

PART II: TRANSLATION

The Key to the Precious Treasury, Briefly Distinguishing the General Meaning of the Glorious Secret Essence Tantra

Composed by Jikmé Tenpé Nyima (1865-1926)

Translated by Nathaniel Garson

INTRODUCTION

Homage to the glorious lama, who is Vajrasattva. [3]¹

Homage to the lama, lord of the all-pervasive circle,

Whose speech on the tantras fashions into the magical net body,

The cloud of magnificence that is the inseparable vajra,² [4]

The exalted body which is the sphere of the ultimate and the basic mind free
from defilement. [5]

The illumination of the secret, supreme tantras,

Acts as the sun of the three unsurpassed lineages, causing the land of trainees,

The lotus-garden of blossoming youth, to achieve the two accomplishments.³

May [this sun] remain steadily in the sky of [my] mind.

Although the profundity of the meaning of tantra is difficult to ascertain by one
such as I,

Listen with an unbiased mind to [this] exposition of only a part,

That relies upon the good explanations of lamas in the transmission,

Like an echo following someone's voice.

¹ Page numbers included in brackets mark the beginning of a page from the Delhi edition of the *Key to the Treasury*. Rdo Grub-chen III 'Jigs-med-bstan-pa'i-ñi-ma, *Dpal Gsang ba'i snying po'i rgyud kyi spyi don nyung ngu'i ngag gis rnam par 'byed pa rin chen mdzod kyi lde mig* in *The Collected Works of Rdo Grub-chen 'Jig-med-bstan-pa'i-ñi-ma* (Gangtok & Delhi: Dodrup Chen Rimpoche & Jayyed Press, 1974; I-Tib 74-901179), vol. 3, 1-237. The other edition used was: Rdo Grub-chen III 'Jigs-med-bstan-pa'i-ñi-ma, *Dpal Gsañ ba'i sñiñ po'i rgyud kyi spyi don nuñ nu'i nag gis rnam par 'byed pa rin chen mdzod kyi lde mig: A General Commentary on the Guhyagarbha Tantra and various writings on Rdzogs-chen practice* (Gangtok: Dodrup Chen Rimpoche, 1973; I(Sik)-Tib 73-903950). This is referred to as the Gangtok edition.

² Underlined words are those highlighted by the *nges bzung* mark in Tibetan. These are honorific marks underneath a syllable indicating it is part of the author's root teacher's name. In this case, the two syllables underlined are *rdo rje* (vajra) and *gzi bjid* (magnificence). *rdo rje gzi bjid* is a secret name for Jam-yang Khyentse-wang-bo (*The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 1, 734), who was the author's root teacher.

³ *grub gnyis* (5.1). Ordinary feats (*mthun mong gi dngos grub*) and the extraordinary feat (*mchog gi dngos grub*) of Buddhahood.

Here I will compose, for the sake of reminding [myself], a brief presentation on the general meaning of the king of tantras, *Secret Essence, Definitive Suchness, the Magical Emanation Net of Vajrasattva*; a treasury within the ocean of teachings which are sacred word-treasures of the early translation; source of the four rivers of secret mantra; framework for all tantras, oral transmissions, and quintessential instructions; essence of the Conqueror's final reflection distilled into an extract, that teaches mind and primordial wisdom as the self-luminous indifferentiable truth. This [presentation] has three [parts]: how it was spoken by the teacher, how it was transmitted from him, and an explanation of the actual meaning of the tantra having that transmission.

THE WAY IN WHICH THE TANTRA WAS SPOKEN BY THE TEACHER [5.6]

Our Teacher, although himself free from all the bonds of attachment, came under the influence of great compassion for sentient beings who have entered into the cage of cyclic existence and [6] who, being oppressed by the thick darkness of obscurations, are completely ignorant of the way out. For the sake of sending forth great waves of illumination of the excellent doctrine to which the light of a billion suns does not compare, he took birth, possessing the adornments of the limitless good qualities of a lotus-lord.⁴ At a time when the life span of beings had fallen to one hundred years, he was born as the son of Śuddhodana, king of the Shākya clan, which was like the tip of a victory banner higher than all [the other] clans.

Shākyamuni or “Lion of the Shākyas,” whose white banner of renown shines over the three levels,⁵ initially acted to thoroughly ripen sentient beings with many skillful means that accorded with the ways of worldly enjoyment, such as playing the games of a youth, learning

⁴ *padmo dbang 'byor* (6.3).

⁵ The three levels are areas where different beings live: below the ground where the Nāgas live (*sa 'og klu'i srid pa*), on the ground where humans live (*sa'i steng mi'i srid pa*), and above the ground, or in the sky, where the gods live (*gnam steng lha'i srid pa*). See *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 2, 120, “Three Spheres (of Existence) *srid/sa gsum*”.

the arts and sciences, living with the royal consorts, and so on.⁶ Having done this, when he had reached twenty-nine years of age, he abandoned the dominion and wealth of a king and became homeless. He practiced asceticism on the banks of the Nairañjanā River.⁷ While he was residing there, he was aroused by the Buddhas of the ten directions, whereupon he left that imputed body there, [and with his] wisdom body went to the highest pure land, where he found enlightenment through the five manifest enlightenments.⁸ [7] Then, having gone to the summit of Mount Meru, the shore of the ocean, the country of Oḍḍiyāna, and the city of Zahor,⁹ he taught the limitless tantras of secret mantra such as this one to a pure circle [of trainees. Then] returning to his imputed body he demonstrated with common appearances the remaining deeds [of a Buddha], going to the Bodhgayā¹⁰ and so forth.¹¹

Accordingly, because the two, the teaching of secret mantra by the Emanation Body and the teaching of the secret mantra in the highest pure land by the Complete Enjoyment Body, are like a face and its reflected image, it is not that [the Buddha] did the former upon having abandoned the state of the latter. This is the way it is explained by the master Sūryasimhaprabha¹² in his *Extensive Commentary on the “Glorious Secret Essence, Definitive*

⁶ These are some of the twelve deeds of a Buddha, considered to be events that take place in each Buddha’s life. For the full list, see note 11.

⁷ *ne ranydza na* (6.5). The Sanskrit name for this waterway is according to Monier-Williams (570), where he lists it as “f. N. of a river (Nilajan) falling into the Ganges in Magadha (Behar)”.

⁸ *mngon byang lnga* (6.6). For a brief discussion of the five manifest enlightenments in their tantric context, see Chapter 1. For another Mahāyoga description of the Buddha’s enlightenment experience, see Sūryasimhaprabha (Ñi-ma’i-señ-ge’i-’od), *dpal gsang ba’i snying po de kho na nyid nges pa’i rgya cher ’grel pa, Śri-guhyagarbha-vipulaṭika-nāma* (Gangtok: Dodrup Sangyay Lama, 1976; I-Tib 76-902441; I-Tib-1565), 5.4-6.1.

⁹ Oḍḍiyāna is said to be the home of Padmasambhava, while Zahor is the home of Śāntarakṣita. See *The Legend of the Great Stūpa*, pp.22, 69, 74.

¹⁰ *byang chub snying po* (7.2). In Sanskrit this is *bodhimāṇḍa*. According to Franklin Edgerton’s *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* (415), *maṇḍa* means “the best, supreme point” so that in English the phrase renders as “supreme point of enlightenment”, referring to the Bodhi-tree at modern-day Bodhgayā.

¹¹ In all, the twelve deeds of a Buddha are: 1. descent from the Joyous Pure Land (*tuṣita*), 2. conception, 3. birth, 4. mastery of the arts, 5. sporting with the retinue, 6. renunciation, 7. asceticism, 8. meditation under the tree of enlightenment, 9. conquest of the array of demons, 10. becoming a Buddha, 11. turning the wheel of the doctrine, and 12. entering into final *nirvāṇa*. See Sopa and Hopkins, *Practice and Theory of Tibetan Buddhism* (New York, 1976), pp.88-9.

¹² *nyi ’od seng ge* (7.4). In a Tibetan edition of his major commentary, this figure’s name is given as *nyi ma’i seng*

Suchness".¹³ [In another way] after having demonstrated the deed of gaining enlightenment in the land of humans, while the Teacher was turning the wheels of the doctrine within the common vehicles, his Enjoyment body explained the tantras in the highest pure land. This position is how it is explained by Vilāsavajra in his *Blazing Palace*.¹⁴ The all-knowing king of the doctrine [Longchenpa] also made assertions agreeing with the latter.

Regarding that highest pure land where he taught the tantras, it was the highest pure land of the Great Lord [Avalokiteśvara].¹⁵ There are two highest pure lands, [one] which is the land of the Enjoyment Body and [another] that of the Emanation Body, which is a similitude of the former. [8] With respect to the latter, there are also said to be two, the land of the Natural Emanation Body¹⁶ known as half-Emanation and half-Enjoyment Body, and the highest pure land of the pure type,¹⁷ which is an abode of the gods.

ge'i 'od, sūryasimhaprabha (cf. below). Dorje and Kapstein give it as *sūryaprabhāsīmha* (*The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 2, 436).

¹³ *Sūryasimhaprabha* (Ñi-ma'i-señ-ge'i-'od), *dpal gsang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid nges pa'i rgya cher 'grel pa, Śri-guhyagarbha-vipulaṭika-nāma* (Gangtok: Dodrup Sangyay Lama, 1976; I-Tib 76-902441; I-Tib-1565).

¹⁴ I could not locate a precise statement of this position in the *Blazing Palace*. Jikmé Tenpé Nyima's wording seems to indicate that he is deducing this position from several statements within Vilāsavajra's text, such as the one in the third chapter:

Through the blessing of the causes and conditions of this tantra being fulfilled, there issued forth the six teachers of the three baskets, the three outer tantras, and the tantras of enlightened body, speech, and mind as well as teachers who tame through inconceivable [means], and they taught and delineated simultaneously. (*rgyud 'di'i rgyu rkyen tshang ba'i byin gyis brlabs las/ sde snod gsum dang / sngags phyi pa gsum dang / sku gsung thugs kyī rgyud rnams kyī ston pa drug dang / bsam gyis mi khyab pas 'dul ba'i ston pa rnams 'thon nas/ dus mnyam du gsungs shing gtan la phab pa...*)

– Vilāsavajra, *Blazing Palace*, 58.1-58.3.

¹⁵ This is the Pure Land of an Enjoyment Body and is where the tantra was taught. It is also called the self-appearing highest pure land (*rang snang 'og min*).

¹⁶ *rang bzhin sprul sku'i zhing khams* (8.1). These are the Pure Lands of the five Buddhas—Akṣobhya, Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi—who are considered to be Emanation Bodies of Samantabhadra. They are not located in the three realms (*khams gsum*), though their inhabitants are both superiors (*phags pa*) and ordinary beings (*so so'i skyes bu*).

¹⁷ *gtsang ris* (8.1). The highest pure land associated with the form realm is found as the highest of the five pure place (*gnas gtsang lnga, pañcaśuddhāvāsakāyika*), which are apart from the four concentrations. They are called pure places, because only superiors—those who have realized emptiness—can be born there. See Lati Rinbochay, Denma Lochö Rinbochay, Zahler, and Hopkins, *Meditative States in Tibetan Buddhism*, (London: Wisdom Publications, 1983), p.41-45.

Scholars say that these modes of explanation are not in any way contradictory, because the fields of a Tathāgata's magical artifice are inconceivable. One earlier [scholar], in dependence on the mode of explanation in the *Blazing Palace*, [mistakenly] asserted that aside from only the common vehicles the Emanation Body did not teach the Mahāyoga Tantras in the land of humans. This is not feasible, because it contradicts the statement in the root tantra itself that in the context of training by speech the section on the four trainings which are deeds of the Emanation Body says, “the highest vehicle and....”¹⁸ Since the mode of explanation in the highest pure land is the main [mode of teaching] explicitly indicated in the first chapter, both modes of explanation by the Enjoyment Body and by the Emanation Body are evident in the tantra itself.

HOW THE TANTRA WAS TRANSMITTED FROM THE TEACHER [8.5]

This section has two parts: a general presentation of the three transmissions and a detailed explanation identifying each.

GENERAL PRESENTATION OF THE THREE TRANSMISSIONS [8.5]

There are three transmissions, as stated in *The Ocean*—an explanatory tantra:

Conquerors, Bodhisattvas, and Yogins

Transmit through thought, basic mind, and the ear.¹⁹

This is the uncommon vocabulary of secret mantra in the early translations. [9]

With respect to that, the Conqueror's transmission through thought is two-fold. For example, because the form of a rabbit exists on the single moon in the sky, however many

¹⁸ *bla na med pa'i theg pa dang* / (8.4). This agrees with *Secret Essence*, Tk.218, 11.3, but Tb.417, 160.6 has: *bla na med pa'i theg pas* / The four taming of the Emanation Body are: 1. taming through the great merit of Enlightened Body (*sku bsod nams chen pos 'dul ba*), 2. taming through the direct perception of Enlightened Mind (*thugs mngon sum pas 'dul ba*), 3. taming through inconceivable miracles (*rdzu 'phrul bsam gyis mi khyab pas 'dul ba*), and 4. taming through the knowledge [conveyed in] speech (*gsung rig pas 'dul ba*). (*The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 2, 133).

¹⁹ *rgya mtsho las/ rgya ba sems dpa' rnal 'byor pal / dgongs pa rig pa rna bar brgyud* / (8.6).

images of the moon arise in water they all appear to possess the markings of a rabbit.²⁰ Similarly, one can posit that by the mere fact that a being of the sixth lineage, who sets forth [the tantra], has completely ascertained the meaning of the tantra, the retinue of all the male and female Tathāgatas, of the father and mother Bodhisattvas, and of the peaceful and wrathful [deities] who are emanated by that [person also] ascertain the meaning of the tantra. This is a transmission due to the sameness of thought between the principal [deity] and surrounding [emanations]. There is another mode of transmission through thought [as follows]. Through communicating the thought of profound initiation to those in his company who have separate continuums from him,²¹ the Teacher and attendants become indifferntiable in thought.

“Bodhisattva’s transmission through basic mind” is similar to “awareness holder’s transmission through symbols,” which occurs elsewhere.²² Since instructors who are pure Bodhisattvas have gained an enlightened body achieved from mantric primordial wisdom, they aim their enlightened mind—the thought of primordial wisdom of basic mind—at their company of Bodhisattvas who have thoroughly ripened continuums. Then, by their merely displaying the modes of communication of mantra and mudrā, in that moment the circle realizes all of the meanings of the tantra. [10] Moreover, although this is a particular type of transmission of the meaning through thought, in order to distinguish it from the mode of transmission that is a Conqueror’s transmission through thought, it is not called “transmission through thought” but “transmission through basic mind”.

As for the yogin of “yogin’s transmission through the ear,” this is not, for instance, someone who has risen as a deity from the beginning but is one who, having assumed an

²⁰ Just as some Western traditions see a man in the moon, the Indo-Tibetan traditions see the shape of a rabbit in the shadings on the moon’s surface.

²¹ *rgyud tha dad pa’i lhan gcig pa’i ’khor* (9.3).

²² *sems dpa’ rig brgyud* and *rig ’dzin brda brgyud* (9.4-9.5).

ordinary basis²³ and cultivated the path, has attained any of the stages from “heat” on up. This [exposition] is done in common terms of the mode of appearance to trainees, but, according to the way things actually are, there also are Conquerors and Bodhisattvas among these yogins, as was the case with the great master Padmasambhava. Successive transmission of the initiation, tantra, and quintessential instructions from the mouths of such earlier yogins to the ears of later ones is transmission through the ear.

The Great Omniscient One [Longchenpa] said it is not contradictory for there be a mode of transmission through the ear even among Buddhas, although this is nothing like a learners’ transmission through the ear. Also, since the scriptures of many sūtras and tantras establish this as well, it is not suitable to say that with regard to Conquerors there is only a transmission through thought and with regard to the Bodhisattvas there is only a transmission through basic mind. Hence, it should be explained that with respect to yogins the main [mode of] transmission is through the ear, the uncommon mode of transmission by Bodhisattvas is through basic mind, [11] and the uncommon mode of transmission by an actual Buddha is transmission through the thought.

DETAILED EXPLANATION OF THE THREE LINEAGES [11.1]

This section has three parts: explanation of the Conqueror’s transmission through thought, explanation of the Bodhisattva’s transmission through basic mind, and explanation of the yogin’s transmission through the ear.

EXPLANATION OF THE CONQUEROR’S TRANSMISSION THROUGH THOUGHT

[11.2]

This is the transmission from the Teacher, [a Buddha of] the sixth lineage, to the five families of regents, etc., and from the five families to the company that is together with them

²³ Ordinary body and mind.

[but have separate continuums].²⁴

EXPLANATION OF A BODHISATTVA'S TRANSMISSION THROUGH BASIC MIND

[11.2]

This section has two parts: transmission to non-humans and transmission to both humans and non-humans. Transmission to non-humans [refers to when] Bodhisattvas of the three families of Conqueror's children²⁵ explained [the meaning of this tantra] to the three awareness-holders—a god, a nāga, and a yakṣa, these being Drakden Chokgyong²⁶ and so forth. Concerning the transmission to humans and non-humans, twenty-eight years after the Conqueror slept in [final] peace, five sages having excellent lineages²⁷ assembled magically on the peak of Mt Malaya, on an island in a lake on the outskirts of a village in the country of Lanka. Imagining the Buddha, they took up a song of lamentation, whereupon, Vajrapāṇi appeared and taught [them this] tantra.

EXPLANATION OF THE YOGIS' TRANSMISSION THROUGH THE EAR [11.5]

This section has two parts: the way this tantra initially arose in the land of humans and how it was transmitted from that.

THE WAY THIS TANTRA INITIALLY AROSE IN THE LAND OF HUMANS [11.6]

As was just explained, at the time when the Lord of the Secret, Vajrapāṇi, collected the [Buddha's] word, by his blessings [12] King Jaḥ of Zahor, also known as Indrabhūti, had seven dream-omens: “Symbols of exalted body, speech, and mind dissolved [into him]; a

²⁴ *lhan cig pa'i 'khor* (11.2).

²⁵ *rgyal sras rigs gsum sems dpa'* (11.3). These three Bodhisattvas—Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, and Vajrapāṇi—are also called the “Lords of the Three Families” (*rigs gsum mgon po*). See David Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1987), 195.

²⁶ *grags ldan mchog skyong* (11.3-11.4). See note 27.

²⁷ According to one source, these are the god *grags ldan phyogs skyong*, the yakṣa *skar mda' gdong*, the rakṣa *blo gros thabs ldan*, the nāga *klu rgyal 'jog po*, and the human *dri med grags pa*. Thinley Norbu, *The Small Golden Key* (New York: Jewel Publishing House, 1985), 10, n.6.

precious tome descended; he engaged in discussion of the doctrine; he was proclaimed holy by everyone; he performed great offerings; a rain of jewels fell; and he was prophesized to become a Buddha.”²⁸ Then, in accordance with that, a volume of tantra and an image of Vajrapāṇi, eighteen inches tall, actually descended onto the roof of the palace. Through making supplications, his latent predispositions [resulting] from having previously studied secret mantra were activated, whereupon he realized [the meaning of] “The Chapter on Beholding the Face of Vajrasattva”.²⁹ After that, relying on that [chapter] and the image of Vajrapāṇi, he practiced for six months. He came face to face with Vajrasattva, and through [the deity’s] blessings he came to know the limitless meanings of this book.

HOW THE TANTRA WAS TRANSMITTED [12.4]

King Jaḥ explained it to Kukurāja. From him, it was transmitted in succession to Indrabhūti,³⁰ Simharāja,³¹ Uparāja,³² and to his daughter, Gomadevī.³³ Together with their groups, they all went to the land of awareness-holders. Gomadevī explained [the tantra] to Vilāsavajra³⁴ and Buddhaguhya.³⁵ Buddhaguhya instructed the great master Padmasambhava³⁶ and Vimalamitra.³⁷ [13] This is how [this tantra] arose in the Land of Superiors.³⁸

²⁸ *sku gsung thugs rtags thim pa dang / rin chen glegs bam babs pa dang / lchos kyi bro ba byed pa dang / kun gyis dam par bsgrags pa dang / lmchog pa chen po byas pa dang / rin chen char du babs pa dang / lsangs rgyas sa la lung bstan ba’ol / zhes pa’i rmi ltas bdun byung zhing / (12.1-12.2).*

²⁹ Tb.423, 294.3-299.2, Chapter 74, *skyes bu dam pa blo rtsal rab kyis rdo rje sems dpa’ zhal mthong ba’i le’u ste don bzhi pa’*

³⁰ *intra bhū ti* (12.5). The transliterations are given for the names as they appear in the text. Page and line numbers are listed only when they are different from the previous name.

³¹ *seng ha rā dza.*

³² *u pa rā dza.*

³³ *sras mo go ma dai vi.*

³⁴ *sgeg rdor* (12.6).

³⁵ *sangs rgyas gsang ba.*

³⁶ *slob dpon chen po padma.*

³⁷ *bi ma mitra.*

³⁸ i.e., India.

In Tibet, Padmasambhava taught the *Garland of Views*³⁹ etc., to the assembly of the king and his subjects, and it appears that there is also a transmission from him. Nevertheless, concerning what is renowned to [our] previous [masters], Vimalamitra instructed Ma and Nyak.⁴⁰ From those two, [the teachings] branched into the three rivers of transmission. These were combined into one in Nup Sanggyé Yeshé.⁴¹ He explained it to Nup Yönten Gyatso⁴² and So Yeshé Wangchuk.⁴³ Nyang Sherapchok⁴⁴ requested [the teaching] from both of them. From him, it was transmitted to Nyang Yeshé Jungné,⁴⁵ Shākya Jungné—the elder from Zur,⁴⁶ Sherap Drak—the younger from Zur⁴⁷—his four main spiritual sons—and Dropukpa Shākya Senggé.⁴⁸ Those three from Nyak, Nup, and Zur are known as the three distributors of secret mantra.⁴⁹ From Dropukpa there arose twelve pupils who grasped his mind and thousands of pupils who were leaders⁵⁰ maintaining colleges. Thus, the activity of this tantra spread in all directions.

The learner's transmission of that [is as follows]. Dzangnak Öbar⁵¹ [instructed] Metön Gönpo.⁵² [From him it was transmitted to] So Sherap Tsültrim,⁵³ to Tanak Dödulbum,⁵⁴ to Da Shākypel,⁵⁵ to Zur Jampa Senggé,⁵⁶ to the two different [people known as] the foremost

³⁹ *lta phreng* (13.1).

⁴⁰ *rma gnyags gnyis* (13.2). These are the two main disciples of Vimalamitra, *rma rin chen mchog* and *myang ting nge 'dzin*. See *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p.464-5.

⁴¹ *gnubs sangs rgyas ye shes*.

⁴² *gnubs yon tan rgya mtsho* (13.3).

⁴³ *so ye shes dbang phyug*.

⁴⁴ *nyang shes rab mchog*.

⁴⁵ *nyang ye shes 'byung gnas*.

⁴⁶ *zur po che shākya 'byung gnas* (13.3-13.4).

⁴⁷ *zur chung shes rab grags* (13.4).

⁴⁸ *sgro phug pa shākya seng ge*.

⁴⁹ *gnyags nubs zur gsum de dag la gsang sngags kyi babs so gsum du grags* (13.4-13.5).

⁵⁰ *gdugs thogs* (13.5).

⁵¹ *gtsang nag 'od 'bar* (13.6).

⁵² *mes ston mgon po*.

⁵³ *sro shes rab tshul khrims*.

⁵⁴ *rta nag bdud 'dul 'bum*.

⁵⁵ *mda' shākya 'pel*.

⁵⁶ *zur byams ba seng ge*.

Tārā [worshipper] and [the teacher of] Yung,⁵⁷ [14] to Drölchen Sanggyé Rinchen,⁵⁸ to Shönnupel—the great translator from Gö,⁵⁹ to Chökyi Drakpa—the fourth in the line of Red Hats in the Karma lineage,⁶⁰ to Rinchen Püntso from Drigung,⁶¹ to Rangdröl Nyida Sanggyé,⁶² to the son of Könjo Tsewang Norgyé⁶³ to the teacher of Kön Beljor Lhündrup⁶⁴ to Trashi Künga from Zurchen⁶⁵ to the awareness-holder Trinlé Lhündrup from Darding⁶⁶ to the king of the doctrine, the great treasury—Gyurmé Dorjé.⁶⁷ The great translator, Dharmashrī heard it from him. These two the great treasure-revealer and his brother, together with their heart-sons wrote many good explanations concerning this tantra, which were like jeweled lamps, on initiation, means of achievement, maṇḍala rites, analysis of the scope, commentaries on the tantra, and so forth. By introducing this continuation of explaining and listening, their kindness to the teaching was inconceivable.

Then, it was transmitted in stages; from the excellent scholar and adept Gedzé Sönam Tendzin⁶⁸, or Jikmé Ngotsar,⁶⁹ [it was passed down to] the Vajradhāra Padma Trashi.⁷⁰ The Conqueror's son Shenpen Tayé⁷¹ heard it from him. He granted it to my two lamas, Superiors who are heart sons of Mañjushrī, the omniscient Emanation Body Jikmé Chökyi Wangpo from Ogyen⁷² and the all-pervasive lord of the ocean of maṇḍalas, the great scholar

⁵⁷ *rje sgrol g.yung* (13.6-14.1). This is a reference to Samdrub Dorjé (*bsam grub rdo rje*), the worshipper of Tārā (*sgrol ma ba*), and Yung-tön-do-je-pel (*g.yung ston rdo rje dpal*). Both of these important commentators on the *Secret Essence* lived in the 13th and 14th centuries and were disciples of Zur Jampa Senggé.

⁵⁸ *sgrol chen sangs rgyas rin chen* (14.1).

⁵⁹ *gos lo chen po gzhon nu dpal*.

⁶⁰ *karma zhwa dmar bzhi pa chos kyi grags pa*.

⁶¹ *'bri gung rin chen phun tshogs*.

⁶² *rang grol nyi zla sangs rgyas*.

⁶³ *'khon jo sras tshé dbang nor rgyas* (14.2).

⁶⁴ *'khon ston dpal 'byor lhun grub*.

⁶⁵ *zur chen bkra shis kun dga'*.

⁶⁶ *dar sdings rig 'dzin phrin las lhun grub*.

⁶⁷ *'gyur med rdo rje* (14.2-14.3).

⁶⁸ *dge rtsé bsod nams bstan 'dzin* (14.5).

⁶⁹ *'jigs med ngo mtshar*.

⁷⁰ *padma bkra shis*.

⁷¹ *gzhan phan mtha' yas*.

⁷² *o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po* (14.6). This is Pa-trül Rinpoché (*dpal sprul rin po che*, b. 1808), one of

Vajradhāra [15] Padma Damchö Özer Pelzangpo.⁷³ There was further transmission through the former instructing the Vajradhāra Sönam Namgyel⁷⁴ and the latter instructing the excellent, foremost, venerable leader precious Mipam Namgyel.⁷⁵

In brief, except for myself [these are all lords of yoga] who have attained the rank of a learned one by training in the topics of the tantra corpora, have made serviceable the approximation to the state of maṇḍala deities, and have attained the heat of realization of the two stages [of generation and completion]. Due to the transmission of such an unbroken series of great lords of yoga, it has come down [to us] in the present, such that the river of initiation has not dried up, the lamp of explanation has not gone out, and the magnificent luster of the blessings has not faded. The details of this history should be made known from other [sources].

THE ACTUAL MEANING OF THE TANTRA [15.4]

The explanation of the actual meaning of the tantra [has two parts:] (1) a brief presentation of the three—object of explanation, means of explanation, and mode of explanation—and (2) an explanation of the actual meaning of the tantra.

BRIEF PRESENTATION CONCERNING THE EXPLANATION [15.5]

In general, within Highest Secret Mantra there are the three tantric categories of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga. With respect to the differences between these three, the final, essential meaning of all tantras is the sole reality of fundamental clear light, having the

Jikmé Tenpé Nyima's teachers.

⁷³ *padma dam chos 'od zer dpal bzang po* (15.1). The fourth Dodrupchen's biography of Jikmé Tenpé Nyima says that this figure was a scholar from Dzok-chen Monastery known as Pe-ma-dor-je. *mkhan chen rdo rje 'chang padma dam chos 'od zer dpal bzang po aml rdzogs chen mkhan pad rdor* (Thub-bstan-phrin-las bzañ-po, Rdo Grub-chen IV, 1927-, *Rdo grub chen 'jigs med phrin las 'od zer gyi 'khrungs rabs rnam thar: the brief biography of the First Rdo Grub-chen 'jigs-med-phrin-las-'od-zer (1745-1821) and his successors in the Rdo Grub-chen lineags [sic] of incarnations* (Gangtok, Sikkim: Dodrupchen Rinpoché, 1985; I-Tib-2743; I-Tib 85-903289), 29.5-30.1).

⁷⁴ *bsod nams rnam rgyal*. This is the treasure-revealer Sö-gyel Rinpoché (1856-1926).

⁷⁵ *mi pham rnam rgyal*. This is the famous Old School exegete and polymath, Mi-pham Rinpoché (1846-1912).

character of a non-duality of profound [emptiness] and manifest [appearances], and there are three different doors for initially entering into that meaning. [16] There is the gradual training in the two areas where the sphere and primordial wisdom are taken as the path: the extensive rites of generation and those rites where the elaborations of generation are much condensed, both of which take the three enlightened bodies as the path. And, there is a manifesting of wisdom through the exertion-less method of self-placement⁷⁶ without depending on a fabricated rite of generation. If one asserts that from among these [three categories] those [tantras] that primarily teach the first and those that primarily teach the second and third are respectively posited as Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga, this is for the moment a convenient explanation and, furthermore, one which accords with Rok's assertions.⁷⁷ With regard to the aforementioned extensive and brief rites of generation and with regard to different extensive and brief maṇḍalas, there are also many points to be analyzed, but I fear that would be too much.

Also, with respect to Mahāyoga, the *Oral Instructions on the Transmission [of Secret Mantra]*, that is a sādhana of the *Consortium of Sugatas* says:

Mahā of Mahā is to generate a deity's maṇḍala by stages. Anu of Mahā is a spontaneous establishment of the natural maṇḍala. Ati of Mahā is the unproduced face of the ultimate.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ *rang bzhag*.

⁷⁷ *rog gi bzhed pa dang yang mthun nol* (16.3). This is probably Rok Sherap ö (*rog shes rab 'od*) whose lineage is described under "Miscellaneous Lineages of the Zur and Kham Traditions" in *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 1, 701-702. That source claims that he composed a text called *Lecture Notes on the Ground, Path, and Result according to the Magical Net* (*sgyu 'phrul gzhi lam 'bras gsum stong thun*) and a *Commentary on the Array of the Path of the Magical Net* (*lam rnam bkod kyi tikā*), neither of which could be located. Khetsun Sango's *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism* (vol. 3, 364) gives dates for Sherap ö who was son of Rok Dra-shi-drak (*rog bkris grags kyi sras*) as 1166-1244.

⁷⁸ *bde 'dus grub pa lung gi bka' sgo las/ ma hā'i ma hā ni lha'i dkyil 'khor rim pas bskyed pa'ol / ma hā'i a nu ni rang bzhin gyi dkyil 'khor lhun gyis grub pa'ol / ma hā'i a ti ni don dam ngo bo ma skyes pa'ol* (16.4-16.5). The *Consortium of Sugatas* is a treasure cycle revealed by Nyang-rel Nyi-ma-ö-zer (*nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer*, 1136-1204). A catalog of that cycle done by the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology gives the full name for this text—the last text in volume Nga—as *bka' bryad bde gshegs 'dus pa las/ gsang sngags lung gi bka' bsgo*. See Ācārya

Accordingly, there is a division into three, relative to the amount of elaboration on the gradual procedure. From among the three, here [the *Secret Essence Tantra*] is a Mahāyoga tantra, because it teaches in accordance with what is said in the *All-Accomplishing King*:

In Mahāyoga one who wishes to become Vajradhāra,
Having entered through the door of method and wisdom,
Achieves Vajradhāra through the four aspects of service and achievement
In the maṇḍala that is the pure [aspect] of one's own continuum.⁷⁹ [17]

Also, within that [Mahāyoga category], because [the *Secret Essence*] teaches through emphasizing that all phenomena are primordially enlightened, it is posited as Ati of Mahā. This is the assertion of most scholars of the Magical Emanation and has its sources in Vimalamitra's *Commentary on the Small Book on Self-Abiding*⁸⁰ and the *Key to the Word of Secret Mantra* from the *Consortium of Sugatas*,⁸¹ etc.

Furthermore, it is the king of all tantras, the peak of all vehicles, the source of all the teachings, the general commentary on all the scriptures, the innermost essence of the thought of all Conquerors, the exalted mind of all fruits, the tracks of passage of all Tathāgatas, and the great path of the yogins. That which possesses these eight greatnesses is the glorious *Secret Essence Tantra*. From among the eighteen great tantras of Mahāyoga, this *Secret Essence*—

Tsultsem Gyatso, *Catalogue of Bka'-brygad Bde-gshegs 'Dus-pa*, Nyingmapa Catalogue Series VII, Vol. 3 (Gangtok: Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, 1997), 23.

⁷⁹ *kun byed las/ ma hā rdo rje 'chang 'dod pas/ lthabs dang shes rab sgor zhugs nas/ lrang rgyud dag pa'i dkyil 'khor las/ lbsnyen sgrub rnams bzhis sgrub par byed/* (16.6). cf. Neumaier-Dargya, tr., *The Sovereign All-Creating Mind: The Motherly Buddha* (New York: SUNY Press, 1992), 135. The passage in the *All-Accomplishing King* is found at Tb.1, vol. 1, 130.3-130.4.

⁸⁰ *dpe chung rang gnas kyi 'grel ba* (17.2). Khenpo Namdröl commented that there was a commentary on the *Secret Essence* written by *Siddhārthadevi (*don grub de wi*) called the *Small Book on Self-Abiding* (*dpe chung rang gnas*) and that Vimalamitra wrote a commentary on it. I have not been able to identify either text among the existing collections.

⁸¹ *bde 'dus gsang sngags bka'i lde mig* (17.2). This is another text in the *Consortium of Sugatas* treasure-cycle. In Sikkimese catalog its full title is given as *bka' brygad bde gshegs 'dus pa las/ gsang sngags bka'i lde mig* (Tsultsem Gyatso, *Catalogue of Bka'-brygad Bde-gshegs 'Dus-pa*, 23).

according to the *Commentary on the Glorious Excellent Garland* by Kukurāja⁸²—is a tantra that summarizes all eighteen sets, and—according to the omniscient lama—it is a general enlightened mind tantra.⁸³

By what means is it explained? By means of scripture, reasoning, and quintessential instructions. Concerning scripture, there are four explanatory tantras of this *Secret Essence*—the *Essence of Primordial Wisdom*⁸⁴ and the *Mirror of Vajrasattva*,⁸⁵ which teach the gradual and simultaneous paths of release, and [18] the *Ocean*⁸⁶ and the *Penetrating*,⁸⁷ which teach the gradual and simultaneous paths of method. There are these four, as well as the supplemental tantra,⁸⁸ and so forth. As for the differences between the two, a root tantra and an explanatory [tantra], there are many opinions. However, Rok Deshek Chenpo⁸⁹ says:

Tantras which arise first and are objects of explanation are root tantras. Other tantras which arise later and are means of explanation are explanatory tantras.⁹⁰

Although this is correct, root and explanatory [tantras] are not mutually exclusive, as is the case, for instance, with the supplemental tantra [of the *Secret Essence*].

Concerning quintessential instructions, the best [occur when] those who have attained the path of Superiors in Highest Secret Mantra are able to explain the meaning of tantra through their clairvoyance. The middling [occur when] those who have been manifestly blessed by their personal deity are able to elucidate the tantras. The least are the tantric

⁸² *ku ku rā dza'i dpal phreng ba dam pa'i 'grel ba* (17.5). I have not been able to locate this text.

⁸³ *spyi'i thugs rgyud* (17.5).

⁸⁴ *ye she snying po* (17.6). This is *dpal sgyu 'phrul dra ba ye shes kyi snying po'i rgyud* (Tb.428).

⁸⁵ *rdo rje sems dpa' me long gi rgyud* (17.6). This is *rdo rje sems dpa'i sgyu 'phrul dra ba gsang ba thams cad kyi me long zhes bya ba'i rgyud* (Tb.441).

⁸⁶ *rgya mtsho* (18.1). This is *sgyu 'phrul rgya mtsho zhes bya ba'i rgyud* (Tb.437).

⁸⁷ *thal ba* (18.1). There are two versions of this tantra in the NGB: *sgyu 'phrul thal ba'i rgyud* (Tb.438) and *sgyu 'phrul thal ba'i rgyud chen po* (Tb.439).

⁸⁸ *rgyud phyi ma* (18.1). This is *dpal gsang ba'i snying po'i phyi ta* (Tb.426).

⁸⁹ *rog bde gshags chen po* (18.1). See *supra*.

⁹⁰ *thog mar byung zhing bshad byar gyur pa'i rgyud rtsa rgyud/ rjes la byung zhing 'chad byed du gyur ba'i rgyud gzhan bshad rgyud* (18.1-18.2).

commentaries and the miscellaneous quintessential instructions formulated by anyone who possesses a fully-qualified lineage of quintessential instructions from former awareness-holders. [Some of these are Vilāsavajra's] *Blazing Palace*,⁹¹ [Vimalamitra's] short commentary *Ball of Meaning*⁹² and so forth, and [Buddhaguhya's] *Stages of the Path*,⁹³ the *Heart Drop*,⁹⁴ the [Padmasambhava's] *Garland of Views*,⁹⁵ and so forth.

Concerning reasoning, those who explain the vajra topics of tantra with the pride of knowing dialectics and with obstinacy disturb the teachings with their own fabrications. Although a person has much dry understanding of general phrases saying "Such and such is explained in such and such [a text]," such a person has not gained firm ascertainment so that one cannot be led astray from the meaning of tantra. Therefore, the most valuable [teachers] are those who themselves have ascertained and are skilled in explaining to others the meaning of the root tantra through logic, i.e., pure reasons, [19] in accordance with elucidation by the quintessential instructions of individual adepts, relying upon the explanatory tantras.

With regard to how this tantra is explained, Lhajé Zurpoché asserts that there are four modes of explanation:

- I. explaining tantras through tantras,
- II. explaining tantras through commentaries,
- III. explaining tantras through means of achievement, and
- IV. explaining tantras through quintessential instructions.

