Approaching the Great Perfection

Simultaneous and Gradual Methods of Dzogchen Practice in the Longchen Nyingtig

Sam van Schaik
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APPROSSHING THE GREAT PERFECTION

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Sam van Schaik

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Preface

The ten Great Perfection texts that appear in this book are the work of Rigdzin Jigme Lingpa. Although he died over two hundred years ago, in the long view of the Tibetan tradition he is a recent figure. In all four of the main schools his work remains of central importance for those who practice the Great Perfection. His Longchen Nyingtig cycle has been handed down through generations of practitioners as a complete path to enlightenment, and many lineages for the authorized transmission (lung) of these texts are still in existence today. While the Longchen Nyingtig is full of treasure texts, speaking with the impersonal and authoritative voice of scripture, it also contains texts written as ordinary, yet still inspired, treatises on the Great Perfection. The individual voice of Jigme Lingpa is strongly present in these compositions. The reader cannot help but be struck by the urgency in his writing, and by his concern to communicate the true spirit of the Great Perfection to his audience. Although Jigme Lingpa did compose more scholarly treatises than these, he is best known as a representative of the yogic side of the Nyingma school, as one who wrote out of his own experience of meditation rather than intellectual knowledge. His writings have a colloquial style, with the quality of a personal instruction given from teacher to student, and I hope that my translations will carry some of this feeling of immediacy.

When texts such as these are subjected to scholarly scrutiny, something—some would say the principal thing—is missed, and for this reason most readers might prefer to begin with the translations in part III, before turning to the discussion of them in part II. In my analysis of the texts I have tried to demonstrate how Jigme Lingpa constructs a coherent thesis using passages that seem to contradict each other when taken individually. These contradictions occur between two apparently opposed tendencies within Jigme Lingpa's writing. The first tendency emphasises the immanence of the
enlightened mind in all sentient beings, and proposes that the realization of this immanence is itself the method by which all aspects of enlightenment are attained simultaneously. The second emphasizes the distinction between the ordinary state of sentient beings, samsara, and its enlightened correlate, nirvana, and proposes that enlightenment is to be attained gradually through various practices. Modern scholarship has usually approached these two tendencies as entrenched positions on one side or the other of polemical debates between different schools. However, both tendencies are present to some extent within each of the schools in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. The great exponents of every school have found it necessary to mediate between these two extremes, and this is what we see Jigme Lingpa doing in his Longchen Nyingtig texts. I have tried to show how the difficult contradictions inherent in Jigme Lingpa's incorporation of the Great Perfection into the Mahayana Buddhist path compelled him to employ a series of interpretive responses.

As ever, I am humbled by the great range and depth of the Tibetan literary tradition. I am not one of those few whose encyclopedic knowledge begins to encompass the whole of the literature, but here I have attempted to trace the subtle lines of literary influence on Jigme Lingpa. Traditional and recent scholarly accounts of Jigme Lingpa's literary sources have focused on the influence of the monolithic figure of Longchenpa, the fourteenth-century Nyingma scholar. The importance of Longchenpa to Jigme Lingpa is indisputable, yet other less famous figures emerge from the Longchen Nyingtig texts, including the seventeenth-century writers Tsele Natsog Rangdröl and Lhatsün Namkhai Jigme. Neither of these two produced a large body of work, but both wrote pithy treatises for meditators in a contemporary and colloquial style that has a clear relationship to Jigme Lingpa's writings. This relationship shows us Jigme Lingpa in a different light. He appears not just as a reformer who breathed new life into the doctrines of a figure from the classical period of Nyingma scholarship four hundred years earlier, but also as a teacher interested in the work of those in the recent past who presented the essentials of the Great Perfection in an accessible form. I have also shown Jigme Lingpa as actively engaged with the different versions of the Buddhist teachings maintained by the other schools, particularly the Gelug school which dominated his homeland of Central Tibet. While open to the doctrines of the other schools, especially the Kagyü, he strongly opposed those who made false equivalences between the doctrines of different schools, and fiercely defended what he saw as the special characteristics of the Nyingma teachings.

In short, I have tried to show that by presenting a particular way to practice the Buddhist path Jigme Lingpa was not merely reviving the work done by Longchenpa. He drew together developments in the Tibetan tradition over the four centuries after Longchenpa and presented all this in a style unmistakably his own. The popularity of the Longchen Nyingtig testifies to Jigme Lingpa's success in this project, and central to this success is his reconciliation of the contradictions between the simultaneous and the gradual approaches to enlightenment.

Conventions

Sanskrit words have been used for some Buddhist terms familiar to most readers, such as bodhisattva and nirvana, and these appear without diacritical marks. Sanskrit has also been preferred for certain technical terms with a strong connection to the Indic context, such as ālāya-vijñāna. Tibetan words, apart from the very familiar exception lama, have been translated, with the Wylie transcription of the Tibetan appearing in brackets where appropriate. In longer passages the shad is transcribed with a vertical slash (／) and the ges shad with a forward slash (/).

Tibetan proper nouns, including names of places, people, and schools, are written in phonetics. A glossary in Appendix III provides the Wylie transcription for all such words that appear in the main text. Titles of texts are given in phonetics in the main text, except in cases where the title is particularly descriptive, such as the Seventeen Tantras or the Story of the Intelligent Bee. The full titles in Wylie transcription are to be found in the bibliography, or if they are not included there, in the footnotes.

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List of Abbreviations

Longchen Nyingtig Texts

DTK  rDzogs chen gnas lugs rdo rje thig rkang (Vajra Verse on the Natural State)
GP   Man ngag rdzogs pa chen po'i rgyud phyi ma (The Subsequent Tantra of Great Perfection Instruction)
KZL  Kun mkhyen zhal lung (The Words of the Omniscient One)
KGN  Kun tu bzang po dgongs nyams (Experiencing the Enlightened Mind of Samantabhadra)
ML   gZhi lam 'bras bu'i smon lam (An Aspirational Prayer for the Ground, Path, and Result)
NCT  rDzogs pa chen po gnas lugs cer mthong (Seeing Nakedly the Natural State of the Great Perfection)
NSB  rDzogs pa chen po'i gnad gsum shan byed (Distinguishing the Three Essential Points of the Great Perfection)
PK   rGyab brten padma dkar po (The White Lotus)
SN   Gol shor tshar gcod seng ge'i ngar ro (The Lion’s Roar That Destroys the Deviations of Renunciants Meditating on the Seminal Heart)
YL   Khri phyug ye shes bla ma (The Wisdom Guru: Practice Instructions)
YLG  rDzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes klong gi rgyud (The Great Perfection Tantra of the Expanse of Samantabhadra’s Wisdom)
Editions of Collected Works of Jigme Lingpa

AC  Klong chen snying thig (Adzom Chögar edition)

SBd  'Jigs gling gsum 'bum (Derge edition)

SBl  'Jigs gling gsum 'bum (Lhasa edition)
1 Approaches to Enlightenment

*The Great Perfection*

This is the heritage left by the buddhas of the past, the object of accomplishment for buddhas yet to come, and the only pure path walked by the buddhas of the present day. Since the intellectual tenets of the other eight vehicles fail to reach it, it comes at the pinnacle of them all.

This is the way in which Rigdzin Jigme Lingpa (1730–98) describes the methods of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*). The Great Perfection is a Buddhist approach to salvation, in a form only known to have existed in Tibet. From its earliest appearance in the eighth century C.E. it has survived to the present day. In the intervening centuries its literature grew into a vast range of texts, describing various different systems of the Great Perfection.

At the time when the first known texts of the Great Perfection appeared in the eighth century, Tibet had reached the zenith of its power as an empire, embracing much of Central Asia and parts of China. The Tibetan Empire came into being a century earlier through the military successes of the Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo (609–49). Songtsen Gampo is also traditionally said to have been the first king to sponsor Buddhism in Tibet. At that time, Buddhism had to compete with indigenous religious practices and local deity cults which made its introduction as a state religion less than straightforward. Nevertheless, as the Tibetan Empire went from strength to strength over the two following centuries, Buddhism rose to become the major religious power within Tibetan borders.

The ascendancy of Buddhism in Tibet was assured by the work of Songtsen Gampo’s great-grandson, King Trisong Detsen (756–97). This king, while continuing the military successes of his forebears, attempted to turn Tibet into a truly Buddhist country, on the model of India and China. Thus
he invited the renowned Indian Buddhist scholar Śāntarakṣita to establish the first Tibetan monastery, with ordained Tibetan monks. He also invited exponents of the Buddhist tantras including the semi-legendary figure Padmasambhava, who taught tantric practice and perhaps the Great Perfection as well.

During the reign of Trisong Detsen great numbers of Buddhist scriptures were translated into Tibetan. A great range of Buddhist literature was translated from both Sanskrit and Chinese, including the most recent developments in the Mahāyāna. Monasteries were established based on the monastic rule of the Mulasarvāstivāda school. At the same time the practices of the tantras, known as the Vajrayāna, were introduced and practiced by both monastics and laypeople. The lay tantric practitioner (rnyogs pa, Skt. mantra) became a common figure in Tibet, and would remain so throughout the history of Tibetan Buddhism.

The early Great Perfection

The earliest Great Perfection texts are from the manuscript cache found in the Central Asian monastic complex of Dunhuang. During the ascendency of the Tibetan Empire, Dunhuang was under Tibetan control, although both Tibetan and Chinese lived there as monks and passed through as lay devotees. The Dunhuang texts contain some of the fundamental features of the Great Perfection that remain in most of its various later forms. These essential features owe much to earlier Buddhist literature, in particular the doctrine of emptiness (Skt. śūnyatā) set out in the Prajñāpāramitā sutras and the understanding of the nature of the mind set out in certain other sutras, such as the Lankāvatāra. The following passage from one of the Dunhuang texts is a typical example:

It does not matter whether all of the phenomena of mind and mental appearances, or affliction and enlightenment, are understood or not. At this very moment, without accomplishing it through a path or fabricating it with antidotes, one should remain in the spontaneous presence of the body, speech, and mind of primordial buddhahood.

As this passage illustrates, Great Perfection meditation instruction points the meditator toward the direct experience of the true nature of reality, which is immediately present. This method is held to be superior to all other

ers, which are said to involve some level of intellectual fabrication. This criticism applies to most of the practices encountered in Buddhism, from intellectual analysis to the use of specific meditation topics as antidotes to undesirable mental states. The exaltation of the Great Perfection above all other schools of Buddhist practice remains a theme throughout Great Perfection literature and can be seen in the eighteenth-century passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The identification of the Great Perfection as a distinct vehicle (theg, Skt. yāna) of Buddhist tantric practice is present in these early texts. It is known as the vehicle of supreme yoga (Skt. atiyoga), overturning all of the lower levels of tantric yoga.

From this position as the ultimate system of Buddhist practice, the Great Perfection was used as an interpretive structure for the practices of the tantras, which were placed below it in the hierarchy of Buddhist systems. The rejection of any kind of path (lam), any conceptually fabricated form of practice, in these early texts—as seen in the passage above—often seems to put the Great Perfection in opposition to the various and complex paths of practice that were derived from the tantras. However it in fact existed as a way of approaching these practices, much as the doctrine of emptiness is used in the Prajñāpāramitā literature and the works of commentators such as Nagārjuna, as a way of approaching the practice of the Mahāyāna. In both cases, although there is criticism of conceptually constructed practices, there is also a great deal of discussion of how to engage in those practices. Thus it is clear that the criticism is not to be taken as an injunction against engaging in the practices at all; rather the practices are contextualized within the higher perspective of nonconceptuality and nonduality.

Thus the Great Perfection was not really a departure from Buddhist tradition. As well as the similarity to features of the Prajñāpāramitā sutras, there are other obvious influences from the Mahāyāna sutras on the early Great Perfection. The true nature of reality alluded to above is also known as the basis of all (kun gzhi, Skt. ālaya), a term that appears often in the Lankāvatārasūtra and became fundamental to the Yogācāra school in India. In the early Great Perfection this basis of all is synonymous with the awakened mind (byang chub kyi bsum, Skt. bodhicitta), which, as well as being immediately present, is the basis of all that manifests. This use of the term awakened mind is also derived from Yogācāra texts and their scriptural sources, such as the Sandhinirmocanasūtra.

The early Great Perfection was also characterized by certain distinctive features, in particular a vocabulary that was later elaborated and developed into a technical terminology. Examples of this vocabulary in the early texts
are gnosis (rig pa, Skt. vidyā), for the everpresent nondual and nonconceptual awareness, and spontaneous presence (lhun gyis gru dpal), indicating—as in the passage quoted above—the immediate and unprefabricated presence of “the body, speech, and mind of primordial buddhahood.” Equally important is the term primordial (ye nas), indicating that the awakened state has always been present, uncreated.6

The categorization of the Great Perfection as a distinct yoga goes back as far as the earliest known Great Perfection texts.7 The Great Perfection is classed as atiyoga, the highest of the three supreme forms of yoga. Below it are the practices derived from the tantras, classed as the two lower forms of inner yoga, anuyoga, and mahāyoga, although in fact the vast majority of tantric practice fell under the mahāyoga rubric. An eleventh-century Tibetan commentary on the different methods of Buddhist practice distinguished mahāyoga and atiyoga as distinct methods, but earlier texts indicate a less orderly state of affairs in which the characteristic approach of the Great Perfection was presented both in isolation from mahāyoga practice and as the means of engaging in it.8

The end of the empire and the new schools

In the 840s a new Tibetan king, Langdarma, was on the throne. Tibetan histories relate that he broke with the custom of supporting Buddhism (which had continued through the reigns of Trisong Detsen’s successors) and supervised the wholesale dismantling of the monastic structure that had been established and encouraged over the previous century. This is said to have been the cause of his assassination by a monk in 842, which ended the royal line and began the disintegration of the Tibetan Empire into small individual states. In the following century and a half there was little or no monastic presence in Tibet, but it seems that the lay tantric practitioners flourished and maintained the transmission of the tantras and their associated practices, including the Great Perfection.

By the eleventh century, certain local rulers in the state of Ngari in Western Tibet wished to see monastic Buddhism reestablished in their land and to curb what they saw as the excesses of the lay tantric practitioners. Their support resulted in the training of Tibetan translators in India, and the beginning of a new wave of translation activity. At their invitation, the Indian monk Atiśa Dipamkaraśrījñāna (982–1054) came to Tibet and instigated a new wave of translation of Buddhist scriptures and commentaries. His disciple Dromtön (1002–64) established a new Tibetan monastic form of Buddhism known as Kadam. Atiśa’s legacy to Tibet was a form of Buddhism based on a graduated path that included tantric practice but put much more emphasis on general Mahāyāna teachings, especially the practice of compassion.

In the following years other schools developed. The Sakya based their tantric doctrines on the newly translated tantric cycle of Hevajra, the practice of which was structured by a doctrine called the Union of Samsara and Nirvana, a meditation-oriented interpretation of the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra. The Sakya also became a monastic school with a highly scholastic element. Another new school, the Kagyū, also appeared in the eleventh century, with a lesser tendency to monasticism than the Kadam and Sakya. The fundamental texts of the Kagyū were a set of tantric practices derived from an Indian lineage of yogins, and a doctrine that was held to be the ultimate understanding of tantra, called Mahāmudrā, “the great seal.” Mahāmudrā has many similarities to the early Great Perfection, and the two teachings may have shared a common source. The last of the main Tibetan schools to appear was the Gelug, which was founded by the Tibetan monk Tsongkhapa (1367–1419), based on his wish to continue the monastic tradition of the Kadam, which had been supplanted by the more recent schools. Tsongkhapa, like Atiśa, placed more emphasis on the nontantric practices of the Mahāyāna and on a strictly graduated path of practice. His most important innovation was a new reading of the Madhyamaka doctrine, which he used as an interpretative structure for all tantric practice.

Despite the proliferation of new schools in Tibet, there were many who continued to adhere to the lineages based on the first wave of transmission of Buddhism into Tibet. These were the spiritual descendants of those lay tantric practitioners who had survived the collapse of monastic Buddhism in the ninth century, and in their lineages of transmission they carried with them the Great Perfection scriptures. These practitioners came to be known as Nyingmapa (the old ones), and although there was never a coherent Nyingma school as such, it became useful to refer to the lineages and scriptures that derived from the first period of transmission of Buddhism into Tibet with the term Nyingma.

Moreover, at just the same time as the new schools began to appear in Tibet, the Nyingma canon began to grow, with the addition of fresh material known as treasure (gter ma). Treasures are scriptures said to have been concealed in Tibet by Padmasambhava in the eighth century that are brought to light by a treasure revealer (gter ston). The new treasures vastly increased the scriptural material available to Nyingmapas and opened the
way to the development of the Great Perfection from its simple early form into a far more complex body of doctrines.

**The development of the Great Perfection**

The proliferation of Great Perfection texts from the eleventh century called for a structure, a method of categorization to make sense of the different systems that were developing. The method that took hold was a distinction into three classes: the Mind Series (sams sde), the Space Series (klong sde), and the Instruction Series (man ngag sde). Under the Mind Series rubric were placed those early Great Perfection texts dating back to the eighth century or beyond, and more recent material in the same mold. The Space Series enjoyed only limited popularity, and little is known of it today. The Instruction Series, on the other hand, gradually increased in popularity from its appearance in the eleventh century and in time supplanted entirely the Mind Series and the Space Series, becoming by the eighteenth century the only form of the Great Perfection still practiced.

The first known occurrence of this distinction into three series is in an early Instruction Series text, and the threefold distinction is perhaps most accurately seen as a way of distinguishing what made the Instruction Series different from earlier forms of the Great Perfection. The three series were defined as different approaches to the true nature of mind, with the Instruction Series embodying the most direct approach. The characterization is as follows: In the Mind Series, one's own mind is established as the basis of all appearances, and then this mind is recognized as an empty and luminous awareness, mind itself (sams nyid). In the Space Series, one approaches mind itself by recognizing it as empty. Finally, in the Instruction Series, mind itself is approached directly by the meditator, without any need to establish its character as the basis of all appearance, or to recognize its emptiness.

The Instruction Series built a far more complex system upon the foundations of the earlier Great Perfection literature, in part through the addition of material from earlier sutra and tantra sources, and in part through distinctive doctrines and practices of its own. The particular features of the Instruction Series are discussed in chapters 4 to 7 below. Here it is only important to mention that, by this stage, the Great Perfection had developed beyond its role as an interpretative approach to tantra (although it did not lose that role) and had developed a complex series of meditation techniques of its own.

The popularity of the Instruction Series owes much to a corpus of literature known as the Seminal Heart (snying thig). Although the term suggests an essentialized and condensed teaching, in fact the most elaborate discussions of the Great Perfection occur in Seminal Heart texts. Some doxographies identify the Seminal Heart with the Instruction Series, some place it at the pinnacle of various subdivisions of the Instruction Series, and some place it outside of all the three series, as the very essence of them all. The earliest known Seminal Heart texts are the collection of tantras known as the Seventeen Tantras and a collection of miscellaneous texts attributed to six Indian figures, named Bima Nyingtig after one of those figures, Vimalamitra. Both collections were circulating in Tibet from around the mid-eleventh century onward. The Indian masters, who also figure in other Great Perfection lineages, are Garab Dorje, Manjuśrimitra, Śrīśimha, Īśānāśatra, Vimalamitra, and Padmasambhava. The last two were both active in Tibet, but the historical existence of the previous four is much less certain. The Bima Nyingtig is said to have been concealed in the eighth or ninth century and rediscovered in the eleventh, yet it is not strictly classified as a treasure text, for reasons discussed in chapter 3. Between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries, the Seminal Heart, just one among a number of systems of the Great Perfection, was not particularly preeminent, and by the end of this period may even have been in decline. This was to change due to the work of two people, the treasure revealer Pema Ledreltsal (1291–1313) and the scholar Longchen Rabjam (1308–63). In the early fourteenth century Pema Ledreltsal produced the first fully fledged treasure collection in the Seminal Heart corpus, the Khandro Nyingtig. This collection did not achieve immediate popularity and may have been short-lived had it not been taken up by Longchenpa.

Longchenpa was probably the greatest exponent of the Great Perfection in its long history and was certainly responsible for the revitalization of the Seminal Heart tradition. He brought together the Bima Nyingtig and the Khandro Nyingtig with two new collections authored by himself, the Lama Yangtig (based on the Bima Nyingtig) and the Khandro Yangtig (based on the Khandro Nyingtig), and a third new collection, the Zabmo Yangtig. Before long all of these collections were handed down through the lineages of textual transmission as one great cycle, the Nyingtig Yabshi. The endurance of this cycle ensured that the great variety of meditation practices and doctrines contained in the Seminal Heart rubric would not be lost.

This was not the end of Longchenpa’s development of the Seminal Heart. In two lengthy prose works, the Tegchö Dzö and the somewhat shorter
Simultaneous and Gradual

He could see, without wishing it, that old, that obvious distinction between the two classes of men; on the one hand the steady goers of superhuman strength who, plodding and persevering, repeat the whole of the alphabet in order, twenty-six letters in all, from start to finish; on the other, the gifted, the inspired who, miraculously, lump all the letters together in one flash—the way of genius. He had not genius; he laid no claim to that; but he had, or might have had, the power to repeat every letter of the alphabet from A to Z accurately in order.\textsuperscript{19}

Many religious, mystical, and philosophical traditions have recognized the existence of two approaches to their ultimate goals. The first is a step-by-step cultivation, the second an immediate realization. The first approach is often associated with learning, meritorious works, and the practice of morality, while the second is often held to transcend such religious and philosophical activities, in fact to transcend all ordinary activities. In essence, the first approach, which I will call gradualist, is pluralistic in that it involves a plurality of methods, and a gradual unfolding of understanding over time. The second approach, which I will call simultaneist, is singular in that it includes no method except direct insight, and no progress over time, only the single moment of realization. It is simultaneous in that all of the elements accumulated by the gradual method are present in the singular event of realization.

The tension between these two approaches is felt through much of the history of Buddhist thought. In early Buddhist scriptures, there are many discussions of gradual cultivation, but also accounts of disciples attaining realization on hearing short sermons by the Buddha.\textsuperscript{20} In the more technical discussions in the Pali canon, a distinction is made between liberation of the mind (Pali: \textit{ceto-vimutti}), which involves gradual ascent through the levels of absorption (Pali: \textit{jhāna}) in śamatha meditation, and liberation through prajñā (Pali: \textit{pañña-vimutti}), which some held to afford a direct access to enlightenment without the need to pass through the levels of absorption.\textsuperscript{21}

The existence of both approaches is evident in the Mahāyāna sutras as well. In the Prajñāpāramitā sutras the doctrine of emptiness undermined the substantiality of all philosophical reasoning and religious practice. In other sutras, such as the \textit{Tathāgatagarbha sūtra}, the teaching that all sentient beings...
are possessed of an inherent buddhahood held the implication that there could be access to an immediate realization of buddhahood. Yet it was also in these Mahāyāna texts that the ideal of the gradual cultivation of the bodhisattva's path was expounded, a cultivation that was generally said to occur through several eons.

In China the simultaneist tendencies of some of the sutras were developed into a doctrine of simultaneous enlightenment by followers of the Chan schools. Most Chan schools advocated a sudden, uncultivated realization of the true nature of mind. In general, the Chan doctrine stated that through nonmentation, the true nature of mind, which is present but not manifest in all beings, becomes manifest. This nonmentation is the avoidance of all conceptual thought. Through the singular method of nonmentation, the singular result, enlightenment, is accomplished. Thus this is a simultaneist approach.

Within the Chan schools, this issue of simultaneism and gradualism received a great deal of attention, and a useful distinction was made between two aspects of the dichotomy. The first aspect is the method. The gradual method is the undertaking of a hierarchical series of practices, which in turn remove more and more subtle obstacles to enlightenment. The simultaneous method is a singular practice, such as nonmentation, which has no internal divisions. The second aspect is realization. In the model of gradual realization, the qualities of enlightenment become apparent in a cumulative manner in the practitioner of the path. This is the model of the five paths and ten stages that appears in many Mahāyāna sutras. Simultaneous realization is the instantaneous presence of all the qualities of enlightenment at the moment of enlightenment. This distinction means that there are at least four alternative positions in the question of simultaneism versus gradualism:

(i) A simultaneous method with simultaneous realization
(ii) A simultaneous method with gradual realization
(iii) A gradual method with simultaneous realization
(iv) A gradual method with gradual realization

All of these approaches were taught by Chan schools. Ultimately, the first one—simultaneous method and realization—came to be the orthodox Chan position. However, another popular approach, which became the standard for Korean Chan, was the third: a gradual method with simultaneous realization. In this model, the trainee Chan adept undergoes a simultaneous realization of the true nature of mind at the very beginning of his career, and then cultivates the spiritual qualities of buddhahood through standard, gradual, Mahāyāna practices. At the end, another simultaneous realization brings about the final accomplishment of buddhahood.23

**Distinctions in the capabilities of sentient beings**

Many of the traditions that recognized the differences between simultaneous and gradual approaches also recognized that this might correspond to a difference in the capability of those who engage in the practice. The simultaneous method might require the practitioner to be above average, perhaps even to be exceptional. Distinctions between levels of ability in trainees are commonplace in Buddhist literature and were usually characterized as levels in a practitioner's faculties (Skt. indriya), with the top level described as having sharp faculties (Skt. tīkṣṇendriya). This distinction is especially useful for traditions in which both simultaneist and gradualist approaches are advocated in the scriptures. Advocates of either approach can argue that the simultaneist approach is only for those of the sharpest faculties. While the advocate of the simultaneist doctrine may feel that this includes a substantial number of adepts, the advocate of the gradual approach may argue that only one in a million adepts is actually of this high standard.

There are several passages in the Pāli canon setting out hierarchies of ability in followers of the Buddha; one occurs in the discussion of the two methods of liberation mentioned above. Richard Gombrich writes:

> At MN I, 437, Ānanda asks the Buddha why some monks are ceto-vimutti and some pañña-vimutti. The Buddha does not reply, as in effect he did to the three monks at AN I, 118–20, that there is no answer to this question. On the contrary, he says, with extreme brevity, that it is due to a disparity in their faculties.24

In this context the distinction is between the levels to which a monk has developed the five faculties of faith, energy, awareness, concentration, and insight.25 Discussions of the concept of disparity in faculties also appear in the Mahāyāna sutras. A reference to three levels of ability occurs in the Sandhinirmocanasūtra:

> But while I teach with such an intention that there is a single way (Skt. yāna), this does not mean that there do not exist the (various) realms of living beings, depending on their natures, being of dull faculties, of medium faculties, and of acute faculties.26
six perfections of the Mahāyāna was required (Kamalaśīla’s position). Thus Hashang represented the simultaneous approach (cig char ’jug pa), Kamalaśīla the gradual approach (rim gyis ’jug pa). According to the Tibetan versions of the story, Hashang was defeated, and his method rejected.

For Tibetan scholars of later generations, the doctrine of a simultaneous realization caused by the mere cessation of conceptualization, attributed to Hashang, became a standard object of rebuttal. This was to be problematic for those who followed doctrines that had something in common with the Chan of Hashang. Certain bodies of teaching in Tibet, including the Great Perfection, were accused of espousing immediate realization and disparaging models of a gradual method and gradual realization, essentially continuing the banned tradition of Hashang. This perception was not unfounded; as we have seen, the texts of the Great Perfection frequently assert the immediate presence of the true nature of mind.

The Great Perfection was subject to criticism at least as early as the eleventh century, when the Nyingma scholar Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo was writing in its defense. Sakya Paṇḍita’s (1182–1251) treatise Domsum Rabjég is an early polemic that influenced many of those that followed. Sakya Paṇḍita criticized the teaching of a doctrine of simultaneous realization called the white panacea (dkar po cigs thub) in the Mahāmudrā doctrine of the Kagyü school and, in passing, leveled the same criticism at the Great Perfection. More extensive attacks followed. The following passage by the great Gelug scholar Khedrubje (1385–1438), translated by David Seyfort Ruegg, is a good example:

Many who hold themselves to be meditators of the Snow-mountains talk, in exalted cryptic terms, of theory free from all affirmation, of meditative realization free from all mentation, of practice free from all denial and assertion and of a result free from all wishes and qualms. And they imagine that understanding is born in the conscious stream when—because in a state where there is no mentation about anything at all there arises something like non-identification of anything at all—one thinks that there exists nothing that is either identical or different. By so doing one has proclaimed great nihilism where there is nothing to be affirmed according to a doctrinal system of one’s own, as well as the thesis of the Hwashang in which nothing can be the object of mentation.
The Great Perfection of the Longchen Nyingtig

The Longchen Nyingtig contains eleven texts that are directly concerned with the Seminal Heart, comprising over three hundred pages. They vary greatly in style, including short and pithy instructions on the essential points of the Seminal Heart, evocative verses on the nature of mind as it is known through the Seminal Heart, and longer, discursive commentaries on aspects of the doctrine and practice of the Seminal Heart. All of these Longchen Nyingtig texts are presented in translation in part IV, except for the Yeshe Lama, which is too long to include but from which I draw frequently in the course of analyzing the texts (see also Appendix I). Of the ten translations, seven have never been translated. These translations are a rich resource for the examination of the presence of simultaneist and gradualist approaches within a single tradition. Points of tension can be identified between different texts and even within a single text. Hermeneutical strategies that smooth over the conflicts between simultaneism and gradualism are to be seen here. Sometimes these are explicitly presented in the texts as solutions, while elsewhere they are not marked out as such and have to be drawn out from where they are embedded in the discourse. In either case, these strategies are an example of how the tradition of the Great Perfection embodies contradictions and how it struggles toward the resolution of those contradictions.

Treasure texts, as I mentioned earlier, are believed to have been concealed by Padmasambhava in the eighth century, to be discovered later by a treasure revealer. Such texts have the authority of scripture. However, a treasure collection is not entirely composed of revelatory material. Texts written as ordinary compositions by the treasure revealer were included alongside the treasure texts, often as direct commentaries upon them. Five of the eleven Great Perfection texts from the Longchen Nyingtig are such ordinary compositions, which Jigme Lingpa attributes to his own hand.

Thus in a single treasure collection one can identify more than the single authorial voice. There are the scriptural voices of the treasure texts, often the first person voice of the primordial buddha Samantabhadra. Alternatively, the scriptural voice may be unspecified, a simple voice of authority. There is also a category of text that, though not considered to have been concealed in the eighth century, nevertheless has a semi-scriptural authority. This kind of text is believed to have come to the writer as a direct realization and is thus called a pure vision (dag snang). Though without any claim to previous existence, the pure vision texts maintain an air of timelessness, not
addressing themselves to contemporary issues as a more mundane composition might.

The nonscriptural texts are usually easily identified by the colophon, in which the treasure revealer records his having written the text. These texts are presented as the expression of the treasure revealer’s own authorial voice. Usually the writer will not use his treasure revealer name to sign a non-treasure text. The texts that are neither treasure nor pure vision I will call authorial, since they are distinguished from the treasure texts by being presented as the work of the treasure revealer in his role as an author, not as a treasure revealer. Authorial texts are often commentaries on the treasure texts in the same collection, but can merely be works with some thematic connection to the treasure collection. The latter is the case with the authorial texts under consideration here, which share the same themes as the treasure texts, but rarely invoke them or comment directly upon them.

In view of the complexity of the concept of authorship in a treasure collection, invoking the treasure revealer as author when citing every text from the collection would only obscure these distinctions. Therefore, though in the course of my analysis I have referred to the authorial texts as Jigme Lingpa’s own statements, I have not invoked this concept of authorship when citing the treasure and pure vision texts. In view of the literary theory of recent decades, one might well question even this use of the concept of the author. Indeed, prior to any modern analysis, the Tibetan Buddhist concept of authorship was informed by the Buddhist concept of nonself (anatman), as Janet Gyatso has shown in her study of Jigme Lingpa’s autobiographical writing, which displays an unstable and ultimately unresolved tension between the presentation of the authorial self and the fundamental doctrine of nonself.

Despite such reservations, the concept of authorship is useful in the limited sense of distinguishing those texts that an author claims as his own compositions from those in which the matter of composition is more complex. I use the concept in this way for the Longchen Nytingtig texts that are neither treasure nor pure vision, in order to distinguish the voice that Jigme Lingpa specifies as his own from the voices of the treasure texts, for which he makes no claim of authorship. This is not to suggest that there is a unitary intention behind all of the authorial texts, but that to avoid the concept of the author entirely is to overlook the question of whether the voices of visionary origin in a treasure collection are saying different things than the authorial voice of the treasure revealer.

Simultaneous and gradual in the Longchen Nytingtig

The translations presented here bring together for the first time a range of treasure, pure vision, and authorial literature from a single author and treasure revealer, creating the opportunity for an exploration of the ways in which these types of text differ in their doctrinal content and in their style. One significant difference emerges when the texts are examined in the light of the distinction between simultaneous and gradual. The treasure and pure vision texts tend toward the simultaneous approach, while gradualist elements and attempts to reconcile gradualism with simultaneity are to be found more often in the authorial texts.

These texts as a whole throw light on the nature of the general tensions between simultaneist and gradualist approaches in the Seminal Heart that are evident from the very earliest Seminal Heart texts. The interpretative strategies employed in the Longchen Nytingtig to reconcile these tensions can also be traced back to predecessors in the Seminal Heart tradition and elsewhere. Jigme Lingpa, drawing on a wealth of previous material, uses the technique of distinguishing between different levels of ability in practitioners of the Buddhist path in order to justify the coexistence of simultaneism and gradualism in the Longchen Nytingtig. As we saw above, this distinction may be used in various ways. It may simply justify the coexistence of two different but valid kinds of practice by stating that one is for simultaneist types and one for gradualist types. Alternatively, the distinction may be used to argue for the superiority of a simultaneist form of practice, superior because it is only for those of the highest ability. In both of these cases the proportion of practitioners who are of the highest ability is not particularly important.

On the other hand the distinction in ability may also be used to justify the teaching of a gradualist path, in which case the proportion of those of the highest ability becomes very important. Those who use the distinction to justify the gradualist path agree with those who use it to justify the simultaneist path in asserting that the latter is only for those of the highest ability. They differ in the question of how many practitioners may be said to be of that category. For those defending the gradualist approach, there are very few, perhaps in this degenerate age none at all, who are suitable for the simultaneist approach. This is the position that Jigme Lingpa tends toward in his authorial texts in the Longchen Nytingtig. As I will show in the following chapters, he attempts to teach a gradualist path without contradicting the voice of the treasure texts, which speak in the language of simultaneism.
2 Jigme Lingpa

The Life and Education of Jigme Lingpa

The life story of Jigme Lingpa has been retold many times by both Tibetan and Western writers, a testament to his importance for Tibetan Buddhism and the Nyingma school in particular. Steven Goodman (1992) and Janet Gyatso (1998) have done much work on gathering the biographical materials and have also provided good accounts of the salient biographical details. This chapter is only a brief account of Jigme Lingpa's life and focuses on his education and his corpus of written work apart from the Longchen Nyingtig. Jigme Lingpa's motivation for his writing career, as revealed by his body of work, is of particular interest and will have something to tell us about the nature of the Longchen Nyingtig.

Jigme Lingpa was born in the twelfth month of the Earth Bird Year (1729 or 1730) in the Chongye valley in the southern part of central Tibet. In his long autobiography, Jigme Lingpa stresses his family's connection with the Drugpa Kagyu lineage. He also states that his family's clan is the same as that of Longchenpa (1308–53), one of many ways in which he felt connected to the great exponent of the Great Perfection.

At the age of six Jigme Lingpa left his family to join the monks of Palri, a relatively small monastery with strong connections to the much larger neighboring monastery of Mindrol Ling. Founded in 1676, Mindrol Ling was one of the six major Nyingma monastic centers flourishing in the eighteenth century, all of which had been nonexistent, or insignificant, before the seventeenth century. The other major monastery in central Tibet, Dorjedrag, was founded in 1610. Both of these central Tibetan monastic centers had been sacked in 1717 by Dzungar invaders, motivated by anti-Nyingma sectarianism, though by Jigme Lingpa's time they had been restored.

As Jigme Lingpa was not a recognized incarnation (sprul sku), he received no special treatment at Palri. In the opening pages of his autobiography,
he discusses the study he undertook during his youth at Palri and makes the assertion, much repeated by later biographers, that he received no formal course of education:

I began with the study of grammar and whatever vajra topics I came across, such as the Conqueror's scriptures and the treatises that clarify their intention, texts on conventional definitions, and instructions on the true nature. I seized on them with veneration. But apart from a few good imprints that inspired me to study in the brightness of day and under lamplight, I had no opportunity to increase my knowledge in a relationship with a spiritual friend, even for a single day. Then in Palgy Samye Chimpu, I encountered the wisdom body of Longchenpa three times, and due to his blessing me with various symbolic portents, my karmic connections were awakened from out of the Great Perfection.  

It should be noted that while Jigme Lingpa states that he never engaged in a course of studies with a lama, he does tell us that he studied extensively on his own. Evidence of this is his first work, the Khayentsa Melang, over three hundred pages in length, which contains explications, albeit brief, of the philosophical tenets (grub mths) of various schools, including Yogacāra and Madhyamaka. As the passage above suggests, Jigme Lingpa seems to have been something of an autodidact. His rather unwieldy prose style also attests to this.

Jigme Lingpa's account of the teachings he received is a representative selection from the Nyingma corpus at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The main scriptural texts (bka' ma) are represented: the Nyingma tantras, the Eight Precepts (bka' brgyud), the peaceful and wrathful deity yoga practices (chi khor), and the treasure texts he lists include most of the major collections. The particular makeup of the teachings Jigme Lingpa received is affected by his affiliation with the Mindrol Ling monastic center. Many of the major Nyingma texts came to Jigme Lingpa through the lineage of Mindrol Ling, from one or all of the following: the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–82), Terdag Lingpa (1646–1714), and Lochen Dharmasri (1654–1717). The lineage of the other major central Tibetan monastery, Dorjedrag, also appears frequently in the Jigme Lingpa's received teachings and includes within it the throne-holder Pema Trinle (1641–1717) and, once again, in many cases, the Fifth Dalai Lama. Tsele Natsog Rangdrol (b. 1608) also appears in transmissions from a number of different teachers. Of the transmissions from the new schools, all of the Sakya ritual texts come, once again, by way of the Fifth Dalai Lama.

What is notably absent from this list is evidence of the study of scholastic subjects such as vinaya, abhidharma, pramāṇa, madhyamaka, and so on, while the number of tantras and ritual texts for tantric practice far outweighs the number of sutras. This tends to confirm Jigme Lingpa's statement in the autobiography, quoted above, that while he read some such texts on his own he never received any formal training, which would have included the textual transmissions.

At the age of thirteen Jigme Lingpa met Tugchog Dorje, whom he took as his primary teacher. From the age of twenty-five he resolved to pursue a course of assiduous meditation practice, and at the age of twenty-eight (in 1757), he began a three-year, five-month retreat at his monastery. Immediately before going into retreat Jigme Lingpa received some texts on meditation from another of his teachers, a monk called Dharmakirti:

Uncle Gönchhen Dampa conferred upon me certain discussions of the meaning of meditation by Gütangwa Natsog. Through this, many different obstructions were freed. The extraordinary understanding of the tenets of the Great Perfection and all the difficult points, without exception, I worked out from the great Seven Treasures.

Both the works of Tsele Natsog Rangdrol and the Seven Treasures of Longchenpa had a strong influence on Jigme Lingpa's writing while he was in retreat, and both were the subject of visions experienced during the retreat (discussed below). Before the retreat Jigme Lingpa must have also received the Drošig Gongpa Rangdrol, a treasure text of Trenghwo Terchen Sherab Özer (1518–84), who was the founder of Palri monastery. This collection was the source for Jigme Lingpa's primary meditation practice during his first retreat. He continued to receive textual transmission, and no doubt instruction as well, during the course of his retreat, but it is the works of Longchenpa, Natsog Rangdrol, and Sherab Özer that are the most evident influences upon the Great Perfection texts of the Longchen Nyungti.

Jigme Lingpa recounts that at the end of the first year spent in retreat he experienced an extensive vision that culminated in the production of the Longchen Nyungti. He also describes numerous other visions occurring
throughout the retreat. Shortly after concluding the retreat in 1760, he began another retreat, this time at Samye Chimpu, in caves known as the Upper and Lower Nyang caves (nyang phug gong 'og), where Longchenpa had also spent time in retreat.

During this second retreat Jigme Lingpa experienced the three visions of Longchenpa that were to be fundamental to the genesis of the Longchen Nyingtig, acting both as an inspiration to write it down and as an assurance of the authority of Jigme Lingpa and his treasures. These visions are discussed below in chapter 3. It should be noted that, while Longchenpa was the most important lama to figure in Jigme Lingpa's visions, two other famous past masters are also mentioned in the autobiography as having appeared to Jigme Lingpa during the second retreat: Tangtong Gyalpo (1361–1465) and Tsele Natsog Rangdröl (b. 1608).

Tangtong Gyalpo was also known as Chagzampa, Iron-Bridge One, for his engineering skills, and was famous for his pure vision revelations, including long life sūdhana. He appeared in a vision to Jigme Lingpa when he was very ill, leading to the writing of a text that was included in the Longchen Nyingtig. Later (around 1770), Jigme Lingpa traveled to Chuwori monastery and met the Chagzam incarnation, upon whom he conferred the responsibility for propagating the Longchen Nyingtig.

The other visionary figure, Tsele Natsog Rangdröl, wrote treatises on the Great Perfection and Māhamudrā, with some of which Jigme Lingpa was familiar, as we have seen. In his vision of this lama, Jigme Lingpa was given a prophecy that he had the potential to be of benefit to many people. In the autobiography Jigme Lingpa praised Natsog Rangdröl as a person who had pure vision and impartiality, and recommended his autobiography. Much later, he met the third Natsog Rangdröl incarnation.

In 1762, the year concluding the second retreat, encouraged by the vision of Tsele Natsog Rangdröl, Jigme Lingpa established a small monastery. The monastery, called Tseringjong Pema Osal Tegchog Ling, was situated not far from Palri monastery and Jigme Lingpa's family home. In 1764 Jigme Lingpa made the Longchen Nyingtig public, giving the first initiation of the cycle in Tseringjong. Thereafter he made Tseringjong his permanent residence until his death in 1798, writing most of his other works there. His fame grew, and late in his life Jigme Lingpa accepted the patronage of the queen of Derge, Tsewang Lhamo (r. 1790–98). Shortly before Jigme Lingpa's death, his son was recognized as the incarnation of the head of the Drigung Kagyu sect, and his last journey was to Drigung for the enthronement.

Jigme Lingpa's Works

Although, as we have seen, Jigme Lingpa did not present himself as a scholar, there is a scholastic element in much of Jigme Lingpa's writing. His strong concern with the conservation and maintenance of the scriptural basis of the Nyingma school is evident in one of his major achievements, a new edition of the collected tantras of the Nyingma school, the Nyingma Gyübum. In 1771 and the following year Jigme Lingpa worked with assistants on the edition, carving new printing blocks and expanding the collection made by Ratna Lingpa (1403–79). This edition became the basis for the Derge edition published in the late eighteenth century, which is considered by the tradition to be the best Nyingma Gyübum, the culmination of the work of the great editors Ratna Lingpa and Terdag Lingpa. A corresponding motivation to preserve the historical tradition surrounding these scriptures is shown by the catalog and history of the Nyingma Gyübum written by Jigme Lingpa at the same time, called the Damling Tadru Khyabpa Gyeten. This book is not the only one written by Jigme Lingpa in the field of textual history, but it is the longest.

Another equally strong concern for Jigme Lingpa was the maintenance of the philosophical tradition of Longchenpa. In the autobiography, Jigme Lingpa invokes his vision of Longchenpa wherein the latter handed him a book containing a clarification of his Shingta Chenpo (the prose autocommentary to the Ngaglo Korum) as a prophecy that he would write a book based on the Seven Treasures and Shingta Chenpo. This book, written in 1781, became Jigme Lingpa's most influential work alongside the Longchen Nyingtig. It is a verse text in thirteen chapters, called Yönten Deö, along with two prose autocommentaries (rang 'grel ba, Denyi Shingga and Namkhyen Shingga). In the Yönten Deö, Jigme Lingpa took on the task that Longchenpa had attempted in his Ngaglo Korum: the presentation of the Great Perfection as the pinnacle of a graduated path, beginning with teachings associated with the Śrāvakāyāna in chapters 1 to 7, proceeding to the Pāramitāyāna in chapters 8 and 9, the Vajrayāna in chapter 10, and finally the Great Perfection in chapters 10 to 13. Although the first part of the Ngaglo Korum trilogy, Semnyi Ngaglo, is also in thirteen chapters, and deals with many of the same topics, Yönten Deö is more than a mere rewriting of that text. Semnyi Ngaglo takes its Great Perfection teachings from the Mind Series, while Jigme Lingpa's presentation of the Great Perfection is thoroughly based in Seminal Heart terminology.
These works show that Jigme Lingpa considered the conservation and transmission of the Nyingma school's own particular scriptures and the traditions surrounding them an especially important task. Unlike Longchenpa, he was not overly concerned with establishing connections between these and the tantras of the new translations. It is not unlikely that this work of preservation gained some of its impetus from the persecution of the Nyingma in central Tibet in the earlier part of the eighteenth century. As I have mentioned, both of the major monastic centers were sacked by the Dzungar invaders in 1717, and although the Dzungars were defeated shortly afterward, the Nyingma school experienced continuing difficulties. The restoration work on the two monasteries was not given the requested financial support by the government, and in 1725 the new Chinese emperor, Yongzheng (r. 1723–35), sent an edict ordering the suppression of the Nyingma school. A senior minister called Polhane (1689–1747), who was sympathetic to the Nyingma, took on their cause and sent an eloquent letter supportive of the school back to the emperor. The emperor conceded, but it seems some persecution did occur despite the rescission of the edict.

Polhane, later the ruler of Tibet but at that time only one of a council of senior figures in the government, seems to have been strongly pro-Nyingma. He is said to have bestowed honor upon the Ratön Tobden Dorje, who became one of Jigme Lingpa's teachers. Such partiality inevitably bred distrust. The Gelug lama Tuken Chökhyi Nyima (1737–1802) believed that Polhane had conspired with Kahtog Tsewang Norbu toward the harm of the Dalai Lama. The persecution carried out in response to the emperor's edict seems to have been largely the work of Khangchenne, the chairman of the council set up by the Chinese in 1721, who was murdered by the anti-Chinese faction in the government in 1727. The edict probably originated from the strong Gelug presence at the court of Emperor Yongzheng, where sectarianism may have been exacerbated by the presence of one of the sons of the previous emperor, Kangxi Jinwang (1697–1738), who strongly favored the Kagyü and Nyingma schools.

It is probable that Jigme Lingpa, resident in central Tibet, would have felt the significance of the events that took place in the two decades prior to his birth. Moreover it seems there were echoes of this persecution later on and well within Jigme Lingpa's lifetime. For example, a letter written by Kahtog Tsewang Norbu to the Seventh Dalai Lama, dated around 1750, makes a plea for an end to the persecution of the Nyingma.

Although Jigme Lingpa's autobiography and record of teachings received show that he had some connections with Sakya and Kagyü schools, almost all of Jigme Lingpa's writing is firmly situated in the Nyingma context, and his major works are oriented toward the conservation and preservation of the Nyingma school's traditions. On the other hand Jigme Lingpa does not seem to have engaged in serious sectarian debate. Apart from a new version of Longchenpa's response to criticism of the Nyingma, out-and-out polemical debate is largely absent from Jigme Lingpa's collected works—his two very short polemical texts are not especially combative in character, one being directed against bias (phyogs 'dzin) toward the tantras and one against pointless disputations (gnas min gyi bregal btra). That Jigme Lingpa was concerned about the danger of the decline or even disappearance of Longchenpa's particular tradition of scholarship is shown in his concluding verses to one of the texts translated below, the Pema Karpo:

The scholar Longchenpa, with his strong body of threefold prajña, having fallen asleep,
Discriminating wisdom had closed its eyes to the examination of the original scriptures of sutra and tantra.

This orientation toward the preservation of what was unique to the Nyingma school can be seen as a development of certain trends in the Nyingma already discernible since the mid–seventeenth century, especially in the Mindrol Ling monastery, to which, as I have shown, Jigme Lingpa was strongly affiliated. The founder of Mindrol Ling, Orgyen Terdag Lingpa (1646–1714), was, like Jigme Lingpa, a treasure revealer, and also edited a new edition of Nyingma Gyümüm. Terdag Lingpa was not the only person to work on the Nyingma Gyümüm in the seventeenth century—another was Sengtrul Tsaltrim Dorje (1598–1669), whose catalog of the Nyingma Gyümüm was received by Jigme Lingpa as a reading transmission. Terdag Lingpa's brother Lochen Dharmaśri (1654–1717), who was also based at Mindrol Ling, studied the scholastic subjects including secular arts and sciences under teachers from different schools including Gelug, but primarily sought the transmissions of as many Nyingma texts as he could find, thus becoming the source of what became known as the Mindrol Ling scriptures, the lineage of transmission to which Jigme Lingpa was heir. Another example of this trend, more contemporary with Jigme Lingpa, is the founder
of Zhechen Monastery, Gyuurme Kunzang Namgyal (1713–69), who was also a scholar, one of his works being a lengthy survey of Longchenpa's corpus. This was written in 1755 to coincide with the publication of an edition of Longchenpa's works at Dzogchen Monastery.

It is clear from these examples that prior to the period in which Jigme Lingpa flourished, the establishment of the major monastic centers had allowed substantial scholarly activity by Nyingma lamas to be directed toward the texts of the Nyingma school, including the writing of commentaries on Nyingma texts, the conservation of scriptures, and the study of the Great Perfection. The works of Longchenpa obviously played an important role in this; the publishing of his collected works occurred just two years before Jigme Lingpa went into retreat. Therefore Jigme Lingpa's presentation of himself as the savior of Longchenpa's teachings from decline should not lead us to believe that Longchenpa had been forgotten by other Nyingmapas.

Jigme Lingpa's two great successes aside from the Longchen Nytingtig, namely his work on the Nyenma Gyubum and his Yonten Dzö, should probably be seen as the culmination of a period of intense scholastic activity within the Nyingma, which had begun in the middle of the previous century and was characterized by an emphasis on the doctrines and texts unique to the school. The important Nyingma scholars of the following century, such as Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820–92) and Mipam Gyatso (1846–1912), both exponents of the Nonpartisan (ris med) movement, represent a different approach, one less concerned with the preservation of the doctrines and scriptures of the Nyingma for their own sake, and more with the common ground between Nyingma, Kagyu, and Sakya.

For this reason the often-stated opinion that Jigme Lingpa's work was a major factor in the genesis of the Nonpartisan movement should be qualified. The Longchen Nytingtig and the Yonten Dzö became very popular in the nineteenth century, and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo was recognized as an incarnation of Jigme Lingpa, so it is not surprising that these texts were to become important to the Nyingma side of the Nonpartisan movement (although even within the Nyingma, Mipam Gyatso, for one, seems to have consciously avoided the work of Jigme Lingpa, preferring to refer directly to the work of Longchenpa). However the almost entirely Nyingma-specific corpus of Jigme Lingpa does not, in itself, seem to constitute a major contribution to the ideals of the movement. Nor would his life have set a particularly strong example: none of his main teachers was from outside the Nyingma school.
3 The *Longchen Nyingtig*

*Treasure Texts*

**At this point** we need to look a little more closely at the features of the treasure tradition. As with the vast majority of treasures, the *Longchen Nyingtig* texts were believed to have been taught and concealed by Padmasambhava during his stay in Tibet. In the case of the *Longchen Nyingtig* the recipients are said to have been King Trisong Detsen, Padmasambhava’s consort Yeshe Tsogyal, and the translator Vairocana.55 The mode of the texts’ transmission down through the centuries to Jigme Lingpa was as mind treasure.56

In recent years the nature of the treasure tradition has been examined in a number of articles by Janet Gyatso.57 The word *treasure* refers to a text that is believed to have been concealed and subsequently rediscovered by a later rebirth of the person to whom it was entrusted prior to the concealment. In the great majority of cases, treasure texts are considered to have been concealed in the eighth century C.E. by Padmasambhava, one of the founders of Buddhism in Tibet—usually called Guru Rinpoche (Precious Teacher) by Tibetans—or by his consort Yeshe Tsogyal.

The tradition distinguishes between different types of treasure, the two main types being *earth treasures* (*sa gter*), which are taken out of a hiding place in earth or rock, and *mind treasures* (*dgongs gter*), which are taken from the sphere of the enlightened mind (*dgongs*) in visions. Whatever their particular hiding place, treasure texts are usually given the status of scripture by those who accept the validity of the treasure tradition, which is a majority in the Nyingma and Kagyu schools, and a minority in the Gelug and Sakya schools.58 Even within those groups who accept treasure texts, there is discussion of the criteria for judging the authenticity of a treasure. Jigme Lingpa himself, in his account of the *Longchen Nyingtig’s* genesis, displays skepticism toward the majority of treasure literature:
In my opinion, in the present degenerate age so many people accept treasure and pure vision texts, both superior and inferior, that everyone has fallen into the net of doubt. If one does not hold in the palm of one’s hand the symbolic language that has the power to set free the secret treasury of the dākinis, then great waves of karma may be caused when the intrinsic energy of the purified state of the channels arises as a smattering of verses, and this is taken to be a pure vision. One sees and hears many things like this.”

According to the Nyingma school, treasure texts are equal in canonical status to those scriptures passed down through the generations in the ordinary way (which are called bka’ ma). Some texts in a treasure cycle are given this scriptural authority even without any preexistence being ascribed to them. Such texts are called pure vision (dag snang), a rubric for texts of visionary origin that in practice are closely associated with, and sometimes overlap, the mind treasure tradition. The existence of this genre indicates that, although it is not stated so bluntly within the tradition, the treasure discoverer is able to introduce new scripture out of the sphere of his own realization (though since that realization is considered to stand outside of time, the adjective new is anachronistic within the tradition). Robert Mayer (1996) has argued that the treasure tradition allows the Nyingma school to hold an open canon that is continually expanding, as opposed to the closed canon insisted upon by the scholastic majority within the Sakya and Gelug schools, in which only the utterances of the historical Buddha are accepted as genuine scripture.

The definition of the difference between earth treasures and mind treasures is discussed in a treatise on the treasure tradition by the third Dodrubchen, Jigme Tenpai Nyima (1865–1926), who plays down the difference between categories. He states repeatedly that the physical scrolls discovered by a treasure revealer as earth treasures are merely the catalyst for awakening within him the texts of which he received the transmission in a previous life, which he and no one else can decipher and transcribe, and that, as such, they differ little from the scrolls discovered in visions of a mind treasure revelation. The treasure revealer represents the rebirth of one of the individuals who received the initiation (dgongs brgyud) and authorization (grags rgya) from Padmasambhava, and the texts are linked with his consciousness (though they are, the author stresses, deposited in the enlightened awareness rather than the samsaric mind). Jigme Lingpa considered himself to be the rebirth of the King Trisong Detsen, who, according to the legend of the origin of the Longchen Nyingtig, was one of those who received all the necessary transmissions from Padmasambhava.

Although in the case of mind treasures the scrolls are said to be perceived in visions while in the case of earth treasures they have physical form, in both cases the scroll is far from being the final text itself. It is generally written in symbols that range from coded sentences to a single character that joggs the memory of the treasure revealer. In both cases the treasure revealer is credited with an active and personal role in the formulation of the treasure texts. The treasure text is not merely hidden and dug up; this is why the Bima Nyingtig, which is said to have been hidden in a temple and discovered later, is not strictly considered a treasure.

The transmission of the treasure is usually understood within the framework of the threefold model of scriptural transmission peculiar to the Nyingma school. The first of the three is the mind transmission (dgongs brgyud), which is usually understood as a wordless transmission “occurring” outside of time between a dharmakāya buddha, usually Samantabhadra, and an entourage who are nondual with him. Second is the symbolic transmission (brda brgyud), usually placed in the context of the Great Perfection’s Indian lineage, including Vajrasattva’s transmission of the Great Perfection scriptures to Garab Dorje. Third is the heard transmission (nyan brgyud), such as Padmasambhava’s teaching of the Longchen Nyingtig to Trisong Detsen and others. This is the transmission of a text in ordinary language. Though in the case of a treasure text these transmissions belong to the prehistory of that text, they are, as Janet Gyatso has shown, used analogously to describe the treasure revealer’s discovery of the texts. The mind transmission is considered the treasure revealer’s realization brought about through his own practice of meditation; the symbolic transmission is the discovery of the scroll with its symbolic script; and the heard transmission is the transformation of those symbols into a text written in ordinary language.

After the discovery, whether through scrolls or visions, there is traditionally a period of secrecy, and within this period there is a hiatus between the discovery and the actual writing down of the treasure texts. This process, which is the same for the mind treasure and earth treasure traditions, is absent from the pure vision texts, where the text has no prehistory—the text is received directly from a buddha figure, who is removed from the historical process. If the treasure tradition tends toward an open canon, pure vision texts require an open canon as a prerequisite for their existence. As I
have mentioned, and will discuss further below, some of the Longchen Nyintig texts are closer to being pure visions than mind treasures.

Revelation, Writing, and Publishing

Revelation

Jigme Lingpa’s visionary revelation of the Longchen Nyintig is barely mentioned in his general autobiography. The visions are described in two texts that are placed at the beginning of all editions of the Longchen Nyintig: Chudai Garkhen and a later, shorter text, the Däkki Sangtäm. The latter is intended as an account of the visionary origin of the Longchen Nyintig, while the former is actually a general record of Jigme Lingpa’s most significant visions during his two retreats, and though these culminate with his three visions of Longchenpa, the Chudai Garkhen is only indirectly concerned with the Longchen Nyintig. Both texts have been translated and analyzed in a recent study by Janet Gyatso.

The production of the Longchen Nyintig texts was an ongoing process, and many years after the initial visions, Jigme Lingpa was still writing new texts for the cycle. This is told to us by Jigme Lingpa himself in his autobiography and need not be thought of as unusual. The process by which the treasure cycle came into being incorporates two visionary events and two periods of writing. The first visionary event is the primary vision for the Longchen Nyintig, the revelation of the mind treasures, recorded in Däkki Sangtäm, which took place during Jigme Lingpa’s first retreat. The second event is the three visions of Longchenpa, which took place during the second retreat.

In the primary vision, as recounted in Däkki Sangtäm, Jigme Lingpa is transported on a white lion to the courtyard of Jarung Khashor (the Bodhnath stūpa in Nepal) where the dakini of dharma-kāya wisdom gives him a wooden casket, indicating that it is a mind treasure. It contains scrolls and crystal beads. The first text he takes from the casket is a sādhana, a text dedicated to the practice of the deity Mahākāruṇikā, a form of Avalokiteśvara. The second is the certificate (byang bu) for the Longchen Nyintig, containing prophecies regarding the treasure cycle and treasure revealer. The certificate is a traditional feature of treasure discovery noticed by Janet Gyatso (1993). It is taken as a sign that the treasure revealer is the one to discover this particular text, and as a certificate of his authority once he has done so. The Longchen Nyintig certificate contains an account of the treasure’s history and prophecies about its discoverer and about the way in which it will come to light.

Following the instruction of a dakini in the form of his mother, Jigme Lingpa eats the remaining scrolls and beads, whereupon their words and meanings become imprinted on his mind. Then he awakens from the vision. Following advice from both the figures of his vision and hislama he does not write down or teach the treasure texts immediately.

After concluding the Palri retreat in 1759, Jigme Lingpa moved to Chimphu, northeast of Samye, and began another three-year retreat in the upper and lower Nyang Caves, so called because the eighth-century monk Nyang Tingdzin Zangpo was said to have meditated in them. More significantly for Jigme Lingpa, Yeshe Tsogyal and Trisong Detsen, two of the three people whom he considered to be the original recipients of the Longchen Nyintig, were also said to have used the caves for meditation. The lower cave Jigme Lingpa called the Flower Cave, because it had appeared to him as such in a vision near the end of his first retreat. In these caves, as he recounts briefly in Däkki Sangtäm and in more detail in Chudai Garkhen, Jigme Lingpa had three separate visions of Longchenpa. In the first vision, which occurred while he was in the upper cave, Longchenpa confirms that Jigme Lingpa has the requisite aspirations (mon lam) and has been given an entrustment (gad rga). He encourages Jigme Lingpa to teach others that which has been transmitted to him and commends his songs. Jigme Lingpa considered this vision to be a blessing of the body (sku'i byin rabs). In the second vision, which occurred after Jigme Lingpa had moved to the lower cave at some point in 1760, Longchenpa hands Jigme Lingpa a scroll that is a clarification of the Shingta Chenmo, tells him that it is time to decode the symbols of the “great secret treasury,” and gives him a scroll confirming that in a previous life he was Longchenpa. This was considered a blessing of speech (gung gi byin rabs). In the third vision Jigme Lingpa receives an initiation into all-pervasive, pure luminosity (od gsal dag pa rab byams), taken to be a blessing of the mind (thugs kyi byin rabs). Thus he states that the transference of Longchenpa’s blessings occurred in the three spheres (body, speech, and mind) that are involved in the initiations of the Vajrayāna, and in this way emphasizes the completeness of the transmission and its authority in the terms of tantric initiation.

