

The Science of the Spirit From Eighth Century Tibet

*Padmasambhava's*  
*Spiritual Advice*  
**FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE HEART**

*Committed to writing by Yeshe Ts'ogyel*

Translated and edited by Ramon N. Prats

*Padmasambhava's*  
*Spiritual Advice*  
**FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE HEART**

Committed to writing and concealed as a treasure-text

by K'andro Yeshe Ts'ogyel

Revealed

by Tertön Sangye Dorje alias Sangye Lingpa

Translated and edited by Ramon N. Prats

English revision by Joan Kaye



# Contents

Publisher's Foreword . . . . .	page
Introduction . . . . .	
<b>PART ONE</b> . . . . .	
Advice for Removing Misconceptions at Once . . . . .	
Advice for Instantaneously Perfecting Either the Six or Ten Transcendences . . . . .	
Advice for Instantaneously Progressing Through the Five Paths . . . . .	
Advice for Self-Perfecting the Three Bodies . . . . .	
Advice on the Basis, the Path, and the Result at One Stroke . . . . .	
Advice for Surpassing the Nine Gradual Mediums . . . . .	
Advice That the View Can Be Open, the Meditation Can Wander, and the Conduct Can Be Natural . . . . .	
Esoteric Instructions for Attaining Buddhahood Without Leaving Any Remains of the Psychophysical Body . . . . .	
Advice for Attaining Buddhahood with Remains of the Psychophysical Body . . . . .	
Advice for Attaining Buddhahood Outside the Transitory States of Death . . . . .	
The Nine Combinations Necessary for Dharma Practitioners . . . . .	
The Six Extraordinary Dharma Teachings . . . . .	
The Supreme Direct Introduction into Buddhahood . . . . .	
Advice for Discerning Buddhahood . . . . .	
The Skilful Method for Attaining Buddhahood Without Meditating . . . . .	
Advice for Attaining Buddhahood Despite Previous Negativities . . . . .	
Advice Suitable to Instantaneously Transforming Ordinary Understanding . . . . .	
The Mentation Possessing the Fifteen Aspects of Bliss That Unite the Intentionality of the Buddhas with the Mind of the Sentient Beings . . . . .	
<b>PART TWO</b> . . . . .	

**PART THREE** . . . . .

**PART FOUR** . . . . .

**PART FIVE** . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning All That Appears and Exists . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning the Eighty-Four Thousand Gates of Dharma Teachings

The Crucial Point Concerning All Sentient Living Beings . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning All Primordial Gnoses . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning Exalted Concentration . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning All Abodes . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning All Paths . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning All Enlightened Bodies . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning All Enlightened [Forms of] Speech . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning All Enlightened Minds . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning All Sacred Bonds . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning All Enlightened Qualities . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning All Enlightened Activities . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning All Secret Mantras . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning All Spiritual Aspirations . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning All Meditations . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning All Modes of Conduct . . . . .

The Crucial Point Concerning All Results . . . . .

**PART SIX** . . . . .

**PART SEVEN** . . . . .

**POSTSCRIPT** . . . . .

**COLOPHON** . . . . .

ENGLISH-TIBETAN LEXICON . . . . .

## Publisher's Foreword

## Introduction

As stated in its colophon, the *Sheldam Nyingthur* (*zhal gdams snying thur*), or *Spiritual Advice from the Depths of the Heart*, was brought to light – in the guise of a sacred treasure (*gter ma*) – from the Great Cave of Puri by the Buddhist monk Sangye Dorje, in the second half of the fourteenth century. The manuscript had been purportedly concealed there, almost six hundred years before, by *Khandro* Yeshe Tshogyel, the Lady of Kharchen, the Tibetan tantric consort of Guru Padmasambhava.

Yeshe Tshogyel's (? 757-817) primordial role in relation to this and other treasure-texts consigned to temporary secrecy «for the benefit of the living beings of future generations,» was that of committing to writing some oral teachings conferred by Padmasambhava to King Trisong Detsen (reigned 755-797) and other of his personal disciples – Yeshe Tshogyel among them. This occurred during the time the great patriarch of Tibetan Buddhism spent in the Land of Snows, around 779 and the 780s. The particular method used by Yeshe Tshogyel to record these teachings is defined (in the concluding paragraph of Part Five of the translation) as "recollected notes" (*zin bris*). It consists in writing down a lama's words or teachings according to one's memories or recollections of them.

Sangye Dorje, the monk who rediscovered and edited the Tibetan text as it has reached us, is none other than the great Treasure-Master (*gter ston*) Sangye Lingpa (1340-1396), regarded as an incarnation of one of King Trisong Detsen's sons, Yeshe Rolpe Tshel. Born in Kongpo, southeastern Tibet, Sangye Dorje was ordained Buddhist novice in his youth. Years later, when he arrived in Lhasa, he had visions of Avalokiteshvara and, above all, of Padmasambhava. His first recovery of treasure-texts took place in 1364, when he extracted a set of manuscripts from Puri Phukmoche, the Great Cave of Puri, not too far from his birthplace. It is likely that the text translated here was among them. Yet, his best-known cycle of scriptural treasures is the monumental *Lama Gongdü* (*bla ma dgongs 'dus*), which comprises 13 volumes numbering a total of over 10,000 pages.

In addition to Sangye Lingpa, other qualified Treasure-Masters rediscovered treasure-texts having similar characteristics to this *Sheldam Nyingthur* also recorded by Yeshe

Tshogyel. Nyang-rel Nyima Özer (1136-1204), *Guru Chöki Wangchuk* (1212-1270) and Pema Lendreltsel (? 1291-1319) came before the time of Sangye Lingpa, while Rikdzin Gödem Truchen (1337-1408) was his contemporary, and Chogyur Dechen Zhikpo Lingpa (1829-1870) came much later.

Despite its generic title, *Spiritual Advice from the Depths of the Heart* is far from being a Buddhist beginner's text. As expected in a treasure-teaching, Padmasambhava's *Spiritual Advice* is a purely tantric work that frequently soars to the very heights of esoteric Buddhism. This implies that one must have a high degree of familiarity with the fundamentals of this tradition in order to grasp its often intricate meanings.

The present translation of *Spiritual Advice* is from the only edition alledged to exist of the Tibetan text. Reproduced from a rare Bhutanese manuscript from the library of a certain *Lopön Künlek*, it was published in 1982, under the title *A collection of esoteric instructions on the practice of Buddhism*, in Thimphu, Bhutan, by the Tango Monastic Community.

From a strictly contextual point of view, the Tibetan text is interspersed with abrupt, unexpected shifts of topic, unspecified references, omissions, and seeming contradictions – traits that often make its reading open to interpretation. Nevertheless, this is not uncommon with Tibetan religious literature. Far more important and interesting is the polysemic character of its terminology, a distinctive and qualifying feature of tantric literature in general and of the Tibetan works of this category in particular. Words like "ku" (*sku*: enlightened body, existential aspect), "gyü" (*rgyud*: tantra, mindstream, personality, existential stream), "gompa" (*sgom pa*: meditation, realization practice, inner cultivation, contemplation), "tokpa" (*rtogs pa*: direct insight, actual understanding, spiritual realization), "tön" (*don*: aim, benefit, import, intent, meaning, purpose, reason, sake, advantage), "mikme" (*dmigs med*: absence of a specific reference, nonreferential focus, unreifiable), and many more, have a spectrum of meanings that make a translation also a task of interpretation and selection. This polyvalent semantic mark sets a high value on an esoteric religious or philosophical work, and it is the translator's responsibility to make a right choice in every instance so as to convey the significance of the original text as reliably as possible.

There are different ways to attempt this. I have tried to disclose the convoluted (*driil*) style of the text, at the same time capturing its style and substance by searching for a



balance between the *letter (tshig)* and its *spirit (don)*. I have also endeavored to be consistent with the translation of the technical terms throughout the book, to yield coherence and continuity to the work. In this sense, the present translation can be considered rather literal, or at least literal enough to be used also as a possible tool to learn some Buddhist Tibetan, by checking the translation against the original text. It is in part with this aim that a CD-ROM containing a corrected version of the Tibetan text, both in Tibetan script and in transliteration (to make the computer search function applicable to the Tibetan text), is included in this volume. To facilitate a correlative reading, the Tibetan page numbering has been kept in the translation. Moreover, a lexicon with a selection of words and phrases excerpted from the translation is found at the end of the volume.

In regard to the import of the teachings of *Spiritual Advice*, they range from the lower to the highest levels of the tantric medium (*mantrayāna*), as structured by the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. Namely, from the Performing Yoga (*kriyāyoga*) to the Supreme Yoga (*atiyoga*) – notwithstanding the fact that neither Atiyoga nor Dzogchen are explicitly mentioned in the text. Therefore, these spiritual instructions apply to all levels of tantric practitioners, as they cover both the basic practical advice and the subtlest insights of Buddhist metaphysics.

A number of paragraphs in Part Two, for example, show that a text like this was meant not only for expert practitioners, but also for those entering the path of tantric practice. The sense of the ordinary spreads from particular passages, which also throw some light into the life of eighth century (or at least fourteenth century) Tibet.

Diaphanous explanations are given to unfold the basic nuances of some crucial Buddhist concepts, such as that of the Three Bodies (*sku gsum*): «The fruition resulting from the spacelike state of nothing-whatsoever is the so-called Body of Dharma. The Body of Perfect Bliss that results from the spacelike state of the Body of Dharma is like clouds appearing under the countenance of the Bodhisattvas of the Ten Stages, adorned with the major and minor marks of enlightenment. And the Body of Emanation is like rain that falls in countless emanations...» (Part Four). Or like the notion of Buddhahood (*sangs rgyas*): «The enlightened mind of the Buddhas is unerring, uncontrived and free from limitations – the awakening from the flaw of deluded sameness, and the unique expansion of intrinsic awareness and primordial gnosis» (Part Five). Also included are precious definitions of types and categories of religious practitioners and philosophical

concepts: lay devotee (*dge bsnyen*), novice (*dge tshul*), fully ordained monk (*dge slong*), regular monk (*btsun pa*), virtuous guide (*dge ba'i bshes gnyen*), yogin (*rnal 'byor pa*), tantric practitioner (*gsang sngags pa*), scholar (*mkhas pa*), detached adept (*zhig po*), bodhisattva (*byang chub sems dpa'*), faith (*dad pa*), diligence (*brtson 'grus*), generosity (*sbyin pa*), core instruction (*gdams ngag*), view (*lta ba*), meditation (*sgom pa*), conduct (*spyod pa*), sublime gnosis (*shes rab*), learning through hearing (*thos pa*), reflection (*bsam pa*), result (*'bras bu*), and solitary place (*dgon pa*) (Part Seven).

We might raise a brow on the subject of the feminine principle, tangentially referred to in one or two places. Unquestionably, a varying degree of male-centrism is a charge that can be made against practically any religion – including Tibetan Buddhism. The point here is that the main addressee of *Spiritual Advice* is "man," man as opposed to woman; and the same applies to the majority of Tibetan religious literature. This does not imply, of course, that this or other books are written exclusively for man or address him only, but simply that they have the male as their first reference. A likely reason for this is the central role traditionally played by the male monastic body – and its predominance over the female one – in all Buddhist communities. The generalized male-centered trend in religious literature and iconography is most probably a consequence of this also. Returning to Tibetan Buddhism, it is only in the higher expressions of its tantric teachings that the masculine and feminine principles hold a totally equal position. There, we can even find some instances where a potential superiority of the latter is extolled: «O *yogini* who has mastered the Tantra, | The human body is the basis of the accomplishment of wisdom | And the gross bodies of men and women are equally suited, | But if a woman has strong aspiration, she has higher potential» (see Keith Dowman, *Sky Dancer: The Secret Life and Songs of the Lady Yeshe Tsogyel*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984, p. 86). To partly obviate this ancient cultural shortcoming of male bias, I have alternated the gender of the personal pronouns whenever possible.

The Bon religion, along with divinatory arts, is mentioned *en passant* in the text, in a discrediting way. It is well known that "Bon", as a term to designate the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet, was hardly used before the tenth and eleventh centuries. That this term occurs in the present treasure-text can then be taken as a clear indication that, at least in the way it has reached us, it is more a fourteenth century – if not later – redaction of the original treasure-trove than the alleged eighth century version of it. This mention of Bon and the divinatory arts can also be interpreted as a general reference to the body of ancient popular Tibetan beliefs, and not necessarily as a specific allusion to the

institutionalized religion, known today by the title of Yungtrung Bon, which came into being around the turn of the first millennia.

We also find Padmasambhava scolding the Tibetans in a rather paternalistic way and calling them «mischievous, uneducated, uptight, and fickle.» In fact, Guru Rinpoche is addressing the predominant type of people he is believed to have met when he visited Tibet towards the end of the eighth century, before the Buddha's teachings were effectively widespread in the country.

In closing, I would like to express my thankfulness to those who, in different ways, helped me to bring this translation to light. A special debt of gratitude goes first to Joan Kaye, Sky Dancer Press' inspiring soul. A knowledgeable practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism, she did not only take care to polish my English, but above all she followed, with interest and intuitive acumen, the steps of my translation. It was a pleasure to work with her. I am deeply indebted also to Sharon Raddock, for her most generous contribution in sponsoring my work and her kind and lasting support. *Khenchen* Palden Sherab and *Khenpo* Tsewang Dongyal bestowed upon me the precious gift of placing their wisdom at my disposal to check out a few, particularly obscure points in the Tibetan text. Needless to say that any eventual mistakes in the translation are to be attributed only to my limited expertness. Last, but not least, I wish to remember the late William Hinman, who initially funded the publication of this book.

Ramon N. Prats

Barcelona, December 2003

*Spiritual Advice*

*FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE HEART*

#

## PART ONE

### ***Homage to the Gurus, Devas, and Dakinis – Hum!***

He who personifies the Three Bodies and the Five Primordial Gnoses, the holy Lord who originated from the totally perfected intentionality and enlightened mind of all the Victorious Ones, is Padmasambhava, the Abbot of Uddiyana. He bestowed the following spiritual advice from the essence of his enlightened mind – teachings that ascertain the actual character of nirvana and samsara, the roots of enlightened beings and sentient beings.

Thus he said:

«Generally speaking, all phenomena exist in our mind. The inherent nature of mind is without any basis or root, is free of unity and multiplicity, and is not even established by its intrinsic essence.

When this is realized in full, without distortion, the existential aspect of Buddhahood and its primordial gnosis, constituting the Body of Dharma that is beyond suffering, [are also realized]. When the field of appearances is not intuitively realized, the bodily conditions of sentient beings and the various miseries of samsara {3} are manifest.

The sublime gnosis is to recognize that all these appearances have an insubstantial nature. The skilful method consists in not obstructing appearances. When this is intuitively realized, the dimension [of the Absolute] and intrinsic awareness [co-emerge].

Intrinsic awareness is free from conceptual elaboration. Quite so, if one intuitively realizes the coalescence of the Absolute and the spirit of awakening, one is a Buddha. If

one does not intuitively realize it, one is a sentient being. If one contemplates it, this is nirvana. If one does not, this is samsara.»

### **Advice for Removing Misconceptions at Once**

«By recognizing appearances as mental [projections], the misconceptions about the external world are removed. Being [aware that] mind [is] insubstantial, misconceptions concerning the internal world are removed.

By intuitively realizing that there is no dichotomy between outer and inner, as it is essentially empty, misconceptions concerning the view are cut.

By being in a state of unobstructed clarity, misconceptions concerning the meditation are cut.

By intuitively realizing that the Absolute is neither good nor bad, misconceptions concerning the conduct are cut. Do not hope for a high [state as] Buddhahood, {4} do not fear a low [state as] samsara.

By recognizing that hope and fear are groundless, misconceptions concerning the result are cut.

By being lucid, present and versatile,<sup>1</sup> misconceptions concerning spiritual experience are cut.»

### **Advice for Instantaneously Perfecting Either the Six or Ten Transcendences**

«[1] By not grasping mind-as-such in any way, so that [mind] issues all facts, the Transcendence of Generosity is perfected.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Bun ne long nge shig ge*. It can be interpreted as "having a direct experience of mind" (oral information from Khenchen Palden Sherab and Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal).

[2] By abiding in equanimity, so that mind-as-such dwells in an unborn state with nothing to safeguard, the Transcendence of Self-Discipline is perfected.

[3] By freeing mind of anger, so that mind-as-such is uncontrived, the Transcendence of Patience is perfected.

[4] By not being distracted by dullness or agitation for even an instant, the Transcendence of Diligence is perfected.

[5] By abiding without fluctuation in the meaning of mind-as-such, the Transcendence of Meditative Stabilization is perfected.

[6] By unmistakably recognizing that established conventions are free from any basis of designation, the Transcendence of Sublime Gnosis is perfected.

[7] By making perfectly clear the impossibility of establishing certainty, the Transcendence of Primordial Gnosis is perfected.

[8] By transcending dualism, the Transcendence of Spiritual Aspiration is perfected.

[9] By subjective mind being inactive, so that mind-as-such can naturally arise, the Transcendence of Skilful Method is perfected.

[10] By becoming one with the universe in the absence of any experience whatsoever, the Transcendence of Power {5} is perfected.

Thus the Ten Transcendences are instantaneously perfected.»

### **Advice for Instantaneously Progressing Through the Five Paths**

«[1] By intuitively realizing that mind has neither a beginning nor an end, the Path of Accumulation is perfected without progressing.

[2] By intuitively realizing that mind has neither error nor obscuration, the Path of Connection is perfected without progressing.

[3] By intuitively realizing that mind is neither clear nor obscured, the Path of Insight is perfected without progressing.

[4] [By intuitively realizing that mind has nothing to obtain nor give up, the Path of Inner Cultivation is perfected without progressing.]<sup>2</sup>

[5] By intuitively realizing that there is no Buddhahood to establish apart from mind, [the Path of No More Learning]<sup>3</sup> is thoroughly perfected.

This is the spiritual advice for instantaneously progressing through the Five Paths.»

### **Advice for Self-Perfecting the Three Bodies**

«[1] By abiding without fluctuating, like space, mind-as-such is the Body of the Absolute.

[2] By intuitively realizing that the spirit of awakening is unobstructed, the Body of Perfect Bliss is spontaneously accomplished through the nonobjective primordial gnosis.

[3] By the arising of total intrinsic awareness in the great, unobstructed natural play of mind-as-such, is the Body of Emanation.

This is the spiritual advice for journeying to the blissful state of the Three Bodies.»

### **Advice on the Basis, the Path, and the Result at One Stroke**

«The inherent nature of the basis of being is uncontrived. Being spontaneously accomplished, the basis [of being] is primordial Buddhahood.

---

<sup>2</sup> This line is missing in the original.

<sup>3</sup> Missing in the original. Sometimes, "Path of completion" is used instead of "Path of no more learning or no more training."



The gradual path does not stray, {6} it is clear and unobstructed. Being spontaneously accomplished in actual thinking, the path is manifest Buddhahood.

The result, without accomplishing or excluding anything, is [that of] the Three Bodies. Being spontaneously accomplished, the result is manifest Buddhahood.

This is the spiritual advice on the basis, the path, and the result at one stroke.»

### **Advice for Surpassing the Nine Gradual Mediums<sup>4</sup>**

«When the effort caused by clinging to subject-object [dualism], in emotion and reason, naturally clears away, mind-as-such dwells in a state of uncontrived creativity, and the ordinary individual's speculation also naturally purifies.

When the effort caused by clinging to the extremes of everlastingness and annihilation naturally clears away, mind-as-such also naturally purifies from the effort of clinging to the extreme heretical positions of everlastingness and annihilation.

When the phenomena of object-subject [dualism] naturally clear away, mind-as-such also naturally purifies in the Medium of the Listeners.

When the effort to contemplate on the phenomena of dependent origination naturally clears away, mind-as-such also naturally purifies in the Medium of the Independent Buddhas.

When the effort to realize one's ultimate meaning naturally clears away, mind-as-such also naturally purifies from all mental effort.

When the swing between [focusing on absolute and relative] truths naturally clears away, mind-as-such also naturally purifies in the [Medium of the] Middle Way.

---

<sup>4</sup> The "Nine gradual mediums" (*theg pa rim pa dgu*) here listed do not correspond with the more conventional series made up of the Mediums related to Listeners (*nyan thos*), Independent Buddhas (*rang sangs rgyas*), Bodhisattvas (*byang chub sems dpa'*), Performing Yoga or Performing Tantra (*bya ba'i rnal 'byor*, *bya ba'i rgyud*), Behavioral Tantra (*spyod pa'i rgyud*), Yogic Tantra (*rnal 'byor rgyud*), Great Yoga (*rnal 'byor chen po*), Subsequent Yoga (*rjes su rnal 'byor*), and Ultimate Yoga (*shin tu rnal 'byor*).

When the effort to realize the pure Absolute naturally clears away, mind-as-such also naturally purifies in [the Medium of the] Performing Yoga.

When the root of the magic of blessing naturally clears away, mind-as-such also naturally purifies in [the Medium of the] Yoga [Tantra].

When the effort of the total view and conduct naturally clears away, mind-as-such also naturally purifies in the [Medium of the] Middle Way. {7}

When the gradual process towards exalted concentration naturally clears away, mind-as-such also naturally purifies in [the Medium of the] Great Yoga.

When effort to contemplate [the union of the] dimension [of the Absolute] and primordial gnosis as being a gradual process towards exalted contemplation naturally clears away, mind-as-such also naturally purifies in [the Medium of the] Subsequent Yoga.

When the uncontrived Body of Dharma naturally rests in the spirit of awakening, however one behaves is the uncontrived Buddha intentionality.

