Dzog Chen Meditation

(rdor sems thugs kyi sgrub pa’i khrid yig
rab gsal snang ba)

[An explanation of the complete rdzogs chen meditation practice: being Lo chen Dharma-śrī’s guide through a Gter bdag gling pa treasure text, a text first taught by the second Buddha Padma-samghava to his inner circle of thirty extraordinary women with wisdom, then hidden away to be rediscovered by those prophesied to do so.]

Explained in Tibetan by Khamtul Rinpoche Presented in English and briefly annotated by Gareth Sparham

Sri Satguru Publications
A Division of
Indian Books Centre
Delhi—India
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I: Preliminaries</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II: Generation Process</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III: Completing Process</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes to Translation</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For an understanding of the structure of the translated text the reader is directed to the Introduction. The folio numbers of the Tibetan text (found in the Gter mdzod vol. ga, folios 427-491) are given in square parenthesis. The numbering follows the Gter mdzod where the front and back of each folio are each given a separate page number.

Dharmkot.
Introduction

The Tibetan word *rdzogs chen* (the initial *r* and the final *s* of the first syllable are silent) is a contraction of two common Tibetan words, an intransitive verbal root *rdzogs pa* (‘to be full,’ ‘to be complete,’ ‘to be exhausted in,’ ‘to finish in’)¹ and an adjective or noun *chen po* (‘big,’ ‘great’). It seems to be a word that, for all practical purposes, originated in and is unique to the Buddhism of Tibet, through as will become clear, what it means is by no means entirely Tibetan in origin. According to the encyclopaedic Tibetan dictionary *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, *rdzogs chen* is a religious term of the Rnying ma school, i.e., of the old, or authentic Buddhism of Tibet. The ‘completion’ part of the word refers to an effortless ‘coming’ or ‘being together’ of innate emptiness, innate luminosity and pervasive compassion (equated with three bodies of an enlightened being: the bodies of truth, enjoyment and emanation, respectively). It is ‘big’ or ‘great’ because it is the way all things are. Self-evidently, if a word connotes a natural and effortless unity underlying and pervading all things, one is using a weighty word, a word to step back from. So a sentence such as ‘I am doing *rdzogs chen* practice now, I prefer it to simple breathing meditation,’ which would not be uncommon in some circles, is at the very least odd and perhaps even vaguely insulting.
A leading Western writer on the subject, Herbert Guenther says *rdzogs chen* "is the name given to that spiritual tradition in Buddhism that emphasizes a holistic approach and rejects all partial perspectives as but local and temporal fluctuations within the atemporally abiding, non-localizable mystery that is Being as such." Gene Smith describes *rdzogs chen* as "a short-cut technique ... simultaneously the approach, the process, the sum of the stages and the realization itself."2

As for the origins of the *rdzogs chen* doctrine, they are to be found in the older or authentic Buddhism of yogic practitioners (Sanskrit *yogācāra*). One of the earliest *rdzogs chen* texts included in the Bstan 'gyur has as an alternative name "*Treatise on the method of meditation according to the yogic practitioners' system.""3 Though extant for a time in India, this Buddhism of yogic practitioners took root and developed into a distinct school in China where it was called Ch’an, the name coming from a pronunciation of the Sanskrit word for yogic contemplation or trance (*dhyāna*). The Buddhism of yogic practitioners has been distinguished in particular for a superficially anti-intellectual, even anti-thinking bent. In its stress on religious praxis, as distinct from mere theory, it carries on at least some of the essential characteristic of very early Buddhism. In China, in combination with the non-action ideal (Chinese *wu-wei*) of Taoism it led to a stress on the development of stable, transcendental planes of mental awareness while sitting immobile with one’s legs crossed in meditation. According to this stream of Buddhism any action whatsoever beyond sitting in meditation (and within meditation any thought at all) was at best meaningless and more likely than not a hindrance. It spread into Tibet during the eighth and ninth centuries particularly
from regions bordering on south-eastern Tibet, in what is now Sichuan province.

Though this early Buddhism of yogic practitioners that developed into Ch’an in China appears to be the root source of rdzogs chen it is not its only source. Mention should also be made, at the outset, of the syncretistic Yogācāra-madhyamaka religious philosophy of eighth century Buddhist scholastics Śānta-rāksita and Kamala-sīla (fl. 750-800). It was the dominant Buddhist ideology in Tibet from the end of the eighth century and for more than a hundred of rdzogs chen’s formative years proponents of Yogācāra-madhyamaka were supported by the powerful Yar klung kings. It would be surprising were rdzogs chen to have been completely uninfluenced by, Yogācāra-madhyamaka particularly since it presented an ideology tailor-made for the distinctive praxis of rdzogs chen, namely, thought seeking within itself for its own transcendental nature. Though later rdzogs chen writers may have merely expropriated developing Tibetan Buddhist theories after the fact to justify their presentation of the essential practice as they saw it, it is certain that rdzogs chen as a distinct doctrine was strongly influenced in its early formative stages by the Yogācāra-madhyamaka in Tibet at the time it originated.

Besides Indian Yogācāra-madhyamaka, another source of rdzogs chen seems to be an authentically central Asian religious tradition, the influence of which is most apparent in Bon. Not only does Bon, now a heterodox school of Tibetan Buddhism, claim rdzogs chen for itself, but the name of one of the earliest rdzogs chen texts Rig byed khu byung (“The cuckoo awakening pure awareness”) is strikingly reminiscent of names found in other early Bon texts.
A final important source of rdzogs chen is Indian tantricism. In rdzogs chen in even its very earliest presentation mention is made of bodhicitta personified as Kun tu bzang po (Sanskrit samanta-bhadra). This notion of bodhicitta (the term has a long history predating its use in tantric texts) comes from Indian tantricism. In the Introduction to his Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs Per Kvaerne says, "the fundamental concept of tantric Buddhism, as of Mahāyāna in general, is bodhicitta . . . [and] it is in its treatment of this concept that the uniqueness of tantricism may best be grasped . . . . " Having identified a relative and absolute bodhicitta Kvaerne says of the former "it is a much wider term" than mere śukra or semen, " . . . it is also the vital breath; indeed, the two concepts can hardly be distinguished." As to the absolute bodhicitta, he says it is " . . . essentially blissful . . . it is the bliss that proceeds from the control of the relative bodhicitta and which culminates in complete mystic rapture." In rdzogs chen, the bodhicitta terminology, the characterization of the primordially pure awareness as blissful, and the presence of esoteric techniques for controlling the energy-winds originate in Indian tantricism.

Besides bequeathing the terminology and concept of bodhicitta to rdzogs chen, Indian tantric texts such as the Guhya-garbha-tantra may very well be the origin of the actual term rdzogs chen itself. In some very early usages rdzogs chen appears to have been an alternative translation for (at least originated in some sort of connection with) the Indian term utpanna saṃpanna-krama (‘completing process,’ ‘completion stage’). It is very similar in form and meaning to the Tibetan word rdzogs rim, the well-known and now standard translation of utpanna saṃpanna-krama.
Now, the *sampanna-krama* is linked in Indian tantra to a preceding group of meditational practices subsumed under the heading *utpatti-krama* (‘generating process’). At the risk of gross over-simplification one may say that the *sampanna-krama* deals with a direct non-conceptual apprehension of the goal (the ultimate), particularly through the utilization of esoteric yogic techniques, while the *utpatti-krama* deals with the conceptual relative (the means to the goal), particularly in the use of symbols such as deities and maṇḍalas. *Rdzogs chen* seems to have slowly emerged as a term to describe something even greater than these two stages or processes—greater in the sense that it unified; or is the unification (*yuga-naddha*) of the two-stages—the inseperability of the ultimate and relative, the inseparability of the *dharma-kāya* and *rūpa-kāya*.

**Descriptions of rdzogs chen Transmission**

Here is not the place to trace in detail the history of the polarity in Tibetan literature between an gradual/active/disscursive/Indian Buddhism and an all-at-once/passive/no-thought/Chinese Buddhism. Besides, most that needs to be written about it has already been written.\(^{10}\) It will be enough to state that the poles of opinion are more symbolic than historically, or even psychologically, real, and to state that they serve in Tibetan literature as part of a vocabulary for articulating an inherent tension between different legitimate approaches to religious practice. One should be aware of this tension, however, because it often explains why reference is made, in a Tibetan text, to India as the origin of doctrines. One should also be aware of the tension, particularly pronounced during certain periods of Tibetan history, between those exclusivists holding that the doctrine of the enlightened one was revealed earlier in India (and is only to
be rediscovered in a philological and intellectual search) and those holding that the doctrine of the enlightened one is revealed in an on-going visionary process. I will return to this below.

Now, in traditional descriptions of the origins and lineage of rdzogs chen the first rdzogs chen master is said to be Dga’ rab rdo rje who was born either twenty-eight or three hundred and sixty years after the enlightened one’s nirvāṇa. It is said he got the rdzogs chen doctrine directly from Vajrasattva, the sāṃbhoga-kāya (‘enjoyment body’) of the enlightened one. Vajrasattva received it in a mind-to-mind transmission from Samanta-bhadra, the dharma-kāya (‘truth body’) of the enlightened one. What this means is that the all-pervading ultimate nature of enlightenment—the dharma-kāya (‘truth body’) personified as Samanta-bhadra (‘the thoroughly good’)—passes on its own reality to its primary embodiment Vajrasattva (‘adamantine being’), which is neither the same as, nor different to it. Vajrasattva passes on the message of its reality to that special being who is at a transcendental level sublime enough to meet with it (sāṃbhoga-kāya=‘body that is used, or enjoyed’).

Dga’ rab rdo rje in turn passed on the doctrine to Śri-sīmha, via Mañjuśrī-mitra and, according to some, Buddha-jñāna. Śri-sīmha and the earlier figures in the transmission lineage are said to have lived in Orgyan (Uḍḍiyāna), perhaps once a real kingdom located in what is now the Swat valley in Pakistan. Śri-sīmha is said to have lived at about the same time as the Tibetan king Khri srong sde btsan (754-794), the king famous in later Tibetan literature for having invited Kamalaśīla and the Chinese monk Mahāyāna to debate the relative merits of their interpretations of Buddhism. Khri srong sde btsan asked Padma-sāṃbhava how to
implant the *rdzogs chen* teaching in Tibet. Padma-samābhava advised him to send Vairocana, a Tibetan translator with an Indian name to get the doctrine from Śrī-simha. Vimalamitra, another Indian disciple of Śrī-simha is said to have been invited by the same Tibetan king to Tibet.

Among the names mentioned in the traditional transmission accounts the importance of the name Padma-samābhava (‘lotus born’), the teacher second only to the enlightened one himself cannot be over-emphasized. Though he appears, at first glance, to have only a tangential relationship to the actual transmission of the *rdzogs chen* doctrine even in the traditional texts, and though doubt remains as to whether there ever was an actual Indian charismatic or shaman with such a name, the figure of Padma-samābhava, perhaps even more than the historical Buddha Śākya-muni himself, occupies the central place in the religious faith and ritual lives of the followers of the school of the older, authentic translations (*rnying ma*). Regardless of how it may have worked itself out in history, for the believer there can be no doubt that the transmission of *rdzogs chen* to Tibet was the work of Padma-samābhava.

The centrality of Padma-samābhava in traditional accounts of the origin and transmission of the *rdzogs chen* doctrine becomes abundantly clear when one turns to this small and relatively late *rdzogs chen* text *A Very Clear Picture*. It describes itself as a treasure text (*gter ma*) hidden by Padma-samābhava and found by Gter bdag gling pa, Gyur med rdo rje (1646-1714), with a guide (*khri*) through the text by Lo chen Dharma-śrī (1654-1717/8), Gter bdag gling pa’s younger brother. According to Khams sprul rin po che, the treasure text *A Very Clear Picture* was spoken by Padma-samābhava to a retinue of goddesses and then hidden
for posterity to be found at a particular time and in a certain place. Padma-sambhava’s words are the enlightened being’s own words (bka’). Gter bdag gling pa’s treasure text is a treatise (bstan bcos) while Lo chen Dharma-šri’s commentary is dgongs ’grel i.e., an explanation of a treatise. Khams sprul said his own oral explanation may be characterized as sgom ’khrid (‘meditation guidance’). It is, he said, “based on personal meditational experience.”

One of the treasure text verses says in A Very Clear Picture that Padma-sambhava “is the reality (dngos) of all the enlightened ones of the three times.”\(^{14}\) He is with his consort, Ye shes mtsho rgyal, described in the same verse as a “space worker” and “empowering woman.”

Further, according to Rnying ma Buddhist doctrine is to be categorized relative to nine vehicles: the śrāvaka-, pratyekabuddha- and bodhisattva-yānas; the kriyā- caryā- and yoga-tantras; and the mahā-, anu- and ati-yoga-tantras. As already mentioned earlier (above note 9) the highest of the nine vehicles, ati-yoga-tantra is often explicitly said to be rdzogs chen. It is in the ati-yoga category that the highest and culminating doctrines are to be found. The vehicles below are each said to be in some way deficient relative to the higher one. If mahā-yoga and anu-yoga contain teachings mainly related to the utpatti-krama and sampanña-krama, respectively, and are therefore deficient in comparison to the complete teaching of those two stages in unity, the ati-yoga, still they are superior to the teachings of the three lower tantras which are in turn superior to the non-tantric teaching grouped in the first three of the nine vehicles.

The doctrines found in the mahā-, anu- or ati-yoga-tantras are said to have been transmitted either in the lineage of scriptural revelation (bka’ ma), through treasure text revelation (gter ma) or through direct clear visionary ex-
Introduction

experience (dag snang). The first two of these are equivalent to the ring brgyud bka’ ma and the nyer brgyud gter ma mentioned where the scriptural revelation goes back to Dga’ rab rdo rje and the treasure text revelation to Padma-sambhava.

A further Another important division of rdzogs chen scriptures is into three: sems sde (‘mind category’), klong sde (‘deep centre category’) and man ngag gi sde (‘secret teaching category’). It is sometimes said that the first two categories were transmitted to Tibet by Vairocana and the last by Vimala-mitra. Amongst these three divisions the last, man ngag gi sde has an alternative name snying thig (‘heart drop’). Under this name rdzogs chen was masterfully integrated with the whole ‘passing over the creat’ corpus of scholastic Buddhism and transformed into a system by Klong chen rab ’byams pa. The explanations of khregs chod (‘cutting off the rigidity’) and thod rgal (‘the leap,’) are included within ati-yoga because they are the mans of attaining what is described in ati-yoga and the three categories. The former is oriented towards the profound primordial awareness and the latter towards the vast mind clarity.

Doctrines discovered in pure visionary experience (dag snang) are sometimes also included here. The dgongs gter are “teachings concealed in the transmigrating principle of associates of Padma-sambhava for propogation by future emanation.”

Finally it should be mentioned that treasure text revelation is further described as being of two or three sorts: treasure texts discovered in the earth (sa gter) and treasure texts discovered in the mind (dgongs gter). As to the former, treasure texts discovered in the earth, they are subdivided into two sorts of gter chos (‘treasure dharma’), each with
three sub-categories. The three sub-categories of the first are bla ma, rdzogs chen and thugs rje chen po. These are (a) ritual scriptures describing meditations, (b) scriptures about rdzogs chen, and (c) scriptures to do with Avalokiteśvara. Very Ckear Picture falls into the second of these sub-categories.16

Now, in tracing the lineage of rdzogs chen from early quasi-mythological figures like Padma-sambhava down to the mid-seventeenth century and the time of Gter bdag gling pa and Lo chen Dharma-śrī, two important early figures whose works are still extant stand out. These are Gnubs sangs rgyas ye shes, who lived during the ninth and into the tenth century, and Rong zomchos kyi bzang po (eleventh century). Rong zom, in particular, is vigorous in his defense of rdzogs chen’s pedigree and profundity.

During the period of the Mongolian-catalyzed sectarian troubles in Tibet from the end of the twelfth to the beginning of the fifteenth century the fortunes of the Rnying ma teachings entered a period of decline. Although members of the Zur family, traditionally closely associated with the rdzogs chen lineage, were briefly allied with the Khon family of Sa skya and even visited the court of the Mongolian emperor in China, no strong foreign patron was found to promote rdzogs chen as forcefully as the Sa skya lam 'bras or the Bka' brgyud mahā-mudrā doctrines.

In the first half of the fourteenth century the fortunes of the rdzogs chen school revived somewhat in the sun of its two most famous classical exponents, the third Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje (1284-1339) and Klong chen rab 'byams pa (1308-1363), but even after the collapse of the Yüan dynasty in China in 1368 the Rnying ma school, and rdzogs chen in particular, remained in the shade while Tibetan affairs were dominated first by the Phags mo gru and then
by the Kārma pa hierarchs and their Gtsang pa patrons. It was a state of affairs that continued until the trends that culminated in the so-called Settlement of 1642 began to make themselves strongly felt and Rnying ma fortunes rose along with the Dge lugs pa sect under the guidance of figures like the first Paṇ chen rin po che Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1570-1662).

The vicissitudes of the Rnying ma school during long periods of Tibetan history goes a long way to explain the importance of the two lineages associated with the transmission of rdzogs chen mentioned earlier, the ring brgyud bka’ ma (a ‘distant’ lineage of more generally accepted authentic texts) and the nye brgyud gter ma (a ‘close’ lineage of treasure texts containing doctrines revealed in visionary experiences). The eclipse of Rnying ma during parts of its history is at least part of the reason why “the distant lineage of the transmitted percepts...grew increasingly fragile with each generation,” a state of affairs that had been seen in advance by Padma-samdhava who “had responded by filling the land of Tibet with spiritual treasures,” the discovered treasures comprising the nye brgyud gter ma.17

It is in this light that the statements about the central role played by Gter bdag gling pa and Lo chen Dharma-ṣri in the revival and propogation of rdzogs chen become meaningful. We read that “Gyurme Dorje...and Ngawang Chöpel [these are the names of the two brothers ]... united all the streams of instruction from all quarters...and thus they raised anew the great unfailing banner [of the essential Rnying ma teaching which had ]...“gradually become sparse.”18 We find that Lo chen Dharma-ṣri's Dpag bsam snye ma, an explanation of the Sdom gsum rnam nges “the basic defense of the tantric practices of the older schools”19 is the most widely used
modern commentary, and that his *Gsang bdag zhal lung* and *'Dus pa mdo dang sgyu 'phrul skar gyi yig cha* are important sources in the works of Dudjom Rinpoche recently made available in English. Following the same work of Dudjom Rinpoche we read that Gter bdag gling pa received the distant lineage (the *ring brgyud*) through the Zur and Rong families and that Lo chen Dharma-śri received the distant lineage of the *Mdo dgongs 'dus*; and we read that Gter bdag gling pa discovered a number of important treasure texts such as the one presented here.

It would appear, then, that what we have here in *A Very Clear Picture* is a work by two figures who are of the utmost importance in the transmission of *rdzogs chen* teaching in Tibet.

Still, even with a knowledge of the different sorts of transmission lineage and of the general layout of the teaching of the enlightened one set forth in Rnying ma, a difficulty remains for the modern reader approaching a treasure text like *A Very Clear Picture* for the first time. One cannot help but wonder whether Gter bdag gling pa really did find a text or whether he deceitfully wrote it himself and then passed it off as a discovery for some personal gain. This is the natural anxiety about "the false prophet... a possibility that plagues with doubt any tradition that accepts the principle of continuing revelation."  

But, while the false prophet is always a worry there is surely no doubt about the validity of continuing revelation in general. Dudjom Rinpoche quotes a *Yid bzhing rnam par bkod pa'i brgyud* as saying that for "As long as the great host of all beings remain, Buddhas will emanate unceasingly, and
the doctrine of liberation will not decline.'\textsuperscript{21} The sentiment is surely unassailable.

As a final thought on this for the moment, consider an important event in the history of western Buddhist scholarship, the discovery of a number of texts written in Tibetan and Chinese dating back to the period when rdzogs chen was in its early stages of development, in caves at Tun-huang by Sir Auriel Stein earlier in this century. Alongside Stein's discovery place the visionary find of this treasure text \textit{A Very Clear Picture} by Gter bdag gling pa at Ökar Rock in 1676.

How do we authentically describe the events? Setting aside the description of Stein's find as it appeared in the scholarly journals of the day for the moment, since Stein was not prophesied to discover the books and since he did not consider himself to have discovered a treasure in the traditional sense (he would no doubt have thought such considerations totally ludicrous) why should one not say of him that even though he did not make up his find himself, still his find was little more than a robbery? Why should one not say of him that he simply pilfered a people's heritage? There is no easy answer. And when one looks at Gter gling pa the book even if he did write down himself, why should his description of his find not be legitimate sin? Even if it does not exactly accord with one's own first educated appraisal it is certainly no more self-serving than is the usual description of Stein's discovery.

