The Song of the Vajra

Namkhai Norbu
The Song of the Vajra

An Oral Commentary by
Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

Edited by
Gina Perini
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EDITOR'S NOTE

This commentary on the Song of the Vajra was transmitted by Master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche at Tashigar, Cordoba, Argentina over Christmas 1990 and during the first week of January 1991. This teaching was in the context of the first retreat held on the newly purchased land, the Gar of the Southern hemisphere, and was attended by many Vajra brothers and sisters from all over the world.

Although Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has given partial explanations of the Song of the Vajra in the past, this was the first time that he has given a full-scale commentary on it. The teaching was given in English.

The reader will discover that this commentary embodies the essence of the Dzogchen teaching. Each verse of the Song has a secret meaning related to our real state, our potentiality. The verses of the Song of the Vajra are like the tesserae of a mosaic that seem gradually to unfold with each explanation. The Song of the Vajra is indeed the heart of the Dzogchen teaching.

I undertook the work of transcribing and editing this teaching for two reasons: to preserve this rare and precious teaching in a written form, and to make it accessible to all of us, Vajra sisters and brothers of the present and future.

In compiling and editing this teaching I followed the chronological order in which it was given, except for the material in chapter 10, which was transmitted in the middle of the retreat. I kept the editing to a minimum in order to preserve the directness of our Master's transmission and his very distinct style of teaching. We are fully aware that, in the interest of retaining the energy of the oral teaching, the text includes a good deal of non-standard English; anyone who has received teachings from Namkai Norbu Rinpoche will surely appreciate the presence of his personal style. It is for them that this edition is intended.

All the material of this book comes from the same retreat.
Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the meaning of this teaching, misrepresentation or mistakes may still occur, and are solely my responsibility. The Tibetan terms are rendered in the generally accepted transliteration system of Wylie.

Although I initiated this project, the compilation of this book would not have been possible without the collaboration of many Vajra sisters and brothers. This work is the result of understanding and putting into action Rinpoche's exhortation and encouragement that we are all "travellers in the same boat," "Collaboration" he says, "is exchanging energy and is practice in itself."

In reality this work happened as a result of the collaboration of many members of the international communities. Annaliese Hlavac checked the first transcription, inserted all Tibetan terms and compiled the glossary. Glen Eddy made all the line drawings. Laurence Mills checked and corrected my first edited version. Steven Goodman corrected the entire edited version including the Tibetan terms. David Christensen translated the Tibetan extract from Nyi.zla kha.sbyor Tantra. Des Barry proofread the entire book. Thanks are due also to Anthony Leitner for his financial contribution.

Special thanks also to: Purusha Ananda, Giovanni Arca, John Bidleman, Maria Julia Busto, Adriano Clemente, Marit Crammer, Dodo, Jack Ellison, Stephen Ezequelle, Norman Lundell, Steven Petty, George Quasha, Susan Quasha, and Mudita Tuell.

Finally thanks to the Dzogchen Communities of Tsegyalgar, Merigar and California, and the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley for their kind support and encouragement.

May all beings benefit from this book!

Gina Perini
Santa Rosa, Ca. U.S.A.
July 18, 1992
Chogyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche
(Tashigar, Argentina, January, 1991)
Listen, Buddhas free of concepts:
The purpose of this Secret Vajra Song
Is to block the entrance to lower births.
It is the very activity of the Buddhas.

When fortunate yogis
Wander in charnel grounds
They should sing the Song of the Vajra over and over again.
It is the support for being in meditation free of thought,
So precede all activity with it

Sing the Vajra Song
When entering the ganapuja and empowerment mandalas
Put your heart into this Song,
When stabilizing mind in the thought-free state,
Sing the Vajra song at that very moment.

These are the reasons for singing the Vajra Song.
To enter into non-conceptual wisdom,
Bring it about with this Vajra Song;
If you are not in a meditative state,
This Vajra Song will enhance the natural state;

If the yogi's mind is dull,
This Vajra Song will clear it and the samadhi will be excellent.
Seal intrinsic awareness with bliss;
Integrate with the great Mahamudra.

Enter the State through the Master's essential words and transmission;
Emptiness will also be integrated into your mind
And all concepts will be freed in themselves.
Experience the nature of mind.

From the Nyi.zla kha.shyor Tantra
Emakirikiri, Mashtavačaivali,
Samitasurusuru, Kulalimasumasu,
Ekarasulisibhatalaye, Cakirabhulibalaye,
Samunlacaryasughayē, Bhelasanabhukulayē,
Muktācārikaṇa, Malarivailana,
Paralihisāna, Makhatlakelanām,
Sambharalamekacāntapa, Suryabhatalaraipashananā,
Ranabhillsagurhalāpa, Masminsagulilayapa,
Ghuraghurbagakharnālām, Natantarāitarpalālām,
Sirnasirnabhērasapalām, Bhundhabhundhacisha-
sakēlām,
sasā, riri, lili, i i, mimi,
Ra Ra Ra
The Song of the Vajra

Unborn,
Yet continuing without interruption,
Neither coming nor going, omnipresent,
Supreme Dharma,
Immutable space, beyond definition,
Spontaneously, self liberating.
Perfect state without any obstruction,
Existent from the very beginning,
Self created, without location,
With nothing negative to reject,
And nothing positive to accept,
Infinite expanse, all pervading,
Immense and limitless, unbound,
With nothing even to dissolve
Or from which to be liberated.
Present beyond Space and Time,
Existent from the beginning,
Immense dimension of inner space,
The radiance of clarity is like the sun and moon,
Self perfected,
As indestructible as the Vajra
As stable as a mountain,
As pure as a lotus,
Strong as a lion,
Incomparable bliss
Beyond all limits;
Illumination,
Equanimity,
Peak of the Dharma,
Light of the Universe,
Perfect since the very beginning.
The Principle of the Song of the Vajra

The Six Syllables

The Song of the Vajra is very, very important for the Dzogchen teaching, it’s like a key for all the methods that we can learn. If you can understand or learn the Song of the Vajra, then that is sufficient for you. All the important methods of Dzogchen Semde, Longde and Upadesha are related with the Song of the Vajra. Maybe if you just read the Song of the Vajra you may not notice that, but if a teacher has that knowledge and transmits it to you, then you can learn and understand. And if you are going more deeply into the Song of the Vajra, then you discover that its essence is that of the Six Syllables. As you know, at the end of all our practices when we dedicate the merit, we recite the Six Syllable: A A HA SHA SA MA. These Six Syllables are explained in the root Tantra teachings of Dzogchen and are called the “Six Spaces of Samantabhadra.” They refer to the six aspects of our primordial state. In our relative condition we also have the six lokas whose real nature or condition is the Six Syllables, so they are also the essence of Song of the Vajra. In the Dzogchen teaching the Six Syllables are considered a very powerful mantra—essential words for transmitting and also for creating a good cause.

In Dzogchen teaching both the Song of the Vajra and the Six Syllables are called grol.ba drug.ldan. Grol.ba means liberation, while drug means six, thus the six liberations; and ldan means possessing that qualification. These six syllables also refer to our six senses and
their contact with sense objects. This is why contact between our six senses and this mantra can create a good cause for us.

Sometimes written forms of the Six Syllables and the Song of the Vajra are arranged like small mandalas and put in places where people can see them. Although they may not understand or be interested in these writings yet the power of the mantra creates a good cause for them. “Making a cause” does not mean that upon seeing those letters people immediately receive wisdom or enlightenment, but rather those who do not have the cause for being on a path, for receiving and following the teachings, then have that possibility. This is called mthong.grol; mthong means seeing and grol is to liberate, thus liberation through seeing. In Tibet many statues of Guru Padmasambhava and Buddha or various deities are called mthong.grol. These statues have been consecrated by great masters who really have the potentiality and the power for empowering them so that they can create a good cause for the people who see them. For example, in Lhasa there is a very famous statue called Jowo. Tibetans from all parts of the country go to Lhasa principally to see it, as it is also known as that statue which is called mthong.grol chen.mo “great liberation through seeing.” This is particularly useful for creating a good cause for those people who have no capacity and no interest in being on the path by following the teaching and doing the practice. This is an example of one of these Six Liberations.

Another one of these liberations is thos.grol which means “liberation through hearing.” In the so-called Tibetan Book of the Dead there is the thos.grol called the Bar.do thos.grol. Bar.do means intermediate state and thos.grol means liberation through hearing. That means that hearing it makes a good cause for liberation. The Song of the Vajra and the Six Syllables are the very roots of thos.grol, so anyone hearing these sounds receives a good cause for entering the path. If you are on the path, a real practitioner, it is not only you who need a good cause, but you can also create that good cause for others. For a practitioner this mantra has yet another very useful function: by having sensory contact with it, obstacles decrease while clarity increases.
Sometimes incense and scents are empowered with this mantra so that by perceiving that odor or scent a good cause is created. This is called \textit{dri.grol}, liberation through smell.

A good cause is also created through touch when the mantra is written on paper and it is put in contact with your body. This is called \textit{btags.grol}, liberation through touch.

In the Tibetan medical system there are one hundred and eight medicines whose preparation was traditionally taught by Guru Padmasambhava and empowered with this mantra of the Six Syllables. That is called \textit{myong.grol}, liberation through taste. Most of the Buddhist traditions of Tibet make these medicines, some people called them \textit{sman.grub}, \textit{sman} means medicine, \textit{grub} means empowered with practice. Some people call them \textit{dam.rdzas}, \textit{dam} means commitment, \textit{rdzas} means object. It means that these medicines also contain some secret ingredients related with tantric practices, that is why they are called \textit{dam.rdzas}; but most people call it \textit{myong.grol}, \textit{myong} means tasting, and \textit{grol} means to liberate, so that is liberation through tasting. All these are functions of our senses. Through these functions we can create the possibility for liberation.

The last one of our sensory functions is mind. Its general function is thinking and judging, so thinking about the meaning and sound of the Song of the Vajra and the Six Syllables, is called \textit{dran.grol} — \textit{dran} means remembering, and \textit{grol} means liberated. So remembering the Song of the Vajra, its words and meaning, in itself makes a cause for liberation. This is the real meaning of the Six Liberations.

The original Dzogchen texts contain many explanations of the Six Liberations, therefore we consider it a very essential and very important method particularly for transmission.

\textbf{Transmission}

In Dzogchen we have three main methods of transmission: oral, symbolic and direct transmission. The first, oral transmission, implies that the teacher transmits by explaining what is the base and
what is knowledge, and how one can have that knowledge. The student listens and follows and he or she can have at least an idea of what Dzogchen means. In this way one receives the oral transmission. The oral transmission is also linked with the symbolic transmission in that in the latter some symbolic objects are used to make that knowledge understood. For example, when I explain Dzogchen and what self-liberation mean, to make people understand I take the example of the mirror.

What is this mirror? A mirror is an object, a symbol. Perhaps you can have a clearer idea by thinking about or seeing and knowing the function of the mirror, which is the relationship between its reflection and its potentiality. By doing so you can also have more understanding of your own potentiality, of your real nature, the relative function of your senses and your three existences of body, voice and mind. When a person wants to learn about the Dzogchen teaching, the first thing that needs to be learned is to distinguish between mind and the nature of mind: what one’s experiences are, the different kinds of experiences, and what is the instant presence in an experience. If one does not distinguish between these things, then one cannot have knowledge of Dzogchen. To have that knowledge, then, we need examples like that of the mirror. The potentiality of the mirror — the capacity of manifesting reflections — is not the same as the reflection. The reflection is related to a certain object in front of the mirror and the object is manifested in the mirror. We can say that object and reflection are interdependent. That’s why Buddha said that all phenomena in the relative condition are interdependent. We cannot say that an object and its reflection are completely different, or that there is no connection between the reflection and the potentiality of the mirror, nor can we say that the two things are completely different, nor that they are just one thing. This means that we cannot explain it orally, but by taking a symbolic object as an example we can easily understand what cannot easily be explained with words.

Many things can be understood through symbols. Sometimes a symbol has greater function than an oral explanation. We can discover many things through experiences, for our own experi-
ences have a greater capacity and possibility than oral explanations. We are accustomed to think and judge and analyze and explain everything in words. That is not the totality and that is why we have different kinds of transmissions. For example, if someone would ask you, “What is ‘sweet’ like?” You know what ‘sweet’ is, but how would you explain it to someone who does not really know what it is? You know it because you have had that experience, and when you say ‘sweet,’ a person who had that experience immediately knows what ‘sweet’ is. That is called knowing through experience. That’s how symbolic transmission works.

The third method, direct transmission, implies that one already has knowledge of oral and symbolic transmission. Through these two one has an idea of how to enter into the real nature; then by using different experiences together and by entering in that real nature at the same moment with one’s teacher, there is the possibility that one also receives direct transmission. So direct transmission implies the possibility of receiving knowledge, when the student already knows how to work while the teacher transmits that knowledge. Let’s take the example of television: it has many channels. Here in Argentina there are eight or twelve channels. If on a certain channel there is a program that you wish to see, then you must tune into that channel to receive that transmission. If you do not know how to tune into that channel you cannot receive that particular transmission. In the same way if you really want to receive direct transmission, you must be ready, you must be prepared. That means that you really know what “direct transmission” means; and you can be in the primordial state at the same moment with your teacher, so that you really have the possibility to receive that knowledge. It is not like some teachers might say, “Now I am giving you direct transmission,” and you think, “Oh, now I’m receiving something.” That does not mean that you are in the state with the teacher; rather, that means you are living very passively and you also have a very dualistic vision. One receives transmission, direct transmission, in the state of integration. One should not remain in a dualistic condition with the teacher and oneself. That’s why we always use the practice of the Guru Yoga
with the white $A$, by sounding “$A$” we are in that state. There is a saying of Guru Padmasambhava: “All enlightened beings in that real state are of the same principle; in wisdom all enlightened beings are the same.” This does not mean that all beings become one, but they are one in being of the same principle, the same knowledge, the same condition. If we are in the same white $A$, that means we are in the same primordial state.

**Vajra Relationships**

The teacher transmits directly to you that knowledge, and then you wake up to your knowledge — your state — or develop your understanding and clarity. This same function is present when practitioners are doing practice together, because everybody is getting into the same state and experiencing the same state. That’s why we also say “Vajra sisters and brothers.” That’s not a kind of fashion, or a sign of good manners, or formality, such as saying “ladies and gentlemen,” but it refers to practitioners as “sisters and brothers of the Vajra,” because there is a real principle: all practitioners’ real condition is related with this same state. We create this relationship with our fellow practitioners throughout our total realization, and this relationship is much more important than any other.

In general, relationships are very ordinary, although someone might say, “Oh, we are very special friends,” and consider it very important. Yet an ordinary relationship is something related with this life. Never can it go beyond our life; and when we die it finishes in our cemeteries. Someone might say, “Oh, I loved him or her very much,” and then he or she sometimes goes to the cemetery and puts a little flower there. But not everyone is like that, for some people forget very quickly. So that relationship does not last very long. By contrast our Vajra relationships are of the same nature as the Vajra, that is, immutable. That means once the relationship is established we cannot change it, so we must maintain it in purity. But if we are ignorant of this relationship, and create problems, then it becomes an obstacle for realization through the many impediments that we
create. For this reason we must be very careful with the relationships of the Vajra.

You see, the word Vajra here has a very important meaning: sometimes we say, “Teacher of the Vajra, student of the Vajra, relationship of the Vajra, everything is Vajra.” It means something we have, a connection that cannot change. It also means that if we take care, we know that we have great benefit from it. The relationship between practitioners is something like people travelling in the same boat. In the Sutra teaching it is said that samsara is like an ocean, and that the path of liberation is compared to a big boat with someone who is trying to lead, that is, the teacher, and other people following, being careful and doing their best for the journey. The aim of travelling is arriving somewhere beyond that ocean. How then can they succeed? They must collaborate with each other, but if, after just two days of travelling on the ocean of samsara, they start fighting with each other and creating many problems, then they can never cross the ocean. So each person is responsible for the journey of everyone else; which means that each one has his or her commitment towards all the travelers, not only towards some. So that is what is meant by “Vajra brothers and sisters”: all of them are in the same boat and travelling together, so they must understand that their relationship is very important.

Actually, all sentient beings are in the same boat, and by cultivating our bodhicitta intention we try to liberate all sentient beings from the suffering of samsara. However, before we speak of “all sentient beings,” we should collaborate with the people who are in the boat with us, otherwise we cannot do anything in a concrete way. So many people, when they practice, chant and repeat for hundreds and hundreds of times invocations of refuge and bodhicitta, and they say, “Oh, I want to benefit all sentient beings!” Although they have that in mind, on a practical level they do not have contact with all sentient beings, but they do interact with the people who are on the boat. Often, they also have many problems among themselves, so they think about this problem, and that problem. You see, the practice never works that way. So we must
practice very concretely and build a real base of knowledge of the teaching.

The Three Vajras

Now you can see the importance of the Song of the Vajra and the Six Syllables. And if we want to be even more concise and essential then we have OM A HUM — the Three Vajras. You see, our relative existence is three-fold: body, voice and mind. The essence or real condition of our body, voice and mind is these Three Vajras, which also represent the essence of the Song of the Vajra and the Six Syllables. For that reason, in the Dzogchen teaching, when we do purification practice, we consider OM A HUM the most powerful mantra. Also when we do Guru Yoga in a very essential way, we practice with OM A HUM. When you practice Dzogchen, first you have A, the most essential principle. Then you develop a little more and you have OM A HUM. This means that through your primordial state you manifest body, voice and mind, the three existences. Still you develop a little more, and you have the aspects of the six lokas, and the six dimensions. Why do we have the six lokas? Because we have the six passions or emotions, and, in general, we are distracted, we always accumulate these emotions, and consequently we create much karma. With the production of that karma we have samsara, and that samsara is mainly presented as the six lokas. If you have knowledge and have received transmission then there is the possibility of reversing the six lokas into their nature instead of continuing in samsara. That is the symbol of the Six Syllables, A A HA SHA SA MA. You can develop this still further with the Song of the Vajra, all seed syllables of the Song of the Vajra being linked to the central channel of your material body.

All parts of your body also have the different functions of energy, because these functions are related with different characteristic sounds contained in the Song of the Vajra. When you have that knowledge, then you have the possibility of dissolving your existence, your material body, into its nature, and integrating into
your real condition. For that reason in the Song of the Vajra, all its syllables are important and developed in that way. You see, the Dzogchen teaching is very concise in that way. You start with A and then OM HUM, so when you do Guru Yoga, the very concentrated Guru Yoga, you do only A.

Yidam

Usually people who follow the Kriyatantra or Yogatantra style of teaching, teachers and students alike, all speak very much of yidam — "This is my Yidam, this is his Yidam", and they consider the Yidam very important. Of course, if you are a follower of the practice of Yogatantra, a Yidam is important, but what is the answer if you are a practitioner of Dzogchen and someone would ask you, "Say, who is your Yidam? Which is your Yidam?"

In the Dzogchen teaching in the Semde series it is written that a monk once asked Tenzin Dharmabodhi, "Who is our Yidam?" And then Dharmabodhi said, "My Yidam is A." The monk could not understand what he meant, and he might have thought that maybe Tenzin Dharmabodhi was a little stupid and that he had no knowledge of the Yidam. What does Yidam really mean from the point of view of the Yogatantra? You see, starting from Kriyatantra and up to the Yogatantra, the idea of practice is mainly to do something to contact enlightened beings. They have knowledge, enlightened beings have infinite wisdom and knowledge, and by contacting them you may or may not have some possibility to receive that wisdom. Depending on your contact with them in your past lives, some contact with these enlightened beings may or may not occur. Let us take for example, three enlightened beings: Avalokitesvara, Manjusri, and Buddha Amitayus. We know that all these three are enlightened beings who have infinite wisdom, and have the same qualifications: if they did not have the same qualifications it would mean that they were not fully realized. Even though all three are fully enlightened beings, if we need to do some practice related to our longevity, we practice it not with Manjusri, but with Buddha Amitayus. If, on the other hand, I feel a little stupid and dull and
want some practice to develop my clarity, I do not choose a practice linked with Buddha Amitayus, but rather one with Manjusri. While if I lack compassion, and I want to develop compassionate feelings, then, of course, I do a practice linked with Avalokitesvara, not one with Manjusri. But this does not mean Manjusri has no compassion, for all these enlightened beings have the same qualification. So why do we do it in this way? It seems that all enlightened beings have developed some special wisdom; because when they were on the path they had a lot to do with that particular aspect of wisdom.

Buddha Amitayus was not a Buddha from the beginning, even though he has a perfect state, or perfect qualifications, but he was still on the path, and then he realized the path. When Buddha Amitayus was on the path, he had many relationships with sentient beings who had life problems. Later Buddha Amitayus reached total enlightenment and those beings, through their previous connection with Buddha Amitayus, now have the possibility of receiving that wisdom. Imagine, for example, that Buddha Amitayus is my Yidam: that means that when Buddha Amitayus was on the path, I had a relationship with him. Then I prepare myself by doing some practice so that I increase that possibility that I already had to receive wisdom. That is the idea of Yidam. When we say, "my Yidam," it means that either the teacher or someone else indicates that perhaps you have had something to do with that particular Yidam in your past life.

In general, for example, if you receive an initiation and teaching of Avalokitesvara, of course you have some connection; otherwise you could never have received it. It is not important what kind of relationship we have, big or small, or good or bad, though of course the best is to have a good relationship. Even a bad relationship is much better than nothing, because there is the possibility of receiving wisdom. So if we have at least that kind of relationship we can prepare ourselves, we do practice, and so forth so that we can have more possibility to receive wisdom.

In the word Yidam, yid means "mind," and dam means "sacred," holy mind. It means something linked with our real condition in relationship with these enlightened beings. In teachings belonging
to the Yogatantra and Kriyatantra systems it is considered very important to do the practice on the path for receiving wisdom, therefore choosing a Yidam and doing that practice is very important. On the other hand if we speak of a practice like Dzogchen, then it is not only a matter of receiving wisdom in order to develop your clarity so that one knows what the path is; following Dzogchen teaching we already have an idea of the path. It is as if one were to study philosophy and would think that for doing so it would be necessary first to study the alphabet. However, we already know the alphabet and are getting ready to study philosophy; in the same way the principle in Dzogchen teaching is not the practice of Yidam.

Of course it doesn’t mean that when you do Dzogchen practice you completely discard the Yidam, and this kind of practice. On the contrary, you can use any of those practices in Dzogchen teaching, but it never becomes the main point. Also in Antaruttarantra we have a Yidam, which you receive and practice through the method of transformation, but it has a different point of view. Let’s say, for example, that you receive the initiation of Kalachakra. Then you say that Kalachakra is your Yidam, but it doesn’t mean that you are praying to Kalachakra so that you can receive that wisdom. In this case Kalachakra is the path, you are using that method of transformation and by being in that clarity you realize that wisdom.

**The Path of Transformation**

Also, most of the teachings like Yogatantra and Kriyatantra — the Lower Tantras — most of them are linked with the oral teaching. Some Kriyatantra teachings were taught by Buddha Shakyamuni somewhere in the human world; some others, like teachings of Yogatantra, are considered to have been taught in other dimensions, but the way the teachings are transmitted is mostly in the oral way. While the Higher Tantra, the path of transformation, is not really oral teaching. That teaching is transmitted by transformation and manifestation. It is very important
that you know that. If you practice Tantrism, then you must understand why you transform and why you are getting in that dimension.

You see, enlightened beings have infinite potentialities and wisdom, but they have no form or color; they do not say, "This is my form and color." In fact when we say "the state of Dharmakaya, the real condition of Dharma," that means beyond form and color. That is the real condition of enlightened beings. But if there is only that state beyond form and color, what could be transmitted? How can people then receive transmission? It means that there must be manifestations. There is always the possibility of having manifestation because that is part of the qualification — Dharmakaya is emptiness, but it does not mean that nothing manifests.

Again, we can take the example of the mirror. We can imagine that the potentiality of the mirror represents something like the state of enlightened beings, beyond form and color. Yet if there are circumstances in front of the mirror, an object for example, then that object manifests. So, when there are people who are interested in the teaching, who have the capacity to receive transmission, then enlightened beings manifest that particular circumstance, exactly how it appears. Yamantaka, for example, is a manifestation of Manjusri; the real condition of Manjusri is the Dharmakaya beyond form and color, yet there is a manifestation of Yamantaka. Why and how did that manifestation appear? Manjusri had contact with beings of the Yama class. In the universe we have many kinds of beings, not only humans. Generally, we have an idea of human beings and some kinds of animals, and we believe only in these existences because they are concrete: we do not believe in the existence of something that we cannot see. In reality there are many kinds of beings in the universe, many kinds of beings which we cannot see, many with whom we can have no contact — we are really very ignorant of all these beings.

Most people do not believe in the existence of other kinds of beings because they cannot see them. That is not really a correct reason to deny their existence, if we cannot see them, that does not mean they do not exist. There are many causes which prevent us
from seeing them, for example, distance and time — we cannot see the past, or the future, but who can say that tomorrow does not exist?

At night if we look at the sky we see infinite stars, galaxies and solar systems. We don't know how they are, and what kinds of beings are there, because we do not have the capacity to see that distance. So, we might have the idea that all these galaxies are inhabited only by beings like humans and animals. If we live with that point of view it means we are very narrow-minded.

So there are many kinds and classes of beings. Some kinds of beings have a high capacity, for instance, there are many kinds of beings who have power and potentiality to control energy. Of course there are many beings who are less powerful than humans, and with different conditions too. One of these kinds of beings is called Yama, belonging to the Yama class. What does a being of the Yama class look like?" We don’t know, we have no real capacity to see and to have contact with them; also we don’t really know in which direction, in which place Yama people live. But if we want to know how Yama people look, then we can have an idea from the manifestation of Manjusri known as Yamantaka. This manifestation appears just like a reflection on a mirror. If a Yama being is in front of a mirror, although the mirror has no concept of color and form, it still manifests the form of the Yama.

So in Anuttaratantra teaching, all manifestations of deities have that principle. What does that form, that manifestation mean? That is only a symbol, a symbol for communicating, otherwise there is no possibility for communicating, so the manifestation of this form is an energy manifestation, which is related with our clarity and energy, and through that channel — clarity and energy — the manifestation transmits that knowledge directly and it manifests through sound. Sound is the base, and from sound comes light and rays. The characteristic nature of sound is the mantra of that principal tantra, because mantra is sound. So when we transform and get in that state, we use that particular mantra linked with the manifestation; and through the power of the mantra we integrate our existence in that symbol, so that manifestation is like having a
possibility of working with our clarity. This is the main point of the meaning of transformation. Although we may not have the possibility of having direct contact with enlightened beings, yet we have the possibility of realization by applying the method of transformation. That possibility is given to us by enlightened beings, and masters who have that capacity, introducing that teaching orally, and by using symbols like the figure of a mandala linked with that dimension, and by explaining how that manifestation happens to be. That represents the symbol by which we transform our dimension.

All manifestations such as Yamantaka and so on, represent all our functions of energy. We enter in that dimension when we receive that specific information from our teacher who empowers our dimension with that specific mantra, and takes us on that path of transformation. That is called initiation, and you can receive it if you really know what that truly means. But nowadays, for most people, initiation is only a ceremony, and the people who receive it have the idea of receiving a kind of blessing; that is why people don’t know that transformation is a path. So, in this example, Kalachakra is the Yidam, it means an example for you, for realization, or like a possibility of manifestation; so that is also called Yidam.

**Dzogchen Method of Practice**

In Dzogchen it is not necessary that you practice in the way of transformation, for the main point of the Dzogchen teaching is not transformation. This does not mean that we do not transform, for we can do that as well. If you follow the Dzogchen teaching you must be free to apply whatever practice you think is necessary, according to your feeling, to the kind of feeling you have. But it does not mean that you apply everything according to what you feel without knowing the principle. On the contrary, you discover your real nature and try to be in that state. So in this case what is your Yidam? Your Yidam is the white A. Your Yidam is really your state, being in your real state; you can be in your state with the
white A, with the Six Syllables, and with the Song of the Vajra. Sometimes, if you have more time, more possibility, and you feel like singing and chanting and doing something more, that is fine, but you also have circumstances in which you cannot do complicated things. So you know what the circumstances are, and you work accordingly that way. That is how we do practice in Dzogchen.

*OM A HUM*, these three syllables, are one of the most important mantras. When you do Guru Yoga with *OM A HUM*, you can directly visualize the three seed syllables in your three places: forehead, throat, and heart. You pronounce *OM A HUM* knowing the state of body, voice and mind. That means you are unified in the state of the three Vajras. You are also empowering your existence and integrating in those three Vajras. If you have a better idea for practice or, if you are accustomed to practice in the tantric style where the practices are characterized by many personified visualizations — personified that is in rays, color and form — then you do Guru Yoga in a *thun*, and you visualize Guru Padmasambhava, for example. This method is related to the tantric system of transformation in the Anuyoga style. If you practice according to Dzogchen system, only doing visualization of the white A in a *thig.le* has the same function as personified visualization — you can realize and you can have all possibilities. However sometimes it is also very useful for you to use the transformation method because it gives you the possibility of manifesting. You can learn more about transformation in the *Bar.do thos.grol, The Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

**Bardo**

In this book there is an explanation of wrathful and peaceful manifestations in the *bar.do*. Why do we have these characteristic manifestations? Because in our nature we have two conditions, the calm state and movement. The base of our real nature is emptiness. The aspect of emptiness, or calm state, is related to calm or peaceful manifestations. Our real condition however is not only the calm
state, we also have movement — our thoughts, the functions of our senses, our energy functions — everything is part of our real nature, and in our nature we also have movement. This aspect of movement equates with wrathful manifestations, but how can we experience those manifestations? We must receive transmission during our life time. The teacher gives you transmission, and upon receiving transmission, you apply that and enter in that method of transformation now that you have the possibility of manifesting. Then, in the state of the bar.do of the nature of existence, at that moment, there are possibilities for manifesting your potentiality. When you have that possibility, and have received transmission, then at that moment the wrathful and peaceful forms manifest. If you don’t remain in a dualistic vision of subject and object, but you know your manifestation is your manifestation, your potentiality, then in that moment you have total realization; and this total realization is called realization of Sambhogakaya. This is why manifestation is considered important. This does not mean that everybody, when they arrive in the bar.do, has the manifestation of wrathful and peaceful forms. If you had no transmission, if you did not receive that method linked with that potentiality, you will not have that vision and your passage of that state will be only with sound, light and rays.