This is the spiritual advice for being naturally released without abandoning the mediums.»

### **Advice That the View Can Be Open, the Meditation Can Wander, and the Conduct Can Be Natural**

«The intrinsic essence of discursive thought is the empty Body of Dharma. Discursive thought arises from the mind, hence one recognizes mind-as-such. By recognizing that samsara is produced by mind, one understands Buddhahood – which excludes nothing. This is what is meant by "the view can be open."

Discursive thought blazes in primordial gnosis, the Five Poisons to the spirit are naturally purified, and mind is insubstantial. By understanding that there is no formal meditation [to practice], this is what is meant by "the meditation practice can wander."

Without anger towards odious enemies, without face-saving toward beloved friends, and without clinging to material wealth, this is what is meant by "the conduct can be natural."

If you wish your view to be open, realize thoroughly that whatever appears is the Body of Dharma. If you wish your meditation to wander, do not manipulate your mind. If you wish your conduct to be natural, {8} cut off all yearning born from affection and attachment.

This is the spiritual advice on the importance of the view, the meditation, and the conduct.»

### **Esoteric Instructions for Attaining Buddhahood Without Leaving Any Remains of the Psychophysical Body**

«Meditate upon the insubstantial nature of the divine appearance of the Generation Stage personal tutelary deities, now that you are alive and have not died – in this transitory state between birth and death. Becoming accustomed to this, cultivate the diamond-like exalted concentration in a state of equipoise, and the illusion-like exalted concentration in the aftermath.

When equipoise and its aftermath become one, one's psychophysical body – generated by negative causes – becomes a rainbow body, which is neither alive nor dead, nor is composed of flesh, blood, etc. The body then dissolves into the expanse of the Absolute, and Buddhahood is attained without leaving any remains of the psychophysical body.

This is the spiritual advice on attaining Buddhahood without leaving any remains of the psychophysical body.»

### **Advice for Attaining Buddhahood with Remains of the Psychophysical Body**

«While remaining in equipoise, meditate upon the blissful and clear unelaborated Absolute. In the aftermath, meditate upon the illusory [nature of phenomena]. Becoming accustomed to this, the indivisibility of equipoise and its aftermath become sheer luminosity.

At the moment of death, after the external breath has stopped and before the internal pulse ceases, the sheer luminosity of the Absolute and the sheer luminosity born from meditative stabilization merge, and Buddhahood is attained having cast off the psychophysical body.

If one is incapable of attaining Buddhahood at the time of death, it can still be attained by first recognizing that one is in the transitory state of becoming – when the karmic traces produced by the force of {9} previous habits are awakened – and then recollecting the meaning of the Dharma teachings. If Buddhahood has not yet been attained, perceive the domain of the womb [in which to take rebirth], and your good residual karma will be operative for one lifetime. It is impossible not to attain Buddhahood in this way.

This is the spiritual advice for attaining Buddhahood with remains of the psychophysical body.»

### **Advice for Attaining Buddhahood Outside the Transitory States of Death**

«The transitory state of sequential knowing: In the transitory state when one knowing act has ended but the succeeding one has not yet emerged, the Absolute rises.

The transitory state of dream: In the transitory state when the ongoing discursive thought has ended and the dream-state has not yet occurred, the Absolute rises.

The transitory state between birth and death: In the transitory state when the perception of the world has ended and the subsequent body has not yet been taken, the sheer luminosity of the Absolute rises.

By recognizing [the Absolute] and determining to keep [this recognition], the sheer luminosity born out of meditation and the sheer luminosity that shines at the time of death merge and Buddhahood is attained outside the transitory states [of death].»

## **The Nine Combinations Necessary for Dharma Practitioners**

«[1] By combining view and scripture, no speculative thoughts contradict.

[2] By combining meditation and direct experience, one's mindstream is refined.

[3] By combining tantric [practice] and empowerments, the [two meditational] stages are perfected. This is a crucial point.

[4] By combining blessings and veneration, one envisions the Lama as a Buddha.

[5] By combining practical experience and direct insight, the basis becomes the path.

[6] By combining [the appropriate] conduct {10} and right timing, transcendent sublimation is enjoyed.

[7] By combining yogic accomplishments and sacred bond, whatever one wishes is fulfilled.

[8] By combining the fruit [of Dharma practice] and altruism, one is able to guide those with a good karma.

[9] By combining [the master's] advice and the Guru [Yoga practice], one accomplishes direct introduction into one's mindstream.

If one completes the Nine Combinations, whatever Dharma one practices – it will work.»

## **The Six Extraordinary Dharma Teachings**

«[1] The empty [nature of] the Absolute is not bound by witty arguments on its fundamentals. Therefore, do not cultivate an intellect that relativizes the essence of emptiness.

[2] The bare intrinsic awareness is not wrapped up in the garment of specific characteristics. Therefore, abandon mental attachment to the body.

[3] The natural condition of mind-as-such does not support attachment or aversion. Therefore, give up craving or pretence.

[4] In pure primordial gnosis, the intellect does not produce virtue or vice. Therefore, realize that virtue and vice are naturally released, without needing to accept or reject.

[5] The specific characteristics of natural liberation are not bound by the knot of the ego. Therefore, remain in natural liberation.

[6] In [the state of] primordial emptiness and primordial freedom there is no clinging to substantiality or characteristics. Therefore, remain in the state of self-awakening and self-purification.»

### **The Supreme Direct Introduction into Buddhahood**

«The direct introduction into [the nature of] mind is that appearances are empty. Mind is not ultimately established in any way; it is beyond the intellect. This is the direct introduction into the Body of Dharma.

The very [nature of] mind is sheer luminosity; being unborn it is absolute bliss. This is the direct introduction into the Body of Perfect Bliss.

In the very state of intrinsic awareness, {11} whatever becomes manifest in appearance is recognized as the field of appearances. This is the direct introduction into the Body of Emanation.

The Three Bodies are in us. Having recognized it, it is sufficient to point then out when they appear.

Viewing it this way, the viewing itself envisions [reality], and right then one attains liberation upon seeing.<sup>5</sup> The result is thus spontaneously accomplished. Free from hopes and fears, one is not reborn in a body, and upon dying attains the so-called Buddhahood.»

### **Advice for Discerning Buddhahood**

«Because mind-as-such is fully awake from the very beginning, it is neither associated nor disassociated [from Buddhahood]. Recognizing this without any conceptual elaboration is the view.

Whatever the Four Types of Activity<sup>6</sup> one performs in that state is uncontrived. Remaining in a natural state is the meditation.

Whatever Dharma practices one performs in that state, they are neither irrelevant to it nor have they any mental reference to it. This is the activity.

There is no reason to hope for high Buddhahood or fear for low samsara. Hence, the self-emergent, spontaneous, and unborn direct insight is the result.»

### **The Skilful Method for Attaining Buddhahood Without Meditating**

---

<sup>5</sup> This is one of the so-called "Six types of spiritual liberation" (*grol drug*): liberation through hearing holy teachings (*thos grol*), wearing amulets (*btags grol*), seeing holy images (*mthong grol*), remembering the Buddha's deeds (*dran grol*), tasting sacred medicine (*myong grol*), and touching holy objects (*reg grol*). Moreover, in his descriptive account of the *Rin chen gter mdzod* (vol. Kha of the compilation, ff. 185v-186r), Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas mentions other six types of liberation: liberation through practicing meditation (*sgom grol*), drinking holy water (*'thung grol*), practicing offerings and gifts (*spyad grol*), absorbing sacred substances (*myang grol*), smelling particular incenses (*tshor grol*), and keeping religious vows (*bslab grol*). Liberation through scent (*dri grol*) is also mentioned occasionally in Tibetan texts.

<sup>6</sup> The "Four types of activity" (*spyod pa rnam bzhi*): going (*'gro ba*), staying (*'dug pa*), lying (*nyal ba*), and moving around (*'chag pa*).

«Since one's mind is not established as substantial, there is nothing to meditate on.<sup>7</sup> Not even mind-as-such is substantial. It is beyond substance, characteristic or convention.

There is nothing whatever to meditate on, and not even a real object with specific characteristics to wonder about for even an instant. {12}

Do not consider "Buddhahood" as superior, and do not view "samsara" as defective.»

### **Advice for Attaining Buddhahood Despite Previous Negativities**

«Mind cannot be pointed out by saying "it is like this or like that," since is not even established in essence.

Since its intrinsic essence is inherently empty, the universal ground of being is not flawed by vice or virtue. Introspection into one's subjective mind ends virtue and vice, which produce the higher and lower realms of samsaric existence. This is because mind-as-such – spacelike – has nothing to meditate upon.

[Mind-as-such] is ineffable, devoid of a principle of consciousness or matter, nonreferential, and dissolves in the expanse of the Absolute. Being ineffable, it is beyond an objective expression of energy, and has no origin or end. It is the spirit of awakening. Being without vice or virtue, the universal ground of being transcends subjective mind.

In that state, there is no agent of meditation. There is not even a speculative thought in the time it takes to snap one's finger. And there is not even [mental] distraction in the time it takes to contract or stretch one's arms.

Rest firmly without meditating in the basic natural state. Abiding in this state even a little while at the moment of death, though one might have committed any of the Five

---

<sup>7</sup> Here, the Tibetan for "meditation" is *bhai*, a term that comes up frequently in the text but does not occur in the current Tibetan-English or Tibetan-Tibetan dictionaries. The term is synonymous with *bsgom* (oral information from Khenchen Palden Sherab and Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal), as it appears to be a corrupt form of *bhāvanā*, its Sanskrit equivalent.



Misdeeds causing an immediate karmic effect,<sup>8</sup> it is yet possible not to be reborn in a distressed body.

When intrinsic awareness vanishes in the state of the unelaborated Body of Dharma, Buddhahood is attained.

This is the spiritual advice that brings great negativities into the shortcut [of direct awakening].»

### **Advice Suitable to Instantaneously Transforming Ordinary Understanding**

{13}

«Just as the ocean is not carried away by wind, mind-as-such steadily rests, unmoving, in the still state of the Absolute. Just like the flight of a bird in the sky, [mind-as-such] steadily rests, leaving no trace. Just like the stroke of a sword in the water, [mind-as-such] vividly rests, leaving no trace.

Since the essence of whatever appears is [simply] mind, there is nothing to meditate upon. Since neither appearance nor mind has referential characteristics that can be analyzed, there is nothing to meditate upon.

There is nothing to meditate upon. Precisely this does not apply to the [ordinary] mind of sentient beings, but it does apply to the enlightened mind of the Buddhas.

This is the spiritual advice on transforming ordinary understanding into the enlightened mind of the Buddhas.»

---

<sup>8</sup> They are as follows: Killing one's father (*pha bsad pa*), killing one's mother (*ma bsad pa*), killing an arhat (*dgra bcom pa bsad pa*), causing dissention in the Buddhist monastic community (*dge 'dun gyi dbyen byas pa*), and drawing blood from a Tathagata with evil intent (*de bzhin gshegs pa la ngan sems kyis khrag phyung ba*).

## **The Mentation Possessing the Fifteen Aspects of Bliss That Unite the Intentionality of the Buddhas with the Mind of the Sentient Beings**

«[1] Recognizing phenomenal existence as mind is bliss arising from impartiality.

[2] Recognizing mind-as-such in everything is bliss arising from all conceptualization.

[3] There is nothing to reject or accept – this is bliss in equanimity.

[4] There is nothing that can be separated into parts – this is bliss in total nonduality.

[5] Spontaneous accomplishing is bliss in total effortlessness.

[6] There is nothing to object to – this is bliss in the state of equanimity.<sup>9</sup>

[7] Resting in an uncontrived state is bliss in inherent totality.

[8] Being free from the sophistry of the subject-object is bliss in the state of discursiveness.

[9] There is nothing to focus upon – this is bliss in the state of equanimity. {14}

[10] Mind-as-such is primordially awake – this is bliss in one's own state.

[11] One's inherent nature is spontaneously accomplished – this is bliss that has nothing to achieve.

[12] There is nothing else to take on – this is bliss in the great primordial beginning.

[13] The path has no entrance – this is bliss in the crucial point of nothing to arrange.

[14] There are no high or low places – this is bliss that needs no searching.

---

<sup>9</sup> "Equanimity" (*mnyam nyid*) is found also under num. 3 and 9.

[15] There is no transition and change in the basis [of being] – this is the bliss of abiding in one's inherent nature.<sup>10</sup>

This is the spiritual advice to possess the Fifteen Aspects of Bliss.»

Thus [Guru Rinpoche] said.

«Buddhahood is not separate [from the mind]. So thoroughly realize [the nature of] your mind!

Thoroughly realizing it is not sufficient, it is also necessary to integrate it in one's mindstream. So accomplish it eagerly!

Accomplishing it is not sufficient. Bring forth the signs of [spiritual] accomplishment!

Beware of being carried away by the devil of hindrances. So do not listen even to a teaching master if he contradicts the precepts to accomplish the supreme awakening!

The power and wealth one amasses in this lifetime are like an illusion. Next [life] will follow quickly. So accomplish the Dharma eagerly!

No matter how important and famous you are in this lifetime, if you do not accomplish something useful for your next lives, it is like being empty-headed. So endeavor to practice your Lama's core instructions!

[He or she] leads us on the various paths to liberation. So in the long time always rely on your Lama!

It would be a disgrace if there were no holy doctrine. So concentrate body, speech, and mind on the Dharma in this very lifetime!

The deceptions caused by a devilish wrong path {15} will [inevitably] arise. So be accurate and investigate in detail!

---

<sup>10</sup> "Inherent nature" (*rang bzhin*) is also mentioned under num. 7.

When overcome by strong doubts, one is overpowered by wrong views. So make the essence of your devotion stable.

Worthy ones of future generations, guard this spiritual advice like a mental jewel!»

*SACRED BOND*

#

## PART TWO

### ***Homage to the Gurus, Devas, and Dakinis – Hum!***

Having considered the benefit of future generations, the Mantra-Holder Padmasambhava – whose traditional teachings are endowed with blessings – conferred this garland of spiritual advice and practice to [*Khandro Yeshe*] Tshogyel:

«Listen, O worthy ones of future generations! It is very important to practice the Dharma accurately, from the depths of one's heart.

To practice the Dharma accurately, you must first find a Lama belonging to a [spiritual] lineage who is qualified, a virtuous guide who is totally reliable, who inspires confidence and is genuine – then you should request the Dharma teachings. If the Lama is improper, the advice will be wrong, the significance of your practice will go awry, and you will be in very big trouble. So it is extremely important to associate with a Lama who is qualified. Keep this in mind!

As to Lamas, they should never give advice to so-called disciples who are unsuitable recipients, since they do not have the required qualifying merits. Moreover, such students have no respect for their Lama. They want the Dharma skilful methods, but once they get them, they give them away to others without the proper connections. They trade on the river of profound advice. They do not properly observe the teachings of their [spiritual] lineage. {16} They do not practice this profound Dharma teachings and give it away. This is like gold dust sinking into a filthy swamp. These disciples are unworthy recipients for advice. Since they do not understand them and lack self-confidence, they cannot practice the Dharma. To give core instructions to unsuitable recipients is to reduce [the teaching] to mere letters and textbooks. Thus, when one expounds the Dharma it is most important that the ones who receive it know how to

preserve the profound teachings, so find out – by using many skilful methods – if the disciple has the proper mindstream. Keep this in mind!

Do not teach the Dharma to those who are extremist. They do not understand the core instructions and lack [the ability to uphold] the authorized transmission of the lineages – or they go astray, since they do not integrate their mindstream with the Dharma. Expounding the Dharma to one attached to [mere] words and sophistry, degrades it. Through the karmic ripening of such behavior, negativity is accumulated in the person's mindstream. By degrading [the Dharma], anger is generated and negativity is accumulated. No one should accumulate negativity. Do not trade in the profound instructions, diligently practice in solitude, and integrate the Dharma with your mindstream!

Some persons revel in worldly vanity and fame, and pretend to practice the Dharma teachings, which they allege to have received and understand, but [in fact] they neglect the main [aim of Dharma] practice. {17} They are [like] Dharma traders. They revel in vanity and fame, in food and riches, getting thereby little respect. Although the Dharma contains strictly sealed doctrines, these people mix them with phony ideas and explanations. Do not rely on students and friends who go around trading in the Lamas and the Dharma. It is pointless [to possess] the best elixir and refuse to take it oneself or give it away to those who do not care about it. Blessings will not ensue when the teachings of the profound Secret Mantra are distorted. Having disturbed the dakinis, [who are like our] mothers and sisters, hindrances will arise. Keep this in mind!

To the worthy individuals having a good residual karma, by having previously practiced [the Dharma], to those who strive from the depths of their hearts [to intuit] its ultimate significance and who practice diligently, [to them only] the quintessence of the instructions should be extracted and bestowed. Moreover, envisioning [one's Lama] as a Buddha is [an act of] deep veneration. Through envisioning the core instructions as elixir, self-confidence is generated. Being free from mental hesitation and ambivalence, one envisions the precepts and the scriptures as precious gems, and the actions of samsara as [spiritual] poison. Strive to accomplish what is significant for the future. By envisioning the aims of this lifetime as insubstantial, one is capable of enduring great hardship to accomplish the unsurpassable enlightenment. {18} Those who are not overlaid with faults like ambition, vanity, competitiveness and so on, are the superior and holy spiritual children of the Victorious Ones. Having given them the most profound

instructions, like filling up a vessel, the aim of both oneself and others will be attained. Keep this in mind!

On the path to accomplish the supreme awakening in one lifetime, if one does not prevent hardships from arising, one strikes the cause for religious practice. So, it is very important to exert oneself in practice. Therefore, when the Practice of Dharma begins, do not distance yourself from hardships or you will not be able to endure idleness or indolence. Thus, in right timing, such as an auspicious month, in summer-time or fall and the like, under auspicious planets and constellations, on the new or full moon, on the eighth day of the Tibetan month and so on,<sup>11</sup> go to a solitary place – such as a charnel ground, a snow mountain, a site made sacred by an accomplished adept, a forest retreat – and prepare a mandala, arrange the holy supports to body, speech, and mind,<sup>12</sup> set up an altar, present offerings of propitiatory cakes to the local ground and water numina, godlings and so forth. Perform rites of libation, to prevent them from causing hindrances, and command them to help in good [practice].

Tread the path of Dharma practice in the morning, in the evening etcetera. Make offerings to the Lama and the [Three] Jewels, address reverential petitions [to your religious lineage], and offer propitiatory cakes to your personal tutelary deities, dakinis, and Dharma protectors. As an auspicious connection to prevent the loss of yogic accomplishments, keep the front of the stand for the propitiatory cake facing you – not outwards – and then cast it off. {19}

If you take all that happens in your daily life as though it appeared in a dream and not manipulate these appearances, you will remain at ease, in a natural state. Then you will rest in a naturally liberated, lucid and objectless [state of] clear perception. At dusk, bring intrinsic awareness into the path. In the evening, uplift your mind – prevent it from losing consciousness and becoming torpid – and keep it sharp, clear and open. At midnight, merge your sleep and the Absolute, sleeping in a state free from recollection. While dreaming, recognize dreams [as no more than dreams], and make an effort to see them objectively. In this way, even in dream, you will be mindful of the Absolute and will be naturally liberated from both happiness and sorrow. At dawn, upon

---

<sup>11</sup> These are particularly propitious days according to the Tibetan calendar.

<sup>12</sup> The so-called "three supports" (*rten gsum*) are, respectively: Images of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Lamas, etc.; scriptures; and stupas.

awakening, by applying the Absolute to the path you will feel a temporary condition of physical pleasure. Then, meditate distinctly and clearly on the self-emergent Absolute in [a state of] objectless luminosity. Prevent bad habits and idleness, and strive to extend practice and meditate.

Also, until realization is attained, do not wear someone else's clothes. Such defilement causes one's realization to fade.

Indulging in rich food one is dominated by afflictive emotions. When the food is poor, one lacks vigor and cannot practice austerities. So, balance the quality [of your meals] and regulate yourself. Do not eat food given by those who are morally faulty – such as a sacred pledge breaker, a mourner for a spouse, a killer of a family member, a thief, or a vow breaker – or possessed by evil spirits. By eating such food one's realization is delayed, one does not attain completion, {20} and hindrances arise.

Do not move your sitting cushion to another place. Your spiritual realization and full commitment [would suffer]. If you move your seat, the auspicious signs of progress [in your practice]<sup>13</sup> will fade, and unpleasant consequences will suddenly emerge.

If you perform protection [rites] for others, your own power will dissipate. So do not perform protection [rites] or exorcisms for others.

Do not wear fancy clothes or wash your body. Your yogic accomplishments will fade and disappear. If you cut your hair and nails or shave, the keenness of your mantras will decay, so do not do it.

Do not teach the Dharma from inside your religious retreat, for you will not realize the signs of spiritual accomplishment. Do not make promises like saying "I will maintain my commitment for a long time." This brings in devilish [influences] – so continue and maintain [your commitment]. Chatting with others will not help your mantra [recitation] – so be silent. Reading the tantric charms of Vajra Dakini in a loud voice will weaken your power, and will terrorize minor beings, causing them to faint. So, recite your mantras correctly in a whisper.

---

<sup>13</sup> The corporeal and mental signs gained from practicing.



Lying down and placing the rosary on your chest to recite [mantras], restrains your [recitation]. Whereas, by keeping the body upright, its channels and vital energy strengthen – causing the [energy] to flow upward. When flow and intrinsic awareness are integrated, [the vital energy] flows upward. Then intrinsic awareness becomes the reference point for whatever is needed for a pliable exalted concentration. So, it is very important to be extremely careful about bodily posture, {21} the Five Values of Meditative Stabilization,<sup>14</sup> and so forth.

