencies: one for the waking state; the other for orgasm); at the base of the genitals, the vital essence of the dream state; in the middle part of the penis, the vital essence of deep sleep; and at the tip of the penis, the vital essence of orgasm.

In the ordinary condition, deep sleep occurs when coarse winds collect at the center of the penis and at the heart. The dream state occurs for a prolonged length of time as these winds spread to the base of the secret place and throat. When the winds reach the navel and the head, the waking state occurs, accompanied by manifold appearances. Orgasm occurs as the vital essences, through the force of sexual intercourse, melt and reach the navel and the tip of the penis, producing a blissful sensation greater than when they reach other spots of the body.

Moreover, each of these vital essences is endowed with a double potency. For ordinary beings, the vital essence at the head and at the navel produces the waking state, accompanied by the countless conceptual constructs of daily life; at the time of enlightenment, however, the potency of the vital essence creates countless emanations of awakened form (*nirmāṇakāya*). Similarly, in the ordinary condition, the vital essence located at the throat and at the base of the genitals produces dreams; at the time of enlightenment, it produces the speech of the enjoyment dimension (*sambhogakāya*), in all its aspects. The vital essence located at the heart and in the center of the penis, the potency of which in ordinary beings causes the unconscious state characteristic of deep sleep, at the time of enlightenment is the source of the dimension of reality (*dharmakāya*), or nonconceptual awakened mind, free from all limitations imposed by mental constructs. The vital essence located at the navel and at the tip of the penis, the potency of which in ordinary beings is the source of the blissful experience when semen is emitted, at the time of enlightenment produces the dimension of bliss (*sukhākāya*), or the supreme, immutable, state of bliss.

Thus, in the ordinary condition, the potencies of the vital essences that produce the four states of waking, dream, deep sleep, and orgasm produce the manifold impure appearances; the manifold deceptive expressions of speech; the nonconceptual yet unclear deep sleep; and the bliss of emission, respectively.

The deception-creating potencies of the vital essences are cleansed by using as experiential means the potency that creates various appearances, the potency that creates

various sounds, the potency of remaining in a nonconceptual state, and the potency to experience sexual bliss. At the time of the path, such experiences become empty forms, invincible sounds, nonconceptual consciousness, and immutable bliss. As the fruition of the process of cleansing, the four states transform into the various manifestations of awakening (*nirmāṇakāya*), the totality of speech of the enjoyment dimension (*sambhogakāya*), the nonconceptual dimension of reality (*dharmakāya*), and the dimension of great immutable bliss and pristine awareness (*mahāsukhakāya*).

The obscurations of the vital essences that produce the four states are the very source of all obscurations. These vital essences are asserted by most outstanding supreme scholars to be matter. The imprints of obscurations accumulated from beginningless time are present within the matter that constitutes the vital essences, that of a union of very subtle mind and wind. These imprints produce the emotional and cognitive obscurations. In the Kalachakra system, the impurities or deception-creating potencies that stain these vital essences are purified and their potencies to produce the four dimensions of awakening are actualized through the phase of creation and the phase of completion consisting of the sixfold yoga, and so on. See Longdol Lama's *Kalachakra Tantra's Sets of Terms According to Tsongkapa's Treatises on the Subject*, pp. 155-156; Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 92a6-93a2 and 205a6-206b7; Naropa's *IK*, pp. 309-151; *Hevajra Tantra* (trans. Snellgrove), p. 105; and *The Samvarodaya Tantra* (trans. Tsuda), pp. 62-64.

90. The secret instructions on the illusory body (*sgyu lus, māyādeha*), luminous clarity (*'od gsal, prabhāsvāra*), dream yoga (*rmi lam, svapnā*), and inner heat (*gtum mo, caṇḍali*) are intended to transform the waking state into the manifest dimension of awakening (*nirmāṇakāya*); the deep sleep state into the reality dimension (*dharmakāya*); the dream state into the enjoyment dimension (*sambhogakāya*); and the orgasm state into the bliss dimension of awakening (*sukhakāya*), respectively.

91. These topics are presented in *CPR*, ff. 107a2-120b2.

92. The tantric system speaks of a subtle body (*phra ba'i lus*) which is based upon the coarse body of psychophysical constituents. As to its nature, Kongtrul explains that the subtle body denotes mind nature accompanied by the white vital essence, red vital essence, and wind. Nothing (except for the adamant contemplation of one who is about to awaken) can destroy that body, and for this reason it is called the "indestructible vital essence of consciousness" (*rnam shes kyi mi shigs pa'i thig le*) (*CPR*, f. 32a5-6).

93. Supreme immutable bliss (*mchog tu mi 'gyur ba'i bde ba*): see Chapter 8, n. 41. Kedrup Norzang equates the innate body with the very subtle wind (*shin tu phra ba'i rlung*) which is undifferentiable in nature from the very subtle mind (*shin tu phra ba'i sems*). The union of subtle wind and subtle mind in the state of conditioned existence is the very root of beings' psychophysical constituents. All phenomena of conditioned existence are but manifestations of the very subtle mind and wind. At death, all appearances dissolve into these two. An experienced yogin, by working on the channels, winds, and vital essences, brings about the three-stage experience of light and the luminous clarity of mind and attains the final mind-isolation (*sems dben mihar thug pa*), which is the actualization of the subtle wind and mind. On the basis of the subtle wind and mind, the yogin arises in the illusory body, which serves as the cause of the same type for

the form dimension of awakening (*rūpakāya*), while the subtle mind serves as the cause of the same type for the reality dimension of awakening (*dharmakāya*) (*Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 24b3-25a6).

94. *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 418), vol. Nga, f. 15b6-7. This citation as it appears in the *Infinite Ocean of Knowledge* does not include the following line between the fifth and the sixth line: *bde ba med na de med 'gyur*. The second to last line reads *mchog tu mi 'gyur bde ba'i gzugs* in IOK but *mchog tu bde ba'i gzugs med pa* in Dg.K.

95. According to this citation, at the time of the ground, the form dimensions of awakening are present in the body in the aspect of seminal fluid. Seminal fluid and bliss are mutually dependent. The union present in the body is the essence of enlightenment. Its potency is equivalent to the vajra body (*CPR*, f. 106b4-5).

## CHAPTER 10: SYMBOLS FOR THE CAUSAL CONTINUUM

1. The union of *e* and *vam* is posited in relation to thirty-seven constituents. Thirty-six constituents (the aggregates, elements, and so forth) form the sphere of pervasion. The thirty-seventh constituent, the unobscured nature and one flavor of the aggregates, and so forth, and their indivisibility, is considered as the single pervading agent. These constitute the ground of purification, the purifying agent, and the result of purification of both the causal and resultant ways. Moreover, all the aspects of the ground that arise as the result are included in and taught as the thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening (*MH*, f. 46b2-4).

2. *Net of Magical Manifestation of Manjushri: King of Tantras* (Toh. 360), f. 7b7. Referred to here is the *Manjushrinamasangiti*.

3. The syllable *vam*, symbol of bliss, is formed by the five immutable great emptinesses, and the syllable *e*, symbol of the dimension of emptiness, is formed (in the shape of a triangular *dharmodaya*) by the six immutable great emptinesses. The bases for this formation of the union of the two syllables are the aggregates, elements, sense powers, faculties, and activities of the faculties, in six sets of six (*MH*, f. 48a2-4). See also Longdol Lama's *Kalachakra Tantra's Sets of Terms According to Tsongkapa's Treatises on the Subject*, pp. 156-162.

4. The psychophysical constituents are endowed with two purities (natural purity and purity from adventitious stains); they are of one flavor in the state of bliss and emptiness and unified in a single immaculate collection; thus, they are referred to as empty. Such emptiness can be experienced by nondual awareness alone; it is not simply negation based on not finding anything upon examination (*MH*, f. 48a5-4).

Pundarika states that emptiness (*stong pa, śūnya*) in this context refers to absence of obscuration, sameness of nature, and unification into one of the factors (aggregates and so forth) included in the respective five emptinesses. It is not an absence of phenomena because they are personally perceived by the yogin (Pundarika's *Stainless Light*, vol. Tha, ff. 148b7-149a1).

5. The shapes of *vam* and *e*, explained below, are formed of the characters of the Vartula or Vivarta Sanskrit script.

6. Aspiration sign (*tsbeg drag, visārga*): grammatical sign indicating aspiration (as in *kshah*, which appears as a crescent moon).
7. A small sphere or dot (*thig le, anusvāra*): the ending nasal sound (as in *ham*).
8. Tip (*nāda*): a flame-like shape rising from the sphere (dot).
9. The definitive qualities of body and mind (*lus bsam gyi nges pa*). Body stands for method, and mind, for wisdom.
10. *a, i, ri, u, li*: the five short vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet.
11. That it is invincible (*gzhom du med pa*) means that it is immaterial, not an object to be refuted by reason, nor one to be forsaken, and therefore cannot be conquered by poison, weapons, scriptural authorities, reasons, or antidotes (*MHI*, f. 47a7-b1).
12. The five awakenings (*mngon byang lnga*) are distinguished as five outer awakenings in accordance with yoga tantra and five inner awakenings in accordance with the highest yoga tantra. For the former, see Chapter 5, n. 45. For the latter, see Yang-gönpa's *Secret Description of the Vajra Body*, f. 6a1-6; see also *CPR*, f. 41a2-5; and Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, f. 141a5-b3.
13. Vairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi.
14. Emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects (*rnam pa kun gyi mchog dang ldan pa'i stong pa nyid*): in this context, "aspects" (*rnam pa*) refers to the clarity or appearance aspect of emptiness, "supreme" (*mchog*) because appearance and emptiness are an inseparable unity from which nothing can be subtracted and to which nothing can be added, utterly immutable.

Kedrup Norzang states that in the Kalachakra system, the emptiness to be meditated upon is twofold: with aspects (*rnam bcas kyi stong pa nyid*) and without aspects (*rnam med* -). The emptiness without aspects is the emptiness of not finding any intrinsic essence in the aggregates of forms and so forth, despite the scrutiny of discerning wisdom, just as one finds no essence in a plantain tree. The emptiness with aspects, or emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects, refers to the variety of empty forms. This is not the emptiness that is a mere elimination by logic of the objects to be negated. It comprises the empty forms of the three worlds which are seen like the images in a divination mirror (*Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 303b4-304a3).

Kongtrul explains that the Kalachakra tantra teaches the emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects, which constitutes the principal view of all the tantras. This emptiness alone is capable of producing supreme immutable bliss. Of the three aspects of emptiness—that of the ground, path, and result—this is an emptiness meditated upon on the path. In the Kalachakra system, supreme emptiness is called indefinite emptiness (*rnam par ma nges pa'i stong pa nyid*) because the forms in which it manifests are indefinite, being unlimited luminous clarity (*'od gsal*) and multicolored images (*sna tsbogs gzugs brnyan, viśvabimba*). This emptiness is revealed after the manifestation of ten signs which are empty images (*stong nyid kyi gzugs, śūnyatabimba*) produced by the yogas of the day (*nyin gyi rnal 'byor*) and of the night (*mtshan mo'i rnal 'byor*). This quintessential emptiness has a nature like that of the images in a mirror type of divination: it has all the aspects (*rnam pa thams cad*) of the three realms of existence, while its own nature is without real characteristics, not being composed of particles and being

free from conceptual constructs. It is direct knowledge. It is the illusory manifestation of the supreme (*mchog*) pristine awareness of luminous clarity (*IOK*, vol. III, pp. 213-218).

15. In the Kalachakra tantra, the consonants of the Sanskrit alphabet are grouped into six classes (of five each). The first class are the gutturals *ka, kha, ga, gha, ṅa*; the second, the palatals *cha, chha, ja, jha, ṅa*; the third, the linguals *ṭa, ṭha, ḍa, ḍha, ṇa*; the fourth, the dentals *ta, tha, da, dha, na*; the fifth, the labials *pa, pha, ba, bha, ma*; and the sixth, the aspirants *sa, ḥpa, ṣha, ṣha, ḥka* (Pundarika's *Stainless Light*, Toh. 1347, vol. Tha, f. 147b1-2).

16. In the ancient Sanskrit script, *e* is usually represented as an inverted triangle.

17. *Indestructible Garland* (Toh. 445), vol. Ca, f. 263b6.

18. *Samputa Tantra* (Toh. 381), vol. Ga, f. 81b1.

19. *Vajrasattva* represents the sixth family, that of the vajra. It is the essence of emptiness and compassion. As it is an undivided state, it is *vajra*, as it is the union of the three worlds, or of body, speech, and mind, it is *sattva*. See *Hevajra Tantra* (trans. Snellgrove), p. 47.

20. This citation is found in Pundarika's *Stainless Light* (Toh. 1347), vol. Tha, f. 136b3-5.

21. The inimical associations refer to that of the elements of water and fire (since water extinguishes fire) and that of wind and earth (since wind scatters particles of earth).

22. The images empty of all aspects, or causal great seal, and the immutable great bliss, or resultant great seal, exist only nominally in a cause-effect relationship: both are primordially present as the nonduality of emptiness and compassion. For a discussion of this point, see *IOK*, vol. II, pp. 213-221.

23. Common abridged tantras (*bsdud pa'i rgyud*) refers to the small *Chakrasamvara Tantra*, the *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations*, the *Kalachakra Condensed Tantra*, and other condensed tantras of highest yoga. The once-extant large forms of these tantras, such as the *Kalachakra Root Tantra* and *Hevajra Tantra Five Hundred Thousand*, are referred to as the extensive tantras (*CSI*, f. 9a).

24. *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 418), vol. Nga, f. 16b1.

25. When distinguished in terms of the aggregates, elements, sense powers, and their five objects, the great single reality of mind exists in five states, whose purities are the five buddhas, the five pristine awarenesses, and so on. See Kongtrul's explanation in *CH*, ff. 203b4-204b3.

26. The potential for manifestation (*char yang*; more often, *'char yang*): Just as any object can be reflected in a mirror, this potential is capable of manifesting as any phenomenon whatsoever (*gang du 'char yang rung ba*).

27. The six unions are discussed in the *Essence of the Great Seal Tantra* (Toh. 420), vol. Nga, ff. 67b5-68a7.

28. See Chapter 8, section entitled "The Impure State: Manifestation of Appearances Based on the Condition of Deception."

29. *rnam bcu dbang ldan*: literally, "powerful one possessed of ten aspects." This refers to the root mantra of Kalachakra, which contains ten letters: *h, kṣh, m, l, v, r,* and *y*; plus *visārga* (crescent moon); *anusvāra* (in *ham*); and vowel *a*.

30. The vowels known as qualities (*guṇa*) are *a*, *e*, *ar*, *o*, and *al*. The sign of aspiration (*rnam bcaad*, *visārga*) is usually written to the right side of a letter as two dots or spheres vertically arranged. Here, it is represented by a crescent moon.

31. For an explanation of the assemblage of the letters of the mantra, see Ngulchu Dharmabhadra's *Brief Discussion of the Arrangement of the Powerful Ten Letters and Their Symbolism*, pp. 339-340.

32. This is the root mantra of Kalachakra (*haṃ kṣaḥ ma la va ra ya*).

33. See Chapter 9, n. 21.

34. In the cosmology of the Kalachakra system, the world with its central Mount Meru is supported at its base by the five elements in a configuration of semi-spheres inserted one into the other. The letters symbolize the elements and also represent the way they first arose. The letter *ya* (which in the arrangement of the ten letters is the base) represents wind, the first element at the base of the world-system. Above *ya* stands *ra*, which represents the fire element that develops from the friction of the wind arising from different directions and converging. Above the *ra* stands the letter *va*, which symbolizes the water element. The water element descends from thick clouds formed by the steam of heat. Above the letter *va* stands *la*, which represents the earth element; it develops as a result of the action of wind "churning" the mass of water. For a discussion of the formation of a world-system according to Kalachakra, see Kongtrul's *Myriad Worlds* (English translation), ch. 3; and Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 30b3-31a4.

35. For a detailed discussion on how the deities of the generation phase exist as the powerful ten-letter mantra, see Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, f. 139a5-b7.

36. For the ten signs, see Chapter 9, n. 21.

37. The sixfold yoga (*rnal 'byor yan lag drug*, *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*), emphasized in Kalachakra: specific withdrawal (*so sor sdud pa*, *pratyaḥāra*); meditative absorption (*bsam gtan*, *dhyāna*); life control (wind control techniques) (*srog rtsol*, *prāṇāyāma*); retention (*'dzin pa*, *dhāraṇā*); subsequent application (*rjes su dran pa*, *anusmṛti*); and contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin*, *samādhi*). The first two branches, withdrawal and meditative absorption, purify the central channel and cause the appearance of the empty images of the ten signs, and so forth. Wind control techniques cause the winds that circulate in the *lalana* and *rasana* to dissolve in the central channel. As a consequence, the mind of luminous clarity (*'od gsal gyi sems*) is made manifest, further purifying the empty form self-manifestation of such mind. Then, by means of the fourth, retention, through the experience of the four joys in the descending and ascending order, the innate bliss of the mind of luminous clarity is conjoined with emptiness, and the pristine awareness of bliss and emptiness is developed. Thereafter, with the fifth, subsequent application, the real empty form of the male and female deities in union is actualized. Simultaneously, the practitioner repeatedly enters the state of pristine awareness of bliss and emptiness in which observer and observed are one. By relying on the great seal of the empty form with the last branch, that of contemplation, one proceeds through the twelve levels of realization, gradually exhausting the 21,600 karmic winds until the mind of luminous clarity arises as immu-

table bliss, the awakened dimension of great bliss. Source: Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation*, ff. 19b7-20a6. See also *CSI*, ff. 27b1-29a1.

38. Ten mandalas (*dkyil 'khor, maṇḍala*). These are the mandalas of the five elements (earth, water, fire, wind, and space) that flow in the order of generation in the left nostril and in the order of dissolution in the right nostril at the navel, and so forth. See *IK*, pp. 251-252; 276-286.

39. Ten states of love (*'dod pa'i gnas skabs bcu*): fixation of thought, desire, fever, pallor of the face, loss of appetite, trembling, madness, vertigo, mental confusion, and absolute insensibility. See Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation*, f. 293b1-4; and *IK*, p. 222.

40. The *Net of Magical Manifestation [of Manjushri]* or *Manjusbrinamasamgiti* (Toh. 360), vol. Ka, f. 3b5.

41. Kedrup Norzang explains the etymology of the term *dus 'khor* in the following way: During the path, when the ten winds enter the central channel, the natural mind of luminous clarity manifests. Like the sun and its rays, there arise many empty image reflections of that natural mind, which are like the forms in a divination mirror. As the empty images become more and more clear, at the end, they become the limitless knowables (*shes bya*) of the three worlds, free of all obscurations. This is called "wheel" (*cakra*) or "wisdom" (*prajñā*). The mind of luminous clarity, the supreme unchanging knower (*shes pa*), free of all obscurations, is the "time" (*kalā*) or "method" (*upāya*). The indivisible union of knowable and knower, or wisdom and method, is Kalachakra (*Detailed Elucidation*, f. 238a4-7).

## CHAPTER 11: THE PATH

1. Tilopa's *Perfect Words: Esoteric Instructions of the Dakini in Treasury of Precious Key Instructions* (*gDams ngag rin po che'i mdzod*), vol. 7, f. 35b1-2.

2. Four dimensions (*sku bzhi*). See Chapter 1, n. 40.

3. *Ornament of the Scriptures* (Toh. 4020), vol. Phi, f. 8a2-3.

4. Stiramati explains that the two sides (*phyogs gnyis*) are the side of the emotional afflictions (*nyon mongs pa'i phyogs*), desire and other emotions, and the side of remedies (*gnyen po'i -*), faith and so forth. To be ripened in terms of the former means that one has gained an existence in which one has the ability to forsake and thereby pacify emotional afflictions such as desire; and in terms of the latter, the ability to apply oneself fully to the virtuous side (*Extensive Commentary on the Scripture Ornament*, Toh. 4034, vol. Mi, f. 97a7-b4).

5. Tib. *dbang*, lit. "power."

6. *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 418), vol. Nga, f. 17a3-4.

7. *Oral Teachings of Manjushri* (Toh. 1853), vol. Di, f. 17a4-5.

8. *Commentary on the Oral Teachings* (Toh. 1866), vol. Di, f. 138b1-2.

9. *Light on the State of Union* (Toh. 1818), vol. Ngi, f. 242b5.

10. Citation not found in the *Hevajra Tantra*.

11. On the various etymologies of initiation, see Taranata's *Explanation of the Kalachakra Mandala Ritual*, Collected Works, vol. 3, ff. 10b7-12b7.
12. *Essence of Pristine Awareness* (Toh. 422), vol. Nga, f. 101a5. The Beijing edition of IOK reads *man ngag* instead of *yan lag*.
13. Jnanaparama, commenting on this passage, explains that "complete" means that the initiation must be complete in all its parts: the ritual for the site, ritual of vases, ritual of preparation of the students, ritual of the mandala, initiation of vajra master, secret initiation, pristine awareness through wisdom initiation, and the fourth initiation. The branch essential principle (*yan lag de nyid*) refers to a master who is part of an unbroken lineage of masters in that he or she has received the initiation according to textual tradition (*Vital Essence of Pristine Awareness Commentary*, Toh. 1203, vol. Ja, f. 228a3-5).
14. *Susiddhi* (Toh. 807), vol. Wa, f. 172b5.
15. Obscuration of emotional afflictions (*nyon mongs kyī sgrīb pa, klēsavarana*), obscuration of knowable phenomena (*shes byā'i sgrīb pa, jñeyāvarana*), and obscuration of karmic actions (*las kyī sgrīb pa, karmāvarana*).
16. *Indestructible Garland* (Toh. 445), vol. Ca, f. 212a2-3.
17. Intelligent persons (*blo ldan*): individuals possessed of the wisdom needed to be able to retain the significance of the four initiations and observe pledges and vows (Alamkakashā's *Indestructible Garland Commentary*, Toh. 1795, vol. Gi, f. 35a5).
18. *Illuminating Lamp* (Toh. 1785), vol. Ha. Citation not found.
19. Concerning the etymology of *mandala* (*dkyil 'khor*), *manḍa* means heart (*snying po*) or essence (*bcud*), and *la*, to seize (*'dzin pa*) or take (*len pa*). Thus, it is called mandala because it causes one to seize or take hold of the basis of essential qualities (Dharmashri's *VOWS*, f. 232b3-4). It denotes the gathering of the deities who are of the nature of compassion and wisdom, as well as the divine mansion that is their supporting environment. The essence referred to in "seizing the essence" is the great bliss which is the indivisibility of emptiness and compassion. Such indivisibility is the progenitor of all mandalas and embodies all forms of deities whose nature is bodhichitta (mind of awakening) (Abhayakara's *Awn of Esoteric Instructions*, Toh. 1198, ff. 82b4-83b6).
20. *Synopsis of the Initiation Procedure for Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1431), vol. Wa, f. 219b5.
21. *Twenty Rituals of the Guhyasamaja Mandala* (Toh. 1810), vol. Ngi, f. 131b3.
22. The relative awakening mind mandala refers to the vital essences of the master and his consort, which are the secret substances of the secret initiation. The mandala of the *bhaga* refers to the consort's "lotus" since in the third initiation the student himself unites with a consort. The ultimate awakening mind mandala refers to the actual innate pristine awareness. See Chapter 12, section entitled "High Initiations."
23. *Abhidhana Tantra* (Toh. 369), vol. Ka, f. 344b3-5.
24. To actualize the mandala (*dkyil 'khor sgrub pa*) involves the invitation of the mandala of pristine awareness deities from their natural abode, making offerings and giving praise to the deities, and merging the pristine awareness mandala with the visualized one. See *IBTS*, pp. 291-301.

25. Refers to the shape of the wind. See Chapter 6, n. 4; and Chapter 4, n. 18.
26. The four mandalas alluded to here are, one, the mandala of colored powders (*rdul tshon gyi dkyil 'khor*), used for the seven initiations patterned on childhood; two, the mandala or body of the consort (*phyag rgya'i lus kyi -*) for the vase initiation; three, the mandala of the consort's lotus (*bha ga'i -*) for the secret initiation; and four, the mandala of bodhichitta (*byang chub kyi sems kyi -*) or vital essence for the pristine awareness through wisdom initiation. The mandala of bodhichitta is twofold: that of relative bodhichitta, or vital essence, and that of ultimate bodhichitta (Taranata's *Explanation of the Kalachakra Mandala Ritual*, Collected Works, vol. 3, f. 4b2-4).
27. Pema Karpo, referring to the *Kalachakra Tantra*, states that the mandala of colored powders is intended for gaining mundane powers and the other three mandalas (that of the body, the *bhaga*, and bodhichitta) are taught for the sake of attaining the supreme power (f. 107a2). The colored powders mandala alone is used for the purpose of bringing about the ripening of the student's mind (*TV*, vol. Ca, ch. 3, f. 103a4).
28. *Synopsis of the Initiation Procedure for Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1431), vol. Wa, f. 219b4-7.
29. This assertion is found in the *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 443), vol. Ca, f. 152b4. The *Continuation of the Samputa Tantra* possibly refers to *rGyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal yang dag par sbyor ba'i thig le* (Toh. 382, vol. Ga), which in the Dg.K. is listed after the *Samputa Tantra* (Toh. 381). In this text, the three mandalas are mentioned at ff. 167b7-168a1.
30. *Commentary on the Purification of All Evil Destinies* (Toh. 2624), vol. Cu, ff. 152b1-231a3.
31. For a description of these, see *The Buddhist Tantras: Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism* by Alex Wayman (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990) (henceforth cited as *LITE*), pp. 92-97.
32. Toh. 388. Citation not found.
33. *Commentary on the Ornament of the Realization of Guhyasamaja* (Toh. 1817), vol. Ngi, ff. 210b1-232b6.
34. For a description of the method of conferring initiation in the body mandala, see *IBTS*, pp. 303-307.
35. Toh. 431, 432, 433, and 434 are Achala tantras that belong to highest yoga tantra, as opposed to the *Achala Kalpa* (Toh. 495), which belongs to conduct tantra. See *LITE*, pp. 234-237. Among the other Indian masters who advocate the use of the mandala painted on cloth is Jayasena. He expresses this in his *Ritual of Initiation of the Glorious Ocean of Dakas* (Toh. 1521), vol. Za, ff. 51a7-52a1.
36. Manjushriyasha (*'Jam dpal grags pa*), the eighth king of Shambhala, lived around the time when Dignaga and Dharmakirti were propagating the Buddhist doctrine in India. It is said that he initiated into the tantra of Kalachakra thirty-five million fortunate seers of different lineages (*rigs*) who adhered to different fundamentalist views, unifying them into the single vajra lineage (*rdō rje'i rigs*). For this, he (in the latter part of his life) and subsequent kings were called *kulika (rigs ldan)* (lineage-holder). After con-

ferring the initiation on the seers, he taught the condensed essence of the *Kalachakra Root Tantra*, known as the *Concise Tantra of the Glorious Kalachakra*, currently referred to as the *Kalachakra Tantra*, the longer version not being extant (Taranata's *Origin of the Kalachakra Teachings*, Collected Works, vol. 2, f. 5a6-b7).

37. Scriptures on discipline (*'dul ba lung, vinayāgama*) refers to the four divisions of the vinaya (*'dul ba lung sde bzhi*) of the individualists.

38. The mandala of colored powders is a flat representation of the three-dimensional mandala, which includes the residence and the resident deity. The various aspects of the residence mandala correspond to the aspects of the path the yogin must traverse, and the symbolism involved is rich and varied. It is used exclusively to confer the vase initiation. See *CH*, f. 116b2-5.

39. *Indestructible Essence Ornament Tantra* (Toh. 451), vol. Cha, f. 51b3. According to Taranata, the family of desire tantras (*'dod chags kyi rigs kyi rgyud*) are intended for persons dominated by desire. These are exemplified by the *Guhyasamaja* (Toh. 442), the *Red Yamari* (Toh. 474, 475) and *Black Yamari* (Toh. 467, 469, 473), *Krishnayamarimukhasatchakra* (*Kṛṣṇayamārimukhaṣaṭcakraśādhana, gDong drug pa*, Toh. 2015) and the *Vairochana Magical Net* (possibly the same as the *Secret Essence* [*Guhyagarbha, gSang ba'i snying po*], Toh. 832). The *Bhairava Tantra* (Toh. 468) exemplifies the family of tantras of aversion (*zhe sdang gi rigs kyi rgyud*) intended for persons dominated by aversion. The *Chanting the Names of Manjushri* (Toh. 360) exemplifies the tantras of delusion (*gti mug gi rigs kyi rgyud*) intended for deluded persons.

Each of these families of father tantras presents its content in accordance with its name. In the *Guhyasamaja* and other desire tantras, the path of desire is of primary importance. The phase of generation involves mainly visualization of the forms of the male and female deity in union; appeal to the deities to melt into the vital essence; and emanation of the retinue deities from the womb of the main female deity, and so forth. The phase of completion involves mainly reliance on the consort. These desire tantras do not extensively present the ascertainment of reality, and fierce rites are not emphasized. In the *Bhairava* and other tantras of aversion, one finds principally a single male deity. The phase of completion in these tantras comprises methods of blocking the winds in the central channel that involve mainly one's body alone (without consort). Fierce rites are described in great detail. The *Chanting the Names of Manjushri* and other tantras of delusion, whether they present a single central figure or the male and female central figures in union, do not teach the emanation of the retinue from the womb of the consort or the appeal to the deities to melt into the vital essence. They teach extensively the ground, path, and result. The phase of generation in these tantras emphasizes nonconceptual reality. Only in a minor way do they teach the path of desire and fierce acts (Taranata's *Origin of the Kalachakra Teachings*, Collected Works, vol. 2, f. 4a2-4; *Explanation of the Indestructible Way*, Collected Works, vol. 8, ff. 7b7-10b5).

40. *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 443), vol. Ca, f. 152b6.

41. Concerning the method and wisdom tantras, Butön states that the *Guhyasamaja* and other tantras belong to the Akshobhya family of tantras. The *Yamantaka*, and so forth, belong to the Vairochana family. The tantras of *Ratnasambhava* and *Akashagarbha* that belong to the Ratnasambhava family were not translated into Tibetan. The

*Shribhagavadekajatamahakalpa* (Toh. 476) and other tantras belong to the Amitabha family. The tantras of *Siddharta* and the *Amritakundali* (Toh. 841) and others belonging to the Amoghasiddhi family were not translated into Tibetan. The *Secret Moon Essence Tantra* (Toh. 477) and others belong to the Vajradhara family (*BGP*, ff. 164a4-185b1).

42. *Abhidhanottara Tantra* (Toh. 369), vol. Ka, f. 208a3. Here, the title of this tantra appears as *nges brjod* while it most commonly appears as *mngon brjod*.

43. Here, Heruka stands for Akshobhya; Vajraditya, for Ratnasambhava; Padmanarteshvararaja, for Amitabha; and Ashvottama, for Amoghasiddhi. Taranata states that the *Buddhasamayoga* (Toh. 366) and the *Secret Moon Essence* (Toh. 477) exemplify the Vajrasattva family; the *Kalachakra* belongs certainly to that family too, although it seems related also to the Heruka family. The *Chatuhpita* (Toh. 428) is the only tantra of the Vairochana family (or "permanent" family) that was translated into Tibetan. The *Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 368), *Hevajra* (Toh. 417, 418), *Mahamaya* (Toh. 435), *Buddhakapala* (Toh. 424), *Vajrarali* (Toh. 426), *Rigi Aralli* (Toh. 427), and *Essence of the Great Seal* (Toh. 420) tantras exemplify the Heruka or Akshobhya family. The *Vajramrita* (Toh. 435) exemplifies the Vajraditya or Ratnasambhava family. The *Kulalokanata* (Toh. 436) and the *Padmanarteshvararaja Sadhana* (Toh. 3160, 3161, 3335, 3423, 3424) exemplify the Padmanarteshvararaja or Amitabha family. The *Tantra of the Origin of Tara* (Toh. 726), *Praise to the Twenty-one Forms of Tara* (Toh. 437), and the various root tantras of *Kilaya* exemplify the Ashvottama or Amoghasiddhi family. The *Tantra of the Origin of Mahakala* (Toh. 440), being a tantra of the activity type, also belongs to this last family. See Taranata's *Origin of the Kalachakra Teachings*, Collected Works, vol. 2, f. 4a4-6; and *Explanation of the Indestructible Way*, Collected Works, vol. 8, ff. 10b5-16b4.