Dge lugs and Rnying ma

Roughly speaking, Tibetan history can be divided into three periods. The first, the so-called period of the old translation lasted up until about the beginning of the eleventh
Dzog Chen Meditation

century. Then followed a period that lasted until 1642 that saw a gradual increase in the power of the Buddhist clergy. In this second period there was an increase in sectarian strife as different religion sects vied for power. Noble families closely allied with the heads of the sects and tracing their religious authority back to early Buddhist saints and sometimes directed by Mongolian overlords fought for power. The seventeenth century saw this fluid power struggle finally end and be replaced by a more powerful and stable form of government as the Dge lugs pa monks, with the Dalai and Pan chen Lamas at their head, constituted a veritable theocracy. The Buddhist clergy (still in collaboration with the noble families, but with much diminished clout) ruled supreme.

Now, A Very Clear Picture was written in part in all probability in about 1667 when, we are told, Gter bdag gling pa "discovered...the Vajrasattva cycles (rdo-sems-ati'i skor) at Ökar Rock during his thirty-first year."22 (Lo chen Dharma-srī’s commentary on it was probably written sometime later.) Some ten years later, in 1676, the fifth Dalai Lama Ngag dbang rgya mtsho would handsomely repay the family of Gter bdag gling pa for the support and friendship his father Gnyos stön phrin las lhun grub (1611-62) had offered during the fight against the Rin spung prince Karma bstan skyong dbang po, authorising and helping to fund Gter bdag gling pa’s new mystery of Smin grol gling in the Grwa valley. In view of the close personal personal relationship, both political and religious between the family of Gter bdag gling pa and the Dalai Lama, and in view of the concatenation of events which linked the rise in the fortune of the Rnying ma pa with the rise to power of the Dge lugs pa one would expect to find some sign, of the relation in a work like A Very Clear
Introduction

Picture of a shared set of beliefs or practices linking the Rnying ma and Dge lugs together. That one does, in fact, do so is clear from reading the text. One can point to the overall structure of the text which accords considerable space to the so-called practices of *skyes bu cung* and 'bring ('persons of small and middle scope'); the characterization of the relation between compassion and emptiness (folio 439-40) and the pervasive presence of a *lam gsum rnam 'khyer* model. This does not necessarily imply that Gter bdag gling pa and Lo chen Dharma-śri took these practices from the Dge lugs pa. It does, though, suggest that the spiritual heritage at the time *A Very Clear Picture* was written was one in which no strong need was felt to clearly distinguish a Rnying ma pa doctrine from a clearly Dge lugs pa one.

This is a point worth making in light of the modern tendency to uncritically accept that the interpretation of Rnying ma doctrines by the great nineteenth century writers of the eclectic movement, particularly 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen rtse dbang po (1820-92), 'Jam mgon kong sprul (1813-99) and Mi pham rnam rgyal rgya mtsho (1846-1912) are somehow authentic and validated by a long tradition rather than inspired re-interpretations (perhaps rediscovery would be a better word) molded by the realities of nineteenth and twentieth century Tibetan life and their new access to texts, particularly of the Jonang pa school, long suppressed by Dge lugs pa zealots. Since the pioneering efforts of Gene Smith, some twenty-five years ago, to make better known the works of those eclectic writers, and perhaps compounded by a western distrust of any entrenched religious power, the intimate doctrinal relation between the Rnying ma and Dge lugs schools in at least part of their history has been rather over-looked.
Much more remains to be said about the accommodation of the old and the new Buddhism in Tibet (gsar rnying zung 'jug). It is a movement that right from its inception in the seventeenth century had a political dimension. But it is also a movement that transcends the merely political and it would be a loss were it to be seen exclusively in terms of social analysis. Particularly in its recent formulation by modern Tibetan writers like Bstan ’dzin rgya mtsho, the present Dalai Lama, the accommodation of the old and the new is symbolic of a struggle that is continually waged, often lost but sometimes won: to rejuvenate the present in a celebration of the past.

To sum up, A Very Clear Picture is an integrated presentation of the entire Buddhist religious practice. It is complete in encompassing the vast diversity of preliminary and fundamental Buddhist practices and complete, as well, in including in its presentation of Buddhism the esoteric practices that convey one to the inexpressible transcendental profundity, the clear and blissful sphere of the ultimate. The practices taught in A Very Clear Picture come together in the person’s mind, as it were, to lead to a breakthrough or a jump into transcendental experience. That is to say, to transcend its own activity and reach into its own primordial nature.

Notes to Introduction

1. rdzogs pa has a further technical meaning as ‘phase’ of the moon.
3. Rnal 'byor spyod pa'i lugs nges pa'i don ji bzhin bsgom thabs.
4. See footnotes to chapter four ‘A Ch’an Text from Tun-huang : Implications for Ch’an Influence on Tibetan Bud-
Steven D. Goodman and Ronald M. Davidson (Delhi: Indian Books Center, 1993), p. 154ff, for references.

5. Yogācāra and Madhyamaka (‘yogic practice’ and ‘pertaining to the middle’) are names for two Mahāyāna Buddhist schools. The former is characterized by its doctrine of vijñapti-mātratā (‘representation-only’), a form of radical idealism. The latter propounded a radical nominalism holding that all phenomena were empty and existed merely by the power of convention or name. According to K. Mimaki in “The Blo Gsal Grub Mtha’ and the Madhyamika Classification in Tibetan grub mtha’ literature,” (in E. Steinkellner and H. Tauscher, eds., Contributions on Tibetan Buddhist Religion and Philosophy [Vienna, Universität Wien. 1983], pp. 161-67) Ye shes sde, a Tibetan translator in the ninth century was the first to explicitly distinguish Yogācāra-madhyamaka. I am making a distinction between Yogācāra the system of religious philosophy (siddhānta) and the Buddhism of yogic practitioners (yogācāra). I think rdzogs chen was intimately related with the latter from its earliest beginnings.

6. In Tibetan literature there is a long tradition of extolling a perfect Indian Buddhist religious philosophy. This Buddhism is first equated with Yogācāra-madhyamaka and later, particularly after the middle of the eleventh century, with the Prāsaṅgika-madhyamaka of the Indian Buddhist Candrakīrti. Prāsaṅgika (‘pertaining to consequences’) is a sub-division of the Madhyamaka. Its name is taken from a short passage at the beginning of one of Candrakīrti’s books where he says that he does not posit proofs, he only draws out the absurd consequences (prasaṅga) in other people’s points of view. A deficient Chinese Buddhism called variously vig car ba (‘all-at-once’) (hence some sort of Ch’ an) or, more generally, the doctrine of ‘the Chinese monk called Mahāyāna,’ is contrasted with it. Within this Tibetan tradition to say that rdzogs chen originated in Ch’an Buddhism is to exclude it from the rank of perfect and pure Buddhist doctrine. Even by the mid-ninth century it appears it was axiomatic that a ‘correct’ view must be defended against any attempt to trace its origins back to non-Madhyamaka sources and against any attempt to tar it with the brush of having a non-Indian origin. Thus we find one of the earliest systematizers of rdzogs chen, Gnubs
sangs rgyas ye shes (fl. circa 850) to be saying explicitly that rdzogs chen and the cig car ba differ. He also explains how it is quite different to Yogācāra.

As to the history of the linkage between rdzogs chen and the Vijñāaptimātrtin view in Tibet, Samten Karmay, in The Great Perfection (rdzogs chen). A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching in Tibetan Buddhism (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988, p. 44 and 60) has shown that in its very earliest sources dating to the early part of the ninth century there is no evidence to link the Yogācāra doctrine of vijñāpti-mātratā ('representation-only') and the doctrine of rdzogs chen." Still, Gnubs sangs rgyas ye she's statements appear to have been motivated not so much by the wish to highlight such facts, as by his desire to show that his tradition was grounded in an Indian Madhyamaka.

The convention or tendency amongst Tibetan Buddhist schools to validate their own practises by locating their origins in India, the land of the enlightened beings and the most famous Buddhist saints, and, conversely to damn opponents' practises as deviant by tracing their origins to non-Indian sources culminated in the extremely influential Tibetan meditation manual Lam rim chen mo written in the late fourteenth century by Tsang kha pa. There a form of all-at-once/no-thought meditative praxis is explicitly said to be the meditation taught by 'a Chinese monk' and it is unequivocally rejected as nihilistic and deviant. So influential were the works of Tsang kha pa in later Tibetan history that they became, in watered-down form at least, a quasi-political ideology. This is touched on briefly below.

7. This is the title given by Karmay (1988) who has made these texts known. Some give the title as Rig pa'i khu hyug.


9. Many important words in Tibetan Buddhism originate as translation terms (skad gdod) for specific words found in earlier Indian (and occasionally Chinese) Buddhist texts. It is therefore instructive to ask if rdzogs chen is a translation of a specific Indian (or Chinese) word or phrase. First of all it should be noted that a definite answer is difficult because,
understandably, the earliest translators into Tibetan did not have a standardised terminology. It is possible that two alternative translations of the same Indian words later became the basis for distinctive Tibetan developments that led to a *rdzogs chen* system, distinct at least insofar as it accepted the name *rdzogs chen* as its own. Still, be that as it may, Samten Karmay in his masterly *The Great Perfection* has identified a passage from the *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba*, an early work "that gave birth to the doctrine of *rdzogs chen*, as a synthetic teaching drawing much from the *Gsad ba snying po*" (Tanaka and Robertson, op. cit., n. 70, p. 162), in which an Indian term for *rdzogs chen* seems to be presupposed (Karmay, op. cit., p. 10, text p. 166, translation p. 158). The complicated passage quoted by Karmay explains *rdzos pa chen po'i tshul*, which probably renders a *mahāsanti-naya* or *mahā-sānapānna-naya*. The passage in question suggests a Sanskrit, or at least an Indian language, *niruktī*-type construction. There is a 'creative etymology' where the writer seems to be providing a pertinent didactic explanation by showing how a compound word is built up out of different roots. Further, in a note to p. 47 of the same book, Karmay speculates that there may have been an Indian word *santi-darpa* which meant *rdzogs chen*. Unfortunately the state of the manuscript he consulted made the crucial letters nearly indecipherable. In *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* of Dudjom Rinpoche (translated and edited by Dorje Gyurme with the collaboration of Mathew Kapstein [Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991], p. 313 and n. 307) there is a passage quoted from Buddha-śrī-jñāna’s *Mañjuśrī-mukhāgama* (T1853-4). There the *sānapānna-krama* and *rdzogs chen* are interpreted by way of two further terms *mtsan yod* and *mtshan med rdzogs rim*. The *mtshan med rdzogs rim*, locked into the real, as it were, is *rdzogs chen*. The commentary by Vitapāda, however, (T1866) suggests that here the word means no more than a *mahā-sānapānna-krama*, in the sense of a completion process that takes the person through to enlightenment in a single life. It should be noted that recently *mahāsanidhi-yoga* has appeared as a translation of the Tibetan term into Sanskrit (Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, *Buddhist Civilization in Tibet* [New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987], p. 44); and that *ati-yoga*, the highest of the nine Rnying ma yānas ('vehicles') is sometimes said to be the Sanskrit word for *rdzogs chen*. 

11. There are a number of versions of the earlier transmission. In the lineage prayer here in *A Very Clear Picture* Śri-simha is followed by Vajra-humkara and Vimala. For a detailed treatment see Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*.

12. 'Gyur med rdo rje is his given name. The honorific epithet *gter bdag* means ‘lord of treasure texts,’ *gter ston* ‘reveler of treasure texts,’ and *gter chen* ‘treasure text great.’ The name Smin sgrol gling pa ‘the one from Smin sgrol monastery’ comes from the famous Rnying ma monastery he founded.

13. The given name of Lo chen Dharma-śrī was Bstan 'dzin 'jam dbang dbang po. His ordination name was Ngag dbang chos 'phel. He was a man very leaned in grammar, poetry and so forth and his name Lo chen Dharma śrī reflects that fact.

14. This group of treasure text verses (see footnotes 18 and 19 to translation) is a more recent ‘find’ since there is reference to the famous nineteenth century eclectic ’Jam dbyang mkhyen rtse.


16. The second sort of *gter chos* is sub-divided into *bka’ brgyad, dgongs ‘dus* and *’phur pa*. (Buddhist Civilization in Tibet, p. 81).


18. Ibid., p. 728.

19. *Introduction to Kongtrul’s Encyclopedia* p. 3, n. 11.

20. Ibid., pp. 11-12. Michael Aris, in *Hidden Doctrines and Secret Lives* (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass) seems to have been much vexed by such difficulties and felt the need to unmask false prophets, though for whose sake it is unclear.

21. The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, p. 944.

22. Ibid., 828.
23. This practice is set forth, for example in Dbyangs chen dga’ ba’i blos gros’ s (18th century) Gzhi’i sku gsum gyi rnam gzhag rab gsal sgron me, which is an explanation, in essence, of Tsong kha pa’ s Rgyud kyi rgyal po gsang ba ’dus pa’i man ngag rim pa lnga rab ru gsal ba’i sgron me (translated by Jeffrey Hopkins in collaboration with Lati Rinbochay in Death, Intermediate State, and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism [London, Rider, 1979; reprint ed. Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1980]).
CHAPTER 1

Preliminaries

Homage to the Guru and glorious Vajrasattva. Homage to the feet to the great treasure text teacher (gter chen bla ma) whose unchanging, self-knowing enlightened mind is wedded to the incomparable emptiness vajra and who is sporting in the unity which is great extasy. I am enthusiastic about the dharma which is so hard to find, this profound path [explained in this] handbook called A Very Clear Picture. It is a truth imparted by [saints who, like] chariots, [have forged the path] to the ground of [enlightenment] the four kāyas (‘bodies’) of those with pure good fortune.

A distillation of all sūtras and tantras, origin of every supreme and shared yogic attainment, the one excellent road travelled by all enlightened beings of the three times, river run of all who want freedom, short cut for those who will become enlightened in this very life, a profound path that is the two-fold process for realizing the glorious Vajrasattva mind: this quick and easy guide to the buddha level for talented trainees has three parts: preliminary stage, stage of actual practice and stage of what follows that.
Preliminary Stage

This has two parts: preliminaries to beginning a meditation session and preliminaries for making oneself a suitable vessel for the path.

Preliminary to all meditation sessions one goes to a secluded place, seats oneself comfortably, straightens one’s body and lets one’s mind settle down.\(^2\) Eliminate the dead energy-winds (\(rlung\) \(ro\)) three times\(^3\) and think that all bad obscuration is purified. Then,[429] thinking: “I will practise this profound path for the sake of all creatures who are as pervading as space,” familiarize yourself with the idea (\(bsgoms\)) that your root guru is on the crown of your head. And thinking of [this guru] as the embodiment of every object of refuge, with boundless faith (\(mos\) \(gos\)) [say] “Precious guru who embodies all buddhas of the three times [past, present and future] you know [all]. Please bless my mindstream.” Having made this request in confident expectation, looking [at the guru as the one possible source of help], believe (\(mos\)) that the guru then dissolves into light and sinks down onto the crown of one’s head. Whatever the visualization that follows [i.e., all meditations down to the last one] below, one must be sure to do all these [six things] as a preliminary.\(^4\)

Preliminaries for Making Oneself a Suitable Vessel for the Path

This has two parts as set forth [in the treasure text]:

Turn away from what confronts awareness [i.e., this immediate life] by reflecting well on the limitless misery of cyclic existence; subdue one’s mindstream by working hard at the shared [and] special paths.
[The two parts, then, are] the shared and unshared preliminaries. There are three parts to the guide to the shared preliminaries: (i) fashioning the mind with renunciation, (ii) going for refuge, the foundation stone of religious practice \((\text{theg}_pa)\) in general, and (iii) generating the altruistic thought \([\text{to become enlightened for the sake of all beings}]\), the root of mahāyāna.

**Fashioning the mind with renunciation.** If one is guiding those who are new there is a detailed explanation of each of the meditations [contemplating] (i) the difficulty of obtaining the freedoms and endowments [of a perfect human birth], (ii) the transitoriness of life, (iii) the way earlier actions ripen into their results, and (iv) the faults of cyclic existence. [The student] must engage in contemplation of them up until there is a vibrant experience of them in the mind. Since this is for those who have already trained their minds \([430]\) let us refresh our understanding a bit with an overview of them all.

At this juncture when I have somehow obtained this precious human body, the complete basis [for religious practice], a body that will be hard to get again and which, when found, is very meaningful, it is imperative that I practise nothing but the pure dharma that gives lasting peace. Not only that, but since like a flash of lightening in the sky it is uncertain when I shall die, without getting in to putting it off, I should practise the dharma right from this very moment. At the time of death food, wealth, possessions, friends, enemies, home, body and power, etc., all do not accompany me and none gives one iota of harm or help. So winning or losing, being happy or being sad, whatever will be will be. There is no purpose, at all, in any of the work which one does based on those. The [residual propensities] left by both virtuous and
bad actions, like a shadow and a body, go along with me at the time of death. And there is neither the ability to off-load bad which has been done already nor to acquire virtues which I have not personally engaged in. This cyclic world, governed by karma, be it an exalted or a low place of rebirth, all of it does not escape being the cyclic world of misery and there is no happiness in it. What is to be done if I take one of the horrid rebirths? There is no certainty I will be born human. So from now on, even at the cost of my life, I will not do [wrong]. I must practice virtue with great resolve.

But even if, through some contaminated virtuous deed, I am born in a happy state, and though there may be some small immediate pleasure that seems like happiness, all of this is but as an occasional good dream in a deep sleep. It changes and goes away. So since all of the cyclic world’s winning or losing, being happy or being sad are states that cannot last, one leading inexorably to its opposite, no matter how apparently excellent, the endowment of cyclic happiness is without any essential reality. So apart from the holy dharma every other activity one involves oneself in is meaningless. It does not pass beyond being the cyclic world of misery. One contemplates this from the very depths of one’s soul again and again. The crucial thing is to put it into practice.

The foundation of the path in general: going for refuge. Thinking that one must approach the precious triple gem, the unmistaken place of refuge that is the force, the security assistant to help liberate all living beings from the conflagration, as it were, of the cyclic world of misery which should, indeed, be feared, visualize that the usual place where you find yourself is a jewelled land wide and vast and level; and in the centre of it a wish-fulfilling tree with its
branches weighted down by flowers and fruits. It has a central and four side branches spreading out. On the central one set on a raised, spacious throne is one's root guru and above, one above the head of the other, the lineage gurus sitting as the embodiment of all the precious jewels of refuge. As to the branches spread in the four directions, on the one in front are the host of maṇḍala deities: the special [i.e., main tantric deities which one practises] buddhas, devatās and kings; on the one on the right are the shared buddhas starting with Śākyamuni and so on, all the supreme nirmāṇa-kāyas ('emanation bodies') [432] of the ten directions and three times; on the one at the back is the dharma jewel in the form of piled-up scripture; and on the one on the left are the shared members of the spiritual community—the ārya-śrāvakas ('noble listeners') and bodhisattvas. [In the sky] surrounding all these are the special members of the [tantric] spiritual community—the ḍakinīs (extraordinary women with wisdom), dharma protectors and wisdom beings (ye shes pa) massed like clouds as it were. Then imagine that oneself, along with all living creatures equal to space, having gathered together, fervently seek refuge in confident expectation with reverence and belief, looking [only on the three jewels as capable of helping], thinking as one does, 'You are aware of our every happiness and pain, all good and bad.' In this frame of mind say to the extent that one is able

Namo ("I make, homage"). I and every wandering creature equal to space starting from now until the attainment of enlightenment go for refuge to the direction and time tathāgatās and their children continually and reverentially with body speech and mind . . . .

[Preliminary gter ma 1]
At the time for setting aside a meditation session, light emanates from the bodies of the refuge objects, striking oneself and all other living creatures purifying bad obscurations. All living creatures are transported to paradise. The refuge objects then dissolve into light and sink down on to one another from above. [With this part of the visualization] turn over [the value of the activity to others’ benefit].

When going to bed think of the refuge objects being right there, at one’s head, without gathering them all together [and dissolving them] and fall asleep with an intense feeling of belief in them.

