LION’S GAZE

A commentary on
Tsig Sum Nedek

By
Venerable Khchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche
and
Venerable Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche

Translated from the Tibetan by Sarah Harding
Edited by Joan Kaye
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A commentary by
the Venerable Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche
and the Venerable Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche
on The Special Teaching of the Wise and Glorious Sovereign by
Patrul Rinpoche and The Three Words that Strike the Crucial Point
by Vidyadhara Garab Dorje

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Lion’s Gaze
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   The Venerable Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche

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THE TEACHERS

Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche
The Venerable Lama Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche was born on the eighth day of the fourth month of the Tibetan lunar calendar in 1941. On the morning of his birth a small snow fell with the flakes in the shape of lotus petals. Among his ancestors were many great scholars, practitioners and treasure revealers. One of his ancestors, Pang Jetsen Tron, was a student of Padmasambhava and was the personal protector of King Trisong Deutsen. Another ancestor in the twelfth century, Pang Lodro Tenpa, was the poetry teacher of Longchenpa.

He was raised in the village of Joephu in the Dhoshul region of Khampa in eastern Tibet near the sacred mountain Jawo Zegyal. The family was semi-nomadic, living in the village during the winter and moving with the herds to high mountain pastures where they lived in yak hair tents during the summers. The monastery for the Dhoshul region was called Gochen and his father’s family had the hereditary responsibility for administration of the business affairs of the monastery. His grandfather had been both administrator and chantmaster in charge of the ritual ceremonies.

Beginning education at age four, his father taught him to read. At age six he started learning the chants and ritual ceremonies. At age seven he started studying at the monastery
and began *ngon drol* practice. Later that year he went on his first retreat for one month.

At the age of twelve he went to Riwoche monastery which was one of the oldest and largest monastic institutes in eastern Tibet. Here he was trained to become the next abbot at Gochen. He completed his studies just as the Chinese invasion of Tibet reached that area.

In 1960 he and his family were forced into exile. They left in the middle of winter and were captured and escaped three times during the journey. His sisters died during the escape and his mother died shortly after reaching India. He and his father and younger brother lived in refugee camps in India. He was eventually appointed to teach at Sanskrit University in Varanasi and was also a founding member of the Institute for Tibetan Higher Studies, where he was head of the Department of Nyingmapa Studies.

In 1980 he made his first trip to America. In 1984 he moved to New York to work closely with H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche, head of the Nyingmapa lineage. In 1985 he founded the Dharma Samudra Publishing Company and has subsequently published a Tibetan edition in eleven volumes of the termas of Tsasum Lingpa. These teachings were held at Gochen monastery, which was founded by Tsasum Lingpa. After the Tibetan diaspora he searched through the refugee communities in India, Nepal, and Sikkim to locate and assemble these texts.

In 1988 he and his brother, Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche, founded the Padmasambhava Buddhist Center, which is incorporated as a nonprofit religious organization. The Padmasambhava Buddhist Center now has chapters in several cities in the United States, as well as in Puerto Rico and in Moscow, Russia. The primary centers are in New York City and
at Padma Samye Ling in Delaware County, New York, where a retreat and study center is being built. He has taught in Tibet, India, Nepal, England, France, Belgium, Australia, Canada, Russia, Puerto Rico, and throughout the United States.

Khenchen Palden is the author of six works in the Tibetan language. These include a book of poetry titled *Ornamentation for the Public Ear*, a grammar text called *Explanation of Tibetan Grammar*; two works dealing with philosophy, *Clearly Establishing the Buddha and His Teachings as Without Error through Clear Reasoning*, and *The Essential and Profound Meaning of Madhyamika*; a work on logic, Madhyamika, and tantra entitled *The Flaming Light of the Sun and the Moon*; and finally, a history book called *The History and Life Stories of the Masters of the Late School of Tibetan Buddhism*, dealing with the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries.

His works in English include *The Light of the Dharma: The Prajnaparamita, The Six Perfections* by Sky Dancer Press; a commentary on the Heart Sutra entitled *Ceaseless Echoes of the Great Silence*, by Sky Dancer Press, and *The Door To Inconceivable Wisdom and Compassion*, Sky Dancer Press. He is currently at work on commentaries on dream yoga and ngon dro practice titled *The Dark Red Amulet*. He is also completing an autobiography. His book *The Flaming Light of the Sun and the Moon* is currently being translated by the Nalanda Translation Committee in Boulder, Colorado. *The Light of the Dharma* and *The Prajnaparamita, The Six Perfections* have been translated into Spanish and are currently being translated into Russian.

He has built a monastic university on a piece of land near the Deer Park in Sarnath, India. He maintains a travel schedule that includes yearly stops at each of the Padmasambhava Buddhist centers, including trips to India, Puerto Rico, and Russia.
Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche

The venerable Lama Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche was born in the Dhoshul region of Kham in eastern Tibet on June 10, 1950. Soon after his birth, three head lamas from Jadcag monastery, a large monastery three days’ travel north of his village, came to his home and recognized him as the reincarnation of Khenpo Sherab Khyentse. Khenpo Sherab Khyentse, who had been the former head abbot lama at Gochen monastery, was a renowned scholar and practitioner who lived much of his life in retreat.

Beginning his schooling at the age of five, he entered Gochen monastery. His studies were interrupted by the Chinese invasion and his family’s escape to India. In India his father and brother continued his education until he entered the Nyingmapa Monastic School of northern India, where he studied until 1967. He then entered Sanskrit University in Varanasi where he received his B.A. degree in 1975. He also attended Nyingmapa University in West Bengal, where he received another B.A. and an M.A. in 1977.

In 1978 he was invested with the title Khenpo by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche. He was later appointed head abbot of the Department of Dharma Studies at the Wishfulfilling Institute in Kathmandu, Nepal, where he taught poetry, grammar, philosophy, and psychology.

In 1980 he made his first trip to the United States. In 1981 he went to Paris, France at the request of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche where he assumed the responsibilities of abbot of the Dorje Nyingpo Center. In 1982 he was called back to New York to work with H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche at the Yeshe Nyingpo center. He worked at this center until the death of Dudjom Rinpoche in 1987.

In 1988 he and his brother founded the Padmasambhava Buddhist Center. Since that time he has served as spiritual
director at the various Padmasambhava centers. He maintains an active travel schedule with his brother and often serves as translator for teachings given by Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche. He has taught in Nepal, India, France, Canada, Puerto Rico, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Russia, and throughout the United States.

He has written two books of poetry: *Ceaseless Waves of Devotion* and *Special Praises and Devotional Breezes to the Accomplished Masters of Tibet*. The latter title deals with the twenty-five original students of Padmasambhava. He has also completed a two-volume cultural and religious history of Tibet entitled *Gratitude for and Commemorations to the Early Masters and Dharma Patrons of Tibet*, which was encouraged and appreciated by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche. This covers the fifth to ninth centuries and relates how Buddhism came to Tibet. It includes the life stories of the translators and early masters, the politics of the kings, and lists of the translations and composed texts from this period.

THE TEACHING

The Rinpoches gave the *Lion’s Gaze, The Clear Light Great Completion*, a teaching on the core eighth century esoteric instruction called *The Three Words that Strike the Crucial Point* by Vidyadhara Garab Dorje, and the eighteenth century commentary of Patrul Rinpoche, *The Special Teaching of the Wise and Glorious Sovereign*. The essence of dzogchen, The Clear Light Great Perfection, was very carefully presented by the Rinpoches.

THE PLACE

*Lion’s Gaze* was the first teaching in summer retreat at Padma Samye Ling in the peaceful mountains of upstate New York.
The dzogchen teaching of the Clear Light Great Perfection, the teachers, and the beautiful site were unforgettable. We sat under a canopy and an open sky in a simple and beautiful setting. The lamas gave the following insights concerning mind’s nature with its unfolding realizations.

THE TIME
The original eighth-century teaching was given at Samye in Tibet. The Rinpoches gave this teaching in July, 1991 at the first summer retreat in Padma Samye Ling. This Samye retreat was part vision, part reality of the Venerable Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche and the Venerable Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche.

THE ENTOURAGE
About 50 or 60 of us assembled for this first summer retreat to be held at Padma Samye Ling. We came from all parts of the United States and Puerto Rico and knew it to be special.

Within my capacity I transcribed and edited the teachings following the order in which the Rinpoches gave them. It was a great gift to immerse myself in such wisdom, which transcends specific times and places. However minute my understanding, I remain very grateful. The Rinpoches’ teachings exhibit the spiritual peak of Tibetan Buddhism. As more realized works become available through Tibetan Buddhism and Nyingma heritage, the world at large, the family of nations and individual practitioners all benefit. Because of the dedication of Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche and Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche, and other spiritual beings, the world’s treasure trove is enriched and broadened.

The Tibetan text is also included for those able to appreciate this spiritual language. The English has an accurate
line-by-line translation by Sarah Harding, accompanying the commentary. The dzogchen Tibetan-English glossary also is extremely useful. The Rinpoches explain crucial Tibetan subtleties, such as *rigpa*, *tsal*, *zangthalle*. These three commentaries and the original Tibetan guide us.

Dzogchen is a perfect antidote to the ills of our degenerate time. Rising above all sectarianism and partialities, dzogchen includes but subsumes psychology, philosophy, and theory. Through techniques using direct experience as a key practice of enlightened mind, dzogchen integrates reasoned thoughts regarding suffering and nirvana, and then transcends them in direct awareness. There is difficulty expressing in words gratitude for such teachings. The larger experience is direct and startling. Abiding insight seems a better position to uphold, given the frequent admonition to still mind’s chatter. We allude to the power of mantra, however. Given that repetitive, mostly samsaric, memes, complaints, and advertisements govern most daily thoughts and activities anyway, mantric syllables such as *Phat*, applied discreetly and repeated in awareness, influence our deep unconscious behavior in ways we are only beginning to comprehend. Dzogchen techniques are very skillful. The Rinpoches tell us to relax; we don’t need to re-invent the wheel. We can make life more pleasant for ourselves and others by maintaining a pristine awareness in everyday conduct that includes the six perfections. May whatever merit that accrues from these Dharma treasures given by the Rinpoches bring happiness and enlightenment, and may pure teachings spread and bring peace and light.

Special thanks to Sarah Harding for her impeccable translations, Ron Wagner for his photography of the lamas, and Judith Cooper for design and layout. A special thanks to a dear friend, William Hinman, who has tirelessly worked on
behalf of the Padmasambhava Buddhist Center in so many projects, including proofreading this text. Thanks to my sister-friend, Sharon Raddock, and of course a very special thanks to Jack, my husband. Thanks to all the members of the Sangha who have been so warm and caring, to Ed Bokert, and to Pierre Donnegro who helped me through the computer maze.

Joan Kaye

Pema Choe Dron
PART I
LION'S GAZE

The Clear Light Great Completion

by the Venerable Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche
Translated by Sarah Harding

Free in basic ground—dharmakaya—phenomenal existence is original Buddha.
Free in itself—sambhogakaya—spontaneously present, effortless Dharma.
Free as it arises—nirmanakaya—unobstructed great Sangha.
Naturally occurring wisdom—trikaya—sovereign object of refuge.

The teacher is the most excellent teacher: Buddha Shakyamuni Bhagavan Shri Dharmakaya Samantabhadra.

The place is the most excellent place. Akanistha Dharmadhatu, the pureland without size or direction.

The teaching is the most excellent teaching; the great song of the unsuppressible vibration (nada) of sixty-four hundred thousand tantras of the Natural Great Completion, the all-pervasive teaching which is free of elaborations of all concepts that characterize discursive dualistic names, words, and sounds.

The entourage is the most excellent entourage: the unimaginable entourage of five buddha families and so on—the entourage that is created out of the natural appearance of spontaneously present great wisdom.
The time is the most excellent time: not the time of the three times divided into many categories by dualistic thought, but the time of the primordially pure extent of the fourth time of transference and clear light in equality.

In that time, the great, pervasive, unimpeded radiance of intrinsic awareness that is free of all signs of elaborations, the deep and bright nondual wisdom perspective of the victorious ones, proclaims fully the utmost pinnacle of all the vehicles: Clear Light Great Completion. That which is being taught eternally in the unimaginable, unthinkable time that is not the time of the three times spread in the human world as follows:

The spread of the Clear Light Great Completion in our world

About fifty years after the most excellent teacher Buddha Shakyamuni demonstrated passing into transcendence, (there appeared) in the western land of Uddiyana the supreme emanation, the Awareness-Holder Garab Dorje. After obtaining the supreme empowerment of Complete Great Intrinsic Awareness Energy in the Lineage of the Enlightened Intention of the Victorious Ones that is fully empowered as the enlightened intention of the sovereign dharmakaya Samantabhadra, he opened the door of the sacred treasures, the secret treasury of sixty-four hundred thousand tantras of the Great Completion. This became the first legacy, the chariot of the Great Completion.

Through very secret means he imparted the combined essence (tshangs sprugs) of the words, meanings, and esoteric instructions of the Natural Great Completion to the great pandit Master Manjushrimitra, protegé of Lord Manjushri, and it was the legacy.

The great pandit Master Manjushrimitra totally and completely imparted the essence of the word and meaning lineage esoteric instruction of the Great Completion in one
single lineage to the great Master Shri Singha, protegé of Lord Avalokitesvara, and it was the legacy.

Then Amitabha, Lord of the western pureland of Sukhavati, and the Buddha Shakyamuni himself, in order to turn the dharma wheel of the Secret Mantra Vajrayana, manifested here in the miraculous birth of the Great Master Awareness-Holder, the Second Buddha, Padmasambhava. To him and to the five hundred great pandits of India, principal among whom were Vimalamitra and Jnana Sutra, master of the stainless light body, were given the legacy of the tantras, transmissions, and esoteric instructions of Clear Light Great Completion.

The spread of the Great Completion in Tibet

This is how the great mystery, Clear Light Great Completion, spread in the snowy fastness of Tibet. Generally, the dawn of the first spreading in Tibet of the buddhadharma, the inner teachings, [was during the time of] the twenty-eighth Tibetan king, Lha Totori, who was an emanation of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra. The sacred dharma began in Lha Totori’s long range perspective. Then in the thirty-second reign, the great dharma king, Songtsen Gampo, an emanation of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, built the main “extremity-taming” temples\(^1\), principle of which were in Lhasa and Tradruk, as well as 108 temples to tame [the land]. He also introduced the system of Tibetan letters and translated the sutras and tantras of Avalokitesvara. From Nepal and China he

\(^1\) The landscape of Tibet was said to reveal the shape of a huge old demoness lying down. In order to pin her down and gain control over the land, four “extremity-taming” temples were built by Songsten Gampo on her shoulders and hips. They are: on the left side Tradruk (gyon ru khra’brug), on the right side Tsangdram (gyas ru gisang ’gram) at the top Katsal (dbu ru bka’ tshal) and at the bottom Drumpagyang (ru lag grum pa rgyang), corresponding to the areas called Bar, U, Tsang, and Ru.
imported two exceptionally sublime statues of our Teacher, [Lord Buddha], and so on; in short, Songtsen Gampo introduced the great tradition of the sacred Dharma [to Tibet].

Five successions later, in the thirty-seventh reign, the great dharma king Trisong Deutsen, an emanation of the bodhisattva, mahasattva Manjushri, invited the great abbot Shantirakshita, the regent of Shakyamuni, the most learned of all the scholars of the glorious Nalanda University and an emanation of the bodhisattva Vajrapani, Lord of Mysteries. And he invited the one who became the awareness-holder of immortal life through achieving the great empowerment of the energy of intrinsic awareness internally; the one who, here in these three realms of existence, pulverized to dust the host of obstructing arrogant forces of delusion that cling to the notion of a self with his vajra of equal awareness-emptiness; the Second Buddha, the Lake-born Vajra. All the dark forces of Tibet, both human and non-human, who cling to the notion of self were finished off, and not even a hoof print of them remained, so blessed was the land of snows. The spontaneously present glorious temple of Great Samye with three architectural designs in both the outer structure and inner contents was constructed. The Abbot [Shantirakshita] and the Master [Padmasambhava] consecrated it, causing the wisdom beings to actually enter it.

This great dharma king, Trisong Deutsen, fully perfected in Tibet the sutric and mantric [systems] which contain the nine successive vehicles of the buddhadharma. He invited Pandits from India, Singhala [Sri Lanka], Islam [kha che], Drusha\(^2\), China, and Liyul [Khotan], each more amazing than the next. The Word of the Buddha Shakyamuni was [found to be] impeccable. The precious Buddhadharma in its perfect

\(^2\) bru sha, a country northwest of Tibet.
entirety: the foundation of the path, which is the Shravakaya-nya; the main approach of the path, which is the sutra mahayana; and the direct path, which is the mahayana secret mantra, especially the direct path of the great mystery by which one can become enlightened in one body in one life, the sacred teaching of the Great Completion, were translated into Tibetan, checked, and verified. As for the meaning of those [teachings], the insight of listening eliminated any misunderstanding of the words, the insight of contemplation eliminated the misunderstandings concerning the meaning, and the insight of meditation established actual experience. [The aspects of] listening, contemplation, and meditation [in Tibet] were unrivaled, surpassing even the noble country of India before it, and the complete teachings of the victorious ones spread far and wide. For example, of the scholars associated with the great dharma establishment of the glorious Samye Temple, there were the 108 great translators who checked and edited, and the 1008 apprentice translators. Examples of the accomplished practitioners were the eighty great siddhas of Yerpa, the twenty-five subjects [of Padmasambhava], the thirty-five realized ones (rtags ldan pa) of Yangdzong, the fifty mantra masters (sngags pa) of Sheltrak, the twenty-seven great highly endowed noble lady siddhas (majos), twenty-five yoginis, and so on. All the mountains and valleys of the snowy land of Tibet became filled with learned and accomplished practitioners.

Then, at that time, the peak of the vehicles, Clear Light Great Completion, was translated, checked, and verified. And at the same time the women and men who were learned and accomplished were all practitioners of that Great Completion.

Furthermore, there were three ways that the sacred teaching of Great Completion spread from India to Tibet: from Padmasambhava, the Second Buddha; from Vimalamitra,
principal of the 500 great pandits; and from Vairocana, the chief of the translators. These three alone disseminated the Great Completion.

The lineage of this sacred teaching: Clear Light Great Completion:

Dharmakaya Samantabhadra, the sixth [of the buddha families], Great Vajradhara, Glorious Vajrasattva, Awareness-Holder Garab Dorje, Master Manjushrimitra, then from Awareness-Holder Sri-Singha to the Great Master of Uddiyana, Padmasambhava, Great Pandit Vimilamitra, Great Translator Vairocana, Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal, Nyangben Sangye Yeshe, Nupchen Sangye Yeshe to Aro Yeshe Jungne, from Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo, and so forth, to Awareness-Holder Kumara, Omiscient Longchen Rabjam, Omniscient Jigme Lingpa, Dza Trama Drupchen, Dza Patrul Rinpoche and to Jamgön Mipam Rinpoche. That is one lineage.

Again, it was transmitted through Omniscient Jigme Lingpa and so on, to Dza Trama Drupchen, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, Jamgön Mipam Rinpoche, and then Mipam Rinpoche, Khenchhen Kunzang Palden, Katok Khenpo Ngakchung, then Kewang Akshu, or Tenzin Drakpa, to the humble Nyingma Khenpo, Palden Sherab.

As well, it was transmitted from Khenchhen Kunzang Palden to Kanu Lama Rinpoche Tendzin Gyaltsen and from him to the humble Khenpo Palden Sherab.

Yet again, it traces from Mipam Rinpoche to Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche Pema Ösal Söngak Lingpa, to Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche Pema Garwang Lodrö Thaye, to Jamgön Mipam Rinpoche and then to Jedrung Rinpoche Jampa Jungne, to the Refuge Lord Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje, and then to the Nyingma Khenpo Palden Sherab and Khenpo Tulku Tsewang Döngyal. This rough account of the
transmission lineage is presented as an inspiration for confidence.

Virtue!

The realization of the great dzogchen sun,
May it quickly arise in myself and others like me.
May all have confidence in the auspicious interdependent arising of the cause and effect of actions.
May all living beings be nourished by the radiating lights of joy and happiness of nirvana.

In upstate New York on the east coast of America in glorious Padma Samye Ling where everyone is enjoying the summer festival, I, the Nyingma Khenpo, Palden Sherab, wrote this on August 24, 1996.
LION’S GAZE
The Clear Light Great Completion

by the Venerable Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche

སོགས་སྤྲུལ་ཞིང་།
སྒྲུབ་པ་སོགས་སྤྲུལ་ཞིང་།
བོད་བོད་སྐད་པ་དོན་གྱུར་་འགྱུར་མོ་
བསྡུ་སྦྱོད་སྤྲུལ་ཞིང་།

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བོད་བོད་སྐད་པ་དོན་གྱུར་་འགྱུར་མོ་
བསྡུ་སྦྱོད་སྤྲུལ་ཞིང་།

ལོངས་གཏོང་ཞིང་།
ཅེས་བཅུ་སྤྲུལ་ཞིང་།
བོད་བོད་སྐད་པ་དོན་གྱུར་་འགྱུར་མོ་
བསྡུ་སྦྱོད་སྤྲུལ་ཞིང་།

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བོད་ལྡན་གཉིས་པའི་ཆེན་པོའི་བཟོ་བཟོ་ཆེན་པོ་ག་མཐོང་།

ལོག་ཤེས་བཟོ་བཟོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཟོ་བཟོ་ལོག་ཤེས་བཟོ་བཟོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཟོ་བཟོ་ལོག་ཤེས་

དེ་ཤེས་པའི་ཆེན་པོའི་བཟོ་བཟོ་ཆེན་པོ་ག་མཐོང་།

lama's gaze
INTRODUCTION
The Clear Light Great Completion
by Joan Kaye

Dzogchen is the supreme essence teaching of Buddha Shakyamuni. In Sanskrit it is called atiyoga or mahasandhi. Of the nine yogas this ninth is the highest yoga, the vehicle that completes. Dzogchen (rdzogs chen) is the Tibetan word meaning great completeness or great perfection.

No grasping
Dzogchen at first may seem difficult to grasp, but this is because it isn’t graspable in the same way as an intellectual concept. One cannot grasp, because awareness is immediate direct experience. Relaxed and spontaneously open, our awareness is fluid and embracing. This is quite a different experience from a concept. Grasping is attachment, and mind likes to cling to thoughts. All thoughts are dualistic by their very nature. For example if we say “this is good,” we infer that some other thing is not good, and in this way concepts are dualistic in their nature.

Empty aspect of mind
Since mind governs our experience, it becomes important to know the qualities of our mind. Mind is a great emptiness. One quality of mind is that like a mirror, it reflects and reveals. Like light, it sparkles or radiates in every direction. The nature
of mind is clarity, brightness and luminous awareness. The foundation of our mind is already naturally enlightened.

Rigpa

When mind reveals its brightness and clarity, the energy of awareness arises. This is rigpa. Relaxing in this play of aware energy, our comprehension enlarges and our compassion naturally increases. Awareness in pure and total presence is called rigpa. Rigpa is a special word in dzogchen. It implies a dynamic yet relaxed awakening within us radiating in and out as intelligent wisdom energy.

Atiyoga or dzogchen is the highest yoga because nothing is missing. Awareness underlies all our reflections. Self-born awareness is naturally present, and in this ground within is pure unifying presence preceding all dualities. Awareness (rigpa) completes without effort and arises spontaneously. It is unceasing and unbounded. It is nonmaterial; its nature of being is totally transparent. Transparent awareness (zang thal le) penetrates directly with utter clarity unencumbered by form and concepts. Direct experience is transparent in this way. Mind’s transparent immediacy, as its natural state, is unitive, intuitive and nondual. This awakened awareness is rigpa.

The purpose of practice

There is immeasurable benefit in realizing our own true nature. Hardship is nonexistent because our inner unborn unceasing spontaneity is joyful and at ease. Such supreme qualities make dzogchen the Clear Light Great Completion.
THE PRACTICE OF THE VIEW, MEDITATION AND CONDUCT

The View

This view is called "below none" (og-min). Because it rises above all partiality, atiyoga is the peak. Great equanimity is impartial. The feeling is direct joy. Beyond the confines of subject and object, this dzogchen view, below none, is very vast. Nothing is missing. The great master, Guru Padmasambhava called it a twofold completion of insightful wisdom (shes rab) and skillful means (thabs), a culmination of ordinary experience and perfection of awareness.

This need not be seen as remote, difficult, and beyond our immediate capability. Our view is what we see, envision, and experience. It is not arcane. It is the source of our very being. Appreciating the preciousness of life gives meaning to being human. This is basically important to us all and is self-liberating.

Self-liberation is primal liberation. The teachings say the practice is to recognize pure awareness as primal liberation, understand it, and maintain it. Introduction to such understanding through an enlightened lineage is a great gift. Ability to maintain it is an incredible treasure, a wish-fulfilling jewel. A ripened continuous insight gives us the steadiness and courage of a lion's gaze. Padmasambhava said that when a stick is thrown to a lion, the lion gazes steadily at the source, the thrower. A dog's gaze follows the object, the stick. Similarly, our source of experience is our own mind. The stick is only the phenomena. We need to look at our mind, the source of the emotion. An emotion like anger represents the stick. The source hurling that emotion is our mind. It is mind that projects. A wise and clear mind experiences something

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1 See p. 89, Patrul Rinpoche; and p. 145, Khenpo Palden commentaries on Phat syllable within the text.
far more luminous and transparent. Conduct is caring. Such dynamic inner and outer relationship informs and purifies our vision. Dzogchen turns our gaze inward toward the source of experience, which is mind. Our own direct irrefutable experience is "certainty wisdom." Buddhists also call this vajra pride. Vajra pride is not ego mind, but an indestructible diamond luminous wisdom view (vajra). Pristine mind is our lion’s gaze. This view is dzogchen.