In his *General Presentation of the Sets of Tantra*, Butön speaks of seven tantras of wisdom (*shes rab kyi rgyud*) or mother tantras: those that teach equally all the six families, tantras of the Heruka family, of the Vairochana family, of the Vajraditya family, of the Padmanarteshvararaja family, of the Ashvottama family, and of the sixth family, that of Vajradhara. The *Indestructible Tent Tantra* (Toh. 419) is the tantra that teaches all the families equally and is considered by commentators to be the very origin of all mother tantras. Butön provides a long and comprehensive list of the tantras exemplifying the other families.

44. *Samputa Tantra* (Toh. 381), vol. Ga, f. 117a7.

45. Explaining this verse in his *Commentary on the Hevajra Tantra*, Kongtrul states that all families have the single nature of innate joy (*lhan cig skyes pa'i dga' ba*). To serve the purpose of limitless kinds of trainees, innate joy is distinguished into thousands of families in the following way: At the time of the ground, innate joy is attended by obscurations, that is to say, differentiated into five states of mind that have the nature of the five emotional afflictions such as desire. Hence, it becomes the five families of Vairochana, and so forth. Extensively subdivided, the five families become as numerous as the grains of sand of ten Ganges rivers. Each of the five root families is subdivided into five smaller families, thus yielding twenty-five. Distinguished in terms of method and wisdom, these become fifty. Distinguished in terms of body and mind, these become one hundred. Each of these has one hundred subdivisions, each of which is further divided into one hundred, and so forth, ad infinitum (*CH*, ff. 204b3-205b6).

46. *Short Guide to the Meaning of Highest Yoga Tantra* (Toh. 3713), vol. Tsu, f. 106b6-107a3.

47. Butön differentiates tantras according to the teacher of the tantra (*ston pa*), the person who has requested the teaching (*zbu ba po*), the compiler (*sdud pa po*), and the trainee (*'dul bya*).

A tantra taught by a teacher in the form of Vajradhara, Vajrasattva, and so on, in the midst of an entourage of queens is a father tantra. If it is taught by a teacher who is a heruka, a sky-farer, or a female deity, it is a mother tantra.

A tantra requested by a bodhisattva or a male deity is a father tantra; one requested for the sake of or by a female deity is a mother tantra even though the teacher may be a male deity.

Although Vajrapani is generally considered to have been the compiler of the tantras, in some cases, the tantra has been compiled by the same person who requested it. For instance, the Guhyasamaja was compiled by Vajradharma and is therefore a father tantra. Those compiled by a female deity are mother tantras.

If the tantra has been taught for the sake of males, it is a father tantra; if taught for the sake of females, it is a mother tantra. It is also a father tantra if it was taught for the sake of uplifting Buddhist trainees who have fallen into wrong ways or adhere to wrong views concerning Buddhist tenets. It is a mother tantra if taught in order to uplift non-Buddhists who have fallen into wrong ways and adhere to wrong views, who enjoy killing, and so forth.

These characteristics are noted in terms of their predominance in a particular tantra. All tantras share these characteristics to a certain extent (*BGP*, ff. 282a2-283a5).

48. Deities in forms conforming to the ways of the world would be, for example, deities seated on jewel-bedecked thrones or lion thrones, who hold the jewel, wheel, and so on, as insignias, and wear silk scarves, and so forth. Deities represented sitting or standing on corpses or skulls, holding the curved knife, skull cup, staff (*khaṭvaṅga*), or small drum as insignias; wearing bone ornaments, garlands of heads, human heads, human skin as garments; or otherwise naked, are forms that are contrary to the ways of the world (*BGP*, ff. 280b4-281a1).

49. The meaning here is probably that father tantra is intended for practitioners of lesser wisdom, and mother tantra, for those of higher wisdom.

## CHAPTER 12: INITIATION

1. Nagarjuna's *Ritual of the Mandala of Guhyasamaja*, for example, states that one must recite 100,000 of the mantra of the main deity and his consort and 10,000 of the mantras of each of the other deities of the mandala (Toh. 1798, vol. Ngi, f. 15b7-16a1). The same is stated in Abhayakaragupta's *Indestructible Garland Mandala Rituals* (Toh. 3140, vol. Phu, f. 6a7b1).

2. Nagarjuna's *Ritual of the Mandala of Guhyasamaja* (Toh. 1798), vol. Ngi, f. 16a1-2.

3. *Ibid.*, f. 16a2.

4. On the details of these, see *IBTS*, pp. 285-291.

5. *Ritual of the Mandala of Guhyasamaja* (Toh. 1798), vol. Ngi, f. 16a2-3.
6. See *IBTS*, pp. 291-301.
7. *Ritual of the Mandala of Guhyasamaja* (Toh. 1798), vol. Ngi, f. 16a3.
8. Reading *ni* in place of *bzhi*. In the original (Dg.T.), the fifth line (*dbang bzhi rdzogs par ...*) does not appear.
9. *Ritual of the Mandala of Guhyasamaja* (Toh. 1798), vol. Ngi, f. 16a3-4.
10. For example, in places such as a monastery, temple, or residence, it is not necessary to dig the soil to clear the ground of stones, thorns, and other faults of the earth (*IBTS*, p. 281).
11. Abhayakara's *Indestructible Garland Mandala Rituals* (Toh. 3140), vol. Phu.
12. As to the examination of the directions, if a site is elevated at the center and depressed in the east and north, it is considered to be a suitable place. On the contrary, if the site is depressed in the center and elevated in the east and north, it is not suitable.

Abhayakara notes the negative effects of building in an unsuitable place: If the land resembles a tortoise's back, there is risk of death or impoverishment; if elevated in the north, there is risk of extinction of one's family lineage; and if elevated in the east and depressed in the center, risk of the practitioner's death (*Indestructible Garland Mandala Rituals*, Toh. 3140, f. 2b6).

Taranata sets forth the associations of the colors of the earth with the four castes. A place where the earth is black is associated with the menial caste and is fit for the activation rituals of killing, drawing out, and parting; yellow earth is associated with the merchant caste, the place fit for stupefying, paralyzing, and striking; red earth is associated with the royal caste, the place fit for dominating and drawing in; white is associated with the brahmin caste, the place fit for peaceful and enriching activities; green earth is associated with the lowest caste, the place fit for all activities; blue earth has the same characteristics as green; earth of uncertain color has the same characteristics as that of the black (*Mandala Ritual of Kalachakra*, Collected Works, vol. 3, ff. 21b7-22a2).

Concerning the examination of the characteristics and signs shown by earth and water tests, the *General Tantra* (Toh. 806) (as cited in Zhuchen Tsultrim Rinchen's *Catalogue of the Tengyur*, p. 569) explains: In examining the characteristics of the site to determine whether it has any defects, it is to be considered inauspicious if the site has steep slopes, thorny brambles, potsherds, bones, cracks, tree-stumps, holes, ant-hills, ashes, alkaline soil, pebbles, dust, stones, hairs, and insects such as ants.

To examine the signs shown by a test of the earth, one digs a knee-deep hole, and then, with the same earth, refills the hole. If there is more than sufficient earth to refill the hole, one will gain powers through practice in that place.

To examine the signs shown by a test of the water, one digs a hole half a cubit deep and fills it up with water. Then, one walks one hundred paces away and quickly returns to examine the level of the water; if it has not diminished, the place is ideal.

As to the site suitable for drawing the mandala, Kongtrul states that it can be in the midst of a forest or garden, or in a house where a bodhisattva lives, or in a temple that contains statues of the buddhas. An unsuitable site is a place where the people are unruly and hostile (*CH*, f. 153b4-6).

13. The request for the site in the case of a manifest being (i.e., the owner of the place, a king, minister, or another) is made by verbal agreement or purchase. The request for the site in the case of a non-manifest being is made as follows: First, having performed the yoga of generating oneself as the deity, one arranges offerings and *torma* (*bali*) on the spot, calls upon the local spirits (known as “lords of the ground”) (*gzhi bdag*) of different kinds who are natural dwellers of the place, makes offerings, and requests them to grant the place for the use of the mandala. To ask permission from the earth goddess, who is the owner of all earth in general, first one invites the earth goddess, who is yellow in color, peaceful in aspect, and adorned with yellow scarves and jewels. In her left hand, she holds a longevity vase filled with nectar; with the right hand, she performs the gesture of “accepting to be the witness.” Having invoked the goddess, one offers to her fragrances and other objects of sensory appeal, as well as the *torma*. After one asks her permission to use the place and receives it, she merges into the place. The details in the procedure to request the site vary somewhat according to different tantras. See Taranata’s *Mandala Ritual of Kalachakra*, Collected Works, vol. 3; *Mandala Ritual of Guhyasamaja According to the Nagarjuna Tradition*, Collected Works, vol. 5; and *Mandala Ritual of Vajrapani Mahachakra*, Collected Works, vol. 8.

14. *Uraga* (*lvo ’phye*) (lit. “slithers on the belly”) is a naga protector of the earth. In the *Kalachakra Tantra*, it is called the “Rahu of the earth” (*sa yi sgra gcan*) and in Pundarika’s *Stainless Light Commentary on the Kalachakra*, Rudra (Drag po).

Tatagatavajra describes the *uraga* as follows: It is white in color, radiates light, and wears various ornaments. Below the navel, it has the form of a snake; above, that of a human with a hood of nine snakes. It lies on its left side with the left hand at the ear. Its hand holds a jewel at the hip. It emits the sound “phu, phu.” It reclines on an area covering one ninth of the soil, with eight naga kings disposed along its body: Kulika (*rigs ldan*), brilliant green, situated at the tip of the tail; Karkotaka (*stobs kyi rgyud*), grey in color, at the secret place; Shankapala (*dung skyong*), white in color, at the navel; Mahapadma (*padma chen po*), golden in color, at the shoulders; Vasuki (*nor rgyas*), green, at the heart; Takshaka (*jog po*), red, at the neck; Padma (*padma*), radiant white, at the ears; and Ananta (*mtha’ yas*), blue, at the crown of the head. The upper body of each one looks like that of a god, head hooded with seven snakes, and the lower part resembles a coiled snake, hands holding blazing jewels (*Ritual for the Mandala of Glorious Chakrasamvara*, Toh. 1511, vol. Zha, ff. 310a6-311).

As the *uraga* revolves clockwise according to the passage of the sun through the twelve houses, one must first determine the direction in which its head points in any given season and month. Dharmashri, in his *Radiance of the Sun*, a manual on astrology, provides a diagram to determine the position of the *uraga*. The diagram is a circle divided into thirty-six sectors, which start from the center of the circle and end on its circumference. Outside and along the circumference, the circle is adorned with twelve lotus petals, each a house. The width of each petal is that of three sectors of the circle. In between the petals and the circle is a rim with spaces equal in number to the three hundred and sixty days of the year. East and the other cardinal and intermediate directions are marked next to the petals. By considering the house and the day on the diagram, one determines the position of the head of the *uraga* in a certain season, month, and day. Based on that knowledge, one strikes a line from the direction of the head’s position to the tail; along this line, the body of the *uraga* will be drawn.

Once the *uraga's* point of revolving in time and space has been determined, one must determine the location of its armpit (*kakṣā*) (where a small rectangular ritual box will be drawn). It is there that the yogin will first dig two or three shovelfuls, and afterwards dig the remaining earth in the square, without risk of offending the field protector.

In the place where one has dug the fifth shovelful, one buries a treasure vase, makes offerings to and praises the god of the earth, and asks to be pardoned; at that point, one imagines the *uraga*, pleased, dissolving into the earth. The lines and drawing are erased and the offering and *torma* are thrown in the southeast direction. With the earth of the five shovelfuls mixed with other good earth and fragrance, the platform of the mandala is built. Wherever that earth is scattered, the area will be cleansed of all impurities. See Kuladatta's *Compendium of Procedures* (Toh. 2531), vol. Ku, f. 250a6-254a5; *Positioning of the Uruga, the Field Protector, Called Elimination of All Impurities [of the Earth]* found in Kongtrul's *Treasury of Precious Treasure Teachings*, vol. Di, f. 1a2-3; and *IBTS*, pp. 280-281, n. 14.

15. Impurities of the earth refers to horns, bones, coal, or other such substances. It is an exceptionally good portent if the digging of the site reveals precious stones, quartz, silver, and so forth. These should be left untouched in the earth. If the purpose is to build a house for the mandala, the digging should be done until water or a layer of stone is reached. If the purpose is simply to build a mandala above the earth, a cubit is sufficient. See Taranata's *Mandala Ritual of Kalachakra*, Collected Works, vol. 3, ff. 23b4-24b7.

16. To perform rituals of purification, one first scares away interferences by touching the ground while reciting, for instance, the mantra of Kandaroha (*Dum skyes mā*) (in the case of the mandala ritual of Chakrasamvara) and scatters water, ashes, and white mustard seeds activated with that mantra. Then, one applies to the soil the five types of cow excretions, which have been sprinkled with saffron water. While doing so, one recites the mantra *om bhū kham* to transform the soil into the nature of space. Reciting *hūm lām hūm*, one imagines that the soil is of vajra nature. At this point, the earth goddess can be invited again (if so desired), venerated with offerings, and reabsorbed into the earth. (Taranata also mentions purification effected through the fire-offering ritual, which could be included here in the purification using substances.) See Tatagatavajra's *Ritual for the Mandala of Glorious Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1511), f. 312a5-7; Kuladatta's *Compendium of Procedures* (Toh. 2531), vol. Ku, f. 256a1-3; and Taranata's *Mandala Ritual of Vajrapani Mahachakra*, Collected Works, vol. 8, ff. 3b6-4a3.

17. Holding vajra and bell, the master sits in the center of the site, facing what would be the eastern gate of the mandala, carries out the procedure of self-generation and generation of the deities of the mandala, and seeks permission to draw the mandala. See Tatagatavajra's *Ritual for the Mandala of Glorious Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1511), f. 312b2; Anandagarbha's *Illumination of the Summation of Essential Principles* (Toh. 2510), f. 254a1; and Taranata's *Mandala Ritual of Vajrapani Mahachakra*, Collected Works, vol. 8, f. 4a4.

Four students, positioned at the four directions of the site, make offerings to the deities of the mandala, requesting them and the master to reveal the mandala. Thereafter, the master, having emanated as the appropriate wrathful deity, points to the ground with the hand mudra of the vajra fists united with the middle fingers outstretched and touching each other. Raising the gesture over his head, the master then lifts the mandala

up into space. At that point, standing and facing south, the master, with hands in prayer position on his head, pays homage to the buddhas and then issues the command to the demonic forces to leave the place (Tatagatavajra's *Ritual for the Mandala of Glorious Chakrasamvara*, f. 312b4-9). See also Kuladatta's *Compendium of Procedures* (Toh. 2531), ff. 286a4-287b1; and Taranata's *Mandala Ritual of Vajrapani Mahachakra*, Collected Works, vol. 8, f. 4a4-b6.

18. As to the way the obstructing forces are expelled by the master, see Kuladatta's *Compendium of Procedures* (Toh. 2531), vol. Ku, ff. 287a5-292b7.

19. Ten daggers (*phur ba*) are struck and left fixed in the ground in the ten directions, outside the mandala: four are placed in the four cardinal directions, four in the intermediate ones; the dagger of the zenith is placed east of the eastern one; and the one of the nadir, west of the western one. These are extracted at the conclusion of the mandala ritual when the mandala is dismantled (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).

20. The site, cleared of obstructing forces, is encircled on the outside by a protective vajra circle, consisting of a vajra tent, ground, and fire. The site is transformed (blessed) through mantras into one of vajra (indestructible) nature (Kuladatta's *Compendium of Procedures*, ff. 298b4-299a5). For Kedrupjé's discussion of the details of these rituals, see *IBTS*, pp. 279-283.

21. Kedrupjé explains that in the case of a mandala of painted cloth, the examination, ritual of clearing the site with digging, and requesting the site are not required. However, one must perform the ritual of seizing, protecting, and blessing the site as for the colored powders mandala (*IBTS*, p. 301).

22. *Net of Magical Manifestation: The Great King of Tantras* (Toh. 466), a tantra of the yoga tantra class.

23. This is a reference to Nagabodhi's *Twenty Rituals of the Guhyasamaja Mandala* (Toh. 1810, vol. Ngi, f. 131a7), where he says: "...first pitch the lines and after that/ Make the foundation (*lhags gnas*) of the earth goddess, and so forth."

24. According to Tatagatavajra, the earth goddess is yellow, in a peaceful mode, wearing white clothing and ornaments. In the left hand, she holds a golden vase, and with the right, performs the mudra of giving protection from fear. Once the pledge goddess has been generated from the syllable *bam*, at one's right hand, one visualizes a moon disk with three *hums*. Pressing the earth with the fingers, the sound and light of *hum* invoke the pristine awareness deity to merge with the pledge one. One then makes offerings to her and praises her. Finally, by the power of one's mantra, she is reabsorbed into the earth (*Ritual for the Mandala of Glorious Kalachakra*, Toh. 1511, vol. Zha, f. 314a2-b2).

According to Taranata and the earlier Tibetan masters, since the tantras state that the ritual of the earth goddess is to be performed only once, at this point it is not necessary to do because the ritual of the earth goddess is performed in the context of the ritual of the site (*Mandala Ritual of Vajrapani Mahachakra*, Collected Works, vol. 8, f. 6b6).

25. Action lines (*las thig, karmasūtra*), so called because they serve as the basis for the subsequent ritual actions related to the mandala. They are also known as "wet lines" (*rlon thig*) as the thread is moistened by rubbing it with chalk or another substance.

With the pitching of the action lines, one sketches the entire structure of the mandala to determine the spots where the deities will be. For the procedure, see Rongta Lozang Damchö Gyatso's *The Creation of Mandalas: Tibetan texts detailing the techniques for laying out and executing tantric Buddhist psychocosmograms* (New Delhi, 1971), vol. 1. For the dimensions of the mandala in the Hevajra tantra used for the initiation and the correspondence to the body, see *CH*, f. 154b.

26. As to the material of vases, Pundarika states that a crystal vase is used for appeasement rituals (*śantika*); silver, for enriching (*pausṭika*); human skull, for killing; iron, for expulsion (*uccātana*) and separating (*vidveśa*); gold, for dominating (*vaśya*); copper, for summoning (*ākṛṣṭi*); clay, for paralyzing (*stambhana*); and wood, for stupefying (*mohana*) (*Stainless Light*, Toh. 1347, vol. Da, f. 96b1-5).

As to their dimensions, the vases for appeasing and enriching purposes must be sixteen fingers wide in the belly, twenty fingers high from the bottom to the top lips, with the lips hanging down from the mouth two fingers long, and the neck, six fingers wide. The mouth (from the extremity of one lip to the other) is eight fingers wide (the mouth opening, six fingers; the two lips, one finger each). The vases used for purposes of other activation rituals differ in their dimensions.

As for their numbers and names, Kedrupjé says that for the most elaborate rituals, the number of the vases equals that of the deities of the mandala. To simplify, one may use five vases, one vase for the generation of the main male and female deities and four vases, one in each direction, for the generation of the deities of the four directions. In a very simple form, one uses two vases, the victorious vase (*rnam rgyal bum pa, vijayakalāśa*) (so called since it is victorious over the enemy of habitual tendencies associated with emotional afflictions), used at the time of the initiation, and the action vase (*las bum, karmakalāśa*), used for sprinkling consecrated water on the offerings, oneself, and the students (*IBTS*, p. 287).

The substances placed in the vases are the five nectars, five perfumes, five jewels, five medicinal herbs, and five grains. The branches of the *amra*, *udumbara*, *ashoka*, *bodhi*, and *naga* trees are the ornaments of the mouth (*kha rgyan*) of the vase, while a white scarf or brocade adorns its neck (Tatagatavajra's *Ritual for the Mandala of Glorious Chakrasamvara*, Toh. 1511, vol. Zha, f. 315a1-3). The substances vary according to the class of tantra, the ones used in action tantras being particularly different from those used in the highest yoga tantras. The Kalachakra, for example, lists five groups of twenty-five items each. See Pundarika's *Stainless Light* (Toh. 1347), vol. Da, ff. 148b6-150a2. On the various substances placed in vases and their symbolism, see *LITE*, pp. 79-81.

The vases, set in the appropriate places (the victorious one outside the eastern gate on the right side, the action vase at the northeast), are first contemplated as emptiness. From within emptiness, from the letter *bam* appears a lotus; on the top of the lotus, a letter *a* transforms into a moon disk. On the moon disk, from the letter *bhrum* arise vases imagined to be made of precious gems. In the victorious vase, one imagines the pledge deities of the entire mandala, and in the action vase, the appropriate wrathful deity alone. One then imagines that the pristine awareness deities merge into them. One then makes offerings and recites their mantras, which causes the vases to be filled with the nectar that flows from their bodies. Thereafter, the deities dissolve into light and

melt into the water of the vases. See Tatagatavajra's *Ritual for the Mandala of Glorious Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1511), vol. Zha, ff. 314b3-315b1; and Taranata's *Mandala Ritual of Vajrapani Mahachakra*, Collected Works, vol. 8, ff. 6b4-7a6.

In the Kalachakra tantra, the entire mandala of deities is generated also in the conch-shell (called *mahāvijayakalāśa*, great victorious vase, which is placed on the top of the victorious vase), whereas most of the other tantras teach the generation of the mandala in the victorious vase alone. In the case of the Hevajra tantra, the victorious vase is placed outside the eastern gate of the mandala. If other deities' vases distinct from the victorious one are used, these are placed in their respective directions (outside the mandala), and the action vase is placed in the northeast direction (*CH*, f. 162b2).

27. The insignia vary from one tantra to the next. In the Chakrasamvara tantra, for instance, the insignia is a curved knife, which is generated as the deity Kandaroha.

28. Purification with water, or ritual ablution (*khrus*), is a form of initiation in which the master calls upon the deities to wash the student with the water of their vases while uttering the words: "*Ji Itar blams pa...abhishekata...*" (Taranata's *Mandala Ritual of Vajrapani Mahachakra*, Collected Works, vol. 8, f. 18b3).

29. The inner initiation consists in the student "taking birth" imaginatively as the child of the deity from which he or she is going to receive initiation. The master is imagined in the form of the male and female deities in union. Light radiating from the master's heart draws the student into his mouth. From there, the student descends into the lotus of the consort and there dissolves into emptiness. The mind cognizing emptiness transforms into the seed syllable of the deity, which transforms into a vajra, and that into the simple form of the deity. Light from the heart of the master as deity draws all the enlightened ones of the universe into his body. There they melt into vital essence, which descends through the secret channel of the father, reaching the lotus of the mother. As a result, in that place, initiation is conferred, which is to say, pristine awareness of great bliss is experienced by the student while imagining himself or herself in the form of the deity. Thereafter, the student emerges from the mother's womb and takes a position outside the eastern gate of the mandala. See Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's *The Kalachakra Tantra: Rite of Initiation*, translated by Jeffrey Hopkins (henceforth cited as *KT*), pp. 174-176.

30. In the Kalachakra system, forehead, throat, heart, navel, crown of the head, and secret parts are blessed with the letters of the six buddha families, *om*, *āḥ*, *hūm*, *hoḥ*, *ham*, *ḥṣah*, respectively (Naropa's *Commentary on the Summary of the Kalachakra Initiation*, Toh. 1351, ff. 227b7-228a1).

31. The tooth-stick (still used in India), twelve fingers-widths in length, is made of udumbara wood or another sweet wood. Its top is adorned with a garland of flowers (Naropa's *Commentary on the Summary of the Kalachakra Initiation*, Toh. 1351, f. 227b5). The board shows a diagram with a center and four diagonal sections representing the five buddha families.

32. For a detailed discussion of these steps in the preparation of the student in the context of the Kalachakra initiation, see *KT*, pp. 92-100; 169-203.

33. The pristine awareness lines (*ye shes thig, jñānasūtra*), also known as “dry lines” (*skam thig*) because no color is applied to them, are pitched right on the action lines, but toward the sky, in order to bless them after the mandala that was raised in the sky is merged with the pledge mandala visualized on the site.

34. Kuladatta explains that the threads for the string used to pitch the lines must be either spun by a virgin or bought by a hero (yogin). These, twenty-five in number, are each colored one of the five colors (white, yellow, red, green, and black). The strings are blessed as the essence of the five transcendent ones with *bbrum, am, dzim, kham, and hum*, their five seed syllables. Thus, every transcendent one, distinguished in terms of the five pristine awarenesses, is represented by five different colored threads; the twenty-five are twisted together (first in groups of five, then altogether) to make the one string for pitching the lines. The string is placed in a golden vessel, or one of a different substance, and offered perfume, flowers, and incense, and protected by means of the recitation of the appropriate mantra (*Compendium of Procedures*, Toh. 2531, vol. Ku, ff. 247b3-249a4). On the way of pitching the lines, see Tatagatavajra's *Ritual for the Mandala of Glorious Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1511), vol. Zha, ff. 316b6-321a4.

According to Bhavabhadrā, the sacred colored powders should be prepared with human bones. Dankadāsa comments that the best material for the colors are substances found in charnel grounds; the middling, the powders of five kinds of jewels, sapphire, pearl, blue beryl, crystal, and emerald; another list gives dark blue precious stone (*mu men*), conch-shell, coral, gold, and silver. If one cannot procure these precious items, the least acceptable are colored powders made from rice and other grains dyed with five colors (*CH*, f. 152a2-6). For the coloring procedure, see Tatagatavajra's *Ritual for the Mandala of Glorious Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1511), vol. Zha, f. 321a4.

35. See Kedrupjé's discussion of these points in *IBTS*, pp. 259-301.

36. Entry into the mandala is twofold: entering while blindfolded and entering in the nature of seeing the deities of the mandala. The first consists of entry outside the curtain and entry beyond the curtain. Entry outside the curtain is known as outer magnificence. Entry beyond the curtain is called inner magnificence of the descent of pristine awareness (Longdol Lama's *Sets of Terms Derived from the Awareness-Holder Collection of Secret Mantra*, p. 193).

37. At this point, the student wears the crown of the five buddhas and an upper and lower garment of brocade symbolizing the deity's attire.

38. To generate the awakening mind of all-encompassing yoga (*thams cad rnal 'byor gyi sems bskyed*), one imagines that one's aspiration to awaken manifests as a moon disk at one's heart. On the top of the moon disk, one's understanding of the emptiness of all phenomena manifests in the aspect of a vajra. These steps constitute the generation of the mind of all-encompassing yoga, the union of the two truths. Resolving to maintain these two minds (the aspiration to awaken and the understanding of emptiness), one recites *om sarva yoga chittam utpadayāmi*. At the same time, one visualizes that a replica of the moon and vajra at the heart of the master (as deity) dissolves into one's heart, stabilizing such yoga.

Sworn to secrecy means that the master warns the student not to show the mandala to unqualified persons. The student is given the “water of the pledges” (*dam chu*) to

drink, enjoining him or her to safeguard the pledges; if the pledges are not safeguarded, the water will turn into fire; if safeguarded, it will bring about all attainments (Taranata's *Mandala Ritual of Vajrapani Mahachakra*, Collected Works, vol. 8, ff. 193-195). On this phase of the initiation procedure, see *KT*, pp. 217-235.

39. The student, clasping the vajra that is held in the hand of the "action-vajra" (*las kyī rdo rje*) who has emanated from the heart of the main deity, is led inside the protective circle of the mandala (Taranata's *Mandala Ritual of Vajrapani Mahachakra*, Collected Works, vol. 8, f. 19a6-7).

40. The four oaths (*dam bzbag bzhi*) are proclaimed by the master while the student remains silent. The student is touched on the head with the vajra held in the master's hand and is given consecrated water to sip. The four oaths are one, the pledge concerning the deity, which is to maintain the deity of the initiation as one's favored deity; two, the pledge given in terms of consequences: if one's favored deity is forsaken, heavy consequences will befall one; three, the pledge given in terms of benefits: if one safeguards the pledges, one will gain the desired powers and supreme attainment; and four, the pledge to heed the master's words and put them into practice (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).

41. For an example of this procedure, see Taranata's *Mandala Ritual of Vajrapani Mahachakra*, Collected Works, vol. 8, ff. 19b4-20a4.

42. *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra* (Toh. 443), vol. Ca, f. 153a4-5.

43. On this expression, "the same as that," used for the fourth initiation, see *IK*, pp. 83-84.

44. Likely a reference to Ghantapa's *Synopsis of the Initiation Procedure for Chakrasamvara* (Toh. 1431), vol. Wa, ff. 219b3-222b5.

45. The sense of these three pledges is to recognize, in accordance with one's level of understanding, that one's body, speech, and mind are the three states of awakened body, speech, and mind, and to maintain this recognition in meditation. See Kongtrul's *Buddhist Ethics* (English translation), p. 249. The vajra (*rdo rje*, *vajra*) represents method (*thabs*, *upāya*) or the mind of awakening, and the bell (*dril bu*, *ghaṇṭā*), wisdom (*shes rab*, *prajñā*) that directly knows reality. Not to forsake method and wisdom and to apply them is the nature of the two pledges. The seal refers to the great seal (*phyag rgya chen po*, *mahāmudrā*), which consists in the contemplation of the deity's form (Pema Karpo's *TV*, vol. Ca, ch. 3, f. 80a6-b5).

46. For details on the masters belonging to the Ngog clan (*rngog*), see *BA*, pp. 72-73, 75, 325, and 698; in particular, on the system of Ngog Loden Sherab (rNgog blo Idan shes rab), see *BA*, pp. 1059-1109.

47. These initiations of the five awarenesses are conferred in order to bless the five aggregates of the student as the five buddhas (Akshobhya, etc.) and bless the emotional afflictions as the five pristine awarenesses. For the water initiation, the master sprinkles and pours water from the vase onto the crown of the head of the student. For the diadem initiation, he places the diadem of the five buddhas on the student's head. For the vajra initiation, he places a vajra in the student's right hand which is then rotated to finally

touch the heart. For the bell initiation, he places the bell in the left hand, whereupon the student sounds it and then holds it at the hip. For the name initiation, the name of the family where the flower fell is given (Dharmashri's *VOWS*, f. 241b3-6).

48. In another interpretation, these are called "awareness (*vidya*) initiations" because they are conferred by Lochana and the other awareness females (Lvabapa's *Illuminating Lamp for the Precious Mandala Ritual of Chakrasamvara*, Toh. 1444, vol. Wa, f. 265b5).

49. This is similar to the method of initiation as "sovereign over the domain of the doctrine in the three worlds," which the buddhas confer on bodhisattvas who have attained the tenth stage. See *IBTS*, pp. 315-316.

50. Ultimate mantra (*don dam pa'i sngags*) refers to the knowledge that everything is the nature of essential reality (*MH*, f. 61b4).

51. The supernormal cognition of the divine eye (*lha'i mig gi mngon shes*), one of the five, or six, supernormal cognitive powers. See Chapter 4, n. 28.

52. Four demonic forces (*bdud bzhi*): the demon of the aggregates (*phung po'i bdud*); the demon of emotional afflictions (*nyon mongs pa'i bdud*); the demon of the lord of death (*'chi bdag gi bdud*); and the demon of the god-child (*lha'i bu'i bdud*). The first demon includes the five aggregates, forms, and so on. The second demon includes all emotional afflictions throughout the three realms. The third refers to the impermanent, perishable, and changeable nature of the aggregates and emotional afflictions. The last demon refers to the divine demon of the desire realm, lord of the realm known as Mastery over Others' Magical Creations, whose power draws beings of the desire realm away from the practice of virtue and the path of non-attachment.