Production of [an altruistic] mind, the root of the mahāyāna. Whatever the direction one measures, the regions (khams) of the world are without a limit. Living creatures of the six sorts cover it all without any part left out, and every one of them, time without number, has been my mother or father [433] so I am beholden to all of them and simply have to look after them. They all of them want what all want, namely, happiness; but they do what all do, namely, cause themselves misery. Alas these poor things who are like the emotionally ill with their hates and loves and misguided behaviour. But what is to be done for these my mothers and fathers who undergo all sorts of misery even as they look for happiness? Certainly just leaving it at feeling sorry for them will not help. They must quickly be got out of the cyclic world of misery and be placed in perfect liberation, in the perfect and complete enlightened state. Right now I am incapable of doing that so I must myself, in this very lifetime attain the station of enlightenment which has the power to liberate all. It is for that [reason] that I am going to become habituated to the profound generation and completion paths of the glorious Vajrasattva. In this frame of mind say...
Preliminaries

Ho! . . . and from now on, until cyclic existence is emptied, cause to rise up as [in] holy enlightenment the thought (empowered by the activity of the victors) of establishing the foundation of nirvāṇa for limitless wandering creatures. [Preliminary gter ma II]

[Say this with] strong, surpassing intention held close to one's heart, [to help] all mother living creatures of the six sorts. At the end of the session, settled for a moment within the absence of any observation [i.e., without grasping at the true existence of] living creatures, turn over [the value of one's action to the good of others].

Preliminaries Unique to Tantra

This is in three parts: (i) guide to the one hundred syllable mantra that purifies wrong and obscurcation, (ii) guide to the maṇḍala that accumulates [merit] and (iii) guide to the worship of the guru which is the root of blessing.

Guide to the one hundred syllable mantra. There is a white hūni on the top of a lotus and moon seat [434] at the top of one's head. Light emanates from that and does the two meaningful things, gathers back and then there is a complete transformation into the guru glorious Vajrasattva with one head and two hands, the right holding a vajra at the heart and the left a bell supported on the hip and the consort Bṛhkuṭi (Snyems ma) holding a knife and skull and embracing him. Adorned with silks and jewels, the male is in the mind posture (sens skiyi) and the female in the extasy posture (bde skiyi) and they are intertwined with each other. At the heart is a white vajra on a lotus and moon standing up erect with a white letter (hūni) in the centre. Circling around it is the one hundred syllable mantra. Then, out of a conscience-stricken regret for wrongs and transgression already done, and a firm
attitude that will prevent the doing of such things in the future, with a fierce longing that the wrongs and obscurations and degenerated and broken pledges, both mine and those of other living creatures may be purified by this guru glorious Vajrasattva repeat the one hundred syllables as though it were a prayer. Thereby from the mantra at the heart and all parts of the body a stream of jellifying\textsuperscript{11} white nectar drips down through the Brahmā aperture. Diseases, harmful spirits, wrongs and obscuration, in the form of pus, bugs and dense smoke pass out ever lower through the doors of the senses and the pores of one’s body leaving one ending up like a glass bottle, clean in every part filled to brimming with the streams of white nectar. Think that experiential realization and good qualities have arisen in the mindstream of oneself and others and at the end of the meditation session make a confession with the verse [435]

Lord, on account of unknowing and stupidity I have transgressed and caused to degenerate my pledges. Lord and teacher please give me refuge. In you who are chief vajra-holder, you whose very being is great compassion, you who are foremost for wandering creatures I seek refuge. I confess and open up to all the degenerations of the root and branch pledges to do with body, speech and mind. I beseech you to purify and make holy (dag) the mass of stains of wickedness, obscuration and downfalls. [Preliminary gter ma III]

Then think that Vajrasattva gives a dispensation saying “Child of good family, all bad and obscuration is purified,”\textsuperscript{12} and that sinking down into oneself he blesses the mindstream. Focus strongly on the [ultimate] nature of wrongs and obscuration and having remained for a time placed within [contemplation] of the purity of the three
spheres [of doer, doing and deed] the indescribably great bliss, then turn over [the value to others]. Work at this until one obtains a sign of the purification of wrong and obscurations.

Explanation of the Maṇḍala. The assembled field maṇḍala ('sacred circle') is visualized in the space before one as above in the visualization of the objects of refuge. The offering maṇḍala is as follows: Use either something like a jewelled maṇḍala, or, if you do not have one, wipe clean whatever you are going to use for the base and smear it with perfumes and purifying water. The physical action is the construction of the heaps of flowers; the verbal action is saying, oneself and others in chorus,

A jewelled firmament girdled with mantras, the golden mountain, delightful oceans, four large and eight smaller continents full of an ocean of human and celestial belongings, I offer them all with the pure field in mind. [Preliminary gter ma IV]

The mental work is visualizing [that spreading out in the four directions in concentric circles from] the axial mountain supported by the Atlas-like golden foundation, are the oceans, four island-like land-masses, the smaller land-masses, the sun and moon and so forth, along with all human and celestial endowments and accumulations, huge amounts of them, without any gap and piled up on high. Offering all this many times, request that a special experiential understanding and good qualities be quickly caused to arise in the mindstream. Finally, the assembled field along with the maṇḍala of offering materials gather back into oneself in the form of the letter hūṃ. After placing oneself for a moment within non-apprehension of the three spheres [of
doer, doing and deed], the great bliss, then turn over [the value to others].

**Explanation of the Worship of the Guru.** The object of one’s request which is in the space in front of oneself is like the refuge objects visualized earlier. All of their compassion has no increase or decrease; their ideas concern neither higher nor inferior; they are the appearance part of the bliss and emptiness of the root guru’s mind, its sport, arising as illusions, as it were. Think that they [the refuge objects] gaze upon oneself and all other living beings moving us with their waves of splendour and that their waves of splendour clear away the gloom. Emanate as many of one’s bodies as there are specks of dust on the ground and together with living beings that cover all space, within faith and reverence, think one offers a perfect seven [branch worship] beginning with prostration and so forth. Say

Teacher glorious Vajrasattva, three jewels (*mchog*) with the bodhisattvas, I completely bow to and make prostrations before you; I offer an ocean of outer and inner offerings; I will refrain from wrong doing; I rejoice in every merit; I beseech you with reverence to turn forever the wheel of dharma and to remain for as long as there are wandering creatures. Whatever the merit of this may wandering creatures equal to space attain the unequalled place of enlightenment. [Preliminary gter ma V]

[Say this] as much as one is able. Then again and again get rid of all doubts (*sgro ‘dogs*) as to whether this very guru is the embodiment of all enlightened beings, and recalling his quality of being the one thing that all the conquerors meet back to, and recalling his kindness with a confident expectation, thinking “You are aware of whatever is done,” looking [only
Foremost pervading lord Samanta-bhadra; bliss and emptiness indivisible, glorious Vajrasattva, royal representative teacher Dga’ rab do rje I beseech you to bless my mindstream.

Sri-simha who completed the unification practice, Vajra-humkarā who is holder of the treasury of secrets, Vimala-[mitra] who sees the essential meaning of the profound path, I beseech you to bless my mindstream.

Padma-sambhava who is the reality (dngos) of all buddhas of the three times; space worker, empowering woman Ye shes mtsho rgyal, Vairocana-vara who elucidates the definitive meaning of the good path I beseech you to bless my mindstream.

Gter bdag gling pa, sun of doctrine translated earlier [Lo chen Dharma-śri], Rin chen rnam rgyal who is the reincarnation (rnam’sprul) of Vimlamitra, Padma bstan ’dzin who attained the level of a vidhyā-dhara I beseech you to bless my mindstream.

Phrin las rnam rgyal teacher of the definitive secret path, Padma dbang rgyal brother and sister couple who see the supreme, dharma-conqueror of the scriptures’ Jam dbyangs mkhyen rtse I beseech you to bless my mindstream.

Lord teacher who strives for the ripening and liberation of living beings, who is the main meditational deity [Vajrasattva] the illusory play of great bliss, whose [enlightened] works know no bounds, who is a space worker and protector I beseech you to bless my mindstream.
Through the virtues obtained by this may I and other wandering creatures equal to space become habituated to the thought of enlightenment; may all that appears arise as the appearances of the deity’s body, and cutting off the rigidity may we get to the final view, and get to the very end of the profound path that is the passing over the crest whence again we need not be disturbed. [Preliminary gter ma VI]

After that one is touched by the light that emanates from the body of the root guru. Thereby the lineage gurus and the three jewels, etc., melt, in turn, into light and gather into the guru’s body. Then [437] the root guru who is the embodiment of all refuge objects is seated with a white om at the crown, red āh at the throat and a blue hūṃ at the heart, these being the nature of the vajra body, speech and mind of all enlightened ones. One requests with23

Conqueror Vajradhara who possesses the majesty of the four bodies turn your mind to me and other wanderers out of your compassion and fill up my mindstream with the vase, secret, primordial transcendental wisdom, and supreme primordial wisdom that is the ultimate reality [empowerments]. [Preliminary gter ma VII]

With this one receives, in a sequence the four empowerments while saying24

The white light spreads out from the om on the top of the guru’s head and sinking down on the top of my head the vase empowerment is obtained. Physical stains are purified, and empowered to meditate on the path that is the generation process I am made into one capable of obtaining the result nirmāṇa-kāya (‘emanation body’). The red light spreads out from the āh in the [guru’s]
throat and sinking down into my throat the secret empowerment is obtained. Stains of speech are purified, and empowered to meditate on the path that is the channels and energy-winds I am made into one capable of obtaining the result sāṁbhoga-kāya (‘enjoyment body’). The blue light spreads out from the hūṃ in the [guru’s] heart and sinking down into my heart the primordial transcendental wisdom empowerment is obtained. Mental stains are purified, and empowered to meditate on the path that is the pearl-drops I am made into one capable of obtaining the result dharma-kāya (‘truth body’). Then again the white, red and blue lights spread out from the [guru’s] three places and sinking down into my three places the fourth empowerment is obtained. Primordial wisdom stains are purified, and empowered to meditate on the path that is the great completion I am made into one capable of obtaining the result svabhāvika-kāya (‘own nature body’). [Preliminary gter ma VIII]

Then again with a worshipful reverence from the very bottom of one’s heart one makes requests so that, with great pleasure, that same guru proceeds to the crown of your head and dissolving into light merges into you. Having settled in equipoise within the indivisibility of one’s own and the guru’s mind for a moment, one then turns over [the value to others].

It goes without saying that these preliminaries should be done until on the verge of an experience of the visualizations arising in the mindstream. If, when a speedy explanation is being given and one has no more than a day or two for these meditations, then, until the explanation is finished during each first session do them fully and extensively in whatever physical posture is comfortable.
Should one prefer a condensed version, however, then do not gather back the refuge objects but make them the basis for the maṇḍala and the worship of the guru. This is lighter in weight and will get to the essentials of the practice. In the later sessions there would be refuge, bodhicitta and worship of the guru. To condense even that one just does [these three] in the preliminaries to the meditation sessions. [Done in this way] there will not be the fault that something has been left out.
Having finished the preliminaries in this fashion there is the actual practice in three stages: generation, recitation and completion.

If one does not set down a solid foundation with the preliminaries, even if the explanation of actual practice is given, good qualities will not arise in the mindstream. Or, though they arise a little will not be firm and finished. Since this is the case train at the outset until the preliminaries are finished. Then, if one has not already received abhiṣekha (‘empowerment’), before meditating on the actual path that is the generation and completion processes one must have one’s mindstream ripened by receiving the empowerments. Even if one has earlier received empowerment, in order to revive one’s tantric pledges it would be good at this point to request [empowerment] either from one’s guru, or, if unavailable, to take it from oneself as a [tantrically] ordained person. One way or the other, engage yourself in meditation after having ripened the mindstream with an empowerment.

[As to the meditations], these are in three parts: the explanation of the body/generation process/mudrā; explana-
tion of the speech/recitation/mantra; and the explanation of the mind/completion process/tattvā.\textsuperscript{27}

In regard to the first, [after seating oneself] in accordance with the general posture in seven essentials on a comfortable seat the way one does the [generation process] meditations is in two parts: realization (sgrub) of the indivisible pledge and wisdom maṇḍala\textsuperscript{28} and training in the main thing in the visualization, the deity-appearance belief (lha’i snang zhen).

Indivisible Pledge and Wisdom Maṇḍala

This is in two parts as spoken of in the verse [of the treasure text]:

First, in the centre of the support protection wheel\textsuperscript{29} generate the deity, summoning and dissolving the wisdom [beings], then . . .

These two parts are: generating the samādhi (‘meditative’)–maṇḍala\textsuperscript{30} which is the form (rnam pa) and inviting and dissolving the jñāna (‘wisdom’)–maṇḍala\textsuperscript{31} which is [its] [439] reality (rang bzhin). The first has two parts: (i) constructing the foundation (khog dbub pa) with the three causal meditative stabilizations, and (ii) generating the resultant supporting and supported maṇḍalas. The first [the three causal meditative stabilizations] again has three parts: [basic reality, total appearances (kun snang) and causal (rgyu) meditative stabilization].

Basic reality meditative stabilization.\textsuperscript{32} All phenomena considered from the angle of (snang grags) self and other, fade away like a rainbow in the sky. Meditate briefly on the mind free of appearances. Then say the emptiness mantra thinking [about its meaning]: “I am that ul-
timate nature of all things, unproduced from the start, an emptiness without conceptualization, a self-originated transcendental wisdom, the sugatas' seed-womb.'" Cultivate a pride in that. Now, the most important thing in every visualization during the generating process is that it meet the three-fold requirement of purification, completion and ripening. This [basic reality meditation] transforms and purifies the death state, in that it plants the seed which manifests as the truth body it sets up a cause and effect relationship which completes the result; and, it functions as a ripening agent in that it sets down the foundation for producing in the mindstream the actual clear light during the sanipanna-krama ('completing process') on the higher path. Be proud also about the relation between the foundation and the result, that the purified death state is the truth body. Understand what follows in a similar fashion as well.

Total appearances. Though the totality of living beings, unaware of this non-conceptual, basic reality meditational depth sphere, appear from out of it like the colours of a rainbow coming from the sky, they are like illusory things empty of any truth. Out of a pervasive appearance [i.e., feeling] of intense compassion for them, non-apprehending, illusory, as it were, cultivate the thought "I shall establish them on the ground of supreme enlightenment." This [total appearance meditation] purifies the intermediate state; it sets up a cause and effect relationship which completes the resultant enjoyment body; and it sets down the foundation for the great compassion which causes the unity deity (zung 'jug gi lha) to rise up from the clear light.

Causal meditative stabilization. There is the white letter hüm which is the self-knowing (rang rig) that is the
unity of emptiness and great compassion. Meditating on it as being in the nature of bliss, clarity and emptiness, one keeps meditating, in a one-pointed absorption equipoise, until clarity and stability of experience arises. This purifies the consciousness and craving that are there just as one is about to enter the birth state; it sets up a cause and effect relationship for the arising, from the resultant enjoyment body, of the emanation body (which is for taming whoever [is in need of taming]); and it sets down the foundation for the arising of the completion process' wisdom-being deity’s body.

Generating the Supporting and Supported Mañḍalas

This has three parts: meditation on the protection wheel, meditation on the support mañḍala, and meditation on the supported deity-mañḍala.

The protection wheel. As light spreads forth from the causal letter hūṃ there comes to be an indestructible vajra ground, on it a lofty and spacious tent within which is a vajra fence. Outside, a vajra net hangs down girdled by a vajra garland. At the summit is an ornamental half vajra crowning piece. From all these burns an unending conflagration of transcendental wisdom which nothing can penetrate. This purifies hinderances and bad conditions [441] in the birth place one goes to after the [moment of] conception; it sets up a cause and effect relationship for pacifying the four māras (demons) during the time of the result and it sets down the foundation for cutting off the interferences to and misunderstandings about channels, energy-wind and pearl-drops at the time of the completion process.

The support mañḍala. Meditate on each of the following in turn. From the causal letter hūṃ in the centre of the protection wheel come ay (e), yoṅ, baṅ, laṁ and suṁ. From
their being cut from the bottom come space, wind, fire, water and earth firmaments. On these comes into being a vajra-dust ground reaching up to the inside of the vajra fence. In the centre of these lower foundations, which are all smooth and interfitting, is a blooming lotus the nature of which is jewels. Its round pillar-like centre is plateau-like on top on which a sun mandala extends out to the stamens. On that is a twelve spoked vajra. These purify the ground of five basic elements along with the axial mountain that come about as the vessel-like environment within which all living creatures are born. It sets up a cause and effect relationship that completes the dharma element, the metaphor for which is the spaces of the five consorts that are the paradises in which the Buddhas gain enlightenment at the time of the result. And it sets down the foundation for, and makes one capable of manipulating and at ease with, the five basic elements and the axial mountain being the five channel-wheels and the avadhuti ('central channel'); and the lotus, sun and stamens being the channel-wheels, energy-wind and drops at the time of the completion process.

Visualize that from the causal ħūṁ at the centre of the protection wheel comes a letter bhrūṁ which is cut and completely transforms into a square celestial mansion with four doors, with the eight causal and eight resultant ladder-like ornamental pyramids (rta babs) and complete in all defining characteristics such as crowning vajra jewel ornament on the top of the central dome (phyur bu), etc. In its centre is an eight petalled lotus in the centre of which is a throne [held aloft by] lions, surmounted by a lotus and moon seat. The celestial mansion purifies the dwelling place in which living beings live and work; the lotus and moon seat the sperm and blood in the womb of the mother of creatures born from wombs and from eggs; the other two
[lotus and throne] purify (a) the warmth and moisture and (b) the residual impressions left by craving and attachment to place (gnas) and body. This sets up a cause and effect relationship that causes the celestial mansion that is a self-appearance of transcendental wisdom to manifest. The celestial mansion sets down the foundation for the three (the channels, pearl-drops and energy-wind) being, during the completion process, the aspect which is the mixing together in one taste of mind-clarity, emptiness and bliss; the lotus seat sets down the foundation for the crown channel-wheel and the moon sets down the foundation for the obtaining of the immutable great bliss with the completion of the sixteen part going forth and reversing of the fluid into that [crown channel-wheel].

Supported Maṇḍalas

This has two parts: generating the deity and the blessing.

Generation of the deity. There are three rituals generated: (a) the speech, seed-syllable ritual where the causal letter hūm descends onto a seat; (b) the mind, hand-symbol ritual where one meditates on a white, five spoked-vajra marked with a hūm that is the hand symbol for that [buddha] family, and (c) the body, completing ritual where light goes out from that and retracts, doing the two meaningful things, and then turns into a ball of light out of which, when saying Otti vajrasattva āh, [443] the body of glorious Vajrasattva arises. These purify (a) the entry of the intermediate-state consciousness into the red and white gathering (tshogs pa) in the mother’s womb; (b) the mixing together of the sperm, granular material (rdul) and mind that comes about with the mother and father having experienced the five [pleasurable] occasions in intercourse; and (c) the being
born with complete sense-faculties after the gradual formation of the body by the ten winds. It sets up a cause and effect relationship so that, when the resultant buddhas arise in the emanation body, they manifest the deed of entering the womb and taking birth. And it sets down the foundations [for what happens] at the time of the completion process [as follows]: The seed and the hand-symbol set down the foundation for the wind-mind dissolving in the central channel; the going out and retraction set down the foundation for arising of bliss and emptiness from the melting bliss; and [lastly], the completed body sets down the foundation for the establishing of the body of simultaneous transcendental wisdom that is the immutable bliss and emptiness [that comes] from that.

Further, about the meditation on Vajrasattva: He has a radiantly clear, white body, and is joyful and smiling in his youth. In his right hand he holds a five point vajra at his heart and his left hand is holding a bell [with his wrist] balanced on his thigh while embracing his consort. His legs are in vajrāsana ('adamantine posture’) and his hair is pulled up into a crowning bun. The consort, Br̥hkuṭī, is white and is embracing him around the neck while holding a knife and skull-cup and is absorbed with him. Both have the five silken articles of clothing and are radiant with the jewel ornaments. Unending, limitless light radiates from their bodies.

The blessing. Visualize them thus with a white om at the crown, red āḥ [444] at the throat and a blue hūṃ at the heart. These purify the stretched capacities\textsuperscript{38} of those three doors of ordinary beings; set up a cause and effect relationship for their getting to be indivisible with the triple vajra of all the resultant buddhas; and set down the foundation for
producing in the mindstream at the time of the completion process the clear openness wisdom (dwangs ma ye shes) which is the cessation of sperm, granular material and energy-wind.

Inviting and Dissolving the Wisdom Maṇḍala Which is the Reality

Summoned by the light from the heart, all the Buddhas rise up from the unchanging truth body as a form body in the shape of the Vajrasattva maṇḍala. They are invited with "Om eh hye hi [heyahi] mahā-kāruṇika-dṛṣyatoḥ samayas tvam." With "dzah hüm bamu ho" like water going into water they dissolve non-dually into the pledge beings. One meditates having removed all idea of, and belief in, a difference in excellence between the wisdom and pledge beings. This purifies the belief that the ordinary being himself, and earlier living creatures of a similar station, are equal in intelligence capacity; sets up a cause and effect relationship for the coming about, at the time of the result Buddha, of the transcendental wisdom all Buddhas have equally; and sets down the foundation for producing in the mindstream at the time of the completion process (a) the actual transcendental wisdom symbolized by example clear light, and (b) the transcendental wisdom [that realizes] the non-duality of saṁsāra and nirvāṇa.

