

## **Eight Swirling Spears**

By Gotsangpa Gonpo Dorje

མདུང་སྐར་བརྒྱད།

སྐད་ཚང་པ་མགོན་པོ་ལྷོ་ཇེ།

**Commentary by HE 10<sup>th</sup> Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche**



*Eight Swirling Spears*

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### Translator's Introduction

This text by Tibetan master, Gotsangpa Gonpo Dorje (rgod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje) (1189-1258) is a series of short verses on what he calls 'Eight Swirling Spears' (*mdung skor brgyad*). Gotsangpa was a mahasiddha of the Drukpa Kagyu school, well known for his songs of realisation and said to have been an emanation of Milarepa. He founded the branch of the Drukpa Kagyu school, known as the Upper Drukpa (stod 'brug). His students included Orgyenpa Rinchen Pal<sup>1</sup>. According to the Nyingma master, Patrul Rinpoche when he was asked who were the two greatest practitioners in Tibet, of Shantideva's *Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, he said one was Gotsangpa<sup>2</sup>.

Gotsangpa states this 'song' was composed at a place called 'White Garuda' (*khyung dkar*)<sup>3</sup> between the years 1233-1236. These 'eight spears' he refers to in the text, represent the view, meditation, conduct, fruition, samaya, compassion, dependent origination, and enlightened activity. Gotsangpa sings about how each 'spear' has three aspects. When these three aspects are all present, then the spear swirls freely in space, without obstruction. Meaning that particular 'spear' is accomplished, complete and free. In English, we might say 'flying free like a kite'.

This commentary on the text here by HE 10<sup>th</sup> Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche is an edited compilation of two public teachings Rinpoche gave on this text. The first was a teaching he gave in English in three sessions in Germany in 2011. I have transcribed and edited that teaching and included it here. The second teaching is from the pre-Kagyu Monlam teachings Rinpoche gave in Bodh Gaya in January, 2019, that I attended in person. The teaching in Bodh Gaya was in Tibetan and the translation of that produced here is largely based on the English oral translation by David Karma Chopel, a transcript produced by Michele Martin and my own notes and additions, where the Tibetan had not been translated and so on.

The only English translation I have seen of the root text verses was by Jim Scott<sup>4</sup>, called 'Eight Flashing Lances', a student and translator of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, a Tibetan Buddhist yogi master who regularly taught this text. HE 10<sup>th</sup> Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche told me that he also received teachings on this text from Khenpo Rinpoche, when he was a student at Rumtek Monastery, Sikkim, India. I have done a new translation of the text, which is closer to the Tibetan original. I have also included the Tibetan script and

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phonetics for those who like to chant such songs in the Tibetan. When Rinpoche has referred to the Tibetan terms I have used the phonetics and not Wylie spelling in the main text for the ease of the reader.

Out of respect for these two great masters who taught this text I have also included in this publication, two new translations of long-life prayers written by HH 17<sup>th</sup> Gyalwang Karmapa, Orgyen Trinley Dorje. The first prayer is for 10<sup>th</sup> Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche and the second for Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche.

Any errors are all mine, a simple woman. May it be of benefit!

Adele Tomlin, May 2019.

Eight Swirling Spears<sup>5</sup> by Gotsangpa

Namo Ratnaguru!

**Homage**

སྐྱེས་མཚོག་ཚས་སྐྱ་རིན་ཆེན་གླིང་།།

kye chog cho ku rin chen ling

ལོང་སྐྱ་ལྷ་ཚོགས་ནོར་བུ་ལ།།

long ku na tshog nor bu la

སྐྱུ་སྐྱུ་འགོ་བའི་དགོས་འབྱུང་བའི།།

trul ku dro wai go jung wai

རྗེ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལ་གུས་པས་འདུད།།

je rin po che la gu pe du

To the supremely arisen dharmakāya, the jewelled expanse,

To the samboghakāya's various gems,

To the nirmanakāya, that fulfills the needs of beings,

To the precious master, I respectfully bow.

1) View

ཀྱེ་གནས་ལུགས་གཏན་འབེབས་བ་དང་།།

ne lug ten beb pa dang

འཁོར་འདས་གདམ་ཁ་མེད་བ་དང་།།

khor de dam kha me pa dang

ཐག་ཚོད་ལྷོ་སྐྱ་འགྱུར་མེད་གསུམ།།

thog chö lo na gyur me sum

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ལྷ་བ་མཁའ་ལ་མདུང་སྐོར་ཡིན།།

ta wa kha la dung kor yin

Precise determination of the fundamental state,

Not 'choosing' samsara or nirvana,

An unchanging mind of conviction; these three

Are the view's swirling spear in space.

### 2) Meditation

པེ་ཚོ་རང་ས་ཟེན་པ་དང་།།

tsa chö rang sa zin pa dang

ཚོགས་ལྷུག་བཅོས་བསྐྱད་མེད་པ་དང་།།

tshog drug che le me pa dang

དྲན་འཛིན་ཚོལ་བ་བྲལ་བ་གསུམ།།

dren dzin tsol wa drel wa sum

གོམ་པ་མཁའ་ལ་མདུང་སྐོར་ཡིན།།

gom pa kha la dung kor yin

Cut off from the root, holding its own ground,

The six collections<sup>6</sup> unsullied by fabrication,

Free of effort to stay mindful; these three

Are meditation's swirling spear in space.

### 3) Conduct

ལྷོ་ཉམས་ཤུགས་འབྱུང་ཐོགས་དྲོགས་མེད་པ་དང་།།

nyam shug jang thog dog me pa dang

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འཇིགས་ལྷོམ་བག་ཚ་མེད་པ་དང་།

jig zhum bag tsha me pa dang

གཟུང་འཇོན་ཕྱོགས་ལས་རྒྱལ་བ་གསུམ།

zung dzin chog le gyel wa sum

ལྷོད་པ་མཁའ་ལ་མདུང་སྐོར་ཡིན།

chö pa kha la dung kor yin

Experiences spontaneously arising, unobstructed,

Absence of fear, discouragement, and anxiety,

Victorious over the 'sides' of perceiver and perceived; these three

Are conduct's swirling spear in space.

#### 4) Fruition

ལེ་སྐྱ་ལྗ་གདོད་ནས་རང་ཆས་དང་།

ku nga dö ne rang che dang

ལྷོད་བས་མངོན་དུ་གྱུར་པ་དང་།

nyong we ngon du gyur pa dang

སངས་རྒྱས་འདོད་པ་ཟད་པ་གསུམ།

sang gye dö pa ze pa sum

འབྲས་བུ་མཁའ་ལ་མདུང་སྐོར་ཡིན།

dre bu kha la dung kor yin

The five kāyas primordially self-arising,

Direct manifestation through experience,

Ambition for buddhahood exhausted; these three



Are fruition's swirling spear in space.

5) Samaya

ཡེ་ཉེས་རླུང་གདོད་ནས་རྣམས་དག་དང་།།

nye tung dö ne nam dag dang

ཉམས་གསལ་སྣོང་དྲི་མ་མེད་པ་དང་།།

nyam sel tong dri ma me pa dang

རང་གི་ཁ་འཛིན་ཐོངས་བ་གསུམ།།

rang gi kha dzin thong pa sum

དམ་ཚིག་མཁའ་ལ་མཐུང་སྐོར་ཡིན།།

dam tshig kha la dung kor yin

Transgressions and downfalls are primordially pure,  
Experiences are stainless, luminosity-emptiness,  
Self- importance and opinions cast away; these three  
Are samaya's swirling spear in space.

6) Compassion

ཡེ་རང་གི་ཞེ་འདོད་ཟད་པ་དང་།།

rang gi zhe dö ze pa dang

ཚོད་མེད་བརྗེ་བའི་བ་སྐོང་དང་།།

tsö me tse wai ba long dang

སྐོར་དུབ་ཞེ་འདུན་བྲལ་བ་གསུམ།།

kyo dub dun drel wa sum

སྐྱོང་རྗེ་མཁའ་ལ་མཐུང་སྐོར་ཡིན།།

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nying je kha la dung kor yin

Selfish desires and concerns exhausted,

Waves of indisputable love,

Free from sorrow, fatigue and self-seeking; these three

Are compassion's swirling spear in space.

### 7) Interdependence

ཕྱེའམ་ལྷོག་པ་སྐྱོག་པ་དང་།།

dzin pa nyog pa dang pa dang

རྒྱ་རྒྱེན་གཟུགས་བརྟན་ཤར་བ་དང་།།

gyu kyen zug nyen shar wa dang

སྤྲེའི་འདོར་ལེན་ཤེས་པ་གསུམ།།

thra mö dor len she pa sum

ཏེན་འབྲེལ་མཁའ་ལ་མངུང་སྐྱོར་ཡིན།།

ten drel kha la dung kor yin

The muddiness of grasping cleaned away<sup>7</sup>,

Causes and conditions shine as reflections,

Knowing the subtleties of adopting and abandoning; these three

Are interdependence's swirling spear in space.

### 8) Enlightened Activity

སེམས་ལམ་འཕེན་པ་སང་བ་དང་།།

mon lam phen pa se pa dang

གང་བྱས་འགོ་བའི་དོན་གྱུར་དང་།།

gang je dro wai don gyur dang

ཚོལ་མེད་སྐྱུན་གྱིས་གྲུབ་པ་གསུམ།།

tsol me khun gyi drub pa sum

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འཕྲིན་ལས་མཁའ་ལ་མདུང་སྐྱོར་ཡིན།།

thrin le kha la dung kor yin

The wakening of aspirations long sent,  
Whatever's done benefiting beings,  
Effortless, spontaneous accomplishment; these three  
Are enlightened activity's swirling spear in space.

### Conclusion

མདུང་སྐྱོར་བརྒྱད་ཀྱི་དབྱངས་རྒྱུང་འདི།།

dung kor gye kyi yang chung di

གནས་ཡོངས་སུ་གྲགས་པའི་ལྷུང་དཀར་དུ།།

ne yong su drag pai khyung kar du

མཚན་ལྡན་ལྷ་མའི་བྱིན་བརྒྱབས་ཀྱིས།།

tshen den la mai jin lab kyi

སེམས་ལ་ཤར་ནས་སྤངས་པ་ཡིན།།

sem la shar ne lang pa yin

This small melody of eight swirling spears rose up,  
At this well-known place, 'White Garuda',  
Due to the blessings of qualified gurus  
Dawning in my mind.

## Commentary by HE 10<sup>th</sup> Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche

### Title

The title of this text, *Eight Swirling Spears in Space*, might make some people excited. All titles are different but the meaning is more important. This is a very beautiful title. The author, Gotsangpa, his name is very simple. He is a great Mahasiddha, mahayogi. The Tibetan word, *go* means vulture, *tsang* is nest. So he stayed at Vulture's Nest<sup>8</sup>. He committed to never moving from the cave, saying that until I have completely unified myself with the name of the cave, my name and the vultures who come there; until all these three become unified, I will not move. That meant that until he fully realised the true nature, he would not move away from the cave. So his name is Gotsangpa.

