



**INSTRUCTIONS FOR  
PRACTISING THE VIEW  
OF OTHER EMPTINESS**

**A TEXT OF ORAL INSTRUCTIONS  
BY JAMGON KONGTRUL**

# Instructions for Practising the View of Other Emptiness

A Text of Oral Instructions by Jamgon Kongtrul



By Tony Duff

- Padma Karpo Translations •  
*Kindle Edition*

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# Introduction

The Buddha declared before he began his formal teaching in Varanasi that emptiness would be a fundament of his teaching.

Later, after he had been teaching for some years, he explained that he had been presenting his teaching in stages, with each stage showing an increasingly profound meaning; for example, he stated in the Great Vehicle sūtra called *Unravelling the Intent Sūtra*, that he had presented the exoteric or sūtra teachings in three stages. In addition to that, it is accepted by his followers that his presentation of the esoteric or tantra teachings was a fourth stage. Each of these four stages was called a “turning of the wheel of dharma”, with “wheel” meaning a “complete level or sphere” of dharma or spiritual truth, and “turning” meaning that the teaching of that particular level of spiritual truth, one which had been either lost from or not previously taught in human society, was being set in motion.

The Buddha also explained in the *Unravelling the Intent Sūtra* that he taught in stages like that for the sake of his disciples, so that they could gradually be led from their state of confusion into full realization of the truth, and illustrated his method with the analogy of spoon-feeding children.

Thus, the Buddha himself said before he began teaching that emptiness would be a fundament of his teaching. However, when he turned the wheels of dharma, he showed emptiness in varying degrees of profundity and it is not always obvious exactly how he taught emptiness within them. Therefore, it became essential for all of his followers to determine exactly how emptiness had been taught through the various turnings of the wheel.

This matter of emptiness and how it is to be understood throughout the turnings of the wheel of dharma is very subtle, so his followers arrived at varying ways of explaining it in accordance with their own capacity to understand the subtlety involved. Generally speaking, their determinations resulted in four main schools of Buddhist philosophy: two for those who accepted only the first turning of the wheel of dharma—called Particularist and Sūtra Followers—and two for followers who either accepted all three sūtra turnings or accepted both those three and the fourth tantra turning—called Mind Only and Middle Way.

Of the four main schools, the Middle Way school is regarded as the one having the highest presentation of how the Buddha taught emptiness. Many sub-schools of the Middle Way arose in India, as the great Indian masters who were both studied and practised turned their attention to this matter and arrived at their own determinations of them.

The various schools of thought mentioned spread from India to other countries. Three of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism—the Nyingma, Kagyu, and Sakya schools—and a couple of smaller schools—such as the Jonang school which is important to this book and about which more will be said later—were direct continuations of Indian Buddhist schools of thought that received their

views on emptiness and the turnings of the wheel directly from Indian sources. These schools arose in the period from the eighth to twelfth centuries C. E. Much later, in the fifteenth century, a fourth major school of Tibetan Buddhism—the Gelugpa school—arose based on the teachings of its founder Lord Tsongkhapa [1357–1419]; it is noteworthy that this school was not a direct continuation of an Indian school of Buddhism and therefore did not get the teaching regarding emptiness and the turnings of the wheel directly from Indian sources.

All of these Tibetan Buddhist schools accepted and followed all four turnings of the wheel of dharma, and all of them followed one or another of the Middle Way sub-schools of thought regarding emptiness.

Generally speaking, the Nyingma, Kagyu, Jonang, and some followers of the Sakya school had a common approach to emptiness and how it had been taught through the four turnings and agreed that, in essence, their views were the same. The remaining Sakya school followers and the Gelugpa school had their own, common approach to this matter that was different to that of the first group. The difference between the two groups succinctly stated is that the first group claims that emptiness was taught in both the second and third turnings and that the ultimate teaching on emptiness is to be found in the third turning, whereas the second group claimed that emptiness was only taught in the second turning and that the presentation of emptiness found there is ultimate. There are many other points of difference that follow on from that, for instance differences of understanding how emptiness was taught in the fourth turning, but to go into that here would complicate this discussion unnecessarily.

The view of emptiness held by the Gelugpa school was, as could be guessed from the foregoing information, a minority view in Tibet. However, the school became the established church in Lhasa, the seat of political power in Central Tibet, and made a concerted effort during many centuries to dominate the other schools in Tibet. Its views spread widely and even today it is still thought by many outside Tibet that the view of Tsongkhapa and his Gelugpa school is the accepted view within all schools of Tibetan Buddhism. In fact, it is a minority view, with the majority of Tibetan Buddhists not subscribing to Tsongkhapa’s explanations of emptiness. Thus, one reason for writing this book is to draw attention to the majority view of emptiness in Tibet in which the ultimate teaching on emptiness is found in the third turning of the wheel.



In the early fourteenth century C.E., the head of the Jonang school, Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen [1292–1361], stated in his writings that the view of emptiness which his school found within the teachings of the third turning should be called “empty-of-other emptiness” or “other emptiness” (“zhantong” in Tibetan<sup>(1)</sup>) and, in relation to that, that the emptiness taught within in the second turning should be called “empty-of-self emptiness” or “self emptiness” (“rangtong” in Tibetan). As a result, they become known as a school that followed the Other Emptiness system of view and meditation.

Following that, the other schools with the same basic view—the Nyingma, Kagyu, and so on as mentioned above—also proclaimed that they followed the Other Emptiness system of view and meditation. Of importance here is that the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje [1284–1339], who was the head of the Karma Kagyu school at the time, visited Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen and, after discussions with him, announced that the view of the Kagyu school was exactly that of Other Emptiness. In fact, the Kagyu school had, since its inception in ancient India, followed the system of view and meditation which was now being called “Other Emptiness” in Tibet—the only change involved was the name being used to describe the approach.

The author of the text in this book, the first Jamgon Kongtrul, was a principal holder of the Karma Kagyu lineage in the nineteenth century, and is well-known for having been a major advocate of the Other Emptiness view. Jamgon Kongtrul was famous for travelling through Tibet to obtain teachings from various schools, then writing them down and propagating them so that they would not be lost. In this case, he went to Dzam Thang, which had become the headquarters of the Jonang school in East Tibet, received the full instructions on the view and meditation of other emptiness from the head of the school at the time—as mentioned at the end of the text, then wrote them down in a manual of instructions for practising Other Emptiness. That manual forms the body of this book. Another reason then, for writing this book, is to show that Other Emptiness is a practical teaching of the Buddha intended as a means for the attainment of enlightenment.



The Jonang school gets its name from Jomo, a place south of Lhasa in Central Tibet, which had become the headquarters of the followers of Yumowa Mikyo Dorje, a highly realized yogin of the *Kālachakra Tantra*. When a later throne holder of the Jonang school, Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen, made his presentations of “other emptiness” mentioned above, it greatly upset the hierarchs of the established Buddhist church in Central Tibet. They proclaimed that their presentation of emptiness based on the logic of Tsongkhapa was correct and that the presentation of “other emptiness” was heretical. They eventually closed down the Jonang school by force, leaving the followers of the school no choice but to leave Central Tibet for East Tibet where they re-established themselves out of reach of further harm.

Since that time, followers of the Gelugpa school have held a running verbal battle with all the schools who uphold the other emptiness position. That has led to the Other Emptiness system of teaching becoming thought of as a philosophical teaching full of all sorts of debatable topics, which is a complete mistake.

The Other Emptiness system is based on the Buddha’s teachings of the third turning of the wheel. Its view is very profound, being essentially the same as the view of the tantras. Moreover, it is a complete teaching, with view, meditation, and conduct, taught by the Buddha as a means for attaining enlightenment. When it is taught as a view and meditation—or theory and practice—for the attainment of enlightenment, much of the philosophical argument that its opponents drummed up is not

only not needed but is simply not presented to disciples. When Other Emptiness is presented for what it is, it is a very profound yet straightforward teaching of view, with a profound yet straightforward meditation practice to go with it.

Therefore, this book does not to bother with dissertations of the polemic which have come to surround the system of Other Emptiness. Rather, it takes its place amongst our several books on Other Emptiness<sup>(2)</sup>, all showing that the Other Emptiness teaching is not an academic exercise for deep philosophical discussion, but a teaching given by the Buddha as a profound means for the attainment of enlightenment. This book has the specific feature of presenting a manual of instructions for actually practising the path to enlightenment according to the Other Emptiness view as presented by the Jonang lineage, the lineage whose followers first coined the name “other emptiness” in Tibet.

## **1. The Text in this Book, “Instructions for Practising the View of the Other Emptiness Great Middle Way”**

One of our several books on Other Emptiness is a large tome called *Other Emptiness, a Complete Exposition of the Zhantong System*<sup>(3)</sup> which features extensive explanations of the theory and practice of Other Emptiness; it is recommended reading for those who would like to examine Other Emptiness in depth. The book starts with my own extensive explanations of Other Emptiness given in plain English, then continues with a rich set of translations of the writings and teachings of Tibetan teachers of the Karma Kagyu school, a tradition which has been based in the Other Emptiness approach from its very beginning in ancient India. Teachings of the Nyingma and Jonang lineages are included in order to give a very complete picture of the theory and practice of the Other Emptiness system.

The following five paragraphs are excerpted from *Other Emptiness, a Complete Exposition of the Zhantong System* to show the resources available in it and to give the reader an idea of how the text in this book fits into the teaching of Other Emptiness:

In the traditional Buddhist way of thinking, before a teaching on a profound view is given, the audience has to be shown the lineage in order to have faith in it.

Accordingly, a very clear presentation of the history, given by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso when he was teaching at Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim, is provided.

Following that, the view should be presented succinctly. Emptiness of Other was fully taught by the Buddha in the sūtras and tantras, though the teaching of his regent Maitreya, which comes in a set of five texts called *The Five Dharmas of Maitreya*, is especially focussed on this view, and, in particular, the presentation contained in the one called *Great Vehicle Highest Continuum Treatise* expounds the view very clearly. Jamgon Kongtrul the Great wrote a major commentary to the *Highest Continuum* from the Empty of Other perspective which he called *The Lion’s Roar of the Non-Regressing Commentary to the Highest Continuum*. The lengthy introduction of the *Lion’s Roar Commentary* has been included because it contains a wealth of background material. That is followed by a key selection from Jamgon Kongtrul’s very

famous *Treasury of Knowledge* with the ascertainment of provisional and definitive meaning<sup>(4)</sup> within the three wheels and within the two truths, ascertainments which are crucial to determining the view of Emptiness of Other. The selection also includes ascertainment of the view of each of the main tenet systems of Buddhism culminating in the view of the Empty of Other Middle Way. These presentations are also crucial to developing a correct understanding of the Empty of Other view.

Once the view has been succinctly presented in a theoretical way, it has to be followed by oral instruction that makes the view come alive. Several chapters based on teachings given by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso as oral instruction to his disciples, address this need.

After the view has been understood theoretically and some certainty has been gained through oral instruction, the next step is to meditate on the view in order to bring it forth as fact within one's mind-stream. Khenpo Tsultrim's complete explanations of the view and especially the meditation of Empty of Other, as shown in two of the most important songs of Milarepa, are available in another book on Other Emptiness called *The Theory and Practice of Other Emptiness Taught Through Milarepa's Songs*<sup>(5)</sup>.

Finally, a practice manual for Other Emptiness is needed, and this is provided through an excerpt of the text *Instructions for Practising the View of the Other Emptiness Great Middle Way, "Light Rays of Stainless Vajra Moon"*.

The text *Instructions for Practising the View of the Other Emptiness Great Middle Way* just mentioned is the text which forms the body of this book. The colophon of the text indicates that it was written by Jamgon Kongtrul Yontan Gyatso, one of the several names of the first Jamgon Kongtrul. It has the feature of being what is called a "Ita khrid" in Tibetan, which is a set of instructions for doing the meditation practice that goes with any given view. Within Buddhism, there are many scholarly works that go into the depths of the various views found within Buddhist philosophy, but there are only a few of these instruction manuals that show how to actually practise those views.

These instruction manuals are of no interest to those who spend their lives in scholarly pursuit of the Buddhist teaching, but for those few who are determined to take the view they have studied and turn it into direct experience through meditation, these guides are exceptionally valuable and are treated with great reverence. All in all, the text in this book is not just another of many Tibetan philosophical texts on the view but is a complete rarity, one of very few texts that explain how to practise the view of Other Emptiness.

Pertinent to this book is that I received extensive, private teachings on Other Emptiness from the Karma Kagyu Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche in which he explained the entirety of Ju Mipham's famous text on the subject called *The Lion's Roar that Proclaims Zhantong*<sup>(6)</sup>. When I asked for information on the meditation of Other Emptiness rather than its view, Thrangu Rinpoche pointed me to this text *Instructions for Practising the View* by Jamgon Kongtrul, provided me with the necessary reading transmission, then asked me to translate it. I found that *The Lion's Roar that Proclaims Zhantong* and this *Instructions for Practising the View* complement each other well, the former being a guide to the

theory and the latter being a guide to the practice of Other Emptiness.

## 2. Counteracting the Effects of Opposition to Other Emptiness

As mentioned earlier, the Gelugpa school concluded that the Other Emptiness system of teaching was heretical and became vehemently opposed to it. Followers of the Gelugpa school in general present themselves with the belief that they alone are the ones who correctly understand the Buddha's teaching on emptiness. That they have this attitude is not my idea; it is frequently mentioned in writings of the followers of the schools they opposed. For example, Ju Mipham repeatedly castigates them in his *The Lion's Roar that Proclaims Zhantong* for their close-minded attitudes, including their well-known unwillingness even to listen to the views of others before condemning them. And Jamgon Kongtrul says of them in his *Instructions for Practising the View of the Other Emptiness Great Middle Way*:

... the group with the pretentiousness of taking the empty experiences of general concept and analysis as being the dharmatā who say, "The Great Middle Way is like ours alone; everyone else is mistaken!" are lost regarding the path ...

and makes other derogatory comments about them too.

Driven by these attitudes, Gelugpa scholars wrote trenchant criticisms of Other Emptiness in order to eliminate it. In reply, experts among the followers of Other Emptiness wrote texts to counter their arguments. Both sides had scholars with great knowledge, so the arguments became extensive and subtle, and are not easy to follow without a very sharp mind, significant knowledge of the Buddha's teachings throughout the sūtras, and Buddhist philosophies of perception. For example, *The Lion's Roar that Proclaims Zhantong* was written in defence of Other Emptiness and provides an excellent example of how extensive, subtle, and difficult to understand the arguments became.

The result of this warfare was that Other Emptiness became, in Tibet, something which seemed to be all about philosophical argument. Because of that, Westerners have developed the notion that Other Emptiness is only about philosophical argument and, with that, the understanding that it is about practice seems to have been lost. In regard to this, *The Lion's Roar that Proclaims Zhantong* contains a thread of argument that Other Emptiness is based in direct perception of reality arrived at through meditation practice, yet it does not show the actual practice of the view, and its style of composition supports the idea that the system of Other Emptiness is all about deep philosophical argument. In comparison, this *Instructions for Practising the View* explicitly shows that Other Emptiness is not intended for academic pursuit but, like all Buddhist theory, is meant as a basis for practice done to return us to our original, enlightened condition.