Also, when most beings have that experience, they lose their presence, because in that state there is no function of the mind. Therefore they have no recognition of their qualification. Even though there is that manifestation of their qualification, it has no function. So, if you prepare a little in your lifetime, then there is a possibility. You see, all transformation methods that we receive through initiations and their application and so on, give us that possibility. It is like putting some objects in front of a mirror to have the possibility that they manifest in a mirror. Therefore it is sometimes also very useful and important to apply transformation methods; that’s why in our thun book we integrate all practices, particularly in a thun in which we use the Anuyoga style of practice. It is a method of transformation, but linked with the principle of Guru Yoga, so then it is easy to get in a state of contemplation. This
is similar to the function of the Song of the Vajra in relation to contemplation. As for me, the Dzogchen teaching means the Song of the Vajra. For me there is nothing more important than the Song of the Vajra. So in these days we can learn about this principle of the Song of the Vajra a little deeper.
The Three Statements of Garab Dorje

The Dzogchen teachings were divided into the three series of Semde, Longde, and Upadesha by Garab Dorje’s first disciple Manjusrimitra. The criterion by which the teachings were divided by Manjusrimitra reflects the famous three statements of Garab Dorje which is a kind of conclusion or summary of the Dzogchen teaching. The first one, *ngo.rang.thog.tu.sprad*, is direct introduction, meaning that the teacher introduces the disciple to his or her own nature. The second one, *thag.gcig.thog.tu.gcad*, is not to remain in doubt, meaning that the teacher gives methods related with different kinds of experiences, and by applying those methods in a concrete way the student can have concrete experience; and does not remain in doubt about his knowledge. Not having doubt does not mean that a person decides upon and believes in something. Rather it means that through concrete experience there is his or her own discovery. If you don’t know what “sweet” means, then you might put a small piece of sugar in your mouth and you discover what sweet tastes like, after which you will not be in doubt about your knowledge of sweet because you know it concretely. If instead, you do not have that knowledge directly, then maybe today you listen to someone, or you read and think and you come up with some belief, so you have decided about something; but tomorrow you might change your belief because your understanding is only intellectual. But if you experience directly, there is nothing to be changed. If you have tasted something sweet and discovered its sweetness, then how can you change your experience? If you see a
new object, for example—something that you did not know before—and then someone asks you to forget what you have just seen, though you might pretend that you had not seen it, how could you change your idea or cancel that experience? You have had that experience! On the contrary, if you had not had that experience and then someone just told you about it, although you might have believed that person, later you may easily change your idea. This is the meaning of not remaining in doubt: with experience you discover. So this second statement refers to how to learn and receive Dzogchen teaching and how a Dzogchen teacher communicates the teaching and that knowledge.

Then we have the third statement, *gdengs.grol.thog.tu.'cha'* , meaning you continue in that knowledge and understanding and you integrate. This means that your understanding, which you discovered just for a moment, is not sufficient. You have to integrate that understanding in your existence, because you are still alive, living in samsara. You still have your body, speech and mind in a very normal way. For example, you know the five elements and that their real nature is the five colors. The nature of the water element is the color white, but if you are thirsty you need water. You need something concrete, that is water, on the material level; your idea of the color white is not sufficient. On the other hand, if when you are thirsty and you imagine the color white and thus overcome your thirst, that means you have a little realization, that knowledge of the nature of an element is something concrete for you. But ordinarily it never works that way. So, that means that as long as we have the material level, our body and our needs are still something concrete, and for having the function of the nature of the elements we must first have knowledge and understanding, and then we need realization. For realization we need to have the capacity of integrating and to be in that knowledge. Then we are continuously in that knowledge, as though we are of the nature of the mirror, and then we can also have self-liberation.

You remember, a mirror has no problem with good or bad reflections? Though you can understand that intellectually, if you want to realize that in relation to your existence, how can you say
that you feel no difference between good and bad? If someone insults you, you immediately get upset, if you don’t feel any difference between good and bad, then there is no reason for feeling upset. Why do we always have a lot of problems? Because we have concrete existence, and just an intellectual understanding, or an experience of some kind, is not sufficient. Many people have this kind of idea: they intellectually learn a little bit about the principle of Dzogchen, they understand that good and bad are of the same principle, the same taste, and they conclude, “Why do we accept the positive things and reject the negative ones when in the real sense there is no difference?” That kind of reasoning is the result of intellectual understanding, for if someone insults you and makes you angry, you manifest anger immediately; then you know there is a difference. We must be careful not to confuse ourselves with intellectual understanding alone.

**The Three Series of Dzogchen**

These are the three statements of Garab Dorje. His disciple, Manjusrimitra, made a collection of all the teachings of Garab Dorje and divided them into the three series of Dzogchen — Semde, Longde and Upadesha teaching.

Why did he divide them into three parts? Because the three statements of Garab Dorje are like a key for everything. Thus all the teachings belonging to the principle of “direct introduction” are called Dzogchen Semde (sems.sde). Methods which are mainly for “not remaining in doubt” — for having experience — this entire series is called Dzogchen Longde (klong.sde). Klong means space and space is the base of manifestations. For example klong.chen, total space, means universe. Dzogchen Longde and particularly Dzogchen Upadesha practices are both related to our visions and manifestation. The Longde teaching series is related with space. Space is the base of manifestation, such as manifestations of our five elements, and all functions related with the senses, all movements — all this manifests in space. There wouldn’t be any manifestation without space.
Then the third series is called Upadesha in Sanskrit and *man.ngag.sde* in Tibetan, and it means a more secret series. In general *man* means negation, saying no, not; *ngag* means voice, so it refers to something which should not be talked about publicly. These are methods transmitted secretly by the teacher to interested people. Why are they secret? There are many reasons for that: first, Upadesha methods are for developing and as Garab Dorje said, “continuing in the state of contemplation.” If you learn and you apply that method, it means you must have something, something you continue with. For example, if we say, “we integrate, we continue,” what do we continue? We continue in the state of contemplation, but if you have no knowledge of contemplation and you just learn the method for continuing, then that is similar to having a field without seeds in it and watering it everyday. You are just doing a job and learning the best method for doing it. You can do that work for years and years, but nothing will grow, and that is very dangerous. Because of that, these teachings are kept secret, and a realized teacher knows whether people have real knowledge or not. When there is a possibility, of course, the teacher transmits them.

Many Westerners are very curious and they often say, “Oh, please teach me this Upadesha method, or *thod.rgal* practice.” They are just trying to get some methods that satisfy them. If there is a possibility of real transmission, the teacher always communicates; but if that possibility is not present, and the teacher insists on communicating to them, it does not work. For that reason also the series is called *man.ngag*. When we say “develop contemplation,” it means that one must have that base of contemplation. How can you have contemplation concretely? You can have it if you study, learn, and apply it in a concrete way, like in Dzogchen Semde, that is the main point.

Nowadays, my personal experience is that, in general, in the Nyingmapa tradition in Tibet, if a person asks for Dzogchen teaching, they immediately give him or her some teachings belonging to Upadesha. Why? Because many of the terma teachings are associated with Upadesha, and they regard the termas as special methods
related with Upadesha, and in fact many teachings have developed that way. Actually, some termas are always used when Upadesha teaching are given.

In the same way, when I started to teach Dzogchen in Italy, I first taught Dzogchen Upadesha and continued to do so for more than two years. Then I noticed that most of the people following the teaching just had very nice ideas about it. Of course, it is not so difficult if you only learn dry words such as saying, “Oh, Dzogchen is beyond concept, Dzogchen is your real nature.” You can learn these words and repeat them, and they seem very elegant, but what do they really mean if you are not integrated, if you are not in that knowledge? They are just words without life and that is very dangerous if you believe, “Oh, I have knowledge of Dzogchen, I understood the Dzogchen he taught.” You might remain that way one, two, even three years, maybe till the end of your life! That’s the danger! For that reason then I started to teach Dzogchen Semde and, for more than three years, everywhere I went around the world giving retreats, that’s all I taught. I know that nowadays in Tibet some teachers give Dzogchen Semde and Longde only like initiations, or just like oral transmissions, but they do not use these series very much because many people follow terma teachings. People have these kind of ideas, “Oh, this is my teacher, this is the lineage of my teacher, it’s a wonderful terma,” and then they limit themselves only to that. For that reason too, we did Dzogchen Semde practice, and later I really noticed that people started to have some concrete knowledge of the Dzogchen teaching.
For our teaching and practice, the Song of the Vajra is like a key for everything that we are going to learn in this retreat. When you are learning the Song of the Vajra, first you learn to get into the state of the white A, that is the principle. How do you directly get into the state of the white A? We start with EMAKIRIKIRI.

We can learn the Song of the Vajra in three different ways. The first way is through the sound; the sound represents the different functions of our chakras; for learning this in a precise way, we must learn through books. Otherwise, even if I explain something you wouldn’t be able to remember it. The second way is through the meaning, the meaning of the words of the Song of the Vajra. Although there might exist a translation of the words of the Song of the Vajra, it is not so easy to understand because every word is something like a key, a symbol. The third point to be understood is what we call dgongs.pa, which means the state. This three-fold aspect of the Song of the Vajra is related to the three aspects of our existence: body, speech and mind. This is similar to what we previously learned about transmission — transmission is three-fold and it relates to our three aspects of existence. The Song of the Vajra too has three main points relating directly to our existence. The Tibetan word dgongs.pa means the real condition or state. How does this word correspond to the three aspects of our existence? If we communicate or transmit through direct transmission, what we transmit is dgongs.pa. So, we must learn a little through the
dgongs.pa state, then we can discover how the Song of the Vajra is really a key for all methods and teachings.

EMAKIRIKIRI MASHTAVALIVALI SAMITASURUSURU KUTALIMASUMASU

Dzogchen Semde

The first section of the Song of the Vajra is formed by four lines. You see, first EMAKIRIKIRI has six syllables, and there are four lines with the same rhythm, EMAKIRIKIRI MASHTAVALIVALI SAMITASURUSURU KUTALIMASUMASU. In all these words, for example, when you find a repetition like kirikiri or surusuru, and so on, the first two pairs of letters sound short, and the second two pairs are longer. When we are learning the function of sound in relation to our body, then the short sounds are linked to our right side, and the longer ones are linked to the left side. The state of dgongs.pa, real knowledge or understanding is related with these four lines of the Song of Vajra, and these first four lines are related with the teaching called The Four Contemplations, which are presented mainly in the Dzogchen Semde.

The first series, Semde is the base of Dzogchen teaching. Semde (sems.sde), with sms being the short form for jangchubsem (byang.chub.sems), which in Sanskrit is called bodhicitta. But the concept of bodhicitta according to the Sutra Teaching, and that of Dzogchen, are completely different. In the Sutra system we refer to absolute bodhicitta as the knowledge of emptiness, while relative bodhicitta means to cultivate compassion; so there is a consideration of relative and absolute bodhicitta.

In Dzogchen teaching, bodhicitta means our primordial state. In Tibetan we say byang.chub.sems: byang means "purified"; it means that since the beginning our real nature, our potentiality, is pure: chub means "perfected," so our real nature is perfected since the beginning. Since the beginning, this purified and perfected state is our real nature. There is no difference whether we call it Dzogchen,
bodhicitta or Ati — the primordial state is always the same. The Tibetan word *sems.sde* comes from the root *sems* plus *sde* meaning "series" of teachings to communicate that knowledge, so that we can have that knowledge through these teachings.

So these teachings are the very base of Dzogchen; they were transmitted from Garab Dorje, the main teacher of Dzogchen, to Guru Padmasambhava. Later, when Guru Padmasambhava was in Tibet, he transmitted them along with the teaching of Dzogchen Upadesha; and he said that the Dzogchen Semde are the roots of the Dzogchen teaching. Dzogchen Semde includes many Tantras and original texts. Padmasambhava sent his disciple Vairocana to Oddiyana to search for those texts and teachings in order to introduce them in Tibet. While he was in Oddiyana, Vairocana met his teacher, and mainly received the transmission of Dzogchen Semde and Longde and later he introduced and transmitted them in Tibet. Dzogchen Semde is the most important teaching in Dzogchen and it offers very concrete methods for having knowledge of Dzogchen.

**The Four Contemplations**

There are different methods in Dzogchen Semde. It includes eighteen original texts, and these texts also have eighteen systems on how to apply contemplation. Among these the one which is considered more universal — and was widespread even in ancient time — is the method of the *ting.nge.dzin*: the Four Contemplations. From that method of the Four Contemplations also developed, in more recent times, a teaching belonging to the Kagyudpa tradition: that is the Mahamudra teaching of Gampopa. Gampopa explained Mahamudra with the Four Yogas. Both methods are presented in a very similar way. The Dzogchen Semde method became very important not only for the Dzogchen teaching in general, but also in Mahamudra. The first of the Four Yogas is called *rtse.gcig*, "one pointed state," meaning something related to the idea of the Sutra teaching. The second level is *spras.bral*, "beyond concept," and it incorporates also the idea of the Madhyamika teaching. The third
level, ro.gcig means "same flavor," and the last one, sgom.med, means "beyond meditation."

So, in Dzogchen why are these teachings called the Four Contemplations? If you have knowledge and know the principle of contemplation, even if you are getting in an experience like that of emptiness, that state of emptiness can then be contemplation, and the way of working with different experiences also becomes contemplation. Also some texts of Dzogchen Semde are called Four Naljyor, Four Yogas, which is a more general name.

The first Naljyor (rna/. 'byor.), rtse.gcig, "the one pointed state," is very important and must be understood very clearly. If you are practicing according to the Sutra system then learning to meditate starts with calm state, which is something like fixation. Then, you enter in a calm state, and your attention is one-pointed in that state. In that calm state you may notice the functions of your senses and if, for example, someone is walking around and making noise, you notice that; but it does not mean you are integrating it just because you are in a one-pointed state. You never move from that, otherwise you would lose your calm state; for that reason it is called a one-pointed state.

In the Dzogchen way, contemplation does not mean you are keeping a one-pointed state inside. You are a human being and you have all the organs of the senses with all their consciousnesses. Therefore you have contact of your senses with objects. So, if you are in a one-pointed state, it means you are no longer working. It is something like sitting in a room with the door and windows shut and being afraid of any movements occurring around you. You think, "I must be in that calm state continuously otherwise I will lose this." You have no capacity to turn your head and look around, otherwise you would lose your calm state. In Dzogchen, contemplation means to be present in such a function. Your senses are not one-pointed inside. On the contrary, they are in their own nature — your senses are working, your eyes are not directed inside, but outside. Do you know why your eyes are directed outside? For seeing! There are objects, things to be seen, you can have that contact because you can see. There is nothing wrong with seeing
an object, that’s part of your clarity. In the same way, all your senses, their sense objects and your mind, and whatever thoughts might arise — all this is dharma, phenomena — you do not need to shut it off, you are in that presence. That is the way we do contemplation in Dzogchen.

There is a very good example about this point given by a great Dzogchen Master called Nubsangye Yeshe (gnubs.sangs.rgyas ye.shes). Some scholars consider him a direct disciple of Guru Padmasambhava, others say he lived later, but in any case he was a great Dzogchen Master, and he wrote some very important books about the Dzogchen teaching. In one of his books, to give a clear understanding of the difference between Sutra and Dzogchen meditation, he gave the example of how birds pick seeds from the ground. If you throw some seeds or grains on the ground, many birds will come to pick them up, one-by-one. If you look at them, it seems that each bird, while picking up the seeds, is looking at the earth, but in reality, the bird cannot see the earth because it is concentrated on the seed. There is another example given: some people, in order to thread a needle easily, hold the needle up against the sky. It seems that the person is looking at the sky, but in reality, he or she is not seeing the sky because they are concentrated on the eye of the needle.

These examples show that when you are in a one-pointed state, you concentrate everything in that calm state, and if you have developed a little more, you are then concentrated in that emptiness, but you are not integrating in the movement. On the contrary, in Dzogchen, since the very beginning when we learn about our nature or real condition, we don’t consider that our nature is only emptiness, but that movement too is present. The great Dzogchen Master Garab Dorje explained this, “There is no difference between being in movement and being in the calm state.” Why did he say that? Because in general, people who follow and apply the Sutra method, consider that contemplation or meditation is only getting in a calm state, or emptiness, and then remaining one-pointed in that state. When thoughts arise they do not like it, but if no thought arises then they feel, “Now my meditation is developing.” But in
Dzogchen that is not really the perfect way, because that calm state of emptiness is not contemplation. Contemplation is that state in which there is a presence. You are “being” in that presence — that is called contemplation, and emptiness is only an experience.

As you can have many kinds of experiences, if one is confused between the experience of emptiness and contemplation, one might spend years and years remaining only in emptiness, and then it’s very difficult to have realization. It is like travelling, but being confused about your destination, and still saying, “Oh, I am going to see Mount Kailash.” If you want to see Mount Kailash, you must travel into Tibet, and then you try to take that direction, that path leading to Kailash; but maybe when you arrive somewhere in Afghanistan, or Pakistan, or somewhere else, and you find a comfortable place, a very nice hotel, then you are satisfied. You think, “Now I am in Kailash.” You can rest there for years and years, but still that is not Kailash. The difference between the experience of emptiness and contemplation is something like that — if you stop at an experience, then you cannot have realization.

For that reason, in the Dzogchen way, the first thing we try to discover is how to distinguish between all aspects of mind and the state of the nature of mind. We distinguish between experience and instant presence. So these are the main points in Dzogchen Semde, and the Four Contemplations relate to different experiences, and we need to discover that.

EMAKIRIKIRI

Calm State

The first line in the Song of the Vajra — EMAKIRIKIRI — refers to the calm state and this means the experience of emptiness. So, how can we get in that calm state, and how can we then discover that emptiness? Then, after discovering that emptiness, how do we know that it is an experience? And what is the difference between that emptiness and the state of contemplation?
The calm state is called *gnas.pa* in Dzogchen Semde. In general, *gnas.pa* is more or less the same as shamatha in the Sutra teaching; or, *zhi.gnas* as it is called in other Buddhist traditions. *Zhi* means peaceful, *gnas* means remaining, staying in that state is called *gnas.pa*.

How can we have this experience, EMAKIRIKIRI? We start with fixation, which is for coordinating our confusion. In general we are very charged and we have a lot of confusions and if someone would say to us, “Try to get in a calm state,” we do not know how to do that. Or, if someone would say, “You relax a little without thinking, without having too many thoughts,” we have no idea at all how to get in that state. For that reason we have the method of fixation and we can learn it in different ways. Some traditions teach fixation by looking at a statue of Buddha, or a figure of Manjusri or some other deity. Why? Because we, particularly tantric practitioners, have the idea of pure and impure vision, and therefore if you have a pure vision in front of you, you can receive its influence and get some benefit from it. If you have in front of your eyes something that you consider impure, then you may feel nervous or have some problems, and for that reason a nice, peaceful object is used. Sometimes practitioners employ objects that are used when applying other methods, such as the forms and colors related to the elements. By fixating on symbols that they are accustomed to, imagination arises more easily in their minds. You can do fixation with any kind of object, but you should not use something bright and shining because that would damage your sight.

**Fixation with support**

In Dzogchen when we do this practice in a precise way, we do fixation on a white *A* in a *thig.le* of five colors. Looking at a white *A* also helps your imagination to have the idea of the white *A*. We put this white *A* somewhere in front of us, the positioning of it depending on each individual’s condition. If you easily fall asleep while fixating, then you must put the object a little higher, so that you do fixation with your eyes wide open. On the contrary, if you
are very agitated then you put it a little lower so that you are fixing it with your eyes half-closed. And if your condition is quite normal, then you do it in a normal way, however you feel. So this is how we use the white A. You start first by fixating on it very sharply, meaning by putting all your attention upon it. If you have a lot of confusion, you are agitated or you have any kind of problem, you can also do fixation by sounding A. People who usually have many problems in doing fixation, and feel they will never succeed, can use more sounding. In any case, first you do a very sharp fixation, something like a triangle, that is to say, the triangle points towards the direction you are fixing, while the two corners are towards you so that all aspects of your body, speech and mind and all confusion, everything, is pointed to that fixation.

If you do this fixation sharply, then you have no thoughts. They are automatically blocked, but you cannot remain that way for a long time; if you try to remain in that sharp fixation for a long time, when you finish your practice you will realize that you are nervous. This is true not only for fixation, but particularly if you do tantric visualization of deities. Many people, instead of realizing the deity, realize only nervousness, because of always doing a very sharp visualization: feeling and thinking and insisting. After the practice is finished, they feel very nervous. So if you practice transformation methods, it is very important that you remember to relax.

So you start by fixating sharply, only for a few seconds, and slowly, slowly, you relax. When you are relaxed you notice thoughts arising. When you notice thoughts arising, then you observe the power of the thoughts, how they manifest, until you are distracted by these thoughts; then you follow them and your presence of contemplation is interrupted. As soon as you are aware of this, immediately you fixate again sharply, but you don't continue for a long time. Then again you try to relax and observe. This is a very important point on how to work with fixation. If you do fixation in this way, you quickly realize that you can get in a calm state and relax completely; even if you have many thoughts, you have no problem with them. That means you have succeeded with your fixation, and do not need to continue this practice for days
and days. Many traditions advise practitioners to begin by doing fixation for seven days and then pass on to the second level. That is not a good idea, it doesn’t mean a thing; you could do it even for a month or a year but, if you don’t know really how it works, there is no realization. But if you are doing practice in a concrete way and you know really how to work with your existence, your condition and how your thoughts manifest, and so on, you can realize fixation in one or two days.

If you have been repeating the practice for many days, but you have problems with it not succeeding, sometimes it appears as if the object of fixation is going through changes. For example, instead of seeing a white A and thig.le, maybe you see the face of a person, or something terrible, something wonderful, or something like a manifestation of Buddha. Everything is possible because these phenomena are related to your tension. This means that you are fixating very sharply and you have a lot of tension. It is an indication that you must relax, that’s all. If you see something like a manifestation of Buddha, do not immediately think, “Now I am realized, my practice works very fast. In just a few days I already have a contact with Buddha, I am already realized.” Some people do have this kind of idea.

Some people who are rather paranoid and have many problems can have visions of wrathful forms like terrible faces. They might judge that as being bad, but that has nothing to do with good and bad, it is only a question of tension. It is important, especially if you are not succeeding and have problems, that you remember to use more sound. In this you first sound A and you start to look at the support — the white A — then you sound again and you relax all your tension and you should not fixate in the way of the triangle. When you finish sounding, then you fix a little sharper; then you change your breathing and again you sound and you relax. You repeat this seven, ten, or twenty times, and then you’ll succeed. So when you have no problem, you are doing fixation on an object, immediately you can get in that calm state. Even if thoughts arise or there is movement around you, you have no problems. Now you have realized your fixation with an object, or with a support.
Fixation without support

Then you can start to do fixation without support. The best time to do this is early morning, or evening, and in an open place. If you are practising in the morning, you should face West; and in the afternoon you should face the opposite direction, so that you have no problem with glaring light. Open your eyes well and gaze into the space of the sky. Start by fixating in the manner of the triangle. There is no white A, nor thig.le, there is nothing, but the way of doing fixation is the same as you did with the A, only you are gazing in one place without moving your eyes.

Generally, if you move your eyes, you then have problems of movement, but if you keep them stable, gazing into empty space, then your breathing, your energy function, and the function of your senses, and everything, remains calm. So you continue like that, but you don’t practice in the manner of the triangle for a long time. You do it just for a few seconds, then you relax and you observe the thoughts arising, and all movements and functions of your senses. If you do not have any problems, it means that you have succeeded. But if you have problems, then you do it again sharply. Even though you succeeded in fixation with support, to succeed with fixation without support, first you must fix sharply. For example, if there is a flower and a bee is flying around it, the bee is very calm and peaceful, enjoying flying there, because the flower has smell, and so on. But if someone slowly, slowly takes away this flower, immediately the bee is upset, it no longer remains calm. In the same way, we can get in a calm state when there is support, but sometimes when there is no support we cannot do this, so for that reason it is very important that you fix sharply and then relax. And if you have no problem, then you have realized that fixation, and you are becoming more and more familiar with fixation.

Then you do not need any ceremony, such as sitting and looking particularly in the sky, but in any circumstances when you feel like getting in that calm state, you just enter in that calm state even in places where there is confusion, such as in a railway station. If you have that kind of experience it is called a stable zhi.gnas, or calm state. So you notice and discover the nature of the calm state, the
real condition of which is emptiness — there is nothing, and in a practical way you are living in that calm state. You are enjoying that state, that experience of emptiness, so that emptiness is one of your experiences. That is samadhi, but it is not contemplation. For knowing or discovering contemplation you must discover the presence in that state. You must be in that presence. You must discover the difference between that empty space and that instant presence. If you know you are in that state of instant presence in emptiness, then we call it contemplation: the contemplation of gnas.pa.

Some people apply that method and easily discover that instant presence. Some others do not discover it easily, particularly those who have their own ideas and condition everything with their ideas. To overcome this we need some examples, and first we can apply a very simple one: you remain in a state of Guru Yoga. In the center of your body there is a five colored thig.le and in the middle is a white A. You sound A and you really feel that presence of vibration. Then you sound A again and you imagine that all dimensions, all circumstances, the universe and everything is dissolving in that thig.le and in your existence. After that visualization you observe your feeling: how do you feel now that you are in an immense empty space? You remember that everything has dissolved in you, there is no earth, no trees, nothing — you are in an empty space, you can have an experience of emptiness. Then again you sound A, and now imagine that your existence, your material body and everything slowly, slowly dissolves in the thig.le and in the white A; and then, again, you observe your feeling. Now you are in an immense empty space and you are just a thig.le and white A, you don’t even have a material body — then you have more experience of emptiness. Again you sound A and slowly, slowly this thig.le is dissolving in the center of the A and you become a very tiny thig.le and white A. Then you observe how you feel: you are a very tiny thig.le in an immense universe, and you understand the experience of emptiness. You might also experience fear. Then, at the end, you sound again A and all dissolves in emptiness, the thig.le and the white A disappear; how do you feel at that moment?
That is a total experience of emptiness, but then you notice you are not completely lost, one “is,” otherwise you would not notice that. That “being” in the immense emptiness is “instant presence,” and that experience is completely different from the one of emptiness and your feeling of fear. The point is, in any experience of emptiness like the calm state, you must be in that kind of instant presence.

You can have another experience which is opposite to the experience of emptiness, and that is the experience of clarity. Imagine, for example, infinite lights radiating from the white A and thig.le. From all these lights and rays manifest also infinite thig.le and infinite manifestations like deities of the Sambhogakaya. The universe is filled with infinite manifestations. Now observe how you feel, your “being” is completely different from when you were experiencing emptiness because this is an experience of clarity. But in this clarity there is someone who is—“being”—instant presence—if you are really in that instant presence there is no difference between clarity and emptiness. The difference is only in the experience; you must distinguish that. That is the principle of contemplation.

**MASHTAVALIVALI**

**Beyond Movement**

When you have that first stage, gnas.pa, then follows **MASHTAVALIVALI** which is the state of mi.g. In the Sutra teaching sometimes the state of mi.g is called lhag.mthong, which means something like insight. Most methods consider that lhag.mthong arises after you have applied zhi.gnas practice for a long time, but that is not true for Dzogchen. According to the Dzogchen principle mi.g means discovering movements; the meaning of the word mi.g is no movement, or “beyond movement.” However it doesn’t mean that when we have stable contemplation we have no movement. We discover movement, and we discover that it is part of our real nature; we are in that and we are integrated in that, rather than
remaining in something like a one-pointed state. If you remain in a one-pointed state, all movements remain something like an object, but here you integrate everything, you are just in that movement, and you have no problem. So this is the second stage, \textit{mi.g}, "no movement." There are also many specific methods for applying it.

\textbf{SAMITASURUSURU}

\textit{Non-dual}

And after that then we have the third stage, the stage is called \textit{mnyam.nyid}, meaning "non-dual state." Non-dual state means that movement and the calm state or emptiness, are not two things, they have the same nature, the same condition of our real potentiality, and we discover this, and we are in it. With this stage, then, we finally really discover what we call the "same flavor" — everything good and bad is experience, and you can get all kinds of experience in a state of \textit{rig.pa}, of instant presence. When you are in that instant presence, then all good and bad things, everything, is of the same taste; and finally you can understand what is meant by being like a mirror — although there are infinite reflections, you have no problems.

\textbf{KUTALIMASUMASU}

\textit{Self-Perfected State}

The last stage is called the state of \textit{lhun.grub}, the "self-perfected state." That means that in your knowledge of Dzogchen, in the state of contemplation, everything is perfect and everything is the self-perfected state. This is what we call Samantabhadra, the primordial Buddha. In Tibetan, this is Kuntuzangpo (\textit{kun.tu.bzang.po}; \textit{kun.tu})
means "forever," "in any circumstance," and bzang.po means "good" or "fine." So according to the Dzogchen principle, everything has value and nothing should be discarded. There is a contrast with Tantrism, where there is the consideration of pure and impure vision, and because the latter creates problems, it is reckoned to have no value, hence the need to transform into pure vision. This great distinction between pure and impure vision is also carried on the path when one applies tantric methods and one remains in that concept. So when you are transforming your dimension into a mandala, perhaps you do it with closed eyes, because your idea is that of a pure dimension mandala. If you keep your eyes open, then their contact with concrete objects would create conflict because that is impure vision. For that reason it is better to close your eyes when you do transformation.