Until myself, the vulture and this cave are addressed by the same name, I will not move away from this place<sup>9</sup>. And we should try and do the same thing!

### Homage

To the supremely arisen dharmakāya, the jewelled expanse,  
To the samboghakāya's various gems,  
To the nirmanakāya, that fulfills the needs of beings,  
To the precious master, I respectfully bow.

*Namo Ratnaguru*, is the homage to the three jewels of refuge. The homage to the precious lord, his own teacher, the supreme being, the dharmakāya, the land of jewels. The guru is the embodiment of the dharmakāya, the sambhogakāya and the nirmanakāya. The Dharmakāya is the essential nature; the nature of our own mind. Free from fabrications and free from inherent existence. The mind is free from all these characteristics. Thus, the mind's nature is shunyata (Śūnyatā)<sup>10</sup>, emptiness.

Then the sambhogakāya is the mind's luminosity-emptiness aspect, (*ngo wo tongpa, rang zhin selwa*). Shunyata does not mean absence or lacking alone. It is not that something is lacking or missing something, or something is absent. It is the shunyata associated with the luminosity characteristic. That is the sambhogakāya.

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Then, the nirmanakāya is the display; the display of the samsaric phenomena, the display of the nirvana phenomena. All that display is the functioning of the interdependent origination within the mind. In mahāmudrā, it always says these are all mental projections. So this means that nothing is really there, due to, or because of, the mind's emptiness, which is never separate from the luminosity aspect of mind. It is the inseparable luminosity-emptiness which enables us to see all the 'entertainments' of the samsaric and nirvana phenomena. Sometimes we 'enjoy' these amusements and smile, and other times we have a very long face about them, yet these are all just the functioning of these three kāyas. That is wonderful. Your guru is never separate from these kāyas. Guru does not mean the guru in human flesh form. Guru here is the ultimate guru; the ultimate guru that is your own nature, your own mind's nature. Sometimes you call it mahāmudrā, mahāti, it is indescribable. Just meditate, rest your mind, from there you can discover your ultimate teacher. Yet, in order to realise this one needs to depend on a conventional teacher; a relative teacher from whom you can get all the instructions, teachings and guidelines and then practise accordingly. From that you can achieve the ultimate guru. We say that in meditation the mind of yourself and the mind of your guru are inseparable. So that is the ultimate teacher.

When talking about the three kāyas, the dharmakāya, the sambhogakāya and the nirmanakāya. There are three different aspects. The three kāyas of the *ground*, the three kāyas of *path*, and the three kāyas of *fruition*<sup>11</sup>. When speaking about the *ground*, these are the three kāyas that naturally exist, regardless of whether we realise them or not. They naturally exist. Without them, we cannot develop or cultivate practice. Receiving teachings from the guru, one then examines and trains one's mind to discover them. To discover, means that something that is already existent is there. By training the mind with a certain method of meditation, then you can find it. Something is hidden, so you dig and you find it. So that is what is called 'discovering'. One recognises its face (*dong ngo she pa*). So the ground three kāyas are naturally, or innately, existent. But due to the basic and powerful ignorance, one cannot see it. Therefore, we say 'an ordinary sentient being', who has a deluded mind, or is ignorant. In mahāmudrā, they say that not discovering (*ma nyepa*) this is the cause of samsara. So that is the three kāyas of the ground.

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Next are the three kāyas of the *path*. When we talk about path, this means the individual depends on the teacher or the master. Particularly from the mahāmudrā, mahāti or Dzogchen point of view, the teacher or master, should be qualified with experience, not just someone who can give you verbal explanations. Even if logically, conceptually or from an analytical point of view they can explain the teachings, they are not regarded as a qualified or experienced master. The teacher or master must be qualified with the full experiential realisations, who can teach you from that experience. So he, or she, teaches or introduces you to the nature of one's own mind. Then you meditate on that. When you meditate on that, then you get experience, or 'discover' the ultimate nature, which is the inseparability of luminosity-emptiness. We say, 'luminosity' and 'emptiness' and logically we can think many things about them, but conceptually that is connected to our own concepts and thoughts. It doesn't mean you have experienced them. So, the experiential explanation is something very different from that explained by scholars. They use a lot of logic and so on which can make people more confused sometimes. So a direct teaching means from 'heart-to-heart'. Therefore, a person who fully understands, and is fully realised, tells you a few words but it has a lot more meaning. This is what we call 'direct'. 'Direct' does not mean we sit opposite each other and look directly at each other gazing into each other's eyes. 'You look at me and I will give you mahāmudrā power' (laughs). It is necessary to have devotion from the student, genuine devotion. When I say genuine, this means for example, when your guru smiles at you then you have devotion but when your guru does something unpleasant to you, your devotion diminishes. That is not genuine devotion. Genuine means unchangeable, unobstructable. That from now until I attain enlightenment, your devotion never changes. It is never obstructed, it is stable. Then if you have genuine devotion you can perceive the genuine blessing. Which is fair, right? With genuine devotion you receive the genuine blessing. Blessing does not mean the teacher's palm touches your forehead, or by blowing on your eyes or nose. The blessing here is the lineage of realisation. That is the genuine blessing. Blessing in Tibetan is '*gyin gi lab*'. Our mind is deluded, so through the blessing, our mind is transformed into the actual reality. Or you 'discover' that. That is the ultimate blessing. What we need is the ultimate blessing. To realise the true nature of mind, the Dharmakāya, the Sambhogakāya and the Nirmanakāya, you discover, or are able to 'see through' and that is the *path* of the three kāyas.

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The relationship between the master and the disciple is very valuable. The disciple meditates on the profound, pith instructions and follows them accordingly, from there they will gain experience as to how valuable the teacher is and how valuable his instructions are. Then from that you will realise how valuable is the experience or realisation that you gain from the practise. So, when people read the histories of the great masters, when they hear the names of their own masters, or they are reading the life story of their masters, they cry. When they recite the names of their teacher, they cry. This does not mean that they are simply longing for them. They are crying because they value their instructions. They value their master through experience. If you do not get experience from the teaching and the meditation, then even if you cry for your master, it doesn't mean you really make such a strong connection with the teacher. It could be that you think 'oh my teacher is very nice'. There are many different reasons you might cry. So a 'good cry' is making each drop of your tears very valuable (laughing). This is something to be done through your meditation experience. Then your devotion and faith towards your master will be stable. It will last forever until you are fully enlightened. Your devotion goes up and down because your tears are also 'so so', not very valuable. Today you cry but tomorrow not very much. So every time you hear the name of your master, if you cry it means you value them. Why? Because you discovered how valuable they are, not just conceptually, or through some simple understanding or just made a connection with the teacher who you regard like your family or close friend who you depend upon. Those previous masters have discovered how valuable their teacher is. Therefore, they understand the qualities of the three kāyas and that in dependence on the teacher one will realise the three kāyas. Thus, one sees their teaching and their experience as wonderful. So to make one's crying valuable comes from the experience. If you have such a stable devotion then your realisation lasts forever. In that way one makes a connection, in that way one values the lineage, and in that way one values the teacher and master. In that way, we can benefit others. One should not treat the teacher as an ordinary person and say 'just my teacher'. However, if there is no true experience, one cannot gain genuine devotion. So, genuine devotion is cultivated from meditation experience.

The last one is the three kāyas of *fruition*. That's the fruition, no explanation and also it is too early to do that. But in general, it means if one is able to realise the inseparability of the

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three kāyas; the dharmakāya, the sambhogakāya, the nirmanakāya are not separate from each other. When someone teaches you about them, they are explained separately but when you achieve realisation, then they are 'oneness'. That is very important. It is not like 'this is the dharmakāya', 'this is the sambhogakāya' and 'this is the nirmanakāya'. It is not that when one finds the dharmakāya, the sambhogakāya is coming later and so on. They are 'one'. If you are able to completely accomplish that realisation, that is the fruition.

### 1) The View

Next is the view's swirling spear in space.

Precise determination of the fundamental state,  
Not 'choosing' samsara or nirvana,  
An unchanging mind of conviction; these three  
Are the view's swirling spear in space.

Without the view it is very difficult to establish correct meditation. Even if you make effort to do so, there will be a lot of mistakes, faults and errors in the meditation. Then it is too late to correct them. Therefore, in order to avoid these unseen faults and mistakes in the meditation, one has to start the practise from the correct view. It helps you to know what is right and what is wrong. It helps to have knowledge. For example, if you want to visit a large city or monuments, castles and so on, first you have to have a general idea. Such as where to go and what you want to see there, you have to have knowledge about that. Otherwise, without that basic knowledge, when you go there you may get very lost and confused. You will wander around the town with a lot of confusion about where to go and so on. With the support of the knowledge and ideas, then it's easier for you to travel there without making many mistakes.

Similarly, here, to meditate one has to have a correct view that protects one from engaging in mistakes when meditating. Since you have a perfect idea and perfect knowledge, then you know what is right and what is wrong. Thus, when you meditate with the correct view, there are less mistakes. There is very little chance of making mistakes because of the correct view. The correct view and meditation are not totally separate. It is what you have



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discovered by the view that you try to familiarise with it in meditation. It doesn't mean you sit there formally and sit tightly with your body and focus on something firmly. Meditation is very simple it is just familiarisation. What you have discovered and found in the view, you bring into your practise. So, cultivating correct meditation on the view is important, for both the scholar and the meditator. Therefore, one starts from the view. In order to become determined to meditate. You can't simply meditate on egolessness, and not have a clue what one is talking about and then meditate on egolessness. Then you are completely absent of the knowledge of what egolessness is. In order to develop determination and the confidence in the meditation then the view is kind of behind you, pushing you. For example, one cannot simply meditate on 'the ego' and say 'no eye', 'no ear' 'no nose' and so on. Then you have a stupid idea like I have no hair, no eyes and so on; this kind of stupid idea. So, if you have the view then you can know what that means. Then you can know the mistakes and the suffering and the pain and the clinging to a self. You can also realise the joy and pleasure and all good things, if you realise egolessness. So, having determined with the wisdom and the knowledge, then you are ready to meditate. You meditate joyfully and happily. Then you will see how supportive it is to do meditation when you have knowledge of the correct view.

The Tibetan word *ne lug*<sup>12</sup> here is how things actually are, which means samsara and nirvana. You cannot just flippantly say samsara is nirvana and nirvana is samsara because that is crazy. As samsara is samsara and nirvana is nirvana and we are doing practise to get rid of samsara and get nirvana. So when we say *emaho emaho* that means we want to go to the Amitabha pure land, if you think that samsara is nirvana then why would you say daily *emaho* and so on, when you can just stay here in samsara. So, saying it is easy but one has to have knowledge, one has to determine the view. The Tibetan here is *ne lug*. Here that means the fundamental nature. There are many terms in English, but I am not a native speaker. In Tibetan, there is the way of appearing (*nang tshul*)<sup>13</sup> and the way of being (*ne tshul*). The *nang tshul* are the conventional appearances, which are not truly existent. The *ne tshul* is that there is something 'behind ' those appearances which is always abiding there, which is inseparable from your own mind's nature. So, samsara is in your own mind

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and nirvana is within your mind, and none of them truly existed anyway, separately from your mind. It's just a mental projection, *nang tshul*.