From the particular perspective of tantra, the obscuration related to the vital essence (*thig le*) of the body is the demon of the aggregates; the obscuration of the vital essence of speech, the demon of emotional afflictions; the obscuration of the vital essence of mind, the demon of the lord of death; and the obscuration of the vital essence related to the habitual tendency for emission of semen (orgasm), the demon of the god-child. These demons have the nature of the four states, waking, dream, sleep, and orgasm, respectively. Inasmuch as they are impurities of one's mind, these demons are not truly existent objects to be forsaken but are solely deceptive manifestations of mind (Taranata's *CSI*, ff. 5b6-6b5).

53. Childhood (*byis pa*) carries three different meanings: one, the state of an ordinary individual (*so so skye bo*) who has not understood emptiness directly; two, that of a stupid person (*blun po*); and three, that of a young child (*na tshod byis pa*). Here, it signifies primarily a person who is stupid in the sense of not being fit to receive the higher initiations, or a person who is like a child in that his mind has not yet been ripened by the initiation. By receiving the seven initiations in the pattern of childhood (*byis pa luar 'jug pa'i dbang*), the individual becomes ripened in that he or she acquires the good fortune of being able to receive the higher initiations. The seven are thus initiations associated with a boy or a girl less than fifteen years of age (Taranata's *Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation*, ff. 14a5-15b2.)

Kedrup Norzang states that the seven initiations in the pattern of childhood are known as the "seven water initiations" (*chu'i dbang bdum*) since they all include water

ritual but are not called “vase initiation” (*bum dbang*) (*Detailed Elucidation*, f. 119b6). The same opinion is expressed by Panchen Lozang Chögyen in his *Presentation of the Doctrine in General and the Four Tantra Sets*, p. 34.

54. This verse is found in the *Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation* (Toh. 361), vol. Ka, f. 14a7.

55. *Ibid.*, f. 14b1.

56. *Ibid.*, f. 14b1-3. Reading *yul* instead of *lus* in the seventh line.

57. The seven initiations correspond to the four indestructible states, or vajras, of body, speech, mind, and pristine awareness. The water and the diadem initiations cleanse the impurities of the body and establish the potency for the vajra body. The silk ribbons and vajra and bell initiations cleanse the impurities of speech and establish the potency for vajra speech. The conduct and name initiations cleanse the impurities of the mind and establish the potency for vajra mind. The permission initiation cleanses the obscurations to pristine awareness, conceptions related to desire, and establishes the potency for pristine awareness.

The water initiation purifies the elements of space, wind, fire, water, and earth. As a result, during the path, pristine awareness manifests from the dissolution of the mandalas or winds in the central channel, and at the time of the result, the five pristine awarenesses associated with wisdom are attained. The potencies for the states of the five consorts, Vajradhatvishvari and the others, are established.

The diadem initiation purifies the five aggregates. As a result, during the path, pristine awareness manifests from the dissolution of the mandalas or winds of the five aggregates in the central channel, and at the time of the result, the five pristine awarenesses associated with method are attained and the five buddhas are actualized.

The silk ribbons initiation purifies the ten karmic winds (five root and five branch). As a result, during the path, pristine awarenesses associated with the ten perfections and the ten signs are perfected, and the ten *shaktis* (*nus ma*, *śakti*) are actualized.

In the vajra and bell initiation, the vajra purifies the solar channel, *rasana*, and the bell purifies the lunar channel, *lalana*. The lunar and solar include the life wind connected with the lunar element and the downward-voiding wind connected with the solar element. Thus, the initiation empowers the practitioner to bind these winds in the single central channel (thus the expression “sun and moon in one”). To signify this, during the initiations, vajra and bell are held in the manner of embrace. Because the winds that flow in the central, right, and left channels, and so on, constitute the basis for speech, this initiation is associated with speech. The vajra represents immutable great bliss, the reality dimension (*dharmakāya*), which is fulfillment of one’s own objectives. The bell represents awakened speech which, being unceasingly present, is invincible; it is the enjoyment dimension (*sambhogakāya*), the basis for the fulfillment of others’ objectives (Taranata’s *CSI*, ff. 16b4-17b2).

Naropa explains that the initiation of the indestructible conduct consists in the purification of the eye and other sense powers and their objects, visual forms, and so on. This involves blocking the ordinary sense powers and their objects while the divine perception and divine sense powers such as the eye engage the immaterial image of emptiness. Since this initiation leads to the attainment of the great seal, it is the initiation of inde-

structible conduct (*Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation*, Toh. 1351, f. 237b5-6).

The conduct initiation, as explained by Taranata, causes the pristine awareness of the non-emission of vital essence to manifest, produces the qualities of clairvoyance, and establishes the potency for the attainment of the state of the twelve bodhisattvas, male and female in union. Through the purity of the senses and their objects, the vajra conduct actualizes the body of the empty image of Kalachakra, and through the power of this image, the vital essence is not emitted (*pho med*), thus the name “pure conduct of non-emission of the vital essence” (*CSI*, f. 17b3-4).

Naropa explains that the initiation of the name (the name ending with “vajra”) is conferred in order to unify the various castes. Consequently, this initiation leads to the perfection of the four immeasurable thoughts of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity, which unceasingly purify attachment, aversion, and so forth (*Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation*, Toh. 1351, f. 237b6-7).

Taranata notes that the elements purified here are the six action faculties and their six activities. The initiation actualizes the potencies for the pristine awarenesses related to the five immeasurable thoughts; for the performance of various activation rituals to influence others; and for the attainment of the state of the ten wrathful deities, males and females in union. The fifth immeasurable thought refers to immeasurable sameness (*mnyam pa nyid tshad med*) (*CSIf*, 17b4-5). To symbolize this, in the actual procedure of the initiation, bracelets and anklets or garlands are placed on the wrists and legs (Longdol Lama’s *History of the Kalachakra Tantra and Its Various Sets of Terms*, p. 143).

Naropa states that the permission initiation authorizes the student to teach, in its aspects of the relative and ultimate truths, the supreme indestructible way to countless beings according to their individual inclinations and abilities. Such an initiation leads to the perfection of the awakened state itself (*Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation*, Toh. 1351, ff. 237b7-238a1).

The permission initiation purifies the aggregates and elements and actualizes the potencies for the pristine awareness of the union of emptiness and bliss; for the perfect promulgation of the doctrine; and for the actualization of the state of Vajrasattva and Prajnaparamita (*CSI*, f. 17b6-7).

For the actual procedure of these initiations, see Naropa’s *Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation*, Toh. 1351, ff. 234b3-236a1; and *KT*, pp. 109-125, 263-353.

58. The original tantra is not extant. This verse is cited in Vajragarbha’s *Commentary Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra* (Toh. 1180), vol. Ka, f. 39b2-4.

59. Like a child being washed at birth by its mother, the student, positioned in the northern direction of the mandala, in the aspect of the vajra body, facing the white face (associated with the body) of the main deity, Kalachakra, is initiated by the five consorts of the five transcendent ones through the cleansing with water. Like a child having its hair knotted on the top of its head as a diadem, the student (positioned as before) is initiated by the five transcendent ones who tie the diadem to his head. Like a child having its ears pierced, and so forth, the student, positioned in the southern direction, in the aspect of vajra speech, facing the red face of Kalachakra (associated with speech), is initiated with the silk ribbons by the ten *shaktis*. Like a child talking and laughing, the

student, positioned in the south as before, is initiated by Kalachakra and his consort with the vajra and bell. Like a child enjoying sensory objects, the student, positioned in the east, facing the blue face of Kalachakra (associated with mind), in the aspect of the vajra mind, is initiated into the vajra conduct by the male and female bodhisattvas. Like a child being named, the student, positioned in the east as before, is conferred the name initiation by the male and female wrathful deities. Like a child being taught to read and write, the student, positioned in the west, facing the yellow face of Kalachakra (associated with pristine awareness), in the aspect of indestructible pristine awareness, is given permission to teach the doctrine by the father (Vajrasattva in union with consort).

60. Dharmashri states that the mandala of the channels of the body, the essential principle of oneself, serves as the general mandala for all three higher initiations. In particular, the secret initiation is conferred in the mandala of the *bhaga* of letters, the essential principle of mantra. The pristine awareness through wisdom is conferred in the mandala of relative bodhichitta (vital essence), the essential principle of the deity. The fourth, or word initiation, is conferred in the mandala of pristine awareness and wind, which is the essence of ultimate bodhichitta, the essential principle of pristine awareness (VOWS, f. 234b1-3).

61. The twelve examples of illusion: a magical creation (*sgyu ma*); a mirage (*smig rgyu*); the city of *gandharvas* (*dri za'i grong khyer*); Shakra's bow (*brgya byin gzhu*), i.e., a rainbow (*ja' tshon*); an image reflected in a mirror (*me long gi gzugs brnyan*); the moon reflected on water (*chu zla*); an echo (*sgra brnyan*); a dream (*rmi lam*); an optical illusion (*mig yor*); a cloud (*sprin*); lightning (*glog*); and a bubble on water (*chu yi chu bur*) (Aryadeva's *Stages of Self-Blessing*, Toh. 1805, f. 113a2-3).

62. According to Naropa, the pristine awareness of bliss experienced during the third initiation is not the actual one but serves as an example. Maitripa, on the other hand, asserts that it is actual pristine awareness but needs to be pointed out through words during the fourth initiation in order to elicit direct knowing. Marpa maintains that these views are essentially identical since Maitripa's assertion takes into consideration students' different capacities: if a student is able to bind vital essence, then the pristine awareness of bliss becomes actual; if he is unable, it is simply an example (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).

63. See Chapter 7, nn. 5 and 10.

64. The consort of the yogin is referred to as an "action seal" (*las kyi phyag rgya, karmamudrā*). The consort is known as seal because she is sealed by the indivisible vajra of pristine awareness, or because by relying on a consort belonging to one of the five families, the yogin's mind is sealed by the vajra of innate bliss undivided by subject-object duality (CH, ff. 75b7-78a3).

The *Hevajra Tantra* speaks of five types of consorts related to the five families. A consort of the vajra family of Akshobhya is a washer woman (*gyung mo*); one of the lotus family of Amitabha, a dancer (*gar ma*); one of the action family of Amoghasiddhi, a dyer (*tshos mkhan ma*); one of the transcendent family of Vairochana, a brahmin girl (*bram ze mo*); and one of the jewel family of Ratnasambhava, an outcaste girl (*gdol pa ma*) (CH, f. 78b2-b4). The best among the five consorts is one of the vajra family; she has an ex-

tremely beautiful face, is good natured, without jealousy and full of compassion, and is youthful. She is initiated by the yogin himself. As to her body size, she is neither too tall nor too short. Irrespective of the family the yogin belongs to, this consort is the best. If a yogin does not find such a consort, he must rely on a consort who belongs to his own family. For example, if he is of the lotus family, he should rely on a consort of the lotus family. The consort's complexion clearly indicates the family she belongs to. The color of the Vairochana family is white; therefore, a consort of that family would be a qualified brahmin girl or another female of white complexion. When a consort of his own family is not found, the yogin may resort to one of another family or a non-human one, such as a goddess or celestial musician (*gandharva*) (*CH*, ff. 93b2-94a3).

Consorts are of three types, mantra-born (*sngags skyes*), field-born (*zhing skyes*), and family-born (*rigs skyes*). Mantra-born are qualified consorts having the same level of realization as the yogin, accomplished through the power of mantra practice. Field-born are consorts of the sky-farer type, born in the thirty-two power places. Family-born are consorts who exhibit the insignia, colors, and mudras of the five families (*CPR*, f. 101b3-4).

The insignia of a nine-pronged vajra at the base of the ring finger of the left hand and a dark complexion indicate affiliation with the Akshobhya family; a wheel and white complexion indicate affiliation with the Vairochana family; a lotus and a reddish white complexion, with the Amitabha family; a jewel and a yellow complexion, with the Ratnasambhava family; and a sword and bluish complexion, with the Amoghasiddhi family. A yellowish white complexion indicates affiliation with the Vajrasattva family (*CH*, ff. 315a2-317b2).

In an alternative classification, consorts are of four types: innate, field-born, mantra-born, and action-born sky-farers. The innate, an exalted being who resides in the pure land of Unsurpassed (Akaniyīṭha), is the enjoyment dimension of awakening manifesting in the form of a goddess. The field-born is a practitioner endowed with unsurpassable contemplation and manifests as a yogini in the thirty-two power places. Mantra-born is a practitioner who is trained in the mantric path and is born in a central land, and so forth, as a sky-farer. Action-born is a woman who in a previous existence has attained the path through familiarization with the mantra way (*CH*, ff. 232a6-233a2).

The types of consort to avoid and those to rely on are specified in Naropa's *Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation* (Toh. 1351), ff. 238a4-239a4.

65. Descendant joys (*yas babs kyi dga' ba*) and ascendant joys (*mas brtan gyi -*): the joys that occur as the vital essence descends from the top of the head, and the joys that occur as the vital essence is held (not emitted as semen) and drawn up from the genitals to the top of the head.

66. The pristine awareness consort (*ye shes kyi phyag rgya, jñānamudrā*) is an imaginary consort (*gid kyi rig ma*) who does not exist in reality but is conceptually represented. To unite means to meditate on the male and female deities in union (*CPR*, f. 101b5-6).

67. In both the secret initiation and the pristine awareness through wisdom initiation, the eyes of the consort (who must be between twelve and twenty-five years of age) and that of the student are covered in order to avoid possible shame, doubts, and other kinds of incongruous thoughts. In addition, the white and red substances derived from the master's union with the consort are not to be seen with the eyes or touched with the hands, but placed directly into the mouth of the student in order to generate bliss (*CH*, ff. 155b4-156a1).

68. The great seal possessing seven features (*yan lag bdun ldan gyi phyag rgya chen po*), more often expressed as the state of Vajradhara possessing the seven features of union (*kha sbyor yan lag bdun ldan rdo rje 'chang*). Devachandra's *Illumination of Pristine Awareness-Wisdom* lists them in the following way: total enjoyment (*longs spyod rdzogs*); union (*kha sbyor*); great bliss (*bde ba chen po*); devoid of intrinsic nature (*rang bzhin med pa*); filled with compassion (*snying rje nges gang*); an unending stream (*rgyun mi 'chad pa*); and an unobstructed presence (*'gog pa med pa*).

Devachandra states that the seven features represent pristine awareness, the indivisibility of emptiness and compassion. Such pristine awareness is, one, total enjoyment or experience in that it manifests as the totality of things that arise through interdependence; two, a union in that it is the perfect inseparability of emptiness and compassion; three, great bliss as it is free from all concepts regarding existing and not existing; four, devoid of intrinsic nature in being unborn; five, filled with compassion as it is of the nature of compassion (i.e., immutable bliss); six, an unending stream as its stream is eternal; and seven, an unobstructed presence as it is free from obstacles (*Illumination of Pristine Awareness-Wisdom*, Toh. 2226, vol. Wi, f. 83a3-b1).

Kongtrul presents the seven from another perspective: one, the total enjoyment of possessing thirty-two major and eighty minor marks of an awakened one; two, the union with the consort who is a manifestation of one's pristine awareness; three, the great bliss of abiding as the essence of great bliss; four, devoid of intrinsic nature in abiding as the essence of emptiness without mental fabrications; five, filled with compassion in being permeated always by non-objectifying compassion for all beings; six, an unending stream in being an eternal unfolding of the dimensions of awakening and pristine awareness; and seven, an unobstructed presence—freedom from interruptions to mind's absorption in cessation without any form and to the form dimension of awakening (*IOK*, vol. III, p. 658).

69. See Chapter 10, n. 23.

70. Generally speaking, the seven Kalachakra initiations in the pattern of childhood serve as direct ripening factors for the phase of generation and as indirect ripening factors for the phase of completion. The four higher initiations serve as direct ripening factors for the phase of completion and indirect ripening factors for the four dimensions of awakening (*kāya*). In reality, the pristine awareness of the fourth initiation is the phase of completion itself and the four dimensions of awakening.

The higher initiations (*dbang gong mā*) in the Kalachakra system are the four—vase, secret, pristine awareness through wisdom, and the fourth initiation. The first three initiations are called mundane (*'jig rten pa*), and the fourth, supramundane (*'jig rten las 'das pa*).

The vase initiation consists in the experience of the pristine awareness of bliss that arises as the vital essence shifts (*'pho ba*) and descends from the crown of the head to the forehead through the passion aroused by touching the breast of a wisdom woman (*shes rab mā*). The bliss experienced has the nature of the initial fourfold joy (*dga' ba, ānanda*) of body, speech, mind, and pristine awareness. The term “vase” indicates the breast of the consort which by touching stimulates bliss; hence, the name “vase initiation.” This pristine awareness of bliss is symbolized by a child (*byis pa*) to indicate that it is new, slight, and unsteady.

The secret initiation consists in the experience of the pristine awareness of bliss that arises as the vital essence shifts and descends from the forehead to the throat and then to the heart as a result of tasting the bodhichitta from the master and consort in union and seeing the fully blossomed lotus of the consort. The supreme joy (*paramānanda*) experienced is a bliss that lasts longer than that experienced in the vase initiation and is of four kinds, as is the above joy. This bliss is symbolized by a “youthful person” (*lang tsho 'am dar ma*) to indicate that although it is more expanded than the previous, it is still unripened.

In the third initiation, the master offers the consort to the student, who holds her hands and enters into union with her. This, initially, causes the vital essence to shift from the heart and descend to the base of the genital area where it produces separation from joy (*dga' bral*); then causes the vital essence to move from the base of the genital area to the penis where it gives rise to innate joy (*lhan skyes kyi dga' ba, sahajānanda*), also distinguished as four kinds. The initiation here consists in the experience of the pristine awareness of bliss that arises as the vital essence flows to the tip of the penis. This bliss is symbolized by an elderly person (*rgan pa*) to indicate that although it is ripened and lasts longer than in the previous two initiations, and hence special, in the end it does not become stable.

All the three types of bliss experienced in the first three initiations are unstable and mutable, unlike the one of the fourth which is stable and immutable. The fourth initiation consists in an immutable blissful pristine awareness born from the passion directed at the great seal of the empty form which binds the vital essence and reverses its course upward and thus produces an unfluctuating bliss. This is not the bliss born from relying on an action seal or imaginary seal, or from conceptual meditation. Such bliss is symbolized by the “progenitor of beings” (*skye dgu'i bdag po*), who is the source of countless family lineages in the world. According to the view of Hindu fundamentalists, this progenitor is Brahma or another god, the creator of all beings and the world, to whom all, in the end, return. Likewise, the immutable bliss characterized by the nature of reality, which is the ground of all cyclic life and perfect peace, is the progenitor, that is, the buddha. Being characterized by the knowledge of reality, it is the source of all buddhas.

In the Kalachakra, the water initiation and the others are called the seven initiations in the pattern of childhood. They are not called vajra master initiations or vase initiation; here, the vase initiation is, in all respects, a higher initiation.

Thus, the initiations are of two types: the seven in the pattern of childhood and the higher four. In consideration of the type of student being initiated, they are classified as master and student initiations. In consideration of the level of pristine awareness involved, they are classified as mundane and supramundane. Moreover, the higher initiations are twofold. The first set of four higher initiations is conferred on students in order to cause them to enter the way of tantra so that they may fully comprehend the path to be followed and to authorize them to listen to the tantras. The second set serves the purposes of conferring the status of great vajra master and authorizing students to give teachings.

The second set, the master's initiation, has two subdivisions: four initiations for the sovereign vajra master and four for the great sovereign vajra master. In the case of any of the three types of higher initiations (those of the student, the sovereign vajra master, and the great sovereign vajra master), if the person who is being initiated has not attained the

level of the branch of contemplation of the sixfold yogas, the first three initiations are mundane and the fourth, supramundane. If he has attained that level, all four are supramundane. In addition, such a person does not need the student initiations or those of the sovereign vajra master but only those of the great sovereign vajra master. The rituals for all three sets of the four higher initiations, except for differences in the length of its components, are, for the most part, similar. Source: Taranata's *CSI*, ff. 20a1-25a7.

There are, however, many differing assertions concerning classification, order of conferral, and purpose of the Kalachakra's higher initiations; see, for instance, Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 115a2-132b1; and Longdol Lama's *Kalachakra Tantra's Sets of Terms According to Tsongkapa's Treatises on the Subject*, pp. 142-144.

71. Taranata classifies the Kalachakra initiations in several different ways. In a threefold classification, one set comprises the seven initiations in the pattern of childhood; one set, the four high initiations; and one set, the initiations of the master which confer the status of a vajra master.

In a twofold classification, one set comprises the student initiations (seven in the pattern of childhood and the four higher initiations, eleven in total) and the second set, the master's initiations (of the sovereign vajra master and the great sovereign vajra master). The higher are each divided into vase, secret, pristine awareness through wisdom, and word initiation, for a total of twelve. Another twofold classification divides initiations into mundane (all initiations with the exception of the fourth) and transmundane (the actual fourth initiation).

In a threefold classification, one set comprises the initiations of the student; one set, those of the sovereign master; and one set, the initiations of the great sovereign master. The initiations are also considered from the perspective of cause, path, and result. Causal initiations are those taken by oneself or conferred by the master, which ripen, purify, and contribute to the accumulation of merit but cannot bring about advancement in terms of levels of realization. Path initiations are those that, as their direct result, allow one to advance to higher levels of realization, such as stability in the phase of generation, the attainment of the state of awareness-holder, gaining of powers, success in the six-branched yoga, attainment of an exalted state, and so on. The resultant initiation is one conferred by the enjoyment dimensions of enlightened beings just as one is about to fully awaken. Source: Taranata's *Explanation of the Mandala Rite of Kalachakra*, Collected Works, vol. 3, ff. 10b6-11b1. See also Taranata's *Elucidation of the Indestructible Way*, Collected Works, vol. 8, f. 17b2-4.

72. In the *Indestructible Garland* (Toh. 445, f. 212b4), the first three initiations (vase, secret, and pristine awareness) are considered as the cause, and the latter one, the word initiation, as the result. The *Essence of the Great Seal* (Toh. 420) makes this same assertion at f. 67a4-6.

73. Self-blessing (*rang byin rlabs, svādiṣṭhāna*): an aspect of the phase of completion that aims at direct experience of the pristine awareness of the four joys, the innate joy in particular, through practices based exclusively on one's body as opposed to the mandala circle (*dkyil 'khor 'khor lo*) aspect of the phase of completion, which relies on another's body (that of the consort) (*MH*, f. 79a5-6). In a threefold system, the phase of completion comprises relative self-blessing, ultimate luminous clarity of the great seal, and their

inseparability or union. Here, self-blessing includes all aspects of the inner fire and illusory body. See Chapter 13, section entitled “Causal Phase of Completion.”

74. Concerning the example (*dpe*) and actual (*don*) pristine awareness or luminous clarity (*'od gsal*), see above, n. 62.

75. Three contemplations: initial union, the supremely triumphant mandala, and supremely triumphant act. See Chapter 5, n. 29.

76. Illusory body (*sgyu lus*) consists in the actual arising of the body of the deity (and its mandala) from the wind-mind of luminous clarity through the bliss of melted vital essence brought about by the winds merging with the indestructible vital essence at the heart. The illusory body is of several types; at this stage, it is impure (*ma dag pa*) as it has not yet been purified of emotional afflictions. For an extensive discussion, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 136-159. The pure illusory body is attained as soon as one arises from the state of absorption in the actual luminous clarity in which the emotional afflictions have been removed. The illusory body is so called because it is a body, or form of a deity, composed only of the most subtle wind and mind and is exemplified by the twelve examples of illusion (Akya Yongdzin's *Presentation of the Paths and Stages of the Glorious Guhyasamaja*, p. 68).

77. Vajra recitation (*rdo rje'i bzlas pa, vajrajāpa*): a name for breathing practice associated with syllables; also a stage corresponding to speech-isolation (*ngag dben*) in the five-stage format of the phase of completion set forth in the Guhyasamaja tantra and other tantras. Although there are many types of vajra recitation, all serve similar functions: loosening the coarser knots of the channel-wheels; purifying the channels; bringing the winds into the central channel; and binding them to the vital essence therein. For an extensive discussion, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 136-159.

78. Union (*zung 'jug*) is of two types: union with training and union beyond training (*mi slob pa'i zung 'jug*). At this point, one trains in order to attain union beyond training, i.e., union of the pure illusory body and actual luminous clarity. It is characterized as a great union exemplifying highest freedom and realization. Freedom refers to the knowledge that all obscurations and their habitual tendencies have been exhausted. Realization refers to the nonconceptual understanding of all phenomena of cyclic existence and perfect peace, such as the ground, path, and result, as images in a divination mirror (*IOK*, vol. III, p. 657). Luminous clarity that has merged with essential reality means that the luminous clarity is totally united with essential reality in being a direct realization of that.

79. Dharmashri presents a summation of the spheres of purification of the four initiations: Since the aggregates of the body and other appearances of the waking state are coarse phenomena, from among the vital essences of the three doors of existence (*sgo gsum*), the vase initiation purifies obscurations of the body's vital essence and purifies the waking state. Of the four demons, this initiation purifies the demon of the aggregates. Since what manifests in the dream state is subtle, and dream manifests due to vital essence being stirred by wind, or since dream is related to conceptions that stimulate talking, the secret initiation purifies the vital essence of speech and the dream state, as well as purifying the demon of emotional afflictions. Since deep sleep is a state that occurs when the coarse sixfold collection of consciousnesses has stopped, the pristine

awareness through wisdom initiation purifies the vital essence of mind and the state of deep sleep, as well as purifying the demon of death. Since the state of sexual union is one of craving for the bliss of dispersion, the fourth initiation purifies the obscuration related to the emission of vital essence which is the very subtle obscuration to knowledge, as well as purifying the demon of the god-child.

By purifying the obscurations of the emotional afflictions, the enjoyment dimension is achieved; by purifying karmic obscurations, the manifest dimension is achieved; and by purifying the obscurations related to pristine awareness, the reality dimension of awakening is achieved. The vase initiation purifies karmic obscurations; the secret initiation purifies emotional afflictions; the pristine awareness initiation purifies coarser obscurations to knowledge; and the fourth initiation purifies the subtle obscuration of the habitual tendency for emission. It can also be said that the first three initiations purify the three planes of existence, respectively; the fourth purifies them all equally. To purify equally means that since the body, speech, and mind of cyclic existence, as well as pleasure, suffering, and indifference, all arise from the three qualities of white essence, red essence, and wind, this initiation purifies the habitual tendency for emission of vital essence together with the mind associated equally with the white, red, and wind aspects.

The vase initiation authorizes one to listen, teach, and practice the outer and inner aspects of the phase of generation, along with the associated rituals. It brings about the experience of the appearance and emptiness of objects manifesting as a union. The secret initiation authorizes one to cultivate self-blessing, inner heat, and illusory body, and brings about the experience of mind's clarity and emptiness manifesting as a union. The pristine awareness initiation authorizes one to cultivate the example pristine awareness by reliance on action and imaginary consorts and brings about the experience of the bliss and emptiness of body through the bliss of the melted vital essence. The fourth initiation authorizes one to cultivate the actual pristine awareness of the great seal and great perfection and brings about the direct experience of supreme immutable bliss, the ultimate luminous clarity which is the natural condition of all things, as the nature of one's own pure and total presence. By establishing potencies which are then developed through the two phases, these initiations enable one to attain, through whatever provisional powers, the ultimate power of the four dimensions of awakening in the nature of the four indestructible states of awakened body, speech, mind, and pristine awareness (VOWS, ff. 244a5-245b1).

80. See *KT*, pp. 109-117.

81. See *CH*, ff. 114a2-119b3. Kongtrul explains that an actual tantric feast gathering (*tshogs kyi 'khor lo, ganacakra*) (lit. wheel of gathering) comprises a group of yogins and yoginis equal in number to the male and female figures found in the mandala of the tantric deity being practiced. The tantric feast is performed on different occasions, such as the eighth and tenth days of the waxing moon, dates on which offerings have a special significance. Yogins and yoginis perform the feast ritual at night at a suitable isolated place, such as the meeting place of sky-farers, the outskirts of a town, in a temple, cemetery, empty cave, at the foot of a tree, or edge of a forest. Depending on its type and purpose, the ritual feast may last a night, a month, or three years and three fortnights. The different purposes include to make offerings to worldly and transworldly sky-farers, to perform an initiation ritual, and to allow a friendly gathering of tantric practitioners.

The ritual feast is a means of enhancing the realization that has been gained in the personal practice of the yogin or yogini.

Once the place has been chosen (some tantras specify that the hidden ritual feast house be three stories high, below the ground, or one half above the ground, etc.), the mandala is drawn, and the yogins and yoginis take their places on corpses, tiger skins, or other kinds of seats, surrounding the central figure, the yogin or yogini who is leader of the feast. The offerings, the five nectars and the five meats, alcohol, and so forth, are consecrated according to the appropriate ritual and then enjoyed by the congregation as an "inner fire offering" to the deities of the body mandala of each participant. The yogins and yoginis enjoy food and drink while imagining them to pervade all their psychophysical constituents and thereby generating bliss. While in the state of meditative absorption, the yogin and yogini, having entered into union, experience the four joys while retaining the vital essence, and remain absorbed in the state of coemergent bliss and emptiness. Arising from the absorption, they see all appearances as illusions, and whatever appears manifests as the form of the deity. Then the yogins and yoginis continue to enjoy the feast while sharpening their senses with reciprocal offerings, dances, music, songs, symbolic language, and mudras.

Celebrations of heroes (*dpa' bo ston mo*) are gatherings of mostly yogins; and celebrations of heroines (*dpa' mo'i ston mo*), gatherings of mostly yoginis. A ritual feast in which one relies on an imaginary consort and only imaginatively creates the presence of the number of female and male figures of the mandala is an imitation of a tantric feast gathering and is the style of the ritual feasts of present-day mantra practitioners (*IOK*, vol. III, pp. 552-560). For a discussion of the term *ganachakra*, see Guenther's *Creative Vision*, pp. 120-121.

82. See Kongtrul's *Buddhist Ethics* (English translation), pp. 256-266.

83. See *ibid.*, pp. 249-256.

84. See *ibid.*, pp. 271-272.

85. See *ibid.*, pp. 242-246, 273.

86. See *ibid.*, pp. 269-270.

87. See *ibid.*, pp. 268-271.

88. See *ibid.*, pp. 256-274.

### CHAPTER 13: CONTEMPLATION

1. In the phase of generation, one trains in yoga that corresponds to the process of the arising and destruction of existence, the yoga of the vital essence (*thig lé'i rnal 'byor*) and the subtle yoga (*phra ba'i rnal 'rbyor*). In the Kalachakra system, these two last yogas correspond to the yoga that causes the descent of the vital essences and the yoga that causes their ascent. These are practiced by relying on an action or imaginary consort. The yogin causes the vital essence to descend and consequently experiences the four joys; and causes the vital essence to ascend and consequently experiences the four joys in the reverse order, thus entering contemplation in the state of bliss. For an extensive discussion of this phase and its correspondence to the process of birth, death, and the

intermediate state, see Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation*, ff. 135b2-201b7; and Dharmashri's *VOWS*, ff. 223b2-228a1.

2. Eight branches of yoga (*rnal 'byor yan lag brgyad*): the yoga of mantra (recitation); the food offering (*tor ma, bali*) (to eliminate obstacles); the yoga of partaking of food and drink (to create merit); the yoga of passion practiced with an action consort; the yoga of conduct between formal sessions of meditation (to purify one's behavior); the yoga of sleep (to transform sleep into virtue); the yoga of waking up at dawn; and the yoga of washing for the purpose of purification (*IOK*, vol. III, p. 199).