Another of our books on Other Emptiness, called *The Theory and Practice Of Other Emptiness Taught Through Milarepa's Songs*, was compiled and published to assist with dispelling the wrong notions that Other Emptiness is a philosophical view meant for argument and that it has no practical application. It shows the view of Other Emptiness as part of the path to enlightenment and shows the meditation for practising it. The book is especially noteworthy for its thorough treatment of Milarepa's song *An Authentic Expression of the Middle Way*, a song which is famous for showing all

levels of the Kagyu view in a compact presentation of Milarepa's realization. The song is regarded in the Kagyu school as one of the most important of Milarepa's songs and is frequently used as a basis for teaching the Kagyu view, including Other Emptiness.

### **3. A Brief Introduction to the System of Other Emptiness**

The Buddha presented his teachings in steps, each one called a "turning of the wheel of dharma":

In the first turning, he did not address emptiness directly but focussed on showing his disciples that they were in an unsatisfactory condition and that they needed to escape from it. He used the analogy which has become famous, of being in a house on fire.

In the second turning, he explicitly taught emptiness in what were called "the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras". In these sūtras, he taught that the self-nature that ordinary beings see in their own persons and in the phenomena of their worlds is a mistake. He taught that all such persons and phenomena are absent or empty of that kind of self-nature. Thus, he taught emptiness in these sūtras and the emptiness that he taught was the emptiness of a self of persons and of phenomena.

In the third turning, he taught in various ways, but all those ways pointed to the fact that sentient beings have within their normal, complicated minds a subtle core which is the same type of thing as the mind of an enlightened being.

The teachings of the third turning are generally understood to mean that all sentient beings have in them the cause of enlightenment. However, a very profound understanding of emptiness was also taught in conjunction with them. Unlike the emptiness of self-nature teaching given in the second turning of the wheel, the teaching of this profound understanding does not focus on the mistaken side of phenomena in order to remove that mistakenness, but focusses on the core of mind taught as the cause of enlightenment. That core of mind, or sugatagarbha as it is referred to in these teachings, is the same type of thing<sup>(7)</sup> as enlightened mind; it is not the same kind of thing as the samsaric mind which sees mistakenly. Therefore, this core of enlightened mind is different in entity from the samsaric mind. Therefore, the core of enlightened mind does not have, within its own entity, the samsaric mind. Therefore, this kind of teaching was called "empty of other" meaning that the core of enlightened mind is "empty of everything which is other than it", where everything other than it is the samsaric mind and all of its paraphernalia.

The Buddha did teach that meaning, then officially entrusted it to his regent, Maitreya, who then passed it on to Indian masters. From them, it went into some of the Tibetan schools, one of which, the Jonang, gave it the name "Other Emptiness" or "Zhantong" in Tibetan and gave the name "Self Emptiness" or "Rangtong" in Tibetan to the teachings of the second turning of the wheel. These two names were then used by the followers of the Other Emptiness system but not by others.

The Tibetan schools who followed only the emptiness teachings of the second turning of the wheel of dharma, the Gelugpa and Sakya schools, did not accept the emptiness of other teaching. For them, the teachings of the second turning were where the Buddha taught emptiness and the teachings of the third

turning were where the Buddha taught that all sentient beings have the cause of buddhahood in them.

That brings us to a crucial point about the Other Emptiness system of teaching: it does not reject the teaching of the emptiness of self found in the second turning of the wheel in favour of the teaching of other emptiness which it finds in the third turning. Instead, it regards the teaching of emptiness of self in the second turning as an indispensable step towards the teaching of emptiness of other found in the third turning.

Understanding this is useful in two ways. Firstly, it is an important point of the view of Other Emptiness and has to be understood by anyone who follows that system as a practical path to enlightenment. Secondly, opponents of Other Emptiness often argue that the system of Other Emptiness rejects the Buddha's teaching of emptiness of a self-nature in the second turning of the wheel; an understanding of the crucial point just mentioned allows one of their important arguments against Other Emptiness to be readily dismissed.

Having understood this crucial point that the Other Emptiness schools require that the emptinesses taught in both the second and third turnings be understood and then practised in the order in which they were taught, various issues concerning how the two emptinesses should be understood and practised come to light.

One issue is the style of definition of the two emptinesses. The sūtras of the second turning consistently teach that emptiness is to be understood and practised through the absolute negation of mistaken phenomena; for example, this can be seen in the *Heart Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* when it says,

... no path, no wisdom, no attainment, and also no non-attainment ...

The sūtras of the third turning do not absolutely negate in order to remove something which is mistaken, because that step has already been completed by determining emptiness of a self-nature in the second turning. They take the next step of negating yet affirming in order to distinguish clearly what is left after the mistaken parts have been removed. The particular thing that they affirm is wisdom, in the form of a seed of enlightenment, called sugatagarbha.

In this two-step approach, the sūtras of the second turning will say that the core of mind which is innate wisdom, sugatagarbha, *does not truly exist*, meaning that a wisdom conceived of as a truly existent thing does not exist in fact. However, the sūtras of the third turning, following on from that, say, "*Wisdom truly is existent*" meaning that, of the two possibilities of wisdom existing and not-existing, it has to be said that wisdom exists.

For someone who has become used to the approach of the sūtras of the second turning, the words "*wisdom truly is existent*" will seem to be in direct contradiction to what the Buddha taught in the second turning, which is that phenomena *do not truly exist*. One can easily understand how someone who is clinging tightly to the style of emptiness taught in the second turning would conclude that the teachings of Other Emptiness, which emphasise the approach of saying that the core of mind, innate wisdom, does indeed exist, go directly against the Buddha's teaching. One can even see how one group might become very upset and raise cries of "heresy!" Nevertheless, one can also see that there is a progression of teaching, just as the Buddha said, and that each approach has its place and that



both are equally important.

The key here is to understand that the emptiness of self taught in the second turning relies on one type of negation, where the emptiness of other taught in the third turning relies on another type of negation. The teachings on emptiness of the second turning negate a false existence using logic based in what is called “non-affirming negation”, whereas the teachings on emptiness of the third turning differentiate whether something can be said to be a certain way or not using what is called “affirming negation”. Then one can easily understand that the Other Emptiness followers have not rejected the emptiness of self of the second turning of the wheel but have put that first and then, on the basis of that, moved to a much more subtle presentation of innate wisdom, which is empty of other.

A more complete presentation of the two types of negation and how they relate to the two types of emptiness—self and other—is outside the scope of this book; the reader is again referred to *Other Emptiness, a Complete Exposition of the Zhantong System* for a thorough treatment of the issue.

From this point on, the explanations of the view of Other Emptiness become more difficult to understand and require for their comprehension expertise in both the Buddha’s teachings and logical argument. Nevertheless, the approach of Other Emptiness can be summed up as follows.

In general, to become enlightened means to put an end to mistaken, samsaric mind and to return to enlightened mind, called wisdom, which has been completely purified of that samsaric mind. The self-empty approach to doing that, shown in the second turning of the wheel, is one in which the samsaric mind is used against itself to overcome itself—this can lead into wisdom but only in an indirect way, because it is an approach which stays in samsaric mind while trying to end samsaric mind. The other-empty approach of the third turning acknowledges, using simple logic, that every sentient being has wisdom innately present in the form of the core of enlightened mind called sugatagarbha. Unlike the things of samsaric mind which had to be removed in the second turning of the wheel, this is not a mistaken entity, but something which is present and could be directly accessed if one knew how to do it. The most profound teachings given by the Buddha in connection with sugatagarbha included instructions on how to access that mind directly, without the need of logic. The style of the view and meditation of those most profound sūtra teachings is the same as the view and meditation of the tantras taught in the fourth turning of the wheel. The difference between these two very profound approaches is that the sūtra teachings show them a little less clearly whereas the tantric teachings expose them fully and in the most uninhibited way possible.

As mentioned earlier, a more technical description of Other Emptiness can be found in the books *Other Emptiness, a Complete Exposition of the Zhantong System* and *The Lion’s Roar that Proclaims Zhantong*. There is also a presentation of the non-dual view of *Kālachakra Tantra* in which the Other Emptiness system is clearly exposed by the second Drukchen,

Gyalwang Je<sup>(8)</sup>. Finally, *Maitripa’s Writings on the View, The Main Indian Source of the Tibetan Views of Other Emptiness*<sup>(9)</sup> shows very clearly the view of Maitrīpa, who is the pivotal Indian source for all the Other Emptiness teachings that came into Tibet.

## 4. Validating the Source of the Teaching

As mentioned above, Other Emptiness is a teaching of the Buddha intended as a means for the attainment of enlightenment. It is a complete teaching of the path to enlightenment with a view, meditation, and conduct at both sūtra and tantra levels. Wishing to eliminate this system in its entirety, the opponents to Other Emptiness dismiss it by claiming that it is an invention of heretics. To assess their claim, it is necessary to look at the history of the Other Emptiness system and investigate whether it is actually the teaching of the Buddha. The text which forms the body of this book begins with a clear explanation of the source of the Other Emptiness teaching presented in the text. It shows that the Other Emptiness system is the teaching of the Buddha but does not prove the matter so convincingly as the excellent history contained in the book *Other Emptiness, a Complete Exposition of the Zhantong System*, mentioned earlier.

Very briefly, the sūtra teaching of Other Emptiness begins with the Buddha himself. Sets of ten and twenty sūtras from the third turning of the wheel have been picked out by Other Emptiness followers as the core sūtras which teach Other Emptiness<sup>(10)</sup>. Maitreya in particular taught the Other Emptiness view to his disciples and the lineage went from him to noble one Asaṅga to the Indian master Maitrīpa. From there, it went into the Tibetan tradition in various ways, such as through Marpa the Translator and through the exceptionally learned Sajjana of Kashmir who taught it to his disciples, who then took it into Tibet.

The tantric system specifically connected with the Tibetan term “zhantong” was the *Kālachakra Tantra* as practised by the Jonang school. However, the tantras as a whole have the approach of Other Emptiness and were taught by the Buddha himself or his appointed holder of the tantras, Vajrapāṇi. Thus, Other Emptiness as seen in the tantric teachings is also a teaching of the Buddha and not something made up by later followers of the Buddha.

## 5. Whole Schools Follow Other Emptiness

*Instructions for Practising the View* brings the oral instructions of the Other Emptiness tradition, both sūtra and tantra, into one text that shows the view and how to practise it according to the Jonang school of Tibet. However, as was mentioned earlier, Other Emptiness is not restricted to the Jonang school. The Kagyus and Nyingmas as a whole, and some parts of the Sakya tradition, maintain that the view underpinning all of their practice is Other Emptiness. The Kagyus and Nyingmas lay out their practice of tantra in a way that embodies Other Emptiness fully, though for the Nyingma, most masters teach that Other Emptiness is a slightly hidden presentation of what Dzogchen teaches explicitly.

Thus, the text here shows the Jonang approach to practising Other Emptiness *per se*, though it is applicable to everyone who is a follower of the Tibetan Buddhist schools which base themselves on the Other Empty approach.

## 6. Disclaimer

It is important for me to say and for the reader to understand that I do not write here with a bias against one school or for another. In particular, I am not using this book as a platform to denigrate the Gelugpa school. In fact, I started my dharma journey in this life as a monk ordained in that school and was one of the founders of the first Gelugpa monastery in my homeland, Australia, where I spent many years studying and practising the Gelugpa teachings on emptiness in forest retreats. I have nothing but the greatest respect for the school's kindness. After that, I studied and practised with the Kagyu and Nyingma lineages and, likewise, have nothing but the greatest respect for them.

In this introduction I have, out of necessity, reported some events that occurred in Tibet and attitudes that accompanied them which might be less than pleasant to read but which are facts of Tibetan history. So, please not shoot the messenger; he is simply an impartial conveyor of the message! Instead, remember that he has worked overtime to bring you the texts and information in a series of books like this one in order that a very profound aspect of the Buddha's teaching on emptiness can be seen more clearly and better understood by non-Tibetans.

## 7. Further Study

Padma Karpo Translation Committee has amassed a range of materials to help those who are studying this and related topics. In particular several books on Other Emptiness have been published, all of which support each other and each of which clarifies another important aspect of the teaching. Please see the chapter Supports for Study at the end of the book for the details.

## 8. Sanskrit

Sanskrit terms are an important aspect of a technical book like this. They are properly rendered into English with diacritical marks. For the sake of precision, diacritical marks have been used with them throughout this book, except where the terms have been incorporated into the English language.



Indestructible vajra, luminosity sugatagarbha,  
Stainless moon of enlightenment mind, and others  
Are all names for our innate buddha-mind.  
May the light rays of this stainless vajra moon,  
Intensified by the practice of Other Emptiness,  
Shine forth so brightly that the obscurations

Caused by the clouds of samsaric mind  
Scudding across its surface be utterly dispelled.

Tony Duff,  
Padma Karpo Translation Committee,  
Swayambunath,  
Nepal,  
September 2011

—...—

**Instructions for Practising the View of the Other  
Emptiness Great Middle Way, “Light Rays of Stainless  
Vajra Moon”**

**by Jamgon Kongtrul Yontan Gyatso**

—...—



**Plate 1.** Source of the teachings in the *Light Rays of Stainless Vajra Moon* text: Dolpopa Sherab Senge surrounded by the masters of the Jonang Lineage



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# Author's Preface

Here, I will write about the ultimate, non-regressing dharma<sup>(11)</sup>  
Which the teacher and the holders of the teaching  
Have set forth as the quintessence of the teaching  
In a condensed instruction manual for practising the view of the Middle Way.



# Where the Teaching Came From

## A. Generally

In general, the conqueror’s word is not classified into provisional and definitive<sup>(12)</sup> on the basis of something in it being mistaken or untrue, but on whether or not a person’s intellect is unable or able, respectively, to engage the object which is outside the reach of concept<sup>(13)</sup>.

There was, in the manner of spoon-feeding children, the first wheel of the word bringing renunciation of saṃsāra, the middle one turning away grasping at characteristics, and the final one precisely distinguishing the meaning of actuality as existent and non-existent, is and is not, and so on. Based on that progression of meaning, the first one has been made out to be provisional meaning, the middle one to be mixed provisional and definitive, and the final one to be unsurpassable definitive meaning. That cannot be condemned because it is established by authentic statement in the classifications made by the conqueror and his sons in *Unravelling the Intent Sūtra*<sup>(14)</sup>, and so on, and in addition, because the profound meaning is also established in a process of gradually becoming clearer that culminates in perfectly complete, direct perception of it<sup>(15)</sup>.

Still, because the mode of the fictional’s appearance was taught in the middle turning as “not existent in non-existence” and the mode of the superfactual’s emptiness<sup>(16)</sup> was taught in the final turning as “existent in existence”, Śhāntipa and the others maintained<sup>(17)</sup> that the intents of both middle and final wheels<sup>(18)</sup> and of the two great charioteers who initiated their systems<sup>(19)</sup> too, come down to the same point. They relied on the twenty sūtras of the final wheel collectively known as the heart of definitive meaning sūtra section, on Maitreya’s Five Dharmas, and on the textual systems of Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga, fathers and sons<sup>(20)</sup>. And then here in Tibet, too, starting from the time of the two, Zu the translator and Tsan<sup>(21)</sup> there were various systems of explanation of this view which became known as “The Other Emptiness Middle Way” and in the time up until now<sup>(22)</sup> there have been three great system-setting charioteers of this teaching—All-Seeing Rangjung Dorje, All-Knowing Dolpopa, and All-Knowing Drimey Ozer. Then, there were the Seventh Lord<sup>(23)</sup>, Zilung Paṅchen, Tāranātha, Tenpay Nyinje<sup>(24)</sup>, and others who were definitely seated on the levels of the noble ones and who were fully complete spiritual friends of the teaching possessing the eye of dharma which does not fall into sides who also determined the matter through listening, explaining, and meditating and whose recorded words as a whole have become supports for the tradition<sup>(25)</sup>.