⁹¹ *spar khab* (18.4). Vilāsavajra, *dpal gsang ba snying po'i 'grel pa rin po che'i spar khab slob dpon sgeg pa'i rdo rjes mdzad pa* in *Commentaries on the Guhyagarbha tantra and other rare Nyingmapa texts from the library of Dudjom Rinpoché* (New Delhi: Sanje Dorje, 1974; I-Tib 74-900928; I-Tib-1252), 1-222.

⁹² *piṅḍārtha* (18.4). Vimalamitra, *dpal gsang ba snying po'i don bsduṣ 'grel piṅḍārtha* (P4755).

⁹³ *lam rim* (18.4-18.5). Buddhaguhya, *lam rim chen mo* in *bka' ma rgyas pa*, vol. 23, 5.1-133.3 (=P4736) and Buddhaguhya, *lam rim chung ngu* in *bka' ma rgyas pa*, vol. 23, 135.1-157.4 (=P4734?).

⁹⁴ *thugs thig* (18.5). Vilāsavajra, Buddhaguhya, and Vimalamitra, *thugs kyi thigs pa* (P4738).

⁹⁵ *lta phreng* (18.5). Padmasambhava, *man ngag lta ba'i 'phreng ba* (*Garland of Views*) in *Selected Writings (gsun thor bu) of Roñ-zom Chos-kyi-bzaiṅ-po*, edited by 'Khor-gdon Gter-sprul 'Chi-med-rig 'dzin (Leh: S.W. Tashigangpa, 1974), vol. 1, 1-18 (=P4726).

In the [Vimalamitra's] *Lamp Illuminating the Inner Text*,⁹⁶ there are two:

- I. Methods for explaining the general text of a tantra, such as explaining it in four [ways]—
 1. outlining the structure by way of its general meaning,
 2. listing the contents,
 3. interpreting the words, and
 4. settling [the meaning] through objections and answers, etc.—and
- II. Methods for explaining the individual tantric topics—
 1. explaining the view through analysis and debate,
 2. explaining the conduct through practical techniques,
 3. explaining maṇḍalas through meanings and words,
 4. explaining initiation through oral instructions,
 5. explaining commitments through their enumeration,
 6. explaining activities through ritual formulations,
 7. explaining achievements through practice,
 8. explaining meditative stabilization through [the stages of] completion and generation,
 9. explaining offerings their through external and internal [forms],
 10. explaining mantras through combining pure sounds and explaining hand-symbols through the stage of generation.

⁹⁶ *khog gzhung gsal sgron* (19.2). Vimalamitra, *sgyu 'phrul man ngag gsal ba'i sgron me* (P4739). The title of the text in the Peking canon translates as *Lamp Illuminating the Quintessential Instructions of the Magical Emanation*. However, the Tibetan commentarial tradition generally refers to this text as *Lamp Illuminating the Inner Text* (*khog gzhung gsal sgron*), though this title does not appear in the text itself. Dorje and Kapstein translate this as *Illuminating Lamp of the Fundamental Text* (*The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 2, 241).

EXPLANATION OF THE ACTUAL MEANING OF THE TANTRA [19.6]

Although according to the assertion of the Secret [Mantra] lord, Dropukpa, there are explanations through the five—the natural mode of abiding of phenomena, the mistaken mode of appearance to those who have not realized [the truth], the mode of perception by an Omniscient One, [20] the mode of generating compassion feeling pity, the mode of effecting the welfare of migrators—and so forth, my excellent lamas make explanations, following the statement in the [*Lamp Illuminating the*] *Inner Text of the Magical Emanation*:

For the best, there is a teaching of the title; for the middling, divisions;

For the lowest, [explanations] setting free the meaning of the words.⁹⁷

Therefore, here I will also explain it in this way.

Regarding this, there are three [parts]: (1) teaching the title of the tantra for those trainees with the best of faculties who understand through mentioning [only] the beginning, (2) opening up the general topics [of the tantra] for those with middling faculties who understand through slightly extensive presentations, and (3) explaining by way of interpreting each word for those with the lowest faculties who understand through elaborations. Along those lines, by merely explaining the meaning of the title to trainees with sharp faculties whose engagement of wisdom is quick, they are able to realize all the points expressed in the tantra. Hence, the teaching of the title is for their sake, but it is not for their sake alone, because it must also be taught in order to establish predispositions—in the two [others], those of middling and low faculties—for understanding through mentioning [only] the title [in the future]. By explaining the general meaning to those of middling faculties, one is able to produce in them an understanding that separates out the important tantric meanings.⁹⁸ Hence, it is mainly taught for them, [21] but for those of low faculties it also

⁹⁷ *sgyu 'phrul khog gzshung las/ rab la mtshan bstan 'bring la dbyel ltha mar 'bru gnyer dgrol ba'o/* (20.1-20.2). Vimalamitra, *sgyu 'phrul man ngag gsal ba'i sgron me*, 134.3.7.

⁹⁸ *rgyud don gyi 'gangs gshog pa'i go ba* (20.6).

[serves] the purpose of more easily apprehending the meanings of the words of the text by having studied the presentation of the body of the text prior to unraveling the meaning of the individual words, just as a horse runs [a race better] after [first] seeing the track.⁹⁹

EXPLANATION OF THE TITLE [21.1]

With regard to the title, it has three parts: [Vajrasattva Magical Emanation Net, the General Tantra, and *Secret Essence Definitive Suchness*].

[VAJRASATTVA MAGICAL EMANATION NET]

The first [part of the title], Vajrasattva Magical Emanation Net, indicates the name that is shared by three things: the tantra, the chief deity of the maṇḍala, and the being who sets it forth. Furthermore, concerning the meaning of that, *The Mirror*, an explanatory tantra, says:

The self-awareness of the non-duality of all phenomena
Is the very mind of enlightenment,
This undifferentiated nature
Is called “Vajra.”¹⁰⁰

Hence, a vajra is indivisible and indestructible; it is wisdom-emptiness. As for the expression “emptiness” throughout this [text], the clear light nature is called emptiness, because the clear light nature has an aspect of just emptiness, since for one in its factor of non-conceptuality it is empty of both elaborative conceptuality and inherent existence, and secondly yogins who have quintessential instructions achieve equipoise on emptiness through setting in equipoise on that [clear light]. The Omniscient Lama¹⁰¹ and Derdak Lingpa,¹⁰² etc.

⁹⁹ *dkyus mthong nas rta rgyud pa ltar* (21.1).

¹⁰⁰ *me long las/ chos rnams ma lus gnyis med pa'il /rang rig byang chub sems nyid dol /tha dad med pa'i rang bzhin nyid/ lrdo rje zhes ni bshad pa yin/* (21.2-21.3).

¹⁰¹ *kun mkhyen bla ma* (21.6). This probably refers to Longchenpa (1308-1363), the great systematizer of the Old Schools teachings. However, Jikmé Tenpé Nyima could be referring to his own teacher, Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo (1820-1892).

call this “emptiness which is an affirming negative.”¹⁰³ From within the two, method and wisdom, this is in the class of wisdom; hence, it is called wisdom, [22] but it is not the mental factor, wisdom.

Sattva, on this occasion, is explained as threefold: firm, inclusive, and realizational. [It is called] firm because that very pure nature, which is a union in one taste of the mind of enlightenment—the self-aware method—and wisdom-emptiness, abides for [all] time without beginning or end and does not become something of a different character. Because the seal of just that [very pure nature] is impressed in all animate and inanimate [phenomena] and because all animate and inanimate [phenomena] dawn as the magical display of that, they abide in the sameness [of this nature]. Therefore, [it is called] inclusive. By the power of being free from obstructions and by the power of completing the two great collections, one manifests—exactly as it is—just that [clear light], the factuality of the vajra-like mode of being. [Therefore, it is called] realizational. The two former are posited as “Vajrasattva which is the non-duality of ground and result” in terms of the mode of subsistence, and the latter is posited as “Vajrasattva that is the result” from the viewpoint of a stainless mode of perception.

Akṣobhya, the main deity of the maṇḍala and the being who sets forth [this tantra], is a symbolic appearance of just that [pure nature]. He is also known as “Vajrasattva”. The actual main [principle] of the maṇḍala, in which the three—firm, inclusive, and realizational—become one, is the union of a non-learner [i.e., enlightenment]. [23] However, the Vajrasattva of the stage of generation—in which one abides implementing the realizational Vajrasattva as the path through taking the firm and inclusive Vajrasattvas as the basis for

¹⁰² *gter bdag gling pa* (21.6). Der-dak-ling-ba, an associate of the fifth Dalai Lama, was founder of Mindröling and a great treasure revealer. He lived from 1646 to 1713.

¹⁰³ *ma yin dgag gi stong nyid* (21.6). An “affirming negative” (*ma yin dgag, paryudāsapratishedha*) is a negation that implies (or affirms) a positive phenomena in its place. See the appendix on “Negatives” in Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*, 721-727.

achievement—and the Vajrasattva of the stage of completion—in which that [Vajrasattva of the stage of generation] is still possessed—must be taken as only partially similar [to the actual Vajrasattva of enlightenment].

With regard to Magical Emanation Net [in the title, *Vajrasattva Magical Emanation Net*], *The Vajra* says,

The meaning of the relationship between method and wisdom,

Which is called “magical emanation [net]” is explained in four [ways].¹⁰⁴

Therefore, there are the four magical emanation nets of the conceptual collection,¹⁰⁵ the definitive meaning, the provisional meaning, and the inseparability of the deities and conceptuality. From among these, the first [the magical emanation net of the conceptual collection] is explained on the occasion of [the phrase], “The elements are the mothers of the wisdom lineages”.¹⁰⁶ The subtle factors that are the drops containing the essence of those five elements are the basis from which appearances of the aggregates and constituents dawn without being distinguished. Hence, it is called “magical”. The coarse factors of aggregates and constituents that appear in various ways from those are called “emanations”, and those two [subtle drops and coarse forms] related as support and supported are called “net”.

As for the second, [the magical emanation net of definitive meaning] is the final essence that is wisdom-emptiness, in which appearances dawn in their way without distinction like magical illusions. Hence, it is called “magical”. The self-radiance of that [wisdom-emptiness] radiating as the primordial wisdom that is self-arisen basic mind, or method, is called

¹⁰⁴ *rdo rje las/ thabs dang shes rab 'brel ba'i don/ lsgyu 'phrul zhes ni bzhir bshad dol* (23.2).

¹⁰⁵ *rtog tshogs* (23.2). Khenpo Namdröl described the “conceptual collection” as the “basis for mistaken designation” (*'khrul ba btags pa'i gzhi*) or mistaken appearances (*'khrul snang*) that are the phenomena of cyclic existence (*'khor ba'i chos*). Here, Jikmé Tenpé Nyima describes it in terms of the five elements, which are produced from subtle drops that contain their essence. When these are purified, they appear correctly as the five “mothers”. Similarly, when the five aggregates are purified, they appear as the five “fathers”. The conceptual collection refers to these phenomena in their impure appearance, which is obscured by conceptuality.

¹⁰⁶ *byung ba shes rab rigs kyi yum/* (23.3). The statement is found in the 13th chapter of the root text (*Secret Essence*, Tb.417, 192.4-192.5).

“emanation”, and the relationship of those two as an indifferentiable entity is called “net”.

Concerning the third [the magical emanation net of provisional meaning], [24] the meaning of “magical” is the mother deities appearing as seals, which are symbolic of that [wisdom-emptiness]. The meaning of “emanation” is the father [deities], which are symbolic of that [self-radiance, or method]. Those father and mother [deities] dwelling in blissful bodies face-to-face is the meaning of “net”.

With regard to the fourth [the magical emanation net of the inseparability of the deities and conceptuality], “magical” [means] the conceptual collection. Just their dawning as deities through the method that is self-knowing realization is [the meaning of] “emanation”. The relationship of the two, the conceptualizations of deities and their nature, as non-dual is [the meaning of] “net”.

Furthermore, these [explanations] are set forth in terms of ground and result. Hence, when they are associated with the ground, there is the conceptual collection and the basis for its appearance, the clear light basic mind. Only to first two [types of] magical [emanation] nets [can be associated with the ground]. When [the four types of magical emanation net] are associated with the result, [to call] the conceptual collection [a result] is nothing more than imputing the name of the phenomena that is the ground onto the phenomena that is the result; the definitive meaning is the realizational Reality Body; the provisional meaning is the uncommon Form Body of Secret Mantra, and the indifferentiable deity and conceptuality is the state of purification of all aggregates and constituents in one taste as vajra deities.

When these [Vajrasattva and magical emanation net] are treated in terms of their main [reference], it seems that Vajrasattva is explained especially from the point of view of the ultimate, and that magical emanation net is explained from the point of view of conventionalities. It is taught that having realized the Vajrasattva magical [emanation] net which is the basic state, [one] takes as the path both the ground and the result in order to

attain the Vajrasattva magical [emanation] net which is the effect state; that continuum of the path is also designated with that name, [Vajrasattva magical emanation net]. [25]

[THE GENERAL SCRIPTURE]

The second [part of this tantra's name], "a general scripture of all definition and tantra [vehicles]", is designated as a name [of this tantra] from the point of view of its greatness. Furthermore, concerning the meaning of this, *The Vajra* says:

That which teaches individually is oceanic tantra.

Since all meanings—teaching with respect to this, teaching by this,

Teaching for the sake of this—are contained in this [tantra],

It is called "a general scripture".¹⁰⁷

All paths for achieving high status,¹⁰⁸ definite goodness,¹⁰⁹ and omniscience¹¹⁰ that are expressed in the Definition Vehicle scriptures are taught as platforms to the path of this [tantra], and the paths with and without signs of the external Secret Mantra¹¹¹ and the secret topics, which are expressions of all the special Highest Yoga Tantra sets and whose essence is the non-duality of the profound and the manifest—all of these are taught in this tantra. Because all the other scriptural collections¹¹² and tantras are set forth stemming from just these topics taught here, they derive from this [tantra], and all those teachings either directly or indirectly flow toward understanding the meaning of this tantra's thought, the

¹⁰⁷ *rdo rje las/ so sor bstan pa rgya mtsho'i rgyud/ l'dir ston 'dis ston 'di phyir ston/ ldon kun 'di la yongs rdzogs pas/ lung gi spyi zbes bshad par yin/ (25.2).*

¹⁰⁸ *mngon mtho, abhyudaya.* This refers to birth in one of the three upper levels of cyclic existence as a god, demi-god, or human.

¹⁰⁹ *nges legs, niḥśreyasa.* Here, this means liberation from cyclic existence.

¹¹⁰ *thams cad mkhyen pa, sarvajña.*

¹¹¹ The external Secret Mantra (*gsang sngags phyi pa*) sets are Action Tantra (*bya rgyud, kriyātantra*), Performance Tantra (*spyod rgyud, caryātantra* or *upatantra*), and Yoga Tantra (*rnal 'byor rgyud, yogatantra*).

¹¹² This refers to the three collections (*sde snod gsum, tripitika*) of Buddhist scriptures in the Sūtra Vehicle: 1) discourses of the Buddha (*mdo sde, sūtra*), 2) discipline (*'dul ba, vinaya*), 3) manifest knowledge (*chos mngon pa, abhidharma*).

indifferentiability of the special two truths. For those reasons [*The Secret Essence Tantra*] is the general structure of all the scriptures. [26] This is also called a name that is concordant with the scriptures.

[SECRET ESSENCE, DEFINITIVE SUCHNESS]

With regard to the third [part of the name], the title that is designated from the point of view of the entity of the meaning itself, or the title that is concordant with quintessential instructions, is “*Secret Essence, Definitive Suchness*”, just the one that appears at the beginning of the book. Regarding this, Vimalamitra’s short commentary¹¹³ explains that all four parts of this name indicate the nature, greatness, character, and definitiveness of [this] tantra:

Nature is summarized as what is called *Secret*.

Greatness is summarized as the meaning of *Essence*.

Suchness is summarized as its character.

Definitive is summarized as the definitive meaning.¹¹⁴

With respect to this, let us express a little of the general meaning. Using as an example the establishment of this universe of a billion worlds from a great many and a great variety of causes and conditions, most sūtras say that complete enlightenment is not achieved through a small or abbreviated casual collection. In this way, according to the Perfection Vehicle, which is taught for those trainees who have enthusiasm for the vast, there is no chance of attaining enlightenment without resorting to hard work at the practices of the two collections in limitless forms, over limitless time, and with limitless skill-in-means in terms of the mode of training. Although this is so, on this occasion [the path of] Highest Secret [Mantra], which is taught for trainees who have enthusiasm for the profound and who

¹¹³ Vimalamitra, *dpal gsang ba snying po'i don bsdus 'grel pa pinḍārtha* (P4755).

¹¹⁴ *bi ma la'i 'grel chung dul rang bzhin gsang ba zhes bya stel lche ba zhes bya snying po'i don/ lde kho na nyid mtshan nyid del lnges pas nges don mdor bstan pa/* (26.2-26.3).

possess the most supreme [karmic] lot, [27] has the features that 1) [enlightenment] can be accomplished through a brief path, in one short life time of this degenerate era, and easily, and 2) it can be accomplished through just this path without relying on being supplemented by another one. As is said in the *Union Drop*:

Therefore, why do it through that vast [path]?

Through a brief one, there is Buddhahood itself.¹¹⁵

Furthermore, the reason for this is its power of solely delineating [the way] to take primordial wisdom as the path, this being unique [to Highest Secret Mantra], which is not taught clearly in the three external tantra sets and below. This tantra calls such “the yoga of the great Reality Body which is the indifferenciability of the special two truths”. The depths of what is expressed here is this. Therefore, it should be understood that all the parts of the title [*Secret Essence, Definitive Suchness*] also teach mainly just this [indifferenciability of the special two truths].

When [the words of this part of the title] are explained individually, the meaning of *secret* is as follows. Although in [Vilāsavajra’s] *Blazing Palace* [“secret”] is divided into the three—natural, [concealed, and hidden]¹¹⁶—and Vimala divides it into four adding the untaught secrecy, I will explain it according to the assertion of the two masters, Rong and Long as composed of the two, hidden¹¹⁷ and concealed,¹¹⁸ in accordance with what is said here in this tantra:

From within issues forth the meanings, hidden and concealed.¹¹⁹ [28]

With regard to secret in the sense of hidden, because the natural continuum, which is the

¹¹⁵ *dpal kha sbyor thig lerl de phyir de rgyas ci zhig byal /mdor bsdus pas ni sangs rgyas nyid/* (27.1-27.2).

¹¹⁶ *de la gsang ba la gsum stel rang bzhin dang / sbas pa dang / gab pa’ol* (Vilāsavajra, *Blazing Palace*, 8.4).

¹¹⁷ *gab pa*. Chandra Das (214) has *mi mngon par bya ba*—“that which is not manifest”—as one of its synonyms.

¹¹⁸ *sbas*. The Sanskrit equivalent *gupta* means protected, guarded, concealed. Monier-Williams, 359.

¹¹⁹ *rgyud nyid lasl khong nas gab sbas don ’byin pa/* (27.6-28.1). *Secret Essence*, Tb.417, 192.3.

mode of abiding, and the paths and results dependent on it are profound and have depths difficult to fathom, no one except those of very sharp faculties is able to realize them. With regard to secret in the sense of concealed, because the uncommon essentials of the view, meditation, and behavior of Highest Secret [Mantra] must be concealed in all aspects from those who are not [proper] receptacles, it is posited as [to be concealed]. Therefore, it is explained that those two [types of secrecy] are divided by way of the difference that there are some things that are difficult to realize and some that are unsuitable for realization.

Concerning the meaning of *essence*, it has three equivalent terms [in Sanskrit]: *sāra* [core],¹²⁰ *hrdaya* [heart],¹²¹ and *garbha* [womb].¹²² When it is explained in relation to the first of these [*sāra*—core or substance], it is applied to the one base from which spread the manifold [phenomena]. Therefore, through realizing or not realizing mind-as-such, all phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana are emitted, and moreover this tantra, which delineates that [mind-as-such], is the basis for sending forth all teachings. When [essence] is explained through *hridaya* [heart], it refers to that which should be cherished like the heart. No matter from which vehicle-approach one enters, in the end one does not pass beyond this [realization of mind-as-such]. Hence, it is the main object sought by those desiring enlightenment. In its earlier [stages], it is called the “causal essence”, [29] and in its later [stages], it is called the “fruitful essence”. *Garbha* [womb] is the main meaning [of “essence”] within the book. It should be taken as meaning the pithy quintessence, like the sap within the bark. Even when compared to all the higher and lower vehicles, because the essentials of skill-in-means for achieving enlightenment are included and contained in this path, there is no other path superior to it. Hence, the essentials of ground, path, and result

¹²⁰ The text reads *sara*, but Chandra Das has *sāra* (p. 503), whose meanings are more appropriate: core, pith, firmness, strength, power, energy, the substance or essence or marrow. (Monier-Williams, p. 1203).

¹²¹ The text reads *hridaya* instead of *hrdaya*, which means the heart, soul, mind, center, core, essence (Monier-Williams, p.1302).

¹²² *Garbha* means the womb, the inside, middle, interior (Monier-Williams, p.349).

are contained [here] in all their pith.

Suchness has three [types]: unfabricated suchness, unmistakable suchness, and suchness that is not other. With respect to the unfabricated suchness, the primordial wisdom—whose nature is originally pure—is polluted with the dirt of adventitious conceptuality and its predispositions and thereby is designated as a “sentient being”. When those [i.e., adventitious conceptuality and its predispositions] have utterly disappeared, one is designated a “Buddha”, and just through meditation upon having nakedly extracted the fundamental nature by means of the skillful methods of Highest Secret Mantra, the pollutants disappear by themselves, just as ice melts into water. Hence, the path of the clear light essence [the unfabricated suchness] is called the “causal suchness”.

With respect to unmistakable suchness, only through that path making the self-subsistent primordial wisdom devoid of defilements, do all the maṇḍalas of exalted body and exalted wisdom arise by themselves in manifest clarity. Hence, this is called the “fruitful suchness”. With respect to suchness that is not other, [30] since it is as [stated above], both the object to be realized—the ground—and the object to be achieved—the result—do not exist separately from the sole, fundamental, indestructible mind. [Therefore] this [suchness that is not other] is also called the “suchness that is the one taste of cause and effect”.

Concerning the meaning of *definitive*, these presentations of such a ground, path, and result are not like the round-about teachings that are taught for the sake of leading trainees, but are teachings of the final thought for those precious trainees with sharp faculties just as it was realized by the Conqueror himself.

In accordance with internal and secret [interpretations, I will give] a partial explanation. According to an internal [interpretation], although the indestructible [drop] at the heart abides in oneself primordially, it is difficult to make known, and hence, it is secret. Since all the profound points of Secret Mantra are included in just that [drop], it is the essence. Just that appearance of primordial wisdom, which is manifestly awakened through the

quintessential instructions of excellent lamas, is suchness. Because that drop at the heart is definite as the life of the three—basis, path, and fruit—it is definitive. Although in the completion stages of tantra there are many different features of the channel-wheels on which one puts concentrated focusing, in Secret Magical Emanation [Tantras] one takes the channel-wheel at the heart as the main one. Hence, it was set forth in that way. This is one interpretation [of the internal name].

Moreover, when [the respective words of the title] are associated with the four channel-wheels, [31] the drop of the five ladies of the spheres at the navel is secret. The drop of wisdom-essence at the heart is essence. The drop of the blissful craving¹²³ at the throat is suchness, and the drop of Samantabhadra at the crown of the head is explained as “definitive”.

According to [an interpretation in] the secret mode, although the drops situated in the channels are endowed with the taste of the wisdom of bliss and exist as an integral part of oneself, one does not know it, and therefore, it is secret. Since the pith of all the aggregates and constituents is included in that drop, it is the essence. One’s innate own-face, which is perceived just as it is by means of concentrated focusing through profound techniques, is suchness. That very drop definite as the life of the essentials of all three—basis, path, and fruit—is explained as “definitive”. These are the quintessential instructions of my lineaged lamas.

In that way, since this tantra includes the essential points of the three—tantra, transmission, and quintessential instruction—there are three titles: concordant with tantra [Mahāyoga], concordant with transmission [Anuyoga], and concordant with quintessential

¹²³ *mgrin pa'i rngams ma'i thig le* (31.1). Khenpo Namdröl discussed the meaning of *rngams* in terms of the Fierce Female, or Du-mo (*gtum mo*), fire. When it blazes, there is a rising of the red psychic drops and a descending of the white drops at which point there is a feeling of bliss (*bde ba*) which is like craving (*sred pa*). In that phrase *rngams* refers to the bliss of the melting white factor (*zhu ya'i dkar cha'i bde ba*) and *ma* refers to the bliss of the red factor (*dmar cha*) melting.

instructions [Atiyoga].¹²⁴ It is said, since the quintessential instructions that rely on [the *Secret Essence's*] own entity, Mahāyoga, abide in the stream of Atiyoga [teachings], only the title concordant with the quintessential instructions is mentioned at the beginning of the book.¹²⁵

EXPLANATION OPENING THE GENERAL MEANING [31.6]

This has two parts: unfolding the categories of the meaning, and unfolding the categories of the words.

UNFOLDING THE CATEGORIES OF THE MEANING [31.6]

This also has five parts: (1) the introductory background, or the cause for the arising of this tantra; (2) the raising the discourse, [32] or the condition through which this tantra arose; (3) the meaning of the tantra that is to be thoroughly known, or the effect of the arising of this tantra; (4) the tantra's purpose and relationships,¹²⁶ and (5) the advice to the retinue and transmission of the teachings.

INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND [32.1]

When the retinue to whom it was taught assembled together, this tantra arose. Therefore,

¹²⁴ “tantra, transmission, and quintessential instruction” (*rgyud/ lung / man ngag/*) are designations for the scriptures of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga respectively. Thus, he is associating the name “*Vajrasattva Magical Emanation Net*” with Mahāyoga, “*a general scripture*” (*lung gi spyi*) with Anuyoga, and “*Secret Essence, Definitive Suchness*” with Atiyoga.

¹²⁵ Khenpo Namdröl said that the tantra's own entity is Mahāyoga, but the quintessential instructions that rely on it are in the Atiyoga category. Though the *Secret Essence* is Mahāyoga, its topic (*brjod bya*) is the Atiyoga of Mahāyoga. Therefore, the name given at the beginning of the book is the one concordant with the quintessential instructions, namely “*Secret Essence, Definitive Suchness*”.

¹²⁶ *dgos 'brel*. This is short for the topic (*brjod bya*), the purpose (*dgos pa*), the ultimate purpose (*nying dgos*), and the relationship (*brel ba*). The topic is the meaning taught on a particular occasion; the purpose is to open the path for entering into the intended meaning; the ultimate purpose is to manifest omniscience by engaging in that path, and the relationship is the connection between the purpose and the ultimate purpose, the purpose and the topic, and so forth (*tshig mdzod chen mo*, vol. 1, 463). An author is supposed to indicate these four—also called the *dgos sogs bzhi*—at the beginning of a text, so it is surprising that in this list it is presented fourth.

that which has the five marvels¹²⁷ is the introductory background. As for the etymology of “introductory background”, [part of the Sanskrit] equivalent for it, “*dāna*”,¹²⁸ applies to giving. It is called “introductory background” because it gives certainty to those who lack conviction due to not finding a history that has a [valid] source and because it serves as the background for relating the meaning of this tantra. When divided, there are two [types] of introductory backgrounds, uncommon and common.

THE UNCOMMON INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND [32.3]

The uncommon introductory background is associated with the path of method. This also has two [aspects]: [the uncommon introductory background] associated with the path of the upper [end of the central channel] and the one associated with the path of the lower [end of the central channel]. With respect to the first of those, the *place* is the four channels of the wheel of doctrine at the heart, and the *teacher* is the indestructible mind in the center of that wheel of channels abiding in dependence on the drops of the five refined essences. The *retinue* is the eight groups of consciousnesses,¹²⁹ having for their mounts the karmic-winds which course through the channels and petals, and the *teaching* or *doctrine* is the inconceivable thought—primordial wisdom of bliss, clarity, and non-conceptuality. Having transformed the karmic-winds into primordial wisdom through the power of awakening the inconceivable [drop], the eight groups [of consciousnesses] are pervaded by the taste of bliss-emptiness. This is the doctrine taught by the teacher [the indestructible mind] to the retinue [the eight consciousnesses]. [33] As for the *time*, it is the time of manifesting the thought of timelessness in which the three times¹³⁰ are melded in equality.

¹²⁷ The five marvels (*phun su mtshogs pa*) are place (*gnas*), teacher (*ston pa*), attendants (*'khor*), teaching (*bstan pa*), and time (*dus*). See chapter four, the summary of the root tantra, the section on chapter one of the scripture.

¹²⁸ The actual Sanskrit equivalent for *gleng gzhi* is *nidāna*.

¹²⁹ The eight groups of consciousnesses are: the five types of sense consciousnesses, the intellect, the afflicted intellectual consciousness, and the consciousness—basis-of-all.

¹³⁰ Past, present, and future.

Concerning the introductory background associated with the lower [end of the central channel], the lotus of the vajra-consort, which has the shapes for the four activities, is the *place*.¹³¹ The drop of the mind of enlightenment containing the essence of the constituents in the channel that is in the center of the male's vajra-jewel¹³² is the *teacher*. The secret consciousnesses of the two, father and mother, having the method of performing [the sex act] and binding [the movement of the winds and seminal drops], are the *retinue*. The innate primordial wisdom at the end of the completion of the five minds¹³³ of the path of method is the *doctrine*. The generation of that retinue [the secret consciousnesses] into the entity of that doctrine [the innate primordial wisdom] through the power of that teacher [the abiding of the drop of the mind of enlightenment in the center of the vajra-jewel] is the meaning of the teacher's responding to the retinue's inquiry. [The explanation of] *time* is as above. These are the five marvels. How the explanatory tantra comments within associating these [five] with the four letters, "*evaṃ māyā*,"¹³⁴ occurring at the beginning of the tantra is to be known from the *Ornament of Thought*.¹³⁵

It is clearly suitable to explain that the introductory backgrounds of the higher and lower openings also emerge respectively by the force of the tantra's words in the second chapter

¹³¹ *rdo rje btsun mo'i padma las bzhi'i dbyibs can ni gnas* (33.1-33.2). "Having the shape of the four activities (*las bzhi'i dbyibs can*)" refers to the shapes assigned to different layers of the consorts vagina, which are related to one of the four ritual activities of higher tantras. The "door" (*sgo*) is a triangle associated with peaceful rites (*zhi ba*). The "courtyard" (*khyams*) is a square associated with rites of expansion (*rgyas pa*). The "women's inner part" (*nang gi skye dman gyi cha* = uterus?) is semi-circular associated with rites of control and power (*dbang*). The "tip of the sphere-ladies' channel" (*dbyings phyugs ma'i rtsa gi sna cig*) is circular and associated with fierce rites (*drag po*).

¹³² *rdo rje nor bu*. The head of the penis.

¹³³ The five minds arising mind (*g.yo ldang gi sems*), wishing mind (*smon pa'i sems*), engaging mind (*'jug pa'i sems*), abiding mind (*gnas pa'i sems*), final mind (*mthar phyin pa'i sems*). In the context of the path of method, the arising mind is when the drop begins to move and bliss is generated; the wishing mind is wishing for the next higher state of bliss; the engaging mind is when one enters into a new state of bliss; the abiding mind is when the bliss is stabilized due to the seminal drop abiding stably in the channel, and the final mind is the innate primordial wisdom (*lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes*).

¹³⁴ (33.4). Probably a misspelling of *evaṃ māyā śrutam* (thus have I heard...), the standard phrase at the beginning of most sūtras and tantras, though this Tantra is exceptional in that it does not begin with this standard phrase.

¹³⁵ *dgongs rgyan* (33.5). Lochen Dharmashrī, *Ornament of the Intention*, 55.6-57.3.

that teach the secret empowerment and the latter two empowerments, because such is known through the way that possessing the five inner marvels or possessing the five secret marvels serves as an introductory background.¹³⁶ On the occasion of the raising of the discourse [in the second chapter], [34] the teacher bestows an effect-initiation on the retinue that is together with him, whereupon they are enlightened through the five inner manifest enlightenments. When this happens, for the sake of the retinue whose understanding is separate [from the teacher] the entire tantra arises within the context of the purposeful statements formulated as a response [to the retinue's] inquiry such as “*e ma'o*—the primordially secret doctrine”¹³⁷ and so forth. The former excellent ones assert the essential point that those five such manifest enlightenments are the way one becomes enlightened in the highest pure land of the heart and in the highest pure land of the secret [place], and because of that essential point, the five marvels, which rely on those [places], become the introductory background.

THE COMMON INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND [34.3]

This has three parts: (1) the introductory background of the Complete Enjoyment Body, or the special introductory background of the special arising of this tantra; (2) ancillary to that the introductory background of the wrathful deity taught for the benefit of trainees, and (3) the introductory background of the Emanation Body that tames migrators, or the general introductory background of the teaching.

¹³⁶ With regard to the second chapter of *Secret Essence*, Khenpo Namdröl claimed that the first two verse statements by Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri represent the secret initiation (*gsang dbang*), while the statement on “non-production” and so forth by the “great identity” represents both the wisdom initiation (*sher dbang*) and the great bliss initiation (*bde ba chen po'i dbang*). Since the secret initiation concerns the upper opening and the other two concern the lower opening, the trainees being initiated in the second chapter (who in fact are emanations of the main teacher) must possess the five inner and five secret marvels as described above. Therefore, these verse statements in the second chapter implicitly teach the secret and inner introductory backgrounds, despite the fact that the chapter itself is considered the “raising of the discourse” (*gleng bslang*).

¹³⁷ *e ma'o ye nas gsang ba'i chos!* (*Secret Essence*, Tb.417, 158.5).

THE INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND OF THE COMPLETE ENJOYMENT BODY [34.4]

Concerning the first, the [*Lamp Illuminating the*] *Inner Text* says:

Teacher, place, retinue, compiler,

Teaching, and time—through these one should know [the introduction].¹³⁸

Although [Vimalamitra thus] explains [the introductory background] in these six marvels, here it will be done as five, through including the marvel of compiler in the retinue.

THE PLACE [34.6]

With respect to those, the *place* is the latter one from the explanation in the *Eye Commentary*¹³⁹ of the five highest pure lands consisting of the actual highest pure land, the highest pure land of basic mind, the secret highest pure land, the highest pure land situated in cyclic existence, and the highest pure land of the Great Lord.¹⁴⁰ The Great Lord indicated here [35] is one rich in the kingdom of unsurpassed doctrine, a Complete Enjoyment Body. Such a place is explained from the viewpoint of the two, nature and entity. With regard to the first, the general nature is the sphere of reality, as stated in the short commentary [the *Ball of Meaning* by Vimalamitra]:

The sphere of reality without limits or a center

¹³⁸ *khog gzhung las/ ston gnas 'khor dang sdud pa dang / l/bstan pa dus kyis shes par byal* (34.4-34.5). The Peking edition reads differently: *ston pa gnas dang sdus pa 'khor/ l/dus dang ston* (sic.) *pa rnam pa drug stel* (Vimalamitra, *khog gzhung gsal sgron*, 134.4.5).

¹³⁹ *spyān 'grel* (34.6). Vimalamitra, *rdo rje sems dpa'i sgyu 'phrul dra ba'i rgyud dpal gsang ba'i snying po shes bya ba'i spyān 'grel pa* (P4756).

¹⁴⁰ Khenpo Namdröl described the “actual highest pure land” (*don gyi 'og min*) as “the sphere of reality that is the final mode of reality” (*cho dbyings gnas lugs mthar thug*), the “highest pure land of basic awareness” (*rig pa'i 'og min*) as “the self-aware primordial wisdom that realizes the sphere of reality” (*chos kyī dbyings la rtogs pa'i rang rig pa'i ye shes*), the “secret highest pure land” (*gsang ba'i 'og min*) as the “consort’s vagina” (*yum gyi kha*), the “highest pure land situated in cyclic existence” (*'jig rten gnas kyī 'og min*) as “one of the five pure places” (*tshangs lnga'i gnas ris*), and the “highest pure land of the Great Lord” (*dbang phyug chen po'i 'og min*) as the “place of the Complete Enjoyment Body” (*long spyod sku'i gnas*).

That is asserted as the highest of places.¹⁴¹

However, with regard to the nature of the individual parts, the nature of the circle that is the foundation is the five primordial wisdoms; the nature of the sides is the four truths; the nature of the inner courtyard is the indiffereniable [two] truths, and so forth. The entity of the place is its particular features, as the short commentary [the *Ball of Meaning* by Vimalamitra] says:

The foundation of the inestimable mansion, its decorations, extent,

Shape, projections, peak,

Ornaments, doorways, hitching posts,¹⁴²

Characteristics and types of cushions,

[The place] should be distinguished through these eleven [features].¹⁴³

THE TEACHER [35.5]

The explanation of the marvel of the *teacher* also has the two [aspects of] nature and entity. Moreover, just as identifying the meaning of the symbolism in a maṇḍala is called “teaching the principle of the maṇḍala”, the principle of primordial wisdom that is the pure residence and residents is designated as “the nature [of the teacher]”, and the features of their forms are designated as “the entity [of the teacher]”. Therefore, nature must be taught from the point of view of the Reality Body, [36] and entity from the point of view of the Form Body.

With regard to those [two], the nature of a teacher is explained in four [parts] as the short commentary [the *Ball of Meaning* by Vimalamitra] says:

¹⁴¹ 'grel chung las/ mtha' dbus med pa'i chos kyī dbyings/ lde ni gnas kyī bla mar 'dod/ (35.2). Vimalamitra, *Ball of Meaning*, 179.3.5.

¹⁴² rta babs, toraṇa (cf. Chandra Das, p.532 and Monier-Williams, p.456). The *tshig mdzod chen mo* (vol. 1, 1060) has: pho brang sogs kyī phyi rol tu rta las babs sa'i mtshams kyī sgo lta bul

¹⁴³ 'grel chung las/ gzhal yas gzhi dang rgyu dang rgyal /dbyibs dang glo 'bur rtse mo dang / lrgyan dang sgo khyud rta babs dang / lmtshan nyi gdan gi rnam pa stel /bcu gcig dag gis dbye par byal/ (35.4-35.5). See Vimalamitra, *Ball of Meaning*, 179.3.5-179.3.6.