The Main Thing in Visualization, Deity-Appearance Belief

This is in four parts, the first of which is training in the general outline. [445] This is spoken of [in the treasure text] as follows:

Habituate yourself, without wavering, to the body complete in all its parts, clear like a reflection in a mirror.
One meditates in order to remove ordinary, rough, impure appearances. Visualize, as a [yogic] path, the totally complete body from the head protrusion to the throne. Absorb yourself, one-pointedly, as if in the appearance of a reflection within a pond’s unmoving, clear openness. If, though, one is not able to do the visualization with vibrant clarity, find what a deity on a painted scroll looks like and stare at it intently until one gets a clear picture of it in the mind. Then, habituate yourself, as path, to being the deity, taking that as an example. Without entertaining disconnected thoughts about anything else, absorb yourself one-pointedly right into that clear appearance of the deity’s body. Meditate on the general aspect of the rough, clear appearance of the deity’s body until the idea [that one is ordinary] no longer captures [the mind.]

Training in particulars. This is spoken of [in the treasure text] as follows:

Habituated to that, meditate clearly, in sequence, on the parts of the body down to the tiny ornaments, as being pure.

One meditates in order to remove subtle, ordinary appearances. Visualize and become habituated, to each in turn of the parts of the body from the eyes, etc., down to the feet and the ornamental parts from the crown jewel to the throne. Getting a hold of each of these with the mind, work hard at the meditation until one achieves a distinctive, unmixed clear appearance of each [446] with subtle details. There is a special meaning (gnad) in generating a clear appearance of each as well as visualizing them together.41

Training in pride. This is spoken of [in the treasure text] as follows:

Habituated to that, get a pride thinking, “I am myself really Vajrasattva.”
One meditates in order to remove belief in what is ordinary. Getting a feeling of pride in the thought that the general form of every victorious one is just this very glorious Vajrasattva [who embodies] the removal of all flaws and amassing of all good qualities and that I am him, meditate until there arises a special ascertainment that the deity’s body is not accomplished as anything else but the working of my own innate knowledge. If one knows how to take the vibrant continuum of pride as the primordial one (gnyug mar), valuing it without grasping at it one has come up with the perfect short-cut.

**Training in remembering the purity [i.e., meaning of the symbols].** This is spoken of [in the treasure text] as follows:

Habituated to that, demonstrate the particular mudrās (‘physical gestures’) in order to tame the many sorts of living beings, remember the purity of mind [i.e., mental symbolic meanings]: the three emptinesses, solid [seat], entry into the seed-[syllable], etc. Keep working at the meditation one-pointedly until the habituation to them becomes firm.

Train in order to transform that clear appearance of, and feeling of pride in, the deity’s body into perfect transcendent-\(\text{tal wisdom. In regard to that, although none of the marks [which appear at the level of consciousness] holding subject and object appear in the perfectly complete transcendental wisdom of enlightened beings,}^{43} \text{ it [the wisdom] demonstrates (ston), unceasingly like illusions as it were, for the taming of wandering beings, mudrā aspects that are in tune with them.}^{44} \text{ [As to the purities or meaning of the marks]: The white colour [of Vajrasattva’s body] is because, [447] at the foundation time, the innate, self-originated, transcendental wisdom is naturally pure in that it has ex-
experienced no taint of fault or wrong; and because, at the time of the result, that self-originated transcendental wisdom is completely liberated from adventitious transformational obscuration. The single face is because, at the foundation time, all dharmas are of the single taste of basic reality; and because, at the time of the result, the three bodies (or body) and transcendental wisdom are of a single taste. The two hands are because, at the foundation time, although not stirring from the innate dharma element, from the conceptual isolate (ldog pa) point of view there are two truths; and because, at the time of the result, there is the completion of the two accumulations or the possession of the phenomenal and noumenal transcendental wisdoms. The [five pointed] vajra and bell hand-symbols are to symbolize, at both the foundation and result, [on the one side] the self-originated, transcendental wisdom that is of a single taste with the five, subjective (yul can) transcendental wisdoms and [on the other] the objective (yul) emptiness, free of all conceptualization; and particularly, at the time of the result, they symbolize working for the welfare of living beings by means of method and wisdom. The two legs of the male deity in vajrāsana ('adamantine posture') and of the female deity in padmāsana ('lotus posture') are because, at the foundation time, in terms of the innate reality the world and liberation are indivisible; and because, at the time of the result, when wisdom and compassion are completed, there is deliverance from the extremes of world and liberation. The five silken garments are because, at the foundation time, the pain of the afflictive emotions is not experienced as staining what is real (rang bzhin); and because, at the time of the result, there is liberation from them. The hair-bun on the top of the head is because all virtues are complete in fundamental reality (rang bzhin gyis). Being adorned with the eight jewelled
oraments is because all the sense-experiences are enjoyed as a sport of transcendental wisdom. The female deity holds a skullcup because, having cut away all conceptualization, one cultivates the bliss of non-conceptuality. The male and female sit in a sexual embrace because emptiness and great compassion are in unity.

Such things as these pertaining to the supported deity (and, as illustrated by that, the support [maṇḍala], i.e., celestial mansion and throne) should, to the extent that one is capable, also be applied to a remembrance of the symbolic significances at the time of the path as well by inferring those [symbolic significances during the path] from the symbolic significances of the foundation and result. The essential thing is that Buddha qualities are upon the innate dharmatā (ultimate reality) naturally and spontaneously and one should hence believe that each and every [Buddha] quality is the essence (ngo bo) of something or other in the support and supported maṇḍala and is innately pure (dag pa). Relative to that [pure essence] the support and supported maṇḍalas of the meditative stabilization are also believed to be pure [i.e., to be that quality that they symbolize].

It is a given that one has to remember the purity/meaning symbolized when cultivating clear realization. But in this instance one has, in particular, at the end of settling into an intense belief in each and every one of those symbolic significances, to one-pointedly settle into a meditative stabilization with combined clear appearance of, and pride in being the deity. Not only that but when, brought on by the melting extasy of the male and female’s mutual desire, physical and mental bliss arise, then, by meditating without grasping from within that [bliss] on a vibrant appearance of the deity’s body and an intense [divine] pride, reckoning it like an illusion, [449] one comes to rest in a meditative
stabilization that sees the entire manḍala arising as the transcendent wisdom of bliss, clarity and emptiness; as the sport of the truth body.

After reaching the stage of a steady clear experience of these then practise on tiny things in order to limber up (rtsal shyang) the samādhi. Meditate on a support celestial mansion that is the size of a mustard seed with a supported deity in it that is the size of the trichiliocosm; on a support celestial mansion that is the size of the trichiliocosm with a supported deity in it that is only the size of a mustard seed, etc. By limbering up on non-specific size, then, even were one to meditate on a celestial mansion no bigger in size than a mustard seed and a deity no smaller in size than the trichiliocosm still there would be no fault of being too small or of not fitting. Also there would be no fault [in one’s meditation] even if [one meditated on] the celestial mansion being no smaller in size than the trichiliocosm and the deity no bigger than a mustard seed, it would still be proportional and so forth. No matter what one meditates on, practise as if twirling a spear around in bliss space [one enters into] the idea that all appearances are the sportings of the deity’s body. Since this is the benefit one gets from an ever greater flexibility of appearance (rtsal snang) work hard at the samādhi which transforms every one of these karmic appearances into the pure deity’s body.

Now, when training in the deity-appearance belief it is not absolutely necessary that the order of the four-schema visualization, and the apprehending of each particular aspect be exactly like the one [set forth here]. It is proper to take whatever comes easily to mind.
[deity’s] form \( (rnam \ pa) \) emerges as the main thing to do. One needs to accomplish calm abiding by concentrating the mind one-pointedly on the clear appearance of the deity’s body.

As to the faults in concentration at that time. If one is disturbed and carried away by some sort of mental disturbance \( (rnam \ rtog) \), meditate by attacking and cutting off the disturbing idea. If the rope [of one’s concentration] unravels winch it back in [one pull at a time]. If the mind gets distracted by a sense desire contemplate faults [e.g., if distracted by physical beauty contemplate the filth of the body, etc.]. If the meditation starts to depress you and begins to be oppressive contemplate the benefits that come from samādhi. In a word meditate immediately removing hindrances such as the production of disturbing thoughts and so forth, right as they come up. At the time that one is holding the mind on the clear appearance of the deity’s body, blanket yourself in it\(^{50}\) by absorbing yourself into that and that alone in many short meditation sessions. Over a period of seven days make each session gradually longer on each day and to the extent that one is able, even in the periods between meditation sessions try to keep just that same deity clear appearance. Alternatively, over a period of seven days make each meditation session ever shorter and practise not being without the clear appearance during the periods between meditation sessions as well. In such ways practise the arising and increase of the meditation session in accord with one’s disposition.

If one is disturbed by a scattering [mind], stare blankly and settle down into oneself. As to one’s intellect, let it wind down. Relax one’s awareness deeply. Take food with more substance and a little more of it. Sit in a lower or warmer place.
If there is sinking [i.e., lack of tension in the meditation], however, eliminate it as follows: focus the stare, give your awareness an edge, keen one’s intellect [451] and stare into space. Eat lighter foods, and less of them. Sit in a higher, lighter place with a clear view.

In general, when there is scattering disturbance eliminate it as follows: produce a dislike for the cyclic world by contemplating mortality and its miseries, thinking again and again ‘‘I do not need any of this.’’ Then concentrate on a beautifully painted icon, for example, as an objective support and become absorbed into it for a moment. Then, without looking at it, completely relax one’s awareness and settle into it.

As for sinking, generate enthusiasm by remembering the many amazing liberating events in the lives (rnam thar) of earlier adepts. You can definitely eliminate it by changing the focus of the visualization, changing the visualization support from one part of the deity’s body to another. When at a stage free from sinking and scattering then let it run on naturally. 51

Again, if the beginning meditation session or the start of sessions are going well but the later or final parts of a session are bad, like a tank that has run out of water, it is because one’s energy level (khams) is not right so meditate preserving one’s energy, with a mind that is relaxed. If [the converse is true and] the beginning meditation session or the start of sessions are bad but the later or final parts of sessions go well, like not getting water to flow through a pipe, it is because one’s application of enthusiastic perseverance is low so winch in one’s native awareness (rig pa) and meditate having raised the tension level in the mind. Be aware of the importance of these [methods] in what follows as well.
By working in this fashion the five experiences\textsuperscript{52} of *g. yo* (‘movement’), *thob* (‘obtaining’), *goms* (‘being habituated’), *brten* (‘stabilized’) and *mthar phyin* (‘consummation’) and the signs of the outer, inner and secret warmth will dawn and gradually one will come to recognize and produce them.

**Explanation of the Speech, Recitation of Mantra**

This has three parts: training in rough energy-wind repetition, subtle vajra repetition and when tired of these the speech repetition.

Training in **rough energy-wind repetition**. This is spoken of [in the treasure text] as follows:

Second, hold the transcendental wisdom heart life samādhi without wavering from the *hūṃ*, bring the winds together and bind them and mentally repeat.

Of the physical posture given earlier the legs are in vajrāsana or in the mind posture, the hands in meditative [mudrā] or else the fists, arms stretched out are placed on the thighs [at the bend of the knees], whichever is more comfortable. As to the visualization, one meditates on oneself appearing as the deity. On a moon in the deep center of the revolving five lights at one’s heart is an identical transcendental wisdom being and in his heart a five—spoked white vajra standing upright with a white, clear, blazing letter *hūṃ* in the centre. When one has got this clearly visualized, focus the mind one-pointedly on it. Clearing [i.e., exhaling] three long and gentle dead energy-winds, after that smoothly inhale the upper energy-wind just enough and press down beneath the navel. Contract the lower energy-wind just a little as well and bring them together and smoothly bind them repeating mentally “*Om vajra-sattva āḥ.*” Hold the energy-
wind until it starts to feel uncomfortable and just when you start to feel it is uncomfortable send it out through both nostrils, at first so that it will not cause even a hair to stir, then generating force and finally sending it out intensely. 

Training in **subtle vajra repetition**. This is spoken of [in the treasure text] as follows:

Habituated to that, put together the mind with the vibrations (gdangs) of *om aḥ hūṃ* [relative to] the three: coming about, entering in and abiding. [453] Do the unproduced vajra repetition.

Imagine the three: the entering in, abiding and rising up of energy-wind as the vibrations of the three syllables [*om aḥ hūṃ*]. Through understanding that energy-winds, sounds and emptinesses are indivisible practise as follows: In the physical posture as set out earlier, after first absorbing oneself in the clear appearance of the deity’s body for a short time, then clear the dead energy-wind and let the breathing become natural and focus, with an unwavering mind, on the [natural rhythm of its] entry, abiding and rising up. Understanding the vibration of the sound *om* when it is entering, aḥ as it remains and hūṃ when it rises up, repeat [the syllables] without getting distracted even for a moment. Besides that, when one is just about to stop gathering the breath in or when it has stopped, refine it by means of the arousal of a fragrant smell of incense, etc. Emerging from the experience of that do vajra repetition based on the four-fold [energy-wind] unification that has a pot: (a) Clear the dead energy-winds and when on hold for a moment outside, tighten the lower door and draw in the expelling-downward [energy-wind] slightly. (b) Imagining the above energy-wind as the sound *om* draw it in sharply and press it down transformed (*sgyur thabs su*) at the navel. (c) Draw up
the lower energy-wind and bring the [above and lower energy-winds] face to face and hold them bound. While abiding [that is, between breaths] imagine it to be the vibration of the sound āḥ. When it gets a bit uncomfortable, breathing in a short breath and drawing up keep pressing. (d) When you are unable to hold it any more focus the mind on the vibration of the sound hūṃ and expel it with a gentle and soft drawn-out force. Work at this in this way until one attains one of the large, middling or small [energy-wind unifications that] has a pot.56

Training in speech repetition. [454] This is spoken of [in the treasure text] as follows:

When tired of that [energy-wind-repetition], emanating and gathering back [light from] the garland of letters do an authorized period or number of speech repetition without being distracted.

When tired of energy-wind repetition enter into speech repetition. Imagine the garland of letters of the mantra, white and clear, going clockwise around the hūṃ in the center of the vajra at the transcendental wisdom being’s heart. Think that when repeating the mantra light rays spread out from the letters and pervade space; offerings are made to all conquerors and conqueror-children and then gather back all blessing and accomplishments in the form of light rays which sink into oneself. This is the visualization for gathering together the blessing for accomplishing one’s own purpose. Again, the enlightened action repetition for the welfare of others is imagining that light rays from the heart strike all living creatures, purifying their badness and obscuration, placing them in the supreme state of a Vajrasattva which is immutable great bliss, after which the light rays gather back and dissolve into the mantra garland at the heart. One does
these two visualizations for a single set [i.e., a day and night without break] (phrugs gcig) or, if not capable, alternating with breaks (re mos), repeating the six letters⁵⁷ and one hundred letters from within not being separated from a state of mind that takes the three: appearance, reverberation (grags) and movement [of thought] as the deity, mantra and clear light.

If there is an unhurried explanation and a large number of mantras are said in a retreat (bsnyen pa) at this stage [of the explanation] the number of mantras to be repeated [during the retreat] is one hundred thousand for each of the six syllables and then the one hundred [syllables] as a sixth; i.e., say one hundred thousand [of the one hundred syllable mantra] in addition. [455] If the retreat is done for a period of time [as distinct from the time it takes to say a number of mantras] it is from the sixth [Tibetan] month [i.e., taking about February fifteenth as the start of the new year, from August fifteenth] to the third month [i.e., April fifteenth]. If one structures the retreat as something to be done at night then there is no specific time or number set for it.

These [above meditations] purify the conceptuality [associated with] words, sentences and letters and the settling (zhen) on speech in cyclic existence; they set up a cause and effect relationship such that, through perfecting the resultant, intrepid roaring sound one will turn the wheel of dharma for trainees; and they set down the foundation for the purification of the energy-winds during the completing process.

Whatever the explanation of the visualization or the period explained for the body/generation process and the speech/recitation, respectively, one does the same thing at the end when completing the session. One visualizes the maṇḍala that is to be gathered together, with its indivisible
pledge and transcendental wisdom beings. Then light from one's heart strikes it, purifying all the environment and inhabiting purified deities which dissolve into the protection wheel. That dissolves into the celestial mansion; that into oneself as the pledge being; that into the transcendental wisdom being; that into the vajra; that into the \textit{hūṃ} which then dissolves upwardly into the complete and ungraspable sphere. Looking intently into its face one is absorbed in the gap (\textit{so \textit{khad}}) that is just that very openness free from identification of appearance or awareness. From that one arises as the deity of the period between meditation sessions, turns over [the good one has done to the benefit of others] and goes about one's work.

The sleep yoga during the generation and repetition stages is as follows. Having gathered together the deity's body into the ungraspable [sphere of ultimate reality] one goes to sleep within a state free from thought. Should one not fall asleep it is suitable to do it over and over again. Arising at dawn, imagine that one has been awakened by the sound of deities in space saying the mantra [of Vajrasattva] and get up in the manner of the deity.

This [meditation on absorption into the sphere of reality and coming forth from it as the deity] purifies the destruction of the last composite and the arising. Gathering together the environment and inhabitants, protection wheel and celestial mansion into the deity pledge being [purifies] the rough dissolution; the three-storied being gathering into the \textit{hūṃ} [purifies] the three appearances and the gathering together of that [\textit{hūṃ} purifies] the clear light. That is, [this purifies everything] from birth in the cyclic world until another death and the arising from there in the intermediate state. It sets up a cause and effect relationship such that at the time of the result the form body gathers back into the sphere of the truth
body and then again dawns forth unbrokenly. It sets down the foundation for the dawning of the body of unity \(^6^3\) after having attained the actual clear light during the completing process.

A "‘gathering back yoga’" of this sort is, then, a completing process. Hence the third explanation, that of mind/completing-process; is connected to and explains just this essential thing.\(^6^4\) The "‘yoga of structured thinking during the period between meditation sessions’" and introductory explanations (\textit{ngo sprod}) in line with whatever meditational experiences have been produced are especially for the accomplishment of the gathering back that comes later.

This slight elaboration on what lies behind the visualization\(^6^5\) given in the generation process explanation has been set out to help persons who, content for the present with just the generation and repetition yogas, do not straight away involve themselves in the completing process. Alternatively it is to help persons who, even if they do involve themselves, do not make it the main thing [in their practice]. It is otherwise, [457] though, when one is primarily intent on just the completing process. If one were to go on excessively about the generation process visualization at such a time a person immediately getting into the completing process might be diverted from that. There would be that and other such faults. Therefore, [such a person] gives up specific periods of visualization for each of the three samādhis, for generating and for dissolving the mañḍala, gives up reckoning completion, maturing and purification, and gives up cultivating pride in the connection between foundation and result. Instead at this time [such a person] condenses the generation process yoga into a basis for the completing process and meditates in this [following] way that brings all the essentials
Dzog Chen Meditation

together: After having meditated on the three causal samādhis, when generating the resultant maṇḍala [the person] either meditates on the celestial mansion in the middle of the protection wheel or else, if there is no meditation [on a celestial mansion, visualizes the deity right] in the middle of the protection wheel [itself]. After generating the pledge being with the triple generation ritual and then blessing, inviting and dissolving [the wisdom being into the pledge being] the apprehension of the clear appearance of the deity emerges as the single central thing. Beyond that, from within the bliss brought about by melting extasy the clear appearance of the deity and associated pride should be treated as illusory and [the person should] train in a one-pointed samādhi that does not waver from that to anything else. When tired of that [the person] focuses either on the rough or subtle energy-wind repetition as the main thing and also does a little repetition of mantra. The deity’s body is gathered back into the clear light and rises up from there. This is turned over [to the benefit of all living beings].
CHAPTER III
Completing Process

The Explanation of mind/completing process/basic reality has three parts: [458] explanation of determining with certainty the way things are through insight (itta bas); explanation of putting this [insight] into practise through becoming habituated to it during equipoise, and explanation of how, during the subsequent attainment one’s behavioural attitude fosters it.

[The treasure text] says:

Third, during the completing process, first driving in the nail (gzer thebs) of insight is held to be important.

This reveals the explanation of ascertaining through insight. It has two parts: determining the outer object grasped and determining the inner mind that is grasper.

Ascertaining the object grasped. [The treasure text] says:

View appearances as illusory.