This is an example of the tantric distinction between pure and impure vision, and it is the main difference between tantric methods and Dzogchen. In Dzogchen the emphasis is not on pure and impure vision. Of course, if we have karma we have karmic vision, but that is not a problem in Dzogchen. The problem is all our distractions.

Why do we have impure vision? Because we have potentiality of karma and the root of that potentiality is related with our real nature, our energy; so whatever we see, even if it is karmic vision, it is still part of our clarity. For example, you see a flower. First you receive that information of sight, and immediately you notice that there is a flower; but what is that flower in that very moment? The flower is only part of your clarity, and clarity is your qualification, nothing else — like a reflection in a mirror. There are no problems with that.

But after you receive that information you are immediately distracted and you might think, "Oh, what a nice flower! I like it, I want it." So that means you are now accepting it, you want it, that is attachment. Or, on the other hand if something ugly appears in your vision, you don't like that, and immediately upon seeing it, you think, "I don't like that, I don't want that." So you reject it, and means you have anger. Attachment and anger are like two legs,
and we walk in this way. We do not notice that because we are always distracted and are therefore conditioned. That is the problem, rather than the pure and impure vision. So if you really are “being” in your state of knowledge and understanding, then everything, every circumstance is fine, and that is called Samantabhadra or Kuntuzangpo. You can also understand what self-liberation means, and to achieve that, in a practical way, we slowly, slowly integrate everything, our existence, in that practice of contemplation.

In Dzogchen the movements of our physical body, all the functions of our energy — walking, speaking, and so on and also the functions of our mind, that is, thinking and judging — everything — can be governed by the state of contemplation, or, can be integrated in a state of contemplation. Because the nature of the state of contemplation is beyond time, while our relative condition, everything, is within time, so beyond time there are all possibilities. Therefore it is unnecessary to be always distracted. This is the address to which you are going, the place where you try to be. This is the last stage of Dzogchen Semde and the conclusion of the first four verses: EMAKIRIKIRI MASHTAVALIVALI SAMITASURU-SURU KUTALIMASUMASU.
Dzogchen Longde

The dgongs.pa, real understanding of the second four verses, are contained in the Four Da (brda bzhi) which are the four principles of the Dzogchen Longde practice. The Four Da constitute a method for having experiences concretely, and it is mainly related with the second statement of Garab Dorje: “not to remain in doubt.” Regarding this, many people are really not sure about their understanding. They may have questions such as, “If I have knowledge, if I really have the knowledge of contemplation, the state of rig.pa, is it really perfect or not?” Others may say, “I don’t understand.” Or another says, “Oh, I have that kind of experience or that knowledge, but I am not sure.” If you are not sure, it means that you are in doubt.

Some people and some teachers too, explain this statement of Garab Dorje by saying that “not to remain in doubt” means that one decides that this is the path, the unique one for oneself, and then one follows it. But that is a misunderstanding, because if you decide something, such as, “I must follow this teaching, this is teaching for me, this is the correct way,” that is false. Although many people understand in that way, that is always false. You may make those kinds of decisions a hundred times, but maybe when different circumstances or situations are present, you will then change your direction.

Many people feel, when they change their tradition, or the teacher they have chosen, “Now I am a follower of this school, this tradition,” then later they think differently, “Oh, I don’t fit in this tradition, I don’t feel good in this,” and then later again they change, and again they feel, “Now I’m becoming a follower of this
school, this tradition, this is my teaching, and so on." But every time they do that, later there is something to be changed.

So that is a manifestation of not having knowledge. If you really have knowledge, there is nothing to be changed, but if something needs to be changed, that means your understanding is false. It is not real. Often people have this same attitude in regard to choosing a teacher; they may say, "Oh, my root teacher is this Lama. I chose this one who is my root teacher because I feel this or that." They may feel that way because the teacher is very famous, or maybe because when they see him, or her, they feel a certain vibration. Often though, as soon as they leave the teacher's presence they realize that nothing has changed and that the vibration has gone. Their vibration is impermanent, but maybe they can have the same vibration another day with a different teacher.

This is not the principle whereby we choose the teacher; furthermore, a root master cannot be chosen. It is important that you know what "root master" means: a root master is someone who transmits to you that real knowledge, and through that you really wake up and discover that all teachers and all teachings are valuable. Discovering one's root master does not mean to remain only with one teacher and be kind of closed up in a small cage. On the contrary, through that state of knowledge you feel totally free.

For example, my root master is Master Jangchub Dorje, that is not because he was very famous, or because he was an elegant master. I met much more elegant, famous, and important masters before I met him. I even received many important teachings before that, but I discovered the real knowledge, something concrete, when I met Jangchub Dorje, and he transmitted it to me. That is why he is my root master. After I met Jangchub Dorje, I had the opportunity to meet many other teachers, but I did not feel that I was still looking for something. Even if today there are many wonderful teachers I do not have much to do with them. Of course, if I receive a teaching from someone that's fine, I like that too, but I know very well there is nothing more than what I received from Jangchub Dorje; because there is nothing to change, as it is some-
thing related with my real understanding. That’s why he is my root master.

Often I meet people who say to me, “I am a disciple of this famous Lama, my root master, but I want to come to you so that you can clarify the teachings for me.” Usually my answer to that is, “There is nothing for me to clarify to you if you have a root master. I am sorry but if you have a root master then you should ask him or her, but you should have really discovered that.” This demonstrates that some people do not really understand what the root master means, and whether or not they are following the real path. You do not choose or decide something, but you do discover. So until you discover your real nature, your understanding, your teacher, your method, the path and all that — if you decide something, then that is false. We must not construct anything false, we try to discover what is real, then finally we become real practitioners, and finally we can also get also on the path and into the teaching.

So when we say, “not remaining in doubt,” it does not mean that we decide something, but we are using the experiences taught by Garab Dorje and other teachers. Through those experiences we discover our real condition and then we “do not remain in doubt” about the path or the contemplation state. Otherwise it is like having to go to the toilet in the night without light! Maybe instead of arriving to the toilet you end up in somebody’s room. That happened to me this year when I was doing a dark retreat in America. I had to go to the toilet and after I finished, I washed my hands and drank some water or juice, all this in complete darkness, and then I decided to go back to my room, and I got a little distracted and I could not find my way back. I knew there was a wall, but I could not understand where it was, until finally I found a kind of hole, and thought that maybe was the way for going upstairs, so I went through it and I bumped into someone and said, “Who are you?”

“Papa, no, not here!” That was my son! We do things like that sometimes! If your contemplation goes that way it means that you have doubt.
Longde Positions

So "not remaining in doubt" is a very important method of Dzogchen Longde. Of course in Dzogchen Longde there is also an introduction, and how you are brought into that knowledge, but mainly it is a method for getting in the state of contemplation in a concrete way. So the first thing when you apply Dzogchen Longde is to control your body. By contrast, in the Dzogchen Semde practice you can sit in a comfortable way and there is no particular position for getting in the state of contemplation. In fact we say, "Do not change, do not modify your existence but totally relax." That's why we do not need any particular position. In the Dzogchen Longde methods, though, we work with different experiences, and for having experiences we need to practice certain positions in order to control our energy, so that we experience aspects of controlled energy. You can have experiences related to all the aspects of the functions of your senses, such as vision, feeling, and so on.

There are many kinds of positions in Dzogchen Longde, but the following is the most used of all of them. You sit down as usual in a comfortable place; men put their right leg across and over the left one, women do the opposite. Then you place your left arm on your knee and your hand on your ankle where there is a bone; and near this bone there is a hollow: you put your finger there to control the energy wave. Again women do the opposite, they use their right hand. It is necessary to have a meditation belt when you do Dzogchen Longde practice, so you put it round your back and your knee so that you can get more easily in position and remain stable. Your knee must be as near as possible to the chest so that you can put your armpit on it. For men the left side should be open, for women the right side, and using this position you look into space. This is the universal position of Longde. Generally, you also need a meditation stick, so if you have one put it here under your armpit so as to feel more comfortable.
The Ten Energy Points of Dzogchen Longde
**Ten Energy Points**

You see at the end of the Song of the Vajra there are ten syllables: SASA RIRI LILI II MIMI. The sounds of these syllables govern ten places, or points, linked with very important energy waves. Among the two syllables, SASA, the first one has a shorter sound than the second and they relate to the right and left side of a man, respectively. In women, the opposite is true in that the first syllable, the shorter one, relates to the left side and the longer one to the right.

**SASA**

The point for control of the of SASA energy wave is on the neck, on the right and left sides. The right side in men, is more related with movement, with confusion; while the left side is related more to the nature, energy; while for women it is the opposite. So, if you are controlling the right side, the side of confusion, you are being more in the side of nature and energy.

First you have SASA. It is not so easy to find this point. The only way to learn to locate it is by putting your hand on the side of your ears with the palm of your hand towards your face and the fingers pointing upward. Check the place between the end of your cheek bone and the beginning of your ear, there is a small hollow, if you put your finger in this hollow you feel a beating. So keeping that point in mind, you put your index finger in that hollow, and twist your hand outside a little bit. Then in the corresponding place below on your neck you can find the point with your thumb. However if you feel there is a heart beat there, you must change because that is not the perfect place: if you press there for a long time then you have red visions, because you are blocking the blood circulation. If you don’t feel any heart beat then that’s fine, you can try pressing a little on this point. So, by controlling the energy and
by sitting in this position you can easily get in the calm state, you can have more experience of emptiness, or the calm state. So this how to find the SASA point. But if you control your energy on the opposite side, then you can have more confusion, and certainly we do not need any more!

You have seen many paintings depicting Milarepa sitting in this position. Many people have no knowledge of the principle underlying this position, they just believe it is Milarepa’s style. There are even lamas who pretend to be like Milarepa and they sit like that. But there is a reason why Milarepa is sitting in this way, and if Milarepa were a woman the position would be reversed. In some statues and paintings, Milarepa’s hand is like this sometimes. You can understand his hand is positioned in such a manner as though he were holding his ear, but that’s a mistake. Some people interpret that by saying, “Milarepa is listening to all sentient beings.” There are many of these kinds of interpretations resulting from misunderstanding. Logically there is no reason for such interpretations because if someone does that gesture with his or her hand, it is usually interpreted as having a hearing problem. So if one cannot hear some sounds nearby, then how could you hear all sentient beings? But if you have the capacity to hear all sentient beings then you don’t need the help of your hand. It’s logical.

**RIRI**

RIRI corresponds to two other points located below each breast. We try to discover these two points with our own measure. You put your hands at the height of breast, one hand has to cross over the other so that the two thumbs touch each other. Then you put your thumbs in the center of your body in this hollow place between the two breasts, then you look where your index fingers touch: that is the place more or less of the points governed by the sound RIRI. When you are sitting in a very straight position, if you touch these points, automatically you have control of them, and you have more experience of clarity.
And then we have the two points related to the two syllables LILI. These points, one on each side, are close to the armpit, but not really inside, just a little on the edge. If you put your hands horizontally across your chest so that the two middle fingers touch each other, then each thumb is on the point just at the entry of the armpit; you can touch it with your thumb. When we use the meditation stick it is not only for being comfortable, but for controlling this point of energy waves so as to experience clarity. Even if you do not control both of them, if at least one is controlled you will have more experience of clarity.

II

II relates to the two energy-point waves at the groin, one on each side, that are controlled by these sounds. We also practice this position in Yantra yoga. Sitting straight, bring your fists into your groin and press down. We also use this position to control the energy waves when we do practice like gtum.mo, inner heat, because in this position you are automatically controlling this energy point. Many people don't know this principle, but in reality these points are for controlling these energy waves giving us the experience of sensation. If you remain for long time in this position then you have a pleasant feeling.

MIMI

Then we have the last two syllables MIMI; we can find their points in the ankles in the place near the bone in your ankle. When we are doing this position, we can control the points with the thumbs. Also these two energy points are related with the experience of emptiness and sensation. All positions are related with controlling these energy points; some positions control all the points, some others work more for clarity, while some others give
more experience of emptiness. With this you can have an idea of how the positions of Dzogchen Longde work.

**The Four Da**

The main method of Dzogchen Longde are the Four Da, *(brda bzhi)*, *brda* meaning sign or symbol. This means that when we are applying that method then we concretely have its effect. The first of the four is called *brda of mi.rtog.pa*, *mi.rtog.pa* means "beyond thought," or no thought. Sometimes it also means no thoughts arising. The word *mi.rtog.pa* is used very much in Sutra teaching, and there it refers to the empty state without thought, but in Dzogchen Longde it means more like beyond thoughts. "Beyond thoughts" does not mean that you have no thoughts, but rather that you are not conditioned by thoughts. There may be many kinds of movements of thoughts, but you are in that instant presence. According to that symbol (*brda*), you are sitting in a position with your eyes gazing into space. You can either do practice in an open place, or inside the house — anywhere is fine because gazing into space does not mean to look into the far distance. There is no limitation regarding that, you can gaze as close as two palms from your nose. Sometimes when you are gazing in that way you may feel a little pain or have some problem with your eyes, but even if you experience that, fixation and gazing never creates real problems for your eyes. On the contrary, if you have very weak sight, or your eyes are becoming weak, gazing is very beneficial and it is important that you do the following exercise. Start by putting your finger quite near your eyes and gaze on it strongly. Then slowly move your finger to the right at the same time you follow it with your eyes. Then you do the same thing to the left side and above your eyes. You should do these exercises many times even if you feel pain because later your vision will strengthened. So that is called *brda of mi.rtog.pa*, the gazing into space.

This way of practising with your eyes open is contrary to the Sutra system of practice, in that in Sutra, most of the practices are done with half-closed or completely closed eyes so that one feels
inside that calm state. But here we are working with clarity. That's why this series of teachings is called Longde, space series. When you are gazing into space with open eyes, that means all your sense organs are open and ready to receive information; and in that way you can really develop clarity. So you are gazing into the space without moving, because until you have developed your capacity of contemplation, if you move, you cannot find a calm state. You do not need any particular method of breathing, because your breathing is associated with gazing. By continuing to gaze and remaining in that position, automatically your breathing also becomes very deep and regular. In this way you have experience of emptiness and the calm state and are able to remain in that experience.

Then there is the second brda, the brda of gsal.ba meaning "clarity," the symbol of that clarity. Here, you gaze into space and all the organs of your senses are open and alive in their functions, having contact with their objects, then there is the presence of clarity. Clarity does not only refer to some special vision, but to whatever you see in front of your eyes, whatever you hear — everything is part of your clarity — you are in that clarity. You are in emptiness, and at the same time there is clarity. So these are experiences related with your mind and energy: you see, the experience of emptiness is related with your mind, while clarity is related with your energy.

Another very important experience is that related to your physical body, that is, the experience of feeling. There are many kinds of feelings related with the physical body — pleasant, unpleasant, and other kinds of feelings. Sometimes you feel very sad, or very happy, and both are your feelings. We have many feelings, all of them are related to our physical body, and by controlling it we can have experience and manifestation of this experience. In general, in our practice we mostly focus on the experience of pleasure. There are many reasons for that: the feeling of pleasure is something that everybody likes to have, and when we experience pleasure we are not upset. Further, pleasurable feelings are recognizable by everybody. It is a very interesting feeling too because we know how it
feels, but we find it hard to describe. Everybody likes it, not only human beings, even cats and dogs. You see, when a female dog is in heat, then many male dogs follow her and fight for her. Why are they going together? Because they had the experience of pleasure, which they want to have again, so they are going after her. Almost everybody in the world is married or living together. Many people say that we are living together for multiplying, but I don't think that is the only reason. We human beings have different kinds of emotions, many kinds of feelings, but one of the most important and noticeable is the sexual feeling, an example of which is presented also in the tantric teaching. You see many deity manifestations — joyful, wrathful, peaceful — are in union, yab and yum.

Why is there manifestation of union? It does not mean that enlightened beings like being together, because they are already beyond that concept. They are omniscient and they know what is the real condition. But when we have a physical body there are also emotions and attachments and so on, and on the path, sexual feeling is one of the most important to work with. For that reason deities and their manifestations are presented in union. We say, "What does this manifestation of union represent?" Then we reply, "This union represents bliss." But what is bliss?

When we consider it more on the wisdom level, then it is called bliss, but when we go more concretely on our physical level, then it is a feeling of pleasure. If you have a feeling of pleasure and you are conditioned by it, and consequently you are distracted, then that is called passion. From passion many problems and consequences arise: first, you have a very strong attachment, then you have jealousy, then you have anger, in fact you have all roots of samsara! What is the benefit? There is no benefit, all you have is a little pleasure maybe for half an hour, but then you have problems for months and years! That is compared to a small moth flying into the flame of a lamp. When they see flames, moths see a wonderful thing. They like it very much and fly straight into it, and then after a few minutes it's all over, finished. That is how we generally do it, but that is not bliss! Bliss means to know the real condition and to govern that.
So, pleasurable feeling is one of the most important of our experiences. When you experience that pleasure there is also your instant presence, and if you have experience of contemplation and that pleasurable feeling is governed by that knowledge, then that feeling is bliss, it never creates problems for you. On the contrary, you can develop much more your capacity of contemplation with it. So it is very important for the practitioners of Dzogchen to know this principle, because most people are not monks or nuns, and lay people always have male and female contact. When you have that contact, you have feelings, but in general we pretend we don’t know about these things, we feel shy, but in a practical sense we know what we are doing. So then we try to understand the real condition of something related with our experience.

We have three kinds of experiences: experience of feeling, experience of clarity and experience of emptiness. These three are related, respectively, with our three-fold existence of body, voice and mind. They are like a key to develop our knowledge. Among these three experiences the one which is most concrete is that of pleasure. In Tantric methods the feeling of pleasure is considered very important. You see this even in the case of monks and nuns who have vows, and so cannot have sexual contact, for if they do something like that they lose their status. Though they have vows of celibacy, when they practice in tantric style, instead of thinking, “I am a monk,” they imagine transforming into Vajrasattva or Vajradhara, or some other deities in yab and yum, in union. Now, if you close your eyes and think, “I am yab yum, I am in union,” and if you are not made of stone, you feel something. That is sexual feeling, and you also work with that to develop your clarity and your capacity for contemplation. This is an example of a very important method. If you are not monks and nuns you always have sexual contact, so why then do you not use it in your practice?

Sometimes you may read about Hindu or Taoist tantric teaching and methods related to sexual contact. They assert their view saying, “It is very difficult to have tantric sexual contact with male and female. You must do a long preparation. Then if a male loses just a little of his seed, then he is going to have very heavy conse-
quences." In Dzogchen teaching the view about sexual contact is somewhat different. In fact when we talk about seed or our potentiality, we consider three categories. The first is very, very essential. You never lose that, but if you do it means that you die, you lose it when you are really dying. But when you have sexual contact you never die, and when you have finished you are still alive, so this means that you did not lose it. Then there is the second one, which is related essentially to maintaining our physical body, that which we refer to as very important in Tantric teaching. You must not lose that! If you lose it, that damages your energy, and you become weaker. What do you do then if you are a real practitioner? If you really have a capacity for contemplation, you do not have sexual contact while distracted like animals. Rather you are aware, and in that state of contemplation then you have sex and enjoy the experience. And you remember that that is bliss, not just passion and ordinary feeling. If you have contact in that way, and you are not distracted, you never lose the second category of seed, you only lose the impure part. The third category is not very important. It is better you lose it, because that helps your sexual feeling, otherwise you have not much feeling and slowly, slowly you become like stone! However, it is very important that you have the base of contemplation, but if you only pretend that you have that capacity of contemplation and then you jump in, sometimes you create problems.

For the practice of the Da related to pleasurable feeling, you remain in the appropriate position gazing into space, and you also work with the lower part of the body, the anus and the genitals, in the same way we do in Yantra yoga. When you learn the breathing of kumbhaka in Yantra yoga, first you inhale, then you push down, and then you pull up the lower part of the body, the anus and genital region. In the same way in the practice of the Da of pleasurable feeling, while you are gazing into space sometimes you also pull up. If you don’t know at all what it means to pull up, then just think a little about when you go to the toilet: when you have finished there, then you must pull up a little. So, when you are in the position you just pull up a little, but don’t do it too strongly;
you’ll experience a kind of pleasurable feeling, just a little. In this way you have an experience of emptiness, clarity, and feeling, something concrete. And being in these three experiences at the same time, remaining in that instant presence, then you notice that the experience of that instant presence is something very concrete. This is the principle.

So for explaining the principle of the Four Da, **EKARASULIBHATAYE** is the *brda* of *mi.rtog.pa*, “beyond thought”; **CAKIRABHULIBHATAYE** is the *brda* of *gsal.ba*, “clarity”, **SAMUNTACARYASUGHAYE** is the *brda* of *bde.ba*, “pleasurable feeling”; **BHETASANABHYKULAYE** is the *brda* of *dbyer.med*, “non-dual” — all this, everything is in one instant. So, you can learn the Four Da one by one, but when you apply, you are in that simultaneously, everything together, and then you discover that experience more concretely. So this is more or less how to do practice according to the principle of Longde. If you want to go more into details, deeper, then there are many things you can learn in Dzogchen Longde. I gave many retreats explaining the Longde principle, so there are many transcripts about it.

**Brief Commentary on the First Eight Verses**

We have already explained the first four and the second four verses of the Song of the Vajra; these represent, respectively, the first and second statements of Garab Dorje. The three statements of Garab Dorje are very important for practitioners, because from them you can have an idea of the teaching, how you can develop your knowledge through these statements. You remember the first statement of Garab Dorje is “direct transmission.” For having that knowledge and understanding we then have the Four Contemplations which are explained in detail in the Dzogchen Semde. The first contemplation is the state of *gnas.pa*, the calm state, then you discover that movements are your nature or your condition; then you have the method or practice of the state of *mi.g*, no movement, that is you integrate in the movement and then you no longer have a dualistic vision. Then the third one is called *mnyam.nyid*, non-
dual, that means both movement and emptiness are your real nature.

You should not understand this only in an intellectual way, such as merely thinking, "Oh, this is the same nature," but you discover that through your experiences of emptiness and clarity. It means that you distinguish between the experience and the instant presence. When you are in the state of instant presence, then you discover there is no difference between emptiness and clarity. Let us take the example of what I already explained, the experience of feeling. We took as the main example pleasurable feeling, and of course, if you remain only in that feeling of pleasure, then that is experience; but if you are in that instant presence in the feeling of pleasure, then that is quite different from your ordinary feeling of pleasure. In that instant presence you can discover that both pleasurable and unpleasant feelings are of the same principle. Through the key of your pleasurable feeling you can discover that good and bad have the same taste, so by continuing with your practice and applying it, then you can realize that. When you realize that, then you are in a state of self-liberation. You are the mirror — finally you no longer have problems with good or bad. That does not mean that you erase good and bad, but that everything is relative, and everything is part of your energy manifestation. So that is the real meaning of mnyam.nyid, the third stage.

When you have that knowledge then you have the possibility of integrating that knowledge of contemplation in all your existence. Generally, when you do meditation you are very much accustomed to sit in a certain position. When you have the idea of doing practice or contemplation, then you sit in a quiet place and remain there that way. At first you don't consider that contemplation is also movement, but as you develop your capacity of contemplation, then you don't limit yourself to only sitting in quiet places, but slowly try to integrate contemplation in your existence.

With regard to movement, we are very much accustomed to doing many positive actions, such as visualization, and so on. For example, if we are doing the sngon.'gro (preliminary practice), particularly the prostrations, while our body is prostrating, our
mind is thinking and visualizing in front of us the refuge tree, and we prostrate and pay homage to that. Also, I am not doing prostrations alone, for with me I visualize all the people who have a good or a bad relation with me; and with all these sentient beings we are paying homage. At the same time I am prostrating I also think that I am purifying my three places: body, voice and mind. As you see, we don’t do only movement with body, but we are also engaged with our mind.

So, if you are accustomed to do that kind of practice, for example, now you try to do a prostration without judging, thinking, or visualizing, but in a state of contemplation; you can do all your good actions and good movements in general all in contemplation; that means turning your attitude into contemplation. If you don’t have any experience with doing prostrations and similar kinds of practice, that doesn’t mean that you have to do them, but after all you are always doing something, doing good, bad or neutral movements. To give an example, you might consider that digging the earth is an ordinary, neutral movement, but in practice it is not neutral, maybe it’s a bad one because you kill many animals or insects. In any case it is a movement. So whenever you are engaged in something related with movement try to be in contemplation, for it is possible. If you cannot do it directly that way, it is due to the fact that you are very much accustomed to be in contemplation only when you are sitting without moving. In fact when our eyes are gazing somewhere without moving, it is easy to be in a calm state. But if you don’t develop the capacity of the state of mi.g, when you turn your eyes or you do some movements then you lose your calm state. That’s why we have the second stage, not moving: it means that we integrate. Let me give you an example. If, while you are sitting in a calm state, someone near you starts making noise, you do not remain in a one-pointed state, but you hear that someone is making noise. Immediately you are ready to receive that sound, not to reject it; that is how to work not only with sound, but with all contacts of the senses.

But generally, how do we receive all these contacts? We receive them, notice them, then become distracted and think, “This is this,
this is that." We have a very strong consideration of subject and object, and that is why we have problems, but when we are in contemplation we are not that way. We receive impressions, but we are present in that; just in that moment we integrate, and we are just in that sound. Even if you do not have the capacity for total integration, but you have that principle, and you try to integrate, then you don’t feel that noise is a trouble for you. But if you feel that there is something which is causing you trouble then your tension always develops. People who are accustomed only to doing zhi.gnas practice, the calm state, remain in the one-pointed state and never integrate; nor can they do practice when there is noise or movement around them. When there are noises and problems they escape to a mountain, a cave or somewhere else. Maybe there they can get into a calm state for some days. But if one does not know how to integrate, sooner or later even on a mountain or in a cave, one can find something noisy; perhaps in the nighttime some birds may come in and make noise; and in the daytime there is always the possibility to have some trouble.

So the principle is not escaping from samsara, or from noise and problems, but the principle is integrating and being in that situation and relaxing. For that reason we need to integrate step-by-step. For example, instead of sitting only in a calm state, you try slowly, slowly while you are in a state of contemplation to move a little, to turn your head. Then try to get up and walk some steps, and if you want to do something you can go to the kitchen and prepare a cup of tea. You can do all that very well by being in contemplation; it is not necessary to be distracted. You have your existence, energy and voice, always we are chanting, we are talking, we are using the energy in many ways. You see, singing the Song of the Vajra is a good example of how we are integrating our existence. But it does not mean that on becoming practitioners we only sing the Song of the Vajra; we are always talking about everything. When we are talking we can also be in a state of contemplation, it is not necessary to be distracted.

Many people think that when we are in the state of contemplation there are no thoughts or judgments. There may be judgements
but one is not conditioned or distracted by them. This is called omniscience, when someone is enlightened. We say that illuminated beings have the quality and quantity of wisdom but that does not mean that an enlightened being becomes something like a statue made of stone. So thoughts, judgments and everything can enter and be integrated in the contemplation. For example, if we are thinking, judging, talking, and explaining as a Dzogchen master does for hours and hours, it does not necessarily mean that he or she is distracted. So our aim, what we want to reach, is for our life to become a total contemplation, that is called contemplation beyond thun. In general we say, "Oh, I want to be in contemplation," and then you remain in it a little. Then after a few minutes you are distracted and you are again in your ordinary condition. That is called thun — a contemplation practice done in a limited time. Beyond thun means that "everything" enters into contemplation. This is also, in the Anuttaratantra, the last stage which is called sgom.med, meaning "beyond meditation" — all circumstances, all times, all existences, all manifestations, everything enters in that total symbol. The symbol that we received from the beginning through the manifestation of our dimension as mandala and our existence like deities, we take as an example, and then we realize totally in that clarity.

There is no limitation of time such as saying, "This is the meditation state, or this is the after-meditation state." The state beyond limitation is called "Total Symbol," Mahamudra in Sanskrit. The correct translation of Mahamudra is "Total Symbol." In many translations Mahamudra is rendered as "Great Seal," which is completely wrong. "Seal" means something like an indication to keep secret. In Tibetan there is a word rgya, meaning "seal." If you seal something, then you must keep it secret, particularly teachings like terma and Upadesha must be kept secret. Then we say, "You keep secret with your samaya." This means that if you do not keep the secret then you break your samaya commitment, and for indicating that we say, "samaya rgya rgya rgya." We say it three times, meaning also that you keep the secret sealed with your state of body, voice and mind. But Mahamudra in Tibetan is phyag.rgya
chen.po, not only rgya. Phyag in general means mudra we perform with our hands, but that is only the symbol that we are presenting something. If I do this mudra, or hand gesture, you can understand that this is the symbol of vajra, but if you have a deity like Kalachakra, what is the figure of the deity? That is a symbol, but it doesn't really mean that Kalachakra, an enlightened being, has that figure. Kalachakra is beyond form and color, it has no form or color, yet when there are circumstances such as an object or something in front of the mirror, then that figure, that form manifests. In the same way, that enlightened being manifests as a pure dimension, and that is called the mandala of Kalachakra. All these are only symbols so that you can have understanding. And we enter in that symbol, we use that symbol and we realize what it represents. When we enter our existence and all our dimension totally in that symbol, and we are in that clarity totally, that is the real meaning of Mahamudra — the Great Symbol or Total Symbol.