The View as Meditation

Patrul Rinpoche in The Special Teaching of the Wise and Glorious Sovereign, differentiates between the words, namtog (rnam rtog), and yeshe, (ye shes). Discursive thought is namtog. Pristine wisdom is yeshe. Namtog means preconceived ideas, mental constructions and conceptual understanding divided into subject and object. Its tendency is to artificially divide reality through labeling. The Sanskrit word is vikalpa.

Yeshe (Skt. jñāna) means exalted, primordial wisdom. It is unitary, authentic, genuine, spiritual, ever-fresh, pristine, aware wakefulness. Yeshe implies inner illumination, gnosis, understanding in peak experience, in short an intuitive true knowledge. This distinction is basic in dzogchen and in this core teaching called Lion’s Gaze. Yeshe points out the limitless view.

Our experience mirrors our view. View is all important. Meditation and subsequent conduct depend on our view. Our conduct is the flow of direct experience. A vast view is not beyond our ability. Direct recognition, a certainty born from direct experience, is the meditation. Its mainstay is courage and confidence. Dzogchen calls this recognition a state of the “meeting of the mother and child clear light.” It is the union of wisdom and skillful means, sherab and thab. The “mother clear light state” is basic ground empty luminous awareness. The mother is antecedent to the child. The ‘child clear light
state” is introduced through awareness. The mother clear light state is our wisdom aspect. The child clear light state is our skillful means aspect. Realization as the “mother and child clear light” is the union of wisdom and skillful means. Wisdom, sherab, and skillful means, thab, are the twofold completion. Absolute reality is the wisdom of emptiness. The relative reality of lovingkindness, compassion and bliss coemergent with absolute reality of emptiness is the union of emptiness and bliss, and the union of wisdom and compassion. This is the view. Padmasambhava said the great nonmeditation is the meditation. Direct introduction, recognition and maintainance is the dzogchen conduct.

Self-born awareness as our basic nature is disturbed constantly by mundane conceptions and wild untamed mind. Mundane thought is very limited by ego. Ego is attachment. This local aspect of our mind is full of dualities and partialities, whereas vast mind is completely luminous. Mundane vision and the many thoughts of relative mind make rules, judgments and concepts constantly, and this process of ordering and priorities creates boundaries which block access into a true reality state. We limit the limitless. If we rest mind in great equanimity, undisturbed by thoughts that naturally arise, there appears from within a clarity and peace. It is spontaneously joyful and peaceful.

The dzogchen view of dynamic wholeness is vast and open as the sky. This process is not limited to man or woman, rich or poor, young or old. Spaciousness is impartial and limitless. One remains at ease (lhod), and in a state of eveness, (phyam), the state of great equanimity. The crucial point is realizing primordial awakening here and now. We create acceptance and rejection in our own mind. Mundane concepts delude. They are like silk threads trapping the silkworm. Dualities trap us this same way, and keep us from direct
experience and dynamic wholeness. The immanent dzogchen view of vast wholeness removes binding conceptual thoughts.

From birth until the present, our self-created judgments of both good and bad are continuous. One concept follows another. We sink into an ocean of hope and fear. These illusions disturb our true natural reality state, and keep us from great bliss. Like an itchy leper, continuously scratching, the movement of temporary thoughts prevents breakthrough. Our emotions keep us stumbling forward, struggling on. We never fully realize full wakefulness, yeshe. Even in our dreams, habitual patterns struggle with daytime phenomena. Struggle disturbs the natural ground of mind. As we cling to our delusions, confusion and more emotional problems arise. Arguments and suicidal self-destructive tendencies of all kinds follow, which produce yet more clinging. Individuals and nations exhibit similar behavior.

We can practice mindfulness. Each of us must find our own true natural path. We can obtain assistance from others. However, it is our own first-hand direct experience that counts.

In order to develop certainty wisdom as personal experience, we must first understand the vast dzogchen view concerning the true nature of mind. Secondly, in meditation we experience this directly. In this way our conduct follows wisely. All the great dzogchen realized beings such as Buddha Shakyamuni and Guru Padmasambhava in a continuous lineage down to the present time gave this same teaching. Many students gained enlightenment too. This lineage is called the Golden Mountain and is uninterrupted.

However, without our own direct participation, lineage and teaching are not enough. We must apply the realizations given by Samantabhadra, Vajrasattva, Garab Dorje, Guru Padmasambhava, Yeshe Tsogyal, Longchenpa, Patrul
Rinpoche, and our present teachers directly after we receive
the teaching. This produces a result or fruit.

Dzogchen is free from all traditional systems and dogma.
It is free from the mundane view. It is spontaneous and direct.
It self-liberates. It is the ultimate view, purely natural. Utter
transparency of mind, (zang thal le) is open seeing that is
ineffable, (bjo dû med).

The Meditation

After hearing the teaching our process is to first intuit the
view, decide conclusively (kho thag bcad) to practice it, and then
maintain it (khyong ba). This does not require great study, nor
much money, nor an outer search. Spontaneous knowing is its
own reward, and insights are internal. From beginningless
time to now, our primary focus has been the external
observation of phenomena. Aware now in the state of pure
presence we say, “From today on, I will observe mind.”

Of the three aspects of being, body, speech, and mind, the
mind is the controller and the principal factor. Therefore we
ask, “What is this awareness? Where and how is my mind
drifting? What is the nature of mind?”

We realize when we search carefully that all our feelings
and emotions are dependent upon our mind. For example,
when we are happy, our mind feels relaxed and comfortable.
We know this experience directly as happiness. When our
mind is stressed and uncomfortable we suffer and feel
unpleasant. Happiness and suffering are created or reflected
from a mental state. Mind accepts, we feel easy. Mind rejects,
we struggle and experience difficulty. Mind creates both ease
and hardship.

Distinctions such as dirty and clean are both created in
mind through judgment. If mind judges something to be dirty,
we call it dirty. If mind considers something clean, we have a concept of cleanliness. Therefore, everything is created by one’s own mind. Mind is the creator. Percepts and concepts arise from this delusory state. Mind constantly creates all phenomena from a complicated set of criteria belonging to each person. Buddha Shakyamuni in his higher teachings called together all the bodhisattvas and all the lineage holders and told them, “This entire universe is nothing but mind.”

Our own experience and careful examination proves this through logic and personal investigation. Everything is mind. Mind creates, analyzes, and continues grasping what mind thinks. Reflections continue this pattern. When mind changes direction, perception changes. Buddha said everything is reflected from this mind. It isn’t necessary to take the word of Buddha. Logic and our own experience help us realize that everything we experience is the reflection of our own mind.

There are three understandings concerning mind. The first understanding is that everything is mind. The second understanding is knowing how to tame the tumultuous mind and recognize its innate empty nature. No major effort is required nor should we punish ourself. On the contrary, relax mind. See inwardly. Since mind is within each of us, we have direct contact. Third, understand and discover the essence of mind. Look inward and ask “Where is mind coming from? What is the source of our present mind? Where is mind now?” We can continue with questions concerning form such as “In what part of the body is it? Does mind have a shape, such as triangular, square, a circle, etc.? Does it have a color or size?” Meditating on the mind’s location, we can’t find any specific place. In its natural state, mind just dissolves. Neither is there shape or form.

From these three direct inner experiences one finds that mind is based on true natural emptiness since beginningless
time. There is no “place”, no “where” mind goes. Mind is always in its true natural state, having gone nowhere. When looking for the “I” or “that” all we find is emptiness in the mind. This realization is the great emptiness or great equanimity state.

_Buddhi_ in Sanskrit, the root of the word Buddha, means to awaken. This describes an experience, a dynamic process. The Tibetan word is _sangye_, (_sangs rgyas_) which can also mean “gone unfolded” likened to a dissipating darkness dawning to full light in an unfolding process of pure potential, a pure light of awakening-arising.

Mind’s nature is emptiness. This is not nothingness. Mind’s aspect is clarity. Upon investigating matter and its basic energy states, we find that nothing solidly exists, yet Mind’s (_sens nyid_)³ aspect is aware, empty, and clear—_rig, stong, gsal_. Clarity is the luminous aspect of mind like bright sunlight. Mind’s true natural state (_sens nyid_) according to dzogchen is unobscured clear self-born awareness wisdom. It is purely present. Of course in our external relative reality we see many things, such as a house, mountain, river or ocean. They all materially exist, yet according to dzogchen these are reflections of one’s own mind. It is said these strong habitual patterns of perceiving relative reality as substantial developed over many lifetimes. Phenomena appear solid to us, but all display of appearance and phenomena ultimately depends on our senses and consciousness.

Appearances are really our habitual conceptual patterns in relative reality. For example, in sleep we may dream. Our dreams seem real enough while they appear. We can see a house or a mountain. We believe the reality seen in the dream while we are dreaming. We are happy when good dreams

³ _Sens-nyid_ literally mind(ness) or suchness, thatness of mind.
happen, unhappy when bad dreams happen. Similarly, our waking thoughts and perceptions are just as insubstantial.

As we purify habitual patterns and remove our ignorance, primordial wisdom is revealed. We perceive the emptiness of phenomena. Then we understand relative reality. Everything is changed, and we see differently. Realized beings do not perceive things in quite the same way as we do. They understand what we see, but from their view of the ultimate state it is not quite the same. Theirs is the emanation of primordial vision.

In atiyoga, the clear light great perfection, this practice is effortless, not hard work. Do not force a rigid mind. Let your mind spontaneously relax. If your mind travels, remain unseparated from pure awareness. Awareness, rigpa, is the luminous emptiness of mind itself. This is the view. Maintain that state. That state contains the meditation, the conduct and the fruit.

The Conduct

Since everything is this manifestation and display of primordial wisdom, it is important to maintain mind in its natural state. Dzogchen view is open and unlimited. Therefore it is not a question of following a certain dogma. Continue to maintain vast equanimity and remain aware of this reality; this is both the practice and the conduct. This is a crucial point. Continue the practice day and night, all the time. This practice is the conduct. There are techniques to assist you, but the target is to maintain the pure nature. The dzogchen experience is to never be separate any time in any situation from primordial awareness. Mingle every moment with awareness.

Let us take a practical situation such as anger for example. When anger arises, don’t suppress it, but look directly at its nature as it arises. Anger isn’t solid. It’s fiery or
icy, it clutches and grabs. Our focus becomes very intense and narrowly clear. If you look at the nature of anger itself, rather than its contents (such as he did this, or why did I do that), you will see that its nature is impermanent. It comes and goes. It has causes and conditions, but basically it arises from the equanimity-emptiness state. Look directly in its face and it dissolves. Anger may again arise, but mind must return to its primordial natural state. Don’t follow the anger. Following anger is the delusion. The same principle holds true for attachment, jealousy, greed and all other emotions that obscure our bliss, wisdom, emptiness and compassion.

Of course we have many thoughts. From the clear light great perfection view, thoughts are okay. Thoughts are the emanation, manifestation, and display of awareness. Stay aware. Just don’t follow or cling to thoughts, which is delusion. The moment a thought arises\(^3\), liberate it in its own state. Although anger was used as an example, happiness is an equally good example. Ask yourself, where does this happiness spring from? As you relax, happiness too will subside into the true natural state. If suffering arises, ask yourself, where is my suffering? In relaxed awareness suffering too will subside into the true natural state of mind. Every activity of thought relies upon and reflects back to this primordial state. Go back to the source. Maintain awareness like the lion’s steady gaze. Then you are practicing great completeness, the Clear Light Great Perfection.

In summary, the inherent nature of mind is clear, luminous emptiness from beginningless time. It is ceaseless and unborn. Everything arises and manifests from this source, the ground emptiness. To rely on concepts and thoughts alone

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\(^3\) see also rang drol (self liberation) cer drol, ye drol and shar drol in Khenpo Palden and Khenpo Tsewang’s commentary.
is the partiality of our relative mind. The relative subset is only a part of the larger whole. Mingle great equanimity and vastness within awareness. It is always present, being our true nature. In the true natural, grasping and holding are non-existent. All the great realized beings tell us that everything is free, equal, open and vast, unlimited like the sky. Meditate and practice on this understanding by looking inwardly and observing your mind. Then maintain it. Don’t block thoughts. Rather, self-liberate them in that point-instant in time—like writing a letter in the water, like a snake uncoiling, like a thief entering an empty house.

First it is important to understand the profound yet sublime and subtle meaning of this view. Ease towards it with joyful effort. Once you gain this realization, continue. Mingle joyful effort. Few people gain realization immediately; most persons need continuity and practice.

The dzogchen view of great completeness, the Clear Light Great Perfection, is the highest teaching of Buddha Shakyamuni. It requires insight. Stay relaxed. Don’t be distracted.
DZOGCHEN LINEAGE
KUNZANG YABYUM, SAMANTABHADRA-SAMANTABHADRI,
THE ALL GOOD FATHER-MOTHER

Primal Lord, Changeless Light, Original Center of all Mandalas,
Possessor of Complete Knowledge and Absolute Awareness.
Homage to Kunzang Yabyum!
DORJE SEMPA, VAJRASATTVA, VAJRA HERO

Divine illusion of Clear Light and Absolute Awareness,
Blazing in the glory of perfect form and symmetry, Threefold Being,
spontaneously perfected Buddha. Homage to Dorje Sempa!
GARAB DORJE, VETALA SUKHA,
INDESTRUCTIBLE ECSTACY

Transcendent perfection of Wisdom and Means,
Manifestation of Complete Liberation and Absolute Awareness,
Supreme root and branch of creation. Homage to Garab Dorje!
JAMPAL SHENYEN, MANJUSHRIMITRA,
SWEET VOICED FRIEND

Winner of the Unsurpassable Achievement, Fountain of every wishfulfilling Word, he showered true teaching upon beings.
Homage to Jampal Shenyen!
SHRI SINGHA, THE LION

In the sky of potent loving understanding, as the Clear Light of the sun of Absolute Awareness, he banished the darkness of the ten directions. Homage to Shri Singha!
PADMA JUNGNE, PADMASAMBHAVA,
THE LOTUS BORN GURU

Miracle Buddha, Lotus Born, Vajra Being, unborn and undying,
he did the work of the buddhas of the three times.
Homage to Padma Jungne!
VIMALAMITRA

With the unsurpassable Light-Void of loving understanding, opening the page of the Lotus Word, he shattered the darkness of beings. Homage to Vimalamitra!
SHANTARAKSHITA, LAKE OF SERENITY

Reposing at the Lotus Feet of Manjushri Vira, honoring him as his supreme teacher, he received the breadth and depth of Dharma.

Homage to the Abbot Zhi wai tso!
YESHE TSOGYAL, OCEAN OF GNOSIS

Mother of the buddhas, Vajra Yogini, Mother of Variety, Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom. Happy, seductive and laughing, she is Padma’s consort. Homage to Yeshe Tsogyalma!
VAIROCHANA

At Yamalu and Liyul Changra he propitiated the Draknak Mopa concourse to gain the magical naming wisdom eye.

Homage to Vairochana!
TRISONG DEUTSEN

Discoverer of the Great Mandala of the Tenth Stage, with infinite omniscient compassionate energy and many magical devices, he protected his people. Homage to Trisong Deutsen!
LONGCHEN RABJAM, FREE SPACE ALL PERVADING

With total insight into the Mandala of Knowledge, bearing the wealth of the most precious sacred teaching, he spread the most profound Gong Ter. Homage to Longchen Rabjampa!
NAMDREN MAPHAM, MAITREYA,
THE IMMANENT BUDDHA OF LOVE

In the Galden Heaven the Buddha Sacred White Crest
bound the diadem to his head to confer
the highest empowerment as the Immanent Buddha.
Homage to the invincible leader Namdren Mapham!
JIGME LINGPA, FEARLESS ISLAND YOGIN

Caught by the lotus born Drimey Wozer, perfect in the art of atiyoga,
he spread the dharma of his Gong Ter to the ends of the earth.
Homage to Jigme Lingpa!
JIGDRAI YESHE DORJE, DUDJOM RINPOCHE

In a previous life, Nuden Dorje Tsal; in his next life Deshek Mopa Thayay; in this life Padmasambhava’s Regent, Druk Bon reincarnate. Homage to Jigdral Yeshe Dorje!
CHAPTER 1

DZOGCHEN LINEAGE

Khenpo Tsewang and I, Khenpo Palden, will explain the history and special meaning of the dzogchen or atiyoga lineage.

It is most important to properly understand this lineage before practicing the profound dzogchen. One needs both perfect pith instructions and lineage blessings. At the same time the student must be ready. The proper five understandings of the lineage are place, time, teacher, teaching and student.

The place of the teaching is Akanistha. This Sanskrit word means beyond the state of duality. The Tibetan word, og min, means below none.

The time of the teaching is beyond the three times of past, present, and future. It is beyond time. This teaching turns unceasingly in the pure realm of Dharmadhatu and is always present. It will never finish, disappear, or decrease. Dzogchen, being the primordial state, will remain forever.

The teacher is Buddha Samantabhadra, the Buddha of the Dharmakaya. The lineage includes Garab Dorje, Guru Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, Vairochana and many others.

Garab Dorje

The teaching came into this human world through Garab Dorje, who was the first human teacher to receive the total dzogchen empowerments and instructions. Garab Dorje still
reveals the authentic teaching to those connected with the practice today. According to the lineage, the first teacher is Buddha Samantabhadra, followed by Vajradhara, Vajrasattva, and then Garab Dorje in the human realm. In this way the history of the lineage is traced back from the first human teacher.

Garab Dorje (Skt. Prahevakajra) was born in Oddiyana about fifty years after the Buddha’s mahaparinirvana. His mother was a princess and a nun, so that he had no father. Because of the strange events concerning his birth he gained much attention. He had several names. One name, Yipe Dorje, means laughing indestructible one. Another, Zombie Sukhasiddhi (Ro-langs bde-ba dngos-grub), means he died but came back like a zombie; not a miserable zombie, but as an emanation or tulku (sprul-sku). Another one of his names is Happy Ashpit Deva, (Ro-langs thal-mdog) because his mother, being so ashamed, threw him into the ashes.

When he was young he told his mother that he wanted to talk to Vajrasattva, but his mother said that Vajrasattva was in the pure land and couldn’t be spoken to. Vajrasattva, however, did visit him from Oddiyana. Vajrasattva gave him great teachings, and Garab Dorje became an expert scholar. He received and transcribed 640,000 dzogchen tantras from Vajrasattva. Three dakinis assisted him by transcribing the teachings. This is how it came into the human world. The name, Victorious One, or One Who Beats the Drum of Victory, was given to him. According to one story, he meditated on a mountain for thirty-five years. This enlightened being had the skill for teaching the path of dzogchen meditation.

Garab Dorje passed the teachings to Manjushrimitra, (’jam-dpal bshes-gnyen). Manjushrimitra was a renowned realized master in Nalanda Monastic University. He had
visions of Garab Dorje. During one meditation Manjushri appeared and said, “Hello, O noble son. If you want enlightenment in this lifetime, go to Oddiyana in the western part of this land and see the nirmanakaya buddha, Garab Dorje.” Manjushrimitra followed these directions. He had many difficulties. When he asked, many people didn’t know of Garab Dorje. Finally he overcame his many hardships and met Garab Dorje on an island in midocean. The dzogchen texts say the hardships he encountered along the way were his own obscurations. Ultimately he purified his habitual patterns. Then Manjushrimitra, crying out in great yearning, appealed to Garab Dorje. In the center of the sky a light field appeared, and Garab Dorje stretched out his right hand to him. His form body appeared, and he gave this three-word teaching that we are now giving you, called the final legacy of Garab Dorje. Then Garab Dorje transformed into the wisdom rainbow body and disappeared into space, into mahaparanirvana. The entire dzogchen teachings poured through the crown chakra of Manjushrimitra and permeated his mind. He practiced fervently and became greatly realized.

This Three Words That Strike The Crucial Point teaching which we will give you was also given to Patrul Rinpoche by Garab Dorje. Patrul Rinpoche’s commentary fills in the details. Later, there were also three further testimonies to this legacy.

The Three Masters:
Guru Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Vairochana

Guru Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and Vairochana are the three renowned dzogchen founders. Vairochana was a Tibetan. All dzogchen teachings from Tibet come from these three masters. There were no other founding masters of dzogchen in Tibet before these three.
Guru Padmasambhava

Guru Padmasambhava was born about eight years after Buddha Shakyamuni’s mahaparanirvana. When he came to Tibet in the eighth century he said in his teachings, “I stayed in India three thousand years, and then I came to Tibet.” Two Tibetan years count as one year here. In Tibet, the waxing and waning moons count as two months; six months is a Tibetan year. He stayed in Tibet fifty-five years. He left Tibet with his own body in the transcendental wisdom rainbow body state. He is beyond birth and death and is a living buddha of the Copper Glory Mountain. There is a very popular prayer in Tibetan about this. We personally know that he is still a living buddha and has come back to Tibetans many times. He has guided not only Nyingmapa practitioners but also great masters from all the other schools. Again and again, directly and indirectly, he guided the great adepts of all schools through dreams and visions and led them to enlightenment. Their autobiographies attest that Guru Padmasambhava is active as a living buddha. This great adept from Urgyen, known as Padmasambhava or Pema Jungne, was most kind to Tibetans.

When Guru Padmasambhava came to Tibet in the eighth century, he gave this particular teaching to selected practitioners. Later, King Trisong Deutsen invited the great master, Vimalamitra to Tibet, and more dzogchen teachings were given. Vairochana was asked to go to India to gather more of these unique dzogchen teachings by Guru Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and King Trisong Deutsen. Vairochana and his friend, Tsengon Lekdrup (gtsan sngon legs grub) retrieved more dzogchen in India from the wisdom body of Srisingha and other living masters. They returned to Tibet and shared these teachings with King Trisong Deutsen and many Tibetan students. As a result dzogchen began to flourish in Tibet.
At first Guru Padmasambhava taught a few students very quietly and secretly. He didn’t teach in the palace or the capital. He chose a hermitage on the mountain’s peak. Those students received the teachings, practiced and reached enlightenment within their single lifetime. Then Guru Padmasambhava and Master Vimalamitra gave dzogchen teachings to many others, such as the eighty mahasiddhas in the Yerpa region, the twenty-seven great yoginis, and the seven from the Tsong region in the center of Tibet. They were taught primarily by Guru Padmasambhava. All attained the transcendental wisdom rainbow body, particularly the eighty mahasiddhas from the Yerpa region. It is said they all attained the rainbow body state at the same moment.

**Vimalamitra**

The great master Vimalamitra attained the great transference transcendental wisdom rainbow body. After staying in Tibet about twelve years, he went to a mountain in China called the Five-Peaked Mountain (ri vo rtse inga). Before he left, he promised King Trisong Deutsen to return every hundred years to refine and clarify the dzogchen teachings. As promised, many emanations of Vimalamitra return every century. Others also saw his wisdom body and received instructions and teachings. Vimalamitra has never died or disappeared and is still a living buddha, a living great siddha. His teachings are known as *Vima Nyingtik*, (bi ma snying tig). Three lineages merged together, and now are one lineage.

**Vairochana**

Vairochana was a very famous master and king of the translators. He also reached enlightenment in the transcendental wisdom rainbow body in his lifetime. He gave dzogchen teachings in many different areas in Tibet, even going far into eastern Tibet. He also stayed a few years in central Tibet.
These three masters traveled around giving many teachings. Guru Padmasambhava’s teachings became two different lineages. They exist to the present, the kama lineage and terma lineage. Vairochana’s teaching merged within the canonical or kama (bka’ ma) and the discovered dharma treasure or terma (gter ma) lineage. They are particularly famous in the longde (klong sde) section of dzogchen.

One of Vairochana’s foremost Longde students was Pang-gen Sangye Gonpo. He was also called Pang Mipam Gonpo as mentioned by the followers of Dorje Dampa. All the following masters reached the state of the rainbow body, one after another for seven generations. Pang-gen Sangye Gonpo’s disciple was Ngenlam Jangchub Gyeltser, a monk from Uru. He requested instructions from Pang Mipam Gonpo who told him to meditate rather than go home. He did that faithfully. His body vanished without a trace at the age of one-hundred seventy-two. His disciple was Zadam Rinchen-yik from upper Dokam. He requested teachings from Ngenlam Jangchub Gyeltser. Then he sat in meditation. At the age of one-hundred forty-four his body vanished. When Khugyur Selweichok from Yarlung Cho was fifty-seven years old, he received teachings from Zadam Rinchen-yik. His body vanished without a trace when he was one hundred and seventeen years old. These three realized masters vanished in the Wa Sense Cavern in their rainbow light bodies. Jangchub was the next disciple. He had the power to transform the four elements. His body also vanished. His disciple was Nyang Sherab Jungne who lived in the forest of Chimpu. His body vanished in the sky like a rainbow. His disciple was Master Bagom, the meditator of Ba. He was a lay person of great realization who could leave his body’s imprint in rock. When he was ninety-eight he passed away. At the cremation people saw a ball of light in the sky. His disciple was Dzeng Dharmabodhi. Master Bagom taught
Dzeng Dharmabodhi the *Vajra Bridge* esoteric instruction. This secret teaching is from an unbroken lineage. By understanding it one attains instantaneous enlightenment. The *Vajra Bridge* belongs to the *longde*, or spatial class, teachings of the Great Completion. This practice leads to the attainment of a light body in one lifetime. Dzeng Dharmabodhi received many other teachings as well. Dzeng’s powers were great, and he taught many men and women who themselves gained liberation. He had heeded master Bagom, and he comprehended the nature of space and appearances. Through understanding that all appearances are like dreams, he developed the certainty of nonmeditation. When he was one hundred and seventeen he passed away. From then on the oral lineage of the *Vajra Bridge* proliferated. These realized beings are known as the “seven chains of the vajra,” which began with Vairochana and the spatial class of the Great Completion.

Dzogchen teachings are as fresh today as they were during the time of Guru Padmasambhava. People practiced then and now. Today, not many practitioners reach the transcendental wisdom rainbow body, but rainbow light body states definitely occur even in this century. In the late nineteenth century, six or seven practitioners became realized and reached the state of the rainbow body. Recently in India, a deceased practitioner melted or dissolved his body to the size of two feet. We definitely heard this. These are signs and results of dzogchen practice. Dzogchen teaches a non-dualistic state of one’s own primordial nature, with nothing to reject or accept, that is pure from the beginning in the nature of a light body.