The entity of supreme enlightenment,¹⁴⁴
 The enjoyment within the sport of phenomena,
 The lord of the Sugatas in the [ten] directions and [four] times,
 And that which is indifferentiable with all phenomena.¹⁴⁵

Furthermore, the first of these is the nature of having matured into suchness.¹⁴⁶ That is, [the teacher] has actualized the real nature of phenomena in a way that he is always in meditative equipoise due to having abandoned all obstructive defilements, and by the power of [being] that [way], he finds the ocean-like good qualities of the result that are self-arisen and gained without exertion. This is the nature of the unsought, spontaneously arisen good qualities.¹⁴⁷ Since each of his primordial wisdoms has the nature of Samantabhadra,¹⁴⁸ they cannot be apprehended [in such a way that one could say], “This is their measure.” Therefore, he has the nature of primordial wisdom without limits or a center.¹⁴⁹ Although he abides at a level of having complete abandonment and realization, that level is not expressible as either of the two extreme positions of cyclic existence and [solitary] peace, nor can the thought of equipoise be characterized by any conceptual mind.¹⁵⁰ Even though he has gained dominion over the resultant [state in this way], he has the nature whose entity cannot be demonstrated.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁴ Jikmé Tenpé Nyima has *byang chub mchog gi ngo bo dang* (36.1), whereas Vimalamitra’s text in the Peking has *byang chub chen po’i rang bzhin dang* (Vimalamitra, *Ball of Meaning*, 179.2.7).

¹⁴⁵ *’grel chung las/ byang chub mchog gi ngo bo dang / lchos rnams rol par longs spyod dang / lphyogs dus bde gshegs bdag po dang / lchos so cog dang dbyer med pa’ol* (36.1-36.2). See Vimalamitra, *Ball of Meaning*, 179.2.7.

¹⁴⁶ *de bzhin nyid du nar son pa’i rang bzhin* (36.3). In his commentary, Khenpo Namdröl associated this nature with the title, “Tathāgata” (*de bzhin gshegs pa*), given to the Buddha in the introduction to the *Secret Essence*.

¹⁴⁷ *yon tan ma btsal lhun gyis grub pa’i rang bzhin* (36.3-36.4). This nature is associated with the title, “genuinely complete” (*yang dag par rdzogs pa*), given to the Buddha in the tantra’s introduction.

¹⁴⁸ *kun tu bzang po’i rang bzhin* (36.4). This could alternatively be translated as “an all-good nature”, both meanings are meant here.

¹⁴⁹ *ye shes mtha’ dbus dang bral ba’i rang bzhin* (36.4). This is associated with the title, Buddha (*sangs rgyas*).

¹⁵⁰ *mtshan ma’i yul can*.

¹⁵¹ *ngo bo bstan du med pa’i rang bzhin* (46.6). This is associated with the title, “Transcendent Victor” (*bcom ldan ’das*).

With regard to the second [aspect of the Teacher's nature mentioned by Vimalamitra, enjoying the sport of phenomena], although his primordial wisdom has control over immeasurable illusory objects of enjoyment, [the teacher] does not deviate from the real nature, which is devoid of apprehending [subject] and apprehended [object]. [37] This is also called "the nature that has actualized equanimity and is free from [dualistic] objects of enjoyment".¹⁵²

With regard to the third [aspect of the Teacher's nature, being lord of the Sugatas in the ten directions and four times], when all the Conquerors of the ten directions and four times are condensed, they are included within the five lineages. All those five are also contained in [a being of] the sixth lineage. Hence, [the teacher] is a lord of all the lineages. This is also called "the nature free from being one or many".¹⁵³

With regard to the fourth [aspect of the Teacher's nature, that which is indifferentiable from all phenomena], even all phenomena of cyclic existence that are included within the three realms and three times do not exist outside of the actuality of the indifferentiable special [two] truths, and the thought of a Conqueror of the sixth [family] dwells permanently and pervasively in those two truths. [This] "great non-dual identity" is also called "the nature in which the three times are not fused or separated".¹⁵⁴

The second, the entity [of the teacher], also has four [aspects]: the meaningful sign¹⁵⁵ that the teacher is the identity of the three bodies, the meaningful sign of the non-duality of his method and wisdom, the meaningful sign that he possesses the six primordial wisdoms, and the meaningful sign that he has the three complete liberations.

Furthermore, concerning the first [the meaningful sign that the teacher has the identity

¹⁵² Khenpo Namdröl added that the "illusory objects of enjoyment" (*sgyu ma'i spyod yul*) were "pure appearances" (*dag pa'i snang ba*), while the "objects of enjoyment" (*spyod yul*) that are absent in the Buddha's nature are those of subject and object (*gzung 'dzin gyi spyod yul*).

¹⁵³ *gcig dang du ma dang bral ba'i rang bzhin* (37.2).

¹⁵⁴ *gnyis su med pa'i bdag nyid chen por dus gsum 'du 'bral med pa'i rang bzhin zhes kyang bya'ol* (37.4).

¹⁵⁵ *don rtags* (37.4).

of all three enlightened bodies], the fact that his exalted body is seen straight on from all directions as without a front or back is the meaningful sign that he has the identity of a Reality Body. The fact that he possesses the final qualities of the major and minor marks is the meaningful sign that he has the identity of a Complete Enjoyment Body, and [38] the fact that emanations spread forth from every hair on his body is the meaningful sign that he has the identity of an Emanation Body.

Concerning the second [the meaningful sign of the non-duality of his method and wisdom], the fact that the father [Samantabhadra] and mother [Samantabhadri] embrace within both equally sitting in a cross-legged posture is the symbol of dwelling in non-abiding nirvāṇa by means of great compassion and non-apprehending wisdom.

With regard to the third [the meaningful sign that the teacher possesses the six primordial wisdoms], his six arms are the sign of having gained the six [wisdoms] consisting of the five primordial wisdoms plus self-arisen primordial wisdom. That those [arms] hold six symbols, a vajra and so forth, is the sign of effecting¹⁵⁶ the welfare of migrators.

Concerning the fourth [the meaningful sign that he has the three liberations], the fact he has three faces—blue, white, and red—is a sign for the indifferentiability of the three—(1) exalted body and emptiness, (2) exalted speech and signlessness, and (3) exalted mind and wishlessness.

THE RETINUE [38.4]

The marvel of the *retinue* has two [parts]: the retinue that is together [with the teacher] and the retinue that is separated [from the teacher]. The first has [three parts:] the retinue of a non-dual nature, the retinue of the special basic mind, and the retinue who listen to the discourse with faith. With regard to the first [the retinue of a non-dual nature], there are the five families of Conquerors, the Tathāgata King of Consciousness, etc. Concerning this

¹⁵⁶ *mjod* (38.3). *mdzad* (Gangtok, 35.6).

[central deity] called “King of Consciousness”, the great Omniscient One [Longchenpa] set forth many proofs that it was Vairocana, but Zur in dependence upon sources such as the *Tantra of the Rutting Elephant*,¹⁵⁷ Sūryasimhaprabha’s commentary [*The Extensive*], [39] and [Buddhaguhya’s] *Stages of Vajra Activity*¹⁵⁸ asserted that it was Akṣobhya. Derdak Lingpa¹⁵⁹ and his brother also followed the latter [assertion]. The *Penetrating [Magical Emanation Net]* says:

When on top of the fearlessness at the center of the channel-wheel,
The Lord Samantabhadra teaches
The source—Magical Emanation—to the retinue,
Akṣobhya, the Conqueror, is in the front.¹⁶⁰

In accordance with this, these five [Lords of the] lineages are the retinue in relation to a [being of the] sixth lineage arising as the teacher of the tantra, and in general according to their fame as “the five lineages of beings who explain [the tantra]”, they are also the teacher. Therefore, they are both the teacher and the retinue.¹⁶¹

Concerning the second [the retinue of special basic mind], it is stated in the *Ocean*:

Out of the particulars of the Tathāgata’s enlightened mind,
Conquerors, Bodhisattvas, and so forth appear on their own, and...¹⁶²

As that says, because [these figures] are self-appearances from the particulars of primordial wisdom that is the basic mind mantra—namely, the teacher’s enlightened mind—they are called “the retinue of the special basic mind”.¹⁶³ Furthermore, concerning that [retinue],

¹⁵⁷ *glang chen rab ’bog gi rgyud* (38.6).

¹⁵⁸ *rdo rje las rim* (39.1). Buddhaguhya, *sgyu ’phrul dra ba rdo rje las kyi rim pa* (P4720).

¹⁵⁹ *gter bdag gling pa* (39.1). Great treasure-discoverer and founder of Mindröling Monastery, lived 1646-1713.

¹⁶⁰ *thal ba lasl ’khor lo ’i lte bar mi ’jigs steng / lbdag po kun bzang ’khor rnam lal / kun ’byung sgyu ’phrul ston pa’i tshel / mi bskyod rgya po mdun na gnasl* (39.2).

¹⁶¹ Literally, “they are the common loci of both teacher and retinue”. *ston ’khor gnyis ka’i gzhi mthun nol* (39.3).

¹⁶² *rgya mtsho lasl / de bzhin thugs kyi khyad par lasl / rang snang rgyal ba sems sogs dang* / (39.4).

¹⁶³ *rig pa khyad par can gi ’khor* (39.5).

there are the sixteen male and female Bodhisattvas—Vajra-Sight,¹⁶⁴ Vajra-Object-of-Sight,¹⁶⁵ and so forth—and the eight male and female wrathful Subduers—Vajra-Contact,¹⁶⁶ Not-Being-Permanent,¹⁶⁷ etc. Although for [one] included within the level of Buddhahood the different entities of sense objects and so forth do not exist, the names of the aggregates and constituents are given to [those] deities due to the fact that the vajra-aggregates, constituents, and spheres—which are of the same taste—are conceptually isolatable factors, so that [students] will understand that the male and female Tathāgatas and the male and female Bodhisattvas are emanated separately. [40]

These [deities] are the retinue actually instructed by the words of the tantra, this being done for the sake of [us] future disciples who meditate on the circle of the maṇḍala in accordance with the introductory background. However, according to the assertions of the foremost Dropukpa¹⁶⁸ and the teacher Nyay,¹⁶⁹ etc., a limitless [number] of Learner [Bodhisattva] Superiors who have other continuums than the teacher must also be [included] in the retinue together [with the teacher], because if such were not the case, then the statement in the second chapter that the teacher, through bestowing the profound initiation on the retinue, cleared away their defilements of conceptuality would not be fitting.

Concerning the third [the retinue who listen to the discourse with faith], the [*Lamp Illuminating*] the Inner Text says, “the great gods listening with faith”.¹⁷⁰ These are the great gods, Bhagavan Mahādeva,¹⁷¹ etc., who abide in the external perimeter [of the maṇḍala].

The second [the retinue which is separated from the Teacher’s] are those fortunate ones with sharp faculties who are motivated towards [Secret] Mantra. Although they are not the

¹⁶⁴ *rdo rje mthong ba.*

¹⁶⁵ *rdo rje mthong bar bya ba.*

¹⁶⁶ *rdo rje reg pa.*

¹⁶⁷ *rtag par ma yin pa.*

¹⁶⁸ *sgro phug pa* (40.2). The third Zur patriarch, lived 1074-1134 C.E.

¹⁶⁹ *nye ston* (40.2). One of the “four teachers” (*ston bzhi*), part of the enumeration of Dropuk-ba’s disciples.

¹⁷⁰ *khog gzhung las/ dad pas nyan pa’i lha chen rnams/* (40.4). P4739, 134.5.1.

¹⁷¹ *legs ldan mahā daiva* (40.5).

retinue assembled in the highest pure land, they are trainees for whom this tantra was specifically taught. Therefore, they are mentioned as being in the retinue of Vajrasattva.

THE MARVELS OF THE TEACHING AND THE TIME [40.6]

The marvel of the *teaching* is just this kind of non-dual tantras, and [41] the marvel of the *time* is the time when the teacher, retinue, and so forth [mentioned] in the introductory background assemble.

INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND OF THE WRATHFUL DEITIES [41.1]

This also has the five marvels [place, teacher, retinue, teaching, and time]. From among these, the *place* is in the great blazing charnel ground bedecked with extremely fearful ornaments.

Concerning the *teacher*, the [*Sūtra that Gathers [All the Buddhas'] Intentions*] says:

Pacification will not benefit

The very vicious and fierce.

Through the seal of wisdom and method

In wrathful [forms] Tathāgatas accomplish all.¹⁷²

Accordingly, [the *teacher*] is the Wrathful One of the seal of exalted activity. Also with regard to that, from the three guises—that of the wrathful sage, that of the childish dwarf, and that of the glorious and resplendent fright¹⁷³—it is the latter.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² *dgongs 'dus las/ shin tu gdug cing gtum pa lal /zhi bas phan par mi 'gyur tel /shes rab thabs kyi phyag rgya las/ /kbro bor de bzhiñ gshogs kun mdzad/* (41.2-41.3). Despite its designation as a “sūtra”, this is an Anuyoga Tantra text: *sangs rgyas thams cad kyi dgongs 'dus pa'i mdo*, Tb.373, vol. 16, 2.1-617.5.

¹⁷³ *rngams mrjid* (41.3). *rngams brjid* (Gangtok, 38.6). The *DTCM* has *rngam brjid* (vol. 1, 696): *'jigs su rung ba'i nyams* (“a posture that is suitable to be feared”).

¹⁷⁴ Khenpo Namdröl explained that there are three types of wrathful forms in terms of their outward aspect. The form of a wrathful sage (*drang srong khros pa'i cha*), which is very tall with long legs and arms, is exemplified by the main deity of the *Supreme Bliss* (*bde mchog*). The aspect of the childish dwarf (*mi'u thung byis pa*) is very short and small. The aspect of glorious and resplendent fright (*dpal chen rngams brjid kyi cha*) is man-sized and is resplendent (*zil brjid*) and hungering for spoiled disciples (*'dul bya gdug pa can gyi rngams*).

With respect to the *retinue*, of the two—the retinue of trainees and the retinue of trainers—the first is Rudra together with his retinue. Furthermore, even though it is explained that this Rudra indicated here is an emanation in terms of his actual measure of being; in terms of the level of appearance he recited a fierce knowledge mantra of an earlier Buddha and meditated on the deity of such a mantra, but due to his not being effected by the essentials of the profound view and due to his being cut off by corrupted vows, at the end of a series of bad transmigrations he became a monster of karma¹⁷⁵ possessing the power of a knowledge mantra. By means of this mantra, he brought under his power all of the desire and form realms, except the five lands of Superiors,¹⁷⁶ [42] and he wreaked havoc on the world. [This monster] came to have a large retinue of the vicious and fierce.

Concerning the second [the retinue who are the trainers], there are the collection of the four types of blood drinkers¹⁷⁷ and the twenty sisters/girls/daughters. It is said that the twenty-eight great ladies¹⁷⁸ are included in both the retinue of trainees and the retinue of trainers.

With respect to the *teaching*, since the self-abiding primordial wisdom is explicitly taught in the father tantras from the viewpoint of liberating and in the mother tantras from the viewpoint of joining, [the *teaching*] is the two joining [and] liberating.¹⁷⁹ The *time* is the

¹⁷⁵ *las kyi srin po* (41.6).

¹⁷⁶ These are the five upper divisions of the Form Realm that are beyond the Fourth Concentration. They are also called the Five Pure Places (*gnas gtsang; shuddhāvāsakāyika*) and are areas in which only Superiors—those on the path of seeing or higher—are born. The names of these places are Not Great (*mi che ba; avrha*), Without Pain (*mi gdung ba; atapas*), Excellent Appearance (*gya nom snang ba; sudṛśa*), Great Perception (*shin tu mthong ba; sudarśana*), and Not Low (*'og min; akaniṣṭha*). For a more detail description, see Zahler, et. al., *Meditative States in Tibetan Buddhism*, pp.44-45.

¹⁷⁷ *khrag 'thung bzhi* (42.1). According to Khenpo Namdröl, these are in Longchenpa's system Padma-Heruka, Ratna-Heruka, Karma-Heruka, and Vajra-Heruka, these being the four deities in the four directions around the central Buddha-Heruka, respectively the forms of Amitābha, Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddhi, and Akṣobhya. In the Zur system, the Vajra-Heruka form of Akṣobhya is the central deity, and the Buddha-Heruka of Vairocana is one of the four blood-drinkers.

¹⁷⁸ *dbang phyug nyer brgyad* (42.1-42.2). Though the feminine particle is left off of their name, this refers to the twenty-eight “powerful animal-headed goddesses” of the wrathful maṇḍala. See Lauf, *Secret Doctrines of the Tibetan Books of the Dead*, 150-154.

¹⁷⁹ *sbyor sgrol* (42.3). This refers to ritual sex (*sbyor*) and liberative killing (*sgrol*).

appointed time for training the vicious trainees of mantra.

INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND OF THE EMANATION BODY [42.3]

From the five [marvels], the *place* is the land of an Emanation Body, which is established by a Tathāgata according to what s/he wished for on the prior path of learning. In connection with this land, there is the nature of a billion [worlds with] four continents, and in general there also are lands of an Emanation Body that possess many hundred-billion-ten-millions of [worlds with] four continents.

In terms of this teaching, the *teacher* is the king of the Shākya. Relative to the six lineages of trainees, [the teacher] is posited as the six Subduers. Furthermore, there are various cases of taming, such as those for hell beings and hungry ghosts by the king Yama, those for some animals by the king of deer, etc.—[these teachers] having a form which accords in type [with the beings taught]—those by a Buddha’s emanated form adorned with the major and minor marks, [43] and those by an actual supreme Emanation Body. However, since just the supreme Emanation Body is the principal, fundamental one, it is the main one of the literal reading of the tantra.

With respect to the *retinue*, when done in terms of the main one, [it consists of] the two, gods and humans, according to the statement, “teacher of gods and humans”. The principals even among those are the four types of retinue,¹⁸⁰ and in general there are [members of the retinue] in any of the six realms.

The *teaching* is the four tamings—taming through exalted body, exalted speech, exalted mind, and magical emanation. Concerning those, the first is the exalted body which has the twelve great deeds.¹⁸¹ It is the basis through which the doctrine is taught. The remaining three are the mode of teaching through the three kinds of miracles. At first, through magical

¹⁸⁰ *’khor nmam pa bzhi* (43.2). These are monks (*dge slong*), nuns (*dge slong me*), laymen (*dge bsnyen*), and laywomen (*dge bsnyen ma*).

¹⁸¹ See note 11 above.

emanation [a Buddha] causes the retinue to aspire. Then, having seen the minds of [those in] the retinue through clairvoyance, s/he speaks all. After that, s/he bestows the perceptual instructions and subsequent teachings. [Some] think that and [others that] it does not arise in that order; the intention is according to the former. The *time* is the time of setting up the lamp having accomplished the three—completion, fruition, and purification.

Furthermore, according to the second chapter [of the tantra] when by means of the effect initiation the retinue which was together with [the Buddha] overcame the subtle demons which are predisposition for the three appearances¹⁸² or predispositions for emission, [44] the sign of that appeared externally as the introductory background of the wrathful [deities]. Not only that but also since the introductory background of the Emanation Body which tames transmigrating beings comes up in the first chapter's statement, "exalted body, speech, and mind thoroughly appearing in various [forms]",¹⁸³ and in the second chapter's statement, "creating various elaborations for the sake of teaching",¹⁸⁴ it is explained that these two [the introductory background of the wrathful deities and the introductory background of the Emanation Body] are secondary introductory backgrounds [in relation to the introductory background of the Complete Enjoyment Body].

RAISING THE DISCOURSE [44.1]

Concerning the raising of the discourse, through the teacher and the retinue using the technique of question and answer, there arises the potential for the meaning of the tantra, appropriate to the awareness of the trainees. That [question and response] is called "the raising of the discourse", since it serves as the condition for the arising of the teaching by way

¹⁸² These are the three appearances which, according to the Guhyasamāja tradition, manifest before the attainment of the mind of clear light, namely: 1) radiant white appearance (*snang ba dkar lam pa'i snang ba*), 2) appearance of red increase (*mched dmar lam pa'i snang ba*), and 3) appearance of black near attainment (*nyer thob nag lam pa'i snang ba*). For more information see Lati Rinbochay and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Death, Intermediate State, and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism* (New York: Snow Lion, 1979), pp.38-48.

¹⁸³ *sku gsung thugs sna tshogs par kun tu snang ba* (44.1). Cf., *Secret Essence*, Tb.417, 154.4.

¹⁸⁴ *bstan phyir spro ba sna tshogs mdzad* (44.2). Cf., *Secret Essence*, Tb.417, 159.3.

of [the retinue] urging [the teacher] to relate the actual meaning of the tantra that is to be told. When divided, there are two [types], uncommon and common.

UNCOMMON RAISING OF THE DISCOURSE [44.4]

From these, the first [the uncommon raising of the discourse] has the manner of secret initiation and the manner of the higher two initiations.¹⁸⁵ Concerning the first [the manner of the secret initiation], by means of the sun and moon minds of enlightenment,¹⁸⁶ which have arisen from the union of the teacher in father and mother [aspect], initiation is bestowed on the awareness-holders who are the retinue accompanying [the teacher]. The father, through holding the factor of method, makes the purposeful statement that all stable and moving phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa are extended and purified in the one divine maṇḍala of endless purity; the mother, through holding the factor of wisdom, makes the purposeful statement that all stable and moving phenomena are from the beginning not other than the sphere of natural purity, [45] whereby this greatly ignites the retinue's realization of the uncommon two truths.

With regard to the second [the manner of the two higher initiations, the Buddha] made statements for the sake of generating the minds [of the retinue] into primordial wisdom, the five passages [beginning with] “*E ma'o!* This marvelously wonderful doctrine!”¹⁸⁷ Since at that time the four minds, which will be explained [later]—fluctuating/rising [mind], disintegrating/descending [mind], abiding [mind], and wishing [mind]—were the preliminaries, [the retinue] attained the entity of the wisdom initiation at the end of the

¹⁸⁵ The two higher initiations are the knowledge wisdom initiation (*shes rab ye shes kyi dbang*), and the word initiation (*tshig dbang*).

¹⁸⁶ *nyi zla byang chub kyi sems* (44.5). These are the white seminal drop (=the moon) of the male practitioner and the red seminal drop (=sun) of the female practitioner. In the secret initiation, the teacher and his partner perform ritual sex, during which their combined sexual fluids is extracted. The disciples are initiated by placing a drop of this fluid on their tongues.

¹⁸⁷ *e ma mtshar lnga* (45.2). This refers to the third speech in chapter two, which is made up of five verses each of which begins with the phrase: *e ma'o ngo mtshar rmad kyi chos!* (*Secret Essence*, Tb.417, 157.7-158.4).

forward process of the sixteen joys.¹⁸⁸ Also, at the end of the sixteen joys of stability from below the initiation of great bliss was complete. [The retinue thereby] attained the mind of enlightenment brought to completion in which the thought of the teacher and retinue is indifferentiable. This is the condition for the occurrence of questions and answers later on; therefore, it is the raising up of the discourse.

Here, the teacher is Samantabhadra, who possesses a primordial wisdom body free from the three—semen, menses, and wind. He bestows the substance initiation of the white and red drops on the retinue, and the awareness-holders—who, abiding at a high level, have their bases in the highest pure land, whose bodies are devoid of semen and blood, and whose minds are devoid of the craving for sex—receive the two higher initiations in dependence on a consort. The way that such is not contradictory is as follows. Since the teacher has perfected the attainment of mastery, there is no stopping him from bestowing the sun and moon blessings¹⁸⁹ for the sake of the retinue, and although the pure retinue [46] does not have the affliction of craving sex, they do seek the innate bliss. Also, although in general those whose physical basis is that of [a body in] the highest pure land do not have semen and blood, there are exceptional cases in which some of those in the highest pure land who practice Highest Mantra have such a special basis possessing the six constituents.¹⁹⁰ Or, according to the assertion of Lochen Rinpoché, bases of learners are not devoid of *subtle*

¹⁸⁸ The sixteen joys of the forward process are experiences produced through meditating on the subtle psychic body. They occur after the heat of the Fierce Female (*gtum mo*) has begun to melt the white drop of enlightenment at the crown of the head. It flows downward, and when it reaches the throat chakra, one experiences “[simply] joy” (*dga’ ba*). It then proceeds down to the heart chakra, where one experiences more intense joy, called “supreme joy” (*mchog dga*). From there, it descends to the navel, where one experiences “special joy” (*khyad dga*). Finally, the white drop reaches the tip of the sexual organ, and one experiences the “innate joy” (*lhan skyes dga*). This is the forward process. The reverse process is when the practitioner subsequently draws the white drop back up to the throat chakra. Sixteen joys are posited for each direction by dividing each joy into the same four categories of simple joy, supreme joy, special joy, and innate joy.

¹⁸⁹ i.e., the secret initiation that involves distributing the mixture of the male and female seminal fluids (sun and moon) to the disciples.

¹⁹⁰ These are bone, marrow, regenerative fluid, flesh, skin, and blood. The first three are from the father; the last three, from the mother. See *Death, Intermediate State, and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism*, 30.

semen and blood. Thus, I think it is also suitable to explain it from that point of view. One should dispel the [apparent] contradictions in such ways.

According to explanations and so forth by the Omniscient King of the Doctrine [Longchenpa] within citing the *Drop of Liberation*,¹⁹¹ a Conqueror's child on a final path enters the path of no-more-learning through the wisdom initiation. Although such [an explanation] is acceptable, here it is explained that [a Conqueror's child on a final path] enters [the path of no-more-learning] through the secret initiation. These explanations are due to different modes of positing the two systems' paths of secret initiation; or in another way, since this mode of bestowing the effect initiation is qualitatively similar with the mode of bestowing the secret initiation, it is only *called* the secret initiation. One should analyze which [of these explanations] is more fitting. There are also qualms with respect to the two latter initiations, and these need to be eliminated. [The reasonings for this] can be understood through those [above].

COMMON RAISING OF THE DISCOURSE [46.6]

When in dependence on such profound initiations the secret of the teacher's exalted mind was manifested just as it is, [the retinue] having delineated the meaning of that by means of the four secrets,¹⁹² asked [the teacher] to set forth this tantra for those sentient beings who are under the influence of error. [47] This is implicit in [such statements as] "*E ma'o!* The primordially secret doctrine!"¹⁹³ and so forth. Then, since all the suffering of existence has its root in mistaken apprehensions and so is only adventitious, suitable to be eliminated, and since the basic disposition [of reality] is without the duality of bondage and release but pure like space, he knew that teaching this tantra [would be] meaningful. Thus, he accepted to

¹⁹¹ *grol ba'i thig le* (46.3).

¹⁹² *gsang ba bzhi*. These are the four types of secret mentioned in the fourth speech in chapter two of the tantra, namely the primordially secret, the naturally secret, the excellently secret, and the extremely secret. See chapter four of the introduction.

¹⁹³ *e ma'o ye nas gsang ba'i chos!* (47.1).

teach it with the six ways of showing pleasure—smiling, moving the eyebrows, etc.

THE MEANING OF THE TANTRA TO BE KNOWN [47.3]

The third [topic] is the effect [of the introductory background and the raising of the discourse]—the meaning of the tantra that is to be thoroughly known. This section has two parts: a general explanation of the three continuums and a detailed explanation of the conditioning factors of the path, the ten topics of tantra. One scholar says the former is explained mainly in terms of the object of expression, whereas the latter is explained mainly in terms of the means of expression.

GENERAL EXPLANATION OF THE THREE CONTINUUMS [47.5]

[Continuum] is explained as the three consisting of 1) that which is to be realized, i.e., the ground or causal continuum, 2) that by which it is realized and by which one progresses, that is to say, the method or path-continuum, and 3) that in which there is completion, the continuum of the result. This is because just as when one knows that oil exists in the sesame seeds, one engages—without holding back—in the tiresome [process] of grinding and filtering, and having done so, obtains the oil. Similarly, when one knows well how the ultimate ground for achieving Buddhahood exists in one's own continuum [48] and knows its distinctive features, one can practice through making effort upon having ascertained the essentials of skillful means in which one takes just that [ground] as the path in a manner concordant in aspect with the very pure state of the result and carries it on up [to Buddhahood]. By that means one will attain the final result. Since in this way the three—ground, path, and result—are related as one continuum, they are called a “continuum”. This is because the *Continuation [of the Guhyasamāja] Tantra* says:

Continuum is explained as [meaning] continuous.

From method and cause [issues] the result.¹⁹⁴

Here, method means path, and cause means the ground.

Concerning these three, Len Nyatselwa¹⁹⁵ says, “That which subsists is the basis. Engagement is the path. Fruition is the result.”¹⁹⁶ [But] Lochen Rinpoche¹⁹⁷ says:

If such were the case, it would follow that the subject, a view, is not a path-continuum, because 1) a path-continuum necessarily has the characteristic of “engaging” and 2) a view is not an [instance of] engagement. You assert the first part of the reason, and the last part is established, because a view is characterized by “knowing” and the two characteristics of knowing and engaging are not the same.¹⁹⁸

However, Len responds to that:¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ *rgyud phyi ma las/ rgyud ni rgyun chags la bshad del thabs dang rgyu las 'bras bu'o/* (48.3). According to *Tantra in Tibet* (p.109, n.32), P81, Vol.3, 200.1.2-200.1.2 is the section on the three continuums. Lessing and Wayman (*Introduction*, p.266 n.14) translate a similar verse from Chap. 18 of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. The Sanskrit for “continuous” (*rgyun*) is *prabandha*, and synonyms for cause (*rgyu*, *hetu*), method (*thabs*, *upāya*), and fruit (*'bras bu*, *phala*) are respectively nature (*prakṛti*), (*ādhāra*), and (*asambhārya*).

¹⁹⁵ *glan nya tshal ba*. There is a Len Nya-tsel-wa So-nam Gönpö (*glan nya tshal pa bsod nams mgon po*) who initiated Ten-nak Dröl-ma-wa Samdrup Dorjé (*rTan-nag sgröl-ma-ba bsam-grub-rdo-rje*) (1295-1376) into the *Magical Net* (*The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 1, 668). Khenpo Namdröl said the source of the quote was probably Zur Ham Shākya Jung-nge, whose family name—Khen-po claimed—was Len Nya-tsel-wa. He also was a contemporary of Samdrup Dorjé (*The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 1, 671-672).

¹⁹⁶ *'di gsum la glan nya tshal bal gnas pa gzhil 'jug pa lam/ smin pa 'bras bu zhes gsung /* (48.3-48.4).

¹⁹⁷ Lochen Dharmashrī (1654-1717).

¹⁹⁸ *lo chen rin po che nil de ltar na lta ba chos can/ lam rgyud ma yin par thal/ lam rgyud la 'jug pa zhes pa'i mtshan nyid kyi khyab pa gang zhig lkyod 'jug pa ma yin pa'i phyir/ rtags zur dang po khas/ phyi ma grub stel khyod shes ba'i mtshan nyid gang zhig lshes 'jug gi mtshan nyid gnyis mi gcig pa'i phyir/ zhes gsungs kyang /* (48.4-48.6). There are three “defining characteristics” (*mtshan nyid gsum*) in the *Secret Essence* tradition. These are:

1. that which is characterized by knowing, the view (*lta ba shes pa'i mtshan nyid*);
2. that which is characterized by engaging, the path (*lam 'jug pa'i mtshan nyid*);
3. that which is characterized by the result (*'bras bu'i mtshan nyid*).

Traditionally, the view (*lta*) is considered to be that which is characterized by knowing, because it is the knowledge of the way things are (*gnas lugs*). However, as such, it is also considered to be the first step in the path, traditionally described as characterized by engaging. Lochen Dharmashrī objects to Len’s definition of the path as engagement, because it excludes the view from being part of the path.

¹⁹⁹ Khenpo Namdröl said the response is actually Dodrupchen’s.

It does not entail [that the view is not a path-continuum because it is not characterized by engaging]. For, it is feasible to make the distinction that, although the first of the three characteristics [the view] *is* a path-continuum that engages [the ground], it is not the characteristic of engagement within the division into the two, [the characteristic of] engaging and [that of] knowing.²⁰⁰ [49]

This answer should be analyzed.

Lhajé Chel²⁰¹ calls the result-continuum a final fruition of qualities. He says that the result-continuum does not encompass results that are [on the] path.²⁰² In our own system, it is asserted as follows:

1. that which is the source of all phenomena is [the meaning of] ground;
2. that which involves the exertion of knowing and engaging is [the meaning of] path, and
3. the actualization of the real nature of phenomena that has gone to the point of no further advancement is [the meaning of] result.

THE GROUND-CONTINUUM [49.3]

The first [of these], the ground-continuum has two parts: 1) the primary meaning—the essential ground that is the mode of subsistence—and 2) the ancillary meaning—the ground for imputing error.

²⁰⁰ *glan gyis de la ma khyab stel mtshan nyid gsum gyi dang po de 'jug pa lam gyi rgyud yin yang shes 'jug gnyis kyi zlas phyé ba'i 'jug pa'i mtshan nyi ma yin pa'i khyad par 'thad pa'i phyir/ zhes lan btab* (48.6-49.1). The point being made here is that, while the view is a kind of path in that through it one engages reality, it is characterized by knowing and not by engaging. Therefore, it does not fall into the category of the second characteristic, the characteristic of engaging.

²⁰¹ *hla rje dpyal*. According to Khenpo Namdröl and *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* (vol. 1, 653), this refers to the great translator from Jel, Gun-ka-dor-je (*dpyal lo tsā ba kun dga' rdo rje*). He lived c. 12th cent.

²⁰² I.e., he excludes results that occur on the path from being part of the result-continuum, which he considers to be only the state of final Buddhahood.

THE ESSENTIAL GROUND WHICH IS THE MODE OF SUBSISTENCE [49.4]

The *Ornament of the Intention* says:

The mode of subsistence that is without bondage or release abides primordially as the self-knowing mind of enlightenment, the indiffereniable [special two] truths devoid of objects of activity.²⁰³

Concerning that, the scriptures of the Conqueror say more than once that out of all the stable and moving phenomena the mind is the only principal one, and that mind is here differentiated from the many subtle and coarse [types of minds] as the final very subtle mind, the mind-vajra, the clear light, the innate nature, and so forth. [50] Primordial wisdom from the statements in this tantra, “[ordinary] mind and self-appearing primordial wisdom”, also is just this [final very subtle mind], and the other coarse minds should be taken as “[ordinary] mind” in that two-fold division.

Even while those other minds are tormented by the **bondage** of actions, afflictions and suffering, the entity [of primordial wisdom] is not even slightly defiled, due to which such primordial wisdom is said to be “free from bondage and release”. It is called “self-knowing”, because when it is clearly experienced in one’s continuum, primordial wisdom knows its own mode of subsistence—emptiness—and hence it is not captivated by the elaborations of signs; or because all appearances and occurrences become appearances of the primordial wisdom that **knows** them as solely **self**-appearance.

In other [systems]²⁰⁴ they do not say much more than just that this coarse mind matures into the primordial wisdom of Buddhahood through the force of meditatively cultivating a path of the two collections. However, in this system just this vajra-primordial wisdom, the

²⁰³ *dgongs rgyan las/ 'ching grol med pa'i gnas lugs rang rig pa byang chub kyi sems bden pa dbyer med spyod yul dang bral bar ye nas gnas pa* (49.4–49.5). In what follows, Jikmé Tenpé Nyima gives a lengthy commentary on this definition, word by word. In the translation, the words highlighted in bold are from this definition.

²⁰⁴ Khenpo Namdröl said this refers to the non-tantric definition vehicle, which asserts that one develops one’s ordinary coarse mind into the wisdom of Buddhahood.

secret core of those **minds**, is asserted as the essence of the primordial wisdom of great **enlightenment**. Hence, it is called “the mind of enlightenment”.

With regard to the two truths, although in general there are many ways to posit them, here they are the two truths of the uncommon system of Secret Emanation, or the **special two truths**.²⁰⁵ [Concerning the special ultimate truth] from the viewpoint of the sphere [of reality] free from elaborations, [51] the special ultimate truth is the natural ultimate. From the viewpoint of self-luminosity²⁰⁶ devoid of obscuring defilements, it is the primordial wisdom ultimate. Its abiding as the treasure of the five fruitional features—enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities—is the fruitional ultimate. Since the third [way it abides] is divided into five, these are known as “the seven riches of the ultimate”.²⁰⁷ In brief, they are nothing more than individual differentiations [of one thing] by way of 1) clear light’s factor of non-conceptuality, 2) its factor of clarity,²⁰⁶ and 3) the factor of that [clear light] serving as the basis for the fruitional features.

With regard to the special conventional [truth], although it is explained as “an appearance of the clear light’s energy”,²⁰⁸ the Tathāgata Zur Chungwa says that all phenomena appearing as a display of basic mind is the system of Mahāyoga; their appearing as the energy of basic mind is the system of Anuyoga; their being the self-appearances of just basic mind is the system of Atiyoga.²⁰⁹ It seems to be appropriate, in accordance with that statement, to call [special conventional truths here] “a display”. The display of the ultimate

²⁰⁵ *lhag pa'i bden gnyis* (50.6). These are the special ultimate truth (*lhag pa don dam bden pa*) and the special conventional truth (*lhag pa kun rdzob bden pa*).

²⁰⁶ The same Tibetan word, *gsal ba*, is translated as both luminosity in “self-luminosity” (*rang gsal*, 51.1) and clarity in “factor of clarity” (*gsal ba'i cha*, 51.2), in order to emphasize the breadth of meaning it conveys.

²⁰⁷ *don dam dkor bdun* (51.2). These seven are: 1. the natural ultimate, 2. the primordial wisdom ultimate, and the five enlightened aspects of the effect state, namely 3. enlightened form, 4. enlightened speech, 5. enlightened mind, 6. enlightened qualities, 7. enlightened activities. They are all considered to be the same entity (*ngo bo gcig*).

²⁰⁸ *de'i rtsal snang* (51.3).

²⁰⁹ *bde gshogs zur chung pa chos thams cad rig pa'i cho 'phrul du snang ba ma hāl rig pa'i rtsal du snang ba a nul rig pa nyid rang snang ba a ti'i lugs zhes gsungs pa* (51.3-51.4).

dawns as myriad worlds in which all environments and beings are pure. There are some who say it is difficult to distinguish this [special conventional truth] from the fruitional ultimate, but there is a great distinction between the basis for dawning and the phenomena that dawn.²¹⁰ The union in which these two truths **abide as one entity** is called the “indifferentiable special truth”.