3. See Chapter 5, n. 29.

4. Kongtrul specifies that the four branches (*yan lag bzhi*) are primarily taught in the Guhyasamaja tantra. Followers of Nagarjuna's system of Guhyasamaja consider the branch of familiarization (*bsnyen pa*) to be the meditation pertaining to the phase of generation up to and including the first factor for actual awakening (the visualization of the lotus and the moon and sun disks). It is known as "familiarization" because the pristine awareness one cultivates at this stage effects familiarization of emptiness. Near attainment (*nyer sgrub*) is everything from that point up to the completion of the mandala of the body. It is known as "near attainment" because there is the attainment of the enjoyment dimension (*sambhogakāya*) of mantra, which is nearly the enjoyment dimension of pristine awareness, and because there is attainment of the sense fields of the deity. Then, everything up to the point of exhibiting passion is the branch of attainment (*sgrub pa*). It is "attainment" because there is attainment of the union of one's body, speech, and mind with the three indestructible states of the buddhas. Great attainment (*sgrub pa chen po*) is everything from the presentation of offerings up to the dissolution of the entire mandala. It is "great attainment" because it brings about others' benefit in great measure, activates the various effects of the mantra of the respective deity, establishes the three beings (*ting nge 'dzin sems dpā', ye shes sems dpā', dam tshig sems dpā'*), and brings about the crowning of oneself (as the deity) with the lord of the family. See *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 177-179. For the four branches, familiarization, and so on, according to the *Kalachakra Tantra*, see Kedrup Norzang's *Detailed Elucidation*, f. 139a2-5.

The four yogas are yoga (*rnal 'byor*), subsequent yoga (*rjes su rnal 'byor*), intense yoga (*shin tu rnal 'byor*) and great yoga (*rnal 'byor chen po*). These are taught in the *Yamari* tantras, the *Buddhasamayoga*, *Secret Moon Vital Essence Tantra*, the *Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra*, and the *Vajra Garland*. For a discussion of these, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 179-180.

5. A beginner (*las dang po pa*) is one who, when cultivating all of the procedures of the phase of generation as set forth in the sadhana being practiced, is unable to have, even for a brief while, a clear vision of the entire gross form of the mandala.

The practitioner who has experienced a slight descent of pristine awareness (*ye shes cung zad 'bab pa*) is one who, when visualizing the divine palace and the gross forms of the deities residing in it, has a clear and stable vision of the limbs, and so forth, of the deities all at once, but is unable to have the same clarity when visualizing the tiny deities in the sense powers of the gross deities.

The practitioner who has gained a minimal degree of mastery with respect to pristine awareness (*ye shes la cung zad dbang thob pa*) is able to have a clear and stable vision

all at once not only of the gross deities but also of the limbs, and so forth, of the tiny deities.

The practitioner who has achieved total mastery with respect to pristine awareness (*ye shes la yang dag par dbang thob pa*) is one who has perfected the phase of generation and reached the phase of completion (Kalka Ngawang Palden's *Presentation of the Stages and Paths of the Four Sets of Tantras: Illumination of the Tantric Scriptures*, pp. 111-112).

6. See *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 167-168.

7. For a detailed discussion of these points, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 159-275.

8. *Great [Heruka] Galpo Tantra (He ru ka gal po che'i rgyud)*, vol. 25, nos. 289-292, of *rNying ma rgyud 'bum (Collected Tantras of the Ancient Tradition)* (hereafter cited as *NGB*).

The *Heruka Galpo* is an ancient translation tantra of the cycle of Vishuddha (Yang Dag), awakened mind. The esoteric instructions of the path and fruit system of the Sakyapa correspond to the exposition of the phase of completion found in the *Heruka Galpo Tantra*, which sets forth the structure of the four initiations, four obscurations, four paths, and so on. This indicates that the path and fruit system comprises esoteric instructions connected with that tantra. See *NSH*, p. 923. This is perhaps the reason for Kongtrul including the explanation of this ancient tantra in the context of the new tradition.

9. See Chapter 8, section entitled "The Uncommon Explanation: The Special Feature in Highest Yoga Tantra."

10. See Chapter 12, n. 76.

11. The phase of completion is characterized by innateness, nonconceptuality, and totality; all three are present equally in the ground, path, and result. In terms of the ground, innateness is twofold: the innate bliss arising from the melting of the vital essence and the innate nature (*rang bzhin lhan skyes*). This last is the single binding nature of all phenomena, the beginningless and endless Vajrasattva, possessed of the distinctive quality of being the union of emptiness and compassion. For a complete presentation, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 159-275.

12. Union (*zung 'jug*) refers to the inseparability of the two truths: the relative truth represented by self-blessing, which causes the body to manifest as the illusory body of the deity, and the ultimate truth represented by the mind entering its natural state through the practice of luminous clarity. Such union cannot be divided by concepts into relative and ultimate: being of one taste, it is the inseparability of object (the supreme emptiness) and subject (unchanging bliss), like milk mixed with water.

There are two levels to the union. The union at the training stage (*slobs pa'i zung 'jug*) of cultivation of the path, in which the three empties, or three stages of light, are experienced in the process of their arising and reversal, is present from the first to the tenth stage of awakening. The union beyond training (*mi slobs pa'i zung 'jug*), free from the arising and reversal processes of the three empties, is the ultimate pristine awareness dimension.

It is also said that the arising as an illusory body from actual luminous clarity is the real "union" and the arising as an illusory body from the example luminous clarity is a concordant union (*IOK*, vol. III, pp. 273-275). See also note 17 of this chapter on the five stages of Guhyasamaja.

13. The “three lights” (*snang ba gsum*) are three stages of experience of light: light (*snang ba, āloka*), increase of light (*mched pa, ālokābhāsa*), and full culmination of light (*nyer thob pa, ālokaupalabdha*). During the path, these manifest as a result of the wind and vital essences being gathered into the central channel. When this occurs, at first there is the appearance of the five signs (mirage, smoke, luminous space, flame, and a cloudless sky) due to the successive merging of earth, water, fire, wind, and consciousness. Then the four “empties” occur successively. In the cloudless sky of the fifth sign, there is the “light” of emptiness, which is like moonlight. Then, there is the “increase of light” of emptiness, which is like sunlight. Then, there is the “full culmination of light” of “the great empty,” which is like the pervasive darkness of night. Finally, there is the luminous clarity or “the total empty,” which is like the sky at dawn, free from the three conditions that can affect its clarity (*IOK*, vol. III, p. 271). See chapter 14, section entitled “Lights.” The three thoroughly afflicted lights (*kun nas nyon mongs pa*) refers to those experienced by a practitioner who has not yet overcome emotional afflictions; the purified lights, those experienced by one who has overcome them.

14. Possibly the first three joys, excluding the fourth, the innate joy.

15. The yoga of vital essence (*thig le'i rnal 'byor, binduyoga*) here refers to the meditation in which, while visualizing oneself as the deity and focusing on the channel-wheels of the body, one holds the winds at the navel and causes the vital essence to melt and descend. The subtle yoga (*phra mo'i rnal 'byor, sūksamayoga*) refers to the meditation in which one focuses the mind on the subtle insignia of the five buddhas visualized in the centers of the channel-wheels (Dharmashri's *VOWS*, f. 287b1-2).

16. See Chapter 10, n. 37.

17. The five stages set forth in the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* are the following: speech isolation (*ngag dben*) or vajra recitation (*rdo rje'i bzlas pa*); mind isolation (*sems dben*); illusory body (*sgyu lus*) or self-blessing (*rang byin rlabs*); luminous clarity (*'od gsal*); and union (*zung 'jug*). Some speak of an additional stage, that of body isolation (*lus dben*), which is considered to be included in speech isolation as its preliminary. (Others include body isolation in the generation phase as its subtle result).

In the stage of speech isolation, the principal winds, especially the life wind, are made to enter, abide in, and dissolve in the central channel. In the mind isolation stage, through the force of meditation, the winds that serve as the mounts for conceptions merge for brief periods in the channel-wheels. Due to this, and from the stabilization of the vital essences, there arises the pristine awareness of bliss and emptiness. In the third stage, that of the illusory body, there manifests the illusory form of the mandala circle of the deity. Its primary cause is the wind and mind of luminous clarity; its secondary condition, the melting-bliss arising from wind and mind merging in the indestructible vital essence. In the fourth stage, that of luminous clarity, whose nature is the path for attaining the direct realization of the emptiness of innate great bliss, the winds of the emotional afflictions and their seeds are vanquished. The fifth stage, union, consists in the pristine awareness that has accomplished the inseparability of the great bliss that directly realizes the essential condition and the infinite pristine awareness mandala. There are two “unions”: the union at the training stage, subdivided into the ten or twelve stages of awakening, and the union beyond training,

the five pristine awarenesses and the four dimensions of awakening (*IOK*, vol. III, pp. 224-227).

Concisely stated, vajra recitation at the stage of speech isolation serves as purifier of the winds. Mind isolation purifies the mind. Self-blessing cultivates the impure illusory body created from mind and wind alone. The illusory body is purified by entering luminous clarity through the total dissolution or sequential dissolution of that illusory body and its environment. As a result of this, there arises the dimension of union with the pure illusory body (*VOWS*, f. 228a2-3).

18. Perhaps a reference to the Chakrasamvara four-stage yoga in the Krishnacharya tradition, consisting of the foundation stage of tantra (*rtsa ba rgyud kyi rim pa*) (the root yoga which is the basis of all practices, for which the essential instructions deal exclusively with the foundation content of the tantra); the stage known as mantra (*sngags kyi rim pa*) (the practice of the inner heat yoga, for which the secret instructions relate equally to the channels, winds, and vital essences); the stage of arising of pristine awareness (*ye shes kyi rim pa*) (the yoga of the descent of the vital essences); and the secret stage (*gsang ba'i rim pa*) of the result (training in entering and arising from luminous clarity through mastery over the descent and reversal of the vital essence). See *IOK*, vol. III, p. 247.

19. The shape (*dbyibs*), mantra (*sngags*), and reality (*chos*) tradition of the completion phase is that of Mahamaya. Shape refers to a simplified procedure for the generation phase as a basis for the completion phase. Mantra refers to training in meditation on the channel-wheels, vital essences, and winds. Nature refers to meditation related to appearances, dreams, and the state between death and rebirth. These aspects also appear in the completion phase of other tantras (*IOK*, vol. III, p. 254).

20. This reference to the channels, winds, and vital essences does not pertain to a particular tradition of the completion phase, but denotes the main elements of practice found in all systems of the completion phase. For instance, mother tantras teach that in order to attain realization, one must stabilize the vital essences by striking crucial points within the vajra body. In order to achieve stability of the vital essences, one must have control over the winds. In order to achieve that, one has to have trained the channels. It is therefore explained that one meditates upon these three, the channels, the winds, and the vital essences, sequentially (*IOK*, vol. III, p. 260).

21. The four seals (pledge seal, action seal, doctrine seal, and great seal) applied to the phase of completion are set forth in the Hevajra tantra as well as the Chakrasamvara. In the Hevajra, the pledge seal (*dam tshig phyag rgya, samayamudrā*) consists in the yoga of the subtle vital essences, which is based upon the winds; and the yoga of the blazing of the inner heat and dripping of the vital essence, which is based upon four and two channel-wheels. The action seal (*las rgya, karmamudrā*) consists in practice with a real consort or with an imagined one once one is able to experience bliss and emptiness relying on one's own body and thereby gain full control of the winds. When bliss has been properly developed, the doctrine seal (*chos kyi phyag rgya, dharmamudrā*) is practiced in order to seal all appearances with bliss. As a result of that, all phenomena become the great seal (*phyag rgya chen po, mahāmudrā*); having fully accomplished the experience of the first three seals, or having gained at least some familiarity with them,

one meditates on the great seal through the six-branched yoga of withdrawal, and so forth (*IOK*, vol. III, pp. 240-241).

As for the Chakrasamvara tantra according to the Ghantapa tradition (which is part of a fivefold completion phase), the pledge seal is the preliminary: the development of joy on the basis of meditation on the pristine awareness seal. The action seal is the main practice: the development of bliss on the basis of an actual consort. The doctrine seal is the concluding practice: the maintaining of bliss through remembering what has previously been experienced. The great seal is meditation on the meaning of suchness on the basis of the other seals (*ibid.*, p. 246).

22. Generally speaking, these refer to initial yoga (*rnal 'byor dang po*), subsequent yoga (*rjes su rnal 'byor*), supreme yoga (*shin tu rnal 'byor*), and total yoga (*rnal 'byor chen po*). These yogas can be generally applied to any generation phase. However, they are very much associated with the completion phase of the Red Yamantaka, Black Yamantaka, and Vajrabhairava texts that were taught by the adept Shridhara. They are also spoken of in relation to the completion phase of Tara Yogini (*IOK*, vol. III, pp. 230 and 256).

23. Previous sections referred to here are *IOK*, vol. II, pp. 134-203; vol. III, pp. 48-109; and vol. III, pp. 508-566.

24. See *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 508-533.

25. The dissolution of the twenty-five coarse constituents—the five aggregates, four elements, six sense faculties, five objects, and five pristine awarenesses of a human—is accompanied by many signs. The way the four elements dissolve is as follows: When the earth element of the body dissolves into water, the external sign is the inability to move the body and powerlessness to control it. The internal sign is the arising of a smoke-like impression. When water dissolves into fire, the external sign is the dehydration of sweat, saliva, and other body fluids. The internal sign is the arising of a mirage-like impression, and the cessation of thirty-three conceptions based on aversion. When fire dissolves into wind, the external sign is the withdrawing of the warmth of the body from the extremities. The internal sign is the arising of an impression like the appearance of fireflies. The forty conceptions that have developed from desire and attachment stop. When wind dissolves into consciousness, the external sign is a long exhalation and an inability to inhale. The internal sign is the arising of an impression like the appearance of the flame of a butter-lamp undisturbed by the wind. The seven conceptions that are based on delusion stop.

Then, as to the way the subtle constituents (i.e., the three lights) dissolve, when consciousness dissolves into light, there arises the white radiance, a vision like moonlight shining in a cloudless sky. When light dissolves into the increase of light, there arises the red radiance, a vision like the sun shining in a cloudless sky. When the increase of light dissolves into full culmination of light, there arises the black radiance, a vision like a sky free from clouds and pervaded by thick darkness, like the beginning of night. At that point, when memory deteriorates, confounded in darkness and blackness, one enters the state of unconsciousness. When one awakens from that unconsciousness, the factors that adulterate the sky—moonlight, sunlight, and thick darkness—are absent. There arises a vision like a perfectly clear sky in early dawn. This is luminous clarity (*IOK*, vol. III, p. 200).

The actual dissolution of these constituents occurs only at death and at the stage of mind isolation (Kalka Ngawang Palden, *Presentation of the Stages and Paths of the Four Sets of Tantras*, vol. 9, p. 135).

26. Discussing this subject in the context of the sixfold yoga (where *pranayama* is the third branch), Kongtrul explains that the expression *srog rtsol* (control of life) is derived from the Sanskrit *prāṇāyāma*. It is also known as stopping life (*srog 'gog pa*). In this case, life (*srog*) is a name for wind (*rlung, prāṇa*), and to stop or control (*rtsol*) means to make the life wind serviceable. The areas affected by wind control are the channels, winds, and vital essences, of which the principal are the three channels—*lalana*, *rasana*, and central—above the navel and the three channels for movement of feces, urine, and semen below the navel, plus the life wind and the downward-voiding wind.

The nature of wind control is to block within the central channel the winds that normally flow in the *lalana* and *rasana*, to block in the conch-shell (*shankhini*) channel the winds that flow in the channels for feces and urine, and similarly to unite into one the flow of the life wind in the central channel and the flow of the downward-voiding wind in the conch-shell channel (*IOK*, vol. III, p. 235).

27. The Chakrasamvara tantra emphasizes the practice of wandering through special localities known as power places (*gnas, piṭha*) so that the yogin can summon, meet, and practice with emissaries (*pho nya mo, dūtī*). These emissaries, who are at different levels of realization, are the mantra-born (*sngags skyes*), field-born (*zbing skyes*), and innate (*lhan skyes*) emissaries. The innate are exalted beings who reside in the pure land of Unsurpassed (Akaniyāha) as the enjoyment dimension of awakening manifesting in the form of goddesses. The field-born abide in unsurpassable contemplation and manifest as yoginis in the thirty-two power places. The mantra-born are trained in the mantric path and are born in the central region (India), and so forth. To begin with, the yogin relies on the mantra-born in order to assemble the field-born, and then relies on both. Finally, the yogin can meet innate emissaries and achieve the highest realization. For an extensive discussion, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 533-566.

28. This is a reference to the winds that flow in the twenty-four major channels of the body.

29. The twenty-four residual vital essences flow in the twenty-four major channels of the body. See Chapter 9, sections entitled “Channels” and “Vital Essences.”

30. *Awn of Esoteric Instructions* (Toh. 1198), vol. Cha, ff. 1b-316a.

31. Based on Naropa's *Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation*, Kedrup Norzang explains that the nature of the action seal (*las kyi phyag rgya, karmamudrā*) is a real woman with breasts and hair. Her “action” (*las, karma*) consists of kissing and embracing the yogin, touching his secret parts, and so forth. She is a seal (*phyag rgya, mudrā*) because through her actions and by her own strength, she is the source of the mutable (*gyur ba, kṣara*) bliss, that is to say, bliss resulting from the emission of vital essence.

The auxiliary of the action seal, the imaginary or pristine awareness seal (*ye shes kyi phyag rgya, jñānamudrā*), is a goddess created in one's own mind, such as Vishvamata, Kalachakra's consort. She naturally bestows the moving (*g.yo ba, spanda*) bliss when one imagines being in union with her. This bliss is called moving because it arises when the vital essences involved shift from one place to another of the body.

The great seal (*phyag rgya chen mo, mahāmudrā*) refers to the female deity of the Kalachakra in union, devoid of intrinsic existence and endowed with the supreme of all aspects, whose emanations pervade the three realms. This empty-image seal brings forth supreme, immutable bliss (the resultant great seal).

The pledge seal is the indestructibility (*jig pa med pa*) or immutability of the result; thus, it refers to the supreme immutable bliss. Source: *Detailed Elucidation of the Kalachakra Tantra*, ff. 291b4-293a5. See also Naropa's *Commentary on the Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation* (Toh. 1351), ff. 273b3-274a1; Naropa's *IK*, pp. 313-315; and Vajrapani's *Eulogy Commentary* (Toh. 1402), f. 125a7-b5.

32. Maitripa (1007-1085), also known as Advayavajra, was a brahmin scholar who became a Buddhist when he met Naropa, who was evidently his first master. He became a monk at Vikramashila Monastery and studied with Shantipa and others. He was evicted from the monastery on the grounds of having been seen drinking beer in the company of a woman. Later he became a student of the peerless yogin Savari. Maitripa is particularly linked with the transmission of *mahāmudra*. His students include Sahajavajra, Shunyatamadhi, Vajrapani, Ramapala, and the Tibetans Kyungpo Naljor and Marpa the Translator. Two works of Maitripa treat the subject of the four seals: *Esoteric Instructions on the Four Seals* (Toh. 2295), vol. Zhi, ff. 211-214, and *Definitive Teaching on the Initiation* (Toh. 2252), vol. Wi, ff. 141-143, the contents of which are closely related to Nagarjunagarbha's *Ascertainment of the Four Seals*. Also treating the four seals according to Maitripa's view is Ramapala's *Commentary Elucidating the Difficult Points of the Definitive Teaching on the Initiation* (Toh. 2253), vol. Wi, ff. 143-160.

33. The catalogue of Dg.T. lists the author of this text as Nagarjunagarbha.

34. *Compendium on States* (Toh. 2227), vol. Wi, f. 98b3.

35. Sealing (*rgyas 'debs*) refers to a type of meditation in the generation phase in which one seals the appearance of the circle of deities with bliss and emptiness. As a result of this, the appearance imagined as the form of the deity immediately arises as the essence of bliss and emptiness. To do this, at all times of training in the phase of generation, one must maintain the awareness that everything that appears to the mind, the mandala, simply appears relatively, that in essence there is nothing existing, ultimately emptiness (*IOK*, vol. III, p. 196).

#### CHAPTER 14: THE RESULTANT PHASE OF COMPLETION AND THE RESULTANT CONTINUUM

1. The three lights, or three stages of experience of light (*snang ba gsum*): light, increase of light, and culmination of light. Aryadeva explains that light (*snang ba, āloka*) is characterized by a nature that is devoid of any aspect, without body or speech. It is like the full moon which illuminates and pervades a cloudless autumn sky. Similarly, as natural clarity, it focuses on all things without exception; hence, it is "light." This is the ultimate awakening mind (*bodhicitta*), the light that pertains to wisdom, and the first empty (*stong pa*) (*Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice*, Toh. 1803, f. 77b3-4).

Increase of light (*snang ba mched, ālokābhāsa*) is also characterized by a nature devoid of any aspect of subject and object duality, without body or speech. It is like an autumn

light pervaded by the light of the sun. As a very luminous and immaculate essence, such light focuses on all things without exception. It is the awakening mind, ever-perfect, the second empty, characterized by being very empty (*shin tu stong pa*) (ibid., f. 77b6-7).

Likewise, the culmination of light (*snang ba thob pa, ālokapalabdhi*) has the characteristic of space, a form devoid of any entity, without body or speech. Like the obscurity that descends at midnight, it is subtle and present everywhere, lacking self-identity. It is devoid of movement since the movements of breath-control techniques are absent. It is devoid of mental activity, unmoved. It is characterized by ignorance. This is the great empty. These three lights are known as the three consciousnesses (ibid., f. 78a1-3).

2. The ultimate three lights of essential reality (*don dam de kho na nyid kyi snang ba*); and the relative three lights of interdependence (*kun rdzob rten 'brel gyi snang ba*).

3. The three lights attended by conceptions (*rang bzhin dang bcas pa'i snang ba gsum*); and the three lights devoid of conceptions (*rang bzhin dang bral ba'i snang ba gsum*).

4. The three lights at the ground stage (*gzhi'i dus kyi snang ba gsum*); the three lights at the path stage (*lam gyi dus kyi snang ba gsum*); the continuous three lights (*rgyun chags pa'i snang ba gsum*); and the three lights that occur at particular times (*khyad par gyi dus su 'byung ba'i snang ba gsum*).

5. See Kongtrul's *CPR*, ff. 22a1-23a2. See also discussion in Shakyamitra's *Commentary on the Lamp Summary of Practice* (Toh. 1834), vol. Ci, f. 261a4.

6. Three lights that occur at death (*'chi ba'i dus kyi snang ba gsum*); three lights that occur during sleep (*gnyid dus*); three lights that occur during sexual union (*'khrig pa'i dus*); and three lights that occur when all the appearances of the sixfold group of consciousnesses arise (*yul snang thams cad la 'char ba'i dus*).

7. Twenty-five gross constituents (*rags pa nyer lnga*). See below, the section of this chapter entitled "Appearance Side."

8. See Chapter 13, n. 25.

9. Through the union of the male organ (method) and female organ (wisdom), first comes the sensation of hardness. This is the earth element. The nature of earth is ignorance, the purity of which is said to be Vairochana, and hence, earth in its purity is the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena. The melting of vital essence is moisture, the water element whose nature is aversion, the purity of which manifests as Akshobhya, and is therefore the mirror-like pristine awareness. From love-making, there arises warmth, the fire element. The nature of heat is desire, the purity of which is the vajra-holder Amitabha; hence, the fire element in its purity is the discerning pristine awareness. Wind and mind flow in the vagina. Such movement is the wind element and is of the nature of jealousy, the purity of which is Amoghasiddhi; hence, wind is the pristine awareness of accomplishment. The bliss of sexual union is the nature of blood, incited by the passionate mind. The joys that arise from this bliss have the nature of space. The element of space is avarice, the purity of which is Ratnasambhava, the vajra of avarice which overcomes avarice; hence, the purity of space is the pristine awareness of total sameness. See *CH*, ff. 203b4-204b3.

10. The three lights consisting of instants (*skad cig gis bsdu pa'i snang ba gsum*); and the three lights consisting of stages (*sas bsdu pa'i -*); the three lights experienced at the time

of initiation (*dbang dus kyi* -); the three lights during the generation phase (*bskyed rim gyi skabs su* -); the three lights arising from body isolation (*lus dben gyi* -); vajra recitation (*rdo rje'i bzlas pa'i* -); the three lights in the stages of mind isolation (*sems dben gyi* -); illusory body (*sgyu lus kyi* -); luminous clarity (*'od gsal gyi* -).

11. The initiation received just before attaining awakening. See Chapter 12, section entitled "Types of Initiation."

12. Body isolation (*lus dben pa*): see Chapter 13, n. 17. In the context of Kalachakra, this consists mainly of the specific withdrawal and contemplation branches of the sixfold yoga, practices related to the instructions on the indestructible body. On vajra recitation and speech isolation, see Chapter 13, n. 17; and Chapter 12, n. 77.

13. See below, section entitled "Appearance Side." See also Chapter 13, n. 17; and Chapter 12, n. 76.

14. Likely a reference to the uninterrupted aspect of the path (*bar chad med lam*) as opposed to the fully liberated path (*rnam grol lam*) of seeing.

15. The source of this list of synonyms is Aryadeva's *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice* (Toh. 1803), f. 77a5-b1.

16. Aryadeva states that in the tantras the Buddha used such terms in consideration of beings with little faith (*Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice*, Toh. 1803, f. 77b4-5).

17. Literally, "natures" (*rang bzhin, prakṛtī*), so called as they are the natures or transformations of the three lights, like momentary spots that obscure the three lights. Later in this chapter, it is noted that their ultimate nature is that of the emptiness of bliss and luminous clarity. Aryadeva explains that these are called natures since they are of the nature of the pristine awareness of light, and so forth (*Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice*, Toh. 1803, f. 78b3).

The first group of thirty-three natures or conceptions are said to be female and are generated by the wind in the left channel; the second group of forty are male, generated by the wind in the right channel; the last group of seven are neuter, generated by the wind in the central channel.

18. See the *Indestructible Garland* for the names of the winds and conceptions (Toh. 445, vol. Ca, ff. 213b2-214b5).

19. *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802), vol. Ngi, f. 48a7-b2.

20. *chags bral*: literally, devoid of desire.

21. To cling (*'dzin pa*). In Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802, f. 48b5) and in Aryadeva's *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice* (Toh. 1803), this conception appears as "to suck" (*'jib pa*).

22. Seven types of pride (*nga rgyal bdun*): pride, excessive pride, pride of excessive pride, pride based on the idea of "I" (egoism), pride of showing off, pride of thinking small, and perverted pride. See Guenther's *Mind in Buddhist Psychology*, pp. 68-72.

23. See Nagarjuna's *Five Stages* (Toh. 1802), vol. Ngi, f. 48b5.

24. Five bad views (*lta ngan lnga*) which are afflicted ideas: the view of the transitory composite (*'jig tshogs la lta ba*); the mistaken view (*log par lta ba*); the view holding to

extremes (*mthar 'dzin gyi lta ba*); the view holding these views as supreme (*lta ba mchog 'dzin*); and the view holding ethics and conducts as supreme (*tsbul khrims brtul zbugs mchog 'dzin*).

25. The three root consciousnesses refer to the continuous three lights—light, increase of light, and culmination of light; the three root winds are the winds that accompany these three lights. See above, section of this chapter entitled “The Continuous Three Lights.”

26. The six root emotional afflictions (*rtsa nyon drug*), which are included in the fifty-one mental factors, are ignorance, attachment, anger, pride, doubt, and views.

27. Karmic actions that propel (*'phen*) and complete (*'grub*) are the factors that propel one into a particular existence and produce the features of that life. Within the twelve links of dependent origination, ignorance and compositional factors (*ma rig pa dang 'du byed*) are propelling branches; attachment (*sred pa*) and grasping (*len pa*) are completing branches. The remaining twelve links consist of the branches that are propelled (consciousness, name and form, senses, contact, and feeling) and completed (becoming, birth, old age, and death).

28. Full culmination (*nyer thob, ālokaupalabdha*) is an unconscious state that immediately precedes the manifestation of luminous clarity in which the last trace of that which holds to cyclic existence dissolves.

29. *sems dmigs kyī snang ba gsum*

30. For these visions or signs, which also occur in the process of death, see Chapter 13, n. 25.

31. *Five Stages* refers to the famous work of Nagarjuna on the five stages of the completion stage of Guhyasamaja (Toh. 1802, vol. Ngi). However, this citation is not found in it.

32. The twelve examples of illusion: magical creation (*sgyu ma*), moon on water (*chu zla*), optical illusion (*mig yor*), mirage (*smig rgyu*), dream (*rmi lam*), echo (*sgra brnyan*), city of *gandharvas* (*dri za'i grong khyer*), magical display (*mig 'phrul*), rainbow (*dbang po'i gzhu*), lightning (*glog*), bubble on water (*chu bur*), and image in a mirror (*me long gi gzugs brnyan*).

33. The five outer awakenings are those which are explained in yoga tantra and the five inner, in highest yoga tantra. Both sets of five are related to the process of birth. See Chapter 5, n. 45; and Yang-gönpa's *Secret Description of the Vajra Body*, ff. 3b-6a.

34. These topics are discussed in the last three books of *IOK* (vol. III, pp. 110-708).

35. See Chapter 1, n. 57.

36. See Chapter 1, n. 24.

37. *'khrul 'khor*: tantric formulas used to accomplish specific purposes written in or around diagrams (usually circular) on paper and worn concealed on the body.

38. *sbyor ba*: preliminary practices involving mainly the making and offering of food (*torma, bali*).

39. In this context, conduct (*spyod pa, caryā*) or mantric conduct (*sngags kyī spyod pa*) refers primarily to a special form of practice to enhance one's realization of the phase of

generation or completion. According to the father tantras, in the phase of generation, the mantric conduct is applied by the yogin who has perfected the phase of generation in order to attain the common great powers. In the phase of completion, the conduct is applied in order to attain the illusory body once mind and winds have been made serviceable; in order to generate the actual luminous clarity once the yogin has become familiarized with the example luminous clarity; and in order to attain the union beyond training once union with training has been attained. In the mother tantras, mantric conduct is performed when the yogin gains signs of warmth of experience (the capacity to maintain clarity of mind even in states of fear, intoxication, suffering, misery, strong attachment, hatred, or torpor) through the practice of the two phases.

The Guhyasamaja and Buddhasamayoga speak of three types of conduct: elaborate (*spros bcas*), unelaborate (*spros med*), and extremely unelaborate (*shin tu spros med*). For the elaborate conduct, the yogin (in a house built especially for the purpose) wears the ornaments and attributes of the deity, and together with a number of yogins and yoginis equal in number to the deities of the mandala, performs the *ganachakra* (ritual feast offering) four times daily and then practices the three concentrations, and so forth, with much activity, such as music, singing and dancing, and symbolic language. Through the enjoyment of sensory pleasures, this conduct enhances realization. For the unelaborate conduct, the yogin dispenses with the music, and so forth, and relies on consorts equal in number to the deities of the mandala, or five, or only one consort. A practitioner who engages in the extremely unelaborate conduct, except when eating or defecating, relies exclusively on the pristine awareness seal (*MH*, f. 70a2-b7).

The conduct of forsaking duality (*gnyis spang*) is more often called "all-shaking" (*kun 'dar, avadhūti*), where "all-shaking" means "shaking off" or "casting off" dualistic thoughts. It consists of engaging in all kinds of activities that give rise to ordinary excitement: partaking of the five nectars and five meats, sexual union with consorts, and so forth. It is performed in secret or in disguise (i.e., while pretending to be crazy), either to deepen the yoga of the deity or to enhance the experience of luminous clarity. The beginner's level at which this conduct is practiced requires having entered the path and having acquired a stable experience of pristine awareness.

The ever-perfect (*kun tu bzang po*) conduct means that whatever action one does, good or bad, it is always perfect. This conduct is performed openly since the yogin has attained stability, and it consists of leading others on the right path by displaying miraculous feats or gathering dakinis through power gazes and various other means. The ever-perfect conduct is adopted by an experienced practitioner, one who has experienced the setting of manifest conceptual constructs. Thus, it said that these two conducts, although performed throughout the entire way to awakening, are focused on mainly in the lower path of preparation.

The victorious in all quarters (*phyogs las rnam rgyal*) conduct means to overcome emotional afflictions and to acquire the strength to help others. This conduct entails gathering goddesses, such as the goddess of water, and relying on them as one's tantric consorts to enable one to immediately attain the direct knowledge of reality on the path of seeing. This is the main conduct to be performed by an accomplished practitioner, one who has attained a great degree of warmth on the path of preparation, indicating that attainment of actual pristine awareness is near, up until the attainment of full awakening (*IOK*, vol. III, pp. 543, 549-552).