This is a brief history of the dzogchen lineage, its masters, and how the teaching came to Tibet.
CHAPTER 2

PRELIMINARY PRACTICES

All aspects of the Dharma are included in Buddha Shakyamuni's highest teaching, dzogchen. We will now discuss the dzogchen preliminary practices.

You may feel that dzogchen can be realized by just reading dzogchen books. As you now realize, dzogchen is not similar to other teachings, since it is not based only on intellectual appreciation. It requires direct experience. Dzogchen, the Clear Light Great Completion, is a spiritual realization, not an intellectual understanding.

Lineage blessings, devotion, and yearning brings your own enlightenment. Ancient great masters used various metaphors for this process, such as planting a good seed in a garden. A good result requires the good seed, good soil, sufficient water, and good growing conditions. Otherwise even a good seed won't produce a good result. Another master used the milk of a snow lion as an example. A gold pot is necessary to keep snow lion milk. Not only is a gold pot necessary, but the pot needs to be washed well and must be very clean. Dzogchen teaching is like snow lion milk. We clean the gold pot well to receive this milk.

Two Accumulation Practices

The two accumulation practices are the practices of merit and wisdom. The future buddha, Maitreya, in his famous
teaching (mdo sde rgyan; Skt. Alankara), explained that the first realization, called a bhumi in Sanskrit, can be reached by the practitioner through merit and wisdom. There are two results, the dharmakaya and rupakaya results. This is the wisdom which clearly realizes the absolute meaning of the nature of emptiness, and the wisdom realizing the relative meaning of the nature of compassion.

Wisdom, as the absolute meaning of reality, is beyond any activity of body, speech, or mind, and is accomplished through maintaining mind in the absolute state of transcendental wisdom, the prajnaparamita.

The practice in relative reality, as the truth of compassion, is accomplished through beneficial activities such as generosity, self-discipline, tolerance and patience, joyful effort, concentration, and wisdom. These are the six paramitas, or perfections. This is said to be the only method to bring about dzogchen realization. Any other way is just fooling yourself. Through devotion and perfect samaya commitment, realization will definitely come. Even though you aren’t realized today, you will have realization tomorrow. If you didn’t have realization yesterday, you’ll have realization today. Even though you don’t expect realization, it comes anyway. This is the first point.

The second point to recognize is that definite techniques can be applied. Dzogchen has two special techniques, kadag trekcho (kadag khregs chod) and togal (thod rgal) as its main practice. Don’t suppose that it’s unnecessary to do anything. You may have heard that there is no meditation and no visualization. Perhaps you should just eat and drink. But please remember, the absolute view is only one side of the dzogchen gold coin. The absolute is pure from the beginning, and from this pure aspect, material things do not exist. It is stated not only in dzogchen. The Heart Sutra of the mahayana
also says; "no form, no eye, no ear, . . ." This is not a blank state. The absolute level is spontaneous (lhin grub) and inheres naturally. The technique applied is "cutting through rigidity," kadag trekcho. In this practice the pursuit of discursive thinking is cut.

Dzogchen applies in relative reality as well. The inherent luminous mind arises in developing vision. This technique is called "passing over the summit," togal. Togal practices are practices of light.

The Four Renunciation Thoughts and Ngondro (sngon 'gro)

Dzogchen was first taught in Tibet to small groups, called single lineages, by Garab Dorje and other realized beings. Guru Padmasambhava first taught nine heart students when he came to Tibet. Later he taught twenty-five students. They were all familiar with basic principles, such as the four renunciation thoughts. These four renunciation thoughts are connected to the four noble truths fundamental to Buddhism, and they begin the preliminary practice. They are an understanding of impermanence, the preciousness of human birth, the inevitability of karmic causes and conditions, and the realization that in the relative world, the chaotic nature of samsara is full of suffering. With these four reflections that reverse the mind, one accepts the task of practicing directly on one's own mind for self-liberation and for the benefit of others. One then begins the ngondro practice.

Ngondro is a general preliminary practice. It actually is composed of several practices that form a complete direct training. The bodhisattva path begins with refuge and the generation of bodhicitta, the mind of enlightenment. The practice is compassion through the techniques of the six perfections for the sake of all sentient beings. Then comes mandala practice, which produces mindfulness, visualization
and the one-pointedness of mind. Vajrasattva practice is a purification of obscuration, and is the light-being embodiment of all the buddha families. Then do guru yoga, visualizing a creation stage and a completion or dissolving practice. The completion stage (rdzogs rim) has two parts to the practice, the object completion stage and the objectless completion stage. The object completion stage reveals actual existing vajra conditions in one’s body, the channels, winds, and tigle, or essence bindu. The objectless completion stage follows. Since ngondro condenses creation and completion practice, one can experience perfect understanding. The final ngondro practices are transference of consciousness and dedication of merit. These practices support the understanding of dzogchen. They are really a foundation, a ladder reaching up to the dzogchen flower.

After we finish ngondro we begin dzogchen itself, which sometimes is divided into two or three parts. The first part is the beginning or preparation practice. This is followed by the main body of dzogchen.

*Khorde Rushan ('khor 'das ru shan)*

More interest in dzogchen arose after the seventeenth century, and some masters began teaching larger groups with more than twenty or thirty students at one time. The emphasis remained the same, receptivity to the teachings was, and still is the key to realization.

After the four renunciation thoughts and ngondro practice, we begin khorde rushan, a preparation practice that is specific to dzogchen. The khorde rushan practice analyzes, separates, and distinguishes samsara from nirvana. We also learn to recognize the difference between absolute reality and relative reality.

Khorde rushan is divided into an outer and inner
practice. After these two preliminary practices of khorde rashan are completed, dzoigchen begins. I will give a brief teaching on khorde rashan, and then begin our main dzoigchen teaching called Lion’s Gaze, which is based on the famous Tsig Sum Nedek (tshig gsum don gyi gnad du brdeg). We will go step by step.

Today we experience time as short, due to being so busy, but we will still follow the ancient masters. Even though time is short, it is nevertheless our own time of retreat and practice. Dzoigchen retreats could be very long in ancient times. A three-year very meaningful retreat and meditation might follow a teaching. Because we are all so busy, time is short, and you can’t do a three-year retreat. That is a fact. This is a busy country, and a busy time. So, in a busy country in a busy time, we try in one week to do a three-year retreat. Even a small baby has the inherent features of the grownup. Let’s not think of this as a small retreat or practice. It is our special time to explore our own understanding of the true nature of primordial wisdom. A teaching is a teaching, which means that after receiving information and instructions, you then practice and apply the words and meaning in your heart. I will give the teaching, and we shall practice together. Then practice privately. This is really very important. Dzoigchen makes no distinction between meditation and postmeditation. Both are one equal state, the meditation state. That view is essential and must be understood. Always remain in the energy of your awareness, in your natural reality no matter where you are.

We begin with protection practices. We meditate on Buddha Shakyamuni, the buddha of our time. There are twelve dzoigchen buddhas. In ancient times they were called “the renowned ones.” One of those teachers is Buddha Shakyamuni. He is also the buddha of the three times; past, present, and future. Buddha Shakyamuni is the great wisdom
knowledge holder of the hinayana, mahayana and dzogchen, the enlightened being who revealed all these techniques. Many, many people, according to their capacity, reached enlightenment through his blessings and teachings.

We begin with protection practices by chanting the seven line prayer. Then we meditate and practice on Buddha Shakyamuni. This is followed by the Heart Sutra.

Visualize Buddha sitting in front of us on a lotus with the sun and moon. He emanates much light from his heart center. Wisdom light of many colors cover you. Light appears in the sky. As it reaches throughout the universe, it dispels the obscurations of all sentient beings. No further obstacles exist, and we enter one pure, calm, peaceful state. Keeping that thought and Buddha Shakyamuni’s presence, we chant the mantra. Next, a short sitting meditation and the three-breath purification exercise. The three-breath purification cleanses the three emotions of ignorance, attachment, and anger. Do the three-breath purification exercise, the seven line prayer, the mantra of Guru Padmasambhava and then the Buddha sadhana as a preparation and purification for dzogchen practice.

Now we will discuss khorde rushan. Khorde rushan is a Tibetan word which, roughly translated, means analyzing or investigating the nature of samsara and nirvana, so that we can discover their respective realities. This is a special dzogchen technique. It is divided into the outer khorde rushan, inner khorde rushan, and secret khorde rushan.

Outer Khorde Rushan

Samsara

Begin observing the external world. Don’t change any of your perceptions; just look at samsara. Don’t change anything. See everything entirely as it is. Normally we think, “I know,”
"He knows," "I heard this," "I experienced that," etc. We tell many stories to ourselves. However, look carefully, what do you really know? You may know some aspect of work, or if you are lucky, you have some knowledge. Maybe we know this country, our own home town, and perhaps a few other subjects. Yet there is much more to know. Our knowledge is about five per cent out of one hundred per cent.

What don't we know? According to the Buddhist point of view, we need to recognize samsara and the beings of the six realms. There are at least five other worlds to explore besides our world, the world of our human desire realm. We cannot say they do not exist simply because we do not know them. Our own ignorance is not a reason to ignore this panoramic view.

Each of the six realms has a different vision, a different perspective, and a different understanding of reality. They are not entirely the same as our human realm. Each realm has its own view and its own experience, even though we look at the same object or live in the same place. It is also true that these visions are always changing. They are not permanent. Even in our own life, our visions and experiences change, so the six realms definitely have different visions which change also. Then too, we aren't only in the human being realm all the time; we too migrate into different realms. Our experiences are then very different. So vision is always changing, experience is always changing. Why? Because all vision and experiences are reflected from one's own mind. This is not external, but rather the internal phenomena in mind that we experience.

The khorde rushan states inform us about our reactions to the experiences of the six different realms. Think that over. Imagine intimately those different realms, and then briefly recognize how mind acts in each place.
The *hell realm* has much hot and cold trouble; in fact the hell realm experience is flaming hot and icy cold. Let’s sense this. In the icy cold of 100 degrees below zero, how would you react? Also imagine suffocating heat, perhaps 110 degrees? That’s not too bad. We stayed in India; it is not that bad. What about the experience of 300 or 500 degrees? What would we feel or experience? How we would suffer!

The beings of the *hungry ghost realm* suffer unquenchable thirst and hunger. They have small mouths and huge stomachs. They can never be full. No matter what is given, it never seems enough. Experience this feeling of being unsatisfiable.

In the *animal realm* are the beings who are the hunted and the hunter, the predators and the prey. They suffer difficulties of dullness and stupidity. That realm cannot articulate nor sufficiently communicate their feelings. What could that experience be?

The *human realm* has difficulties of birth, sickness, old age and death. Much suffering is felt in each of those stages. Think how you react to those four sufferings.

The asuras in the *semigod realm* fight and constantly argue. When we fight and argue, how do we then react to beings, things, and events?

Suffering in the *god realm* is very intense when their power plays fail and change happens. Everything seems wonderful for awhile, but ultimately things change due to impermanence. Ego winces, recoils, and feels crushed. There is difficulty transferring power and prestige to another as the inevitable downfall occurs with its inherent suffering and loss.

The whole idea, the essence of this teaching, is that all of these states are unpleasant and unacceptable. All are what we call suffering. Now examine this suffering. Where is this suffering? Where does it exist? This is really important.
Nirvana

Let’s go from samsara to nirvana. We are now in nirvana. You have autonomy and self-governance in your own mind states. You are in the energy of your awareness, self-liberated. Every situation is clear and perfect. This realm in which you now exist is a state of great blissfulness, happiness, and joy. Think again. Where does this really exist? Where does joy and happiness reside? Observe the nature and quality of joy and happiness.

The suffering of samsara and the happiness experienced in nirvana are manifested and reflected from mind. But where is this mind? What is mind’s nature?

The basis of mind is the unimpeded primordial natural state. From this point of view in rigpa energy, all such notions are inherently nonexistent and do not inherently abide anywhere. Both suffering and happiness equally self-liberate into mind’s own natural state. There is no absolute high or low, etc., for both are the display of wisdom itself. From the intensity of rigpa wisdom, suffering and happiness are experiences of the dream state, which also does not solidly exist.

This understanding of the preliminary dzogchen practice is known as the outer khorde rushan. In Tibet, these practices are traditionally done for a few days or perhaps a few months. A practitioner usually travels to another place and makes a small offering to the local land deities. Each person has different experiences, different exercises, different chants, and observes the reaction of his or her mind through practicing a few days or a few months.

Inner Khorde Rushan

The Three Syllables: Om, Ah, Hung

Now we will briefly discuss inner khorde rushan practice. We now look inward to our vajra or subtle body with
its inherent natural systems and functions within our body. Vajrayana and dzogchen vehicles teach of many channels and energy patterns within the body. There are channels, winds and the essence bindu or sphere. Chakras are the shared junctures of these channels. Patterned or structured as wheels, they are called chakras in yoga. We focus particularly on three chakras; the head, sometimes called the crown chakra; the throat or speech chakra, and the heart chakra.

In the center of the crown chakra visualize the white syllable, Om. In actuality the formation of the channel inherently makes the syllable, Om. This is not something we try to make appear. It is not imagination. It naturally exists. This seed syllable is white, and it glows. It is a very bright, very small shining syllable. At the speech chakra there is the syllable, Ah, which is red. It is also a tiny, very bright, shining red syllable, Ah. In the heart center the syllable, Hung, is blue, small, but glows intensely. These syllables naturally abide.

The Six Seed Syllables

The six realms have six seed syllables. They exist naturally and are the cause of the six samsaric realms formed as the existing chakra system.

In the crown chakra is a dull, tiny, offwhite ah syllable. It is eggshell white. At the speech or throat chakra is a dull yellow syllable, su. The syllable nri is dull green at the heart chakra. The tri syllable, at the navel chakra, is dull blue. At the secret chakra is the syllable, pri, which is dull pink. At the soles of the feet are two, du and du, smoky or dark colored syllables. These are the six syllables of the six realms. The first syllable, ah is the syllable of the god realm. The second syllable, su, at the throat is the asura realm. The third syllable, nri, at the heart chakra is the human realm. The fourth syllable, tri, at the naval chakra is the animal realm. The fifth syllable, pri, at the secret center is the hungry ghost realm. The
sixth syllable, du and du, at the soles of the feet, is the syllable of the hell realm.

The Practice of the Three Syllables

The first three syllables, Om, Ah, Hung, glow bright powerful light, emanating the three colors of white light, red light, and blue light. They join together and burn up the first seed syllable of the god realm, ah. Then together they burn up the su, the seed syllable of the asura realm; then nri at the heart chakra. All three together go down to the naval, down to the secret center, down to the soles of the feet and burn up all those syllables of the six realms. Not only are the syllables burnt up, but also these three lights completely burn up all karma and karmic residues during this meditation.

This teaching is important. Do a short practice on the three syllables, Om, Ah, Hung. Visualize and meditatively invoke the power of the three syllables, Om, Ah, Hung, the white, red, and blue light. Meditate on the six syllables starting with the head down to the soles of the feet; ah, su, nyi, tri, pri, du and du. Then meditate on the three syllables, Om, Ah, Hung, as the glowing light of these three syllables burn up all karmic residue.

In Tibetan Buddhist history, there is a story that during Guru Padmasambhava’s time, five translators were sent to India to get more Yangdag or Heruka teachings. One of Guru Padmasambhava’s nine heartlike students, Ngakpa Gelong, went with four or five other monks and requested more Yangdag teachings from Master Humkara. They found him meditating deep down in an underground cave. There were nine different caves underground. Humkara was in the ninth. At the moment they entered the cave, Humkara quipped, “The Tibetan demons are here,” and he started chanting Hung. He chanted Hung several times and all five monks fell to the ground unconscious. Of the five monks who fainted, Ngakpa
Gelong was the first to recover. “We are not Tibetan demons,” he said. “We were sent to get the special techniques and teachings necessary for enlightenment in this lifetime. Please give me these teachings. I’ve brought letters from the king as well as gold offering to give to you.” This story illustrates the power of the Hung.

In ancient times many meditators used the Hung meditation. In the twelfth century a famous Kagyu master, Gotsangpa (rgod tshang-pa), went to the part of northwest India called Oddiyana. There he found one lama who had been in the cave for twelve years. Very respectfully he bowed down and requested teachings. The master remain silent. He sat silently near the cave and heard the master continuously chant only the Hung. The history says that Gotsangpa received great realization by staying near the cave. Even though he didn’t get any other teachings from this master, he got the Hung teaching.

**Secret Khorde Rushan**

**The Mudra of the Flaming Blue Vajra: The Blue Vajra State**

In this secret khorde rushan, we then purify the notion of physicality within the blue vajra state. All sensory appearances of body and mind are transformed into the blue vajra state. The five wisdoms are in the state of the vajra body. The visualization technique plus the mudra of the body is a five pointed vajra. Visualize blue flames. Hold the vajra body gesture, palms together above your crown chakra, legs crossed. The purpose is the return to the original state through reversing the notion of a delusional body. There are four results. It purifies, reducing clinging and attachment to the body. It pacifies. It heals sickness. It acts as a protection. This is the vajra body practice.

The vajra speech state utilizes the Hung mantra. We
purify sound or speech within the Hung state. This is called "purifying sound or speech within the Hung." The Ha or Hung is a natural inherent sound. It is primordial sound. No matter the language we speak, when we feel excitement or something different than our normal experience, the hidden sound or syllable Ha or Hung arises at that time. Ha or Hung is not other than the rigpa. Visualize yourself as a blue flaming vajra. In the center of your heart is the blue vajra knot which contains the blue Hung mantra. Place your awareness on the blue Hung. Everything merges into the blue five-pointed vajra as it radiates beams of light. One's own body becomes the state of the blue vajra through the Hung mantra. This is the Vajra Speech State.

Vajra mind state utilizes the Hung mantra. Vajra mind is divided into the external sealing up and the internal sealing up. The external sealing of the vajra mind state unites the Hung syllable, voice, perception, sound and mind identically and inseparably. To accomplish this sealing up of perceptions into an inseparable state, recite the mantra, Hung. This multiplies and reflects externally, increasing in ever widening spirals from the heart center. The blue vajra radiates out until the whole universe radiates with Hung. Since perception and mind are identical, everything in the universe becomes transformed into Hung at the first moment. This is the external sealing up.

For the internal sealing up of the state of the vajra mind, meditate on the one syllable Hung within which are hundreds of millions of Hungs, as many as atoms in the universe. Our body is one large blue Hung, while at the same time millions of Hungs radiate out from within that one Hung. In our body are channels, winds and the essence element (tigle) as well as the seven different elements that make up our bodies. The Hung, sound, and mind are not other than rigpa. The mudra
of the flaming blue vajra is the meditation, we ourself being the blue Hung. Recite the mantra. Visualize it beginning in the heart center. In the center of the vajra meditate that the one blue Hung is made of millions of Hungs.

Dzogchen is an embodiment practice. It is also the three jewels of buddha, dharma and sangha. This is the state of kadak trekcho and the three roots of guru, deva and dakini. It is very full and completes all practices. This is my teaching.

We will stop here. Like the construction of a house, we have laid the proper foundation.
PART II
CHAPTER 3

THREE WORDS THAT STRIKE THE CRUCIAL POINT

Garab Dorje’s pith instruction of the three crucial points.
The time was eighth century, the place was Tibet,
and Garab Dorje was the first human teacher of dzogchen.

êtshig gsum don gyi gnad du brdegs pa

Introduction directly to one’s own nature is the first crucial point.

To decide directly upon one thing is the second crucial point.

To have confidence directly in liberation is the third crucial point.
CHAPTER 4
THE SPECIAL TEACHING
OF THE
WISE AND GLORIOUS SOVEREIGN
and its Commentary by Patrul Rinpoche

Translated by Sarah Harding

Homage to the Guru.

The view is Longchen Rabjam, infinite vast expanse.
The meditation is Khyentse Odzer, light rays of knowledge
and love.
The activity is Gyalwai Nyugu, offspring of the victorious
ones.
One who practices in this way
Will surely become buddha in one lifetime.
Even if not, what a happy mind—ah la la.
The view is Longchen Rabjam:
Three words that strike to the crucial point of meaning.
First, rest your own mind at ease.
Don’t project, don’t concentrate: no thoughts.
Abiding in a state of evenness, at ease,
Suddenly shout a mind-shattering PHAT.
Violent, sharp and short . . . Astonishing!
There is nothing—a total opening.
In that opening is utter transparency.
Utter transparency which is ineffable.
Identify this as dharmakaya awareness.
Introduction directly to one’s own nature; this is the first crucial point.

Then, whether mind is active or still,
Angry or passionate, happy or sad;
At all times and situations,
Identifying this dharmakaya recognition,
Let the already acquainted mother and child clear light meet.
Rest in the state of the ineffable awareness aspect.
Again and again disrupt stillness, bliss, clarity, and mental activity.
Suddenly hurl the letter of means and insight.
No distinction between sitting meditation and post-meditation.
No division of meditation sessions and breaks.
Abide continuously in that undivided state.
However, until stability is attained,
Give up commotion and cherish meditation.
Divide meditation into sessions.
At all times and in all situations,
Maintain the ups and downs of the single dharmakaya.
Decide that there is nothing other than that.
To decide directly upon one thing is the second crucial point.

At that time passion, aggression, joy and sorrow,
And every incidental thought,
Being recognized, leaves no trace.
Identify the dharmakaya in what is liberated:
Like a drawing in water,
It is continually ‘naturally arising; naturally liberated’.
Whatever arises nourishes stark empty awareness,
Whatever moves is the expression of sovereign dharmakaya.

No trace; innately pure—ah la la.
The manner of arising is the same as before;
The distinguishing crucial point is the manner of liberation.
Without this, meditation is a path of delusion,
With it, the state of unmeditated dharmakaya.
To have confidence directly in liberation is the third crucial point.

With this view of three crucial points,
The meditation of interrelated knowledge and love,
And the support of the general bodhisattva activities,
Even if the buddhas of the three times conferred,
They would have no better instruction than this.
The treasure-finder of dharmakaya, awareness energy,
Brought forth this treasure from the expanse of insight.
This is unlike the extracts of earth and stone.
It is the last testament of Garab Dorje.
It is the heart extract of the three lineages.
To heart disciples it is entrusted and sealed.
Profound meaning; words of the heart.
Words of the heart; the crucial meaning.
Do not let the crucial meaning fade.
Do not let the instructions fall away.
This is the special teaching of the wise and glorious sovereign.
THE COMMENTARY OF PATRUL RINPOCHE

Homage to the gracious root guru,
the incomparable compassionate one.

Here is an explanation of how to practice these few crucial points of view, meditation, and activity.

First of all, since the guru is the unified essence of all the Jewels, by paying homage just to the guru, homage is paid to every source of refuge. Therefore the text says:

Homage to the Guru.

Then, the meaning of the main subject is as follows. If you practice with the understanding that all the root and lineage gurus are inseparable from your own mind, then all aspects of view, meditation, and activity are included in that. Therefore, view, meditation, and activity are explained by applying the meaning of the names of the root and lineage gurus.

First, the view is the understanding that in the dimension of reality free of elaboration, the vast expanse of buddha nature\(^1\), the full extent of the infinite appearances of cyclic existence and transcendence are all consummated in the equality of that reality. Therefore it says:

The view is Longchen Rabjam, infinite vast expanse.

In such a view of unelaborated nature, the knowing aspect or intelligence is established through superior insight. Moreover, that emptiness [seen with insight] is never without

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\(^1\) *bde bzhin gshags pa'i snying po*, Skt: *sugatagarbha*, literally, the womb or seed essence of those come or gone to bliss, refers to the idea of the intrinsic awakened quality that is the true nature of all beings but not yet actualized. "Buddha nature" has become a common nonliteral translation.
the means of calm abiding\(^2\) of great love and compassion. Resting thus in equipoise with undivided attention, the relationship of emptiness and compassion is the meditation. Therefore:

\[
\text{The meditation is Khyentse Odzer,}
\text{light rays of knowledge and love.}
\]

Endowed with this kind of view and meditation, the activity is the altruistic practice of the six perfections\(^3\) which is in keeping with the ways of the bodhisattvas, the offspring of the victorious ones. Therefore:

\[
\text{The activity is Gyalwai Nyugu,}
\text{offspring of the victorious ones.}
\]

In order to indicate that an individual who practices the view, meditation and activity in this way is indeed fortunate, it says:

\[
\text{One who practices in this way,}
\]

Someone who is capable of staying in secluded retreats and giving up the mundane affairs of this life, practicing with undivided attention, will in this lifetime become liberated directly upon the ground of primordial purity. Therefore:

\[
\text{Will surely become buddha in one lifetime.}
\]

But even if not, even if you just turn your mind in the direction of such a view, meditation, and activity, you will know how to apply the difficult circumstances of this life to the spiritual path. Without giving rise to excessive hopes and

\(^2\) \text{\textit{zhi gnas}; Skt. \textit{samatha}. "Calm abiding" is the universal Buddhist practice of bringing the mind to rest in a tranquil state. In the usual sequence of practice, this enables one to observe its nature, which is the "superior insight (\textit{lhag mthong}; Skt. vipassana) mentioned in this same line.}

\(^3\) \text{Six perfections (\textit{pha rol tu phugin pa drug}), more literally "the six crossings to the other side," are generosity, moral discipline, patience, perseverance, meditative stability, and insight.}
fears over the affairs of this life, you will proceed from one happy existence to the next. Therefore:

**Even if not, what a happy mind—ah la la.**

In the sequential explanation of such beneficial view, meditation, and activity, the intention to begin with the expanded explanation of the way to practice the **view** is indicated by:

**The view is Longchen Rabjam:**

The **meaning** is that this instruction, the **three words that strike the crucial point** of practice, cuts off the life force of delusion. Therefore:

**Three words that strike the crucial point of meaning.**

**First** is the method for introducing the view which has not been revealed. Generally speaking, there are many systems, such as the dialectical approach in which the view is established through scripture and reasoning, and the common approaches of Secret Mantra where the illustrative wisdom of the third empowerment introduces the absolute wisdom of the fourth empowerment. In this instance, however, in accordance with the tradition of the holy ones of the practice lineage, it is the introduction in the vanishing point of mind.