Do not sigh. Do not spit out spittle or snot, except when performing the rituals to extinguish, avert or subjugate [negative forces]. Engage in clear mantra [recitation]. Do not swallow your spittle or snot, as it would affect your voice.

Do not sleep during the day. There are many flaws connected to this. So, restrain yourself by all possible means!

Until you attained realization, [worldly] activities are a distraction. Do not be involved in actions that profoundly disturb and agitate your body, speech, or mind. Whatever are your [present] accomplishments, strive for excellence, so that you can bring it to completion. Whatever are your signs of accomplishment – good or bad – or your paranormal experience, do not make any analysis of them, accepting what is pleasant and rejecting what is unpleasant. A yogin's mind should settle down in its own place, and then continue steadfastly in the practice.

When your ascetic and realization practices are fulfilled, you should also gradually perform offerings of thanks. Moreover, after the completion of your seclusion, you should maintain your retreat at least for some days, and do not wander about in crowded places, countryside, etc. For three full days, do not lie anywhere else but on your own cushion. Do not be seen by anyone who has not the same sacred bond connected to your practice of realization. Do not show others the instruments used in your practice. Do not give away the substances of yogic accomplishment,<sup>15</sup> but enjoy them yourself.

---

<sup>14</sup> I could find no reference to this numerical category (*bsam gtan chos lnga*).

<sup>15</sup> "Substances of yogic accomplishment" (*ngos grub kyi rdzas*) are the elixir of spiritual immortality (*bdud rtsi*), sacred medicine (*sman rdzas*), propitiatory cakes (*gtor ma*) etc.

From the time you begin until the time you finish the practice of realization, {22} under no conditions suddenly leave your religious retreat. Be aware that succumbing to circumstances is a devilish obstacle.»

Furthermore:

«The yogin who persists in propitiatory and realization practices should not have a disordered life, eat food carelessly, wear dirty clothes or someone else's patched clothes etc., or sleep above the floor. His or her bodily excretions should be kept private. The yogic practices should not be undertaken at wrong moments, etc. So, in all situations it is most important to be extremely careful how one behaves.

Generally speaking, if you wish to be happy, practice your disciplines and so on first. Then, having risen above your own suffering, alternate your day and night [practice] accordingly. If you prevail in your religious practice, happiness will follow in the long run. Keep this in mind!

Those whose practice is to realize the unsurpassable enlightenment should stretch their commitments. Without knowing [how to do it], they can be carried away by devilish obstacles. Thus, do not waste your religious instructions. Having made a commitment to practice strictly, the time comes for you to put this into practice. [Then you can accept] others' services, homage, and offerings, as well as their protection, etc. However, if you are swayed by the opinions of others or if you spoil yourself through food and drink, the advance of your practice of virtue will stop. This being so, until you have achieved stability and gained spiritual maturity, generate altruism and reject [temptations] with the proper antidotes. {23}

Commit first [to practice] for a week, then for half a month in winter, later for a whole month in summer, and so on, and know how to prolong it. Twelve years or more is the greater [commitment], six years is the medium, and three, two or one year the least commitment. Anyhow, if you are incapable of this, try for six months, or for a summer or a winter. Without being lazy or idle, if you establish your body, speech, and mind exclusively to virtuous activities, and if you practice strictly, the benefits that follow will be great. This is the way to complete the paths to supreme awakening.»

Furthermore:

«Taking on too many commitments and making promises that cannot be kept is a primary cause of harm. Stay consistent with your own capabilities, make promises that are feasible, and take on commitments that are practicable. To follow this through is profound. Keep this in mind!

As you continue these unspoiled religious instructions and practice them, refraining from regular speech and maintaining silence is most important. There are many distractions of speech, such as pointless chatter and babble, which ruin virtuous practice. The practice of silence is the most sublime of all religious retreats. Even being in a crowd makes no difference. Regardless of how many austerities you practice, the capacity to maintain silence is extremely important. But even if you cannot accomplish that much, try by all means to maintain silence until your retreat period is completed, no matter what your religious practice. {24} If you can maintain silence in the performance of your religious practice, without the interruption of extraneous words, your speech will become powerful and your realization will take place quickly. Furthermore, it is unnecessary to speak much about things not related to Dharma practice. However, if you remain silent but do not perform activities to accomplish the supreme awakening through speech – like mantra recitation etc. – it is the same as being dumb. Keep this in mind!

When meditating upon your personal tutelary deity, it is very important to have the intention [to realize] its enlightened body, speech, and mind in a state of equipoise. Henceforth, when your body appears in a divine form, it is clearly devoid of an inherent nature. This is the state of equipoise of the enlightened body. When speech and recitation [of mantras] are indivisible, this is the state of equipoise of the enlightened speech. When subjective mind is free from discursive thoughts, clarity and emptiness are indivisible. This is the state of equipoise of the enlightened mind. Do not transgress the state of equipoise of the enlightened body, speech, and mind, for that is the object of Mahamudra. *Om* is enlightened body, *ah* enlightened speech, and *hum* enlightened mind. By regularly reciting these [three seminal sounds, that are] the essence of the enlightened body, speech, and mind of all the Blissful Buddhas, you become one with them. Furthermore, to remain inseparable with the enlightened body, speech, and mind [of the Blissful Buddhas], is a decisive [factor] in the unerring path of the Secret Mantra. Keep this in mind!

It is also very important to maintain the appropriate number of [mantra] recitations. Therefore, do three or four sessions of recitation practice each day, {25} according to the length of the recitation. So, make a commitment [accordingly] for ten thousand [mantra repetitions] by day and ten thousand by night, or a thousand by day and a thousand by night, or five hundred by day and five hundred by night etc., or at the least one hundred by day and one hundred by night. Until this is accomplished, do not interrupt your [mantra recitation] with ordinary speech, so that hindrances do not arise.

Put this advice into practice through constancy – like a flowing stream – in the integration of the generation and consummation stages, and in the propitiatory and realization practices. This is an unmistakable doctrinal feature. By integrating the generation and consummation stages, and by realizing propitiatory and realization practices, all aspirations – like purifying obscurations,<sup>16</sup> gathering accumulations,<sup>17</sup> wishing to clear hindrances or to quickly attain the Two Yogic Accomplishments<sup>18</sup> – and so on, are conveniently consummated. Moreover, the three seed syllables – which are the essence of the enlightened body, speech, and mind of all the Blissful Buddhas – are included in all the propitiatory and realization practices. Very great blessings are conferred by committing yourself to these [seed syllables], or by appending them when you begin your mantra recitation. On the other hand, even an ocean is formed drop by drop. So, it is very important to reinforce your continued recitation of mantras and seed syllables, without pause. One single period [of mantra recitation] is a primary cause of realization. Keep this in mind!

If skilful method and sublime gnosis {26} are not integrated, the Secret Mantra may take you on a mistaken path. In other words, "skilful method" means that the meditation practices of the generation and consummation stages have unmistakable significance. As to "sublime gnosis," it means that unless you realize the full significance that the self-emergent luminosity of the empty [nature of the] Absolute is the view, you are not treading on the path of sublime gnosis. Therefore, you cannot develop direct experience

---

<sup>16</sup> "Two obscurations" (*sgrib gnyis*) are usually mentioned: the obscuration of afflictive emotions (*nyon mongs pa'i sgrib pa*) and the obscuration related to the objects of knowledge (*shes bya'i sgrib pa*).

<sup>17</sup> The "Two accumulations" (*tshogs gnyis*) are that of religious merits (*bsod nams kyi tshogs*) and that of primordial gnosis (*ye shes kyi tshogs*).

<sup>18</sup> The "Two yogic accomplishments" (*dngos grub rnam gnyis*) are announced as the "supreme yogic accomplishment" (*mchog gi dngos grub*) and the "ordinary yogic accomplishment" (*thun mong gi dngos grub*), namely the accomplishment of nirvana and the attainment of paranormal powers, respectively.

of the sublime gnosis apart from skilful method. In the same way, the skilful method alone, unconnected from sublime gnosis, cannot give you first hand [experience of] the Absolute. So, it is necessary to integrate them, without separating the two. If you detach skilful method from sublime gnosis, you are like a one-winged bird – incapable of flying. Keep this in mind!

If you do not understand that the state of equipoise and its aftermath are nondual, you will not be able to abide in emptiness. Therefore, stay in equipoise, without speculating upon the self-luminous insubstantial essence of phenomena. Finally, while in the aftermath [of the state of equipoise], thoroughly realize that the void is absent of any inherent nature whatsoever. Clinging and attachment are absent in the direct experience of the void. The state of [meditative] equipoise and its aftermath are nonexistent, since their inherent nature is devoid of any mental reference or characteristic. They are like clouds, fog, etc., which naturally disperse and dissolve in the wide-open expanse of the sky. Moreover, the state of [meditative] equipoise and its aftermath are not characterized by clarity or dimness. They are just one, like a mirror and its image. Keep this in mind! {27}

If you do not know how to naturally release dullness and agitation, even your meditation will ultimately fail. When the Absolute is established naturally, whenever dullness, agitation etc. [occur, just] through direct observance, the real condition of dullness becomes itself empty. When dullness and agitation are purified by not clinging to external appearances, the extremes of dullness or agitation are not slipped into but acquire a natural clarity. Conversely, your meditation will arise [unobstructed] if you know how to naturally release dullness and agitation. Whatever meditation practice is established through dullness or agitation becomes an intellectual practice. It is very important to fully realize that the root of dullness and agitation is empty [in itself]. Keep this in mind!

If you do not know how to cope with ordinary activity, you will be bound to sessions of formal meditation. The Absolute is free from elaboration. Remaining in equipoise will give you some experiences of your mindstream. While going, moving around, lying, staying etc., practice wherever you are. Since everything you do relates to your way of life, abide in the state of the causal Absolute, and you will be free from cultivating sessions of formal meditation. Even those immersed in meditation but who have failed

[to realize] the crucial point concerning meditation, constrict their bodies and minds, and so remain entrapped. Keep this in mind!

You will not remove your karmic obscurations if you restrict yourself to performing offering rituals or the formalities of confession. [Properly] practicing religious instructions is known as "bringing to the path of Dharma practice." Therefore, once you have entered upon the undefiled path of performing Dharma practices – like meditation, making offerings, {28} circumambulating, making *tsatsa* images,<sup>19</sup> offering propitiatory cakes, reciting [scriptures], asking for explanations, and so on – do not stop these activities. And most importantly, do not practice through the door of habituation and fatigue. Moreover, if [your practice is] not complemented by a nonreferential focus, whatever you do will merely produce the pleasant fruits in samsara, and will never become a path to supreme awakening. So, whatever you do – like practicing virtuous activities with body, speech, and mind, making offerings, or performing elaborated [rituals] – it is most crucial that it be done in a state free from mental reference. Keep this in mind!

If there is no display of auspicious signs of progress when practicing the Dharma, it is because you have not thoroughly carried out the [deeper] sense of the instructions. Otherwise, inner signs would arise – such as bliss, clarity, and nonconceptuality. Being free from the clinging to that reality which retains afflictive emotions, discursive thoughts become naturally liberated. Blessings then will flow freely and spontaneously, and will manifest in your body and speech. Then you will be capable of cutting through afflictive emotions and adverse circumstances –trampling them – and you will not be deceived by negative and evil influences. These are the intermediate signs that secure the blessings of Dharma. Once you are liberated by untying the knot of ego-clinging, you dissociate from the Eight Worldly Concerns.<sup>20</sup> This is the outer sign. Besides, if you do not have a good Dharma master, you will not be able to generate self-confidence. So, it is very important that you plant the wondrous lotus of the unbroken lineage of lamas and accomplished adepts. {29} Keep this in mind!

It is impossible to know which instructive advice is [most] profound. Even a single word of profound advice sown in a worthy disciple by an outstanding Lama, and put into

---

<sup>19</sup> Small clay figures of deities, lamas, stupas, etc.

<sup>20</sup> On the "Eight worldly concerns" (*'jig rten chos bgyad*) see Part Six.

practice, will generate his self-confidence, and will bring about a noteworthy result. Since your mind is completely permeated by an unborn luminosity, do practice unceasingly! On the other hand, when the Dharma master is good, her profound advice is always present. Keep this in mind!

Whatever the Dharma teachings, if you do not practice them for the sake of sentient beings, this will not even lead you to the listener's [medium]. By practicing religious instructions for the sake of all sentient beings, the [real] purpose of Buddhahood is put into practice. The accomplishment of altruism is part of the extraordinary medium.<sup>21</sup> Desiring only one's own happiness refers to the inferior medium.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, those who only seek their own bliss, and practice to realize merely their own benefit, will hardly attain bliss and happiness. Therefore, it is most important to practice altruism. The accomplishment of altruism will naturally bring about one's own benefit, without having to seek it. Keep this in mind!

All roots of goodness that one may have developed will wither unless one's practice is complemented by unconditional compassion. The roots of conditioned goodness {30} do not stretch far enough and are exhausted. The roots of goodness are not exhausted when they are accompanied by a dedication [of merits] that is unconditional. This is the primary cause for unsurpassable enlightenment. What is the meaning of "unconditional"? [Unconditional] refers to the absence of any mental reference to the ego, absence of any mental reference to the person, and absence of any mental reference to the roots of goodness. Abandon them, in equanimity, as though they were empty! A conceited dedication [of merits] is an erroneous dedication. The conceited roots of goodness produce conceited dedications [of merits] – and these roots cannot increase. All in all, it is most crucial that the three spheres<sup>23</sup> are thoroughly purified. Keep this in mind!

[Even] one single root of goodness outshines any other [means] if wisely applied as a skilful method. Therefore, once you have gained skill as well as a command of all [of your Lama's] instructions, by connecting them to the ultimate aim [of your practice],

---

<sup>21</sup> Namely the Mahayana.

<sup>22</sup> Namely the Hinayana, usually known as "Lesser medium" (*theg dman*).

<sup>23</sup> The "Three spheres" (*'khor gsum*) are the subject or the giver, the object or the given, and the action or the giving, or, in this case, the ego, the roots of virtue and their dedication.

and by sealing them with the unconditional dedication [of merits], the [negative] habit of considering objectively substantial reality will be overcome with brilliance. This, more than any other Dharma teaching, will develop the roots of goodness. In brief, the roots of goodness are inexhaustible and multiply unceasingly into higher levels until unsurpassable enlightenment is attained. It is most crucial to persevere in performing dedicatory deeds, without a specific focus or trail. Keep this in mind!

No devilish hindrances will obstruct you, if you associate with the right companions. {31} Therefore, meditate with steadfast devotion on the appropriate qualified Lama, constantly [feeling his presence] on the top [of your head], and address your reverential petitions to him. Join with the right spiritual companions having the same sacred bonds, and stay unconcerned with worldly ambitions and material goods. In this way you will apply yourself diligently to develop the roots of goodness necessary to your next life. The proper instructions are incontrovertible. Lamas and adepts must rely on the profound Dharma teachings of the generation and consummation stages in which they have a first hand experience, and put them into practice. If you are not separated from these three,<sup>24</sup> devilish hindrances will not obstruct you. Moreover, by taking your own mind as witness, diligently perform worthy deeds for the Three Jewels, which constitutes a positive and permanent goal. Keep this in mind!

In practicing the Dharma, one should lay a good foundation. So, firstly, if one has not accumulated enough [merits and gnosis], he does not encounter a Lama endowed with [the proper] core instructions. If one does not have good residual karma from the practice of previous [lives], she does not understand the Dharma. If one does not have exceptional faith and respect, he does not fully realize the Lama's good qualities. If one does not observe an ethical restraint or the sacred bonds, the roots of Dharma deteriorate. If one is not guided by practical instructions, she does not know how to meditate. Without diligence nor effort, one cannot practice virtue properly. {32} If one is not repulsed, from the depths of his heart, by the things of samsara, he does not bring the Dharma to completion. But if one combines all of these [factors], the Dharma will ensue. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate the various causes and conditions to realize the unsurpassable enlightenment. So, be diligent! In brief, giving up what must be given up, and practicing all that needs to be practiced, apply yourself and do not leave your

---

<sup>24</sup> That is to say, the appropriate Lama, suitable companions and right instructions.



body, speech, and mind<sup>25</sup> in their ordinary condition – the result will be good! Keep this in mind!

It is not sufficient to brag that you know the Dharma – it must be instilled into your mindstream and practiced. Enhance your understanding of the view, and you will not be mistaken about the Dharma. Secure the stronghold of meditation, and the significance of all dharmas will integrate in your mind. Generate an understanding that liberates your conduct, and both your view and conduct will not contradict each other. Be confident in the result, and you will become one with the Absolute [that transcends] samsara. Know how to preserve the sacred bonds, and you will observe the Three [levels of] Vows.<sup>26</sup> If you practice in this way, your Dharma practice will not err. But if you are unskilled in maintaining your practice, there is no point to mere Dharma words. Keep this in mind!

In this time when the degeneration of the present aeon has started, certain people – who claim to be Dharma practitioners – want to explain it to others without having first liberated themselves. They ask others to meditate without having practiced meditation themselves. They pretend to liberate others without having become liberated themselves. {33} «Practice generosity!» they say to others, but they themselves are not free from selfish interests. They clearly explain other's good or bad qualities, without knowing why their own actions have a good or bad quality. They hunger for the welfare of living beings, but have themselves no self-control. They are charlatans who want to encourage others, but have themselves no self-confidence. If one considers all of this in terms of Dharma, there seems to be many who swindle, cheat, mislead, or deceive. They do not have the clear perception of an acharya,<sup>27</sup> yet they are arrogant.

Look and consider the Acharya Padmasambhava's spiritual testament, written down for those in future times who wish to practice Dharma! Look at the flaws of suffering in samsara! Having actually beheld the impermanence of all things material in this life, from your depths, turn your mind around! Listen to the biographies of previously accomplished adepts who undertook hardships! Search for a qualified Lama with faith

---

<sup>25</sup> Literally "Three doors" (*sgo gsum*). They are the three functional levels of a human being: **physical**, psychic and spiritual, corresponding to body (*lus*), speech (*ngag*) and mind (*gid*) respectively.

<sup>26</sup> The "Three vows" (*sdom gsum*) are those for individual liberation (*so sor thar pa'i sdom pa*), which correspond to the Hinayana; those of the Bodhisattva (*byang chub sems dpa'i sdom pa*), for the Mahayana; and those of the Secret Mantra (*gsang sngags kyi sdom pa*), for the Vajrayana.

<sup>27</sup> Sanskrit *ācārya* (*slop dpon*): A preceptor in charge of tantric studies and practice.

and devotion, and fulfill his wishes by paying him respect with your body, speech, and mind! In the beginning, do not be overly familiar with him, or treat him as an equal, and cut through any misconceptions when listening to and contemplating his teachings! Later, directly engage into practice, and diligently and energetically manifest it! Finally, integrate it in your mindstream, so that they are a remedy for your afflictive emotions! Always observe your sacred bonds and monastic discipline flawlessly! {34}

Do not postpone your practice of virtue nor make it sporadic. Bring your body and speech into complete balance right away! I, the Acharya, want you to achieve [yogic] accomplishments – so you are not allowed any distraction! Once you have envisioned the suffering of sentient beings – who are tormented by the things of samsara, its delusions and afflictive emotions, and their own negative karma – you will feel like crying bitterly, will feel despair and fear, and will develop an intense compassion. [Many sentient beings] have gained a human body. Still, they will not achieve supreme enlightenment in one lifetime, because they see that happiness and sorrow are the result of the positive and negative karma respectively yet do not practice and take refuge in each meditation session. [They are obsessed with] the things of this life, [puffed up with] arrogance, and revel in competition and distraction – this is how they accumulate negative karma. They are hopeless and insensitive, as if they had been attacked at their hearts by a harmful virus, and are deceived by evil companions. From the depths of your heart place your trust in the Three Jewels and practice to reach the supreme enlightenment in one lifetime. In this way you cannot be deceived by the Jewels, and suffer for want of food and clothing. Those who say, «I have no food and clothing for practicing the Dharma,» «I have no opportunity to take refuge or to do religious practice,» or «I do not have the time [to practice],» they are carelessly fooling themselves.

Your sense faculties are still clear and you have the time, yet you do not exert yourself to achieve the supreme enlightenment. But time remaining is going to be swept away really fast by the wind of karma. {35} When actual death overwhelms you, and you come into the presence of the evil Lord of Death, all kinds of mental flashbacks will occur simultaneously to you. This is going to happen to you someday. Keep this in mind!»

Furthermore:

«Alas! At the nadir of your fortune, worms will attack you from within [your body], you will spew vomit, and your eyeballs will become defocused. There is much misery by the time the human body suffers its final exhaustion. In recollecting this, the Acharya's eyes are distressed. But, since the negative karma of sentient beings is so strong, it is hardly possible to do anything about it. You, future, powerful ones, followers [of mine, listen!] There are no deceptive words in the writings of the Acharya Padmasambhava. Therefore, be without regret at the moment of death, so that you can fulfill your wish! Be true to yourself, and be endowed with an enlightened attitude for yourself and others!»

This "Spiritual advice from the depths of the heart" was thus bestowed.

*SACRED BOND*

#

## PART THREE

*Epitome of the series of the enlightened mind*

### ***Homage to the Gurus, Devas, and Dakinis – Hum!***

The king protector of the Dharma, Trisong Detsen, offered to the Great Preceptor Padmasambhava various precious jewels – his personal life-supporting turquoise, a blazing Meru,<sup>28</sup> a cat's-eye stone, jewels with inlaid stones, etc. Then he arranged a heap of turquoise on a golden mandala [plate], {36} offered it to him, and making praises he asked:

«O Great Preceptor! As to the cause, in order for the sentient beings to fulfill the accomplishment of Buddhahood – which is the effect – first they must cherish the "view possessing actual understanding." So then, what is "view possessing actual understanding"?»