There is more to it than that though—the ultimate mind of the noble beings who see unmistakable actuality through integrated hearing, contemplation, and meditation, arrive at only this<sup>(26)</sup>.

## B. Specifically

Specifically, an instruction manual for the profound view could present two systems of the view. There is the common system of guidance on the view which was skilfully exposed by the one who had complete mastery of the meaning intended in the *Highest Continuum*, Maitrīpa, and his lineage consisting of Ratnavajra the Great Central Pillar, Sajjana of Kashmir, and so on. Then there is the system that derives from the path of empowerment in which there is transference of blessings; coming to life in Jetsun Lhodrakpa<sup>(27)</sup> and well known as the Kagyu, this is the uncommon system of the Mahāmudrā of sūtra and mantra united. The former of the two will be explained here.



# The Actual Instructions for Practising the View

## 1. The Sutra System that Stands on its Own Feet

### A. What is to be understood

The Buddha's teaching that trusts in the infallibility of cause and effect is the correct view for a worldling; this is set as the basis. Then, on top of that, in order to transcend the three realms, it is necessary to rely on an unmistakable view of the profound. For that, śhrāvakas will meditate on the meaning that comes from the determination of lack of self of a person, pratyekabuddhas on lack of self in what is grasped<sup>(28)</sup>, Yogacharins on wisdom of emptiness of both, and ordinary Middle Wayists on all phenomena themselves being empty of self-entity. By meditating on the meanings that come from those determinations they gain experience but, because they remain totally constrained by the three things of mind, perceptions, and mistaken views, they do not get to a determination of non-dual wisdom and with that, buddhahood is a long way off.

This brings the question: who does experience that non-dual wisdom? The answer is that it is seen by the wisdom of a fully characterized noble one and, in accordance with that, by those individualized beings<sup>(29)</sup> whose mindstreams are cleansed with uncommon hearing, contemplating, and meditating.

The latter type falls into two categories as follows. The advocates of lack of essentiality decide, using the five great reasonings of the Middle Way<sup>(30)</sup>, that all phenomena from form up to omniscience are emptiness—that in actuality they are, like the horns of a rabbit and the son of a barren woman, not referenced at all and not existing as anything whatsoever—that shines forth unceasingly in appearances of interdependent origination. Then, at the time of the main part<sup>(31)</sup>, just as both a rubbing stick and its supporting stick are consumed by the fire produced from rubbing them together and finally the fire itself disappears of itself, similarly, when clinging concept has been evaluated by individually discriminating concept<sup>(32)</sup>, the prajñā itself of the individually discriminating concept settles into non-referencing in which there is no mind process<sup>(33)</sup> whatsoever, no involvement in mentation about anything whatsoever<sup>(34)</sup>, but realization of lack of self in a space-like state. If meditation is done like that as a no meditation done in that kind of state, many doors of unified śhamatha-vipaśhyānā type concentration, such as the Jewel Lamp, and so on, will be born. When that happens, if a good introduction using authentic statement and foremost instruction<sup>(35)</sup> is received, then the mistaken graspings will be purified and prajñā will leap up, and there will be a realization of the view of the uncommon Great Middle Way<sup>(36)</sup>.

That being so, when it says in *Volume on Accumulations for Samādhi*<sup>(37)</sup>,

One might have developed an utterly stable samādhi,

But if there is overt clinging happening within it,  
It can only be called “the usual behaviour of children”  
And it will not obtain nirvāṇa ...

it means that the group with the pretentiousness of taking the empty experiences belonging to generic examination and analysis as being the dharmatā<sup>(38)</sup>, the ones who say,

The Great Middle Way is like ours alone; everyone else is mistaken!

are lost regarding the path...<sup>(39)</sup>.

Then, there is a group who, not having liberated self-entity into a state beyond rational mind, enumerate birth and cessation and confuse that with Mahāmudrā; they are lost regarding the character that is definite experience<sup>(40)</sup>.

Both groups are the same in that they have some degree of attribute analysis of names<sup>(41)</sup> but other than that are incapable of lifting themselves up above the three realms. Thus, no-one will disagree that, in terms of passing through the door of all-knowing wisdom, unmistakable authoritative statement, reasoning, and foremost instruction will produce understanding, experience, and realization when rock meets bone, nevertheless, it does require that a view, meditation, and conduct that is superior to all is brought to bear<sup>(42)</sup>.

As for the Yogacharins relying on Maitreya’s dharmas, the ones who have used the textual systems belonging to the middle wheel of the word together with the commentaries on its intent to cut the elaborations of adventitious, confused appearances of dharmas<sup>(43)</sup> as a preliminary are the best ones. People who cannot deal with that degree of elaborateness definitely must study Maitreya’s Five Dharmas or at least the *Highest Continuum* to the point of having certainty in such. For those for whom even that is not possible, then, as has been said<sup>(44)</sup>,

That there is nothing other than mind is known rationally;  
Then from that, mind also is realized to be nonexistent;  
Those with good rational mind will know both as non-existent,<sup>(45)</sup>  
Then one dwells in that without it, the dharmadhātu. <sup>(46)</sup>

That is to say, without beginning, one’s own mind, due to the factor of ignorance, adventitious stains, has had various appearances like dreams’ confusions, coming on its non-examining, non-analyzing face yet, if the appearances are analyzed, because each one, not being established at all, is empty of self-entity, all of them are just mind’s trickery. Thus, the grasped<sup>(47)</sup> appearances that shine forth seemingly as outer objects but which lack any nature and which are like moons in water, are the actuality of fictional truth. They and the grasping mind which also does not reside anywhere outside or inside and does not exist as a thing of shape and colour, together with its parts, the eightfold group<sup>(48)</sup> which arises from the stream of grasping at a self which is the confusion of taking something to exist where there is nothing, are, like a sky-flower, primordially empty. They are primordially empty yet there is the wisdom empty of both the grasped and grasping that pervades everything from buddha through to sentient beings—the dharmatā sugatagarbha<sup>(49)</sup>— which has the nature of



luminosity<sup>(50)</sup>. To correctly recognize that luminosity which has, primordially, never been covered by the adventitious stains, which is the actuality of superfactual truth, then to put yourself in equipoise on its state is the understanding that goes with Maitreya's dharmas. Just that much analysis must be done as a preliminary for the purpose of ascertainment. Freedom from extremes is determined with that and then there is what is called "practising unification" which is to remain in the actuality that is the innate, self-arising wisdom. The style of emptiness here is called "being empty of the concepts that come from grasping at the extremes of elaboration". The style of realization here is called "realization by individual self-knowing wisdom<sup>(51)</sup>".

## **B. How to practise that**

### *i. The preliminaries*

In accordance with the progressive sequence of purification of the gross, subtle, and very subtle stains of the wish-fulfilling-jewel-like sugatagarbha<sup>(52)</sup>, to begin with, you are to meditate on thoughts consistent with the dharma sūtras which correspond to the first wheel. Meditate on this:

It is like this: birth ends in death, coming together ends in separation, accumulation ends in dissipation, rise ends in fall. Every one of these composited harms are even more impermanent than bubbles and lightning. In dependence on the appropriation of karma and affliction<sup>(53)</sup>, I cycle in and outflow<sup>(54)</sup> into the three realms in the five aggregates of form, and so on, and outflow into the three realms, like an insect trapped in a jar. This is unsatisfactory in nature, movement in unsatisfactoriness, and being sealed in unsatisfactoriness. Every fictional phenomenon from form up to omniscience is not truly existent so is empty and the basis for the lack of self of dualistic grasped-grasping which is the emptiness of all phenomena is the great, wholly existent<sup>(55)</sup> nirvāṇa beyond adventitious confusion which is permanent, stable, holy peace.

And while you are doing that, say this over and over:

All composite things are impermanent. Whatever has outflow is unsatisfactory. All phenomena are empty and without self. Nirvāṇa is peace.

To expand it, mix the ordinary preliminaries found in "Stages of the Path" texts<sup>(56)</sup> with your mindstream to the point of having certainty in them.

### *iii. The main part*

#### *a. To make this the path of extraordinary Great Vehicle, first take refuge*

As for mind, its nature is luminosity,

The virtuous sugatagarbha<sup>(57)</sup>.

As for sentient beings' appropriation<sup>(58)</sup>,

The extremes of existence and non-existence are completely abandoned.

Just as by burnishing gold colour

And Sa-le-dram<sup>(59)</sup> and five-metal alloy  
Are seen, likewise  
In the aggregates, sentient beings and persons  
Do not exist and aggregates do not exist but  
Buddha wisdom without outflow,  
Permanent peace is fully meditated on—  
In that I take refuge.<sup>(60)</sup>

Then arouse enlightenment mind:<sup>(61)</sup>

The supreme advocate fully taught  
That mind's nature which is luminosity  
Falls into association with the afflictions of  
Mentation, and so on, and a self.  
In order to dispel them, I will meditate on the supreme path.

Repeat those whilst remembering their meanings.

***b. Setting yourself in equipoise on no-thought freedom from elaboration corresponding to the middle wheel, then crossing over to the profound dharmata***

On a comfortable seat, set your posture according to the usual points of the body<sup>(62)</sup>. Cultivate yearning devotion. If you have previously determined the view by hearing and contemplating, remembering that view, put yourself into equipoise on it. If you do not have the needed hearing and contemplation, determine that this mind of yours has no entity at all— which is lack of self of a person—then decide that every appearing object does not exist other than as an appearing factor of your own mind—which is the lack of self of dharmas—and then also understand that mind and appearances are inseparable in the way that water and waves are not different—which is the equal taste of grasped-grasping. Having aroused that understanding, do not be distracted outside; do not withdraw inside; do not grasp in between; and, not going astray into indeterminate states<sup>(63)</sup> or equanimity<sup>(64)</sup>, rest in an empty way, like space. If your mind does not stay put but starts to have movement, given that whatever appearances of the sixfold group shine forth are empty, if you preserve<sup>(65)</sup> the meditation in self-pacification, self-liberation without engaging at all in acceptance and rejection, hope and fear, suppression and furtherance<sup>(66)</sup>, the signs of an abiding mind will gradually occur. Then, by searching for mind as described in the instruction texts, a decision about the nature being primordially free from elaboration will be produced and, because there is no meditation to be done except only for the recognition of that actuality free from elaboration, you must rely simply on a mind that stays inseparable from it.

That has also been taught as “uncontrived freshness” and as “whatever arises, the innate”. Thus, no matter how your own luminous, empty, free-from-grasping mind shines forth— abiding or moving, happy or sad, and so on—you preserve just that without alteration. Do not bind yourself up in the conceptual efforts that go with having things to be abandoned and antidotes for them! Instead, put yourself in the non-meditation of supportless rigpa<sup>(67)</sup> and through that the finalized śhamatha-vipaśhyānā of the Great Vehicle will happen. While you are involved with such practice, a profound

key point is that, no matter what kind of temporary experiences or qualities of the path might be produced, rather than attaching or clinging to them, they should be self-recognized.

And with your speech, say this whilst remembering the meaning:

The ground is emptiness.

The path is characteristiclessness.

The fruit is wishlessness<sup>(68)</sup>.

***c. When some sort<sup>(69)</sup> of shamatha-vipashyana samadhi has arisen then, corresponding to the final wheel and to Vajra Vehicle, the differentiations of existent and nonexistent are precisely done and there is the introduction<sup>(70)</sup> as follows***

If you have a coarse understanding of the excellent speech<sup>(71)</sup>, texts, and commentaries, just that will suffice, but if not, you should at least receive the reading transmission of *Mountain Dharma: An Ocean of Definitive Meaning*<sup>(72)</sup> and through that develop an understanding of the view as much as you can. That will bring the understanding that, although mind's entity—emptiness having the excellence of all superficialities and the nature luminosity<sup>(73)</sup>, the tathāgatagarbha—is taught under many different names—suchness, emptiness, mahāmudrī, and so on—there is no fault of contradiction in that. That understanding frees you from fault that was expressed in these words:

Everything the Buddha said taught emptiness and lack of self. Foolish ones who do not understand the meaning of emptiness and lack of self will degenerate.

And then, relying on the two truths and four reliances<sup>(74)</sup>, the ultimate definitive meaning sūtras within the conqueror's excellent speech and your own experience of wisdom will meet and your practise of the path will become meaningful.

In that way, all the phenomena belonging to the adventitious, totally imaginary<sup>(75)</sup> mind, are empty like the image of gathered clouds, yet the dharmatā sugatagarbha, an uninterrupted stream of illumination and knowing<sup>(76)</sup> which has been introduced as self-arising wisdom, must be taken into practice. To do so, take refuge and arouse enlightenment mind as described above. Then, as stated in the excellent speech of Jetsun Tāranātha<sup>(77)</sup>, meditate for one session on the recollection that the guru is buddha and at the end say:

The tathāgata is un-showable;

It cannot be looked at with the eye.

The dharma is in-expressible;

It cannot be listened to with the ear.

The saṅgha is un-compounded;

It cannot be honoured with body or speech or mind.

and,

Buddha nature is un-compounded thus is called “permanent”. What is called “space” is buddha nature. Buddha nature is the tathāgata. The tathāgata is un-compounded.

Un-compounded is permanent. Permanent is the dharma. The dharma is the saṅgha.

The saṅgha is uncompounded. Uncompounded is permanent.

Saying that over and over, recollect that the superfactual Three Jewels are permanent.

Then, as it says in the *Descent Into Laṅka*:

When Mind Only has been taken as the reliance,  
There is no consideration of objects being external.  
Through relying on there being no appearances,  
Mind Only will be passed beyond.  
Through relying on a reference of the authentic<sup>(78)</sup>,  
There being no appearances will be passed beyond.  
If the yogin remains in there being no appearances,  
The Great Vehicle will not be seen.

This is saying that the realization of fictional confusion being Mind Only, the absence of appearances, must be torn down by the Middle Way and then, having passed beyond it, the non-mistaken way of suchness must be entered using the Middle Way which does have appearances with it<sup>(79)</sup>.

What is “reference of the authentic” mentioned there? The answer is, “Just as none of the four elements are not pervaded by space, there is no knowable not pervaded by a buddha’s dharmakāya. And, in the suchness of the buddha and oneself and all sentient beings, while there are none of the distinctions of good and bad, big and small, high and low, and so on, there is the ability to generate the buddha dharmas. It has time of being without beginning. That naturally present family or element<sup>(80)</sup> is obtained because the dharmatā exists in all migrators—the beings who have the breath of life—so every sentient being is one who has tathāgatagarbha”<sup>(81)</sup>. In order to make that clear, say this,

Because the complete buddha’s kāya radiates, and  
Because tathātā is undifferentiable, and  
Because they have the family, all bodied ones  
Always have the buddha garbha.

Then say this, while contemplating the meaning,<sup>(82)</sup>

The pure ones’ dharmakāya, the impure-and-pure ones’ suchness, and the impure ones’ family<sup>(83)</sup>—this way is how they have them.