So it is incorrect to say that Mahamudra is the Great Seal or Total Seal, because if it were really a total seal then it would have to be kept secret, nobody could touch it, even the teacher, because he must keep the samaya commitment. So he would not even be able to teach it, because that would imply breaking samaya. So how could he do that? So that is really a misunderstanding in translation showing that there is no real knowledge or understanding of the meaning.

Another example is found regarding Dzogchen terminology, where the word snying.thig from the Dzogchen Upadesha, is often translated in English as "heart drop." You see, the heart is physically one of the most important organs, while drop means something like a drop of water. I do not really know what is meant by "heart drop" — maybe it refers to blood! This shows that people who translate like that did not even know the grammatical system of the Tibetan language. You see thig, the drop, (in the Tibetan transcription we write "thigs"), so thigs has an "s" at the end, that means drop like a drop of water, but if you write only thig without "s", that is the root word of thig.le, you see, which we visualize with the white A.
The thig.le represents our dimension of potentiality and how the energy of our potentiality develops. So when we say snying.thig, snying means “heart,” but it does not really mean the heart as our organ, but rather the center of our body. If you say, for example, the name of the organ, then snying means the heart; but if you say snying of a fruit, it doesn’t mean that the fruit has the heart organ, but it has a center. If you say snying of a tree, which refers to its innermost center, you can see it when you cut a tree, in its center there is a point surrounded by circular lines. That is really the meaning of snying, it means the innermost point of thig.le and thig.le means our entire dimension, all our existence. So there is a big difference between “heart drop” and the most central point of potentiality. This is very important because if you learn Dzogchen Upadesha you must understand that, but if you translate only words, then you completely lose the sense of it.

Also, in many of the translations of Garab Dorje’s three statements, particularly the second one, it is translated as “we decided.” As I already explained, if we decide then it means we decide by judging and thinking, and that is false, not real. Rather than decide something we have to discover something, so that we don’t remain in doubt. When I went to Hong Kong, I saw a Chinese translation of this text.

As you know the first statement of Garab Dorje explains how you can have that experience. A very important Dzogchen master, Patrul Rinpoche, wrote an explanation of these three statements of Garab Dorje, and it is called Tshigs.gsum gnad.brdegs. Many Lamas, when they want to teach Dzogchen, use this explanation because it is very simple and very concentrated. In this commentary he explained that for having experience of the first statement of Garab Dorje, “In the real sense, first you relax and when you are totally relaxed, then suddenly you shout a very strong phat! After you have shouted phat! no thought arises; even if you have thoughts they are all blocked. You experience a state that you cannot explain. It is a little bit like a shock in that there is no concept. It is called the state of had.de.ba, and in that had.de.ba state immediately you can find an instant presence. You notice that instant presence and you are in
that, and that is the state of Dharmakaya. Now you are in the state of Dharmakaya, that's marvellous, wonderful." Thus, Patrul Rinpoche explains the real meaning.

But in the Chinese translation that I saw, they translate it this way: first you relax, then, after you shout a strong *phat!* you have a state in which there is not something concrete, that is called *had.de.ba.* Just that state of *had.de.ba* is the Dharmakaya; and then, when you are getting in this *had.de.ba* state you shout, "*E MA HO, E M HO, E MA HO.*" There is no need to say these things of course; as Patrul Rinpoche just said, "You are in the state of Dharmakaya, that is *Emaho.*" *Emaho* means "marvellous," or "fantastic," it really means without effort, without sacrifice, instantly you get in the Dharmakaya, that's wonderful. The same translators previously translated into Chinese some invocations of Guru Padmasambhava. These invocations begin with "*Emaho*" which means marvellous; but sometimes this word is combined with the explanation of the three words *E-Ma-Ho* in relation to the three kayas: Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, Nirmanakaya. So in the invocation you repeat them many times, saying: *E-Ma-Ho.* These translators considered that *E-Ma-Ho* must be the same as "*Emaho*"; this is an example of translation mistakes, there are many of these kind. That's why we say that it is very important to get in the real sense of the teaching rather than being too literal, otherwise we also have problems.

So you continue on integrating your existence, body, speech and mind, as much as possible in the state of contemplation. That is called the state of *lhun.grub,* the "self-perfected" state. You see these Four Contemplations combine the real sense or state of the first four verses of the Song of the Vajra.

Then I explained *EKARASULIBHATAYE CIKIRABHULIBATYE.* These four verses are linked with the Four Da of the method of Dzogchen Longde, which is mainly related to the second statement of Garab Dorje: "not to remain in doubt." If someone has no capacity for, or has no time to have this experience through Longde, then we have a very simple way for experiencing "not remaining
in doubt” which was given by a great Dzogchen master, Sri Simha, who had been the master of Guru Padmasambhava and Vairocana.

This method is very simple. You sit in your usual meditation position visualizing the three channels. You can do this visualization more or less the same as we do in the Yantra yoga, for in this practice it is not necessary that you transform yourself into a deity manifestation. It is typical of Dzogchen style when we are working with channels and chakras to visualize the physical body as something transparent. We call that stong.ra which means something not material, rather something essential, like the essence of the elements. That is your existence, your condition, your form. Then you visualize in your body the central channel with the two channels, one on each side of the central one.

When you do visualization of the three channels, sometimes the channel of the right and that of the left unify in each chakra. Sometimes one channel is turning towards the right and the other is turning towards the left. Again, sometimes we visualize all three just straight. There are many different ways you can do visualization.

Some people, when they are accustomed to do visualization, having learned one method, think that it must be the only way. You must remember what is the purpose of doing visualization. If you are doing it particularly for developing your sensations one-by-one in different chakras, then there is a specific visualization in which these channels are connected with the different chakras. But if you are only using visualization for developing the capacity of the prana energy, or maybe developing inner heat, in these cases you can visualize the two channels turning to the right side and left side. In any case, in different kinds of visualization of the three channels, the two channels always unify in the center channel four finger breadths below your navel, and at the top point these channels are connected with your nostrils. This is the usual way. If you do yang.tig practice, the dark retreat, or thod.rgal practice, then you can discover that they are not only connected with the nostrils, but that they connect with all your sense organs.
The Method of Sri Simha

Anyway, all that is general information for having an idea about visualization of the channels and chakras, but here with the method given by Sri Simha, you can visualize all three channels being straight and in the center of your body. The center channel is called dbu.ma, and its outer color is somewhat bluish, its inside color is more reddish and represents light and it's transparent. Then you have two side channels, one on the right and one on left. For men right is white and left is red, while for women it is the opposite, that is, the one on the right is red and the one on the left is white. They unify at four fingers below the navel, while on the upper part they are connected with the two nostrils. You start by first visualizing these channels and after it is very clear, while inhaling you imagine that your breathing, the inhalation, is turning into something like two balls: one white and the other red. As you are inhaling, these balls slowly, slowly go down, and after you have completed your inhalation you push down; at that moment then these two small balls enter into the center channel and they become one ball. You do this visualization and hold your breathing for a little, and when you feel tired you exhale. It is not necessary that you imagine that the ball is coming out. Again you start inhaling and imagine the balls, repeating what you did the first time. You repeat six, seven, or ten times. You don't force yourself holding your breath for a long time. When you have the need to change your breathing, don't go on holding it, but change it.

After you have this visualization quite clear, then not only are you pushing down, but then slowly, slowly, also you pull up and you imagine that energy you are pulling up pushes this ball slowly higher and higher. That ball represents your solar and lunar energy concentrated. When you feel tired, you change your breathing, then you repeat it again and again, so that you develop your capacity of holding more and more. Each time that you pull up, you bring it higher and higher. If you do this practice for a long time you have many experiences of prana, sometimes experience of feelings and sometimes of visions of different kinds. When your capacity is developed so that this ball reaches near the site of your heart,
center of the body, then you start to shout *phat!* very strongly and after you have done that you observe your state. How do you get in that instant presence? If still you do not have a precise experience you repeat this practice many times and you discover, so that you do not remain in doubt about your experience of instant presence.

You can get more or less the same principle as with the Longde practice. This is one of the *man.ngag* or secret methods for having that experience as given by Sri Simha. So when you have the opportunity, then you dedicate yourself to do this practice and then you have experience, but if you don’t do practice then it doesn’t work. So all this is related with these four verses of the Song of the Vajra:

EKARASULIBHATAYE CIKIRABHULIBATAYE  
SAMUNTACARYASUGHAYE BHTASANABHYKULAYE
Dzogchen Upadesha

Then we have SAKARI DHUKANA MATARI VAITANA. These four short verses are mainly related with the third and last statement of Garab Dorje “remaining, or continuing, or integrating in that state,” meaning that you already have that knowledge. When you discover and you have that experience then what do you do? It means that it is not sufficient only to have experience but you integrate, you are in that, in ordinary language it means that you are applying contemplation, or you are in contemplation. Then you continue your contemplation, but how are you in contemplation?

In general, when we do meditation or practice, then we explain how to sit for doing practice, or we ask, “How is the position of practice?” That means that since one of our ways of existence is our physical body, for that reason then we must coordinate our body, and therefore we have an explanation of the position. After that, we consider the existence of our voice and for that reason we ask, “What is the method of breathing when we do practice?” Or, if there is no particular explanation related to breathing then, “How do we look with our eyes and how are the functions of the senses?” Finally we have an explanation on how we must do visualization, thinking, meditating, because we have mind, the existence of mind.

The Four cog.bzhag

So it means that we control our body, speech and mind, and all three are coordinated in the practice. So how do you integrate all these aspects in contemplation? This is explained in the Dzogchen Upadesha teaching with the Four cog.bzhag; cog means “how it is,” bzhag means “remain, being as it is.” This means you don’t change,
you don’t modify, you should be as it is in your real nature. So then you can go through them one-by-one: how should your body be when you do practice? You remain just as it is. Then you continue with your voice and mind; so the cog.bzhag are for giving you the knowledge of that principle. The first one is ri.bo cog.bzhag, like a mountain; this does not mean that you remain in a gigantic manner without moving. Sometimes you can find in the Sutra teachings some explanations referring to being like a mountain. For instance it is said that many demons tried to distract Buddha, but he remained in contemplation like a mountain. There the idea is of something that cannot be disturbed, some idea of stability. But here, in this context, it does not have the same meaning. Also Dzogchen teachings explain that the cog.bzhag of the mountain gives the idea that you are on a mountain. If you are on the top of a mountain, you can see everything, you do not feel limited as one in a tomb or a cage; yet this explanation is relative, in that it is not the main meaning. The main meaning of ri.bo cog.bzhag is that you remain as you are, as your condition and position are, just at that moment.

You see, there are millions and millions of different kinds of mountains in the world — some are very sharp and high, some are very large, some are very low, some are very extended, some are small. Why? Because it depends on circumstances, on their condition. For example, some mountains are formed with very strong rock and are covered by snow all year like Kailash and Everest, so then of course they become very sharp and high. But mountains formed by sand are never very sharp and high. In the same way we human beings are living in different situations, and different circumstances. We live in time and with different circumstances, and they change every day. Sometimes we are standing, sometimes lying down, sometimes doing something, so we then are being present at every moment, whatever the condition of our body, just being in that position. Sometimes you are lying down on a bed, so if you are present it doesn’t mean that immediately you should get up and sit in a meditation position. If, while you are walking, you have presence, or you are in a state of contemplation, it doesn’t
mean that you immediately sit in a position for meditating. If you are, for example, on a toilet, it could also be that you are in contemplation, it doesn’t mean that you have to immediately go in the temple. Generally people’s idea about meditation is very much related to the Kriyatantra style of practice, that is, to meditate in a temple. The principle of that style of practice is doing visualization of enlightened beings for which the support of statues is needed to whom people pray and give offerings. If you invite an enlightened being like Tara then you prepare a nice place. It is not so nice to invite Tara into a toilet. But in contemplation there are no problems; you can contemplate and integrate everything, so that is the real meaning of ri.bo cog.bzhag, the chog.bzhag of the mountain. You can apply contemplation in any circumstances, in any moment.

The second cog.bzhag is called rgya.mtsho cog.bzhag; rgya.mtsho means “ocean.” There are explanations for this name: “ocean” refers to being in a state of contemplation, and that state is like the ocean that reflects all the universe. That is an example of developing clarity. But this explanation is relative, because it is more intellectual. In practice that is not the meaning of ocean. Ocean is the secret name for the eyes. The eyes are the first of the five sense organs, and by knowing the function of the eyes, you then know the function of your other organs. So, it means to remain as it is, in that condition without changing or modifying your vision. It does not mean, for example, that you should concentrate in a one-pointed inner state, or do fixation on an object, or gaze at something in a particular way.

In general, we have two eyes for looking and their nature is to be open and have contact with objects, but sometimes we are lying down on a bed with closed eyes. In this case it does not mean that when you are in contemplation, you immediately open your eyes, or as in the Sutra system, when you do meditation you immediately close your eyes. It just means to be in the normal way with organs having normal contact with sense objects. The same applies to breathing, because breath and the function of the senses are all related. So this is the real meaning of the second cog.bzhag.

Then we have the third cog.bzhag; we call it rig.pa’i cog.bzhag,
cog.bzhag of the state of rig.pa. Generally we ask, “How should our mind be, how do we do concentration or visualization?” The answer is the state of instant presence, and that is the state of rig.pa, without changing, modifying or creating anything. This means we are in the nature of the mirror instead of being like reflections. We may have infinite reflections and have no problem with them, since they are something like qualifications of our state. That is the third cog.bzhag.

Then the last cog.bzhag called snang.ba cog.bzhag, the cog.bzhag of snang.ba “vision,” meaning mainly the sense objects. Firstly there is the object of our eyes, that is, the forms and colors and all things; then through the ears we have different kinds of sound, and so on with all our senses, while for our mind we have all dharmas, all phenomena. So there is nothing wrong or considered to be without value. It does not matter if it is pure or impure vision, we say Kuntuzangpo, meaning everything is fine. If you are in the state of rig.pa, you don’t have any problem with vision, that is why in the Dzogchen teachings we say, “Visions are ornaments of the primordial state.” Ornaments create beauty for you, they don’t create problems. In the same way, even though it is a samsaric vision, if you are not conditioned, if you are not distracted and you are in the state of rig.pa, there is nothing wrong. You can be in that and everything is your mandala of energy. This is the last cog.bzhag.
PARALIHISANA MAKHARTAKELANAM

Khregs.chod

Now we come to PARALIHISANA MAKHARTAKELANAM. These four verses indicate the state of the Four chog.bzhag. When we explain them we do it one-by-one, but when they are applied in the state of contemplation it does not mean there is a progressive order such as first you do this, then second you do that. Your entire existence, how it must be in that moment, is called cog.bzhag. The practice method for being in that state, is called khregs.chod in Dzogchen Upadesha. Many translators today, translate khregs.chod as “breakthrough.” I do not think that does really correspond to the meaning of khregs.chod because “break” is done with effort. If you have effort it is not contemplation. One of the most important points is “beyond effort,” so how can you be beyond effort if you break through something? However, you can learn the real meaning of it. It doesn’t matter if you don’t get a precise word, as you cannot realize with words anyway, while you do realize with meaning. So in the real sense khregs.chod in the Tibetan language has this meaning: khregs means something bound together, a bundle, such as wood bound up with a rope for fire. In Tibetan we say shing.khregs, shing is “wood,” khregs is bound. If we bind cut grass together, then we say rtsa.khregs, if many clothes are bound together, then we say gos.khregs. Any kind of thing that you bind together is called khregs. In general, we are bound with our tension, emotions, and so on, all our existence, and that is the real meaning of khregs.

So khregs means that we cut that tension by doing something and being liberated. We are liberated from that binding, so that is called khregs.chod, chod meaning “liberated.” The root of the syllable chod comes from gcod, which means actively cutting with a knife or something. But if there is someone who is not cutting, but is
self-liberated then that is called chod. Maybe you hear these two as the same word, but they are not the same — one is chod, the other is gcod. The word gcod means something like “cutting,” the same word as that of the practice of the gcod; while the word chod means something which is self-liberated. So khregs.chod means “totally self-relaxed” and this name refers to these Four cog.bzhag. When you learn the Four cog.bzhag then you apply and integrate in your daily life — this is our practice, what we do. Now you know these lines: PARALIHISANA MAKHARTAKELANAM.

Lung and Tantra Upadesha

Yesterday we started to learn a little about Dzogchen Upadesha, and I explained the Four cog.bzhag belonging to the Upadesha system. Upadesha really refers to the secret methods. In Tibetan we say man.ngag, man is a negative, and ngag means voice, talking, the method which is orally transmitted. “No voice” means you don’t talk when it is not necessary. In the Dzogchen teaching the main point, like the original source of the teaching is called rgyud and lung; rgyud is the Tibetan word for tantra and means our continuation of pure potentiality. For having that total knowledge of our real condition and potentiality, there are complete teachings. Generally we say that there are many, many Dzogchen Tantras in the universe, while we human beings have only a few Tantras. Some enlightened beings though, have the capacity to go beyond the limitations of time and distance and have contact with many rig.'dzin — realized beings — in different dimensions. These enlightened beings introduced into our dimension many small parts of texts, the important and essential points of Tantra teachings and these are called lung.

In general, lung means something like a quotation. You are quoting some verses from somewhere. Here, in this context, it means that some chapters constituting the very important points of a Tantra were taken out and introduced to the human dimension or condition. These are called lung teachings. In the Dzogchen teaching, we have many lung which were principally introduced
by the Master Garab Dorje, but also other masters. One of the root texts that we consider one of the most important in Dzogchen is called The Great Space of Vajrasattva. It contains an explanation of the Six thig.le and is an original Tantra text that Garab Dorje chanted when he was a very small boy. This is not the complete Tantra, but a lung, a small piece of some Dzogchen Tantra.

As another example, the Dzogchen Master Vairocana, who first introduced the Dzogchen teaching to Tibet, translated the Six Verses about Dzogchen which are considered the most fundamental of all the Dzogchen texts introduced to Tibet. That is also considered a lung, meaning that it comes from a Dzogchen Tantra, but only a small piece of it was introduced. He also gave it a title: Rig.pa'i Khu.byug. Rig.pa means “knowledge” or understanding of our real nature, while khu.byug is a kind of bird, a cuckoo. Why did he use that example? Because when the cuckoo sings then spring-time starts, and all of nature wakes up. When these verses were first introduced all sentient beings who were interested in these teachings were awakened by them. There is also a book about these verses, a commentary which was found among the ancient books of Tun Huang.

We went to visit this place when we journeyed to Kailash. It is located between East Tibet and China and in ancient times it also had a Buddhist temple containing a very big collection of Buddhist books in Chinese and Tibetan. The majority of these books belong to the eighth century. Later, this temple was covered by desert sand. In this century many caves were discovered under the sand, and a library was found in one cave. Many of these books were bought by French and English professors, so now most of them can be found in England and France. Large quantities of them can also be found in Peking. We consider these books to be very important for studying the history of Tibet, and the Chinese also consider them very important for the study of their own history. Among those documents three Dzogchen books were found, one of them being the Rig.pa'i khu.byug, the verses themselves and a commentary upon them. So this discovery was very important.

During a retreat I explained the meaning of these Six Verses,
and through the verses I explained the aspects of the point of view, the path, and the application of our attitude. So that is an example of what is meant by lung and rgyud in original Dzogchen books. There are many ways for explaining these methods and how to develop them. These special methods are taught mainly by relating with the experiences of masters. For example, the Dzogchen Master Garab Dorje gave his particular personal experiences on the path, then his disciples — Manjusrimitra, Jnanasutra and many others — explained how they had their experience when they were developing the capacity of contemplation. If you know some of these experiences given by the master then you use them and develop easily, but they are always special methods. An example of this is the method for “not remaining in doubt” given by the Dzogchen Master Sri Simha: the experience of visualization of the three channels, holding breathing and shouting phat, and so on. That is not an original Dzogchen teaching, but the experience of a Dzogchen master who was totally realized. There are many of these recorded experiences taught by Guru Padmasambhava and many of his disciples.

Today we have many Dzogchen teaching terma, and most of the terma contain these kinds of teaching methods and hence are called Upadesha teachings. Within the series of Upadesha we also have the most important secret teachings such as thod.rgal and Dzogchen yang.tig. Both methods are for developing contemplation. This means that you already have such knowledge of contemplation but in order to realize it, so that that knowledge becomes something concrete, you have particular methods. That is why, for example, for doing practices like thod.rgal and yang.tig, the first thing that you must try to have is a base. To have a precise base means that you have experience of contemplation which you learned particularly in Dzogchen Semde and Longde. When you start with the Four cog.bzhag, it means that you already have something to develop and, in particular, the use of methods such as thod.rgal and yan.tig implies that you are in a precise experience of contemplation, and you are using these methods to develop rapidly. Why are there these important and special methods? That principle is explained
with the four *snang.ba*, the Four Visions, which are the principle of both Dzogchen *yang.tig* and *thod.rgal*. It does not mean that we are only speaking of some kind of visions, but how we can apply this method and have that experience. This principle of the Four Visions is explained in the Song of the Vajra. Remember, we learned previously the four *cog.bzhag* in order to have knowledge of contemplation and continuation, and how we integrate them in our existence. We had SAKARIDHUKANA MATARIVAITANA, and with these verses the Four *cog.bzhag* are explained; so these four are like a key. We can also say that the distinct real condition of the meaning of these verses are the Four *cog.bzhag*.

**The Four Visions**

Then we have Paralihisana Makhartakelanam, the principle of these four verses is the Four Visions. The first one, Parali, refers to the vision called *chos.nyid mngon.sum*. You know *chos* is the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit word *dharma* and it means all phenomena. In Sanskrit we have two words: *dharmadhatu* and *dharmata*. Many people understand them as having the same meaning. *Dharmadhatu* means the universal condition of all phenomena, including sentient beings and their nature. It is somewhat related to *dharmakaya*, the dimension of all phenomena. But *dharmata* means the nature or real condition, particularly of an individual. *Dharmadhatu* means nature, the real condition of subject and object, the whole, the complete; while *dharmata*, *chos.nyd* in Tibetan means our individual nature, our potentiality.

You see, each individual has infinite potentiality, in that the state of the individual is also the center of the universe. For example, I have in my state infinite potentiality, and that potentiality is the center of the universe, but it means that for me, not for you. You are another individual, you have infinite potentiality and yours for you is also the center of the universe. Yet being the center of the universe is not for egotistic and selfish feelings, or a feeling of being more important than others. Rather it refers to what is the real
potentiality of each individual, that is the real meaning of dharmata. Generally people have no knowledge of dharmata.

Sometimes when we study Buddhist analytic philosophy, the Abhidharma, and we try to understand something with our judgment, with our thinking and by doing analysis, then, we understand it partially — we never have real knowledge if we cannot get beyond judgment and thinking. For that reason also Buddha gave an example, a very good example, in the Sutra teaching. He gave the example of people who study and learn only in an intellectual way that tathagata or prajnaparamita means the real condition. Their way of studying is compared to many blind people trying to figure out how an elephant looks. The only way they can know is by touch; so, slowly, slowly they learn what it looks like. They each touch a part of the body of the elephant and build up from it an idea of the elephant. One of them might touch the foot of the elephant, so he says, “The elephant is like the trunk of a tree;” another one gets the tail of the elephant and says, “Oh, the elephant is something like a snake;” yet another one touches the stomach of the elephant and then says, “the elephant is flat, it’s like a ceiling.” So then they gave many different explanations because they have no capacity for learning totally, each person gets a small piece of the elephant and bases his or her analysis and knowledge just on that small piece. Of course you could not say that something is not the elephant, it is some part of it, but they do not consider it one of the many parts of the elephant, they believe that is the whole elephant. That is the problem.

That is an example of what intellectual study is like, we believe very much in our judgment and thinking. That is also why when we are studying Buddhist philosophy we establish everything with three logics. When you do not know something then you say, “Why? What?” If someone asks you “Why?” then you must reply, and also reply logically, otherwise it is not accepted, so you say, “because of this and this and this.” And that person says, “Ah, yes, now I agree.” Maybe sometimes your reply is not really perfect, but it doesn’t matter if that person has accepted it and agreed upon it.

We human beings have the same human vision, but if a realized
being sees how we are seeing, it would see that as just illusion, not real vision. Yet somehow we agree on what we see. Let us take the example of a person who has an illness of the liver, or the bile — we call it mkhris.pa in Tibetan. As a consequence of that disease, the person's vision slowly, slowly becomes yellow; even though one looks at a white color they see it as yellow. Of course we know that it is not real. But if there were two people with the same illness, they would agree, “This is not white, it is yellow.” They have no problems. That is an example of how even if it is an illusion, there is also a value to logic. So we are living in that way, we say, “Why?” and then, “Because...” and then we believe that logical explanation. In reality the Buddha said, “Everything is illusion, unreal.”

**Logic**

The following story will clearly illustrate the point. Once in a country there was a very good astrologer, and he calculated very carefully what was going to be the future situation for that country. Through his astrological studies he discovered that there was going to be a very big rainfall, and that anyone who drank that water would go crazy. So then he informed the king, the government and everybody, “It's very dangerous, we must prepare water for drinking.” Then the government made a public announcement and everybody stored big quantities of drinking water. After seven days, the dreadful rain fell. Most of the people did not drink this water, but of course after two or three days all the water they had stored was consumed, so the local people started to drink ordinary water. We did the same thing when we had the problem with Chernobyl — first for many days we tried not to drink milk or eat vegetables, then after a few days we started to drink and eat everything as usual. So, when the first people started to drink water they went crazy. Slowly, slowly more and more people became abnormal. Soon the officers of the government drank that water and they became crazy. This went on until everybody became crazy except the king, the queen, and the royal family. They still had a lot of water that could have lasted them for some years, but then they
found it to be a great problem. Why? Because all the people, government functionaries, everybody considered the king and the queen crazy, abnormal people, because all the rest of the people shared the same vision. This is an example of our logic: if there is a reason and it is logical then we believe in it.

There are three principal logics: the first logic means something experienced objectively, concrete through our senses. For example, if I say, "This cup is white," and you are normal people who can see it and you can see white and you say, "Yes, it is white." You don't say, "Why?" because you see that this is white, this is a direct contact of your senses with an object, and we don't have any problems with that. But if we do have not something with this possibility of direct sense contact, then indirectly we get a reason for it. For example, we say, "Oh, there is a fire somewhere." In this case you can say, "Why?" Then I say, "Look, because there is smoke." You cannot see the fire, but you can see the smoke. You know, when there is smoke then there is also fire, usually that is our reply. Or we have a common belief system: for example I say, "After death there will be something." But as it is not so easy to prove, because it cannot be seen, a person may ask me, "How do you know? Why is there something after death?" Then if I know that you believe in Buddha, for example, then I may try to quote some saying of Buddha, "Because, you know, Buddha said that after death there is this and this." Then you don't say, "No, I don't agree," because you believe in the Buddha, therefore we agree on that. If you don't believe in Buddha, but I believe in Buddha and I say, "Because Buddha said that", that doesn't have any value for you. Many of these kinds of logic are complicated, and if we can go on with some belief as our base that is considered to be really logical.

Then there is the type of belief which is supported only by one's own consideration and not by any other base. For example, if I believe in Buddha and then I say, "Whatever Buddha said is perfect." But what is the guarantee? I only believe it, that's all. I believe because many teachers, many experts, many people have believed that Buddha is perfect. In that case I can say, "Nagarjuna
is a very famous scholar, and Nagarjuna explained that Buddha is an enlightened being and that he is perfect," but then there is no guarantee that Nagarjuna is someone worthy our belief. If you go that way in learning there is no base, the base is only your decision. You just believe that way, and behind your belief you have some logic, so is that true or not? Also, that logic is not perfect because you are living in time, you are living in circumstances, so you are thinking with your mind, you are judging and deciding with the help of the capacity of your senses, that is all. If you cannot see something with your two small eyes, you have no other ways of seeing. So everything is limited, even our mind. There is no guarantee, if you observe you can notice it. For example, last year how many plans did you have? When you were a small child how many plans did you have? When people are young then they feel, "Oh, when I grow up then I'll do this and that," but then when you grow up you don't do that. You may do the contrary to what you planned, because everything must go with circumstances, there is no other way. Who knows what kind of circumstances we are going to have tomorrow; for that reason even if we have prepared a very precise program, when we apply that program today, things go in a different way.

If only half of the secondary causes are present then something corresponds to the initial plan, but mostly we do it in a different way. Many of our ideas, we discover later, are only a kind of fantasy. So then which is really the base of our mind? We can believe very much, we can decide everything. Today we can decide ten things, but maybe tomorrow we discover that everything is false. We change everything when there are different secondary causes. So that is our manifestation of mind, that is why all relative conditions are like an illusion. So if there is no real knowledge, something in our real condition, then anything which we are judging, thinking, or creating is like a reflection in the mirror. We also have that condition, which is the existence of our body, speech and mind. We believe very much that our physical body is something concrete until we die. Of course we know that when we die it is finished. Maybe most of our bodies go to a cemetery some-
where, and that also is very concrete. In fact, after one hundred years nobody who is here on earth now will still be alive; most of us will have integrated into the nature of the elements. Nevertheless, we don’t feel that way now because we have our physical body, something concrete; that is why we feel “I” and “mine” and all “my” conditions. But through that condition there is the possibility to discover our real nature, which we call dharmata, that potentiality. But how can we discover it within a method of teaching?