Writing

Jigme Lingpa provides much less detail on the process of putting the treasure into writing than on the visions themselves. In his autobiography he mentions writing a short piece on the Great Perfection around the time of
the initial Longchen Nyingtig visions that was not included in the treasure collection:

At this point, through the favorable circumstance of realizing that the clinging of any ordinary person and the true condition that manifests in visions are both illusory, I united the two. The vital points of the secret, translated, symbolic scrolls of the enlightened mind-expans of the Longchen Nyingtig collection came to me. From out of [my experience of] appearances arising as books, I wrote the Story of the Intelligent Bee as a preliminary to the emergence of [the Longchen Nyingtig] in the time it takes to drink three cups of tea. It came to me in an unfinished form. Because this book was not set down by the intellect, if one attempts to grasp the meaning, the words appear to be indefinite.\textsuperscript{17}

It is interesting to compare the Story of the Intelligent Bee to the Longchen Nyingtig texts, to which it bears striking similarity. It was written down quickly, in an inspired manner, in association with the Longchen Nyingtig vision. However Jigme Lingpa did not consider it to belong in the treasure collection. A similar case is the song that he wrote immediately after the visions of Longchenpa, during the second retreat, which was also not included in the Longchen Nyingtig.\textsuperscript{18}

For treasure texts proper, there is a traditional hiatus between revelation and writing, as has been mentioned. We cannot be certain when Jigme Lingpa was convinced that this period had passed. In the Däkki Sangsam he says only that he was encouraged to set down (gan la dbab pa) the great secret mind-treasury by the visions of Longchenpa, and once the time set for decoding the symbols by the chief däkini of the five buddha families had passed, he made it manifest (snang ba byas pa) in gradual stages (rim par skirtung) on sheets of white paper.

A seven-year vow of silence is mentioned in the certificate and in the colophon to the Mahākārūṇika text, but neither makes it quite clear whether this refers to writing or to teaching.\textsuperscript{19} The autobiography mentions that, after the move to the Flower Cave, but some time before the end of the retreat, one of Jigme Lingpa's disciples, a wandering yogin called Kongnyön Bepai Naljor, encouraged Jigme Lingpa to break the great code of Dharma (rda chen bdun ba) in spite of the fact that Jigme Lingpa had not told the yogin of his visions. Jigme Lingpa took this as a sign that the auspicious conditions for revealing the treasure were increasing.\textsuperscript{20} This encouragement is also recorded in the colophon to one of the Longchen Nyingtig texts, dated the Iron Snake Year (1761/2), roughly coinciding with the last of the visions of Longchenpa, which Jigme Lingpa also took as a form of encouragement.\textsuperscript{21}

After these encouragements, and before the end of the retreat, Jigme Lingpa wrote the Great Perfection texts that he attributed to his own authoritative hand, the supporting instructions (rgyab chos) included below as translations 7 through 10. He records the writing of these texts in Chudui Garkhen, stating that they were inspired by the visions of Longchenpa, and written as distillations of the Seven Treasuries and Shingta Chenpo.\textsuperscript{22} He mentions the specific texts KZL, PK, SN, “and so on” (by which he probably means NCT). Some of the colophons of these texts specify that they were written in the Flower Cave, and all mention the visions of Longchenpa. In KZL Jigme Lingpa records that he is in his thirty-second year, which indicates that the year was 1761.

These texts are not strictly treasure texts, as they are attributed to Jigme Lingpa’s own authoritative hand. Was Jigme Lingpa writing down the treasure texts, such as YLG and NSB, at the same time? The colophons of the treasure texts rarely place them in time, tending to make oblique references in the form of prophecies. There are exceptions; the colophon of one prayer of purification in the Longchen Nyingtig gives the Iron Dragon Year (1760) as the date and the Flower Cave as the place.\textsuperscript{23} However, though the prayer has the treasure punctuation, the colophon suggests that it is closer to the category of those texts that were not considered to be treasure texts as such, despite being inspired by the visions of Longchenpa.\textsuperscript{24}

Another clue is found in DTK, which states in its final line that KZL is a commentary on it.\textsuperscript{25} The colophon to DTK only provides the day (26th) and the month of writing (the “miracle month”: the first month of the year), but if it was written before KZL, then it was probably written early in 1761, the year Jigme Lingpa wrote KZL.\textsuperscript{26} Therefore, despite the general lack of dates, it seems likely, given Kongnyön’s significant encouragement and the date of the writing of DTK, that Jigme Lingpa began to write the treasure texts around the same time as the other texts, that is, from 1761 onward, soon after the final vision of Longchenpa.

This initial period of writing continued after Jigme Lingpa had left his retreat and moved into his new home at Tseringjong Monastery, as the colophon to YL shows. By the end of the seven-year vow of secrecy in 1764,
when Jigme Lingpa began to spread the new teachings, he probably had a large number of complete treasure texts written down. Therefore a tentative time-scale for the first and most intense period of the writing of the Longchen Nyingtig is 1761 to 1764.

Two major subsections within the Longchen Nyingtig, both comprising mahāyoga practice texts (grub thabs), were written sometime later. The Dechen Gyalmo section (323 pages in AC) was probably written in 1773, following a vision. These comprise both treasure and commentarial texts, and while little can be gleaned from the colophons of the treasure texts, some of the colophons to the commentaries indicate their relatively late date. Indeed, as the autobiography shows, one was written as late as 1786 and was occasioned by Jigme Lingpa’s practices with his consort, Paldung Jetsün Drung. She is also credited in the colophons with having encouraged Jigme Lingpa to write four other texts in the Dechen Gyalmo cycle.

A rare reference in the autobiography to this consort implies that she was engaged in sexual yogic practices as Jigme Lingpa’s consort, and that through this she was responsible for the decoding of at least one Longchen Nyingtig text:

Paldung Jetsün secured the connections for a long life. Also, through the creation of the blessings of a consort within her, the good connections for breaking the code of the Khandro Lükyil arose.

In the late 1780s, when Jigme Lingpa was nearly sixty, he wrote the largest subsection of the Longchen Nyingtig, its wrathful deity practices, the Palchen Düpa. This was in part in response to requests by his disciples, including Jigme Trinle Özer and the Queen of Derge. In the same period, another student encouraged Jigme Lingpa to produce a practice for the Dharma protector Mahåkåla and his consort. Longchen Nyingtig contains seven of these texts in its Dharma protector section. Also around the same time, Jigme Lingpa wrote the aspirational prayers for the intermediate state and pure land that appear in the Longchen Nyingtig, again at the request of a student.

The pattern of writing is the same in each period: first a number of central treasure texts are produced, and subsequently, over a period sometimes extending to several years but generally not more than ten, commentaries are written on them as authorial compositions. This central and subsidiary text arrangement is the usual pattern for treasure collections. Apart from these the Longchen Nyingtig also contains more miscellaneous texts, the criterion for the inclusion of which was perhaps no more than a sense of appropriateness. One text, for example, a commentary on the development stage of mahāyoga included with the Palchen Düpa texts but actually containing no reference to them, has a colophon stating that Jigme Lingpa wrote it in his thirty-ninth year (1768), long before he wrote any of the Palchen Düpa proper.

Furthermore, a number of miscellaneous texts written by Jigme Lingpa are grouped at the end of the Longchen Nyingtig, including a guru-yoga practice for the translator Vairocana and also one for Jigme Lingpa himself, along with various offering rituals and prayers, all of which could just as well have been left to find a place in the fifth volume of the collected works, with Jigme Lingpa’s other miscellaneous short texts.

Publishing

The two-volume Derge edition of the Longchen Nyingtig was printed shortly after Jigme Lingpa’s death, around the turn of the century (1800) as part of his collected works. According to the autobiography, there were earlier, independently printed editions of Longchen Nyingtig. The first edition mentioned is a ten-volume collection, described as “the complete mind treasurers and commentaries,” which was probably published in 1794 or 1795 at a monastery in Dungsamgyi Riše. As we have seen, Jigme Lingpa was producing Longchen Nyingtig material almost right up to this time.

The Derge edition of the collected works, supervised by the queen of Derge and Jigme Lingpa’s disciple Dodrubchen, edited by Kahtog Getse Trulku, and printed at Gönchen monastery, became the normative collected works. The modern printing of SBI, in which the Longchen Nyingtig comprises the seventh and eighth volumes (ja and nya), is based on this edition. A century later, another edition of the Longchen Nyingtig was printed in Lhasa. From the records of the printing blocks at Necho Monastery, and from certain extra colophons in this edition that mention Necho, it looks as if the two volumes of the Longchen Nyingtig in this edition may have been copied from the blocks kept there. The collected works in SBI are based on the Derge edition except for the Longchen Nyingtig and one other text, which have been taken from the Necho blocks. Also at the beginning of the twentieth century, editions of the Longchen Nyingtig (in three volumes) and the collected works (in fourteen volumes) were printed under the auspices of Adzom Drugpa (1842–1924) at Adzom Chögar. The modern print-
ing of AC is based on this edition of the Longchen Nyingtig. Its three volumes are identified by the mantra letters ohm, ah, and hum. These three editions of the Longchen Nyingtig are similar in content, with some differences in the order of the texts. In terms of the latter, the Adzom Chögar edition is very close to the Derge edition, with the Lhasa edition diverging from the other two more often than they differ from each other. The Lhasa edition, as it appears in SBl, is also the least legible of the three, with some pages hand copied rather than printed. However, within the Great Perfection texts translated here, SBl and SBD appear to be closer, in spite of the greater number of scribal errors in SBl, with AC showing more significant divergences, most interestingly where it fills in a lacuna in KZL that occurs in the other two editions.

The Contents of the Longchen Nyingtig

The structure of the Longchen Nyingtig

I have already mentioned that the Longchen Nyingtig is divided into certain subgroups of texts, namely the Dechen Gyalmo and Palchen Düpa. Although not all of the collection's contents fall into subsections in this way, the following is an outline of the way the contents of the Longchen Nyingtig are grouped, based on the arrangement in SBD and AC.

No. of texts

1. Revelation accounts and prophecy 3
2. Root tantra and root initiation 3
3. Outer guru sādhanā (phyi grub) 4
4. Inner guru sādhanā (nang grub) 4
5. Longlife practices (tshe grub) 2
6. Dechen Gyalmo 28
7. Palchen Düpa 20
8. Secret guru sādhanā (glang grub) 4
9. Very secret guru sādhanā (jang glang grub) 1
10. Wrathful lama practice (bla ma drag po) 3
11. Miscellaneous aspirational prayers (smon lam) 4
12. Peaceful and wrathful deities (zhi khrus) 8
13. Protectors (bka' srung) 16
14. Transference of consciousness ('pho ba) 2
15. Practices on the channels and winds (risa rlung) 6
16. The practice of cutting attachment (grod) 2
17. Great Perfection treasure texts 4
18. Preliminary practices (tinggon gro) 3
19. Great Perfection practice instructions (YL) 1
20. Supporting instruction (rgyud chos) for the above 6
21. Additional miscellaneous texts 11

It has been said that the Longchen Nyingtig marks a critical point in the merging of the Great Perfection with the rituals of mahāyoga, the assumption being that from the fourteenth century onward, Great Perfection cycles came to incorporate more and more mahāyoga material, and that this becomes especially apparent with the Longchen Nyingtig. However, treasure collections much earlier than the Longchen Nyingtig can be identified that contain an equal or higher proportion of mahāyoga, anuyoga, and general ritual texts than the Longchen Nyingtig. For example, a fourteenth-century treasure cycle, the Lama Gongdu Sangye Lingpa (1340–56), which is also a Seminal Heart cycle, contains a greater proportion of non-Great Perfection to Great Perfection texts in its thirteen volumes than the Longchen Nyingtig contains. This is not to argue that there was no development in the traditions of the Great Perfection, but that a true picture of any such development will not emerge until the nature of the treasure tradition is understood through the analysis and comparison of a large number of treasure cycles.

The late additions to the Longchen Nyingtig of the Dechen Gyalmo and Palchen Düpa collections and the Dharma protector texts show Jigme Lingpa rounding out the content of the Longchen Nyingtig later in life, as its popularity grew. The new texts were almost all from the mahāyoga rubric. In tipping the balance of the Longchen Nyingtig's content this way, Jigme Lingpa was not moving away from older models of treasure collections but toward their example, especially toward the example of the Lama Gongdu, with which he was very familiar. It is, perhaps more than anything else, the completeness of the Longchen Nyingtig that created the conditions for, and maintained, its popularity in the following centuries.

The Longchen Nyingtig shares the aims that, I have argued, are characteristic of Jigme Lingpa's general body of work: the preservation and revitalization of the unique texts and doctrines of the Nyingma. Just as his Yönten Dzö was a new presentation of what he considered to be the core doctrines of the Nyingma, the Longchen Nyingtig, like many earlier popular
treasure cycles, presented new forms of the traditional types of meditation and ritual texts: the tantras, initiations, sādhana, and practice instructions of the mahāyoga, anuyoga, and atiyoga rubrics.

The Longchen Nyungtig’s Great Perfection texts

The Longchen Nyungtig contains eleven texts directly concerned with the Great Perfection. Six of these are treasures or pure visions, and five are written as personal compositions. Even within these two groups, distinctions emerge. Within the treasure texts, YLG is the only one that contains a colophon giving the supposed history of the text. According to this colophon there was a nonverbal transmission of the tantra by the primordial buddha Samantabhadra to the eighth-century translator Vimalamitra, who set it down in writing (bkod pa). Jigme Lingpa translated the dākini language of a certain box without a dictionary (skad guyis shan shyur). Almost certainly this was the box that contained the scrolls given to Jigme Lingpa in the vision mentioned above, in which the Longchen Nyungtig was revealed. In this case, in conformity with the threefold model of scriptural transmission invoked by Jigme Lingpa in the colophon, the mind transmission would be the nonverbal transmission from Samantabhadra, the symbolic transmission must be the dākini language of the scrolls, and the heard transmission would be Jigme Lingpa’s own transmission of the text to his disciples. The colophon of GP does not indicate this kind of historical preexistence. The tantra is said to have arisen of itself (rang shur) from the enlightened mind (dgongs) of Samantabhadra. The symbolic transmission came from Longchenpa, and Jigme Lingpa put it into words. Thus while there is a reference to the visions of Longchenpa, there is no reference either to earlier visions or to the historical preexistence of the text. There is, however, a Sanskrit version of the title given at the beginning of the text, a feature shared only with YLG. These two texts are also the only ones named as tantras, and the presence of the Sanskrit title is probably linked to this status. Thus, while GP is certainly designated as a tantra, its historical preexistence is left ambiguous. The other two treasure texts—KGN and NSB—lack distinct colophons but both conclude with a prophetic verse indicating, in vague terms, that at a certain time a certain person will give this teaching, indicating indirectly that these texts are considered to have previously existed.

DTK, on the other hand, appears to be a pure vision text. According to the colophon it was granted as a mind transmission by Samantabhadra straight to Jigme Lingpa. While there is no mention of the symbolic transmission, the writing of the text is associated with the heard transmission. Moreover, the origin of the transmission is presented as the awareness of Samantabhadra (shes rig kun tu bzang po), emphasizing the deity’s role as a symbol for the enlightened mind. ML differs from all of the above in that it is an aspirational prayer. It is located in the Longchen Nyungtig with two other aspirational prayers rather than with the Great Perfection texts, yet the subject matter is undoubtedly the Great Perfection. The colophon states that the prayer was written at the behest of the protector Rāhula in the form of a monk, which is an allusion to a vision related to the Ḍākī Sangtāṃ:

Then one who had taken the form of a monk suddenly appeared as a guide. He said “I have had the feeling for some time that you had something like this in you,” and while he was creating an unparalleled pure vision I felt sure that it was the protector Rāhula.

The phrase “creating an unparalleled pure vision” is obscure, but whether it refers specifically to ML or not, the colophon of ML alone suggests that Jigme Lingpa considered the prayer to be a pure vision directly from Rāhula.

I have already mentioned four of the other five texts, those that Jigme Lingpa credits to the inspiration arising from the visions of Longchenpa: PK, KZL, SN, and NCT. These are the texts classified in later catalogs of the Longchen Nyungtig as supporting instructions (rgyab chos). The colophons of KZL and SN report that the texts were written in the Flower Cave, and in KZL, as already mentioned, Jigme Lingpa states that he is in his thirty-second year. The colophons of PK and NCT are in verse and more elusive, but both mention the blessings of Longchenpa. All four contain Jigme Lingpa’s name as author in the conventional sense: the text is written (bris pa or bkod pa) or made (byas pa) by the author. This, and the lack of the treasure punctuation marks, sets these texts apart from the five treasure texts discussed above.

The distinctions between these authorial texts and the treasures and pure visions are blurred, however, by the fact that Jigme Lingpa seems to be playing with the idea of mind treasures and pure visions in the texts. In the opening verses to SN he writes: “I made this from the treasury of the enlightened mind of the vast expanse,” making references to Longchenpa (vast expanse is klong chen) and his Seven Treasures (treasury of the enlightened mind is
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dgongs pa'i mdo'od), and to the process of the revelation of a mind treasure. A very similar statement with the same set of associations is made in the closing verses of KZL quoted below.\(^{155}\) Also in KZL, Jigme Lingpa refers to the text as "this very scroll" (shog dril 'di nyid), alluding to the yellow scroll (shog sgya) that is the traditional form in which treasure texts are meant to appear, and uses the formula samaya, sealed sealed sealed (sa ma ya rgya rgya rgya) with which many treasure texts conclude.\(^{156}\) Jigme Lingpa had a precedent for this blurring of distinctions in the texts of Longchenpa's Khadro Yangtig. Although the Khadro Yangtig is not directly presented as treasure, Longchenpa often signs himself as Pema Lodenpa (the name of the treasure revealer responsible for the Khadro Nyintig), attributes his text to the blessings of Padmasambhava, and sometimes refers to the text as a "yellow scroll."\(^{157}\)

There are a number of other ways in which Jigme Lingpa invests his text with status indirectly. At the end of NCT he writes that the text is his last testament (kha chems), aligning his work with the texts presented as the last testaments of the figures of the early Great Perfection contained in the Bima Nyintig\(^{158}\). It seems that Jigme Lingpa may have been genuinely concerned that he might not live long: at the end of PK, he alludes to a prophecy indicating that he might die soon. Another example is Jigme Lingpa's use of the phrase appearances arising as books (snang ba dpe cha shar), which appears in SN, KZL, and PK.\(^{159}\) In SN the phrase appears in the description of the yogin who has achieved Great Perfection realization, but in KZL and PK Jigme Lingpa uses it in reference to himself and the way in which he wrote these texts. This is the relevant verse from KZL, which follows a verse in which he tells of receiving the blessings of Padmasambhava and Longchenpa:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Appearances and sound truly arose as symbols and books,} \\
\text{And my throat came to be a treasury of advice.} \\
\text{This advice is not dependent on shreds of words and examples;} \\
\text{It bursts forth from the secret treasury of the realized mind of the vast expanse.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Although originally "appearances arising as books" may only have meant that a realized person had no need to rely on written teachings, as his perceptions were the actualization of those teachings, it is clear here that the phrase is used to indicate the practice of writing out of one's realization rather than book-learning. Although the visionary language of the above verse is not present in the explanation of how PK was written, here Jigme Lingpa uses the image of appearances arising as books to validate the authenticity of his writing, despite his not having spent time in debating schools and not having the confidence to give extensive teachings. Given Jigme Lingpa's general emphasis on experience over learning, some irony is probably intended here.\(^{159}\)

Both SN and PK are described as having been written "as a handprint of having undone the knot of the central channel," which is another example of his investing his texts with authority.\(^{160}\) Like the use of the image of appearances arising as books, this is a declaration of writing based on personal realization, in this case using the terminology of the development-stage yoga of the channels and winds.\(^{161}\) Furthermore, when explaining the genesis of the text in PK and KZL, Jigme Lingpa refers to having received what he variously calls "the blessing of the truth-continuum" (don bregu'd byin rabs), "the blessing of the continuum" (rgyu'd byin yis rabs), and "the transmission-blessing of symbols and words" (brda thig gi byin bregu'd).\(^{162}\) These words are echoed in Jigme Lingpa's report of his first vision of Longchenpa, where he hears the master say:

\[
\text{Let the heart continuum of the truth that is expressed be transferred. Let it be transferred! Let the continuum of the words that express it be perfected. Let it be perfected!}\]

Jigme Lingpa also believes that in the third vision he was granted permission to be master of the realization of the truth continuum (don rgyud).\(^{163}\) This is very close to the language of the three transmissions used in the treasure texts. The Tibetan words continuum (rgyud) and transmission (bregu'd) are, as well as being close homonyms, related in meaning: there can be no transmission without a continuum. That Jigme Lingpa has access to that continuum of ultimate truth suggests that his realization is now equivalent to that of Longchenpa. He is making a strong assertion of the authenticity of his compositions.\(^{164}\)

These ten texts indicate how indefinite the boundary between mind treasures and authorial compositions can be. While at one end of the scale YLG is explicitly stated to have had a previous existence in the time of Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra, in GP, despite its status as treasure tantra, there is no explicit assertion of preexistence. The attribution of status becomes more uncertain with DTK, in which the three types of transmission (mind from Samantabhadra, symbolic from Longchenpa, heard from Jigme Lingpa
himself) associated with mind treasures are invoked but no preexistence is suggested. On the other side of the boundary, in KZL, SN, and NCT, and to a lesser extent PK, Jigme Lingpa names himself as author but invokes the authority of Longchenpa’s blessings and playfully suggests that these texts too are mind treasures.

The playfulness and shifting boundaries of the categories are present even in the name of the collection, Longchen Nyingtig. The name is both “the heart essence of the vast expanse” and “the Seminal Heart of Longchenpa.” The pun acknowledges the importance of both Longchenpa’s works and his visionary inspiration to the cycle but, being a pun, is not fixed there. It allows for a more all-encompassing meaning, the expanse of realization, and links the cycle, beyond Longchenpa, to the figure of Padmasambhava and his activity of treasure concealment in Tibet in the eighth century. Since the name Longchen Nyingtig does not feature within the treasure texts themselves, and does not appear in the certificate (gnaad byang) for the collection, it may be assumed that the name itself is not supposed to date back to the eighth century, and Jigme Lingpa was free to make a reference to the fourteenth-century figure of Longchenpa in the title.

Though it is important to recognize the fluidity of categories of text in treasure cycles, it is vital not to lose sight of the way the texts are categorized since, as we will see, different types of treasure texts perform different functions in a treasure cycle. So, for ease of reference, the table below lists the texts according to the category with which they are most strongly associated.

**Revealed Texts**

**Treasure texts (gter ma)**
- YLG: *The Great Perfection Tantra of the Expanse of Samantabhadra’s Wisdom*
- GP: *The Subsequent Tantra of Great Perfection Instruction*
- KGN: *Experiencing the Enlightened Mind of Samantabhadra*
- NSB: *Distinguishing the Three Essential Points of the Great Perfection*

**Pure visions (dag snang)**
- ML: *An Aspirational Prayer for the Ground, Path, and Result*
- DTK: *Vajra Verses on the Natural State*

**Authorial Texts**

**Practice instructions (khrid yig)**
- YL: *The Wisdom Guru*

**Supporting instructions (rgyab chos)**
- PK: *The White Lotus*
- KZL: *The Words of the Omniscient One*
- SN: *The Lion’s Roar That Destroys the Deviations of Renunciates Meditating on the Seminal Heart*
- NCT: *Seeing Nakedly the Natural State of the Great Perfection*
PART II
SIMULTANEOUS AND GRADUAL
4 Immanence and Distinction

Key Concepts of the Seminal Heart

The discussion of the nature of the path as simultaneous or gradual is strongly connected with the relationship between the origin and the goal of the path, which in the terms of Buddhist soteriology are samsara and nirvana. The strongest form of the simultaneous doctrine, in which everything is achieved at once through a single method, suggests that the origin and the goal are never as far apart as they seem—that they are, in fact, the same place. On the other hand, the strong gradualist position, in which there are many methods and many stages on the journey, seems to emphasize the great distance between the origin and the goal.

For the Great Perfection, and for other Buddhist traditions, the actual understanding of the relationship between the origin and the goal, or, as I will call them in this Buddhist context, the samsaric and the nirvanic, is usually somewhere in between these two extremes. There is a complex relationship between the belief that the two opposites, samsara and nirvana, are somehow identical, immanent within each other, and the need to keep the distinction between the goal and the origin in order to justify the teaching of any kind of path.

In the Seminal Heart, there is a notable tension between the belief in the immanence of the samsaric in the nirvanic, and the belief that the two need to be strongly distinguished. All forms of the Great Perfection place a great emphasis on nonduality and assert often that the enlightened state is immanent in the everyday state. Yet the Seminal Heart, while placing equal importance on nonduality, introduces a strongly dualistic kind of instruction that distinguishes the enlightened state of awareness from the everyday state. In order to discuss this tension, and the movements toward its resolution, it is necessary first to sketch the structure of the Seminal Heart: its specific technical vocabulary.
Among the many words used in the Seminal Heart to denote the state of enlightenment, two are particularly significant: the ground (gebi) and gnosia (rig pa). The ground is also referred to as the general ground (spyi gebi) and the original ground (gdon ma'i gebi). There is also a tendency in Seminal Heart literature to describe the nirvanic in a spatial sense, a space inhabited by gnosia. This space is referred to as the expanse (klong dbeyings, both translations of the Sanskrit dhātu), or the true expanse (chos dbeyings, a translation of the Sanskrit dharma-dhatu). In this respect the Great Perfection owes much to earlier Mahāyāna sources, particularly the Lārṅkavatārasūtra.172

The ground and gnosia can be said to represent, respectively, the ontological and gnoseological aspects of the nirvanic state, in that the ground is discussed as the pure basis for all phenomena, while gnosia is defined as the enlightened form of awareness. I will look first at the definition of the ground, which in Seminal Heart literature is generally defined as three-fold.173 These three aspects are described concisely in the first verse of ML:

Because its essence is empty, it is free from the limit of eternalism;
Because its nature is luminous, it is free from the extreme of nihilism;
Because its compassion is unobstructed, it is the ground of the manifold manifestations.174

The three aspects of the ground touched upon here are its essence (ngo bo), nature (rang bzhin), and compassion (thugs rje).175 The essence of the ground is generally defined as ever-pure (ka dag), the nature of the ground as spontaneously present (lhes grub), and the compassion of the ground as all-encompassing (kun khyab). The word ever-pure is related to the concept of emptiness. The word emptiness (stong pa nyid, Skt. sūnyata) itself frequently appears in these texts, employed in a very similar way to use of the term in the Madhyamaka traditions. As the passage above shows, the Madhyamaka doctrine of freedom from extreme philosophical positions, frequently expressed as the pair of opposites, eternalism (rtag pa) and nihilism (chad pa), is also incorporated in the definition of the ground. But ever-purity differs from emptiness in that it also suggests the primordial and continuous presence of emptiness, the word being a contraction of pure from ka (ka nas dag pa), ka being the first letter of the Tibetan alphabet.176 One also sees the synonyms pure from the origin (gdon nas dag pa) and pure from the beginning (shog nas dag pa). I will discuss the particular way emptiness is presented in the Longchen Nyingtig in chapter 5 below.

The ground’s second aspect, its nature, is defined as spontaneous presence, or more literally, spontaneous accomplishment (lhes grub is a contraction of lhes gyes grub pa). This signifies a presence that is spontaneous in that it is not created or based on anything, a fundamental characteristic of the state of enlightenment in the Great Perfection (which I will discuss below). The nature is the luminous aspect of the ground—as seen in the passage above, where it is cited as the reason that the ground cannot be said to be defined in a nihilistic way. In the definition of the ground’s nature, the term spontaneous presence is used interchangeably with luminosity (gad gsal or gsal ba).177 The dyad ever-purity and spontaneous presence is little more than a variation on the dyad emptiness and luminosity, found in the non–Great Perfection tantras with a history going back to the Indian Mahāyāna.178

Compassion, the third aspect of the ground, signifies more in this context than its literal meaning, which has prompted some translators to look for nonliteral alternatives.179 This compassion has the same fundamental character as the ground’s nature, which is to manifest. The distinction between the compassion and the nature is not as clear as the distinction between the nature and the essence, which represent, respectively, the manifest and the empty character of the ground. The compassion seems to signify the immanent presence of the ground in all appearances, in that it is defined as all-encompassing and unobstructed. Thus it extends the role of the nature without adding very much to the definition of the ground.

In general the manifest aspect of the ground is referred to in Seminal Heart texts as the manifest ground (gebi stong) or ground of arising (‘chad gebi). This is often identified with awareness, especially the nirvanic, enlightened awareness for which the word gnosia (rig pa) is used. Such an identification occurs in the opening lines of DTK:

The natural state of the ground is free from elaboration.
The manifest ground is gnosia, the dharmakāya.180

There is a tendency in the treasure and pure vision texts of the Longchen Nyingtig to identify all nirvanic terms—they do after all represent one reality—as above, where gnosia is equated not only with the manifest ground but also with the dharmakāya; however, there do seem to be certain distinctions. One such distinction is the ontological and gnoseological aspects of the nirvanic, a distinction indicated primarily by the context of the use of the terms ground and gnosia. Another is the distinction between static and dynamic nirvanic terms: the ground’s essence as opposed to its nature and
compassion. When gnosis is identified with the manifest ground, the gnoseological aspect of the dynamic side of the nirvanic state is emphasized. At other times this aspect is referred to as a dynamism (rtshal), a radiance (dwangs, mdangs, gdangs), or a luminosity (‘od gsal).\(^\text{11}\)

The identification of gnosis with the manifest ground, or with synonyms of the manifest ground, is one kind of definition of gnosis. Other than this, definitions are generally constructed through a *via negativa* and the indirect approach of metaphor and simile. Fundamentally gnosis is a form of awareness aligned to the nirvanic state, free from all delusion. As such it is distinct not only from the deluded mind but also from *awareness* (shes pa), a neutral word that can signify an awareness that is either samsaric or nirvanic.

Among the negative definitions of gnosis the most common are that it is free from elaboration (spros bral), nonconceptual (roig med), and transcendent of the intellect (blo ’das).\(^\text{12}\) Given the prevalence of this kind of definition, it is not surprising that gnosis is often paired with emptiness, as in GP:

\[
\text{Gnosis and emptiness cannot be divided in two,}
\]
\[
\text{Nor are they one—they are the life-essence of everything.}\(^\text{13}\)
\]

The pairing of gnosis and emptiness is often indicated by a contraction, *gnosis-emptiness* (rig stong), signifying their unity. An example of a definition of gnosis through simile is to be found in NSB, where the two general types of definition, through identification with the emptiness aspect and the dynamic aspect (here it is luminosity), are suggested in terms of simile:

\[
\text{Gnosis is without supports and all-pervasive.}
\]
\[
\text{In its emptiness it opens up as the space-like expanse;}
\]
\[
\text{In its luminosity it is nonconceptual and radiant like a polished crystal.}\(^\text{14}\)
\]

**Immanence**

In the *Longchen Nyingtig* texts the ground and gnosis are not presented as states to be attained or developed; rather they are intrinsically innate to the individual mind. In YL it is stated: "In the system of this vehicle, from the very first the essence of mind exists as vast self-liberation."\(^\text{15}\) In YLG and KGN a continuity between buddhas and sentient beings is asserted and the distinction between samsara and nirvana rejected. These are the words of the primordial buddha Samantabhadra in YLG:

\[
\text{If you think that he who is called "the heart essence of all bud-}
\]
\[
\text{dhas, the Primordial Lord, the noble Victorious One, Samanta-
}\]
\[
\text{bhadrā" is contained in a mindstream separate from the}
\]
\[
\text{ocean-like realm of sentient beings, then this is a nihilistic view}
\]
\[
\text{in which samsara and nirvana remain unconnected.}\(^\text{16}\)
\]

Samantabhadra, an emblem for enlightened awareness, is, according to this passage, not to be seen as a separate mindstream (the term signifies the mental continuum of a sentient being) from those of ordinary beings. In KGN buddhas and sentient beings are said to share the same nirvanic principle, which is indicated here with the term usually found in the Space Series rather than the Seminal Heart, the awakened mind (*byang chub sems*, Skt. *buddhicitta*):

\[
\text{The essence of all phenomena is the awakened mind;}
\]
\[
\text{The mind of all buddhas is the awakened mind;}
\]
\[
\text{And the life-force of all sentient beings is the awakened mind, too.}\(^\text{17}\)
\]

Corresponding to this lack of difference between sentient beings and buddhas is a strong insistence that the change from the state of the former to the latter does not occur within the ordinary processes of causation. For example, in YLG the questioner is instructed: "Do not look hopefully for buddhahood in a creator and created that involve cause and effect."\(^\text{18}\) In GP, neither buddhas nor sentient beings are allowed to have any causal connection with gnosis:

\[
\text{Not constructed by excellent buddhas,}
\]
\[
\text{Nor changed by lowly sentient beings,}
\]
\[
\text{This unconstructed gnosis of the present moment}
\]
\[
\text{Is the reflexive luminosity, naked and stainless,}
\]
\[
\text{The Primordial Lord himself.}\(^\text{19}\)
\]

The rejection of causality entails the problem of how to justify the soteriology that is central to the Seminal Heart texts, as it is to most Buddhist literature. Longchenpa, the most prolific writer on the Great Perfection and
Jigme Lingpa’s primary inspiration, seems to have been aware of this problem, for he wrote in some detail about the capacity of the manifest ground to arise in either samsaric or nirvanic mode. According to him, awareness (shes pa), a characteristic of the manifest ground, has the potential to develop into either samsaric or nirvanic awareness, mind or gnosis. Thus, in *Tsigdon Dzo*, Longchenpa writes:

The gnosia that shoots out from the ground is like a seed. Because it is uncertain whether there will be liberation or delusion it is called unripened gnosia. The ripening into buddhahood is brought about by the prajña of realization.\(^{180}\)

In most cases the unripened gnosia referred to here is simply known as awareness, a neutral term in the Seminal Heart without the strong nirvanic connotation that gnosia carries.\(^{11}\) The ripening of awareness into delusion is said to be brought about by awareness’s nonrecognition of its own nature (rang ngo ma shes pa), which is followed by dualistic conceptualization. In this situation awareness is given the name manas. This movement into delusion is sometimes called awareness moving away from the ground (shes pa gzhi las gyo ba). Nevertheless, gnosia remains present.

The catalyst that switches the practitioner’s mode of being from samsaric to nirvanic is the recognition of gnosia (rig pa’i ngo sprod or ngo shes), which may be more simply called self-recognition (rang ngo sprod).\(^{192}\) This latter term suggests that the switch to a nirvanic awareness is the recognition of something already immanent. In YL, Jigme Lingpa states that this is a self-sufficient method, “Like a knot in a horse’s tail coming undone by itself,” and quotes from the Künje Gyalpo: “Without transforming or renouncing, gnosia is perfected all at once.”\(^{193}\) This idea of simultaneous and instantaneous realization is also expressed as liberation upon arising (shar grod), meaning when discursive thought arises it is liberated into the state of gnosia without needing any action on the meditator’s part.\(^{194}\)

**Distinction**

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the relationship between nirvanic concepts, such as gnosia and the ground, and samsaric concepts, such as the deluded mind (sem) and perceptions (snang ba), is conceived in the Seminal Heart in a different way from the other classes of Great Perfection discourse. The general trend in Mind Series literature is nonduality: samsara and nirvana are nondual and to divide them is merely conceptualization.\(^{189}\) While, as shown in the previous section, such statements are still to be found in Instruction Series literature, there exists alongside them a set of fundamental distinctions between certain specific samsaric and nirvanic terms. Many Seminal Heart texts, including tantras from the Seventeen Tantras, insist on these distinctions and base on such statements of difference the presentation of the true nature of things, the view (*lta ba*).\(^{196}\) The following verse from one of the Seventeen Tantras may be cited as a typical example. The speaker is, as usual, the primordial buddha Samantabhadra:

Designating appearances as the dharma-kāya obscures me;
Designating whatever appears as mind obscures me;
Designating wisdom as mind obscures me.\(^{197}\)

The value of these distinctions was insisted upon by Longchenpa in his major Seminal Heart works, *Tsigdon Dzo* and *Tege Dzo*. In both texts he collated and systematically presented the points of divergence between the particular samsaric and nirvanic terms.\(^{198}\) The importance of these distinctions should be understood in the context of the doctrine discussed in the previous section, wherein awareness (shes pa) arises in different modes, and the recognition of the nirvanic aspect of that awareness, gnosia, is that act by means of which one attains the realization of the Great Perfection.

Certain specific terms are distinguished from each other consistently in all of these texts. They are the following two pairs: (i)ālaya (*kun gzhi*) and dharmakāya (*chos shuk*), and (ii) mind (*sem*) and gnosia (*rig pa*).\(^{199}\) Again there seems to be some level of distinction here, if only an implicit and germinal one, between the ontological (the first pair) and gnoseological (the second pair) aspects of delusion and enlightenment. I will look at the treatment of these pairs in turn, beginning with the distinction of ālaya from the dharma-kāya. This is one of the three topics of NSB, where the ālaya is described as follows:

The ālaya is the basis of all samsara and nirvana;
It is not unlike muddy water.
[In it], because of confusion led by latent ignorance,
The brightness of wisdom and gnosia has become hidden.\(^{200}\)
Thus the alaya is associated with delusion and the obscuration of wisdom. It is often associated with the basic nescience (ma rig pa, Skt. avidya) that is the root of samsara, and in the Seminal Heart context it is defined as the nonrecognition (rang ngo ma shes) discussed above. The statement that the alaya is the basis of nirvana as well as samsara seems to confuse the distinction between a samsaric alaya and nirvanic dharmakaya. However, in YLG (where the alaya is also stated to be the basis of samsara and nirvana) this is elaborated upon, and is explained in terms of potential:

Thus at this site there exists, in a latent and nonmanifest way that is inconceivable, [i] purity, which is the gate to wisdom and the path to nirvana, along with the visions of the great sphere and the lake-like characteristics of full enlightenment; and [ii] impurity in accord with samsara, along with karma, suffering, and the multitude of thoughts and emotions.

The words "the gate to" and "the path to" indicate that the alaya is the basis for nirvana only in that it is involved in the process of the path. The definition of the function of the alaya, which is the topic of discussion in chapters 1 and 3 of YLG, refers to its samsaric character. There is a fourfold definition of the alaya given in YLG, which also appears in Longchenpa’s work, of which the first is its nescience, the second its connection to samsara and nirvana, and the third and fourth its association with mental imprints (bag chags, Skt. vasant). A much more extensive version is given by Longchenpa in Tshigdon Dzö.

The four in detail are: [i] The primordial alaya: the attendance of nescience upon gnosis—that aspect of nescience that from the beginning arises simultaneously with gnosis, like tarnish on gold; it serves as the initial ground for all samsaric phenomena. [ii] The linking-up alaya: the ground of karmic activity, the neutral basic support that links up and impels one through one's individual karma to samsara or nirvana. [iii] The alaya of various imprints: the neutral [ground] of diverse latent karma that generates the samsaric cycle of mind and mental factors. [iv] The alaya of the body of imprints: nescience as a basis, a ground for the manifestation of three different bodies: [a] a gross body that manifests in parts, whose limbs and organs are [composed of] minute particles, [b] a radiant body of light, and [c] a body that manifests out of contemplation.

The concept of imprints is not elaborated upon in the Longchen Nyingtig, but is used in much the same way as in the Indian sutras and treatises that deal with these elements of consciousness—they are the enduring effects of actions upon the personality, and are located in or on the alaya. In his Namkhyen Shingpa Jigme Lingpa provides his own definition of imprints: “Because of the traces of the initial action, there is an imprint; after that, because of clinging, there is ripening; after the initial cause and result, there is conjoined ripening and the linking-up to all happiness and suffering.”

In YLG eight other elements of samsaric consciousness are elaborated, all proceeding from the basic state of the alaya. First, the alaya-vijnana, which is described as the dynamic aspect (rtul cha) of the alaya, emerges from the state of the alaya. The alaya and alaya-vijnana are apparently samsaric analogues of the nirvanic dyad of the ground and the manifest ground. Next, from the alaya-vijnana come the mano-vijnana, (yid kyi rnam shes) and the klishta-manas (nyon mong kyi yid), referred to collectively as the twofold manas (yid gnay). Again the definitions are very similar to those in the sutras that deal with this material and to those in the Yogacara treatises. The mano-vijnana is associated with the conceptualization of sensory phenomena and the basic duality of the apprehender and apprehended (gzung ’dzin, Skt. grahya-grhaha). The klishta-manas is linked to self-clinging (bu dag tu ’dzin pa, Skt. atma-graha) and the afflictions (nyon mong, Skt. kleśa, klishta). The remaining elements of samsaric consciousness are the consciousnesses associated with the five sense organs or, literally, the five gates (sgo lnga): sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.

Thus the division between a nirvanic basis and a samsaric basis in the Seminal Heart seems to have created the condition for a much greater elaboration of the samsaric elements of mind than had been the case in the Mind Series traditions. This elaboration was largely imported from Yogacara literature, with very little alteration of the technical terms and their definitions.

Turning to the other side of the distinction between alaya and dharmakaya, NSB defines the dharmakaya as follows:

The dharmakaya is like water that is clear of mud;
It embodies the expulsion of adventitious impurities
And is the essence of all the qualities of liberation.
Henceforth there is wisdom, undeluded awareness.\textsuperscript{211}

The analogy of clear water complements the analogy of muddy water for the ālaya. The mud is a simile for the adventitious impurities, the word \textit{adventitious} (glo \textit{bur}, Skt. \textit{ägantuka}) indicating that the impurities are not intrinsic to the nature of the dharmakāya, a relationship examined in chapter 7. NSB goes on to warn that those who do not distinguish the two are like blind men. The meaning of this simile is suggested by the definition of ālaya in YLG: “The ālaya is a state that is like the vast general ground of all samsāra and nirvana having fallen asleep and not being awake to the sense objects.”\textsuperscript{212} Such a passage suggests a definition of the ālaya in terms of experience, or rather the lack of it, as an insensate state. This tallies with the definition of the ālaya as a potential for the experiences of samsara or nirvana (but not the experiences themselves) that was touched on above.\textsuperscript{213}

The second pair, mind and gnosia, are defined as follows in NSB:

Mind and gnosia are like air and space.
Mind is the aspect of deceptive objects of fixation,
Vividly filling up, swirling round, and pouring out again,
Or briefly becoming agitated like a hurricane.
Its foundation is the condition for the various sensations.

Gnosia is without supports and all-pervasive.
In its emptiness it opens up as the space-like expanse;
In its luminosity it is nonconceptual and radiant like a polished crystal.
Thus the [second] essential point of the Seminal Heart is to hold a secure place in the natural state,
Utterly liberated from mind in the expanse of gnosia.\textsuperscript{214}

The concept of enlightenment as liberation from mind, which occurs here, is quite unlike the general approach of the Mind Series texts, wherein the word \textit{mind} (\textit{sems}) covers both samsaric and nirvanic aspects of awareness. A typical example is the following line from the \textit{Rgpa \textit{Nor}gr} of Karma Lingpa (1323–60): “The single mind encompasses all of samsara and nirvana.”\textsuperscript{215} The approach in the Mind Series is generally the recognition of all appearances as mind, and then the recognition that mind is empty. An early example of this is the opening lines of an early Mind Series text, \textit{Tawar Gymchung}:

Phenomena are the delusion of mind;
Apart from mind there are no phenomena.
The deluded mind appearing as phenomena
Is dependently originated, illusory, and uncreated.\textsuperscript{216}

Following the early Seminal Heart texts and the work of Longchenpa, Jigme Lingpa's texts unequivocally distinguish the nirvanic from the samsaric mind. The following verse of NSB deals with the mistake of those who do not make this distinction:

Those who have not realized this say that mind is everything,
Divided according to whether it is tainted or untainted by the perception of objects.\textsuperscript{217}

The mistake, according to this, is to believe that the goal of meditation is a mind without an object. This would seem to be a reference to a Yogācāra style of meditation practice, which is specifically criticized by Jigme Lingpa elsewhere, as I will show in chapter 5 (section 2.2). In YLG it is stated that mind appears to be the same as mind itself (\textit{sems nyid}, a synonym for gnosia) in the condition of nonconceptualization (\textit{trod med}), but that they are different due to mind's association with clinging to the self and with the imprints.\textsuperscript{218} The type of meditative practice criticized here is the suppression of concepts and perceptions, and the belief that success in this is realization. The argument in NSB and YLG is that this is still within the sphere of the deluded mind.

The idea that nonconceptualization is not the ultimate state can be found early in the Great Perfection. For example, the Bepai Gymchung, one of the Great Perfection texts from Dunhuang, contains the following verses:

[Q.] Is it true that a deep nonconceptual state
Manifests as an object of the intellect?
[A.] Deep nonconceptualization is an experience;
Because it is an experience, it is not the thing itself.\textsuperscript{219}

In KZL Jigme Lingpa addresses this same topic from another angle, in answer to the question of whether the meditation of the Great Perfection is not equivalent to that of the Chan teacher known as Hashang Mahāyāna, which was a common accusation leveled at the Great Perfection, as we saw in chapter 1.\textsuperscript{220} Jigme Lingpa answers thus:
Reconciling Immanence with Distinction: The Buddha Nature

As we have seen, the conflict between immanence and distinction is present within the scriptural texts of the Seminal Heart, from the Seventeen Tantras down to the Longchen Nyimgig's treasure texts. And it is in the Longchen Nyimgig's treasure texts themselves that some attempt to reconcile that conflict can be detected in the frequent appearance of the buddha nature model. There are many direct references and indirect allusions in these texts to the buddha nature (bde bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po, Skt. tathāgatagarbha).

The term tathāgatagarbha, indicating the immanent presence of the state of buddhahood within all sentient beings, is found in many Mahāyāna sutras. These sources became the basis for a treatise, attributed to the Indian scholar Asanga by way of the bodhisatva Maitreya, called Ratnakoravabhāga or Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra. This treatise became the standard work on the subject in Tibet, where it was generally known by a shortened form of its second name: Uttaratantraśāstra (Gyud bla ma). In this treatise the buddha nature is said to be present in all beings but obscured by defilements; however, while the buddha nature is permanent, the defilements are merely adventitious. Several analogies for the presence of the buddha nature within the defilements are used, such as a nugget of gold in the dirt, or a buddha within a rotting lotus flower.

Although the buddha nature was discussed by Kamalaśīla in the eighth century, the doctrine remained relatively obscure in Tibet until the eleventh century, and there is correspondingly little or no reference to it in the earlier Great Perfection texts. The earliest known explicit use of the concept by an exponent of the Great Perfection is in the writings of Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo (1012?–1112?):

In the higher vehicles, the characteristic of the ālaya is that it is the primordial awakened mind. The afflictions and the imprints that lead to birth in the lower realms are adventitious obscurations, like oxide covering gold, or dirt covering a precious jewel. Although the buddha qualities are temporarily hidden, their nature is not defiled.

In the fourteenth century the buddha nature doctrine was given a significant presence in Great Perfection literature by Longchenpa at the same time that Dölpopa (1292–1361) produced the texts drawing on the buddha
nature concept that formed the basis for the Empty-of-Other (gebny stong) Madhyamaka. Longchenpa’s works on the Seminal Heart contain many citations from the Uttaratantraśāstra. The similarity, in the most general terms, between the Seminal Heart’s ground and the buddha nature, as presented in the Uttaratantraśāstra, is clear. Both the buddha nature and the ground are entirely pure, and both are everpresent in the nature of sentient beings.

In the fifth chapter of YLG the buddha nature is explicitly identified with the ground of the Great Perfection, in the context of explaining how the sāṃphoṣbhakāya is able to manifest to non-enlightened beings while they are in the intermediate state after death (bar do):

For a person who has found the gate to this path of the supreme secret vehicle and trains in maintaining the great vows, even if he does not arrive at the full extent of the four visions in this life, the all-pervasive buddha nature remains in his heart as the luminosity of the great manifest ground. This is the five wisdoms (true expanse, mirror-like, sameness, discriminating, and all-accomplishing), the ground of arising that is the vast and spontaneously present nature. 228

In this passage the buddha nature is connected to the ground’s nature, the second element of the threefold definition (essence, nature, and compassion) discussed earlier in this chapter. The ground’s nature is here accompanied by many of its synonyms: luminosity (’od gsal), spontaneous presence (bstan grub), the manifest ground (gebny stong), and the ground of arising (char sbyi). It is also equated with the five wisdoms of Buddhist tantric discourse.

A slightly more specific identification of buddha nature with luminosity appears in the fourth chapter of YLG, where it is identified with the luminosity that is apprehended in the four visions of leapover as the son (bus) luminosity, as opposed to the ultimate state of enlightenment, which is the mother (ma) luminosity. This luminosity is surrounded by the samsaric elements of skandhas, sensory elements, and sense bases, and illustrated with the simile of the space inside the vase, the samsaric elements being the vase itself. 229 The meaning of this simile is brought out by Jigme Lingpa in SN, where he states that at death, when the seal (ngaw) of the body is broken, it is like the smashing of a vase, when the space inside the vase becomes one with the space outside. 230

Along with YLG, all of the other Great Perfection treasure texts in the Long-chen Nyingtig make some reference to the buddha nature. In KGN, it is identified with innate gnosis:

The awakened mind free from renouncing or obtaining, The buddha nature endowed with gnosis abides in one’s mindstream; Yet one gets trapped in the cage of fabrication. 231

Here, where gnosis (and its synonym, the awakened mind) is identified with the buddha nature in the context of its innate presence in all beings, the samsaric element, in this case conceptual fabrication (chos pa), becomes the entrapping element, the metaphorical cage. Then in the following verse from KGN, although there is no use of the word itself, it is obvious that the buddha nature model is being used. The verse is a discussion of mind itself (sams nyid):

How is it like a treasure in a poor man’s house? Although present in oneself, one is unaware of it; This is like the poor man not changing his state. Sentient beings, unrealized in samsara, Are covered by the net of nescience and concepts. How sad! 232

This is a direct citation of the fifth example of the way the buddha nature is obscured in the Uttaratantraśāstra. 233 The metaphor of the net is comparable to the cage in the passage above. In NSB the buddha nature model is invoked in a slightly different context: the discussion of the dharma-kāya, which I touched on in the the previous section:

The dharma-kāya is like water that is clear of mud; It embodies the expulsion of adventitious impurities, And it is the essence of all the qualities of liberation, Henceforth there is wisdom, undeluded awareness. 234

Although buddha nature is not explicitly referred to in this passage, the language here is even closer to the language of the tathāgatagarbha literature than that of YLG and KGN. The samsaric elements are described as adventitious, and the treatment of the dharma-kāya is very close to the presentation of the dharma-kāya in the Uttaratantraśāstra. The analogy with
water appears in the latter, and the characteristic of expelling the obscurations is also present there, where the dharmakāya is associated with the result, and therefore, unlike the buddha nature, is designated as purifying or casting out the obscurations. The association made in this passage between the dharmakāya and enlightened qualities is also stated throughout the Uttaratantraśāstra. Furthermore the description of mind and gnosis in NSB (which was quoted in the previous section), where gnosis is described as being like the sky and mind like air, also owes much to the Uttaratantraśāstra.

In PK, the only authorial text where the buddha nature model is employed extensively, Jigme Lingpa uses it as a way of presenting and, in effect, justifying a gradual realization. These are the opening lines of the text:

Although the buddha nature pervades the nature of beings like oil in a sesame seed,
The two adventitious obscurations should be cleansed, just as one removes something unbearable.

Here Jigme Lingpa seems to identify the cleansing of obscurations as a primary factor in the path. This is confirmed further on in the text where Jigme Lingpa employs the Uttaratantraśāstra's nine similes for the way the buddha nature is obscured, and relates these to a gradual removal of obscurations as the practitioner progresses on the path. He does this to explain why he is writing about the errors in meditation that might occur right up until the level of buddhahood itself is attained. Invoking the Paramitāśāstra, he draws on the doctrine of different phases of development—impurity, partial purity, and purity. He then refers to the Uttaratantraśāstra, which uses these phases, and links them to the nine different similes for obscurations. In this instance Jigme Lingpa directly and explicitly draws upon the Uttaratantraśāstra, not only for the buddha nature model, but also for the use of that model to justify a gradual realization in a context where the nirvanic element is immanent: the gradual revelation of the obscured but primordially present buddha nature.

Another passage from PK illuminates Jigme Lingpa's use of the buddha nature model in a different way. Here the context is the higher levels of meditative experience, which, though very advanced, still present the danger of regression into normal awareness. In this passage Jigme Lingpa discusses the experiential aspects of the ālaya and the dharmakāya.

Furthermore, when [the meditator] has emerged from the ālaya-vijñāna, because of the blazing lamp of the dharmakāya's luminosity, his nature remains free from elaboration. However, if he has not perfected his skill in the wisdom that shines out in vipaśyanā, then, being enveloped in the ālaya as before, that lamp of luminosity will be extinguished and no longer present.

The ālaya and the dharmakāya are one of the pairs defined in opposition to each other in NSB and many other Seminal Heart texts. In this passage there is no acknowledgement that a different model of the relationship between these two, not simply an absolute distinction, is being used, or that it is (once again) the buddha nature model. However, it is just at this point—the discussion of the transition from samsaric to nirvanic awareness—that the need to establish some form of relationship between the two becomes essential. Though this might appear to be no more than a passing reference, it reveals that in Jigme Lingpa's authorial texts, as well as in the treasures, the buddha nature is not only explicitly invoked, but is implicitly present in the discourse on the relationship between samsaric and nirvanic states.

In the second section of this chapter I showed how in the Seminal Heart the awareness that comes forth as the ground's manifestation is said to have the capacity to arise in either nirvanic or samsaric mode, and that the mode that comes into effect depends on whether awareness is recognized as being nondual with the ground. Longchenpa attempted to use this model to explain the simultaneous identity and difference of the samsaric and the nirvanic. He writes in the Tsidgdon Dzo:

General delusion is caused by the stain of gnosis not recognizing the manifest ground, through which gnosis itself becomes polluted with delusion. Though gnosis itself is without the stains of cognition, it becomes endowed with stains, and through its becoming enveloped in the seal of mind, the gnosis of the everpure essence is polluted by conceptualization. Chained by the sixfold manas, it is covered with the net of the body of partless atoms, and the luminosity becomes latent.

Here the mind is conceived of as having an enveloping effect on nirvanic awareness. The samsaric is deriviative in that it is derivative of the ground,
or of wisdom (ye shes), without having a bearing on the latter's essence. Elsewhere Longchenpa illustrates this argument with the analogy of sunlight, which is caused by the sun but has no causal effect on the sun. Longchenpa's argument was not especially new, since it is stated in the *Uttaratantrarāja* itself that the samsaric elements (the skandhas and so on) are contingent on the buddha nature, but that it is not contingent upon them. The metaphor of envelopment used by Longchenpa is also, and more directly, an example of the use of the buddha nature model.

A slightly different approach to the modes of awareness is to define the enlightened state as the mode of awareness when it abides in the present moment. In *SN* Jigme Lingpa suggests that the Great Perfection statements identifying discursive thought with dharmakāya (that is, the identification of the samsaric with the nirvanic), which are relatively rare in the Seminal Heart, are true only when awareness abides in the present moment:

> Therefore the name dharmakāya cannot be given to discursive thought before the awareness of the present moment is unimpaired and uncorrupted. This alone is the antidote for the agent of meditation, a total penetration not chained by attachment to the view.

There is an implication here of a way to reconcile the contradictions in the relationship between samsaric and nirvanic awareness, which is that, though distinct, they may be identified in the context of awareness abiding in the present moment. For a fuller explanation of this we must again look to Longchenpa, who states the following in the *Tsigdon Drö*:

> Because all appearances of the three realms of samsara are at first apprehended from the aspect of the expanse, they remain connected to that aspect. Like reflections, in ultimate truth they remain in the true condition, emptiness. As they manifest in the present moment, the skandhas, elements, and so on are connected with the aspect of the kāyas and wisdoms.

Longchenpa states that all internal and external phenomena as they appear in the present moment, prior to reification and conceptualization, can be identified with the dharmakāya. He suggests that the identification of the nirvanic and the samsaric is always true in the context of the present moment, a context accessible only when, in Jigme Lingpa's words, "the awareness of the present moment is unrestricted and uncorrupted." Although Jigme Lingpa was clearly aware of the idea that samsaric and nirvanic opposites can be identified where awareness abides in the present moment, he did not, in the *Longchen Nyingtig* texts, extend the idea to any kind of hermeneutical purpose. There is little explicit discussion even of the more general topic of awareness's different modes in the *Longchen Nyingtig*; in fact there seems only to be one instance, located in *YIG*:

> Thus the all-creating king, the natural state of the mind itself, having been hidden invisibly in the expanse of the ālaya, emerges from the primordial ground as the luminosity of the great manifesting ground, free from extremes, and abides as the ground of all samsara and nirvana. However when awareness moves away from the ground and enlightenment in the true expanse...it is transformed into the *mano-vijñāna*.

Note that the buddha nature metaphor reappears here, in a form very similar to the form in the passage from *PK* quoted earlier; in both passages the enveloping samsaric element is the ālaya.

The conflict between immanence and distinction raises some fundamental philosophical questions. If the enlightened state of mind, gnosis, is innate in sentient beings, what prevents it from functioning as such and releasing them from delusion? What kind of relationship does the everpresent, all-embracing nirvanic state have to the delusion of ordinary sentient beings? If the immanence of gnosics is not challenged, which it is not in these texts, two basic positions are open, either immanence without distinctions or immanence with distinctions. Although the first position could describe the Mahāmudrā and the Mind Series of the Great Perfection, as well as passages in certain Mahāyāna sūtras, such as the *Lankāvatārasūtra*, the second position is a better description of the Seminal Heart, where frequent assertions of immanence coexist, often in the same text, with an insistence on certain distinctions between the samsaric and the nirvanic state of being: dharmakāya and ālaya, gnosics and the deluded mind (*sems*).

One solution for commentators such as Longchenpa was to turn to an old approach to this philosophical problem, the buddha nature. In this model, samsaric and nirvanic are conceived of as inhabiting a relationship between an obscuring agent and that which is obscured. The obscuring agent is adventitious without inherent reality, while the obscured is the
essential reality. The fact of obscuration explains why the nirvanic fails to manifest at all times.

Yet it is clear that neither the treasure texts nor Jigme Lingpa’s authorial works in the Longchen Nyingsigs are directly concerned with the actual philosophical problem of how to reconcile the contradictions in the relationship of samsaric and nirvanic elements. In his Namkhyen Shingta Jigme Lingpa dealt more discursively with this topic, though from my reading of the text, he does not seem to go beyond the interpretations offered by Longchenpa. Nonetheless the buddha nature is a strong presence in the Longchen Nyingsig. Although it is not discussed explicitly with the same depth of thought and awareness of the philosophical problems that is found in certain parts of Longchenpa’s work, the buddha nature model does appear frequently and in contexts where it works to reconcile the problematic relationship between the samsaric and the nirvanic. It is apparent that Jigme Lingpa considered that this relationship had already found a natural resolution in the buddha nature model, which appears most frequently in the treasure texts, where it is invoked from within the nonpersonal, scriptural voice of the those texts rather than the interpretative voice of the authorial commentary.

5 The Simultaneous Approach

In YL, Jigme Lingpa writes the following on the recognition of gnosia:

So right now, through the lama’s instructions, gnosia is instantaneously complete. Nothing is built on top of your natural state, which comes out of gnosia alone. Therefore at no point are you distracted, and at no point do you engage in meditation. This is the teaching that illuminates the nucleus of the enlightened mind of the original buddha, Samantabhadra.

This unequivocal statement asserts that enlightenment, or buddhahood, occurs instantaneously (skad cig) upon the recognition of gnosia. Any further activity is rejected, since the result has been attained. This conflicts strongly with Buddhist gradualist discourse in general, and with the gradualist material that makes up the majority of the Longchen Nyingsig in particular. Here in chapter 5 I will examine the way in which certain Longchen Nyingsig Great Perfection texts take the position of simultaneity and engage critically with various aspects of gradualism.

Criticism of Causal Practice

The practice of meditation or any other activity in the belief that it will bring about the state of enlightenment is frequently criticized in the Longchen Nyingsig. This criticism is aimed at two general kinds of activity. The first is meditation with techniques rooted in cause-effect structures; the second is intellectual analysis, both in the context of meditation and in scholastic activities.
**Causal meditation**

When the general idea of meditation as the cause of buddhahood is rejected, the rejection is based on the nature of the nirvanic state which, as I have shown in chapter 4, is placed outside of cause-effect relationships. An example of this rejection is the following from YLG:

Buddhahood is not obtained by meditating, and one does not wander in samsara through not meditating.

In SN, Jigme Lingpa states that once the nature of the Great Perfection is understood “the desire for causal meditation is purified.” Effort (rtos ba) becomes something to be rejected because of its basis in a belief in causation. For example, in KGN it is said that “the [true] state of the mind is not dependent on being caused by efforts,” and in YLG the Seminal Heart is called “the vehicle that transcends effort.” So in these texts, where the mechanism of cause and effect is identified with the samsaric, and the ground is placed outside of this mechanism, the transcendence of cause and effect is stated to be the path itself.

The idea of freedom from effort goes back to the earliest of Great Perfection texts, as can be seen in the root verses of the Rigs Khujug, a Dunhuang text located by Samten Karmay:

The various [phenomena] are nondual
And free from elaboration into discrete elements.
That which is called thunness is nonconceptual.
Yet it brings about the manifestation of appearances—all is well.
Because everything is done, the sickness of effort is abandoned,
And one remains in the state of spontaneous presence.