Padmasambhava replied:

«The pinnacle of all views is the series of esoteric instructions on the essential spirit of awakening. Therefore, the billionfold world systems, the Blissful Buddhas of the ten directions, and the sentient beings of the Three Realms, all of them are actually but one. They are united in the essential spirit of awakening. As to the so-called "ordinary mind," it emerges in a myriad of sentient beings, beyond the exercise [of their will].

---

<sup>28</sup> Probably a model of Mount Meru or Sumeru, the *axis mundi* of Buddhist cosmology, which rises in the center of a universe. It is surrounded by four cosmic continents, the southern one of which is Jambudvīpa, our own world. Identified by Tibetans with Mt. Kailash (*gangs ti se*), a pyramidal mountain in Western Tibet.

This being so, is there any difference between a Buddha and a sentient being? The only difference consists in having or not having an actual understanding of ordinary mind. The primary cause of Buddhahood is within yourself, but you do not recognize it. And without recognizing [the nature of one's] mind, one wanders in the Six Existential Streams.

Does there exist any skilful method for obtaining an actual understanding of mind? In this regard, you need a Lama's core instructions. Moreover, as mind, memory, intrinsic awareness, and meditative experience are really one, do not look externally for the mind, but focus within. Search the mind within mind-as-such. Ascertain the inherent nature of mind. Look first from where does it originate, where does it dwell, and finally where does it go? In this regard, if you look at your own {37} mind, you will not find its source, place or destination. Mind cannot be pointed to, since it is not something to be seen externally or internally, and because it has neither a periphery nor a center. The great fruitional primordial gnosis is primordially empty, primordially free, and overarching. Primordial gnosis abides inherently in itself – it has not been produced now. To recognize that the void abides directly in itself, this is the view. Completely eliminate any gaps!

As for such so-called "indwelling confidence": It is like space, because it is naturally present from the outset. It is like the sun, because it is without a dark spot of spiritual ignorance. It is like a lotus, because it is not sullied with imperfections. It is like gold, because its essential nature is nontransmutable. It is like an ocean, because it is stable. It is like a huge river, because it is incessant. It is like heaven and earth, because they are inseparably united. And it is like Mount Meru, because it is unmovable and unalterable. When one has thoroughly realized the meaning of these analogies and has fully established [oneself in them, this is what] is called "view possessing actual understanding".»

Again, the King asked:

«What is "meditation possessing direct experience"?»

Padmasambhava replied:

«As regards "meditation possessing direct experience": Mind-as-such is uncontrived, undefiled, simple, natural, genuine, and loose. It does not wander off, nor does it withdraw into itself, but remains aimless. Be in the state of the great equipoise of the Absolute, like a butter lamp {38} unagitated by wind. As to such direct experience, [it results in] a state that is without knowledge [yet it is] overflowing, constant, blissful, clear, and nonconceptual. In this state, appearances are hazy and unfocussed. When it no longer accords with worldly activity, this is a sign of spiritual experience. But whatever the case, do not consider such signs as something exceptional, nor cling to them at all. This analogy is what is called "meditation possessing direct experience".»

Thus he said.

The King asked:

«What is "conduct possessing the quality of sameness"?»

To this, the Preceptor replied:

«As to "conduct," it is meditating without interruption. There is nothing upon which to meditate while going, moving around, lying, and staying in general, but you should not be forgetful either. It is like a great river, which is unceasing. "Quality of sameness" means that whatever [object of] the Five Sense-Pleasures – which correspond to the Five Psychophysical Constituents – you happen to envision or happen to appear, you remain free from attachment or clinging to them, since they pertain to the Absolute. Therefore, whatever the case, it is like visiting a precious Land of Gold and not accepting or rejecting [any of the pleasures found there]. This is precisely what it meant by "conduct possessing the quality of sameness".»

Again, the King asked:

«How does one cut through the ambush of fluttering discursiveness?»

Master Padmasambhava replied:

«In whom are generated the discursive thoughts when you are in a state of equipoise? They are all generated in your mind, by yourself. Mind has no essence whatsoever. The

primary cause for emerging discursiveness is essentially empty. For example, just as clouds arise and then dissolve in the sky, {39} discursive thoughts arise in the mind and then dissolve in the true nature of mind. Discursive thoughts have the inherent nature of the Absolute. As for cutting through the ambush [of discursive thoughts] fluttering as different memories, by focusing one's awareness on this [point], empty thoughts will not harm the empty mind at all – just like a thief in an empty house [cannot steal anything]. This is what is called "cutting through the ambush of fluttering discursiveness".»

The King asked:

«How does one establish an unmoving confidence in the result?»

The Preceptor replied:

«The spirit of awakening is not generated by any primary cause. It is not suppressed by any circumstances. It is not made up by an arcane Buddha. It is not something contrived by any skilful sentient being. It exists inherently from the outset. When you recognize this through the Lama's esoteric instructions, the ancestors of the Buddhas turn out to be like sentient beings. It is like recognizing an old acquaintance. Having attained stability in such a condition, even all the Buddhas of the Three Times<sup>29</sup> realize Buddhahood in such manifest state. Therefore, it is like a prince who has finally come to the royal seat – he is no longer anxious or apprehensive. Buddhahood is spontaneously accomplished from the outset. This is what is known as "result possessing confidence".»

Again, the King asked:

«How does one cut through the extremes of deviation and defect?»

The Master replied:

«When the dichotomy between hope and fear occurs, this is a defect of the conceptual view, since it lacks actual understanding. In the [state of] intrinsic awareness of the

---

<sup>29</sup> Namely the Buddhas of the past, present and future.

unborn spirit of awakening, {40} there is neither hope of attaining Buddhahood nor fear of falling into sentient existence.

When the dichotomy between meditation and meditator occurs, this is a defect of mind-as-such, since it has not stopped churning out [thoughts]. There is no object of meditation in the Absolute, which is beyond conceptual elaboration, and there is no agent performing meditation. Neither is there any need to meditate. So it is said.

When the dichotomy between acceptance and rejection occurs, this is a defect of not having cut through attachment. Mind-as-such is primordially empty and primordially free, and attachment to what is to be accomplished or aversion to what is to be rejected, both are absent from it. Acceptance of good qualities and rejection of imperfections are also absent.

Being attached to material things is a defect of not knowing how to use them on the path [of realization. Instead,] by using any [material thing] not referentially and without grasping at it, one understands how to sever the root of attachment and clinging.

To put it succinctly: The view is without clinging, the meditation dwells on nothing, the conduct<sup>30</sup> is not based on experience, and the result is free of attainment. Aside from this, there is nothing other that the Buddhas of the Three Times did teach, do teach, or will teach. This is called cutting through the extremes of deviation and defect.»

Thus he said.

King Trisong Detsen asked again:

«How does one clarify the faults concerning certainty?»

The Master replied:

«Even though you realize that your mind is fully awakened, do not give up the Lama. Even though you fully realize that [all] appearances are mental [projections], do not

---

<sup>30</sup> The text has "direct experience" (*nyams myong*), likely a scribal oversight in the well-known series of view (*lta ba*), meditation (*sgom pa*), conduct (*spyod pa*), and result (*'bras bu*).



stop the practice of virtue. Even though you have no expectation of Buddhahood, do not give up making offerings to the divine beings and the [Three] Jewels. {41} Even though you have no fear of samsara, restrain yourself from even subtle negativities. Even though you acquire a deep meaning of the immutable Absolute, do not overrate or underestimate any Dharma teaching. Even though such good qualities as clairvoyant knowledge and exalted concentration arise in you, give up pride and conceit. Even though you understand the nondual nature of samsara and nirvana, do not stop being compassionate with [all] sentient beings.»

Thus he said.

Once more the King asked:

«How does one generate certainty?»

The Master replied:

«By generating certainty that mind is fully awake from the beginning; by generating certainty that all phenomena are manifestations [of the mind]; by generating certainty that the result dwells only in oneself, not somewhere else; by generating certainty that the Lama is an actual Buddha; by generating certainty that the actual state of the view and the meditation is the purport of Buddhahood. You should practice in such a way.»

Now the King asked:

«What is a religious lineage endowed with esoteric instructions?»

The Preceptor replied:

«Since Samantabhadra's<sup>31</sup> arcane message is absolutely extraordinary, the breadth of its purport is naturally disclosed [only] to those who have faith in it and intensely yearn for it. The [mere] enumeration of the successive [teachers of a] religious lineage, does not make you a charismatic recipient of such a lineage. Lacking faith [in the teachings]

---

<sup>31</sup> The archetypal Buddha of the Nyingma tradition, a symbol of universal positivity.

and not respecting [the teachers], even though you take on practice, you are exceeding the ninefold religious transmission.<sup>32}{42}</sup>

O mighty Lord! Rely on the expanse of the enlightened mind, you who are endowed with faith, the powerful teachings and religious experience!»

Thus he continued:

«O divine Lord! If you do not thoroughly realize the unique meaning of the nonarising nature of phenomena, life becomes as worthless as a bubble – though you are born with a royal body. If you do not take keen delight in the inconceivable Absolute, your might and kingship are like a rainbow display – it fades away. If you do not keep the companionship of self-emergent intrinsic awareness, it is as though your queens and subjects were visiting guests – all going their separate ways. If you do not meditate on the meaning of the abiding nature of view and meditation, the occurrence of birth and death are like the paddles of a waterwheel – they turn round and round in succession. If you do not look after your kingdom through the Dharma of inner peacefulness, no matter how strict your laws are, it is like a poisonous tree – it will ruin you.

Great King – enforce the law of Dharma! This is my advice.

O great King! At the end of time, everyone will wish to have good precepts [to follow], but no one will understand how to thoroughly realize them. People will not practice the precepts properly, yet many will claim to be Dharma practitioners. In those times, few will be accomplished adepts, but there will be many big babblers. Indians, Tibetans and Mongols will be like broken chain-mail coats – difficult to set right. It will be difficult {43}, at that time, to adjust to the Dharma and its teachings; so conceal them as

---

<sup>32</sup> The "Ninefold religious transmission" (*brgyud pa dgu phrugs*), associated with the Nyingma tradition, is usually enumerated as follows: (1) The intentional transmission of the Victorious Ones (*rgyal ba dgongs brgyud*); (2) the symbolic transmission of the Awareness Holders (*rig 'dzin brda' brgyud*); (3) the aural transmission of the individuals (*gang zag snyan brgyud*); (4) the transmission of the dakinis' seal of entrustment (*mkha' 'gro gtad rgya brgyud pa*); (5) the transmission of the written yellow scrolls (*shog ser tshig gi brgyud pa*); (6) the transmission empowered by way of aspiration (*smon lam dbang bskur brgyud pa*); (7) the transmission of compassionate blessings (*thugs rje byin brlabs brgyud pa*); (8) the transmission of prophetically declared charismatic succession (*bka' bab lung bstan brgyud pa*); and (9) the transmission of liberation through tasting sacred substances (*dam rdzas myong grol brgyud pa*).

precious sacred treasures. O Lord, you and your descendants will find them, in your terminal incarnations, by the power of your aspiration-prayers. At that time, do not let go of [these teachings], but practice them diligently. There is no better provision and reward!

[As to these teachings transmitted] for the benefit of living beings, keep them secret from [people who are] arrogant, who do not crave and yearn [for them], who are competitive or dissatisfied with their quality. Do not present the essence of the religious instructions to unworthy recipients. Yet, do not be mean or inconsiderate to those persons who are worthy recipients.»

Thus the Master bestowed this spiritual advice.

*SACRED BOND*

#

## PART FOUR

### ***Homage to the Gurus, Devas, and Dakinis – Hum!***

King Trisong Detsen addressed the following words of plaintive yearning to the supreme Body of Emanation, Padmasambhava:

«I beg you give us the core instruction for attaining Buddhahood at the time of death.»

The Master said:

«This is the advice for attaining Buddhahood through the Secret-Mantra shortcut, without experiencing the transitory state [of death, fit for those who accumulated] great negativities previously. Listen!

Through the contributory cause of spiritual ignorance and the power of karma, first we enter a womb and later we are born. We then live in this world only a brief number of years, and finally our psychophysical body is left behind at the time of death. The principle of consciousness is embodied again, through the power of karma, in one of the Six Archetypal Realms of Transmigratory Existence, {44} and we wander in samsara. In this regard, even if our present life is lived to its fullest extent, we cannot extend it past a hundred years. Furthermore, we spend half our life asleep at night – like a corpse – and through the power of deluding karmic traces directly experience happiness and sorrow in dreams. This leaves us fifty years at best. Moreover, morning through evening we are occupied with cooking, eating and drinking, and also are distracted with gossip, luxuries and material possessions. Aside from this, a person has no time to waste, since life is bit by bit consumed without one sensing it. This is the case if we manage to live to one hundred years; yet it is natural that we can be struck by death any time, from the very minute we are born. But we live instead as though we will never die, engaging in a variety of misguiding worldly concerns caused by attachment, aversion etc. There

are many unknown circumstances regarding death, and [though there are some] skilful methods to postpone it for perhaps one day, there is no form of life that does not flow down to death. Be certain that death is out of control!

Listen, King and princes! There is a superior, medium and inferior way of dying:

"To die like a king" means to die surrounded by the Three Subordinate Enjoyments,<sup>33</sup> since one with worldly concerns obsesses over what will be left behind. This is the inferior way of dying. Hence, it is most crucial not to have any attachment or clinging at the time of death. "To die like a beggar" is to die without retaining any material possession whatsoever. {45} This is the medium way to die. As to the so-called way of "dying like a wild animal," it is to die alone, as in a mountain retreat, without any thoughts of attachment or clinging. This is the superior way of dying.

There are also three ways to attain Buddhahood at the time of death:

Those of lower capacity accumulate [religious merits and primordial gnoses,] and later attain Buddhahood from their next life; those of medium capacity attain Buddhahood during the transitory state [of death,] due to their thorough training; and those of highest capacity attain Buddhahood without experiencing the transitory state [of death,] because of their spiritual realization.

Now, this is my advice for attaining Buddhahood without experiencing the transitory state [of death,] that is the aim of the Secret-Mantra shortcut. The root advice are illustrated by three statements:

[1] By discerning that all things externally perceived are coessential with space, you are freed from the root of the life-realms of the Six Archetypal Animate Existences in the external world.

[2] By cutting through to the root of the essence of the clear and empty internally-perceiving mind, all sentient beings of the world become freed from the root of birth – hence they bypass any empty womb.

---

<sup>33</sup> The "Three subordinate enjoyments" (*mnga' ris longs spyod gsum*) are those related to body, speech and mind.

[3] By thoroughly realizing that spiritual ignorance is not born [by itself], you cut through to the root of the Absolute – hence you are freed from the root of virtue and vice.

These are the three statements that glean advice [for attaining Buddhahood outside the transitory states of death].»

This was the Master's advice. Then the King asked:

«How can one ascertain that all things externally perceived are coessential with space? {46} How does one become free from the root of the life-realms of the Six Archetypal Animate Existences in the external world?»

The Preceptor replied:

«As to all things externally perceived, your current phenomenal vision is as vast as ten-million-billion<sup>34</sup> times Mount Meru and the Four Continents that surround it.<sup>35</sup> Your external perception of this is the phenomenal vision which manifests as a variety of soil, stones, mountains, rocks, plants, trees, woods, forests and the like. But all this is solely the result of not having fully realized the distorted [nature of] phenomenal vision.

The *Do Gongpa Dupa*<sup>36</sup> says:

"The intrinsic essence of [all] substantial entities is identical,  
Yet, there are six wrong views – for one which is correct  
And two forms of misapprehension."

[For instance:] Water is just one experience for us. But divine beings envision it as nectar; demigods, as armors or weapons; humans, as water; animals, as beverage; starving ghosts, as pus or blood; and hell beings, as melting copper. These are like the six wrong views – none of which is correct.

---

<sup>34</sup> 10,000,000,000,000,000.

<sup>35</sup> See Part Three, n. 1.

<sup>36</sup> This is the main text (*mdo dgongs pa 'dus pa*) of the Anuyoga class of Nyingmapa tantras.

Regarding the Two Misapprehensions, they are as follows. Heretics proclaim that both cause and effect are permanent, so that a deceased human being is [always re]born as a human being, a deceased horse as a horse and so on. Holders of the nihilist theory say instead that the body devolves into the first four protoelements and mind dissolves into space.<sup>37</sup> [They also affirm] that our present apparent condition is accidental, so that there is no [re]embodiment after death. This is what they say. But both conceptions are distorted.»

Hence you might wonder what is the [real] sense of the correct [view]. {47} It is [having] no [view in] particular. It is to get rid of all clinging. It means not to hold on [to anything] at all and not to fix your current phenomenal vision in any way (such as soil, stones, mountains, rocks, plants, trees, woods, forests and so forth), but also not to obstruct its [natural] appearance. By not establishing [things] as existent or nonexistent, the phenomenal vision will arise on its own; yet, it is empty, inherently empty, just like the essence of space. So, the intrinsic essence [of your phenomenal vision] is also inherently empty. It comes into appearance, but then it leaves – as it has no inherent nature.

By not getting involved in holding on to any phenomenal vision of such things [perceived as external], both affection and attachment are no longer generated. By eradicating the external world, there is no further [re]birth into the Six Archetypal Classes Of Transmigratory Existence. These Six Existential Streams are simply empty, because their phenomenal appearance is delusory – and when you are freed from delusion, there is nothing apparent to behold.»

This said the Master.

The King asked again:

«How does one ascertain the essence of the clear and empty internally-perceiving mind?»

The Preceptor replied:

---

<sup>37</sup> The five protoelements (*'byung ba*) are earth (*sa*), water (*chu*), fire (*me*), air (*rlung*), and space (*nam mkha'*).

«Once the internally-perceiving mind, clear and empty, has been ascertained, the matrix of mind remains empty and you become free from the root of continuous births. This is, approximately, what is called "internally-perceiving mind." [What you behold as] parents, siblings, children, wealth, enemies, friends and so forth, is just this. You might wonder then *what* holds on? It is the afflicted subjective mind. But when the root of subjective mind is cut off, it does not become established. Is there anything left then? {48} When there is no actual understanding that it is the subjective mind that overturns everything it creates, this is known as "flashing mind." When *this* is realized in full and ascertained, clarity [flows] unimpeded as one [stream]. This is what is called "mind-as-such," because it is not established in any particular way – which is again called "expanse of the Absolute." This is exactly what is self-manifested as unimpeded clarity. Yet, though it is manifest, it is not established in any particular way, since it is empty. Thus, by not holding subjective mind through any [referential] object or location – such as "father" and "mother," holding "father" as the primary cause and retaining "mother" as a contributory cause – [ordinary mind] is at an end. Then there is no need to worry about being [re]born from a matrix of any of the Six Archetypal Classes of Transmigratory Existence.»

The King then asked again:

«How does one, by thoroughly realizing that spiritual ignorance is not self-generated, cuts through to the root of the Absolute, and so eradicates virtue and vice?»

To this, the Preceptor replied:

«What does "spiritual ignorance" mean? It means not envisioning the significance of the Absolute. This must be thoroughly realized as unborn. And what does "unborn" mean? It means that mind-as-such is not established as having any intrinsic essence. Hence, intrinsic awareness – that is free of all elaborated characteristics – shines forth. This is "self-knowing by itself." And this is to realize the significance of "unborn," which means ascertaining the essential significance of the Absolute. This is what is known as "absence of karmic phenomena," generated either by virtue or vice. It does not matter if you have practiced virtue, as you should have no expectation as to achieving the fruit of Buddhahood; and it does not matter also if you have practiced vice, as you should have no fear of falling into the inferior or {49} hell realms of samsaric existence. To this



regard, [the final outcome] is overlaid neither with karma nor the ripening of karma. It is not intentional or contrived – as it is explained in practically all the major teachings.

In the expanded version of the *Prajnaparamita*<sup>38</sup> it is said that:

"The ultimate reality of all phenomena is just empty of inherent nature. Not even the ripening of karma exists."

The *Tshulgya Ngachupa*<sup>39</sup> states:

"Just like an exquisite red lotus  
Is not overlaid with impurities,  
In like manner, empty phenomena  
Are not overlaid with the negative karma of the Earth['s inhabitants]."

Moreover, in the *Namkha Che*<sup>40</sup> it is said as follows:

"Even though karma might be under control,  
Self-arisen primordial gnosis is not necessarily present."

It is said in the *Dorje Rirab Khangpa*:<sup>41</sup>

"Self is empty of self. Other is empty of other. Both are empty of both. Neither is empty of neither. None of these is empty of being limitless. [All these positions] are inauthentic, as they are totally speculative."

And in the *Sagaramatiparipiccha Sutra*:<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> It refers to the version of the *Prajñāpāramitā* (*shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa*) in eighty-four thousand verses.

<sup>39</sup> Text (*tshul brgya Inga bcu pa*) unidentified.

<sup>40</sup> This is the *Mi nub rgyal mtshan nam mkha' che* or *Rdo rje sems dpa' nam mkha' che*, one of the so-called "Eighteen tantras of the Mental class" (*sems sde bco brgyad*) of Dzogchen.

<sup>41</sup> Text (*rdo rje ri rab khang pa*) unidentified.

<sup>42</sup> The *Sagaramatiparipiccha Sūtra* (*blo gros rgya mtsho'i mdo*) of the Mahayana.