When waves of deluded thoughts roll in, the blatant discursive thinking that pursues its objects obscures mind’s own nature. So even if it were introduced, it would not be revealed. Therefore, in order to allow the blatant discursive thoughts to clear away:

**First, rest your own mind at ease.**

However, this very resting in one’s own uncontrived mind is radiant wisdom; a contrived approach will not realize the true nature. Therefore, to indicate that uncontrived co-emergent pristine wisdom is in oneself, it says:
Don't project, don't concentrate: no thoughts.

When you are still a beginner, although you may maintain the natural state of mind resting in itself, it is impossible to resist being caught up in experiences, such as bliss, clarity, and non-thought, that are an aspect of that abiding. Therefore,

Abiding in a state of evenness, at ease,

Freening yourself from the pit of attachment to these kinds of experiences, starkly expose the true nature of utterly transparent naked awareness:

Suddenly shout a mind-shattering PHAT.

Since it is vitally important to sever the flow of thoughts and destroy mind-made meditation, the sound of PHAT needs to be violent, sharp and short.

Violent, sharp and short . . . Astonishing!

At that moment, free of all concerns such as “this is mind,” liberation is manifest. So:

There is nothing—a total opening

Within dharmakaya free of all concerns, the awareness aspect of that stark transparency dwells just so as the pristine wisdom beyond mind.

In that opening is utter transparency,

This kind of utter transparency also transcends extremes such as “arising” and “ceasing” or “existing” and “not existing.” It is the crucial, ineffable, inherent pristine wisdom beyond the discursive endeavors of speech and mind.

Utter transparency which is ineffable.

The crucial meaning is that the awareness inherent in the ground of dharmakaya is the absolute view—primordially
pure and free of elaboration—of the yogic path. Therefore, as long as this one thing is not recognized, no matter how you practice meditation you will not get past a mind-made contrived view and meditation. And since this is as far from the approach of the Natural Great Completion as the earth is from the sky, it misses the significance of the unceasing clear light of non-meditation. Therefore, recognizing this one thing is of primary importance. So:

Identify [this as] dharmakaya awareness.

This is the meaning of the first of the three words that strike to the crucial point. If it is not revealed by the view, there will be nothing to sustain by meditation. So first of all it is most important for the view to be revealed. Furthermore, since the inherent pristine wisdom is introduced as just that—inherent in oneself—it is not something to be sought elsewhere. It is not something that arises in your being that was not there before. Therefore:

Introduction directly to one's own nature;
this is the first crucial point.

Then for the expanded explanation on how to practice the meditation:

Since 'resting in state', the meditation of the riverflow, occurs at all times and in all situations, without inhibiting or encouraging either stillness or activity, maintain the very nature of dharmakaya when mind is still, and the self-expression of pristine wisdom when it is active.

Then, whether [mind] is active or still,

Whatever arises from the energy of the mind’s discursive thinking—whether it is the afflictive emotions, such as anger and passion, that pertain to the Truth of Cause, or the sensations of feeling, such as happiness and sadness, that
pertain to the Truth of Suffering, if you understand that the intrinsic nature of those discursive thoughts is reality itself, then they are just the ups and downs⁴ of dharmakaya.

Angry or passionate, happy or sad;

But that is not enough. In general, even though it has been revealed by the view, if it is not maintained within meditation and you slip into the common proliferation of delusion, you will be tied to cyclic existence by the same old thought process. Once your being is thus isolated from Dharma, you will become no different than a common person. Therefore you must never be without the great inherent resting in non-meditation:

In all times and situations

Thus this is not a method where you apply a different specific remedy to overcome each different emotion or thought that occurs when the mind is still, active, or whatever. Rather, the ‘single sufficient remedy that liberates all’ the thoughts and emotions is contained in the identifying of just that view which was already introduced.

Identify this dharmakaya recognition

Whatever discursive thoughts and afflictive emotions arise are in themselves none other than the pristine wisdom of dharmakaya. Since the nature of those thoughts is the actual radiant ground of dharmakaya, if you recognize that, it is

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⁴ According to Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche, yo langs is a colloquial expression of eastern Tibet (khams). Yo means to fall or be weighted downwards, whereas langs means to lift or become upright. His example was that of a saddlebag when it is too full on one side, and then must be lifted up to correct it. In keeping with the colloquial flavor of it, I have translated it as “ups and downs.” Another example of this idea is the waves on the ocean: no matter how they swell and subside, it is all just one ocean.
called the mother clear light that abides as basic ground. When you recognize the view of the clear light of intrinsic awareness that was already introduced by the guru, it is called the clear light of the path of practice. When you dwell in the very nature of indivisible union of these two, the clear light of the ground and of the path, it is called ‘the meeting of the mother and child clear light.’

Let the already acquainted
mother and child clear light meet.

In this way, be mindful in the constant view of the clear light recognized in oneself and rest within that state. It is of supreme importance to neither inhibit nor indulge, reject nor accept, the thoughts and emotions that arise as its expression. Therefore:

Rest in the state of the ineffable awareness aspect.

As a beginner, when you maintain this state for a long time, experiences of bliss, clarity, and non-thought will veil the true face of your basic nature. But if you strip the skin of experiences off of the naked face of awareness, it will enhance the clarity of wisdom. As is said:

The yogin’s meditation improves through disruption;
The waterfall’s force improves through falling.
In that same way:

Again and again disrupt stillness, bliss,
clarity, and mental activity².

How should you cause this disruption? When experiences of stillness, bliss and clarity occur and feelings

² In three available copies of the Tibetan, the spelling in this instance was spro, (“projection”), although the root verse that it corresponds to has the more passive form of this verb, ‘phro (“mental activity”). Khenchen Palden Sherab and Khenpo Tsewang feel that it should read as ‘phro, and it has been changed accordingly.
such as joy, delight or pleasant sensations arise, you should blast this husk of attachment to experience into smithereens with the violent sound of PHAT falling like a thunderbolt. PHAT is the combination of “PHA”, the letter of the skillful means of collecting (merit and wisdom), and “T”, the letter of insight which cuts (through obscurations).

Suddenly hurl the letter of means and insight.

In this way, continuously connected with this crucial point of meditative experience, maintaining at all times and situations the transparency of ineffable intrinsic awareness, there will be no distinction between sitting meditation and postmeditation.

No distinction between sitting meditation and postmeditation.

For this reason, the meditation on the essence during sessions and the meditation of the activities during breaks are no different.

No division of meditation sessions and breaks.

In this great meditation of no meditation, the yoga of inherent, even wakefulness that flows like a river, there is not a hair’s tip of something to meditate on, and yet not a moment of distraction. This is the meaning of the saying:

Not experiencing meditation, not experiencing departure from it:

This is no departure from the meaning of no meditation.⁵

Abide continuously in that undivided state.

⁵ This quotation is attributed to Dzogchen Guru Zhiwa in “The Clear Elucidation of True Nature” (geas legs gsal ston), Patrul Rinpoche’s commentary on teachings of Aro Yeshe Jungne, where it is also explained in some detail.
If you become a suitable recipient of the unique approach of the Natural Great Completion and are the type of person in whom hearing the teachings and liberation occur simultaneously, then appearances and mind become the great liberation in basic ground and everything arises as the ups and downs of dharmakaya. Hence there is nothing to meditate on and no meditation. On the other hand, however, less fortunate individuals who are dominated by discursive thought and must follow a gradual path need to meditate until stability is attained.

However, until stability is attained,

As for that meditation, when all the causes of meditative stability are present then meditative experiences will occur. Otherwise, no matter how long meditation is prolonged amidst commotion and distractions, meditative experience will not arise. Therefore:

Give up commotion and cherish meditation.

Although in this meditation there is no distinction between the practice of sitting meditation and post-meditation, if at first you have not grasped sitting meditation on its own ground then you cannot integrate the insight of meditative experience with the post meditation experience. Even if you strive to turn the stream of daily activities to the spiritual path, you may deviate into ‘losing the natural disposition in the general proliferation’. Therefore:

Divide meditation into sessions.

Dividing the practice into sessions this way, you may even have the kind of practice where you feel certain that you

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7 Gsam gyan gyi rgyu tshogs. According to Khenchen Palden Sherab, the causes of meditative stability are primarily the “three kinds of isolation” (dben pa gsum): physical isolation from commotion; verbal isolation from talking; and mental isolation from discursive thinking.
can sustain the essence in the meditation state. But if you don’t know how to integrate this with activities in post-meditation and then maintain that state continuously, the remedy will not work under all circumstances. And if an incidence of discursive thinking prevails, you will be consigned to the usual rut. So it is most important to maintain the transparent wakefulness in post-meditation.

**At all times and in all situations,**

At that time there is no need to look for some other meditation subject. In the meditation state imbued with this very dharmakaya view, vagrantly take no account of all the activities and thoughts, neither inhibiting nor indulging them, and maintain that with uncluttered immediacy.

**Maintain the ups and downs of the single dharmakaya.**

This kind of practice that maintains the inseparability of calm abiding and superior insight, the yoga of basic nature free of elaboration, uncontrived co-emergence, the very nature of reality—this is the heart of all the practices of the secret mantra vajrayana tantras. It is the absolute wisdom of the fourth empowerment. It is the special teaching that is the wishfulfilling jewel of the practice lineages. And it is the flawless intention of all the great masters and their lineages of the old and new traditions of India and Tibet. So believe it and make up your mind.

If you cannot stop drooling for other esoteric instructions, you are like the elephant keeper who leaves the elephant at home in order to go look for it in the jungle: having let yourself into the trap of mind-made fabrications, there will

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*Chad chod yad yud, another colloquialism, according to Khenchen Palden Sherab. Chad chod indicates a kind of cutting through or clearing away, and yad yud means immediately without delay, hence ‘uncluttered immediacy’ like clearing through all the underbrush.*
be no opportunity for liberation. You need to decide on your practice.

Decide conclusively that there is nothing other than that.

In this way, deciding conclusively that the stark wakefulness inherent in dharmakaya is the buddha that has never experienced delusion and maintaining that continuity is the second secret word of crucial importance. Therefore

To decide directly upon one thing
is the second crucial point.

Now if you lack confidence in the process of liberation at those times and merely practice a relaxing meditation of mental quiescence, you will not go beyond the deviation into higher realms⁹. It won’t work under the difficult conditions of passion and aggression, nor will it cut off the flow of karmic formations. Decisive mental confidence will not be gained. This is extremely important.

Furthermore, whether there arises intense passion towards desirable objects, or intense aggression towards undesirable objects; whether you feel joy over favorable conditions, enjoyments, and so on, or sorrow over unfavorable conditions, illness and so on; no matter what occurs, at that time the expression of intrinsic awareness is evoked. So it is important to identify the pristine wisdom of the ground of liberation.

At that time passion, aggression, joy, and sorrow,

⁹ Higher realms here refers to existences which are the result of various levels of meditative stability (bsam gtan) or trance states. Not part of the six realms of cyclic existence included in the “desire realm” (dod khang), they constitute the “form realm” (gzung khang) and “formless realm” (gzung mchod khang), which are regarded as obstacles to total awakening.
Moreover, if you lack the crucial point of practice, 'liberation upon arising', then whatever mental processes and discursive undercurrents might occur, they will all accumulate the karmic causes of cyclic existence. So with every thought, subtle or blatant, it is crucial to maintain the 'liberation upon arising' that does not leave a trace.

And every incidental thought,

Therefore, whatever thoughts arise, without letting them all slip into the undercurrent of proliferating delusion or hanging on to them with mind-made fixation, with ongoing mindfulness of basic nature in its undisturbed state, recognize for itself whatever thought arises. You should maintain the state of 'liberation upon arising' that leaves no trace, like a drawing in water.

Being recognized, leaves no trace.

If thoughts are not purified in natural liberation, the recognition of those thoughts alone will not cut the continuity of deluded karma. So together with recognition you must look nakedly at your own nature, identify the previously encountered pristine wisdom itself and then rest within that state. This crucial point of the very purity of thoughts that leave no trace is very important, so:

Identify the dharma-kaya in what is liberated;

For example, like a drawing in water, now you draw it and now it is destroyed: the drawing and the disappearing happen at the same time. In that way, the arising of thoughts and their liberation occur at the same time. It is continually 'naturally arising, naturally liberated'.

Like a drawing in water,

Therefore without blocking what arises, let whatever it is arise. Whatever does arise is pure in its basic nature. This very
application to the spiritual path should be grasped as the crucial point of practice.

It is continually 'naturally arising; naturally liberated'.

Thus by cultivating thoughts as the expression of dharmakaya, whenever a thought arises there also arises the cultivation of intrinsic awareness. So however blatant the five poisonous thoughts are, there will be that much more powerful clarity of liberated awareness.

Whatever arises nourishes stark empty awareness,

Whatever thoughts move, however much, they all arise as the self-expression of the transparency of the nature of intrinsic awareness. Maintain this without accepting or rejecting. It is liberated since it arose. It is not beyond the ups and downs of dharmakaya since its inception.

Whatever moves is the expression of sovereign dharmakaya.

Since mental discursiveness and deluded forms of ignorance are pure in the expanse of dharmakaya, the wakefulness of intrinsic awareness, then whatever thought moves within the expanse of the uninterrupted clear light is empty in its own true nature, therefore:

No trace; innately pure—ah la la.

When you get used to this kind of application to the spiritual path after a long time, thoughts will arise as meditation and (mental) stillness and the boundary between mental stillness and movement will collapse, so that the stillness will not be affected.

The manner of arising is the same as before;

At that time, the way energy arises as thoughts of joy and sorrow, hopes and fears is not different than that of other
ordinary people. However, it is unlike the ordinary person’s obsession with inhibiting or indulging these processes that then cause them to accumulate karmic formations and come under the power of passion and aggression. For a yogin, it occurs as liberation from the time of arising. First, the thought is liberated through being recognized, like meeting an old acquaintance. Then, the thought is liberated by itself, like a snake’s coils unwinding. Finally, thoughts are liberated by being neither beneficial nor harmful, like a burglar entering an empty house. A yogin has these and other crucial points in the manner of liberation.

The distinguishing crucial point is the manner of liberation.

That is why it is said:

Knowing meditation but not liberation—
What’s the difference than the gods of meditative stability?

Meditation without this crucial point in the manner of liberation is merely the meditative stability of mental quiescence. Those who have confidence in this risk deviating into the higher realms of meditative stability. Those who believe that it is sufficient to recognize stillness and movement are no different in their deluded thinking than ordinary people. And as for those who apply mind-made designations such as “emptiness” and “dharmakaya,” the inherent inadequacy of their remedy will be exposed when it fails to hold up under the difficult circumstances that they encounter

Without this, meditation is a path of delusion.

Whether you call it “liberation upon arising,” “natural liberation,” “naked liberation” or anything else, the manner of liberation in which thoughts are purified, naturally liberated without a trace, demonstrates the same crucial point of natural
liberation. It is the extraordinary special teaching of the Natural Great Completion. With it, whatever afflictive emotions and thoughts arise evoke the dharmakaya. Then deluded thoughts are purified as wisdom, adverse conditions arise as allies, afflictive emotions are made into the path, and cyclic existence is purified in its own place without being rejected. That is the liberation from the bondage of existence and peace\textsuperscript{10}; the transcending experience in the state of non-action free of effort and achievement.

**With it, the state of unmeditated dharmakaya.**

Without this utter confidence in the manner of liberation, no matter how lofty the view or how profound the meditation that you presume to have in your being, it won't benefit your mind, nor will it work as a remedy for the afflictive emotions. Therefore it is not the authentic spiritual path. If you do have this crucial point of “naturally arising, naturally liberated,” even without a speck of conviction in a lofty view or attention to a profound meditation, it is impossible that you would not be liberated from the bonds of dualistic clinging in your being. Just so, it is impossible to find ordinary earth and stone when you go to the Land of Gold, even when you search for them. Whatever stillness, movement, and thought occurs arises as meditation, so that even if you were to search for the identifying characteristic of delusion you would not find it. This alone is the guideline to distinguish whether your practice has hit the mark or not.

**To have confidence directly in liberation is the third crucial point.**

\textsuperscript{10} *zhi ba,* “peace” is another word for transcendence (*mya nga n las ’das pa*; Skt. *nirvana*) emphasizing the aspect of cessation and usually indicates an inferior goal when found in Mahayana literature.
These three crucial points are the unmistakable essential principle that decisively integrates the view, meditation, activity, and fruition of the Natural Great Completion in the state of transparent intrinsic awareness. Therefore it is certainly an esoteric instruction on meditation and activity as well. However, it does not go along with the general religious terminology of the textual tradition, wherein the knowable objects of the rational mind must be measured and then verified by scripture, reasoning, and proof. Whenever you realize the actual stark wakefulness itself, that is the view of intrinsic awareness insight. Since the many views and meditations have the same flavor, there is no contradiction in explaining these three crucial points as the practice of the view.

With this view of three crucial points,

This kind of practice is the unmistakable crucial point of the primordially pure path of the Natural Great Completion, the very pinnacle of the nine vehicles. Just as a king could not possibly arrive without his court, the paths of all the other vehicles become the supports or assistants of this crucial point. Not only that, when you encounter your own face in the lamp of self-arising insight of primordially pure intrinsic awareness, its expression blazes forth as the insight arising from meditation and the expanse of knowledge swells like a summer river. The natural disposition of emptiness arises as great compassion and you enter into unbiased compassionate love. Since this is reality itself:

The meditation of interrelated knowledge and love,

When you actualize this crucial point of the unified path of emptiness and compassion, the prolific activities of the bodhisattvas, consisting of the path of the six perfections, arise as its self expression like the sun and its rays. This kind
of activity is related to the collection of merit so that whatever you do becomes beneficial to others and it supports the authentic view that does not deviate into blissful peace.

And the support of the general bodhisattva activities,

This kind of view, meditation and activity is the gist of the intention of all the buddhas that have come, are present now, and that will come in the future. Therefore:

Even if the buddhas of the three times conferred,

It is the sovereign summit of all paths, the crucial path of the vajra heart of innermost essence, the select fruition. There is nothing better than this.

They would have no better instruction than this.

The subject matter of this instruction, the real meaning, is most certainly the pith of the esoteric instructions of the lineage. Yet even the medium that expresses it, these few words of verse, must have arisen from the energy of intrinsic awareness:

The treasure-finder of dharma-kaya, awareness energy,

Although I have no experiential insight from meditation of the meanings contained herein, I have successfully cut through all misconceptions with the insight arising from listening to this unerring oral transmission of the genuine guru, verified it through the insight of contemplation, and so composed it, therefore:

Brought forth this treasure from the expanse of insight.

This is unlike common worldly treasures that merely alleviate poverty temporarily.

This is unlike the extracts of earth and stone.

These three crucial points of the view are called The Three Words that Strike the Crucial Point. The nirmanakaya Garab Dorje appeared in the midst of an orb of celestial light as he
was passing into nirvana and bequeathed them to the great master Manjushrimitra. It is an authentic esoteric instruction inseparable from his enlightened intention, so:

It is the last testament of Garab Dorje.

By adhering to the crucial meaning of this instruction, the omniscient Dharma King [Longchenpa], in his own lifetime and body, actualized the mind of primordial purity, the exhaustion of all phenomena, and attained actual perfect buddhahood. He then manifested the wisdom body to the Awareness-Holder Jigme Lingpa, and bestowed the blessing in the manner of the symbolic lineage of awareness holders. Jigme Lingpa, in turn, imparted it to our kind root guru as an aural lineage, and bestowed the introduction, upon which he directly encountered reality. And I heard this instruction from the lord protector of beings while he lived, so:

It is the heart extract of the three lineages.\(^{11}\)

One would resent teaching this kind of esoteric instruction that is like the refined essence of gold or the vital drop of the heart to people who do not practice it. But to those individuals who hold the instructions as dearly as their own life, who practice its crucial meaning to attain Buddhahood in one lifetime, to them one would regret not teaching it. Therefore:

To heart disciples it is entrusted and sealed.
    Profound meaning; words of the heart.
    Words of the heart; the crucial meaning.
    Do not let the crucial meaning fade.
    Do not let the instructions fall away.

\(^{11}\) These are the three lineages, or the first three of the six lineages, of the Nyingma oral (bka' ma) and treasure (gter ma) teachings. They are generally called the mind lineage of the conquerors (rgyal ba'i dgongs pa'i brgyud pa), the symbolic lineage of awareness holders (rig 'dzin brda'i brgyud pa), and the aural lineage of ordinary individuals (gang zag snyan khung gi brgyud pa)
This completes for now a small commentary from the root text on *The Special Teaching of the Wise and Glorious Sovereign.*

Virtue! Virtue! Virtue!  

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CHAPTER 5

DIRECTLY CUTTING THROUGH AND LEAPING OVER

_Bodhicitta_

Love and compassion are emphasized in all nine yogas, but reach their highest expression in this peak atiyoga or dzogchen.

Hinayana is the first turning of the wheel. This practice emphasizes the end of suffering through the teachings of the four noble truths. These are the truth of suffering, the truth concerning the origin of suffering, the truth of its cessation, and the truth of the path. This is Buddha's first turning of the wheel. Its fruition is the four immeasurables, sometimes called the four boundless, of joy, equanimity, compassion and loving-kindness. Through dynamic movement within these four boundless mind states, suffering in oneself is cleansed.

_Skillful Means_

The second turning of the wheel is the mahayana teachings of emptiness through mahayoga, the Prajnaparamita and the six perfections. Bodhicitta is attained through emptiness and compassion.

Skillful means and wisdom go hand in hand. All nine yanases have many skillful means or techniques. In the mahayana and vajrayana, bodhicitta is the practice of the
mind of enlightenment for our own happiness and for all sentient beings. Being able to help both ourselves and others is indispensable for spiritual and practical growth.

Specifically, skillful means are the practice of the six perfections, or the six paramitas. On an ascending scale, they are the perfection of generosity, self-discipline, patience, joyful effort, concentration and transcendental wisdom. As practice becomes focused, nonwavering, nonscattering and nonfading, we are able to maintain this vast view for longer and longer periods. We journey past doubts to arrive at certainty wisdom, the Prajnaparamita, the profound wisdom knowing the empty aspect of all phenomena. Prajnaparamita is the highest of the perfections. There is The Short Sutra of Perfect Wisdom, The Heart Sutra, which is very famous. There are longer teachings as well, such as The Large Sutra of Perfect Wisdom, but they are all the Prajnaparamita. Skillful means, thab, and wisdom, sherab, are in union. In summary the essence of the six perfections is compassion and loving-kindness based upon the empty true nature of reality. This is the condensed heart practice of the Prajnaparamita.

Direct Introduction Through Cutting Thoroughly

Buddha Shakyamuni’s third turning of the wheel of vajrayana and dzogchen as we are describing here is the bodhicitta, the mind of enlightenment of direct introduction through cutting thoroughly, kadak trekcho, and leaping over, lhundrub togal.

The vital point when beginning atiyoga is to generate the mind of enlightenment. This, as you know, is called bodhicitta. Its qualities are great love and compassion for all sentient beings. Since this dzogchen view is vast, our motivation is also vast and spacious, so we start by generating love and compassion towards people connected to us in our daily life.
This includes the deities and icons we mentally worship. Compassionately, we subdue our demons or obstacles that self-sabotage our growth and well-being. Then we generate love and compassion for our parents in this lifetime. We expand the mandala and radiate good meditations and positive thoughts to our relatives. Enlarging our scope still more, we direct positive energy towards our friends. As our largesse grows, we gain ability to motivate love and compassion for our enemies. The basic idea is to generate great love and compassion to all those particularly connected with us in this time and space. Our aspirations reflect in the statement, “May all experience a self-existing, primordial wisdom awareness, not different than the primordial buddha, Samantabhadra.” Expressing that attitude and thought is known as bodhicitta.

The dzogchen view has a deep and subtle meaning, and it is very important to understand it. Our awareness is the source of everything, and the source of primordial awareness is called rigpa. Rigpa ordinarily means intelligence, but the meaning in dzogchen is special. Everything arises from the capability and power of this energy. The energy intensity of rigpa is rigpa tsal. It has a dynamic immediate direct quality. It “introduces directly.” Dzogchen completes; its view is the Clear Light Great Completion. As enlightened mind, its qualities are love, compassion and pure awareness.

Dzogchen introduces the nature of mind directly. An aware mind is a wise and glorious sovereign. Its sure gaze is like a lion’s gaze. As Guru Padmasambhava explained, when you throw a stick to a dog, the dog will chase the stick. When you throw a stick to a lion, the lion will chase you. Similarly, a mind functioning beyond the jumbling of discursive emotions develops a steady and aware inner gaze, piercing the welter of thoughts. Take anger for example. It’s quite easy to identify
the target of your anger. It’s quite another to recognize the nature of anger as the poison itself, and spontaneously self-liberate your attachment to this emotional mind. We can apply this same process to our other negative obscurations such as attachment and ignorance. Anger, attachment and ignorance are the three basic poisons. The five basic poisons include jealousy and greed.

Awareness is central to our well-being. Awareness governs our behavior and shapes our character and vision. The dynamic intensity of awareness varies and can be trained. Skillful means training in these Buddhist and dzogchen techniques is important. Dzogchen skillful means trains awareness directly in our everyday life. Skillful means, thab, and the insight of wisdom, sherab, are the two wings of awareness. Skillful means works through our conduct in our relative reality. Pristine primordial wisdom abides as awareness in absolute reality.

Dzogchen is the pinnacle and most secret of all the Buddha’s teachings. It isn’t secret because of some conspiracy. Secrecy rests in its subtle nature and profound view, an inherent depth within us called the Clear Light Great Completion. This peak directly transcends narrow reality because its dynamic energy is high, wide and deep. Inner creativity expands space and generates awareness of the larger experience. The dharmakaya of emptiness and change inheres in the time and space of all things. A person aware of this dharmakaya display, through direct introduction to the view, no longer has a myopic, narrow, and partial mindset. Rigpa underscores, impresses and seals upon us the importance of pure direct perception. Remember, we’re not trying to make the impure, pure. Rather we invoke “what is.”