In the Longchen Nyingtig this ethos of non-effort is elaborated into the rejection of various types of Buddhist method. I will look at the rejection of the practices of specific schools in the next section; here I wish to explore the various general practices that are criticized in the Longchen Nyingtig texts. A phrase one comes across frequently is “freedom from accepting or rejecting” (spangs thob las ’bral ba). At one level, accepting and rejecting refers to the renunciation of sin and the practice of virtue. In KGN, for instance, Samantabhadra says: “I have discarded the establishment of virtue and sin, actions and their result,” and in YLG he states:

Because I know that the great fault that is the supporter of karmic actions and imprints is to associate with the great demon of grasper and grasped, I Samantabhadra, never performing even the merest particle of contaminated virtue, am the buddhahood that is the ancestor of all buddhas.

This kind of assertion, where contaminated virtue is a dualistic form of virtue based on the distinction between virtue and sin, is similar to the antinomianism of Vajrayāna tantric discourse. The rejection of sin and virtue does appear in these texts as a part of the general rejection of causation as a path, but the texts, like most Great Perfection literature, do not contain the strong and shocking antinomian statements and injunctions found in certain tantras. Great Perfection texts tend to speak of rejecting the distinction between good and bad in the sphere of one’s own mind, rather than encouraging unrestricted behavior. In other words, they deal with the issue of moral relativity in the realm of thoughts and emotions (rnam rig) rather than activities. The identification of thoughts as either good or bad is seen as a barrier to the process of meditation mentioned earlier in which all thoughts, whatever their nature, are liberated as they arise (sha’ar grol). This is stated in DTK:

Not falling into the extremes of
Good, bad, or neutral discursive thought.
You will not be a scholar who distinguishes arising and liberation.

The benefit of good thoughts is considered as much an entrapment as the harm of bad thoughts, benefit and harm being a part of the cause-effect mechanism. In SN it is said that in Great Perfection meditation, “you are not chained by the benefits of good thoughts, harmed by the evil of bad thoughts, or deceived by the neutral ones.” The specific meditative practice associated with the identification of good and bad that is singled out for critique is the use of meditative antidotes (gney po)—that is, techniques for dealing with harmful states of mind. In most of the Longchen Nyingtig texts, Jigme Lingpa associates the use of antidotes with dualism and intellectualism:

Because, through being at leisure in the mountain-like view, you recognize the way things are free from thinking, you do not engage the vast reflexive luminosity of gnosis with meditative antidotes in order to grasp it with your intellect.
Clearly the reason for the rejection of the use of antidotes in the Great Perfection is that they involve both a causal mode of practice and dualistic concepts of good and bad. In NSB there is a criticism of the meditation practice of šamatha in which mindfulness (shes byin, Skt. samprajñā) and recollection (dran pa, Skt. smṛti) are cultivated as antidotes to undesir-able mental states:

Šamatha is like a person without sensory faculties:
Vividness is dulled, dispersed, and stultified; [119]
Mindfulness is held firm, and recollection is fixed on an object.205

In Longchenpa’s Smnyi Rangdröl the same argument, in much the same words, appears: he states that this practice leads to rebirth in the form and formless realms.206 The verses of NSB go on to criticize those meditators who turn their ambition into a path of controlling the mind.207 The ideal, a meditation that is not technique based, is expressed with the term “non-meditation” (gsum med). In SN Jigme Lingpa defines this concept: “Non-meditation is when, having entered the womb of the natural state, the desire to meditate or not to meditate is purified, and there are no fabrications or fixations whatsoever in the mind.”216

**Intellectual analysis**

In the Longchen Nyingtig the rejection of intellectualism is applied both to purely intellectual pursuits (that is, scholastics) and to the subtler applications of the intellect in meditation. The intellect (blo) and concepts (trog pa) are almost universally conceived of as negative in Great Perfection texts.209 This is expressed in terms of transcending the intellect (blo ’das), nonconceptuality (trog med), and being inexpressible (bρjad med), which are applied to nirvanic terms like gnosis and the ground.210 The inconceivable and ineffable character of the ground is stated poetically in ML:

[The ground] is inconceivable and free from imputation,
Destroying partiality toward existence and nonexistence;
In expressing this truth even the tongues of the conquerors are thwarted.211

Thus analysis is rejected outright: gnosis is not to be sought after as an object of knowledge (shes bya). Such activity is dismissed with the analogy that it is like looking for the end of the sky.227 The knowledge gained through study is often compared unfavorably with the experiential knowledge gained in meditation. Scholar (mānas, Skt. kuśāla) and philosopher (rtog pa, Skt. tārtika) are usually derogatory names in Jigme Lingpa’s writing. In the opening verses of KZL he states:

Nowadays clever thinkers analyze endlessly
With their nonconceptual viṣayaṇā and become proud,
Reckoning the number of months and years they have been on the path.
I teach this so they may engage in the path free of such falsity.273

This is a favorite theme of Jigme Lingpa, who saw himself as a meditor rather than a scholar.274 In the closing verses of KZL Jigme Lingpa defends the Great Perfection scriptures against the charge that there is too little learning evident in them with a verse from one of the Seventeen Tantras, the Kudung Barwa Tantra:

This oral tradition exhausts all expression.
Thus, though elsewhere talkers are listened to,
Here they are not considered to be sages;
Following only words, how could they be?275

In non-analytical meditation, as we have seen, the discrimination of arising thoughts as good or bad is rejected. That kind of practice is identified as analysis (bstan dpöd) and examination (bsam gzhig). In NCT Jigme Lingpa specifies that in the first moment when a thought arises, it is to be seen nakedly (gser mthong), and in the subsequent moments it is not to be analyzed or examined.270 In the spirit of nonduality, even the distinction—which is frequently seen in Great Perfection texts—between view (lta ba), meditation (gsum pa), and activity (spyod pa) can be rejected as false conceptualization. For instance, from ML:

Because [the path] is pure from the beginning, it does not even have the name view;
Because it is a reflexive awareness, the truth emerges from the sheath of causal meditation;
Because it is without reference points, it is free from the chains of activity.”277
In DTK the triad is turned into nonview (ita med), nonmeditation (sgom med), and nonactivity (spyod med).

There is a particular suspicion apparent in certain texts of any kind of view. Sometimes it is the idea of the view as linguistically communicable that is criticized, as in YL: “Though you may believe that the mere words expressing the connection between the deep luminosity and empty appearances are the view and meditation, they are not.” Elsewhere even the subtlest interpretation of a view, implying as it does a duality between the subject employing the view and the object of the view, is rejected, as in KZL: “Because the discursive thought that is the object of the view and the awareness of the viewer are two, there is dualistic grasping.”

In certain texts there is also a rejection of the Buddhist distinction between meditation (nam gshag) and post-meditation (ryes thob), that is, the state of practicing meditation and the state of not being in meditation respectively. For example, in KGN this distinction is condemned as a fabricated conceptualization. This is again an attack from the position of nondualism directed at a dualistic pair of concepts, and an insistence on the understanding of the nirvanic state as immanent at all times and in all states of being.

Criticism of Inferior Approaches

The lower vehicles

The Nyingma school traditionally divides the Buddhist canon into nine vehicles (theg pa, Skt. yāna). The first three are associated with nontantric literature. They are: (i) śrāvaka (nyan thos pa) and (ii) pratyekabuddha (rang sangs rgyas), representing the texts subsumed under the “lesser vehicle” (hinayāna) by Mahāyāna doxographies, and (iii) bodhisattva, representing Mahāyāna literature. The next three are the outer yogas: (iv) kriyā, (v) upa, and (vi) yoga, which correspond to the kriyā, caryā, and yoga classes of the New (gSar ma) schools’ classification of tantra. The final three are the inner yogas: (vii) mahāyoga and (viii) anuyoga, which are roughly equivalent to the anuttarayoga of the New schools, and (ix) atiyoga, which represents the Great Perfection corpus.

A common mode of discourse in the Great Perfection is the rejection of the practices of the other vehicles; it is a key feature of the Kunje Gyalpo, for example. In the Longchen Nyingtig, the first chapter of KGN contains a critique of the modes of practice associated with the other eight vehicles. Here each vehicle is associated with a particular kind of misperception of mind itself (sangs nyid). The non-Buddhist (tu gnyis can, Skt. tirthanka) is associated with the extremist positions of eternalism and nihilism. The śrāvaka is criticized for making mind itself a cognizable phenomenon (shes bya’i chos), and the pratyekabuddha for selfishly attending only to his own consciousness. The bodhisattva is associated with a conceptual belief in the two levels of truth (bden gnyis). As for the three lower tantras, the practice of kriyā is associated with the acceptance and rejection of good and bad, upa is associated with a code of activity or means (thabs) that prescribes ways of behaving, and yoga is criticized for constructing a seal (phag rga) upon luminosity. In the higher tantras, anuyoga is associated with causal meditation, and mahāyoga meditation is associated with the conceptualization of appearances and sounds as the deity’s body and mantra; however, in this case it is an error (gol ma) in the practice of mahāyoga that is rejected, rather than the vehicle per se.

These eight vehicles are also sometimes criticized, in passing, in the course of extolling the virtues of the ninth vehicle (the Great Perfection), as in YL: “The intellectual tenets of the eight vehicles fail to reach it, so it comes at the pinnacle of them all.” The other vehicles are often characterized as lower (‘gog ma) or inferior (dmar pa), or, more interestingly, described as the vehicles of assumption or supposition (yid byed). The word has a positive sense in the more scholastic Tibetan traditions, where it signifies a correct belief based on scripture, a valid part of the gradual path to a nonconceptual apprehension of emptiness. This kind of non-experiential training is rejected in these texts where the direct apprehension of ultimate truth (or gnosia, and so on) is emphasized. In YL, Jigme Lingpa quotes the well-known verse of Nāgarjuna, “Because I make no assertion / I have no assertion to defend,” and goes on to say:

Although that is the way of arriving at [realization], nowadays proud people who grasp these tenets settle them according to intellectual supposition; this is wrong. One arrives at [realization] through comprehending the true expanse of the Natural Great Perfection.

This is of course another aspect of the rejection of dualistic conceptual elaboration of the nirvanic. What is interesting here is that all paths apart from the Great Perfection are considered to involve supposition, which is not a direct apprehension of gnosia.
I will now turn to the more specific rejection of the methods of certain Buddhist schools in the Longchen Nyingtig texts. These are: the Yogācāra, the Madhyamaka, and mistaken approaches within the Great Perfection itself.

Yogācāra

As I have shown in chapter 4, the Seminal Heart is influenced by the teachings on the nature of samsaric consciousness found in sutras such as the Lakāsāvatāra, and in the work of writers from the milieu variously known as Yogācāra, Viśjñānavāda, or Cittamātra. In its first and third chapters, YLG provides a good example of this influence, and the elements of Yogācāra found there can be traced back to the earliest Seminal Heart scriptures, the Seventeen Tantras. Despite these similarities, one central aspect of Yogācāra thought, the statement that all phenomena are mind, is strongly criticized in the Seminal Heart; in the Longchen Nyingtig it is in YL that Jigme Lingpa makes this critique.

Although it is largely the mind-only doctrine of the Yogācārins that is discussed, the criticisms can apply to variations of that doctrine held by certain Tibetan traditions. The approach singled out in YL is a contemplation in two parts, the first being to understand that all phenomena are mind, the second that mind is empty. Jigme Lingpa writes:

[i] When appearances are recognized as being created by mind, the mindstream that has attachment to their reality is reversed.

[ii] When you recognize the mind that fabricates them as empty, attachment to the truth of the outer object is abandoned.

[iii] By recognizing emptiness as gnosis, one does not mistake the true condition for nonexistence. This last essential point alone is the direct approach and the practice instruction.

The first two statements are not considered by Jigme Lingpa to belong to the approach of the Seminal Heart, probably because he considers them causal meditations, types of antidote that are used against specific misperceptions. The third, approved, statement speaks only of the recognition of gnosis. Jigme Lingpa backs up his rejection of the all is mind—mind is empty approach with a quotation from the Rigpa Rangshar, one of the Seventeen Tantras, but the source is probably Longchenpa, who put forward this same argument in several places, including, from the Seven Treasures, his Desum Nyingpo and Tsigdon Dzö. In the latter the argument is supported with a scriptural citation from another of the Seventeen Tantras, the Kuntu Zangpo Tugyi Melong. Thus it is clear that Jigme Lingpa’s position has a precedent as far back as these early tantras, and was considered normative within the Seminal Heart from at least as early as the works of Longchenpa.

In the context of eighteenth-century Tibet, this passage could well be seen as a criticism of the contemporary practitioners of Mahāmudrā, in which the designation of appearances as mind is central to the practice of vipāsyanā. In the same section of YL, Jigme Lingpa further refines the definition of the position that is the subject of his critique: it is the statement that mind is existent in relative truth (kun rdo rgyi bden pa, Skt. samyaktiyā) and nonexistent in ultimate truth (don dam pa’i bden pa, Skt. paramārtha-satyā). This combines the doctrine of mind-only with the two truths of the Madhyamaka. Jigme Lingpa argues that in such a system, even the idea of union (zungjug)—that is, of the two truths—is actually the union of two existents (yod pa gnyis). The object of the critique, indicated in the text only with the phrase elsewhere or according to others (gshon du), seems to be one or more contemporary traditions. Jigme Lingpa has no qualms about naming the Yogācāra school directly when he is criticising its doctrines (see below); as is usual in Tibetan polemical writing, it is living writers or traditions that he does not name directly.

The most likely subject of this criticism is certain Tibetan Madhyamaka variants with Yogācāra influences, which bear a resemblance to the Yogācāra Svātantrakā Madhyamaka doctrines set out by Śāntarakṣita in the eighth century. For instance, there is the Inner Madhyamaka (dbu ma nang ba) expounded within the teachings of the Sakya school called the union of samsara and nirvana (khor ‘das rgyud med). Here the Inner Madhyamaka is said to differ from the Outer Madhyamaka (by which is meant either Svātantrika or Prāsaṅgika) not in its understanding of ultimate truth, which is always emptiness, but in its definition of conventional truth, which is that all appearances are mind. Then in the Karma Kagyü school there is a similar doctrine called Great Madhyamaka (dbu ma chen po), which is set forth in the treatises of the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (1284–1339). This is a form of the Empty-of-Other (gshen stong) interpretation of Madhyamaka, influenced by the Mahāmudrā texts, in which the statement that all appearances are mind is also taken as the description of relative truth.

For these traditions, the relative truth of “all is mind” is the first step in contemplation, the second being the ultimate truth that mind is empty. Jigme Lingpa was familiar with the teachings of the Sakya and Kagyü and
would have been aware that his words could be taken as a criticism of their teachings. It is also pertinent that, as I pointed out in chapter 4, although they do not consistently use the two truths structure, many texts of the Great Perfection Mind Series texts do use the *all is mind—mind is empty* statement, and so may also be counted as objects of Jigme Lingpa’s critique.

In YL Jigme Lingpa also offers an argument in support of his critique:

Now, the direct means of cognizing that appearances cannot be mind: During what are taught in the *Madhyantavibhagita* as the five unconscious states—sleep, faint, the two absorptions, and constant nonperception—appearances have not gone anywhere. In last night’s dreams, finding jewels or experiencing exhilaration is grasped as real and joyful, but upon waking, there is nothing. Therefore it is certain that thoughts, memories, and the white and red appearances arise from adventitious conditions.  

This is an appeal to ordinary experience, an argument based on cognition, as is indicated by the use of the epistemological term, derived from Indian Buddhist epistemology, *direct means of cognition* (pratikṣādipramāṇa). The direct means of cognition is that which is immediately apparent, unlike inferential means of cognition (anumāṇa-pramāṇa). Jigme Lingpa argues that appearances are found to remain during and after states of nonperception, and moreover, that the perceptions of dreams have no effect on the realm of waking perceptions. The claim is that, were mind and appearances equivalent, firstly, appearances would cease when perceptual activity ceased and have no consistency thereafter, and secondly, the appearances of dreams would have the same level of reality and consistency as waking appearances. A more extensive version of this argument appears in Longchenpa’s *Tsigdon Dzo*:

If appearances were mind there would be logical consequences such as the mind having colors. When you were not present, your mind would remain in that place, since appearances remain. Through a single birth everything would be born and through a single death everything would die. When ten million people looked at a vase, and it was like their being of a single mind, they would be of a single mind. Because the appearance of all phenomena is the object of some buddha’s knowledge, samsara would be the buddha’s wisdom. When a buddha saw a sentient being, the buddha would be deluded due to the mind of the sentient being, and the sentient being would become a buddha due to the mind of the buddha. Just as the mind moves abruptly in a single moment, appearances would move abruptly in a single moment. There would be a great many more consequences in addition to these.

These arguments are certainly influenced by previous refutations of the Yogācāra doctrines in Indian Mahayamaka writing, such as Candrikirti’s *Mahyamakavārttika* (chapter 6, v. 45–71) and Bhāvaviveka’s *Prajñāpradīpa* (chapter 25). It becomes evident that Jigme Lingpa is making his refutation of the mind-only doctrine from a Mahyamaka position in the final statement of the passage above, where he asserts the dependence of mental phenomena upon adventitious conditions, an allusion to the concept of interdependent origination (*riten cing ’brel par byung ba*, Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*).

Some pages further on in YL, Jigme Lingpa defines the restricted circumstances in which the identification of appearances with mind may be allowable in the Great Perfection. He puts the question: “Does this [Great Perfection realization] not approach the faults of the Sākāravāda mind-only position, which fails to distinguish perception from the object of perception?” The reply is as follows:

To give an example, at the first instant of seeing a mountain there is the thought: “It’s a mountain.” As an ordinary sentient being you do not have the power to stop this. However, in the second instant, the mind that examines the nature of the mountain and the discursive thoughts about the mountain caused by the dynamic energy of your mental factors subside automatically without a trace. Then, although the aspect of the mountain’s appearance is unobstructed, you become accustomed to abiding in the true condition where there is no grasping at it. Since it is purified into arising and being liberated at the same time, mind and appearances mix together. This is the unerring path of the Natural Great Perfection.

Before dealing with this passage, it is worth examining the question that introduces it, a contention that the Great Perfection falls into the
philosophical error of conflating the mere immediacy of perception (snang ba) with the objective basis for perception (snang yul). The erroneous position is attributed to a subschool of the Yogācāra, the Sākāravāda. The distinction within the Yogācāra understanding of mind-only between Sākāravāda (real image) and Anākāravāda (false image) is described by Śāntarakṣita, who is probably the source for descriptions of these positions in Tibetan doxographical literature by writers such as Longchenpa. The crux of the disagreement seems to be whether or not the consciousness contains an objective basis for perception and is thus ultimately real. The distinction between mere perception and the object of perception is made by Longchenpa in his Shingta Chenpo, and the identification of the object of perception with mind is rejected:

Mere perception can be classified as the mind, but claiming that the objective basis of perception is the mind is a serious error.

The Sākāravāda position, as it is understood by Jigme Lingpa, makes a claim for the reality of mind that cannot be accepted in the Seminal Heart where mind (sams) has a strictly samsaric position. Both this distinction between perception and the object of perception, and the form of the argument in Shingta Chenpo, were repeated by Jigme Lingpa in his Yongden Dzö:

Furthermore the objective basis of perception is not the mind. Though the reflected image of a face is contained in a mirror, it is merely due to conditions that arise through dependent origination; face and mirror are never found to be mixed together.

In this work, as in YL, an argument based on the concept of dependent origination is used to refute the idea of mind being both perception and object of perception. Thus there is a deliberate move away from the Yogācāra position toward a Madhyamaka position. It seems that the primary purpose of these arguments is to defend the Seminal Heart from the accusation that its position is tantamount to that of the Yogācāra school. It was definitely an ongoing concern for Jigme Lingpa; previously, in his Khyentse Melong, he had written a defense against the same accusation. This may be due to the increasingly normative role the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka came to hold in Tibet and the increasing marginalization of the Yogācāra doctrines.

Returning to Jigme Lingpa’s answer, in YL, to the accusation that Sem-inal Heart falls into the same error as the Yogācāra, we have seen that he indicates the particular way in which the identification of mind and appearances is acceptable in the Seminal Heart. He says that the identification is allowed when describing the state of arising and liberation (shat grol), where the discursive thought that interprets an object of perception such as “mountain” as an external appearance has no effect. This form of identification seems to be acceptable to Jigme Lingpa because in this context it is a description of realization itself, rather than being a step in the course of practice leading to realization; it is presented as an immediate transcendence of concepts, not a conceptual means. It is at the level of ultimate rather than relative truth, or in the terminology of the Great Perfection, at the level of the result rather than the path.

There is another aspect of the Yogācāra doctrine, related to the mind-only doctrine, that is criticized in YL and elsewhere in Jigme Lingpa’s work: the concepts of reflexive awareness (rang rig, Skt. svasamedana) and reflexive luminosity (rang grol, Skt. svayamprakāśa). These terms, near-synonyms, are fundamental to the Yogācāra understanding of the way the mind works. They refer to the activity of a mind that does not cognize phenomena as extrinsically: it is cognizant only of itself, and, like a lamp that needs no other lightsource to be visible, it illuminates itself. Both terms were utilized in this way by Śāntarakṣita in his eighth-century works setting out the Yogācāra Svātantrika Madhyamaka position.

Jigme Lingpa writes in YL, “If…when you examine that which abides, the mere reflexive luminosity (rang grol) of the ālaya-vijñāna comes up as truly accomplished, then you approach the mistake of the Anākāravāda mind-only doctrine.” We have seen above how the Sākāravāda form of Yogācāra is criticized by Longchenpa and Jigme Lingpa, based on the distinction between mere perceptions and the objective basis for perceptions. The Anākāravāda form of Yogācāra, which did not accept the ultimate reality of consciousness as the objective basis for perceptions, is criticized for a different reason. In his Khyentse Melong, Jigme Lingpa sets out what he understands the Anākāravāda position to be:

We hold that the outer object does not exist, and the awareness that apprehends it does not exist either. The awareness that realizes the apprehender and apprehended as nondual is a reflexive awareness and a reflexive luminosity. This is designated as truly existent. This is the ālaya-vijñāna. Actions and their result are based on it.
The Anākaravāda position is criticized for attributing reflexive awareness with true existence. The terms reflexive awareness and reflexive luminosity are often used in the Great Perfection, and figure frequently in the Longchen Nyingtig texts themselves. Jigme Lingpa cannot criticize the use of the terms themselves. He must object to the designation of them as being truly established, that is, existent. As the passage from the Khyentse Melang suggests, this is also a criticism of the position that holds the ālaya-vijñāna, the basis of consciousness, as the basis of both the samsaric and nirvanic awareness. For Jigme Lingpa, and his Seminal Heart sources, the ālaya-vijñāna is samsaric in nature, a result of delusion and separation from the ground, as I have shown in chapter 4. Thus these criticisms of the Yogācāra are rooted in the Seminal Heart distinction between two types of basis, the nirvanic basis known as the ground (gzi) and the samsaric basis of consciousness, the ālaya (kun gzi). Because the distinction is not made in the Indian Yogācāra texts, the versions of reflexive awareness and reflexive luminosity found there are considered flawed. Yet the Seminal Heart owed a great debt to Yogācāra philosophy in its treatments of both samsaric and nirvanic awareness, and this is why Jigme Lingpa, like Longchenpa before him, felt the need to strongly distinguish the differences between the models of awareness in Yogācāra and Seminal Heart literature.

**Madhyamaka**

I have already discussed briefly, in chapter 4, the conception of emptiness in the Seminal Heart as a primordially present state that is identical with gnosis. Both this identification with gnosis and the primordial presence are asserted by Jigme Lingpa in the following passage from SN:

That which is called emptiness is empty from the very beginning, nonself, separate from the four and eight extremes of elaboration, the loose awareness of the present moment, transcending intellect; that is what we call gnosis.\(^{220}\)

In GP, emptiness is stated as present in all sentient beings:

Emptiness transcending causes and conditions
And embodying luminosity
Exists in the continuum of every sentient being.\(^{221}\)

So, emptiness is characterized, along with the other nirvanic terms, as present prior to meditation and enlightenment, empty from the beginning. Any kind of intellectually effected emptiness is taken to be a form of fabrication (chos pa). As I stated in chapter 4, transcending the intellect (blo 'das) is one of the most commonly cited characteristics of gnosis.

In NSB, the dharmakāya is defined in terms of emptiness:

The wisdom that is aware that the manifesting objects—
Form, feelings, perception, and so on—are empty of self.\(^{222}\)

Jigme Lingpa attaches an interlinear note to the term empty of self (rang stong, which in this context is a contraction of the Madhyamaka term rang bzhin gyis stong pa nyid, Skt. svābhava-sūnyatā).\(^{223}\)

Here the external forms that are perceived are not designated as empty of self. When emptiness is made an intellectual object, the form and emptiness aspects of the object arise in the intellect. However since the perceived forms have no intrinsic characteristics, those forms should not mixed with the intellect. Therefore the statement, “Emptiness is not other than form, nor form other than emptiness,” should be taken as an axiom.\(^{224}\)

Jigme Lingpa’s argument here seems to be that, through analysis, the intellectual method of establishing emptiness generates the concepts of form (gzugs, Skt. rūpa) and emptiness, while in fact the form, as it manifests, bears neither the characteristic of form nor of emptiness. The distinction between form and emptiness comes into being only through the application of intellectual analysis to that which manifests.

This critique may be directed against the methods of meditation based on the Madhyamaka in the Gelug school. Certain explanations of the method of meditation directed toward emptiness from this school do suggest dualism. Robert Thurman (1980) has shown the importance of analytical meditation to Tsongkhapa, and Jeffrey Hopkins has dealt with this point in some depth. It was clearly an important topic for the Gelug scholars who were Jigme Lingpa’s contemporaries. For instance, Hopkins has given a translation of a passage by the Gelug scholar Jamyang Zhepa (1648–1721) in which arguments presenting meditation on emptiness as nonconceptual are refuted. Elsewhere he translates the following passage by
Changkya Rolpai Dorje (1717–86), establishing reasoning as the correct mode for meditation on emptiness:

Therefore one must analyze well what that which is conceived by consciousnesses erroneously perceiving [persons and phenomena] as the two selves is. After analyzing that, it is necessary to bring about the collapse of the false edifice of mistake by way of inducing conviction through pure scripture and reasoning that [things] do not exist as they are conceived by this [erroneous consciousness]. That this is needed is an indispensable excellent essential [of the path]. Hence it is important to analyze again and again, with the wisdom of individual investigation.\textsuperscript{325}

Paul Williams (1992) points out that while the ultimate experience of emptiness is dealt with conceptually (as involving a subject and object of the experience) by most Gelug scholars, they do in fact assert some kind of direct, nonconceptual experience of emptiness. Jigme Lingpa’s disagreement with these methods is not concerned with the nonconceptual nature of the ultimate truth but with the conceptual means of reaching that ultimate state.

Jigme Lingpa paraphrases the well-known lines from the Heart Sutra to argue that the nondistinction between form and emptiness stated there is in harmony with the usual presentation of emptiness in the Great Perfection. The union of form and emptiness is not taken as a goal, but as the already-present nature of that which manifests. This is the explanation given for the rejection of a conceptual, dualistic mode of establishing emptiness. A non-dualistic practice of emptiness is also emphasized in YL where Jigme Lingpa writes that in gnosis, “appearances are not cut by the razor of emptiness.”\textsuperscript{326}

It is suggested in RGN that the distinction between relative truth and ultimate truth is another false duality. The line is: “In the awakened mind there is no relative or ultimate truth.”\textsuperscript{327} In accordance with this rejection there are very few references to the two truths in any of these Longchen Nyingtig texts.\textsuperscript{328}

In SN, Jigme Lingpa enumerates four mistaken approaches to emptiness, which he calls the four ways of straying (shor sa bzhis).\textsuperscript{329} These are borrowed from the Mahāmudrā tradition, where they are to be found at least as far back as Dāgap Tashi Namgyal (1512–87), who enumerates them in his Leghe Dawat Özer.\textsuperscript{330} They are (i) straying into the condition where emptiness is an object of knowledge (shes bya, Skt. jñeya), (ii) straying into taking emptiness as the path, (iii) straying into taking emptiness as an antidote, and (iv) straying into taking emptiness as a seal (rgyas 'debs). The first three errors are related to the criticism of approaches to Madhyamaka set out in the previous paragraphs.

The first error is the fault of making emptiness an intellectual object. It is said to stem from not understanding that emptiness is not associated with analysis or any kind of activity, and has been pure from the beginning. The second is the fault of taking emptiness as a path of training and attempting to arrive at emptiness, rather than taking it as the basis for the path. This is said to stem from not understanding that the path is one of reflective awareness (rang rig), an allusion to the method of immediate recognition discussed in chapter 4. The third is the fault of using emptiness as an antidote to discursive thought (rnam rtag) and afflictions (nyon mongs). This is said to stem from not understanding that discursive thought and afflictions are primordially empty in essence, and are freed through self-liberation (rang grol), which is here explicitly related to the idea of recognition.\textsuperscript{330}

These three ways of straying are all variations on a single theme: emptiness is already present and is not found by artificial efforts. The fourth way of straying is described as sealing [everything] with a definitive (thag chod) view of emptiness, where thag chod means a final, decisive definition. The implication is that there is no such definition, and that getting stuck in the definition results in a position of nihilism. However Jigme Lingpa's account of this error involves a defense of means (thabs) and to some extent a defense of conceptualization, and is closer to the subject matter of chapter 6, where I shall discuss it further.

Here I wish to examine the metaphor of the seal (rgyas 'debs) that appears in this passage and elsewhere in the Longchen Nyingtig texts.\textsuperscript{332} In certain Vajrayāna tantras there are references to all phenomena being sealed by emptiness or by the meditation deity,\textsuperscript{333} and the Mutig Trengwa (one of the Seventeen Tantras), no doubt based on those Vajrayāna tantras, teaches a series of seals, including sealing one's perceptions with emptiness, as a positive achievement.\textsuperscript{334} For Jigme Lingpa, it is the negative connotation of the seal, the affixing of a concept to the nonconceptual, that is of primary significance. To seal everything with emptiness is, for Jigme Lingpa, to apply the concept of emptiness to all perceptions. From the position of nonduality and the adherence to an ideal of an unconstructed arising and liberation (shar grol), which is characteristic of the Great Perfection, this is understood as an obstacle.
In SN, Jigme Lingpa indicates two specific erroneous methods of practice intended to establish emptiness, which, again, seems to derive from Dagspo Tashi Namgyal:

If this is not understood, you experience an emptiness in which everything is nonexistent, following intellectual analysis that accomplishes the negation of existence and nonexistence, as in the lower vehicles. Alternatively, with an absorption that trains in emptiness through the svabhāvata mantra and the like, you experience merely a posited emptiness and luminosity, the view that everything is like an illusion, as in the lower tantras. This is an error.\(^{335}\)

The first of these references, a criticism of the approach to emptiness in the lower vehicles, would seem to be a reference to the Madhyamaka taken as a practice in itself, outside of Vajrayāna or the Great Perfection. This could merely be directed toward certain mistaken ways of practicing the Great Perfection, but it could also be taken as an implicit denigration of the Madhyamaka as a path in its own right. In certain places Jigme Lingpa does appear to reject Madhyamaka analysis entirely, even as an initial introductory teaching. For instance, in PK he writes:

The wisdom of the Natural Great Perfection exists as the spontaneously present qualities of the greatness of buddhahood. Because one inherently possesses the complete three kāyas, there is no need to look for them through turning away from it is to it is not, like mounting a donkey from a step.\(^{336}\)

Here the argument that the intellectual practice of emptiness is valid early on in the path is dismissed with a disparaging analogy: the realization of buddhahood is the donkey, and the refutation of inherent existence in appearances is the unnecessary step. Despite the clear importance of Madhyamaka for Jigme Lingpa's presentation of the Great Perfection, in the Longchen Nyintig texts the more philosophically complex aspects of Madhyamaka thought are generally ignored, and in some cases disparaged. For example, in YL Jigme Lingpa makes two disparaging references to affirming negation (ma yin dgag, Skt. paryūṣaṇa-pratijñedha) and nonaffirming negation (med dgag, Skt. pravasāya-pratijñedha).\(^{337}\)

If you do not cut the root of the emergence of mind and mental factors, then you will wander into the extreme of seeking the natural state in nonaffirming negation and affirming negation, like the Yogācāra Madhyamikas. Therefore look right here in the mind that is doing the searching.\(^{338}\)

Affirming negation indicates that in refuting others' arguments something is established, while nonaffirming negation indicates that nothing beyond the refutation is established.\(^{339}\) The interpretation of the two differs according to the approach of the commentator: Prāsaṅgika commentators generally argued for the superiority of nonaffirming negation over affirming negation, while Dūlpopa used the concept of affirming negation in establishing the position that became characterized as Empty-of-Other.\(^{340}\)

Jigme Lingpa, on the other hand, is not concerned with establishing that nonaffirming negation is superior to affirming negation, or vice versa; rather it seems that his primary use of these terms is as an illustration of needless conceptual hair-splitting. This carries an implicit rejection of both the Prāsaṅgika and Empty-of-Other Madhyamaka. The reference in the passage above to the Yogācāra Madhyamikas (literally, the Madhyamaka Cittamātrins, Tib. dbu ma sems tsam pa) could be taken as a reference to either the Yogācāra Madhyamaka (rtul byor spyod pa'i dbu ma) school, which was propagated by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla in the eighth century, or the Empty-of-Other position, which was undergoing a renaissance in the eighteenth century and was also referred to as the Yogācāra Madhyamaka.\(^{341}\)

As for the Prāsaṅgika, the form of Madhyamaka that came to be accepted as normative by the majority of Tibetan scholars, perhaps the most that can be said is that, as the passages above show, Jigme Lingpa stays close to the position set out by Longchenpa in his Lungi Terdzö:

The methods of fathoming the freedom from extremes and the like, according to the traditions of this Natural Great Perfection, are generally similar to the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka. However in the Madhyamaka emptiness is calculated to be an emptiness like space, and is made the basis. Here, the mere constancy of gnosis, ever-pure, naked, all-penetrating, and unaccomplished, is made the basis. The phenomena that arise from the sphere of such a basis are apprehended as being free from extremes, like space.\(^{342}\)

Longchenpa’s description is certainly true for the texts of the Longchen
Nyintig, where gnosis (or the ground, or one of the many synonyms) is taken as the basis for the discourse, and emptiness only appears in the role of a characteristic, if a particularly important one, of gnosis. Emptiness is not a basis for discussion in its own right. The experience-oriented discussion of gnosis is the basis, and the discourse on emptiness per se an intellectual distraction. This last point is not stated outright by Longchenpa but strongly suggested by his use of the verb to calculate (tsiis) in describing the Madhyamaka version of emptiness. In brief, it is quite clear that Jigme Lingpa, following Longchenpa’s example, neither aligns the understanding of emptiness in the Great Perfection with the Prāsaṅgika nor the Empty-of-Other position.343

In the second part of the SN passage quoted above, Jigme Lingpa attributes to the practitioners of the lower tantras a different kind of erroneous approach to emptiness, the use of the svabhava mantra to generate an experience of emptiness.344 The kind of emptiness Jigme Lingpa attributes to this level of practice is a posited or asserted (khas len) emptiness, which he seems to consider less analytical in nature than the emptiness of supposition (gig dpod). Nevertheless, he criticizes it as something spoken about and accepted as true rather than experienced. It is also characterized as the “like an illusion” view (gsug ma la bu’i lta ba). The instruction to see all phenomena as being like an illusion is a common one that occurs in the Tibetan texts as a method for the post-meditation state (rjes thob).345 Indeed, elsewhere in SN, Jigme Lingpa associates the emptiness that is “like an illusion” with post-meditation.346

Finally, formulations of the nature of emptiness are rejected even where assertions specific to the Great Perfection are concerned, such as the statement that gnosis and emptiness are one:

If, while maintaining the flow of the great, inherent natural state, you think “The essence of this gnosis is emptiness,” then that which is labeling it as emptiness is your intellect. The intellect is a reference point. There is no way to attain buddhahood by means of an absorption that contains a reference point.347

The word labeling (dogs) seems to carry the same meaning here as sealing: it is a conceptual activity that blocks the recognition of gnosis. The rejection of all reference points (gig sa) indicates again the unmediated character of the meditation discussed here, in which nothing is to come between the meditator and the unelaborated ultimate state, and clearly comes from a position of nonduality.

Other classes of the Great Perfection

The correction of erroneous ways of putting Great Perfection into practice occurs in most of the Longchen Nyintig texts. Here, however, I wish to note specifically the rejection of other Great Perfection methods. In Instruction Series literature, criticism of the other two classes of the Great Perfection, Mind Series and Space Series, is not uncommon, especially in the discussions of tenet systems (grab mtha’).348 Yet in the fourteenth century Longchenpa could write texts for the practitioner of Mind Series or Space Series, both of which obviously still had currency as systems of practice. It is a different matter in the Longchen Nyintig: Jigme Lingpa does not present either series as a living system of practice, and their primary role in his writing is as examples of erroneous methods. Thus in YL he writes:

Not applying a seal, like Mind Series, or fixating on the expansive, like Space Series, they should cross over to the experience of Instruction Series, self-settled and transcending visualization and fixation.349

I have already discussed, in the section on Yogācāra, Jigme Lingpa’s rejection of the approach that identifies appearances with mind, a central theme of the Mind Series texts. Here the Mind Series approach is criticized as a seal—which, as we have seen, indicates a conceptual labeling activity and comes to be regarded as a barrier to direct experience of gnosis. The Space Series approach, presented as emphasizing an identification of all phenomena with the expansive (klong), is criticized as a fixation (gigs pa) upon that definition.

The Rejection of Stages in Realization

For Mahāyāna Buddhism, the most common structures that define the steps in the gradual progress toward enlightenment are the five paths (lam, Skt. mārga) and ten stages (sa, Skt. bhūmi). The latter were also incorporated into the tantric literature, with their number sometimes increased. It is these structures that are explicitly and frequently rejected within Great Perfection texts such as the Künje Gyalpo. In YL, Jigme Lingpa writes:
On the stage that is without progressive purification of gnosis, there is no need to train on the ten stages of the bodhisattvas, nor on the paths and stages achieved by accomplishing the exertions of development and completion in the outer and inner Mantra-yāna. This is because they are all combined in the single essence of wisdom.¹⁰

Here Jigme Lingpa places the paths and stages in the context of the system of the tantras (the Vajrayāna). In PK, Jigme Lingpa quotes a passage from the Künje Gyalpo that rejects the structure of the paths and stages:

No view and meditation, no maintaining of vows,
No ascending of stages, no traveling of paths.³¹

Elsewhere in PK Jigme Lingpa implies that the paths and stages are a conceptual restriction on the true freedom of the Great Perfection practitioner:

Because we yogins have this path, we have a continuous bliss that is free from the all the weariness of being caught in the cage of the paths and stages, and from the net of conceptualization, the analysis, disputations, and contradictions of the original Pāramitāyāna scriptures.³²

In some of the other supporting instructions Jigme Lingpa uses the terms path and stage in a poetic or perhaps ironic sense, where they indicate the singular, nongradual nature of realization in the Great Perfection. An example is the first verse of homage in KZL:

I prostrate to the glorious Primordial Lord,
Whose nature is the expanse, intrinsically pure, the true nature
Of view, meditation, activity, and result, of exertion, grasping, and desire.
To the perfect path and stage, unlike all other vehicles,
The great secret ati, I prostrate.³³

Here there is only one path and stage, the perfect (rdzog) path and stage identical with the enlightened state that is the true nature of all things.

6 The Gradual Approach

Graduated Practice within the Longchen Nyingtig

Those meditators who are fatigued by the penance of solitude and the burden of things to be counted and the teachers who support them are a long way from the definitive secret, the truth of the Great Perfection. If they can come to the place of the ultimate truth of meditation, just by recognizing stillness and just by recognizing movement, there is no need for any other kind of contemplation.³⁴

Although the main part of KZL begins with this advice, it becomes apparent as one reads on that these are not the instructions of Jigme Lingpa, but those of an imagined teacher of the simultaneous method, set up in order to be subjected to criticism. Jigme Lingpa replies: “Although you may achieve an initial acquaintance with the realization of the great ascension to ever-purity by throwing everything out at once as stated above, you will not really have come close to it.”³⁵ Later in the same text Jigme Lingpa quotes a passage from Longchenpa’s Lungi Terdzö in which much the same criticism is made:

The sage oriented toward realization who explains to every flawed person with little merit he meets, “The genuine realization that whatever arises is the nature of the dharma-kāya is itself self-arisen wisdom,” and, “Absorption is accordingly nescience and manas,” teaches what is tantamount to a fabrication that seduces beings. Because of this, one sees [disciples] who are cut off from the profound Dharma, which will not be found elsewhere. Such a teacher is a thief of this vehicle. There are many appearing nowadays.
Here Longchenpa directly attacks those lamas who, as he sees it, teach the simultaneist method to all and sundry. While Jigme Lingpa repeats Longchenpa’s concern with those who wrongly interpret the simultaneist style of Great Perfection literature, he directs it more toward students than teachers, as can be seen in SN, where the fourth of the four ways of straying from emptiness (the first three ways of straying were discussed in chapter 5) is a premature rejection of meditation and conceptualization:

Not maintaining the watchman, who is the nonfixed flow of ordinary gnosis that transcends the intellect, he keeps the initial theory [of emptiness] in mind. Thus he says, “There is no meditation or meditator,” “Everything is emptiness,” “Everything is dharmakāya,” “Actions and their results are not real,” “That’s just the intellect,” “That’s just discursive thought,” and “Everything is unaccomplished.” This is known as being sealed by a definitive view of emptiness. There is a lot of this about nowadays.396

The rejection of the dualities of cause and effect, meditation and meditator, are not to be abandoned, according to this passage. Jigme Lingpa makes a number of similar statements in SN, and in PK as well, in the discussion of such terms as nonmeditation and ordinary awareness, terms that suggest a literal reading of the simultaneist statements of Great Perfection texts resulting in the total renunciation of methods.397 In order to understand Jigme Lingpa’s concern it is necessary to have an understanding of the variety of methods prescribed in the Longchen Nyintig.

**Practices from outside of the Great Perfection**

The meditation practices found in the Longchen Nyintig include elements from within the Great Perfection as well as from the Vajrayāna and the preliminary practices (sngon ’gro) associated with the Vajrayāna. Discussion of Vajrayāna practice occurs rarely in the Longchen Nyintig’s Great Perfection texts, and only in the authorial ones. It is in the specific Vajrayāna meditation texts (gsgrub thabs, Skt. sādhanā) on these practices, which form a significant part of the makeup of the Longchen Nyintig, that most of this material is found.

The preliminaries to Vajrayāna practice are mentioned as a requisite part of the path in PK:

Your mindstream is purified by the profound initiation, which is the cause of ripening, and then you begin with the outer, inner, and secret preliminaries, which can be equated with the path of accumulation in the Pāramitāyāna. For beginners, the way of practicing is explained by the practice instructions and the lama’s instructions.398

Jigme Lingpa moves on after this passage to Vajrayāna and Great Perfection practice, which are equated with the other four paths of the Pāramitāyāna. The reference here to preliminary practices is not a mere formality however. The Longchen Nyintig includes several practice instructions (’khris ’byig) on the preliminaries, divided into ordinary and extraordinary.399

There are two texts of instruction on the ordinary preliminaries. The first is a long text entitled Tarpai Temkha, which is a version of the seven-point mind training (blo sbyong) system derived from Atiśa.400 The second is entitled Laglenla Dzeyug, and has six main sections, each a contemplation on a particular subject.401 The first is on the difficulty of obtaining the leisure and endowment of a human life (dal ’byor rgyed dka’ ba), the second on contemplating impermanence (khyad par ’byor ba bsam pa), the third on the difficulties of samsaric existence (’khor ba’i nyis dmigs bsam pa), the fourth on cause and effect in one’s actions (las gyi ’bras bsam pa), the fifth on the benefits of liberation (shar pa’i phan yon), and the sixth on the qualities of one’s lama (dge ba’i lhes guyen bsten pa).

These contemplations, especially the first four, were generally associated with the preliminary practices in the eighteenth century.402 The contemplations are causal, in that they are supposed to cause a certain state of mind to arise, and antidotal, in that they are intended to combat undesirable states of mind. Thus they embody the very qualities that are so frequently criticized in the Great Perfection texts of the Longchen Nyintig, as I discussed in chapter 5.

The extraordinary preliminary practices are presented in the text entitled Drepn pa Nyenzhag, which is also in six parts.403 The first part is the practice of going for refuge to the three jewels (sbyab rus ’gro ba), the second is the development of the compassionate mind of the Mahāyāna (shig chen gyi rtsa ba’i sems bskyes), the third is the recitation and meditation of Vajrasattva (rdo rje sems dpa’i sgom bglas), the fourth is the accumulation of merit through offering a mandala (mthun rkyen thogs bsig pa la mandala), the fifth, which
is really an appendix to the fourth, is a symbolic offering of one’s flesh based on the practice of cutting attachment, called the hermit’s accumulation of merit (ku su la’i tshog go), and the sixth is the yoga of devotion to the guru (bla ma’i rnal ‘byor).  

Again by the eighteenth century these practices, in this order, with the exception of the fifth, were standard constituents of the preliminary practices. Similar arrangements can be seen in a text on the preliminary practices by Khyung Tsewang Norbu and in Karma Chagmé’s practice instructions, while the individual elements of these preliminaries are to be found much earlier, in works by Longchenpa and in the fourteenth-century treasure cycle Lama Gongdü. Jigme Lingpa states that the preliminaries are not to be abandoned at a later point, as they are the basis of the main practices. To abandon them, he writes, is to stray away from activities, that is, methods, into the extreme of the view, that is, the direct apprehension of gnosis.

Although, as I discussed in chapter 3, instructions on Vajrayāna practices comprise the majority of the texts in Longchen Nyingtig, only one particular aspect of Vajrayāna practice is discussed by Jigme Lingpa in the authorial Great Perfection texts. This is the reliance on the enlightened mind (shugs) of the lama, and the use of initiations (dbang, Skt. abhiseka) to effect a mixing of the student’s mind (yid) with the lama’s. Jigme Lingpa devotes a whole section of PK to a discussion of the necessary qualities of a lama. The list of qualities required is quoted directly from the Rigpa Rangshar Tantra, in which the lama is specified as a practitioner and teacher of the Vajrayāna and of the Great Perfection, showing that from very early in the history of the Seminal Heart, the Great Perfection was practiced together with the methods of the Vajrayāna.

Jigme Lingpa also details, again in PK, the effects of the four types of initiation and the vows associated with them. The four are the same set generally found in the anuttarayoga tantras: the vase initiation (’bum, Skt. kalasha), the secret initiation (geg, Skt. gubhya), the prajñā wisdom initiation (sheb rab ye she, Skt. prajñā-jñāna), and the fourth initiation, which has different names in different tantric traditions—here it is called the precious word initiation (tshig rin po che). Jigme Lingpa, aware of the variety of systems of initiation in existence, argues that this one encompasses them all, and relates each of the four initiations to four levels of practice. The first initiation is linked with the development stage (bskyed rim, Skt. upsatikraman), that is, meditation on the yidam deity; the second to mantra recitation and the internal heat practice (gtum mo); the third to the completion stage (rdo rje rim, Skt. uppannakrama), that is, manipulation of the body’s psychic winds (lung, Skt. prāna); and the fourth to Great Perfection meditation.

The texts of instruction on Vajrayāna practices in the Longchen Nyingtig all fall into the Nyingma doxographical categories of mahāyoga (which is associated with the development stage) and anuyoga (which is associated with the completion stage). In general, Jigme Lingpa follows the standard hierarchy in which mahāyoga is followed by anuyoga, which is followed by atiyoga (that is, the Great Perfection). This is stated clearly in a text in the Longchen Nyingtig on the three inner yogas. This may be an indication of the order in which Jigme Lingpa expected the texts of the Longchen Nyingtig to be practiced, although according to the structure of Jigme Lingpa’s Khientse Melong, and the order the vehicles are presented in chapter 1 of KGN, anuyoga precedes mahāyoga.

In summary, the way in which the practical instructions on initiation, the practice of preliminaries, and the development and completion stage is given in PK texts, as well as the general textual makeup of the Longchen Nyingtig, indicate that the rejection of the eight lower vehicles found in KGN cannot be interpreted literally. Thus the following verse from Jigme Lingpa’s Yönten Dào seems to be a clear description of his position:

What is the main point of the excellent path of greatness?
It is no more than wiping clean intellectual limitations.
Therefore the three vows, six paramitās, development, and completion, and so on
Are all steps on the ladder to the Great Perfection.

The gradualist symbolism of the ladder is particularly notable here. In his own commentary to this passage in Namkhen Shingta, Jigme Lingpa argues even more strongly for the importance of the other levels of practice alongside the Great Perfection:

By saying that development and fulfillment meditations are not absorption, you cut yourself off from the benefit of contemplation. By saying that Great Perfection meditation is not emptiness, you cut yourself off from the benefits of prajñā. By saying that keeping samaya is not morality, you fall into the abyss of transgressing the secret mantra.
**The hierarchy of Great Perfection methods**

All of the Great Perfection texts in the Longchen Nyingtig are concerned, to a greater or lesser extent, with the practical application of Great Perfection methods, yet only one, the meditation instruction (khrid yig) called Yeshe Lama (YL), sets out the specific instructions for that practice and the levels through which it is to be approached. All of the elements of YL are based on earlier texts of the same genre. Out of Longchenpa's corpus, the main sources are of course Tsigdon Dzo and Tegcho Dzo, while all of the different elements (including the preliminaries, breakthrough, leapover, and teachings on the intermediate state) also appear in various short texts throughout the Nyingtig Yabzhis. The general division of YL is threefold: (i) the instructions for those of sharp faculties, (ii) the instructions for middling types, and (iii) the instructions for inferior types. The main part of the text, on Great Perfection meditation proper, is in section 1, section 2 being a treatment of the subject of the intermediate states between one life and the next (bar do), and section 3, instructions on the transference ('pho ba) of one's consciousness into a pure land (zhi'ing) at death.

Section 1 is divided into two parts, the preliminaries—this time the specific preliminaries to Great Perfection practice—and the main practice. In setting out the preliminaries, Jigme Lingpa quotes primarily from the Dratalgyur Tantra, one of the Seventeen Tantras, though his actual source is probably Longchenpa. Two types of preliminaries are taught. The first set is called making a gap between samsara and nirvana (khor 'das ru shan dbye ba), and is a series of visualization and recitation exercises, the name of which reflects the dualism of the distinctions between mind and gnosia, alaya and dharmakaya, in Seminal Heart literature, already discussed in chapter 4. The second set of preliminaries comprises a variety of practices for training (shyong ba) the body, speech, and mind. The training of the body is composed of instructions on physical posture. The training of speech primarily involves recitation, especially of the syllable hüm. One aspect of the preliminaries of speech is called sealing (rgyas gdab), a term that, as I have discussed (chapter 5), has the negative connotation associated with conceptualization when used elsewhere by Jigme Lingpa. The training of mind is a Madhyamaka-style analysis of the concept of mind, which attempts to establish that mind cannot arise from anywhere, reside anywhere, or go anywhere. Although mixed with these instructions are rejections of supposition (srid dpod) and deliberate effort (byas pa'i chos), the instructions are in effect an establishment of emptiness through the intellect. Furthermore, Jigme Lingpa presents practice as having an antitodal quality:

Therefore by training in the preliminaries of mind, in general, the sins and obscurations of mind are purified, hindrances are pacified, and attachment is turned around.  

Even the teaching *all is mind—mind is empty*, which is criticized further on in YL (as was shown in chapter 5), makes an appearance in the Great Perfection preliminaries:

Therefore, because there is no place to go to, determine that manifesting objects are made by the mind. Because there is nothing that goes, find confidence that the subject is without its own nature.  

This passage is illuminated by a statement from PK, where Jigme Lingpa is commenting on one of the levels of realization in which, according to his root text the Dröljig, appearances are recognized as mind, and mind is recognized as without root, that is, empty. Jigme Lingpa comments: "As it says, when there is conceptual imputation, appearances should be intellectually understood to be the magical play of mind." He goes on to say that from the perspective of the higher path, this approach involves grasping. This indicates that Jigme Lingpa does sanction the use of a conceptual establishment of emptiness through the *all is mind—mind is empty* approach at a certain preliminary or lower level of Great Perfection practice.

The main practice of the Great Perfection, as set out in YL, falls into two general categories: breakthrough (khregs chod) and leapover (thod rgyal). The instructions on breakthrough are, once again, divided into ordinary and extraordinary. The ordinary section comprises the rejection just mentioned and discussed in some detail in chapter 5, of the *all is mind—mind is empty* approach. The instructions on breakthrough proper are given in the extraordinary section; they are quite brief and consist of the setting out of the view (lta ba), the doubts and errors that may occur in practice, and some general instructions thematized as the four ways of being at leisure (cog bzhag).  

The setting out of the view involves Jigme Lingpa trying to point the reader toward a direct recognition of gnosia, the recognition itself being the means. The style here is simultaneist, insistent upon the immanence of
gnosis and dismissive of meditation and effort. The four ways of being at leisure are essentially a set of brief instructions on the spheres of view (lwa ba), meditation (rgom pa), activity (spyod pa), and result (bras bu); the first and second are defined as mountainlike and oceanlike respectively. These add little to the general setting-out of breakthrough, although in the explanation of the oceanlike meditation Jigme Lingpa gives the instruction to sit cross-legged with one’s eyes open, the only instruction on physical posture specific to breakthrough. Along with this section in YL, both SN and NCT should probably be read as breakthrough instructions, NCT being advice for those just starting breakthrough meditation, and SN detailing the errors that may crop up at any time for the breakthrough practitioner.

In chapter 4 we looked at the idea that the nirvanic and samsaric states were determined by the mode in which awareness manifested. Enlightened awareness was stated to be the awareness of the present moment (da la’i shes pa). This particular definition of gnosia seems to be a feature of breakthrough. Jigme Lingpa’s instructions on breakthrough begin: “Settle in the present moment of gnosia, without spreading out or gathering in.” In this context gnosia is still defined in terms of emptiness—the statement that follows the above is: “In that [gnosia], the extremes of existence and nonexistence are unaccomplished.” From his reference in SN to “the breakthrough awareness of the present moment” it can be seen that Jigme Lingpa specifically associates this definition of gnosia with breakthrough.

Returning to the other passage from SN that was discussed in chapter 4, we can see that Jigme Lingpa is primarily concerned here with breakthrough meditation instruction rather than doctrinal instruction. The point is that because even an experienced meditator’s awareness may stray from the present moment into conceptualization, such an identification cannot be applied to phenomena until one is truly accomplished:

Therefore the name dharmakāya cannot be given to discursive thought before the awareness of the present moment is unimpaired and uncorrupted. This alone is the antidote for the agent of meditation, a total penetration not chained by attachment to the view.

The tone of this passage suggests an attempt to distance the reader from the simultaneist tendencies of Great Perfection scripture. As with the introduction to KZL, the message is a warning against over-hasty applications of simultaneist statements.

Breakthrough is the simplest rubric of Seminal Heart practice, and because it seems to embody the simultaneist assertions found in the Longchen Nyingtig texts, one might expect it to be ranked as the most advanced level of meditation practice. This is not the case, however. Jigme Lingpa follows Longchenpa’s presentation of these teachings in placing leapover as the highest level of meditation practice. Thus not only is breakthrough, with its simultaneist orientation, incorporated into the graduated path, it is not even placed at the summit of that path. Jigme Lingpa leaves no room for doubt about this; drawing on Longchenpa, he gives seven reasons for the superiority of leapover to breakthrough.

The theoretical basis for leapover is given in Jigme Lingpa’s general discussion of its theory and practice. The primary sources for Jigme Lingpa’s presentation of leapover are chapter 8 of Longchenpa’s Tsigdon Dzö and chapter 20 of his Tegchö Dzö, which together contain all the elements of leapover found in YL. Other possible sources are the Nyingtig Yabzhi, which also contains many leapover texts, and instructions on leapover practice found in a number of the Seventeen Tantras. The theoretical basis for leapover is a complex system of channels (rtsa) and winds (r lung) located in the body of the practitioner. The winds are divided into the winds of mind (r lung sem) and the winds of gnosia (r lung rig)—an extension of the distinction between gnosia and mind made in a more general way in Seminal Heart texts. Mind is located in a channel in the lungs, while wisdom is located in the physical heart (tsittsa, a rendering of Skt. citta). The aim of meditative practice is to make the lamp of wisdom at the heart shine through the channels that connect it with the eyes, and hence appear as visions of light in the form of spheres (thig le) and chains (lu gu rgyud). The process is put very succinctly in GP:

Internally, the experience of emptiness emerges,
And externally, the wisdom of luminosity.
Its paths are the channels, the self-arisen great secret,
Connecting the heart with the eyes: [104]
The kati and crystal tube,
Which are like white silk threads.

These continua become manifest to the senses
In vipaśyanā as the vajra chains,
Looking like cleansed pearls strung together:
Luminous, bright, radiant, and free from impurity.
This model of the channels and winds is clearly influenced by the completion stage practices of the tantras. However Jigme Lingpa specifically distinguishes leapover from the practices of the development and completion stage. The speciality of leapover, it is argued, is the distinction between the winds of mind and the winds of gnosis. One obvious difference is the significance of the word sphere (thig le), which in leapover refers to a visual phenomenon, a usage not well attested in the Indian tantric literature. In fact the emphasis on the visual is perhaps the definitive aspect of leapover.

The complexity of the specific practices taught in leapover can be seen from the composition of YL alone, where concise instructions on the seven essential points of meditation, details of four visions (snang ba), and supporting instructions for leapover fill about sixty pages. The essential points are composed of two sets. The first three are the essential points of the three gates (sigo gsum): (i) body, which details the postures (bzhugs stangs), (ii) speech, which is an injunction to silence, and (iii) mind. The next four are the essential points of seeing the luminosity (od gal bla ba): (i) the gates through which the luminosity arises, which are the eyes, (ii) the basis for its arising (char gezi), which can be the sky, or another light source such as a candle, (iii) the winds (rlang), which is the instructions on breathing, and (iv) gnosis, which is an account of the inner and outer expanses (dbyings phyi nang), the experiential space in which the luminosity manifests. The leapover section also contains a version of the recognition of gnosis, formalized for meditation practice, which is called the initiation of gnostic dynamism (rig pa’i rtul dbang bikur).

An account of how all these elements—preliminaries, development and completion stages, breakthrough and leapover—would be practiced alongside each other can be found in Richö, Jigme Lingpa's notes on retreat practice included in the Longchen Nyingtig. Describing his own practice during his first three-year retreat, he writes that the first meditation session at dawn was the preliminary practice, followed by a session of completion stage yoga, and then a session of recitation in the development stage. After the morning meal he would do another session of the development stage, then perform miscellaneous religious activities such as making torma offerings, saying prayers, or writing his commentaries. At this point he would practice leapover if he was not free from fixation (dmigs bsad med). After the midday meal he would practice the recitation of his yidam deity (the development stage again) until evening, when he would recite prayers and do one more session on the winds (the completion stage). Then he would sleep.

This account reveals a number of things about the practical application of the texts found in the Longchen Nyingtig. All components of the path, from the most humble (making prayers and offerings) to the most advanced (leapover), are practiced sequentially in a single day. Development stage recitation takes up the largest share of the time, followed by the completion stage. Great Perfection practice takes a fairly minor role, with no specific place for breakthrough, and with leapover only practiced occasionally to correct a certain mental state. This seems to confirm that the role of breakthrough is, as suggested in YL, view rather than meditation. Development and completion stages are certainly not discarded in favor of the Great Perfection. Indeed there is no indication here or elsewhere that Vajrayāna practice precedes the Great Perfection in the way that the preliminary practices (sngon ’gro) are preliminaries to Vajrayāna. If anything, the impression given by PK and Richö is that Vajrayāna and the Great Perfection are to be practiced simultaneously, with much more time spent in actual meditation on the former.

Other gradualist aspects of Great Perfection practice

The so-called lower vehicles are, as we have seen, often compared unfavorably to the Great Perfection, yet some of their terminology is incorporated into the language of Great Perfection practice. The first example of this occurs in the verses from GP on leapover quoted above, where the word vipaśyanā (lhaig mthong) is used to denote a specifically Seminal Heart form of meditation:

These continua manifest to the senses
In vipaśyanā as the vajra chains.

A form of meditation called vipaśyanā, but having little resemblance to vipaśyanā as it is known in other Buddhist contexts, has a central role in the instructions of leapover. In PK, Jigme Lingpa explains the process through which the meditator dissolves into the luminosity of the dharma-kāya, and then gives the following proviso:

However if he has not perfected his skill in the wisdom that shines out in vipaśyanā, then, being enveloped in the añāya as before, that lamp of luminosity will be extinguished and no longer present.
This passage, and the verse in GP, show that vipaṣyānā is used as a synonym for the main practices of leapover. This is a convention that dates from the early Seminal Heart, for it is to be found in the texts of the Seventeen Tantras. The role of śamatha in the Seminal Heart context is touched upon in SN:

Within those experiences, they may experience emptiness, which is a predominance of śamatha, or luminosity, which is a predominance of vipaṣyānā.

Thus, in this Seminal Heart sense, śamatha is associated with emptiness and vipaṣyānā with luminosity, the suggestion being that just as vipaṣyānā is associated with leapover, śamatha is associated with breakthrough. This suggestion, without any specific identification of the two pairs, is also to be found in the texts of the Seventeen Tantras.

Another set of terms that comes in for redefinition in the context of Great Perfection practice is meditation (rnam gzhan) and post-mediation (rjes thob). Although, as I mentioned in chapter 5, this duality is rejected in KGN, definitions of the two terms specific to the Great Perfection are given by Jigme Lingpa in SN and PK. In PK Jigme Lingpa employs these terms throughout the text in detailing the different levels of realization; he also gives a definition of them specific to the Seminal Heart:

In meditation, with utterly pure realization you see the truth of breakthrough, transcending intellect. In post-mediation, you conquer the essential points of the inseparability of gnosis and the expanse, and of the vajra chains, and you should never be separated from the three postures.