"The Mahayana sutras do not accord with the ordinary world. The reason is that mind-as-such is free from continuance."

Therefore, ascertain the significance of the Absolute by understanding that everything is [produced by] the deluding nature of your mind {50}. Thus it will free from the roots of virtue and vice.»

This said the Master.

Once again the King asked:

«How does one attain Buddhahood at the time of death, without experiencing the transitory state?»

The Preceptor answered:

«The yogin of higher mental capacity does not cling to the objects of past and future phenomenal appearances. Hence, having cut through the misconceptions about phenomenal appearances, these are naturally liberated – so the objects of phenomenal appearances in the transitory state do not arise. Then there is no [further re]birth in the external world. Because the internally perceiving mind is not established in any way whatsoever, not even in essence, samsara is naturally liberated. And since the transitory state is without a mental field, the gateway to the matrix of the Six Archetypal Classes of Transmigratory Existence is empty – so there is no cause for [re]births. When the yogin has released her body in the natural state of the Absolute, intrinsic awareness encounters space, and the development of positive or negative karma is extinguished.»

Thus said the Master. And the King asked once more:

«This being so, how does the fruition of the Three Bodies come about?»

The Preceptor replied:

«The foundation of the Absolute is ineffable. The fruition resulting from the spacelike state of nothing-whatsoever is the so-called Body of Dharma. The Body of Perfect Bliss that results from the spacelike state of the Body of Dharma is like clouds appearing

under the countenance of the Bodhisattvas of the Ten Stages, adorned with the major and minor marks [of enlightenment]. And the Body of Emanation is like rain [that falls] in countless emanations, {51} so that they benefit [all sentient beings] according to each one needs.

It is said in the *Thigle Bepai Gyu*:<sup>43</sup>

"From the very empty state [like] space  
A natural condition like that of water-bearing clouds is formed  
Which showers down like rainfall,  
So that plants, trees, woods, and forests are born.  
The Body of Dharma, which is inconceivable,  
Is the domain fully realized [through] the Three Yogas.<sup>44</sup>  
From it, the Body of Bliss comes forth,  
Which is the domain of the Bodhisattvas of the Mahayana.  
From it, the Body of Emanation comes forth,  
Which is the domain of worthy sentient beings."

This is the way of the arising of the fruitional Three Bodies.»

Thus said the Master.

«O, divine Lord! There is no time to waste. Put into practice the profound significance of the Absolute! But even though its purport is endowed with such a profound significance, keep cultivating the root of relative virtue. Whatever you do, fix it with the seal without reference point. If these precepts were spread now, they would be distorted. So, fix them with the seal [of secrecy] and conceal them as a sacred treasure for the sake of future generations.»

---

<sup>43</sup> Text (*thig le sbas pa'i rgyud*) unidentified.

<sup>44</sup> Namely Mahayoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga, forming up the "Innner tantras" (*nang rgyud*) or mediums of the Nyingma tradition. They focus on the practices of the "Generation stage" (*bskyed rim*), "Perfection stage" (*rdzogs rim*) and Dzogchen (*rdzogs chen*), respectively.

This is the precious spiritual advice bestowed to the mighty Lord and his descendants.  
I, Tshogyel, committed them to writing and hid them as a sacred treasure. May the  
worthy ones with a good karma, encounter them!

*SACRED BOND*

#

## PART FIVE

### ***Homage to the Gurus, Devas, and Dakinis – Hum! {52}***

An emanation of Buddha Amitabha, the Preceptor Padmasambhava, who became the holy epitome of skillful method and compassion, pronounced this crucial advice that condenses the purport of all the Victorious Ones.

#### **«The Crucial Point Concerning All That Appears and Exists**

It is subsumed in space. All protoelements change, and space is impermanent. In regard to its inherent nature, the protoelements earth, water, fire and air – [which dissolve] in the space of the Absolute – have a transient reality. So, they come forth, yet they come forth from space. They abide, yet they abide in the condition of space. And they dissolve, yet they dissolve in the condition of space. The inherent nature of space is immutable throughout the Three Times. All that appears and exists is subsumed in the condition of space. Thus, the import of space is that of being empty and immutable from the very beginning, [and at the same time] it is subsumed in the condition of the [previous] four protoelements. Yet, space is just an instance, its actuality being the space of the Absolute, which is empty from the very beginning. The signs [of phenomenal existence] are [like] clouds of karmic traces and afflictive emotions in the spacelike empty mind-as-such. Even though they are like mist, they come forth from empty mind-as-such. Then, they abide, yet they abide in the condition of empty mind-as-such. And they dissolve, yet they dissolve in the condition of empty mind-as-such. When this is thoroughly realized, you are not clothed anymore with the flaw of both karma and the karmic sequels of afflictive emotions. This is called "penetrating the crucial point concerning all phenomena that appear and exist." {53}

## **The Crucial Point Concerning the Eighty-Four Thousand Gates of Dharma Teachings<sup>45</sup>**

It is subsumed in the great truth of the Absolute. The other Dharma teachings are immutable and permanent. The great truth of the Absolute is naturally present from the outset, and the effortless uncontrived condition is subsumed in an unelaborated condition that is self-emergent and self-luminous. As to the eighty-four thousand Dharma teachings of the other mediums: They come forth, yet they come forth from the condition of the great truth of the Absolute. They abide, yet they abide in the condition of the great truth of the Absolute. And they dissolve, yet they dissolve in the condition of the great truth of the Absolute. Topical phenomena might change, but regardless of how they are expressed in words and how are taught by experts, the significance of the great truth of the Absolute is immutable. Therefore, the crucial point concerning all phenomena is to remain in effortless equipoise in the great truth of the Absolute. This is the crucial point concerning the eighty-four thousand gates of Dharma teachings.

## **The Crucial Point Concerning All Sentient Living Beings**

It is subsumed in the spirit of awakening. Matter and cognition transform into something else and are impermanent. As to the Four Types Of Birth<sup>46</sup> of sentient beings: At first, they come forth; yet they come forth because of having not thoroughly realized [the real nature of] mind. Next, they abide; yet they abide as sentient beings, for they do not thoroughly realize [the real nature of] mind. And finally, they revolve in samsara; yet they revolve like sentient beings, for they do not thoroughly realize [the real nature of] mind. If you search for the intrinsic essence of mind, it is the unborn {54} and originally pure self-emergent awareness. Buddhahood is found in oneself. As to the defining characteristics of mind: When they are thoroughly realized, Buddhahood is in the condition of equipoise of the creative expression of mind. In regard to the intrinsic essence of the spirit of awakening, being as it is immutable throughout the Three Times,

---

<sup>45</sup> A metaphor for the entire range of Buddhist teachings.

<sup>46</sup> The "Four types of birth" (*skye ba rnam bzhi* or *skye gnas rnam bzhi*): birth from a womb (*mngal*) or viviparous; from an egg (*sgo nga*) or oviparous; from heat and moisture (*drod gsher*), for insects; and miraculous (*rdzus*) or epiphanic.

this is the attainment of Buddhahood by all living beings. Inasmuch as the state of absolute awakening – which is the heart of transcendent blissfulness – pervades all sentient beings, it is called "thorough understanding of the spirit of awakening." When this is thoroughly realized, then it is called "penetrating the crucial point concerning all sentient living beings."

### **The Crucial Point Concerning All Primordial Gnoses**

It is [subsumed in] the self-emergent primordial gnosis. Other [kinds of] primordial gnoses change and are conventional. The self-emergent primordial gnosis arises naturally from the very beginning, while the significance of the Absolute consists in being self-luminous and unbiased. The self-emergent primordial gnosis is unfailing in knowing, in seeing and in the thorough realization [of reality]. Therefore, self-emergent primordial gnosis is lucid and its intrinsic essence cannot stand up to examination. This also applies to the root of primordial gnosis. Hence, the crucial point concerning all conventional primordial gnoses is also so subsumed. This is the root of all phenomena and primordial gnoses alike – which also abides [in reality]. That is why it is called "penetrating the crucial point concerning all primordial gnoses."

### **The Crucial Point Concerning Exalted Concentration**

The exalted concentration of the ultimate nature<sup>47</sup> neither mistakes the intrinsic essence of the significance of the Absolute {55} nor contrives the significance of the primordial state of being just as it is. The intrinsic essence of its significance comes upon that. There is nothing absent from all [the forms of] exalted concentration in the state of emptiness that holds the exalted concentration of the ultimate nature of *thusness*. How the different aspects of Dharma are subsumed in this state is inconceivable. In any case, there is nothing absent from the whole Buddha-mind in this effortless, primordially empty state of being just as it is. On account of this, it is called "penetrating the crucial point concerning all exalted concentrations."

---

<sup>47</sup> That of the "ultimate nature" (*de bzhin nyid*) is the first of the "Three exalted concentrations" (*ting nge 'dzin rnam pa gsum*), the other two being that of the "total appearance" (*kun tu snang ba*) and that of the "primary cause" (*rgyu*).

### **The Crucial Point Concerning All Abodes**

It is [subsumed in] the immutable expanse of the Absolute. Other abodes are impermanent. As for the sentient beings who thoroughly realize the immutable significance of the Absolute, for them, abode, time, lifespan, circumstances, karma and discursive thought change accordingly. The Absolute does not change [instead] through any circumstance or afflictive emotion at all. Hence, the good abodes of the Buddhas' empyreans and the bad abodes of the sentient beings' transmigratory cycle are not alike. So, because there is no specific reference whatsoever for the discursive thought to [dichotomize] good and bad, [the abode of the Absolute] is established as uncontrived and unseekable. That is why it is called "the abode of the immutable expanse of the Absolute." Once its significance has been thoroughly realized, it is called "penetrating the crucial point concerning all abodes."

### **The Crucial Point Concerning All Paths**

It is abiding by the path that has no traversing. Other paths change and are impermanent, but the path to supreme awakening has no traversing. {56} When one thoroughly comprehends the aim of realizing the significance of the nondual primordial gnosis that clarifies the empty expanse [of the Absolute, which is] the incontrovertible, authentic meaning of the intrinsic essence of the spirit of awakening, then the so-called path without destination or traversing [is trodden]. This being so, when the significance of neither going nor coming is thoroughly realized, the Adamantine Body [is attained], because there is no medium of realization that lacks the essential foundation of the Absolute – which is called "path." Being as it is imperishable, it is [also] called Buddhahood. That is why the actual understanding of the significance of this analogy is called "penetrating the crucial point concerning all paths."

### **The Crucial Point Concerning All Enlightened Bodies**

It is [subsumed in] the unchangeable Body of Dharma. All other bodies change and are impermanent. The Body of Dharma is not clothed with the flaw of a substantial entity or



specific characteristics, and has no appearance. The Body of Dharma is also indestructible no matter what the contributory cause, while all enlightened bodies mentally conceived change, such as the Body of Bliss and the Body of Emanation. A so-called "enlightened body" is an "enlightened body" on account of being unchangeable. Again, it is an "enlightened body" on account of being indestructible no matter what the contributory cause. [This is called] "thoroughly realizing and fathoming the significance of that [Body]."

### **The Crucial Point Concerning All Enlightened [Forms of] Speech**

It is subsumed in the crucial point concerning the insubstantial nature [of enlightened speech]. Other forms of speech change and are impermanent. All utterances by any sentient being are acknowledged as mere sounds, {57} that are ephemeral. When the significance of the insubstantial nature of the Absolute is thoroughly realized, any sentient being's utterance is accordingly realized as having no inherent nature – like an echo, which is empty, essentially empty. Therefore, it self-emerges unimpeded, in an empty condition. Hence, the import of its self-emergence is being without inherent nature. To thoroughly realize and fathom the significance of this is called "penetrating the crucial point concerning all enlightened [forms of] speech."

### **The Crucial Point Concerning All Enlightened Minds**

It is subsumed in the great awakening from the [state of] deluded sameness. Other enlightened minds change and are impermanent. The enlightened mind of the Buddhas is unerring, uncontrived and free from limitations – the awakening from the flaw of deluded sameness, and the unique expansion of intrinsic awareness and primordial gnosis. Ordinary religious mediums do not realize [the nature of] the sentient beings' mind, and those that make use of all relative and illusory phenomena are deluding. When the spirit of awakening is unerring and uncontrived, it is free from the limitations of effort. All [aspects of] Buddha-mind are subsumed in it. To thoroughly realize and fathom its significance is called "penetrating the crucial point concerning all enlightened minds."

### **The Crucial Point Concerning All Sacred Bonds**

It is subsumed in a plain state, as there is nothing to be observed from the outset. Other sacred bonds change and are impermanent. The spirit of awakening is free from defects and obscurations – it is pure and clear. {58} Therefore, since there are no qualities to be accepted and no faults to be rejected, the spirit of awakening is not accomplished in terms of something to be observed or someone who observes. So, as there is nothing to be neglected in this regard, there is no transgression about the significance of spiritual realization. This is known as the "plain state where no sacred bond is to be observed." As to the numberless ordinary sacred bonds or *samaya*, beyond any contradiction there is the maintenance of the sacred [bonds] one has to observe. To thoroughly realize and fathom the significance of this is called "penetrating the crucial point concerning all sacred bonds."

### **The Crucial Point Concerning All Enlightened Qualities**

[Enlightened qualities are those which] are entered through equilibrium. All other enlightened qualities change and are impermanent. As to the qualities of the spirit of awakening: The qualities of all phenomena arise from ordinary mind. When mind-as-such becomes pliable, just as a wish [is formulated], it is in your power [to accomplish it]. As if it were the precious wish-fulfilling gem, your needs and desires come about naturally. Conversely, the subtle qualities of a distorted knower are not in complete equilibrium. Therefore, it does not consummate your ends. When mind-as-such is pliable and stability is achieved, the consummate qualities of Buddhahood find a complete equilibrium. To thoroughly realize and fathom the significance of this is called "penetrating the crucial point concerning all enlightened qualities."

### **The Crucial Point Concerning All Enlightened Activities**

It is subsumed in effortless and spontaneous accomplishment. {59} All other activities change and are impermanent. The self-aware mind is uncontrived and spontaneously accomplished from the outset. If you exert effort and striving now, the intent of enlightened activity is missing, since it *is* already consummated from the outset. With regard to those who take delight in the phenomena of cause and effect, they [wrongly]

expect to accomplish Buddhahood as the result of effort and striving. "Establishing the enlightened activity without effort, your karma is exhausted. There being no ground to strive for, the Body of Dharma is accomplished." Thus it is stated. To thoroughly realize and fathom the significance of this is known as "penetrating the crucial point concerning all enlightened activities."

### **The Crucial Point Concerning All Secret Mantras<sup>48</sup>**

It is subsumed in the essential meaning of secret mantra. All other mantras are impermanent and change. As regards the essence of all secret mantras, it is self-awareness. The significance of [the coalescence of] intrinsic awareness and emptiness is universal. Yet, since it is not thoroughly realized by everyone, it remains hermetic. The core of its essential meaning is ineffable. Therefore, being uncontrived from the outset, its essence – which is sustained by the esoteric instructions on the significance of secret mantra – becomes the primary cause for accomplishing Buddhahood. That is why this is the essential meaning of the secret mantra. Expecting to accomplish Buddhahood by means of persevering in the meditation on deities and the recitation [of mantras], is to be ensnared by the desire for Buddhahood. Buddhahood is not accomplished by practicing with perseverance in order to realize its meaning; {60} the practice of realization would be otherwise ensnared by itself. Hence, if one is aware that [Buddhahood] is spontaneously accomplished in itself, then there is nothing to practice in order to achieve Buddhahood. To thoroughly realize and fathom the significance of this is known as "penetrating the crucial point concerning all realization practices."

### **The Crucial Point Concerning All Spiritual Aspirations**

It is subsumed in the [aspiration to an] absence of hope and fear. Other spiritual aspirations change and are impermanent. Keeping to the ordinary mediums of the doctrinal systems and engaging in them, it is [the same as] considering those two [namely, hope and fear]. Neither hope nor fear exists in the spiritual aspiration of the

---

<sup>48</sup> It seems suitable to remember that "Secret mantra" (*gsang sngags*) is an equivalent to both "secret tantric practice" and Tantrism.

Adamantine Medium of the Secret Mantra, just like the path of a bird [in the sky]. The Five Paths<sup>49</sup> need not be traversed – just enter the path of completion. This is what is known as "treading the path of Buddhahood without aspiring to it." The unerring significance of the spirit of awakening is the spontaneously accomplished nature of the expanse of the Absolute. As to its intrinsic essence, it is free from hope of attaining Buddhahood and fear of falling in samsara. Hence, apart from this primordially pure spiritual aspiration, traversing is absent from the outset. To thoroughly realize and fathom this is known as "penetrating the crucial point concerning all spiritual aspirations."

### **The Crucial Point Concerning All Meditations**

It is subsumed in the uncontrived state without meditation. Any other [form of] meditation changes and is impermanent.

In the state of nonmeditation, the meditation is free from thought and

The meditator abides in an uncontrived state.

There is no principle to meditate upon {61} and

There is no one who meditates.

To thoroughly realize that there is nothing whatsoever

This is the crucial point concerning authentic meditation.

Meditating by putting effort into the ordinary mediums of realization, you are bound by the mental reference of striving practice, hence you will not become liberated. Fathoming the self-luminous [state of] such [form of] meditation is known as "penetrating the crucial point concerning all meditations."

### **The Crucial Point Concerning All Modes of Conduct**

---

<sup>49</sup> The "Five paths" (*lam Inga*) are the stages on the way to enlightenment, according to the Prajnaparamita literature. They are the path of accumulation (*tshogs*), connection (*sbyor*), insight (*mthong*), inner cultivation (*sgom*), and no more learning or no more training (*mi slob*). This last is often replaced by the path of completion (*mthar*). See also Part One.

It is the absence of a [particular] mode of conduct. Other modes of conduct change and are impermanent. By remaining relaxed in your own condition, behaving effortlessly, karmic actions are exhausted. As to definitely engaging in subjective mind and karmic propensities, this is the mode of conduct [based] on the phenomena of cause and effect of the ordinary mediums of realization, which is proper to ordinary or unwholesome sentient beings. You might wonder then what is the mode of conduct free from both hope and fear. Even though you engage – as generally occurs – in all factors of existence, by remaining effortlessly in equipoise you will be freed from desire for striving practice. So, whatever the apparent and recollected [worlds], remain in effortless equanimity. Such is the [enlightened] conduct of all the Buddhas. To thoroughly realize and fathom this is called "penetrating the crucial point concerning all modes of conduct."

### **The Crucial Point Concerning All Results**

It is subsumed in authentic, perfect Buddhahood. All other results change and are impermanent. Authentic perfect Buddhahood is released from the extreme positions of everlastingness and annihilation. {62} Thus, as it transcends the domain of all substantial entities, it is immutable and has no origination or cessation. Hence, there is nothing to abandon or attain.

"The very Body of Dharma, entirely pure,  
Is intrinsic essence in itself, indivisible from its own manifestation.  
Appeared in the state of the Absolute, of intrinsic awareness,  
Is the sign of unhindered result,  
Self-existing and self-accomplished."

So it is said.

Conversely, the desire to achieve anything other than fruitional Buddhahood is of the ordinary mediums of realization, which do not explain how to become spiritually liberated. To thoroughly realize and fathom the significance of this [statement] is known as "penetrating the crucial point concerning all results".»

This spiritual advice on the crucial point of all Buddhas' purport has been bestowed to Yeshe Tshogyel for the benefit of future living beings. It has been recorded by the Lady of Kharchen as recollected notes.<sup>50</sup>

*SACRED BOND*

---

<sup>50</sup> Lady of Kharchen ("Great castle") is another name of Yeshe Tshogyel.

#

## PART SIX

### ***Homage to the Gurus, Devas, and Dakinis – Hum!***

The wish of the so-called Great Preceptor Padmasambhava, the very upholder of the life-pillar of all the Buddhas' teachings, was that once the people of Tibet had entered the gates of the Buddha's teaching, they would take refuge in the Three Jewels. Yet, if they still were disinclined [toward the Dharma] and in case some hard or similar circumstances were to occur, he conferred the following spiritual advice on conduct to the hard-hearted ones who trusted in divinatory arts, Bon and the like.

«Tibetan religious people of the degenerate age, keep this in mind! {63}

All Dharma teachings you practice have great meaning. You must practice for a particular benefit to ensue. Whatever fearful situation arises, recall the objects of refuge – the Three Jewels. When you walk, move around, lie down, sit, etc, recollect also [to visualize your] Lama on the top of your head.

If you lack the spirit of awakening, the root of all Dharma teachings of the Mahayana will rot. Therefore, do not digress from generating the attitude to attain the sublime awakening. If you become stingy while practicing generosity, you will be born as a starving ghost. Therefore, practice generosity however small, but do not slide into stinginess. If you generate sexual passion while practicing chastity, you will be born in the hell realm of rotting corpses.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, do not indulge in sexual passion and in sexual intercourse. If you generate anger when meditating on patience, you will directly experience the suffering of being fully consumed in the blazing flames of the iron

---

<sup>51</sup> One of the eighteen hell realms (*dmyal khams bco brgyad*) of samsaric existence, according to Buddhist mythology.

vessel.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, do not digress from the armor of patience. If you slide into laziness or indifference while practicing for unsurpassable enlightenment, [you will...]<sup>53</sup> Therefore, do not become overpowered by laziness or indifference for even an instant of your life.

The day and night cycle stands as a symbol of this life's burning up. Keep this in mind!