Just as there is a buddha in a bad lotus, honey in a honey bee,  
Seed in a husk, gold inside impurity,  
Treasure in earth, bamboo and so on in small seeds,  
A king’s body inside tattered clothing,  
A leader of humans in a bad woman’s belly,  
And forms of jewels in the ground, likewise,  
In sentient beings obscured by the stains of  
Adventitious afflictions, this element is present.

Karma and cause and effect; full-ripening and afflictions; skandhas, dhātus, āyatanas, and interdependent origination; and so forth—everything having the aspect of complete separability has not only never existed in superfact but also is seated, without causing contamination of that, in whatever has the fictional. And the self-arisen major and minor marks, the strengths, the fearlessnesses, the four close applications of mindfulnesses, love and great compassion, the Vajra-Like and other samādhis, the immeasurable wisdoms of the dharmadhātu, and so on<sup>(84)</sup>, that is, the buddha dharmas having the aspect of being completely without separability, more in number than the grains of sand in the Ganges, are primordially inherently present, and therefore not empty. That is made clear with<sup>(85)</sup>,

Through trust in the basis as something that could be separable from the stains  
And able to give rise to the good qualities,  
The element is empty of the adventitious,  
That which has the characteristic of being completely separable,  
But is not empty of the unsurpassed dharmas,  
That which has the characteristic of being completely inseparable.

In luminosity what there is is what has not been made  
Which is not separable; it possesses all  
The buddha dharmas which exceed  
The sands of the River Ganges.

Furthermore, the śhrāvakas, pratyekas, and so on, viewing bliss as unsatisfactoriness, permanent as impermanent, self as lack of self, and clean as unclean, do not understand the meaning to be known from the words spoken by the conqueror. The meaning involved with those items is thus. Lack of self is to be called “saṃsāra”. What is called “self” is the tathāgata. What is impermanent is the śhrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. What is permanent is the tathāgata’s dharmakāya. Unsatisfactoriness is everything of the Tīrthikas. Bliss is total nirvāṇa. What is wholly impure is compounded phenomena. What is wholly pure is the buddhas and bodhisatvas’ dharma of the authentic; your own mindness<sup>(86)</sup>, sugatagarbha which is the four dharmas of the authentic that is beyond any mistake. Thinking, “I possess this” make the matter clear with this:

That, because its nature is pure and  
Because the latencies<sup>(87)</sup> have been abandoned, is clean.  
Pure of the elaborations of self and no self  
It is the holy self of utter peace.

Because mentation’s nature, the aggregates and  
Their cause, are reversed, it is bliss itself.  
Because saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are  
Realized as equality<sup>(88)</sup>, it is permanence.

The basis for such attributes, the sugatagarbha, together with the many good qualities that are the attributes connected with a buddha, is here and now the self-knowing wisdom whose luminosity is un-stopped<sup>(89)</sup>, the innate, co-emergence. This wisdom which is to be experienced through the three

of hearing, contemplating, and meditating is seated within you as the basis of purification. When what is to be purified out, the adventitious stains, have been removed, the result of purification is that the actuality that is seated in you will have become manifest. Having become manifest, it is given the name, “dharmakāya free from stains”. At that point, all the superficialities of the whole of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa shine forth but, having merely shone forth, there is no wavering from the ground and they appear as a variety of superficialities which are the reflections of this stainless crystal ball. They appear but this mere appearance is just like that of a crystal ball where the crystal and its reflections remain unmixed. Like that, when self-knowing luminosity-emptiness is nakedly exposed, no matter which way the appearances of the three of saṃsāra, nirvāṇa, or the path shine forth, they self-shine-forth-selfliberate, their entity never being cloaked, so there are no latencies of view and wrong-doing to be cleared away whatsoever and there is no need to add any new attributes whatsoever which previously were not present. Do the main part, which is equipoise in that wisdom-emptiness of the noble ones, meditating in as many sessions as you prefer, and sometimes refresh your understanding using these vajra words,

In this there is nothing whatsoever to be cleared away.  
There is not the slightest addition to be done.  
The authentic looks at the authentic;  
If the authentic is seen that is complete liberation.<sup>(90)</sup>

Say that or contemplate the meaning.

These were also made into an instruction of the profound key point by eminent Tāranātha:

When both meditation on the nature, sugatagarbha, and  
Contemplation on the attributes, the conqueror’s good qualities,  
Are brought together by mind freed from discursive thought,  
That is the supreme path of definitive meaning sugatagarbha.

Also, he<sup>(91)</sup> made the point,

At the end of staying in that sort of equipoise,  
As it was before, so it is afterwards;  
Such is the unchanging dharmatā.

In other words, when the sugatagarbha which is primordially inherently present in you—the nature luminosity—has had the adventitious stains on it overcome by the view and meditation of the authentic, one’s own face has become manifest, so it is given the name of the fruition, “manifest complete enlightenment”. To generate a confidence which trusts in the causal path having that fruition:

That which is expressed with “the nature, luminosity” and which has, like the sun and the sky, become obscured by the adventitious obscurations of thick masses of clouds of the afflictions and knowables<sup>(92)</sup> possesses all the good qualities of stainless buddhahood and is permanent, stable, svastika<sup>(93)</sup>, buddha itself; it is obtained not through conceiving of dharmas but through discriminating them with wisdom.<sup>(94)</sup>

Without beginning, middle, or end and completely without separability,  
Non-dual, free from the three, stainless, and without discursive thought,  
What is the dharmadhātu nature residing permanently  
Is seen by the equipoised yogin.<sup>(95)</sup>

Having generated certainty, arise from the equipoise.

### *iii. Post attainment*

When you engage in activities between sessions, have dharmakāya devotion to the guru<sup>(96)</sup> who so nicely gives you the core foremost instructions. And have universal sacred outlook that comes from knowing that, because all sentient beings have tathāgatagarbha, even though temporarily they might or might not recognize it, ultimately they do possess the sixty-four ultimate good qualities. And have unbearable compassion for the entirety of these beings who have not realized such, not one of whom has not been your parent, and who, because of being forced to wander in an endless chain of confused appearances, circle around in only the cycle of unsatisfactoriness. And accordingly, in order that all sentient beings obtain the fruition of what resides in each of them as their own ground of manifest dharmakāya and through having the Great Vehicle aspiring and entering arousings of the enlightenment mind: abandon oneself and other with their associated non-virtues by realizing that primordially they are emptiness; accomplish whatever virtue you can through generosity, and so forth that are taken into the pāramitās done without pride and pretentiousness; and, with the approach of not clinging to oneself and sentient beings, do practices that benefit sentient beings both directly and indirectly in any way you can; know that all the phenomena of outer and inner interdependency belonging to the totally imaginary<sup>(97)</sup> appear but are empty of true entity like dreams and illusions.

Especially, when merit has not been accumulated, many disadvantages, such as wrong views, and so on, arise, and it was taught that to produce the realization of the view of the authentic, accumulation of the accumulations is necessary. Therefore: dedicate the generally useful merit gained from having parted from bad deeds and embraced the Great Vehicle arousing of the mind on up through that gained from prostrating, circumambulating, making satstsha<sup>(98)</sup>, and offering lamps, to the cause of seeing the tathāgatagarbha; and through a mind of trust in the permanent Three Jewels, generally do activities to please them such as making representations, making offerings, giving praise, and so on, and especially, offer the seven limbs without thinking of the count but doing them as much as you can.

Sometimes receive the reading transmission of the twenty heart of definitive meaning sūtras and recite them, contemplate their meaning, and explain them to others. Also, gain an understanding of the valid commentaries on the intent—the *Highest Continuum*, *Mountain Dharma: An Ocean of Definitive Meaning*, and so on. Do not let hearing and contemplating take you away from meditation and do not let meditation overwhelm hearing and contemplating, rather, unify the accumulation of wisdom which is equipoise done in order to manifest the naturally present family and the accumulation of merit which is post-attainment done in order to develop further the family to be increased<sup>(99)</sup>.

Even though you might have produced the prajñā that unmistakably realizes the profound's actuality a little, given that equipoise is much more effective than inconceivable amounts of compounded virtue, you should make equipoise the main thing. If, when you have produced some sort of concentration,

hearing and contemplation of the completely pure, excellent speech of a buddha is done, the long-term possibilities for the aims of others increases more than one hundred or one thousand times and bit by bit you should develop it so that it becomes unceasing.

All activities should be embraced by the two types of enlightenment mind without separation from mindfulness and alertness.

When it is time for death, it will be necessary to have the practice of something like All-Knowing Dolpopa's very special Foremost Instruction on Transference, with its way of entering luminosity which is consciousness's basis, so you should familiarize yourself with it from now on. Then, when the time comes, the yogin's rigpa will absorb into emptiness having-the-excellence-of-all-superficies luminosity whereby the primordially resident dharmakāya will be released from its sheath of adventitious stains. It is a space-like vastness which embodies a perfection of all that is measureless, unassessable, which is the maker of the good qualities of the utterly amazing and wonderful kāyas and wisdoms<sup>(100)</sup>, and it becomes the place, like a tree of wish-fulfilling jewels, of fulfilment of sentient beings' every desire. For as long as saṃsāra lasts, this maker which is permanent, pervasive, and spontaneously existing will continuously arise.

In order to accomplish it quickly, make the general Great Vehicle dedications and aspirations, *Samantabhadra's Conduct*<sup>(101)</sup>, and so on and, as well as that, in between sessions make this supplication:

From buddha comes dharma, from dharma comes the saṅgha assembly,  
From the assembly the garbha wisdom element is obtained and finally  
The wisdom is attained with the dharmas of supreme enlightenment, and so on;  
For performing the aim of sentient beings, may I possess those dharmas.

May I quickly attain the sixty-four good qualities  
Of the fully ripened and freed  
Superfactual and fictional kāyas that depend on it  
Which are the benefit for oneself and others.

When we go to the object and time of  
The element of those to be tamed, the methods for taming,  
And the action of taming the element of those to be tamed,  
May we enter pervasive, permanent, spontaneous existence.

By the virtue I obtain from hearing, contemplating, and meditating on the seven  
topics<sup>(102)</sup>  
The three jewels, total purity, the element, stainless, enlightenment, qualities, and  
activities—  
May this migrator see the master of limitless light, the ṛiṣhi Amitayus  
And having seen him may the stainless dharma eye be born and so supreme  
enlightenment be obtained.

Prayers without fear or hope and dedications in no-thought of the three spheres<sup>(103)</sup> should be made



extensively.

## 2. Practising that View in Connection with Mantra

There are two parts to this.

### A. Tantra to be intellectually understood

These appearances of an outer world with its containers and contents of the three becomings<sup>(104)</sup> are, similar to the images that appear on the surface of a mirror, the illusory displays of inner channels, winds, and drops and, as well, the three are present as the superficialities of the supreme other maṇḍala's sphere together with support and supported<sup>(105)</sup>. All of that also is suchness sugatagarbha's self-light, self-lustre, dharmakāya itself, supreme unchanging wisdom shining forth as all superficialities, which was taught in the tantric sense as super-factual dharmadhātu, unified bliss and emptiness, whose nature is unchanging yet uninterrupted. That, at the time of the ground when it is suchness with stains, is called "cause tantra"; at time of the path it is dharmatā's meaning gradually becoming visible, so it is called "the path, method tantra"; and when it has been manifested possessing the two purities<sup>(106)</sup>, it is called "highest level of complete purity fruition tantra". This uncommon view is not even partially seen by the ones who hold the mode "emptiness of the fictional" to be supreme, something that seems barely worth a mention<sup>(107)</sup>.

The path of the sūtra system explained earlier stands on its own feet but takes a very long time. If the equipoise of the six vajra yogas<sup>(108)</sup>, which are especially distinguished compared with the mantra paths as a whole which themselves are special because of empowerment and samaya, is done, realization will easily come in a short time and with little hardship.

### B. The main part, practice

As it says in the *Great Commentary*,

Just as fire is always present in wood but  
Is not seen by the methods of cutting and dissecting  
Yet by rubbing stick and support stick being rubbed by hand  
What exists there also becomes seen,  
So mind's luminosity is not seen by  
Purification with conceptual methods of meditation,  
Instead the purity alone contained in it is joined  
With in one taste making it visible.

The meaning there is that the nature luminosity, supreme unchanging wisdom, which is present there in terms of entity as emptiness having the excellence of all superficialities and in terms of nature as the supreme, unchanging great bliss, is not seen by any of the various meditations that have concept with them. It will, by no-thought concentrations and special methods that bind it, be seen like the forms seen in a divination mirror<sup>(109)</sup>. To begin with, the intentionally driven<sup>(110)</sup> yogas that rely on withdrawing into freshness and absorption bring sight of the signs of smoke, mirages, space-like

appearances, and butter lamps. Then the yoga of the cloudless daytime sky takes as its object blazing, moon, sun, vajra rāhula, and the supreme portion up to lightning and bindus. Those ten signs of completely perfected empty forms are made into the object then, by staying equipoised day and night, you gain the experience of the emptiness of every superfice shining forth as something having the entirety of superficies of the three realms. Then, by relying on the details of prāṇa and holding of it, melting-bliss is brought on. Recollection and concentration accomplish the ultimate one, the supreme unchanging bliss, and the wind of the latencies of shift is stopped which forces an end to fictional truth's confused appearances. Then, the appearances without anything holding them back are ignited without limit or restriction. That is the pure self gone to the other shore of bliss and permanence, the dharmakāya freed of stains, the pervasive original buddha primordially residing in oneself made manifest. During that time on the path completely pure friends, samayas, and conduct are necessary; the way to do that has been taught by the dharma lord, and father and sons following him. And then, having understood what is to be done in accordance with the guru's foremost instructions, you must go and meditate one-pointedly.

### 3. An Explanation of its Benefits

At the end of this age of strife the five dregs<sup>(111)</sup> start up causing the twenty-eight dregs of view<sup>(112)</sup> to arise. Because sentient beings' merit is small, the heart of definitive meaning sūtras is not respected and, rather than meditating on the meanings taught in them, people become lazy. Not only that but one faction, due to the cause of their having wrong views that has come from not trusting in the heart meaning sūtra section, has fallen into the great abyss of bad migrations, which has been taught as “the severing the life-line of emancipation”<sup>(113)</sup>.

The reverse of all that is the beneficial side. It is taught in the *Highest Continuum* that the benefits of hearing this profound dharma are greater than especially good generosity, discipline, and absorption that result from practise during many aeons. And, generally, there are the benefits of having oriented yourself towards the Great Vehicle; as it says in a sutra,

Someone who develops a very strong intention towards the Great Vehicle will not go to bad migrations for one thousand aeons. For five thousand aeons, he will not be born as an animal or preta. For twenty-five thousand aeons, he will be born in the god worlds and the Brahmā worlds.

And the *Mother*<sup>(114)</sup> says,

Someone who hears the Prajñāpāramitā goes at death and transference to a buddha-field and while alive approaches and honours every sentient being with all enjoyable items. Compared to someone who listens to Prajñāpāramitā for an aeon of time, the merit of someone who meditates on it for a period as short as a finger-snap is greater.

Especially<sup>(115)</sup>, the *Unravelling the Intent Stra* says,

For the atoms in a fingernail and the water in an ox's hoof-print, if the atoms of a great land or the waters of four oceans were made known, they would not be a hundredth, a thousandth, or one hundred thousandth of them and the matter could not be expressed with example or cause<sup>(116)</sup>.