Here meditation and post-mediation are explicitly connected with breakthrough and leapover, respectively. The fact that a number of different definitions of meditation and post-mediation, linked to the level of the meditator’s realization, are given in PK, shows that the definition of a term can itself be graduated—for one word, there is a range of meanings linked to lower and higher levels of the doctrine. This explains how different uses of the same terms, some lowly, some exalted, can appear in the same text.

Such a practice is an effect of the incorporation of both simultaneous and graduated approaches into a single body of teaching.

Finally, the topic of the correction of potential errors in meditation is present in some form in all of the Longchen Nyingtig’s supporting instructions (rgyab chos), one of which, SN, being entirely dedicated to the subject. The subject is also treated in the instructions on breakthrough in YL. Only one of the treasure and pure vision texts, KGN, contains a discussion of potential errors (located in its third chapter). Some of the errors described, including the wrong ways of apprehending emptiness, I have already discussed in chapter 5. The topic of errors in meditation is by no means original to Jigme Lingpa. It is to be found in the early texts of the Seminal Heart, and indeed in the texts of other classes of Great Perfection literature as well. For example, chapters 9 and 38 of the Künje Gyalpo address this topic, and there is a short Mind Series text called the Sutra That Teaches the Errors and Obscurations in the Nyingma Gyubum. The Lama Gongdub contains a text that, like SN, claims to cut off errors.

Despite this heritage within the Great Perfection, the specifics of Jigme Lingpa’s treatment of the subject of errors in meditation in SN seem to be drawn from the Mahāmudrā tradition; this is most notable in the use of the four strayings (shor sa bzhis) and three deviations (gos sa gsum), and also in the more miscellaneous collection of errors (nor sa), which involve the use of certain technical terms including ordinary mind (tha mal gi shes pa) and nondistraction (yung med) commonly found in Mahāmudrā texts. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the treatment of the four ways of going astray in SN is very similar to the presentation of the same topic in the Kagyü writer Doppo Tashi Namgyal’s Leghe Dawaɪ Özer. The three deviations are also described in the latter, in much more detail than in SN, and there is a section on the errors that covers many of the same topics, including a lengthy discussion of ordinary mind and nondistraction.

The topic need not imply a gradual realization; it may be imagined that although the meditator may make several false approaches to enlightenment, once he gets it right, realization is immediate and there is no further need to meditate. Although this could be true of KGN, it is not the position of the other texts. In concluding his account of the various errors, deviations, and ways of going astray in SN, Jigme Lingpa writes:

In short, on the journey from the meditator’s first reception [of the teaching] to the unsurpassable stage, there are extremely narrow pathways and hiding places of error, deviation, and straying. Therefore, if you do not have a fine discernment of these
experiences, even if you are learned in talk and terminology it will be as they say in the Great Perfection: "Experiences are like mist; after fading away, they're gone."410

The language of this passage suggests gradualism rather than simultaneism. There is a journey to be made toward the goal, and the experiences of the meditator along the way may be misleading. There is a distinction between the transient experiences (nyams) of meditation and the final realization (r涛gs). In one part of SN Jigme Lingpa details the deviations of becoming attached to the experiences of bliss, clarity, and nonconceptionalization, and distinguishes these experiences from true realization.411 He also employs the threefold distinction, which adds another level before those two, that of the very intellectual understanding that is elsewhere thoroughly rejected. In this context it becomes the first step on the way to final realization, the levels being: (i) intellectual understanding (go ba), (ii) experience or taste (myong ba), and (iii) realization (r涛gs pa).412

Levels of Realization

Among the sets of levels in realization discussed in the Longchen Nyingtig, there are those that have been borrowed from other traditions and those that are specific to the Great Perfection. The former are the four yogas (rnal byor bzhi) of the Mahamudra tradition, and to a lesser extent the path and stages of the Pimilarinya, and the latter are the three freedoms (groi ba gum) and the four visions of leapover. As they occur in different contexts, I will deal with them separately.

The four yogas and the paths and stages

Jigme Lingpa seems to have felt that those descriptions of graduated realization that were to be found in Great Perfection texts were not sufficient. Without, it seems, a precedent in Longchenpa's work (although in accord with other Nyingma precedents—see below), he chose to bring a system from the Kagyu tradition of Mahamudra into his presentation of the Great Perfection. The system is called the four yogas (rnal byor bzhi). Jigme Lingpa's extensive presentation of this system is located in PK, though he also mentions it briefly in NCT:

Although nothing is said in the instructions and tantras of the Great Perfection or Mahamudra about the classification of the path subsequent to self-liberation through the single cut of gnosis, it was taught by those great bodhisattvas, the accomplished ones of the past. Having completely mastered the gnosis of postmeditation, they created, out of this realization, the categories of one-pointedness, non-elaboration, one taste, and nonmeditation, each divided into great, medium, and small, and calculated their equivalence to the stages and paths.413

This passage sets out Jigme Lingpa's own position: there is not sufficient teaching on the path after the recognition of gnosis (here single cut means a self-sufficient method), and the four yogas are the best system. The names of the four are exactly the same as in the Mahamudra texts:

(i) One-pointedness (rse greg)
(ii) Non-elaboration (spros bral)
(iii) One taste (ro greg)
(iv) Nonmeditation (gong med)

The history touched upon in the passage above is elaborated in PK, in the longest passage of historical writing in these Longchen Nyingtig texts. Jigme Lingpa states that this teaching is generally attributed to Gampopa, the founder of the Dagpo Kagyu, but that it originates with the Rali Sami Khyabpa Tantra, a tantra from the Cakrasamvara cycle, the Sanskrit name of which is the Guhycintina Tantra.414 Jigme Lingpa also states that before this Atisha had given a similar teaching known as the four unions (shyor bzhi), which was based on the Cakrasamvara Tantra.

Jigme Lingpa's account is an almost word-for-word repetition of a passage by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal.415 However, where the latter asserts the superiority of the Kagyu explanation of this system, Jigme Lingpa gives examples of its treatment in the work of Nyingma writers. He states that Padmasambhava taught these four yogas to Yeshe Togyal (probably a reference to a treasure text), and that Sogdogpa Lodro Gyalsen (1552-1624) taught these four yogas in parallel with the levels of experience in the Mind Series. Most important, he mentions the Drilittig Gongga Rangdrol of Trungwo Terchen Sherab Œzer (1518-84), a treasure cycle in which, he says, the four yogas were taught under a different name, and linked with the five paths of the Pilaririnya.416 It is the Drilittig verses that Jigme Lingpa takes as the basis
for his presentation in PK. He writes: “As this method is said to be particularly good I will teach, for the benefit of gradualists, solely according to the intention of these instructions, which withstand analysis.”

The four levels of Sherab Özer’s system are: (i) the worldly yoga (‘jig rten gyi rnal ’byor), (ii) the yoga of the path of seeing (mthong lam gyi rnal ’byor), (iii) the yoga of the path of meditation (igom lam gyi rnal ’byor) and (iv) the yoga of the path of no more learning (mi slob pa’i lam gyi rnal ’byor). The first is linked with the path of application ( ‘byor ba’i lam) in the Pāramitāyāna, and the remaining three are linked with the paths for which they are named. Jigme Lingpa includes the first path of the Pāramitāyāna, the path of accumulation (tshogs pa’i lam), in this system by equating it with the practice of the preliminaries. Each of the four levels is subdivided into lesser, medium, and greater (che ‘bring chung), making twelve levels in all. In general, at each higher level a fault present in the previous level is abandoned, making this a thoroughly graduated and progressive path.

Jigme Lingpa’s main contribution to his source verses is to flesh out the verses from the Droltig with descriptions of his own experiences in meditation. He also incorporates other Pāramitāyāna material, following the Sūtrālāmākāra in subdividing the path of meditation into the second to the ninth stages (bhūmi), and using quotations from the Uṭtaratattvātisāstra to elaborate this material at a number of points in the text. The twelve levels of realization culminate, with the yoga of the path of no more learning, in a description of realization in the language of the Seminal Heart. Even this, Jigme Lingpa chooses to connect with the realization of the Pāramitāyāna, in the form of the three enlightenments (byang chub gum), the enlightenments of a śrāvaka, a pratyekabuddha, and a bodhisattva. Jigme Lingpa then presents the three kāyas, first according to the Sūtrālāmākāra and the Uṭtaratattvātisāstra, and second according to the Droltig. Jigme Lingpa is certainly attempting here to join the discourse of the Great Perfection with that of the sutra material, while still occasionally asserting the superiority of the Great Perfection.

The three liberations and the four visions

KZL is a partner to PK, in that like the latter it attempts the elaboration of graduated levels of realization, but in this case it uses a system specific to the Great Perfection, a system that Jigme Lingpa identifies as belonging to those who follow the translator Vimalamitra:

For the benefit of those with gradualist capabilities, three ways of liberating thoughts and emotions have been expounded by the followers of Pañchen Vimalamitra, taught with the following three similes:

1) Liberation by recognizing thoughts and emotions: thoughts and emotions are liberated as if meeting an old friend.
2) The self-liberation of thoughts and emotions: thoughts and emotions are liberated like a snake untying its own knots.
3) Liberation of thoughts and emotions into the dharmakāya without benefit or harm: thoughts and emotions are liberated like a burglar in an empty house.

This set of three has a strongly experiential character, especially in the use of similes to indicate what the Great Perfection yogin experiences at each level. The descriptions seem to be more applicable to the simple recognition of breakthrough than to the complex light visions of lepap. In KZL, Jigme Lingpa’s discussion of the first kind of liberation is almost entirely negative; his objection seems to be that it goes too far for the beginner. He writes:

This is intended for the phase of practical instruction for a devoted person who is a beginner, just after they have been taught the main practice of meditation as mindfulness in all activities. However you should know that this is not the period in which to teach the simultaneous method of the Great Perfection in a literal way.

Jigme Lingpa’s concern is that when the recognition of gnosis is taught to beginners, a dualistic recognition of discursive thought will be thought to be the first liberation; as I have shown in chapter 5, Jigme Lingpa rejects the duality of an agent and an object of the view. This skepticism fits the general theme of KZL, which is, as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, a warning against carelessly teaching the simultaneist method. It almost looks as if Jigme Lingpa is rejecting the first kind of liberation entirely; however, in NCT, where Jigme Lingpa also mentions the three liberations, he indicates that in his view all three liberations are valid when the progress of the meditator is checked by a reliable lama. Thus the first level (and this applies to the second as well) is not rejected by Jigme Lingpa, but is put in its place as a lower level in a gradual realization.
In itself the use of the word beginner (las dang po pa) here is important. The word on its own has strong implications of a graduated path, confirmed in the conclusion of KZL, where Jigme Lingpa implies that the use of meditative antidotes is appropriate for most beginners (in this case the word seems to refer to those who have not yet entered into Great Perfection practice):

Beginners need to be trained gradually in bringing thoughts and emotions onto the path, as appropriate to the individual’s experience and character. Because there is a danger of some people rejecting [the teachings] out of fear and anger, the one who holds the ten powers advised that the key precepts are not to be taught everywhere.439

Following this passage, Jigme Lingpa quotes the Buddha’s advice from the Pañcavimśati-sahasrikā-prajñāpāramitā Sūtra that the teachings on emptiness are not to be given to beginners. All of this indicates a genuine anxiety about the danger of giving advanced teachings to those who are not equipped to make proper use of them. Interestingly, the word beginner also appears in the subtitle to NCT: Necessary Instructions for Beginners, suggesting that even entrants onto the supreme path of the Great Perfection are considered beginners.

The second level of liberation is discussed in more positive terms, and the third level is treated as fully developed realization, the discussion of which is based on a passage by Lhatsün Namkhai Jigme (1597–1650), a Nyingma author of numerous songs of realization and short instructional texts on the Great Perfection. It is difficult to tell where these three levels might be considered to fit within the four yogas, and Jigme Lingpa makes no attempt to connect the two systems. In general it seems that Jigme Lingpa did not think of the three liberations as an adequate map of the graduated levels of realization.

The other set of graduated levels of realization specific to the Great Perfection is the four visions (snang ba bzhi), which are specific to the instructions on leapover, being as they are the results of the meditative exercises of leapover. These four visions are considered the shining out (gsal ba) of the lamps of wisdom that exist in the body’s wisdom channels. I mentioned in the brief examination of leapover above that there is a lamp located at the heart (tsitita). In the context of the four visions, four lamps are enumerated and considered the bases of the visions. The subject of the visions is the spheres (thig le) and vajra chains (rdo rje le gu rgyud). This model of the four visions is summarized in YLG:

The lamp of self-arising prajñā forms the ground of their arising. The lamp of far-reaching water forms the gates of their arising. The lamp of the pure expanse forms the ornaments of their arising. The lamp of the empty sphere forms the characteristics of their arising. In this way each of the four lamps is a support. That which is supported on the basis of these four lamps is the great radiance of gnosis, the vajra chains. Having become accustomed to [i] the vision of the manifest true condition there is [ii] the development of experience, [iii] arriving at the full extent of gnosis, and [iv] exhaustion of the true condition. When one has reached the furthest limit of these four great visions, the characteristics of full enlightenment are completely present in the visions of the path.440

According to this passage, the four lamps form the basis for the four visions, but there is no direct equivalence (it is not that the first lamp supports the first vision and so on). Jigme Lingpa describes each vision in detail in YL; in introducing the topic there, he quotes from the Dratalgyur Tantra, establishing that this doctrine goes back to the Seventeen Tantras.441 In that passage the visions are presented as a graduated series of accomplishments. Jigme Lingpa himself goes on to say that the visions are similar to the five paths of the Paramitāyāna, but the difference between the slow vehicle of the Paramitāyāna and this fast vehicle is like the difference between the speed of a chariot and the speed of the sun and moon.442 So he sees the distinction here as a matter of the time taken to reach the goal, and, crucially, not the difference between a gradual and simultaneous approach.

The other source for information on the four visions in the Longchen Nyingtig is GP, which gives a slightly idiosyncratic account of them, leaving out the first vision entirely, and taking only the lamp of the element as the basis for the second, third, and fourth visions.443 Here too the visions are presented as progressive, and it is worth noting that even the names of two of the visions use the language of gradual realization: the development of experience (nyams gong 'phel) and arriving at the full extent of gnosis (rig pa thad 'phel). Despite equating these with the five paths of the Paramitāyāna, Jigme Lingpa does not use them outside of the context of leapover, preferring (as
we have seen) to use the four yogas of Mahāmudrā or the three liberations of the Great Perfection. This is probably because the details of these visions are based on the specific meditative exercises of leapover.

Also within the leapover rubric, Jigme Lingpa describes a series of signs (rātā) of the meditator’s progress in leapover, enumerated from the least significant to the signs of realization itself. This indicates an ethos within leapover, much more than breakthrough or the other classes of Great Perfection literature, of gradual, cumulative progress in meditation.

Finally, there is a general trend found in Jigme Lingpa’s supporting instructions that runs contrary to the theme of simultaneous liberation: his warnings against excessive confidence in the level of one’s own realization. Examples can be found in all of the supporting instructions, though Jigme Lingpa makes this point most frequently in SN. For example, on the subject of straying into the state of the seal in meditation, he writes:

Because of it meditators develop the pride of thinking: “My meditation is the thing itself,” “Nobody knows better than this,” and “In this way, I have achieved realization.” If this is not stopped by a qualified lama, then, as they say in the Great Perfection: “Intellectual understanding is like a patch: after it has worn away, it’s gone.”

In general Jigme Lingpa sees pride and arrogance as the faults that result from this premature celebration of realization, faults that then block any further progress. Jigme Lingpa stresses the need for a genuine lama who can put the meditator in his proper place. It is clear from the following passage in PK that Jigme Lingpa believes the divisions of graduated levels of realization are vital for limiting the pride of meditators. This comes at the end of a short section on the ten stages:

The distinctions and collections, such as the 2,360 qualities of the stages, the 660 divisions of wisdom, and the 3,120 parts of Dharma, should be studied in the sixth part of the Tegchü Dzö. I say this thinking, “Wouldn’t it be nice if this became a cause for the decline of braggarts and boasters and the rousing of the ignorant people of these times who sleep in their mountain seats.”
7 Interpretation and Reconciliation

At this point the contradiction within the Longchen Nyingtig between the ethos of non-activity and simultaneous enlightenment on the one hand and the elaborate systems of meditation and graduated realization on the other (discussed in chapters 5 and 6 respectively) should be apparent. In this chapter I will look at the strategies, both implicit and explicit, in the Longchen Nyingtig texts, for dealing with these contradictions.

Simultaneous and Gradual Realization:  
The Levels of Ability

The prevalence in Buddhism of the distinction between practitioners of higher and lower ability, is also true of Great Perfection texts, in which it is often stated that the path of the Great Perfection is only for those of the sharpest faculties. For instance, in the auto commentary to the Nelug Dzö Longchenpa writes:

Because the intention of the Seminal Heart is just this alone, when this essential point is realized, there is no goal-oriented activity or effort. Therefore it is known as “the teaching of buddhahood without meditation for those of the very best faculties.” 442

Similarly, in the opening verses of PK, Jigme Lingpa writes: “This is the path of methods for those trainees of the sharpest faculties.” 443 The principal question raised by such statements is whether they were intended to be taken literally, or were rhetorical devices designed to exalt the Great Perfection above all other systems. In the Longchen Nyingtig there appears to
be some reference to a practical use of these distinctions—that is, that certain teachings are intended to be given to those of lower ability, and certain teachings to those of higher ability. On the other hand, most of the occurrences of this kind of discourse in Jigme Lingpa’s texts are applied to the hermeneutical task of interpreting the relationship between simultaneist and gradualist methods.

In PK Jigme Lingpa responds to an objection that the gradual realization set out in the four yogas contradicts the doctrine of primordial liberation contained in the Great Perfection scriptures. This is the clearest articulation in the Longchen Nyingtig texts of Jigme Lingpa’s awareness of the contradiction between the simultaneous approach of the Great Perfection treasure texts and the gradual path set out in YL, PK, and the other supporting instructions. His response to this question is to apply the hierarchy of three levels of ability:

Some may think, “If the tantras of the Great Perfection teach that there is a primordial liberation, then this doctrine of yours is in contradiction with them.” This is not correct because Vajradhāra, using his skill in means, taught according to the categories of best, middling, and worst faculties, subdivided into the nine levels from śrāvakā to atiyoga. Although the Great Perfection is the path for those of the sharpest faculties, entrants are not composed exclusively of those types. With this in mind, having ascertained the features of the middling and inferior faculties of awareness holders, the tradition was established in this way. ⁴⁴⁴

Here Jigme Lingpa is clearly turning the statement that the Great Perfection is only for those of the sharpest faculties to a hermeneutical end. It is useful to separate two different ways in which these distinctions are used by Jigme Lingpa in his supporting instructions. The first way (which I will call inclusive) includes all three types as potential practitioners of the Great Perfection. The second way (which I will call exclusive) puts the first, highest type out of the range of contemporary practitioners, in that those of the highest type are said to be extremely rare or even no longer existent. It is the latter that Jigme Lingpa employs to reconcile the gradual path taught in YL and the supporting instructions with the simultaneist character of much of the Seminal Heart literature, including his own treasure texts. Before examining that strategy, I will look briefly at the inclusive use of the distinctions. ⁴⁴⁵

The inclusive use of the distinctions

The three levels of ability are used as the basic structure of YL, where the best encompasses the main teachings of breakthrough and leapover, the medium encompasses the instructions for the intermediate states, and the inferior encompasses the technique for achieving transference into a pure land at the time of death. The use of these levels to provide a structure for the presentation of instructions on the Seminal Heart is not original to Jigme Lingpa. It is also present in Longchenpa’s Tegchö Dzö, where chapters 18 through 22 contain the breakthrough and leapover instructions intended for the superior types, while chapter 23 contains the instructions for the middling type and chapter 24 contains the instructions for the inferior. In both texts, the majority of the material, including the main practices of the Seminal Heart, is in the section for the best practitioners, indicating that among those who are to be taught the Great Perfection, some at least are expected to be of that caliber.

However the system should probably not be taken too literally. It is likely that all three types of instruction contained in the threefold structure of YL would be given to any one person, as indicated by an aspirational prayer in the Longchen Nyingtig, which states that, at the time of death, every practitioner should aim at the highest kind of culminating practice (the visions of leapover) and resort to the lower kinds only if unable to actualize the higher. ⁴⁴⁶ Thus the level of their capacity would only be an issue at the very end of the path, which could be the achievement of the body of light in leapover practice, or failing that, the use of the bar do instructions to achieve realization after death, or failing that, the use of the technique of transference. ⁴⁴⁷ This is then a case of the levels of practitioner providing a hierarchical structure for the teachings and having little to do with the question of which instruction is to be given to whom. ⁴⁴⁸

There is one passage of YL where Jigme Lingpa does give practical instructions on how to teach different types of students, though here, rather than three types of practitioners, Jigme Lingpa only identifies two, those he designates as being of inferior intellect (blo dam) or dull faculties (dbang po rnal) on the one hand and those he designates as being of greater intellect (blo che ba) on the other. He writes:

Those of inferior intellect are first brought to understanding by being taught in accordance with the two truths. It is done in this way: those of dull faculties recognize how the afflictions arise and
then, by settling in their own place, they develop and maintain the realization of the purity of stillness and movement in which the afflictions are essentially without root or object. Those of greater intellect employ the essential point of liberation from one's own place in the true condition, so that whatever afflictions, thoughts, and emotions arise, they are harmless by nature.⁴⁹

Jigme Lingpa does not use the terms simultaneist and gradualist, and this seems to be because even the better type of practitioner as described in this passage is not a true simultaneist. This instruction is given within the context of breakthrough practice, so the suggestion about how to teach those of greater intellect would be understood as applicable only to the student who has already progressed through the preliminary levels of practice that precede breakthrough (which were discussed in chapter 6). Jigme Lingpa's approach in this passage is very similar to that of Tsele Natsog Rangröl in a discussion of the way in which to teach Mahāmudrā:

In particular, among people there are various types of faculty and intelligence. Those simultaneists of sharp faculties who are accomplished through previous training do not need to be led gradually through śamatha and vipaśyanā. For them, recognition and liberation arise at the same time. However, others need to be instructed gradually. At the beginning they should train for as long as necessary in the levels of śamatha with a focus, such as a stick, a stone, a deity's image, a syllable, a sphere, or breath control.⁴⁵⁰

The exclusive use of the distinctions

In the passage from PK quoted above, Jigme Lingpa states that those who engage in the path of the Great Perfection are not all of the superior type, and thereby justifies his teaching of a gradual approach to enlightenment in the rest of the text. Although he does not state what proportion of practitioners might be considered to be of the superior type, elsewhere in the supporting instructions he states that those of the best faculties are extremely rare, which is by no means an unusual position: in the literature of the tantras, such statements are not uncommon and are linked with the common

Buddhist concept of the present as a degenerate age. An example of this kind of statement in earlier literature is the following from the Cāndamahāroṣṇapatantra:

Yet in this declining time, among the millions,
Only a single being is devoted to faith and effort.
All this was said for the sake of his swift accomplishment
of enlightenment.⁴⁵¹

In a similar vein, Jigme Lingpa writes:

And yet, though this teaching is the pinnacle of the vehicles, a variety of people of the best, middling, and low types exist. Because it is difficult to gather only those of the very best faculties, there can be problems between teacher and student. Then, though the student may meditate, because of this flaw, which makes it difficult to develop qualities, he will go astray.⁴⁵²

Here Jigme Lingpa recognizes that in dealing with the issue of errors in meditation practice (the subject of SN), which suggest a graduated and progressive path to the goal, he is implicitly teaching gradualism. In KZL Jigme Lingpa makes a similar kind of statement in introducing his subject, the graduated levels of realization. He writes:

To be specific, having distinguished between reflexive awareness (which is all-penetrating primordial wisdom) and mind (which is nescient conceptualization and delusive forms), you should maintain freedom from limits in the state of the vast and spacious expanse of gnosis, without following after it. Through this, the imprints of the conceptual mind are purified, and errors and straying are cut off. However, except for those rare people with extremely sharp faculties, this is difficult to realize. Because of this, although in the essential heart that I am speaking about there is no obtaining that which is beyond increase or decrease, good or bad, we distinguish between samsara on the one hand and nirvana on the other, solely in the context of skillful discursive thought, and because meditators get confused, we articulate their precise nature.⁴⁵³
An important point to be drawn from this passage, and the one that precedes it, is that Jigme Lingpa feels it necessary to defend the subject-matter of his text. Clearly he is aware that it is gradualist in character, although this is not stated outright in these passages. In introducing the main topic of PK, Jigme Lingpa does use the word *gradualist* when he announces his intention to base the structure of his treatment of gradual realization on the Drölég:

As this method is said to be particularly good I will teach, for the benefit of gradualists, solely according to the intention of these instructions that withstand analysis.⁴⁵⁴

Similarly, Tsem Natsog Rangdröl, at the beginning of a treatment of the four yogas of Mahāmudrā in one of his short texts, cites the three types of practitioner and declares his intention to proceed according to the path of the gradualist. It is quite likely that Jigme Lingpa was familiar with this passage. In the same text Natsog Rangdröl explicitly advocates an inclusive interpretation of simultaneist and gradualist types whereby both are incorporated into the gradual path.

Ease or difficulty in understanding these [points] depends on the faculties of the individual person, which can be divided into three types. Those who can be taught through symbols alone, or who, because understanding, experience, and realization arise instantly without having to engage in difficult exertions, perfect the qualities at once, are known as the *simultaneous* type. They are sages who are accomplished through their previous training. On the other hand, there are those for whom the higher or lower levels of the qualities of experience and realization increase or decrease without any order. They are known as the *leaping-over* type and are of medium [faculties]. The other type, ordinary people who in general ascend through the levels in order, in concordance with the amount of effort they have made in practice, are known as the *gradual* type, and are of average [faculties]. So, as the other two can also be included in the graduated path in concordance with the gradual types, I will teach in accordance with that.⁴⁵⁵

Another example from the Mahāmudrā lineage (on which Natsog Rangdröl’s passage may well be based) is the *Legshe Dawai Özer* of Dagpo Tashi Namgyal, where a discussion of the three types prefaces his presentation of the four yogas.⁴⁶⁰ Even further back, a precedent for this strategy exists in the recorded oral teachings of Gampopa (1079–1153): in reply to a question about the relationship between the Great Perfection and Mahāmudrā (a topic, incidentally, to which Jigme Lingpa dedicated a short work), Gampopa states that there are two types of people, the simultaneists and the gradualists, but the former approach is very difficult, and he himself is a gradualist.⁴⁶¹

One notes from the passage from PK quoted above that Jigme Lingpa seems to place the creation of a gradual path for the Great Perfection in the realm of ordinary composition, not scripture. This is also suggested by the passage from NCT in which he briefly details the four yogas of Mahāmudrā:

Although nothing is said in the instructions and tantras of the Great Perfection or Mahāmudrā about the classification of the path subsequent to self-liberation through the single cut of gnosis, it was taught by those great bodhisattvas, the accomplished ones of the past.⁴⁵⁴

Jigme Lingpa’s perception of the place where simultaneist and gradualist discourses are to be found, that is, scripture and commentary respectively, is evident in the contents of the Longchen Nyüngön texts themselves: in the supporting instructions Jigme Lingpa seems to have quite deliberately taken on the task of filling in the gaps in the treasure and pure vision texts, where, as he says, the path after the recognition of gnosicis not addressed. However he is keen to find precedents for his use of gradualism in the Great Perfection where possible, as the passage from PK quoted at the beginning of this section shows. There he uses the example of the three types of awareness holder (*rig ’dzin*, Skt. *vidyādhara*), a distinction from the mahāyoga rubric, that is attributed to the Buddha who teaches many of the tantras of that class, Vajradhāra.⁴⁵⁵

Along with the problem of introducing graduated levels of realization, Jigme Lingpa is aware, in these texts, of the conflict between scriptural material and a graduated method. In PK he writes:

Those trainees of the very sharpest faculties like Garab Dorje, Self-arisen Padmasambhava, and Indrabhūti, who were lords of the mandala while seeming to be ordinary students, were spontaneously liberated upon hearing, but gradualist people will not
reach the goal in that way. So, in this situation, there must be
some further striving for complete liberation.\textsuperscript{601}

Jigme Lingpa shows a similar concern in the passage from KZL that
was quoted in chapter 6, in which he states that “this is not the period
in which to teach the simultaneous method of the Great Perfection in a
literal way.”\textsuperscript{602} In these passages Jigme Lingpa clearly indicates
that while the recognition of gnosia occurs at the beginning of the path,
the full realization of gnosia will only occur for gradualist people after
a long period of subsequent training. This leaves us with the question of
whether Jigme Lingpa thinks there are any people of the best faculties,
the simultaneous type, in existence at all. The passage from PK seems to
make that possibility extremely remote, limiting the examples of those
of the sharpest faculties to only the most eminent, and semi-legendary,
figures of the distant past.

This approach presents a solution to the conflict between simultaneist
and gradualist tendencies by stating that the present text is intended for
gradualist types, an essentially gradualist path is taught without the neces-
sity of refuting the simultaneist statements of the majority of Great Perfe-
c tion scripture. Moreover, by indicating that only the great masters of
the distant past are admissible as simultaneous types, the door is effec-
tively closed to those who might claim to be such. This strategy was not
original to Jigme Lingpa, as is shown in YL, where he quotes a similar passage from
one of Longchenpa’s works:

The great yogins who arrived at that state [of enlightenment], like
Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and Tilopa, taught directly, with-
out cause and effect, virtue, or sin. Even if we understand this
intellectually we have not reached it through becoming truly
acclimated to it, so we are taught it after we have distinguished
the subtle aspects of cause and effect and are no longer afraid of
that state.\textsuperscript{603}

In another example of the belief that the early figures had an ability that
is no longer to be found, Lhatsun Namkhai Jigme asserts in a discussion
of leapover that the “body of great transference” (pho ba chen po), which
Vimalamitra, Padmasambhava, and many of Padmasambhava’s twenty-
five disciples are said to have achieved, is not within the power of later
practitioners.\textsuperscript{604}

It is now apposite to return to the passage from KZL quoted at the begin-
ing of this section, where one particular statement is of especial interest:
“For this reason, although the seminal essence of which I have spoken is
beyond increase or decrease, good or bad, rejecting or accepting, we dis-
tinguish between samsara on the one hand and nirvana on the other, solely
in the context of skillful discursive thought, and because meditators get
confused, we articulate their precise nature.” Here Jigme Lingpa appears
to make a connection between gradualist discourse and the distinction
between samsara and nirvana. However on closer examination this may
not be the case. In this same passage the simultaneous method is itself
described in terms of the distinction between reflexive awareness (rang rig,
here a synonym for rig pa) and mind (sme dpon), respectively the nirvanic
and samsaric modes of awareness. It seems that Jigme Lingpa does not perceive
this kind of discourse as a distinction between samsara and nirvana. This
could be because, as I showed in chapter 4, those Seminal Heart texts in
which the distinction is made generally also emphasize the immanent pres-
ence of gnosia. Indeed, immediately preceding this passage in KZL is a
quotation from one of the Seventeen Tantras, which includes the following
lines:

Gnosis is spontaneously present without meditation;
You will not find me by constructing a meditation.\textsuperscript{605}

What Jigme Lingpa seems to have in mind in the KZL passage is this
immanence of the nirvanic in the samsaric state. This, he suggests, is the
position of the Great Perfection scriptures, and any separation between
the two is a pragmatic distinction made for the less brilliant trainees (admittedly
a group that includes virtually everyone). However he considers the skill-
ful distinction between mind and gnosia—or ālaya and dharmakāya—a
part of the simultaneist aspect of the Great Perfection and not what he iden-
tifies as the distinction between the samsaric and the nirvanic.

Jigme Lingpa’s belief that the distinction of mind and gnosia is not linked
to the gradualist path is not unreasonable in the context of the Seminal
Heart, for here, as I have shown, the recognition of the difference between
one’s deluded mind and gnosia is itself the act of simultaneous realization.
For example, in the second section of NSB it is just that distinction between
mind and gnosia that is identified as the place of simultaneous liberation (geg
kar grol ba). Although this course leaves unanswered the apparent para-
dox between the identification and distinction of the samsaric and nirvanic,
for Jigme Lingpa, as we have seen, the answer seems to be the buddha nature metaphor.

When Jigme Lingpa talks about the skillful distinction between samsara and nirvana, what he is almost certainly referring to is the distinction between hierarchical levels of realization, the main topic of KZL. Jigme Lingpa is aware that the creation of this kind of distinction between samsara and nirvana is a gradualist-oriented activity. For him it is a useful, pragmatic strategy, necessitated by the inadequacy of meditators, yet the nonduality of samsara and nirvana, qualified by the buddha nature model, remains the true state.

The Manifestation of Enlightenment: The Khyung Bird

In PK, Jigme Lingpa mentions that the achievement of the first stage (bhūmi) occurs on the path of seeing. He then brings up the question of the miraculous enlightened qualities (yon tan) that, according to certain sutras, are supposed to become evident at the achievement of each stage. He writes:

You may think: “What about the specific qualities? Why is it not the case that the instant anyone sees the faces of a hundred buddhas, that person manifests such powers as being surrounded by a hundred wondrous entourages, having the 112 qualities of a teacher, far-seeing and foreknowledge, being without the marks of life and death, and the power to be born as the king of Jambudvīpa?”

Though this may not initially appear to be a question about the conflict between simultaneous and gradual enlightenment, Jigme Lingpa’s answer does address that issue, employing a metaphor from earlier Instruction Series literature, the khyung bird:

In the tantras of the Great Perfection there is the example of the young khyung bird which reaches perfection inside the egg. As soon as it is freed from the egg it flies, and then nothing has the power to stop it. However, before the bird is free from the bindings of the egg, there is an extended development into fullness over a long period of time.

In the Pāramitāyāna, the result manifests at some point uncountable eons after beginning on the path. In the phase of the Vajrayāna, all qualities of renunciation and realization are perfected inside the seal of the body of the meditator, and upon freedom from the “egg” of the body, he guides others to certainty in laying hold of the secure place, in the manner of an optical illusion on the stage possessing the twofold purity. Thus the qualities are not necessarily seen to manifest at all. The finer points of this can be seen in instructional treatises such as the Seven Treasuries.

The metaphor of the khyung bird (sometimes identified with the Indian garuda) that develops to full maturity inside the egg has a long history in Tibetan Buddhist writing. An early Great Perfection text, the Ta’wa Yeshe Tinglak Tantra, uses the metaphor in much the same way as Jigme Lingpa does, in specific connection to the delayed appearance of the qualities of enlightenment:

As for the examination of the major and minor marks that are the qualities of buddhahood...when [do they arise]? At present their arising is obscured by the body. To use a metaphor, though the great khyung bird’s wings are fully grown inside the egg, while the egg is unbroken it cannot fly.

This passage seems to be specifically the type of statement to which Jigme Lingpa is referring in PK. However the sources Jigme Lingpa is most likely to have been familiar with are Longchenpa’s treatments of the subject, which he mentions in the passage above, though giving only a general reference to the Seven Treasuries. There are two passages from the Seven Treasuries that I am aware of in which Longchenpa uses this metaphor. The first is in the commentary to the Nelse Dzö, the Desum Nyingpo, where most of the discussion employs the metaphor in a purely celebratory, rather than explanatory, way, although Longchenpa does state that “just as the [khyung bird] flies upon leaving the egg, [the yogin] achieves buddhahood upon being freed from the body.” The other text where this topic is discussed is the commentary to the Chokyong Dzö, the Lungi Terdzö, where Longchenpa discusses the second use of the metaphor in more detail.

Now, although one may have at present perfected the three powers of realization, one has not been released from the egg—that is, this illusory body. At some point, one will transfer out of it,
and then in a moment one will be liberated into ever-purity, like flying in the sky after getting free from the egg. At that time, out of the state of flying in the sky of gnosis, which is the dharma-kāya, the khyung bird, which is the rūpakāya, performs the two benefits for trainees, thereby conquering the lower vehicles and crossing the abyss of samsara.⁴³⁰

While here Longchenpa uses the metaphor in the same way as Jigme Lingpa does in PK, the passage from the Tawa Yeche Tingdzog Tantra quoted above is the closest. In both that tantra and PK, the myth of the khyung bird’s development in the egg is employed to bring the model of the particular sets of qualities specific to each stage into a relationship with the belief, common to both the Great Perfection and the Vajrayāna, that enlightenment can be achieved in a single lifetime.

In PK Jigme Lingpa deals with the equivalencies between the five paths and ten stages of the Pāramitāyāna on the one hand and the four yogas of Mahāmudrā and the Dröljig on the other. One major difference between the two systems, as they are understood here, is the time-scale: where eons of development are to be expected in the Pāramitāyāna, merely a single lifetime is sufficient for the Vajrayāna and the Great Perfection. There is no particular problem with compacting the experiential gains of the paths and stages into a single lifetime, but a difficulty presents itself where the qualities are concerned, since such vastly impressive, world-shaking qualities would hardly go unnoticed if Vajrayāna and Great Perfection meditators were developing them. Thus we find this explanation of the body as a seal that keeps the qualities hidden and the use of the khyung bird metaphor to illustrate it.

David Jackson mentions that the idea of the delayed appearance of the qualities was the subject of some controversy in Tibet, notably being criticized by Sakya Pandita in his Domjum Rahje, and becoming a subject of debate among later Sakya scholars.⁴³¹ In the Kagyu school, this topic was also discussed by Dagpo Tashi Namgyal, who used the khyung bird metaphor in much the same way as Jigme Lingpa.⁴³² However Jigme Lingpa does not refer to these sources, nor does he refer to the existence of the subject outside of the Great Perfection tantras and commentarial literature, like the Seven Treasuries.

In summary, Jigme Lingpa approaches the conflicts in the Great Perfection texts of the Longchen Nyingtig from three directions. First, the buddha nature model works to integrate the divergent ways in which the relation-
I suggested in chapter 1 that in examining the tendency toward gradualism in these texts it is useful to distinguish between a gradual method—that is, the hierarchy of methods, meditative and otherwise, through which the practitioner proceeds one level at a time—and a gradual realization—that is, a hierarchy of spiritual realization through which the practitioner progresses one level at a time. As should be clear at this point, the *Longchen Nyingtig* represents both a graduated method and a gradual realization. It should also be apparent that this wholly gradualist prescription stands in stark contrast to the discourse of the Great Perfection treasure texts, and that Jigme Lingpa employs the interpretive device of different levels of ability in practitioners in an attempt to reconcile this contradiction. Jigme Lingpa places the possibility of being of the type suitable for the simultaneous approach essentially out of reach with the statement that such types are very rare and by limiting the type to semi-legendary figures of the past such as Padmasambhava. Through this device, the simultaneous statements of much Great Perfection scripture, including the treasure and pure vision texts of the *Longchen Nyingtig*, are placed on a different level from the gradualist statements made by Jigme Lingpa. The accusation that the presentation of a gradualist path contradicts the scriptures is thereby deflected. This approach was not new, and immediate precedents for Jigme Lingpa were available in the works of previous commentators on the Great Perfection such as Longchenpa and Tsele Natsog Rangdröl.

An important question remains: what is the role of the simultaneist discourse found in the *Longchen Nyingtig*, and does it have more of a place in the Great Perfection of the *Longchen Nyingtig* than that of an inherited doctrine that must be explained away by means of strategies like those we have discussed? Any answer to this question can only come from looking at the
Great Perfection texts from the perspective of the cycle as a whole and the course of practice that it prescribes.

The hierarchy into which the Seminal Heart practices fall is clearly set out in YL, but there is little discussion of how the other elements of the path fit in. In a short sentence in PK Jigme Lingpa indicates that the practitioner receives initiation (after having found a suitable lama), then practices the sets of preliminaries to Vajrayāna, then the main practices of the path, which seem to include both Vajrayāna practices (i.e., the yogas of the development and completion stages) and the Great Perfection practices set out in YL. No hierarchy that fits Vajrayāna practice below that of the Great Perfection is apparent. The general approach of PK, in which no distinction is made between the practitioner of Vajrayāna and the practitioner of the Great Perfection, and Jigme Lingpa's account of his own retreat practice in Richö, suggest that a simultaneous practice of the two is more likely. This would probably entail the integration of the view (lta ba) of breakthrough, which in YL has no particular meditation instructions of its own, with the structured meditations of the development and completion stages and with those of leapover. Jigme Lingpa makes no provision in the texts for the practice of the Great Perfection in isolation from these other meditative techniques.

The characterization of breakthrough—the most straightforwardly simultaneous type of discourse in the Seminal Heart—as view rather than meditation is useful for understanding the role of simultaneous discourse here. It occupies an exalted position above the structure of methods that form the textual bulk of the Longchen Nyingtig and take up most of the meditator's time in meditation. This would explain the space that is devoted, in the authorial texts, to criticisms of Madhyamaka and Yogacara doctrines, which lay a claim to the same space: the ontological and gnoseological discourse on the nature of reality.

The Great Perfection's emphasis on the nonconceptual and nondual is maintained in this space. As I have shown, the direct experience of that nonconceptual, nondual state, gnosis, is arrived at only after progress through the hierarchy of methods and realizations. However the discourse on that state also has a place outside of that hierarchy, the same place that is occupied by the philosophy of the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka for the scholars of the Sakya and Gelug schools. Here Jigme Lingpa's use of the triad of intellectual understanding (go ba), experience (myong ba), and realization (rtaogs pa) is most relevant. The view set out by the simultaneous discourse of the Great Perfection texts is present from the beginning of the path when it is understood intellectually. The levels of gradual realization then represent the experiences of the state described in that discourse, and ultimately, buddhahood represents the permanent, complete realization of it.

Jigme Lingpa's criticisms of Yogacara and Madhyamaka have a polemical air that seems to confirm the sense that they are an attempt to retain the position of philosophical eminence for the Great Perfection. The criticisms of Yogacara, as I have shown, seem to refer to Tibetan doctrines contemporaneous with Jigme Lingpa. As for the Madhyamaka, Jigme Lingpa tends to assert the everpresent and uncreated nature of emptiness, and to criticize any approaches that aim to establish emptiness, especially where this is through the intellect. This is certainly within the bounds of earlier discussions of emptiness in the context of Great Perfection practice by Longchenpa, for example in the second chapter of the Desum Nyingpo, which is dedicated to the topic of emptiness. However I would suggest that the criticisms of the causal and intellectual methods of establishing emptiness have a particularly strong presence in the supporting instructions and YL because of the time in which Jigme Lingpa was writing those texts. While Longchenpa wrote his works before Tsongkhapa and the founding of the Gelug school, by Jigme Lingpa's time the Gelug had become the most powerful school in Tibet, particularly in his homeland of central Tibet. It would not be unlikely that Jigme Lingpa would feel that the Gelug insistence on the preeminence of the Madhyamaka, in a form in which the intellect played a central role, was a threat to the position of the Great Perfection and the Great Perfection's version of emptiness.

This maintenance of the Great Perfection's preeminence in the sphere of discourse on the true nature of things is the role of the voice of the treasure and pure vision texts, which speak of such things from the side of enlightenment, the true expanse, and tend not to become too involved in the gradualist discourse, which would compromise their exalted position as the voice of the view of the Great Perfection, outside of time.

I suggested in chapters 2 and 3 that Jigme Lingpa's body of work is generally directed toward the preservation of those texts and doctrines that were unique to the Nyimgma, and that the Longchen Nyingtig was essentially the same in this respect, especially in its finished form with the later additions of the Dechen Gyalo and Palchen Dupa cycles. In the specific context of the Longchen Nyingtig Great Perfection texts, this conservative trend is also evident. In the colophon to KZL, Jigme Lingpa writes:

I was saddened that the profound realization of the transmission of the truth of the Natural Great Perfection was becoming scarce.
While there is no reason to doubt this sentiment, it does not entirely explain Jigme Lingpa's choice to include the authorial texts in the *Longchen Nytingrig*, which was already well furnished with Great Perfection texts in the form of the treasure and pure vision texts. The supporting instructions and YL could, in theory, have been left out and placed with his general collected works. It is likely that he did not want to let the voices of the treasure and pure vision texts speak without qualification. The supporting instructions act as implicit commentaries on the treasure and pure vision, and interpret the simultaneist statements of the latter in the context of a gradual method. This method is fully set out in YL, which describes the complete path for the Great Perfection practitioners. The presence of YL and the supporting instructions tips the scales toward gradualism, and places the simultaneist statements of the treasure and pure vision voices firmly in the context of a hierarchical and graduated structure.

The visionary inspiration from Longchenpa that Jigme Lingpa claims for the supporting instructions, and the associated blurring of the distinction between his treasure texts and those attributed to his own authorship, give his voice in the supporting instructions an authority that it would not otherwise have. This is a voice that has almost an equal weight to that of the treasure texts, and in employing this authority to present a gradual path, Jigme Lingpa was able to turn the balance of the *Longchen Nytingrig*’s Great Perfection texts away from simultaneism and toward gradualism.
Technical Note to the Translations

The general policies outlined in the preface are also followed in the translations. As stated there, I use the Sanskrit versions of words that are firmly situated in the Indic Buddhist milieu. I have also retained the Sanskrit (along with some anachronistic spellings) on the rare occasions when Jigme Lingpa uses a Tibetan transcription of a Sanskrit word. I have tried to preserve the complexity of the texts by using a different English word for each Tibetan word, although a particular difficulty in Great Perfection writings is the family of words used to signify different aspects and modes of awareness, which have quite specific and nuanced definitions. Therefore I have included a concordance list for this group of words in the appendices.

When the name of a text appears within the body of the same text (in chapter conclusions, for example) it is given in the English version. When the name of a different text is given, such as before a quotation, this is usually rendered in the form in which Jigme Lingpa gives it, with, where possible, the full title provided in a note in the first instance. Personal names are also rendered in the form in which Jigme Lingpa gives them, except for his transliterations of Sanskrit names, usually abbreviated, which I render in their full form.

In prose I have attempted to retain the structure of the original, but I have broken up sentences that become unwieldy in translation (which is the case with much of Jigme Lingpa’s prose). In verse I have tried to preserve the order of the lines, though due to the structure of the Tibetan sentence this has not always been possible.

The translations are arranged according to the scheme set out in chapter 3: first the four treasure texts, followed by the two pure visions, and finally the four supporting texts. Numbered section headings within the texts are taken from the original scheme, while unnumbered headings are
not and have been introduced as an aid to reading. The numbers given in brackets are the page numbers of the AC edition; these numbers are also found in the critical editions in part IV and can be used to refer between the translations and the editions. Interpolations in the translation, beyond those that are necessary for the rendering of Tibetan into English sentences, have also been placed in brackets. Passages that appear in the original texts in small letters (yig chung) appear here in smaller print. Where these are notes to the main text, their anchor in the main text is represented with an asterisk.

Treasure Texts

The Great Perfection Tantra of the Expanse of Samantabhadra’s Wisdom

[74]
In Sanskrit: *Mahāsandhi samantabhadra deśanyāna dhārtu tantra*
In Tibetan: *tDeogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes klong gi gnyed*

Chapter I

I prostrate to the Victorious One, the buddha nature.

In vast Akaniṣṭha, which is one’s own pure perception, the expanse of the true condition without delusion, there dwells the gnosis of all buddhas manifest from the beginning, Samantabhadra himself, in the company of the victorious ones who are the king of form, the king of feeling, the king of perception, the king of volition, and the king of consciousness; [75] the five great elements: earth, water, fire, air, and sky; and the host of male and female bodhisattvas who are the pure senses, sense objects, and times.477

At that time, the great bodhisattva called Vajra Realization, having risen from his seat, asked this question: “Again and again you have given the teaching on separating the phenomena of samsara and nirvana through
distinguishing between the ālaya and great wisdom. What is the difference between the characteristics of each of these? [76] Also, what lies behind the names mind and mind itself, and what is their essence like?

Thus spoke Samantabhadra: “The ālaya is a state that is like the vast general ground of all samsara and nirvana having fallen asleep and not being awake to the sense objects. However, even during the five unconscious states, mind itself and mind, which have the nature of support and supported, remain latently present. In the lower vehicles this [ālaya] is taught as the buddha nature for the sake of temporarily guiding the immature ones who are eaten by doubts regarding the stainless true condition.

“Thus at this site, in a latent and nonmanifest way that is inconceivable, there exists [i] purity, which is the gate to wisdom and the path to nirvana, along with the visions of the great sphere and the lakṣaṇālike characteristics of full enlightenment; and [ii] impurity in accord with samsara, along with karma, suffering, and the multitude of thoughts and emotions. Thus [the ālaya] is not a particular thing such as sentient beings or buddhas, the wisdom of the path or mind itself; [77] rather it is the container of them all (kun) and it becomes the ground (gachi) of their arising. That is why it is called ālaya (kun gachi).

“In detail, it has four aspects: [i] the ālaya of the original ground, [ii] the ālaya of linking-up, [iii] the ālaya of the physical body of imprints, and [iv] the ālaya of various imprints. In brief, the essence of these is as follows: The domain of the ālaya with no mental activity at all is like an egg. When its dynamic energy rises up as the basis for the arising of its various contents, this is the state of the ālaya-vijñāna. From the latter comes the movement of the winds, which engage in virtue and nonvirtue through desire, anger, and indifference. These are the characteristics of mind.

“Then there is the karma of having woken up to the six sense objects: an association with the movement of the manas with its apprehender and apprehended and the kliṣṭa-manas, which clings to “mine.” From that, the five root afflictions, twenty related afflictions, fifty mental factors, and 84,000 aggregate thoughts and emotions are brought into being. Now everything that connects up to and supports the three realms is, without a single exception, complete. [78]

“O Vajra Realization! Although the wisdom of gnosis is not of a different substance to the continuous flow from the realm of the ālaya, that which is called the transformation of the essence is like waking up from sleep. In this situation, although you have awakened to the sense objects, you are not tainted by the perception of objects, and you will not go back into the sheath of co-emergent nescience and the nescience of conceptual imputation.

“In the condition of nonconceptualization, mind and mind itself appear to be the same. However mind is involved with grasping and secretly associated with the transparent imprints of objects. Mind itself is free from elaboration in its essence, all-penetrating in its nature, and its all-pervasive prajñā cannot be upset by external objects or by sinking and scattering. Therefore everything is complete, coming together and supporting nirvana.”

This is the first chapter of the Tantra of the Expanse of Samantabhadra’s Wisdom, explaining the ground and the gates to samsara and nirvana.

Chapter II

Again Vajra Realization asked a question: [79] “Is it possible or impossible to give a conclusive statement regarding the hours before and after samsara and nirvana separated? Also, Teacher Samantabhadra, are you an emanated appearance for the good of others, like an illusion, or a truly existent real appearance contained in a separate mindstream? I beg you, Teacher, to explain.”

Thus spoke Samantabhadra: “The manifestation of the nirmanakāya can take place in the three times: past, future, and present. Thus, because I, Samantabhadra, am the inexpressible true condition, my time is unfathomable by thought. To make an origin for Samantabhadra is merely to bind him using the words ‘Primordial Lord’ as an abstract term. So whenever a discrimination that conceptually analyzes samsara and nirvana arises, this is called the splitting apart of samsara and nirvana, because the one ground has arisen as two paths.

“O Vajra Realization! If you think that he who is called the heart essence of all buddhas, the Primordial Lord, the noble Victorious One, Samantabhadra [80] is contained in a mindstream separate from the oceanlike realm of sentient beings, then this is a nihilistic view in which the connection between samsara and nirvana remains unconnected. Also sentient beings would be without the seed of buddhahood, so that even these teachings on the oceanlike path of the two accumulations would fall into disrepair.

“This is why you should know the modes of the ground, because there are two paths from the primordial ground in my Natural Great Perfection: liberation and delusion. The spontaneous arrival in the realm of a buddha
or a sentient being depends on, respectively, liberation from all the stains on one’s own side and total ensnarement by karma and suffering. By understanding this teaching, stop searching hopefully for me, Samantabhadra, as a separate mindstream or as a buddha who is a fabricated emanation that manifests like an illusion.”

This is the second chapter of the *Tantra of the Expanse of Samantabhadra’s Wisdom*, teaching the point of separation into samsara and nirvana.

**Chapter III**

Again Vajra Realization asked a question: “How are the differences among the aggregates of consciousness, the *manas*, and the *kliśṭa-manas* classified?”

Thus spoke Samantabhadra: “When the alaya’s own dynamic manifestation moves out from it, and awareness begins to enter its object, the alaya-vijñāna rises up. It is as if the sensory elements of the alaya are awakening from a deep sleep. The objects that are grasped, the five sense objects, do not yet arise as substantial things, but a very subtle awareness that grasps does rise up. This generates out of itself a situation of grasping at conceptual imputations, which are like one’s own reflection in a mirror.

“Through the activity of the channels and winds of each of the five sense organs, awareness is led to its object. [82] The five sensory elements of consciousness emerge: form as the object of the eyes, sound as the object of the ears, odor as the object of the nose, taste as the object of the tongue, and contact as the object of the body. The *manas* and *kliśṭa-manas*, which are by their nature endowed with desire, anger, and stupidity, grasp at the objects, and because of this, nescience—which is the cause of samsara—karmic actions, imprints, and all their results are all brought together.

“In short, that which exists as a container or basis for all of these is the *alaya*. The aspect that opens up is the *alaya-vijñāna*. The aspect that then looks out and wakes up to the objects is [the consciousness of] the *five sense organs*. The aspect that, moving from its own place, engages with the afflictions is the *kliśṭa-manas*. The aspect that distinguishes the various appearances is the *mano-vijñāna*. These are called the *eight aggregates of consciousness.*” [79]

Again he asked a question: “Since the sensory spheres that manifest in that way are delusory perception, why does an object, such as a house, manifest to all sentient beings as the same thing?” [83]

Thus spoke Samantabhadra: “In the case of the perceptions of realized beings, delusory perception is never experienced. For nonrealized beings, on the other hand, perception manifests for each of the six families according to their general class. Therefore there are different perceptions for each of the six families; for instance, although there is just one single body of water, it is experienced as nectar by the gods, as embers by the hellbeings, and as blood and pus by the hungry ghosts. This is because those who are included in the karmic perceptions and dynamic forms of a particular family are given simultaneously one type of delusory perception, which is merely the coarse way their sensory spheres, senses, and thoughts manifest.

“If one considers this from the point of view of the realized and the nonrealized, appearances manifest in this way within the human race as well. For example, for a yogin residing in the sameness of the true condition, although there is no obstruction to appearances such as mountains, houses, and palaces, his gnosis has no cognition apprehending them as such. Therefore in the state where appearances and mind are of one taste, he may even go like an eagle through the sky, or like a duck on the water, or pass through rocks and the like, because of the absence of grasping at those appearances. [84]

“Thus the all-creating king, the natural state of the mind itself, having been hidden invisibly in the expanse of the alaya, emerges from the primordial ground as the luminosity of the great manifesting ground, free from extremes, and abides as the ground of all samsara and nirvana. However, when awareness moves away from the ground and enlightenment in the true expanse—which casts out the obscurations of cognition and the cognized, is not polluted by the apprehender or fettered by the apprehended, not confused in its own place, and not connected with objects—it is transformed into the *mano-vijñāna*.

“Because I know that the great fault that is the supporter of karmic actions and imprints is to associate with the great demon of apprehender and apprehended, I Samantabhadra, never performing even the merest particle of contaminated virtue, am the buddhahood that is the ancestor of all buddhas.”

This is the third chapter of the *Tantra of the Expanse of Samantabhadra’s Wisdom*, explaining the nature of the eight aggregates of consciousness.
Chapter IV

At that time he who is called Vajra Wisdom, who is nondual with all the buddhas, rose from his seat, [85] and with the intention of listening to the teaching from his teacher and passing it on to those who are around him, asked this question: “O Victorious One! Please explain which of the following is the true, primordial state of the Great Perfection: is it that called ever-purity, which is not more than the empty aspect of gnosia, free from elaboration, or rather is it the luminosity that is distinguished into mother and child?”

Thus spoke Samantabhadra: “The realized mind of my Seminal Heart, the wisdom that has never tasted delusion, cannot be constructed by excellent buddhas or polluted by lowly sentient beings. In this context, worldly appearances are buddhahood. The term ever-pure is merely affixed as a label to this. Because from the perspective of the essence there is no falling into the extremes of appearance or emptiness, do not look hopefully for buddhahood in a creator and created that involve cause and effect.

“Yet you might ask, ‘Why is this?’ It is because I teach that in this vehicle, which transcends effort, the luminosity of the ground and the luminosity of the path are of one substance. Thus the conceptual distinction between mother and son is not taught as the main teaching. [86] On the other hand, when, in order to instruct trainees, the nondual ultimate truth is made twofold, it is permissible to apply the term mother luminosity to the great place of liberation that reaches the limit of the primordial ground’s expanse and is like the vastness of the sky. In the present phase of the path, when one is endowed with the aggregates of consciousness, and one is becoming familiar with possessing the luminosity of the buddha nature in the midst of the skandhas, sensory spheres, and sense bases, like distinguishing the space inside a vase, it can be set forth with the term son. However, if ultimately the mother is placed outside and the son intellectually understood and experienced as being enclosed inside, then this is what I call the immature person’s experience of absorption.

“O Vajra Wisdom! This is the expanse of my, Samantabhadra’s, wisdom: because it is without characteristics, my essence is not permanent; because the luminosity casts out defilements, my nature is not nothingness; and because it is without borders or divisions, my compassion never reaches a boundary or limit. Although it is like the realm of space, it is not correct to use the metaphor of being empty. [87] It is the opening up of gnosia, like the light of the sun and moon. My manifestation is external eminence because there is no grasped object. My emptiness is internal emptiness because there is no grasping mind. Because in the expanse of gnosia the seal of wisdom is never broken, it is emptiness without rejection.

“In short, any phenomenon you may posit is perfect in its own essence, which is without substantiality, and therefore the ground is the great ever-purity, the path is great spontaneous presence, and the result is the great self-liberation. Buddhahood is not obtained by meditating, and one does not wander in samsara through not meditating. This is called the great ever-pure wisdom, changeless through the three times, and endowed with the five characteristics: freshness, self-liberation, relaxation, spaciousness, and great settledness.

“Out of that state comes the great manifesting ground, the luminosity, the sambhogakāya, arrayed in the visions of leapover. The lamp of self-arising prajñā forms the ground of their arising. The lamp of far-reaching water forms the gates of their arising. The lamp of the pure expanse forms the ornaments of their arising. The lamp of the empty sphere forms the characteristics of their arising. [88] In this way each of the four lamps is a support. That which is supported on the basis of these four lamps is the great radiance of gnosia, the vajra chains. Having become accustomed to [i] the vision of the manifest true condition, there is [ii] the development of experience, [iii] arriving at the full extent of gnosia, and [iv] exhaustion of the true condition.” When one has reached the furthest limit of these four great visions, the characteristics of full enlightenment are completely present in the visions of the path. This is the great secret of Samantabhadra, unfathomable by thought.”

This is the fourth chapter of the Treasures of the Expanse of Samantabhadra’s Wisdom, explaining the path of the great manifesting ground.

Chapter V

Again Vajra Wisdom, who is nondual with all buddhas, asked a question: “O Teacher, please consider this: what is the difference between [i] the essential kāya, the great sambhogakāya of the result and [ii] the manifestation of that essence, the sambhogakāya of the true condition?”

Thus spoke Samantabhadra: “The ground of the sambhogakāya’s arising is the dynamic manifestation of the dharmakāya. Its characteristics are the best of all attributes. In essence it never moves from the nature of the dharmakāya. [89]
“Now the definitions: When the manifestation of all teachings, without exception, that are the cause and result of the three kāyas and the seven limbs is experienced in a continuous cycle, this is the manifestation of the eleventh stage, light everywhere. This is what is known as the sambhogakāya of the result. Then the kāyas, which manifest according to the needs of trainees, or a sambhogakāya teacher, who is like a reflection, are projected out of the kāya of the result, which possesses the five certainties, into the pure lands emanated in the ten directions by the compassion of Vajradhāra—such as Manifest Joy, Abundance of Glory, Abundance of Lotusus, Supreme Accomplishment, and Blazing Mountain. This is like a face and its reflection in a mirror.

“For a person who has found the gate to this path of the supreme secret vehicle and trains in maintaining the great vows, even if he does not arrive at the full extent of the four visions in this life, the all-pervasive buddha nature remains in his heart as the luminosity of the great manifest ground. This is the five wisdoms (true expanse, mirrorlike, sameness, discriminating, and all-accomplishing), the ground of arising that is the vast and spontaneously present nature. Therefore the paradigm for the major and minor marks of reaching the full extent of gnosis in the visions of the path is present [in such a person], and the sambhogakāya of the true condition can work, as if in a dream, for the benefit of trainees even when they are in the intermediate state. Because of this it is called half-nirmānakāya, half-sambhogakāya.

“Although its own manifestations are not essentially distinct from the sambhogakāya of the result, it is limited to the manifestation of emanations such as pure realms and entourages. Those who draw breath in these pure realms are bodhisattvas who are a single rebirth away [from buddhahood]. The great sambhogakāya of the expanse constitutes the appearances that arise for an actual buddha, the experience of the true condition that is the continuous cycle of empty forms. Other mindstreams, even the lords of the tenth stage, do not see it. That is the difference.”