A mind that has coarse elaborations—i.e., appearances in the manner of **objects** and subjects—**does** not nakedly perceive such a union of the two truths, which is the mode of being, not merely [something] fabricated by an awareness. [52] Hence, [this union] is said to be “beyond being an object of activity of an [ordinary] mind” or “devoid being an object of activity of an [ordinary] mind”.²¹¹ It is not suitable for one to propound that the ultimate truth is not an object of knowledge, being misled by teachings like this that it is devoid of being an object of an awareness’ activity. This is because saying such explicitly contradicts the statements 1) in *Heruka Gel-bo*:

From within objects of knowledge it is excellent.

Hence, this is the etymology [of “ultimate”].²¹²

And 2) in the *Oral Instructions*, citing a summation of a sūtra [which say] that all phenomena abide primordially in the nature of the mind of enlightenment just as it is and that this is the meaning of the tantra that is to be understood.²¹³

²¹⁰ The fruitional ultimate is that aspect of the clear light primordial wisdom that *serves as a basis* for the dawning of enlightened form, speech, mind, qualities, and activities. It is the basis for dawning (*'char gzhi*) and part of the special ultimate truth. The appearance of those five aspects of the result state are the phenomena that dawn (*shar chos*), as such they are part of the special conventional truth.

²¹¹ *sems kyi spyod yul las 'das pa'am spyod yul dang bral ba* (52.1).

²¹² *he ru ka gal po las/ shes bya'i nang nas dam par nil gyur phyir nges pa'i tshig yin no!* (52.2). This is probably the *dpal he ru ga'i gal po*, Tb.599, vol. 33, 568.6-619.4. Although the Tibetan word used here for “object of knowledge” is *shes bya*, the Sanskrit word for “object”, *artha*, could also be translated as *don*, which simply means topic, object, or meaning. This is a common folk etymology describing the ultimate (*don dam pa, paramārtha*) as the object (*don, artha*) that is best or excellent (*dam pa, parama*).

²¹³ *zhal lung du mdo'i don bsdu drang par chos rnam thams cad byang chub sems/ lji bzhi ngang du ye gnas pal* (52.3). Khenpo Namdröl identified the source as Buddhajñānapāda's commentary on *Chanting the Names of Mañjuśrī* (*'jam dpal mtshan brjod pa, mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti*) entitled *'jam dpal zhal lung*.

And 3) by all the former awareness-holders [who hold] that a path-continuum performs two activities—knowing the ground and attaining the result.

Furthermore, [one should not assert that the ultimate is not an awareness' object of activity], because there are limitless damages [to that position] by way of reasoning.

Moreover, the **primordial** wisdom, as it is called, **abides** as an entity that is none other than the fundamental nature of the mind. Therefore, [the quote above] also says, “abides primordially”.

The coarse minds, which are born from the predispositions for evoking the three appearances,²¹⁴ do not exist at the level of the result, and due to that an emptiness in which those [coarse minds] are taken to be the basis²¹⁵ also does not exist there. Hence, one must posit the suchness that turns into the Reality Body of a Tathāgata [53] as the sphere of this fundamental primordial wisdom. Therefore, just this [suchness] is also the final basis of the thought, thinking of which [the Buddha] taught in the sūtras of the final wheel about the Sugata-essence.²¹⁶ Nevertheless, when it is explained that those sūtras, which [Buddha] spoke thinking of the [Tathāgata-nature], are not scriptural collections that teach fundamental mind, this is easier to maintain [in debate]. However, on this [point] many former seers of the supreme—the Conqueror Longchenpa and so forth—assert that because the essence of a Sugata, which is taught in those sūtras, and the fundamental mind indicated here are the same, just this [fundamental mind] is not only the basis of the thought for those [sūtras] but also their object of expression.

Objection: In that case, would not sūtra and mantra be indistinguishable?

Response: To this Lochen Rinpoché of Minling, et. al., maintain that although there is no

²¹⁴ *snang gsum 'pho ba'i bag chags* (52.5-52.6). This most likely refers to the three appearances prior to death: that of radiant white (*snang ba dkar lam pa'i snang ba*), that of red increase (*mched dmar lam pa'i snang ba*), and that of black near attainment (*nyer thob nag lam pa'i snang ba*).

²¹⁵ *stong gzhir byas pa'i stong nyid* (52.6).

²¹⁶ *bde gshegs snying po, *sugatagarbha* (53.1). This is the same as tathāgatagarbha.

difference [between sūtra and mantra] in the assertion of an unchangeable basic awareness as the ground for purification, the assertion of that very [awareness] as having a nature of innate, immutable bliss is a distinctive feature of mantra. Since this meaning is a difficult essential point, I will mention merely an approach for analysis in dependence upon the texts by the omniscient father and son.²¹⁷

Although the two—the fundamental mind discussed within Highest [Yoga] Tantra and the essence of a Tathāgata taught within the final wheel—have different names, they mean the same thing. [54] However, even though that fact abides pervasively in all migrators, being obstructed by minds that mistakenly [perceive] subjects and objects, it is not seen. Therefore, in order to actualize it, these mistaken minds must be cleared away. With regard to that assertion, there is no difference between sūtra and mantra. Nevertheless, they have different modes of purification.

Not only in the sūtras but also in the Yoga Tantras and below, it is simply taught that, through cultivating a path of the profound [wisdom] and the vast [method] in relation to this coarse mind alone, one is gradually purified into the realm of non-conceptuality and that, having done this, in the end one contacts the actual essence of a Sugata. However, [in Highest Yoga Tantra] through the method of a vajra-master bestowing initiation, the clear light—i.e., the essence of a Tathāgata—is awakened as the three bodies. Due to having first arranged such a dependent arising, fundamental mind is then revealed through the profound, secret, skillful technique of immediately eliminating this mind of mistaken conceptuality. Having taken just that on up [to the level of Buddhahood], one easily and quickly connects with the result. These means of connecting with the result and their accompanying [topics] are not taught anywhere other than Highest Yoga Tantra. Presentations of channels, winds, and drops—which are not needed on the occasion of the

²¹⁷ The father here is Longchenpa, and the son is Jik-med-ling-ba.

former [i.e., sūtra] mode for achieving the path—and the teachings on fundamental mind from the perspective of great bliss and so forth also do not exist in the sūtra position. [55]

When it is explained in this way, all the presentations of the higher and lower vehicles come to abide without dispute or confusion like the petals of a lotus. Moreover, it would not follow that one must obtain initiation to be suitable to listen to sūtras on the essence of a Sugata, because bestowal of initiation is mainly for the sake of training in the Highest Yoga Tantra path. This is like, for example, the fact that although in the context of Highest Yoga Tantra the purpose of having achieved the innate bliss through many endeavors²¹⁸ is to cultivate emptiness with that bliss, it is not necessary to receive initiation to [merely] listen to [teachings on] emptiness.

Objection: If the teaching of such an essence of a Sugata from within the sūtra category is not for the sake of taking it as the path now, what is the purpose of [teaching that in the sūtra context]?

Response: The way to abandon this fault[y way of thinking] should be known in terms of the statement of five reasons in Maitreya's *Sublime Continuum of the Great Vehicle*.

Throughout [the scriptures of the middle wheel doctrine] it is said that all objects
of knowledge are empty in all respects

Like clouds, dreams, and a magician's illusions,

But why has the Conqueror said here [in the scriptures of the final wheel of
doctrine]

That the essence of a Buddha exists [from the start spontaneously in the
continuum of] sentient beings?

It was set forth so that persons having the five faults might abandon them:

1. [The fault of] a discouraged mind [and non-enthusiasm for the path,

²¹⁸ In Delhi edition (55.2) read 'bad for 'bang in accordance with Gangtok (51.5).

which is to think that enlightenment cannot be achieved; this is due to not knowing that the ultimate basic element exists in oneself, and such discouragement is an obstacle to generating the intention to become enlightened;

2. the fault of non-respect] despising others as lowly, [thinking that these sentient beings are low; this is due to not knowing of its existence in others and is an obstacle to assuming the care of others;
3. the fault of] incorrect conception [falsely holding that the adventitious defilements exist in the basic element whereas from the start they do not; this is due to not knowing of its existence in all others and is an obstacle to the wisdom realizing the true mode of subsistence;
4. the fault of] deprecating the true doctrine [thinking that good qualities which are indivisible in entity with the basic element do not exist whereas they do, and
5. the fault of] excessive attachment to oneself [due to not knowing that the nature of the element of Superior's qualities is equal in oneself and others, this being an obstacle to realizing oneself and others as equal].²¹⁹

This also requires fine distinctions. The dispelling of contradictions of statements such as the

²¹⁹ Although only the first line is quoted, two stanzas are supplied here to elucidate all five reasons:

*sprin dang rmi lam sgyu bzhin de dang der//
 shes bya thams cad rnam kun stong pa zhes//
 gsungs nas yang 'dir rgyal rnams sems can lall//
 sangs rgyas snying po yod ces ci ste gsungs//
 sems zhum sems can dman la brnyas pa dang//
 yang dag min 'dzin yang dag chos la skur//
 bdag cag lhag pa'i skyon lnga gang dag lall//
 yod pa de dag de spang don du gsungs//*

Tibetan is from the Asian Input project's version of *rgyud bla ma* (61b.6-62a.1). English translation is taken, with slight modification, from unpublished translation (1987) by Jeffrey Hopkins, p.25. The bracket commentary is translated by Professor Hopkins from Mi-pham (1846-1912).

Commentary on the Sublime Continuum calling the essence of a Tathāgata a “permanent reality”, etc., and the dispelling of contradictions of some [other] statements, which are even more difficult to explain than that, should be known from putting together the whole structure of the great Omniscient One’s texts, but I am not going to speak of that here.

I do not see a great contradiction even when, in another way,²²⁰ one interprets delineations of the clear light of Mantra in dependence on sūtras of the final wheel and [Maitreya’s] *Sublime Continuum*, etc., as merely teaching how the final meaning of the thought of those profound sūtras feeds into Highest Secret Mantra, saying, “If such delineations are explained as being in terms of the respective final basis of thought of those sūtras and treatises, then it is like this....” This should be analyzed in detail by the upholders of our system.

Concerning how that primordial wisdom comes to be the basis for both cyclic existence and nirvāṇa, within most new and old Highest Yoga Tantras it is stated as follows. When sentient beings circle in the five transmigrations, [at the time of death] the former aggregates are collected into just that sphere of the clear light through the stages of earth dissolving into water and so forth.²²¹ Then, the winds and minds of the three appearances and the [eighty]

²²⁰ Here, he is possibly returning to the above position (53.2) that these final wheel sūtras are not “scriptural collections teaching fundamental mind”.

²²¹ In Highest Yoga Tantra the process of death involves eight stages of dissolution (*thim rim*). These are the dissolution of 1) earth into water, 2) water into fire, 3) fire into wind, 4) wind into the eighty conceptions, 5) the eighty conceptions into the mind of white appearance, 6) the mind of white appearance into the mind of red increase, 7) the mind of red increase into the mind of black near-attainment, and 8) the mind of black near-attainment into the clear light of death. In the four initial stages there are also many other factors—the corresponding aggregate, sense-organ, sense-object, and basic wisdom—which dissolve simultaneously with the element. Concerning the meaning of dissolution, Yang-jen-ga-way-lo-drö (*dbyangs can dga’ ba’i blo gros*) says (Lati Rinbochay & Jeffrey Hopkins, *Death, Intermediate State, and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism*, p.38):

That earth dissolves into water means that the capacity of the earth-wind to act as a basis of consciousness degenerates, whereupon the capacity of the water-wind to act as a basis of consciousness becomes more manifest. Thus, since this is like a transference of the capacity of the former to the latter, it is said that earth dissolves into water, but it is not that ordinary earth dissolves into ordinary water.

Elsewhere (p.46), he says that the meaning of dissolution is that the former mind ceases and the latter becomes more manifest. Since in this type of presentation the fundamental mind of clear light must in some way cease

conceptions again gradually develop out of that very [clear light] as well as the indestructible wind. These having developed, one achieves the intermediate state and rebirth. Once one has taken rebirth,²²² actions and afflictions assemble the aggregates of future suffering [in that lifetime] along with the external environment, and these come to be established according to how they were formed. In that way, one cycles [in cyclic existence] like the wheel of a water-mill.

However, within the early translation of Secret Mantra it is explained as follows. Even when dwelling in the live body now, all the factors that are the winds and minds of coarse [elaborations in the manner of] subjects and objects abide pervaded by the wind and mind of primordial wisdom, like sunlight and its heat. Hence, it is not that even all appearances of objects [57] do not each have a factor of appearance of the clear light primordial wisdom, but within those the wind and mind of primordial wisdom are the fundamental factors, and the coarse factors arise as their display. Due to the fact that [the fundamental factors] exist as the life of those [coarse ones, the latter] engage in their respective functions, and when the primordial wisdom develops into the mistaken winds and minds, due to that even the appearances of primordial wisdom become mistaken appearances. Hence, it is asserted that the ground that is the root of all minds and appearances is only the basic mind of clear light.

[For different sentient beings] the way the clear light primordial wisdom abides in the body as well as the way it dawns are not the same. [So] the techniques for causing it to dawn are similarly not limited to just one [way]. Therefore, although it is the case that [the clear light's] dawning at the time of death and so forth have the aspect of an empty vacuity like space free from the three conditions,²²³ and although it is the case that there are dawnings [of

or become inactive once one passes into the intermediate state (*bar srid*), here the author will contrast it with the Nying-ma presentation, where the basic mind remains as the root of all minds and appearances.

²²² Rebirth, here, means at the point of conception.

²²³ These are the three appearances prior to death, also known as the three pollutants, *bslod byed gsum*.

the clear light] only in the central channel²²⁴ and so forth, all the [instances] of the clear light are not limited to [just] those. I have mentioned this slight [presentation of the basis] due to the fact that it is needed on the many occasions of practicing appearances as deities and so forth, but I have not stated what extensively appears in the cycle of the Great Completeness.

That is how the [clear light primordial wisdom] serves as the basis of the thoroughly afflicted phenomena of cyclic existence. There are, moreover, ways that it serves as the basis of the purified class [of phenomena], but [58] the main one has already been expressed above in explaining the meaning of the mind of enlightenment.

Concerning the mention of “self-appearances of primordial wisdom” on these occasions, they are appearances that are none other than primordial wisdom itself. They are pure appearances, established according to the way that primordial wisdom dawns under its own power. Also, “self-appearances of mind” [mentioned on these occasions] are the appearances of impure things, that is, ordinary dawnings of appearances and minds due to that primordial wisdom’s having been disturbed by the [ordinary] mind. Since these are nothing more than factors of appearance merely imputed by the [ordinary] mind itself and are not established by way of their own entity, they are called “self-appearances”. Because abodes, bodies, and so forth of the latter are neither factors of primordial wisdom nor factors of mind, they are not actual self-appearances. However, [the root tantra] says in the chapter on “Generating the Ultimate and Conventional Mind of Enlightenment into Primordial Wisdom”:

Although they search for phenomena “other than [primordial wisdom] itself”

Conquerors do not find them.²²⁵

²²⁴ *dh’uti’i rtsa ’khor* (57.5). *Dhūti* is an abbreviation for *avadhūti*, the Sanskrit name for the central channel. Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), Vol. 2, p.72. See D. L. Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), part I, pp. 35-39.

²²⁵ *nyid las gzhan zhes bya ba’i chos/ l’tsal yang rgyal bas mi brnyes sol* (58.4-58.5). Cf., *Secret Essence*, Tb.417,

In order to ascertain the meaning of the thought behind such statements that teach appearances and occurrences as equally pure, all phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa are taught through including them within the class of self-appearances.

THE GROUND FOR IMPUTING ERROR [58.6]

Concerning this, Rok Deshek Chenpo says, “Although the ground has no error, error has a basis.” Accordingly, [59] although the fundamental nature has no error, its display dawns erroneously. It serves as the basis of coarse and subtle cyclic existences²²⁶ through the erroneous superimposition of misconceived appearances,²²⁷ which cover and obstruct the essential face of the mode of being. Therefore, it is called “the ground for imputing error”.

Furthermore, since something appears to a perceiving mind and is misconceived in accordance with those appearances, [we speak of] “misconceived appearances”. This is how [the words] should be put together, according to the general layout in the texts.²²⁸ On the other hand, in this [particular] system it is said, “Although the supramundane appears, it is misconceived to be cyclic existence.” That should be explained as: “Without realizing appearances as deities, one misconceives them otherwise.” In any case, it is explained that misconceived appearance are posited as misconceiving what is in fact non-dual as dual. One conceives things, which are not other than the nature-less reality, to be autonomous external appearances, independent, and with their own character.

Moreover, the main cause for deviating from the factuality of the mode of being is obscuration, or ignorance, and that [ignorance] has two types, innate and imputational.²²⁹

157.5.

²²⁶ Subtle cyclic existences are the three appearances, or minds of appearance, that immediately precede and follow the clear light of death. Coarse cyclic existence is everyday life.

²²⁷ *zhen snang* (59.1).

²²⁸ *gzhung spyi skad dang bstun na* (59.2).

²²⁹ *lhan skyes dang kun btags*. In the context of the Ge-luk-ba system these terms can be translated as “innate” and “acquired,” where the innate is the subtler conception of inherent existence, which is the root of cyclic existence, established through beginningless conditioning and the acquired is the coarser conception, which fortifies the former, established from contact with false philosophical systems, i.e., “bad tenets”. (See *Meditation*

Also, here we do not posit those two as imputed or not imputed by bad tenets but explain them as (1) the ignorance that is non-realization, i.e., merely being obscured with respect to the essential sphere and (2) the ignorance of wrong conceptions that conceive appearances and minds to be autonomous. [60] The main one is the latter. This is the misconception of appearance²³⁰ indicated on this occasion. In my mind, the essential ground is taught in terms of the basis for achieving Buddhahood, and the ground for imputing [error] is taught in terms of the root of cyclic existence where one strays into [becoming] a sentient being. If the former were not taught, the essential tenet of this [system] that all phenomena are primordially enlightened could not be settled, but if the latter were not taught, there would be no identifying the main object to be abandoned in relation to that [nature]. Thus, the two have been described [here] in the manner of main and ancillary [topics].

THE PATH-CONTINUUM [60.3]

Do the producers, the three types of wisdom, generate the object produced, the five common and the five supreme minds? They do generate them.²³¹ In the *Three Stages* it is said:

It is taught that the five minds are generated

By the three aspects of the entity, wisdom.²³²

on *Emptiness*, p.96). However, in this presentation the imputational (*kun biags*) is presented as the main type of ignorance.

²³⁰ *snong* (60.1), *snang* (Gangtok, 56.2).

²³¹ The three types of wisdom are the wisdom of hearing (*thos pa'i shes rab*), the wisdom of thinking (*bsam pa'i shes rab*), and the wisdom of meditating (*sgom pa'i shes rab*). The five minds (*sems lnga*) are the rising mind, the aspiring mind, the engaging mind, the abiding mind, and the final mind (see below). In Mahāyoga, the literary source for the discussion of these five minds is the statement of the five verses in the second chapter of the root tantra that each beginning with: "E ma'o! This marvelously wonderful doctrine!" The five minds have a special interpretation in the context of both the path of release and the path of method. These are the supreme five minds. In lower systems, they do not use the terminology of the five minds but describe states of consciousness along the path that are structurally similar and thereby can be called the five minds. These are what the author refers to here as the common five minds.

²³² *ngo bo shes rab rnam gsum gyis/ lsems lnga skeyes par bstan pa yin/* (60.4). The source is *sgyu 'phrul dra ba'i man ngag rim pa gsum pa (māyājālopadēsakramatrāya)*, P4742, 144.4.8-144.5.1, which is attributed to Vimalamitra in *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 2, 279. The text in the Peking edition speaks of four minds and not five: *ngo bo shes rab rnam gsum gyis/ lsems bzhi skeyes par bstan pa yin/* However, in his *khog gzhung gsal*

Here, the five common minds are the five minds enumerated within each of the vehicle of gods and humans, the paths of Hearers and Solitary Realizers, the paths of Bodhisattvas, and the paths of the three general tantra sets, but the five supreme minds are enumerated within just the path of Mahāyoga itself.

The initial thought that wishes to enter such and such a path is the arising mind (*g.yo ldang gi sems*). The strength of that aspiration having become greater, thinking “How nice it would be if I gained that path,” is the aspiring mind (*smon pa'i sems*). That which practices in accordance with [such a] wish [61] is the engaging mind (*'jug pa'i sems*). Having entered [the path], that which abides in a continuum of practice is the abiding mind (*gnas pa'i sems*). That which in the end achieves the desired purpose is the final mind (*mthar phyin pa'i sems*).

[When the phrase] “mind of enlightenment” appears affixed to the end of each of these, it should be explained in relation to whichever [of the following positions] is more convenient.²³³ It is done in terms of the five supreme minds [of Mahāyoga]. Or in another way, even with respect to the five minds of the Hearer and Solitary Realizer Vehicles they are called such from the point of view of their respective enlightenment, or it is a case in which the actual usage of the term does not fulfill [all the requirements] of the etymology. Moreover, it is not the case that within the scriptural collections of the Hearers there is a teaching that condenses their paths into the five minds and so forth; rather, it is the case that within the texts of *this* tantra set [i.e., Mahāyoga] there are teachings condensing Hearer paths into the five minds and so forth.

Question: How are these methods, or path-continuums?

Answer: Since they are cooperative conditions for actualizing the object of attainment—

sgron (134.2.2) Vimalamitra clearly speaks of the five minds: *g.yo ldang smon 'jug gnas mthar phyin!*

²³³ In other words, the phrases—awakening mind of enlightenment, aspirational mind of enlightenment, practicing mind of enlightenment, abiding mind of enlightenment, and the final mind of enlightenment—can occur in a number of different contexts. They are used in the context of any of the different Buddhist vehicles. Hence, mind of enlightenment does not necessarily mean one particular thing, but its meaning should be explained in one of the three ways that are elucidated here.

the result-continuum—they are methods, and since they are the tracks by which and on which one progresses, they are paths.

When [path-continuums] are divided from the viewpoint of main and ordinary ones, there are [two]: (1) the short path (*nye ba'i lam*), just this path of the highest magical [emanation] net, and (2) long paths (*ring ba'i lam*), the paths of the four common vehicles and of the three external tantra sets.²³⁴ Furthermore, if actual trainees of the former [Mahāyoga], having forsaken this path, enter into those [ordinary paths], [62] they are greatly distanced from the supreme feat [of Buddhahood]. Also, when those having the lineage of the other vehicles accomplish their own path, even though they have entered a perfection path or an external tantra path from the beginning, they achieve complete enlightenment over a long period of time relative to [a practitioner] on this [Mahāyoga] path. What need is there to mention those who previously have traveled on a lower [vehicle] path? Hence, these are called “long paths”. Also, the [*Lamp Illuminating*] *the Inner Text* says:

In the mere common path-platforms,

They practice the cause and effect of the ten perfections.²³⁵

Accordingly, in the path of this [Mahāyoga system] merely training in common types of realization for the sake of purifying [one's] senses and attitudes, which are the vessel [for practice], is a path of common length.

When the special path is divided, there are the two, the path of ascertainment through method and the path of release through wisdom. The explanatory tantra, *The Ocean*, says, “It is taught as the path of release and method.”²³⁶

²³⁴ The four common vehicles are the Vehicle of Gods and Humans, the Lower Vehicle, the Solitary Realizer Vehicle, and the Great Vehicle. The three external tantra sets are Action Tantra, Performance Tantra, and Yoga Tantra.

²³⁵ *khog gzhung las/ thun mong lam stegs tsam nyid dul lpha rol phyin bcu rgyu 'bras spyod/* (62.2-62.3). Vimalamitra, *khog zhung gsal sgron*, 134.5.8.

²³⁶ *bshad rgyud rgya mtsho las/ grol lam thab su rnam par bstan/* (62.4-62.5).

Concerning the differences between these two, in general the method which is part of the phrase “path of method” also occurs within the path of release, as [in the case of] group practice.²³⁷ The wisdom realizing reality which is explained in the context of the path of release also must exist on the path of method, because if [the path of method] were devoid of that [wisdom], the essence of the path would be lost.

Furthermore, it is also not the case that both method and release are posited for the path of a single person, [63] [since] these are asserted as two entire paths of different people, one on the path of method and one on the path of release. Along these lines, [some say that] in relation to stage of completion, which is the center-post of the path, one relies in one’s initial efforts on the quintessential instructions concerning the method of focusing on important points in the body [i.e., the path of method], and [then] one relies on merely the method of placement, where the mind is placed on whatever it flows to [i.e., the path of release]. Although it is suitable to explain the difference [between the path of method and the path of release] like that, here according to the *Ornament of the Intention*, causing the bonds of one’s continuum to be **released** into reality mainly by way of the three wisdoms is taken to be the path of release, and causing the effect to be quickly achieved mainly by way of the features of **method**—the amazing disciplined conduct²³⁸—is taken to be the path of method. This is the assertion of Nyetön Chöseng²³⁹ and so forth.

Furthermore, having realized the way that special two truths abide indivisibly, familiarization [with that] is the general framework of just this [Mahāyoga] system’s path.

²³⁷ *tshogs spyod* (62.5). Khenpo Namdröl says this is the “collective achievement in groups” (*tshom bu tshogs sgrub*), where groups of yogins and yoginis recreated the maṇḍala in a group practice. The groups (*tshom bu*) referred to are the five Buddha-families. This is the last of the five yogas found on the path of release. However, this group practice involves the practice of ritual sex (*sbyor ba*) and killing (*sgrol ba*), which are the “methods” referred to in the phrase “path of method”.

²³⁸ *brtul zhugs kyi spyod pa rmad du byung ba* (63.3–63.4). This refers to the practices focusing on the upper opening and lower opening of the central channel, which entail the practice of liberative killing and ritual sex.

²³⁹ *nye ston chos seng* (63.4). Nye-dön-chö-gyi-seng-ge of Gong-drिंग was one of Dro-phuk-ba’s many disciples, belonging in particular to a group classified as the “four teachers” (*ston bzhi*) because their names all contained the word “teacher”, or *ston* (*The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 1, 649, 660).

However, progressing on the path mainly in relation to just that [familiarization with the special two truths] is posited as the path of release, and having added on top of that the separate method of the quintessential instructions, progressing along the path mainly depending on that [method] as well is posited as the path of method. Therefore, due to that fact, the framework of the three characteristics²⁴⁰ is taught extensively in the context of the path of release, while [64] at the time of explaining the path of method nothing more than merely the path of method's own particular features are described. It is not at all the case that the three characteristics do not exist on the path of method. For example, it is like [the fact] that although the six perfections are also contained in the Mantra path, the Mantra Vehicle is not a Perfection Vehicle, and the texts of the Perfection Vehicle²⁴¹ expand upon the topic of the deeds of the six perfections, whereas in the Mantra [Vehicle the texts] mainly teach the distinguishing features of Secret Mantra itself. Hence, through this explanation about a greater or lesser scope with respect to the paths that are taken to be the main ones of the individual [paths of] method and release, it is evident that one can also understand the fact that in the context of the meaning of the title, the introductory background, and so forth explanations according to the path of release are called explanations in accordance with the common or general [way of looking at it].

When [the difference between these two paths] is done in terms of the speed of the path, it is explained that the path of release is like the element of stone which has been placed next to the jewel, *Kaustubha*,²⁴² gradually changing into gold, and that the path of method is like the element of iron instantaneously transforming into gold through the application of

²⁴⁰ These are (1) the cause, the characteristic of consciousness (*rgyu shes pa'i mtshan nyid*), (2) the condition, the characteristic of engagement (*rkyen 'jug pa'i mtshan nyid*), and (3) the characteristic of the effect which is the path (*lam gyur gyi 'bras bu'i mtshan nyid*).

²⁴¹ *phyen* (64.2), *phyin* (Gangtok, 59.6).

²⁴² This is the "name of a celebrated jewel obtained with thirteen other precious things at the churning of the ocean of milk and suspended on the breast of Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu." (Monier-Williams, 318).

maksika.²⁴³ However, there also appears an oral system that says, “One on the path of release who progresses gradually is slower than one on the path of method who progresses gradually, but one on the path of release who progresses suddenly is faster even than one on the path of method who progresses suddenly.”²⁴⁴ [65]

It is said:

Either, the path of release is explained first, treating it in terms of explaining the common one initially and the special one subsequently, or, having thought it more convenient for the explanation, the path of method is explained first.²⁴⁵

That being the case, here I will explain the path of method prior [to the path of release] in accordance with the *Ornament of the Intention*, because even in the path of method itself, according to the progressive sequence of the two yogas—the yoga of method and the yoga arisen from method, the [yoga of] method precedes [the yoga arisen from method] and also because [the yoga] arisen from method can be known from within the path of release.

PATH OF METHOD [65.3]

This section has two parts: (1) the path of melting and taming at the upper opening and (2) the path of the sport of the three realms at the lower opening. The activities of melting and taming the basic constituent within the central channel cause primordial wisdom to dawn. Therefore, it is called “the path of melting and taming”. And, in fourth chapter of the tantra the [sense] objects are called exalted body; the sense-powers, exalted speech; the consciousnesses, exalted mind, while the body, which [fully] appears is explained as the

²⁴³ Khen-po described this as an ointment (*rtsi*) that instantly transformed iron into gold. In classical Sanskrit *maksika* is an alternative spelling of *maksikā*, bee or fly (Monier-Williams, 771-772). In Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, there is word with a similar root but different ending, *maksita*, that means smeared (Edgerton, 414).

²⁴⁴ *grol lam rim gyis pa thabs lam rig gyis pa las bul yang / grol lam cig char ba ni thabs lam cig char ba las kyang myur zhes gsung srol yang snang ngol* (64.6-65.1).

²⁴⁵ *thun mong sngon dang khyad par rjes su bshad pa'i dbang du biang ste grol lam dang por dang / 'chad bde ba la bsam nas thabs lam dang por 'chad pa gang yang rung zhes gsungs pa* (65.1-65.2).

Desire Realm, partially appearing speech as the Form Realm, and non-appearing mind as the Formless Realm. Among such explanations, the main one is the playful sport of Mantra where one joins the three—the lotus-object of contact, the vajra-sense organ, and the bliss-consciousness.²⁴⁶ Thus, this is called “the sport of the three realms”. The former depends on one’s own body, and the latter depends on the body of another. [66] Even one who mainly takes the path of melting and taming must train in the sport of the three realms in order to bring forth enhance the benefit [of their practice], and even one who mainly does the sport of the three realms must first make the three—channels, drops, and winds—definitely serviceable through the path of melting and taming. Although that is the case, relative to what one mainly does it is permissible to posit these as paths of two [different] people, as [mentioned] previously.

PATH OF MELTING AND TAMING AT THE UPPER OPENING [OF THE CENTRAL CHANNEL] [66.2]

The first, the yoga of the upper opening, is explained in two [parts]: the common one and the special one. With regard to the first, the explanatory tantra, *The Ocean*, says:

By the movement of the wind and fire through the
 Two groups of three channel-wheels and the three life-posts,
 One milks the cow of space. Hence, [this] is known as [the path of] the upper
 one.²⁴⁷

Two groups of three channel-wheels are the four main channel-wheels—namely, the wheel of great bliss at the crown (*spyi bo bde chen gyi 'khor lo*), the wheel of enjoyment at the throat (*mgrin pa long spyod kyī 'khor lo*), the wheel of phenomena at the heart (*snying ga chos kyī*

²⁴⁶ Lotus refers to the vagina. Vajra is a symbol for the penis, and the bliss is that of sexual union.

²⁴⁷ *bshad rgyu rgya mtsho las/ 'khor lo gsum gnyis srog shing gsum/ lme rlung 'gro bas nam mkha'i bal/ lbzho bas steng du rnam par grags* (66.3-66.4).

'khor lo), and the wheel of emanation at the navel (*lte ba sprul pa'i 'khor lo*)—as well as the two contributing wheels,²⁴⁸ i.e., the sphere of fire known in other tantras as “the wheel of Brahma” blazing upward²⁴⁹ from the Fierce Female of the navel [region] located at a measure of four finger-widths below the navel and below that the downward-voiding wind, which fans that fire. The three life-posts are the middle, left, and right [channels].

Concerning the meaning of the rest [of the quote], through focusing on the important points by observing [the seed syllables or drops] at the four channel-centers, [67] the movement of [wind in] the right and left channels is stopped, and with the essence of [those] winds the fire [at the navel] is ignited. [That fire] proceeds straight up the path of the central channel, and “the cow of space”—i.e., the letter *ham* at the crown—is stirred. Then, due to the pearl-like mind of enlightenment descending, one experiences the four joys of descent from above and stability from below, and in particular at the time of [the last of the four joys] the innate joy one enjoys the encompassing and pervasive sphere that is without conceptual elaboration.

With respect to the second [the special yoga of the upper opening], there are two parts: 1) the important topic that primordial wisdom is generated from the body and 2) having understood that, how to focus on the important points. Regarding the first, as for how the self-subsisting primordial wisdom which, as explained previously, is completely pure from the start abides in the vajra-body at this very moment, it abides as an entity of empty and luminous great bliss in the middle of the five great refined factors at the center of the wheel of phenomena at the heart and is the basis for the dawning of all appearances. The *Mirror of Vajrasattva* says:

That which dwells at the heart of embodied beings

²⁴⁸ *rkyen gyi 'khor lo* (66.6).

²⁴⁹ *yar* (66.5), *sngar* (Gangtok, 62.2).

Is the form of the self-arisen, uncontaminated primordial wisdom.

It is the indestructible drop, great bliss,

All-pervasive like space,

The nature of the non-abiding Reality Body.²⁵⁰

And the *Small Book on Self-Abiding* says:

The indestructible drop of primordial wisdom,

The vajra-essence of exalted body, speech, and mind,

Which has abandoned [conceptions of] one and many,

Appears variously but [68] cannot be characterized.²⁵¹

When the capacity for the display [of conventional phenomena] to arise from that is gradually activated, initially there arise subtle factors of the three—white, red, and wind [constituents]—that have the function of inducing pure appearances, which accord with that [primordial wisdom]. These are the proximate refined portions, the quintessences and essential parts of all the other refined portions. Those are disturbed by factors of perverse conceptions and appearances that have come continuously from beginningless time. From that [disturbance], there arise the main unrefined portions of the three—channels, basic constituents, and winds—which produce bad, impure appearances. And, just as flowing water turns into an element as hard as stone through coming into contact with the cold of winter, [when] together with those [unrefined portions] the objects of self-appearance also dawn as aspects of the ordinary, whereupon [mistaken] conceptions and appearances again increase. In this way, the cycle of mistaken object and subject revolves.

Furthermore, when this is explained in a little more detail, in this system the essential

²⁵⁰ *rdo rje me longs las/ lus can snying la gang gnas pal /rang byung zag med ye shes gzugs/ lmi shigs thig le bde chen pol /nam mkha' lta bur kun khyab bal mi gnas chos sku'i rang bzhin yin/* (67.5-67.6).

²⁵¹ *dpe chung rang gnas las/ mi shigs ye shes thig le nil /sku gsung thugs kyi rdo rje'i bdag /gcig dang du ma rnam spangs pal sna tshogs snang la mtshon du med* (67.6-68.1).

point at the heart is taken as the main one. Concerning that, according to the *Ornament of the Intention* there are eight channel-petals and four great channels [at the heart].²⁵² From among those, in front at the channel of reality there are the proximate refined factor [in the form of] the letter *om* (ཨྐྱ) and the [distant] unrefined factor [in the form of] the letters *su* (སྣ) and *tri* (རྩ); to the right at the channel of primordial wisdom there are the refined factor [in the form of] the letter *hūṃ* (ཨྵམ) and the unrefined factor [in the form of] the letters *a* (ཨ) and *nṛi* (རྩི); and to the left at the channel of qualities there are the refined factor [in the shape of] the letter *āḥ* (ཨླ) and the unrefined factor [in the shape of] the letters *pre* (ཤྲ) and *du* (དུ). [69] The three letters [*om*, *hūṃ*, and *āḥ*] abide close to the central channel. Those proximate refined factors arise from the qualities of the five [great] refined factors, which are at the center. The letter *om* arises from the quality of the crystalline tube, the refined factor of flesh or the channels.²⁵³ It produces the refined factors of the channels in the body and the qualities of those, and nourishing the continuum of those that have [already] been produced, it causes them to increase. The letter *āḥ* arises from the red factor of the indestructible [drop]. It generates and nourishes the refined factors and qualities of blood. The letter *hūṃ* arises through the power of the qualities of the indestructible wind. It generates and nourishes the refined factors and qualities of breath.

Positing [the drop which is in front] as *om* is from the point of view of that drop predominantly having the capacity for generating various pure appearances, because *om* is the seed of the exalted body-vajra. Using that as an illustration [for the others], it should also be

²⁵² Lochen Dharmashrī, *Ornament of the Intention*, 340.6-341.3. The four are the channel of reality (*chos nyid kyī rtsa*) in front, the channel of primordial wisdom (*ye shes kyī rtsa*) to the right, the channel of qualities (*yon tan gyī rtsa*) to the left, and the channel of one's own continuum (*rang rgyud kyī rtsa*) in back. The front and back channels have three petals associated with them, while the right and left have one each, thus making a total of eight channel-petals (*rtsa 'dab brgyad*).

²⁵³ The crystalline tube (*shel sbug can*, 69.2) is part of the white-factor (*dkar cha*) that comes from the father, and therefore it is the source of flesh, the most subtle form of which is the psychic channels. It is called such because it has the shape of a clear glass pipe and has the nature of light. According to Khenpo Namdröl, the qualities that rely on it are the qualities of the path and result.

known that positing [the drop on the right] as *āḥ* is from the viewpoint of [that drop predominantly having the capacity for] generating any and all types of appearances of letters and sounds and that positing [the drop on the left] as *hūṃ* is from the viewpoint of [that drop predominantly having the capacity for] generating good meditative stabilization. However, it is also explained that the actions that are the means for achieving the exalted body and are being accumulated nowadays are stored in the *om*; those that are the means for achieving exalted speech are stored in the *āḥ*, and those that are the means for achieving exalted mind are stored in the *hūṃ*.²⁵⁴

Similarly, it should also be known that the two [syllables] *su* and *tri* [70] have two capacities, one for generating the unrefined factor of the channels and the other for generating appearances and conceptions of demi-gods and animals.²⁵⁵ Furthermore, the actions accumulated nowadays, through which one is born in those two transmigrations, also invigorate the capacities of those two. The two [syllables] *pre* and *du* drive the activities with respect to the unrefined portion of blood and generate the appearances and conceptions of hungry ghost and hell-beings. *A* and *nṛi* drive the activities with respect to the unrefined portion of the breath, and they generate and so forth the appearances and conceptions of the two, gods and men.