40. The deliberate behavior of using desire (*'dod 'jug*) refers to the conduct observed by the yogin between meditation sessions when enjoying food, drink, and other pleasures. If this conduct is not directly pervaded by nonconceptual pristine awareness, it is said to be common; if it is pervaded, it is uncommon (*IOK*, vol. III, p. 536).

Training in and enjoying desire (*brten slob*), emphasized in the father tantras, is to train in and enjoy pleasures in conjunction with elaborate conduct. This means to cultivate a conceptually based meditation in which one imagines whatever appears to be the male and female deities and to enjoy all sense objects one encounters. To train in and enjoy desire in conjunction with unelaborate conduct means to cultivate a meditation, only partially conceptually based, which sees one's sense powers and sense objects as those of the deity and to enjoy all objects while understanding that the deity is the appearance of one's own mind. To train in and enjoy desire in conjunction with an utterly unelaborate activity means to contemplate the form of the deity as being the manifestation of bliss and emptiness and to enjoy sensory objects with the understanding that the deity and pleasures have no reality (*ibid.*, pp. 536-537).

41. For instance, the person of lesser faculties should practice the elaborate conduct; the average, the unelaborate conduct; and the person of higher faculties, the extremely unelaborate conduct. For the way the various conducts are classified, see *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 533-566.

42. See *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 533-566.

## CHAPTER 15: TANTRIC SCRIPTURES

1. Sönam Tsemo speaks of two scriptural tantras (*rjod byed tshig rgyud*), the actual and the nominal. He defines the first as a multitude of generic images that arise in one's consciousness in the aspects of names, words, and letters that convey the meaning of the three continuums. Nominal scriptural tantras refers to the scriptures containing the tantras that serve as conditions for the arising of those appearances (mentioned above) in the mind (*SGP*, f. 61b1-2).

2. See Chapter 3, section entitled "Divisions of Action Tantra."

3. *Yakshini's Kalpa* (*gNod sbyin ma'i rtog pa*). Unidentified. Kalpa is a term for tantra, evidently originating in western India.

4. Sönam Tsemo distinguishes between extensive and concise root tantras by explaining that extensive tantras, for the most part, are the tantras that were taught during the actual promulgation of the teaching and were intended for the disciples present at the time. Concise tantras are those taught principally in consideration of future students who would have short life spans and inferior intelligence and not be able to retain the extensive tantras (*SGP*, f. 36a6-b1).

5. These three tantras are actually found in a single scripture, the *Summation of Essential Principles Tantra* (Toh. 479). The identification and the subject matter of the *Continuation* (*Uttaratantra*) and *Continuation of the Continuation* (*Uttaratantra*) within the *Summation of Essential Principles Tantra* is treated in *IBTS*, pp. 216-219. Butön states that this tantra is like a root for all yoga and highest yoga tantras (*BGP*, f. 285b2). This would explain why it is placed here in this section, which concerns highest yoga tantra.

6. Sönam Tsemo states that the explanatory tantras (*bshad rgyud*) of a particular class are those that appeared after the root ones and are exegetical in nature. A root tantra (*rtsa ba'i rgyud*, *mūlatantra*) is defined as the tantra that appeared first and that serves as the basis for the explanatory ones (*SGP*, f. 36a5-6). Explanatory tantras are of two kinds, common and uncommon. The common kind clarifies several tantras, while the uncommon clarifies its own specific tantra (f. 36b1-2). Six kinds of explanatory tantras are distinguished: elucidations; supplements; presentations of variations in aspects; summaries; ascertainment of similarities; and analyses of terms and meanings. See *SGP*, ff. 36b2-37b1.

7. *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra* (Toh. 450), vol. Cha, f. 10b5-6.

8. A stanza may consist of two, three, four, five, or six lines, each called *shloka* (*śloka*). In scriptures of prose, nine syllables are called vajra faculty (*vajra indriya*); four of these are called *shloka* (*SGP*, f. 37b2-3).

9. *Indestructible Essence Ornament* (Toh. 451, vol. Cha, f. 51a4-b2) mentions numerous names of father tantras and their numbers of metrical lines.

10. *Indestructible Tent*, Toh. 419, vol. Nga, f. 54b4-5. Kongtrul paraphrases the original terse passage to facilitate understanding.

11. The tantras mentioned in the passage are difficult to identify. Butön states that this passage indicates thirteen or fourteen tantras (*BGP*, f. 288b3) and notes that few of these tantras are found among the Tibetan translations. It seems that many tantras cited in Indian commentaries were not translated into Tibetan. There are also tantras mentioned in the book lists of the early translations which are no longer available (*BGP*, f. 288b4-5).

12. The ten outer essential principles of tantric expertise enumerated in the *Indestructible Essence Ornament Tantra* (Toh. 451, vol. Cha, f. 58a4) are the following: mandala, contemplation, seal, stance, seated position, recitation, fire offering, worship, ritual, and dissolution.

These essential principles are explained in Tsongkapa's *Commentary on the Fifty Verses on Devotion to the Master: Fulfilling the Aspirations of Students* as follows: (1) Mandala refers to the form and formless mandala. (2) Contemplation refers to the three contemplations, the initial union of the deity yoga, the supremely triumphant mandala, and the supremely triumphant act. (3) Seal refers to the various seals of the deities. (4) Stance refers to five stances—the left leg drawn in and the right leg extended, the reverse, the shanks of the legs held straight, legs apart mimicking the wings of a bird, and the soles of the feet together. [See Anandagarbha's *Illumination of the Summation of Essential Principles*, Toh. 2510, Vol. Li, f. 254b2-5.] (5) Seated position refers to the vajra posture and other postures. (6) Recitation refers to the meditation on the deity in conjunction with various styles of repetition of mantra. (7) Fire offering is of four kinds (appeasing, etc.). (8) Worship consists of offerings and praises to the deity. (9) Ritual refers to protection, invitation of the deities, and so forth. (10) Dissolution refers to the concluding act of requesting the deity to depart (*Collected Works of Tsongkapa*, vol. Ka, f. 8a4-b1).

The ten inner or secret essential principles of tantric expertise are the following: the rituals of the two reversals; the secret initiation; the initiation of pristine awareness through wisdom; the ritual of tearing apart the union of hostile forces; food offerings; vajra reci-

tation; the ritual to perform the fierce type of activation; consecration; and actualization of the mandala (*Indestructible Essence Ornament*, f. 58a3-4).

Tsongkapa states that the ten outer essential principles of tantric expertise apply to the vajra master of the three lower tantras and the inner or secret essential principles are primarily characteristic of the vajra master of the highest yoga tantra (*Collected Works of Tsongkapa*, vol. Ka, f. 8b1-2). He explains the inner essential principles in the following way: (1) and (2) The two reversals consist of the ritual of turning away negative forces through contemplation of the ten wrathful deities, and so forth, and through the drawing of protective wheels that are then worn by the practitioner around the neck. (3) and (4) Knowledge of the secret initiation and the pristine awareness through wisdom initiation implies knowledge of the vase and the word initiations. (5) Tearing apart the union of body and mind means to drive away guardians of the enemies of the doctrine and then to implement fierce rituals in order to terminate the power of enemies through the power of concentration. (6) Food offerings (*gtor ma, bali*) refers to offerings to the worldly protectors. (7) Vajra recitation refers to the mental and verbal vajra recitation. (8) The ritual to perform the fierce activation means that if the adept has been initiated, is abiding in the pledges and commitments, has practiced according to the prescribed means of attainment (*sādhana*) for eighteen months or more, and yet has had no results, he may strike the dagger to call upon the deities to bestow attainments. (9) Consecration refers to the blessing of temples and so forth. (10) Actualization of the mandala entails creation of the mandala of the deities in front, veneration, entering into the mandala, and receiving initiation and permission. *Commentary on the Fifty Verses on Devotion to the Master*, ff. 7b5-8a4.

13. The mystic staff (*khaṭvāṅga*) symbolizes the wisdom of emptiness, and in the Hevajra tantra, Nairatmya, Hevajra's consort. The small drum (*cang te'u, damaru*) symbolizes the method of compassion and resonates with the sound of great bliss. To hold the mystic staff and the small drum is a symbol of the union of wisdom and method (*CH*, f. 96a5-b1). The symbolic bone ornaments (*rus pa'i rgyan phyag rgya, aṣṭhiamudrā*), known as seals (*mudrā*), are listed in various ways in the tantras and the treatises of tantric adepts. They are five in number, often with an additional sixth ornament. To use the example of the Hevajra tantra, the five ornaments are the wheel-like (*khor lo*) crown ornament (sometimes called crown jewel) (*gtsug gi nor bu*), which symbolizes Akshobhya and mirror-like pristine awareness; earrings (*rna cha*), symbolizing Amitabha and pristine awareness of discernment; the necklace (*mgul rgyan*) symbolizing Ratnasambhava and pristine awareness of total sameness; bracelets (*lag gdu*) and anklets (*gdu bu*) symbolizing Vairochana and pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena; girdle (*ske rags*) symbolizing Amoghasiddhi and the accomplishing pristine awareness (*CH*, f. 66a6-b1). The additional ornament spoken of in various texts related to Hevajra is ash from a cremation ground smeared on the body (*thal chen*) (*MH*, f. 77b3).

In the Chakrasamvara literature is found an additional ornament—the sacred thread worn by brahmins (*tshangs skud*). The Kalachakra and Chakrasamvara tantras and the adept Lohipa teach that the six ornaments represent the purity of the six perfections: the necklace represents generosity; bracelets, ethics; earrings, patience; crown ornament, diligence; the sacred thread, meditation; and the girdle (or sacred ashes), wisdom (*MH*, f. 78a7).

Kongtrul explains that these ornaments symbolize the yogin's (or yogini's) pledges: the yogin wears the crown ornament on the head in order not to forget to pay homage to the vajra master who is "heavy" with qualities, the master who explains the training, and the favored deity. The yogin wears the earrings as a reminder not to listen to others' words disparaging the master, and so forth; the necklace as a reminder never to stray from the inner and outer mantra recitations which protect the mind from conceptual limitations; the bracelets and anklets as a symbol of the vow not to kill creatures; and the girdle to symbolize the binding of the vital essence by relying on the outer and inner consort. For these reasons, the yogin always wears these ornaments which symbolize the five buddhas. According to the definitive meaning given in the *Stainless Light*, the crown and the other ornaments symbolize the fixing of the vital essence at the crown of the head and at the other channel-wheels by binding the five winds (*CH*, ff. 289b1-290a2).

## CHAPTER 16: EXPOSITION METHODS

1. Most likely a reference to Buddhaguhya's *Commentary* (Toh. 2671). Three commentaries on the *Dialogue with Subahu Tantra* are listed in Dg.T. (rGyud, vol. Thu, Toh. 2671, Toh. 2672, and Toh. 2673). Only the first bears the name of the author, that of Buddhaguhya. Kedrupjé attributes the second (Toh. 2672) also to Buddhaguhya (see *IBTS*). Likely the third one is also by the same author.
2. Dg.T. lists two commentaries by Buddhaguhya on this tantra, one brief (Toh. 2662) and one extensive (Toh. 2663). The latter is likely the one referred to here.
3. See Chapter 5, n. 4.
4. *Indestructible Peak* (Toh. 480), vol. Nya, f. 146a2-4.
5. *Ibid.*, f. 292a1.
6. *Ibid.*, ff. 291b7-292a1.
7. Added from *BGP*, f. 301a7-b1.
8. This section on yoga tantra's method of exposition is taken from Butön's *Survey of Yoga Tantra*, ff. 58a6-59a3.
9. The *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra* (Toh. 447), an explanatory tantra on the Guhyasamaja, sets forth the seven ornaments, which are elaborated upon by Chandrakirti in his *Illuminating Lamp*. A two-page explanation of the seven ornaments is given by Shraddhakaravarman, entitled *Revealing the Seven Ornaments as Set Forth in the Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra* (Toh. 1789), vol. A, ff. 8a-10a.
10. Concerning the seven ornaments, Sönam Tsemo notes that the first two, the five introductory remarks and four correct methods, are to be understood when discussing the tantra sets, the origin of the tantra, and the meaning of the title. The six parameters, the four modes, and the two forms of teaching (group and individual) are explained through the instructions that constitute the means of exposition of the tantra. The forms based on examination of students and the two truths are comprehended through realization of the tantra (*SGP*, f. 72a2-3).

11. To give an example of how the title of a tantra relates to its content, in the case of the *Hevajra Tantra*, in the title, the *he* in *hevajra* indicates the method of great compassion which serves as the cause for awakening. Referred to here is the compassion that does not conceive of any intrinsic nature. *Vajra* means to destroy, in the sense of eliminating all conceptual limitations; alternatively, it means analysis as it represents the discriminative wisdom that examines phenomena. The connectedness and continuity of the method of great compassion and the wisdom of realizing emptiness constitute the very nature of the highest yoga tantra. Such a union of method and wisdom is known as *hevajra*.

In terms of the general meaning, *he* denotes compassion represented by the clear and complete form of the deity; *vajra* denotes wisdom, the realization of the emptiness or lack of intrinsic nature of phenomena; thus, *hevajra* is the union of clarity and emptiness. As for the concealed meaning, *he* indicates compassion, *karuṇā* in Sanskrit, where *ka* is bliss and *ru*, to hold; together, to hold or retain the bliss born from the inner heat or union with consort. *Vajra* is emptiness, the object realized by the bliss; thus, *hevajra* is the union of bliss and emptiness. In the ultimate sense, *he* is enjoyment or play, passing beyond the extreme of perfect peace by means of great compassion, which always enjoys working for others' welfare in cyclic life. *Vajra* means passing beyond the extreme of cyclic life through the profound wisdom that shatters all objectifications in the realization of the nature of reality. *Hevajra* is thus the union of method and wisdom beyond the two extremes.

In a different explanation, *he* is *karuṇā*, where *ka* means bliss and *ruṇā*, stainless; that is, immutable great bliss, the subject. *Vajra* is the emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects, the object. Hence, *hevajra* is the essential dimension of awakening (*svabhāvikakāya*), the indivisibility of the four dimensions (*kāya*), the union of *e* and *vam* (CH, ff. 13a6-14a4).

12. The *Guhyasamāja* as found in Dg.K. (Toh. 442, ff. 90a-148a) has seventeen chapters. The eighteenth constitutes the *Continuation of the Guhyasamāja* (Toh. 443, ff. 148-157).

13. Four correct methods (*rigs pa bzhi*), also known as four correct methods for enlightenment (*'tshang rgya ba'i rigs pa bzhi*). Butön calls these correct methods "four ways of awakening" (*'tshang rgya ba'i tshul bzhi*) (BGP, f. 301b6).

14. This is a pledge of the Amitabha family, especially in the context of yoga tantra. As an expression, it means observance of all kinds of Buddhist teachings, from the sutras to the tantras. "Outer" likely refers to the three spiritual ways of proclaimers, solitary sages, and bodhisattvas; "inner," to action, conduct, and yoga tantras; and "secret," to highest yoga tantra.

15. Pure conduct (*tshangs spyod*) generally means celibacy; in this context, however, it means retaining the bodhichitta of the union of method (*vajra*) and wisdom (lotus); or, the non-emission of bodhichitta as semen (which is the cause of immutable bliss) while "churning" in the lotus of the consort. See Kongtrul's *Buddhist Ethics* (English translation), p. 255.

16. *Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra* (Toh. 447), vol. Ca, f. 248b3.

17. *koṣṭhikā*. For the coined names of the other winds, see Aryadeva's *Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice* (Toh. 1803), f. 68b1-4. See also *SGP* (f. 65a4-5) for examples of other coined words.

18. Concerning the six parameters, Kongtrul states that the provisional (*drang don*) and interpretable (*dgongs pa can*) meanings are used when the subject matter concerns the relative truth. The definitive (*nges don*) and non-interpretable (*dgongs pa can ma yin pa*) meanings are used when the subject matter concerns the ultimate truth. Standard and coined terminologies are used in scriptural tantras that convey the subject matter of the tantras (*CPR*, f. 12b3-4).

19. On this mode, Sönam Tsemo points out that even though the meaning of the actual text may not be obvious, it can be understood by separating one letter from another, splitting a syllable, or studying the shapes of the letters.

In the first case, take, for instance, the Sanskrit *naḡaha aśva*. To understand the sense of the words, one takes *na* separately, from which is derived *naṛ*, which means human; and *ga* separately, from which is derived *gabi*, meaning ox.

In the second case, the syllable *hūṃ*, for example, means beyond subject and object. To reach an understanding of such meaning from this syllable, *hūṃ* is split into *ha*, from which is derived *grāhaka* or apprehended object. From *ha* is also derived *grahāja* or apprehending mind. The *hu* in *hūṃ* becomes *śu* and from it *śunyata* ("empty") is derived. The dot on the *hūṃ* is *ma* from which is derived *manota*, meaning mind. Thus, the *hūṃ* signifies "mere mind empty of subject and object."

In the third case, take, for instance, *evam maya*, which refers to the navel, heart, throat, and head channel-wheels (*chakra*), and so forth. The letters do not explain such meaning, but it is possible to comprehend this through the correspondence between the shapes of the letters and the shapes of the channel-wheels. For instance, the three corners of the *e* signify the navel's channel-wheel, which has a similar triangular shape (*SGP*, ff. 64b5-65a3).

20. The lines are from the *Guhyasamāja* (Toh. 442, vol. Ca, f. 96a2), which reads: *rin chen kha dog sna lnga pal yungs kar gyi ni 'bru tshod tsam/ sna yi rse mor nan tan dul rnal 'byor rig pas rtag tu sgom*. This citation relates to the "subtle yoga" (*phra ba'i rnal 'byor*) as described in the generation phase of the *Guhyasamāja*. Lilavajra explains that the "tip of the nose" refers to the "tip of the nose" of the lotus of the female deity. There, emanated from the bodhichitta (semen) of the male deity, one visualizes a vajra or other symbol, the size of a mustard seed. Within the vajra, one contemplates the entire mandala of residence and the mandala of resident deities. "Precious" means "very valuable." "Of five different colors" means that they are symbols or insignia (vajra, etc.) that arise from the five families. "Always" means day and night. Source: Lilavajra's *Commentary on the Difficult Points of the Abridged Phase of Generation*, Toh. 1836, vol. Ci, f. 301a7-b4.

The insignia of the buddhas of the five families: the vajra for Akshobhya, jewel for Ratnasambhava, wheel for Vairochana, lotus for Amitabha, and crossed vajra for Amoghasiddhi.

21. See Chapter 14, section entitled "Emptiness Side: Lights."

22. Here is meant one of inferior quality that does not bear fruit and has little fragrance (*MH*, f. 40a6).

23. *Equal to the Sky Tantra* (Toh. 386), vol. Ga, ff. 200b7-201a1. The Rali tantras are considered to be explanatory tantras (*bshad rgyud*) of the Chakrasamvara class, thirty-two tantras subdivided into four types. Toh. 383 to 390 are the eight awakened mind

tantras; Toh. 391 to 398 are the eight awakened speech tantras; Toh. 309 to 406 are the eight awakened body tantras. Toh. 407 to 413, plus Toh. 414, are eight additional or derived Rali tantras (*BGP*, ff. 215a3-219b1).

This citation from the *Equal to the Sky Tantra* is found in the *Circle of the Sun* (Toh. 397), vol. Ga, f. 228b6-7. This tantra belongs to the Rali class.

24. Expositions according to instructions for general meaning (*spyi yi don gyi man ngag gi bshad pa*), concealed meaning (*sbas pa'i don -*), and final meaning (*mthar thug pa'i don -*); and literal meaning (*yi ge'i don -*), auxiliary meaning (*yan lag gi don -*) and inclusive meaning (*bsdus pa'i don -*).

The general meaning is that which applies to both the way of the perfections and way of mantra, such as the thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening, the five paths, the ten stages, and so forth, which are taught in the way of the perfections. It is general because it removes the regret of those who have entered the way of the perfections and is taught in the scriptures of the secret mantra as well. It includes the general meaning of the phase of generation consisting in the vase initiation and connected branches. This meaning is called general because it must be trained in by both those who wish to accomplish ordinary powers and those wishing to reach the supreme power (awakening).

The concealed meaning is so called because it is not taught to those who have received the vase initiation alone and is to be known only by trainees who have received the three higher initiations. As to method, the concealed meaning consists in the steps of self-blessing and the circle of the mandala. As to bodhichitta, it consists in relative and ultimate bodhichitta. As to pristine awareness, it consists in natural, innate pristine awareness. Concisely stated, concealed teachings are all those given with reference to the three mandalas of body, *bhaga*, and bodhichitta. The descriptions of the gross and subtle body of channels relate to the body mandala. The descriptions of the natures of the vajra and lotus of method and wisdom and the channels as letters relate to the *bhaga* mandala. The descriptions of the natures of the relative vital essence and the contemplation of bliss and emptiness relate to the bodhichitta mandala. Teaching on pristine awareness wind as the means of cultivating such contemplation is an auxiliary aspect of the concealed meaning.

The final meaning refers to teachings concerning the path that actualizes the final result, that of the pristine awareness of a buddha, which has features not set forth in the sutras.

Auxiliary meaning refers to explanations of the words that actually appear in the tantra in accordance with how they are commonly known, how they are known in language treatises, and their semantic meanings.

The literal meaning refers to explanations of the words to convey understanding when the words do not stand up to reason. The words are explained by examining their derivatives, by separating the syllables, or comparing the shapes of the letters.

Inclusive meaning refers to explanations according to esoteric instructions used when the words in the tantras have been coined by the Buddha and are not known by common people of the world nor found in the treatises. For example, alcohol is referred to by common people as simply alcohol and in the treatises as "intoxicator" (*myos byed*), while in the terminology coined by the Buddha, it is called *madana*. See *SGP*, ff. 62b5-67b4.

25. *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations* (Toh. 417), vol. Nga, f. 10b6-7.

26. Commenting on this verse, Kongtrul states that phenomena never stray from the true nature of reality (*de kho na nyid, tathatā*) which is primordially beyond conceptual limitations: this is the purity of the true nature of things.

When impurities are removed through cultivation of the path, the purity of the true nature is distinguished as the aggregates, elements, and so on, unified with the five buddhas, their five consorts, and so on. Thus, the knowledge that the aggregates and so forth have always existed as the nature of the deities is the purity of the individual deities.

One's intrinsic awareness, luminous and non-conceptual, which must be understood through direct experience, has the nature of yogic cognizance. It has never been tainted by obscurations but remains pure as the innate nature which is bliss-emptiness. It is the knowledge that there is no liberation through another purity believed to exist outside oneself: this is the purity of one's own intrinsic awareness. These three purities apply to both the phase of generation and that of completion (*MH*, ff. 32b5-33a3).

27. *Mahamaya* (Toh. 425), vol. Nga, f. 168b6-7. In the Dg.K., the second line of the citation as it appears in *IOK* is missing and the fourth line is slightly different.

28. See Chapter 5, n. 19.

29. Likely the seed syllables of the five primordial buddhas which represent the phase of generation.

30. See Chapter 13, section entitled "Mandala Circle."

31. See Chapter 13, section entitled "Self-Blessing."

32. Citation not located.

33. *Mer mer po* refers to the embryo in the first week, described as similar to curd in formation.

34. The causal Vajradhara (*rgyu'i rdo rje 'chang*) refers to the deity visualized prior to, and who transforms into, the chief figure of the mandala one is generating oneself as (the fully manifest deity), which is called resultant Vajradhara (*'bras bu rdo rje 'chang*). It is known as causal since it is the cause (base or "seat") for the resultant one.

35. The four essential principles (*de nyid bzhi* or *de kho na nyid bzhi, caturtattva*), that of mantra (*sngags kyi -*), oneself (*bdag gi -*), deity (*lha'i -*), and meditation (*bsam gtan gyi -*). This last is not set forth in this tantra as a separate principle. See *Worldly Lord of the Family Tantra* (Toh. 436), vol. Ca, ff. 27a-29b.

Kongtrul, in reference to the Hevajra tantra, speaks of four essential principles, that of oneself, mantra, deity, and pristine awareness. The essential principle of oneself is explained through the meaning of *evam maya*, that of mantra, through the meaning of the three syllables *om āḥ hūm*, and that of the deity, through the descriptions given in the deity chapter of the Hevajra tantra. The essential principle of pristine awareness is the very essence of all phenomena, natural luminous clarity, the nature of emptiness, from the beginning devoid of birth, abiding, and cessation, pure like the sky, unstained by dualistic conceptions of subject and object (*MH*, f. 65a6-b2). The essential principle of pristine awareness is the very reality that encompasses the essential principles of oneself, mantra, and deity.

36. Pundarika's *Stainless Light*, vol. Tha, f. 114a3-7.

37. Mundane and supramundane truths (*'jig rten dang 'jig rten las 'das pa'i bden pa*). The former refers to the way of attainment of mundane powers by means of the phase of generation, which is meditation involving imagination of the deities of the mandala. The latter refers to the way of attainment of the supreme power, that of the great seal, through the phase of completion, which involves the nonconceptual mind and the signs of smoke, and so forth (Pundarika's *Stainless Light*, vol. Tha, f. 122a5-6).

38. The four aspects of perfect awakening (*rdzogs pa'i byang chub rnam pa bzhi*): perfect awakening in one instant (*skad cig gcig gis mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa*); perfect awakening in five aspects (*rnam pa lngas -*); perfect awakening in twenty aspects (*rnam pa nyi shus -*); and perfect awakening in the net of magical manifestation (*sgyu 'phrul dura bas -*). One instant stands for the pristine awareness vajra; five aspects, the mind vajra (*thugs rdo rje*); twenty aspects, the speech vajra (*gsung rdo rje*); and the net of magical manifestation, the body vajra (*sku rdo rje*). The four aspects of perfect awakening refer to both the path and the result. They are the actual path of the total Vajradhara, and they should therefore be known as the ultimate knowledge of tantra and as the authentic pristine awareness introduced through the initiation.

As to the first, because the nature of reality is bliss alone and because, in the context of the path, the moments of bliss that occur with the blocking of the 21,600 breaths (karmic winds) are immutable and unceasing and of an identical nature, one speaks of the unobscured bliss as perfect awakening in one instant.

As to the second, the pure essences of the five elements (earth, etc.), reality itself, are naturally present as the five pristine awarenesses. In the context of the path, the five aggregates and the five elements, through phases known as "burning the five tatagatas," and so on, are purified in the indivisible union of natural emptiness and bliss resulting from the melting of vital essence. Thus, one speaks of the inner heat (*gtum mo*) in the branch of subsequent application and the other branches of the sixfold yoga as perfect awakening in five aspects.

As to the third, because reality is of the natures of the twenty emptinesses and, in the context of the path, the five sense powers, five objects, five action faculties, and their five activities are conquered by inner heat and transformed and thus understood to be natural emptiness, one speaks of the awakened body manifestation of inner heat and the invincible sound that accompanies that body as perfect awakening in twenty aspects.

As to the fourth, because the ultimate nature of the three existences is like a magical manifestation and, in the context of the path, all of the environment and inhabitants are purified within the infinite images of emptiness, one speaks of the empty forms that manifest infinitely as perfect awakening in the net of magical manifestation.

With respect to the result, the four aspects of perfect awakening correspond to the four dimensions of awakening (*sku bzhi*). Because innate reality does not change or move in a second moment, the innate dimension of awakening (*lhan cig skyes pa'i sku, sahajākāya*) is perfect awakening in one instant. Because it has the nature of the five pristine awarenesses, the dimension of reality (*dharmakāya*) is perfect awakening in five aspects. Because it is emptiness and yet performs the functions of the sense powers, objects, action faculties, and activities, the enjoyment dimension of awakening (*sambhogakāya*) is perfect awakening in twenty aspects. Because its various emanations, like magical manifestations, actualize the welfare of beings, the manifest dimension of

awakening (*nirmāṇakāya*) is perfect awakening in the net of magical manifestation (Taranata's *CSI*, ff. 12a7-13a4).

39. The four dimensions of awakening (*sku bzhi*) refer to the essential, reality, enjoyment, and manifest dimensions. For human beings, these have the characteristics of the fourth state, deep sleep state, dream state, and waking state, respectively. For buddhas, these same states are free of obscurations (Pundarika's *Stainless Light*, vol. Tha, f. 122b3-4).

40. The six families (*rigs drug*) refer to immutable bliss, the element of pristine awareness; consciousnesses, the element of space; compositional factors, the element of wind; feelings, the element of fire; discriminations, the element of water; and forms, the element of earth. For ordinary beings, these six are possessed of obscurations; for buddhas, they are devoid of obscurations (Pundarika's *Stainless Light*, vol. Tha, f. 122b4-5).

41. The twelve truths (*bden pa bcu gnyis*) refer to the twelve links of dependent origination on which conditioned existence is based: ignorance (*ma rig pa, avidyā*), compositional factors (*du byed, saṃskāra*), consciousness (*rnam shes, vijñāna*), name and form (*ming gzugs, nāmarūpa*), the six objects and the sense powers (*skye mched drug, āyatana*), contact (*reg pa, sparśa*), sensation (*tsbor ba, vedanā*) attachment (*sred pa, tṛṣṇā*), grasping (*len pa, upādāna*), becoming (*srid pa, bhava*), birth (*skye pa, jāti*), and old age and death (*rga shi, jarāmaraṇa*). For ordinary beings, these twelve are possessed of obscurations; for buddhas, they are devoid of obscurations (Pundarika's *Stainless Light*, vol. Tha, f. 122b5-6).

42. The sixteen essential realities (*de kbo na nyid bcu drug*) refer to the awakened body of the manifest dimension, awakened speech of the manifest dimension, awakened mind of the manifest dimension, and pristine awareness of the manifest dimension; the awakened body of complete enjoyment, the awakened speech of complete enjoyment, the awakened mind of complete enjoyment, and the pristine awareness of complete enjoyment; the awakened body of the reality dimension, the awakened speech of the reality dimension, the awakened mind of the reality dimension, and the pristine awareness of the reality dimension; the awakened body of the essential dimension, the awakened speech of the essential dimension, the awakened mind of the essential dimension, and the pristine awareness of the essential dimension.

These sixteen essential realities are distinctions within the four joys—the initial joy, the supreme joy, the special joy, and the innate joy. These, for ordinary people, are possessed of obscurations since, with these joys, there is the loss of half of the half of the sixteen vital essences. For the buddhas, they are free of obscurations because the half of the half of the sixteen vital essences are withheld.

To explain, one speaks of sixteen essential realities distinguished into four groups of four, each related to one of the four joys. In this case, the four joys are associated with the head, throat, heart, and navel, respectively.

Since the head is the place related to the manifest dimension and place of the vital essence of the awakened body, one speaks of the reality of the awakened body of the manifest dimension, and so forth, corresponding to the four aspects of initial joy.

Since the throat is the place related to the enjoyment dimension and place of the vital essence of the awakened speech, one speaks of the reality of the awakened body of the complete enjoyment dimension, and so forth, corresponding to the four aspects of supreme joy.

Since the heart is the place related to the reality dimension and place of the vital essence of the awakened mind, one speaks of the reality of the awakened body of the reality dimension, and so forth, corresponding to the four aspects of special joy.

Since the navel is the place related to the innate dimension and place of the vital essence of pristine awareness, one speaks of the reality of the awakened body of the innate dimension, and so forth, corresponding to the four aspects of innate joy. (Pundarika's *Stainless Light*, vol. Tha, ff. 122b7-123a3).

43. The sixteen emptinesses (*stong pa nyid bcu drug*) refer to the dark phase of the moon, the sun, and wisdom. The sixteen compassions refer to the light phase of the moon, the moon, and method.

In this context, emptiness has three aspects: emptiness (*stong pa nyid*), emptiness of the great (*chen po stong nyid*), and emptiness of the ultimate (*don dam pa stong pa nyid*). Emptiness comprises the emptinesses of the five aggregates, which represent the first five phases of the waning moon. The emptiness of the great consists of the emptinesses of the five elements, which represent the second five phases (from the sixth to the tenth) of the waning moon. The emptiness of the ultimate comprises the emptinesses of the five sense powers which represent the next five phases (the eleventh, etc.). The day of the dark moon, the fifteenth, is the fifteenth emptiness. Between the end of the dark moon and the beginning of the first day of the waxing phase, there is the sixteenth, the total emptiness (*thams cad stong pa nyid*).