The buddhas and bodhisattvas assembled in attendance, in a state of rejoicing at the great good fortune of experiencing self-manifestation as self-manifestation, asked: [91] “O Teacher Samantabhadra! In accordance with your realized mind, which does not fix on the logic of the one and the many, please speak of the essential wisdom enclosed in the essential expanse, the true expanse, the natural state of the youthful vase body.”

The Victorious One, the glorious Primordial Lord, after merely reflecting upon the meaning of the true expanse, unfathomable by thought, fell into silence. Having answered with the meaning of his silence, his face, hands, major and minor marks, and all the signs of a teacher, which are the vajra of the unchanging true condition, dissolved into the expanse of manifest enlightenment.

At that time Vajra Wisdom, who is nondual with all buddhas, inspired by the compassion of the unfathomable secret of the Victorious One, the glorious Samantabhadra, having utterly freed the great treasure that is the courage to teach the essence through words, spoke thus:

Enaho!
There is no permanence—just the kāya of wisdom; [92]
There is no end—just the radiance of luminosity;
There is no duality—just the inner space of union.
Reflexive awareness is the kāya of the essence,
Without center or periphery like the sky.
In the immeasurable radiant true condition,
The five kāyas are by nature the five wisdoms;
The inner luminosity is the youthful vase body.
In the youth who never grows old,
The cognizing aspect is the inner luminosity, the vase body;
Unchanging wisdom
And the dynamic prajñā of unobstructed means
Are its state and its nature.
When they dissolve into the true condition’s expanse,
The kāyas that are subtle but unconcealed
Are like the new moon.
All the qualities of the two form kāyas,
When not shining out as the manifest aspect, remain enclosed
in the expanse.
Though they manifest individually for the benefit of trainees,
In the expanse of dharmakāya they are mixed as one.
From the sphere of the sambhogakāya, complete with the major and minor marks,
The nirmānakāya guides countless trainees.
In short, the Tathāgata’s Body, speech, mind, qualities, and enlightened activities
Are the secret unfathomable by thought.
Where is this great wisdom?
In the expanse of the essence itself.

This is the fifth and final chapter of the *Tantra of the Expanse of Samantabhadra's Wisdom*, [93] explaining the great place of liberation and fruition, teaching the definitive expression of the wisdoms and kāyas.

**Conclusion**

This tantra, measuring six finger-widths,
Was written with semen, the first precious substance.
This, an actual relic of the dharmakāya,
Is endowed with the three others as well.
It has the un purified nectar, *amrita*.
And a lock of hair from the blissful girl.⁴⁶⁴

In general, it was written in the manner of a book,
Before [the words] were separated from the warmth of the throat.
From sandalwood belonging to a yogin
Its end-boards were made, and from the bottom up
It was sealed and bound with the five kinds of silk,
Made smooth by a host of ḍākīnis.

Laying hold of the *cakra* of great bliss, mixed with
The initiation of gnostic dynamism in leapover,
Is like gaining the throne of the eight bundles of teachings,
The completion of all three paths of samsara and nirvana.

By taking the awareness holders, heroes, and ḍākīnis
As one's life stone,⁴⁶⁵ devotion grows;
The three roots and the host of deities gather like clouds,
Blazing with powerful experiences and realizations.

When the yogin has powerful experiences,
Like eclipses and earthquakes, [94]
He should study this tantra and consider its truths;
By attending to these blissful truths, he will attain realization.

When his fate becomes the same
As primordial Samantabhadra's,
To the inferior view and meditation and the inferior vehicles
He bows not, but makes a symbolic gesture with his hand.

Since this is the heart of all the tantras,
Have faith and confidence in it.
It is a misfortune to doubt
The accomplishments connected with it.

On the path of the result, the secret mantra,
It is very difficult to maintain devotion
And never to be in two minds;
Thus we have the supreme path of means.

**Samaya**

Sealed sealed sealed.

Seal of treasure. Seal of concealment. Sacred seal.
Seal of completion.

This, the great king of tantras, was taught without obstruction from the expanse of Samantabhadra’s realized mind without reliance on words and terminology, through the medium of the vajra emanation of the three secrets, Paṇḍita Vimalamitra of India. Rigidzin Jigme Lingpa, without having to rely on the explanations of a dictionary, having made an imprint from the ḍākini language of the fiery box, the expanse of white *puri*, set it down in an instant. [95] Because they are very profound and strict, offending the ḍākini of the expanse will cause the full force of their wrathful anger to come forth in a single day. After a woman strung together maroon garlands of *bhūkāra* beads and amulets into a chain and two people together offered amulets and knotted blue silk scarves, this was taught secretly. Thus each of the three transmissions occurred.

**Gubya**
Emptiness transcending causes and conditions
And embodying luminosity
Exists in the mindstream of every sentient being.
Yet they obscure their own essence,
Covering themselves with a dark expanse of karma and imprints [99]
And experiencing the karma of various kinds of suffering.

After they have been guided by my compassion,
They investigate the essence, the way
My vast natural state abides.
Thereafter the continuum of words from the unborn expanse
Turns into unobstructed vajra music.

**Samaya**

As for the mind, the gate to all the various appearances,
Awareness in which one thought follows the other,
The ground of all samsara and nirvana:

First, from what does it arise?
All the objects encompassed by the cognition
That analyzes perception—
Appearances such as earth, rocks, mountains,
Or emptiness such as nothingness and the expanse of space—
May be established or annihilated by conceptual analysis.
So what? The expanse is empty by its very essence,
And when the state of arising is empty, there is nothing to arise. 186
Because this cannot be achieved through causal analysis,
I teach the empty essence.

Then, in the phase of the path,
By searching for the place where the object might abide
From the top of the head to the bottom of the feet
Of a sentient being brought about through karmic imprints,
The one who is searching turns out to be empty 187 [100]
Because this does not depend on conditions,
I teach the luminous nature.
Lastly, after samsara has become empty,
Not even the names container and contained will be known.
(Similarly), though you may investigate the nature of the state into which
Subject, object, and so on disappear,
Because that which has gone is totally pure,
There is no place to which it goes.48
Therefore [I teach] the vast, all-encompassing compassion.

Samaya

Thus the mind itself is without the analytical concepts
Of arising, abiding, and departing.
Though you may intellectually measure and analyze it along the lines of
Having substance or being insubstantial,
Being luminous or being empty,
Being the result or not being the result,
Existing in ultimate truth or not,
Like a blind man looking for the end of the sky,
You will not be able to reach it as an object of knowledge.

It arises from the sphere of emptiness as gnosis.
The essence of gnosis is emptiness;
Gnosis and emptiness cannot be divided in two,
Nor are they one—they are the life-essence of everything.
Not constructed by excellent buddhas,
Nor changed by lowly sentient beings. [101]
This unfabricated gnosis of the present moment
Is the reflexive luminosity, naked and stainless,
The Primordial Lord himself.

Sentient beings in nescience
Try to realize me as form;
They may have carried this out for eons, but they will not see me.
They try to realize me as sound;
They may have calculated gnosis, but they will not accomplish me.
Though they try to realize me as compassionate wisdom,
Even this is just dualistic discursive thought.

The expanse that is without good and bad, not benefited or harmed
By happiness and suffering, actions and their result,
The expanse that is pure of the effort of accepting and rejecting
And I, Samantabhadra, the ultimate natural state,
Reside in sameness throughout the four times,
Reside as the ineffable, vast, intrinsic state,
Reside like the unchanging swastika.

Fabrication through verbal elaboration
Does not come near my realized mind;
It manifests accordance with essential points.
To reach this is to be nondual with me.

Samaya

Sealed, sealed, sealed.

In the continuum (rgyud) of the ultimate truth, the realized mind,
The tantras (rgyud) of words emerged as three types:
The Mind Series, the Space Series, and the Instruction Series.

First, the essence of the Mind Series: [102]

One's eyes look into the realm of space;
Although the breath moves, it is relaxed in its own place;
One meditates cross-legged in relaxation
With the hands covering the knees.

All phenomena are in the condition of the awakened mind;
Gnosis, which discriminates the luminosity,
Is not seen by clever categorizations;
The vast, primordially settled natural state
In which there is no duality of seer or seen
Is not discovered by the straining intellect;
It cannot be trapped by the web of recollection
And cannot be adulterated by alloying it with antidotes.
At that time, whatever memories and thoughts arise  
Emerge from mind and are the sphere of mind;  
Everything in samsara and nirvana, without exception, is mind.

The true condition that abides in this way  
Cannot be verbally understood with words and terminology  
And cannot be seen by the eyes of artifice;  
It is the vast ever-purity and the profound luminosity.

Samaya

Second, the essence of the Space Series:

The expanse of the view is without partiality and extremes;  
The expanse of meditation is without fixation or steadying;  
The expanse of activity is without hope or fear;  
The expanse of the result is free from uncertainty. [103]

The expanse of the dharmakāya is without good and bad;  
The expanse of the sambhogakāya is without an apprehending awareness;  
The expanse of the nirmāṇakāya is not eternalistic or nihilistic.

The expanse of luminosity is without meditation;  
The expanse of awareness is without antidotes.

In the vast expanse of the spacious bhūga*  
Of blissful Samantabhadra,  
Fabricated phenomena are the perfect Buddha.  
Therefore the vajra minds of all the conquerors  
Are not joined with or separate from  
My own expansive space. Emaho!

Samaya

Third, the luminous Instruction Series:

The profundity of the essential points, the cycle of the spheres,  
Is a truth more precious than the eyes in your forehead  
And more necessary than the blood in your heart.

What point is there in a teaching created by the intellect?  
Knowledge that is mastered by searching  
For a conceptually analyzed emptiness  
And the written tenets of the eight vehicles  
Has no hope of being the natural state.

After one has become confident in breakthrough,  
Internally, the experience of emptiness emerges,  
And externally, the wisdom of luminosity.  
Its paths are the channels, the self-arisen great secret,  
Connecting the heart with the eyes: [104]  
The katu and crystal tube,  
Which are like white silk threads.

These continuia become manifest to the senses  
In vipaśyāna as the vajra chains,  
Looking like cleansed pearls strung together:  
Luminous, bright, radiant, and free from impurity.

Because this is the path of the vast wisdom  
Of all buddhas,  
Whoever finds it and reaches the essential points  
Will never return to the three realms.

This vipaśyāna of gnosis corresponds to  
The positions and gazes of the three kāyas  
And the essential points of the gates, the objective sphere, and the winds. [105]

Once the four lamps have been mastered,  
The expanse of the lamp of the totally pure inner expanse  
Ripens into the elixir of gnosis.  
The visions of the half-and-half kāya* are the development of experience,  
And those of the assemblies of the five families are the experience of arriving at the full extent.

Then, transcending the true condition that apprehends  
Manifestation and nonmanifestation,  
And purifying the gross body and all the sense objects
Into the expanse,
Is taught by me to be the *exhaustion of the true condition*.  

These visions of the result, which are the three kāyas in the vehicles of supposition, [105]
Are the visions of the path in this vehicle,
And are perfected instantaneously.
At this time the great emptiness, the youthful *vase body*, Disolves into the inner luminosity.
This is buddhahood manifest as the unclouded expanse.
This is the highest point of renunciation and *realization*.
This is to be nondual with me.
This is the vast reflexive luminosity of the *dharma-kāya*.

The extensive systems of instruction
For this unsurpassable supreme path*44
Of the greatest secret
Are the *Seventeen Tantras* of melted light,
Which are summarized by the three last testaments.*95
Develop your gnosis in accordance with these.

*Samaya*

Sealed, sealed, sealed.

[This tantra] arose of itself from the expanse of glorious Samantabhadra's realization. Longchen Namkhai Naljor translated the symbolic transmission of Pañchhen Drime Özer, setting it down completely in the form of the translated intended meaning and the translated essential points of instruction. Thanks to the glorious guardians of mantras, these sacred experiences were not permitted to fall into the hands of thieves.
One's own mind, the root of all samsara and nirvana,
Achieves Buddhahood in a state without artifice. [109]
The sectarian who proceeds according to his own understanding
Of the realms of samsaric phenomena, dependent upon nescience,
Is a Buddha endowed with pride. How pleasant!

This mind itself, its dynamic energy perfect from the beginning,
Resides as the womb that is innate and unfabricated.
The hypocrites who construct a method that allows fabrication of the way
things are,
By analysis that believes the words of the two truths,
Will hold the tenets of the bodhisattvas for a long time to come.

Mind itself, which is without good or bad, acceptance or rejection,
Is adulterated by the alloy of adroit rejection and acceptance of dirt and
purity,
When the nondual ultimate truth is fabricated by the duality of subject
and object,
To aspire toward the rank of ultimate truth, which is not a thing to be
obtained,
Is to hold the tenets of the kriyātantra of conduct. How attractive!

In the natural state, which is without good or bad, increase or decrease,
If the terms view, meditation, and activity are abandoned,
Yet with an intellect that reifies the activities of means and prajñā,
You hold tenets that designate what to do and what not to do,
Then you are engaged in the behavior of the upatānta of activities. How
tiring! [110]

In the condition of cognizance without outer and inner, center and
perimeter,
Mind itself is free from the fabricating intellect.
Those whose discursive thought constructs a seal on the deep luminosity
Have the tenets of yogatantra. How ineffective!

The true state of mind does not need to be brought about through effort;
The true condition makes the result the path;

Those who complicate this with breathing to relax the channels, winds,
and mind
Have the tenets of anuyoga. How tiring!

Mind itself is free from the characteristics of faces and hands;
But those who deviate in seeing worldly appearances as the deity’s body,
And deviate in apprehending sounds as mantras,
Are conceptualizers who fail to see it through the path of mahāyoga.

This is the first chapter of Experiencing the Enlightened Mind of Samartha-
bhodra, which establishes the intellectual tenets of the eight vehicles.

Chapter II

Kyaiho!

In my nature, the Great Perfection,
The phenomena of samsara and nirvana are perfect without renouncing
and obtaining;
The essential points of instruction are perfect in their vast self-liberation;
The essential points of the view are perfect in their absence of eternalism
and nihilism;
The paths of meditation are perfect in their absence of striving; [111]
The dharmas of activity are perfect in their absence of permission and
prohibition;
The essence of the result is perfect in being free from aspiration;
Even being called “perfect” is discarded as a mere intellectual label.

The essence of all phenomena is the awakened mind,
The mind of all buddhas is the awakened mind,
And the life force of all sentient beings is the awakened mind too.
In the awakened mind there is no relative or ultimate truth;
It should not be sealed as empty by saying “It is nonexistent,”
Or intellectually constructed as eternal by saying “It exists.”
It is the expanse, transcending intellect right where you are, without
grasping or letting go,
The expanse that is separate from all elaboration of the objects of
thought.
Because I am without any fabricating discursive thought,
I have utterly exhausted virtue and sin, actions and their result.
What is the use of contemplation on deities and mantras?
The Buddhahood accomplished through those practices is not me.
Since my nature pervades everything,
Where do you expect to see me while traveling the paths and stages?

Therefore, without becoming trapped in the entanglements of hope and fear,
Separate yourself from the superficiality of an excellent view,
Come out of the sheath of profound meditation, [112]
Destroy the fabricated methods of busy activities,
And transform your hopes and fears regarding the great result.

The state of cognizance that transcends meditation and nonmeditation,
Where reckoning of activity and inactivity sink into the expanse,
The awakened mind that transcends being empty or not being empty,
The innate expanse that destroys the extremes of existence and nonexistence,
Gnosis that is beyond thought and expression—
One who has a strong life-staff free of antidotes aimed at these
Abides steadily and nakedly in the condition of fresh self-liberation,
The expanse free from all striving and elaboration,
The state that does not increase or decrease throughout the three times.

This is the second chapter of Experiencing the Enlightened Mind of Samantabhadra, showing how to settle in the place of primordial liberation, the Great Perfection.

Chapter III

Kyiibo!

The awakened mind free from renouncing or obtaining,
The Buddha nature endowed with gnosis, abides in one’s mindstream;
Yet one gets trapped in the cage of fabrication.
These are the ways meditation comes to obscure the essential truth:

The true condition is without root or essence; [113]
But by superimposing concepts onto that which neither arises nor ceases,
It is fabricated as form and formlessness,
And thus the meaning of resting at ease is forgotten. Such affliction!

Some people, chasing thoughts in order to cut off their spread,
Have a form of meditation where emptiness is polluted by antidotes;
Their meditation is tightened by their exertions. How wear! This is a great hindrance that forces the karmic winds into the life-channel.

Some, not having found the essence of resting at ease,
Hold on to the indeterminate state beguiled by the words “resting at ease,”
And a darkness in which thoughts are hidden
As the essence of meditation. They are extremely deluded!

A few, who have an intellectual understanding of flickering thoughts as illusions,
Are absorbed in thinking about the proliferation and reduction of thoughts
And enumerating their arising and cessation;
Meditating like this for a hundred years, they just turn the wheel of delusion.

For many, diligence itself arises as an enemy:
If they meditate, there is no ease and all kinds of discomfort come up;
If they don’t meditate, they don’t recognize their own state and get lost in delusion;
They have forgotten the meaning of unfabricated resting at ease.

Kyiibo! [114]

The intellect that divides the present moment into meditation and nonmeditation,
Because it hasn’t transcended all these experiences of an ordinary person,
Is fabricated conceptualization—be certain of that.
Settle in the mind of this present moment without changing or arranging it.
Having renounced the extremes of aiming toward equanimity
And continuous striving with the volitional intellect,
In this freedom where direct awareness is not evaluated,
Settle in your own place, without artificially expanding or reducing it.

At that time, no matter what categorizing discursive thought arises,
Whatever arises is not viewed, and that which arises is recognized.
Thus, like hammering a peg into the earth,
Awareness goes deep into the essential point of recognizing one’s own
essence.

How should one remain in that condition?
If you abide nakedly without coming or going, increase or decrease,
But are not free from the state of antidotal grasping at that state,
You will deviate into the ways of the vehicles of supposition.

Therefore all the terminology of view, meditation, and activity
Is, in the ultimate truth of resting at ease, merely the chaff of the intellect.
The subsidence into the expanse of antidotes that seek to steady one’s
awareness,
The asceticism of being neither distracted nor undistracted,
The state of being that is not engaged in purification through projecting
and absorbing. [115]
The expanse free from all the elaborations of effort,
The great treasure without thought and thinker:
Know that these are not primordial buddhahood,
For that is the true condition in which all these designations are finished
from the beginning.

The spaciousness where sorrows are purified into the expanse,
Which is the special teaching that rots the root of samsara,
Emptiness that transcends the limits of truth and falsehood,
The great liberation upon arising, self-liberation, and liberation on sight:
If the truth of these is realized, you are nondual with the buddhas,
You are a buddha who is not separate from me.

At the time of debating, when the essential points of instruction in the
great secret
Will be mixed with precepts of the vehicles of supposition,

An awareness holder who is nondual with me
Will set out my true intentions.
An emanation of the bodhisattvas of the three families will be the master
of this teaching.

May those with good karmic connections engage in practice.

This is the third chapter of Experiencing the Enlightened Mind of Samanta-
bhadra, on cutting off errors. Thus the whole is complete.

Samaya
Dhatim
Distinguishing the Three Essential Points of the Great Perfection

I prostrate to Samantabhadra's expanse.

In this degenerate age, Great Perfection meditators,
Because of their confusion about the essential points of ground, path,
and result,
Are biased toward the particular meditation and view that they maintain;
Thus liberation from the fetters of supposition is as rare as stars [at
daylight].
Therefore the distinctions of the three essential points will be taught here:
The separation of mind and gnosis, with the prowess of a lion.⁶⁶

Samaya

The ālāya is the basis of all samsara and nirvana;
It is not unlike muddy water.
[In it], because of confusion led by latent ignorance,
The brightness of wisdom and gnosis has become hidden.

The dharmakāya is like water that is clear of mud; [117]
It includes in itself the expulsion of adventitious impurities
And is the essence of all the qualities of liberation.
Henceforth there is wisdom, undeluded awareness.

Therefore like the isolation of water from mud,
[The dharmakāya] is separable from the indeterminate aspect.
Hold a secure place in the expanse of dharmakāya, reflexive awareness.
Look upon all scenes in the expanse of unstained wisdom.

The ālāya-vijñāna is similar to ice on water.
It arises as the dynamic energy that apprehends the state of the essence,
And due to attachment to the object thus apprehended, it is generally
deceptive.
Thus the [first] essential point of the Seminal Heart is transference from
consciousness⁷⁷ into the dharmakāya,
The wisdom that is aware that the manifesting objects—
Form, feelings, perception, and so on—are empty of self.⁸

Those who, not understanding this, mistake the ālāya for the dharmakāya,
Are like blind men wandering in the desert without a guide.
Because of their confusion about the vital points of the ground and
result, [118]
They have come to a standstill on the path that accomplishes buddha-
hood in one lifetime.

Samaya

Mind and gnosis are like air and space.
Mind is the aspect of deceptive objects of fixation,
Vividly filling up, swirling round, and pouring out again,
Or briefly becoming agitated like a hurricane.
Its foundation is the condition for the various sensations.

Gnosis is without supports and all-pervasive.
In its emptiness it opens up as the spacialike expanse;
In its luminosity it is nonconceptual and radiant like a polished crystal.
Thus the [second] essential point of the Seminal Heart is to hold a secure
place in the natural state,
Utterly liberated from mind in the expanse of gnosis.

Those who have not realized this say that mind is everything,
Divided according to whether it is tainted or untainted by the perception
of objects.

* Here the external forms that are perceived are not designated as empty of self. When
emptiness is made an intellectual object, the form and emptiness aspects of the object arise
in the intellect. However, since the perceived forms have no intrinsic characteristics, those
forms should not be mixed with the intellect. Therefore the statement, "Emptiness is not
other than form, nor form other than emptiness," should be taken as an axiom.
Such views, which cannot apprehend the nature
That is like water or quicksilver falling to the ground,
Are confused about the place of simultaneous liberation,
Where the summit of Vajrayāna makes the result the path.

Samaya

Śamatha is like a person without sensory faculties:
Vividness is dulled, dispersed, and stupefied; [119]
Mindfulness is held firm, and recollection is fixed on an object.

Vipaśyanā is like a person complete with the five sense-doors:
Trying to be mindful of the nature and seeing the true condition of the essence,
He proceeds intellectually, with excessive analysis and too much objectification.

Therefore, the [third] essential point of the Seminal Heart is to meditate throughout the three times
In the true condition that is without essence or root,
And not to fabricate with one's intellect the naked natural state
Of ordinariness, the primordial union [of śamatha and vipaśyanā].

The traditions of the vehicles of supposition fail to realize this;
By their "enlightenment," which seals everything with the emptiness of existence and nonexistence,
They settle heavily into the aspect of stillness,
Cutting off thoughts and imprisoning the manifestations of the winds.
They chase after objects, armed with antidotes, grasping at
Their form of vipaśyanā, which analyzes according to scripture and reasoning.
Those who make ambition into a path of mental concentration,
Because they only have an intellectual inclination for this vehicle,
Will not have the good fortune to see it as it is.

Samaya

In the future, sentient beings, unsuitable because of their small merit,
Will have great difficulty meeting with a sacred lama.
I prostrate to glorious Samantabhadra.

The natural state of the ground is free from elaboration:
It is not existent—even the conquerors cannot see it;
It is not nonexistent—it is the ground of all samsara and nirvana; it is not both or neither—it goes beyond being an object of speech;
May I realize the natural state of the ground of the Great Perfection.

Because its essence is empty, it is free from the limit of eternalism;
Because its nature is luminous, it is free from the extreme of nihilism;
Because its compassion is unobstructed, it is the ground of the manifold manifestations;
Though it can be divided into three, in truth there is no difference.
May I realize the natural state of the ground of the Great Perfection.

[The ground] is inconceivable and free from imputation,
Destroying partiality toward existence and nonexistence;
In expressing this truth even the tongues of the conquerors are thwarted;
It is the expanse of the vast and profound luminosity, without beginning, middle, or end.
May I realize the natural state of the ground of the Great Perfection.
In my own essence, stainless, unborn, and ever-pure, [446]  
The radiance of unconditioned spontaneous presence rises up; 
Realizing this as the union of gnosis and emptiness, without looking for 
it elsewhere, 
And thus arriving at the full realization of the ground, 
May I not deviate from the essential points of the path.

Because [the path] is pure from the beginning, it does not even have the name view; 
Because it is reflexive awareness, the truth emerges from the sheath of 
causal meditation; 
Because it is without reference points, it is free from the chains of 
activity; 
Residing in the womb of the nature, it is the state of naked non- 
elaboration, 
May I not deviate from the essential points of the path.

Not falling into the extremes of the concepts of good and bad 
And not diffusing into an indeterminate state of indifference, 
Liberation upon arising is the impartial, open, and outspread expanse; 
With full awareness of the nature wherein acceptance and rejection are 
exhausted, 
May I not deviate from the essential points of the path.

The original general ground is a state like the sky; 
The ground's manifestation, gnosis, is like clouds dispersing in the sky. 
When the awareness of the outer luminosity is turned to the inner, 
Enclosed in the youthful vase body endowed with six special qualities, 
May I capture the royal fortress of the result. [447]

In my own primordial gnosis, Samantabhadra, 
The limits of wishing for attainments subside into the expanse; 
Through the state of the Great Perfection, transcending intellect and 
endeavor, 
Enclosed in the spacious expanse of Samantabhadri with gnosis and the 
expanse united, 
May I capture the royal fortress of the result.
If you become aware of the sudden arising of discursive thought [ṣāyamāṇa],
And try to maintain the continuity of this [state],
This is vipaśyānā straying into the condition. 501
If you bind post-meditation with names, you will impede yourself,
And thoughts and emotions will not be liberated as the dharmakāya;
You should cut off this tendency at the root.

In gnosis, unelaborated from the beginning
The terms view, meditation, and activity,
And grasping at them, are cleared away as being groundless.
Not falling into the extremes of
Good, bad, or neutral discursive thought,
You will not be a scholar who distinguishes arising and liberation.

As long as gnostic awareness does not stray from its own station,
There is no need for anything above this.
Even if you meet with a hundred scholars and a thousand siddhas,
Ten thousand translators and pāṇḍitas, a hundred thousand instructions,
And ten million million sciences,
There will be no need to cut off doubt.

Samaya. Dhatim.

This was given in the form of a mind-transmission blessing
By the gnostic awareness of Samantabhadra
To his dear son Kyentse Özer;
Not showing it everywhere, place it in your breast.

When the dakini is assembled during my dark retreat
On the twenty-sixth of the miracle month
In the rocky cave of Akaniṣṭha,
These words were set down on one side of a precious sheet of yellow paper, [519]
And the profound hearing transmission was sealed with atham.

This is it. This is it.

The commentary to this is the Words of the Omniscient One.
Supporting Instructions

Although the buddha nature pervades the nature of beings like oil in a sesame seed.
The two adventitious obscurations should be cleansed, just as one removes something unbearable.
The power to purify them simultaneously is none other than the immeasurable Vajrayāna.
I bow down to the accomplished omniscient scholar who has examined its nature.

This is the path of methods for those trainees of the sharpest faculties,
Those who are wealthy with the jewels of many noble qualities.
This crossing of the ocean of ripening and liberation
Is the tradition of those supreme sailors, the awareness holders.
In front of the polished mirror of threefold prajñā,\(^{92}\) [465]
The beautiful girl who discusses the teachings
Blows into a reed pipe symbolizing the questions
And receives the answers as the song of the cuckoo.

**Introduction**

The field, broad and wide, that is the sixteen pure dharmas of men,\(^{100}\) is protected by the sprouts of generosity and the jewels of faith, which are the dharmas of the gods. They are bent down by their leaves and fruit, which flow into one in the noppika, the essence of hearing, thinking, and meditating, and are endowed with the sublime qualities. Such is the essential point of the path of ripening and liberation, the Vajrayāna. Now to answer the question of how this is combined with the way progress is counted in the Paramitāyāna. [466]

In this life, without the experience of going to those places where people debate and interpret, such as a college, I have taken hold of the transmission of the truth from the depths of the wisdom arising from the oral transmission and the Vajrayāna initiations. At this time, absorbed in a hermit’s practices, I don’t have the confidence to give a long, extensive teaching. However, I shall proceed according to the path where appearances arise as books through the dynamic energy of gnosic in the expanse of luminosity.

In general, according to the causal vehicle, one proceeds from the relative truth, which includes the concepts of creator and created, to the ultimate truth, which is designated as realization. It also teaches that in the phase of the path, through alternate and equal engagement in the two accumulations, the paths and stages are traversed over a period of eons. When following the Vajrayāna, the wisdom that arises through initiation—which is not reliant on words, systems, and judgments—is instantaneously and forcefully recognized as the manifest wisdom of one’s own state. Through this kind of meditation, rejection and antidotes are purified in self-liberation, and thence the paths and stages are completed in one. This is primordial liberation.

Although this is true, if those who talk about the Paramitāyāna have not reached a proper understanding of the definitions of the five paths, the meaning of what they are saying will become confused. Therefore my lama, the Omniscient One, Longchenpa, has said: [467]

By engaging in the main accumulations—listening, thinking, and merit—you reach the path of accumulation. By application on the path of seeing nonconceptual wisdom, you reach the path of application. By really seeing the true condition, you reach the path of seeing. By making what has been seen into meditation, you reach the path of meditation. By reaching the end of what can be taught and meditating no more, you reach the path of no more learning.

Thus in [the paths of] accumulation and application, with a little luck you may see manifest the level of truth that comes from the supposition: “This is the definite essence of ultimate truth.” Therefore these are paths of activity through faith. On the path of seeing, because the strength of your partial seeing increases, this is counted as the first stage. On the path of meditation you progress along the levels of the ten stages. These comprise the seventh stage, far going, and those below it, which are counted as impure stages, and the eighth stage, immovable, and those coming after it, which are counted as the three pure stages. Of what nature is the path of no more learning? It is certainty on the stage of buddhahood itself through direct perception.

As for examples of the stains that are separated out on these paths, the teaching of nine examples in Ārya Maitreyā’s *Uttaratantraprāśa* has been examined in extensive commentaries to the root text. It says:

- The stains supported on the seven stages
  - Are like the stain of being inside the womb;
  - [Freedom from them] is like coming out of the womb,
  - And nonconceptual wisdom is like becoming fully grown. [468]

- The stains connected with the following three stages
  - Should be known to be like traces of mud;
  - They are vanquished by the vajra-like
  - Contemplation of great beings.\(^{104}\)

This concludes [my teaching on] the nature of these stages. The few words I have written cannot encapsulate them; if you have a strong wish to understand how the complete tenets of our teaching are stated, you should study, in general, the commentaries of Samyéпа Ngag Wangpo, and in particular, the fourth chapter of the *Drubta Rinpoche Dzō*.\(^{105}\)

The meditator, through not making philosophical lectures or conceptual analysis the most important thing, comes to the heart of the truth.
This is the omniscient wisdom that is the perfection of renunciation and realization with all the qualities of the paths and stages. However even in this state he may be chained by the grasping of the eight aggregates of consciousness. There is not a chance that these do not remain in the mindstream of a sentient being merely because they have ceased to manifest. This is clearly taught in the *Buddhāvatāsamakāśtra* with the example of the three-thousand great unfurled banners. Although thusness already exists as your own state, in the context of the Vajrayāna it is shown clearly through the symbolic means of the profound secret path of ripening and liberation, like a prince being enthroned in his palace. [469] From the subsequent tantra of the *Lamgpoche Churjug*:

Sentient beings’ mind itself, in truth luminous reflexive awareness,
Is the cause for abiding in spontaneous unfabricated buddhahood.
Having entered the path of ripening and liberation that makes this clear,
The result will be clearly seen in your own mindstream.

1. The Connection Between Teacher and Student

In the first place, the primary condition necessary for initiation is none other than the vajra master himself; therefore it is very important to examine the teacher to whom you are connected. As Orgyenpa has said:

Having an unexamined lama is like jumping into an abyss;
Having an unexamined student is like drinking poison.

Because you must not make a mistake in this basic situation, I will examine the nature of it. The *Rangshar Tantra* teaches the following on the characteristics of a master:

A master endowed with the truth of the vajra should:
Have a good disposition and be skilled in teaching,
Have obtained initiation and have applied himself to the secret mantra,
Know all of the outer and inner activities,
Be inseparable from his yidam deity,
Be undistracted in contemplation,

Be learned in the secret tantras of the secret mantra,
Which hold the truth of the Great Perfection’s Instruction Series,
Have achieved all the outer and inner accomplishments,
Never move from the meaning of the view, [470]
Perform the outer, inner, and secret activities,
With qualities like precious jewels,
And an inexhaustible treasury of activity.

This tantra also speaks of six characteristics: [i] having put all samsaric phenomena behind him, [ii] having few desires and being content, [iii] being skilled in practice and having had experiences, [iv] being learned in the meanings of the tantras and having striven to accomplish them, [v] being learned in the meaning of the view and being completely capable with it, and [vi] having great compassion and being happy in renunciation.

One with the complete set of these qualities is said to be necessary. If, on the other hand, he is merely an effigy of whom it is said “This one is a wonderful source of miracles,” “This one holds an unsurpassable rank,” and “This one is a sacred object of worship in harmony with worldly people,” then he is not a genuine teacher. From the same tantra:

Very proud and ignorant,
Followed because of his foolish words,
Without any realization of the meaning of secret mantra,
His arrogant words disparaging others,
Engaged in a false path,
Not seeing the face of the initiation mandala,
Becoming lax in his vows,
Not coming up with answers to pure questions,
Very proud of the little he has learned,
The unexamined master is a demon of a master.

As it says, [471] do not get involved with such a demonic master.

Now, on the characteristics of a student, the Rangshar points out several, such as:

Having strong faith and great diligence,
With strong prajña and no attachment,
Having great respect and practicing the secret mantra.
His mind not wavering from nonconceptualization,
Holding his vows and striving for accomplishment,
Faithful, devoted, and affectionate,
Practicing a natural, relaxed meditation,
Practicing whatever his master says.

In short, it is proper for students of a master who teaches the secret mantra to follow the examples of Pañchen Nāropa and Milarepa Zhepai Dorje. After you have examined the connection between teacher and student in this way, you should not abruptly ask for initiations and instructions. Before too many months or years you should make a request and, when the time is ripe, assemble in the right way all the auspicious elements such as the place and the ritual objects. Then the profound initiations will be bestowed. At that time the blessings of all the buddhas of the ten directions will become as one with the lama. Through your being made the recipient of initiation, and because at other times you have served him with such actions as providing food and drink, he will give teachings as a vast and manifold gift in return for yours. [472]

Along with the blessing of the excellent support of initiation, you will have the support of all the heroes and heroines, present because of [the lama’s] compassion and [your own] vows. Because of this you will develop a hundred thousand times more quickly than otherwise. You should understand that this is the way in which the root lama is the essence of all buddhas, and that because the compassion of his very presence is accessible to you, he is even superior to them.

2. The Four Initiations

After the door has been opened by these marvelous causes and conditions, one comes to the main practices and initiation; its essence is spoken of in the Dratygur Tantra.  

Elaborated, unelaborated,
Very unelaborated, and
Totally unelaborated:
By means of these four types
The mindstream of one with faith is ripened.

The meaning of initiation is completely contained within these four initiations. Otherwise, the levels of the differing classifications according to the intentions of the tantras and instructions of the old and new schools are infinite.

So this is the proper way to connect the ground of purification, the cause of purification, and the result of purification of the four initiations, which are the entrance to power. The ground of purification is, outwardly, the four periods, inwardly, the four accumulations in body, speech, and mind, [473] and, secretly, ignorance, anger, desire, and indifference. The cause of purification is purification through the four initiations: [i] vase, [ii] secret, [iii] prajñā wisdom, and [iv] precious word.

First, by the vase initiation, the stains of being bound by the channels and the delusory conceptualization of the body (tus) are purified. You gain the foundation for the completion of the twelve paths of accumulation, and the powers of the body (sku) enter you. In particular, you gain the foundation for becoming a fully ripened awareness holder.

The vows for this initiation are as follows: In meditation, you meditate on the development stage, which is nondual, profound luminosity. In post-meditation, appearances, which are like illusions, do not depart from the seal of the beloved deity. The vow of eating and drinking: clearing away the dualistic concepts of clean and dirty, and thinking of them as the five meats and five nectars, you enjoy them. The vow of holding: from the state of awareness, you hold the nature of being endowed with the vajra, bell, and marks. The vow of guarding: you train in appearances, sounds, and awareness being the play of the three mandalas.

Second, by the secret initiation, the stains of being bound by the winds and the delusory conceptualization of speech (ngag) are purified. You gain the foundation for the completion of the four certainies on the path of application and the powers of speech (gungs) enter you. In particular, you gain the foundation for becoming an immortal awareness holder. [474]

The vows for this initiation are as follows: In meditation, you engage in the yoga of mantra recitation and candali heat yoga, free from desire. In post-meditation, you concentrate on the warmth of the short a, which is the essence of the fire of prajñā wisdom. The vow of eating and drinking: they are enjoyed as the nature of white and red bodhicitta. The vow of holding: you possess the signs, that is, the counting beads and the skull cup. The vow of guarding: you guard, without deterioration, the supreme bodhicitta.

Third, by the prajñā wisdom initiation, the gross stains of being bound by the seven aggregates of consciousness and the subtle stains of being
bound by the delusory conceptualization of mind (yid) are purified. You gain the foundation for the completion of the path of seeing, and the powers of mind (thugs) enter you. In particular, you gain the foundation for becoming an awareness holder of the great seal.

The vows for this initiation are as follows: In meditation, the channels are cleansed, the winds are washed, and the spheres are purified. Once you have mastered the quality of heartfelt effort, and when you receive the permission of the lama, you may engage in absorption by means of the three perceptions of mental events or objects. In post-meditation, you train in all happiness and sorrow, good and bad, being the cakra of bliss, emptiness, and wisdom. The vow of eating: it is determined to be the great play of the four joyful absorptions. [475] The vow of holding: you hold dear to your heart the precious semen bodhicitta. The vow of guarding: in the family of the maiden of gnosis, you renounce even momentary wrong views.

Fourth, by the precious word initiation, the stains of the ālaya and the obscurations of cognition are purified. You gain the foundation for the completion of the nine stages of the path of meditation, and the powers of self-arisen luminosity enter you. In particular you gain the foundation for becoming a spontaneously accomplished awareness holder.

The vows for this initiation are as follows: In meditation, with utterly pure realization, you see the truth of breakthrough, transcending intellect. In post-meditation, you conquer the essential points of the inseparability of gnosia and the expanse,* and of the vajra chains, and you should never be separated from the three postures.

The vow of eating: by determining it as the realization of vastly pervasive emptiness and luminosity, it is the play of the true condition in the true condition. The vow of holding: you possess the sign, that is, the mirror of Vajrasattva. There is no vow of guarding: at the end, alone, present, and spontaneously accomplished, your view is free from the boundaries to be guarded.

The result of purification through traveling the four paths is the path of no more learning, as you have come to the end of things to be learned. [476] In particular, the vase initiation brings about the power of the ten strengths and four fearlessnesses, like the supreme nirmāṇakāya, Sākyamuni. The secret initiation brings about the sapbhoṅgakāya, endowed with the five certainties and seven branches of union, like the teachers from the pure lands of the five families. The prajñā initiation brings about the dharmakāya, which is like the sky, the ultimate realization that is free from all stains, the nature that is the nonduality of wisdom and the expanse. The word initiation brings about the svabhāvikakāya, total inseparability from the inner luminosity of the Great Perfection, the youthful vass. body.

As for the nature of the svabhāvikakāya, in the ordinary vehicles it is as the Aññiyayaṁphātra says: ⁵¹⁰

The svabhāvikakāya of the sage:
Whoever attains this inexhaustible teaching
Is thoroughly purified;
Their nature is endowed with the marks.

Nowadays few make a distinction between the dharmakāya and the svabhāvikakāya. The difference is as follows: the aspect of the pure, equal, empty expanse, which forms the true condition of the kāyas, is the svabhāvikakāya. At the final realization of wisdom, the essence of gnosia—that is, the twenty-one marks—becomes the dharmakāya of realization and wisdom. As the Omniscient One says: [477]

That which is the wisdom of buddhahood is due to the ultimate manifestation of the union of gnosis with the expanse.

Thus the division should be made. Through staying with the root meaning of these four initiations, which is this very set of classifications of the ripening initiations, one can explain their essential heart concisely.

However, by dividing these into the aspects of the transformation of purifier and purified, there can be an inconceivable number of distinctions among the initiations of the vehicle of means. In a similar way, the number of stages can be raised to sixteen when the stage of a hundred emanations and the four awareness holders are added. These are taught as the ordinary qualities, after which the final result arises from the perfect qualities of the circle of ornaments, the inexhaustible body, speech, and mind of Lord Vajradhāra. The distinctions and collections, such as the 2,360 qualities of the stages, the 660 divisions of wisdom, and the 3,120 parts of Dharma should be studied in the sixth part of the Teghi Dzö. ⁵¹¹ I say this thinking, “Wouldn’t it be nice if this became a cause for the decline of braggarts and boasters and the rousing of the ignorant people of these times who sleep in their mountain seats.” [478]

* This in particular is taking the initiation of gnostic dynamism onto the path.
You may ask, "If this is so, are these qualities of the paths and stages made manifest through initiation alone?"

They are not. The lineage of the four vajras residing in the heart of beings is awakened through the power of the four initiations. Those trainees of the very sharpest faculties like Garab Dorje, Self-Arisen Padmasambhava, and Indrabhūti, who were lords of the mandala while seeming to be ordinary students, were spontaneously liberated upon hearing, but gradualist people will not reach the goal in that way. So in this situation there must be some further striving for complete liberation.

The mere meeting of a lama who teaches the path of bestowing initiations, and is a truly accomplished one who has come to the limit of the realization of wisdom and reflexive awareness, with a student who is a devoted person with a background of merit accumulated over many eons, is a great opportunity. If there is such an auspicious meeting of lama and student, then liberation is possible through the lama merely entrusting his realization. [479] This is like the stories of Manjusrimitra being placed in the heart of the instructions on the three classes and the nine sections of the Space Series merely through being shown symbols by Garab Dorje, and becoming realized and liberated at the same time, and of Naropa attaining liberation through the symbol of Tilopa striking his sandal on Naropa’s head. Even when it is not like this, the conditions can be created by devotion, and through the gradual attainment of realization, buddhahood is possible in this life, or in future lives.

3. Some Cautionary Advice and a Prophecy of Uncivilized Times

If there is no conjunction of auspicious circumstances between lama and student, some people substitute the portrait of an awareness holder who is rumored to be the emanation of such and such a man or such and such an animal. Calling in person on a lama with pleasant qualities, such as having a life-staff of teaching or having immeasurable learning in the three baskets and the tantras, they show off a mandala to rival the size of those already displayed and pile up [offerings] as high as Mount Meru. Possessing great riches, they offer dumplings by the jar and fill [the lama’s] meditation room with sweet drinks. However, because the object and the agent of transference are empty from the beginning, this will not work as a cause for placing the powers in the mainstream of the student, and therefore their afflictions will not be diminished in the slightest. Indeed, piles of letters say-
Being taught on the street, and nonsense-talkers
Without experience, [wearing] bone ornaments and holding the
khatvāṃ,
Gaining respect through their miracles
And giving initiations to crowds.

The sign of the degeneration of the teaching of ati
Is rough people with great appetites and a hypocritical view of
emptiness
 Saying “There is no such thing as virtue or sin,”
Abandoning discipline to maintain their ordinary activities,
And killing small creatures, saying “It’s an offering.”
While accomplished meditators are cast out to wander the streets.

Things have come to pass just as he said. In particular, it has become cus-
tomary for those who give initiations into the secret mantra to crowds to
explain them in the context of worldly accomplishments. When they think
that there might be no work for them, they become very worried.

“Well then, what is the measure of someone who has really taken initiation?”
It is stated in the treasure transmission what the measure of someone
who has really taken initiation is:²⁵³

In the dharmakāya, Samantabhadra,
There is nobody called lama
And no scholar who teaches the doctrine of initiation.
In realizing your own mind as dharmakāya,
You obtain the initiations and oral transmissions of all the
conquerors.
Grasping at transmission is just discursive thought. [482]

So there should be no need for confused elaboration about this. Your
mindstream is purified by the profound initiation, which is the cause of
ripening, and then you begin with the outer, inner, and secret prelimi-
naries, which can be equated with the path of accumulation in the
Pāramitāyāna. For beginners, the way of practicing is explained by the
practice instructions and the lama’s instructions. Therefore it will not be
dealt with here.

4. The Way of Integrating the Development of Experience with the
Paths and Stages

4.1 Clearing away the darkness of erroneous talk with the sun of accom-
plishment and refutation

Through certainty in each class—the Mind Series, the Space Series, and
the Instruction Series—the Seminal Heart takes only the deepest teachings
from the tantras of our system of the Great Perfection, which are as numero-
us as the stars in the sky, explaining them as the primordially liberated
natural state and teaching that this transcends cause and effect. The Longpa
Tantra says:²¹⁴

A person who sees the truth²⁵⁵
Progresses from the first stage to the sixteenth
By gradual practice.
According to the other [vehicle],
This is the way the qualities of each transient state are obtained.

As it says, this is the way the graduated paths and stages are counted
according to the Pāramitāyāna. [483] In the section on the ground, path,
and goal of the Khyentse Melong, I have reproduced the correct view of this
subject found in the Rigpa Rangshar Tantra.²⁶⁰ Apart from this there is no
tradition of counting the graduated paths and stages in accordance with the
Pāramitāyāna.
The following is written in the Kunje Gyalpo:²⁶⁷

No view and meditation, no maintaining of vows,
No ascending of stages, no traveling of paths,
No skill in virtuous activity, no initiations,
No effort through the three gates, no generation of mandalas,
And no duality of cause and effect, like the sky.

You may think: “If this means that beings of low intelligence are pri-
modially established [in buddhahood] without having trained in discrimi-
nating the stains of the element,²¹⁸ this seems to be no different from the
ordinary state.”

This is not the case. The wisdom of the Natural Great Perfection exists
as the spontaneously present qualities of the greatness of buddhahood.
Because one inherently possesses the complete three kāyas there is no need
to look for them through turning away from *is to it is not*, like mounting a donkey from a step. It is taught that the unfabricated, self-arisen natural state is accomplished by not moving from the state of thusness. From the same tantra:

The buddhas of the past [484]
Were those who saw and realized their own unfabricated minds.
As for the buddhas who exist now,
Their own minds are unfabricated,
And having realized unfabricated thusness,
Now they work for the benefit of beings.
As for the buddhas who are yet to come,
Their own minds, the awakened mind itself,
Cannot be prophesied, as they are not previously fabricated
And will not be constructed through contemplation.
But will come through their entering the path of nonfabrication.

As it says, through not trying to make anything and not falling into the extreme of sealing the wisdom of self-arisen non-elaboration, you can hold buddhahood in the palm of your hand as the state of freedom from efforts. Therefore this is the pinnacle of all vehicles. Extensive discussions on this exist in oceanlike collected works of the Omniscient One, Longchenpa, and in a number of works by Khajog Sakya Dorje and Ngari Panchen Rigung Chenpo. Therefore, just to avoid mental strain and keep from falling asleep, this will be sufficient.

4.2 The main topic of this treatise

Be that as it may, I shall give a short answer to the question for the sake of gradualists. The absorptions of one-pointedness, non-elaboration, one taste, and nonmeditation are primarily known in the context of Mahāmudrā. They were explained in the songs of Milarepa, and the four yogas are known as the tradition of the Dharma regent Dagpo Lhaje, the great Orgyen in the form of an accomplished awareness holder. [485] They also exist in the root tantra of the *Inconceivable Rali*. With the intention of putting this into practice, he explained [the four yogas], having counted them in place of the paths and stages, and some previous lineage holders have examined this minutely. Nevertheless the basis is the original teaching in the Rali Tantra, as I have just said. Furthermore Jowoje, in his teachings on the four unions in the context of explaining co-emergent arising and union for his disciples in retreat, cites the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra. Explaining this openly is sure to create contention and spread ignorance. Also, if this tantra is taught to those who are not totally pure, they will fall into an extreme view.

Yangönпа Pawang Khapa and others also taught [the four yogas] with extensive parallels. As for our school, according to what was said by Rongpa Dzogchenpa, the awareness holder of Orgyen requested [this teaching] from Śrī Singha, and clarified the extent of Yeshe Tsogyal’s experiences with it. Also, Khechog Sogdogpa taught it in parallel with the levels of experience in the Mind Series. [486] In particular, in the great mind treasure free from contention, Drolötg Gongpa Rangdröl, the four yogas, only without that name, were taught in parallel with the progress along the five paths of the Pāramitāyāna. As this method is said to be particularly good, I will teach, for the benefit of gradualists, solely according to the intention of these instructions, which withstand analysis.

Some may think, “If the tantras of the Great Perfection teach that there is a primordial liberation, then this doctrine of yours is in contradiction with them.” This is not correct because Vajrārāja, using his skill in means, taught according to the categories of best, middling, and worst faculties, subdivided into the nine levels from śrāvaka to arhat. Although the Great Perfection is the path for those of the sharpest faculties, entrants are not composed exclusively of those of the sharpest faculties. With this in mind, having ascertained the features of the middling and inferior faculties of awareness holders, the tradition was established in this way. This system should be seen as the skillful means and compassionate activity of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. [487]

4.2.1 The lesser, medium, and great worldly yogas, taught as being equivalent to the Pāramitāyāna’s path of application

4.2.1.1 The lesser worldly yoga

From the great mind treasure, the Drolötg Gongpa Rangdröl:

When the essence isn’t grasped, the nature of emptiness
Is natural, unobstructed, glittering, pure, and naked;
This is what is called the lesser worldly yoga.
Now to comment on the intention of this according to my own experience: Gradualist people should give up distractions in the presence of a holy lama and establish, through meditation, that the nature of mind is free from the four extremes of existence and nonexistence. Having established and clarified this, you will hold in your hand the recognition that this nonconceptual samatha is itself the essence of the object of meditation.

As you sharpen your awareness and meditate, thoughts and emotions become like flies in a sunbeam; however, it is a great setback to turn this into many subjects and objects. Then there will be no benefit from meditation, and you may experience feelings of nausea. Some time after going through such mistakes, you will have an unobstructed understanding of the luminous essence of awareness, [488] and very strong experiences of emptiness will arise from pure, naked, unadulterated radiance. The extent of this depends on how long you have been meditating. If you do not meditate, a deterioration into ordinariness will occur. In Mahâmudrâ this is called lesser one-pointedness.

Although some think that this kind of thing causes over-confidence, that is an intellectual judgment and therefore unreliable.

4.2.1.2 The medium worldly yoga

From the same source:[37]

By maintaining that [experience] undistractedly, you obtain great steadiness,
And although you still meditate, the whole path becomes an aspect of meditation;
This is what is called the medium worldly yoga.

Progressing from the previous level, because your diligent effort increases, there is less grasping at experiences than before, and the aspect of radiance becomes greater. Sometimes, in periods when you are not meditating, through awareness arriving at a startled state,[38] naked, unadulterated emptiness and luminosity arise. The practitioners of Mahâmudrâ call this medium one-pointedness.

4.2.1.3 The great worldly yoga

From the same source:

The luminous brilliance of contemplation becomes stronger than before;
Without any effort, it comes forth to its very limit, day and night;
This is called the great worldly yoga. [489]

You obtain great steadiness. Day and night, experiences free from grasping, the naked luminosity and emptiness expand to their limit. In Mahâmudrâ this is called great one-pointedness.

This is similar to what is called not progressing because the experience of stillness becomes an object in the Great Perfection's Mind Series. In this experience, feelings of bliss in the body and joy in the mind arise and spread immeasurably. You develop great certainty in, and enjoyment of, meditation, like a lamp undisturbed by the wind. You do not feel the existence of the body. Attachment to worldly, non-Dharmic things becomes small. You reach great heights of experience.

Sometimes the complacency of thinking, "What could be superior to this?" develops. Sometimes, from having an awareness free of moisture, the unfortunate idea, "I have experienced nonmeditation," develops. Sometimes compassion for sentient beings develops, and also a conceited emptiness, which is the thought, "This is neither a cause for buddhahood nor wandering in samsara." If a clever person analyzes the manifestations of luminosity, many visions will arise. If upon seeing the face [of a deity] they grasp at it as a prophecy, this is a very dangerous error. Many people do it.

If you come to the essential point of meditation at this level then, because the consciousnesses of the five sense organs are directly neutralized, it will not subsequently be affected by external conditions such as voices and apprehended objects. [490] Furthermore, if this is compared with the Pâramitâyâna, it is taught there that on the three pure stages the consciousnesses of the five sense organs are transformed, that is, they are empowered in a pure land, and once purified, they arise as the all-accomplishing wisdom. You should understand that, although this is not actually true, it is said so that the practices of concentration are not affected by external conditions.

"Those on the path of accumulation understand, those on the path of application experience, and those on the path of seeing realize."[39] This is
how understanding, experience, and realization are connected. And in the Lama Yangtig the following is taught: "the concentration of the gods, the contemplation of the bodhisatvas, and the enlightened mind of the buddhas." I have realized that if one analyzes [meditation] according to this, one can make particularly good distinctions. So in [the meditation] discussed above, although someone who is an ordinary person may, through vipaśyāna without characteristics, be proficient in the essence of their personal practice, this is only experiences and tastes. Although prophetic powers or signs of accomplishment may come forth, they absolutely must not become objects of pride.

In any case, though later you may come to the end of the path described here, it is difficult to reach. When anyone who manifests a little perseverance is considered by their teacher to have mixed day and night with their realization, this is a case of the blind leading the blind. [491] When a person who has experienced a steadied and object-fixated meditation, being possessed by the demon of emptiness arising as an enemy, wastes his human life, then any hope of developing qualities is lost. Some, not coming to the essential point of meditation, enter a diffuse indeterminate state of not knowing what is what, which is essentially like someone who does not know how to express himself. Developing their own reckoning, thinking: "Who has a realization like mine?” and “This itself is what is known as nonmeditation,” the pure vision of the aforementioned external conditions remains totally undeveloped. Through separation from the attitude that advances one's progress, they come into terrible errors. If all of the undeceiving teachings about the connection of cause and effect are destroyed, then, through a single deviation into the emptiness of virtue and the emptiness of sin, there will be no nirvana.

Thinking in this way, the great Orgyen gave this advice to the king:

"Train in not straying from the view into the extreme of activities, and not straying from activities into the extreme of the view. Rely on the holy lama who is endowed with experience as you rely on your own eyes. With devotional prayers, receive the four initiations again and again. Symbolically offer your own flesh, as if letting go of hot iron. [492] This is very important.

According to the Pāramitāyāna, the path of application, which is the meditation on the five senses according to [i] heat and [ii] climax, and the five strengths according to [iii] endurance and [iv] [highest worldly] Dharma, is the essence of the wisdom possessing the four aspects of certainty. During meditation there is total nonconceptualization, and during post-meditation there is nonconceptualization along with whatever conceptualization is necessary. Relying on the four antidotes you weaken the seeds, which are the obscurations to be cleared away. The particular type of realization brought about by this is the realization of the two nonselfs, which is a wisdom resulting from meditation. The particular qualities are various, such as far-seeing and foreknowledge. Supported by the heat of this wisdom, you progress from the great path of accumulation toward the path of seeing. It is stated in the Abhisamayālamkārāloka:

It is said: "If there are no hindrances, you approach the great path of seeing." Through being in harmony with the side of liberation, you should be aware of its particularities.

This is the way of reckoning progress on the path of application.

4.2.2 The lesser, medium, and great yogas of the path of seeing, given that name because it is taught to be similar to the path of seeing in the Pāramitāyāna

4.2.2.1 The lesser yoga [of the path of seeing]

From the same source: [493]

With the experience of stillness and the one who experiences it stripped away,

Realization is free from mind, empty, and stainless like the sky;

This is called the lesser yoga of the path of seeing.

The previous yoga of one-pointedness becomes more profound, and dry intellectual understanding is husked away from the grains of gnosis. If you have reached this essential point of meditation then, through the power of the guru yoga and your own devotion, you are carefree like one who has planted barley and has no need to look for food and drink.

Using immediate conditions, such as suffocating fear and terror, in the practice of cutting attachment (in which one roams cemeteries truly feeling like a lion wandering the valleys), your meditation previously trained with antidotes, and involved an objectification and assertion that [these
conditions] were mere emptiness and luminosity. Now however, when the fixation on the meditator, who is so very joyful and so very blissful, and fixation on the taste of samatha, which is like a bee coming to honey, subsides, then all dharmas of samsara and nirvana are purified in their own place, in a state of nonconceptualization, in the luminous essence of awareness. A freedom from assertions of existence and nonexistence, eternalism and nihilism arises, which is like being surrounded by the sky. In Mahāmudrā this is called *lesser non-elaboration.*

At this time, when people who have not learned much and aren’t supported by a holy lama find their experiences of bliss, clarity, and nonconceptualization subsiding, [494] they think, “Where has my meditation gone?” and with lots of urgent thoughts, try to be aware of everything, but just become depressed. Conceited people who think “This is it,” or “This is nonmeditation,” and hurry to the aid of beings just get carried away by distractions.

After you have become aware of these obstacles and abandoned the two extremes of timidity and going too far, the awareness of the present moment is sufficient for meditation. Losing one’s focus through the indeterminacy that is deprived of the radiant strength of this awareness is a very serious error.

### 4.2.2.2 The medium yoga [of the path of seeing]

From the same source:

Casting off the stains of grasping at the emptiness of mind and phenomena,
Whatever thoughts arise, they are realized to be placeless and rootless;
This is called the *medium yoga of the path of seeing.*

In the previous development of certainty in luminosity and emptiness, which was like being surrounded by the sky, transcending the limits of existence and nonexistence, eternalism and nihilism, there was a subtle grasping at emptiness. That is cast off like a snake’s skin. It is not necessary to seal concepts with an awareness that directly apprehends whatever arises. Thoughts and emotions being empty of self and arising as groundless and rootless is sufficient. This is the way of modestly proceeding to the essence of simple cognizance. [495] If the luminosity is not influenced by one’s cognizance of it, there is no “ordinary” or “special” and therefore, at that time, without meditating or being distracted, you are entrusted with the depths of the view. In Mahāmudrā this is called *medium non-elaboration.*

### 4.2.2.3 The great yoga [of the path of seeing]

From the same source:

Appearance are recognized as mind, and mind itself as rootless;
However the subtle stains of the mind’s grasping at emptiness remain;
This is called the *great yoga of the path of seeing.*

As it says, when there is conceptual imputation, appearances should be intellectually understood as the magical play of mind. By directly equating appearances with mind, appearances and mind are liberated as placeless and rootless, and this manifests as the disappearance of grasping at the emptiness of one’s own essence. However, examining this from the perspective of the higher path, there remains a subtle grasping at emptiness that pollutes gnosis with the subtle stains of mind. This is similar to the teachings in the Great Perfection’s Mind Series on absorption not being damaged by conditions such as sinking and scattering.

If the essence of your personal practice is without any causal activity whatsoever, and you come to the essential point of it, the mano-vijñāna is transformed, and therefore this kind of meditation is free from causal experiences. However, if the cognizance of spontaneous presence is not maintained, a great deal of renouncing and obtaining will remain.

In the teachings elsewhere on the four unions it is said that, at this level, even if you do not meditate you are not deluded or distracted, and even in dreams this is not cut off. [496] However, in our root text the signs of delusion are taught even for the phase of the great [yoga of the] path of meditation, and because I have not experienced this directly, I remain impartial about it. If you want to know the reason for this way of teaching, it is because total liberation from all stains, which crosses over to the far end of awareness of spontaneous presence throughout day and night, is present at the level of buddhahood, and nowhere else.

According to the Pāramitāyāna, the lineage of sentient beings is impure, the lineage of bodhisattvas is pure, and the lineage of tathāgatas is totally pure. These distinctions are made according to the situation [of the medita-
tor], and he is given a particular name because he is at a higher or lower level on the paths and stages. Thus the buddha nature exists in the heart of beings; this and the examples of the stains that are to be removed from the ground were spoken of by Maitreya in the *Uttaratantraśāstra*.

For ordinary beings bound in all their chains, the examples of the coverings of buddhahood are [i] the lotus, [ii] bees, [iii] the rice kernel, and [iv] mud. Because the heart essence is obscured by the nescience that exists in the streams of the arhats (śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas) the example of [v] the treasure under the poor man’s house is taught. [497] The stains (gross) to be abandoned on the path of seeing in the Mahāyāna, in the mindstream of ordinary beings who are trainees, and the stains to be abandoned on the path of meditation, in the mindstreams of āryas (subtle, and coming into being invisibly and concurrently) are taught by the examples of [vi] the seed shell, and [vii] ragged clothes.

Now, the particular phases that concern us here: the stains of the ten stages for those who, having achieved the path of seeing the truth, reside at these stages. The stains that underlie the seven impure stages and the stains that underlie the three pure stages are taught by the examples of [viii] the womb and [ix] gold that has muddy traces. As it says:

The stains supported on the seven stages  
Are like the stain of being inside the womb;  
[Freedom from them] is like coming out of the womb,  
And nonconceptual wisdom is like becoming fully grown.

The stains connected with the following three stages  
Should be known to be like traces of mud;  
They are vanquished by the vajralike  
Contemplation of great beings.511

The state that is evidence of having reached the path of seeing is similar to the state in the Pāramitāyāna called obtaining freedom from illusory phenomena by meditating on the seven branches of enlightenment. At that time, through attaining transcendental wisdom for the first time, effusive joy becomes greater than before. When the state of an ārya is attained, this is the first stage, called the joyful. [498] The path of seeing manifests itself through the definite emergence of the signs of the path, such as immeasurable joy and happiness arising in post-meditation, and the ten million swords of prajñā, which is the proximate cause of omniscience. This is counted as the point at which the first stage is reached.