Concerning the second [how to focus on the important points], there is a capacity for emitting any and all types of appearances that exists with the indestructible mind which is an essence that is a composite of the five refined factors. It is guided nowadays by the seeds of any of the six types of transmigrations; that being the case, having transformed this [capacity], which dawns as a great array of ordinary mistaken appearances, into the

²⁵⁴ According to Khenpo Namdröl, these two interpretations entail that the shapes of the syllables—*om*, *āḥ*, and *hūṃ*—are not necessarily present in the heart-center but that the refined factors residing there are designated as these syllables based on their capacities.

²⁵⁵ Both the *su* and *tri* have the capacity for generating the channels, but *su* generates the appearances and conceptions of a demi-god, while *tri* generates those of an animal. The same applies *mutatis mutandis* for the following four syllables.

appearances of myriad purities, one enters into the abiding reality of the seven riches of the ultimate.²⁵⁶

In order to bring this about, one first practices the view and the stage of generation. By training single-pointedly in holding the mind on the indestructible [drop] at the heart, or the drop of Samantabhadra, the drop is ignited, and having become serviceable it dawns as the indestructible mind, the intention of the inconceivable clear light, which is devoid of the scum of conceptuality. At that time within having previously trained in the stage of generation [71] and having held the mind on the five refined factors, one focuses on the channel in which the uncommon appearances of primordial wisdom dawn. [This is called] the silk-thread-like [channel]²⁵⁷ or the crystalline tube [channel].²⁵⁸ Due to focusing on that, the capacity for the dawning of pure appearances that are together with the indestructible [drop] is activated into a manifest [state], whereupon one sees limitless appearances of exalted bodies and [pure] lands in the manner of a reflection dawning in a clear mirror. Through the force of that, according to the stages in which they first arose, the magnificence and capacity of the three syllables blazes greatly. By the power of those having been ignited, all the refined factors of the upper and lower body become powerful just as when a butter lamp is refueled its own light increases, and, having been ignited, the channels and basic constituents are spread with bliss.

However, there are channels, winds, and constituents of the very subtle and coarse kinds, or the kind [that belongs to] the refined primordial wisdom and the kind that is impure and unrefined. As for the channels, winds, and constituents of those two classes, it is a natural fact that when one increases the other becomes weaker. Hence, as much as the three letters are ignited, that much the capacity of the six seeds decreases. This is also called burning and

²⁵⁶ These are the natural ultimate, the primordial wisdom ultimate, and the fruitional ultimate which consists of exalted body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities. See *supra*.

²⁵⁷ *dar skud lta bu* (71.1).

²⁵⁸ *shel sbug can* (71.1).

purifying the six types [of transmigrations] by one on the stage of completion.

It is like this: through the force of arousing the great, indestructible, fundamental refined factor, the refined factors of the channel-petals are ignited. With regard to that, in proportion to however much they are ignited, they come under the influence of the indestructible [refined factor]. [72] Thereby, the other refined factors enter into the three root letters in stages, and those three also enter into that [indestructible drop], which is endowed with the five [great] refined factors. Thereby, the capacity of the supreme refined factor becomes surpassingly manifest.

Question: How is that?

Answer: It is said, “From among the five refined factors earth makes bliss stable; water makes bliss cohesive and supple; fire ripens bliss; wind extends bliss; space makes it into a great completeness equal to space.”²⁵⁹ In brief, this means that the experience of great bliss is made thick,²⁶⁰ vast, and stable. Through the force of that, the appearances of empty forms²⁶¹ also become clearer, vaster, and more stable. In order to bring about such an uncommon mode of arousing the essentials of the refined factors, initially from the time of cultivating the stage of generation, all appearances whatsoever are viewed as the maṇḍala and that [maṇḍala] is also viewed as “the self-appearance of primordial wisdom”, i.e., just a display which is spread out from the indestructible mind. Moreover, in order to bring that about, on the occasion of the view, building confidence in identifying and determining [things] in that way must be taken as the life [of this path].

The explanation of how to achieve empty form on this occasion and the explanation in Kālacakra of the appearances that are signs of having bound the ten winds²⁶² into the central

²⁵⁹ *dwangs ma lnga las sas bde ba brten par byed/ chus bde ba sdud cing mnyen/ mes bde ba smin/ rlung gis bde ba rgyas/ nam mkha' mkha' mnyam rdzogs pa chen por byed ces gsungs tel (72.2-72.3).*

²⁶⁰ *'thug (72.3).*

²⁶¹ *stong gzugs kyi snang ba (72.3).*

²⁶² The ten winds mentioned in the context of the Silk Ribbon Initiation in Kālacakra are: fire-accompanying wind, turtle wind, upward-moving wind, chameleon wind, pervasive wind, devadatta wind, serpent wind,

channel are similar merely in that [they are both] appearances of the clear light. [73] However, since this [empty form in the context of Mahāyoga] is an appearance of the indestructible wind being activated in its own place,²⁶³ they are different. The two, this [empty form of Mahāyoga] and the appearances that dawn for a Great Completeness Leap-over practitioner are somewhat similar except for the fact that the [Great Completeness Leap-over] brings out basic awareness' energy with respect to its factor of radiance²⁶⁴ whereas the [Mahāyoga] does not and the that the [Mahāyoga] has the exertion of holding the mind but the [Great Completeness] does not. Furthermore, this is nothing more than an analysis of whether those appearances are or are not dawning as signs of the ten winds entering into the central channel. It is not an explanation that "In order for these to dawn it is not necessary for the ten winds to enter into the central channel."²⁶⁵

In order to merely see [the divine body]—from among the two, seeing and attaining a divine body on the stage of completion, within the explanation of great treasure-revealer [Gyurmé Dorjé] and his brother [Lochen Dharmashrī]—or in order to merely gain serviceability of one's realization of clear light, it is sufficient to meditate on just the drop of Samantabhadra [at the heart]. However, for the sake of attaining that divine body or for the dawning of a fully developed realizational clear light, or thick clear light,²⁶⁶ one should definitely value as assisting factors the observation of the short *a* at the navel, the quintessential instructions of Samantabhadrī;²⁶⁷ the observation of the hungering²⁶⁸ at the

dhamñajaya wind, vitalizing wind, and downward voiding wind. See Tenzin Gyatso, *The Kālacakra Tantra: Rite of Initiation*, tr. and ed. by Jeffrey Hopkins (London: Wisdom Publication, 1985), p.112.

²⁶³ *rang mal du sad pa* (73.1).

²⁶⁴ *gdangs kyī cha* (73.2).

²⁶⁵ In other words, for these appearances to dawn the ten winds must have *already* entered into the central channel, but these appearances are not signs that occur while the winds are entering the central channel, because presumably this occurred earlier.

²⁶⁶ *'ihug po 'i 'od gsal* (73.5).

²⁶⁷ On this, Lochen Dharmashrī says in his *Lord of Secrets' Oral Instructions* commentary on the *Secret Essence*.

As for the second, it is meditating on the channel-wheel at one's navel. By meditating on that according to the quintessential instructions, the drop is made serviceable whereupon a non-duality of bliss and emptiness dawns. Through that, the conceptual collection shines forth as

throat, the pure union;²⁶⁹ and the observation of the letter *ham* at the crown, the quintessential instructions of great suffusion.²⁷⁰ [74] [One should value these three meditations] because in proportion to how much one meditates actually observing the essential point of the Fierce Female, the blazing and dripping become stronger, and the blazing and dripping cause the primordial wisdom to blaze in accordance with the progressively stronger satisfaction of the indestructible [mind]. This enhances the clarity and

the forty-two enlightened bodies and primordial wisdoms, and at that time the light from the channel-wheel of phenomena [at the heart] descends downward. By dissolving into the drop of Samantabhadrī, it extinguishes (? *chad*) the substance of the refined essence, whereby one abides in the entity of the five primordial wisdoms, the non-duality of bliss and emptiness. This is the quintessential instructions of the drop of great bliss, or of Samantabhadrī. (*gnyis pa nil_lte ba'i 'khor lo sgom thabs tel_de man ngag bzhin du bsgoms pas thig le las su rung nas/_bde stong gnyis med du shar bas rtog tshogs sku dang ye shes bzhi bcu rtsa gnyis su gsal zhing /_de'i tshes chos kyi 'khor lo'i 'od mar babs te kun tu bzang mo'i thig le la thim pas dwangs ma'i rgyu ba chad nas bde stong gnyis med ye shes lnga'i ngo bor gnas pa ni kun tu bzang mo'am bde chen thig le'i man ngag gol* from Lochen Dharmashrī, *Lord of Secrets' Oral Instructions (gsang bdag zhal lung)*, Zhe-chen Monastery electronic edition, n.d., p. 328).

²⁶⁸ *rngams ma* (73.5). Khen-po repeatedly emphasized the meaning of “hunger” with regard to *rngams*. Here, he said this represents the craving for the nectar of bliss from the *ham* at the crown of one’s head. The “*ma*” suffix seems to personify this craving in the female form. However, the translation has kept it abstract.

²⁶⁹ *sbyor ba dag pa* (73.6). On this Lochen Dharmashrī says:

As for the third, it is the method for meditating on the channel-center at the throat. The upward movement of the light from the great refined factor at the heart strikes the drop at the throat channel-center. Melting it, the bliss of the two channel-centers become unified at the same time, and through the generation of bliss, when one experiences the taste of the five primordial wisdoms, it is without there being taste and taster. This teaching is the quintessential instructions of pure union. (*gsum pa nil_mgrin pa'i 'khor lo'i sgom thabs tel_snying ga'i dwangs ma chen po'i 'od gyen du song ba mgrin pa'i 'khor lo'i thig ler phog de zhu ba las 'khor lo gnyis bde ba dus gcig tu mnyam par sbyor zhing /_bde ba skyes pas ye shes lnga'i ro myang ba na/_myang bya myong byed med par gnas su ston pa ni sbyor ba dag pa'i man ngag gol* from Lochen Dharmashrī, *Lord of Secrets' Oral Instructions, gsang bdag zhal lung*, Zhe-chen Monastery electronic edition, n.d., p. 328).

²⁷⁰ *khyab brdal chen po* (73.6). On this Lochen Dharmashrī says:

As for the fourth, it is the method for meditating on the channel-wheel of great bliss [at the crown]. The light from the neck [center] strikes the channel-center at one’s crown, whereupon melting into light, it generates the uncommon indifferenciability of bliss and emptiness that has the form of space. That is the intention of all the conquerors, and by experiencing that, one sees the faces of all the Buddhas at the same time. (*bzhi pa nil_bde chen 'khor lo'i sgom thabs tel_mgrin pa'i 'od kyis spyi bo'i 'khor lo la phog pas 'od du zhu nas bde stong dbyer med nam mkha'i gzugs can kun gyi thun mong ma yin pa skyes pa de ni rgyal ba thams cad kyi dgongs pa yin la/_de nyams su myong bas ni sangs rgyas kun gyi zhal dus gcig la mthong ba yin no/* from Lochen Dharmashrī, *Lord of Secrets' Oral Instructions (gsang bdag zhal lung)*, Zhe-chen Monastery electronic edition, n.d., pp. 328-9).

stability of the divine body, which is a self-appearance of that [primordial wisdom], and greatly diminishes the six seeds of the life-fortress,²⁷¹ that is, the basis for imputing error.

The loosening of the channel-knot through vajra-repetition is not explained here. However, upon the bliss of blazing and dripping greatly increasing in the path of the central channel from the navel up to the crown, the mind is withdrawn by means of that bliss. When this happens, even the winds of the channel-petals are drawn into that path, since wind and mind operate together. Through the power of withdrawing the winds like that, the channel-knots of the central channel become loosened naturally. Hence, the essential points [of Guhyasamāja and the like] are thoroughly contained [in this *Secret Essence Tantra*].

Those [essential points] are explanations of a little of the meaning upon arranging the contents of the texts on the quintessential instructions of the upper opening. The actual practice of cultivating the quintessential instructions of the four [upper] channel-wheels resides clearly in the commentary on this tantra [called] *Dispelling Darkness in the Ten Directions*,²⁷² the *Instructions on the Meaning of (Longchenpa's) "Resting the Basic Mind"*,²⁷³ the *Lord of Secrets' Oral Instructions*,²⁷⁴ and so forth.

PATH OF THE SPORT OF THE THREE REALMS AT THE LOWER OPENING [74.6]²⁷⁵

Concerning this, [75] one investigates and searches for a seal [i.e., consort] who is fully qualified, according to the statement in the root tantra's eleventh chapter, "Goddesses,

²⁷¹ *srog mkhar* (74.2).

²⁷² *phyogs bcu mun sel* (74.5) This is the word-by-word commentary by Long-chen-pa (1308-1363). See the bibliography.

²⁷³ *sems nyid ngal gso'i don khrid* (74.5). *Resting the Basic Mind* is the first book in the *Trilogy on Resting (ngal gso skor gsum)* which was translated by Guenther in the three volumes of *Kindly Bent to Ease Us* (Emeryville, CA: Dharma Publishing, 1975). The other two books in this trilogy on the Great Completeness are *bsam gtan ngal gso* and *sgyu ma ngal gso*. It is unclear which commentary (*don khrid*) on *Resting the Basic Mind* is being referred to here.

²⁷⁴ This is Lochen Dharmashri's *gsang bdag zhal lung* (74.6).

²⁷⁵ This is called the "Sport of the Three Realms" because, as was explained above, the main explanation in this context is of "the playful sport of Mantra where one joins the three—the lotus-object of contact, the vajra-sense organ, and the bliss-consciousness." See *supra*.

female Nāgas, or women of bad descent....”²⁷⁶ Having summoned and obtained one, those [acts which] initiate sexual desire through the practices described in the *Treatise on Passion*²⁷⁷ are **service**.²⁷⁸ [Then, there are three discriminations related to intimate service.] Generating [oneself and the seal] into male and female deities is divine discrimination. Blessing the secret space²⁷⁹ into a vajra and a lotus is discrimination of mantra. Thinking “Through depending on this method I will achieve the innate primordial wisdom” is the discrimination of doctrine. [When] within having these three discriminations one incites an intertwining²⁸⁰ [of one’s own body and the consort’s body] through four symbols, that is **intimate service**. Becoming absorbed [in sexual union] by means of the four seals, one excites the wind of sexual desire, whereby the Fierce Female blazes up, and the moon is melted by her light. It falls downward. Through its coming along that course, the four joys are experienced in stages

²⁷⁶ The full text is:

*lha mo klu mo rigs ngan mol
 dbye 'am yang ni ma dbye barl
 bsnyen pa dang ni nye bsnyen dangl
 bsgrub pa dang ni sgrub chen pol
 yum gyi padma'i dkyil 'khor dul
 bde ba thugs kyi dkyil 'khor srol
 sangs rgyas sprin tshogs ma lus lal
 dges mnyam mchog gi sbyin pas bstiml* (*Secret Essence*, Tb.417, 187.4-187.6).

This translates as:

Goddesses, female Nāgas, and women of bad descent
 Distinguishing [between them] or not,
 There is service and intimate service,
 Achievement and great achievement.

In the maṇḍala of the mother’s lotus
 Bliss, the maṇḍala of enlightened mind, spread.
 Through offering supreme joy and equanimity,
 [The couple] dissolves into the whole cloud [like] assembly of Buddhas (Cf. Gyurme Dorje, “The *Guhyaagarbhatantra* and its XIVth Century Tibetan Commentary”, 883).

²⁷⁷ *'dod pa'i bstan bcos* (75.2).

²⁷⁸ Following the quote, given above, from the eleventh of the root text, this section discusses the practice at the lower opening of the central channel in terms of the four branches of service and achievement (*bsnyen sgrub bzhi*). These are service (*bsnyen pa*), intimate service (*nye bar bsnyen pa*), achievement (*sgrub*), and great achievement (*sgrub chen*). These words are highlighted in bold in the following.

²⁷⁹ *mkha' gsang* (75.2). This is a euphemism for the genitals of the two partners.

²⁸⁰ *bsnol ma* (75.3).

at the four channel-wheels. At the end of that, [the white drop of the moon] is held at the tip of the jewel without emission. Completely attaining innate joy through doing this is **achievement**. Taking up the sun and moon with the tongue of the vajra, they are drawn up by way of the opposite technique, whereupon the factors of joy gradually fill the individual places of the channel-wheels. At the end of that, the innate [joy], which arises through depending on the letter *ham* at the [channel] wheel of great bliss [at the crown], is brought to completion. [76] This is **great achievement**. From among the three ways to posit the four branches of service and achievement—at the time of the path, at the time of achievement, and at the time of union—this is the latter.

In the continuation tantra of this [*Secret Essence Tantra*] another special way of positing the [four branches of] service and achievement is described:

The yogin joining with the yoginī

Is taught as “service”.

Applying *Kakkola* to the *Bo*²⁸¹

Is called “intimate service”.

Manifestly joining the two channels

Is taught as being achievement.

Joining the two innate [blisses]

Is called the great achievement.²⁸²

There is also a way to posit the five minds—arising mind and so forth²⁸³—with respect to

²⁸¹ Monier-Williams (241) lists *Kakkola* as “a species of plant (bearing a berry, the inner part of which is waxy and aromatic)” and “a perfume prepared from the berries of this plant.” The symbolic meaning of *bo* is unclear. Khenpo Namdröl commented that these refer to the lotus of the female and the vajra of the male practitioner, respectively.

²⁸² *'di nyi kyi rgyud phyi ma las nil rnal 'byor rnal 'byor mar 'brel bal /bsnyen pa zhes byar bstan pa yin/ po la ka kko la sbyor bal /nye bar bsnyen par brjod pa stel /rtsa gnyis mngon par 'brel ba nil /sgrub pa yin par bstan pa'ol /lhan cig skyes gnyis 'brel ba nil /sgrub pa chen por brjod pa'ol (76.1-76.3).*

²⁸³ These are arising mind, aspirational mind, engaging mind, abiding mind, and final mind. See *supra*.

those. This is known from the commentaries.

The single greatest essential point of the path of the messenger²⁸⁴ is just the essential of binding the channel, according to the statement in *The Penetrating*:

Having abandoned [impure appearances], if one does not know
 The drawing in and binding of Vajradhātviśvarī's channel,
 One will not attain the Reality Body
 In limitless vajra-eons.²⁸⁵

This is also the reason for analyzing consorts.

In the commentaries it is said that through this method the conceptual collection dawns as the maṇḍala of exalted body and primordial wisdom. As for the meaning of that, [77] the whole conceptual collection becomes intoxicated with the single taste of great bliss, whereupon it becomes free from the corrosion of discrimination that apprehends things as individual. Just as some excellent ones explain, “Even though [things are] different from the perspective of conceptuality, they become one in the perspective of primordial wisdom.” This is called “binding the aggregates and constituents into the maṇḍala of bliss.”

In many places in this [tantra], here and elsewhere, the impure aggregates, constituents, and sense-spheres are explained as the “conceptual collection”. With regard to this, having taken conceptuality as the conception of misconceived appearances and adherence to that,²⁸⁶ [some] explain it as that which is conceptualized from [the distinction between] what is conceptualized and what conceptualizes. Although this is suitable, I think it might be correct, if one explains [the conceptual collection] from the viewpoint that all impure

²⁸⁴ *pho nya'i lam* (76.4). *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* (vol. 2, 80, note 1130) says, “The messenger (*pho-nya*) is the consort or partner who acts as an intermediary, bringing to the practitioner the pristine cognition of co-emergent bliss.” Khenpo Namdröl said this means the “female seal” (*phyag rgya ma*), i.e., consort.

²⁸⁵ *thal ba las/ spangs nas rdo rje dbyings phyug rtsal /dgug dang bsdam pa ma shes nal /rdo rje'i bskal pa mtha' yas par/ lchos sku thob par mi 'gyur rol* (76.4).

²⁸⁶ Reading *rnam rtogs la byas nas* in accordance with Gangtok (71.5), as Delhi (77.3) is unclear.

appearances are emanations of wrong conceptuality. This agrees with the statement in the third chapter [of the tantra]:

Abodes and sufferings, the cycle of error and so forth,
Are nothing other than just wrong conceptuality.²⁸⁷

Even in terms of one on the instantaneous path of method described above, the order of the paths of the second and third initiations is definite, and in the third initiation there is nothing but cultivation in dependence on another's body of just that meaning which was clearly made known in the second initiation by the method that depends on one's own body. Hence, I do not think that the mode and so forth for achieving a primordial wisdom body is other than that.

PATH OF RELEASE THROUGH WISDOM [77.6]

In terms of the path's speed, [78] there are two paths of release through wisdom: the path of a suddenist and the path of a gradualist. From these, the first is as stated in [Lochen Dharmashrī's] commentary [*Ornament to the Lord of Secrets' Intention*]:

There are some with the most superior faculties who in one stroke²⁸⁸ complete the realization and contemplation of indivisible [reality]. They are called 'suddenists', and....²⁸⁹

Concerning that, the ground for reckoning suddenists and gradualists is the three characteristics. However, even if it is possible in the opinion of Ngari Pañchen Rinpoche²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ *le'u gsum par/ gnas dang sdug bsngal 'khrul 'khor las sogs pa/ llog rtog nyid las gzhan du ci yang med/* (77.3-77.4). *Secret Essence*, Tb.417, 162.6.

²⁸⁸ *chig chod du* (78.1). Realization refers to the path of seeing and familiarization refers to the path of meditation. Thus, at least the progression over the first eight Bodhisattva grounds is quick.

²⁸⁹ *'grel ba las/ dbang po yang rab kha gcig dbyer med chig chod du rtogs goms mthar phyin par byed pa yod de cig char ba zhes bya zhing* (78.1-78.2).

²⁹⁰ *mnga' ris pañ chen rin po che*. This is the treasure discoverer mNga' ris Pañ chen Padma dBang rgyal (1487-1543). According to 'Dod 'joms Rin po che, he was considered a mind-emanation of mKhri srong lde'u bstan

and so forth to posit a suddenist who completes those three just at the same moment, all suddenists are not definitely like that. On the other hand, [all] those whose realization is very quick are called “suddenists”. These are persons, but the paths of a suddenist are the meditative stabilizations and so forth in their continuums. In further detail, at the beginning of training in the path of this [tantra] one sets up the main points of the reasonings²⁹¹—such as the four realizations and so forth.²⁹² With that one finds the unfabricated realization of the clear light. Then, all appearances and beings dawn as the single maṇḍala of self-manifesting primordial wisdom. By setting in meditative equipoise on the meaning of that, one immediately²⁹³ attains a supportive realization,²⁹⁴ which is steady without increasing or diminishing, whereupon one passes to the level of an awareness-holder in the manner of an illusion.²⁹⁵

Such a quick realization arises from the cause of certain special people—who have powerful continuums, faculties, and roots of virtue [79]—previously planting great waves of prayer-wishes for this path of the Magical Emanation Net, and so forth. Furthermore, there are those who did not learn the path of the Magical Emanation Net in previous lives and are in this life suddenists relying on the procedure of the path and this path of the Magical Emanation. However, it is not contradictory for these people to have gradually trained in lower paths up through the previous lifetime. In the oral tradition,²⁹⁶ such a one is known as

(*The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 1, 805). His most famous work is the *sDom gsum rnam par nges pa'i bstan bcos* or *The Treatise on Ascertaining the Three Vows* (*bka' ma rgyas pa*, v.37).

²⁹¹ There are four points of reasoning (*gtan tshigs bzhi*). In *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* these are called the “Four Axioms of Mahāyoga” and are listed as the four kinds of realization (*rtogs bzhi*), the three purities of Mahāyoga (*dag pa gsum*), the four modes of sameness (*mnyam pa bzhi*), and supreme identity (*bdag nyid chen po*).

²⁹² *rtogs rnam pa bzhi*. According to the same source, these are the realizations of the single basis (*rgyu gcig pa*), the manner of the seed-syllables (*yig 'brug tshul*), consecration or blessing (*byin gyis rlabs pa*), and direct perception (*mngon sum pa*).

²⁹³ *'phral la* (78.6).

²⁹⁴ *rkyen thub kyi rtogs pa* (78.5).

²⁹⁵ *mig 'phrul bzhin du* (78.6).

²⁹⁶ *brgyud pa'i bka' 'srol* (79.3).

“a suddenist, sharp by training”,²⁹⁷ and the Great Lord of Secrets Dropukpa (1074-1135) says:

Like those who are definite in the lineages of the three vehicles, the lineages and faculties of sentient beings are various. Hence, there are also suddenists of sharp faculties.²⁹⁸

Through that, it is easy to understand how to differentiate gradualists into two, those sharp by training and those who are naturally sharp.

Concerning this, the great master’s *Garland of the Quintessential View* says:²⁹⁹

With regard to that, one’s goal will be brought to completion through the three characteristics. Knowing the modes of the four types of realization is the characteristic of knowledge. Familiarizing [with those] again and again is the characteristic of engagement. Manifestation by the force of familiarization is the characteristic of the result.³⁰⁰

According to that statement, the three characteristics are (1) the cause, or the characteristic of knowing—view; [80] (2) the condition, or the characteristic of engaging—meditative stabilization; and (3) the characteristic of manifestation—the result. When done in terms of that which causes one to know the object engaged in practical application, i.e., the object of

²⁹⁷ *sbyang rno cig char ba* (79.3).

²⁹⁸ *theg gsum rigs nges ltar sems can gyi rigs dang dbang po sna tshogs yin pas dbang rno cig char ba’ang yod ces gsang bdag sgro bug pa chen po gsung ngol* (79.3-79.4).

²⁹⁹ In *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* (v.1, p.265) this same passage is translated as follows:

Concerning this, the goal is conclusively reached by means of the three characteristics. Awareness, or the four kinds of realization, is the characteristic of perception, the repeated experience of it is the characteristic of the entrance, and the actualization of it by the power of experience is the characteristic of the result.

See the same for a nearly identical commentary on this.

³⁰⁰ *man ngag lta ba’i phreng ba las/ de la mtshan nyid gsum gyis don mthar phyin par ’gyur tel/ rtogs pa rnam pa bzhi’i tshul rig pa ni shes pa’i mtshan nyid dol/ lyang nas yang du goms par byed pa ni ’jug pa’i mtshan nyid dol/ lgoms pa’i mthus mngon du gyur pa ni ’bras bu’i mtshan nyid dol* (79.5-79.6).

meditation, it is posited as the view. When it is done in terms of engaging in practical application, or the means of meditation, it is posited as the meditative stabilization, and when it is done in terms of manifesting the aims of meditation, it is posited as the result. As for the characteristic of the result, there are two types of results:

- 1 the final result, which is the manifestation of everything to be realized and
- 2 path results where there is only partial manifestation.

From between those two, the former is equivalent to the result-continuum, and the latter is the third characteristic [of the result] in the context of a path-continuum.

The difference between sentient beings and Buddhas is whether or not they have purified themselves of the misconceived appearances explained earlier. The main means for eliminating misconceived appearances is one's view. That very [view] is nurtured again and again and its generation is lengthened until the effect state of an awareness-holder is achieved.³⁰¹ This is why [the three characteristics of view, meditative stabilization, and their results] are posited as the three—cause, condition, and result.

In the texts of the common Great Vehicle, mind-generation is like the seed for complete enlightenment, and the other practices, the view and so forth, are called aids to that.³⁰² However, [such] is a different presentation from this one. [81] Here one can posit even the

³⁰¹ There are four levels of awareness-holders: the fruitional awareness-holder (*rnam smin rig 'dzin*), the life-empowered awareness-holder (*tshe dbang rig 'dzin*), the awareness-holder of the great seal (*phyag rgya rig 'dzin*), and the spontaneously present awareness-holder (*lhun grub rig 'dzin*). The Zur tradition holds that all the Awareness Holders are on learner paths, but Longchenpa maintains that the spontaneously present awareness-holder is equivalent to Buddhahood.

³⁰² The *locus classicus* for this simile is the *Supplement to the Middle Way* (*madhyamakāvātāra*, *dbu ma la 'jug pa*; 1.2). The translation from *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism* (p.102) is:

Mercy (*brtse nyid*) alone is seen as the seed
 Of a Conqueror's rich harvest,
 As water for development, and as
 Ripening in a state of long enjoyment,
 Therefore at the start I praise compassion.

It should be noted however that Shantideva maintains in the ninth chapter of *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* that all practices are for the sake of wisdom.

uncommon, conventional mind-generation within the class of the view.³⁰³ Hence, there is no confusion of classes [between the three characteristics].

THE CAUSE—THE CHARACTERISTIC OF KNOWING [81.1]

This section has three parts: the object to be comprehended, the means of comprehending, and the meaning to be established.³⁰⁴

OBJECT TO BE COMPREHENDED [81.2]

The object to be comprehended is explained as the collection of misconceived appearances, or the collection of appearances and misconceptions. However, when the intention behind that [explanation] is sought, it [should be understood as follows]. Having taken the mistaken objects of observation of wrong conceptuality as the subject, one comprehends or ascertains them as primordially pure entities. Hence, it is evident that [the object to be comprehended] is to be taken as the actual collection³⁰⁵ of [both] such [impure] subjects and the predicate to be established [their primal purity]. This can be understood, when one investigates well the way the example is posited in the [Lochen Dharmashrī's] *Sacred Word of the Lord of Secrets*:

By ascertaining misconceived appearances, one will arrive at reality. This is like realizing there is a striped rope by analyzing the consciousness that mistakes it to be a snake.³⁰⁶

³⁰³ According to Khenpo Namdröl, the uncommon, conventional mind-generation (*thun min kun rdzob sems bskyed*) is “the mind generated into the identity of knowing that oneself and limitless sentient beings are primordially enlightened” (*bdag dang mtha’ yas sems can rnam ye nas sangs rgyas yin pa la yin par shes pa’i bdag nyid byang chub sems bskyed do*). This can be included in the view, because it is a view of primordial purity.

³⁰⁴ These are *gzhal bya*, *’jal byed*, and *grub mtha’*. The last term (*grub mtha’*) is often translated as “tenets”, but here Khenpo Namdröl glossed it as *grub don*, the meaning to be established.

³⁰⁵ *tshogs don* (81.3).

³⁰⁶ *gsang bdag zhal lung las/ zhen snang gtan la phab pas chos nyid phebs par ’gyur te sbrul ’khrul gyi shes pa la dpyad pas thag khrar rtogs pa bzhin no/* (81.4).

MEANS FOR COMPREHENDING [81.5]

The second, or the means for comprehending, are the reasonings, because it is ascertainment of the relevant meaning by way of reasons. It has three parts, according to the statement in [Buddhaghya's] *Stages of the Path*, “Those are the five facts, modes, and words.”³⁰⁷ These are reasonings of the five historical facts (*sngon byung dngos lnga'i gtan tshigs*), reasonings of the five modes of followers (*rje 'jug tshul lnga'i gtan tshigs*), and reasonings of the five phrases (*tshigs lnga'i gtan tshigs*).

THE FIVE HISTORICAL FACTS [81.6]

With respect to the five historical facts, [82] in past history the five enlightened bodies as teachers displayed the meaning of reality in direct perception to five retinues by way of five types of communication. The Reality Body as teacher communicated [the meaning of reality] to the retinue—Ocean of Primordial Wisdom—through a communication that is the fact itself of non-production.³⁰⁸ The Complete Enjoyment Body communicated [the meaning of reality] to the retinue—Ocean of Fruition—through a symbolic communication that is exalted thought. The Emanation Body communicated to the retinue—Ocean of Belief—through verbal expressions. The Vajra Body communicated to the Indifferentiable Vajra retinue through a vajra communication, [and] the Manifest Enlightenment [Body] communicated to the retinue—Ocean of Conquerors—through a communication that was the blessing of basic mind.

Concerning this, [some] former professors of the Magical Emanation [Cycle, such as Longchenpa] say that since the retinues of the four enlightened bodies, other than the Emanation Body, do not have misconceived appearances, in terms of what happened in the past these communications are not [actual] reasonings, but they are reasonings for the

³⁰⁷ *lam rim las/ de nyid dngos lnga tshul dang tshig* (81.6).

³⁰⁸ *skye med don gyi gsung* (82.1).

realization of [later] followers in that they are aids for proofs [concerning the nature of reality]. Therefore, they are [merely] designated as reasonings [but are not actual ones]. Others [from the Zur tradition] say that even the retinues of the four exalted bodies have certain types of subtle misconceived appearances to be eliminated and, hence, [all] these communications are actual reasonings. Lochen Dharmashrī says that since there are subtle obstructions to omniscience even on a final [stage of the] path, the latter [statement, that these communications are actual reasonings] is correct.

In comparison, I think that (1) those on a final path become the retinue of all three enlightened bodies, the Reality Body and so forth, through just their becoming the retinue that is together with the Complete Enjoyment Body and [83] that (2) differentiating them by way of isolatable factors, those who attain realizations concordant with the Reality Body are called the Ocean of Primordial Wisdom retinue and those who attain realizations partially similar to the Vajra and Manifest Enlightenment Bodies are [respectively] called the Vajra retinue and the Ocean of Conquerors retinue. This is because on learner paths one does not directly perceive the Wisdom Reality Body³⁰⁹ and also because it is impossible to describe [these five] teachers as different since just the actual collection of the three—the Reality Body, the Complete Enjoyment Body, and the Emanation Body—is separately posited as the Vajra Body from the viewpoint of those three being an indivisible entity and as the Manifest Enlightenment Body from the viewpoint of those three being different isolates. [The difference between those two enlightened bodies] is no more than that. Moreover, as for the understood meaning of the vajra communication and so forth, the convention of communicating³¹⁰ is used for the retinue's complete realization of the meaning of the tantra through the teacher's just setting in equipoise on the thought of the indifferenciability of the three bodies and so forth. This is like the Conqueror's transmission through thought.

³⁰⁹ Only those on a path of no-more-learning, i.e., Buddhahood, directly perceive the Wisdom Reality Body.

³¹⁰ *brda sprad pa'i tha snyad* (83.3).

As far as I understand it, it is asserted that, on this occasion of the path of release, without previously practicing the methods of focusing on important points in one's own and another's bodies [but] in dependence upon merely the reasonings, one newly induces a realization of the stage of completion. Regarding the reason for being able to induce such, it is due to the fact that since this path is formulated in terms of trainees with surpassingly sharp wisdom, they are called ones on the wisdom path, i.e., the path of release, [84] and such [trainees] are able to eliminate elaborations of misconceived appearances in dependence upon a mere reasoning, and by the power of having eliminated them they are able to nakedly perceive the fundamental mode of being. Moreover, by way of a vajra-master merely focusing his *thought* [on them], or by way of a vajra-master's mere *symbolic* method,³¹¹ or by way of a vajra-master merely stating the beginning *words* [of a reasoning]³¹² certain [trainees] who have very sharp faculties cut through their misconceived appearances. Doing this, the vajra-master is able to characterize clearly the self-abiding primordial wisdom [for such trainees]—"It is thus...." This is like making these divisions of the three—facts, modes, and words—for the sake of generating ascertainment in those with sharp faculties by way of enumerating which teaching belongs to which mode of release. Furthermore, in the verbal transmission of the omniscient lama [Patrül Rinpoché] it is said:

Joining to the clear light of the path only by means of reasonings without relying on binding the activities of the channels, winds, and drops is a great

³¹¹ *brda thabs tsam* (84.2).

³¹² In the Gangtok edition (77.6), the words *dgongs*, *brda*, and *tshig* are highlighted, which is the reason for the italics here. In the Delhi edition (84.2) only *brda* is highlighted. The three represent the three means for comprehending mentioned above: the five facts which are primarily wordless communications, the five modes of followers which involved symbolic communication, and the five verses, or words, which are verbal communications. The words themselves also evoke a connection with the three transmissions—Conqueror's transmission of thought/intention, Bodhisattva's symbolic transmission of basic awareness, and the yogin's oral transmission.

distinctive feature of this tantra. Hence, here the reasonings must be taken as the life [of the path].³¹³

Therefore, since all the ways of characterizing primordial wisdom by the reasonings—ranging from the five historical facts up to and including those for understanding by analysis—are similar in being modes of release through wisdom, even the five facts are called “reasonings” out of their being similar [with the others]. When it is done like that, [85] one realizes that both of the two assertions stated above have both a factor of correctness and a factor of incorrectness that need to be distinguished.³¹⁴ This mode appears as a difficult point of the path of release.

THE FIVE WAYS OF COMMUNICATING TO FOLLOWERS [85.1]

Concerning the second, [the reasonings of] the five ways [of communicating to followers], for those [trainees] with the very best sharp faculties, all phenomena that are known to appear identify the meaning of the tantra in accordance with the communications of the five historical enlightened bodies. Furthermore, these reasonings are modes of communicating [the meaning of the tantra] concordant with those [communications] of the [five] teachers—the Reality Body, Complete Enjoyment Body, Manifest Enlightenment Body, and Emanation Body. They are respectively:

1. the reasoning of the fact of non-production, which is [that everything is] like space characterized by non-production,
2. the reasoning that symbolizes the intention, which is [that everything is] like a

³¹³ *bla ma thams cad mkhyen pa'i gsung rgyun las kyang / rtsa lung thig le'i byed pa cing la mi ltos par gtan tshigs kho nas lam gyi 'od gsal sbyor ba ni rgyud 'di'i khyad chos chen po yin pas 'dir gtan tshigs srog tu bzung dgos (84.4-84.5).*

³¹⁴ This first assertion by Longchenpa is correct in stating that the five facts are only designated as reasonings but are not actual ones. It is incorrect in stating that the retinue does not have misconceived appearances. Correspondingly, Lochen Dharmashrī and the Zur tradition is correct in stating that the retinue does have misconceived appearances but is incorrect in the assertion that the five historical facts are actual reasonings.

reflection in a mirror identifying the obstructions,³¹⁵

3. the reasoning of the self-knowing manifest clarity, which is [that everything is] self-illuminating non-conceptuality like the center of the sun,
4. the vajra reasoning of indifferentiability, which is [that everything is] like an echo, [illustrating] the indifferentiability of emptiness and [appearances] that are renown, and
5. the verbal reasoning of expressions, which is [that everything is] like the pure voice [of the Buddha], engaging the minds of all.³¹⁶

This accords with the saying of the former Conquerors that “All appearances dawn as teachers and religious texts.” Also, when in dependence on the sign that is the appearance of objects the realization of non-production dawns, the reasoning falls within the Reality Body’s mode of communication.³¹⁷ When through that sign [i.e., the appearance of objects] [86] one identifies the obstructions in one’s own continuum, the reasoning comes to be within the Complete Enjoyment Body’s mode of communication. When [through that sign] one identifies the basic mind of unimpeded brilliance, the reasoning comes to be within the Manifest Enlightenment Body’s mode of communication. When one knows from the very moment they appear that [appearances] are empty entities, the reasoning comes to be within the Vajra Body’s mode of communication, and when one sees just a single thing as a way to know a variety of the thought in Secret Mantra—just as a single [phrase] of a Conqueror’s

³¹⁵ Just as one uses a mirror to view dirt and so forth on one’s face, these reasonings help one to identify one’s obstructions through seeing all appearances as the self-appearances of one’s own mind.