When you are engaged in straightening out your religious activity, it is extremely important to fully dedicate, six [times] day and night, [the merits derived from your] religious observances. {64} Lying unconscious like a corpse is even more doltish than being an ox. Not to practice the Dharma once you have attained this [precious] human condition is like being a leper – whose seminal energy is lost. Not to avoid the ripening of the definite causation of positive and negative karma is insane. When a bad ripening occurs, even if a subtle one, you should know that a suffering about the size of Mount Meru [will be experienced]. Recall this to mind!

It is extremely important to care about virtues, even small ones, as though they were your own heart. There is no difference between the karma of killing [a small sentient being] and that of killing your own parents or children. If you have lust when seeing a woman, you will be born as a uterine parasite. Therefore, do not digress from the antidotes of renunciation.

If you consider taking the possessions of others that are not given to you, you will be born destitute and dejected for many aeons. So, in this very lifetime, take care of your own things – and be like a sentinel who is watching suffering. Bad karma constituents are like residual tendencies. But do not feel disheartened. Even the Exalted Shakyamuni had been Bhaskara first, a potter's son. You, instead, are proud and arrogant for having a personality with just very minor qualities to show off. The Exalted Buddhas are omniscient and possess unfathomable qualities, but they have no conceit whatsoever.

Performing rites of divinatory arts, Bon [etc.], which bring about unwholesome circumstances, {65} and taking refuge in the secular world instead of relying upon the

---

<sup>52</sup> The iron vessel (*lcags kyi khang sgrom*) refers to the triangular receptacle used in the performance of fire rituals.

<sup>53</sup> Missing in the original.



Three Jewels, these are signs of having developed a wrong view on the Dharma precepts of the Mahayana. Therefore, do not profane the teachings.

Whatever suffering arises, such as disease, think of it as karmic retribution of former lifetimes and cleansing from bad karma. Whatever blissful happiness arises, this is by the graciousness of the Three Jewels. Therefore, if you greatly hope for compassion, gratefully cultivate a wish for faith and devotion.

When anger towards your adversaries arises, think, "they are holy friends [helping me] cultivate patience." Consider them also like envoys dispatched by the Victorious Ones. When you feel loving kindness and affection for your beloved ones, *these* are the ties of samsara. Thus, think, "these fetters are hindrances to achieving unsurpassable enlightenment sent by demonic forces. All sentient beings of the Three Realms<sup>54</sup> are [like] my parents, and my parents are wandering in samsara – how pitiful!" However, feeling compassion is not sufficient. Through the Four Immeasurables,<sup>55</sup> for their sake, think, "until samsara is emptied, I will adopt various skilful methods for all those who need to be guided out of samsara." Recall this to mind!

Whatever distracting pleasures appear in this life, {66} think, "these are deceptions of demonic forces to hinder my achievement of unsurpassable enlightenment." Regard these demonic forces more dreadful than venomous serpents. Even if you are extremely successful in this lifetime, consider this like a mere flash. But even if success takes place for a brief moment, it is just a mundane happening. Therefore, consider that anything you do is the turmoil of delusion. Recall this to mind!

Exert yourself in activities beyond this turmoil of delusion. Make sure that you part with all dependents, sensual pleasures and enjoyments. In the meantime, think that nothing but Dharma is beneficial.

Consider how important it is to search from now on for an appropriate companion in this cyclic existence. As for companionship, it is most important to associate with whoever

---

<sup>54</sup> The "Three realms" (*kham ssum*) are the realm of desire (*'dod pa'i kham s*), the realm of form (*gzugs kham s*) and the realm of formlessness or immaterial realm (*gzugs med kyi kham s*).

<sup>55</sup> The "Four immeasurables" (*tshad med pa bzhi*) are: immeasurable loving kindness (*byams pa*), compassion (*snying rje*), joy (*dga' ba*), and equanimity (*btang snyoms*).

is helpful in accomplishing unsurpassable enlightenment in this lifetime. Keep this in mind!

When hindrances arise, know these to be like a preceptor who encourages the practice of virtue. And be aware and consider that a preceptor is also a great benefactor.

If you are seriously ill, that is the prompting of the Victorious Ones, to make you proceed towards the spirit of awakening. Recall that the objects of refuge will lead you towards the path of realization. But consider that when the object of refuge {67} is the ordinary body, there is nothing that can be done. When this heap of flesh and blood is apprehended as the *I*, consider it to be an ego-clinging spirit that has entered your heart. Cast out, without distraction, the ego-clinging spirit that has entered your heart.

Phenomenal appearances are just like dreams and illusions, lacking inherent nature. Recall this to mind. By not recognizing what is devoid of inherent nature in itself, the *I* and *other* – both – are deluded. These delusions must be reversed into the Absolute right now. Keep this in mind!

If they are not reversed right now, later you will endlessly wander through samsara, and cycling there you will directly experience unbearable suffering. Therefore, it is very important that you give up all other activities and diligently apply yourself to the unique Dharma that accomplishes unsurpassable enlightenment. But just practicing the Dharma is not sufficient. It must be done profoundly and properly. Keep this in mind!

If you practice this way, the course of samsara will be reversed. And if you can reverse it, an ever-flowing great bliss will arise in you. Keep this in mind!

Yoga practitioners of later generations will not listen to spiritual advice such as this, and will deceive themselves by placing their trust in divinatory arts and Bon. Keep this in mind!

If you carefully listen to this advice and practice it properly, {68} blessings will surely ensue effortlessly. Moreover: If you regularly rely upon loving kindness, you will reach the heart of all living beings. If you regularly rely upon compassion, you will be loved as though you were everyone's child. If you regularly rely upon equanimity, you will make no distinction between enemies or friends. If you regularly rely upon sympathetic joy,

you will be in accord with all ways of life. If you give up ill will towards others, you will cause little harm to yourself. If you are gentle and magnanimous, you will gather a large retinue [of companions]. If you are free of envy and haughtiness, you will not be gossiped about much. If you mind your affairs, little blame will fall on you. If you renounce desire, you will get food, wealth and enjoyment effortlessly. If you regularly keep your religious observances correct, your mind will work properly. If you have no desire whatsoever for profit, your accumulations will be perfected naturally. If you know the characteristics of samsara, you will renounce the world.

When you set your mind on the profound Dharma and put it into practice, many contributory hindrances will occur. If you associate with the appropriate Lama, you will be led by the power of good qualities. If you have unceasing devotion to the [Three] Jewels, blessings will quickly ensue. If you listen and contemplate [all teachings] without discrimination, you will not be able to differentiate between the Dharma and other doctrinal positions. If you meditate on the profundity of the generation and consummation stages, vigorous power and blessings will ensue. If your phenomenal perception does not conform to the ordinary ways of the world, you will suffer little excesses. If you abandon attachment and clinging, {69} your body and mind will be blissful.

If you dwell in a mountain retreat or in a monastery, direct experiences will dawn in you. If you discard ego-clinging and self-esteem, the devil of hindrances will not harm you. If you watch your own mind, the Absolute will arise in you. If you constantly persist in your practice, your good qualities will be limitless. If you recognize the nature of your own mind, your striving for practice will be naturally liberated. If you thoroughly realize samsara and nirvana as the Body of Dharma, there will be no necessity to strive to practice meditation. If you do not slide into laziness when doing religious practice, you will have no regrets at the time of death. Oh worthy ones, blend your mindstream with the Dharma, and the Buddha's verity will come forth in you!

Still listen!

If you have not subdued your afflictive emotions, [even though] you may subdue the enemies created by anger, they will still grow more numerous. So, relax your false mind. If you do not preserve your virtuous engagement in Dharma practice, there will be no help at the time of death. So, constantly preserve the virtuous engagement of your

Three Doors. If you have not embraced the teachings of [Shakya] Muni, worldly arrogance will grab you, and you will not escape from the primary causes that propel you again into samsara. So, embrace the teachings of the Exalted One. If you do not abide in the citadel of immutability, although your castle of earth and stone is well built, it will be left behind when you pass away. So, seize the citadel of immutability. If you have not gathered the Twofold Accumulation,<sup>56</sup> although you have amassed wealth, it is useless after death. So, gather the Twofold Accumulation as best as you can. If you do not rely on the elixir of the Absolute, {70} although you ingest a variety of tasty food, it will be a primary cause for an impure psychophysical body. So, drink the elixir of this profound advice. If you have not accomplished the unborn Body of Dharma, although you have selfishly cherished your flesh and blood body, [your body's] elements will be repossessed and carry away. So, give up cherishing it, and seize the stronghold of the unborn Body of Dharma. If you are not accompanied by skilful method and sublime gnosis, although you keep the company of many thousands of congenial relatives and friends, you will quickly part from them. So, keep the companionship of skilful method and sublime gnosis. If you do not encounter the sense of the ineffable, the inconceivable and the indescribable, although your reputation pervades the three-thousandfold universe, this is but the evil of deception. So, search for the sense of the ineffable, the inconceivable and the indescribable. If you have not achieved mental self-control, although you are endowed with the mighty power of a universal monarch, you will lack self-control at the time of death. So, gain mental self-control. If you are not endowed with the creative expression of sublime intrinsic awareness, although you are as brave as a very strong champion, you will not win the battle with samsara. So, try by all means to be endowed with sublime gnosis and the creative expression of intrinsic awareness. If you do not take to heart the significance of the emptiness of sound, although you become like the Lion of Speech,<sup>57</sup> you will not succeed in resolving karmic ripening. So, take to heart the significance of the pristine purity of the emptiness of sound. If you do not secure absolute bliss in yourself, although you ride a thoroughbred horse, you will not free yourself from the suffering of samsara. So, search out the significance of absolute bliss. If you are not adorned with the precious qualities of Buddhahood, {71} although you are as beautiful as a god, you cannot possibly deceive the evil Lord of Death. So, adorn yourself with the precious qualities of the Victorious Ones. Put yourself

---

<sup>56</sup> See Part Two, n. 7.

<sup>57</sup> Lion of Speech (*smra ba'i seng ge*) is both an epithet of Manjushri – the bodhisattva emblematic of divine wisdom – and the name of one of Padmasambhava's twelve manifestations.

under the protection of the Lama and the [Three] Jewels, because who else will be capable of protecting you from the enemy of afflictive emotions? So, win the responsive company of the Lama and the [Three] Jewels. If you do not thoroughly realize the enlightened nature of your mind, you will be deceived by worldly concerns about spiritual realization. So, realize in full the enlightened nature of your mind.

By combining [this advice] in one sweep, the multiple, never ending meaningless ways and things of the world cannot become a primary cause for the supreme awakening of liberation and omniscience, but become [instead] a primary cause for samsaric suffering. So, it is very important to strenuously apply your body, speech and mind to work towards achieving the unsurpassable enlightenment.

Keep listening!

Those who do not renounce the ways of the world are caught by spiritual ignorance of both the doctrine of causation and the characteristics of samsara. Moreover, due to the primary cause of samsara, you do not reject the object-subject dualistic thinking. Rather, you and all sentient beings are just one in the spirit of awakening. So, those who consider self and other as separate are hopeless.

All sentient beings of the Three Realms have been one's parents again and again in the past. So, those who hold them as enemies or friends {72} are hopeless.

At the time they should clearly separate samsara from nirvana, those who maintain worldly concerns are hopeless.

Like the dwelling places of disembodied spirits, life lasts but a short moment. So, those who build many mansions are hopeless.

You cannot bear even a thorn pricking your body – which is full of impure substances. So, those who cling to the self are hopeless.

Friends and relatives continue dying due to impermanence. So, those who hope for a permanent self are hopeless.

When one dies, one goes forth empty-handed. So, those who seek food and wealth while indulging in sundry unwholesome habits are hopeless.

Even external perceptions keep changing, for they cannot remain. So, those who constantly hope to enjoy them are hopeless.

Like the shadows of the setting sun, life fades away. So, those who are marked by laziness and idleness are hopeless.

Both in this life and beyond, those who turn their back on the auspicious Dharma and then engage in the householder's life, they are hopeless.

By committing negative actions one is certain to go into the lower realms of samsara. So, those who do not shun their karmic ripening are hopeless.

Now, one cannot bear being burned by a single spark of fire. So, those who hope to bear the hot hells are hopeless.

One cannot bear the cold of a winter's evening. So, those who hope to bear the freezing hells are hopeless. {73}

One cannot bear hunger and thirst even for three days. So, those who hope to bear the suffering of the starving ghosts are hopeless.

One cannot bear being bound into servitude or something similar even for a moment. So, those who hope to bear the suffering of the animals are hopeless.

Now with everyone giving advice to everybody else, those who do not listen even to the Lama's explanations are hopeless.

Now that everyone has become self-governing, those who become slaves to sensual pleasures are hopeless.

Without practicing the Dharma even for an instant, those who hope to reach an absolutely blissful happiness in the next life are hopeless.

Death inheres in birth. So, not knowing their time of death, those who put their effort into karmic activity for the approaching future, they are hopeless.

When one has the choice of moving freely about, those who do not engage in the Dharma of deliverance right now are hopeless.

Anything you do in samsara cannot transcend suffering. So, those who do not give up the activities conducive to suffering are hopeless.

[At this point,] one is compelled to keep wandering in the infinitude of samsara. So, those who lie to themselves are hopeless.

In this time when the degeneration of the aeon is taking place, you are fooling yourself, following your own advice, doing your own way, lying to yourself, and deceiving yourself. Moreover, most of those with a human {74} body do not even have the brains of an ox, so they go on fighting.

Keep listening!

Dharma practitioners, behave in this way from the depths of your heart!

With faith as vigorous as the stream of a great river, rely on the Lama and the [Three] Jewels.

With loving kindness and compassion, loving like a mother loves her only child, care for your followers, students and all living beings.

With the strength, energy and power of a thunderbolt, liberate the enemies of the [Dharma] teaching.

With diligence free of laziness, like a person in misery whose hair has caught fire, cultivate the virtuous roots of your body, speech, and mind.

Conduct relates to karmic causation, so [with discernment] finer than powdered iron, clearly separate virtue from vice and reject everything unwholesome as though it were poison.

Generate an enlightened attitude contrary to the demeanor of those who look like imperial lords, and remain upright in the company of the holy ones.

[With] Lamas, personal tutelary deities and dakinis as witnesses to your religious observances, keep modesty, shyness and uprightness about the Dharma.

Apply a measure of patience to yourself and do not act harmfully to others.

Do not depart from [the right] purpose, whatever life-style you engage in, and turn your body, speech, and mind to the Dharma.

Do not act disdainfully to others at any time and be objective about all your own faults.

[Employ] the provisional and definitive meanings [of the teachings] etc., according to each one needs, to make the true believers enter the Dharma.

Apply all forms of impermanence that apply to everyone else, like death, meeting and parting, etc., to you also. {75} So, be cautious.

Never do too many distracting things.

[Let your] body and mind settle into the natural state.

Epitomize this profound advice directly in your mind and put it into practice.

No matter how destitute you are, do not seek food and wealth dishonestly.

If your mind is disturbed by disruptive emotions, do not provoke the physical spirits that cause obstruction.

Even if the country is devoid [of leadership], do not operate by harming sentient beings.

As the time of death is unknown, seize the stronghold of the mind-as-such.



Seek out a Lama having the defining characteristics, always place [his image mentally] on the top of your head and, with faith and devotion, generate a longing [for him].

Since the necessities for a human lifespan are unknown, train your mind on the entirety of traditional sciences.

However aware you are of your qualities, should you bear any conceit, abandon it – for this is the root of [becoming] a ruinous spirit.

As it is a source of bliss, roam in secluded mountain retreats often.

As it brings sorrow both in this life and beyond, do not involve yourself in a householder's negative karma.

Since friends affect your ordinary conduct, associate with holy friends and keep harmony with the Dharma.

As long as [the fruit of] meditation does not manifest, do not abase your disposition and behavior.

Give up factious and biased object-subject [thoughts,] that are the iron chains of samsara.

Since the learned scorn and criticize you, do not be pretentious and do not babble.

Since bad behavior easily infects you, do not stay amidst ordinary people. {76}

Since everything is illusory, do not rely on any conditional thing whatsoever.

As Buddhahood does not exist apart [from yourself,] ascertain [the nature of] your own mind.

By adopting or rejecting this method accordingly, you will uphold the teachings of the Shakya [Sage].

Keep listening!

To practice the Dharma wholeheartedly, set your religious observances on the Dharma as firmly as the foundations of the earth.

As to a conceptual view, perfect all mediums of the doctrinal systems in a spacelike [open] mental attitude.

Differentiating them like the various colors in a rainbow, [recall] all Dharma teachings clearly and distinctly to mind.

Differentiating them by levels, like the layers of a plantain, guide those endowed with a good karma.

With reverence that is like [tending] a sprout, prolong the core instructions and care well for worthy disciples endowed with good karma.

Like a late spring flower [in full bloom], cultivate [mental] clarity by meditating with transparency and lucid openness.

Like [medicine in] a physician's small bag, carry this advice everywhere and dispense it whenever is needed.

As [though you were sprinkling] salt, be observant and use skill.

Behave as though you were searching for fruit in a narrow valley, and cut through and adapt to the situations.

When you meet afflictive emotions that must be abandoned, reject these like enemies and thorns.

When the remedial primordial gnosis is generated, set it within your mindstream, as though it were your eyeballs.

In order to cut through misconceptions related to receiving and contemplating [the Dharma teachings], {77} rely on a Lama with pliability, as though you were chasing a reward.

As to worldly activities, not once conform to others or to appearances – with the vigor of a charging bull.

In order to apply the [Four] Immeasurables into your mindstream, do it with patience and impartiality and with uniformity, like a sheep.

When you happen to debate with scholars, readily cut through everything whatsoever, with the sublime gnosis of a man of noble qualities.

In order to search for the significance [of the Dharma] by reflecting [upon it], overcome dullness and agitation, as though taming a wild horse.

In order to instill your religious practice in your mindstream, let go of all worldly activities, as though you were mesmerized with the beauty of a unique person.

In brief, if you wish to achieve unsurpassable enlightenment and quickly realize Buddhahood, behave like a bride. It is very important that, on all occasions and situations, you observe yourself continually and compel yourself to [sort out] the subtleties of karmic causation.

Keep listening!

Being comforting and soft-spoken bears the quality of easily generating loving kindness in your mindstream.

Being very sensitive and having an open mind bears the quality of suddenly generating faith.

Having a noble origin and yet being very modest bears the quality of not turning your mind back from the Dharma.

Suffering and various [other] adverse circumstances bear the quality of setting the mind on Dharma.

Being righteous and good-natured {78} bears the quality of coping patiently with any situation.

Being stable and very affectionate bears the quality of [developing] great reverence for the Lama.

Being generally devoid of pretense about worldly values bears the quality of not becoming biased about the Dharma.

Being cautious about worldly values bears the quality of being less attached to religious values.

Sticking to your word bears the quality of harmonizing your personal self with the Dharma.

Being tolerant and very resolute bears the quality of better practicing the Dharma.

Smiling and being easy bears the quality of keeping pure sacred bonds with your [spiritual] friends.

Having few concerns and [not] boasting about your lifestyle bears the quality of eradicating speculative thought.

Also practice this [advice] without incurring any error even once.

As to the one who is forbearing and soft-spoken, he can incur the error of hypocrisy and falsehood.

As to the one who has great sensitivity and an open mind, she can incur the error of turning her mind from the Dharma.

In having a noble origin and yet being very modest there is the possibility of incurring the error of not giving up worldly values.

In suffering and in many adverse circumstances there is the possibility of incurring the error of not coming up with the time to practice the Dharma, even though you so wish.

In [considering oneself] righteous and good-natured there is the possibility of incurring the error of becoming little acquainted with the Dharma.

In having a steady personality and being very affectionate to those who are close there is the possibility of incurring the error of not cutting the connection with worldly values.

In being almost devoid of pretense about worldly values there is the possibility of incurring the error of [finding] even fewer antidotes related to religious values. {79}

In being prudent about worldly values there is the possibility of incurring the error of not going all the way in [practicing] the Dharma.

In sticking to your word there is the possibility of incurring the error of abusive language and quarrelling.

In being tolerant and greatly resolute there is the possibility of incurring the error of finding it difficult to abstain from maliciousness.

In keeping a smiling countenance and behaving in a free way there is the possibility of incurring the error of sophistication and effeminacy.

In being circumspect and having a rigid behavior<sup>58</sup> there is the possibility of incurring the error of not persevering in practicing the Dharma and so demeaning spiritual ripening.

Whoever has entered the gates of Dharma and abstains from incurring errors, if [such a person] is endowed with good qualities, [then for him or her] it is not difficult to attain the unsurpassable enlightenment. Keep this in mind!

Keep listening!

---

<sup>58</sup> The premise of this statement is slightly different from the corresponding one in the previous set of related statements.

Many have entered the gates of Dharma yet have not followed through. If you [are one of those who] do not pursue it, you must do so.

Hence:

If you have been ordained monk but still are a breadwinner and pursue material possessions like a householder, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you have put aside human affairs but have not given up ordinary chatter, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you dwell in a monastery but act like a worldly person, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you have left your homeland but are still concerned with worldly people, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you perform religious practice but do not renounce your desires, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you practice various austerities but cannot bear the harm caused by others, {80} you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you meditate on the generation and consummation stages but expect to dispel hindrances by means of the divinatory arts and Bon, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you practice nondual meditation<sup>59</sup> but expect to bring benefit and harm to gods and goblins respectively, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you have entered the path of the Mahayana but do not bring benefit for sentient beings, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

---

<sup>59</sup> That of "nondual meditation" (*gnyis med sgom*) is the level where both the generation and consummation stages (*bskyed rim, rdzogs rim*) of tantric practice are transcended.