Compassion has three aspects: focused on sentient beings (*sems can la dmigs pa*), focused on the teachings (*chos la dmigs pa*), and nonreferential (*dmigs pa med pa*). The first represents the first five phases of the waxing of the moon. The second refers to the next five phases (the sixth, etc.). The third refers to the next five (from the eleventh to the fifteenth). Between the end of the full moon and the beginning of the first day of the waning or dark phase of the moon is the sixteenth compassion (Pundarika's *Stainless Light*, vol. Tha, f. 123a3-b1).

44. Ten mundane initiations (*'jig rten pa'i dbang bskur ba*): water, diadem, silk ribbons, vajra and bell, the great deliberate behavior, name, permission, vase, secret, and pristine awareness through wisdom. These are the ten mundane initiations of ordinary beings. They purify body, speech, and mind, pristine awareness, elements and aggregates, sense powers, faculties of action, and so forth. The eleventh, the supramundane initiation (*'jig rten las 'das pa bcu gcig pa*), known as "the fourth one which is just like that," has the nature of the great seal, supreme immutable pristine awareness. Through the words of the master, body, speech, mind, and so forth, are purified owing to the very reality of their being unobscured in nature (Pundarika's *Stainless Light*, vol. Tha, f. 123b1-4).

45. Action seal (*las rgya, karmamudrā*), a real woman; pristine awareness seal (*ye shes kyi phyag rgya, jñānamudrā*) or imaginary seal; the great seal (*phyag rgya chen po, mahāmudrā*), the pristine awareness of immutable supreme bliss. See Chapter 13, n. 31.

The mutable bliss related to the desire realm is the power attained from the action seal; the moving bliss related to the form realm is the power attained from a pristine awareness seal. These two are mundane powers. The pristine awareness of immutable bliss is the supramundane power attained from the great seal (Pundarika's *Stainless Light*, vol. Tha, f. 123b4-6).

46. The first two chapters of the *Kalachakra Condensed Tantra* teach the phenomena of cyclic life (the sphere of purification) and the essence of awakening (the object of purification); the third chapter teaches the basis of the path; the fourth chapter, the stages and the paths; and the fifth chapter, the result (Taranata's *Commentary on the Summary of the Initiation*, f. 14a1).

47. This is a reference to the trilogy of *Commentaries by Bodhisattvas* (*Byang chub sems 'grel skor gsum*): Pundarika's *Stainless Light*, a commentary on the *Kalachakra Condensed Tantra* (Toh. 845); Vajrapani's *Commentary Epitomizing the Condensed Tantra of Chakrasamvara*, referred to by Tibetan authors as *Eulogy Commentary* (*Phyag rdor bstod 'grel*) (Toh. 1402); and Vajragarbha's *Commentary Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra* (referred to by Tibetans as Vajragarbha's *Commentary* (*rDo rje snying 'grel*) (Toh. 1180).

48. The four reliances (*rton pa bzhi, catuḥpratiśaraṇa*) are set forth in the *Sutra on Great Perfect Peace* (*Mya ngan las 'das pa chen po'i mdo*) with the words of the Buddha: "Monks, the doctrine is found in four ways. It is found in the meaning, not in the words. It is found in the teachings, not in the individual. It is found in pristine awareness, not in consciousness. It is found in the definitive meaning, not in the provisional one." These four are extensively discussed in the *Dialogue with Akshayamati Sutra* (*Blo gros mi zad pas bstan pa'i mdo*).

Reliance on the meaning rather than on the words means that one should rely on the uncommon methods to actualize the omniscience of pristine awareness rather than on the words of common treatises or on merely the words of the eighty-four thousand aspects of the doctrine.

Reliance on the teachings rather than on individuals means that one should trust the perfect view and conduct, as well as teachers of the universal way who are well-versed in the centrist view rather than trusting persons who are important merely owing to their social status or family, such as royalty, or those renowned as incarnate masters, scholars, accomplished yogins, or teachers who, despite having many students and much wealth, contradict the true teachings in their behavior.

Reliance on pristine awareness rather than on consciousness means that one should trust essential pristine awareness which passes beyond arising and cessation and other conceptual constructs, trust the understanding of the two selflessnesses, and trust pristine awareness which correctly realizes the authentic condition of existence, the luminous clarity essence of awakening. Such forms of trust are to be relied on rather than believing one's own opinion to be the ultimate one; or trusting in the conceptions that hold the self and aggregates to be real, or in the consciousnesses attached to the pleasures of the five sensory objects.

Reliance on the definitive meaning rather than on the provisional meaning means that one should trust the definitive meaning of the inconceivably vast and profound truths, the domain of experience of practitioners of superior faculties, which cannot be fathomed by short-sighted sophists, proclaimers, or solitary sages. One should not trust the provisional meaning that teaches disillusionment with cyclic existence, the liberation of the individualists' way, or the points of view that assert substantial or imputed existence, that maintain that everything is mind, or that present the emptiness of nothing whatsoever (*IOK*, vol. III, p. 115).

49. Vajragarbha's *Commentary Epitomizing the Hevajra Tantra*, Toh. 1180, vol. Ka, f. 5a5-6.

50. Reading *'dod* for *dod*.

51. The protective circle (*srung 'khor, rāksācakra*): generally, an enclosure formed of vajras. Kongtrul provides an example of the generation of the protective circle: First, one contemplates that from the letter *ra*, a sun disk manifests. Above the sun disk a black *hūm* transforms into a huge crossed vajra, having twelve prongs; white in the east, yellow in the south, red in the west, green in the north, and blue at the center. The vajra emits multicolored rays of light in all directions, creating a strong and solid enclosure of indestructible vajras including a rim, a roofed tent above, and a ceiling. One contemplates a blazing fire with a net of arrows outside the enclosure. Vajragarbha's *Commentary on the Hevajra Tantra*, citing the large *Hevajra Root Tantra*, explains as part of the protective circle visualization of a ten-spoked wheel above which are positioned the ten wrathful deities. Accordingly, the omniscient Rangjung Dorjé says that in most cases of the phase of generation of the highest yoga, one contemplates the protective circle of the ten wrathful ones as described in the *Indestructible Tent Tantra*.

In terms of the definitive meaning, in the generation of the protective circle, the letter *ra* stands for the red vital essence, method, and the relative nature. The letter *hūm* stands for the white vital essence, wisdom, bodhichitta, and the ultimate nature. The crossed vajra born from these is the pristine awareness of great bliss, the indivisibility of method and wisdom. The rim is the relative truth inseparable from the ultimate truth, represented by the roof (*CH*, f. 61a4-b6).

52. The sixth family (*rigs drug pa*) is that of Vajradhara (*rdo rje 'chang*). It is known as the sixth family as it encompasses all the other five families.

## CHAPTER 17: THE WAYS OF THE ANCIENT TRADITION

1. The ancient tradition (*rnying ma'i lugs*), which originated with the early translations of tantras, was inspired by the activity of the Indian master Padmasambhava in the ninth century. The tantric texts translated from Sanskrit prior to the end of the tenth century and during the early spread of Buddhism in Tibet are known as the tantras of the early translation (*gsang sngags snga 'gyur*).

2. Vimalamitra's *Great Perfection Endowed with Conch Letters*, f. 3b1. Citation continues as: *theg pa che chung las kyang chen po nyid | pha rol phyin dang sngags las min 'dra'o*.

3. *Mode of Transcendent Wisdom in One Hundred and Fifty Stanzas* (Toh. 489), vol. Ta. The citation as it appears in *IOK* is not found in this text.

4. A reference to Shantipa.

5. Rok Dershek Chenpo (Rog bder gshegs chen po), also known as Rok Dershek Chenpo Sherab Ö (Rog bder gshegs chen po shes rab 'od), a Nyingma master and propagator of the *General Scripture That Unifies the Knowledge of All Buddhas* and the *Net of Magical Manifestation*. See "Miscellaneous Lineages of the Zur and Kham Traditions" in *NSH*, pp. 701-702.

Drime Özer (Longchenpa) (Klong chen pa dri med 'od zer) (1308-1363), a great tantric adept, philosopher, and writer, was the most important master in the great perfection system after Guru Padmasambhava. He was the author of two hundred and sixty-three works, the most important being the *Seven Treasuries*.

Terdak Lingpa (gTer bdag gling pa) (1617-1682) was both disciple and teacher of the Fifth Dalai Lama. His work was essential to the transmission of the ancient tradition. In 1676, he founded Mindroling Monastery in central Tibet, which was renowned as a center of learning.

6. *Majestic Creative Energy of the Universe* (Toh. 828), vol. Ka, ff. 15b6-16a1. The citation is from the tenth chapter of this tantra (concerning the manifestation of perfect conditions). Kongtrul's version of this citation reads "the fourth (*bzhi pa*) collection" whereas the Dg.K. reads simply: "apart from these three (*gsam las*)." Other versions of the *Majestic* do not clearly specify a fourth collection.

7. Text not identified.

8. *Descent to Lanka Scripture* (Toh. 107), vol. Ca, f. 173b6.

9. The way that leads away from the source of suffering (*kun 'byung 'dren pa*); the way that resembles Vedic austerity (*dka' thub rig byed*); and the way of the dominating method (*dbang sgyur thabs*).

10. Three causal ways: the ways of the proclaimers, solitary sages, and bodhisattvas.

11. *Descent to Lanka Scripture* (Toh. 107), vol. Ca, f. 175b5-6.

12. The third line of this citation in *IOK* appears as *sems ni nam zhiḡ gyur pa na* while in the Dg.K it appears as *sems ni rab tu gyur ba ni*. In any case, from a reading of this section in the *Descent to Lanka Scripture*, this line seems to mean that as long as mind (*sems*) apprehends appearances as real, the ways to realization will be infinite. When the mind has completely transformed or reverted from (*ldog*) apprehension of things as real and has thus realized the selfless nature of things, there is neither traveller nor way.

13. *General Scripture That Unifies the Knowledge of All Buddhas* (Toh. 829), vol. Ka. Citation not located.

14. This represents the most ancient classification of the nine ways (see, for instance, Padmasambhava's *Garland of Views*). The first way to realization is that of the worldly spiritual way of gods and humans (*'jig rten lha mi'i theg pa*), followed by the ways of the proclaimers and the solitary sages, considered as one.

15. Conduct tantra in the ancient translation system is sometimes called *ubhaya*, meaning "both," because it applies the outer activity typical of action tantra and at the same time is based on the view of yoga tantra.

16. *Majestic Creative Energy of the Universe* (Toh. 828), vol. Ka, f. 6a5. This citation is from chapter five of this tantra, which explains the definitive meaning or primordial state of knowledge. Missing in *IOK*'s version is the line: *bstan ni rnam pa gyis su bstan*.

17. The word "I" is found throughout the *Majestic Creative Energy* as though to indicate a speaker. However, this "I" refers to one's own true nature, pure and total presence (*rig pa*), primordial awakening.

18. "Its existence is not other than the one" denotes the ground; "Its arising occurs in the nine ways," the path; and "Its union is unified in great perfection," the result. The *IOK* version, between lines 3 and 4, does not include the line "Nevertheless, its manifestation presents two aspects."

19. *bdag nyid de kho na nyid*: denotes the indestructible state of the ground continuum.

20. Offspring (*sras*) here refers to original or “root” bodhichitta (pure and perfect mind), or great bliss, which is the “child,” or which has the nature of indivisible appearance (the father) and emptiness (the mother). Bodhichitta is called root (*rtsa ba*) since it is the ground for the appearance of everything, cyclic life and perfect peace; or because everything is complete and perfect within it (Namkhai Norbu Rinpoché, oral communication).

21. Essence (*ngo bo*), nature (*rang bzhin*), and compassionate energy (*thugs rje*). In the inner tantras, compassionate energy means that the practitioner experiences all manifestations as the compassionate energy of buddhas.

22. Mahayoga is called tantra (*rgyud*) because it presents in their entirety the ten topics (*dnagos po bcu*): the view, conduct, mandala, initiation, pledges, activation rituals, powers, contemplation, offerings, and mantras and mudras. Anuyoga, which includes such scriptures as the *General Scripture That Unifies the Knowledge of All Buddhas*, is known as elucidation (*lung*) because, in addition to the ten topics, it fully sets forth the most essential points of those ten. Atiyoga is called esoteric instructions (*man ngag*) because it principally provides special instructions and does not present all the topics contained in the tantras.

23. Superior (*lbag pa*) means that the relative and ultimate truths as understood in this context are superior to the two truths explained in the way of the perfections. See Chapter 18, section entitled “View of Mahayoga.”

24. Zurchungpa (Zur chung pa shes rab grags pa) (1014-1074): an important master of the ancient tradition in the lineage of mahayoga.

25. Atiyoga is taught to practitioners of mahayoga and anuyoga who are attached to effort and striving toward a goal; it is the way to self-liberate that attachment.

What is set forth in this citation is not a direct relationship between mahayoga, anuyoga, and atiyoga and the mother tantra, father tantra, and nondual tantra of the new schools but is instead a simple analogy: Just as father tantra emphasizes the phase of generation, and mother tantra, the phase of completion, mahayoga emphasizes the phase of generation, anuyoga, the phase of completion, and so on.

26. *Great Array (bkod pa chen po)*. Text not identified. *NSH* suggests that perhaps this text is the *Great Array of Ati*, *NGB*, vol. 2, no. 39 (*rDzogs pa chen po chos nyid byang chub kyi sems rin chen bkod pa rnam par dbye ba'i rgyud*).

## CHAPTER 18: MAHAYOGA

1. Three outer yogas (*yo ga phyi pa*): action, conduct, and yoga.

2. Two purities (*dag pa gnyis*) refers to natural purity and the purity that occurs once adventitious stains are cleansed.

3. See the section in this chapter entitled “Total State of Being.”

4. The term “experience” (*nyams*) is generally used in the case of an experience of an unrealized practitioner; that of a realized practitioner is referred to as pure perception or vision (*dag snang*).

5. The mandala of the nature of pristine awareness (*rang bzhin ye shes kyi dkyil 'khor*); the superior reflected images of the contemplation mandala, also called the emanated mandala (*lhag pa ting nge 'dzin gyi gzugs brnyan nam sprul pa'i -*); the mandala of the experience of total presence (*rig pa nyams kyi -*); and the superior reflected images mandala (*lhag pa gzugs brnyan gyi -*).

6. *Vajra of Magical Manifestation* (*sGyu 'phrul rdo rje*): the explanatory tantras of the *Net of Magical Manifestation*. NGB, vol. 15. See NSH, p. 248.

7. A master who dwells on the final path (*mthar lam pa*) is one who abides on the last stream of pristine awareness (*rgyun mtha'i ye shes*) before attaining buddhahood.

8. The above section is taken from Dharmashri's *VOWS*, ff. 232b4-234a.

9. *Secret Essence* (Toh. 832), vol. Kha, f. 120a6.

10. The ten initiations that bring benefit (*phan pa'i dbang bcu*). Concerning their significance, see Longchenpa's *Dispelling Darkness in the Ten Directions*, pp. 376-379.

11. Five initiations that impart ability (*nus pa'i dbang lnga*). See Longchenpa's *Dispelling Darkness in the Ten Directions*, pp. 372-376.

The ten initiations that bring benefit and the five initiations that impart ability are subdivisions of the four basic initiations. The ten that bring benefit are included in the vase initiation; the supreme secret initiation is included in the secret and pristine awareness through wisdom initiations; the remaining four initiations that impart ability are part of the fourth, the word initiation (Longchenpa's *Commentary on Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind*, vol. Kha, Dodrupchen Publications, f. 24b).

12. The deliberate behavior of tantric conduct (*spyod pa'i brtul zbugs*) refers to a vast range of activities including those that effect ripening performed during the initiation; those that effect the achievement of paths not yet achieved; those that enhance the realizations of the phase of generation and completion practiced in one's abode, in charnel grounds, or in power places. In particular, it refers to tantric activities performed in secret by persons who have not yet gained stability in pristine awareness, carried out during formal sessions of meditation and between sessions. The deliberate behavior of awareness (*rig pa'i brtul zbugs*) is performed openly once one has gained stability in pristine awareness and entails wearing yogic attire, associating with consorts, and so forth. The deliberate behavior of sameness (*mnyam pa'i brtul zbugs*) is performed throughout the tantric path and requires making no distinctions between clean and unclean, pure and impure, and so forth.

13. *Commentary on the Pure Scripture* (*mDo byang tika*). Text not identified.

14. Releasing (*gyol ba*) refers to the ritual of liberating beings who are leading extremely evil lives. According to the tantras, an evil person who throughout his life harbors intense hatred for others and constantly harms them, when he cannot be tamed by any other means, should be released from the present life and his consciousness transferred to a pure buddha realm. This release serves the double purpose of saving the evil person from rebirth in hell and relieving others and the world of his harmful presence. The ritual to perform this release can only be performed by a yogin of the highest attainment who meets the following requirements with regard to motivation, action, and result:

Regarding the motivation, the yogin must have no self-interest whatsoever and desire only the other person's ultimate good. For the action, the yogin must effect the release through meditative absorption, hand mudras and mantras, and never resort to the use of poison or weapons of any kind. In addition, the yogin must be able to resurrect the individual. For the result, the adept, using the power of meditation, must be able to project the consciousness of the person into a pure buddha realm (Bokar Rinpoché, oral communication).

15. Symbol (*phyag rgya*). A seed syllable such as *hūṃ* is a symbol from which oneself as a deity manifests.

The three contemplations mentioned here—the contemplation of the yoga of great emptiness (wisdom); the contemplation of illusory compassion (method); and the contemplation of coarse and subtle symbols—refer to the contemplation of reality (*de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin*); the contemplation of total vision (*kun tu snang ba'i* -); and the contemplation of cause (*rgyu'i* -). The contemplation of reality is to remain in meditative equanimity, free from concepts, in a state all-pervasive like space. The contemplation of total vision refers to the arising of impartial compassion, like a magical illusion, directed toward all beings who lack understanding of reality. The contemplation of the cause, which depends on the preceding two, consists in the visualization of a syllable, *hūṃ* for example, which is of the essence of the pristine awareness of the state of pure presence (Kongtrul's *Sunlight*, f. 12a2-4).

16. *Self-Arising State of Total Presence* (*Rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud*). One of the main tantras of the esoteric instructions division (*man ngag sde*) transmitted by Garab Dorjé.

17. This is the actual view to be realized at the beginning of the path, the primordial state of pure and total presence and its expressive energy.

18. The view of reality, that of great emptiness, consists in the absorption in the integrated state of ultimate luminous clarity, a concept-free contemplation, and in the luminous clarity of deep sleep (Dharmashri's *VOWS*, f. 230a4).

19. The view of all-illuminating illusory compassion (*snying rje sgyu ma kun snang gi lta ba*) is the yoga of compassion like a magical illusion, a state of uninterrupted compassion which is the bliss that manifests from seeing all appearances of the day and dream state as a magical illusion (Dharmashri's *VOWS*, f. 230a4-6).

20. The view of the single seal, the union of appearance and emptiness (*snang stong zung 'jug phyag rgya gcig pa'i lta ba*), refers to the single seal of the deity's body, which is the genuine union arising with the bliss of the melted vital essence brought about by the secondary conditions of contemplation and great compassion increased by all kinds of appearance (Dharmashri's *VOWS*, f. 230a6-b1).

21. The view of the elaborate seal, the realization of the myriad of thoughts as the mandala (*rtog tshogs dkyil 'khor du rtogs pa phyag rgya spros bcas kyi lta ba*), consists in the stabilization of the realization that all appearances are actually the deity, which is the state of union (Dharmashri's *VOWS*, f. 230b1).

22. Everything-in-one-group practice (*tshom bu tshogs sgrub*). *Tshogs sgrub* is a term borrowed from the *Abhisamayalamkara*, in which context it means "practice through accumulation" and refers to an aspect of the path of preparation (*sbyor lam*). With *tshom bu*,

meaning “group” or “bundle,” it indicates the enjoyment of everything without being bound to the notion of one thing to be rejected and another to be accepted.

23. The direct knowledge of reality gained on the path of seeing purifies the body and grants the power to extend life span.

24. Buddhaguhya's *Sequence of the Path of the Magical Net* (*Māyājālapathakrama*, *sGyu 'phrul lam rim*), P. 4736; and vol. 23 of the *Collected Transmitted Teachings of the Ancient Tradition* (*rNyung ma bka' ma rgyas pa*) in 55 vols. Edited by Dudjom Rinpoché. Kalimpong, India, 1982 (henceforth cited as *NKG*).

25. The view as the characteristic of knowledge which is the primary cause of awakening (*rgyu shes pa'i mtshan nyid lta ba*) is the actual recognition of the ground continuum (*gzhi rgyud*), naturally present pristine awareness (*rang gnas kyi ye shes*), by means of the four axioms (Dharmashri's *VOWS*, f. 230a2).

26. Ten topics of the tantras (*rgyud kyi dngos po bcu*). See Chapter 20, section entitled “Ways to Teach the Tantras.”

27. In the mirror-like reality which is the indivisibility of primordial purity and spontaneous perfection manifest various images or discursive thoughts (Namkhai Norbu Rinpoché, oral communication).

28. In the way of the perfections, the ultimate truth is, for the most part, posited as simply emptiness; in this context, the superior ultimate truth is the indivisible union of primordial emptiness or purity (*ka dag*) and spontaneous perfection (*lhun grub*) of all qualities. The relative truth in this context is superior to that of the perfections as it is manifest as the mandala of the deity.

29. These axioms or reasonings (*gtan tshigs*), though different from those taught in the central way, are called axioms because they involve an object of evaluation and a means of evaluation. However, in the fundamental nature of reality, no such distinction between object evaluated and means of evaluation can be made (Namkhai Norbu Rinpoché, oral communication). The four axioms appear in *Secret Essence* (Toh. 832), f. 122a2; and *Net of Magical Manifestation of Vajrasattva* (Toh. 833), f. 143b5. Padmasambhava discusses them briefly in his *Garland of Views*.

30. Reading *gzhal bya* for *gzhal byed*.

31. Unimpeded expressive energy (*rol pa 'gag med*).

32. Identical cause (*rgyu gcig pa*) refers to the single nature of phenomena and not to a single cause capable of producing all phenomena.

33. Concerning understanding through the mode of letters (*yig 'bru'i tshul gyis rtogs pa*), the unborn condition of all phenomena is symbolized by the syllable *a*, the nature of awakened speech. This unborn condition manifests in an illusory way with the capacity to function on a relative level; this is *o*, the nature of awakened body. The total presence which is the knowledge of such condition, illusory pristine awareness without center or limits, is *m* (Padmasambhava's *Garland of Views*, f. 3b5-6).

Rongzom explains that understanding through the mode of letters serves the purpose of understanding the state of enlightenment according to tantra. The three syllables are in fact the doors to liberation since awakened body, speech, and mind, the naturally

perfected result, are also the very meaning of liberation. *A* is the door of the unborn, *o* is the door from which originates miraculous manifestations, and *m* is the door of nonduality. See *Commentary on the Garland of Views*.

34. Understanding through the empowering energy (*byin gyis brlabs kyiis rtogs pa*): Like madder, which transforms white cotton by dyeing it red, here all phenomena are transformed into the manifestation of enlightenment by virtue of the force of the understanding of the identical cause and the mode of letters (Padmasambhava, *Garland of Views*, f. 3b6-7).

35. Direct cognizance (*mngon sum par rtogs pa*): not depending solely on the words of the scriptures or the instructions, a definite ascertainment from the depths of the mind by virtue of the state of one's own pure and total presence (*Garland of Views*, 3b7-4a1).

36. *Secret Essence Tantra* (Toh. 832), vol. Kha, f. 122b1.

37. As for the correspondences between the five elemental properties (*byung ba lnga*) and the five consorts (*yum lnga*), the element of earth is Lochana; water, Mamaki; fire, Pandara; wind, Tara; and space, Dhatvishvari. As for the correspondences between the five aggregates (*phung po lnga*) and five buddhas (*yab lnga*), the aggregate of forms is Vairochana; feelings, Ratnasambhava; discriminations, Amitabha; compositional factors, Amoghassiddhi; and consciousnesses, Akshobhya. The correspondences between the eightfold group of consciousnesses (*rnam shes tshogs brgyad*) and the five pristine awarenesses (*ye shes lnga*) are as follows: the ground-of-all consciousness is mirror-like pristine awareness; the mental consciousness, the discerning pristine awareness; the afflicted mind, the pristine awareness of total sameness; and the five sense consciousnesses, accomplishing pristine awareness. The pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena is inherent to the natures of all the other pristine awarenesses.

38. *Secret Essence Tantra*, f. 122b1.

39. Partial ultimate truth (*rnam grangs pa'i don dam*) as opposed to the all-encompassing ultimate truth (*rnam grangs ma yin pa'i don dam*).

40. A logic found in Chandrakirti's *Guide to the Middle Way* (Toh. 3862), which leads to the understanding of the lack of self-nature of phenomena through the elimination of the four conceptual extremes (holding that phenomena arise from themselves, from other, from both, or from neither).

41. Total state of being (*bdag nyid chen po*): Everything is recognized to be the pristine awareness of pure and total presence.

42. *Secret Essence Tantra*, f. 121a4.

43. *Array of the Path of the Net of Magical Manifestation* by Indrabhuti, P. 4737.

44. Eight sets of sadhanas (*sgrub sde brgyad*): the eight divisions of sadhanas in mahayoga, or "eight great mandalas of deities," transmitted by eight great realized masters (*grub pa'i slob dpon chen po brgyad*): one, the sadhanas of Manjushri (Yam>ntaka), awakened body (*jam dpal sku*), transmitted by Manjushrimitra; two, the sadhanas of Padma (Hayagr<iva), awakened speech (*padma gsung*), transmitted by Nagarjuna; three, the sadhanas of Vishuddha (or< Heruka), awakened mind (*yang dag thugs*), transmitted by Humkara; four, the sadhanas of Pure Nectar (Vajr>m&eta), awakened qualities (*bdud rtsi yon tan*),

transmitted by Vimalamitra; five, the sadhanas of Vajrakīlaya (Vajrakīla), awakened activities (*phur pa phrin las*), transmitted by Prabhahasti; six, the sadhanas of the magical forces of the *mamo* (*mātarah*) (*ma mo rbod gtong*), transmitted by Dhanasamskrita; seven, the sadhanas of worship of worldly deities (*jig rten mchod bstod*), transmitted by Rambughya; and eight, the sadhanas of fierce mantra and maledictions (*dmod pa drag sngags*), transmitted by Shantigarbha. Each of these eight divisions comprises a vast tantric literature, as found in the *Collected Tantras of the Ancient Tradition*. On the body of literature on the eight sets of sadhanas and their origin, see *NSH*, Book II, History, pp. 474-482.

45. Nine vast spaces (*klong dgu*) of pristine awarenesses are spoken of primarily in the mind division of the great perfection system. As explained in the root tantra, the *All-Surpassing Sound* (*sGra thal 'gyur*), and in other tantras as well, throughout the infinite universe are numerous worlds in which the principal tantras of the great perfection teachings are present. The essence of the great perfection teachings found in these supreme dimensions is condensed in what are known as the nine vast spaces: one, the vast space of the view without partiality (*phyogs ris med pa lta ba'i klong*); two, the vast space of meditation without any objective reference (*dmigs gtad med pa sgom pa'i -*); three, the vast space of conduct beyond hope and fear (*re dogs med pa spyod pa'i -*); four, the vast space of the result beyond doubt (*the tshom med pa 'bras bu'i -*); five, the vast space of the reality dimension beyond good and bad (the total dimension of existence) (*bzang ngan med pa chos sku'i -*); six, the vast space of the enjoyment dimension beyond fixed concepts (*dran 'dzin med pa longs sku'i -*); seven, the vast space of the manifest dimension beyond the limits of eternalism and nihilism (*rtag chad med pa sprul sku'i -*); eight, the vast space of luminous clarity wherein there is nothing to be contemplated (*bsgom du med pa 'od gsal gyi -*); and nine, the vast space of awareness in which there is no need of antidote (*gnyen po med pa dran pa'i -*).

46. Four channel-wheels of Manjushri, awakened body (*'jam dpal gyi sku 'khor lo bzhi*).

47. Yamantaka (gShin rje): the wrathful manifestation of Manjushri. In the ancient translation tantras, Yamantaka is the central figure of the transcendent family related to the awakened body.

48. Secret channel-wheel (*gsang ba'i 'khor lo*) or abiding channel-wheel (*gnas pa'i -*); channel-wheel of existence (*srid pa'i 'khor lo*); cutting channel-wheel (*gcod pa'i 'khor lo*); and channel-wheel of emanation (*sprul pa'i 'khor lo*).

49. The three realms of existence (*srid pa gsum*) or three worlds: realms of desire, form, and formlessness.

50. Padma, awakened speech (*padma gsung*), refers to the *heruka* of the lotus family, Hayagriva, the wrathful manifestation of Avalokiteshvara, characterized by the head of a horse as a crown ornament.

51. The three neighs of Hayagriva (*rtā mgrin gyi rta skad thengs gsum*).

52. Mamo (*ma mo*, *mātarah*), one of the eight classes (*sde bryad*) of beings, fierce females who can provoke epidemics, famine, and wars. They correspond to the *matrika* of the Indian tradition. They are known as *ma mo*, where *ma* means mother, root, or origin of all of the fierce classes of female beings, who are like owners of the universe.

53. Great Glorious One (dPal chen po): here synonymous with Vishuddha (Yang dag), the *heruka* of the vajra family, a manifestation of Vajrapani, related to awakened mind.
54. Ten blood-drinking *herukas* and their consorts (*khrag 'ihung yab yum bcu*): Buddha Heruka, Vajra Heruka, Ratna Heruka, Padma Heruka, Karma Heruka, and the five consorts.
55. The eight *gauris* (*ko'u ri brgyad*) are Gauri (Ko'u ri), Cauri (Tso'u ri), Pramoha (Pra mo), Vetali (Be'e ta li), Pukkasi (Pus ka si), Gasmari (Kas ma ri), Smashani (Sma sha ni), and Chandali (Tsan dha li).
56. Eight *simhas* (*sim ha brgyad*) are Simhamukha (Seng ha mu kha), Yaghrimukha (Bya kri mu kha), Shrigalamukha (Sri la mu kha), Svanamukha (Shwa na mu kha), Gridhramukha (Kri ta mu kha), Kankamukha (Kang ka mu kha), Kakamukha (Khwa kha mu kha), Ulumukha (Hu lu mu mkha).
57. The four gate-guardians beginning with Horse-Head (*ria gdong sgo ma bzhi*): Ankusha (Horse-Head), Pasha (Sow-Head), Shrinkhala (Lion-Head), Ghanta (Snake-Head).
58. Twenty-eight *ishvaris* (*dbang phyug, isvari*): six *ishvaris* of the east—yak-headed Rakshasi, leopard-headed Mahadevi, mongoose-headed Lobha, snake-headed Brahmi, snow-bear-headed Kumri, and brown-bear-headed Indrani; six *ishvaris* of the south—bat-headed Vajra, crocodile-headed Shanti, scorpion-headed Amrita, hawk-headed Chandra, fox-headed Danda, and tiger-headed Rakshasi; six *ishvaris* of the west—vulture-headed Bhakshini, horse-headed Rati, eagle-headed Mahabhala, dog-headed Rakshasi, hoopoe-headed Kama, and deer-headed Vasuraksha; six *ishvaris* of the north—wolf-headed Vayudevi, ibex-headed Nari, sow-headed Varahi, crow-headed Vajra, elephant-headed Mahahastini, snake-headed Varunadevi; and four *ishvaris* of the gates—cuckoo-headed Vajra, goat-headed Vajra, lion-headed Vajra, and snake-headed Vajra.
59. The five dimensions (*sku lnga*): reality dimension (*dharmakāya*), enjoyment dimension (*sambhogakāya*), manifest dimension (*nirmāṇakāya*), essential dimension (*svabhāvikakāya*), and indestructible dimension (*vajrakāya*).
60. For a description of the fifty-eight *herukas*, wrathful manifestations, see *Liberation through Hearing in the Intermediate State* (*Bar do thos grol*), translated as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* by Freemantle and Trungpa.
61. Mahottara (Che mchog) is the *heruka* of the jewel family, related to awakened qualities, also called Amritaguna (Amṛtaguṇa, bDud rtsi yon tan).
62. The five nectars (*bdud rsi lnga*): feces (*dri chen*), urine (*dri chu*), blood (*khrag*), semen (*rdo rje'i zil pa*), and human flesh (*mi'i sha*). These five are the basic constituents of one's body, which include the three humors of wind, bile, and phlegm according to traditional Indo-Tibetan medicine. The nectars correspond to the buddhas of the five families: Ratnasambhava is blood; Amitabha, semen; Amoghāsiddhi, human flesh; Akshobhya, urine; and Vairocana, feces.
63. Vajra Kilaya (rDo rje phur pa) is the *heruka* of the action family, related to activities. His symbol is the dagger with a three-sided blade, called *kila* (*phur ba*), used in rites to subdue hostile forces.