³¹⁶ *kun yid ’jug pa* (85.5). This refers to the belief that when a Buddha speaks everyone in the audience hears exactly what they need to hear for their progress toward enlightenment.

³¹⁷ About this, Jeffrey said:

It can get so that the appearance of inherent existence itself draws one into emptiness, because one immediately reflects on the discrepancy [between what appears and the way it is]. So, as soon as you see appearance, it draws you into emptiness. One uses the appearance of objects as the sign of emptiness, and thus the appearance itself is a mode of communication of non-production.

pure speech dawns as various types of language and various meanings according to the situation of each trainee—the reasoning comes to be within the Emanation Body’s mode of communication.

THE FIVE PHRASES [86.3]

As for the third, the five phrases are these five modes expressed in words. Words that indicate [all phenomena] to be the self-appearance of non-production are the words of the Reality Body. Words that are signs of the hidden intention are those of the Enjoyment Body. Words that indicate [all phenomena] to be indifferntiable [with emptiness] like a vajra are those of the Vajra Body. Words and letters that indicate [all phenomena] to be the self-appearance of primordial wisdom are those of the Manifest Enlightenment Body, and the transmitted words of the definitive instructions are words of the Emanation Body. When those [five] are condensed, there are two, as [Buddhaguhya] says in his *Stages of the Path*:

Although they are thus, when condensed there are two:

Four without subsequent analysis and one with subsequent analysis.³¹⁸

These two are: (1) “the four exalted bodies’ reasonings for understanding without analysis”, being done in terms of trainees with very sharp faculties who understand the tantra’s meaning without relying greatly on the weariness of analysis, and (2) “the Emanation Body’s reasonings for understanding with analysis”, [87] being done in terms of [trainees with] dull faculties who understand the tantra’s meaning mainly in dependence upon doing analysis. When [the reasonings] are comprehended in this [way], I think that, from among the five phrases, a phrase that teaches [all phenomena] to be the self-appearance of non-production must be a precise³¹⁹ indication of the meaning through an utterance such as “All phenomena are not produced” without elaborately explaining it. Extend that analysis to the reasonings of

³¹⁸ *lam rim las/ de lta mod kyi bsdu na gnyis/ lbzhi rjes mi dpyod gcig rjes dpyod/* (86.5).

³¹⁹ *bcar phog tu* (87.2).

the three other exalted bodies. That being the case, although those with supremely sharp faculties do not rely on extensive teachings of the reasonings for understanding the tantra's meaning, it is nonetheless definite that a substitute of a reasoning is necessary, since [otherwise], without there being a cause [for realization], there would be no realization of the tantra's meaning.

Furthermore, the [trainees who are] the main object, i.e., the purpose for teaching the [verbal] reasonings, are called "those with dull faculties" in comparison with the former [trainees with supremely sharp faculties mentioned above]. However, in general they are [trainees] with very sharp faculties, because they are the main, special, intended trainees of this tantra. [The main intended trainees of this tantra must be those with very sharp faculties,] because it is unsuitable [to say] that this tantra, which is the pinnacle of the whole tantric corpus, was intended for those with dull faculties.

EMANATION BODY'S REASONINGS FOR UNDERSTANDING THROUGH ANALYSIS

[87.6]

With regard to the reasonings of the Emanation Body [which are reasonings for understanding through analysis], there are two types: reasonings where the meanings of the words are concordant and those where the meanings of the words are discordant. [88] The first are delineations upon conjoining the meaning to be proven and the reasoning without the words being contradictory. I think this short phrase, "without the words being contradictory", must be added [here, because] if [the difference] referred to whether or not something was a fully qualified contradictory reasoning, there would be no way to posit reasonings where the meanings of the words are discordant.³²⁰

³²⁰ A "fully qualified contradictory reasoning" means a statement where the reason contradicts the predicate. Khenpo Namdröl gave the following syllogism as an example: "The subject, a sound, is impermanent, because it is permanent" (*sgra chos can/ mi rtag pa yin te rtag pa yin pa'i phyir*). That is a fully qualified contradiction. This is not what Jikmé Tenpé Nyima is referring to by reasonings in which the meanings of the words are discordant. Instead, he is referring to reasonings where the words are contradictory (in being opposites) but the

[Reasonings where the meanings of the words accord] are of two types: reasonings from valid scriptural sayings and reasonings where the words accord [with the lower vehicles] but the meanings are superior. The first are explanations according to the actual teaching of a tantric scripture. There are four of these, consisting of the reasonings of the four realizations, those of the three purities, those of the four equalities, and those of the great entity.³²¹

THE FOUR REALIZATIONS [88.4]

Concerning the reasonings of the four realizations, the eleventh chapter of the tantra says:

The sole cause and the method of the syllables,
 Blessing into magnificence and direct perception,
 By these four types of thorough realization,
 Everything is the great Conqueror of manifest completeness.³²²

With respect to that, the various appearances of ordinary abodes, enjoyments, etc., and the minds that have various ways of conceiving those appearances as good or bad, to be abandoned or adopted, and so forth, are the thoroughly afflicted class of cyclic existence, and appearances of the perfect primordial wisdom, which are the opposite of those, are the pure class of nirvāṇa. Neither of these is established in the realm or expanse of the mind's fundamental mode of abiding. That expanse alone is the cause or basis of appearance for all those [pure and impure appearances], and if, from the perspective of that expanse, the appearances and minds of cyclic existence were established, the expanse would fall into the

meaning is not. He will later give the following syllogism as an example of a reasoning where the meaning of the words is discordant: "The subject, mind-itself, is nothing whatsoever, because it is anything [whatsoever] since in its mode of appearance it appears by itself without hindrance" (*sems nyid chos can/ yang dag par ci yang ma yin tel snang tshul du ma 'gags par rang snang bas ci yang yin pa'i phyir*, 101.6-102.1). Here, although the words are contradictory, the meaning is not.

³²¹ *rtogs pa bzhi'il dag pa gsum gyil mnyam pa bzhi'il bdag nyid chen po'i gtan tshigs* (88.3-88.4). These are the well-known "axioms" of Mahāyoga. See *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 1, 275-276.

³²² *rgyud kyi le'u bcu gcig par/ rgyud gcig pa dang yig 'bru'i tshull lbyin gyis brlabs dang mngon sum pa/ lrab tu rtog pa rnam bzhi yis/ lthams cad mngon rdzogs rgyal po che/* (88.4-88.5). Cf., *Secret Essence*, Tb.417, 187.1.

class of cyclic existence, whereby it would be unsuitable to purify those appearances and minds. However, if the pure appearances were established from the perspective of that [expanse], [the expanse] would fall under the pure class [of phenomena], whereby it would not be suitable to be the basis for the appearances of cyclic existence. If the appearances and minds were established autonomously or under their own power, then in the final realm there would be no basis for appearance. Since [these positions] are incorrect, that mode of establishment must be refuted. Therefore, the [Vimalamitra's] *Eye Commentary* extensively explains these as reasonings that one with the refutations of the four extreme [types of] production [in the Great Vehicle].³²³ Since that is the case, it is asserted that the final mode of abiding of the expanse does not have even the slightest very subtle elaborations of dualistic appearance. This is an analysis that starts from an emptiness that is an affirming negative.

In short, when setting up the practice, it is said that all four—sole cause, mode of syllables, blessing, and direct perception—are established as reasonings through apprehending [the following] four [facts] as what are to be proven:

1. [the reasoning of the sole cause proves that] the nature [of the expanse] is unproduced;
2. [the reasoning of the mode of syllables proves that] its play is unobstructed;
3. [the reasoning of blessing proves that] its entity is indifferentiable, and
4. [the reasoning of direct perceptions proves that] its characteristic is separate from awareness. [90]

THE REASONING OF THE SOLE CAUSE [90.1]

When [the reasonings] are applied to that statement, [the reasoning of the sole cause] is as follows:

The subject, the appearances of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa, are not produced

³²³ *spyān 'grel las mtha' bzhi'i skye 'gog dang gcig du bral gyi rig pa rgyas par bshad dol* (89.4).

within the nature of the expanse, because there is no other final basis for the appearance of those two apart from that single expanse.³²⁴

One should understand this to be the mode of setting up [the reasonings as presented] in the *Ornament of the Intention*. The scholars of Magical Emanation say:

Although, in that way, the factor of appearance is not established from the perspective of the expanse, it is not possible for the expanse to be devoid of primordial wisdom, and primordial wisdom has a spontaneously established factor of appearance. Just as, when there is no rope, there is no basis for mistaking it to be a snake, if the mind's fundamental mode of abiding had no appearance at all, then there would necessarily be no mistaken appearances whatsoever.

This is the [incontrovertible] vajra-word.

Furthermore, due to the quintessential point, stated above, that the root expanse does not fall into either class, it dawns by itself as boundless,³²⁵ illusion-like appearances. The meaning of "boundless" is a limitless [number of] particulars and [it also points to the fact] that even one thing such as water can appear as anything due to [one's] karma, [the use of] knowledge-mantras, [the practice of] concentration, and so forth. In brief, [the expanse] is not cut off in any direction. In this tantra, [91] it is said again and again that everything is exhausted as merely names. This is the final reason for boundless appearances, but the reason for appearances not being established in the expanse also resides there.

³²⁴ The expanse is the basis for the appearance of cyclic existence or nirvāṇa in terms of whether it is realized or not. When it is not realized, cyclic existence appears. When it is realized, nirvāṇa appears. Neither class of appearance is established in the expanse itself. For, if either of them were, it could not act as the basis for the appearance of the other.

³²⁵ *ris med* (90.5).

THE REASONING OF THE MODE OF SYLLABLES [91.2]

Although the appearances of primordial wisdom have no boundary or direction, the mind apprehends them as distinct forms in certain directions. Not only that but even when on the stage of completion one sees empty form, the energy, through which it dawns boundlessly and pervasively, is not complete, but the adventitious conceptions and obstructions [still] engage in distinctions. That appearance is not the final factor of its fundamental mode of being. When there is no pollution by adventitious [minds], all the types of maṇḍalas composed of the self-appearances, which are none other than the primordial wisdom of Vajrasattva, have a thoroughly unbounded extent like the sphere of reality. Such a thing is called “the appearance of myriad purities”, and just that is also the very entity of the thoroughly pure deities. Thus, it is well known that all the pure residences and residents have the entity of a Tathāgata. This is referred to as “the manner of syllables” and “establishing appearances as deities”. When the practice of the reasoning is set up, [the syllogism] is as it occurs in *The Ornament to the Intention*:

With regard to the subject—the tone of non-production or mind-itself—its unimpeded play dawns by itself as the enlightened body, speech, and minds of the deities, [92] because such is realized through the illustration that [in Sanskrit and Tibetan] the non-descript letter, ཨ (a) itself, appears without hindrance in the many distinct letters [of the alphabet].³²⁶

That the sphere is without conceptual elaborations is like the fact that the letter ཨ (a) does not possess the many [other] letters [within it]. Nevertheless, various appearances dawn as the display of that sphere. This is like the fact that the collection of vowels and consonants occur through transforming the ཨ (a) by [applying] different effective forces at the five

³²⁶ dgongs rgyan las 'byung ba ltar/ sems nyid skye med kyi gdangs chos can/ rol ba 'gags med lha'i sku gsung thugs su rang snang ba yin tel mtshon du med pa'i yi ge a nyid mtshon byed yi ge du mar ma 'gag par snang bas mtshon nas rtogs pa'i phyir/ (91.6-92.1).

stations [of speech, i.e., the lips, teeth, palate, back of the mouth, and throat]. In the context of a suddenist on the path of release, *The Ocean* says:³²⁷

Due to appearing as enlightened body, speech, and mind,

Everything without exception is realized as the ornament of communication.

Accordingly, one realizes the indifferenciability of the superior two truths through the illustration that the three letters—ཨ་ (*a*), ཨུ་ (*u*), and མ་ (*m*)—are combined into the single syllable, ཨོཾ་ (*om*).³²⁸ This is also called “the mode of syllables”.

THE REASONING OF BLESSING [92.5]

For instance, when a white cloth is led through the [dye of] the madder root,³²⁹ it becomes red. Similarly, when viewed from the perspective of the sole cause and the mode of syllables, all phenomena—whatever and however they appear—dawn as the sole maṇḍala of the conqueror, which is the indifferenciability of the special two truths. Thereby, [93] all appearances and activities are blessed into Buddhahood by those two modes. When explained like that, this agrees with *The Garland of Views*,³³⁰ and it is evident that one can legitimately apply this to the reasoning of blessing in this context. I think it is also easy to understand when the application is set up as follows:

³²⁷ *rgya mtsho* (92.4). Tb.437.

³²⁸ Here, he is referring to the pronunciation of ཨོཾ་ (*om*). The “o” is considered to be composed of an “a” plus a “u”.

³²⁹ *btsod* (92.5). Chandra Das (1005) gives the Sanskrit equivalent as *mañjiṣṭā*, which he translates as “a creeper”. Monier-Williams (774) defines *mañjiṣṭā* as “Indian madder, *Rubia Munjista*”, the root of which is used to make a red dye.

³³⁰ *lta phreng dang mthun* (93.1). The *Garland of Views* (10.6-11.2) says the following about the reasoning of blessing:

The realization by way of blessing is, for instance, like the way white cloth is when it is inserted into [a solution] that has the power to dye it red. The power to bless all phenomena into Buddhahood is realized as a blessing through the power of the sole cause and the mode of syllables. (*byin gyis brlabs kyis rtogs pa ni dper na ras dkar po la dmar por byin gyis rlabs pa'i mthu btsang la yod pa bzhin du chos thams cad sangs rgyas par byin gyis rlob pa'i mthu yang / rgyu gcig pa dang yig 'bru'i tshul gyi mthus byin gyis rlob par rtogs pa'o*)

The subject, the two superior truths, is an indiffereniable entity, because such [a realization] issues from the blessing or force of delineating those two as the nature and its play.³³¹

Or, in another way one should say:

The subjects, these things that appear, are primordially purified and extended into the nature that is the indiffereniability or union of the two superior truths, because such is seen through the power or blessing of the two realizations, sole cause and the manner of syllables.³³²

THE REASONING OF DIRECT PERCEPTION [93.4]

Thus, all phenomena become enlightened into the indiffereniability of the [two] truths. Which consciousness clearly establishes that? This is taught in the following way. Even when those with clever minds analyze it for a long time, they are unable to see it directly, because it is not within the scope³³³ of the [ordinary] mind, in the same way that the spheres of activity³³⁴ for gods and humans are different. However, when the unwavering thought of self-luminous primordial wisdom that transcends the [ordinary] mind dawns, at first one

³³¹ *lhag pa'i bden gnyis chos can/ ngo bo dbyer med yin tel khyod gnyis rang bzhin dang rol pa r gtan la phab pa'i byin rlabs sam shugs las de ltar thon pa'i phyir/*

³³² *'di ltar snang ba'i dngos po chos can/ lhag pa'i bden gnyis dbyer med dam zung 'jug gi rang bzhin du ye nas sangs rgyas pa yin tel rgyud gcig pa dang yig 'br'i tshul du rtogs pa gnyis kyi stobs sam byin rlabs las de ltar mthong ba'i phyir* (93.3-93.4). Neither of these syllogisms is found in the *Ornament of the Intention*, which gives the following syllogism (taken from the electronic edition):

[With regard to the subject] the two—the non-produced nature and [its] unimpeded play, by the power of actually realizing them there implicitly arises the blessing of realizing their indiffereniability, because, through the spontaneous presence of being the entity of the seven treasures of the superior ultimate [truth], the container [worlds] and the contained [sentient beings] appear on their own as the maṇḍala of enlightened body and primordial wisdom, [in terms of] isolating [the factor of] its appearance (*rang bzhin skye med dang rol pa 'gags med gnyis dngos su rtogs pa'i mthos de gnyis ngo bo dbyer med du rtogs pa'i byin rlabs shugs la 'byung ba yin tel_ lhag pa don dam dkor bdun ngo bo nyid rgyur lhun gyis grub pas de'i snang ldog snod bcud sku dang ye shes kyi dkyil 'khor du rang snang ba'i phyir/*

³³³ *spyod yul* (93.5).

³³⁴ *spyod yul* (93.5).

experiences something like the bliss of [having] a young virgin. Experiencing this, one does not know how to express it, [94] and although one may have confidence in that, it [still] has to be seen by oneself in an unbiased manner. The reasoning of direct perception is as follows:

The subject, the indifferentiability of the two truths, is beyond the scope of [ordinary] awareness, because it is realized by self-knowing direct perception in its objectless self-luminosity.³³⁵

One should remember the previous explanations about the statements, “the sphere, primordial wisdom, and the mind,” and not confuse [these words] with the general terminology of [other] texts.

THE THREE PURITIES [94.3]

The root tantra says, “The vessels (worlds), their contents (beings), and mental continuums are realized to be pure and....”³³⁶ Concerning this, one can state:

The subject, the phenomena of inner and outer appearances, is primordially purified and extended, because of possessing the three purities.³³⁷

Or, one can state:

The subject, the triad of vessels, contents, and continuums, is primordially purified and extended, because they are respectively purified into the five male

³³⁵ *bden pa dbyer med chos can/ blo'i spyod yul las 'das pa yin tel rang rig mngon sum gyis yul med rang gsal du rtogs pa'i phyir/* (94.1-94.2). This is slightly different from the syllogism given in the *Ornament of the Intention* (electronic version):

The indifferentiable [two] truths are beyond the scope of [ordinary] awareness, because it is realized in its objectless self-clarity by a self-knowing direct perceiver without the duality of object viewed and consciousness that views (*bden pa dbyer med de'ang blo'i spyod yul las 'das pa yin tel_bltā bya'i yul dang lta byed kyi shes pa gnyis su med pa rang rig mngon sum gyis yul med rang gsal du rtogs pa'i phyir*).

³³⁶ *rtsa rgyud nyid las/ snod bcud rgyud rnam dag rtogs shing /* (94.3). This is also in chapter 11 of the root tantra several verses after the one on the four realizations. Cf., *Secret Essence*, Tb.417, 188.2.

³³⁷ *snag ba phyi nang gi chos rnam chos can/ ye nas sangs rgyas pa yin tel dag pa gsum dang ldan pa'i phyir/* (94.4).

Tathāgatas, the five female Tathāgatas, and the five primordial wisdoms.³³⁸

These two statements have the same meaning. Furthermore, however many particular inner and outer things [we perceive] now, the conception of ordinary appearance extends to them all, and just as that extends, so one deviates from the pure mode of abiding. Similarly, [95] however much one exercises³³⁹ the view that knows all those observed objects to be primordially pure entities, to that degree one greatly cuts through wrongly apprehended appearances. Even though there are limitless observed objects that are wrongly apprehended appearances, here they are described by condensing them into the three—vessel, contents, and mental continuums.

To illustrate this with one of the aggregates, the fact that the mere aggregate of form abides in the identity of all the aggregates—feeling, etc.—is the vajra-aggregate of one taste, and that some part of the vajra-aggregate of one taste pervades all animate and inanimate things is the eternal, most pervasive form-aggregate.³⁴⁰ These two together are the meaning of the pure form-aggregate.³⁴¹ These meanings also are the final meaning of “boundless self-appearances,”³⁴² and having already explained that the form-aggregate of sentient beings is primordially pure as boundless self-appearances, by just such a method all three—container

³³⁸ *snod bcud rgyud gsum chos can/ ye nas sangs rgyas pa yin tel/ rim bzhin de bzhin gshegs pa yum lnga dang yab lnga dang ye shes lngar dag pa'i phyir* (94.4-94.5). This is similar to the syllogism that Lochen Dharmashrī gives in the *Ornament to the Intention* (electronic edition), which is slightly more elaborate:

Everything included within the external container world [composed of] the five elements, the beings who are contained therein [composed of] the five aggregates, and their individual collections of eight consciousnesses is primordially enlightened as the maṇḍala of enlightened bodies and primordial wisdom, because those three—container, contents, and continua—are respectively pure just as they are as the five mother Tathāgatas, the five father [Tathāgatas], and the five primordial wisdoms (*phyi snod kyī 'jig rten 'byung ba lnga dang /_nang bcud kyī sems can phung po lnga dang de dag rang rang gi rnam shes tshogs bryad kyis bsdu pa rnam ye nas sku dang ye shes kyī dkyil 'khor du sangs rgyas pa yin tel_ snod bcud rgyud gsum po de rim pa ji lta bar de bzhin gshegs pa yum lnga dang /_yab lnga dang /_ye shes lngar dag pa'i phyir*).

³³⁹ *rtal sbyangs pa* (95.1).

³⁴⁰ *rtag khyab chen po'i gzugs phung* (95.3). This reading is supported by Gangtok (88.1) and Khenpo Namdröl.

³⁴¹ *dag pa'i gzugs phung* (95.3).

³⁴² *rang snang ris med* (95.4).

worlds and so forth—are thoroughly pure. This is the meaning of the three aspects of purity.

THE FOUR EQUALITIES [95.5]

The text says, “Through the two equalities and the two superior equalities.”³⁴³ [The reasoning is done] like this:

The subjects, all appearing phenomena, are primordially enlightened, because through the four equalities they abide equally.³⁴⁴

As for these four, all inner and outer things occur in two ways, appearing to the mind as pure and impure, [96] but they do not exist in the way they are viewed, or conceited,³⁴⁵ as truly being good or bad, to be adopted or abandoned. With respect to the abiding reality of those phenomena, there are two [kinds of] ultimates: the enumerated and the non-enumerated.³⁴⁶ However, except for this being a differentiation relying on the features of the subjective consciousnesses [comprehending them], [all phenomena] are equal in being non-produced and free from extremes. And, even when it is done in terms of either correct or false conventionalities, these are equal in being empty of true [existence] like illusions. Those two [equalities] are the way of positing the equality of existence and peace which is common to both sūtra and tantra. This is not merely for the sake of leading [trainees of] lower [vehicles to this one], but the yogis of this path must view the equality of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa

³⁴³ *mnyam nyid lhag pa'i mnyam gnyis kyis/* (95.5). Cf., *Secret Essence*, Tb.417, 188.2-188.3.

³⁴⁴ *'di ltar snang ba'i chos thams cad chos can/ ye nas sangs rgyas pa yin tel mnyam pa bzhis mnyam par gnas pa'i phyir/* (95.6). Lochen Dharmashrī give the following syllogism in his *Ornament to the Intention* (electronic edition):

All phenomena are primordially enlightened, because through the four equalities one realizes the non-duality of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa (*chos thams cad ye nas sangs rgyas pa yin tel mnyam pa bzhis 'khor 'das gnyis med du rtogs pa'i phyir/*)

³⁴⁵ *rlom pa* (96.1).

³⁴⁶ *rnam grangs yin min gyi don dam gnyis* (96.1-96.2). Khenpo Namdröl explained the enumerated ultimate as the “empty apprehender of non-true existence” (*bden par med pa'i 'dzin stong*) and that it was called such because it was only ‘counted’ as an ultimate truth but was not an actual one. The “non-enumerate” ultimate is the actual final ultimate that is the negation of the four extremes of existence, non-existence, both, and neither. In more colloquial translation, these might be called the pseudo-ultimate and the non-pseudo-ultimate.

also through these modes, because these two are known by the epitaph, “the common equalities.”

However much one stresses a presentation of emptiness either as an affirming or non-affirming negative, it is only done in dependence on how one establishes the negation of that which is superimposed by the adventitious mind. From the perspective of the superior ultimate which has transcended the [ordinary] mind, it is devoid of the conventions of both negations. Similarly, when one meditates within having negated the impure misconceived appearances through the present coarse mind, [everything] dawns as pure. However, such purities and impurities [97] are not distinguished in terms of being or not being appearances to an adventitious mind,³⁴⁷ and one cannot establish the appearance of purity as the mode of abiding of impure things. Therefore, this is nothing but a trifling [realization]. Yet, when one comprehends it in relation to the actual superior conventional truth, all such karmic appearances and all appearances fabricated by meditative stabilization without abandoning or adopting any of them are equal in being solely the self-appearing circle of primordial wisdom, just like one does not find an ordinary stone on a golden island. These two [equalities] are the superior equalities.

When explaining that the self-arisen primordial wisdom is taught in the last wheel [of the doctrine], there is a great need to determine whether or not one should assert [the equalities taught therein to be] “superior equalities”, or “uncommon equalities”. Nevertheless, taking the sūtras that teach such to be exceptions, these [equalities] are posited as uncommon in relation to the sūtra system in general. Or in another way, [when one is explaining how the self-arisen primordial wisdom is contained in the last wheel] the essence of a Tathāgata is shown through the conceptual isolate of the seven riches of the ultimate, but the viewing of

³⁴⁷ Because they both are appearances of an adventitious mind. That is, this is a realization of the ordinary mind (*sems*), which is why in this meditation one cannot see the pure mode of abiding of all phenomena. Such can only be seen by the self-knowing primordial wisdom, the basis of all, the only truly non-adventitious mind.

appearances and occurrences as pure and equal in dependence upon that [essence of a Tathāgata by itself] does not exist in the system of the sūtras. Therefore, one should say, “From that perspective, these are posited as uncommon.” I think the latter [statement] is better. In the *Ornament of the Intention* on the eleventh chapter, [the uncommon equalities] are explained according to the former [way]. But, it is easier to understand the way it occurs when the two equalities—that all phenomena are ultimately not produced and [98] conventionally like illusions—are posited as the common ones, and the two equalities—that all phenomena are ultimately the seven riches of the ultimate and conventionally the enlightened bodies and primordial wisdom—as the uncommon ones.

THE REASONING OF THE GREAT IDENTITY [98.1]

Although in accordance with [Buddhaguhya’s] *Layout of the Path*³⁴⁸ it seems suitable to cite the passage from the ninth chapter [of the tantra], “Self-arisen primordial wisdom appears without abiding,”³⁴⁹ this must be analyzed. As for the meaning [of this reasoning], it should be expressed as follows:

As for the phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa, in their mode of appearance they appear as many things, but in their mode of being they are not established as such, because they primordially abide as the identity of the sole self-arisen primordial wisdom, the unproduced mind-itself.³⁵⁰

It is said that this is illustrated by the example of knowing what [someone’s] family lineage is through the story of their ancestral history. In brief, all phenomena are taught as the direct

³⁴⁸ *lam rnam bkod* (98.2). This is the alternative name for Buddhaguhya’s *Greater Stages of the Path* (*lam rim chen mo*).

³⁴⁹ *rang byung ye shes gnas med snang* (98.2). Cf., *Secret Essence*, Tb.417, 184.4.

³⁵⁰ *'khor 'das kyi chos rnam chos can/ snang lugs [la] du mar snang yang yin lugs la de ltar ma grub stel sems nyid skye med rang byung gi ye shes gcig gi bdag nyid du ye nas gnas pa'i phyir/* (98.2-98.3).

descendants³⁵¹ of the clear light or mind-itself.

Moreover, the four realizations delineate in general the essential points for viewing all [things] as pure and equal. The three purities demonstrate the way they are pure through differentiating the particulars. The four equalities differentiate the particulars of how they are equal, and the great identity determines that the end point of all the essential points of purity and equality is the self-arisen primordial wisdom. When these are explained like that, it fits with the commentator from Nyang³⁵² and with the thought of Mindröling's Lochen Dharmashrī.

REASONINGS WHERE THE WORDS ACCORD [WITH THE LOWER VEHICLES] BUT THE MEANINGS ARE SUPERIOR [98.6]

There [99] are four of these: (1) the reasoning of the specific and general characteristics of the afflictive emotions, (2) the reasoning of being free from extremes, (3) the reasoning of division, and (4) the reasoning of illustrative examples. The first is as follows:

The five poisons or afflictive emotions are not truly established as objects to be abandoned, because in both their specific and general characteristics they are empty by way of entity.³⁵³

Although the positing of both general and specific characteristics for the five poisons is in accordance with the lower [systems], the method of positing these two [here] is not in

³⁵¹ *gdung rigs* (98.4). Literally, “bone family”, but in Tibetan this has the equivalent meaning to the English, “blood relative” or “direct descendant”.

³⁵² *nyang ṭi ka pa* (98.6). The exact reference here is unclear. Khenpo Namdröl thought it perhaps referred to the treasure-revealer Nyang-rel Nyi-me-ö-zer. However, Nyang is the name for a long river and its valley in west central Tibet. Several figures associated with the Zur tradition bore the toponymic name Nyang including Zur-bo-che's teacher, Nyang Ye-she-jung-ne, and one of Dropuk-ba's disciples, Nyang-nak-do-wo. One of Samdrup Dorjé's teachers was also called “the teacher from Nyang”, Nyang-dön Dor-je Seng-ge, and during the Dynastic Period the figure Nyang Ting-nge-dzin-zang-bo was an associate of Trisong Detsen and Vimalamitra. The title *ṭi ka pa*, or in its correct form *ṭī ka pa*, generally refers to one skilled in Indian commentarial traditions. Hence, the use of the Sanskrit word for commentary, *ṭīka*, in the designation.

³⁵³ *nyon mongs dug lnga chos can/ spang byar yang dag par ma grub stel rang spyi'i mtshan nyid gnyis char du ngo bo nyid kyis stong pa'i phyir/* (99.1-99.2).

agreement. In the lower systems their general characteristic is the aspect of a thoroughly non-pacified mind. As for their individual characteristics, ignorance is the aspect of thorough obscuration; anger is the aspect of a thoroughly belligerent mind; pride is the aspect of haughtiness;³⁵⁴ desire is the aspect of craving an object, and jealousy is the aspect of being unable to bear another's good fortune.³⁵⁵ But, here the general characteristic of the afflictive emotions is asserted to be that they are the basic mind free from elaborations, and their individual characteristic is asserted to be that the basic mind appears as different capacities of illusion. Hence, these [meanings] are called "superior". This latter characteristic does not refer to an isolated meaning [for each afflictive emotion] but refers to their nature or reality, and one should remember the explanation, given above in the section on the ground-continuum, of how the reality of the afflictive emotions are basic mind, primordial wisdom. [100] It is not that the former mode of explaining them [according to the sūtra interpretation] is not asserted here [in this system], but when the afflictive emotions are taken as the path, the main meaning is the latter, and that is a superior doctrine, which is not in accord with the lower systems.

The second, the reasoning of being free from extremes, is stated as follows:

As for the abiding reality of all phenomena, elaborations of extremes are in no way established in it, because it is devoid of being truly one or many.³⁵⁶

Although the words agree with [the way it is] commonly [explained that] emptiness lacks any extreme whatsoever—existence, non-existence, permanence, or annihilation, here [the reasoning] is superior because, having differentiated mind and primordial wisdom, it demonstrates that no conception of extremes functions within the sphere of primordial

³⁵⁴ *khengs pa* (99.4). Means "full, puffed up."

³⁵⁵ *phun tshogs* (99.4).

³⁵⁶ *chos thams cad kyi gnas lugs chos can/ khyod la mtha'i spros pa ci yang ma grub stel yang dag par gcig dang du ma dang bral ba'i phyir/* (100.1-100.2).

wisdom.

The third, the reasoning of division, is stated as follows:

The subject, a pot, has no inherent existence, because it is void when analyzed through having many features, such as shape, color, and so forth.³⁵⁷

In accordance with the common [presentation], those things that appear as coarse elements [mistakenly seem] to be truly established as they appear, but when that true establishment is divided into parts, it is not found [to exist], and such an awareness negates it. Although this is concordant in terminology, here this reasoning causes those phenomena, whose reality is [the syllable] མུམ་ (*mūṃ*),³⁵⁸ to dissolve into the sphere of the clear light. Therefore, it is superior.

The fourth, the reasoning by illustrative example, is stated as follows:

As for the subject, mind-itself, its entity is not in any way established, because it is not graspable, like space.³⁵⁹

Although stating it like this is terminologically concordant with the general way the scriptures apply the example's meaning, [101] it is said that here the reasoning is superior because apart from merely illustrating reality with the metaphor³⁶⁰ of space it is not for the sake of establishing the three modes of reasoning.³⁶¹ However, it appears that this needs some analysis.

³⁵⁷ *bum pa chos can/ rang bzhin med del dbyibs dang kha dog sogs chos du ma dang ldan pas brtags na dben pa'i phyir/* (100.4).

³⁵⁸ The syllable, *mūṃ*, is the seed-syllable for the Māmakī, the consort of Akṣobhya. In the *Secret Essence* tradition, she is the pure form of the earth-element. Thus, the true reality of something made from earth, such as a pot, is *mūṃ*.

³⁵⁹ *chos thams cad kyi gnas lugs chos can/ khyod la mtha'i spros pa ci yang ma grub stel yang dag par gcig dang du ma dang bral ba'i phyir/* (100.1-100.2).

³⁶⁰ *brda thabs* (101.1).

³⁶¹ *rtags kyi tshul gsum* (101.1). These are 1) the presence of the reason in the subject, i.e., that the mind-itself is not graspable; 2) the pervasion, i.e., that whatever is not graspable is not in any way established, and 3) the counter-pervasions, that whatever is established in any way would be graspable. On the three modes of reasoning, see Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*, 449-451, 730-733.

REASONINGS IN WHICH THE MEANING OF THE WORDS IS DISCORDANT [101.2]

These things that appear as things to ordinary sentient beings are primordially purified and extended as the indifferentiability of the superior two truths. However, they are not understood as such. The reason for this is as follows. When the secret essential of the superior two truths is brought to conclusion, one arrives at a point where the sphere of mind-itself is without any predication or is not established as anything, but the things which appear, dawning as any of a variety of things, exist like an illusory city. Hence, confused by this [illusory dawning], [ordinary beings] mistakenly wander away from the sphere's mode of existence. On the other hand, when one identifies the view [of this system], [the ability of the ground to] dawn as any type of appearance is established as the reason for the sphere being without predication. With this marvelous skill-in-means one unravels the knot of conceiving "many" and "one taste" as separate positions. This is called "destroying the conceptions that hold to the position of 'is' and 'is-not'" in [Buddhaguhya's] *Layout of the Path*.³⁶² Such a reasoning is explained as follows:

The subject, mind-itself, is genuinely not anything, [102] because it is anything since in its mode of appearance it unceasingly appears on its own [accord]. The reason is established, because it becomes whatever one analyzes and thinks it to be, and hence reality appears on its own as the entity of all phenomena.³⁶³

The basis for determining concordance and discordance in the reasonings where the words are concordant but the meaning superior and in the reasonings where the meanings of the words are discordant is not the same, because the former is posited as agreeing in terminology with the mode of explanation in the lower vehicles, and the latter is posited as

³⁶² *yin min gyi phyogs 'dzin gzhiig pa zhes lam rnam bkod las gsungs tel* (101.6).

³⁶³ *sems nyid chos can/ yang dag par ci yang ma yin tel snang tshul du ma 'gags par rang snang bas ci yang yin pa'i phyir/ rtags grub stel ji ltar brtags shing bsam par ltar 'gyur pas na chos kun gyi ngo bor chos nyid rang snang ba'i phyir* (101.6-102.2).

the discordance, in language and meaning, between the predicate and the reason [of the syllogism]. The point of discordance in this latter [example] is merely the two phrases “is not anything” and “is anything”.

Furthermore, that delineation of how to identify the view, [using] as a source the four actual teachings of the tantric scripture, the four realizations and so forth, clearly unravels the final basis of the thought, which was hidden or not revealed, behind those conventions described in the scriptures of the lower [vehicles]—such as “specific and general [characteristics]”, “free from extremes”, and so forth. Having done so, it demonstrates that the other scriptural collections flow into this one. We call this the occurrence of a reasoning where the words are concordant but the meaning is superior. Also, within those four there appear to the unskilled what seem to be great contradictions. Having taken even these apparent contradictions as mutually beneficial aids, there incidentally issues forth, or one incidentally identifies, a marvelously fine quintessential point for not wandering into the abyss of deviant obscurations. [103] We call this the occurrence of discordant reasonings.

THE MEANING TO BE ESTABLISHED [103]

What happens when one delineates such? One will find the actual view, the characteristic of knowledge. As for the entity of that, *The Stages of the Path* says:

Just like a reflection in a clear ocean,

Without applying the mind to the [objectival] basis of language,

There is the self-knowing direct perception free from observed objects.

Without disturbing the self-clarity free from the three [times],

One brings to completion the view that relies on hearing and thinking

And that acts as a definite platform [on the way to Buddhahood].³⁶⁴

Accordingly, with a self-knowing direct perception one nakedly realizes the abiding reality, or indifferentiability of the two superior truths, as a self-luminosity devoid of objects. This direct perception and the direct perception on the occasion of the four realizations have the same meaning. To explain it clearly, having actually found the realization of the clear light, one produces a wisdom, which is a factor of that [clear light]. In *[Lamp Illuminating] the Inner Text* it says:

The lamp of spontaneous primordial wisdom itself

Is the supreme, naturally luminous eye.³⁶⁵

In this context, regarding the explanation of the phrase “self-knowing direct perception”, [it is used] because one realizes in direct perception that the primordial wisdom abiding in oneself is the whole object of understanding.³⁶⁶ [104] However, when the clear light of the path dawns to direct perception, one does not necessarily directly see the sphere of reality. Therefore, this is not in contradiction with the assertion by both the foremost Dröl and Yung³⁶⁷ that at this [time] one sees reality by way of a meaning generality. To the extent that one is unable to engage the sphere of the clear light because of the way that even the slightest appearance of duality interrupts it, to that degree one does not nakedly see reality. That mere amount of perception is not a thoroughly complete and fully qualified sphere of non-conceptuality.