We can discover our potentiality, dharmata, with the method of the Four Visions. The First Vision is chos.nyid mngon.sum. Chos.nyid means “dharmata,” mngon.sum means “real,” meaning something we have contact with or we discover through our senses, not merely imagination. For example we say, “Emptiness is our real nature,” although that is a kind of experience, yet it is not something we really see or experience concretely. By contrast chos.nyid mngon.sum means something concrete. How then can we have that concreteness? We acquire that through visions. The First Vision we can have is the thig.le that we use in the visualization of the guru yoga that I explained. For example, you are looking in empty space, then the thig.le appears, particularly if there are secondary causes like sun-rays, or other kinds of light. In that case you look into the rays of that light with your eyes half-closed and in a dimension of rays you can discover the apparition of the thig.le. It looks somehow like a peacock feather, and it is shining and sometimes when you see it and look at it then it goes away and disappears. So even though we did not do much practice we can have that experience, we can have that experience because everybody has that potentiality in their nature. Our potentiality can manifest and we can easily discover it.

So what really is the manifestation of the thig.le? A thig.le is the form of our potentiality manifesting in front of our eyes as something like a vision because there is a secondary cause for its manifesting. For example the sun’s rays are only a secondary cause. For example, if you sit with your hand, or any part of the body near your eyes, you notice that you have many hairs on your hand and
if you look through this hair near the sun’s rays it is shining and many kinds of *thig.le* manifest. Or if you lay down on the ground and you put a piece of woolen or silken cloth on your face, looking at the sun-rays through this cloth you can see many *thig.le*. You might think that they are coming from the woolen cloth or from the rays; but those are only the secondary causes, the *thig.le* do not originate from them.

Let us take the example of a crystal rock. If you put it in the light when secondary causes, such as sun rays, are present, then from this crystal rock infinite lights having rainbow colors come out. They are not really manifesting from sun-rays, which is only a secondary cause. In reality that manifestation comes from the potentiality of the crystal rock, and in the same way, the manifestation of *thig.le* comes through our potentiality. You can discover that when you are doing the dark retreat: in the dark you are only doing some specific positions and gazing with your eyes and you can have infinite visions of *thig.le*. How can you have these visions when there are no sun-rays? Even if you live in the dark you still have your potentiality, only the secondary causes for manifesting it are not the sun-rays; it could be the position and the manner of gazing. There are many ways in which you can develop that possibility, and that is called *chos.nyid mgon.sum*, “the real vision of *dharmata*.” You have that vision of *thig.le*; it means something like having the vision of your potentiality, because through that you discover your potentiality. So this is the first stage of the vision; through this very important method you can have possibility of that vision and discovering your potentiality. So your vision of *dharmata* is very important for realizing and integrating your potentiality.

All the practices like *thod.rgal* and *yang.tig* start and develop from that point of *thig.le*. You always have the production of a karmic body — your material body is the resultant product of the potentiality of karma that you produce. You see, your real nature is pure from the beginning, and has infinite potentiality which manifests through sound, light and rays. But when we do not have that knowledge and we are distracted and enter into a dualistic
vision, that is the starting point of samsara. Someone may ask, “Who made, and who created this samsara and when was it created?” Although you cannot trace a cosmological map of its origin, yet whenever you enter in a dualistic vision, you are already in samsara and that is the starting point.

So if you continue in that way you then produce the infinite potentiality of negative karma — not only are you distracted, but you produce potentiality. All your karma, is produced in the same way: first your intention, then you enter into an action and then you are satisfied. When you have these three aspects or qualifications then you create the potentiality of karma, and this potentiality of karma has the potential of producing some result. But karma is not only negative, it’s only negative if you do some negative action, or it can be a kind of obstacle. For example, you are walking and, due to distraction, you put your foot on a small animal and kill it. When you notice what you have done you feel very sorry, because you had no intention of killing that animal. What is that action? That is a negative action because you killed that animal and it received that suffering, but you did not produce any negative karma because you had no intention at all to kill it; on the contrary when you realized what had happened you were not satisfied, so there are no secondary causes for really producing karma. However, negative actions can become obstacles. If you produce negative karma then there is really some concrete negative energy and that becomes associated with your potentiality.

For example, you have the five elements and in your potentiality they are like the five colors if you manifest some pure manifestation or pure dimension. But when you produce negative karma that characteristic of negative karma is associated with all your elements, with all your potentiality, so your elements slowly, slowly become somewhat material, more on a material level due to the production of karma, and the result of it is what we call karmic vision.

The vision of the thig.le and that of our physical existence are very distinct: the physical body and all our human dimension is
the production of karma, while what appears in the *thig.le* is our real potentiality.

When you have this knowledge then you have the possibility that your existence, this karmic production is integrated in that *thig.le*. If you totally succeed in integrating your existence in the *thig.le*, that is called "Great Transference," like that manifested by Guru Padmasambhava — there is no death and every element, all existence, is realized in its natural manifestation of the rainbow body. Even if you do not have the capacity for that total integration in the *thig.le*, but are on that path, and you have the capacity of integrating, even if your material karmic body remains, depending on the level of your capacity of contemplation when you die, still you can totally integrate — maybe it will take seven days, but then your physical body dissolves in its real nature. Even if you have death, your realization manifests as the rainbow body. Many of our teachers manifested a rainbow body like that, so this is called the rainbow body; and in Tibetan it is called 'ja'.lus.

You see, when we do practice of *gcod* at the end of the invocation we say, "*phrin.las mthar.phyin 'ja'.lus. 'grub.par.shog." "phrin.las. mthar.phyin." means success benefitting all sentient beings, and 'ja'.lus. 'grub.par.shog means to obtain that realization of the rainbow body. So if you are a practitioner of Dzogchen and you do practice correctly, there is always the possibility of realizing the rainbow body, but you cannot achieve realization only through the methods of Dzogchen Upadesha. You must keep your transmission perfectly, and apply it doing practice in a correct way.

Many people today are jumping into the methods of Dzogchen Upadesha and they say, "Oh, there is a wonderful method of *thod.rgal! We must discover that.” Many people ask me to teach them *thod.rgal*. Of course I do teach *thod.rgal* if someone is really ready and has a perfect condition; but if a person does not have that condition, even if I teach *thod.rgal* it has no benefit for that person. Furthermore, I can create problems for my own practice if I don't give transmission in the correct way. I might not be able to have my realization — so far I don’t have a rainbow body, I have a physical body, I am an ordinary person. I would like to realize the
rainbow body and I know how I can have that realization, for I
know precisely how and what methods to apply. We should not
broadcast and talk about these methods. Often when people find
something they consider interesting they copy it, write about it and
talk about it, commenting, "Oh, there is a wonderful method.”
They do not know that that method is related to transmission. They
have the idea of something that works in a mechanical way. If you
break a car and you know how to repair it mechanically you can
do that, but the method of teaching doesn’t work that way. The
number one principle is transmission, and the second is the correct
way of applying it, so that you know which is the method and you
can benefit from it; that’s why both teacher and practitioner keep
it secret. That’s the reason also why it is called Upadesha, so it is
very important that you know this principle. So the first stage is
called chos.nyid mgon.sum, meaning seeing or having real experi­
ence of dharma.ta.

The second stage is called nyams.snang gong.'phel. Nyams means
experience, snang means “vision”; through experience you can
have different kinds of visions. Visions do not only refer to visions
related to our eyes, but also mean the functions of all the senses.
Gong.'phel means “developing,” “increasing,” and it refers to the
fact that you are using specific positions. In general we have three
main positions: Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya.
By using a particular position and by controlling your energy the
result is that specific aspect of manifestation. For example, you are
gazing into space, or you are looking in the sun-rays and you have
visions of thig.le, one or many thig.le. And when you have that thig.le
you can also see a kind of light-net; sometimes you can see silver
strings, and we call that a Vajrasattva-chain. That too is a manifes­
tation of the continuation of our potentiality. When you observe
the thig.le all these chains move; then when you observe this net of
light, do not go after the thig.le and these things, but remain in a
state of contemplation. In this way you can find these thig.le and all
other visions stop moving. And slowly, slowly, day after day, you
develop and you can find some stable thig.le; then you fix on that
thig.le and integrate your existence in that thig.le. It does not mean
very much when you have many visions of thig.le, that is only the manifestation of your potentiality, also you must not only have curiosity and kind of play about with these visions, you should only integrate, and be in that thig.le.

Integrating means that whatever you see, you are just that, and that is in your existence. If you do not remain in a dualistic vision you can develop your manifestations more and more. When you develop visions you must not immediately create an attachment to them. Some people, when they have some kinds of visions, such as nice things, feel very happy and say, “I always want to have this vision.” With this kind of attachment you block your possibility of development. On the contrary, you have to relax in that state, in any kind of vision, and integrate in that state in this way so that the vision of the thig.le increases. You can also experience the development of visions in a thig.le, such as full or partial manifestations of the Dhyani Buddhas or a half form, a partial form of it. So this is called nyams.snang gong.'phel. — increasing your vision.

The Third Vision is called rig.pa tshad.phebs and means “maturing your knowledge,” being in a state of rig.pa. When you are in that contemplation, you do not need any effort for being or integrating; you easily, automatically get in that state of integration and remain that way in this vision. Through applying integration in that way you have the vision of how all that has matured and totally developed. Particularly in the dimension of the thig.le there are many different kinds of visions, some are pure and some are impure. So this is the third stage.

Then you have the last stage which is called the stage of chos zad, chos means “dharma,” or phenomena, zad means “consuming”; thus consuming phenomena, principally in your vision, in your consideration of subject and object. You see, you have a physical body, which is the product of karma, and through this practice of integration with that capacity you slowly, slowly consume your existence — it means dissolving your physical body into its real nature. So when you are entering in this stage, applying this practice and you die on that path, your death and your realization
is the rainbow body. If you completely succeed at that stage then there is the great transference like that of Guru Padmasambhava.

This is a very important, essential method, so you must be very serious about this method and its teaching. If you are not serious, then you damage and destroy yourself, not other people. It means that you must not talk about it unless it is necessary. Of course, if the teacher asks you something you can talk about it, also among students, people who received that teaching together, because they collaborate talking to one another, they are working with that transmission. But among practitioners also when you want to talk to one another, it has to be done in a serious way, not as if they are going to a bar, or a wine shop and being half-drunk they say, “How is the first and second stage?” I know that many people who follow the teaching have this kind of behavior.

I remember when we were traveling to Kailash a person in the group had some notes about some methods of thod.rgal, and he repeatedly asked me to teach thod.rgal. After so much insistence I said, “I am sorry. For me this teaching is something very serious, if there is a possibility, the conditions, I certainly know when it is appropriate for me to teach. It is not necessary that you keep on insisting.” However, they must have felt that I did not want to teach, that I wanted to keep the secret, so they tried to discover that secret. At a certain point of the journey I noticed that many people were secretly writing down these methods; I even heard that one day while they were traveling in the bus someone was reading these notes over a loudspeaker and everybody in the bus was listening, including the Chinese guides. I was very upset when I heard these things, not for myself, because I did not do anything concerning thod.rgal, but those people were creating problems for themselves. If you do these things such as not respecting transmission, not respecting methods, then you create very heavy obstacles for yourself, and that’s why we must be very precise in the teaching.

The same principle also applies to Dzogchen yang.tig, the dark retreat. In this method we mainly apply seven levels, and for these levels the teacher transmits them one-by-one. Students do the
practice and after having experience they receive the second level, they continue with the practice and then they receive the third level, and so on. Also, for transmitting, the teacher must have precise experience, must know how that experience is, and the particular experience, and characteristic of that person receiving the teaching, and in that way the teacher can transmit the second or third levels; and then the student can really progress in the practice. Even with these methods people have the tendency to relate with them in terms of techniques. For example in the United Stated at Tsegyalgar we have a dark retreat cabin, and someone asked me, “Can people who did the first, second and third levels inform the new people of these methods?” What does that mean? That is just an idea of technique, I know very well that nobody can do it the way I do. It is quite strenuous for me always to listen to each person one-by-one about their progress in the practice, but if we do this practice method, then it must be done very seriously. The aim of this practice is realization not just curiosity. For me the Upadesha teaching methods are very, very serious, because I am interested in realization, having total realization, so how can I destroy myself and my path? So then people must be aware of that. That is why I always ask practitioners not to fight, not to get angry with one another because that creates problems and obstacles for our realization. This is an important point related with transmission. So these are mainly the Four Visions related with PARALIHISANA MAHKARTAKELANAM. You go ahead that way and know the sense of the Song of the Vajra.
Solar and Lunar Energy

There are many methods related to a practitioner’s attitude that you can use in your life. For example, some methods are more linked with practices like gtum.mo heat, others are more related to sensation; both are characteristics related to our nature as male and female. There are many methods for acquiring these kinds of knowledge. Let us take a practice like gtum.mo, “inner heat.” To develop your capacity of inner heat you use different methods such as kumbhaka, visualization of fire energy and so on, and that capacity will develop and physically manifest to the point that you can sit in the snow without wearing any clothes as Milarepa did. So, what does heat represent? Heat is a principle linked with female energy, for maturing something.

In the yoga method we have, in general, the principle of solar and lunar energy. In the Western system and others it is considered that lunar energy is female and the solar energy is male but in Dzogchen and tantric teaching it is the opposite. Solar energy is female and linked with ripening, maturing, while the lunar energy is male and is related to the cause. For example, the male can give only the cause of existence like a seed, which is represented in visualization as white in color. We visualize the lunar energy as a white luminous ball. It is only the cause of existence that is received in the mother’s womb, where it remains and develops for nine months. The father does not have any power or capacity for developing that. Even if the father would like to do something and collaborate with the mother, there is nothing he can do. But the
mother’s nature, even if she does nothing in particular, already has that potentiality. All functions of the elements in her combine slowly, slowly to develop that being, and after nine months it is perfectly developed, and then the birth takes place. That is called solar energy. When there is solar energy on the earth, everything grows and matures, so the solar energy represents the function of universal energy.

Of course, the male also has the function of solar energy, and the female has the aspect of lunar energy, but mainly male and female mean, respectively, lunar and solar energy. For that reason, when we use channels and chakras in our practice, we have these aspects of solar and lunar energy. Heat is solar energy, and the result of developing heat is sensation. Why do yogis develop heat so much? They are not developing in order to avoid buying clothes! The purpose is to develop sensation. If you really want to develop your sensation, then you must start by developing heat; if there is no development of heat, there is no sensation. These two principles are called bde.drod; bde means sensation and drod is heat. These two principles are also related with our daily existence because we have that nature. If you have this knowledge you can use all these methods and then integrate them into your life.

Especially in Dzogchen, we say that the principle is integration, and for that reason also in the Song of the Vajra, after the Four Visions we have SAMBHARATAMEKACANTAPA, the principle of male energy. It concerns the function of lunar energy, and how it is linked with our attitude and condition, and how we integrate all in that aspect of energy into the state of contemplation. Then there is the verse SURYABHATARAIPASHANAPA, the principal of female energy, the function of solar energy and how we can integrate it in the state of contemplation.
Integration

Next there is the verse RANABHITISAGHURALAPA which means we are integrating our behavior, attitude, and everything with our experiences. An example of this is the ganachakra. Chakra means something like a mandala, we are in total enjoyment, and everything is beyond limitation. In a practical sense we cannot have that, but we can have experiences of some other dimensions. If we are good practitioners, through our vision, dreams and capacity, but in this limited world we cannot have ganachakra. The ganapuja that we perform periodically by gathering together food and pleasurable substances for outer and inner offering, is a symbol of ganachakra.

I shall give you an example, a very simple one, related to sexual contact. Everybody knows that sexual contact gives pleasurable feelings and practically everybody has sexual experience, but nobody can do it in public, in the middle of a square, for example. If we have sexual contact in public places where there are many people, we would have many problems as some people consider that to be crazy. Why? Because that is our attitude. We are shy or pretend that we don’t know about these things. But when we are alone inside a dark room, then we become courageous. So that is not the real condition, but when we say ganachakra, we are going beyond that limitation.

One of the most important experiences is that of feeling, and of course then you manifest that also in the ganachakra, but there is no way we can do that. That is why I am saying that ganachakra is impossible for our dimension, but when we do ganapuja at least we imagine, we try to get in that situation, maybe we can have some dreams or vision of what we could enjoy in ganachakra.

I remember my teacher Jangchub Dorje once told me, “You have a big obstacle, you are shy.” That is true, because I spent many years in a college with monks, so that when we were speaking to or meeting some girls, I felt very shy and always ran away. Master
Jangchub Dorje was not a monk, and his community was not made up of monks. They had another attitude, a more open one, but I still had that attitude. So when he told me that I was shy, I said, "How do you know that I am very shy?" He told me, "Because I had a dream." And he related it to me. In the dream my Master and I were inside a house and we went upstairs and we arrived in a big hall where many naked dakinis were dancing. As soon as we arrived there a dakini immediately took my Master and then together in union they started to dance. Another dakini tried to take me and although I ran away she still tried to take me. Then I started to cry and asked my Master for help. This was his dream. Maybe it's true, for at that time I was somewhat like that. So we have to integrate our sensory pleasure, that is the meaning of RANABHITISAGHURALAPA.

Same Flavor

The principal meaning of MASMINSAGULITAYAPA is ro.snyoms—"same flavor." The aim is not only to discover the same flavor, but being that way in our integration. In Tibetan this is also called "srid.pa ru.slog." meaning "reversing dualistic possibilities." You see, in the invocation of Garab Dorje we chant the line "snang.srid gzhir.gzhengs" which means the request to receive empowerment of snang.srid gzhir.gzhengs — reversing all our vision, subject and object and getting in its origin. That is also the principle of same flavor and the final goal of contemplation of Dzogchen.

So to sum up these four: SAMBHARATAMEKACANTAPA, SURYABHATARAIPASHANAPA, RANABHITISAGHURALAPA, MASMINSAGULITAYAPA, are related with the four principles of our attitude and how to integrate them. This is also one of the most important points of the path. Though you know many methods and technical practices, if you have no capacity for integrating them in your daily life, they are not very important. If you have studied for many years the point of view and philosophy, and you feel very expert in these topics yet you do not enter into the real sense, then
it does not have much meaning. That is why attitude is very important.
Energy

Now we are on the point of explaining our energy. You see, in this retreat we are going one-by-one, step-by-step with this teaching of the Song of the Vajra, and I have explained the real sense of the Song of the Vajra up to these verses: GHURAGHURASAGAKHARNALAM. I have already explained what our attitude must be and what it means to integrate our attitude in contemplation. Today we have this explanation of energy, or, we can say the knowledge and understanding of our potentiality.

In our potentiality, too, there are many considerations; we are not only speaking only of our nature or energy, but also how we are in general, how we have contact with our energy, and how we use it. Because if we do not understand the teaching in a concrete way — meaning with our existence of body, voice and mind — then we learn it only in an intellectual way, and keep on living in a fantasy, and never walk with our feet touching the earth. One day you may discover that everything is fantasy, but by then maybe it is too late and you have lost a lot of time. So it is very important that you proceed in a concrete way with everything. With our energy we can do many things in a concrete way. We are living with energy — you see every day we go to work, maybe in a school or factory, and we do something to earn money. Why do we need money? Because with no money, we cannot buy food, we have no place where we can sleep, we cannot even live our life. That is why we say that our situation is limited and we must concretely know that condition. Furthermore, we continuously use our energy.
through our whole life and sometimes maybe, we waste it in a useless way. If we are aware we really know that energy is important so we should use it in a correct way, then we can benefit ourselves and others.

But in general, we never observe ourselves, that is the problem. We must remember and we must discover first that the majority of us are really very egotistic. That is why it is said in the Dzogchen teaching that the cause of being in the human dimension is pride. You always feel that whatever you do is perfect, your own idea and point of view is better than that of someone else. That is also the reason why people do not communicate when they do something; they just do as they feel, then they don’t communicate. If you don’t communicate, then other people have their ego too, so you end up in a situation like that game of paper, scissors and stone. Then you have stone with stone and what is then the condition? There is no communication, there is no possibility to do something in common with others and that is mainly the manifestation of ego.

We really have a very strong tendency to egotism, everybody has that. I do not mean that you should not have ego, that is human nature, but if you are a practitioner and really on the path, then you must try to understand that; observe yourself a little more and then you can become a little smoother, have less tensions, listen to other people’s opinions and realize that there exist many other solutions.

Let us take the example of our Dzogchen Community, often we have many difficulties because we do not sufficiently collaborate and communicate with one another. For many years I have been asking all our practitioners, “Please communicate, please collaborate with one another.” Because communicating and collaborating between one person and another, that in itself is practice. If you are egotistically leaning on your side and shutting yourself away, that is very contrary to the principle of the path and teaching. In the Buddhist teaching it is said that though you may have studied all the many teachings and explanations of Sutra and Tantra, but if you had really learned just one, then you can manifest something and your attitude will become smoother. It means that you know
and understand what communication is in the real sense of the teaching. If our attitude and intention are hard like a stone, then even if we are in the teaching, even if we have transmission, we do not change very much. So this is very important for practitioners — to be really careful and observe ourselves, particularly the practitioners who are on the path, they have the responsibility of the teaching too.

**Namkhai Norbu's Life Experience**

When I came from India to Italy for the first time in 1963, I did not really come to Italy with the intention of giving teachings but just to work. Previously I was in Sikkim, and I had many problems and difficulties. At that time I was still hoping to be able to go back to Tibet, but in 1959 there were many problems in Central Tibet, so at that time the Dalai Lama and many Tibetans escaped. I had already been in Sikkim for two months and, with the intention of trying to return to Tibet, I went to the border between China and Sikkim. Some people informed me there that the situation in Tibet was very complicated, therefore it would be better to wait a few more days before attempting to enter Tibet. So I did that.

A Tibetan man belonging to a rich family and very devoted to the teaching invited me to his house. He was a functionary of a Chinese office and he told me, "It would be better you waited a few days and then go; and while you are waiting, please stay here and do Tara puja for me." So I spent one week with that family, a very rich and good family. They had a very nice temple and I was doing puja there. Every day I received news from Tibet and the situation worsened; I also had many very bad dreams. After one week I decided to go back to India, but it was not that easy. Once in India what should I do? I had no house, no money and no idea how to do something, nevertheless I went back to Sikkim. Some people knew that I am a reincarnation, therefore they kept on inviting me here and there to do a puja. I spent more than three months doing pujas for families and going everywhere. The principle was not that I believed I could benefit all sentient beings by doing pujas, but
rather because they offered me a little money or rice, or something to eat, or something that was useful for me at that moment, and of course by doing my best in performing the puja they might also have had some benefit from it. But I am not so sure about that. The idea of going to people's houses and receiving money in exchange for doing a puja was not part of my principle regarding the teaching. I did not like to do that at all. Some people see themselves as missionaries of the teaching, but I don't like that either. But what else could I have done?

One day, I was invited to have dinner with the king of Sikkim. After dinner, while we were talking about ordinary situations, I asked him, "Why don't you offer me a job? I spent almost three years in China where I was a teacher. I know how to teach in school and prepare programs for education." To that he replied, "If you want, of course, we will make you an offer," and I said, "That's wonderful if you offer me a job; and I can do something for education." So they immediately offered me a position in an office for education in Sikkim.

After a week, carrying my bag and going to the office, I started to have an ordinary life and I felt very happy. No longer did I have to go around doing pujas. Instead, every day I went to my office and prepared teaching material and reading books in Tibetan for seven classes. I stayed working in Sikkim until 1963. While I was there I met many foreigners. A French professor asked me to go to France and at that time I had some idea to go there; but then, as we talked more about it, I understood he wanted to use me, so I did not feel happy to be used for his advantage.

Later, I was invited to go to Japan. I almost went there, but then decided to wait six more months before going. During that time I also had an invitation to go to Korea, but declined because there are always problems there. And then I was told that an Italian professor, Mr. Tucci, was inviting someone to go to Italy. Then I talked with this other professor and he told me that in Italy they have a great quantity of Tibetan books, the biggest collection in Europe, brought there by Professor Tucci during his seven journeys to Tibet. So when I asked this professor what my work would be,
he said, "You can collaborate with Professor Tucci and coordinate the Tibetan books, and so on." So I liked that idea very much, because I thought I could read a lot of books. And then they asked me to come, so I went to Italy and for the first two years I worked at the I.S.M.E.O. Institute and received a scholarship from the Rockefeller Foundation. Apart from me there was another Tibetan Lama sent by the Dalai Lama, a Geshe representing the Gelugpa school. They chose me as because they wanted someone representing the Nyingmapa, or Kagyudpa school.

So I went to Italy to work and I had no idea to give teachings. That does not mean that I went there without my practice or my knowledge, but these two are something for my realization. During the first five years I spent in Italy, the only thing I did in the way of giving teaching was that I officially gave two or three seminars on yoga at the Institute. Although some people who attended the seminars asked me for teaching, I never accepted anyone as a student because I did not feel I was a teacher, I was not ready to give teaching. I spent more than fifteen years in Italy without giving any teaching, but later some situations arose — we say in Dzogchen, "Always work with situations and circumstances" — when conditions and circumstances were really good for giving teaching in such a situation, you do not reject anything but you apply yourself. Also, doing something for the teachings is the responsibility if a practitioner. If I really have knowledge, then I must communicate that to someone, otherwise there is no way of continuing the teaching and that is also part of my energy.

The Dzogchen Community

When I started to teach Dzogchen, I felt the responsibility for the transmission of this teaching, but not as though I was selling something. If I have an object to sell and someone wants to pay a lot of money for it, then I am happy to take the money and give them that object and that is the end of the transaction. Next I think about how I am going to sell another object. I do not care very much where that object goes or what happens to it. But the teachings are not like selling objects; rather it is mainly related with my spiritual, or my real condition. When I communicate with someone it means
it is related with my spirituality, my state. So we must not remain indifferent, that’s why all practitioners, all people who are interested, collaborate and to facilitate collaboration we have the Dzogchen Community.

Many people, when they hear about the Dzogchen Community immediately have the idea of an ordinary Dharma center, or of a group of people behaving in a limited way. You must understand what the meaning of the Dzogchen Community is and why we gave it this name. Dzogchen means our real state, our real potentiality and knowledge, and for discovering that, for having that knowledge we have teaching and transmission. People who are interested in this knowledge for discovering their real nature, and want to work in this field, are like travellers on the same boat. That is the meaning of community. When this is translated into Sanskrit, “community” is called Sangha. For example, the traditional Buddhist refuge recitation is: “Nama Buddhayya, Namo Dharmaya and Namo Sanghayya.” Sangha refers to a group of four or more than four practitioners; if there are only two or three practitioners that cannot be called Sangha. This point of view of the Sutra teaching system is related to Dzogchen teaching.

For more than ten years I have been giving teaching and collaborating with people who are interested. Now there are at least five or six thousand people in the world doing practice with me. This means that we are all in the same boat, that is, in the Dzogchen Community. So it is very important to collaborate with each other so that we hold this transmission truly for the future. If you really feel and consider this teaching to be wonderful and very important for realization, then you must think that it can benefit people. Even if you cannot go along with the idea of benefitting all sentient beings, at least you must think of your generation, of your sons and daughters, nieces and nephews. But because we are going to die one day, that does not mean all sentient beings must die together with us, for our human condition always continues. In this human condition there are many things: some are good, some are bad, and many things are superficial. Although people apply these various things today, tomorrow they may change them in some way, so it
is uncertain if they have value or not. But if you know that there is something valuable, such as the teaching and its transmission, then somehow you must protect it. Protecting the teaching means you are keeping the real teaching as it is, so it is really a transmission that has value.

Today in the modern world, for example, many people are taking teachings. We very much like to change things around and create something new: a little bit from this method, another little piece from that method and so on, then we put it all together in a basket. That is the characteristic of the "New Age," considered wonderful by many people, but I don't know if it is really wonderful for realization. If someone asks me, "Would you follow that way for your realization?" I'll never follow something like that, because I follow a teaching that has a source and has been proven for realization. I do not consider the teachings as something invented by someone thinking and then putting together a kind of montage. That is why I am saying, for example, that the Dzogchen teaching was mainly taught by Master Garab Dorje and that he manifested the great transference. From Garab Dorje to Guru Padmasambhava, how did these masters realize and manifest their realization and what is the proof of their realization? Up to today we have proof of many Dzogchen masters' realization: they manifested the rainbow body and many other proofs of their realization.

So, I consider teaching something like that; its transmission is something that has proof and it is something real. I do not think that the main point is just to take a little from here and there, and then make an "Eastern" philosophy. Anybody can do that, but what is really the function of it? Maybe we end our life that way without any conclusion. Teaching is not just for going about and creating something like a school, or a theory, or a point of view. The principle of teaching and transmission continued for centuries and centuries: the practitioners practiced so that their knowledge and experience was brought down to us without interruption. If a transmission has been interrupted, or some problems had arisen between lineage and transmission, then even if there are wonderful books explaining how you can do this and that, that transmission
or teaching has no life. In the Dzogchen teaching, we have a live transmission. The teaching has life and we are working towards developing the transmission in that way.

The Gakyil

Working together in the Dzogchen Community means to work for our own interest in realization as well as that of others. That is why I ask people to collaborate when we need to organize retreats and so on, and that is why we have the Gakyil. But sometimes people do not really understand when I ask to collaborate and to organize a little such as having a Gakyil in different places where there are Dzogchen Community members. Some people say, “Oh, we don’t like to make organizations.” Some others say, “Oh, we are afraid of organizations.” It is true that sometimes people form such terrible organizations with a hierarchical system and they say, “Oh, we are afraid, it’s better we don’t do anything.” That is a characteristic of our dualistic vision — there is or there is not, it exists or it does not exist. There is not a third possibility. We are living in that conflict; either you organize in a very structured and limited way so that when you get tired of it then you are completely against it, or you don’t do anything. Yet there is always the possibility of organizing something in a more harmonious way. You must know that we live in a human dimension, and even if you do not like organization in general, you could not live without it. If you want to sleep somewhere even for one night, you must prepare for that. You must get a bed or a blanket or something. That is organization. Organization does not imply a hierarchical system. There is always the possibility to do something useful if we have the responsibility to carry on and continue our teaching, for that we need at least some organization.