64. The three existences (*srid pa gsum*) refer to the realms of desire, form, and formlessness; alternatively, above the earth, below the earth, and on the earth.
65. The original life (*gnas srog*) refers to the original symbol of life of a protective deity, usually her seed syllable. The life of the refined essence (*dvangs srog*) refers to the vital essence of the five elements. The additional life (*gdag srog*) refers to a new symbol conferred on the deity following the deity subjugation.
66. The tantra tradition (*rgyud sde*) is based on the eighteen tantras of mahayoga, the principal of which is the *Secret Essence* (*Gubhyagarbha, gSang ba snying po*). For a list of these tantras, see Chapter 20, section entitled "Tantric Scriptures in the Ancient Tradition."
67. *Maktika* corresponds to the Sanskrit *māṅṅika*. *NSH* (n. 267) notes that according to Mipam (*sPyi don 'od gsal snying po*, pp. 48-49), *makshika* is a specific kind of mercury reputedly employed as a catalyst for the transformation of iron into gold.
68. *Oceanic Magical Manifestation* (*sGyu 'phrul rgya mtsho*). *NGB*, vol. 15, no. 199. Also referred to as the *Explanatory Tantra of the Oceanic Magical Net*.
69. The six channel-wheels (*'khor lo drug*) referred to here are the channel-wheels at the crown of the head, forehead, throat, heart, navel, and secret place.
70. Blazing and dripping (*'bar 'dzag*) refers to the practice of inner heat (*gtum mo*), where blazing refers to the blaze of the inner fire at the navel symbolized by the letter *a*, and dripping, the descent of the white vital essence from the crown of the head, symbolized by the letter *hām*.
71. During sexual union, the adept applies the technique that causes the vital essences to descend and be withheld, reversed, and spread throughout the channels of the body. This generates the four joys in the reverse order, eliciting the pristine awareness of bliss and emptiness (Dharmashri's *VOWS*, ff. 230b6-231a1).
72. *All-Surpassing Explanatory Tantra of the Net of Magical Manifestation* (*bShad rgyud thal ba*), *NGB*, vol. 13.
73. Wisdom of three kinds (*shes rab gsum*): wisdom derived from listening, from reflection, and from meditation.
74. *NSH* (n. 271) says that according to Mipam (*sPyi don 'od gsal snying po*, pp. 48-49), the *kaustubha* is applied to the base metal to extract gold. In classical Indian mythology, this is the name of the gemstone of Vishnu which he obtained during the churning of the primeval ocean.
75. Indrabhuti, king of Oddiyana, a figure of great importance in the lineages of many of the highest tantras. For details of his life, see *NSH*, pp. 458-462.
76. *Secret Essence* (Toh. 832), vol. Kha, f. 123b6-7.
77. On the three characteristics (*mtshan nyid gsum*), Padmasambhava explains that the comprehension of the principles of the four understandings (axioms) is the characteristic of knowledge (*shes pa'i mtshan nyid*). To acquire greater and greater familiarity with such comprehension is the characteristic of application (*'jug pa'i -*). The realization that derives from the power of acquired familiarity is the characteristic of the result (*'bras bu'i -*) (*Garland of Views*, f. 4a2-3).

For a succinct explanation of meditation through devotion (*mos sgom*) and definitive perfection (*nges rdzogs*), see *NSH*, pp. 278 and 363.

78. Dharmashri provides a brief explanation of the nature and steps of the path of liberation: The view as the characteristic of knowledge, the primary cause of awakening (*rgyu shes pa'i mtshan nyid lta ba*), is the actual recognition, by means of the four axioms, of the ground continuum (*gzhi rgyud*), naturally present pristine awareness (*rang gnas kyi ye shes*).

Having realized the view in that way, one practices contemplation, the characteristic of application, the secondary condition (*rkyen 'jug pa'i ting nge 'dzin*) for awakening. Disengaging from all involvements related to the three doors, one integrates the luminous clarity of concept-free contemplation with the luminous clarity of deep sleep. Remaining absorbed in that state is the yoga of the great empty (*stong pa chen po'i rnal 'byor*). Because in that state of luminous clarity the activity of the mind ceases, the appearances of empty images arise.

Consequently, the appearances of the waking state during the day and the appearances during the dream state at night are seen as magical illusions, like the reflections of the moon on water. From this the compassion of great bliss manifests unceasingly. This is the yoga of compassion of the magical illusion (*snying rje sgyu ma'i rnal 'byor*).

Then, there arises the single symbol of the deity's body, which is the genuine state of union correlated with the bliss of the melted vital essence brought about by the secondary conditions of contemplation and great compassion increased by all kinds of appearances. As an expansion of that realization, one gains stability in the yoga of elaboration, the direct realization that all appearances are actually the deity, which is the state of union. Thereafter, by practicing one of the three conducts (elaborate, unelaborate, or extremely unelaborate), the proximate cause for awakening, one attains the state of an immaculate awareness-holder (*VOWS*, f. 230a2-b2).

79. Deliberate behavior (*brtul zhuḡs*) is the conduct of a yogin who has brought under control (*brtul*) ordinary actions conditioned by passions and has adopted (*zhuḡs*) the special behavior intended for overcoming dualism. See also Chapter 14, n. 40.

80. The four kinds of awareness-holders refer to the awareness-holder who is ripening (*rnam smin rig 'dzin*), the awareness-holder with control over life span (*tshe dbang -*), the awareness-holder of the great seal (*phyag rgya chen po -*), and the spontaneously perfect awareness-holder (*lhun gyis grub pa -*).

Longchenpa, in his *Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind*, explains that the first awareness-holder is a practitioner of the phase of generation and phase of completion who abides either on the path of accumulation or on the path of preparation. Although such a practitioner still has an ordinary body, she has actualized her mind as the body of the deity. If such a person dies before having achieved the supreme state (*chos mchog*) of the path of preparation, discarding her body, and with her mind "ripening" (*smin*) into the form of the deity, she will realize the great seal in the intermediate state.

The second type of awareness-holder is a practitioner who has attained the supreme state of the path of preparation, and the resulting indestructible body beyond death and birth, and thus has control over his life span. His mind turns into the mind of the path of seeing.

The third kind of awareness-holder may be a practitioner of any of the stages of awakening (from the first to the ninth). Her body manifests as the mandala of the deity. Her mind is the pristine awareness devoid of any adherence to conceptual limitations in the process of removing the obscurations found on its respective level.

The last awareness-holder is a practitioner who has attained the fully awakened state (*The Great Chariot* in *Trilogy of Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind*, vol. Ka, ff. 174a3-175b6).

81. See *IOK*, vol. III, pp. 591-708. An important text for the understanding of mahayoga is the *Light of the Eyes for Meditation* (*bSam gtan mig sgron l sGom gyi gnad gsal bar phyé ba bsam gtan mig sgron*) by Nupchen Sang-gye Yeshe (gNubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes), published by bKra shis sgang pa, Leh, 1974. This ninth-century text includes presentations of the profound mahayoga views of Nagarjuna, Lilavajra, Padmasambhava, Buddhaguhya, the Tibetan translators Kawa Paltsek (sKa ba dpal brtsegs) and Nyen Palyang (gNyan chen dpal dbyangs).

## CHAPTER 19: ANUYOGA AND ATIYOGA

1. *All-Unifying Pure Presence* (Toh. 831), vol. Kha, f. 107b1-2.
2. Likely the *All-Unifying Pure Presence* (*Kun 'dus rig pa'i mdo*) which, along with its explanatory text, the *General Scripture That Unifies the Knowledge of All Buddhas* (*sPyi mdo dgongs 'dus*), is the fundamental text of anuyoga.
3. *List of Rituals That Illuminates Great Bliss* (*bDe bar gsal mdzad kyī las tho*). Not identified.
4. Four yogas (*rnal 'byor bzhi*) in this context refer to supreme yoga (*shin tu rnal 'byor*), total yoga (*yongs su rnal 'byor*), great yoga (*rnal 'byor chen po*), and *sattva* yoga (*sems dpa'i rnal 'byor*). These correspond, respectively, to atiyoga, anuyoga, mahayoga, and *sattvayoga*, where *sattvayoga* includes the meditations and methods of the outer tantras, yoga tantra in particular.
5. *Analysis of the Meaning of Initiation* (*dBang don rnam par 'byed pa*). Not identified.
6. Undetermined stage (*'gyur ba ma nges pa'i sa*): In the great perfection treatises, the undetermined stage refers to the path of accumulation, known as undetermined because at this stage defilements are present and because it is possible to regress.
7. The atiyoga mentioned here does not refer to the system of atiyoga as such, but the final result of anuyoga practice which is called atiyoga.
8. *Majestic Creative Energy* (Toh. 828), vol. Ka, f. 44b4. The citation is from chapter thirty-eight of this tantra, the chapter that sets forth the deviations and obstructions related to the view and conduct.
9. A simile for the mode of meditation of anuyoga where the deity is generated all at once, not through a sequential process of generating the details.
10. *General Scripture That Unifies the Knowledge of All Buddhas* (Toh. 829), vol. Ka, f. 135a6.
11. The mandala of primordial suchness (*ye ji bzhin pa'i dkyil 'khor*); the mandala of the spontaneously perfect nature (*lhun grub kyī -*); and the mandala of original pure mind (*rtsa ba byang chub sems kyī -*).

12. *Fundamental Meaning of the Secret Discourse* (*Gubyasūtrapiṇḍārtha, Don bsdus*), P. 4751.
13. Four channel-wheels (*'khor lo bzhi*); channel-wheel of great bliss at the head; channel-wheel of enjoyment at the throat; channel-wheel of phenomena at the heart; and channel-wheel of emanation at the navel.
14. The axioms, according to *NSH* (n. 283), include centrist reasonings as well as the four axioms of mahayoga.
15. For a slightly more detailed discussion, see *NSH*, pp. 287-288.
16. Total sameness (*mnyam nyid*) refers here to acting in a state of absolute equanimity, without discriminating between pure and impure, and governing oneself according to the principle of making use of all things and situations of cyclic existence, usually considered to be avoided, while not adhering to any specific form of conduct. In this way, there is nothing that does not become merit. The enjoyment of everything is merit, and being detached, wisdom (Namkhai Norbu Rinpoché, oral communication).
17. *General Scripture That Unifies the Knowledge of All Buddhas* (Toh. 829), vol. Ka, f. 267a3-4.
18. The conduct of the empowering energy (*byin gyis rlob pa'i spyod pa*), dominating conduct (*dbang sgyur ba'i -*), and conduct of method (*thabs kyī -*).
19. Twenty-five resultant aspects (*'bras bu chos nyer lnga*): the five dimensions of awakening (namely, the reality, enjoyment, manifest, essential, and indestructible dimensions); the five modes of awakened speech (the speech of uncreated meaning, of intentional symbols, of expressive words, of indestructible reality, and of the blessing of awareness); the five kinds of awakened mind (the pristine awareness of the ultimate dimension of phenomena, of total sameness, of accomplishment, of discernment, and mirror-like); the five attributes (the pure buddha realm, the dimensionless celestial palace, the radiant and pure rays of light, the exalted thrones, and the enjoyment of acting just as one desires); the five awakened activities (pacification of suffering along with its causes, enriching the excellent provisions of merit, dominating those who require training, forcefully uprooting those who are difficult to train, and effortlessly and spontaneously accomplishing whatever is required.)
20. *Tantra of the Supreme Sphere* (*Thig le mchog gi rgyud*). Unidentified.
21. One's primordial nature is revealed in itself as Samantabhadra, ever-perfect, without searching for perfection elsewhere (Namkhai Norbu Rinpoché, oral communication).
22. The initiation of the creative energy of total presence (*rig pa'i rtsal dbang*): direct experience of the spontaneously perfect state through the master's introduction.
23. Manjushrimitra's *Essential Meaning of the Net of Magical Manifestation of Manjushri* (*Jam dpal sgyu drva'i khog don*). Unidentified.
24. *Naturally Present Perfection*, one of the seventeen tantras of the esoteric instructions division of the great perfection system.
25. *Majestic Creative Energy of the Universe* (Toh. 828), vol. Ka, f. 46a4-5. The citation is from chapter thirty-nine, which concerns the essence of enlightenment, or essence of the victorious ones.

26. Mind (*sems*) here refers to original pure mind (*byang chub sems, bodhicitta*), naturally present pristine awareness. See below, n. 30.

27. The total sphere (*thig le*), free from corners, refers to reality free from all extremes created by conceptual fabrications.

28. *The Total Space of Vajrasattva*. This tantra appears in its entirety as the thirtieth chapter of the *Majestic Creative Energy*. These lines (Toh. 828, vol. Ka, f. 36a5-6) are part of the third of fifty-five quatrains.

29. See Chapter 17, n. 26.

30. The division on mind (*sems sde*). Mind (*sems*) is an abbreviation for original pure mind (*byang chub sems, bodhicitta*) which the *Majestic Creative Energy of the Universe Tantra* defines as pure and totally perfected presence, one's own true nature, primordial awakening. The emphasis of this division is the master's introduction to the practitioner of his or her own spontaneously perfect state beyond all verbal and mental limitations.

31. The essence of the mind division (*sems sde*) is to sustain the state beyond acceptance or rejection based on the realization that all of the appearances of the environment and its inhabitants are the ineffable reality dimension of awakening, the naturally present pristine awareness which is the very nature of the mind.

The essence of the vast space division (*klong sde*) is to sustain the state of the non-objectifiable authentic condition which is beyond effort, based on the realization that naturally present pristine awareness and all phenomena that manifest from it have no place of abiding other than the vast space of Ever-Perfect, the authentic condition which is primordial liberation and natural purity.

The esoteric instructions division (*man ngag sde*) is subdivided into outer (*phyi*), inner (*nang*), secret (*gsang*), and most secret (*yang gsang*) cycles. The essence of the esoteric instructions division from the perspective of the most secret and unsurpassable cycle is to realize mind's absence of base or root as primordial purity, and with that understanding, practice total relaxation (*khregs chod*), the great natural condition in which mind and appearances are left in the state of primordial liberation.

Then, by opening the buddhas' treasury of spontaneously perfect mandalas of the body, one meditates on the path of the four lamps, the direct leap (*thod rgal*), which is looking at the face of the spontaneously perfect mandala, the luminous clarity of naturally present pristine awareness. By means of this, when phenomena exhaust themselves in the state of reality, all aggregates and faculties are naturally purified. By hammering the nails of the three attainments, one actualizes the naturally present lamp of wisdom (Dharmashri's *VOWS*, f. 231b1-6).

32. Indisputable logic (*gtan tshigs*) here stands for realizations that replace the mentally constructed axioms of the lower systems.

33. Seven distinctions in the view in the division on mind: the first, the view that the result is the source of mind (*'bras bu sems kyi byung sar 'dod pa'i sems phyogs*); the second, the view of the transcendence of deviations and obscurations (*gol sgrib la bzla ba'i -*); the third, the view concerning the collapse of the foundation of logical reasoning (*gtan tshigs khongs rdib pa'i -*); the fourth, the view that the true nature of reality neither falls to one

side nor is limited (*rgya chad phyogs lhung med par 'dod pa'i -*); the fifth, the view that the true nature transcends partial and limited philosophical positions (*phyogs 'dzin grub mtha' las 'das pa'i -*); the sixth, the view that the true nature is beyond the conceptual mind and transcends limited positions (*blo bral phyogs 'dzin las 'das pa'i -*); and the seventh, the view that everything is part of mind (*sems kyi phyogs yin du smra ba'i -*).

34. The assertion that all appearances are the mind's expressive energy (*sems kyi rol pa*) is not equivalent to the idealist's assertion that everything arises from the mind. Here, it is not asserted that things arise from mind but rather that they are simply mind's expressive energy. The difference is that the expressive energy manifests like reflections in a mirror. Wherever a mirror is placed, there will always be some reflections in it. The reflections are, so to say, the display, or expression, of the mirror, but are not created by the mirror itself (Namkhai Norbu Rinpoché, oral communication).

35. An important text for understanding the mind division of atiyoga is the *Light of the Eyes for Meditation* (*bSam gtan mig sgron l sGom gyi gnad gsal bar phyé ba bSam gtan mig sgron*) by Nupchen Sang-gye Yeshe (gNubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes), published by bKra shis sgang pa (Leh, 1974), which includes presentations of the profound early views of the mind division held by Garab Dorjé, Shri Simha, Manjushrimitra, Indrabhuti (King of Oddiyana), Vimalamitra, and other masters.

36. Black vast space propounded as the absence of cause (*klong nag po rgyu med du smra ba*); multicolored vast space propounded as diversity (*klong khra bo sna tshogs su smra ba*); white vast space propounded as mind (*klong dkar po sems su smra ba*); and infinite space in which cause and result are transcended (*klong rab 'byams rgyu 'bras la zlo ba*).

37. For the names of the divisions, see *NSH*, p. 327.

38. Four vast spaces (*klong bzhi*): expressive energy (*rol pa*), ornament (*rgyan*), true nature (*chos nyid*), and transcendence of action (*bya bral*). This last erroneously appears in *IOK* as *bya rtsol*. For a concise explanation of these, see *NSH*, p. 328.

39. Three distinctions within the general view of the esoteric instructions division: the view of the scattered teachings (*kha 'ibor*); of the oral tradition (*kha gtam*); and of the textual tradition of its own tantras (*rgyud rang gzhung*).

40. For the names of these divisions, see *NSH*, p. 331.

41. Four visionary appearances (*snang ba bzhi*): the visionary appearance of the direct perception of reality (*chos nyid mngon sum gyi snang ba*); the visionary appearance of increasing contemplative experience (*nyams gon 'phel gyi snang ba*); the visionary appearance of reaching perfected awareness (*rig pa tshad phebs kyi snang ba*); and the visionary appearance in which phenomena cease to be apprehended in reality (*chos nyid zad pa'i snang ba*). See Dudjom Rinpoché's succinct explanation of these in *NSH*, p. 339.

42. For a concise explanation of total relaxation (*khregs chod*) and direct leap (*thod rgal*), see *NSH*, pp. 335-345.

43. *Total Space of Vajrasattva* (Toh. 828), vol. Ka, f. 38b1. The citation is the second line of quatrain fifty-three of this tantra. In Dg.K. the citation appears as: *bya ba med pa'i las rnams te*, while *IOK* reads *bya ba med pas las rnams zin*.

44. Four assurances (*gdeng bzhi*): the assurance that allows one not to fear bad existences (*ngan song la bag mi tsha ba'i gdeng*); the assurance that one does not have to aspire towards the maturation of the cause and result (*rgyu 'bras rnam smin la ma re ba'i -*); the assurance that there is no need to aspire towards the object of attainment (*thob bya la re ba med pa'i -*); and the assurance that one's joy is pure in the state of total sameness (*dga' brod mnyam pa nyid du dag pa'i -*). See also *NSH*, Glossary, p. 124.

45. See Kongtrul's *Buddhist Ethics* (English translation), pp. 285-294.

46. *Supplement to the Transmitted Teachings of the Elucidation of the Attainment of the Gathering of the Joyful Ones* (*bDe 'dus sgrub pa lung gi bka' bsgo*). Unidentified.

47. Pristine awareness of total presence (*rig pa'i ye shes*). Total presence (*rig pa*) denotes one's primordial nature itself while the pristine awareness (*ye shes*) denotes its quality (Namkhai Norbu Rinpoché, oral communication). The word *rig pa* is translated as awareness in Chapters 1-16.

48. *Key to the Transmitted Teachings of Secret Mantra* (*gSang sngags bka'i lde'u mig*). Unidentified.

## CHAPTER 20: TANTRIC SCRIPTURES AND EXPOSITION METHODS

1. *rdzogs pa chen po*: the common name for atiyoga.

2. The eighteen principal tantras of mahayoga (*rgyud sde chen po bco brgyad*) consist of five root tantras, five tantras of expression, five tantras that concern conduct, two supplementary tantras, and a condensation of the meaning of all others.

The five root tantras are the following: the tantra of awakened body, *Tantra of the Unification of the Buddhas: The Root Tantra of the Supreme Bliss of the Dakinis* (*Sangs rgyas mnyam sbyor gyi rtsa ba mkha' 'gro ma bde mchog rtsa ba'i rgyud*); the tantra of awakened speech, *Root Tantra of the Secret Moon's Essence* (*dPal zla gsang thig le rtsa ba'i rgyud*); the tantra of awakened mind, *Guhyasamaja* or *Secret Communion* (*dPal gsang ba 'dus pa*); the tantra of awakened qualities, *Tantra of the Glorious Supreme Original Being* (*dPal mchog dang po*); and the tantra of awakened activities, *Tantra of the Garland of Actions* (*Kar ma ma le*).

The tantras of expression that expound the practice of sadhana are these: *Tantra of the Expression of Heruka* (*He ru ka rol pa'i rgyud*) concerning the sadhana of awakened body; *Tantra of the Expression of the Supreme Horse* (*rTa mchog rol pa'i rgyud*) concerning the sadhana of awakened speech; *Tantra of the Expression of Compassion* (*sNying rje rol pa'i rgyud*) concerning the sadhana of awakened mind; *Tantra of the Expression of Nectar* (*bDud rtsi rol pa'i rgyud*) concerning the sadhana of awakened qualities; *Tantra of the Expression of the Twelve Daggers* (*Phur pa bcu gnyis rol pa'i rgyud*) concerning the sadhana of awakened activities.

The five tantras that concern conduct are the *Tantra of the Heap of Mountains* (*Go 'phang dbang gis bgrod pa ri bo brtsegs pa'i rgyud*); *Tantra of the Arrangement of the Pledges* (*gZhi dam tshig gis bzung ba bkod pa rgyal po'i rgyud*); *Tantra of the Powerful Elephant* (*Phang lta bas bcad pa glang po rab 'bog gi rgyud*); *Tantra That Unifies All in a Single Point* (*Nyams su ting 'dzin gyis blangs pa rtse gcig bsdu pa'i rgyud*); *Tantra of Terrifying Lightning* (*La spyod pas dor ba rngam pa glog gi 'khor lo'i rgyud*).

The two supplementary tantras are the *Net of Magical Manifestation of Vairochana* (*rNam par snang mdzad sgyu 'phrul drva ba'i rgyud*), which contains supplementary instructions concerning mandala rites and sadhanas to attain powers; and the *Lasso of Method: Tantra of the Lotus Garland* (*Thabs kyis zhags pa pad mo'i phreng ba'i rgyud*).

The condensation of the meaning of all others is the *Secret Essence* (*gSang ba snying po*).

3. The eight major texts of the *Net of Magical Manifestation* (*sGyu 'phrul sde bryad*): *Secret Essence* (*gSang ba snying po*), the root of the eight; *Forty-Chapter Net of Magical Manifestation* (*sGyu 'phrul bzhi bcu pa*); *Higher Net of Magical Manifestation* (*sGyu 'phrul bla ma*); *Net of Magical Manifestation Supplement* (*sGyu 'phrul le lag*); *Eight-Chapter Net of Magical Manifestation* (*sGyu 'phrul bryad pa*); *Goddesses' Net of Magical Manifestation* (*lHa mo sgyu 'phrul*); *Eighty-Chapter Net of Magical Manifestation* (*sGyu 'phrul bryad cu pa*); and *Net of Magical Manifestation of Manjushri* (*'Jam dpal sgyu 'phrul*).

4. Four major explanatory tantras (*bshad rgyud sde bzhi*): *Explanatory Tantra of the Oceanic Magical Manifestation* (*sGyu 'phrul rgya mtsho*), *NGB*, vol. 15, n. 199; *All-Surpassing Tantra* (*sGyu 'phrul thal ba*), *NGB*, vol. 15, nn. 200, 201; *Essence of Pristine Awareness* (*Ye shes snying po*), unidentified; and *Indestructible Mirror* (*rDo rje me long*), unidentified.

5. Twenty-one elucidation tantras (*rgyud lung nyer gcig*), ten crucial scriptures (*mdo bcu*), and seventy texts of elucidation (*lung gi yi ge bdun bcu*). The last (seventy texts) are the *lung phran bdun bcu rtsa lnga* listed in *Sog zlog pa blo gros rgyal mtshan's rNam thar yid kyi mun sel*. See *NSH*, Bibliography, p. 265.

6. Four root scriptures of anuyoga (*rtsa ba'i mdo bzhi*), *NGB*, vols. 11 and 12: *Root Tantra of All-Unifying Awareness* (*rTsa rgyud kun 'dus rig pa'i mdo*); *General Scripture That Unifies All Buddhas' Knowledge* (*Sangs rgyas thams cad dgongs pa 'dus pa*); *Flash of Splendor* (*Jñānācāryadyuticakrasūtra*, *Ye shes rngam glog*, Toh. 830); *Play of the Cuckoo in the Charnel Ground* (*Dur khrod khu byug rol pa*).

7. The cycle of the *Majestic Creative Energy of the Universe* (*Chos tham chad byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po'i skor* / *Kun byed rgyal po'i skor*).

8. According to Longchenpa (as set forth in *Chos dbyings rin po che'i mdzod ky'i 'grel pa lung gi gter mdzod* in *mDzod bdun*), the five tantras translated first are the *Cuckoo of Total Presence* (*Rig pa'i khu byug*); *Great Creative Energy* (*rTsal chen sprug pa*); *Great Garuda in Flight* (*Khyung chen lding ba*); *Pure Gold in Ore* (*rDo la gser zhun*); and *Victory Banner Never Lowered: Total Space of Vajrasattva* (*Mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che*). The thirteen tantras translated later are *Supreme Peak* (*rTse mo byung rgyal*); *King of Space* (*Nam mkha'i rgyal po*); *Magical Display of Bliss* (*bDe ba 'phrul bkod*); *All-Encompassing Perfection* (*rDzogs pa spyi chings*); *Essence of Bodhichitta* (*Byang chub sems tig*); *Infinite Bliss* (*bDe ba rab 'byams*); *Wheel of Life* (*Srog gi 'khor lo*); *Six Spheres* (*Thig le drug pa*); *All-Penetrating Perfection* (*rDzogs pa spyi spyod*); *Wish-Fulfilling Jewel* (*Yid bzhin nor bu*); *All-Unifying Pure Presence* (*Kun 'dus rig pa*); *Supreme Lord* (*rJe btsun dam pa*); and *Realization of the True Meaning of Meditation* (*sGom pa don grub*).

These are known as the eighteen major elucidations (*lung*) of the mind division. Together with the three other major tantras, namely, *Majestic Creative Energy of the Universe* (*Kun byed rgyal po*), *Marvellous King* (*rMad byung rgyal po*), and *Ten Crucial Scriptures* (*mDo bcu*), these constitute the twenty-one main scriptures of the mind divi-

sion. The first five were said to have been translated by Vairochana, who also translated the last three texts just mentioned. The remaining thirteen texts were translated into Tibetan by Vimalamitra, Nyak Jnana Kumara, and Yudra Nyingpo. The first five texts correspond to chapters 31, 27, 22, 26, and 30, respectively, of the *Majestic Creative Energy*. The fourth of the five is an abbreviated form compared to the elucidation (*lung*) version.

See Longchenpa's *Treasury of the Ultimate Dimension*, edited by Dodrup Chen Rinpoché, Gangtok, Sikkim, 1964. For the diverse classifications of the mind division scriptures, see Appendix III of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's *The Supreme Source: The Fundamental Tantra of the Dzogchen Semde: Kunjed Gyalpo*.

9. The main tantras of the vast space division: *King of Infinite Vast Space* (*Klong chen rab 'byams rgyal po*); *Total Space of Samantabhadra* (*Kun tu bzang po nam mkhā' chē*); *Manifestation of the Creative Energy of Pure Presence* (*Rig pa rang rtsal shar ba*); *Wheel of Key Instructions* (*gDams ngag sna tshogs 'khor lo*); *Array of the Exalted Path* (*'Phags lam bkod pa*); *Vajrasattva Equal to the Limits of Space* (*rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkhā'i mha' dang mnyam pa*); *Lamp of Secret Pristine Awareness* (*Ye shes gsang ba sgron ma*); *Wheel of Precious Gems* (*Rin po che 'khor lo*); *Secret Pristine Awareness* (*Ye shes gsang ba*); *Perfect Pristine Awareness* (*Ye shes rdzogs pa*); *Total Revelation of the All-Pervasive State of Pure and Total Presence* (*Byang chub kyi sems kun la 'jug pa rnam dag ston pa*); *Radiant Vajra of the State of Pure and Total Presence* (*Byang chub kyi sems rdo rje 'od 'phro*).

10. Seventeen unsurpassable tantras of the esoteric instructions division (*man ngag sde'i rgyud bcu bdun*) that were brought to Tibet mainly by Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava: *Self-Arising State of Pure Presence* (*Rig pa rang shar*); *Mirror of the Heart of Vajrasattva* (*rDo rje sems dpa' snying gi me long*); *Lion's Perfect Creative Energy* (*Seng ge rtsal rdzogs*); *Absence of Syllables* (*Yi ge med pa*); *Beauteous Auspices* (*bKra shis mdzes ldan*); *All-Surpassing Sound* (*sGra thal 'gyur*); *Mirror of the Heart of Samantabhadra* (*Kun tu bzang po thugs kyi me long*); *Blazing Lamp* (*sGron ma 'bar ba*); *Array of Fine Gemstones* (*Nor bu 'phra bkod*); *Union of Sun and Moon* (*Nyi zla kha shyor*); *Pearl Necklace* (*Mu tig phreng bā*); *Naturally Liberated Pure Presence* (*Rig pa rang grol*); *Samantabhadra Sixfold Space* (*Kun tu bzang po klong drug pa*); *Naturally Present Perfection* (*rDzogs pa rang byung*); *Ekajati: Black Wrathful Goddess* (*Ekajati nag mo khros ma*); *Blazing Relics of the Awakened Body* (*sKu gdung 'bar ba*); *Mound of Gemstones* (*Rin chen spungs pa*) (*NGB*, vols. 9 and 10, nos. 143-159).

11. The tantras of the eight sadhana divisions (*sgrub pa sde brgyad*) concern the eight great mandalas of deities (*sgrub pa bka' brgyad*): the tantra of awakened body, Manjushri (Yam>ntaka); the tantra of awakened speech, Hayagr>va; the tantra of awakened mind, Vishuddha (ōr|heruka); the tantra of awakened qualities, Amrita (Vajr>māta); the tantra of awakened activities, Vajrakīlaya (Vajrak|la); the tantra of magical forces of the *mamo* (*mātanah*); the tantra of worship of worldly deities; and the tantra of fierce mantra and maledictions. These scriptures are of two kinds, canonical (*bka' ma*) and rediscovered treasure (*gter ma*). See also Chapter 18, n. 44.

12. *Gathering of the Joyful Ones of the Eight Transmitted Teachings* (*bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa*) refers to a series of tantras of both canonical (*bka' ma*) and rediscovered treasures (*gter ma*). The former are found in *NGB*, vols. 31-32. The latter are treasures of Nyangral Nyima Özer (Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer) in *Treasury of Precious Treasure Teachings* (*Rin*

*chen gter mdzod*) (111 vols. Paro: Ngodrub and Sherap Drimey, 1976), vol. 21, p. 183, to vol. 22, p. 367.