Having turned the mind to all things, [which are systematized] as self and other, to wit, the appearance of the container vessel and essence [i.e., outer environment and living inhabitants], one practises with a strong focus ('dun) on how everything, whatever it may be, seems to be just as
it appears to be but [at the same time] how not even the tiniest content is established beyond deceptive mental appearances. Things do indeed have an appearance, therefore, but as to their truth value, they have none; they are like illusions. View all appearances as just a glare or as a vagary [of light].

After that, by looking directly into the face of that very mind that is aware of the fact that they are illusions and that there is no truth [behind appearances], without stopping what appears, the stainless clarity-emptiness of that mind dawns in its openness without any [subject-object] grasping. Without adjusting the state that has dawnd one becomes absorbed by relaxing more and more into the very face of that. As it says in the *Samādhi-rāja-sūtra*.

Like an illusion, deception, city of the *gandharva* (heavenly musicians), mirage and dream, the meditated image is inherently empty. Understand all dharmas to be like that.

And the *Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra* says:

God-children! all dharmas are like illusions, like dreams.

So all such appearances are ascertained as the self-appearing, indifferentiable, illusion-like transcendental wisdom.

**Ascertain the inner mind that is grasper.** [The treasure text] says:

View the mind as free of grasped and grasper. It itself is without beginning, end or middle, devoid of colour, shape or identification.

The physical [posture] has the seven essentials. The speech [i.e., breath] essential is the energy-wind settling
Completing Process

within itself. The mental essential is as follows: Without concentrating or relaxing, without any attention whatsoever, when unfashioned pure awareness has settled down fresh and unwavering, stare directly with the consciousness turned in on itself into the very face of the mind. By viewing in this way there is the dawning of a self-illumining object-less state free from conceptual extremes, devoid of subject/object bifurcation [in the form of] viewed and viewer, experience and experiencer, object and subject, etc. Based on that, without making adjustments, without sulllying or modifying it, become absorbed in that gap. This is the way those of sharpest faculties meditate with pure awareness settling in the sprinkling pot.

The ordinary person, disturbed by conceptuality, finds it hard to become introduced to that [bare nature of mind in that way] and so [460] should search for the mind contingent on a single wavelength (rkyang 'ded la brten nas) of bare awareness. It is best if, having set awareness in the sprinkling pot, it remains right there. If confusing ideas come up in an disordered fashion, then about that idea that arises uncontrollably: First, from where was it produced? Right now where is it taking place? Finally, where will it cease to be? Look on a single wavelength. Not only that but also one who gets enlightened, one who wanders down into cyclic existence, and so forth, any maker of happiness or pain, who is it? If one thinks, "It is the mind," is there any beginning, end or middle stage for that mind? Is that mind itself either something (dngos yod) or nothing at all? If it is something what is its shape, its colour, etc. If one considers it to be nothing (dngos med), is there some vacuity? How so? Ask over and over again, and without fabricating any false cul-de-sac in which to park yourself enter into the insight. "This sort of thing is there" is grasping at a truth, a solid
Dzog Chen Meditation

thereeness; and "There is a vacuity, an emptiness" is getting a [false] measure. Keep up the inquiry and keep searching for as long as one has uncertainty in the mind and still wonders "How could something be unfindable?" [for as long as one cannot get away from believing that] something unfindable is either absolutely not there or [if] there, [that it exists in a way] which makes it more than it is. Something looked at and something that is looking; something seen and something that sees, and so forth: no such thing is seen, when sought for and investigated nothing is found. Like looking at the vault of space, as if one is looking at nothing at all, this awareness-knowing is devoid of any identifiability, a bare openness, [461] unutterable, inconceivable, unseeable, a pure awareness emptiness-clarity without an object, naked and calm.

If the explanation has been understood then without stopping or producing [any thought] one remains within just that. As it says in Kun byed

Because there is no seeing into mind by mind, through seeing become absorbed in a state just like not looking.

and in Bde ba rab 'byams

The mental state without a root is not found when sought and is not identifiable. It is the inexpressible, self-originated, primordial wisdom within the vacuity that is, as it were, how things are and the origin.

Also the supreme master Dga' rab rdo rje says:

The nature of mind is enlightened from the start. In regard to mind, like space, 'there is no production or cessation. Having realized the perfect truth (don) that is
Completing Process

the sameness of all dharmas, becoming absorbed in that without investigation is meditation.

Moreover, if one takes as one’s path during meditative equipoise the primordial wisdom that is an openness to awareness-emptiness, the loosening into the relaxation of self-luminosity without any taint of belief-grasping, and takes, during the state subsequent [to equipoise] a non-grasping clarity-emptiness certain that everything that appears is like a magical apparition or a dream-appearance it is definite that [the spontánéous] play of the non-conceptualizing wisdom of meditative equipoise itself will dawn as a non-cessation of flexibility of appearance (rtsal snang) and that every object that appears will appear as though unreal (med bshin du). That wisdom alone is equipoise [i.e., the ultimate non-dual realization of final reality] and the subsequent attainment [i.e., surface level special meditative practices] indivisible. [Such wisdom, i.e., indivisible ultimate and surface level meditation] is the unity of the two truths, the final state (gzhi lugs) of all dharmas,[462] the way things are. It is the fundamental nature beyond the limits of which there is no living creature, even though they do not understand that is how it is. The bodhicitta drawn forth by the great compassion [beholding living beings having such a fundamental nature but ignorant of it] is not blocked and dawns forth. With just the dawning [of such wisdom and compassion] become intent on,73 and continue practising without holding to annihilation, without holding to a state of “there is.”

In this way, with that combination of indivisible equipoise and subsequent [attainment] it is good if, whatever comes up [in the mind] one sees its intrinsic state of liberation and it becomes an aid to one’s meditation. If thoughts disturb
one, however, whatever the remembrance which carries the mind away, watch it intensely as it dissolves away like a wave sinking back into the ocean, the remembrance disappearing without trace. And when certainty that conceptual states (*rnam rtog*) have no foundation and without roots comes about, as one hears the holy ones say:

The conditions, capability and watching out for being spiritual are a gentle way forth [i.e., for a competent *rdzogs chen* meditator all that comes up in the mind is not accepted or rejected, but, seen in its true vacuity, simply transformed into path].

Guide to Putting [Insight] into Practice Through Becoming Habituated During Equipoise

[The treasure text] says:

Having thus determined [the way things are], there is meditation on bliss, clarity and nonconceptuality.

Having determined that external objects appearing in all their diversity are equally self-appearing, indifferentiable clarity-emptiness free of attachment like the sky; and having determined that the inner mind that cognizes subject and object, when investigated and analyzed, in not established but is an emptiness free from ignorance rooted in any of the extremes, then one engages in meditation [i.e., in a process of habituation to that]. The explanation of this [463] has three parts: (i) meditation on bliss, (ii) meditation on clarity, and (iii) meditation on non-conceptuality.

These three each function as follows: The ground of purification⁷⁴ is the *dharmatā* (‘fundamental nature’), the ultimate, the *tathāgata-garbha* (‘seed/womb of the tathāgatas’), the blissful luminous non-conceptual wisdom
Completing Process

abiding in itself from time immemorial. By meditating on the path that is the catalyst for purification (to wit, the three: bliss, clarity and non-conceptuality) that is in accord with that ultimate nature (*gnas lugs*), what are to be purified (to wit, subtle and gross obscurations systematized in terms of the three: desire, hatred and ignorance) are cleansed not by being eliminated or transformed but through their own natural purity (*sangs*), whereby the desire, form and formless realms are delivered up into the bliss, clarity and non-conceptuality [of] self-originated wisdom bringing forth the purified result, the body, speech and mind vajras.

**Guide to the meditation on bliss.** This has two parts: (i) the essentials (*gnad*) for clearing the path, this being the purification of the channels and energy-wind [and (ii) the meditation which actually causes bliss].

[The treasure text] says:

In the middle of one’s body, visualized as being the deity’s rainbow-coloured one, is the central channel having the four attributes, and to its right and left the right channel and left channel filled with [red and white, female and male] molecules and moon [-coloured fluid] (*rdul zla*) [respectively]. Look on the lower ends as tucked into the central channel.

The physical posture: Having crossed one’s legs in the vajrásana, straightened up the vertebrae, stretched one’s hands forth and placed them on the knees, slightly adjust the focus of one’s gaze from looking straight ahead to the spot between the eyebrows. The rest [of the physical posture] is as in the usual [meditation session]. Purifying one’s ordinary body like a rainbow disappearing in the sky, focus and meditate on one’s body coming from non-settling to be like a rainbow-light coloured Vajrasattva, hollow, clear and
luminous within and free from any impediment. Having got this clearly then visualize the straight central channel. It has these four attributes: (a) it is straight like the trunk of a plantain tree, (b) luminous like a sesame-oil flame, its light radiating, (c) it is red in colour as though coated with a coat of varnish, and (d) it is extremely delicate and translucent like a lotus petal. Its diameter is about that of a medium-weight arrow-shaft. The top end extends to the Brahmā aperture, the lower end to about four finger widths below the navel. To the right of it is the right channel, filled with red molecules and to the left the left channel filled with white moon [-coloured fluid]. They are about a quarter of the diameter of the central channel. Their top ends bend forward to the eyebrows and come out through the nostrils. These two lie alongside the central channel, the three lying together, and the ends of the two go down a bit further and are inserted into the end [of the central channel. Clearing [i.e., exhal­ing] three long and gentle dead energy-winds imagine that all diseases, harmful spirits and afflicting obscurations are cleansed by [their own natural] purity. Inhaling the on-top energy-wind just enough (ren par), imagine energy-winds which embody all cleanliness, the ordinary and extraordinary firm and wavering [roots of virtue] going in a continuum from the two nostrils down the right and left channels and settling into the central channel beneath the navel. Think that one brings them together below the navel, [465] letting them descend naturally and holding them gently with just enough tension (ren par), and focus on the very interior of the central channel. If it feels a bit uncomfortable purge. When unable to hold one’s breath expel it through both nostrils with a breath so gentle it would not even cause a hair to move. In that fashion practise the four-fold energy-wind unification (rlung sbyor). If, during the earlier repetition the channel
pathways have become cleaned out through subtle vajra repetition, and the [energy-wind unification] that has a pot has already been attained through rough vajra repetition, it is enough, at this point, to refamiliarize oneself with it for a day or so. If they have not become cleaned out previously, at this point one has to practise until some sort of experience start to arise.

In the time between meditation sessions on these one should also do the following physical exercises: In the physical posture [set forth] earlier forcefully bind the [energy-wind unification] that has a pot. With a short inhalation of the upper energy-wind press down. Based on this, as it says:

First strike on your shoulders with both hands; second strike your hips with your heels; third rotate and shake your torso; fourth roll your head around in the four directions, and fifth, with a shout from the mouth, as if purging the one thousand energy-winds inside the body, meditate, levitate and shake the limbs.

Actual Meditation on Bliss

This has three parts: (i) blazing of the psychic heat (gtum mo), (ii) accomplishing the melting and bliss with that, and (iii) mixing the bliss-warmth with the primordial purity (ka dag).

Blazing of the psychic heat. [The treasure text] says:

Meditate on the letters haiṁ, oṁ, hūṁ and ah in the crown, throat, heart and navel cakras wheels. The above [energy-wind] is pressed down; the lower energy wind [is visualized] forcefully as [being in] three [channels]. Visualize that the letter ah blazes with the energy-wind coming from the right and left channels, like blowing on charcoal.
The physical posture: One sits bound up in the form of a stove [i.e., with the knees drawn up and arms crossed on one’s chest using a meditation strap]. Visualize oneself, as before, as the deity with the three channels in the centre of one’s body. Thus the three channels lie each along the other. Right at the pit of one’s navel, right at the heart, right at the throat in between the collar-bones, and located down about two finger lengths from the end of the tip of the central channel at the crown, the right and left channels disappear into the central channel, so to speak, presenting a single inner surface. From those, the petal-shaped channels of the wheels in the form of transparent tubes arise. At the crown is the great bliss wheel with thirty-two channel petals facing downwards like the spokes of an umbrella; at the throat is the enjoyment wheel with sixteen channel petals facing up like an umbrella [blown inside out] turned up; at the heart is the dharma wheel with eight channel petals facing down like the spokes of an umbrella and at the navel is the emanation wheel with sixty-four channel wheels like the spokes of an umbrella turned upside down. Meditate on all of these channel petals being pinkish in colour, translucent, luminous and empty in the middle. One visualizes like this and also visualizes on the crown wheel, in the middle at the top where the central channel projects, Samanta-bhadra the moon drop, the white letter haih in the nature of bliss just ready to melt; in the hub of the throat wheel the dakini Rdams ma (?) drop, the yellow letter om; in the heart the [467] Jñāna-garbha drop, a blue letter hūnā, being a ball of five lights; and at the navel Samanta-bhadri, the sun drop, a red letter ah just ready to blaze. Also, in this, and in the meditation of melting bliss, should one prefer a condensed visualization (dmigs pa) then without meditating on the channel petals of the four wheels, right at those very same points, meditate on the four drops in
Completing Process

the middle of the central channel. It comes to essentially the same thing because the hub of each of the four wheels is the central channel itself, so by meditating on it the significant content (don) of the four wheels is fully there.

Anyway, whether one meditates with an extended or condensed visualization, having clearly imagined such an objective support eliminate the dead energy-wind. Sharply draw in the breath, and sending it below the navel press down on it. Equally with that forcefully draw up the bottom energy-wind and hold united together at the navel. When it becomes a bit uncomfortable again breathe in a short breath. At the navel region, on the right and left and in the centre, draw in, press down and hold. When one cannot [hold any longer], expel gently with a subtle, long force. Then immediately breathe in and until this becomes a natural pattern (ma goms bar), meditate, as in the four-fold energy-wind unification that has a pot, in a four or eight cycle round, for instance, in unbroken succession. Rest at periods chalked out after one, two, three or four rounds and so forth, but apart from those do not just stop whenever you feel like it. Also, if the rest periods are too long the heat will not arise so shorten them.

The visualization is as follows: [468] The upper energy-wind, breathed in, enters the nostrils and it goes along the right and left channels reaching beneath the navel to where the three channels are compressed and merged together. The lower energy-wind with a contraction enters, through the anus into the passage way of the central channel impaling it with a spear thrust. The three: the right and left channel and the eliminating energy-winds [i.e., lower energy-wind being drawn up] come together and strike the letter ah at the navel. One concentrates as though blowing on an intense charcoal
fire, as though on an extremely subtle tongue of flame that is sharp, like a red whisker, subtle and clear, shining dense with its point blazing and shining. It gets from half an inch to two inches in length. Stopping other ideas (spros pa) meditate on this alone with a single pointed concentration. When the visualization becomes firm, think that the light from that flame fills up all the navel channel wheel whereby the body from the navel down becomes brilliantly red and a roaring blaze. Think that in this way fire ascends entering the central channel completely, burning the two wheel letters at the heart and throat from below and filling all the channel wheels and then, going up from there, that the tongue of flame touches right to the crown wheel. Immediately that this happens think that the light from the four wheels fills everywhere right out to the pores, that a brilliant redness pervades and that there is a roaring blaze in the body. Sometimes focus one’s awareness on a subtle clear tongue of flame like a copper needle that burns in a red line (dinar phreng gis). Meditate in this fashion with great perseverance, having divided the day and night into one early session and two later sessions, six sessions in all.

When sleeping at night the best physical posture is [to sit with] the legs crossed; middling to squat; and last, raising oneself up with a pillow to lie with the right side underneath and draw one’s knees up sleeping as if folded in three. Whichever of the three ways one does it, tie yourself there with a meditation strap (pus'khyud) without moving. Cross over one’s arms in front and with the palms cover the right and left indentations where the kidneys are. Then keeping the mind focused on the burning letter ah at the navel go to sleep. The reasons for this are to encompass (zin) sleep clear-light, and so that the continuum of the psychic heat
meditated during the day is joined to the night so that the warmth is not lost. In the times between such psychic-heat meditation sessions do the physical exercises (lus sbyong) mentioned above a certain number of times as a preliminary, mainly holding the energy-wind [unification] that has a pot, focusing one’s awareness on the fire and making a one pointed effort solely at intense, even violent physical yoga (rtsub shing rtsub rten gyi 'khrul 'khor). If one’s body perspires the heat will dissipate so wear lighter clothes. If that does not help, cool down some morning urine in a clay pot and wash yourself with it and also smear yourself with smooth cow dung and ashes. Stop your thoughts wandering to something else, taking long rest periods, getting run down (khams nyam pa), sitting in the sun or near a fire, wearing heavy clothes, taking salty or hot foods, sleeping in the day or lying down. If one’s effort is weak, one will not become well-versed in it so meditate with an intense perseverance. Since it is bad if heat initially goes outside [470] the heart, it is with many openings and closings of the sring zhal and with forceful meditation on energy-wind unification at the navel that the heat is brought together and falls into place. 82

Accomplishing the Melting Bliss

This has two parts: accomplishing [bliss] by [implementing] the perceptual advice about the upper door melt pacification, and by the preceptual advice about the lower door three spheres of sport. 83

Upper Door Melt Pacification

This has three parts: (i) the descent of bliss, (ii) the method for making it remain effortlessly and (iii) accomplishing non-emission by the reversal spreading process.
Descent of bliss. [The treasure text] says:

Think that the letter $\text{hūm}$ at the heart melts, going down the central channel it falls on the [letter] $\text{ah}$. By applying the drawing up of the lower energy-wind the [letter] $\text{ah}$ at the navel boils and from the heart on down is filled with bliss. There is a burning and dripping of the $\text{oni}$ at the throat as earlier and when that bliss becomes stable the $\text{oni}$ melts and disappears down into the navel [letter] $\text{ah}$. The [letter] $\text{hain}$ at the crown burns and drips filling the whole body from the crown on down.

At the stage when the warmth has been generated through the psychic heat of the earlier [meditation], get into the seven-point physical posture. One meditates on an even clearer visualization of the earlier four letters in the central channel at the hubs of the four wheels. Through getting this clearly visualized and through forcefully doing the four-fold energy-wind [unification] that has a pot, the fire burns the letter $\text{ah}$ at the navel. It causes bodhicitta to emerge from the letter $\text{hūm}$ at the heart (like the strand of a cobweb or a pearl) a nodule of bliss which drops down on the letter $\text{ah}$ at the navel making the fire blaze more, like melted butter poured on a trunk root. Think that the glow from the melting of that pervades one totally from the heart down [471] with the taste of bliss. Remain within that and absorb yourself into it. When that bliss becomes firm, by applying the drawing up of the lower energy-wind the $\text{hūm}$ at the heart melts in its fullness and sinks down into the [letter] $\text{ah}$ at the navel. Meditate that the tongue of flame lengthens and burns and that the bodhicitta from the throat $\text{oni}$ melts and drops down to the navel [letter] $\text{ah}$, burning and dripping as earlier. Absorb yourself into the bliss of the glow that fills you from the throat on down. When firm, as before, the letter $\text{oni}$ melts and sinks
Completing Process

into the [letter] \textit{ah} at the navel and with the burning of even longer flames the \textit{ham} at the crown burns and drips. Then one becomes absorbed into the bliss from the glow that fills the entire body, from the crown on down, [a pervading glow] without any upper and lower.

**Making the bliss remain effortlessly.** [The treasure text] says:

At the time that bliss occurs, meditate an extension\textsuperscript{85} of the bliss that dawns when the drop falls from the letter \textit{ham} down to the secret place and remain within bliss.

When the bliss from the glow that fills the whole body ([a bliss] that comes from causing bliss to descend) dawns of itself, the method to make it remain effortlessly for a long time is to imagine a strand of \textit{bodhicitta}, a pale extension like a thread of white silk, stretching from the [letter] \textit{ham} at the crown, through the central channel to the secret place. Hold with a single pointed concentration within the vibrancy (\textit{mdangs}) of that bliss.

**Accomplishing non-emission.** [The treasure text] says:

Again drawing in the \textit{hūm} forcefully, drawn upwards spread it. [472]

When the clear welling\textsuperscript{86} \textit{bodhicitta} drops down, bliss comes to arise of itself. Because of the increase in bliss at that point it is as though the \textit{bodhicitta} will move, so draw it upwards by doing the following: Contract one's stomach until it hurts. Tense the lower legs and forearms and curl up the fingers and toes violently. Meet the tongue to the upper palate. Stare and roll the eyes upwards and say a loud \textit{hūm}. As it says in the \textit{Heruka gal po}.\textsuperscript{87}

The ocean Mount Meru is reversed and dried. The four continents are brought under control. The taste-grabber
is joined to the place of speech. The primary sense is directed up. The speech power a loud *hūm* draws long.88

The important thing in the energy-wind practice is as follows. Relax the lower door forcefully and clear the life-force energy-wind out. In the midterm the energy-wind should be both held and reversed with force. By drawing in like this the vajra gets to be reliable. If the body perspires and heat blazes it is a sign of upward withdrawal. So spread this out in the channelways. Since it says in [Heruka] *gal po*: "With the pleasure trap spread it in the body," with the lion's pleasure spread it pervasively. At the end, with perhaps seven [energy-wind unifications] that have a pot one mixes the energy-wind and, as in the following [section], through mixing it with the primordial purity at the deep centre of the heart (*klong*) one impresses the good qualities of the energy-wind on the mind.