You may think: “What about the specific qualities? Why is it not the case that the instant anyone sees the faces of a hundred buddhas, that person manifests such powers as being surrounded by a hundred wondrous entourages, having the 112 qualities of a teacher, far-seeing and foreknowledge, being without the marks of life and death, and the power to be born as the king of Jambudvīpa?” In the tantras of the Great Perfection there is the example of the young khyung bird that reaches perfection inside the egg. As soon as it is freed from the egg it flies, and then nothing has the power to stop it. However, before the bird is free from the bindings of the egg, there is an extended development into fullness over a long period of time.

In the Pāramitāyāna the result manifests at some point uncountable eons after beginning on the path. In the phase of the Vajrayāna, all qualities of renunciation and realization are perfected inside the seal of the body of the meditator, and upon freedom from the “egg” of the body, he guides others to certainty in laying hold of the secure place, in the manner of an optical illusion on the stage possessing the twofold purity. Thus the qualities are not necessarily seen to manifest at all. The finer points of this can be seen in instructional treatises such as the Seven Treasuries.

### 4.2.3 The lesser, medium, and great yogas of the path of meditation, given that name because it is similar to the path of meditation in the Pāramitāyāna

#### 4.2.3.1 The lesser yoga [of the path of meditation]

From the same source:

- Casting off grasping at emptiness, reckoning of empty or non-empty is surpassed;
- Transcending dualistic phenomena, the nondual one taste is realized;
- This is called the lesser yoga of the path of meditation.

In the natural state of unelaborated emptiness from the previous level, the conceptual obscuration of grasping at emptiness—which is a sinking
into the central channel—subsides. Then, with the dissolution of all of the gates of arising (such as the red and white appearances) into the mind, the outer grasped object ceases to manifest. When all the flickering of the mind and all cognizance dissolves into ineffable gnosis, you are freed from the clever perceiver who is the inner apprehender, and all situations of samsara and nirvana arise as one taste. [506] In Mahāmudrā this is called lesser one taste.

4.2.3.2 The medium yoga [of the path of meditation]

From the same source:

   Experiences of mind and phenomena are exhausted, and you are free from grasping whatever objects arise;
   Mind and appearances are mixed together, while meditation and post-meditation are generally mixed;
   This is called the medium yoga of the path of meditation.

Having come to the self-liberation of the fetters of all the phenomena of samsara and nirvana, this is a contemplation in which there is the realization, transcending the intellect, of a union like water being poured into water. Because you are free from even the few remaining obscurations of antidotes, which are based on grasping at this contemplation, the kliṣṭa-manas is purified. Simply through your arriving at the utterly pure cognizance that comes from having totally mastered mind and appearances, renunciation and antidotes arise as self-liberation. Meditation and post-meditation, in which the perception that apprehends subject and object as separate has been abandoned, are generally mixed together. This is the real meaning of meditation and post-meditation. The designations of our own extraordinary Great Perfection regarding the recognition of meditation and post-meditation can be understood from our own instructional work the Gūlshor Tsarchö. [502]

Because at times meditation and post-meditation arise with their own particular characteristics, the Great Perfection's Mind Series teaches that to stay free from fear you should keep in mind that in meditation, samsara and nirvana have the same taste, [501] and that in post-meditation the eight aggregates of consciousness are like illusions. The teaching from the four unions that is similar to this, which we did not hear in the great non-elaboration, is spoken of here in the medium one taste. Thus the differences between these [two traditions] are minor. [533] In order to establish without error the intention of the vajra verses in this tradition, they should not be mixed up [with any other teaching]. The master of yoga Milarepa has also expressed this point of view.

4.2.3.3 The great [yoga of the] path of meditation

From the same source:

   There is no need to adulterate the fresh manifestation of objects, for they arise as meditation;
   Though meditation and post-meditation are completely mixed, during the night some delusion remains;
   This is called the great yoga of the path of meditation.

Previously appearances and mind were mixed into one taste, and genuine meditation and post-meditation were interchangeable. Now this becomes even more steady, so that in the daytime they are completely mixed. It is not necessary to use antidotes to suppress adventitious manifestations such as fear; they arise as the dynamic energy of post-meditation. In Mahāmudrā this is called great one taste.

In comparison, in the Pāramitāyāna these phases are called the great, medium, and lesser paths of meditation. Meditating on the noble eightfold path, [502] you progress from the second stage, stainless, to the tenth, clouds of Dharma. Furthermore, the Śūtraśāṅkara, as well as distinguishing great, medium, and lesser, divides each of those three into three, making nine. [534]

   [i] The lesser of the lesser is the second stage, stainless, and the pāramitā of morality.
   [ii] The medium of the lesser is the third stage, luminous, and the pāramitā of patience.
   [iii] The great of the lesser is the fourth stage, radiant, and the pāramitā of effort.
   [iv] The lesser of the medium is the fifth stage, unconquerable, and the pāramitā of meditation.
   [v] The medium of the medium is the sixth stage, manifestation, and the pāramitā of prajñā.
   [vi] The great of the medium is the seventh stage, far going, and the pāramitā of means.
[vii] The lesser of the great is the eighth stage, immovable, and the paramitā of power.
[viii] The middle of the great is the ninth stage, correct understanding, and the paramitā of aspiration.
[ix] The great of the great is the tenth stage, clouds of Dharma, and the paramitā of wisdom.

When progress is reckoned using these ten stages, it is in accordance with the bodhisattvas, on the nature of which the Uutta-rataastraāstra says: [503]

The way bodhisattvas act in post-meditation,
And the tathāgatas’ pure liberation of beings
In the world are the same.
Though this is true, the difference between buddhas and bodhisattvas
Is like the difference between the earth and a grain of sand,
Or the ocean and the water in an ox’s hoof-print.31

It is taught that in liberating sentient beings, bodhisattvas are on the same level as buddhas in that they have the same way of carrying out beneficial activities. However, in terms of the duality of action and agent, the superiority of the buddhas is taught by examples like the earth and a grain of sand. As for the particular qualities: whether or not the power of the 112 qualities of the first stage (which are then multiplied by a thousand immediately upon ascending to the next) will manifest, has already been discussed through the example of the khyung bird and the egg.

4.2.4 The path of no more learning, divided into lesser, medium, and great

4.2.4.1 The lesser yoga [of no more learning]

From the same source:

With the exhaustion of striving for mindfulness, meditation and post-meditation are completely mixed.
Though subtle stains of delusion remain during sleep;
This is called the lesser yoga of no more learning.

Through the power of your having completed the limitless accumulations of merit and wisdom in the post-meditation training of the lower paths, all assertions that grasp at such things as endurance, union, nonduality, and ineffability, with the substantiality of scripture and reasoning and a view based on assumptions, are destroyed in their own place. [504] Awareness of the present moment is pristine and its colors do not change.

In the essence of wisdom that isn’t made by the intellect, not an atom of a meditation object remains, so where will you find a meditator? In freedom from meditation and the one who places himself in it, where will you look for post-meditation? In the truth outside the sheath of an excellent view, what will mindfulness apprehend? Distracting objects have gone into the true condition, so who is distracted? In primordially spacious nonfixation, liberation from out of the expanse of the realized mind, where is there a sought-after object to accomplish? When whatever appearances of samsara and nirvana may arise are experienced without attachment as spontaneous presence, where will you put the watchman of recollection?

Having destroyed the assertions about meditation from the foundations up, it is sufficient to settle. Without a cause for settling, only spontaneous presence remains. As there is no existence, there is freedom from apprehending. As there is no nonexistent, there is the enlightened mind of a buddha.

Just now, having become a child of the lineage of Longchen Rabjam, alone in a cave, I let slip these laughing words: [505]

Alala Ho! Alala Ho! Alala Ho! Saying this I strike the kettle drum of the circle of sambhogakāyas. If this is seen by those whose view is attached to words of obscure significance, they will surely think that this is the drunken view of Hashang, They will surely have the idea that this is like the view of the Bönpos. They will think that this is like the tenets of the naked Jains.

He he! Madhyamaka is absolutely nonexistent, yet here it is! Mahāmudrā transcends intellect, yet here it is! The Great Perfection is pure from the beginning, yet here it is!

Having entered the yoga of great certainty, groundless and rootless, what else is there to do? For the madman whose ālayavijñāna has dissolved into the dharmakāya, recollection that steadies disturbance no longer exists, and its flickering is put to bed in the state without causal subjects and objects. Because this has stopped, the subtle awareness of the intrinsic radiance of the
five objects is no longer mixed with the mano-vijñāna. Furthermore, when he has emerged from inside the ālaya-vijñāna, because of the blazing lamp of the dharmakāya’s luminosity, his nature remains free from elaboration.

However if he has not perfected his skill in the wisdom that shines out in vipaśyānā, [506] then, being enveloped in the ālaya as before, that lamp of luminosity will be extinguished and no longer present. At that time, as soon as the mano-vijñāna comes into being, he is in the city of dreams. After that, one further aspect of delusion is brought into being through the emergence of a pollution by the various white and red appearances.

Thus, having been dragged down by words and names from seeing things as they are, I showed that the luminosity is the great expanse. This is connected with the aspect that is given the name lesser nonmeditation in Mahāmudrā.

4.2.4.2 The medium yoga of no more learning

From the same source:

Throughout day and night, you become entirely at one with the luminosity;
The subtle luminosity of sleep arises as experiences;
This is called the medium yoga of no more learning.

This is explained in these words:

During the day, if you look for a realization that is superior to the previous one, it will not be found. During the night, you do not, as before, need to rely on separating the different ways of arising and the different phases of dissolution of your proliferating visions. In the state in which the objects of apprehension, which are the five objects, have gone, the dynamic energy of the threefold manas stops, and there is none of the darkness of ignorance. [507] You dwell in a nonconceptual luminosity called the undivided space of the luminous aspect. If this is not kept awake by the wisdom of clear vipaśyānā, you will stray into the four spheres of perception that are the formless realms.

Thus Omniscient Dorje Ziji brought about recognition in me. Also, on the establishment of freedom by subduing the manas and expelling cleverness he wrote:

In the unobstructed space of the visions experienced on the path of luminosity, a transcendence of clever perception comes about.
This is the nature of the luminosity that shines out. If you become attached to it, you will be born in the realm of form.

Because Lama Omniscient One left behind this last testament, a teaching on the essential points of the vast, spacious, unlimited expanse will always remain.

Alala Ho!

Thanks to the blessings of my father, the great Orgyen,
And the compassion of my mother, the wisdom dakini,
Inside my house, the luminosity of the central channel,
My realization dwells at great leisure.

Thanks to the kindness of the Seminal Heart in general,
And the mind treasures of the Omniscient One in particular,
My experiences are free from the shackles of doubt,
And friendly accomplishments accumulate but cause no harm.

The thunderous pronouncement of the emptiness of analysis [508]
And the liquid of bright melted gold that polishes meanings:
Combine them but do not mix them up
And thereby adulterate the instructional treatises.

The luminosity of the bliss of the path of means
And the luminosity of the visions of leapover:
Not falling into the situation of separating the two,
Ask the mother, the Khandro Yangtig, about it.

4.2.4.3 The great yoga of no more learning

From the same source:
Those subtle stains of the object of cognition, dualistic appearances, are exhausted.
And the luminosities of ground and path are mixed into one;
This is called the great yoga of no more learning.

Objects, which are the outer manifestations, are exhausted, and mind, which is the inner apprehender, is exhausted. The boundaries of karma and imprints are erased. The natural state of the original ground is not labeled by the intellect as samsara or nirvana, and because delusion is liberated, all divisions are transcended. Where there is nothing, anything is allowed. Because the six dharmas are present in the ground from the beginning, one remains in the state of purity that is the inner nature of the luminous wisdom of buddhahood. The gnosis of the present moment transcends obtaining and negating the qualities and faults of good, bad, and neutral thoughts and emotions. Because they are mixed like the expanse of the radiant sky, [399] there is no teaching to be meditated upon, no partiality of accepting and rejecting, no reckoning of is and isn’t, and no progress on the paths and stages.

This is called crossing over, without any difference in day or night, to the state of the inseparable three kāyas. In the Great Perfection’s Mind Series it is explained as the experience of spontaneous presence transcending the boundaries of ordinary contemplation. In Mahāmudrā it is the great nonmeditation. You should know that because all genuine instructions are taught after mixing with the realized mind of the Seminal Heart, there are few differences between them.

If you want to know who attained a realization like this, it was the great siddhas. Because of a story that appeared in a dream I had a realization in which I was surrounded by the vast expanse of the realized mind of Gyalwang Tsokye Dorje and Panchen Vimālamitta. Then the thought arose: “How nice it would be if I could make those foolish meditators who talk in extremes be careful not to speak boastful nonsense that resolves nothing,” and even writing seemed excessive.

Now to compare this phase with the Pāramitāyāna: By completing the two accumulations, which are the things to be learnt on the four paths of learning, the qualities of renunciation and realization manifest without exception, and through wonderful, beneficial activity, limitless beings are established in the threefold enlightenment. [310] The basis that is the essence of this is distinguished into three kāyas.

First, the dharmakāya: It is distinguished into two aspects, which have already been discussed in the section on the initiations. An extended discussion of the dharmakāya is found in the Abhisamayālaṃkāra, and its distinctions are taught by the Omniscient Second Buddha in his Crossing the Oceanlike Intention of the Secret Tantra with the Ship of Pure Threefold Analysis. Whatever I have said can be found there.

Second, the sambhogakāya: When the samsaric ālaya with its eight aggregates of consciousness has sunk into the expanse, even though the dharmakāya is of one essence, the qualities—which are the aspect of manifestation—are complete without exception. They remain continuously and permanently in the modes of the five certainties and seven branches of union.

The five certainties are taught through the nature of the five perfect aspects: [i] certainty regarding the place—being established in abundant Akaniṣṭha; [ii] certainty regarding the teacher—Vairocana, complete with the major and minor marks; [iii] certainty regarding the entourage—the bodhi-sattvas of the ten stages; [iv] certainty regarding the teaching—the unique Mahāyāna; and [v] certainty regarding the time—the wheel of eternity.

As for the seven branches of the three kāyas: [311] [i] The highest compassion for all sentient beings being uninterrupted, [ii] your mainstream being completely filled by great compassion, and [iii] being without obstacles, are the three branches of the nirmānakāya; [iv] the union of emptiness and compassion, natureless and without any elaboration, is the single branch of the dharmakāya; [v] permanent enjoyment of the prayer wheel of the deep and profound mantra, [vi] union achieved through uniting the wisdom kāya with the consort who is one’s own radiance, and [vii] uncontaminated great bliss without interruption are the three branches of the sambhogakāya, making seven.

Third, the nirmānakāya: Without moving from the state of the dharmakāya or the expanse of the sambhogakāya, there is an immeasurable play of emanations training whoever is present to be trained. These are divided into three, as stated in the Sūtra-ālaṃkāra:

The emanations of artistry, birth,
And supreme enlightenment
Are the Buddha’s nirmānakāyas;
They are the great means to complete liberation.
These distinctions are as follows:

[i] The nirmanakaya of artistry: the merit of beings is increased through systems, writings, books, and all such things.

[ii] The nirmanakaya of birth: emanating as a nobleman, he protects from sickness, hunger, and so on.

[iii] The nirmanakaya of supreme enlightenment: like Lama Saky Senge, who came to train sentient beings through the twelve deeds and the like. [512]

From the Uttaratantrastra:

He knew the world through his great compassion;
Having seen all worlds,
Without moving from the dharmakaya,
Through its manifold nature of emanation,

He was born into the highest birth:
[i] Transferring from his abode in TuJita,
[ii] He entered the womb, and [iii] was born.
[iv] He became skilled in the arts,
[v] Spurred in the company of princesses,
[vi] Renounced all, and [vii] practiced asceticism.
[viii] Coming to Bodhgaya,
[ix] He vanquished Mara’s hosts and [x] became fully enlightened.

[xi] Then he turned the wheel of the Dharma
[xii] And went to nirvana.
And so, in impure lands,
He teaches for as long as they remain.540

The nature of the wisdom behind those deeds can be understood in accordance with the great systems of the original texts. In particular, you should study the great Omniscient One’s instructional treatises. Furthermore, the characteristics of the intrinsically present three kayas that are accomplished in the Vajrayana, the chief of the paths discussed here, are spoken of in the vajra verses of the Drölrig:

SUPPORTING TEXTS

The place where gnosis and emptiness are inseparable is the unique dharmakaya.
The essence of gnosis is that everything is unaccomplished emptiness;
That empty essence is known as the dharmakaya. [513]
The nature is unobstructed, transcendent of samsara and nirvana, and is the reflexive luminosity of all;
That luminous nature is the sambhogakaya itself.
Whatever arises is the unobstructed magical show of gnosis;
That unobstructed compassion is known as the nirmanakaya.
The inseparability of those three, of the same taste and beyond thought and expression,
Is known as the svabhavikakaya.
In the essence of reflexive awareness, whatever arises is unaccomplished and pure like the sky;
This is the first buddha, the dharmakaya, the unique sphere.

This is the final place of liberation of the Vajrayana. Through this alone you come to hold in your hand the experience of determining the root of all individual factors of samsara and nirvana to be the great wisdom of reflexive awareness. Because we yogins have this path, we have a continuous bliss that is free from the all the weariness of being caught in the cage of the paths and stages, and from the net of conceptualization, the analysis, disputations, and contradictions of the original Paramitayana scriptures.

Conclusion

Those who are proud of being learned in the scriptures proclaim a contradictory babble, which feeds the path of the Vajrayana to the twofold manas. Yogins, not understanding even a few of the essential points of the path, have the fault of being in doubt, and because of this obstacle, do not even experience taking so much as a single step in cultivating the path of the perfections. [514] This handprint of untying the knot of the central channel was made after having examined the dynamic energy of gnosis in the vast expanse. To say a little more:

Made from a hundred light rays of fragrant words,
This good and proper letter in reply, the White Lotus,
Says no more than is necessary;
It is a messenger united with the ultimate truth.

The scholar Longchenpa, with his strong body of threefold praññā, having fallen asleep. Discriminating wisdom had closed its eyes to the examination of the original scriptures of sutra and tantra. When tenets uniting contradictions and crushing conceptualizations within the essential points of the profound and extensive method swelled the belly of the Earth Daughter, I wrote these instructions on the ultimate truth.

The oceanlike activities of listening and reflecting are the companions of the path; Though accomplishment of the heart essence of the teaching is often praised, Examination of the extensive original scriptures is precious and rare. If you are intoxicated by the joyful distractions of the world, Then this manikáry with its three pure examinations Is the best boat for the ocean of the ultimate accomplishment And contains the nectar of profound and extensive luminosity and emptiness. It is guided by the heroes, who are its captains. How wonderful! [515]

This song of the madness of realizing the exhaustion of all phenomena. Was due to having drunk a distillation of the liquor of ever-purity Sprinkled with the yeast of the transmission of ultimate truth's blessings. If it is heard by an accomplished awareness holder, he will understand.

In the forest wilderness, with its bushes of distraction, The monkeys who stretch out their arms in conformity With the universal dance of the afflictions Will not be interested in this.

Escaping from the cities of worldly existence, which are like a plantain tree, To nearby lofty, snowy mountains, You should make a delightful feast for your best friends: Those who aspire to carry out contemplation on the luminosity.

SUPPORTING TEXTS

This life is impermanent like mist on the mountainside; The way birth and death appear is as swift as lightning. However one looks at samsara, it is the basis of duḥkha; With certainty in this, do not waste what remains of your life.

Through attachment to excessive learning, you won't be liberated; Instructing, debating, and writing are sources of rigidity and empty pride. Therefore, under a rocky outcrop far from the hustle and bustle, This beggar's only concern is to mix gnosis with the expanse.

By the powerful drumbeat of scriptural prophecies, Yamāntaka who steals the elements of life has been summoned; [516] But even if I die before long, I can be sure that I followed the precepts of previous masters.

If my sons and daughters who are karmically connected to me now, Or later generations of descendants who rejoice in me, Practice the accomplishment of the unique heart essence, They should look carefully at these records of my experiences.

Wangchen Khaynte Özer, though insignificant, Was blessed by his guru, laid hold of by the enlightened mind of Longchenpa, And that steadfast youth who had heard, contemplated, and meditated Became unmistakably certain about the essential points of the instructions.

Practicing in carefree seclusion, I have become resolved, And with the power to express whatever comes forth in my awareness, I am not affected by the deceptive calls of hope and fear; Therefore if I have erred, I confess it—all is sameness in the true expanse.

By my dissolution into clouds of white aspiration, Which rain a sweet, bright nectar of instruction, May the afflictions, imprints, and diseases of all be cleared away, And may their perceptions be enlightened as the Primordial Lord.
This is not written as a refutation of everything perceived
By a proud intellect that holds its own view to be supreme.
Because it is a teaching based on what I have realized myself,
Those whose honesty means that they have some genuine interest should
listen.

Introduction

“Those meditators who are fatigued by the penance of solitude and the
burden of things to be counted and the teachers who support them are a
long way from the definitive secret, the truth of the Great Perfection. [523]
If they can come to the place of the ultimate truth of meditation, just by
recognizing stillness and just by recognizing movement, there is no need for
any other kind of contemplation.”

Although you may achieve an initial acquaintance with the realization of
the great ascension to ever-purity by throwing everything out at once as
stated above, you will not really have come close to it. Without the pride,
arrogance, and the other results of trying too hard to apprehend your own
face, or the great waste of exhausting your life in emptiness, turn your minds
to the questions in this upadesa called the Words of the Omniscient One,
which is an aspiration toward ultimate truth.

The realized mind of the extraordinary Seminal Heart, one’s own pri-
mordially liberated natural state, is said to transcend cause and effect and
to be neither benefited nor harmed by view, meditation, and activity. From
the tantra of luminosity, Senge Tsalzog.343

Gnosis is spontaneously present without meditation;
You will not find me by constructing a meditation.
Self-arising is primordially free from effort;
You will not see me by carrying out activities.
The dharmakaya is primordially free from limits;
You will not see me by examining the view.

To be specific, having distinguished between reflexive awareness (which
is all-penetrating primordial wisdom) and mind (which is nescient con-
ceptualization and delusive forms), [524] you should maintain freedom
from limits in the state of the vast spacious expanse of gnosist, without
following after it. Through this, the imprints of the conceptual mind are
purified, and errors and straying are cut off. However, except for those rare people with extremely sharp faculties, this is difficult to realize. For this reason, although the seminal essence of which I have spoken is beyond increase or decrease, good or bad, rejecting or accepting, we distinguish between samsara on the one hand and nirvana on the other, solely in the context of skillful discursive thought, and because meditators get confused, we articulate their precise nature.

For the benefit of those with gradualist capabilities, three ways of liberating thoughts and emotions have been expounded by the followers of Pañchen Vimalamittra, taught with the following three similes:

1) Liberation by recognizing thoughts and emotions: thoughts and emotions are liberated as if meeting an old friend.

2) The self-liberation of thoughts and emotions: thoughts and emotions are liberated like a snake untying its own knots.

3) Liberation of thoughts and emotions into the dharmakāya without benefit or harm: thoughts and emotions are liberated like a burglar in an empty house.

1. The First Liberation

When resting one-pointedly in the luminosity and emptiness of awareness, the thoughts and emotions that suddenly arise from this state are gnosises. When it first occurs, this is a meditation comparable with the formless gods and because this entails a duality of the awareness of the agent of the view and the thoughts and emotions that are the object of the view, it is dualistic grasping. This is the root of samsara, the origin of suffering, and a barrier to the ground and paths. Thus at the time when this mere recognition of stillness and mere recognition of movement are transformed into an expanse of realization, the errors are very frightening.

You may be thinking, “That’s all very well, but where is there a teaching like this among the advice of a previous scholar?”

This is intended for the phase of practical instruction for a devoted person who is a beginner, just after they have been taught the main practice of meditation as mindfulness in all activities. However you should know that this is not the point at which to teach the simultaneous method of the Great Perfection in a literal way. [526] If you think this is not so, these words from the great Omniscient One’s treatise on the instructions, the commentary to the Yigchön Dzö, the Pema Karpo, will destroy your unfortunate teaching.

Nowadays some meditators think that the third type of undercurrent in the present moment’s gnosisis non-elaboration. Those who, saying “It is enough to recognize the movement of whatever arises as mind,” count the birth and cessation [of thoughts] are a long way from accuracy, to say nothing of the truth of the natural state.

2. The Second Liberation

If you know how to maintain nonattachment, then because of the one-pointed meditation that comes of having destroyed fixation on an object and agent of the view, there is no need for a view. Since thoughts and emotions are recognized as yourself by yourself, you have arrived at self-liberation. This is called liberation like a snake [untying] its knots.

In terms of general religious terminology, because one is embraced by skillful means, one has the characteristics of post-meditation. Although in other vehicles calculations are made regarding these, in the Great Perfection it is exactly this clever perception of the agent of recognition that is taught to be a deviation and an obscuration and is said to be a subtly obscured awareness of dualistic appearances. [527] Therefore if the yogin who has gone into the expanse of realization in this recognition of stillness and recognition of movement examines it, there is a very subtle kind of discrimination. This is not the intention of atiyoga, the pinnacle of the vehicles.

Some, on the other hand, close the eyes of examination through hearing and thinking regarding these special tenets and, in solitary places like rocky overhangs and holy spots, take the path toward the genuine intention of the Natural Great Perfection through faith. However through the power of stability alone they will not arrive at the secret treasury of the realized mind of the vast expanse. Yet with pride in this delusion, they make remarks about “some people” and “philosophers.”
"If you are saying that the realization of a scholar is not really genuine, then this is similar to the wrong view of Hashang."

In answer I suggest that Hashang is without the essential points that differentiate between the objectifying mind and directly penetrating, non-objectifying gnosis. Because of this, since all memory, thought, and perception are stopped in an indeterminate state of awareness that does not differentiate between the phases of mind and gnosis, he falls at once into the extreme of ignorance that is like unconsciousness or a heavy sleep.* [528]

In the Great Perfection, because we do not stray into analyzing conceptual, objective mind with nonobjectifying wisdom, mindfulness of reflexive awareness neutralizes conceptual imputation in a state that is like a polished crystal ball. Then, without emptying or filling up, or any changes, one resides in the realized mind of the vast, spacious expanse, free from limitations. So there is nothing similar between these two.

People who practice by means of the bad gnosis of the philosophers, which is like taking vomit for nectar, [529] have constructed a method for coming forth in one’s own place without the experience of having taken even a single step in the cultivation of the path of the quintessential vajra luminosity. These people are to blame for the accusations that the intention of this vehicle is like Hashang. From the Gbhandaryūhasūtra:  

If, having heard the view of emptiness,  
That very view is not destroyed,  
The holder of the view is like a sick person  
Who takes medicine but cannot be cured.

The intention of this particular statement is that one should develop the eyes of threefold prajñā. Further, the Prajñāpāramitāsūtra advises:

* You have made the assertion that the view of Hashang was like this, based on refutations like the similarity of nonmentionation to an egg. Yet scriptures such as the Buddhāvatāmaśaka were known to Hashang. During the debate, Kamalaśīla asked what was the cause of samsara by the symbolic action of whirling his staff around his head. [Hashang] answered that it was the apprehender and apprehended by the symbolic action of shaking his robe out twice. It is undeniable that such a teacher was of the sharpest faculties. If the noncollection and nonmentionment entail the offense of rejecting the wisdom of differentiating analysis, then the Prajñāpāramitā sutras of the Conqueror also entail this fault. Therefore what the view of Hashang actually is can be known by a perfect buddha, and no one else.""
I have not exhausted afflictions and ignorance or going onto wrong paths. [531]

The sage oriented toward realization who explains to every flawed person with little merit he meets, “The genuine realization that whatever arises is the nature of the dharmanaya is itself self-arisen wisdom,” and, “Absorption is accordingly nescience and manas,” teaches what is tantamount to a fabrication that seduces beings. Because of this, one sees [disciples] who are cut off from the profound Dharma, which will not be found elsewhere. Such a teacher is a thief of this vehicle. There are many appearing nowadays.

When there is a slight movement away from self-arisen wisdom in the dynamic energy of [the ground’s] compassion, the awareness that arises in the objective sphere is known as the play that arises out of dynamic energy. It is not the true self-arisen wisdom because there is an emphasis on the existence and nonexistence of objects, and because there is an emphasis on means (and if you are not embraced by means, then the afflictions and karma that put you into worldly existence are brought about), and because it does not transcend one’s own samsaric nature of conceptualization and analysis.

As he says, [532] the clever perception that is the agent of recognition has the nature of conceptual analysis, and no more. Namkhai Naljor Lhatsün Chenpo⁶⁶⁶ has said:

When associating with experienced meditators, don’t err into analysis and vipaśyanā.

Nowadays statements like “View the essence of whatever arises,” “Apprehend your own face,” and “Relax into your condition,” are [like] royal banners, but this is not the way of the path of total purity. As Lama Omniscient One has said:

If you have not been given the introduction to this, you will fail to understand the essential point that the concepts of relaxing into whatever arises, the view, and recognition are themselves what is called the pith of delusion. By recognizing the emergence of the [ground’s] compassion, the state of naked gnosis that is from the moment of its arising without a place of arising or an agent of arising, as unobstructed wisdom, and by subsequently recognizing this wisdom, self-arisen from the root, as nakedly present in its own place, the essence and the intrinsic dynamic energy will be nondual. Hence there will be the unelaborated wisdom of self-arisen nonduality, known as the unique sphere.

3. The Third Liberation

If you ask which of these stages is the authentic accomplishment, it is the third of the ways of liberation, thoughts and emotions being liberated into the dharmanaya without benefit or harm, like a thief entering an empty house. [533] This itself is the path of the masters of yoga.

It is like this: though a thief may enter an empty house, there is nothing for him to steal, and just as there is nothing to lose in an empty house, one transcends from the beginning the nature of benefit and harm, obtaining and losing. Here the all-penetrating essence of gnosia, an immovable steadiness that is free from the cognitive obscuration of conceptual analysis, is itself the very heart of meditation, or innate mindful awareness. Although the dynamic energy of thoughts and emotions moves as usual, analytical perception is purified. Because of this, in the state of relaxed, non-intellectual, naked gnosis without a place or agent of arising, [the yogin] holds the secure place of the king, the unchanging dharmanaya. This is the meaning behind the words “thoughts and emotions not causing any harm.”

This is the upadesa cast forth as the teaching on utter purity, and it is like this whether in stillness or movement. However, if the one who recognizes this is not purified into limitless and placlessness, he will move away from the site of gnosia reflexive luminosity. From the growing strength of delusory manifestations, which are cultivated in his extensive straying toward objects, he will become proud of the heights of his realization, while actually abiding in a constant stream of the seeds of samsara. [534]

Even in the present time on the path, examples [of this realization] can be pointed out. When powerful thoughts and emotions such as suffering and fear arise, through your merely recognizing the thoughts and emotions, your suffering and fear are purified into limitlessness, at which you burst into laughter. This can be understood from this teaching by the subduer of kings, Namkhai Naljor Lhatsün.”
The Dagpo Kagyüpas designate thoughts and emotions as the dharmakāya; we Great Perfection practitioners do not make that designation.

Also:

The main points, such as how one should relax into the non-apprehension of thoughts and emotions, are spoken of in The Omniscient One’s secret treasures. Alala! Though this is accepted by some, those meditators who grapple with thoughts and emotions will not make a connection with the definitive secret Great Perfection, so how will they recover from their illness? Again and again, using the essential points of the profound instructions, which are like cutting to the heart essence, cast erroneous perception far from you. Listen for a moment and think of yourself in this way.

Regarding the essential point of thoughts and emotions being without benefit or harm, after you have completed the practice of Great Perfection luminosity, then, through the practice of breakthrough, the body disintegrates into its subtle components, the mind disintegrates into the true condition, and one approaches liberation in the place of ever-purity. [535] Through the practice of leapover, at the time of the completion of the four visions, the body disintegrates into its subtle components and is reborn as radiant light. Thus you achieve mastery and arise in the body of great transference. If this happens, then, as the marks of the path, the body becomes like a corpse in a cemetery, speech becomes like an echo, and mind becomes like mists in the air.

“The body becomes like a corpse in a cemetery” means that even when surrounded by murderers, the conceptual imputation of danger and fear is purified in the state of unfixed gnosis. It is not like an obstructive indifference or unawareness.

“Speech becomes like an echo” means that because your perception of gnostic radiance is flawless, your reliance on following others and on apprehending the mind as a conceptual object has been exhausted, and therefore your understanding, which was based on questions and answers, is exhausted. This is a great wonder!

This is spoken of in the last testaments of those who have gone entirely into the rainbow body. When tantras and instructions of the Great Perfection are weighed in the balance, those of little intelligence believe that they have the fault of not containing enough learning. The Kudung Barwa Tantra, on the same subject of teaching the measurement of one’s cultivation of [the visions of] the spheres in leapover, states: [536]

This oral tradition exhausts all expression.
Thus, though elsewhere talkers are listened to,
Here they are not considered sages;
Following only words, how could they be? [553]

Furthermore this can also be understood from what is written in the Ösel Dorje Nyingpoi Nesum Satwar Jepa Tsigdon Rinpochei Dzo: [554]

Freedom from grasping at expression, which is the aspect of speech being like an echo, occurs after one has inserted the syllables that abide in the channels into the spheres of the winds. This is what is known as the meaning of speech that is the ineffable truth of the Great Perfection. It is the mastery of utterly unelaborated wisdom that transcends all objects of speech.

Now according to the other vehicles, after having cultivated the development stage, one’s gross body is transformed into a radiance, like the gods of the realms of desire and form, and then one goes to a pure land. On the other hand, the one who travels this unsurpassable path is given the name rainbow body and goes to the limits of the four visions of the Great Perfection. It is a fault not to realize that there are two kinds of rainbow body (of a superior and inferior rank), as [shown by] Garab Dorje. I have become aware of this point through adhering to the instructions of the great Omniscient One. [537] As for what I have written here, saying ennhö and alala out of joy in the sacred lamas who put me into the place of the awareness holders, I am in no doubt.

As for “mind becomes like mists in the air,” the Longdrug Tantra states: [555]

Reflexive awareness, out of the presence of thoughts,
And the various perceptions of the mental factors;
If these two are equated with each other—what an error!
As it says, in the extraordinary intention of the Natural Great Perfection, mind and gnosias, álaya and dharmakāya, are distinguished as separate things. Thus the wisdom of gnosias, the unique sphere, is embraced by the spacious expanse of Samantabhadri, the ground’s expanse, which has six special dharmas; and the conceptual mind, which manifests as analytical perception, disintegrates into groundlessness, like mist disappearing in the sky. This is the intention. Furthermore, as it is said in the *Nelug Deśi*:

Just as container and contents will disappear into the state of space, Accomplishment and obstruction, attachment and aversion subside into the primal expanse.
Thoughts that have not gone anywhere leave no trace.
In the infinitude of the state of undivided gnosias
The mode of grasping at hope and fear is transcended, [538]
The stake that tethers you to the apprehender and apprehended is pulled out.
And the city of samsāra’s delusory appearances becomes deserted.
Due to this, the manifestation of external objects as phenomena
And one’s own internal mind arise as the play of dynamic energy.
The one who knows that everything is present in primordial emptiness
Will liberate phenomena according to the essential point of presence.

Also:

Not chained by the apprehender and transcending the object apprehended,
Without reference or fixation, there is a suddenly awakened openness.
This realization, which has exhausted undistracted cognizance,
Is present like the sky, without meditating or not meditating.
It is the vast expanse of Samantabhadri’s enlightened mind.

If you do not develop confidence even after receiving clarifying teachings
from the explanatory vajra words like these, then what the Primordial Lord
in the form of an ordinary man, Omniscient Drime Özer, has said is exactly true:

_Alala!_ The difference between this vehicle and others is even
wider than the sky. Although taught, it is not realized; although shown, it is not understood. Those who, after grasping merely the words of the teachings, rest on the surface of an initial introduction will, whatever they do, not come one step closer to bodhihood because they are without the benefit of the Natural Great Perfection’s Seminal Heart. [539] To burst into laughter at dejection is wonderful!

Having mastered the tantric scriptures and gained confidence in my experiences, I teach the path of the Great Perfection straightforwardly. Although I refute ignorance, I do not rush into the extremes of anger and attachment. From the *Sūtrañāṇāṇāra*:

When one who is aware of the correct teachings has judgmental thoughts,
The demon of permanence does not make them an obstacle.
Finding the differences and refuting the assertions of others
Is a characteristic of full maturity that cannot be taken away.

In these degenerate times it is hard to find a spiritual friend who has mastered the intention of this vehicle, and whom one can ask about its tenets. A regent who is comparable to the great Omniscient One himself would not be able to find the original treatises, which are spontaneously present relics of the dharmakāya, the root texts and commentaries of the *Seven Treasuries* and the mind treasures of the Seminal Heart, which explain without error the intention of the three classes of the Great Perfection. Because we are poor in analytical prajñā, the pith of the view of the essential supreme vehicle has become mixed with the view and meditation of the vehicles of supposition, and people talk nonsense about the teachings. [540] Dismayed by this degeneration I composed these instructions in order to clarify the meaning in a few words. Through so doing, merit is increased, as has been taught in the commentary on the root downfall:

If, with the intention of identifying and teaching higher and lower views, other precepts are deprecated, this is not a transgression, but greatly increases merit.

There is no doubt that through the power of this the accumulation of wisdom is also greatly increased. However if these instructions are taught
to a person who has strayed into seeing the view as an intellectual object, then he will become savage like a vulture. Beginners need to be trained gradually in bringing thoughts and emotions onto the path, as appropriate to the individual's experience and character. Because there is a danger of some people rejecting [the teachings] out of fear and anger, the one who holds the ten powers advised that the key precepts are not to be taught everywhere. The medium-length Prajñāpāramitā says:  

Subhūti, the teaching "all dharmas are emptiness, markless, and wishless" should not be given initially to beginners who have just entered this vehicle. [541] If you ask why, it is because they may develop wrong views out of attachment and aversion, that cause them to reject [the teachings].

Furthermore not even the outline of these instructions should be taught to those philosophers who talk nonsense. That which is said in the Rinpoche Pungpa Tantra is exactly true:  

"You should not explain the least bit of these words to insiders such as śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. If you ask why, it is because if they hear all of these words, they will faint with fear and aversion, and they will have no faith in the secret mantra. Because of their small-mindedness, they will cast aspersions, and these actions will ripen into the experience of becoming a being of the vast hell realms. Never mind their being taught and listening to [these teachings]—they should not even be taught downwind of them."

Vajra Speech asked: "O Victorious One! What is the cause for śrāvakas and so on coming about as such?"

Thus he spoke: "The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas have not become vessels for the secret mantra for incautious ones because of their small-mindedness. [542] It is like trying to pass a bolt of cotton through the eye of a needle: it does not fit and will never go through."

Thus you should keep [this text] very secret. On the other hand, when this vehicle has been entered by somebody with faith, and the gods whose accomplishment does not include the essential points of the path become angry at his having exhausted the true condition, then they should look to this. When they have looked at it, then from the true expanse, the great truth that is nothing at all, from the miraculously arising compassion of the awareness holders who hold the transmission, and from the power of the pure wishes of myself, the hermit beggar of the forests, may they instantly be freed from all chains and swiftly make contact with the inexpressible realized mind of Samantabhadra. As for all those unfortunate people with wrong views and those who are arrogant because of pride in their own self-esteem, may they be blessed without noticing by the awareness holders who carry the transmission.

Aala Ho! This scroll, which is like the space of the vast expanse, the core of the great heart, the pupil of the great eye, and the juice of the Seven Treasures, is guarded by the protectors who are friends to the Seminal Heart.

Samaya samaya samaya

Sealed, sealed, sealed.

Ho ho!

Appearances are unfixed, and gnosis is primordially liberated; There is nothing to be done with view and meditation, and the six accumulations can be left as they are; Meditating in dependence on mindfulness and antidotes is not necessary; The Great Perfection practitioner who is free from activities passes over into the exhaustion of phenomena.

Fools who are deficient in listening and contemplating pass themselves off as meditation masters, But the tantric transmissions and instructions do not manifest to their enemies, I do not surround myself with important people from the cities of the eight worldly dharmas Who are attached to the nonsense of labeling with terminology.

Because in this case I stayed fixed on the heart of accomplishment, The blessings of the self-arisen teacher Padmasambhava and his consort, And of the yogin of the spacelike state, Longchenpa, Descended as the sphere, the indestructible heart center.
After this I became free and relaxed, not reliant on striving.
Appearances and sound truly arose as symbols and books.
My throat came to be a treasury of advice.
This advice is not dependent on shreds of words and examples
But bursts forth from the secret treasury of the realized mind of the vast expanse.

How wonderful! There is no need for me to boast about my wisdom
Because the winds and channels of apprehender and apprehended have entered the central channel.
The tendency to fix flickering awareness or sinking and scattering having been purified,
In my self-liberation there was no diminishment of luminosity. What happiness! [544]

When the state of meditation is a mind-made asceticism, what is achieved?
Do not err into the ordinary renunciation of not meditating,
Free from the designations meditating and not meditating,
Look the present moment's awareness in the face. Ho ho!

One who boasts of the austerity he has borne for months and years
May have miraculous powers, clairvoyance, and have transcended the marks of accomplishment,
But after freeing the knotted channels of apprehender and apprehended into the heart,
He will be confused about the Great Perfection and his mind will be troubled.

Through the kindness of the awareness holder Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra of India,
And Vairocana and and Longchenpa of Tibet,
The doctrine of the heart essence has flourished in this land of snow.
In caves they spent their lives in exhausting the true condition
And constant teaching that spread the initiations and transmissions.

The heart essence of the teaching is not [given out] at the door;
It is necessary that the transmission of the truth descend into one's heart
Because of an attitude of devotion, accomplishment, and perseverance.

The accomplished student [unifies] the liberated expanse with the three kayas;
The person with pure vision [unifies] luminosity with liberated gnosis;
By putting bone to stone, [unifying] view and meditation with bad situations,
May these accomplished ones leap forward on the path like the past masters. [545]

This foolish beggar, though he is of no importance or value,
Owned a little bit of good karma from his previous practice;
Meeting with the sacred regent of Orgyen,
He received an inheritance of experience and realization.

Omniscient lama, stainless with light rays,
I met you face to face as an illusory appearance and was inspired;
Your blessings, transmitted in words and symbols, descended into my heart center,
And I came to understand the undeluded realized mind of the Great Perfection.

The words of the Omniscient One found here
Were sent as a messenger to distinguish,
As a duck distinguishes milk from water,
The view of the Great Perfection, which has been mixed with suppositions.

May this, on its own, benefit the teaching on the heart essence and cause
All hermits to be filled with the destruction of delusion and renunciation of activity;
Leaving behind as a remainder only their hair and nails,
May they be transformed like Garab Dorje and Manjusrimitra.

On the rocky crag of Akaniṣṭha, the navel of glorious Samye Chimpu, on the side
that is protected by the power of Lower Geu with its lines of drêgu bushes,
I recognized a supreme place, a house where dākini of the great secret congregate,
and called it Flower Cave. [546] When I was striving for the heart essence in a three-year retreat, I met the Omniscient One, Ngagi Wangpo, to face to face three times in the form of a delusory appearance. After he inspired me with his speech, from the power of the immeasurable good fortune of his
blessing-continuum, my meditation and post-meditation were purified into equality. From this I took a little courage, which gave me a deeply felt confidence in the validity of my interpretation of the texts of the tantras, instructions, and treatises. Based on that, I was saddened that the profound realization of the transmission of the truth of the Natural Great Perfection was becoming scarce.

I, the hermit called Pema Wangchen Khentse Özer, have reached my thirty-second year. The Omniscient One, the Second Buddha himself, praised this very same sacred place as being like Śrīvāna in India. In his fifty-sixth year, on the eighteenth day of the king month of the Water Rabbit Year, his body, in the posture of the dharmakāya, became a source of relic pills and the five major relics. Through his attainment of the highest degree of the signs that indicate having followed the tenets in the primordial place of the supreme vehicle, such as rainbow lights, he established the ocean of beings in the soil of faith.

Having dissolved for a little while into the ground’s expanse of the primordially enlightened mind, as the time has come when reverence is given to groups who debate about the number of qualities, orifices, and skandhas, I set down in words the extremely secret class of teachings.

Sarwa mangalāṃ

May there be virtue.
May there be virtue.
May there be virtue.

The Lion’s Roar That Destroys the Deviations of Renunciants Meditating on the Seminal Heart

Primordially without meditation, transformation, or fabrication,
Without concentration or distraction, holding the quintessence of gnosis,
Free from intellectual grasping at the state of equanimity,
Self-settled and innate, I pay homage continuously to the Great Perfection.

This elixir of the luminous Great Perfection tantras,
The heart essence of Padma, the lifeblood of the dakīnis,
The truth that transcends all of the nine vehicles
Cannot be expressed except through the power of the mind transmission. [549]

However, for the benefit of meditators who are single-mindedly fixed
Upon this quintessence, the supreme truth,
I made this from the treasury of the realized mind of the vast expanse,544
It was not composed to entangle people in conceptual analysis.

Introduction

When an introduction has occurred due to your previous pure aspirations, and you have met with a qualified holy lama who holds the transmission of the truth of realization, then if you know how to make a request with the confidence that is borne of a single-pointed, fierce devotion, the conditions will be created by faith, and the realization of the lama will be poured into the student. [550]
Out of that comes the natural state of the unelaborated Natural Great Perfection, not pointed out by words and metaphors, unobstructed and unlimited and not falling into extremes, the breakthrough awareness of the present moment, which does not shed its coat or change its colors. Having entered this meditation freely, the desire for causal meditation is purified, you are released from the fetters of view and meditation, and confidence arises from within. That which arises is no longer an object. You are not chained by the benefits of good thoughts, harmed by the evil of bad thoughts, or deceived by the neutral ones. [551] Because gnosis and the expanse have become all-pervasive, the qualities that are the signs of the path manifest. Errors, deviation, and straying are destroyed so that not even their names remain.

And yet, though this teaching is the pinnacle of the vehicles, a variety of people of the best, middling, and low types exist. Because it is difficult to gather only those of the very best faculties, there can be problems between teacher and student. Then though the student may meditate, because of this flaw, that makes it difficult to develop qualities, he will go astray.

For those who have the ability for gradual progress, there are three [levels] to personal practice: intellectual understanding, experience, and realization. *

Due to grasping at a natural meditation based on intellectual understanding, there are many these days who stray into the state of the seal. [552] What kind of state is this? It is an enjoyable and relaxing meditation where luminous and empty awareness is without any conceptualization whatsoever. When this develops, it is for the most part no more than a blissful experience. Because of it meditators develop the pride of thinking: “My meditation is the thing itself,” “Nobody knows better than this,” and “In this way, I have achieved realization.” If this is not stopped by a qualified lama, then as they say in the Great Perfection: “Intellectual understanding is like a patch: after it has worn away, it’s gone.”

When presented with good and bad circumstances, many distinguish between them, [like a duck distinguishing] milk from water. However the coming and going of bad circumstances on the path is trivial and easy to deal with, while the coming and going of good circumstances on the path is very difficult to deal with. This is why those who are proud of their high realization are really devoted only to the glorification of their present life. They are distracted and filled up with the desire for the demon Devaputra, the retribution for which is that they will not realize the vital point of the self-liberation of the six aggregates. Because these types are nowadays taken to be wonderful and miraculous, those who are willing to say this are fewer than white ravens. [553]

Even those who practice the holy teachings from the heart are at present meditating ineffectually on a confused, conceptual view. They should perform the recitation of the guru yoga in the four periods and receive the four initiations, after which they will experience loosely relaxed gnosis in the state of the mixing of their mind with the enlightened mind of the guru. Without the essence of this experience becoming unsteady or unsupported, they should put bone to stone.

Within those experiences, they may experience emptiness, which is a predominance of sámatha, or luminosity, which is a predominance of vipaśyāna; in short, when they are aware of the faults of flickering awareness and their skill in discriminating prajñā blazes forth, they will know how to carry both stillness and movement into meditation. However, there exist in this state deeply hidden and very dangerous cognitive obscurations, such as the essence of the observer becoming the tight grip of selfhood, or straying into the condition of analytical examination. Therefore the name dharmakāya cannot be given to discursive thought before the awareness of the present moment is unimpaired and uncorrupted. This alone is the antidote for the agent of meditation, a total penetration not chained by attachment to the view. [554]

To perform analysis according to one’s intellectual understanding of meditation and post-meditation, which exceeds loosely carrying it onto the path, is to go astray. If this happens then one is on the treacherous pathways of error, deviation, and straying. If one does not know how to recognize each of these then it is impossible to distinguish what is and isn’t one. Therefore their faults will be explained here.

The Errors

That which is called emptiness is empty from the very beginning, nonself, separate from the four and eight extremes of elaboration, the loose awareness of the present moment, transcending intellect—that is, what we call gnosis. If this is not understood, you experience an emptiness in which
everything is nonexistent, following intellectual analysis that accomplishes the negation of existence and nonexistence, as in the lower vehicles. Alternatively, with an absorption that trains in emptiness through the stūbhaṇa mantra and the like, you experience merely a posited emptiness and luminosity, the view that everything is like an illusion, as in the lower tantras. This is an error.

After gross and subtle discursive thoughts have been pacified in their own place, and mind itself is free from the waves of flickering awareness, the aspect of spacious and clear stillness, reflexive awareness and radiance, is šāmātha. If, not understanding this, you think that stillness is a stupefied unawareness, this is an error. [555] Where both stillness and movement are the vigorous radiance of reflexive awareness, and there is no grasping at gnosis and luminosity, that is vipāṣyaṇa. If, not understanding this, the intellect examines the states of stillness and movement, this is also an error.

There are various ways of explaining meditation and post-meditation. In the Great Perfection’s own terms, when the essence of whatever arises abides in the state that is embraced by cognizance, this is meditation, and in that state of mindfulness, the aspect of movement—such as apparitions and transformations—is post-meditation. If, misunderstanding this, you define meditation as one-pointed settling in the emptiness of the gazes, and post-meditation as sealing whatever arises with the emptiness that is like an illusion after getting up from meditation, this is an error.

Nondistraction is not going into the indeterminate state or straying into the undertow of proliferating thoughts that spread delusion. This is called awareness that is innately pure. If you become involved with caution that is afraid of distraction, and bound up by the awareness that is tangled in ascetic practices, this is an error.

Ordinary mind is the awareness of the present moment, [556] self-settledness that is unadulterated by good or bad qualities. This is called maintaining the flow of gnosis. If, not understanding this, you cling to the worldly discursive thought in your own mindstream, this is an error.

Nonmeditation is when, having entered the womb of the natural state, the desire to meditate or not to meditate is purified, and there are no fabrications or fixations whatsoever in the mind. This is called entering the castle of all-inclusive awareness. If you remain in ordinary, careless equanimity, or spread out into the seal of the indeterminate state where you do not know what is what, this is an error.

What is maintaining whatever arises? It is not seeing directly whatever thoughts and emotions arise and then obstructing them. It is not making an analysis of them. It is not chasing after them. When the agent of arising thoughts and emotions relaxes into his own gnosis, this is called all-penetrating maintenance of stillness and movement. If, misunderstanding this, you follow what you please in whatever arises and analyze it, this is an error.

The Three Deviations

If you are attached to bliss, you will be born as a god of the desire realm; if you are attached to clarity, you will be born as a god of the form realm; [557] and if you are attached to nonconceptualization, you will be born as a god of the formless realm. Therefore these are known as deviations. I will teach the recognition of these and errors involved.

[i] That which is known as bliss is said to be the manifestation of an experience of joyful bliss, which is like not being able to bear being separated from the sphere of the natural state unadulterated by the three great root sufferings. It is said to be unlike the contaminated bliss of passion or the arising of happy and joyful thoughts and emotions, which can be changed by external conditions.

[ii] That which is known as clarity is said to be the vigorous aspect of gnosis, unpolluted by hindrances like fogginess or sinking, or an unobstructed clarity of perception. It is said not to be the forms of deluded appearances, perception endowed with characteristics, such as the colors and shapes of the objects of perception.

[iii] Nonconceptualization is said to be a skylike lack of conceptualization, free from the trembling movements of deluded conceptualization in which one thought follows another. It is said not to be a black darkness like a heavy sleep, or a blocking off of feeling like being senseless in unconsciousness. [558]

In short, even these three experiences only arise as a natural occurrence in accordance with the way the signs of the path appear. They are not realization. If you meditate impelled by hope for these, and when they arise become attached through concentrating on correct meditation, you will not transcend the karmic cause for deviation into the three realms.
The Four Ways of Straying

The four are: [i] straying into the condition where emptiness is an object of knowledge, [ii] straying into taking emptiness as the path, [iii] straying into taking emptiness as an antidote, and [iv] straying into taking emptiness as a seal. Although each of these is also taught as being divided into two, an original straying and an immediate straying, for brevity's sake I will roll them into one.

[i] The essential point of the great ascent to the present moment's gnosis is freedom from the chains of intellect and activity that bind the essence of ultimate-truth emptiness, which is pure from the beginning. If this is not understood and you seek accomplishment from the type of emptiness that is like sealing appearances with emptiness, this is straying into the condition [where emptiness is an object of knowledge].

[ii] With no belief in bringing everything into the path of ordinary, reflexive awareness [159] and no understanding of the primordially and spontaneously complete nature of the inseparable cause and effect, you strive in hope that the effect—the dharmakāya—will emerge from elsewhere through your meditation on emptiness as the path. This meditation, which is an intellectual imputation, is straying into [emptiness] as the path.

[iii] Whatever thoughts and emotions arise in the state of affliction are in their essence primordially empty. When you do not depart from this, there is no need for the duality of afflictions as the cause of rejection and emptiness as the antidote. The essential point is that this object of rejection is self-liberated, like a snake untwisting its knots, at the very moment it is recognized by your reflexive awareness. If this is not understood and you think it necessary to meditate on the type of emptiness that is an antidote to the afflictions and to thoughts and emotions, which you take as objects of rejection, then this is straying into [emptiness] as an antidote.

[iv] Now, straying into the seal: Everything, elaborated or unelaborated, has always been spontaneously present as the great union of luminosity and emptiness in the elemental space of Samantabhadri, the vast expanse. If this is not understood, then because the rigid mediator and the way of practicing training without fixation are not united, means and wisdom become separated. Not maintaining the watchman who is the nonfixed flow of ordinary gnosis that transcends the intellect, [560] he keeps the initial theory [of emptiness] in mind. Thus he says, "There is no meditation or meditator," "Everything is emptiness," "Everything is the dharmakāya," "Actions and their results are not real," "That's just the intellect," "That's just discursive thought," and "Everything is unaccomplished." This is known as being sealed by a definitive view of emptiness. There is a lot of this about nowadays.

Conclusion

In short, on the journey from the meditator's first reception [of the teaching] to the unsurpassable stage, there are extremely narrow pathways and hiding places of error, deviation, and straying. Therefore if you do not have a fine discernment of these experiences, even if you are learned in talk and terminology, it will be as they say in the Great Perfection: "Experiences are like mist; after fading away, they're gone." Even a tiny good or bad condition can fool the meditator. Because of the confusion about these conditions, I have given this advice.

Therefore, if you are not embraced by the special essential points that remove obstacles and enhance practice, then how will you attain liberation and enlightenment on your own, just by searching for and buying merchandise such as strict retreats with no contact with people, concentrating the mind and binding the body according to the strict points while being boastful of your asceticism, deity meditation and mantra recitation, or meditation on the channels and winds? [561] The Dharmaśaṅgitiśūtra says:  

Even if he has dwelt for many millions of years  
In mountains and valleys full of poisonous snakes five hundred miles away,  
A bodhisattva who does not understand solitude,  
Gaining only greater pride, will remain an ordinary being.

So, having understood the essential point of bringing whatever arises onto the path, the accomplished one who thinks of his body as a retreat but does not rely on the number of months and years he has spent in retreat, since his is not a path that gives great import to the accomplishment of remaining in solitude in itself. Having developed to his full measure in this very life, he strives to maintain the flow of the unelaborated natural state. Though good or bad thoughts and emotions arise, he does not engage in any activities such as applying the moxibustion of the antidote to the object of rejection or applying the patch of naked apprehension that is the idea: "Whatever good or bad thoughts and emotions arise, they are just thoughts.
and emotions." [562] Throughout day and night he crosses over without interval to a state of non-elaboration, as unconcerned as an old man watching a child at play. Because of this his skill in concept-free vipaśyanā is perfected, and he lays hold of the secure place where all that arises—be it stillness or movement, cognizance or gnosia, good concepts or bad concepts—is the expance of the Great Perfection, gnosia and emptiness inseparable, transcending the intellect. Then as they say in the Great Perfection: "Realization is changeless, like space."

Though such a yogin appears ordinary in body, his mind resides in the enlightened mind free of all activity, the dharmakāya. Because of this his worldly perceptions are the mandala of the lama, whatever arises is all-pervasive wisdom, the objects of perception are symbols and books, and the paths and stages are inseparable in the relaxed enlightened mind. From the expance of the primordial liberation of samsara and nirvāṇa, the aiding of sentient beings and teaching in accordance with their circumstances arise effortlessly and spontaneously.

The moment the bindings of the seal of the body are destroyed, it is like the space inside a vase becoming inseparable from, and of one taste with, the space outside, as soon as the vase is broken. The inner luminosity, the original ground's expance, manifests as the youthful vase body free from analytical awareness. This is the achievement of buddhahood, the final accomplishment. [563]

To say a little more on this:

The delusory appearances of conventional truth are a great lie.
When everything is brought into the condition of gnosia in the vast expance.
The subject and object in flickering awareness, like a child's dance,
Are neutralized in the state of awareness transcending intellect.

Don't become drunk in a stupefied sleep, having swallowed the beer
Of good concepts that pursue an exalted view
Or bad concepts that bind with the fetters of doubt;
Remain in relaxed, naked, ordinary gnosia.

The exaggerations that spread superficial theories,
And the suffering of talking about the narrow paths of stillness and movement.

Are conquered with a thousand refutations by the few words
Of the profound vajra verses, the mind transmission.

Due to the conjunction of previous accumulations and white aspirations
And the kindness of the yogin of the profound vajra path,
I wrote these instructions on the essential points of the experiences
As a handprint of having untied the knot of the central channel.

When the thunderous roar of these words rings out,
It breaks the hearts of proud scholars.
Yet because profound experience and realization boils over from the inside,
It is impossible to keep the fame of the all-encompassing expance secret.

By this virtue, may those who maintain self-settled awareness
Purify all nonvirtues of straying into the confused tangle of awareness
In the innate and spontaneous state,
And may the Great Perfection be realized by all.

This is the Lion's Roar That Destroys Deviations. One who possesses the karmic connection of the previous virtue of maintaining (without shrinking or expanding it) the Great Perfection luminosity, and is enriched by the wealth of faith, generosity, and instruction, tethered his mindstream in the presence of the Dharma with the three solitudes and the liberation of gnosia and the expance. Residing in a place stopped up with clay, he strove to accomplish the quintessence of the vajra luminosity.

Based on the exhortations that came not once but again and again from the three kāyas, the union of gnosia and the expance, and so on, Pema Wangchen Yeshe Palgyi Rölts, the hermit yogin who is proud of having cultivated the state of manifest Great Perfection luminosity, wrote this at the retreat site of the Flower Cave, the great secret house of the Akāniṣṭha dākaṇīs at the navel of glorious Chimpu. [565]

It should not be taught to those who have not received meditation instruction, or to those who have received it but are the unfortunate type who hold wrong views and, having been maddened by drinking the poisoned water of their self-esteem, have not experienced the vital points of the
path. Look earnestly to this text, which is for those who are set on the quintessence of accomplishment. To those with full confidence the reading transmission should be given. The protectors who are friends to the Seminal Heart are its guardians.

Samaya

Sealed, sealed, sealed.

Seeing Nakedly the Natural State of the Great Perfection: Necessary Instructions for Beginners

To the self-liberated ground, the Great Perfection, I prostrate without the idea of bowing. May I be blessed at this present moment with seeing The face of the Great Perfection, genuine reflexive awareness, free from the intellect.

The location of the truth of the Great Perfection is the unfabricated mind of the present moment, this naked radiant awareness itself, not a hair of which has been forced into relaxation. Maintaining this at all times, just through not forgetting it even in the states of eating, sleeping, walking, and sitting, is called meditation. However, until you are free from the obscurations of cognition, it is impossible for this not to be mixed with the experiences of bliss, clarity, and nonconceptualization. Nevertheless, just by not forgetting the nature of one's own awareness—the kind that is not a tangled mindfulness that gets more tangled in order to be mindful—at some point the unelaborated ultimate truth, transcending terms and examples, will appear.

At times beginners become agitated by the spread of negative thoughts and emotions, and because of this the mere accumulation of adventitious thoughts and emotions turns into an undercurrent. At a later stage, after they have arrived at a startled awareness, they develop regret, thinking, "I have become agitated." At that time, one should not do anything like regretting the agitation or cutting off the tails of the departing thoughts. Maintaining a settled flow with regard to the startled awareness that one has arrived at is what is generally known as not abandoning the view of thoughts and emotions as the dharmakāya.
However, if you practice in this way without having perfected your skill in vipaśyāna over some time, you will certainly fall into the trap of not knowing what is what. Therefore, to begin with, whatever thoughts and emotions arise should be viewed by seeing them nakedly, and they should never be analyzed or examined. The agent of the recognition of thoughts and emotions should be put to one side without giving him any importance, like the unconcerned disinterest of an old man watching a child at play.