Therefore, when you have not fully developed your wisdom, then what you see is called samsara. Once you develop the wisdom, the *prajñā*, the ultimate wisdom, then what you 'see' is called the abiding nature, *ne lug*, which is unchangeable. In order to realise samsara and nirvana are inseparable, one has to realise the inherently existing nature. The nature of samsara and the nature of nirvana are the same, they both come from your mind. So, the nature of samsara and nirvana are not separate from your mind. If you realise this then, dualistically you see nirvana and samsara as separate, but ultimately they are not separate from one's mind. This means you have discovered that within the true nature there is no samsara or nirvana. In this verse it says, if you have 'determined that' (*ten la beb pa*) there is no separation of these two, then there is no 'choosing'. Now, we 'choose' nirvana, we try to abandon samsara and try to adopt the qualities of nirvana. However, if you are able to resolve/conclude firmly the ultimate nature then you will realise the 'sameness' of nirvana and samsara. That is free from 'choosiness', from choosing this or that.

So here there are three, the ground view, the path view and the result view. In Tibetan, *zhi tawa*, *lam gi tawa* and *drebu tawa*. One has to understand the nature of one's own mind, the shunyata, emptiness. These are the correct view. Buddha coming to this world and turning the wheel of Dharma is not the reason for this view. What we have to understand is that this fundamental fact is there. It is not created, it is always there. Buddha discovered it and he came to the world to introduce us to it. It doesn't mean he has invented something. The abiding reality *nelug* is something that is unchangeably existent. But as we are very ignorant, we are unable to see it. Greatly realised beings, like Buddha and mahasiddhas, they have 'seen' it. They have come to this world, as a Buddha, a master, a Bodhisattva and gave us an introduction. So if you want to become like them, there is no other way but to develop the wisdom through study, contemplation and meditation. Therefore, the ground the correct view is innately existent. If that abiding nature, *nelug*, is not there then no matter how much effort one puts into practise, one cannot discover anything else.

Then there is the correct view of the *path*. When we talk about the path, it means when you are realised. When you realise that samsara and nirvana are just your mental projection.

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Not conceptually, but the ultimate realisation. Because of the ground correct view that helps you to realise correct view of the path.

The third line in the Tibetan verse, *an unchanging mind (thag cho lo)*, means *lo* is the mind that has established/determined definitely with certainty towards the fully developed correct view. This is the same as *nge she*, certain knowledge. It means you have certainty. Once you are certain no one can change your mind. For example, when you order in a restaurant and the waiter says ‘certainly’. If they bring it and then you change your mind then you will get in trouble. It means not changing. It means the certainty of the realisation or experience. That is the result of the ground and the result of the path. We have to have a result, otherwise we can’t simply say intellectually, samsara and nirvana are inseparable is not sufficient. One has to have some certainty inside one’s mind. With that certainty one then tries to familiarise through meditation. Without certainty of the correct view, one cannot meditate. Meditation depends very much on the certainty of the correct view. The Fifth Karmapa, Dezhin Shegpa, in his Dewachen Monlam<sup>14</sup>...then gives a quote.

འཇོན་བའི་དེ་བཞིན་ཉིད་ །གང་ལྟ་ངན་འདས། །

ཀུན་རྟོག་དེ་བཞིན་ཉིད་གང་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཏེ། །

གཞིག་དང་དུ་མའི་བདག་ཉིད་ལས་འདས་བའི། །

ཚོས་ཉིད་རྟོགས་བའི་སློ་གྲོས་ལྷན་གྱུར་ཅིག །

The very nature of samsara is nirvana,

The very nature of thoughts is primordial awareness,

May I realize the true nature which transcends, concepts of single or multiple,

And attain the mind that realises dharmatā.

Here it’s the same teaching. The nature of samsara itself if nirvana. The thoughts are the very nature of the primordial awareness. So, the Fifth Karmapa prays that may we have a mind that realises the fundamental nature, dharmatā.

In summary, the first line means that one has determined precisely the correct view, that’s the first aspect of the view’s swirling spear. The second aspect of the spear is one does not

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choose between samsara and nirvana. Now, we choose between these two. We say 'I don't want samsara and throw it away, I choose nirvana'. The third aspect of the 'spear' is that one has decided, clearly resolved, what the nature of mind is. Such decisiveness is unchanging, cannot be swayed or influenced by conditions. This is easy to understand. If one has not determined the authentic view then one cannot have the confidence that knows the nature of mind. One has to generate the view that arises from authentic wisdom, then real confidence can arise. Before this, you made choices, such as preferring nirvana to samsara. Now you have the confidence that the suchness of samsara is nirvana, that they are indivisible, so there is no samsara to give up and no nirvana to adopt. You have eliminated these two conceptions from within, and therefore, there's no need to choose between the two. Knowing this deeply, you generate the unchanging confidence and decisiveness.

### 2) Meditation

Cut off from the root, holding its own ground,  
The six collections<sup>15</sup> unsullied by fabrication; and  
Free of effort to stay mindful, these three  
Are meditation's swirling spear in space.

The first line speaks of '*cut off from the root*', which cannot happen through only knowing the view; the view has to be sealed with meditation so that it cuts through the root of fixation. This does not mean that you are cut loose and set adrift, not knowing where you are or what to do. It is the genuine view that severs the root of samsaric existence and ego-clinging. Then having attained the correct view, one is able to take firm hold of its own ground, so that no one can make you move from there. If one is not holding one's own ground firmly then a swirling spear is not possible.

Then, when '*holding one's own ground*', having friends, repelling enemies, tasty food, nice clothes and attractive things are no longer necessary. Whatever arises in one's experience, one doesn't take or abandon as good or bad. 'Holding one's own ground' in Dzogchen, they say *tsen sa zin*, means one is able to remain in perfect meditation. The outer factors that

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dominate one's mind and make one lose control, seeing and hearing all kinds of things, sometimes desire, jealousy and so on, these disturbing emotions arise one after the other and one is unable to stabilise one's own mind. In Dzogchen teachings they give an example, a long time ago in Tibet there was war and fighting. At that time, there were no machine guns and weapons like that. So, one person would run away and the other person run after them. They would think, 'we are going to win and they are going to lose'. However, they climb up the mountain and reach there and it's easy for them to attack downwards. Those at the bottom cannot attack upwards, it's too difficult. So we call that 'top of the mountain' place, where the other group can dominate and no one can attack them anymore, 'the place that one holds'. Similarly, if you are completely accomplished and mastered the meditation, no other factors can disturb you. That is '*sa dzin*', holding one's ground, completely free from all these different circumstances.

Then the second line, '*the six collections unsullied by fabrications*' means whatever appearances arise from the six sense consciousnesses, when you see or hear pleasant or unpleasant things, you do not mentally fabricate them. The ultimate reality arises in one's experience. You do not need to change anything, but just let things be as they are. Whichever of the six objects of consciousness appears, you do not examine its characteristics but look at its nature and relax into it without contrivance or effort.

Milarepa asked a local Ngagpa six questions. One of these questions was: 'Is there a yogi or yogini who can see the objects of the eye and nose consciousness and so on, without fabrication?'<sup>16</sup> Which means, can you see them as they are, can you see their nature and the nature of your consciousness. If you can see the nature of all the objects, then they can no longer disturb your mind. Milarepa realised this and he is asking if there is a yogi or yogini who has also realised it. Then when we make offerings to wisdom deities of light, food, perfume and vast offerings and so on, it does not mean these deities are looking at your tsok offering. Like Manjushri does not ask me 'can you get me an orange juice' and Tara doesn't ask 'can you bring me a biscuit'. Maybe it seems like they are looking for something, but it is not like that. However, as Milarepa explains, for them it is not like us, who are looking for something. They have really seen the nature of objects and thus they

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are unfabricated and relaxed. So whatever they see, hear, smell and so on, good or bad, they don't complain. We complain but they don't. Why? They have seen the nature of phenomena. So, this line, 'six collections unsullied by fabrication', means relaxed and familiar with its own nature. This tells us the outer factors are not disturbing us. You cannot complain and run away and say 'I want to go somewhere where I do not see such objects, or hear such music that disturbs my mind'. Even if you do manage to run away, the fundamental, powerful ignorance is still there. You cannot run away from your own fundamental ignorance.

As Nāgārjuna says in the *Fundamental Wisdom of Madhyamaka*<sup>17</sup>:

དམིགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཉེར་ཞི་ཞིང་།

སྒྲོས་པ་ཉེར་ཞི་ཞི་བ་སྟེ།

སངས་རྒྱལ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་གང་དུའང་།

སྐུ་ལའང་ཚོས་འགའ་མ་བསྟན་ཏོ།

All focal objects completely pacified

And conceptual fabrications pacified

The Buddhas, did not teach the dharma at any place or person.

Nāgārjuna here says Buddha has never taught the Dharma. Why? Because Buddha has shown us things as they are. Nāgārjuna says whoever and wherever, he never turned the wheel of Dharma. It is important is to subdue or eliminate our strong conceptual fixations. Seemingly we see the object and hear the sounds. Yet, don't blame these objects, they are very innocent. They don't bother us, they don't disturb us, you are the one who disturbs yourself. The thing is there just as it is; these things are just there, innocently there. What we fabricate about the object is something to do with our way of thinking. We have to examine our own mind, not the outer object. In this quote, all focal objects completely pacified (*mig pa tham che sher she chin*), *migpa* is the existent object *yod pa*. As I said before, there are two objects, one is the object of fixation, the other is the object of appearance. The object of fixation does not exist at all but is created by thoughts. This is the most 'dangerous' object. It does not exist but it disturbs us. If there is something there, then

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we can eliminate it and say 'take it away this disturbs me'. Then, someone removes it and you feel delighted. But there is something hidden in it that you cannot find. That is why we need to do a lot of examination and training of our mind. We need a lot of diligence and hard work. We need to find out or identify if it is existent or not. So, we need to find out that it is like a dream.

The third line of the root verse is '*free of effort to be mindful*'. So the problem is we think thoughts are not good during meditation; that thoughts are terrible, not good, they are the enemy. So, one is always seeking absence of the thought. Yet these masters say that is totally wrong. If you are seeking this, that is what they call 'mindfulness' (*drenpa*). You're hoping for an absence of thoughts. And the *keeping* (*dzin*) here is if thoughts arise regarding it as an imperfect meditation. Then, the word *effort*, you are trying to put effort into not allowing thoughts to arise. When the thoughts arise, it's the effort you make to remove the thoughts. So these two kinds of effort are what is meant when it says 'free from the effort'. Why do you think thoughts are not good? Because you are still lacking the experience that thoughts are inseparable from the Dharmadhātu. You are unable to transform the thoughts during meditation. So you separate the non-thinking state from the thinking state. So you separate them and that is why our meditation is not perfect.