The mirror-like wisdom mind reflects and reveals an image. A mirror isn’t judging the subjectively present object.
It reflects. It sees "what is." Rigpa awareness also sees what is. Conceptualization judges. A concept structurally is objective, static and dualistic by nature. But before the advent of a concept, seeing is pristine. Relaxed attention is antecedent to labelling. We see "as it is." Spacious mind is relaxed, naturally transparent, zangthalle, open, pure. Everything that manifests, moves, functions and performs, originally happens within and from this state of dharmakaya.

The Three Words That Strike The Crucial Point

Our teaching is based upon a core text called Tsig Sum Nedek (tsig gsum don gyi gnad du brdegs). It was first taught in our world system by Garab Dorje. Generally, this means targeting three crucial statements able to penetrate core awareness. This is accomplished through two dzogchen practices called "direct introduction through cutting thoroughly," kadak trekcho, and "spontaneously leaping over," lhundrub togal.

Dzogchen history distinguishes sixty-four hundred thousand different teachings. Manjushrimitra organized them into three categories: the outer mind section, semde; the inner space section, longde; and the secret pith instructions, mengagde. Although all are quite the same, each category has different techniques and aspects. All three sections are very big. We don't have enough time to do them all thoroughly, and perhaps we also don't have sufficient wisdom to derive their full meaning.

Through the kindness of the great adepts, these three sections are further summarized for us and divided into two groups; kadak trekcho and lhundrub togal. Lazy beings who won't make any effort can reach enlightenment through kadak trekcho. Diligent individuals can reach enlightenment through the practice of lhundrub togal. Our teaching condenses these two
basic practices. Both practices are important. The lineage generally practiced kadak trekcho first and lhundrub togal followed. This order was reversed in the eleventh century, but later masters realized that the kadak trekcho should be taught first.

*Kadak Trekcho*

I will now explain kadak trekcho. *Trekcho* is a Tibetan word which roughly means “cut thoroughly right this moment.” What is being cut? All dualities and concepts are cut. All vagaries liberate into primordial awareness, now, immanently. That is “in this moment.” Self-liberation through rigpa awareness is the kadak trekcho practice. “Cutting thoroughly” is the metaphor. Concepts, because they are based in duality, are not pursued, liberating naturally into the primordial natural now. Direct thorough breakthrough into present awareness by cutting through duality is kadak trekcho. Self-liberation isn’t some external device. It’s not intellectual analysis, such as saying “that tree is empty; this land is empty; aggregates are empty; or a vase is empty.” *Kadak*, the first word, means pure.

Instead of an outer directed examination, maintain an inner skillful means of “cutting thoroughly.” This technique is self-freeing. Self-liberation returns all concepts back to their natural source. This is the special technique of the trekcho.

*Rigpa* is primal awareness. Normally our mind flits around and functions through local concepts and judgments. Our worldly interactions produce many surface thoughts. We decide “I am right,” “He is right,” “She is right,” “He is not right,” etc. These concepts as judgments are created by our mind. But mind itself rests within a more primal state in the ground of rigpa. What is mind? Mind is the energy display of awareness. This energy has a dynamic expressive charge, *tsal.*
Dzogchen words are very specific. For example, there is an important and clear distinction between mind, *sem*, and awareness, *rigpa*. Mind, *sem*, is always limited, said Master Jampal Shiné. Pure present awareness, *rigpa*, fully pervades. Buddhamind is all-pervasive. *Sem* is limited and particularized. Looking ahead, we cannot see behind us. Feelings, perceptions, sensations are examples of particulars. We hope. We grasp. Local mind’s energy charge, *tsal*, penetrates no further than our focal point. But buddhamind, *rigpa* itself, fully pervades as pure total awareness and presence. There is no region or limit. This distinction between pervasive awareness and the limitations of conceptual mind is extremely important. The special practice of “cutting thoroughly,” trekcho, is the technique for directly introducing awareness knowing.

As practice improves, self-correcting patterns naturally emerge, creating opportunity for clearer habit patterns. Repetitive acts of generosity and kindness create more openness. The result is released negative habitual patterns, *bagchag*, which improves view, meditation and conduct. This is directly felt in body, mind and heart. We feel reassured and gain confidence and courage.

*Lhundrub Togal*

Within our own mind is an unimpeded luminous awareness or clarity. Direct recognition is as direct as a child’s recognizing her mother and jumping into her lap. This source of our spacious awareness precedes the duality of samsara and nirvana. Our clarity aspect is togal, (*thod-rgal*). Togal is luminous clarity. For example, when someone asks you where is your mind, you don’t have any answers for that question. You become temporarily mute or dumb without identifying, explaining, or categorizing in your own mind. You answer, “I
don’t know where it is.” Even though you don’t have an answer in that moment’s experience, you are reaching mind’s core, something the mundane concept cannot quite explain. This knowing is ineffable, *jod me* (*brjod med*). Mind functions clearly, everything is happening. That clarity of mind is togal, the empty open aspect of mind.

In summary, dzogchen meditation maintains a natural state that doesn’t reject and doesn’t bind. Stable recognition and awareness is the meditation by remaining natural, free of rejection or acceptance. Continue in that meditative state, and all delusions transmute and transform within the nonduality of rigpa. We use the metaphor, “one hundred rivers flow under one bridge.”

This brief teaching of trekcho and togal prepares us for the Patrul Rinpoche commentary, *The Special Teaching of the Wise and Glorious Sovereign*, and the Garab Dorje core dzogchen teaching, *The Three Words that Strike The Crucial Point*. Patrul Rinpoche was a great realized being and scholar living in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in eastern Tibet. He was a great hermitage yogi who reached enlightenment within his lifetime.
CHAPTER 6

LION’S GAZE

The Commentary of
Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche
and Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche

Now I will read the *The Special Teaching of the Wise and Glorious Sovereign* by Master Patrul Rinpoche. This is a commentary on Garab Dorje’s *Three Words that Strike the Crucial Point* penetrating the essential meaning of the rigpa or realization state. We, Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang, will explain Master Patrul Rinpoche’s teaching.

Homage to the Guru.

The view is Longchen Rabjam, infinite vast expanse.
The meditation is Khyentse Odzer, light rays of knowledge and love.
The activity is Gyalwai Nyugu, offspring of the victorious ones.
One who practices in this way
Will surely become buddha in one lifetime.
Even if not, what a happy mind—ah la la.
The view is Longchen Rabjam:
Three words that strike to the crucial point of meaning.
First, rest your own mind at ease.
Don’t project, don’t concentrate: no thoughts.
Abiding in a state of evenness, at ease,
Suddenly shout a mind-shattering PHAT.
Violent, sharp and short . . . Astonishing!
There is nothing—a total opening.
In that opening is utter transparency.
Utter transparency which is ineffable.
Identify this as dharmakaya awareness.
Introduction directly to one’s own nature; this is the first
   crucial point.

Then, whether mind is active or still,
Angry or passionate, happy or sad;
At all times and situations,
Identifying this dharmakaya recognition,
Let the already acquainted mother and child clear light meet.
Rest in the state of the ineffable awareness aspect.
Again and again disrupt stillness, bliss, clarity, and mental
   activity.
Suddenly hurl the letter of means and insight.
No distinction between sitting meditation and post-
   meditation.
No division of meditation sessions and breaks.
Abide continuously in that undivided state.
However, until stability is attained,
Give up commotion and cherish meditation.
Divide meditation into sessions.
At all times and in all situations,
Maintain the ups and downs of the single dharmakaya.
Decide that there is nothing other than that.
To decide directly upon one thing is the second crucial point.
At that time passion, aggression, joy and sorrow,
And every incidental thought,
Being recognized, leaves no trace.
Identify the dharmakaya in what is liberated:
Like a drawing in water,
It is continually 'naturally arising; naturally liberated'.
Whatever arises nourishes stark empty awareness,
Whatever moves is the expression of sovereign dharmakaya.
No trace; innately pure—ah la la.
The manner of arising is the same as before;
The distinguishing crucial point is the manner of liberation.
Without this, meditation is a path of delusion,
With it, the state of unmeditated dharmakaya.
To have confidence directly in liberation is the third crucial point.

With this view of three crucial points,
The meditation of interrelated knowledge and love,
And the support of the general bodhisattva activities,
Even if the buddhas of the three times conferred,
They would have no better instruction than this.
The treasure-finder of dharmakaya, awareness energy,
Brought forth this treasure from the expanse of insight.
This is unlike the extracts of earth and stone.
It is the last testament of Garab Dorje.
It is the heart extract of the three lineages.
To heart disciples it is entrusted and sealed.
Profound meaning; words of the heart.
Words of the heart; the crucial meaning.
Do not let the crucial meaning fade.
Do not let the instructions fall away.
This is the special teaching of the wise and glorious sovereign.
The First Word
That Strikes the Crucial Point:
Introduction Directly To One’s Own Nature

Master Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary
Homage to the gracious root guru, the incomparable compassionate one.

Here is an explanation of how to practice these few crucial points of view, meditation, and activity.

First of all, since the guru is the unified essence of all the Jewels, by paying homage just to the guru, homage is paid to every source of refuge. Therefore the text says:

Homage to the Guru.
bla ma la phyag 'tshal lo

The Commentary of Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang

The Homage
The teaching begins by paying homage to the lama. This can be understood in two different ways. Generally one expresses homage to all lamas, and secondly, Master Patrul Rinpoche expresses his respect to the kindness of his own root teacher.

Why do we begin by paying homage to the lama? This is one of the special techniques of the vajrayana. We pay homage
to the lama out of graciousness and gratefulness. In this case the lama is considered even kinder to you than the Buddha. Though the realization of the Buddha might be greater, it is the lama who is giving us the teaching and guiding our path. Through his pure perception the lama embodies the three kayas and the three jewels. The body of the lama embodies the sangha. The speech of the lama embodies the dharma. The mind of the lama represents the Buddha; thus the three jewels.

The two-syllable word *lama* is a Tibetan word. *Guru* is the Sanskrit. There are a few different meanings. In this case lama means the higher one. *La* means higher; *ma* is the possessive. So it means "I pay homage to the higher one." Who is paying homage to the lama? Here it is Master Patrul Rinpoche, as well as we who are studying, listening, and understanding. So we all share in this homage. Also, the lamas are our own root teachers as well as the lamas of the old root lineage.

There are three lineages in the Nyingmapa school: the lamas of the mind-to-mind lineage, the lamas of the symbolic transmission lineage, and the lamas of the oral transmission lineage. We are paying homage to all of them indirectly and to our own root teacher directly.

The lama is also another way to understand all the realization beings. According to the vajrayana the three roots, the guru, deva, and dakini, are within that lama. The lama is the embodiment of all of them, and we are not leaving anybody out. All are included. This is the meaning of the homage to the lama. Keep your clarity and maintain awareness with the lamas. This is the way to practice dzogchen perfectly.

*Master Patrul Rinpoche's Commentary*

Then, the meaning of the main subject is as follows. If you practice with the understanding that all the root and lineage gurus
are inseparable from your own mind, then all aspects of view, meditation, and activity are included in that. Therefore, view, meditation, and activity are explained by applying the meaning of the names of the root and lineage gurus.

First, the view is the understanding that in the dimension of reality free of elaboration, the vast expanse of buddha nature, the full extent of the infinite appearances of cyclic existence and transcendence are all consummated in the equality of that reality. Therefore it says:

**The view is Longchen Rabjam, infinite vast expanse.**

*Ita ba klong chen rab 'byams yin*

**The Commentary of Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang**

**The View**

Master Patrul Rinpoche begins with the view and points to his meditation master, Longchenpa. He pays homage to his meditation guru and says, “The view is long chen rab jam.” *Long chen rab jam* is Longchenpa’s full Tibetan name.

*Longchen Rabjam* was Patrul Rinpoche’s root lama or guru, and so he pays homage to his teacher. But there is obviously more. *Long chen rab jam* embodies the meaning of his name. He is the embodiment of the view, the tawa. This is important. He is reflecting and revealing his name, like a mirror.

*Long* (klong) means vast and spacious like the primordial, true nature of reality, the dharma-dhatu. *Chen* means great. *Rab* is ultimate. *Jam* (byams) means completed, permeated. The two syllables *rab jams* together mean infinite. That “state of being” vast and spacious, the great infinite is the view. *Tawa* (*lta ba*) means view or object, a mental focus or something seen with the eye. Here the view does not solely rely on external objects seen by the eye. There is an internal focus of the rigpa state of clear wisdom.
There are many teachings with many details on view. Teachings divide view into two forms; the mentally analyzed view (yid dpyad) and the view of the true nature (chos nyid). Although some dzogchen teachings discuss mentally analyzed views, most teachings, like this one, emphasize the view of true nature.

The view then is long chen rab jam, immeasurably expansive and spacious. A meditation interpenetrating and connecting everything is also our view. Conduct reflects our view and meditation. Our conduct as its expression is its fruition. A spacious wholeness in the true nature,chos sku in Tibetan; dharmakaya in Sanskrit, is the view. Rigpa abides within primordial awareness as our consciousness and experience. Natural innate mind as pure awareness is rigpa, whose energy is pure and total presence. When awakened, pure awareness is vast and infinitely spacious; completing everything within its abiding. Dzogchen, the clear light great perfection is the peak, the atiyoga. Samsara and nirvana, suffering and transcendence, all exist within it. This essence of view and meditation is recognizable in immediate experience. Concepts and words are second-hand, once removed from wordless ineffable happening. This is the meaning of Master Longchenpa’s name. All our experiences of both samsara and nirvana are also within this complete vastness, long chen rab jams, the true nature of dharmadhatu. This view needs to be known directly and understood.

Now to speak of the person, the great omniscient master Longchenpa. Longchenpa lived in the fourteenth century and was one of the greatest adepts in the Buddhist and dzogchen lineages. He organized the teachings into two forms, practical and philosophical. The practical understanding is called Nying Thig Ya Zhi (snying thig ya bzhi), and he summarizes four kinds of Nying Thig teachings. Among his philosophical works are
the unequalled *Seven Treasures*. These writings demonstrate
direct realization. With clear philosophic understanding
written beautifully in poetic style, his scholarship is never
pedantic. It was written from the wellspring of his realization
for our benefit.

The biographies say that Longchenpa envisioned the
three roots and the lineage masters. It is common for realized
beings to have these visions. Longchenpa was a renowned
emanation of Garab Dorje, the first human teacher of
dzogchen, and many have called him Garab Nyipa, the second
emanation of Garab Dorje.

*Master Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary*

In such a view of unelaborated nature, the *knowing* aspect or
intelligence is established through superior insight. Moreover, that
emptiness (seen with insight) is never without the means of calm
abiding of great *love* and compassion. Resting thus in equipoise with
undivided attention, the relationship of emptiness and compassion is
the *meditation*. Therefore:

The meditation is Khyentse Odzer,
light rays of knowledge and love
sgom pa mkhyen brtse’i ‘od zer yin.

*The Commentary of Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang
The Meditation*

Khyentse Odzer was also called Jigme Lingpa and
dzogchen Ramjam Dorje. Over time there have been many
Khyentses; the first Khyentse lived in the ninth century, and
there is a recent famous Nyingmapa Tibetan master called
Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. Since Jigme Lingpa was called
Khyentse, many more took that name. They are known as
emanations of Jigme Lingpa.

Jigme Lingpa lived in the eighteenth century, three
hundred years after Longchenpa. During his three-year retreat
he saw Longchenpa three times and received initiation, lineage blessings, transmission, and he became enlightened. Then Jigme Lingpa revealed many terma teachings. He named them after Longchenpa who became his root teacher. Although three hundred years separated them, Longchenpa’s wisdom body taught Jigme Lingpa. Jigme Lingpa’s lineage and cycle of teaching is called Long Chen Nying Thig lineage.

Patrul Rinpoche speaks next about meditation or gompa and refers to his lama, Khyentse Odzer. He says Khyentse Odzer is the meditation. Again we refer to the significance of his lama’s name. Khyen means knowing and knowledge. Tsewa (brtse ba) means love. Od zer is radiating and illuminating light. The meaning of meditation, as well as the guru’s name, is “light rays of knowledge and love.” This is important.

Light rays of knowledge and love is the meditation. Patrul Rinpoche’s view inheres as meditation of light rays of knowledge and love. Wholeness, the dharmakaya (chos sku) is the very nature of illuminating clarity. Continue to practice this view. That is meditation. Maintain the view. That is perfect meditation.

There are many teachings on meditation. Dzogchen divides meditation into two categories; meditation with visualization, and meditation without visualization. Sometimes this is referred to as meditation focused on an object, and meditation without an object. Objectless meditation is undistracted and unceasing.

View and meditation cannot be separated. Clear understanding is vast, empty, and spontaneously spacious. Being whole and complete, everything within is its perfection. Samsara and nirvana are within. This is important.

The ability to “cut through thoroughly to purity,” kadak trekcho, is the first dzogchen skillful means. Kadak trekcho is its emptiness aspect. Remember, mind’s empty nature is
neither blank nor dark. Because our view radiates outward from within rigpa, it spontaneously manifests inherent natural qualities of wisdom and compassion as this state. Trekcho unifies emptiness and awareness.

The second dzogchen process as skillful means is the clarity aspect of togal. Togal is rigpa’s clear luminous primordial wisdom. Wisdom in this context has a specific meaning. Wisdom is direct seeing in a state of special insight, lhak thong (lhag mthong) in Tibetan, vipassana in Sanskrit. Cutting thoroughly through the tranquil mind state (zhi-gnas) its natural spontaneity exhibits great equanimity and special seeing. Great equanimity’s natural flow are the qualities of compassion and loving-kindness. A simple explanation of togal is the union of emptiness and appearances.

In dzogchen, the Clear Light Great Completion, togal is not different from trekcho. Trekcho is not different from togal. Both unify inseparably into one natural state. Directly cutting through and leaping over in rigpa awareness is fluid and one taste. But if you ask simply, “On what do you meditate?” Meditate on your true reality, your own mind in its emptiness and clarity at one and the same time. This is called “the union meditation state of trekcho and togal.” This is the heart practice of great perfection. It makes perfect and meaningful meditation. Trekcho and togal techniques are the heart teaching of dzogchen Clear Light Great Completion. So Master Patrul Rinpoche says that the meditation is light rays of knowledge and love (sgom pa mkhen brtse'i 'od zer yin).

Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary

Endowed with this kind of view and meditation, the activity is the altruistic practice of the six perfections which is in keeping with the ways of the bodhisattvas, the offspring of the victorious ones. Therefore:
The activity is Gyalwai Nyugu, offspring of the victorious ones
spyod pa rgyal ba'i myu gu yin

Commentary of Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang
The Conduct

Master Gyalwai Nyugu followed Jigme Lingpa. He lived in the eighteenth century and was sometimes called Khyentse Odzer. He was Patrul Rinpoche’s root teacher. His village nickname was Za Tama Drupchen. Za tama is the name of a big mountain in eastern Tibet where he stayed for a long time. People began calling him a mahasiddha or “Great One of Za tama,” but his real name was Gyalwai Nyugu. Patrul Rinpoche says Longchen Ramjam is the view, Khyentse Odzer is the meditation, and Gyalwai Nyugu is the conduct.

After view and meditation, Patrul Rinpoche’s next topic is conduct, saying the activity or conduct is Gyalwai Nyugu, offspring of the victorious ones (spyod pa rgyal ba'i myu gu yin). This activity is a bodhisattva’s conduct, a person choosing the buddhic path of the enlightened mind. Conduct or activity is called chopa, (spyod pa). Gyalwai Nyugu is Patrul Rinpoche’s root teacher, but Gyalwai Nyugu is also a name given to a bodhisattva. Although bodhisattvas have many names, generally all bodhisattvas are called Gyalwai Nyugu. Gyalwai means “victorious one.” Nyugu is a sprout from a seed.

The conduct of all the Victorious Ones, the bodhisattvas, is like a vibrant sprout arising out of a good seed. It stems from perfect view and perfect meditation, a union of clarity and compassion. This is the union of trekcho and togal, the two primary dzogchen techniques of meditation and post-meditative activity. A bodhisattva’s conduct is the skillful means of the six perfections. The six perfections, also called the six paramitas “directly cut through,” trekcho. This is the
path of all bodhisattvas. Whatever our capability and self-development, our aim is to benefit all sentient beings.

A subtle point concerns conduct. Conduct follows meditation and view, although we emphasize again that they really are inseparable. Like the helpful assistant, practice on the six perfections continues to improve our view and our meditation. There are many, many teachings concerning conduct. One method divides conduct into two stages; a gradual ascending developmental process as in the hinayana schools. Another method is spontaneously accomplished instantaneous self-liberation in whatever arises. This uses rigpa as the practice. Conduct emanating from such a view and meditation of totality remains very relaxed and open. This is a huge giant step, allowing whatever arises to liberate itself naturally.

Guru Rinpoche, Guru Padmasambhava, said that view, meditation, and conduct interpenetrate and manifest as your experience. He said, “The view must be vast as space, the conduct grounded and exacting.” Even if you have the highest realization, vast as the sky, your conduct must never simulate your view. If your conduct becomes as expansive as your view, hubris and arrogance will make you very crazy, and you will hurtle into samsara. “Big view, vast as the sky. Careful caring conduct, watch your step where you’re going.” What of its opposite? However, if your view becomes as timid as your conduct, you will be regimented and narrow-lensed, and get as lost as though travelling deep in the Amazon jungle. You won’t find your path, and you’ll fall into clinging and attachment. So Guru Padmasambhava said, “Don’t lose your view in your conduct, don’t lose your conduct in your view. Otherwise, you jump from one side of samsara to the other side of samsara,” (Ita ba yin pa spyod pa min bdag). Boundless view above, skyward in a vast and spacious lion’s gaze.
Conduct earthbound, caring, and precise. Another dzogchen master said “timid conduct, courageous view.” Otherwise nets of ropes will entangle and knot you up into great confusion.

*Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary*

*In order to indicate that an individual who practices the view, meditation and activity in this way is indeed fortunate, it says:*

**One who practices in this way,**

de ltar nyams su len pa la

*Somedone who is capable of staying in secluded retreats and giving up the mundane affairs of this life, practicing with undivided attention, will in this lifetime become liberated directly upon the ground of primordial purity. Therefore:*

**Will surely become buddha in one lifetime.**

tshe gcig sangs rgyas la thang med.

*Commentary of Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang*

Briefly, this explains Patrul Rinpoche’s view, meditation, and conduct as the proper way to practice. He says, “de ltar nyams su len pa la. One who practices in this way will surely attain buddhahood in one lifetime. Even if not, what a happy mind. Ah la la”

The way, then, to practice is to unite your vision, meditation, and conduct. Then all mingles with the lama from the dzogchen perspective. Unify them; then practice. As we have said, all the lamas, including your own root teacher, is not other than your own primordial awareness. Everything completing within primary awareness is within you. Lucid clarity and maintainence of rigpa with the lamas is the perfect practice of great completeness.

*Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary*

*But even if not, even if you just turn your mind in the*
direction of such a view, meditation, and activity, you will know how to apply the difficult circumstances of this life to the spiritual path. Without giving rise to excessive hopes and fears over the affairs of this life, you will proceed from one happy existence to the next. Therefore:

Even if not, what a happy mind—ah la la.

min kyang blo bde a la la

Commentary of Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang

Those fortunately connected to this lineage, those who understand these techniques, unite view, meditation, and conduct. There is no doubt of reaching enlightenment when you continue to maintain these three. Generally this means that the fortunate student can attain enlightenment in one lifetime. Indirectly, it also informs us that we need joyful effort along with enthusiasm and diligence.

If you don’t reach enlightenment and you can’t practice diligently, even some interest and some practice will bring enormous results. Obstacles can be overcome by bringing them into the path. You will not be caught within the tangled net of hope and fear (re-dog). Eventually you can die comfortably and confidently and reach enlightenment in the next lifetime. In any case, by connecting with this practice great benefits occur. This is wonderful, the great a la la. If you reach enlightenment in this lifetime, you are wonderful. Even if you don’t, you are still wonderful.

Master Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary

In the sequential explanation of such beneficial view, meditation, and activity, the intention to begin with the expanded explanation of the way to practice the view is indicated by:

The view is Longchen Rabjam:

ita ba klong chen rab ‘byams ni
Commentary of Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang

We have given a brief description of these three masters, Master Longchenpa, Master Khyentse Odzer, and Master Gyalwai Nyugu as listed by Master Patrul Rinpoche in his text. They are part of the long chen nyiug thig lineage. Longchen Rabjam is the view. Khyentse Odzer is the meditation, and Gyalwai Nyugu is the conduct.

I shall now say a little more concerning this crucial dzochen meaning to help us understand Master Patrul Rinpoche's teaching.

Dzochen is a very direct clear focus of pure and present awareness. Self-born primordial wisdom is a direct and sharp display without intermediaries. Rigpa awareness is direct experience. Its essence (ngo bo) is emptiness. Its nature (rang bzhin) is lucidity. Its foundation (gzhi) is vibratory. These energy waves express spiritual heartfelt compassion, (thugs rje). Self-liberation through awareness awakens all aspects, appearances, and manifestations. This dynamic intensity is rigpa awareness. Generally, rigpa means intelligence, but the dzochen definition is more rigorous and specific. We are not trying to make something up that isn’t. In this state of rigpa, everything is seen clearly as a complete display and manifestation of primordial mind.

The core teaching of Garab Dorje is called The Three Words That Strike The Crucial Point, tshig gsum don gyi gnad du brdege in Tibetan. Tsig is word, sum is three. Nad means essential target or crucial point, Dek is striking or hitting. Three Words that Strike the Crucial Point—the essence of enlightenment. From these three statements striking the essential target, the deluded state will be uprooted. The three statements are important. We explained that view, meditation, and activity are vitally linked, first through the names of Patrul Rinpoche’s root lamas and secondly through understanding the meaning
of dzogchen. Through subtle words and meanings, the pointing-out instructions direct us to three crucial key statements as the target. Direct revelation into one's own nature is the first crucial point. Direct decisiveness is the second crucial point. Direct confidence in liberation is the third crucial point.