Similarly, if you explained what the merit is that accrues from meditation done based on having an intention towards the sūtras of provisional meaning, you would not be able to come up with a factor, example, or cause that showed how small it was compared to the merit accrued from having an intention towards and meditating on the definitive sūtra section.

Furthermore, a sūtra says,

My nirvāṇa is not from the outside,  
It is something from within.  
In sentient beings of every type  
There is the sugatagarbha.  
If they are capable of making a completely pure intention,  
They will be sustained by the buddha's kindness.

The *Āṅgulimāla* says,

The exposing of tathāgatagarbha can be done by anyone, whether he be with affliction or without affliction; whoever succeeds is known as a “complete buddha”.

And,

By the cause which is knowing that permanent tathāgatagarbha exists in every sentient being, one obtains all supreme types of bliss and everything that is perfect in the world. By hearing of permanent tathāgatagarbha, one permanently obtains everything that is perfect in the three times and every happiness of the higher levels and abodes above the land.

And,

By the cause of the merit of hearing of tathāgatagarbha, there is lack of illness, lack of harm, long life, and joy for every sentient being. The tathāgata is permanent, stable, svastika, and enduring; by hearing of parinirvāṇa or deathlessness, everything is received and for a long time one becomes firm and steady.

And, the *Mahānirvāṇa* says,

Those sentient beings who teach “The tathāgatagarbha exists in all sentient beings” possess unfathomable qualities. Son of the family who wishes for the holy dharma, those who have done countless evil deeds will be cured of brain disease, contagion, pain, and denigration.

And,

If there is trust that the tathāgata has the item of permanence, that person becomes extremely rare, like the Uḍumbara flower. After my nirvāṇa, if someone hears this extremely profound sūtra section of the Great Vehicle, then arouses the mind of faith, it should be known that he will, in future times, for one hundred thousand kalpas not fall into bad migrations.

And,

Sons of the family and daughters of the family who have made efforts at understanding with the thought, “The tathāgata is permanent. The holy dharma does not subside. The saṅgha will not become non-existent” will like me see the abode of a buddha.

And,

For example, when the sun dawns, the south becomes free of bustle<sup>(117)</sup> and similarly, merely hearing this heart of the sūtras will quickly cleanse the mass of defeat by other and the immediate evil deeds<sup>(118)</sup>. Competition with an opponent and being forced to do another’s bidding or profit and esteem could also be put there instead. Even for a person who, because of thinking “I don’t need enlightenment” does not arouse the mind will, merely by hearing this heart of the sūtras, have the cause of enlightenment enter all of the hair-pores of his body like dust-motes in spring-time sun. And if he aroused the enlightenment mind with previous buddhas as many as the sands of a single Ganges

River, in bad times he would not denigrate this dharma and would develop an intention for it. And if he aroused the mind of enlightenment with buddhas as many as the sands of eight Ganges Rivers, in bad times he would uphold, read, and recite this sūtra, and would have others wrap it in a cover, and would encourage others to uphold it and read it, and would also be able to expose the meaning ...

And so on; it has been taught extensively. In brief, the advice given by All-Knowing Dolpopa should be held as the quintessence:

If buddhahood is obtained just from hearing sugatagarbha's name, what need to mention faith and respect for it, and meditation to manifest it? Therefore, the experts who have compassion should teach it even at the cost of giving up their own lives, and so on. And those who seek emancipation should seek it and prostrate to and listen to it, even if it comes from a great pit of fire.



The lineage is as follows: Down to All-Knowing Tāranātha it is as given in the Other Emptiness lineage supplication. After that, it went from that Jetsun to his regent snar thang ba, to blo gros rnam rgyal, ngag dbang phrin las, kun bzang dbang po, tshe dbang nor bu, bstan pa'i nyin byed, bdud 'dul rdo rje, and to byams mgon dzogs pa'i sangs rgyas padma nyin byed dbang po. I went before the last one mentioned, who used an "instructions for practising the view" text of the thirteenth lord to provide me with instruction. In his presence, there was a good stream of blessings, the ripening and liberating instructions of the *Kālachakra* were provided, and now there is another complete purity as part of the lineage<sup>(119)</sup>.

The excellent speech concerning the profound view  
Is indeed definitive meaning yet few realized it.  
The regent Maitreya was commanded to make  
An unconfused explanation in the *Great Vehicle Highest Continuum*.

Vajra yoga is its ultimate practice  
But meditation on it is rare<sup>(120)</sup>.  
Trust in the king of tantras  
Does not cause lesser ones to salivate<sup>(121)</sup>.

The Samantabhadra conduct<sup>(122)</sup> has small hindrances and  
The ground covered is great but to do it properly is difficult.  
Still, the forefather's life stories are witnessed and,  
In order to do the cleansing oneself, good instructions are sought.

If view, meditation, and conduct are completely pure,  
The aims of both oneself and others will be quickly accomplished.  
This, which has been written here, is asserted by the experts, it is not my own

invention;

It is the vital sap of the intent of the Buddha word and treatises on it.

By this virtue may I and all sentient beings  
Abandon the five great bad actions and  
Obtain the five great qualities, and then  
Manifest the superfactual dharmadhātu!

*This was written at the great dharma institution of glorious Dzam Thang<sup>(123)</sup> by Yontan Gyatso<sup>(124)</sup>, an idle monk<sup>(125)</sup> who gained faith after understanding the empty basis, sugatagarbha, in accordance with the way it was asserted by the holder of the glorious Jonang teaching named Learned and Accomplished Ngawang. In all my lives may I have the good fortune of hearing, contemplating, and meditating on the teaching of heart definitive meaning.*





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# Glossary

**Actuality**, Tib. gnas lugs: A key term in both sūtra and tantra and one of a pair of terms, the other being apparent reality (Tib. snang lugs). The two terms are used when determining the reality of a situation. The actuality of any given situation is how (lugs) the situation actuality sits or is present (gnas); the apparent reality is how any given situation appears to an observer. Something could appear in many different ways, depending on the circumstances at the time and on the being perceiving it but, regardless of those circumstances, it will always have its own actuality, how it really is. This term is frequently used in view teachings to mean the fundamental reality of any given phenomenon or situation before any deluded mind alters it and makes it appear differently.

**Adventitious**, Tib. glo bur: This term has the connotations of popping up on the surface of something and of not being part of that thing. Therefore, even though it is often translated as “sudden”, that only conveys half of the meaning. In Buddhist literature, something adventitious comes up as a surface event and disappears again precisely because it is not actually part of the thing on whose surface it appeared. It is frequently used in relation to the afflictions because they pop up on the surface of the mind of buddha nature but are not part of the buddha nature itself, which is one of the key points of Other Emptiness theory.

**Affliction**, Skt. kleśha, Tib. nyon mongs: This term is usually translated as emotion or disturbing emotion, etcetera but Buddha was very specific about the meaning of this word. When the Buddha referred to the emotions, meaning a movement of mind, he did not refer to them as such but called them “kleśha” in Sanskrit, meaning exactly “affliction”. It is a basic part of the Buddhist teaching that emotions afflict beings, giving them problems at the time and causing more problems in the future.

**Alaya**, Tib. kun gzhi: This term, if translated, is usually translated as all-base or thereabouts. It is a Sanskrit term that means a range that underlies and forms a basis for something else. In Buddhist teaching, it means a particular level of mind that sits beneath all other levels of mind. However, it is used in several different ways in the Buddhist teaching and changes to a different meaning in each case.

**Alertness**, Tib. shes bzhin: Alertness is a specific mental event that occurs in dualistic mind. It and another mental event, mindfulness, are the two functions of mind that must be developed in order to develop śhamatha or one-pointedness of mind. In that context, mindfulness is what remembers the object of the concentration and holds the mind to it while alertness is the mind watching the situation to ensure that the mindfulness is not lost. If distraction does occur, alertness will know it and will inform the mind to re-establish mindfulness again.

**All-Knowing**, Tib. kun mkhyen: Every century in Tibet, there were just a few people who seemed to know everything, they were given the title “All-Knowing”. Note that “All-Knowing” does not mean “omniscient one” even though it is, unfortunately, often translated that way.

**Appropriation**, Skt. upadāna, Tib. nye bar len pa. “Appropriation” is the name of the ninth of the twelve links of interdependent origination. It is the crucial point in the process at which a karma that has been previously planted is selected and activated as the karma that will propel the being of the time into its next existence. In other words, it is the key point in a being’s existence when the next type of existence is selected.

**Authentic statement**, Skt. agama, Tib. lung. Although often translated as “scripture”, authentic statement means statement made by someone who has the true knowledge needed to make fully reliable statements about a subject. It is often used to indicate dharma taught by the Buddha or his disciples which is authoritative because of its source. It is also used in the pair “authoritative statement and realization” which, the Buddha explained, summed up the ways of transmitting his realization.

**Becoming**, Skt. bhāvana, Tib. srid pa: Becoming refers to the style of existence that sentient beings have within samsara. Beings in samsara have a samsaric existence but, more than that, they are constantly in a state of becoming. They are constantly becoming this type of being or that type of being in this abode or that, as they are driven along without choice by the karmic process that drives samsaric existence.

**Bodhisatva**, Tib. byang chub sems dpa’: A bodhisatva is a person who has engendered the bodhichitta, enlightenment mind, and, with that as a basis, has undertaken the path to the enlightenment of a truly complete buddha specifically for the welfare of other beings. Note that, despite the common appearance of “bodhisattva” in Western books on Buddhism, the Tibetan tradition has steadfastly maintained since the time of the earliest translations that the correct spelling is bodhisatva.

**Clinging**, Tib. zhen pa: In Buddhism, this term refers specifically to the twofold process of dualistic mind mis-taking things that are not true, not pure, as true, pure, etcetera and then, because of seeing them as highly desirable even though they are not, attaching itself to or clinging to those things. This type of clinging acts as a kind of glue that keeps you with the unsatisfactory things of cyclic existence because of mistakenly seeing them as desirable.

**Complete purity**, rnam dag: This term refers to the quality of a buddha’s mind, which is completely pure compared to a sentient being’s mind. The mind of a being in samsara has its primordially pure nature covered over by the muck of dualistic mind. If the being practises correctly, the impurity can be removed and mind can be returned to its original state of complete purity.

**Confusion**, Tib. ’khrul pa: In Buddhism, this term mostly refers to the fundamental confusion of taking things the wrong way that happens because of fundamental ignorance though it can also have the more general meaning of having lots of thoughts and being confused about it. In the first case, it is defined like this, “Confusion is the appearance to rational mind of something being present when it is not”, and refers for example to seeing an object, such as a table, as being truly present when in fact it is present only as mere, interdependent appearance.

**Cyclic existence**, Skt. saṃsāra, Tib. ’khor ba: The type of existence that sentient beings have which is that they continue on from one existence to another, always within the enclosure of births that are produced by ignorance and experienced as unsatisfactory. Although the Tibetan term

literally means “cycling”, the original Sanskrit has a slightly different meaning; it means to go about, here and there.

**Dharmakaya**, Skt. dharmakāya, Tib. chos sku: In general, this refers to the mind of a buddha, with dharma meaning reality and kāya meaning body. However, the term has special significance in the practice of Great Completion where it is the means by which one rapidly imposes liberation on oneself.

**Dharmata**, Skt. dharmatā, Tib. chos nyid: This is a general term meaning the way that something is, and can be applied to anything at all; it is similar in meaning to “actuality” *q.v.* For example, the dharmatā of water is wetness and the dharmatā of the becoming bardo is a place where beings are in a samsaric, or becoming mode, prior to entering a nature bardo. It is used frequently in Tibetan Buddhism to mean “the dharmatā of reality” but that is a specific case of the much larger meaning of the term. To read texts which use this term successfully, one has to understand that the term has a general meaning and then see how that applies in context.

**Dharmin**, Tib. chos can: Generally speaking a dharmin is a conceived-of phenomenon, so by implication belongs to the world of saṃsāra. It is not only a phenomenon in general, a dharma, but has become a conceptualized phenomenon because of the samsaric context. Padma Karpo defines it as “awareness possessing a phenomenon” which puts the emphasis on the samsaric awareness knowing the phenomenon.

**Discursive thought**, Skt. vikalpita, Tib. rnam rtog: This means more than just the superficial thought that is heard as a voice in the head. It includes the entirety of conceptual process that arises due to mind contacting any object of any of the senses. The Sanskrit and Tibetan literally mean “(dualistic) thought (that arises from the mind wandering among the) various (superficies perceived in the doors of the senses)”.

**Elaboration**, Tib. spro ba: a general name for what is given off by dualistic mind as it goes about its conceptual process. In general, elaborations prevent a person from seeing emptiness directly. Freedom from elaborations implies direct sight of emptiness.

**Emptiness having the excellence of all superficialities**, Tib. rnam kun mchog ldan gyi stong pa nyid: This term is taught in the *Kālachakra Tantra* to emphasize the fact that emptiness is always unified with appearance. The tantra teaches, in conjunction with this term, that emptiness always has the excellence of all superficialities, that is, always has the fullness of appearance with it. The name is employed in philosophical writings to imply that emptiness is never the bare kind of emptiness that can come from mistakenly understanding the Prajñāpāramitā teachings on emptiness.

The term is usually mistakenly translated as “emptiness endowed with the supreme of all aspects” because of mistaking the Tibetan term “mchog” to mean the buddha qualities. However, the translation as given is the correct understanding of the term, an understanding which is standard throughout Tibetan literature. Furthermore, grammatically speaking, this is emptiness which is not “endowed with” anything but simply “has” or “possesses” something

**Enlightenment mind**, Skt. bodhicitta, Tib. byang chub sems: A key term of the Great Vehicle. It is

the type of mind that is connected not with the lesser enlightenment of an arhat but the enlightenment of a truly complete buddha. As such, it is a mind that is connected with the aim of bringing all sentient beings to that same level of buddhahood. A person who has this mind has entered the Great Vehicle and is either a bodhisatva or a buddha.

It is important to understand that the term is used to refer equally to the minds of all levels of bodhisatva on the path to buddhahood and to the mind of a buddha who has completed the path. Therefore, it is not “mind striving for enlightenment” as is so often translated, but “enlightenment mind”, that kind of mind which is connected with the full enlightenment of a truly complete buddha and which is present in all those who belong to the Great Vehicle. The term is used in the conventional Great Vehicle and also in the Vajra Vehicle. In the Vajra Vehicle, there are some special uses of the term where substances of the pure aspect of the subtle physical body are understood to be manifestations of enlightenment mind.

**Entity**, Tib. ngo bo: The entity of something is just exactly what that thing is. In English we would often simply say “thing” rather than entity but there is the problem that, in Buddhism, “thing” has a very specific meaning and not the general meaning that it has in English.

**Equipoise and post-attainment**, Tib. mnyam bzhag and rjes thob: Although often called “meditation and post-meditation”, the actual term is “equipoise and post-attainment”. There is great meaning in the actual wording which is lost by the looser translation.

**Fictional**, Skt. saṃvṛti, Tib. kun rdzob: This term is paired with the term “superfactual” *q. v.* Until now these two terms have been translated as “relative” and “absolute” but the translations are nothing like the original terms. These terms are extremely important in the Buddhist teaching so it is very important that they be corrected but more than that, if the actual meaning of these terms is not presented, then the teaching connected with them cannot be understood.