There is a great master in Drugpa Kagyu, Sherab Drugyel. He says:

I have no meditation and no post-meditation. If someone says there is meditation and post-meditation then that is wrong meditation. For me, when I meditate it is like a wave in an ocean, the thoughts arise from the Dharmadhātu and dissolve into the Dharmadhātu. I have no such sense that the thought and the meditation are separate.'

One is able to transform all the thoughts during meditation because they are never separate innately. *Transform* here does not mean making two things into one. It means, they come from one origin and go back into one, same origin. Therefore he says, I have no time for mediation. Normally, people say 'I have a session, I have a morning and evening session. After I finish work I can meditate from 6 to 7pm and then after that my meditation is finished. I do meditation when there are no people around, otherwise I cannot meditate'

and so on. So for him, he meditates while he eats and walks and talks and sleeps, even while snoring! He thinks that if you have to meditate this is also a disturbance and you are not a great meditator. He also says 'I don't have things to adopt or abandon'. He does not think 'this is virtue, this is not virtue, this is to be adopted and abandoned'. For him, they are all equal. That is why he says 'I have no meditation and no non-meditation'. My life is meditation. Eating, drinking and driving meditation (maybe don't do that one, it's very risky laughing).

The third line of the verse: '*free of effort to stay mindful*', one meditates on emptiness, luminosity, equality, union and so on. This will not happen if you try to seal your experience with a conceptualized emptiness or luminosity. As explained before, if you know the point of liberation upon rising, one is able to be free from effort with concepts. You can come to a place of non-thought; yet just wishing for it will not bring successful meditation. We wish that we can have meditation free from thoughts and so on, but this cannot bring about a good meditation.

To work with good or bad situations, we need to realize that they do not transcend the nature of luminous mahāmudrā. All the phenomena of samsara are included within that, so everything we see and hear is self-liberated. The power for this to happen comes from the nature of phenomena and not from thoughts. Thinking about it and relying on concepts one will not be able to transcend the conditions. That is meditation's swirling spear in space.

### 3) Conduct

Experiences spontaneously arising, unobstructed,

No fear, discouragement, and anxiety,

Victorious over the 'sides' of perceiver and perceived; these three

Are conduct's swirling spear in space.

The next verse of Gotsangpa's explains excellent *conduct*. When conduct is blended together with the view, profound experience is continuous and free of grasping. Since there



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is no wish to achieve them, when the experiences of bliss, luminosity and non-conceptuality arise, they are not obstructed by clinging. Here, not only are you free of hope for what is positive, but also you have no fear of negative experience. This type of conduct brings victory over duality. In sum, there is no grasping, fear, or duality when conduct is blended with the correct view and meditation. Having determined the correct view, and practice of meditation, then the experiences will spontaneously arise; the experiences of bliss (*dewa*), luminosity (*salwa*) and non-conceptuality (*mi tog pa*). This is a general categorisation, there are uncountable numbers of experiences in meditation that are inexpressible. So, as a great meditator, whether you are among people, or in a solitary retreat, it does not really make any difference. The arising experiences of the meditation are spontaneous and are never obstructed.

Here, in this line, there are two Tibetan words, '*thog*' and '*dog*'<sup>18</sup>. People think this means 'hindrance' but in the meditation there are two, the gross and the subtle. If one's meditation is not so great, then when you meditate some experiences will arise, but then go, coming and going. There is no continuity, there is a block. So there are gross and subtle blockages. Like on a road you are completely blocked. So that obstruction, '*thog*', like a wall, you cannot open it up and go through it. Then the obstruction, '*dog*', is more subtle. That is like an uncomfortable road, where there are difficulties here and there and you have to traverse them. It is difficult for you to do that and that is what is called a subtle hindrance. However, when you are completely accomplished in meditation then these two hindrances are overcome.

So the experiences spontaneously and effortlessly arise, even if you try to stop them, they just come. When they arise, then each and every experience helps you to strengthen your meditation. It's not just a result of your meditation but these experiences help you open up your meditation. These experiences never cease and continually help you to develop meditation. These experiences never hinder you. If you cling to such experiences then your meditation fails. Completely fails. Zero marks (laughter). So this is great danger for a meditator.

In one story, Gampopa reports to Milarepa about his many dreams and Milarepa told him not to worry, to be calm, that his dream is neither good or bad: 'calm down, calm down. They are neither good nor bad, just continue.' What this means is that without clinging to

the experiences, you can develop more and more, and then one day, the meditation will be completed.

Then the third line: *without fear or discouragement*. The Tibetan word, *zhum* means discouragement. It is thinking 'I cannot do this. I do not dare to do this.' This is a lack of confidence. The Tibetan *bagtsa mepa* means *without anxiety*, worry or uncertainty. So this kind of master, who has determined the correct view and meditation can perform all activities. If you lack these two, then even if you try to perform many activities, there is still a lack of confidence, there is still a lack of wisdom, a lack of lots of things and abilities. Because of that, you may say I cannot do this and so on, you have a total lack of confidence. However, if a person has confidence, the view, wisdom and so on, then such a master can accomplish their activities, free from mistakes. If one is 'anxious' or 'nervous' as to whether one can perform or not, there is no determination, there is anxiety.

The word in the next line, *victorious* means completely victorious due to having the correct view and meditation. If you lack those two, even though you can perform activities there will be obstructions of fixation and grasping. This is the obstacle for meditators. This is why they need to run away to a cave, away from noisy places, as there are less disturbances and so on. So, a person does not want to come down from their meditation place to the town, they request their family members, 'I am doing meditation, so I will shut my door and window. Don't come to me, I am doing meditation'. They put a sign on their door, 'don't knock on it, I am doing meditation'. There are a lot of complicated things they have to prepare, even for five minutes meditation. Then if they want to meditate again they have to put up a new notice and say 'don't disturb me, don't knock, don't make noise' and so on. Whereas for a great meditator, they can be anywhere, you can make noise, jokes, sit right next to them and they are very comfortable. You cannot pull them down at all. They have completely determined the view and meditation, so the objects that used to disturb them no longer do. As they have fully developed wisdom, there's no chance to disturb them.

#### 4) Fruition

The five kāyas primordially self-manifesting,

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Direct manifestation through experience,

Ambition for buddhahood exhausted; these three

Are fruition's swirling spear in space.

The first line states: *'the five kāyas primordially self-manifesting'*. The three kāyas are as I have explained already. The five kāyas are the three kāyas including also the svabhavivekāya and the vajrakāya. So these kāyas are not something we find somewhere else. They exist in each and every individual, they are primordially, or innately, existent. They are a fundamental fact or quality. Simply having these qualities in us is not sufficient though. It is totally insufficient. What we need to do next is the *'direct manifestation through experience'* that is the path. You need to experience and actualise it through applying the instructions, this fundamental quality needs to be discovered. Having these qualities within us does not mean we are now a complete Buddha. In order to become a complete Buddha one has to experience or realise it. You have to prove it by yourself. Not simply by listening or contemplating but one has to prove by experience that 'yes this is what I have discovered'. That is called the 'experience of the path'. If one becomes very eager to discover it but has no way to apply it and you just say 'I have it somewhere else in me', this is unwise. The Buddha saw these fundamental qualities in us and he urged us to bring them out. Now, they are invisible but in order to make them visible we do all sorts of practice. The day one takes the refuge vow, they cut a piece of your hair. So, one might wonder why did they take my piece of hair away? This exemplifies that one is no longer deluded, they cut your hair in order to say: 'now you have to start to discover your qualities'. Therefore, it's very important to have experience. Every day, if you do all kinds of practice and are very diligent, but if you get exhausted and tired and are still trying then it is not much use. To make it useful and meaningful we also need the wisdom and the joy.

Then there is the third line *'ambition for Buddhahood exhausted'*. So that means there is no more hope about becoming Buddha, or thinking 'where is Buddha?' and so on, we no longer have this ambition. As Milarepa says: *rang sem sangye se lo tag cho*. He says it very simply: 'I have completely decided that my mind is Buddha'. It is very short and sweet and definite. This is wonderful but very difficult. So, to make it easy we have to start our practise very

diligently and joyfully. Each and every day, we must not waste our energy. It means we need energy but should use it in a meaningful way, with wisdom, mindfulness and diligence. So we need to start everyday practice. On the one hand its difficult, on the other hand, its simple. We need to deal everyday with the so-called 'disturbing emotions'.

I always give the example of anger. Of course, there are many disturbing emotions but the most powerful is anger. We cannot control it and we lose control of it. I always talk about mindfulness because I respect it but I also cannot apply it. I also still struggle with it. As Shantideva says in the *Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, before the disturbing emotion arises, the mindfulness gives us an alarm, 'be careful, it's coming'. So you can feel it, some heat or something. The mindfulness helps you with that disturbing emotion. By recognising 'this is not good', 'it harms me'. Knowing that the anger does not stay with you and the powerful anger goes away by itself, is due to the power of mindfulness. It does not mean we can run away from the object that makes life unpleasant, we cannot run away. Dealing with those emotions when they arise, we have to be careful with mindfulness, then slowly and gradually they will reduce. We cannot get rid of them immediately. Due to the application of mindfulness then slowly these emotions will lessen. Then one day they will be easily overcome. Yet, we don't want to do that, that's the problem. We want it to happen for others, but when it comes to us, we don't want to do it. Buddhas cannot do it for us, doctors cannot do it, it is our responsibility to do something. Applying the teaching within means we have to bring it into the practice. That is the practice. It does not just mean discipline or morality but with mindfulness we can slowly discover the Buddha qualities.

### 5) Samaya

Transgressions, downfalls are primordially pure,  
Experiences are stainless, luminosity-emptiness,  
Self- importance and opinions cast away; these three  
Are samaya's swirling spear in space.

The first line, '*transgressions, downfalls are primordially pure*'. A person can only say this, if they have realised they are primordially pure. We cannot simply say 'oh there are no

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downfalls, no obscurations due to negativities'. Why? Because they are there and they disturb us; they have disturbed us for beginningless samsara. Why? Due to a lack of wisdom. Therefore, the best samaya, is the ultimate samaya that is free from the contaminated samaya. Within the duality of the idea that 'I exist', 'the samaya exists' and 'the object of the samaya exists', if you regard that as samaya, it is called 'contaminated samaya'. So Gotsangpa explains, if you are able to realise the ultimate samaya then you will realise that all the downfalls and the transgressions and all the negativities are innately pure. As you have the wisdom that realised these are not truly there. If you see the nature of them, they are no other than the ultimate nature, dharmadhātu. Once you realise the true nature of mind, and have seen that, then they will dissolve back into the true nature. They are not something that solidly exists there.

In this text, '*Eight Swirling Spears in Space*', there are the three aspects of the spear of the view, the three of the spear of meditation, three of conduct, three of fruition, three of samaya, three of compassion, three of interdependence and three of enlightened activity. When speaking about the three aspects of the spear of samaya, the first line means that mind's nature has never been stained or obscured. Knowing this is like having a firm seat, a stable place, so we are comfortable whatever might happen. Without a steady basis, we can be unbalanced and fall. But if we are firmly centred in our own ground, we can move and act freely without worry. So, first we need to know the true nature of our mind, its very foundation, and be completely convinced that it is unpolluted and stainless. This confidence of a certain mind is very important.