You may wonder what, if any, are the similarities of this teaching to the mahayana. In one way all Buddha's teachings are similar. Yet in the specific level of teaching there is quite a big difference. One famous dzogchen master, Rongzom Chokyi Zangpo, said that although the explanations of the other vehicles seem very detailed and specific, upon careful examination they are a very rough or gross explanation. You may think the dzogchen explanation very vague at first, but actually it is extremely thorough and very detailed. In fact, it is here the explanations are the most specific and most keen.

Master Patrul Rinpoche's Commentary

The meaning is that this instruction, the three words that strike the crucial point of practice, cuts off the life force of delusion. Therefore:

Three words that strike the crucial point of meaning.

tshig gsum don gyi gnad du brdegs
When waves of deluded thoughts roll in, the blatant discursive thinking that pursues its objects obscures mind’s own nature. So even if it were introduced, it would not be revealed. Therefore, in order to allow the blatant discursive thoughts to clear away:

First, rest your own mind at ease.

dang po rang sms bzhag

However, this very resting in one’s own uncontrived mind is radiant wisdom; a contrived approach will not realize the true nature. Therefore, to indicate that uncontrived co-emergent pristine wisdom is in oneself, it says:

Don’t project, don’t concentrate: no thoughts.

mi spros mi bsdu rna m rtog med

Commentary of Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang

Dang po means first. Rang sms is one’s own mind. Lhod means slow down, relax without force. Lhod implies softness, gentleness, not being too tight, being smooth, and non-rushing. Bzhag means place. Master Patrul Rinpoche is saying here to “Relax your mind in its natural state.” Dzogchen is the state that is unimpeded and clear. Its nature is pure presence of awareness which is greatly complete, rigpa. It is the Lion’s Gaze of the Clear Light Great Completion. Without constructing thoughts, mind in that state is naked and clear and without delusion. This is the nature of rigpa.

Meditation, as we have said, can be divided into two kinds, constructed and unconstructed. Constructed meditation relates to a concept. Unconstructed meditation is beyond concepts. The Tibetan word, cho (bcos) means constructed or prepared. In this case meditation is not constructed. The Tibetan, tro (spros) means spread out, reflecting, radiating thought. Mi means not. Don’t actively pursue your thoughts by allowing them to radiate out and become more expansive, thereby building up concepts in the three times. So the text is
saying don’t radiate out thoughts of past, present, or future by expanding your present thought in different directions, such as business concerns or future conceptions, etc.

Nor should we trap the mind either. The Tibetan is mi ’du. It is also incorrect to fall into “I have too many thoughts and conceptions. I should try and stop them. I must trap the thought and lock it up within a rigid mind.” Mi ’du means don’t do that.

Awareness Certainty arises from your own direct experience. Decide this confidently, courageously. Decide instantaneously, in a complete certainty of awareness. Unelaborated meditation, free from doubt, is perfect meditation. This state is fresh naked dharmakaya. There is no extension, no subtraction, no gathering, no thoughts, no movement, and no mental construction, no new thoughts developing or building up. Maintain mind that natural way. That is called nonconstructed meditation. It is very pure and perfect meditation. This is known as rigpa meditation or dharmakaya meditation. It is the natural state of mind resting in itself.

**Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary**

When you are still a beginner, although you may maintain the natural state of mind resting in itself, it is impossible to resist being caught up in experiences, such as bliss, clarity, and non-thought, that are an aspect of that abiding. Therefore,

*Abiding in a state of evenness, at ease,
ngang la phyam gnas lhod de’i ngang

**Commentary of Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang**

Primordial wisdom, (rig pa rang byung ye shes), means self-born wisdom. The wisdom enlightenment state is called nampar denpar chenpo gi yeshe. It is unborn and unceasing. It is self-born in that it is naturally self-arising and self-liberating.
In sutra or mahayana, this is the wisdom which knows every aspect thoroughly and clearly; in other words, buddhamind. Self-born wisdom is buddha wisdom. The wisdom of enlightenment is free from obscurations. Dzogchen dynamic process introduces buddhamind in its entirety.

At present, the surface level of our mind is filled with mundane concepts. We continue experiencing grasping and clinging. Attachments manifest dualities of subject/object, high/low, etc. These fabrications and mental attitudes, from the dzogchen point of view, are called namshe (rnam shes) the consciousness of subject and object. We are not making the point here that there are no good thoughts. Some thoughts are good; some are not. We are not making distinctions concerning particular concepts. We are saying that whatever we focus on, whatever we think, as long as we grasp and cling, distinctions remain. This is the conception state.

The base, the foundation, of dzogchen is the unimpeded. The unimpeded mind is transparent, zangthalle. Zangthalle means unimpeded and totally transparent. Unimpeded and transparent mind is the “great emptiness state,” the Prajnaparamita. It is totally transparent and open. Within rigpa’s total transparency and openness, concepts totally self-liberate, like a drop entering the ocean. Being pure from the beginning, mind’s essence was never bound. We are already free. This reality is the basis of every concept. This profound nature is based on great emptiness, the mahamudra and the Prajnaparimata, the wisdom of transcendent emptiness and bliss, which is pure from the beginning. Emptiness of mind is not dark or blank. It is luminously clear. It is lucidly aware. A mind full of clarity has energy radiating qualities within this unimpeded rigpa state. To encounter wholeness and bring it up and forward is dzogchen, pure from the beginning. We needn’t look outward. Realization lies within.
If we examine our mind, we observe thoughts arising and dissolving. We attempt to trace back the source of mind’s movement. We ask ourselves where do our moving thoughts come from? Where do they currently reside? However much we try we cannot find a source or base. Thoughts free naturally. Their unimpeded state is primordially pure. We may want to believe we liberate mind in this moment, that it is impure, and then it transforms. However, the reality is that in the arising moment, thoughts free into their own nature. If phenomenal mind was solid and material, dense as we tend to believe, rather than empty and spacious, no space could fit all our thoughts. Our brain or hearts would break or overload because we didn’t have space.

The unimpeded natural mindstate is open and very flexible because it is pure from its beginning. Mind changes and self-liberates each instant as event. Yet although it transforms as it arises in its own nature, it never moves from its original source. We have room for everything we think. Mind, in fact, self-liberates without your even knowing it. Understand this basic nature of primordial wisdom (gzhi ye rig pa). gzhi means basic awareness of the ground of being, basic rigpa.

If you perfectly realize this nature, having received the perfect teaching from the qualified master, perfect enlightenment is within this very moment. It’s like a child recognizing her mother and jumping into her lap. The knowing encounter is direct. Realization is direct, the mother-child clear light state. It’s understood like a child’s recognition of its mother. Dzogchen says “realize this nature in the morning, reach enlightenment in the morning; realize this nature in the evening, reach enlightenment in the evening.” The fortunate student doesn’t even have to meditate to reach enlightenment.
Dzogchen may seem strange at first, because it stares directly into awareness, like a lion’s gaze. Connect this present moment to basic rigpa. You have all these opportunities. You have manifold opportunities. This state is the reality. Actually, we never went anywhere beyond this basic primordial natural state. We always remain naturally in it. Yet we leave our primordial wisdom, and we create samsara and chaos through all our delusions and concepts. Since we’ve never left, there’s nowhere to go. We remain in arising self-liberation always. We just don’t know that we’ve never left. The only difference between samsara and nirvana is recognition or nonrecognition, rigpa and ma rigpa. Otherwise everything is the same.

Then what is samsara? Dzogchen Master Mipham Rinpoche explains that duality is samsara; otherwise there is no samsara. Duality is grounded in the same rigpa or primordial wisdom, so it is really also unimpeded. When we become aware of the nature of duality and allow its own movement or manifestation, we are in direct contact with the primordial natural state. Duality liberates into nirvana, the enlightenment state of wisdom, emptiness and bliss. That is liberation. Let it be. It is its own way. Don’t try to make it something else. Identify and realize essence (ngo bo) as emptiness; nature (rang bzhin) as clarity; and its basis (gzhi) as radiant compassion.

What methods do we use to understand our nature? We have many, many methods to bring about realization. Generally speaking, on the relative level, beneficial activities such as the six perfections must be practiced. Another way to express this is to say that practitioners must engage the union of wisdom and skillful means. Sometimes the terminology used is “the union of the two accumulations” (wisdom and merit). Guru Padmasambhava said the two accumulation practices are the perfect accomplishment. He meant that
wisdom truth accomplishment and relative truth beneficial practices must be applied by practitioners in order to understand the basis of dzogchen. The two accumulation practices aren’t only dzogchen practices. They are essential practices.

What really is best? In summary, relax! Rest mind in its natural state. The nature of pure aware presence in the state of unimpeded transparency is rigpa. Without constructing thoughts, the mind state is naked and clear without delusion. This is the nature of rigpa. Continue to maintain your mind evenly in pervasive openness, a state that neither rejects or accepts thoughts. Don’t expand and gather thoughts and concepts. Be relaxed in this natural reality. Remain in equanimity, as it comes. The word we use is cham (phyams) meaning evenly and pervasively relaxed. What we are saying is be evenly pervasively relaxed in a natural state of mind. Lhod means to slow down and relax without forcing; softly, gently, not too tight, smooth and unrushed.

The attitude then is to naturally relax without force. Don’t follow all your gross mental events. If you mentally follow all your activities you will become tired, and you will obscure the real natural face of the rigpa. The gross mind is a delusion of concepts. Patrul Rinpoche said that the mind moves like great ocean tides. At first you might find it enchanting, but you won’t be able to stay on for eons and eons. The tide never ends. It started from beginningless time, and it continues. Unless you stop the oceanic tide of mind’s movements, the hurricanes will continue. The currents of yesterday continue on to this moment. Even while we talk of dzogchen, we are within the tide. The waves and the hurricane will continue on tomorrow. So the teaching is to continue to maintain mind in an even pervasively relaxed state without rejecting or accepting thoughts, without expanding and gathering thoughts. Relax mind in its coming
and goings, in the natural reality of equanimity. Just maintain an evenly pervasively relaxed equanimity in a natural state of mind.

**Master Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary**

Freeing yourself from the pit of attachment to these kinds of experiences, starkly expose the true nature of utterly transparent naked awareness:

_Suddenly shout a mind-shattering PHAT._

,Thol byang blo rdeg PHAT cig rgyab

Since it is vitally important to sever the flow of thoughts and destroy mind-made meditation, the sound of PHAT needs to be **violent, sharp and short.**

_Violent, sharp and short . . . Astonishing!_

,drag la ngar thung e ma ho

At that moment, free of all concerns such as “this is mind,” liberation is manifest. So:

_There is nothing—a total opening_

,ci yang ma yin had de wa

Within dharmakaya free of all concerns, the awareness aspect of that stark **transparency** dwells just so as the pristine wisdom beyond mind.

_In that opening is utter transparency,_

,had de wa la zang thal le

**Commentary of Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang**

Suddenly, without plan, shoot forth the syllable PHAT. What is the benefit of doing this? The purpose of the syllable PHAT is that the unimpeded naked nature of the rigpa clarifies, freeing all duality concepts into the rigpa and dissolving all mental constructs. Removing constructs of thought reveal the naked unimpeded awareness. How?
Two words are used—drag and ngar-thung. Drag means strong or very powerful. Shoot forth the word PHAT in a strong and powerful way. Thung means short, and ngar-thung means powerful but very short. So the method is to suddenly, strongly, powerfully, abruptly utter the syllable PHAT. The power of this word, dissolves mental constructs and brings up a free unconstructed state of consciousness. At the moment of PHAT, a fresh unobscured awareness will arise without any blockage. Emaho! "How wonderful, how great!" The fresh awareness, marvelous unimpeded nature is revealed. How joyful!

In experiencing rigpa after the forceful PHAT, no description is possible. Ci yang ma means a noncategorical or nonidentifiable state. After this the hedewa experience will arise. Hedewa cannot be verbalized. It is the clear and vivid reality level of primordial wisdom. It is rigpa itself, a shining beyond words. The nature of hedewa is an unimpeded and clear mindstate.

Hedewa is an expletive of joy, freedom, astonishment and wonder. So at the moment of uttering the PHAT, a fresh unobscured awareness arises without any blockage of mind. "How wonderful, how great!" Hedewa! A fresh awareness is revealed. How marvelous, this unimpeded nature. How joyful!

Hedewa is the unimpeded clear state. Zangthalle is important, as we have noted before. It means totally instantly penetrable, an utter transparency of mind, a mind that is totally unimpeded.

**Master Patrul Rinpoche's Commentary**

This kind of utter transparency also transcends extremes such as "arising" and "ceasing" or "existing" and "not existing". It is the crucial, ineffable, inherent pristine wisdom beyond the discursive endeavors of speech and mind.
Utter transparency which is ineffable.

zang ma thal byung brjod du med

The crucial meaning is that the awareness inherent in the ground of dharmakaya is the absolute view—primordially pure and free of elaboration—of the yogic path. Therefore, as long as this one thing is not recognized, no matter how you practice meditation you will not get past a mind-made contrived view and meditation. And since this is as far from the approach of the Natural Great Completion as the earth is from the sky, it misses the significance of the unceasing clear light of non-meditation. Therefore, recognizing this one thing is of primary importance. So:

Identify (this as) dharmakaya awareness.

chos sku'i rig pa ngos zungs shig

Commentary of Khchenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang

The wisdom enlightenment state is primordial suchness (ye shes ji bshin pa). Sutra or mahayana teach that wisdom, intuiting every aspect thoroughly and clearly, is buddha wisdom. Self-born wisdom is buddhamind. The wisdom of enlightenment is free from obscurations. Buddhamind in its entirety is introduced through dzogchen techniques. Totally unimpeded, totally transparent clear mindstate is not expressible (brjod du med). Thought’s very nature is based on zangthalle, the transparent unimpeded state.

The commentary says we must identify this dharmakaya awareness whose utter transparency is ineffable, not expressible. Choku is dharmakaya. Rigpa is being aware of awareness, a pure presence. The pure presence of rigpa is being aware of awareness. Ngo (ngos) is aspect, and zungs (zungs) means hold. The meaning of these two syllables together means recognition, identification and maintenance as dharmakaya awareness (ngos zungs). This is direct introduction, thoroughly cutting and leaping over.
Until you reach dzogchen, all the other vehicles or yanas have teachings on meditation. Now see everything as embodying wholeness, dharmakaya, choku. Mind itself (sams nyid) is ever fresh awareness (ye shes); seamless (’dus ma byas); and naturally serene (gadod nas rab zhi). This pure mind of awareness (sams nyid) actually wakes up to what is, right now (de tar mnon sangs rgyas) the supreme way of life (theg pa’ yang rtse). Whatever arises is the display of the dharmakaya, a clear light state of great completion. This is not regular light. It is seeing and seen within, having the quality of rigpa.

Rigpa can be divided in three ways; residing or maintaining, nepa (gnas pa); moving, gyur wa; and self-radiating, rang shar. All three abide within the clear light nature of mind. Maintaining, moving, and self-luminousity are all primordial wisdom within the rigpa.

Dzogchen teachings are divided up into the semde or mind teachings, the longde or spacious teachings, and the mengagde or esoteric teaching. The mind section instructions (sams sde) teach that whether by the sense of eye, ear, or mind, all our envisionings are the five senses and are no other than one’s own mind. Mind itself, suchness, is based completely in the state of primordial wisdom, rigpa. Primordial wisdom rests completed within the great emptiness. Each of us have slightly different visions and interpretations, but whatever we see is one’s own mind. This is the essential mind section teaching, semde, of dzogchen.

There are four essential understandings concerning mind. First is that mind is pure from the beginning. Second is that mind’s nature is unimpeded. Third is that mind is emptiness. Although it is unimpeded and empty, mind is not blank or dark. Mind is self-radiating, and luminous, pure from the beginning. Emptiness is totally within the state of rigpa, the clear light state (’od zer). The fourth understanding
is that rigpa is the union of clear light, emptiness and unimpededness.

The spaciousness section of dzogchen, longde, teaches that everything arises from spacious emptiness and clear light, everything is maintained in it, and everything dissolves in it. This is the principle instruction, the heart essence of the longde teaching section.

Rigpa, the unimpeded natural state of the union of clear light and emptiness is embodied in the three kayas; dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, and nirmanakaya. The emptiness aspect of rigpa is dharmakaya. The clear light nature in its self-radiating clarity or energy is the unceasing, uninterrupted movement of sambhogakaya. The compassionate resonance display of rigpa is the nirmanakaya. All three kayas are within the rigpa.

The method that instantly reveals the true nature of the three kaya states are the two techniques of trekcho and togal. These two techniques are the principle teachings of the mengagde (man ngag sde) section teachings of dzogchen. Trekcho teachings are direct introduction techniques called “thoroughly cutting through.” Tugal is the “leaping over” into spontaneous clear light. Like a long high jump leapng over samsara, the spontaneous clear light of our natural inheritance reveals a pure land. In the three kayas of the buddhas, one knows the wisdom of the buddhas, the mandalas of the buddhas and the wisdom rays of the buddhas. This is how togal is the leaping over to the state of direct perception in the true nature of seeing.

In summary, rigpa is the state of the unimpeded clear light of emptiness. Master Patrul Rinpoche says if you are aware and recognize this quality, the dharmakaya embodying wholeness is not far away. It is right here. The mundane view is that things are far away, but this is low understanding. The
direction is wrong. Dharmakaya is within us, not separate from the state of rigpa. It is right on this cushion.

Three statements entirely discover and cover the essential state of rigpa. The first crucial statement introduces the naked nature in its own state. *ngo rang thog tu.* Ngo means fresh face. *Rang thog tu* means introducing the fresh naked face in its own state. Our open eyes recognize a friend when we look at his or her face. Now we introduce fresh naked reality within, which is our natural inheritance. What are we introducing? We are introducing the self-born wisdom rigpa to ourselves. Primordial wisdom is no other than rigpa. Dharmakaya is no other than rigpa.

Buddha Shakyamuni said many times that this nature is naturally inherited by all sentient beings, even the smallest insects. The sutras refer to this nature as *tathagatagarbha.* According to dzogchen, rigpa, *tathagatagarbha,* or primordial wisdom, is being introduced directly at this moment.

**Master Patrul Rinpoche's Commentary**

*This is the meaning of the first of the three words that strike to the crucial point.* If it is not revealed by the view, there will be nothing to sustain by meditation. So first of all it is most important for the view to be revealed. Furthermore, since the inherent pristine wisdom is introduced as just that—inherent in oneself—it is not something to be sought elsewhere. It is not something that arises in your being that was not there before. Therefore:

**Introduction directly to one’s own nature;**
**this is the first crucial point.**

*ngo rang thog tu spros pa ste gnad dang pa’o.*
The Second Word
That Strikes the Crucial Point:
Decide Directly Upon One Thing

Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary

Then for the expanded explanation on how to practice the meditation: Since ‘resting in state’, the meditation of the riverflow, occurs at all times and in all situations, without inhibiting or encouraging either stillness or activity, maintain the very nature of dharmakaya when mind is still, and the self-expression of pristine wisdom when it is active.

Then, whether (mind) is active or still,
de nas 'pro'am gnas kyang rung

Whatever arises from the energy of the mind’s discursive thinking—whether it is the afflictive emotions, such as anger and passion, that pertain to the Truth of Cause, or the sensations of feeling, such as happiness and sadness, that pertain to the Truth of Suffering, if you understand that the intrinsic nature of those discursive thoughts is reality itself, then they are just the ups and downs of dharmakaya.

Angry or passionate, happy or sad;
khro 'm chags sam skyid dam sbug
Commentary of Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang

Suffering is not outside of ourself. Happiness or suffering lies within us. Our suffering is completely connected with our mental state, sensations, and feelings, which mind then reflects. Since experiences of suffering and happiness have no source outside ourself, whatever arises in experience allow to just be so, without holding on to anything. There being no base whatsoever, anger and attachment liberate instantly. You have finished off the source of your suffering. Buddha’s earliest teachings were the four noble truths and the end of suffering. Suffering arises out of the three poisons of attachment, ignorance and anger. If you directly recognize your own power of instant release, you can transform samsara into one great co-emergent perfection (lhan cig skyes pa). It is most important to understand this principle. It underlies all Buddhist truth and nonbuddhist reflection. Suffering and the noble truths concerning the source of suffering are basic Buddhism. Merge duality with its verbal concepts into the greater whole, like a river flowing into an ocean. Then whatever self-arises, self-berates. Nirvana is achieved in this awakened nature. This is the noble truth of cessation.

Continue practicing self-liberation through awareness. A transformation occurs. It is called the Application Path. The Great Completion encompasses all aspects of Buddha’s teaching. Dzogchen techniques of the Clear Light Great Perfection increase our understanding of the nature of both samsara and nirvana and the four noble truths.

Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary

But that is not enough. In general, even though it has been revealed by the view, if it is not maintained within meditation and you slip into the common proliferation of delusion, you will be tied to cyclic existence by the same old thought process. Once your being
is thus isolated from Dharma, you will become no different than a common person. Therefore you must never be without the great inherent resting in non-meditation:

In all times and situations
dus dang gnas skabs thams cad du

Thus this is not a method where you apply a different specific remedy to overcome each different emotion or thought that occurs when the mind is still, active, or whatever. Rather, the 'single sufficient remedy that liberates all' the thoughts and emotions is contained in the identifying of just that view which was already introduced.

Identify this dharmakaya recognition
ngo shes chos sku gnos bzung la

Commentary of Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang
The text continues with the word meaning times or moment (dus). A period of time, such as a duration, event, or situation is nekap. All that time, in every event, and in every moment, tham cad, continue to maintain awareness in pure presence. All the time. On every occasion. In every event. Maintain this always. The major point here is to identify and maintain view in each duration and each situation.

We speak here about time. Time continues and flows like a big river, like the Mississippi. Apply this meditation to all occasions or periods, nekap, such as the four normal activities of eating, sleeping, sitting, and walking, plus all the many other activities that we must perform.

Dzogchen reaches right into core enlightenment, the state of primordial wisdom, buddhamind. When you ask yourself "Where is my mind? Who am I? What is mind?", who is doing the asking? You are looking within, and you are discovering the state of clear and open emptiness. This is rigpa, mind's nature. Remember to practice mindfulness. Don't look
elsewhere. All concepts dissolve into one single state, like one hundred rivers converging their flow under a single bridge.

**Patrul Rinpoche's Commentary**

Whatever discursive thoughts and afflictive emotions arise are in themselves none other than the pristine wisdom of dharmakaya. Since the nature of those thoughts is the actual radiant ground of dharmakaya, if you recognize that, it is called the mother clear light that abides as basic ground. When you recognize the view of the clear light of intrinsic awareness that was already introduced by the guru, it is called the clear light of the path of practice. When you dwell in the very nature of indivisible union of these two, the clear light of the ground and of the path, it is called ‘the meeting of the mother and child clear light’.

Let the already acquainted mother and child clear light meet.

**sgnar 'dris 'od gsal ma bu sprad**

**Commentary of Khchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang**

Not pursuing the welter of external phenomena, understanding mind’s nature becomes quite clear and easy. Look inward at the source. Ask yourself what is mind? At that very moment you are looking at the ultimate state of the mind.

There was a very famous Nyingmapa master who lived in the eleventh century in western Tibet named Dampa Sangye. He gave a special eighty-line instruction to the villagers. He taught that if “the antidote of self-freeing emotions upon arisal” was not applied by the practitioner, the purpose of the dharmakaya practice was lost. So subdue and pacify your arising emotions right then and there!

Another famous master used the example of striking a piggy on the nose when he runs in the wrong direction. He will stop.
Still another concerns cleaning a butter lamp. It is much easier to clean it immediately. More effort is needed if you delay. Similarly with the emotions, act immediately.

Through this system, yogis and yoginis recognize that all thoughts and activities are the display of the empty awareness nature of the dharmakaya. Don’t focus outwardly. Don’t create obstacles or bother. Look within, view the energy display, rolpa, and its expressive charge, tsal, of the empty, whole ground reality. Everything is dharmakaya.

Master Patrul Rinpoche says that continuing this way, you will connect the mother and child clear light luminosity state. What is the mother? What is the child? Here mother means the unimpeded true nature of the mind, free from duality concepts; in other words, naked rigpa. This state of unimpeded basic clear light is known as the mother. The mother exists before the child. The child comes later. Similarly, the primordial nature of unimpeded clear light emptiness is first. Its rigpa nature is always with us, therefore it is known as the mother. And what of the child? The child luminosity state is the fresh naked rigpa nature that a qualified master introduces to us and we recognize it. As recognition comes about, continue to apply this knowing, maintain it, and gain experience. This is the child clear light. To summarize, the meaning of the child clear light luminosity state is your introduction by a qualified master to something you have, but have not recognized before. In this way it is newly born. Therefore the metaphor of child is applied.

Continue practicing what the master taught. Maintain the meditation and liberate each thought into its own dharmakaya state every moment. This experience of merging into primordial awareness mingles without separation, effort, or activity. Continue that natural state. This merging is the meeting of the mother and child. Patrul Rinpoche says that by maintaining this state, a merging occurs in a single union of
the mother and child clear light state that is inexpressible (brjod med). He urges us to maintain this all the time. This requires no particular meditation, no thought processes or effort. Just remain mindful of your true nature. Keeping this state is the meditation. For this reason many masters would sing to themselves, “Mind, mind, don’t wander!” The mindfulness practice is like an assistant who watches from a distance. Don’t wander. Don’t wander. Wandering, straying, confusion brings obstacles.