³⁶⁴ *lam rim las/ rgya mtsho dwangs pa'i gzugs brnyan ltar/ lsgra rten yid la byed min par/ l'rang rig mngon sum dmigs bral bal/ l'rang gsal gsum bral mi bgul bar/ lnges par gdeng su gang byas pal/ l'thos bsam brten pa'i ltar mthar phyin/* (103.2-103.3).

³⁶⁵ *khog gzhung las lhun grub ye shes sgron ma nyid/ l'rang bzhin gsal ba spyen gyi mchog* (103.5).

³⁶⁶ *rang gnas kyi ye shes go yul du ma lus par mngon sum du rtogs pa'i rgyu mtshan yin* (103.6f).

³⁶⁷ *rje sgrol g.yung rnam gnyis* (104.6). Samdrup Dorjé and Yungtönpa . See *supra*.

Question: If there is one on the gradual path of release who nakedly realizes the clear light, is not it contradictory that he or she must again enter into the yoga of the great empty through the series of five experiences?³⁶⁸

Response: It is not contradictory, because although one momentarily realizes the clear light like the sun peeking out from behind the clouds, it is still under the control of conceptuality, and therefore one needs to gradually attain stability, just as the Great Omniscient One said, “If it is identified but not made familiar, you will be taken by the enemy of conceptuality like a small child in battle.”³⁶⁹ If one does not contact the actual intention of the clear light but finds a certainty arisen from thinking about the two superior truths, [105] this must be asserted as just the ordinary characteristic of knowing. This completes the explanation of the characteristic of knowing.

In the context of dividing the Mahāyoga Tantras into three groups, it is said:

In the father tantras such as the *Secret Assembly Tantra* and so forth, the completion stage of radiant, empty winds is mainly taught. In the mother tantras such as the *Supreme Bliss* and so forth, the completion stage of blissful, empty drops is taught, and in the non-dual tantras such as the *Secret Essence* and so forth the completion stage of the great clear light primordial wisdom is taught.³⁷⁰

It is evident that the latter stage of completion refers to the path of release. As explained previously, in the path of method the generating, abiding, and increasing of the completion

³⁶⁸ *nyams lnga mthar chags kyi sgo nas* (104.4). The five experiences are explained below (108.6-110.1). They are the experience of movement (*g.yo ba'i nyams*), the experience of attainment (*thob pa'i nyams*), the experience of familiarization (*goms pa'i nyams*), the experience of stability (*brtan pa'i nyams*), and the experience of completion (*mthar phyin pa'i nyams*).

³⁶⁹ *kun mkhyen chen pos/ rang ngo 'phrod kyang goms 'dris ma byas nal / rnam rtog dgras 'khyer g.yul ngo'i bu chung 'dral* (104.5-104.6). The “Great Omniscient One” (*kun mkhyen chen po*) refers to Longchenpa.

³⁷⁰ *ma hā yo ga'i rgyud la gsum du 'byed skabs/ gsang 'dus sogs pha rgyud rnam so gsal stong rlung gi rdzogs rim dang / bde mchog sogs ma rgyud du bde stong tig le'i rdzogs rim dang / gsang snying sogs gnyis med rgyud las 'od gsal ye shes chen po'i rdzogs rim gtso bor ston zhes 'byung ba* (105.1-105.3).

stage primordial wisdom—each and every step—is done by the yoga of channels, winds, and drops. In this path [of release] it appears that one progresses in terms of taking the view as the path in lieu of [these yogas on the path of method], and it is not suitable [to say that] the path of method does not have that [method of taking the view as the path]. Therefore, it has been explained [here] extensively.

THE CONDITION—THE CHARACTERISTIC OF ENGAGING [105.5]

The *Stages of the Path* says:

In the way that worldly existences gradually ripen,

The stages of engagement are posited as five,

Because these are the self-awareness of all things.

Death is ultimate truth.

The intermediate birth is conventional [truth].

The three stages of a creature are the actual non-duality [of the two truths].³⁷¹

Accordingly, [106] having purified the misconceived appearances of ordinary birth, death, and intermediate state, taking the clear light of death as the path as the Reality Body is the ultimate yoga of the great empty. Taking the winds and minds of the intermediate state as the Complete Enjoyment Body is the conventional yoga of compassionate illusion. Then, there are the three stages of the yoga for purifying the coarse birth-states along with their surroundings into the Emanation Body. These are the five meditative stabilizations (*ting nge 'dzin lnga*).³⁷²

³⁷¹ *lam rim las/ srid pa rim par smin tshul gyis/ l'jug pa'i yan lag lnga ru bzhag /gang dag dngos kun rang rig phyir/ /shi ba don dam bden pa stel /skeye ba bar ma kun rdzob yin/ /skeyes pa'i rim gsung gnyis med don/ (105.5-105.6).*

³⁷² As the meditation purifying the birth-state into the Emanation Body is broken down into three parts, there are five meditative stabilizations all together. These five are in order:

1. the yoga of the great empty (*stong pa chen po'i rnal 'byor*),
2. the yoga of compassionate illusion (*snying rje sgyu ma'i rnal 'byor*),
3. the single seal (*phyag rgya gcig pa*),
4. the seal with elaboration (*phyag rgya spros bcas*),

As for those last three stages, the sole seal is what accords with the period from when the scent-eater³⁷³ enters the womb to when [the child] comes out, and (4) the seal with elaboration is what accords with the period from birth to when the child has an extended circle of friends. (5) The collective, group practice is what accords with the mature person achieving a definite form and a profitable [occupation]. It is explained like this in the *Six Stages*.³⁷⁴ As for the sole seal, when it is joined with the generation of the three vajra-rites, Lochen Dharmashrī describes it as follows, citing the *Importance of Heruka*³⁷⁵ as his source.³⁷⁶ The seed-syllable of enlightened speech is like the winds and minds of the intermediate state initially entering into the father's sperm and the mother's egg. The hand-symbol of enlightened-mind is like the condition of hardening such as the first two weeks of embryonic development.³⁷⁷ The completion of the enlightened body is like giving birth to a completed body from a tortoise or fish egg.

5. the collective achievement in groups (*tshom bu tshogs sgrub*).

³⁷³ *dri za* (106.2). I.e., consciousness in the intermediate state between rebirths.

³⁷⁴ *rim drug* (106.4). The *Six Stages* (*rim pa drug pa*) is a commentary on the *Secret Essence* path written by Vilāsavajra (P4741, vol. 83, 139.3.6-144.2.8). The six stages elaborated in that text consist of view plus the five meditative stabilizations, listed with slightly different names:

1. the characteristic of knowing about the meaning that naturally abides (*rang bzhin gyis gnas pa'i don rjes su shes pa'i mtshan nyid*)
2. the stage of meditative stabilization on suchness (*de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin gyi rim pa*),
3. the stage of meditative stabilization that is like an illusion (*sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin gyi rim pa*),
4. the stage of subtle meditative stabilization (*phra mo'i ting nge 'dzin gyi rim pa*),
5. the stage of meditative stabilization that differentiates appearances (*snang ba rnam par 'byed pa'i ting nge 'dzin gyi rim pa*),
6. the stage of inconceivable, spontaneously present meditative stabilization (*bsam yas lhun gyi grub pa'i ting nge 'dzin gyi rim pa*).

³⁷⁵ *he ru ka galpo* (106.6).

³⁷⁶ The three vajra rites (*rdo rje'i cho ga gsum*) are a method of generating oneself as the deity, described in terms of enlightened body (*sku*), speech (*gsung*), and mind (*thugs*). The first rite is to meditate on the seed-syllable of the deity, or enlightened speech. In the second rite this transforms into the hand-symbol of the deity, which is enlightened mind, and in the third rite, the hand-syllable transforms into the complete enlightened body of the deity. *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism* (vol. 1, 279 & vol. 2, 116) describes the three rites in the context of Mahāyoga.

³⁷⁷ *mer nur* (106.5). In Gampopa's *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, the first week of development is called *mer mer po* or 'of oval shape' and "looks like rice water or sweetened curd." The second week it is called *nur nur po* or 'of oblong shape' and "thick cream or coagulated fat" (Guenther, p.64). The passage above is referring to both weeks by conflating their names into a single term.

As for other ways of dividing the meditative stabilizations, there are the two stages of generation and completion. [107] It is said in the supplement to this very tantra:

The stages of a moon, vajra, and so forth
 That join one to the aspect of the deity
 Are explained to be “the stage of generation”.
 The yoga that is achieved naturally
 Is called “the stage of completion”.³⁷⁸

Thus, the stage of generation is:

The fabricated yoga which, having taken the two factors of (1) the birth, death, and the intermediate state of cyclic existence and (2) the three uncommon, enlightened bodies as concordant in aspect, fulfills the essential points of purity, completion, and ripening when it is meditated on as the ripener of the stage of completion.³⁷⁹

And, the stage of completion is:

The unfabricated yoga that is the type of path that actually transforms birth, death, and the intermediate state into the three enlightened bodies.³⁸⁰

Therefore, some earlier [sages] have said, “The stage of generation is an imputational nature; the stage of completion, a thoroughly established one.” This is, indeed, a profound thought.

³⁷⁸ *'di nyid kyi rgyud phyi ma las/ lha yi rnam pa'i sbyor ba yil/ zal ba rdo rje la sogs rim/ lbskyed pa'i rim pa zhes su bshad/ lrang bzhin grub pa'i rnal 'byor nil/ rdzogs pa'i rim pa zhes byar brjod/ (107.1-107.2).*

³⁷⁹ *'khor ba'i skye 'chi bar do gsum dang/ thun mong ma yin pa'i sku gsum ste gzhi 'bras de gnyis char dang rnam par mthun par byas nas rdzogs rim gyi smin byed du sgom pa'i dag rdzogs smin gsum gyi gnad tshang ba'i bcos ma'i rnal 'byor ni bskyed rim (107.2-107.3).* As for the three essential points (*gnad*), Khenpo Namdröl said the following. Purity refers to completely removing objects of abandonment. Completion refers to bring to completion in oneself the full measure of all the good qualities of the result state, and ripening refers to how the stage of generation acts as the ripener of the stage of completion.

³⁸⁰ *skye 'chi bar do sku gsum du dngos su sgyur ba'i lam gyi rigs su gnas pa'i ma bcos pa'i rnal 'byor ni rdzogs rim yin (107.3-107.4).*

Or else, [when the stages of meditative stabilization are divided] there are two: meditation by belief (*mos sgom*) and definite completion (*nges rdzogs*). Meditation by belief is:

To practice, through just thought and belief, a full means of achievement—from the circle of protection to the bodily protection of donning armor—in each session of meditation, despite not having attained stability in the meditative stabilizations.³⁸¹

And definite completion is:

Training in the final formation in a way that, when one has completed the five experiences—motivation, attainment, familiarity, stability, and finality—in any one of the former five [meditative stabilization], such as the great empty and so forth, one brings the initial [experiences] into later and later [meditative stabilizations].³⁸² [108]

It is explained that way in the [Buddhaguhya's] *Stages of the Path*. Although one can bring the stage of generation to final completion through applying the meditation of this method described as “meditation by belief” in four sessions, nevertheless that [kind of explanation] does not occur much in this oral tradition. It is also not held here [in this system] that meditating on all the steps of the means of achievement in each session is necessarily meditation by belief from the division into meditation by belief and definite completion, because it is said that one meditates in such a way even in the context of the group practice, which is [within] definite completion. This meditation by belief is necessarily a stage of generation, and the meditative stabilizations that are to be fully cultivated within each of its

³⁸¹ *ting nge 'dzin la brtan pa ma thob kyang mos mno tsam gyis thun re'i nang du srung 'khor nas go ba go lus srung bar gyis sgrub thabs tshang ba re nyams su len pa mos sgom* (107.5-107.6)

³⁸² *stong chen sogs lnga po snga ma snga ma la g.yo thob goms brtan mthar phyin gyi nyams lnga rdzogs pa na gdod phyi ma phyi ma la 'jug pa'i tshul gyis mthar chags su slob pa nges rdzogs* (107.6-108.1).

session are just those four ranging from the seal with elaboration on down.³⁸³ However, many who have accomplished non-seeing, which is a sign of mental stability, have found it necessary to posit [some] performances of group practice also as meditation by belief. Therefore, in general there are all five [meditative stabilizations] within meditation by belief.

It is said that definite completion has two parts, [the stages of] generation and completion, and that even in terms of how one trains in it there are two different [ways] due to the particular features of the person [practicing]. These are (1) the method of training in the union of generation and completion from the very beginning and (2) entering into the stage of completion [only] after having finally completed the stage of generation.

As for the first, initially through the conceptual yoga of the great empty, [109] one completely cultivates each of the five experiences. The experience of movement (*g.yo ba'i nyams*) is like water falling down a steep hill. The experience of attainment (*thob pa'i nyams*) is like water falling into a deep chasm. The experience of cultivation (*goms pa'i nyams*) is like water flowing slowing on the northern plains. The experience of stability (*brten pa'i nyams*) is like the surface of a lake rippled by the wind, and the experience of completion (*mthar phyin gyi nyams*) is like an ocean without waves.

From within having cultivated each of these five experiences with the conceptual yoga of the great empty, there issues forth a familiarity with the taste of the clear light experience in the completion stage. When that happens, one begins to meditate on the yoga of compassionate illusion with [mental] fabrications. That turns into the unfabricated compassionate illusion of the stage of completion. When the five experiences are completed, one trains in the stages of generation on observing the coarse and subtle sole seal. With that

³⁸³ Khen-po explained that on the stage of generation one meditates on the first four meditative stabilizations, or yogas—the great empty, illusory compassion, the single seal and the seal with elaboration—completely in each session. In the stage of completion, however, one cultivates each of the yogas, or meditative stabilizations, until it has been brought to completion. That is, one does not move on to the next higher yoga until one has all of the five experiences with the present stage.

as a cooperating condition, one sees the single seal, the enlightened body of the deity. One acquires the capacity of stable clarity with regard to that, and then one initially [does] the stage of generation also for the yoga of the seal of elaboration, gradually moving to the stage of completion. Having brought the seal of elaboration to completion, one connects [to the clear light] through the secondary cause of practicing collective achievement, whereby one attains the path of a superior. Since, for instance, this stage of generation of the sole seal is a fabricated yoga in the continuum of one who has not experienced the attainment of the stage of completion, it is called such things as “the completion [stage] of generation” and “the generation [stage] of completion”. [110]

As for the second [the serial practice of the stages of generation and completion], initially one meditates until the attainment of stability in the great empty of the generation stage. Then, one does that with compassionate illusion. When, through such stages, one arrives at the end of seal with elaboration’s generation stage, one accomplishes [the state of] an awareness-holder in either the desire or form [realms] through collective achievement. Then, one wanders in the lands of sky-dwellers,³⁸⁴ etc., and together with a group of *ḍākas* and *ḍākinīs* one will bring the five paths to completion in dependence on the stage of completion. It is said that although there are two such [ways], the actual way of meditating, mainly [used by] gradualists on the path of release, is the former.

[THE STAGE OF GENERATION]

Having stated merely the seeds for [a more detailed] analysis of such a general presentation, I will describe in part the individual identification of each of the five meditative stabilizations. The yoga of the great empty is placing oneself in equipoise on the sphere of emptiness—that is, the abiding reality of all things, the non-apprehension of anything, the clear light—and viewing this as the entity of the Reality Body. The yoga of compassionate illusion is to

³⁸⁴ *mkha’ spyod kyi zhing* (110.2).

meditate knowing that the compassion [observing] what is not apprehensible³⁸⁵ toward illusory sentient beings, who do not realize such, is the nature of the Complete Enjoyment Body. The yoga of the sole seal has a subtle and coarse aspect. The subtle seed-syllable is meditating on one's own mind—indifferentiable emptiness and compassion—as a white letter, A, and then observing letters issue forth from and condense back into that. And then out of that, with either an elaborate or condensed rite of generation, one meditates on the single pair of the male and female root deities along with the nine secondary deities, these being the wisdom-being at the heart [111], the three deities of blessing,³⁸⁶ and the five deities of the crown.³⁸⁷ This is the coarse sole seal.

According to the opinion of Nyel Sanggyé Drak,³⁸⁸ it is explained that the maṇḍala is distinguished by the main deities of the different families being together, while the group is distinguished by being composed of individual main deities within the same family. Thus, there are four divisions of the seal with elaboration: the two elaborations, that of the maṇḍala and that of the groups, [along with] the elaboration of the number [of deities] and the elaboration of the [number of their] faces and hands.

With regard to that, the elaboration of the maṇḍala is as follows. The middling maṇḍala of the peaceful deities has forty-two deities. The extensive version has eighty-two through adding the forty male and female Bodhisattva of the immediate families to that.³⁸⁹ The condensed version is the eighteen, [consisting of] the male and female deities of the five

³⁸⁵ *dmigs med pa'i snying rje* (110.5). On this term, see Hopkins, *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism*, p.120.

³⁸⁶ *byin rlabs kyi lha gsum* (111.1). These are Vairocana at the crown of the head, Amitābha at one's throat, and Akṣobhya at one's heart.

³⁸⁷ The five deities of the crown (*dbu rgyan gyi lha lnga*) are the five primary Buddhas arranged on the five points of the crown, i.e., the regal headdress that one is wearing when visualizing oneself as a deity.

³⁸⁸ *gnyal sangs rgyas grags* (111.2). It is unclear who this figure is. Khetsun Sangpo's *Biographical Dictionary* (vol. 4, 280) lists a *sangs rgyas grags* who studied with Abhayākara Gupta (11th century) and was skilled in the Kālacakra.

³⁸⁹ In the extensive version of the maṇḍala, each of the five Buddhas has an additional set of four Bodhisattva couples surrounding them, which comprise the additional forty deities. These figures are not explicitly mentioned in the short version of the tantra.

families and the male and females [deities] who are the four sets of guardians. The middling wrathful maṇḍala has seventy-eight by adding the male and female wrathful deities to the well-known fifty-eight. The extensive version has one hundred and eighteen by adding the immediate families to that. The condensed version consists of the fifty-eight wrathful deities.

As for the groups, there is [the single group of] eighteen consisting of the male and female Akṣobhya, [112] the four pairs of their immediate vajra-family, and the [four pairs of] male and female guardians. There are also the forty-six, [arrived at] through adding the eight pairs of wrathful deities—the ten minus the ones in the zenith and nadir—to the main deities of the three lineages—enlightened body, speech, and mind—along with their immediate families, and there are the seventy, consisting of the male and female deities of the five lineages, their immediate families, and the ten wrathful deities. These are respectively the single group, the three groups, and the five groups.

In the case of the wrathful deities, the deities of the place, those of the country, the door protectors, and the ladies are the same [in each version].³⁹⁰ To those are added the ten deities of the Vajra family, the main couple with their retinue, and the ten pairs of male and female wrathful deities, making seventy-eight. There are ninety-eight by adding also the main couples and their retinues of the Buddha and Padma [families], and there are one hundred and eighteen by adding also the remaining two families to that. These are as above [the single group, the three groups, and the five groups].

As for the number of deities, according to the eighth chapter [of this tantra] there are three elaborations: the elaboration into 1,000 Buddhas, the elaboration into 24,000

³⁹⁰ *gnas yul sgo skyong dbang mo rnams yod mnyam* (112.3). According to Khenpo Namdröl, these refer to the eight Mamo goddesses of the place (*gnas kyi ma mo brgyad*), the eight lions of the country (*yul gyi seng ge brgyad*), the four gate keepers (*sgo skyong bzhi*), and the twenty-eight ladies (*dbang phyug ma nyi shu rtsa brgyad*), making a total of forty-eight wrathful deities that are the base for the brief, middling and extensive versions of the maṇḍala.

Buddhas, and the spontaneous elaboration into an inconceivable number of Buddhas.³⁹¹ When these types are applied also to the wrathful deities, there are the three elaborations: the elaboration into 1,450 deities, the elaboration into 76,850 deities, and the spontaneous elaboration into an inconceivable number of deities. It is said that, “The spontaneous elaboration into an inconceivable number must be on a Superior’s path.” However, though one cannot actually do such elaboration until that point, it is not that one cannot meditate on it. [113]

As for [the number of] faces and arms, the extensive version of the peaceful deities is when except for the six sages and the consorts everyone has three faces and six arms. The middling version is when only the conquerors of the six families have three faces and six arms. The condensed version is when everyone has one face and two arms. As for the wrathful deities, it is explained in the tantra that the main deities have either countless heads and arms or nine heads and eighteen arms and that even the Mamo goddesses of the retinue have three heads and six arms.³⁹² However, for the lineaged practice in the extensive version the five families have three heads and six arms; in the middling version just the main deities have three heads and six arms, and in the condensed version they all have one face and two arms.

The [last of the five meditative stabilizations] collective practice in groups is when, having meditated on those [other four meditative stabilizations] again within each session, one induces their enhancement or makes them become special. This has three parts: (1) grasping the basics through the five marvels, (2) paving the way³⁹³ with the four branches of

³⁹¹ The tantra itself (*Secret Essence*, Tb.417, 178.3-178.4) says little more than “The forty-two will spread out in three [ways]” (*bzhi bcu rtsa gnyis gsum ’phror ’gyur*). The numbers presented here are from the commentarial tradition.

³⁹² This refers to the passage in the fifteenth chapter where the wrathful deities are alternately described as having infinite heads and arms, nine heads and eighteen arms, and three heads and six arms (*Secret Essence*, Tb.417, 198.6-200.4).

³⁹³ *gzhung bsrang ba* (113.5). Literally, “straightening the main road”.

service and achievement, and (3) teaching when one attains the result of [becoming] an awareness-holder.

GRASPING THE BASICS OF GROUP PRACTICE THROUGH THE FIVE MARVELS

[113.5]

[In the collective practice in groups] there are the five marvels of place, time, accessories, achievers, and means of achievement. In a pleasant place where there are no interruptions to self-initiation [the group] builds a three-storied house in which the first floor is for making the provisions, the second for paving the way to achievement, and the third for engaging in the secret practices.³⁹⁴ [114] This is the marvel of place. Calculating the date through doing the practice of astrology is the marvel of a good time. Collecting together all the necessary accessories—nourishing food, medicine for reversing [negative] conditions, substances for the practice, and substances for offering—is the marvel of accessories. The master should have eight natures, as it is said:

[In] the teacher there occur eight [qualities]:

He has the treasury [of view, meditation, and conduct] and has completed
the stream [of initiation].

He takes care [of his disciples] and is skilled in tantra and activities.

He possesses the quintessential and elaborate [experiences].³⁹⁵

And according to the following passage, the retinue should have six qualities:

To persevere in making offerings to the teacher, to have clear realizations,

³⁹⁴ *gsang spyod la 'jug pa* (113.6f). Khenpo Namdröl explained this as a reference to ritual sexual union (*sbyor ba*) and liberative killing (*sgrol ba*).

³⁹⁵ Only the first line is given in the text (114.2), Khenpo Namdröl provided the rest of the stanza. He did not identify the source:

*ston pa mdzod ldan chu bo rdzogs/
gnyer ldan rgyud dang las la mkhas/
man ngag spros dang bryad byung ngo/*

To keep the commitments, [recite] the mantras,
 And to know the seals without defect.
 One who possesses these requisites will become accomplished.
 One who lacks them will be unsuccessful and lost.³⁹⁶

These two—teacher and retinue—are combined into one as “the marvel of the achievers”. To gather together such an assembly of whatever size—small, medium, or large—and to engage in the traditions of the four types of service and achievement is the marvel of the means of achievement.

PAVING THE WAY WITH THE FOUR BRANCHES OF SERVICE AND ACHIEVEMENT [114.4]

At the time of achievement, there are four [branches] of service and achievement. The first of these is service. It has two parts: the preliminary service and the service of actions to be done. The first is just to have previously trained in bringing to completion the four meditative stabilizations from the seal with elaboration on down. As for the second, these are the preliminary rites done for the land, the preparations, the confessions [of downfalls] and fulfillments [of vows], demarking the boundary, drawing the maṇḍala, and donning the costumes. Having done those, [the disciples] should be lined up by seniority.³⁹⁷ [115] Then, dividing the recitation into cultivating the three meditative stabilizations, the meditative stabilization on the maṇḍala [in one, three, and five groups], and the five meditative

³⁹⁶ This second verse (114.3) is from Chapter 5 of the root tantra (*Secret Essence*, Tb.417, 167.5-167.6). The whole stanza is:

*ston pa mchod brtson rtogs pa gsall
 dam tshig sngags dang phyag rgya rnamsl
 ma nyams shes shing yo byad ldan!
 'grub 'gyur mi ldan don med brlag!*

The English translation is from Gyurme Dorje, p.601.

³⁹⁷ *gral tshug gyi phyag nas rtags gdab bar bya* (114.6). Concerning this, Khenpo Namdröl said that the disciples line up in order of seniority based on who received initiation first with the less senior disciples prostrating to the more senior ones.

stabilization of the active stages,³⁹⁸ one who has the three manifestations should chant the recitation.³⁹⁹ Those differentiations of the maṇḍala [then] dissolve into oneself, and one does the collective offering, etc. This is the service of the first night, [called] the branch of service.

When reciting in accordance with those stages of action, strive at becoming a suitable vessel for the feat of emanating and reabsorbing the white clear light, for up to half of however much time there is to practice. This is [called] the branch of intimate service. For the remaining half of the time, one should bring into one's power the feat of emanating and re-absorbing the red clear light. This is [called] the branch of achievement. When there arises confidence in the signs of attaining the feats, condense the feats with the blue clear light, and give rise to the feats through the deities, substances, and [secret] spaces of the consorts. This is [called] the branch of great achievement.

In the tantra itself, when the collective achievement is taught, it is described [from the perspective of] extracting, within a state of non-apprehension, the capacity of some means for thoroughly enjoying the five pleasurable substances of this world. Therefore, the point of collective achievement must be to ignite and stabilize the realization of suchness by way of extending the primordial wisdom of great bliss. By the force of that, the continuum of the four previous meditative stabilizations will also become highly distinguished. Therefore, it is both the means for enhancing [those other meditative stabilizations] [116] and the reason why the feats are quickly accomplished.

The taking of bliss in general as the path or the taking of the particular bliss of melting as the path is not necessarily the stage of completion. Since this is well known, I will not dissect it [here]. In the commentaries, the way to use the vowel and consonant materials⁴⁰⁰ is not

³⁹⁸ *las rim gyi ting nge 'dzin lnga po* (115.1). These are the five meditative stabilizations when they act as a cause for bringing the special abilities, or feats, into the practitioner.

³⁹⁹ The three manifestations (*gsal ba gsum*) are visualizing oneself as the commitment deity, visualizing the wisdom deity in space, and seeing lights traveling between the two.

⁴⁰⁰ *a li ka li'i yo byad* (116.2). This refers to the materials used for the two controversial practices. *a li* refers to the materials used in ritual sex (*sbyor ba*), while *ka li* refers to the materials used in liberative killing (*sgrol ba*).

clearly expressed except in the sections on giving rise to the feats. However, it is not that [the use of these substances] do not exist [in the practice of Mahāyoga], because it is understood through the occurrence of statements such as the one in the offering [section] of the means of achievement, “By their being joined together in the great offering of embracing...”⁴⁰¹

TEACHING WHEN ONE ATTAINS THE RESULT OF BECOMING AN AWARENESS-HOLDER [116.3]

Through having practiced with fierce effort one attains in a definite period of time, such as six months and so forth, an awareness-holder’s body, possessing the qualities of subtlety, lightness, and so forth, which accords with the [bodies of] either Desire or Form Realm deities. It is said, “Which of the two awareness-holders—of the Desire or Form Realm—one attains is due to the difference between [using] an action or a wisdom seal.” Such an awareness-holder is a great, common feat.

In the *Stages of the Path* [Buddhaguhya] describes differences such as the best collective achievement of the peaceful deities is attained in six months and the worst in one year and four months, while the best of the wrathful deities is attained in two months and the worst in six. With regard to that, there are assertions that [the difference in the amount of time between the peaceful and wrathful versions] is a feature of the recitation of mantras, sprinkling, and wrapping.⁴⁰² [117] Nevertheless, it is convenient when, in accordance with the assertion of Nardön,⁴⁰³ the majority refer to [this difference as] due to the fact that wrathful deities tame interruptions and arise as deities of fierce and swift enlightened activity.

⁴⁰¹ *sgrub thabs kyi m chod pa’i nang dul ’khril ba’i mchod chen mnyam sbyor bas/* (116.2-116.3). The means of achievement (*sādhana*) referred to here is, according to Khenpo Namdröl, from the *Consortium of Sugatas*.

⁴⁰² *’dzab ’thor ’dril gyi khyad par du* (116.6). Using the example of mantra recitation (*’dzab*), Khenpo Namdröl said the wrathful achievement was faster because a single recitation is done for all the deities, whereas in the peaceful version a recitation is done for each deity.

⁴⁰³ *snar ston* (117.1). This is probably Nar-dön Seng-ge-ö. He is mentioned cursorily in the *Blue Annals*, 157 and *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, 77, 78, and 702, but no information is given other than that he was a member of the Zur tradition and composed some commentaries, whose titles are not given.

I wonder if there is also some slight difference because of who the deliverers of the feats are.

In other Mahāyoga tantras⁴⁰⁴ it is said that in order to accomplish the great common achievement at the end of collective achievement [the group] must continue until the burnt offering and yantra [are completed].⁴⁰⁵ But, here it is said that awareness-holdership is attained during the time of collective achievement itself without relying on those [rituals]. Concerning these two statements, there are assertions that the former is done in terms of a slightly stable stage of generation and the latter in terms of a greatly stable one. However, since it is explained that even those collective practitioners who bring to completion the subtle yoga do it as the former do, one should analyze whether these must be differentiated by some feature such as the means of achievement.

For all these higher and lower meditative stabilizations of the seals, one should remember that the understood meaning of boundless self-appearances explained in the section on the view is the life-force [of the practice]. In the Master Jñānapāda's texts,⁴⁰⁶ he says that the stage of generation destroys delimited space and time. This is also similar in method. However, [118] the *Assembly of Sugatas* says:⁴⁰⁷

Although in the maṇḍala of boundless self-appearances the measure of the number [of deities], the [number of] the faces and hands, etc. are not definitely one particular way, if they were not taught as definite in the means of achievement, one would be unable to generate a meditative stabilization with clear aspects and stable pride. Therefore, it is taught that way [in the means of achievement].

The above five meditative stabilizations are done only in terms of the stage of generation,

⁴⁰⁴ I.e., the *Secret Assembly*.

⁴⁰⁵ *'khrul 'khor* (117.3).

⁴⁰⁶ *slob dpon ye shes zhabs kyi gzung* (117.6).

⁴⁰⁷ *bde gshegs 'dus pa* (118.2). This is the treasure cycle discovered by Nyang-rel Nyi-me-ö-zer (1124-1192).

and the five meditative stabilizations within the stage of completion are as follows.

[THE STAGE OF COMPLETION]

Initially forsaking other religious and non-religious activities,⁴⁰⁸ one should sit having the seven qualities of Vairocana,⁴⁰⁹ the bodily essentials, and one should dwell in either of the two methods of placement,⁴¹⁰ the mental essentials. The two methods of placement are placement [in reality] through the power of great awareness, or wisdom, and placement [in reality] through the lesser awareness, or the instructions. The first [method of placement through the power of great awareness] also has two [types]: 1. placing [the mind] in the container of awareness,⁴¹¹ which is situating oneself in the vivid, objectless awareness merely through inducing the thought, “[I will] place the mind in reality free from [conceptual] elaborations,” and 2. placing [the mind] after having seen [reality], which is situating the mind with unwavering clarity in the entity of the view, upon having remembered it as delineated above. As for the latter [placement through instructions], when one inwardly views the entity of one’s own mind, one sees nothing whatsoever, and one situates [the mind] authentically in that entity. [119] Although all three are not different in situating one in the suchness of the mind, they are divided through being different methods or approaches to placement.

In either cases, through training one-pointedly and without interruption, the space-like clear light devoid of coarse objects and subjects manifests, whereupon limitless aspects of

⁴⁰⁸ *chos dang chos min gyi bya ba* (118.3). That is, virtuous and non-virtuous activities.

⁴⁰⁹ *nam snang gi chos bdu dang ldan pa* (118.3). These are sitting 1. with legs crossed in the lotus-posture (*rkangs pa skyil krung*), 2. having the hands placed equally (*lag pa mnyam bzhaḡ*), 3. with the spine straight (*sgal tshigs drang bor bsrang ba*), 4. with the neck slightly bent (*mgrin pa cung zad gug pa*), 5. with the shoulders splayed like the wings of a peacock (*dpung ba rgod gshog ltar brkyangs pa*), 6. with the eyes pointing down at the tip of the nose (*mig sna rtser phabs pa*), and 7. with the tongue touching the upper palate (*lce ya rkan la sbyar ba*). See bKra shis rgyal mtshan, *chos kyi nam grang bzhugs so* (zi ling: mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1992), 91-92.

⁴¹⁰ *bzhaḡ thabs* (118.3).

⁴¹¹ *rig pa spyi blugs su ’jog pa* (118.5).

shape and color dawn, which are like an illusory city. These are the reflection-like appearances of the empty clear light, or the appearances of form that are aspects of the empty clear light. They are called “empty form”.⁴¹² Through an extended meditative session, the clear light becomes thicker, and as it gradually thickens, those empty forms will become more and more crystal clear⁴¹³ and greatly increase. Since such a clear light is empty of mistaken conceptuality, this is called “the meditative stabilization of the great empty” (*stong pa chen po'i ting nge 'dzin*). At this point, it is evident that one develops the energy to mix with the non-conceptual realm that is the clear light's own mode of being without mainly activating that dawning of empty forms.

When one has cultivated the purification of that, one generates a more extensive clear light and, having combined it with blissful appearances, dwells one-pointedly. Thereby, the limitless appearances [of empty form] increase, greater than before. All those [120] will dawn as only things of bliss in the non-observable, namely things of the uncommon compassion [observing] what is not observable. When that is stabilized, one attains the special quality of [having made] empty form serviceable. Therefore, there is the ability for one on the stage of completion to transform into the single-seal of a deity through merely some slight conditions. By purifying the energy for such in meditative equipoise, even when one arises from that, all beings dawn as the illusion-like play of compassion and great bliss while being empty form. This is the yoga of compassionate illusion (*snying rje sgyu ma'i rnal 'byor*).

Then, at the time of unifying creation and completion, in dependence upon any impelling condition such as the meditative stabilization that is the stage in which one generates a similitude of Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri, all those empty forms are awakened into the aspect of the single-seal deity-body. This is the yoga of the single seal (*rgya*

⁴¹² *stong gzugs zhes* (119.2). The term “empty form” is also used in the context of a later tantric path, that of the *Wheel of Time* (*dus 'khor, kālacakra*).

⁴¹³ *je dwangs je gsal* (119.4).

gcig gi rnal 'byor). It is called such because however many deity-bodies of empty form dawn they are the same in having the single aspect of being like Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri. However, it does not seem to be the case that there does not dawn more than one enlightened body of empty form. Within this oral tradition there is the statement, “Beginning with the single seal, there is a divine body of union.” The intention behind this is that [the yoga of the single seal] merely proceeds to unify the empty of the first meditative stabilization and the compassion of the second, [121] but this is not an actual enlightened body of union.⁴¹⁴

Then, through the slight condition of a stage that generates the elaborate maṇḍala and the groups' circles, there dawns limitless aspects of empty form—the main deity, the retinue, and the groups, and in each of those there dawns innumerable [deities and aspects] as [discussed] in the context of elaboration through number. [These appearances] dawn in thorough completeness without being mixed. From that point until bringing it to completion is [called] the seal with elaboration. Such are the four initial meditative stabilizations.

In this context of the stages for generating the seal [with] elaboration, one meditates on the maṇḍala of the forty-two Buddhas in order to purify the whole conceptual collection—the aggregates, constituents, and so forth—into the deities, and one meditates on all the deities of the maṇḍala completely within each of those deities [with their bodies acting] as the pure land in order to achieve all the good qualities of purity with respect to each of those factors—the aggregates and so forth.⁴¹⁵ Moreover, that method in which one purity becomes the identity of all the purities takes as its reason the fact that all [the members of] the conceptual collection have the indestructible [mind] as their life-force. In order to meditate

⁴¹⁴ The actual enlightened body of union (*zung 'jug gi sku dngos*) occurs only at Buddhahood.

⁴¹⁵ The eternal, most pervasive form-aggregate (*rtag khyab chen po'i gzugs phung*) was discussed above (95.3). Since the essence of the pure form-aggregate is the ground, its essence is the essence of all phenomena. Therefore, the form-aggregate pervades all phenomena.

on that, there is the observation that each of the deities arrayed in the body has its own wisdom-being, [122] and so forth. Therefore, knowing the indifferenciability of deities and conceptuality appears to be the single most precious point on the paths of generation and completion.

Even on the occasions attained subsequent to those meditations, whatever yoga of meditative equipoise is done, it impresses its seal on all appearances and activities, whereby one binds the conceptuality that is discordant with that yoga. This is also a quintessential point. It appears that this is along the lines of [the second of the ten topics of tantra] conduct, or resolution.

Similarly, as for the way that the very training in which [one meditates on] the meditative stabilization during the day is taken as the night-time yoga, there are statements in the tantric commentaries⁴¹⁶ that in the context of the great empty the clear light of the waking hours and the thick clear light of sleeping at night are practiced in tandem and that in the context of compassionate illusion all the daytime appearances and all the dream appearances are seen as illusory. Therefore, [those commentaries] clearly demonstrate the way to purify sleep and dreams through the first two yogas, and through that method one is able to also understand [the way sleep and dreams are purified by] the meditation upon having transformed the compassionate illusion of dreams into the single and elaborate seals.

Furthermore, with the citation of the *Stages of the Path* above, “Death is the ultimate truth”, and so forth⁴¹⁷ one can rightly extrapolate that death and the great empty are combined and that the intermediate state and compassionate illusion are combined, and so forth. [123] Therefore, even though [those yogas] are not designated as “quintessential instructions on combining [the five stages of ordinary existence with the five meditative

⁴¹⁶ *rgyud 'grel las* (122.3). Here, Khenpo Namdröl mentioned particularly Lochen Dharmashrī's *Lord of Secrets' Oral Instructions* and his *Ornament to the Intention of the Lord of Secrets*.