So what is the reason for not knowing this? When we speak of a stainless mind, it refers to a special mind, the nature of our mind, and not our usual one. Our regular mind operates through the six consciousnesses and their objects. For example, it becomes attached to beautiful forms and doesn't like ugly ones. Through the influence of an appearing object, ordinary mind loses its own power, and this allows faults and downfalls to happen. We have to confess these, and practise Vajrsattava and so on, which we wouldn't have to do if we had remained within mind's nature. Right now we have faults, downfalls and obscurations so we need to confess them by regretting what we have done, reciting mantras, resolving not to repeat our mistake, and so forth. This is a beginner's way. We need to know our level

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of practice and apply what fits our mind since there is no all-purpose practice that applies to everyone.

For a yogi, the best method for purifying faults and downfalls is knowing that faults and downfalls come through thoughts and that all thoughts are naturally liberated, so that faults and downfalls do not essentially exist. The yogi also knows that the person who accumulates negativities and the negative action does not exist by nature. If one can realize this, that is the best way to purify negativities. Yet this does not happen, does it? If one does not have a high level of realisation and thinks: 'oh there are no negativities, or there is no person who accumulates them, and therefore I am liberated from negativities', this is not alright. This is a false understanding. For example, if one merely verbally says: 'I have confidence in the view, and there are no deities or demons' this is not of benefit to oneself or others. Why? Because if you say that then others may think that the person saying it is lying, because for them there are deities and demons.

A few years ago, someone told me there was a lama, who whenever possible spoke about the great importance of emptiness. He would say: 'Emptiness is very important. There is no need to recite rituals, it's a waste of time. No need to get empowerments or purify obscurations. In the morning, it is not necessary to recite prayers. In the afternoon, it is not necessary to do feast offering.' He was a lama who was interested in the ways of foreign countries. He would say: 'It is not necessary to accumulate mantras' and so on, saying it is of no benefit. So, apparently, in an airplane there is sometimes turbulence, and one time this lama was in an airplane and the turbulence became very strong, and this lama started earnestly reciting 'Om Tare Tuttare Ture Soha' with great passion. There is no choice then, right? After that, his helpers and associates thought that this lama was speaking meaninglessly and mentioned this story. That is the danger of saying such things. Talk of emptiness comes with a high level of realisation. We must be careful not to fool ourselves or others in thinking that our realisation is higher than it is. So if we say there are no deities and no demons in order to confuse or deceive people then this is speaking falsely.

In summary, this first line of Gotsangpa's verse on samaya is taught from the perspective of mind's nature, in which there is no stains, no faults, and no downfalls. If faults and downfalls were by nature non-existent, what would be the basis for imputing a stain? So that we are not caught up by words, we should also remember that 'the ultimate nature' is merely a

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label, a name that's been posited, a convention agreed upon. This line, then, presents samaya from the ultimate point of view.

Then the second line, '*Experiences are stainless luminosity-emptiness*', so when one does meditation, experiences arise that are definite. When the positive experiences of the luminosity arises, if the practitioner is not careful they will cling to it. Then it becomes stained, it is a stain. It is an obstacle, an obscuration, a hindrance. So, Gotsangpa is saying although such experiences arise from meditation just take them as they are. Experiences of luminosity are temporary, *gom* is the realisation, *nyam* is the experience. They come and go. If you are not experienced as a meditator then these experiences will be clung to and fixated upon. So then you think 'oh this is a beautiful experience' and you are looking for more of that. Then you try to search for more of it but instead of improving, it deteriorates the experience. In order for it to become stainless, one should avoid the clinging and fixating on it. Then the experience will spontaneously transform into the meditation.

The Tibetan word for 'experience' is '*nyam nyong*'. These words '*nyam*' and '*nyong*' are separate. Normally we talk about them together, '*nyam nyong*'. '*Nyam*' means when we meditate, experiences arise and they are signs that precede realisation, just as warmth comes before a fire. They do not remain for a long time, however, but come and go like clouds appearing and disappearing. But when realisation comes in their wake, like after the clouds disappear, it is stable like the sun and moon, unchanging. When realisation arises like that, it is called '*nyong wa*'. So the words '*nyam*' and '*nyong*' are separate. In the context of mahāmudrā, there are different kinds of *nyam*, *dewai nyam* (bliss), *selwai nyam* (luminosity) and *mi togpai nyam* (non-conceptuality), these three kinds of experience. When the experience is happening, if we can connect and remain within its depths, realisation does arise. In summary, meditative experiences fade away and realisations remain unchanging. While we are practicing mahāmudrā, experiences of bliss, luminosity, and non-conceptuality will arise, but these are passing experiences and not realisation. They do not mean that we have realized bliss or luminosity or emptiness. These are merely precursors to the realisation of mahāmudrā and not mahāmudrā itself. '*Flawless*' in the second line means that the nature of mind is free of flaws, but at first, ordinary individuals are blemished by stains. The non-dual nature of the experience, however, is not affected by any flaw.

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The third line of Gotsangpa's verse is crucial: '*Self- importance and opinions cast away*'. For a great deal of time, we are focused on ourselves, wanting to be celebrated and famous, thinking that all should go well for us, and that we have to get rid of faults and manifest good qualities for ourselves. We are so bound up in ourselves that we focus on wanting everything to be good for us alone. When we practice the teachings, our minds are preoccupied with expectations; in meditation, we are fixated on our desires. View, meditation, and conduct—our whole life is totally polluted by our thoughts. Gotsangpa is telling us to throw away, and give up, this sense of self-concern and excessive desires; to toss off our fixation on ourselves, on friends and enemies, on hopes and fears; to give up the three realms of desire, form, and formlessness. To let them all go.

In the Dzogchen tradition, there is a phrase, '*move relaxed in open space*', (*gya yan lhug pa'i 'gros*) and we find, for example, in Longchenpa's *Treasury of the Expanse of Phenomena*<sup>19</sup>, the line, '*free of the three times, move relaxed in open space*'. It means that whatever we do has a relaxed and spacious feel to it. The opposite would be, for example, wearing uncomfortable clothes that are too tight. It is like if one is holding something tightly, the thief thinks 'what is that?' And then we hold it more tightly to ourselves. I don't have any personal experience of thieves myself, but it's an example. So if one is relaxed, then whatever happens it will not be felt. Then, even if someone tried to steal something from them, they wouldn't notice it. There won't be a single shred of hope and fear. This is the meaning of having let go of self-concern. We let whatever happens, happen, since we are free of hope and fear or doubt. We have let fixating on self-importance go. Now we can see that "*move relaxed in open space*" points to Gotsangpa's ultimate *samaya's swirling spear in space*. These are profound, poetic words with great blessing. So it's saying that this kind of *samaya* is like a spear swirling in space.

As I said before, if you are able to cultivate the correct view, then the correct meditation spontaneously arises. With an incorrect view, then the meditation very quickly becomes incorrect. It is due to the correct meditation, that your conduct also becomes correct conduct. If there is something wrong with the meditation, then your conduct also becomes incorrect. So, by having these three correct, then the fruition is also correct, the genuine and ultimate fruition. Then the *samaya* also follows correctly. The correct *samaya* is the ultimate *samaya*. The Tibetan phrase in this line is '*kha dzin pa*', it has different meanings



but here it means opinions ‘like I want to be a good meditator’, and so you are very particular about the kind of meditation and the kinds of experiences you have, and you also always look out for yourself, you have this concern for yourself. Then, when someone gives you an initiation, when they give you samaya, then you become very particular about that samaya. From that kind of samaya practice, there arises a lot of fixation and clinging, lots of obscurations and obstructions. So, one has to get away from these hindrances and obstacles, one has to realise the true nature. If you are able to see the true nature, then these obscurations and contaminations will completely disappear. The Tibetan word in this line, ‘*thong*’, does not just mean you ‘give up’ but rather that they disappear, they naturally vanish. This is talking about the ultimate samaya, not the conventional samaya.

### 6) Compassion

Selfish desires and concerns eliminated,

Waves of undisputed love,

Free from sorrow, fatigue and self-seeking; these three

Are compassion’s swirling spear in space

Next is compassion. The first line, ‘*selfish desires and concerns eliminated*’ means in order to be genuinely compassionate, to be a bodhisattva with genuine bodhicitta, one must not look for one’s own benefit, visibly or invisibly. Sometimes, one visibly acts like a bodhisattva but invisibly you are trying to benefit yourself. That is a dangerous bodhisattva! (laughter). Here the Tibetan word is ‘*zey*’ which is stronger than ‘exhausted’, it means completely eliminated. Even a single, tiny desire is completely eliminated. Being ‘genuine’ means you are not looking for anything else for yourself but totally and absolutely concerned for others’ benefit. The fundamental way of thinking of bodhisattvas is in order to help others.

The second line says ‘*waves of undisputed love*’, the Tibetan word ‘*tso med*’ has many meanings but here it means ‘unpolluted’ or ‘undisputed’ compassion. This means if your compassion is accompanied with wisdom, then the compassion becomes stainless and faultless. Free from obscuration and free from delusion. It is genuine compassion because of the wisdom associated with it. Then you are able to ‘see’ beings’ suffering. The cause of the

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suffering is the concepts 'my', 'my family', 'my relatives' and there the attachment arises. The opposite is 'my enemy' to which anger and negative thoughts arise. These contradict compassion, love and so on. So, this is how one circles round in samsara. You are unable to see the suffering. Then, with this knowledge, your compassion combined with wisdom will develop and become stronger and stronger. Then you will see not just the suffering itself, but also the nature of the suffering; your compassion becomes unconditional compassion. Why unconditional? Because you know your compassion is worthy in order to help beings and you are able to see the suffering; that it does not truly exist and is caused by yourself, due to ignorance or 'mis-knowing'. That compassion cannot be disputed or competed with by anything else. If your compassion is limited and contaminated and not associated with wisdom then such compassion can be disputed and challenged. However, compassion combined with wisdom cannot be competed with by fabricated compassion. That's why it says 'tso med', it cannot be disputed or competed with. There are two different kinds of bodhisattva. One is the ordinary bodhisattva whose compassion is polluted and without wisdom. The bodhisattva on the path of seeing<sup>20</sup> is the noble bodhisattva. Why noble? Because they have wisdom; the compassion and wisdom are unified. Nobody can dispute or compete with that, so he or she is called 'noble'.

The next line, '*free from sorrow, fatigue and self-seeking*'. Of course, bodhisattvas do not have these negative mind states. Whatever the time, the number of beings and so on, they are not 'tired'. Whatever the conditions, they say 'am very happy to help you', from the heart not just from the mouth. I am not talking about myself, Sangye Nyenpa, I am talking about bodhisattvas, they do not have any feelings of tiredness or negative feelings. And also, these positive feelings for them do not last only two or three days and then they say 'Oh now I am fed up, get out and leave me alone'. They are extremely patient, time-wise as well because bodhisattvas have knowledge. They are free from depression, free from exhaustion and free from selfish concerns. Of course, no Bodhisattva is selfish. This is because of the power of compassion but also wisdom. It is the combination of wisdom and compassion that means bodhisattvas never get tired.