As I have indicated, it is important to know that all our thoughts are no other than the display of the actual radiant ground of dharmakaya. Once we’ve established the dzogchen view, we must apply the teachings and the view to ourselves. We always start with bodhicitta, the thought of love and compassion for all sentient beings. Master Patrul Rinpoche urges us to recognize the pristine wisdom state of dharmakaya and remain in it. Don’t pursue upsurging emotions or thoughts. Looking immediately back at the root of the emotional obscuration as it appears, the emotion or thought will self-liberate in that moment. This is the example of the lion’s gaze. Throw a stick at a doggy and throw a stick at a lion. The doggy chases the stick. The lion chases the person. If we follow each emotion we follow the doggy system. We should follow the way of the lion. Don’t confront the specific emotion such as attachment or whatever. Look to the dharmakaya, the fundamental empty reality of the mind. Remain empty.

*Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary*

*In this way, be mindful in the constant view of the clear light recognized in oneself and rest within that state. It is of supreme importance to neither inhibit nor indulge, reject nor accept, the thoughts and emotions that arise as its expression. Therefore:*
Rest in the state of the ineffable awareness aspect.

*b*radio mest rig chais ngang la gshag

As a beginner, when you maintain this state for a long time, experiences of bliss, clarity, and non-thought will veil the true face of your basic nature. But if you strip the skin of experiences off of the naked face of awareness, it will enhance the clarity of wisdom. As is said:

The yogin’s meditation improves through disruption;
The waterfall’s force improves through falling.

In that same way:

**Again and again disrupt stillness, bliss, clarity, and mental activity.**

*gnas bdegs la ‘phro yang yang shig.*

How should you cause this disruption? When experiences of stillness, bliss and clarity occur and feelings such as joy, delight or pleasant sensations arise, you should blast this husk of attachment to experience into smithereens with the violent sound of PHAT falling like a thunderbolt. PHAT is the combination of “PHA”, the letter of the skillful means of collecting (merit and wisdom), and “T”, the letter of insight which cuts (through obscurations).

**Suddenly hurl the letter of means and insight.**

*thabs shes yi ge glo bur ‘bebs*

**Commentary of Khochen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang**

We demolish the visions or the experience by shooting the PHAT syllable very suddenly. The letters PHA and the TA are known as the union of skillful means and wisdom. The PHA is the skillful means, meaning that which gathers and brings together. The TA is the wisdom letter that cuts. It is the cutter. PHAT is a Sanskrit word that has many explanations. When different experiences arise, shoot out the PHAT syllable. Begin to use the syllable. It brings out the naked nature of the rigpa itself.
As we continue in a natural state, moving thoughts will come again naturally. These habitual patterns appear at different times as experiences of clarity, bliss, or blank emptiness as no-thought, _mi tog pa_. All three can arise. The syllable, PHAT, removes those curtains. Moving thoughts in the mind can also arise as ordinary duality concepts. Whether clarity, bliss, emptiness, or regular mundane duality come up, all are mental constructs. They appear in meditation like skins on an onion. In order to remove these skins or curtains, we need the syllable, PHAT!

Patrul Rinpoche says cutting off attachment to experiences, meditation becomes better and better. Rushing water washes stones in its path cleaner and cleaner. Deep running rapids makes clean water. Without force, without tightness, be present in full awareness. Relax gently, smoothly, peacefully, evenly. A short and powerful syllable, PHAT, dispels discursive inner chatter immediately, naturally, and the fresh, naked _rigpa_ is experienced. This unimpeded natural clear state is beyond category or description. It is called _hedewa_.

Even with some meditation experience, habitual patterns return. Dualities return and hover like flies. Yet the _hedewa_ nature is beyond words, beyond description, beyond categories such as either, neither; existing, nonexisting; good, bad, etc. All these constructions will dissolve.

Recognize your experience. Reintroduce it. Utter a short and powerful syllable, PHAT. As I said, due to our habitual patterns from the past, yogis, yoginis, and meditators won’t retain the _hedewa_ experience. It may possibly stay for a short time, but then mind becomes blocked again. However, what is important, what dzogchen tells us, is that whatever arises is also part of the nature of dharmakaya. Recognize and understand all things are the movements of this wisdom. This
allows us to recognize dharmakaya or *hedewa* as a nonconceptual state. Whether we recognize it or not, we are always in this state. We all are never separate from open and empty awareness. Rigpa is the basic nature of the mind.

Stay mindful. Remain aware of your true nature. The conduct is to maintain that natural state. Stay at ease in full and total presence. This is the dzogchen meditation of the Clear Light Great Completion.

Forgetfulness is an obstacle of rigpa. In our practice we remain aware of all display and movement of rigpa. Stay aware. Guru Padmasambhava said there is no other dharmakaya than the liberation of each thought into its own natural state. Maintain your natural state. Don’t lose it. He also said that the true nature of naked dharmakaya has nothing to do with meditation. It is beyond meditation. Keep the natural rigpa, the state of nonconceptual awareness. If you can do that, whatever arises self-liberates.

Three experiences arise; bliss, clarity, and the nondual. Clarity is brightness as a refined clear state. Continue being in this refined brightness. This clear state is like a blue sky free from clouds and wind. It is the meditation. Dzogchen texts call this refined nature the “clear emptiness.” Different Tibetan words distinguish subtleties such as *wal-le*, *sal-le*, *hri-g-ge*. *Wal-le* refers to rigpa’s clear brightness. Consciousness is not blank or dull, but bright and open. *Sal-le* is its spacelike unimpededness, free of blockage. *Hri-g-ge* is rigpa’s movement whose nature is clear emptiness. As it arises, mind also dissolves very naturally. Guru Padmasambhava said that like a bird flying in space, it leaves no trace or marks. Maintaining this core of rigpa is called *deng cha*. Without it, there arises the three clingings to bliss, clarity, and the nondual, or attachment, anger and ignorance.

Vidyadhara Master Garab Dorje said that if you cling to
rigpa like a solid object, you are as dumb as the cows. If you believe rigpa is a state of nothingness, you are even dumber than the cows. Here this text refers to the union of emptiness and awareness in one bindu or sphere state.

Continue to demolish the calmness or blank state, the sense of blissfulness, the sense of clarity or brightness, and self-fulfillment. Wherein do you demolish this? As we discussed before, within the 'wal-le, sal-le, hrig-ge' rigpa experience.

The three experiences of bliss, clarity, and no-thought are generally very good results of practice. They are good signs of your developing enlightenment. Yet they are just experiences. They are connected with experience. Demolish these experiences because by clinging to any experience you are led on in another direction.

Bliss, clarity and no thought are connected with three emotions. Experiences of bliss brings attachment. Not all bliss is attachment, but if you start clinging to maintain bliss, it could lead you to the "capitol" of attachment. Clinging to clarity can lead to anger. Anger and clarity are related. Not all clarity is anger. But clinging to your experiences of clarity with its sharp focus can lead to anger. The nondual state of no thought is not bad in itself, but clinging to a blank state can bring dullness and ignorance. These are the three poisons of attachment, anger, and ignorance.

The famous Master Shakya Pema, from the Shakya school of Tibetan Buddhism analyzed these views in one of his many books. He said that people who meditate on the mahamudra (emptiness) mostly take birth in the animal realms. Many Kagyu masters were upset and said he didn't like the mahamudra doctrine. But he was not criticizing Mahamudra. He was actually saying that clinging to a realm of no-thought leads to ignorance, so he used the metaphor of
an animal and the animal realm. In dzogchen it is clinging itself to a state of no-thought that brings ignorance or dullness.

These three obscured states interrelate with the three realms; the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm. Every tantra cautions against clinging to these three realms. Cling to bliss and you wander in the desire realm. Cling to clarity and you may enter the form realm. Clinging to experiences of no-thought induces wandering in the formless realm. These three realms—the desire realm, the form realm and the formless realm—maintain the three clippings. So Patrul Rinpoche says don’t cling to any of them. Invoke the power of basic awareness itself. The yogi and yogini need to keep rigpa itself clean. If you continue to raze clinging, more and more naked qualities of rigpa are revealed, and the hidden self-born wisdom mind shines clearly like an onion skin.

This is very important advice for practitioners. Generally speaking, practitioners get caught up in their experiences. Whatever your experience, be it subtle or rough, don’t get snared by it. The experience or vision, nyam, arises when you begin practice, but it is not the final goal. It’s like driving your car. Keep the speed, keep moving, no U turns, no speeding up, just keep going.

The experience, nyam, comes in many different ways. In dream or in a waking state between sleep and dream, there are many experiences. They can be divided into good, frightening, neutral, etc. Don’t get seized in any of them. It will delay you.

The famous adept Machig Labdron, in her chod teaching taught about such blockage. They are like four demons. Obstacles and blockages visit in dreams. They also appear between waking and dreaming as visions. They can also appear in direct perception. They appear in sickness as well as in actual ordinary happenings. Don’t get captured. Demolish demons in the rigpa state. Liberate everything within the
rigpa. You then have the discipline of the fearless yogini and yogi. Such discipline and strength is known to be beyond both hope and fear, as Jigme Lingpa said. Hope re, fear dok, are two words bound together as one word; re dok, beyond hope and fear. Don’t get enticed into projecting either hope or fear. Both bind. Activate your heroic bravery within rigpa. Perform all activity without hope and fear. Have no doubt. If we can’t maintain bravery within rigpa we are weak, like the small, timid, sensitive, crying child always calling to its mother.

Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary

In this way, continuously connected with this crucial point of meditative experience, maintaining at all times and situations the transparency of ineffable intrinsic awareness, there will be no distinction between sitting meditation and post-meditation.

No distinction between sitting meditation and post-meditation.

mnyam gshag rjes thob tha dad med

For this reason, the meditation on the essence during sessions and the meditation of the activities during breaks are no different.

No division of meditation sessions and breaks.

thun dang thun mtshams dbye ba med

In this great meditation of no meditation, the yoga of inherent, even wakefulness that flows like a river, there is not a hair’s tip of something to meditate on, and yet not a moment of distraction. This is the meaning of the saying:

Not experiencing meditation, not experiencing departure from it:

This is no departure from the meaning of no meditation.

Abide continuously in that undivided state.

dbyer med ngang du rgyun du gnas
Commentary of Khchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang

The great meditation is no meditation. We must, of course, reach good realization. To reach that state is not impossible. If we self-liberate everything in the dharma-kaya within rigpa, we are always in meditation. There is no distinction between the meditation period and non-meditation. Everything is pure presence in direct awareness effortlessly. Simply remain aware in rigpa itself, no effort and no hardship. This is called "the great meditation which is no meditation." Experiences of vastness, openness, and self-born wisdom then shine continuously like a big river. There is no wandering at all for the yogi or yogini in this kind of non-meditation. Master Patrul Rinpoche quotes a master of the Longde lineage who says, "I never meditate. I never separate from the true nature. Awareness is meditation." That which is natural to us at its base, instantly self-liberates. This dzogchen meditation of the Clear Light Great Perfection is the practice of great completeness. It leads us to totality. All percepts and concepts liberate totally in this suchness, its own state.

Everything arising is the display of dharma-kaya. This type of practitioner is known as the sky yogi, sky yogini or sky dancer. This is the best.

Patrul Rinpoche's Commentary

If you become a suitable recipient of the unique significance approach of the Natural Great Completion and are the type of person in whom hearing the teachings and liberation occur simultaneously, then appearances and mind become the great liberation in basic ground and everything arises as the ups and downs of dharma-kaya. Hence there is nothing to meditate on and no meditation. On the other hand, however, less fortunate individuals who are dominated by discursive thought and must follow a gradual path need to meditate until stability is attained.
However, until stability is attained,
'on kyang bstan pa ma thob bar

As for that meditation, when all the causes of meditative stability are present then meditative experiences will occur. Otherwise, no matter how long meditation is prolonged amidst commotion and distractions, meditative experience will not arise. Therefore:

Give up commotion and cherish meditation.
'du 'rdzis spangs nas sgom pa gces

Although in this meditation there is no distinction between the practice of sitting meditation and post-meditation, if at first you have not grasped sitting meditation on its own ground then you cannot integrate the insight of meditative experience with the post meditation experience. Even if you strive to turn the stream of daily activities to the spiritual path, you may deviate into ‘losing the natural disposition in the general proliferation’. Therefore:

Divide meditation into sessions.
'mnyam gshag thun du bcad la bya

Dividing the practice into sessions this way, you may even have the kind of practice where you feel certain that you can sustain the essence in the meditation state. But if you don’t know how to integrate this with activities in post-meditation and then maintain that state continuously, the remedy will not work under all circumstances. And if an incidence of discursive thinking prevails, you will be consigned to the usual rut. So it is most important to maintain the transparent wakefulness in post-meditation.

At all times and in all situations,
dus dang gnas skabs thams cad du

At that time there is no need to look for some other meditation subject. In the meditation state imbued with this very dharmakaya view, vagrantly take no account of all the activities and thoughts,
neither inhibiting nor indulging them, and maintain that with uncluttered immediacy.

Maintain the ups and downs of the single dharmakaya.

chos sku gcig po'i yo langs bskyang

This kind of practice that maintains the inseparability of calm abiding and superior insight, the yoga of basic nature free of elaboration, unconstrained co-emergence, the very nature of reality—this is the heart of all the practices of the Secret Mantra Vajrayana Tantras. It is the absolute wisdom of the fourth empowerment. It is the special teaching that is the wishfufilling jewel of the practice lineages. And it is the flawless intention of all the great masters and their lineages of the old and new traditions of India and Tibet. So believe it and make up your mind.

If you cannot stop drooling for other esoteric instructions, you are like the elephant-keeper who leaves the elephant at home in order to go look for it in the jungle: having let yourself into the trap of mind-made fabrications, there will be no opportunity for liberation. You need to decide on your practice.

Decide that there is nothing other than that.

de las gshan med ko thag bcad

In this way, deciding once and for all that the stark wakefulness inherent in dharmakaya is the buddha that has never experienced delusion and maintaining that continuity is the second secret word of crucial importance. Therefore

To decide directly upon one thing is the second crucial point.

thag gcig thog tu bcad pa ste gnad gnos pa'o

Commentary of Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang

Don’t block the five senses of sight, sound, taste, smell, touch or feeling. Keep your eyes open during meditation.
Thoughts may arise when our eyes are closed. Whatever may arise as the display of the senses need not be changed. Whatever is being experienced is an array of mind, and every movement is based upon its unimpeded underlying state. Therefore blocking is unnecessary. Don’t focus on one object. Use all the senses together in the rigpa. The rigpa seeing is unimpeded and beyond words. So whatever movement or thought comes up, don’t worry about suppressing it. Be without hope or fear, re dok. Whatever arises, let it be! But be aware—the display embodies wholeness, the dharmakaya.

Suppose we are not immediately capable of accomplishing this stability. What then? Those practitioners who don’t immediately have these capabilities can begin by meditating with joyful effort, free from distractions in a peaceful and quiet place.

The beginner should begin to reduce the activities of the body, the speech, and the mind. Reduce the activity of the body by being more quiet. Reduce the activities of speech by talking less. Reduce the activities of the mind by fewer thoughts and mental activity.

If one wishes, one can go on retreat or to a place of refuge. You can go to a nice, quiet place, a hermitage. The texts describe three kinds of hermitages. There is an outer refuge place, an inner refuge place, and a secret hermitage. In that locale begin the dzogchen, the Clear Light Great Completion. Do your meditation with devotion and bodhicitta, the mind of enlightenment, of compassion and emptiness. Always maintain a sense of calm and joyful effort, expanding love and compassion for all sentient beings. Do good practice. A hermitage is more than an outer place. Give yourself a timetable, a schedule starting from the morning. Make plans as to how much you will do, and do it meaningfully.
During meditation, once in a while think of the preciousness of the human body. Reflect on the nature of impermanence, and the nature of cause and conditions. Remember the difficulties of samsara. This will indirectly support your joyful effort. Muse on this once in a while. The thought of impermanence is very important. Otherwise you may think “I will do this later” and keep on postponing your practice. But after one hundred years we won’t be here.

Whatever is gained from the hermitage or retreat, meditative experience must also be brought back to the relative level, brought back into the world. Without clinging or grasping, bring it back into the postmeditative state to be liberated in the rigpa state itself.

Patrul Rinpoche says maintain the rigpa state of naked awakened awareness. Apply experience and realization to the postmeditation. Self-liberate your thoughts and experience in the rigpa by reconnecting postmeditation and meditation in one single state as one single taste. That is really quite important.

Maintain awareness. Thought is the energy or expressiveness, *tsal*, of dharmakaya. Thoughts aren’t bad. They display the state of rigpa. Thoughts arise, reside and dissolve back. Being aware of movement as the display of dharmakaya is doing dzogchen meditation. Stay aware without forgetfulness. Due to these aspects it is said there is no meditation. “No meditation is the great meditation,” say the dzogchen texts. No mental constructs to bind you. Meditation is unconstrained, *ma bcos pa*, without distraction, *ma yeng*. In fact it really means mindfulness, *drepma*.

Patrul Rinpoche in his Mind teachings says that yogis and yoginis sometimes remark, “I can’t do that, it is difficult.” Patrul Rinpoche says you don’t have to be an expert, you don’t
have to be educated. You have a mind. Look to your mind. This is something everyone has. This is the beginning of these practices.

Remember: the great meditation is no meditation. Maintain that state. Then there is no meditation or postmeditation. All is one.
The Third Word
That Strikes the Crucial Point:
To Have Confidence Directly In Liberation

Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary

Now if you lack confidence in the process of liberation at those times and merely practice a relaxing meditation of mental quiescence, you will not go beyond the deviation into higher realms. It won’t work under the difficult conditions of passion and aggression, nor will it cut off the flow of karmic formations. Decisive mental confidence will not be gained. This is extremely important.

Furthermore, whether there arises intense passion towards desirable objects, or intense aggression towards undesirable objects, whether you feel joy over favorable conditions, enjoyments, and so on, or sorrow over unfavorable conditions, illness and so on—no matter what occurs, at that time the expression of intrinsic awareness is evoked. So it is important to identify the pristine wisdom of the ground of liberation.

At that time passion, aggression, joy, and sorrow,
de tshe chags sdang dga’ sdu dang

Moreover, if you lack the crucial point of practice, ‘liberation upon arising’, then whatever mental processes and discursive undercurrents might occur, they will all accumulate the karmic causes of
cyclic existence. So with every thought, subtle or blatant, it is crucial to maintain the ‘liberation upon arising’ that does not leave a trace.

And every incidental thought,
glo bur rnam rtog ma lus pa

Therefore, whatever thoughts arise, without letting them all slip into the undercurrent of proliferating confusion or hanging on to them with mind-made fixation, with ongoing mindfulness of basic nature in its undisturbed state, recognize for itself whatever thought arises. You should maintain the state of ‘liberation upon arising’ that leaves no trace, like a drawing in water.

Being recognized, leaves no trace
ngo shes ngang la rjes mthud med.

If thoughts are not purified in natural liberation, the recognition of those thoughts alone will not cut the continuity of deluded karma. So together with recognition you must look nakedly at your own nature, identify the previously encountered pristine wisdom itself and then rest within that state. This crucial point of the very purity of thoughts that leave no trace is very important, so:

Identify the dharmakaya in what is liberated;
grol cha’i chos sku ngos bzung bas

For example, like a drawing in water, now you draw it and now it is destroyed: the drawing and the disappearing happen at the same time. In that way, the arising of thoughts and their liberation occur at the same time. It is continually ‘naturally arising, naturally liberated.’

Like a drawing in water,
dper na chu yi ri mo bshin

Therefore without blocking what arises, let whatever it is arise. Whatever does arise is pure in its basic nature. This very application to the spiritual path should be grasped as the crucial point of practice.
It is continually ‘naturally arising; naturally liberated’.
rang shar rang gro lrgyun chad med

Thus by cultivating thoughts as the expression of dharmakaya, whenever a thought arises there also arises the cultivation of intrinsic awareness. So however blatant the five poisonous thoughts are, there will be that much more powerful clarity of liberated awareness.

Whatever arises nourishes stark empty awareness,
 ci shar rig stong rjen pa’i zas

Commentary of Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang

If we are unable to continue in the manner described, simple maintainence won’t help. Relaxation alone won’t be of benefit. Without self-liberation we cannot transmute our anger and attachment. There will not be enough power to fully liberate karma because the bravery of the ultimate view is missing. It is essential to be able to liberate each thought into the dharmakaya state. The dzochen difference is that when anger, attachment, jealousy, pain or joy arises, the power of rigpa, the energy awareness of the awakened mind, is provoked. It gives us the momentum to self-liberate instantly within the state. Skillful means techniques help maintain the powerful clarity of liberated awareness.

The Four Stabilizations, The Chog Zhag Techniques

The practices of trekcho and togal maintain the view of liberated awareness. Within the trekcho process, there are four techniques called the chog zhag (cog bzhag). This means “let it be just as it is” and “freely resting.” Maintain your awareness without shaking it up. Maintain meditation on the view and stay aware. Don’t try to do something to the rigpa. Leave it as it is.

Look within this profound nature. Maintaining that state
continually is the chog zhaq practice. I will name the four chog zhaq: mountainlike stabilization (ri-bo cog bzhag); oceanlike stabilization (rgya-mtsho cog bzhag); rigpa stabilization (rig pa cog bzhag); and vision stabilization (snang-ba cog bzhag).

The Mountainlike Stabilization

There are two ways to understand mountainlike stabilization. It is mountainlike because it is huge, steadfast, stable and unshakable. The second understanding is that when you reach the top of the mountain the view is panoramic. Longchenpa said from the highest peak everything else is underneath. From the top, there is an all-encompassing view. Mind is free, there is no source, no place where it resides. No place where the mind is found, no place where it is going. We find mind totally pure. Continue maintaining this view. This is the mountainlike stabilization. It is the perfection of the view.

The Oceanlike Stabilization

The oceanlike stabilization also has subtle meanings. Firstly, the ocean openly reflects everything, such as the sun, moon, stars, and clouds. Secondly, no matter how much the ocean’s surface moves, the container remains. Similarly, whatever activities happen on the mind’s surface doesn’t affect basic reality. Thirdly, the motion of tides and waves appear like emotions and moods. But they are not different than the ocean itself. Tides and waves are a part of the ocean. One develops this way of seeing in this stabilization. This is the great meditation of no meditation. This is the perfection of meditation.

The principle purpose of the oceanlike chog zhaq is to maintain awareness without interruption. This state of awareness is free from duality. Its nature is unimpeded with qualities of great clarity and emptiness. Don’t reject, invoke, or revoke. Don’t grasp at views, no matter how tiny the
movement of thought. The empty clear nature is the “real” reality. We must maintain this all the time. This is the oceanlike stabilization. It is nonmeditation.

Rigpa Stabilization

Then there is the rigpachos zhag. The quality of rigpa shows itself as the person’s awareness. Its way of perceiving is pure from the beginning, skylike, cloud free, windless. Maintain the chos zhag experience without analyzing external data. The very moment of seeing reveals rigpa itself. What appears is clarity, an emptiness, and then the inexpressible. It goes beyond words or symbols without analyzing shapes, form, color, etc. Jigme Lingpa said in the absolute, nothing exists. Even Buddha never saw anything, and Buddha’s knowledge is deeper and stronger than ours. Buddha’s third eye was open. Even with the third eye open he never saw absolute reality. Jigme Lingpa said we cannot say how this all is not existing, but it is beyond samsara and nirvana. How can this be? Generally such a statement is a contradiction. However, it means that samsara and nirvana both exist within union. Beyond the relative mundane state of reality, beyond intellect and concept, is a natural mystery. Basically it is dzogchen, the Clear Light Great Perfection, the great completeness. Jigme Lingpa said “may everybody realize the basic nature of dzogchen.”

As we have indicated, the word rigpa in dzogchen has a different meaning. Colloquial Tibetan, particularly in eastern Tibet uses the word rigpa as synonymous for intelligence, such as “this child is smart.” In Sutrayana, rigpa means general thought. It is one of the synonyms for mind’s thinking. In dzogchen, rigpa means the energy intensity of primordial wisdom. Here what is meant is the awareness that is unimpeded, nondual, and beyond concepts. This is the perfection of result.
Vision Stabilization

The nangwa chog zhag is the stabilization of vision. We remain energized in pure present awareness without elaborations. If mind moves, maintain this natural state. If mind is clear, maintain its own clear nature. If mind is not clear, allow outflow of its cloudiness. Through this stabilization of vision, you never separate the moisture of the rigpa from its display. Keep the moisture or oil of the state. Keep your eyes open.

The dzogchen yogi or yogini does not block the senses. Simply keep the six senses as they are, freely resting. When reflections come, let them come, but don’t pursue them. Guru Padmasambhava said, “Don’t provoke, don’t trace back. Remain naturally in the self-liberating dharmakaya.” Whatever arises from the five or six senses are the decorations of rigpa itself. For example, when the sky is clear, the reflection of sun, moon and stars rest on the ocean, decorate it, and become part of its beauty. Shivering diamonds glitter the ocean surface on a sunny day. All is motion, yet the container of shore and land remain stable. Similarly, whatever arises in the six senses become reflections of rigpa awareness itself as its ornaments and decoration. We need not prevent thoughts. But we needn’t pursue them. Our error is our clinging and grasping, which bring obstacles and obscurations, the cause of samsara. Every Indian and Tibetan sage said the same thing. Tilopa said to Naropa, “Oh noble child, whatever appears is not bondage; clinging is bondage. Cut the clinging.” Closing our eyes, blocking our ears, blocking our taste, ignoring the body is difficult. It is cocoonlike, ultimately impossible.

Buddha said follow the middle way, not the way of the ascetic nor the hedonist. The way of the ascetic, cutting or pricking his body with needles, going without clothes, and torturing himself is incorrect. When we reach the ninth
dzogchen yana of the Buddhist vehicles, restrictions lessen and lessen, until no blockage exists. One Vajrayana specialty is to use the object of the senses as the path. However, one always maintains the rigpa state of awakened awareness. Remain in that state and self-liberate every sense and concept as its arises. This is the Vajrayana path. Simply by claiming “I am a practitioner of the Vajrayana, and therefore I can do whatever I want,” will just make more obstacles.