The Sanskrit term saṃvṛti means a deliberate invention, a fiction, a hoax. It refers to the mind of ignorance which, because of being obscured and so not seeing suchness, is not true but a fiction. The things that appear to the ignorance are therefore fictional. Nonetheless, the beings who live in this ignorance believe that the things that appear to them through the filter of ignorance are true, are real. Therefore, these beings live in fictional truth.

**Fictional truth**, Skt. saṃvṛtisatya, Tib. kun rdzob bden pa: See under “Fictional” for an explanation of this term.

**Field**, Field realm, Tib. zhing, zhing khams: This term is often translated “buddha field” though there is no “buddha” in the term. There are many different types of “fields” both in saṃsāra and in nirvāṇa. Thus there are fields that belong to enlightenment and ones that belong to ignorance. Moreover, just as there are “realms” of saṃsāra—desire, form, and formless—so there are realms of nirvāṇa—the fields dharmakāya, saṃbhogakāya, and nirmāṇakāya and these are therefore called “field realms”.

**Foremost instruction**, Skt. upadeśha, Tib. man ngag: there are several types of instruction mentioned in Buddhist literature: there is the general level of instruction which is the meaning contained in the words of the texts of the tradition; on a more personal and direct level there is oral

instruction which has been passed down from teacher to student from the time of the buddha; and on the most profound level there is upadeśha which are not only oral instructions provided by one's guru but are special, core instructions that come out of personal experience and which convey the teaching concisely and with the full weight of personal experience. Upadeśha are crucial to the Other Emptiness and Vajra Vehicle systems because these are the special way of passing on the profound instructions needed for the disciple's realization.

**Great Vehicle**, Skt. mahāyāna, Tib. theg pa chen po: The Buddha's teachings as a whole can be summed up into three vehicles where a vehicle is defined as that which can carry you to a certain destination. The first vehicle, called the Lesser Vehicle, contains the teachings designed to get an individual moving on the spiritual path through showing the unsatisfactory state of cyclic existence and an emancipation from that. However, that path is only concerned with personal emancipation and fails to take account of all of the beings that there are in existence. There used to be eighteen schools of Lesser Vehicle in India but the only one surviving these days is the Theravada of south-east Asia. The Greater Vehicle is a step up from that. The Buddha explained that it was great in comparison to the Lesser Vehicle for seven reasons. The first of those is that it is concerned with attaining the truly complete enlightenment of a truly complete buddha for the sake of every sentient being where the Lesser Vehicle is concerned only with a personal liberation that is not truly complete enlightenment and which is achieved only for the sake of that practitioner. The Great Vehicle has two divisions. There is a conventional Great Vehicle in which the path is taught in a logical, conventional way. There is also an unconventional Great Vehicle in which the path is taught in an unconventional and very direct way. This latter vehicle is called the Vajra Vehicle because it takes the innermost, indestructible (vajra) fact of reality of one's own mind as the vehicle to enlightenment.

**Ground**, Tib. gzhi: This is the first member of the formulation of ground, path, and fruition. Ground, path, and fruition is the way that the teachings of the path of oral instruction are presented to students. Ground refers to the basic situation as it is.

**Intent**, Tib. dgongs pa: The honorific term for the way that something is understood or for a mind that has a certain understanding.

**Introduction and To Introduce**, Tib. ngos sprad and ngos sprod pa respectively: This pair of terms is usually translated in the U. S. A. these days as "pointing out" and "to point out" but this is a mistake that has, unfortunately, become entrenched. The terms are the standard terms used in day to day life for the situation in which one person introduces another person to someone or something. They are the exact same words as our English "introduction" and "to introduce".

In the Vajra Vehicle, these terms are specifically used for the situation in which one person introduces another person to the nature of his own mind. Now there is a term in Tibetan for "pointing out" but that term is never used for this purpose because in this case no-one points out anything. Rather, a person is introduced by another person to a part of himself that he has forgotten about.



**Kagyū**, Tib. bka' brgyud: There are four main schools of Buddhism in Tibet—Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug. Nyingma is the oldest school dating from about 800 C.E. Kagyu and Sakya both appeared in the 12<sup>th</sup> century C. E. Each of these three schools came directly from India. The Gelug school came later and did not come directly from India but came from the other three. The Nyingma school holds the tantric teachings called Great Completion (Dzogchen); the other three schools hold the tantric teachings called Mahāmudrā.

**Kayas and wisdoms**, Tib. sku dang ye shes: Enlightened being might be empty of samsaric phenomena but it does have enlightened content. “Kāyas and wisdoms” or “bodies and wisdoms” is a stock phrase used to indicate either the content of enlightenment or to imply that it does have content.

**Latency**, Skt. vāsanā, Tib. bag chags: The original Sanskrit has the meaning exactly of “latency”. The Tibetan term translates that inexactly with “something sitting there (Tib. chags) within the environment of mind (Tib. bag)”. Although it has become popular to translate this term into English with “habitual pattern”, that is not its meaning. The term refers to a karmic seed that has been imprinted on the mindstream and is present there as a latency, ready and waiting to come into manifestation.

**Lesser Vehicle**, Skt. hīnayāna, Tib. theg pa dman pa: See under Great Vehicle.

**Luminosity**, Skt. prabhāsvara, Tib. 'od gsal ba: the core of mind, called mind's essence, has two aspects, parts, or factors as they are called. One is emptiness and the other is knowing. Luminosity is a metaphor for the fundamental knowing quality of the essence of mind. It is sometimes translated as “clear light” but that is a mistake that comes from not understanding how the words of the Sanskrit and the Tibetan, too, go together. It does not refer to a light that has the quality of clearness (something that makes no sense, actually!) but refers to the illuminative property which is the hallmark of mind. Mind knows, that is what it does. Metaphorically, it is a luminosity that illuminates its own content. In both Sanskrit and Tibetan Buddhist literature, the term is frequently abbreviated just to gsal ba, “clarity”, with the same meaning.

**Mind**, Skt. chitta, Tib. sems: the complicated process of mind which occurs because there is ignorance. This sort of mind is a samsaric phenomenon. It is a dualistic mind

**Mindness**, Skt. chittatā, Tib. sems nyid. Mindness is a specific term of the tantras. It is one of many terms meaning the essence of mind or the nature of mind. It conveys the sense of “what mind is at its very core”. It has sometimes been translated as “mind itself” but that is a misunderstanding of the Tibetan word “nyid”. The term does not mean “that thing mind” where mind refers to dualistic mind. Rather, it means the very core of dualistic mind, what mind is at root, without all of the dualistic baggage.

Mindness is a path term. It refers to exactly the same thing as “actuality” or “actuality of mind” which is a ground term but does so from the practitioner's perspective. It conveys the sense to a practitioner that he might still have baggage of dualistic mind that has not been purified yet but there is a core to that mind that he can work with.

**Noble one**, Skt. ārya, Tib. 'phags pa: In Buddhism, a noble one is a being who has become spiritually advanced to the point that he has passed beyond cyclic existence. According to the Buddha, the beings in cyclic existence were ordinary beings, spiritual commoners, and the beings who had passed beyond it were special, the nobility.

**Non-regressing**, Tib. phyir mi ldogs pa: This is a standard term used to describe the ultimate teachings on emptiness of the third turning of the wheel of dharma, called Other Emptiness. When a person has heard and comprehended these teachings, he immediately understands that all other teachings of the second and third turnings of the wheel are not ultimate and assumes the position that he will never turn back from these teachings and regress to taking one of the lesser views as ultimate.

**Outflow**, Skt. saśrava, Tib. zag pa: Outflows occur when wisdom loses its footing and falls into the elaborations of dualistic mind. Therefore, anything with duality also has outflows. This is sometimes translated as “defiled” or “conditioned” but these fail to capture the meaning. The idea is that wisdom can remain self-contained in its own unique sphere but, when it loses its ability to stay within itself, it starts to have leakages into dualism that are defilements on the wisdom. See also un-outflowed.

**Post-attainment**, Tib. rjes thob: See under equipoise and post-attainment.

**Prajna**, Skt. prajñā, Tib. shes rab: A Sanskrit term for the type of mind that makes good and precise distinctions between this and that and hence which arrives at correct understanding. It has been translated as “wisdom” but that is not correct because it is, generally speaking, a mental event belonging to dualistic mind where “wisdom” is used to refer to the non-dualistic knower of a buddha. Moreover, the main feature of prajñā is its ability to distinguish correctly between one thing and another and hence to arrive at a correct understanding.

**Preserve**, Tib. skyong ba: In general, this term means to defend, protect, nurture, maintain. In explanations of meditation, it means to keep something just as it is, to nurture that something so that it stays and is not lost.

**Provisional and definitive meaning**, Skt. neyārtha and nitartha, Tib. drangs don and nges don: This is a pair of terms used to distinguish which is an ultimate or final teaching and which is not. A teaching which guides a student along to a certain understanding where the understanding led to is not an ultimate understanding is called “provisional meaning”. The teaching is not false even though it does not show the final meaning; it is a technique of skilful means used to lead a student in steps to the final meaning. A teaching which shows a student the final meaning directly is called “definitive meaning”. The understanding presented cannot be refined or shown in a more precise way; it is the final and actual understanding to be understood. These terms are most often used in Buddhism when discussing the status of the three turnings of the wheel of dharma.

**Rational mind**, Tib. blo: The Kagyu, Nyingma, and Jonang traditions use this term pejoratively for the most part, using it to mean dualistic mind. It is the villain, so to speak, which needs to be removed from the equation in order to obtain enlightenment. This term is commonly translated simply as mind but that causes confusion with the many other words that are also translated

simply as mind. It is not just another mind but is specifically the sort of mind that creates the situation of this and that (ratio in Latin) and hence upholds the duality of saṃsāra. It is the very opposite of the essence of mind. Thus, this is a key term which should be noted and not just glossed over as “mind”.

**Rigpa**, Tib. rig pa: Rigpa literally means to know in the sense of “I see!” It is used at all levels of meaning from the coarsest everyday sense of knowing something to the deepest sense of knowing something as presented in the teachings on wisdom. To translate it as “awareness” which is common practice these days is a poor practice; there are many kinds of awareness but there is only one rigpa and besides, rigpa is substantially more than just awareness. Since this is such an important term and since it lacks an equivalent in English, I choose not to translate it. However, it will be helpful in reading the text to understanding the meaning as just given.

This is the term used to indicate enlightened mind as experienced by the practitioner on the path of these practices. The term itself specifically refers to the dynamic knowing quality of mind. It absolutely does not mean a simple registering, as implied by the word “awareness” which unfortunately is often used to translate this term. There is no word in English that exactly matches it, though the idea of “seeing” or “insight on the spot” is very close. Proof of this is found in the fact that the original Sanskrit term “vidyā” is actually the root of all words in English that start with “vid” and mean “to see”, for example, “video”, “vision”, and so on. Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, who was particular skilled at getting Tibetan words into English, also stated that this term rigpa really did not have a good equivalent in English, though he thought that “insight” was the closest. My own conclusion after hearing extensive teaching on it is that rigpa is just best left untranslated.

**Shamatha**, Skt. śhamatha, Tib. gzhi gnas: The name of one of the two main practices of meditation used in the Buddhist system to gain insight into reality. This practice creates a foundation of one-pointedness of mind which can then be used to focus the insight of the other practice, vipaśhyānā. If the development of śhamatha is taken through to completion, the result is a mind that sits stably on its object without any effort and a body which is filled with ease. Altogether, this result of the practice is called “the creation of workability of body and mind”.

**State**, Tib. ngang: A state is a certain, ongoing situation. In Buddhist meditation in general, there are various states that a practitioner has to enter and remain in as part of developing the meditation.

**Sugatagarbha**, Tib. bde war gshegs pa'i snying po: A Sanskrit term literally meaning “the birthplace of those who go to bliss” and used as a name for the buddha nature. The buddha nature is the potential that we all have which allows us to go to the state of enlightenment, the blissful state beyond all the unsatisfactoriness of normal existence. Sugatagarbha has the same basic meaning as tathāgatagarbha though its use indicates a more practical way of talking whereas tathagātagarbha is more theoretical. A discussion which uses the term sugatagarbha is one that is talking about the practical realities of an essence that can be or is being developed into enlightened being.

**Superfactual**, Skt. paramārtha, Tib. don dam: This term is paired with the term “fictional” *q. v.* Until now these two terms have been translated as “relative” and “absolute” but those translations are nothing like the original terms. These terms are extremely important in the Buddhist teaching so it is very important that their translations be corrected but, more than that, if the actual meaning of these terms is not presented, the teaching connected with them cannot be understood.

The Sanskrit term parāmartha literally means “a superior or holy kind of fact” and refers to the wisdom mind possessed by those who have developed themselves spiritually to the point of having transcended saṃsāra. That wisdom is *superior* to an ordinary, un-developed person’s consciousness and the *facts* that appear on its surface are superior compared to the facts that appear on the ordinary person’s consciousness. Therefore, it is superfact or the holy fact, more literally. What this wisdom sees is true for the beings who have it, therefore what the wisdom sees is superfactual truth.

**Superfactual truth**, Skt. paramārthasatya, Tib. don dam bden pa: See under “Superfactual” for an explanation of this term.

**Superfice**, superficialities, Tib. rnam pa: in discussions of mind, a distinction is made between the entity of mind which is a mere knower and the superficial things that appear on its surface and which are known by it. In other words, the superficialities are the various things which pass over the surface of mind but which are not mind. Superficialities are all the specifics that constitute appearance, for example, the colour white within a moment of visual consciousness, the sound heard within an ear consciousness, and so on.

**Suppression and furtherance**, Tib. dgag sgrub: Suppression and furtherance is the term used to express the way that dualistic mind approaches the path to enlightenment. In that case, some states of mind are regarded as ones to be discarded, so the practitioner takes the approach of attempting to suppress or stop them, and some are regarded as ones to be developed, so the practitioner takes the approach of trying to go further with and develop them. These two poles represent the way that dualistic mind always works with itself.&

**Tathagatagarbha**, Skt. tathāgatagarbha, Tib. de bzhin gshegs pa’i snying po: See under sugatagarbha.

**Temporary experience**, Tib. nyams: The practice of meditation brings with it various experiences that happen simply because of the meditation. These experiences are temporary experiences and not the final, unchanging experience, of realization.

**The nature**, Tib. rang bzhin: The nature is one of the three characteristics—entity, nature, and un-stopped compassionate activity—of the core of mind. Using this term emphasizes that the empty entity does have a nature. In other words, its use explicitly shows that the core of mind is not merely empty. If you ask “Well, what is that nature like”? The answer is that it is luminosity, it is wisdom.

**Unaltered or uncontrived**, Tib. ma bcos pa: The opposite of “altered” and “contrived”. Something which has not been altered from its native state; something which has been left just as it is.

**Un-outflowed**, Skt. anāśrāva, Tib. zag pa med pa: See also “outflowed”. Un-outflowed dharmas are ones that are connected with wisdom that has not lost its footing and leaked out into a defiled state; it is self-contained wisdom without any taint of dualistic mind and its apparatus.