### 7) Interdependence

The muddiness of grasping cleaned away,  
Causes and conditions shine as reflections,  
Knowing the subtleties of adopting and abandoning; these three  
Are interdependence's swirling spear in space.

Gyalwa Gotsangpa speaks of inconceivable interdependent arising, which is found, for example, in madhyamaka texts that show how things arise from causes and conditions. This understanding of interdependent arising precedes that of emptiness. If you can see how interdependent arising operates and know its nature correctly, on that basis you can find emptiness within your mind.

The first line, *'the muddiness of grasping cleaned'*, indicates that in order to properly realize interdependent arising, one must first conquer ego-fixation. Whenever there is grasping, it is not possible to realize interdependence in its full measure. Whatever arises in dependence on causes and conditions is not independent, because it occurs through relying on conditions that are different from it. Therefore, what can be grasped, clung to, or perceived by the intellect has no ultimate value. However, if an object of attachment arises and it is authentic (not a delusion), by using it wisely to accomplish a positive goal, your attachment and working with it have value.

This kind of conventional thinking, however, is not from the perspective of the ultimate nature of phenomena, but its reverse. When you are thinking, 'If only it would happen,' the object of your thinking does not ultimately exist. You are deluded in thinking so, because the object is merely imputed through your ignorance—it is a product of conceptualizing mind. The object does not exist in the way we perceive it to be. We might also want to get rid of it, but just wishing, "May it not exist!" "May it be false, not real!" will not reverse our mistaken concepts.

You might have a doubt about your concepts and think, "Maybe things are not like that," but your intellect cannot help you here, as it is mistaken itself. Firstly, with your unmistakable wisdom, you have to see the nature of interdependence and then realize it through your experience. This will give you confidence in what it actually is: "Oh, this is really the way

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things are. Things all do come about in dependence on one another.” You become certain that everything is interconnected and nothing is independent and self-existing. Phenomena (ourselves included) are not autonomous. This confidence is the result of practice. Further, it is also possible to realise profound interdependence through experiencing the twelve links of dependent arising<sup>21</sup>, from ignorance through to death.

If you practise like this, Gotsangpa assures us that *‘the muddiness of grasping is cleaned’*. Even though the muddy pollution has no real nature, you might think that it actually exists, because you have been habituated to thinking like this since beginningless time. Whatever you happen to meet, you see in a dualistic way—self and other, good and bad, and so forth. These are all mistaken cognitions, coming one after the other, which misapprehend their conceptual object. Helplessly, you go around like this through the six states of existence and the activities of life, experiencing suffering. This comes from grasping, from not knowing that the conceptualised object you cling to is not actually there, yet you take it to exist as it appears.

Through finding your own wisdom, you can see that what you previously thought and believed in was false and meaningless. Thinking that this is not the way things are, you can come to see interdependent origination through your wisdom. This is the first profound point of Gotsangpa, that the muddiness of grasping will be self-liberated. You come to it through analysing and reflecting; just wishing or turning ideas around in your head will not bring about this deeper seeing. Repeating concepts, “This is an illusion. It’s not true, this is a dream” does not help. You must give rise to an unmistaken mind that can realise the nature of the object it is seeing. A dualistic, conceptual mind, one that takes things at their face value cannot do this. Any afflictive emotion interferes with the wisdom of seeing things. Your mind should be in accord with the way things are, so that *‘this muddiness of grasping is cleaned away’*. That is the meaning of the first line. This is the first stage.

As a practitioner, when you realise the interdependent relationship, then spontaneously the clinging and grasping, the subtle grasping, are eliminated. In Nāgārjuna’s texts there are two types of clinging, clinging to characteristics (*tshen dzin*) and clinging to truth, i.e. inherent existence (*den dzin*). The first type is the subtlest fixation. Sometimes in madhyamaka, they use *den zin* and *tshen dzin* to mean the same thing. In the highest tantric practise and certain practises of mahāmudrā, they differentiate them. *Tshen dzin pa* is the tiniest clinging

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or fixation. *Denpa dzin pa* is the gross clinging and fixation. Once one has realised interdependent origination, then naturally and spontaneously the subtle clinging will be cleared away. Then, if you realise the interdependent relation, you don't need to worry about cause and effect, as it's just a reflection of that interdependent relation. Why is there a connection between cause and effect? Since none of these truly exist, however, since there is the realisation of interdependent origination, and because of that, these things never cease. If there is no interdependent origination, then the function is not there. Why is there this process and order? Due to interdependent origination. Then you can see the interdependent origination, and the subtlest cause and effect. One can see all the relations of cause and effect and how it works.

The second line of this verse is '*causes and conditions shine as reflections*' you need to consider cause and effect and how one thing arises from another. What makes for an excellent result and for an unvirtuous result? How is it that interdependent origination is infallible? How is it that a virtuous cause unfailingly produces the result of happiness? Once self-fixation has been vanquished, you can experience on a conventional level that the activity of dependent origination as cause and effect is undeceiving; virtue brings about happiness, and non-virtue, suffering. One can reflect on each action to see how the activity of interdependent origination does not deceive.

You might think that if you lose your worldly mind based on self-fixation, the sequence of various activities of dependent arising might become jumbled up and that would present many problems. Yet, this is not the case. What happens is that your intellect that grasps onto a self and perceives incorrectly cannot see how interdependent arising operates. It is this confusion that is eliminated.

If you examine how thoughts arise interdependently and how you cling to things as real, you can come to see clearly how interdependent origination is undeceiving. Dualistic perception will fade, grasping onto things as real will be self-liberated, and you will be able to realize the dharmatā or suchness. On this basis, you see all phenomena in their undeceiving natural state.

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While its essential nature is emptiness—not established by having a basis and not existing ultimately—interdependent arising nevertheless performs its merely illusory activity on a relative level. As much as emptiness free of mental constructs is present, that much does dependent arising function according to its nature and without deception. This is the subtle aspect of dependent arising described in the madhyamaka. There are two, the coarse and subtle interdependence. In other words, the unmistaken mind that realises emptiness rests correctly and sees the natural way that phenomena arise in dependence. Based on that, phenomena arising from causes and conditions perform their activity effortlessly, naturally, and inconceivably. That is the certain discovery of the subtlest interdependence.

The second line states that: *causes and conditions shine as reflections*. *Reflections* here means there is no real form there, the Tibetan word is ‘*zug nyen*’. Just as the moon is reflected in water, the actual form of the moon is not there. It resembles the form, but other than resembling it there is no actual form or object there. Similarly, the causes and conditions are not actually existent but they appear like reflections. Reflections are not actual forms but merely resemble them; for example, we call the moon we see in water a reflection of the moon—not the actual moon but something resembling it. In a similar way, all phenomena that arise through causes and conditions are like reflections. You realize that forms are not truly or actually established; their essence is empty and their nature is free of mental constructs. From this arises the mind’s dynamic energy and display, which you do not grasp onto or identify as something: it is just like an illusion, a dream, or a reflection of the moon in water. That is the realisation that all is like an illusion, in dependence on that realisation, then whatever arises we will not take to be real and like reflections.

In the *Perfection of Wisdom* (Prajñāpāramitā) Sutras, the Buddha states:

Understand interdependent arising to resemble an illusion.

The consciousnesses of the five aggregates are like five illusions.

Illusions and aggregates do not arise apart from each other.

Avoid the discriminations that take a phenomenon to resemble something.

This is the conduct of the perfection of wisdom.

The first two lines of this verse were explained before. The third line means that it is impossible to separate the aggregates and being illusion-like: there is not one aggregate

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that does not resemble an illusion; the two are inseparable. This way of explaining emptiness points to the same meaning as the famous lines from the *Heart Sūtra*:

Form is emptiness and emptiness is form.

Form is none other than emptiness, and further,

emptiness is none other than form.

The fourth line in the quote above reads, 'Avoid the discriminations that take a phenomenon to resemble something.' A discrimination that apprehends a similarity is one that grasps onto characteristics, such as 'It's empty.' 'That's the middle.' 'This is the end.' 'That's a form.' 'This is a sound.' and so forth. You should be free of such clinging to an object of perception.

Then the next line, usually, we do not understand the term 'perception', or 'discrimination' (*du she*). It means that we are making things real by clinging onto them as an object or as having characteristics or existence. Whether we are taking things to be existent or non-existent, both ways are grasping onto something as real or true. In this fourth line, what is to be negated is that something truly exists. We take a thing to exist even though it does not. This is perhaps the most difficult problem because it relates to an instinctual clinging to a self, or essence.

The imaginary, or imputed, clinging to a self that comes from studying texts and tenets is easy to eliminate by bringing in new views that counter and oppose it. What is most difficult is eliminating the instinctual, deep-rooted clinging to a self that is naturally present in all living beings down to the smallest insect since beginningless time. There is no need to establish it through logical proofs; there is no need to study it, it is there for all to experience. It is crucial to recognize this, as instinctual clinging to a self is the basis of all faults and wrongdoing. This basis, that is present even in tiny insects, which is the root of the biggest fault of self-clinging, is not there from not understanding the connection between naming and existence and not understanding the way of thinking about objects, or from not thinking about conventional concepts and so on. This power is there naturally within oneself. As long as you have this mistaken, ignorant grasping within, you will not be able to correctly realise interdependent origination.

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For the mind that authentically sees interdependence to appear, you first need to correctly engage the instinctual mind, and on this basis, you discover that it is interdependently arisen. When you find this mind that knows instinctual clinging comes from causes and conditions, then all appearances will manifest as reflections. These lines from Gotsangpa's song are very profound:

The muddiness of grasping is cleaned away  
Causes and conditions shine as reflections.

Through this you can know the foundation of the madhyamaka. What is the benefit and profit of realizing appearances to be like reflections? Your suffering diminishes and life becomes delightful and happy. It is difficult for your mind to be under the sway of the afflictions because then you have no freedom. What you want to have happen does not, and what you do not want arrives. Who creates these mental states and situations? The mistaken mind that clings to true existence makes them arise.

If you can analyse correctly, your mind will entertain its object and know its way of being just as it is, so the mind's power will expand. Then, from this perspective, all phenomena arise as mere appearances from causes and conditions. At that point, you will not cling to anything and all points of reference will collapse. Until this happens, you will still have objects of reference and clinging to characteristics. The instinctual grasping onto a self will continue to appear to the mistaken mind. Deconstructing the ignorant mind's grasping onto objects will not be possible until the object dissolves. This points to the abiding nature of the ground in Mahayana meditation.