When you have become accustomed to this flow for a while, at some point the thoughts and emotions that arise in meditation will be liberated into the sameness of stillness and movement. At that time the following will arise in stages: [i] thoughts and emotions are liberated as the dharmakāya once they have been recognized, [ii] thoughts and emotions are liberated as the dharmakāya by themselves, and [iii] thoughts and emotions are liberated as the dharmakāya without benefit or harm. [570] It is important to distinguish the dividing lines between these with the help of a supreme teacher who has obtained the inheritance of the mind transmission of the Great Perfection.

In this teaching are found the best of the essential points, unlike the other vehicles, and unlike the systems in which the view of thoughts and emotions as the dharmakāya is mere supposition. Therefore follow the tenets of those heroic beings who reside at the stage where they have reached the extraordinary realization of the Instruction Series.

When you attain liberation that is like the sky, a non-elaboration without renouncing or obtaining, the meditator and mindful awareness's antidotes having disappeared, the continuum of awareness is pure like space. A self-liberation from the chains of doubts and uncertainty comes about, and one crosses over to limitlessly open, non-intellectual gnosis that has not been made by anyone.

The certainty that this itself is the Buddha’s gnosis, which transcends analysis, cuts off the errors that return you to the three realms. Through this you will realize the ever-pure natural state, primordially as it is. If on the other hand you do not develop stability, it is not difficult to revert to renouncing and obtaining without ever reaching the three pure stages. [571] Therefore you should rely on solitude to purify the obscurations of cognition, and put bone to stone.

Although nothing is said in the instructions and tantras of the Great Perfection or Mahāmudrā about the classification of the path subsequent to self-liberation through the single cut of gnosis, it was taught by those great bodhisattvas, the accomplished ones of the past. Having completely mastered the gnosis of post-meditation, they created out of this realization the categories of one-pointedness, non-elaboration, one-taste, and nonmeditation, each divided into great, medium, and lesser, and calculated their equivalence to the stages and paths.

Later generations have erred into a non-elaboration endowed with characteristics and, meditating on the imprint of the great one-pointedness, have developed pride in being able to unite day and night. Such people have certainly been forsaken by the three kinds of prajñā. Because of this, I wrote this appendix to the secret Semināl Heart of the Great Perfection with the intention of inspiring confidence in the realized mind of Samantabhadra who is endowed with the six dharmas, the ground of final liberation, and the place of liberation.

To understand this essential point properly, it is necessary to penetrate the secret treasuries of the Omniscient One, Longchenpa. [572] If this is done, in later generations there will be a succession of yogins who have the benefit of having obtained the transference of the mind transmission. Longchen Namkhai Naljor wrote this as his last testament. It was written as notes on the awareness that is like all-pervasive space, endowed with pure visions and focused on the present moment.

Appearance is unborn, gnosis is primordially free, awareness is all-penetrating, and union is an imputation.
All-encompassing awareness goes gradually to nonfabrication.
The perception of one’s own face goes immediately to direct awareness.
Extremes do not remain in the Great Perfection’s view;
Appearances, emptiness, and union are just words, names, and terms.

Aho!
There is no meditation to bring about that which is primordially unelaborated;
The solid vajra throne is unchangeable confidence,
The little tent of white cotton is the protection from the fear of samsara,
And the brothers and sisters of nonfabrication are the assembly of self-liberation.

Aho!
From the primordial identification of mind and appearances comes bliss;
Transcending view and meditation, the Great Perfection yogin [573]
Acts spontaneously when the radiance of gnosis is at its full extent;
The manifestations of happiness and sorrow pass freely through his mind; 
With this liberating realization he reaches the limit of his practice.

Having taken a step toward the pith of prajñā and means, 
I wished to practice in a mountain retreat; 
Thus dwelling in a rocky cave, and in a state of nonconceptuality, 
Namkhai Naljor met Longchenpa, 
And the realizations that came up were expressed as songs.

In the primordial radiance, happiness and suffering, accepting and rejecting did not exist; 
At the full union of gnosia and emptiness, the cave of fictitious appearances 
Dissolved into perfect sameness, the expansive realization of Samantabhadra, 
And I came to the kingdom of the dharmakāya, spread out all around.

Fortunate ones who are gathered here, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers: 
Maintain your own spacious state in a relaxed way, 
The union of gnosia and emptiness in which there is no attachment to samsara. 
And set out together toward liberation in the original ground's expanse.

Even this vajra song is like the play of optical illusions.
Appendix I
The Structure of the *Yeshe Lama*

While Jigme Lingpa’s longer supporting instructions (*rgyab chos*)—that is, PK and KZL—have a basic structure of internal divisions, it is negligible in comparison with the internal structure of the *Yeshe Lama*, which is closer in its complexity to Jigme Lingpa’s scholarly works outside of the *Longchen Nyenigig*, such as the *Khyense Meling* and the commentaries to the *Yonten Dzö*. An effort in organization and clarity of presentation greater than that in the supporting instructions is evident throughout YL, which corresponds to the ambitious aim of the work—to present all levels of the Seminal Heart’s special practices, breakthrough and leapover, concisely in one text.

Written in Tseringjong after Jigme Lingpa’s retreats, YL is a later composition than the supporting instructions. The colophon mentions, as an event now past, the end of the vow of secrecy, and Jigme Lingpa’s activity of spreading of the teaching; so though the text may have been begun at an earlier date, it was completed sometime after the end of Jigme Lingpa’s vow in 1764. Here the inspiration is not credited to Longchenpa but, as with many of Jigme Lingpa’s non-*Longchen Nyenigig* works, to the encouragement of an ordinary person, a certain Tendzinje, quite possibly the Chagzampa incarnation, Tendzin Yeshe Lhündrub.595

Jigme Lingpa’s structural scheme for YL divides the text into three parts, which are designated as being intended for those of sharp, middling, and inferior faculties (*dbang po*) respectively. The bulk of the text is contained in the first part and is the instructions on the twofold meditation practices specific to the Seminal Heart: breakthrough and leapover. The meditation instructions are arranged in four parts. First there are the preliminary practices, of which three types are mentioned (Jigme Lingpa does not actually give any instructions on the first, which he says is no longer practiced). Second is breakthrough, which is explained briefly. Third is leapover, which
forms the largest part of the text. This is broadly divided into four parts: (i) the way leapover transcends breakthrough, (ii) the main meditation teachings, which are based around a number of essential points (guad), and the recognition of gnosis in the context called the initiation of the dynamism of gnosis (rig pa’i rtsal dbang), (iii) the progressive experiences brought about by these practices, which are known as the four visions (snang ba bzhi), and (iv) supporting teachings on maintaining the experiences of meditation and the signs of progress in one’s meditation. The practices in the second section, designated for those of middling faculties, deal with the intermediate states between death and life (bar do). The third section, for the inferior type, is a short explanation of the instructions on the transference (pho ba) of the stream of consciousness into a pure land (shing khams) at the moment of death.  

The following catalogue is based on the divisions marked out within the text itself. Wherever these were ambiguous, I used the catalogue (dkar chag) of the Derge edition of the collected works (see bibliography) for guidance. The location of the text in the three versions is as follows:

AC: Vol. III (hûn), pp. 293–463, ff. 1a–83b
SBd: Vol. VIII (nya), pp. 519–617, ff. 1a–50b
SBI: Vol. VIII (nya), pp. 945–1125, ff. 1a–91a

The Wisdom Lama: Practice Instructions for the Graduated Path of the Original Lord from the Great Perfection Scripture
Longchen Nyingtig

Contents

1. For those with the power of sharp faculties, unity with the ground’s expance in this very life (dbang po rnon po rgyu’i stobs can ishe ’di nyid la gdod ma’i gabs dbeyings sbyor)
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1.1.2.1 The outer distinction (phyi ltar dbye ba)
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1.1.3.3 Purification of the mind (sems sryong ba)
1.1.3.3.1 The main purification of mind (sems sbyong ba rdangs)
1.1.3.3.1.1 Examining the place of arising and that which arises (byung sa dang byung mkhan la brtag pa)
1.1.3.3.1.2 Examining the place of abiding and that which abides (gnas dang gnas mkhan la brtag pa)
1.1.3.3.1.3 Examining the place of departure and that which departs (’gro sa dang ’gro mkhan la brtag pa)
1.1.3.3.2 The methods of settling after purification (sphyang pa rnal du dbab tshul)
1.1.3.3.2.1 Settling (rnal du dbab pa)
1.1.3.3.2.2 Revitalizing (sor gzug pa)
1.1.3.3.2.3 The gaze of the śrāvakas (nyan thos kyi la stangs)
1.1.3.3.2.4 The gaze of the bodhisattvas (byang chub sems dpam la stangs)
1.1.3.3.2.5 The gaze of the krodhas (kho bo’i la stangs)
1.2 The main practice (dngos gzhi)
1.2.1 The brief teaching: entering the great mandala of initiation bringing about ripening, and so on (dbyang gi dkyil ’khor chen por ’jug cing smin par byed pa la sogs mdor bidus nas bstun pa)
1.2.2 The extensive teaching: understanding the definitions, then engaging in the path of the fruit, this unexcelled vehicle of the vajra essence, and so on (nges thig gi go nas rdo rje snying po bla na med pa’i theg pa ’di ’bras bu lam du byed pa sogs rgyas par bstun pa)
1.2.2.1 Understanding the definitions (nges thig gi go)
1.2.2.2 The recognition of gnosis (rig thog tu ngo spro pa)
1.2.2.2.1 For those of the sharpest faculties, liberation through crossing over without meditation: the instructions on breakthrough (dbyang po rnon po sgom du med kyang la btsa bas gro’i bkhrugs chod kyi gdams pa)
1.2.2.2.1.1 Ordinary (thun mong pa)
1.2.2.2.1.2 Extraordinary (thun mong ma yin pa)
1.2.2.2.2 For those of great diligence, liberation through meditation on leapover in the path visions of the three kāyas: the way of going to nirvana leaving the skandhas behind (brtson ’gros chen po thod rgyal du sgom pas sku gsum lam snang la gro’i te phung po thag med du mya ngan ’da’ tshul)
1.2.2.2.2.1 The ways it transcends breakthrough (bkhrugs chod las ’phags tshul)
1.2.2.2.2.2 The main teachings on this special path (khyad par can gyi lam dngos bshad pa)
1.2.2.2.2.3 The vision of the manifest true condition (chos nyid mgon sum gyi snang ba)
1.2.2.2.2.4 The vision of experience increasing (nyams snang gong ’phel gyi snang ba)
1.2.2.2.2.5 The vision of coming to the fullness of gnosis (rig pa thig pa phel kyi snang ba)
1.2.2.2.2.6 The vision of the exhaustion of the true condition (chos nyid zad pa’i snang ba)
1.2.2.2.2.7 The concluding instructions (mtha’ rten gyi man ngag dang bcas pa)

1.2.2.2.2.1 The general outline of leapover (thod rgal byes pa’i ching)
1.2.2.2.2.2 The path of teaching the essential points directly (gnas mgon du ston pa’i lam)
1.2.2.2.2.2.1 Teaching the essential points of the three gates (go gsum gyi gnad ston pa)
1.2.2.2.2.2.1.1 The essential points of the body (las kyi gnad)
1.2.2.2.2.2.1.2 The essential points of the speech (ngag gi gnad)
1.2.2.2.2.2.1.3 The essential points of the mind (sems kyi gnad)
1.2.2.2.2.2.2 Seeing the luminosity through the three essential points (gnas gsum gyi ’od gsal bshad ba)
1.2.2.2.2.2.2.1 The essential points of the gates of arising (’chog byed gso’i gnad)
1.2.2.2.2.2.2.2 The essential points of the ground and sphere of arising (’chog gzhi yul gyi gnad)
1.2.2.2.2.2.2.3 The essential points of the winds (rlung gi gnad)
1.2.2.2.2.2.2.4 The essential points of gnosis (rig pa’i gnad)\textsuperscript{374}
1.2.2.2.2.2.2.5 The initiation of gnosis’s dynamism, and the recognition of gnosis following it (rig pa’i rnal dbang bkur nas rig thog tu ngo spro pa)
1.2.2.2.2.2.2.1 Entering the mandala of wisdom in one’s own perceptions (rang snang ye shes kyi dkyil ’khor chen por ’jug pa)
1.2.2.2.2.2.2.2 The initiation of gnosis’s dynamism as [one’s own] condition (gshis thog tu rig pa’i rnas dbang bkur ba)
1.2.2.2.2.2.2.3 The concluding teaching (mtha’ bren gyi mjug bshad ba)
1.2.2.2.2.2.2.4 Elaborate: learning the yoga of the four sessions (spros pa
can thun bshis’i rnal ’byor la bshad pa)
1.2.2.2.2.2.2.4.1 Unelaborate (spros pa med)
1.2.2.2.2.3 The signs: the stages of the four visions (rtag snang ba bshis’i sa mchams)
1.2.2.2.2.3.1 The vision of the manifest true condition (chos nyid mgon sum gyi snang ba)
1.2.2.2.2.3.2 The vision of experience increasing (nyams snang gong ’phel gyi snang ba)
1.2.2.2.2.3.3 The vision of coming to the fullness of gnosis (rig pa thig pa phel kyi snang ba)
1.2.2.2.2.3.4 The vision of the exhaustion of the true condition (chos nyid zad pa’i snang ba)
1.2.2.2.2.4 The concluding instructions (mtha’ rten gyi man ngag dang bcas pa)
Although I had previously been encouraged in this way by people of the holy lineage,
Such as Kongnyaṅ Pawo Wangchug,
The time for spreading [the teaching] had not yet come
Until the signs were confirmed by the ocean of ḍākinis.

At one time, the emanation of the mistress of the devastating mantra,
The ḍākini protectress Wangmo Tsering,
Gave a prophecy that moved me to laugh: *hi hi!*
Because of this Dharma I took on responsibility for the benefit of beings.

In the heaven of Manifest Joy at the summit of the deathless mountain,
I was exhorted by the words, like golden flowers
Or a hundred-faceted crystal,
Of Tendzinje, who has all the qualities of a scholar.\(^{199}\)

Thus at Tseringjong, the forest dwelling of enlightenment
Where they rely on the compassion of Padma,
This was written by Rangiung Dorje Jigme Lingpa
In order that visitors weary of the ocean of worldly existence should be
inspired.\(^{200}\)

Colophon

*Yeshe Lama* concludes with twelve stanzas of verse, of which the following four stanzas relate to the composition of the text and may be called the colophon.
Appendix II
Concordance of Common Words
Relating to Mind and Mental Events

analysis  \( \text{rnam par dpyod pa} \)
awakened mind  \( \text{byang chub kyi sems} \) – in certain contexts: \( \text{bodhicitta} \)
awareness  \( \text{shes pa} \)
cognizance  \( \text{dran pa} \) – in certain contexts: recollection
concept  \( \text{rtog pa} \)
conceptual analysis  \( \text{rtog par dpyod pa} \)
consciousness  \( \text{rnam par shes pa} \)
enlightened mind  \( \text{dgongs pa} \) – in certain contexts: intention
gnosis  \( \text{rig pa} \)
intellect  \( \text{blo} \)
manas  \( \text{yid} \)
mind  \( \text{sems} \) – except where another Tibetan word signifies mind in general, in which case the Tibetan word is given in brackets
mind itself  \( \text{sems nyid} \)
reflexive awareness  \( \text{rang rig} \)
supposition  \( \text{yid dpyod} \)

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thought
thoughts and emotions

**APPENDIX III**

List of Tibetan Proper Names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonetic</th>
<th>Wylie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adzom Chögar</td>
<td>a 'dzom chos sgar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adzom Drugpa</td>
<td>a 'dzom 'brug pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chagzampa</td>
<td>lcags zam pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changkya Rolpai Dorje</td>
<td>lcangs skya rol pa'i rdo rje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chetsün Senge Wangchug</td>
<td>lce btsun seng ge dbang phyug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chongye</td>
<td>phyongs rgyas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuwori</td>
<td>chu bo ri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagpo</td>
<td>dwags po</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagpo Tashi Namgyal</td>
<td>dwags po bkra shis rnam rgyal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derge</td>
<td>sde dge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodrubchen</td>
<td>mdo sgrub chen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dölpopa</td>
<td>dol po pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorjedrag</td>
<td>rdo rje brag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drigung</td>
<td>'bri gung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drime Özer</td>
<td>dri med 'od zer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dromtöö</td>
<td>'brom ston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugpa</td>
<td>'brug pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dungsamgyi Ritse</td>
<td>gdung bsam gyi ri rtse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzogchen</td>
<td>rdzogs chen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garab Dorje</td>
<td>dga' rab rdo rje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gönchen</td>
<td>dgon chen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guru Rinpoche
Gyalwai Nyugu Khyentse Lha
Gyurme Kunzang Namgyal
Hashang
Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo
Jamyang Zhepa
Jarung Khashor
Jigme Kündrul
Jigme Lingpa
Jigme Losalchen
Jigme Tenpai Nyima
Jigme Trinle Özer
Kadam
Kagyü
Kahdug
Kahdug Getse Trulku
Kahdug Sakya Dorje
Kahdug Tsewang Norbu
Karma Chagme
Khangchenne
Khedrubje
Kongnyön Bepai Naljor
Kongnyön Pawo Wangchug
Langdarma
Lhatsün Namkhai Jigme
Lochen Dharmārī
Longchen Namkhai Naljor
Longchen Rabjampa
Longchenpa
Mila Zhepai Dorje
Mindrol Ling

LIST OF TIBETAN PROPER NAMES

Mipam Gyatso
Nagshö
Namkai Naljor Lhatsün Chenpo
Namkhai Nyingpo
Nechung
Neten Dangma Lhungyi Gyaltsen

Ngari
Ngari Rigdzin Chenpo
Ngawang Legpa
Nub Sangye Yeshe
Nyang Tingdzin Zangpo
Nyangular Nyima Özer
Nyimgma
Nyimgmai Gyübum
Orgyen Terdag Lingpa
Palding Jetsün Drung
Palgyi Samye Chimpu
Palri
Palyul
Patrul
Pema Karpo
Pema Ledreltsal
Pema Trinle
Pema Wangchen Khyentse Özer

Pema Wangchen Yeshe Palgyi Röülso

Palri
Polhane
Rangiung Dorje

mi pham rgya mtsHo
nags shod
nam mkha' ri rnal 'byor lha btsun chen po
nam mkha' ri snying po
gnas chung
gnas brtan ldang ma lhun gyi rgyal mtsHan
mnga' ris
mnga' ris rig 'dzin chen po
ngags dbang legs pa
gnubs sangs rgyas ye shes
nyang ting 'dzin bzang po
nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer
rnying ma
rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum
o rgyan grter bdag gling pa
dpal ldings rje btsun drung
dpal gyi bsam yas mchims phu
dpal ri
dpal yul
dpal sprul
padma dkar po
padma las 'brel tsal
padma 'phrin las
padma dbang chen mkhyen brtsa 'od zer
padma dbang chen ye shes dpal gyi rol tsho
dpal ri
pho lha nas
rang 'byung rdo rje
ratna gling pa
[ra] stobs ldan rdo rje
rong pa rdzogs chen pa
rong pa ger ston bdud 'dul gling pa
rong zom chos kyi bzang po
sa skya
sangs rgyas gling pa
sog bzlog pa blo gros rgyal mtshan
srong btsan sgam po
gsung sprul tshul khrims rdo rje
thang stong rgyal po
bstan 'dzin ye shes lhun grub
pter bdag gling pa
thugs mchog rdo rje
phreng bo ger chen shes rab 'od zer
khris stong lde'u btsan
rtse le sna sogs rang grol
tshe ring ljong padma 'od gsal theg mchog gling
tshe dbang lha mo
tsong kha pa
thu'u bkwan chos kyi nyi ma
dbang mo tshe ring
yang gdon pa pha wang kha pa
ye shes mtho rgyal
zhang g.yu brag pa
zhang mtsal pa
zhe chen

Notes

1 IOL Tib J 454 (panel 1): sems dang sems sngan ba'i chos thams cad daml ikun nas nyons monga pa dang ba'i chos thams cad rto's kyang rùng ma rto's kyang rùng 'phral la lam gyls ma bsgrub gnyen po ma bcos tél ye nas sngas rgyas pa sku bsungs thugs lhun kyi [st] grub pa gnas pa la byal 354.
2 Examples of this in the Dunhuang texts are Pelliot tibétain 44, transcribed and translated in Bischoff and Hartman 1971, and Pelliot tibétain 849, transcribed and translated into French in Hackin 1974.
3 An example is the heterogenous nature of the works of Nagajuna (cf. the discussion in the first chapter of Seyfort Ruegg 1981a). In the Great Perfection, this position is shown by commentaries to tantric practice such as IOL Tib J 454 quoted above, which also discusses meditation on the yidam deity at length, and the Man ngag ba ba'i phreng ba of Padmasambhava (cf. chapter 6 of Karmay 1988).
4 The use of kun gshis in early Great Perfection is discussed in Karmay 1988, pp. 178-84.
5 Mayer 1997, p. 87.
6 All examples are found in IOL Tib J 454.
7 See Hackin 1924.
8 The commentary is the Samten Migdron of Nub Sangye Yeshe (b. 844). See bibliography for details.
9 See Karmay 1980.
10 A brief account of the characteristics of the texts of these classes can be found in Karmay 1988, pp. 206-15, and a longer, traditional account in Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, vol. 1, pp. 319-45. This threefold system seems to have emerged, by the fourteenth century at the latest, from an earlier situation in which there was less standardization and other rubrics (such as yang ti, spyi ti, and a ti) were common.
11 Janet Gyatso has identified an occurrence of the three classes in one of the earliest Instruction Series texts, the Dratulgyur, which is one of the Seventeen Tantras (Gyatso 1998, p. 300 n. 53). This subject is also discussed in Germano 1994, pp. 28-44.
12 The second approach is found in Dudjom 1991. The third approach is favored by Jigme Lingpa in PK p. 482.
13 For a discussion of this early material, and possible dates, cf. Germano 1994, pp. 266-75.
14 See Thondup 1996 for accounts of these figures based on traditional hagiographies.
Germano 1994, pp. 271–62. There are two named discoverers, Neten Dangma Lhüngri Gyaltse and Chetsün Senge Wangchug.

There are references in the Khandro Nyinmy to the decline of the Bima Nyinmy, and the role of this new treasure in revitalizing the tradition (David Germano, personal communication). Another Seminal Heart cycle, which seems to have enjoyed only a limited popularity, was the Karma Nyinmy (Karma snying thig) of the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (1284–1339).

The other five are:
(i) Yidzön Dza (yid brisn mtha’): This text in twenty-two chapters deals with cosmology, with non-Buddhist and Buddhist philosophical systems, and with the Mahāyāna doctrines. It has a long prose commentary, the Pema Karpo (padma dkar po).
(ii) Drubtha Dza (grub mtha’ mtha’): This text belongs to the tenet system (grub mtha’) genre of Tibetan Buddhist literature, which deals with the exposition of the tenets of different schools and systems. Thus it includes discussions of the Indian schools and philosophical systems, as they came to be understood in Tibet, as well as the nine-vehicle structure that became normative for the Nyinmas.
(iii) Mnyen Ngag Dza (man ngeg mtha’): A short verse text in six topics in the form of advice for a person engaged in meditation practice. Longchenpa classed it as the graduated path along with the result (lam rim bris bu dang bcos pa).
(iv) Chögyi Dza (chos dbyings mtha’): A verse text that deals with the view mainly in the Mind Series style (and is classed as such by Longchenpa), though it includes some quotations from the Seventeen Tantras. It has a prose commentary, Longyi Tserai (long gi ger mtha’).
(v) Nying Dza (gnas legs mtha’): Similar in style and structure to the above, different in that it concentrates on the four great commitments of the Great Perfection. It also has a prose commentary, Dzog-Nyingpo (de gsum snying po).

It can also be translated as the "Seminal Heart of the Vast Expanse." The name is discussed a little further in chapter 3.


21 Gombrich 1996.

22 The Heze Chan scholar Zongmi (780–844) stated that all of these approaches were taught by meditation teachers in China (Luis Gomez 1983, p. 424).


27 ekarhavare ‘py asamdhod bahupayad aduskarat tikṣendriyaidhikārata ca mantraśāstram viśyayaat
don gcig yin nang ra ramong dang! l thabs mang dka’ ba med phyir dang! l dbang po rnon po’i dbang byas paa! l sngags kyi bstan bcos khyad par ‘phags! Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for the Sanskrit verses.

28 Gomez 1987, pp. 72–73, 92.


31 The historicity of the debate has been questioned: cf. Gomez 1983, p. 393, Seyfort Ruegg 1992. The point here, however, is the symbolic significance of the story of the debate for later generations.

Since Rolf Stein’s analysis of these terms and their Chinese counterparts (Stein 1987), it has generally been accepted that their primary signification is one of singularity versus plurality, and that cig car should be understood to mean in one or all at once, that is, simultaneous. The Chinese words are dunmin (simultaneous enlightenment) and jianwu (gradual enlightenment), the respective schools of thought being dunmen and jianmen. In this context, “simultaneous” indicates that all methods are encompassed by a single method, and all stages of realization are traversed at once. The secondary signification (which naturally, but not inevitably, follows from the first) is a time-based distinction: immediate, sudden accomplishment versus gradual, slow accomplishment. As Stein has shown, although this latter sense can accompany the first, it by no means always does so (Stein 1987, pp. 46–51). Thus here, in accord with Stein and most recent work on the subject, cig car is rendered “simultaneous” rather than “instantaneous.” “Simultaneous/simultaneity” is employed in Seyfort Ruegg 1989, where this question of translation is discussed on p. 97, and in Jackson 1994. In my translations I have reserved “instantaneous” for skad cig. To avoid confusion I have used “concurrent” for bstan cig, a word that could otherwise also be translated as “simultaneous.” For rim gyis the word “gradual,” which can hold both of the significations of the Tibetan, is perfectly adequate and has become the standard translation. The jong pa after cig car and rim gyis is the equivalent of Chinese wu (“enlightenment”), as Stein has shown (1987, p. 42) and so should be read as “the entry [to enlightenment].” In the texts studied here the full terms usually refer to types of practitioner, and so cig car [jong pa] should be understood as “one who enters [enlightenment] all at once,” and rim gyis [jong pa] as “one who enters [enlightenment] gradually,” and are rendered here as “simultaneity” and “gradualist.”

33 Jackson 1994, p. 53 n. 118.


35 Seyfort Ruegg 1981, p. 223. The text is in the Tsong shu lha shang mig byed, f. 152, in volume ka of the gsum ‘bum (Zhul edition). Khedrubje’s presentation of the oppo-
nent's doctrine in terms of view, meditation, activity, and fruit identifies it as the Great Perfection. These are standard definitions of the Great Perfection found in many of the texts of that system, and are indeed found in two of the texts translated in part III. These are GP (p. 102) and KGN (p. 109). Other polemics directed against the Great Perfection are discussed in Karmay 1988, pp. 121–31, 178–84, 186–89, 195–97.

36 Jackson 1994.

37 “What is needed in Buddhist studies is not enlisting in campaigns and polemics with other schools of Buddhist thought, but careful descriptions and analyses of the various traditions, establishing their sources and religio-philosophical problems and identifying how each deals with the philosophical and hermeneutical questions that arose in their respective schools.” Seyfort Ruegg 1995, p. 168.

38 The three that have appeared in translation are YLG in Guenther 1989, pp. 115–30 (this appears as part of a paper originally published in 1963), NSB in Guenther 1989, pp. 142–47 (an article originally published in 1966), and DTK in Prats 1985, pp. 1166–71. These three translations (including Prats’s) are in Guenther’s existentialist-influenced language, and the translations here offer a quite different interpretation. A translation of SN was presented by Chiogyam Trungpa in Mudra magazine (1972), but this was more a loose paraphrasing of the text than a translation.

39 Another type of treasure text, not represented here, is one that presents itself as a record of the words of Padmasambhava as spoken to disciples in the eighth century. They are also usually distinguished by the absence of the punctuation mark used for treasure texts, the ger shad, which I discuss in chapter 3.

40 The colophons to the translated texts show that Jigme Lingpa does not use that name in the colophon to any of the four manuscripts. Instead of his own names, such as Namkhai Naljor. However this is not an adequate method for distinguishing the different types of text. For one thing, not all of the treasure texts are signed with the treasure revealer name (e.g., GP). Furthermore, the practice does not appear to have been a strict rule, and one finds a number of clearly authorial texts in Jigme Lingpa’s collected works that are signed with the name “Jigme Lingpa.” It is plausible that as he became famous under this name in later life, he came to use it more often and more generally, not strictly as a treasure revealer name.


43 For the full details of Jigme Lingpa’s autobiography, see the bibliography. It is referred to in these footnotes as Namtar.

44 Namtar pp. 8–9. A later reference (p. 180) shows that he was familiar with the biography of the great Drukpa scholar Pema Karpo (1527–92).

45 Namtar p. 10.

46 The other four monasteries, all in Derge, were: Kahtog (rehabilitated 1656), Palyul (founded 1655), Dzogchen (founded 1685), and Zhechen (founded 1734).

47 Petech 1950, p. 95.

49 However, later on he established a lineage of previous lives (khrung rabs) for himself, based on his visions. Cf. SBI vol. IV, pp. 709–12 & pp. 721–29. These have been discussed extensively in Goodman 1993, p. 136 & pp. 191–97.

50 Namtar p. 17: 'lar kho bo cag gi ni yi ri i brda sprod pa nas brtams tsel rgyal ba i bka’ dang! lidongs’ bral ston bcosi tha snyad zhi gzhung yin lugs kyi kyi man nag sogs rdo rje’i gnas jI stney pa mthong pa de dag gas pas nye bar blangs te nyin mo’i snang ba dang srog ma’i od la mjal bar spro ba’i bag cshags brang ba rtsam las dge ba’i bshes gnyen dang nyin gic kyang ‘gro gs nas byang chos kyi blo gros ‘phel ba’i gnas su ma gyur modi dpal gi bsam yas mchims phur rgyal ba klung chen pa’i ye shes kyi sku dang las gsum du mjal zhiing brda thabs ren ’brel du ma byin gnis brlas pa la bren nas kho bo’i las ’brel rdzogs pa chen po nas sad pa yin yin nol.

51 There is a similar assertion in Chudai Garkhen p. 41.

52 See bibliography for details.

53 See bibliography for details.


55 Namtar pp. 20–21, Ri cho p. 582.

56 Namtar p. 23: zhang sgom chen dam pas rgu lugs pa nam thogs rang grol gnyen don gzhung byas gsal zhig bsuk bar mthod pas ‘di res kyi ggsi mang po grol...kho bo rdzogs pa chen po’i grub mtha’i ngog ‘dzin thun mong ma yin pa dangl dka’ ba’i gnas ma lus pa mdzod chen bdun las rnyed pa yin


58 Grol tib dgon gi pa rang grol. Sherab Özer was also known as Drodiul Lingpa (‘gro’i dal gling pa).

59 Jigme Lingpa’s account of practicing the development stage of the Drolig is in his work on the practice of retreat (Richi, AC vol. III, p. 582).

60 In Dhakki Sangtam p. 7; also briefly mentioned in Namtar p. 30.


62 Dhakki Garkhen pp. 60–63.

63 Tangtong Gyalpo is mentioned in Namtar p. 69 and p. 137 (for information on Tangtong Gyalpo see Gyatso 1992b). Tsele Natsog Rangdröl is mentioned in Namtar p. 143. Jigme Lingpa usually refers to him by his alternative title of Gotsangwa (rgod chhang ba) Natsog Rangdröl.

64 See Gyatso 1992b, pp. 102, 174 nn. 24, 25.


66 Namtar pp. 204–5.

67 This vision is also referred to in Dilgo Khyentse 1988, p. 98 n. 3; Dudjom 1991, vol. I, p. 838.

68 Namtar p. 198. He describes Tsele Natsog Rangdröl as belonging to the Karma Kagyû school.
69 Namtar p. 362.

70 The building project was probably begun by Jigme Lingpa's disciples while he was still in retreat. Cf. Namtar p. 141ff. Jigme Lingpa refers to the monastery as Tseringjong, Pema Ö Ling, and other permutations of the full name.


73 Namtar p. 236.

74 Cf. Mayer 1996, pp. 233–35. Jigme Lingpa's other work of collection and preservation was Phur pa rgyud legs, a collection of the extant Vajrakila texts, which he completed by 1785, the year in which he gave the transmission for it at Salya monastery (Namtar p. 319).

75 sNgags 'byur phreng rin po che rtog pa brjod pa 'dzam gling thang bsdus khyab pa'i rgyan. Mentioned in Namtar p. 244. The text is in SBI vol. III, pp. 1–499.

76 The earlier text was written soon after the end of Jigme Lingpa's second retreat in 1762, and is called Dshi lam rin po che bstan bcos lung gi gter mdzod (text in SBI vol. III). It is mentioned in Chudai Garkhen p. 68. Gyatso (1998, p. 320) gives 1763 as the date for this text.


78 The full name is Yon tan rin po che'i mdzod dga' ba'i chos (SBI pp. 1–120). The thirteen chapters (based on the chapter descriptions within the text itself) are:
1. Distinguishing the freedoms and endowments (p. 2)
2. Impermanence (p. 6)
3. The cause and fruit of actions (p. 8)
4. The suffering in saṃsāra (p. 14)
5. The four great wheels (p. 21)
6. Going for refuge (p. 31)
7. The four immeasurables (p. 35)
8. Fully grasping the bodhicitta (p. 38)
9. Training in entering into the aspiration (p. 47)
10. The teachings of the awareness holders (p. 71)
11. The ground's way of being (p. 96)
12. The extraordinary path of the Natural Great Perfection (p. 101)
13. Summarizing the final fruit, wisdom (p. 107)


79 Guenther writes that it is "in every respect modelled after Klongchen Rab-byiams-pa's Sem-pa Ngyid Ngag-so" (Guenther 1975, p. xxv).

80 Longchenpa's attempts to integrate Nyungma doxography with that of the new schools has been discussed at some length by David Germano (1994, pp. 243–51).

81 The political life of Polhane is discussed in detail in Petech 1950.

82 Petech states that "it was an open secret that at heart he was a Nyenma-pa" (Petech 1950, p. 179).


85 Petech 1950, p. 95.

86 Khyung Cerling Norbu, Selected Writings, pp. 743–48.

87 gTsam tbangs nos. 63 and 68 (SBI vol. IV, pp. 504–6 and pp. 533–35).

88 PK p. 514: shes rab gsum gyi lus stobs che ba'i mkhas grub klong chen gzims pa la lmsdo snags gzhung la mnam par dpod pa'i sor rog ye shes mig zem la


90 On this figure and others who were involved with the Nyenma Gyabum in the seventeenth century cf. Mayer 1996, pp. 227–28. The dates are provisional, as Mayer notes: another source gives them as 1634–1714, but the earlier dates fit much better with the dates of Srongtrul's students.

91 Thubphig pp. 868–69.


93 rGyal ba gyi pa kun mkhyen ngag gi dbang po'i guung rab las mdzod skor ngag so guung sig mnam mad byang phrod gyi phyi chu ji las bzhag bu'i pha'i tshul las mthams pa'i ngo mthar gsum gyi gling bu skal bzang mna 'ba'i dga' ston. Edited and published by Dodrup Sangye Lama, 1976, pp. 1–157.


95 This is stated in Nejang p. 71.

96 It is referred to as such in Chudai Garkhen and throughout Däkki Sangtam.


98 Cf. Kapstein 1989 for a study of critical and sympathetic attitudes to treasure texts in the Gelug school.

99 Däkki Sangtam p. 12: rang blor yang dang sang dus nyids gter dang dag snang la bzhed pa drag zhan la ma ldog par mang drag pas mi thams cad the tshom gyi drwa bar chudd la mkha' 'gro'i gsang mdzod chen mo la rang dbang sgur nu pa'i bdra' rats lag pa'i mthul du ma zin na rta kham dangs pa'i rang rtsal la bzhis bcad thar du shat ba la dag snang du ngos' 'dzin pa sogs las rabs po che'i rgyur 'dugs ste de 'dra'i rigs kyang mthong thos mang!

100 Janet Gyatso (1992b) has discussed the subject of pure vision texts in connection with the revelations of Tangtong Gyalpo (1361–1465).


106 See bibliography for details of these texts.


Khad byung thugs kyi sgrom bu (AC vol. I, pp. 67-78).

Goodman 1992, pp. 204-204-5 n. 69.

The Tibetan is me tog phug. It is referred to by that name in the colophons to KZL and SN. See also Goodman 1992, p. 142.

Chudai Garkhen pp. 60-63.

Janet Gyatso (1998, p. 279) suggests that the first vision occurred in September/October 1765, but there is evidence in a colophon that the date should be taken back a year. The colophon of one text refers to a vision of Longchenpa in the Flower Cave, and gives the year as Iron Dragon, that is 1760 (ending in January 1761). The text is Kong skags rdo rje'i sboth glu (colophon: AC vol. II, p. 347). If this is not an error on Jigme Lingpa’s part, which seems unlikely as the year is clearly stated, it means he moved to the Flower Cave in 1760, and had had at least one vision of Longchenpa by January 1761.

Chudai Garkhen pp. 64-65.

Chudai Garkhen p. 66.

Namtar p. 30: gnas skabs der blo la su rung ba'i nye bar len pa dang! snang ba'i chos nyid sgu ma la bar rogs pa'i ten cing brel ba 'byung bas brtseams sbyar te lka' 'dus rjeogs pa chen po klong chen snying thig gi klong byang thugs kyi sgrom bu bdra sbyug rung ba'i gal mdo babs shing de nyid 'byung ba'i sngon 'gor snang ba dpe char shar ba'i bdra las blo ldan brha ma ra'i gtam du gtags pa ja zhal gsum 'thung ba'i yun la 'bris mi tshar ba tsam du babs pa blos blood pa'i yi ge ma yin pas don buzung la tshig grad pa med par snang ngo! This text is in SBI vol. IV, p. 40ff.

d'yid kyi rgyal mo'i crtags glu (SBI vol. V, p. 108ff). The composition of this song is mentioned in Chudai Garkhen p. 66 (Gyatso 1998, p. 54).


Namtar p. 75. Đakki Sangsam mentions this event in the context of the events of 1764, after the end of the seven years (Đakki Sangsam p. 35), but this is outweighed by other sources that indicate the earlier date, and the fact that Đakki Sangsam deals with the matter of writing very briefly.

AC vol. III, p. 228ff. The full title of the text is: Thun mong gi sngon 'gro sems kyang rnam pa bdun gyi don khrid thar pa'i them skas.

Chudai Garkhen p. 66.

1 Kong bsags rdo rje'i sboth glu (AC vol. II, p. 333-47).

1 Kong bsags rdo rje'i sboth glu (AC vol. II, p. 374; klong chen dgon s pa'i gsal mzdod nas phyung teh! Cf also the opening verses of SN.

This is the case in AC and SBD; however in SBI the title line of KZL names KZL as the commentary to DTK. As the SBI edition is generally the least reliable, I have, in concordance with the other editions, placed this line as the final line of DTK.

Moreover, the colophon mentions the Akanjīṣṭa caves, giving us the range of dates 1760-62, and also a dark retreat. In Chudai Garkhen p. 64, Jigme Lingpa mentions that he did a very strict retreat in the lower cave, which he moved to in 1760.

One exception should be mentioned: a prayer, the colophon of which states that it was written in the tenth month of the Earth Tiger year, that is, October 1778 (Phags pa'i glo' ldeh zhal mthong ma). AC vol. II, p. 399). The colophon also states that it was written after a vision of Mahakārūnakā, which correlates it with the prayer mentioned in Chudai Garkhen p. 46.

Yam ka bde chen rgyal mo (AC vol. I, pp. 278-603). The vision is mentioned in Namtar 243-47; a longer account appears in AC vol. I, p. 278. Regarding the date, the new year of the Wood Horse (1774/75) is recorded at Namtar p. 250. At this time Jigme Lingpa received a new name: Gyalwa Nyugu Khynsetse Lha, which appears in the colophons of certain Longchen Nyungtig texts, including commentarial texts in the Dechen Gyaltse section. Also signed with this name are two ritual texts at the end of the collection: dMar gyur la bsten nas rang gzhon gyi 'che ba btsu ba (AC vol. III, p. 656) and rten gsum rab tu gnas pa'i cho ga bzhis tshi 'dod 30 (AC vol. III, p. 662).

The name Palding Jetsun Druing (dpal ldings rje brun drung), which appears in the colophons, appears to be combination of two consort names identified by Janet Gyatso: Palding jetsunma (dpal ldings brun ma), and one Jigme Lingpa calls (in Chudai Garkhen) Yungdrung Kyiwa (g.yang drung dkyil ba). See Gyatso 1998, pp. 140-41.

These are to be found at AC vol. I, pp. 304, 423, 496, 552.

Namtar p. 301: dpal ldings rje brun gyis ring 'sho'i ren 'brel mzdod pa brtags 'gyur zhings! khong la yum ka'i byin rtags byas pa'i rgyen gyis mkha' 'gro lus dkyil gyi brda yang gro ba'i ren 'brel legs pa byung! Gyatso (1998 pp. 140-41) translates this passage as a description of the personal results of the consort’s own practice, but it seems more likely that this is a reference to the decoding of a Dechen Gyaltse text: yam ka bde chen rgyal mo'i bshyang yan yan gyur la sdb dkyil mnong brjod (AC vol. I, p. 311-21).

At the earliest, 1787, and at the latest, 1790. Namtar p. 346 (sprel la) and p. 381 (lungs phug).


Namtar pp. 365.

Namtar p. 368. This student is probably Jigme Kündrö (see note above). Goodman (1983, p. 127) and Gyatso (1998, p. 177) state that ma ngon refers to Ekājati and Mahākāla.

Namtar pp. 365-64. Texts in AC vol. II, pp. 448-64.

Gyatso 1996, p. 158.

Ample evidence of this popularity is provided by the extensive list, given by Thondup (1998, pp. 362–65 n. 56), of commentaries on Longchen Nyingtig texts written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Elements of Great Perfection doctrine are found in many of the sādhanas (sgrub thugs), but these are not instructions on practices specific to the Great Perfection (as YL is) or discourses in the context of the Great Perfection (as the other ten are).

There is a tantra with exactly the same title (Kun tu bsang po ye shes klong gi rgyud), though not the same text, in the Nyingma Gyukhum (mTshams brag; Tbi: 150; Taiwan Edition: Tbi. 4607; Kaneko Catalogue: Tkt. 137).

GP p. 105.

In SBD only, YL has a Sanskrit title above the Tibetan on the title page. However, that title is not given in the body of the text and is probably a later addition.

DTK p. 518.

AC vol. 1, p. 10: ban dhe bdro’ bag can zbigs glor bu dzla bar byung nas de na ral nga khyed la di’i dza yod bsam pa snga mo rjing nas yod set zhi lin dag sngag dpe med byed kyin ‘dug pa bka’ srung drug srong chen por nger pa rnyed.

Janet Gyatso (1998, p. 57) translates the same phrase as “and he made [as if I were] an incomparable Pure Vision.”

Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche classifies the texts (excluding ML) as follows: YLG is the root tantra (rg转入 gnyud) and GP the subsequent tantra (rgyud phyi ma). KG is scripture (lung); NSB and DTK are instructions (mun nagg). YL is commentary (don ’grul) to those two, while PK, KZL, SN, and NCT are supporting instructions (rgyab chos) to YL (Thondup 1996, pp. 44–45, based on Klong chen snying gi thig le’i dbang lhuk gi phreng ba bklog chog tu bkod pa skal ba sksang kun dga’i rolston, by Dilgo Khyentse).

SN p. 549: klong chen dguongs pa’i mdzod nas ’di’i byas so.

KZL, p. 543.

KZL pp. 542–43.


KZL p. 543: lsnang grags ni brda dang dpe cha ru shar mod lming rin pa’i dge gdams pa’i bang mdzod du ‘dug gol lsgams ngag ni thug dang dpe hru’l la ma hrosl klong chen gzi dgonpo pa’i gsang mdzod nas srol byung.

PK p. 466.

A. Bu ma’i risa mdzod grol ba’i lag rjes su byas (PK p. 514, SN p. 563).

It could equally refer to leapover practice, see chapter 6.

PK p. 515, KZL pp. 545, 546.
169 Chudai Garthken p. 61: brjod bya don gyi thugs rgyud 'pho bar gyur cig 'pho bar gyur cig (brjod byed thig gi brgyud pa rdzo s par gyur cig ldzo s par gyur cig)

170 Chudai Garthken p. 66.

171 This point has been made by Janet Gyatso in her study of Jigme Lingpa. For instance Gyatso 1998, p. 219.


173 Cf. for example chapter 1 of Tsegdon Dzö for a discussion of this; the definition certainly goes back as far as the Bima Nyintig and Seventeen Tantras. There is a discussion of this in English in Guenther 1975, pp. 232–54. There is also a sixfold definition, which is alluded to in KZL p. 537, and dealt with at length in Namkhyen Shingta, pp. 544–50. For a brief treatment of this topic in English, cf. Przis 1985, pp. 12–13 n. 47.

174 ML p. 445: ngo bo stong pas rta p’a mtha’ las grol/ rang bzhin gsal bar chad pa’i mu dang bral/ thugs rje ’gang med stobs bsgrul pa’i gzhul/

175 An alternative triad is snaa (ngang), nature (rang bzhin), and great self (bdeug nyid chen po)—cf. Germano 1994, pp. 312–13. There is also a sevenfold definition, which does not occur in the Longchen Nyintig but is used by Jigme Lingpa in the Yonten Dzö p. 97.

176 The full version is far less common but not unknown: cf. Namkhyen Shingta p. 552.

177 The identification of these terms is not found in the Longchen Nyintig texts, but is made by Jigme Lingpa in Yonten Dzö p. 97. A definition of lhan grub, based on the Seventeen Tantras, is given by Jigme Lingpa in Namkhyen Shingta pp. 546–47.

178 For the uses of gsal ba in the tantras cf. Snellgrove 1986, p. 241. 249, and for the tantras’ indebtedness to earlier texts, such as the Uttaratantratālāstra, cf. pp. 294–95.


180 DTK p. 117: gzhul yi gnas lugs spros dang bral: gzhul snang rig pa chos kyi sku/

181 In most texts these words seem to be roughly synonymous; however, in his Tsegchö Dzö and Tsegdon Dzö Longchenpa attempted to define them separately.

182 E.g., SN p. 554.

183 GP p. 100: rig stong gnyis su mi phyed la/ gcig kyang ma yan kun gyi srog/ Cf. also ML p. 446, SN p. 554.

184 NSF p. 118: rig pa rten dang bral zhing kun la khyab/ stong la go ’byed nam mkha’i dbyerings lta bu/ gsal la rtag med dangs shes gsal ma’i drat/

185 YL p. 327: thug pa ’di’i lugs la sams kyi ngo bo dang po nyid nas rang grol chen por yod pa

186 YLG pp. 79–80: sngags rgyas thams cad kyi snying po can thog ma’i mgon po bcom ldan ’das dpal kun tu bzung po zhes bya ba nyid mens can gyi kham bsrgyud mtha’i lta bu las rgyud gzhan gyis bsdu s par sams na’i khos ba dangs myang ’das ’brel la ma ’brel bar gnas pa’i lta chad del/ Cf. also KGN p. 111. This is also expressed in Yonten Dzö pp. 96–97.

187 KGN p. 111: chos rnam kun gyi ngo bo byang chub sems/ sangs rgyas kun gyi thugs kyang byang chub sems/ sems can yongs kyi srog kyang byang chub sems/

188 YLG p. 85: rgyu ’bras dang bcas pa’i skyed bya skyed byed las sangs rgyas su re ba ma tshol cig This is also stated in Yonten Dzö p. 101.


190 Tsegdon Dzö pp. 116: de yang gzhis nas ’phags pa’i rig pa sa bon lta bu grol ’khrol gang byed ma nges pas ma smin pa’i rig pa zhes bya stel sangs rgyas su smin par byed pa ni rtogs pa’i shes rab kyi byas tel


192 E.g. NCT p. 567.

193 YL p. 333: rta lnga’i mdud pa rang gi grol ba bzhin...ma byugur ma sbyangs rig pa llun rdzo s pa


195 For examples cf. the Mind Series texts presented in Norbu and Lipman 1987, Karmay 1988, and Reynolds 1989. Too little is known about the literature of the Space Series to make any general statement about it. The identification of samsaric and nirvanic elements also seems to have been the norm within the literature of the Mahāmudrā tradition. For instance, one passage by Zhang Tsalpa (1123–31) on the error of making dualistic distinctions includes the distinction between mind and dharmakāya (sem dngos dus grub phyi’i phyi). This is cited in Jackson 1994, p. 47.


197 Kunzang Tshogyel Melang Tanka (Seventeen Tantras, vol. I, p. 216): snang ba chos skur ’dod pa nga la sgrīb pa yin’i l cir snying sems su ’dod pa nga la sgrīb pa yin’i y e shes sems su ’dod pa nga la sgrīb pa yin’i


199 In the second pair, gnosis is sometimes replaced with the synonym mind itself (sems nyid) or wisdom (ye shes). The two pairs dovetail in the Longdrug Tantra (Seventeen Tantras, vol. II, pp. 165–66), where mind is said to be located in the ālaya, and wisdom in the dharmakāya.

200 NSF p. 116: kun gzi khor ’das kun gzi gzi yin te’/ myog ma can gzi chu dang byad pa med’i bag la nyal gzi gzi gzi mug rgo ssnas’i ye shes rig pa’i dangs cha lkg tu gzi’u

201 YLG (p. 78) mentions two forms of nescience: innate (lha gnug stong pa) and conceptually imputed (kon tu brag pa). In the Tsegdon Dzö p. 133, three subdivisions are mentioned, adding a primal nescience to the two of YLG:

The three are: [i] causal nescience of a single identity—the arising of an awareness that fails to recognize itself; [ii] innate nescience—that non-
recognition arising simultaneously with awareness; [iii] conceptually imputed nescience—the aspect that processes one’s own perceptions as an other.

An alternative sixfold division is also given in the Tīgdon Ddo ph. 214 and in Tegchus Ddo (cf. Germano 1992, p. 175ff.).

202 YLG p. 76: de’i phyir ‘di’i go na dac pa ye shes kyi sgo myan gan la ‘das pa’i lam dang/thig le chen po i snang ba dang’/bras bu’i chos rgya mtha bu dang/ ma dac pa ‘khor ba i’u gso dang/ nyon mong pa dang/ tnam par rgya pa tshogs bsam gyis mi khyab pa litar mi ngon po ba ngyi gyi tsul bu yod pa nas/

203 YLG p. 77.

204 Tīgdon Ddo pp. 214–25: dbyen na bzhis stel ye don gyi kun gzhis ni ngsi ri’i steng na ye yogs dang po’i dus nas gser g dang ga’i bzhin lhan cigs skyes pa’i chia ri ga ri pa la’i los pa’i ma ri’i stel ‘khor bu’i chos kun gyi dang po’i ghe’i shyog pa don gyi kun gzhis las kyi cha ghe de ‘khor’ ‘das su las dang so sos shyor zhing ‘phen pa’i rtsa ba’i ren can lung ma bstan pa dang’ bag chags na tshogs pa kun gzhis rgyas dang’/ ‘byung gi’ ‘khor ba’i dbu’gyis pa’i cha las sna tshogs pa bag la ngyi gyi cha lung ma bstan pa dang’ bag chags las kyi kun ghan la dang ning lag rdul phan cha shas su snang ba rags pa’i’u’i lus dang dang’ po ‘od kyi lus dang rint sce ‘dzin litar snang’i’u’i lus gyum du so sor snang bu’i gzhis ma ri’i ren gyi cha can te/

205 On the sutra sources for this material, see the detailed discussion in Schmithausen 1987, p. 67ff.

206 Nasbylyon Shingba ph. 651–52: las snga ma’i ji’c’og ba’i chagd phyi ma nge bar len pas rnam smin rgyu’bras snag phyir smin pa’i’i sde dang’ be sdug gi kun shyor byed pa/

207 YLG pp. 81–82; on the álaya-vijñāna alone cf. YLG p. 77, NSB p. 117.

208 David Germano has not found this particular distinction within the Seventeen Tantras; however, it does appear in the Khadro Nyingrig (personal communication).

209 All of these variants and their Sanskrit equivalents are listed in Nagao 1961 and Nagao 1994.

210 The extended form of sgo lnga given in the Tsegdus Chenmo is dBang po’i sgo lnga, “the five gates of the sense-faculties” (Skt. *pativedayādvara). The álaya-vijñāna, manas-vijñāna, khyāa-manas and the consciousnesses of the five sense organs together comprise the "eight aggregations" (tshogs brgyud). These are listed by Longchenpa in the elements of mind (sems) in Tīgdon Ddo pp. 119–20. They are also discussed in Lungten Terdöl pp. 1284–85. Another treatment of the eight aggregates is to be found in Khadro Nyingrig, vol. II pp. 174ff.

211 NSB pp. 116–17; chos sku rnyog ma dangs pa’i chu dang ‘dra’ glo bur dri ma sampa’pa’i bdag nyid can/ rnam grol yon tan kun gyi ngo bo sté phyin chad ‘khrul mi shes pa’i ye shes yin/

212 YLG p. 76: kun gzhis ni ‘khor ba dang myan gan la’i das pa thams cad kyi spyi gzhis chen po dbang po yul la ma sada pu gnyid du sngog ba’i skabs la ba sté/

213 Longchenpa’s association of the álaya with the formless realm (gnyan me kyi khams) in Semnyi Ngolo suggests a similar conception of the álaya’s role. Cf. Guenther 1976, vol. I, p. 56. In Tīgdon Ddo p. 227ff., Longchenpa argues that if the álaya and dharmakāya are identified, then the dharmakāya must have the qualities of the álaya, such as being endowed with imprints.

214 NSB p. 118: sems dang rgyas pa’i lung dang nam mkha’ ‘dra’ sems ni dmigs grad sva’i gnyu’i rnam pa can’i’i la rgya srung pa’i sems’i dang rgya srung pa’i’i dang rgya srung la khyab/’srong la go’i byed nam mkha’i byings Ila bu’i gsal la rta’i dang rgyas dang sgsang ma’i dré/ phyir sems las rnam grol rgya pa’i’i klong/ gnas lugs brtan sa’i dzin pa snying rig gcad/

215 Rigs pa’i ngo spro’id gser mthong rang grul, p. 22: ‘khor’ ‘das yongs la khyab pa’i’i sems gcig po.

216 Ila ba byams chung (Peking, bsTan gser, no. 9520), L1–4; Tibetan text in Karmay 1989, p. 93; my translation): chos nams sems kyi’i khral ta stel sems las ma gregs chos nams med I cho su snang ba’i’i khral ba’i sems’i ren’i’i brel gnyo ma skye ba med. I discuss the explicit rejection of this approach in chapter 5.

217 NSB p. 118: rlitar ma rogs thams cad sems yin’i’i yul gyi snang bas gos dang ma gos mthamsa/

218 A more extensive version of this argument appears in Tīgdon Ddo p. 235ff.

219 Ila ba’i byams chung (IOL Tib J 594): ji tsa’ro myed zab mo zhi’gi blo yi yul du snang zei nai nyi rgya zab mo nyams myong ba’i’i byams myong ba’i’i phyir de ngyed min (Tibetan text in Karmay 1988, pp. 74–75. My translation.)

220 Jigme Lingpa’s insistence on this distinction between the two methods makes the note he attaches to this passage, in which he suggests that the common understanding of Hashang’s erroneous method is a misrepresentation, quite surprising. There is a precedent for this statement in the works of Longchenpa however. In his Desum Nyinpo (pp. 155–56), Longchenpa writes on the subject of the transcendence of the consequences of positive and negative actions. There is a famous statement attributed to Hashang Mahāyāna on this same subject, that virtue and sin are like black and white clouds, in that both cover the sun. Rather than distancing himself from this, Longchenpa uses the same metaphor and then goes on to say:

The great master Hashang said this, and although those of lesser intellects could not comprehend it, he was in accordance with the [ultimate] truth.

I slob don chen po ha shang gis gungs pas de dus blo dman pa’i’i blor ma shong yang don la de bzhin du gnas sol

Longchenpa himself was also following a precedent set by the twelfth-century Nyinmapa Nyangral Nyima Özer (1124–92), who states that there is no difference in [ultimate] truth (don) between the two paths, but that for those of the best faculties, there is the simultaneous method of Hashang, and for those of medium and below there is the graduated path (Chos bying me tog snying po p. 435b). I discuss Jigme Lingpa’s use of this distinction between the faculties of trainees with regard to the simultaneous aspect of the Great Perfection in chapter 7. Perhaps Jigme Lingpa’s real original contribution in this note is to point out that there is a scriptural basis for the simultaneist method as much as for the gradualist method in the
If in the ground under a poor man’s house
There were an inexhaustible treasure,
That man would not know of its presence,
Nor could the treasure say “I am here.”

Just so, the treasure within one’s mindstream
Is stainless, needing to neither be added to nor cleansed.
However, if this is not realized, there is the suffering of poverty.

I ji lar mi dbul khyim rang sa ‘og na’i l mi zad pa yi gter ni yod gyur la l mi des de ma shes shing gter de yang l de na nga’i dir ces ma smra’i lar l de bzhin yid kyi rang rgyud rin chen gter l dri med bzhag bsdag bsmal med chos nyid kyang l ma rtags pa na dbul ba’i sdug bsdag nal

Materials are given to those who have no wealth,
And we are the servants of the spiritual.

The purification of adventitious defilements,
Such as attachment, is like the water of a lake.
It is like a pool of pure water
Because it is free from the dirt of desire and hatred.

I chu mthong sogs bzhin ‘dod chags sog l gio blu nyon mongs dag pa ni l chu dag rtsing dang mthongs pa yin l zhe sding skra ba las grol bas

This distinction can be found in an earlier source, the Ānandaśīla (Brown 1991, p. 248).

The wrong mode of thought is like the element of air.
The nature is like the element of space,
Without a nature and abiding nowhere.
I trashi bzhin ma yin yid byed ni l rlung gi khams dang ‘dra bar lta’i rang bzhin nam mthu’i khams bzhin dul l rang bzhin can min gnas pa med

He also makes quite prominent use of the buddha nature in chapter 15 of the Yon-ten Doi, which opens with the following verse (p. 96): In the second wheel the Conqueror taught the three [gates of] liberation to his circle.

The essence of these is reflexive awareness:
In sentient beings it is known as the buddha nature,
To rest in that nature is the Great Perfection.

11 rgyud bas ’khor lo bar rnam thag gsum l bstun bya’i ngo bo so so rang rgyud ni l sams can kham l bde gshegs snying po rul l rang bzhin bzhugs la rdo rje pa chos por gragsal

Prajñāparamitā sutras, an insight that appears to be based on comparative readings of texts rather than the standardized rubrics of Tibetan scholarship.

221 KZL p. 527: ha shang la yul sems rtag dang yul med rig pa zang ka mar phre dpa’i gnad med pas sems rig skabs ma phre dpa’i shes pa lung ma bstan gyi ngag du dran bsam tshor ba thams ca’ gags nas bsgyals ba’am’i gnyis’ thug lta b’i gti mug phyogs gcig tu thun ngo

222 The use of the term lung ma bstan to signify an intense state of meditation also appears in SN, pp. 555, 556.

223 YLG p. 80: nga’i rang bzhin rdog pa chen po gzi thog nas grol pa dang/ ’khrul pa’i lam gnyis ka yod pas gzi’i bzhugs tshul la mchabs par gis shig/ ’di litar rang ngo i dri ma mtha’ dag las rnam par grol pa dang/ las dang nyon mongs pas kun nas dkris pa’i chen gnyis la sangs rgyas dang sams can gyi khams su rang shar ba’i chos shes par gis

224 These texts are discussed in Seyfort Ruegg 1969, pp. 7–18.

225 Mahāyānatattvāntarāśūtra (Ratnagotravibhāga), Tib. Thig pa chen po rgyud bla ma’i bstan bcos (Peking biTan gyur vol. 108). The Sanskrit version is also extant (E. H. Johnston 1950), and an English translation from the Sanskrit has been made (Jikidu Takesaki 1931). Obermiller 1931 and Holmes 1985 are translations from the Tibetan into English. In the following pages I have used the canonical Tibetan text rather than the Sanskrit because it is the use of the text in the indigenous Tibetan literature that is of relevance here. The translations are my own.