**Un-stopped**, Tib. ma ’gags pa: An important path term in the teaching of both Mahāmudrā and Great Completion. The essence of mind has two parts: emptiness and luminosity. Both of these must come unified. However, when a practitioner does the practice, he will fall into one extreme or the other and that is called “stoppage”. The aim of the practice is to get to the stage in which there is both emptiness and luminosity together. In that case, there is no stoppage of falling into one extreme or the other. Thus non-stopped luminosity is a term that indicates that there is the luminosity with all of its appearance yet that luminosity, for the practitioner, is not mistaken, is not stopped off. Stopped luminosity is an experience like luminosity but in which the appearances have, at least to some extent, not been mixed with emptiness.

**Upadesha**, Tib. man ngag: See the glossary entry “Foremost Instruction”.

**Vajra Vehicle**, Skt. vajrayāna, Tib. rdo rje’i theg pa: See under “Great Vehicle”.

**View, meditation, and conduct**, Tib. lta sgom spyod: A formulation of the teachings that contains all of the meaning of the path.

**Vipashyana**, Tib. lhag mthong: The Sanskrit name for one of the two main practices of meditation needed in the Buddhist system for gaining insight into reality. The other one, shamatha, keeps the mind focussed while this one, vipaśhyānā, looks piercingly into the nature of things.

**Wisdom**, Skt. jñāna, Tib. ye shes: This is a fruition term that refers to the kind of mind, the kind of knower possessed by a buddha. Sentient beings do have this kind of knower but it is covered over by a very complex apparatus for knowing, dualistic mind. If they practise the path to buddhahood, they will leave behind their obscuration and return to having this kind of knower.

The original Sanskrit term has the sense of knowing in the most simple and immediate way. This sort of knowing is present at the core of every being’s mind. Therefore, the Tibetans called it “the particular type of awareness which is there primordially”. Because of their wording, it is often called “primordial wisdom” in English translations but that is too much. It is just wisdom in the sense of the most fundamental knowing possible.



# About Padma Karpo Translation Committee, The Author Tony Duff, And Supports for Study

I have been encouraged over the years by all of my teachers to pass on the knowledge I have accumulated in a lifetime dedicated to study and practice, primarily in the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism. On the one hand, they have encouraged me to teach. On the other, they are concerned that, while many general books on Buddhism have been and are being published, there are few books that present the actual texts of the tradition. Therefore they, together with a number of major figures in the Buddhist book publishing world, have also encouraged me to translate and publish high quality translations of individual texts of the tradition.

My teachers always remark with great appreciation on the extraordinary amount of teaching that I have heard in this life. It allows for highly informed, accurate translations of a sort not usually seen. Briefly, I spent the 1970's studying, practising, then teaching the Gelugpa system at Chenrezig Institute, Australia, where I was a founding member and also the first Australian to be ordained as a monk in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. In 1980, I moved to the United States to study at the feet of the Vidyadhara Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. I stayed in his Vajradhatu community, now called Shambhala, where I studied and practised all the Karma Kagyu, Nyingma, and Shambhala teachings being presented there and was a senior member of the Nalanda Translation Committee. After the vidyadhara's nirvana, I moved in 1992 to Nepal, where I have been continuously involved with the study, practise, translation, and teaching of the Kagyu system and especially of the Nyingma system of Great Completion. In recent years, I have spent extended times in Tibet with the greatest living Tibetan masters of Great Completion, receiving very pure transmissions of the ultimate levels of this teaching directly in Tibetan and practising them there in retreat. In that way, I have studied and practised extensively not in one Tibetan tradition as is usually done, but in three of the four Tibetan traditions—Gelug, Kagyu, and Nyingma—and also in the Theravada tradition, too.

With that as a basis, I have taken a comprehensive and long term approach to the work of translation. For any language, one first must have the lettering needed to write the language. Therefore, as a member of the Nalanda Translation Committee, I spent some years in the 1980's making Tibetan word-processing software and high-quality Tibetan fonts. After that, reliable lexical works are needed. Therefore, during the 1990's I spent some years writing the *Illuminator Tibetan-English Dictionary* and a set of treatises on Tibetan grammar, preparing a variety of key Tibetan reference works needed for the study and translation of Tibetan Buddhist texts, and giving our Tibetan software the tools needed to translate and research Tibetan texts. During this time, I also translated full-time for various Tibetan gurus and ran the Drukpa Kagyu Heritage Project—at the time the largest project in Asia for the preservation of Tibetan Buddhist texts. With the dictionaries, grammar texts, and specialized software in place, and a wealth of knowledge, I turned my attention in the year 2000 to the translation and publication of important texts of Tibetan Buddhist literature.

Padma Karpo Translation Committee (PKTC) was set up to provide a home for the translation and publication work. The committee focusses on producing books containing the best of Tibetan literature, and, especially, books that meet the needs of practitioners. At the time of writing, PKTC has published a wide range of books that, collectively, make a complete program of study for those practising Tibetan Buddhism, and especially for those interested in the higher tantras. All in all, you will find many books both free and for sale on the PKTC web-site. Most are available both as paper editions and e-books.

It would take up too much space here to present an extensive guide to our books and how they can be used as the basis for a study program. However, a guide of that sort is available on the PKTC web-site, whose address is on the copyright page of this book and we recommend that you read it to see how this book fits into the overall scheme of PKTC publications. In short, given that this book is about Other Emptiness, other books of interest would be:

1. *The Noble One Called “Point of Passage Wisdom”, A Great Vehicle Sutra*, the root sūtra of the twenty sūtras of Other Emptiness of the third turning of the wheel;
2. *Other Emptiness, A Complete Explanation of the Zhantong System*, a major and exceptionally complete exposition of Other Emptiness with many Tibetan texts and teachings included;
3. *The Theory and Practice Of Other Emptiness Taught Through Milarepa’s Songs*, explanations of Other Emptiness based on two songs of Milarepa—*Authentic Expression of the View of the Middle Way* and *Ultimate View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition* showing both the view and meditation of Other Emptiness;
4. *The Lion’s Roar that Proclaims Zhantong*, a text by Ju Mipham which shows the view of Other Emptiness then goes through arguments raised by Tsongkhapa’s followers against the Other Emptiness system;
5. *Maitripa’s Writings on the View*, a selection of important texts written by the Indian master Maitrīpa showing his understanding of the Other Emptiness approach;
6. *A Juggernaut of the Non-Dual View, Ultimate Teachings of the Second Drukchen, Gyalwang Je*, a set of sixty-six teachings on the non-dual view of the tantras which shows clearly the Other Emptiness view of the Kagyus.

These texts on Kagyu Mahāmudrā indirectly show the meaning of Other Emptiness given that Other Emptiness is the view underlying Kagyu Mahāmudrā:

1. *Drukchen Padma Karpo’s Collected Works on Mahamudra*
2. *Dusum Khyenpa’s Songs and Teachings*
3. *Gampopa’s Mahamudra, The Five-Part Mahamudra of the Kagyus*

We make a point of including, where possible, the relevant Tibetan texts in Tibetan script in our books. We also make them available in electronic editions that can be downloaded free from our web-site, as discussed below. The Tibetan texts for this book are included at the back of the book and are available for download from the PKTC web-site.



# Electronic Resources

PKTC has developed a complete range of electronic tools to facilitate the study and translation of Tibetan texts. For many years now, this software has been a prime resource for Tibetan Buddhist centres throughout the world, including in Tibet itself. It is available through the PKTC web-site.

The wordprocessor TibetDoc has the only complete set of tools for creating, correcting, and formatting Tibetan text according to the norms of the Tibetan language. It can also be used to make texts with mixed Tibetan and English or other languages. Extremely high quality Tibetan fonts, based on the forms of Tibetan calligraphy learned from old masters from pre-Communist Chinese Tibet, are also available. Because of their excellence, these typefaces have achieved a legendary status amongst Tibetans.

TibetDoc is used to prepare electronic editions of Tibetan texts in the PKTC text input office in Asia. Tibetan texts are often corrupt so the input texts are carefully corrected prior to distribution. After that, they are made available through the PKTC web-site. These electronic texts are not careless productions like so many of the Tibetan texts found on the web, but are highly reliable editions useful to non-scholars and scholars alike. Some of the larger collections of these texts are for purchase, but most are available for free download.

The electronic texts can be read, searched, and even made into an electronic library using either TibetDoc or our other software, TibetD Reader. Like TibetDoc, TibetD Reader is advanced software with many capabilities made specifically to meet the needs of reading and researching Tibetan texts. PKTC software is for purchase but we make a free version of TibetD Reader available for free download on the PKTC web-site.

A key feature of TibetDoc and Tibet Reader is that Tibetan terms in texts can be looked up on the spot using PKTC's electronic dictionaries. PKTC also has several electronic dictionaries—some Tibetan-Tibetan and some Tibetan-English—and a number of other reference works. The *Illuminator Tibetan-English Dictionary* is renowned for its completeness and accuracy.

This combination of software, texts, reference works, and dictionaries that work together seamlessly has become famous over the years. It has been the basis of many, large publishing projects within the Tibetan Buddhist community around the world for over thirty years and is popular amongst all those needing to work with Tibetan language or deepen their understanding of Buddhism through Tibetan texts.



# Tibetan Text

Where possible, we include the Tibetan text of the translated materials in all of our books. Unfortunately, at the time of writing Amazon's Kindle devices do not support Tibetan, even though they supports most other languages. If this changes, we will add Tibetan text to our Kindle books.



# Notes

1. Tib. gzhan stong. It has become popular in the West to transliterate the Tibetan letter "zha" with "sha" but this is mistaken. There is another Tibetan letter zha, which is pronounced in exactly the same way as is the English "sha", with the tongue almost touching the upper palate; it is correct to transliterate and pronounce this letter as "sha". The letter 5- is pronounced with the tongue moved down to the floor of the mouth, resulting in a sound similar to some European letters which are transliterated as "zha". It is correct to transliterate and pronounce this letter as "zha"; transliterating it as "sha" both indicates an incorrect spelling and leads to an incorrect pronunciation. Thus, the word here should be written "zhantong" and pronounced similarly; writing and pronouncing it as "shantong" as is commonly done is a mistake.
2. See the Supports for Study chapter for a complete listing of our resources for studying Other Emptiness.
3. To be published shortly by Padma Karpo Translation Committee.
4. For provisional and definitive meaning, see the glossary.
5. Tony Duff, published by Padma Karpo Translation Committee, 2011, ISBN: 978-9937-572-10-1.
6. By Tony Duff Published by Padma Karpo Translation Committee, first edition, January 2010, ISBN: 978-99378244-6-0.
7. "Same type of thing" is the meaning of the Sanskrit term "gotra", which is one of the names given to this core of mind.
8. Published by Padma Karpo Translation Committee in *A Juggernaut of the Non-Dual View, Ultimate Teachings of the Second Drukchen, Gyalwang Je* by Tony Duff, 2011, ISBN: 978-9937-572-07-1.
9. By Tony Duff, published by Padma Karpo Translation Committee, second edition published January 2010, ISBN: 938-9937-9031-7-2.
10. These are listed in *Other Emptiness, a Complete Exposition of the Zhantong System*. They are also listed in the Padma Karpo Translation Committee's publication *The Noble One Called "Point of Passage Wisdom", A Great Vehicle Sutra* which is a particularly important publication because it contains a translation of the root sūtra of all the twenty sūtras. Readers will find the sūtra and the extensive introduction to it to be another, very useful support for understanding Other Emptiness.
11. "Ultimate" refers to that dharma which is the final or highest teaching of the Buddha. For non-regressing, see the glossary.
12. ... in meaning ...

13. The object outside the reach of concept is wisdom, which is the final teaching of the Buddha and the aim of Other Emptiness practice.
14. This is a sūtra of the third turning which is frequently used as a scriptural support for the Other Emptiness view.
15. Not everyone agrees that the division of the turnings of the wheel into provisional and definitive meaning which the author has just given is correct. Therefore, he gives the two main kinds of validation (Skt. *pramāṇa*) which show it to be correct: authentic statement and direct perception. For the first, there are a number of third turning sūtras in which the conqueror and his sons state that this is the intended meaning—it is hard to think of condemning that, because it is authoritative statement of the Buddha and his bodhisattva sons. Secondly, in practice, the profound meaning does become increasingly clear to a person in the sequence shown until finally the whole meaning is understood in direct perception, which is regarded as the best kind of validation.
16. For fictional and superfactual, see the glossary. Fictional and superfactual here are defined as appearance and emptiness respectively. There are other ways to define them which are important to the Other Emptiness view; for an explanation of this point see *The Lion's Roar that Proclaims Zhantong*.
17. Śhāntipa refers to Śhāntirakṣita who came to Tibet in Padmasambhava's time, one of the great exponents of the Yogachara Middle Way view and a mainstay of what became called in Tibet, the Zhantong view. The others refers to the others of the time in India, such as Maitrīpa, who held the same view.
18. "Middle and final wheels" are the names commonly used in Buddhist literature to refer to the second and third turnings, respectively, of the wheel of dharma.
19. Nāgārjuna championed teachings which emphasized the second turning of the wheel as ultimate and Asaṅga championed ones which emphasized the third turning as ultimate. Their teachings developed into the two main systems of teaching on emptiness that came into Tibet.
20. "Fathers and sons" means the gurus and disciples of a lineage, so here it is the gurus and disciples of Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga.
21. The *Illuminator Tibetan-English Dictionary* gives: "The two, translators Zu and Tsan, were individuals of the late 10<sup>th</sup> and early 11<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E. who became important figures in the lineage of the profound meaning teachings coming from Maitreya and Asaṅga. Zu was a student of Maitrīpa who stayed with him for many years and heard all of his teachings on Maitreya's texts. Tsan was a Chinese Buddhist who came down to India shortly before his death looking for a special teaching. Tsan, with Zu as the translator, requested Maitrīpa for a special teaching on the *Highest Continuum* and was favoured with an inner teaching which Maitreya gave to no one else. This inner teaching became part of the lineage of the Zhantong teachings and Zu-Tsan are regarded as the lineage holders of that teaching following Maitrīpa.
22. The mid-1800's. After this, the writer Jamgon Kongtrul, and his subsequent incarnations became mainstays of the system and their followers such as Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso in recent times, likewise.