But it is not necessary that we have a terrible organization, or that someone is giving orders. We always have these kinds of ideas. However the principle of Dzogchen practitioners is to be aware and know how the situation is. Yet many people do not know how to be aware and often after they organize a Gakyil then the people in
the Gakyil immediately feel like they are some kind of boss. They say, "Oh, he has," or "I have a position, and the people who have no position must obey." That is not the meaning of collaboration. The function of a Gakyil is that of creating a system of collaboration: how to collaborate, to whom and how to communicate to other people.

For example, if someone asks me to go some place and lead a retreat, who is going to be responsible for organizing that? For that reason I want to have a Gakyil — people collaborating with one another, communicating, preparing and organizing with all the people of the Dzogchen Community who are interested. Also when we finish a retreat, there are many things to be done, we don’t just say, "Oh, we finished the retreat, goodbye," and we go away. We are all on the path, and we must collaborate with one another for our realization. But who will organize? Who takes the responsibility for coordinating? It cannot be everybody’s responsibility — someone must take this responsibility. That someone is the Gakyil.

The principle and symbol of the Gakyil — with the three colors, yellow, red, blue — is related to the principle of our three existences, the three vajras: we have body, voice and mind. When these three are unified together then there is the human function, an active energy. And of course, if you are in society and there are those aspects going together, there is also an active function. From the example of the Gakyil representing our three existences, we form a group of people called the “Gakyil.” They are responsible, each according to their color, for the different aspects of our community. The yellow color represents the more material level, the economic aspect, because in general both white and yellow correspond to our physical body. The red color represents our energy, that is work or any kind of activity. Blue represents the mental, intellectual aspect. So these are the three existences. If we have a representative of these then there is every possibility of function. That is what is meant by the Gakyil in the Dzogchen Community. People who are involved in the Gakyil are those on the path; they collaborate and practice in order to develop their capacity.
must coordinate the Gakyil, carry out duties and also overcome the problems arising within the Gakyil itself.

We should not think that the main focus of a Gakyil is with the financial aspect of the community. I have heard people say, “We have a Gakyil here but we have no money, and have to make a lot of payments.” That is not the purpose of the Gakyil, that is only a secondary thing; the main focus is teaching. If the principle of the teaching is missing, then there is no collaboration among practitioners, no development, nor understanding, and then the Gakyil has no function.

Practitioners also need a place where they can to meet. If a group of ten people want to get together to do Ganapuja, for example, they must have a place where they can coordinate it and make some plans and so on. Then if you want to go deeper and higher into the practice, you also need a place for doing a personal retreat. It does not mean that a person has to spend his or her whole life in retreat but maybe for a few days in a year a practitioner must find that time. Therefore you need a place, maybe a cabin somewhere. Your condition and desires are the same as those of other Dzogchen Community members. If you want to develop methods, particularly those of Semde, Longde and Upadesha (such as the yang.tig, the dark retreat) that you received through transmission from a teacher, you need a place where you can apply those practices. You also need a place to do collective practices; you cannot do all that anywhere in the city. These are the reasons why the Dzogchen Community needs a place, and why we are trying to buy land with houses in different places in the world where there are Dzogchen Community members. It is so that we can built a retreat cabin and make adequate preparation for the continuity of the teaching, and transmission, for our realization. All these actions are related to our energy.

When I first started to teach, I was personally involved in doing all these things. Some people do not understand why I sometimes also feel a little tired and a little upset too. Yet that is not very important because I understand the nature of samsara and I know very well people’s condition and their competition. Therefore, if I
followed the opinion and point of view of only a few people then I could not do anything. Even if there are some problems, I try to overcome them and I do my best.

When I started at Merigar, you know we started from zero. There was no capital and, for many years, instead of getting money from people’s contributions I offered my personal income. Many people may think I am making money from this, and live elegantly and comfortably, but it is a total misunderstanding! I am one of the oldest professors at the university in Naples and I do not have any economic problem either for myself or for my family. In reality, I spend more money than I can afford for Merigar and the Dzogchen Community, and I do not get any money for myself. On the contrary, for any projects that we have — such as building the Gompa as we did in Merigar, buying land and creating a base for the Dzogchen Community, the Gars in different places — then of course I even make some sacrifice for making money. But I also ask people to make some money somehow; they must be responsible, too, because it is not only my responsibility.

It is like being a father who is responsible for the economy of a family, but often when the father disappears, then the whole family becomes somewhat crazy because of financial difficulties, and that’s why it is important that the mother and children know how to make money. Therefore as long as the father is present, they can learn and apply that knowledge. That is an example of what we are doing, and how we are collaborating in that way.

Last year, for example, we built a big Gompa in Merigar; maybe you have seen photos of it. During all the many years we had retreats in Merigar, we always had problems of space, because at each retreat the number of people participating kept increasing. One year we rented a very big tent, and it was during Christmas and it was very cold. Even though the tent was equipped with a heating system, that was not sufficient. Furthermore the system was so noisy that it was difficult for the people to hear the teaching. Then, on the last day of the retreat, due to a big snowfall, the tent fell down. Because of many similar problems we had for many years, we decided to built a big Gompa.
This project started with some difficulties. We had problems in getting the building permit, then the cost of the project was more than we estimated at the beginning, and consequently we had a lot of problems making payments. In fact we have not finished yet, still we need to pay something. For that reason I asked all Dzogchen Communities to collaborate, not only for the Gompa project but also for the land we bought near Merigar, and the remodeling of the old house that today is the library. So there are many things to do and develop, but many people are not aware of that and they say, “Oh, we sent some money to Merigar, what happened with it?” While some Dzogchen Communities said, “Oh, we did not do anything because we sent all the money to Merigar. Merigar is not alive only with the money we receive!”

But Merigar also sends money to other communities when there is the necessity, and we try to do our best, we collaborate. For example, we bought this house and this land here in Argentina just last year, and although there was no money here, nevertheless we bought it. Where did the money come from? You may not know, but the money was sent from Merigar. Even though we had a lot of economic problems, such as paying for the Gompa and so on. Yet it was very important to buy it because we need a place on this continent where many people are interested in the teaching. Although the price of this property seemed very expensive due to the economic situation of this country, but when we thought how much money we spent for the land, Gompa and the house in Merigar, this in comparison is nothing. That is why we made some sacrifice and sent the money to buy it. This is collaboration! People must know and understand that, otherwise they may think “Oh, we have this land, but how did we get it?” It is not sufficient merely to own this land, but you have to do something, because the principal aim of having this land is that of slowly, slowly developing it and building retreat cabins. And if it is possible we can also build a meeting hall. As you noticed during this retreat, almost every day we had to move from one place to another for the teaching — sometimes we are inside, sometimes we are outside under a tree and so on. We do not do this because we like it! Of
course, if we had a meeting hall, that would be much more comfortable for us. When we own a piece of land there is always the possibility that one day we can build a meeting hall. However, you should not think that money is the only thing we need in order to carry out these kinds of projects. Some people immediately have these kinds of ideas, "How can we build a meeting hall without money?" Money never makes man, but man makes money!

So, if we are alive and we have an interest, we can succeed in doing everything, but if we do not have a deep interest, then we can do nothing. The question rests with our own interest and participation, and these both are part of our energy. We must exchange our energy and collaborate. This does not mean that you collaborate only with a small group of people in a very closed in way, but you also collaborate with other people, mainly with other Dzogchen Communities where there are different Gakyil and practitioners. You can open up and collaborate with people who are interested, particularly in different parts of the world where we have Dzogchen Communities. You exchange your ideas, you exchange your energy, and from that arises many benefits and a lot of prosperity. We must not close ourselves up egotistically, we must open up and collaborate, that is really very important also for developing knowledge, understanding and realization, at least we do something for the interest of our Community, such as making money.

In our society, in our condition, there are many rich people and others are very poor, and it is very important to know people's condition. For example someone suggested, "Oh, we try to ask everyone to give a dollar." I don't like this idea at all because I know very well that even one dollar is a lot for some people, as much as what a thousand dollars is for a person with money. Therefore you must be aware of all situations and if you have much money, for example, you can offer some and have benefit. If you have much money and one day, due to some circumstances, you lose it, you have no benefit at all from it. Furthermore if you feel bad about your loss you may even create the cause of becoming a preta (hungry ghost) for yourself, instead of a benefit. Therefore, if you
have money use it generously so that it benefits everybody. Many people who have money have no clear ideas about this.

You see, each individual's contributions are like the many drops that make an ocean, because if you want to do something you must have collaboration from the whole group and then everything becomes very easy. However, the point is not only to offer money, but also to make money. Everybody in society makes money, and we can also make a little money that will benefit all sentient beings. It is not for my comfort, that is why I am courageous and I ask people to collaborate and raise some money. If it were for my own benefit alone, I am sure that I would not have the courage to ask, but for the Dzogchen Community I try any way I can to raise money.

So, all this is part of our energy, how we work with it and how we use it. We are speaking of concrete energy, not something of a high level, after we know and understand energy in a concrete way, then we also have the possibility to know the essence of energy and knowledge and understanding becomes something more concrete.

GHURAGHURASAGAKHARNALAM

Gdangs Energy

Now we have GHURAGHURASAGAKHARNALAM. These four half-lines are related with our energy manifestation. It is important to realize how energy manifests. The characteristics of our energy are called gdangs, rol.pa, and rtsal. The Tibetan word gdangs is related with the state or knowledge of these verses: GHURAGHURASAGAKHARNALAM. The energy of the state of rig.pa is immutable, and being in that energy itself, that is the state of contemplation of gdangs. How is the gdangs energy itself? In general, we learn about it with an example: gdangs energy is like a crystal ball; it has no color, and its real nature is pure, limpid and clear, but if you put it on a piece of colored cloth, for example, then it will appear to be the same color as the cloth.
In Dzogchen, when we give teachings with the symbolic transmission. We sometimes place symbolic objects on a table, not merely speaking about them, so that the practitioners can observe them and then discover what they mean by going into the experience concretely. For example, you take a table and cover it with a piece of cloth which has four different colors, one on each side of the four directions like a mandala: the mandala in the East is white, the Vajra Family; in the South is yellow, the Ratna Family; the one in the West is red, the Padma Family; while in the North it is green, the Karma Family; and the center is blue, the position of Vairocana, the Buddha Family. Then at the center of this mandala you place a crystal ball; if you look at the ball from above it appears completely blue because in the center the base is blue.

Then you go to the East side and you look in the crystal ball, and it appears white, then you go and turn around a little and its aspect changes again and it becomes yellow, if you keep on walking it will keep on changing into red and then into green, because all directions have their color, and so on according to the direction you are walking around. So what does this mean? It means that whatever the situation and the circumstances are, the state of contemplation manifests that, because in the real Dharmakaya state there are no colors, or forms, or positions. All circumstances and positions are relative, so when you are in your real nature nothing ever changes, even if you are seeing different colors. The nature of the crystal is always clear, pure and limpid. So you are like that; this is your state, and in any circumstances in which you integrate, and you find yourself in that integration — that condition of energy is called gdangs.

NARANARA ITARPATALAM

Rolpa Energy

NARANARAITARPATALAM, these verses refer to the energy of rol.pa which is infinite manifestation beyond limitation. When you
are in this, beyond limitation, that is the state of rol.pa. For introducing that we use the example of the mirror. In general, our ideas are very limited. For example, good is not bad, big is not small, and so on; all are in conflict and different. So if someone says “big,” you understand “big,” you never understand “small” — that is our limitation of dualistic vision. If a dimension is small, you cannot conceive how to put something big inside it, that is impossible. For that reason also the story of Milarepa in a yak horn seems strange. In the biography of Milarepa, it is explained that one day Milarepa and his disciple Rechungpa were walking when suddenly it started to rain. When they arrived at the place to which they were going, Rechungpa noticed that his Master was not with him. Then he started to look but could not find him, so he just waited for him. Later when the rain stopped he heard Milarepa singing but he could not see him, though he continued to look for Milarepa everywhere. Finally he noticed that the sound of Milarepa’s voice was coming from a yak horn, and he thought, “Oh, it is impossible!” But it seemed that sound was really coming from there, so slowly, slowly he went towards the yak horn. A yak horn is not very big — it is like a cow horn — so then he looked inside and saw Milarepa sitting in his usual position and singing. Rechungpa really saw him, it was not an illusion, so he was very surprised. He said, “The yak horn did not become big, because it is its normal size,” while he also saw that Milarepa was his normal size and had not become smaller. That is why he was very surprised and thought it impossible. Yet he really saw that. Then Milarepa sang, “You feel that is strange, but that is the real condition. That is what we mean by being beyond limitation.” That was the teaching he received from Milarepa. Although it seems impossible, sometimes we have this kind of possibility. I also once had a personal experience similar to that one when I was doing the practice of thod.rgal. I had a manifestation of a thig.le and it seemed like a mandala: in the center there was a thig.le of five colors, and in the four directions there were four thig.le, all five thig.le being within a big thig.le. So this was my experience. If during my practice I have some interesting experiences, I usually try to draw them afterwards so that I remem-
ber them. So when I finished my practice I tried to draw it, but it never looked like what I saw. I really saw these five thig.le in one thig.le, with no empty spaces in between them, but while I was drawing I discovered that it was impossible. I tried to draw them again and again but after three or four pages of drawing I understood logically that it is impossible. Then I thought that it might look like that, but in reality it couldn’t be so. After two or three days, while I was doing my practice, it appeared again and at that moment I knew that it was impossible to draw them. Even though I already knew it was impossible to do this, at that time I really saw why. So I was a little surprised but that is real — in nature there are things like that.

So when we take the example of the mirror, we can illustrate there the conflict of big and small: the big cannot be put into the small; nevertheless, if you have a small sized mirror you can see the whole countryside in it. You can see the whole countryside without its changing size and becoming smaller — you just see it in the normal way. That is a good example for breaking the conflict of big and small. So rol.pa energy, in relation to our dimension, means something like a mirror, then we have infinite potentiality of manifestation. You can manifest the whole universe in your dimension. Also, when you are doing a transformation method in tantric teaching, you are manifesting the whole universe in a mandala like that of the Kalachakra, or you are transforming your existence into that of a deity and your whole, total existence into that mandala. In the real sense it does not mean that you are building a mandala outside somewhere, but you are just manifesting in your dimension the characteristic of rol.pa energy, as we do in our practice of zhi.khro — peaceful and wrathful manifestations which are related with our energy, movement and calm state. All these are manifesting in our dimension, just as in the example of the mirror. The characteristic of this kind of energy is called rol.pa. It is very important that you know that principle and how the energy manifests, especially if you do transformation and realize the whole manifestation in your dimension.
Then we have SIRNASIRNABHESARASPALAM, that is the non-dual rtsal energy in the state of rig.pa. What is rtsal energy? The rtsal energy has the characteristic of manifesting in a different way from the gdangs and rol.pa energies I explained before. You can learn about the rtsal energy with the example of a crystal rock. The crystal rock is the symbol of your real nature, which is clear, pure and limpid. It does not differ much from the crystal ball, but the crystal rock has many corners and many shapes. In the same way, rtsal energy is more related with our different conditions, our characteristic functions of energy; also different kinds of elements are all related with our physical body and energy. So that is the root of our pure and impure vision.

To have an example of this, we put the crystal rock in the sunshine, then, when the sun rays strike the crystal rock, rainbow colors manifest everywhere. But in the absence of sunshine, all these lights and their potentiality remain inside the crystal rock, because it is the source of the manifestation of these colors. Of course, if there is no secondary cause — sun-rays — there is no manifestation.

With the mirror, for example, the secondary cause is the presence of an object or some people in front it, if that cause is not present, then there is no reflection. It is similar with the crystal rock — its potentiality manifests only when there are secondary causes. Let us take the example of the manifestation of deities or mandalas. Their cause for manifesting is sound, light and rays — first sound, then light becomes rays of different colors, and from the five colors different shapes form which are the manifestations. We call that a pure dimension, which is part of our real energy.

When we are distracted, conditioned by subject and object, we produce a lot of karma and the potentiality of karma. All potentiality of karma is associated with our energy, and then instead of light, we have impure vision — karmic vision — and that becomes
an obstacle for having knowledge or being in real potentiality. So in that way we have samsara, and we say then that we have different visions of lokes, mainly the six lokes. What are the six lokes in a practical sense? They are part of our rtsal energy. What does an enlightened being like Kalachakra or some other Sambhogakaya manifestation display? That is rtsal energy. We can speak of rtsal energy in a more detailed way, as it pervades our whole existence. Our prana energy, for example, which is more related to our physical body, the kundalini energy, or even ordinary physical energy force — everything is related to rtsal energy.

So rtsal energy is like the root of all, that is why we say our primordial state is the center of the universe; the whole universe is our rtsal manifestation. Everybody has the same condition. When you are in the state of rig.pa, what is rtsal energy? It is your experience and through experience you are in the rtsal energy, and this called rig.rtsal. No longer do you have a dualistic consideration such as, this is energy, this is my condition and so on, because in that instant presence you are not in dualistic vision. That is the most important point in contemplation. In this way we integrate all our existence — body, voice, and mind — the whole universe and all circumstances, in a state of contemplation.

So, these three main manifestations of our energy are related with the three states of the kayas: the gdangs energy never changes its real nature, which is primarily in the state of the Dharmakaya. For demonstrating the rol.pa energy, we took the example of the mirror and being integrated in that is the Sambhogakaya. And rtsal energy is more related with our condition, both pure and impure dimensions, so it is linked with the Nirmanakaya state. You can understand that is not sufficient just to have knowledge of your nature and energy, but there is something to do in your practice.
Wisdom Energy

In the last verses BHUNDHABHUNDHACISHASAKEALAM, the word bhundha is more or less the same as buddha in Sanskrit.

The real meaning of bhundha in the Oddiyana language is awakened state, our primordial state, the real nature. So BHUNDHABHUNDHACISHASAKEALAM is related to entering in our real nature. Even if we have infinite visions and experiences related with different kinds of energy, everything then is reversed into its original real nature: essence, nature and potentiality, that is "being" in that state totally. That is called sridpa gzhir gzhengs in Tibetan: srid.pa means "existence" like dharmas, all phenomena; and gzhir means "the base," gzhengs means "to arise" or "to wake up." We wake up or arise in the base — all our considerations, all our existence, everything. We are in samsara; and have the continuation of samsara; we also have the cause of it and are propelled in that direction. But if we reverse it towards its real nature — the state of Dharmakaya or Samantabhadra — that is the meaning of sridpa gzhir gzhengs. In this case everything, any kind of energy without distinction is called the quality and quantity of wisdom. This is the meaning of BHUNDHABHUNDHACISHASAKEALAM. So these four lines GHURAGHURASAGAKHARNALAM NARANARAITARPAT-ALAM SIRNASIRNABHESARASPALAM BHUNDHABHUNDHACISHASAKEALAM are more related to the characteristics of energy. You need to have this knowledge and then you also apply it and integrate it in contemplation.
The next ten syllables of the Song of the Vajra, SASA RIRI LILI II MIMI are called dbang.bcu; dbang means “potentiality” and also “energy,” bcu means “ten,” so “ten points of energy.” I already explained these ten places that we control through positions, particularly in the Longde practice. So, for example, SASA, the specific experience of these two energies is called snang.stong — you are in that non-dual experience of vision and emptiness — you are in the emptiness but at the same time you have all functions of your senses in contact with objects. The experience of RIRI is called rig.stong, non-dual experience of rig.stong. The Tibetan word rig means instant presence in any kind of experience, and rig.stong means that at the same time you are in emptiness. Then the LILI experience is called gsal.stong, gsal means “clarity,” and stong means “emptiness.” You can have this experience when you are doing practice like transformation; if you really know the sense of transformation you can have that experience. Then we have II which is the experience called bde.stong: bde means feeling of pleasure, like when you are in a pleasurable feeling beyond attachment, but being in instant presence, that is bliss; and this state, bde.stong, is also connected with being in emptiness — non-dual. Then we have MIMI, which is the last one, non-dual, totally non-dual. Mostly, if you are in contemplation it means non-duality of gnas.gyo; gnas means “calm state” or emptiness, but in the calm state you have also movement gyo.ba — you are not remaining in a limited way, you are in that non-dual state.
The Difference Between "Non-dual" and "Union"

In Tantrism, for example, we use the word "union," we always say union of clarity and emptiness, and union of pleasurable feeling and emptiness, while in Dzogchen we say "non-dual," gnyis.med in Tibetan. "Non-dual," gnyis.med, and "union," zung. jug, are very different. Non-dual means you are not remaining in a kind of dualistic consideration — but you have experience of the state of rig.pa and that is the unique way you discover the non-dual state. This does not mean you put the two together, for example, such as mixing milk and tea and the result of it is something else — that is called "union." With union we have the idea of two distinct things which are put together. That is also the symbol displayed by the union of male and female in the representations of tantric deities. Of course male is not female and female is not male, but you are unifying them, so that is called union and it is different from non-dual. In Tantrism why is this term "union" used? Because in Tantrism there is, from the beginning, a very distinct idea of pure and impure vision, sometimes also developed with ideas of Sutra teaching such as the two truths.

When you listen to or follow a teaching of some Tibetan Lama or teacher, sometimes you may notice that even when they are giving a very high level teaching like Anuttaratantra, they give the explanation of the two truths which is pertaining to the Sutra system and not to the Tantra. That is due to the fact that their knowledge is always developed by studying Sutras. For example, in Tibet the geshe of the Gelugpa tradition study for years and years. They study philosophy, they debate, they analyze all the Sutra books (the five main divisions are: Prajnaparamita, Abhidharmakosha, Madhyamika, Vinaya and Logic). When they have learned them they have to pass an oral examination in which they have to demonstrate they can analyze and explain and so on, and then they receive the title of geshe. But many of these geshe know nothing at all about Anuttaratantra. Later, when they study Anuttaratantra, which is completely new to them, they understand
it through their previous knowledge and the base of that which is the Sutras.

For them universal knowledge is the Sutras, and when they find something explained a little differently, such as concepts and ideas pertaining to Tantrism, they do not accept them. When they go deeper into knowledge by reading some commentaries of Tsongkapa, Nagarjuna, and other masters, they explain them and combine them with their knowledge of Sutras. They feel then that things are acceptable and slowly develop more and deeply. For example, when they learn tantric teaching they understand that in Tantrism there are two main points: the development stage that is transformation, and the accomplishment stage in which you visualize chakras, channels and you integrate in that transformation. They try to combine these two stages as corresponding to the two truths. Yet they say that they are not speaking really of two truths, but of two stages. But even if the terminology is different it is the same principle. So this is the way they develop tantric knowledge.

Most of these people cannot understand Dzogchen teaching at all. For many of them Dzogchen methods are not acceptable. For that reason also, many Nyingmapa lamas, scholars like Longchenpa, and more recent ones like Mipham, try to explain Dzogchen through Buddhist philosophy: “In Dzogchen there are not two stages but there is something similar which corresponds to that;” they try to show something like the correspondence to the Tantric method. This does not mean that these masters have no knowledge of the sense of the teaching, but that if they do not do this, there is no possibility to communicate, and that is why there are many of these kind of explanations. When we are going deeper into the Dzogchen teaching the principle is real knowledge, we must have knowledge concretely. So union and non-dual are very different. Non-dual means that we are in the state of rigpa and then we finally discover that any kinds of experiences have the same flavor. So these are the ten powers that we can have in this practice of the Song of the Vajra.
The teachings you received during this special retreat were based particularly on the Song of the Vajra. We started with the "A" and now we have arrived at the end. Today we have "RA RA RA." What do these three "RA" represent? They represent, respectively, the state of Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya. When you are in the state of contemplation, like in the state of emptiness, you can easily have that experience of emptiness in contemplation. That experience of emptiness is the Dharmakaya level. For having the experience of clarity integrated in the state of contemplation you need to have a little more capacity or, you have to develop your practice a little more than just being in a calm state or emptiness. While in the Sutra teaching this knowledge of contemplation beyond emptiness is missing, in Tantrism we work with transformation and manifestation, which are clarity and movement. So that is the Sambhogakaya.

In Dzogchen we go still further, we integrate all our existence, our experience in the state of contemplation. In this state there is not even the consideration that something is wrong or of no value. We say Kuntuzanpo — everything is fine in all circumstances. That means you have the knowledge of how to integrate everything in a state of contemplation. That level is the Nirmanakaya. You need to have the capacity of integrating because that is more difficult. First you must have the knowledge of contemplation; then you develop your capacity for integrating, and finally you really have the possibility of being in this Nirmanakaya level.

We started to sing the Song of the Vajra in the state of the Dharmakaya which is the calm state or emptiness; and then we continued singing and sounding the syllables of the Song of the Vajra and at the end we integrate with our energy all our sense contacts with objects, such as your mind thinking something, your ear hearing some sounds, and all the movements surrounding your dimension. By being in that instant presence and integrating in it you do not think that when you finish singing the Song of the Vajra that the practice is finished; but rather you are and continue to be in the Nirmanakaya level. Your whole life is contemplation and
integration in the Nirmanakaya level, therefore whatever you do — eating, sleeping, walking — you are continuing your life in a state of contemplation. So that is the meaning of the last “RA” at the end of Song of Vajra. You must understand that. Why is there the last “RA” and what does it mean? It means to be in a Nirmanakaya state — in the integrated state and continue your life in that state.

But if you do not have that capacity then at least try to be aware, and whenever you have the possibility you can develop your capacity of contemplation much more. Being aware and not distracted is still not the state of contemplation, because by being aware it implies a kind of attention and with it you automatically have tension. Yet with your knowledge you can apply contemplation whenever you have the possibility.

If in your daily life you observe yourself, try to be aware and particularly observe yourself when you have tension, trying to relax the tension and then developing slowly, slowly you can integrate that kind of awareness in a state of contemplation. So at any moment in your daily life the most important thing is integrating.

Usually when you are doing a retreat you think, “Oh, I learned this and that practice. I like this method, this practice, I want to do this everyday.” But when you go back to your home in the city it is not easy to change your condition very much. Only if you have the knowledge of how to integrate and how to be in a practice then maybe you know more how to relax and you have a greater possibility to integrate the practice in your daily life. In this case it also depends on how you really learned. It does not mean that you cannot integrate what you have learned, such as visualization and transformation methods, but you have to integrate the main principle: that is being aware in your daily life and being yourself and trying to understand your tension and the nature of tension. You already know that the root of our tension is our ego, associated with our attachments and emotions. And we are distracted with all these things. By being distracted we give too much importance to these things. You may say, “Oh, this is very important, I just do this. I
must not do that because that is not necessary.” You analyze everything and you build your dimension like that. That is the way how you build your tensions. In the real sense there is nothing important. Even what you consider very, very important maybe is not so important. You know the circumstances and you work with them, but without charging yourself. Even if you lost your airplane ticket it is not the end of the world. In our life we lose many things, I lost my house and many possessions, such as horses and so on, in East Tibet when I went to India. In India I started all over again. Even if someone steals something from you, you can always start over again.

Whatever you have is really not so important and whatever you have to do is not so important either because if you had an accident, for example, then everything else instantly becomes unimportant. Rather than charging ourselves, let us relax, then even normal things go better.

The Principle of The Song of the Vajra

We can find the principle of the Song of the Vajra in the Tantra Upadesha called Nyi zla kha shyor, meaning “Union of Sun and Moon.” Here the sun and moon principle is different from that of the Yogatantra. The emphasis of the Tantra Upadesha is on female and male energy. The main focus of this Tantra are the Six Syllables: A A HA SHA SA MA, showing the six real dimensions of the six lokas, and, the explanation of the state of bar.do: the four or six different states of the bar.do which are the root of all tantric teaching.

Often tantric teachings are presented like a dialogue where someone is asking questions and the other replies giving explanations. For example, in this case, the phrase de nas nyid kyis bka’stsal pa means the state of Dharmakaya, such as Samantabhadra, is replying and explaining something while the Sambhogakaya or Nirmanakaya states, because of their more active aspect, are asking. This does not mean that the Dharmakaya is like a statue of Samantabhadra sitting somewhere, and then Vajrasattva goes there and asks questions. Rather it is more as if you were sitting in
contemplation, your real state representing the Dharmakaya. Then some thoughts arise, “How must this be?” That is the question. Then immediately you have clarity in your state of contemplation and that is the reply. That is an example of how this dialogue is developed. This way of explaining is very efficient because we are very much accustomed to asking questions to which someone replies. Here are some quotes and explanations of the Song of the Vajra from the Nyi zla kha sbyor Tantra:

_Nyon cig thup pa rtog pa med_

_Nyon.cig_ means “listen!” _thub.pa. med_ means beyond you, beyond thought. The Dharmakaya explains:

“Your state communicates to yourself, there is nothing else.”

_rdo rje gsang ba’i glu ‘di yi_

_Rdo rje_ is “vajra,” _gsang.ba_ is “secret;” the secret Song of the Vajra. Why do we say secret? Secret is a qualification of the nature; also energy is secret because you cannot see or find it easily.

_dgos pa ngan song sgo dgag phyir_

The aim, the reason why we have this Song of the Vajra is for blocking our inferior state. It means that by being distracted we produce negative karma and we have infinite _samsara_. What do we do then for blocking that state, that condition? We sing the Song of the Vajra.

_sangs rgyas nyid kyi mdzad spyod yin_

Singing the Song of the Vajra, applying it and just integrating in your real original nature, that is the action of enlightened beings.