If you act for the sake of living beings but have not accomplished the stage of the awakened state of mind and are not detached from your intimate desires,<sup>60</sup> you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you thoroughly realize the theory [of Dharma] but do not shun karmic ripening, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you know the Nine Gradual Mediums but your mindstream has no relationship with the Dharma, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you always practice one-pointed meditation but do not refrain from identifying appearances, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you have been given the Three Trainings<sup>61</sup> but do not cut through overbearing references, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you perform any virtuous practice but do not complete the preparatory, the main and the concluding [stages],<sup>62</sup> you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you naturally engage in the regular activities of body and speech but afflictive emotions still slip into your own mindstream, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you now put aside your spiritual realization and later set your hopes in your aspiration prayers, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you do not recognize the nature of your mind and still expect to [get some] result at some later time, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

If you have set the roots of virtue to work but do not detach from the Eight Worldly Concerns, you are not a Dharma practitioner.

---

<sup>60</sup> The statement "... and are not detached from your intimate desires" seems superfluous, as it disagrees with the pattern of the previous and following statements.

<sup>61</sup> The "Three trainings" (*bslab pa gsum*) are the training of discipline (*tshul khrims*), that of exalted concentration (*ting nge 'dzin*) and that of sublime gnosis (*shes rab*).

<sup>62</sup> These are the three stages (*sbyor dngos rjes*) involved when performing a religious practice.

People of future generations, the Eight Worldly Concerns are these – {81} a wild universally-pervading goblin:

"If praised, I feel joy;  
If belittled, I feel sorrow.  
If famous, I feel joy;  
If defamed, I feel sorrow.  
If happy, I feel joy;  
If unhappy, I feel sorrow.  
If winning, I feel joy;  
If losing, I feel sorrow."

These are the eight.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore:

Whatever the roots of vice of my body, speech and mind might be, have they been produced from my previous thinking, or have they not? Are they being produced at present and will they last or not? Will they be produced in the future, along with those Eight [Worldly Concerns], or will they not? Find this out, for it is very important do not part from it, O you people of future generations!

Follow me – Padma[sambhava] – and whatever Dharma teaching you undertake, you will quickly achieve the total awakening of Buddhahood.

Also:

Put into practice the shortcut [teachings] without distortion!

Put into practice their extensive and profound meaning!

Put into practice the entire horizon of precepts to realize perfectly pure Buddhahood!

---

<sup>63</sup> The "Eight worldly concerns" (*'jig rten chos brgyad*) are also formulated this way: praise and blame (*bstod pa, smad pa*), fame and bad reputation (*snyan pa, mi snyan pa*), happiness and pain (*bde ba, sdug bsngal*), and gain and loss (*rnyed pa, ma rnyed pa*).



Put into practice – from your individual mindstream – the meaning of the Nine Gradual Mediums, perfecting them to their higher level!

Put into practice the means to recognize that whatever the practice and the practitioner, both have no objective existence!

Put into practice [the realization that] all phenomena related to samsara and nirvana [are the same] in the state of the very nucleus of the Body of Dharma!

Put into practice these specific exhortations of mine! {82}

Put into practice the result of supreme awakening without ambivalence or hesitation!»

Thus [Padmasambhava] bestowed this spiritual advice on conduct for the venerable religious persons of Tibet who wish to practice the Dharma. May the worthy ones endowed with a good residual karma encounter them!

*SACRED BOND*

#

## PART SEVEN

### ***Homage to the Gurus, Devas, and Dakinis – Hum!***

Padmasambhava – who in the omni-pervasive displaying dimension [of the Absolute] consummated every phenomenon concerning all that appears and exists, samsara and nirvana [alike] – conferred, in the language of India, this spiritual advice for those living beings who were to be converted [to Buddhism]. From the depths of his heart, he expounded to the mischievous, uneducated, uptight, and fickle people of Tibet, the exceptional advice of the insuperable Mahayana, without concealing anything or leaving anything out. Yet, they did not understand, and simply continued engaging in wrongful conduct. To wholeheartedly practice the Dharma, from the depths of your heart and the marrow of your bones, hold these spoken words in your mind and put them into practice!

[Here it is] an epitome of all the main points:

«One is called "lay devotee" who expels all vices, wicked karma and actions. Aiming to [solely] observe the Four Roots [of virtue]<sup>64</sup> does not qualify one as lay devotee.

One is called "novice" who practices the roots of virtue properly. Someone [merely] posing as religious is not given the name of novice. {83}

One is called "fully ordained monk" who applies all the roots of virtue on the path of total awakening. Just by restricting oneself to regular activities of body, speech, and mind, how can a person be said blessed?

---

<sup>64</sup> The "Four roots" (*rtsa ba bzhi*) of virtue, for a religious person, consist in refraining from killing (*srog gcod pa*), stealing (*ma byin len pa*), misbehaving sexually (*mi tshangs spyod pa*), and lying (*rdzun smra ba*). The second of these is often commented as "falsely proclaiming oneself as a lama in human affairs" (*mi chos bla ma'i rdzun smra ba*).

One is called "regular monk" who shuns karmic ripening. To merely wear a yellow robe does not suffice.

One is called "virtuous guide" who has become a thoroughly glorious protector. [Showing] self-confidence and [behaving with] pomposity does not qualify as virtuous guide.

One is called "yogin" who has trained his or her mind in the essential nature [of reality]. Those who display disorderly foolish, crazy behavior are not given the name of yogins.

One is called "tantric practitioner" who [engages] in attaining Buddhahood quickly through the path which integrates skillful method and sublime gnosis. Those who utter the ritual canticles of Bon, [which sound like] the noise of livestock, are not included among the set of mantra-adepts.

What is called "meditation" is the intentional realization of the true abiding nature [of things]. To merely establish [a mental state of] firm stability does not qualify as meditation.

What is called "solitary place" is any place secluded from the mental object-subject elaborations. Not all deserted forests and mountain ravines are solitary places.

One is called "scholar" who is skilled in discriminating between meaningful and pointless [logical] positions. Attending [only] to the Eight Worldly Concerns does not qualify one as scholar. {84}

One is called "bodhisattva" who strives to liberate all [sentient beings] from samsara through various skilful methods. One dishonestly involved in selfish interests is not given the name of bodhisattva.

What is called "faith" is being fearful of the flow of birth, old age, sickness, and death, and then entering the authentic, unsurpassable path [to spiritual liberation]. Being eloquent while cultivating gloomy feelings, does not qualify as faith.

What is called "diligence" is skilful method to abandon samsara. Those who are fickle in a variety of ways are [practicing] a misguided [form of] diligence.

What is called "generosity" is to being free from any grasping and attachment, hope and fear, acceptance and rejection. To be partial and then be bound by hopes and fears does not qualify as generosity.

What is called "core instruction" is a concise verbal exposition that resorts to the key points to thoroughly realize the import of mind. A disordered heap of manuscripts does not qualify as core instruction.

What is called "view" is becoming liberated from the extreme [positions] of conceptual elaboration. Identifying yourself with the preferred tenet is not given the name of "view."

What is called "meditation"<sup>65</sup> is stabilizing the natural clarity of mind without grasping it. Grasping intellectual thinking does not qualify as meditation.

What is called "conduct" is maintaining a relaxed [attitude], without grasping anything that happens. Accepting or rejecting any disorderly, debased behavior cannot be considered conduct. {85}

One is called "detached adept" who disassociates himself from clinging to delusory appearances as [having] true [existence]. [One who has a] crazy behavior and acts disorderly is not called detached adept.

What is called "sublime gnosis" is the sharp intellectual capacity of both knowing that all phenomena are neither generated nor elaborated, as well as discerning the facts that lead to the path of supreme awakening. Acute intellect [sustaining] wrongful views does not qualify as sublime gnosis.

What is called "[learning through] hearing" is cutting through external misconceptions, by which [one's] intentionality transcends [mere] intellect. Just having Dharma teachings ringing in your ears does not qualify as [learning through] hearing.

What is called "reflection" is cutting through internal delusions and yearnings. Following after your discursive thoughts and mental speculations does not qualify as reflection.

---

<sup>65</sup> "Meditation" (*sgom pa*) occurs for the second time in this list.

What is called "result" is recognizing the nature of one's mind, and hence manifesting stability [in that state]. Inviting a sacred image [to descend] from the Akanishtha empyrean<sup>66</sup> is not called a result.

Do not separate the word and its meaning in any Dharma teaching. Having integrated these [teachings] into your mindstream experience, at the time of death you should have no regret, but let joy and hope be one. Keep this in mind.

Henceforth, if you do not apply yourself in the skilful methods to be free from samsara, the advantage of having attained a precious human body, endowed with [the right] freedoms and connections,<sup>67</sup> will not bring about the [expected] result. So, generate firmness of mind and apply yourself in the skilful methods to depart from samsara.

These fickle Tibetans do evil things to others, {86} that they do not want for themselves. [Conversely,] they want to be benefited by others' virtues. When seeing this, I feel like laughing. By means of such a religious system, one does not advance even in the least in the path to supreme awakening. Moreover, in the time when the Five Degenerations<sup>68</sup> of this aeon will be increasing, all kinds of wrong actions will be committed; thereby everyone will be projected into the lower realms of samsaric existence. Aired as the Buddha's teaching, many spurious doctrines will deceive living beings. So they will disparage [the doctrine of] cause and effect; they will not listen to the Lamas' precepts; they will not observe their sacred bonds or an ethical restraint; they will not stay in mountain retreats and secluded places, but will wander around inhabited places and will chase after women. Unprincipled charlatans and deceivers, hunting for food and wealth,

---

<sup>66</sup> Akanishta (Skt. *akanishta*; 'og min) is the highest pure realm – or transcendental plane of existence – of Buddhist hierology. It corresponds to the dimension of the "Body of bliss" (*longs sku*).

<sup>67</sup> It refers to the "eighteen freedoms and connections" (*dal 'byor bco brygad*) of a "precious human body" (*mi lus rin po che*) to practice the Dharma properly. Namely, freedom from eight adverse conditions (like being born in the lower realms of samsara, suffering from psychophysical defects etc.) and endowment with ten favorable connections (like being born in a land where Buddhist teachings are available, having faith in them etc.).

<sup>68</sup> The "Five degenerations" (*snyigs ma lnga*). They are the degeneration of views (*lta ba*), doctrinal views in particular; the degeneration of afflictions (*nyon mongs pa*), that become rampant; the degeneration of sentient beings (*sems can*), becoming increasingly corrupt; the degeneration of life (*tshe*), in terms of natural lifespan; and the degeneration of time (*dus*), described also as degeneration of fortune (*bskal pa*), intended in a general way.

will swindle crowds of people. So, people of future generations: Look after yourselves!  
Be concerned about yourselves! Give counsel to yourselves! Be your own preceptors!  
Find out your own way! Pay respect to yourselves!

Train into the supreme domain of the insuperable Mahayana!»

In this and similar ways, [Padmasambhava] conferred spiritual advice – countless instructions [born] from his loving compassion.

*SACRED BOND*

*Seal, seal, seal!*

# POSTSCRIPT

This spiritual garland [of teachings], a compendium of the spiritual advice and core instructions of [the precious Master from] Uddiyana, {87} has been committed to writing by me, the dull Tshogyel, for the benefit of the living beings of future generations. After having fixed it with the seal of authenticity, it has been concealed as a precious sacred treasure, accompanied by prayers of aspiration. May the worthy ones with a good karma, who will follow in the future, encounter [these teachings].

*Sacred bond – Seal*  
*Seal of secrecy*  
*Seal of entrustment*

*Kha tham*  
*Ithi*  
*Dha thim*

# COLOPHON

One like me, the Shakya monk Sangye Dorje, recovered [this scriptural treasure] from the Great Cave of Puri.<sup>69</sup>

[Text] Revised

---

<sup>69</sup> The Great Cave of Puri (*spu ri phug mo che*), in the Puwo district located around the great bending of the Tsangpo River (north of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh), is a treasure-site particularly connected with Sangye Lingpa. It is there that he brought to light also his major cycle of teachings, the monumental *Lama Gongdu* (*bla ma dgongs 'dus*), in 1364.



# English-Tibetan lexicon

Tibetan terms are rendered in scholarly transliteration.  
Only the most common equivalents in Sanskrit have been included.

<b>abiding nature</b>	gnas lugs
<b>absolute</b>	chos nyid
<b>absolute bliss</b>	bde chen
<b>absolutely awake</b>	buddha; sangs rgyas
<b>acceptance and rejection</b>	blang dor
<b>accidental</b>	blo bur ba
<b>accomplish</b>	bsgrub pa
<b>accomplished adept</b>	siddha; grub thob
<b>according to each one needs</b>	gang la gang 'dul
<b>accumulation</b>	tshogs
<b>actual understanding</b>	rtogs pa
<b>acute intellect</b>	blo rtse mno ba
<b>adamantine body</b>	rdo rje'i sku
<b>adamantine medium of the secret mantra</b>	gsang sngags rdo rje theg pa
<b>adverse circumstances</b>	rkyen ngan
<b>advice</b>	gdams pa
<b>aeon</b>	bskal pa
<b>afflictive emotions</b>	nyon mongs
<b>aftermath</b>	rjes thob
<b>agent of meditation</b>	sgom rgyu
<b>aim</b>	don
<b>all kinds of mental flashbacks</b>	sems la mi dran dgu dran
<b>all kinds of tasty food</b>	zas zhim dgu
<b>all that appears and exists</b>	snang srid
<b>altruism</b>	gzhan don
<b>ambition</b>	bya blo
<b>analysis</b>	brtag dpyad
<b>anger</b>	khong khro, zhe sdang
<b>apparent condition</b>	rkyen snang
<b>apparent perception</b>	snang ba
<b>appearance</b>	snang ba

**arise naturally** rang byung  
**arrogance, arrogant** kheng dregs, dregs rloms  
**aspiration** yid smon  
**aspiration-prayer** smon lam  
**attachment and aversion** chags sdang  
**attainment of buddhahood** sangs rgyas pa  
**auspicious connection** rten 'brel  
**austerities** dka' thub  
**authentic** yang dag pa

**bad karma** las ngan  
**bare intrinsic awareness** rig pa gcer bu  
**basis** gzhi  
**benefit, beneficial** phan pa  
**benefit and harm** phan gnod  
**beyond conception** bsam las 'das  
**biased** phyogs ris  
**billionfold** stong gsum gyi stong chen po  
**biography** rnam thar  
**birth and death** skye shi  
**birth, old age, sickness, and death** skye rgas na 'chi  
**blessing** byin gyis brlabs  
**bliss, blissful** bde ba  
**blissful buddhas** bde gshogs  
**blissful happiness** bde skyid  
**bodhisattva** byang chub sems dpa'  
**body** lus  
**body and mind** lus sems  
**body of the absolute** chos nyid kyi sku  
**body of bliss** sambhogakāya; longs sku  
**body of dharma** dharmakāya; chos sku  
**body of emanation** nirmāṇakāya; sprul sku  
**body of perfect bliss** longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku  
**body, speech and mind** lus ngag yid  
**bodily posture** lus gnad  
**bring to the path** lam 'khyer  
**buddha** sangs rgyas  
**buddhahood** sangs rgyas

**capacity** dbang po  
**causal absolute** rgyu chos nyid  
**causation, cause and effect** rgyu 'bras  
**certainty** nges shes  
**change** 'gyur ba ma  
**charismatic transmission** bka' babs  
**charnel ground** dur khrod  
**circumambulating** skor ba  
**circumstance** rkyen  
**clairvoyant knowledge** mngon shes  
**clear, clarity** gsal ba  
**clear away naturally** rang gsal  
**clarity and emptiness, clear and empty** gsal stong  
**clear perception** wal le, mngon shes  
**cling to delusory appearances as (having) true (existence)** 'khrul snang la bden 'dzin  
**clinging** 'dzin chags  
**cognition** shes pa  
**commitment** dam bca'  
**common worldly values** mi chos tha mal  
**companion** grogs po, grogs zla  
**compassion** snying rje, thugs rje  
**compendium** don 'dus  
**composite** 'dus byas  
**conceit** rlom sems  
**conceptual elaboration** spros pa  
**conceptually elaborated** spros bcas  
**concise** tshig du nyung  
**condition** ngang  
**conduct** spyod pa  
**confession** bshags  
**consider** snyam pa  
**consumed** zad pa  
**consummate** phun sum tshogs pa  
**continuous** rgyun  
**contributory cause** rkyen  
**core** snying po  
**core instructions** gdams ngag

**corpse** ro  
**correct** yang dag  
**countless** dpag med, grangs med  
**crazy behavior** smyon spyod  
**creative expression** rtsal  
**creative expression of intrinsic awareness** rig rtsal  
**creative expression of mind** sems rtsal  
**crucial point** gnad  
**crucial point concerning meditation** sgom gnad  
**cultivate** sgom pa  
**cut through** gcod pa  
**cut through to the root** rtsa gcod

**dakini** dākinī; mkha' 'gro (ma)  
**day and night** nyin mtshan  
**death** 'chi ba  
**debased behavior** rtsing spyod  
**debate** rtsod pa  
**deception** bslu brid  
**dedication (of merits)** bsngo ba  
**deeds** bya ba  
**defective** skyon  
**defilement** grib pa  
**defining characteristics** mtshan nyid  
**degenerate age** snyigs ma'i dus  
**degeneration** snyigs ma  
**delight** dga' ba  
**deluding, delusion** 'khrul pa  
**delusions and yearnings** 'khrul zhen  
**demeanor** bya spyod  
**demigod** lha ma yin  
**demonic forces, devil** bdud  
**dependent origination** rten 'brel  
**depths of the heart** snying thag, snying khung, snying thur  
**desire** 'dod pa  
**destination** 'gro sa  
**detached adept** zhig po  
**develop** skye ba

**development** 'phel ba  
**devil of hindrances** bar chad bdud  
**devoid of inherent nature** rang bzhin med pa  
**devotion** mos gus  
**dharma, dharma precepts, dharma teachings** chos  
**dharma master** chos bdag  
**dharma practice** chos spyod  
**dharma practitioner** chos pa, chos byed pa  
**dharma protectors** chos skyong  
**die** 'chi ba  
**difficult** dka' ba  
**diligence** brtson 'grus  
**dimension** dbyings  
**dimension of the absolute** chos dbyings  
**direct experience** nyams myong  
**direct introduction** ngo sprod  
**directly experience** nyams su myong ba  
**disciple** slob ma  
**discursive thoughts, discursiveness** rnam rtog  
**disembodied spirit** dri za  
**disordered** nyab nyob  
**dispel** sel ba  
**disperse** 'byams pa  
**dissolve** thim pa  
**distraction** rnam g.yeng  
**divinatory arts** mo  
**divine beings** lha  
**divine form** lha'i rnam pa  
**doctrinal feature** khyad chos  
**doctrinal systems** grub mtha'  
**does not qualify** go mi chod  
**does not suffice** mi chog  
**domain** yul  
**dreadful** 'jigs pa  
**dream** rmi lam  
**dualistic thinking** rnam rtog  
**dullness and agitation** bying rgod

**earth, water, fire, and air** sa chu me rlung  
**effect** 'bras bu  
**effort** rtsol ba  
**effort and striving** 'bad rtsol  
**effortlessness** rtsol med  
**ego** bdag, dak, nga bdag  
**ego-clinging** bdag 'dzin  
**ego-clinging spirit** 'gong po  
**eight worldly concerns** 'jig rten chos brgyad  
**eighty-four thousand gates of dharma teachings** chos kyi sgo mo brgyad khri bzhi stong  
**elaboration** spros pa  
**elixir** bdud rtsi  
**emanation** sprul pa  
**empowerment** dbang bskur  
**emptiness** stong nyid  
**empty** stong pa  
**empty of inherent nature** rang bzhin gyis stong pa  
**empty of self** bdag stong  
**empty of other** gzhan stong  
**empyrean** zhing khams  
**engage** 'jug pa  
**enjoy, enjoyment** longs spyod (pa)  
**enlightened activity** phrin las  
**enlightened attitude** sems skyed  
**enlightened body** sku gsung thugs  
**enlightened mind** sku gsung thugs  
**enlightened qualities** yon tan  
**enlightened speech** sku gsung thugs  
**enlightenment** bodhi; byang chub  
**entire horizon** mtha' dag dang ldan pa  
**entirety** mtha' dag  
**envision, envisioning** mthong ba  
**envoys** pho nya  
**ephemeral** 'gags pa  
**epitome** don bsdus, bsdus pa'i don  
**equanimity** mnyam nyid  
**equipoise** mnyam pa, mnyam gzhang  
**eradicate** rtsa gcod  
**error** skyon

**esoteric instructions** man ngag  
**essence** snying po  
**essence of emptiness** stong ngo  
**essential meaning** don gyi ngo bo  
**essential nature** don chos nyid  
**essentially empty** ngo bo stong  
**ethical restraint** 'dul khrims  
**everlastingness and annihilation** rtag chad  
**exalted** bcom ldan 'das  
**exalted concentration** samādhi; ting nge 'dzin  
**exalted concentration of the ultimate nature** de bzhin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin  
**exalted concentration of the ultimate nature of thusness** de kho na nyid bzhin nyid kyi ting nge 'dzin  
**exhausted** zad pa  
**exhortation** gdams pa  
**existential aspect (of buddhahood)** sku  
**expanse** klong  
**expect, expectation** re ba  
**expert** mkhas pa  
**explanation** bshad pa  
**expound** ston pa  
**external world** phyi snod 'jig rten  
**extinguish, avert or subjugate** bsad bzlog mngon  
**extraordinary** thun mong ma yin pa  
**extreme (position)** mtha'