226 The discussion by Kamalasila is in his Madhyama-kalika (Seyfort Ruegg 1981, pp. 94–95).

227 The passage is cited in Karmay 1988, p. 179 (the translation here is mine): Thig pa chen po’i tshul la’i jug pa fl. 137b–138a: thig pa gong ma’i tshul la nals kil kun gzi’i mthun nyid grol ma nas byang chub sems zhes bya ba’i nyon mongs pa dang gnas ngan len gyi bag chags ni glo bur gyi dri ma ste gser gyas gys yogs pa’am’i nor bu rin po che dam du shubs pa bzhin yon tan cung zadi mi snang bar zad del rang bzhin nyams par byas pa med dol

228 YLG pp. 89–90: ’di litar gsang ba mchog gi thig pa ’di’i lam gnyi sgo mtshon zhing dam thig chen po’i gnas la bsal pa dag ni gal te skye ba’i di la snang bzhin tahad du ma phyin kyang/ khams bde gshegs snying po’i khyab byed rang gi snying kha na gzi snang ba chen po’i od gsal chos kyi dbhyangs dang/ me long lta bu dang/ mnyam pa nyid dang/ so sor rtag pa dang/ bya grub pa dang lnga’i ye shes rang bzhin thun grub chen po’i char gzhin bzhugs pa

229 YLG p. 86.

230 SN p. 562.

231 KGN p. 112: de lar sponges thob bral bai’i byang chub sems/ bde bar gshegs pa rig pa’i snying po can/ rgyud la gnas kyang bcos ma’i gzed kyi bzhings/

232 KGN p. 107: ji litar dbul po’i khyim gnyi gter bshang po’i rang la yod kyang de nyid ma rig pas/ dbul po’i rang bzhin’ gyur ba med pa litar ma rig rtag po’i dra bar ’thums ches pa’i ma rtags ’khor bai’i sems can snying re rje /

233 Uttaratantraśūtra (Peking biTan gyur vol. 108, 26–27f):

234 NSB pp. 116–17: chos sku snyog ma dangs pa’i chu dang dmar glo bshad dri ma sphaṅgs pa’i bsdag nyid can/ rnam grol yon tan kun gnyi ngo bo st’an phyin chad ’khrul mi sbar pa’i ye shes yin/


The purification of adventitious defilements,
Such as attachment, is like the water of a lake.
It is like a pool of pure water
Because it is free from the dirt of desire and hatred.

I chu mthong sogs bzhin ’dod chags sogs l gio blu nyon mongs dag pa ni l chu dag rtsing dang mthongs pa yin l zhe sding skra ba las grol bas

236 This distinction can be found in an earlier source, the Śrīmālāśīla (Brown 1991, p. 248).

237 Compare NSB p. 118 with the following from the Uttaratantraśūtra (Peking biTan gyur vol. 108, 25–27f):

The wrong mode of thought is like the element of air.
The nature is like the element of space,
Without a nature and abiding nowhere.
I trashi bzhin ma yin yid byed ni l rlung gi khams dang ’dra bar lta’i rang bzhin nam mthu’i khams bzhin dul l rang bzhin can min gnas pa med

238 He also makes quite prominent use of the buddha nature in chapter 15 of the Yon-ten Doi, which opens with the following verse (p. 96): In the second wheel the Conqueror taught the three [gates of] liberation to his circle.

The essence of these is reflexive awareness:
In sentient beings it is known as the buddha nature,
To rest in that nature is the Great Perfection.

11 rgyud bas ’khor lo bar rnam thag gsum l bstun bya’i ngo bo so so rang rgyud ni l sams can kham l bde gshegs snying po rul l rang bzhin bzhugs la rdo rje pa chos por gragsal

239 PK p. 464: bde gshegs snying po’i gzo’i bzhin kham la til mar bzhin du khyab gsal yang/ l glo bshad gnyis’ rgyas tu mi bzhed bral bya’i tshul du nogs pa dag/
240 "Two adventitious obscurations" refers to the standard distinction of two forms of obscurations, emotional (neyon mong po'i sgrub pa) and cognitive (she la yi sgrub pa). Cf. for example Utasaratantralakṣa (Peking b'i Tan 'gyur vol. 108, 27–29); translation in Holmes 1985, p. 77.

241 PK pp. 496–97.

242 The verses from the Utasaratantralakṣa that Jigme Lingpa quotes following the passage, which deal with the stains of the seven impure and three pure stages, are actually quoted twice in PK—the other occurrence is near the beginning of the text: PK pp. 467–68. (The passage is in the Utasaratantralakṣa, Peking b'i Tan 'gyur vol. 108, 26–66ff.)

243 PK pp. 505–6: kun ghzi'i rnam shes kyi ssubus su chud pa la chos sku'i 'od gsal gi yin mar mer rang 'bar bas rang bzhin gzi spros pa dang bral bar gnas sol de lta na'ang lahag mthong gsal bai ye shes kyi rtsal ma 'drgogs pas snang gyi kun ghzi'i ssubus su thums nas 'od gsal gi yin mar me de bi shi nas mi 'dug go'

244 Tsigdon Deśö pp. 126–27: dang po ni spyi'i 'khrul gzi snang de rig pas rang nga ma shes pa'i dri mas rai na nyid 'khrul bar spags pas shes bya rig pa dri ma med pa nyid kyang dri bcas su song ste sems kyi rgyar thums nas nga bo ka dag gi rig pa rtags pas spags te yid drug gis bcings pas las rdzun phra chen ma dra bar chud te de 'od gsal bar la zhal'

245 This simile appears in Tsigdon Deśö p. 228. He argues that one should understand that the alaya and dharmakaya are "distinct conceptual isolates of a single essence." (ngo bo gci la lhag po tha dad du song ba). The same argument appears in Khandro Yangtung vol. II, p. 212 and Zambo Yangtung vol. II, p. 267ff.

246 Utasaratantralakṣa (Peking b'i Tan 'gyur vol. 108, 25–66ff):

Just as space is everywhere
[Yet] subtle and completely untainted,
So in all beings
This abides, [yet] is completely untainted.
Earth rests on water, water rests on air,
And air rests on space,
[Yet] space does not rest
On the elements of earth, water, or air.
Just so, the skandhas, sense bases, and sense faculties
Are based on karma and the defilements,
While karma and the defilements
Are always based on the wrong way of thinking.
The wrong way of thinking
Rests fully on the purity of mind,
[Yet] the purity of mind does not rest on any of those phenomena.

I jī lta bar nam mkha' kun song bal phra zhing nye bar go pa med l de bzhin sems can thams cad la! gnas la dvi nye bar go pa med! ... sa ni chu la chu drung la! lhung ni mkha' la rab tu gnos! l mkha' ni thung dang chu dang! sa yi kham la gnas ma yin l de bzhin phung po khamン dbang rnam l las dang nyon mong dang la gnos l las dang nyon mong tsul bzhin min l yid byed la rtag tu gnos! tsul bzhin ma yin yid byed nil l sems kyi dag pa la rab gnos! l sems kyi rang bzhin chos rnam nil l thams cad la yang gnas pa med!

247 SN pp. 533–34: rnam trog la chos sku'i ming 'dogs mi snga bar de ltar gyi shes pa gra ma nyams shing zur ma chag pa di ka la sgom mkhan gyi gyen po dang lta ba'i zhen pas ma bcings pa dang thal

248 Tsigdon Deśö p. 142: khamgs gsum 'khor ba'i snang ba thams cod dang po yang dbyangs kyi cha la bzang bas de'i cha re sbyar du yod pas kyang gugs bnyan ltar don la chos nyid stong par gnas la de ltar snang dus phung po dang 'byung ba la sogs po sku dang ye shes kyi char sbyar tel

249 SN p. 335: de ltar gyi shes po gra ma nyams shing zur ma chag pa

250 YLG pp. 83–84: de' phyir kun rje rgyal po sems kyi gnyis lugs nyid kun ghzi'i klong na blati mi mingon par gab nas 'khor das thams cad kyi gzhir gnas pa dang 'gshi thog nas gnyis snang ba chen po'i 'od gsal ma mtha' med par shar kyang 'yul dang ma 'brel rang sa ma rmgugs' 'dzin pas ma sld brzang bas ma bcings' shes dang shes bya'i sgrub pa mtha' dag sphi te chos sku'i dbhyangs la byang chub pa dang 'gshi las shes pa gnos te yi kyi rnam shes su gnyis gnyi!


252 YL pp. 325–26: na ni bla ma'i gdams ngag gis rig pa skad cig ma'i 'tsang rig pa tsam nas yin lugs kyi thog tu bzo mi 'chos shing' di las gang du'ang ma yengsl gang du'ang mi sgo ma 'jog pa ni ggod ma'is sngas rgyas kun tu bzang po'i dphogs pa'i mthul lahag ger bstan pa yin tel

253 This topic is discussed extensively in chapter 9 of the Kānyā Gyalpo.

254 YLG p. 87: bsigoms pas sngas rgyas ma thob/ ma bsigoms pas 'khor bar ma'kham/

255 SN p. 550: sgom gryu'i zhen pa dag

256 KGN p. 110: 'bad rtso lgyu la ma los sems kyi ngang. YLG p. 83: bya rtso las 'das pa'i theg pa.

257 Rig pa'i khi byag (IOL Tib 647): sna tshogs rang bzhin mi yngis kyang! cha shas nyid du spros dang bral ji bzhin pa zhes mi yngis rtag kyang! rnam par snang mda'od kun tu bzang! zin pas rtso laser nas snang tel lhun gyis gnas pas bzhag pa yin! (Tibetan text in Karmay 1998, p. 56. The translation is mine.)

These verses are also to be found in the Kānyā Gyalpo, where they constitute chapter 31.

258 E.g., KGN p. 110; YL pp. 318, 326, 330, 332; PK p. 599; KZL p. 539.

259 KGN p. 111: dge sdig las dang 'bras bu gar nas zad/

260 YLG p. 84: gzung 'dzin gnyi gnod chen po dang 'grogs nas las dang dag chags kyi rten byed pa'i mthbang chen po 'di shes nas nga kun tu bzang pos zag bcas kyi lde ba ndul tsmang ying ma byas pas sngas rgyas thams cad kyi mes por sngas rgyas po a'd


262 DTK p. 518: bzang trog nyan trog lung ma bstan/ gang gi phyogs su ma zhing/ shar grol dyi ba'i mkhan po dang!

This point is illustrated in YL with a quotation from a text of the Bima Nyonteg, attributed to Garab Dorje, on the way concepts are freed without acceptance or rejection (YL p. 330):
At the time of arising, it arises in sameness, neither good nor bad;
At the time of liberation, it is liberated in sameness, neither good nor bad.

I shar ba'i dus na manyam shar bangz nang medl i grol ba'i dus na manyam grol bangz nang medl

263 SN pp. 550–51: bangz rang gis phan ma bragsh l nang rang gis gnod ma bkseyal lung ma bstan gni mgao ma bkser par

264 YL p. 311: lta ba ri bo cog bzhag gis yin lugs bsam ngo bra'i ngrog pas rig pa rang gsal chen po la blo's 'dzin rtsol dbang ched du bsom pa'i gnyen po ma zhugs pa

265 NSB pp. 118–19: zhi gnas dbang po med pa'i mi dang da'i lhang nge thom me bun ne yo re ba' shes pa mdung thshugs dran pa dmigs grd can/


267 NSB p. 119.

268 SN p. 556: sghom med ni gnas lugs lhums su zhugs nas sghom mi sghom gni zhen pa dagste ste ms la bzo bcos dan dmigs grd mng med pa
The term nonmeditation may have been imported into the Great Perfection from the Mahāmudrā texts, where it is common. In Mahāmudrā nonmeditation is the highest of the four yogas (snad. Byor chub), a four-level model of gradual realization. Jigme Lingpa's use of the four yogas in PK, and precedents for this in the Mahāmudrā tradition, are examined in chapter 6.

269 David Jackson (1994, pp. 39–53) has written on this same tendency to criticize intellectual methods in the followers of Mahāmudrā at the Kagyū school, in particular the twelfth-century figures Gampopa (1079–1155) and Zhang Rinpoche (1123–93).


271 ML p. 445: bsam gvi mi khya brgyud gnyis chos kung dang bral' yod dang med pa'i phyogs 'dzin rnam par zhig/ 'di don bzhod la rgyal ba'i ltag pa kayang rdugs/

272 GP pp. 100, 101; cf. also NCT p. 570. This topic is given an extensive treatment by Jigme Lingpa in his Namkhyen Shingtsun pp. 599–601.

273 KZL pp. 521–22: Idend sang 'di na lo la jia snyed du llam la zhugs dom lhag mthong rosg med kyis tla mzin dpyod pa'i 'du shes grub po yiil 'lbus dag yang dag lam la zung phyin bshad/

274 He makes this clear in the introduction to PK (p. 533).

275 KZL p. 536: bsam gnyis bzhod pa zad pa'i phyir! l'gehan la sgra byed bsam pa yang/ l'khyes bu 'di la 'byung mi srid/ l sgra stshig rjes su ga la 'gyur! (Seventeen Tantras vol. III, p. 131.)

276 NCT p. 569.

277 ML p. 446: ye nas dag pas la ba'i ming yang med/ rang nig rig pas sghom rgyi'i zhugs nas don/ gni ggal med pas spygod pa'i sprog dang brah/
Cf. also the opening lines of KZL.

278 DTK p. 517.

279 YL p. 320: zab gsal dangs snang srong la sogs pa gcig la gcig 'bral gni tshig tsa m la tsa sghom yin par yid brag 'cha ba'ang ma yini

280 KZL p. 525: lta bya'i rnam torg dangs lta mkhan gnyis dran pa gnyis su yod pas gnyis 'dzin nil

281 A contraction of rnam par gzhag pa, elsewhere rnam par bzhag pa is equally common.

282 A contraction of rjes la blo pha.

283 KGN p. 113: bco's ma'i rnam tog.

284 The historical evolution of this ninefold system is discussed in Snellgrove 1987 vol. II, pp. 404–7.


286 SNK pp. 108–10. Interestingly this is not quite the same as the nine-vehicle system that was considered orthodox in the eighteenth century: the normal positions of mahāyoga and anuyoga have been reversed, so that anuyoga is lower than mahāyoga.

287 This does not agree with any of the variants given in Karmay 1988, pp. 172–74.

288 See below in the section on Madhyamaka for a discussion of the concept of the seal.

289 YL p. 302: thge pa byrgad kyi blo'i grb mthas ma reg pas kun gnyi mor phyin la!
Cf. also GP p. 103.

290 E.g., YLG pp. 76, 94.

291 E.g., GP p. 105; KGN p. 115; YL pp. 315, 324, 329, 462; KZL pp. 540, 545.

292 The role of supposition (yid dpyod) in the Gelug graduate path is described in Hopkins 1983, pp. 701–5. Though it is a valid part of that path, it is not considered one of the valid means of cognition (shad ma).

293 YL p. 315: slob thub yang dang sa sgrub pa'i mtha' 'di nyid 'dzin par riom pa nams lta'i yid dpyod kyi blo's bzhag pa ma yin par ran bangzhin edzogs pa chen po'i chos nying kyi don mthong bas slob pa yin

294 In particular, the theme of the dichotomy between the alaya and the dharmakāya is treated in many of the Seventeen Tantras. The elements of the samsāric consciousness deriving from the alaya are described at length by Longchenpa in chapter 2 of the Tsigdon Dzöö and chapter 10 of the Tegchö Dzöö. Cf. my discussion of this in chapter 4.

295 In YL this rejection is located in the section on the practice of breathlessness (YL pp. 331–34).

296 YL p. 332: snang ba sams kyi bzo's par ngo sprad pas bden 'dzin rang ngag pa ldog/ de lta bzo byad kyi sams stong par sprad pas phyis yul don du zhen pa spong tsong pa rig par ngo sproad pas choi nyid chad lta mi gol ba'ang tsa m la lha drangs te khrid pa'ol

297 Desum Nyimga pp. 77–83. Tsigdon Dzöö p. 238. The line from the Kuntu Zangpo Tegyel Melong (Seventeen Tantras, vol. I, p. 356) is: "Designating whatever appears as mind obscures me" (cir sngags ma 'duod pa nga la sgrij pa yin).

310 Translation in Thondup 1989, p. 263 (Shing rta chen mo f. 63a.3ff).

311 Yönten Dö 1 100: de tsan 'a-nang snang yul sems ma yin l bzhin gyi gyag rgyan me long nag zhugs kyang 'rten cing 'breli bar byung ba'i rkyen tsam las l bzhin dang me long nam 'dres ma myon gy.

312 Khensur Melang p. 10.

313 Sanskrit equivalents for rang rig include: svatamviti, svatamvidata, svatamvedana (Hirano 1996), and svatamveda (Snellgrove 1959, vol. II, Tibetan-Sanskrit Index). The only attested equivalent for rang gsal I have found is: rang nyid gsal ba: svayampraksa (Hirano 1996).


315 These works, the Madhyamakalākāra and Tattvacatākrama, have been discussed in Williams 1998, chapter 2.

316 Yl p. 316: kun ghi'i rnam shes ki kyri rang gsal bden grub tu shar na'amangs sems tsam rnam edzan par nye ba!

317 Khensur Melang, p. 9: phyi rol ro gi yul yang med 'dzin byed gi shes pa yang med gzungs 'dzin gnyis dros pa'i shes pa 'rnying rgyan 'dres pa 'dod del 'di ni kun ghi'i rnam shes yin la'i 'di steng du las 'bras khas len pa'ol

318 The accounts of both types of mind-only are probably based on the treatments of the subject by Longchenpa in his Yizhin Dö and Drubta Dö. For a more extensive exploration in English, cf. Dudjom 1991, vol. I, pp. 160–62.


320 Paul Williams (1998) states that Mipam Gyatso's arguments for the validity of rang rgyan at the level of conventional truth are motivated by a wish to make the Great Perfection noncontrary with Prasangika Madhyamaka, because in the Great Perfection rang rgyan is used to describe the nature of conventional awareness (rnam shes) as well as ultimate awareness (rjes shes). This understanding of the Great Perfection position is based on a belief that in the Great Perfection what is true of ultimate reality, mind itself (rsem nyid), is also true of everyday consciousness. That this is quite the opposite of the position put forth in the Seminal Heart texts should be clear by now. Nor have I seen any analysis of ordinary awareness (rsem) in Great Perfection texts that describe it as rang rgyan. As I have just mentioned, it is precisely the non-applicability of rang rgyan to ordinary awareness (that which is based in the abalya-vijnana) that Great Perfection writers have taken as the point of distinction between the Great Perfection and the Yogacara.

321 SN p. 554: stong pa nyid ces pa de ye grol ma na stong zhing dbag med pa spros pa'i mtha' bzhin'am phyag rgyan drang bal ba de la' shes pa blo 'das kha yan 'di ka rig pa la zer ba.

322 GP p. 98: rgyu rkyen las 'das stong pa nyid/ 'odd du 'gsal ba'i dbag nyid can/ 'sems can kun gnyi rang tgyud la/
A very similar passage criticizing both ways of establishing emptiness occurs in Dagpo Tashi Nampyal's *Leghe Dawai Özer* (pp. 277b–278a) in the midst of the treatment of the four ways of striving that was discussed in note 330.

336 PK p. 483: rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po'i ye shes ni sangs rgyas kyi che ba'i yon tan lhun grub tu yod cing sku gsum rang chas su tshad ba'phyir rta babs nas mngrin bzang zhon pa ltar yin bzhin spangs nas ma'yi yan pa lags nas brtal mi dgos tel


338 YL p. 314: byung mkhan gyi gshi ste tros ta 'ol le ba sems dang sems 'byung ltar shar ba rtsa ba ma chod na ni dbu ma sems tsam pa ltar med dgag dang mi yin dgag la gnas lugs re ba'phyi phya la'phyan du yod pas' lshod mkhan gyi sems la shur llos shig.


340 For Dolpopa's use of these terms, cf. Hookham 1991, p. 31, 137.


342 Lungi Terdro p. 1104: rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po 'di'i lugs kyi mtha' bral la sogs pa'yi 'jal shul phal cher dbu ma thal' 'gyur dang mtshungs pa lasa dbu mar stong po nam mkha' dra ba rtsis gzhis byed pa stel 'dir rig pa ka nas dag pa rjen zang nge ba ma grub la mi' 'gag pa tsam de la gshir byas nas de dang de'ngang las shar ba'i chos rnam mtha' grol nam mkha' ltar 'jal ba stel Translated in Thondup 1989, p. 104.

343 It is important to make the distinction especially, as there has been a tendency to equate the two in some recent studies that touch on both the Great Perfection and Empty-of-Other (including Hookham 1991 and Williams 1998).


345 Cf. Mayer 1997, pp. 81–83, 96 n. 2. Cf. Glen Mullin. 1993. *Training the Mind in the Great Way*. Ithaca: Snow Lion. This is a commentary on the Seven Points for Training the Mind by the First Dalai Lama, which includes the following sentence (p. 134): "In those times when you have arisen from your meditation, and consciousness and its objects seem to truly exist, meditate on the thought, "They seem to exist, yet they are like an illusion and like things seen in a dream.""

346 SN p. 555.

347 YL p. 327: de ltar gnas lungs rang gnas chen po'i rgyun bskyangs pa'i tshig pa'i rig pa de'i ngo bo stong par dug snyam nal stong par 'dogs mkhan blo yinl blo la grad so yodd grad so dang bcas pa'i bsam gtan gyis sams mi rgya ba'i tshul

348 Thondup 1989, p. 51, has a short passage from the *Drubka Dzö* in translation, which presents Mind Series and Space Series as erroneous approaches; Thondup also includes a longer passage on this subject by Jigme Lingpa from the Namkhen Slinga. The subject also appears in Dudjom 1991, vol. 1, pp. 329–30.

349 YL p. 333: sems sde ltar rgyas mi 'debs klong sde ltar dbhinyas la mi gcod par rang babs dungs bsam las 'das pa ma ngag sde'i 'myung thog tu la bhral bar bya'o

350 YL p. 333: rig pa sbyangs bgro med pa'i sa la byang chub sams dpa'i sa bcu dang snga pa'phyi rang gi bskyed rdzogs res grub kyi sa lam sgsu sbyang mi dgos te ye shes ngo bo gcig tu bzhum pa'i phyir rol
364 In the Longchen Nyungtig there is also a clearly graduated set of guru yoga texts identified as outset (phyi), inner (nang), secret (gzang), and most secret (yang gzang) sadhanas. These are:

(i) AC vol. I, pp. 129–38: Phyi igrub bla ma'i rnal 'byor yid bzhin nor bu
(ii) AC vol. I, pp. 235–36: Nang igrub rig 'dzin dus pa
(iii) AC vol. II, pp. 349–50: Gzang igrub thugs rje chen po idag bshang rang grol
(iv) AC vol. II, pp. 493–21: Yang gzang bla ma'i igrub pa lugs kyi 'rgyas can gyi brgyud 'debs byin rabs char 'bubs

This is a common way of dividing guru yogas, though usually only a triad of outset, inner, and secret are used. One precedent for this division of sets within the Semnal Heart is in Khandro Nyungtig vol. II pp. 238–46.


367 That is, section one: PK pp. 469–72.

368 PK p. 469. All three of Jigme Lingpa’s quotations from the Rgya Rangzhag may well have been taken directly from Longchenpa’s treatment of this subject in Tigdzin Dzog where they appear (pp. 355–7, 359). Their location in the Rgya Rangzhag is chapter 9 (Seventeen Tantras, pp. 422–25).

369 PK p. 472. On these four initiations cf. Snellgrove 1987, vol. I, pp. 243–77. In the scriptural quotation from the Rangzhag Tantra that supports this topic, the four have different names, that is, elaborated (spro bchas), unelaborated (spro med), very unelaborated (spro bhus), and totally unelaborated (spro gsum). In his treatment of the initiations in Tigdzin Dzog, Longchenpa uses this set (elaborated etc.) but seems to treat all the two sets of terms as synonyms (pp. 368–71). Lama Gongdrel (vol. V, pp. 295–470) definitely treats the two sets as equivalents, but also adds a fifth: entirely unelaborated (spro gsum). The first set (elaborated etc.) seems to be specific to the Semnal Heart, while the second (spro etc.) is not. Extensive treatments of the four initiations using only the second set of names are to be found in Khandro Nyungtig (vol. I, pp. 112–208).

370 Sanskrit equivalents in this paragraph are from Snellgrove 1959, vol. II, Tibetan–Sanskrit index.

371 One Longchen Nyungtig text, Rig 'dzin rtsas rgyud shod pa’s dam bu (AC vol. I, pp. 79–85), identified by its title as the “root tantra” of the Longchen Nyungtig, deals with the definition of tantra (rgya), using not the six-vehicle system of the Nyingma, but the mother, father, and nondual classes of the anuttarayoga tantras of the new schools—and the Great Perfection is not mentioned at all. This treasure text is a rather unusual voice in the Longchen Nyungtig, representing the understanding of tantra that stems from the second period of translation in Tibet.

373 Yeten Deö p. 96: gang du rgya che'i lam bzang dam pa'i doni l mtha' dag blo yi byi dor kho nai i phyir l sdom pa gsum dang phyin drug bskyed rdzogs sog! skun kyang rdzogs pa chen po'i lam stegs yen!

374 Namkhyen Shinga p. 599: bskyed rdzogs bsog pa ting 'dzin ma yin pas khyed la bsam gran gyi skal pa 'chad gyi skal pa 'chadl rdzogs bsog pa stong nyid ma yin pas khyed la shes rab kyi skal 'chadl dam thug brung ba tsul khrims ma yin pas gsang negs gyes sphyod kyi g.yang sar song! 375 Tsigdon Deö pp. 512–24, and Tegebo Deö pp. 1402–16.

376 This argument also appears in GP (pp. 99–100), where non-arising, non-abiding, and non-going are linked, respectively, with ground, path, and fruit, with essence, nature, and compassion.

377 YL p. 317: de lta sens kyi sngon 'gro'i sbyong ba byas pa thun mong du sens kyi sdig sgrub 'dag cing bar chad zhi mngon zhen ldog!

378 YL p. 317: de lta 'gro sa med pas yul snang sens kyi bcos par thag chodl 'gro mikan med pas yul can rang bzhin med pa'i gdung nyedl!

379 PK p. 495: zhes pas 'di lta stog pas btags pa'i tshe snang ba sens kyi chos 'phrul du go la!

380 These translations are by no means definitive: khregs chod is more literally translated "cutting through solidity" and shod rgyal as "passing over." The former is generally translated with breakthrough or cutting through, but the latter has been translated with direct transcendence (Gerzeno 1994), supreme vision (gyatso 1998), and all-surpassing realization (pettiti 1999).

381 As they fulfill the first two tasks, KZL, SN, and DCT can be seen as extensions of this aspect of breakthrough instruction.

382 YL, pp. 330–33. The set of view, meditation, activity, and result has a long history in the Great Perfection, going back not only to the Seventeen Tantras but to the Mind Series scriptures as well. The similes mountainlike and oceanlike are also to be found in older material; the titles of chapters 54–57 of the Rangdhar Ta (Seventeen Tantras vol. 1, pp. 694–704) are as follows:

| 54. ri bo yyi bsings kyi lsa ba | 55. rgya mitho klong rdol ba |
| 56. ngya zla drod mnyam pa | 57. nam mkha' khyad mnyam pa |

And in the Nyingma Gyisham (Waddell edition, vol. 1, ff. 159b–8a) are four relatively lengthy Great Perfection tantras, the names of which occur in a similar sequence:

Ita ba nam mkha' dang mnyam pa yi ge med pa'i tsgug Gom pa rgya mitho dang mnyam pa sneg pa med pa'i tsgug styod pa nyya zla dang mnyam pa sneg pa med pa'i tsgug 'Brus bu rin po che dang mnyam pa skye ba med pa'i tsgug

Cf. also the gTsing skyes edition: Kaneko nos. 4–7, vol. I. Also of the Cakrasanyvara tantras has a similar name: dPal bde mchog nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i tsgug kyi tsgul po (Peking bKa' 'gyur vol. 59).

383 YL pp. 324–325: kye khyed kyi da lea'i rig pa 'di la bcas bcos dang spro sdu ma byed pa thad kar zhog.

384 YL p. 326: de la yod med dang phyogs cha ma grubl!


386 SN pp. 533–54: mam rtag la chos sku'i ming dgos mi sngag ba de lta gyi shes pa gra ma nyams shing sur ma chag pa 'di ka la sgo s mkhan gyi gnyen po dang! lta ba'i zhen pas ma bings par zang thal.

387 YL pp. 344–36; their source is Tsigdon Deö pp. 503–10.

388 Jigme Lingpa's discussion is in YL pp. 336–41. The discussions of leapover in the Seventeen Tantras include chapter 2 of the Dresagur (Seventeen Tantras vol. 1, pp. 102–8), chapter 5 of the Longder (vol. II, pp. 183–200), and various chapters of the Rigpa Rangbar, including chapter 24 (vol. I, pp. 489–92).

389 GP pp. 103–104: rang du stong pa'i nyams shar bas/ phiyu tu gsal ba'i ye shes ni/ snying nas mig tu 'brel ba yul/ rang byung gsang ba chen po'i rtsas/ ka ti shel gyi sgu pu can/ da dkar snal ma lta bu'i lam/ brgyud de dbang po'i mngon sum par/ lhag mthong rdo tse lu gu rgyud/ mu tig bstar la brgyus pa ltar/ gsal 'ta'i dangs snyigs phyed par 'chat/

390 On the similarities between these two and the differences, as argued by Longchenpa, cfr. Germano 1995, pp. 307–25.

391 This is the subject discussed in YL pp. 336–39.


393 YL pp. 341–46.

394 Though there are undoubtedly four sections here, they are introduced as "three essential points" (YL p. 346), and in some editions both the third and the fourth section are numbered as the third.

395 YL pp. 346–54. The presentation of these elements of leapover in Longchenpa's Tsigdon Deö is discussed in Germano 1993, pp. 95–127.

396 YL pp. 354–66.

397 See bibliography for details.

398 Richö pp. 982–84.

399 GP pp. 103–104: brgyud de dbang po'i mngon sum par/ lhag mthong rdo nge lu gu rgyud/

400 PK pp. 595–60: de la m'a'ang/ lhag mthong gsal ba'i ye shes kyi rtsal ma rdzogs pas sngar gyi kun gsh'i sbus su 'thams nas 'od gsal gyi mar me de ni shi nas mi dug gol

401 Janet Gyatso has noted this in the leapover passages in Jigme Lingpa's Namkhyen Shingba (Gyatso 1998, p. 204).

402 David Germano: personal communication.

403 SN p. 533: de bzhin du nyams mong la zhi grnas shas che ba'i stong nyams dang! lhag mthong shas che ba'i gsal nyams.
404 David Germano: personal communication.

405 PK p. 475: mnyam zhag tu blo 'das khrugs chod kyi don la yang dang gi dgeongs pas bila zhi gis rjes thob tu dbangig rig drayer med ido rje lu gu rgyud kyi gnad la gzi gzhing bshungs stangs gsum dang ma bral bar bya’ol

“The three postures” (bshungs stangs), part of the essential points of the body in leapover, are described in detail in chapter 19 of Longchenpa’s Tegché Dzö (pp. 1442–30).


409 Leghe Dawu’i Ozer, ff.275a–278a; see cf. especially ff.282b–291b and ff.233a–293a.

410 SN p. 560: mdor nas sgom pa dag po’i lag tu ’phrod nas rnam kun mchog Idan gyi sar bdgrod pa la shor gol nor sa gsum gyi bkangs sa dang ’phrad shin tu dog pas nyams myong de dag la gdar sha ma chod na kha khyer dang tshig khyer ma khas kyang gi skad du dgeongs chen nas nyams na bun’dra ste yal nas ’grol

411 SN pp. 556–58.


413 NCT p. 571: phyag dgeongs gnyis la’i rgyud dang man ngag nas rig pa gcig chod rang grol las lam gyi rnam gbar ma gsungs kyang gi sngon byon grub thob byang chub sems dpa’i chen po rnam kyis brtan pa rjes thob kyi rig pa rtsal chen dgeongs pa la dgeongs nas rtsi gcig spros bral ro gcig sgom med so sor che ’bring chung gsum gyi ming brags nas las gyi dod po brtse bar mdzas pa bzhin rol

414 Cakrasamvara-gyukhyin-tantrarajya, Tib. Rabi bsam mi khya’ab pa’i rgyud, or Gsang ba bsam mi khya’ab pa’i rgyud (Peking, bKa’ ’gyur vol. 30). The tantra is one of the thirty-two in the Rabi Cakrasamvara cycle (cf. Dudjom 1991, vol. II, p. 275). The sources for the four yogas are discussed by Jamgon Kongtrul in his Hega Künkhbyab (Shes bya kun khya’ab vol. III, pp. 408–9), where he mentions other Indian writers and quotes from the Gyuksa’Gyin tantra. However, I could not locate his passage in Peking, where the verses are seven syllables in length, rather than the nine-syllable lines of Kongtrul’s passage. Perhaps this is a different translation, or a different tantra. On the Tibetan side, David Jackson (1992, p. 101) noted the appearance of the four yogas in a short text by Gangpopa (Lam rim rim bod dudus). Daniel Martin (1992, pp. 249–51) has translated Gangpopa’s treatment of the four yogas in a different text (Phag 0’gri zhus las). In the same article he also translated a work by Zhang Yudrapa (1122/1–91) in which the four yogas appear (pp. 279–81).

415 Dakpo Tashi Namgyal 1986, pp. 357–8. The text is Ngag don phyag rgya chen po’i sgom rim grol ba’i byed pa’i legs bshad za ba’i od zer.

416 A number of texts attributed to this treasure revealer have been published as the Collected Works of ’Phren-blo gTer-chen Shes-rab Od-zer (see Bibliography). However, I have not been able to locate the relevant text, either in this volume or in the Rinchen Tendzo.

417 PK p. 486: khya’ad du ’phags pa sgungs pas gang zag rim gyes pa’i don du dpriad bzhod pa’i man ngag ’di kher na’i dgeongs pa ltar bshad par bya’ol

418 For the connection between the four yogas and the paths and stages, and the history of the discussion of this topic in Kagyü literature, see Dakpo Tashi Namgyal 1986, pp. 402–8.

419 PK p. 482.

420 See for example p. 496, and the personal account on pp. 504–506.


423 The stages are enumerated in PK p. 502. Elsewhere in PK (p. 477, in the section on initiation) Jigme Lingpa mentions a set of sixteen stages, and in PK p. 483 Jigme Lingpa quotes a verse from the Longyal Tantra that mentions the sixteen stages, and links them to the Paramāyāna rather than the Great Perfection. There is a translation of a detailed description of sixteen stages the Rigpa Rangshar Tantra in Thubdon 1989, pp. 79–80.


425 KZL p. 152: de yang rim skyes pa’i dbang du byas nas rnam rog lugs gsum du pa’i chen bi ma la’i rjes ’hrangs rnambs bzhed pa’i ’di ltar rnam rog ngs shes pas grol ba snags ’dris kyi ma dang ’phrad pa lta bur grol bar rnam rog kho rang grol sprul gyi midad pa zhig pa ltar grol bar rnam rog phan gnod med pa chos skur grol ba khang stong gi rkin ma lta bur grol ba zhes mthyon dpe rnam grangs gsum gyes bshad pa.

426 Enumerations of different ways of liberation (lhor grol) are common in Great Perfection texts. Longchenpa writes about sets of four and five liberations in Trisö Dzö (Seven Treasures) vol. VI, pp. 478–503), with supporting quotations from a number of the Seventeen Tantras. The same three levels as in KZL are enumerated by Patrul Rinpochhe (1808–87) in his mkhas pa in rgyal po’i khya’ad chos, which exists in several English translations, the most readily available being Reynolds 1996. In KGN (p. 115) three types of liberation are mentioned, “liberation upon arising (lhar grol), self-liberation (rang grol), and liberation on sight (cer grol)” but they are not defined and there is no indication that they are graduated.

427 KZL p. 125: de ni las dang po pa’i gang zag mos pas spyod pa rnam las dran pa gsum gyes di dngos gezh bshad bstan nas ’khrad pa’i skabs la dgeongs kyi dzogs chen gyi lam cig char du ugra ji bzhin par bstan pa’i skabs ma yin par shes par bya’ la.

428 NCT pp. 569–70.

429 KZL p. 540: las dang po pa rnam dyi so’i rgyud tshod nyams dang sbyar nas rnam rog lam khyer la rim pas bsdb dzongs phuyil ’gal zhig slang skags skyes nas ’dor ba’i nyon yod pas khya’ad gel du mi ston pa’i bka’ rgya stobs bcu mngn ba nyid kyi gdam clad.

430 YLG pp. 87–88: shes rab rang byung gi sgron mas ’char ba’i gzi byas so’i rgyang shag chu’i sgron mas ’char byed kyi sgo byas so’i dag pa dbhyangs kyi sgron mas shal ba’i rgyan byas so’i thig le stong pa’i sgron mas shal ba’i mthshan nyid byas so’i ltar sgron ma rnam pa bzhis’i rten de yang bten pa rig pa’i gdangs chen po rdo rje lu gu rgyud
However if these instructions are taught to a person who has strayed into sealing the view as an intellectual object, then he will become savage like a vulture.

Jigme Lingpa supports his point with quotations from the medium-length Parca-vimālī-saṃbhāra-smṛti and the Rinpoché Pungwa Tantra (one of the Seventeen Tantras), which must be intended to support the policy of secrecy in general, since they are concerned with the secrecy of the doctrine of emptiness and the doctrines of the Vajrayāna, respectively. A similar warning comes at the end of SN:

It should not be taught to those who have not received meditation instruction, or to those who have received it but are of the unfortunate type who hold wrong views and, having been maddened by drinking the poisoned water of their self-esteem, have not experienced the vital points of the path.

SN p. 64-65: ‘dlí khrid ma thob pa dang/ thob kyang rang rtsis kyi dug chus myos shing lam gyi gnad ma longs pa’s skal med leg lta cab gyi rig las bstan par mi bya’ol

The prayer, Kloong chen nyig gi stig gi rgyud ‘debs byams chad rgyan, is in AC vol. I, p. 216-19. Another occurrence of this distinction is in the descriptions of breakthrough and leapfrog in YL (p. 321), where the former is said to be “for those of sharp faculties” (dbang po rnor po) and the latter “for those of great diligence” (brum gyur chen po). However once again there is no evidence that this distinction is meant to be put into practice literally.

The topic of different ways of dying is quite common in Seminal Heart texts. In KZL (p. 156) Jigme Lingpa mentions that there are two kinds of rainbow bodies (’ja las) that can be attained at death. There is also a set of four ways of dying in some texts. Cf. Thondup 1987 (pp. 81-88) for a discussion of this subject.

Another example of this is Jigme Lingpa’s discussion of the three classes of the Great Perfection (i.e., Mind Series, Space Series, and Instruction Series) in his Namkhyen Shingta (pp. 607-608), in which he states that the three levels are divided according to the measurement of the faculties of trainees—specifically, how much they cling to mental objects (blo yul). Though it seems feasible that the three classes might be taught in this way, in fact, as I mentioned in chapter 1, there is evidence that neither Mind Series nor Space Series existed as a living system of practice by the eighteenth century, and it is certainly true that neither class is dealt with in the Longchen Nyingtig in anything but the most perfunctory way.

AC vol. I, p. 322-33: blo dman nams bden gyi kyis phye nas bshad pas gdod rtags pa igyu gyi de’i sbyin nu dbang po rnal ’bri ma yongs gan gnyes brang stags bzhag pas nyon mongs pa’s ngo bo yul med rtsa bral du song ba’i gyur gnas dag gi dgongs pa bskyang zhing rtsal sprang ngol! blo che da rnam ni chos nyid rang sa nas grol ba’i gnyis nyon mongs pa dang rnam rtog gtags kyang de’i rtag bzhin thugs mi thub par.

Chos thams cad kyi nyig po phyag rgya chen po ‘i don yang dag par ral tu gsal bar byed pa dri ma med pa’i sgron ma (Collected Works vol. II, pp. 18-19): byre brag tu gang zag gi dbang po dang blo rigs sa tshogs pa’i phyir cig char dbang po rnor po sbyangs pa mongun gyur nams la ni zhi lhag rim can du dki ni dgos par de ’phrub pa dang grol ba dus mnyam du gyur pa dag ‘byung mod kyang’ gzhin dag la ni rnyi gsis
khril dgos phyir thog mar zhi snas kyi rim pa mtschan bcas shing bu tre'u lha sku yig 'bru thig le rtung gi sbyor ba sogs ci ring la bslab cing!

There is also a translation of this passage in Tsele Natsok Rangdrol 1989, p. 17–18.


Thanks to Harunaga Isaacson for these lines from his provisional edition of the tantra (10:36):

tathapyat atra kalu käle kotenjamhey t'ha ka'scana ekai[kasam]khyatay satvayil śraddhayatprapayatánal i-tasyarbe bhaiṣṭajman svarṣa śhrabodhitrāpasadāhaye!

452 SN p. 535: chos 'di theg pa'i rts yig yin kyang gang zag la mchog dman 'bring gsum sna thogs yod cing dbang po yang rab thag thogs dka' nas gdul bya dang 'dul byed kyi bar du 'dzom shor nas bsangs kyang yon tan skye dka' b'ai sbyor 'di nas shor rol!

453 KZL p. 523–24: khiday par rang rig ye shes zang yang dang sems rots ma rig 'khrul gongs gnis bye nas rign pa klong chen yangs pa'i ngang du mtha' grol rjes med du bdevangs pa'i sems rogs gnyu' phre'is bax cing thad kar dag ste gor shor las 'das par 'chad kyang dbang po shin tu rron po'i gang las sad po ra tsem gnis ma ra gspis 'di bzin rots dka' b'ai 'di ched sma' bai snying po ngo bo la 'phel 'grub dang bzig nang bral thod med kyang yrtal gnyi gnams ronkho nas 'khor 'dus bar lag 'byed cing sgom po chus bai 'phur 'phri 'de rang bzin zhib tu snyad pa la!

454 PK p. 486: khid yon du 'phags pa gsungs pas gang rig yin pa'i don du dpal bzhad pa'i man ngag 'di kho na'i dgongs laitar bshad par bya'o!

455 Chos thams cad kyi snying po phyag rgyu chen po'i don yang dag par rab tu gsal byed pa dri ma med pa'i gsum ma (pp. 41–42): de gnams blo ngog chu ma la sla gang zag so so'i dbang po'i rim pa gsum phyi khiday par stel de yang brda' bstan pa tsem mnam skad cig tsa'm la go myong rogs po shar nas dka' bas 'bad mi dgos par yon tan lhung ru dzogs pa ni cig 'char ba' rig yin tel skyes chen sbyangs pa mgongs gnay gnams sol yangi ga' zhih nyams rogs yon tan gnams go rim la yin par mtho dman nges med 'phel 'grub can 'char ba' ni thod ral ba ces bya sre 'bring po'o l'gshan gang zag mthun mong bya spyi la nyams len brenson 'grus che chung la lhos pa'i go rim nges can da na 'phar pa'i rig ni rim gnis pa ces bya ste phal pa gnams pol da ra rim gnis pa dang mthun pa'i lam rim la gzhahn gnis po'ang 'du bas de litar 'chad de!

There is also a translation of this passage in Tsele Natsok Rangdrol 1989, p. 14–35: Note that the use of thod rgal here to describe this person a leps overs the established order of gradual accomplishment is not explicitly linked to the leapord (thod rgal) rubric of Seminal Heart practice instruction.

456 Legshe Dawa Oser Hh. 327a–29a.

457 Jackson 1992, pp. 101–2. The text is the Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus las (pp. 438–39), in vol. 1 of the gsum 'bum of Gampopa. Interestingly, in the same text Gampopa characterizes the Great Perfection of his time as a simultaneist (rig car) doctrine. Other references to simultaneists and gradualists occur in the gsum 'bum, as Ulrich Kragh has pointed out (1998, p. 22).

458 NCT p. 571: phyag rdzogs gnis kai'i rgyud dang man ngag nas rig pa gcig chod rang grol las lam gnyi rnam tshogs ma gnyi kyung chung smon byon grub thob byang chub sems dpa' chen po gnams kyi bstan pa.


460 PK p. 478: de yang dbang po rnon mchog gi gdul bya dag'a' rab rdo rje dang rang byung padma indra bhu ti sogs pa ni dkyil 'khor gnyi bdag po nyid thun mong gdul bya'i snang ngor lam la 'jug pa'i shul bstan pa tsam yin phyin rang byung thos grol du gyur kyung gang zag rim gnis pa la ni de la'i rga pa mi 'gro stel de'i phyir skabs 'dir yang grol ba don du snyer ba zhih yin phyin chad!

461 KZL p. 512: rdzogs chen gyi lam cig char du sgra' gi bzhin par bstan pa bskas ma yin par shes par bya la!

462 YL p. 312: gshis der phdes pa'i rnal 'byor pa chen po rnon rams la rgyu 'bras dge sgid med po thad drang du bshad de padma dang'i bi ma la dang le te lo pa la sogs pa bzhin nol rang caq rams la blos de ltar srogs kyang goms pa thug du ma' phbes pa'i gshis la mi skrag cing las 'bras cha' phra ba la 'dzem pa dang sbyar na bshad dol

I have not been able to locate the passage in Longchenpa's works.

463 The passage is in the bKa' 'gyur rdo rje snying po la rdzogs pa chen po thog pa gzhan las khrid par du lhag pa'i brjod don (Collected Works, vol. IV, pp. 135–36).

464 KZL p. 512: rig pa ma bsigmos lhan grub la! I sgon pa byas pas nga mi rnyed! The lines are from the Seri Tsulang Tantra.

465 PK p. 498: 'o na tan yon khiday par dus skad cig ma la sange rgyas brgya'zhal bhta ba nas lus re la'ang 'khor phun sum tshogs pa btra' sbya bskor bstan pa' bar gyi yon tan bhrag phrag bcu gnyis spyan dang mngon shes shyle 'chi rang tshan pa med 'da'm ba'gi gling yin grya po'ikyde 'dzin nus pa la sogs pa'nus pas mngon gyur de med pas so snyam na!

466 PK p. 498–99: rdzogs pa chen po'i rgyud nas khyung phrug nga'i shugs nas rtsal rdzogs te sgo nga'i rgya las grol ma thag 'phur ba la chags thogs mi mnga' ba dang ling byan sgo nga rga' las grol nas kyung yeung cing por tshad du bskeyed bzin bya'i dpebs bstan tel phar phyin du bsikal pa grangs de la sogs par lam la zhung csa ci zhih na 'bras bu mngon' gyu du bya ba dang rdo rje theg pa'i sbsk pa spangs srogs kyi yon tan thams cad sgon chen gyi lus gya's shugs su rtsal rdzogs te las kyi nga'i rgya las grol ma thag dag pa gnis lbas gyi la mi' lphur ltar bstan sa zin pa'i nges pa dren rgyu yod pas ci kyang yon tan de dag mngon gyur du mthong mi dgos sol di 'di tshul zhib pa nil mdzod bdun la sogs pa ma ngan gi bstan bcos rams su bla'o!

467 David Jackson (1992) has made a brief study of the use of the khyung bird image in connection with the simultaneist approach.

468 [Ta ba ye shes gting rdzogs kyi rgyud] (Kaneko no. 43, f. 52): sangs rgyas yon tan mtschan dang dpe dpayd stel ... dus ni da lea byang bu la lus kyi[1] bsgrilbs pel na khyung chen srgom nga'i nang na gshg rgyas kyung nga nga ma chag 'phur mi nus pa bzhin! Cited in Karmay 1988, p. 185 n. 58 and Jackson 1992, p. 100. The translation here is mine.

A translation of the full passage can be found in Barron 1998, pp. 199–200. The sentence I have quoted is located at the end of the passage (pp. 251–52): sgoṅ rgya bral las 'phur ba ltar lus rgya bral bas snga sgya bio l
The bird, which spreads its wings after coming out of the egg, soars in the sky. Conquering the nágás and crossing abysses. Just so, in this pinnacle of all vehicles, the vajra essence, the fortunate yogin with realization conquers the inferior vehicles and crosses the abyss of samsárá.

The five victorious ones are: Vairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitábha, and Amoghasiddhí. The elements are the five consorts: Dhātuvári, Locana, Māmáki, Pándaraváini, and Samayatárá. The pure senses are seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting, represented by Kstirgarbha, Vajrapáni, Akṣágarbha, and Avalokítésvara. The sensorial states are form, sound, smell, and taste, represented by Lasyá, Māla, Gitá, and Nárti. The times are past, future, present, and indefinite, represented by Puspa, Dhápa, Áloka, and Gándhi. Cf. JDoom 1991, vol. I, p. 125, 128; vol. II, p. 114 n. 129.

I sgo nag pa'i dang la nga dang drel nas nam mthong ieding ba dang 'dra stel de dus rig pa chos skiu i mthong a ieding ba'i ngang nas gzugs skiu bya khyung gdul bya'i don gnyis mdzad pas theg dman zil gnyi gnom zhing 'khor ba'i g.yang sa chod stel.

The root verses for this passage are as follows (pp. 821–22):

The Seven Teñstras and the last testament (†du rje) attributed to Garab Dorje, Mahājñānaśrimitra, and Śri Śaṅkarācārya contained in the Bimal Nyírgal ma (vol. I, pp. 273–344).

The prowess of a lion (seng ge rtse rdzogs) is the title of one of the Seven Teñstras (see bibliography).

This is a reference to the Instruction Series. These lines refer to the Seventeen Teñstras and the last testament (†du rje) attributed to Garab Dorje, Mahājñānaśrimitra, and Śri Śaṅkarācārya contained in the Bimal Nyírgal ma (vol. I, pp. 273–344).

The meaning of the word bhaga, which has the esoteric significance of raja in the anuttarayoga tantras (cf. Snellgrove 1987, vol. I).

Phyed sprul longs skiu: presumably a contraction of phyed sprul longs skiu: cf. YLG p. 90.

These are three of the four visions (snang bshad) of leapower: cf. YLG p. 89 and YLG pp. 370–90.

This is a reference to the Instruction Series.

This is a reference to the Seventeen Teñstras and the last testament (†du rje) attributed to Garab Dorje, Mahājñānaśrimitra, and Śri Śaṅkarācārya contained in the Bimal Nyírgal ma (vol. I, pp. 273–344).

The prowess of a lion (seng ge rtse rdzogs) is the title of one of the Seven Teñstras (see bibliography).

Rnam rig. Skt. vijñapti (Nagao 1961) here seems to be synonymous with rnam shes.

Ramon Prats (1985, p. 1167 n. 28) has noted that this and the previous verse are identical to two lines from the eleventh verse of the Mahāmudrā aspirational prayer by the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (1284–1339), entitled Phyag rgya chen po 'i smon lam, with the exception that here 'di in the first line replaces kyang.

Dbu ma chen po (Madyamaka), phyag rgya chen po (Mahāmudrā), and rdzogs pa chen po. As pointed out by Prats 1985 (p. 1172, n. 54) these three lines echo three lines in the nineteenth verse of the Mahāmudrā prayer by Karmapa Rangjung Dorje: yid byed bral ba 'di ni phyag rgya ches mthong dang, 'bras pa dbyu ma chen po yin la ni kun 'du rdzogs chen zhes kyang byal.


Skye mchod, Skt. āyatana (Nagao 1994).

These are the four visions (snang bshad) of leapower; cf. YLG p. 370–90.


This must be another term for the sambhogakāya of the fruit.

bDe bzhed ma: this is probably bDe bzhed mthong 'gro ma, described in Bunce 1994, p. 44, as a consort to Mahākāla.

bla rdo.
531 These two verses are repeated from pp. 467–68.

532 gol tshur tshad go bral. SN pp. 55–56.

533 This elliptical passage, referring to the discussion a few pages back in the section on the great yoga of the path of seeing, is somewhat illuminated by the following, from a text by Tsele Natsog Rangdrol (Chos thams cad kyi snying po phyag rgya chen po’i don yang dag par rab tu gsal bar byed pa dri ma med pa’i sgron ma. p. 38):

There are many different ways of interpretation among the numerous positions of accomplished scholars on this subject of meditation and post-meditation. Some say that from [the stage of] non-eloabration in the four yogas onwards meditation and post-meditation are not taught as such. A few differentiate the meditation and post-meditation experience of the meditation and post-meditation of realization. Some say that there is a different meditation and post-meditation for each individual stage of the four yogas, and so on ad infinitum.

Sprin snyam rjes kyi ska bs’i ila mka’ bzhud po mi gcig du ma’i dbang gi nga’i dzin thub rdzul gis mtha’i be dka’ ma’i spros bral lan chad la mnyam rjes dngos bstan med par gcangs pa dang ‘ga’ zhih gis rnam kyi snyam rjes dang rgo’i mnyam rjes so so dbyar ba dang l la rnal’ byor bshis so la ral pa’i mnyam rjes re thad da’u gcangs pa so sogs mtha’i yas mod cing l


536 ’Do rje gai brjod: Longchenpa.

537 rGyal dbang mtho skyi rje: Padmasambhava.


539 gSang rgyud dbang po rgya mtho la bstan bya ba gsum dam pa’i rgyan ge’i brtag. This seems to be an alternative name or description of the Phyo’gyi mtho mun sel, Longchenpa’s commentary on the Guhyagarbha Tantra: cf. Dorje 1987.


541 nor’dein bu mo: a name for the goddess Sitā.

542 These are the chos kyi la gum, the three types of activities of a Buddhist teacher.

543 One of the Seventeen Tantras (see bibliography for details).


545 Thig pa choen po man ngag gi bstan bya’i bzhin rin po che’i meda kyi gre’l ba padma dkar po, in Longchenpa’s Seven Treasures.

546 Kun mkhyen zhul lang pp. 527–28: khedr cag gi’i dlo dpa’ ha shang la lta ba nor’de lta bu zhig yod de snyam pa ci yang mi sams pa sgo nga lta bu’i phyogs sngags ji bzhin ‘di bkod nas bryod kyi gshen du na sanga rgyas phal po che la sogs pai’i guung ras mang po la shang gi blo la bzhus shing’i kama la shi la saga rtsod dri’i tsho phyogs shing klad la bsdus ba’i brdas ‘khor ba’i rgyu dri pa na ber ge rpha bsa’i gnyis sprungs na gsum ‘dzin gylis las bshis ba’i brda las snom nas pa sogs dbang po shin tu
NOTES

547 Ghandarbya-nams-mahayana-sutra, Tib. Sgyam stod po bkod pa shes bya ba thod pa chen po'i nges (Peking bKa' 'gyur no. 778, vol. 25).

548 One of the Seventeen Tantras (see bibliography for details).


550 Nam mkha' i rnal 'byor lha btsun chen po: this is Lha btsun chen po nam mkha'i 'jigs med (1597–1650).

551 Nam mkha' i rnal 'byor lha btsun rgyal po: again, this is Lha btsun chen po nam mkha'i 'jigs med (1597–1650), who is said to have converted a heretical ruler in India (Bradburn 1995, p. 237).

552 sang thal.

553 The last testaments (ldat rjes) are located in Bima Nyinjig, part ga (vol I, pp. 275–344).

554 gSang ba bla na med pa 'od gsal rdo rje'i nyid po'i gnas guum gsal ba byed pa thig don rin po che'i med dad is the full title of Longchenpa's Tshigdon Dzö.

555 One of the Seventeen Tantras (see bibliography for details).


557 Longchenpa.

558 Mahâyâna-sûtrarâja-kârikâ, Tib. Thog pa chen po'i nges sgrub gis thig le'ur byes pa (Peking bKa' 'gyur, no. 5321, vol. 108).

559 tSru la'i stong ba'i rgya cher 'grel ba, by Atiśa.

560 Patrâsimâiti-sâharika-prajñâpâramitâ, Tib. Sles rakby bya rol tu phyin pa stong phyag rgya bhag nyi thu lnga pa (Peking bKa' 'gyur, no. 731, vol. 18–19).

561 One of the Seventeen Tantras (see bibliography for details). This passage is in vol. III, p. 112. The same passage is quoted in the auto-commentary to Longchenpa's Dzod Nyingpo (pp. 155–56, translation in Barron 1998, p. 135), which is probably Jigmé Lingpa's source.

562 dri med dang 'od zer: a pun on one of Longchenpa's names, Drime Özer.

563 Ngag gi dbang po: Longchenpa.

564 klong chen dcóong pa'i medado: a reference to the Seven Treasuries of Longchenpa.

565 Cf. PK p. 490.

566 zang thal.

567 megsam gshag dang rjes thob.

568 yongs med.

569 tha ral gis shes pa: I use the translation of this term that has become standard in translations of Mahâmudra texts. The term seems to originate from the Mahâmudra tradition; it appears in Gampopa's Guung 'bum (cf. Krahg 1998, p. 35).

570 sgom med.

571 gang thar skyong.

572 mi 'gnyu dgu 'gyu.

573 'Arya-dharmasamgiti-nams-mahayana-sutra, Tib. Phags pa chos yang dag par stod pa shes bya ba thod pa chen po'i nges (Peking bKa' 'gyur no. 904, vol. 36).

574 These are the four activities (spyod pa rnam bzhis).

575 YL p. 462.

576 Thondup (1998) p. 364 n. 56) mentions a 271-folio commentary to YL by mkHan po Ngag dbang 'dpa' bstan (1879–1941) that has been reprinted recently in an edition edited by Bya bral Sangs rgyas rdo rje: rDoags pa chen po ye shes bla ma'i 'gnyis don smy ing thig ma bu'i lde mig kun bstan thugs kyi tikka (Ngagru Nyingma Sungrab Series vol. 1), New Delhi, 1971.

577 AC and SBL misnumbered: guum pa.

578 SBD, SBL: misnumbered: guum.

579 Probably the seventh Chagdampa incarnation.

580 AC pp. 461–62, SBD p. 615, SBL 1123–24. The Tibetan text for these verses is as follows:

'ltshu 'li kong smyon dpa' bo'i dbang phyug sogal idam pa'i rigs can 'ga yis snong bskul yangl le zhig spel ba'i dus la ma babs pas lla'ka 'gro rgya mtha' klong gis rgya bsdams sulas lam zhih snags kyi bdag mo'i yang sprul nil lhzing skyong daki dbang mo she ring ma'i hi'i bzhad sgra g.yo'i lung bstan bcas lchos dis 'gro phan pa'i gnyer bhang zhingl l'chi med ri bo'i spo na mgonon mtho lla'bsen mkhas yon tan rdoags pa bstan dzin rjed l rin chen shel phyng ba bskyi tra dang l'gser gyi me tog bcas pa'i bkas bskul nas bshyang chub ljon pa'i nags khorod shes ring lhongs gir na padma'i rjes tse nger bsten pa lrang byung rdo rje 'jigs med gling pas bkodl tshrid mtshor dupa'i mgon po dbugs 'byin phyiril
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Secondary Sources

CAJ Central Asiatic Journal
HR History of Religions
JA Journal Asiatique
JIABS Journal of the Internation Association of Buddhist Studies
JIP Journal of Indian Philosophy
JTS Journal of the Tibet Society
LTWA Library of Tibetan Works and Archives
SOAS School of Oriental and African Studies
SUNY State University of New York
TJ Tibet Journal


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_sDe gsum snying po don 'gre gnas lugs rin po che'i mdzod_ [Dsem Nyinpo]: vol. VII, pp. 51–347.

_gNas lugs rin po che'i mdzod_ [Nelug Dzö]: vol. V, pp. 1–49.

_gSang ba bla na med pa' od gsal rdo rje snying po'i gnas gsum gyal bar byed pa'i thig don rin po che'i mdzod_ [Trigdöön Dzö]: vol. VI, pp. 61–841.

Tseg pa chen po'i man ngag gi bitan bcos yid bzhi rin po che'i mdzod [Yizhin Dzö]: vol. I, pp. 2–137.


_mKha' gro snying thig_ [Khando Nyingtig]: vols. II–III.

_mKha' gro yang tig_ [Khando Yangtig]: vols. IV–VI.

_Bi ma snying thig_ [Bima Nyingtig]: vols. VII–IX.

_Bla ma yang tig_ [Lama Yangtig]: vol. I.

_Zab mo yang tig_ [Zabmo Yangtig]: vols. X–XI.


'Jam mgon kong sprul blo 'gro mtha' yas


Jigs med gling pa

1. Collections


_Klong chen snying thig_ (3 vols.). N.p. or d. [but boards bear the same seals as those on the Rin chen gter mdzod: cf. 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul above].
2. Texts from the Klong chen snying thig:

For the page references for the translated texts (those with abbreviations after the title), see part the critical editions in part IV.

rDo rje thog pa smin grol lam gyi rim pa las 'phros pa'i man ngag gi rgyab brten padma dkar po [PK].

rDo rje'i thig rkang gi don 'grel kun mkhyen zhal lang [KZL].

rDzogs pa chen po klong chen snying tig gi gdod ma'i mgon po'i lam gyi rim pa'i khrid yig ye shes bla ma [YL].

rDzogs pa chen po kun tu bzang po ye shes klong gi rgyud [YLG].

rDzogs pa chen po gnas lugs ser mthong [NCT].

rDzogs pa chen po'i gnad gzum shan 'byed [GSB].

Klong chen snying gi thig le'i rtogs pa brjod pa dökki'i giang gjam chen mo [Dökki Sangtam] (AC vol. I, pp. 4-16; SBL vol. VII, pp. 1-15).

Kun tu bzang po'i dgongs nyams [KGN].

Man ngag rdozgs pa chen po rgyud phyi ma [GP].


gNas lugs rdo rje thig rkang [DTK].

sNying tig sgo ma'i bya bral gyi yul shor tshar geod seng ge nag ro [SN].


gSang ba chen mo nyams snang gi rtogs brjod chu zla'i gar mkhan [Chudai Garkhen] (AC vol. I pp. 17-68; SBL vol. VII, pp. 15-69).

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mkhyen brsè'i me long 'od zer [Khyentse Melong] (SBL vol. IV, pp. 1-371).


Yon tan rin po che'i mdzod dga' ba'i char [Yonten Dzó] (SBL vol. II, pp. 1-121).

Yul nga rgyud du byung ba'i rdzogs chen pa rang byung rdo rje mkhyen brsè'i od zer gyi rnam par thar pa legs byas yong gi du'i snyem [Namtar] (SBL vol. IX, pp. 1-500).

Nubs Sangs rgyas ye shes


'Phreng bo gter chen Shes rab 'od zer


Sa skyà Pàndita


Sangs rgyas gling pa


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rDzogs chen sens sde'i khrid yig, in Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, gDams ngag mdzod, vol. I, pp. 270-95.

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