_rnal ’byor gang zhig skal ldan pa_

_Rnal ’byor_ means “yogi” — practitioner who has knowledge; _gang zhig_ meaning one who has that knowledge; _skal ldan pa_ means one who is fortunate to have that possibility, the fortunate yogi who has that possibility.

_dur khrod gnas su rgyu ba’i tshe_

In general _dur khrod_ means cemetery, but it also means silent place. _gnas.su rgyu ba’i tshe_ means when you are going to some silent place, where there is no one.
You again and again sing the Song of the Vajra.

This Song of the Vajra is like your friend through which you enter in a state of contemplation, for being beyond thoughts and confusion.

By applying this before any kind of action, then you can integrate all your actions in contemplation.

For that reason, then, sing the Song of the Vajra very often.

When you perform ganapuja, you do initiation, empowerment, give transmission, or you are trying to be in the real mandala of your pure dimension.

In that moment sing the Song of the Vajra.

When you are trying to get into a calm state,

Then you sing the Song of the Vajra alternating with the practice of calm state.

This is the reason why we have the Song of the Vajra.

The singing of the Song of the Vajra awakens you inner state of wisdom beyond thoughts or confusions.

For that reason, for entering into a state of contemplation, you start your practice with the Song of the Vajra and make your contemplation function through the Song of the Vajra.
If you find difficulty entering into a calm state, by singing the Song of the Vajra you can easily be in that state.

If, when you are doing practice, you are easily distracted, then by coordinating your contemplation with the Song of the Vajra you can overcome it and can be in a state of contemplation in a perfect way.

With the Song of the Vajra you can enter into your primordial state with bliss.

All symbols are for totally entering in your state of contemplation in an integrated way.

All teachings and methods, their real essence and particularly those that you have received from teachers, are the Song of the Vajra. If you really understand and really know them you discover that there is nothing that does not correspond with the Song of the Vajra.

It is not necessary to try to find the knowledge of emptiness from some different way. With the Song of the Vajra you automatically enter into that state totally.

It is not necessary that you escape, transform, change or reject any of your concepts and confusions, for all are automatically self-liberated.

By singing it you naturally accomplished the total purification of all the aspects of your mind.
For all these reasons you should sing the Song of the Vajra, The one who sings and dances the Song of the Vajra,

\[ 'di ni rdo rje'i rigs su 'gyur \]

That person, that practitioner, achieves the realization of the Vajra — everything is in that total integration.

\[ zhes bcom ldan 'das nyid kyis gsungs so \]

So this is explained by Vajradhara, the primordial Buddha.
Essentials of Dzogchen: An Overview

Base/Path/Fruit

In general, when we learn about teaching — not only Dzogchen but any kind of teaching — the principles of the teaching are called in Tibetan gzhi, lam, and 'bras.bu, — “the base, the path and the fruit.” That means that we always need these three principles for having knowledge. If we consider something from which our knowledge arises or the possibility awakening our knowledge, or we have the consideration of contemplation — that is the base. We must first have the base, then we discover it and we are in that state and can realize it concretely. In order to do that we have the path and the realization, our consideration of what is realization — that is the fruit.

We take a simple example in Sutra teaching. When the Buddha physically taught the Sutra teaching he first explained suffering. What is suffering? Suffering is a universal condition of all sentient beings. Maybe we do not like having suffering, yet most beings are ignorant of the cause of it. When we have any kind of problem, then immediately we try to struggle with it instead of learning, or studying, or discovering what is its cause. That is why in our condition, in our world, there are always different nations and places engaged in revolutions. You can see those making revolution have the principle of struggle between one class and another, and that they hope to change something. But if you change from right to left, you don’t change anything, still you are on the left,
then you can change again to the right, but in reality nothing is changed.

That is the real condition of suffering, that is called delusion, and after many years you may discover that, like the Communist system is doing today. You know, ten years ago most of the people were very convinced of the ideology of Communism. When I was young and I was living in China, I was also somewhat convinced that there was really the possibility of getting into Communism. There was very good propaganda. They said that first all the world will arrive at Socialism, and there would be only two classes of people, the farmers and the factory workers. Later, slowly, slowly with the development of technology there would be just one class — the workers. Then they considered that the workers would need to work only a few hours per day, because everything was going to be developed with machines and would function that way without economic problems; everything would be easily produced. But they didn’t think very much of who would buy the production. They also had the idea that Communism is wonderful, but today, with experience, people slowly discover that it is not really so. When I was in China in 1953 and 1954, the Chinese people were convinced that after ten years the whole country would be socialist, but after twenty or thirty years Socialism still has not appeared. What appears now are only the many conflicts between classes. They considered that they could eliminate all classes, but you see, after many years of revolution the classes still remain. So that means that there is no way we can stop or really change only the effects, because the problem is only the effect. If you do not like that effect then you try to understand what is causing such an effect and you change the cause; then the fruit or effect will be different.

So the base means knowing what is the situation, not only in relation to practice but also to our practical life. You must not think that the teaching means only doing a practice, a ritual, or sitting in meditation. Teaching is related to our body, voice and mind and all our dimension; our life is part of the teaching, and if the teaching has a function it must have a function in how we live, how we continue our life. So if you say, “What is the base for a person?”
The base is also the situation of our life, and if you go a little more to the essence then you say that the base is also the base of knowledge and understanding. Part of our understanding is also the condition of samsara, its real condition; then you can say that you have discovered your potentiality. You remember, I told you many times, that for discovering the nature of mind, really we must first understand what mind is. In the same way, for discovering our real potentiality, first we must know how our situation is, then the methods of teaching and the practices and everything becomes very concrete.

**Essence/ Nature/ Energy**

When we explain the base in terms of the essence, nature and the potentiality or energy, it is like doing a kind of analysis of our real condition. For example, you say, "What is the condition of a mirror?" You can say that the potentiality of the mirror is clear, limpid and pure; but it does not mean that clear is different from limpid somewhere in our real nature, in our condition. We can explain, about the essence, the nature, and so on, but this does not mean different things; rather there are different aspects and possibilities of manifestation — like a crystal ball.

The nature of a crystal ball is pure and limpid, and it has no particular color. If you put it on a red color and look into it, the crystal appears red because at that moment the crystal is found in the dimension of the color red. Even if you see the crystal as red, yet it has never changed its nature. That is an example of how our potentiality, our real nature, has different aspects, and that depends on the aspects of body, speech and mind. If you think more of your mental condition, then you say essence, the essence is emptiness and since the beginning it is pure. There is nothing concrete, but when you say there is nothing, that does not mean totally nothing, because it has its potentiality and manifestation. It is the same with the nature of your thoughts, you cannot find anything, only emptiness, but thoughts arise continually. So, that movement, that manifestation is called "nature," nature is clarity.
This means that if there is a mirror, and there are objects in front of it, then they manifest clearly, so in this case you could not say, "emptiness," that there is nothing, for something appears there. That is what we consider its nature, meaning something that has its function, it has its characteristic function or energy manifestation and that is called "nature."

For example, if you say "nature of fire," that is heat; while if you say "nature of water," then humidity is the nature of water. This means that characteristic function is clarity in our real condition. Clarity means when we have our senses in contact with objects which appear, we receive all functions — all are clarity. When you open your eyes then you continually have contact with objects. That is part of your clarity, but when it is conditioned by judgment and you are distracted, then it does not function much as clarity.

You see, for example, you look first to your left side and then you look all around quickly to the right side; maybe there are many trees, persons, fruits, flowers, everything, you can see everything. What is your vision? It is clarity. If you are looking quickly, you could not have judgment, because your judgment must take some time, you have not sufficient time for judging everything — this is this, that is that — but you have that vision.

If you are dancing, for example, you are turning quickly, you have clarity, but you have no judgment, that is an example. So when you see some object that is only part of your clarity, the same when you are hearing a sound, that is part of your clarity, but then you enter into your ideas thinking, "Oh, this is nice, this is not nice." If you feel something is nice, then immediately you accept it, if you do not like it then you reject it. So these two are called chags sdang, chags means "attachment," and sdang means "refutation" or "anger," these two being like our two legs. We walk with these two and by accepting or rejecting we produce negative karma. So it means that we are distracted, otherwise we could never be conditioned by chags and sdang. When we are distracted we are conditioned by emotions and attachments, and then we have problems with clarity.

But if you are in instant presence, you have no problems with
your clarity, and though clarity enters into time and there is judgment, you can also be in awareness at this time. That is the difference between practitioners and ordinary people. If you are really a practitioner you are aware in this way even if you have some problems. You do not have that heavy feeling because you are not distracted and are not conditioned. So this is what we call our knowledge of the base.

Also, you see, our condition is alternating between movement and the calm state or emptiness; it always continues without interruption and that is called “energy.” Or it is referred to as an aspect of our potentiality; in Tibetan we call it thugs.rje. You see, in the invocation of Garab Dorje you learn these words: ngo.bo, ran.bzhin, thugs.rje — “the essence, the nature and the energy.” These three are related with the principle of the base — the three aspects of our base. So they are also called the three wisdoms of the base. If you have that knowledge, that is called the three kayas — the three dimensions, the famous Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Nirmanakaya.

When you study the Mahayana Sutras, it seems that, when speaking of the qualifications of enlightened beings, these qualifications have nothing to do with our ordinary condition. In a real sense though, if you want to really know what Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya are, then you must know your base in the way of the three kayas or dimensions. We have the three dimensions of the base, three dimensions of the path, and three dimensions of the fruit.

In general, people speak only of the three dimensions in terms of the fruit, as when we say that Buddha Shakyamuni or some other Buddha or enlightened beings have the qualifications of Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya, these qualifications being presented in relation to statues or images depicting them, such as Samantabhadra or Vajradhara. Then if someone asked, “What is this?”, one might reply, “Oh, this is the Dharmakaya.” While peaceful manifestations like Vajrasattva, or wrathful ones like Chemchog Heruka or Yamantaka, or joyful like Kalachakra or Hevajra, are presented as having Sambhogakaya qualities. Then,
you see, we ourselves have nothing resembling Kalachakra, so it seems that there is nothing to do with it in a practical way. That is why people have the idea that the Sambhogakaya is always an enlightened being. Then someone says “What is Nirmanakaya?”, and we say, “Nirmanakaya is someone like Buddha Shakyamuni, he manifested a physical body like a human being.” Manifesting like a human being implies the possibility of having concrete contact with human beings, as he spoke a human language, had contact with humans and transmitted an oral teaching. His disciples went to see the Buddha, listened to him and then wrote it down, saying, “I met Buddha on such and such day and he said this and this.” The Buddha taught something and having concluded what He said, it was eventually written down — that is the arising of the Sutras. The real meaning of Sutra is the conclusion of a discourse or teaching.

We imagine that this kind of manifestation of the Buddha is the Nirmanakaya, but if we compare Buddha Shakyamuni’s condition with our own, we see that it has nothing to do with us, because really the manifestation of a Buddha is the fruit. But everybody can have that fruit because everybody has the base. The real base of the three dimensions is the essence, the nature and the energy, and everybody has that base. It is not sufficient that we have the potentiality or qualification, we need knowledge of the base itself. When we have that knowledge, then we try to be in that knowledge, and that means to be in the three kayas of the base.

Our essence — emptiness which is pure since the beginning — just that is Dharmakaya, but how can we realize that Dharmakaya and how can we manifest it? We apply that knowledge and we do something on the path. On the path we mainly use the three experiences: emptiness, clarity and feeling, which are related to our three existences of mind, voice and body respectively. The experience of emptiness is related to our mind and mind is related to our knowledge of the essence of the base. So on the path we are in the knowledge of emptiness, and being in the emptiness we discover that instant presence of emptiness. That is then the most important point on the path of Dharmakaya. Dharmakaya is not only consid-
eration of the fruit but also implies doing something. We need, from the beginning, to have knowledge of the base, then we do something on the path and finally we have the realization of the Dharmakaya fruit. In the same way, we can also realize the Sambhogakaya: all movements, all contacts with the senses arise in the mind, all this is part of our clarity. We know our nature is clarity, and having knowledge of this function of energy, that is Sambhogakaya, and we also apply it on the path.

Because we are not only in a calm state or emptiness, we discover that movement is part of our real nature, not something wrong, so then we use it and try to get into that. You remember, when we are speaking of mi.gyo.ba, the second state, that means that we are integrating with movement. That experience of movement and clarity is related to our energy. For example, when you are doing some tantric style practice through the method of transformation, first you are in an immense emptiness, that represents your dimension of Dharmakaya, emptiness; but then your nature is not only emptiness, and for that reason, in this dimension of emptiness through sound, the seed letter and light, you manifest deities and mandalas. It means that you are working with your energy, you are working with your nature, and that is also part of your clarity.

Many people who follow tantric teaching don't know that transformation is just the final goal, because they are in general, very accustomed to do practice in the Sutra style. In Sutra, when we say meditation or contemplation, it is always considered you are being in an empty state. For being in a calm state, of course, you must remain quiet, otherwise you cannot get in a calm state. So the idea of meditation, or contemplation is of sitting quietly without moving. If someone is chanting, or is moving and doing transformation, or thinking about something, they consider that not to be real meditation. So why do they have this idea? Because they don't know that movement is part of our real nature.

In Tantrism there is the knowledge that movement is part of our clarity, but often in tantric teaching it is not explained very clearly, as it is in Dzogchen. This is why even though tantric practitioners know about transformation and they apply it, they do not have a
precise idea. For that reason today, many followers of Tantric teaching first receive an initiation and then do a practice of transformation. Some lamas instruct their students in this way, "Oh, you first do this practice, mantra and so on and then do a long retreat." Let us say, for example that you received Chakrasamvara initiation, or, if you follow a Sakyapa master, maybe you received Hevajra initiation. Then they ask you to do that practice, maybe you do at least three months retreat, for doing visualization, transformation and chanting of the mantra. When you have completed all these things finally they consider that you are ready to follow a teaching like Mahamudra. They start to teach you something like fixation, for example, and you perhaps feel like you are really following Mahamudra, something very elevated.

This shows that many people do not have knowledge of tantric teaching: the principle of tantric teaching is not fixation followed by arrival at Mahamudra. That is only the particular method presented by Gampopa who was a great Kargyudpa master, a disciple of Milarepa. In his teaching he combined Tantra, Sutra and Dzogchen all together, and presented it as his Mahamudra. But that is not universal Mahamudra, only the point of view of Gampopa. The final goal of Mahamudra is universal in all Anuttaratantra. You can find Mahamudra in the Gelugpa, Nyingmapa and in the Sakyapa tradition, it is common in all traditions. If you apply a transformation method, particularly Anuttaratantra, the supreme system of Tantrism and the final goal of all transformations, what then does Mahamudra really mean? The real meaning is that you are in that state of contemplation, mainly through your experience of clarity. How do you develop, how do you enter into that experience of clarity? Through the symbols presented in the transformation method. Your dimension is presented like a mandala, your existence, all your functions of energy, everything manifests like deities and all these are part of your clarity — you are walking, you are in this clarity and just being in this clarity in instant presence — that is Mahamudra.

Let us say for example, that you are practicing according to the gradual way of Anuttara style and you start to transform into
Kalachakra; first you must have emptiness in your dimension of manifestation; that is the universal knowledge also of the Sutra teaching, and you must have that base already, otherwise there is no way you can transform. In tantric teaching the knowledge of emptiness is the starting point not the final goal, while in Sutra it is considered the final goal; so you have that knowledge and you know how you are in emptiness. In that emptiness then the seed syllables of the elements develop one-by-one in a pure dimension of different colors of light. Through the seed syllables then you manifest yourself as Kalachakra in his dimension or mandala. You are building up your manifestation part-by-part with your idea; that is the first stage bskyed.rim — “the development stage.” When you have this idea of the total manifestation of Kalachakra, that does not refer to something out there, but rather that you become that. If you are that, a manifestation, you also have your existence — all your feelings and your functions of the senses, and energy. Everything is related to your sense organs; with your visualization of chakras, channels, kundalini energy and prana, you are using all that and integrating all aspects of your existence with your manifestation of the mandala and the deity. If you do not integrate your existence in the manifestation, then it has no meaning, for that reason too then, it is usual to recite many mantras, because mantra is the unique way of integrating your existence in the manifestation. This is the second stage rdzogs.rim; the “accomplishment stage.” The two stages however, are not separated and you are in them at the same moment, in the same condition. You are not remaining in a kind of dualistic vision, but you are really in that dimension. All your existence, your whole condition is integrated in that state, and that means you are in instant presence.

At the beginning, when you were in the development stage, you were working with your mind, but when you have already developed that, then you have integrated your existence — you are in the instant presence and you are no longer working with the mind. Being that way in the instant presence of clarity — that is Mahamudra. Therefore, you must not think that receiving initiation and doing the practice are a kind of preparation for having the
possibility to follow Mahamudra, or that Mahamudra is somewhere else. If you do transformation with this kind of idea it has not much meaning. Transformation is really a very important path if you know what you are doing and how to do it, but if you don’t know this and are doing only a transformation, then it becomes something like the practice of Kriyatantra.

There is a very good example that I can give you about this. In Eastern Tibet there was once a Sakyapa lama. He spent many years living on a mountain and reciting the mantra of Hevajra hundreds of millions of times. He fully produced the function of the mantra and he also had the capacity to do transformation. Of course he did not have much knowledge of where he must arrive, but he knew how to transform to an extent that he could say, “Now I am Hevajra, I can really see what my manifestation looks like.” This is true, you can feel that manifestation very precisely and by reciting many mantras you empower that manifestation. Of course you can also produce some precise function, but you are still in the concept of your idea, and it is not contemplation. So that lama did the practice that way and he became very powerful.

One year there was no rain in that country and people didn’t have any crops. Many problems developed caused by the scarcity of food. But that lama who was living on the mountain had a great quantity of crops. He had cereals like barley, wheat, and so on, because he had accumulated it for many years and kept it on the mountain where he used it slowly, slowly, so that he could do retreat for many years. So people went to him and asked him to give them some cereals, but he replied, “I can’t give you any because I am not able to produce any more. If I give it to you I cannot continue my retreat.” The people insisted, but he did not move from his decision. Then during the night a group of people went to his place, killed him and took away everything. At the very moment when the lama was being killed, he became very angry and became a kind of bad and very powerful spirit, not a normal spirit because he did a lot of transformation practice of Hevajra.

Many teachers and masters tried to control this spirit, because he was creating many problems in that country, and many people
died and were taken away by him, but nobody succeeded in subduing him. At that time there was a a Sakyapa lama called Samten Lodro, from a monastery in Derge. This lama was very powerful, for many years he did the practice of Yamantaka and he was also one of my uncle’s teachers. One day while he was traveling with his monks he saw in his vision that spirit coming toward him, surrounded by many local noble people and many lamas who had died. So the Sakyapa lama at that moment thought that he wanted to conquer that bad spirit and immediately transformed himself into a gigantic Yamantaka. As soon as he transformed himself, the spirit then manifested an even more gigantic Hevajra. Samten Lodroe was really very upset because Hevajra is considered by the Sakyapa to be the most important of the Tantras. Therefore he thought, “How is it possible that a spirit who has this capacity of transformation can turn into a bad spirit?” He was really so upset that he started to cry and at that moment everything disappeared. He never succeeded in controlling that spirit. This is a real story. So, even if a person has great capacity for transformation, that does not mean very much if he or she does not know the real sense of transformation. That is why, if you do transformation practice, you must know what Mahamudra really means. The final goal of transformation is being in that instant presence of clarity. So this is really Mahamudra.

In this way, not only Mahamudra, but with any kind of function of your clarity, there is a possibility for getting into contemplation. You see, on the path your knowledge of this movement, being in that instant presence, that is really the Sambhogakaya. And Nirmanakaya means continuation of your emptiness state and its movements. In movement we also have our physical dimension — everything is linked with our real nature, so it is very important that you know that continuation is our nature and that it is also related with our ordinary life. In Dzogchen we consider the state of experience of Nirmanakaya to be much more important than that of Dharmakaya; Dharmakaya means you are emptiness and you are in that emptiness, but your total condition is not only being in the Dharmakaya, you have also your movement, you have your
normal condition, which is related with Nirmanakaya. It is very important that you have that knowledge, you have the base, that your knowledge of these two alternates — movement and emptiness — that is the Nirmanakaya of the base.

Not only are there misunderstandings regarding contemplation, but also erroneous explanations in some books. For example I saw this explanation, "When you are getting in a calm state or emptiness, that is really the state of meditation, that state is just the same as the one between two thoughts." You see, between two thoughts there is also emptiness, sometimes you can notice it, sometimes you can’t, because thoughts arise quickly. I also heard this presentation, "That space, empty space between two thoughts, that is the state of meditation or contemplation; developing contemplation means developing that empty space." That is a very big mistake. Emptiness is only an experience, it has nothing to do with contemplation. If you are in emptiness and you are in that instant presence then it has value, but in this case you can also be in the instant presence of clarity, not only in emptiness. In that way, when you are in an instant presence, you discover that there is no difference between clarity and emptiness, that is the real "state of contemplation." Emptiness is a state of meditation and in the Dzogchen teaching we call it an experience.

We mainly have three experiences, because we have the three existences of body, voice and mind. When you discover, through these three experiences, you can then discover the function of your senses in contact with objects, and these are also experiences. For example, if you hear a sound, that is an experience. Sometimes you like very nice sounds like music, while other sounds such as terrible noises you don’t like. Why do you like some sounds and not others? It is because you have the consideration that you are listening to that particular sound, and sound is something like an object. If you have the capacity of integrating and being in integration with sound, if you are in that instant presence, the sound — good or bad — has "the same taste," as if you were the mirror, in which you have nice and ugly reflections.

So that is an example of how all the contacts of our senses with
objects are experiences, and you can discover that your entire life is experience. In general when you eat something, you get different tastes. Sometimes you like them, sometimes you do not like, but all are experiences. If everything is experience then you have no problems, everything is a method for developing your clarity and realizing, that is why in Dzogchen we do not need to escape from samsara, but most importantly we integrate and we try to have that knowledge. So this is — when you have that knowledge and you apply it that way — why that integration is called the Nirmanakaya on the path. You see, in the Dzogchen teaching we speak very much of integration. Of course we first need a base, knowledge, and when we have knowledge then we integrate within it, and that integration on the path is the Nirmanakaya. When you have the realization of that manifestation, you also have contact with other karmic visions, with beings who have different kinds of karmic visions. Through this contact with them, you can benefit them, and that is Nirmanakaya. So this is called the base, the principle of the base is essence, nature and energy, related with the three kayas. Practitioners must know what the base is and what the three kayas mean, for there is something connected with the three kayas at any moment of our life.

**View /Meditation/ Attitude**

One of the main points of the teaching is the path. When you know the base then you realize it and you try to be in that base, but how can you have that knowledge? You achieve that knowledge through these three main points: point of view, application or meditation, and attitude and in Tibetan they are called lta.ba, sgom.pa, spyod.pa respectively. Any kind of path has these three principles. In general, the point of view refers to one’s conviction or belief about something, and when we believe in something then we say, “It is like this”. Why? “Because of this, and this, and this.” and then we believe it to be true. As I already explained, we believe through the three-fold logic: we consider something to be real and concrete and that is considered the point of view. Different schools
and traditions have their own ideas, "Oh, this is the point of view of our school, this is the point of view of the founder of our school."

Let us take for example the Gelugpa school whose founder Je Tsongkapa is considered to be the most important teacher. Of course Tsongkapa also had his point of view, so he said, "Buddha said this, it must be this way, but not that way." He would not just say,"It must be that," but he said,"because." Of course Tsongkapa was one of the most learned men in the Buddhist Tradition, so he could logically explain everything very well from the point of view of the Madhyamika, the Abhidharmakosha, the Prajnaparamita, all these kinds of teaching, and also from his point of view of tantric teaching. So his disciples tried to follow him and dwell in his ideas, because they considered Tsongkapa to be the supreme teacher with perfect vision.

But if you go to another school like Sakyapa, for example, its followers consider Sakya Pandita to be the supreme scholar, the one who really has knowledge and he has his point of view of Madhyamika and Tantric teaching, and so on. So of course an argument exists between Gelugpa and Sakyapa. The Nyingmapa and Kagyudpa tradition also try to build up their schools in the same way. But there are many new and innocent people who have no idea about traditions, schools and points of view yet they follow the way traced by these schools.

For example, where I lived in Eastern Tibet, my family and everybody else in that area belong to the Sakyapa tradition, although I had no knowledge of Sakyapa tradition, so that did not mean that I was convinced about the Sakyapa point of view. But as I grew up a little, and I wanted to be a monk, or I just wanted to study in a monastery, my possibility, my first contact had to be with the Sakyapa. So of course, then I felt,"Oh, our tradition is Sakyapa." Why did I feel that? I did not know the Sakyapa point of view, actually I knew nothing about Sakyapa, yet that was the condition I found myself in. At the beginning of my studies I had contact mostly with Sakyapa lamas, so I received my education mostly from the Sakyapa tradition rather than from any other school. Slowly, slowly I became conditioned by the ideology of the
Sakyapa. I started to be convinced that the Sakyapa school was better than others and I tried to develop my knowledge by going deeper in studying Sakya Pandita. When I became a young scholar I started to write some books, some commentaries, I even taught other people and explained very well, in a perfect way, the Sakyapa point of view. I could do that better than others. I wrote some books and I tried to comment upon the Sakyapa point of view. If someone negated the Sakyapa scholars then I replied to them and I defended the Sakyapa tradition. Then I became very famous in the Sakyapa tradition, maybe I even received the title of Pandita. They considered me a wonderful teacher. So that is how, in general, the point of view is presented, but in the real sense of the teaching it does not work that way.

We are living in our limited human dimension. We put everything in a limited box, even our teacher, our wonderful teacher who is giving us teaching for overcoming these kinds of problems and limitations, we very easily put him in a limited box. Even the teaching of Buddha is developed in that limited way. Yet since the beginning the Buddha never taught any kind of limitations. He did not even say, "My teaching is called Buddhism and this is different from others." He said that he discovered a knowledge beyond limitations and he wanted to communicate that knowledge to all sentient beings. Although the Buddha said that repeatedly and tried to communicate, people could not understand. You see, as soon as the Buddha manifested Parinirvana, his manifestation of death, his disciples immediately divided into eighteen different schools, and each one of these schools said, "Our point of view is exactly what Buddha said." Everybody had a small piece of truth, but not the total truth, just like the example the Buddha gave of blind people searching for how the perfect elephant looked.

Through the point of view in this way we never discover the real sense beyond it. When we are speaking of point of view, in the Sutra teaching, the highest point of view is considered that of Nagarjuna. Why? Because Nagarjuna is not only a Sutra scholar, he was also a great practitioner. We can find Nagarjuna in the Dzogchen Semde lineage, so that means he practiced and had knowledge of
Dzogchen Semde. When he explained Buddhist philosophy, his characteristic point of view was, "I have no affirmations or concepts." He said, "I am innocent." His idea was to negate everything, and if anyone was confirming something, he always logically negated it. At the end someone asked, "Then what is your point of view?" He said that he had no affirmation. It sounds strange, but in the real sense that is true, if you know the real meaning, that makes sense. In the ordinary Sutra teaching that also becomes a kind of concept, "I have no concept," is also a concept. That is the position of Madhyamika, but then they could not arrive beyond that.

With regard to the point of view (lta.ba) in Dzogchen, we say that it is not sufficient only to analyze something and proceed logically. That is the same as Nagarjuna asserted, "I have no concept." But just saying that is not sufficient, rather one must be in that state without concepts. So that view is called ltaba rtogs, rtogs means having that knowledge. That particular knowledge of ltaba rtogs is different from lta.ba ("view"). In Dzogchen lta.ba does not imply analyzing something and through logic getting somewhere. You may have many kinds of logic, and analyze endlessly, but if you are looking at an object and you have this kind of idea, "This is logic, this is something that must be stabilized through a point of view," then you always remain in a dualistic condition.

The principle is not looking, judging and doing analysis, rather it is turning one's gaze upon oneself to observe and discover one's real condition. That is the correct point of view. You do not need to use eye-glasses for seeing the object in front of you better. You might have many kinds of things and good qualifications for seeing objects, yet that does not change anything at all, for you are looking at an object and you always have the principle that "you" are looking at an "object." Rather, you should observe yourself as if you were looking at yourself in a mirror. You try to understand the difference between the function of the mirror and that of eye glasses. If you look in a mirror your existence appears, and discovering your existence is the base of all knowledge of the universe.
Finally you can really discover all existence, all phenomena. So this is really the correct point of view.

So according to the Dzogchen path, when we speak of the lta.ba, point of view, what do we do with it in a practical way? We observe ourselves. We discover our existence of body, voice and mind and how limited our condition is. Furthermore, we discover many of the causes of effects and understand how we can help ourselves to overcome many problems. So that is really the correct point of view. After discovering that we then need the path. And if, for instance, you discover and really feel that you are limited in your existence of body, voice and mind, and in everything, like a small bird in a cage with all the many kinds of limitation — what do you do then? By discovering that that is not really your nature, you liberate and free yourself from all this confusion. That you are a small bird freeing yourself from all confusion does not mean you damage your cage. Maybe you need your cage for defending your existence, maybe you do not know how to fly. Even if you know how to fly a little bit, maybe you do not know how to defend yourself from other animals that can eat you. So when you discover that you are not ready to come out of the cage, then there is something to be done — preparing for your realization to enter into your real condition. That is what is called the path, the meditation and application of methods.