**Lower Door Three Spheres of Sport**

As to the training in the perceptual advice about the lower door three spheres of sport. [The treasure text] says:

Having become habituated to just that, rely on the bliss from uniting with wisdom.

In general there are four mudrās (‘sealer/hand-trap’): a *karma* (‘action’), *jñāna* (‘wisdom’), [473] *samaya* (‘pledge’) and a *mahā* (‘great’) mudrā. The pledge mudrā is the psychic heat. It has already been dealt with. The great mudrā is said to be completely excellent emptiness and immutable bliss that comes from uniting (*kha sbyor*). The action mudrā is the human female and the wisdom mudrā is a mental knowledge [holder] (*yid rig*). Here the explanation is from the point of view of a wisdom mudrā.
Completing Process

The physical posture is crossed legs with one's clenched fists crossed and pressing on the heart. The energy-wind practice is the uniting of the life energy-wind and expelling energy-wind at the navel. The meditation practice is to visualize oneself as Vajrasattva with consort with the secret and space blessed as vajra and bell; to press on to a state of being interlocked by the four signs of absorption [i.e., looking, holding hands, kissing and union]; and by way of possession of the three discriminations [of no subject, object or action], to bring together equally the four mudrās as follows: Conditioned by mutual desire, the energy-winds swirl causing the psychic heat to burn fiercely and enter the central channel, by the force of which the stream of bodhicitta, which is the melted white part, descends. In the throat and other locations of the four wheels there is pleasure, excellent pleasure, special pleasure and simultaneous pleasure, respectively. In each of these one remains meditating within the pleasure and becomes absorbed in it, one goes through each location again and again, one reverse upwards, spreads out [the bliss] pervasively, mixes it with the energy-wind and carried away into the sphere of reality (dbyings), all the qualities of the energy-wind dissolve into the mind. Everything is done fully and in turn [in this way]. Practising in turn the descent, holding, reversing and pervading one after the other [474] the experiential realization (nyams) comes to be fully comprehended. After which, finally, when the bodhicitta descends to the secret jewel, through the methods to hold it without emission, there is the experience of the functioning (dngos pa) simultaneously arisen wisdom. As one again reverses up [the bodhicitta] through the four wheels at the navel and so forth, one experiences the four stages of bliss that come about during the progressive reversal, at the conclusion of which, when the bodhicitta is firm at the crown of
the head, one comes to experience the fundamentally real (*rang bzhin*) simultaneously arisen wisdom.

Now, these essentials of the practice are to be received by those who have the good fortune to be suitable trainees for the lower door perceptual advice, from the mouth of a holy guru who has had the experience. The custom here nowadays is not to give an encompassing extended [explanation] to ordinary students but merely make it understandable to them so they can grasp its dimensions. This [that I have just explained] is complete enough in respect to merely the core of the visualization for a trusting student to make meditation.

**Mixing [Bliss-warmth] with Primordial Purity**

[The treasure text] says:

Place the great bliss within primordial purity.

By having practised the upper door: the pledge psychic heat (the warmth generated earlier) and the bliss that is the dharma psychic heat, then, when the bliss-warmth experience arises, one assumes the physical posture in seven points and practises the energy-wind [unification] that has a pot. By gazing long and directly right into the face of that wisdom produced [from] warmth and bliss, then, without stopping the vibrancy of the bliss-warmth there is a manifest dawning [475] of the bliss-emptiness wisdom: its nature unidentifiable as anything, beyond mind, self-knowing, self-luminous and free of all conceptuality. By becoming absorbed right into that, the pledge and dharma psychic heat are trapped with the wisdom seal, and by the qualities of the energy-wind dissolving into mind, become duplicated as the great transcendental wisdom.
Completing Process

In meditating on psychic heat in this way for most there are problems in reversing the energy-wind. These should be dealt with. If one gets the vacuity problem: a jumpy mind, discomfort at the heart, pain in the upper torso, headaches, etc., then visualize one’s body as a completely open vacuity (stong sang ge ba). After having meditated a time or two on the energy-wind, imagine that all diseases, like motes of dust in rays of sunlight issue forth in puffs (bun bun) from the hole going right through, from front to back of that body sitting there, and that the inside of one’s body becomes a completely empty glare in space. After stretching out one’s clenched fists in front of oneself back with one’s fists on the breast and strike the palms of the hands on the ribs and at the same time shout out a short Ha!

As to the lower torso fluid (kun da) problem: If it comes about caused by the residual impressions left by desire and attachment, eliminate it with awareness free from trying to do, or trying to stop, anything. If emission is because of pollution (grib) or breaking one’s sacred commitment take an initiation and hold a tantric feast. If emission is because of fullness (gang bu) or disease stop it by the holding, reversing, and spreading visualization and by physical exercises. Other bad things causing the decline of bodhicitta are too much physical tension and getting too hot or too cold. Avoid these. If there is discharge along with the feces and urine, when excreting it helps if you retract your fingers and toes, stare upward into space, join your tongue to the upper palate and then urinating and defecating after holding the [energy-wind unification] that has a pot at the navel for as long as possible.

If emission happens while dreaming, deal with it in the following very profound manner: Right before going to sleep
meditate oneself in the form of a black Śiva with the topknot of hair, body completely smeared with ashes, sex organ erect, holding Rma bya sgo chun\(^{93}\) with the right arm and engaging in intercourse inside her sex organ. Say “\textit{Om hari nisrakta chuka chuka svāha}” as much as possible and enclosing the head with the skin of the vajra hide it within and pressing with either the left or the right heel stretch the other leg out and go to sleep.

These ways of stopping problems can be explained where they match the problem that arises. It is alright if one does not put them into [the description of] a meditation session and explain [all of] them [at that particular time].

\textbf{Meditation on Clarity}

This has two parts: general [dimensions of the meditation] and specific [meditations].

First, [the treasure text] says:

When meditating on clarity-emptiness wisdom, having identified the whatever-dawns awareness (\textit{rig pa}), without stopping or doing anything, let it be.\(^{94}\)

The physical posture has the seven aspects. The voice [energy-wind] practice is to slightly hold the gentle energy-wind. The important thing to remember about the eyes is not to close them but to stare blankly into space. The visualization is as follows: Whatever appearance dawns one has a good look at it, directly in the face, without stopping it or doing anything to it. Positioning oneself within self-knowing, self-luminous non-apprehension, \(^{[477]}\) when all appearances (without truth and not dazzling) finally dawn, radiant and vibrant, just hold within that, positioned on what befalls.
Completing Process

Specific [meditations]. [The treasure text] says:

Specific [meditations are], having visualized the three channels, swirling, binding and sameness in being . . .

Visualize oneself, as before, as the deity with one's body a great vacuity free of impediment and in the centre of it the three channels and the three letters at the crown, heart and navel. When this is down pat, there are the following three visualization practices.

(a) Swirling practise. [The treasure text] says:

Clear the dead energy-winds. Hold the mind at the ham and [letter] ah and swirl the lower energy-wind upwards.

Clear the dead energy-winds. From the energy-wind [unification] that has a pot the main thing is to swirl the lower energy-wind upwards. Focus on the crown ham and navel [letter] ah. Not blocking the sense-faculties and relaxing [causes there to come about] a radiant dawning of the self-appearing, self-luminous state of non-apprehension. Meditate within this.

(b) Binding practice. [The treasure text] says:

Hold the mind at the heart hūī and bind down the upper energy-wind from above.

From the energy-wind [unification] that has a pot the main thing is to bind down the upper energy-wind. Focus on the heart hūī and without blocking the senses the state dawns, as earlier. Meditate.

(c) Sameness in being. This has two parts: the actual [practice] and an excursus. In regard to the first [the treasure text] says:
Uniting the energy-winds, relative to any sameness in being, non-conceptuality, going and coming, always free . . . [478]

The energy-wind [practice] is to unite and bind together the life and downward moving [energy-winds]. The mental practice is as follows: Positioning oneself without thought, without anything manifesting itself and free from conceptuality, whatever the appearance of going or coming, good or bad, etc., it dawns as a welling up without being identified, without truth, as a flux free of distraction. One meditates on what befalls without any adjustment.

**Excursus**

This has two parts: The practice of transforming the rough energy-wind into subtle energy-wind [and the main thing to care about].

**Transformation of the energy-wind.** [The treasure text] says:

At that point think the light emerges from the central channel, that the body is clear like a glass. The rough energy-winds become subtle.

At the point that, through being absorbed in sameness in being, an experience of clarity-emptiness arises, imagine shining light to spread from the central channel and just by its touch that the body becomes clear like a glass, that it becomes like rainbow light without any covering, impediment or obscuration whatsoever. By forcefully stopping the energy-wind the rough physical energy-wind [i.e., ordinary breath] is stopped. By its becoming subtle mental energy-wind, one is able to mix the outer and inner energy-winds together. By mixing dualistic appearances [i.e., dissolving them into fundamental reality] one obtains the situation of
being unimpeded by physical things, and the capacity to hold and draw along the vital element.  

The main practice to care about. [The treasure text] says:

Stare into space without moving your eyes. At the time that the experience of luminosity and clear wisdom dawns, identify its content and for a long time treat that meditation as the thing to care greatly about.

The physical posture is to adjust oneself in the seven point posture unflinchingly, like a spike [479] driven into a board. The way of looking is as follows: Do not move the eyeballs, do not close the eyelids, stare blankly into the vault of the sky, single-pointedly, without changing. Focus right on whatever mind \(^{96}\) dawns. Completely relax consciousness and looking into the face of it just become aware of seeing that. Furthermore, without stopping or establishing the luminous part that is self-dawning in the appearance of things, staring \(^{97}\) right into the face of what dawns, there is nothing at all. Not preventing the self-presentation of that at all, a radiance shines forth and the authentic experience of luminous clarity is produced. In all of the breaks between meditation, within the right there, identify the pure awareness and transparency, the clear openness aspect, and without stopping or presenting anything meditate on that.

The meaning of 'without refuting or establishing anything' is as follows. Without pursuing any inquiry into this awareness luminous clarity, this unblemished radiant shining, like a bird going into its nest in a tree place yourself there with certainty (\(tsen gyis\)). Within the right there, like a bee that sticks wherever it goes, lengthen the continuum of the luminous state; and like a person who has finished the task,
with complete and utter relaxation place yourself right there without making any effort to do so.

**Non-conceptual meditation**

The explanation of the meditation on non-conceptuality has two parts: the root visualization and its ramifications.

**Root visualization.** [The treasure text] says:

The way of doing non-conceptual meditation is as follows. Straighten the body, unite the energy-winds, do not move the eyes and position the mind on either the body, seed-syllable or a pearl-drop for a while. Concentrate with the letter \( hrim \) and be absorbed in a non-conceptuality that is unfabricated, unblemished and unchanging, like space in its purity, without boundary and without center.

The physical practice is to sit in the seven-point posture without moving. The energy-wind practice is to bind in unification the gentle energy-winds. The important thing about the gaze is that one does not move the eyes but merely is aware of looking, without too much penetration, at a visualized object such as either the [deity’s] body, a seed-syllable or a pearl-drop. The essential of the mental practice is as follows. Having cut off, right there and then, any thought of the three times, with unwavering recollecting one becomes absorbed in that moment.\(^98\) Then with a gaze concentrated by [the sound] \( hri\text{\textipa{m}} \) the mind goes welling up.\(^99\) At that time, there being no fabrication on top of the immediate state of fundamental reality, one becomes absorbed in radiance; there being no blemishes, one becomes absorbed in blank expectation (\( had \text{\textipa{de}} \)); there being no change, one becomes absorbed in a gap (\( so \text{\textipa{khad}} \)). One becomes absorbed
Completing Process

in the non-conceptual that is like a cloudless sky, without boundary and without centre, an utter vastness (*yangs cham me*), not identifiable and giving no place for investigation, a sudden breakthrough of transparency.

**Variations on the Root Meditation**

This has six parts, the first of which is becoming absorbed in the one nature of dawning and release as a great primordial emptiness without root. [The treasure text] says:

If spreading-conceptuality occurs, the one that does the conceiving is mind. It is devoid of colour, shape, anything that makes it identifiable. If one is grounded the one grounded is the mind of pure awareness (*rig pa*). The state of primordial freedom is the way things really are. There is nothing to be done and nothing to be avoided; no hopes or fears; no inclusion or exclusion. One becomes absorbed in a great primordial emptiness without root.

If motile thought insinuates itself onto one’s equi-poise, stare directly at that spreading conceptual mind with that [mind] itself. [481] One sees no colour, shape or so forth at all, rather an immaculate openness defying identification and analysis. Staring right into this mind grounded in fundamental reality with [that mind] itself, when seer and seen disappear without trace there is the state of primordial freedom which is the way things really are, or the way they exist, or their mode of being. Within that there is no taint of the spread or inhibition of gross or subtle thoughts, of inclusion and exclusion based in subject-object duality, of things to be done or to be avoided, of hopes or fears, and so forth. Cultivate this, the great primordial emptiness without
root, free in and of itself just where it is, an unimpeded openness.

**Second variation.** This is cultivating the state within which there is recollection of the meaning of non-production. [The treasure text] says:

Or else, while recollecting its non-production, focus on a shining [letter] *ah* written in front. When the mind, settling down into itself, abides within, relax completely within non-grasping.

Having actually, or mentally, written in front of oneself a white letter *ah* that is the objective support of all equi­poise and post [meditative equipoise attainment] stare at it. As it says, "The [letter] *ah* is originally non-produced and as such is the start (*sgo*) of all dharmas;" and "The [letter] *ah* is the first seed-syllable, best of all, of great significance, the holy letter, emerging from within and unproduced;" and "The [letter] *ah* is the unproduced way things are." While thus recollecting that the letter *ah* is non-produced from the very start, is beyond being anything conceivable or express­ible and is pure like space, [482] focus the mind on its shining form and become absorbed. At the point that, settling down into itself, there is a gap of mind, completely relax and become absorbed within a space-like state that is un­graspable and inexpressible.

**Third variation.** This is becoming absorbed in the single nature of [both] the ground and motility that is a self-dawning free in and of itself. [The treasure text] says:

Like a crow [going] off from a ship for a time, wherever it goes knowing and steady in recollection . . . .

It is just like, for example, a crow on board a ship. If you watch it, when shooed away it flies straight off. But though
Completing Process

the ocean is so vast it has no limit, still the crow again homes
in on the very same ship and makes its way back again. Just
so, when motile thought wells up insinuating itself onto one’s
equipoise, stare directly into the essence of it. Then just that
very conceptuality which is without firm grounding dawns
as the nature of the [fundamental] ground, an immaculate
openness. Cultivate this single [underlying] nature of
[both] the ground and motility within its being ungraspable
as a dawning or a liberation.

Fourth variation. This is getting flexibility of ap­
pearance (rtsal snang) through the emptiness experience.
[The treasure text] says:

Think that sometimes, within the white central channel
stretching from the navel to the crown of the head, the
white pearl-drop is caused to go back and forth. From
this the diverse emptiness experience comes to dawn.

In the centre of one’s body, which is completely hollow,
the central channel, white, clear and luminous, hollow in the
middle and without twists and crookedness, stretches straight
up from the navel to the crown. Within it visualize a white,
luminous pearl-drop, in size [483] about the size of a millet
seed, light in weight and easily moved. By the gentle ener­
gy-wind having settled down into itself, that pearl-drop goes
up like a shot from the navel and arrives at the top of the
central channel at the crown; again, it zigzags gently (khyur
gyis) downwards and arrives at the navel. In this way, by
focusing the mind on the movement back and forth of the
pearl-drop, all appearances go out of focus and there is the
dawning of an emptiness experience like a nothingness as it
were, a vast open expanse. By cultivating just this state,
whatever happens there is a dawning of the glowing light of
emptiness, the unstoppable diversity of flexible appearance as well.

**Fifth variation.** This is removing sinking [i.e., loss of tension and vibrancy in a meditator’s mind] by *rtog pa kha’khyil ba* (‘conceptuality gathering into itself while going around in a circular motion all the time not leaving the surface’). [The treasure text] says:

If there is sinking, imagine a white pearl-drop between the eyebrows about the size of a millet seed revolving. Sometimes become absorbed in a state without objective support.

The physical practice is the seven-point posture with the change being that one’s gaze is directed up. Concentrate the mind (*rig pa*) while focusing awareness on a white pearl-drop just the size of a millet seed between the eyebrows flashing as it spins (*chir chir*). At times become absorbed in a blank receptiveness which observes nothing at all. The removal comes about by alternating the meditation between the two.

**Sixth variation.** This is integrating and taking as path in the attainment that follows [meditative absorption] the experience produced during meditative absorption. [The treasure text] says:

Having identified consciousness [in] the period between meditation sessions, one should become absorbed while in a state of complete relaxation. By this one becomes habituated to non-conceptuality.

During meditative equipoise all conceptuality [484] which moves in between and moves below is cut and one becomes absorbed one-pointedly without thought or ideas, within a state without objective-support wherein the spread and contraction [of thought] is absent. When one gets up
from that meditation session one simply identifies the current (ngo bo) of that state of abiding and, within that itself, cultivates a state of complete relaxation without stopping or presenting anything.

**Explanation of How, During Subsequent Attainment, One Cultivates [Insight] Through Behavioural Attitude**

This has three parts: taking as path an impartiality to whatever appears, as though it is an illusion; taking as path whatever dawns as being self-liberated, like waves; taking as path all that is to be done and avoided, all hopes and fears, as the play of the truth body.

**Taking impartially as path.** [The treasure text] says:

> Afterwards, every outer and inner thing that appears is a self-reflection like a dream; though appearing, is without any truth-content, like a moon in water; is a mere dependent arising like an illusion. All are viewed without desire and aversion, without hopes or fears.

In order to firmly implant the meditation, the experience produced during meditative equipoise is applied, during the subsequent attainment, to every self-reflection of the sense-faculties, all of which are of an equal taste. Thus, things that appear, all phenomena in their variety systematized as the outer world as environment and the inner living beings that are the life of it, are not established as being anything other than mind, are just self-reflections [i.e., are that mind itself appearing or shining] (rang snang). Still, even though that is the case, appearance is experienced, like a dream appearance; though appearing it is without any truth-content, like a moon in water; and though the self-reflection is on account of the coming together of causes and conditions it is untrue (bden med), like the horses and cattle, etc., conjured
up by a magician. [485] So it is definite that all appearances are self-reflections, something to be impartial towards, like illusions. Understand, then, how, by having no desire or aversion, no hopes or fears for anything, one makes all that one does into an aid on one’s path.

**Taking whatever dawns as self-liberated.** [The treasure text] says:

> Whatever afflictive idea dawns [in the mind], like waves sinking back into the ocean, take whatever dawns as the truth body path [i.e., as (a simulation of) the enlightened state].

Even though, during the time of the attainment that follows [meditative absorption], various conceptual states spawned by afflicting emotion dawn, understand how, by looking into their essence (*ngo bo*), as mere appearances they are empty, like waves sinking back into the ocean. Still, even though they are void, this does not prevent their appearing. Whatever has been done, one is certain about its being the play of the truth body that is appearance and emptiness indivisible. One should know how to take this as an aid to one’s path.

**Taking all as the play of the truth body.** [The treasure text] says:

> Existence and non-existence, appearance and emptiness, all are mere imputations. Cyclic existence and nirvāṇa are self-reflections devoid of truth. What is to be done and avoided, hopes and fears, are merely imputed by mind. Practise [them] as in fact the non-dual truth body.

Existence and non-existence, appearance and emptiness, etc. (all dharmas which are contingently presented)
they are merely imputed anew by mind and are without even a single atom of truth content. And also the dual dharma of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa: though each appears, contingent on the self-reflection of mind and transcendental wisdom, the unchanging element that is the heart of all meaningful things is the fundamental reality [486] that is liberated from the very beginning, the permanent ultimate truth. For those who have distorted awareness because of not understanding this reality (de nyid), there seems to be [literally, there is the appearance of] cyclic existence but it is mere appearance. Since its truth content is not established it is but a passing appearance of what is not really there (med snang). This [in turn] is because it is not something that is primordially and firmly set down.