Similarly, Maitreya, through Asanga's *Ornament of the Scriptures*, states that when you realize that there is no object and then no mind, you can rest in the expanse of dharmadhātu (*cho ying*), knowing all mere appearances to be dependently arisen while seeing causes and conditions come into view as reflections. Phenomena are seen to be mere names, or mere imputations, and not ultimately existent. Here, the most important word is not the 'knowing' but having the 'certainty'. You must recognize this and be fully certain that this is the way things are. You might say that you are convinced that something is so, but if you investigate carefully, you will see that actually this conviction is quite rough. It comes only from studying and reflecting, which are not sufficient to create real certainty. To do that, meditation is necessary. The word certainty (*nge pa*) here means 'confidence'

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(*deng*). Dzogchen speaks of introducing mind to its own nature. Other phrases are “making a firm resolution,” or “meditation arising as a friend.” Knowledge without confidence is not much benefit.

How is it then that you find deep conviction? It is not on the basis of a conditioned object but through comprehending your previous experience, which gives you a confidence that cannot be budged by any outer or inner conditions. No matter what happens, you are able to remain within the nature of your mind, stable and unmoving like the king of mountains. Nothing can rob you of it. This is what it means to have certainty.

If you stay in the flow of this kind of undisturbable mind, the wisdom of the utterly purified mind, one arrives at the third line of Gotsangpa’s previous verse, “Tireless, persevering, not self-seeking.” You are delighted to go along the path of practice, engaging in virtuous activity, such as gathering the two accumulations and purifying obscurations. There’s a joyful feeling in progressing along the path of practice. To whatever extent you find certainty in emptiness and profound dependent arising, that much will you enjoy gathering the accumulations and purifying obscurations. And when you realize emptiness, you are even more joyful in continuing these two activities. So, it is not the case that once you have realized emptiness, it is no longer necessary to gather merit on a relative level, reciting rituals, practicing Tara and daily Mahakala, for example. These are important.

After the Buddha attained full awakening at the Vajra Seat in Bodh Gaya, he first turned the wheel of Dharma in Sarnath, teaching that you should understand suffering and so forth; he did not teach about emptiness. While resting in the vajra-like nature of the mind, he taught the foundation of the Mahayana and the root of all practice—the Four Truths of the Noble Ones: to know suffering for what it is, discard its origin, realize cessation, and rely on the path. He did not teach one should know there is no suffering, no origin, no cessation and no path. That one should know the four kāyas and one should just relax!

When practicing the Dharma, you need to be careful and reflect, “This is appropriate to do and that is not. This will make what I want to see happen and that will not.” Things will not go well if you just act without reflecting. The stages of the path according to the Victorious One are related to view, meditation, and action, and not simply doing whatever you want.

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You recognize interdependent arising and see that it is empty and not established through having an inherent nature—what comes about in relying on a support is not independent. Further, it has no basis, no root, no beginning, middle, or end, and it is not a thing. To the extent that you can develop confidence in mind's nature being free of such mental constructs, to that same extent interdependently arising thoughts will come unerringly from their ground. To the extent that you can be confident in the profound meaning of emptiness, to that same extent will you have respect for the way karma and results work. To the extent that the correct view of emptiness is born within you, to that same extent will you feel a deep sorrow and compassion for all living beings, who are caught in samsara chained by cause and effect.

Until samsara empties out, you vow to work for their benefit. Knowing that phenomena are not inherently existent and merely dependently arisen—that the phenomena we cling to are mere names and conventions—we have an even greater compassion for those who have not realized this. For this realisation and compassion to occur, however, they must be preceded by the correct view. Through its powerful influence, the correct view will bring all practice onto the right path. Without it, concepts will run their own misleading course through samsara. If you practice under the influence of samsara and concepts as they follow their own direction, you will not be able to eliminate the ignorance that has to come to an end. And if this is not possible, your suffering will never leave you.

The third line in the root verse: *'knowing the subtleties of adopting and abandoning'* is speaking about the subtlest adopting and abandoning. This is very important, for an ordinary practitioner. Of course, generally, we know about karma, cause and effect and that one should not engage in negativities because in the next life I will suffer and so on. Also, that we should engage in positive actions and so on because in the next life there will be a good result and so on. However, there is still a lack of a determined belief because of a lack of knowledge. The idea is there but the determination is not. Why? Due to a lack of realisation and understanding of emptiness. In madhyamaka, Chandrakirti says, the more you realise and understand emptiness, the more you understand and believe the beautiful relationship between cause and effect. This is true. A lack of realisation and understanding of emptiness means you are not so careful with cause and effect. Why does one adopt virtue and abandon negative actions? Due to completely understanding cause and effect

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and thus having a lot more respect towards the practise of adopting and abandoning virtue and non-virtue. This is due to the knowledge of emptiness. If you lack such knowledge then you are not so careful. Chandrakirti says if you do not understand the interdependent origination, then you still lack understanding of emptiness. One realises emptiness based on the interdependent relationship.

Nāgārjuna says:

རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་འབྱུང་མ་ཡིན་པའི།

ཚོས་འགའ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།

དེའི་སྤྱིར་སྣང་ཉིད་མ་ཡིན་པའི།

ཚོས་འགའ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།

There is no phenomena that is not interdependently arisen.

Therefore, there is no phenomena that is not emptiness.

It is very important not to think there is no karma, no action and one can do whatever one likes. It is not like that. In fact, it is because of the interdependent relations that we must be careful with the virtues and non-virtues. If anyone says ‘everything is emptiness and so one can do what one likes’ please be careful with that person!

### 8) *Enlightened Activity*

The awakening of aspirations long sent,

Whatever’s done benefiting beings,

Effortless, spontaneous accomplishments; these three

Are enlightened activity’s swirling spear in space.

The first line is talking about how Bodhisattvas on the way to enlightenment have made a lot of aspirations and a lot of prayers. When the condition comes, these aspirations are accomplished. The next line, whatever is done benefits beings. The activities of body,

## *Eight Swirling Spears*

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speech and mind are done completely and solely for the benefit to beings. That activity is also effortless. Not like us, we have to make effort. If you have to make effort then your activity will be limited. Buddha's activity is limitless. The prayers never cease, until all sentient beings are enlightened.

I have explained this briefly, but because the lineage is excellent I hope it will be of benefit for your practise. I received this teaching from my teacher, Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche a long time back. So each and every day we need to observe our mental attitude. One should have mindfulness, diligence, wisdom and also devotion. These first three were given by Nāgārjuna, the last of 'devotion' was given by the Kadampa masters. These four are your ultimate weapon and ultimate protector. They can protect you, nothing else can.

Long-Life Prayer for HE 10<sup>th</sup> Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche  
Composed by the 17<sup>th</sup> Karmapa, Orgyen Trinley Dorje<sup>22</sup>



ཚོས་དབྱིང་བདེ་ཆེན་འདུ་མ་བྱས་པའི་དབྱིངས།།      སྐྱུ་དང་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཟུང་འཇུག་སྐྱུ་མའི་རྩལ།།  
ཐབས་ཤེས་ཚེ་ཡི་དངོས་གྲུབ་ཀུན་སྣོལ་བ།།      འཆི་མེད་མགོན་པོ་དེ་ཡིས་པ་སྐྱབས།།  
*chö ying de chen du ma je pai ying/*      *ku dang ye shey zung jug gyu mai tsal/*  
*thab shey tshe yi ngö drub kun tsöl wa/*      *chi mey gon po de yi shi pa drub/*

The expanse of the uncompounded, great bliss Dharmadhātu;  
The illusory display of the union of primordial awareness and kāyas;  
The one who bestows all the siddhis of life, wisdom and method;  
Immortal protector<sup>1</sup>, may we accomplish auspicious fortune!

ཚོས་བརྒྱད་འབྲི་བ་ཚོད་པའི་གཏང་མེད་པོ།།      ཚོས་ཀུན་རྩུན་པར་ཤེས་པའི་ཞེན་ལོག་ཅན།།  
མོས་གྲུས་སྣོང་ཕུར་འཇུགས་པའི་དཔའ་བོ་ཆེ།།      རྣལ་འབྱོར་དབང་ཕྱུག་ཆེན་པོའི་ཞབས་བརྟན་གསོལ།།  
*chö gye thri wa chö pai te mey po/*      *chö kun dzun par she pai zhen log chen*  
*mö gu nying phur dzug pai pa wo che/*      *nel jor wang chug chen po'i zhab ten sol/*

Free of fixed goal, by severing entanglement with the eight worldly aims<sup>23</sup>,  
Turned off grasping, by understanding all phenomena as false.  
Great hero, who plants seeds of heart devotion,

<sup>1</sup> 'chi med mgon po may refer to Buddha Amitayus here.

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## Eight Swirling Spears

Magnificent, powerful yogi, please remain stable and long!

གཞུང་ལུགས་ཀུན་ལ་བཤད་ཡམ་ཙམ་མེན་པར།།      གདུལ་བྱའི་སྐྱོན་མཚང་གོང་ནས་ཕྱུངས་བྱས་ཏེ།།  
འཇུལ་མེད་ལམ་བཟང་མཚོག་དང་ལེགས་སྤྱད་པའི།།      བསྟན་པ་ཚུལ་བཞིན་འཛིན་པའི་ཞབས་བརྟན་གསོལ།།  
*zhung lug kun la she yam tsam min par/                      dul ja'i kyon tshang gong ne chung je te/  
thrul me lam zang chog dang leg tre pai/                      ten pa tshul zhin dzin pai zhab ten sol/*

Not merely pontificating on all the scriptural traditions;  
Expelling all prior hidden flaws and faults of disciples;  
Delivering well the supreme, superb, unerring path;  
Upholding correctly the teachings, please remain stable and long!

དབང་ཕྱུགས་བརྒྱད་ལྡན་ཚོས་ཀྱི་ཁྱིའི་འཕང་ལ།།      འགྲུར་མེད་ཞབས་མེན་བསྐྱལ་བརྒྱར་རབ་བཀོད་ནས།།  
བཀའ་བརྒྱད་མཚོག་གི་རིང་ལུགས་རྒྱས་བཞིན་དུ།།      སྐྱ་གསུམ་གོ་འཕང་འགོ་ལ་སྦྱེལ་བྱེད་ཤོག།།  
*wang chug gye den chö ki thri phang la/                      gyur me zhab sen kal gyar rab kö ne  
ka gyu chog gi ring lug gye zhin du/                      ku sum go phang dro la tsöl je shog/*

On the Dharma throne level, endowed with the eight authorities<sup>24</sup>;  
Immovable, remaining hundreds of eons, the finest display.  
As with the flourishing of the sublime Kagyu tradition,  
Please bestow on beings the level of the three kāyas<sup>25</sup>!

Translated and edited by Adele Tomlin, Bodh Gaya, India, 17 January 2019. With special thanks to HE 10<sup>th</sup> Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche for answering questions about the prayer during its translation. May it be of benefit!

**Long-Life Prayer for Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche**  
**Aspiration Words for Lasting Stability**  
composed by HH 17th Karmapa, Orgyen Trinley Dorje



འབས་བརྟན་སློན་ཚིག།

ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་ཡོན་ཏན་ཞིང་གི་དཔལ་ལྷན་ཅིང།།

ཚོས་དོན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་མ་འདྲས་སོ་སོར་སྒྲང།།

སྤྲོས་ཟབ་མའི་མགུར་དབྱངས་ཕྱོགས་བསྐྱར་ལེན།།

བཤེས་གཉེན་དམ་པའི་འབས་བད་རྟག་བརྟན་ཤོག།།

Gloriously endowed with the universe of qualities of ethical discipline,  
Illuminating each distinctive meaning of the ocean of Dharma,  
Chanting inspiring songs of the profound view and meditation,  
Genuine spiritual friend, please remain long and stable!