**fact** bya ba  
**factious** sde ris  
**fade** yal ba  
**faith** dad pa  
**faith and respect** dad gus  
**fault** nyes skyon  
**fear** dogs pa  
**fickle** bcol chung po  
**field of appearances** snang zhing  
**five degenerations** snyigs ma lnga  
**five misdeeds causing an immediate karmic effect** mtshams med pa lnga  
**five paths** lam lnga

**five poisons to the spirit** dug lnga  
**five psychophysical constituents** phung po lnga  
**five sense pleasures** 'dod pa'i yon tan lnga  
**five values of meditative stabilization** bsam gtan gyi chos lnga  
**flashing mind** sems mi dran dgu dran  
**flaw** skyon  
**flesh and blood** sha khrag  
**follower** rjes 'jug skyes bu  
**food and clothing** lto gos  
**fool oneself** rang mgo rang gis g.yogs pa  
**formal meditation** bsam gtan  
**former lifetimes** tshe rabs  
**four immeasurables** tshad med bzhi  
**four protoelements** 'byung bzhi  
**four roots** rtsa ba bzhi  
**four types of activity** spyod pa rnam bzhi  
**four types of birth** skye ba rnam bzhi  
**free from recollection** dran med  
**free from limitations** mtha' bral  
**freedoms and connections** dal 'byor  
**freezing hells** grang dmyal  
**fruition** 'bras bu  
**fruition primordial gnosis** 'bras bu'i ye shes  
**fullest extent** mthar phyin  
**fully awake** buddha; sangs rgyas pa  
**fully ordained monk** dge slong  
**future generations** phyi rabs

**gates of dharma** chos sgo  
**gateway to the matrix** mngal sgo kha  
**generate an enlightened attitude** sems skye ba  
**generation and consummation stages** bskyed rdzogs  
**generation stage** bskyed rim  
**generosity** sbyin pa  
**genuine** rkyang ma  
**give away** byin pa  
**give up** spang ba  
**gloomy feelings** yi mug



**god, godling** lha  
**gods and goblins** lha 'dre  
**going, moving around, lying, staying** 'gro 'chag nyal 'dug  
**good** bzang po  
**good karma** las can  
**good-natured** rgyud bzang  
**good or bad** bzang ngan, legs nyes  
**good qualities** yon tan  
**good residual karma** las 'phro  
**goodness** dge ba  
**gossip** lab lob smra mchu  
**graciousness** bka' drin  
**gradual** rim pa  
**grasp** 'dzin pa  
**great benefactor** drin chen  
**great preceptor** slob dpon chen po  
**great yoga** mahāyoga  
**ground numina** gzhi bdag

**happiness** bde ba  
**happiness and sorrow** bde sdug  
**hard-hearted** snying rul po  
**hardships** bka' thub  
**harm** gnod pa  
**haughtiness** mtho ltas  
**heap** phung po  
**hear and contemplate** thos bsam  
**heart** snying po  
**heart of transcendent blissfulness** bde bar gshegs pa'i snying po  
**heaven and earth** gnam sa  
**hell realm** dmyal ba  
**hell realm of rotting corpses** ro myag gi dmyal khams  
**heretical** mu stegs  
**hermetic** gsang ba  
**hesitation** the tshom  
**higher mental capacity** blo rab  
**higher realms of samsaric existence** mtho ris  
**highest capacity** dbang po rab

**hindrance** bar chad  
**holy** dam pa  
**holy doctrine** dam chos  
**hope** re ba  
**hope and fear** re dogs  
**hopeless** snying med pa  
**hot hells** tsha ba'i dmyal ba  
**householder** khyim pa  
**householder's life** khyim thabs  
**human affairs** mi chos kyi bya ba  
**human being** mi  
**human body** mi lus

**I** bdag

**idleness** snyom las  
**ill will** gnod pa'i sems  
**illusion, illusory** sgyu ma  
**immeasurable** tshad med pa  
**immutable** 'gyur med  
**imperfection** skyon  
**impermanence, impermanent** mi rtag pa  
**incessant** rgyun chad med  
**inconceivable** bsam du med pa, bsam gyis mi khyab pa  
**independent buddha** rang sangs rgyas  
**individual** gang zag  
**indivisible** dbyer med  
**indolence** le lo  
**ineffable** brjod med  
**ineffable, inconceivable, and indescribable** smra bsam brjod med  
**infinitude** mtha' med  
**inherent nature** rang bzhin  
**inherently empty** rang stong  
**inner peacefulness** zhi ba  
**inner signs** nang rtags  
**insane** smyo ba  
**instant** skad cig  
**instructions** gdams pa  
**insubstantial nature** rang bzhin dngos med

**insuperable** bla med  
**integrated, integration** zung 'brel  
**intellect** blo  
**intellectual practice** blo sgom  
**intellectual thinking** blo rtog pa  
**intense compassion** snying tsha  
**intentionality** dgongs pa  
**intermediate signs** bar gyi rtags  
**internally-perceiving mind** nang 'dzin pa'i sems  
**intrinsic awareness** rig pa  
**intrinsic awareness and emptiness** rig stong  
**intrinsic essence** ngo bo  
**invite** spyen 'dren pa

**jewel** dkon mchog

**karma, karmic action** las  
**karmic causation** las rgyu 'bras  
**karmic obscuration** las kyi sgrib pa  
**karmic ripening** rnam smin  
**karmic sequels, karmic traces** bag chags  
**killing** srog gcod  
**king** rgyal po

**lama** guru; bla ma  
**later generations** phyi rabs  
**law of dharma** chos khriims  
**lay devotee** dge bsnyen  
**laziness** le lo  
**lead** 'dren pa  
**levels** go rim  
**libation** gser skyems  
**liberation** thar pa, grol ba  
**liberation upon seeing** mthong grol  
**life-pillar** srog shing  
**life-supporting turquoise** bla g.yu

**lifetime** tshe  
**listen and contemplate** thos bsam  
**listener** nyan thos  
**living beings** 'gro ba, skye 'gro  
**lord** rje  
**lotus** padma  
**love** brtse ba  
**loving compassion** thugs brtse ba  
**loving kindness** byams pa  
**lower capacity** dbang po tha ma  
**lower realms of samsaric existence** ngan song  
**lucid openness** ye re ba  
**lust** 'dod chags  
**luxury** 'dod yon

**magic** cho 'phrul  
**magnanimous** gtong phod chen  
**mahamudra** mahāmudrā; phyag rgya chen po  
**mahayana** mahāyāna; theg pa chen po  
**major and minor marks of enlightenment** mtshan dang dpe byad  
**major teachings** bka' lung  
**man of noble qualities** dpa' bo  
**mandala** maṇḍala  
**manifestation** rnam 'phrul  
**mansion** mkhar khang  
**mantra** sngags  
**mantra-adept** sngags pa  
**mantra-holder** sngags 'chang  
**mantra recitation** bzlas brjod  
**marrow of bones** rus pa'i gting  
**material good, material possession** zang zing  
**matter** gzugs  
**measure** tshad  
**meditation** sgom pa  
**meditation and meditator** bsgom bya sgom byed  
**meditation on deities** lha bsgom  
**meditative experience** nyams myong  
**meditative stabilization** bsam gtan

**meditator** bsgom byed pa  
**medium** yāna; theg pa  
**medium capacity** dbang po 'bring  
**meeting and parting** 'du 'bral  
**memory** dran, sems dran pa  
**mental reference** dmigs pa  
**middle way** madhyamaka; dbu ma  
**might** mnga' thang  
**mighty** mnga' bdag  
**mighty power** mthu dpung  
**mind-as-such** sems nyid  
**mindstream** tantra; rgyud  
**misconceptions** sgro 'dogs  
**misery** sdug bsngal  
**mode of conduct** spyod pa  
**modest** ngo tsha  
**monastery** dgon pa  
**monastic discipline** vinaya; 'dul ba, 'dul khrim  
**monk** dge slong  
**moon** zla ba  
**morning and evening** nang nub  
**most crucial** gnad shin tu che  
**most profound** yang zab  
**mount meru** ri rab  
**mount meru and the four continents** gling bzhi ri rab  
**mountain retreat** ri khrod  
**moving freely about** yar 'gro mar 'gro  
**must** dgos pa

**natural clarity** rang gsal  
**natural liberation, naturally liberated** rang grol  
**natural play** rol pa  
**natural state** rnal, rang lugs  
**naturally** rang sar  
**naturally present** lhun grub  
**needs and desires** dgos 'dod  
**negative actions** sdig pa'i las  
**negative and evil influences** nad gdon bdud

**negativity** sdig pa  
**new moon, full moon and the eighth day of the tibetan month** nya stong brgyad gsum  
**next life** tshe phyi ma  
**night** mtshan, nub mo  
**nine combinations** 'brel ba dgu  
**nine gradual mediums** theg pa rim pa dgu  
**no dichotomy** gnyis med  
**no difference** khyad med  
**no origination or cessation** skye 'gag med pa  
**noble origin** rigs bzang  
**nonconceptual** rtog med  
**nondual** gnyis med  
**nonreferential** dmigs med, mi dmigs pa  
**not generated** skye med  
**noteworthy result** don 'bras  
**nothing to abandon or attain** spang thob med pa  
**novice** dge tshul  
**nucleus** thig le

**object** bya ba, yul  
**object or location** yul gnas  
**object-subject** gzung 'dzin  
**objects of refuge** skyabs gnas  
**obscuration** sgrib pa  
**occasions and situations** dus skabs rnam pa  
**ocean** rgya mtsho  
**offering ritual** mchod pa  
**omniscience** thams cad mkhyen pa  
**one lifetime** tshe gcig  
**one-pointed** rtse gcig  
**one's mind, ordinary mind** sems  
**one's own condition** rang sar  
**oneself** bdag, rang nyid  
**oneself and others** rang gzhan, bdag gzhan  
**open mind** blo sna mangs  
**ordained monk** rab tu byung ba  
**ordinary** thun mong  
**outer sign** phyi rtags

**outstanding** khyad par can

**past and future** snga phyi

**path** lam

**path of accumulation** tshogs lam

**path of completion** mthar phyin pa'i lam

**path of connection** sbyor lam

**path of inner cultivation** sgom lam

**path of insight** mthong lam

**path of no more learning** mi slob kyi lam

**patience** bzod pa

**penetrate** tshud pa

**perfect** rdzogs pa

**perform** byed pa

**perform exorcisms** 'dre brdung

**performance** bya ba

**performing yoga** kriyāyoga

**period** dus tshod

**permanent** rtag pa

**persevere** brtson pa

**person** skyes bu, mi

**personality** rgyud

**personify** bdag nyid

**phenomena** dharma; chos

**phenomenal existence** snang srid

**phenomenal perception** snang ba

**phenomenal vision** snang ba

**phony ideas** snyam par brdzun zog

**physical** khams

**physician** sman pa

**plaintive** smre sngags

**planets and constellations** gza' skar

**pleasant fruits** bde 'bras

**pointless** don ma yin pa

**pointless chatter** long gtam

**pomposity** spobs yor

**position** phyogs

**positive** legs pa

**positive and negative** dge sdig  
**positive and negative karma** las dge sdig  
**possessed by evil spirits** gdon can  
**power** nus pa, dbang, nus mthu  
**power and wealth** btsan phyug  
**practice** nyams len  
**practice and practitioner** spyod bya spyod byed  
**practice chastity** tshangs spyod pa  
**practice of austerities** bka' thub  
**practice of realization** bsgrub pa  
**practice silence** smra bcad  
**practice the dharma** chos byed pa  
**prayer of aspiration** smon lam  
**precept** bka'  
**preceptor** slob dpon  
**precious** rin po che, rin chen  
**precious quality** che ba'i yon tan  
**precisely this** de kho na  
**preparatory, main, and concluding (stages)** sbyor dngos rjes gsum  
**pride** nga rgyal  
**primary cause** rgyu  
**primordial emptiness, primordially empty** ye stong  
**primordial gnosis** ye shes  
**primordially free** ye bral  
**primordially pure** ye dag  
**principle of consciousness** rnam shes  
**pristine purity** ka dag  
**profound** zab mo  
**promise** khas len  
**pronounce** gsungs pa  
**propitiatory and realization practices** bsnyen bsgrub  
**propitiatory cake** gtor ma  
**protection** srung skyob  
**protoelement** 'byung ba  
**proud** nga rgyal  
**provisional and definitive meanings** drang don dang nges don  
**psychophysical body** phung po  
**pure** dag pa, rnam dag  
**purport** dgongs pa, don



**pus and blood** rnag khrag

**quality** yon tan, bzang ngan

**quality of sameness** ro snyoms

**quintessence** snying po bcud

**rainbow body** 'ja' lus

**rainbow colors** 'ja' tshon

**real condition** chos nyid

**realization** sgrub pa

**realize in full, realize thoroughly** rtogs pa

**recall** yid la dran pa

**recipient** snod ldan

**recitation** bzlas pa, klog 'don

**recognize** ngo shes pa

**recollect** dran pa

**recollected notes** zin bris

**(re)embodiment** lus len

**reference point** dmigs gtad

**regular activity** spyod lam

**regular monk** btsun pa

**reject or accept** spang blangs

**relative** kun rdzob

**relatives and friends** mdza' bshes

**release** grol ba

**religious lineage** brgyud pa

**religious observance** bsrung sdom

**religious system** chos lugs

**remain** bzhag pa

**remedy, remedial** gnyen po

**renunciation** zhen log

**reputation** snyan grags

**residual tendencies** bag chags

**respect** bsnyen bkur

**restrict** sdom pa

**resulting fruition** 'bras bu

**retreat period** thun mtshams

**retreat** mtshams  
**reveal** gdan 'dren pa  
**revel** dga' ba, longs spyod pa  
**reverential petition** gsol ba 'debs  
**reverse** log pa, zlog pa  
**revise** zhu dag  
**revolve** 'khor ba  
**right timing** dus tshod  
**ripening of karma** las kyi rnam par smin pa  
**ritual canticles of bon** bon gyer  
**root** rtsa ba  
**root of goodness** dge rtsa  
**ruinous spirit** phung 'dre

**sacred bond** dam tshig  
**sacred image** sku gzugs  
**sacred pledge** dam nyams  
**sacred treasure** gter ma  
**secular world** 'jig rten  
**samsara** samsāra; 'khor ba  
**samsara and nirvana** 'khor 'das  
**samsaric suffering** du: kha 'khor ba, 'khor ba sdug bsngal  
**scholar** mkhas pa  
**scripture** lung  
**seal** rgya  
**seal of entrustment** gtad rgya  
**seal of secrecy** sbas rgya  
**sealed doctrine** bka' rgya  
**secluded** dben pa  
**secluded place** dben gnas  
**seclusion** mtshams  
**secret mantra** gsang sngags  
**seed syllable** 'bru  
**self** bdag  
**self-confidence** nges shes  
**self-control** rang dbang  
**self-discipline** tshul khrims  
**self-emergent** rang 'byung

**self-emergent intrinsic awareness** rang byung rig pa  
**self-emergent primordial gnosis** rang byung ye shes  
**selfish interests** rang 'dod  
**seminal energy** thig le  
**sense faculties** dbang po  
**sensual pleasure** 'dod yon  
**sentient being** sems can  
**session** thun  
**sexual passion** 'dod chags  
**sharp intellectual capacity** blo rna ba  
**sheer luminosity** 'od gsal  
**shine forth** shar ba  
**shortcut** gseng lam  
**sign** rtags  
**sign of progress** drod rtags  
**sign of spiritual experience** grub rtags  
**significance** don  
**six archetypal animate existences in the external world** phyi snod kyi 'jig rten 'gro drug  
**six archetypal classes of transmigratory existence** rigs drug  
**six archetypal realms of transmigratory existence** 'gro ba rigs drug  
**six existential streams** rgyud drug  
**six wrong views** log lta drug  
**skilful method** thabs  
**skilful method and sublime gnosis** thabs shes  
**skill** nyams rtsal  
**skilled** mkhas pa  
**sky** nam mkha'  
**soil, stones, mountains, rocks, plants, trees, woods, forests** sa rdo ri brag rtsi shing nags  
tshal  
**solitary place** dgon pa  
**solitude** gnas dben  
**sorrow** sdug pa, mi dga' ba  
**source** 'byung gnas  
**space** nam mkha'  
**specific characteristics** mtshan ma  
**speculative thought** rtog pa  
**spirit of awakening** byang chub sems  
**spiritual accomplishment** grub rtags  
**spiritual advice** zhal gdams

**spiritual aspiration** smon lam  
**spiritual child** thugs sras  
**spiritual companion** mched grogs  
**spiritual experience** nyams kyi rtags  
**spiritual ignorance** ma rig pa  
**spiritual poison** dug  
**spiritual testament** kha chems  
**spontaneously accomplished** lhun grub  
**sporadic** res 'jog  
**spurious doctrine** chos log  
**stability** brtan pa  
**starving ghost** yi dwags  
**state** ngang  
**stingy, stinginess** ser sna  
**stream** gzhung  
**strive** brtson pa  
**stronghold** btsan sa  
**subjective mind** yid  
**sublime gnosis** prajñā; shes rab  
**subsequent yoga** anuyoga  
**substance** rdzas  
**substantial entity** dngos po  
**subtle** phra mo  
**suddenly** blo bur  
**suffering** sdug bsngal  
**superior, medium, and inferior** rab 'bring tha ma gsum  
**support** rten  
**supreme** mchog  
**supreme awakening, supreme enlightenment** byang chub, byang chub kyi mchog  
**sutra** sūtra; mdo  
**symbol** mtshon, brda  
**sympathetic joy** dga' ba

**take refuge** skyabs 'gro  
**tantric practice** gsang sngags  
**teaching** bstan pa  
**ten directions** phyogs bcu  
**ten-million-billion** bye ba ther 'bum

**ten stages** sa bcu  
**terminal incarnation** skye mtha'  
**things** yul  
**things externally perceived** phyi snang ba'i yul  
**three bodies** sku sgum  
**three doors** sgo gsum  
**three jewels** dkon mchog gsum  
**three (levels of) vows** sdom pa gsum ldan  
**three realms** khams gsum  
**three spheres** 'khor gsum  
**three statements** tshig gsum  
**three subordinate enjoyments** mnga' ris longs spyod gsum  
**three-thousandfold universe** stong gsum  
**three times** dus gsum  
**three trainings** bslab pa gsum  
**three yogas** rnal 'byor rnam gsum  
**thunderbolt** thog  
**time of death** 'chi dus  
**to be accepted** blang bya  
**to be converted** gdul bya  
**to be observed** bsrung bya  
**to be rejected** dor bya  
**top** spyi bo  
**total awakening** byang chub chen po  
**traditional sciences** rig pa'i gnas  
**traditional teaching** bka' srol  
**training the mind** blo sbyongs  
**transcend** las 'das  
**transcendence** paramitā; pha rol tu phyin pa  
**transcendent sublimation** thod rgal  
**transform** bsgyur ba  
**transitory state** bar do  
**transitory state of becoming** srid pa bar do  
**transmigratory cycle** saṃsāra; 'khor ba  
**truth** bden pa  
**turmoil** zang zing  
**turn round and round in succession** gcig nas gcig tu 'khor  
**tutelary deity** yi dam  
**two yogic accomplishments** dngos grub rnam gnyis

**twofold accumulation** tshogs gnyis

**ultimate meaning, ultimate significance** don dam, dam pa don

**ultimately** mthar

**unbiased** phyogs med

**unborn, not generated** skye med

**unceasing** rgyun chad med pa

**uncontrived** ma bcos

**undefiled** zag med

**understand** go ba

**uneducated** shes chung

**unelaborated** spros bral, spros med

**unerring** ma log, ma nor ba

**unhindered** thogs pa med pa

**unimpeded** ma 'gags pa

**universal ground** kun gzhi

**universal** kun la gnas

**universally pervading** mtho dman med par khyab pa

**unknown** mi shes pa

**unobstructed** 'gags med

**unprincipled** khrimis med

**unsuitable recipients** snod med

**unsurpassable enlightenment** bla med byang chub

**unwholesome** ngan pa

**uphold** 'dzin pa

**utterance** skad

**vanity and fame** khengs grags

**venerable religious person** ban btsun

**veneration** mos gus

**verbal exposition** rjod byed

**very beginning** ye gdod ma

**very important** gal che

**vessel** bum pa

**vice** sdig pa

**victorious** rgyal ba

**view** lta ba

**virtue and vice** dge sdig  
**virtuous guide** dge ba'i bshes gnyen  
**virtuous practice** dge sbyor  
**vital energy** prāṇa; rlung  
**void** stong pa  
**vow** sdom pa

**water numina** klu  
**way** lugs  
**way of dying** 'chi lugs  
**way of life** spyod lam  
**what must be given up** spang bya  
**what needs to be practiced** bsgrub bya  
**wind of karma** las kyi rlung  
**wish** 'dod pa  
**wish-fulfilling gem** yid bzhin nor bu  
**without distortion** phyin ci ma log  
**without distraction** ma yengs pa  
**without interruption** rgyun chad  
**without specific reference** dmigs med  
**witty arguments** tshig rtsub  
**woman** skyes dman, bud med  
**womb** mngal kha  
**wondrous** ngo mtshar can  
**word** tshig  
**world** 'jig rten  
**worldly activity** 'jig rten gyi spyod pa  
**worldly concerns** zang zing  
**worldly values** mi chos  
**worldly person** 'jig rten pa  
**worthless** long med  
**worthy** snod ldan, skal ldan  
**wrong** nor ba  
**wrong path** lam log  
**wrong view** log lta  
**wrongful** log pa

**yellow robe** gos ser

**yogic accomplishments** siddhi; dngos grub

**yogin** yogī; rnal 'byor pa