In Dzogchen, to illustrate how the Dzogchen practitioners' realization is, we give the example of an eagle. It is written in a Dzogchen book that when the eagle emerges from the egg it is already perfect, strong and ready to fly. On the contrary, some other birds, when they hatch from the egg, cannot fly and therefore they remain in the nest for many days. But the eagle can fly immediately, and that means that it is perfected inside the egg. Dzogchen practitioners are similar to the eagle in that when you do practice and use very special methods, then you can realize. If you do practice according to the Sutra system, you have insufficient knowledge for developing or manifesting everything in a perfect way. It is true that at each stage there are some developments which also manifest in a concrete way because qualifications build up
one-by-one; but it takes many lives in the Santra system, so that stage by stage your realization becomes something more concrete. You cannot have all these manifestations of the same stage at the high level of Dzogchen because through Dzogchen methods, your development is very quick, and therefore you do have not sufficient time so that developments can manifest. That is the example of how the eagle is when it comes out from the egg. These are the methods of different practices. So although you learn many kinds of methods in the Dzogchen way, they are mainly related with the three experiences of emptiness, clarity and sensation.

Another very important aspect is attitude. You see according to Dzogchen, practicing does not mean going somewhere to do a retreat and staying there for many years. Rather you do particular retreats needed for having concrete realization of your methods. That means you may just need to limit your retreat to two or three months, the necessary time for preparing, using methods and having experience in a precise way. And when you have the capacity to use experiences, then the most important thing is integrating them in your daily life. Therefore it is not necessary that you live in a limited place to integrate in practice.

In Tibet there are many tantric colleges for people who want to develop their capacity of transformation. It is not difficult to learn about this idea of transforming one’s emotions into wisdom, but for having that concrete capacity, one has to practice for a long time and in a very quiet place. It can be quite difficult to precisely visualize mandalas and deities in a place surrounded by confusion. That is why a silent place is needed along with an expert person who can give guidance on tantric practice. You must have the guidance of an expert in tantric practice and stay in retreat for three, five or seven years. Most of the practice colleges in Tibet have seven year retreats, three years of which are spent in tantric practice. This is mainly the tantric practice system.

I do not mean that Dzogchen practitioners do not do seven year retreats, for they can do that too. Ayu Kandro, a woman master, lived almost all her life in retreat. So there is nothing wrong with doing retreat, but that is not the only way; there are many ways
that you can do practice and integrate. You can find Dzogchen practitioners living in very different conditions: in towns, in the countryside as farmers, or in the mountains as yogis — there are no particular rules dictating how a Dzogchen practitioner should live or follow a certain system. There are also monks living in monasteries who are Dzogchen practitioners. Many different people are interested in Dzogchen — some important ones, such as the Fifth Dalai Lama who had position and power, and some like my Master Jangchub Dorje, who although a great master, had the appearance of an ordinary person.

I remember one incident when I was with Jangchub Dorje. One day a monk came to my Master’s place announcing that the next day a lama, a young reincarnation would visit. He said to Jangchub Dorje, “Oh, tomorrow our Rinpoche wants to come to see you.” To that Master Jangchub Dorje replied, “Oh, you are welcome, please come and we’ll prepare.” Then that afternoon Master Jangchub Dorje told us to make the appropriate arrangement for receiving that reincarnation. We cleaned and decorated the whole house and also prepared a throne covered with silken cloth. The next day this reincarnation arrived elegantly clad in silken robes. As soon as you saw him, you immediately felt a kind of vibration; he was very elegant and slowly walked followed by his retinue. My Master Jangchub Dorje went to the door to welcome him carrying incense and invited him to come inside. Then the lama walked in very elegantly and my Master asked him to sit on the throne. So he went very elegantly towards the throne and sat on it in a very elegant manner while my Master Jangchub Dorje sat in his ordinary place. Tea and refreshments were served while the lama and my Master engaged in conversation. The lama asked, “How many monks do you have here?” My Master replied, “Maybe thirty or forty monks.” In reality I knew that there were not so many. Then he asked, “What kind of rituals do you perform in your monastery?” So the conversation went on in this way and my Master respectfully replied to all his questions. After a little while my Master asked his people to bring all the offerings for the lama. They had prepared many offerings — tea, grain, barley, butter and a large quantity of
things. That lama accepted them all and afterwards, very satisfied, went away.

Although I knew a little bit how the situation was, I was nevertheless very surprised and upset by all this. I believed that the lama wanted to see my Master and perhaps receive some teachings from him. So I expressed my feeling with my Master and I said, "His attitude is very strange." He said, "No, that is normal." Then I said, "Why did he not ask for teaching, for example?" He said, "No, because he did not come for teaching, but for receiving offerings. He is a very important head Lama of many Nyingmapa monasteries." All the Nyingmapa monasteries of the area in which my Master Jangchub Dorje resided, belonged to and were under the control of that lama. So he just came there to show that Jangchub Dorje's place was also under his control. Master Jangchub Dorje was very aware, and he knew the situation, and for that reason he presented the lama with many offerings. So people like this lama never considered Jangchub Dorje a teacher. My Master never presented himself in any form as a teacher. He usually dressed like a Tibetan farmer. He was not elegant, he rather looked like a poor person. The only distinguishing things about him were his long hair that he wore tied up in a big knot on top of his head like a Tibetan yogi, and also two earrings made of conch shell, which is something like an indication that he was gter.ston, a discover of gter.ma. That is all, there were no other indications.

You see, ordinary Tibetan people, when they go to see a very important lama, generally do prostrations, and pay respect wonderfully. But they would never do prostrations in front of a lama like Jangchub Dorje, even if they knew that he is a very good lama. They might feel a little uncomfortable or a little shy, and that is the real situation. Even if a person is stupid, if he or she wears a very nice robe then everybody comes and asks for blessings.

Many years ago I spent more than one year in China in a school there and every day I went outside and walked everywhere and nobody ever asked me for a blessing or anything. That was quite normal because I did not wear Chinese dress. I wore Mongolian dress, which is very simple and normal and nobody thought things
such as, "He is a Rinpoche, he is something important." But one
day the government organized a religious meeting, and invited all
the great lamas. They also asked me to participate in this meeting,
and they asked me to put on my robe because I must present myself
as a Rinpoche. So, I had a very nice silken robe and I wore it that
day. A car sent by the government came to pick me up at my door.
As soon as the people saw me, hundreds of them crowded in the
road around me for receiving blessings. I felt very stupid, really! I
felt stupid for myself and also these people! That is the real condi-
tion, people do not really know the value of a teacher.

So it is very important to know that, in Dzogchen, the principle
of the attitude is not really to show something — although that type
of behavior can sometimes be beneficial for creating a kind of
movement or to have more people interested in some ideas and so
on. But in the real sense, that is very artificial. Today there are many
people that seem interested, but if they do not have a real base, then
it does not work. According to Dzogchen, we just try to be as we
really are in the real nature, and then we try to communicate and
make others understand, and in this way we can build a base,
something stable. While this kind of approach is very difficult for
Tibetan people, for Westerners it is not so, because most of the
people who are involved in Dharma have fresher ideas, so if they
meet a good teacher who really communicates how their real
condition is, they can discover it and know how to be in that. But
most Tibetan people do not have much capacity for that. People
who are really very involved in the teaching have great devotion,
but most of their devotion is a little bit blind, because they are not
going to the real sense of the teaching which is trying to under-
stand.

Some years ago I went to Maratika in Nepal with a group of my
students. Before going to Maratika we went to Tolu Monastery near
Mount Everest. The people there are Tibetan Sherpas. To reach
Tolu we had to walk for four days. The news that a Tibetan Lama,
a reincarnation, was going there went around very quickly, and
many people thought, "Oh, a very important Rinpoche will be
coming here, we must go to see him." So while we were still on our
way to Tolu, many Nepalese people came to meet me on the road. They were very faithful devotees, though in a very blind way, and they came with some offerings — rice, a little money and so on. I really did not want those offerings and I said, “Please, don’t bring rice. I don’t want money, you keep it for yourself.” Then someone told me that if I did not accept these things, they would feel bad because I refused them. So then I understood, therefore I accepted them and we kept on walking. Yet those people were not coming to ask for teachings or to receive some knowledge; they were only interested in receiving a blessing. I really I don’t know what I can do for them with my blessing. However, I tried at least to make a good cause for them. Finally we arrived at Tolu.

Also, while I was leading the retreat, many Sherpa people came, not for receiving teaching but just to meet me and receive blessings. In fact they came, received the blessing and went away satisfied. I felt very sad about that because it would have been a good opportunity for them to receive some teaching and have some understanding. Although most of the people were Westerners, I was giving the teaching in the Tibetan language with translations into English, Italian, and other languages. One day I noticed that some Sherpas who apparently were following the teaching, while I was explaining something, were taking among themselves and not listening. Then I thought that my words were too difficult for them to understand, so I tried to explain in a very ordinary way but they kept on being distracted. Then I thought that perhaps they did not understand Tibetan as they all speak Sherpa dialect. So I asked to someone to translate my talk into that Sherpa dialect. But they kept on talking to each other. They never listened, they were just sitting there, considering the teaching like a blessing. I was really very upset because there was no way of communicating with them.

One day four people came from far away, they travelled for four days to get to me. They brought me cheese, butter and some other offerings and they asked me for some protection cords which I gave them. Then they were satisfied and ready to go away. I said to them, “You travelled four days, you really sacrificed a lot to come here, why don’t you stay one day at least and listen to the teaching I am
giving?” They said, “Okay,” and they waited. Then while I was giving teaching they came to sit there. At that time I mainly explained for them, and tried to make them understand a little, but they were always distracted. I don’t know what they were talking about, but they were always talking. Maybe they spent half an hour there, and although the teaching was not finished, they got up and started to do prostrations after which they came to me to receive a blessing. So then I did something and they went away. That is an example of how many people do not know the real sense of the teaching and how they must get it.

You see many years ago, when I was younger, it was my idea that Tibetan lamas really do not communicate the teaching and I used to criticize them, directly and indirectly. Particularly when I started to teach in the Western world, I criticized them again and again because many lamas have been educating even Westerners to become passive in that way. So I did a lot of criticizing, but after having gone to Nepal I cannot do this anymore, because it is true it is not so easy. It is not easy, but if you are really in that dimension you can create something, and there is the possibility of educating people at least a little bit so that they learn that teaching is some knowledge and understanding, not only receiving blessings. If you never make others understand that and you always continue doing blessings and receiving offerings, then of course it repeats itself in that way and never changes.

In any case, in Dzogchen it is very important that we really know the principle of the teaching and how to integrate without changing or manifesting too much outside. That is the aspect of attitude. You see, in Dzogchen we have no particular rules, as for example, in the Sutra system, the first thing is to inform you of the rules — you can do this and cannot do that, so you must control your existence in a certain way. But in Dzogchen, if you would make rules the main point, that would be considered being conditioned by something. This does not mean that rules are not useful; rather you must know that rules are a secondary thing. The main rule is your knowledge and your being — you are not conditioned by a rule but you govern the rule. The rule is not responsible, you are responsible for your-
so you must learn that — that awareness. For this reason, although there are no particular rules in Dzogchen, the main rule, the main point of Dzogchen, is to be aware. With regard to commitments, in tantric teachings we say that we have many samayas, "commitments," and we that should practice this and that, and so on. On the other hand, in Dzogchen, we have no particular commitments, yet the main point — which is also a commitment — is being aware. If you are indifferent, always distracted and do not care, then of course you are not in the principle of Dzogchen. It does not mean that on becoming a Dzogchen practitioner you are not distracted; you can always be distracted, but if you are a Dzogchen practitioner then you are also frequently aware of this point. And by being aware you discover you are distracted, and then slowly, slowly your presence develops. So the Dzogchen practitioner's attitude must be free, but free doesn't mean that you do everything, such as whatever bad things you feel like. By being distracted your behavior is negative, and of course you will have consequences in the normal way. "Being" freely means you are free in being governed by your awareness. Being aware is the best rule, a rule that has a universal correspondence. In general, we are living in time and in different situations, so rules do not always universally apply. Something which is considered nice in Tibet may not be considered acceptable in the West. For example, when Tibetans are paying respect to someone according to ancient tradition, they show their tongues; but if you put out your tongue to Westerners it does not mean anything and maybe some even feel bad about it. All rules and systems are related with the time and situation.

In Mahayana Buddhism we say that, with good intention everything is fine. However, this assumption might work to some extent, but not totally. How can you distinguish a really good intention from a bad one? Maybe you consider something to be a good intention, but that same thing might be considered a bad intention by someone else. There is no a universal standard for good intention, it depends on circumstances and situations. There is a very good example given by Sakya Pandita which really illustrates this point. He said: "In a certain place at the border between Tibet and
India, there lived a kind of bird. When this bird becomes a mother it is very kind towards her chicks, and they know that their mother is very loving. As they grow up day after day, they know that as soon they learn to fly they will have to leave their mother. So they say, "Mother has been very kind to us, we should do something for her before we go." But they do not know what to do, so with very good intention and love they tried to pluck out all their mother's feathers. Then slowly, slowly, plucking and plucking one feather after another, at the end the poor mother is left there in the nest without feathers and can no longer even fly, while all her offspring are very happy and satisfied with what they have done and fly freely away." So the chicks' intention was very good, but what happened to the mother received was not good at all.

That is an example of how good intention does not always give good results. In Dzogchen we do not say that good intention is universally good, rather we say that the main point is being aware, so that we can understand what the circumstances are and work with them. With this attitude, whatever manifests, good or bad, even if you have a problem, the best way is to be aware of the circumstances and do your best. That is the only way. You cannot really say, "Oh, this is the rule, this is the system and we do it that way." If you are somewhere and a very bad man wants to hit you, then what do you do? You may ask a teacher, "If someone hits me what shall I do?" And if the teacher is very convinced about the Mahayana approach, then he will say, "Oh, feel compassion for that person, don't be angry, otherwise you will make a very bad action." So when someone is going to hit you, you feel compassion towards that person, you may even smile and that could make that person more angry so that he hits you even more! That is how it ends, it doesn't work! This is an example of not knowing the circumstances.

But if you go to a Dzogchen master and ask, "Master, what shall I do if someone hits me?" The master will never tell you to carry on with compassion, but he will say, "You do the best that is within your possibility. We don't know when and how you will meet that person. Everything is related to the situation. Maybe you have a
possibility to escape or maybe the situation will be that you could not even move. We don’t know how and what will be the secondary causes, so just do your best.” That is the Dzogchen approach for any kind of problem we have, we try to understand everything by being aware, and we do our best, that’s the only way.

So, being aware is the rule of our life, and in this way we know how to respect different kinds of rules according to wherever we are. For example, I live in Italy and when I am in Italy I respect Italian rules. Italian rules are not Buddhist rules, nor Dzogchen rules, but I am physically living in Italy, so the Italian rules are much more important than any other rules. But when I arrive in Argentina, the Argentine rules are much more important than the Italian ones as long as I stay in that country; otherwise I have problems. That’s an example of our relative condition. If we are aware, then we know how the situation is and we know how to apply all these things.

In Dzogchen we don’t need any rule, we know very well that in every part of the universe there are rules and even if Dzogchen had rules we could not use them all, even in one country. Dzogchen rules would never be recognized in all nations. If there were a common rule and all the world would recognize it, then maybe it would have some function. We must live in a dimension which has its rule. Shantideva gave us an important teaching about this. He said that we must control our intention and by doing so we have the possibility to control all negative karma. He also gave an example that clearly illustrates that. He said: “With a good pair of shoes you can walk everywhere. If a country is completely covered with thorns so that you cannot walk on it without shoes, even if you wanted to, it would be impossible to cover it all with leather, so in this case it is much easier to cover your feet, for which you need good shoes.” In the same way, it is much easier to control our existence and, being aware of all situations, everything becomes very easy. So this is the relative aspect in our attitude.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Tibetan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anger and rejection</td>
<td>sdang</td>
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<tr>
<td>apply oneself diligently</td>
<td>brtson.pa</td>
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<td>attitude; to practice</td>
<td>spyod.pa</td>
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<td>awaken (to)</td>
<td>gzhengs.pa</td>
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<td>base</td>
<td>gzhi</td>
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<td>being in the non-dual energy of the state of rig.pa</td>
<td>rig.rt</td>
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<tr>
<td>beyond concept or elaboration (level of Mahamudra in Gampopa system)</td>
<td>spros.bral</td>
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<tr>
<td>beyond meditation (level of Mahamudra in Gampopa system)</td>
<td>sgom.med</td>
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<tr>
<td>“beyond movement”; the discovery that movement is part of one’s real nature</td>
<td>mi.gyo.ba</td>
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<td>beyond thought</td>
<td>mi.rtog.pa</td>
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<td>bile</td>
<td>mkhris.pa</td>
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<td>bliss, ecstasy</td>
<td>bde</td>
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<td>bliss-emptiness</td>
<td>bde.stong</td>
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<td>bliss-heat</td>
<td>bde.drod</td>
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<td>bodhicitta, primordial mind</td>
<td>sems=byang.chub sems</td>
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<td>bound-together straw</td>
<td>rtsa.khregs</td>
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<td>Buddha, enlightened being</td>
<td>sangs.rgyas</td>
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<td>calm state, emptiness experience</td>
<td>gnas.pa</td>
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<td>calm or stable state</td>
<td>zhi.gnas</td>
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<td>“remaining peaceful”</td>
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<tr>
<td>cemetery, quiet place</td>
<td>dur.khrod</td>
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<tr>
<td>center, heart, nucleus</td>
<td>snying</td>
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<tr>
<td>center, central channel</td>
<td>dbu.ma</td>
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<tr>
<td>clarity</td>
<td>gsal.ba</td>
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clarity and emptiness

cuckoo bird

"The Cuckoo Heralding the
Awakening Of Our Real Nature",
the name of a text introduced
by Vairocana

compassion, energy of the base
completion stage
consume, exhaust
consuming existence,
dissolution of phenomena into
their real nature; one of the
Four Visions

contemplation, real understanding
cutting actively (through)
The Four Da (Signs, Symbols,
Indications)

Da of Clarity
Da of Beyond Thought
Da of Bliss
Da of Inseparability
desire-attachment and
anger-rejection
development and increase of
vision; one of the Four Visions
development stage
dharm, phenomenon
dharmata, universal potentiality
of an individual
discover of spiritual treasure
direct or real vision and
experience of dharma;
one of the Four Visions
direct perception, real and
concrete contact with,

discovery through one’s senses
dissolution of phenomena into their real nature; one of the Four Visions
to draw forth, call up drop
"Union of Sun and Moon" Upadesha Tantra Dzogchen, "Total Contemplation/Perfection"
empowered medicine empowered medicine (in tantric practice)
emptiness
clear light of originally pure essence
energy of an individual's infinite manifestations beyond limitation
energy of an individual's non-dual energy of the state of rig.pa related to the different kinds of elements and characteristic energy function
enlightened being, "Capable One" enlightened, beneficial activities essential excerpt of a Tantra existence of all phenomena experience ganapuja Gelugpa school gone, passed heart, center, nucleus to hear inner heat (tantric practice) insight meditation instant presence, being in the state instant presence and emptiness
chos.nyid zad.pa 'dren.pa thigs nyi.zla kha.sbyor rdzogs.chen sman.grub dam.rdzas stong.pa.nyid gdangs rol.pa rtsal thub.pa phrin.las lung srid.pa nyams tshogs dge.lugs.pa song.ba snying thos.pa gtum.mo lhag.mthong rig.pa rig.stong
instant presence, remaining
in instant presence
without modifying

Kagyudpa school

Six Liberations = Six Syllables
liberation through hearing
liberation through hearing in
the Bardo state
liberation through remembering,
(e.g. the sound and meaning of
the Song of the Vajra)
liberation through scent
liberation through seeing
Great Liberation Through Seeing,
name of the Buddha statue in
Lhasa
liberation through taste
(e.g. of empowered medicine)
liberation through touch
mandala
Mahamudra "Total Symbol"
master of Dzogchen, name
(Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche’s
woman master)
master of Dzogchen, name
(Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche’s
root master)

medicine
mind, all aspect of mind in their
pure, real nature
Mind Series of Dzogchen teaching
and practice
mudra/hand gesture
natural and spontaneous awareness
non-dual
non-dual state,
state of total identity
non-dual state of emptiness and movement
nucleus of one's dimension of existence, most central point of one's potentiality
Nyingmapa school one-pointed (level of Mahamudra in Gampopa system)
path
peaceful and wrathful perfection of one's intrinsic awareness
(existence of all) phenomena potentiality, its dimension and development
power, potentiality to practice, attitude practice session limited in time to prepare, mix
rainbow Body, manifested realization and integration of all elements, all existence
Upadesha method of release, liberation of tensions and passions remaining "like a mountain", without modifying
to remain remaining in one's real nature without modification remaining in instant presence without modifying remaining in vision and other sense objects as "ornaments" of the primordial state, unconditioned and undistracted to remember

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to reverse into origin
Samantabhadra, the Dharmakaya seal
same flavor
same flavor (level of Mahamudra in the Gampopa system)
scent, odor, smell
to see, view
self-liberated
self-perfected state
shocked surprise without concepts
space
spiritual commitment
teaching, one of the three divisions of Dzogchen teaching
total space, the universe
to succeed
Tantra excerpt, important point of
ten points of energy
to think
transparency
"treasure" teaching
"Union of Sun and Moon"
Upadesha Tantra
Upadesha method of release, liberation of tensions and passions
Upadesha, one of the three divisions of Dzogchen teaching
Upadesha practice
universe, "total space"
vajra
Vajradhara, Primordial Buddha
the very
view
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>view (being non-conceptually present in the)</td>
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<tr>
<td>vision (subject and object)</td>
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<tr>
<td>vision-emptiness</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>wisdom, inner state of, pristine cognition</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>yan.tig &quot;even more essential&quot; system of Upadesha practice</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>yab - the male aspect of a deity in union</td>
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<tr>
<td>yi.dam &quot;sacred mind&quot; (realized being)</td>
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<tr>
<td>yoga</td>
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<tr>
<td>yum - the female aspect of a deity in union</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Tibetan–English**

A yo mkha.'gro  name of a woman Dzogchen Master (Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's master)

bar.do thos.grol  liberation through hearing in the bardo state

bcom.ldan.'das.nyid  the Primordial Buddha, Vajradhara

bde  bliss, ecstasy

bde.stong  bliss-emptiness

bde.drod  bliss-heat

bka.'bryud.pa  Kagyudpa school

brda bzhi  The Four Da (Signs, Symbols, Indications)=Da of Bliss (bde.ba'i brda); Da of Inseparability (dbyer.med kyi brda); Da of Beyond Thought (mi.rtog.pa'i brda); Da of Clarity (gsal.ba'i brda)

brtson.pa  apply oneself diligently

bskyed.rim  development stage

bsam.gtan  contemplation

btags.grol  liberation through touch

bzhag.pa  to remain

Byang.chub rdo.rje  Master of Dzogchen, Namkhai Norbu's root master

byang.chub sems  bodhicitta, primordial mind

chags.sdang  desire-attachment and anger-rejection

che.mchog Heruka  name of joyful Buddha

chos  Dharma, phenomenon

chos.nyid  dharmata, universal potentiality of an individual

chos.nyid mgon.sum  direct or real vision and experience of dharmata, one of the Four Visions

chos.nyid zad.pa  dissolution of phenomena into their real nature, one of the Four Visions
remaining in one’s real nature without modification

empowered medicine (in tantric practice)

spiritual commitment

power, potentiality

ten points of energy

center, central energy channel

Garab Dorje, first master of Dzogchen on this planet, in this time cycle

contemplation, real understanding

mandala

to remember

liberation through remembering, e.g. the sound and meaning of the Song of the Vajra

to draw forth, call up

scent, odor, smell

liberation through scent

cemetery, silent place

cutting actively (through)

energy glow of originally pure essence

non-dual state of emptiness and movement

calm state, emptiness experience

non-dual

Six Liberations = Six Syllables

clarity

clarity and emptiness

discoverer of spiritual treasure

treasure teaching

inner heat (a tantric practice)
to awaken

base
shocked surprise without concepts
rainbow body, manifested
realization and integration of all elements, all existence

space
total space, the universe
one of the three divisions of Dzogchen teaching
cuckoo bird; rig.pa’i khu.byug is the The Cuckoo Heralding the Awakening Of Our Real Nature, the name of a text introduced by Vairocana
Upadesha method of release, liberation of tensions and passions
Samantabhadra, the Dharmakaya Buddha
path
insight meditation
self-perfected state
view
essential excerpt of a Tantra
Upadesha, one of the three divisions of Dzogchen teaching
“beyond movement”–the discovery that movement is part of one’s real nature
contemplation beyond thought
bile
direct perception, real and concrete contact with, discovery through one’s senses
non-dual state, state of total identity
to succeed
to see, view
liberation through seeing
Great Liberation Through Seeing, name of the Buddha statue in Lhasa

liberation through taste (e.g. of empowered medicine)

experience

increase and development of vision; one of the four visions

"Union of Sun and Moon", name of Upadesha Tantra

enlightened, beneficial activities

hand gesture, mudra

Mahamudra, "Total Symbol"

natural and spontaneous awareness

self-liberated

vajra

Dzogchen, "Total Contemplation/Perfection"

accomplishment stage

remaining "like a mountain", without modifying

instant presence, being in the state

remaining in instant presence

being in the non-dual energy of the state of rig.pa

instant presence and emptiness

perfection of one's intrinsic awareness

remaining without modifying one's vision

yoga

Nyingmapa school

one flavor

energy of an individual's infinite manifestations beyond limitation

"same flavor"
to keep, rely on

to think

bound-together straw

an individual's non-dual energy of the state of rig.pa, related to the different kinds of elements and characteristic energy functions

one-pointed; level of Mahamudra in Gampopa system (level of Mahamudra in Gampopa system)

Buddha enlightened being

to prepare, mix

anger or rejection

(byang.ch'ub sems) bodhicitta, primordial mind

all aspects of mind in their pure, real nature

Mind Series of Dzogchen teaching and practice

beyond meditation

medicine

empowered medicine

remaining in visions and other sense objects as "ornaments" of the primordial state, unconditioned and undistracted

all vision, subject and object

vision-emptiness

center, heart, nucleus

nucleus of one's dimension of existence, most central point of one’s potentiality

gone, passed
beyond concept or elaboration (level of Mahamudra in Gampopa system)
to practice; attitude
existence of all phenomena
to reverse into origin
emptiness
transparency
potentiality, its dimension and development
drop
Upadesha practice
liberation through hearing
to hear
enlightened being, "Capable One"
compassion, energy of the base
practice session, limited in time
meditative absorption, contemplation
time, life
ganapuja
consume, exhaust (e.g. chos.zad, consuming existence, dissolving the body in its real nature; one of the Four Visions
"remaining peaceful", calm or stable state
peaceful and wrathful
the male aspect of a deity in union
"even more essential", system of Upadesha practice
inner state of wisdom, pristine cognition
"sacred mind"; realized being
the female aspect of a deity in union
Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was born in sDe.dge in East Tibet on December 8, 1938. He was recognised as the reincarnation of the great Dzogchen Master, A’dzom ‘Brug pa, who lived in the early part of this century. A’dzom ‘Brug pa was a gter ston, or treasure discoverer, and a direct disciple of the great ’Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse, and dPal sprul Rinpoche.

When he was eight years old, Norbu Rinpoche was also recognized by both the sixteenth Karmapa, and dPal spung Situ Rinpoche to be the mind incarnation of Padma dKar po, the historical founder of the state of Bhutan. The Zhabs drung Rinpoches continued to be the Dharmarajas, or temporal and spiritual rulers of Bhutan, until the early years of the twentieth century.

Norbu Rinpoche first received Dzogchen teachings from his uncles mKhyen brtse Yang srid Rinpoche, and rTogs ldan Orgyan bsTan ‘dzin, while he was still a child. He became a monk at an early age and received his training in the Sa skya pa school of Tibetan Buddhism. At the age of fourteen he did a long retreat of Vajrapani, Simhamukha and White Tara.

At this time, Norbu Rinpoche was advised to go to the woman master A yo mKha’ ‘gro rDo rje dPal sgron to ask for teachings. From her, he received the teachings of the mKha’ ‘gro yang thig, and A yo mKha’ ‘gro’s mind treasure of the practice of Simhamukha, among other teachings.

In 1954, he visited the People’s Republic of China and taught Tibetan Language at the University of Chengdu. At this time he met Gangs dkar Rinpoche, from whom he received the teachings of the Six Yogas of Naropa, and Mahamudra. Norbu Rinpoche also became proficient in the Chinese and Mongolian languages.

Returning to sDe dge, he had a dream of great clarity, which led him to meet his root master, Byang chub rDo rje. Byang chub rDo rje Rinoche had been a disciple of A ’dzom ’Brugs pa, Nyag Bla Padma bDud ’dul, and Shar rDza Rinpoche, the famous Bonpo.
master, who had achieved the Body of Light. From Byang chub rDo rje, Norbu Rinpoche received teachings on the three series of Dzogchen teaching: Sems sde, kLong sde, and Man ngag gi sde; and was introduced to the real understanding of the state of Dzogchen.

In 1955, Norbu Rinpoche travelled to India, and because of the worsening of the Tibetan political situation, he did not return to Tibet at this time. He found work in the Offices of the Education Ministry in Sikkim. In 1960, Rinpoche was invited to Italy by Professor Giuseppe Tucci as a research associate. Rinpoche became a professor at Naples University in 1964, teaching Tibetan and Mongolian Studies.

Although still teaching at the University, Rinpoche finds time to give retreats to explain the Dzogchen teaching, all over the world — including Italy, the USA, Argentina, Russia, Australia and Singapore. This has resulted in the growth of the Dzogchen Community, an association of individuals who, while continuing their usual occupations in society, study and apply the Dzogchen Teaching, which Norbu Rinpoche continues to transmit.

(This biography is written with acknowledgement to John Myrddin Reynolds).
Ekajati
The Principle Guardian of Dzogchen Teaching