23. “The Seventh Lord” is Karmapa Chodrag Gyatso, who explained the Zhantong system in his *Ocean of Texts on Reasoning and Pramāṇa* as follows. Regarding the self-empty system, the view of the middle turning, it is said that, if it is first realized that all appearing phenomena are lacking existence by way of self entity, which is a coarse approach using the coarse phenomena of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches that is easy for a beginner, then from that coarse determination one can enter what is more subtle, mind’s actuality. Then, in the other-empty system, the root of all phenomena is mind, so if the actuality of mind is determined principally in relation to mind, then, having already understood the emptiness of coarse phenomena—that sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches are not truly existent—which is easy to realize, the actuality itself becomes expanse-knowing (expanse-rigpa) inseparable in the entity of the actuality.
24. Tenpay Nyinje is the eighth Situ.
25. The outstanding exponents of this system have been: the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje; Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltzen one of the heads of the Jonang school; and the great Nyingma master All-Knowing Longchen Rabjam Drimey Ozer. There have also been a number of other great masters—the seventh Karmapa, Zilung Pañchen, Tāranātha of the Jonang school, and the eighth Situ Panchen Tenpa’i Nyinje—who were noble beings with the validating eye of direct perception of wisdom whose works were in favour of this system.
26. All history aside, anyone who practises the Buddha’s teaching and arrives at a correct view of reality will arrive at the view of this system—there is simply no other possibility. Saying so is not polemic; when everything is understood, this is the ultimate teaching of the sūtras.
27. Marpa Lotsawa, Tibetan founder of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition called the Kagyu.
28. What is grasped is the external objects of a dualistic consciousness—see grasped-grasping in the glossary.
29. Individualized beings are the ordinary beings of samsara; they have cut themselves off into an individualized existence.
30. These are those who advocate the second turning of the wheel with its emphasis on negation of dharmas as the place where the Buddha taught the ultimate teaching of emptiness. They use the reasonings: 1) The Vajra Slivers; 2) Existence and Non-existence in Production and Cessation; 3) Four limits of production and cessation; 4) Great Dependent Relationship; 5) Freeing From One and Many.
31. The previous sentence shows the view with two aspects—emptiness and appearance—arrived at intellectually through contemplation. This sentence shows the actual view which one settles into during the actual practice of meditation.
32. This is also known as individually discriminating prajñā but the point is being made that, even though it is correctly operating mind, it is still dualistic mind.
33. See the note on “mind” in the glossary.
34. Skt. manaskara, Tib. yid la mi byed pa. Mentation is an important term in discussions of

meditation on emptiness. It could mean that there is no mentation but in this case it means that the whole process of mind is gone and therefore there is none of the usual activity in which mentation itself is actively stirred up.

35. For foremost instruction, see the glossary.

36. The previous sentences concerned the understanding and meditation on emptiness of the second turning of the wheel. Once that has been realized, a practitioner can continue on to gain realization of the emptiness taught in the third turning of the wheel. This view is not developed with intellectual process as is the case with the previous step, but is communicated directly using authentic statement and foremost oral instruction as the means of giving an introduction to the realization in direct perception. This use of introduction based on foremost instruction is usually considered to be a feature only of the Vajra Vehicle. It shows that the instructions for the Other Emptiness practice are a secret type of instruction which corresponds to the innermost teachings of the Vajra Vehicle.

37. By the Indian master āchārya Bodhibhadra, this text explains what must be brought together (the meaning of accumulations in the title) in order to develop a good one-pointedness of mind.

38. For dharmatā see the glossary.

39. What has just been described is how it actually is. Still, and as it says in the quotation given, it is possible to be mistaken over this. The followers of the Gelugpa school historically have made exactly that mistake. They were renowned for their insistence on the use of intellect, with its two generic mental events called examination (Tib. rtog pa) and analysis (Tib. dpyod pa), to find emptiness and then their insistence that the very subtle concept of emptiness achieved through that was the dharmatā that is, reality seen in direct perception. They were very conceited about their approach and were known for proclaiming that they were the only ones in Tibet who understood emptiness as taught by the Buddha. They were regarded by others, such as the Kagyu, Nyingmas, and Jonangs, as having lost the true path of the Middle Way.

40. Now the author moves on to people who are following the tantric path. They have the instructions on Mahāmudrā practice but do not know how to liberate according to the instructions. Therefore, they find themselves in a meditative state in which concepts, with their attendant birth and cessation, are still being used. They believe this to be Mah udr but in fact it has not transcended samsara; it is still a conceptually enumerated understanding of the dharmatā.

41. “Attribute analysis” is one of a pair of terms used to specify the type of mind doing an analysis. Attribute analysis is done using the names or labels which are conceptual constructs, so never exceeds the scope of rational mind. Therefore, even those both of these groups definitely have analysis for emptiness in their meditation, it is a conceptual type and they never get to liberation because of it. The other type of analysis, called “overall analysis”, refers to direct knowledge through wisdom.

42. Everyone will agree that correct instructions for practice are needed and that they will produce wisdom when applied. However, to get to the all-knowing wisdom of a buddha, the instruction must be the one above all others which is consistent with actual exit from samsaric existence.

43. For dharmin, see the glossary. Essentially it means having a mind which has conceived of



phenomena dharmas).

44. ... in the *Descent into Lañka Stra* ...

45. This is equivalent to knowing non-duality intellectually.

46. Finally, without any of that dualistic, rational-minded knowledge, one dwells in direct perception of reality.

47. For grasped and grasping as used here, see grasped-grasping in the glossary.

48. The eightfold group is the set of eight consciousnesses had by humans.

49. Sugatagarbha is another name for tathāgatagarbha. However, where the latter is a very philosophical term, the former is a very practical term which implies the actual attainment of buddhahood. The Other Emptiness teaching mainly speak of sugatagarbha because of emphasising that one really could achieve buddhahood by practising this view. Adding “dharmatā” to indicates that it is the wisdom mind seeing reality.

50. For luminosity, see the glossary.

51. There are individually discriminating prajñā, which is what is used to see emptiness in the approach of the second turning of the wheel, and there is individual self-knowing wisdom, which is what is used to see the actual dharmatā of reality in the approach of the third turning of the wheel. The two are not the same. The word individually in the first means one by one—each phenomenon known individually by prajñā. The word individual in the second means that every being does possess self-knowing wisdom.

52. This is the progression taught in the *Highest Continuum*.

53. For appropriation, see the glossary. Appropriation happens based primarily on karma and affliction which in turn happen based on ignorance of reality as it is.

54. Samsaric beings do not stay within the sphere of their own complete purity, wisdom, but have corrupt discharges of ignorance which keep them cycling in the sphere of cyclic existence. See the un-out flowed in the glossary for more on outflow.

55. “Great” is the term generally used in these sort of discussions to indicate the real version of something as opposed to a mental image of the same. “Wholly existent” is the third of the three characters of Mind Only presentations. It has been translated as “thoroughly established” but Mind Only presentations make it clear that the meaning is not reality that has been thoroughly established through philosophical reasoning but reality which is wholly existent because it is the super-factual truth and not fictional in any way.

56. “Stages of the Path” is a genre of Tibetan literature that arose from At ha’s seminal work called *Lamp of the Path to Enlightenment*. The ordinary preliminaries in them are the four contemplations of Precious Human Birth, Impermanence and Death, Karmic Cause and Effect, and Disadvantages of Cyclic Existence.

57. “Virtuous sugatagarbha” is the original dharma term which Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche famously translated as “basic goodness”. It means the actual sugatagarbha which in itself never falls into samsaric afflictions and therefore could always be said to be virtuous. Of course, at the superfactual level, sugatagarbha is beyond being virtuous and non-virtuous.
58. For appropriation, see the glossary.
59. “Sa-le-dram” is a name from Ancient India for particularly pure gold.
60. Mind’s nature is luminosity and the karmas and afflictions that drive the process of sentient beings taking on samsaric birth are not present within it at all. When this is cleaned by removing the superficial stains, then, just like polishing the surface dross off gold, and so on, the underlying condition, which is that the skandhas are empty of self but more than that, that there is wisdom present, is what is meditated on. I take refuge in that. The last section of verse, beginning with “Just as by polishing ...” is from the *Highest Continuum*.
61. For enlightenment mind, see the glossary.
62. Take up the posture of the Seven Dharmas of Vairochana.
63. Tib. lung ma bstan. Indeterminate states are various blank states that can occur and which do not lead to liberation.
64. Equanimity here means to be in a state of absorption on nothing in particular, in which you feel good in a mindless kind of way. It is a serious mistake of meditation.
65. “To preserve” means to hold or keep or maintain the meditation.
66. For suppression and furtherance, see the glossary.
67. For rigpa, see the glossary.
68. These are the three doors of emancipation taught by the Buddha in the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*.
69. ... good, poor, excellent, etcetera ....
70. “Introduction” means introduction to the nature of mind; see the glossary.
71. The “excellent speech” is the words of the Buddha as written down in the Buddhist canon.
72. This is the name of one of the most important texts by Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen on Other Emptiness. It is called “Mountain Dharma” meaning that it is meant for people who are going to live in a remote place and practise.
73. For “emptiness having the excellence of all superficialities” and “the nature”, see the glossary.
74. The four reliances were taught by the Buddha in the *Kalama Sūtra* as the way to determine which is the correct meaning of anything, including his own dharma, that one has heard: “To rely on the dharma (thing) being presented rather than the fame of the individual presenting it; to rely on the meaning in it rather than the words of it; to rely on the definitive meaning rather than the provisional

meaning; and rely on wisdom rather than consciousness in order to ascertain the correct meaning of what was being taught.”

75. “Totally imaginary” is the name of the first of the three characters of the Mind Only system. It indicates that such things are only products of the conceptual mind.

76. “Luminous knowing” is a term used in Mind Only to indicate the ultimate truth, which is a mind freed of the totally imaginary and other-controlled fictional truths. It emphasizes that there is an ultimate mind.

77. Tāranātha was a throne holder of the Jonang school who came after Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen. Like Dolpopa, he was very learned and wrote extensively in support of the Other Emptiness of the Jonang.

78. Now, instead of taking as the reference point for practice something which is close to reality but not quite it, one moves to taking a reference point of the authentic itself and goes on from there. The Middle Way references the authentic—which is a name for reality. In short, this is saying that what is authentic requires both emptiness and appearance, and the Mind Only system does not have the appearance part, so it has to be left behind to reach the Middle Way.

79. ... as opposed to the Middle Way which does not have appearances with it, which would be the mistaken understanding of the Middle Way as known by those who insist on a negated emptiness of the second turning.

80. Family is Skt. gotra, Tib. rigs. Element is Skt. dhātu, Tib. khams. These are key terms in tathāgatagarbha explanations.

81. The answer here consists of a paraphrase of the meaning found in the *Descent Into Lañka*. To clarify it, the relevant verse from the *Highest Continuum* is given next. The verse is famous for its setting out of the three reasons for the existence of tathāgatagarbha in all beings.

82. This next piece consists of a section of prose and a section of verse. The prose shows how the *Highest Continuum* states that there are three levels of beings and that each has the tathāgatagarbha in a certain way. The verse is taken directly from the first chapter of the *Highest Continuum*.

83. Family here has the same meaning as given in a note above.

84. “And so on” mean “and the other wisdoms apart from dharmadhātu”.

85. Again, he has paraphrased the meaning in the *Highest Continuum* and now provides the actual quotation, which is again from the first chapter.

86. For mindness, see the glossary.

87. For latency, see the glossary.

88. For un-stopped, see the glossary.

89. Found in the fifth samaya of the *Ornament of Manifest Realizations*, the first of *Maitreya’s Five*

- Dharmas*. There is a similar construction in the first chapter of the *Highest Continuum*. “The authentic looks at the authentic” is saying that the observer of reality has to be the same as the reality being observed; it is the authentic in each case.
90. ... the Jonang master who taught the author ...
91. That, is, the two obscurations, the obscurations of the afflictions and the obscurations to the knowable.
92. “Svastika” means steady goodness.
93. *Highest Continuum* chapter 2, the Chapter on Enlightenment.
94. *Ibid*.
95. “Dharmakāya devotion to the guru” in which one regards the guru as a fully enlightened buddha is regarded the most important of several types of devotion.
96. “The total imaginary” is the first of the three characteristics of the Mind Only school.
97. This is the Sanskrit word for baked clay images of some religious motif made to gain merit.
98. The “naturally present family” is one of the two types of tathāgatagarbha. It refers to the one that is naturally present in all beings. The “family to be increased” is the other type. It refers to the one that has to be developed.
99. For kāyas and wisdoms, see the glossary.
100. The famous Great Vehicle prayer composed by the bodhisatva Samantabhadra, *The Noble One Excellent Conduct, King of Prayers*.
101. These are the seven vajra topics which comprise the *Highest Continuum*.
102. No thought of the three spheres means not to conceptualize the doer, doing, and object of the action; they are to be kept empty while the dedication is done.
103. For becoming, see the glossary. The three becomings are the three realms of samsara. Containers are the places and contents are the sentient beings inhabiting those places.
104. “Supreme other maṇḍala” is terminology of the *Kālachakra Tantra*. Not only are the appearances of the three realms a magical display that comes from channels, winds, and drops, but they are also the entire maṇḍala of Kālachakra with all of the environment (support) and the inhabitants (supported) of the maṇḍala. This maṇḍala is based in superfact which is called “supreme other Kālachakra”.
105. The two purities are the complete purity of the dharmakāya and of the rūpakāyas. To have the two purities is to have perfect buddhahood because of being free of all samsaric aspects.
106. This is a criticism of those who insist on the lesser understanding of self-emptiness and who refuse to see that other emptiness is the actual fact of dharmatā. Other emptiness is a profound,

uncommon view.

107. This is a criticism of those who insist on the lesser understanding of self-emptiness and who refuse to see that other emptiness is the actual fact of dharmatā. Other emptiness is a profound, uncommon view.

108. The six vajra yogas are the six approaches to completion stage contained in Kālachakra practice.

109. A divination mirror is a mirror in which images appear according to the divination being made. It is equivalent to the crystal ball of a European psychic.

110. “Intentionally driven” refers to the level of a yogin who has not yet reached the path of seeing and therefore is still working towards that with dualistic mind.

111. In ancient Indian cosmology, there are four ages of the current human era. The fourth age is the very end, and is an age in which there is strife only. That final age is marked by having qualities which are the mere dregs of the original, god-like qualities of the first age. We are near the end of that final age with its five dregs in general.

112. One of the five dregs is “dregs of view” meaning that the views held by beings in general are very degenerate. When the dregs of view is looked at closely, twenty-eight aspects of degenerate view can be categorized.

113. This again is referring to those who insist that their view of emptiness based on their misunderstanding of the teachings of the second wheel, is correct above all others.

114. *Prajñāpāramitā Stra.*

115. The first two quotations have been general quotations from the Great Vehicle. They show the importance of being connected with the Great Vehicle in general and with the second turning teachings on emptiness of self in particular. Now though, he will continue by quoting only from sūtras of the twenty heart of definitive meaning sūtras which the Other Emptiness followers regard as the basis for the teaching of other emptiness. You will note in these quotations the feature of the teachings of the third turning of the wheel: the emphasis on teaching that there is tathāgatagarbha and that this is the way to enlightenment. These quotations clearly show the core ideas of other emptiness.

116. Expressing something by example and cause was the standard way of showing the particular features of something in the Buddha’s time.

117. When the sun dawns in South India, the heat becomes fierce very quickly. Everyone goes indoors to the shade and all movement outside ceases.

118. “The immediate evil deeds” are five deeds which will cause the person who has committed them to suddenly die and immediately appear in hell without an intermediate bardo existence.

119. This last clause means that he, Jamgon Kongtrul, having received everything perfectly—empowerment, reading transmission, and instructions for practice—from the current Jonang throneholder who obviously had the blessings of his lineage, yet another person whose nature is the two complete purities of enlightenment has joined the lineage.

120. Vajra yoga refers to Kālachakra practice.

121. Salivation is a sign of direct perception of the ultimate meaning described particularly in the tantras. Lesser people do not have the trust in what this dharma of the king of tantras, the Kālachakra, is that would make them salivate.

122. ... is a name for the conduct of the tantras ...

123. Dzam Thang was home to two of the main Jonang monasteries in Eastern Tibet. It was where Jamgon Kongtrul went to get instructions from the lineage.

124. Yontan Gyatso is one of the many names of the first Jamgon Kongtrul.

125. This is one of many standard phrases used by Tibetan authors to indicate their humility.

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