⁴¹⁷ 105.5-105.6.

stabilizations]”,⁴¹⁸ they fulfill the meaning. Nevertheless, since in this [system] the single and elaborate seals of [both] the dreaming state and the intermediate state are purifiers of [both] the waking state and birth, it is not the same as other [systems].⁴¹⁹ Moreover, in the context of the view, in dependence upon the reasonings one views the coarse common appearances of mind and primordial wisdom, apprehending them as [belonging] only to the class of the self-appearances of primordial wisdom. Thereby, one awakens in direct perception the clear light that is the goal to be achieved. This is the first approach to actually arousing the uncommon appearances of primordial wisdom. Here, the uncommon appearances of primordial wisdom should be taken [to mean] empty form.

Having seen such appearances in the first meditative stabilization, in the second one achieves power over them just as they are seen. From the third onward, one transforms into the deities body and trains in that ability. Thus, within the mode of abiding that is the essential ground there is the ability to elaborate all the aspects of subtle appearances. Through arousing that ability with the winds of primordial wisdom, it is awakened into clarity, and when the mother [clear light] that is the quality of the ground and the son [clear light] that is a path of knowing and engaging meet, they act to assist each other, whereby the ability to establish the actual state of the maṇḍala of supporting [palace] and supported [deities]—the self-appearances of primordial wisdom [124]—easily become complete. This is the great essential point on the path of the Magical Emanation Net. Since on the occasion of both [the paths of] method and release there is no difficulty in untying this knot of joyful

⁴¹⁸ *bsre ba'i man ngag* (123.1).

⁴¹⁹ For instance, the *Secret Assembly* where, according to Khenpo Namdröl, the purifiers of the dream state and the intermediate state, which respectively induce the purity of the waking state and birth, are completely different paths. Indeed, in *The Six Yogas of Nāroṇpa (nā ro'i chos drug)* the third practice is “dream yoga” while the fifth practice is “intermediate state (*bar do*) yoga”. See Garma C. C. Chang, *The Six Yogas of Nāroṇpa and the Teachings on Mahāmudrā* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1977), 54, 88-94, 101-111. However, that same text (93) does contradict this notion by saying, “One of the main purposes of Dream Yoga practice is to assist one to realize the Illusory Body in the Bardo state, and in this lifetime.”

realization, the intention that issues upon there being some capacity [in that practice should be held] dear.

The meditative stabilization of group achievement is that which, upon having finished the elaborate seal, connects one to an uncontaminated path through having achieved immutable bliss in dependence upon any of the extensive, middling, or abbreviated group practices where one successively gathers the enjoyments and powers of a yogin or in dependence upon a single goddess of empty form. This is also called the “uninterrupted meditative stabilization”. On the occasion of group practice there is indeed a marvelous meditative stabilization on the elaborate seals, but this is not the fourth in the division of five meditative stabilization, and one should also understand the others, the great empty and so forth, according to that [principle].⁴²⁰

The teachings that occur in the ostensible reading of the root [text]’s ninth chapter and its commentaries concerning the time when one accomplishes [the state of] an awareness-holder, or the result, are done in terms of just this group practice on the stage of completion. There, they explain that at the time of group practice one enters into a different quality of result⁴²¹ through the features of meditating on a single group of deities, three groups, and so forth. [125] Since [they also] explain that there are cases where one leaps over the elaborate [seal going directly from] the single seal to the group practice, whether or not it is necessary to relate [the different qualities of the result] in such a fashion [should be] analyzed.⁴²²

⁴²⁰ In the collective group practice one does all five meditative stabilizations, but the four lesser meditative stabilizations done in this context are nonetheless classified as collective group practice.

⁴²¹ I.e., a different one of the four awareness-holders.

⁴²² The meditation on one, three, or five groups of deities is initially cultivated in the meditative stabilization of the elaborate seal and then acted out in the group practice. If it is possible to completely skip the elaborate seal, then one cannot say that the different types of result are due to whether one practices one group, three groups, or five groups.

As for how one should present the two paths of accumulation and performance with regard to these characteristics of knowing and engaging,⁴²³ in *The Cluster*, a commentary on *Binding the Circle*,⁴²⁴ it explains that the stage of generation up until the time one achieves through group practice [the status of] an awareness holder within the desire and form realms is posited as the path of accumulation and that the entrance into the stage of completion on up is posited as the path of preparation. This is in line with the latter mode of training [serially] in the two stages [of generation and completion] described above, and since it also agrees with the most well known way of explaining it, it is easy to hold to this [position].

However, there must be another presentation for the position where the generation and completion [stages] are meditated on side by side. Thus, in our system of explanation in the Magical Emanation, it must be [explained] according to the well known [statement], “The path of accumulation [consists of] the four yogas of the path of completion, and the path of preparation [is] the group practice.” This position agrees with the clear and broad statements in many [texts] such as the root text and commentary of the *Wish-fulfilling Treasury*⁴²⁵ and so forth that there a number of yogas in the stage of completion that occur through the winds and minds entering the central [channel] due to the power of meditating on Highest Mantra’s path of accumulation. [126]

Furthermore, as long as one relies on a fabricated and analytical yoga, for that long one is on the path of accumulation, and when one has progressed to only a naturally present yoga, or an unfabricated yoga, that is posited as the path of preparation. Although placement on

⁴²³ Both Sūtra and Tantra present a system of five paths (*lam lnga*), which are actually five stages of the path. These are the path of accumulation (*tshogs lam*), the path of preparation (*sbyor lam*), the path of seeing (*mtshong lam*), the path of meditation (*sgom lam*), and the path of no-more-learning (*mi slob lam*). The path of accumulation is so called because one is accumulating the necessary collections of merit and wisdom, while in the path of preparation one is preparing for the actual perception of reality, which occurs on the path of seeing. The path of seeing is when one has a direct insight into the empty nature of reality. The path of meditation is bringing that initial insight to higher and higher levels, and the path of no-more-learning is final Buddhahood.

⁴²⁴ *sdom tī ka snye mar*

⁴²⁵ *yid bzhin mdzod rtsa ’grel* (125.6). This is one of the “seven treasures” (*mdzod bdun*) by Longchenpa, who composed both the root text and the auto-commentary.

the path of accumulation is done in terms of a fabricated yoga, it is not contradictory to posit unfabricated yogas of one on the path of accumulation as a path of accumulation. Through this, due to the essential point of not finishing the stage of generation prior to initially entering the stage of completion, even after achieving the elaborate seal on the stage of completion, one must train one's ability in emanating and withdrawing [the deities] in dependence on the stage of generation. Therefore, that is the reason for placing the initial four yogas on the path of accumulation.

In this position of emanating inconceivable, spontaneously present [appearances] from the elaborate seals, the details require some refinement. When such is done, in the system of alternating between the stages of generation and completion, one must assert that most of the qualities of an ordinary being's stage of completion are completed on just the path of accumulation, and on the path of preparation, one does the four levels of heat and so forth but does not see [reality]. Therefore, I think there comes to be a very great difference from other systems of the path of Highest [Yoga] Tantra. [127] Still, I beseech the wise to investigate and analyze this in detail. There are also assertions that correlate the time on the path of accumulation with the single seal and below and the time on the path of preparation from the elaborate seals [on up]. However, I will not discuss those here.

THE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE RESULT [127.2]

The third [characteristic], results that are paths, has two [types]: paths and beings. With regard to paths, there are three [that are results]: the path of seeing, the path of meditation, and the final path, and as for people who have those in their continuums, these are the four awareness-holders according to the statement, "Fruitional, Life-empowered, Seal, Spontaneously Present...."⁴²⁶

⁴²⁶ *nam smin tshé dbang phyag rgya lhun gyis grub!* (127.3).

THE FRUITIONAL AWARENESS-HOLDER [127.4]

The first, a fruitional awareness-holder, is one on the path of seeing with the following three qualities:

1. Who is not free from the coarse, fruitional body-basis,⁴²⁷
2. Whose mind has ripened into the enlightened body of the tutelary deity, and
3. Who, once freed from the seal of the body, will definitely join the awareness-holders of the great seal.

When that [level of a fruitional awareness-holder] is attained, many other good qualities are also attained, such as being able to act for the welfare of migrators in just the world of the four continents, and so forth. They say there are two ways to explain [the use of] the term “fruitional awareness-holder” for this [stage], one from the viewpoint of being bound by the fruitional body that is a seal [of cyclic existence] and the other from the viewpoint of the mind ripening as the deity’s enlightened body. [128]

LIFE-EMPOWERED AWARENESS-HOLDER [128.1]

A life-empowered awareness-holder is a person on the path of seeing whose body is not contaminated and who has the primary physical features of a wheel-turning king or a deity of the desire or form realm. They act for the welfare of sentient beings in a billion [worlds with] four continents through their twenty-five sense consciousnesses which are the imprint of the stage of completion and through the six prescient consciousnesses that are generally known.⁴²⁸ Here, the contamination referred to in the phrase “not contaminated” is fourfold:

⁴²⁷ That is, they have the four contaminations mentioned below in the context of a life-empowered awareness-holder.

⁴²⁸ These are the five prescences—clairvoyance (*lha'i mig mngon shes*), clairaudience (*lha'i rna ba'i mngon shes*), knowing the minds of others (*pha rol gyi sems shes pa'i mngon shes*), knowing how to perform illusions (*rdzu 'phrul gyi bya ba shes pa'i mngon shes*), and remembering past lives (*sngon gyi gnas rjes su dran pa'i mngon shes*)—along with the prescience of having exhausted one’s contaminations (*zag pa zad pa'i mngon shes*).

1. the contamination of afflictive emotions, i.e., the superimposition of mistaken apprehensions (*zhen pa phyin ci log gi sgro 'dogs nyon mongs pa'i zag pa*),
2. the contamination of the body, i.e., the body being cast aside without one's control (*lus rang dbang med par 'dor ba lus kyi zag pa*)
3. the contamination of the constituents, i.e., health and illness arising uncontrollably (*kham s bde mi bde rang dbang med par 'byung ba kham s kyi zag pa*),
4. the contamination of birth-place, i.e., one has assumed a body uncontrollably due to one's previous actions (*las kyis rang dbang med par lus len pa skye gnas kyi zag pa*).

The first of these is the main one; the remaining three are secondary. With regard to that, these two awareness-holders [fruitful and life-empowered] are not different in terms of having attained the actual fully qualified clear light. Nor are they different in terms of having realized the abandonment that extinguishes the root contamination. However, [Buddhaghosha's] *Lesser Stages of the Path* says:

There are two paths of seeing, one that has attained ability and one that has not,⁴²⁹

Citing this passage, it is explained that they are distinguished [in two ways, either] through the feature of being able or unable to purify the coarse body with the fire of primordial wisdom due to either having sharp or dull faculties or through the feature of whether or not they have exhausted the three ancillary contaminations. [129] Therefore, it is not possible for one person to travel on both these awareness-holder [paths], because one cannot attain the path of seeing twice.

⁴²⁹ *lam chung las/ nus pa thob dang ma thob pa'il /mthong lam gnyis su 'gyur ba yin/* (128.6).

AWARENESS-HOLDER OF THE GREAT SEAL [129.1]

An awareness-holder of the great seal is one who has a body basis in the aspect of the tutelary deity, decorated with the major and minor marks; who displays an Emanation Body in various forms, such as hunters, prostitutes, and so forth; and who works for the welfare of migrators equal to the field of a Complete Enjoyment Body through presciences that are superior to even those of a life-empowered awareness-holder in terms of clarity, stability, and purity. At this [stage] one abides in a special path of meditation. It has as many divisions as the nine levels of the path of meditation, and in the context of the five families, all nine also are done into five types.

SPONTANEOUSLY PRESENT AWARENESS-HOLDER [129.4]

A spontaneously present awareness-holder is one who abides in the special path of a tenth grounder, known as “the final path”; who has a form that is a copy of a Buddha’s Complete Enjoyment Body; and whose realization and activity are partially similar to those of Buddhahood.⁴³⁰

When it is said that in those later two awareness-holders [the great seal and the spontaneously present] the subtle defilements, which are latencies and abide innately,⁴³¹ are abandoned, the defilements referred to are only the obstructions to omniscience, because it is explained that [all] the afflictive obstructions, without differentiating them into imputed and innate, are abandoned on the path of seeing. [130]

There are also [situations where] one attains Buddhahood without traversing [more] than one awareness-holder [level] on a learner’s path and so forth, because it is described that some very intelligent [people] leap over to Buddhahood from the life-empowered [stage], skipping both the great seal [stage] and the spontaneously present [stage], or [others] skip

⁴³⁰ *rtogs pa dang phrin las kyang sangs rgyas nyid dang phyogs mtshungs pa’ol* (129.5).

⁴³¹ *lhan cig gnas pa dang bag la nyal gyi dri ma phra mo* (129.6).

just the great seal [stage] or they skip the spontaneously present [stage, progressing to Buddhahood] from the great seal [stage].

[ANALYSIS OF AWARENESS-HOLDERS]

If we are to give a small approach to analyzing these difficult points, although in general there are great differences between this and the system of *The Wheel of Time*, the conqueror Yung⁴³² and so forth explain that they are similar in thought in terms of how one achieves the immutable bliss in dependence on the seal of empty form and how one purifies the course aggregates and constituents through that. The omniscient king of the doctrine [Longchenpa] also explains it like that. For, the *Vajra[sattva] Magical Emanation* says:

The grounds and their qualities

Are asserted [to come] from the winds and great bliss

Being generated and increased in the channels.

The basis of purification and the purifiers increase and decrease.

Existence and nirvāṇa increase and decrease.

Four types or three or five wheels

[Have] two each; one is not enough.

Through the final tenth ground, there is the ground of primordial wisdom.

With the fourth [wheel], upper and lower are made known.⁴³³ [131]

Quoting that, [Longchenpa's] *Wish-fulfilling Treasury* says:

⁴³² Yung-tön-Dorjepel (*g.yung ston rdo rje dpal*, 1284-1365), author of an influential commentary on the twenty-two chapters of the root tantra, called *Mirror Reflecting the Meaning of the Glorious Secret Essence Tantra* (*dpal gsang ba snying po'i rgyud don gsal byed me long*) in the *rnying ma bka' ma rgyas pa*, vol. 28 (Kalimpong: Dupjung Lama, 1983; I-Tib-82-900981), 5-589.

⁴³³ *sgyu 'phrul rdo rje las/ sa dang sa yi yon tan rnamsl/ rtsa rnam kyi ni skye 'bri las/ lrlung dang bde chen las 'dod del/ lsbyang gzhi sbyong byed 'phel dang 'grib/ lsrld dang mya ngan 'das 'phel 'grib/ lnam bzhi'am gsum mam lnga 'khor lol/ lgnys gnyis kyi ni gcig ma rdzogs/ lsa bcu tha mas ye shes sal/ lbzhi pas steng dang 'og tu grags/ (130.4-130.6).*

When the wind and mind of the fourth wheel are made serviceable,
 The good qualities of the four paths gradually dawn.
 Through loosening two channel-knots at each [of the four wheels] in the
 central channel,
 It is asserted that the good qualities of the tenth ground dawn within.⁴³⁴

[These passages] in the root text and its commentary are explanations of how the coarse body is consumed by immutable bliss, and some former adepts have said that except for the difference in coarseness and subtlety of the explanations they are one in thought.

If it is done that way, it is like this: having attained empty form during the single seal and the elaborated seal, one does the collective practice in order to induce great bliss through the power of such a seal, and the moment one attains the bliss that never changes is the beginning of the pure factor of the physical body. Therefore, this can be posited as a life-empowered awareness-holder whose coarse body has become crystalline clean.⁴³⁵ As for those of dull faculties, although they have attained the great seal and the collective practice forms imprints on them, they cannot induce the supreme bliss. Therefore, it must be asserted that although they attain the path of a superior, there are both those who have purified the encrusted body⁴³⁶ and those who have not. For these reasons, although one necessarily becomes enlightened in that lifetime where one attains immutable bliss, [132] it is asserted that the mere attainment of a fully qualified empty-form body does not have such a mind [of immutable bliss]. One can know this through the explanation of a fruitional awareness-holder.

⁴³⁴ *yid bzhin mdzod kyil l'khor lo bzhi yi rlung sems las rung tshel lam bzhi'i yon tan rim bzhin 'char ba stel/dbu ma'i rtsa mdud gnyis gnyis grol ba las/lsa bcu'i yon tan nang nas 'char bar bzhed/* (130.6-131.2).

⁴³⁵ *dwangs ma* (131.5).

⁴³⁶ *snyigs ma'i lus* (131.6). *snyigs ma* and *dwangs ma* are antonyms. Their translation here respectively as "encrusted" and "crystalline clean" express only part of these words' full meaning.

The way that a fruitional [awareness-holder] establishes the great seal in the intermediate state is as follows. That very subtle wind at the time of their death is purified by the actual fully-qualified clear light like cleaning gold, and it is cleansed into the stainless constituent. Through the previous [practices of] compassionate illusion⁴³⁷ and so forth one cleanses the misapprehended appearances⁴³⁸ of dreams, life, and the intermediate state. By the power of this one attains an empty-form body. When that enlightened [empty-form] body arises out of the clear light due to the dependent arising of clarity, stability, and completion, it is evident that there is no difficulty in arising as an illusory body of union adorned with the major and minor marks.

At the time of moving from being a life-empowered [awareness-holder] to being one of the great seal, the coarse body is established as a divine body, but there is no description of how this is accomplished.⁴³⁹ For instance, in [the stages of] a life-empowered [awareness-holder] and the great seal attained by that, the clarity, stability, and purity of the empty form body has been perfected. Nevertheless, since they are only connected with the meditative stabilization on the empty form, one should not say, “their body-basis of empty form is fully enlightened”, but one should say, “If the great seal is attained in the intermediate state, they are fully enlightened in an illusory body basis, but if they attain it in this life, they are fully enlightened in a basis, where the coarse body has become crystalline clean.” [133]

A leap-over path where one goes from the path of seeing to the path of no more learning bypassing the path of meditation is not asserted here, but there are explanations of becoming fully enlightened from the life-empowered [stage] skipping the great seal and spontaneous presence and so forth. Leap-over [paths] are enumerated in relation to the three different body bases of an awareness-holder, a vajra-body that has an ordinary appearance⁴⁴⁰ and so

⁴³⁷ *rmying rje sgyu ma* (132.2).

⁴³⁸ *snang zhen* (132.3).

⁴³⁹ *sgrub tshul zur pa med do/* (132.4).

⁴⁴⁰ *rdō rje'i lus tha mal ba'i cha byad can sogs* (133.2).

forth. Whether it is asserted that for example some extremely sharp individuals complete everything from top to bottom in one instant of immutable bliss should be examined.

LONGCHENPA'S ASSERTIONS [133.3]

As a side note, I will also teach the assertions of the Omniscient Lord of the Doctrine [Longchenpa]. He says that regarding [the four awareness-holders]:

1. the fruitional awareness-holder incites devotion⁴⁴¹ toward ripening the mind into the seal of the tutelary deity,
2. the life-empowered [awareness-holder] is on the path of seeing,
3. the mere [the awareness-holder of] the great seal [is everything] ranging from initially attaining the realization of a Superior's path to being on the special path of meditation, and
4. the spontaneously present [awareness-holder] is a path of no more learning.

Those [four] are posited in relation to their mental realization, while those [awareness-holders] who have the special fruitional body basis⁴⁴² and so forth are posited in relation to the awareness-holder's body. [Longchenpa says that] those two ways of positing it are one entity with different conceptual isolates, since the life-empowered [awareness-holder] is posited from the viewpoint of the body being crystalline clean, and the great seal [awareness-holder] is posited from the viewpoint of the mind having attained a Superior's path. [134] In relation to that, it is also easy to understand how there is no contradiction in saying the second is "life-empowered" and the third is "the great seal".

[According to Longchenpa] there are two fruitional [awareness-holders], those who having attained the supreme qualities [stage of the path of preparation] are joined in this [life] to the life-empowered [awareness-holder], and those who without attaining the

⁴⁴¹ *mos skyod* (133.4).

⁴⁴² *rnam smin gyi lus rten khyad par can* (133.6).

supreme qualities will attain the great seal body in the intermediate state. The former attains all four awareness-holder [levels], and the latter attains no more than three. Those two being such, there is a big difference between the two paths of seeing that they attain. This is the meaning of such scriptural passages as, “one who has attained ability and one who has not”. The path of seeing attained by the latter one is suitable to be an awareness-holder of the great seal in relation to its mind, but in relation to its body it is not any of the four awareness-holders. I think that a fruitional [awareness-holder] who achieves the great seal in the intermediate state without attaining the supreme qualities must have greatly cleansed his or her realization of the stage of completion and does not just have the stability of the stage of generation. Although the term, “path of seeing”, is applied to the fruitional awareness-holder, it is difficult to count them as anything other than having acquired the special insight of the stage of completion on up. Therefore, if a fruitional [awareness-holder] on the stage of generation is posited, one must assert them as merely ordinary [people and not Superiors].

The Stages of the Path says:

Having loosened the knot that is the body-seal,

The enlightened body of the great seal becomes manifest. [135]

That is called a fruitional awareness-holder.⁴⁴³

Based on such explanations and so forth, [Longchenpa] teaches that when a fruitional awareness-holder dies, there is a connection to the [awareness-holder of] the great seal, but he does not assert that [this passage] says, “Whoever is a fruitional awareness-holder must die before they achieve the great seal!” The awareness-holder Jikmé Lingpa asserts that “attaining or not attaining” the supreme qualities in this life is [done] in relation to whether or not one

⁴⁴³ *lam rim las/ lus kyi rgya mdud grol gyur nas/ lphyag rgya'i sku nyid gsal 'gyur bal/ lnam par smin zhes de la brjod/* (134.6-135.1).

does the collective performance.⁴⁴⁴ It is also the opinion of the omniscient [Longchenpa] that the connection between the supreme qualities [stage of the path of preparation] and the awareness-holder [stage] proceeds in terms of the immutable bliss.

This has already been explained, and even though there are different opinions such as positing the limitless boundary of immutable bliss within the high [level of] practice through belief and so forth, the position that the attainment of the first moment of that bliss and the acquisition of a Superior's path are simultaneous is the thought of the omniscient [Longchenpa]. If it is not done in this way for those reasons, [one's position could be] harmed by scripture and reasoning, and so forth. I will not elaborate on how this is so. However, the meaning of the explanations in the *Great Chariot of Definitive Meaning* and so forth⁴⁴⁵ that moments of immutable bliss destroy the channel knot in the central channel⁴⁴⁶ [136] is different from explanations elsewhere of the channel-knots and how they are destroyed in that [here the immutable bliss] causes the channels to dissolve into light. How that is so will also not be explained.

In general, some former scholars of the Magical Emanation wish to posit a moment when a fruitional awareness-holder has separated from this body but has not yet arrived as an awareness-holder of the great seal. Regarding that, Nyetön Chöseng⁴⁴⁷ expresses the fault of [such a moment] being in contradiction with the scripture, “Without forsaking, they establish the other.”⁴⁴⁸ Nevertheless, among those who posit a fruitional [awareness-holder]

⁴⁴⁴ *tshé 'dir chos mchog thob ma thob ces pa ni tshogs spyod byas ma byas la rig 'dzin 'jigs med gling pa bzhed dol* (135.2-135.3). The author is here referring to the passage from Buddhaguhya's *Lesser Stages of the Path* quoted above (see page 567).

⁴⁴⁵ *nge don shing rta chen po sogs* (135.6). This is Longchenpa's auto-commentary on his *Resting in the Mind-Itself* (*sems nyid ngal gso*).

⁴⁴⁶ *dhū ti'i rīsa mdud* (135.6).

⁴⁴⁷ *nye ston chos seng* (136.2). A disciple of Dropuk-ba (*sgro phug pa*), Nye-dön-chö-seng hailed from Gongdring (*sgong drings*). Among Dro-phuk-ba's twelve favorite disciples he was one of the four “teachers”, because their names contained the word “to teach”, *ston*. *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 1, 648-649, 660.

⁴⁴⁸ *mi 'dor 'god pa gzhan gyi'o/* (136.2).

as one who has attained the path of seeing prior to death, I think it is good to posit the basis of the Zur system as follows.⁴⁴⁹

According to the former [view of there being a moment when one is no longer a fruitional awareness-holder but has not yet attaining the status of an awareness-holder of the great seal], one cannot prove that such a fruitional [awareness-holder], having repeatedly attained the immutable bliss, does not achieve the great seal in this life.⁴⁵⁰ However, if that were the case, then it would contradict the explanations by the Zur system itself that a fruitional [awareness-holder] and the great seal attained by him or her and so forth [represent] a nirvāṇa without remainder because this coarse body is not carried over to the great seal, and that a life-empowered [awareness-holder] and the great seal attained by him or her and so forth are a nirvāṇa with remainder because the opposite of that [is true]. Also, it does not seem to be good to assert that a superior who has exhaustively abandoned the afflictive obstructions through having previously achieved the empty-form body of primordial wisdom as well as having attained the actual clear light [137] [could] come under the influence of death due to karma and so forth.

According to this latter view, when one who does collective achievement on the path of preparation achieves the immutable bliss through the power of the great seal, [such a person] becomes one on the path of seeing, and even if one does not attain that, through the power of death one attains the indestructible [mind] by means of the thick clear light that [still] has elaborations of dualistic appearance,⁴⁵¹ whereby [that person] becomes one on the path of seeing. From among those two, the one who attains the path of seeing by the former [method] should be explained as a life-empowered [awareness-holder], while the second one should be explained as a fruitional [awareness-holder]. When it is done like that, since that

⁴⁴⁹ *'di nyid zur lugs gzhir bzbag la'ang bzang bar sems tel* (136.3-136.4).

⁴⁵⁰ *sna ma ltar na de 'dra'i rnam smin pa des slar mi 'gyur ba'i bde ba thob nas rgya chen tshe 'dir 'grub pa'ang med par sgrub mi nus la/* (136.4).

⁴⁵¹ *de ma grub kyang 'chi ba'i stobs kyis 'thug po'i 'od gsal gnyis snang gi spros pas mi shigs pa thob stel* (137.2).

latter one on the path of seeing has already withdrawn from mind and body, she or he is described as above, “having separated from the body,” but she or he abides in the fruitional body until arriving at the intermediate state. And, since [the awareness-holders of] the great seal did not issue forth outside of their body, they are also described as “not having separated from the encrusted body of obstructions.” And, those who have previously ripened the mind into an enlightened body and have attained the great seal in dependence on the intermediate state before it was over, have the complete set of three qualities discussed previously. However, the meaning of not having exhausted the three contaminations refers only to the body having impure, encrusting factors that are elements of the previous body basis, but still it is not necessary that they are powerless over their health. [138] For instance, according to the assertions that [the status of] fruitional awareness-holder is attainable in this lifetime, although that [awareness-holder] has not exhausted the contaminations of their birth situation, she or he will definitely be joined to the great seal in the intermediate state. Therefore, it is asserted that [the fruitional awareness-holder] necessary does not take rebirth powerlessly. Even though this [person] acquires the path of seeing, she or he does not transcend the encasement of the ordinary, fruitional body-seal. Therefore, even the etymology is preserved.⁴⁵² But if the method of positing a fruitional awareness-holder is done like that [i.e., if they are asserted to transcend the fruitional body], then it contradicts the explanation in the *Stages of the Path* that they are obstructed by the body:

[Those who have] the fruition of perfect clarity in deity yoga
Are obstructed by the net of the body.⁴⁵³

This is because it is reasonable to assert that they are not obstructed by the net of coarse aggregates and constituents [only] when they abide in the clear light of death. [This

⁴⁵² *sgra bshad kyang mi 'jig gol* (138.2).

⁴⁵³ *lam rim las/ lha yi rnal 'byor gsal rdzogs smin/ llus kyi drwa bas bsgribs gyur pa/* (138.3).

assertion] is also harmed by the explanation of the meaning of their prescience's object, "They act in the countries and realms of limitless continents".⁴⁵⁴

Objection: It follows then that it is reasonable to refute also the explanation that they do not forsake the acting for the welfare of others through the four enlightened activities, [described in the statement]:

The fruitional one completes the enlightened activities,

Whereby not forsaking [the one], they establish the other.⁴⁵⁵

Response: There is not fault [for three reasons]. First, this does not mean that the clear light is obstructed, and it is also not the actual meaning of having stopped [them], when one utterly severs the connection to the subtle and coarse aggregates. [139] However, one will not manifest the illusory body until one has issued out of the previous fruitional body. For that [reason], such an exalted body is conventionally designated as obstructed. That is known through such passages as:

The mind grasps the deity's form

And the knot of the body seal is untied.

Thus, one manifests the enlightened seal body itself.⁴⁵⁶

And:

With the seal of the eye and the seal of the earth [element] just as they are,

One does not obtain attainment of the hand-seal.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁴ *dpag tshad gling khams yul la spyod/ ces mngon shes kyi yul don bshad pas kyang gnod/* (138.4-138,5). There is no indication of the quotation's source. Given the context, it is likely from Buddhaguhya's *Stages of the Path*.

⁴⁵⁵ *smin pas phrin las rdzogs byed pas/ lmi 'dor 'god pa gzhan gyi 'ol/* (138.5). The last half of this passage is quoted above as Nye-dön-chos-seng's proof that there is no momentary gap between the state of a fruitional knowledge holder and that of a knowledge holder of the great seal. See page 574.

⁴⁵⁶ *yid kyiis lha yi gzugs bzung zhing / llus kyi rgya mdud grol gyur nas/ lphyag rgya'i sku nyid gsal gyur pal/* (139.2).

⁴⁵⁷ *rgya mig rgya sa ji lta bar/ lphyag rgya thob la ma rag pa'i/* (139.2).

The second reason there is no fault is that it is permissible to connect the ability of prescience to what is just the mode of attainment. Third, it merely teaches the way one progress in yoga:

Through the mind ripening into the deity's body, one's ability at enlightened activity for others becomes superior. By way of this, the fruitional [awareness-holder's] primordial wisdom of meditative equipoise [realizes] the non-duality of the profundity/clarity and stops the two extremes of existence and nirvāṇa.⁴⁵⁸

This latter is an extremely important essential point.

When it is explained in this way, the assertions of the Zur system and those of the Omniscient Lord of the Doctrine [Longchenpa] merely differ in identifying the basic characteristics of a fruitional awareness-holder. And, when the Awareness Holder Jigmé Lingpa⁴⁵⁹ arranged and set forth the Omniscient One's thought, [he said] the reason for not attaining the life-empowered awareness-holder in this life through the single and elaborated seals is that one does not do the collective practice. Thus, there is also the difference between [this assertion and the Zur system's] assertion that [the collective practice] is not necessarily required. Except for just that, they appear to be in agreement on the essential points, but there is a big difference in their disagreement over the essential point of whether to assert [the existence of] a fruitional awareness-holder who attains the path of seeing in this life and will establish the great seal in the intermediate state.

Regarding that, those [who hold] to the Zur system say that the characteristic of the result, within the three characteristics, is [the set of] these four awareness-holders. Therefore,

⁴⁵⁸ *gsum pa sems lha'i skur smin pas gzhan phan phrin las kyi nus pa cher lhag pa'i sgo nas rnām smin pa'i mnyam bzhaḡ ye shes de zab gsal gnyis med dang srid zhi'i mtha' gnyis 'gogs pa'i rnal 'byor du 'gro lugs ston pa tsam yin pa'i phyir tel/ (139.3-139.4). This is not a passage from another text but is the author's concise description of the fruitional knowledge holder's yoga and as he notes himself is "very important."*

⁴⁵⁹ *rig 'dzin 'jigs med gling pa (139.6).*

they think this cannot be posited on the level of an ordinary being. They posit the fruitional awareness-holder only as one on a Superior's path and assert that one cannot posit [a fruitional awareness-holder] by way of merely the completion of the fundamental mind into a divine form.⁴⁶⁰ The Omniscient [Longchenpa says that] "the feats of an awareness-holder" are commonly and mainly posited in relation to the special bodily feats. This is very well known in all the upper and lower tantric groups. [He] also [says that] when one has attained the deity body of the stage of completion [called] "ripening the mind into the deity's body", one is not in a fruitional body but one has acquired an awareness-holder body that is included in the class of supreme accomplishments. Therefore, thinking that it is correct for this to be the first of the four awareness-holders, he asserts a common ground between those who abide on the level of practice through belief and the awareness-holders. When it is explained like that, one will perhaps discover [a way] to test the definitiveness of each system. [141] One should know that although one [system] explains this enlightened body where "the mind was ripened into a divine body" as being within the class of mind and the other [system] explains it within the class of body, there is no contradiction. This much at least is easy to understand.

THE RESULT CONTINUUM [141.2]

The third [topic] is the result-continuum, that which has been brought to completion. This is the final stage where the ground manifests just as it is through the path having clarified the adventitious defilements that are the objects to be abandoned in relation to the essential ground that is the mode of abiding.⁴⁶¹ According to the statement in the [*Lamp Illuminating the Inner Text*], "The final accomplishment is called the result,"⁴⁶² when the thought of those

⁴⁶⁰ *gnyug sems lha'i skur rdzogs pa tsam gyis 'jog mi nus par bzhed/* (140.3-140.4).

⁴⁶¹ *gnas lugs ngo bo nyid kyi gzhi* (141.2).

⁴⁶² *khog gzhung las/ grub pa mthar phyin 'bras bur brjod/* (141.3).

who seek the highest stage is thoroughly complete, that is the result. Since the stream is never severed, it is described as a “continuum”.

Within the canon of the Perfection Great Vehicle this is extensively taught to be the result [known as] great enlightenment, but there is a big difference between that Buddhahood, which is achieved through practice of a path of devotion and the two collections, and the Buddhahood explained within highest Mantra where one actualizes just as it is the abiding measure of the natural ground’s continuum. It is also incorrect [to say that] Secret Mantra’s uncommon result can be established without relying on its uncommon path. Therefore, [142] the final path of a spontaneously present awareness-holder is merely designated as Buddhahood, but the great and glorious upholders of the Zur tradition assert, “The actual Buddhahood of the Mantra path must be attained outside of that.”⁴⁶³

On the other hand, the Omniscient [Longchenpa] asserts that the Buddhahood explained within the Sūtra position is the same as the spontaneously present awareness-holder of this tantra, and he is referring to the spontaneously present [awareness-holder]’s final path. Therefore, [the Zur system and Longchenpa] are not one in thought. According to the latter, a Buddhahood where all phenomena become manifestly enlightened in all ways is extensively explained within the Sūtra position. However, since it is not possible for an adventitious mind to take such a manifest enlightenment as its basis for achievement, one must definitely rely on the highest path. Therefore, [Longchenpa says] “Although there is one Buddhahood achieved by two vehicles, it cannot be attained by the path of Sūtra alone.”⁴⁶⁴ For fear of too many words, I will not create more elaboration.

When one divides the phenomena of results, there are many [divisions], such as the ten powers—fearlessness and so forth—that are generally known, the seven branches of union

⁴⁶³ *snags lam gyi sangs rgyas dngos ni de'i phyi nas 'thob dgos so zhes dpal ldan zur pa'i srol 'dzin chen po rnams bzhed la!* (142.1-142.2).

⁴⁶⁴ *de'i phyir theg pa gnyis kyi thob bya'i sangs rgyas gcig yin kyang mdo lam rkyang pas 'thob mi nus zhes pa stel* (142.4-142.5).

known only in Highest [Yoga Tantra], and so forth. However, when it is done in terms of this tantric scripture, there are the twenty-five phenomena of the result: [the five phenomena of enlightened form, the five phenomena of enlightened speech, the five phenomena of enlightened mind, the five phenomena of enlightened qualities, and the five phenomena of enlightened activity]. [143]

The first [set] is the five enlightened forms [or bodies] (*sku lnga*). The awareness of the sphere that is free from partiality is the reality body, and while not straying from that [awareness of the sphere], demonstrating the complete enjoyment of the supreme vehicle's doctrine to Bodhisattvas who are superiors is the [complete] enjoyment body. Showing the supreme form that is born and labors to the perspective⁴⁶⁵ of both the pure and impure trainees in common is the Emanation Body. The indifferenciability of those three is the vajra [or diamond] body. The unadulterated⁴⁶⁶ factors of appearance of those three are the Manifest Enlightenment Body.

As for the five enlightened communications (*gsung lnga*), primordial wisdom itself, which is always in meditative equipoise on the sphere devoid of thought or expressions, is from the perspective of being the basis of all expressions the reality body's communication of the fact of non-production. That form of the Complete Enjoyment Body is the symbolic communication of the thought from the perspective that merely by seeing it the retinue enters into the state of the inconceivable secret. In each moment, teaching the immeasurable doctrines in the various languages of trainees is the Emanation Body's communication through verbal expressions. The fact that whatever is said is nothing other than the indestructible primordial wisdom's own words is the vajra [or diamond body's] communication of indifferenciability. Just that one primordial wisdom dawning as all the types of melodious sounds is the manifest enlightenment [body]'s communication of the

⁴⁶⁵ *snang nor* (143.2).

⁴⁶⁶ *ma 'dres pa* (143.3). Literally, this means "unmixed".

blessing of basic mind. The difference between those last two is [144] from the perspective of their conceptual isolates: [the first] condenses many into one, and [with the latter] just one thing dawns as many. When joined to only the transmission of mind, it is also suitable to explain these as leading straight to the five historical facts [mentioned] previously.⁴⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the actual teaching of the seventh chapter in both the root text and commentaries is what was just explained.

Concerning the five enlightened minds (*thugs lnga*), the primordial wisdom [that knows] the sphere of reality is the non-conceptual enlightened mind of the reality body. The primordial wisdom of equality is the Complete Enjoyment Body's enlightened mind of great equality. The primordial wisdom of achieving activities is the Emanation Body's enlightened mind that tames migrators. The primordial wisdom of individual concepts is the vajra-[body's] enlightened mind of inseparability. The mirror-like primordial wisdom is the manifest enlightenment [body's] enlightened mind that clarifies everything.

Concerning the five enlightened qualities, they are a thoroughly pure realm, an inestimable mansion without limit or measure, [emanating] light-rays that are clear and pure, thrones of superior features, and enjoyments that are blissfully enjoyed in the nine realms. Concerning the five enlightened activities, these are the spontaneously present enlightened activities of pacifying the external suffering of this life along with its causes, extending the beneficial reserves, controlling trainees on the three levels [under, on, and above ground], annihilating those who are very difficult to train with fierce [means], and all those occurring effortlessly according to the time and capacities of the trainees. The presentation of the

⁴⁶⁷ *dgongs brgyud kho na la sbyar na sngar sngon byung dngos lnga'i thad du bshad pa ltar yang rung mod del* (144.1).

supporting enlightened body, the supported primordial wisdom, and the deeds of enlightened activity are included within these [twenty-five phenomena of the result state].