Differences between these stabilizations in view, conduct, meditation and postmeditation dissipate when we perceive naked presence (rjey-gser-ba). Distinctions between meditation and post-meditation are for those who are unable to maintain rigpa all the time. The beginner is urged to combine appearance and the dzogchen view in whatever appears. The example used is of a baby looking around a beautiful temple. The baby sees all appearances without analysis or thoughts. Tibetan temples are colorful and have many beautiful decorations. So whatever you see, see it as a baby looking around in a temple. Trekcho uses this as a key to the uninhibited state, the transparency that is without fabrication or construction. This is perfection in union.

This is also true in togal. Those who are accomplished see in a different manner than the beginner. Perceiving rigpa nakedly (rjey-gser-ba) seeing diverse colorful phenomena with a baby’s freshness without clinging to thoughts, opens the door to the indestructible nature of the fundamental ground of being. Beginning togal practice utilizes external symbolic light as support, such as watching the light of the sun, or light on the land. Some even stay in a dark retreat. Whatever appears, let it appear nakedly, freely resting. Don’t cling to it, just let it exhaust itself. Whatever arises in appearance, don’t follow, count, accept, reject, analyze or cling. Keep everything in the way of the baby in the temple.
Using this view of the nature of awareness we reach the effect or result. In the dzogchen tantra, The Sovereign All Creating Mind (kun byed rgyal po), Samantabhadra is teaching Vajrasattva and says, “Listen, don’t change the mind. From the beginning the mind is in a natural state, so don’t change anything. Discover it as it is.”

A story is told of a prince who lived in great luxury. One day while playing he wandered further and further away from the palace until he lost his way. Many difficulties transpired. He had no food or shelter. He was harrassed by others. Finally he remembered the palace in his spiritual heart, and he found his way back. When he returned to the palace all the luxuries were still there. All his miserable conditions disappeared. He came back to his original place, and his original state. All his sufferings returned only as dream memories.

Our situation is similar. Our difficulty starts with nonrecognition of primordial awareness. Then we begin the state of deluded clinging. Now recognizing the primordial nature of rigpa, we follow its natural path and return home finding our original nature that we had never left. The fourth chog zha, the great freely resting, distinguishes itself from the others. We discover what we have always had, a self-born inherent wisdom energy. When we can discover it without application, it is togal. This fourth practice is a culmination of the three. Master Nagarjuna said you are riding your own horse, but you forget the horse.

Master Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary

Whatever thoughts move, however much, they all arise as the self-expression of the transparency of the nature of intrinsic awareness. Maintain this without accepting or rejecting. It is liberated since it arose. It is not beyond the ups and downs of dharma kaya since its inception.
Whatever moves is the expression of sovereign dharmakaya.  
ji’gyu cho’ skus rgyal po’i rtshal

Since mental discursiveness and deluded forms of ignorance are pure in the expanse of dharmakaya, the wakefulness of intrinsic awareness, then whatever thought moves within the expanse of the uninterrupted clear light is empty in its own true nature, therefore:

No trace; innately pure—ah la la.
rjes med rang dag ah la la

When you get used to this kind of application to the spiritual path after a long time, thoughts will arise as meditation and (mental) stillness and the boundary between mental stillness and movement will collapse, so that the stillness will not be affected.

The manner of arising is the same as before;
‘char lugs sngar dang ‘dra ba la

At that time, the way energy arises as thoughts of joy and sorrow, hopes and fears is not different than that of other ordinary people. However, it is unlike the ordinary person’s obsession with inhibiting or indulging these processes that then cause them to accumulate karmic formations and come under the power of passion and aggression. For a yogin, it occurs as liberation from the time of arising. First, the thought is liberated through being recognized, like meeting an old acquaintance. Then, the thought is liberated by itself, like a snake’s coils unwinding. Finally, thoughts are liberated by being neither beneficial nor harmful, like a burglar entering an empty house. A yogin has these and other crucial points in the manner of liberation.

The distinguishing crucial point is the manner of liberation.
grol lugs khyad par gnad du che

That is why it is said:
Knowing meditation but not liberation —
What’s the difference than the gods of meditative stability?
Commentary of Khenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang

Don’t close your eyes, tighten the mouth or jaw, or change your breathing. Control and regimentation are not the dzogchen view. The mind stays relaxed in its own natural state without changing anything. Then you are naturally in the long chen rab jam view. Patrul Rinpoche said “Don’t contract, don’t expand, simply relax mind, and thought will liberate naturally.” Be like wind in space. A moving thought will naturally arise. If you make no attempt to hold or change its identity, it will liberate itself like wind in space. Wind dissolves in space and dissolves naturally. In dzogchen this is known as the self-liberation of movement. Maintain that. Dharamakaya is not further away. That is the dharmadhatu state, and that is what we must recognize.

A la la!

Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary

Meditation without this crucial point in the manner of liberation is merely the meditative stability of mental quiescence. Those who have confidence in this risk deviating into the higher realms of meditative stability. Those who believe that it is sufficient to recognize stillness and movement are no different in their deluded thinking than ordinary people. And as for those who apply mind-made designations such as “emptiness” and “dharmakaya”, the inherent inadequacy of their remedy will be exposed when it fails to hold up under the difficult circumstances that they encounter.

Without this, meditation is a path of delusion.

‘di med sgom pa ‘khrul pa’i lam

Whether you call it “liberation upon arising”, “natural liberation”, “naked liberation” or anything else, the manner of liberation in which thoughts are purified, naturally liberated without a trace, demonstrates the same crucial point of natural liberation. It is the extraordinary special teaching of the Natural Great
Completion. With it, whatever afflictive emotions and thoughts arise evoke the dharma-kaya. Then deluded thoughts are purified as wisdom, adverse conditions arise as allies, afflictive emotions are made into the path, and cyclic existence is purified in its own place without being rejected. That is the liberation from the bondage of existence and peace; the transcending experience in the state of non-action free of effort and achievement.

With it, the state of unmeditated dharma-kaya.

'di 'ldan ma bsgoms chos sku'i ngang

Without this utter confidence in the manner of liberation, no matter how lofty the view or how profound the meditation that you presume to have in your being, it won’t benefit your mind, nor will it work as a remedy for the afflictive emotions. Therefore it is not the authentic spiritual path. If you do have this crucial point of “naturally arising, naturally liberated,” even without a speck of conviction in a lofty view or attention to a profound meditation, it is impossible that you would not be liberated from the bonds of dualistic clinging in your being. Just so, it is impossible to find ordinary earth and stone when you go to the Land of Gold, even when you search for them. Whatever stillness, movement, and thought occurs arises as meditation, so that even if you were to search for the identifying characteristic of delusion you would not find it. This alone is the guideline to distinguish whether your practice has hit the mark or not.

To have confidence directly in liberation is the third crucial point.

gdeng grol thog tu bca’ ba ste gnad gsum pa’o

These three crucial points are the unmistakable essential principle that decisively integrates the view, meditation, activity, and fruition of the Natural Great Completion in the state of transparent intrinsic awareness. Therefore it is certainly an esoteric instruction on meditation and activity as well. However, it does not go along
with the general religious terminology of the textual tradition, wherein the knowable objects of the rational mind must be measured and then verified by scripture, reasoning, and proof. Whenever you realize the actual stark wakefulness itself, that is the view of intrinsic awareness insight. Since the many views and meditations have the same flavor, there is no contradiction in explaining these three crucial points as the practice of the view.

With this view of three crucial points,
gnad gsum ldan pa'i lta ba la

Commentary of Kh Chen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang

Liberation has four different modes: primordial liberation (ye grol), self-liberation (rang grol), liberation upon arising (shar grol), and liberation through bare attention (gce r grol).

Primordial liberation (ye grol) is already self-liberated. Totally unimpeded, it is not some solid thing. Great emptiness is already in this state. Originally liberated in itself, it is primordial liberation.

Liberating an emotion or thought directly at its source is not a second-hand or indirect approach. Emotion self-liberates in one’s own mind (rang grol). There isn’t someone from outside who is going to free you. Nobody externally can help you. Now you become your own king, police, government, and your own supreme court. This is self-liberation.

Without blame, excuses or buildup of a retinue connected with any particular emotion or thought, look directly at its arisal. This means look directly at the emotion, the lion’s gaze, at the anger, jealousy, joy, sadness, etc. itself emerging in that moment (shar grol).

Directly, alone, unclothed and naked, finally it liberates by itself. It does not stretch out further. Whatever came up began liberating and ended liberating (gce r grol).

Use these liberating techniques. Don’t trace thoughts. Use
these liberations. *Og gyu* (*og 'gyu*) is a Tibetan word that means sneaking underneath, like the water in a marshy everglade. You think you’re having a good meditation, yet underneath it some thoughts are sneaking around. These mental events can come through the back room or window, so to speak, like a raccoon or small mouse. They arise suddenly. It can be confusing and may not be noticed immediately. Remain aware and mindful. Don’t build up the *og gyu*, or underneath movement, but immediately liberate the thought in its own natural state. Once you recognize your situation, don’t reconnect back. That means don’t pursue the thought. If you do pursue it, then you are collecting and stretching it out. Once you recognize this process, you are rid of it. We don’t have to collect the garbage. We can just recycle it out.

*Deng* (*gdeng*) is ultimate deep confidence and assurance. *Deng* implies continuance and courage in rooting and establishing liberation deeply within the state of ripga. So deep confidence and assurance is meant. In Tibetan, *deng*, signifies the ultimate state of the mind. Sometimes *dengs* also means bravery, the courageous view, heroic meditation and activity. Bravery is what the word mostly implies. Liberation, *drol*, is established and is rooted. Above, uppermost, cover is *thog*. *Togtu chawa* (*thog tu bca'ba*) means the view must be as vast and changeless as the sky, a mountainlike view, unshakeable, skylike. Then we apply this view to the practice. Ultimate meditation is “beyond acceptance and rejection,” beyond removing and establishing. Continue that state effortlessly. This is the bravery beyond acceptance and rejection.

*Master Patrul Rinpoche’s Commentary*

This kind of practice is the unmistaken crucial point of the primordially pure path of the Natural Great Completion, the very
pinnacle of the nine vehicles. Just as a king could not possibly arrive without his court, the paths of all the other vehicles become the supports or assistants of this crucial point. Not only that, when you encounter your own face in the lamp of self-arising insight of primordially pure intrinsic awareness, its expression blazes forth as the insight arising from meditation and the expanse of knowledge swells like a summer river. The natural disposition of emptiness arises as great compassion and you enter into unbiased compassionate love. Since this is reality itself:

The meditation of interrelated knowledge and love,

\[ m\text{kyen b}{\text{r}}\text{tse 'grel b}{\text{a'i s}{\text{g}}\text{om p}{\text{a d}{\text{ang}}}} \]

When you actualize this crucial point of the unified path of emptiness and compassion, the prolific activities of the bodhisattvas, consisting of the path of the six perfections, arise as its self expression like the sun and its rays. This kind of activity is related to the collection of merit so that whatever you do becomes beneficial to others and it supports the authentic view that does not deviate into blissful peace.

And the support of the general bodhisattva activities,

\[ \text{rgyal sras s}{\text{pyi s}{\text{pyod p}{\text{a grogs}}} \]

This kind of view, meditation and activity is the gist of the intention of all the buddhas that have come, are present now, and that will come in the future. Therefore:

Even if the buddhas of the three times conferred,

\[ \text{d}{\text{us gsum r}{\text{gyal b}{\text{a'i z}{\text{hal bs}{\text{udr kyang}}} \]

It is the sovereign summit of all paths, the crucial path of the vajra heart of innermost essence, the select fruition. There is nothing better than this.

They would have no better instruction than this.

\[ \text{'di las lhag p}{\text{a'i gdamis ngag med} \]

The subject matter of this instruction, the real meaning, is most
certainly the pith of the esoteric instructions of the lineage. Yet even
the medium that expresses it, these few words of verse, must have
arisen from the energy of intrinsic awareness:

The treasure-finder of dharmakaya, awareness energy,
rig rtsal chos sku'i gter ston gyis

Although I have no experiential insight from meditation of the
meanings contained herein, I have successfully cut through all
misconceptions with the insight arising from listening to this
unerring oral transmission of the genuine guru, verified it through
the insight of contemplation, and so composed it, therefore:

Brought forth this treasure from the expanse of insight.
shes rab klong nas gter du blangs

This is unlike common worldly treasures that merely alleviate
poverty temporarily.

This is unlike the extracts of earth and stone.
sa rdo'i bcud dang 'di mi 'dra

These three crucial points of the view are called “The Three
Words that Strike the Crucial Point.” The nirmanakya Garab Dorje
appeared in the midst of an orb of celestial light as he was passing
into nirvana and bequeathed them to the great master Manjushri-
imtra. It is an authentic esoteric instruction inseparable from his
enlightened intention, so:

It is the last testament of Garab Dorje.
dga rab rdo rje'i zhal chems yin

By adhering to the crucial meaning of this instruction, the
omniscient Dharma King (Longchenpa), in his own lifetime and
body, actualized the mind of primordial purity, the exhaustion of all
phenomena, and attained actual perfect buddhahood. He then
manifested the wisdom body to the Awareness Holder Jigme Lingpa,
and bestowed the blessing in the manner of the symbolic lineage of
awareness holders. Jigme Lingpa, in turn, imparted it to our kind
root guru as an aural lineage, and bestowed the introduction, upon which he directly encountered reality. And I heard this instruction from the lord protector of beings while he lived, so:

**It is the heart extract of the three lineages.**

*brygyud pa gsum gyi thugs bcud yin*

One would resent teaching this kind of esoteric instruction that is like the refined essence of gold or the vital drop of the heart to people who do not practice it. But to those individuals who hold the instructions as dearly as their own life, who practice its crucial meaning to attain buddhahood in one lifetime, to them one would regret not teaching it. Therefore:

**To heart disciples it is entrusted and sealed.**

*snying gi bu la gtad do rgya*

**Profound meaning; words of the heart.**

*zab don yin no snying gi gtam*

**Words of the heart; the crucial meaning.**

*snying gtam yin no don gyi gnad*

**Do not let the crucial meaning fade.**

*don gnad yal bar ma dor cig*

**Do not let the instructions fall away.**

*gdams ngag zags su ma 'jug cig*

This completes for now a small commentary on

*The Special Teaching of the Wise and Glorious Sovereign.*

*mkhas pa shr'i rgyal po'i khyad chos so*

**Virtue! Virtue! Virtue!**

*dge'o dge'o dge'o*
CHAPTER 7

REVIEW OF THE CRUCIAL POINTS

Dzogchen, or atiyoga, the Clear Light Great Perfection, is profound, special, direct as Buddha Shakyamuni’s highest teaching. This is the culmination of all nine vehicles. Familiarity with its view, meditation, and conduct brings unique results. We trace this back in Lion’s Gaze through The Special Teaching of the Wise and Glorious Sovereign, the nineteenth century commentary by Patrul Rinpoche, back to The Three Words that Strike the Crucial Point by eighth-century Vidyadhara Garab Dorje.

To summarize, relax to experience direct introduction into the pristine empty awareness of dharma-kaya. This view is primary. Firmly, courageously, decide to maintain realization of this pure awareness as your meditation practice. This is nonmeditation in meditation. This is the second crucial point. Thirdly, your conduct maintains your realization of this pure awareness as the six perfections, regardless of the flux of thoughts, emotions and situations. Maintain a courageous manner, gracefully, like the lion’s gaze, beyond hope and fear. Without hope and fear, clinging and obsession are reduced. This makes your practice easy and good. These three statements that strike the crucial point of recognition and confirmed decisiveness are the embodiment teaching.
At this time, do not reject the hinayana or the mahayana, for this would be like a dry trunk without the beauty of the rest of the living tree. It is also impractical. Looking up to the sky view alone offers possibilities of breaking your neck. Watch your feet too!

The open and skylike view is the practice of kadag trekcho. Notions and concepts keep you too busy and narrow. Relax! Liberate all your thoughts into a pure natural state. Kadag trekcho is a most powerful practice. Like fire it burns up all grasping; like wind it blows up all concepts; like water it cleans up all stains.

As ideas arise, and they will, look within and liberate these projections and thoughts at their source, like writing letters in water or wind blowing in space. After applying this trekcho technique, maintain this state.

We have a well established highway used by all the great adepts. There is no need to recreate the path anew. It exists already. The general preliminary of ngondro contains the four renunciation thoughts, refuge, generation of the mind of enlightenment, merit, mandala, mantra purification of obscurations in adamantine being, guru yoga, transference, and dedication of virtues. These are the components of one general preliminary practice.

Continue trekcho. Mingling guru yoga with the trekcho state is very powerful. Invoke blessings of the lineage and Pema Jungne. This removes obscurations and reveals the true face of trekcho itself. Guru yoga is important. Dedication as the union of joy and interest is the channel to lineage blessings. Spontaneous rigpa comes suddenly without any warning. Yesterday you were a regular sentient being, and next you are a great yogi and yogini. Realization comes through connection of lineage blessings in meditation with devotion. Books alone won’t do it. All Buddha’s teachings maintain that knowing
comes through direct experience; then practice maintains this experience. This is how realization happens.

The great Dudjom Rimpoche in his pith instructions also said that realization comes through practice. For the beginner, meditation is followed by postmeditation. Keep the duration short, until ability increases. Make a schedule for yourself. This activity informs habit patterns. The activity of joyful effort, commitment, and courage brings realization. Meditation and postmeditation are a flow. The state of enlightenment arises. Enlightenment in this lifetime can happen. Even if not, at the special naked moment in the death process, a high realization state may occur. Even if this is missed, there follows the three visions of white, red, and black in the bardo. The white light of clarity, the red light of increase, and the black light of near attainment occur before rigpa becomes trapped, and unconsciousness occurs from the blockage.

When fresh naked rigpa arises, it is really bright, like an autumn sky free of dust and clouds. A perfect, vivid and bright vision arises for a moment. Most practitioners with some experience are able to connect to this state and reach enlightenment. Many practitioners have this opportunity. Self-recognition, a previously met direct knowing, is like the child, who without doubt or hesitation, recognizing her or his mother, jumps into her lap.

Dzogchen teachings are so powerful that highly capable practitioners can reach enlightenment in this lifetime, medium capacity practitioners may reach enlightenment after death, and lower capacity students can reach enlightenment in three lifetimes. So even a small connection is important.

Aspiration and dedication are important. It is important for beginners to develop good intentions. This breaks down clinging. The power of the wish expands mental ability.
Aspiration prayers invoke the support of all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Before going to sleep, maintain the state of realized trekcho. This knowing during sleep time is called “entering into the vase.” The goal of dream yoga is entry into “the state of clear light luminosity.” This is done through the trekcho practice in sleep also. Keep the practice day and night. That view, that courage, is necessary.

All the positive deities will protect you and help you maintain the kadag trekcho and the togal practice, particularly the dharma-palas, Ekajati, Rahula, Dorje Legpa, and Mahakala. Ekajati is particularly important. She’s like the highway patrol giving out speeding tickets. Thankas depict her having only one eye, but her one eye sees everything. Dharmapalas will come naturally with good practice. Patrul Rinpoche said that the dharmapalas become magnetized by samaya, devotion, and good intentions.

Relaxed mindfulness in retreat is very helpful. Longchenpa began his three-year retreat after receiving pith instructions from his root teacher, Kumaradza. Materially he had very little. He had the equivalent of 10 pounds of barley (tsampa) flour for his three-year retreat and no warm boots or clothes. His one blanket was made of yak’s hair, and his stay was not in warm Florida but in nChims Phu at Samye with its glacier snow mountain above and the meadow below. He meditated on dzogchen and reached enlightenment into primordial reality not different from Buddha Samantabhadra. The protectors came after his achievement. He didn’t call for help. They came voluntarily. The dharmapalas helped him transcribe his teachings. Ekajati provided ink, Dorje Legpa the paper. Rahula was the executive secretary. These teachings, like the unexcelled Seven Treasures, still exist.

Besides the general preliminary practice, ngondro, there
is the preliminary dzogchen skillful means of inner, outer and secret korde rushan, as we described. It reverses all deluded states into the basic ground state. It is important to remember that in absolute reality, samsara and nirvana do not exist, nor are they separately existing. To liberate mind, one needs to first distinguish between samsara and nirvana, by exploring the six realms, as described. This discriminating analysis involves the six syllables, six realms, six chakras and their colors. The six syllables are ah, su, nri, tri, pri and du. The six realms are the deva, the asura, the human, the animal, the hungry ghost, and the hell realms. The six chakras are the crown, throat, heart, naval, secret, and the soles of the feet. The six colors are dull white, dull yellow, dull green, dull blue, dull pink, and smoky color. The three syllables, Om, Ah, Hung, are the basic nature of the primordial wisdom channel, the place of the peaceful and wrathful buddhas. The Om is white, the Ah is red, the Hung is blue; the chakras being the mind, throat, and heart. Then practice the secret khorde rushan of the blue vajra state as described.

The First Word that Strikes the Crucial Point

The view is Longchen Rabjam, infinite vast expanse. It is direct introduction to one’s own nature.

The Second Word that Strikes the Crucial Point

In the Clear Light Great Perfection the meditational lama is khyentse ’od zer, light rays of knowledge and love. Relaxed and open, nonmeditation is a meditation of transparent wakefulness in intrinsic awareness, rigpa. It flows co-emergent, lhan cig skyes pa, as a stream in the ground of being, gzhi. It is felt by us as flowing changes in the tides and ebbs of emotions and perceptions. This energy wave itself is impartial, a “wave of nonequilibrium in equilibrium” awake, empty and
luminous. It is likened to a lion’s gaze. Such clarity is aware of the river’s mindflow deep beneath the underbrush of thought. It is vast awareness likened to that of one hundred rivers flowing into the ocean. This process, lugs, of intrinsic awakening, yeshe, knows the flow and has the capacity to attune to its rhythms of change. This condition, khyen, and its cause, gyu, must be identified, ngos ’dzin, in order to recognize, ngo shes, what realm, kham; we are in. Two techniques are used, trekcho and togal.

The second word that strikes the crucial point then is nonmeditation in “attending awareness that maintains the Clear Light Great Completion” in the previously encountered mother and child clear light. This includes the appearance of phenomena, since samsara and nirvana are both within. The realization is seeing rigpa nakedly so that we self-liberate spontaneously. Through light rays of knowledge and love, we decide undeviatingly to follow this path, that of the great meditation that is nonmeditation, without missing the view, or overlooking our conduct.

*The Third Word that Strikes the Crucial Point*

The third crucial point of conduct is the activity of Gyalwai Nyugu, offspring of the victorious ones. It is appreciative, sherab, likened to appreciating a vibrant seed, a clean jar or snow lion’s milk. The third crucial point is to maintain confidence directly in liberation with diamond courage, courage born of confidence, deng. Self-liberating thought in every instant and in each event is liberation upon arising, shar drol; like a drawing in water; it leaves no trace. When we identify pristine wisdom of the dharmakaya in what is liberated, the self-arising and the self-liberation are simultaneous, a very important point. The dharmakaya is the empty intelligent field of the expressive energy charge, tsal, of
awareness. Possessing direct confidence in liberation is the third crucial point.

It's all innately pure. A la la. In the wakefulness of intrinsic awareness, *rigpa yeshe*, the manner of arising is the same as before. This immediacy of direct perception, *mgon sum*, is explained by the treasure finders of awareness energy, *rig tsal*, through the Clear Light Great Completion techniques of breakthrough contemplation of trekcho and the direct transcendence of togal.
ENGLISH–TIBETAN GLOSSARY

abide
gnas

absolute view
don gyi lta ba

absolute wisdom
don gyi ye shes

accept
blang

active; activity (of mind or thoughts)
'phro

activities
spyod pa

actual perfect buddhahood
mgon par rdzogs par mngos rgyas

afflictive emotions
nyon mong pa (Skt. klesa)

already acquainted
sugar 'dris

altruistic
gzhan phan

angry
kho

appearances
snang ba

application to the path
lam khyer

arising
skye

astonishing
em ho

attachment
zhon pa

authentic
yang dag pa

awareness
rig pa

awareness energy
rig tsal

awareness holder
rig 'dzin

basic ground
gzhi

basic nature
gnyug ma

believe
yid ches

beneficial
phan yon

blast into smithereens
thal gyis gtor

blatant
rags pa

bliss
bde ba

block
'gnyi; dgags pa

bodhisattva
byang chub sems dpa'
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<tr>
<td>bondage; bonds</td>
<td>'ching ba</td>
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<td>breaks (in meditation)</td>
<td>thun mthams</td>
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<td>bde bar gshegs pa'i sring po</td>
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<td>zhi gnas; (Skt. samatha)</td>
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<td>cherish</td>
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<td>gz'a gtd; gtd so</td>
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<td>cultivate; cultivation</td>
<td>'khor ba; (Skt. samsara)</td>
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<td>dug nga'i rnam rtog</td>
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illustrative wisdom
inadequacy
incidental thought
ineffable
infinite
inherent
inhibit
innately pure
innermost essence
inseparable
insight
instruction
integrate
intelligence
intention
interrelated
introduce
introduction
jewels
joy
karmic formations
knowable objects
knowing; knowledge
lamp of self-arising insight
Land of Gold
last testament
leaves no trace
liberated
liberation
liberation upon arising
life force
lineage
love
main subject
maintain
make up your mind
manifest
manner of arising
manner of liberation

dpe'i ye shes
mtshang
glo bur rnam rtog
brjod med
rab 'byams
rang gnas
'gag
rang dag
snying thig
dbyer med
shes rab
gdams ngag
bsre ba; bsres
shes rab
'dod; dgongs pa
'brel ba
ngo sprod
ngo sprad pa
dkon mchog
dga' ba
'du byed kyi las
shes bya
mkyen pa
shes rab rang byung gi sgron me
gser gling
zhal chems
rjes mthud med; rjes med
grol
grol ba
shar grol
srog
brgyud
btse ba
bshad bya
'khyong ba
blo thag bcd
mngon du gyur ba
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grol lugs
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