*Tantra of the Totality of Secrets (gSang ba yongs rdzogs)*. Unidentified.

13. Belonging to rediscovered treasures (*gter nas byon pa*). Rediscovered treasures (*gter ma*) are texts that were concealed by Guru Padmasambhava and later rediscovered by realized practitioners.

14. See Chapter 16, section entitled “Exposition Methods in Highest Yoga Tantra: General Methods.”

15. Tantras (*rgyud*), elucidations (*lung*), and esoteric instructions (*man ngag*). Tantras refers to the fundamental scriptures that contain all the teachings concerning the ground, path, and result. Elucidations refers to the great awareness-holder collection of profound methods and instructions. Esoteric instructions refers to essential teachings that evolve from the particular experiences of great adepts, based on the tantras and elucidations.

16. For the lives of these masters, see *NSH*, pp. 463-466.

17. See *NSH*, pp. 617-649.

18. The three ideal cognitions (*tshad ma gsum*): direct perception (*mngon sum tshad ma*), inference (*rjes dpag gi tshad ma*), and valid scriptures (*lung gi tshad ma*).

19. *Secret Essence Tantra* (Toh. 832), vol. Kha, f. 123b6-7.

20. *Fundamental Text (Khog gzhung)*, likely Vimalamitra's *Khog gzhung gsal sgron*, P. 4739.

21. Dharmashri, citing Lilavajra's *Shimmering Light on the Pledges*, enumerates the ten areas (*zhing bcu*) of behavior: acting as an enemy of the Three Jewels who causes great harm to the teachings; in particular, an enemy of a qualified spiritual master; allowing pledges to deteriorate and not restoring them; rejecting the secret mantra after having entered its way; despising the master or vajra siblings; although unauthorized, participating in tantric activities with the intention of stealing; harming sentient beings; acting as a fierce enemy of practitioners who observe their pledges; engaging exclusively and continuously in evil actions; and perpetrating evil actions that would lead to rebirth in the three lower forms of life or currently experiencing the result of those actions in lower forms of life (*VOWS*, ff. 261b5-262a5).

22. The main source for Kongtrul's presentation of these chapters on the tantras of the ancient tradition is Longchenpa's *Treasury of Philosophical Systems (Grub mtha'i rin po che'i mdzod)*.



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Abhidh>nottaratantra  
mNgon par brjod pa'i rgyud bla ma  
Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 247a-370a (Toh. 369)

### *Achala Tantra*

Acalamah>guhyatantra  
Mi g'yo ba'i gsang rgyud chen po  
Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 14b-16b (Toh. 434)

### *All-Secret Tantra*

Sarvarahasyan>matantrar>ja  
Thams cad gsang ba zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po  
Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ta, ff. 1b-10a (Toh. 481)

### *All-Surpassing Explanatory Tantra of the Net of Magical Manifestation*

bShad rgyud thal ba  
NGB, vol. 13, nos. 200, 201

### *All-Unifying Pure Presence/ Root Tantra of the All-Unifying Pure Presence*

Sarvatath>gatacittaguhyajñ>n>rthagarbhakrodhavajrakulatantropiöç>rtha-  
vidy>yoga-siddhan>mamah>y>nasātra  
Kun 'dus rig pa'i mdo/ De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi thugs gsang ba'i ye  
shes don gyi snying po khro bo rdo rje'i rigs kun 'dus rig pa'i mdo rnal 'byor  
grub pa'i rgyud ces bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo/ rTsa rgyud  
Dg.K. rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, ff. 1b-110a (Toh. 831); NGB, vol. 12,  
no.162

*Amoghapasha Scripture*

Amoghpaṅśāh, dayasātra  
 Don yod zhags pa'i snying po'i mdo  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ba, ff. 278b-284a (Toh. 682)

*Awakened Body, Speech, and Mind Tantra*

Kṛyāvākcittatantraṅśā  
 dPal sku gsung thugs kyi rgyud kyi rgyal po  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, ff. 203-208 (Toh. 388)

*Blue Beryl Light Dharani*

Tathāgatavaiçāryaprabhāṅśāmbalādhānasamādhidhāraḥ  
 De bzhin gshegs pa'i ting nge 'dzin gyi stobs bskyed pa bai durya'i 'od ces bya  
 ba'i gzungs  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Da, ff. 284a-286a (Toh. 505)

*Blue Beryl Light Discourse*

Bhagavatobhaiḥajyaguruvaiçāryaprabhasyaparvaprāḥidhānaviḥāvistārasātra  
 'Phags pa bcom ldan 'das sman gyi bla bai durya'i 'od kyi sngon gyi smon lam  
 gyi khyad par rgyas pa'i mdo  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Da, ff. 274a-283b (Toh. 504)

*Buddhasamayoga Tantra*

Sarvabuddhasamāyogaçākinīśālasambaranāmotatantra  
 Sangs rgyas thams cad dang mnyam par sbyor ba mkha' 'gro ma sgyu ma bde  
 ba'i mchog ces bya ba'i rgyud phyi ma  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 151b-193a (Toh. 366)

*Chakrasamvara Concise Tantra*

Tantraṅśāñīśāghusaḥvara  
 rGyud kyi rgyal po dpal bde mchog nyung ngu  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 213b-246b (Toh. 368)

*Chakrasamvara Root Tantra*

Cakrasāvaramālatantra  
 bDe mchog rtsa rgyud  
 Another name for *Chakrasamvara Concise Tantra*

*Chanting the Names of Manjushri*

Mañjuśrījñānasattvasyāparamāthānāmasāḥgīti  
 'Jam dpal ye shes sems pa'i don dam pa'i mtshan yang dag par brjod pa  
 Part of the *Secret Essence* cycle of teachings. Also known as *Manjushri's Net of  
 Magical Manifestation* ('Jam dpal sgyu 'phrul drva ba) and considered a tantra of  
 the awakened body (*sku'i rgyud*) associated with the Manjushri cycle.  
 NKG, vol. Nga; Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 1b-13b (Toh. 360)  
 Trans. A. Wayman, *Chanting the Names of Manjushri*. Boulder: Shambhala,  
 1985

*Chatuhpita Tantra*

Catuhp|thamah&gt;yogin|tantrar&gt;ja

rNal 'byor ma'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal gdan bzhi pa

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 181a-231b (Toh. 428)

*Circle of the Sun*

ör|sáryacakratantrar&gt;ja

Nyi ma'i khor lo'i rgyud kyi rgyal po

Dg.K., rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, ff. 228b-229a (Toh. 397)

*Compendium on the Indestructible Pristine Awareness Tantra*

Vajrajñ&gt;nasamuccaya

Ye shes rdo rje kun las btus pa

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 282a-286a (Toh. 447)

ör|ijñ&gt;nasamuccaya

dPal ye shes rdo rje kun las bsdsus pa

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Cha, ff. 1b-35b (Toh. 450)

*Continuation of the Continuation of the Summation of Essential Principles*

Contained within Sarvatath&gt;gatattvasaÖgraha

De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi de kho na nyid bsdsus pa'i rgyud phyi ma'i  
phyi maDg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nya, found within ff. 1b-142a (location not known)  
(Toh. 479)*Continuation of the Guhyasamaja Tantra*

(Sanskrit not given in Toh.)

'Dus pa phyi ma

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 148a-157b (Toh. 443)

*Continuation of the Samputa Tantra*

(Sanskrit not given in Toh.)

rGyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal yang dag par sbyor ba'i thig le

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, ff. 158b-184a (Toh. 382)

*Continuation of the Summation of Essential Principles*

Contained within Sarvatath&gt;gatattvasaÖgraha

De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi de kho na nyid bsdsus pa'i rgyud phyi ma

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nya, begins at ff. 106a6 (Toh. 479)

*Descent to Lanka Scripture*

Laëk&gt;vat&gt;rasātra

Lang kar gshegs pa'i mdo

Dg.K. mDo sde, vol. Ca, ff. 56a-191b (Toh. 107)

Translation: *The Lankavatara Sutra*. Ed. and tr. D. T. Suzuki. London:  
Routledge, 1932

*Dharani of the Eleven-Faced Avalokitesvara*

Avalokiteḥvaraik>daḥamukhadh>raḍḥ  
 'Phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug zhal bcu gcig pa'i gzungs  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Tsa, ff. 137b-139b (Toh. 693)

*Dhyānottara Tantra*

Dhy>nottarapañalākrama  
 bSam gtan gyi phyi ma rim par phye ba  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Wa, ff. 223a-225b (Toh. 808)

*Dialogue with Four Goddesses Tantra*

Caturdevḥparip,cch>  
 Lha mo bzhis yongs su zhus pa  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 277b-281b (Toh. 446)

*Dialogue with Subahu Tantra*

Sub>huparip,cch>tantra  
 dPung bzang gis zhus pa'i rgyud  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Wa, ff. 118a-140b (Toh. 805)

*Equal to the Sky Tantra*

Khasamatāntra  
 Nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, ff. 199a-202a (Toh. 386)

*Essence of Pristine Awareness*

Jñ>nātilakayoginḥtantrar>japaramamah>dbhuta  
 Ye shes thig le rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po mchog tu rmad du  
 byung ba  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 96b-136b (Toh. 422)

*Essence of the Great Seal*

Mah>mudr>tilakamah>yoginḥtantrar>jadhipati  
 dPal phyag rgya chen po'i thig le rnal 'byor ma chen mo'i rgyud kyi rgyal po'i  
 mnga' bdag  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 66a-90b (Toh. 420)

*Explanatory Tantra of the Oceanic Magical Manifestation*

See *Oceanic Magical Manifestation*.

*Galpo Tantra/ Great Galpo Tantra/ Heruka Galpo Tantra*

Gal po'i rgyud / He ru ka gal po che'i rgyud  
 NGB, vol. 25, nos. 289-292

*Gathering of the Joyful Ones, Peaceful Tantra*

bDe 'dus zhi rgyud/ bKa' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus zhi ba'i rgyud  
 The tantra of the *Cycle of the Eight Transmitted Teachings* (bKa' brgyad bde gshegs)

'*dus pa'i chos skor*) rediscovered by Nyangrel Nyima Ozer (Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer); found in the *Ngagyur Nyingme Sungrab*, vols. 75-87. Published by Sonam T. Kazi, Gangtok, Sikkim (1978).

*General Scripture That Unifies the Knowledge of All Buddhas*

Sarvatath>gatacittajñ>naguhy>rthagarbhavayáhavajratantrasiddhiyog>gama-  
sam>jasarva-vidy>sátramah>y>n>bhisamayadharmapary>yavyáhan>masátra  
sPyi mdo dgongs pa 'dus/ De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi thugs gsang ba'i ye  
shes don gyi snying po rdo rje bkod pa'i rgyud rnal 'byor grub pa'i lung kun  
'dus rig pa'i mdo theg pa chen po mngon par rtogs pa chos kyi rnam grangs  
rnam par bkod pa zhes bya ba'i mdo  
Dg.K. rNying rgyud, vol. Ka, ff. 86b-290a (Toh. 829); *NGB*, vol. 11, no.160

*General Tantra/ Secret General Tantra/ Secret Tantra of the General Ritual of All Mandalas*

Sarvamaòçalas>m>nyavidh|n>maguhyatantra  
dKyil 'khor thams cad kyi spyi'i cho ga gsang ba'i rgyud  
Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Wa, ff. 141a-167b (Toh. 806)

*Glorious Secret Essence: Supreme King of Tantras That Ascertains Reality*

See *Secret Essence Tantra*.

*Glorious Supreme Original Being*

ör|param>dyamah>y>nakalpar>ja  
dPal mchog dang po zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i rtog pa'i rgyal po  
Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ta, ff. 150b-173a (Toh. 487)

*Guhyasamaja Tantra/ Glorious Guhyasamaja Tantra*

Sarvatath>gatak>yav>kcittarahasyaguhyasam>jan>mamah>kalpar>ja  
De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi sku gsung thugs kyi gsang chen gsang ba  
'dus pa zhes bya ba brtag pa'i rgyal po chen po  
Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 90a-148a (Toh. 442)

*Heruka Galpo*

See *Galpo Tantra*.

*Hevajra Tantra Five Hundred Thousand*

Kye'i rdo rje 'bum Inga  
Not extant

*Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations (brTag gnyis)*

Hevajratantrar>ja  
Kye'i rdo rje rgyud kyi rgyal po (part I)  
Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 1b-13b (Toh. 417)  
Kye'i rdo rje mkha' 'gro ma dra ba'i sdom pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po (part II)  
Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 13b-30a (Toh. 418)  
Translation: *Hevajra Tantra*. Parts I and II. Ed. and tr. D. L. Snellgrove.  
London: Oxford University Press, 1959

*Indestructible Essence Ornament Tantra*

Vajrah, day>laÖk>ratantra  
 dPal rdo rje snying po rgyan gyi rgyud  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Cha, ff. 36a-58b (Toh. 451)

*Indestructible Garland Tantra*

Vajram>l>bhidh>namah>yogatantrasarvatantrah, dayarahasyavibhaêga  
 rNal 'byor chen po'i rgyud dpal rdo rje phreng ba mngon par brjod pa rgyud  
 thams cad kyi snying po gsang ba rnam par phyed ba  
 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ca, ff. 208a-277b (Toh. 445)

*Indestructible Nectar Tantra*

Vajr>m, tatantra  
 rDo rje bdud rtsi'i rgyud  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 16b-27a (Toh. 435)

*Indestructible Peak Tantra*

Vajra'ekharamah>guh'yayogatantra  
 gSang ba rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud rdo rje rtse mo  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nya, ff. 142b-274a (Toh. 480)

*Indestructible Tent Tantra*

i >kin|vajrapañjar>tantra  
 mKha' 'gro ma rdo rje gur zhes bya ba'i rgyud  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 30a-65b (Toh. 419)

*Kalachakra Condensed Tantra*

Laghut tantra/ Param>dibuddhoddh, ta'ri;k>lacakra>matantrar>ja  
 bsDus pa'i rgyud/ mChog gi dang po'i sangs rgyas las phyung ba rgyud kyi  
 rgyal po dpal dus kyi 'khor lo  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 22b-128b (Toh. 362)

*Kalachakra Root Tantra*

K>lacakra málatantra  
 Dus 'khor rtsa rgyud  
 Not extant

*King of Tantras: The Secret Essence*

See *Secret Essence Tantra*.

*Magical Manifestation*

See *Net of Magical Manifestation*.

*Mahamaya Tantra*

Mah>m>y>tantra  
 dPal sgyu 'phrul chen po zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nga, ff. 167a-171a (Toh. 425)

*Mahayana Phenomenology Scripture*

Mah>y>nabhidharmasātra  
 Theg pa chen po'i chos mngon pa'i mdo  
 Not extant

*Majestic Creative Energy of the Universe*

Sarvadharmamah>ŷ>ntibodhicittakulayar>ja  
 Chos thams chad rdzogs pa chen po byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po  
 Dg.K. rNying rgyud, vol. Ka, ff. 1b-86a (Toh. 828)

*Manjushri Root Tantra*

Mañjuŷr|mālatantra  
 'Jam dpal gyi rtsa ba'i rgyud  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Na, ff. 108a-351a (Toh. 543)

*Marichi Dharani*

M>r|cidh>rao|  
 'Phags pa 'od zer can zhes bya ba'i gzungs  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Pha, ff. 156b-158b (Toh. 564)

*Marvellous Cemetery Ornament*

ōr|cakrasaōvaratantrar>j>dbhutaŷmaŷ>n>laōk>ra  
 dPal 'khor lo sdom pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po dur khrod kyi rgyan rmad du byung ba  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, ff. 254b-259b (Toh. 413)

*Miraculous Key to the Storehouse*

Bang mdzod 'phrul gyi lde mig  
 NGB, vol. 2, no.24

*Mode of Transcendent Wisdom in One Hundred and Fifty Stanzas*

Prajñ>p>ramit>nayaŷatapañcaŷatik>  
 Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i tshul brgya lnga bcu pa  
 Dg.K. Shes phyin, vol. Ka, ff. 133a-139b (Toh. 17)

*Net of Magical Manifestation/ Magical Manifestation*

sGyu 'phrul drva ba  
 A cycle comprising eight main scriptures, the root one being the *Secret  
 Essence (Guhyagarbha, gSang ba'i snying po)*  
 NGB, vols. 14, 15, 16, 19

*Net of Magical Manifestation: Great King of Tantras*

M>y>j>lamah>tantrar>ja  
 rGyud kyi rgyal po chen po sgyu 'phrul drva ba  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ja, ff. 94a-134a (Toh. 466)

*Net of Magical Manifestation of Manjushri*

See *Chanting the Names of Manjushri*.

*Net of Magical Manifestation of Vajrasattva*

Vajrasattvam&gt;y&gt;jalaguhyasarv&gt;dar'ya

rDo rje sems dpa'i sgyu 'phrul drva ba

A name for the *Secret Essence* (*gSang ba'i snying po*), as well as a general name for the texts of the cycle of the *Magical Manifestation* (*sGyu 'phrul*)

Dg.K. rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, ff. 132b-198a (Toh. 833)

NGB, vol. 14

*Ocean of Sky-Farers Tantra*

D&gt;k&gt;ròavamah&gt;yogin|tantra

mKha' 'gro rgya mtsho rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Kha, ff. 137a-264b (Toh. 372)

*Oceanic Magical Manifestation*

sGyu 'phrul rgya mstho

NGB, vol. 15, no.199

*Primordial Buddha Tantra/ Supreme Primordial Buddha*

Param&gt;dibuddhoddh\_taYr|k&gt;lacakra

mChog gi dang po'i sangs rgyas las phyung ba rgyud kyi rgyal po dpal dus kyi 'khor lo

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 22b-128b (Toh. 362)

*Prophetic Declaration of Intention Tantra*

Sandhivy&gt;karaòatantra

dGongs pa lung bstan pa zhes bya ba'i rgyud

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 158a-207b (Toh. 444)

*Root Scripture*See *All-Unifying Pure Presence*.*Sacred Golden Light Scripture*

Suvaròaprabh&gt;sottamasátrendrar&gt;jamah&gt;y&gt;nasátra

gSer 'od dam pa mdo sde'i dbang po'i rgyal po theg pa chen po'i mdo

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Pa, ff. 19a-151a (Toh. 555); vol. Pa, ff. 151b-273a

(Toh. 556); vol. Pha, ff. 1b-62a (Toh. 557)

*Samputa Tantra*

Sampuīan&gt;mamah&gt;tantra

Yang dag par sbyor ba zhes bya ba'i rgyud

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ga, ff. 73b-158b (Toh. 381)

*Samvarodaya Tantra*

Mah&gt;sambarodayatantra

bDe mchog 'byung ba'i rgyud

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Kha, ff. 265a-311a (Toh. 373)

*Secret Essence Tantra/ Secret Essence That Ascertains Reality*

Guhyagarbhatattvaviniñcayamah>tantra

rGyud gsang ba'i snying po/ gSang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid rnam par nges pa

Also known as *Root Tantra of the Net of Magical Manifestation*

Dg.K. rNying rgyud, vol. Kha, ff. 110b-132a (Toh. 832)

NGB, vol. 14, no. 187

*Secret General Tantra*

See *General Tantra*.

*Self-Arising State of Total Presence*

Rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud

One of the main tantras of the esoteric instructions division of atiyoga transmitted by Garab Dorjé

Found in vol. 1 of *rNying ma'i rgyud bcu bdun* published by Sangs rgyas rdo rje, New Delhi, 1973

*Summary of the [Kalachakra] Initiation*

Sekodeṣa

dBang mdor bstan pa

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ka, ff. 14a-21a (Toh. 361)

*Summation of Essential Principles*

Sarvatath>gatattvasaṅgraha

De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi de kho na nyid bsodus pa

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Nya, ff. 1b-142a (Toh. 479)

*Supreme Knowledge of Vajrapani Tantra*

Vidyottamamah>tantra

Rig pa mchog gi rgyud chen po

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Dza, ff. 1b-237b (Toh. 746)

*Susiddhi Tantra*

Susiddhikaramah>tantras>dhanop>yikapāñāla

Legs par grub par byed pa'i rgyud chen po las sgrub pa'i thabs rim par phye ba

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Wa, ff. 168a-222b (Toh. 807)

*Tantra of the Secret Essence*

See *Secret Essence Tantra*.

*Teaching to Nanda on Entry into the Womb*

Āyurmannandagarbh>vakra>tinirdeṣa

Tshe dang ldan pa dga' bo la mngal du 'jug pa bstan pa

Dg.K. dKon brtsegs, vol. Ga, ff. 237a-248a (Toh. 58)

*Teaching to Nanda on the Condition in the Womb*

Ānandarabhaṅgavakṛntinirdeśa

Tshe dang ldan pa dga' bo la mngal du gnas pa bstan pa  
Dg.K. dKon brtsegs, vol. Ga, ff. 205b-236b (Toh. 58)

*Total Space of Vajrasattva*

rDo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che

Chapter 30 (ff. 36a-38b) of the *Majestic Creative Energy of the Universe* (Dg.K.

rNying rgyud, vol. Ka, ff. 1b-86a (Toh. 828)

*NGB*, vol. 1

Translation: *Total Space of Vajrasattva*. Ed. and tr. by Adriano Clemente.

Arcidosso, Italy: Edizioni Shang Shung, 1999

*Transcendent Wisdom Extensive Scripture*

Prajñāpāramitāyātasahasrikāśātra

Sher phyin stong phrag brgya pa/ rGyas pa

Dg.K. Shes phyin, vols. 12-18 (Toh. 8)

*Trisamayavyuha Tantra*

Trisamayavyāharjatantra

Dam tshig gsum bkod pa'i rgyal po

Dg.T. rGyud 'bum, vol. Da, ff. 181a-247a (Toh. 502)

*Two Examinations*

See *Hevajra Tantra Two Examinations*.

*Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra*

Mahāvairocanaḥśāradhivikurvitḥnavaipulyasātreṇdrarajanmadharmaparyaya

rNam par snang mdzad chen po mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa rnam

par sprul pa byin gyis rlob pa shin tu rgyas pa mdo sde'i dbang po'i rgyal po

zhes bya ba'i chos kyi rnam grangs

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Tha, ff. 151b-260a (Toh. 494)

*Vajradaka Tantra*

Vajracātāntra

rGyud kyi rgyal po chen po dpal rdo rje mkha' 'gro zhes bya ba

Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Kha, ff. 1b-125a (Toh. 370)

*Vajra of Magical Manifestation*

sGyu 'phrul rdo rje

Explanatory tantras of the *Net of Magical Manifestation*

*NGB*, vol. 15

*Vajrapani Initiation Tantra*

Vajrap>öyabhiøkamah>tantra  
 Lag na rdo rje bdang bskur ba'i rgyud chen po  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Da, ff. 1b-156b (Toh. 496)

*Vajravidarana Tantra*

Not translated into Tibetan

*Victorious in the Three Worlds Tantra*

Trailokyavijayamah>kalpar>ja  
 'Jig rten gsum las rnam par rgyal ba rtogs pa'i rgyal po chen po  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ta, ff. 10a-58a (Toh. 482)

*White Lotus of the Sacred Doctrine Scripture*

Saddharmapuöçar|kan>mamah>y>nasātra  
 Dam pa'i chos pad ma dkar po zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo  
 Dg.K. mDo sde, vol. Ja, ff. 1b-180a (Toh. 113)

*Worldly Lord of the Family Tantra*

Kulalokan>thapañcadañaka  
 Rigs kyi 'jig rten mgon po lnga bcu pa  
 Dg.K. rGyud 'bum, vol. Ca, ff. 27a-29b (Toh. 436)

**TREATISES**

## Abhay&gt;kara (Abhay&gt;karagupta)

*Awn of Esoteric Instructions: Extensive Commentary on the Samputa Tantra*

Saöpuñatantrar>jai|k>mn>yamañjar|  
 Man ngag snye ma/ dPal yang dag par sbyor ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po'i rgya cher  
 'grel pa man ngag gi snye ma  
 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Cha, ff. 1b-316a (Toh. 1198)

*Indestructible Garland Mandala Rituals*

Vajr>valin>mamaöçalas>dhana  
 dKyiil 'khor gyi cho ga rdo rje phreng ba  
 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Phu, ff. 1b-94b (Toh. 3140)

## Ānandagarbha

*Illumination of the Summation of Essential Principles*

Sarvatath>gatattvsaögrahamah>y>n>bhisamayan>matantratattv>loka-  
 kar|n>mavy>ky>  
 De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi de kho na nyid bsdu pa theg pa chen po  
 mngon par rtogs pa zhes bya ba'i rgyud kyi bshad pa de kho na nyid snang  
 bar byed pa/ sTod 'grel  
 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Li, ff. 1b-352a; vol. Shi, ff. 1b-317a (Toh. 2510)

## Āryadeva

*Lamp Summary of Tantric Practice*

Cary&gt;mel&gt;pakaprad!pa

sPyod bsdus pa'i sgron ma

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ngi, ff. 57a-106b (Toh. 1803)

*Stages of Self-Blessing*

Sv&gt;diññ&gt;nakramaprabhedā

bDag byin gyis brlab pa'i rim pa rnam par dbye ba

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ngi, ff. 112a-114b (Toh. 1805)

## Aṅvaghōṣa

*Summation of Pledges* (wrongly attributed to Atisha)

\*SamayasaŌgraha

Dam tshig thams cad bsdus pa

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Tshu, ff. 44a-59b (Toh. 3725)

## Atiṣya

*Commentary on the Lamp for the Path*

Bodhim&gt;rgaprad!papañjik&gt;

Byang chub lam gyi sgron ma'i dka' 'grel

Dg.T. dBu ma, vol. Khi, ff. 241a-293a (Toh. 3948)

Trans. R. Sherburne. *A Lamp for the Path and Commentary*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983

## Buddhaguhya

*Commentarial Notes Epitomizing the Dialogue with Subahu Tantra*

Sub&gt;hupariṣ, cch&gt;tantrapiṅṅ&gt;rthav, tti

dPung bzangs kyis zhus pa'i rgyud kyi bsdus pa'i don dgrol ba'i brjed byang

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Thu, ff. 100b-116b (Toh. 2673)

*Commentary Epitomizing the Dialogue with Subahu Tantra*

Sub&gt;hupariṣ, cch&gt;tantrapiṅṅ&gt;rtha

dPung bzangs kyis zhus pa'i rgyud kyi bsdus pa'i don

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Thu, ff. 38a-54b (Toh. 2671)

*Commentary Epitomizing the Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra*

Vairocan&gt;bhisambodhitantrapiṅṅ&gt;rtha

rNam par snang mdzad mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa'i rgyud kyi bsdus pa'i don

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Nyu, ff. 1b-65a (Toh. 2662)

*Commentary on the Dhyānottara Tantra*

Dhy&gt;nottarapañālañ!k&gt;

bSam gtan pyi ma rim par phye ba rgya cher bshad pa

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Thu, ff. 1b-38a (Toh. 2670)

*Commentary on the Purification of All Evil Destinies*

Durgatipariyodhan&gt;rthav&gt;rttika

Ngan song sbyong ba'i don gyi 'bru 'grel

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Cu, ff. 152b-231a (Toh. 2624)

*Explanatory Notes on the Meaning of the Words of the Dialogue with Subahu Tantra*

(Sanskrit not given in Toh.)

dPung bzang kyis zhus pa'i rgyud kyi tshig gi don bshad pa'i brjed byang

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Thu, ff. 54b-100b (Toh. 2672)

*Extensive Commentary on the Vairochanabhisambodhi Tantra*

(Sanskrit not given in Toh.)

rNam par snang mdzad mngon par byang chub pa'i rgyud chen po'i 'grel bshad

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Nyu, ff. 65a-351a (Toh. 2663)

*Extensive Commentary on the Vajravidarana Tantra*

Vajravid&gt;raò&gt;n&gt;madh&gt;raò;î;k&gt;ratn&gt;bh&gt;sv&gt;r&gt;

rDo rje rnam par 'joms pa zhes bya ba'i gzungs kyi rgya cher 'grel ba rin po  
che gsal ba

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Thu, ff. 176a-186b (Toh. 2680)

## Buddhaguhya (the expert on mahayoga)

*Sequence of the Path/ Sequence of the Path of Magical Manifestation*

M&gt;y&gt;j&gt;lapathakrama

sGyu 'phrul lam rim

P. 4736. Also: *NKG*, vol. 23

## Buddha'ri'jn&gt;na (Buddhajñ&gt;nap&gt;da)

*Liberative Essence*

Muktililaka

Grol ba'i thig le

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Di, ff. 47a-52a (Toh. 1859)

*Oral Teachings of Manjushri / Meditation on the Reality of the Two Stages*

Dvikramatattvabh&gt;van&gt;n&gt;mamukh&gt;gama

'Jam dpal zhal lung/ Rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na nyid bsgom pa zhes bya ba  
zhal gyi lung

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Di, ff. 1b-17b (Toh. 1853)

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*Commentary on the Ornament of the Realization of Guhyasamaja*

Sam&gt;j&gt;bhisamay&gt;laòk&gt;rav\_tti

gSang ba 'dus pa'i mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyan gyi 'grel pa

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ngi, ff. 210b-232b (Toh. 1817)

*Illuminating Lamp: Commentary on the Guhyasamāja Tantra*  
Pradḥpodyotananḥmaḥiḥkḥ

sGron ma gsal bar byed pa zhes bya ba'i rgya cher bshad pa  
Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ha, ff. 1b-201b (Toh. 1785)

*Seventy Verses on the Triple Refuge*

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Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ra, ff. 15b-53b (Toh. 1650)

Indrabhāti

*Array of the Path of the Net of Magical Manifestation*

Mḥyḥḥpathavyavasthḥpana

sGyu 'phrul lam rnam dkod

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Jñḥnaḥḥrḥ

*Dispelling the Two Extremes in the Indestructible Way*

Vajrayḥḥnakoḥḥidvayḥpoha

rDo rje theg pa'i mtha' gnyis sel ba

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Tsu, ff. 115a-120a (Toh. 3714)

Kḥḥḥācāryaḥ

*Vital Essence of Spring*

Vasantatilaka

dPyid kyi thig le

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Wa, ff. 298b-306b (Toh. 1448)

## Maitreya

*Jewel Affinity*

Ratnagoṭravibhāgamahāyānottaratantraḥstra  
 Theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos  
 Dg.T. Sems tsam, vol. Phi, ff. 54b-73a (Toh. 4024)

*Ornament of the Scriptures*

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 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ngi, ff. 131a-145b (Toh. 1810)

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Pañcakrama  
 Rim pa lnga pa  
 Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Ngi, ff. 45a-57a (Toh. 1802)

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 Dg.T. dBu ma, vol. Tsa, ff. 1b-19a (Toh. 3824)

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*Ascertainment of the Four Seals*

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bsDus pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po dus kyi 'khor lo'i 'grel bshad rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi rjes su 'jug pa stong phrag bcu gnyis pa dri ma med pa'i 'od

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Tha, ff. 107a-277a; vol. Da, ff. 1b-279a (Toh. 1347)

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*Light on the State of Union*

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gNas pa bsdus pa

Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Wi, ff. 92a-99b (Toh. 2227)

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*Ornament of Kosala*

Kosal>laōk>ratattvasaōgrahaî|k>

De kho na nyid bsdus pa'i rgya cher bshad pa ko sa la'i rgyan

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Theg pa gsum rnam par gzhag pa

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Dg.T. rGyud, vol. Tsu, ff. 104b-115a (Toh. 3713)

ör| SiÖha

*Lock of the Heart*  
Cittat>laka  
Thugs kyi sgo lcags  
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Tilopa

*Perfect Words: Esoteric Instructions of the Dakini*  
Åjñ>saÖyakpram>ðan>maç>kinyupadeŷa  
bKa' yang dag pa'i tshad ma zhes bya ba mkha' 'gro ma'i man ngag  
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mDzes pa'i me tog ces bya ba rim pa gnyis pa'i de kho na nyid bsgom pa zhal  
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