From the point of view of the way things are, neither cyclic existence nor nirvāṇa are established as an objective content (yul) when there is the apprehension of truth, so: (a) cyclic existence as something to be avoided and in which one fears to roam, and where one hopes not to roam, and (b) nirvāṇa as something to be got, that one hopes to attain and that one fears one will not attain, and so forth, all such dualistic apprehension is merely imputed by mind. In reality, it is as [Nāgārjuna] says:

Ultimate reality is cyclic existence and ultimate reality is nirvāṇa as well. Having given up cyclic existence there is, besides, no other nirvāṇa to be attained.

Having thus ascertained from the point of view of the way things are, that cyclic existence and nirvāṇa are the non-dual, clear light, truth body, enlightenment mind, one should know how to take this as an aid to one’s path.
By means of ascertaining in this way, all behavioural attitudes that follow [meditative absorption] are behavioural attitudes connected to the time [i.e., are what is most appropriate to the person's level of spiritual development]. When one is a beginner, from within an absence of grasping-belief for anything, one should be unmistakable about what is to be done and what is to be avoided. On the levels corresponding to each vehicle the behavioural attitude will be one in line with the Buddha's word and not misguided. The experience is taken up having integrated in a non-contradictory fashion the three restraints, and it should be brought to its final conclusion by the three: conceptual (spros bcas), non-conceptual and completely non-conceptual behavioural attitudes [487] after the [stage of] warmth has been obtained.

Concluding Explanation

Those [teachers] with experiential understanding produced in just such a way, through giving an introduction to reality (gnas lugs) just as it is, cause certainty to be generated. Experienced religious teachers (bla ma), having delineated a ground, path and result (gzhi, lam 'bras) and, in terms of a path, the three (view, meditation, and behavioural attitude) give a direct introduction [to the nature of mind] along with excellent advice about removing hindrances and firmly ingraining [the insights gained]. They will guide by a method which causes expansion [i.e., by an integrative method] to an effortless approach to transcendental wisdom. By being guided in such a fashion, experiential understanding grows like a spring shoot and one progresses with great speed along the levels and path systematized as four sorts of knowledge apprehension. [These four knowledge apprehensions] are a temporary
resultant unity during the practice stage. An ultimate resultant unity, during the stage of no [further] practise, the unparalleled state of glorious Vajrasattva comes to be obtained.

Now this explanation of the root text on the path has been fully completed. Following it a brief teaching providing a door to the essential practice of the branches of the path should be given.\textsuperscript{110} There is continuity of recollection during the day. Based on preceptual advice about making an attack at night (\textit{mtshan mo btsan thabs}), there are the practices of the identification, purification, increase and transformation of dreams. If this nocturnal yoga does not provide one with a grounding\textsuperscript{111} for being unmistaken about the death state [and] intermediate state, one practices the preceptual advice about transference of consciousness to the next life [literally, ‘link up’]. The explanation of cutting off mistaken dualistic grasping lets one take bad conditions as path, whereby experiential understanding\textsuperscript{488} becomes firmly rooted. In the root explanation, from a stable familiarity [comes about] the supreme final method, the upward leap vajra shortcut (\textit{thod rgal rdo rje'i gsengs lam}) to the unsurpassed, secret, clear-light vajra essence.\textsuperscript{112} Based on six essential practices perception settles down on itself and, through practising the dawning mode of the four appearances along with the culminating foundation\textsuperscript{113} [the attainment of] the rainbow, non-moving vajra body comes about not longer than seven years and seven months distant. Since this is the case it is the supreme path. By applying the preceptual advice about the four appearances of the special completing process, where the occasion is appropriate, as an auxiliary aid, the path becomes complete in all respects.
Four external times. It makes no difference whether it is just [the practices given in] the root explanation or the auxiliary [practices] as well, the essentials of the practise during a twenty-four hour period, according to the dge sbyong srang 'jug ("Approach road to religious practise") instructions are as follows: There are delineated four external time slots for day and night and four esoteric moments in a single instant of consciousness. The four external time slots are: (a) the daylight hours, and (b) the night divided into three parts. During the day, according to the snang brgyad 'debs ("Projection of a hundred appearances") instructions, one is absorbed, during meditative equipoise, within the non-conceptual clear light that is like space. During subsequent attainment one either imagines an illusory deity's body, or else projects energy (rtsal 'don) by taking the pure illusory body appearance (the state of luminosity in the form of the deity) as symbolizing (sbyang) clear light. During the night, according to the ye shes gnad du bsnun pa ("Getting to the heart of the transcendental wisdom") instruction there are three parts:

The first is holding [489] the consciousness within [during] the early part of the night. One adjusts one physical posture. With the gentle energy wind [unification] that has a pot one flames the letter ah at the navel within the central channel causing the hani at the crown to melt. By holding the mind in the pearl-drop that falls down to the heart the simultaneous wisdom-bliss-emptiness dawns naturally (ngang gis).

The second is merging consciousness in the pot [during] the middle part of the night. One focuses one's mind on a white [letter] ah blazing with light in the centre of the red four-petalled lotus at the heart. By holding in unity the gentle
energy-winds at the heart, and lying on one's right side in the fashion of the lion, deep sleep dawns as the clear light.

The third is the self-visualization\(^{114}\) of pure awareness (rig pa) [during] the last stage of the night. Arising [during] the last stage of the night, seated in the fashion of the lion exhale three long breaths [while saying] ha and hold. At that time project forth the [letter] ah at one's heart through the crown aperture and focus on it shining in space perhaps an armspan above the top of one's head. Settled within holding the breath outside, luminosity-emptiness non-conceptual wisdom dawns.

**The four esoteric moments.** There are three moments of conceptuality while the mind analyses and a moment of non-conceptuality free from mind. Of these four, having identified the truth body, a sudden inconceivable stroke of the mind (blo 'das kyi dgongs pa car phog) free of three of the four parts [of the four-part single instant], without wavering from that enter into the freshness (so ma) of it. Now, in regard to the three [conceptual] moments: [490] the non-cessation of what is previous, the non-production of what comes after, and the non-wandering of the mind in the present, they come about without differentiation. And this is the inexplicable, non-conceptual fourth moment, free of the three, the dawning of an ordinary person's pure awareness, luminous but non-identifiable. One cultivates the awareness, clearness and purity right within that. As it says in the Gsang ba sgra tantra:\(^{115}\)

The penetrating awareness, clearness and purity without past, future, remembrance or conceptualization, just this very consciousness of the here and now, the truth body that has four [aspects to its explanation] has been identified.
This is what the practice boils down to in the final analysis.

Colophon

My thought grew strong: "May this Very Clear Picture become glorious" in accord with the holy guru's speech, this profound path and dharma that is the guidance for leading the group of the fortunate to the exalted state of lord Vajradhara.
Notes to Translation

Abbreviations

KS Khams sprul rin po che.

1. The word snang ha (as at folio 445.3, etc.) often renders Sanskrit āloka. It may mean appearance, shining, reflection, etc.
2. Tibetan rnal (cp. rnal shyor which renders Sanskrit yoga) means non-conceptual (rtog med) (KS).
3. Watch white, red and black breath being exhaled from the left, right and both nostrils in turn, each exhalation being slightly more forceful than the preceding (KS).
4. That is: (i) posture, (ii) letting the mind settle down, (iii) expelling dead energy-wind, (iv) bodhicitta motivation, (v) visualizing the guru on one's head, (vi) taking refuge while repeating the prayer "Precious guru . . ." and the sinking into oneself as light (KS).
5. Perhaps emend mi skye → ma skye 'no certainty of not being born there.'
6. Perhaps sdig pa has been omitted.
7. The verses to be recited during the visualizations set forth here are found in full in another small gter ma called Sngon 'gro phan bde 'i charr gyun [hereafter 'Preliminary gter ma'] taken from Zab chos rig 'dzin thugs thig (las) in Gter mdzod smin
“Dzog Chen Meditation

96 Dzog Chen Meditation

gling thugs thig, pp. 67-73. Only the first line is given in this text followed by ‘etc.’ (la sogs pa).

8. The geography of the sacred world is not only terrestrially, but also psychologically spatial. The term kham is equally a terrestrial space and a fundamental element (dhātu) locating the state of being alive.

9. Only the first line is given in the text followed by ‘etc.’


11. Tibetan chi li li seems to imply each nectar drop or particle being so close to the other that it nearly forms a mass. SCD derives the word, through onomatopoeia from the sound of snuffing up the nose i.e., short puffs of breath. It describes how scents diffuse a space thoroughly. BRD says it is a word descriptive of a downpour.

12. This is missing from Preliminary gter ma folio 70.4.

13. Literally, non-apprehension of the three spheres [of subject, object and action].

14. Literally, cow urine, which is thought to be pure.

15. Only the first line is given in the text followed by ‘etc.’

16. mtshe → mtsho

17. Tibetan byin in byin gyi rlob (Sanskrit adhiṣṭāna), usually translated as blessing, literally means ‘splendour or magnificence.’ A free translation might be ‘think they are blessing us and that the blessing is just awakening within us.’

18. Only the first line of this prayer (found on p. 275ff of vol. Ga of Gter mdzod smin gling rdor sems) is given in the text followed by ‘etc.’

19. Again, only the first line of the first of the following seven verses which is found as the last page (no number) of Gter mdzod smin gling rdor sems is given in the text followed by ‘etc.’ An alternative lineage request prayer is found at folio 70.5-72.1. The Preliminary gter ma appears to have been discovered/written at about the end of the nineteenth century.
judging from this lineage. For description or biographies of the members of this lineage, transcendental and ordinary, see NSTB Index of personal names, Vol. 2, pp. 393ff.

20. This may refer specifically to his knowledge of the fundamental Rnying ma tantra Gsang ba'i snying po, for references to which see NSTB, Vol. 2, p. 275.

21. Padma bstan 'dzin appears to be O rgyan bstan 'dzin rdo rje (NSTB, p. 733).

22. The lineage given here presents problems. KS suggests that the sister referred to is Sras ma Mi 'gyur padma sgron me (the daughter of Gter bdag gling pa). That the lineages become various and complex after Gter bdag gling pa is suggested by the comments in NSTB p. 733 and 833. 'Jam dbyang mkhen rtse (1820-92), of course, is the well-known guru and friend of 'Jam mgon kong sprul blos gros mtha' yas (perhaps referred to in the next verse) well known for reviving and empowering many of the Tibetan Buddhist practices and lineages extant today.

23. Only the first line of this is given in the text followed by ‘etc.’

24. Only the first line of this is given in the text followed by ‘etc.’

25. This is a conjectural rendering of thon thon.

26. A student would have been guided through the practices with enough time being given between each for contemplation and meditation. The total guidance of an ordinary student may very well have taken years to complete.

27. In all Tibetan theories of tantra there is a transformation process involved. Correlations are setup between the basis which will be transformed, the transforming activities and the transformed state. The body, speech and mind of the deity Vajrasattva which is the transformed (enlightened) state are intimated by mudrā, mantra and tattvā. These words, according to the way they are translated into Tibetan, mean ‘hand trap’ (i.e., a hand gesture signifying restraint), a string of syllables with magical power, and ‘the state of thatness,’ respectively.

28. The samaya-sattva (‘pledge being’) and jñāna-sattva (‘wisdom being’), each living in an identical maṇḍala are (i) the deity constructed in the imagination out of one’s pledge, and (ii) the deity ‘from its own place’ (rang gnas las) which may
be an actual geographical location or may be understood as the sphere of partless reality.

29. As will be set forth below, this is a standardized visualization preceding the śādhanā proper in which one imagines oneself in the hub of a baccarat-like wheel delicately mounted in an impenetrable plexiglass-like conical tent enclosing an entire universe, around the outer edges of which, on the spokes of the wheel, are stationed furious protection beings facing outwards and brandishing weapons.

30. This is a sacred circle [and the deity which inhabits it, contemplated in] a stabilized meditation.

31. This is a sacred circle [and the deity which inhabits it] which comes from a place where the deity usually lives, vivifying or empowering the sacred circle being contemplated.

32. In the Tibetan text *de=de bshin nyid* and *ting=ting nge 'dzin* (KS).

33. As D.L. Snellgrove, for example, has already mentioned in the Introduction to his edition of the *Hevajra-tantra*, (London, 1959) this use of *dag pa* (Sanskrit *śuddha*), special to tantra, includes the idea of spelling out the meaning behind the tantric symbol.

34. That is to say, basic reality (Sanskrit *tattvātā*) is the meaning, revealed in meditation, as lying behind the death state.

35. That is to say, basic reality is the truth body and that in turn is the meaning behind the death state.

36. The following is a summary of an explanation of this section given in Tibetan by KS. This initial section on the *rgyu ting gsum* incorporates what the Dga' ldan pa (or Dge lugs pa) call *lam gsum rnam khyer* taking, i.e., transforming through meditation, the three (death, intermediate state and birth) into dharma-kāya, saṁbhoga-kāya and nirmāṇa-kāya (see also Introduction). The *rgyu ting gsum* are the basis, both theoretical and psychological of all subsequent meditation activity and hence are called cause. Of the three, the *tattvātā* meditation which is being described here is *stong nyid spros brah rang byung gi ye shes* (=śīñyatā-nisprapaññasa-viśuddha-jñāna) that is *de bshin gshegs pa'i snying po* (=tathāgata-garbha). From within this sphere of ultimate reality, as it were, that lies as the inherently liberated nature of every living creature but that is unknown to them, the *kun snang* (the coming up in the mind
of a picture) is a compassion of a part with basic reality because, when the meditator realizes ultimate reality, the realization that living creatures wander in ignorance of it comes along as a part. Thus the first two of the *rgyu ting gsum* are *prajñā* and *upāya* in unity. But just basis (=prāṇidhi-citta-totpāda) compassion is not sufficient. It must lead to altruistic work, to the resultant meditations that follow and for this the activating (=prasthāna-citta-totpāda) compassion is needed. This is the *rgyu snying rje chen po* which is referred to also as the *zung 'jug gi lhā* (yuga-naddha-devatā) or the letter *hūn* arising from unity that is the first two of the *rgyu ting gsum*. This is the actual cause (hence the name *rgyu ting gsum*). It is *rang rig*, the most important activating principle, understood as the unity of *prajñā* and *upāya* (apparently having a paradoxical relation with them like a self-originated child). It is in the form of the letter *hūn* and where it is present one may talk of *bde gsal stong pa nyid*, i.e., extasy, clear light and emptiness all manifesting together.

37. The schema of the *Abhidharma-kosa* is being followed. Four *srid pa* are set forth: (a) previous, (b) death, (c) intermediate and (d) birth. Here death has been equated with emptiness/dharma-kāya-paramārttha-satya, intermediate with compassion/saṁbhoga-kāya/saṁvrti-satya, conception with emptiness-bliss unity/nirmāṇa-kāya/afflicted state of mind and finally, in this section, the previous state with religious power (Sanskrit *tapas*) to overcome hinderance to altruistic activity. The esoteric yoga centred on drawing ecstatic energy-winds up and down and throughout the psychic channels is related to the protection wheel just because of the notion of wheels and spokes, this being the basic structure of the channels.

38. Perhaps *nus rtsal nar son pa* simply means natural talents.
39. Perhaps *snga ma*—*Inga* 'five sorts of living being.'
40. Perhaps *mnyams*—*nyams*.
41. This reminds one of Kamala-sīla's explanation of calm abiding in his *Bhāvanā-krama*.
42. Perhaps this is a reference to the primordial mind endowed with the qualities of an enlightened are. 'Not grasping' perhaps has the additional connotation of not reckoning anything of it [i.e., not having an absurd conceit].
Perhaps to make clear that the Jo nang pa view of primordial mind is rejected here? A comparison of the doctrines of Lo chen Dharmaśri and Gter bdag gling pa, formulated in the immediate aftermath of the sealing of the works of Jo nang pa ōraṇātha and Shes rab rgyal mtshan, with the doctrines of the followers of the late nineteenth century eclectic movement would be most instructive for answering such questions.

Alternatively, which accord with the usual bifurcation of consciousness into subject and object.

These are the called in Sanskrit the yāvad-bhāvikātā and noumenal yathāvad-bhāvikātā wisdoms.

This is reading phyir and phra ba separately. Perhaps phyir phra ba is possible. The meaning might then be "practise on places that are extremely tiny capacity releasers (rtsal byang) of the samādhi."

The trichiliocosm is vividly explained in NSTB, p. 131 and Vol. 2, p. 28, n. 376.

Alternatively, "No matter what one meditates on there will be ease. Practising meditative stabilization as if twirling a spear around in space . . . ."

Tibetan spros pa is Sanskrit prapañca, something cooked up in the mind.

This is a speculative translation of snam 'dogs→snam 'thog? 'dogs is not attested as a form of 'thag pa to weave. 'dogs means to tie to.

Literally, "keep it going without any tinkering."

The five experiences (nyams) are likened to a waterfall over a cliff (ri gzar gyi 'bab chu), a stream at the head of a valley (rong khung dog po 'i chu), a broad river (chu klung), an ocean without waves (rgya mtsho rlabs bral) and a mountain (ri bo). R.A. Stein ("Sudden Illumination or Simultaneous Comprehension" in Sudden and Gradual Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought, ed. by Peter N. Gregory [Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1987], p. 51, n. 54) says nyams is "a state of happiness in which one directly apprehends the ultimate."

Sang signifies an intensifier, however see below folio 464.5 where it appears to mean a natural state of purity.
54. Tibetan *sel ba*, future *bsal bar bya*, has the basic meaning of eliminating, and a secondary meaning of eliminating other things to make one particular thing stand out.

55. The four basic aspects of this *prāṇāyama* are given below folios 464.5-465.2. One visualizes the three *ṇādis* and then (a) exhales dead energy-wind in the form of badness, (b) inhales light energy-wind through the two outside channels in the form of goodness, (c) brings the two energy-winds together and holds them within the central channel below the navel and finally (d) gently expels them. This practise is called the energy-wind *bum pa can*, apparently as a literal, creative rendering of Sanskrit *ghatīn* ‘one possessing a pot.’ As Monier-Williams remarks it is more likely to be derived from Sanskrit *han* ‘to strike’ and originally, perhaps, referred to the distinctive striking together of the two energy-winds below the navel.

56. The three levels of breath retention and control are defined relative to the amount of time one can retain the breaths at the navel. The lengths of time are measured in a unit defined by the amount of time it takes to touch forehead, left and then right knee with the tips of the fingers of the right hand. The three levels can be measured in rounds of seven or nine. For example, one round would be small, two middling and three large.

57. *Om vaj-ra-sat-tva hūṁ*.

58. This is a speculative translation of *bcud lhar dag pa*.

59. In the Deva-nāgarī and Tibetan alphabets *hūṁ* is written vertically, so to speak, with the ‘ḥ’ in the middle, ‘ū’ beneath and the ‘ṁ’ on top in the form of a cresent moon lying on its back cradling a sum surmounted by a squiggle.

60. Perhaps *tha ma*→*tha mal* ‘ordinary’?

61. The three stories (*sum brtsegs*) are the letter *hūṁ* at the heart of the wisdom being in turn at the heart of the pledge being.

62. These are *[dkar] snang*, *[dmar] nched* and *[nyer] thob*: three appearances of an intense and pervasive white, red and black, respectively.

63. This is a unity (*yuga-naddha*) of wisdom and method (*prajñopāya*). Method means compassion or great extasy. Unified spontaneous great bliss and wisdom is clear-light
emptiness, the emptiness of that which possesses complete excellence (the object known) with immutable great bliss (the knower).

64. Alternatively *khongs* might simply mean what has been referred to earlier.

65. Alternatively *dmigs rkhang* may mean the lines of the *gter ma* concerning the visualization.

66. BRD says *sang seng* is as a frame of white light in a doorway or window and 'al 'ol is how things seem at dusk, clear but at the same time somehow vague.

67. This is a conjectural translation of *so mar tsen gyis*. The word *tsen* is not attested, but *tse ne* is explained BRD as *sems mig yo bar bhrtan por 'dug tshul*; alternatively, if *tsen*→*rtsen* BRD gives *gnas bsti ba dang* ba ('to rest') as one of its meanings.

68. The *spyi blugs* (literally ‘general flow’) is the Sanskrit *kamaśūla*, a pot for sprinkling holy water. Possibly a general meaning is intended “Pure awareness settles in a general flow.”

69. This is a free rendering of *bya ma shor bar byas la*.

70. SCD says *lhing ba* or *llings pa* means unchanging, linking it to *lhing chags*. BRD does not have an entry for *things pa* and explains *lhing ba* as *zhi zhing dul ba*.