*This Aspiration Prayer was composed for the incomparable spiritual friend, Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche by HH 17<sup>th</sup> Karmapa, Orgyen Trinley Dorje, at Gyuto Monastery India, after being urged and requested again and again by several Asian devotees.*

Translated by Adele Tomlin, 1st March, 2019.

<sup>1</sup> Orgyenpa Rinchen Pel (o rgyan pa rin chen dpal) (1229 -1309) also known as Orgyen Nyendrub, was also a teacher of the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje. According to his biography: ‘For twelve years Orgyenpa studied Kālacakra, mainly in the traditions of Dro Lotsāwa ('bro lo tsA ba) and Chak Lotsāwa (chag lo tsA ba), and the major Kagyu doctrines with Gotsangpa.’ See <https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Orgyenpa-Rinchen-Pel/2733>

<sup>2</sup> This story was told by HE 10<sup>th</sup> Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche in some mind-training teachings he gave in Nepal in April, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> This place name where Gotsangpa states he composed this text is called Khyungkar ( *khyung dkar*). I asked Dan Martin, who translated Gotsangpa’s biography, and he helpfully sent me chronologies from the sources below. Both sources state that Gotsangpa was there for three years between 1233-1236.

Sources are: Rare Tibetan texts from Lahul: Narrative Accounts of Rgod tshang pa Mgon po rdo rje, Chos rgyal G.yu sna Legs pa'i don grub & Sras Gu ru Chos kyi dbang phyug. LMPj 015,893. SB 5097. Set X. The biography contained here, on pp. 1-325, has no specific title, but the colophon title is as follows (318.2): Chos rje rgod tshang ba'i stod pa nyi shu rtsa Inga'i sgo gnas stod pa rnam par thar pa yon tan kun bsal zhes bya ba. It states that Gotsangpa was at for three years until age 38: *de nas khyung dkar dang spang dkar gnyis su lo gsum te so brgyad / 1233-1236*. There is also a similar passage in Rgod tshang pa Mgon po rdo rje, 1189-1258, The Collected Works of Rgod tshang pa Mgon po rdo rje, the founder of the Upper Tradition (Stod) of the 'Brug pa Dkar brgyud pa, Tango Monastic Community (Thimphu 1981). 5 vols. LMPj 014,572. Set VIII. This also states that Gotsangpa was there for three years (1233-1236), *de nas shri ri khyung dkar du lo gsum*.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ktgrinpoche.org/songs/eight-flashing-lances>.

<sup>5</sup> The title *mdung skor brgyad* literally means ‘swirling’ (or ‘circling’) and ‘spear’ (or ‘lance’). In the only prior English translation of this text I have seen, it has been translated as ‘eight flashing lances’. The reason I have translated this differently is because Rinpoche states that the reason it is called a ‘swirling spear in space’ is that such a spear is free from all obstructions and moves freely. In English, one might say ‘as free as a bird or a kite’ to get across a similar meaning. I have not been able to find any editions of this text on TBRC. The Tibetan text was sent to me on request by 10<sup>th</sup> Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche, source is not known.

<sup>6</sup> Here *tshogs drug* is referring to the six types of consciousness.

<sup>7</sup> The Tibetan term used here is *dwang pa*, which has a slightly different sense to the commonly used term *gsal ba*, ‘eliminate’ or ‘clear away’. It is more like ‘cleaned’, or polished or ‘made transparent’.

<sup>8</sup> He became known as Gotsangpa after meditating for several years at a cave near the border of Nepal called Gotsangpa cave. See <https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Gotsangpa-Gonpo-Dorje/3759>.

<sup>9</sup> The quote in Tibetan is: མིང་དང་གཞིག་བྱ་ལྷོད་དང་གཞིག་བྱ་ལྷོད་དང་གསུམ་མེད་གཞིག་ཏུ་མ་གྲུབ་བར་ད་གནས་འདི་ལས་མི་འདུལ།

<sup>10</sup> *Śūnyatā* is translated most often as *emptiness* and sometimes *voidness*. It is a concept which has multiple meanings depending on its doctrinal context. It is either an ontological feature of reality, a meditative state, or



## Eight Swirling Spears

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a phenomenological analysis of experience. Here in the Mahayana context, it means ‘devoid of any inherent existence’.

<sup>11</sup> The three kāyas of the *ground* (zhi’ sku gsum), the three kāyas of *path* (lam gi sku gsum), and the three kāyas of *fruition* (dre bu’i sku gsum).

<sup>12</sup> *gnas lugs*, the abiding reality, ultimate nature.

<sup>13</sup> *snang tshul* the way things appear.

<sup>14</sup> Fifth Karmapa (1384-1415), De-Bzhin gShegs-pa. The Tibetan title of this text is *Bde smon shes bya ma*

<sup>15</sup> Here *tshogs drug* is referring to the six types of consciousness, body, eyes, nose, ear, tongue, touch, mind.

<sup>16</sup> ཚོགས་དྲུག་གི་ཤེས་པ་འདི་རྒྱལ་བའི་ཕྱག་གིས་ཀྱང་མི་ལེགས་པ་ཞིག་འདུག་ཏེ། དེ་བས་ཚོགས་དྲུག་སྐྱེག་པར་འཇོག་པའི་ཚོ་བོ་རྣམས་འཕྱོར་པ་འདྲ་ཡོད་དེ།

<sup>17</sup> *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*.

<sup>18</sup> *thogs* and *rdog*.

<sup>19</sup> Longchen Rabjampa, Drimé Özer (*klong chen rab 'byams pa dri med 'od zer*), commonly abbreviated to Longchenpa (1308–1364). The text referred to here is called The Treasury of the Open Space of Dharmadhātu (*Dharmadhātu ratna kośa nāma: Chos dbyings rin po che'i mdzod*).

<sup>20</sup> This is referring to the third of the five stages of the path, when a being becomes an Arya after realising emptiness and the lack of inherent existence of phenomena.

<sup>21</sup> The twelve links of dependent origination (Skt. dvādaśāṅga-pratītyasamutpāda; rten 'brel yan lag bcu gnyis) also referred to as the twelve nidanas (Skt. nidāna) are:

- Ignorance (Skt. avidyā; ma rig pa): Fundamental ignorance of the truths and the delusion of mistakenly perceiving the skandhas as a self.
- Formation (Skt. saṃskāra; 'du byed): As long as there is ignorance there is the formation of karma: positive, negative and neutral. This forms the rebirths in the various realms.
- Consciousness (Skt. vijñāna; rnam par shes pa): Formations cause the consciousness of the next existence. The consciousness which propels one towards the next existence is called the impelling consciousness. And the consciousness that is led to that particular state, once the conditions have come together, is known as the consciousness of the impelled result. These two aspects of consciousness are counted as a single link since together they establish the link between two lives.
- Name-and-form (Skt. nāma-rūpa; ming dang gzugs): The five skandhas. By the power of consciousness one is linked to a womb, and there the body develops: the form and the four ‘name’ skandhas of sensation, perception, formation and consciousness.
- The six ayatanas (Skt. ṣaḍāyatana; skye mched drug): The six inner ayatanas of the sense faculties then arise.
- Contact (Skt. sparśa; reg pa): The coming together of objects, sense faculty and consciousness is contact.
- Sensation (Skt. vedanā; tshor ba): From contact arises sensation: pleasurable, painful and neutral.
- Craving (Skt. tṛṣṇā; sred pa): There then develops a desire not to be separated from pleasurable sensations and to be free from painful sensations.

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## *Eight Swirling Spears*

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- Grasping (Skt. upādāna; len pa): As craving increases, it develops into grasping, i.e. actively striving never to be separated from what is pleasurable and to avoid what is painful.
- Becoming (Skt. bhava; srid pa): Through this grasping one acts with body, speech and mind, and creates the karma that determines one's next existence.
- Rebirth (Skt. jāti; skye ba): Through the power of this becoming, one is reborn in a particular birthplace whenever the necessary conditions are assembled.
- Old age and death (Skt. jarā-maraṇa; rga shi): Following rebirth there is a continual process of aging as the aggregates change and develop; and eventually there is death when the aggregates finally cease.

<sup>22</sup> This Long-Life Prayer was spontaneously composed by HH 17<sup>th</sup> Karmapa, Orgyen Trinley Dorje on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2010, at the conclusion of the Kangyur oral transmission, which HE 10<sup>th</sup> Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche gave in Dharamsala, India.

<sup>23</sup> The 8 (worldly) aims (chos brgyad) are 1) gain (rnyed pa); 2) loss (ma rnyed pa); 3) pleasing speech (snyan pa); 4) unpleasing speech (mi snyan pa); 5) slander (smad pa); 6) praise (bstod pa); 7) pleasure (bde ba); 8) pain (sdug bsngal).

<sup>24</sup> These are the eight powers of authority (*dbang phyugs brgyad*) over body, speech, mind, enlightened activity, miraculous feats, ubiquitousness, abodes and fulfilment of wishes.

<sup>25</sup> The dharmakāya, sambhogakāya and nirmanakāya.

This text by Tibetan master, Gotsangpa Gonpo Dorje (rgod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje) (1189-1258) is a series of short verses on what he calls 'Eight Swirling Spears' (*mdung skor brgyad*). Gotsangpa was a mahasiddha of the Drukpa Kagyu school, well known for his songs of realisation and said to have been an emanation of Milarepa. He founded the branch of the Drukpa Kagyu school, known as the Upper Drukpa (stod 'brug). These 'eight spears' he refers to in the text, represent the view, meditation, conduct, fruition, samaya, compassion, dependent origination, and enlightened activity. Gotsangpa sings about how each 'spear' has three aspects. When these three aspects are all present, then the spear swirls freely in space, without obstruction. Meaning that particular 'spear' is accomplished, complete and free. In English, we might say 'flying free like a kite'.

This commentary on the text by HE 10<sup>th</sup> Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche is an edited compilation of two public teachings Rinpoche gave. The Tibetan script and phonetics are included for those who like to chant such songs in the Tibetan.

Two new translations of long-life prayers written by HH 17<sup>th</sup> Gyalwang Karmapa, Orgyen Trinley Dorje for 10<sup>th</sup> Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche and the second for Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche have been included.

### Author

Adele Tomlin is from England and has an MA in Western Philosophy (King's College, London) and an MA in Tibetan Buddhist Studies (University of Hamburg). Since 2006, she has spent several years studying Tibetan language and Buddhist Philosophy in India and Nepal. Publications include 'Taranatha's Commentary on the Heart Sutra' (LTWA, 2017) and The Chariot that Transports to the Four Kayas (LTWA, 2019). She founded the website [www.shentongkalacakra.com](http://www.shentongkalacakra.com), on which her work and translations are published.

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*Eight Swirling Spears*

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