71. This is the *Byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po lta ba nam mkha’l tar mtha’ dhus med pa’i rgyud le’u brgyad cu rtsa bzhi pa* (or, alternative name) *Chos thams cad rdzogs pa* *chen po byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po* (Rnying rgyud vol. 1:1-220) translated by Śri-sīṁha and Vairocana.

72. I have been unable to identify this and the following quotation. *Bde ba rab ’byams* is perhaps a short title for one of the Heruka (*bde mchog*) tantras. For an explanation of the person of Dga, *rab rdö rje* see the Introduction.

73. This is a conjectural translation of *khrol le bskyur?/bsgyur*. SCD gives *mig khrol le khrol le lta ba* ‘to stare;’ BRD does not attest either *khrol le* or *khro le* but says that *khrol ba* or *khrol le ba* is the sound of a small drum. It is unlikely the meaning *'grol ba* is intended.

74. Four related terms are used here, *sbyang gzhi* ‘ground of purification,’ *sbyong byed* ‘catalyst for purification,’ *sbyang bya* ‘what is to be purified’ and *sbyangs ’bras* ‘purified result';
all combining the meaning of religious practice with purification.

75. *Gzhil bar bya* (the verb is used to describe letting blood to relieve the patient of a build up toxins in the humours) probably means to allow a small amount of air out to relieve the build up of tension that comes from holding one's breath. It may also refer to the yogic technique of taking in a small extra puff of breath on top of the breath already retained (referred to earlier folio 453.6).

76. The four aspects set out here comprise the basic pranayama.

77. This is the section called ("Speech, Recitation of Mantra") beginning at folio 452.6.

78. *Stong* can also mean ‘empty.’

79. This cryptic statement is spelled out in the explanation that follows.

80. Perhaps ‘glows’ is intended by ’*bar ba*.

81. Literally ‘from a full *tshon* to four *tshon.*’ A full *tshon* is said to be half the distance between the tip and first joint of one’s thumb.

82. This translation is conjectural. Perhaps the emendation *snying ga*→*gar* is needed. According to the BRD *srin zhal* is simply said to be the name of a ferocious Rākṣasa. It gives anus (*rkub*) as the meaning of *srin po* ’i *sgo* which is perhaps the intended meaning here.

83. In regard to these two lineages of instruction the NSTB, p. 368 says: ‘...*thabs-lam* refers to the yoga in which there is meditation connected with four or six centers forming the ‘upper door’ [of the body, *steng sgo,* and to the skillful means which develops co-emergent, positive cognition by relying on the meditation absorption associated with the two secret centers [ of the male and female consorts] forming the ‘lower door’ (*'og sgo mkha' gsal gnyis.*’)

84. SDC says *item* means full. BRD says *item gyis gang* means brimming. The way of being full seems to be meant and this is to be applied to the way of melting.

85. This is a conjectural translation of *breng nge.* The archaic word *breng* (cp. *sbreng ba*) is said in the BRD to mean ‘going or following one after the other.’ Dharma-śrī says *skya breng nge gnas.*
Following SCD *them mer* is conjecturally related to ‘full, enough.’

The text as in NSTB, p. 58 *et passim* reads *Heruka gal po* which originally perhaps derives from a misprint or regional pronunciation intending *Heruka rgyal po*.

Mount Meru is the stomach, the four continents the limbs, the taste grabber the tongue and the primary sense the eyes. The last sentence is a literal translation.

This is a conjectural rendering of *snyom ’jug gi brda bzhis bsnol mar bskul*.

This renders *bu gha ha re [ba] dod pa las . . . . thon*. BRD says *ha re ba* refers to a hole or blankness. The adverb *bun bun* describes the way dirt flies off from a bird scratching at a hole, how boiling water or spring water bubbles up.

This is a conjectural rendering of *khu tshur [gyi→] gyis rgyab tu steng*. I am unable to make any sense at all of the original reading unless it means that one strikes the back of one’s fists on one’s breast, a very difficult proposition.

This renders *grib* and *dam sel*.

Śiva’s consort is often called Parvati or Durga. The Tibetan name literally means ‘one with the peacock feather hat’ (Sanskrit Śikhini or Barhiśikhā).

Tibetan *rang sar bzhag* literally means ‘place it in its own ground.’

The vital element (*khams*) probably is semen. If *khams* refers to the basic elements (fire, water, etc.) the capacity perhaps is to be understood in terms of miraculously producing fire, walking on water and so forth.

A less literal translation of *sems gang shar* is ‘whatever comes up in the mind.’

This takes *las* as a misprint for *ltas*.

*Bzhag* (rendered as ‘one becomes absorbed in’ throughout the following pages) has a passive sense in the original and literally means ‘becomes [naturally] arranged or sorted out.’

*Bun long gis ’gro* (cp. folio 475.3) literally means ‘it goes in a welling up fashion.’

This renders *’phro ba*.

Literally, ‘spreads on the ground without calling attention to itself (lhang gis).’
The Tibetan letter \( a \) (pronounced \( ah \)) is said to be inherent in every consonant. In that the Arabic letter \( a \) is first in the English alphabet it suits the present context well.

BED also gives 'being of a whitish colour' for \textit{thal le bar}.

This translates \textit{stong dus nas snang ba ma 'gags pas}. Literally it says 'From the empty time the appearances are not prevented.'

The \textit{sdom gsum} are prātimokṣa ordinations (in eight codifications including the vows of monks and nuns), bodhisattva vows and tantric vows.

The \textit{uṣma-gata-prayoga-mārga} or \textit{nirveda-bhāglya} is said to be the lowest stage in the upward spiritual quest to which the warmth of the fire of the sublime vision of truth penetrates.

Here \textit{ltā ba} (‘view’) means \textit{yang dag pa'i lta ba}, a correct understanding of the ultimate.

This sentence is a conjectural translation of \textit{ye shes kyi rtsal kha phyogs med du rgyas par byed pa'i thabs kyis khrid pa}.

BRD lists these four \textit{rig 'dzin} (Sanskrit \textit{vidyā-dhara}) as: \textit{rnam smin} (‘ripening’), \textit{tshe dbang} (‘power of life’), \textit{phyag chen} (‘great seal’) and \textit{lhun grub} (‘effortless’).

The following is a totally inadequate conjectural translation which is intended only as a point of departure for further study. It is possible that the branches of the path spoken of here are a summary of the path set forth in the body of the text. The six essential practices mentioned below (folio 488.1) perhaps refer to six practices for the day and night set out here in brief as the branches of the path. These six are: being aware during the day; identification, purification, increase and transformation of dreams during the night; and sixth, transference of consciousness.

This emends \textit{gdings} to \textit{gdeng}. If one emends to \textit{gdengs} it means to gain confidence.

This takes \textit{gyis} (folio 488.1) as an instrumental case ending (see below "Since this is the case...") and not as imperative of verb \textit{bgyid pa}, ‘to do.’ If one understands an imperative the sentence may be construed "From a stable familiarity with the root explanation apply yourself to the supreme final method..."
113. The four dawning modes are the red, white, black and clear light appearances at the time of death. The culminating foundation (mtha 'rten) is the fourth of the four appearances.

114. *Rang gsal gdab* literally means 'reflexive clear strike.'

115. This is probably the *Rdo rje gsang ba 'i snying po rtsa' ba' i rgyud de kho na nyid nges pa* (Rnying rgyud vol 16: 1-137).
ka dag: primordial purity (465.6)

kun snang gi ting nge’dzin: total appearances meditative stabilization

kyad par gi /thun mong gi sangs rgyas: special and shared buddhas (431.6)

klong: deep center (452.3)

rkyang 'ded la brten nas: contingent on a single wavelength (459-460; 460.2)

skyur dbang med pa: inability to off-load (430.4)

khog bhub pa khog inside; 'bubs: to turn face down (inside out), or construct, eg., a roof (439.1)

khod snyoms: level

khod snyoms par to: level (441.3)

khrid btab: to explain (438.1)

khrid thabs: handbook

khrid yig: guide

'khor gsum gyi yongs dag': purity of the three spheres (435.2)

'khor 'das gnyis med kyi ye shes: transcendental wisdom [that is/realizes] the non-duality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa (444.6)

go mtshams med par: without any part left out
gya gyu: confused (460.1)

gyen rdzogs mi dmigs pa’i dbyings su thim: dissolve upwardly into the complete and ungraspable sphere (455.5)
g.yo thob goms brtan mthar phyin pa’i nyams lnga 451.6

’gag med kyi rtsal snang sna tshogs: the unstoppable diversity of flexible appearance
dngos po lhan cig skyes pa’i ye shes: functioning simultaneously arisen wisdom (474.1)
mngon rtogs: clear realization (448.4)
bsgno ba: turn over to, dedicate to (435.2)
ci tsug byed pa: what is to be done (430.5, 433.2)
ci yang med pa ’dra ba’i stong nyams rjen rjen pa la yangs cham me ba zhig: an emptiness experience like a nothingness as it were, a vast open expanse.
cer cer blta ba (cer→ce re) lta: to look wide eyed; watch intensely (462.3)

chi li li: jellying, dense and cloying, each particle being so close to the other that it nearly forms a mass (434.5)

chir chir ’khor: flashing as it spins (483.5)

’ja’ lus ’pho med rdo rje’i sku: rainbow, non-moving vajra body (488.2)

rjen ne ba: openness (455.5; 460.6)
rjen sang gis ’char: openness (458.6)
rjes thob: subsequent attainment

brjod bral bde ba chen po: indescribably great bliss

nyams: experiential realization (474.1)

nyams rtogs: experiential understanding (434.6, 435.6)

nyer bsdu’i rnal ’byor: gathering back yoga
Partial Glossary of Words and Phrases

**gnyid 'thums**: (enveloping/blocking all else out) → deep sleep

**gnyis med 'od gsal chos sku byang chub kyi sems**: non-dual clear light dharma-kāya enlightenment mind (486.4)

**gnyug mar**: the primordial one (446.3)

**gnyong 'gyod**: conscience-stricken regret (434.3)

**mnyam bzhag**: equipoise (458.2)

**nyam rjes dbyer med bden gnyis zung 'jug gi ye shes**: wisdom that is equipoise and the subsequent attainment indivisible, the unity of the two truths (461.6)

**snying khong du bcangs pa'i lhag bsam**: surpassing intention held close to one’s heart/from the bottom of one’s heart

**snying khong rus pa'i gting nas**: from the very depth of one’s soul (431.2)

**ting /ting nge 'dzin**: meditative stabilization (438.6; 439.1)

**gtad med du song ba**: go out of focus

**rtag thub pa gcig**: lasting

**rten 'brel sgrig**: set up a cause and effect relationship

**lta ba'i gzer thebs**: incisiveness of insight (458.2)

**sten sgo 'ju 'dul gyi man ngag**: preceptual advice about the upper door melt pacification (470.2)

**stong gegs**: vacuity-problem

**stong nyams**: emptiness experience (482.5)

**stong nyams sna tshogs**: diversity of emptiness experience (482.2)

**stong pa nyid dang snying rje chen po zung du'jug pa'i rang rig**: self-knowing that is the unity of emptiness and great compassion (440.2)
stong pa'i mdangs 'od glowing light of emptiness (483.3)
thal thol→thar thor→tha re tho re : in a scattered about, disordered fashion (460.1).
thun mtshams kyi khyer so'i rnal 'byor : yoga of structured thinking during the period between meditation sessions
thod rgal rdo rje'i gsengs : lam the escalating vajra shortcut (488.1)
thon thon : on the verge of appearing; vivid (?) (437.4)
mtha'gang du'ang ma rig pa'i rtsa bral stong pa nyid : emptiness free from ignorance rooted in any of the extremes (462.6)
dag rdzogs smin gsum : purification, completion and ripening (439.3)
dam ye dbyer med kyi bsdu bya'i dkyil 'khor : the maṇḍala : that is to be gathered together, with its indivisible pledge and transcendental wisdom beings (455.3)
dung nge ba : intense [emotion] (432.5)
de bshin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin : basic reality meditative stabilization
don chos thams cad kyi snying po dbyings mi 'byur ba : unchanging element that is the heart of all meaningful things (485.6)
don gyi ye shes : actual transcendental wisdom
don gyi 'od gsal : actual clear light (456.3)
dwangs ma ye shes : clear openness wisdom (444.2)
gdangs : vibration, tone
gding : certainty, grounds for belief (430.5)
gdung shugs drag pos : fervently (432.3)
Partial Glossary of Words and Phrases

**gdod ma nas rang byung gi ye shes**: innate, self-originated, transcendental wisdom (447.1)

**gdod ma'i chos dbyings**: innate dharma element (447.2)

**bde gsal stong pa nyid kyi ye sheschos kyi sku'i rol par 'char pa'i ting**: meditative stabilization that sees the entire maṇḍala arising as the transcendent wisdom of bliss, clarity and emptiness, as the sport of the dharma body (449.1)

**bde skyil**: extasy posture

**bde stong gi snang cha**: appearance part of bliss and emptiness 436.3

**'dug lugs**: the way it exists

**nus rtsal nar son pa**: natural capacity which has become stretched out? (444.1)

**gnas skabs 'bras bu slob pa'i zung 'jug**: a temporary resultant unity during the practice stage (487.3)

**Rnam 'gyur glo bur gyi sgrib pa**: adventitious transformational obscuration (447.1)

**snang grags 'gyu gsum lha sngags 'od gsal gyi 'khyer so**: a state of mind that takes appearance, reverberation and movement [of thought] as the deity, mantra and clear light (454.5)

**snang ba bzhi'i 'char tshul mtha' rten dang bcas pa**: the dawning mode of the four appearances along with the culminating foundation (488.2)

**snang ba sna tshogs su rang shar ba'i gsal cha**: the luminous part that is self dawning in the appearance of things (479.2)

**snang rig**: appearances and pure awareness (460.6)
snang rig ngos bzung dang bral ba'i rjen ne ba: openness free from identification of appearance and awareness (455.5)

snang gsum: three appearances (456.2)

dpe'i 'od gsal: example clear light (444.5)

spyi blugs su 'jog pa: settling in the sprinkling pot; settles in a general flow (459.6; 460.1)

spyod pa: behavioural attitude (484.1)

pha ma'i 'du 'phrod kyis 'gyur pa'i gnas skbas lnga (443.1)

phung gtibs pa: to mass (432.2)

phyi bshol du ma lus par: not get into putting something off (430.2)

bu gha ha re [ba] dod pa las from the tunnel-like hole (475.3)

bun long gis 'gro/bun bun thon pa: come out in puffs (475.3; 480.3)

byin 'thibs se sad pa: blessing is just awakening (436.3)

dbab bzung ldog kyab: descent, holding, reversing and pervading (473.6)

sbu ga sang nge ba'i rnam pa can: in the form of transparent tubes (466.3)

med snang blo bur ba'i chos: passing appearance of what is not really there (486.1)

mer gyis gang: filled to brimming

mi 'gyur pa'i bde stong lhan skyes ye shes kyi sku: body of simultaneous transcendental wisdom that is the immutable bliss and emptiness (443.4)

mig rengs rengs su lta stare intently; rengs rengs: means in a congealed manner.
Partial Glossary of Words and Phrases

dmigs med brjod bral nam mkha' lta bu'i ngang: within a space-like state ungraspable and inexpressible (482.2)

rmangs rdo: foundation stone

tsub tsub/ tsab be tsub be: disconenctedly (445.3)

tsen gyis/tse ne: a firmness (479.5)

rtsal 'don: to project energy (488.6)

rtsal snang flexibility of appearance; rtsal: means talent or capacity as in lus rtsal exercise that releases the body's innate capacity (449.5; 461.6)

rtsal byang: to limber up (449.2)

rtsub shing rtsub rten gyi 'khrul 'khor: intense, even violent physical yoga (469.4)

tshogs zhing: accumulation field (435.3)

tshod dpogs pa: getting a [false] measure (460.5)

tshom bu: heap (435.4)

wal gyis/wa li wal le: clearly, vibrantly (445.3)

zhub ba las byung ba'i bde stong bliss: emptiness that comes from melting bliss (443.3)

zhu bdes drangs ba'i bde ba: the bliss brought about by melting extasy (457.5)

zhen rtog idea: of and belief in (444.4)

gzhi 'ding ba: set down the foundation (439.5)

gzhom med nā da'i dbyangs: intrepid speech roar (455.2)

zim me ba/zim zim: blankly, fixed without blinking (450.5)

zung 'jug (yuga-naddha): unity (428.2)

zungs 'jug gi sku: body of unity (456.4)

zor yang ba: light in weight (437.6)
'a 'thas pa: solid thereness (460.4)
'al 'ol = 'al le 'ol le: play [of light], as e.g., how things seem at dusk 458.5
'og sgo khams gsum rol ba'i man ngag: preceptual advice about the lower door three spheres of sport (470.1)
yang dag pa'i ye shes: perfect transcendental wisdom (446.5)
yangs cham me: an utter vastness (480.4)
yid la gsal snang shar ba: a clear picture in the mind (445.3)
yin lugs its mode of being
ye grol gdod ma'i gnas lugs: the state of primordial freedom which is the way things really are (481.2)
ye stong chen po: great primordial emptiness (480.5)
rag pa'i gsal snang: rough, clear appearance
rang gar/ga ba: usual (431.4)
ran gi rig rtsal: working of one's own innate knowledge (446.3).
rang snang ris med gsal stong: appearing, indifferentiable clarity-emptiness (462.6)
rang snang ris med sgyu ma lta bu'i ye shes: self-appearing, indifferentiable, illusion-like transcendental wisdom (459.2)
rang snang: self-appearance, a [mere] show, appear as they are/just come up (442.3, 459.2, 462.5)
rang gzhan snang grags kyi chos: phenomena characterized as appearance of self and other (439.2)
rang bzhin lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes: fundamental real simultaneously arisen wisdom (474.2)
rang rig (cp. sva-samvedanā): self-knowing

rang gsal gdab: self-visualization, reflexive clear strike (489.3)

rig ge (from rig pa) (490.2)

rig stong rjen pa'i ye shes: the primordial wisdom that is an openness to awareness-emptiness

rig 'dzin bzhi: four knowledge apprehensions (478.3)

rig pa dang sang nge ba: pure awareness and transparency

rig pa: pure awareness

re ltos ling skyur gyis: confident expectation (429.2)

re mos: (=brje len exchange and return) a state in which one thing leads inexorably to its opposite (431.1)

ro gcig tu 'dres pa'i sems gsal stong bde ba'i cha: the aspect which is the mixing together in one taste of mind-clarity emptiness and bliss (442.4)

lag len du thebs pa: to put into practice

lam me ba: intense (448.6)

blo 'das kyi dgongs pa car phog: a sudden inconceivable stroke of the mind (489.6)

rlung ro: dead energy-wind (428.6)

sham sham: ever lower (434.6)

shing rta: [saints who are like] chariots (428.3)

sang nge ba: immaculate (481.1)

sang seng/sang ge seng ge: glare, frame of white light e.g., in a doorway or window (458.4)

sal le ba: vibrant (448.6)

sal le bar snang: radiance shines forth (479.3)
sing nge : a radiance (480.3)

sel le wel le (cp. gsal le ba) ye re : finally radiant and vibrant (477.1)

sems skyil : mind posture (452.2)

sems rnal du phab : to let the mind settle down (428.6)

sems snang med : mind free of appearances

so khad gap; so : is a space, the ground something occupies, khad a dimension or time space (455.5; 459.6; 482.1)

so mar tsen gyis 'jog : settle down fresh and unwavering (459.4)

gsal rjen ne ba : the clear openness aspect

gsal brtan gyi nyams : firm and clear experience /clarity and stability of experience (440.3)

gsal brten gyi myöng ba : steady clear experience (449.1)

gsal stong 'dzin med : non-grasping clarity-emptiness (461.5)

gsal stong 'dzin med du rjen sang gis 'char ba : clarity emptiness dawns in its openness without any [subject-object] grasping

gsal stong rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes : clarity emptiness non-conceptual wisdom (489.5)

gsal dwangs kyi nyams : authentic experience of luminous clarity (479.3)

bsal bzhag med pa : without stopping or producing [any thought] (461.1)

had de : blank receptiveness (480.3)

lhag lhag : intensifier of lhag ge ba clear manifest (not shortened form of lhag ge lhog ge)
*Partial Glossary of Words and Phrases*

**lhan ne** (= lhang nge or lham me) as in *lhan ne gnas*: luminous state (479.5)

**lhan skyes kyi ye shes bde stong**: simultaneous wisdom bliss emptiness (489.2)

**lha'! gsal snang and nga rgyal sbral ba'i ting nge 'dzin**: meditative stabilization with combined clear appearance of and pride in being the deity (448.5)

**lhod gyis glod pa**: relaxing more and more; letting go by relaxing